FINAL REPORT

SVRI Strategic Plan
Mid-Term Evaluation

8 March 2022
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AWDF</td>
<td>African Women's Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAG</td>
<td>Consortium Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHNRI</td>
<td>Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COFEM</td>
<td>Coalition of Feminists for Social Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREA W</td>
<td>Centre for Rights Education and Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIM - UNAM</td>
<td>Regional Centre for Multidisciplinary Research - National Autonomous University of Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Child Sexual Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEIA</td>
<td>Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI</td>
<td>Expression of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQI</td>
<td>Equality Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVAC</td>
<td>Ending Violence Against Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVAW</td>
<td>Ending Violence Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGDs</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender-Based Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSRA</td>
<td>Global Shared Research Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWI</td>
<td>Global Women's Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HICs</td>
<td>High Income countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIP</td>
<td>Hispanics in Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INMUJERES</td>
<td>National Institute for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSPIRE - Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children</td>
<td>Implementation and enforcement of laws; Norms and values; Safe environments; Parent and caregiver support; Income and economic strengthening; Response and support services; Education and life skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Innovations for Poverty Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPV</td>
<td>Intimate Partner Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JLI Faith</td>
<td>Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIIs</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTIQ+</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or Questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMICs</td>
<td>Low-and Middle-Income Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSHTM</td>
<td>London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC</td>
<td>Medical Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSHEA</td>
<td>Preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESPECT Women</td>
<td><strong>Relationships skills strengthened; Empowerment of women; Services ensured; Poverty reduced; Environments made safe; Child and adolescent abuse prevented; Transformed attitudes, beliefs and norms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPS</td>
<td>Regional Priority Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMRC</td>
<td>South African Medical Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAR</td>
<td>South Asia Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRHR</td>
<td>Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI</td>
<td>Sexual Violence Research Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTF</td>
<td>UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAC</td>
<td>Violence against Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAW</td>
<td>Violence against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBG</td>
<td>World Bank Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPF</td>
<td>Wellspring Philanthropic Fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

A feminist, non-profit organisation that works to create a world free from violence against women and violence against children, the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) launched a strategic plan in 2019 for the period 2020-2024. This plan aims to: Build research-based evidence on VAW and VAC in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs); Strengthen and support the capacity of the SVRI grantees, partners and members; Foster collaborations and partnerships; Influence change through maximising the use of research for policy and practice, and advocating for more and better resources for VAW research in LMICs.

The SVRI commissioned the social enterprise, Includovate to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the implementation of its strategic plan, covering the period between September 2019 and February 2022. The primary data derived from interviews and Focus Group Discussions cover a slightly shorter period, up until December 2021 and January 2022 respectively.

This Strategic Plan Mid-term Evaluation set out to identify challenges encountered, opportunities discovered, and lessons learned through the process of implementing the strategic plan. The evaluation assessed the SVRI’s mid-term performance against the programme outcomes as documented in the strategic plan.

Methods

Mixed methods were used for data collection and analysis. A desk review was used to evaluate the SVRI’s mid-term performance against the Strategic Plan’s four programme outcomes which ensured a thorough and detailed understanding of the Strategic Plan. Other methods for primary data collection included Key Informant Interviews which helped to assess SVRI’s mid-term performance and evaluate the implementation of programme activities against the overall Strategic Plan’s programme outcomes and overall performance. Focus Group Discussions provided an in-depth and qualitative understanding of specific activities and outputs aimed at achieving the four programme outcomes. An Online survey allowed for further insights from specific activities and outputs aimed at achieving the four programme outcomes. Case studies helped focus on successes and key learning as well as challenges encountered in the process of implementing the strategic plan.

A sample of requests to the SVRI helpdesk address was also analysed. Methodological rigour and report quality was ensured through Includovate’s Institutional Review Board and the client. All of these methods helped to
triangulate evidence obtained and ensure the validity and reliability of the mid-term evaluation findings.

**Key findings**

Overall, the evaluation found that the SVRI has achieved excellent outcomes under all of its four Goals during these first two years of the strategy implementation, and is fully on track to achieve its planned outcomes under all of its strategic pillars by the end of 2024. The evaluation team has no doubts in this regard, and found the evaluation exercise to have received an overwhelmingly positive response from all stakeholders interviewed and surveyed. The SVRI’s mandate is unique and critically needed within the ecology of work aimed at ending VAW and VAC. Moreover, the SVRI team has performed at outstanding levels throughout the period of evaluation, despite its very limited funding and resources. Indeed, the small team has achieved above and beyond what it set out to accomplish during the period 2020-2022, and this with high levels of professionalism, ethics and overall excellence.

As regards SVRI’s first goal, to strengthen the evidence base, to improve policies and programmes to respond and prevent VAW and VAC, the evaluation found that the SVRI is undoubtedly playing a leading role in ensuring increased and strengthened research on different intersections relating to VAW and VAC around the world, particularly in low and middle income countries. The SVRI contributes towards a strengthened evidence base which in turn has the potential of influencing policy and programming, notably through its international and diverse grant making activities, through the Global Shared Research Agenda, as well as the biennial organisation of the Forum – the largest conference on VAW and VAC in the world. The creation of the SVRI Knowledge Hub means revitalising how the organisation shares information through its website, social media platforms and newsletter.

In relation to SVRI’s second goal, namely to strengthen and share knowledge, skills and tools with VAW and VAC researchers, the evaluation found that the SVRI is performing extremely well. Grantees highly appreciate the openness in communication and technical support they receive from SVRI. The impact of SVRI’s work on researchers’ skills in relation to methodology, research methods, research ethics in the complex and highly sensitive context of VAW and VAC, appears to be very tangible. Research grantee’s highlighted certain areas of research methods within which they would value further support, but, overall, there was widespread appreciation. Meanwhile, capacity strengthening in terms of policy influencing and enhanced research uptake could be enhanced further, building on excellent ongoing efforts and will be through SVRI’s new online learning platform due to be launched mid 2022.

As regards the third goal of developing partnerships, the evaluation found that the SVRI is extremely well-connected and dedicates highly impressive efforts
towards ensuring strong and meaningful connections across the field of VAW and VAC - both between the SVRI team and strategic, like minded partners, and between different third parties themselves. Partnerships are clearly deeply essential to everything the SVRI does. The team is highly conscious that VAW and VAC are complex matters which require an inclusive, participatory and holistic approach. The SVRI thus works through partnerships in all areas of its strategic plan, and does so with high levels of care and participation.

In relation to the fourth goal, to influence policy and practice, not only has the SVRI achieved impressive results in terms of numbers of meetings with donors, it has also been leading the way on developing guidelines and best practices on ethical funding for the field - something which is much needed and certainly highly commendable. Grantees are grateful for support in research uptake skills strengthening, and for connections made with new funding opportunities and donors. Meanwhile, the SVRI’s efforts to influence change is an area where further clarity among stakeholders could perhaps be sought. It may be helpful to clarify with all related parties that the small SVRI team, which works relentlessly to deliver high volumes of impactful work across the four strategic pillars, cannot be expected to also connect individual grantees directly with policy-makers and/or achieve and demonstrate direct policy and programming impact as part of its work under the current strategic plan, most notably due to limited financial support to the SVRI team and, as a consequence, its limited size.

While the SVRI’s articulation of how building evidence leads to the influencing of change at policy and programme levels is not entirely clear to all stakeholders, it is widely recognised that its work towards research agenda setting, funding-tracking and leading the way on ethical guidance is enabling SVRI to successfully advocate for more and better funding for research on VAW and VAC in LMICs and to disrupt and decolonise the current funding ecosystem.

Overall, it was concluded that the SVRI has implemented a highly impressive volume of impactful activities throughout the first half of the period under evaluation, from September 2019 to February 2022. The organisation has accomplished its aims and plans throughout 2020-2022 and is certainly on-track to successfully attain - if not exceed - what it has set out to do during the remaining two years of its implementation of the strategic plan.
Introduction

Background

Violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC) have now been recognised as global public health and human rights problems. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that about 30% of women face physical and sexual violence from their partners while 7% of them face the same from non-partners. UNICEF estimates that 6 in 10 children (aged 2-14) face regular physical punishment while 7 in 10 of them face psychological aggression. 1 in 10 girls under 18 face different forms of sexual violence, including rape.¹

The SVRI is a feminist, non-profit organisation that works to create a world free from such violences by creating a network where global stakeholders working on VAW and VAC (and other forms of violence emanating from gender inequality) collaborate through sharing research findings, working to influence policies and improve the lives of those who face violence rooted in gender inequality. To implement this vision, SVRI launched a strategic plan for the period 2020-2024 in 2019, which is anchored in four basic tenets:

a. Build research-based evidence on VAW and VAC in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs).
b. Strengthen and support the capacity of the SVRI and grant members.
c. Foster collaborations and partnerships.
d. Influence change through maximising the use of research for policy and practice, and advocating for more and better resources for VAW research in LMICs.

Broadly speaking, the Strategic Plan Mid-term Evaluation aims to identify challenges encountered, opportunities discovered, and lessons learned through the process of implementing the strategic plan. The evaluation thus seeks to assess the SVRI’s mid-term performance against the programme outcomes as documented in the strategic plan (see Figure 1).

Objectives of the evaluation

The specific objectives of the mid-term evaluation of SVRI's strategic plan, in relation to the overall programme outcomes, are as follows:

- Evaluate the SVRI’s mid-term performance against the overall programme outcomes as described in the strategic plan.
- Identify challenges, opportunities and lessons learned and proffer recommendations that would be useful in strengthening and improving the SVRI work.
- Evaluate the implementation of programme activities against the Strategic Plan.
- Assess how the activities and project outputs are viewed and used by SVRI partners, including researchers, practitioners, and funders, particularly in LMICs.
- Assess the extent to which the programme has contributed towards the achievement of its strategic outcomes.
- Propose recommendations for strengthening the SVRIs work moving forward.
- Develop a communications package for the dissemination of findings for different audiences.

The timeframe for the evaluation covers the period between September 2019 and February 2022. The primary data derived from interviews and Focus Group Discussions cover a slightly shorter period, up until December 2021 and January 2022 respectively.
Conceptual Framework

Drawing inspiration from the SVRI’s six Core Values and Principles, the evaluation is grounded in a feminist and human rights-based approach with attention to ethical, equitable, collaborative standards, as summarised below:

1. **Feminist approach:** Includeovate designed and implemented a methodology for the mid-term evaluation based on the feminist evaluation principles, incorporating an intersectional lens. Feminist evaluation pays attention to participatory, empowering, inclusive, and social justice agendas and seeks to provide knowledge that increases social justice for women and other disadvantaged women groups. An intersectional lens allows an understanding of context specific factors, for example, gender, race, geographical location, (dis)ability, sexual orientation as well as the social, cultural and political drivers that impact on VAW and VAC research.

2. **Human rights approach:** Includeovate’s methodology for the mid-term evaluation is based on gender equality and human rights evaluation principles. The five principles of the human rights-based approach – participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment and legality – were integrated throughout the evaluation process.

3. **Ethics:** In conducting the evaluation, Includeovate considered ethical and safety standards. All data collection tools were reviewed by the SVRI and Includeovate’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure ethical compliance.

4. **Collaboration:** In designing and implementing the evaluation, Includeovate identified diverse actors and partnerships that make up the SVRI research network and have achieved the four Programme Outcomes described in the strategic plan. The Includeovate team closely collaborated with the client during the whole process of the assignment.

Methodology

Once again guided by the SVRI’s six Core Values and Principles, Includeovate adopted mixed methods for the data collection and analysis. The main data sources of the evaluation were derived from a thorough desk review as well as primary data collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KII) and an online survey. These data collection methods helped to:

- Triangulate evidence obtained to ensure the validity and reliability of the mid-term evaluation findings incorporated in the final report - including challenges, lessons learned, examples of good practice and recommendations.
- Ensure that accurate and reliable research findings were obtained.
Methodological rigour and report quality were ensured through Includovate’s Institutional Review Board. In using the aforementioned methods, inspiration was drawn from well tested and known conceptual frameworks aimed at evaluating performance against the Strategic Plan and identifying challenges, lessons learnt, and improvement areas to be able to put forward workable recommendations.

**Methods of data collection**

**Desk review:** To address the evaluation objectives and to evaluate the SVRI’s mid-term performance against the Strategic Plan’s four programme outcomes, the Includovate team reviewed SVRI core documents including grantmaking reports, monthly activities reports, evaluation reports, the biennial Forum reviews, and a wide range of other relevant documents. The review ensured a thorough and detailed understanding of the Strategic Plan, and the ways in which the SVRI has made progress on attaining its goals under the four strategic pillars. Indicators were developed to conduct and guide this revision and to measure SVRI’s achievements in each key action within the proposed strategies for all four goals. The findings from these reviews enabled the evaluation team to explore and discuss further during the Key Informant Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions.

A sample of requests to the SVRI helpdesk address was also analysed and assessed in terms of content and response.

**Key Informant Interviews (KII):** Following the comprehensive desk review, the Includovate team developed a key informant interview guide and conducted fifteen (15) key informant interviews with SVRI funding partners, Board members, Leadership Council, staff, and consultants. The KII provided insights into the programme, the opportunities, challenges, and lessons learnt. These interviews helped to assess SVRI’s mid-term performance, particularly how the activities and project outputs are viewed and used by different stakeholders, particularly in LMICs. Crucially, these interviews assisted in evaluating the implementation of programme activities against the overall Strategic Plan’s programme outcomes in order to identify (positive or negative) factors that affect implementation and overall performance. The KII participants were identified and recruited by the SVRI team and introduced to the evaluation team.

**Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Three (3) FGDs were conducted with grant recipients of research projects. A total of 16 grant recipients from the different regions participated. These FGDs helped the evaluation team to gain a more in-depth and qualitative understanding of specific activities and outputs aimed at achieving the four programme outcomes. The FGDs also served as a safe space for constructive dialogue that helped the evaluation team identify challenges, improvement areas and lessons learnt in the implementation of the programme activities. The information gathered from this discussion assisted in
compiling recommendations. The FGD participants were identified and recruited by the SVRI team, and introduced to the evaluation team.

The key informant interviews as well as FGDs were conducted online using Zoom or Google Meet depending on the convenience of the participants. Prior consent was obtained from the participants regarding the interviews and group discussions, and specific consent was sought to record audio and video. All interviews and group discussions were later transcribed. All data collection tools were reviewed by the SVRI team and Includovate’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure ethical compliance. It was ensured that the KII and FGD guides were inclusive, participatory and in line with the feminist and human rights evaluation principles. Gender inclusive language was employed to accommodate individuals who do not necessarily identify with the male/female binary categorisations.

**Online survey:** An online survey was sent to SVRI members (Forum/Listserv participants as well as grant recipients and other beneficiaries) through the SVRI Update. This allowed the evaluation team to gain further insights and understanding of specific activities and outputs aimed at achieving the four programme outcomes, in particular those relating to members, grant recipients and other beneficiaries. The survey was made available in English, French and Spanish. A total of 58 responses with approximately two-third women (including trans women) were received (54 in English, 2 in French, and 2 in Spanish).

The survey participants were all signed up to SVRI’s ListServ. Amongst the respondents, 16% were SVRI forum delegates and 14% were SVRI partners. 34% identified only as ‘Listserv subscribers’. Table 1 below illustrates the sample distribution in detail.

**Table 1:** Online survey sample distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVRI tech advisor</td>
<td>3% (n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI staff or consultant</td>
<td>7% (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI partner</td>
<td>14% (n=8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI ListServ subscriber only</td>
<td>34% (n=20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI funding partner</td>
<td>3% (n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI Forum delegate</td>
<td>16% (n=9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI grantees (former and current)</td>
<td>19% (n=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (bursary recipient, reviewer, UNICEF deploy etc.)</td>
<td>19% (n=11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be observed from Table 2 below that approximately half of the respondents are based in the Global North (North America - 24%, Europe - 22%). The
respondents’ research is primarily focused on Africa and Asia, followed by Latin America and Central Asia.

Table 2: Regional distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Regions based in</th>
<th>Research focused on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>29% (n=17)</td>
<td>57% (n=31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>2% (n=1)</td>
<td>15% (n=8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>7% (n=4)</td>
<td>20% (n=11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>22% (n=13)</td>
<td>19% (n=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and Caribbean</td>
<td>6% (n=3)</td>
<td>19% (n=9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>3% (n=2)</td>
<td>28% (n=15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>24% (n=14)</td>
<td>11% (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>7% (n=4)</td>
<td>31% (n=17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case studies: Includovate collected three case studies to highlight successes and key learnings as well as challenges encountered in the process of implementing the strategic plan. These were collected from the Focus Group Discussions and included in the final report.

Table 3: Sample distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder type</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Focus group discussions</th>
<th>Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVRI funding partners</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI Board</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI Leadership Council</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI Consultants</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI members (including Forum/Listserv</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants, Grant recipients and other beneficiaries)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant recipients</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 FGDs: 3, 7, 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Limitations of the evaluation**

A number of limitations have been identified in relation to the methodology and implementation of the mid-term evaluation.

Firstly, the evaluation team was dependent upon the SVRI team for the identification of respondents for KII and FGDs. In principle, this potentially could have resulted in a lack of a well-rounded and neutral perspective.

Secondly, due to time and resource constraints, it was not possible to include interviews with researchers whose grant proposals had been rejected. Time-zone differences, amongst other factors, appear to have led to a somewhat limited participation of larger numbers of participants in the focus group discussions. It is possible that the timing of the evaluation, at the year-end, also contributed to a reduced participation rate, although it is difficult to ascertain. It is unlikely that language was a barrier to participation, given that the survey was made available in the three key languages in which members usually work with the SVRI.

Finally, there was a low response rate (0.8%) for the online survey despite reminders being sent by the SVRI team. It is generally a challenge to achieve high response rates for online surveys.
Mid-term evaluation of SVRI’s strategic plan 2020-2024

Goal 1: Build Evidence

SVRI’s first goal, as it is presented in the Strategic Plan, is to strengthen the evidence base to improve policies and programmes to respond and prevent Violence Against Women (VAW), as well as Violence Against Children (VAC) where it intersects with VAW, with a focus on Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs).

This goal is supported by two strategies. The first strategy within this goal includes two key actions: to identify innovative research; and to provide technical guidance to researchers from LMICs. This is a central strategy which sits at the core of the SVRI’s work, and considerable impact has been achieved in this regard during the time period under evaluation. The second strategy within this goal includes two key actions: to refine and advance a research agenda on the key gaps in knowledge practice; and to distil, synthesise and disseminate information on topical issues. The SVRI has made important advances in regard to this strategy as well.

