

Kubatana Membership Survey Report

December 2019

Introduction

In November 2019, we asked our members to participate in a survey. The survey was hosted in a Google form, and we shared the link via Facebook and Twitter. We also included the link + questions in full in a dedicated email newsletter and in a dedicated WhatsApp post.

Questions asked what members value about Kubatana, the impact Kubatana has on them, specific posts or issues which had stood out for members, and also gave members an opportunity to discuss their experience with the opportunities Kubatana shares on behalf of other NGOs.



Responses

1. What I value about Kubatana is . . .

There were 222 responses to this question with most respondents (61%) citing access to reliable, relevant news and information as what they value most about Kubatana. A significant portion of respondents (31%) also said that they valued the sharing job vacancy announcements and other opportunities. Some respondents cited both news and job vacancies as what they value most.

Within the theme of reliable news and information, members specifically commented on:

- the transparency and non-partisan approach to news sharing (34 respondents)
- the professional and timely arrival of the newsletter (24 respondents)
- the variety of information shared (12 respondents)
- the community focus (12 respondents)
- the concise style and tone of the newsletters (18 respondents)

Other responses mentioned connection to networks; focus on human rights and advocacy for the marginalised; the optimism and hope contained in newsletters; opportunities for advertising; and convenience, as other aspects which members value about Kubatana.

Sample responses include:

News and Opportunities

- The depth, variety, considered debate, community participation and local knowledge about current situations.
- The email provides coverage of the status quo in Zimbabwe including the civil society. The laws and policies and the ever changing situation in Zimbabwe.
- I receive information that has been verified
- It gives accurate information that is timely
- The insight on social and political issues that affect me each and everyday.
- The news that is happening around me ie. Art, social, economic, sports, politics and human rights.
- It keeps me informed about latest job vacancies, opportunities as well as current affairs in Zimbabwe. I am always well informed about developments and events happening around me.
- It is informative, unbiased and credible
- What I value most about Kubatana is its provision of different job alerts that are all around Zimbabwe
- Kubatana gives me full package. Weekly news in detail, testimonies and job opportunities
- What I value about Kubatana is that it keeps me up to date on local news. I hate our media because it's biased, you can't even rely on the radio to speak on issues that matter.

Style and Presentation

- Your unique style of packaging information, you pay exhaustive attention to detail in a relaxed manner.
- Their candidness
- Their frankness when discussing the issues bedeviling my country Zimbabwe
- Succinct helpful news

- Kubatana analyse issues in a critical and jovial manner which makes the publication interesting. It also captures scenes which covers Africa at large.
- The way they execute their news it's amazing. It feels like they are reaching to the young people and also the older guys.

Kubatana Values and Ethos

A few respondents commented on the values of Kubatana that have come to mean something to readers:

- What I like about Kubatana is it values other people no matter who you are
- Summarised state of the nation updates and inspirational stories from around the world about how some people have taken steps to make a positive change to the world around them.
- Because of Kubatana, I now understand the environmental issues and opportunities and how to come up with up to date announcements and how to approach situations.

2. Because of Kubatana, I . . .

This question sought to measure what difference Kubatana makes to our membership, and the impact of our work.

Themes raised by respondents reflect that because of Kubatana, subscribers are:

- More informed about news and current affairs
- Aware of job vacancy announcements and opportunities (including have received a job / opportunity due to seeing it on Kubatana)
- Have a more critical / analytical / thoughtful perspective
- Participate more in their community or are engaged in advocacy
- Inspired / hopeful / more optimistic
- More informed about issues beyond Zimbabwe
- Helped at the organisational level when Kubatana shares their material
-

Across these themes, some sample responses include:

News and current affairs

- Able to keep up to date on topical issues which are presented in a more objective manner without taking sides. Am able to read about issues at a more relaxed pace and keep a record for future reference.
- Keep up to date with issues that interest me especially on democracy and governance
- Keep informed about what is happening in Zimbabwe in a summarised way.
- Get first hand news
- Get to know local and international news
- I now understand what is happening in our continent and our community be it political or fun
- I understand that things are not always as the papers report them to be. Being away from Zim, I feel connected to what is going on back home every week, and I feel urged to be and do better as a Zimbabwean
- I was able to stay current on news that matter and have been verified.
- I'm fully aware of current affairs and other programs of interests being run by NGOs
- It is what I look forward to every week and really feel I am reading real news.

