



RIGHT2KNOW

2014 Mid Term Review

8 – 10 August 2014, Community House, Cape Town

Meeting Report



Introduction	2
1. Review of Campaign Focus Areas	2
1.1 Stop Secrecy	2
1.2 Access to Information	3
1.3 Right to Protest.....	4
1.4 Whistleblowers.....	4
1.5 Media Freedom & Diversity	5
1.6 Access to Telecommunications.....	5
2. Building the Right2Know	6
2.1 Expanding Beyond our Urban Nodes.....	6
2.2 Popular Education Materials	6
2.3 Capacity & Systems.....	7
2.4 National Organiser	7
2.5 Leadership School 2014	8
2.6 United Fronts and Coalitions.....	8
2.7 Finance & Budgets.....	8
3. Action List.....	9

Introduction

The Right2Know campaign National Working Group (NWG), Provincial Coordinators and staff met from 8 to 10 August 2014 in Cape Town to conduct our annual Mid Term Review.

We assessed the opportunities and threats facing the right to know in South Africa and progress made by the R2K¹ in implementing our three-year strategic framework² and 2014 National Summit Resolutions³, and charted a way forward for the Campaign.

The meeting was attended by Alison Tilley (NWG), Bongani Xezwi (GP Organiser), Carina Conradie (NWG), Dale McKinley (NWG & Gauteng Coordinator), Ghalib Galant (WC Coordinator), Hennie Van Vuuren (NWG), Jayshree Pather (Gauteng Coordinator), Janine Julisen (Administrator), Joanne Adams (KZN Organiser), John Haffner (Telecoms Convener), Julie Reid (NWG), Mark Weinberg (National Coordinator), Meshack Mbangula (NWG), Murray Hunter (Secrecy Convener), Nkosingiphile Mpanza (NWG), Nomvula Sikakane (NWG & KZN Coordinator), Roegshanda Pascoe (NWG), Siviwe Mdoda (National Organiser), Vainola Makan (WC Organiser), Vinayak Bhardwaj (NWG). Khaya Xintolo (NWG) gave his apologies.

We noted that Vinayak was stepping down from the NWG because of new employment that created a conflict of interest. We thanked him for the contribution he has made in leading the Campaign.

1. Review of Campaign Focus Areas

Overall we are satisfied that we are making good progress in implementing our resolutions and achieving our strategic objectives.

The four legs of the Campaign have been evolving organically over time and it has become clear that the Right to Protest (that has emerged from our work on secrecy and access to information) and Access to Telecommunications (that has emerged from our work on communication rights under media freedom and diversity) both require dedicated strategic attention. As a result we have reflected on six Campaign focus areas.

1.1 Stop Secrecy

The Secrecy Bill has now been sitting unsigned on the President's desk for almost a year. Until it is signed, even more draconian 1982 Apartheid secrecy law and MISS remain in place and we cannot challenge the Secrecy Bill in court. We need to re-energize this aspect of the Campaign by calling on Zuma to either "Scrap the Bill " or begin redrafting in Parliament, or sign it and send it to the Constitutional Court for review. In our messaging we must be cautious – we are not calling for him to sign it and make it law.

Our plan to mobilize and take legal action if/when the Secrecy Bill is signed, in place and ready to roll.

¹ See the R2K progress report of June 2014 here: <http://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/R2K-6-month-Narrative-Report-June-2014.pdf>

² See the 3 year strategic framework here: http://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/R2K_2013_draft_strat_frame.pdf

³ See the 2014 National Summit Resolutions here: <http://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/R2K-2014-Summit-Report-.pdf>

We must intensify our challenge to the National Key Points Act with more defiance protests & picnics at Key Points, pursuing our demand for the list of Key Points in court (set for November) and calling for a scrapping of the Act when it is reviewed in Parliament this year.

The R2K also appears to be one of the very few civil society groups engaging the intelligence agencies and related policy and oversight processes. This is important work that we must continue with a view to engaging the Intelligence Policy Review announced for this year.

Secrecy regarding political party funding is an important issue on our agenda and we missed the opportunity make it a major talking point in the run up to the 2014 General Elections. To ensure that it is a key issue in the 2016 Local Government Elections we must begin to have a strong focus on the intersection between money and politics at a municipal level now as party funding is an abstract question with little traction on the ground. Provinces must work with communities around issues of tender transparency, corruption and undue political influence.

We have been doing important public awareness raising work around the Arms Deal Commission through public meetings, pickets and publicity. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Commission is not committed to uncovering the truth. We will support the call for the inclusion of critical documents in the process and continue to assess the pros and cons of publicly declaring the process a white wash.

