

## **Experiencing Violence in Schools: Voices of Learners in the Lesotho Context**

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**ABSTRACT** This study explored learner experiences of school violence at a secondary school in Lesotho. Fifteen (15) learners participated in the study. Data were collected through individual and focus group interviews and document analysis. The study found that learners were exposed to complex patterns of violence and these were experienced in multiple forms, for example, sexual violence, corporal punishment, sexual harassment, bullying, physical violence. In certain ways schooling itself can be viewed as violence in that the school had an ethos of authoritarianism and control. Violence was often experienced as a gendered phenomenon. The study highlights the need for proactive programmes that are directed at attaining the goal of building school communities that are safe havens. A key component of such programmes should be critical self-reflection and self-scrutiny by members of the school community.