



MY VOTE
COUNTS

Annual Report 2023





MY VOTE
COUNTS

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document aims to guide the My Vote Counts staff and Board of Directors to carry out the Vision of the organisation from 2023-2027. The document is a result of a consultative strategy process that included an analysis of the organisation, an analysis of the political context of South Africa and an analysis of the next 5 years.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Almost three decades since the first election and South Africa's democracy is at a crossroads.

By mid-2021 there were mass riots which were sparked to meet political ends and fuelled by mass hunger and social insecurity. The riots laid bare the fault lines of South Africa's democratic project. Several months after the riots, in November, the country held its Local Government Elections and saw the lowest voter turnout in its democratic history. In the main, people who chose not to vote simply do not have a sufficient alternative to represent them.

The elections also produced several unstable coalition governments and the ANC's share of the vote dropped below 50% for the first time, as it continued to be consumed by factionalism and patronage.

Further, this year the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture concluded and released several reports. The Commission's findings exposed the brazen nature of how money was used to influence the South African state, in favour of unscrupulous private interests.

On top of this, people have lost trust in democratic institutions, we see a closing of the democratic space, the state losing its monopoly on violence, and a retreat to narrow nationalism and ethno-communities by sectors of our society. These issues are flourishing in a context of a stagnating economy, economic austerity, commodification of the state, and a deepening ecological crisis.

This context has forced a fundamental shift in the work of My Vote Counts in the past year. Within this shift our dedicated and skilled group of researchers and campaigners took our small organisation to the centre of defining the road towards the future of our democracy.

In the office, we joke that our biggest achievement for the year was the bizarre verbal attack by two parliamentarians during a parliamentary debate in October 2022 in an attempt to silence our critique of their electoral reform process. The attack was a response to our

#RejectTheBill campaign which called on MPs to put the interests of people above those of political parties.

We saw a similar attack by members of the political elite earlier this year in response to our May 2023 court application challenging the constitutionality of aspects of the Political Party Funding Act (PPFA). The court application will ensure deeper transparency in party financing, limit the ability to use money to buy political influence, and strengthen the rights of voters.

Of course, these attacks are not to be celebrated, and are an indication of the closing of the democratic space as our democracy becomes contested. This is a threat that we have strongly opposed in the past year.

This report, however, is a celebration of the crucial work that has been led by our researchers and campaigners Robyn, Letlhogonolo and Joel and pushed to the centre of the public debate by communicators Lelethu and Sheilan. This was held together by our operations guru Pelo and supported by our promising interns Awonke and Lilitha. In addition, this work was made possible through the strategic guidance of our board of directors led by Amanda, the partnerships and solidarity of our NGO and social movement partners and the support of our funding partners.

Through this community we have become an authoritative voice on the country's democracy.

In the year, we published four research reports, convened two catalytic civil society coalitions, led two successful campaigns, developed a cutting-edge interactive virtual tool, supported community mobilisation, contributed to countless panels and media conversations, and launched a pivotal strategic litigation campaign. Most importantly, this report will outline Vision 2027 which is our five-year strategy. The strategy recognises the 2024 general election as a watershed moment and roots our work on the threats and opportunities that it presents.

The bulk of what we have done over the last year was to lay the foundation for the next period. What we do over this period will go a long way in defining whether we move towards state collapse or a more viable society. I believe that our work to deepen democracy and build people's power will play a crucial role in taking our society on the latter road.

Minhaj Jeenah
Executive Director



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD

In 1994 a paper titled "A Bridge to Where?" was written by Etienne Mureinik. This has become one of the most cited legal papers in South Africa. The paper spoke about the vision for democracy, accountability, and transparency in South Africa. Mureinik explained:

"If the Constitution is a bridge away from a culture of authority, it is clear what it must be a bridge to. It must lead to a culture of justification—a culture in which every exercise of power is expected to be justified; in which the leadership given by government rests on the cogency of the case offered in defence of its decisions, not the fear inspired by the force at its command. The new order must be a community built on persuasion, not coercion."

This has been the vision of My Vote Counts – an 11-year-old organisation. During these 11 years My Vote Counts has worked tirelessly to enable a culture of justification to ensure a government and electoral system where the exercise of power is by the will of the people not by the power of money, and where people are able to participate in the democratic system without fear and are free of coercion.

Under the leadership of Executive Director, Minhaj Jeenah, the organisation has grown to have eight staff members. The research and analysis conducted by My Vote Counts has been instrumental in shaping public discourse and popular education. The research and education work has been informed by the Constitutional principles of openness, transparency, accountability, and access to information.

These principles have also guided the Board in their decision-making processes and their governance. The My Vote Counts Board has worked hard over the last three years to strengthen its governance, grow its expertise, and take decisions in a transparent manner. Through this process we have adopted a Board Charter which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Board, financial accountability mechanisms, and Board terms.