We need to connect with people/organizations working on energy (in particular nuclear) as the building of new power stations is likely to be the next major site of large-scale secrecy and corruption.

Our Secrecy Focus Group is functioning well and our 2014 Secret State of the Nation Report will be published soon.

1.2 Access to Information

As a Campaign we must continue to take up the 'big ticket' information access issues like the list of National Key Points, SANRAL tolling in the Western Cape, access to land, corporate secrecy in wage negotiations, the Arms Deal, secrets regarding mining, fracking and nuclear power, etc.

However there is a need to shift from mostly raising awareness about access to information to supporting community-led access to information struggles as we initially envisaged. We need to become more systematic in supporting these struggles and in documenting our work in this regard. We should work with community groups over time to build their info-access capacity and share our successes as much as possible to amplify the various struggles. By amplifying the secrecy that a community is facing we can create media attention and generate solidarity and political pressure.

While PAIA remains a useful tool we must continue to politicise access to information as a critical element of participatory democracy and demand the proactive release of information. Often struggles need information urgently and the PAIA process takes too long, frustrating and potentially expensive (although we hope the newly legislated Information Regulator will help in this regard). We need to build our own capacity to access information outside the legal framework.

The proactive release of information (open data) remains a critical area of this work.

We will monitor and engage in the process of appointing the Information Regulator. If a critical and independent person gets this position it could become as important as the Public Protector.

We also need to explicitly link information access to other campaign focus areas like telecommunications, secrecy, etc.

There is a need for various Focus Groups to lead the fight for access to information on different fronts, from the various 'big ticket' issues to local community issues. The National Organizer has an important role to play on coordinating this work.

1.3 Right to Protest

Our work Right to Protest continues to be a central focus amongst grassroots activists who experience ongoing harassment from police and municipalities who seem intent on using the Regulations of Gatherings Act (RGA) as a means to frustrate rather than enable the freedom of assembly. Beyond the RGA we see municipalities putting a range of additional constraints on our right to gather.

Our popular education workshops and publications have been very successful and there are calls for more workshops in other areas – in particular outside the large metros. We are also working with a network of organizations to set up a 24-hour hotline that activists can call to get advice and referrals.

Beyond our current legal guide to the RGA we need to develop a practical activist guide in the form of a tip sheet pamphlet.

We must also engage the police and call on them to re-educate their members – we will run workshops in the RGA for their members if necessary.

When we decide to undertake an unprotected protest we must always ensure all participants are aware of the risks and are willing to take these. We also need to start recording protests to ensure we do not only rely on police evidence should a conflict emerge.

We also need to establish if the network of organizations looking at protesting rights will serve as a R2K Focus Group and how we related to the FXI which has a Freedom of Expression Network doing similar work to the Campaign.

1.4 Whistleblowers

Our work on promoting and defending whistleblowers has developed from a largely abstract level looking at the broad enabling environment to a more practical level of supporting various whistleblowers on the ground.

On the policy front the amendments to the Protected Disclosures Act have been tabled and R2K has made a submission. We will continue to engage this process.

The Right2Know Whistleblower Calendar has proved to be an excellent resource for prompting whistleblowers. Despite the challenges in producing the calendar it must continue in 2014/15. Given the large amount of time and effort required to develop the calendar we are committed to finding additional capacity to help with this process.

As we become more effective in communicating our support for whistleblowers we receive increasing requests for support. We need to be realistic as to what we can do and what we cannot. While there are a number of legal and procedural guides available for whistleblowers, Right2Know should develop a political guide that spells out the real risks and give appropriate guidance. In addition we need to develop a practical referral guide (a R2K internal protocol) for Campaign activists as well as a network lawyers that will accept R2K referrals.

We also need to work more directly with unions to promote whistleblowing. Local government could be a focus of our whistleblowing work given the link to local communities and the low number of clean audits taking place.

We must also be cautious and do due diligence when engaging people who claim to be whistleblowers. They may well have other motives and not make a full disclosure. There is a risk this could damage the credibility of the Campaign.

Our Whistleblower Focus Group needs to become more active in supporting the work of the Campaign.

1.5 Media Freedom & Diversity

Editorial independence at the SABC and the migration to digital television have emerged as our priority areas of focus. We must emphasize the commercialization of all communications as a cross cutting theme. Of particular concern is the cost of set top boxes that everyone will need to access digital TV. We will campaign for free set top boxes to ensure no one is excluded from digital TV.

