Health Systems Global (HSG) is a global membership society connecting researchers, decision-makers, and implementers dedicated to health policy and systems research (HPSR), and knowledge, innovation, and action.

The Society, whose membership exceeds 2,000 diverse stakeholders in over 125 countries, focuses on building the field of HPSR and cultivating its collective capacity to strengthen and develop health systems that improve and protect health and well-being around the world.

Vision
Support health systems to attain better health, equity, and wellbeing by strengthening health policy and systems research, policy, and practice communities.

Mission
Connect and engage researchers, policymakers, health care managers, educators, civil society, the media, and donors from around the world to advance the field of health systems research and create opportunities for unleashing their collective capacity for generating, sharing, and applying knowledge, necessary for health systems strengthening.
Message from the HSG Board Chair

2020 was an unprecedented year; one that pushed global health to the forefront. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts brought tremendous challenges and calls for extraordinary action around the world.

Health policy and systems research (HPSR) emerged as a critical component for building back stronger, robust, and more resilient health systems, and will play a crucial role in ensuring that they remain fit for purpose.

Throughout this period, Health Systems Global was very active and engaged in advancing its mission to strengthen HPSR for supporting health systems in driving better health, equity and wellbeing. Marking almost a decade of contribution and leadership in HPSR, HSG continued to constitute, connect and sustain HPSR and practice communities from around the world to build the field, generate and translate knowledge, strengthen capacity, and pursue relevant advocacy.

This report captures our main achievements in 2020, outlining work around 4 key strategic objectives in the final year of our 2016-2020 strategy: building HPSR communities, advancing the field, mobilizing and supporting our members, and ensuring HSG is strong and sustainable.

Transitions were plentiful for HSG. Following a Board election, we welcomed new board members and successfully shifted the helm of Secretariat responsibilities to the Canadian Association for Global Health (CAGH), that has since been building on the foundations set by the Curatio International Foundation and the Institute of Development Studies. The new team together approached tasks, opportunities and challenges with confidence and creativity coupled with enthusiasm and energy. HSG continued its important work in convening communities to facilitate knowledge-sharing and strengthening HPSR capacities across all levels – individual, organization and network, though the pandemic forced us to take an adaptive and agile approach in our operations and with some of our programs. HSG found itself well positioned to respond with its highly engaged membership Society, deep partnerships, and a determination to progress.

The Sixth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2020), focused on re-imaging health systems, was recalibrated to the realities of a COVID-19 world. Six months before the start of the program, the global scale of the pandemic emerged and HSG, with its partners and through consultation, took a carefully considered decision to transform HSR2020 into a global virtual event running over three-phases and a five-month period. Organizers made the online experience an excellent one, the event retained the distinctive character of its regional hosting from Dubai and Beirut, and session content was made available free in hope that the body of work would make a significant contribution to further strengthening of health systems. It attracted 2296 registrations from 107 countries, with more delegates participating from LMICs than before.

In collaboration with the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR) and Health Policy and Planning (HPP), we also launched the HPP journal supplement featuring 22 first-time women authors at HSR 2020. This followed a call for mentoring early-career women health policy and system researchers based in low- and middle-income countries that attracted 2525 applications. Additionally, #TheRightBalance Campaign cultivated awareness and action to address gender power imbalances and the structural barriers facing women in HPSR and practice generated much support and engagement through the Society and beyond.

TWGs continued to be active and vibrant communities around the world, publishing 10 blogs, and hosting 5 webinars. As part of the TWG renewals, the year started with an intensive collaborative process to revisit the guidelines that govern TWGs and outline a process to clarify how they can collectively pursue HSG’s mission.

A year from this review, we will be reporting on key developments that will support our mission: a new strategic plan development process undertaken to position our organization at the forefront of HPSR within the changing landscape of global health and shape the direction for the Society through to 2025; progress towards HSR2022 in Bogota, where we hope to be face-to-face, will also use the learning from last year, and retain virtual elements to enhance inclusivity; and the stronger foundation for the TWG renewal process which concluded in 2021 with launch of the new TWGs.

On behalf of HSG, I would like to thank our dedicated HSG members, the Secretariat, partners, and HPSR colleagues who have worked together to achieve so much under challenging circumstances in 2020. We look forward to sharing the progress achieved in 2021 and are grateful for your contributions and support. From all of us of at HSG, we thank you.