The Board of My Vote Counts has also undergone significant transformation over the past two years. We said goodbye to Chair of the Board, Greg Solik, as well as trustees Hennie van Vuuren, Adi Eyal and Advocate Ncumisa Mayosi. Greg, Hennie, and Adi were founding

members of My Vote Counts and we are deeply thankful for their commitment to the work over the past decade. We also thank fellow founding trustees and current board members Gaile Fullard and Tyronne McCrindle for their commitment to ensuring continuity and stability within the Board.

In the past year the Board has also welcomed several new members who bring in a vast array of experiences:

- 1. Zukiswa Kota who is a public accountability and monitoring expert from Rhodes University.
- 2. Dr Trevor Ngwane who is an academic and activist from the University of Johannesburg with extensive experience in grassroots movement building and democracy.
- 3. Khaya Sithole who is a chartered accountant, activist, and political analyst who has been instrumental in enhancing our understanding of party funding.
- 4. Dr Kudrat Virk who is a researcher and governance professional with over a decade of capacity-building experience in the civil society sector.

We believe that this experience on the Board, as well as your political and financial support, will be vital for the challenges that My Vote Counts will face in the upcoming years. As we approach a watershed general election in 2024, My Vote Counts will continue to fight against a shrinking democratic space, and instead push for a culture of justification. This work is essential because it yields reactions from politicians. This past year some parliamentarians have attacked My Vote Counts because we continue to call for transparency in political party funding by accusing us of being a shill for foreign donors. However, this level of negativity will not deter the organisation because we will continue to help build a community built on persuasion and not coercion.

Amanda Rinquest

Chairperson of the Board



The research and analysis of My Vote Counts has been instrumental in shaping public discourse and popular education. This research and education work has been informed by the Constitutional principles of openness, transparency, accountability, and access to information.



WHO WE ARE

In 2012 My Vote Counts emerged out of campaigns by South African civil society that aimed to address the scourge of corruption and the hollowing out of South Africa’s democracy. Our organisation was launched as a public campaign to advocate for a fair electoral system and increased transparency and openness in political party funding. Both campaigns garnered traction and have contributed towards shaping the future of politics and democracy in South Africa. In 2016 we registered as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO). At the Constitutional Court in 2018, we successfully challenged the constitutionality of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) and influenced the development of the Political Party Funding Act (PPFA). The PPFA and the amended PAIA came into operation in 2021. These victories have taken our work as a social justice organisation to a new phase of our life cycle. Thus, we have since broadened our vision to one that focuses on deepening democracy, public transparency and accountability, social justice, and building people’s power.

OUR TEAM:



Minhaj Jeenah
Executive director



Nosiphelo Mahola
Finance and
administration officer



Sheilan Clarke
Head of
communications



**Lelethu
Masangwana**
Digital media officer



Joel Bregman
Senior researcher



Robyn Pasensie
Political party
funding researcher



**Letlhogonolo
Letshele**
Electoral systems
researcher



Awonke Baba
Political party funding
intern (2022)



Lilitha Zulu
Research and campaigns
intern (2023)

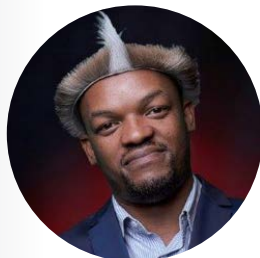
OUR BOARD:



Amanda Rinquest
Chairperson



Gaile Fullard
Treasurer



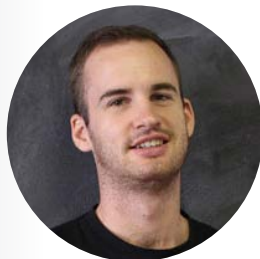
Khaya Sithole



Dr Kudrat Virk



**Dr Trevor
Ngwane**



**Tyronne
McCrindle**



Zukiswa Kota



CHAPTER ONE

MONEY IN POLITICS

The Political Party Funding Act (PPFA) has proven to be one of the most important pieces of legislation since 1994. It is also the first law that governs the internal workings of political parties. It provides a transparency framework for political funding, limits undue private influence in our politics, protects the country's sovereignty, and it enhances the rights of the voter.

The PPFA mandates political parties to disclose annual private donations above R100 000 and places a R15 million cap on donations. The PPFA has laid the foundation for our work on money in politics.

In the past year we have worked towards, (1) making political party funding data accessible, (2) strengthening party funding legislation, and (3) understanding the future of political financing.

CAUTION WITH PRIVATE FUNDING



South Africa's politics can be financed through private and public funding. Public funding, as opposed to private funding can be used to (1) to create a society wherein citizens feel that they are represented, and (2) to link money to service where the view of money changes from self-enrichment to public service.