- I am also in the know how/informed about what is happening in different spectrum's, politics, economy, social, human rights you name it. Despite living and working in the rural i am always in the loop. Kudos to you Kubatana!
- Have a better understanding of political and social dynamics in Zimbabwe, but I also get to know about interesting stories from elsewhere
- Don't feel so isolated from events & trends in Zim
- Because of Kubatana, I have been always well informed of the current events happening not only in Zimbabwe but even beyond, I have also been able to follow and read opinion piece from different articles as well as some general education from various educative articles.
- Am much better informed about what is happening beyond my narrow sphere of interest or influence

Job vacancies and opportunities

- Because of Kubatana I got a job that am in now
- Because of Kubatana, I have got a job of my dream
- Because of Kubatana, I have got my first job after masters. Got a consultancy opportunity for my firm worth more than 100k

News and jobs

- I'm able to see job opportunity that suits my qualification and also get to know what is happening in Zimbabwe "news"
- Because of Kubatana I get informed about issues in my country and job vacancies
- I stay highly informed and connected to what's happening in my surroundings. My current job is because of Kubatana job adverts. I am so grateful.
- I have learned a lot of things through information I get from Kubatana and also I managed to get job adverts which suits my qualifications though I have not yet called for an interview
- Because of Kubatana, I have learnt a lot about our local politics and even got a job!

Have a more critical / analytical understanding

- I am interesting in reading and analysing
- Get to think about issues as other perspectives are presented. Invites intra dialogue and provokes me to dialogue with others.
- Think more and reflect on the complexity that is Zimbabwe
- Now I understand the value of having access to the right information at the right time and am now informed always on what is happening in our nation. I can also read between the lines due to the news and discussions being availed to me by Kubatana
- Know the issues affecting Zimbabwe and I get to see that I am not the only one baffled by the policies of this 'new dispensation'.
- Has changed the way I think, feel and act
- Get my thinking cap on and assess everything.
- Changed my view on government policies reporting
- Able to keep up to date on topical issues which are presented in a more objective manner without taking sides. Am able to read about issues at a more relaxed pace and keep a record for future reference.

Participate more in their community

- Because of Kubatana I feel motivated and committed to my values (I'm fond of human rights issues and development) I feel there is need for everyone to become emancipated and Kubatana is in the right direction.
- There is more to life than just complaining about our problems. It is better to look for opportunity and to always try and give back
- Am now an informed citizen practising my constitutional roles
- The updates makes us want to discuss more and more on social and political issues
- Because of Kubatana the NRZ is now giving us protective clothing.
- Manage to wake up in the morning and carry on doing what needs to be done in my v small way
- Have been made aware of the situation in Zimbabwe and worldwide and how I can be of assistance to others less fortunate than myself
- Feel motivated to take action about something in my environment that concerns me
- Because of Kubatana, I have begun writing again. I passed a comment on the 22 October issue on Hilton Tamangani and Kubatana featured it and commended it. I have been writing for so long and nearly gave up because there are no platforms to put my work on but Kubatana including my comment pushed me to continue. I am also now pushed to be a proactive citizen and to do something for my community. I realise that people out there (in and out of Zimbabwe) are doing something and I can and should too.
- Because of Kubatana, I am inspired to do challenging tasks, to give the little I have, to keep on dreaming big
- Am aware of topical civil society issues for advocacy

Are more inspired / hopeful

- Keep faith in the renewing spirit of Zimbabweans
- I'm generally inspired to do better and get out of my comfort zone, and value myself more.
- Am better informed, and often inspired.
- A great deal as it gives me hope for the future and if I will not be there, the future for my children looks bright.

3. What does Kubatana do well, or badly? What would you like to see more of? Less of?

This question asked respondents to consider elements that they appreciate and want to see more of, while also shining a more critical light on areas in which we could do better.

What does Kubatana do well?

