



RIGHT2KNOW

TRANSPARENCY TOOLKIT

How can we use access to information in our struggles?

This worksheet is a tool for activists to think about **how to identify** information that is needed for a struggle and how to **fight for that information**.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

1. What is the struggle we face in our community/area?

Be as specific as possible. There may be many issues, but focus on one at a time.

Ask yourself about what you know:

- What is the issue/cause?
- What actions have you taken?
- Which institutions or people are we are fighting in this struggle?
- How has our struggle been opposed?
- What were our strengths/weaknesses?
- Who are our key partners?

Remember: sometimes the information we have tells us what information we need.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO KNOW?

2. What information could help us in fighting our struggle?

Ask yourself: If I was in a room with the people with all the information – what questions would I ask them?

Also think about:
What are the most important pieces of information/questions?
There may be many questions we want to ask, but identifying the important focuses can be very helpful.

Once we have listed the priority questions we must take the time to think about what pieces of information would answer those questions, and if there are any specific records (documents) that contain the information.

- Eg:
- QUESTION: What do I want to know?
 - INFORMATION: What information would answer my question?
 - RECORD: Which record/document contains this information?

QUESTION	INFORMATION	DOCUMENT/RECORD
<i>EG: Who could apply for the tender?</i>	<i>What was the tender criteria?</i>	<i>Tender documents</i>

WHAT WILL WE DO?

3. Which strategies will we use to fight for this information?

For example:

- Organise a meeting with community or stakeholders to discuss the information
- Write a letter demanding the information
- Contacting the media (writing a letter to the newspaper or calling into the radio) to publicly call for the information
- Holding a protest in demand of the information
- Doing a petition demanding the information be released
- Meeting directly with the person/institution who has the information and demanding answers
- Collect our own information to challenge what we are told (social audit)
- Use the law to request information: PAIA & PAJA
- Use public participation processes
- Work together with partners and others fighting similar struggles
- Other _____

Using those strategies and tools, how can we campaign for the information:



Remember: we can use many of these strategies at the same time and together!

WHAT NEXT?

4. How will we use this information to forward our struggle?

Once we have the information – how do we ensure that this information is a mobilising force rather than a demobilising one?

Some key first steps:

- Share the information! We must ensure that we do not become gatekeepers to important information. How can we do this?
- Analyse the information. What is relevant to our struggles? How is it relevant?
- Use the information! How can we take this forward?
- FOLLOW UP! Make sure that the information we have is up to date and that we are ready for future opportunities to engage.
- Is there more information we need? Go back to Step 1,2 and 3.

How else will we use this information to strengthen our struggle?

More resources:

There are many useful documents and guides that have been produced by civil society organisations to help with Access to Information issues, including using the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA). Here are some of those resources and where you can find them:

-South African History Archive: PAIA guide and forms:
http://www.saha.org.za/publications/paia_re_source_kit.htm
(011) 718 2560

-Ndifuna Ukwazi: PAIA guide
<http://nu.org.za/open-and-participatory-local-government/paia-guide/>
(021) 012 5094

-Local Government Action Handbook
<http://localgovernmentaction.org/>
082 583 5869

-R2K Activist Guide on Local Govt Transparency
<http://www.r2k.org.za/localgovt>
(021) 447 1000