

Governance report of elected NWG

Delivered At: R2K National Summit 2020 – 6 to 8 August 2020

1.0 Introduction

This report outlines an overview of the term of office of the National Working Group (elected) from March 2019 to 5 August 2020. The governance body in any organization carries an important role in overseeing the legal, financial and strategic accountability. In an activist led social justice organization such as R2K, these tasks had a different experience to it as there multiple stakeholder relationships involved other than a normal NPO. Right to know has a complex structure and it takes time even for seasoned board members who had a stint at governance previously to understand the role at hand. Below is an outline of our journey as the elected NWG highlighting our role, tasks done, challenges and legacy. The period of our term became longer as lock down came in March at a time when we normally have our National Summit. A cash flow situation in March made it difficult for us and we put logistics in place to have the Summit in May. The lockdown that was initially going to be a month was extended to August. The need for us to come together to pave the way forward for R2K, the fact that the elected NWG term has expired, the lack of direction on programme plan for funding proposals as well as to gather and address internal organisational difficulties ahead made the summit an urgent priority.

The requirements of social distancing have most organisations resort to virtual platforms to have meetings during lockdown. Given the fact that the National Summit is one of only two platforms where activists meet face to face, we struck a compromise after consultation with provinces. The delegates of each province will come together and we will interact on virtual platform with other provinces. Given the challenges with virtual platforms, the provinces and NWG collectively decided that we will have provincial delegates together in a space to allow for interaction. Care will be taken to ensure that social distancing and health considerations are adhered to.

2.0 Roles and Fiduciary Duty of NWG

According to clause 3.7 of our R2K Constitution, the National Working Group” or “NWG” means the governance structure of the Association, which is to be constituted in accordance with clause 6, (referenced below) in order

to exercise overall responsibility for the affairs of the Association, directly or indirectly by delegation to one or more of the Provincial Working Groups.

6. National Working Group (Constitution of R2K)

6.1 “The National Working Group shall be responsible for the running of the affairs of the Association. The NWG shall be the highest decision making authority between National Summits and or National General Meetings. The NWG shall be constituted every second year by election, co-option, or ex officio, as the case may be, in terms of the succeeding provisions. Only bonafide members may be eligible for election (or co-option in special cases determined by the National Summit) to the NWG, with due consideration to even (equal) representation by functioning PWGs”.

The NWG is responsible for financial, legal and strategic governance of the organization. Monthly meetings were held with participation of broader staff. This happens over teleconference. The diagnostic report pointed out that this is not always effective and that the governance body must meet face to face to discuss and work through issues to come to good decisions.

Recommendation: Even though it is more cost effective to have meetings on teleconference, there need to be quarterly sessions among members of the NWG. This will also allow members to get to know each other better as they carry the accountability of the organisation as a collective.

Our inheritance:

We inherited several key tasks that were left over from the previous NWG. Given sensitive HR matters, we had to spend time learning the backgrounds of decisions from previous NWG so as to make informed decisions as we were at a disadvantage. The fact that there were members on the NWG (elected) from previous term assisted. The board tasked some members to look into and find more facts on issues and to interview stakeholders to understand what happened before. Tasks outstanding included finalising senior management contract aspects, finalising the restructuring process that started three years ago and streamlining financial system oversight.

Self-assessment and organising ourselves

One of the first things the elected NWG did was to that each one had to fill in a designed self-assessment form in order to see where the strengths and interest lies and to see what skills we would need if we co-opt more people onto the governance structure.

Office bearers:

The Constitution makes provision for portfolios within the governance structure. This year, a chairperson (Biko Motswarau) and Vice Chairperson were elected as office bearers. Many administrative tasks that fell prevented them from being as active on the programme side of things. These to members performed a function were still accountable to the NWG governance structure.

Recommendation: Portfolios of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson secretary, treasurer and programmes

NWG AGREEMENTS (as of Feb 2015)

1. Composition of meetings & decisions

- 1.1. All elected NWG members, Provincial Coordinators, and Staffers will participate actively in the NWG.
- 1.2. The NWG will meet (1) physically once a year at the Mid Term Review meeting, (2) monthly at a teleconference, and (3) on an ongoing basis through the NWG email list.
- 1.3. Where ever possible decisions will be taken by full participation and reaching consensus. In the absence of a consensus only elected members of the NWG will vote to resolve an issue.

2. Mid Term Review and teleconference

- 2.1. Quorum for the Mid Term Review and teleconference will be 50% +1 (six) elected member of the NWG.
- 2.2 Reports and other documents and agendas will be circulated prior to meetings - at least 24 hours before the monthly teleconference Everyone will read these reports/documents before the meeting.
- 2.3 Everyone will participate actively in meetings.
- 2.4 Draft minutes/reports of meetings will be circulated timorously and adopted via email. In the case of our monthly teleconference, draft minutes

will be circulated no more than 3 days after meeting and will be adopted 3 days after that.

