

Democracy Development Program

NEWSLETTER

**MAKE
YOUR VOTE
COUNT**



Welcome!

The DDP's annual theme, "**Make Your Vote Count**", reflects our commitment to empowering individuals to participate in the democratic process actively.

Through voter education initiatives, facilitating access to information, mobilizing voters, fostering inclusivity, monitoring and advocacy efforts and post-election engagements, we aim **to enable citizens to exercise their democratic right to vote effectively.**

We are delighted to present the various impactful initiatives that have shaped our journey toward fostering stronger democratic principles.

Happy reading!

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EVENTS

WORKSHOPS, PRESS BRIEFINGS, FORUMS, DIALOGUES & CONFERENCES

Our events were filled with insightful discussions and brought together diverse voices to tackle pressing issues facing our democratic systems and communities. From conference debates to community dialogues, the DDP is proud to have provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and constructive engagement.

DDP ASSOCIATE FACILITATORS REFRESHER WORKSHOP



ABOVE: Delegates at the Refresher Workshop

On February 5th, we hosted a refresher workshop as part of our dedication to empowering individuals and communities in the democratic process.

The objective of the workshop was to equip facilitators with the **necessary skills and knowledge to actively engage in a variety of DDP initiatives** expected throughout the year.

PRESS BRIEFING: UNVEILING DDP'S 2024 INITIATIVES

On February 6th, the DDP conducted a press briefing to reveal our initiatives for 2024. This briefing provided **essential updates on our collaborative work throughout the year and outlined our strategic approach to navigating the 2024 election year.**



ABOVE: DDP Executive Director, Dr. Paul Kariuki addressing delegates and the media



ABOVE: Sphamandla Mhlongo, Mbalenhle Mkhize, Prof. Bheki Mngomezulu, Dr. Paul Kariuki and Dr. Lubna Nadvi during the DDP SONA2024 Public forum in Durban.



ABOVE: Dr. Lubna Nadvi, Senior Lecture at UKZN and Prof. Bheki Mngomezulu Director of CANRAD at the Nelson Mandela University.

SONA FORUM

On 7 February, the DDP hosted its first forum of the year ahead of the 2024 SONA Forum, which took place on the 8th of February. The forum's theme, **"Unpacking the Budget Speech of 2023 and its implications on SONA"**, set the stage for insightful discussions.

During the forum, Prof Bheki Mngomezulu delved into the political climate of South Africa, considering the emergence of new political parties, the ANC's January 8th Statement, and various manifesto launches. Subsequently, Dr Lubna Nadvi analysed the 2023 SONA and provided forecasts for the 2024 address, including South Africa's global role.

Watch the full forum [here](#).

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP



ABOVE: Dr Paul Kariuki with delegates at the Women in Leadership Workshop

On 27 March, the DDP convened a workshop for women in leadership positions.

The workshop **focused on addressing the disparities in the leadership sphere**, as well as unpacking insights from their personal leadership journeys and how these experiences influence their ascendancy in board governance.



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VOTER EDUCATION: COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIALOGUE

On February 16th, the DDP organised a Local Government Dialogue at Ntuzuma A Hall.

Community members engaged in discussions concerning local **government operations, electoral procedures, and the importance of voting.**

A prominent issue brought to light was the ongoing water shortage, emphasising the community's urgent concerns.



ABOVE: Delgates at the Ntuzuma Community Dialogue

WOMEN'S DIALOGUE



ABOVE: Delgates at the Nhangwini Community Dialogue

On February 26th, we hosted a Women's Dialogue at the Nhangwini Community Hall. Collectively, we explored the theme of '**Building Gender-Sensitive Communities to Foster Strong and Empowered Leadership**'.



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VOTER EDUCATION: COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

WOMEN, DEMOCRACY AND LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE



ABOVE: Delgates at the Msunduzi Community Dialogue

On the 30th of April, the DDP Women, Democracy and Leadership Community Dialogue at the Msunduzi Municipality. Discussions centred around **the issue of gender representation, specifically looking at women's equality through legislation in the 21st century.**

ELECTORAL INTERGITY DIALOGUE



ABOVE: Maotana delgates at the Electoral Integrity Dialogue

On the 2nd of April, the DDP came together with the Maotana community, in a powerful dialogue on the theme: **“Promoting Electoral Integrity and boosting voter turnout for the upcoming 2024 elections”.**



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SPECIAL PROJECT: ELECTION ACTIVITIES

Aligning with the organisation's core principles and with the 2024 elections on the horizon, the DDP has committed this year to prioritise civic education and empowering citizens to **#MAKEYOURVOTECOUNT**. Through these initiatives, we seek to enhance democratic participation, promote transparency, and ultimately strengthen the democratic foundation of South Africa.

LAUNCH: ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION FOR INTEGRITY BY CIVIL SOCIETY

On February 16th, the DDP introduced its inaugural electronic platform for its elections program, Electoral Participation For Integrity by Civil Society, coined **EPICS**.

Endorsed by diverse stakeholders and accredited by the IEC, the initiative is **dedicated to promoting electoral integrity and uses rigorous methodologies to oversee and assess the entire electoral process**. This platform serves as the primary tool for recruiting observers for the upcoming National and Provincial elections.

