



In 2010 the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) launched the Clean and Safe Sanitation Campaign to compel the Cape Town City Council to properly maintain existing toilets and also provide additional clean and safe sanitation facilities in informal settlements. SJC's campaign had several achievements, including the introduction of a janitorial service for regular maintenance of flush toilets and standpipes. To achieve these gains, SJC relied on a multifaceted approach including extensive research, a legal strategy, media publicity targeting both poor and wealthy communities, protest, and some budget work.

Photo courtesy of David Harrison

The following case study describes a campaign that compelled the Cape Town city government to introduce and fund a janitorial service for public toilets among other measures to improve access to basic sanitation in the city's informal settlements. This is a summary of a more in-depth study prepared by Neil Overy as part of the Learning Program of the IBP's Partnership Initiative. The PI Learning Program seeks to assess and document the impact of civil society engagement in public budgeting.

Download a PDF of the complete case study at <http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/LP-case-study-SJC.pdf>.

SOUTH AFRICA: CAMPAIGNING FOR SANITATION JUSTICE

In May 2012 the Mayor of Cape Town, Patricia de Lille, stood on the steps of the city's civic center to announce a daily janitorial service for flush toilets in informal settlements. The service would employ 500 community members to clean in and around flush toilets and standpipes on a daily basis and make minor repairs to these facilities. This announcement was made to an approving crowd of more than 200 members of the Cape Town-based social movement, the Social Justice Coalition (SJC), which had been campaigning for improvements to sanitation in the settlements.

The janitorial service, which later received R26 million (\$3.2 million) worth of funding from the city, was not only a victory for the SJC, but the first service of its kind in South Africa.

This document describes the campaign that compelled City authorities to implement the janitorial service and to take other measures designed to improve access to basic sanitation in Cape Town, and briefly discusses some of the factors that led to its success.

THE ISSUE: INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND SANITATION

Cape Town is South Africa's second largest city with an estimated population of 3.7 million. Over the past 10 years, the city's population has grown by 21 percent and is expected to reach 4.2 million by 2031. Its rapid growth is largely due to the "in-migration" from other parts of South Africa of mostly poor, young South Africans looking for work. The relative poverty of most migrants means that they are not able to purchase or rent formal housing when they arrive in the city, and government housing programs meet only a fraction of the demand. As a result, informal settlements continue to grow at a rapid pace. According to the most recent estimates, there are now 230 informal settlements in the city containing over 194,000 households, or about a quarter of the city's population.

A lack of access to water and basic sanitation in such informal settlements remains a serious problem for residents. The City of Cape Town (often simply referred to as the City) has estimated that 400,000 residents lack access to basic sanitation in the informal settlements, but

SJC argue that the real figure is much higher: that the City's calculation has disregarded the uneven distribution of toilets, ignored the large number of toilets in disrepair, and unfairly included toilets that do not meet the minimum requirements of "basic sanitation."

Sanitation is an important issue to residents for a variety of reasons. Access to basic sanitation is a matter of basic human dignity and a right of all South Africans as enshrined in the Constitution. It is also an important health issue, especially for children. According to UNICEF, among children under 14, more than 20 percent of deaths and disabilities are attributable to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation, or insufficient hygiene.

Furthermore, SJC discovered that sanitation is intimately linked to *safety* and *security* in the settlements. The SJC collected testimonies from numerous residents about assaults, rapes, and murders that occurred because residents are forced to relieve themselves in isolated areas far from their homes.

THE CAMPAIGN

The SJC describes itself as a grassroots social movement committed to making government accountable. It has a total of 1,500 members, all based in the township of Khayelitsha, which lies on the southeastern edge of Cape Town. Through its efforts at education, policy advocacy and research, and community organizing, it promotes what it calls *active citizenship*, building leadership skills from within the ranks of its members. The SJC also works both sides of the fence on issues: organizing protests and public demonstrations while simultaneously collaborating with government officials to design policy solutions. In this regard, the SJC shares some similarities with the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), which is known, among its many accomplishments, for compelling the South African government to develop and implement a national plan for the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs for people living with HIV/AIDS. The similarity of style is not a coincidence. Zackie Achmat, the high-profile South African activist, was the driving force behind the creation of both movements.