POLITICAL PARTY FINANCING IS CENTRED IN THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

THE DATA IS MORE ACCESSIBLE



See timeline on the next spread.

We have disseminated the quarterly funding disclosures widely, provided analysis to the public, civil society and media, and developed infographics that unpack the data. This has received significant media and public attention. As a result, we have seen party financing centred in the national conversations on state capture and corruption, and social justice campaigning.

CONVENING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA TO UNPACK THE PPFA



PPFA CAP

The PPFA compels political parties and their donors to disclose private donations of donations of R100 000 or more in one financial year and places an annual cap of R15 million in one financial year.

By recognising the inadequate public analysis on party funding disclosures, we gathered 30 senior members of the media for a two-day convening in Johannesburg in March 2021. The convening provided a space for participants to understand the history of the legislation, its purpose, its potential, and the threats against this piece of law. After the symposium there was improvement in the reporting analysis and the narrative on party funding which has resulted in the topic of party funding constantly being in the public domain.



TIMELINE:

OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING TRANSPARENCY



MY VOTE
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July 28, 2016

MVC launched a high court application

My Vote Counts launches application at the Western Cape High Court on the invalidity of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) as it excluded the disclosure of private political funding information.

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Photo: Ashraf Hendricks / GroundUp

2016

Aug 15, 2017

PAIA case heard

The PAIA case is heard in the Western Cape High Court.

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March 6, 2017

Ad Hoc Committee established

Parliament establishes the Ad Hoc Committee on Funding of Political Parties after the Political Party Funding Bill was introduced to Parliament.

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Photo: Bulumko Gana

Nov 28, 2017

National Assembly adopts Political Party Funding Bill

The National Assembly in Parliament adopts the Political Party Funding Bill.

[READ MORE](#)



Sept 27, 2017

PAIA ruled unconstitutional

The Western Cape High Court rules in our favour.

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Photo: Shutterstock



2017

2018

June 21, 2018

Constitutional Court rules in favour of MVC

The Constitutional Courts affirms the Western Cape High Court order and orders Parliament 18 months to remedy PAIA to include the disclosure of private funding of political parties and independent candidates.

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June 28, 2018

NCOP adopts Political Party Funding bill

The National Council of Provinces in Parliament adopts the Political Party Funding Bill and sent to the President for assent.

[READ MORE](#)

2018

2019



Jan 22, 2019

President signs bill into law

President Cyril Ramaphosa signs the Political Party Funding Act but without a promulgation date.

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Photo: Ashraf Hendricks / GroundUp



April 1, 2021

Both Political Party Funding Act and Promotion of Access to Information Amendment Act comes into effect

Both the Promotion of Access to Information Act and the Political Party Funding Act comes into effect.

[READ MORE](#)

PUBLISHED DECLARATIONS REPORT
Report Details as at Thursday, 09 September 2021 13:09:20

Financial Year: 2021/2022
Quarter: QUARTER 1
Party: ALL PARTIES
Donor: ALL DONORS
Declaration Type: ALL TYPES

LIST OF DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FOR QUARTER 1
(In terms of the Political Party Funding Act, 2017 as amended and Regulation (1))

Party Name	Donor Name	Description Type	Amount of Contribution (R)	Accumulated Contribution (R)
ACTIONA	08/06/2021	MARTIN MCHIRAL	MONETARY	R 2 500 000.00
	11/06/2021	STALE EVEL OF CALIFORNIA (PTY) LTD	IN KIND	R 533 000.00
	28/06/2021	BLACK ONE ONE (PTY) LTD	IN KIND	R 121 490.26
	28/06/2021	BRANDON HILL PROPRIETARY LIMITED	MONETARY	R 220 000.00
Total Amount Received by ACTIONA				R 3 354 490.26
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	24/05/2021	MAESTRO SILVER TRADING 40 (PTY) LTD	MONETARY	R 2 500 000.00
	18/05/2021	UNITED MANAGEMENT OF KENYAS LTD	MONETARY	R 5 000 000.00
	29/04/2021	SURE DUBS	MONETARY	R 420 000.00
	10/04/2021	THISS SECURITY	MONETARY	R 100 000.00
DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE	28/04/2021	KAR VYTHIRI M NTOUMELA	MONETARY	R 1 000 000.00
	09/04/2021	NONKWELO INVESTMENT HOLDINGS	MONETARY	R 1 000 000.00
	08/04/2021	NONKWELO INVESTMENT HOLDINGS	MONETARY	R 1 000 000.00
	24/05/2021	FREDERICH HANNAHMAN FOUNDATION	IN KIND	R 220 476.51
Total Amount Received by DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE				R 10 720 476.51
DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE	24/05/2021	FREDERICH HANNAHMAN FOUNDATION	IN KIND	R 220 476.51
	24/05/2021	INCOPIES PLUIT	MONETARY	R 100 000.00
	24/05/2021	DANISH LIBERAL DEMOCRACY PROGRAMME	MONETARY	R 100 000.00
	12/05/2021	FREDERICH HANNAHMAN FOUNDATION	IN KIND	R 220 476.51
DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE	14/05/2021	WIS MARY BLACK	MONETARY	R 10 000 000.00
	04/05/2021	LONGLANDS VILLAGE (PTY) LTD	MONETARY	R 200 000.00

Sept 19, 2021

IEC releases first private funding disclosures

The first ever quarterly disclosure of private political party funding is released by the IEC. This covered the period from 1 April 2021 – 30 June 2021.



