

SLSJ

Annual National Seminar Report 2013

16-18 August 2013

**“The Implementation Gap:
The Disjuncture between the Constitution and Reality”**

Prepared by: Tayo Alabi



Institutional Background and Objectives

SLSJ was launched by students in 2007 as a seminar-based forum for engaging law students on central issues of legal and socio-economic concern. In 2008, SLSJ became a national organization, fostering networking, dialogue and activism between the Universities of Cape Town, Western Cape, Fort Hare, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West. Since 2010, our membership has increased to include the Universities of Stellenbosch, Witwatersrand, Free State, Johannesburg, NWU-Potchefstroom, and Walter Sisulu. SLSJ acts as an interface between students, legal activists, public interest law practitioners, and civil society Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The highlight of our calendar is the annual weekend seminar, which has brought together legal activists, academics and leaders of the bench and civil society to share their ideas, concerns and experiences with some 200 students from across the country on current and relevant matters. Through the facilitation of discussion and debate, these seminars have stimulated the growth of young lawyers and leaders in South Africa who are committed to furthering human rights, social justice and social transformation.

Through discussion of current issues in the legal, political and social spheres, the annual SLSJ seminar provides a platform for delegates to gain a more holistic conception of the law than that generally achieved at law school. The objective is to explore the manner in which law, politics and society interact, as well as the law's potential as a mechanism for social change. It is also intended to encourage a sense of social responsibility amongst the delegates and to catalyze their participation as active members of civil society; and perhaps most importantly, to go back to their respective universities and impart the skills and knowledge gained to fellow students. The seminar has also traditionally been the recruitment ground for new members and has provided the impetus for the development of new branches across the country.

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Theme for the 2013 Seminar

This year's seminar was held on the weekend of the **16-18 August 2013**. Because of the success of previous seminars, and the increase in number of branches, we managed to secure an increase of participants this year to just short of 322 students over the two nights.

For 2013, SLSJ worked towards presenting a programme that is topical, stimulating and thought provoking. SLSJ endeavoured to formulate a theme that allows students to take stock of the South African socio-political scene on the cusp of its twentieth year of democracy – with its looming national elections in mind – and simultaneously that allows SLSJ to navigate its path forward as a growing student-led social justice movement. The theme for this year seminar was:

'The Implementation Gap: The Disjuncture between the Constitution and Reality'



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The Seminar Organising Committee for this year's seminar was composed by 8 Students who volunteered from the two Universities. The North West University – Mafikeng Campus, and WITS University were chosen at the beginning of the year at the national workshop as the two Universities who would send representatives to make up the organizing committee. There was a mix of skills and experiences on the committee, each person brought a fantastic energy to the team and really pulled everything together very well.

Muyideen (Tayo) Alabi – National Seminar Chairperson

Madonna Rangaka

Bakang (Bkay) Sephecholo

Keitumetse Mothibi

Kefentse Nonyane

Palesa Madi

Nonhlanhla Dawn Ngwenya

Lord Motlhabani

Ariane Nevin

Zakaria Suleman

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Profile and list of participants

SLSJ has 11 University branches. As is customary, invitations to all branches were extended. Universities from outside of the North West and Gauteng were allotted 30 available spaces, and those from within the North West and Gauteng 60. This was done to minimise costs while maximising representivity. With our drive to get people involved as much as was possible, we attracted students from outside of our branches too. Participants who attended this year's Seminar were aged 18 – 36 years and came from the following University campuses:

- North West University – Mafikeng Campus
- University of the Witwatersrand
- University of the Western Cape
- North West University – Potch Campus
- Walter Sisulu University
- University of Stellenbosch
- University of Cape Town
- University of Fort Hare
- University of Kwa-Zulu Natal- Howard College
- University of Kwa-Zulu Natal- Pietermaritzburg
- University of The Free State

The Programme

With the theme, “**The Implementation Gap: The Disjuncture between the Constitution and Reality**”. South Africa, over the past 20 years has developed one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, and laws that guarantee not only political but also socio-economic rights. Moreover, the socio-economic rights enshrined in the Constitution are, unlike in many other jurisdictions, justiciable. However, in contrast to the lofty aims of the legislative framework South Africa still faces poor service delivery, high levels of unemployment and inequality, and a large band of low- or no-income citizens. The seminar gave us, and all those present, participating and presenting, an opportunity to speak their minds in an open nonpolitical, positive space. The programme of the actual event forms the third and last section of this report and is well worth a read. Each speaker and participant received a programme booklet on arrival so they could track the happenings of the weekend.

Success and lessons learned

At the beginning it started as dream which turned into a reality. We were challenged in raising an amount of R800, 000.00. This was a huge challenge at first, because none of the committee members had any experience in raising funds which had to be done within 8 months. We approached not less than 42 potential funding partners. At the end, one of the biggest successes would be the fact that we raised enough financial support to make the event possible.

