



2026 Campaigner Fellowship

Guide to Petition Pitch Exercise

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Carefully review the document below to assist you in completing Section 5 of the online application form, the petition pitch. This exercise is designed to test your ability to identify opportunities, decision-makers, and demands, and to write in a conversational style.

Step 1: Identifying a specific issue for your petition

You might be passionate about tackling GBV or poverty, but these are big issues. A good campaigner can break down the big issue into smaller more specific issues that they can do something about. Instead of running a petition to end GBV, you might look at what contributes to GBV, such as comments that reinforce rape culture.

Tip: Brainstorm at least five different issues you want to address by looking at news articles and/or issues your community is talking about.

Below is a good example of a petition that had a very specific issue. The petition demanded action against a radio presenter who suggested that men can't be blamed for acting like dogs if women are wearing revealing clothing. The petition did not end rape culture, but it moved us a small step closer to challenging rape culture.

To: The South African Broadcasting Corporation

Dismiss Tshathugodo for Rape Culture Comments

This campaign has ended.



We, the concerned people whose signatures are appended below, hereby call upon the South African Broadcasting Corporation (the SABC), to immediately dismiss UKhozi FM radio presenter Khathide Ngobe, otherwise known as Tshathugodo or 'Tshatha'.

<https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/dismiss-tshathugodo-for-rape-culture-comments>

When selecting a petition issue, it must be values-aligned (fit with amandla.mobi's values) and intersectional. Reintroducing the death penalty is not a values-aligned issue to petition on. Petitioning on the issue of racism whilst making misogynistic comments is not intersectional.

It is also important to note that amandla.mobi is not connected to any political party. We are independent and non-partisan. This means we don't approve petitions that promote a particular political party or politician.

Step 2: Can you run a petition in less than a month?

This petition-pitching exercise requires you to pitch a short-term petition. This can be a difficult task because many petitions can take months or even years to win. Here are some examples of petitions that are not short-term:

- Demanding a new police station is built in a community - This is a long-term petition because budget has to be allocated by national government, plans have to be drawn up, etc.

- Demand an increase for the Old-Age Grant - This is an important issue, but for a social grant increase to be agreed to, it has to be considered by National Treasury, and announced in late February during the budget speech, before it is implemented from 1 April of that year.

The above petition issues are important, but for this exercise, you must pitch a short-term petition where the decision-maker can do something immediately to address the issue and there is not a long complicated process that has to be followed. Examples of petitions that are short-term include:

- Calling on a big supermarket to withdraw their sponsorship of an event that gives a platform to racism/ sexism.
- Demanding that a Mayor publicly commit to taking disciplinary action against a senior municipality manager if there are reliable reports that the person has done something wrong.

Tip: Look at the list of specific ideas you brainstormed. Ask yourself, if you launched a petition on this specific issue, could you win this petition in less than a month? For a petition to 'win' it means the decision-maker felt enough public pressure that they decided to implement your demands and this resulted in real impact.

Petitions that require government funding, changes to policies, or legislation almost always take more than a month to win.

Step 3: Find the right decision-maker

Your petition must have a clear decision-maker, someone with the power and mandate to address the issue by implementing your petition demand. For example, you should not address a GBV petition to 'all men' as the decision-makers in a campaign on gender-based violence. It's impossible to deliver your petition demands to 'all men'. Rather, one way to address the issue is to petition the Minister of Police to commit to ensuring that all police officers have been trained in GBV processes by the end of the year.

Your decision-maker should also not be too broad, i.e., 'government' or 'all companies'. For example, if workers on a wine farm are striking and calling for a boycott until they are paid better, the decision-maker would be the CEO of the winery.

Tip: Research who your decision-maker is. Depending on the issue, the decision-maker could be in local, provincial or national government, but there are also different departments in government, like the Department of Water and Sanitation. It is not just those in government we must hold to account, but

also businesses, public institutions, political bodies like Parliament etc.

