



THE BOKAMOSO BA RONA YOUTH CAMPAIGN



BACKGROUND TO THE PARLIAMENTARY MILLENNIUM PROGRAMME

The Parliamentary Millennium Programme (PMP) is a nation-building initiative of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. It seeks to use creative and interactive means to challenge all South Africans to explore the sources of the different perspectives obstructing nation building, and forging a common vision for the future.

The vision of Parliament is to build an effective people's Parliament that is responsive to the needs of the people and that is driven by the ideal of realising a better quality of life for all the people of South Africa.

This vision implies the dedication and commitment of the institution, to acknowledge and address the needs of all South Africans and to ensure their active participation in the Parliamentary processes that affect their daily lives. This is appropriately aligned to the Constitution and assisted in defining the missions of the PMP as follows.

The mission of PMP is to be Parliament's primary tool for facilitating nation building and promoting social cohesion, in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the people and contributing to Parliament's vision of becoming a true people's Parliament.

The mission of the PMP finds expression through the following core objectives, which in turn speak to the challenge of promoting nation-building and contributing to African unity:

- To harness the potential of our diverse perspectives into a process that maps a way forward for our new nation
- To make visible and assert our South African and African identity
- To build bridges of understanding among South Africans so as to reshape current social and political discourses
- To serve as a means for Parliament to build and consolidate democracy.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Bokamoso Ba Rona Youth Campaign is the PMP's most ambitious project to date. Through the innovative use of various tools and networking technologies, and by forming strategic partnerships with a range of stakeholders, the PMP aims to make a significant and enduring impact on youth development in South Africa.



The campaign aims not only to create a broader awareness of the scope and severity of the social challenges faced by the youth of South Africa, but also to directly assist young people in overcoming these challenges. Bokamoso Ba Rona aims to create an empowering environment for the youth to address these issues by making available tools that will allow them to find creative responses to the challenges they face, and to link them with existing institutions and programmes that can empower and assist them. As Parliament's primary nation-building programme, the PMP further aims to highlight these issues amongst Members of Parliament, and strengthen the capacity of Members of Parliament to use parliamentary mechanisms to support the youth in their efforts to address these issues. Ultimately the project aims to encourage the youth to create a positive vision of a future South Africa, and consider the actions and attitudes that will be required to make this vision a reality.

Bokamoso Ba Rona strives to reflect the voice of the youth in outlining a focused agenda for youth development interventions. The various consultative stages of the campaign will result in a plan of action that will identify specific interventions required by stakeholders to address the issues of greatest concern to the youth.

Overcoming the challenges faced by young people in South Africa will require the coordinated and focused action of Parliament, the Executive, civil society and individual South Africans, both young and old. Bokamoso Ba Rona will allow these stakeholders to hear what the youth themselves have to say about the challenges and opportunities of "our future".



INTRODUCTION

This multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral campaign engages young people in spaces where they ordinarily congregate in their daily lives, and to discuss issues they are often presumed to have no interest in. Platforms are provided for young people to discuss topics such as crime, education, health, employment, and support structures in communities, as well as resolutions for these challenges. In creating platforms for open and honest dialogue about these socio-economic challenges, young people can become united in building a common vision for the future. Therefore, the Bokamoso Ba Rona Youth Campaign is premised on the belief that the youth play a key role in creating and realising a positive vision of a future South Africa, united in its diversity.

It is also important to note the significance of this project in facilitating public participation with a segment of our society that is often regarded as disinterested and apathetic towards social and political issues. While Parliament provides means for citizens to actively participate in its legislative and oversight business, it is worthwhile to emphasize the innovative strides that this project is taking in breaking new ground and making Parliament accessible in new spaces.

The primary objectives of this campaign are:

- To create a broader awareness of the scope and severity of the social challenges faced by the youth of South Africa;
- To create an empowering environment for the youth to address these issues by making available tools that will allow them to find creative responses to the challenges they face, and to link them with existing institutions and programmes that can empower and assist them;
- To highlight these issues amongst Members of Parliament, and strengthen the capacity of Members of Parliament to use parliamentary mechanisms to support the youth in their efforts to address these issues.
- To encourage the youth to create a positive vision of a future South Africa, and consider the actions and attitudes that will be required to make this vision a reality.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

This project is designed to allow the youth the opportunity not only to raise challenging issues, but to also take part in the creation and conceptualisation of the solutions. Throughout the Campaign young people are encouraged to have their say on issues of national importance, and also acknowledge their role in creating the kind of South Africa they want to live in. The following components map out how the objectives of this project will be achieved.

Phase 1

Bokamoso Ambassadors

Training has been conducted with 100 Ambassadors from across the country to support the project in the following ways:

- Popularising the project amongst their peers (in their personal capacity as well as through media opportunities created),
- acting as a focus group in finalising a social survey on MXIT,
- giving input into the First Edition of a Youth Magazine,
- assisting with facilitation during the Youth Dialogue Forums,
- participating in the Youth Summit and drafting business plans for social entrepreneurship initiatives in their communities.
- Ambassadors are also exposed to different youth activities and events, to ensure that they benefit from this campaign.



