



ZELNA.JANSEN
CONSULTANCY

Bringing Stakeholders together to find Solutions

**“Principles Guiding Public
Participation in Parliament and its
Committees”**

**NCOP Members’ Training
and Development**

Principles Guiding Public Participation in Parliament and its Committees



- **Training purpose:**

Empower Members of Parliament by developing an understanding and appreciation of the principles that guide public participation in Parliament and the practical experiences ordinary South Africans and civil society organisations on the effectiveness and challenges pertaining to participating in Parliamentary activities.

- **Talk to the following:**

1. The work that your organisation has done around public participation in Parliament
2. Reflections on experiences and public perception on public participation
3. Admission of the public to proceedings of Parliament
4. Opportunity for public input / submission
5. Public hearings in the midst of a pandemic
6. A reflection of the public / civil society on public participation



“Without broad consultation, policymaking becomes a sterile exercise that takes place in a vacuum. Ministers that fail to engage with the people become feudal lords driving in airconditioned limousines, shielded from the real world by a coterie of aides. Keeping in touch with reality requires consultations and public discussions. Ordinary citizens deserve to be heard and to influence policy. They also deserve to be given the tools to keep those in government accountable. This requires open communication and transparency.” Former Finance Minister of Zimbabwe

Rebuilding Zimbabwe: Lessons from a Coalition Government. The piece was written for the Centre for Global Economic Development

Executive Director of Zelna Jansen Consultancy (PTY) LTD Social enterprise aimed at:

1. Bringing people together to find solutions
2. To have effective conversations with law and policy-makers

This is achieved through assisting community organisations, businesses and other stakeholders by conveying their messages, leading to open doors and allowing them to raise their voice and influence policies and laws affecting them.

Admitted Attorney – BA prelaw, Bachelor of Laws, Masters of Commerce degree (UCT, GSB) specialising in International Trade Law and Policy

I worked for and consulted to Parliament, the Department of Justice, Law Society of South Africa, tobacco sector, Southern African Catholics Bishops Conference, Uber SA, KZN Legislature, political office bearers, GBV advocacy, NGOs, South African Legislative Sector and community organisations

LOBBYING & ADVOCACY

- Raising your voice in a manner that allows it to be received well
- Lobbying, stakeholder management, developing engagement and regulatory strategies
- Facilitating workshops, seminars and panel discussions
- Obtaining information through engaging stakeholders (government, business and civil society)
- Facilitate meetings with identified stakeholders
- Monitoring legislative developments
- Research, speechwriting, submissions and legal opinions



Empower citizens and comm. organisations to raise their Voice



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- Educational workshops with community organizations as to how government works, how to participate and how to hold political office bearers accountable.
- Advocacy on gender-based violence (GBV)
- Technical and drafting assistance on submissions to community organizations on GBV and other bills before Parliament and government
- Legal and drafting assistance with Toolkits on Domestic Violence Act and sexual assault.



Empower citizens and comm. organ raise their Voice

- School projects aimed at educating learners how to raise their voice and influence policy and law
- Facilitating meetings between community organizations and government
- Tutorials on governance issues through YouTube Channel and Facebook page
- Blogs, print and online news
- Legal Advice

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I was interviewed this morning about my views on why it's important to vote, how govt engages at local govt level compared to provincial and national a... See more



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The video is Part Three in a series of videos focussing on local government. The video is intended to provide information on the role and purpose of local government and why it is important to vote in the local government elections on 1 Nov. [Zelna Jansen](#)



Local Govt Part Three: What is the role and purpose of local govt

Zelna Jansen Consultancy 1d

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Owners fight to keep homes 8 comments • 23 shares

Active citizenry needed

South Africans must hold their politicians accountable for policymaking

An invitation to the public for comment on laws is no longer 'sufficient'

Parliament, the legislature and executive, that often appear to operate in a vacuum, should be held more accountable for the way they govern. This view is shared by the ANC's Jansen & Jansen, who say the public has a right to be consulted on laws that affect their lives. The legislative arm of government must, therefore, find ways of involving the public in its process, particularly when public consultations appear to be a mere formality. Jansen & Jansen say that the public should be consulted on laws that affect their lives, and that the public should be consulted on laws that affect their lives. This view is shared by the ANC's Jansen & Jansen, who say the public has a right to be consulted on laws that affect their lives. The legislative arm of government must, therefore, find ways of involving the public in its process, particularly when public consultations appear to be a mere formality. Jansen & Jansen say that the public should be consulted on laws that affect their lives, and that the public should be consulted on laws that affect their lives.



In my Masters Thesis (2016) – *How do peoples perceptions influence the policy and law-making process*, * I concluded that the public must be involved in the law and policy making process. Especially, those who participated in the process **must be kept up to date on the consideration of their submissions** because:

1. Opening up the process to the public makes it more **TRANSPARENT**
2. If people understand the process, they can keep law and policy-makers **ACCOUNTABLE**
3. This will enhance **SOCIAL CAPITAL** which I defined in my thesis as being the trust citizens have in Government.

Social capital is defined the trust people have in their government.



Some of the conclusions from my **thesis** was that:

Stakeholders impacted by a legislative measure, want to be informed before any announcement or publication thereof. Some of the reasons provided was that sometimes a legislative measure may impact businesses or projects negatively. If stakeholders were informed beforehand, these stakeholders could soften the blow of the legislative measure or even assist Government in reaching its goals perhaps through different measures.

Stakeholders wanted to be kept informed of the processes a legislative measure was undergoing. **FEEDBACK IS KEY**

Stakeholders wanted to be informed of the outcome from the public hearings. Were the submissions considered? If not, why was the submissions not taken into account?

I finally concluded that if measures were undertaken to keep stakeholders informed it will increase and enhance the social capital (trusts and linkages) between citizens and Government.



Reflections on experiences and public perception on public participation

My perspective of the public's views on participating in Parliamentary processes

Not understanding the processes – “niche area” / “only for select few” / “for big business and politicians” (middle class)

No point in commenting on the process as it is already decided

There was also many people that wanted to influence the process but did not know how to. Not understanding the process meant that the public will struggle to obtain access to participate in the processes at Parliament

Admission of the public to proceedings of Parliament

Opportunity for public input / submission

- Myself and organisations I represent and assist - Easy access to Parliament proceedings. Good relations with the Parliamentary Constituency Office. I find no problems in making submissions to calls for comment from Parliament *
- A thought to leave with MPs is that SA unequal society. The National Planning Commission, itself states that a “...developmental state tackles the root causes of poverty and inequality. A South African developmental state will intervene to support and guide development so that benefits accrue across society (especially to the poor) and build consensus so that long-term national interest trumps short-term, sectional concerns.”
- Question is therefore, does the poor have easy access to proceedings and if they did, can they influence a decision a committee is making?

- The pandemic severely disrupted the work of parliament.
- With everything going online, made it difficult to engage politicians.
- Usually during committee meetings MPs are available and can be approached during tea or lunch time. This time is utilized to raise issues and sometimes decisions are made. If a meeting is online that element is lost. This is important as it is not always easy to schedule a meeting with a politician.
- Security is also up but there is still access to Parliament.

- Parliament is implementing its mandate of conducting public participation.
- I would suggest that there is conversation as to whether what is being done up to now is sufficient to say that it is meaningful?
- What are the ways in which Parliament can measure what it has done up to now and if there is more that can be done.

Thank you

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