



Let's talk **accountability**

By Chengetai Chikadaya



The Eastern Cape Socio-economic Consultative Council (ECSECC) has adopted the acronym VUCA to succinctly describe the socio-political landscape of the province. According to the council, the setting in which our provincial leaders, civil society organisations and media houses operate is challenging, not only because it is **Volatile** and holds much **Uncertainty**, but also because it has problems that are **Complex** and **Ambiguous**. The Eastern Cape is a province with a strong storytelling and oratory historical tradition. There are therefore many institutions and organisations that use this asset to facilitate inclusive communication spaces that address the VUCA environment. The province has a vibrant community and local media sector, civil society organisations (CSOs) like the Eastern Cape Communication Forum (ECCF) and state actors like the Government Communication Information System (GCIS), working together to facilitate inclusive communication spaces where citizens can discuss key development issues and hold their local government to account.

CSOs and state actors frequently make use of dialogues and debates to facilitate inclusive communication spaces where citizens can not only voice their opinions freely but also be heard by relevant decision-makers. However, one of the major disadvantages or challenges of many of these invited spaces is that firstly, there is a negative invited-inviter power dynamic unintentionally formed by technicalities as simple as the process of agenda drafting, seating arrangements and feedback loops. The importance/role of inclusion and listening as a value and act is often underestimated within these spaces. There also exists a healthy yet complex historical tension between state and local/community media. A thorough exploration into the complexities of the relationship between state and media is imperative to facilitating a radical shift in the metanarrative and meta-values used to underpin communication in the Eastern Cape public domain.

From 10 to 25 June 2015, the ECCF co-ordinator travelled to Germany on a study tour with 12 South African communicators. The group included editors and journalists from the community and local media sector as well as government communicators from both Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape. The tour was organised by the South African-German GIZ-Governance Support Programme (GSP) in an attempt to facilitate learning and transfer of knowledge on tools and mechanisms in the field of accountability. Over 15 days the group travelled through Berlin, Hamburg and Bonn, to engage on the importance of two-way communication between state and citizens and the role of local media as an intermediary. The team visited a variety of media houses, public offices and communication enterprises to gain an overview of the German media-state dynamic, especially regarding state accountability.

It is the fundamental belief of the ECCF that in order to contribute to a transparent, healthy and more vibrant democratic media ecology, which is in line with its vision, an understanding of all actors must be gained, and furthermore, an overview of the system dynamics must be attained. On embarking on this study tour to Germany, the key intentions of the ECCF was to learn more about the democratic and communication ecology of Germany and how the various actors relate to one another. Through discussion and comparison, the hope was to therefore gain a deepened understanding of the South African context.

The tour was facilitated by trained journalist and coach Andrea Tapper of Tapper Press, who gave input in the form of workshops and guidance and assisted in eliciting deliberative dialogue on key issues throughout the trip. The trip successfully provided a variety of insights into the inner workings of the German federal state and the healthy tension between itself and the German media. The trip also provided the opportunity to reflect on the historical differences and similarities between the two countries.

Germany and South Africa: democratic cousins

South Africa is viewed as Africa's economic and political powerhouse. It has a decisive influence on Africa's political stability, while Germany holds a similar position in Europe. The two countries share a comparable history characterised by citizens suppressed through legislative segregation who showed a determined unwillingness to submit to unjust laws. Both countries were host to a socio-political system of separation that limited freedom of movement and association. In South Africa, the system was known as apartheid, loosely translated as a system of "being apart". In essence it was a 46-year-long institutionalised system of racial segregation, established and enforced by the ruling, white, Afrikaans, National Party from 1948 to 1994. Therefore, for 46 years, South Africa was divided along racial lines. While in Germany, almost 14 000 kilometres away, a different kind of wall existed, a physical barrier named the Berlin Wall that was erected in 1961. The wall separated the "socialist" East from the "capitalist" West. The East claimed that the wall was built to protect the people from fascist elements that threatened the "will of the people" and the development of a self-determined, socialist state. In reality, the wall served as a barrier to the masses of people that sought to defect from East to West Germany during the post-World War II period. Therefore, for 27 years, Germany was divided along ideological lines.

