



A Yetu Infotech Collective¹ project proposal

(as of 12 Oct 2021)

There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.” — Arundhati Roy

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¹ The Yetu Infotech Collective is a recently launched initiative aiming to build the internet from below by supporting working class community initiatives to establish and maintain secure and affordable networks and provide progressive civil society organisations with affordable and secure communication technology and capacity development so that they can maximise the benefits of information technologies while mitigating the risks. For more see www.yetu.coop.

1. The Problem/Opportunity

In South Africa - the most unequal country in the world - mass media remains concentrated in the urban areas, focusing on the news generated in the private sector, government, and political parties. Most mass media pay little attention to news from the townships and rural areas and rely on elite 'spokespeople' and institutionalised 'experts' as sources.

This problem is exacerbated by cuts to newsroom budgets that see fewer journalists carrying greater workloads and increasingly relying on the spin of the government/commercial Public Relations industry for framing and analysis.

The result is a dominant 'public sphere' that excludes the experiences and voices of the marginalised majority - and a national discourse that largely silences the marginalised majority and thus is incapable of finding lasting solutions to the many socio-economic and ecological challenges we face.

2. The Solution

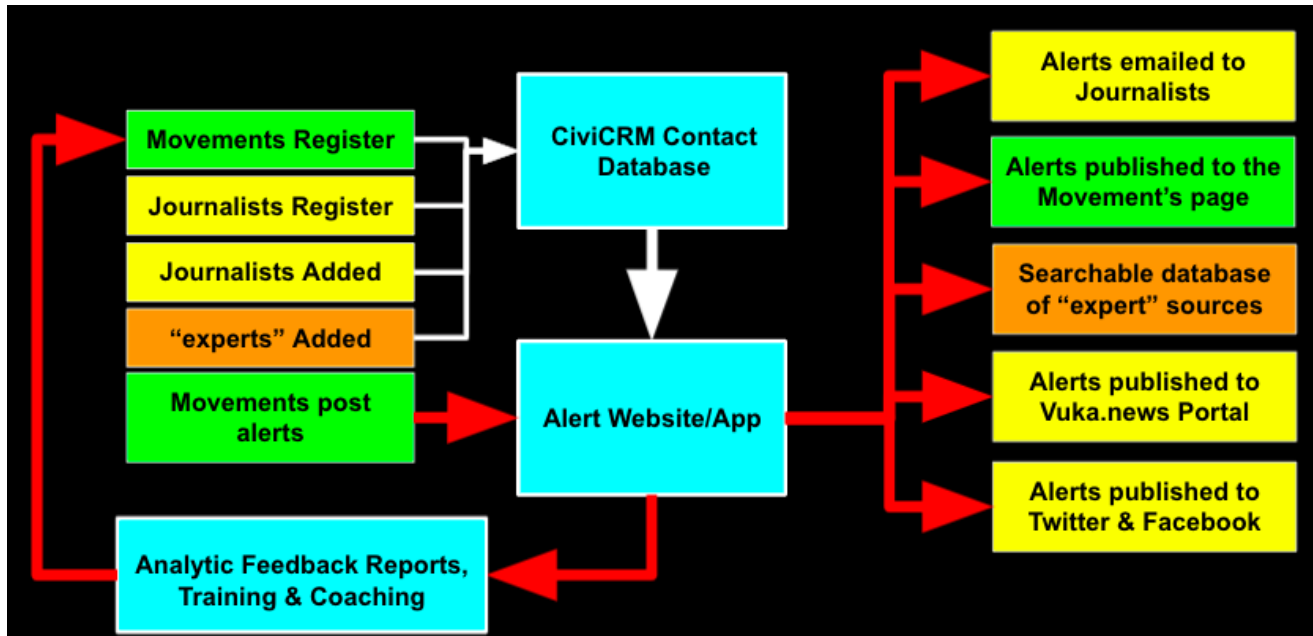
The Yetu Infotech Collective will develop a web/app based service with five main objectives:

1. It bridges the digital divide in moments of crisis/action enabling activists on the ground to send alerts to the media in real time from their phones.
2. It gives journalists access to 'breaking news' and 'grassroots sources' outside of their urban/elite bubbles.
3. It also offers journalists access to progressive 'expert' sources and promotes these comrades in the media;
4. Further the public can access alerts (and the alert history) on the internet and share alerts to social media. Alerts will also be published on the [proposed news portal](#).
5. Lastly, it gives movements a permanent web presence with their description, contact details, and list of the alerts they have published as well as analytical feedback reports so they gain insight into the reach of their alerts.

A key component of the project will be training and ongoing coaching for contributors. Capacity building will cover journalistic ethics, news values, accuracy, taking photos, giving an interview, etc.

To evaluate and further develop the project, all platforms will invite feedback and a quarterly review of the project will be informed by a workshop of participating organisations and a feedback meeting with invited journalists.

3. Elements & Functions



3.1 Contact Database

A database of movements, journalists, and progressive ‘experts’:

1. Movement representatives can register with their contacts and movement description. Once moderated (for quality control) they are (1) given login details to publish, (2) added to the list of ‘participating organisations’, and (3) a dedicated page is created for their ‘about’ and ‘alerts’.
2. Journalists can register to receive alerts (or be added from existing media lists).
3. Progressive comrades/organisations with thematic expertise are invited to register for the “according to the experts” database.

3.2 Website/App

A website and mobile app interface enables (1) movement and journalists registration (2) publishing of alerts (2) access to the searchable database of

movements & ‘experts’, and (4) all the published alerts by theme and location.