The SJC prides itself on setting its agenda from the bottom up, so when its members indicated sanitation as one of their priority concerns, especially with relation to security issues, it decided to formulate a campaign, which it later called the Clean and Safe Sanitation Campaign (CSSC). From the outset, SJC sought partnerships with other sections of civil society for the CSSC. To this end, the SJC hosted a Cape Town Sanitation Summit that was attended by over 100 delegates representing 60 partner organizations and both major political parties in Cape Town. This summit was a major part of the SJC's efforts to form a broad alliance of organizations committed to improving access to sanitation.

Recognizing the important role that religion continues to play in South African society, the SJC also reached out to the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum (WCRLF), a multi-faith umbrella group, by inviting its leaders on "walks

of witness" to see for themselves the conditions of public sanitation facilities in Khayelitsha. And the SJC has made a concerted effort to partner with researchers and health professionals. It included eminent health professionals in the delegations sent to meet with City officials and has drawn on the expertise of the African Center for Cities, a think-tank based at the University of Cape Town that develops solutions to urban problems, to formulate proposals for sanitation in the informal settlements.

Drawing upon this broad base, the SJC initiated a communication strategy that saw the SJC and its partners in the campaign having more than 20 opinion pieces published about sanitation issues,



TACTICS FOR CAMPAIGNING CAPE TOWN FOR BETTER SANITATION IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

- Methodically and democratically gathering priorities, opinions, and perspectives from residents;
- Forming a broad coalition that includes civil society organizations, health professionals, and religious leaders;
- Conducting a broad communications campaign in print, broadcast, and television, and distributing small media in local language;
- Organizing protests and creative demonstrations aimed at cultivating support from across social classes;
- Requesting public service contracts to monitor their implementation and using the media and the threat of legal action when officials are reluctant to be transparent;
- Maintaining a collaborative and civil relationship with government officials; and
- Working with researchers and policy experts to make technically sound and financially feasible proposals to government for how to address sanitation issues.

including an open letter by a group of health professionals endorsing the campaign. SJC representatives have also made numerous television and radio appearances. Meanwhile, the SJC distributed more than 10,000 CSSC booklets, over 1000 factsheets and hundreds of campaign posters, all of these in Xhosa (the native language of most informal settlement residents) and English.

As part of the campaign, the SJC has organized a series of protests and demonstrations, including a march for better sanitation to the City's offices. It also submitted a petition to the City with over 10,000 signatures, and the endorsement of 25 different organizations, to demand improved sanitation services. The SJC has also organized

more creative demonstrations, twice mobilizing its members to form lines at public toilets in affluent areas to symbolically represent the numerous South Africans who are still waiting for access to clean and safe sanitation facilities.

The SJC's most effective efforts, however, have been through its engagement with City officials. This began in a somewhat antagonistic tenor, but gradually became a respectful collaboration. First, the SJC worked with Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU), a Cape Town-based nongovernmental organization that supports campaigns for social justice issues in order to assess and monitor the performance of private service providers involved in sanitation services. To this end, the organizations requested copies of relevant Standard Delivery Agreements (SDAs) from the city. According to the law, all SDAs must be published on municipal websites and made available to the public for inspection. Despite this fact, no SDAs were on the City's website and none were available for inspection. After SJC and NU brought the issue to the attention of the media and later raised the possibility of legal action, the City eventually released a number of SDAs.

Amidst the release and revision of the SDAs by the SJC and its partners, the City acknowledged that it lacked the capacity required to properly supervise service providers, and has welcomed an offer by the SJC to get its members involved in the monitoring of these contracts. Whilst the SJC is wary of absolving the government of its monitoring responsibilities, its willingness to cooperate has allowed for more cordial relations. As SJC researcher Axolile Notywala observes, "We don't see ourselves as against government. If we want something achieved we will work with government and with communities and try and bring them together."

The SJC has also brought a number of other issues to the attention of the City. For example, the City had established a toll-free hotline for reporting faulty or broken standpipes and toilets. But the toll-free number was only accessible from land lines, which are rare in informal settlements, and so seldom used. The City has been willing to hear feedback like this from the SJC after officials witnessed how the organization methodically gathers opinions and perspectives from its members. It has since accepted the SJC's comments and demands as a legitimately representative of residents.

