

At the Coalface

Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa

Edited by Colleen Lowe Morna and Susan Tolmay
with a foreword by Winnie Byanyima

Gender links (GL) is a Southern African NGO that is committed to a region in which women and men are able to realise their full potential and participate equally in all aspects of public and private life.

At the Coalface – Gender and local government in Southern Africa
© Copyright 2007 Gender Links.
ISBN: 978-0-620-38248-9

Gender Links
9 Derrick Avenue
Cyrildene, 2198
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 (11) 622 2877
Fax: 27 (11) 622 4732
Email: governance@genderlinks.org.za
Website: www.genderlinks.org.za

Editors: Colleen Lowe Morna and Susan Tolmay
Cover Design: Gemini Concepts
Cover Photo: Matau Moreki by Colleen Lowe Morna
Design and Layout: Gemini Concepts
Printer: DS Print Media
Sponsors: EU through the Conflict and Governance Facility (CAGE), Mott Foundation and HIVOS

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Community. The views expressed herein are those of Gender Links and can therefore in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

Contents

Acknowledgements	6
The research team	8
Acronyms	11
Foreword	12
1. 50/50 by 2020! Introduction	**15**
Gender, democracy and good governance	18
Gender and decentralisation	28
Why this research	35
Structure of the book	36
2. Oasis in the desert- Concepts and methodology	**39**
Conceptual framework	42
Measuring change	47
Scope	50
Methodology	60
3. A foot in the door – Accessing local government	**67**
What keeps women out?	70
Strategies for change	76
Where next?	95
Conclusions	98
4. When 'your sari is not needed'- Participating in local government	**101**
How local government works	103
Gender lens on council meetings	108
Barriers to participation	112
Conclusions	139
5. Claiming new spaces - Enabling factors	**141**
How critical is the critical mass?	143
Background and grounding	150
Support systems, networks and structures	155
Relevant capacity building	161
Conclusions	169

Contents

6. 'Give her the car wash' - What women bring to local politics 171
The politics of presence 174
Concerns and interests 176
Leadership styles 187
Performance 194
Conclusions 199

7. Measuring change – New men in local politics **201**
Resistance 203
Changing mindsets 206
Men and gender in local government 211
Conclusions 217

8. Measuring change – Gender in the daily work of councils **219**
The work of local government 222
Beating the odds 233
Pushing the margins 240
Conclusions 245

9. From practical to strategic – Gender mainstreaming **247**
Conceptual issues 249
Policies and strategies 255
Gender mainstreaming in the work of councils 260
Gender management systems (GMS) 275
Conclusions 283

10. Conclusions and recommendations **285**
Findings 286
Recommendations 293

Glossary **294**

Tables

Tables

Table one: Comparative analysis of women in parliament across the globe 21
Table two: Gender and politics in Southern Africa 22
Table three: Gender and local government - global 32
Table four: Case study countries 50
Table five: Women in politics in Lesotho. 52
Table six: Women in politics in Namibia 54
Table seven: Women in Politics in South Africa 57
Table eight: Women in politics Mauritius 59
Table nine: Research sample 60
Table ten: Gender breakdown of research sample 61
Table 11: Political party breakdown of research sample 61
Table 12: Summary table of focus groups 63
Table 13: Summary of council meetings observed 63
Table 14: Assessing women's influence in decision-making 64
Table 15: Outcomes for women of the 2005 elections in Mauritius 75
Table 16: Combinations of quotas and electoral systems at local level 77
Table 17: Recent gains for women in Lesotho 80
Table 18: Namibia where the parties stand 83
Table 19: Gender and local government in South Africa 90
Table 20: Gender and local government by political party in South Africa 93
Table 21: Structure of local government in case study countries 104
Table 22: Mandatory committees in each country 105
Table 23: Women's participation in council meetings 109
Table 24: Women in top positions in local government 131
Table 25: Areas of women's service in local government 132
Table 26: Women's participation in Council meetings in Lesotho 148
Table 27: The Gender, Communications and Local Government Course 163
Table 28: Competencies of local government 224
Table 29: Country differences in understanding the meaning of gender 254
Table 30: Gender policies and plan in South Africa councils 257
Table 31: Measuring change 290

Figures

Figures

Figure one: Better presence, better outcomes 27
Figure two: Women in parliament and local government, Southern Africa 33
Figure three: Conceptual framework 43
Figure four: How local government elections take place in South Africa 89
Figure five: Women in council vs women's participation 110
Figure six: Level of participation versus percentage women in councils 144
Figure seven: Women in leadership versus levels of participation 146
Figure eight: Msunduzi gender machinery organisational 277

Case Studies

Case Studies

Case study one: Rhetoric and reality in Mauritius 73
Case study two: Lesotho shatters the myth 78
Case study three: Namibia steams ahead, but does the system work? 82
Case study four: South Africa: Conflict and compromises 89
Case study five: Women and chiefs square up in local government 115
Case study six: Women in Lesotho speak their mind 147
Case study seven: Gender and the City of Jo'burg 162
Case study eight: Looking at dustbins through a gender lens 265
Case study nine: Jo'burg women demand a piece of the action 269

Boxes

Boxes

Box one: A matter of justice. 26
Box two: Gender, crime and grime 30
Box three: Conflict transformation 47
Box four: Yardsticks for measuring the impact of women in politics 49
Box five: The hazards of running for office 71
Box six: Money speaks in constituency elections 73
Box seven: Getting the balance wrong 84
Box eight: Whose representative 85
Box nine: Knowing your councillor 86
Box ten: Settling in as a ward councillor 92
Box 11: DA says quotas are not necessary 94
Box 12: The chief problem in Lesotho 117
Box 13: Fighting a feeling of inadequacy 119
Box 14: An open display of "PHD" 120
Box 15: Odds stacked against all female council 126
Box 16: Mother, councillor, station manager 128
Box 17: Cooking the outcome 134
Box 18: Fighting from the fringes 136
Box 19: Going it alone. 138
Box 20: Lively debates in Jo'burg and Windhoek 144
Box 21: Gender balance empowers women at the top in Jo'burg 146
Box 22: Women councillors in Lesotho flex their muscles 149
Box 23: The power of knowledge 151
Box 24: A family affair 156
Box 25: Dawning of a new era for women 157
Box 26: Safe spaces for women 158

Boxes

Box 27: Partnerships for progress 160
Box 28: What made the Jo'burg project special 165
Box 29: Making mentorship her business 167
Box 30: "I don't believe in the gender thing" 176
Box 31: Eyes and ears on the ground 182
Box 32: Who feels it knows it 184
Box 33: Why women should represent women 187
Box 34: Venus and Mars? 188
Box 35: Getting a mandate 192
Box 36: Getting all on board in the rainbow nation 193
Box 37: Missing our woman ward councillor 197
Box 38: Swimming against the tide 205
Box 39: From jail bird to gender activist 209
Box 40: Learning to be a Dad 210
Box 41: The man who champions home based care 215
Box 42: Whose role, whose responsibility? 227
Box 43: Living in the highlands with no water 231
Box 44: How I got my dream house 235
Box 45: Let there be light 236
Box 46: "I'm not fine with the way things are" 243
Box 47: A Guide to Economic Development with No Women 264
Box 48: SALGA takes up the 365 day campaign 268
Box 49: Some women in Johannesburg are more vulnerable than others 270
Box 50: 2010 - What's in it for women? 274
Box 51: Frustrations of an SPO 278
Box 52: Customer satisfaction through a gender lens 280
Box 53: Councillors need capacity on gender 282
Box 54: Mauritius the odd one out? 289
Box 55: Follow up plans 294

Annexes

Annexes

Annex A: Areas and councils 297
Annex B: Councillors interviewed 299
Annex C: Structured one-on-one questionnaire 311
Annex D: Officials and experts interviewed 313
Annex E: Civil society focus groups 314
Annex F: Council meetings observed 315

Select bibliography 316

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgments

A work of this nature is never complete, nor is it possible to mention by name and to thank adequately all those who have contributed to it.

The research covered virtually every corner of the four case study countries: South Africa, Namibia, Mauritius and Lesotho (see areas and councils covered at **Annex A**). In all, 946 people gave of their time for interviews with researchers: 478 local councillors (**Annex B**) who responded to the questionnaire at **Annex C**; 30 experts and officials (**Annex D**) and 438 civil society representatives (**Annex E**). Their views and voices are the heart of this work.

A reference group consisting of gender experts from the region helped to review and finalise the briefing document and structured questionnaire used in the research and reviewed the draft report. They are: Thenjiwe Mtintso, South Africa's ambassador to Cuba and chairperson of Gender Links (GL); Thoko Mpulwana, commissioner with the South African Independent Electoral Commission (IEC); Ayanda Nabe, Gender Coordinator at South African Local Government Association (SALGA); Amanda Williamson, Senior lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand; Glenise Levendal, Project coordinator, Local government and gender project at the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) in South Africa; Vuyiswa Sidzumo, Programme Manager at the Mott Foundation; Rose Haji, Director Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Tanzania; Gladys Mutukwa, Acting Regional Coordinator, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF); Pat Made consultant and GL Board Member; Lulu Malanda, Gender Manager at Msunduzi Municipality, South Africa; and Liz Frank, Director of Sister Namibia.

Mpho Mankimane, Limpho Mahase, Puseletso Sello, Mamookho Ngoae, Moleboheng Mohlomi, Libakiso Matlho, Colleen Lowe Morna and Susan Tolmay undertook the research in Lesotho; Loga Virahsawmy, Saskia Virahsawmy Naidoo, Pouba Essoo, Vanee Renghen and Pamelah Gungaram in Mauritius; Belinda Beukes, Manfred Isaacks and Sarry Xoagus-Eises, Susan Tolmay and Colleen Lowe Morna in Namibia; Susan Tolmay, Judith Mtsweu, Rochelle Davisdon and Nontobeko Dlamini in South Africa. GL Executive Assistant Mwenda Yeta-Mkhize captured all of the data for the report and compiled the lists in the annexes. Lukhanyo Nyati analysed the questionnaires and prepared most of the graphs in the book. Brief biographies of researchers are at the beginning of the book.

GL Executive Director Colleen Lowe Morna and Governance Manager Susan Tolmay compiled and edited the final report. Susan Tolmay coordinated and managed the research.

Our sincere thanks to our sponsors: the Conflict and Governance Facility (CAGE), a project of National Treasury, South Africa, which is funded by the European Union under the European Programme for

Reconstruction and Development; the Mott Foundation and HiVOS.

Heartfelt thanks are also due to the institutional partners with whom we worked closely on this project. These include Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) Lesotho; Media Watch Organisation-Gender and Media Southern Africa Network (MWO-GEMSA) in Mauritius and GEMSA Namibia. Special thanks to Sister Namibia and GAP for helping to organise focus group discussions in Windhoek and Cape Town.

A vast array of inputs, skills and experiences inspired and enriched this work. Ultimately, however, GL takes responsibility for the interpretations, conclusions and recommendations drawn.



Partners in progress: Officials of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

The Research Team

The Research Team



Colleen Lowe Morna (South Africa) is executive director of GL. She began her career as a journalist and editor based in Harare covering the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. She subsequently worked in various posts at the Commonwealth Secretariat. The founding CEO of the South African Commission on Gender Equality and a founder of GL, Lowe Morna edited *Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics*, the precursor to this study.



Susan Tolmay (South Africa) is the Gender and Governance manager at Gender Links. She holds a BJuris and an internal auditing diploma. She is currently completing a Masters degree in governance and political transformation.



Belinda Beukes (Namibia) is a member of the consultative committee on human rights under the auspices of the Ombudsman. She has been involved in organising Sixteen Days of Activism activities in Namibia and worked as a co-ordinator of the parliamentary based- Constituency Channel.



Rochelle Renere Davidson (South Africa) is a researcher specialising in the status of women in developing countries, particularly in Southern Africa. She holds a BA in Communications and Sociology with a concentration in African Studies from Villanova University in the USA, and an MA in Development Studies from the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.



Nontobeko Dlamini (South Africa) was a programme officer at Gender Links. She holds a BA Honours majoring in Industrial Psychology and is currently completing her Master of Arts in Industrial Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand.



Pouba Essoo (Mauritius) has worked as a consultant on gender and communication for the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare and was project leader and consultant for the "Audience Research Survey" for GL in 2005. She holds a Masters in Business Administration and Public Sector Management.



Pamelah Gungaram (Mauritius) works as a secretary for the Industrial and Vocational Training Board. Her previous research experience includes media monitoring and the Audience Reserch conducted with GL in 2005.



Manfred Isaacks
Was the Personal Assistant to the National Co-ordinator of the Namibia Community Radio Network (NCRN). He previously worked as Information and Advocacy Officer for MISA Namibia.



Limpho Mahase (Lesotho) is Programme Officer (Legal) at WLSA Lesotho. Among her duties are legal rights education and training programmes, research as well as legal aid services office. She holds a Bachelor of Law Degree (L.L.B)



Mpho Matilda Mankimane (Lesotho) is a Programme Officer (Gender) at WLSA Lesotho. Among her responsibilities are: gender advocacy and training, research and information generation. She previously worked as a Development Studies teacher from 2003 to 2004. She holds BA in Education.



Keiso Matashane-Marite (Lesotho) has been National Coordinator of WLSA Lesotho since 1994. She holds a BA in Sociology and Public Administration and MA in Public Health, and has over ten years experience working in the area of women's rights research, training and advocacy, gender, law and development. She has contributed to women's law literature in Southern Africa and Lesotho in particular.



Libakiso Matlho (Lesotho) is a Full time Research Associate at WLSA Lesotho. She is an advocate in the courts of Lesotho and has previously worked as a defense counsel; researcher at the Law Reform Commission and a lecturer in the National University of Lesotho. She holds a Masters degree in issues of law in development, human rights and criminal justice.



Moleboheng Mohlomi (Lesotho) was an Assistant Programme Officer at WLSA Lesotho in 2006. She holds a Diploma in Business Management.



Judith Mtsewu (South Africa) served as a Programme Assistant for GEMSA where she worked on this project as well as Home Based Care research. She is currently doing a Masters in Management (Public Policy) at the University of Wiwatersrand. Her interests are gender, HIV and AIDS and communication.



Mamookho Ngoae (Lesotho) was a Programme Officer (Gender) at WLSA Lesotho 2006. She is now a Senior Rehabilitation Officer in the Department of Correctional Services in the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights, Rehabilitation and Constitutional Affairs. She holds a degree in Social work.



Lukhanyo Nyati (South Africa) is a research consultant at Ukhanyo Research & Consulting and research project manager at the University of Witwatersrand. He has received postgraduate training in physical anthropology and child growth and development. He has worked as an Associate Researcher for the Birth to Twenty Research Programme at the university. This is a longitudinal study of child health, development and social status.



Vanee Renghen (Mauritius), a graphic designer, is a member of MWO-GEMSA. She previously served as a researcher for the Mauritian Gender and Media Audience Research Study.



Puseletso Sello (Lesotho) was a Programme Officer Legal at WLSA Lesotho from 2005 – 2006. She is currently in private legal practice. She holds a Bachelor of Law Degree (L.L.B)



Saskia Virahsawmy Naidoo (Mauritius) works as a financial controller at the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes. She holds a post graduate diploma in management. She is currently working on her dissertation entitled "A study to investigate the impact of Good Governance at the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes with a view to improving Service Delivery".



Loga Virahsawmy (Mauritius) is a freelance journalist who writes mainly on gender issues. She has published two books of short stories in collaboration with her husband and is a regular contributor to the yearly *Collection Maurice,* a collection of short stories by Mauritian writers. She is president of MWO GEMSA and vice –president of Centre de Solidarite, an NGO with a rehabilitation centre for drug addicts.



Sarry Xoagus-Eises (Namibia) is the chairperson of the Namibia Media Women's Association (NAMWA) and the country representative of GEMSA Namibia. She has participated in various media monitoring projects since 2006 including the HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline study in Namibia.

List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALAN	Association of Local Government Authorities of Namibia
AU	African Union
BPFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CAGE	Conflict and Governance Facility
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCAP	Community Council Action Plan
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
CREDO	Centre for Research Education and Development of Freedom of Expression and Associated Rights
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DAWN	Democratic Alliance Women's Network
DC	District Council
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FPTP	First-Past-the-Post
GAD	Gender and Development
GAP	Gender Advocacy Programme
GEMSA	Gender and Media Southern Africa
GL	Gender Links
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GMS	Gender Management System
GETNET	Gender Education and Training Network
GTZ	German Technical Assistance
GU	Gender Unit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Resource Council
IDASA	Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LHDA	Lesotho Highland Development Authority
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MMPR	Mixed Member Proportional Representation
MMR	Mixed Member Representation
MWO	Media Watch Organisation
NA	National Assembly
NC	National Council
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non governmental organisation
NWMN	Namibian Women's Manifesto Network
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PLCP	Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee
PR	Proportional Representation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAFAIDS	Southern Africa HIV and AIDS information dissemination service
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAPA	Southern African Protocol Alliance
SARDC	Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre
SDGD	SADC Declaration on Gender and Development
SPO	Special Programme Officer
SPU	Special Programmes Unit
TRC	Transformation Resource Centre
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WDS	Women Development Strategy
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organisation
WID	Women in Development
WILDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa
WNC	Women's National Coalition

Political Party List

Lesotho

BAC	Basutholand African Congress
BCP	Basutholand Congress Party
BNP	Basotho National Party
LCD	Lesotho Congress for Democracy
LPC	Lesotho Peoples Congress
MFP	Marematlou Freedom Party

Mauritius

AS	Social Alliance
MLP	Mauritius Labour party
MMM	Militant Mauritian Movement
MR	Mouvement Republician
MSM	Militant Socialist Movement
PMXD	Parti Mauricien Xavier Duval

Namibia

CoD	Congress of Democrats
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
MAG	Monitor Action Group
RP	Republican Party
Swapo Party	
UDF	United Democratic Front
NUDO	National Unity Democratic Organisation

South Africa

ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
ANC	African National Congress
Azapo	Azanian People's Organisation
DA	Democratic Alliance
ID	Independent Democrats
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
UCDP	United Christian Democratic Party
UDM	United Democratic Movement
VFP	Vryheidsfront Plus

Foreword



In *Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics* I am quoted as saying that across Africa, women are preparing themselves for political office. This, I said, "is the call of history..there can be no turning back."

This sequel study, focusing on gender and local government, shows that there is indeed no turning back. Rich in its variety of experiences, strong in its analysis, *At the Coalface* is a bold reminder, if ever one was needed, that there are many spheres of decision-making that women are yet to conquer. Of all these, local government is possibly one of the most important, yet ignored areas in the gender and governance discourse.

A few years after South Africa's first democratic elections, I had the opportunity, then as an MP in Uganda, to participate in the many exciting debates at the time about the establishment of the country's machinery for advancing the status of women. Much of the discussion concerned national and provincial structures with less attention to local structures, despite their obvious immediate significance in giving poor women voice. In the various posts I have since held, at the African Union and now at the United Nations, we are only just beginning to grapple with what the 50/50 campaign means at the local level.

The key message to emerge from this study is that with the growing number of Southern African countries from different political and electoral backgrounds showing that gender parity *can* be achieved in local government, there is no longer any excuse for any country in the region not to achieve this goal. However, if women are to make a difference in this sphere of decision-making - the "coalface" of service delivery - far more needs to be done to strengthen local government and to integrate gender considerations into its work.

Over a year in the making, the study included interviews with 478 councillors in four Southern African countries: Lesotho, Namibia , South Africa (the countries in the region with the highest representation of women in local government) and Mauritius (one of the countries in the region with the lowest representation of women).

Highlighting the range in women's representation in local government from 1.2 percent in Angola to 58 percent in Lesotho, the study notes that where governments have been willing to take special measures to increase women's representation, this is more likely to be so at local than at national level. For example Lesotho introduced a quota for local but not national elections held in February 2007.

What is unfortunate, the study says, is that measures to increase women's participation at local level appear to result from a calculation that local government is not as serious a sphere of politics than the national level, rather than because of a commitment to deepening democracy through decentralisation and the equal participation of women.

However, examples like Lesotho, South Africa and Namibia (representing the constituency, PR and mixed electoral systems) show that the SADC target of 50 percent women in decision-making *can* be achieved in pretty much any situation, provided that there is the necessary political will.