A number of respondents replied with personal testimonials of what Kubatana has meant to them. These responses also reflect some of the less tangible effects that Kubatana has on communities and individuals. Some positive comments include:

- Manages to make me laugh even when the news is so dire....
- I like that you provide brief write ups with links to further stories, I also like that sometimes you then have a special interest type write up in more depth, and that you circulate jobs and opportunities in one place
- I love the way you add a dash of humour, I laugh out aloud every time I read your newsletter.
- Your reporting on social/ health issues is superb, well done! The pdf formats are very nice and low size (Mb) which is very good considering the cost of internet and data in Zim lately

- The humour, wit and good English presentation makes for very enjoyable reading! The artistic images are great as well. Maybe you could put two images at the beginning of each weekly post rather than just one? The short stories from various authors are also a welcome read. There was one you posted for a few consecutive weeks, last year I believe, written by an unemployed youth on her quest of finding a job in Harare. I shared it with my daughter who's at university and she thoroughly enjoyed it as well. Such issues that we can relate to are great, so are the job vacancies. I keep forwarding them to every person I know seeking employment, and they are always grateful. I believe several now subscribe to Kubatana as well.
- You did well on giving interpretation and understanding to issues that were written in technical language like the budget statement. Hahaha you did well also on the jobs you have shared throughout the year though i was not called for an interview kkkkkk! Keep the zeal like that nothing less/more just maintain the status quo
- I like that Kubatana always tries to include a bit of light during these dark times. The positive stories help fuel our hope.
- Kubatana is excellent on providing current news with good analysis. The topics are so catchy that you wouldn't want to miss any one of the newsletters. The inspirational stories and quotes motivate me to reach a better version of myself. I also love the job vacancies segment. The adverts are authentic and I have been called for interviews several times since the time I joined Kubatana in 2014. Keep up the good work and don't stop being creative, I think I like that.

What does Kubatana do badly?

The most common criticism here was that some respondents (3) feel that job advertisements are sometimes posted too close to the application deadline. Two respondents also expressed disappointment that the newsletter did not seem to arrive when they expected it.

In specific reference to the WhatsApp platform, one respondent said that the links to other articles did not always work and another respondent said that the PDF format of the WhatsApp newsletter would not open on some phones. The cost of data needed to open both emails and WhatsApp was mentioned as prohibitive in 2 responses. For example: "data bundles are becoming expensive so as to access emails".

One respondent questioned the balance of reporting in the newsletter writing, "You tend to be reporting much from an opposition parties point of view than from a neutral or balanced view. Though I personally disagree with the government on several issues but I feel Kubatana must take a neutral or balanced coverage so as to gain credibility. When one says he/she saw a job opportunity from Kubatana automatically he/she will be judged as an opposition affiliate. This may influence the interview panellists' judgement".

Another respondent wrote: "So far so good. Just surprise us with an article on Zanu Pf positive contribution to Zimbabwe!" One other respondent said that Kubatana does not always verify its stories and does not publish opposing views.

One respondent had a negative experience in submitting an article for publication: "I sent an article for publication. I did not hear back. I followed up, no one answered, I had to write back and say I am withdrawing my piece because I was going to publish it elsewhere. This made me lose respect for Kubatana in terms of who it accommodates. You publish pieces of those you know and answer those you know. This is the impression I got. You did not show respect for me as someone who wanted to contribute."

What would you like to see less of?

Only a few respondents highlighted what they would like to see less of. Six respondents said that the newsletters were too lengthy. Two of the respondents suggested sending the newsletter at least twice weekly to cut down on content.

Two respondents said that they would like to see fewer job advertisements and one respondent said they would like to see less negative news.

What would you like to see more of?

There was a wide range of suggestions here for what respondents would enjoy more of. The most frequent requests were for more:

- Job opportunities (8 respondents)
- Video content (3 respondents)
- Training opportunities (3 respondents)
- Original opinions/ pieces of writing (3 respondents)
- Frequency (3 respondents)
- Free materials (3 respondents)
- Information on the Constitution (2 respondents)

In general, responses could be grouped into the following themes:

1. Content

Much of the content that respondents wanted more of already exists in the newsletter (such as reader contributions, real life stories, extracts from books etc). Two respondents said they would like to see some sports news included. A couple of respondents also said they would like to see a greater focus on humanitarian issues and would like to see NGO project reviews.

In political content, respondents said that they would like to see more Parliamentary material and would like to see Kubatana approach relevant government officials for responses to political points of enquiry / discussion. Two respondents also wanted to see information specific to understanding the Constitution and rights therein.

