

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.

Project Summary



22

People took part in an interview



8

Universities represented



Support provided to all participants

- Support pack with information on local and online support organisations.
- Post-interview debrief & 'check-in'
- Access to specialist, confidential counselling, free of charge, up to 6 months after the interview

About the interviews

Fieldwork dates

July - August 2023

Interview methods

- Meeting in-person at a safe location
- Online meeting via Zoom

Recruitment methods

- Direct communications via email & WhatsApp
- Flyers and posters in University buildings
- Project website
- Twitter

Participant groups

Who took part in an interview?

23%

University students

32%

Academic university employees

27%

Other (non-academic) university employees incl. policy-makers

18%

University activists

90% women

23% identified as queer, lesbian, bisexual or gay*

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.

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.

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.

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