3. Email and Teleconference procedures

3.1 Everyone must check emails at least once a day and engage actively with matters raised.

3.2 A minimum of 24 hours must be allowed for any decision that is required from our email list - unless in exceptional circumstances like the approval of an urgent press statement. We proposed that this become 72 hours as activists have very busy lives and will not always be able to check their e-mail on a daily basis and apply their minds to a particular issue at hand in a qualitative way.

3.3 If we fail to reach consensus quorum for a email vote will be 50% +1 (six) elected member of the NWG (i.e six at least 6 elected members must state their position on an issue).

4. Tasks of NWG members

4.1 All activists will conduct themselves according to the R2K Activist Code of Conduct. Staffers will abide by the Staff Code of Conduct.

4.2 Everyone will participate actively in the life of the NWG. This will include share perspectives from other R2K structures they serve in, sharing their own views, and asking questions if there is anything they are not clear about.

4.3 Everyone will communicate relevant decisions of the NWG to other R2K structures in which they serve.

4.4 Everyone will communicate relevant decisions and developments of the R2K structures in which they serve to the NWG.

4.5 All elected NWG members will participate actively in their respective Provincial Working Groups (PWG).

4.6 All elected NWG members will participate actively in at least one of R2K's thematic Focus Groups.

4.7 All elected NWG members will take at least one task from the monthly NWG teleconference and report on this task.

5. Accountability

5.1 Any concerns regarding the fulfilment of these Working Agreements can be raised on the NWG email list at any time by anyone including Staffers.

5.2 The question of "NWG accountability" will be placed as standing item on the monthly teleconference agenda.

5.3 if a NWG member misses 3 consecutive NWG teleconferences without apology, they will lose their NWG position and a replacement can be coopted onto the NWG.

5.4 If an elected NWG member fails (within 2 months of taking up the position) to become actively involved in all activities/ responsibilities as set out in the Working Agreement then they will be given a warning. If the situation maintains after another 2 months then the relevant member will lose their NWG position and a replacement can be coopted onto the NWG.

5.5 The NWG will address any other concerns regarding the fulfilment of these Working Agreements and take appropriate action.

Tasks completed during the course of our term of office:

Restructuring the organization

- Self-assessment of elected NWG members
- Set up task teams for example finteam, HR team, interim committees donor liason and coordination team
- Co-opted new members
- Set up recruitment process for new National Coordination
- Shortlist, interview and liason with selected candidates
- Engage in restructuring process and adopted a two tier structure, adopted staff structure under the Patterson model after review of CMDS scale, appointed staff in new roles and adopted a new salary scale after lengthy consultation with staff.
- Attend induction process for NWG and provincial coordinators in July 2019
- Created new posts and made admin and outreach posts redundant.
- Attend hearings of staff for various charges by leading the case,
- Represent R2K in CCMA cases
- Make decisions on how to respond to legal disputes and potential litigation issues
- Consult experts and legal experts as the need arise in exercising our fiduciary responsibilities
- Restructuring in terms of organisational, staff and salary review
- Assist with planning eg. Drew up timeline for National Summit
- Signed audit reports
- Study management letters
- Met with auditors
- Line manage senior staff in the absence of National Coordinator

- Line manage National Coordinator
- Created action plan template
- Attend meeting with donors as finteam, signatories
- More than 20 meetings and engagements with donors
- Read donor reports
- Wrote funding proposals
- Wrote equipment policy and review other existing and new policies
- Send updates to donors on R2K matters
- Assist in writing NPA donor proposal
- Attend and led on PAG events
- Occasionally Participate in media interviews
- Contracted Vanessa Ludwig as independent consultant to do a diagnostic review of R2K in the light of our transformation and challenges within our organisational culture
- Facilitated sessions at National and some provincial meetings
- Reported back to the provinces on NWG and governance matters
- Attend monthly NWG meetings
- Take minutes at meetings
- Managing work plan of the National Coordinator
- Manage conflict among stakeholders
- Write reports to provinces
- Attend networking meetings
- Take part in protest action
- Liase with provincial coordinators
- When there is time take part in debates and discussion on thematic areas of work
- Engage on social media with respect to R2K matters
- Attend advocacy meetings
- Visit communities
- Engage staff on queries re HR and other matters
- Integrated staff reps as part of SHR related matters on NWG
- Consult our policy documents to make decisions that has a serious impact on the organization
- Delegate authority to sign staff contracts
- Oversight on donor reporting
- Read and give approval to funding proposals and programme plans
- Have regular discussions among elected NWG members on whatsapp and e-mail

- Obtain legal advice when the need arise
- Deal with urgent solidarity requests
- Approve memorandum of understandings between organisations
- Consult our Constitution and Policy Manual and Procedures from time to time when the need arise
- Overseeing provincial processes and dispute when the need arise

Relations between management and NWG

After tough and contested elections in 2019, a team was elected to play a governance role in 2019 and 2020.

