

CONTACT DETAILS

Pretoria Office	Cape Town Office	Durban Office
<p>Tel: +27 (0) 12 339-8526 Fax: +27 (0) 12 339-8582 Postal address: Medical Research Council Private Bag X385 Pretoria 0001 South Africa</p> <p>Street address: MRC Building 1 Soutpansberg Road Pretoria</p>	<p>Tel: +27 (0) 21 938-0445 Fax: +27 (0) 21 938-0310 Postal address: Medical Research Council Private Bag 19070 Tygerberg 7505 South Africa</p> <p>Street address: MRC Building Francie van Zyl Drive Parow</p>	<p>Tel: +27 (0) 31 242-3600 Fax: +27 (0) 31 242-3806 Postal address: South African Medical Research Council P.O. Box 70380 Overport, 4901 South Africa</p> <p>Street address: SAMRC Building 491 Peter Mokaba Ridge Road Overport</p>

Pretoria



Professor Rachel Jewkes

Executive Scientist for Research Strategy in the Office of the SAMRC President
Director of What Works To Prevent Violence: A global programme to prevent violence against women and girls
Secretary of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative

Tel: +27 (0) 12 339-8525
 E-mail: rachel.jewkes@mrc.ac.za

Rachel is the Director of the MRC Gender & Health Research Unit, based in Pretoria, and a NRF A rated scientist and MRC gold medal winner in 2014. She is Secretary of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (www.svri.org) and Consortium Director of the DFID-flagship What Works To Prevent Violence? Global Programme (www.whatworks.co.za). The Global Programme is working across 14 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East to generate knowledge on prevention of violence against women and girls. She is a medical doctor and Specialist in Public Health Medicine, with a Masters in Community Medicine and Doctorate of Medicine (MD) from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She has spent the last 20 years researching intersections of gender-based violence, gender inequity and health using methods drawn from epidemiology, anthropology and health systems research. She has authored over two hundred and fifty publications in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters and reports. She has worked closely with the South African Government over many years on sexual violence policy in the health sector. She is the Secretary of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative. She was the lead technical advisor on the UN Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia Pacific and a member of the steering committee of the WHO multi-country study on violence against women. She is a member of the WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Injury and Violence Prevention and Control, a member of the WHO's Strategic and Technical Advisory Committee for HIV-AIDS (STAC-HIV) and the STAG - WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research, and a former member of the PEPFAR Scientific Advisory Board. Most importantly she has been working to ensure that these research findings are translated into interventions within society to improve the lives of women. She has a very active programme of PhD supervision and is also an Honorary Professor in the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand.



Associate Professor Yandisa Sikweyiya Specialist Scientist

Tel: +27 (0) 12 339 8619
 E-mail: yandisa.sikweyiya@mrc.ac.za

Yandisa is a Specialist Scientist at the Gender and Health Research Unit, SAMRC, an NRF C2 rated scientist, and an Associate Professor at the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand. His research focuses on the topic of men and masculinities as it intersects with violence and HIV; and on research ethics and has authored over 55 publications in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters and technical reports on these topics. Yandisa is a member of the DMTS Human Research Ethics Committee and a member of the Innovations for Poverty Action's Institutional Review Board. He is an editorial board member of the Journal of Bodies, Sexualities, and Masculinities. His current research activities include being a principal-investigator in the following projects: 1) The Individual Deprivation Measure (IDM) Survey: A Qualitative Follow-up Study in Two Selected Provinces in South Africa, and 2) Exploring constructions, performances, and reconfigurations of masculinities during and after the Marikana mineworkers' strike of 2012. Moreover, he is a co-investigator in the following projects: 1) a RCT to assess the impact of the Rural Response System to Reduce Violence against Women in Ghana, 2) a RCT to evaluate the combined intervention of Stepping Stones and Creating Futures in urban informal settlements in Durban, South Africa, 3) Formative research and development of a sexual violence prevention intervention for South African Higher Education Institutions, 4) KAP and HIV Prevalence Study Among Farm Workers in Limpopo province, South Africa: An Evaluation Study, 5) Developing Research Capacity to Support Community-Based Interventions to Better Engage Men in the HIV Continuum of Care.



