



eNewsletter No. 3

30 January 2013

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Dear PACSA Friends

Welcome to our first edition of the PACSA eNewsletter for 2013. We welcome Mervyn Abrahams as Acting Director to this edition. Also, we hope to see you at the launching of the PACSA Archives to be housed at the Alan Paton Centre, UKZN. Remember to RSVP for catering purposes.

The Editor

1. From the Director's Desk

Greetings from PACSA.

After a three-week break the PACSA staff returned, well rested and in high spirits to tackle what will surely be a busy but interesting year.

We started the year with a slightly different staff profile and in a period of leadership transition. Julie Smith is our new Research and Advocacy Coordinator and I am Acting Director till the end of March 2013, in addition to continuing as Programmes' Director. The search process for a new Director, led by a PACSA Council committee, is underway and they intend to finalize an appointment by the end of February. Transitions are not always easy but it is a necessary part of the journey for every organisation.

As part of settling into the new year we spent three days doing manual labour in teams by painting and cleaning offices. Already the offices look brighter and hopefully will release further energy to focus on the work ahead. We will keep you informed on how we progress in the next E-Newsletter.

On behalf of all PACSA staff I would like to extend to you and your loved ones best wishes for 2013.

FROM MERVYN ABRAHAMS, ACTING DIRECTOR

2. News

- **The Electricity Action Group, a PACSA community partner, was invited by the National Energy Regulator to make an oral presentation at their Durban hearings in January 2013 on whether ESKOM should be awarded a 16% increase in electricity tariffs.** The group argued in a written submission to NERSA in November that if electricity tariffs are to be increased by 16% it would turn poor areas into darkness and deepen inequity to access to electricity. The EAG spokesperson, Ms. China Mbanjwa, was widely quoted in the media, including on the SABC news programme. China said after the hearings, "I was quite scared because the hall was packed. We decided that I would speak from my heart and in my own tongue.

Read more on this inspiring story [here](#)

- **Msunduzi Municipality's municipal services: Identifying the roots of the affordability crisis and seeking remedies. PACSA Research Report. PACSA Affordability Series. Municipal Brief: 2/2012**

PACSA's latest research report analyses the municipal service affordability crisis for poor households

in Msunduzi Municipality, Pietermaritzburg. It provides a powerful case for a national review of the disparities within municipal service pricing frameworks and subsequent intervention to smooth for affordability if developmental gains, equity and poverty alleviation goals are to be realized.

Read more about the report/ download the report [here](#)

3. Events and Invitations

The PACSA Collection 1979 - 1999: First hand accounts of crisis and compassion

PACSA and the Alan Paton Centre invite you to the launch of the PACSA Collection.

When: 9 February 2013

Venue: Leeb du Toit Council Chambers, UKZN, PMB Campus

Time: 12.30 for 1pm, until 5pm

Welcome: Mr Nazim Gani

Guest Speaker: Mr John Aitchison

RSVP: Sonia on +27 33 342 0052 or sonian@pacsa.org.za (only those who RSVP will be welcome).

Join us for a viewing of the archive exhibition, introduced by Ms Karen Buckenham.

4. Features/ Debate

Hardened Hearts: A woman is gang-raped in Howick's centre and nothing happens. WHY?

*The following is an excerpt taken from an article written by Daniela Gennrich, outgoing Director of PACSA, which appeared in **The Witness on 27 December 2012**. It is an article that we should not just read and put aside - it should spur us all into action to stop gender-related violence and crime...*

"At around 4 am on Sunday, December 2, the two women were driving home through Howick. Says Pearl: "At the first intersection after the bridge, by that furniture shop, we stopped at the crossroads. We saw this group of about 12 guys, most of them standing, some sitting, in a sort of semi-circle. There was something going on that they were all watching. When we stopped, they looked straight at us. They were right in the middle of the road, in the left lane. They had surrounded the woman quite well, so we could not see her until we had almost passed them ... Two of the guys were sitting on the side of the road and just looked at us like there was nothing going on. They were not even startled or wanting to hide what they were doing." Her friend Sadie, who could see more from the passenger seat, takes up the story: "I suddenly noticed there was a woman lying on her back on the tarmac. I couldn't see her face. She was a bit chubby. I saw she was wearing white Tomy tacksies. One guy was holding her chest down, and another one was on top of her. Others were holding her legs down at the edge of the circle, cheering. And then I put it all together and yelled 'They are raping her!'"
Read the full article [here](#).

5. Meet a PACSA Staff Member!

MERVYN ABRAHAMS is currently **Acting Director**. He has worked at PACSA for the past 6 years, first as Programme Manager: Economic Justice and Democracy and thereafter as Senior Manager: Research, Policy and Advocacy. In September 2010 he was promoted to Deputy Director Programmes and the Research and Advocacy Coordinator.

Mervyn holds a Master's degree in Theology from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KU Leuven) in Belgium and has worked in the trade-union movement, church, academic institutions and the NGO sector. Mervyn serves on the board of the Church Land Programme and the Economic Justice advisory committee of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference Justice and Peace Department.



6. Please write to us!

Tell us your story to inspire or challenge us to action!

We look forward to hearing from you in 2013

