



Date: 30 Nov. 2018

Abantu Book Festival implements Zero Tolerance to Harassment

Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Code of Conduct:

Rationale:

Abantu Book Festival envisions and aspires to be a platform wherein people, black people, can imagine and actively create new ways of being, doing, feeling and seeing. In other words, a new future wherein our full humanity as black people is recognized.

We would like to help usher in a future in which the full humanity of *all* black people is recognized and celebrated. That is black people in their myriad and complex identities according to aspects such as gender identity, sexual orientation, expression, physical ability, physical appearance, body size, ethnic group, age, religion, or class.

To this end, Abantu Book Festival provides a harassment-free festival experience for everyone. Just as important in the work of imagination, is the work of action to begin to realize those futures in the present.

We are aware that despite our best intentions, our festivals do not operate in isolation from wider social dynamics where such harassment is rife. To that extent, over the past few years the issue of harassment has increasingly been reported as a problem at a number of literary festivals.

Abantu Book Festival will thus be taking a proactive stance by implementing a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY to harassment of all kinds. This policy is based on the model that has been implemented by the likes of Ake Arts and Book Festival (Nigeria) and Writivism Festival (Uganda), which in turn have sought guidance from the Ada Initiative and other volunteers. This entails the harassment of festival participants, staff and audience members. Festival participants violating these rules may be sanctioned or expelled from the festival (without a refund if they are paying attendees) at the discretion of the festival organizers.

Offenders may also be handed over to the appropriate law enforcement authorities if the organisers feel that their actions warrant such steps.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

Verbal comments that reinforce social structures of domination [related to gender,



gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnic group, age, or religion]:

- Sexual images in public spaces
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following
- Harassing photography or recording
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Unwelcome sexual attention
- Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behaviour

Exceptions:

Discussion or images related to sex, pornography, discriminatory language, or similar is welcome if it meets all the following criteria:

- the organizers have specifically granted permission in writing,
- it is necessary to the topic of discussion and no alternative exists,
- it is presented in a respectful manner, especially towards women and sexual minorities,
- attendees are warned in the program and respectfully given ample warning and opportunity to leave beforehand. This exception specifically does not allow use of gratuitous sexual images as attention-getting devices.

Enforcement:

- Participants asked to stop any harassing behaviour are expected to comply immediately.
- If a participant engages in harassing behaviour, event organisers retain the right to take any actions to keep the event a welcoming environment for all participants. This includes warning the offender or expulsion from the festival (with no refund if participant is a paying attendee).
- Offenders may be handed over to the appropriate law enforcement authority.
- Event organisers may act to redress anything designed to, or with the clear impact of, disrupting the event or making the environment hostile for any participants.
- We expect participants to follow these rules at all event venues and event-related social activities, including hotel spaces. We think people should follow these rules outside event activities too!



Reporting:

If someone makes you or anyone else feel unsafe or unwelcome, please report it as soon as possible. Festival staff can be identified by t-shirts and special tags. Harassment and other code of conduct violations reduce the value of our event for everyone. We want you to be happy at our event. People like you make our event a better place.

We require that all authors and participants in the festival agree to abide by this code of conduct. If participants find themselves opposed to this conduct, they should feel free to not attend the festival.