Working to Prevent Violence against Women and Children
In any ambitious enterprise, regardless of how much preparation and careful thought has gone into it at the outset, there comes a point of encounter with the enormity of the task. That is the point we reached in 2015 in our five year journey of the current Strategic Plan. Despite the frenetic activity and optimism of early successes, we found ourselves asking fundamental questions about how we are approaching the task, did we gauge it right and is it time to recalibrate?

The first realization that became visible early in the year was that our Strategic Plan was far too ambitious for the five year timeframe we had set on it. Multiple internal processes as well as learning partnerships inspired us to ask deeper questions about what success would look like. It became clear that if we were serious about sustainability, we needed to weave a more intricate and durable web. This would take more time, additional expertise and infrastructure. We invested significant energy integrating the emerging insights into our plans and work in 2015, including extending our current Strategic Plan from five to seven years. In addition, we developed an organization wide learning framework that tasked each team to identify their key questions and what we need to measure to answer those questions and create a tighter feedback loop into our programs.

Toward the tail-end of the year, we also discovered the importance of critically reexamining the path to reach our vision. The success of our methodologies brought pressure to scale them. Our preliminary interpretation of scale—essentially more of it, in more places—led to conflict in identity and capacity. We are a midsized organization that is still learning the art of managing things at scale. We needed to make choices regarding what we should aim to do ourselves and what we should cause to happen. Surprisingly, arrival at that seemingly simple insight was a challenging and at times, a fraught path.

In between these two choices was a year of intense activity and some gratifying validation. Seven years of patient investment in developing a violence prevention methodology came to fruition. Rigorous data published in one of the most prestigious journals confirmed that our hypothesis and practical application of it was effective at preventing violence against children in schools. This brought organization-wide credibility to an idea we had subscribed to, with at times wavering confidence: that developing sustainable solutions is an art, and requires iteration, investment, cultivation and a good measure of faith. Despite it being the content of our day to day work, having hard data and a credible independent institution confirm that it is possible to prevent interpersonal violence in a relatively short period of time stunned even the ardent believers within the organization and elevated spirits well beyond any team building process can ever do.
A significant boost to that organization wide elevation of spirit was also provided by the success of SASA! In 2015, over 40 agencies adopted, adapted, tweaked and implemented SASA! in their own context without explicit invitation or advocacy from us. In collaboration with Trocaire, we adapted SASA! to speak to those who work with faith leaders and created SASA! Faith. Although we did not hesitate in creating headwind for it, SASA! demonstrated to us that good ideas fly on their own. We have also had to learn, sometimes with a little anxiety, that when they fly on their own, they also have a life of their own. We worried about the quality of adaptation and implementation in far-off places, but nevertheless celebrated its independence as a tool that agencies all over the world tap into as a source of inspiration for their work.

In the interstices of these larger outcomes, we spent a lot of time solving problems: how to track attendance at school where there is incentive to inflate numbers; how to discern whether we are specifically responding to the needs of participants who travel from far and wide to attend our learning processes; how to communicate efficiently both internally and externally; how to manage the enormous mountain of emerging data and create tight programmatic feedback loops; how to boost transparency in our financial management and most of all how to become more efficient at doing our work.

2015 was a year of honing our vision and refining our strategic approach. It was a year in which, as we report in following pages, we made agonizing choices and took a principled stand. We invested in equal measure in the credibility of our outputs and the internal infrastructure to assure the quality of that contribution. We continued to enjoy support from many partners in that journey and emerge from it, not only with a sense of satisfaction but also energy for the coming year.
Raising Voices 2015 Annual Report

PRACTICE

The strength to act lies in everyone. This year, the Practice team at Raising Voices continued to engage with communities and partners to support activism against violence. We did this through developing strategic partnerships with ten organizations in Uganda to prevent violence against children, which are now carrying out community- and school-level violence prevention activities, as well as providing front-line support to children in need. In addition, we partnered with 40 organizations in and out of the Africa Region to prevent violence against women.

Violence against Children (VAC) Prevention Centers are a partnership between Raising Voices and community based organizations (CBOs) throughout Uganda. With investments and capacity building from Raising Voices, VAC Prevention Centers become local hubs of activism that reach out to community members, schools and local leaders. They are a resource for children experiencing violence, and a place to turn to when they need help. Communities collaborate directly with these centers for activism to prevent violence against children at home and at school.

