



GENDER VIOLENCE
RESEARCH
AND
COLLABORATION
NETWORK

COLLABORATION. WELL-BEING. KNOWLEDGE SHARING.

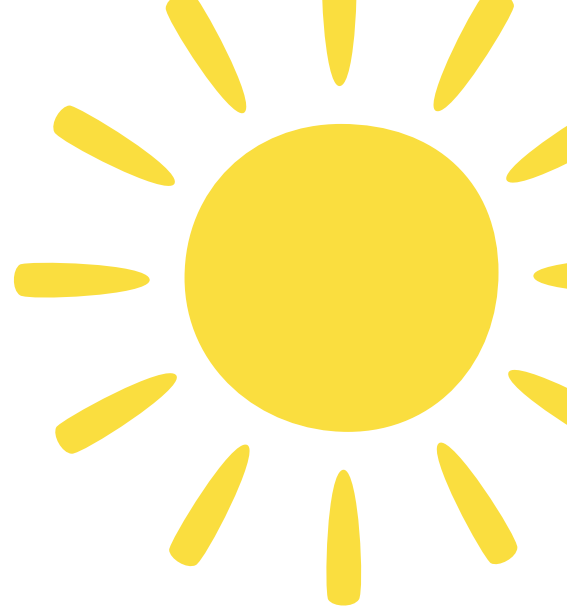


SVRI FORUM '24
SOUTH
AFRICA
CONNECT SHARE LEARN



IMPACT REPORT OCTOBER 2024

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introduction

Eighteen months ago, I put out a simple call on social media, wondering if anyone else felt the same loneliness I did and wanted a community in this field. I never could have imagined that today we would be a network of nearly 400 members, representing over 50 countries, with more than 60% of us from low- and middle-income regions.

Working in gender-based violence is profoundly challenging and often isolating. The weight of this work is heavy, and it's easy to find oneself grappling with poor mental health without always knowing where to turn. For many of us, the need for support runs deep, yet the path to finding it can feel unclear, or even out of reach. At times, I've felt the despair of not knowing where or how to seek the understanding and empathy needed to continue.

This community has become a lifeline. At SVRI, we gathered for eight events that weren't just about professional growth but about human connection and shared resilience. From informal coffee chats, lunches, and dinners to sunsets on the promenade and powerful round-table discussions, we created space for real conversations. One of the most meaningful events was our Early Career Researchers and Research Giants meet-up, where early- and mid-career researchers could connect directly with leaders in the field. These gatherings weren't limited to career paths; they encompassed the realities of navigating this space as mothers, as survivors, as young and mid-career researchers, and as newcomers. Mental health and well-being were not sidelined but prioritised, and it became clear that the need for collective care was urgent. We formed new friendships, shared our struggles, and even shed tears — but we also laughed, bonded, and built each other up.

When I asked myself what I needed a year and a half ago, during one of the darkest periods of my life, I knew I needed community, kindness, guidance, and compassion. I needed understanding from those who truly "get it" and patience from those who know the toll this work can take. This network has been all of that and more. Seeing people connect deeply within days, witnessing friendships and collaborations spark before my eyes — it has made every moment of hardship feel worthwhile.

We can't pour from an empty cup. To make a difference in this field, we must take care of ourselves and each other. This work may be difficult, but with a community to lean on, it is possible. I am filled with hope for the next generation and deep admiration for everyone walking this path alongside me. No one said it would be easy, but now, together, we can believe that it will be worth it.

Sabrina, Founder of the GVR-CN

// GVR-CN

SVRI REPORT OCTOBER 2024

Message From The Co-Facilitators

We're thrilled to welcome two incredible new members to our team post-SVRI, Segun Awolaran and Esther Nantana! Having been invaluable members of our network from the start, their kindness, passion, and commitment to building community have already made a lasting impact. We're excited to continue this journey together and look forward to the year ahead!

"If you want to fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together"

This was the first time I attended the SVRI Forum and all I can say was it was exhilarating, thought provoking and inclusive. I particularly enjoyed the Forum because I was part of a Early Career Research (ECR) Network that had separate events organized everyday (lunches, meetings with Research Giants, panel discussions and informal dinners). The events were specifically for those who were in their early stage of their life and the spaces offered the opportunity to talk about each others work, provide support based on experience and learn about the challenges across different settings.

In particular, I was especially impressed by the session "ECRs meet Research Giants in the Field" – Being part of this session was surreal. The ECRs interacted in small groups with those who were influencing the field of violence. This opportunity gave ECRs an ability to get to know the research giants and ask questions about challenges, opportunities and addressing work life balance. We laughed, listened and cried with each other on our personal struggles and joys. This session was a brain child of the lead organizers and brought to life by the SVRI leadership who allowed us to come under the umbrella of SVRI.