In the following sections, the SVRI’s achievements and activities are outlined and evaluated against Goal 1 of the strategy.

Strategy 1: Support and fund innovative research on VAW and VAC in low and middle income countries (LMICs)

Identify and support innovative research

By way of background, as explained in the SVRI Grant-Making (2014-2019) report\(^2\), the SVRI Grant was first established in 2014, before the SVRI was registered as an NGO. The success of the grant led, in 2016, to a partnership with the World Bank Group (WBG), seeing the expansion of the funding pot and the launch of the Development Marketplace Award for Innovation in the Prevention and Response of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and, up to 2019, the SVRI received over 1,095

proposals. The WBG, though continuing to be a strong partner and an external reviewer, was unable to continue to contribute to the funding pool due to some factors. Hence in 2019, with support from Sida and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, launched the SVRI Research Grant. More information on Annex 1.

**SVRI’s Grant-making 2020 and beyond**

In 2020, according to the SVRI Annual Report (2020-2021), the SVRI established, with the support of the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (WPF) and SIDA, the SVRI research grant entitled ‘Knowledge for Action to End Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children,’ allowing researchers in LMICs to apply for two-year grants to undertake innovative research that contributes to the prevention and response of VAW, VAC and other forms of violence driven by gender inequality in their countries. This constitutes an important and central part of the stated goal of building evidence, and the particular strategy of identifying and supporting research in LMICs.

Following calls for application and the review process, 8 and 7 proposals from LMICs in different regions were accepted for funding in the years 2021 and 2022 respectively. For more details, see Annex 2.

**The SVRI’s Approach to Grantmaking**

In its approach to grantmaking, the SVRI funds research that includes partnerships between academic institutions, research institutions, local government departments, local NGOs and women’s organisations, supporting research agendas and questions that come from those settings. SVRI doesn’t fund any proposal that is decided by a research academic institution alone, without sufficient insight into the realities of the countries.

As an SVRI staff member explained, gaps in the field are used to guide selection of proposals, while reviewing the proposals, to bring new evidence (new insight and new gaps). She continued: “For example, years ago, SVRI gave a grant to Raising Voices in Uganda and that was key to make the connection between violence against women and violence against children. Another grant given was to work on cyber violence.” As expressed by another staff member in her interview, “SVRI has been working on building evidence in multiple ways, through knowledge exchanges, webinars, systematic reviews and grant making programmes to address research gaps and respond to the needs of the field. This is facilitated by an incredibly committed board, an innovative team, the Leadership Council, and a well-equipped strategic and financial management, to ensure that the funds are well utilised.”

The evaluation of the SVRI’s approach to grantmaking suggests that it is

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consistent with the organisation’s guiding values and principles. As highlighted in the Grant Making Series (2014-2020), the SVRI’s approach to grant making takes into account the global balance of power and resources. Their aim to support and retain researchers in low- and middle income countries requires a multifaceted approach: it considers the power balance and equity within partnerships in a proposal, promoting partnerships between organisations within a context where the research will make a difference.

As one Board member explained in an interview, the SVRI makes sure that “the requests and the grantees are conducting research in areas that are deemed to be high priorities on the VAW and VAC agendas. SVRI is successful by creating a central platform for the funding to be accumulated so that it finds the best possible home for the research work that is required.”

**Shifting the power imbalance**

In addition, SVRI has also been working on shifting the power imbalance, by which researchers from Western academic institutions lead research studies even in LMICs. This results in researchers and voices from the global South getting sidelined, and there remains a big gap between what people think should be researched, and what actually gets researched. Although SVRI has proactively attempted to address this imbalance, the scope is still somewhat limited, since SVRI has focused on certain countries as of now.

In order to change this, a consultant emphasised the need to ensure that the SVRI always seeks to fund “equitable partnerships and multi sectoral teams and that it isn't parachute or colonial type research practices, so you don't have folks from high income countries sort of parachuting in and getting data and off they go to build their own careers.”

> “The SVRI is able to ensure that evidence is being built, particularly in those parts of the world where not much is known about violence against women and violence against children. SVRI’s priorities have been to ensure those areas, those countries that are under researched, begin to have some semblance of evidence being built up.” - SVRI Board member

**Support to prospective and actual grantees**

The evaluation found that the grantmaking process is commendable, in that it provides ongoing and holistic support to prospective grantees in the process. After the proposal is approved, the SVRI continues to provide technical assistance,
focusing on ethics and research uptake and providing platforms, such as SVRI Forums and its networks, for the researcher’s dissemination plan.

“The SVRI helps to incubate early stage research [...] Accompanying grantees from early stages, following up with research, helping to feed this research into future interventions or broader research, ensuring that the research is robust with a strong theory of change.” - Funding Partner

A further theme which was brought up by multiple evaluation participants was that of the balance between number of grants and level of support for each grantee. A careful balance needs to be maintained between how many projects SVRI would like to support and how much to allocate to each grantee given the overall pot of money for this purpose. It is unclear whether SVRI has achieved the right balance.

**Views of online survey respondents in relation to grants**

Twenty percent of the online respondents have applied to the SVRI Research Grant and 10% to the SVRI World Bank Development Marketplace Award. The primary source of information for these grants is the SVRI update (67%) followed by hearing from a colleague (39%), funding opportunities websites (22%), and SVRI websites (17%).

Through the online survey, respondents were invited to provide feedback on the process relating to the call for proposals. The response was as follows:

- The majority (88%) agreed that the SVRI call for proposals was easy to understand and the eligibility criteria were clear.
- The selection criteria was agreed (78%) to be appropriate and reasonable.
- Seventy-two percent agreed that the length of the application form was reasonable.
- Ninety-four percent agreed that the type of questions were relevant.
- A sufficient period of time was provided for proposal/application development and submission was agreed by 95%.
- Eighty-nine percent of respondents agreed that there were opportunities to ask questions relating to the call for proposals via email before the submission deadline.
- Around half of the respondents attended webinars related to the calls for the proposals.
- The majority (83%) agreed that information on the review process, including timelines and selection criteria, was clear and easy to understand.
- 100% agreed that their research/programming had strengthened as a result of this grant.
- 91% agreed that the reporting requirements were reasonable and
When asked a question relating to seeking SVRI’s assistance through emails, almost everyone (95%) reported that SVRI staff were helpful in responding to their information request, and 90% reported that SVRI’s ad hoc help and support was useful for their work. Survey respondents were asked additional questions, including about what they like most about the SVRI. A summary of responses can be found in Annex 3.

Participants from one of the FGDs described the application process in a positive light, highlighting the clear and straightforward eligibility criteria and guidelines, SVRI's helpful comments, and the opportunity to ask questions to the SVRI team. It was found to be very comprehensive in terms of the information that was necessary but with limited questions, and the team from SVRI got in touch about different areas wherever they needed clarification, and the website contained all the additional information required. It was also highlighted that the timeline provided was sufficient for them to work on the proposal.

Feedback on the application process and grant criteria were also invited through the online survey. One SVRI Forum delegate expressed the following view: “It’s just too few awards available and also it’s too restrictive in not funding organisations previously funded when some organisations are very large with multiple unrelated teams doing relevant work.” Other perceived shortcomings with the application process and criteria, as highlighted via the online survey, included the following:

- “I did not get the responses of not being granted so no guidelines for improvement.” - Bursary recipient
- “I think the use of characters, rather than words, is a pain. That it can’t be uploaded as a word/pdf document, but rather pasted in, is also a hassle.” - Grant recipient
- “It’s just way too much work for too little chance at too little funding.” - SVRI Forum Delegate

**Composition of review teams**

In regard to the composition of the review teams, the first tier review is carried out by SVRI team members. In the second tier, they are joined by an external consultant (a VAW research expert who is bilingual) as well as a funding partner if they are available. In the third tier, a team of international experts representing diverse expertise is brought together for the final review. The group is very impressive, consisting of senior experts from different geographical regions and institutions. There appears to be less experience from South East Asia and LAC.

**Eligibility criteria**
The evaluation team found that the eligibility criteria were clear, transparent and appeared most reasonable. As mentioned above, online survey participants largely agreed on this as well. Proposal selection is not based solely on the highest technical quality but also takes into consideration proposals from regions that are underserved, and have potential if additional technical assistance is provided.

In addition to the eligibility criteria, the SVRI also provides prospective grantees with a list of ‘Nature of Supported Projects’ and some bullets about ‘What We Like to See in Proposals’ as well as ‘Guiding Principles.’ The latter states, for instance, that the research should be feminist, collaborative, ethical, and so on. These additional pointers seem very useful to prospective grantees, as they make things more concrete to the applicants and also help to ensure that the projects funded by SVRI are in line with its own ethos and values, and feminist approach. The ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ document regarding Research Grants is also very clear, accessible and helpful. The SVRI also endeavours to ensure geographical diversity by shortlisting applications from less common locations. This is, at times, done post the review process, since applications which may not get the highest ‘points’ in a review may be accepted since they are from a country which has never been supported before or an innovative proposal or thematic area which had not been considered earlier.

A Board member summed up the strengths of the grantmaking and selection process as follows: “The grant selection criteria and the proposal advertisement and assessment processes are very effective. SVRI has a broad based call for applications, a strong involvement of the technical experts in the Leadership Council and others who sit through. […] The process is robust, fair and reflects the priorities of the field.” In addition, a funding partner expressed the following view: “The selection process has found very relevant research and that it also shows that SVRI are professional in the selection process and screening of applications. The selection process tries to define research projects that are really applied research; these are from low- and middle-income countries. In that sense, the process helps SVRI to increase innovations and numbers of researchers in low- and middle-income countries.”

“The SVRI has provided me with access to cutting edge research from around the globe, and has been a place to share my work over the years. I work in a very resource-poor setting and have been privileged to receive support from SVRI.” – SVRI Collaborator

**Intersectionality and inclusion**

A specific theme addressed as part of the evaluation was that of intersectionality and inclusion. It was found that the SVRI is working on ensuring multiple voices...
are heard, by making sure that there's geographic diversity, gender diversity, and that there is diversity of opinions in their selection panels (for the selection of grantees and papers, for instance). To take an intersectional approach to the research and evidence building, the organisation has looked at different kinds of marginalised and vulnerable groups in different settings, and this is a part of the feminist approach that they follow. As a feminist organisation, it has tried to maintain its focus on inclusion and overcome marginalisation through their calls for proposals, reviewing proposals, and by partnering with organisations that are focused on marginalised groups. Furthermore, to ensure intersectionality and inclusivity, SVRI has also focused on highlighting the voices from LMICs, by supporting research and holding events in those settings, ensuring active engagement, and participation of researchers/practitioners in these settings. While there are a lot of research opportunities in the LMICs in this field of work, researchers from the HIC tend to dominate the agenda, and have more publications than their counterparts in the South.

To ensure the representation and visibility of various groups in the SVRI Forum, seminars about violence against women and girls with disabilities were held, and there was a specific effort to also put a woman with a disability on an important panel, giving them the space to talk about how she viewed the problem and possible solutions. Further, attempts are also made to ensure diversity, inclusion and equity at the forum through interpretation services (funding allowing); bursaries; gender neutral bathrooms; gender stickers; and, briefing of staff in advance.

“As leaders in the field and the ongoing development of resources and allocation of the grants and the Global Research Agenda... All of those things continue to position [the SVRI] in the forefront of the field.” - Board member

**Case study 1: An evolving relationship with the SVRI**

The relationship between a former grantee from Uganda and the SVRI began back in 2014 when the SVRI invited them to a workshop organised for partners in the East Africa region. After that initial contact, SVRI approached the person to apply for a grant, something this former grantee considered “really useful and encouraging” as well as an “excellent thing” since “few funders can actually do that.” Later, they had an opportunity to submit a joint application to the Oak Foundation and, from that moment on, the SVRI moved away from being a funder and became a partner, a collaborator in the proposal writing process, sharing ideas, thoughts and any difficulties found during said process. Through this funding, their relationship changed once more, with the SVRI becoming
their mentor and working towards enhancing their capacity. The assistance and resources provided by the SVRI throughout this evolving relationship - from funder to partner to mentor - have been extremely beneficial from the former grantee’s perspective, seeing that the SVRI was the first organisation that gave them funding to start working on parenting and violence prevention and introduced them to the field of VAC. In addition, the SVRI was the first organisation to provide this grantee with capacity strengthening sessions in areas such as communication, research and research uptake and linking them to other regional organisations in East Africa. Likewise, the SVRI supported them so they could participate in several SVRI Forums, even hosting a side event at the conference in 2019. Nowadays, although they haven’t received funding from the SVRI in a couple of years, their rapport continues to grow, with the SVRI operating as an ambassador for them, creating opportunities for them to disseminate their work and engage in advocacy and connecting them to other potential partners or funders.

Provide technical guidance to researchers from LMICs

The SVRI team provides support and technical guidance to the researchers in their networks, including both grantees and non-grantees. In the context of grantees, this technical guidance takes place throughout the grant making process and once the grant has been awarded.

Face-to-face meetings

In addition to the online interactions, including the grantee training programme, the SVRI team endeavours to also meet face-to-face with grantees. One example of this was when the SVRI met with one of the new grantees, the UCT Psychology Department, in Cape Town, South Africa in March 2021. During the first week of September and October 2021, a meeting took place with all the grantees, followed by a meeting in December 2021. Several additional meetings held with grantees during previous years are listed in Annex 4. The SVRI also participated in meetings organised by the World Bank. These are listed in Annex 5.

In regards to the experiences of grantees, the participants in the Focus Group

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5The SVRI documents used in this section include: SVRI (n.d.). Advancing research for improving responses and ending violence against women and violence against children. SVRI Annual Report (2020-2021) and SVRI’s monthly reports (January - December) 2020 and 2021.
Discussions all agreed that SVRI has provided useful technical guidance after being awarded a grant. All of them felt that this had helped to improve and strengthen the proposal, whilst allowing the SVRI to get clarifications on certain parts. Some applicants saw this as mentorship, whilst others saw it more as a collaborative process of adjusting and improving the application.

One grantee, for instance, explained that they had received helpful support during the grant application process in relation to administrative matters such as word length, the online process, and so on. Another grantee explained that they had received mentorship after they had been awarded the grant. The SVRI got in touch to help further strengthen their study. The applicant praised the SVRI for being very flexible, and “not bureaucratic at all.” She continued to explain that, “they were like, ‘we believe you can build a stronger, more focused proposal so use this resource (a local expert) to dive in and strengthen your theory of action and strengthen your proposal in such ways...’. Some grantees couldn’t quite remember what sort of mentorship or guidance they had received. However, one grantee distinctly remembered the (technical) support which the SVRI provided - once they had moved from being an applicant to being an awarded grantee - in order to make their study concise and focused on clear objectives. Others, again after being awarded a grant, described the support from the SVRI as very helpful in making their research clearer, with stronger methods, a strong implementation plan, and an appropriate budget.

Strategy 2: Identify, amplify, debate and disseminate new knowledge and trends in the field

Refine and advance a research agenda on key gaps in knowledge and practice

The Global Shared Research Agenda (GSRA)

A significant way in which the SVRI has built evidence, advancing a research agenda relating to key gaps, is through their vast efforts invested in establishing a Global Shared Research Agenda (GSRA) on VAW and VAC. Indeed, the SVRI has long been focused on identifying research priorities for the field, working with multiple partners. This work has most recently led to the development of the GSRA on VAW between the Equality Institute (EQI) and the SVRI, with support from SIDA and WPF. The GSRA was launched on 23 September 2021 through an online event. Since then, it has been shared widely with SVRI’s partners. In

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November 2021, it was presented to UNICEF-Innocenti, shared on a UN Women #16Days panel, and circulated widely via SVRI’s networks and via an active social media campaign.

“SVRI is unique in the sense that they are shepherding the field and not focusing on projects. [...] They’re interested in the whole field of VAW and VAC. They have a broader vision - setting the stage for everyone else.” -Board member

According to the document Global Shared Research Agenda (2021), the GSRA was overseen by three groups: the Stewardship Group, which included SVRI, technical expert and EQI; the Advisory Group, which included approx. 30 experts on VAWG, and the Global Expert Group, which included 400 people from both LMICs and HICs working on VAWG prevention and response. The mobilisation of these experts around creating a shared research agenda should be considered as a great achievement for the SVRI during the evaluation period.

**A participatory process**

Something which is particularly noteworthy and commendable about the GSRA is the highly participatory process which was used to develop the research priorities. In using an adaptation of the CHNRI method, the development of the GSRA took place through a six-step highly participatory and iterative process, the first step being a revision of literature to identify key gaps in the field which framed the priority-setting process, and led to the identification of four key research domains:

1. Research to understand VAW in its multiple forms (prevalence of different types of VAW, risk and protective factors for VAW, causes and consequences).
2. Intervention research (including research on violence prevention and response interventions, and various types of evaluations (process, formative and impact evaluations)).
3. Improving existing interventions (including scale-up research, costing research, intervention science, process research and other forms of research that generates innovative solutions to improve existing interventions making them more deliverable, affordable or sustainable).
4. Methodological and measurement gaps (including new and innovative ways to measure VAW, hierarchies of knowledge, practice-based learning, sticky ethical issues, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions.)

The Advisory Group identified priority research questions under each of these four domains (41 questions). These questions were then sent to the Global Expert

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Group through an online survey to rank and score against three criteria – Applicability, Effectiveness and Equity (214 responses, 128 based in HIC and 84 in LMIC). Practitioners gave preference for questions relating to Intervention research, while researchers’ top five questions included two from the Intervention research domain and two from the Understanding VAW domain, with the addition of a question relating to methodology and measurement gaps. For further details about the steps of the GSRA development, a list of meetings which took place in relation to this work can be found in Annex 6.

“The latest Global Research Agenda is the most amazing piece of work; in a relatively short space of time SVRI gathered the opinions and thoughts of global leaders in the field.” - Board member

As one of the Board members explained, the process giving shape to the Global Shared Research Agenda enabled a very participatory process for priority setting: “Researchers in the field received several reminders to participate, make their voices known, indicate what they thought the priorities were, and so on and so forth.” It was a sufficiently long process to enable veritable collaboration and participation, which included webinars “to share with everyone what we’re learning and what would happen next, online surveys, etc.” Another Board member praised this work as follows: “The latest Global Research Agenda is the most amazing piece of work; in a relatively short space of time SVRI gathered the opinions and thoughts of global leaders in the field, as a methodology to setting priorities and making priorities available for people to understand and to guide funding.”