Violence Prevention Learning Center is a collaboration between Raising Voices and the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), aimed at developing capacity of other organizations to prevent violence against women effectively. It offers highly interactive courses linking theory and practice, with follow up technical assistance for taking action. Courses this year included guidance on SASA! implementation, as well as new courses on ending violence against women. In 2016, we will expand the mandate of this Learning Center to include courses on prevention of violence against children.

implementing, inspiring and strengthening community activism to prevent violence against women and children
SASA! Adaptations

In partnership with ToCaire Uganda, Raising Voices adapted the SASA! Activist Kit for use by Christian and Muslim faith communities. SASA! Faith will help religious leaders and members to explore the religious values of justice, peace and dignity and how communities of faith can prevent violence against women. The adaptation modified existing SASA! tools like dramas and posters to fit Muslim and Christian realities, as well as developing new tools like sermon notes and discussion guides on the Holy Bible and Holy Quran.

A guide for communities

MADA! Adaptations

In addition, an adaptation of SASA! for communities in Haiti was published this year with Beyond Borders; this is the first formal adaptation of SASA! in their own contexts in September. The geographic distribution of partners has expanded as well, now including the Middle East and the South Pacific. In addition, we trained 19 partners of the USAID-funded DREAMS initiative on SASA! Start Phase. We have also conducted two new Learning Center Courses: Inspiring Community Activism and The Power Analysis, engaging a total of 45 participants from 29 organizations. These courses are designed to increase the impact of any violence against women prevention programming. They explore fundamental concepts that underlie effective prevention work and how these concepts translate into practice. Courses have received positive feedback from participants, and at the same time, many organizations have not followed up with concrete programmatic changes after the courses. Factors that could be affecting take up after the course include a lack of senior staff participating in the course, staff turnover and communication challenges.

In 2016, we hope to further hone technical assistance methods, investing in efforts to clarify roles and enhance trust with partners, so they feel free to communicate even when activities are not running smoothly. We will also seek to understand if the Learning Center is providing what organizations need, by talking with communities-based organizations and the donor community before determining courses to be offered in 2016.

Support to partners: SASA! and Ending Violence against Women

This year, our violence against women Practice team has grown significantly to keep up with increasing demand for technical assistance. We supported the 25 SASA! partner organizations this year; 11 from 2014 transitioned from the Start to Awareness Phase and 14 additional partners were trained to begin implementing the Start phase of SASA! in their own contexts in September. The geographic distribution of partners has expanded as well, now including the Middle East and the South Pacific. In addition, we trained 19 partners of the USAID-funded DREAMS initiative on SASA! Start Phase.

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VAC Prevention Centers

Raising Voices supported ten VAC Prevention Centers in five districts of Uganda this year. We invested in all the personnel of the Centers and developed their understanding of violence against children, why it happens and what could be done about it. We signed agreements that required specific actions and compliance in return for this capacity building and financial support. In addition, we took two key projects staff from each center through a series of specialized trainings to broaden their knowledge and skill sets to address violence against children, including guidance and counseling training, child protection policy, developing a referral directory, reporting and documenting violence against children cases, and advocating for children through the local response system. Eight out of the ten centers have designated rooms with necessary equipment to receive reports from children experiencing violence.

In 2015, Raising Voices worked with VAC Prevention Centers and other partners to conduct over 336 community dialogues, roll out the Good School Toolkit in 200 new schools, and support participating schools in their communities. In addition, partners have led and formed district-based coalitions with the aim of influencing local government policies.
At least **20 countries** utilizing SASA! and organizations in **17 countries** directly engaged with Raising Voices to use SASA!

