



# RIGHT2KNOW

**JOIN THE STRUGGLE FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION!**

**DEMAND YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW!**

**FREE INFORMATION  
FULL INCLUSION  
FAIR PROCESS**

What are the **four legs** of the Right2Know Campaign?  
Why is access to information important?

## everything you need to know about THE RIGHT2KNOW CAMPAIGN

The Right2Know Campaign (R2K) is a coalition of many organisations and activists who are building a people's movement to support community struggles for access to information and freedom of expression. The campaign was launched in August 2010 to challenge the "Secrecy Bill" but has grown - and today has a broader mandate to tackle a broader problem:

the **four legs** of the Right2Know:

- 1 STOP SECRECY!**  
Stop the Secrecy Bill and any other law or practice that abuses secrecy and limits the constitutional right to openness.
- 2 INFORMATION ACCESS NOW!**  
Solidarity with communities and struggles demanding information to protect their rights and win basic services. Everyone has the right to free information, full inclusion & fair process!
- 3 MORE MEDIA! NOT LESS!**  
Promoting a diverse media that is independent of government & corporate control, and calling for affordable internet and telephone access: the right to communicate!
- 4 JUSTICE 4 WHISTLEBLOWERS!**  
When people become aware of wrongdoing they should be able to blow the whistle without fear. R2K works to give support and solidarity to whistleblowers!

### WHY DID R2K BROADEN ITS FOCUS?

The Secrecy Bill is **not the only threat** to people's right to know: it is only the symptom of a much bigger problem. One reason that so many people joined the fight against the Secrecy Bill is that there is already **too much secrecy** in our society, and ordinary people are struggling for their right to know **every day!** People are tired of having their rights undermined and are **joining together to fight for their right to know!**

Freedom of expression and access to information are **building blocks for an accountable democracy** that can deliver on the basic needs of its people. The struggle started with the Secrecy Bill but it doesn't end there!



### WHO IS PART OF R2K?

As a coalition, the Right2Know is coordinated through 4 **provincial committees called 'working groups'** - in Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape.

These working groups are made up of volunteers and representatives of civil society organisations, community groups and social movements from each of these regions; there is also an elected national committee made up of people from each province.

Everyone who is part of the provincial working groups is allowed to have a say in how R2K works, and the provincial working groups are open to any person or organisation who wants to join the fight for the free flow of information!

### CONTACT US

R2K Gauteng Bongani - gauteng@r2k.org.za R2K W. Cape Nkwame - wcape@r2k.org.za  
R2K KZN Vanessa - kzn@r2k.org.za R2K E. Cape Xola - ecape@r2k.org.za  
R2K national office (t) 076 728 7009 (f) 0865518879 (e) admin@r2k.org.za  
You can also visit [www.r2k.org.za](http://www.r2k.org.za), talk to us on [Facebook.com/Right2Know](https://www.facebook.com/Right2Know) or Twitter (@r2kcampaign)

**get involved: donate today at [www.r2k.org.za](http://www.r2k.org.za)!**

# STAND UP FOR THE COMMUNITY'S RIGHT TO KNOW!



### WHY DO WE NEED THE RIGHT TO KNOW?

Imagine trying to pass an exam or trying to do a job without having the necessary information. We all know what the result would be - we would fail the exam and not be able to do the job properly. The point is that without the information we need - whether it is for an individual exam or for ensuring your local municipality delivers quality and affordable basic services to your community - we are left in the dark.

The good news is that whether it relates to the activities of your councillor, or provincial government plans in your community, or holding a local factory to account: you have the right to know!

This means that all communities have a right to **FREE INFORMATION, FULL INCLUSION, and FAIR PROCESS!**

**FREE INFORMATION** → This means you must be fully informed about what is planned for your community; the information should be public and easy to access and easy to understand!

**FULL INCLUSION** → This means you should be consulted by the officials or bodies that will take decisions that affect you and your community, and be invited to important meetings!

**FAIR PROCESS** → Government officials, politicians and other powerful people (e.g. local business owners) must listen to your demands. Your views matter and your voice must be heard!

