

Request for Proposals:

SVRI Early Career Research Fellowships: Advancing Research on the Intersection of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children

Background

Recognition of the deep connections between violence against children (VAC) and violence against women (VAW) is growing, yet the evidence base remains limited, fragmented, and underdeveloped. Most research focuses on the intersections between intimate partner violence (IPV) against women and child maltreatment within the home, with limited evidence on other forms of VAC and VAW.

[An early global review](#) – findings of which were first shared at [SVRI Forum 2013](#) - identified six key areas of intersection: shared risk factors; harmful social norms that drive perpetration and discourage help-seeking; high rates of co-occurrence, particularly within households; intergenerational impacts; overlapping and compounding consequences throughout life; and adolescence as a critical period of heightened vulnerability to both VAC and VAW.

A [systematic review of IPV and VAC co-occurrence](#) in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) confirmed a significant link between IPV and child maltreatment but also highlighted major gaps in the evidence. Few studies examined risk factors for co-occurring violence within households, and findings were often contradictory. Research rarely measured male-perpetrated violence against children or female-perpetrated IPV, and definitions and measures of violence varied widely. These gaps, alongside a lack of gender and power analysis and few longitudinal studies, limit understanding of the relationships between, and the risk and protective factors associated with, co-occurring VAC and VAW. Identifying programmes that effectively address both VAC and VAW is essential for developing integrated, evidence-based approaches.

A recent [rapid systematic review](#) explored these intersections, identifying 29 effective interventions from 15 countries interventions that work across both forms of violence. Interventions identified, include 18 primary prevention initiatives (mostly from LMICs) and 11 response interventions (mostly from high-income countries). While some were designed to address VAC-VAW intersections, most focused on either IPV or child maltreatment, with limited attention to the other



form of violence. Few interventions combined prevention and response, and little evidence exists on ineffective or harmful approaches. Methodological issues, including inconsistent definitions and high risks of bias, further restrict understanding.

About the fellowship

Too often, research on VAW and VAC in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is led and funded by institutions in high-income countries. This skews priorities and limits relevance. Locally led research, on the other hand, is more impactful, more sustainable, and better aligned with community needs.

Through this fellowship, SVRI is investing in early career researchers in LMICs who are committed to building the evidence and action needed to prevent violence and promote the rights and wellbeing of women and children.

Fellowship Objectives

The SVRI ECR Fellowships aim to:

- Strengthen the evidence base on the intersections of VAW and VAC
- Build leadership and research capacity among early career researchers in LMICs
- Support the publication and dissemination of locally generated knowledge
- Foster regional and global networks of feminist, equity-driven researchers

Available Fellowships

Fellowship Type	Number of Awards	Value up to (USD)	Duration
Doctoral Fellowship	2	\$17,000	Up to 2 years
Postdoctoral Fellowship	2	\$20,500	Up to 2 years

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Be a national of a low- or middle-income country (LMIC)
- Be enrolled full-time at an in-person, accredited academic institution in an LMIC
- Be undertaking PhD dissertation or postdoctoral research focused on the intersection of VAW and VAC
- **For PhD applicants:** Have a defended or institutionally approved dissertation proposal.
- **For Postdoc applicants:** Completed PhD within the last three years (Jan 31, 2023, onwards)

Preference will be given to candidates who:

- Are from underrepresented regions or groups



- Demonstrate a long-term commitment to advancing the rights and wellbeing of women and girls

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted online through Proposal Central:

<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>

First-time users must register before accessing the application form.

Languages accepted:

- English
- French
- Spanish

Application Process

1. Complete Online Application Form, which includes:
 - Career Objectives (6000 spaces)
 - Community Impact Statement (3000 spaces)
 - Research Proposal (following SVRI format, see below)
2. Upload Required Documents:
 - Letter from academic institution verifying status and nationality
 - Academic transcripts (past 2 years)
 - Two reference letters (one from your academic advisor)
3. Interview:

Short-listed candidates will be invited to participate in a panel interview.

