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**Safe schools in an emerging economy country:  
In pursuit of quality education provision**

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For the past ten years South African schools, as in other parts of especially the emerging economy world, have been criticized for not creating educational settings that are safe and provide quality education (Van Jaarsveld, Minnaar & Morrison, 2012). Criticism pertaining to unsafe and unsupportive schools that are not conducive to teaching and learning include: *infrastructure issues* (lack of water and sanitation, and lack of safety and security (Prinsloo, 2005); *rights issues* (violation of children's, and especially girl children's, rights (Masitsa, 2011); *teaching and learning issues* (under-prepared teachers, teacher absenteeism, language of teaching and poor conditions for learning (Vogel, Seaberry, Barnes & Kelley, 2003); *health and well-being issues* (including poor health conditions in schools, disconnects with parents/caregivers, lack of hope and optimism among teachers and children, lack of social and emotional safety and gender based violence in schools, and failure to address unsafe/at-risk health practices that contribute to illness, teenage pregnancy and early drop-out (Vermeir & Tempelman, 2006); *school-community issues* (a lack of connectedness between schools and the communities in which they function (Fourie, 2003; Palmer, 2005 ); and *governance and policy issues*.

However, within the same context of transformation, scarce resources and high needs, others have found instances of high performance even in the presence of high need (Department of Education, 2008; Ebersöhn, 2012; Irvine, 2000). For example, different community organizations, NGOs, and government agencies have made concerted efforts to address quality education in their countries: UNICEF and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) have introduced the principles of child-friendly schooling (CFS) into pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes to improve quality education (Irvine & Harvey, 2010; Osher, Kelly, Tolani-Brown, Shors & Chen, 2009). Since 2005, CFS has been implemented by South Africa's National Department of Education in partnership with UNICEF as Safe and Caring Schools. A number of South African higher-education institutions participate in Child Schools programmes. This call for papers aims to (1) extend our understanding of how to create safe and supportive schools (UNICEF) with strong conditions for learning and providing high quality education and (2) initiate a debate on the manner in which higher education institutions contribute to knowledge generation and incorporate principles of schools as safe and enabling contexts in their research, teaching and community engagement. This debate embraces Nelson Mandela's legacy regarding quality education: "It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to a quality education. Those who do not believe this have small imaginations" (Mandela, 2007).

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Completed manuscripts should be e-mailed for review to [estelle.botha@up.ac.za](mailto:estelle.botha@up.ac.za) .

**Closing date for submissions: 30 April 2014**