

SAMRC INTRA-MURAL POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAMME

Request for Applications 2025/2026 (Replacement)

PROJECTS OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS

Project 1:

Research Unit	Unit/Project Contact details	Project title
Gender and Health Research Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof Nwabisa Shai Tel: +27 12 339 8528 and email: Nwabisa.Shai@mrc.ac.za Prof Yandisa Sikweyiya Tel: 012 339 8619/Email: Yandisa.sikweyiya@mrc.ac.za Dr Pinky Mahlangu Tel: 0123398554/Email: Pinky.mahlangu@mrc.ac.za 	Engaging young men (ages 18-30) in the process of adapting the Stepping Stones and Self Help+ interventions to improve mental health and prevent sexual violence

Background

Male-perpetrated sexual violence is a worldwide public health concern that has serious negative impacts on the women and girls who experience it. While there are several drivers of male-perpetrated sexual violence, men's masculinity/ies are key. Masculinity refers to idealised notions of what it means to be a man in any given context. Violent masculinities do not simply 'exist' but emerge out of poverty, men's own experiences of violence, poor mental health, and inequitable gender norms, including the acceptability of violence. Addressing sexual violence perpetration by creating more gender-equitable masculinities is critical for improving men's, women's, and children's health and well-being and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite this, there is little empirical evidence about the overlap between multiple forms of sexual violence (e.g., partner and non-partner rape) perpetrated by men, nor effective strategies for preventing it.

Project 2:

Research Unit	Unit/ Project Contact details	Project title
Cochrane South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof Mark Engel Tel: 0219380307/ Email: Mark.engel@mrc.ac.za Dr Duduzile Ndwandwe Email: uduzile.Ndwandwe@mrc.ac.za 	Strengthening Africa's Pandemic Readiness: A Systematic Review of Preparedness Plans with Actionable Improvements and Impact Evaluation

Background

The global threat of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases with pandemic potential underscores the urgent need for effective pandemic preparedness plans, particularly in Africa's low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). These nations face unique challenges, such as inadequate healthcare infrastructure, economic disparities, and socio-political factors, which can hinder their response to outbreaks. Tailored pandemic preparedness plans ensure rapid and effective public health responses to future pandemics. This systematic

review will thoroughly assess the existing pandemic preparedness plans in African nations, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

Project 3:

Research Unit	Unit/Project Contact details	Project title
Environmental Health Research Unit	Dr Renee Street (renee.street@mrc.ac.za or Tel: 031 242 3738).	Water, sanitation, and society

Background

Climate change disrupts weather patterns that may lead to unpredictable water availability and contamination of water sources. Such impacts can drastically affect the quantity and quality of water. Moreover, the availability of safe and sufficient water is linked to how wastewater is managed. Access to potable water remains a challenge in many low- and middle-income countries. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include improving water quality, supporting the participation of the local communities in improving water and sanitation management (Goal 6) and reducing the number of deaths due to waterborne diseases (Goal 3). In partnership with the University of Venda, this project will explore environmental (water) surveillance, hazard identification and risk management of water sources in both urban and rural settings.

The aim of the project is to determine changes in the quality of local water sources due to climate events and to reduce health risks through locally relevant risk communication.