**FREE INFORMATION! FULL INCLUSION! FAIR PROCESS!**

## HOW CAN YOU USE INFORMATION?

Having the **right to know** and the **right to speak out** means being **included and informed** so that the community can empower itself with information and take decisions for itself. Ensuring the right to know is one small way of **making democracy work for the ordinary person on the street.**

And many communities have experienced how government officials, politicians or private companies will try to shut the community out of a process and deny them access to information as a way of disempowering the community and not being accountable!

### THIS MEANS YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW:

- How the municipality is spending the community's money!
- What are local government's plans to improve service delivery, reduce unemployment, or fight corruption? Are they **delivering** on those plans?
- What are the local housing allocation plans?
- Who has received service tenders from the municipality and how much they're paid!
- Whether a local company is obeying labour laws and treating their employees fairly!
- Are they polluting the water or making the air dirty? You have a right to know how their activities are affecting the environment!
- If a private company is receiving money to provide a service to the community (e.g. collecting the rubbish, building low-cost houses) are they using the community's money properly?

There are many other examples! This kind of information should be **freely available** to everyone. But often it isn't - many activists and community leaders have experienced a climate of secrecy around these issues!

Where there is **too much secrecy**, it often means **wasted money, inefficient government, corruption and human rights abuses.**

## FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS!

Knowing your rights is the first step. But the next step is to fight for those rights, because we all know that action is more important than words. The fight for our right to know is central to the fight for all our other rights - the right to decent housing, safe communities, clean water, and many other things. Without information to empower and inform our struggles, we are fighting for those rights with one hand tied behind our backs.

If you and your community **know your rights to access information** and then **organise and fight for them**, not only will you and your community be more empowered but can also hold political leaders, government and local businesses accountable. This is what real democracy is all about!

We demand the right to know!

**FREE INFORMATION! FULL INCLUSION! FAIR PROCESS!**

### Is there a law that can help?

In South Africa there is a law that's meant to **ensure your right to access information**: the Promotion of Access to Information Act (we also call it PAIA - say 'pie-uh').

PAIA says that every person can request information or documents from government bodies and private bodies and they should get a response within 30 days.

But although PAIA is meant to empower us, it's often a frustrating process!

The Human Rights Commission says that **2 out of 3 times** that a community or person has used PAIA to ask for information from government, **they get no response!**

Other communities report that they had to wait a **long time** to get the information, or got information that was very hard to understand or didn't answer their questions.

*These are some organisations that may be able to give you advice or help you to request information:*

**The Right2Know Campaign:** 076 728 7009 [www.r2k.org.za](http://www.r2k.org.za)

**The South African History Archives:** 011-717-1941 [www.saha.org.za](http://www.saha.org.za)

**SA Human Rights Commission:** 011-877-3600 [www.sahrc.org.za](http://www.sahrc.org.za)

**Legal Resources Centre:** 011-836-9831 [www.lrc.org.za](http://www.lrc.org.za)

**Public Service Accountability Monitor:** 046-603-8358 or [www.psam.org.za](http://www.psam.org.za)

Information is power. An **informed people** that can use radio & TV stations, newspapers, magazines, and websites to have public discussions, exchange information and raise their voices is a **powerful people**. Power-hungry politicians and profit-driven businesses are fighting over who controls the media, because it will help them control the people!

But R2K is calling for **media freedom and diversity**. Without **freedom** the media would become the voice of the government, but without **diversity** of ownership and access they would only serve the interests of a few people!

### MORE MEDIA, NOT LESS!



#### MEDIA FREEDOM FOR ALL!

Free media is a public good - our society needs independent, informative journalism and SA's Constitution says it is our right! The media should be independent of control from government officials, politicians and corporations. R2K stands against all censorship and for the freedom of journalists to practice their ethics and protect their sources.



#### THE RIGHT TO CALL, SMS & DATA

The internet empowers everyone to access and share information. But even though almost everyone in South Africa has a cell phone and many phones are able to access the internet, most people can't afford it! This is because cell phone companies are making **super profits!** The right to communicate is in our constitution (like the right to water and electricity) and R2K is campaigning for free basic and affordable airtime, SMS, and data. The cell phone companies can afford it, so why don't they provide it?

#### SUPPORT MEDIA DIVERSITY!

In South Africa most of our mass media is **controlled by just 5 companies** (four private companies and the SABC). Community media organisations that are trying to serve the needs of the members of their community are under-funded and struggle to survive! We need to limit the power of the dominant companies and should have many more publicly funded radio & TV stations, newspapers, magazines, and websites to tell our stories and give us a voice.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF R2K

#### PREAMBLE

We subscribe to the right to know, which is founded in the right to dignity and is realised through the right to freely access and share information.

