



Second 2018 Mid Term Review (MTR2)



Meeting Report

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1. Introduction

The Right2Know's elected leadership (National Working Group and Provincial Coordinators) and Staff met from 22-24 November 2018 at Boschendal to continue our review of the health and strategic orientation of the organisation and prepare for a revised 3-year strategic framework. The meeting was facilitated by a team from CDRA (see APPENDIX 1: Participant list).

The meeting (MTR2) was a follow-up to our annual Mid Term Review (MTR1) held on 19-21 September 2018 where we did a thorough diagnostic of the Campaign¹. The MTR2 was preceded by a series of provincial workshops where we gathered feedback on the critical questions generated at the first Mid Term Review².

The review process has been characterized by open, honest and critical self-reflection. This is in the best tradition of R2K's commitment to openness and truth-telling - we trust it will continue as we reach consensus on the future of the Campaign.

Whereas MTR1 was primarily aimed at deepening a shared understanding of our context, strategy, strengths and challenges, MTR2 sought to chart the way forward for the coming years.

This report summarises the emerging consensus (and points of divergence) from the provincial workshops and MTR2. It lays the basis for further consultation in the run-up to the 2019 Provincial and National Summits. The report does not repeat the full analysis made in the MTR1 report and is best read together with that report.

There are high levels of consensus on the analysis of our context and the challenges we face, as well as the overall strategic and programming changes required. However where the rubber hits the road, on issues of implementation (specifically structure & roles), there remains a lack of consensus. Debates can be characterised by two broad perspectives: Those proposing major changes to respond to the strategic shifts agreed, and those who believe the current structure is sufficient to drive the strategic shifts.

A summary of the major proposals/debates generated at provincial workshops and the MTR 2 are unpacked below.

2. Right2Know at a crossroads

R2K is now a well-established and respected voice for free expression and transparency in South Africa. However all Provincial workshops agreed that our shifting context, growth in our campaigning scope, staffing, and organisational complexity has led us to a crossroad. As the MTR1 noted "If we do not make fundamental changes to the Campaign programme, structure, and how we relate to each other, we risk undermining the democratic activist driven and action-oriented nature of our organisation. If not proactively addressed, this will ultimately lead to the collapse of the Campaign."

¹ See MTR1 report: <https://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/MTR-2018-Report.pdf>

² See feedback from KZN workshop: <https://goo.gl/9nuR2H>

See feedback from Gauteng workshop: <https://goo.gl/NcxhrJ>

See feedback from Western Cape workshop: <https://goo.gl/YYWz5a>

Our ever-growing list of advocacy issues has affected our ability to follow-up consistently, and to do the popular education and consensus building required to ensure we have the unity and activist capacity to advance struggles. Increasingly we are not mobilizing around core R2K issues where R2K plays a leading/coordinating role, but rather we are mobilizing in support of struggles lead by fraternal organisations.

As our staff has grown and we have seen a high turnover of elected leadership, we have lacked the capacity to induct and support this growth and yet are increasingly dependent on staffers to implement our work. We've witnessed increasing conflict, the weakening of commitment to core principles, violation of our Code of Conduct, and the degeneration in campaign structures.

At the same time, trends in global and national politics and economics are creating an increasingly challenging terrain for the Campaign. Globally we see a deepening economic and climate crisis accompanied by a rise of right wing populism and authoritarianism. Trends are echoed in the South African context and take on a specific character (see Section 3 below). While there are some signs of resistance internationally (for example the Yellow Vests in France and election of Jeremy Corbyn to lead the Labour Party in the UK) in South Africa popular democratic forces remain weak and fragmented.

3. Context: Threats to democracy

All Provincial workshops and the MTR2 affirmed the analysis of our context presented in the MTR1 report (APPENDIX 2). In a nutshell: The Ramaphosa regime's 'dark dawn' remains faithful to the ANC's commitment to a neo-liberal and unsustainable capital driven development path. Low/no levels of economic growth will continue to fuel social and political instability and conflict, creating fertile soil for the continued growth of populist authoritarianism and securitisation/repression. Increasingly campaigns to defend democratic space and to advance socio-economic and environmental social justice will need to confront corporate power directly. The civil society response to this very challenging context remains muted and uneven. The risks of division and co-option are high. Communities are largely demobilised and local struggles are relatively weak and sustained local organising is very difficult. Broad coalitions and popular campaigns will be harder to sustain.

In short, we will be required to work in an increasingly difficult terrain with increasing contradictions and the possibility of advancing our campaigns. To remain relevant to both our base constituencies and to broader society we are going to have to "up our game".

4. Campaign Purpose & Strategic Orientation

MTR1 and all the provincial workshops all confirmed that our purpose and strategic orientation remain relevant: "We are a campaign about peoples' transparency, peoples' accountability, and peoples' control. We campaign for a participatory democracy that can meet the needs of all."