In an ideal world, management have to work together and the ex-officio members had to play a supportive role to the governance structure. Even though management and the elected had to work closely together, there were often disagreement about the decisions and the approach to governance.

Some of these tensions was framed as personal disputes and actually resulted in complaints and grievances among key role players. Two narratives evolved out of this tension. Internal and external stakeholders was unsure how to deal with these narratives as they were often depending on what narrative they hear first left with a onesided view of the actual problem. The tension created blockages in implementing some of the organisational decisions.

Some elected members complained that they did not get airtime or data on time for meetings. A request to the National Coordinator for a programme plan was refused. A governance administrator was also appointed during the restructuring process to ensure some of these tasks are done. Some informationn requested by elected NWG for oversight purposes was not send or were send very late which made it sometimes difficult for eleted NWG memebhrs to do their oversight role. This later improved as the issues was raised in a firm way and it was pointed out that it consitutes insubordination.

This rightfully created some concern in provinces. Management came out of the tradition that staff and management made decisions together. This became especially accute when senior managers had to be told that they cannot be part of salary structure decisions as they had a conflict of interest as they stand to benefit from the decision. We landed into a CCMA dispute after one member of R2K applied and was disqualified based on that rule.

We had to honour the CCMA ruling to interview the candidate. The interview is completed.

The exit of National Coordinator

The National Coordinator contract came to an end January 2020. The contract was not renewed as he expressed that he is ready to move on in several occasions and agreed to be on the panel for the recruitment of a new National Coordinator. We contracted Mark as an independent consultant for a month after the contract expired in order to give us an exit report.

Working together of elected NWG

The elected NWG interacted with each other on e-mail, whatsapp and teleconferences. The pressure of different tasks and balance of other aspects of their lives made it difficult for everyone to always participate as sometimes urgent tasks were at hand.

There were also healthy differences and we could continue working together even though there were different opinions on some of the issues we had to deal with.

Some of the matters resulted in value conflicts among elected NWG members and there were times when disagreements among them slowed down consensus and were not so healthy. The team tried to hold each other accountable as much but more than often given the workload and pressure we just moved on when someone was inactive on the team and tried to ensure that we pushed for completing the tasks. Those who ended up more

