



Invitation to a roundtable discussion: Addressing the high levels of sexual violence in schools

Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre to end violence against women (TLAC) is hosting a roundtable discussion that seeks to bring together all relevant stakeholders in the basic education sector to discuss sexual violence in schools as part of the 16 Days of Activism.

Despite the numerous measures that have been put in place including programmes seeking to address this scourge, there are reports that this kind of violence is continuing at alarming rates. According to the **Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALs)** study conducted in Gauteng in 2014 titled **Sexual Violence by Educators in South African Schools: Gaps in Accountability**, educators sexually harass and abuse learners in their care with little to no consequence for such conduct. It has been identified that factors that contribute to this include a lack of awareness amongst educators on how to deal with sexual violence; schools' reluctance to take action against educators who abuse learners; lack of screening of educators before they are employed thus allowing them to enter and re-enter the system.

In 2014 and 2015 TLAC implemented a national programme that built the capacity of educators and education officials to address gender based violence in South Africa. This programme further confirmed the continuing occurrence of sexual violence in schools and the factors that contribute to this. Furthermore, the recent press release of 14 November 2016 by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) points to a continued increase of cases of sexual assault of learners by educators.

It is against this backdrop that TLAC seeks to have this round table discussion which seeks to achieve the following **objectives**:

- To contribute to improved access to justice for learners who experience or are at risk of experiencing sexual violence in schools.
- To ensure that relevant authorities act swiftly on cases of sexual abuse of children.
- To reduce secondary victimisation of learners by streamlining processes.

Anticipated Outcomes

- An in-depth discussion on sexual violence in schools and the degree to which schools are equipped to address emerging issues.
- Sharing of information about on-going interventions and best practise models that contribute to the realisation of a better learning environment and quality education
- Collectively identifying mechanisms for strategic discussions and exchange of information on awareness programs.
- Collectively seeking ways to strengthen policy implementation: from the local to the national levels.



To achieve the above, we are inviting various stakeholders from the education and violence against women and children sectors to come together to reflect on what has been achieved thus far, the challenges as well as the lessons learned. Furthermore, it is hoped that a co-ordination and monitoring mechanism will be agreed upon, to ensure efforts are co-ordinated and resources are combined to avoid duplication of services.

Please join us for a roundtable discussion with various stakeholders to begin exploring ways of developing meaningful interventions that will address the high levels of sexual violence in schools.

Date: Wednesday 7th December

Time: 9am to 4pm

Venue: Emoyeni Estate - 15 Jubilee Road, Parktown, Johannesburg

Please confirm your attendance via email to tshwaranang@tlac.org.za.

This roundtable discussion is made possible with support from:

