



**SHARED  
VALUE**  
AFRICA INITIATIVE

**African Universities**  
**GENDER EQUALITY**  
12.08.2021 *Forum*



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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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To commemorate Women's Month in South Africa, the Shared Value Africa Initiative (SVAI) and the #ITSNOTOK movement held discussions among academic representatives from universities across Africa to create awareness on gender inequality and Gender Based Violence (GBV). The forum was co-hosted by the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. The webinar was guided by the question; 'What can Academia do to support gender equality?'

Introducing the forum was Tiekie Barnard, founder and CEO of SVAI who acknowledged the power imbalance across gender stating, 'GBV knows no culture nor background [...] women have continually been abused for decades.' She challenged academia to embrace collaboration with civil societies, private sector and governments to forge gender equality. The moderator for the session was Dr. Mumbi Wachira, Lecturer at the Strathmore University Business School, started the session by sharing daunting statistics, "According to the United Nations 137 women are killed each day by a member of their family or a partner." This was echoed by Ms. Elizabeth Dartnall, Executive Director of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, who noted a high rate of sexual harassment cases went underreported particularly in universities due to poor confidence in management response mechanisms and existing gender-discriminatory policies.

The discussions pushed for collaboration among universities with stakeholders in the private sector and civil societies since these sectors are increasingly embedding strategies that are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ms. Dartnall suggested that academic institutions could pursue collaborative and multi-sectoral research which could potentially inform policy making while leveraging on relationships with fellow researchers and policy makers. Equally important, Prof Corné Davis, Associate Professor for Strategic Communication at the University of Johannesburg, suggested adopting a strategic approach towards encouraging research uptake in matters pertaining to sexual abuse and gender inequality.

Further, universities were encouraged to forge gender equality through their teaching and learning mandate by aligning curricula with GBV awareness. Dr Olebogeng Selebi, Senior Lecturer at the University of Pretoria, commended the approach by the university to integrate GBV awareness in curriculum through an Advanced Human Rights Course that focuses on challenging gender inequality and the [University of Pretoria TuksRes Women in Leadership](https://www.itsnotok.ac.za/)



[Academy](#) (TRWLA) program that mentors young women. Likewise, Ms. Immaculate Mogotsi, Senior Research Fellow & Head of the Gender Training and Research Programme University of Namibia, commended The Social Contemporary Issues module that infuses GBV awareness and is compulsory for all courses offered at the University of Namibia.

Speaking at the forum Ms. Lindi Dlamini, Chief Executive Officer at GBVF Response Fund 1, acknowledged, “We have solved so many challenges in this world [...] yet fundamental societal norms and values continue to malign the disadvantaged, marginalized and see it fit to perpetrate violence based on the gender of others. We have to break the back of this scourge.” Likewise, Ms. Nonkosi Tyolwana, Director Centre for Diversity, Inclusivity and Social Change at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), commended the approach at the university towards [supporting victims of GBV](#) to create an enabling environment to confidently report sexual violence.

Ms. Dartnall suggested active approaches for academia to prevent GBV through addressing unequal power relations in leadership positions. Similarly, Prof Davis expressed the need to address sexual violence in organizational communication through Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting and urged the academic community to mainstream GBVF research, “We need to get it written into our literature so we can approach it as a strategic issue.”. In the same way Dr Hlengiwe Ndhlovu, postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Women and Gender Studies (CWGC) Nelson Mandela University, added, “In advancing the fight for Gender Based Violence and gender harm within the university in collaborative work [...] is to undo long history of silencing.” This was further echoed by Ms. Nonkosi Tyolwana who commended the impact of multi-sector partnerships at Cape Peninsula University through gender equality campaigns like [HeforShe movement](#).

Speaking at the forum, guest speaker Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill, Council Chairperson, Nelson Mandela University, shared on the importance of telling women-centered stories to address social injustices particularly by informing policy change and creating a legacy through their experiences as told in their own words. She noted that the book, Write to Speak, a collection of stories written by African Women Leaders, in honor of [Beijing+25](#). It celebrates women leaders all across Africa for their collaborative efforts in adopting the Beijing declaration global agenda for gender equality as well as recognizes the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the African Union’s [African Women’s Decade 2020](#) initiative aimed to elevate women towards leadership.



