



The Democracy Development Programme Annual Report

November 2008

An inclusive society is one in which all can speak – and be assured that they will be heard (Steven Friedman, 2007)

Introduction

Despite the xenophobic related violence that gripped the country in the first part of the year and the ubiquitous discontent about the disbandment of the Scorpions, 2008 will undoubtedly be remembered for the post-Polokwane political tensions in the ANC between supporters of the current ANC President, Mr. Jacob Zuma, and the former President of the Republic, Mr. Thabo Mbeki. The tensions were manifested, inter alia, by the sacking of pro-Mbeki premiers and ANC provincial chairpersons, a litany of bellicose statements in the name of Jacob Zuma, and slurs against certain judges. The recent judgment by the honourable Judge Chris Nicholson on the NPA's decision to recharge Jacob Zuma has fanned the unsavoury environment inside the ruling party. His inferences of a political vendetta by Mbeki and members of his Executive against Zuma have fuelled the recalling of Mbeki by the ANC's National Executive Committee. This move by the NEC has lifted the lid from the factional battle inside the ruling party, forcing it into the open, and has sparked a mass exodus by members of Mbeki's Executive and resignations from the party by some key players in the Mbeki camp.

Since Mbeki's recalling we have witnessed relentless vitriol between senior members of the ANC's present incumbents and some of those who were defeated in Polokwane, like Mosiuoa Lekota and company. Both sides are using the name of democracy to legitimate their claims/arguments. For example, those within the victorious faction have accused the dissidents for not being able to accept the democratic outcomes of Polokwane, whilst Lekota has slated the Zuma camp for threatening a key principle of our constitutional democracy. **However, the jury is out whether the political wrangle between the party incumbents and the dissident group is genuinely about democracy or simply narrow power interest.**

From an outsider's perspective, the political imbroglio inside the ANC does allow us to reflect on our understanding of politics. It exposes one of the glaring limitations of party

politics, which is that the jockeying for power and positions by those at the centre invariably eclipses the majority interests of the rank and file. This is because most parties tend to privilege representation over participation – the rules over the ruled. South Africa needs a new style of doing politics that transcend the constraints of the party system and that is grounded in the daily realities of ordinary people. This new political practice has to be underpinned by the values of equality, popular democracy and solidarity, and has to draw on the innovative political practices of people.

Hence, as the DDP, one of our goals for the New-Year is to engage and work closely with a wide range of grassroots organisations to stimulate *a rethink* about the practice of democratic politics in South Africa. In pursuance of this objective, we will use our civil society forums and interactions with a wide network of civil society actors in the province to profile and heighten this discourse.

Matters arising from the Board meeting of the 13th of November 2007

The Board identified two issues that I was tasked to address. The first relates to the DDP's involvement in the *local economic development projects* of municipalities. Our efforts to get involve in the LED projects of municipalities have been dogged by several challenges, viz,

- funding constraints as participation in LED projects falls outside the scope of our mandate;
- a glaring lack of capacity within municipalities to galvanise higher levels of business support for LED projects;
- the funding woes of municipalities which impinge on their capacity to initiate LED projects;
- political interferences and a lack of transparency.

However, in pursuance of our involvement in LED projects, we have initiated a series of discussions with several municipalities in the uMkhanyakude and Zululand areas in order to improve our working relations with local authorities. We support the capacity building programmes of municipalities, especially to enhance their capacity to engage local businesses regarding employment creation and to increase their revenue support. In addition, our research unit has been assigned to cast around for potential funders and collaborators-this is work in progress. Sadly, we had no tangible success thus far, and therefore will have to revise our strategies at our final Board meeting.

Secondly, the Board decided that we need to explore opportunities to broaden our **funding base** in order not to rely on KAS alone for core funding. We had considerable success in this regard. The Charles Stuart Mott Foundation is currently funding some of our participatory initiatives in municipalities. We have also initiated talks with both the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Foundation. In addition, we are engaging several

civil society organisations in the province to join as a consortium in a bid for a set of provincial projects.

Brief update of DDP activities

Several new developments have emerged in the organisations that have affected our work over the past six months.

1. DDP Cape Town office

We have recently appointed a highly competent programme manager, Ms. Vanja Karth, to coordinate our activities in Cape Town. Ms. Karth worked for the Harold Wolpe Trust as programme manager. She is linked to a large civil society network in the city region and considerable knowledge and experience of civil society processes.