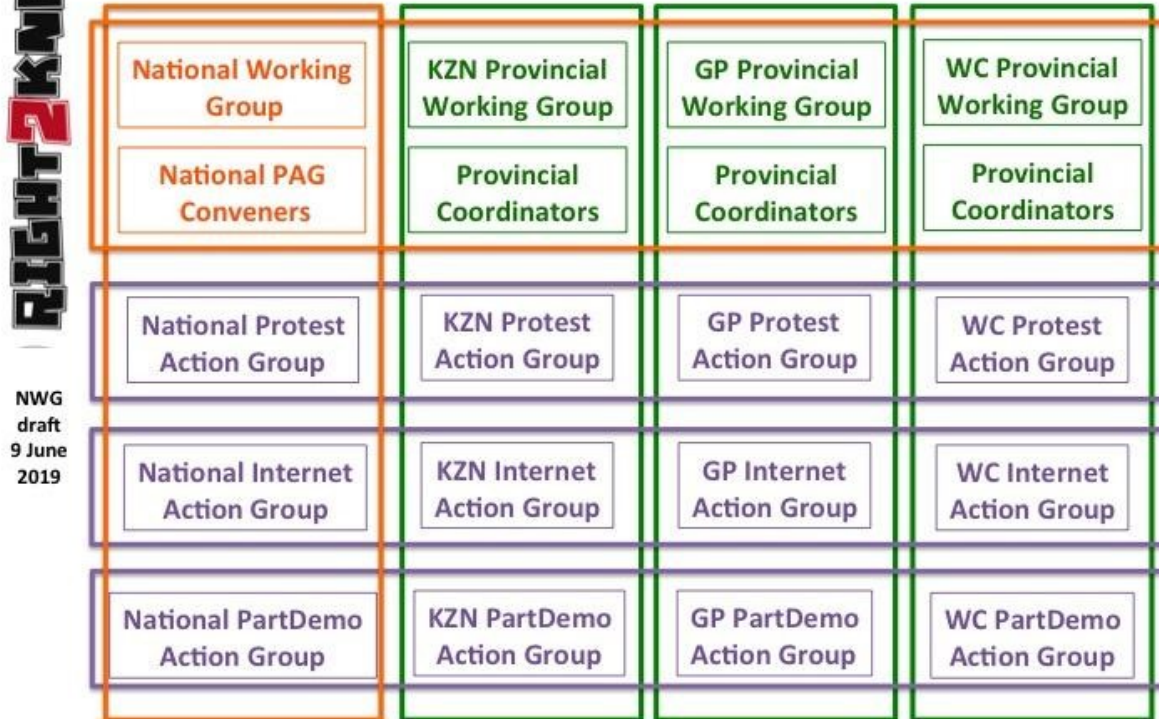
Donor management

Despite the internal challenges, our donors were very supportive in supporting R2K through working on the tensions which impacted the organisational culture.

Restructuring Process outcome of R2K

RIGHT2KNOW
RIGHT2LIFE

Advocacy Structures



NWG
draft
9 June
2019

5.1 Staff structure:

The two tier structure with no staff other than the Deputy Coordinator (Programmes and Advocacy) will fulfil programme line managerial roles. This was confirmed and decided in September 2020 and on dispute was endorsed again at this meeting with full consensus. This decision is now implemented for many months.

5.2 Staff Posts:

The following staff members were affected by the new staff structure. A decision was made as to the offers that will be made to them in consultation by their respective line managers:

Rowena Salo: Governance Administrator position was given to her, falls under the National Coordinator as line manager.

All provincial admin posts were made redundant

Moeketsi Monaheng: All Admin posts were made redundant as all provincial admin staff. Provincial National Participatory Democracy Coordinator Line managed by Programme and Advocacy Coordinator

Janine Julisen

Book keeper and coordinate financial administration of the organisation

Amina Abrahams: Tracker Assistant working under line management of Finance Coordinator and work closely with National Administrator.

Bongani Xezwi: Job as outreach Organiser became redundant and he employed on the level of Campaigns Organiser

Ghalib Galant: Deputy National Coordinator focusing on leading Programmes and Advocacy. Supervise programme staff

Alois Mushambi – Started as Finance Coordinator and was confirmed as part of restructuring process as Deputy National Coordinator with designation Finance Coordinator. Currently appointed as Acting Coordinator from July 2020

National Coordinator - Line manage the National Communicator (Busi), Recording and Governance Coordinator (Rowena), Finance Coordinator (Alois) and Programme and Advocacy Coordinator (Ghalib).

Ghalib and Alois will both occupy the functional role of Deputy National Coordination and work together around financial and programme implementation in the event that the National Coordinator is not in office for work purposes or on leave. The DNC as a post will become redundant. Their salaries will be adjusted to be equal level posts on the E scale/band on the organogram underneath the National Coordinator. Alois' job

description will also change according to the new added responsibility. Mark to consult with Alois.

Busi Mtabane is the National Communicator

Thami Nkosi and Lazola Kati – Their portfolios are National Campaign organisers as they hold specific thematic portfolios and work across all provinces.