## 2. INTRODUCTION

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### 2.1 The #ITSNOTOK movement

Although gender equality is a fundamental human right according to the United Nations Global Impact women still lag behind in terms of representation in positions of power and decision making. Aside from the undeniable fact that most women receive unequal pay compared to their male counterparts, women are easy prey to physical and sexual abuse at the workplace and other spheres of life. The World Economic Forum's global gender report for 2021 indicates that women are belittled in matters of political leadership and influence. The Covid\_19 pandemic only amplified already existing flaws in society on gender bias which propelled the creation of the #ITSNOTOK movement in June of 2020, by the Shared Value Africa Initiative. The movement was further motivated by the ongoing rate of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) in South Africa and President Cyril Ramaphosa's call to action to fight GBVF in South Africa.

The purpose of this movement is to mainstream awareness on GBVF and to collaborate with strategic partners to forge gender equality. The SVAI as the creator of the #ITSNOTOK movement has created engagement platforms, campaigns and partnerships to challenge the private sector, civil society, governments and the academia to fight GBV. This movement seeks to influence public policy, encourage advocacy and concrete actions that will push private sector, civil society, governments and the academia to actively address GBV and inequality.

### 2.2 African Universities Gender Equality Forum

In recognition of Women's Month in South Africa, the Shared Value Africa Initiative (hereafter SVAI) and #ITSNOTOK movement on Thursday, 12th August hosted an academic forum to create awareness on Gender Based Violence (hereafter GBV). The forum was co-hosted by the University of Johannesburg. The webinar was guided by the question 'What can Academia do to advance gender equality?' This timely discussion was held among academic representatives from universities across Africa with the aim of acknowledging the significant role that academia must play in stopping GBV within places of learning, beyond as well as to explore appropriate methods to support families, particularly women and children all across the world who experience some form of abuse during the course of their lives.



Tiekie Barnard, founder and CEO of SVAI opened the session by stating: “GBV is not depended on our culture, our background, our religion, the color of our skin, our education, how much money we have, the language we speak, where we live or the country we come from. Women have been abused for centuries” Ms. Barnard notably pointed that GBV encircles power inequality. From the onset she acknowledged, “Gender based violence knows no boundaries much like Covid-19, it is spread by human behavior”. She added that the forum was aimed at uniting the academia, civil society, private sector and governments to forge gender equality to end GBV.

The moderator for the session Dr. Mumbi Wachira, Lecturer at the Strathmore University Business School, started by sharing daunting information on the rate of GBV, "According to the United Nations, 137 women are killed each day by a member of their family or a partner." On voicing this Dr. Mumbi raised the need for academia to not just by stand and critique GBV but to inform change and urge for equality in their spheres of influence.



### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE ACADEMIC FORUM

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Given the potential significant role academia can play towards transformative sustainability, the following provides a summary of the intended objectives of the forum.

#### 3.1 Incorporate institutions of higher learning to drive change

The discussions aimed at creating an opportunity for universities across Africa to increasingly collaborate. This would be a push towards actively forging gender equality to curb GBV. Further, to rally for research in sexual harm and violence by advocating applied and collaborative research methods in institutions of higher learning to raise awareness of GBV beyond academic spaces.

The intended outcome of these discussions was to push academia to ride on their legitimacy and bring together civil societies, private sector, NGOs and government to work collaboratively towards innovative solutions that can counter GBV.

Finally, to encourage universities to forge gender equality through their teaching and learning mandate through discussions on the tried approaches to align curricula with awareness on sexual violence.

#### 3.2 Create an action plan

The intended takeaway from the forum was to create concrete initiatives and actions, within learning institutions and workplaces, that mainstream e-awareness on sexual violence and inequality across the African continent. Such actions towards GBV eradication would then enable universities to adopt policies that prioritize gender equality as well as support victims of sexual harm.

The forum would provide an avenue for universities across the continent to share best practices on how to embed GBV awareness within various curricula. Highlighting what has worked best for them to guide others still working towards curricula development. The big picture being forging change driven by academia.



### 3.3 Collaborate with academic focused institutions for the future

In line with the transformative sustainability agenda, the forum aimed to collaborate with institutions of higher learning all across Africa to rally efforts of the Africa Academic Voices (AAV) platform to fight GBV. In addition, to mobilize collaboration through impactful partnerships such as the [United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education \(UNPRME\)](#) that engages business schools to refine their curricula with the right skills to match workforce needs and incorporate sustainability goals. Such curated collaborations would go a long way in upgrading academic institutions and empowering future-leaders.