Social Survey

As a social networking tool widely used by young people, MXiT was ideally suited as a platform to communicate with young people for this campaign. Given its popularity and its accessibility it was the ideal choice for a social survey, which was launched in October 2009 to determine apathy and also allow the youth to identify and prioritise social challenges they confront. The survey had overwhelming response, with over 50 000 respondents to date completing the questionnaire. In addition to survey respondents, the Bokamoso MXiT Contact has a captive audience of over 30 000 registered users.

Outreach

To accommodate those young people who may not have access to MXiT, we also conducted paper based surveys through community based youth clubs, and through the Campaigns Youth Ambassadors. Through the community outreach, over 3000 surveys were completed.

Website Launch

The website was launched to support several of the Campaign's activities, and is available also available as a WAP site (a format compatible with mobile phones). One of the website's featured activities was a virtual march where participants logged onto the site, choose a marcher, and joined others in a march to the South African Parliament.

For the first time ever, young people across the country took part in a 'virtual march', walking across cyberspace to 'attend' the 2010 State of the Nation Address. For more information log onto www.bokabuddies.co.za - This event attracted over 16 000 marchers who virtually attended the President's address. The website also hosted a June 16 virtual march to commemorate the youth of 1976.

Phase 2

Youth Magazine

The results of the MXiT campaign as well as other research done on youth issues will be compiled and published in the form of a magazine. The magazine will serve as a source of information during dialogue forums, as well as a workbook. Information on support organisations will also be provided, allowing the magazine to remain relevant outside of the Dialogue Forums. To ensure maximum youth participation in the process, ambassador inputs are incorporated into the magazine, as well as inputs gathered on other networking platforms provided by the project. In addition, the name for the magazine was voted for by almost 10 000 MXiT users, and by popular choice, the youth magazine is called “Ur Turn”.



Youth Dialogue Forums

The first phase intends to get a sense of how young people generally feel about issues, while in the second phase, the results of the social survey will be discussed in greater detail. Workshops will be held for all provinces in clusters of three, with 60 young people invited from each province. A customised scenario planning methodology will be adopted for these forums, and young people will be encouraged to learn from the future, and to make plans to create that future. The focus will be on both the role of young people as individual change agents for their own lives, as well as the collective efforts of the Youth constituency, Parliament, Government, business and civil society sectors.



Youth Machinery Review

Parallel to the process of providing a platform for young people to have their say, this project will also conduct interviews, focus group sessions and round tables with organised youth structures. These enquiries will serve to provide a comprehensive view of Youth Machinery in South Africa, evaluate their achievements and challenges, and begin to plot a way forward on youth development in the country.



Phase 3

Youth Summit

The Youth Summit is a chance for ordinary young people convene at the National Parliament in Cape Town, and discuss their issues with the country's decision makers. It will be an opportunity for them to present their views, plans and aspirations to Members of Parliament, Ministers, Director Generals of government departments, leaders of business and those in civil society. The key output for the summit is a Plan of Action for all stakeholders in youth development, as well as a plan for following up and monitoring progress on commitments made.

BOKA YOUTH MEDIA PROJECT

Using mobile units, a technical and content team will travel throughout the country to train young people, in especially marginalized communities, to become critical media consumers who can also produce their own content. Through strategic partnerships this content will then be shared with a wide variety of media platforms. This training will involve access to and training in the use of communication platforms such as television, radio, print, mobile and social networks.

One of the core functions of this project will be to interface with young people in spaces where they ordinarily congregate. It is hoped that by providing platforms for dialogue the youth will capture their own stories, thoughts, opinions, hopes and dreams. The aim of the project is to equip the youth with skills that would empower them to become key role players in creating and conceptualizing their own stories and to establish a multi media communications network, operated by young South Africans for young South Africans.



Social Entrepreneurship

One of the goals of the project is to assist young people in realising their own roles in shaping their lives, and the future of South Africa. Thus a significant focus will be on giving Bokamoso Ambassadors, as well as other young South Africans the opportunity to draft plans that will target a specific issue in the communities they come from. The top ten plans will be supported (financially and through mentorship) to ensure their sustainability.



CONCLUSION

The Parliamentary Millennium Programme is tasked with the challenge of creating spaces for South Africans to engage on issues related to national identity, tolerance, diversity and nation building. These issues have a profound effect on how South Africans relate to each other, how we resolve conflict, and our ability to collectively build a united country. With a citizenry that is divided on what our country's priorities are, or what should be done about them, the social cohesion necessary for building one nation cannot exist. It is thus imperative that the PMP find ways of getting South Africans to realise and acknowledge their commonalities, and not only their differences.

In addition to this, there is a need to engage what appears to be an uninterested segment of society, the youth. As significant actors in the future of our country, the choices young people make for their lives, as well as their ability to engage with one another in constructive ways builds on their levels of tolerance, as well as their problem solving skills. Creating a platform for youth to express their views, and for those views to be reflected in governance structures, will give Parliament an opportunity to create the "People's Parliament" it strives for. A closer relationship between governance structures and the people they serve, can only strengthen these institutions, and deepen democracy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BOKAMOSO BA RONA YOUTH CAMPAIGN, PLEASE CONTACT THE

PARLIAMENTARY MILLENNIUM PROGRAMME

www.pmpsa.gov.za

PO Box 15 Cape Town, 8000 RSA
Tel: 27 (21) 403 8246 Fax: 27 (21) 403 8181
www.parliament.gov.za
Email: mill_project@parliament.gov.za