Coming from Uganda that has achieved significant

increases in women's participation through quotas, I can testify not only that special measures are necessary, but that they do *not* lead to the kind of mayhem that is often predicted. The case study in this book of the normality that has returned to Lesotho after a High Court challenge to the quota shows that despite resistance to quotas, these do not lead to destructive conflict but rather to a necessary debate about why women are under-represented in the first place.

In instances where governments have been reluctant to force the pace of change, women's representation is lower at local than at national level because the forces of culture, tradition and religion tend to be more concentrated at this level than at national level. Through numerous personal accounts and case studies as well as quantitative data gathered through questionnaires, the study explores the many barriers to women's effective participation at local level. These are reflected in the 41 council meetings observed, where researchers found that there was not a single instance in which women participated in meetings in proportion to their numbers.

However, the observation of meetings showed that there is a greater participation of women when they comprise half or more of the participants; a strong argument for raising the target for women in decision-making from 30 to 50 percent. The findings also show that on average women participated more in meetings led by women, underscoring the importance of women occupying leadership positions such as mayors, chairpersons, deputy mayors and speakers.

The study acknowledges that not all women are the same and that not all believe it is their duty to raise the concerns of other women. But the overwhelming majority of those interviewed spoke of the obligation they feel towards other women. In the 92 focus group meetings conducted with civil society, female and male constituents many spoke about how women councillors are more accessible, hard working and honest.

The study cites numerous examples of ways in which women are making a difference at a practical level in local government (which suffers from many structural weaknesses in all countries) by helping to cut through red tape and providing access to basic needs. These practical interventions raise strategic questions: such as in Lesotho where councils are responsible for allocating land and women are beginning to ask about access to title for land.

But a key conclusion of the report is that unless gender is systematically mainstreamed into the work of local government, increased representation of women at local level may become a case of "jobs for the girls" rather than gender equality for the region.

The study highlights the absence of such strategies at local level, with the result that efforts to ensure that women and men benefit equally are piecemeal and often driven by a few individuals rather than by institutions and systems. Drawing from the work of GL with the City of Johannesburg that has developed a Women Development Strategy including a plan for mainstreaming gender into Soccer 2010, the study recommends that all countries and councils in the region begin to look at how local government can become a motor for achieving gender equality where it matters most: on the ground.

This study is not just a challenge to Southern African countries to deliver on their promises to women. It is a challenge to all of us in the international community- and I happen to be writing this on International Women's Day – not just to talk the talk of enhancing gender equality through decentralisation; but to begin walking the walk. This indeed is the call of history. There can be no turning back.

Winnie Byanyima
Director, Gender Team
Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP
8 March, 2007.







From left top: Sarry Xoagus-Eises, GEMSA Namibia; Tomaz Augusto Salomao, Executive Secretary, SADC;Womens Focus Group in Keetmanshoop; Botswana Minister of Health, Sheila Tlou and Attorney-General Dr Athalia Molokomme

Photos: Colleen Lowe Morna

50/50 by 2020!

Introduction

"Women's representation in the various levels of governance is crucial for development, particularly in the least developed countries where, outside of legal provisions, culture and socialisation put women at the periphery of decision-making yet at the centre of the real work and development."
- Rethabile Mohloli, Animator for Development Peace for Education, speaking at a workshop for Maseru women councillors organised by Transformation Resource Centre, 6-7 December 2006.

When the 14 men who lead the Southern African Development Community (SADC)[1] gathered in Gaborone, Botswana, for their 25th meeting in August 2005, they had not bargained on the hive of activists who swarmed the city, giving a buzz to this usually sombre affair. For the first time in the history of the annual gathering, civil society organisations met in a parallel session that sought to hold the region's

1. The members of SADC are: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

leaders accountable for the promises they have made - and not always kept.

Among the most vocal and visible of the organisers, the gender lobby demanded to know what leaders had done to make good on their promise, contained in the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (SDGD), to ensure that women constituted at least 30 percent of all decision-makers in the region by 2005: also the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

Armed with an audit of the Declaration covering ten key sectors for advancing the status of women conducted by different non governmental organisations (NGOs)[2], coupled with a well planned lobbying and advocacy strategy that included gaining high visibility for gender at the summit through the media, the activists pointed to serious gaps in attaining the lofty goals. While a handful of countries had achieved the 30 percent target for women in parliament, the majority lagged behind. Governments had conveniently narrowed the focus down to political decision-making, ignoring the more difficult areas like the uniformed services and the private sector. Even then, key areas of political decision-making, like local government, hardly featured in the discourse.

The audit also showed that despite legislative gains, most women in the region continue to live a schizophrenic existence; their daily lives governed not by modern codified laws but by customary laws that consign them to being minors all their lives: beholden to their fathers; their husbands and in widowhood to their sons and male relatives. Women in the region remain the majority of the poor, the unemployed and dispossessed. While Southern Africa has embraced human rights decrees and standards as part of the wave of democratisation that swept through the region in the 1990's, women's rights are daily flouted with an impunity that suggests words without deeds. The region has among the highest instances of gender violence in the world, with new forms, such as trafficking, being added to a long list of sexual, economic, psychological and physical abuse that cuts across all ages with an especially devastating effect on the girl child.

Above all, the audit underscored how HIV and AIDS, the pandemic that has swept relentlessly through this highly mobile region with its history of white settler colonialism; migrant male labour to mines and commercial farms; conflict; poverty and gender inequality is threatening to roll back all the fragile gains that have been made. Women, who have limited power within relationships to negotiate safe sex, constitute some 59 percent of the 24.5 million people living with AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa[3]. Young women, many of whom become involved in sexual relationships with older men for economic reasons (the so called "sugar daddy" syndrome) are the most affected. Gender violence, both a cause and consequence of HIV and AIDS, fuels the vicious cycle. And yet it is women who bear the burden of care for those infected and affected, not least 12 million orphans.

In Gaborone, activists made two key demands of their leaders. Chanting "50/50 by 2020" the activists lobbied for the 30 percent target for women in decision-making (always envisaged as a minimum) be raised to gender parity in line with measures taken by the African Union. They also added their weight

2. Organisations that conducted the audit included Gender Links, the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) , CREDO, and Southern Africa HIV and AIDS information dissemination service.

3. See UNAIDS website http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2006/200605-FS_SubSaharanAfrica_en.pdf.



to a position that had been endorsed by gender ministers meeting in Swakopmund, Namibia in 2002 that the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development be elevated to a Protocol - the most binding of the regional organisation's instruments. To borrow the words of Botswana's Minister of Health Sheila Tlou at the opening of the 2005 Civil Society Summit, a growing body of opinion around the region is making the case that gender equality can no longer be a "nice to do" but must become a "have to do" within the regional organisation.

The activists pointed out that rather than add to the plethora of commitments that already exist, the sub-regional instrument would bring together all the existing commitments under one umbrella and enhance these where they might be lacking. For example, most instruments are silent on the contradictions between customary and modern law that are at the root of the oppression of the majority of women. Yet there are examples of good practise in the region such as South Africa where the Bill of Rights is paramount. What a Protocol should do is ensure that all countries in the region adopt similar measures.

Most of the regional and international instruments make some form of commitment to women in decision-making. But few have specific targets or deadlines. The momentum generated by the tenth anniversary of Beijing; the 25th anniversary of SADC and the 2005 target date for the only concrete target in the SDGD paid off. In their final communiqué, the SADC leaders agreed to up the target to 50 percent; but they said that the Protocol needed more leg work.

Since the watershed summit, the momentum has continued to grow. Civil society organisations have constituted a Southern African Protocol Alliance[4]. The SADC Gender Unit (GU) created a task team, including representatives of the Alliance, to draft the Protocol. In 2006, Heads of State "noted the progress being made toward achieving the set target of 30 percent women representation in decision making and reaffirmed their commitment to the new target of 50 percent. The Summit endorsed the process of drafting the Gender Protocol and further directed the Secretariat to ensure that thorough consultations with Member States are undertaken."[5]

Southern African gender ministers met in Lesotho in November 2006 to review the "zero draft" of the Protocol developed by the Protocol Task Team. They "recognised that the sub-regional Protocol will open a unique possibility for rationalising and enhancing all existing commitments to gender equality. In addition, this Protocol will provide clear targets and indicators to enhance accountability and monitoring mechanisms specific to the SADC region."[6]

4. Members include: Gender Links; Gender and Media Southern Africa Network; The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA); SAFAIDS; Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF); Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA); the Women in Politics Support Unit; Women, Land and Water Rights and the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN).
5. Final Communiqué of the SADC Heads of State Summit, Lesotho, August 18 2006.
6. Final Communiqué, SADC Gender Ministers Meeting, Lesotho November 2006.

At the time of writing, the draft Protocol was being canvassed in all member countries before the 2007 SADC Heads of State summit, where it is hoped that it will be adopted. At that meeting, the region's leaders have also specifically requested that they be presented with data on women in all areas of decision-making; especially local government. Long the poor cousin of national decision-making, this sphere of governance is finally set to take centre-stage.

This chapter situates the Gender Links (GL) study on gender and local government in Southern Africa in the broader context of gender, democracy, governance and decentralisation debates. It shows how, despite the lip service paid to local government as one of the most important areas for enhancing gender equality and participatory democracy, this is also the sphere where forces of tradition and patriarchy are often most evident. The chapter sets out the rationale for the study- the first of its kind in Southern Africa and one of the few such studies globally – and provides an outline of subsequent chapters.

Gender, democracy and good governance

Since the fall of the Berlin wall and of communism in the old east bloc countries, as well as the return to multiparty democracy in many developing countries, "democracy" and "good governance" have become the buzz words in the global arena. Over the last two decades, Africa has been in the grips of a major social, economic and political revolution. Following the "lost decade" of the eighties when a combination of stumbling commodity prices, conflict, war, political instability and mismanagement witnessed major economic decline, the continent is slowly but surely on an upward swing.

According to a concept paper of the African Governance Forum led by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the end of the Cold War had three major impacts on Africa.

First, it highlighted democracy as the preferred system of government, putting pressure on Africa's one party states and military regimes to commence democratisation. Between 1989 and 1995, 35 presidential and parliamentary elections took place on the continent, prompting reference to Africa as "the world's most democratically contested continent". Although in very few cases did these elections actually lead to a change of government, the wave of democratisation opened the door to political dissent and debate; a mushrooming of civil society organisations and a new lease on life for the continent's beleaguered media.

Second, economic liberalisation became the order of the day. The painful medicine of International Monetary Fund and World Bank - sponsored structural adjustment programmes has led to more stable macroeconomic environments, investment and growth, but exacted harsh cuts in social spending that have often had to be absorbed by the invisible and unpaid "care economy" of women.

Third, by promoting a linkage between democracy, economic and social progress, the end of the Cold War obliged Africa and the international community to focus on governance. According to the African Governance concept paper: "The continent's economic crisis was seen not just as resulting from faulty economic strategies, but linked to more fundamental causes relating to peace, security and stability." [7]

7. UNDP (1997), "The African Governance Forum Conceptual Framework", p3.

Defining governance

Atkinson points out that, "Government is an institution.. a set of internal roles and relationships, rights and obligations, responsibilities and functions." Governance, on the other hand "refers more broadly to the environment in which government functions and to governments relationship with outside stakeholders. A system of governance refers to governments relationships with the electorate, the public, the consumers of services, and non-state actors."[8]

Narrow definitions focusing on economic and administrative governance favoured by institutions like the World Bank have since broadened to include political and legal considerations in definitions by organisations that have a more development focus like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the ECA.

The pillars of "good governance" are now generally agreed to include the responsibility of the government (that is the executive and administration) to manage; the role of the judiciary, statutory bodies, the media and civil society to provide checks and balances; and the role of the private sector, working in a conducive macroeconomic environment, to create wealth and jobs.

The hallmarks of "good governance" are accountability, transparency, openness and the rule of law. Such definitions have been embraced by regional organisations like SADC and more recently by the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) that has also set up a peer review mechanism to ensure that countries abide by a minimum set of "good governance" standards.

NEPAD documents argue that there are two dimensions of governance:

- Economic and corporate governance, to attract increased investment, improve efficiency and productivity and reduce poverty through macro-economic management, public financial management, banking supervision, financial services regulation and corporate governance.
- Political governance, that includes "political pluralism, allowing for the existence of several political parties and workers' unions, and fair, open and democratic elections periodically organised to enable people to choose their leaders freely."[9]

There have been a number of feminist critiques of NEPAD suggesting that women's views have largely been ignored in the crafting of this blueprint for Africa's future. Randriamaro argues that NEPAD overlooks the impact of structural adjustment on women and fails to mainstream gender in its programme (for example there is no mention of women in the agriculture section).

She adds that NEPAD fails to "tackle the structural causes of women's inequality such as discriminatory laws, cultural norms, male-biased development priorities, land reform or public expenditures, and macro-economic policies," assuming that women's equality can be addressed solely by dealing with issues such as "income generating measures, education, training and access to credit."[10]

8. Atkinson, D (2006) "Local Government, Local Governance and Sustainable Development: Getting the parameters right", HSRC Publishers.

9. See NEPAD website www.touchtech.biz/nepad

10. Randriamaro, Zo (2002), "The NEPAD, Gender and the Poverty Trap: The NEPAD and the challenges of financing for development in Africa from a gender perspective", paper presented at the "Conference on Africa and the Development Challenges of the New Millennium, Accra, Ghana", available at www.aidc.org.za/NEPAD/Gender%20and%20poverty%20trap.htm

Gender on the agenda

Gender equality and good governance have been two of the most pervasive themes in development debates in recent times. They come together in the growing body of literature and thought on gender, democracy and good governance.

Through socialisation, not nature, women and men are allocated different and unequal roles in society. Women are assigned the private sphere, taking care of the home and family, while men are assigned the public sphere, running the affairs of society.

Where women venture into public spaces they are expected to play roles similar to the home – that is nurturing roles. Also grafted onto the gendered "division of labour" is a difference in power relations. Whether in the home, in the community, or in national life, men occupy the decision-making roles. Patriarchy is the system that defines these power relations between women and men, allocating a dominant role to men and a subordinate role to women.

Politics and governance involve all aspects of power: who has power, what power relations exist, how power is exercised, the institutions of power, how they operate, what policies and laws are churned out from these institutions and what impact those have on people. Through the patriarchal powers vested in them by society, men become the "directors" of virtually all public life - the "face" of politics and governance.

Nowhere, says a report of the United Nations (UN) to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 "is the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality among men and women greater than in the area of decision-making."[11]

11. United Nations (1995) "Report of the United Nations to the Fourth World Conference on women" p.12.

During the five year review of the Beijing conference in 2000, the Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) coordinated the launch of the global campaign: "50/50 by 2005: Women in government - getting the balance right." The global campaign demanded that governments work towards a provisional minimum target of 30 percent women in decision-making by 2003, with equal representation being achieved by 2005. Overall, the results are disappointing. Globally, the average representation of women in both houses of parliament has increased by a mere six percent (from 11 percent to 17 percent) in the 11 years since the Beijing conference.



Table one: Comparative analysis of women in parliament across the globe

Region	Lower house	Upper house	Both houses
Nordic countries	40.8%		40.8%
Americas	21.7%	20.8%	21.6%
SADC	20.2%	18.6%	20%
Europe including Nordic countries	19.5%	17.5%	19.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa including SADC	16.6%	17.6%	16.7%
Asia	16.4%	15.7%	16.3%
Pacific	12.5%	27.4%	14.4%
Arab states	9.3%	6.0%	8.5%
Global Average	**17.2%**	**15.9%**	**17%**

Source: IPU and Gender Links

But, as illustrated in Table One, the average figures mask wide regional variations, from 40.8 percent in the Nordic countries, to 8.5 percent in the Arab states. With an average of 20 percent women in its parliaments, SADC comes third in the regional ranking (after the Nordic countries and the Americas). With 48 percent women in its parliament, an African country – Rwanda - tops the country charts and has come closest to showing that parity can be achieved.

Southern Africa on the march

Africa in general and Southern Africa in particular have been the site of intense lobbying and far more adventurous strategies for increasing women's participation in decision-making than in many of the older democracies. The SDGD mentioned at the beginning of this chapter came about as a result of intensive post-Beijing lobbying by the women's movement who managed to get the 30 percent target for women in decision-making (the only concrete target in the Declaration) slipped into the signed document.

At least two Southern African countries, South Africa and Namibia, have active 50/50 networks. South Africa became the eleventh country to launch the campaign in March 2002. Coordinated by the Cape Town-based Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) the network brings together such partners as the Commission on Gender Equality (a constitutional body) with NGOs such as GL, Women's Net, Gender Education and Training Network (GETNET) and the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA).

In Namibia, following the development of the Namibian Women's Manifesto in 1999, Sister Namibia has coordinated the 50/50 campaign as the lead agency of the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network (NWMN). The campaign has published posters and pamphlets calling on parties to include 50 percent women candidates on "zebra" style party lists.[12]

12. Frank, Liz (2005) "Namibia update 2005: The 50/50 Campaign: Women and Men in Government- Get the Balance Right" in "Written out: How sexuality is used to attack women's organising", International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and Centre for Women's Global Leadership, p172,

When the African Union (AU) took a position in favour of gender parity in all its structures at the inaugural session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Durban in July 2002, this gave impetus to the 50/50 campaign in the region. As described at the beginning of this chapter, 2005 provided a benchmark for activists to call the region's leaders to account for what they had done about the 30 percent target in the SDGD, as well as demand that this be raised to 50 percent in line with the AU position.

The fact that Heads of State conceded this point at their summit in Gaborone marked a key victory for the women's movement. The main challenge remains whether words will be matched by deeds. For example In Namibia parliament refused to adopt a 50/50 bill developed by the local campaign that would have amended all electoral laws to ensure gender balance at all three levels of government in future elections. So far the only political party to have publicly endorsed the position is the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa which adopted a 50/50 stance for the 2006 local government elections. As discussed in Chapter two, it remains to be seen if this position this will be extended to national elections in 2008.

Table two: Gender and politics in Southern Africa

Country	% women lower house	% women upper house	% women both houses	% women cabinet	% women local government
Angola	15.0%	-	15.0%	5.9%	1.2%
Botswana	11.1%	-	11.1%	25.0%	23.3%
DRC	8.4%	2.5%	7.3%	16.7%	
Lesotho	11.7%	**36.4%**	17.0%	27.8%	**58.0%**
Madagascar	6.9%	11.1%	8.4%		
Malawi	13.6%		13.6%	12.5%	8.3%
Mauritius	17.1%		17.1%	10.0%	6.4%
Mozambiqe	**34.8%**		**34.8%**	25.0%	
Namibia	26.9%	26.9%	26.9%	24.0%	**41.8%**
South Africa	**32.8%**	**33.3%**	**32.8%**	**43.3%**	**39.7%**
Swaziland	10.8%	**30.0%**	16.8%	18.8%	18.5%
Tanzania	**30.4%**		**30.4%**	14.8%	**34.2%**
Zambia	14.6%		14.6%	22.7%	7.1%
Zimbabwe	16.7%	**34.8%**	22.2%	13.9%	9.5%
Totals	**19.5%**	**19.6%**	**19.5%**	**19.5%**	**29.7%**

Source: Gender Links 2007

Table two shows that on average, there is no area of political decision-making in which SADC countries have achieved 30 percent, let alone 50 percent, women's representation. At 29.7 percent, local government is the sphere with the highest proportion of women, although (as will be discussed later in the chapter) this figure masks wide variations between countries.