Our purpose remains protecting and upholding our democratic space necessary for mobilising and organising the masses to be active citizens in order to hold government and corporate power to account.

The MTR2 addressed aspects of our Campaign strategy where we are seeing limitations, weaknesses and contradictions emerging.

4.1 A 'broad church': Uniting progressive civil society

MTR1 noted that a decline in the diversity and levels of participation in the Campaign. MTR2 and all provincial workshops reaffirmed our Mission remains "To coordinate, unify, organise and activate those who share our principles to defend and advance the right to know." We stressed the need to prioritise unity with other progressive forces - to remain relevant to both our base constituencies and to broader society through the relevance of our core issues/struggles.

We need to catalyse and unify other organisations and movements to act/struggle with, in particular unions, student, environmental & social justice organisations. We must identify and develop more equal and productive relationships with academics/researchers and associated institutions to enhance our capacities.

While there are subjective and structural reasons that mitigate against unity, we need to do more to understand the decline (and lack of) participation and take further steps to address concerns.

To maintain and deepen this unity we must remain ideologically non-sectarian and work with everyone who shares a vision of participatory democracy and justice, and democratic values (APPENDIX 3).

We must promote tolerance and diversity within R2K and guard against sectarian tendencies that attempt to divide the organisation by emphasising differences within the Campaign and advancing the narrow interests of any particular group.

We must maintain our policy of not working directly with any political party.

Critically, we must continue to confront patriarchy and create a safe space for women and non-gender conforming activists.

4.2 Orientation to local struggles

All provincial workshops and the MTR2 confirmed that key to our strategy remains orientating the R2K towards mass struggles. As the MTR1 put it: "Since our inception we have worked hard to emphasise the connections between our campaigns and the daily hardships and struggles of working class communities. We have undertaken extensive popular education, coalition building, and mobilization work. We have worked to offer practical support to local struggles to access their democratic rights to protest, access information, meaningful engagement, free expression, etc."

MTR1 noted that while community protests continue to erupt, "communities are largely demobilised and local struggles are relatively weak. High levels of poverty and unemployment, low levels of political consciousness, as well as limited organisational strategies, make sustained local organising very difficult." In this context MTR1 was concerned that "we lack the capacity to undertake the deep and long-term organising work required to strengthen local organisations" and that "for the most part we are providing broad support, but that the impact of the deep support in the few cases where it was possible, has been much more impactful."

MTR1 was also concerned that as ‘resourced outsiders’ “ we risk creating relations of ‘undemocratic dependency’ and undermining self-organisation in communities. Despite our intention to see local struggles thrive, in some cases we could be doing more harm than good.”

Provincial Workshops and MTR2 confirmed this analysis. There was agreement that we should work in more focused ways with fewer communities and that we should develop clear guidelines (or criteria) to determine who we work with and how we work:

1. Our relationship with struggles must be one of mutual respect and political solidarity that prioritises listening, dialogue, conscientisation, and action.
2. We should work in communities actively engaged in struggle with an established organisational structure (i.e organisations with an active programme/campaign that hold regular meetings to get mandates, ensure accountability etc, not dormant or passive structures). We should unite in action.
3. We should prioritise working with community organisations who share our democratic vision and values.
4. We should support organisations to walk-the-talk, practicing free expression, accountability, transparency, etc.
5. We should be wary of ‘gatekeepers’ and specifically support the organised community structure, not individualise support.
6. We should undertake visits and attend local meetings before committing to offer support.
7. We should ensure R2K advocacy focusses address issues of critical importance to communities and include opportunities for community engagement/support in our campaign strategies - then work with communities that ‘fit’ with our campaign focuses/strategies.
8. We should be very clear on what support we can offer to prevent unrealistic expectations from arising.
9. By ‘local struggles’ we should not limit ourselves to working only in working class communities. Local struggles should also refer to struggles in the workplace, on campuses, etc.

When we cannot assist a community/struggle we should attempt to refer requests for support to other more capacitated and/or relevant organisations.

4.3 Leadership Development & Popular Education

Leadership development and popular education are underdeveloped aspects of the MTR process.

Too often in the provincial workshops - and at times at MTR2 - comrades proposed ‘training’ or ‘workshops’ as a remedy to an identified strategic or organisational weakness.

There is a need for Popular Education to raise political consciousness and address the uneven understanding of our advocacy work. Communities we work with need to better understand R2K and our campaigns. We must do more popular education before mass action to avoid ‘renting-a-crowd’. Campaign activists should undergo more ‘induction’ to understand and be able to participate in our complex structures. And capacity gaps in staff and leaders - especially Provincial Coordinators elected without finance or management experience - could be addressed through training.

However, the overall MTR1 assessment of the organisation, confirmed in provincial workshops, suggests that our many years of popular education and leadership development have had a rather limited impact.

