Technology Facilitated Gender-Based Violence:

Developing a shared research agenda

SVRI
sexual violence research initiative

the global partnership
For Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse

APC
ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS

UN WOMEN

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations Used

AI .... Artificial Intelligence

AG .... Advisory Group

APC .... Association for Progressive Communications

ASRA .... African Shared Research Agenda

CEDAW .... Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CHNRI .... Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative

CSE .... Commercial Sexual Exploitation

GBV .... Gender-Based Violence

GEG .... Global Expert Group

GSRA .... Global Shared Research Agenda

HIC .... High-Income Country

ICTs .... Information and Communication Technologies

IPV .... Intimate Partner Violence

LGBTQI+ .... Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and others

LMIC .... Low- and Middle-Income Country

MENA .... Middle East and North Africa

RPS .... Research Priority Setting

SVRI .... Sexual Violence Research Initiative

SG .... Stewardship Group

TFGBV .... Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

TFVAW .... Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women

UN .... United Nations

VAW .... Violence Against Women

VAC .... Violence Against Children

WHO .... World Health Organisation

A Note on Terminology

This report uses the term **"technology-facilitated gender-based violence"** or **"TFGBV."** Whilst different organisations refer to this phenomenon using different terminology, in November 2022, UN Women convened a diverse set of global experts to develop a shared term and common conceptual definition of online violence against women. This built on work from academics, governments, national statistical offices, feminist movements, international organisations and other gender equality advocates. Using the term, technology-facilitated violence against women (TFVAW), the definition that emerged from their process is **"any act, that is committed, assisted, aggravated or amplified by the use of ICTs or other digital tools, that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, social, political or economic harm, or other infringements of rights and freedoms"** (UN Women, 2023, Technology Facilitated Violence against Women-Report of the Foundational Meeting of the Expert Group). The group also noted that: "violence against women can be substituted with gender-based violence (TFGBV), whilst maintaining the common definition describing the phenomenon." This definition acknowledges that like all other forms of gender-based violence, TFGBV is rooted in and enabled by discriminatory gender norms that intersect with other forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation and ability, among other factors.

Whilst our definition remains the same, the term "technology-facilitated gender-based violence" will be used for the purpose of this report. This is because feminist research undertaken on sexuality and the Internet has revealed the significant levels of tech-facilitated violence faced by gender diverse and gender non-conforming people. Hence, this term better reflects and includes intersecting social locations that must be considered.

The term "TFGBV" also reflects agreed-upon language in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which remains the strongest human rights instrument that exists in terms of influencing states to enact appropriate legislation. CEDAW general recommendation 35, paragraph 20, includes online violence and states: **"Gender based violence against women occurs in all spaces and spheres of human interaction, whether public or private, including … the redefinition of public and private through technology mediated environments, such as contemporary forms of violence occurring online and in other digital environments."**
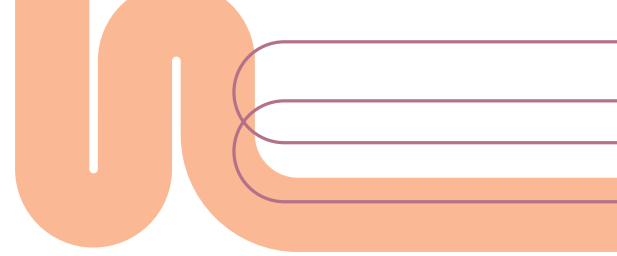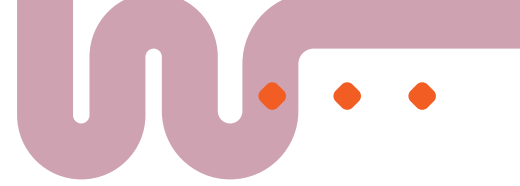
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Executive Summary

The Global Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) Shared Research Agenda is a set of research priority recommendations for addressing the global problem of TFGBV. These priorities have been identified through a transparent, methodologically sound, comprehensive and inclusive process that aims for global inclusivity to ensure the representation of those often not represented in such important decision-making processes. It is a unique and diligent approach that emphasises decoloniality, collaboration and collective power.

The Global TFGBV Shared Research Agenda follows the creation of previous shared agendas on gender-based and sexual violence. In 2021, the Global Shared Research Agenda (GSRA) was developed through a collaboration between the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) and the Equality Institute, with support from funding partners and the field. More recently, the African Shared Research Agenda (ASRA) was developed by SVRI and UN Women, while the Intersections Between VAW and VAC: Global Shared Research Priorities, was stewarded by UNICEF Innocenti, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and SVRI. As with these previously shared research agendas, this TFGBV Shared Research Agenda was created via a method called the Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative (CHNRI). This approach considers the views of multiple stakeholders, not just technical experts, so all views are treated equally without some voices being more dominant than others. It does this by 'crowdsourcing' multiple opinions on an issue, surpassing the 'expert' judgement of any one person.

Three groups were established to govern and guide the co-creation of the Global TFGBV Shared Research Agenda:

1. The Stewardship Group (SG) oversaw the overall process, including coordination, design, analysis, reporting and dissemination. The SG included key staff and consultants working with SVRI (Elizabeth Dartnall, Ayesha Mago, and Mark Tomlinson), UN Women (Raphaëlle Rafin, Juncal Plazaola Castano and Giorgia Airoldi), the Association for Progressive Communications (Tigist Shewarega Hussen and Namita Aavriti) and the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse (Rachel Grant).

2. The Advisory Group (AG) group was established during the inception phase of the project, using set criteria established by the SG. The AG included 29 people from the fields of feminist technology, violence against women and girls, online violence prevention and response fields as well as big tech and cybercrime across multiple geographical contexts. AG members collectively provided expert technical input and advice on key steps in the TFGBV priority-setting exercise.

3. The Global Expert Group (GEG) was the largest group with a final tally of 350 experts and offered an important mechanism to ensure the engagement of multiple and diverse stakeholders from across the globe in the prioritisation of research questions. To create the GEG, the SG and the AG worked together to create a longer list of global experts and organisations working on understanding, preventing and responding to TFGBV.

Drawing on the support and expertise of passionate experts across these three structures, the Global TFGBV Shared Research Agenda was created through a 6-step iterative process, with many opportunities for feedback and debate. The first step involved a scoping review of the literature, to identify key gaps in the field that framed the priority-setting process and led to the identification of five key research domains for development of proposed research questions:

• Domain 1: Nature, Prevalence, and Impact
• Domain 2: Responses
• Domain 3: TFGBV Prevention
• Domain 4: Populations
• Domain 5: Measures and Methodologies

After these domains were established, potential research questions were gathered using a two-phase approach. An online question-gathering survey was shared with the SG and AG, and further disseminated by members to their relevant networks. Forty-nine (49) responses were received online and a few additional responses received via email. A total of 481 potential research questions were gathered. These questions were reviewed, synthesised and prioritised by the SG and reduced to 15 questions per domain. The questions were then shared with the different governance groups through an online global ranking survey, where respondents were asked to rank the research questions in each domain. Overall, a total of 350 experts shared their responses.

The Top Two Research Questions in Each Domain

Domain 1: Nature, Prevalence, and Impact

• What is the current prevalence rate of TFGBV across different online platforms and digital communication channels, (including specific dating apps) and how does it vary among different groups and demographies (age, gender, and socioeconomic status)?
• What is the nature, prevalence and impacts of TFGBV in a particular setting?

Domain 2: Responses

• What policy and legal frameworks and regulatory approaches are in place to address TFGBV? To what extent are they being implemented? How effective are they?
• How are private sector organisations, including tech developers, being held accountable for the technology they create and for TFGBV perpetrated on their equipment and on their domains?

Domain 3: TFGBV Prevention

• What evidence-based interventions work to prevent different forms of TFGBV?
• Which prevention interventions have been most successful in shifting attitudes and behaviours of perpetrators of TFGBV, including those in the high-risk categories for perpetration?

Domain 4: Populations

• How does lack of / or limited access to the internet affect the ability of marginalised groups to access justice/ seek remedy when it comes to TFGBV?
• How do we best leverage existing findings from certain populations (in particular hard to reach, or marginalised groups) and apply to expanded understandings of TFGBV, whilst remaining sensitive to local realities and lived experiences?