In 1989 the Eastern political forces experienced increasing pressure. Poland and Hungary began to succumb to an erosion of power. After continuous civil unrest, on 9 November 1989 East Germans were allowed to travel to West Germany. Masses of people crossed and climbed onto the wall. At the same time, in South Africa, political pressure on the apartheid government through international sanctions put the regime under increasing pressure and in 1990 negotiations to end the heinous system of apartheid began. The Berlin Wall fell completely

in 1992 and South Africa enjoyed its first democratic elections in 1994. South Africa and Germany were both born anew.

Formerly advantaged minority groups stayed in South Africa in and among the previously disadvantaged majority. This dynamic forced reconciliation to the top of the political agenda and made South African politics a highly VUCA space. Some would say that while systems and frameworks for access to information were being set up well, a culture of accountability was eroded by challenges in implementation and political appointments dominated by patronage. Further questions about the transparency of the South African governance space arose when the Protection of State Information Bill that was passed by parliament in 2010/11. Yet, on the other hand, South Africa simultaneously joined the Open Government Project (OGP), a membership-based international project whose selection criteria is based on frameworks that allow access to information, constitutional rights, budget transparency, civic participation, and asset disclosures. Economically speaking, structures were set up to equalise opportunities for the black majority through radical programmes like Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) followed up by Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBEE). South African political discourse therefore became highly contextual.

On the other hand, in Germany, things transpired a little differently. There was a strong focus on transparency and accountability. Symbols of transparency were placed in the public domain; wooden doors were replaced with glass in parliament buildings, historical exhibitions were placed in public spaces and the electoral system was set up to ensure that no one political party held exclusive power at any given time. The study tour to Germany revealed that many of these small actions combined with the bigger acts of the state, make the German political domain one of the most stable and transparent spaces. Although many historical problems remain and there is a struggling media sector, it is still a space where accountability remains key.

Overview of the German media landscape

The German media landscape is characterised by a vibrant print, TV and radio sector. The print sector has about 50 daily, 1 528 local, 121 weekly and seven Sunday editions. Out of a population of 80-million people, 22-million are regular readers, making Germany one of the greatest reading nations in the world. The numbers are quite difficult to believe, especially because in every train travelled on during the tour, almost no one was holding a newspaper and almost everyone had a cellphone in their hands. According to the same numbers, television has a penetration of 90%, newspapers 63% and online about 46%.

The media sector is divided into public or private. There are two nationwide television channels (ZDF 1 and 2) and a number of community television stations. Public TV is run by an independent board made up of people from all walks of life (church, trade unions and parties). Since 2010, a law was passed, forcing all citizens to pay tax to finance public TV. However, not all citizens are supportive of this law and the state has two cases in the constitutional court against the regulation. This is interesting because in South Africa, TV licenses are rarely contested. Compared to the American-centric South African TV, German TV is still very much under the influence of British television, especially the BBC.

What is most interesting about German public TV is the fact that no advertising is allowed. This is very different from public TV in South Africa where prime TV time is sold to advertisers. Compared to a country where state advertising is relied upon for survival (the state recently promised 30% of its advertising to community media), in Germany, for the past five years, more money is made from distribution (€4.7-billion) than advertising (€3.1-billion) in print. This is a major paradigm shift that impacts the relationship between state and media drastically, especially



making media free to report on state matters as they wish. This theme ran through the various engagements that the team had with media houses throughout the journey. Print publications are clearly branded by their ideological leanings, left, right and/or liberal. The question of political allegiances in South Africa remains a sensitive topic that is rarely discussed but often made into accusations.

Similar to the situation in South Africa, the print sector in Germany has not been immune to the effects of online penetration and shrinking budgets; many editors are being fired and re-hired as online editors for far smaller salaries or as freelancers and stringers. Also, similar to the South African Press Council is the German Presse Rat. The German body is far more anonymous than the one in South Africa. Complainants can go online and file their complaint (www.presserat.de). The body had only 20 cases in 2014.



Alex TV: free radio and TV for all

Alex TV is a public access television station based in Berlin, Alexanderplatz. The main vision of the television station is to encourage public participation and because of this, anyone and everyone can produce and share content on its platform.

In 2006/2007 German online spaces became saturated with low quality content and German TV inundated with badly-produced programmes. The big question then arose: do we need open access TV, if it's really this bad?