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Aug 3, 2021

MVC establishes the Party Funding Working Group

MVC establishes the Party Funding Working Group that consists of around 30 organisations and individuals dedicated to party funding transparency.

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Jan 21, 2022

MVC responds

MVC responds to the ANC's call to weaken the PPFA.

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9 May 2023

Parliament briefed on needed amendments to the Political Party Funding Act

The Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi briefs Parliament on the needed amendments to the Political Party Funding Act to be in line with the new Electoral Amendment Act.

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6 October 2022

MVC Research

MVC releases research on public funding as an expansion of our work around political party funding transparency.

[READ MORE](#)



May 16, 2023

My Vote Counts Launches Legal Challenge to Strengthen Political Party Funding Act

MVC launches application at the Western Cape High Court seeking amendment to certain aspects of the Political Party Funding Act.

[READ MORE](#)



Photo: Ashraf Hendricks / GroundUp

CONTRIBUTING TO POLITICAL FINANCING
WORK WITHIN A BROADER SOUTHERN AFRICAN
CONTEXT

In July 2022 we were invited by Transparency International for a conference in Lusaka, Zambia to speak on the South African party funding experience with civil society groups. At this conference there was representation from Zambia, Kenya and Malawi who are all involved in similar work. We have also been invited to a similar engagement in Maputo, Mozambique in August 2023. The importance of party funding accountability in Southern Africa will motivate us to continue to foster relationships with, and in support of, civil society groups in the region.

MINING INFLUENCE



Since 2021, the energy industry (21.8%), mining industry (18.2%) and the Oppenheimer family (15%) were the three biggest sectors funding our politics.

WHOSE VOTE COUNTS? - LOOKING AT THE
PARTY-FUNDING TRACKER

In August 2023 we launched our flagship project called “*Whose Vote Counts?*”. It is a virtual interactive tool that uses political party funding disclosure data to illustrate party donors, their business interests, and other trends. *Whose Vote Counts?* is also the first platform of its kind developed in South Africa for the purpose of analysing private political funding.

WHOS VOTE
COUNTS



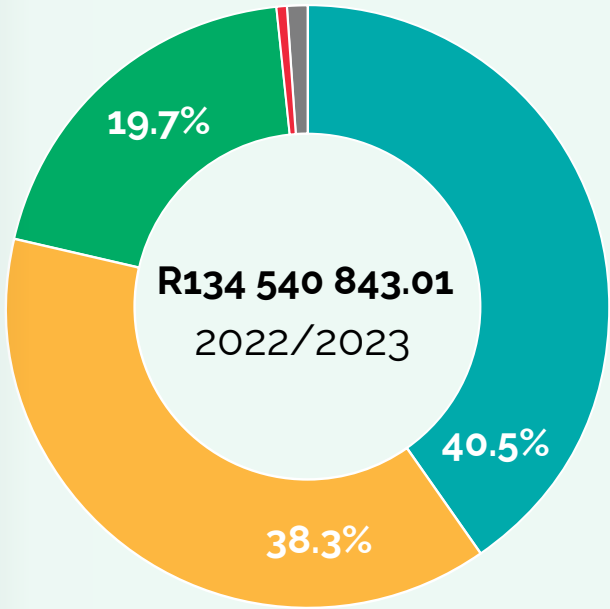
BIGGEST PLAYERS



Since 2021, donations linked to the Oppenheimer family amounted to just over R50 764 160, followed by donations linked to Capitec co-founder Michiel Le Roux amounting to just over R50 370 000, and online gambling businessman, Martin Moshal donated R46 500 000 as an individual.

POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING
DISCLOSURES

The pie-charts below showcase how much political parties received from private donations for the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 financial years.