Domain 5: Measures and Methodologies

• What are the best approaches for conducting good quality, ethical and safe research on different forms of TFGBV, including in humanitarian settings?
• What are the best approaches for conducting analysis of laws and policies on TFGBV to generate evidence about implementation?

Conclusions

TFGBV is a significant global issue that undermines gender equality and disrupts human rights and social development worldwide. There is growing interest from global leaders in understanding and addressing TFGBV, and this global shared research is intended to provide a strong foundation of evidence for constructive action.

Our findings underscore the need for foundational research to understand the nature, risk, protective factors, and impacts of TFGBV to provide a strong base of evidence for prevention and response. Such research is essential to ensure survivor-centred approaches to response and prevention. Participants called for the development of innovative methodologies that accurately capture the complex nature of TFGBV. Standardized, reliable, and valid measurement tools are crucial for consistent data across studies, and for understanding prevalence, impacts, and the efficacy of interventions.

Our participants emphasized that response strategies for TFGBV should prioritize the perspectives and experiences of survivors, aligning the services and support provided with their actual needs and preferred channels for help-seeking. Respondents consistently advocated for robust policy and legislative frameworks that penalize perpetrators and hold digital platforms accountable for facilitating such environments. Additionally, while respecting privacy and freedom of expression, the design of technological platforms must prioritize safety features to mitigate TFGBV risks.

The process has emphasized the importance of an intersectional approach to understanding TFGBV, acknowledging that neither the risk nor the impact of TFGBV are equitably distributed. Feedback on the role and impact of policy and legislation highlighted a dual narrative: the need for robust legal frameworks to hold perpetrators and platforms accountable, and the potential misuse of these laws to silence and oppress marginalized groups such as activists and LGBTQI+ communities. Future research should explore these dynamics comprehensively, ensuring that TFGBV laws strengthen protection without enabling political repression.

Way Forward

Effectively addressing TFGBV will require a multifaceted research approach that spans foundational research, improved methods, evidence-based prevention, and response strategies. There must also be careful attention to the intersectional needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations. Our collaborative and inclusive methodology in setting research priorities aims to ignite a concerted effort among global researchers, policymakers, funders and activists to address TFGBV more effectively. This can foster safer digital spaces and contribute to the broader goal of gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence both in the online-offline continuum.

We call upon all stakeholders dedicated to fostering violence-free online environments to advocate for the implementation of this agenda. By doing so we will advance our understanding of TFGBV, formulate effective and quality responses to support survivors and victims, and nurture violence free online and offline spaces for all women and children.
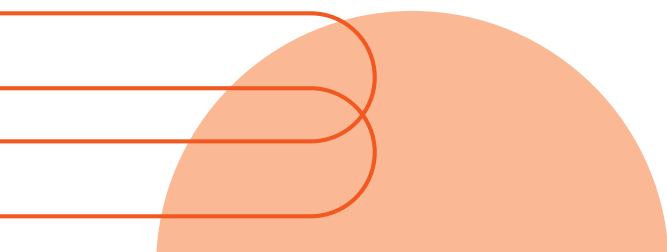
Introduction

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) has been on the agenda of feminist technology experts and researchers for many years. Thankfully, an understanding of the importance, pervasiveness, and profound impact of TFGBV on gender equality and the open and peaceful functioning of democracies is gaining traction among global leaders and others working in the field of VAW in off-line spaces. This interest from governments on this form of violence provides an opportunity for the field to advocate for more and better resources to address knowledge gaps and build better programmes to respond to and prevent TFGBV.

Unfortunately, key knowledge gaps can hamper delivery of effective response and prevention programmes. There is little comparable, reliable data on the prevalence, forms, impact and drivers of TFGBV across different global regions and social intersections. There is limited data on the links between online and offline violence, although we know from many women's experiences that such links exist. We don't know enough about who the perpetrators of TFGBV are, or about how much is perpetrated by intimate partners and known entities as opposed to organised and networked forms of attack. We don't know what works to deter or change abusive behaviour online, and there is little knowledge of the role and impact of legislation (and its implementation), regulation, or big tech in addressing this issue. The unfortunate realities of TFGBV are moving fast; we must deal with how to address victimisation and perpetration and respond in real-time, whilst we innovate to prevent it.

The need for research priority setting

Co-creating a set of research priorities for the field can help address the afore-mentioned knowledge gaps, bring more diverse voices into the discussions, and move the field forward in a more coordinated manner. The SVRI, Association for Progressive Communications, UN Women, and the Global Partnership to End Online Abuse and Harassment have been working in partnership to co-facilitate a research priority-setting exercise. The intention is to draw on the wisdom of the crowd and set research priorities for the next 5-10 years for fair, effective, and relevant research on TFGBV.

To identify these priorities, and to ensure an inclusive and transparent process, we used a method called the Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative (CHNRI). Our adapted approach drew on SVRI's and partners' past experiences with research priority-setting exercises to ensure the inclusion of the views of multiple stakeholders and not just technical experts. The CHNRI method does this by crowd-sourcing multiple opinions, surpassing the expert judgement of one individual. This method challenges the tried way of doing things, which for too long has seen research agendas set by people far removed from the communities for whom the research is meant to serve.

Our goals in this process were to:

1. Provide a process to bring multiple stakeholders (representing diverse constituencies and perspectives) together to share, learn and connect.
2. Identify evidence gaps and highlight priority areas for research that can guide research expenditure and ensure precious resources are spent effectively.
3. Assist researchers, funders, practitioners, and policymakers with research planning and fundraising.
4. Create an advocacy tool to signal to stakeholders the areas of research that have been identified as being important.
5. Provide a monitoring tool for the field.
6. Guide SVRI grant-making.

Who participated in developing this shared research agenda?

The TFGBV research priority-setting exercise was guided by the following three groups:

Stewardship Group:

The Stewardship Group (SG) oversaw the overall process, including coordination, design, analysis, reporting and dissemination. The SG included key staff and consultants working with SVRI (Elizabeth Dartnall, Ayesha Mago, and Mark Tomlinson), UN Women (Raphaëlle Rafin, Juncal Plazaola Castano and Giorgia Airoldi), the Association for Progressive Communications (Tigist Shewarega Hussen and Namita Aavriti) and the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse (Rachel Grant).

Advisory Group:

The Advisory Group (AG) was established during the inception phase of the project, using set criteria established by the SG. The AG included 29 people from the fields of feminist technology, violence against women and girls, online violence prevention and response fields as well as big tech and cybercrime across multiple geographical contexts. AG members collectively provided expert technical input and advice on key steps in the TFGBV priority-setting exercise.

TFGBV Global Expert Group:

The Global Expert Group (GEG) was the largest group with a final tally of 350 experts and offered an important mechanism to ensure the engagement of multiple and diverse stakeholders from across the globe in the prioritisation of research questions. To create the GEG, the SG and the AG worked together to create a longer list of global experts and organisations working on understanding, preventing and responding to TFGBV. To help facilitate global participation, proposed research questions were made available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Bahasa and Hindi.

How was the TFGBV shared research agenda created?

Scoping review

1 Advisory Group defines domains and scoring criteria

2 Question gathering from SG, AG and their networks

3 Consolidate questions from Step 2

4 Survey of Global Expert Group who scores survey items

5 SG team performs data analysis and draft report

6 SG & AG agree on findings and support wide dissemination

Step 1: Scoping review to inform development of domains and set scoring criteria [1]

A scoping literature review, summarized below, provided an overview of the current state of evidence on TFGBV and key gaps in knowledge. This review helped the SG select the key research domains for classifying the proposed research questions and choose criteria for evaluating their relevance as the priority setting process progressed.

Step 2: Question gathering

The SG, AG and experts from their networks generated a large set of potential research questions under each domain. They also voted on the criteria to be used to evaluate the questions in the global ranking survey.

Step 3: Consolidation and selection of research questions

The SG then engaged in a rating process to agree on sets of potential research questions to be shared with the larger GEG. After a preliminary round of review and consolidation, wherein duplicate and off topic questions were removed, a further four rounds of review, consolidation, and synthesis took place through a RAG (red, amber, green) rating process. Eventually 75 questions remained, 15 per domain.[2]

Step 4: Global research priority setting survey and scoring[3]

An online survey with consolidated research questions was widely circulated to the AG, the SG and global experts, inviting them to rank questions in order of priority using a set of provided criteria. The survey also offered space for participants to suggest additional research questions.