Alex, started in 2008, has an open TV and radio studio where young people can come and produce and broadcast their own radio/TV shows. Radio shows are produced using a simple software programme called Mairlist. In Berlin there are about 150 radio stations and many open access radio stations. This means that there is huge competition and content has to be good. Alex allows young people to produce content by providing equipment for anyone to use free of charge, as long as they produce

for Alex. The quality of equipment provided and duration allowed depends on the quality of the production and level at which the product engages the audience. Alex has about 530 evaluators of content. The evaluators watch the content and then critique the quality. Suggestions are given and workshops are provided to help producers improve. Alex is seen as a valuable stepping stone for practical experience for young people. A great deal of the content produced is placed online, with their website receiving around 27 500 clicks per day. The station has about 800 producers and 86% of them are from Berlin.

Talking Point!

Alex TV allows young people to freely contribute to local and national discourse. By the mere fact that it remains a platform and not a producer, its political affiliations are unquestionable. The value of such an initiative to the South African media landscape would be immense. However, some of the already glaring challenges would be skills shortage and language barriers. In Germany, everyone speaks German. Would it be possible to develop a cross-cultural platform that allows the flow of information in various languages? Would the government be prepared to sponsor an endeavour where it is not possible to censor through any means, especially pressure through advertorial supply? The Media Development and Diversity Agency could quite possibly take on such an endeavour in the Eastern Cape.

Bezirksamt Neukölln: a problem district changing

Neukölln is one of 12 boroughs in Berlin. Each borough has its own municipality. Similar to Soweto in South Africa, the borough is home to a large migrant population. In its totality, the area has a population of about 310 000. Almost half of the population are immigrants coming from 146 different countries. Not only are the immigrants from a different racial/ethnic background, mostly, Turkish or Arab; 63 500 are Muslim. One major difference between Neukölln and South Africa is that the state provides a great deal of financial and social support to foreigners. Firstly, there are many schools where parents do not have to pay for books and furthermore the state pays out €185 per child for school fees and other expenses related to education. The down side to this is however that because the state provides so much support, a small minority of migrants do not work and others even go as far as pocketing the surplus cash.

Most of the Germans who could not handle the influx of foreigners moved to other suburbs and integration became a top priority for the municipality. Regardless of the state support, the area was soon

labelled a “problem borough”. Social workers began to work closely with the police and develop strategies to manage integration and encourage engagement. The situation became difficult in the district when in 2006 an elementary school, the Rutli School, was declared unmanageable by its own teachers due to the high levels of violence. The issue was communicated extensively through local news. Political tension grew between politicians and those working on the ground.

In an effort to curb this, the municipality began to run projects with civil society. A nationwide debate about the schooling system ensued and the school has since been reformed. In addition to this, the main church was developed into an intercultural centre. There is even a café run by an African and rooms for seminars. In order to maintain close communication with citizens, the municipality does not use a complex communication strategy but rather relies on close ties with CSOs through a hands-on municipal officer and social workers who also speak directly to the media. It is interesting to note that in comparison to the multi-layered communications departments that many of the South African municipalities have, the Neukölln Municipality has had no formal communications department for 15 years.

Neukoellner.Net: famous, wild and unpaid



Neukoellner.Net is an online news website founded in 2011 by three young women who studied cultural journalism. They started off as student project and continued when they got their first jobs (none of them are actually working as journalists). The magazine is run as a non-profit entity. The website is attractive to the eye, clean and fresh with beautiful photography. The news section is creatively labelled as “art and kitsch” and the politics section as “power and fairy tales”.

The website can be translated into eight different languages and receives almost 12 000 clicks per day. The main aim of the online news website is to re-imagine and shape the image of the “problem district” which it serves.

The topics started with culture, street life, and galleries and changed as the district changed. Issues of crime and gentrification took the fore but the magazine still aims to provide balanced and fair reporting that gives everyone a voice. They recently won the Grimm award which is an important step for acknowledgment of online journalism.

Zebralog: professional citizen participation

What do you get when you cross a team of psychologists, historians, town planners, software engineers, project managers and dialogue specialists with a zebra? Well, you get Zebralog. Zebralog is a Berlin-based agency specialising in public participation. The agency manages everything from concept to design, technical development to communication issues, management and evaluation and has carried out major public participation projects such as school planning in Frankfurt and various participation websites in the city of Berlin.