For more information, click [here](#).



ABOVE: DDP Senior Programs Officer, Sphamandla Mhlongo, addressing stakeholders at the EPICS inauguration

MULTI-PARTY FORUM

The second forum of the year featured a multi-party platform, providing political parties with the opportunity to present their manifestos to citizens and discuss their visions for South Africa.

Prof. Bheki Mngomezulu, representing CANRAD, delivered a thought-provoking response. He emphasised the **importance of continuous interactions between citizens and political parties, rejecting the idea of elections as a means to sideline opponents**.

Rather, Prof. Mngomezulu underscored the significance of embracing an intergenerational mix of leadership as a practical necessity.

Watch the event [here](#).



ABOVE: DDP's Dr Paul Kariuki and Sphamandla Mhlongo with political party representatives at the Multi-Party Forum



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SPECIAL PROJECT: ELECTION ACTIVITIES

INCEPTION WORKSHOP

On March 14th and 18th, the DDP, in collaboration with its partner CANRAD, organised an Inception Workshop for the Election Integrity Project in Durban and Gqeberha respectively. The workshop served as an opportunity to delve deeper into **safeguarding election integrity**.



ABOVE: DDP staff with delegates at the Inception Workshop's in Durban and Gqeberha

DDP OBSERVER MISSION

On March 19, the DDP, in collaboration with CANRAD, conducted an observer mission training. This program aimed to **educate** delegates, partners and DDP CSO Network Members on the **role and duties of election observers**.



ABOVE: DDP staff with DDP CSO Network Members and delegates at the DDP Observer Mission



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SPECIAL PROJECT: ELECTION ACTIVITIES

JOURNALISM WORKSHOP



On March 21, the DDP conducted a training session for journalists representing diverse media platforms, including print and radio. The workshop focused **on enhancing their skills in electoral reporting for the imminent National and Provincial elections.**

In recognising the pivotal role of the media in keeping the public abreast of election-related matters, the workshop aimed to **equip journalists with the necessary tools to ensure that citizens are adequately informed and empowered to fulfil their civic responsibilities with assurance.**



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SPECIAL PROJECT: SISONKE IN DEMOCRACY



ABOVE: Sisonke in Democracy Project Manager, Donsy Kunene, addressing delegates

Funded by the Canadian High Commission and implemented by the DDP, the Sisonke in Democracy project focuses on **strengthening community interrelationships between African migrants (refugees and asylum seekers) and their host communities (South Africans) in co-governing their communities together as partners.**

More information can be found [here](#).

SPECIAL PROJECT: ADVANCING COMMUNITY VOICES PROJECT



ABOVE: Sphamandla Mhlango addressing delegates at the Advancing Community Voices Project

Funded by the Social Justice Initiative, the Advancing Community Voices Project aims to **mobilize citizens and civil society for active participation in the 2024 National and Provincial elections, both as voters and election observers.** The project has several [key objectives](#) and activities.

AFRICAN UNION AND CIVIL SOCIETY THINK TANK MEETING ON EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN AFRICA

In November 2023, the DDP was invited by the Africa Union-NEPAD secretariat to share its views on the use of emerging technologies for the public benefit **in relation to deepening citizen engagement and participation in democratic processes across the continent.**

The event was held in Cairo, Egypt, co-hosted by the Africa-Union-NEPAD secretariat and the Ministry of Communications, Egypt.



ABOVE: DDP Executive Director, Dr Paul Kariuki, with delegates in Egypt

SPECIAL VISIT BY THE KONRAD ADENAUER STIFTUNG FOUNDATION



ABOVE: DDP staff with KAS Resident Representative, Mr Gregor Jaecke and Project Manager, Dr Christoph Wiedenroth

On the 12th of March, the DDP held a meeting with KAS Resident Representative Gregor Jaecke and Project Manager Dr Christoph Wiedenroth.

The meeting shed light on DDP's exciting **election-related activities for the year with a particular focus on the training of election observers.**

STAFF CELEBRATIONS



ABOVE: DDP Researcher, Thelma Nyarhi

Congrats!

Counted and called amongst hundreds, DDP Researcher, Thelma Nyarhi, graduated with a degree with distinction in the Master of Social Science specialising in Anthropology at the University of Cape Town on the 14th of December 2023.

Her dissertation, under the supervision of Prof. Francis B. Nyamnjoh, was later converted into a book titled: ***Running Ahead - Zimbabwean Women Navigating Precarity in Johannesburg.***

Welcome!

The DDP family welcomes Yelokazi Mfuto to the communications team. Yelokazi is a Youth holistic Development enthusiast who is passionate about the struggle against socio-economic, political and health challenges that affect young people.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Communication, History and Political Sciences, and an honours degree in Political Sciences and International Relations from the University of Fort Hare. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Multidisciplinary Human Rights at the University of Pretoria.



ABOVE: DDP Communication Strategist, Yelokazi Mfuto

Upcoming Events

- **Multi-Party Forum (10/04/24)**
- **KAS Journalism Capacity Building Workshop (11/04/24)**
- **Media Summit (27/06/24)**
- **Political Parties Summit (04/07/24)**

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