Step 5: Data analysis, report drafting and review of findings

The data from the survey of the GEG were analysed and preliminary results generated by a technical specialist working with the SG. Together, the specialist and the SG drafted this report.

Step 6: Consensus on Findings and Wide Dissemination.

The SG and AG reviewed drafts findings, conclusions and recommendations and planned for wide dissemination and uptake.

Key Stages and Findings

Step 1: Scoping Review & Defining Domains

Step 1A: Scoping Review

To begin, a scoping review was used to highlight notable gaps in the published literature.

How the scoping review was conducted

The review team developed a framework for the review, which included dividing the literature into four key thematic areas:

- Research to understand TFGBV (e.g. prevalence studies, perpetration studies, risk factors and causes and consequences of TFGBV).

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[1] Annex D: https://www.svri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/TFGBV-Results-of-the-Scoping-Review-Annex-D.pdf
[2] Annex A: Full intradomain rankings of all proposed research questions. SVRI. https://www.svri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/TFGBV-Report_Annex_A.pdf
[3] Annex C: Technology-facilitated Gender Based Violence (TFGBV) Shared Research Agenda - Global Ranking Survey (English Version). SVRI. https://www.svri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/TFGBV-Report_Annex_C.pdf

- Intervention research (prevention and response interventions, and different types of evaluations of interventions, including process, formative, and impact evaluations).
- Policies and legislation related to TFGBV.
- Measures and methodologies used in TFGBV research.

These thematic areas were then reviewed and analysed against different categorisations of the literature, including:

- Types of violence
- Populations
- Geographies (regions and countries)
- Methodologies

The adoption of criteria for inclusion and exclusion helped to maintain a focused review with the understanding that available resources would not allow the team to review the literature for all types of violence and populations.

The review covered academic and grey literature published in English from 2012 -2022 (inclusive) that looked at all forms of tech-facilitated gender-based violence. Time and resource constraints meant that some topics were excluded, notably, the literature on online trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children, adolescents, and women. The existing literature on this topic is vast[4], and overlaps with CSE, online pornography, child sexual abuse online, grooming, migration, and child sexual exploitation. In addition, several organisations had already published or were planning reviews on this area. This includes extensive work being planned and carried out in the violence against children (VAC) field in terms of online sexual exploitation and abuse against children[5][6]. That said, we recognise the need to ensure that the exclusion of trafficking and CSE doesn't ignore multiple critical intersections between trafficking and TFGBV. This includes how victims are coerced into trafficking by an abuser/trafficker exerting power and control over their victim and how this can involve the threat of non-consensual image distribution (a form of TFGBV that is included in this review). The extensive consultations, held during and after the drafting of this report, were designed to ensure stakeholders dealing specifically with these topics were included in the AG, and participated in the survey and online expert group discussions. In this way, their views are reflected in these findings.

What we learnt from the scoping review

The review found that most existing studies focused on understanding the scale and impact of TFGBV, with only a handful of intervention studies examining TFGBV prevention or response. There is also limited research on legislation or policies. Existing research has several methodological limitations, including little original data collection, little qualitative or mixed-methods research, small sample sizes, and little disaggregation of data. Overall, the field lacks standardised definitions, terminology, and measurement frameworks that would allow for the collection of reliable and comparable data.
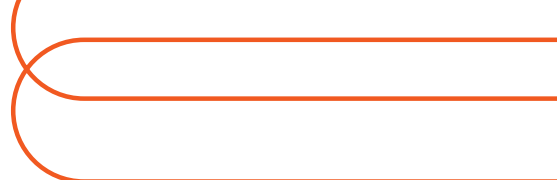
There are gaps in regional knowledge, with few studies in Central or Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

There are also population gaps. Whist existing research confirms that online harassment is worse among girls and young women of colour, those who are disabled or identify as LGBTQI+, few studies looked at women and girls who suffer multiple intersecting forms of discrimination. Those that did, tended to be qualitative studies with small sample sizes. Gaps were also apparent in terms of studies on migrant and refugee

[4] Barnert E, Iqbal Z, Bruce J, Anoshiravani A, Kolhatkar G, Greenbaum J. Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Children and Adolescents: A Narrative Review. Acad Pediatr. 2017 Nov-Dec;17(8):825-829. doi: 10.1016/j.acap.2017.07.009. Epub 2017 Aug 7. PMID: 28797913; PMCID: PMC5673585.

[5] For this report, in line with the WHO definition, young girls are defined as under 15 years and youth as those aged 15-24. Due to ethical and methodological considerations, data on violence is usually collected on girls and women aged 15 and older. We do recognise that violence against girls aged between 15-18 years is also considered part of violence against children.

[6] For instance, the Safe Online Initiative at the End Violence Partnership are planning a landscape analysis of online CSEA data which would assist current projects and stakeholders to identify key thematic, sectoral or geographical gaps in data collection, analysis, flows, integration, application, terminology and communication; Other resources include ECPAT International (2017). Online child sexual abuse and exploitation: Current forms and good practice for prevention and protection; Equality now (2021). Ending Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Women and Girls: A Call for International Standards; Council of Europe (2022) Online and Technology Facilitated Trafficking in Human Beings.

women, rural women, and women from racial or religious minorities. Overall, there is a need for research across all domains used to guide this review to thoroughly understand the differentiated effects and impacts that TFGBV has on the lives of women and girls, in all their diversity. This is not surprising given the nascent nature of the field and highlights the importance of a priority setting process for the TFGBV research to guide the field more systematically.

Step 1B: Defining Domains and Scoring Criteria

Based on the gaps identified in the scoping review, the SG and AG identified five domains for potential research questions. The domains included two intervention domains: TFGBV response and TFGBV prevention.

Domain 1: Nature and prevalence and impact

This domain includes research to understand:
- TFGBV in its multiple forms, including the prevalence of different types of TFGBV; risk and protective factors for TFGBV victimisation and perpetration; the causes and impacts of TFGBV, both online and offline including health, direct and indirect economic and psychosocial consequences; and the connections between TFGBV and offline violence.
- How different forms of TFGBV impact on a range of individual and collective rights, including the rights to participate in shared civic spaces, access and use information and communication technologies (ICTs), freedom of expression, privacy, rights to dignity and security etc.
- How TFGBV impacts the digital economy and the digital inclusion of women and girls in all their diversity.

Domain 2: Responses[7]

This domain includes research on:
- Multi-sectoral response interventions (and evaluations thereof), for example, on services needed for survivors of TFGBV. This considers how current services are not fit to respond to and support survivors of this form of GBV.
- The role and impact of policy and legislation in building survivor centric services and, the role and challenges of legislation in holding perpetrators accountable.
- How tech companies can be held accountable for providing safety online and what tech companies and online providers are currently doing to respond to TFGBV on their sites.
- What more governments and tech companies can and should be doing in providing services and responding to TFGBV.

Domain 3: TFGBV prevention

This domain includes research on:
- What works to prevent TFGBV, as well as evaluation of existing programmes or interventions such as programmes to prevent cyber dating violence or workplace online sexual harassment.
- How platform features and functions may proliferate and amplify TFGBV perpetration.
- The role that tech companies must play in primary prevention by designing technologies to be safe as well as to prevent violence.
- The role policy and legislation can play in prevention.
- How social norms are changing (both online and offline) and how this change - both negative and positive - is impacted by the ways in which technologies are designed and used or misused.

Domain 4: Populations[8]

This domain includes research:
- On the differing impacts on TFGBV on specific population groups. This includes young girls, LGBTIQ+ persons, women and girls living with disabilities in all their diversity, as well as migrant and refugee women and women living in humanitarian contexts in all their diversity.
- Exploring the intersectional nature of TFGBV experienced by these populations as well as research on the obstacles to reporting, available prevention, and differing populations responses to prevention interventions as well as research on response services needed.
- That expands understanding of TFGBV in humanitarian contexts and research on how TFGBV and conflict may reinforce each other.