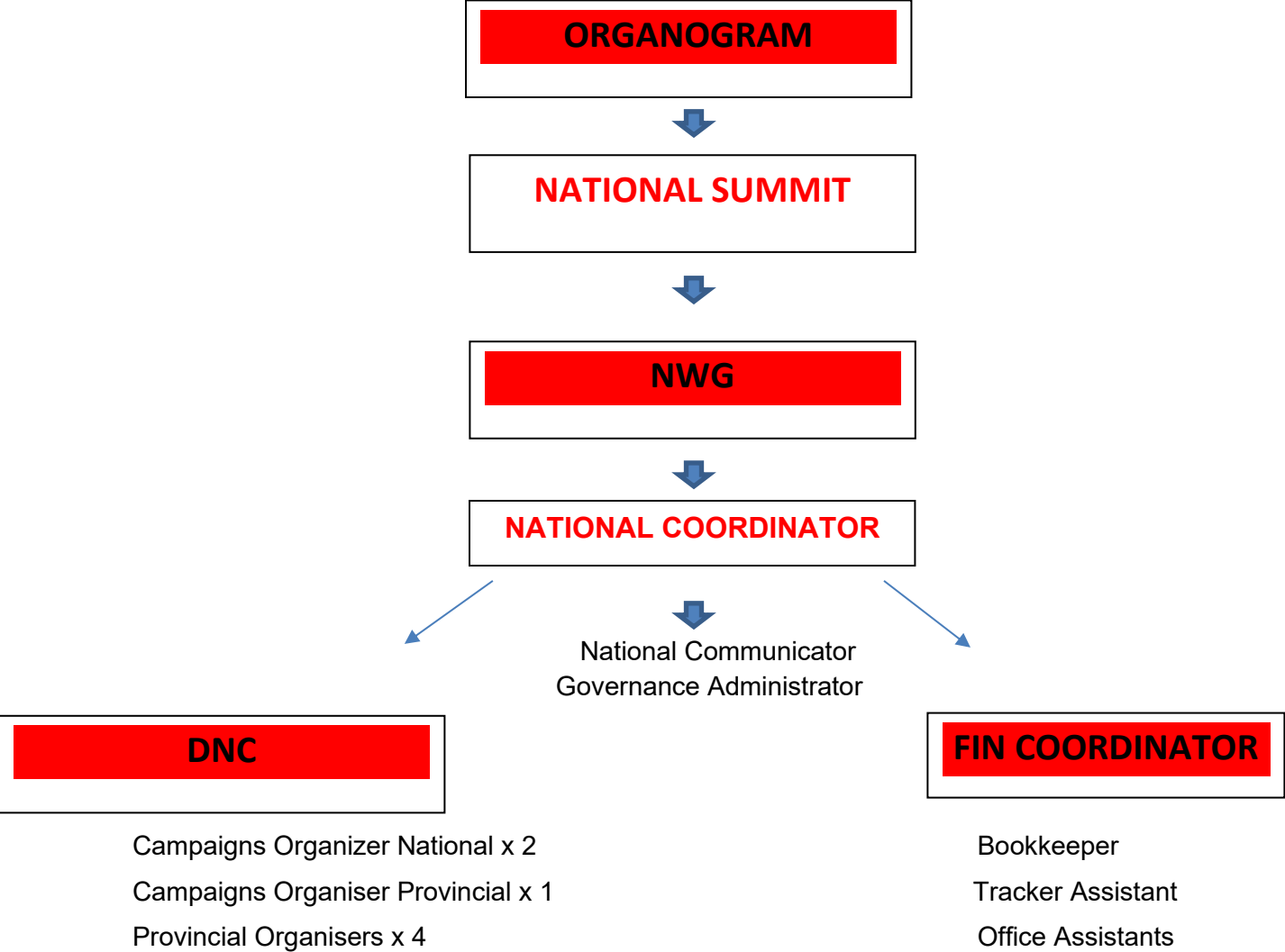
Our cleaners at provincial offices had an increase in salary as well.

Lundi, Percy, Pupa, Ngazini, Vainola, Louw, Wendy, Daniel, Sine, Sthe supported the above decisions

There was a request or 13th cheque during the time of the Review Meeting and we had to decline to as our cash flow situation as not good. This proved a good decision as in the beginning of the year we had only three month of cash flow to begin with and the other donors only promised to bring in money around June/ July

The above salary scale based on the new structure have been implemented from June 2020

Below is our organogram as it currently stands:



RIGHT2KNOW

ORGANISATION AND SALARY STRUCTURES

Advocacy Structure

Resolution: We confirmed the resolution that Provincial Coordinators will continue to be an important component of the provincial / local structures. Their primary responsibility will be to coordinate and drive the provincial / local programme(s) of action. We confirm that the administration and finance functions will be performed by appropriate staff who have been properly capacitated.

- *As per the new activist structure below had been implemented*
- *Coordinators hold the political programme in Provinces, sign of on the monthly budget*
- *Proposed activist structure was taken to PWG's for input*

Advocacy Structures

NWG
draft
9 June
2019

National Working Group	KZN Provincial Working Group	GP Provincial Working Group	WC Provincial Working Group
National PAG Conveners	Provincial Coordinators	Provincial Coordinators	Provincial Coordinators
National Protest Action Group	KZN Protest Action Group	GP Protest Action Group	WC Protest Action Group
National Internet Action Group	KZN Internet Action Group	GP Internet Action Group	WC Internet Action Group
National PartDemo Action Group	KZN PartDemo Action Group	GP PartDemo Action Group	WC PartDemo Action Group

Staffing & Finance - Resolutions

1. Recognising the resolutions to better structure and focus our activism and recognising the proposal to restructure staffing to better support the new Activism structures, we resolve that the incoming NWG establish a sub-committee to formulate a proposal on an integrated Advocacy Team and an integrated Admin/Finance Team within a period of three (3) months after the Summit;
 - We have established a subcommittee (restructuring team)
2. Recognising that currently there are several vacancies in the staffing complement throughout the organisation, we resolve that the incoming NWG come up with a proposal on the filling of those vacancies within 3 months of taking office. The NWG should fill the vacant posts as soon as possible in line with this proposal.

What was implemented?