Additional work related to refining the research agenda

Other achievements under this strategy include support for the co-creation of a Regional Research Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the SVRI’s efforts at setting Research Priorities for the Intersections of VAC and VAW in partnership with the UNICEF Office of Research at Innocenti and the Human Reproduction Programme at WHO. The latter had the aim of facilitating a participatory, global process to address the gaps in research, focusing on the intersections of VAC and VAW, by identifying priorities and including them in the SVRI grant-making work.

Closely linked to the Global Shared Research Agenda, it is clear that these efforts (described in further detail in Annex 7) have been most successful and instrumental in refining and advancing a global research agenda on key gaps in knowledge and practice - once again highlighting SVRI’s central role in this space.
Distil, synthesise and disseminate information on topical issues

The SVRI also distils, synthesises and disseminates information, via its website, social media channels, through publications and via its Listserv. The weekly updates, newsletters and social media usage draws significant attention to the work that’s been done, both among the membership base of more than 7,600 members (see Annex 8), and amongst broader audiences, and freely makes it available and accessible.

**SVRI Listserv Updates**

Every week the SVRI sends out an update to those who have signed up to the ListServ. The membership database was tidied up through 2021 and by December 2021, the SVRI Update, a roundup of resources on violence against women and violence against children, was received by 7,428 members from all global regions. Eighty one percent of respondents reported that they receive SVRI updates via the ListServ. Out of those who receive SVRI updates, an impressive 59% of respondents always read the updates while 30% often do so. 37% of respondents reported that they sometimes share the updates with their colleagues, while 29% of them reported never/hardly ever sharing updates. However, 85% of the respondents find the updates useful for their work.

The online survey participants highlighted ways in which SVRI updates are useful:

- Know about the latest research, publications, resources, vacancies, grant opportunities
- Remain updated about VAW and VAC

One grantee who took part in a Focus Group Discussion suggested that the SVRI newsletter is “one of the best newsletters I’ve ever seen.” Another grantee said that the SVRI newsletter has been extremely valuable to her in learning and connecting with other partners in the same space, but also to share what they have been doing themselves. She explained that the work of her organisation “is niche [...] because we focus on a very small area of sexual violence response and prevention and so it’s been a really good outlet for us to share what our achievements have been so far.”

The online survey participants also highlighted ways in which updates can be made more useful:

- Categorise research topics - to make it easy to search for relevant studies quickly.
- The way articles are formatted using hyperlinked citations makes it challenging to first see the title of the article.
- The content is good but it feels very dense.
“SVRI’s updates help staying on top of current literature and seeing what other partners and organisations are doing and identifying opportunities for collaboration.” - SVRI ListServ member

SVRI Website

One funding partner commended the strengths of the website content with the following words: “The content of the web page is so wide and so relevant, so that is one way of spreading the knowledge and the results of research.” The SVRI team explained during the evaluation that a new website was being developed at the time of the evaluation. This involved moving away from the old website hosting system to a new one, and working with a content writer, striving to ensure that the website content is readable and accessible to all people. The team is also considering introducing a plugin to translate the content in different languages.

SVRI Blogs

Importantly, the SVRI also produces and publishes blogs on its website. From February 2020 to March 2021, it produced 40 blog posts, with contributions from a wide range of authors, as outlined in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Number of blogs</th>
<th>Available in multiple languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVRI member contributions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI Staff contributions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVRI Leadership Council contributions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young researchers contributions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grantee contributions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total blogs</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between April and December 2021 alone, the SVRI published as many as 35 blogs. Additional products, such as articles, papers, briefs, podcasts and videos were also published by the SVRI. See Annex 9 for a list of examples.

Grantees’ feedback regarding SVRI blogs
Several of the grantees who took part in the Focus Group Discussions explained that they had been given opportunities throughout the grant to publish articles and blog posts, which many of them found useful. One grantee, for instance, who had posted a blog during the 16 days of action in 2020, described this as “a good experience [and] we now think that we will much more use these channels to communicate broader research findings, because we're just finalising the research report.”

Survey respondents' views about the blogs

72% of the online survey respondents said that they have read SVRI's blogs. However, out of those who read the blogs, more than half ‘read sometimes' while 17% ‘hardly ever read.’ One-fourth of the respondents ‘read often.’ The majority (81%) do enjoy reading blogs. SVRI, however, lags behind in word-of-mouth publicity as 38% of respondents reported they sometimes refer people to the SVRI blogs while one-third of them reported never/hardly ever referring people to the SVRI blogs. One-third of the respondents are quite unsure whether SVRI blogs help them in their work or not, while 60% agree/fully agree to the same.

The online survey respondents find SVRI's blogs useful for the following purposes:

- To learn from others’ research and the new research techniques.
- To access updated knowledge and new research ideas.
- To learn about issues that are not easily accessible in literature - Cutting edge information and learning/reflections or information/learning that wouldn't make it into a traditional academic publication.
- In providing interesting reflections and new perspectives to address GBV and gender equality.

The online survey participants provided ideas for future blogs, which included the following suggestions:

- **Violence**: LBTQI violence - focus on children and adolescents; terminologies used in different languages to express the violence/bullying/harassment related terms.
- **Online violence**: online violence against children and young people; online violence - VAC/VAW and how this is applied in LMICs; digital violence in Africa.
- **Solutions**: some non threatening tips to initiate the talk in highly patriarchal societies; the "elephant in the room" - the divide between those who work only with women and girls, those who think we should work with men and boys and those breaking down silos in different areas of VAC and GBV work, as well as PSHEA; behaviour change within faith communities; use of technology/digital solutions in supporting survivors.
- **Research**: changing the face of communicating sexual violence research; overcoming challenges in research and data collection; new/innovative types of data collection and analysis; intersection of VAW and VAC; practice...
based learning; implementing feminist research; important findings on implications and/or application globally; diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) of scientists and study participants.

- **Other topics:** code of conduct on safeguarding; alcohol and GBV; structural violence.

**Events and Webinars**

Other ways in which the SVRI disseminates new knowledge and innovations in the field include holding and participating in events and webinars. In 2020, the SVRI ran eight webinars, often in partnership with other actors including the World Bank Group and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The webinars covered topics such as, engaging the private sector in addressing VAW, understanding the intersections between VAW and VAC, and applying feminist principles to data collection. Refer to Annex 10 for a full list of the webinars in 2020. In 2021, the SVRI hosted and/or participated in 42 webinars. Many of these were delivered in partnership with other key actors in the VAW and VAC space, and included topics such as research for influencing, policy and programming, innovative approaches for positive mental health, and engaging religious leaders for gender equality, amongst many others. Refer to Annex 11 for a full list of the webinars in 2021.

One of the grantees who took part in the Focus Group Discussion explained that they had been invited to present in a webinar, and this was a very valuable experience as it had given “visibility to the research, and also to get different perspectives on the impact and the dimensions and the programmatic aspects of the research.” The same grantee is hopeful that they will have more of those opportunities in the future.

In regards to the online survey participants’ feedback on the activities under this strategy, around 62% of respondents reported that they find the webinars and events (not including SVRI Forum) useful. Around 55% of respondents agree/fully agree that being able to attend the webinars in different languages was important.

**SVRI materials and tools**

Overall, around 80% respondents reported that they find SVRI materials and tools useful.

The types of materials and tools that the survey respondents found useful include the following:

- Research methods and tools (including remote research methods)
- Ethical guides
- Publications/papers/articles/research reports
- Research uptake
In regards to the challenges found in the area of knowledge exchange and in building and sharing of knowledge, one staff member highlighted the following: “We haven’t had a clear research uptake strategy or impact strategy, to really think through impact and change in different ways. [...] It’s a challenge around building evidence and disseminating evidence to the people who can use it, due to the multiple players in the ecosystem.” The same staff member highlighted that the team is currently working to overcome these challenges by developing a Theory of Change with grantees, and producing an online course for researchers in the field, also with grantee partners, to ensure they utilise multiple platforms to disseminate what they are doing. As such, a strategy is being developed to help them do that more.

Overall, for Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan, online survey respondents offered their views on ways in which the SVRI could further strengthen its work and render it even more useful. These suggestions included, but were not limited to, the following points:

- **Bite-size and digestible knowledge products**: Digest research into bite size, easily accessible chunks to give those not in the academic arena a chance to digest and implement.
- **Diversify research network**: Bring in more WLOs/researchers/INGOs from diverse regions, and more youth leaders/movements, inclusion of queer issues and gender diversity.
- **Grants for secondary analysis and agenda setting**: Provide small grants for research aims such as secondary analysis, agenda setting, etc, and establishing small funds for early career research.
- **New approaches to peer learning**: SVRI could also explore establishing regional and thematic networks and groups of researchers for peer support, and create a linking mechanism for regular brown bag and roundtable virtual discussions for scholars.
- **New areas for collaboration**: Consider collaborating with other main research fora working on violence related to women, and on greater inclusion of queer issues and gender diversity. Collaborate with other researchers on topics which are less researched, eg. violence against widows, VAW in humanitarian settings, and more.
Overall Assessment of Goal 1

The evaluation found that the SVRI has achieved excellent outcomes under Goal 1 during the first two years of the evaluation, and is fully on track to achieve its planned outcomes under this strategic pillar by the end of 2024. The evaluation team has no concerns or doubts in this regard. Indeed, the SVRI is undoubtedly playing a leading role in ensuring increased and strengthened research on different intersections relating to VAW and VAC around the world, particularly in low and middle income countries. The SVRI contributes towards a strengthened evidence base, which in turn has the potential of influencing policy and programming, notably through its international and diverse grant making activities, as well as the biennial organisation of the Forum – the largest conference on VAW and VAC in the world. The SVRI is contributing to building evidence strategically and advancing a research agenda relating to key gaps in knowledge and practice, through their vast efforts invested in establishing a Global Shared Research Agenda (GSRA) on VAW and VAC, and in making available an impressive range of unique knowledge products.

This mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan sought not only to highlight successes, but to also identify challenges encountered, and opportunities discovered for enhanced performance against the SVRI’s strategic plan. Under the first strategic goal, it was suggested that the SVRI could further increase its impact by building evidence more strategically by providing greater support to ensure research uptake. Furthermore, the evaluation found that the SVRI team is taking important steps to try and diversify the geographical scope of research supported through its grants.

Goal 2: Strengthen Capacity

SVRI’s second goal implies that the organisation will strengthen and share knowledge, skills and tools with VAW and VAC researchers, particularly in LMICs, to implement sound research and ensure their research can support advocacy efforts and influence policy and practice.

This goal is supported by one strategy, which involves three key actions: to build skills of researchers in research uptake, particularly in LMICs, to ensure their research can influence policy and practice; to mentor young and emerging researchers from LMICs; and to develop and disseminate guidance documents and tools to support ethically and methodologically sound research. This strategy is instrumental in ensuring that advances towards the overarching vision of the SVRI is accelerated through the creation of ‘ripple effects’ through the strengthening of research communities in LMICs.
In the following sections, the SVRI’s achievements and activities are outlined and evaluated against Goal 2 of the strategy.

Strategy 1: Strengthen capacity for quality, policy relevant research and practice

Build skills of researchers in research uptake, particularly in LMICs, to ensure their research can influence policy and practice
Provide researchers from LMICs with technical assistance and mentorship

Bespoke training for grantees

SVRI’s efforts aimed at enhancing research uptake firstly take the shape of bespoke training for grantees, including workshop sessions. Grantees who took part in the Focus Group Discussions explained that the SVRI had provided them with a research uptake matrix and asked them to fill in the research uptake metrics. One grantee commented as follows: “This is really good to know how to share and how to disseminate information about the project, the data results, etc. and now we are using that for disseminating research results and the results of the project [...] It was also helpful to see what channels could be used when we were actually developing this research optic matrix.”

Another grantee, whose organisation had applied for a joint grant with the SVRI, explained that “during the implementation of the joint application [...] SVRI organised for us capacity building on research uptake and actually then gave us some money, again, to support research uptake. Not a lot of money, but something that could help us to achieve that particular objective.” Find out more about this particular funding relationship in Case Study 1.

In one of the interviews, a staff member said that “SVRI strengthens and shares knowledge, skills and tools with researchers working on VAW and VAC by creating a pipeline and platform for their research to appear.” This initiative helps the grantees’ cause also, because the grantees that are selected do not only get the funding, but also acquire new skills. Another staff member added that “capacity building has been a very important pillar of SVRI’s work, and has been done through their website, through forums, workshops, or the leadership council, with a focus on ethics, tools and methods, and research uptake.”

The annual virtual capacity-building workshop for the 2021 grantee cohort took place from the 7th of June to the first week of July 2021. The workshops were positively evaluated with 42% of the participants stating that the workshop met their expectations and it was useful for their research project, while 58% stated that their expectations were fully met.

Several grantees highlighted, through the Focus Group Discussions, the direct impact the capacity building workshops organised by SVRI had on their skills and capacities. One person explained that “the topics that were covered were quite relevant also for the research that we’ve been working on for the past couple of months.” Others agreed that the SVRI had a positive impact on their capacity.

According to the SVRI Annual Report (2020-2021), regular individual calls were conducted with all the grantees during the evaluation period from the year 2018 onwards on a regular basis. The monthly report for July 2021 states that the SVRI 2021 grantees requested SVRI to host informal meetings to stay in touch and discuss challenges in their projects’ implementation or share useful resources and information. The first one was held in August. During the October meeting it was determined that they would be held every second month.

One grantee who took part in a Focus Group Discussion was very enthusiastic when highlighting how SVRI continues to remain connected and provide support even once the grant had ended: “They’ve [...] continued to invite me - particularly to join working groups - some of which are not necessarily local…international working groups…and invitations to review papers for them, and so on. So, I think this is our story. We are so impressed with that relationship, we think that they really supported us to build capacity.”

In terms of the nature of the grantees’ interactions with the SVRI team, it appears as though the SVRI was living its stated values and treating all grantees with respect. One grantee explained: “I only saw the SVRI being transparent, open, accepting of the obstacles that we were all facing. [...] It’s not an organisation that has a top-down approach, it truly believes that the grantees are also references of experiences and should be heard throughout the process so it is always an open conversation and something that really, really inspires me as a partner.” Another grantee said that they had “managed to build a kind of a friendship with the SVRI and I hope even after the project ends, we could count on their support and any information sharing, etc. So I think that we established a kind of friendship also with them.”

“I hope even after the project ends, we could count on their support and any information sharing. [...] I think that we established a kind of friendship also with them.” - Grantee
Through a WhatsApp group, grantees moreover felt a sense of belonging. As one grantee explained, there is a “feeling of belonging in a way, because we’ve also had informal monthly meetings with other grantees. There is this whole global dimension of our cooperation, not only with the SVRI but also with other grantees, getting to meet them, getting to hear about their research, how their research and their projects are progressing is really valuable. Having the opportunity to share our experience with other colleagues from really all over the world is something that is highly appreciated.”

Another grantee told the story of an evolving partnership with the SVRI, in which the organisation moved from being a funder to a partner and collaborator, and eventually a mentor, as described in Case study 1. It should be noted that this relationship was not funded through SVRI’s grant making - it took place through an Oak Foundation supported project.

The element of flexibility was mentioned by several grantees in the Focus Group Discussions. One person, for instance, emphasised the following: “I would like to highlight the flexibility in the relationship that is really very helpful, as mentioned a while back, it really gives, you know, the headspace for the grantees to just really focus on doing the actual work rather than getting worried and ripped into the technicality of things, rigidity of things. So that’s the thing that’s really very different with SVRI.”

Case study 2: Receiving technical guidance to overcome challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic was a significant challenge for most grantees, especially for the ones conducting their work in the field. As such, the SVRI included in their capacity strengthening workshops a session to guide grantees in the process of adapting their research to this new scenario. For one particular grantee the workshops proved to be essential since they didn’t have any experience in collecting data online, but were planning to conduct a survey “in person, using the pencil and paper method.” They were initially hesitant as to how to achieve the required sample and data, particularly when dealing with a highly sensitive issue such as sexual violence at universities, in Serbia. The SVRI’s workshops were important in helping them to move forward with their research by providing techniques to collect data. Guidelines on online surveys were extremely useful, even if collecting data online meant altering their initial plans by needing more time to complete this stage and relying on contact points at the different faculties. Consequently, forming these additional contact points resulted in a positive experience, as “these people were really enthusiastic, helping with informing students about the survey, trying to motivate them to join, to fill in the questionnaire.” At the end of this stage, the sample achieved and the response rate were rather good and the grantee was satisfied with the results as well as with the guidance received from the SVRI.
SVRI Online Training

In addition, the SVRI team is in the process of developing an online training platform. In November 2021, the outline for the course in Research Uptake was approved and the first draft is currently under development. Likewise, the SVRI is developing a VAC measurement course. By November 2021, the team had completed an inception report and various stakeholders were consulted, including in FGDs, advisory group meetings, and speaking with colleagues at UNICEF HQ. It is now moving forward with content creation.

“The SVRI had a very holistic and integral approach to what we could be doing with the resources that we were now accessing.” - Grantee

By April 2022, the course should be ready to pilot. Amongst the first offerings of the Online Training platform one finds: pathways to research impact, VAC measurement, as well as collective care and kindness.

Forum pre-conference workshops

In regard to the workshops held at the SVRI Forum 2019, the Conference Report mentions that as many as 10 pre-conference workshops were offered and attended by 300 participants. This included 21 participant-driven events. In addition, between February 2020 and March 2021, more than 25 grantees from 11 countries were trained and supported through SVRI workshops and events. The SVRI conducted a survey to ask the grantees what they would like to be included in the workshops, resulting in the inclusion of training on ethics, methods, storytelling and science pitch writing. All of these matters can help to increase the quality of the research and therefore the potential for positive uptake.

Response to COVID-19

Highlighting SVRI’s responsiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the Board members said that “the organisation was very proactive and undertook several interventions such as regular interaction with the grants recipients to understand the challenges they faced as a result of isolation, several discussions around how those could be overcome, discussions with grantees to understand the implications of lockdown on their research, on their ability to be in the field. Several alternatives were discussed and debated, including from simply getting extensions to time, to the use of online means like WhatsApp to gather research.” Grantees reported through Focus Group Discussions that grantee training has been very helpful, not least in supporting researchers to adapt their research to

the COVID-19 pandemic - moving from conducting a survey “in person, using pencil and paper method” into the online space. The workshops organised by the SVRI were described as “very important in helping us to move forward and to really start in a proper way with the project.” Another grantee agreed that the SVRI was very flexible in “helping us to find some ways that we could still meet our objectives.” Additionally, one grantee mentioned that during the COVID-19 lockdown in India, they “were pushed to carry out a blog series, and it was a huge learning for us and a huge push for the team to really get into doing blogs because we aren’t really trained to do blogs. We had always aspired to write in a social science journal or a medical journal, but we never really had the parlance to do blogging.”