Domain 5: Measures and methodologies

This domain includes research on:
- Adaptation of traditional ways to measure the prevalence of violence against women, as well as new and innovative ways to measure TFGBV.
- Standardised measures according to agreed-upon concepts, definitions, terminology, as well as consideration of practice-based learning, hierarchies of knowledge, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

Domain 5 also refers to the approaches and research instruments we use to measure the different forms of TFGBV, and their validity (e.g. are they measuring what they are supposed to), reliability (e.g. the consistency of how a person answers over time to the same question/scale), accuracy (e.g. how can we mitigate limitations in measuring accurate TFGBV prevalence data, including recall bias and social desirability bias), comparability and standardisation (e.g. can we use standardised methods and measures of TFGBV across studies).

Criteria for Scoring and Ranking Potential Research Questions

Simultaneously, the SG developed a list of 10 CHNRI[9] criteria for scoring/ranking research questions[10] and completed an internal survey to reduce this down to five. These five criteria were then voted on by the AG, who prioritised the following three criteria:

ANSWERABILITY: the likelihood that the research question can be answered and/or reach its objective within the proposed timeline.

APPLICABILITY: the likelihood that the knowledge produced through the proposed research will be applied in policy and practice.

FILLS KEY GAP: some research ideas will be more likely to fill a key gap in knowledge that is required for translation and/or implementation than others.

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[8] We acknowledge that the question of populations overlaps with the other 4 domains, but felt it was important to have a domain focused on populations that are exceptionally vulnerable to and/or currently under-served and under-researched in the area of TFGBV.
[9] Rudan I, Gibson JL, Ameratunga S, El Arifeen S, Bhutta ZA, Black M, Black RE, Brown KH, Campbell H, Carneiro I, Chan KY, Chandramohan D, Chopra M, Cousens S, Darmstadt GL, Meeks Gardner J, Hess SY, Hyder AA, Kapiriri L, Kosek M, Lanata CF, Lansang MA, Lawn J, Tomlinson M, Tsai AC, Webster J; Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative. Setting priorities in global child health research investments: guidelines for implementation of CHNRI method. Croat Med J. 2008 Dec;49(6):720-33. doi: 10.3325/cmj.2008.49.720. PMID: 19090596; PMCID: PMC2621022.
[10] Annex E: CHNRI Criteria and Shortlisting. https://www.svri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Annex-E-CHNRI-Criteria-and-Shortlisting.pdf

Step 2: Question Gathering

Using the domains above, the SG developed an online question-gathering survey in English, French and Spanish, allowing up to three research questions to be entered per domain. The survey also allowed respondents to enter two additional research questions they felt did not fit neatly under any of the five domains. The survey included demographic questions to capture the professional and personal characteristics of the experts contributing proposed research questions. The survey was sent to the AG with requests to disseminate it to colleagues in relevant fields. A total of 48 experts from around the word contributed at least one proposed research question each.

Step 3: Compilation and Consolidation of Questions

The question gathering generated a total of 481 proposed research questions which were then consolidated. We first conducted a series of reviews during which the questions within each domain were organized and classified into sub-themes (e.g. prevalence, risk factors or impacts). This allowed us to remove duplicates, merge similar questions where relevant and remove questions that were incomprehensible or did not constitute actual research questions. Once this process was completed, members of the SG entered a RAG (red, amber, green) rating for each question, based on three criteria selected by the AG (answerability, applicability and fills key gap). RAG ratings were converted into scores (red=0, amber=1, green=2) and summed across all raters.

Through this process, the SG was able to reduce the number of questions down to 15 questions per domain, or 75 in total.

Step 4: Global Ranking Survey

An online survey was developed to invite multiple stakeholders working on TFGBV from around the world to rank the 75 candidate research questions in order of priority within each of the five domains. The survey comprised the following main components.

- The survey began with a series of demographic questions on personal characteristics including geographic areas of expertise, country in which the participant was based, areas of professional expertise, gender and membership in any marginalized groups.
- For each domain, respondents were asked to rank all potential research questions, but with a special focus on their top ten, in order of priority, considering the three criteria of answerability, applicability and fills key gap.
- For each domain, respondents were invited to enter any additional research questions they felt were a priority but not covered by the questions presented, and to offer any other comments on the domain they felt were relevant.[11]

The ranking survey was available online via SurveyMonkey for a total of five weeks from 14 December 2023 to 22 January 2024. The survey was available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Bahasa and Hindi. It was tested in each language by members of the SG and the professional translators who created each language version.

After the close of the survey, the data were downloaded in Excel for checking and then transferred to Stata 17 for further analysis. For each respondent, the mean score for each research question within each domain was then calculated to determine the intra-domain ranking (lowest scores were considered highest to the maximum possible rank of #1).
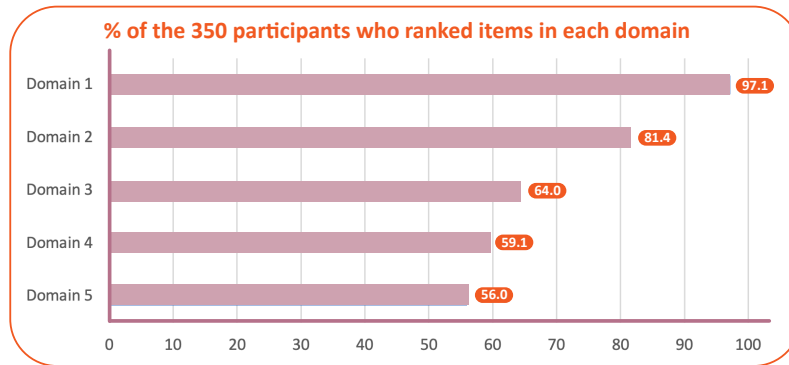
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[11] Annex B: Technology-facilitated Gender Based Violence (TFGBV) Shared Research Agenda - New potential research questions and topics proposed by respondents during the ranking survey. https://www.svri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/TFGBV-Report_Annex_B.pdf

Characteristics of global ranking survey participants

A total of 350 people ranked questions in at least one of the five domains and are therefore counted as survey participants. Of these, 63 (18%) also offered substantive written comments regarding at least one domain.

The number of people contributing to the rating dropped off as the domains were presented in order with 97.1% ranking Domain 1 (n=340) down to 56.0% who ranked Domain 5 (n=196). See Figure 1.

Figure 1

Percentage of total participants who ranked results in each domain

% of the 350 participants who ranked items in each domain

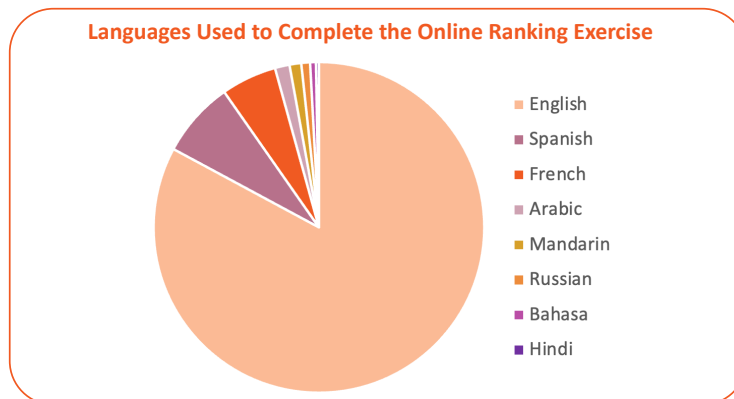| Domain	%
Domain 1	97.1
Domain 2	81.4
Domain 3	64.0
Domain 4	59.1
Domain 5	56.0

Except where explicitly stated otherwise, all the results presented in this report draw on all the information available from the 350 people who contributed any ranking data, ensuring full inclusion of all perspectives contributed by participants based in the Global South.[12]

Languages participants used to complete the survey

The ranking survey was available in eight languages. Most participants, 82.8% (n=290) chose to complete the survey in English. Another 7.4% (n=26) used the Spanish version, 5.4% (n=19) used the French version and less than 2% used each of Arabic (n=5), Mandarin (n=4), Russian (n=3), Bahasa (n=2) and Hindi (n=1).

Figure 2
Languages used to complete Global Ranking Survey

Languages Used to Complete the Online Ranking Exercise

- English
- Spanish
- French
- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Russian
- Bahasa
- Hindi

Of the 63 participants who provided narrative data, 53 (84.1%) wrote in English (including one who took the survey in Arabic), 8 wrote in Spanish (12.7%), and 2 wrote in French (3.2%).