Dr Nwabisa Jama Shai
Specialist Researcher
Tel: +27 (0) 12 339 8528
Email: nwabisa.shai@mrc.ac.za

Nwabisa is a Specialist Researcher in the Gender and Health Research Unit, Technical Advisor in the What Works To Prevent Violence to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls global initiative and Honorary Senior Lecturer in the School of Public Health at the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research focuses on the prevention of gender based violence (GBV) and HIV through quantitative and qualitative and research, implementation of evidence based behavioural prevention curricula, and evaluation of GBV prevention interventions in low- and middle-income countries. Nwabisa has a special research interest on femininities particularly understanding how femininity influences women's vulnerability of GBV. Her current projects include the development, adaptation and evaluation of evidence based GBV prevention interventions in rural Nepal, rural Tajikistan, and in eThekweni informal settlements. Nwabisa has also conducted household surveys on GBV. She has co-authored peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, policy briefs and technical reports, and GBV prevention curricula from multiple sociocultural contexts including South Africa, Tajikistan and Nepal. Nwabisa works closely with South African government departments, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations to promote the scaling up of evidence based violence prevention interventions through the National Dialogue Forum, and other GBV policy activities. She also sits in the Editorial Board of the South African Crime Quarterly and the Project Empower board.



Dr Mercilene Machisa
Specialist Scientist
Tel: +27 (0) 12 339 8596
E-mail: Mercilene.Machisa@mrc.ac.za

Mercilene is a Specialist scientist in the SAMRC's Gender and Health Research Unit and an honorary lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand's School of Public Health. She has conducted research that includes epidemiology of gender-based violence in [South Africa](#) and other [Southern African countries](#) using national and population-based surveys, [investigating intersections and structural pathways of childhood abuse, mental ill health and gender-based violence experience or perpetration in adulthood](#), [criminal justice system responses to rape](#) and [developing an intervention for young women in higher education settings](#). Mercilene holds an MSc (Med) in Epidemiology and Biostatistics and a PhD in Public Health from the University of Witwatersrand.



Dr Pinky Mahlangu
Specialist Scientist
Tel: +27 (0) 12 339 8554
Email: pinky.mahlangu@mrc.ac.za

Pinky is a Specialist Scientist and project manager in the SAMRC's Gender and Health Research Unit. She is an honorary lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand's School of Public Health. Her research interests are on the social determinants of health, gender-based violence, with focus on adolescents and young women, and intervention development and evaluation. Pinky holds a PhD in Public Health from the University of the Witwatersrand.



Ms Shibe Mhlongo
Biostatistician
Tel: +27 (0) 12 339 8588
Email: shibe.mhlongo@mrc.ac.za

Shibe is a statistician in the SAMRC's Gender and Health Research Unit and works closely with Dr Esnat Chirwa (senior biostatistician). She has been involved in the data management and statistical analysis of projects in the unit, namely the Rape Impact Cohort Evaluation (RICE) Study and the National Study on the injury-related mortality burden in South Africa in the year 2017. She is interested in longitudinal data analysis methods. Shibe holds a Masters in Biostatistics from the University of Stellenbosch.



Monalisa Hela

Secretary – Office of the Executive Scientist for Research Strategy Senior Administrator – Gender and Health Research Unit

Tel: +27 (0) 12 339-8526
E-mail: monalisa.hela@mrc.ac.za

Monalisa, is the Secretary in the Office of the Executive Scientist for Research Strategy in the Office of the SAMRC President and also administrative assistant to the Gender & Health Research Unit responsible for the daily operations.

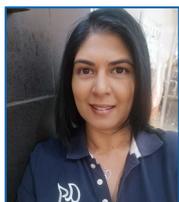


Dr Tirhani Manganyi

What Works? Global Programme Manager

Tel: +27 (0) 12 339 8521
E-mail: tirhani.manganyi@mrc.ac.za

Tirhani is a South African national with over 15 years of experience in international development, research and grants acquisition and management (GAM). She has vast experience in the development as well as the management community-based programs, gender and development (GAD); monitoring and evaluation (M&E), program and project management, including proposal development. Dr Manganyi brings to her new role over 5 years of experience at senior management level and worked with multiple countries in Southern Africa. For 4 years, she has worked and supported 9 countries with proposal development as well as the management of programs funded by private, bilateral and multilateral donors. In her role as Regional Grants Quality Assurance Advisor in World Vision International, Dr Manganyi managed a portfolio of at least \$400mil across the 9 countries from various donors that had diverse compliance modalities and requirements. Dr. Manganyi possess proven capacity development, technical and management skills as well as strong networking and liaising capabilities to engage various donors; host governments, universities, and community-based stakeholders throughout the life of the project cycle to build capacity and ensure local ownership as well as sustainability of projects. She holds a PhD in Agricultural Education and Communication as well as a certificate in Gender and Development from the University of Florida, USA. She is also certified in Project Management, training and she recently completed the Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT).



