ParliMeter

Workshop Survey Report

2 & 9 October 2024

PMG PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING GROUP

OUTA ORGANISATION UNDOING TAX ABUSE

openup:

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1. Executive Summary

The Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard is an initiative developed by the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) in collaboration with the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) and OpenUp, co-funded by the European Union (EU). One of the project deliverables is the dashboard, known as ParliMeter. ParliMeter is in its initiation phase and aims to enhance public engagement and transparency in South Africa's parliamentary processes by providing real-time data and insights on parliamentary activities. To ensure that ParliMeter aligns with user needs, two workshops were conducted in October 2024 at the University of Pretoria's Future Africa Institute and the Wits School of Governance. These workshops targeted politically engaged students and professionals to gather critical feedback on ParliMeter's functionality.

The workshops included pre-workshop, during-workshop, and post-workshop surveys, each containing five questions, to assess participants' initial knowledge, engagement during the workshop, and their satisfaction and overall experience afterwards. The workshops were structured as full-day events, combining interactive showcasing of the ParliMeter, together with engaging discussions on parliamentary oversight and accountability. The purpose of this report is to reflect on the workshops, based on the insights gleaned from the surveys.

Key findings from the surveys are as follows:

1. **Pre-Workshop:** Participants had varying levels of familiarity with parliamentary processes, with many seeking practical skills to navigate ParliMeter for research, advocacy, and decision-making. The pre-workshop survey revealed a high interest in tools that could enhance public accountability and transparency.

2. **During-Workshop:** Participants provided real-time feedback on ParliMeter's features, with the MP Meeting Attendance Tracker and Status of Bill Tracker being highlighted as the most useful. Engagement was high, especially during interactive sessions, and participants expressed that the dashboard was easy to understand and use. However, some online participants encountered minor challenges with navigation.

3. **Post-Workshop:** Satisfaction levels were high, with most participants rating the workshop 5 out of 5 for clarity and effectiveness. The majority felt prepared to use ParliMeter in their work or studies, with suggestions for improving mobile accessibility, data visualisation, and providing additional support materials such as tutorials and user guides.

Several key recommendations were drawn from the workshops:

1. Optimise ParliMeter for mobile use to enhance accessibility.
2. Provide comprehensive user guides and tutorials to support independent learning.
3. Enhance data visualisation features to make ParliMeter more user-friendly.
4. Tailor future workshops to better support online participants.

Consider addressing survey fatigue by offering post-workshop surveys with more flexibility. Continue engaging youthful voices in future workshops to strengthen their participation in parliamentary oversight.

These workshops provided valuable insights that will shape the further development of the ParliMeter to ensure it meets the needs of its users. A second thematic report will follow, offering a deeper analysis of the themes emerging from the workshops, such as youth engagement and the role of digital tools in promoting public accountability.

2. Introduction

The Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard, currently in its initiation phase, is a collaborative project developed by the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) in partnership with the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) and OpenUp. This initiative, co-funded by the European Union (EU), aims to improve transparency and accountability in South Africa's parliamentary processes by providing a user-friendly platform for real-time parliamentary data tracking and public engagement. The project has several deliverables, including the monitoring and tracking of Parliamentary activities by PMG, conducting research and delivering research reports by OUTA, as well as developing the dashboard, known as ParliMeter, by OpenUp (Figure 1).
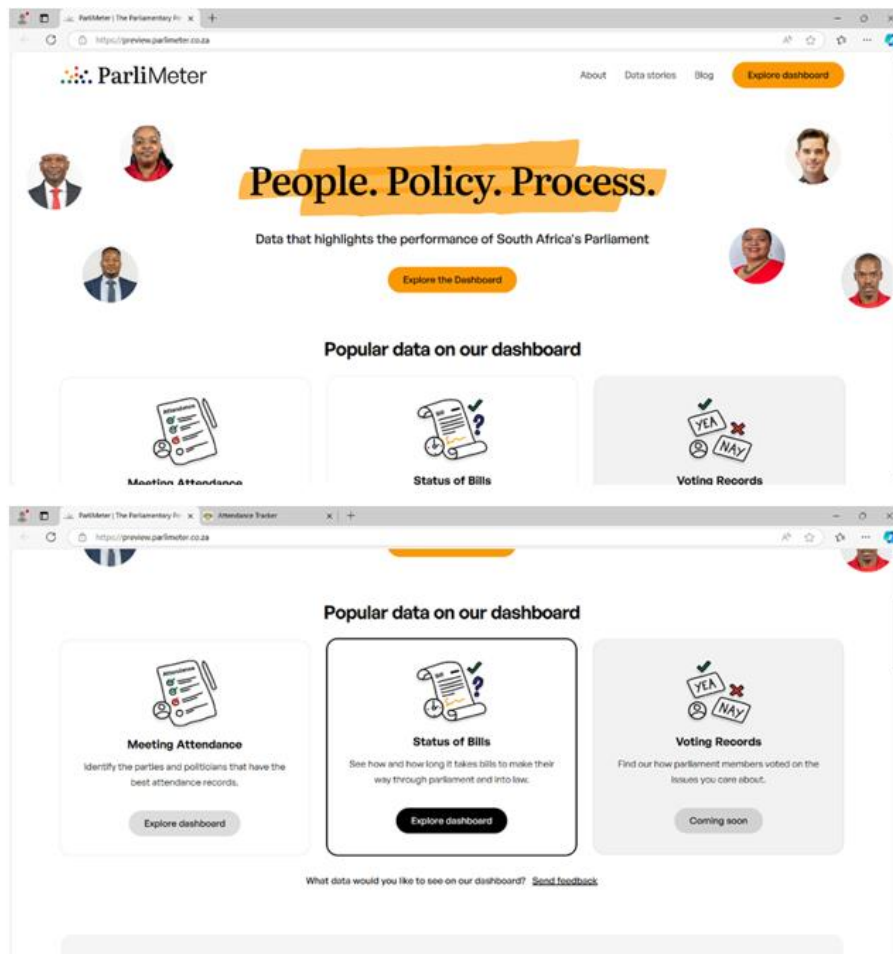
Figure 1: ParliMeter Dashboard Landing Page

To gather essential feedback and ensure ParliMeter aligns with the needs of its users, OUTA hosted two university workshops. These workshops were designed to introduce politically inclined students and professionals to ParliMeter, while also gathering their feedback on its features, accessibility, and usability. The university setting was particularly important, as the public perception survey conducted earlier in 2024, had identified a significant lack of youth engagement in parliamentary oversight. The workshops provided a platform to bring in the youthful voices that were missing from prior discussions on parliamentary accountability.

The first workshop took place on 2 October 2024, at the University of Pretoria's Future Africa Centre, with 34 participants attending in person and online. The second workshop was held on 9 October 2024, at the Wits School of Governance, attracting 50 participants in a hybrid

setting. Both institutions were selected due to their focus on governance studies and their ability to engage politically aware students.

The workshops, which spanned a full day, included training with the Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard, interactive discussions, and panel sessions (Figure 2). The objective was not only to introduce ParliMeter, but also to recruit potential user testers and gather valuable feedback that could guide further improvements. By involving users directly, we aim to ensure ParliMeter meets their needs and expectations, making future iterations more effective. The workshops also aimed to fill the gap identified in earlier surveys concerning youth involvement in parliamentary oversight, by specifically engaging students in governance-related academic programs.