Staff Appointments

One of the main things that we needed to do was to finalise the appointments of acting staff. There was weak handling of this process of the side of management as contracts were allowed to laps, no new contracts were given and it necessitates intervention by elected NWG in steering this process.

As per the new proposal the elected appointed

- Rowena as Governance Administrator
- Amina as Tracker Assistant
- Moeketsi as Organizer
- Bongani as Provincial Participatory Democracy Organizer

Salary Band based on Patterson scale adopted

BAND	DESCRIPTION	R2K Jobs
A	General office cleaning Assistants tasks –Office assistants and general office cleaning	Office Assistants <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Margaret Mabala• Buyiswa Mfecane
B (lower)	Discretionary / Operative Decisions. These include jobs that are semi repetitive and routine- ordering, capturing and arranging data in support function to finance administrator	Tracker Assistant <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amina
B (upper)	As for B Lower, but in addition, these could include jobs where job holders could suggest minor changes to work procedures and includes jobs such as organising and mobilising event administration and programme administration	Community organisers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provincial Community Organisers (Norma, Sthe, Ntombi and Moeketsi• Governance Administrator - Rowena

C (lower)	Routine / Process Decisions. Skilled, technical and academically qualified employees. These include jobs where job holders deal independently with situations and have to have knowledge of an entire process. Includes jobs such as Program / Project Coordinators etc,	National Bookkeeper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janine
C (upper)	As for C Lower. However, job holders will work with a longer cycle of activities and have to have more knowledge and experience. Job categories includes job categories such as Accountants, Senior Project or Program Coordinators, Senior Specialists and the supervision of Specialists, etc.	Campaigns Organisers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Campaigns Organiser on Participatory Democracy - Bongani • National Communicator – Busi • National Campaigns organisers – Thami, Lazola
E (lower)	Programming decisions. Senior Management, Heads of major Functions. These include jobs where job holders are required to implement organisational / country strategy in their functional area and include senior management or executive positions in Programs, Operations, Finance, Human Resources, Media, Advocacy, Communications	Deputy National Coordinator – Ghalib and Alois Finance Coordinator
E (upper)	Strategic Direction, Public Liason, Oversee Senior management – Operation, finance, HR and programmes oversee all functions of organisation	National Coordinator

The salary scale based on the above staff structure had been adopted had been implemented from June 2020

Financial governance

Meeting with auditors

The incoming elected NWG had a strong concern for tightening up the financial governance system. We had one meeting with the auditors to discuss the audit process, discuss writing of bad debt

We engage them on the laptop crash, the fact that elected NWG is not involve in the audit process and why the audit report did not mention the laptop crashed

The auditor could not answer many of our questions as he never worked with R2K directly

The incoming NWG should review the Safety Net policy

- We reviewed the Policy and concluded that money will no longer be handled by activists
- No secondary advances to be given to activists as staff members were held accountable if money is unaccounted for
- We endorsed the policy that financial oversight will no longer rests from the PWG
- We strengthen our internal finance system to ensue backup
- According to the new structure we appointed a finance assistant tracker to support national admin that was overloaded
- We have separated the fin team and H.R functions and now
- We adopted a practice in finteam where all payments that are paid out are send to the fin team on a weekly basis. One of three signatories from the elected finteam then go to the office to sign. This worked for a couple of months, but due to activists staying far from the office, it was decided that the signing can happen afterwards and approval be given on e-mail.
- This is a good practice and allows the finteam to pick up irregular transactions governance body

1. Transformation Goals

Issues of race, class and gender came to the fore in more salient way as governance body pushed for transformation issues and organizational culture being as important in R2K as our programme issues.

2. Capacity Building of Campaign Leadership NWG

One National Workshop was held in Cape Town in July. This was attended by the elected NWG members and the provincial leaders. We had extensive discussions and two presentations by Wendy and Ghalib on the role of a non-profit governance body. Joseph Williams from the CCMA facilitated a session taking the elected leadership through the principles and responsibilities of NPO governance outlined by the King Commission. A number of issues were clarified. The NWG noted that R2K has extensive and detailed policy covering most governance issues and agreed that members should continue to refer to our policies on an ongoing basis as issues emerged and amend policy if need arises. The principle about displaying good faith, respecting the King Principles and accountability and transparency and providing access to information important for governance was highlighted as important to adhere to in Right to Know. We often had management disagree with the decision the board is making. Having more than two decades of CCMA experience, he confirmed that when the board of the organisation have made a decision, it is binding on everyone even if someone does not agree with the decision. Options for appealing decisions in a formal are existing in the organisation. It was also confirmed in the discussion that work plans by staff are important as it enable governance structure to assess the impact

Recommendation:

There should be more regular capacity building with board members on a quarterly basis on finance governance, HR and labour related issues and stakeholder management.

