



Bringing together Security and Incident Response teams from around the globe

Women of First 2024 Year End Newsletter

Issue #1 | November 2024

Welcome to the November Edition of Women of First!

Hello Women of FIRST SIG Members,

We are excited to share the *Women of First newsletter*, where we plan to celebrate remarkable achievements, reflect on our accomplishments as a SIG, and look forward to the future. This very first month, we've got a lot to share—from recognizing outstanding women in our community to reflecting on what we learned in 2024 and looking ahead to 2025. We hope you enjoy the read!



In This Issue:

- **Winner of the FIRST AfricaCERT Regional Symposium Fellowship Opportunity**
 - We are thrilled to announce the winner of the Africa Conference, **Kelly Dingalo**, who is a current member of WoF SIG and was the lucky winner to attend the 2024 FIRST & AfricaCERT Symposium: Africa and Arab Regions held in Livingstone, Zambia November 26-28, 2024. Congratulations, Kelly and thank you for inspiring us all!
- **November and December Meeting Cancelled**
 - A quick reminder that our November monthly meeting has been **cancelled** due to Thanksgiving Holiday celebrated across United States and December monthly meeting is cancelled due to Santa (Christmas Holiday). We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but we are looking forward to seeing you in 2025 for our next gathering. Tentatively scheduled for Thursday, January 23 - stay tuned for more details!

- **Women of the Quarter**

- We are proud to recognize our **Women of the Quarter**! These remarkable women have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and dedication to our mission. Please join us in celebrating:
 - **Cristine Hoepers** – The FIRST 2024 inductee to the Incident Response Hall of Fame, Cristine is the General Manager of CERT.br and has been a long-standing force in the incident response community, within LATAM and far beyond.
 - **Gwynneth McCarthy** and **Monica Malik** – Two Women of FIRST SIG members who attended the most meetings this year, bringing smiles and thoughtful questions to the Special Interest group with their presence and attention.
 - **Khushali Dalal** – Nominated by SIG chair, Emer O’Neil, and SIG Support, Grace Staley, Khushali prepares for each meeting with passion and care with a real drive to inspire others and foster community.

Congratulations to all and thank you for your hard work and commitment! 😊

- **Nomination of Regional Women of First Leaders**

- We’re excited to open the nomination process for our **Regional Women of First Leaders**! These leaders will play a key role in driving our mission forward in APAC and EMEA. We encourage you to nominate deserving women who are making an impact in your area. Please submit your nominations by **2nd December 2024** to wof-sig@first.org. Let’s continue to lift each other up and empower the leaders of tomorrow.

- **Announcement: Removal of Non-Participating Members**

- As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure an active and engaged community, we will be removing members who have not participated in recent events or meetings. If you are unable to attend or actively participate, please let us know so we can update our records accordingly. Our goal is to maintain a dynamic and supportive environment for all our members.



Reflection on What We Learned in 2024:

As we look ahead to 2025, let's take a moment to reflect on what we've learned in 2024. This year has been one of growth, resilience, and connection. Here are a few key takeaways from our collective journey:

- **Feb Meeting:** We hosted Presentation – “**Getting Across**” by **Don Stikvoort**
 - How do you become an excellent communicator?
 - Be you, be genuine
 - Reach out, establish rapport
 - Focus on the message
 - Prepare, rehearse, repeat
 - Variety and flexibility
 - Body language and voice are 90% of the success of what you say
- **March Meeting:** We had a Fun Social Event where we played a virtual Scavenger hunt. Goal was to quickly show objects matching different categories to win a prize. Gwynneth was the winner. Woo-hoo Shoot out to all the enthusiastic participants.
- **April Meeting:** Leader and LinkedIn Queen **Rebecca Taylor** – Shared her journey. Below are few advice from Rebecca:
 - Get yourself a mentor
 - Sounding board, guides, help you network and connect, advocate for you and learn to advocate for yourself
 - What brings you joy? What are your non-negotiables?
 - Have a personal brand
 - LinkedIn is a window to a professional's soul

- Recruiters look at last few likes and posts – do they reflect what you want your future employer to know about you?
 - You are more than your job title. Use your subheader/description, add volunteering and skills, groups you are a part of, contribute to articles and posts (demonstrates thought leadership), get recommendations and give them out to others, leverage “featured” section
- **May Meeting: Empowerment through Action:** Guest Speaker - **Traci Wei** of the FIRST Events team shared her story of how she went from engineering to event planning, the lessons she’s learned (and still learning) along a non-traditional career trajectory.
- **June Meeting: The Power of Reflection:** Guest Speaker - **Sharifa Roziah**, a new member of Women of FIRST SIG who had recently attended the FIRST conference in Japan, was introduced as the guest speaker to share her experiences and background in cybersecurity. Sharifa works as a Senior Specialist in Cybersecurity Malaysia, an organization under the Ministry of Digital in Malaysia. She has over 20 years of experience in cybersecurity, starting her career with Malaysia Computer Emergency Response Team (MYSERD) which later expanded into Cybersecurity Malaysia.
- **July and September Meeting:** Welcomed Special guests, **Dr. Paula Mussuva**, Director of Cyber Shujaa, with 18+ years of experience in training, teaching, and research and **Divine Omozokpia** – Cyber Girls Fellowship Leader, Divine introduced the Cyber Girls Fellowship, highlighting its mission to empower young women in Africa through cybersecurity training, mentorship, and job placement. <https://cybershujaa.co.ke>
<https://cybergirls.cybersafefoundation.org/>
- **October Meeting:** Guest Speaker - **Nadia Meichtry** – works at Oneconsult AG based in Switzerland, who has been a speaker at FIRST conferences and led a successful training session on ransomware.

Did you miss a meeting? You can find all meeting notes and call recordings in the FIRST WoF SIG Wiki: <https://wiki.first.org/display/WoF/Women+of+FIRST+SIG+Home>

Remember, you need to have your FIRST Portal account setup to access this link!

Looking Ahead:

As we prepare for 2025, we are filled with excitement about the opportunities to further empower women, support regional leaders, and create more spaces for meaningful connections. Stay tuned for upcoming events, initiatives, and projects that will help us achieve even greater heights in the new year.

This SIG is open to both female and male participants! We encourage you to socialize and spread word of this forum with your colleagues. Afterall, allies are a powerful resource. Help us expand our community. Interested individuals can look here for more information:

<https://www.first.org/global/sigs/wof/>

Stay Connected:

We encourage you to engage with us on social media and keep the conversation going. Join us on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/women-of-first/about/> and use **#WomenofFIRST** to share your stories, thoughts, and experiences being a part of WoF SIG.

Until Next Time,

Emer O'Neil and Khushali Dalal

Chair and Co-Chair WoF

PS: Forward this newsletter to a friend who could use some inspiration and empowerment this month!