

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

# CONNECTING INSIGHT TO ACTION

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## LETTER FROM BOARD LEADERSHIP AND PRESIDENT

2020 truly tested ICRW's resilience and resolve. With the rapid spread of COVID-19, we experienced unprecedented challenges that forced us to change the way we live and work. Organizationally, we quickly shifted to a virtual workplace, adapted our workplans and research methodologies, and continued to focus on the work that matters.

The pandemic amplified existing inequalities and shone a harsh light on new disparities worldwide, further escalating the need for solutions to barriers that women around the world face every day—in issues such as employment, childcare, and healthcare.

That's why, since 1976, ICRW has relentlessly pursued our mission and vision of a more equitable world. As social scientists, we have always known through our research, that when women and girls thrive, entire communities thrive. This is apparent now more than ever, and we will continue to work toward gender equity, social inclusion, and shared prosperity.

As an organization, we've taken steps to uphold our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Working in partnership with DEI experts, we've formed a global in-house working group and surveyed employees to gather their perspectives on work-life balance. We continue to move toward more fully integrating these values into every aspect of our work.

ICRW remains committed to using our research, advocacy, and advisory services to interrogate injustice, drive evidence-informed solutions, and collaborate with our partners globally to chart inclusive pathways forward. This work is only possible with the support of partners who share our vision for a more equitable world. Thank you for helping us dig deep to bring proof to power.



**SARAH DEGNAN KAMBOU**

President and CEO



**SCOTT JACKSON**

Chair of the Board



**PATIENCE MARIME-BALL**

Vice Chair of the Board

# COVID-19

In 2020, the world faced the rippling impact of COVID-19 across healthcare systems and the global economy. The pandemic also shed more light on deeply entrenched social inequities. In response, ICRW tackled the fallout from the pandemic by providing support to the relief efforts and adopting new strategies for developing evidence-based solutions.



## SHIFTING FOCUS TO RELIEF SERVICES

In the spring of 2020, in compliance with lockdown restrictions and in the interest of public health and safety, UMANG—a program designed to empower girls and advocate for policies to end child marriage—was put on hold. In response, the team quickly developed strategies and interventions to mitigate the adverse impact of the lockdown on adolescent girls and their families. The UMANG team from ICRW Asia worked closely with the government, district administration authorities, and other partners to provide support, community assistance, and response activities in Godda and Jamtara districts of Jharkhand.

Activities helped amplify and strengthen the reach of the government response, including the distribution of essential supplies and raising awareness about hand washing and social distancing. The team helped distribute food, essential supplies, and sanitization kits, and supported community members in accessing cash entitlements provided by the government. At the height of the crisis, ICRW was proud to see many of the girls in the UMANG program actively leading and participating in response activities in their own communities, making and distributing home-made masks, and spreading awareness through social media.



## SEX-DISAGGREGATED COVID-19 TRACKER

In September, ICRW and partners Global Health 50/50 and the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) launched the world's most comprehensive global dashboard on sex, gender, and COVID-19.

The dashboard is the only global initiative that systematically collects, publishes, and analyzes national COVID-19 data on men and women separately, illustrating how COVID-19 affects the health of men and women differently and providing crucial data to those outside of research establishments.

The combined evidence will be used to inform a set of effective, real-world recommendations for governments. The new data provides insights on how current policies can be tailored to incorporate gender considerations that have a better chance of reducing the impact of the pandemic and reaching people equitably with the health services and support they need, while also lessening the economic impact of the epidemic.

## DR. RAVI VERMA APPOINTED TO NATIONAL TASK FORCE

In May, Dr. Ravi Verma, Director of ICRW Asia, was appointed to a national task force convened by the Indian Council of Medical Research to identify research priorities and initiate research studies related to COVID-19. In this role, Ravi worked within the Operations Research Group of the task force to help the Government of India understand and address bottlenecks in the healthcare response to the COVID-19 crisis; identify research priorities and partners; and develop research protocols for studies on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on families and communities.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

ICRW's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has been a long-standing one, but we must continually challenge ourselves to do more. 2020 was no different. With an institutional investment and strong commitment from the Board, ICRW established a DEI team composed of staff across offices and with diagonal representation that brings together a wide range of perspectives. A second task force was set in place to take the ideas coming through the global DEI team and put them into action.