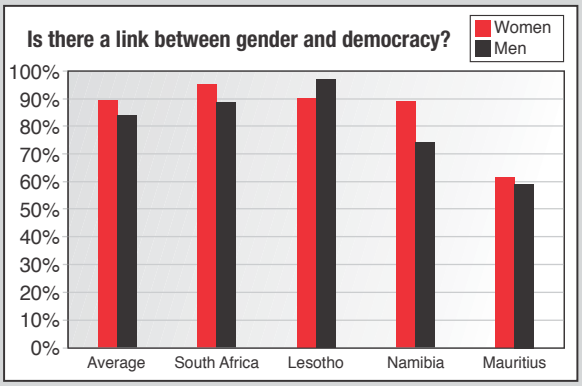
However, as illustrated by the figures in red which denote all instances of women's representation reaching 30 percent or more, there are pockets of good practise in six countries and in all areas of political decision-making. This includes 58 percent women in local government in Lesotho; approximately 40 percent each women in local government in South Africa and Namibia; 43 percent women in the cabinet of South Africa; and 30 percent or more women in the parliaments of Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania; as well as the upper houses of Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

Over the last decade, there has also been a marked shift in attitudes towards women in decision-making. As the Speaker of the South African parliament (then deputy speaker) Baleka Mbete-Kgositsile put it in the research for *Ringing up the Changes* that preceded this study, there is now "a culture of zero tolerance for no women in decision-making."[13]

Research conducted in Namibia in 2002 showed that 75 percent of Namibians (women and men) said there is more need for women in positions of power. The research also established that women and men are interested in participating in politics in almost equal numbers. This goes against the general perception that men are more interested in politics than women.[14]

13. Lowe Morna C (2004) "Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics" Gender Links, p19.
14. Research quoted in Beyond Inequalities 2005 (2005) Women in Namibia, SARDC and University of Namibia p.27.

What the councillors said:



In response to the question of whether there is a link between gender equality and democracy, 88 percent of the councillors interviewed for this study agreed that such a link exists. This finding is similar to that in the *Ringing Up the Changes* study conducted three years ago in which 89 percent of the ministers, MPs and councillors interviewed agreed with the statement. On average more women councillors (90 percent) than men councillors (85 percent) believe that gender and democracy are linked. Of the four case study countries (Lesotho, South Africa, Mauritius and Namibia) councillors in South Africa and Lesotho agreed most strongly with this statement. Councillors in Mauritius (the country in the study with the lowest representation of women councillors) agreed least strongly with the statement. In the South African municipality of Tshwane where there is a woman executive mayor one woman councillor declared: "politics is about life- so how can women not be a part of it!" Focus groups with women and men constituents, as well as civil society in the four countries yielded similar responses. A participant in the male focus group in Matsatseng, Lesotho, compared the link between gender and democracy to "a marriage contract, you can't have one without the other."

Why a woman's place is in politics

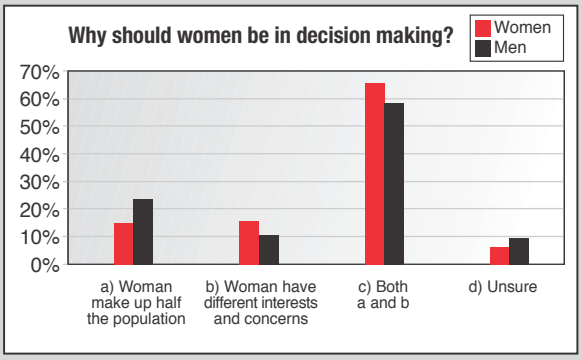
Politics is not only about institutions of power and who occupies them. It is also about how power is exercised and with what effect. Studies show that women are not only rendered non-citizens by their virtual non-participation in decision-making but that the outcomes of policies reinforce their inferior status. The signs of this include the feminisation of poverty, development programmes that do not change women's status, abuse and violence against women and the high prevalence of HIV among women.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 calls on governments to take measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, decision-making by creating a gender balance in government and administration; integrating women into political parties; increasing women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership as well as increasing women's participation in the electoral process and political activities.

What the discussion suggests is that democracy stands on two pillars. Representative democracy focuses on the quantitative representation of all groups in society – giving opportunity to all to access decision-making. Participatory democracy allows for qualitative inputs that draw on the experiences and aspirations of those represented. The sum total is better, more responsive and more accountable governance.

The quantitative or equity arguments make the case that as a distinct group in society women have a right to share in decision-making in proportion to their numbers. The qualitative or efficacy arguments concern how women's interests, perspectives, and experiences enrich governance.

What the councillors said:



Asked if women should be in decision-making because they make up half the population or because they have different interests and concerns to men or both, the majority of councillors (63 percent) cited both reasons as correct. This is higher than the 53 percent who cited both as being the reason in the Ringing up the Changes survey conducted in 2004, including ministers, MPs and councillors. The finding suggests both a higher level of awareness at local level than might be expected as well as the fact that the understanding of the links between gender and democracy is growing over time. In both studies women had a stronger sense that their participation is important both for quantitative and qualitative reasons (54 percent in Ringing up the Changes and 65 percent in this study). The higher percentage of women in this study (that focused only on local government) who said that women have a right to be in politics and that they bring a different agenda is again an interesting comment on the high levels of awareness at local level as well as the fact that gender and governance discourse in the region is becoming more advanced over time.

Equity arguments

This school of thought, reflected in various Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) resolutions and international as well as regional commitments holds that women's under-representation in politics is a violation of the democratic principle of fair representation. Cooper and Lybrand maintain that parliaments should be "mirror images" of each country.[15]



Namibian women claim their space
Photo: Liz Frank

The United Nations Charter for Human Rights, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the BPFA and other international agreements and conventions denounce all discrimination including that based on sex. They conclude that it is unjust to exclude women from the central activities in the political realm especially given the significance of politics to decision-making.

15 Cooper and Lybrand (1994) "Women and parliaments in Australia and New Zealand", a discussion paper prepared for the Commonwealth Minister's Conference on the Status of Women (unpublished).

The IPU maintains: "The concept of democracy will only assume true and dynamic significance when political policies and national legislation are decided upon jointly by men and women with equitable regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population."[16]

SADC leaders have expressed similar views recently. Botswana President Festus Mogae argues that: "Equality of access to positions of power and decision-making is a matter of fundamental human rights, and a prerequisite for democracy."[17]

In his foreword to "Into the Future" former South African president Nelson Mandela added: "As leaders of SADC we recognize that freedom cannot truly be achieved unless women attain equality, respect and dignity through their full participation in every aspect of our regional endeavour."

During this research, a ward committee member in the Emakhazeni District Council of Mpumalanga, South Africa noted: "We have come a long way from being oppressed as black people by the apartheid regime. We speak of living in a democratic society, but it appears as though this democracy is only for the benefit of men. Women are now being oppressed by their own men, who do not believe that we are capable of contributing meaningfully to the society in more ways than being child bearers."

A participant in the male focus group in the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa added: "Democracy is inclusive. Since women contributed to the liberation of the country, it is only fair that they partake in leading and changing it."

16. IPU (1994), "Plan of Action to Correct Imbalances in the Participation of Men and Women in Political Life", IPU.
17. Speaking at the SADC Gender Unit Conference on "Women in Politics and Decision-making" in Gaborone in March 1999.

Box one: A matter of justice

Comments made by participants in other male and female, as well as civil society focus groups during the research echo similar sentiments:

- If you want the interests of all sectors of the community to be represented then you have to have women. (Men, Msunduzi, South Africa.)
- If you want all of the views of all sections of society to be reasonably represented in policy discussions then people who can represent those views must be there. (Men, Msunduzi, South Africa.)
- Where we have both men and women equally participating in governance, we have reached equality as well as democracy. (Chief, Thaba Mokhele, Lesotho.)
- Where it is said that democracy exists, it is important that all people be presented. Be it women, men, youth, disabled people or any other group, everyone should be included. This is the only way that issues will be understood better. (Women, Matsatseng, Lesotho.)
- If we have equal participation of both men and women in decision making, we will be sure that all the people are represented in governance and that all peoples' views and needs are taken into account. (Women, Khoelenya, Lesotho.)

Efficacy arguments

The impact arguments concern the benefits to democracy and governance of equal participation by women. The BPFA argues: "Women's equal participation in decision making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision- making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning."[18]

The International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) states that: "systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men."[19]

This line of argument holds that although women are not homogenous, they do have certain common life experiences and "interests" that need to be brought into, and enrich political decision-making. Because of these different life experiences, the argument runs, women are likely to shed different perspectives on all mainstream political issues, such as crime, transport, and the economy.

As a participant in the civil society focus group in eThekwini in the Kwa Zulu Natal province of South Africa, put it: "It is important for women to participate in local government, to make sure that the democracy works for us (women)."

The focus group discussions showed that women are more likely to make the link to the importance of having women in decision-making because of the different qualities, perspectives and interests that they feel they bring. Many of the women said their presence helps to ensure that everyone's issues are dealt with because women are more able to represent different groups, such as women, youth, disabled people and men. A woman in

18. United Nations (1995) "The Beijing Platform for Action", paragraph 181, UN.
19. IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government.

the Matsatseng, Lesotho focus group observed: "It could be argued that people are not the same because they do have differing values, personalities or principles. However we believe all those values could be pulled together in order to compliment each other so that at the end, people could benefit."

While women drew out these qualitative differences, men tended to emphasise that women should only hold decision-making positions if they are competent. However, they also recognised the difference that the presence of women makes. As a man in the focus group in Lekwa Teemane, in the North West province of South Africa put it: "If we do not give women a chance to participate we are depriving ourselves of high quality development inputs."

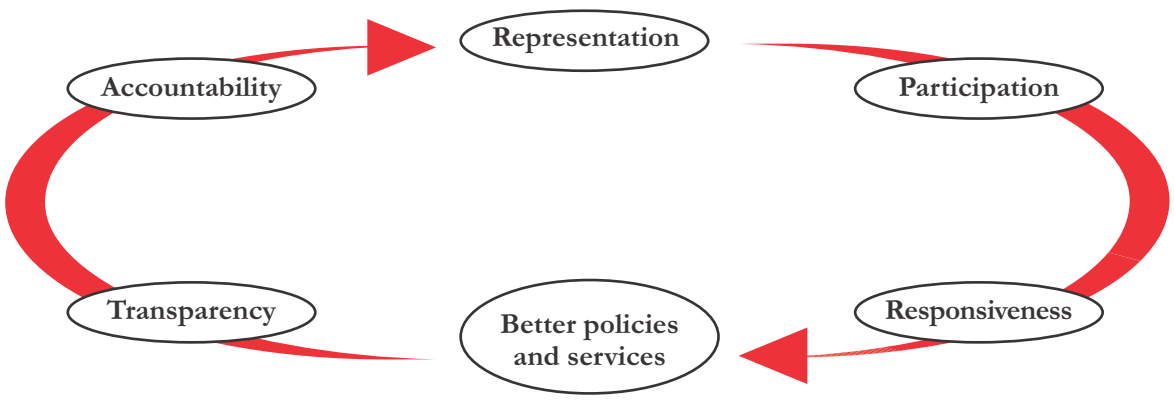
A related but more contested set of arguments concerns whether or not women bring a different style to leadership, greater integrity and perform better than men in public office. Although generalisations always run the risk of being flawed there is a perception among women decision-makers that they have to be "twice as good to get half as recognised". These concepts will be explored and tested in greater depth throughout the book, and especially in Chapter six on whether and how women at local level make a difference.

Making the links

What the various arguments suggest is that women have a right to equal participation in political decision-making, whether they make a difference or not. As South Africa's Minister of Education Naledi Pandor (then a Member of Parliament) put it when she launched the 50/50 campaign at the GAP offices in Cape Town in 2002: "The question is not whether women make a difference, but rather if society is democratic. If the answer is yes, then there should be women in all spectrums of society."

But what the governance discourse emphasises is that democracy is not just about representation. It is about participation and citizenship, which give people a say in their lives, thus making for better policies and service delivery, and holding those who make such decisions and take such actions more accountable as illustrated in figure one.

Figure one: Better presence, better outcomes



As underscored in the feminist critiques of NEPAD, governance debates raise critical issues about the quantitative presence of women in decision-making, and its qualitative significance. For example, how transparent, accountable and responsive can governance be when it fails to represent key interest groups? In what ways are democracy and governance the poorer for excluding over half the population and indeed that half of the population that takes the major responsibility for the welfare of families and communities? Is there a link between achieving gender equality in politics and achieving gender equality in the rest of society?

Gender and decentralisation

Against this background, the growing (if belated) interest in the links between gender, democracy and decentralisation – the means for bringing governance closer to where people live, and where inequality is actually experienced – is logical.

As Samson notes, "the notion of a strong, centralised developmental state has come under relentless attack since the mid-1980's."[20] The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and bilateral donors have added to the "good governance" agenda through the discourse on the creation of "enabling states" that seek to provide a framework for the private sector, local government and other actors to be more proactive, while they play a more facilitative role.

20. Samson, Melanie (2005) "Gender Transformative Developmental Local Government? Reinventing the Post Apartheid Local State within the Context of Neo-liberalism", Paper presented at CODESRIA 11th General Assembly, December 6-10, Maputo, Mozambique.

Defining decentralisation

Political decentralisation aims to give citizens and their elected representatives more power in public decision-making. **Administrative decentralisation** seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government. **Fiscal decentralisation** is a core component of decentralisation: if local government is to be effective, it must have adequate revenues, raised locally or transferred from central government, as well as the authority to make expenditure decisions.[21]

Much of the decentralisation taking place in Africa is politically motivated. The spread of multiparty political systems is creating demand for more local voice in decision-making. Ethnic considerations and post-conflict reconstruction are also motivating factors.[22] In general, participation and decentralisation are seen as having a symbiotic relationship, even though the extent to which authority is actually devolved by central government differs widely.

Advocates of decentralisation say that it will make government more responsive and citizens more engaged. Opponents point to the danger of "elite capture" and inadequate tax base at local level, and the fact that there is little empirical evidence to support the notion that decentralisation is more democratic. [23]

As discussed in Chapter two, as one of the newest democracies and a product of protracted political struggle, South Africa has gone a step further in its

21. Litvack, J and Seddon, J (1999), "Decentralisation Briefing Notes," World Bank p.2-3.
22. Ibid, p6.
23. Beal J (2005) "Decentralising Government and Centralising Gender in Southern Africa: Lessons from the South African Experience." United Nations research Institute for Social Development p.2.

thinking on local government with a Constitution that refers to "spheres" rather than "tiers" of government, and a philosophy of "co-operative governance" that regards all "spheres" as equal and inter-dependent partners.

A 1997 government document, "Towards a White Paper on Local Government in South Africa" states that:

> Throughout the world, municipalities have come to appreciate that the relation between government and those who are governed is as important as government itself. That is what is meant when people speak about the shift from government to governance. Governance is a way of governing that takes the views and interests of those affected by government more seriously than in the past. The "governed" refers to the community at large. This includes individuals, community organisations, business, trade unions and NGOs. Municipalities have realised that they need to involve the community and all the constituent parts in the functioning of government. Relationships, partnerships and alliances have therefore become much more important for local government than in the past.



Springfontein Town Hall

Photo: Susan Tolmay

Where gender fits in

The significance of gender from a local government perspective is highlighted in key documents. According to *Gender and Development – A Handbook for Councillors and Officials* "local government is the sphere of government closest to the people, and the one that impacts most on women's lives. It is best placed to analyse and respond to the needs of different women."[24]

The International Union of Local Authorities argues in a position paper on women in local government that:

> From a gender perspective local government is the closest and is the most accessible level of government to women. Local governments traditionally provide services utilised by individual households such as electricity, waste disposal, public transport, water, schools, health clinics and other social services. The decisions of local government therefore have a direct impact on the private lives of women, because they are traditionally responsible for providing for and caring for the family and home in many countries. Women also have important unique contributions to make to the appropriate management of these services. They must be fully part of the local democratic system and have full access to the decision-making structure. Until the interests of women have been represented at the local level, the system is not fully democratic. [25]

Box two summarises why local government is increasingly seen as important in gender and governance discourse.

24. SALGA publication, cited in the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, Section 4.6. Office on the Status of Women in the Presidency, 2000 p33.
25. IULA (1998) p.1

Box two: Gender, crime and grime



Poverty

Photo: Trevor Davies

A councillor in the eThekwini municipality of the Kwa Zulu Natal province of South Africa described the work of local government as addressing the daily challenges of "crime and grime." These have a particular significance in the every day lives of many women:

Environment and health: Pollution, lack of adequate services such as sanitation, sewerage and fuel impact on the environment and are also health hazards.

Women are disproportionately affected because they perform the majority of the tasks around the home and care for the sick. Public health care facilities are often inaccessible. The reproductive health needs of women are also often poorly serviced.

Water: Women play a central, but mostly unacknowledged role, in the management of water and sanitation. Women, and to a lesser extent children, are primarily the ones who draw water for household use, transport it home, store it until it is used, and use it for cooking, cleaning, washing, and watering. Women are often responsible for negotiating with their neighbours for access to water supply, evaluate water sources, analyse supply patterns, lobby relevant authorities, and launch protests when water availability reaches dire levels.

Sanitation: While men participate in the decision-making on the type and building of sanitation units, their maintenance is seen as the responsibility of women since cleaning the house and toilet are regarded as women's work. Women encourage or discourage, teach and supervise young children's use of sanitation units. Small aspects of design can make a big difference between the use and non-use of these facilities. For example, many mothers are fearful of their children using pit latrines because of the size of the hole and yet they are often not consulted in the design of these facilities.

Crime and security: In addition to the high levels of crime that affect both men and women in Southern Africa, especially in poor areas, women are the main victims of domestic violence and sexual offences.

Land and housing: Although men and women are theoretically eligible for housing and land subsidies in most countries, these services are invariably registered in the names of men. Ironically, urbanisation is increasingly accompanied by a diversity of household types, with single adult households and women-maintained families emerging as an important and growing household form. Single adult households are invariably headed by women.[26]

Electricity: Access to electricity has major implications for women, both with regard to security and fuel for cooking and heating.

26. Beall,J (1996), "Urban governance: Why gender matters".

Transport and mobility: Often women need to travel into residential areas at times when transport is planned for people travelling out. For example, domestic workers come to work in residential areas in the early hours of the morning when most residents are going out to work in the city. The domestic workers are thus forced to leave their children with relatives, and live in cramped quarters with their employers. The multiple roles of women mean they must often take several short trips in a day, often on routes that are poorly serviced and dangerous.

The informal sector: Women constitute the majority of informal traders especially in the so-called survivalist sector. Instead of providing simple facilities like market stalls that can help women to work in safe and hygienic environments and make a more decent return from their long hours of work, local authorities often harass women traders and charge them with breaking by- laws.

Source: GL Local Government training materialBBB

Conflicts and contradictions

On the face of it, one would imagine that local government would both be of greater interest to, and more accessible to women. This sphere is often touted as a "stepping stone" to national politics for women. Verifying whether this is so or not through statistics on women in local government poses enormous challenges because unlike parliament, for which statistics are readily available and regularly updated, there is no such global and country data on local government.



Poverty in Mauritius

Photo: Rishi Raj Ramnauth

Table three: Gender and local government - global

	Lower House	Councils	LG Higher/Lower
North America			
Canada	21%	18%('95)	Lower
United States	16.2%	23% (90)	Higher
Europe * (2000)			
Sweden	47.3%	42%	Lower
Netherlands	36.7%	23% ('98)	Lower
France	12.2%	23%	Higher
Greece	13%	3%	Lower
Africa * (2007)			
Angola	15%	1%	Lower
Botswana	11%	23%	Higher
Burkina Faso	8% ('00)	10% ('94)	Higher
Lesotho	12%	58%	Higher
Malawi	14%	8%	Lower
Mauritius	17%	6%	Lower
Namibia	27%	42%	Higher
South Africa	33%	40%	Higher
Swaziland	11%	19%	Higher
Tanzania	30%	34%	Higher
Zambia	15%	7%	Lower
Zimbabwe	16%	10%	Lower

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Council of European Municipalities and Regions

As illustrated in Table three, out of 18 countries in three regions of the world for which data could be obtained, there appears to be little evidence to suggest that women are better represented in local than in national politics. In nine (or half the countries) scattered over three regions the representation of women in local government is lower than in national assemblies.