ParliMeter

Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard Workshop

9 October 2024
Wits School of Governance

Time	Activity
8:30 – 09:00	Registration and Welcome Drinks
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome and Opening Remarks Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA)
	Pre-Workshop Survey: Conducted during the opening remarks to capture initial attendee expectations and baseline knowledge
09:30 – 10:00	**Keynote Address:** Enhancing Accountability through Public Engagement
10:00 – 10:30	**Session 1:** Practical considerations on Parliamentary Tracking & Monitoring *Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG)*
10:30 – 11:00	*Tea/Coffee & Refreshment Break*
11:00 – 13:00	**Session 2:** Leveraging the Dashboard for Effective Governance: Hands-on Dashboard Run Through *OpenUp*
	During workshop survey: Conducted to gather feedback on the morning sessions and assess the effectiveness of content delivery.
13:00 – 13:45	Lunch Break
13:45 – 15:00	**Session 3 Panel Discussion:** Parliamentary Performance and Public Accountability
	Post-workshop survey: Distributed online, available for completion within 48 hours to evaluate the long-term impact and gather detailed feedback.
15:00 – 15:30	Feedback and Closing Remarks *OUTA*
	Tea/Coffee & Refreshments

People. Policy. Process

Figure 2: Workshop Programme

To collect this feedback, participants completed three surveys (pre-workshop, during-workshop, and post-workshop), each consisting of five questions. These surveys were used to capture participants' expectations, real-time engagement, and final reflections on the workshop and ParliMeter. While the results of these workshops are not definitive due to the relatively small sample size, they provide key insights into how the ParliMeter can be refined to meet the needs of its intended users.

This report serves as an initial analysis of the survey results, while a second thematic report will follow, providing a more detailed exploration of the themes that emerged from the workshops, including youth engagement, data accessibility, and the potential for digital tools to enhance transparency in governance.

3. Limitations

Several limitations were encountered during the workshops and survey process, which may have influenced the results and the extent to which they can be generalised.

3.1.   Small Sample Size

The number of participants in both workshops was relatively small, with 34 attendees at the University of Pretoria and 50 attendees at the Wits School of Governance.

Here's a table summarising the survey responses for both workshops combined:

Table 1: Survey Reponses

Survey Type	Number of Responses
Pre-Workshop Survey	44
During-Workshop Survey	33
Post-Workshop Survey	21

While these participants provided valuable insights, the limited sample size restricts the ability to draw broad conclusions about the wider target audience for ParliMeter.

3.2. Reduced Participation Over Time

A noticeable reduction in the number of participants completing surveys as the workshops progressed was observed. While pre-workshop and during-workshop surveys were well-attended, post-workshop surveys saw lower response rates as some participants left the workshops early or did not complete the follow-up surveys within the given timeframe. This decline in participation may affect the representativeness of the post-workshop feedback.

3.3. Hybrid Format Challenges

Both workshops featured a mix of in-person and online participation, which posed challenges in maintaining consistent engagement across both formats. Online participants, in particular, may not have been as fully engaged as those attending in person, leading to variability in the quality and depth of feedback provided.

3.4. Limited Time for Feedback

Given the full-day structure of the workshops and subsequent full programme, there was limited time for participants to provide in-depth feedback during the workshop itself. The compressed schedule may have influenced the detail and thoughtfulness of responses, particularly in the during-workshop surveys, where participants were focused on learning ParliMeter's features.

3.5. Initial Development Stage of ParliMeter

Since ParliMeter is still in its initiation phase, participants were reviewing a product that was not fully developed. This could have influenced their ability to fully understand its potential or envision its final form, affecting the depth of their feedback on certain features.

3.6. Youth-Focused Audience

The workshops specifically targeted politically inclined students, which is a narrower demographic segment. As a result, the feedback reflects the needs and perspectives of younger, academically inclined individuals and may not fully represent the broader user base, such as policymakers, civil society leaders, or general members of the public.

3.7. Survey Fatigue

As the workshops were long, participants may have experienced survey fatigue, especially with multiple surveys being conducted throughout the day. This could have impacted the quality of the responses, particularly for the post-workshop surveys, where fewer participants provided detailed feedback.

4. Methodology

The data collection for the Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard workshops was carried out through a combination of pre-workshop, during-workshop, and post-workshop surveys, each consisting of five questions. These surveys were carefully designed to capture participants' baseline knowledge, real-time engagement, and final reflections on the workshop. The data gathered provides critical insights into how well the workshop met its objectives and how the dashboard, known as ParliMeter, can be improved in its early development stages.

4.1. Pre-Workshop Survey

Conducted during registration and opening remarks, this survey contained five questions aimed at establishing participants' initial expectations, their familiarity with parliamentary oversight, and their specific learning goals. This survey set the baseline for measuring changes in understanding and readiness after the workshop.

4.2.   During-Workshop Survey

Administered immediately following the hands-on ParliMeter training session, this survey also contained five questions designed to gather real-time feedback on how clearly the ParliMeter's features were explained, which features participants found most useful, and their initial impressions of its potential use in governance and research.

4.3.   Post-Workshop Survey

Distributed at the end of the workshop and available for completion within 48 hours, this survey consisted of five questions aimed at assessing overall participant satisfaction, their readiness to use Parlimeter, and suggestions for further improvements. It allowed participants to reflect on the workshop experience and provide detailed feedback.

4.4.   Sampling and Participant Demographics

The workshops targeted politically inclined students and professionals from two prominent academic institutions:

- The first workshop was held at the University of Pretoria's Future Africa Centre on 2 October 2024, with 34 participants attending both in-person and online.
- The second workshop took place at the Wits School of Governance on 9 October 2024, with 50 participants attending either in person or virtually.

Both workshops were organised to gather feedback from younger, academically engaged participants, as the public perception survey conducted earlier in 2024 highlighted a lack of youth involvement in parliamentary oversight. The attendees included students, lecturers, researchers, civil society representatives, and others involved in governance, ensuring a broad demographic profile and diverse perspectives.
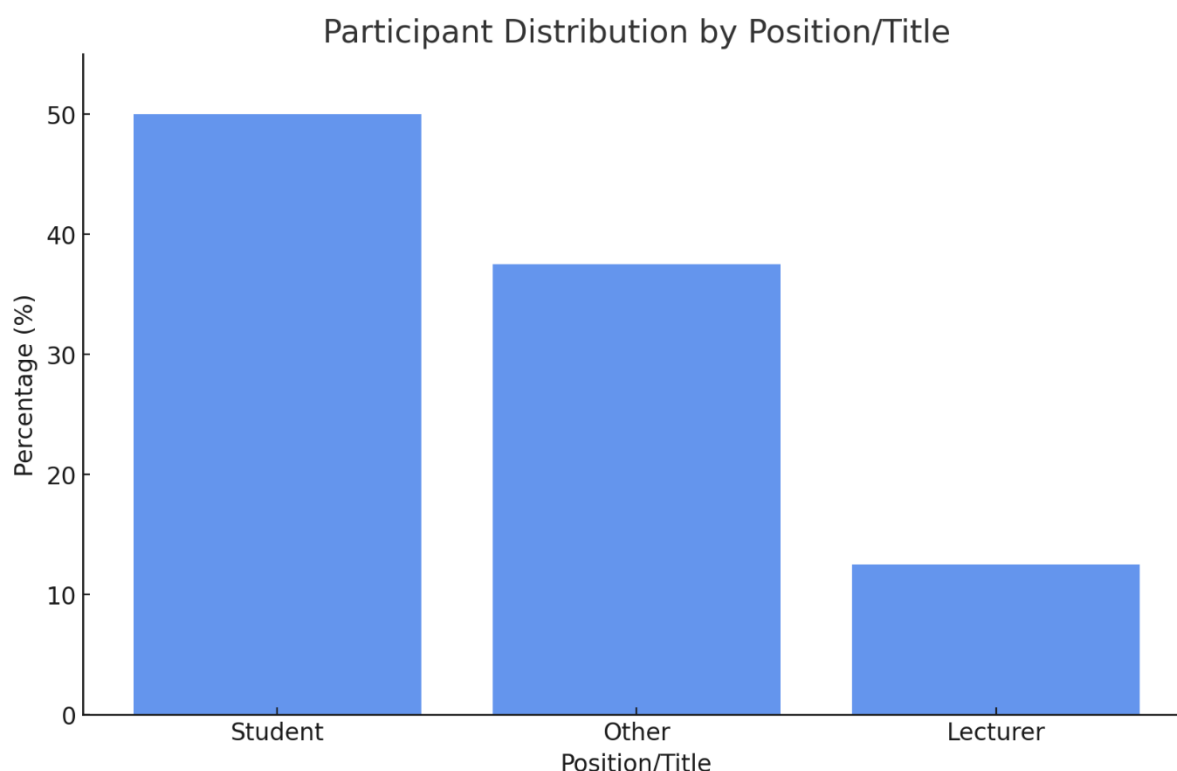
Figure 3: Workshop participant positions