To date, she has successfully coordinated an array of activities, including

- ✘ a seminar on the political economy of Cape Town;
- ✘ a public forum on the state of democracy;
- ✘ a political party workshop for the DA;
- ✘ a voter education training workshop, and
- ✘ a public forum on the link between service delivery and participation in Kayalitsha

2. DDP research programme

We have also appointed a new research coordinator, Mr. Ibrahim Steyn, to manage the activities of our research programme. Mr. Steyn worked for the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) as a researcher. He is currently doing his PhD thesis on participatory governance with the School of Government at the University of the Western Cape. Ibrahim has brought fresh insights to our work, especially on issues of democracy, participatory governance, citizenship participation, etc.

His first assignment was to repurpose the focus of our research programme with a view to creating an integral role for research in the scope of our work – details of the programme are available on our website (www.ddp.org.za).

To date, he has produced four research papers on the following topics:

- Democratic governance in Africa;

- A framework for inclusive democratic governance in Africa;
- Participatory local governance in South Africa;
- Rethinking the conception of civil society

In addition, he prepared copious presentations and policy inputs for several conferences and participatory processes, inter alia:

- the Fifth World Assembly of the Movement for Democracy;
- Colloquium on Indigenous Knowledge Systems that was hosted in Ghana;
- the Provincial and Local Government consultative process on the local government White Paper;
- the Logo-link conference on civil society participation in local governance, and
- the relationship of civil society with democracy in South Africa

On the advocacy front, he has coordinated a successful seminar on the Kerala democratic decentralisation model. The seminar was graced with the presence of Dr. Thomas Isaacs, the Minister of Finance of Kerala. He also conducted a workshop to draw inputs from critical thinkers – academics and researchers - on the relationship between race, democracy and citizenship. In addition, he authored newspaper articles on race and democracy that can also be viewed on our website.

3. Political forums

The political forums are coordinated by our research programme. It is a space of participation for representatives of civil society and political society to engage in topical socio-political issues. To this end, we were able to draw on several pre-eminent experts to lead the discussions at all our forums for 2008. And they were all well attended by an agglomerate of civil society and political society actors – see *annexure (A)* for an evaluation of our forum attendances. Briefing notes of all forums are available on our website (www.ddp.org.za). Incidentally, we have recently established a forum blog on our website where members of the public could posit comments and observations on any given topic, before and after a particular forum.

In 2008, we have convened seven forums to discuss the following topics:

- **The ANC in the aftermath of Polokwane**

Presenter: Mr. Mazibuko Jara

- **The Meaning of Race in Democratic South Africa**

Presenter: Dr. Steven Friedman

- **The relationship between non-racialism, democracy and citizenship**

Presenter: Dr. Ivor Chipkin

- **How does the decision to disband the Scorpions reflect on our democracy?**

Presenters: Dr. Steven Friedman and Dr. Johan Burger

- **The relationship between representative and participatory democracy in post-apartheid South Africa**

Presenter: Mr. Mazibuko Jara

- **The socio-political factors that stimulate gender-based violence in South Africa**

Presenter: Professor Relebohile Moletsane

- **Judge Chris Nicholson's historic judgment on NPA's decision to recharge Jacob Zuma**

Presenter: Professor Pierre Devos

4. Civic and voter education programme

Mr. Sibonelo Zuma has been appointed as the coordinator of our civic and voter education programme. His appointment has helped us to consolidate our approach to civic education in general and to thoroughly prepare for the forthcoming elections, in particular.

4.1. Voter education

The main focus of our work in 2008 has been on the forthcoming national and provincial elections. As the lead organisation of the KwaZulu Natal Democracy and Election Forum (KZNDEF), we have assumed full responsibility for the rollout of a provincial wide voter education campaign using street theatre, community radio and participatory workshops. We are confident of reaching over a million voters directly and at least twice this amount indirectly through our voter education programme.

The KZNDEF comprises of 15 organisations, representing all districts of the province. Its main objective is to promote the principles of our constitutional democracy and to guarantee free and fair electoral processes in the province. The Forum's activities are classified into five sub-committees, namely, democracy and voter education, violence monitoring, mediation and conflict management, voting station observations and legal compliance and litigation. The DDP is the lead organisation, and is responsible for the overall coordination of all the Forum's activities.