Figure two: Women in parliament and local government, Southern Africa:

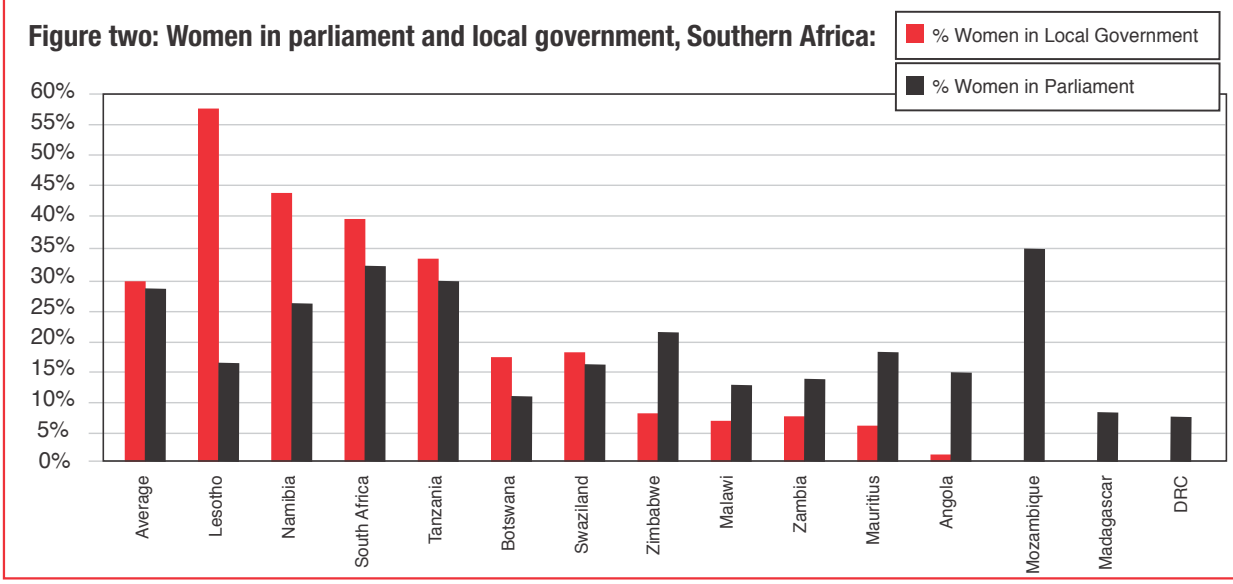


Figure two illustrating women's representation at local (where data is available) and national level in Southern Africa shows that there are much wider gaps between countries of the region between women's representation at local as compared to national level. The range at national level is from 35 percent in Mozambique to seven percent in Madagascar (a difference of 28 percent). In comparison, the range for local government is from 58 percent in Lesotho, to one percent in Angola (a difference of 57 percent).

In two countries, South Africa and Tanzania, there is a strong correlation between relatively high levels of women in local and national politics. In others there are wide gaps. The largest of these is Lesotho (58 percent local; 17 percent national). Botswana, Swaziland and Namibia have higher levels of women at local than at national levels. But in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and Angola the opposite is true.

In her paper on "Decentralising Government and Centralising Gender in Southern Africa: Lessons from the South African Experience" Beall makes the following pertinent observations about the contradictions at a local level:

> Local government is in an ambiguous position. It is the part of the state that is located closest to the people and to organised civil society. As such it has the potential to engage more effectively with women who are often confined through their domestic responsibilities to public engagement close to home, but because of its closeness to society the local state can also become too close to social institutions. In Africa, the latter can be deeply patriarchal, illustrated for example by the role of traditional authorities both in every day life at the community level and in local government. When local government is impervious to progressive social change it may be an unreliable site for the pursuit of gender equity, particularly in contexts where women are making gains without the formal institutions of state. As such it tends to be a litmus test not only for democratic decentralisation but for engendered democracy more generally. [27]

27. Beall, J (2005) Decentralising Government and Centralising Gender in Southern Africa: Lessons from the South African Experience, United Nations Institute for Social Development, Occasional Paper 8 p 1.

Why this research

GL's 2004 study, Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics identified the uneven representation of women in local government in Southern Africa as one of the most glaring yet under-researched areas in gender, conflict and governance studies in the region. Southern Africa has vacillated between taking special measures to ensure women's increased representation in local government resulting in varying degrees of conflict (as evidenced in the recent local government elections in Lesotho and most recently in South Africa) and not taking any action at all.

Local government appears to spark contradictory responses among male decision-makers under pressure to redress gender imbalances. On the one hand, to the extent that countries in Southern Africa have been willing to legislate quotas for women's representation in politics, they have been more willing to do so for local than national elections. Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa (the three countries with the highest representation of women in local government) all have quotas of one kind or the other at local but not at national level.

The discrepancy suggests that rather than being a reflection of commitment to women's participation at local level, the measures taken in the three countries are a case of male decision-makers giving way at local level (described by a focus group participant in Windhoek as "community affairs, rather than real politics") while resisting such measures in the more coveted national arena.

To the other extreme of these countries that have achieved rapid strides in women's participation in local government are a host of SADC countries in which women councillors constitute less than ten percent of the total. In these countries (such as Malawi, Mauritius, Zambia and Angola) conservative attitudes on the ground continue to work against women's participation at local level, even more so than at national level.

With the decision by SADC Heads of State to increase the target for women in decision-making from 30 to 50 percent in August 2005, and to ensure that all areas of decision-making are taken into account, pressure will increase to ensure more even and greater participation by women in local government.

Objectives

This study set out to draw lessons on increasing the representation of women in local government in a way that minimises conflict; increases participation and leads to more equitable, responsive government at the coalface of delivery through:

- Studying the recent experiences of four Southern African countries with different electoral systems and approaches to quotas in increasing the representation of women in local government.
- Studying the extent to which the conflict generated by these different approaches was of a zero sum as opposed to a mixed motive approach, and the implications of this for the women subsequently elected into power.
- Examining how these experiences can be applied by other Southern African countries seeking to comply with the decision by Heads of State at their 2005 summit to raise the quota for women in all areas of decision-making from 30 to 50 percent.
- Examining the impact of women at local level and proposing strategies for overcoming barriers to their effective participation and contribution at local level.

Structure of the book

Other than this introductory chapter, the book consists of nine chapters as follows:

- **Chapter two** builds on the foundation provided by *Ringing up the Changes* that drew on Thenjiwe Mtintso's access, participation and transformation model to provide the **conceptual framework** for the research, which in turn informs the methodology that is described in detail in this chapter. The chapter also explains and gives background information on the four case study countries chosen for the research: Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa.

- **Chapter three** concerns the barriers that women face in **accessing** local government and the strategies that have been devised to overcome these barriers, ranging from legislated to voluntary quotas, with varying challenges and effects within different electoral systems. The chapter ends with a discussion about general views on quotas among councillors and the general public canvassed in focus groups. It concludes that while quotas are a "jump start" mechanism that should gradually be phased out, they are critical for ensuring rapid change. Despite some concerns, quotas have not backfired in any country of the region, including Lesotho where the legislated quota prompted a High Court challenge described in the chapter. A highlight of this chapter is a case study of the constituency that led to the court challenge where a woman is now the vice chair of the council and believes she could as easily have won the seat on her own steam.

- **Chapter four** explores the barriers to effective **participation** for women at local level. Based on quantitative and qualitative observations of council meetings, the chapter shows that even where the "critical mass" of over 30 percent has been achieved, this is no guarantee of women's effective participation. For a host of cultural, personal, political and institutional reasons felt more acutely at local than national level, many women find that they are "in", but effectively "out" of the decision-making process.

- **Chapter five** flips the scales and examines what factors help to create an **enabling environment** for women's participation. While numbers alone are not a sufficient guarantee, the chapter shows that there is a definite correlation between having a high proportion of women as well as women in leadership and the breadth and depth of women's participation. Using empirical evidence and case studies from the extensive field work carried out for the study, the chapter shows how factors such as education, background, appropriate capacity building, support from political parties and institutional environments can be transformed from barriers to facilitators of effective participation. The chapter draws substantially on GL's first hand experience of collaborating with the City of Johannesburg in a unique "Gender, Communications and Local Government" pilot project that aimed to tailor capacity building to the needs of councillors, and to link it to the development of a gender policy and action plan.

- **Chapter six** grapples with the vexed issue of what women bring to decision-making at local level and whether this makes a difference. While arguing that it is dangerous to stereotype women as more caring and nurturing than men, and men as more logical and aggressive than women, the chapter argues that perhaps even more so at local than at national level women have different concerns and interests to men that contribute to different perspectives and priorities. The majority of women and men believed that women have different leadership styles and are more

performance oriented: factors seen to enrich decision-making at local level.

- **Chapter seven** begins to measure what difference the presence of women at local level makes using one of the indicators in the study – the extent to which attitudes of men are changing and whether gender issues are becoming a concern both of women and men. Examples from different countries suggest that some men in this sphere of government feel threatened and are resisting change. But a number of other examples, from all four of the case study countries, show that many men on the ground welcome and support the participation of women, and are themselves becoming champions of gender equality.

- **Chapter eight** measures the effect of women's participation in local government in the **determination of priorities** and **delivery of services** traditionally performed by local government. Against the background of structural weaknesses, lack of clarity over roles between different levels of government and the high levels of debt faced by many councils the chapter emphasises that it is difficult in these circumstances to single out and measure the impact of the presence of women. However, several examples of women "taking the bull by the horns" and trying to resolve financial crises through self help schemes; working their way around bureaucratic hurdles to ensure that communities get essential services like lights; and introducing new agendas to the councils like **HIV and AIDS** show that even in difficult circumstances the presence of women makes a qualitative difference. Using Lesotho as a case study, the chapter also shows how, as women gain confidence, they are beginning to challenge male hegemony in such sacred-cow areas as **land distribution**. How far they will be able to take these more strategic agendas forward depends on a number of factors, including the new Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act 2006 which allows married women to hold title deeds to land in their own name.

- **Chapter nine** takes forward the discussion on moving from the **practical to the strategic** through measuring the extent to which gender is being systematically mainstreamed in the policies and practices of local government, both internally and in its core delivery functions. The virtual absence of any strategies at national or regional level for mainstreaming gender at the local level despite the lip service paid both to decentralisation and gender mainstreaming is one of the key gaps identified in the study. Such strategies only existed in South Africa, but at council rather than national level. Even then, gender strategies only existed in a handful of councils where particular individuals have worked around the system to begin to embed gender in planning, budgets and programmes. A case in point is the Member of the Mayoral Committee for Community Development in the City of Johannesburg who has spearheaded a Women Development Strategy that includes ensuring that women benefit from South Africa hosting Soccer 2010. Overall, the chapter concludes that local government is missing out on its most strategic opportunities for empowering women, such as through procurement and local economic development initiatives.

- **Chapter ten** summarises the key conclusions and recommendations of the study. In a nutshell these are that there is no longer any excuse for any government in the region not to "get the gender balance right" at local level. Experiences in the region show that

no matter what the electoral system, where there is a political will there is a way to overcome this and other barriers. But the study makes a strong case that women's participation in local government should not just be a numbers game. Even more so at local than at national level where women confront some of the best opportunities for and worst resistance to their participation, it is important to ensure that women are not set up for failure. The study concludes that if the presence of women in local government is to be more than just a case of "jobs for the girls" and instead become a driving force for gender equality in Southern Africa, the policies, systems, structures and resources expended on gender mainstreaming at national level need to be extended double fast, and more effectively, to the local level.



Keetmanshoop council offices

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna



Ama Buruxa Culture Group, Maltahohe, Namibia

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Oasis in the desert

Concepts and methodology

"Politics is about life, so how can women not be a part of it?"
- Woman councillor, Tshwane"

If you are contemplating a trip to the Namib desert, the chances are that you will pass through the 4000-strong village of Maltahohe in the dry and desolate Hardap region of southern Namibia. If you stop long enough in this village, you will most definitely be accosted by the Ama Buruxa (Nama for *"Simply Amazing"*) Culture group comprising abandoned children whose beautiful moves are choreographed by their champion, the soft spoken but

also "simply amazing" Councillor Karolina Pieters.

Like the proverbial oasis in the desert, the children spring out of the dusty planes in their colourful traditional patchwork outfits, their melodious voices rising above the scorching heat as their bodies sway back and forth to the clicks and rhythms of the desert tunes. Pieters has some 382 OVC's (Orphans and Vulnerable Children) under her care; nearly ten percent of the village population. Most have lost one or both parents to HIV and AIDS or gender violence. Cultural activities, Pieters explains, help to make sure the children never forget their roots and remain firmly grounded. They are also a form of healing. As Pieters introduces each child by name, she recounts their story without ever once mixing up the details.



Karolina with triplets Shireen, Sherita and Sheroleen *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

The triplets, Shireen, Sherita and Sheroleen came to the home (a dilapidated old building that has been renovated by volunteers to provide shelter for as many of the children as possible) at the age of six. Now they are going 16. Six year old Paul Aeb who clings to Pieters and hides shyly behind her skirt witnessed his father stab his mother to death. Paul Hanse saw his mother kill his father in a drunken stupor in an area renowned for its high level of alcoholism. She is out of jail but the boy is afraid to go home.

Somewhere in the sea of faces that rush around Pieters as the dance troupe finishes its last act and the school bell signals a lunch break is Raphaelia Pieters, Karolina's youngest daughter. She is so integrated into the crowd that you would not guess she is any different from the rest. According to Ivan Pieters, the eldest of Pieter's six children and a teacher at the school, "from the time I was a child I knew I shared my mother with other children; I knew she belonged to everyone."

A loyal member of the ruling Swapo Party who stopped short of going into exile to join the liberation army because her parents did not want her to "run around with the boys in politics" Pieters has been a teacher for 25 years and a community activist for as long as she can remember.

When the 2004 local government elections came around and the party scouted about for women candidates to make good its promise of a "zebra" list (one woman, one man) Pieters came under pressure to run for public office. She did so on one condition: that I "bring my children into the Council with me" and make them part of the Council's business.

Only six of the OVC's on her books are sponsored through the government's social welfare programme. When the older children perform for tourists, they charge R450 per show; the main source of income for the home. Many of the tourists have been so touched that they have sent clothes, computers and other helpful items from Austria, Germany and the other European countries from which most of them hail.

Leveraging her position as deputy chair of the council, Pieters has persuaded the nearby lodge to provide a soup kitchen twice a day, five times a week. The Council now assists with transport to get supplies from the Catholic

Aids Council based in Mariental, 111 km away.

Pieters has formed and chairs a council HIV and AIDS committee that brings together 25 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) with Council members once a month and is spearheading an awareness programme in the community. She has trained as a counsellor and is negotiating with the Ministry of Health to establish a programme for administering anti retroviral drugs for those living with AIDS.



Namibia HIV/AIDS awareness
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Men and women interviewed as part of focus groups in the community cited Pieters as the most effective member of the council that comprises four women and one man (Hans Joseph, the chair of the council) because she "worked in the community before and she takes that with her."

They argued that Pieters, rather than Joseph, should be the chair of the council. In Namibia, chairs of councils are elected by the councillors. There are three Swapo Party and two opposition members of the Maltahohe council. Pieter's husband, the school principal and leader of the local Swapo Party branch, is said by community members to have engineered the chairing of the council, sidelining his wife to appease party bosses.

Pieters agrees that it is ironic that out of five members of the council, only one of whom is a man, the man should have been elected chair (see also Chapter four). But she insists that the reason she did not campaign for the post of chair is that as a full time teacher she would not have had the time to be chair as this frequently involves attending meetings during school times.

Pieters stressed that as a community activist she is less concerned about power than about making things happen. She reels off a long list of what needs to be done: the upgrading of the squatter camp to an informal settlement; getting sponsorship for the children's education and welfare; preparing for the regional dance competition; unemployment; HIV and AIDS; a campaign against the high levels of alcoholism, the council's seemingly intractable debt, the lights that get turned off and the water level in the area that is always too low. How can a flitting one day visitor contribute? "Some toiletries for the children," she is quick to reply as we drive off to the nearest grocery store.

Welcome to Maltahohe and to the Namib desert; to the multiple challenges of every day life in a rural community in Southern Africa; to a society that still defers to men even when women clearly have the qualities to lead; to one woman who prefers to ignore the politics and use whatever space she has for the good of her community. Welcome to gender at the coalface of service delivery.

This chapter provides a conceptual framework for the research, rationale for and a detailed description

of the methodology used. It describes the case study countries chosen; the reason for doing so and provides background information on each. Building on GL's earlier study, *Ringing up the Changes*, *Gender in Southern African Politics* the chapter also sets out the yardsticks used for measuring impact in the current study.



Children in Maltahohe

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Conceptual framework

At the Coalface, Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa builds on, and is informed by the conceptual framework first put forward by Thenjiwe Mtintso,[28] ambassador to Cuba, Chair of GL and a former Chair of the South African Commission on Gender Equality (CGE). This framework, elaborated in *Ringing up the Changes*, is illustrated in Figure three. The crux of Mtintso's argument is that access and numbers are a prerequisite for, but do not guarantee transformation. She argues that once women have entered decision-making, it is necessary to remove the barriers to their effective participation. Only when women are present in significant strengths, and are able to participate effectively, can they start to make an impact.

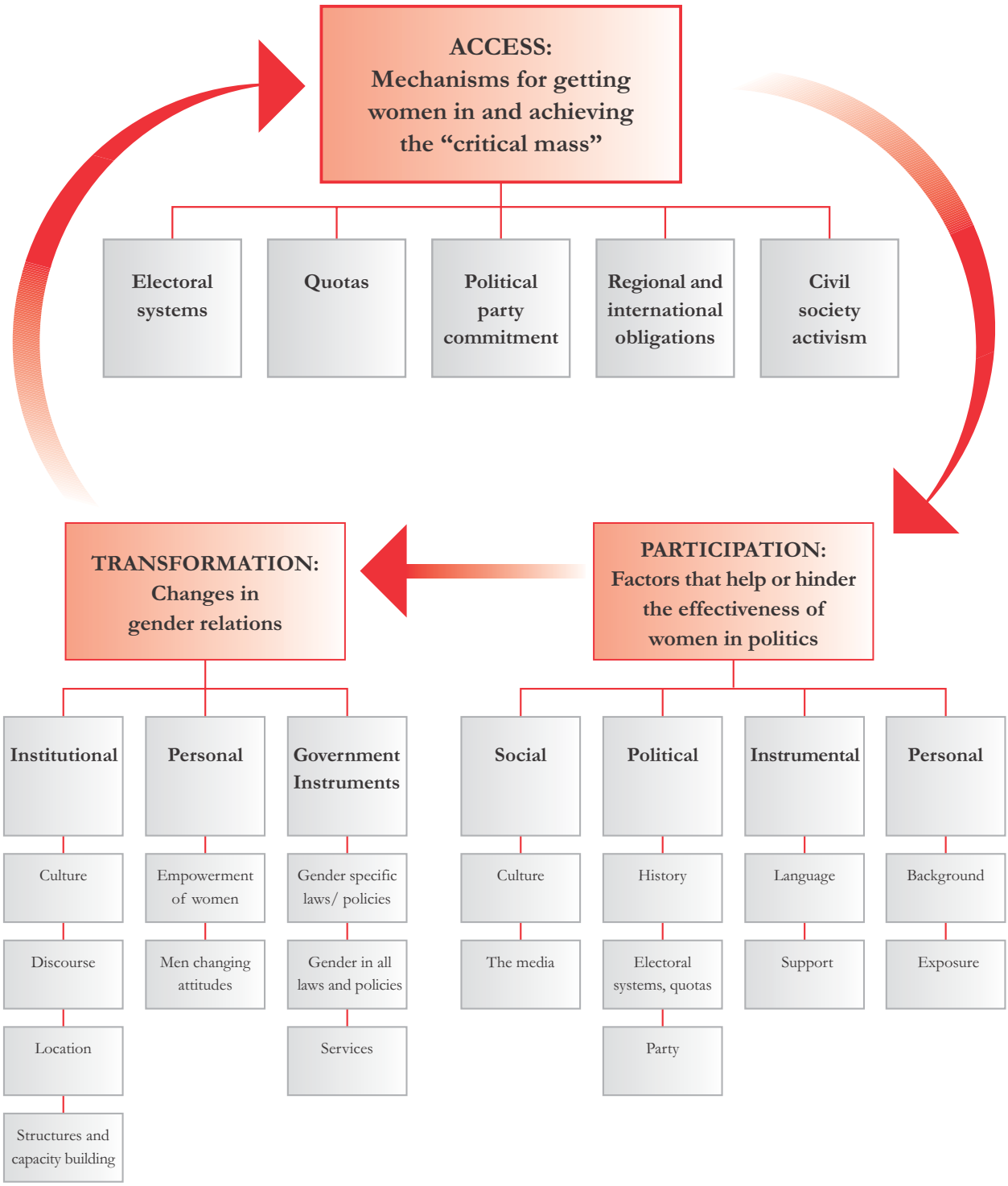
Access

Women have been denied access to political decision-making for a host of reasons that basically boil down to the fact that societies all over the world have defined women's space as being in the private rather than in the public sphere. Of all the areas of decision-making, politics is the most public of public spaces, and therefore has been among the most hostile for women to access. As discussed in Chapter one, there is very little evidence to support the assumption that local government, as an area of immediate and direct interest to women, is more accessible to their participation.