Where participants were based

Overall, 230 participants (65.7%) told us they were based in countries defined as low- or middle-income countries (LMICs) by the World Bank in 2024. Of these, Kenya (n=36), India (n=24), Papua New Guinea (n=11),

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[12] The people who ranked all of the items were significantly more likely to report working in Latin America or the Caribbean (p=.007), Europe and Central Asia (p=.008), or North America (p=.003) and less likely to report working in Africa (p=.001). Of the participants who shared the country in which they are based, 65.1% of participants based in high-income countries completed all five domains, versus 42.1% of participants based in LMICs (p<.0001). Professionally, participants who completed were slightly more likely to be in academia than in other fields (p=.05). There were no significant differences by any demographic characteristics.

South Africa (n=11) and Nigeria (n=10) were the most common, with 59 additional countries reported by one to eight people each. In total, participants were drawn from 64 different LMICs.

Another 109 participants (31.1%) said they were based in countries defined as high income countries (HICs) by the World Bank. Of these, the United States of America (n=31), Australia (n=18), and the United Kingdom (n=11) were the most common, with 17 additional countries reported by one to eight people each. In total, participants were drawn from 20 different HICs.

The remaining 11 participants (3.1%) did not share where they were based.

The map below (Figure 3) shows the global distribution of the participants with LMICs in brown and HICs in blue.
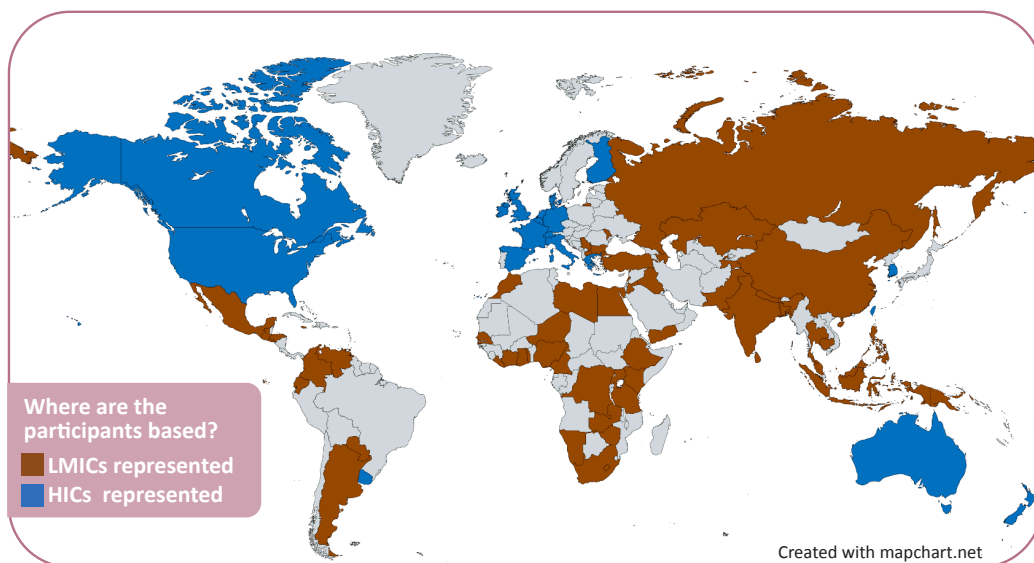
Figure 3
Global distribution of participants

Created with mapchart.net

Where participants worked

The ranking survey participants had wide ranging global work experience, representing all major regions, with 13% (N=46) of participants reporting they work in multiple regions. As shown in Figure 4, the highest numbers of respondents reported working in Africa, followed by East Asia and the Pacific.
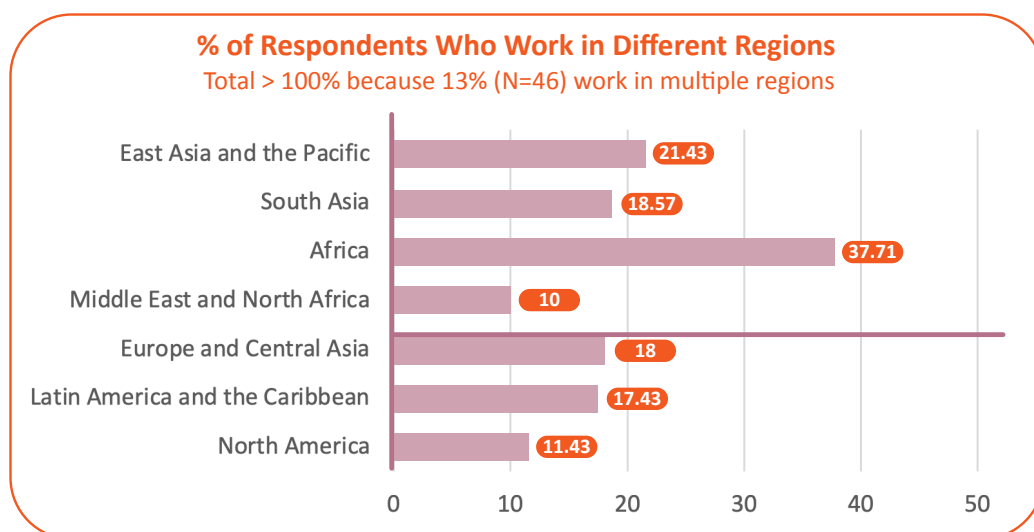
Figure 4
Geographic Areas of Expertise

% of Respondents Who Work in Different Regions
Total > 100% because 13% (N=46) work in multiple regions

Region	%
East Asia and the Pacific	21.43
South Asia	18.57
Africa	37.71
Middle East and North Africa	10
Europe and Central Asia	18
Latin America and the Caribbean	17.43
North America	11.43

Professional expertise of respondents

The majority of participants said they work in GBV prevention or response (n=251). Other fields reported included violence against children (n=119), academia (n=107), tech (n=55), legal/jurisprudence (n=38), cybercrime/security (n=32), and law enforcement (n=13).

Smaller numbers volunteered, in free text under "Other (please specify)", that they worked in government (n=12), statistics (n=9), NGO/civil society (n=8) or media/journalism (n=3).

Figure 5
Professional areas of Expertise/Sector

% of Respondents Who Work in Different Fields
(multiple options allowed)

| Field	%
GBV prevention or response	71.7
Violence against children	34.0
Academia	30.6
Tech	15.7
Legal/jurisprudence	10.9
Cybercrime/security	9.1
Law enforcement	3.7
Government	3.4
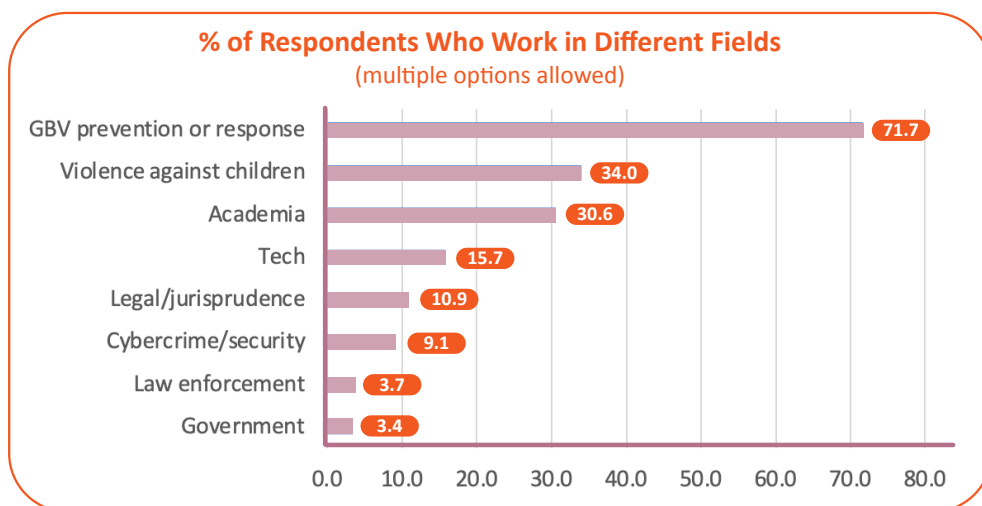
Personal characteristics of the participants

A significant majority of participants were female (78.0%, n=273), with another 16.9% male (n=59), and 3.4% non-binary, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, agender and/or transgender (n=12)[13]. A small minority (1.7%, n=6) did not disclose their gender. Gender proportions among those who shared their gender are shown in Figure 6.

