

About Putting 'People' in People's Parliament project and Key lessons learnt

Sam Waterhouse, coordinator

Dullah Omar Institute | Putting People in People's Parliament



Who and what is 'PPiPP'?

- Co-applicants – five organisations – Academic/NGO



- Partners

- In total we worked closely with 44 people from 23 Organisations
- Changes over time
- End of last year still connected to and working with 29 people from 19 Organisations
- C19 really affected how much capacity we all had.... Have....

- CSO networks

- We also brought information and some capacity processes into CSO alliances we work in

- Donors over the four years:





Partners

Eastern Cape

- Adelaide Advice Office
- Berlin Advice Centre
- Care Alicedale
- Dordrecht Legal Advice Community Development Agency
- Entlago Primary Agricultural Co-op
- Flagstaff Advice Office
- Hershel Legal Advice
- Interchurch Local Development Agency
- Masiphumelele LDA
- Mqanduli Advice Office
- PSJ Advice Office

- Qunu Community Advice Office
- Siyanakekela LDA
- Social Change Assistance Trust
- Tyinira Rural Advice Office
- Zanoncedo Empowerment Centre (ZEC)

Western Cape

- Cederburg Matzikama AIDS Network
- Equal Education Law Centre
- Right2Know Campaign
- Social Change Assistance Trust
- Social Justice Coalition
- Witzenberg Rural Development Centre
- Women on Farms Project

PPiPP in context

- Took place within a longer timeline of actions by Parliament Watch (ParlyWatch) since 2014
- And coordinated actions with a wide range of CSOs since the *People's Power, People's Parliament Conference* in 2012.

PEOPLE'S POWER PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT

A Civil Society Conference on South Africa's Legislatures

What happens in Parliament [must be] located within the context of power globally... unless we

My area of concern is making sure that we as the people are being listened to, and that parliament needs to remain to

PARLIAMENT WATCH



2018 SCORECARD ON PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE

Introduction

National Parliament recorded more than 1 400 committee meetings in 2018 that tackled various issues of national importance. Parliament Watch's scorecard zooms in on four case studies. Three of which span committee meetings of the Portfolio Committees in the National Assembly namely: The Portfolio Committee on Social Development, specifically pertaining to challenges in the Social Security Agency (SASSA); the Portfolio Committee on Police's deliberations on the allocation of police resources; and the Portfolio Committee on Communications' focus on the ongoing challenges at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The fourth case study provides observations and scoring from monitoring committees in the Eastern Cape Legislature.

Section 59 of the Constitution states that the National Assembly must facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the Assembly and its committees, and that it must conduct its work in an open manner and hold its sittings, and the sittings of its committees, in public. Section 118 imposes the same obligations on provincial legislatures. It is within this context that Parliament Watch monitored selected committees in the National Assembly and the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature and to a lesser extent the Western Cape Provincial Legislature during 2018 using a framework of four thematic areas: access and openness; responsiveness to the public; independence and oversight; and general effectiveness. This scorecard rates committees' performance across these three case studies with a five-point score. In the scoring we have used 1 equals a fail, 2 equals poor, 3 equals fair, 4 equals good and 5 equals excellent. Parliament Watch members acknowledge that their assessment is based on subjective analysis and have attempted to mitigate this by collectively agreeing on the scoring subsequent to debate and collective analysis. Opinions and analysis reflected in the Scorecard are supported by quotes from monitors.



Why we did it: Claiming #OurLegislatures

- **The constitutional intention is that the executive is accountable to the public via the legislatures.**
- **The law making, oversight and accountability functions should be directed by, their core purpose – to ensure government that is based on the will of the people,** by representing the public and acting as forums for public consideration of *issues*
- **legislatures are there to serve the constitutional objective of addressing the deep inequality and discriminations against the majority of people in South African society.**
- **We Go beyond the framing of government as having ‘the three branches’ – the Legislatures, Executive and Courts – expand this to include understandings of ‘publics’**

Doctors for Life (2006)

- “The participation by the public on a **continuous basis** provides vitality to the functioning of representative democracy. It encourages citizens of the country to be **actively involved in public affairs, identify themselves with the institutions of government** and become familiar with the laws as they are made. **It enhances the civic dignity of those who participate by enabling their voices to be heard** and taken account of. It promotes a spirit of democratic and pluralistic accommodation calculated to produce laws that are likely to be widely accepted and effective in practice. ... Finally, **because of its open and public character it acts as a counterweight to secret lobbying and influence peddling.**”

UDM v Speaker of the National Assembly and others (2017)

- *“Knowing that it is not practical for all fifty five million of us to assume governance responsibilities and function effectively in these three arms of the State and its organs, “we the people” **designated messengers or servants to run our constitutional errands for the common good of us all.** These errands can only be run successfully by people who are unwaveringly **loyal to the core constitutional values of accountability, responsiveness and openness.** And this would explain why all have to swear obedience to the Constitution before the assumption of office.*
- *... Meaning, in the event of conflict between upholding constitutional values and party loyalty, **their irrevocable undertaking to in effect serve the people and do only what is in their best interests must prevail.**?*

What we did

- Based on experience wanted to expand on 'the usual suspects' of who has access to and engagements with legislatures.
- Test - can this system be made to work for people who are not in larger, national, urban-based NGOs? Organisations that don't have 'Parliamentary desks'?
- The project sought to **increase engagements by CSOs and activists in our networks**
- **Focus on National Parliament and to ECPL and WCPP**
- **Extended some activities to all nine PLs**
- Various levels of success in the outcomes, **both the ECPL and WCPP leadership were receptive to our interventions.**
- Starting point was that despite the weaknesses and deep failures in oversight and accountability, **the intended role of legislatures is worth fighting for in our constitutional democracy**
 - This is a question we keep checking in on