**34 new partners** supported to use SASA! in 2015

**260 Good School** Launches

**139 violence against children prevention murals** painted

Over **43,200 community members** reached through violence against children community activism events

**116 participants** in the violence against women prevention Learning Center courses

**260 Good School** trainings for schools/teachers conducted by partners

**336 violence against children community activism events** held

**5 Learning Center** courses facilitated by Raising Voices

**1,820 teachers** reached by partner trainings

**16 partners** currently using Good School Toolkit

**2,316 children** accessed VAC prevention centers

**336 violence against children community activism events** held

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In this part of our work we aim to embolden the culture of learning at Raising Voices through formal research and reflective processes where staff carve out space to synthesize experiences and consider issues that shape the context of our work. Under the broad goal of expanding the body of knowledge in the field of violence prevention, the department is oriented both internally and externally. Learning activities are designed to bring more rigor and structure to how Raising Voices learns from and evolves its own practice, as well as to extract credible evidence which grows our influence in the region and beyond.

In 2015 our learning area of work continued to expand as we articulated several core questions to guide our learning agenda and initiated new partnerships to help drive the work forward.

Key achievements in the Learning area of our work include:

Raising Voices-led studies to explore key questions

A notable achievement in 2015 was developing two successful proposals to study key questions emerging from our work. Both studies are being led by Raising Voices with the support of academic institutions, a notable shift from previous years and an indication of our increasing credibility as a learning organization. The Adaptations Study (funded by the UN Trust Fund) will run for the next three years, during which time Raising Voices, the University of California, San Diego and three SASA! partners will investigate how SASA! is being adapted for different contexts. The resulting case studies will help us better understand SASA!’s adaptability as well as the critical components of the methodology that must be engaged to generate impact. We will incorporate the emerging insights into several tools to strengthen SASA!’s global implementation.
In 2015, the learning and Good School teams continued the detailed work of developing and supporting a robust M&E framework for the 1000 Schools project. Throughout the year, learning team members completed over 42 technical support visits to partner organizations and schools in order to provide refresher trainings on how to enter information—and analyze data—using the customized online system developed the previous year. While continued support is needed to maintain capacity and momentum, over the past few months we have seen notable improvements with over 4,200 total activity-level records entered into the system by partners to date. In addition, over 30 primary school teachers are using smartphones to collect daily attendance data and sync it to our system (using a custom application developed by Vera Solutions). To our knowledge we are the only organization in Uganda relying on mobile technology to track attendance—and in the process we have learned a lot about the benefits (and challenges) of utilizing tech solutions to quickly capture challenging data across a large geographic area.

An important milestone around the 1000 Schools M&E was the successful preparation and completion of the midline evaluation (led by Research World International). During the midline, 1,452 girls, 1,452 parents, 224 teachers, and ten partner staff were interviewed in eight districts of Uganda. The data collection required substantial effort to trace girls who participated in the baseline in order to more confidently assess how 1000 Schools may be impacting on girls as well as their families and communities. Data are still being analyzed, with findings expected to reveal important insights about the benefits (and challenges) of utilizing tech solutions to quickly capture challenging data across a large geographic area.

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In 2015 we spoke with over 70 parents and children in Kampala as part of the Intersections Study—an exciting new initiative (in partnership with Columbia University) that aims to explore the overlap of violence against women and violence against children within families.
LEARNING indicators 2015

4,277 partner records entered into an online database as part of the 1000 Schools centralized M&E system.

1,452 girls,
1,452 parents,
224 teachers,
and 10 partner staff interviewed as well as 83 school assessments completed for the 1000 Schools midline evaluation.

600+ boda boda (motorcycle taxi) passengers interviewed as part of the boda boda rapid assessment.

16 focus groups and 20 in-depth interviews with parents and children carried out for the Intersections Study.

10 skills building sessions facilitated for staff.

19 internal reflective processes held (including 8 to unpack research findings).

3 rapid assessments and 3 microstudies completed to explore key questions around our programming in progress.

5 partnerships underway with prominent research organizations (Columbia University; ICRW; Ideas 42; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; and University of California, San Diego).

600+ boda boda passengers interviewed as part of the boda boda rapid assessment.
With the arrival of new senior staff, Raising Voices was able to increase our participation in influential regional and global spaces this year. We encouraged a feminist analysis of violence against women, a whole-child perspective and use of the principles of quality prevention of violence. We did this through various platforms and events, like the GBV Prevention Network’s #power101 social media campaign, the National Dialogue on Violence against Children in Uganda, writings for activist, programming and policy audiences, among others. While peer-review articles add substantially to our reach, we also seek to engage policy-makers, program designers and activists to improve prevention programming on the ground.