Each of the surveys was designed using Google Forms, allowing for seamless distribution through QR codes and direct links, making it accessible to both in-person and online participants. The five-question surveys were concise to encourage high response rates without overwhelming participants during the full-day workshops.

Quantitative and qualitative data from these surveys were analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop and gather insights into how ParliMeter can be improved. While the results presented in this report offer an initial analysis, a second thematic report will follow, providing a deeper dive into key themes such as youth engagement, data accessibility, and the broader impact of digital tools on governance and transparency.

Please Note: Since the surveys remained consistent across both workshops, and the demographics similar, the analysis was combined for both. In total, there were 43 responses

for the pre-workshop survey, 33 for the during-workshop survey, and 21 for the post-workshop survey.

5. Survey Results Analysis

5.1. Pre-Workshop Survey Results

The pre-workshop survey was designed to establish participants' initial expectations, their familiarity with parliamentary oversight processes, and the specific skills or knowledge they hoped to gain from the workshop. The survey served as the baseline to measure participants' learning progression and to ensure that the workshop content addressed their needs.
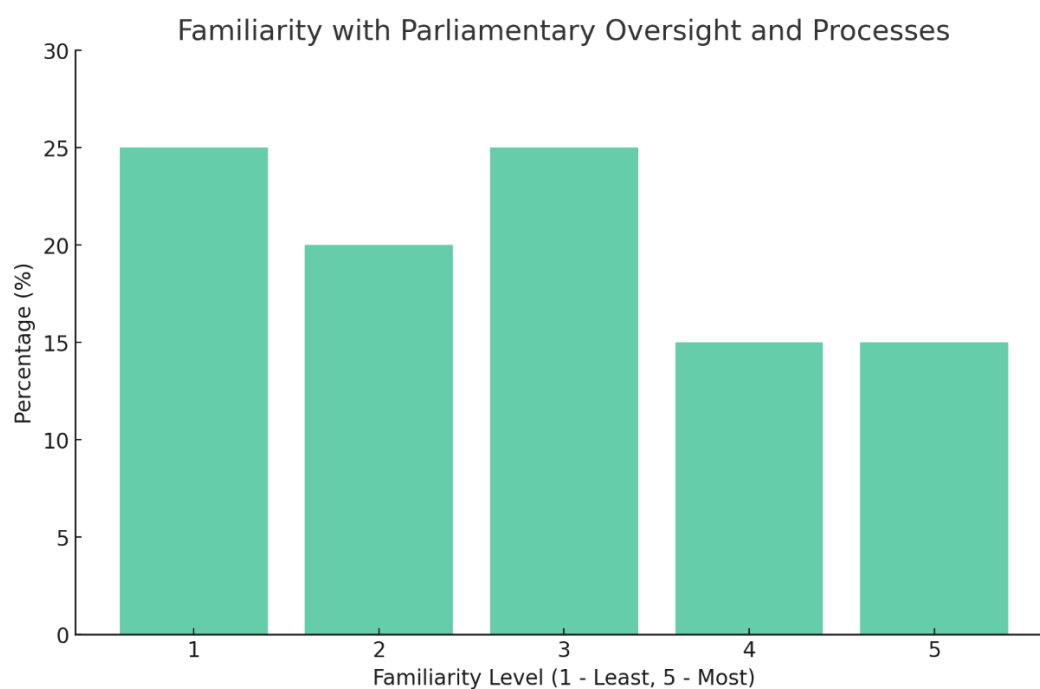
Key Findings:

Figure 4: Pre-Workshop familiarity levels

Familiarity with parliamentary processes: Participants reported varying levels of familiarity, with some having significant knowledge of parliamentary oversight mechanisms, while others had minimal exposure. This mix highlighted the importance of tailoring the workshop content

to address both newcomers and more experienced attendees. The range of familiarity also reflects the diverse backgrounds of participants, from students to professionals involved in governance and civil society.

- Those with low familiarity expressed a need to understand the basic functions of parliamentary oversight and how it impacts governance.
- Participants with high familiarity sought deeper knowledge on how to leverage Parlimeter for research and activism, especially in tracking parliamentary accountability.
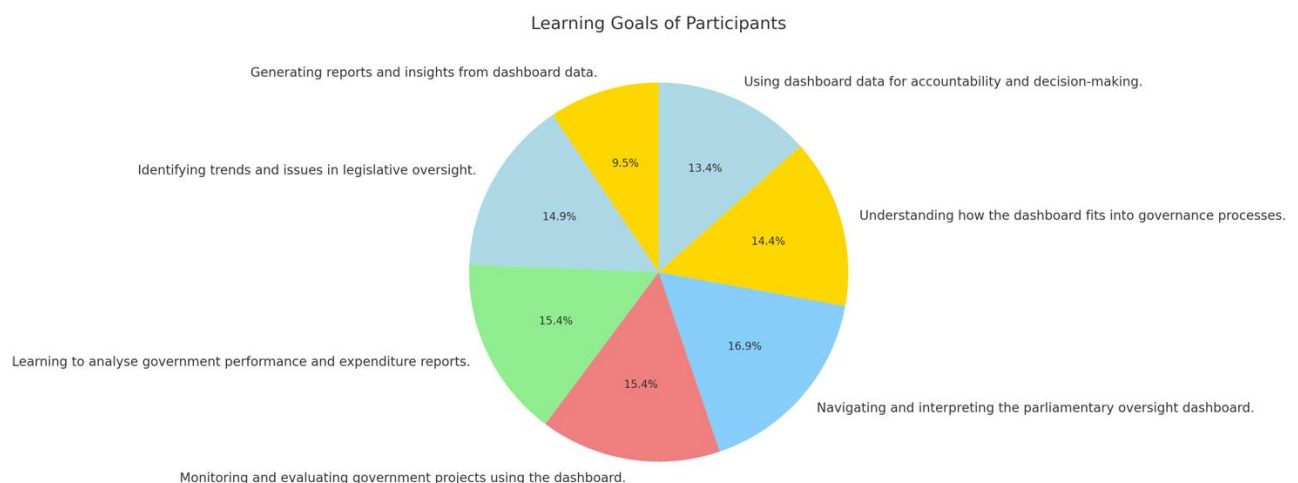
Figure 5: Pre-Workshop participants' learning goals

Learning goals: There is generally a good distribution across seven different learning goals. A significant number of participants expressed a strong interest in acquiring practical, hands-on skills. They sought to understand how to navigate the Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard for use in research, advocacy, and decision-making. Specific learning goals included:

- **Understanding data interpretation:** Many participants wanted to know how to interpret the data available through ParliMeter and how this could be applied in their academic or professional work.