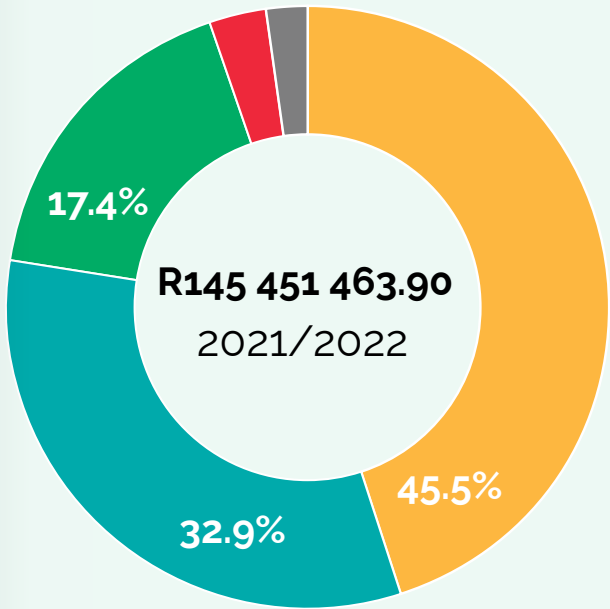


Key:

- African National Congress
- Democratic Alliance
- ActionSA
- Economic Freedom Fighters

Smaller parties combined:

- Inkatha Freedom Party
- Vryheidsfront Plus
- GOOD
- Patriotic Alliance
- African Christian Dem. Party
- Abantu Integrity Movement
- African Transformation Mov.
- Shosholozza Progressive Party



THE PPFA WILL BE STRENGTHENED

CONVENING THE CIVIL SOCIETY WORKING GROUP ON PARTY FUNDING

At the beginning of 2022, the African National Congress' (ANC) National Working Committee resolved to expand the reporting and upper threshold of the PPFA to a point that will undermine the essence of the Act. In 2021 we established the Civil Society Working Group on Party Funding which following this decision by the ANC, vowed to continue to guard against threats to the Act.

FIRST STATEMENT

LITIGATING TO STRENGTHEN THE PPFA

In May 2023 in recognition of the PPFA as the first phase of a process to open our politics we filed an application at the Western Cape High Court challenging aspects of the PPFA. Our application seeks to amend the PPFA so that it provides for:

- 1. The disclosure of all private donations and not only those above R100 000.
- 2. The reduction of the upper annual limit of R15 million per donor.
- 3. The disclosure of financial information related to all expenditure of private donations.
- 4. Limitations on donations from related people or entities to prevent circumvention of the upper limit.

FOUNDING AFFIDAVIT

Below: Members of MVC staff enter the Western Cape High Court to file an application to amend the PPFA.



Photo: Ashraf Hendricks / GroundUp

TOWARDS BROAD-BASED POLITICAL PARTY FINANCING

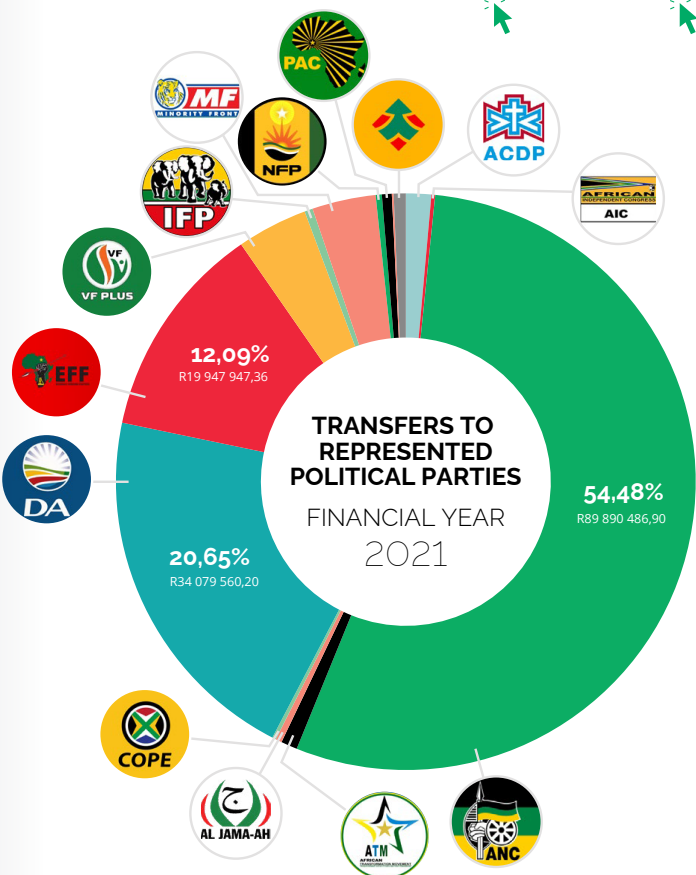
UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC FUNDING OF OUR POLITICS

Represented political parties in South Africa are largely funded by the state. In 2022 we published *"How Many Rands?"*. We undertook this research to understand the public funding model. Furthermore, the report unpacks and analyses the public funding of South Africa's political parties from 2014 to 2022. It also lays bare the flaws in public funding disclosures and reporting.