“The workshop] was really amazing, the support and the sort of flexibility that SVRI showed supporting us in that process.” - Grantee on adapting to COVID-19

Grantees’ experiences

It is thus clear that the SVRI dedicates significant time and effort to this strategic goal, especially with regards to grantees with a wide range of capacity strengthening support. It is unsurprising, therefore, that all the grantees spoke very highly of this capacity strengthening support. One FGD participant, for instance, explained how the SVRI had built a coalition of all grantees and then conducted a series of online classes: “They called upon different experts on the field, past grant makers, other people that are doing research on VAW, they introduced lots of topics, they introduced lots of references, lots of texts, lots of bibliography in very informal, open, accessible way.”

Grantees also praised the SVRI for supporting them to build capacity in translating research findings into learnings for programme implementation and ensure potential positive impact on beneficiaries.

“The SVRI helped us to […] incorporate how we will utilise the lessons learnt from this study and […] to include our beneficiaries in this aspect, […] engaging with them post study to make sure the lessons learnt don’t go to waste.” - Grantee

One grantee described the relationship between his organisation and the SVRI as follows: “For us, it’s historic, it’s something we can never forget, because we went into this area because of the initial funding provided by SVRI and right from that time we got introduced to the field in many different ways, in understanding
concepts, in understanding the departments in the field, how far the field has gone or come and we got introduced to concepts of primary prevention of violence.”

“About SVRI strengthening and sharing knowledge, skills and tools with researchers working on VAW and VAC - it does this through the website, newsletter, and has plans for an online training curriculum. On their website, they showcase the work of different networks in the field, those networks have their tools up there as well.” - Board member

As such, the evaluation has found that the SVRI implemented an impressive number of activities to strengthen the capacities of researchers in various areas during the evaluation phase. By supporting researchers in strengthening the quality of their work, the SVRI contributes to a credible body of work, which has strong potential for being taken seriously at policy and programming levels, thus increasing the prospects for research uptake.

**Guidance documents and resources for researchers**

An impressive number of guidance documents have been produced by the SVRI over the evaluation period. Guidance publications include the following:

- **Feminist Research on VAW**: COFEM and SVRI are co-developing a guidance publication on feminist approaches to research on VAW in development and humanitarian contexts (this was in progress at the time of writing).

- **Guidance on adaptation on IPV interventions**: At the time of the evaluation, Equality Insights was working for the SVRI to assist the field to strengthen adaptation of IPV prevention programmes through the development of programme adaptation guidance and tools applicable to diverse contexts.

- **SVRI and Raising Voices published a guide** “Learning together - A guide for feminist practice in violence against women and girls research collaborations.”

Develop and disseminate guidance documents and tools to support ethically and methodologically sound research
The SVRI has also developed the Knowledge Exchange Series (a number of COVID-related and non-COVID related think pieces), which resulted in six publications:

- **Engaging the private sector to prevent and address violence against women**, by Pino, Dartnall, Shields, Flores Guevara, Duma, Lawrence, Majumdar, and Rizvi, 2020.
- **Pivoting to remote research on violence against women during COVID-19**, by Namy and Dartnall, 2020.

In addition, several new publications for researchers addressing VAC and VAW have been published during the evaluation period, and in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Trauma-informed Phone Interviews on Sensitive Topics: Learning from the COVID-19 lockdown in Uganda (2020).
- With IPA, a blog on Considerations for Doing Intimate Partner Violence Research in the Time of Coronavirus (2020).
- With Jocelyn Kelly (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative) a blog on staying safe online during COVID-19.
- Newspaper article in the South African Daily Maverick

Related to COVID-19, the SVRI also released a website page and survey among its community on how research practices are adapting to COVID, to identify how best to serve the community during this time (May 2020, findings shared in June 2020).

**Overall Assessment of Goal 2**

In relation to delivering against the goal of capacity strengthening, the evaluation found that the SVRI has delivered above and beyond what it had planned for the period 2020-2022. As such, the SVRI is on a promising track to meet its set aims and objectives under this Goal by the end of the strategy implementation period. Grantees highly appreciate the openness in communication and technical
support they receive from SVRI. An assessment of the grant making criteria and additional guidelines concluded that the documentation made available by the SVRI to prospective grantees is of very high quality; clear, concise and detailed. The SVRI team, once again, is carrying out very high volumes of work for its small team size and resourcing.

The impact of SVRI’s work on researchers’ skills in relation to methodology, research methods, research ethics in the complex and highly sensitive context of VAW and VAC, appears to be very tangible. All relevant evaluation participants reported great satisfaction with this side of the SVRI’s work, and the desk review similarly concluded that the SVRI is very advanced in this area. Evaluation participants highlighted certain areas of research methods within which they would appreciate further support, including in the context of COVID-19 and remote research on sensitive topics but, overall, there was widespread appreciation of the SVRI’s current level of support in this regard.

Goal 3: Promote Partnerships

The SVRI’s third goal in the Strategic Plan for 2020-2024, refers to the organisation’s global knowledge network on VAW and VAC in LMICs and the provision of platforms and opportunities for researchers, activists, policymakers, practitioners, academics, journalists and donors to share knowledge, build tools and solve problems together to reduce duplication, identify gaps and promote change.

This goal is supported by three strategies. The first strategy within this goal contains three key actions: to organise and convene the SVRI Forum; to promote learning through knowledge exchanges; and to leverage strategic partnerships.

In the following sections, the SVRI’s achievements and activities are outlined and evaluated against Goal 3 of the strategy.

Strategy 1: Organise and convene the biennial SVRI Forum

Share new knowledge and skills on VAW and VAC prevention and response at SVRI Forum

Sharing knowledge and skills at SVRI Forum

The biennial SVRI Forum is the largest conference on VAW and VAC globally, and is a unique opportunity for the SVRI to advance several aspects of the Strategic Plan. Significant amounts of the SVRI team’s time and efforts reportedly go into the organisation, preparation, delivery and follow-up work of the Forum, thus requiring noteworthy resources. Its unique added value and benefits were highlighted and confirmed by all stakeholders who took part in the evaluation. The Forum moreover feeds into multiple strategic goals and strategies of the SVRI Strategic Plan. One important aspect is that the SVRI intends for the Forum to be a place where new knowledge and skills on VAW and VAC prevention and response can be shared, as discussed in this section.

Indeed, as a Board member highlighted, an important way for the SVRI to build evidence is through the SVRI Forum, which is “the place for anyone working on issues of violence against women or violence against children to congregate every other year to really understand what the state of the field is, that really is the place that this is established.” One funding partner similarly highlighted the importance of the Forum in this respect: “The large number of presentations at the SVRI Forum gave researchers an understanding of where other researchers have their activities and their research, where this can be accessed.”

“**The Forum gives researchers inputs to their own research and ways of reaching information and reaching other people’s research, which definitely increases the quality of their own research.**” - Funding partner

**The 2019 Forum**

The 2019 Forum (held in Cape Town, South Africa on 21-25 October 2019), was attended by a total of 761 delegates from different regions, which is a huge increase from 200 delegates in 2009. This significant increase shows how, over the years, the SVRI Forum has transformed into the go-to place for cutting-edge, innovative research and networking, as well as, nurturing and establishing partnerships in the field to prevent and end all forms of sexual violence. The SVRI Forum 2019 was particularly important, as suggested in the 2019 Forum Conference Report, not only because it celebrated 10 years of holding forums, but also because SVRI, as a newly formed NGO, launched its new logo and its Strategic Plan (2020-2024).

In reviewing the 2019 Conference Report, one obtains an overview of the key outcomes of the Forum, all of which reflect a range of highly relevant, useful and impactful themes and which confirm the unique value-add of the SVRI Forum within the sector. The outcomes were as follows:

1. **Social Change:** Current global movements have increased awareness of the consequences of VAWG, generating a window of opportunity to
advance discussions about its prevention and response efforts. The Forum provided a platform to further those discussions among researchers and social movements, highlighting the relevance of expanding activism whilst uniting it with research and developing a global advocacy agenda to mobilise resources for research on VAWG.

2. **Leave no-one behind:** Leaving no-one behind is an SDG 2030 pledge. During the Forum, research working to address VAW across populations in situations of vulnerability, including persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, LGBT+, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants were showcased. It is necessary, moving forward, that studies regarding VAW incorporate an intersectional lens.

3. **Changing norms and shifting gender inequalities:** The importance of addressing, through research, the root causes of VAW, which stem from gender inequality and other forms of oppression and marginalisation, was discussed. As the Conference Report states, without changes in norms, laws and other interventions to reduce and prevent, research to combat VAW can prove ineffective.

4. **Achieving the SDGs:** The SVRI Forum provided a space to share feminist research methods, analysis and approaches for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

5. **Linkages between VAC and VAW, including child sexual abuse:** Understanding the shared risk factors, intergenerational effects, common consequences and levels of co-occurrence between VAW and VAC has allowed for more collaborative research and increased evidence of its intersections. Studies and programmes to continue strengthening the work in these two fields were presented at the Forum. These presentations also highlighted the need for more comprehensive data to understand the nature and drivers of VAC and innovative solutions, to address the multiple intersections between VAC and VAW through integrated services and programmes.

6. **Research methods and measures:** Strengthening the field through discussing, debating and sharing research tools, methods and measures, is a core agenda of the SVRI Forum. The SVRI Forum provided an opportunity to discuss and debate new and innovative ways to measure VAW, hierarchies of knowledge, practice based learning, sticky ethical issues, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

7. **Scaling up of interventions:** Panels, workshops, and presentations at the SVRI Forum took a deeper dive into mechanisms of change, platforms for scale-up, practice-based learning, and strategies for integrating prevention and response interventions within existing services and programmes, implemented by multiple sectors.

8. **Addressing poverty and gender inequality through economic empowerment:** Poverty is a key driver of VAW and VAW increases poverty. Several economic empowerment studies were showcased.

9. **New technologies:** Mobile phones and apps are increasingly being considered as the new mechanism for delivering GBV interventions to both
general and at-risk populations. SVRI Forum 2019 shared insights in this new frontier and other tech-based developments.

Reaching underserved areas

Given the SVRI’s unique and much-needed role of reaching areas which are underserved, it carries out extensive efforts to this end (in relation to the Forum and beyond):

- Scholarship programmes to enable people from different parts of the world to attend the conference because it can be costly.
- Though no specific region is targeted for ongoing activities, emphasis is placed on certain regions depending on annual work plans/strategic priorities. Taking the Forum to Mexico in 2022 is also part of a long term strategy to ensure that different contexts which have not received as much attention get the attention that they deserve. Mexico was selected after year-long consultations with multiple partners across Latin America & Caribbean & East Asia Pacific; The time is now – feminist movements & uprising against VAW & VAC; Opportunity to highlight research & programmes & build partnerships in the region; found great co-hosts – academic and government.

Reflections on the size of the Forum

One of SVRI’s funding partners similarly highlighted the value of the Forum, but also cautioned against letting it grow too big: “If the SVRI Forum gets too big, it might not be as effective, because it might be too overwhelming.” The same funder noted that while it was understandable, and probably wise, that the SVRI had chosen to not go ahead with the Forum last year due to COVID-19, the SVRI might need to think about a middle way to host it in 2022 if the COVID-19 situation continues to pose challenges to the Forum. The funding partner continued to suggest: “In that sense they could have more like a seminar series or a one-day Forum on a digital platform. Even without the full SVRI Forum on a digital platform, smaller alternatives could be considered.”

SVRI members’ perceptions and experiences of the Forum

The evaluation invited feedback from SVRI members regarding their perceptions, experiences and expectations in relation to the Forum. Out of the total 58 online survey respondents, around half of them have attended the SVRI Forum. The primary reason (Figure A) to attend the forum was to learn about current evidence in the field (79%) and meet others doing similar work (75%).

Figure A: Primary reasons to attend the SVRI forum
89% of them attended the Forum in 2019 while 43% attended in 2017, 25% in 2015, 21% in 2013, 18% in 2011 and 21% in 2009.

67% of the respondents are planning to attend the Forum in 2022. The primary reason for attending is to share their work with others (Figure B).

**Figure B:** Primary reasons to attend the SVRI forum in 2022
The respondents who attended found the Forum useful (57% - extremely useful, 32% - very useful). The different ways in which the Forum was useful included the following aspects, according to the survey respondents:

- **Networking**: It is a vital space for connecting with others in the field; meeting colleagues involved in sexual violence research.
- **Innovative research**: Work grew immensely after each forum for the participants - learned about innovative research studies
- **Showcasing work**: Creates a community of multi-sectoral players in the VAWG field, enables showcasing of one’s own work in various formats.

The majority (92%) of the respondents agreed that the SVRI Forum promotes diversity and inclusion in both presentations and participants. Additionally, 96% said that the quality of research and programming presented at the Forum was high; 86% agreed that the opportunities for networking at the Forum were useful; 64% thought that the Forum provided a useful and safe space for difficult conversations and to address sensitive topics in the field while 25% of respondents were unsure of the same (11% disagreed as well). Seventy-nine percent of respondents agreed that they were able to build new partnerships and/or network at the Forum such as hire researchers, exchange materials, participate in other events etc.

Twenty-one percent of respondents have received a bursary from the SVRI to participate in the Forum which helped to connect with other researchers, learn about research methodologies and tools.

Potential ways to make the SVRI Forum more useful, according to members, include the following ideas. It should be noted that each suggestion was mentioned only once, but have been included here to relay the voices of online survey participants to the SVRI team - the latter may however decide at its discretion which points are useful and which ones are not:

- **Additional support and guidance**: The SVRI Forum could provide more bursaries to researchers from low and middle income countries. Support
partners to better present the evidence by curating the presentations with further guidance.

- **Engage youth in planning:** Involve more young people in planning and participation so they may provide and explore ideas and relevance to younger generations.
- **Engage trans and nonbinary people in planning:** Centrally involve trans and nonbinary people in advising the SVRI Forum.
- **Enhance activist voices, and speakers of other languages:** Seek more activist voices and increase diversity of presenters. Encourage involvement of speakers of other languages (one member specifically suggested encouraging an increased involvement of French speakers, for instance).
- **Diversity of networking events:** Ensure increased diversity of networking events, for people with multiple social styles. Adopt some space for quiet low key socialising for people who are introverts, anxious, have sensory processing disorders, etc.
- **Gender inclusive bathrooms:** Ensure gender inclusive bathrooms and try to encourage people to be courteous in them. The attempt to put up signs at the last forum didn't work, and people were still disrespectful.

### Grantees' experiences of the Forum

Further feedback relating to the Forum was sought from former and current grantees through the Focus Group Discussions. In the first group discussion, someone who has participated in the SVRI Forum twice expressed the following views: “It has been one of the best conferences I’ve attended. [...] Being able to learn from everyone else and pick up various tips and tools and methodologies from other partners [was valuable]. For example, we’ve been able to do a number of evaluation studies since the last conference that we attended, and it was really interesting to [...] reach out to partners that we met there, that might be useful for what we want to do - and so it is really good for networking. It’s definitely been a benefit for this relationship and hopefully many more people will be able to have that same experience.”

An interesting point, also highlighted by the same discussion participant, was that for the last Forum, in 2019, they had submitted an abstract and as a testament of how well managed the relationship is between SVRI and their partners and people they have collaborated with, the SVRI team was quick to respond and request that the participant prepared a presentation on an aspect of their project which they deemed to be most interesting for other conference attendees. The participant added: “So, this is just how much [the SVRI team] had internalised the work that we do and, not only asked, but also knew what would be informative for everyone else attending the conference. They didn’t hesitate to get back to us and just ask us to tweak and focus or include certain aspects of our work that we had left out and didn’t think that would be useful for sharing out at this large conference.”
Another discussion participant, of the SVRI Forum 2019, similarly expressed appreciation for the very tailored approach of the SVRI team in supporting and incorporating participants’ contributions into the programme in a meaningful way. “They created a platform for us to do a side event, so they actually organised a side event in which we presented. They supported us [...] and so we are very proud, particularly surprised by that kind of relationship.”

Another participant to the Forum in 2019 considered it to have been “an enriching experience. It allows for younger team members to be exposed to other research, not just their research, but other methodologies to also be able to interact with researchers, practitioners, policymakers across different countries. So in a sense, it’s a culmination of so many different things. And it was a brilliantly organised one, the 2019 one, and we’re quite looking forward to the virtual one, if not the physical one, this time in Mexico.”

A grantee, who attended the Forum in 2019, described it as, “a good opportunity to meet researchers from different parts of the world, learn from them, and also to know new things about the SVRI (...) it also gives opportunity to network and also to liaise with people, actually, we still have a WhatsApp group of the bursary recipients. And so, researchers, from our experience, they’re learning (...) I think everyone who attended the Forum benefited in one way or the other. So it was a very good and very unique and very big opportunity for all the researchers.”

All of the FGD participants who had attended the Forum described the experience in an overwhelmingly positive way. It allowed them to learn, meet and connect with researchers and potential partners. They furthermore described it as a key networking and learning experience that is beneficial for the grantees. Meanwhile, participants from the FGDs that haven’t attended the Forum mentioned that they are looking forward to presenting their abstracts and attending the conference.

“The Forum creates networking opportunities, with multiple stakeholders, mostly with those working with similar ideas or challenges, and helps people connect.” - SVRI staff member

**SVRI Forum 2022**

In regards to the SVRI Forum 2022, it will be held in Mexico, and will be co-hosted by the CRIM - UNAM and In Mujeres. Between February 2020 to March 2021, SVRI established partnerships (10 partnerships established, including WBG, IP, COFEM, HIP) with global and regional stakeholders and had 5 meetings with local co-hosts and 13 meetings with regional partners. The partners include:

- National Institute for Women (INMUJERES) (regional partner, government agency)
- Innovations for Poverty Action (IP).
Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP online).
UNFPA Latin America.
Make Sense Mexico.
Luchadoras.
Gendes Mexico.
ProMujer.
World Bank Group (WBG).
Asia Foundation.

The official website was launched once the venue had been selected. In December 2021, the contract was finalised. In March 2021 a specific newsletter for the SVRI Forum 2022 was created.