Finally, the SJC submitted a budgeted proposal for the Janitorial Service to the City's Budget Steering Committee, which reviews and approves allocations. As well as providing a rationale for the service, the submission included a costing based on the employment of 1500 janitors at an estimated cost of R100 million (\$12.3 million), with figures derived from calculations by the City itself.

In the meetings held to discuss the proposal, City officials were consistently impressed by the SJC's ability to marshal evidence and facts to make its case. And the

SJC's approach of supporting even incremental progress on issues was also appreciated by those in office.

Cape Town City Councilor Shehaam Sims says that the proposal ultimately gave new impetus to the issue. Sims had requested a total allocation of R40 million (\$US 4.9 million), but was granted R26 million (\$US 3.2 million) in the budget for 2012 to 2013. Still, the allocation can grow from there, she contends, because the City announced that it would support the program on a yearly basis, adjusting resource allocations as needed.

CHANGES DUE TO THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign can claim a few small but important victories.

First and foremost, it was instrumental in getting approval and funding for the janitorial service for public toilets in informal settlements. Not only does the service promise the regular maintenance of thousands of flush toilets and standpipes in Cape Town's informal settlements (and the health benefits that will accrue from this), but it also provides 500 jobs for Cape Town's unemployed. The establishment of the service was also an important symbolic victory for informal settlement residents, who feel they have been treated more like refugees than citizens.

The campaign also led to a number of other immediate sanitation improvements within Khayelitsha. For example, the City reported in late 2011 that it had repaired 256 toilets in Khayelitsha in November 2011 alone. The SJC has also helped the City to improve its methods of monitoring and repairing sanitation infrastructure. The SJC convinced the City to tag each toilet in Khayelitsha (with the promise of implementation in all informal settlements) with its GPS coordinates to enable repair teams to easily locate them after faults are reported. The City is also piloting a public phone with a dedicated line to the City's Water and Sanitation Technical Operations Centre so that residents can report problems.

The release of the SDAs, the service contracts, was another valuable outcome. Though only limited monitoring of SDAs has so far taken place, a number of breaches have already been identified by NU and SJC and brought to the attention of the City. The release of the SDAs is seen as an important step towards a greater culture transparency in Cape Town's administration.

A number of external factors contributed to the pressure on the City of Cape Town to implement these measures. In a sense the CSSC could be seen as a beneficiary of good timing. Sanitation, and toilets in particular, became a political issue after the national ruling party, the African National Congress, blasted the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) for allowing public toilets to be built in the open air, with no privacy or shelter, in one of the municipalities it controls. The DA, which took over control of Cape Town in the midst of the campaign, was eager to rectify its image on the issue and so perhaps was an easy target. Still, however, observers agree that SJC skillfully

took advantage of the political winds and effectively played upon the public discussion of toilets to achieve its goals.



OUTCOMES OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR IMPROVED SANITATION SERVICES IN CAPE TOWN'S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

- The repair of hundreds of toilets and other improvements to faulty water and sanitation facilities;
- The geo-tagging of public toilets in informal settlements to allow for speedier repairs;
- The piloting of a dedicated public phone for reporting faults in water and sanitation infrastructure;
- The release of service delivery contracts and the discovery of numerous irregularities in their implementation; and
- Approval and funding for a service employing 500 janitors to clean and service hundreds of public toilets and water points in Cape Town's informal settlements.

CONCLUSIONS

The SJC-led campaign for improved sanitation services in informal settlements in Cape Town has been successful in a remarkably short period of time. The SJC's legitimacy with its members, its ability to garner support from a broad swath of civil society groups, and its exceptional communication skills are all credited for its achievements.

The SJC itself has also highlighted the importance of working both on the inside, as a collaborator with government, and as an independent agitator for change from the outside. To work on both sides of the issue, as it has, requires an exceptional array of skills: the ability to mobilize citizens and the technical capacity to formulate concrete budget and policy proposals. The SJC has many of these capacities in house, but has also benefitted from strategic partnerships with NU and the IBP that allow it to do all of these things effectively.

Budgetary tools and analysis played a significant factor in demonstrating the feasibility of the proposal for a janitorial service. The SJC is aware that budgetary analysis will continue to be an important tool for holding the City of Cape Town to account for its promises and so it has recently sent its staff (along with staff from NU) to a series of IBP budget training workshops. While this is a new area for the SJC, given its record of innovative and effective activism, its future use of budgetary tools will almost certainly warrant more attention.

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