Solidarity fund resolution

3. We resolve that a Solidarity Fund be established within the next three months on the following terms:

- I. Contributions to the fund be on a voluntary basis by any staff or activist members on a regular or monthly basis;
- II. That the contributions be paid into a separate bank account established solely for this purpose;
- III. The account will be administered centrally by the FinTeam with regular reporting and accountability to the NWG;
- IV. The procedures for application, criteria for eligibility and other practical arrangements to be finalised by FinTeam within 3 months of the National Summit

What was implemented?

Two proposals had been made but no final proposals being agreed upon. Comrade Biko and Vainola made proposals. They are as follows:

This will continue to be a difficult question as it is not ethical for the organization to expect of staff to contribute compulsory way. Most activists are unemployed or have a low income. Activists who are by the means also contributed in whatever physical way they can to comrades who were in need. This is not sustainable. A funding proposal had been developed by elected NWG to OSF for humanitarian purposes and R200 000 had been approved pending our audit report being handed in.

2. Recognising the recent appointment of the Deputy National Coordinator and the Finance Coordinator, we resolve that the National Administrator and Finance Coordinator visit each province to set up and explain the revamped financial systems within the first six months after the summit; further we resolve that the Deputy National Coordinator engage all advocacy staff and provincial / local activists about the integrated advocacy approach.
 - *Finance Coordinator visited all provinces*
3. The incoming NWG should develop an IT policy for the campaign including a sound IT system

A financial tracker system has been tightened up based on the lessons of the laptop crash and the weaknesses in which the way the tracker was managed before.

An IT policy must still be written up. Our Acting NC will be tasked it

Recognising our adoption of 3 broad campaigning areas detailed below, we recognise that our structures must be aligned to best supporting those areas at a provincial or local level and that those broad campaigning areas must be joined-up between regions and nationally. At the provincial level this will consist of an activist-led programme oversight structure (the Provincial Working Group) that will meet periodically as well as at least 3 campaigning focused action groups that will meet and work as required to achieve our resolutions. We endorse the approach of joining and connecting local actions into a national approach.

Recommendation: The working functional and political relationship between provinces and national staff must get serious attention s there had been several complaints in this regard

- *Provincial Working Groups are functioning*
- *PAG's was established and meet periodically*
- *During lockdown the provincial leadership were hampered as they could not visit offices anymore to administer programmes and they were a bit constrained in driving the political programme as envisaged under conditions outside the lockdown*

Resolution on Internal Communication & Accountability

Monthly narrative and financial reports submitted to the NWG as well as NWG minutes must be shared electronically with other structures who may choose to consider reports and give the NWG feedback.

- Monthly reports were given to the NWG, but it often came late or just before the meeting. A verbal warning was given to the programme head for serial later to reporting despite requests to send programmes

Minutes on time.

- Many minutes have not been adopted as we recalled the decisions made differently
- We consolidated all the minutes into one document, but it was contested by Management
- Minutes had been shared with Coordinators, staff and Elected NWG

The NWG will remain responsible for all policy and the national budget - when policies and/or budgets impact on any structure these structures must be consulted.

- *The elected ensured that we discuss and endorsed the 2019 and 2020 proposed budget*
- *We also ensure that we stay within our budget and have addressed under expenditure on programmes*
- *Staff made a proposal for a 13 cheque and salary increases and we considered our policy on remuneration, financial sustainability, budget and agreements with donors*
- *We decided not to give a 13 cheque*
- *We agree that consultation need to happen should there be policy or budget impacts, hence our proposal to review our sexual harassment policy, consultation also took place with regards to PWG request for transport and food increases, consultations also took place with regards to new staff structure*

If an elected NWG does not collectively have adequate experience and skills to govern an organisation of R2K's nature after skills training, they must co-opt comrades to fill the identified gaps.

- We accepted Gauteng's proposal to co-opt Jebe and Moloko.
- We co-opted Stanley, a lawyer from the Right to Protest who resigned due to a heavy work program
- The resignation of NWG members (Dale, Veruska and Carina) had an impact on our functions as the work load for elected NWG became greater. Dale resigned to ill health and Carina had a study opportunity. Verushka also had too much workload in terms of her work responsibility

Governance:

NWG Meetings:

The tasks by the elected NWG included attending and driving consensus of the agenda of Monthly NWG. This meeting happened regularly.

Elected NWG Meetings

In between NWG meetings, at certain times the elected NWG had to meet to discuss issues on their own outside of broader NWG, especially where staff matters were concerned or whether they needed to develop a position on a matter without management interference.

Fin team meetings

We had several financial team meetings. It was agreed that all payments should be sent to the finteam to approve regularly.