Furthermore, we have also provided technical support to the IEC to train municipal election officers on aspects of voter education. In 2008, we provided training on our "Democracy and You" voter manual to IEC employees in 6 districts and to members of the KZNDEF in all 11 districts of KwaZulu Natal.

We have established a similar partnership with the IEC's Western Cape branch, and so far, at least one workshop has been held to introduce our voter manual. Our Cape Town office has secured a contract with the IEC to roll out a voter education programme for the Cape Metropolitan area, and is presently working with local networks. The funds will be used to extend the reach of our voter education programme.

5. Schools programme

Our schools programme has been extended both in terms of its reach and impact. The mainstay of our 2008 programme focused on different aspects of children's rights, involving several schools in the Durban and surrounding areas. The aim is to develop an informed cadre of youth in the province who actively participate in public life. In addition, we recently conducted a workshop with young learners on race and diversity to equip them with the tools to confront discriminatory tendencies in their social milieu.

Furthermore, an exciting initiative has been launched using social theatre as a means of extending voice to learners in schools. On this score, August Boal's "Theatre for the Oppressed" has been piloted in four schools and could stimulate new ideas about how young people articulate their experiences and concerns.

We also explored several opportunities for establishing local working relations with different actors in the youth sector. To this end we provided logistical and technical support to the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) at their June 16 seminar and Youth Imbizo – reports of all the aforementioned activities are available on our website.

6. Local Government outreach programme

As already mentioned, very little progress has been achieved in deepening our participation in the Local Economic Development projects of municipalities. In addition to the challenges alluded to above, establishing partnerships between municipalities and NGO's have been generally problematic given the low levels of accountability and

capacity that exist in terms of these projects. Meanwhile, we are turning to the Board for guidance on how to proceed with funding for our involvement in these projects.

Incidentally, we have raised our challenges with the Institute of Local Government (ILGM) who agreed that this is a new terrain for NGO's. They indicated that there is currently no similar initiative anywhere in the province. Hence, I am of the opinion that this is not an area that the DDP should venture into as it is inconsistent with our objectives and mission statement. However, we will turn to the Board for guidance at our next Board meeting.

On the converse, one area that has yielded positive results has been the rollout of our **"Partners in Transformation"** programme in the five local municipalities of the Umkhanyakude district, namely, Hlabisa, Mtubatuba, Jozini, Mhlabayalingana, and the Big Five. The purpose of the PIT programme is to build and strengthen the capacity of all key players involved in the Ward Committee participatory process with a view to enhancing the democratic and substantive outcomes of Ward Committees. To this end we conducted 10 workshops in the aforementioned municipalities and trained a total of 310 representatives from +_ 49 wards, including municipal officials, business representatives, youth, church leaders, chiefs, etc. In turn, representatives were entrusted with the responsibility to widely disseminate the information they obtained in their respective localities. We were overwhelmed by the high levels of participation we experienced in all five municipalities – a detailed account of the successes and constraints in each municipality are available on our website.

Based on our experiences of the past 15 years, we have found that one of the main contributing factors to dysfunctionality within many municipalities has been the lack of trust amongst stakeholders. Hence, this programme is aimed at bringing stakeholders together in order to establish clear values and principles on which they can base their working relationships. The DDP intends to work with municipalities once the initial protocols have been established in order to promote a culture of trust and collaboration.

On this score, the PIT meeting of the 23rd of October decided that the DDP should convene a strategic planning workshop for officials of the corporate service units and municipal speakers of the abovementioned 5 municipalities, and that a protocol document needs to be prepared for tabling at the workshop.

7. **Annual Local Government Conference**

We convened our Fifth Annual Local Government Conference in conjunction with the School of Public Administration and Development Management at the University of KwaZulu Natal on the 11th and 12th of August 2008, at the Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel. The theme of the conference was **"Local Government Financing and Development in South Africa"**. We received a handsome donation of R340 000

from Standard Bank towards the cost of the conference. The conference was attended by 209 participants, and 18 presentations were made – the presentations and conference report are available on our website.

8. Political party capacity building activities

We have conducted 9 capacity-building workshops in the second part of 2008 with several political parties, including the UDM, the African Nazareth Democratic Movement, DA, MF, IFP, ACDP, NADECO, and two multi-party political workshops. The main purpose of these workshops is to explore ways of strengthening the leadership capacities and operations of political parties. To this end we conducted workshops on strategic planning, election campaigning, media relations and internal democratic processes - the workshop reports are available on our website.