Dr Leane Ramsoomar-Hariparsaad

Researcher and Research Uptake Specialist

Tel: +27 12 339 8557
Email: leane.ramsoomar@mrc.ac.za

Dr Leane Ramsoomar holds a PhD in Public Health from the University of the Witwatersrand, a Master's degree in Health Promotion (with distinction) from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, an Honors degree in Psychology from the University of Durban-Westville and a BA degree (Cum Laude) from the same university. She is an experienced behavioral scientist with 18 years' experience in conducting quantitative research, impact evaluations, policy analysis and desk top reviews in the areas of alcohol and other drug use, violence against women and girls and their intersections, HIV/AIDS and in academia. Most recently, she held the portfolio of Research Uptake Manager of the Global UK-AID funded What Works to prevent Violence against Women and Girls, where she led a multi-faceted strategy for research translation in the global South. In addition to managing strategic dissemination and use of evidence in 13 countries across 15 interventions in Africa, Asia and the Middle east, she was an integral part of the efforts to develop capacity for the interpretation and use of evidence to impact policy, programming and funding in these diverse contexts. Leane managed multiple dissemination platforms, including a dynamic website, which has become an influential public repository of all What Works outputs, and dynamic and influential social media platforms. She was pivotal to the oversight, direction and finalization of over 50 research products, including evidence briefs and reviews, technical reports, synthesis reports, infographics and videos, each tailored to the needs of VAW practitioner, policymaker, donor and research audiences. Notable successes of research translation under her leadership, include; high-profile local and international media coverage on the issue of VAWG prevention; increased level of demand for What Works evidence from international bodies (e.g. UN Women, UN Trust Fund, WHO); the use of What Works evidence in informing UN Women/WHO RESPECT Framework, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the South Africa Gender-based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan, and the awarding of multi-year funds for scale up in more than 20 sites in LMIC settings. Leane's back ground spans research in adolescent alcohol use, alcohol policy work and youth risk behaviour.



Dr Esnat Chirwa

Senior Statistician

Tel: (+27) 12 339 8556
Email: esnat.chirwa@mrc.ac.za

Esnat is a Senior Statistician for the What works to prevent Violence project, a multi-country DFID-funded programme within the MRC Gender & Health Unit. She has a postgraduate diploma and Master's Degree in Biometry obtained from the University of Reading (UK), and PhD from the University of Witwatersrand (SA). Her career as a Statistician started at the University of Malawi, where she worked as a lecturer in Applied Statistics and was involved in teaching study designs, statistics theory and quantitative analysis methods to undergraduate and postgraduate students. She has done consultancy work for various medical research organisations. As a PhD student at University of Witwatersrand (SA), she was involved in statistical consultations for the Faculty of Health Sciences students. Statistical consultation activities included helping students with study designs, protocol writing, refining research questions, sample size calculations, data management and analysis. She is interested in application of multi-level models to longitudinal or hierarchical observational studies.

Cape Town



Professor Naeemah Abrahams

Unit Director

Tel: +21 (0) 21 938 0823

E-mail: naeema.abrahams@mrc.ac.za

Naeemah is the Unit's Acting Director. She has a PhD and MPhil in Public Health and started her career as a nurse. She has worked in the area of gender based violence for the last 20+ years. She has two honorary appointments: as a Honorary Associated Professor with UCT Faculty of Health Sciences in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, as well as Extraordinary Professor with UWC Faculty of Community Health Sciences in the School of Public Health. She provides teaching, post graduate supervision and research support at both universities. Her special interests are health sector responses to gender-based violence, including the interface between GBV and HIV. Her research skills are in both epidemiological and qualitative methods. Her current research activities include longitudinal research on the impact on rape, sexual assault services - particular adherence to post exposure prophylaxis after rape to prevent HIV, mental health services for rape survivors, social responses to HIV and rape, developing and testing gender-based HIV and AIDS risk reduction skills interventions, femicide, intimate femicide, child homicide and infanticide. She was also involved in the Global Burden of Disease study in collaboration with WHO and the London School of Health and Tropical Medicine. She is currently also part of the Know Violence – a Global learning Initiative on violence in Childhood.