Why the name Zebralog? “A zebra is very much like a human being. It is almost impossible to domesticate and does not like to be manipulated. A zebra is a social animal and although humans may think that they are individualistic, they care a lot about social issues,” said Mathias Trelen, the founder of Zebralog. “We love democracy and we all know that for democracy to function, people need to be consulted and allowed to participate in public processes.” In 2003, the agency recognised a gap in the market. The state of Berlin was embarking on various development projects following the reunification of East and West. Questions about the use of public space were often coming up. Similar to South African municipalities, the city of Berlin has a lot on their plate. Public participation often ranks low on the list; even though there are dedicated officials for this purpose, they are often themselves in the communications department, acting as communicators and making use of the obvious communication suspects of radio, TV and print to elicit public participation.

In an ever-changing and flowing dynamic, the tried and tested methods are simply not enough, because people do not like to be manipulated and public participation should never be just another communication campaign. Therefore, Zebralog does not run communication campaigns for the state; they develop tools and software that create a platform for the state to engage with its citizens.

“Let’s take the example of a new building in the middle of the city. How do you get people involved?”

How do you answer their questions before they even get the chance to ask? Imagine a public participation website where visitors get the following options: attending a live event on site, a colloquium with building experts that can tell them about the impact of the building on urban planning, noise pollution, property costs etc., a citizen workshop where grandma and grandpa can actively engage and debate their concerns and queries around the erection of the new infrastructure, a theatre show on the future uses of the building, a guided tour... the list goes on and on. These are just some of the tools we are using to get the public participating.”

When you walk into the Zebralog office you immediately notice the glass walls, free and open spaces and dynamic discussions in each room. The team consists of a range of professionals with varying backgrounds. Trenal attributes the success of the 12-year-old agency to the eclecticism of the team. He believes that public participation is a cross-cutting function and cannot be left on the shoulders of, say, communication experts or software engineers alone. In fact Zebralog thoroughly enjoys working with more technical officials in the municipality, such as town planners, because they are always on the pulse of the action. In addition to the state, the agency also works closely with civil society organisations and often runs joint workshops.

There are of course some grey areas in the space of public participation. For instance, what do you do when you start an online dialogue and the feedback is atrocious? What do you do when public participation may ignite dormant issues that would much rather be left untouched? What do you do when you feel strongly about an issue and are asked to mediate objectively?

Talking point!

Is this model applicable in South Africa? Can public participation be outsourced? In a country where trust for the state dwindles and people suffer from consultation fatigue, perhaps a fresh, neutral and non-biased approach to public participation can be found in a South African Zebralog? Public participation is a value that is also shared by South Africa and some of these lessons can be useful for the South African context. South Africa has a complex and bureaucratic government system; government communicators are extremely busy managing invited spaces and regulated public engagements. In such cases, the space and time for social innovation becomes limited. Social innovation could help to address issues such as xenophobia, housing, public services etc. and in this case, outsourcing might just be the key needed to unlock public participation in our country.



Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten (PNN): daily for sale, weekend for free

Nachrichten is one of two daily newspapers in the affluent and historic neighbourhood of Potsdamer. The paper has a circulation of about 10 000 and that's not rising. Its main readership is the affluent and active citizens of the area. The paper is ideologically liberal and has historically been seen as a revolutionary option in the times of the East-West separation. Readers crave liberal political opinion and PNN provides them with this. Potsdamer Neue is the little sister of the Tagesspiegel, a national newspaper. It is a mix of local news and national news sourced from its big sister publication and the local version would not be able to survive without this. PNN has a small team managed by editor-in chief Sabine Schicketanz. The paper publishes six times a week with a paid e-paper that has a rising circulation. The paper, like most publications, has been hit by shrinking news rooms

and drops in circulation.

The paper itself is sold for €1.40. The Sunday edition – Potsdam am Sonntag – is given out for free to households and has a circulation of more than 120 000. Fifty percent of the paper's revenue comes from sales and the other 50% from advertising. To supplement the business, the PNN runs a small ticketing office on its premises. Printing and stringers are outsourced. Distributors/vendors are paid a minimum wage in accordance with German labour laws. The paper does not have fixed editors; everyone does a little bit of something. The paper keeps contact with its readers through media, letters, emails, calls and some drop-ins. Returns are stocked and recycled. Dissimilar to most South African community newspapers, the PNN does not struggle with a high turnover, because for many journalists, Potsdamer is actually seen as the greener pasture. To give back to the community, they do media literacy work with schools.

Hinz and Kunz: A media project for and by the homeless

The life expectancy of a homeless person is about 47 years compared to an average German who is expected to live to the age of 80. Homelessness is more likely to affect men because women often go into other illicit activities like prostitution to earn money. There are 2 000 people in Hamburg living on the streets and 4 000 in Berlin.