Key achievements in the Influencing area of our work include:

**Good School Study shows significant reduction in violence against children**

In July 2015, *Lancet Global Health* reported that schools utilizing the Good School Toolkit showed a 42% reduction in physical violence against students by teachers in the past week. Study findings were also launched in Kampala to Government officials, education professionals and journalists, and in South Africa at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum, where it was awarded ‘best presentation’ of the forum. Additional papers published in 2015 based on the Good School study include an exploration of the link between school-level factors and children’s experience of violence and the ethical aspects of researching violence against children.

In addition, an article was published on SASA!’s effects on children’s exposure to violence against women in the home. Five additional papers are in the pipeline for publication in 2016.
Raising our Voices

We spoke in many spaces in 2015 where we were able to highlight the analysis underlying SRAS and the Good School Toolkit as well as cross-cutting principles of quality violence prevention. From a keynote to the New Zealand Family Violence Council to engaging policy makers in Somalia, the global violence against women prevention and response community at SVRI in South Africa to colleagues in London, Washington DC, New York and Geneva, we strove to inject evidence-based ideas and a practical 'on the ground' perspective.

At a global level, we were involved in Know Violence, a global initiative to put the issue of violence against children on the international policy maker's agenda and advocate with policy leaders. One of the Co-Directors is the primary author of a paper framing the case for preventing violence against children in schools. This will be published as part of a special series in early 2016.

Elevating Learning from Practice

Publications and documentation of programs and organizations in the Global South are largely produced by academics and practitioners in the Global North. It is critical to Raising Voices that the practice and experience of work on the ground is also valued and recognized as legitimate and relevant learning – and that this learning feeds into funding decisions, program design and implementation strategies. Towards this end, Raising Voices is developing a Learning from Practice series, comprised of accessible and focused Learning Papers to document its experiences of research and practice (published on the Raising Voices website).

The first three papers, released in 2015, include:

- Learning from Practice No.1: Organizational Perspectives, Creating an organizational culture for social justice activism
- Learning from Practice No.2: Organizational Perspectives, Growing as an activist organization through evaluation research
- Learning from Practice No.3: Research Perspectives, Walking In Her Shoes inspires a pathway of change In sub-Saharan Africa

Powering up with the Gender Based Violence Prevention Network

Sustained for more than a decade, the GBV Prevention Network continues to play a critical role in bringing activists together and providing conceptual leadership across the region on prevention of violence against women. Network materials continue to draw members and enrich their programming, from ten new Get Moving! partners committed to focusing on the strength and culture of their organizations, to the over 115 groups using the 16 Days of Activism Action and Advocacy Kits, or the over 2,000 members and enrich their programming, from ten new Get Moving! and reflecting on violence against women. Network materials continue to draw members and enrich their programming, from ten new Get Moving! and reflecting on violence against women. Network materials continue to draw members and enrich their programming, from ten new Get Moving! and reflecting on violence against women. Network materials continue to draw members and enrich their programming, from ten new Get Moving! partners committed to focusing on the strength and culture of their organizations, to the over 115 groups using the 16 Days of Activism Action and Advocacy Kits, or the over 2,000 people in the region who walked In Her Shoes this year. The Network is injecting innovative ideas, new ways of uncovering assumptions and creating more unity among members through personal connections and a shared analysis of violence against women.

This year, the Network supported eight members across the region to lead change in their countries based on the Call to Action to prevent violence against women, published in the Lancet in 2014. Groups are working on a range of initiatives from reforming policy on female genital mutilation (FGM) to operationalization of domestic violence law. The Call to Action also provided the driving impetus for this year’s 16 Days of Activism Campaign. Activism across the Network’s East, Horn and Southern members will focus on the first action of the Call to Action – “Show Leadership”.

Reaching new audiences through the VAC Media Campaign

In 2015, our national dialogue on VAC took on a broader reach by covering more areas in different parts of Uganda. We expanded our monthly audience from 2.5 million to 3 million as Raising Voices partnered with 34 radio stations and nine television stations spread across the country. In addition, the national dialogue targeted new audiences through different initiatives and communication activities, including: the taxi sticker campaign (2,500 stickers were branded on shared commuter taxis), a one-way vision bus sticker campaign (whereby 150 long-distance buses were branded); and the reflector jackets campaign (whereby 10,000 jackets were disseminated to boda-boda [motorcycle taxi] drivers to engage their passengers on VAC prevention).