Some petition issues require you to be creative about the decision-maker. Let's take an apartheid denialist like Steve Hofmeyr. You wouldn't petition Steve Hofmeyr directly because he won't change his views. What gives him power, however, is the microphone he uses at concerts and festivals to spread white supremacy. Steve Hofmeyr only has that power because companies like Pick n Pay sponsor these events. These companies spend millions to make themselves look good. By targeting Pick n Pay to drop their sponsorship, you can begin to chip away at those who push white supremacy.

Step 4: Identify realistic petition demands

Your petition demands are a set of specific actions you want the decision-maker to agree to and implement, that will help address your petition issue.

Examples of petitions that **do not** have a realistic demand would be:

- A petition demanding the Justice Minister sentence someone to life in prison (*Ministers do not and should not have the power to sentence people, it has to go to court*)
- A petition demanding mining companies pay more taxes (*What type of tax? How much more tax? You must be specific*)
- A petition telling the President to end corruption (*Corruption cannot be ended overnight, and it won't be ended by one person*)

Here is an example of a campaign with specific and realistic demands:

- *We demand YOU Magazine cancel its forum event with Nestle. YOU Magazine should put its readers' health first and not give Nestle a platform to undermine breastfeeding and promote their ultra-processed, high-sugar products. You can read*

more about the petition here:

<https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/you-magazine-must-cancel-their-nestle-event-put-child-nutrition-first>

Tip: Do your research. Depending on your petition issue, you might need to research the issue, research progressive ways your issue can be addressed and research what actions a decision-maker can take. Many demands cannot be implemented within a month, so you must identify demands that could be implemented in the short-term. For example, if you want to stop a political party from being xenophobic, your first step towards that goal might be to demand that they retract a statement.

Often, it is important that realistic demands of a decision-maker include a deadline by which you wish the demands to be implemented.

Petition demands must also be values-aligned. You can't address an issue such as substance abuse among young people by running a petition to demand that the Mayor of Johannesburg ban Nigerians from living in an area. This is xenophobic and misguided.

Step 5: Explain why people should act now

Even if someone is concerned about your petition issue, why should they sign your petition now? A good petition clearly explains why urgent action is needed.

For example, the organisation Ndifuna Ukwazi is working to provide people with decent housing. They found out that the City of Cape Town owned land that was being leased to a golf club, but the lease was coming to an end and members of the public had a few weeks to submit objections before the deadline. They used this deadline to mobilise people to send objections and to call for the lease not to be renewed, and instead use the land to build affordable housing. Read more about the campaign here:

<https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/cheap-rent-for-the-rich-object-to-the-rondebosch-golf-course-lease-3>

Step 6: How will you get the decision-makers' attention?

Successful petitions are able to communicate to anyone reading the petition page a clear and powerful argument about why their signature could have an impact. Think about who your decision-maker is, and what gives them 'power'. Often, CEOs have power because people buy their products, politicians have power because people vote them in, and public servants have power because they have a public mandate. Petitions can be a tool that builds the collective power of people, which can force decision-makers to consider demands. For example, if enough people boycott products, the CEO's power is threatened by the loss of profits, and they may have to listen.

Here is an example of a petition that makes a convincing argument about why signing could get the attention of the decision-maker. The text below was from a petition to stop the Minister of Communications from having power to influence SABC news. We have made notes in red explaining how the different parts work together.

If enough of us come together (This is an important sentence because it communicates the importance of

coming together in numbers), we can ensure that the minister does not have unlimited power to influence the news and content that the SABC covers, similar to the Hlaudi era. We must spotlight why the SABC Bill is being rushed through Parliament right now *(This sentence highlights that something shady is happening, but together we can shine a light on what is happening which may make the decision-makers think twice)*. Together, we can help protect news independence from political interference by the Communications Minister.