One respondent felt there was room to advocate on behalf of a wider range of marginalised groups such as the physically disabled community.

Three respondents said they would like to have more free materials made available.

Three respondents said they felt Kubatana could do more to point readers towards taking action in response to what they had read.

2. Presentation

As mentioned under 'less of', six respondents said that the presentation of the news was too wordy and long - while one respondent said that articles were too short! Three respondents said there was need for more graphics/ images while one said we needed to speak the "language of the youth".

Three respondents commented on the need to categorise jobs and opportunities more clearly.

Another respondent requested a link to databases of public information such as ward and council information; emergency contact numbers; health and wellbeing facilities etc.

3. Opportunities

Thirty-two respondents said that they would like to see more jobs and opportunities posted. Many of these wanted to see more opportunities for training and up-skilling. One respondent wanted to see more internships advertised and another respondent wanted to see more international positions advertised.

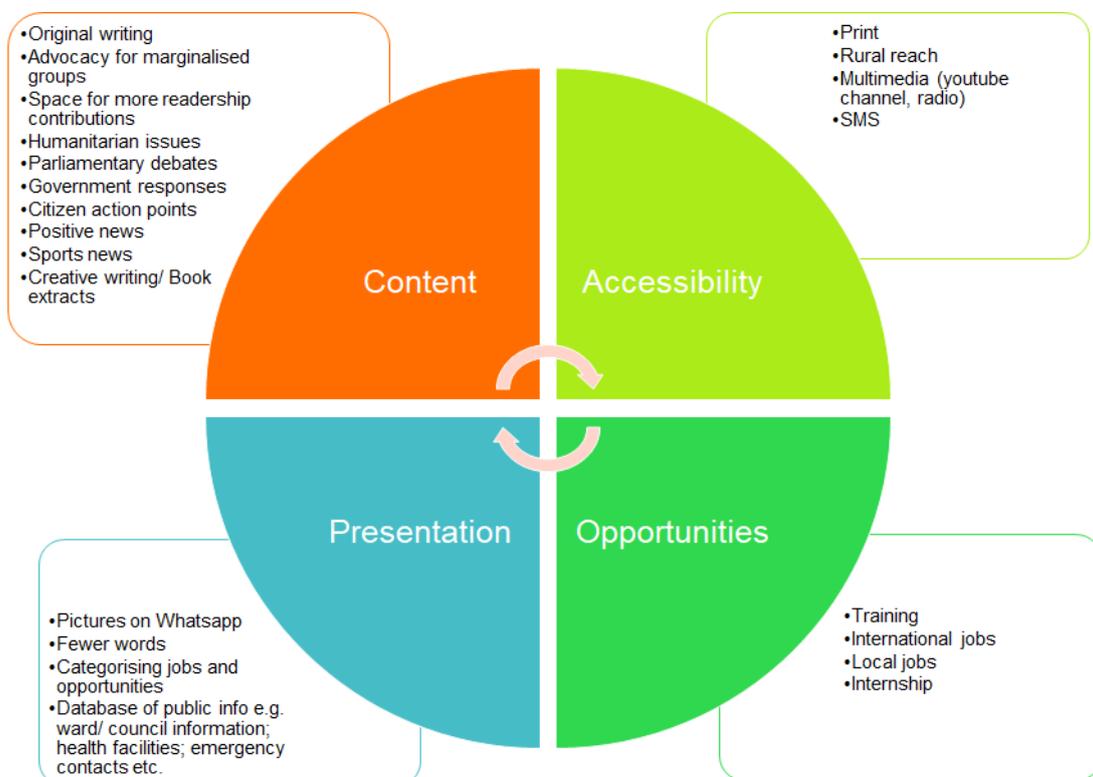
4. Accessibility

Three respondents said that they would like to see an increase in the frequency of newsletter delivery and two respondents said they would like to receive Whatsapp updates (and suggested that they did not know that such a platform exists).

Three respondents commented that they would like to see video content and/or news sharing through other forms of media such as YouTube/ Facebook Live feeds.

A few respondents pointed out that some people may not be able to access any of Kubatana's platforms due to data and technology limitations and suggested looking into print and SMS platforms.