The national dialogue has enabled Raising Voices to continue to play a critical role in increasing knowledge, influencing attitudes and inspiring action among the Ugandan general public with regard to the prevention of VAC. Our rapid assessments suggest strong penetration of the campaign—with the majority of participants reporting they have heard Raising Voices key messages and that this media engagement has influenced them to think differently about VAC—and, in some cases, persuaded them to change their behaviors. While we do not have representative data to draw broader conclusions, we believe that we have significantly contributed to the perception of VAC as a pervasive rather than isolated societal problem, and inspired a broader involvement in its prevention.
### INFLUENCE indicators 2015

| **2 national-level** violence against women prevention advocacy events and a national CSO coalition meetings in Uganda to inform educational policies to prevent violence |
| **8 academic publications** |
| **17,629 unique visitors** to GBV Prevention Network website and 519,204 page views to the Raising Voices website. |
| **125+ new members** joining the GBV Prevention Network in 2015 |
| **965 new Twitter followers** for a total of 1,349 (159% increase from 2014)  
**654 New likes on Facebook** (44% increase from 2014) |
| **43 media houses (34 FM stations and 9 TV stations)** are now partnering with Raising Voices, and 50 Films screenings were aired on TV |
| **4,277 partner records** entered into an online database as part of the 1000 Schools centralized M&E system |
| **1,918 individuals** included in Voices for Children database - the database now has **5,058 individuals** |
| **16 national-level** violence against women and **4 violent against children** staff presentations at international conferences/meetings |
| **40,500 radio ad spots** aired, **408 radio dramas**, **544 radio magazine shows**, **342 one-hour** live talk shows conducted, **6,018** violence against children radio spots and **128 TV shows** aired |
| **152 16-Days of Activism to Prevent Violence Against Women** kits distributed in 18 countries |
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2015 was an exciting year for the operations department. Key achievements in Operations include enhanced oversight and a growth in staff, with two new members joining the team. In order to strengthen its internal control and oversight systems, Raising Voices contracted four external agencies including auditors, capacity builders for key partner organizations, and compliance experts. These external reports offered fresh perspectives that brought much growth to Raising Voices. In addition, we trained key partner organizations in Quickbooks and use of Salesforce, built capacity of Raising Voices staff on key technologies and administrative and financial systems, developed a draft human resources manual (to be approved in 2016), and streamlined procurement policies, with an eye on elevating transparency. Raising Voices also introduced a more comprehensive ‘360 Degrees’ performance review system that engaged all staff in fostering collective accountability and growth.

Key achievements in finance include:

Our funding situation remained healthy throughout the year. In 2015 our income was USD 3,846,731 (three million, eight hundred forty six, seven hundred thirty one dollars) through 12 distinct partnerships excluding individual donors. This was a 2.2% increase in income compared to the USD 3,762,174 received in 2014.

In terms of expenditure, Raising Voices spent a total of USD 2,513,765 in 2015; this was an increase in spending of 14% compared to the USD 2,167,342 spent in 2014. The 2015 expenditure was primarily in the practice part of our three thematic areas of work. By the end of 2015, Raising Voices had a closing balance of USD 1,332,966 which was carried forward into 2016. Detailed financial reports (monthly, quarterly and annual) are available upon request including financial statements audited by Deloitte and Touche for both 2014 and 2015.

The chart below illustrates our expenditure in 2015 in USD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Running Costs</th>
<th>Organizational Development</th>
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<td>406,482</td>
<td>312,433</td>
<td>299,107</td>
<td>27,073</td>
</tr>
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Key achievements in finance include:
Organizational Reflections

Raising Voices 2015
Annual Report

a) ‘Yes’ has a price-tag. Collaborations and learning opportunities bring an urgent practical consideration: should we do it? This year more than others, we pondered about the choices we had made and what lay behind ‘yes’ of each of those choices. We wondered whether the outcomes of such calculations have yielded dividends worthy of the price paid. Each decision, whether it was about continuing to accept the conditions under which a donor will grant substantial resources, or agreeing to collaborate on a research project with a prestigious institution in a bid to gain credibility and visibility, closed off other areas of engagement. We need to learn the discipline of being clearly hold of and guard our question—the core of our motivation and the lines we will not cross in the service of remaining connected to our priorities.