- **Using data for accountability:** Several participants were interested in learning how to use ParliMeter to hold MPs and parliamentary bodies accountable. This aligned with their goals of improving public transparency and enhancing civic engagement.

The focus on practical applications underscores the importance of providing tools that can be used not only for learning but for real-world governance monitoring.

Information Sources Used by Participants
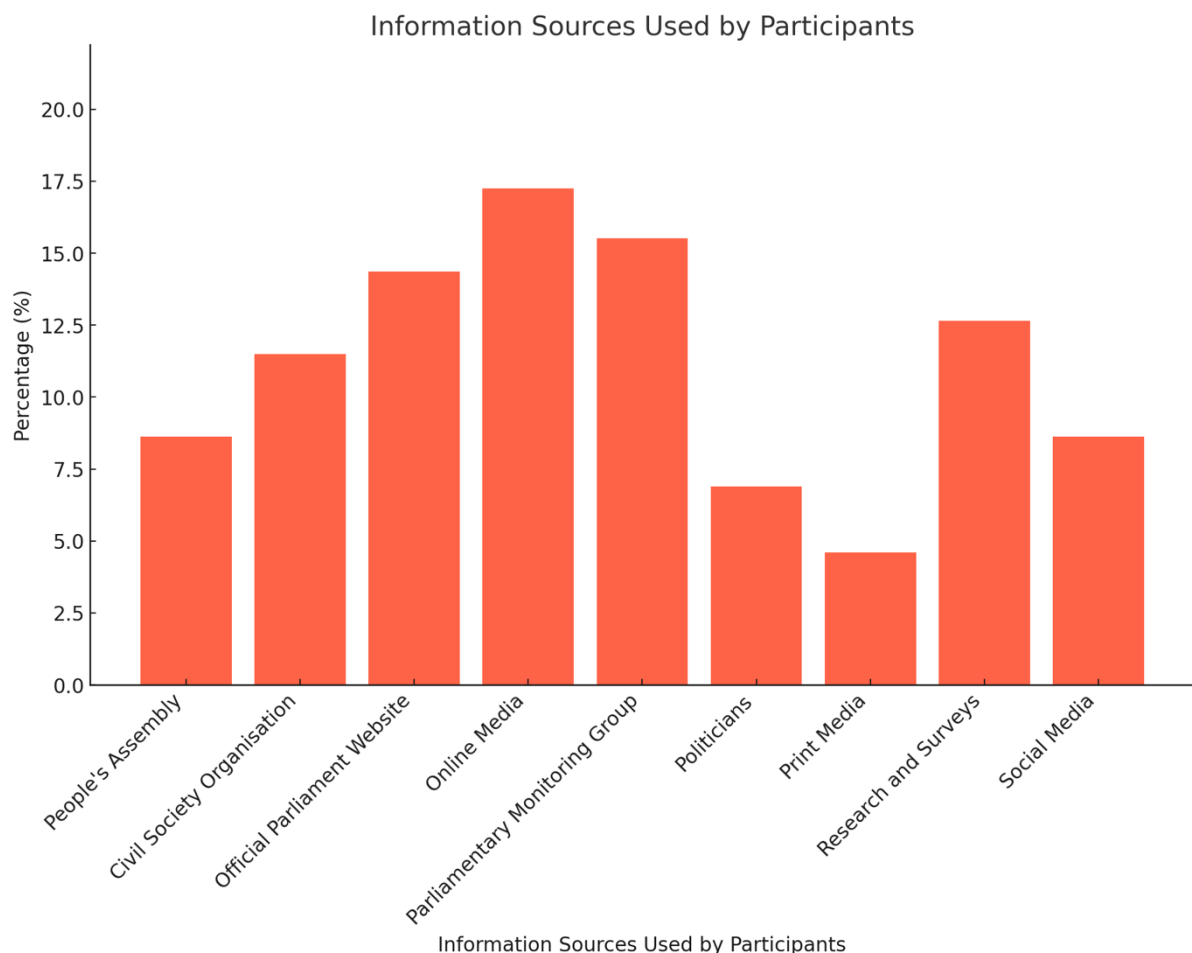
Figure 6: Pre-Workshop survey participant information sources

Information sources: The pre-workshop survey also revealed participants' reliance on a range of information sources, primarily official parliamentary websites and online media. A smaller number of participants indicated they used civil society reports and print media. This insight reflects participants' comfort with digital tools and emphasises the importance of developing a user-friendly online platform like the ParliMeter to cater to their needs.

These insights allowed workshop facilitators to ensure that both basic and advanced concepts were covered during the workshop sessions. By understanding the participants' starting points, the facilitators could address foundational knowledge gaps while also providing more advanced, practical applications for more experienced attendees.

5.2.   During-Workshop Feedback

The during-workshop survey was distributed after the hands-on ParliMeter training session. The goal was to capture real-time feedback on how well ParliMeter's features were explained, which features participants found most useful, and their confidence in using the tool moving forward. This feedback was critical to assess the immediate effectiveness of the training and identify any areas where further clarification was needed.

Key Findings:

Figure 7: During-Workshop participation satisfactory level

Clarity and understandability: A significant majority of participants rated the clarity of the training as 5 out of 5, indicating that the content was clear, well-structured, and accessible. Participants particularly appreciated the interactive elements of the workshop, which allowed them to experiment with ParliMeter in real-time. These hands-on sessions helped them grasp complex functionalities in a practical way.

- Some participants rated the clarity 4 out of 5, suggesting that while the content was generally clear, there were still areas that could benefit from further elaboration, particularly for those less familiar with digital tools or data interpretation.

Most useful features: Participants identified several features of ParliMeter as particularly useful:

- **MP Attendance Tracker:** This feature was highly praised for its ability to track the participation of Members of Parliament (MPs) in sessions. Participants viewed it as a critical tool for holding MPs accountable for their attendance and engagement in parliamentary processes (Figure 8).
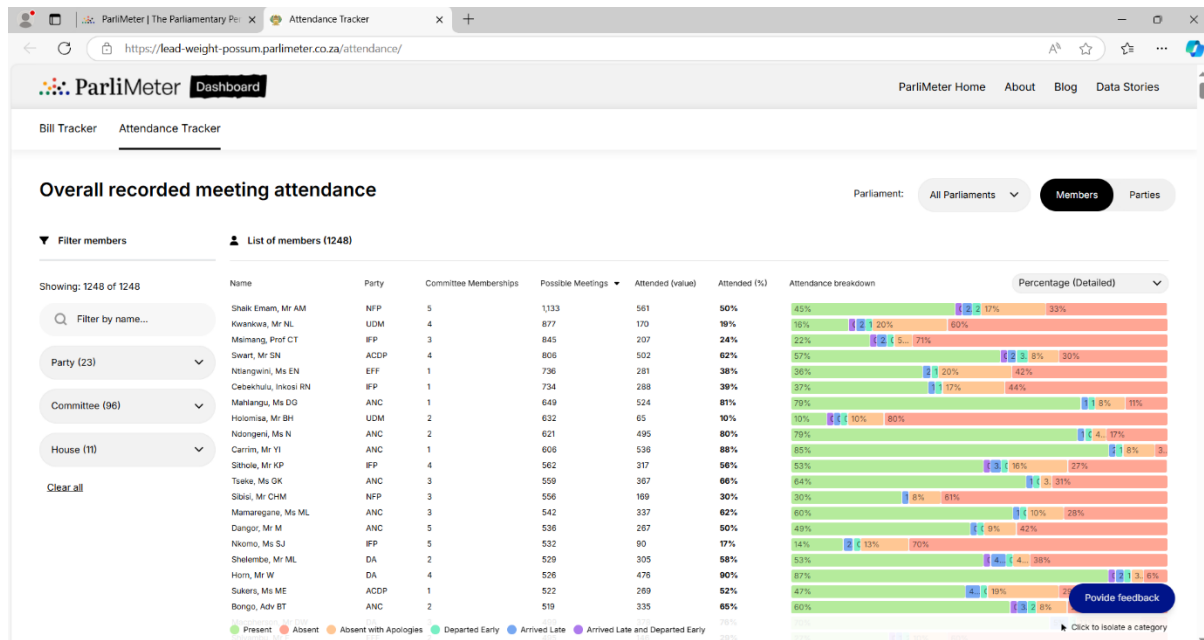
Figure 8: MP Attendance Tracker