We shall defend and advance the right to know, encouraged that it and its constituent rights were won through peoples' struggles in South Africa and internationally, and are affirmed in the Constitution of South Africa, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We commit to the following principles, both in our own policies and practices and in the vision we propagate throughout society: All people have the right to access information, and have it equally. This right has inherent value and enables many other democratic rights.

#### 1 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The right to access information must be defended and advanced in law, policy and practice as demanded inter alia by section 32 of the Constitution of South Africa.

All people have the right to express themselves (that is to share information, including opinion) freely and equally. This right has inherent value and enables many other democratic rights.

#### 2 FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

The right to free expression must be defended and advanced in law, policy and practice as demanded inter alia by section 16 of the Constitution of South Africa.

#### 3 FREE AND DIVERSE MEDIA

The media have rights and corresponding duties to access and disseminate information, including opinion, freely and fairly, without fear or favour. These rights and duties are vital to the public's exercise of many other democratic rights.

Media freedom must be defended and advanced in law, policy and practice as demanded inter alia by section 16 of the Constitution of South Africa.

Media diversity must be extended so that everyone, in particular the socially and economically marginalised, shall have a voice.

#### 4 ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

Transparency, achieved through the right to know, holds power to account so that political, social, economic and environmental justice is realised.

#### 5 INFORMED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The right to know empowers all people to participate in democracy actively and effectively so that they can defend and advance their political, social, economic and environmental rights.

#### 6 TRUTH & QUALITY OF INFORMATION

The rights to access information must be served through the provision of information that is reliable, verifiable and representative of the data from which it is derived, and must include the right to access source data itself. Information must be provided transparently and equally, untainted by partisan interests.

#### 7 PROACTIVE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

Public and private bodies must disseminate information proactively. Laws providing for access to information must not be used as a shield to obstruct its release.

#### 8 EQUALITY

All rights, including the rights here demanded like any other right, are equal to all people regardless of any human or social characteristic including class, race, gender, language or sexual orientation.

#### 9 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The right to know is vital to the struggles of communities demanding political, social, economic and environmental justice. Campaign efforts rooted in communities and their needs are vital to the campaign's success and the realisation of a responsive and accountable democracy that can meet the basic needs of our people.

#### 10 SOLIDARITY

The full realisation of the right to know cannot be defined by individuals, organisations or borders. Our campaign is best served where we act in concert and solidarity with like-minded people and organisations locally and internationally.

## DEFEND OUR WHISTLEBLOWERS!



#### WHAT IS A WHISTLEBLOWER?

A whistleblower is someone who sees wrongdoing, and speaks out about it! Like a soccer ref who sees a foul and then 'blows the whistle', a **whistleblower uses their freedom of expression** to speak up and let the public know that someone is breaking the law or doing something wrong.

#### WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES?

A whistleblower could be someone who exposes a company that is exploiting its workers, or an official who exposes municipal corruption. When the public gets information about illegal activity - in government or a private company - that information is often coming from a whistleblower. That person may take information to an elected official, a body like the Public Protector or Human Rights Commission, or a journalist.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

Although the Constitution protects the rights of whistleblowers, and we have laws that are meant to promote their rights (such as the **Protected Disclosures Act**) in reality there is not much protection for whistleblowers, and such people face huge challenges!

For example, people who blow the whistle on their employer often lose their job (even though the law says you can't be fired for blowing the whistle)! Sometimes the corrupt person will say the **whistleblower** has broken the law and hire a lawyer to threaten them or take them to court. Sometimes whistleblowers have even been hurt or killed.

South Africa's whistleblowers are being targeted, intimidated, and silenced.

**We must stand with them!**





REPEATED text block containing the phrase 'TOLDI FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS' and 'INFORMED SECRECY IS FOR SKELMSI' repeated many times in various orientations and colors (red, black, white).

WANT TO KNOW, JOU MA SE BILLI SPEAK UP! JUSTICE FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS! DELIVERY, NOT SECRECY! PHANTSI ISRECY BILLI FREE INFORMATION, FULL INCLUSION, FAIR PROCESS! SPEAK UP!

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