Promote exchange between researchers, policymakers, practitioners, funders and activists

Partnerships - a central feature of SVRI's work

Promoting partnership is not only about reaching researchers, but also to connect with other actors who are involved in the field of combating violence. As one Leadership Council member explained, promoting partnerships has been an integral part to SVRI’s work since the outset. She explained that this “has been something we’ve discussed from the beginning; in the early days we were focused on researchers etc, but we realised early on that there was a need for [...] partnerships between researchers, programme designers and policy makers, so we started to encourage these partnerships as an important element in research.” The same interviewee explained that this has been sustained over time; in the last two Forums there were specific sessions focusing on partnerships.

“Partnerships are deeply essential to everything SVRI does. Since VAW and VAC are complex problems, especially in LMICs, a single partner or government cannot solve it. It requires working across different value systems, diverse views and ideas, more owned and understood by the people on the field. Hence, SVRI prefers to fund collaborations, consortiums, research questions that are co-created.” - SVRI Staff

Indeed, the SVRI Forum constitutes a unique opportunity to promote exchange between researchers, policymakers, practitioners, funders and activists. One staff member explained the crucial value-add of the Forum in fostering partnerships.
as follows: “So we bring together researchers, practitioners, people who are involved in activism, we bring survivors in, we bring donors, policymakers and just try and bring that whole group to get into a space where they can engage.” A Leadership Council member said the SVRI plays an absolutely crucial role in bringing together all of those stakeholders in the Forum as it would otherwise be a gap in the sector which the SVRI fills.

“The SVRI Forum [...] gives people a chance to develop relationships right from their first Forum attendance. People keep attending and deepening their relationships with those they would not have met because of where each is located; they exchange and develop ideas together.”-Board member

Indeed, one participant highlighted that a huge additional value of the SVRI Forum is that it “exposed them to other partners and collaborations that we wouldn’t necessarily have had access to.” The conference also gave them the opportunity “to not only share your work, discuss what you have done and projects that you hoping to be able to implement and set up but it also gives you the opportunity to do this in an environment that allows for informal conversations, no stress or pressure but just to be able to speak about your work and share out your work in a way that is conducive to building partnerships.” Through this, the participant explained that they have “been able to get two grants to be able to support this important work that we’ve set out to do, so I think that’s a very direct way in which our work with SVRI has influenced our partnerships.”

Another FGD participant added that the possibility to participate in the SVRI Forum is a really important element in building connections and relationships. Without the SVRI, the participant doesn’t think they “would have heard or known much about these other research institutions around the world and how they’re conducting their research, so topics might be different to what we’re working on - it’s violence against children, immigration - it was still, I think, inspirational and allowed us to connect with other professionals around the world working on similar topics.”

As for the online survey respondents, 71% said that the SVRI was helpful in linking them to different organisations and networks, while an impressive 91% reported that the SVRI had provided them with opportunities to amplify their work. 73% also reported that the project funded by SVRI had helped them to fundraise with other donors, either for a particular project or in general.

**Engaging policy makers at the Forum**
The SVRI has also taken specific steps to engage policy makers at the Forum. One staff member explained: “Generally we also try to get the policymakers to host satellite type events, where they then can discuss research to action, but we do try to weave it into the conference as well.” Another staff member said in her interview that “researchers get to engage with policy makers at the national level, along with WHO, UN women and UNDP. SVRI does not directly engage with the Governments, but their partners do. For instance, the South Korean Government was brought to the conference by UNDP.”

**Young Professionals Programme**

In addition, as a SVRI Board member emphasised, the Young Professionals Programme during the conference also provides space for partnerships: “communicating with someone from across the globe and working with them on tightening up their abstract for the SVRI so that it is at the standard that it needs to be and tightening up the presentation for the Forum.”

| ![Icon] Provide a safe space to discuss difficult issues (fault-lines in the fields), as well as research challenges, new approaches and solutions |

The SVRI wants to ensure that the Forum and other events provide opportunities for discussing difficult issues (fault-lines in the fields), as well as research challenges, new approaches and solutions, in a safe space.

Being a values-driven, feminist organisation, the SVRI takes self and collective care very seriously. To this end, it seeks to ensure that the Forum also includes a space for well-being and self-care activities. At the SVRI Forum 2019, these included counselling services by the Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust and two lunch-time events on empowerment. The SVRI Forum 2019 moreover provided the BRAVE room, a contained safe space open to anyone attending the conference to take time out, reflect, relax and breathe, turn to for emotional support after engaging with presentations, or to process any research presented at the Forum.
Strategy 2: Promote learning through knowledge exchanges

Organise gatherings, including virtually, to foster collaborative solutions to complex problems and gaps in the field

Gatherings and efforts around complex issues

Several gatherings were identified during which the SVRI discussed complex issues, including intersections between VAC and VAW, refugees and mental health. Importantly, the SVRI has truly led the field forward in this regard, not least through its trail-blazing work on the Global Shared Research Agenda, its efforts on developing the guide “Funding ethically”, work on VAC and VAW dialogues, as well as its work with CARE on GBV, to name but a few important examples. The evaluation has thus found that the SVRI’s work in this area is leading the way in the sector, and enables a dialogue and progress on very complex issues. The role of SVRI in this is critically important within the sector and it fills a very specific gap in this respect.

“When working in partnerships, we have a better product, diverse views and ideas, and everything is more owned and understood by the people in the field.” - SVRI staff

Grantees' views

Grantees highlighted that the SVRI’s various events and gatherings are very valuable to their work. One grantee who took part in a Focus Group Discussion explained that one of SVRI’s advantages is that they can bring together “not only organisations across the globe, but also organisations that operate in a particular region and by building those networks and connections [...] it directly translates to the organisations being able to act together, having access to each other.”

“SVRI is very good at making direct connections with...so they will introduce you to certain people, they will foster connections...I think that

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is one area where they excel very much.” - Grantee

Another grantee made reference to one of the workshops they had participated in, during which “we were able to meet with other colleagues, with other people who are working on the different projects within the programme, where we could discuss different ethical issues, safety issues related to the research, particularly doing research on gender based violence in the context of pandemic, then about different research methods, tools, dissemination, how to stay in touch, etc.”

Serve as a knowledge hub for information on VAW and VAC and disseminate this knowledge through multiple channels

Knowledge Management Plan

SVRI has developed an ambitious and very impressive three-year Knowledge Management Plan\(^\text{12}\) which articulates the organisation’s intentions as follows:

- To create a niche knowledge management resource for the sexual violence sector that effectively links knowledge and practice.
- To continue to grow as the global “go-to” source for information and community and partnership development in the area of VAW and VAC.
- To manage knowledge to influence change in the sector.

The Plan points out two critical questions that SVRI faces in terms of knowledge management: What knowledge management resources need to be developed over the next five years? What is needed from a knowledge management system to ensure sustained innovation? According to the Plan, succeeding in this area is necessary for SVRI to achieve its vision, mission and goals. The document details resources already available for SVRI that are important when establishing a Knowledge Management Strategy:

- Global networks: SVRI supports a global network of researchers, practitioners, funders, activists, policy-makers, journalists and other stakeholders - and promotes the generation of new knowledge on VAW and VAC. Through this network, SVRI builds partnerships within the field and encourages the acquisition and interpretation of evidence related to VAW and VAC.
- Programmes:
  1. Grantmaking – SVRI supports research that makes a difference on the ground.
  2. Capacity building – SVRI strengthens research capacity in LMICs.

3. Promoting partnerships – SVRI helps share knowledge through collaboration and support (collective learning).
4. Influencing change – SVRI wants to scale up the impact policy and implementation of solutions that are effective and affordable.
   - Research information and data.

The evaluation found that the Knowledge Management Plan is a highly positive development, which has the potential of further strengthening the SVRI’s already impactful work over the coming two years of the strategy implementation period.

**SVRI Knowledge Hub**

The creation of the SVRI Knowledge Hub means revitalising how the organisation shares information through its website, social media platforms and newsletter. SVRI has an online presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Currently, it uses Instagram and LinkedIn to share updates and materials about SVRI and partners whilst using Facebook and Twitter to share updates from the field. Several social media campaigns were produced and launched during the evaluation period, including the following: 16 Day of Activism Against Gender Violence (November 2020); SVRI Knowledge products (posts on each Knowledge Exchange Brief and COVID-19 related blogs); The SVRI and World Bank Development Marketplace Awards (2020 winners, SVRI disseminated the WB campaign in their networks, August 2020); The SVRI Research Grant 2021 winners (one post for each winner); SVRI key messaging (launched in January 2021); Adjusting to COVID-19 (12 posts during June 2020); Save the date for the SVRI Forum 2022 (January 2021).

**SVRI website reach**

*NB: It should be emphasised that this key action overlaps with the work that SVRI carries out under Goal 1, strategy 2. Please refer to that section for additional information and analysis of the SVRI’s achievements against the strategic plan in this regard.*

In regards to the SVRI website reach, it has seen a relatively steady number of visits over time. The below graph, based on the information available to us, shows an example from the period June 2020 to April 2021, during which time there were peaks in July 2020 and March 2021, and a relatively steady number for the rest of the period, albeit with some dips in June 2020 and April 2021.
According to the online survey respondents, 93% have visited the website. More than 80% of respondents agree/fully agree that the website is an important resource, while 80% find the website accessible. Two-thirds of respondents reported that the website helps them in their work. SVRI, however, lags behind in word-of-mouth publicity as 45% of respondents reported they sometimes refer people to the website while one-fourth of them reported never/hardly ever referring people to the SVRI website.

Ways in which SVRI website is useful, according to the survey respondents:

- **Resource**: Research studies, tools, funding opportunities, events and blogs.
- **Global overview and perspectives**: Evidence based initiatives in other countries, informs practice based research and collaborative learning.
- **Data**: Gender-based violence, issues affecting women and girls.

Ways in which the website could be more useful and user-friendly, according to the survey respondents:

- The website could be made less text-heavy.
- Accessibility requirements could be taken into account.
- Navigation and flow of the website could improve: Too many options in the left menu makes it difficult to browse a particular topic or to find key information within the topic.
- A chat option could be provided.

**SVRI's social media reach**

In regards to the SVRI's Social Media Networking Platforms, there is a large and steady Facebook following of more than 7,600 followers. Meanwhile, Twitter is somewhat lower, but with the biggest increase among all of the channels (rising from just under 5,000 in June 2020 to more than 6,500 in December 2021. LinkedIn and Instagram have a smaller number of followers, both under 1,000 each.
**Figure D:** Social media following growth (June 2020-April 2021):


**SVRI Helpdesk**

An important aspect of the SVRI’s role as a go-to organisation and knowledge hub for information on VAW and VAC, is the existence of its helpdesk. This helpdesk receives requests for information from members, including materials/resources inclusion in the SVRI Update, partnerships requests, information requests, contacts for colleagues in the field, and internship opportunities. See Annex 12 for the number of requests received and dealt with in 2021. An analysis of a sample of requests to the SVRI helpdesk, in terms of content and response, revealed that the response times were very quick, most often on the same day or at the most, within a day or two of the request. The responses were also very specific to the request and comprehensive, giving appropriate information, links where necessary, prompts to join the listserv for updates, updates regarding availability and processes regarding the research grants, and invitations to attend meetings/webinars of other organisations. The analysis also made it clear that certain broad decisions taken by SVRI are well conveyed through the helpdesk. For instance, SVRI’s inability to add private sector products to their website and newsletter was made explicit in a response. Google translate is used for queries in other languages and are responded to in English. If the same person replies that they do not understand English, a colleague is asked for assistance. Though one person in the team is responsible for the helpdesk management, the responses are a team effort depending on the type of query. There are focal persons who respond to the various queries, based on the nature of questions. These include general queries and those related to membership, grants, partnerships, Forum and donations.
Strategy 3: Leverage strategic partnerships

Develop partnerships with actors whose work intersects with SVRI’s where our values align, and where acting together means achieving more and can support the implementation of SVRI’s strategic plan.

Developing partnerships - at the Forum and beyond

The biennial Forum is undoubtedly a key strategic opportunity for the SVRI to achieve its strategic goal of leveraging and building partnerships. In an interview with an SVRI staff member, the value-add of the Forum in this regard was highlighted as follows: “the Forum is key in promoting partnerships and fostering collaborations. It was created with the intention of having a common platform where people can meet, they can collaborate with other researchers; meet funders; funders can identify new research to fund in the future etc.” She also adds that “while the current model is great for promoting partnerships, there is a need for enhanced face-to-face interactions, possibly through in-country forums which could be held regularly, apart from the two year Forum event. This could be a good way of interacting in LMICs.”

In addition to the Forum, which indeed creates unique opportunities for networking and partnerships at the largest conference on VAW and VAC in the world, the SVRI team also creates partnerships through other activities. The team is often contacted by members who ask for contacts in a certain country, working on a particular theme. This usually leads to the SVRI team connecting people, which is a highly valuable addition. As one staff member explained, the SVRI are uniquely placed to do this because “We have all been in the field for some time in different ways; we know who’s doing what and who’s who in each area.” One of the grantees who took part in the evaluation through a Focus Group Discussion explained that the partnerships and connections brokered by the SVRI have been highly beneficial for her: “The peers and specialists that the SVRI brought to us during both the mentoring phase and the project building phase and the newsletters [...] have been referenced throughout our research so we are now using them as experts as well.”

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“Partnerships are deeply essential to everything we do. We know that VAW and VAC are complex and wicked problems. No one partner, government or actor can solve it alone.” - SVRI staff

Breadth of contact and global reach

The evaluation found that the SVRI is extremely well-connected and dedicates highly impressive efforts towards ensuring strong and meaningful connections across the field of VAW and VAC - both between the SVRI team and strategic, like-minded partners, and between different third parties themselves. In the same vein, one of the funding partners interviewed as part of the evaluation explained that one of the reasons they had decided to fund the SVRI was because they were impressed with the breadth of contacts, the global reach, the wide networks and the efforts to encourage southern based research in low- and middle-income countries. A Board member similarly highlighted the importance of building partnerships, and the SVRI’s strengths in doing so: “Because of their global recognition, SVRI are incredibly good at promoting partnerships, collaborating with several organisations in the field.” A Leadership Council member added: “I think SVRI is a good model of building partnerships between policy makers and academia, and donors, and among donors themselves so that they are also driving the agenda. A really huge step for SVRI was to also start working with other international organisations.”

Indeed, the SVRI has been incredibly successful in forging relationships with important organisations in their field, including the World Bank and other major stakeholders at high levels. It has also connected with researchers working on similar topics of intervention.

Creating opportunities for grantees to network and connect

Similarly, SVRI has also given the grantees the opportunity to network with other grantees and colleagues, and this has been invaluable to them. Participants from the FGDs agreed on the networking aspect, saying that apart from the grant that SVRI has provided, it has also helped them in connecting with other grantees from different countries, and with other research institutions (universities, organisations, funders). It was highlighted that SVRI gave them the opportunity to start cooperation with an academic institution, the University of Sarajevo, which helped them in overcoming some of the challenges that they were experiencing whilst carrying out the research.

One of the grantees also mentioned that “SVRI has been helpful in providing access to networks and linkages, by regularly forwarding call for proposals of other organisations and because of that we were able to craft and submit a programme proposal in one of the funding agencies, and although there’s no result of that yet, because that was just a few weeks ago, but it’s a very good thing that there's generosity on the part of SVRI in trading information like that.”
Hence, it would not be wrong to say that SVRI has not only provided these grantees with resources and documents, but also references and opportunities for networking. It is also worth mentioning that some of the participants admitted to having never seen the funders in previous grant applications, but with SVRI, they were a part of the process throughout.

**Selectivity in partnership building work**

One staff member highlighted however, that at times it can be a challenge to be selective enough when it comes to building partnerships. The SVRI does not currently have clear criteria for how and when they partner with others, and given that it is a political field, this can sometimes be a challenge: “We get excited about partnerships. [...] We need to maybe have a process around partnerships.” However the same staff member noted that, “it is lucky that we have deeply rooted principles which guide how we partner.” In a similar vein, a Leadership Council member suggested that the SVRI could “set a template and guidance for partnerships.”

One of the funding partners who took part in the evaluation process emphasised that the SVRI should reflect on the size of its network of members: “At a certain point, if you have too big a network, it might be difficult to get organised. Perhaps SVRI should not grow in membership.” Along these lines, the SVRI may wish to reflect on striking the right balance between growing the membership further versus deepening the existing network and engagement further. That being said, this of course depends on the concept of ‘membership’ and whether it mainly refers to those who receive the listserv update, or whether one might envisage a deeper engagement with the ‘membership’.

In reviewing SVRI documentation, the evaluation found a significant number of meetings with potential partners and funders. In 2020, there were at least nine networking meetings identified through the review, and in 2021 there were 13. See Annex 13. In addition, there were at least 20 online webinars held in partnership with other key actors, and 8 publications created in partnership with other actors.

**Online survey respondents’ views on their partnership with SVRI**

Online survey respondents suggested a number of ways in which they would like to work more closely with the SVRI and have a strengthened involvement in SVRI’s work as members. 73% of the online survey respondents would like to be more involved with the SVRI, than they currently are, in advancing research on VAW and VAC in LMICs. The ways in which they suggested being more involved included the following ideas, all of which were mentioned once only and should be understood as individual ideas gathered through the online survey in response to the question posed:

- **Deepened engagement with the SVRI team:** Some online survey participants were keen on sharing learnings and tools with SVRI, as well as
conducting more studies in collaboration with the SVRI (collaborative research), and contributing to and sharing blog posts, and writing for the SVRI blog. For example, one participant expressed an interest in continued participation in research agenda setting processes and advancing methodological approaches while another wished to support the SVRI in assessing grant proposals.

- **Wider reach:** One participant put forward the idea of ensuring dissemination of information from SVRI all over the world. This of course may have language implications and is not necessarily a direction in which the SVRI would like to go. This would also link to funding availability; the possibility of regional hubs could be explored.

- **Key issues and intersections:** Online survey participants highlighted themes and intersections which they would like to work with the SVRI on. The ones highlighted were: inclusion of queer issues and gender diversity; work on GBV in humanitarian contexts; violence against widows; and continued work on the VAW/VAC intersection.

### Partnering with the private sector

Another challenge in partnership building which emerged from the interviews is the question of partnering with the private sector. This was described as being complicated; something which is not unique to the SVRI but a common sentiment within the sector as it involves vetting and ensuring that any private sector partners one works with are ethical and in alignment with one’s values and ethical standards. Whilst the SDGs indicate that this type of partnership should take place, the question for the SVRI is how to do it well. The SVRI has engaged with the private sector through knowledge exchanges, blogs and webinars, but according to one staff member, this was “not done in a strategic way,” most likely referring to the fact that it was done in response to an ad hoc request rather than a proactive manner guided by a set strategy on private sector engagement.