Our work around diversity of media ownership has not received sufficient attention. We must problematize the dominant print media houses and DSTV's dominance in broadcasting. Our engagement with community media is taking place at a provincial level but this requires greater synergy across provinces to share experiences and celebrate victories. This work must extend to advocating for a community media grant.

Our work on media freedom and diversity has been largely in response to acts of censorship and engaging in government policy processes. We need to find ways to be more proactive and frame the issues on our own terms.

We will hold a National Day of Action commemorating Black Wednesday (19 October 1977) and highlighting issues of editorial independence, media ownership, and access to telecommunications. This will include popular education leading up to mobilization in all provinces. As per our National Summit Resolution we will also become more active in the campaign to screen *Miners Shot Down* on the SABC.

The ICT Policy Review process appears to have collapsed with the introduction of separate ministries for broadcasting and telecommunications. There were a number of critical policy issues on the Review agenda and we will continue to monitor the policy terrain and make necessary interventions.

Given the ambitious scope of this work the capacity of our MFD Focus Group remains a concern. We must bring in activists from provinces beyond Gauteng and consider paying someone to coordinate this work. We will continue to work closely with the SOS Support Public Broadcasting Campaign on the understanding that they are in support of the campaign for free set top boxes.

1.6 Access to Telecommunications

We remain committed to building a campaign for decommodified telecommunications as a basic human right. While our current focus is on the cost of voice, we are laying the basis with research and the production of popular education material for a campaign on access to free high-speed internet infrastructure in the coming years.

As noted above, the ICT Policy Review process that included critical telecoms policy questions appears to have collapsed with the introduction of separate ministries for broadcasting and telecommunications.

We will continue to monitor legislation and regulation - in particular the current regulation of interconnection fees to ensure cost reductions are passed on to users.

There is a need to focus now on the current advertising war where phone companies are promising considerable reduced airtime rates, but these only apply to new customers. Most users are still on prepaid and post paid contracts charging much higher rates. We must demand that the new rates are extended to everyone. We will also take up the issue of expiring air time on a smaller scale that initially envisaged.

While we will focus on winning concrete concessions for telecoms users we will take up these demands under the call for free services. We will complete our research into the lived cost of communication and alternatives to privatized telecom provision to underpin our call for free services.

2. Building the Right2Know

2.1 Expanding Beyond our Urban Nodes

Our goal is for R2K to become a truly 'national' campaign. A critical challenge emerging from our 3rd National Summit in Durban remains how to build a sustainable Campaign presence in provinces beyond KZN Gauteng and the Western Cape. We have accumulated experience of how challenging this is in the past 3 years. We use a mixed bag of strategies to work with established popular organizations and respond to their priorities and needs.

Our work around the right to protest could be a useful entry point as the abuse of this right is prevalent in small towns and rural areas. As the Right2KnowCampaign we are well placed to raise awareness of abuses and offer solidarity. The NUMSA led 'United Front' process may also hold opportunities to build in new areas.

We noted the risk of setting up structures before rooting the campaign in real struggles. We want to connect and support activism and not build bureaucracies that frustrate activism.

We agreed to continue experimenting with approaches to expanding our reach and review these efforts to identify effective approaches. To this end each Province will aim to establish a sustainable presence in two areas beyond our current urban nodes before December 2014.

We noted that this would put additional strain on already stretched Provincial capacity. We agreed that the new National Organizer would play a central role in driving this expansion.

2.2 Popular Education Materials

Developing successful popular education material is a complex process involving research, developing content in accessible language, deciding on a medium, possible translation, and technical production. All of these rely on scarce skills and we have been relying on those inside the campaign to do most of this free of charge.

While the Campaign has produced a range of effective popular education materials in the past, we acknowledge that this is a very resource intensive aspect of our work where at times we have failed to meet our ambitious targets.

Moving forward – and given the health state of our finances – we should consider bring in capacity where appropriate to develop the following priority materials:

- A pamphlet on the Secrecy Bill
- A pamphlet on the national key points
- An activist guide and pamphlet on DDT
- An activist guide and pamphlet on Internet Access and Data
- A pamphlet on Housing, and what information to ask for.
- A guide on how to do you use access to information at a local level for local struggles
- The 2015 Whistleblower calendar
- A mobi site to support activists
- An online course on broader contextual issues

We also noted that the Campaign has produced most of our material in a printed format. We must explore using audio and video formats including working with community radio as a distribution mechanism. To this end we will explore the feasibility of producing “Discussions on a Disc” and a series of pod casts that will be placed on community radio.