- **Bill Tracker**: This tool is essential for monitoring legislation through Parliament. Participants valued it for keeping track of bill statuses, from introduction to enactment, fostering transparency and public engagement. It's seen as crucial for informed advocacy and ensuring legislative actions are well-publicised (Figure 9).
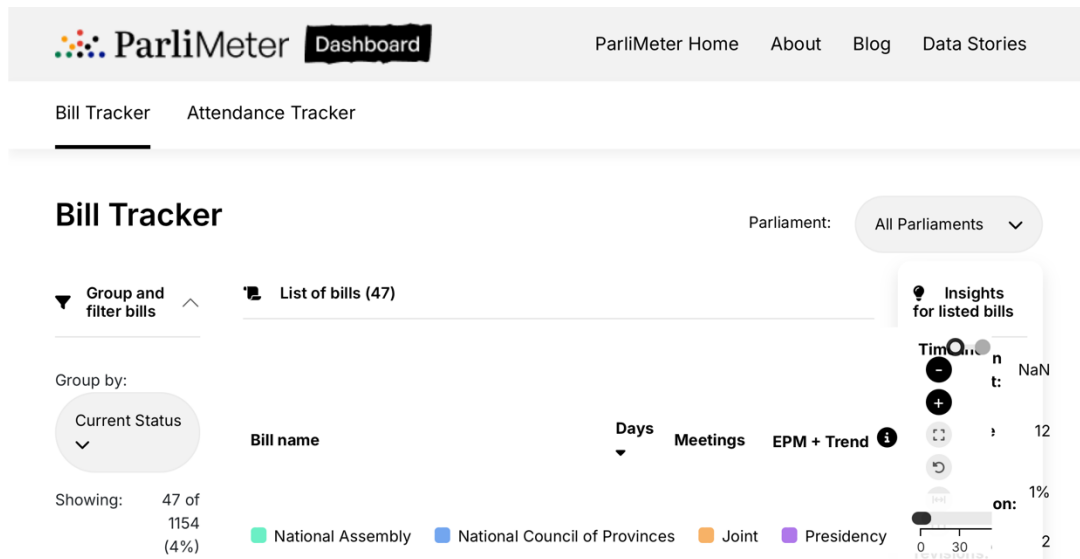
Figure 9: Bill Tracker

These insights confirm that ParliMeter's core features align with participants' needs for accountability and transparency tools. They also demonstrate that ParliMeter is seen as a valuable resource for research and public engagement.
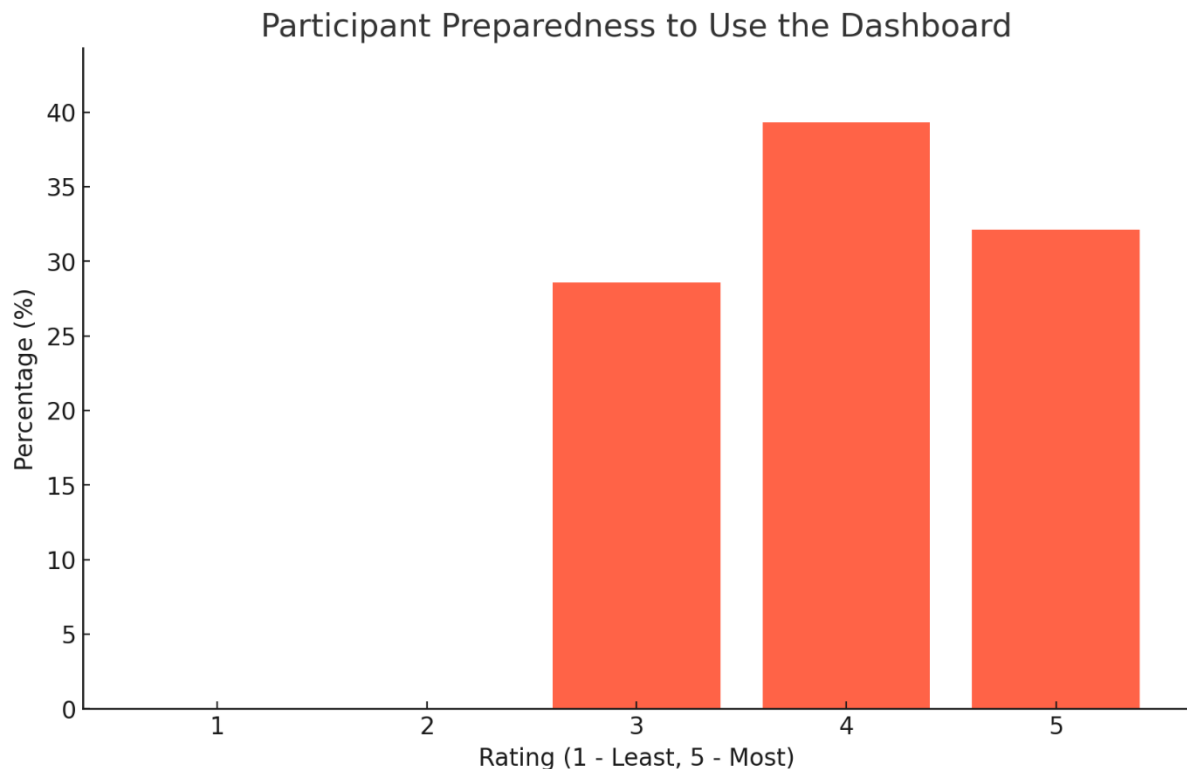
Figure 10: During-Workshop participants preparedness to use the dashboard rating

Preparedness to use ParliMeter: Most participants reported feeling prepared or very prepared to use ParliMeter in their professional or academic settings. With most ratings between 4 and 5 out of 5, it is clear that the hands-on training provided participants with the confidence to navigate the platform effectively. This result is significant because it highlights the workshop's success in equipping participants with the practical skills needed to use the tool independently once it has been officially published.

Some participants, while generally positive, noted that they would benefit from additional support or follow-up sessions to further enhance their familiarity with more advanced features. This feedback indicates that while the initial training was successful, ongoing engagement and additional resources (such as user guides or video tutorials) could enhance long-term user confidence. This will be addressed in the follow-up phase taking place in 2025.

5.3. Post-Workshop Survey Results

The post-workshop survey was designed to capture participants' overall satisfaction with the workshop, assess their readiness to apply the skills gained and collect suggestions for future improvements. Administered after the conclusion of the workshops, this survey offered participants time to reflect on the experience and provide feedback on how Parlimeter could be enhanced.