In order to broker partnerships between actors, the SVRI Forum, with its many different components, plays a crucial role. The SVRI Forum 2019 hosted four networking events. These included the Welcome Event and Gala Dinner, a “speed networking” event and a “sharing our stories” breakfast with leaders in the field. There was also a networking booth, where delegates could sit down and have
informal discussions. These are important moments for networking outside of the formal space of the Forum panels and presentations.

As highlighted in the SVRI Annual Report (2020-2021), significant activities of the JLI Faith and GBV Hub took place during the evaluation period. Initially launched in 2014, this is an international collaborative effort on evidence for faith groups’ role and contributions to local community health and wellbeing and ending poverty. In 2020, the Hub secretariat moved from Tearfund to the SVRI and was rebranded as the SVRI JLI Faith and GBV Hub. The goal of the Hub is to advance the evidence base and capacity for research on faith and gender-based violence. The Hub provides an opportunity for advocacy through a platform to share research findings and strengthen the capacity of those in the field of Faith and GBV. The Hub has held several events, as listed in Annex 14.

The SVRI moreover sits in a number of different advisory groups, which is a helpful way to create and grow its network and connect other actors with one another. From February 2020 to November 2021 the SVRI was involved with a total of 28 groups, as listed in Annex 15.

Undertake research to analyse, learn from and improve partnering experience and showcase advocacy initiatives

Under this action, it appears as though minimal activities have been undertaken during the evaluation period, like the Raising Voices work in which a new initiative, PIVOT (Preventing Violence Together) Partnership was launched. The SVRI may wish to publish learnings from its vast and impressive partnering experience, with researchers, funders and policy-makers alike, and it may wish to do the same with regard to advocacy initiatives.

Overall Assessment of Goal 3

The evaluation found that the SVRI has performed extremely well under Goal 3, exceeding plans for the period 2020-2022, and is hence fully on track for a successful attainment of the achievement of this strategic pillar by the end of the strategy implementation period in 2024.

Naturally, the Forum stands out as an excellent opportunity to foster relationships, both between the SVRI team and partners, and between grantees, researchers, funders, policy makers, programme implementers and more.

The evaluation found that the SVRI is extremely well-connected and dedicates highly impressive efforts towards ensuring strong and meaningful connections
across the field of VAW and VAC - both between the SVRI team and strategic, like-minded partners, and between different third parties themselves.

Partnerships are clearly deeply essential to everything the SVRI does. The team is highly conscious that VAW and VAC are complex matters which require an inclusive, participatory and holistic approach. The SVRI thus works through partnerships in all areas of its strategic plan, and does so with high levels of care and participation. It is clear from the evaluation that the SVRI team moreover values the notion of inclusion highly, and would for instance, take all necessary measures to provide accommodation for people with disabilities at the Forum events. In selecting papers for the Forum, there would also be a lot of attention paid to the importance of intersectionality and inclusion.

The goal could potentially be strengthened in countries where there is low representation via increased targeted efforts, and between researchers and policy makers. This, however, is not a necessary step in order to achieve the goals of the 2020-2022 strategic plan, but rather something that would be of added value should resources and staffing one day permit for increased volumes of work and reach.

**Goal 4: Influence Change**

SVRI’s fourth goal, as presented in the Strategic Plan, is to influence policy and practice by building an understanding of the magnitude and consequences of VAW and VAC, and effective interventions for VAW and VAC prevention and response. Ultimately, this strategic pillar will be crucial in order to advance the SVRI’s vision of creating a world free from violence against women and violence against children.

This goal is supported by two strategies. The first strategy within this goal includes two key actions: to strengthen understanding among decision-makers of the value of research for policy-making and programme development, in order to eventually influence change. The second strategy entails three key actions: to advocate for investment in VAW and VAC research and evidence-based programmes, to convene meetings with donors to discuss evidence-informed funding strategies and to identify opportunities for researchers working on key issues to connect with key decision-makers and funding streams.

In the following sections, the SVRI’s achievements and activities are outlined and evaluated against Goal 4 of the strategy.
Strategy 1: Maximise the use of research for policy and practice

Strengthen understanding among decision-makers of the value of research for policy-making and programme development\(^{14}\)

Connecting with policy makers

The SVRI team has made extensive efforts at engaging with policy makers around VAW and VAC research. The Executive Director is very actively and successfully creating and nurturing relationships with key stakeholders at the international level and has brought about a wide range of key connections with policy makers and funders. It was evident in the evaluation that the SVRI team, within its current capacity and resource level, is carrying out high volumes of work in this regard, and performing at very high levels. The SVRI team has provided important opportunities for grantees to meet regional policy-makers and has also developed a theory of change for research uptake work. Over the coming two years of the strategy, this will likely be used to strengthen the SVRI’s efforts in the area of influencing change.

Questions around further policy level engagement

However, there is a question of whether the SVRI team has sufficient capacity and resources to reach policy makers and influence change. One Board member suggested, for instance, that: “It is not clear whether SVRI is doing enough as an organisation to make sure that policy makers see the research done, understand the work, understand the impact, and understand the importance of the change. Much more could be done in this area. From the Board perspective, this is not discussed much - how to make sure that [VAW and VAC research pieces] make their way to policy makers.”

Another Board member expressed a similar view, stating that the SVRI ought to increase its reach: “It’s doing amazing work but not known to many. Considering that SVRI has limited staff, it has stretched the horizon and has done a lot [...] The limitations are the availability of funds and limited resources.” In order to ensure that the research reaches key stakeholders who have the power to bring about change, the SVRI team may need increased capacity, according to one Board member. This would help to ensure that decision makers see and understand important key findings emanating from VAW and VAC research and can take action.

\(^{14}\)The SVRI documents used in this section include: SVRI (n.d.). Advancing research for improving responses and ending violence against women and violence against children. SVRI Annual Report (2020-2021) and SVRI’s monthly reports (January - December) 2020 and 2021.
“The challenge is how to ensure that not only members of the SVRI network see [the research], but that the decision-makers and policy makers are able to see it.” - Board member

The question to pose here, however, is whether this is truly the role of the SVRI or in fact the role of the researchers/grantees. It may be that the SVRI is best placed to provide knowledge/support to researchers in research uptake, but not attempt to engage directly with policy makers on behalf of researchers/grantees. It would appear unreasonable to propose the latter, given on the one hand the small size of the SVRI team, and the vast number of countries and contexts in which grantees operate. Hence, it appears appropriate to suggest that the SVRI continues, as it has successfully done to-date, to support grantees and researchers in building their skills around research uptake and policy influencing, but not expanding its ambitions beyond this.

**Strategy 2: Raise awareness/advocate with donors and decision-makers**

- Advocate for investment in VAW and VAC research and evidence based programmes
- Convene meetings with donors to discuss evidence-informed funding strategies

**Mobilising resources**

As highlighted by one staff member during an interview, an important aspect of this strategic pillar is about bringing more resources into the field of research and planning on how these resources are to be used. It is also about bringing in new arenas of research into the work of the SVRI, such as when they brought in reproductive health research. The different ways in which this is done is by developing the Global Shared Research Agenda and unpacking it regionally, partnering with universities, tracking funding, developing advocacy messages and podcasts to support that work.

One of the Leadership Council members interviewed as part of the evaluation expressed that bringing more funding for the field is one of the biggest

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challenges for the SVRI in terms of implementing its strategic plan. The interviewee said: “I think that the biggest challenge is really to do with the level of funding and the funding available and how the SVRI is being positioned within the field. [...] There just isn’t very much funding overall in the field of gender based violence and what funding is available tends to fund gender based violence work in high income countries; not in low income countries.”

Moreover, at the time of the evaluation, the SVRI was running a project called Tracking the Money, which looked at the amounts of money being given to research, not programmes, on violence against women and violence against children in low income countries. This appears to be an important and much-needed foundational element of SVRI’s implementation of the strategic plan, upon which further resource mobilisation can be built. This exercise appears to be unique to the SVRI, within the field of VAW and VAC, and therefore brings a clear value-add to the sector. In addition to this, one of the Focus Group Discussion participants suggested that the SVRI could help its partners in pushing for research on VAW and VAC in areas where this is not yet very common. See Case Study 3 for further details.

**Broader impact on the field**

A Board member emphasised how SVRI’s specific model of influencing change should be understood as creating broader impact on the field of VAW and VAC, through the localisation of research, through supporting researchers from low research settings and LMICs, and so on. By influencing the field and by drawing attention to research in different parts of the world that previously may not have had much attention, SVRI is focusing the need for research in under-researched areas. The Board member continued to explain: “Similarly, with the global research strategy, [...] it is really a global initiative which is influencing the field, because that is an agenda that the world is going to follow now [when doing] research on VAW and VAC. The SVRI Forum also influences the topics that researchers select since they hear about what the current issues are through keynote speeches and other sessions.”

“The project with SVRI is directly changing the lives of the survivors of online sexual exploitation.” - Grantee

One of the grantees who took part in a Focus Group Discussion was similarly enthusiastic about the SVRI’s impact on the field. The grantee explained that the grant her organisation had received from the SVRI is both a research and programme grant. This means that “apart from doing the data gathering and analysis of all of this data that’s being collected, it has a programme component, where we are providing capacity building for after care professionals who are
providing mental health support services for the survivors." As such, the grantee explained, “the project with SVRI is directly changing the lives of the survivors of online sexual exploitation.”

**Donor meetings during the evaluation period**

In relation to meetings with funders, an important number of meetings were identified via the monthly reports in 2020-2021, signalling that the SVRI team is very actively implementing this activity under Goal 4:

- 5 meetings with UNTF in 2020.
- 1 meeting with Sigrid Rausing Trust – review of funding for core partner.
- 1 meeting with Rugters, Promundo and Sonke in engagement with funders.
- 1 meeting with the Solidarity Fund grant selection process (evaluation panel).
- 1 meeting with Reference Group Meeting: SVRI Tracking the Money on RVAW Initiative.
- 1 meeting with the Columbia PopFam share Tracking Funding work.

In addition, meetings were held with funders to share results. The SVRI also participated in calls organised by the World Bank with past and present grantees from LAC, Africa, and Eastern Europe, to share the research projects’ updates/results with regional World Bank teams.

The Monthly Reports track SVRI meetings with its key donors. 14 meetings with existing funders took place in 2020. They were as follows:

- February: 1 meeting with OAK Foundation.
- March: 1 meeting with SIDA.
- July: 1 meeting with SIDA.
- August: 1 meeting with SIDA.
- September: 1 meeting with SIDA, 1 with WPF and 1 with partners about EOI for kNOWVAWdata.
- November: 1 meeting scheduled about EOI for kNOWVAWdata.

In 2021, the meetings with key donors were as follows:

- January: 1 meeting with WPF.
- April: 1 meeting with OAK.
- August: 1 meeting with SIDA, 1 with OAK Foundation and 1 with Making Sense on CARE GBV project
- September: Individual meeting CARE-GBV Grants - Grantee.

**Leading the way on ethical approaches to funding**

It is not only in quantitative terms that the SVRI’s work on donor engagement has been impressive over the past two years. In addition, it is leading the way on ethical approaches to funding of the field. To this end, the SVRI has been working
on developing a set of resources to actively engage with funders on precisely ethical approaches to funding and to promote good practices for funding the field of research on VAW and VAC in LMICs. These include the global shared research agenda, the study on tracking funding for VAW research in LMICs and a guide for ethical and sustainable funding. According to the Annual Report (2020-2021), the Global Research Agenda, the Regional Research Agendas and the Research Priorities for the Intersections of VAC and VAW are included. This is a unique and much-needed effort which fills a gap within the wider ecology of actors working on VAW and VAC, and certainly adds value to ongoing efforts.

In addition, through the Funding Ethically project, the SVRI created guidance for ethical funding for violence against women and violence against children research, in low and middle income countries. One of the reasons the Funding Ethically Guidance is written is to address inequitable power relationships in research partnerships. Guidance includes a roadmap for funders to work together to support different critical stages for research interventions, from formative process, to scale up and replication. The evaluation found such activities to be an important part of the strategy of advocating for investment in VAW and VAC research and evidence based programmes; one which highlights the holistic and ethical approach taken by the SVRI in this area of work.

One challenge relating to identifying and funding innovative research, as highlighted by one of SVRI’s Board members, is to ensure sustainability in terms of raising funds to keep supporting grantees. To this end, the Board member suggested, there is a need to “broaden the appeal of SVRI’s work to make it more accessible so that it draws local and individual donations apart from relying on large donors.” A Leadership Council member expressed a similar view: “I would like to see the SVRI being able to fund more research within the field but that requires more funding and more resources.” This is discussed again more broadly in Chapter 5, in relation to the SVRI’s own sustainability as an organisation.

Case study 3: Expanding the SVRI’s influence

The SVRI’s reputation and work in the field is globally recognised. Nevertheless, a grantee based in India who is specialised in the health sector presented an interesting possibility for the SVRI to expand its influence and reach other funding groups and platforms. Using the Health Systems Research Conference as an example, this grantee highlighted a gap - the health systems’ response to violence - that the SVRI, as a veteran and well established organisation in the GBV space, could push to conceptualise at the Conference. This would help to draw attention to the matter. In fact, smaller organisations in low and middle income countries have tried to negotiate and advance the issue of GBV in that particular context, but without much success. Therefore, the SVRI - one of the few organisations that promote research in a broad range of issues within the
field of VAW and VAC - could capitalise on this and engage with funders and relevant actors from a given sector.

Identify opportunities for researchers working on key issues to connect with key decision-makers and funding streams

Connecting researchers/grantees with funding opportunities

The SVRI can, and often does, play a key role in connecting grantees with potential donors and funding streams. One grantee explained that the SVRI has the capacity to be an advocate for grantees. He further elaborated: “They will refer you to who else is doing the same work, to events with funders that are interested in your work and that’s really helpful [...] I have seen that quite a lot, sometimes directly referring to or writing an email to say I would like to introduce you to this group that is also doing similar work or that is interested in your work.”

“Even though they haven’t been funding us for a couple of years now, I have got lots of [opportunities] coming through the SVRI [...] so SVRI has been our ambassador and we appreciate that, there are few funders [...] like that.” - Former grantee

Connecting researchers/grantees with policy and decision makers

Meanwhile, when asked specifically about connecting with policy and decision-makers to influence change, the responses were quite varied. Many of the grantees who took part in the Focus Group Discussions are relatively new grantees, so they felt they couldn't quite answer that question, as they are still in the early stages of the research process. Some participants from group one mentioned that SVRI connecting researchers with each other could be understood as an indirect way of helping them influence change. Some grantees also mentioned SVRI's help in disseminating the results from the research and advocacy campaigns. The link between SVRI and policy makers isn't clear or apparent for most grantees.

However, it is once again important to note that under the current strategic plan, the SVRI has achieved and exceeded what it set out to do in this regard. As mentioned in an earlier section, it would appear unreasonable to propose that the small SVRI team, which works relentlessly to deliver high volumes of impactful work across the four strategic pillars, should also be tasked with connecting grantees directly with policy-makers. This may be an interesting area to explore in future strategic plans, depending on core funding made available to the SVRI
team, but it appears as though it is not an area in which the organisation should go within the current context. Instead, it can continue, as it has successfully done to-date, to support grantees and researchers in building their skills around research uptake and policy influencing, but not expanding its ambitions beyond this.

Grantees highly appreciate the SVRI’s support in helping researchers ensure good research uptake. One grantee, for instance, appreciated “[...] the support that they have given us, for instance, with research uptake, so first of all, beginning to understand the concept of research uptake and to systematically check it [...] enables us to reach the policy. [...] And to me, I still think that indirect way has been very, very, helpful.”

Overall Assessment of Goal 4

The mid-term evaluation found that the SVRI has exceeded plans and aims under Goal 4 of the strategic plan. Hence, mid-way through the strategy implementation period, it is clear that the SVRI is fully on track for meeting the planned aims and objectives of this strategic goal by 2024.

Not only has the SVRI achieved impressive results in terms of numbers of meetings with donors, it has also been leading the way on developing guidelines and best practices on ethical funding for the field - something which is much needed and certainly highly commendable.

Grantees are grateful for support in research uptake skills strengthening, and for connections made with new funding opportunities and donors.

Meanwhile, the SVRI’s efforts to influence change is an area where further clarity among stakeholders could perhaps be sought. It may be helpful to clarify with all related parties that the small SVRI team, which works relentlessly to deliver high volumes of impactful work across the four strategic pillars, cannot possibly be expected to also connect individual grantees directly with policy-makers and/or achieve and demonstrate direct policy and programming impact as part of its work. This is a potential area to explore in future strategic plans, post-2024, depending on the level of core funding which is made available to sustain and grow the SVRI team to enable such expansion of activity. Indeed, the evaluation has found that this is unlikely to be an area in which the organisation should go within the current context.
Conclusion

Following the launch in 2019 of its strategic plan for the period 2020-2024, the feminist non-profit organisation SVRI has reached the mid-point of its implementation of this plan, which ultimately aims to create a world free from violence against women and violence against children.

Overall, the evaluation found that the SVRI has achieved excellent outcomes under all of its four Goals during these first two years of the strategy implementation, and is fully on track to achieve its planned outcomes under all of its strategic pillars by the end of 2024. The evaluation team has no doubts in this regard, and found that the evaluation exercise received an overwhelmingly positive response from all stakeholders interviewed and surveyed. It moreover found that the SVRI’s mandate is unique and critically needed within the ecology of work aimed at ending VAW and VAC. Moreover, the SVRI team has performed at outstanding levels throughout the period of evaluation, despite its very limited funding and resources. Indeed, the small team has achieved above and beyond what it set out to accomplish during the period 2020-2022, and this with high levels of professionalism, ethics and overall excellence.

There can be no doubt that the SVRI is playing a leading role in ensuring increased and strengthened research on different intersections relating to VAW and VAC around the world, particularly in low and middle income countries. Through its grantmaking, mentoring and sharing of knowledge, the SVRI contributes towards a strengthened evidence base which in turn has the potential of influencing policy and programming. The SVRI’s work in this area rests largely on its international and diverse grant making activities as well as the biennial organisation of the Forum – the largest conference on VAW and VAC in the world. The Forum feeds into multiple strategic goals and enables the implementation of several strategies found in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. Importantly, another significant way in which the SVRI is contributing to building evidence strategically and advancing a research agenda relating to key gaps in knowledge and practice, is through their vast efforts invested in establishing a Global Shared Research Agenda (GSRA) on VAW.