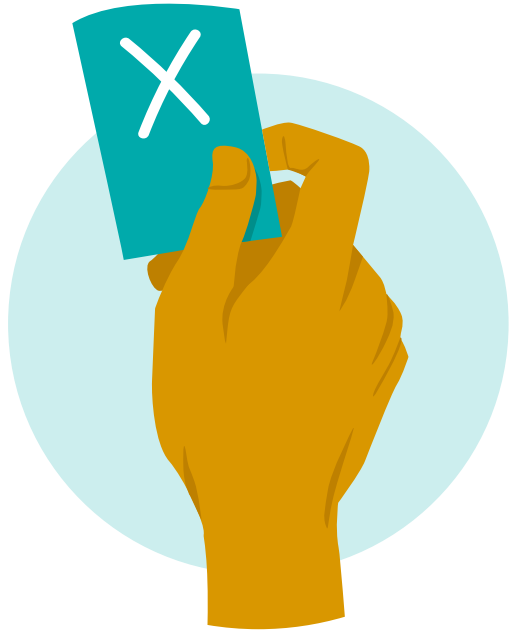
From this report we launched a position paper arguing for a comprehensive public funding framework in South Africa. The position paper launched a new phase of our work on money in politics. We will continue to work towards understanding the relationships between money, influence, and politics, and thereby campaign to remove the use of money to buy influence in politics.

SEE REPORT

SEE PAPER



REPRESENTED POLITICAL PARTIES	TOTAL TRANSFER	%
African Christian Democratic Party	R2 332 773,84	1,41
African Independent Congress	R357 762,36	0,21
African National Congress	R89 890 486,90	54,48
African Transformation Movement	R1 502 001,00	0,91
Al-Jama-Ah	R587 950,52	0,35
Congress Of The People	R357 762,36	0,21
Democratic Alliance	R34 079 560,20	20,65
Economic Freedom Fighters	R19 947 947,36	12,09
Freedom Front Plus	R6 505 974,60	3,94
GOOD	R766 831,72	0,46
Inkatha Freedom Party	R5 859 090,34	3,55
Minority Front	R562 528,14	0,34
National Freedom Party	R920 290,48	0,55
Pan Africanist Congress	R178 881,16	0,1
United Democratic Movement	R1 118 354,02	0,67



CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The disconnect between public representatives and people is most starkly illustrated by the lack of accountability. Mechanisms for accountability need to be strengthened, made more effective, and they need to prioritise transparency. In the past year our work to strengthen accountability through political systems included, (a) advocating for broad electoral reform, and (b) scrutinising the under-funding of the Electoral Commission.

TOWARDS BROAD ELECTORAL REFORM

In June 2020 the Constitutional Court ruled the Electoral Act as unconstitutional because it did not allow adult citizens to contest provincial and national elections as individuals. The Constitutional Court ordered Parliament to fix the defects in the Act. Following the judgement Parliament embarked on a wholly inadequate process to adopt the Electoral Amendment Bill which was signed into law in 2023. During this process we embarked on a campaign to push for an adequate public participation process and for the Bill to meet constitutional muster. Thus, the electoral amendment process laid the foundation for how we approach our work on the electoral system.



DID YOU KNOW?

The legislative process around the Electoral Amendment Act lacked adequate public participation and produced a flawed Act that may not meet constitutional muster.

CIVIL SOCIETY IS ORGANISED BEHIND BROAD ELECTORAL REFORM

In September 2022 we co-convened a civil society coalition to advocate for broad electoral reform. The indaba agreed to organise civil society to pressure Parliament to ensure that the Bill meets constitutional muster, that it prioritises constituencies in the electoral system, and that it does not disadvantage independent candidates. The campaign created significant debate within Parliament and saw some changes to the Amendment Bill.

A significant victory of the campaign was a clause in the Bill that forces Parliament to engage in a second consultation process on broad electoral reform.

The coalition on electoral reform will now collectively work towards advocating for broad electoral reform.

Right & Below:
The Indaba brought many organisations together to share ideas on how best to approach electoral reform.





Left: The People's Hearings brought together various sections of communities to discuss the Electoral Amendment Bill and the inadequate parliamentary process around it.

PEOPLE'S HEARINGS

Our main critique of parliamentary processes was against its inadequate engagement of public participation. To illustrate meaningful public participation, we hosted three People's Hearings on electoral reform in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and KwaZulu Natal.

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION (IEC) WILL BE PROTECTED

CRITICISED NATIONAL TREASURY'S BUDGET CUTS TO THE IEC

The National Treasury plans to cut the IEC's budget by R240 million for 2023. According to the Commission this will undermine its mandate to hold free and fair elections.

This is particularly concerning as the IEC readies itself for our most consequential election in 2024. In 2022 we criticised the budget cuts to the IEC and will build a campaign to stop the underfunding of our democracy and to guard against other threats to the IEC.