Our poor track record is in large part because of a lack of depth, focus, and follow-up. We are way too ambitious in the content we wish to cover and the stakeholders we want to engage. The result is often a 1-day workshop on one topic here, another few hours on another topic there, etc. Even when we facilitated 'schools' with more targeted participants over longer periods of time we tended to overload the content, poorly select participants, and did not sustain the intended practice of new skills.

Popular education to support our programme and leadership development to support our staff and leaders are both vital aspects of our work that we need to get right. With limited resources and a commitment to prioritise actual campaigning work we need to intensify and more consistently roll out our popular educational, leadership development, skills development, orientation/induction processes. How this is done requires more thought.

5. Campaign Focus

The MTR1 noted that “over the years we shown a strong capacity to convene broad networks to review the context and developed shared campaign goals, share and conducted research to inform strategy and advocacy, driven popular education, and mobilized a wide range of organisations and activists into various campaigns; in doing so we have made important contributions and secured important victories to advance each of the objectives above.”

However, as MTR1 noted we “have a tendency to take on too much and then lack the capacity to undertake the necessary groundwork (coalition building, research, popular education, networking, advocacy, etc.) and sustain our engagement, build on progress, and fully realise our intended results.” and agreed that “we need to be better at prioritising our campaigns and ensuring better follow-through to secure victories.”

Having reviewed our context and strategy - and confirmed our vision, mission and principles - the provincial workshops and MTR2 confirmed this assessment of our programme and considered how best to focus and structure our programme to ensure its relevance in responding to the narrowing/closing down of democratic space.

5.1 General Guidelines

We agreed our advocacy needed to have more focus and that campaigns should be inspiring, realistic, and take forward our past work.

Our strategic priorities are uniting broad progressive civil society, orienting to the working class, and engaging mass organisations and local struggles. Therefore we should prioritise advocacy around unifying issues where there is high level of need/impact on ordinary activists and communities.

Given our capacity limits we should prioritise issues where we already have a track record of winning victories as well as knowledge/expertise/networks, and the prospect of future victories.

In every area we need to develop more equal and productive relationships with academics/researchers and associated institutions – to main/enhancing our advocacy capacities.

We must expand and pay more attention to our consciousness-raising efforts. We should do more preparatory work and popular education to lay the necessary foundations before we embark on action.

Our tactical actions need to be much more closely linked to our strategic goals and we should improve and expand our monitoring and evaluation processes to track progress and review strategy/tactics.

5.2 Flagship Campaigns

We need to adopt a limited number of prioritised ‘flagship’ campaigns that enable us to focus and better sustain engagement. After provincial consultations the MTR2 identified the following potential ‘flagship’ campaigns:

1. Right to Protest:
 - a. Asserting protest rights
 - b. Expanding protest rights
 - c. Killing of activists
2. Communication Rights:
 - a. Cost of mobile networks
 - b. Access to fibre networks
 - c. Online Privacy & surveillance
3. Participatory Democracy
 - a. Meaningful engagement
 - b. Open meetings
 - c. Institutions promoting/protecting democracy

5.2.1 Right to Protest

Over the years the right to protest has emerged as an important aspect of R2K’s work as the suppression of protest is both a critical freedom of expression issue impacting activists as well as being the most visible and impactful expression of securitisation. It is the R2K issue most directly impacting local struggles and mass based organisations (including the Trade Union’s right to strike). It is an area in which we have developed significant standing and capacity over the years.

We must continue to support protestors to understand and exercise their existing rights. We must continue to challenge the state and private security when they frustrate or suppress protest. We must continue to push back on - and reform - repressive protest laws and regulations.

Our work on protest also encompasses ‘intelligence led policing’ and thus must incorporate the electronic and offline surveillance of activists.

In recent years we have seen a rise in the number of activists assassinated. In response to this alarming trend in 2018 we held a national Day of Action to Stop the Killing of Activists. The MTR2 considered whether our focus on protest needs to extend to more generalized repression - including the action on ‘non-state actors’ (thugs & assassins). The MTR2 did not reach consensus on this.

5.2.2 Free & Safe Internet for the People

Traditionally our communication rights work has focus on traditional media (ownership of radio/TV/print and journalistic freedom), however there are a number of progressive civil society organisations working on these issues and the internet is fast emerging as the dominant platform for freedom of expression and access to information for most people in South Africa.

While most people have internet access via mobile networks, there are massive injustices regarding the cost of accesses and quality of these networks. The rollout of fibre has the potential to offer fast quality internet and disrupt the dominant mobile operators - it is currently being deployed by the private sector to reproduce communication inequality.

Since R2K began campaigning on access to affordable telecommunications it has become a national issue with government and regulators all pressuring mobile operators to reduce costs of access. R2K is well established as a civil society voice in this process.