3.3 Automated distribution

Published alerts are automatically (1) emailed to journalists (2) published to the relevant movement’s page and home page, (3) published to the Vula News Portal and (4) published to social media.

3.4 Feedback, Training & Coaching

Contributors will receive analytic reports indicating the reach of their content as well as training and coaching as they contribute to the platform.

To evaluate and further develop the project, all platforms will invite feedback and a quarterly review of the project will be informed by a workshop of participating organisations and a feedback meeting with invited journalists.

4. Quality Control, Training & Coaching

There is a risk that registered movements could publish misinformation - thus undermining the credibility of the service and all the other movements associated with it.

To ensure that the site publishes reliable and accurate information:

1. Movements that register will need to be vetted through an interview process to confirm they are who they claim to be;
2. Movement reps with login details will need to participate in an online training that covers how to use the publishing platform, the basics of journalistic ethics, etc.
3. All contributors will receive ongoing feedback and coaching as they contribute to the platform.
4. All alerts will include a disclaimer that says: "information provided by ___NAME___ is accurate to the best of ___MOVEMENT's___ current knowledge. Any opinion expressed should be attributed to ___MOVEMENT___. Please contact ___NAME___ for further updates, commentary, and verification. If you have any concerns about the veracity of information provided please ___CONTACT US___".
5. All alerts from a movement will be moderated before being published. Only once quality/consistency is established, auto-publishing will be enabled.

Regarding POPI Act compliance, movements and 'experts' must opt-in and will receive an automated monthly email giving them the option to opt out or update their details. Journalists whose details are already in the public domain will be added. Other journalists will opt-in via registration. All journalists receive an 'opt-out or update your details' link in every alert email.

5. Rough Design

A landing/home page could look like this:



Once logged-in, movement reps would get a Movement Alert Form to complete. The form could look like this:

Each registered movement would get a dedicated webpage with a URL like www.mamela.org/name_of_movement. These pages will be auto-generated and could look like this:

6. Potential Partners

We hope to work with these progressive organisations that support either grassroots organisations or a network of activists engaged in local struggles:

1. [Abahlali baseMjondolo](#) (ABM) organising an estimated 75,000 members in Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KZN, and Western Cape
2. [AIDC Association](#) includes:
 - a. [Amadiba Crisis Committee](#) (ACC) - Eastern Cape
 - b. [Botshabelo Unemployed Movement](#) (BUM) - Free State
 - c. [PE Amandla Forum](#) - Eastern Cape
 - d. [Southern African Green Revolution Council](#) (SAGRC) - Mpumalanga
 - e. Unemployed People's Movement (UPM) - Eastern Cape
3. [Bench Marks Foundation](#) (BMF) supports mining affected communities in the North West & Mpumalanga
4. [Casual Workers Advice Office](#) (CWAO) supports organising in Gauteng
5. [Equal Education](#) (EE) organises branches in Eastern Cape, Gauteng, and Western Cape.
6. [Groudworks](#): support climate change affected communities in KZN and Mpumalanga.
7. [International Labour Research and Information Group](#) (ILRIG) supporting local organisations in Gauteng & Western Cape.

8. [Mining Affected Communities United in Action](#) (MACUA) organises branches of mining affected communities in Free State, Gauteng, KZN, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, and Northern Cape.
9. [Right2Know Campaign](#) (R2K) is a network of human rights groups organising in Gauteng, KZN and the Western Cape.
10. [South African Federation of Trade Unions](#) (SAFTU) is a federation of 13 trade unions organising workers across South Africa.
11. [Social Change Assistance Trust](#) (SCAT) supporting +- 30 community advice offices in the Eastern Cape, Free State, Northern Cape & Western Cape.
12. [Surplus People Project](#) (SPP) supporting food sovereignty struggles in the Northern & Western Cape.
13. [Treatment Action Campaign](#) (TAC) organising over 210 branches in Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KZN, Limpopo, North West, & Western Cape.
14. [Trust For Community Outreach & Education](#) (TCOE) including affiliates:
 - a. [Cala University Student Association](#) (CALUSA) - Eastern Cape
 - b. [Commercial Stevedore and Allied Workers Union](#) (CSAAWU) - Western Cape
 - c. [Itireleng](#) - Limpopo
 - d. [Khanyisa Educational and Development Project](#) - Eastern Cape
 - e. [Mawubuye Land Rights Movement](#) - Western Cape
 - f. [Zingisa Education Project](#) - Eastern Cape
15. [Women On Farms Project](#) (WFP) organing farm women in the Western Cape
16. [Workers World Media Productions](#) (WWMP) supports Labour Community Media Forums in Gauteng, Western Cape.

7. Milestones for implementation

| MILESTONE | Nov 21 | Dec 21 | Jan 22 | Feb 22 | Mar 22 | Apr 22 | May 22 | Jun 22 | Jul 22 | Aug 22 | Sep 22 | Oct 22 | Nov 22 | Dec 22 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. Tech Development & Maintenance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design CMS, site & app | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Review & maintain CMS, site & app | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| 2. Recruitment & Networking | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Recruit Social Movement contributors | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Clean & update media list | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| Recruit & update 'experts' list | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 |
| launch publicity (pamphlet & Sticker) | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Capacity Development | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Designing training module | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deliver introductory trainings | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 |
| Moderate alerts & coach contributors | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| review training module | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 4. Strategic Review | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Undertake 1/4ly review | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Stakeholder meetings | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 |