Many people who have fallen on hard times move from small towns to big cities in an effort to gain anonymity and avoid public shame. These are hard facts that most Germans do not know about. In an effort to raise awareness, Hinz and Kunz is a unique magazine/NGO that covers major issues surrounding the lives of homeless people in Berlin. The magazine is very similar to the Big Issue and the two publications have a strong relationship.

Counterintuitive to what one might think of a NGO/magazine focusing on marginalised groups, Hinz and Kunz is a high-quality product. It has a full editorial staff made up of professional journalists, a press office and a fundraising officer and works very closely with social welfare from the state. The founders of the magazine admit that they could not work without social workers as many of the homeless have complex psycho-social problems that they are not equipped to deal with (drug and alcohol addiction, depression and psychosis).

The main office of Hinz and Kunz provides a welcoming space for homeless people to get a free coffee and socialise. The magazine is sold by the very same homeless people who act as vendors on the streets of Berlin. Each vendor buys their own copies to then sell on the street for a profit. Vendors are 18+ and come from 15 different nationalities but most are from East Europe, Poland, Bulgaria and Germany. Since its inception in 1993, more than 17-million newspapers have been sold by 5 000 homeless men and women, averaging about 64 000 copies per month. They do not make huge profits from this because by law, anyone who is receiving assistance from the state can only earn a maximum of €100 from employment.

As a non-profit organisation the publication aims to offer a good structure for vendors as well as open the minds of the people in Berlin to alternative narratives about why people become poor in Germany, as there is quite a strong stigma against the poor. For most people in Germany, housing is very expensive. One can see posters advertising simple two-bedroom flats in town for the amount of €1 200 (approximately R18 000). Many young working people have found it difficult to find housing in the city and many of the houses that provide so-called asylum for the homeless are actually far from safe. Homeless people are mixed among the mentally disturbed, drug addicts and rapists. It is for this reason that most homeless people prefer to live on the streets. This is an issue that they address in their magazine, while working closely with the state to rectify the situation. Hinz and Kunz often work with the homeless to develop new projects that support them.

It is very impressive that the magazine manages to finance itself and fundraising for the NGO is strictly done locally to maintain the dignity of its beneficiaries and raise awareness among its neighbours. Once a year the magazine has a special edition on cooking where staff members and vendors cook together and share recipes. The last edition was wildly successful and made a large profit.

Der Spiegel/Spiegel online (SPON): famous news magazine, popular news site

Der Spiegel is Germany's most famous and recognised weekly news magazine published in Hamburg. Even as the largest and most recognised publication, Der Spiegel has suffered the effects of the decline in print. Today Spiegel sells about 880 000 copies, down from over a million copies in 2003. On the other hand, its online news site makes enough money to sustain a large staff; they charge about €50 000 per day for a single online ad. In 2009 they did however sustain a big hit from the financial crisis. No online adverts were sold that year. The online site has about 150 journalists. Although they work side by side with print, there is the feeling that more needs to be done together. They have lost the lead on digital to Bild which oftentimes sacrifice fact-checking for speed. They get about 20-million page impressions a day and 10-million readers a month. The institution was made famous when two journalists were charged with treason for publishing an article titled, "Germany is not quite ready to defend itself".



Professor Caja Thimm: social media expert from Bonn University

If there is an expert on social networks, Twitter, Facebook and the like, it's Dr Caja Thimm who studied communication and political science in Heidelberg, San Francisco and Berkeley and has been a professor and director of the media science faculty at Bonn University for 15 years.

This dynamic social media expert talked to the team about her recently published analysis "Digital citizens: political participation in times of social media" covering case studies in Germany, Egypt and China. She provided the team with an insight into an all-important question: in times of digital democracy, what do citizens really want?

One cannot talk about politics without talking mediatisation of politics. In essence we are experiencing the transformation of politics through media. Habermas talks of normative political deliberation. Thimm asks if the traditional concept of deliberation can be applied to the digital world. Thimm's team has been attempting to model Twitter as a discursive network by looking at German national elections through qualitative research methods. They looked at 3-million tweets from certain selected events. The results of their research are yet to be completed and published. They have however found that more and more people are fighting for their digital rights and demanding to be heard. However, what is even more interesting is the overwhelming feeling that the digital world cannot close the real life and social divide that we experience on a day-to-day basis.