I also enjoyed the one on one sessions to network, connect and talk about different ideas and intersecting topics to bring collective change to the field. It was because of

these dedicated spaces, I was able to lean for support, pitch ideas and be part of the next generation of researchers and practitioners who want to influence prevention and mitigation of violence across the life course.

-Astha Ramaiya, GVR-CN co-facilitator

"Connections create possibilities—when we learn and grow together, our impact multiplies"

Attending my first SVRI Forum was an eye-opening and energising experience, filled with countless opportunities to expand both knowledge and network. The forum felt like a vibrant community where early career researchers (ECRs) were not only welcomed but celebrated. From daily lunches to immersive sessions, every event was thoughtfully crafted to bring ECRs closer to one another and to the broader GBV

research community.

One highlight was the dialogue "Building the new generation of evidence builders", where peers shared stories of resilience and perseverance, and I left with a renewed sense of purpose, knowing that these connections would support me throughout my career. The dedicated spaces for ECRs (with the memorable green sign) were more than networking opportunities; they were places to connect on a personal level

and discuss the real-life experiences behind our work. These sessions allowed us to explore topics such as the emotional challenges of fieldwork, the importance of self-care, and the unique hurdles faced by those early in their careers.

Ultimately, the SVRI Forum showed me the power of a supportive network that believes in the potential of emerging voices. I am happy that the creation of our ECRs group has contributed to this. I feel ready to carry this experience forward, knowing that the connections and insights gained here will shape our careers and contributions to the field of violence prevention.

-Luise Koch, GVR-CN co-facilitator

"It feels so good to be taken seriously!"

I had a wonderful time at this year's SVRI forum, mainly due to the events and spaces organised for early career researchers! It feels so good to see that the SVRI leadership takes the new generation of researchers on GBV seriously and is happy to provide the time, space and support for them to meet, network, learn from more experienced researchers, while also giving them the feeling that their voices matter. A personal highlight for me was the session organised with the "Giants in the Field" –

I was so happy to be able to get close to some of the researchers I have admired from afar for such a long time, get to know their more personal side, and receive career advice from them! I am also well aware that a session like this would have never happened had it not been for the unwavering support and legitimacy bestowed upon us by the SVRI leadership.

It was also great to have spaces just for us to meet – especially reserved tables at each evening event – I did not feel like a child hanging on to my supervisor all the time, instead I could do my own networking with my peers and feel less alone while at the Forum!

-Rebecca Brambilla, GVR-CN co-facilitator



OUR STORY SO FAR

OUR MISSION

We aim to create an inclusive and collaborative global platform for researchers and practitioners to advance the study and understanding of gender-based violence. By fostering a community of practice that emphasises knowledge sharing, networking, and mentorship, we strive to support early and mid-career researchers while leveraging the expertise of seasoned professionals. Through regular meetings, discussions, and collaborative projects, we aim to facilitate the exchange of insights, promote innovative research, and contribute to effective solutions in the field of gender-based violence worldwide.

We believe in creating a space that prioritises diversity, equity, and inclusion, welcoming participants from underrepresented groups and those from various professional and geographic backgrounds. By doing so, we hope to address the global challenge of gender-based violence with a wide array of perspectives and experiences.

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to foster a global community dedicated to understanding, researching, and addressing gender-based violence through collaborative efforts and shared expertise. We aim to bridge the gap between early-career and established professionals, creating a space where knowledge, resources, and support are accessible to all.

Our group exists to:

- **Facilitate Connections:** We bring together researchers, practitioners, and advocates from diverse backgrounds to form meaningful connections, allowing them to share insights, collaborate on projects, and support one another in their work.
- **Promote Innovation and Knowledge Sharing:** Through regular meetings, webinars, and events, we encourage the exchange of pioneering ideas, methodologies, and research findings. This collaborative approach drives innovation and strengthens our collective impact in addressing gender-based violence.
- **Empower Early Career Researchers:** Supporting the next generation of researchers is central to our mission. Through mentorship programmes, skill-building workshops, and networking opportunities, we help early-career researchers gain the confidence and expertise needed to lead in this field.
- **Support and Leverage Mid-Career Expertise:** We recognise the valuable perspectives and experience mid-career researchers bring to our community. Our programmes ensure they have opportunities for professional growth, peer support, and skill development. Through mentorship, leadership roles, and collaborative projects, we create spaces where mid-career researchers can both share their expertise and receive support tailored to their unique career stage.
- **Drive Advocacy and Policy Change:** We believe in transforming research into action. Our network champions advocacy initiatives and collaborates with organisations to influence policy, aiming to create lasting social change and improve responses to gender-based violence worldwide.

By fostering a diverse and inclusive community, we empower members to bring forward new ideas and solutions, ensuring that research on gender-based violence remains dynamic, responsive, and impactful.