Barbara McPake Chair Health Systems Global Director of the Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne.
During 2020, HSG grew its diverse membership community. Whilst HSG is a society dedicated to promoting HPSR and knowledge translation, the society is by no means a home solely for researchers and academics. HSG members come from a range of sectors, including government, the private sector, and civil society, and bridge us to multiple communities through regional and topical working groups. Its 2,621 members globally reflect an overall increase of 920 new members from 2019 and a 35% growth. National and regional level society activity and engagement are primary contributors to this expansion.
HSG supports ten multidisciplinary Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) comprised of experts from across multiple communities and diverse geographies, sectors, and experience. These groups collectively represent the priorities of the Society and provide a platform for HSG members and broader communities to interact, foster dialogue, exchange experiences, and consider innovative solutions around particular issues in health systems research. HSG’s ten TWGs reflect a total of 4,085 participants.

2020 TWGs

- Community Health Workers
- Emerging Voices
- Ethics and Justice
- Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings
- Medicines in Health
- Quality in Universal Health Care
- Social Science Approaches
- Teaching and Learning
- The Private Sector
- Translating Evidence into Action

HSG’s ten TWGs have been active throughout 2020 building awareness, sharing insights, strengthening capacity, and developing and delivering effective resources and tools.

Publications

10 blogs
- Ethics Resource on COVID-19

Events - 5 webinars

1. Sustainability and Transition of Improvement Efforts
   23 participants - Quality TWG
2. Approaches to accelerating and enhancing Teaching and Learning in HPSR
   83 participants – Teaching & Learning TWG
3. Supporting the next generation of health policy and systems researchers: Lessons learned across three teaching and learning case examples
   40 participants – Teaching & Learning TWG
4. Interactive teaching approaches for HPSR to address current and future consequences
   70 participants – Teaching & Learning TWG
5. Evolving evidence, fake news, and emerging contexts: researchers at the nexus of EIDM for COVID-19
   72 participants – Translating Evidence into Action TWG

Regional Networks: facilitating knowledge-exchange and learning

These networks seek to facilitate knowledge exchange and mutual learning between different regions of the world. These networks host members events, webinars, document and share evidence and experiences from their respective regions and convene and collaborate with national and regional partners to advance HPSR.

Five Regional Networks

- Africa
- Asia and the Pacific
- Eastern Mediterranean
- Europe
- Latin America and Caribbean
Connecting a global community

**Our digital presence**
The HSG website, social media channels and newsletter present an important digital presence for the Society facilitating valued resources for knowledge sharing with and between HPSR community members and wider audiences around the world.

We host regular webinars to share research, enhance capacity and skills of both HSG members and our wider network, and encourage peer-to-peer learning and support. Additionally, the monthly newsletter continues to provide a regular source of news and information about Society and partner’s activities.

Twitter remains the primary channel used by HSG members, with the HSG Twitter account passing the 20,000 followers mark in 2020 and acting as a key platform for participants of the **Sixth Global Symposium** on HSR2020 to engage with one another, promote their sessions, and share insights from the proceedings.

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**A new online home for HSG**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>54,171</th>
<th>209</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>209</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WEBSITE VISITORS DURING 2020 TO OUR NEW HSG ONLINE HOME</strong></td>
<td><strong>COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF WEBSITE VISITORS</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>TWITTER FOLLOWERS IN 2020</strong></td>
<td><strong>NEW TWITTER FOLLOWERS IN 2020</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NEW SUBSCRIBERS IN 2020</strong></td>
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<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NEW COVID-19 WAKELET COLLECTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTENT SUBMISSIONS</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*DATA CORRECT AS OF THE 31 DECEMBER 2020*
2020 marked the 10th anniversary of HSG’s flagship activity: the biennial Global Symposia on Health Systems Research. Thanks to the essential and long-standing commitment of HSG’s national, regional and global partners and supporters, the traditionally five-day-long symposia have each attracted over 2,000 participants to Montreux, Beijing, Cape Town, and Liverpool. In 2020, the Sixth Global Symposium (HSR2020) was scheduled to be hosted for the first time in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in the Middle East through a collaboration with the Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center at the Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut, and the Mohammed bin Rashid School of Government in Dubai.