Instead, there appear to be two diametrically opposed trends at this level: a relatively high representation of women where parties and countries have decided to push the 50/50 agenda and see local politics as a less contested power base than national politics; and low levels of representation where the forces of tradition on the ground are such that politicians have not dared to challenge them.

28. Mtintso, T (1999) "Women in Decision-Making: A Conceptual Framework" in "Women in Politics and Decision Making in SADC: Beyond 30 % in 2005", SADC: p35-52 and Mtintso, T (1999) "Women in Politics- A Conceptual Framework" in "Redefining Politics: South African Women and Democracy", Commission on Gender Equality: p33-51.

Figure three: Conceptual framework



The "critical mass"

A question that frequently arises in access debates is the extent to which women have to be represented in specific numbers in order to make a difference. Put differently, how critical is the critical mass? How magic is the figure 30 percent?

The notion that to make a difference women should constitute a "critical mass" traces back to research by Danish political scientist Drude Dahlerup who declared: "Don't expect us to make too much difference as long as we are only a few women in politics. It takes a critical mass of women to make a fundamental change."[29]

A study on women in public life carried out by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in 2000 also argues that only a critical mass of women allows female politicians to bring different values to public life:

> As a minority operating in a male domain, for most women public figures to be accepted and function on a basis of equality with men they have to adapt to and adopt the male priorities predominating in public life. Minorities, such as women who are successful in a male world, according to the classic theory of minority behaviour, absorb the dominant culture to such an extent that they tend to dissociate themselves from other women, to undermine their own success and to perceive any discrimination they meet as a result of their own shortcomings. It takes a minority of a certain minimum size, 30-35 percent, to be able to influence the culture of groups and to facilitate alliances between group members. The theory may also explain why lone women who reach high office have often appeared not to bring distinctively female values to their office.[30]

However, as Britton points out, there is "an equally rich body of 'women in politics research' finding that getting women into office is not enough to have an impact on either policy or legislative behaviour."[31]

A middle-of-the-road argument is that while women are not homogenous, and while they may not openly advocate feminist agendas, they do have certain common interests, different values, outlooks and approaches to men. The mere presence of women in decision-making can be an impetus to change.

The argument that only self-declared feminists and gender activists can make a difference overlooks the important role that other women play in supporting such agendas and the importance of numbers in building consensus around these agendas. It also ignores the importance of the many women decision-makers who are not self-declared feminists or gender activists nor hostile to such agendas, but are sympathetic to the issues without being quite certain what they can do within decision-making structures to make a difference. It is this "critical mass" that needs to be targeted with appropriate empowerment strategies that build on their empathies and equip them with the skills to challenge the dominant male ethos of institutions and the services that they deliver.

For the purposes of this study, the **"critical mass"** is understood less as a fixed number and more as the point at which women, through a combination of numerical strength, enabling political environments, empowerment and conviction feel able to raise critical questions in mainstream environments.

29. Dahlerup D (1991), "From a small to a large minority, women in Scandinavian politics" quoted in Virginia Willis, "Public life: Women Make a Difference", Paper for the Expert Group Meeting on the Role of Women in Public Life, DAW, Vienna: p.10.
30. DAW (2000), "Public life: women make a difference," in "Women 2000", No 2, 1992: p.5.
31. Britton, H (2003), "From Resistance to Governance: South African Women's Transformation of Parliament", unpublished: p 219.

What is undeniable is that increasing the numbers of women in office is not, on its own, a panacea for ensuring women's equality and ending gender discrimination. Numerous other factors play an equally important role, such as the cultural norms of society, the financial limitations of fledgling democracies, and the partisan constraints of political life[32]. These factors can be especially intense at the local level, where the general disempowerment of this sphere of government combined with the often more blatant forms of patriarchy experienced on the ground pose particular challenges in measuring the impact of women in decision-making at this level.

Constructive versus destructive conflict

Across the globe, there is a growing acceptance that the only way to break through the barriers to women getting into decision-making at all levels is through taking "special measures" that involve some form of quota or "positive discrimination." Such measures are a direct challenge to male hegemony in the decision-making arena.

Power is never given up easily. In every instance in which there have been quotas (whether of the voluntary party nature, such as the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and Swapo Party in Namibia; or legislated, such as Lesotho's brave experiment in the 2005 local elections) there has been resistance.

Conflict is an inescapable fact of life. The key issue is not the existence of conflict; but how it is managed. The struggle for gender equality is fraught with conflict. That conflict can either be destructive, leading to women becoming even more oppressed than they are now, or it can lead to awareness and understanding that over time changes attitudes and mindsets.

32. Britton, H (2003), "From Resistance to Governance: South African Women's Transformation of Parliament", unpublished: p 378.

The **zero-sum approach** is a situation in which the only way one side can get ahead (or get more of something) is if the other side gets less. This occurs when there is a finite amount of a resource to be distributed, and together the parties want more than is available. In this situation, no side can get what they want unless the other side gets less than they want. This is the classic win-lose situation[33].

Many of the conflicts around women's increased participation in decision-making have the potential to be zero sum games because there are a finite number of positions available, and if women are to occupy half these seats, then some men are going to have to be displaced. What therefore becomes important is how the issue of women's increased participation in decision-making is presented; as a win-lose or win-win situation.

The **mixed motive approach** is based on the premise that each side may benefit more by negotiating an equitable resolution that both can accept, by strategic co-operation rather than competition[34].

In the case of women's increased participation in decision-making this is about ensuring that the overall benefits to society of equal representation are put above petty individual interests. It is about parties examining their own ideologies and what they stand for, and making sure that words are matched by deeds. It is also about taking a long term view that recognises that by harnessing the under utilised potential of half the world's population, there will be more growth and potential for both women and men. This then becomes a win-win solution.

33. Conflict Research Consortium (1998), University of Colorado, USA.
34. Ibid.

Destructive conflict and confrontation has largely negative results; it pushes people apart, destroys relationships, and leads to a host of negative personal and social changes including an escalation of violence, fear and distrust. **Constructive conflict and confrontation** has more benefits than costs – one that pulls people together, strengthens or improves their relationship (by redefining it in a more appropriate or useful way) and one that leads to positive change in all of the parties involved.[35] For example, if the heated debates around quotas ultimately lead to an understanding of the structural barriers to the effective participation by women at local level and to an acceptance by men that women's under representation goes against the basic tenants of democracy, this can be regarded as a case of "constructive conflict and confrontation."

Participation

For women decision-makers to be effective, strategies for increasing women's representation must go beyond mere access and address the barriers to effective participation. Political decision-making is fraught with obstacles for women. These include:

- **Ideological factors**, including the patriarchal nature of all societies and the intersection between racism, sexism; culture and religion. This may vary with time, place and country. It may also differ between the different spheres of government. As this study shows such forces often loom much larger as barriers at the local than at the national level.
- **Political factors**, such as support from the party and party structures; the kind of electoral system and where one sits in the political spectrum. Women in opposition, for example, face the challenges both of being female and of being in opposition; a combination of factors that can be especially challenging at local level where public scrutiny is often closer and more personal.
- **Institutional factors**, such as leadership and management roles within the institutions as well as links and networks with organisations outside parliament. Again, these factors are often more acute at local level, where women may be numerous in number, but short on actual influence as men dominate key positions and decisions, either directly or indirectly.
- **Personal agency**, such as individual backgrounds, grounding, values and capacity. Generally, levels of education and exposure are higher at national than local level. Ironically many of the issues to be addressed at this level (levying of taxes, balancing of budgets, out sourcing, managing of infrastructure etc) are technical and require more than basic skills to be able to guide, manage, and hold officials to account. This raises serious questions concerning what kind of capacity building is most appropriate at local level.

What is important to underscore is that each one of the factors that serves as a barrier to effective participation can be turned around into an enabling factor. The very process of **enabling participation becomes part of the transformation** of people, institutions, and society as a whole.

Transformation

Representation and participation in decision-making allows for the full spectrum of voices to be heard, experiences and values to be centred and for citizens to take responsibility for, and change their own lives. Once citizens who had previously been reduced to non-citizens bring "other" views, paradigms begin to change. Those who had always spoken on behalf of the others, assuming they know what the others feel, get challenged. Various myths are exploded and

35. Ibid. These approaches were also highlighted in the CAGE Application Guidelines to which GL responded for this research.

a new understanding begins.

Thus when women enter decision-making, the concept, content and form of politics and governance, and the way that they are practiced, begin to change. Power relations shift. Outcomes begin to be informed by the new paradigm. But there is a constant struggle because the tools for transformation are often the very same institutions that need to be transformed.

Transformation of gender relations is understood in this study to consist of two core components:

- The **empowerment of women** to take their equal and rightful role in all areas of social, economic and political endeavour and
- **Changes in the attitudes of men** to allow women to take their rightful place as well as to free men of those burdens of masculinity that prevent them from working as equal partners with women; a process that illustrates the conflict transformation theory at work (see box).

Box three: Conflict transformation

Conflict transformation is a term being used more and more to refer to a change (usually an improvement) in the nature of a conflict; a de-escalation of violence or reconciliation between people or groups. Unlike **conflict resolution**, which denies the long-term nature of conflict, or **conflict management**, which assumes that people and relationships can be managed as though they were physical objects, the concept of **conflict transformation** reflects the notion that conflicts go on for long periods of time, changing the nature of the relationships between the people involved, and themselves changing as people's response to the situation develops over time [36].

As demonstrated in Ringing up the Changes many of the men who initially resisted quotas gradually came to accept these as they learned through the (often animated) party debates why these were essential to transforming gender relations.

As men who resist change became "converts" they also often become champions of gender equality. This is an example of "conflict transformation"; the ideal outcome of the conflicts that surround women's increased participation in political decision-making. As more men take up the cause of gender equality, the "critical mass" need not only be counted in terms of number of women in decision-making, but also the number of gender sensitive men in such structures as men become part of the mobilising force.

Measuring change

Assuming that women have been able to access decision-making in significant numbers and that the barriers to their effective participation start to give way, the question then becomes **what difference this makes** and **how this difference can be measured**.

As illustrated in figure three, the transformation in gender relations can be measured in three areas:

- Personal change (for women and men).
- Institutional change and the
- Extent to which gender is integrated into key tools of government including laws (or in the case of local government by-laws), policies and services. This can in turn be divided into women-specific laws, policies and services (for example an income generating project specifically targeted at

36. Conflict Research Consortium (1998), University of Colorado, USA.

women) and the extent to which gender is mainstreamed in *all* areas; for example to what extent women and men will benefit equally from a new housing project.

Women in Development (WID) vs. Gender and Development (GAD)

The Women in Development (WID) policy framework that emerged in the mid 1970's sought to add on women specific projects to existing activities. Failing to address the systemic causes of gender inequalities, this approach tended to view women as passive agents of development assistance, rather than as active agents of transforming their own economic, social, political and cultural realities.

The Gender and Development (GAD) Framework emerged in response to these flaws. It recognises that improving the status of women is not a separate, isolated issue but needs to be addressed by taking into account the status of both men and women, their different life courses and the fact that equal treatment will not necessarily produce equal outcomes.

Practical and strategic gender needs

Closely linked to the difference between the WID and GAD is the difference between practical and strategic gender needs. Practical needs do not challenge the gender division of labour or women's subordinate position in society, although rising out of them. **Practical gender needs** are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context.[37]

Thus, for example, when poor women are given the option of loans and opt for sewing machines rather than purchasing land and starting an agro business, this option satisfies an immediate practical need to generate income within a safe space. But it does not challenge the status quo or address the strategic need of women to share control over economic resources that have traditionally been in the hands of men, and upon which greater wealth creation is based.

Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society. Strategic gender needs vary according to specific contexts. They relate to gender division of labour, power and control and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies. Meeting strategic gender needs helps women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position.[38]

The distinction between practical and strategic is particularly significant al local level. When confronting constraints on the ground, the path of least resistance is often to opt for practical rather than strategic solutions. Some practical solutions can become a stepping stone to strategic ends. For example rural electrification can both ease the immediate burdens faced by women in the home, such as cooking, as well as open the possibilities of entrepreneurial activities. The issue is not to discourage practical solutions but to have a long term vision about the strategic objectives to be achieved such as women gaining access to productive resources.

Gender mainstreaming

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines gender mainstreaming as: "Taking account of gender equity concerns in all policy, programme, administrative and financial activities, and in organisational procedures, thereby contributing

37. Moser, C. (1993) "Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training." Routledge, London and New York.

38. Ibid.

to a profound organisational transformation." The UNDP explains this as follows:

> Women and men have different positions, roles, and responsibilities, but also different asset bases and opportunities at home and in society. Gender analysis brings to light many of the gaps and challenges, as well as the strategies for possible action. Even the achievement of a single target, "girls education" depends on access to water and fuel, transport and sanitation facilities, income, legal rights and traditions. Girls education is hampered by many competing priorities. And yet, investing in poor women is the right thing to do and also the smart thing to do because educated girls and empowered women are untapped resources for economic growth and key change agents for poverty reduction.[39]

Gender mainstreaming involves both internal transformation (where women and men are located, and in what roles within institutions) as well as the integration of gender considerations into key tools of governance: laws, policies and service delivery. At the implementation level, gender mainstreaming involves taking gender into account in design, training and capacity building, monitoring and evaluation as well as resource allocations for programmes and projects.

Box four: Yardsticks for measuring the impact of women in politics

Against this background, the following are some of the key yardsticks used for measuring the impact of women's representation and participation in decision-making at the local level in Southern Africa:

Personal transformation

- ✓ The attitudes and confidence levels of women in mainstream positions so that women feel themselves to be sufficiently empowered to champion gender causes even within these often hostile and patriarchal structures.
- ✓ The extent to which the attitudes of male decision-makers begin to change and they start to take up gender issues.
- ✓ The extent to which gender stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of male and female decision-makers begin to change and that these roles and responsibilities are naturally inter-changed.

Institutional transformation

- ✓ Infrastructure changes, such as the provision of adequate toilets and facilities for the increased number of women who may have recently accessed these previously "men only" clubs.
- ✓ Creation of a more family friendly work environment; dates of recesses, sitting hours and child-care facilities.
- ✓ Changes in the style of debate and discourse.
- ✓ The extent to which women have influence within the institution vertically (management and leadership roles within the institution) and horizontally (are spread across the different areas of work).
- ✓ Whether or not there are structures in place for supporting women-decision makers and if capacity building is tailored to their needs.
- ✓ Whether gender training is incorporated into capacity building for all councillors.
- ✓ To what extent gender is mainstreamed into performance agreements and institutional culture.

39. United Nations Development Programme (2003) "What does it take to mainstream gender' discussion paper

Transformation of key tools of government

- ✓ Whether there is a gender policy and or strategy in place at national level for local government, and the extent to which this has been adopted and adapted by individual councils.
- ✓ The existence of a Gender Management System (GMS) including structures and gender disaggregated data with which to integrate gender considerations into planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.
- ✓ The extent to which there are women specific programmes in place, and to what extent these address practical and or strategic needs.
- ✓ The extent to which gender considerations are built into the delivery of all services, and the extent to which this addresses practical and or strategic needs.

It is important to underscore that the areas of transformation measured in the study are limited to the personal, institutional and service delivery changes experienced or actions taken by political decision-makers at local level.

Government actions at whatever level do not guarantee fundamental changes in the way people think, act and conduct themselves. However, they can be a powerful force for change. Thus, for example, government insistence on the equal representation of women on water and sanitation committees does not mean that women on those committees wake up and find themselves as equals in their homes. But it does send out a powerful message that women have the right to have a say in every day decisions that affect their lives. Over time, perhaps even over generations, such messages chip away at the status quo and open the door to social change.

Scope

At the Coalface, Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa focuses on gender and local government in the 14 countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Table four: Case study countries

Country	Last election	% women local govt	Electoral system at local level	Quota	Comments
Lesotho	2005	58%	First past the post (FPTP)	Legislated 30%	30% quota that led to considerable resistance in the first local government elections held in 2005. Now highest proportion of women in local government in SADC
Namibia	2004	42%	Proportional representation	Legislated 30%	Combination of legislated quota and party "zebra" system. Has been in existence for some time.
South Africa	2006	40%	Mixed	Not legislated. ANC voluntary quota of 50%	PR and ward system. ANC voluntary quota. Increase in women ward councillors. Pressure for legislated quota.
Mauritius	2005	6.4%	First past the post (FPTP)	None	Control country reflective of many countries in the study: Economically and politically progressive; socially conservative. FPTP electoral system.

Source: Gender Links 2007

To ensure depth as well as breadth in the study, GL selected four countries in which to undertake primary research that demonstrate unique approaches to increasing women's representation at the local level (South Africa, Namibia and Lesotho) as well as one, for comparisons sake, that has a low level of women's representation at the local level (Mauritius). The four countries are also geographically, politically and culturally diverse. Table four summarises the key features of the four countries chosen. These are discussed in greater detail in the sections that follow.

Lesotho

A Constitutional monarchy, Lesotho is the only country in the world to be completely surrounded by another - South Africa. With a population of 1.8 million spread over 30 335 square km of some of the region's most mountainous and rugged terrain, Lesotho's economy is intimately linked to that of its giant neighbour.

The "mountain kingdom" has survived as a labour reservoir for the mining industry of South Africa. Some 35 percent of active male wage earners live in South African mines. Lesotho's main export is water from its verdant highlands to the thirsty industries of South Africa's Gauteng province.



Approximately 86 percent of the resident population is engaged in subsistence agriculture. With a GDP per capita of $2,240 per annum, Lesotho is ranked by the UNDP as one of the poorest countries in the world.

Lesotho has one dominant ethnic group, the Sotho, and Sotho is the most widely spoken language although English is the official language.

At independence from Britain in 1966, Lesotho adopted a multiparty system of government but abandoned this from 1970 to 1993 when the country vacillated between military and civilian dictatorships. Multiparty democracy returned in 1993 as part of the wave of democratisation that swept the continent. The Basutholand Congress Party (BCP) won all the seats in the 65-member National Assembly in elections based on the FPTP system.

The 1998 Elections were the first to be managed by a specially set-up non-partisan Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). Between 1993 and 1998 the ruling BCP had split into two factions; the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) led by the Prime Minister and a splinter group that retained the BCP name and became the official opposition in parliament.

At the polls, the newly formed LCD won all but one of the 80 constituencies even though it only got 60 percent of the vote. Both the Basotho National Party (BNP) and the BCP rejected the vote as rigged and the ensuing tensions led to the 1998 political riots. SADC intervened and established an interim body, the Independent Political Authority, to prepare for subsequent general elections held on May 25, 2002.

To overcome some of the inherent weaknesses of the FPTP system, Lesotho opted for a Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR) system in these elections. The LCD again won 79 of the 80 constituency seats and the Lesotho Peoples Congress (LPC) won only one seat. The LPC and the other eight political parties were allocated the 40 PR seats according to the overall percentage that each had polled. The result is that the ruling party has a 65 percent majority in the National Assembly. The next elections were due to take place at the time of writing this book in February 2007.

The upper house or Senate is not an elected body. It comprises 33 members of whom 22 are principle chiefs and 11 are nominated by the King acting on the advice of the Council of State.

Lesotho's Constitution (Section 106.1) mandates parliament to establish local authorities "to enable urban and rural communities to determine their affairs and to develop themselves." The Constitution empowers parliament to determine the functions of local authorities. The two main pieces of legislation governing local government are:

- The Local Government Act No 6 1997.
- Local Government Elections Act 1998.