External consultants Ellavate Solutions and KPMG were brought on board to administer an all-staff survey, intended to serve as a foundation for a multi-year action plan. The plan will be built out to include both the important internal work at ICRW—where staff will delve into biases, as well as institutional policies and practices—and approaches to how ICRW shows up in the sector, among partners and donors, and in digital spaces.

It is vital that ICRW looks deeper at institutional shortcomings, pathways to growth and belonging, and approaches to dismantle long-standing social inequities that have maintained unequal access to power globally. ICRW is dedicated to overcoming the challenges that lie ahead—to interrogate injustice, drive evidence-informed solutions, and collaborate with partners near and far to reimagine and create a better world.

# PROGRAMS

## COLLABORATION WITH GAP INC. ON COURSE TO IMPACT OVER 1 MILLION WOMEN ACROSS THE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN

2020 marked 13 years since ICRW began working with Gap Inc. on the company's Personal Advancement & Career Enhancement (P.A.C.E.) program, which was designed to support women who work in the apparel industry globally. This support has included skill-building, technical training, and opportunities for workplace advancement.

The P.A.C.E. program was initially delivered to partner facilities starting in 2007, reaching seven countries and directly impacting over 20,000 female garment workers. In 2013, the program was expanded to women and girls in surrounding communities.

Joined by Bangalore-based NGO Swasti Health Resource Centre, ICRW and Gap Inc. designed and developed curriculum lessons on communication, time and stress management, decision-making, and problem-solving. And starting in 2009, ICRW conducted evaluations

at six factory sites—two in India and one each in Cambodia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and China. Findings from these multi-country evaluations demonstrated that P.A.C.E. is an effective, sustainable, and scalable model, yielding high returns for women, their families, and the businesses where they work.

At the 2015 Clinton Global Initiative meeting, Gap Inc. announced an ambitious goal to extend its workplace education program to one million women and girls worldwide. As of late 2020, over 715,000 women in 17 countries had participated. With ICRW's support, P.A.C.E. has been implemented in 400 factories globally. Gap Inc. anticipates reaching that one million women goal within the next couple of years.

More recently, ICRW's Asia team was asked by Gap Inc. to collaborate with Water.org, CARE India, and the Institute for Sustainable Communities to develop a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) curriculum and evaluate the impact on the health and well-being of women and girls through the program. ICRW will continue to support Gap Inc. as the company expands and refines the program.

### BREAKING NEW GROUND IN WASHINGTON, DC AND UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STUDENTS

In 2019, ICRW kicked off new research in Washington, DC. Teaming up with Anacostia High School, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE), and a number of youth-serving organizations, ICRW spearheaded efforts to design an evidence-informed out-of-school program, entitled #AnacostiaConnected, that would serve students in their final two years of high school.

The program was intended to develop students' practical life skills and employment readiness, as well as offer opportunities for holistic healing and experiential learning to build self-esteem, decision-making skills, relationship management, and academic engagement.

As COVID-19 rapidly gave rise to social and economic disruption in 2020, ICRW shifted gears and conducted an appraisal of lived experiences and the impact of the pandemic lockdown on parents, guardians, and students enrolled at Anacostia High School. The resulting research strategy, "Understanding the Impact of the COVID-19 'Lockdown' on Parents/Guardians & Youth in Washington, D.C.," utilized online surveys and focus group discussions to assess the impact of COVID-19 on academic engagement, mental well-being, family functioning, and sense of safety for the students and parents of Anacostia High School.

The findings from this study will support the Connected Schools Program at Anacostia High School and inform programming to address the emerging needs of the students as the school returns to in-person learning.

### SUPPORTING ADOLESCENT GIRLS' DECISION-MAKING, SKILL-BUILDING AND EMPOWERMENT

Early, child, and forced marriage (ECFM) is a violation of a girl's right to grow in a safe environment, receive education, and realize her full potential. It compromises all efforts to overcome poverty, fight for gender equality, advance girls' education, and improve overall health and well-being.

In India, two interventions used multi-layered approaches to bring policy change and create a shift in social expectations for girls.

With support from the IKEA Foundation, the UMANG program aims to disrupt and end the practice of ECFM in Jharkhand State. The program's socio-ecological framework and gender-transformative approach focuses on interventions at the individual, family, and community level. In Godda and Jamtara districts of Jharkhand State, where the research is focused, one in 10 girls from 15-18 years of age are already married. Most unmarried girls in the study area perceive they have little say in marriage-related matters and decisions, particularly with respect to the timing of marriage (86 percent) and choice of partner (87 percent).

