

# Campaign to campaign: giving a voice to those affected by injustice

 By Cari Van Wyk

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Amidst increasing food prices, with households already struggling to make ends meet, the expected increase in the price of bread have been met with concern. The drought and resulting hike in wheat import duty have taken its toll on food price inflation, but the price of wheat globally has been at an all-time low. According to Grain SA, the price of bread should not increase but should be reduced due to the falling international cost of wheat.



In light of this, Amandla.mobi initiated a [campaign against the increase in bread price](#). We spoke to Koketso Moeti, executive director of amandla.mobi, to find out more about their campaigns.

## **What does the success rate for amandla.mobi's campaigns look like?**

**Koketso Moeti:** It's hard to give an exact figure, because many of our campaigns are ongoing, meaning if a campaign isn't doing well, we often wait for 'moments' to re-energise it. Since the launch in June 2014, we have mobilised over 30,000 people across more than 40 campaigns. Some of our major victories include:

- Getting the award-winning documentary, 'Miners Shot Down' broadcast on a free-to-air broadcaster;

- Forcing the Department of Higher Education to release the 'No Fee Varsity' report;
- Mobilising Amandla.mobi members who hosted over 73 events across the country commemorating the Marikana Massacre during the anniversary last year;
- Working with the SOS Coalition to ensure that the number of households that would receive free set-top boxes is increased to five million, a number we are working to grow
- Mobilising members to support the 'Fees Must Fall' protests through donations of money, airtime and data as was needed.

#### ▣ ***What kind and level of research goes into your campaigns/petitions?***

**Moeti:** This varies from campaign to campaign, depending on the issue. There are times when we launch 'rapid response' campaigns, responding to values aligned, immediate issues brought to our attention in the news or by our members. But we also have long lead campaigns, which we research comprehensively ourselves or we partner with expert organisations, which have the research capacity and content we don't have. Partners we have worked with on such campaigns include Gun Free South Africa, SOS Coalition, Economic Justice Network (EJN) and OXFAM.

#### ▣ ***What is behind the bread price increase campaign?***

**Moeti:** The Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community and Social Action (PACSA), has run a barometer on food prices since 2006. Their Food Price Barometer tracks prices of 36 basic foods that poor households try to buy each month. According to this barometer, the basic food basket has increased from R1,650 to R1,869 between November 2015 and February 2016, which is a 9% increase in just three months.

Now considering the average monthly income of Black households and what is prioritised in these households, an increase in the bread price which is a staple food for many homes would disproportionately affect Black women, who are the primary caregivers in the majority of households. Particularly when one considers the number of people supported by single incomes in Black households and the implications where there are school-going children.

#### ▣ ***Why should people get involved? Do they really have the power to make a change?***

**Moeti:** We use creative technology and tactics to build a more just and people-powered South Africa by enabling people to use their collective power to hold leaders in government and corporations to account. We believe that there is power in people unifying over a particular issue and particularly when this comes from those most affected, who are often silenced or unheard.

#### ▣ ***What happens after you reach the necessary amount of signatures?***

**Moeti:** The signatures are then taken to the 'decision-maker' involved and depending on their response, a course of follow-up action is decided on. The response is also communicated to our members, people who join our campaigns, who we also involve in follow-up actions. These vary from campaign to campaign and have included direct targeting of decision makers and offline actions such as protests or symbolic actions and in one instance, the submission of a PAIA request.

#### ▣ ***What is your call to action? What drives your campaigns/petitions?***

**Moeti:** The call to action varies from campaign to campaign but generally involves an explanation of why it matters in the context of Black lives. Amandla.mobi works to ensure that those most affected by injustice, Black women, are at the centre of issues we campaign about- which also informs our campaign selection.

## ABOUT CARI VAN WYK

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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