2.3 Capacity & Systems

We noted the improvements in the Campaigns administrative, financial and HR systems, including the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive R2K Policy Manual.

We have completed our second round of staff appraisals and there are no major concerns to address. Our plan to address the training needs of staff is being implemented.

The role of the R2K Communicator was conceptualized as an internship, however it is clear that this is fulfilling a critical function for the Campaign and the current incumbent is qualified to do the job. Therefore we agreed to make the position full time, dependent on available funding, when the internship expires. The role of the Communicator needs to be documented to clarify expectations and guide other sections of the campaign on the support they should expect.

We noted that National Focus Groups that had dedicated coordinating capacity are performing better than those that are entirely driven by activists where work is undertaken on a stop/start basis. We agreed that Focus Groups should identify their capacity gaps and that we should strive to allocate funds to pay for additional capacity where needed.

We considered separating the National and Western Cape offices but decided the current arrangement was working well and would be monitored. Gauteng and KZN need to keep a close watch on whether National Office is serving them as required. The office space is currently sufficient but requires an additional phone line.

Our financial systems are now functioning smoothly with regularly monthly reports, a complete set of clean audits, and a systematic keeping of records.

Our programmatic record keeping needs to improve. This must include the e-filing of campaign documents and the maintaining of a Campaign archive.

2.4 National Organiser

A highlight of the meeting was welcoming Siviwe Mdoda as our new National Organizer. He is the first person to hold this critical position full time and we identified specific expectations of the role of the National Organiser in the coming period:

- 60% of his time should be spent supporting Provinces and 30% supporting focus groups.
- Have a national presence and spend at least one week a month in Provinces other than the Western Cape (where he is based).
- Attend all PWG meetings to get a sense of what provinces are doing
- Actively support Provinces to move beyond their urban nodes.
- Ensure the sharing of best practice between various campaign structures
- Ensure greater synergy between Provinces and National Focus Groups
- Undertake a three-month probation with monthly reports.

2.5 Leadership School 2014

We reflected on the 2013 Leadership School and decided that the 2014 R2K Leadership School will be smaller and more focused than last years' School. This will allow us to give more individual attention to participants and enable a more participatory and experiential approach to learning. The school will take place over 2 months and will comprise two 4 day training modules with a month long 'practice session' in between the modules where participants will return home to practice and integrate their leanings.

Critically the School must not be seen as stand-alone training, it must be completely integrated into the building of the existing operational capacity of the Campaign. Selection of participants in critical and Provinces must choose people with a proven commitment to working in the Campaign that meet the minimum entrance criteria we will develop.

We considered a proposal to hold two Schools this year one focusing on communication and one on mobilization, each with 12 participants (4 per province). We decided to hold only one School for 2014 that should begin in September and conclude in November. An outline of the proposed school including entry criteria will be sent to Provinces shortly.

2.6 United Fronts and Coalitions

We have been pursuing our 2014 National Summit resolution to engage constructively in initiatives to build progressive coalitions and fronts. Reviewing this work we agreed that the NUMSA-initiated United Front is the process that Provinces have been most engaged in and is the process that currently holds the most promise.

We noted the concern that some see the United Front process as one that will lead to the launch of a political party, as well as the involvement of some political parties in the exploratory process. Right2Know is committed to building fronts and coalitions of civil society that strive to coordinate related struggles on the ground. Our supporters identify with a range of political parties and to maintain our unity we will withdraw from any process that has a party political agenda or recognizes the formal participation of political parties.

There are also opportunities to build broader coalitions around various R2K focus issues including the SANRAL tolling in the Western Cape, environmental issues like fracking and service delivery issues including municipal expenditure.

2.7 Finance & Budgets

For the first time in the Campaign's history we have successfully raised all the funds for our 2014 budget and have a number of multi-year donor contracts that run into 2015 and beyond. This provides us with a great deal of security and stability to undertake our work.

Considering the 2014 spending-to-date and projections we noted a overspend on auditing due to under budgeting donor requirements. This will be corrected in the 2015 budget. There is also overspending on equipment because we purchased data projectors and PA systems for Provinces.

There is currently under spending on popular education, mobilization, and communications due in part to cash flow challenges earlier in the year. The work planned for the remainder of the year (including working beyond our urban nodes, the work of the new National Organizer, and the production of popular education material) should address this under spending.