378 MEMBERS

50+ COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

**62% MEMBERS FROM
GLOBAL SOUTH**

OVER 45 LANGUAGES

IN OUR NETWORK

OUR PRIORITIES FOR SVRI



01. Well-being

At SVRI 2024, we prioritised well-being by creating spaces for early career researchers to engage in open, supportive discussions about mental health and collective care. A standout session, “Academia and Perfectionism,” provided a safe environment to address issues like imposter syndrome, where attendees could share personal struggles, offer mutual support, and foster a sense of community. Additionally, informal gatherings over coffee, lunch, and even during a sunset allowed members to connect as individuals beyond their professional roles, creating moments of camaraderie that underscored the importance of well-being in this field.



02. Networking

The SVRI 2024 Forum offered us invaluable networking opportunities, where members connected with both peers and established experts in the field. Through a series of structured and informal events—including panels, meals, and relaxed evening gatherings—participants had the chance to forge genuine connections and collaborations. A particular highlight was our panel on “Building the Next Generation of Evidence Builders,” which enabled early career researchers to discuss their aspirations and the challenges they face. The presence of senior researchers and practitioners provided a bridge across generations, sparking new ideas and collaborative opportunities for the coming year.



03. Mentorship

Our mentorship priority came to life at SVRI 2024, where seasoned researchers—referred to as the “giants” of the field—engaged with early career researchers in both formal panels and informal settings. These interactions allowed emerging researchers to seek advice, gain insights, and feel empowered to shape their own paths in the field of gender-based violence research. The SVRI platform enabled meaningful exchanges on career development, research challenges, and life balance, leaving many feeling inspired and supported. By fostering these mentor-mentee relationships, we strengthened our network and honoured the legacy of those who paved the way, helping early career members feel equipped and motivated to lead in the future.

THE

NUMBERS HUMANS

In research, we're taught that numbers matter. They provide evidence in quantitative research and strengthen arguments in qualitative work. And while we recognize the importance of demonstrating our network's reach, we know that the remarkable individuals behind these figures are so much more than the bright, visually appealing images below.

Each member of our network is a vibrant individual with a unique story and a life rich in roles, passions, and identities. They are daughters, sons, wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, godparents, dog parents, hikers, adventurers, hobbyists, artists, singers, and dancers. Every person contributes not only their expertise but also their compassion, creativity, and whole selves.

Our community will always celebrate the depth and complexity of each member. Here, we embrace not only the professionals and advocates but the full, multifaceted individuals they are beyond this work. We believe that by honoring each person's humanity, we create a network that is not only effective but also deeply connected and sustainable.

48

New sign-ups to the network during the forum

68

68 WhatsApp group members for the forum

284

ECRs engaging on our network channels at some point through the forum.

8

Total events and meet-ups for ECRs throughout the week

44

Total attendees at the first ever ECR and Research Giants meet-up

THE IMPACT



This was my first time attending the SVRI Forum, and while I was so excited to meet everyone, I was also quite nervous! It's a big and busy event, and I wasn't sure how to navigate everything as an early career researcher. However, I found so much comfort in the ECR group—everyone was in a similar situation, which gave me a sense of belonging. It also helped mitigate some of the imposter syndrome I was feeling! By creating a space to connect with other first timers, and by creating an opportunity to connect with the well-established “giants,” the ECR Group helped me find my place at SVRI and in the field. I met so many incredible researchers, and I'm so excited to continue to work with and learn alongside all of them!

-Jack Cagney, USA



As a first time SVRI participant, I think my biggest worry was how I'd navigate the forum, from the busy schedule, to wanting to leverage the opportunity to network with other researchers and implementers. The ECR group gave me a sense of community throughout the event. By creating space to have meals, to exchange and to engaging with some of the brilliant individuals in the work we do. Grateful for the group and their support during the forum. Particularly to Sabrina who kept us informed, was warm and welcoming. It was a heartwarming experience.

-Esther Nantana, Namibia

THE IMPACT



The ECR group was absolutely vital to my success at SVRI. It helped me feel like I belonged at the event and like my contribution was not only worthwhile, but also valued by others in attendance. I was able to connect with incredible scholars across fields and geographies.

I'm nothing but grateful for the compassionate, rigorous, and encouraging space that the network created at the forum. Thank you!!!

-Sarah Nandi, USA

The ECR network is an invaluable platform for researchers with shared interests in this critical field. This group offers unique opportunities to exchange ideas and refine research approaches, benefiting from the diverse perspectives and experiences of others. Attending the SVRI Forum 2024 in Cape Town, South Africa, from October 21st to 25th was especially meaningful for me, as it allowed me to connect with fellow early-career researchers, gain insights, and share my passion for learning.