The SVRI team highly values the principle of inclusion, and would for instance take all necessary measures to ensure people from low and middle income countries are present and address accessibility needs of people with disabilities at the Forum events. In selecting papers for the Forum, there would also be a lot of attention paid to the importance of intersectionality and inclusion.

In relation to delivering against the goal of capacity strengthening, the evaluation found that the SVRI is performing very well. Grantees highly appreciate the
openness in communication and technical support they receive from SVRI. An assessment of the grant making criteria and additional guidelines concluded that the documentation made available by the SVRI to prospective grantees is of very high quality; clear, concise and detailed. By the same token, the assessment of a random sample of helpdesk queries indicated that the SVRI team is highly responsive to incoming queries and ensures to respond in a timely and helpful manner, with a tailored response to each message. The SVRI team, once again, is carrying out very high volumes of work for its small team size and resourcing.

The impact of SVRI’s work on researchers’ skills in relation to methodology, research methods, research ethics in the complex and highly sensitive context of VAW and VAC, appears to be very tangible. All relevant research participants reported great satisfaction with this side of the SVRI’s work, and the desk review similarly concluded that the SVRI is very advanced in this area. Research participants highlighted certain areas of research methods within which they would appreciate further support, including in the context of COVID-19 and remote research on sensitive topics but, overall, there was widespread appreciation of the SVRI’s current level of support in this regard.

The SVRI’s reputation and standing is clearly very positive. All stakeholder groups who took part in the evaluation spoke very highly of SVRI, both as a global actor in the field of VAW and VAC research, and also in terms of the work of the team itself. The organisation is described as highly values-driven and staff in particular celebrated the unique nature of the organisation in terms of ‘practising its values’. The SVRI adopts a highly participatory approach to agenda and priority setting, and is known to take a caring and supportive approach to its work with grantees and other members. The governing model, policy suite and governing documents, as well as the ethical guidelines of the SVRI appear to be commendable across the board.

This mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan sought not only to highlight successes, but to also identify challenges encountered and opportunities discovered for enhanced performance against the SVRI’s strategic plan. Under the first strategic goal, it was suggested that the SVRI could further increase its impact by building evidence more strategically by providing greater support to ensure research uptake. This is linked to boosted capacity strengthening in terms of policy influencing and enhanced research uptake (as well as skills required for presenting research findings and methods to a variety of audiences and engaging with policy makers and other influential stakeholders), which may also be an area for further enhancement in a future strategic plan post-2024.

As regards the identification of potential for improvement in its implementation of the strategic plan, all interview participants consistently emphasised the successful implementation of the planned activities. In cases where participants wanted to share ideas for future enhancement or additional work, they cited the need for additional resources to enable the SVRI team to increase its work in various areas. All agreed that without such increased future financial support,
there appears to be very little more that the high-performing team could possibly be expected to achieve. As such, there is a widespread sense that the SVRI team is performing at extremely high levels and producing a huge volume of work for its size - successfully implementing what it has set out to do, and oftentimes more.

Whilst a resource mobilisation strategy has been put in place, and with the Board and Leadership Council supporting with ideas around this, it appears as though additional time and capacity would be helpful in order to mobilise longer term core funding for the SVRI team's work. This could for instance be accomplished by freeing up more time of the Executive Director, who is well-connected and has been highly successful in this domain to date.

While the Forum stands out as an excellent opportunity to foster relationships, both between the SVRI team and partners, and between grantees, researchers, funders, policy makers, programme implementers and more, there may be ways to enhance partnerships and influencing work in future strategic plans. This could be strengthened, on the one hand, in countries where there is low representation and on the other hand between researchers and policy makers.

That said, the SVRI’s efforts to influence change is an area where further clarity among stakeholders could perhaps be sought. It may be helpful to clarify with all related parties that the small SVRI team, which works relentlessly to deliver high volumes of impactful work across the four strategic pillars, ought not to be expected to deliver additional activities under the goal of influencing change as part of the current strategic plan. Suggested enhancement of this area of work certainly appears to be something to explore in future strategic plans, post-2024, depending on the level of core funding which is made available to sustain and grow the SVRI team to enable such expansion of activity. Indeed, the evaluation has found that this is unlikely to be an area into which the organisation ought to go under the current strategic plan and should not be expected to be able to demonstrate direct policy and programming impact as part of its work.

While the SVRI’s articulation of how building evidence leads to the influencing of change at policy and programme levels is not entirely clear to all stakeholders, it should be clearly emphasised that its work towards research agenda setting, funding-tracking and ethical guidance enable the SVRI to successfully advocate for more and better funding for research on VAW and VAC in LMICs and to disrupt and decolonise the current funding ecosystem.

The evaluation found that, if deemed relevant and appropriate by the SVRI team, Board and Leadership Council, there could potentially be increased clarity and distinction between the four strategic pillars of the SVRI’s strategic plans. There is currently considerable overlap between the four strategic pillars with the inputs in each one affecting the outputs in others. The SVRI could either consider rethinking the strategic pillars ahead of the next strategic plan post-2024, or at least bring greater clarity and distinction between them and ensure that it is satisfied with the way the pillars interact and intersect with one another.
Attribution in these cases to specific inputs becomes difficult when measuring and evaluating impact, and when communicating the same, for instance, to funding partners and other stakeholders.

The SVRI team has commenced some important work on developing Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) aspects of its work. This is a very positive step towards ensuring measurable indicators which in a future scenario can help to provide evidence that the research funded by the SVRI has had an impact on policies and programmes, as part of a larger ecology of actors working to end VAW and VAC. Refining these narratives could facilitate resource mobilisation from funders.

Overall, it can be concluded that the SVRI has successfully achieved and exceeded its aims and planned activities under the 2020-2024 strategic plan so far, and there is no reason to believe that it would not accomplish what it has set out to do by 2024. The SVRI team has implemented a truly impressive volume of impactful activities throughout the first half of the strategy period.
Recommendations

Given the overwhelmingly positive outcome of the mid-term evaluation of SVRI’s strategic plan for 2020-2024, there appear to be no pressing recommendations which would need to be addressed in order to ensure that the SVRI achieves its stated goals under the four strategic pillars by 2024. However, as with any evaluation, different potential ideas emerged from the interactions with the different evaluation participants, and from the evaluation team’s analysis of the desk review and primary data sources. Such ideas are outlined below. It should be noted, though, that none of these recommendations serve to undermine the fact that the SVRI has exceeded its aims and planned activities under the strategic plan for the period under evaluation. As such, the recommendations are all additional ideas which could be considered by the SVRI team, Leadership Council and Board - if and as they see appropriate and feasible from a resource perspective. Indeed, it may be that most, if not all of the recommendations and ideas would be more appropriate to consider for a post-2024 strategic plan.

Building evidence

- **Build evidence strategically:** In terms of building evidence or more incremental development of the evidence, in order to strengthen advocacy towards influencing practice and policy. This would involve targeted selection of applications or stated criteria when advertising for research proposals in order to build evidence more strategically. The co-creation, participatory development of research agendas will help guide future grant-making.

- **Streamline the selection process:** The process of inviting proposals and selection could be further strengthened and streamlined. Discussions could be held in advance with reviewers. While clear criteria for grants are available on the website, reviewers could be told in advance that, for instance, preference will be given to underrepresented regions, or thematic areas which are new in certain contexts. This could also be added to the criteria on the website. Since the SVRI endeavours to ensure geographical diversity by shortlisting applications from less common locations, this could be enhanced even further by providing the review team with specific and transparent pointers in relation to priority countries, themes and intersections.

- **Ensure intersectionality and inclusivity:** SVRI has focused on highlighting the voices from LMICs, by supporting research, holding events and ensuring active engagement of researchers/practitioners in these settings. Since researchers from the HIC tend to dominate the agenda, and have more publications than their counterparts in LMIC, the SVRI can continue to do its commendable work to further unset this imbalance and elevate
researchers from the South who are experts on their respective contexts. For instance, as key informants suggested, capacities of researchers from LMICs, and from more disadvantaged groups, could be strengthened to encourage them to write and publish papers.

- **Conceptual clarity regarding ‘evidence base’ and ‘evidence based’ approaches:** There is a need to have a strong definition and conceptual clarity of what is meant by both the creation of an ‘evidence base’ as well as what is meant by ‘evidence based’ approaches. How does the SVRI understand this? For instance, indigenous evidence, value-based, based on methodologies that are based on indigenous practice, etc. The SVRI needs to think through where in the evidence cycle the proposals are best placed to create significant impact. There could be a stronger and more explicit articulation of how impact is made in the SVRI strategy and/or in the Theory of Change.

- **Grant size and number of grantees:** A careful balance needs to be maintained between the number of projects SVRI would like to support and the amount to be allocated to each grantee, based on the available pot of funds dedicated to this purpose.

- **Diversify blog topics:** Incorporate suggestions from members for future blog topics like LGBTQI violence, online violence, communicating sexual violence research, and other topics that emerged through the online survey.

### Strengthening capacity

- **Capacity strengthening on policy influencing:** SVRI can continue to build the capacity of researchers (beyond grantee partners) on how to influence policy and regarding the kind of research uptake that is needed. The SVRI’s structure appears to make it such that the capacity building training sessions and opportunities are more one-off. Grantees could be provided with further training opportunities on how to present their findings at the SVRI Forum to increase clarity, especially to people from outside of academia. This has direct implications on how much they can influence policy and practice.

- **Communicating research findings effectively:** Researchers could be provided with further training on how to communicate their research findings (and methods) in multiple ways for different audiences.

- **Research methods capacity:** Based on the online survey responses, which included grantees and other listserv members, it was felt that more capacity strengthening is needed on research methods (feminist research in practice; challenges of ethics while conducting research on children and young people; collection (appropriate tools) and data analysis (qualitative
and quantitative) of sensitive data; reducing bias in research especially quantitative research. These can be done with regular roundtable virtual discussions, research based talks or training programmes, or even providing small funding for early career research. In addition, should the COVID-19 situation and its consequent restrictions continue to affect field research, it may be advisable to provide further capacity strengthening regarding ethics during COVID-19 (including but not limited to the use of technology to conduct research, how to collect qualitative data using online tools, and so on).

*Greater consistency through webinar series:* While the webinars have been useful, it was suggested that SVRI starts creating a series in order to build more conversations online rather than one-off webinars on a particular theme. This could also be done at the regional level, in different languages, with different topics in different regions to make it context-specific. This would help with greater consistency and deeper reflection on certain topics and themes as well as sharing evidence. This could perhaps be incorporated into the current strategic plan period.

*Widen the pool of technical experts:* The pool of technical experts to provide assistance to grantees could be widened to reduce the load on the team. Additional budgetary allocations would also be needed for this technical assistance. Targeted efforts could be made to create a pool of technical experts in specific regions/countries who would also help spread information in their countries/regions on SVRI in order to attract more proposals and help proposal writers. This model could be piloted in one country or region to explore potential for scaling up.

*Proposal writing support:* SVRI could also provide some support in proposal writing for organisations which may have a team of researchers with very good research ideas and abilities, but who might not have the skills to prepare a proper research proposal. This type of support could be quite helpful for them to get the summary concept. However, this would require additional funding and human resources and could be considered in future strategic plans.

**Promoting partnerships**

*Developing funding partnerships further:* In its communications with funding partners, the SVRI could focus on communicating what it uniquely brings to the sector, like the grantee capacity building and mentorship support that it provides, and inform funders accordingly so that the latter can feed into the SVRI strategic plan and activities of the organisation.

*Freeing up time of the Executive Director for resource mobilisation:* With increased and adequate staffing, in particular in relation to technical skills, the Executive Director could free up time to do more resource
mobilisation work. This would also enable the SVRI to widen its donor base and establish connections or engagement with other donors in the SGBV space.

- **Explore and articulate SVRI's partnership model:** If and as feasible, the SVRI could further explore what SVRI's partnerships model looks like and how that can be strengthened. It might be beneficial to set clear criteria for how and when the SVRI should and can partner with others. This could also include the oftentimes thorny area of if and when to partner with the private sector - how to do it well and in a strategic way. Partnerships in countries where there is low representation could be increased through targeted efforts. One of many examples might be to, for example, continue to host the Forum in parts of the world where there is lack of membership.

- **Publishing learnings:** The SVRI may wish to publish learnings from its vast and impressive partnering experience, with researchers, funders and policy-makers alike, and it may wish to do the same with regard to advocacy initiatives.

- **Increasing participation in the Forum:** In order to ensure that participants in the Forum have a safe space for difficult conversations, the SVRI may consider having more sessions on addressing sensitive topics and examples from the field as well as increasing the space for grantees and researchers to share the challenges they face while conducting research. Through its online platforms, the SVRI could reach out to and have consultations with the grantees on how to make the Forum more inclusive and participatory.

**Influencing change**

- **Articulate how to influence change:** There could be a clearer articulation of how building evidence leads to influencing change. Conceptual clarity on what ‘influencing change’ means; where SVRI is situated in the cycle of evidence building and influencing change and in turn what realistic impact is to be expected, would go a long way towards understanding and measuring the impact SVRI has on programmes and policies.

- **Strengthen research uptake by introducing criteria relating to influencing change:** A lacuna found in the evaluation demonstrated a need to strengthen research uptake and influence change. Research uptake plans, with a vision for how the project can help influence change by engaging with key stakeholders, could be made a required element in research proposals. This is being done since 2021, but may not cover all the proposals that are submitted. That said, it is not necessary that every research proposal has the potential of influencing research practice - and also research to improve a programme, since it depends on where in the evidence continuum that proposal sits. In some cases there may be a clear
policy window but in others, though it is a long standing problem, there may not be one. However, it is still important to support researchers to think about influence from day one and not to focus solely on rigour and research, and provide a clear rationale and justification wherever such plans are not included in the proposal.

- **Track grantees’ policy and advocacy work:** It might be interesting to invest additional efforts into the tracking of any advocacy and policy work carried out by grantees, in particular if the SVRI ramps up its work on building capacity in this regard. Clear indicators to measure the goal of ‘influencing change’ would be useful. However, this may be an area for post-2024 as it will require additional resources for the SVRI team.

- **Measurable indicators:** The SVRI fully recognises the importance of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, and has put resources towards this, making important strides in developing its MEL framework. Having measurable indicators in place, to provide evidence that the research it has supported has informed policies and programmes, will be a very positive development. This can help further enhance the attribution of impact to SVRI research on policy and programmes, and could show how the organisation places itself in a larger political ecosystem.

- **Creating ripple effects around the Global Research Agenda:** The Global Research Agenda was an interesting participatory and global process that could be written about in different formats so that the methodology can be shared with practitioners who could draw their own lessons and relevance from it. The evaluators welcomed the fact that this is indeed part of the next two years of the SVRI’s strategy.

**Clarity of strategic goals and impact**

- **Increased clarity and distinction between the four strategic pillars:** There is considerable overlap between the four strategic pillars with the inputs in each one affecting the outputs in others. Attribution in these cases to specific inputs becomes difficult. However, it may be the SVRI’s choice to keep the pillars intertwined and overlapping for various reasons. Hence, it is merely a suggestion for the SVRI team, Board and Leadership Council to reflect on and decide what works best for them.

- **Articulate pathways for change within each pillar:** Pathways for change should be clearly articulated for each of the four strategic pillars. A tighter narrative could be created around what can be achieved under each of the strategic pillars. This will also make it easier to mobilise resources from funders as the latter would be able to measure the impact that their funding is having.
References


Annexes

Annex 1: SVRI’s Grant-making 2014-2019

SVRI’s grant-making, in 2014-2019, ensured funding for 50 innovative research projects in 30 countries, infusing more than USD 5 million into the field of GBV research, supporting unique projects that otherwise might not have received funding. The SVRI accepted applications from all geographical regions, but prioritised researchers from LMICs: between 2014 and 2019, 44% of the applications received came from African countries, 19% from South Asia, 14% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 9% from East Asia and Pacific, 6% from Europe and Central Asia, 6% from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with the remaining 2% described as Global applications.

Briefly, in regard to the Development Marketplace Award executed by SVRI and WBG, its Evaluation Report (2016-2020) states that the award:

- Established a unique and relevant place in the funding ecosystem by investing in new areas of work, encouraging new researchers and neglected regions, and seeding innovations that are not within the purview of other donors in regards to innovative responses to GBV.
- Enhanced the World Bank reputation.
- Despite limited human and financial resources, it achieved its aim of identifying and seeding innovations, contributing to the evidence base, stimulating partnerships, and strengthening capacity.

Nevertheless, the Evaluation Report (2016-2020) also notes that the award was limited when it came to:

- Supporting scale-up or more incremental development of the evidence.
- Establishing connections or engagement with other donors in the GBV space (besides the donors that contributed to the award).
- Institutionalising of research outcomes: research uptake was one of the biggest gaps identified by the evaluation. Awardees were supported to develop research uptake plans as part of the awardee workshops, but financial and human resource constraints prevented a greater focus on this aspect. Awarded projects did not always engage with the government.
- Connecting the award to the core work of the WBG and to the needs of its clients.

Annex 2: Additional information about the 2021 and 2022 SVRI grants

In regards to the **SVRI Research Grant 2021**, the SVRI received 330 applications and, following the review process, 110 were selected for a second round where 25 proposals were shortlisted for one of the 7-10 available awards, eventually accepting 8 proposals. The final winners were announced in March 2021 and most of them received their first payment in June 2021. The accepted proposals were from Brazil; the Philippines; Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; Lebanon and Turkey; Nepal; Jordan; Mali and Zimbabwe. With the support of SIDA, the SVRI funded the projects in Brazil, the Philippines, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, Lebanon and Turkey and Nepal, while with the support of the Wellspring Philanthropic Foundation, the projects in Jordan, Mali, and Zimbabwe were funded.

For the **SVRI Research Grant 2022**, the call for applications was published in May 2021 and remained open until August 2021. A total of 349 proposals were received, with 116 being selected for a second review and 26 for the final review. In November 2021, the expert review panel met for the last time and 7 proposals were approved for funding: 2 from South Africa and Ethiopia & Tanzania (Africa), 1 from China (EAP), 1 from Kazakhstan (ECA), 1 from Mexico (LAC), 1 from Palestine (MENA) and 1 from Sri Lanka (SAR).