The transport and catering policy was also discussed.

HR Meetings

Review of Policies and New Policies (acting appointments, handling cases of sexual harassment, Equipment policy, transport and catering policy)

We decided on procedure to follow and set out guidelines

Fiduciary responsibility included approval of advances, budgets, signing of requisitions, signing of audits, ensuring our policies is uphold.

Meeting with funders

The NWG attended more than 15 meetings with funders HBS, NPA and Raith, OSF, Foundation. Two elected NWG members also attended the Bread for the World information meeting of how there funding operations will shift and the impact on the organisation. We thank our donors that took great effort in understanding the organisational DNA and engaged us in dialogue over the challenges faced by R2K the past months. Donor relations between the governance body and the donors improved with more regular contact. The organisation was especially challenged by donors who pointed out specific risk areas.

Challenges

We have to contend with many e-mails a day and week which almost keep the elected NWG busy. Many times there are both programmatic and operational issues that need our attention. Due to contesting environment in the organisation, we took long to reach consensus on matters and any times matters were left unresolved and the list of outstanding matters became longer. Staff has expressed the fact that going forward they need more strategic guidance as they would like input from the governance structure and activists as well.

We had to contend with a National Coordinator who refused to submit a monthly action plan so we could him accountable.

The organisational culture

R2K is an organisation where the members call each other comrade. Race, class and gender issues came to the fore in the organisation and was pointed out poignantly in the Ludwig Diagnostic report. A series of programmes need to be embarked upon to deal with this as an ongoing commitment in R2K. Some of our donors has also pointed this area out as a one of the red flags for the sustainability of the organisation.

Grievances

Out of the complex structure of R2K and the different interest groups that emerged, the organisation as challenged this year with handling grievances. Grievances were lodged between management and elected NWG members, elected NWG members with management, activists against activists and

Several grievances

A mediation team was appointed to deal with this process led by Ngazini and Sine.

Comrades was willing to let go of their grievances in order to move forward, except the NC

When contestations are high and lots of pressure of the tasks at hand, there is often uncomradely behaviour among each other by elected NWG members.

Staff responded opportunistically to the challenges between management and the organisation by demanding and a 13th cheques as a compensation for the conflict in the organisation and the low staff morale.

Combatting Patriarchy

There were several cases and complaints of patriarchy in the organisation where women and leadership felt they were respected and women undermined. There is a lack of gender sensitivity and sexuality training and must be compulsory for all leadership.

Combatting patriarchy became another site of combat in R2K. There are more training needed for understanding so that issues of gender discrimination are taken seriously and are not seen as a nuisance or a 'soft'

issue in the organisation as we could see how the very issues contributed to the toxic environment

Due to a protracted process of trying to handle this situation inside the organisation the sexual harassment cases has been handed to external advisors to deal with

There had been an inconsistent application of the R2K Policies and Procedure. Flaws were also pointed out in the R2K policies and procedure document and this Summit should tighten this up

Shortcomings and Challenges

Culture of resolving grievances created a toxic environment.

We dropped the ball on several processes as there were too many issues that we had to deal with at the same time

We never held the National Coordinator properly accountable.

Some grievances were never properly handled

We did not communicate effectively to provinces, especially where there was a vacuum

On certain items on the agenda we found it difficult to reach consensus

We did not meet deadlines for many of the resolutions. We met most resolutions, but not in the time frames agreed.

We spend most of our time in meetings and the programme work did not get the attention needed

Even though the elected NWG is diverse, there was an uneven skills level which placed a greater burden to ensure we do things right.

Alois Mushambi was appointed as Acting National Coordinator from 6 July

Highlights and achievements

A 95% attendance at NWG meetings of elected NWG members meant that there was always a quorum and that the meetings could happen. I want to thank and honour the committed comrades who all have busy lives in their own jobs, their local organisations and family lives. This came out strongly

with the declaration of State of National Disaster where our elected NWG members played a role in frontline health service, feeding the poor.

This often meant doing duty for Right to Know during night times or having to get up early morning as there tasks at hand to save lives threatened by the Corona virus.

For a complex and highly technical task in doing restructuring, the activists too time to apply their minds to solve the problems thrown at us during the debates and negotiations regarding salary structure in the difficult task to balance the staff interests as well as the organisational sustainability concerns.

Tough personal setbacks was felt by board members during the lockdown period, but despite that they stayed in the governance structure and attend to the decision making processes at hand as best they could.

We were committed and started to address conflicts that seemed insurmountable

Our activists remained committed to the organisation and its aims and vision even though there were tough challenges during the year.

We thank all elected members, staff, PWG members and provincial leaders for their contribution and commitment during this year.