Dr Bianca Dekel

Senior Scientist

Tel: +27 (0) 21 938-0838

E-mail: bianca.dekel@mrc.ac.za

Bianca is a senior scientist working in the Gender and Health Research Unit, based in Cape Town. Bianca holds a PhD in Psychology from the University of the Western Cape. Her research interests include GBV, trauma, parenting and homicide. She currently works on the third national female and child homicide study conducted by the Gender and Health Research Unit.



Ms Ncediswa Nunze

Scientist

Tel: +27 (0) 21 938-0214

E-mail: ncediswa.nunze@mrc.ac.za

Ncediswa is Scientist in the SAMRC's Gender and Health Research Unit. She is part of the research team conducting formative research and development of a sexual violence prevention intervention for South African higher education institutions. She holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences, majoring in Sociology and Criminology, an Honours degree in Criminology from the University of Fort Hare and she is studying towards a Master's in Public Health at University of Cape Town.



Prilene Stroud

Administrator

Tel: +27 (0) 21 938 0329

Email: prilene.stroud@mrc.ac.za

Prilene is an Administration Officer to the Gender and Health Research Unit for the Cape Town Branch. She is responsible for the Unit's Administration, Procurement and daily operations.

Durban



Andrew Gibbs
Senior Specialist Scientist

Tel: (+27)31 2034899
Email: andrew.gibbs@mrc.ac.za

Andrew has over 15 years' experience of working on gender and health. He is also an Honorary Lecturer, at the Centre for Rural Health, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Andrew received his PhD in Psychology from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2015. He also holds an MSc in Health, Community and Development from the London School of Economics and Political Science. His research focus includes masculinities, intimate partner violence, processes of change, and the role of economic interventions, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. He has published widely on these topics in top peer reviewed journals, with nearly 100 publications. Andrew is currently working on several projects globally. He is currently the PI with Prof Mannell (UCL) on a three-year UKRI funded project: An inter-disciplinary approach to understanding and intervening on contextual factors that shape HIV-risk for young women and men in South Africa. He is also a co-investigator on a project in rural South Africa and provides technical support to other studies. Prior to this he worked on the Works Global Programme, where he was PI on the Stepping Stones and Creating Futures intervention trial, and co-investigator on a trial in Afghanistan, and provided technical support to studies in Bangladesh, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He supervises a range of students on their PhDs.



Prof Jill Hanass-Hancock
Senior Specialist Scientist

Tel: (+27) 31 2423749
Email: Jill.hanasshancock@mrc.ac.za

Jill Hanass-Hancock's is a Senior Specialist Scientist and hold a PhD in Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Science from the Humboldt University in Berlin. She started her career as a special educator and educational psychologist and has 10 years of on the ground experience working with young people with disabilities in schools and the NGO sector. Thereafter the dedicated her life to research and has worked 15+ years in the field of disability and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). She is also appointed as an honorary Professor at the UKZN School of Health Science and is an NRF C1 rated scientist. Jill's research focuses on the SRHR and people with disabilities using a variety of research approaches including ethnography, epidemiology, situation and policy analysis techniques and evaluations. She has lead a number of milestone disability research projects in Africa, among them the Elements of the Financial and Economic Costs of Disability, which was among the 12 best of UNICEF 2016 research projects and influenced the South African White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and which research methods are now applied in other countries. Jill is the principal investigator and co-author of the Breaking the Silence Intervention a project which focuses on access to SRHR for people with disabilities and includes an evidence-informed curriculum innovation approach to enable educators to provide Comprehensive Sexuality Education in accessible formats. She is also known for her work to increase the participation of women with disabilities in GBV programmes (ALIGHT) and her development of disability policy audits in the space of SRHR and HIV programming in Africa. Currently she conducts studies on SRHR and vulnerable populations and how SRHR interventions need to adjust in times of crisis (Masimbambane and SRHR and COVID study)