However, the global scale of COVID-19 emerged. With six months to go from the start of HSR2020, HSG and partners took the carefully considered decision after consultation, to transform HSR2020 into a global virtual event running over three-phase and five months. It was a significant decision given that each symposium is a major two-year process of engagement and community building within and beyond the HSG membership society.

To build on and adapt the tremendous amounts of high-quality work already invested in the scientific program, HSG and partners sought to develop a focused and engaging virtual experience based on principles of effective and inclusive digital convening. These included harnessing the strengths of digital technology whilst recognizing where it is more challenging to replicate face-to-face interactions in digital form. The HSR2020 theme – **reimagining health systems for better health and social justice** – was used to embrace new thinking at a key moment for health systems around the world.

Thanks to the energy and contributions of HSG members and the wider global health systems community, the results from a reimagined virtual global symposium were impressive. HSR2020 attracted 2,296 registrations from 107 countries, with more delegates participating from low- and middle-income countries and from several regions, including the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia, East Asia, and Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa.
In the build-up to Phase One of HSR2020, HSG with its journal partner, Health Policy and Planning, launched the customary call for contributions from people with papers accepted by the HSR2020 program working group to a special supplement focusing on the Symposium’s main and sub-themes.

Through its web-based virtual symposium platform, all HSR2020 sessions were available on-demand to participants. HSG also utilised its YouTube channel to broadcast multiple free-to-access sessions to a global audience. Every session is now available for viewing via YouTube, ensuring that HSR2020 provides an important knowledge resource for HPSR and practice actors throughout the world.

An independent evaluation and the documenting of experiences during HSR2020 provides significant learning and insights for HSG and others as they reflect on and reimage how international convenings can take place during the COVID19 pandemic and beyond as the planet is faced by a climate crisis that necessitates adaptation and innovation.

By removing registration fee barriers, HSG was able to award 1,190 scholarships including to many participants who may not otherwise have been able to take part.

Participation via HSR2020’s online virtual platform was further built upon via the symposium’s social media reach and engagement. The official symposium social media hashtag – #HSR2020 – featured third in the top hashtags used by the scientific community with 11 million exposures on Twitter during Phase One in November 2020, behind only the likes of #COVID19. It exceeded the 6 million exposures for same period during HSR2018. The HSR2020 website received 46,755 visitors from 190 countries in 2020.

Registered participants by symposium

Thanks to all the HSR2020 co-sponsors and supporters:
Societal Award 2020

In 2020, HSG and the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research were pleased to announce Dr. Rajani R. Ved as the winner of the Sam Adjei Distinguished Public Service Award for leadership in evidence-based policy and health systems strengthening.

The Sam Adjei Distinguished Public Service Award is presented to an individual currently or previously in an elected or appointed position in government, an international agency, or other non-profit organization engaged in public service who has:

- demonstrated leadership in evidence-informed health policy formulation for stronger health systems
- championed the field of HPSR within their particular context
- significantly contributed to the enhancement of health systems, nationally and/or internationally.

“It is a great honour to accept this award, and although I am named as the recipient, it belongs equally to everyone I’ve ever worked with – grassroots workers, programme managers, and teams I have worked with on a day-to-day basis. My thanks to Health Systems Global and the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research for this recognition. Their commitment to health systems and policy research and knowledge translation, and consistent goal of ensuring diversity and representation in all their activities make HSG an exceptional organization, and I am proud to be associated with it.”

Dr. Rajani R. Ved

Women’s mentorship program launches special issue

HSG is committed to strengthening individual capacity and enhancing health policy and systems research (HPSR) uptake.

Peer-reviewed publications are important for communicating scientific work, recognition within the research community, and career progression. In July 2019, HSG and the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research in partnership with Health Policy and Planning, launched the Women Mentorship Program. Applications were invited from early-career women based in low- and middle-income countries working on HPSR issues, who are interested to publish their HPSR research for the first time in a global peer-reviewed journal but require guidance and support to submit a manuscript that has the potential to be published.