A summary of what respondents want to see more of can be found below:



4. Have you ever applied for an opportunity you saw on Kubatana?

This question sought to better understand the extent to which Kubatana members perceive themselves as benefiting from the opportunities we share.

Of the 205 responses to this question, 155 members said yes, and 50 said no they had not ever applied for an opportunity they had seen on Kubatana. Of this 155, 55% said they had not gotten the job, 17% said they got to the interview stage, and 28% said they successfully secured the opportunity they had applied for.

Sample feedback:

- Yes I did a few times - never got the job, but did get involved in some projects both local and international
- Yes I have. The response was very good and I missed out on the opportunity in the third and final stage of interviews. It was a great learning experience
- I was actually called for 3 interviews on jobs I saw on Kubatana
- Yes I'm currently at a job I saw from Kubatana it's been an awesome experience, I have also been called to other interviews and I have learnt from the interview experiences
- I am in Dubai through Kubatana
- Yes I did for many jobs, but no response. I wonder if the organisations that advertised those jobs employed people or they just advertise whilst they have their own people get the jobs
- Yes, I have applied but unfortunately have only been called to a handful of those interviews. One time I applied for a voluntary post and attended the interview which was all okay until I was "assigned" to write a proposal. So after 1 week of writing the proposal I was not called back. I mean all that time devoting it to not receive any feedback. Maybe it wasn't the best but if employers could be reminded that it's just nice to hear back even if it is an apology. Sorry about the rant. I'm trying to be as honest as possible.
- Yes. I got the jobs two different times which paid me a lot and they were genuine companies.
- Yes. My daughter got an internship through Kubatana.
- Yes, I was called for interviews twice, although I couldn't make it to any of the posts. I felt so proud of Kubatana and I introduced Kubatana to almost all of my close friends
- Yes. It was a leadership training best 8 months of my life.
- I have applied to posts that suit the qualifications and experience that I have but am quite unfortunate I have never received even a single reply. Sometimes I wonder if the posts advertised are in existence
- Yes and was sceptical but was called for an interview that's when I became confident
- Yes. I have applied to numerous actually I check for opportunities everyday on Kubatana. I was called for interviews on 1 and I am still waiting for feedback but fingers crossed. Most of the opportunities inquired how I got to know about the post and I stated that it was Kubatana.
- I have applied for positions advertised on Kubatana and have never had a single response. I wonder if the vacancies are cosmetic, in the sense of going through the motions but they already have their person. Also there are usually many vacancies from the same large organisations. They are so frequent that one wonders if they are opening new projects or people are not staying on those posts.
- Yes I applied for about three jobs and I was lucky and got one having been referred to Kubatana by a friend that same month.

- Yes I did. My first experience was in 2017, I applied for an internship that I had seen on Kubatana, I was successful and I'm thankful for that opportunity. Where I am serving right now, I also saw an advert through Kubatana mailing list, got called for an interview and I was successful. I have had great opportunities like trainings that I attended through the good work of Kubatana and I have always encouraged my friends and relatives to subscribe to this platform.

5. I'd also like to tell you . . .

We included this question to provide a catch all / optional question whereby members were able to share their thoughts and feedback in a less structured way. In many of the responses, members repeated similar content to what they had already mentioned, but there was also some new information from respondents.

Themes which came up in the 161 responses to this question include:

- Keep Up the Good Work! (101)
- Post More Jobs/Free CV etc writing Trainings (18)
- There is room for Improvement (12)
- I share Kubatana with my friends and family (5)
- Thank you (6)
- Include more art! (3)
- More regular updates please! (3)
- Other (13)

Some of the recommendations for improvement that some respondents gave us include:

- Use YouTube more
- Kubatana should have a radio station
- I hope to see Kubatana change from dissing politicians and also post about positive changes happening in and around Zimbabwe. I believe the negativity in reporting will not help our country move forward. It may inform in a way, which is credible. But if so consistent then it seems biased. They are good people in Zimbabwe who are praying and rooting for the country to move forward.
- Keep on doing a great job if possible include translation to vernacular and print hard copies for distribution in rural areas. Also if you can do training on writings in marginalised communities so that information can be accessed and passed on well for bulletin capturing.
- Continue with the topical areas you are covering and also consider more science; technology areas and innovations which happen in Africa.