Beyond issues of cost/access, addressing privacy and mass surveillance are critical to securing an internet that is safe for use. Taking forward R2K's work on protecting personal information and challenging telecommunications surveillance is critical in this regard.

5.2.3 Participatory democracy & “meaningful” consultation.

Given the drive to focus and prioritise our campaigns, there was some debate about the future of our InfoAccess work.

There is general consensus that a narrow focus on access to information is not sufficiently compelling given the relatively progressive legal framework and very bureaucratic/technical nature of engagements. Also we have battled to develop and sustain relations with other campaigns where our interests are limited to InfoAccess aspects of broader ecological/social justice issues.

However, it was argued that we have developed important resources and partnerships through this work - and won important victories. Most importantly, even more than our work on protest, it is substantive engagements with the state and private companies that are at the centre of local struggles and mass based organisations. To maximise our relevance to these key constituencies we must consider intersecting with their work beyond a narrow focus on their protests/security or the more peripheral aspects of their access to safe airtime and internet.

As the GP workshops emphasised, while the Ramaphosa regime is ‘inclusive’ in posture, its commitment to public participation must be tested - participation must “meaningful”. Government must be able to show that affected stakeholders have been heard AND that government have considered their perspectives by either taking the perspectives on board, or giving rational reasons for rejecting the perspectives. We have done little work on this in the past, but it could be fertile ground in coming years.

In provincial workshops issues of local government and service delivery surfaced again and again - and there is a local government election set for 2020.

This focus could draw on our traditional work on transparency (accessing information, the call for open meetings, challenging corruption, supporting institutions promoting/protecting democracy, etc) where we have developed some capacities.

We could deepen our work on Open Meetings (promoting access to government meetings at local, provincial and national levels) and strengthening institutions promoting and protecting democracy (with a focus on the delivery of their mandate to communities).

Such a focus would go a long way to ensuring the relevance of the Campaign to broader struggles for socio-economic and ecological justice. It would need to be clearly framed to avoid 'mission creep', raising of unrealistic expectations, substituting and 'turf wars' with progressive organisation, and narrow 'constitutionalism'.

5.3 What would be deprioritized?

There is a high risk that the above efforts to bring greater focus to our work could amount to little if campaigns are framed so broadly that virtually any remotely R2K related issues could be rationalised as part of a flagship campaign (as has been our past culture). For this reason, considering the proposals above require additional focusing. After resolving a broad campaigning framework we need to assess the forces impacting each set of issues and identify specific priority campaign demands/victories that will hold our focus.

Further, the proposed prioritisation above should see a necessary deprioritization of other issues we have addressed in the past.

MTR1 noted that "beyond the mandated campaign priorities adopted at annual Summits, we have also demonstrated the capacity to be flexible and responsive - rallying to confront new challenges and opportunities as they emerge." The GP workshop noted that issues arise every day and there must be room for responsiveness (without raising expectations).

We will therefore continue to monitor and make ad-hoc interventions (protests, public meetings, statements, letters, etc) on number of the issues we 'de-prioritize'. These currently include the traditional media freedom and media ownership (including the public broadcaster and community media), secrecy laws, use of PAIA, etc.

We should also develop a strong referral system encouraging other organisations to take issues up.

6. On Structure & Capacity: More activism, activist control and accountability.

The MTR1, all Provincial workshops, and the MTR2 all emphasised the need for R2K to be a democratic activist-led and driven organisation with high levels of transparency and accountability. However, MTR1 noted that, "Ironically a structure intended to enable democratic control and dynamic activism at times produces the

opposite: Bloated, overly bureaucratic and inward looking collectives that are not engaged in strategic campaigning.”

There are high levels of consensus on the analysis of our context and the challenges we face, as well as the overall in strategic and programming changes required. However, when it comes to structure and capacity, there remains a significant lack of consensus on how this can best be achieved. Debates can be characterised by two broad perspectives: Those proposing major changes to respond to the strategic shifts agreed, and those who believe the current structure is sufficient to implement the strategic shifts.

This section of the report presents the proposals and debates.

6.1 Campaign Action Teams (CATs): Keeping everyone in the same room.

A central weakness identified at MTR1 was the dislocation between capacities residing in Provincial Working Groups (PWGs) and thematic Focus Groups (FGs). The MTR1 put it thus:

“When this cross-pollination is lacking, the decentralised structure has created unhealthy power dynamic where the FGs can think/speak for the Campaign and PWGs are instrumentalised as mere ‘implementers’. Conversely, at times, PWGs can take ill-informed positions that undermine and alienate FGs or fail to prioritise issues/programmes identified by FGs.

