FemIDEAS

South Africa fieldwork: summary report

Sept 2023

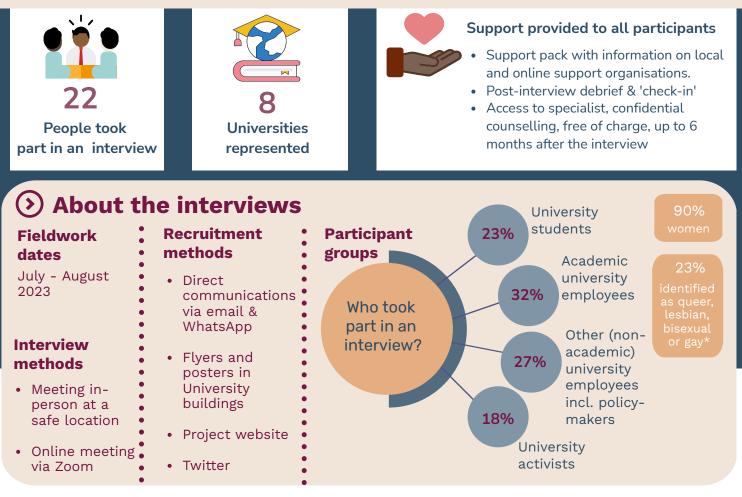
Decolonising sexual and gender-based violence in higher education: Innovations in Theory, Policy and Practice



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This project aims to develop new approaches for responding to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Higher Education (HE) by bringing together learning from people with lived experience, activists, academics, and policymakers in the Global South. There is an emphasis on prevention and culture change in HE institutions so that outcomes for victim-survivors are improved. We will speak to people in 5 countries in the Global South. South Africa is the first country we visited.



Challenges & learning

- Recruitment was complex and the reach limited in terms of demographic, university types and locations, despite various recruitment channels being used.
- There were several 'false' contacts for interview made from duplicate accounts which created challenges.
- Concerns regarding institutional 'push-back' and or regulations re. participation in research hindered willingness to take part.
- Multiple and co-occurring violence(s) meant interviews were emotionally distressing.

Notes:

*Where available; provision of this info was optional.

****** Analysis has not yet been conducted, so these themes are subject to change as well as expand. **For more info email:** femideas@westminster.ac.uk **Visit:** www.femideas.com

Emerging themes in the data**

- Accountability: Victim-survivors want institutional and perpetrator accountability, and support to challenge a culture of misogyny, including via freedom to name perpetrators.
- Law & Policies: Data indicate there is a need to align SGBV law and employment law, as well as for students and staff to be addressed under the same institutional SGBV-specific policy.
- **Coordinated response:** Highly beneficial to establish separate office for SGBV complaints, with designated first point of contact, and trained student volunteers and support services.
- Surveillance: Data point to surveillance and institutional policing according to binary gender in university spaces to address SGBV.
- **Resources:** Adequate and sustainable resourcing is required in addition to efforts to address historic racisms, the legacy of apartheid, and colonial harm incl. via reparations.
- Intersectional abuse & discrimination: SGBV in HE strongly intersects with class and racial discrimination, economic insecurity, institutional violence, police brutality, gender inequalities, and trans & homophobia in some cases.