Online application form sections: (All character limits include spaces. Please only use text, no special characters or formatting allowed)

- **Career objectives:** Describe your long-term professional goals and how the fellowship will help you achieve them. Reflect on how your background and personal experiences have influenced your path toward working in the VAW/VAC space (6000 characters).
- **Community impact statement:** While the fellowship prioritises advancing the rights and wellbeing of women and girls, we recognise that addressing violence, particularly at the intersections of violence against women and violence against children, may require engaging boys, men, and broader community members to create lasting change. In this section, please clearly describe the ways in which your work will improve the lives, safety, and wellbeing of women and girls. If applicable, you may also explain how your research's engagement with boys, men, or others will contribute to this goal. (3000 characters).
- **Research proposal:** Using SVRI research grant format with minor adjustments
- **Applicant & institution details**
- **Abstract:** Please provide an overall description of the entire study. It should include a

brief statement of the need or problem being addressed, the need for the study, the methodology(s) to be employed in accomplishing the tasks outlined, research goals or expected outcomes, the time duration, and the approximate cost (3000 characters).

- **Project Background:** The project background must clearly outline what is already known about the research topic and justify the need for the study. It must provide the foundation of your study, offering insight into the broader area of research, summarising existing literature, showing how your study will address a research gap. Your reference list can be uploaded as an attachment (6000 characters).
- **Innovation and Contribution:** What is particularly innovative about this project? What will its contribution to building the evidence for VAW/VAC prevention and response in low- and middle-income countries? What are the limitations and strengths of your study? (3000 characters).
- **Research Aim and Objectives:** Clearly articulate clear, specific research aim and objectives (3000 characters). (Up to maximum of 4 objectives)
- **Research Methods:** Please describe how this study will achieve the aim and objectives. Provide detailed information on study design, study site, study population, sampling and analysis. Where appropriate, also include information on the intervention, including type, target group, delivery mechanisms, setting etc. (6000 characters).
- **Data Management Plan:** Outlines what data will be collected, how it will be securely stored and backed up, the strategy for ethical sharing and long-term preservation, and any legal or privacy concerns that need to be addressed. (2500 characters).
- **Research Plan:** Your research plan is the nuts and bolts of your proposed research, where you succinctly describe your research rationale and the research activities you will conduct to accomplish each aim and objective. Think of your research aim being your destination for your research, your Research Plan is the map that takes you there by describing the activities you will conduct. For example, if you have expertise in a method or experience working with certain groups, highlight this in the research plan to showcase how you are best suited to carry out this research, justify why you think you will succeed. (8000 characters)
- **Ethical Considerations:** All SVRI supported research must have ethical approval. Outline the ethical considerations specific to your study and how do you plan to address these? State if your project has ethical secured ethical approval, or if approval is pending and from where (6000 characters).
- **Timeline:** A realistic schedule outlining key milestones over 24 months of the project.
- **Budget and Justification:** The budget should be a definitive line-item budget for all direct costs, and administrative or indirect costs. Overhead should be no more than 15% of total costs and the total cost of the proposal should not exceed \$17,000/year for dissertation fellowships and \$20,500/year for postdoctoral fellowships including



overhead. Any applications exceeding the budget ceiling will not be considered. You can budget (with justification) for research costs including travel for data collection, software, publication costs, books etc. *Please note that South African applicants must submit their budgets in South African Rands. Proposals submitted by South African applicants with budgets in USD will be rejected at the point of receipt. All other applicants must submit their budget in USD.

*Please include costs for one week long academic site visit to a university of your choice and to attend one international conference during the fellowship. Explain why this academic visit and conference is important for your professional development.

Application Deadline

All applications must be submitted by: **31 January 2026 at 11:50pm South African Time (SAST).**

Late applications or those not submitted via Proposal Central will not be considered.

We strongly encourage early submission. Online platforms may experience high traffic close to the deadline. SVRI and Proposal Central are not responsible for internet issues or submission failures.

Contact Information: For questions or support, please contact: svri@svri.org with subject 'Fellowships'



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Who is eligible to apply for the SVRI ECR Fellowship?

You are eligible if you:

- Are a **national of a low- or middle-income country (LMIC)** as classified by the World Bank
- Are **enrolled full-time** at an **accredited, in-person academic institution** in an LMIC
- Are conducting **PhD dissertation** or **postdoctoral research** on the **intersection of violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC)**
- (PhD applicants only) Have a **defended or institutionally approved dissertation proposal** focused on VAW/VAC intersections

2. What is meant by “intersection of VAW and VAC”?

This refers to research exploring the **overlapping, connected, or co-occurring experiences** of violence that women and children face. This could include:

- Shared risk factors
- Co-occurrence of IPV and child maltreatment
- Intergenerational cycles of violence
- Prevention or response strategies that address both forms of violence

Please see SVRI’s shared research agenda on intersections between VAC and VAW

[Intersections Between VAW and VAC: Global Shared Research Priorities - SVRI](#)

3. How many fellowships are available?

Four fellowships – two for Doctoral Students and two for post-doctoral researchers are available.