### 3.4 Increase research on societal issues in the private sector

This forum aimed to rally efforts for research sharing through e-platforms and GBV mainstream e-awareness.

Further again to discuss on best practices to create impactful partnerships with stakeholders in the private sector and civil societies particularly since the sectors are increasingly embedding strategies that are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These efforts would be aimed at empowering learning institutions, particularly academia, to influence the private sector's activities supporting [SDG 5](#) which focuses on Gender Inequality.



## 4. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS BY VARIOUS SPEAKERS

The forum was split into three distinct sessions. The first part consisted of individual presentations from academic experts across various African universities. Next, a moderated panel discussion facilitated by Dr. Mumbi, Lecturer at Strathmore University Business School, was held to establish what academic institutions in Africa can collaboratively do to address GBV and gender inequality. Finally the session closed with a speech on the importance of sharing our stories from Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill, Chair of the UNGC-Local Network in South Africa.

### 4.1 Collaboration and the key to ending GBV

*By Ms. Lindi Dlamini, Chief Executive Officer, GBVF Response Fund 1*

“We have solved so many challenges in this world [...] yet fundamental societal norms and values continue to malign the disadvantaged, marginalized and see it fit to perpetrate violence based on the gender of others. We have to break the back of this scourge.”-Lindi Dlamini

Speaking at the forum Ms. Dlamini acknowledged the women-led panel discussion noting that it was important to engage men in the activism against sexual violence. She added that bridging the gap of system inequality at workspaces would go a long way to protect women from vulnerability of sexual abuse. Ms. Dlamini challenged African leaders that “There is a responsibility on industry captains and leaders alike to take the mantle of activism around gender equality and the elimination of workplace and societal conditions that keep women backwards and oppressed.”

She further suggested steps towards collaboration on a GBVF Response Fund to support survivors. The GBVF was a movement formed to impel government and civil society to address issues of sexual violence and system inequality in workspaces. She added the need to engage male voices to unvoice their silence in matters of sexual abuse as well as support women and families in general. Equally important Ms. Dlamini recognized the necessity to engage governments and policy makers in research planning and sexual equality discussions. Finally, she addressed the need to partner with early childhood educational institutions to curate a curriculum that embeds GBV awareness and gender equality from the onset.



## 4.2 Role of Academia in ending GBV

*By Elizabeth Dartnall, Executive Director, Sexual Violence Research Initiative*

**“This is a real problem for us in the field of knowledge production, especially given the importance of research to inform policy and practice and the importance of evidence-based prevention programs to improve the lives of women and children.” -Elizabeth Dartnall**

Ms. Dartnall started by echoing the statistic of the alarming rate of harassment women experience globally. Further she advised on the role of academia in GBV prevention stating a high rate of underreporting for sexual harassment cases in institutions of higher learning particularly due to poor confidence in management response mechanisms and existing gender-discriminatory policies. In addition, Ms. Dartnall noted the insufficient research on GBV in institutions of higher learning.

She suggested steps to improve the existing approaches by engaging religious leaders to teach against sexual harassment as the What Works to Prevent Violence initiative in DRC that reduced violence by 40%. As well as by rallying activists to advocate power balance at the workplaces such as Sasa Together initiative in Uganda that reduced sexual violence by 52%.

Ms. Dartnall further acknowledged current drivers of sexual and physical violence based on existing studies where poverty, poor mental health and substance abuse were linked to drive up cases. These she noted would assist in understanding the root cause of the problem and take steps towards improvement. In view of the identified challenges she suggested approaches for effective GBV prevention such as engaging men in participatory approaches, providing support for survivors, address unequal power relations and engaging with scholars in research sharing.

According to Ms. Dartnall academia need to develop a field owned priority driven research agenda to address both practice and policy needs. The research agenda will encourage accountability of research resources, guide research planning and most importantly it will act as an advocacy tool to signal funders and policy makers.

