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01 Introduction

Greetings everyone

We hope that this first newsletter of the year finds you well and that you had a peaceful and relaxing break, sharing time with friends and family. The holiday followed a busy 2019 with challenges and successes, saying farewell to and welcoming new partners on board.

The CSPPL team has been engaging with you telephonically and we continue to be inspired by your commitment as well as your innovative approaches to making positive changes in your communities. While some of you are already engaging with your Provincial Legislatures to various degrees, others are actively working on identifying the relevant issues to take to our representatives and on collecting the necessary evidence to present with your message. Regardless of where you are, we look forward to continuing to walk this journey with you.

In the past months we have been actively working to build the formal relationships with the Provincial Legislatures in all three provinces. Through these connections fruitful engagements can emerge and be sustained long into the future. We also had a constructive meeting with the Limpopo Group of CSOs where promising networks are developing. This leaves us with a great platform from which to launch into the final year of the project.

But first, here are some of the highlights from the past month:





02 Provincial Legislature Engagements

Limpopo

We met with the Deputy Speaker, the Chief of Staff and other representatives of the Provincial Legislature in Limpopo. The aim of the meeting was to learn more about the capacity building programs and to explore how collaboration with Civil Society can be improved. The Speaker introduced the function of the Public Participation Committee as the appropriate channel through which to engage with the different Committees. Their role is to support law making, receive petitions and submissions from communities, conduct oversight, engage through the district/regional offices and engage with stakeholders on specific issues. A formal letter has been sent to the Chief of Staff who has promised to direct it to the relevant stakeholders in the Provincial Legislature.

We also had an interesting roundtable meeting with the Research, Public Participation and Capacity Development Units and two of our partner CSOs namely the Treatment Action Campaign, and the Ritavi Victim Empowerment Group. The Unit Manager for Public Participation and Outreach explained that her Unit is made up of three distinct offices: Outreach and Education, Petitions and Public Hearings. She also shared some of the processes about how petitions and submissions are dealt with. We anticipate that once we have a formal agreement in place we can build on the relationship with this office and explore the role CSOs can play a role in oversight and strengthening accountability through the Provincial Legislature's annual reports, performance plans and budget processes for example.

Northern Cape

In our last newsletter we shared the developments taking place in the Northern Cape, where, together with some of our partner CSOs, we met with the Executive Manager for Committees, Research, Information Services Public Education and Communication and other members of the Provincial Legislatures.

Since then we have been working on a formal agreement and are planning to have an official signing ceremony in 2020. This agreement will create opportunities to streamline Civil Society engagements with the Provincial Legislature in this province. We will keep you updated about the developments in this area.





03 **Civil** Society Engagement

In Limpopo we hosted a half-day engagement session with the CSO partners.

There were many new faces in the room, both from the CSOs and Democracy Works Foundation. We started this meeting by introducing the new members and outlining the project. We also introduced the Advocacy and Communication Diaries, which we hope will assist partners to collect ideas and information for the Communication Plans that we shall co-produce and implement over the course of this year. We are delighted that the Treatment Action Campaign shared their evidence collection tool, which we have

adapted to suit various partner organisations. We will send these out to the CSO partners in Limpopo soon and plan to introduce the tools in all three provinces. We look forward to working with you on continuous improvements and on implementing the tools to support your work with Provincial Legislatures. We also envisage that partner organisations can create networks to enable peer-to-peer learning and support.





04 Democracy Works Academy

The opportunity to collaborate with the South Africa CSPPL project was well received among the Democracy Works Academy fellows.

We have selected a group of young, active citizens who are keen to work with you to spread your message and to create awareness about your work through newspaper articles, blogs and podcasts.

We look forward to introducing you to each other early this year, as well as to co-producing compelling outputs that you can use to advocate for your work.

With that we wish you a pleasant start into the New Year and look forward to continuing our work with you.

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