DID YOU KNOW?

As of 2023, out of the 82 local coalition governments, 50 are functioning. Coalitions are also not a new feature in South African politics. But as they become a more common form of government, we must deepen our understanding of the conditions needed for coalitions to best serve the people.



[SEE VIDEO](#)



[SEE STATEMENT](#)



[READ THE REPORT](#)



WE SCRUTINISED THE PROCESS TO APPOINT AN IEC COMMISSIONER

In February 2022 the Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ) launched the process to appoint a new Commissioner for the IEC. Recognising that every process related to the appointment of the Commission needs to be transparent and open to public scrutiny, we wrote to the OCJ requesting that the interviews be widely publicised and live-streamed. As a result, the OCJ live-streamed the interviews, and we were present as observers. Thereafter, we wrote a report analysing the transparency and openness of the process and we will closely monitor future processes relating to the IEC.

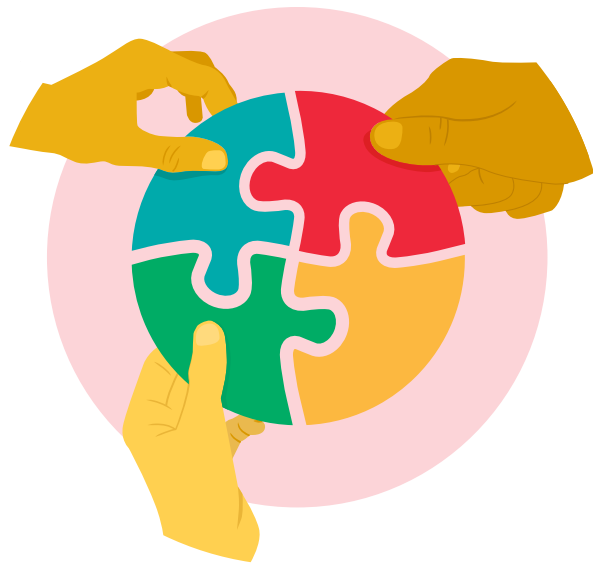
TOWARDS ACCOUNTABLE COALITIONS

The 2021 Local Government Elections produced several unstable coalitions and ushered in a new era of South African politics where coalitions are at the centre. The possibility of the ANC losing its majority in the 2024 General Elections presents the possibility of coalition

governments being formed at National and Provincial levels for the first time. We have begun to understand how coalitions will impact our democracy and we will advocate for accountable coalition governments that are voter centric.

Image source left:
Screengrab off Daily Maverick





CHAPTER THREE

INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY (IPD)

We recognise that functioning political parties are crucial to our multi-party democracy. In order to have good governance of our country, political parties must value democracy and accountability. This year we have launched our work to advocate for deepened IPD. As a result, we have made a case for IPD by presenting a paper exploring the IPD theory and its relevance to civil society and academia within a South African context.

In addition we performed an analysis of the level of democracy within the ANC. At the end of 2022 and in the build-up to the ANC's National Conference we launched a paper analysing the ANC's internal democracy. We will thus deepen our work to understand the levels of democracy in all political parties in South Africa.

[READ THE PAPER](#)



[READ THE PAPER](#)



WHAT MAKES A PARTY DEMOCRATIC?

Some of the main criteria to judge whether a party is internally democratic include the following:

1

Candidate and leadership for internal or public positions is a key indicator of the level of internal democracy within parties. This process can range from being highly inclusive to being highly exclusive.

2

Policy making and the extent to which members are allowed to participate in developing policy. Some parties adopt a 'top-down' approach wherein party bosses decide and articulate party positions, whereas parties that are more inclusive facilitate structures that allow members to drive policy.

3

Civil liberties within parties should ensure that their members are afforded all the rights that they enjoy as people living in a democracy.

4

Fair disciplinary procedures, that are applied equally to all members of a party, are required for parties to be internally democratic.

5

Transparency is necessary and having access to information about the inner workings of a party reinforces the notion that parties are not a law unto themselves and that they are accountable to their membership and the public.

6

Accountability, which refers to elected representatives needing to work in the best interests of the public. When this is not the case there must be mechanisms to address it.



CHAPTER FOUR

DEMOCRACY FROM BELOW

We will work towards a democracy that is rooted in the principle of popular sovereignty. We define popular sovereignty as every adult having an equal influence in the decisions that affect them all the time. This includes when citizens use the vote during Local Government-, General- and By-Elections, and when citizens engage with, and influence, public representatives between elections.

We work with community organisations, social movements, and labour to develop the tools needed for people to organise themselves around the vote.