Addressing the forum Ms. Dartnall mentioned that "We must commit to supporting and undertaking better research to develop and scale up evidence to form programs to address sexual violence in higher education that embrace gender equality." She emphasized on the need to engage and share research to inform policy making firstly by focusing on developing



relationships with fellow researchers and policy makers. She added that to enable research sharing it was key to collaborate in multi-sectors share insights to eradicate GBV. Particularly by involving the partners from inception, the disseminating would create opportunities to do things with a fresh perspective.

### 4.3 The approach applied at University of Johannesburg to address GBV

*By Prof Corné Davis, Associate Professor, Strategic Communication, University of Johannesburg*

**“We can make a difference and we are showing that we can. Let us fulfill our duty that comes with knowledge. It is our responsibility.”-Prof. Corne Davis**

Prof Davis expressed the need to address sexual violence in workspaces and organizational communication through Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting and mainstream journals. She continued to emphasize academia need to enable each other, “We need to get it written into our literature so we can approach it as a strategic issue.”

In expounding on the approaches applied at The University of Johannesburg, Prof Davis noted the strategic approach towards research uptake in promoting GBV research in its education curriculum. Additionally, through partnering with the private sector to encourage Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting by highlighting where gender equality fits in and influencing their Public Relations. For instance the collaboration with K.P.M.G to publish a report on GBV and gender inequality in South Africa.

Prof Davis suggested that academia take part in facilitating multi-sector stakeholder intervention through incorporating matters of sexual abuse and unequal power roles in strategic planning and governance matters. As well as to influence the discussion on mainstream communication of businesses to make a change towards eliminating GBV and gender inequality.



#### 4.4 Role of the University of Pretoria to address GBV and inequality

*By Dr Olebogeng Selebi, Senior Lecturer, University of Pretoria*

**“Universities have a huge role to play through research and our influential role in society”-  
Dr. Olebogeng Selebi**

Dr. Selebi started off by noting the notions of gender imparity that are deeply rooted in society and cultural upbringing. In light of that she highlighted the importance of SCG 17 that focuses on need for meaningful partnerships in this case being that, “Learning institutions have a responsibility to impact societal values”, can be attained by partnering with researchers to solve key societal issues.

Dr. Selebi acknowledged the initiatives at the University of Pretoria to address GBV and inequality for example the Sustainable Development Goals Hub (S.D.Gs) which mainly collaborates and partners through shared research and social influence. She further stated how the SDG hub helps accord policy maker’s up-to-date findings on all issues GBV.

Dr. Selebi mentioned the approach by the university to integrate GBV in its curriculum such as The Advanced Human Rights Course that focuses on challenging gender inequality. The university partnered with the [Centre for Human Rights](#) to combine academic excellence and effective activism to advance human rights through education, research and advocacy. Further, the [Centre for Sexualities, Aids and Gender](#) on HIV research and all issues surrounding gender equality. Together with the [University of Pretoria TuksRes Women in Leadership Academy](#) (TRWLA) program that mentors and trains young women and the [#SpeakOutUp](#) campaign, the university is at the forefront in the fight against GBV.

#### 4.5 Role of academia in spearheading GVB and gender inequality

*By Ms. Immaculate Mogotsi, Senior Research Fellow & Head of the Gender Training and Research Programme, University of Namibia*

**“Gender equality can only be fully attained if men and women are fully represented at all structures of the university”- Immaculate Mogotsi**

Ms. Mogotsi started by recognizing the role of national policies in fighting GBV. She continued to state, “The call to eradicate GBV is embedded in the instruments adopted by national



leaders such as national policies by Namibia Government that align with the [Beijin Declaration](#), [African Chanted for Human Rights](#) and [SDGs](#).”

She noted the role for universities to deduct institutional polices that align with national policies such as ensuring strategic gender representation in the leadership ranks within the university, policing the leadership structure and address any loopholes.

Ms. Mogotsi suggested the need for curriculum development that incorporates awareness for sexual harassment such as the Social Contemporary Issues module that is compulsory for all courses in University of Namibia. She went ahead to appreciate the role of extra-curricular activities and strategies that infuse matters of activism and feminism to eradicate GVB and inequality. Lastly, she noted the role of research particularly though multi-disciplinary sectors by teaching, consultancy and collaboration on the subject of GBV and gender equality.