If the President and other politicians respect our democracy, constitution, and independence of the public broadcaster, why support this Bill? (Politicians are supposed to respect independent media as a part of democracy, and they don't like being called hypocrits. This sentence exposes the hypocrisy of politicians.) We are currently in the lead-up to the 2024 elections, and media outlets will be sharing important election updates from various political parties with us.

Read more about the petition here:
<https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/withdraw-the-flawed-sabc-bill>

Step 7: Writing the text for your petition

This next step is what you will have to upload as part of section 5 of the online application. You have brainstormed, designed, researched and thought through your petition; now you need to write out your petition text, which has four parts:

- a) Petition title
- b) Decision-maker
- c) Demands
- d) Why is this issue important

Tip: It's impossible to write the perfect text the first time, so do multiple drafts. Remember, we will be looking to ensure you can write clearly.

a) Petition Title *(Max 10 words, the shorter the better)*

Your petition title is the first thing people see. Make sure it's short, specific and to the point. Below are some examples of good and bad petition titles. The bad petition titles on the right are not real petitions.



AWETHU.AMANDLA.MOBI

Tell CUT Management to allow all eligible students to graduate.



#MAKEOURHOMESAFE!!! 1 million signatures against home invasions

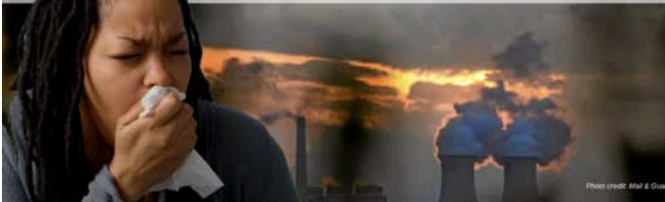
Like

Comment

Share



Stop Standard Bank funding air pollution and making us sick



Add your name to the campaign



AMANDLA.MOBI

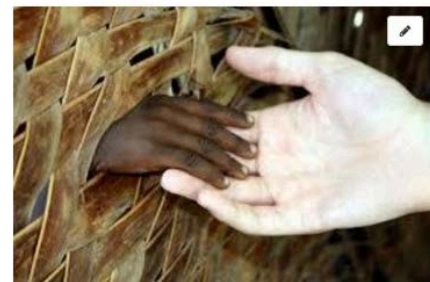
Stop Standard Bank funding air pollution and making us sick



To: People of South Africa

Lets hold hands and donate an apple to a hungry child

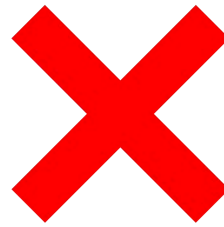
Campaign created by Becky



Donate an apple to a hungry child

Why is this important?

People are suffering and we must help the voiceless



AWETHU.AMANDLA.MOBI

Take Skhumba Hlope off air until he apologises

Amidst the violence at Wits University, Sarah Mokwebo, Hlengiwe Patri




Ensure greater integration of vertical and horizontal health systems, tell the DDG to amend sub-regulation (2)(a)

b) Name of decision maker, their title and organisation (*Try to keep this below 12 words*)

Once you have done your research and identified the right decision maker, put their name and the government department/ business / institution they work for.

c) Petition demands (**What you want the decision-maker to do?**) *Try to keep this section between 200 and 300 words.*

Briefly outline your petition demands. You do not want to write a small essay explaining the problem (leave that for the *Why is this important?* section). You want one or two sentences mentioning the issue to the decision-maker. The rest should be clear demands in bullet points. See the examples below.