Key Findings:
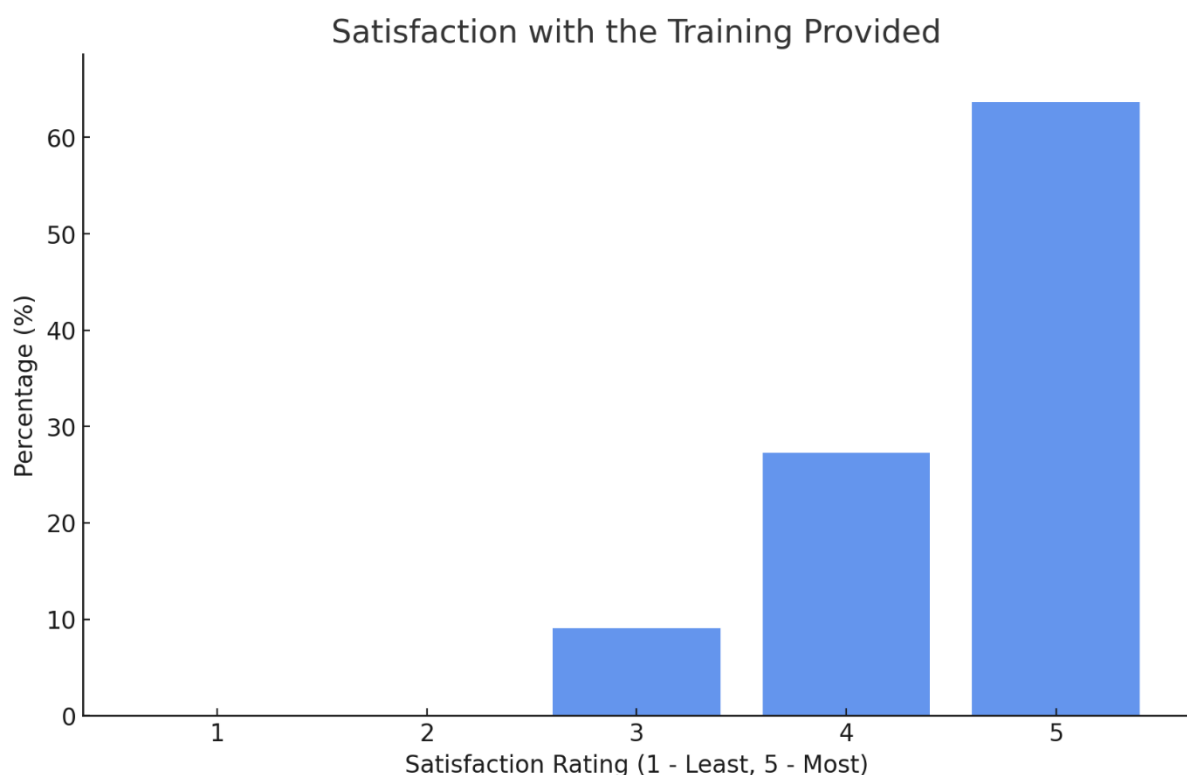
Figure 11: Post-Workshop participation satisfaction rating

Satisfaction with the training: Overall, participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the workshop, with most rating their experience as 5 out of 5. Many participants noted the practical value of the training, especially in terms of gaining hands-on experience with ParliMeter. A smaller portion of participants rated the workshop 4 out of 5, indicating satisfaction but also highlighting areas where further refinement could improve the training.

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Participants appreciated the structured approach of the workshop, noting that the progression from theoretical overviews to practical application was effective in helping them understand both the purpose of parliamentary oversight and how to use ParliMeter in real-world scenarios.
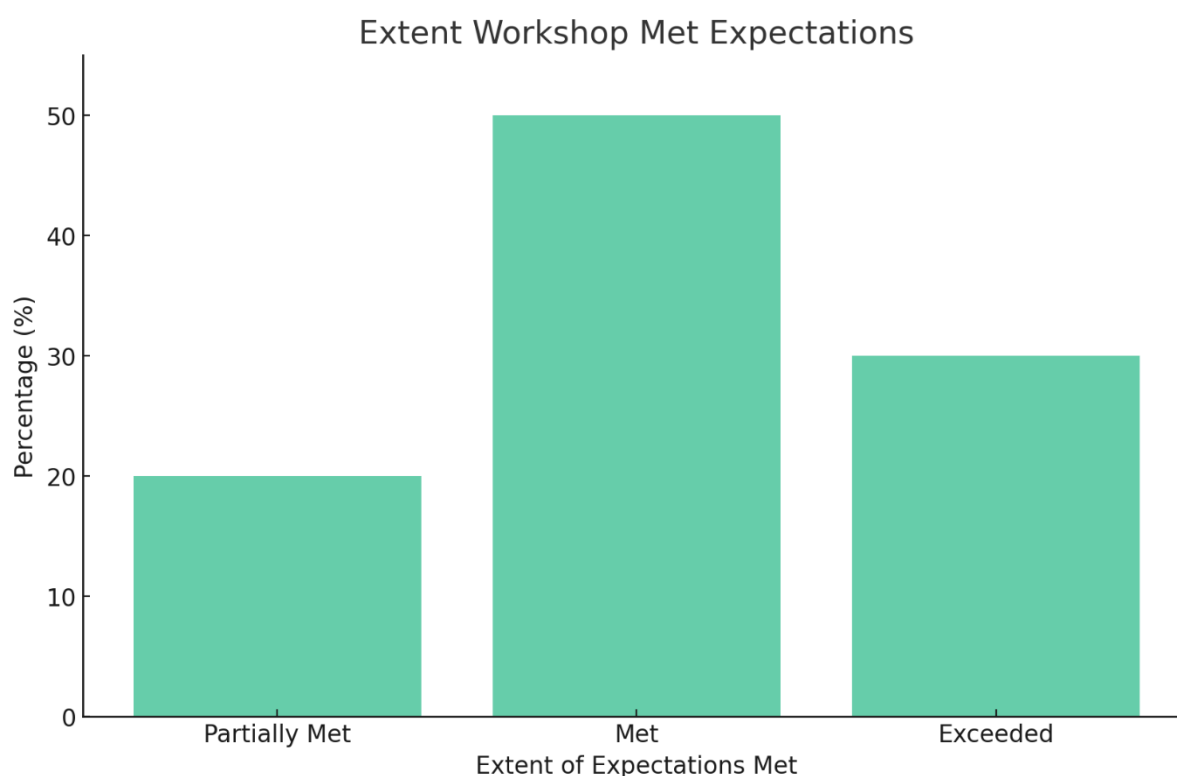
Figure 12: Post-Workshop extent of expectations met.

A large majority of participants indicated that the workshop either met or exceeded their expectations. Participants who felt that the workshop exceeded expectations often cited the interactive elements and the depth of discussion around the ParliMeter's practical uses as reasons for their positive feedback. These participants left the workshop feeling fully prepared to use ParliMeter in their professional or academic roles.

Some participants who felt the workshop met expectations noted that while they were satisfied, they believed additional training sessions or follow-up materials would help

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reinforce what they learned. These respondents indicated that the workshop was a strong start but felt that ongoing support would be necessary to achieve full mastery of ParliMeter.

5.3.1. Application of ParliMeter

When asked how they planned to apply ParliMeter in their work or studies, participants provided a range of responses:

1. **Research:** Many students and academic professionals indicated they would use ParliMeter as a key resource for gathering data on parliamentary processes and understanding MP behaviour. The MP attendance tracking were cited as valuable tools for research projects related to governance and public accountability.