#### 4.6 Approach by Nelson Mandela University in eradicating GBV

*By Dr Hlengiwe Ndhlovu, postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Women and Gender Studies (CWGC), Nelson Mandela University*

**“In advancing the fight for Gender Based Violence and gender harm within the university in collaborative work [...] is to undo long history of silencing” - Dr. Hlengiwe Ndhlovu**

Speaking at the forum Dr. Ndhlovu commended Nelson Mandela’s University commitment towards fighting GBV, with its own center for women studies fully dedicated to supporting and enabling students to eliminate GBV and promote positive masculinity. She emphasized on the initiatives by the transformative office to support students such as Memeza campaign and Mandela Pride campaign.

She added that the university has applied a strategic approach to empower voices of women towards undoing the history of silencing through its [online reporting system](#) available to both staff and students to ensure reported harassment and unfair discrimination incidents are dealt with in line with the timelines and procedures outlined in the applicable policies.

Finally, she commended the university commitment on regulation by providing well laid out sexual harassment policies that include the revised Sexual Harassment and Sexual Offences Policy, the new Integrated Policy for the Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of and Protection against Unfair Discrimination.



#### 4.7 Approach by Cape Peninsula University of Technology in fighting GBV

*By Ms. Nonkosi Tyolwana, Director, Centre for Diversity, Inclusivity and Social Change at Cape Peninsula University of Technology*

Ms. Tyolwana started by sharing the strategic approach at Cape Peninsula University that is the smart vision 2030 strategy that includes GBV eradication towards embracing inclusivity and oneness. She continued to explain the approach focuses on influencing diversity and social change with aim to advance gender responsiveness to eradicate GBV and promote equality.

Further, Ms. Tyolwana explained on the inclusive multi-sectoral partnerships the university has engaged in such as critical multi-sectoral partnerships; the partnership with UN women against GBV, HERS-SA, Civil society-dealing with GBV

Ms. Tyolwana added that through inclusivity through influence to ensure responsiveness with strategic partners; gender inequality formed the [HeforShe movement](#) as well as by [supporting victims of GBV](#) to create an enabling environment for victims to report.

Furthermore, she noted the university management continued effort and commitment towards fighting GBV; a GBV committee chaired by the Vice Chancellor also where members of the [Executive Management recently received training on GBV](#). As well as curricula integration to include GBV awareness; CPTU 101 compulsory module taught to all first years.



## 5. PANEL DISCUSSION

The forum moved into a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Mumbi Wachira, Lecturer at Strathmore University Business School. The speakers were engaged through questions raised and below is a summary of the responses.



### Q. What can we do as a collective to influence change?

According to Ms. Elizabeth Dartnall it is necessary to identify current discriminatory practices and support available to victims of sexual violence across universities this will boost to learn from each other to develop appropriate community practice. In the same way she noted the need for shared research practice to assist address valid research questions and knowledge gaps. Ms. Dartnall suggested it was equally important to commit to research using a feminist approach which is new and innovative.

Likewise Prof. Corné Davis echoed the need for research sharing and engaging on mainstream journals. She suggested the need to come together as a collective to share research and support information by actively engaging in platforms to drive change aside from awaiting policies to be effected.



*Q. How can we infuse GBV and inequality in our curricula and policies?*

Ms. Immaculate Mogotsi started by acknowledging that it is key to partner with the faculty leaders and top management at the universities to improve the curricula and mainstream research. She went on to suggest that although curricula development was a huge stride in forging change, there challenge was in creating an enabling environment where victims would voice sexual harassment cases with confidence that appropriate action would be taken. This she added would go a long way to strengthen survivors and empower students.

*Q. How can the academia community engage with NGOs and Governments?*

Ms. Lindi Dlamini responded by noting that academia discussions needed to be multi-sectoral so as to have a broader engagement beyond research conferences. She continued to say that academics also had a role in renegotiating gender equality within institutions of higher learning. Ms. Dlamini added that collaboration with these sectors though sharing research findings and evidence based strategies, would help drive change in societal behavioral and renegotiate gender equality at area of work.

Similarly, Ms. Nonkosi Tyolwana emphasized that to have impactful collaborations, beyond their founders, there was need to effect integrated partnership with a structured approach together with evidence based reporting to show how GBV affects the society at large.