#### PERCENT OF UNMARRIED GIRLS WHO PERCEIVE THEY HAVE LITTLE SAY IN:

##### The timing of their marriages



##### The choice of their partner



Overall, 82 percent of girls viewed their father as the main decision-maker on matters of marriage. Most girls (80 percent) recognized the negative implications of early marriage and endorsed the need to attain an education and achieve career aspirations before marriage. However, only 43 percent agreed that it is appropriate for girls to express dissent if they do not like their parents' choice of partner.

Based on these findings, UMANG works with schools, local governance structures, child protection mechanisms, and education and health departments to ensure there is broad-based support for bringing an end to child marriage and ensuring girls feel empowered to make their own decisions. UMANG is expected to reach over 200,000 adolescent girls, men, boys, and community members over the course of the four-year program.

Another program in India, Plan-It Girls, similarly builds the agency of adolescent girls and

promotes gender equality at the local level. Using the Gender Equity Movement in Schools program as a foundation, ICRW tailored a life-skills and employability curriculum for girls in grades 9 and 11 in government schools in New Delhi, as well as in two rural districts of Jharkhand (Pakur and Deoghar).

In partnership with Restless Development and Pravah, the Plan-It Girls team has spearheaded interventions that integrate principals and teachers, parents, boys, community members, business leaders, and policymakers to create an environment that supports girls in their education, life, and career goals.

One of the strengths of the program is that it is integrated fully in the government school system, ensuring systematic and intentional engagement with heads of schools and teachers. The program is on course to reach 8,000 girls in urban Delhi and 2,000 in rural Jharkhand.

Credit: Florian Lang/ICRW (left); Anacostia High School Yearbook Staff (top middle); David Snyder/ICRW (center middle and bottom middle); Nikhita S./Unsplash (right)



# RESEARCH

At ICRW, our proof fuels social change. Our research generates and informs innovative solutions to social, economic, and health challenges. Our advocacy drives the passage of new laws and policies that work for women and girls. And our thought-leaders develop language and measurement frameworks that transform how the global community articulates and measures progress toward gender equity. Below are some of the impactful projects we worked on this year.

## REINVISIONING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Women are both uniquely impacted by the economic crisis triggered by COVID-19, and integral to its recovery. It is critical now, more than ever, to identify and overcome the underlying barriers to women's equitable participation in the workforce. ICRW set out to find some answers, and this year published results from two studies that explore women's economic participation—the *Women in Manufacturing study in Kenya*, and *Vikalp: An Exploratory Study on Non-Traditional Livelihoods in India*.

While these two studies had different scopes and methodologies, they arrived at a similar layered understanding. Vikalp identified three social spaces that are particularly important in shaping women's livelihood options: household, market, and state. Similarly, the ecosystem in which women work in Kenya is articulated across the micro (intrapersonal factors), meso

(business-related factors) and macro (policy) levels. These models suggest the value of more holistic interpretations of women's economic empowerment—interpretations that seek to acknowledge the influence of social norms on the perceived value of different types of work, and who is deemed qualified to do that work. They also aim to capture the nuances and full complexity of women's lives.

## PROMOTING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The imperative to earn and to generate an income propels many men, women, and even children, into entrepreneurship. Since women take on the lion's share of domestic care work, they must, to a greater extent than men, consider how to balance employment with responsibilities at home. Informal work may offer needed flexibility on hours worked and distance traveled, which can act as a significant draw for women. However, it is not surprising that the informal sector often leaves workers

without pensions, social protections and other rights that are afforded those in the formal economy. Supported by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), ICRW continued to build out a series of briefs this year that explore the various facets of and barriers to women's entrepreneurship. We highlight how women's enterprises drive global economic growth and reduce inequality, and we emphasize the need for interventions that directly and intentionally address the rights of entrepreneurs and the ecosystem in which they operate.

## INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN COVID-19 RECOVERY

The global socio-economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 has profound implications for the well-being of individuals, households, and communities. It has deepened existing social inequalities and heightened the risks for gender-based violence (GBV) and violation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) among

marginalized groups. As countries move to mitigate the health costs of the pandemic, the policy choices they make have economic and social implications, particularly for women.