Lesotho is divided into ten administrative districts: Berea, Butha Buthe, Leribe, Mafeteng, Maseru, Mohale's Hoek, Mokhotlong; Qachas Nek; Quthing and Thaba Tseka. There are 128 community councils; ten district councils and a municipal council, the capital, Maseru. The first local government elections took place in April 2005.

Lesotho's migrant labour system results in the phenomenon of men being away from home for long periods of time, leaving women nominally as heads of homes. According to Lesotho's Gender and Development Policy: "Although Basotho women have a relatively high literacy rate and many of them are *de facto* heads of households, these do not open avenues of power, leadership and decision-making for them in all spheres of life including politics."[40]

Table five: Women in politics in Lesotho

Level of government	Members/ councillors	No. of women	% women
Cabinet	18	5	28%
Senate (Upper house)	33	12	36%
National Assembly (lower house)	120	14	11.7%
Local Authority	1290	748	58%

Source: Gender Links 2007

Table five shows that women are least well represented in the National Assembly (11.7 percent). While the reform of the electoral system to a mixed one helped to placate the opposition it apparently did not create more opportunities for women's participation, despite the fact that globally women are better represented in countries with PR than in those with FPTP systems (see Chapter three).

However, in the two areas of Lesotho politics in which those who serve are appointed to office (cabinet and the senate) the country has achieved or is close to achieving the 30 percent target originally set by SADC, underscoring some level of political commitment to getting the gender balance right.

40. Gender and Development Policy (2003), Government of Lesotho. P.16

What is most interesting about Lesotho for the purposes of this research *is that it is the only country in the SADC region with a FPTP electoral system to have adopted a legislated quota for increasing women's representation in politics at the local level*. Despite a High Court challenge, the elections proceeded. Surprisingly, in addition to the 30 percent women who got in through the quota, a further 28 percent made it on their own steam in seats contested by women and men, or through subsequent bi-elections bringing the total proportion of women councillors to 58 percent.

This is the highest proportion of women in any area of political decision making in SADC, and makes Lesotho the only SADC country to have *exceeded* the parity target set by Heads of State in 2005 (albeit it in only one area of decision-making). Lesotho therefore provides an excellent case study of the application of quotas in a FPTP system; as well as the achievement not just of a "critical mass", but of a majority of women in decision- making in a cultural context that is still largely hostile to their participation.

Namibia

Namibia is located in south-western Africa. It borders Angola to the north, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

The country's two million people straddle a large land area of 825 418 sq km. Most of this is dry or desert terrain interspersed with rich mineral deposits such as diamonds and uranium. Because mining is not a big creator of employment, Namibia has a high level of unemployment despite its relatively high GDP per capita income of $ 7,418 per annum.

Approximately 35 percent of the population live in urban areas and 65 percent in rural areas. English is the official language of Namibia. Oshivambo is



spoken in 48 percent of households, Nama/ Damara and Afrikaans in 11 percent, Rukwangali in ten percent and Otjihero in eight percent of households.

South Africa illegally occupied Namibia, nominally a UN territory, as an extension of its apartheid policies. Like Zimbabwe, the struggle in Namibia took the form of a liberation war, with a transition eventually mediated by the UN. Namibia obtained independence on March 21 1990 with a progressive Constitution and a multiparty system. It has since held regular presidential, national, regional and local elections. The most recent elections, covering all three levels of government, took place in 2004.

The parliament of Namibia consists of two houses: the National Assembly (NA) which has 72 elected seats and the National Council (NC) which consists of 26 members, two from each of the country's 13 regions.

Elections for the National Assembly are run on a simple Proportional Representation (PR) system. In the latest elections that took place in November 2004 Swapo Party won 76 percent of the seats in the National Assembly, with the other seats split

between six opposition parties: the Congress of Democrats (COD) Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA); United Democratic Front (UDF) National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO); Monitor Action Group (MAG) and the Republican Party.

Chapter 12 of the Constitution provides for regional and local government. Article 102 (1) empowers parliament to decide on the form of these. The main legislation that has been passed is:

- The Local Authorities Act 1992.
- Regional Council Act 1992.
- Decentralisation Enabling Act 2000.
- Trust Fund for Regional Development and Equity Provisions Act 2000.

Each region is run by a regional council whose members are elected on a constituency-based or First Past the Post (FPTP) system. The political head of the region is a governor, elected by the councillors from among themselves.

Since independence, Namibia has been reforming its system of local government to devolve more responsibility to local level. The Decentralisation Policy (March 1998) states that: "the political leadership of Namibia has chosen the path of decentralisation to enhance and guarantee democratic participation of people at lower/grass roots levels in order to achieve sustainable democratic development."

There is no lower or upper tier in local government. The 48 municipal, town and village councils are autonomous from the regional councils. Local government elections are held entirely on a PR basis. National, regional and local elections take place at the same time.

As in other liberation struggle countries, Namibian women recognised early the triple oppression of race, class and gender, but the latter had to be placed on the backburner in the struggle for liberation from South African occupation. The struggle opened a space for consciousness concerning women's oppression.

Women's organisations had an important impact on the drafting of the Constitution, crafted over a five-month period from November 1989 to March 1990. The fact that the UN facilitated the process also influenced gender provisions in the Constitution.

The Namibian Constitution, which outlaws discrimination based on sex and makes provision for affirmative action, provided the cornerstone for future legislative reform. Article 144 of the Constitution states: "The general rules of international agreements binding upon Namibia form part of the law of Namibia." Thus when Namibia ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1992 this automatically became law. Namibia is the only country in Southern Africa where this is the case.

Table six: Women in politics in Namibia

Level of government	Members/ councillors	No. of women	% women
Cabinet	26	6	23%
National Assembly	78	21	27%
National Council	26	7	27%
Regional Council	107	12	11%
Local Authority	323	135	42%

Source: Gender Links 2007

As reflected in Table six, Namibia has an uneven record with regard to achieving at least one third women in political decision-making. The PR system at national level is conducive to greater women's participation, but as this has not been accompanied by either a voluntary or a legislated quota, Namibia has fallen short of achieving the 30 percent mark on this front.

Typical of FPTP systems that are not accompanied by any quota, the representation of women is lowest at the Regional Council level.

However, until Lesotho trumped Namibia, this is the country in the region that consistently had the highest level of women's representation at local level (currently 42 percent) thanks to the combination of the PR system and a legislated quota.

Like Lesotho, one of the key questions in Namibia, and in the region generally, is why the country has been willing to take bold "special measures" for increasing women's representation at the local but not the national level. The fact that there has been a substantial proportion of women at this level for some time also makes Namibia a valuable case study for testing what difference women make.

As the only country in the region with a purely PR system at local level (where it is often argued that this system is not suitable, because citizens need to be able to hold individuals, not just parties accountable) Namibia is also an interesting test case for how electoral systems at this level either help or hinder women's effective participation.

South Africa

With a population of nearly 45 million people occupying a land mass of 1,2 million square kilometres, South Africa is the largest and most complex country in the region. The country's epic journey from legalised racial segregation to the first democratically elected government in 1994 and the adoption in 1996 of one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world is well known.



Over the last decade, South Africa has grappled with overcoming the legacies of apartheid on a multitude of fronts. Rich in natural resources and one the best developed countries in Africa, South Africa is often described as having two economies: a first world economy for whites and a few elite blacks and a third world economy in which the majority black population predominates. In this economy, unemployment, poverty and crime run high; services are poor and HIV and AIDS is rampant. With five million people living with HIV and AIDS (more than half of whom are women) South Africa is one of the countries worst affected by the pandemic in the world.

South Africa has a 400 seat National Assembly, to which members are elected on a PR basis. In the last elections held in August 2004, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) garnered 62 percent of the vote with the main balance split between six opposition parties: the Democratic Alliance (DA),

Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Independent Democrats (ID), Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), United Democratic Movement (UDM) and African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP).

The country is divided into nine provinces, led by premiers. The nine provincial legislatures elect representatives to a 90 member National Council of Provinces (NCOP), the upper house in parliament.

Local government is one of the three spheres of government established by Chapter three of South Africa's Constitution ("The Principles of Co-operative Government"). This means that national, provincial and local government do not exist in a hierarchical relationship as in the past, but that each sphere has its own powers and functions that may overlap, but that are also unique to that sphere.

Since the advent of democracy, South Africa has been reforming its local government system by abolishing the 843 racially demarcated local authorities and creating 284 new local authority areas.

The Constitution of South Africa sets out the objectives and functions of local government. These include to: provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; promote social and economic development; promote a safe and healthy environment; encourage the involvement of communities and promote social and economic development. [41]

A White Paper on Local Government in 1998 advanced the concept of "developmental local government" and determined that councils should pursue integrated development planning with the active involvement of communities.

41. Constitution of South Africa (1996) clause 151-160.

New local government legislation that has been enacted to facilitate the transformation process includes:

- The Municipal Structures Act 1998.
- The Municipal Demarcation Act 1999.
- The Municipal Systems Act 2000.
- The Municipal Finance Management Act 2003.
- The Intergovernmental Framework Act 2003.

Local elections have now been held three times: in 1995; 2000 and 2006 on a mixed PR/ FPTP basis. Elections to metropolitan and local councils are split evenly between those elected under PR and those representing districts. For district council elections this is a 60:40 split (see Chapter three).

Women's activism in South Africa dates back to the anti-pass law struggles of the 1950s, especially the famed women's march on 9 August 1956 to present a petition to the white government, today celebrated in South Africa as Women's Day.

While women tended to put gender concerns second to national liberation, once the path cleared for a new order, gender came to the fore. The Women's National Coalition (WNC), formed in 1991 with over ninety groups and organisations gained legitimacy and a high profile by launching a countrywide participatory research project to prepare a "Women's Charter" handed to those negotiating the ending of apartheid.

Important immediate gains included the provision for each party to have at least one in three women representatives in the highest decision-making body of the negotiations; a Multiparty Gender Advisory Committee as a working group of the negotiations and a theme committee on gender during the transition.

Britton comments that "in the span of four years, from 1991 to the 1994 elections, the women of

Table seven: Women in politics in South Africa

Level of government	Members/ councillors	No. of women	% women
Cabinet	30	13	43%
Lower house	400	131	33%
Upper house	54	18	33%
Local Authority	9126	3620	40%

Source: Gender Links 2007

South Africa moved from the silent backbone of the nation to a force of considerable political power and public influence.[42]

The influence has been especially felt within the ANC. While the party has shied away from legislated quotas, it has been at the forefront of promoting women's participation where it has the influence to do so. Table seven shows that the area in which women are best represented in South Africa is in cabinet, where ministers are appointed by the President. South Africa ranks among the global top five in the executive category.

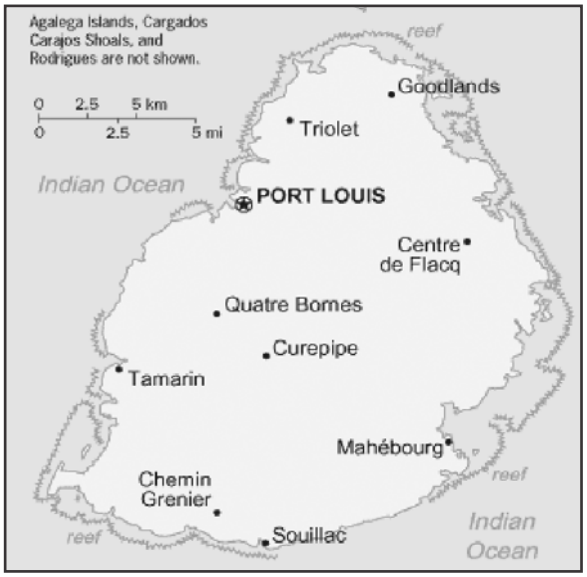
The ANC has adopted a voluntary 30 percent quota for women in all three provincial and parliamentary elections since 1994 and in local government in 1995 and 1999. While the quota, used in combination with the PR system at provincial and national level, ensured over 30 percent women in these spheres of politics, local government lagged behind because women struggled to get in on the ward seats in local government (see Chapter three).

What makes South Africa of particular interest for this study - apart from its progressive vision of local government - is the fact that for the 2006 elections the ANC adopted a 50 percent quota for women in local government. Furthermore, it made a particular effort to ensure that women were elected on their own merit in ward seats, narrowing the gender gap between the PR and ward seats and increasing the overall representation of women in local government from 29 percent in 2000 to 40 percent in 2006.

42. Britton,H., "Coalition Building, Election Rules, and Party Politics: South African Women's Path to Parliament", article forthcoming in Africa Today, p6.

Mauritius

Situated in the Indian Ocean off the south east coast of Africa Mauritius is unique in Southern Africa for its ethnic mix (people of Indian, French, Chinese and mixed descent); its well established and relatively stable democracy and the major economic strides that have earned the island the title of Africa's "little tiger." With 1.2 million people in a space of 2040 square kilometres Mauritius is the most densely populated of the countries studied. But with a GDP per capita of $12,027 it enjoys a middle income status.



Rapid economic strides as a result of the investment of proceeds from its sugar industry in creating an industrial base through economic liberalisation that led to Export Processing Growth witnessed the island achieve full employment, and the entry of many women into the labour force. While this growth has since slowed down as Export Processing Zone (EPZ) companies chase cheaper labour in countries like Madagascar, Mauritius has sought to climb the economic ladder by going into lower volume, higher value exports like financial services and informatics. The country has high levels of education and health care and is often held up as a model of good governance.

The unicameral National Assembly has 70 members. These are elected from 23 member constituencies and one two member constituency on the island of Rodrigues on a FPTP or constituency basis. Eight assembly seats are apportioned on the basis of "best losers" among the non-elected candidates on the basis of their ethno-religious affiliation and proportionately to the major political parties.

The most recent National Assembly elections took place in July 2005. The Social Alliance (AS) headed by former Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam defeated the coalition of the Militant Mauritian Movement (MMM) and the Militant Socialist Movement (MSM) led by Paul Berenger.

The island has nine geographical districts. Local government comprises five municipal councils in the urban areas, and four district councils with a lower tier of 124 village councils in the rural areas.

Local Authorities in Mauritius are guided by the Local Government Act 1989. Only a few sections of the Local Government Act 2003 have been proclaimed. Both Local Government Acts 1989 and 2003 are silent on gender issues. In his foreword to the Local Government Directory 2006, James Burty David, Minister of Local Government says:

> During meetings held with municipal and village councillors, I had the opportunity of putting forward the philosophy and the vision of government regarding the management of Local Authorities. In this context, a new local Government Act is being prepared, defining the parameters for a new approach which reflects the motto of government "Putting People First" and its willingness to initiate a process for change at various levels of our society.

Minister of Women Rights, Child Protection and Family Welfare Indira Seebun, points out that "Putting People First" also means giving women their due: "there must be at least 30 percent women at the level of local government."

Despite the fact that women constitute over half of those who go to university and are prominent in all the professions, women's political participation (in all areas) is among the lowest in Mauritius. The Mauritius White Paper on "Women in Development" March 1995 stated that: "The position regarding women's fundamental rights, as a public person, citizenship rights and basic human rights is still inequitable. The issue is now not women's right to vote but the opportunity of voting for women rather just voting men to power. Because equal right to vote has not guaranteed women equal access to power."

This report suggested that political parties adopt quotas for women candidates and highlighted the need for a more female-friendly code of conduct in parliament. The National Gender Action Plan of 2000 further recommended that legal reforms be introduced to ensure that political parties reserve at least 30 percent of seats for women in national, municipal and village council elections.

Table eight: Women in politics in Mauritius

Level of government	Members/ councillors	No. of women	% women
Cabinet	20	2	10%
Senate (upper house)	N/A		
National Assembly (lower house)	70	12	17%
Local Authority	1614	103	6.4%

Source: Gender Links 2007

However, the government rejected proposals for amending the electoral system and adopting a quota for women at national level (see Chapter three). Despite 2005 being both an election year and the deadline set by SADC for achieving 30 percent representation of women in political decision-making, Mauritius did little to make good its commitment.

As shown in Table eight, in cabinet, where ministers are appointed by the Prime Minister, Mauritius has only two women ministers (ten percent). Thanks to intensive lobbying by civil society organisations, notably MWO-GEMSA (Media Watch Organisation-Gender and Media Southern Africa Network) which ensured high level media visibility for the issue of women's low representation in the run up to the 2005 elections, women's representation in the national assembly increased from 5.6 percent to 17 percent in the 2005 elections.

At local level representation of women is a paltry 6.4 percent; the second lowest in the region (after Angola). For the purposes of this study, Mauritius provided a control to the three countries with high levels of women's representation. The island typifies the many countries in the region that have a FPTP system and have not taken any special measures to increase women's participation (other examples are Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe). Mauritius is also an example of a country in the region where women's representation at local level is even lower than at national level.

This "democratic deficit" as Judge Albie Sachs referred to the gender gap in Mauritian politics (see Chapter three) provides interesting insight into how even the most politically progressive countries in the region need to be brought to book over the lac k of commitment to implementing regional decisions; especially at the local level.



James Burty David, Minister of Local Government, joins a march against gender violence in Mauritius

Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

Methodology

Having selected the case study countries, GL sought to establish a reasonable sample for undertaking the research and the methods by which information would be gathered and analysed.

Sample

As a guideline, researchers attempted to interview ten percent of councillors in the country with the smallest number of councillors (Namibia), five percent in countries with medium numbers (Mauritius and Lesotho), and three percent in the country with the largest number of councillors (South Africa).

Table nine: Research sample

Country	Total local authorities	Local authorities covered	Total councillors	Total councillors interviewed	% Total
Lesotho	139	24	1290	81	6%
Mauritius	9	9	1614	80	5%
Namibia	49	13	323	41	13%
South Africa	283	27	9126	274	3%
Total	480	69	12 353	476	4%

Source: Gender Links 2007

Table nine shows the actual sample size for each country, both in terms of number of authorities and number of councillors. It shows that the research met or exceeded the targets with regard to the proportion of councillors interviewed in each country (six percent in Lesotho; five percent in Mauritius; 13 percent in Namibia and three percent in South Africa.)

Altogether, the researchers interviewed 478 councillors; or four percent of the total number of councillors in the four countries, with the majority of these (276) from South Africa that is also considerably bigger than the other three countries. They also covered 69 out of the 480 local authorities in the four countries (a total of 14 percent).

As illustrated in Annex A that gives a detailed breakdown of the areas visited and the type of local authority (district, municipal, village/ community) the research covered a broad geographical spread and a close to even balance between the three main types of local structures, which also translates into a good balance between urban and rural. In South Africa, researchers covered all nine provinces and in Mauritius all nine districts; in Lesotho seven out of the ten administrative districts and in Namibia eight out of 13 regions. Annex B gives a full list of those interviewed, broken down according to gender and party affiliation.

Gender considerations

Because the study is about women in local government researchers aimed to interview at least two-thirds women and one third men. The inclusion of men in the sample was important to understand the impact that women have on men in local government structures and to understand how they view changes, if any, that are taking place as a result of the inclusion of women in this sphere of government.

Table ten: Gender breakdown of research sample

Country	Number of women interviewed	Number of men interviewed	Total councillors interviewed	% women	% men
Lesotho	46	35	81	57%	43%
Mauritius	52	28	80	65%	35%
Namibia	26	15	41	63%	37%
South Africa	186	90	276	67%	33%
Total	310	168	478	65%	35%

Source: Gender Links 2007

Table ten summarises the gender breakdown of the interviews conducted for the research. In total the researchers administered questionnaires to 310 women councillors (65 percent of the total) and 168 male councillors (35 percent of the total). This split was achieved in most of the countries except in Lesotho where researchers interviewed more men (43 percent) due to a perceived need to obtain more views from men, given that women are in the majority in local authorities in this country. Of the 21 researchers involved in this research 18 were women and three men.

Political parties

Researchers also had to ensure the inclusion of all main political parties as far as possible in accordance with the percentage of seats held by the ruling and opposition parties in local government in each country.