2. **Civic engagement:** Civil society representatives expressed an interest in using ParliMeter to inform the public and advocate for greater accountability in governance. They saw ParliMeter as a tool that could empower citizens by providing easy access to information about parliamentary activities and decisions.

3. **Policy and decision-making:** Some participants working in governance-related fields noted that ParliMeter could assist in policy analysis and decision-making processes by offering real-time data on parliamentary discussions and outcomes.

The feedback demonstrated the broad applicability of ParliMeter across various sectors, from academic research to civil society activism.

5.3.2. Most Valuable Aspects of the Workshop

- Participants consistently highlighted the hands-on experience with ParliMeter as the most valuable aspect of the workshop. Being able to explore ParliMeter in a real-world context helped participants see its potential and understand how it could be applied in their work.

- The workshop's interactive format was also highly appreciated. Facilitators ensured that participants were actively involved throughout the day, which helped keep engagement levels high and allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the aim of the overall project and ParliMeter in particular.

- Several participants also valued the discussions on governance and public accountability, which provided a broader context for ParliMeter's development and its potential impact on transparency in governance.

5.3.3. Suggestions for Improvement

- A common suggestion was the need for ParliMeter to be more mobile-friendly, as many participants expressed a preference for accessing the tool on their phones or tablets. This feedback reflects the need for ParliMeter to be fully optimised for a range of devices to ensure maximum accessibility. It is noted that ParliMeter has not been developed for mobile use, but this is a future development to be considered.

- Some participants requested the addition of step-by-step tutorials or user guides to help them navigate ParliMeter independently after the workshop. Although the training provided a solid introduction, several participants felt that additional resources would help reinforce their learning.

- There were also suggestions for improving data visualisation within ParliMeter. Participants felt that some of the data could be presented in more intuitive formats, which would make it easier for users to quickly grasp key insights without needing to analyse raw data.

The post-workshop feedback highlighted the effectiveness of the training in terms of satisfaction, preparedness, and the applicability of the skills gained. Participants felt that the interactive, hands-on nature of the workshop was the key to its success, as it allowed them to immediately engage with ParliMeter and understand its value in their professional and academic contexts.

However, participants also identified several areas for improvement, including the need for a mobile-friendly interface, additional user guides and tutorials, and enhancements in data visualisation. Addressing these suggestions would not only improve the overall user experience but also increase ParliMeter's accessibility and usability for a broader audience.

6. Discussion

The Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard workshops held at the University of Pretoria and the Wits School of Governance were instrumental in gathering crucial feedback during the early phases of ParliMeter's development. The insights gained through the pre-workshop, during-workshop, and post-workshop surveys offer a detailed view of how well the workshops met their objectives and how participants responded to the training. This section discusses the overall impact of the workshops, the alignment with participants' expectations, and areas for future improvement.

The workshops succeeded in increasing participants' understanding of parliamentary oversight processes and the practical applications of ParliMeter. The pre-workshop survey revealed that participants had varying levels of familiarity with parliamentary oversight, with some attendees being well-versed in the topic and others having minimal exposure. However, by the end of the workshop, the during-workshop and post-workshop surveys showed that most participants felt prepared or very prepared to use ParliMeter, indicating a significant increase in both understanding and confidence.

One of the main strengths of the workshop was its interactive, hands-on approach, which kept participants actively engaged throughout the day. The ability to interact directly with the presenters allowed attendees to grasp its functionalities more effectively. The use of QR codes helped maintain high levels of engagement, particularly for online participants, ensuring that both in-person and virtual attendees could contribute meaningfully to discussions and exercises.

Despite these positive outcomes, there were some engagement challenges, particularly among online participants who did not have the same experience as those in the venue. These challenges highlight the need for further refinement in how online users interact with ParliMeter and how facilitators can better support remote engagement in hybrid formats.

6.1.   Alignment with Workshop Objectives

The workshops were designed to achieve several key objectives:

1. Enhance understanding of parliamentary oversight processes.
2. Provide hands-on training with the Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard.
3. Gather user feedback to inform ParliMeter's development and ensure it meets the needs of its target audience, particularly young, politically engaged students.

Based on the survey results, the workshops largely achieved these objectives:

1. The training effectively increased participants' knowledge of parliamentary oversight and equipped them with the skills to use ParliMeter in academic, research, and advocacy contexts. The pre- and post-workshop surveys demonstrate that participants left the workshop feeling more knowledgeable and prepared to use ParliMeter in their work once it has been officially launched.
2. The workshops were successful in gathering critical feedback. Participants provided valuable insights into the features they found most useful, such as the MP Attendance Tracker as well as areas for improvement, including the need for mobile optimisation and step-by-step tutorials.

6.2.   Insights into Survey Timing and Response Rates

While the workshops were successful in gathering feedback, the timing of the surveys and response rates provide important insights into how future workshops can be improved:

1. The pre-workshop survey was well-attended, with most participants providing detailed responses about their expectations and knowledge levels. This early engagement helped facilitators tailor the workshop content to meet participants' needs.
2. The during-workshop survey, conducted immediately after the hands-on session, received similarly high response rates. Participants were engaged and motivated to provide feedback at this stage, likely due to the immediacy of the training and the opportunity to reflect on what they had just learned.

3. However, the post-workshop survey saw a slight drop in response rates, which could be attributed to survey fatigue and the full-day nature of the workshop. Some participants noted that by the end of the day, they were less motivated to provide detailed feedback. This suggests that in future workshops, post-workshop surveys could be distributed with more flexibility, such as allowing additional time or providing incentives to ensure higher participation rates.

6.3. Areas for Future Improvement

While the workshops were largely successful, the feedback highlighted several areas where future workshops and ParliMeter itself could be improved:

- **Mobile optimisation:** One of the most common suggestions was the need for a mobile-friendly interface. Many participants expressed a preference for using ParliMeter on their phones or tablets, and optimising the platform for mobile use would greatly improve accessibility.

- **User guides and tutorials:** Several participants requested additional step-by-step tutorials or user guides to help them navigate ParliMeter independently. While the hands-on training was effective, these resources would provide ongoing support after the workshop.

- **Data visualisation:** A few participants noted that the ParliMeter's data visualisation could be improved to make the information more intuitive and accessible. Simplifying the way data is presented would help users quickly grasp key insights without needing to analyse raw data.

6.4. Workshop Limitations

Several limitations affected the overall outcomes of the workshops:

- The small sample size (34 participants at the University of Pretoria and 50 at the Wits School of Governance) limits the generalisability of the findings. While the workshops provided valuable insights, a larger and more diverse participant pool would be necessary for broader conclusions.

- The hybrid format posed some challenges for maintaining consistent engagement across in-person and online participants. While facilitators made efforts to ensure that both groups were equally involved, remote participants faced some challenges in following in-venue workshop proceedings due to audio-visual quality.
- Survey fatigue was evident, particularly towards the end of the day, which may have affected the quality and quantity of feedback in the post-workshop survey.

The workshops successfully achieved their main objectives of enhancing participants' understanding of parliamentary oversight and gathering crucial feedback to inform ParliMeter's development. Participant engagement was high, and the hands-on approach was particularly effective in helping attendees grasp the ParliMeter's practical applications.