This fall, ICRW launched a three-country research study supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the International Development Research Centre—REBUILD—to dig into these challenges. This is the first of what we hope to be many studies that engage experts across our global platform: Kenya, Uganda, India, and the U.S. The study explores how COVID-19-related health and economic shocks, and the policy responses to them, interact with pre-existing gender and social norms to impact livelihoods, experiences of GBV, and SRHR outcomes for women who work in the urban informal economy. We will translate our findings into an actionable agenda for policy makers and advocates to help build a more equitable post-pandemic world.



Women from the Self Help Group Alita Kole, taking care of their crops that they own together as a group. This gardening activity is part of an income generating activity supported by Reproductive Health Uganda.

# ADVOCACY

## LEVERAGING RESEARCH TO INFORM TRANSFORMATIVE POLICY: FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

As the world quietly marked the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, ICRW spearheaded the launch of a groundbreaking new vision and framework for Feminist Foreign Policy. In May, over 1,000 people tuned in to the launch of a collective vision for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States—an initiative that has now been endorsed by over 84 organizations representing thousands of Americans. These major milestones are the culmination of a years-long global and inclusive process involving research and consultations with more than 200 feminist academics, experts, and activists from over 40 countries to gather insights toward defining a gold standard for feminist foreign policy both globally and in the United States. As more and more countries adopt such policies, advocates are turning toward next steps for how to move feminist foreign policy from vision to reality.

With the World Economic Forum estimating it will take over 250 years to close the gender gap for women in the economy, ICRW has continued to advocate for women's economic empowerment (WEE). In addition to highlighting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women in the workforce, ICRW provided recommendations for the incoming U.S. administration to approach women's economic empowerment from a crosscutting perspective—to include GBV, care work, and health, among other issues. ICRW is also leading the creation of a global WEE advocacy and communications hub and coalition to streamline and aggregate evidence; leverage key campaigns; and drive policy change and funding to advance women's economic empowerment in priority countries.



Credit: Eleven Photographs/Unsplash

## NEW EVIDENCE REVEALS HIGH RATES OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN NORTH CAROLINA

In August, ICRW released first-of-its-kind research that estimates North Carolina to be among the top five U.S. states for the highest prevalence of child marriage. The new data confirms that child marriage continues to happen in the state, and that legal loopholes—such as allowing girls as young as 14 to marry if pregnant or parenting—continue to leave girls vulnerable. This research has equipped state-level decision-makers with evidence and recommendations to advocate for concrete policy changes to protect children.

**APPROXIMATELY 93%** of marriage applications included in this analysis were for a marriage between a minor and an adult.



# ADVISORY SERVICES

## EXPANDING CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS, BROADENING GLOBAL IMPACT

ICRW Advisors' corporate client relationships have flourished over the past year. With Unilever, our work has expanded from individual consultancies with leading brands targeting women's empowerment to include strategic support, driving and measuring gender equity and shared prosperity across Unilever's social sustainability commitments.

The team partnered with an impact investment group—the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG)—to support the launch of a Gender Action Plan and develop accompanying case studies and measurement frameworks. These tools capture both social impacts for women and communities and material benefits for the project/company supported by PIDG's subsidiary firms. The Gender Action Plan focused on project, portfolio, and group-level outcomes, from project selection and development, to building capacity in the firm's Development Impact (DI) team, including on gender-smart practices and metrics.

Advisors also worked with Nike to develop a self-diagnostic tool and a suite of resources that suppliers can use to determine where there are

opportunities to improve gender equity within their factories and what actions they can take to open and strengthen women's pathways to leadership. These publicly available resources are not only used by a subset of Nike suppliers but are being piloted with 60 suppliers working with six additional brands (C&A, H&M, Gap Inc., Inditex, Primark, and Puma). The use of these tools by multiple brands has the power to reduce duplication at the supplier level and serve as an industry best practice for enhancing gender equity within apparel and footwear manufacturing. As a result of these efforts, the partnership and self-diagnostic tool were featured in Nike's FY20 Impact Report.

And beginning in April 2020, ICRW Advisors began working with Heifer International on a phased initiative to drive diversity, equity, and inclusion/belonging (DEI/B) across the global organization. The team is spearheading an in-depth DEI/B assessment of the organization's culture, practices, and policies, with the aim to inform long-term action planning. In July 2020, Heifer's leadership engaged ICRW Advisors to assess the impact of deep-rooted racism in the U.S. on their staff and how best to support them by creating safe spaces for dialogue and working with staff to identify solutions for a more equitable workplace and sense of belonging.



