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17 August 2017

UCT study examines how the state can support survivors of sexual violence

A study by a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town is analysing integration models in South Africa and Kenya as a means of fulfilling the state's obligations to eliminate sexual violence against women.

Ruth Nekura master's research in the UCT Faculty of Law probed the challenges of the criminal justice system when it comes to access to justice for rape survivors. Building on her thesis findings, she pursued a PhD.

Nekura says: "The idea is: We acknowledge that violence against women is a complex problem that needs to be addressed in a multi-sectoral way. If this is the case, then there needs to be a way that everybody does [their work] in a coordinated way.

"People use different terms to describe that idea of collaboration, that idea of engaging together ... I'm calling it integration. It really is just the idea that different sectors will or should work together to support survivors of sexual violence as they seek recourse through the criminal justice system."

Nekura hoped to investigate which models would be most effective on our continent. Her research focuses on four centres in South Africa and four in Kenya.

Some contexts support the commonly held notion of the one-stop centre, where a survivor would be able to receive all of the required services under one roof. This is certainly how South Africa's Thuthuzela Care Centre (TCC) models itself, she says. On the continent and even globally, the TCC model is lauded as a best practice for integrating.

In Kenya, what is called integration is really a system of referral networks, which could often mean that someone at the centre has a direct link to other services. This works very well, given the practical challenges of having all service providers under one roof.

Nekura explains: "If we align our response models to what current studies on rape construction suggest, then possibly more cases will be coming into the system in a safe way. Women will not be discouraged from coming in."

Read more [here](#).

ENDS

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