What we did

- The project worked in four areas
 - Our emphasis was on interactions relating to public finance
1. Information
 - Foundational to the ideals of participatory democracy, pre-cursor to engagement
 - Legislatures and CSO investments have increased reach
 - But this is still fraught with barriers and deepened inequality
 - PMG committee meetings records enable CSO engagements, but only in WC and Parli
 2. Relationships, networks, capacity, practical support, and collective advocacy strategy
 - To share expertise
 - To invest in going beyond the 'usual suspects'
 3. Research
 - Emphasised systems and structural issues with the legislatures
 - Fiscal and Budget Oversight, Accessibility of information, Impact of C19 move online, National Budgets and MTBPS analyses, Education spending

What we did

4. Advocacy and engagement

- Attempted different approaches
 - Written and oral submissions, open letters, media
 - Constituency offices
 - Taking the Legislatures to the People
- Traditional written and oral submissions seemed to have most purchase, could be followed up
 - but their impact and influence remains opaque
 - They favour people who have the equipment and training to draft complex statements
- Watching briefs – monitoring committees to inform organisational advocacy strategies
- Constituency offices were a dead end
- TTLTP could not proceed under C19

No single story

- PPiPP brought a **diverse range of organisations and activists together.**
- The diversity of contexts, geography, and resources
- Different partners had **very different experiences of accessing and engaging with legislatures, and different sense of influence**
- The legislatures and people in them also create conditions for vastly different experiences.
- To get 'people' need other strategies, models and investments to ensure emphasis is on engagements with the people who are facing the highest levels of exclusion
- Utilise all the tech, but make sure it is free
- Resourced CSOs facilitate and fulfil some roles of the legislatures – despite legislatures having resources for this
- NGOs become a 'bridge' this has inherent problems and requires accountability

A Wedge in Parliament's Door

Putting the 'People' in People's Parliament

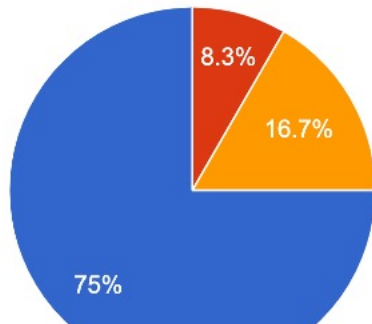
A Case Study

November 2021



Was it worth it to spend your time and energy on public participation?

Responses



- Yes
- No
- Not sure



Wedge in Parliament's door

BY STAFF REPORTER ON OCTOBER 30, 2019

NEWS POLITICS

A first-of-its-kind meeting aimed at making provincial parliaments more inclusive and transparent saw the Speaker of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, Helen Sauls-August, meet face to face with civil society organisations on Tuesday 15 October. Sauls-August was participating in *Putting the People in the People's Parliament* – a project hosted by a collective of organisations.

Western Cape's State of the P... Address will be more show the substance – ANC

By Mwangi Githahu Feb 16, 2021



OUR WEEKEND
Helen Sauls-August ready for th Bhisho hot seat
I'll take it in my stride,' says newly elected legislature speaker who wants respect

DAILY MAVERICK

SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

SONA2018: Parliament sets stage for the unnamed 'head of state' to address the nation

Shelters for abused women protest outside Parliament

More funds needed to implement the recommendations of the Commission for Gender Equality

23 July 2019 | By Candy Chan
Brief | Cape Town

Equal Education pickets outside Eastern Cape legislature over bad state of schools

news24 Mooli Mngadi, News24

BusinessDay
NATIONAL POLITICS ELECTIONS COMPANIES ECONOMY BUSINESS

OPINION
Gauteng legislature's draft money bills act is riddled with flaws

Decision-making over public finance in SA's most economically important province could be hit if ANC loses majority

25 MARCH 2019 - 05:02 BY SEAN MFUNDA KULLER

GroundUp

TOPICS ABOUT DONATE

Farm workers march to Parliament demanding moratorium on evictions

Call for President Cyril Ramaphosa to keep promise he made in 2014

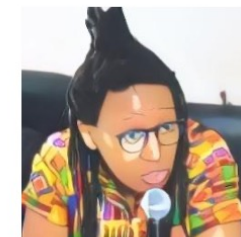
20 March 2019 | By Ashraf Hendricks

Brief | Western Cape

Concepts and made space to explain their meaning or origin. The explainer (x-plane) image:



viewpoints on different issues in relation to public participation the booklet there are comments by the critical thinker. She stions that will help readers to think more. The critical thinker¹



“They must come to us! We don’t want to go to stand outside there with the memorandum. They must come to our meetings, assist. Listen. Come see what we are doing.” Janine June 2021

For us, first of all, this thing of holding legislatures accountable, is useful, it is a useful tool, but we need it to be more visible, to put this participation for democracy in a reality. Do we have resources? It is a need for us as civil society to take action. Phumeza June 2021

Looking back to when we started – access and openness was very difficult, this has improved. if we look at the victories. Public protector, Small victories - all contributions to something bigger. We keep on pushing. Then the advocacy will bear fruits. Norma June 2021

“our absolute goal is that Parliament must be accessible to the people.” Nobuzwe June 2021

IN MEMORY OF MR SEKUMPANA SHABALALA AND MRS JENNY NKALA