Staff raised the concern that there is a discrepancy between the salaries of Provincial Organizers and other positions. We will benchmark these salaries, as well as that of the Communicator, against fraternal organizations and consider making necessary adjustments. We noted that in 2013 the National Coordinator had accepted a R5000 reduction in pay to address cash flow constraints and agreed that his salary would be increased in line with the initial rate.

We agreed to work with the current 2014 budget to track expenditure for the coming months and only adopt a 2015 budget once we have a clear sense of our actual costs of implementing our programme and new salary structure.

3. Action List

The meeting adopted the following list of tasks for the coming period:

SECRECY	WHO	BY WHEN
Building on recent success of accessing the JSCI reports in engaging intelligence agencies	Secrecy FG	Ongoing
Consolidate the work on NKPs - more picnics & pickets	Provinces	ongoing
continue problematizing the Arms Deal commission	secrecy FG	ongoing
Engage Parliamentary Review of Intelligence Policy	secrecy FG	ongoing
Monitor Parliamentary review of Key Points	secrecy FG	ongoing
focus on money and polices in local government tendering processes	Provinces	ongoing
Hold meetings with groups that are tracking the nuclear deal process	Gauteng	ongoing
pursue NKPA legal action	Murray	November
publish Secret State of the Nation Report	Murray	august
Prepare Mobalisation for POSIB signing	Provinces	October
Sign it or sink it – Secrecy Bill messaging	secrecy FG	October
RIGHT TO PROTEST	WHO	BY WHEN
Constitute R2P FG	R2P FG	September
A right to protest poster, which can be used as a training tool.	R2P FG	November
Build up referral legal database – 4 names per province	KZN & WC	October
Pamphlet for community activists –revisiting the “rules of engagement”	R2P FG	November
Set up a 24 hotline	R2P FG	Waiting funding

Workshops of Gatherings Act – include SAPS	Provinces	Ongoing
INFO ACCESS	WHO	BY WHEN
A pamphlet on Housing, and what information to ask for.	tbc	tbc
A guide on how to do you use access to information at a local level to meet local struggles	tbc	tbc
MEDIA FREEDOM DIVERSITY	WHO	BY WHEN
Activist Guide on DTT	Jay	September
Advocating for a community media grant	MFD	October
Broadening the focus group to include activists outside Gauteng	MFD/Province	Ongoing
Campaign to screen Miners Shot Down	MFD/Province	Ongoing
National day of Action activity	MFD/Province	October
Pamphlet on DITTO	Jay	September
Provinces to connect with community media	Provinces	On-going
Stronger coordination for the MFD leg of R2K	MFD	September
Workshops on DTT	Julie, Jayshree, Sekoetlane	Ongoing
TELECOMS	WHO	BY WHEN
Campaign for free/ drastic reduction of call rates in 2014 -Radicalising Vula Ma Connexion	VMC FG	Ongoing
Campaign for Wifi to be a free municipal service in 2015	VMC FG	2015
Conducting research on alternatives to commercialization	John	October
Convene focus group	John	September
Do a smaller “stolen airtime “complaint	John	October
Preparing and submitting complaint to Consumer Commissioner	John	November
Research & write Activist Guide to Broadband & Data	John	November
Writing Pamphlet on communication cost & Access	John	November
WHISTELBOWERS	WHO	BY WHEN
Develop list of lawyers for referral	Alison	October
develop practical referral guide for Campaign activists	Alison	done
Developing a political guide to WB	Alison	October
Highlight stories of 4 women WBs	WC WG	August
Monitor the PDA Amendments in Parliament	WB-FIG	on-going
Reactivate the focus group	WB-FIG	on-going
Work on producing 2015 calendar	Busi	November
	Busi & WB-FG	November
BUILDING THE R2K	WHO	BY WHEN
Develop sustainable presence in two notes outside of our urban centres	Provinces	December
Report on expanding beyond urban nodes	Siviwe	January
A mobi site to support activists	Mark	August
Online course on broader contextual issues	Dale/Julie	October
Explore feasibility of discussion on a disc	Mark/Busi	October

Develop podcasts of community radio	Busi	October
Implement staff training programme	Mark	On-going
3 month probation of National Organiser	Mark	October
Make Communicator a full time position	Mark	January
Get additional phone line	Janine	September
Document on role of communicator	Busi/Mark	August
Develop and maintain e-filing archive for programme documents	Janine	October
Identify the need for paid capacity in focus groups	focus groups	November
Benchmark organdie and communicator salaries	mark	October
Hold 2014 leadership school	School Team	Sept - Nov

ENDS