The program supported 22 young researchers with one-to-one support from paired mentors to convert their work into a publishable manuscript.
Their hard work led to the exciting launch session at HSR2020 of a Health Policy and Planning supplement featuring their papers. The papers span a wide range of equity-oriented topics affecting health system performance and outcomes. Topics include health workforce support, intimate partner violence, health sector corruption, implementation factors in service delivery, universal health coverage, and more. Countries represented include Kenya, Vietnam, Uganda, Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Brazil.

Thanks to:

We would like to extend a huge thanks to all of the mentors for their guidance and support throughout the program.

Seye Abimbola
Mohammed Alkhaldi
Salla Atkins
Edna Nyanchama Bosire
Judith Daire
Karen Grepin
Katrina Hann
Lisa Hirschhorn
Nasreen Jessani
Sharon Low
Lyn Macarayan
Robert Marten
Shiv Mathur
Devaki Nambiar
Ligia Paine
Robyn Preston
Lal B. Rawal
Marsha Orgill
Emma Sacks
Kerry Scott
Steph Topp
As a global membership organization, HSG advocacy campaigns are shaped by its members. With its diverse membership of HPSR players, and varied geographical, sectoral, and thematic representation, HSG has a strong capacity and capability to shape and advance the health agenda for the future. Among priority issues are the need to highlight the value and importance of HPSR in the pursuit of UHC and the demand for more action to tackle the structural barriers and power imbalances facing women in the field.

On the International Day for Women and Girls in Science on February 11, 2020, HSG launched #TheRightBalance campaign. It served to promote awareness and prompt action to address gender power imbalances and structural barriers facing women in health systems research, policy, and practice.

As part of this campaign, a dedicated website was designed to highlight key messaging and profile inspiring women, proposed by HSG members, who are working around the world on the generation and application of HPSR knowledge.

Launched through social media, the campaign was mentioned over 700 times in Facebook and Twitter posts, while its hashtag reached 527,000 users and received 3.36 million impressions on Twitter.

Campaign engagement peaked on April 20, 2021, with an HSG-hosted webinar to explore the power dynamics in global health - within global agencies, journals, and local health departments that prevent women and other groups from reaching their full potential – and to identify approaches to address these dynamics.

Following the webinar, the panelists and 2019-20 HSG Chair, Asha George, shared their reflections in a blog post: Advancing gender equality in global health is more than a numbers game. It also prompted Lavanya Vijayasingham, a post-doctoral fellow at the United Nations University to share her reflections: For #TheRightBalance in global health the structural matters.

The campaign, alongside the Women Mentorship program and 2020 Societal Award, represent a triumvirate of initiatives that promoted and supported critical contributions and leadership of women in HPSR.
2020 was a period of both planned transition and the need for adaptation and resilience. Over the past year, HSG has ensured that the organization remains financially secure and that its membership is engaged and participating in the transitions and pivots.

Governance

Board and leadership transition
In June, HSG announced the membership of the 2020 HSG Board following an election voted for by HSG members. Several new members were welcomed and later introduced to the HSG membership at the society’s virtual AGM at the end of 2020.
In December, after five years of energy and commitment toward building a strong and sustainable Society, the Curatio International Foundation (CIF), led effectively by Executive Director, George Gotsadze, ended its five-year term as HSG’s Secretariat.

Over the five years, CIF made the Society financially secure and organizationally more robust, enabling it to deliver on its ambitions and objectives. HSG not only manages its resources effectively and in a transparent and prudent way but has also emerged with robust and responsible policies and processes. It is a strong and sustainable platform for HSG to maintain and build from for a new phase of growth and impact.

As part of their five-year term, CIF committed to developing the portability of the Society’s Secretariat, so that the transition between hosts was smooth and well supported. This transition took place during 2020, and in October the HSG Board was pleased to announce the Canadian Society of International Health (CSIH) based in Ottawa, as the next HSG secretariat.

CSIH, a Canadian not-for-profit organization established in 1977 with over 300 members, has recently amalgamated with the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR) to form the Canadian Association for Global Health (CAGH). Led by Executive Director Eva Slawecki, the CAGH team brings a wealth of knowledge and skills from running an established national membership society with international reach and profile. CAGH also has experience working with HSG, that includes serving as a local co-host in 2016 of the successful Fourth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research in Vancouver, Canada. CAGH is well positioned to support the Society, its activities, and deliver the important role of the HSG secretariat.