Credit: Hakan Oguz, Yeşim Apparel and Textiles

A woman works in a factory in Yesim, Turkey.

# MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS



Over the course of the year, ICRW expanded its reach across a range of traditional media outlets at the global, regional, and local levels. In 2020, ICRW initiated a thought leadership series, *Our Facts. Our Future.*, with the intent of lifting up the voices of staff and drawing connections between different areas and aspects of our work. The first three in the series focused on positive youth development; women in nontraditional careers; and ICRW's work with Global Health 50/50 and the African Population and Health Research Center to collect sex-disaggregated data during the global pandemic. By highlighting both the challenges and successes faced, ICRW experts offer best practices and recommendations for further inquiry to others attempting similar work.

**Images from top to bottom:**

The *TIME* magazine featuring an article with ICRW Asia (Atule Loke for TIME).

The launch of ICRW's Women in Manufacturing Report in Nairobi on September 15, 2020. The report will inform stakeholders in mainstreaming gender equality in the manufacturing sector (Salaton Njau/Nation Media Group).

The New York Times promoted ICRW's feminist foreign policy initiative (Franziska Barczyk/The New York Times).



A mom and her newborn baby at the Maternal & Child Health Training Institute for medically needy in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Featured in a Ms. Magazine article by Aria Grabowski (United Nations Photo/Ms. Magazine).





Credit: Toni Mull/Redland Roses

# EVENTS

While in-person events quickly ground to a halt with the onset of COVID-19, ICRW adjusted over the subsequent months to host important virtual dialogues on topics like feminist foreign policy globally and for the United States, child marriage in North Carolina and across the U.S., and women in manufacturing in Kenya.

ICRW continued the yearly series of presentations from the selected Mariam K. Chamberlain and Paula Kantor Award Winners. In November, Paula Kantor Award winner Dr. Jabulile Mary-Jane Jace Mavuso spoke about their doctoral research on abortion seekers' and providers' narrated experiences of pre-abortion counselling in the public health sector in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Meanwhile, the following month saw Mariam K. Chamberlain Award winner Dr. Abhilasha Sahay share her research on public

activism as a strategy for countering violence against women.

In December, ICRW co-hosted a discussion with the Ford Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on how to work across movements and sectors to end all forms of gender-based violence—an important discussion to have in the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the lead up to the Generation Equality Forum.

That same month, ICRW hosted an event on COVID-19 and women in the informal economy as part of a cross-regional program called REBUILD, which aims to better understand the social and economic impact of policy responses to the pandemic. Given the economic fallout from COVID-19, this discussion and cross-regional efforts could not be more timely.

# PARTNERS & LEADERSHIP



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Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General

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Correspondent, Legal Affairs, National Public Radio

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Fellow and Deputy Director of the Women and Foreign Policy Program Council on Foreign Relations



Credit: Dominic Chavez/GFF - Flickr

**ICRW FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2020**

The two charts below represent the total institutional support and revenue, as well as the total institutional expenses for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020. Detailed financial statements can be viewed at [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org).