Annex 3: What online survey participants like most about SVRI:

- **SVRI staff**: SVRI staff are friendly, helpful, approachable, supportive and positive; their openness and flexibility.
- **Resources**: Listserv information, website resources, information sharing and dissemination, the SVRI Forum, SVRI updates, provides multiple languages
- **Research**: Practical application of research; the commitment to research; the commitment to sexual violence globally; providing up to date information on SGBV so that stakeholders can easily know the latest information and knowledge in SGBV; depth of research; multi stakeholder collaborative approach, evidence based and feminist informed studies and research; ideas and research that signals hope and affirms possibilities of constructive change in gendered relations
- **Network**: connect like minded people working for one goal;
  - SVRI brings together researchers and activists from around the world whose work is aimed at preventing and responding effectively to the many forms of sexual violence. It is a dynamic organisation that responds to the needs of its members, and is constantly seeking

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This information was extracted from the SVRI (n.d.), Advancing research for improving responses and ending violence against women and violence against children. SVRI Annual Report (2020-2021) and SVRI's monthly reports (January - December) 2020 and 2021.
ways to respond to the changing priorities in research agendas.

- A respected, trusted organisation in the field that provides useful guidance and support; and the way SVRI works hard at embodying their own values and principles in all they do.
  - The exciting energy it brings to the field, that anyone can benefit from their work, the participatory way it operates and the way it strives to live feminist principles
  - Diversity and the ethical approach
- Sharing resources, emphasis on local leadership (not “top-down” development)
- Mentoring.

Annex 4: Meetings held with grantees in 2020-2021

- **SVRI WBG DM Grant 2020**: SVRI supported 4 projects based in Brazil, India, South Africa, and Cambodia. Update meetings took place on 26 and 27 October 2020. In July 2020 with the Nossas staff and a consultant to discuss their amended proposal. Also, in February 2021 with Project Empower (South Africa), in relation to the COVID-19 situation in their country and its impact on the project. New project update meetings with all 2020 grantees were held on 23 & 24 March 2021 and again in October 2021.
  
  The 2019/2018 cohort's research was the most affected by COVID-19. Therefore, SVRI held several meetings regarding extensions and new work plans.

- **SVRI WBG DM Grant 2019**: update meetings took place in
  - June 2020 with GRADE to discuss the implementation of their project, which was quite delayed, and with the BRAC team.
  - August 2020 with UCLA (2017 grantee) to discuss their final narrative report and potential participation in webinars.
  - October and November 2020 and February, April, August and November 2021 with Oxfam Ireland (PNG). The project was extremely delayed due to COVID-19 and internal changes in their office.
  - October 2020 with Monash University (Australia/Cambodia). The SVRI supported the WB in this meeting.
  - November 2020 and February 2021 with Anusandhan Trust (India) Project delayed due to COVID-19.
  - January 2021, update meetings were held with Physicians for Human Rights (WB grantee) and the team from Harvard School of Public Health (WB grantee).
  - March 2021, update calls were held with Brac (Bangladesh) and Grade (Peru). Both projects have been delayed due to COVID and updated work plans were submitted and approved.
• SVRI WBG DM Grant 2018: Various closed meetings.

Annex 5: Meetings with grantees and the World Bank
• In November 2020 with grantees from LAC (IPA (Peru); JuanFe Foundation (Colombia) and IPPF (Mexico)) to orient their new staff members, focusing on VAW.
• In May 2021, with grantees from the ECA and MENA regions: Arizona State University School of Social Work project in Kyrgyzstan; Try Center for Training and Education in Jordan; Queen’s University project in Syria; and the Information and Research Center - King Hussein Foundation Jordan.
• In June 2021 with the Try Center for Training and Education in Jordan to discuss their 2018 project on Prevention of intimate partner violence among newly married couples in Jordan.

Annex 6: Meetings held in relation to the Global Shared Research Agenda:
• 2020:
  ○ In May two meetings were held related to the GSRA and the following month, the Stewardship Group formally met twice.
  ○ In August, the Advisory Group met for the first time and in September, for the second time. That month, EQI/SVRI/WPF met to discuss the progress and relationship between the Advocacy work and the research agenda process.
  ○ In October the Stewardship Group met multiple times to finalise the online survey sent to the Global Expert Group, which met for the first time that month. In November the Stewardship Group met to finalise roles, responsibilities and timelines.
• 2021:
  ○ In March, the Stewardship Group met to discuss data analysis and the structure for the GSRA report, the next month the Advisory Group led a validation workshop regarding the GSRA and the work done until then.
  ○ The Stewardship Group’s next meeting was in May to discuss the progress on the report writing.
  ○ In June a draft was sent for comments from the Global Expert Group. Final edits in July and August.
• The number of participants: GSRA Stewardship Group; Consultants (Dr Julienne Corboz (independent consultant) and Prof Mark Tomlinson (University of Stellenbosch)); GSRA Advisory Group (approx. 30 experts); Global Expert Group (approx. 400 experts); External Reviewers (including, Dr Yvette Efeybera ScD from the Gates Foundation, Lori Michau from Raising Voices, Lusajo Kajula, independent consultant); Ladbury Communications (Rebecca Ladbury of Ladbury PR, comms specialist); SIDA and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (funding partners).
Annex 7: Regional Research Agenda and Research Priorities for VAW-VAC intersection

- **Regional Research Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean and East Asia Pacific:** Understood as an adaptation of the GSRA, the SVRI was looking to engage in regional priority setting (RPS) exercises to contextualise the findings of the GSRA in the different regions and identify specific research priorities on VAWG. In January 2021, SVRI hired a technical consultant to start working with the SVRI to support a regional consortium, appointed after a competitive application process, to unpack the regional agenda in LAC. EQI and SVRI met to discuss the future EAP regional agenda in March and April 2021. It was decided that EQI will lead the process in EAP. In March 2021, the SVRI began looking for a consultant/consulting firm to undertake this project and held a number of meetings with regional colleagues to share the ToRs in different languages. Equipo Free was selected in May 2021 as regional partner in LAC and since then monthly meetings have been held with Equipo Free. In November 2021, the regional team met and discussed the project further.

- **Research Priorities for the Intersections of VAC and VAW:** Partnering with the UNICEF Office of Research at Innocenti and the Human Reproduction Programme at WHO, the SVRI’s aim was to facilitate a participatory, global process to address the gaps in research, focusing on the intersections of VAC and VAW, by identifying priorities and including them in the SVRI grant-making work. It would also inform the implementation of the multiagency RESPECT Women and INSPIRE frameworks, support UNICEF’s commitment to respond to the gender dimensions of violence, and promote coherence in the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Meetings between partners (coordinating group) were held in May, June, July, August (including a discussion with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine’s Gender Violence and Health Centre (LSHTM) on systematic reviews) and in September 2020. SVRI carried out two systematic reviews in partnership with the LSHTM. In April 2021, the preliminary results of these systematic reviews were ready and by August the team began working on an evidence synthesis based on the findings from these systematic reviews. In March 2021, they began looking into (developing criteria) forming an Advisory Group and a Global Stakeholder Group (381 members by November 2021). The first meeting of the Advisory Group started to be prepared in October 2021.

Annex 8: Information about the membership.
(with a total of 7,368 as of the second half of 2021):

**By region:**
North America: 2183
Africa: 1703
Europe and Central Asia: 881
East Asia and Pacific: 371
South Asia: 286
Latin America and Caribbean: 271
MENA: 81
Undefined: 1592

**Primary area of interest:**
Unknown: 6272
Understanding VAW and VAC: 166
Cause and consequences of VAW and VAC: 113
Prevention / Risk Mitigation: 210
Responses / Services: 108
Humanitarian / Conflict Settings: 114
Research Method and Measures: 111
Ethics of VAW and VAC Research: 24
Research Uptake: 50
Other: 86
SVRI/JLI Faith and GBV Hub: 114

**Age:**
Unknown: 6257
70-79: 4 - 80+: 38

**Preferred pronoun:**
Unknown: 6221
She/Her: 803
He/Him: 245
They/Them: 33
Prefer not to say: 66

**Organisation type:**
Unknown: 6165
Independent consultant: 108
Community-based organisation: 84
Non-governmental organisation: 351
International non-governmental organisation: 98
Bilateral/multilateral/UN agency: 52
Private sector: 33
Government: 49
Activist organisation: 15
Educational institution: 69
Faith-based organisation: 23
Annex 9: Products produced by the SVRI from April to December 2021:
- Articles: One article in the South African Daily Maverick.
- Papers or other products:
  - Individual Deprivation Measure Paper with SAMRC and ANU.
  - Blog with COFEM: By the way...Did you ask women? Ethical considerations for engaging men and boys to end violence against women and violence against girls.
  - Brief - Ethics of Research Partnerships with Raising Voice and the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW).
  - Video publicising the SVRI Research Grant 2021 winners.
  - SVRI podcast (Launched in November 2021)
  - SVRI Grant Making 2019-2020 Two thematic briefs.
  - SVRI Forum 2019 report.
  - Advancing SVRI’s Work on VAC and CSA to Strategical Contribute to the Field.
  - We Care project: evidence review. Exploring research into how wellness and care can be institutionalised in the violence against women field in low-and middle-income countries.

Annex 10: SVRI’s webinars in 2020

2. Webinar: Engaging the private sector to prevent and address VAW SVRI. BSR HERrespect/HERproject; UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women; Promundo; The Children’s Place; DFID (FCDO). June 2020.
7. Sida Webinar on Discrimination, Social norms and GBV: SVRI was invited to present at a Sida internal meeting on global trends for gender equality.
work and reflections regarding their partnership with them. December 2020.


Annex 11: SVRI's webinars in 2021

1. Ubuntu Symposium Roundtable: “By the way...did you ask women?” Ethical considerations for engaging men and boys to end VAWG. SVRI, COFEM, IPPFWHR, Sida, ACEV. January 2021.

2. CEDIL Webinar: Crossing the social barrier: participatory theatre as means to overcome GBV: SVRI (Liz) participated on this CEDIL panel. February 2021.


4. SVRI presented at an internal ActionAid global webinar focused on feminist approaches to GBV research with a particular focus on practical ethics. March 2021.


15. Faith in GBV response: Exploring relationships and implications for humanitarian practice. GBV AoR Community of Practice, JLI/SVRI Faith & GBV Hub, the Institute for Research into Superdiversity at University of

17. The Role of Academia in Advancing Gender Equality. Shared Value Africa Initiative (SVAI) and the University of Johannesburg. **August 2021.**


19. Decolonised and Inclusive - Reflections on the generation of VAW prevention evidence for African Women’s Rights Organisations. SVRI & AWDF. **September 2021.**

20. Learning event 1: Priorities in child sexual abuse research in low- and middle-income countries. SVRI and Grantees. **September 2021.**


22. Launch: The Global Shared Research Agenda. SVRI and EQUITY. **September 2021.**

23. Voices from the South - Research in Africa contributing to the production of evidence on VAW and VAC WBG. **October 2021.**

24. Launch of the regional LAC shared research agenda. SVRI, WBG, Equipo FREE. **October 2021.**


26. Voices from the South: Research in Asia contributing to the production of evidence on VAW and VAC. WBG. **October 2021.**

27. Discussant on Webinar #1 | UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women | Launch of Learning from Practice Series. **November 2021.**

28. Voices from the South webinar series – LAC launch with WBG. **November 2021.**

29. SVRI presented at UNICEF INSPIRE Conference in the session Why EVAW is critical to EVAC – and vice versa: the implications for the action, advocacy and programming. Unicef. **November 2021.**


31. Voices from the South webinar series – Thematic briefs launch. WBG. **November 2021.**

32. SVRI presented at the Group IFC Global Giving 2022 conference. IFC Group. **November 2021.**

33. SVRI presented the GSRA at the UNICEF Innocenti Office Seminar. Unicef. **November 2021.**

34. SVRI presented on MH Knowledge Exchange at the Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network Meeting, partnering with Sophie Namy & Abbie Fields. **November 2021.**
35. SVRI presented at the Annual Conference of the Victimology Society of Serbia. Victimology Society of Serbia (grantee). **November 2021.**

36. Presentation on SVRIs work at Virtual High-Level Dialogue: Accelerating Progress and Accountability for Ending GBV in East and Southern Africa. UN Women. **November 2021.**

37. Presentation at Sida Brown Bag Lunch for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. **November 2021.**

38. Innovative Practices for Preventing Gender-Based Violence among Adolescents. WBG. **December 2021.**

39. Gender-Ally Speaking: Preventing Violence against Women and Girls by engaging Men and Boys. The Kingdom of the Netherlands & the Dominican Republic, with MenEngage, SVRI, UN Women and the RESPECT Women Framework (WHO). **December 2021.**

40. South to South Collaborations to Prevent VAWG. Womanity Awards webinar. **December 2021.**

41. Intimate Partner Violence and Forced Displacement: From Research to Action. WBG. **December 2021.**

42. Launch: SVRI Forum 2022. SVRI and CRIM. **December 2021.**

**Annex 12: SVRI Helpdesk**

The number of requests received and dealt with in 2021 were as follows:

- January: 25
- February: 53
- March: 42
- April: 37
- May: 41
- June: 186
- July: 295
- August: 169
- September: 70
- October: 60
- November: 70
- December: 50

**Annex 13: Networking meetings**

*Meetings identified in 2020:*
- 1 meeting with Lauren Shields – HerProject to discuss a joint webinar of the role of the private sector in advancing the SDGs and VAW work.
- 1 meeting with Girl Empower and the Population Council regarding open access datasets.
- 1 meeting with Promundo, catch up of SVRI/Forum.
• 1 meeting with the Global Innovation Fund – sharing work/networking;
• 1 meeting with Rutgers, Promundo and Sonke in engagement with funders;
• 1 meeting with MRC colleagues on setting up a Health Promotion Structure entity similar to the SVRI;
• 1 meeting with Oxfam Canada on an upcoming webinar on influencing policy and programming;
• 1 meeting with Making Cents International staff, who are implementing a USAID funded project: “Collective Action to REduce Gender-based Violence (CARE-GBV)”. They are establishing a small grants programme and wanted to learn from SVRI’s experience.
• 1 meeting with Students for Global Health on Ending Violence against Women: Presenting and Responding to Violence against Women as Global Health Professionals. The SVRI presented on the SVRI’s work on increasing and strengthening action-orientated research and it’s uptake to improve and expand violence against women and violence against children prevention globally.

Meetings identified in 2021:
• 1 meeting with IPA on possible future collaboration and partnership;
• 1 inception meeting with the Australian Volunteers Programme Representatives;
• 1 meeting with Wellspring’s Stakeholders Engagement Discussion;
• 1 meeting with UNESCO to discuss their Transforming MENtalities initiative and next steps in the proposal presented by White Ribbon Canada, Promundo, MenEngage and SVRI;
• 1 meeting with Niyati from the WB to discuss a potential initiative to create a database of proposals among some key donors to streamline identification of potential grantees to facilitate grant making
• 1 meeting with Grand Challenges Canada to share information on promising innovations tackling SGBV prevention and/or response in Sub-Saharan Africa, including the work of some of our former grantees;
• 1 Meeting with the Evaluation Fund Reducing Violence Against Children who invited SVRI to participate in their last learning sessions with partners and grantees;
• 1 meeting with USAID and US State Department re their new GBV strategy;
• 1 meeting with UNESCO to discuss pitching the Mentalities proposal to a high level meeting of ministers.
• 1 meeting with consultant on the Feelsafe initiative sponsored by Naspers;
• 1 meeting with the Feminist Humanitarian Network to get to know each other meeting
• 1 meeting with Erin Hagan from the Evidence for Action (E4A) to search information and discuss potential collaborations on research uptake.
• 1 meeting with UNICEF Innocenti Deep Dive: inputs into Innocenti’s questions around research strategy and how to amplify their research. SVRI shared various SVRI products/calls during this meeting including the call for the Research Uptake course and the Raising Voices and SVRI Learning
Together knowledge exchange product.

**Annex 14: Partnership meetings relating to faith groups and religion**

- GBV AoR CoP: Exploring faith and spirituality with GBV response. The GBV AoR Community of Practice with JLI/SVRI Faith & GBV Hub, the Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) at the University of Birmingham and EQUYSTY Gender Lab.
- How can religious literacy and freedom of religion or belief literacy inform partnerships, especially for promoting gender equality? Peer-to-Peer learning webinar co-hosted by OHCHR, UNFPA, UNWOMEN and The JLI/SVRI Faith and GBV Hub.
- A matter of faith: Comprehensive sexuality education as a gender-based violence prevention strategy in faith settings. Convened by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI). This is a part of a series of webinars co-hosted by OHCHR, UNFPA, UNWOMEN and JLI and SVRI Faith and GBV Hub.
- Religious Actors: Ally or Threat for Achieving Gender Equality?.

**Annex 15: Groups and meetings at national and international levels**

**National:**
1. The Violence Prevention Forum (7 meetings)
2. South Africa Solidarity Fund – GBV Fund Selection Committee (2 meetings)
3. Safer Spaces Expert Working Group (2 meetings)

**International:**
4. UNICEF-Innocenti End Violence Solutions Summit Evidence Events – Advisory Committee
5. Global TAG Meeting: GBV Learning in Refugee Settings
6. Latin American Network against Gender Violence
7. ECPAT Advisory Group (5 meetings)
8. Group MenEngage Global Symposium Advisory Group (6 meetings)
9. ELHRA Priority Setting Advisory (3 meetings)
11. COFEM Internal Communications and Diversity Working Group (2 monthly meetings)
12. COFEM Internal Research Working Group (3 meetings)
13. Building GBV Evidence Grant – Review Committee
14. SGBV and ICT Steering Committee
15. Our Voices University Network (OVUN) Taskforce
16. Preventing VAWG Initiative - Global (6 meetings)
17. Violence Prevention Forum Driver group (3 meetings)
18. GBV-Care (USAID) TAG (2 meetings)
19. UNTF Evaluation Review
20. VAW Accelerator/Shared Agenda Advisory Board (2 meetings)
21. ICT and SGBV Evidence Steering Committee Meeting (2 meetings)
22. Funding Ethically Advisory Group
23. UNICEF Innocenti Solutions Summit events advisory group
24. Group World Bank Senior Advisory Panel - Gender Dimensions of Forced Displacement (2 meetings)
25. Shared Global Advocacy Accelerator Advisory Group (2 meetings)
26. Womanity Award Advisory Board (4 meetings)
27. ECPAT Boys Initiative Inception Steering Committee
28. FE TAG Process Elements Sub-Committee Meeting