Samantha Willan
GBV Researcher & Capacity Development Specialist

Email: samantha.willan@mrc.ac.za
Skype: Samantha.willan

Samantha has over 20 years' experience working on preventing violence against women and girls, gender equality, sexuality, and HIV, from a women's rights perspective. Her work has spanned providing technical support and capacity development, training, intervention development and implementation, global research and policy influencing. While being based in South Africa her focus has been across southern and eastern Africa and South Asia, with a global outlook in relation to research and policy developments. From 2015-2019 she was the Capacity Development Manager for the global What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls team. Prior to that she was the Programme Lead for the Gender Equality and Health Programme at HEARD, UKZN a programme which she co-founded in 2009. Her work has focussed on research to improve the evidence base around what works to prevent violence against women and reduce women's HIV risk. She focuses on generating evidence to improve interventions and our understanding of VAW and improving the realisation of women and girls sexual and reproductive health and rights. Alongside generating evidence, she supports capacity development of researchers and implementers globally. She was recently involved in a flagship programme around the development of an intervention that utilised a gender consciousness raising and livelihoods approach, she explores whether and how this increased young women's sexual and personal agency. She has also undertaken pioneering policy work on ensuring that National Strategic Plans on HIV & AIDS in east and southern Africa include women, girls and gender equality. Previously she worked as the Policy Adviser: HIV&AIDS and Gender at VSO (2004-2006), in London; Project Director at HEARD (2000-2004) and as Information Manager at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996-1998). Her professional expertise is complemented by her activism for over 25 years around social injustices, women's rights, sexuality and HIV. She obtained her PhD in Public Health in 2021 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.



Bradley Carpenter
Scientist

Tel: +27 (31) 242 3615
E-mail: bradley.carpenter@mrc.ac.za

Bradley is a scientist working in the Gender and Health Research Unit and is based in Swellendam. Bradley holds a MA in Research Psychology from the University of the Western Cape and is currently completing his PhD. His interests include research designs, analysis techniques, disability, mental health, and individualised treatment. He currently works on the Forgotten Agenda and the Rape Impact Cohort Evaluation (RICE) studies conducted by the Gender and Health Research Unit.



Sister Tholsie Gounden
Senior Research Technologist

Tel: +27 (31) 242 3720
E-mail: tholsie.gounden@mrc.ac.za

Sr Tholsie is a Senior Research Technologist at the Gender and Health Research Unit, based in Durban. She is working with the Rape Impact Cohort Evaluation (RICE) Study as the senior nurse as well as assisting in management of the study. She has a background in clinical trials, having worked on phase 1/11/111 trials with The International Maternal Paediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) Network. She has a Diploma in General, Community, Psychiatric and midwifery nursing with over 20 years' experience within this field.



Miss Nomfundo Mthethwa
Social Science Research Technologist

Tel: +27 (31) 242 3624
Email: Nomfundo.mthethwa@mrc.ac.za

Nomfundo Mthethwa is a Social Science Research Technologist and holds a Masters in Medical Science under Public Health at University of Kwa Zulu Natal. She works on the MRC-Gender & Health Research Unit. Her work is focused on understanding the experiences and contributing factors of violence against people with disabilities, the gaps of disability inclusion in policies and programmes and interventions that increase the participation of people with disabilities (targeting policy makers, NGOs and DPOs). She has extended this work into her Masters. She is currently working on two projects. Nomfundo is a project coordinator of Breaking the Silence Intervention, a project which focuses on access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for people with disabilities and includes an evidence-informed curriculum innovation approach to enable educators to provide Comprehensive Sexuality Education in accessible formats. She is also involved in a COVID-19 study assessing how the vulnerable populations adjust in times of crisis. During the 4 years at South African Medical Research Council she has achieved few milestones: a key contributor towards developing UNFPAs SRHR, Disability Policy and Programme Analysis Tool and a co-author on few publications.



Thobeka Majola
Research Assistant

Tel: +27 (0) 31 242 3600
Email: thobeka.majola@mrc.ac.za

Thobeka is a recruiter/Research assistant for the RICE study, based in Durban. She has a BA Degree majored in Psychology in Communication Science. She joined Gender Health Research Unit in 2014 when the Rice Project started, her duties include recruitment of rape exposed participants and recruitment of rape non exposed participants, conducting interviews with participants as well as retention of these participants.



Mpumelelo Mabhida
Retention/Counsellor
Contact No. 031 242 3720
Cell No. 071 076 9322

Mpumelelo joined SAMRC in June 2016 as a RETENTION/COUNSELLOR, based in Durban Chatsworth. She currently completing her Diploma in Public Management, duties includes Calling of scheduled participants, tracking missed visits and making sure of that participants are retained in the study as expected.