Table 11: Political party breakdown of research sample

Country	% ruling party in local gvt	% ruling party interviewed	% Non ruling party and Independents in local gvt	% Non ruling party and Independents Interviewed
Lesotho	76%	72%	24%	28%
Mauritius		41%		59%
Namibia	63%	68%	37%	32%
South Africa	69%	73%	31%	27%
Total	69%	67%	31%	33%

Source: Gender Links 2007

Table 11 shows that on average the researchers interviewed 67 percent ruling party and 33 percent non-ruling parties and independents, correlating closely to the actual breakdown of ruling party (69 percent) and opposition (31 percent) at local level in all countries except Mauritius. In Mauritius the ruling party occupies 97 percent of the seats in municipal councils but in village councils most of the candidates stand as independents because they are well known in their villages. As village councillors make up the majority of all councillors (1488 of the total of 1614) in Mauritius the majority of councillors interviewed at village level were indepedent candidates.

How the research was conducted

The research made use of the following techniques:

Structured one-on-one questionnaires

Researchers administered the one-on-one questionnaire at **Annex C** to councillors in each of the localities according to the sample. These questionnaires provided the quantitative findings of this research which are interspersed throughout the text in shaded boxes with the graphs and commentary entitled "what the councillors said."

Semi-structured interviews

To obtain greater insight and depth, researchers identified councillors to profile in the following categories:

- Women councillors who serve to highlight the impact of the electoral system on getting elected.
- Women councillors who illustrate the obstacles to effective participation at local level.
- Women councillors who illustrate the different interests and sensitivities of women at local level and how they make a difference.
- Male councillors who illustrate resistance to women's participation at local level.
- Male councillors who serve to highlight changing attitudes towards gender equality at local level.

The outcomes from these interviews are included in the book in the quotes, anecdotes, boxes and case studies that give depth, texture and insight into the quantitative findings.

Further semi-structured interviews were conducted with ministries of local government and of women's affairs; key party functionaries for the ruling party and main opposition parties; electoral authorities and experts. A list of officials and experts interviewed can be found at **Annex D**.



Researchers at work in Mauritius

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Focus groups

As far as possible, researchers sought to conduct focus groups in each of the localities researched with a minimum of three people from the following groups:

- Civil society groups (see **Annex E** for a list of organisations that participated in focus groups).
- Male constituents.
- Women constituents.

Table 12: Summary table of focus groups

Country	Localities	Type of focus group			No women	No men	Total participants
		Civil society	Female constituents	Male constituents			
Lesotho	14	7	10	11	53	52	105
Mauritius	5	5	5	5	27	25	52
Namibia	8	4	11	8	68	51	119
South Africa	15	12	8	6	111	51	162
Total	42	28	34	30	259	179	438

Source: Gender Links 2007

Table 12 shows that the researchers conducted 92 focus groups in 42 localities spread across the four countries. A total of 438 people took part in the focus groups, 59 percent women and 41 percent men. The focus groups reflected on similar questions to those put to the councillors, but included discussion on the particular challenges faced in the localities and perceptions of how male and female councillors in the specific areas are conducting their work. The focus groups thus served to amplify and verify the responses provided by the councillors. Separating the participants into the three different groups also served to ensure that all parties (and especially women at local level) could express their views freely.

Council meeting observations

To establish how women participate in local government and whether this participation is effective or not researchers observed 41 council meetings (full sittings of councils) split between the three different types of local government (municipal, town, village/community - see Table 13).

Table 13: Summary of council meetings observed

Country	Municipal	District	Local/town/ village/community	Total
Lesotho		4	12	16
Mauritius	2	2		4
Namibia	2		4	6
South Africa	4	3	8	15
Total	8	9	24	41

Source: Gender Links 2007

A detailed list of meetings observed can be found at **Annex F.** Researchers made notes and observations at each of these meetings regarding the gender dynamics underpinning the kinds of issues raised; who raised them; how they were debated; how they were resolved and what conclusions can be drawn regarding women's participation in such structures.

In Namibia, South Africa and Mauritius, researchers kept detailed quantitative records of interventions by women and men in 11 council meetings with different proportions of women and men; some chaired by women, others by men etc. to assess the extent to which women participate in different scenarios.

In Lesotho, where there are a majority of women in most councils, researchers piloted the use of a UNDP tool to probe the extent to which women actually make decisions as opposed to making contributions (see Table 14.) The results were analysed according to the composition, leadership and gender dynamics of the different meetings observed; as well as the kinds of issues raised.

Table 14: Assessing women's influence in decision-making

	No say	Express an opinion	Participate in a group discussion	Make a decision, subject to review	Veto a decision made by others	Final authority over decisions
Level of interaction						
Example						

Source: UNDP 1990

Case studies

Each researcher also identified case studies in their research localities of ways in which the presence of women makes a difference (or fails to make a difference) with regard to how gender is integrated into the daily work of the Council; helps to inform priorities and shape agendas. For the case studies in the study, GL also drew extensively on its first hand experience of developing and implementing pilot projects for main-streaming gender in local government with the City of Johannesburg and municipalities of Msunduzi and eThekwini.

Limitations of the study

Other than the budgetary constraints that limited the number of countries in which GL could undertake primary research, the limited research to date on gender and local government meant that many of the research tools were being piloted for the first time.

With hindsight, there are adaptations that would have been made to the questionnaire and to the tools used to monitor council meetings. A simple quantitative questionnaire would also have been administered to individuals in the focus groups before the discussion, to assist in assessing changing

attitudes and opinions among citizens. The value of such research is in the lessons learned that can be used to improve future research and also to design self-monitoring tools for the sector as part of the follow up envisaged for this study.

A general limitation of any kind of qualitative research is the lack of "scientific measurement". By their very nature, attitudes and relationships do not lend themselves easily to quantifiable measures. They occur within dynamic and complex environments and are impacted upon by factors that cannot be controlled or held constant while other measurement occurs. However, the strength of this research is that the experiences of those being "researched" are vividly brought to life in the pages that follow.



Karolina Pieters with her constituents

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna



Tsepo Molefe and Mateboho Tsepane, Litjotjela, Lesotho

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

A foot in the door

Accessing local government

"There is a close correlation between electoral system and women representation. Studies have shown that the First Past the Post persistently produce less women in Parliament than the Proportional Representation (PR) system or the mixed system FPTP accompanied with a good dose of PR."

Dr Navin Ramgoolam, Prime Minister, Mauritius.



You imagine people who challenge the State in the High Court to be affluent, urban and well known. Yet to find Tsepo Molefe, the man who made history by challenging Lesotho's legislated 30 percent quota for women in local government takes a two hour drive out of the capital city Maseru, in among the majestic peaks of Leribe and down country lanes that disappear into potholes too large to navigate before you get to his home in Litjotjela.

It says something about grassroots democracy in Lesotho that the person who helps you find this rural farmer (also a renowned medicine man) is Mateboho Tsepane - the very woman who won the council seat for the area after the High Court upheld the law reserving one third of the constituencies in Lesotho for women only in the country's first local government elections in 2005. As Molefe emerges from his hut Tsepane greets him politely but warmly and then excuses herself so as not to influence the interview.

Molefe might not be a man of much formal education, but he is an informed citizen. Speaking in Sotho, he said that he felt unhappy about the judgement "because I feel that the court did not uphold my rights. I agreed with the principle (of encouraging women's participation in politics) but not with the approach. It is unfair to deny men the right to stand for elections in any constituency. Women and men should have equal opportunities to stand against each other and they should compete."



Tsepo Molefe

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Are there disadvantages that women face that mean that the playing field is not level? "Maybe there are disadvantages, but there are other ways of addressing these without infringing on the rights of other candidates," he reasons. "For example the government needs to come and explain to the people why it is important for women to participate. There was no consultation. We were just told: it has to be done."

Matau Futho-Letsatsi, Director in the Ministry of Gender that conducted an awareness campaign on the SADC target of 30 percent women in decision making by 2005 before the local elections said that her ministry criss-crossed the country explaining the reservation of one third of all constituencies for women on a rotational basis for three elections, after which the law will be reviewed. She pointed to the fact that another 28 percent women won in the two thirds constituencies open to men and women as a signal that women in Lesotho are ready and willing to stand for political office. This brings the total proportion of women in local government in Lesotho to 58 percent (the highest proportion of women in any area of politics in Southern Africa).

Molefe, on the other hand, sees the success of women in the open seats as evidence that women should not get any special favours. He pointed to the inconsistency that while the government championed the quota for women at local level it has been silent on the national elections being prepared for at the time of writing this book: "If they are serious, why do they discriminate between national and local elections?" he asked.

Molefe had wanted to stand, he said, because members of the community put pressure on him to do so as "they felt I could help with the development of this area." He is proud of the fact that these same community members raised the money for his court case and supported him through the High

Court challenge. He got no support from NGOs even though many expressed similar disquiet about the quota in the run up to the elections.

While not directly criticising Tsepane, who is now deputy chair of the Litjotjela Community Council, Molefe expressed disappointment at the performance of the council, in which there are six women and five men. Gender, he says, is a subsidiary issue: "the main problem is favouritism. Matters are not settled according to the law but on the basis of one's relationship to the party." Molefe had planned to stand as an independent candidate. He remains convinced that the reason the court did not rule in his favour is that he is not a supporter of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD).

Members of the community interviewed during the focus groups for this research see things differently. They say that Molefe is a substantial land holder in the area, and wanted to get onto the council so as to influence land distribution policies. One of the major changes that has come about since the local elections is that the councils, not the chiefs, now have control over who gets what land (see also Chapter eight). In the interview, Molefe expressed "great disappointment that the powers of the local chiefs to reallocate land have been curtailed. This is against our Sotho tradition. It could lead to instability; to bloodshed."



Mateboho Tsepane

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

A young man in the community, countered that the best thing to have happened since the election of the new council is that the "allocation of land is now transparent."

Tsepane believes that Molefe's views towards the council are tainted by a lingering sour grapes attitude. Pointing to her election by other council members as deputy chair, she says she believes that with or without the quota, "I would have won, because I am hard working and I understand matters of administration. Even without resources we as a council have managed to serve our community."

She cites the building of a bridge, water wells, and distribution of land to those who do not have any as being among the council's early achievements despite "people who could play a constructive role like Molefe not being forthcoming. They cooperate only when they want to."

Tsepane adds that the fact that she was elected to a leadership position in the council as a sign of changing attitudes. "In the old days women and men believed that only men, as heads of household, could be leaders." According to a participant in the male focus group, "at first men did not understand. But as they see women performing well in positions of power they will realise that it is okay for women to lead."

A woman participant in the separate women's focus group expressed support for the quota "Because it is time for women to have the opportunity to take part. We like to have women representatives because they are accessible, unlike men. We interact regularly with them, on water, electricity, business opportunities and many other issues."

Apart from a few murmurs of discontent in Molefe's camp, all indications are that Litjotjela has forgotten about hitting the headlines in the High Court drama

that came close to having the entire elections postponed. "The hostility (to quotas) has died a natural death," reflects Rhetabile Pholo, Public relations co-ordinator of Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). "We don't hear about it any more. It was like a cry in the wilderness that dies away."

This chapter concerns the barriers to women accessing decision-making at the local level, and the various "special measures" that have been taken to overcome these barriers. From global to regional to country level, the discussion shows that no matter what the electoral system or the local politics, the inescapable conclusion being reached is that the only way to "fast track" women's entry into politics is through quotas. These might be easier to implement in some situations (like in Namibia that has a Proportional Representation or PR system) than in others (like Lesotho with the First Past the Post or FPTP system that means that men have to be barred from standing in certain constituencies to ensure that one third women get in).

As witnessed even in the constituency that challenged this system in Lesotho quotas do not lead to the kind of backlash that is often predicted. While quotas are not a panacea and should be viewed only as a temporary "jump start" mechanism, the chapter concludes that - based on the evidence and views from the four case study countries- there is no longer any valid reason for any country in SADC not to achieve the minimum 30 and desired 50 percent target for women's representation.



Mateboho Tsepane and women in her constituency

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

What keeps women out?

Local government may seem an obvious place for women because of its closeness to the people and the daily issues of concern to women. However, it is also the level where culture and patriarchy are still deeply rooted and there is a belief that women are not capable and should not occupy public spaces. As illustrated in the experience of the Mayor of Maseru when she ran for office, no matter what your background, education or experience, politics is a hostile terrain for women, especially in local contexts where there tends to be more focus on the personality rather than on the skills or pledges of politicians.

Box five: The hazards of running for office

Mayor of Maseru Malijane Morahanye is not the kind of person to be pushed around. A retired civil servant who worked as a teacher, schools inspector and then for the Ministry of Finance, she knows the ropes in government - a good basis, she believed, for going into politics. The mayor is also well known in her community as a hard working and successful farmer. "It was time to do something different; to use all this experience I had gathered to improve my country," she reflected in an interview.



Mayor of Maseru, Malijane Morahanye
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Standing against two male and two female candidates in one of the constituencies in the elections open to both men and women in Lesotho's 2005 elections, Morahanye counted on her standing as one of her main campaign advantages. "I took my car and criss-crossed the constituency," she recalled.

Yet on many occasions what should have been a clean campaign turned dirty and personal. "People accused me of being a crook, of not being able to lead, of not being good at politics, of having no experience. I found myself hurt and astounded." But Morahanye persisted and won. Nine out of 15 of the councillors in Lesotho's capital city are women. They and the mayor are cited as role models by women in the community.

Women "unsuited" to decision-making

As witnessed in the accusation that the mayor "could not lead", the biological or "woman's nature" school of thought argues that women have been excluded from power because they are not capable of logical and analytical decision-making and their "natural" characteristics are unsuited to public life.

The characteristics commonly associated with women - such as softness, emotion, nurturing and caring - are seen as more suited to the private sphere. The argument runs that the roles of women as mothers, carers of children, the elderly and sick make it impossible for them to be effective in full time politics.

Ironically, these are exactly the kinds of roles that one would imagine that women could use to their electoral advantage, as is starting to be the case in the older western democracies. But in many countries, it is an argument used to effectively bar women from politics. As a man in the Moteng focus group in Lesotho put it: "There are limitations on what a woman can do. It's okay for women to participate, but some duties require a man."

Women "their own worst enemies"

A variant of this argument, expressed by several men interviewed for the study, is that women do not want to be in decision-making and when they are there they do not support each other. As Rama Valayden, Leader of the Mauritian Mouvement Republicain (MMM) and now Minister of Human Rights put it: "Women themselves refuse when they are offered tickets".

The tendency for any oppressed group of persons

to internalise their own oppression is a common phenomenon. As a study on women in Zimbabwe observes, "Ironically, society has made women the custodians of the very cultural values that lead to their oppression. In that respect it is tempting to conclude that politically, socially and culturally society has turned women into their own oppressors as they too tend to see men as better leaders than women."[43]



Thenjiwe Mtintso (centre)
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

It has often been observed that women, who are usually the majority voters, tend to vote for men. This, argues Thenjiwe Mtintso, South Africa's ambassador to Cuba, Chair of GL and a former MP with the African National Congress (ANC) is "mainly because their own lived experiences have conditioned them to be subordinates."

Systemic barriers

A socialisation version of the argument is that women have been brought up to regard politics as alien. Their lives and activities have always directed them away from activities of power. It is also argued that: "Women often face a double day, balancing career and family responsibilities, thus limiting their opportunities for career advancement."[44]

According to this view, it is not simply the case that women lack the will and attributes to participate in decision-making but they are systematically discriminated against by men in authority who refuse to promote them; and by legislation, which limits their opportunities. In support of this male "political gate keeping" theory is a hostile media that hounds or ridicules women who dare to venture into the political sphere.

Such a society, it is argued, is patriarchal. It accords men the dominant role and the status of decision-makers in both the private sphere (home) and public sphere (society). It banishes women to the private sphere of home keeping and limits them to reproductive services in the public sphere. Thus a society can be called democratic and be completely patriarchal.[45]

Electoral systems and political parties

In addition to the social and cultural barriers that inhibit women from going into politics, the type of electoral system, whether or not quotas are applied and attitudes of political parties towards increasing women's representation are key factors.

There is evidence to suggest that the choice of electoral system has a profound effect on whether women get elected or not.[46] The PR system, in which the electorate vote for political parties, has been shown to be far more woman-friendly than the constituency or FPTP system in which voters vote for a specific candidate. Resources and public profile play a critical role in the latter system (see Box six).

43. "Beyond Inequalities, Women in Zimbabwe", SARDC, WIDSA
44. Beckman, P.R. and D'Amico F. (eds) (1994) "Women, Gender and World politics: Perspectives, Policies and Prospects." Westport, Bergin: p.76
45. See also Molyneux, M (1984) "Mobilisation without Emancipation? Critical Social Policy" 10, 4; and Phillips, A (1991) "Engendering Democracy." Oxford, Polity Press.
46. See www.ipu.org; Women's data base.

Box six: Money speaks in constituency elections

In constituency systems like Mauritius and Lesotho, and in the ward seats in South Africa, the area in which women often feel least supported is in the financing of campaigns.

As Mauritius Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, Indira Seebun observes: "Women are economically dependent. Politics costs money in Mauritius. We are like social workers and if we do not have the money how are we going to help others? The other major problem is mobility. Very often these women do not drive and their husbands will not support them. It is difficult to campaign by bus. How will they reach the maximum people by bus?"

Violet Moothia, Chair of the Women's League of the Parti Mauricien Xavier Duval (PMXD) added: "Women have big financial problems. It is easier for a man to go and look for sponsors than women. Sponsors trust men more than women. It is not in the culture of women to knock at doors for money. This can also be misinterpreted. If a woman is not rich she cannot get into politics." Women councillors in Mauritius expressed the same concern raised by Seebun regarding financial barriers. They are not paid for sitting on Committees let alone for being a councillor.

Because of the prejudice that voters have shown towards women the PR system works better for women as voters are electing a political party and not an individual. The latter system works against women because they have not had the same degree of exposure as men, and their parties often do not field them in "safe constituencies" because they are regarded as a risk. For this same reason, in the absence of a system for "reserving seats" quotas do not work well with the FPTP system, because even if parties agree that they will field a certain proportion of candidates, there is no guarantee that they will win.

Like the Mauritius case study that follows most Southern African countries (for example Botswana, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Swaziland) run their local elections on a FPTP system with no quotas to boost women's participation.



Rhetoric and reality in Mauritius

Women's participation in decision-making in Mauritius is low in all areas (see Chapter two). The parliamentary elections that took place in 2005 saw the proportion of women increase from six to 17 percent. But women still make up only 6.4 percent of those in local government.

Although a multi ethnic society, culture and especially religion play a pivotal role in every day life. The FPTP electoral system and the absence of a legislated quota or of any serious voluntary party quotas aggravate the constraints faced by women. While the Labour Party, part of the ruling Social Alliance (AS), has made all the right noises concerning women's participation in decision-making, it has been slow to put its money where its mouth is.

Lovena Sowkhee, Labour Party councillor for Beau-Bassin-Rose-Hill (see also Chapter four) notes: "Women are good politicians and there are hundreds of capable women who are prepared to go into politics but this is a male dominated society and if we do not put legislated quotas into place we will have to wait for a very long time before there is gender equality."

Violet Moothia, Chair of the Women's Wing of the Parti Mauricien Xavier Duval (PMXD) adds: "The system does not favour women. Elections cost a lot of money. Women are not good at knocking at doors asking for money. Finance is a big constraint for women and the party does not help us financially. It is about time that we all think in the same direction. With the political will of our male leaders there are so many ways that women can get elected in either the legislative assembly or the municipalities. There is the PR system, legislated quota, electoral reform. It is only a question of being committed to including women."

Electoral reform has long been on the agenda of mainstream political parties. In 2001 the government instituted a Commission on Constitutional and Electoral Reform presided by South African Constitutional Court Judge, Albie Sachs, Judge B.B. Tandon from India and Mauritian Judge Robert Ahnee. The Commission completed its report a year later with a whole section on "Correcting under-representation of women". Paragraph 54 of the report [47] states:

> It is clear that there is no formal discrimination which expressly excludes women from political life. Thus, there is nothing in the Constitution or the law which prevents political parties from choosing women in greater numbers to be candidates and part of the government. In practice, however, the manner in which candidates are chosen appears heavily to discriminate against women. Such discrimination has a self-fulfilling effect; instead of women being encouraged and prepared for the rigours of political activity, as should be all new entrants, they are required to have special courage and enterprise to allow their names to go forward. Mauritian's are family-orientated and this should not be put in question. What needs to be examined is how to find means whereby responsibilities in the family can be more equitably shared, with backup public support where appropriate, so as to enable women to take their rightful place in public life.