b) More is not necessarily better. This year, it was easier to get lost in the momentum of our preliminary success. With impressive results for both of our methodologies, we assumed without sufficient critical interrogation that they should reach as many people as possible, as quickly as possible and in exactly the manner in which we had designed them. We have come to realize that scale is open to interpretation and should certainly be constructed narrative and priorities to get diluted and reinterpreted based on experience. We have come to believe that narrative.

c) Get a lock on our niche. As we traverse far and wide have our name to them deserve our meaningful intellectual engagement. We owned in a visceral manner that all activities that led to a strengthening exercise that has ultimately created a heavy price when we found that the data were unreliable. We had invested substantial resources in a baseline survey in one of our projects and instead of investing several years but in 2015 this simple truth became painfully visible. It acknowledged that there is no perfect tool, and that the whole exercise failed to inspire confidence in what could be learned from the data, unable at a high price, that the urgency of getting things done should not trump careful thinking through of what learning will emerge from it. We owned in a visceral manner that all activities that have our name to them deserve our meaningful intellectual engagement.

d) Do get a lock on our niche. As we traverse far and wide to explain our ideas and experiences, this particular question has become more salient then we had apprehended in the past. Are we purveyors of practical knowledge; are we experimenters with ideas; are we developers and packagers of what works; or are we a hybrid of all of the above? These questions have always been around but as we get stretched more and more, we begin with a specific question, usually something we want to learn or need to know to create better interventions. We wondered whether the price paid. Each decision, whether it was about our methodologies, we assumed without sufficient critical interrogation that they should reach as many people as possible, as quickly as possible and in exactly the manner in which we had designed them. We have come to realize that scale is open to interpretation and should certainly be constructed narrative and priorities to get diluted and reinterpreted based on experience. We have come to believe that narrative.

Raising Voices 2015
Annual Report

f) Doing without learning fails to create a virtuous cycle. Arguably we have grappled with this for several years but in 2015 this simple truth became painfully visible. It acknowledged that there is no perfect tool, and that the whole exercise failed to inspire confidence in what could be learned from the data, unable at a high price, that the urgency of getting things done should not trump careful thinking through of what learning will emerge from it. We owned in a visceral manner that all activities that have our name to them deserve our meaningful intellectual engagement.

g) Even people we disagree with can teach us important things. This year we also learned the humility of listening carefully, even to detractors. In one collaboration, the feedback was that while our work was of excellent quality, our management and accountability systems had important flaws in them that need to be addressed. It took us a while to take this feedback on board, mainly because of other tensions in the relationship. Eventually, it did lead to searching internal reflection on what we do with feedback and led to a creation of checks and balances before important decisions are made. It also led to a growing realization that has ultimately created a more accountable system.
These are hardly original insights, and have been articulated before by others with more eloquence. However, profound truths have to be apprehended personally to become real. In 2015, these insights permeated our experience and emerged with particular emphasis as we tried to navigate the minutiae of day to day choices. We accord them honorable place in our narrative. We also juxtapose that component of our narrative with an overarching feeling within the organization of becoming aware of the power of making choices. By balancing these reflections with the privilege of exercising organizational agency, we continue to take charge of our trajectory. Almost every staff member experienced the stresses and strains of a growing organization. However, there was also an underlying, organization-wide sense that taking responsibility for the growth and insisting on creating meaningful work with autonomy and dignity was the only way we can pull this off. We move toward 2016 armed with that belief, and with gratitude that we are in a position to do so.
Raising Voices deeply appreciates the support it received from its partners in the course of 2015. A heartfelt thanks goes to:

- American Jewish World Service
- DFID
- Foundation for a Just Society
- HIVOS
- Individual Donors
- International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
- Irish Aid
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- The Oak Foundation
- Sexual Violence Research Initiative
- Sigrid Rausing Trust
- Stephen Lewis Foundation
- William and Flora Hewlett Foundation