

Global Shared Research Agenda

To strengthen our understanding of violence against women and girls (VAWG)¹, and ultimately prevent it, we need to ensure that the research undertaken is both priority driven and carried out in such a way that it provides a sound practical and empirical basis for interventions/programmes, policy and advocacy on sexual violence.

To drive this process forward, the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) and the Equality Institute with support from Wellspring Philanthropic Fund are facilitating the development of a global shared research agenda for research on violence against women and girls in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).



¹ During the development of the global research agenda we will explore and unpack the use of this terminology including issues related to conflation of women and girls, measurement, and effectiveness of interventions across different age groups.

Why is a Global Shared Research Agenda important?

- To identify evidence gaps and highlight priority areas for research that can guide research expenditure and ensure precious resources are spent effectively.
- To assist researchers, funders, practitioners, and policymakers with research planning and fundraising.
- To serve as an advocacy tool to signal to stakeholders the areas of research that have been identified as being important.
- To serve as a monitoring tool for the field.
- To guide SVRI grant-making.

THROUGH THIS WORK WE ARE LOOKING TO ELEVATE RESEARCH THAT:

- Facilitates improved responses to and prevention of VAWG.
- Tackles head on the need to redress inequalities and hierarchies in global research that currently sees most research resources and capacity in high income countries (HICs).
- Provides a sound practical and empirical foundation for interventions, policy and advocacy programmes within countries, and at regional and global levels.
- Increases diversity and involves multiple voices in the process and informed by diverse voices representing multiple sectors.

KEY GROUPS INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING A GLOBAL SHARED RESEARCH AGENDA

Three key groups will participate in the research priority setting exercise.

1

STEWARDSHIP GROUP

Key staff and consultants working with SVRI and the Equality Institute who will oversee the overall process, including coordination, design, analysis, reporting and dissemination.

2

ADVISORY GROUP

A group of approximately 40 experts in the VAWG prevention and response field, across multiple geographical contexts, who will provide expert technical input and advice on key steps in the research priority setting exercise.

3

GLOBAL EXPERT GROUP

A group of approximately 400 global experts from both LMICs and high-income countries (HICs) working on VAWG prevention and response, including researchers, practitioners, funders, policy-makers and others.

Developing a Global Shared Research Agenda

THE GSRA METHOD

Developing a Global Shared Research Agenda (GSRA) is a complex process. Many forces influence what can be defined as a research priority, and research needs will differ from country to country and even within countries. Therefore, rather than provide a detailed list of research objectives, we aim to provide an indication of where major gaps lie and what major questions need to be addressed for the field to progress toward eliminating VAWG.

Efforts to set priorities for health research historically have been ad hoc or directed by the most powerful in the room. The Child Health and Nutrition Initiative (CHNRI) in 2005 began the creation of a more democratic and objective methodology for setting research agendas. This method, known as the CHNRI method, takes into account the views of multiple stakeholders and not just technical experts, and does so in a way that the views of all are treated equally without some voices being more dominant than others. The CHNRI model is based on the philosophy of 'crowd-sourcing' which proposes that asking multiple people for their opinion on an issue will result in accurate predictions, surpassing the expert judgement of one individual.²

Adapting the CHNRI model, we will undertake a number of steps to ensure the inclusion of diverse voices from across the VAWG research, practice, funding and policy-making fields.



² Surowiecki, James (2005). *The Wisdom of Crowds. Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations*. Anchor Books. pp. xv. ISBN 978-0-385-72170-7.

STEP ONE

Undertake a broad scoping review. The Stewardship Group developed a framework for the review, which included dividing the literature into key thematic areas that were then reviewed and analysed against different categorisations of the literature.

Key gaps identified in the review, include:

THEMATIC GAPS:

- Most studies focus on understanding VAWG, including prevalence of, risk factors for and outcomes of different types of VAWG, predominantly intimate partner violence (IPV). There are far fewer studies on the impact of prevention or response interventions, and very few studies on scale-up and costing of VAWG interventions.
- There is a limited number of studies on social norms and their relationship with VAWG.
- Although there is a growing understanding of risk factors for VAWG, there are few studies on protective factors for VAWG.
- Research on technology-facilitated VAWG and comprehensive strategies to target this form of violence is limited.
- There is a large gap in studies on male perpetration of violence.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND POPULATION GROUP GAPS:

- VAWG research is concentrated in certain regions, including South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, but there are less data in other regions, particularly in the Pacific, Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) and Eastern Europe.
- Very few VAWG studies include women and girls with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) populations, and other high risk / vulnerable groups.
- There are a limited number of studies on IPV outside of current marriage, i.e. in dating relationships or violence from former partners.