Looking forward, CAGH’s priorities as HSG Secretariat include the 2021 renewal of HSG’s thematic working groups; preparations for HSR2022 in Bogota; and the consultation process to develop the Society’s new five-year strategic plan with its subsequent operationalisation.

Barbara McPake was named as the new Chair of HSG. Barbara previously served as Vice Chair and brings significant experience and commitment to the role of HSG Chair, with a strong vision for the society’s future. Adnan Hyder, re-elected to the Board, serves as the new Vice Chair of HSG, and Tolib Mirzoev took on the role in the HSG Board Officer team as Treasurer.

HSG expresses thanks and appreciation to Asha George and Daniel Maceira for their exemplary leadership and huge dedication and energy as HSG Chair and Treasurer, respectively, and gratitude to outgoing members Aku Kwamie, Fadi El-Jardali, Kumanan Rasanathan, Sara Bennett, and Soonman Kwon for their contributions to shaping and steering the Society.

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HSG continues to build and solidify its financial position to ensure a secure and sustainable platform for the effective pursuit of its mission and objectives.

### Revenue

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Item</th>
<th>2018</th>
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<tr>
<td>Symposium income</td>
<td>$1,507,586</td>
<td>$10,326</td>
<td>$554,703</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donor grants</td>
<td>$1,312,018</td>
<td>$241,013</td>
<td>$823,171</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership income</td>
<td>$69,064</td>
<td>$11,686</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$79,469</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,968,137</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$1,502,520</strong></td>
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### Expenditure

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<th>2020</th>
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<td>Conduct a global symposium</td>
<td>$2,015,813</td>
<td>$244,115</td>
<td>$912,383</td>
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<tr>
<td>General administration and management</td>
<td>$74,201</td>
<td>$78,605</td>
<td>$98,065</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evolve HSG’s governance</td>
<td>$41,788</td>
<td>$87,484</td>
<td>$39,698</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support and sustain TWGs</td>
<td>$72,060</td>
<td>$44,491</td>
<td>$28,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for the field of HPSR</td>
<td>$20,058</td>
<td>$91,670</td>
<td>$16,728</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a stable financial foundation</td>
<td>$258,739</td>
<td>$42,827</td>
<td>$25,807</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase the membership diversity and regional reach</td>
<td>$4,567</td>
<td>$41,028</td>
<td>$34,293</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate knowledge acquisition and dissemination</td>
<td>$11,892</td>
<td>$140,805</td>
<td>$48,839</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disseminate health systems research methods</td>
<td>$1,582</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forge strategic alliances</td>
<td>$6,442</td>
<td>$4,876</td>
<td>$1,526</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect diverse communities</td>
<td>$5,877</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote and support capacity building</td>
<td>$1,233</td>
<td>$5,226</td>
<td>$15,899</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
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### Net Assets

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<tr>
<td>Reserve fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>$138,029</td>
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<td>$97,781</td>
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<td>Board restricted</td>
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<td>$544,136</td>
<td>$97,801</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
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<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$1,564,834</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,831,165</strong></td>
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SOURCES OF REVENUE 2019-20

- 32% Symposium income
- 59% Donor grants
- 8.5% Membership income
- 0.5% Other

EXPENDITURE 2019-20

- 58% Conduct a global symposium
- 9% General administration & management
- 6.3% Evolve HSC’s governance
- 4% Support & sustain TWGs
- 5.4% Advocate for the field of HPSR
- 3% Establish a stable financial foundation
- 4% Increase the membership diversity & regional reach
- 9% Facilitate knowledge acquisition & dissemination
- 0% Disseminate health systems research methods
- 0.3% Forge strategic alliances
- 0% Connect diverse communities
- 1% Promote and support capacity building

NET ASSETS (IN THOUSAND $US)

- Unrestricted
- Temporarily restricted
- Board restricted
- Reserve fund

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Board Restricted</th>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>$1,593</td>
<td>$138</td>
<td>$48</td>
<td>$356</td>
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<td>$457</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>$1,198</td>
<td>$98</td>
<td>$98</td>
<td>$437</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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