| | |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| <p>To: The DTI, The Dept of Small Business Development, Centurion Lake Hotel, Kim Du Preez who is the seminar coordinator, The Law Society of South Africa</p> <p>Stop the "Fronting Seminar"</p> <p><small>AM Campaign created by Amandla.mobi Member</small></p> <p>a) The DTI and Small Business Development must stop this seminar from happening. b) Seminar sponsors Innoven Consulting and Axidex must be investigated. c) Centurion Lake Hotel should not host this seminar. d) Kim Du Preez must cancel this seminar.</p> <p>Why is this important?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fronting is criminal conduct. 2. A general lack of transformation in South Africa's private sector is one of the stumbling blocks in SA. 3. This seminar seeks to defeat the intended outcomes of transformation laws. 4. This seminar seeks to teach white people how to get away with fronting. | <p>The Green Shift: Ask companies to stop using palm oil</p> <p><small>Campaign created by</small></p>  <p>Companies are spending huge amounts of money to create palm oil plantations. We need them to get all their money out deforestation and into alternatives that don't destruct our environment.</p> <p>This would have a huge financial impact and set a gold standard that other companies would then aspire to.</p> <p>Join the global campaign</p> <p>The Green Shifts Global's vision is for all people to have access to food that doesn't cause deforestation. We want a world without supply chains that destroy our planet.</p> <p>Huge amounts of forest is being bulldozed to plant palm trees, this is destroying the natural habitat of animals like orangutans. We need your help.</p> <p>Some companies agree that destroying forests is bad. Their mission is to be an ethical company. However, it still supports a lot of projects that destroy our environment.</p> <p>Companies must put their money where their mouth is.</p> <p>We are calling for much greater transparency about the impact on forests.</p> |

d) Why is this issue important? *(Try to keep this section between 2 to 4 paragraphs maximum, no more than 800 words)*

This is where you explain why you care about the issue, why other people should care too, an analysis of why it matters right now, and an explanation of how this petition will get people to take back their power that has been undermined by various dominant groups in our society. Ensure you include at least three fact-based references from newspapers and other legitimate sources. Africa Check provides useful information on how to fact-check: <https://africacheck.org/how-to-fact-check/>.

In this section, it's important to make the case for why other people should join your petition. Describe the problem, why it matters and what you want people to do. If you have a personal story of how you or someone you know has been impacted, include that story in this section, as well as provide links to reliable news articles, reports, etc., so readers can see the source of your claims.

Tip: Make sure your writing is short, sharp and simple. Imagine you are explaining the petition to a friend or family member. Avoid technical, academic or vague language.

Don't spend too much time explaining the issue. People tend to over-explain why people should care about a particular problem. People join petitions because they want to address an injustice, but also because they can see there is an opportunity to really make a difference.

More examples of good petitions:

- Good Petition Example 1:

a) Petition Title: *(Max 10 words, the shorter the better)*

To Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molelwa :
Revoke Enviroserv Shongweni Landfill Licence

b) Name of the decision-maker and/or their organisation: *(Try to keep this below 12 words)*

Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molelwa

c) What you want the decision-maker to do (campaign demands) *Try keep this section between 200 to 300 words.*

We demand that the Department of Environmental Affairs puts a stop to the environmental injustices and health issues created by Enviroserv's toxic stench, the role of protecting affected communities should not lie with the courts alone. Government must demand that Enviroserv

rehabilitate the landfill site and hold them financially accountable for any health, social and environmental threats they have posed in Ntshongweni, Dassenhoek, KwaNdengezi, Buxfarm and Cliffdale, and Shongweni.

We demand the Department of Environmental Affairs and Department of Health come together to create a social, health and environmental audit on the destruction caused by improper waste management.

DEA and DoH must immediately come up with a national strategy that deals with toxic waste without causing harm to health or the environment. We demand this strategy to have maximum public participation involvement and not isolate black communities living with the impacts of improper hazardous waste disposal.

d) Why is this issue important? *(Try to keep this section between 3 to 4 paragraphs maximum, no more than 800 words)*

Enviroserv has been in the news a lot lately for their toxic waste landfill site, which has angered the residents of Shongweni. But Enviroserv's crimes are not only limited to those in the current new cycle. They have been polluting in black communities, such as Ntshongweni,

Dassenhoek, KwaNdengezi, Buxfarm and Cliffdale, for over 15 years and have left struggling communities with a mountain of health issues including; headaches, fatigue and nosebleeds.