As the Campaign has grown in scope and complexity the bonds uniting different structures have weakened. In recent years we have seen significantly less overlap in PWG/FG membership. As our programme has expanded the NWG has battled to play an effective coordination role. Efforts to share information across the campaign - including publishing of reports/minutes and the production of a weekly newsletter highlight thematic developments have not had the desired impact as the quantity of communication can be overwhelming and many comrades either battle to access/read their email or are just not interested in other aspects of the Campaign. Individual activists/organisations traditionally active in FGs have become far less active - resulting in the collapse or stagnation of some FGs. Efforts to re-enrol these comrades have not received sufficient attention. Efforts to develop thematic capacity within PWGs through the establishment of provincial focus groups (and integrate these comrades into national FGs) have not been sustained.

The result - at its most dysfunctional - 3 PWGs and 4+ FGs acting in silos, unable to draw on the synergies of each other’s capacities, and all lacking the capacity to fulfil their envisaged roles in the Campaign. ”

In light of this critical reflection the MTR1 called for the consideration of “fundamental structural changes - including the scraping of PWGs and introduction of more advocacy focused and action orientated Campaign Action Teams”. There was a lot of resistance to this call at Provincial workshops where it was generally felt PWGs should remain unchanged - no alternatives were presented to address the challenge of integrating PWG an FG capacities.

MTR2 considered the question and the commission presented a detailed proposal that was debated in plenary (See diagram in APPENDIX 4). Again, there were objections to the proposal, but no alternatives were proposed. The proposal presented is as follows:

FG's have tended to exclude PWG activists and focus on very high level policy issues without considering implications for popular education, mobilisation, etc. PWGs have evolved to exclude FG activists and address an overloaded agenda seldom addressing the political content of campaigns and doing insufficient popular education and follow-up to sustain impact.

A new structure must bring traditional FG and PWG activists together into the same room with the same agenda. We're calling these Campaign Action Teams (CATs).

Different activists join R2K because they are concerned about different issues - some care primarily about repression issues like the right to protest, others about communication rights issues like the cost of airtime/data. Different CATs should be established with different thematic/campaign focuses. This will ensure a limited/focused agenda that will allow for a depth of discussion that will enable full consideration of unfolding developments, implications of R2K principles and development of policy/positions that are shaped and shared by everyone driving the relevant campaign.

This structure will enable R2K to engage our more challenging context with greater unity, drawing on the full range of capacities in our activist base. It will ensure that our campaigns are better informed by perspectives and popular education/mobilisation needs on the ground as well as enabling more organic and effective leadership development (the ongoing engagement and transfer of knowledge and experience between so called 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals).

In short it will result in a stronger more united organisation better placed to survive and thrive through the challenging years ahead.

To bring traditional FG and PWG activists together into the same room, CATs will need to be both 'national' and 'local' in nature. Each CAT will meet regularly and activists will gather in local nodes (this could be their R2K provincial office or a small town in, for example, northern KZN or Limpopo). Each meeting would begin with a national teleconference to discuss relevant political/policy development, review the previous months POA and overall strategy, and agree priorities for the coming month. Then the national teleconference would end and local collectives (Action Task Teams or ATTs) would meet to plan their POAs for the month.

This approach would have the benefits of drawing on all the capacity across the campaign and develop integrated coherent campaign strategies while still allowing local activists to conceptualize and implement action. It would also enable comrades in remote parts of KZN, GP, and WC - as well as all other provinces - to participate fully and equally in the organisation.

While the proposed CATs would break down the silos we've seen form between PWGs and between PWGs and FGs, there is a risk that new silos would form between CATs: Instead of 3 PWGs and 4+ FGs acting in silos, unable to draw on the synergies of each other's capacities we could create +-3 CATs that function as unrelated campaigns.

To address this risk the MTR2 proposed retaining geographical meetings where activists from across the CATs would gather to share their work, adopt R2K policy & strategy, review governance and hold each other and the NWG accountable. These meetings could be called Local Activist Forums (LAFs) and could take place either twice a year (to feed into the National Summits and NWG Mid Term Review) or more frequently.

Bottomline: To drive our campaigns we need to 'get the right people in the right room with the right agenda'. Rather than diminishing activism, democracy and accountability (as some comrades at Provincial workshops and the MTR2 fear) the proposed CATs and LAFs can produce holistic campaign strategies, integrate our various strengths, develop leadership, grow the organization and ensure deeper and more meaningful activism and activist control for everybody.

6.2 Criteria for Participation

Another weakness identified by the MTR1 was our open-door policy that "invites all campaign supporters into PWGs and/or FGs has resulted in bloated structures where often the majority of those present in PWG meetings or on FG email lists do not participate actively and do not involve themselves in campaign implementation."

Provincial workshops agreed this issue needed to be addressed but did not generate concrete proposals. The MTR2 proposed that, while everyone should be free to join the campaign as a supporter, participation in coordinating structures (see 6.1) should be limited to two categories of activists:

1. Activists with a mandate to represent a mass based organisation with the proven capacity to draw over 50 people to a meeting (some comrades suggested this be as high as 150 people, other comrades were concerned this would exclude organisations that cannot draw 50 people to a meeting).
2. Activists, either in their personal capacity or representing an organisation, with useful skills and the willingness to contribute these to the R2K.