4. What is the value and duration of the fellowships?

- **PhD Fellowship:** Up to USD \$17,000/year for up to **2 years**
- **Postdoctoral Fellowship:** Up to USD \$20,500/year for up to **2 years**



This includes research costs, travel for a week long academic site visit to a national/international university, one conference attendance, and up to **15% overhead**.

5. Can I apply if I'm from a high-income country but studying in an LMIC?

No. **Applicants must be nationals of an LMIC** and based at an academic institution in an LMIC.

6. Can I submit my application in another language besides English?

Yes. Applications are accepted in:

- English
- French
- Spanish

7. What documents do I need to submit with my application?

- Completed online application form (via Proposal Central)
- Proof of enrolment and nationality (letter from institution)
- Academic transcripts (past two years)
- Two reference letters (preferably one from your academic advisor)
- Full research proposal (using the SVRI grant format)

8. Where do I submit my application?

All applications must be submitted online through Proposal Central:

<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>

You must register an account if you're a first-time user. Search under **Award Maker: Sexual Violence Research Initiative**.

9. What happens after I submit my application?

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted for a **panel interview**. Final selection decisions will be communicated thereafter.

10. Can I submit more than one application?

No. Each applicant may submit **only one proposal**.

11. What should I include in my budget?

Budgets should include:

- Research costs
- Travel for one week long academic site visit to an international/national university
- Attendance at one academic conference
- Administrative/overhead costs (maximum 15%)

Note: South African applicants must submit budgets in **ZAR**, not USD. All other applicants should submit their budgets in USD.

12. Do I need ethical approval before applying?

Not necessarily. You must:

- State whether ethical approval has been granted, is pending, or will be sought
- Identify the ethics committee or board that will review your proposal
- Clearly explain how you'll manage ethical risks in your study

Fellowships will only be awarded once **ethical clearance** is obtained.

13. Can I apply if I'm in the final year of my PhD or postdoc?

Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria and your research aligns with the fellowship objectives.

14. My university is a past SVRI grant award winner, can I still apply to the fellowship?

Yes, you are eligible to apply to the fellowship as the funding mechanism for fellowship is different than the annual SVRI research awards.

15. Can my PhD advisor charge for their time mentoring me on my research?

No, this fellowship is only to support your research, and your time spent in conducting the research- this does not cover the staff time of advisors or other university staff.

16. My university is asking for additional fees to process the award, will SVRI cover these costs?

We suggest that you enquire with your university in advance about the administrative



procedures. The SVRI fellowship allows for 15% indirect costs, which are meant to cover administrative costs for the fellows' universities to process the award. Any additional cost will not be borne by SVRI.

17. What will happen if I drop out or change my university or topic during the two years of the fellowship?

You will be ineligible for the fellowship if your new topic is not related to VAW/VAC intersections or if you drop out of your academic institution. This fellowship is intended to support researchers working towards a PhD or postdoctoral qualification. As this is a one-year fellowship, we cannot accommodate a change of university within the fellowship period.

18. What is the selection process?

SVRI will follow a 2-step selection process as described below:

Step 1: Review of the applications received by a panel of experts

Step 2: Interviews with shortlisted applicants, followed by shortlisting of the fellowship winners.

19. Will SVRI provide mentorship during the fellowship?

Yes. Fellows will have opportunities for **learning, mentorship, and networking** through SVRI's broader programming, including:

- Peer engagement
- Knowledge-sharing platforms
- Potential participation in [SVRI Forum](#) or other events

20. I have not started a postdoc yet. Am I still eligible to apply?

Yes, you can still apply. You would need to identify a potential advisor and institution that can provide you with a letter of support, noting that they will be able to host you if you receive the fellowship.

21. When is the deadline to apply?

All applications must be submitted by **31 January 2026 at 11:50pm South African Time (SAST)**. Late or incomplete applications will **not be accepted**. If your question is not addressed here, please contact us at: svri@svri.org with the subject 'fellowships'.