There has been no science-specific research that measures the long-term impacts of EnviroServ's pollution and the health issues experienced by communities. A targeted surveillance system that maps out the social, health and environmental impacts created by hazardous waste needs to be developed to avoid far more serious health issues like cancer in the future.

EnviroServ's legal appeal process that is challenging DEA's decision to suspend their operations license, sends a clear message that EnviroServ thinks our lives are cheap and that profit matters more to them than our health, environment and quality of life.

EnviroServ is ignoring our constitutional rights and the increased incidence of illnesses apparently related to the foul odour, not to mention the psychological effects living in the stench of a toxic landfill is having on us. By refusing to tell us what is going into the landfill and what its possible toxic effects on humans are, you are only serving to increase our fear that the health effects are

being caused by the hazardous, ineffectively or untreated waste being accepted at the landfill.

<https://highwaymail.co.za/278776/dea-minister-lifts-shongweni-landfill-suspension/>

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/charges-against-enviroserv-execs-in-shongweni-landfill-case-reduced-12055456>

Good Petition example 2:

a) Petition Title: *(Max 10 words, the shorter the better)*

SABC, stop airing alcohol ads that associate alcohol consumption with success.

b) Name of the decision-maker and/or their organisation: *(Try to keep this below 12 words)*

Madoda Mxakwe, Group Chief Executive Officer, SABC

c) What you want the decision-maker to do (petition demands) *Try keep this section between 200 to 300 words.*

We want the SABC to completely stop airing alcohol ads that associate alcohol consumption with status and success.

It is bad enough that attempts to ban alcohol ads completely on TV were unsuccessful and now television in South Africa has become dependent on alcohol advertising. Since the ads cannot be banned because the SABC says they stand to lose half-a-billion rand in ad revenue per year [1], never mind the fact that banning those ads will in actual fact, help save the country R1.9 billion that the government is already spending on dealing with alcohol-related harm [2], the least our public broadcaster could do is monitor and regulate alcohol marketing and advertising. The WHO recommends a number of different policies to help protect young people from advertising [3]. We call on the SABC to:

- Do not use settings that associate alcohol products with status and success.

- Avoid using young people in the advertisements, or implement a law that only adults aged 40 and over, can be in alcohol ads.
- Don't use words such as "Boss, The Man, Good Life, etc.

c) Why is this issue important? *(Try to keep this section between 3 to 4 paragraphs maximum, no more than 800 words)*

We live in an era where the digital world influences the lives of many people, especially young black people from poor backgrounds. We see something, we digest it, and we want to copy it. Institutions such as the SABC should not have a negative impact or allow negative airing. As the national broadcasting company, content that is of a harmful nature or influence should not be aired, if not controlled. It is no secret that alcohol ads are flooding television. What is more saddening is that these ads glamorise alcohol consumption and associate it with being successful. In the ads, you will see young people in an environment 'where successful people belong' consuming alcohol, and promoting and encouraging those who are watching to go buy and drink it.

According to a special issue on alcohol advertising by the Southern African Alcohol Policy Alliance (SAAPA), research has linked exposure to portrayals of alcohol use in the mass media with the development of positive drinking expectancies by children and adolescents. Young people with more positive affective responses to alcohol advertising hold more favourable drinking expectancies, perceive greater social approval for drinking, believe drinking is more common among peers and adults, and intend to drink more as adults. [4] Research conducted by Soul City suggests that young people's views on alcohol advertising, marketing and availability have a direct influence on their drinking patterns and sexual behaviour. Conducted in a rural village in Mpumalanga and an urban township, where young people were encouraged to capture their experiences through photographs and captions, including participating in focus-group discussions, young males believed that drinking a particular brand would lead to them being successful and young women said flavoured drinks were targeted at them. [5]

While there are a number of regulations against alcohol advertising that have passed, such as airing alcohol ads between 2pm - 5 pm on weekday and before 12pm on weekends on TV; and 6am - 9am and 2pm - 5pm on weekdays and no advertising before 12pm on weekends on radio, the laws need revisiting. In 2010, the World Health Assembly of the World Health Organisation endorsed a Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol that countries needed to adopt. Ten policy options were identified, one of them being to reduce the impact of marketing, especially on young people and adolescents.