METHODOLOGICAL AND MEASUREMENT GAPS:

- Most IPV studies focus on physical and sexual IPV. There are a lack of data on psychological/emotional and economic IPV and non-partner sexual violence (NPSV).
- Very few studies measure or report frequency, severity or recency of IPV and NPSV.
- Many studies did not use standardized VAWG measures.
- There are very few longitudinal studies. The cross-sectional nature of most studies means that causality and temporality of risk factors and other findings cannot be established.
- Among those studies that do have a longitudinal approach, very few have follow-up data collection sufficiently long after the end of the intervention to assess longevity of change.
- There is far less qualitative research than quantitative or mixed methods research, and there are very few systematic reviews of studies in LMICs.
- There is a lack of primary population-based surveys, with most comprising secondary analysis of existing datasets with diverse methodologies.
- Several intervention studies either lacked a control group or had an imperfect control group, making it difficult to assess intervention effectiveness.
- Most studies had small sample sizes, limiting the power of the results, and making disaggregation unfeasible.
- There is a general bias of published literature towards HICs and papers in English.

STEP TWO

Based on the topics and gaps identified in the scoping review, four key domains of research on VAWG prevention and response have been identified (see page 9). The Advisory Group provided advice and feedback on the domains and through an online survey will generate a list of research questions. They were also asked to comment on the criteria for prioritising and scoring the research questions. They will be asked to generate no more than **FOUR** questions that fall within any or all of the four research domains listed on the next page. Ideally, participants will be asked to generate one question per domain.

DOMAIN 1:

Research to understand VAWG in its multiple forms (including studies on the prevalence of different types of VAWG, risk and protective factors for VAWG experience and perpetration, and the causes and consequences of VAWG, including health and psychosocial consequences etc):

- Example research question: What are the psychosocial impacts of economic intimate partner violence on women and girls?

DOMAIN 2:

Intervention research (including prevention and response interventions, and various types of evaluations, including process, formative and impact evaluations):

- Example research question: What types of IPV prevention interventions are most effective for women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including age, poverty, disability, ethnicity, sexuality etc?

DOMAIN 3:

Improving existing interventions (including scale-up research, costing research, intervention science, process research and other form of research that generate innovative solutions to improve existing interventions making them more deliverable, more affordable or more sustainable, and understanding the impact of policies and laws on VAWG):

- Example research question: What are the most effective platforms or entry points that can be leveraged to implement VAWG prevention interventions at scale?

DOMAIN 4:

Methodological and measurement gaps (including new and innovative ways to measure VAWG, hierarchies of knowledge, practice-based learning, sticky ethical issues, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions):

- Example research question: How to conduct good quality, ethical research on VAWG using online methods?

STEP THREE

The Stewardship Group will then consolidate the survey responses from the Advisory Group. After all questions have been collated and consolidated, the Stewardship Group will refine the list down to 10 questions per domain. The Stewardship Group will host a webinar with the Global Expert Group to advice on the priority setting process.

STEP FOUR

The Stewardship Group will develop a second survey to disseminate to the Global Expert Group (which includes the Stewardship Group and the Advisory Group), which will present the research questions consolidated from step 3 and ask stakeholders to score the questions against a set of criteria. This will be done in two rounds to give participants the opportunity to score all domains and take into account the impact on time and resources, especially for frontline services. The second survey will also ask stakeholders if there are any questions they believe are missing and they will be invited to provide one additional question. As per the first online survey, the second online survey will be translated and distributed in six languages: English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Portuguese, and Russian. The Stewardship Group will analyse the scoring and develop the results, which will consist of a set of core research questions that have been identified as the most important ones that will move the VAWG prevention and response field forward over the next five years.

STEP SIX

The results will be published and widely disseminated in different formats for different constituencies, including funders, researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and activists.

The shared global research agenda is expected to be available in early 2021 and will be used to advocate for more resources to be put towards building the knowledge base and addressing key research gaps in the field of VAWG prevention and response.

STEP FIVE

The Stewardship Group will host a workshop / webinar with the Advisory Group presenting and validating results. The Stewardship Group will also host a webinar with the Global Expert Group to share results.

www.preventvawg.org/agendas/draft-research-agenda

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