Petra Reiner, DJV-German Federation of Journalists: press freedom vs. state duties

Petra Reiner is a lawyer and media expert employed by the German Federation of Journalists (DJV). The federation was founded in 1945 in Hamburg. Hamburg is a state known for its progressive transparency laws and also used to be known as the media capital. The DJV is one of two trade unions for journalists in Germany. It has branches in 16 federal states; each has a website and a magazine. The federation has seven interest groups including gender, freelancers and photographers. It carries out trade union work like organising strikes, checking the contracts of freelancers and creating a network for journalists. Some of the interesting points about press freedom that the DJV oversees are:

- When authorities and politicians refuse to give statements, the journalists can claim their right to information. The authority is required to give them this information.
- Within the state only designated people are required to give this information; ordinary officials do not have to. It is the responsibility of the journalist to ask the correct authorities.
- Only editors, freelancers and publishers are allowed to take information. Authorities are not allowed to judge whether it is serious information or tabloid news. Regardless of the category, they are required to pass on information.
- Foreign publications can request information from Germany.
- Information can be denied if it affects pending legal (or otherwise) actions and must not hinder the work of the authorities.
- Journalists cannot claim secret information or public/private information that must be protected. Information is deemed secret only by state law.
- Personal rights of any third party must be taken into consideration. Personal data from archives regarding war cannot be supplied until 30 years after the person's death (like Nazi membership). This kind of information can be collected elsewhere but the state is not allowed to provide it.
- The press code is there to offer ethical rules to journalists and guidelines on responsible writing and adequate journalistic behaviour.

Abgeordnetenwatch.de: the watchdog of the parliamentarians

Parliamentwatch.org is the watchdog of parliamentarians. In 2004 there was a reformation of the electoral law. The founders of the organisation were involved in this process. It is a site that allows the public to pose questions to the parliament. Once the question is posed, it is moderated and posted. One can also give "votes" to different candidates in different parties. If a member of the public has any queries they can contact the head of moderators and board of trustees. The site not only creates positive information to foster transparency; it also encourages investigation into shady practices. The organisation looks at issues such as parliamentarians who have a second source of income, and in this way, they track the actions of politicians. The pressure that the politicians feel to answer questions drives competition. During the time of elections a lot of the politicians increase participation and competition increases. If there is an article online about that politician, the online site directs the reader to parliamentwatch.org. The employees at the organisation have backgrounds in political science, social science and software engineering. Not all are employees; they also have volunteers and their moderators are interns.

The site has an archive of 160 000 questions and answers, with a response rate of 80%. One success story shared was an incident when the Minister of Labour communicated with someone through the site who had posted that they were struggling to get a job. The minister invited that person for dinner and helped them

fill out application forms for jobs. A second incident was when there was an MP they thought was “lazy” as he did not respond to any questions on the site. They investigated further and found out that he did not even have an office and yet was still earning money from the state. Once this information came out, he resigned. Some parliamentarians have also been exposed for not attending parliament. They also do research on donations to parties and started a petition against donations and political corruption.

Conclusion

Almost two decades after the peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy, state and media in South Africa are still in a state of transition. More and more people are expressing a feeling of exclusion from public processes. Although the media exists as a fantastic opportunity to develop inclusive communication spaces in the country, the fractured relationship between state and media remains a cause for concern. Not only is the strength of the media to hold government to account precarious, but the state still has a long way to go in terms of social innovation in the communication space. What has become clear through the study tour is that South Africa holds all the necessary resources to facilitate inclusion, transparency and accountability. What is lacking is only a paradigm shift in the metanarratives of power and force within these spaces. Not only should deliberative dialogue and democracy play a more established role in public participation processes; communicators and actors need to come to the spaces with a stronger emphasis on listening to each other and especially to citizens.

When state and media enter a space of deliberative dialogue and democracy they will believe that the answer can be found in the space only through the two processes of dialogue and deliberation and not debate. It is important for both parties to suspend judgment and remain open to listen to others. Our broader communication spaces must assume that everyone, through the sharing of their personal lived experience, holds a part of the answer and that the shared thinking of other participants can improve their own.

Deliberative dialogues and democracy is less about finding the correct technical solution and more about working with what we have in common as state, media and civil society. It is about figuring out what our values are and what the assets and interests are that are most important to us as we think about our way forward. If implemented in the Eastern Cape, this kind of communication will allow problem-solving in a deeper and more sustained manner.



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