



MEDIA STATEMENT

SACE CELEBRATES ESTEEMED WOMEN IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) joins the nation in celebrating women in the teaching profession under the “Women’s Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment: Building Back Better for Women’s Improved Resilience” theme. This year’s commemoration marks the 66th Anniversary since the march of approximately 20 000 women to the Union Buildings to petition against the pass laws of the country at the time. Therefore, it is imperative that we step up our efforts, as a nation, in taking tangible steps in responding to the most persistent challenges affecting the lives of women in the teaching profession and girl children alike.

Equally, in line with women’ day theme, SACE is intensifying its call upon the nation to respect the dignity and rights of women in the teaching profession because their rights are human rights too. Amongst others, they deserve the right to life, right to protection, right not to be discriminated, economic and social justice rights, right to sexual orientation, as well as the ending of all forms of violence against them in particular.

SACE recognises the significance of women empowerment, shared power, roles in building communities, privileging their voices, liberatory environment in the profession, and the pedagogy for social and economic justice. Council, therefore, views these factors as part of its fundamental emancipation strategies and agenda for humanising women in the teaching profession and providing them with a better meaningful life. Hence the significance of social conscientisation as part of the process of liberating women to reclaim their humanity, along with revolutionary praxis that involves purposeful reflective and action process in their emancipation journey.

As part of walking the talk, Council launched a programme that focuses specifically on empowering women in the teaching profession, as well as strategies to break and shatter the glass ceiling as an endeavour to empower

and give voice to the women in leadership and management too. This programme has seen women in the profession being shot for promotional posts; discriminated unfairly; undermined; pulled down, experiencing sexism, painful power relations and emotional abuse; denied opportunities to lead in certain schools by virtue of being women; suffering in the hands of patriarchy in schools and communities; as well as experiencing sex for job requests and losing confidence and assertiveness due to their working conditions.

Despite our 28 years in democracy as a nation, these women continue to be subjected to the most excruciating pain of their career lives, psychological and emotional stress and oppression of their lifetime. It is for this reason, amongst others, that SACE followed the revolutionary praxis and transformative and opposed to transformational approach to its women empowerment programmes to ensure processes of social justice, along with reflection and action that is directed at the emancipating, democratising and liberating of women in the teaching profession.

Lastly, on this special day of celebrating women, SACE is announcing its project of writing a book by women for women in the teaching profession in collaboration with the KwaZulu-Natal Women Authors Forum (KWAF). These are the women who will define their own success, best practices, and struggles and how they should be addressed. As such, women in the teaching profession are saying “there will be no writing about us and our struggles in the teaching profession as women, without us”. Please watch the space for this new and inspiring project.

SACE is calling upon on all women in the teaching profession to demonstrate resilience by standing up, raising their hands, and being counted in their professional role of teaching and teacher leadership space. Lift one another as you rise and claim your rightful space unreservedly.

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