*Q. How to sustain the initiatives beyond their founders?*

Dr. Olebogeng Selebi stated passion for great initiatives is driven by individuals who relate to an issue of concern. She continued to say that in as much as passion to fight sexual violence is key, there is need to educate society at large on the cross-cutting effects of GBV. Further, Dr. Selebi noted in line with engaging with various stakeholders it was necessary to prove importance by stating how sexual abuse affects businesses and the economy.

Speaking on the matter of collaboration with the private sector, Dr Hlengiwe Ndhlovu stated it is important to expose the cases of gender harm to the community and workers at corporate spaces. She added that these efforts to involve communication with the community would advocate to bring on board women in leadership and influence policies formulation.



### *Q. How to stir up men to rise to the movement?*

Ms. Immaculate Mogotsi responded by sharing the need for more extra-curricular activities and mentorship programs that infuse discussions of GBV. She further elaborated on how the University of Namibia organizes workshops for in-depth conversations on sexual harm. In agreement Ms. Tyolwana added that empowering student-led clubs and campaigns would encourage initiatives to address mental health and sexual matters.

Both Dr Hlengiwe Ndhlovu and Ms. Lindi Dlamini raised the need for commitment to create awareness to these campaigns and movements particularly amongst men themselves by partnering with their men role models in the academia community.

### *Q. How to empower research to inform national policies?*

Dr. Mumbi Wachira raised the issue of the traditional mainstream research which has influenced policy formulation for the longest time, unlike the rather new feminist research approach which incorporates bias and empowers women to voice their lifelong silence.

In response Ms. Elizabeth Dartnall emphasized the importance of relationships and collaboration to forge change. She continued to add the importance of relationships and taking time to build trust for leverage when informing policies with research findings. Further she noted the feminism research approach in its qualitative nature is ideal to addresses gender inequity. Equally important Ms. Dartnall noted that to inform policy it is important to present the research findings in a standard format while research questions are meaningful to practitioners and the community. This she added would make the findings much more impactful for policy formulation.

Similarly, Prof Corné Davis emphasized on creating relationships for partnering in the private sector such as a strong academia network, governments call for campaigns. Further she duly noted the need to utilize a give and take approach in collaborating particularly in the private sector for transformative sustainability.

Ms. Nonkosi Tyolwana agreed that research needs to be guided by evidence based reporting to show the trends and patterns informing behavior to drive solutions and rally the society to join the movement.



*Q. How can women protect one another against GBV in their spheres of influence?*

In response Dr. Olebogeng Selebi acknowledged that sexual violence and inequality is rooted deeply in our society which then transforms to influence in workplace behavior. To that note Dr. Selebi emphasized the need to infuse conversations of gender discriminatory and abuse to our curriculum from inception. This she added would go a long way in informing behavior and asserting that all genders are the same. In agreement Ms. Elizabeth Dartnall asserted that although we are born into the patriarchy we are tasked to formulate programs towards GBV prevention as early as during upbringing.

Further, Dr Hlengiwe Ndhlovu noted the influence of structural organization to inform human behavior. She continued to say that power dynamics at the workplace influences decision making hence the need to increasingly push for women in leadership to nurture policies for gender equality.

Ms. Lindi Dlamini responded on the importance to model the female leader that will go a long way to empower women in leadership not to act like men but to stand out with empathetic style leadership.

Dr. Mumbi Wachira stated the need to call out behavior enabling GBV an inequality at the point it occurs. As well as not silencing women when they experience GBV from women in leadership power.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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We trust that the recommendations and observations by all participants will be used as a way forward for the collective to eradicate GBV.

It was suggested by Dr. Mumbi Wachira that there is a necessity for a shared platform to highlight the best practices on tackling GBV and create further opportunities for collaboration for transformative change. Likewise both Ms. Nonkosi Tyolwana and Dr. Hlengiwe Ndhlovu agreed on the necessity for research sharing and supporting research to address any personal bias.

Equally important, Prof Corné Davis strongly felt that academia need to firmly support the Shared Value Africa Initiative and other likeminded organizations in their active role towards raising awareness of GBV and gender inequality. This she added could be achieved by collective participation through shared research, publishing research, participating in programs and engaging through research platforms. Dr. Olebogeng Selebi emphasised the need for collaboration with regulators and policy makers to share research and push for research publishing. She continued on the necessity to collaborate with regulators and policy makers from inception in the research planning to address relevant research questions and meaningful research findings.