Participants reported a range of personal experiences of marginalised identity as shown in Figure 7 below, with several reporting multiple overlapping marginalised identities.

Trans and/or nonbinary 4%

Male 17%

Female 79%

Figure 6 *Gender proportions among participants*
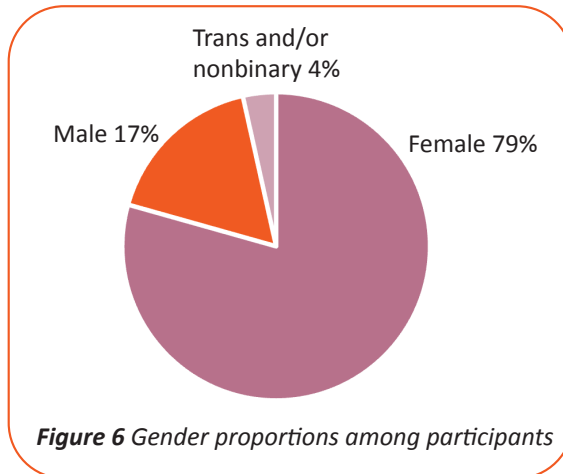
These included people with a disability and/or chronic illness (n=46)[14], LGBTQI+[15] people (n=40), indigenous people (n=31), racial or ethnic minorities (n=30), migrants (n=25), refugees (n=5), people who use drugs (n=5), people in the sex industry (n=4) and people who are/have been incarcerated (n=3).

Because of the small numbers, refugees were grouped with migrants for later analysis. Similarly, people who use drugs, people in the sex industry, and people who are/have been incarcerated were grouped together as legally persecuted.[16]

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[13] The number includes participants who chose "Non-binary, genderqueer, or gender nonconforming" in response to the question "What is your current gender?"; those who specified another gender identity (all of these were "no gender" or "agender"; and all those who responded "No" to the question "Is your current gender the same as your sex assigned at birth?")
[14] These were asked separately in the survey, but combined for analysis due to significant overlap.
[15] Includes non-binary, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, agender and/or transgender respondents.
[16] We recognize that in many countries represented in this survey, LGBTQI+ people are also criminalized, persecuted or simply excluded from the protection of law, and thus could fit within the group of those who are legally marginalised. However, this survey also included LGBTQI+ participants from countries with significant legal recognition and protections. The overall group of LGBTQI+ participants was large enough for standalone analysis and was therefore treated as such.

% of Respondents Who Self-reported Being:

*Figure 7
Percentage of
participants
reporting
marginalised
identities*

Identity	%
Person with a disability/chronic illness	13.14
LGBTQI	11.43
Indigenous person	8.86
Racial or ethnic minority	8.57
Migrant	7.14
Person who uses drugs	1.43
Refugee	1.43
Sex worker	1.14
Person who is or has been incarcerated	0.86
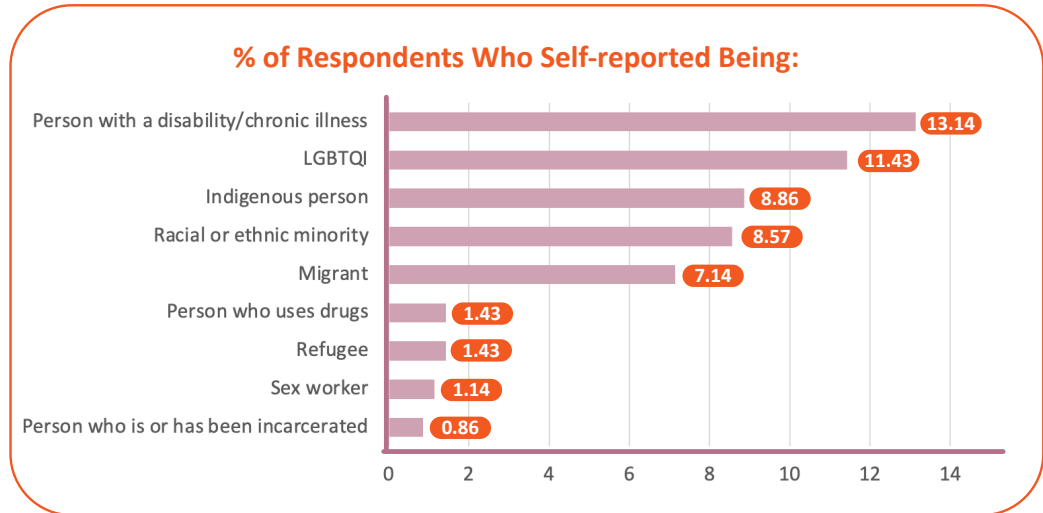
Step 5: Analysis of Ranking Data

The Top Two Research Questions in Each Domain

The top two questions in each domain were generally consistent across geographic, demographic, and professional expertise of respondents, and can be considered to represent important domains for generation of new knowledge on TFGBV.[17]

Domain 1: Nature, Prevalence, and Impact

• What is the current prevalence rate of TFGBV across different online platforms and digital communication channels, (including specific dating apps), and how does it vary among different groups and demographies (age, gender, and socioeconomic status, for instance)?
• What is the nature, prevalence and impacts of TFGBV in a particular setting?

Domain 2: Responses

• What policy and legal frameworks and regulatory approaches are in place to address TFGBV?   To what extent are they being implemented? How effective are they?
• How are private sector organisations, including tech developers, being held accountable for the technology they create and for TFGBV perpetrated on their equipment and on their domains?

Domain 3: TFGBV Prevention

• What evidence-based interventions work to prevent different forms of TFGBV?
• Which prevention interventions have been most successful in shifting attitudes and behaviours of perpetrators of TFGBV, including those in the high-risk categories for perpetration?

Domain 4: Populations

• How does lack of / or limited access to the internet affect the ability of marginalised groups to access justice/seek remedy when it comes to TFGBV?
• How do we best leverage existing findings from certain populations (in particular hard to reach, or marginalised groups) and apply to expanded understandings of TFGBV, whilst remaining sensitive to local realities and lived experiences?

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[17] As discussed above, fewer than half of the participants (48.3%, n=169) ranked items in all 5 domains. Thus while the ranking within each domain are internally comparable, we have not attempted to compare ranking across different domains. We note that it also makes sense conceptually not to rank domains directly against each other, as proposed research questions within each domain are targeting very different goals.

Domain 5: Measures and Methodologies

- What are the best approaches for conducting good quality, ethical and safe research on different forms of TFGBV, including in humanitarian settings?
- What are the best approaches for conducting analysis of laws and policies on TFGBV to generate evidence about implementation?

Rankings for Domain 1: Nature and prevalence and impact

This section details the overall priority rankings for proposed questions in Domain 1 using data from all 340 participants who ranked these items. We present here the top 5 items, but the full set of rankings can be found in Annex A.

RANK	QUESTION
1	What is the current prevalence rate of TFGBV across different online platforms and digital communication channels (including specific dating apps) and how does it vary among different groups and demographics (age, gender, and socioeconomic status, for instance)?
2	What is the nature, prevalence and impacts of TFGBV in a particular setting?
3	What are the risk and protective factors associated with TFGBV victimisation and perpetration?
4	Are the social norms (including male peer groups online) that drive the perpetration of TFGBV the same as or different to those that drive GBV? How do we understand their intersections and key differences?
5	What is the prevalence of TFGBV in humanitarian contexts including in natural disaster, conflict, and post conflict settings?

The top two items were consistent across geographic regions where participants worked. However, a few interesting regional variations emerged. Participants who worked in Africa collectively ranked "What is the prevalence of TFGBV in humanitarian contexts including in natural disaster, conflict and post conflict settings?" as #4, while those working in South Asia ranked it #5. While this item did not appear on the Top 5 list for those working in any other region, interestingly, it was ranked #2 overall by participants based in HICs.