**SOURCES OF SUPPORT**

**Total: \$12.1 million**

**\$9.8 MILLION**  
Foundations, Corporations, & NGOs

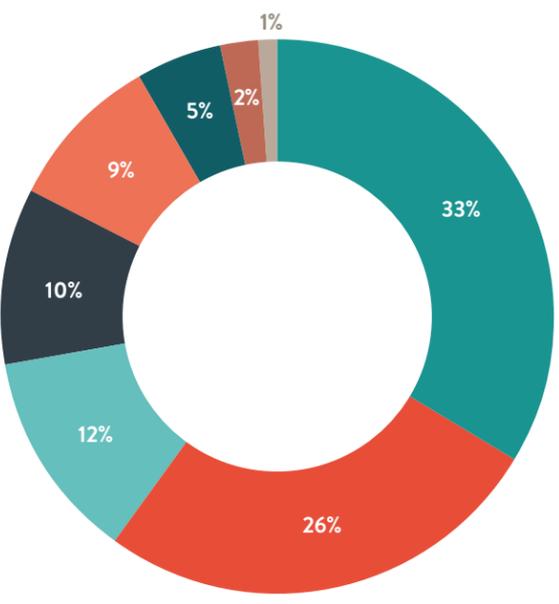
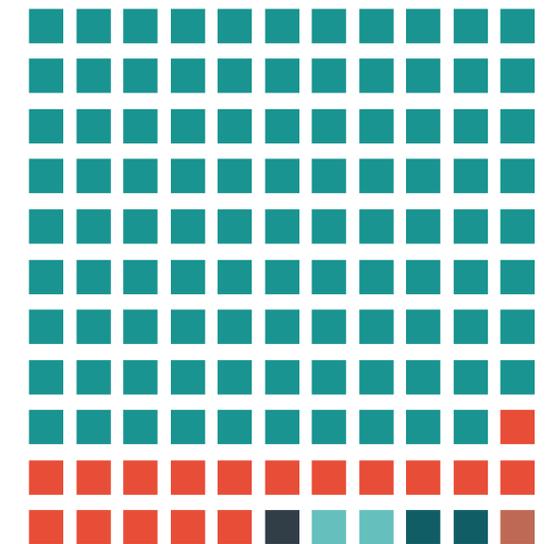
**\$1.7 MILLION**  
U.S. Development Agencies

**\$0.1 MILLION**  
Bilaterals

**\$0.2 MILLION**  
Investment income

**\$0.2 MILLION**  
Multilaterals

**\$0.1 MILLION**  
Other revenue



**USE OF FUNDS**

**Total: \$10.6 million**

- ICRW Asia
- Global Health, Youth & Development
- Advisors
- Policy & Advocacy
- ICRW Africa
- Gender, Economic Empowerment & Livelihoods
- Fundraising
- Violence, Rights & Inclusion

## LOOKING AHEAD

2021 is ICRW's 45th anniversary year. Looking back, there is so much to be proud of in over four and a half decades of seeking evidence-based solutions powerful enough to shift systemic inequities. While COVID-19 has proven to be a formidable obstacle to progress in 2020, ICRW will be there with all of you as we recover, rebuild, and reimagine what we can do together next.

2021 brings other changes. There's a new administration in the White House, with the United States' first female and Black Vice President. Child marriage is on the decline worldwide, and feminist foreign policy is on the rise. With an arrival of vaccines to counter COVID-19 and the world looking for new solutions to old challenges, there is an opportunity to build back with women, girls, and marginalized communities squarely at the center.

2021 will also see the end of an era for ICRW, as Sarah Degnan Kambou, President for nearly a decade, is set to retire. We look forward to celebrating Sarah's legacy and welcoming a new President. 2021 brings new opportunities, new partnerships, and new growth.

And with the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration now behind us and the Generation Equality Forum and new election for U.N. Secretary-General just ahead, this could be a watershed moment, but it will take an extraordinary amount of effort to tip the scales.

Our 45th year will be met with steadfast resolve to push boundaries and find new paths forward — from our offices in Nairobi and Kampala to New Delhi and Washington, DC. But we know we cannot do this alone. Through our partnerships and with our staunchest supporters by our side, we will take the next deliberate step together with an eye toward the horizon.





# ICRW

INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN

**PASSION. PROOF. POWER.**

## OFFICES

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### ICRW U.S.

1120 20th Street NW ♦ Suite 500 North  
Washington, DC 20036  
T +001.202.797.0007

### ICRW Asia

C - 59, South Ext, Part II  
New Delhi, India - 110049  
T +91.11.4664.3333

### ICRW Africa (Kenya)

Vienna Court, Ground Floor,  
State House Crescent  
P.O. Box 44168 - 00100 Nairobi, Kenya  
T +254.20.5138.584/6/7

### ICRW Africa (Uganda)

1st Floor, S&L Chambers ♦ Plot 14 Mackinnon  
Road Nakasero - Kampala  
P.O. Box 2475, Kampala, Uganda  
T +256.393.206.506

## ADDITIONAL REGISTRATIONS

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### ICRW-Netherlands

Kwakkenbergweg 62 ♦ 1, 6523 MN Nijmegen  
The Netherlands  
T +001.202.797.0007

### ICRW UK

Bates Wells ♦ Riverscape  
10 Queen Street Place  
London EC4R 1BE  
T +001.202.742.1259  
infoUK@icrw.org

[www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org)

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