Ms. Elizabeth Dartnall shed light on the issue of insufficient research particularly in GBV and inequality pushing for research uptake in the area to be informed by relevant research questions and collaboration with relevant stakeholders in research planning and that we produce research that is acted upon.

Ms. Immaculate Mogotsi advised on the importance of relationship building with other influential partners to push policy change and curriculum changes. Similarly, Dr. Mumbi Wachira concurred on the importance of having allies particularly those with decision making powers.

Dr. Ndhlovu challenged the participants to mobilize, organize and participate deliberately with strategic partners to influence decisions. She further emphasized on the importance for shared research to support each other's research, cite one others research and address personal bias in research findings both as feminists and activists.



Finally, Ms. Dlamini spoke on the need to utilize the existing information to make decisions and drive change without necessarily reinventing the wheel. She echoed the need for partnerships particularly within the scholarly community to assist wear resistance within our spheres of influence. Further, on the necessity to research on the downfalls of current curriculum and suggest areas of improvement. As well as research on the effect of gender inequality in leadership roles to push for programs of action to make transformative change.

The speakers all touched on the importance of inclusivity, curricula programs and victim support systems to help fast track gender equality.

The #ITSNOTOK movement and SVAI co-hosted by University of Johannesburg uniformly believe it's time for the academia to collectively unite through shared research and collaborations. The Academic Institutions need to consciously address GBV on-campus through policies and practices and as a collective, the Academia need to produce research that both the private and public sectors can action to create and implement policies and practices that will influence behavior change.



## 7. IMPORTANCE OF TELLING WOMEN-CENTERED STORIES

*By Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill, Council Chairperson, Nelson Mandela University*

Guest speaker Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill, Council Chairperson at Nelson Mandela University, shared on the importance of telling women-centered stories. Just as seen in her book *Write to Speak* which is a narrative where fifty-eight African women leaders share their individual journeys in forging gender equality. She noted that these real-life stories highlighted the good and bad in their struggle towards addressing social injustices with their unique voices. Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill challenged the participants to inform change within their spheres of influence. She stated that the book is not only a celebratory of success for the women but also aims to inform policy change by creating a legacy for their stories as told in their own words.

Speaking at the forum Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill stated the book is written in honor of the [Beijing+25](#) to celebrate women leaders all across Africa for their collaborative efforts in adopting the Beijing declaration global agenda for gender equality. She added that *Write to Speak* was also inspired by 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the African Union's [African Women's Decade 2020](#) which was an initiative aimed to engage African leaders to contribute towards elevating women and empowering them in the push for women empowerment.

She continued to state that governance within universities remains an important area of research, which could shed light on how university governance intersects with inequality and GBV awareness the governance element across universities requires extensive research. She noted the area of university governance has been neglected seeing as its impact value and power to drive transformative change. Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill encouraged the academia community to take up research in the area.



## 8. CONCLUSION

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The #ITSNOTOK movement and SVAI co-hosted by University of Johannesburg believe it's time for the academia to collectively unite through shared research and collaborations to influence both the private and public sectors in advocating for behavioral and policy change.

First off by acknowledging current behavior patterns and discriminatory practices to actively take steps towards eradicating sexual violence. The speakers all touched on the importance of inclusivity, curricula programs and victim support systems to help fast track gender equality.

Equally important academia need to develop a shared research knowledge hub to engage and collaborate to make research impactful and address knowledge gaps. This will make huge strides towards driving policy change and transformational sustainability.

Further, the necessity of a research agenda to guide research was emphasized. It was noted it will be particularly important to address practice and policy needs. The research agenda ideally will guide research expenditure, increase accountability for resources and aid research planning.

Furthermore, academia can partner with private sectors, civil society, activists and non-governmental organizations to engage multi-sector investors by sharing the research findings that help drive behavioral change in universities to mobilize each other towards eliminating GBV. The need for a structured approach in multi-sector collaboration to make meaningful output was emphasized. The solutions and remedies need to have meaningful insight to investors to encourage their longevity as well as incorporate evidence reporting and evidence data to provide relevant research findings and influence policy reforms.

Academic institutions have a mandate involving teaching and learning, research and societal engagement. This can be achieved through informing curriculum building that infuses GBV awareness. As well as university policies that create an enabling environment through enforcing appropriate measures and mechanisms for dealing with victims

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12.08.2021 *Forum*