9. Miscellaneous activities

The DDP in collaboration with the Mariann Hill community hosted a youth camp for senior learners of the Mariannridge Secondary School, in April 2008. The purpose of the camp was to support and equip learners who are experiencing social problems – substance abuse, crime, etc. - at home with life skills to improve their performances in the classroom.

The DDP was one of the leading NGO's in conjunction with the South African Human Rights Commission that highlighted the plight of the victims of xenophobic related violence in the province. The response of the Durban City left much to be desired for. The most effective response came from civil society organisations, which not only generously provided relief and support to the victims, but also created spaces for the public to share their observations on the underlying causes of the sudden outbreak of violence against foreigners. To this end the DDP has hosted a special workshop to tease out the causal factors that led to the xenophobic outbreaks, as well as participated in several other similar initiatives.

Meanwhile, we partnered with the SAHRC in a series of legislative briefings to heighten public awareness of important pieces of legislation. To date, we collaborated with the SAHRC to conduct four dissemination workshops on the following set of laws:

- the Social Assistance Act;
- the National Credit Act;
- the Films and Publications Act, and
- the Sexual Offences Amendment Bill

We participated in all activities of the Civil Society Budget Watch since the beginning of the year. The Civil Society Budget Watch is a loose network of eleven organisations in the KZN province which spun off a joint initiative by the DDP and Fair Share to educate citizens on budgeting processes, in 2007. The cardinal focus for 2008 was, inter alia, on

- Electricity tariffs
- The impact of big/ national projects on basic delivery of social services to the poor
- The funding of projects like, uShaka Marine, ICC, Grand Prix, that have no beneficial impact on the livelihoods of the poor

More recently, the DDP and the Independent Projects Trust (IPT) established a joint initiative to create a mentorship programme for magistrates in KwaZulu Natal in order to share learning amongst peers and to assess the implementation of legislation.

10. Liaison

The DDP has engaged several civil society organisations in the KZN province with the aim to build a strong network of civil society partners that could collaborate on a range of advocacy initiatives. We continue to work with different CSO's in order to deepen the participation of civil society in governance and policy processes, in the province. To this end we conducted several workshops with civil society organisations in 2008, focusing on

-financial management;

-monitoring and evaluation;

-fundraising, and

-strategic planning

We have also entered into a tentative agreement with Inyathelo (a Cape Town based NGO) to partner with them in their civil society activities in KZN.

Meanwhile, our affiliation to several national and international networks on local governance and democracy has popularised the profile of the organisation. On this score, our affiliation to the India-Brazil-South Africa Good Governance Charter that was signed in Delhi in February this year is of great significance. Our participation at the Fifth Assembly of the World Movement on Democracy that was held in April is another event of note. We presented a paper at the Assembly on "*the relationship between citizens and states*". The DDP is also a steering committee member of the Good governance learning network, which is a sub committee of the WMD.

Finally, the DDP has established several new partnerships during the year with; inter alia, the YMCA, the SAHRC, GCIS, the Narrative Foundation, several schools in the Durban South Basin, the AbahlalibaseMjondolo social movement, the Chatsworth Community Care Centre and Police, We Help Our Children (WHOC) support group, and informal partnerships with the Department of Political Science at UKZN and the KZN branch of the Human Science Researcher Council.

In Cape Town, we established partnerships with the KENFAC Youth Forum who focuses on issues of youth development in the Kensington and Factonville areas, and Community Connections who works with community based organisations in the Western Cape and KZN provinces, to increase the capacity of CBOs to engage with local municipalities on issues of governance and service delivery.

11. Internships

We appointed four interns – 3 local and 1 international – since the beginning of the year.

12. Website

I would like to urge members to stay abreast of our activities via our website which is being updated on a weekly basis.

13. Finance

Key areas of spending for the current financial year included seminars, information material and travelling - for full details kindly refer to our 2008 financial report.

Conclusion

As illustrated above, a range of new developments have emerged that have shaped and influenced the activities of DDP since the beginning of 2008. Much of these activities require further theoretical and programmatic clarity. We hope to draw on your inputs regarding these issues, especially in terms of how the DDP should proceed.

Dr.Rama Naidu

Director