Implementation of these criteria would require coordinating structures to maintain records of active members, consider new membership applications, and regularly review membership and remove individuals that are no longer actively contributing and 'mass based organisation' that are no longer mass based. It was proposed that new members would be introduced with the support of 60% of the existing structure and members should be systematically audited every year or 6 months to remove those that no longer meet the criteria.

MTR2 debated, but did not resolve whether organisational representatives and individuals should have the same 'voting power' or if these should be weighted in favour of organisational representatives.

To address concerns that some current activist would not be included in the proposed structure everyone currently active in a FG or PWG would be invited to join one or more CAT as an initial member.

6.3 Action Agendas & Governance

MTR1 noted that "PWGs have spent less time/resources on outward-looking coalition building, popular education and campaigning - and more time/energy looking inward addressing issues of their own governance, cohesion, and resource allocation and (lack of) accountability." The result has been a decline in the political and campaigning focuses of these structures, and ironically also the rise of unaccountability.

MTR2 discussed the phenomenon and proposed that the agenda of the campaign coordinating structures (CAT or PWG) be limited to its advocacy focus. They would consider (1) the political context and developments

impacting advocacy, (2) review of advocacy strategy and previous POA and (3) adopt statements and agree the upcoming POA.

The oversight of governance and operational issues (including, administration, finances, staffing, etc.) would be left to line managers and the NWG. NWG reports and minutes would continue to be shared with all activists and questions or concerns regarding these operational aspects would be raised with the NWG or at Local Activist Forums.

We would continue to elect the NWG at the National Summit (see 6.4 below). Summit delegations would be elected at Local Activist Forums in the run-up to the Summit.

6.4 The National Working Group

MTR1 raised the concern that “the process of selecting the NWG by popular election at the National Summit had resulted in the NWG having insufficient capacity to perform their legal and fiduciary responsibilities” and considered a proposal that “the Constitution be amended to ensure the NWG has necessary legal and financial skills.” The counter-view was that “this would undermine our open democratic practice, skewing power to those with more middle class skills and that the Constitution already enables the NWG to co-opt members if additional skills are required.”

GP & WC workshops both supported criteria for election into the NWG. MTR2 did not discuss this specifically but emphasised that when elected leaders we should prioritize needs, experience and understanding over popularity and expediency. New members of the NWG should specifically chose an area of preferred work and to be active within that area (avoiding the thin spread that is currently an issue). The NWG should conduct a structural/collective evaluation that parallels the term of the NWG member.

MTR1 also raised concerns that “the practice of maintaining a flat structure within the NWG (with all members equal) resulted in a lack of efficiency. It was proposed that the NWG’s efficiency could be enhanced if we had a division of labour with a Chairperson (political head), Secretary, Treasurer, etc.” The counter view was that “the Constitution allowed the NWG to appoint these positions, doing so would ‘outsource’ the power of the collective, create new hierarchies, and leave the majority of NWG members with a very passive role.” This was not discussed at provincial workshops or the MTR2.

The MTR1 also considered the proposal that NWG terms should be extended to two years to ensure more stability given the steep learning curve after election. KZN and WC workshops as well as the MTR2 supported this proposal. This would require an amendment to the Constitution.

6.5 On Staffing

MTR1 affirmed that “the Campaign requires staff with the necessary time, skill and experience to be held accountable for key tasks and core functions”. MTR2 noted that better organisation and prioritisation of staff roles and work activities is critical to responding to our shifting context.

MTR2 considered a proposal to restructure staffing in line with the CAT/LAF proposal (see 6.1 above and diagram in APPENDIX 4). The proposal was to organise programme staff into teams to support different CATs

ensuring that each team and the necessary mix of skills (popular education, mobilization, research, advocacy, media/communications). Each team would have a line manager.

We also considered a proposal to form an integrated Finance/Admin team (see detailed proposed admin roles³). Because the MTR2 could not reach consensus on broader restructuring, other staffing proposals (CAT & Finance/Admin Teams) were not fully discussed.

The MTR2 did address the senior management vacuum left by the Operations Coordinator in July. We considered the option of two senior managers (a National Coordinator and Finance/Ops Coordinator) and agreed that we required more management capacity. We agreed to appoint a Deputy National Coordinator and Finance Coordinator once job descriptions had been finalised⁴.

6.6 Provincial Coordinators

The MTR1 focused on the critical role played by elected Provincial Coordinators agreeing that “the wide ranging and critical responsibilities allocated to Coordinators were too time consuming to expect from volunteer activists. There was a strong view that we should be compensating people for fulfilling many of the Coordinator functions. In addition, concerns were also raised about how we ensure Coordinators have the necessary technical skills and experience to fulfil their responsibilities when they are elected by popular vote.”