However, the feedback also highlighted areas for improvement, particularly in terms of mobile optimisation, user support, and data visualisation. Addressing these issues will ensure that ParliMeter becomes a more accessible and powerful tool for a wide range of users, from students and researchers to civil society activists and policymakers.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the pre-workshop, during-workshop, and post-workshop surveys, as well as the overall feedback from participants, several key recommendations can be made to enhance both future workshops and the development of ParliMeter. These recommendations focus on improving accessibility, support materials, and participant engagement, ensuring the tool is both useful and easy to navigate for a wide range of users.

7.1.   Optimise ParliMeter for Mobile Use

- One of the most common pieces of feedback was the need for ParliMeter to be optimised for mobile devices. Many participants expressed a preference for accessing the tool on their phones or tablets, particularly for quick checks on parliamentary activities while on the go.

- **Recommendation:** Prioritise the development of a mobile-friendly interface that maintains the core functionalities of ParliMeter while ensuring ease of use on smaller screens. This would significantly improve accessibility and make the tool more versatile for users across different environments.

7.2.   Provide Comprehensive User Guides and Tutorials

- While the hands-on training was effective, participants indicated that additional support materials – such as user guides, video tutorials, or step-by-step walkthroughs – would be valuable for reinforcing what they learned. These resources would also help users who were unable to attend the workshops but still wish to engage with ParliMeter.

- **Recommendation:** Develop detailed tutorials and user guides, including video content where possible, to walk users through key features of ParliMeter. These materials should be available directly on the dashboard platform and should be regularly updated as new features are added.

7.3.   Enhance Data Visualisation

- Several participants suggested improvements to the way data is displayed on ParliMeter. While the current setup allows for access to raw parliamentary data, some users found the presentation too complex and indicated that more intuitive data visualisation tools would help them quickly extract key insights.

- **Recommendation:** Improve the data visualisation features of ParliMeter by incorporating graphs, charts, and interactive visual tools that make the information more digestible. This would allow users to quickly understand trends and make data-driven decisions without needing to perform their own analyses on raw data.

7.4. Tailor Workshop Content for Online Participants

- Although participant engagement was high, some online attendees experienced challenges. While facilitators made efforts to involve all participants equally, additional support could enhance the online experience.

- **Recommendation:** In future hybrid workshops, consider offering a separate track for online participants, where they receive additional guidance, user-testing and troubleshooting support. This could involve shorter, more frequent check-ins with online attendees to ensure they are not encountering technical difficulties and can engage fully in the training.

7.5. Address Survey Fatigue

- The full-day workshop format led to survey fatigue, particularly in the post-workshop phase, where some participants provided less detailed feedback. This could impact the richness of the data collected and limit insights that could have been gathered from more engaged responses.

- **Recommendation:** To combat survey fatigue, consider distributing the post-workshop survey after participants have had time to reflect, perhaps 1-2 days after the event. Additionally, offering small incentives for completing the survey, such as certificates or access to exclusive resources, could encourage more thorough responses.

7.6. Continue Engaging Youthful Voices

- The workshops targeted politically inclined students to address the gap in youth engagement with parliamentary oversight, as highlighted by previous surveys. The workshops successfully involved this demographic, and the feedback received has been instrumental in shaping ParliMeter's future development.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to engage young, politically active individuals in future workshops and in the development process of ParliMeter. Consider hosting follow-up events, potentially at additional universities or civil society hubs, to gather broader feedback and ensure that ParliMeter remains relevant to a growing user base.

7.7. Increase Participant Involvement in Development

- Many participants expressed interest in contributing to the ongoing development of ParliMeter, particularly in testing new features or providing additional feedback after updates are made. They also expressed an interest in remaining informed of the overall project's development. This presents an opportunity to create a feedback loop that continually improves the tool based on real-world user experience.

- **Recommendation:** Establish a beta testing group made up of participants from these workshops and other stakeholders interested in shaping ParliMeter's future. This group could provide ongoing feedback, test new features before they are fully launched, and offer insights on usability improvements.

7.8. Expand Training to Cover Advanced Features

- While the workshop provided a comprehensive introduction to ParliMeter, some participants – particularly those with a higher level of expertise – expressed interest in learning more about the advanced features of ParliMeter and how they could be customised for specific research or advocacy purposes.

- **Recommendation:** Develop advanced training modules that focus on deeper data analysis and customisation options within ParliMeter. These modules could be offered as part of follow-up workshops or as online courses, allowing more experienced users to maximise ParliMeter's potential.

8. Conclusion

The Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard workshops conducted at the University of Pretoria and the Wits School of Governance provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of ParliMeter, designed to enhance parliamentary transparency and public engagement. These workshops, strategically targeted at politically inclined students and professionals, were crucial in the initial phase of ParliMeter's development, as they gathered essential user feedback which will guide further refinements.

Throughout the workshops, participants engaged with ParliMeter through a structured series of activities that included hands-on training and interactive discussions. The survey responses, collected at different stages of the workshops, underscored a significant increase in participants' understanding of parliamentary oversight mechanisms and their ability to utilise ParliMeter effectively in various professional and academic contexts. The high level of satisfaction and preparedness reported in the post-workshop surveys highlights the success of the workshops in achieving their educational and engagement objectives.

However, the feedback also pointed to areas needing improvement. Participants called for enhancements such as mobile optimisation, better data visualisation, and additional support materials like tutorials and user guides. Addressing these areas will make ParliMeter more accessible and user-friendly, ensuring it can serve a broader audience and have a greater impact on promoting civic engagement and parliamentary transparency.

The workshops also revealed the importance of continuous engagement with the target audience, particularly the youth, whose involvement in parliamentary processes has traditionally been limited. By integrating their perspectives and feedback into the development process, ParliMeter can be better tailored to meet the needs of younger users, who are increasingly reliant on digital tools for information and engagement.

As this project moves forward, it is clear that ParliMeter has the potential to become a pivotal resource for researchers, policymakers, and the general public. It promises to enhance the understanding of parliamentary activities and foster a more informed and engaged citizenry. The planned second thematic report will delve deeper into the specific themes and suggestions raised during the workshops, providing a more detailed roadmap for future enhancements and outreach efforts.

In conclusion, the success of these workshops, coupled with the constructive feedback received, sets a strong foundation for the next phases of the project in general, and

ParliMeter's development in particular. Continued improvements and adjustments, guided by user input and evolving technological capabilities, will ensure that ParliMeter remains a vital tool in the landscape of South African governance and public accountability. A forthcoming report will delve into the theoretical components that emerged during the workshops, further informing ParliMeter's future enhancements.

9. Appendices

Pre-Workshop Survey:

1. How familiar are you with parliamentary oversight and parliamentary processes?

2. What specific knowledge or skills do you hope to gain from this workshop on the parliamentary oversight dashboard?

3. What sources do you typically use to gather information about parliamentary activities?

4. Have you previously used any digital tools to monitor government or parliamentary activities?

5. How do you think technology can enhance transparency and accountability in governance?

During-Workshop Survey:

1. What new information have you learned today about parliamentary oversight and how relevant is it to your needs?

2. How clear and understandable are the theoretical concepts and potential functionalities of the dashboard as presented?

3. What features of the dashboard do you anticipate will be most useful, based on today's descriptions?

4. How prepared do you feel to use the dashboard after today's guidance?

5. What additional features or improvements would you like to see in the final version of the dashboard?

Post-Workshop Survey:

1. How satisfied are you with the training provided on the parliamentary oversight dashboard?

2. To what extent did the workshop meet your expectations and prepare you for using the dashboard?

3. How do you plan to apply the dashboard in your work or studies once it becomes available?

4. What was the most valuable aspect of the workshop, and why?

5. What improvements or additional support would help you use the dashboard more effectively in the future?