Planning an event is not an easy task especially when one has to cater for students. There are bound to be obstacles, and often plans will have to be adapted. A great lesson learnt is that preparation and determination can lead to great results, Another challenge was being able to deal with last minute changes, specifically when a speaker was unable to make it and only informed us the day of the event.

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Something that we also learnt is the fact that you simply cannot please everyone. The organization is diverse in its membership and has an alumni base spread thorough the country in almost all walks of life. In the planning stages, and even during the event, lots of people are very excited to get involved, but there were often many opinions and suggestions on matters so having to balance these suggestions with doing what is best for the event proved complicated at times.

To the hundreds of students and speakers who joined us for the Seminar, I think it is safe to say that it was a great success. The material covered was topical, relevant and made for very healthy and spirited debate. Reviews that the committee has received after the fact have all been incredibly positive. Students left the weekend inspired to continue striving to uphold the ethos of the organization and to continue empowering others. They left understanding that every person has the power to make a change, not only in their own and their peer's lives, but in their country as a whole. They left appreciating that the law is a tool for change and that they are entitled to wield it.

Moving Forward

Contact with many existing funders needs to be nurtured in terms of moving forward. Many funders were excited to assist, but were unable to because of the time of year that they were approached. Creating solid relationship with other organizations, this will help in getting more resources. The Annual National Seminar is set to continue from here on to higher heights. With an expanding organization, and a growing social movement, SLSJ has an opportunity to really make sustainable, meaningful and lasting impact on society.

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Special Thanks

I would like to personally thank all of the funding partners who we have been in touch with from the beginning stages of the planning process, and to those too who came in last minute. Without the financial and other support of Funders, partners, and individuals, the Seminar would not have been a success it was. I would also like to thank all of those who sacrificed their time to assist the committee in putting together the Seminar, from its conception through to execution, there are too many to name. Lastly and definitely not least importantly, I would like to thank the entire committee for the tireless dedication displayed throughout the whole process. Working with a team so dedicated really makes any event a success!



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Income	R737,305.00
	R5,444.00

Income	Note Number	Amount
Donations	1	R651,100.00
Seminar Fees & Contributions		R86,205.00

Expenses	R735,693.00
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Venue	2	R220,885.00
Flights	3	R286,907.00
Committee Meetings Travel		R8,470.00
Buses	4	R144,556.00
T-shirts	5	R24,765.00
Booklets	6	R24,950.00
Name Tags	7	R2,280.00
Shopper Bags	8	R11,780.00
Sundries	10	R11,100.00

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Note 1: Funds

TOTAL	R651,100.00
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Claude Leon Foundation	R250 000.00
Section27	R150 000.00
OSF	R150 000.00
Webber Wentzel	R50 000.00
Juta	R30 000.00

Note1B: Donations

WITS (Paid for Transport) Worth	R6 900.00
LexisNexis (Writing Pads & Pen) Worth	R4 500.00
MOB & DB Enterprise (Roller Banners) Worth	R8 700.00
Walter Sisulu (Paid Transport) Worth	R1000.00

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Note 2: Venue

TOTAL	R220,885.00
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	Number	Price	Amount
Student Accommodation & Food	322	R631 (Two Nights)	R200,782.00
Speakers Accommodation & Food	28	R631	R17,668.00
Lunch invited guest	41	R60 P.P	R2,435.00

Note 3: Flights

Quantity	Cost	Amount
90 Students (Cape Town)	R2331.00 P.P	R209,864.00
30 Students (East London)	R1862.03	R55,861.00
Speakers Flights		R21,182.00
	Total	R286,907.00

Note 4: Buses

Quantity	Cost	Amount
4 Buses (38) Seater (OR Tambo)	R280 P.P	R21,340.00
48 Seater (DBN)	R854 P.P	R41,030.00
48 Seater (PMB)	R854 P.P	R41,030.00
60 Seater (MFK)	R607 P.P	R36,420.00
4 Seats (UFS)	R684 P.P	R2,736.00
5 Seats (Potch)	R400 P.P	R2000.00
	Total	R144,556.00

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Note 5: T-shirts

Quantity	Cost	Amount
381	R65 p/t-shirt	R24,765.00
	Total	R24,765.00

Note 6: Booklets

Quantity	Cost	Amount
380	R65.49 p/t-shirt	R24, 950.00
	Total	R24,950.00

Note 7: Name Tags

Quantity	Cost	Amount
380	R6 p/t-shirt	R 2, 280.00
	Total	R2,280.00

Note 8: Shopper Bags

Quantity	Cost	Amount
380	R25 p/t-shirt	R 9, 500.00
	Total	R9,500.00

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Note 10: Sundry Expenses

TOTAL

R11,100.00

The expenses listed below are a short summary of what the sundry expenses entailed.

More detail is available on request.

- Stationery
- Gifts for speakers and those who assisted the event
- Plugs and electrical hardware for the seminar
- Large print-outs of the programme for display
- Video Camera
- Refreshments
- Petrol
- Airtime
- Paper
- Printing Cartridges