At provincial workshops there was a mixed response with GP concluding that we should continue to elect Provincial Coordinators with full operational responsibilities; that they should be paid for their time, and that capacity weaknesses should be addressed with training. KZN concluded that Coordinators should remain responsible for programmatic leadership, but finance and staff management should move elsewhere. KZN felt that the election of Coordinators should be based on criteria and the submission of CVs. WC did not address the issue.

The challenge of GPs proposal that elected coordinators be trained to fulfill their managerial responsibilities is (1) the range of skills is expansive covering financial management, staff management and project management, (2) Coordinators are expected to take full responsibility on their first day in office and (3) R2K lacks capacity to undertake such systematic technical training and has a poor track record of leadership development generally.

While MTR2 did not discuss the issue specifically, the CAT and NWG proposals above suggests that democratically elected activists will lead on advocacy - including agreeing advocacy positions and POA - and technical operational aspects will be led by skilled/experienced line managers accountable to the NWG.

7. Resources & Incentives

7.1 On paying activists

³ Proposed admin job descriptions: <https://goo.gl/9Kuugf>

⁴ New JDs finalised: <https://goo.gl/EWbf8b>

MTR1 again considered the question of paying activists with a few comrades arguing that the Campaign should compensate activists for their time while other comrades reaffirmed the position captured in the 2017 Reflection Report: “we should not pay activists because paying activists would transform the democratic activist lead nature of R2K. It would undermine our independence/autonomy and militancy. It would drag us into a culture of opportunism and conflict. As our nature transforms we would lose donor confidence and funds would dry up. Also paying activists would dramatically increase the administrative and legal burden on the organisation - requiring more resources for these functions”.

The Gauteng workshop proposed that the need to compensate activists could be addressed by the proposed solidarity fund which intends to assist activists in situations of dire need. Western Cape argued that activists should be compensated for their contribution but could not unpack on how this would be done. MTR2 did not discuss this further; however after the MTR2 the NWG adopted the 2017 Solidarity Fund proposal⁵.

7.2 On Transport & Catering

MTR1 noted: “Paying of transport and catering can incentivise some comrades to place activities of R2K above their own community organising work” and that we are “attracting supporters who sit through entire meetings without contributing or taking tasks”.

MTR1 concluded that, “transport claims could be inflated” and resolved: “We need to be honest about our motivations and challenge signs of self-interest, opportunism and corruption in the campaign.”

Gauteng and KZN provincial workshops agreed that some activists have shown self-interest, lack of honesty and opportunism. They proposed that we should develop systems to verify actual costs and monitor claims for transportation, catering and airtime. The issue was not discussed at WC workshop or the MTR2.

7.3 Salary Scales

At MTR1 concerns were raised about the perceived high gap in the Campaigns pay scales. Provincial workshops agreed that the principle of equal pay for equal work must be respected and that the differences should be reviewed. MTR2 did not consider this matter, but the NWG has begun a full review of salaries, scales, and policy.

9. Conclusion & Way Forward

The MTR review process was able to confront a number of difficult and challenging issues impacting our work. Key issues have been unpacked and proposals made. The process of building consensus on the future of the Right2Know is well underway.

We commend all the R2K leadership, staffers and activists whose engagement in the MTR meetings and provincial workshops has reaffirmed R2K’s commitment to openness and honesty. We have had difficult

⁵ Solidarity Fund proposal: <https://goo.gl/DaXNQT>

discussions and managed to put the best interests of democracy above the many personal and sectarian interests we hold.

Regarding the way forward, this document will serve as the basis for broader consultation across the Campaign culminating in the 2019 Provincial Summits in February and the National Summit in March 2019.

The Summits will interrogate the outcomes of this reflection process and adopt a set of resolutions that place the Campaign on a clear path and firm footing to continue to fight for participatory democracy and advance the right to know in South Africa and beyond.

ENDS

APPENDIX 1: MTR2 Participant list

- **NATIONAL WORKING GROUP:** Alison Tilley, Biko Chisuvi, Carina Conradie, Cleopatra Shezi, Dale McKinley, Gcina Makhoba, Ghalib Ghalant (also WC Coordinator), Mshengu Tshabalala (also WC Coordinator), Muzi Mkhize, Ngazini Ngidi, Sinenhlanhla Manqele, & Wendy Pekeur.
- **PROVINCIAL COORDINATORS:** Thabo Maile (KZN), Daniel Dunia (KZN), Eunice Manzini (GP), Khaya Xintolo (WC), Joyce Malebu (WC).
- **STAFFERS:** Mark Weinberg (National Coordinator), Janine Julisen (National Administrator), Bongani Xizwe (Outreach Organiser), Busi Mtabane (National Communicator), Murray Hunter (Secrecy Organiser), Lazola Kati (Right to Communicate Organiser), Mluleki Marongo (InfoAccess Organiser), Sthembiso Khuluse (KZN Community Organiser), Ntombi Tshabalala (GP Community Organiser), Thami Nkosi (GP Campaigns Organiser), Nomacebo Mbayo (WC Administrator), Moeketsi Monaheng (GP Administrator) & Rowena Salo (temporary National Administrator)
- **CDRA FACILITATORS:** Desiree Paulsen & Rubert Van Blerk

