

# Don't judge a book by its cover - The Human Library

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In line with the [SACAP Festival of Learning](#)'s focus on generating significant conversations, the Human Library will be hosted at both the Johannesburg and Cape Town festival (18 and 25 May). This innovative concept, to inspire challenging, change-driven dialogues, involves volunteers serving as books; and 'reading' them takes the form of conversations. This will be the first time a Human Library will be staged in Johannesburg.



The Human Library, was initiated in Copenhagen in 2000 to build a positive framework for conversations that can challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue. Eighteen years down the line the Human Library concept has spread to many countries internationally and launched in Cape Town in late 2017.

The Human Library is where books are people, reading is a conversation and difficult questions are expected, appreciated and encouraged. The books represent social groups who face prejudice, stereotyping and stigma, or who have endured experiences that are hard to talk about. The Human Library creates a safe space for their stories to unfold in order for an authentic exploration of the 'titles', which can range from social status to sexuality, health to trauma and loss, religion to politics.

Each Human Library at the SACAP Festival of Learning will host ten books. In Johannesburg titles will include: **The forgotten 44%** (Stories of a male survivor of sexual abuse); **I am not my Prison Sentence or Tattoos** (It takes a community to change a broken story into one of hope and redemption); **Polygamy, Infertility and Embryo Killing** (Difficult questions about available life creation options and choices I made); **Abusing the Abuser** (The impact staying in an abusive relationship had on both me and my children).

At the Cape Town event titles will include: **Neglected & Abused** (Living with Hope after being neglected, physically and sexually abused); **HIV+ and Gay** (The 50 Shades of Reality); **Depression** (Preacher living with the Black Dog); **Dyslexia** (Living in a world without reading and writing).

Why is it so important, especially in South Africa, to have dialogues around the issues that are currently affecting society? "Dialogue opens up opportunity for engagement, the kind of engagement that enables us to better understand each other's humanity," says Dr Laura Fisher, head of strategic development at SACAP. "All of us come from different families, have unique backgrounds as well as special and sometimes unusual life experiences. Dialogue creates space where we come to

know each other better, come to understand our shared humanity and move toward deeper sensitivity and empathy for each other. Holding dialogue around issues currently affecting society does the same, opening the possibility for shared experience and deepened insight and understanding that enables us to innovate together.”

**The Human Library will be hosted on 18 May from 11am to 3pm at the festival in Johannesburg and on 25 May from 11am to 3pm at the festival in Cape Town.**

**The 2018 Festival of Learning hosted by SACAP:**

***Johannesburg, 17-18 May***

**Venue: SACAP Campus, Rosebank**

**Times: 17 May from 5:30pm to 8:30pm / 18 May from 9am to 5pm**

**Human Library: 18 May from 11:00am to 3pm**

***Cape Town, 24-25 May***

**Venue: SACAP Campus, Claremont**

**Times: 24 May from 5:30pm to 8:30pm / 25 May from 9am to 5pm**

**Human Library: 25 May from 11:00am to 3pm**

Tickets for the 2018 Festival of Learning are available through [Webtickets](#). Costs are R200 for the full-day programme, which includes dialogues, panel discussion and the Human Library. Tickets for the short-talk evening programme, which includes catering and networking opportunities, are also R200. There is a special offer for students at R80 per ticket.

For further information please visit: <http://go.sacap.edu.za/psychology-festival>.

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