The top two items were consistent across all self-reported areas of professional expertise, with those working in GBV (n=251) and VAC (n=115) both matched to the overall ranking. Cybercrime and security experts ranked "What is the prevalence of TFGBV in humanitarian contexts including in natural disaster, conflict and post conflict settings?" more highly than other groups, possibly reflecting a focus on the intersections of technology and crisis situations. Tech experts included "What are the short term, long term and cumulative impacts of victimisation of TFGBV, including looking at health and psychosocial impacts and impacts on different populations?" as one of the top 5 items, while law enforcement added "What is the prevalence of perpetration of TFGBV by men in a specific setting?"

Migrants, refugees, and indigenous people ranked the prevalence of TFGBV in humanitarian contexts higher, consistent with their heightened vulnerability in such settings. Men were distinct in ranking the impact of TFGBV on non-targeted groups within their top 10. People with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, and trans/nonbinary people showed a higher concern for the impacts of TFGBV on human rights and intersectionality. Women and racial/ethnic minorities added to their Top 5 questions, "What are the short term, long term and cumulative impacts of victimisation of TFGBV, including looking at health and psychosocial impacts and impacts on different populations?"

Emerging Themes

Text comments from participants on this domain emphasized the need for foundational research on the nature and dynamics of TFGBV. This will increase understanding of its impacts in various contexts before moving to intervention research. They also noted that lack of standardisation of measures limits understanding of prevalence and impact across settings. They cautioned that prevalence data must be carefully contextualised to prevent misuse of figures that involve under-reporting.

Several participants noted the limited foundational research on risk and protective factors for TFGBV, especially as it pertains to perpetrators, and worried this lack of foundational work constrains intervention design. Others noted that research should consider how online and offline violence can be interconnected and mutually reinforcing, and that this is particularly important to consider in respect of assessing impact.
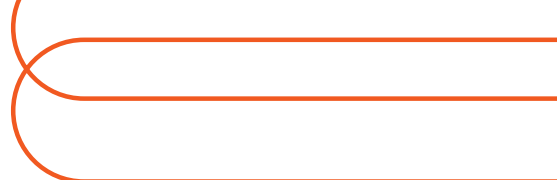
A number of participants, and in particular those working for governments, emphasized a need to research on direct and indirect economic costs of TFGBV on both individuals and the broader economy, including limiting digital inclusion of women and girls in online spaces.

Many commenters emphasized the need to also consider boys and men as victims of TFGBV, and to consider the specific and gendered dynamics of violence against them, as well as exploring who perpetrates such violence. These comments aligned with an overall call to better understand risk and protective factors for TFGBV perpetration, to better inform prevention programming.

Rankings for Domain 2: Responses

This section details the overall priority rankings for proposed questions in Domain 2 using data from all 285 participants who ranked these items.

RANK	QUESTION
1	What policy and legal frameworks and regulatory approaches are in place to address TFGBV? To what extent are they being implemented? How effective are they?
2	How are private sector organisations, including tech developers, being held accountable for the technology they create and for TFGBV perpetrated on their equipment and on their domains?
3	What is the role of stakeholder engagement to improve platform accountability/content moderation response in a particular setting/region to better support and protect women and children online?
4	What role can policy and legislation play as a deterrent in preventing the widespread distribution of image- based abuse/non-consensual sharing of sexual images on pornography sites, social media platforms and other online distribution platforms?
5	What types of services do survivors consider adequate and appropriate and what are they seeking out (technical, emotional, financial- online or in person)? How many of these services are informal (e.g. familial) rather than legislative or regulatory?

While the top items were largely consistent, there were some notable regional variations in these rankings. Participants working in North America ranked "What types of services do survivors consider adequate and appropriate and what are they seeking out" as #2, whereas those in Latin America and the Caribbean and East Asia and the Pacific ranked it as #3. Participants in Europe and Central Asia added "How can law enforcement agencies and online platforms collaborate to create a comprehensive response framework for TFGBV, including efficient reporting mechanisms, swift action against perpetrators, and adequate support for victims, while also addressing challenges related to jurisdiction and privacy?" as a #3 item. Those working in North America added "To what extent do existing GBV services support the needs of survivors of online and technology-facilitated GBV?" as a #5.

Professional groups were largely consistent, but law enforcement ranked "How can law enforcement agencies and online platforms collaborate to create a comprehensive response framework for TFGBV, including efficient reporting mechanisms, swift action against perpetrators, and adequate support for victims, while also addressing challenges related to jurisdiction and privacy?" to their top 5.

LGBTQI+, trans/nonbinary, and male participants ranked "What types of services do survivors consider adequate and appropriate and what are they seeking out (technical, emotional, financial—online or in person)? How many of these services are informal (e.g., familial) rather than legislative or regulatory?" as #3, up from #5 overall, with disabled/chronically ill participants ranking it as #4. Indigenous people and racial/ethnic minorities both added "How can law enforcement agencies and online platforms collaborate to create a comprehensive response framework for TFGBV, including efficient reporting mechanisms, swift action against perpetrators, and adequate support for victims, while also addressing challenges related to jurisdiction and privacy?" as #5.

Emerging Themes

Comments from participants on this domain emphasized the central importance of survivor-centred responses, aligned with a need to better understand survivors' perspectives, experiences and help seeking behaviours when they experience TFGBV.

Those who commented had differing opinions on the current importance of understanding how legislation and policies can better support survivors. Many wanted to better understand how TFGBV laws are implemented and their practical effects, especially concerning help-seeking and prevention. Others suggested legal and policy research is overdone. Others cautioned that legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks to address TFGBV have historically been used to harass and silence a range of communities. These include activists, human rights defenders, LGBTQI+ persons and organizations, sexual and reproductive health providers, survivors seeking to denounce abuse they have experienced, or others who reasonably expect to benefit from these laws. It is important to ensure that accurate information about sexual and reproductive health and rights can still be shared, and that freedom of speech and freedom of association, especially for LGBTQI+ people, is protected from backlash. There is a need to assess policy-level interventions for unintentional consequences and to explicitly monitor the potential for harm to people from marginalised groups.

Similarly, while many participants emphasized the need for better ways to hold both perpetrators and platform providers accountable, others noted that platforms need better guidance on how to engage in TFGBV prevention.

Rankings for Domain 3: TFGBV prevention

This section details the overall priority rankings for proposed questions in Domain 3 using data from all 224 participants who ranked these items.

RANK	QUESTION
1	What evidence-based interventions work to prevent different forms of TFGBV?
2	Which prevention interventions have been most successful in shifting attitudes and behaviours of perpetrators of TFGBV, including those in the high-risk categories for perpetration?
3	How can technology companies and social media platforms proactively design and implement features that prevent or mitigate TFGBV, while also respecting users' privacy and freedom of expression?
4	What are the roles of tech companies in perpetrating/enabling OGBV/TFGBV? How can we imagine their business models/underlying logic for algorithms to prevent OGBV/TFGBV?
5	What moderation and content curation strategies and standards in online spaces are most effective at preventing and responding to TFGBV?

This list was almost entirely consistent across geography and the top item was also consistent across all self-reported areas of professional expertise. Participants working in law enforcement added "What role can digital literacy programs and online safety education play in empowering potential victims to recognize and respond to TFGBV?" as their #5, while those who note statistics and/or NGO/civil society as an area of work all added ranked this item as #4.

The top items were also fairly consistent across demographic groups¸ although trans/nonbinary participants added to their top 10, "How can TFGBV prevention interventions be best delivered to ensure inclusivity (age, SOGI, people with disabilities, etc) and reduce risk of re-traumatization for survivors?". LGBTQI+ participants were more like to emphasize the question "How does effectiveness of prevention interventions vary across different groups? How can we use this information to design interventions that address intersectionality?"

Emerging Themes

Some participants commenting on this section, were concerned there is a gap in evidence-based prevention strategies and worried that foundational research on what constitutes effective prevention is lacking. Participants who commented on this section called for specificity in prevention research, particularly how different types of TFGBV, such as intimate partner violence (IPV) and trafficking, require distinct prevention strategies. They also noted that we need to detail effective prevention at different points of interventions (i.e. online platforms vs governments) and to think about the nuances of differences between primary and secondary prevention.

Rankings for Domain 4: Populations

This section details the overall priority rankings for proposed questions in Domain 4 using data from all 207 participants who ranked these items.