APPENDIX 2: MTR1 Report

Online with Appendixes here: <https://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/MTR-2018-Report.pdf>

APPENDIX 3: R2K Vision, Mission & Principles

Our Vision

“We seek a country and a world where we all have the right to know – that is to be free to access and to share information. □ □ This right is fundamental to any democracy that is open, accountable, participatory and responsive; able to deliver the social, economic and environmental justice we need. □ □ On this foundation a society and an international community can be built in which we all live free from want, in equality and in dignity. □”

Our Mission

- To co-ordinate, unify, organise and activate those who share our principles to defend and advance the right to know.
- To struggle both for the widest possible recognition in law and policy of the right to know and for its implementation and practice in daily life.
- To root the struggle for the right to know in the struggles of communities demanding political, social, economic and environmental justice.
- To propagate our vision throughout society.
- To engage those with political and economic power where necessary.
- To act in concert and solidarity with like-minded people and organisations locally and internationally.

R2K Principles (“The Shalimar Principles”)

Preamble

We subscribe to the right to know, which is founded in the right to dignity and is realised through rights freely to 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:

Principle 1: Access to Information

All people have the right to access information, and have it equally. This right has inherent value and enables many other democratic rights.

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.

Principle 2: Free Flow of Information

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.

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.

Principle 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.

Principle 4: Accountability and Transparency

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

Principle 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.

Principle 6: Truth and 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.

Principle 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.

Principle 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.

Principle 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.

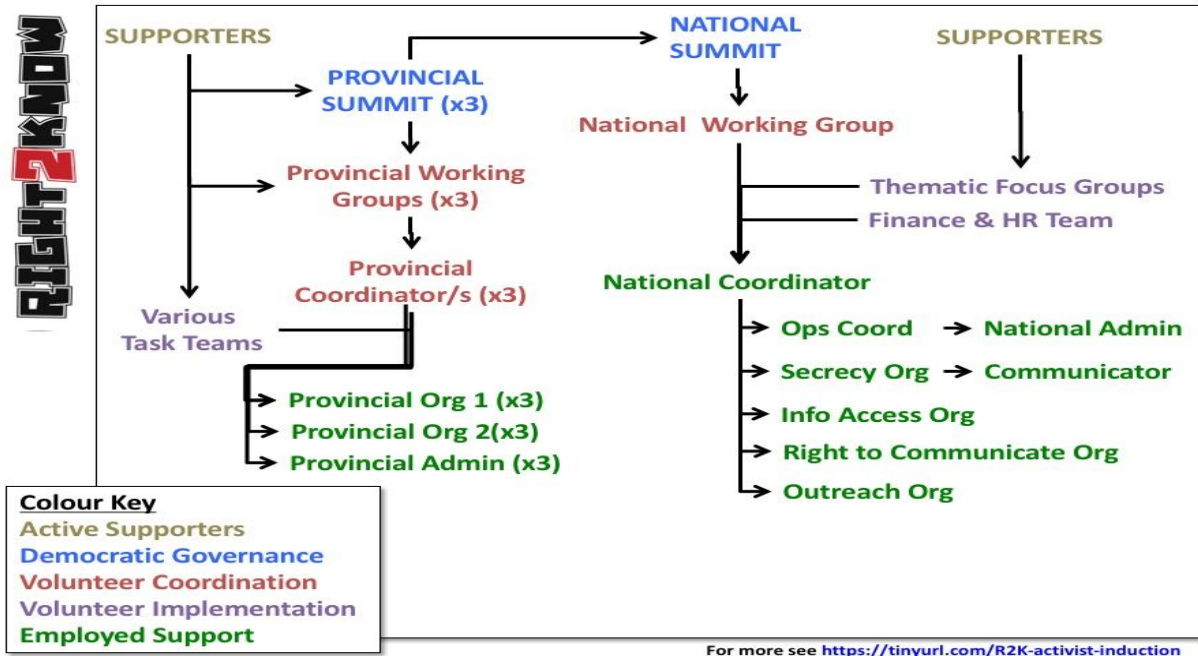
Principle 10: Solidarity

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.

ENDS

APPENDIX 4: Current & proposed new structure

Current structure:



Flipchart from MTR2:



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