At the SVRI Forum, I met researchers who shared valuable perspectives on global violence prevention. They reinforced the importance of building networks that will contribute to our work as early-career researchers in the future. I am deeply grateful to the initiators of this thought-provoking and globally impactful chain. As researchers, it is crucial to understand the diverse regional, cultural, and social contexts that shape gender-based violence and affect prevention efforts. Through the global reach of the ECR network, we gain knowledge that goes beyond any one country or culture. This platform also fosters collaboration and dialogue, providing a supportive space to honestly discuss our work. Listening to other researchers' potential and dedication to gender-based violence prevention was inspiring. I am truly thankful to the ECR initiative team for creating such a remarkable platform.

-Afreenbanu A Khadirnavar, India

THE IMPACT

Question: How would you describe your experience as an early-career or mid-career researcher at the forum?

At the close of the forum, we invited early and mid-career researchers and practitioners to share their experiences and insights on both the conference and the GVR-CN through a survey. We're excited to share their feedback below, highlighting the impact our network has made on their journeys and professional growth!

I thought it was well structured and offered a great opportunity to both connect with other early career researchers and 'giants.'

I remember on the first day I was overwhelmed by the number of people at the conference. However, the different groups I was part of was very helpful in getting to know people and talking to them. I was in particular thankful for the Monday afternoon lunch with ECRs that allowed us to get into small groups get to know each other. I was also humbled to be part of the seasoned researcher's event where both ECRs and research giants shared the same space.

It was really nice to have a 'home' to return to, especially as someone who came without knowing many other delegates. Having friendly faces that are welcoming of each other in the ECR network made the huge conference less intimidating.

The sessions were informative and highly relevant, offering a deeper understanding of the diverse challenges and innovations within the field.

This was my first SVRI and I presented my poster. The conference was very big and also a bit overwhelming as there were so many panels and participant driven events one could go to. I attended great presentations and learned a lot but it was a lot to take in especially with our research field.

Exciting, overwhelming, exhausting, nerve-racking

THE IMPACT

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Question: Did you find our networking events beneficial?

The structured networking elements was helpful—especially the small group discussions. I love to see this group could facilitate deeper, targeted connections and allow us to interact with experts in areas directly aligned with our research goals.

Yes! And I know for people who attended alone they were absolutely crucial

Yes very much! As I didn't know many people, your events made it easy to connect and talk to others. For me, early career researchers were more approachable than other participants at SVRI and it was great that you gave us a space to connect.

Yes... the networking events were fun! I especially liked the fact that we split up into small groups. I also liked how open people were with including everyone for dinners.

These were meetups that allowed friendships to develop organically. I believe many of us made a couple of friends through this conference and went on to go sightseeing etc together, even not as part of an organised group. That was really nice!

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Question: If you feel comfortable, could you share where you are from, and what your role is or interests are?

Germany, and I am interested in IPV towards women, social and gender norms around it and prevention programs

Tanzania, Faculty, my interests include prioritizing adolescents, envisioning a safe world and aiming to make a difference.

South Africa. Child protection, mental health and food insecurity!

UK/ Southeast Asia. PhD Student. International development, Migration and Health, Adolescent Health, Refugee Child Protection

Kenya. I am interested in HIV and IPV.

UCLA School of Public Health, Los Angeles, California; PhD Candidate; Sexual Violence Prevention in schools and higher education institutions

The Netherlands, child protection, research

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Dear SVRI Team,

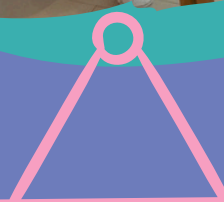
We would like to extend our deepest gratitude for the incredible opportunity you provided us to host our events at the SVRI Forum 2024. Your unwavering support and dedication to creating a space where we could connect, learn, and grow as a community of early career researchers has meant so much to us. It is rare to find such a platform where emerging voices in our field are given the chance to share experiences, engage in meaningful dialogue, and build strong relationships with both peers and leaders. Your encouragement and trust have empowered us to continue this vital work, knowing that we are not facing its challenges alone.

Your backing in bringing our vision to life made it possible for us to foster moments of true connection, centring on collective care and well-being—often overlooked aspects of gender-based violence research. We have been deeply inspired by the inclusive spirit that SVRI embodies, which nurtures compassion, collaboration, and genuine community-building.

Looking ahead, we are excited to strengthen and grow the partnership between our organisations. Together, we have the potential to shape a more inclusive and supportive future for this field, ensuring that emerging voices are heard, nurtured, and celebrated. Thank you once again for believing in us and for making this journey a reality.

With heartfelt appreciation,
The GVR-CN team

PHOTOS



PHOTOS



PHOTOS



PHOTOS



PHOTOS



PHOTOS