RANK	QUESTION
1	How does lack of / or limited access to the internet affect the ability of marginalised groups to access justice/seek remedy when it comes to TFGBV?
2	How do we best leverage existing findings from certain populations (in particular hard to reach, or marginalised groups) and apply to expanded understandings of TFGBV, whilst remaining sensitive to local realities and lived experiences?
3	Are there differences between the most effective techniques to tackle TFGBV aimed at different groups?
4	What are the modalities through which stigma and discrimination towards LGBTIQ+ people increases their risk of GBV facilitated through dating apps and other online platforms? (for example, how does discrimination against trans women increase their dependence on online platforms for connecting with intimate partners and therefore increase the risk of TFGBV victimisation?)
5	How do offline and online forms of GBV intersect for population groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination?

This list was largely consistent across geography, with a few subtle variations. The item "Are there differences between the most effective techniques to tackle TFGBV aimed at different groups?" was rated #1 by participants working in MENA, Europe and Central Asia and North America and #2 in Latin America and the Caribbean. The list was also largely consistent across all self-reported areas of professional expertise. There was, however, a bit more variation in top items across demographic groups. Trans/nonbinary participants ranked as #1 the item "What are the modalities through which stigma and discrimination towards LGBTIQ+ people increases their risk of GBV facilitated through dating apps and other online platforms? (for example, how does discrimination against trans women increase their dependence on online platforms for connecting with intimate partners and therefore increase the risk of TFGBV victimisation?)". This was ranked #2 by LGBTQI+ participants. The item "What is the prevalence and impact of TFGBV on transgender people and gender diverse people who do not conform to patriarchal gender norms?" was ranked #4 by LGBTQI+ participants and #5 by trans/nonbinary participants. The small number of legally marginalised respondents who ranked this domain, ranked this item as #2.

Emerging Themes

Participants who commented on this section emphasized the importance of an intersectional approach, and some wondered if it would be more beneficial to outline overall areas of concern that need to be addressed for all marginalised groups. Commentors emphasized the need to ensure digital inclusion for marginalized groups, particularly in developing contexts where digital access remains limited. Other noted the importance of identifying the unique barriers these groups face in reporting TFGBV and accessing prevention and response services. Participants again noted the risk and reality of backlash against marginalised groups from certain types of intervention and the need to prevent this.

Rankings for Domain 5: Measures and methodologies

This section details the overall priority rankings for proposed questions in Domain 5 using data from all 196 participants who ranked this section.

RANK	QUESTION
1	What are the best approaches for conducting good quality, ethical and safe research on different forms of TFGBV, including in humanitarian settings?
2	What are the best approaches for conducting analysis of laws and policies on TFGBV to generate evidence about implementation?
3	How can social media listening tools be used to understand and measure the prevalence of TFGBV in ethical ways?
4	How can we classify different forms of TFGBV?
5	How can machine learning techniques be utilized to collect data on TFGBV and what are the risks of using these technologies?

This list, like others, was largely consistent across geography. Participants working in East Asia and the Pacific ranked the item "What are the best approaches for measuring the success of primary prevention interventions addressing specific aspects of TFGBV within a broader GBV prevention intervention?" as #3.

Ranking was also relatively consistent across all self-reported areas of professional expertise. An exception is that participants working in violence against children added, as #4, the item "What are the best approaches for measuring the success of primary prevention interventions addressing specific aspects of TFGBV within a broader GBV prevention intervention?"

Emerging Themes

Many participants who commented on this section emphasized the importance of improving measurement, and called for the development of standardized, reliable, and valid measures across studies to ensure consistent and accurate data on TFGBV. One participant noted that we need to recognize the complexity of measuring TFGBV and asked for methodological innovations that capture this complexity rather than relying on overly broad or simplistic measures. Another noted the need to address biases like recall and social desirability biases in measurement.

One participant offered a critique of methods of economic cost analysis in TFGBV research as potentially misleading or superficial, advocating for a nuanced understanding that goes beyond budgetary allocations. Another noted the importance of both measurement and research strategies designed for different levels of the social ecological model.

Discussion

A notable feature of the TFGBV research agenda is that there was more convergence in terms of top priorities within domains than in the other agenda setting processes conducted in recent years.[18] This could reflect the fact that this is a young and rapidly developing area of work, with a limited current pool of evidence and potentially a high level of agreement in terms of key gaps that currently exist.

TFGBV is increasingly recognized as a significant issue that undermines gender equality and disrupts and impedes the human rights and social development of women and girls worldwide. There is growing interest from global leaders and stakeholders in understanding and addressing TFGBV. This global shared research agenda is offered in service of furthering this interest and providing a strong foundation of evidence for constructive action.

The process of engaging with a wide range of global stakeholders in creating this shared research agenda has highlighted the importance of the following points:

Importance of Understanding the Nature of TFGBV

There is an urgent need for foundational research to understand the magnitude, nature, risk and protective factors, and impacts of TFGBV to provide a strong base of evidence for prevention and response. Further research on perpetration has also been highlighted as a need. Such research is essential to ensure survivor-centred intervention approaches.

Measurement and Methodology

Participants called for the development of innovative methodologies that accurately and safely capture the complex nature of TFGBV. Standardized, reliable, and valid measurement tools are essential for the ethical and safe collection of comparable data across studies, and the development of consistent measurement strategies is crucial for understanding prevalence and impacts of TFGBV. Moreover, methodologies need to address inherent biases such as recall and social desirability, which can distort the understanding of TFGBV. Similarly, the field is urgently in need of methods and measurement strategies that can assess the efficacy and impact of interventions to prevent and respond to TFGBV.

Responding to TFGBV

Our participants emphasized that any response strategies for TFGBV should be survivor-centred and prioritize the perspectives and experiences of survivors. This would ensure the services and support provided align with survivors' actual needs and preferred channels for help-seeking, and help pave the way for their recovery and empowerment. Respondents consistently advocated for robust policy legislative frameworks that not only penalize perpetrators but also hold digital platforms accountable for facilitating such environments.

Prevention Strategies

Our findings highlight an urgent need to identify effective prevention methods across different platforms and perpetrator groups. Additionally, the design of technological platforms must prioritize safety features to mitigate TFGBV risks while respecting privacy and freedom of expression.

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[18] https://www.svri.org/category/research-priorities/

Importance of Intersectionality

The process has also emphasized the importance of an intersectional approach to understanding and responding to TFGBV, acknowledging that neither the risk, nor the impact, nor the consequences of TFGBV are equitably distributed.

In particular, feedback on the role and impact of policy and legislation highlighted a dual narrative: the need for robust legal frameworks to hold perpetrators and platforms accountable, and the potential misuse of these laws to silence and oppress marginalized groups such as activists and LGBTQI+ communities. There is a long and unfortunate history in many global settings and on-line spaces of using regulations against sexually explicit content to repress sharing of accurate information about sexual and reproductive health, and to prevent community organising and education around issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. Future research should explore these dynamics comprehensively, ensuring that TFGBV laws strengthen protection without enabling political repression.

Way Forward

Effectively addressing TFGBV will require a multifaceted research approach that spans foundational research, improved methods, evidence-based prevention, and response strategies. There must also be careful attention to the intersectional needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations to ensure that we meet the needs of those most at risk. Our collaborative and inclusive methodology in setting research priorities aims to ignite a concerted effort among global researchers, policymakers, funders and activists to address TFGBV more effectively. It is intended to foster safer digital spaces and contribute to the broader goal of gender equality and the elimination of GBV both online and off.

As we reflect on this process and the results, we need to act strategically and promptly to use this agenda well. The situation in the fast-moving world of technology shifts constantly. Even as we work to address current gaps in the evidence, the ground shifts beneath our feet. A notable example: whilst AI is not new, the emergence of AI tools that impact TFGBV has escalated since the development of this agenda began, particularly with the emerging ability to fake images and videos of identifiable individuals. As a result, the current agenda does not have questions related to the impact of AI in the Top 5 of any domain. It is very possible that had this exercise been conducted one year later, AI and TFGBV would be a priority focus. Given the urgency and profound impact TFGBV is having on democracy and women's rights, we must work together to swiftly address key research questions, balance speed with rigour, and plan for future updates as the field evolves. We call upon all stakeholders dedicated to fostering violence-free online environments to advocate for the implementation of this agenda. In doing so, we will not only advance our understanding of TFGBV, but also formulate effective and quality responses to support survivors and victims, and nurture violence free online and offline spaces for all women and children.