THE DEMOCRATIC SPACE MUST REMAIN OPEN

On the 20 August 2022 the Chairperson of eKhenana Commune, Lindokuhle Mnguni, was assassinated in his home by hitmen. It is clear that the assassination was part of the sustained use of violence to suppress the shack dwellers movement, Abahlali baseMjondolo. Our democracy is under serious threat when we allow members of the political elite to use violence and murder to silence activists for simply

[SEE STATEMENT 1](#)

[SEE STATEMENT 2](#)



expressing their constitutional rights. We publicised a statement calling on the Minister of Police to investigate the murder and the threats to the movement. We will continue to guard against threats to the democratic space.

TOWARDS POLITICS THAT IS PEOPLE-CENTRIC

[COVERING REPORT](#)



[RECAP VIDEO](#)

Below: Delegates from various grassroots organisations and trade unions engage in critical discussions about the power of the vote ahead of the 2024 elections.

In 2023 we convened 55 representatives from social movements, labour federations, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to discuss the threats and opportunities that accompany the 2024 elections. We brought this group together to explore collective strategies and tactics to take into the election period. Participants included representation from the South Africa Federation of Trade Unions, Abahlali baseMojibdolo, and Equal Education.



The participants agreed to organise collective voter-led campaigns in the run-up to the 2024 elections. These campaigns will aim to meet four objectives which are to, (1) use the elections to centre people's demands, (2) organise mass voter turnout, (3) protect the integrity of the election process, and (4) build a political alternative beyond 2024.

THE FUTURE OF OUR DEMOCRACY

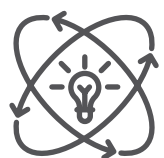


In 2022 we partnered with a Cape Town-based community radio station Radio 786 for a monthly show called **Democracy**

Dissected. The series contained five episodes where it critically unpacked different aspects of the state of our democracy.

[SEE EPISODES](#)





MY VOTE COUNTS' THEORY OF CHANGE

Over the next five years, we will work towards our vision where every adult has an equal influence in all decisions that affect them. This vision will be guided by people's power, democratic institutions and open political institutions.



A
democracy
where every
person has equal
influence in all the
decisions that
affect them



Voters have the tools to organise themselves around the vote

Every adult can more meaningfully participate in the democratic process



Our politics is driven by the interests of people



People have political alternatives to represent them



Elections are always free and fair



Democratic institutions are more reliable and trustworthy



Public representatives are more accountable and responsive



Money in politics is used more to deepen democracy than for private influence



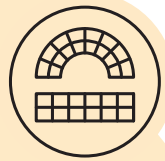
Political parties are more committed to democratic principles



The IEC remains independent and is better resourced



Public accountability mechanisms are more effective and enhance transparency



The civic space remains open and inclusive

PEOPLE'S POWER

DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS

OPEN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

OUR FUNDERS

We would like to thank our institutional funders and every individual and organisation that contributed so generously to our work this year.

With your support we will continue to strive for a healthy democracy. We have been fortunate to have a dedicated group of core funders over the years, including:



Donated: R2 250 000
Period: 2022-2024



Donated: R1 960 000
Period: 2021-2023



Donated: R1 800 000
Period: 2020-2023



Donated: R850 000
Period: 2023



Donated: R510 000
Period: 2022

MONEY MATTERS

My Vote Counts NPC

(Registration number: 2014/046956/08)

Annual financial statements for the year ended 28 February 2023

DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT

Figures in Rand	2023	2022
GRANTS AND DONATIONS RECEIVED	5 022 560	2 136 105
OTHER INCOME		
Sundry income	434	764
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Accounting fees	(32 504)	(135 176)
Auditors remuneration	(46 000)	(87 880)
Bank charges	(8 233)	(8 474)
Cleaning	(5 250)	-
Computer expenses	(22 149)	(25 232)
Consulting fees	(19 825)	(104 043)
Depreciation	(30 516)	(20 733)
Electoral Indaba expenses	(523 833)	-
Employee costs	(2 286 718)	(1 765 794)
Entertainment	(98 100)	(31 345)
External writer expenses	(67 500)	-
General expenses	(2 098)	(7 913)
Insurance	(4 829)	(4 417)
Interest and penalties	-	(8 508)
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	(2 973)
Office supplies	(12 843)	(5 726)
Printing and stationery	(5 645)	(711)
Rental and utilities	(131 989)	(117 737)
Staff welfare	(18 245)	(10 495)
Strategy Workshop expenses	(130 472)	-
Subscriptions	(20 562)	(9 212)
Telephone and fax	(45 913)	(32 573)
Travel and accommodation	(161 848)	(57 098)
Website design and hosting	(3 048)	(5 500)
	(3 678 120)	(2 441 540)
Operating surplus/ (deficit)	1 344 874	(304 671)
Investment income	41 228	16 500
Finance costs	(6 866)	(192)
	34 362	16 308
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	1 379 236	(288 363)



MY VOTE
COUNTS