We must act now because we are what we consume! South Africa has a major problem with alcohol abuse. Even though there are hundreds of organisations and campaigns raising awareness about the dangers of alcohol abuse. We know that advertising causes younger people to drink sooner and in greater quantities. It also creates an environment that normalises drinking and it typically only portrays the positive sides of drinking and not any negatives [6]. If we act now, we can have the power to control what we consume on TV, and by doing

that, we will be saving ourselves and the lives of young people.

#WeDontNeedAlcoholToBeSuccessful

[1] SABC Could Lose Half a Billion Rand If Alcohol Ads Are Banned. Zodidi Dano for IOL. 16 April 2018

[2] Banning Advertising Alcohol Can Save SA R1.9 Billion. Zeenat Vallie for IOL. 2 March 2018.

[3] 10 areas governments could work with to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. WHO

[4] Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use. Peter Anderson, Avalon de Bruijn, Kathryn Angus, Ross Gordon & Gerard Hastings. SAAPA. 14 January 2009.

[5] Alcohol Ads Luring SA Youth to Drink. Noni Mokati for IOL and Soul City Institute For Social Justice. 24 February 2017.

[6] Proposed New Liquor Law Needs Revisiting. Marvin Charles for IOL. 16 August 2017.

- Good Petition Example 3

a) Petition Title: *(Max 10 words, the shorter the better)*

Stop Johannesburg's R50 recycling fee that threatens waste reclaimers' livelihood

b) Name of the decision-maker and/or their organisation: *(Try to keep this below 12 words)*

City of Johannesburg and Pikitup

c) What you want the decision-maker to do (campaign demands) *Try keep this section between 200 to 300 words.*

We demand that the City of Johannesburg and Pikitup:

1. Put an immediate stop to the R50 recycling fee.
2. Develop a reclaimer-based recycling system through consultation with reclaimers.

d) Why is this issue important? *(Try to keep this section between 3 to 4 paragraphs maximum, no more than 800 words)*

Starting from 1 July, residents living in houses worth more than R350 000 could potentially pay a R50 “recycling fee” if the City of Johannesburg’s proposed waste management tariff is approved [1]. The City said that the R50 additional levy will go to Pikitup to extend a separation at source (S@S) programme which has already been piloted in a few suburbs in Johannesburg.

The City places the bill at the feet of “affluent” residents to extend the S@S pilot programme yet provides no research or statistics to support it. Residents are expected to buy into a system they know nothing about despite having very little trust in the government to provide services and use the money for its intended purpose.

Not only does this recycling fee raise more questions and concerns for residents, but it is also a grave threat to the

livelihood of reclaimers who depend on the collection of recyclables for their daily living. The extension of this project will decrease reclaimers' access to bins which will significantly decrease their income.

Reclaimers collect between 80 - 90 % of used packaging collected for recycling [2], saving municipalities millions of rands per year. The contribution of reclaimers cannot be overlooked or underestimated. There are alternatives to the City's proposal. As African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO), we have been piloting our own S@S programme, where we work directly with residents in Brixton and Auckland Park who separate materials for us.

Instead of destroying our jobs, Pikitup should expand our pilot across the city.

[1] New R50 levy proposed for 'wealthy' households in Johannesburg. Staff Writer for Business Tech. 6 April 2021.

[2] Packaging SA (2015). 2015 Recycling Assessment Report. Prepared by BMI Research, 01 September 2015.

Remember, when pitching your petition, do not pitch a petition about affordable inner-city housing, sewage leaks, or copy any of the petition examples used above, or existing petitions on amandla.mobi or awethu.mobi. Those selected for the Campaigner Fellowship each did an original petition.