The report also mentions that the gap between legal and factual equality in decision-making is so wide that women's interests and concerns are not adequately represented at policy levels and women cannot influence key decisions in social, economic and political areas that affect society as a whole. It argued that "the major responsibility for correcting the massive gender imbalance rests with the parties."

However, the then ruling Militant Mauritian Movement (MMM) and Militant Socialist Movement (MSM) failed to act on the recommendations of the Sachs Commission before the national elections in July 2005 nor to adopt special measures within their own parties.

Section 15 (v) of the Constitution of the Mouvement Mauricien Militant (MMM) dated October 1998 states that in preparing the list for the general and municipal elections the Party will ensure that there are at least 20

47. Sachs, A et al. (2001) Report of the Commission on Constitutional and Electoral Reform, Mauritius

percent women. But this was not observed and the 2005 Electoral manifesto of the MMM. The MMM-MSM alliance, while pledging to end gender discrimination, did not mention mainstreaming gender into politics. According to Leela Devi Dookun of the MSM, "there is no law as such to say that there should be so many women. There is an understanding that there must be women at all levels. We do not have an inside lobby as there is a will on the part of the leader. We did our maximum for the last elections but unfortunately when two or more parties go together in election, we cannot do as we would have wished to do."

The Constitution of the Labour Party (that forms the backbone of the now ruling Social Alliance or AS) was amended in 2003 to stipulate that there must be at least 30 percent women in party structures at all levels. This, however, is not binding with regard to fielding candidates in either local or national elections. A section in the AS *Programme of Action* on the active participation of women in public life says that electoral reform would allow the active participation of women which should reach at least 30 percent in the medium term. Another section adds that political parties:

- Should assure a better representation of women at all levels of democratic institutions;
- Create a favourable atmosphere so that women can participate in Municipal Elections and promote the
- Participation of women in political and economic life.

Speaking at a GL/MWO-GEMSA workshop in February 2005 (ahead of the national elections) the then leader of the opposition (now Prime Minister) Navin Ramgoolam supported both electoral reform and the introduction of quotas to ensure an increased level of women's participation in politics (see quote at the beginning of this chapter). While the AS was in opposition at the time of the national elections in July and therefore could not effect policy changes, it is disappointing that the ruling alliance did nothing thereafter to effect any changes to the municipal elections that took place in October and village elections in December.

Table 15: Outcomes for women in the 2005 elections in Mauritius

	% Women parliament	% Women municipalities	% Women district councils	% Women village councils
Prior to 2005	5.6%	11.9%	3.2%	2.9%
July, October and December 2005 Elections	17%	11.9%	3.2%	5.9%

Source: Mauritius Media Watch Organisation (MWO)

Table 15 shows the increase in women's participation at national level, where despite the absence of special measures by the government and political parties, civil society activism resulted in a high proportion of the women candidates who stood being elected, boosting the overall average from 5.6 percent to 17 percent.

But the outcome at local level was disappointing, with the same proportion of women at municipal and district level, and a small increase from 2.9 percent to 5.9 percent at village level. Overall, women constitute a mere 6.4 percent of all councillors in Mauritius.

Minister of Labour Sheila Bappoo (one of the few women cabinet ministers) says that in a democracy "We must walk the talk. It is about time that political parties prove their commitment on the issue of gender equality in politics." The problem, she says, is that "we do lobby but we get very little in return. The lobby must be stronger. I do not believe in quotas. The political parties should prove their commitment to the issue. Sometimes there is so much pressure on ethnic groups that is very difficult. Women are then sacrificed on the basis of ethnicity. The Constitution of the party stipulates that women should constitute 30 percent of all decision making posts of the party but unfortunately this is not binding at national level. The only solution is political reform."

Strategies for change

All the evidence from Southern Africa – and this concurs with experiences around the globe - is that women's increased representation in decision-making seldom happens by some evolutionary miracle. Where there have been rapid and substantial increases in women's participation in decision-making these have invariably come about as a result of a combination of political party commitment (often influenced by a country's history and ideology) as well as electoral systems and quotas.

Quotas and electoral systems: a global perspective

Professor Drude Dahlerup distinguishes between the "fast" and "slow" tracks for achieving women's increased participation in decision-making. The slow track is characterised by incremental changes, coinciding with greater participation in the labour force and educational opportunities. She cites Sweden as an example of a "slow track" country" that has taken 80 years to achieve over 40 percent women in parliament and at local level.[48]

Dahlerup argues that this is no longer the model for other countries in the world, especially in Africa and Latin America that are choosing the "fast track."

48. Balington, J (ed) (2004) The Implementation of Quotas: African Experiences, Quota Report series, IDEA, p 14.

The result is that quotas are fast becoming the accepted norm in emerging democracies, while the "older" democracies lag behind.

By 2005, more than 40 countries had introduced electoral quotas by amending the constitution or introducing different types of legislation. In more than 50 other countries, major political parties have voluntarily introduced quotas requiring women to comprise a certain percentage of the candidates. This means that altogether 90 (or about half the countries of the world) are now employing constitutional, legal or voluntary party quotas to rapidly increase women's participation in decision-making.

Latin America is the leading region in the world with regard to the number and different kinds of quota systems adopted. But sub-Saharan Africa is the region in the world with the most rapid rate of increase in women's representation in parliament over the last 40 years primarily through the use of quotas.[49]

The reasons for this vary from civil society pressure, to the progressive politics of dominant parties, to opportunities created by (and pressures from the donor community) to take special measures for increasing women's participation in post conflict societies (as happened in Mozambique and Rwanda,

49. Ibid p 161

for example). Countries like Rwanda (the world leader, with 48 percent women in its parliament),

Quotas and electoral mechanics

Argentina, Costa Rica, Mozambique and South Africa are now vying with the Nordic countries in the global stakes for who has the highest proportion of women in politics.[50]

There are two main types of electoral system:

- In the **Proportional Representation** (PR) or "list system" citizens vote for parties that are allocated seats in parliament according to the percentage of vote they receive. Individual candidates get in according to where they sit on the list. In an **open list system**, voters determine where candidates sit on the list. In a **closed list system**, the party determines where candidates sit on the list, although this is usually based on democratic nomination processes within the party.
- In the constituency or **"First Past the Post"** (FPTP) system, citizens vote not just for the party, but also for the candidate who represents the party in a geographically defined constituency. Thus a party can garner a significant percentage of the votes, but still have no representative in parliament, because in this system "the winner takes all".

As illustrated in Table 16, in addition to the two types of electoral system (PR and Constituency) there are two main types of quota (voluntary as well as constitutional and/or legislated). The notes in each column show there are examples of all of these different combinations in local level arrangements in Southern Africa - with their attendant advantages and disadvantages. Drawing on the experiences of the countries studied in-depth for this research, these combinations of electoral systems and quotas are explored in greater depth in the sections that follow.

Quotas and constituency systems

In constituency systems, voluntary party quotas can only succeed in delivering the numbers if women candidates are fielded in safe seats, which is often not the case, as illustrated in the previous case study of the Labour Party's nominal commitment to fielding 30 percent women candidates in Mauritius.

Table 16: Combinations of quotas and electoral systems at local level

Type of quota	PR system	FPTP	Mixed
Voluntary party quota	E.g. Swapo Party in Namibia (exceeding the legislated quota by adopting the zebra system).	E.g. Labour Party in Mauritius	E.g. ANC adopting its own 50/50 quota for the 2005 local elections
Constitutional or legislated quota	E.g. Local government elections in Namibia.	E.g. Local elections in Lesotho	E.g. The proposed 50/50 to all parties in the Municiple Structures Act (1998).

Source: Gender Links 2007

50. Karam, A and Ballington, J ed (2005) Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, IDEA, p 146.

Constitutional or legislated quotas in such systems pose challenges because restricting a constituency to any group of people opens itself to challenge as undemocratic or unconstitutional (as happened in Lesotho).

There is an alternative to this, employed in national elections in Tanzania in which there is a constitutional 30 percent quota for women. The way this works is that women and men are free to contest all constituency seats. An additional 30 percent of the seats in the assembly are distributed among *women only* from the different political parties on a PR basis (i.e. on the basis of the proportion of votes that the parties garnered in the elections).

By taking the reservation route (a method that has been used at local level both in India and Uganda) Lesotho showed that even though this path is more precarious it is possible, thus shattering the convenient view among the many countries in the region with the FPTP system that quotas are not possible in this system.



Lesotho shatters the myth

As discussed in Chapter one, Lesotho switched from the constituency to a mixed system for the 2002 national elections in order to placate opposition parties. But the constituency system continued to be employed for the first local government elections in May 2005. The Local Government Amendment Act of 2004 also required that 30 percent of the constituency seats be reserved for women on a rotational basis for at least three elections.

Minister of Local Government Pontso 'Matumelo Sekatle, a political scientist and one of the few women in cabinet, played a key role in driving the legislation through, against considerable opposition from other political parties and civil society, not to mention Molefe's high court suit (described at the beginning of this Chapter).

Local Government Permanent Secretary Moliehi Matabane sites the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (which set a target of 30 percent women in decision-making by 2005) as a key factor. "Government is serious about the SADC target," she said. "The minister is behind it. She is a strong woman, who likes to see women taking charge, and she is very serious about regional commitments."

In an interview before the 2005 elections[51], Minister Sekatle said that she had undertaken a study visit to Tanzania, but decided not to opt for what amounts to a mixed constituency (for woman and men) and PR (for women only) system because it would create two kinds of women councillors in the local elections (with the PR councillors being inferior).

Rajeev Ahal, an Indian expert on decentralisation seconded to the ministry by GTZ, the German technical co-operation agency, argued that the "affirmative reservation" that Lesotho opted for is more appropriate than the Tanzanian model at local level because there is need for voters, not parties, to decide who the councillor will be. He also believes that a separate PR system for women "would disempower them. Women need to stand

51. With GL Executive Director Colleen Lowe Morna

for elections like other candidates. This is how they will learn to compete. If they are given the seats on a PR basis, they will be regarded as token."

The model that Lesotho opted for is similar to that chosen in India where the 74th Constitutional Amendment requires that 33 percent of the seats in the local elected bodies in the towns and country side (the panchayats) are reserved for women. Gender quotas are combined with reserved seats for scheduled casts as part of a rotation system, according to which it is decided in advance which category will be allowed to contest for the seats in the different wards.[52] Article 180 (1) (b) of the Uganda constitution similarly stipulates that one-third of each local government council shall be reserved for women.

The Lesotho Government Elections Amendment Act 2004 provides for one third of the seats to be reserved for women in rotation, for three successive elections. This means that over the period each constituency would be reserved for women once. Women interviewed in the focus groups for this research in Lesotho generally welcomed the quota. As a participant in the Maseru women's focus group put it: "It is a good thing. Most of the time its only men and they have policies that do not address women." However, others said that the quota has not been accompanied by sufficient awareness: "many women were not clear what was happening, so they were rather reluctant. Voter education was not enough."

Rethabile Pholo, Public relations co-ordinator of Lesotho's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) recalled that "We faced a lot of discontent, especially from the men. A lot of them used highly derogatory language to describe the elections. Many women (like the mayor of Maseru) were insulted."

A participant in the male focus group in Moteng said it is "unfair when men can only vote for women." Men in the Maseru focus group echoed similar views. "We feel that people should be elected fairly," one participant said. "This is discrimination. The system was imposed on people and it was not explained, so the people don't like it but they have to follow it."

Speaking on behalf of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) Minister of Gender Mathabiso Lepono said there was some resistance from men to the quota system but "the Prime Minister supported the quota so the men just had to deal with it." She added that the party had just amended its constitution to provide for 30 percent women in all party structures.

Leader of the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) Sekwala Tolwane said that his party doesn't agree with the quota system where constituencies are reserved for women only regardless of their capabilities. He added that there is no real need for the quota because women outnumber men in Lesotho.

Participants in a civil society focus group in Maseru hosted by the Transformation Resource Centre said NGOs had opposed the quota on the basis that they believed it was unconstitutional, despite the high court order. "We wanted an alternative to the quota that would not deny anyone their rights," one participant said.

Male voters interviewed in the focus groups blamed the women's quota for seven parties threatening to withdraw

52. Karam, A and Ballington, J ed (2005) Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, IDEA, p 148.

on the eve of the elections and for the low voter turn out. According to the IEC's Pholo the parties cited shortage of time as the main reason for their threat to withdraw. Because the government was under pressure to hold the elections before the end of the financial year, they went ahead on 30 March (the last day of Lesotho's fiscal year).

With only a 29 percent voter turn out and the ruling party winning by a huge margin, many of the opposition parties cried foul. An independent team of observers deployed by the Commonwealth Secretariat concluded that:

> A cloud of uncertainty prevailed over the backdrop of the Local Government Elections, with a clear breakdown of consensus and communication among critical stakeholders in the electoral process. Consequently we identified shortcomings in the conduct of critical processes leading up to the elections, such as delimitation of constituencies, the conduct of the voter registration update and voter education. We however commend the overall conduct of the polling day activities, which were carried out in a peaceful atmosphere and in a transparent manner, in accordance with the law.[53]

Since the elections Pholo points out that the discontent over the gender quota has died "a natural death"; councils are now in operation and little distinction is made on the ground between women in the reserved constituencies and those who contested in the open elections.

In her assessment of the process, Local Government Permanent Secretary Matabane said the quota experiment had worked well. "Yes there was resistance at the beginning, but we have persuaded people through sensitisation. I don't think women are disadvantaged in any way." As mentioned in the litmus test example of Litjotjela constituency at the beginning of this chapter, an interesting feature of these elections is that 23 percent women won in the open elections. Table 17 shows that by January 2007, a further 64 women (five percent) had become councillors through bi-elections, bringing the total proportion of women to 58 percent.

"I am not surprised that women have come in on their own steam," commented Matabane. "Basotho women have what it takes." Director in the Ministry of Gender Matau Futho-Letsatsi adds that the independent success of women in the elections is "proof that women are capable."

Table 17: Recent gains for women in Lesotho

	Women	Men	Total	% Women
Elections	681	609	1290	53%
Bi-elections	745	545	1290	58%

Source: GL and Lesotho IEC 2007

53. Commonwealth Report on the Conduct of Local Elections in Lesotho (2005) p 19id p 161

A more cynical interpretation of why women have done so well in the local elections in Lesotho offered by a male councillor is that men understood at the time of the campaign that councillors would only be earning a R50 sitting fee for attending meetings if they got elected; not the R1000 a month that councillors are in fact earning as a fixed fee. As a result the councillor said, male councillors "lost interest" but feel now feel cheated since in many rural communities R1000 a month is a healthy amount of money.

Another male councillor said he thought women have done well in the open elections because "they are hard workers. People voted for delivery." Pointing to the country's "mountain culture" and high level of male migration to the gold mines of South Africa the GTZ's Ahal noted: "Women predominate in the public service and they are the backbone of the community. They deal with the day to day issues." In the rural areas, he said, there is a tussle between knowing the value that women bring to local processes and being caught in the time warp of "women sitting on the fringes of the pitso (village meetings) while men make the decisions." Gradually, he said, communities are coming to recognise that women are capable decision-makers: "The elections broke the mould by planting the idea that women can stand for elections and be voted for." While in India there had been the phenomenon of a large proportion of women fronting for their husbands in the seats reserved for women, this has not been the case in Lesotho; women stood in their own right, Ahal noted.

However, the Lesotho government still needs to explain why moves to "fast track" women's participation at local level have not been matched at national level. The explanation put forward by Local Government Permanent Secretary Matabane that there is a higher level of awareness at national level and therefore that special measures are not needed is not convincing to many Basotho. As Molefe put it (see beginning of the chapter) the perception among voters is that there are double standards at play. This weakens the efforts to make local government a site for meaningful change.

Quotas and PR systems

Voluntary party quotas have the advantage of party buy in, but they can only deliver large numerical increases in closed list PR systems where the party has the say on who gets onto the list. A good example of this is in Namibia, where the party has had a 50/50 or "zebra" list system with alternating names of women and men at the local level for its recent elections.

As demonstrated in the example of Namibia that follows, the combination of the PR system and *legislated* quotas is among the most effective for rapidly increasing women's representation. In this system *all* parties are obliged to honour the quota, not just a progressive ruling party.

But some parties argue that *any* quota infringes on freedom of choice. There have also been criticisms that the PR system, in which voters vote for the party rather than for a candidate, is not suitable at local level where there is need for residents to interact with individuals that they have elected, given the kinds of issues to be addressed at this level.



Namibia steams ahead, but does the system work?

Namibia has three different electoral systems. In presidential elections the candidate that receives the most votes is elected as long as the candidate has over half the support. In National Assembly and Local Authority elections a proportional representation (PR) system with party lists is used. For Regional Council elections the FPTP system applies. Namibia held its first internationally recognised elections in 1989 under UN supervision. It has since held regular national, regional and local elections. The most recent elections took place in 2004, with all three levels of government holding elections.

As described in Chapter two, by 2004 the only level of government in Namibia that had achieved and passed the 30 percent mark for women in political decision-making was local government (42 percent). This progress is due mainly to legislated affirmative action measures for local government. By 2007 (the time of writing this book) no equivalent measures had been introduced for other levels of government.

For the first local government elections the Local Authorities Act of 1992 provided that the party lists include at least two women for councils with ten or fewer members and at least three women for councils with 11 or more members. The Local Authorities Amendment Act of 1997 strengthened the affirmative action provision for women in the second local elections. For the 2004 Local Authority elections, party lists for councils with ten or fewer members had to include at least three women and lists for councils with 11 or more members had to include five women.

In 1998, both the ruling Swapo Party and the opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) made a public commitment to "zebra" lists of alternating male and female candidates. All the parties combined put forward 462 women; 47 percent of the 978 candidates. But the key issue with the list system is where women are positioned; at the top, bottom, or in the alternating pattern envisaged by the "zebra". Only about 42 percent of Swapo Party and 20 percent of the DTA's party lists complied with the "zebra" format. As a result only 41 percent women won.

This pattern has persisted, despite the strengthening of the provisions in the act (that are silent on how the desired targets are to be achieved). This explains why Namibia continuously comes close to, but has never quite achieved the parity target at local level (43.4 percent in the 2004 elections). It also raises questions as to how committed the parties really are to the quota.

In interviews and in their manifestos, many of the political parties in Namibia acknowledge the importance of gender issues. Table 18 is an analysis of the different political parties, their views on gender quotas and how these are applied. Compared to South Africa (see Case study four) in which most opposition parties are publicly against quotas, in Namibia the opposite appears to be true. Indeed the Congress of Democrats (CoD) has a better record than the ruling Swapo Party with regard to applying the consistent application of the quota (including within its own structures).

Table 18: Namibia where the parties stand

PARTY	% VOTE 2004 LOCAL ELECTIONS	VIEW ON GENDER QUOTAS	COMMENTS
Swapo Party	64%	Believe in 50/50; manifesto pledges to remove barriers.	Only applied at local level and sometimes inconsistently
CoD	10.2%	Supports gender balance in all structures including internally. In 1999 the (CoD) introduced a 50% quota for women on electoral lists.	40% senior positions in party held by women; women constituted 43% of its National Assembly list.
DTA	7.85%	Publicly supports the zebra system.	Not been applied consistently. But is the only party with more female than male representatives at the local level.
UDF	6.48%	Manifesto supports and advances the cause of woman's emancipation.	Put forward 50% women candidates in the Presidential and National Assembly elections.
NUDO	4.6%	Manifesto supported 30 percent women at all levels with target of 50% by 2005.	No information as to how this has been applied.

Source: Gender Links 2007

However, for all parties there seem to be anomalies on the ground in the way in which the zebra system is applied. In some instances, researchers heard that local party officials had been instructed to ensure that women are always first on the list (and in one case that they had been instructed to ensure that two women topped the list).

This would be consistent with trying to ensure the desired outcomes with regard to the electoral law (that states minimum numbers of women to be achieved in councils depending on their size). However, how each party painted its zebra stripes remained a puzzle in field observations.

The result (see Box seven) is that in a country where one would expect a fairly even split of women and men in *all* local councils, researchers found extremes of councils with *only* women to the one hand; and with only *one* woman (and the rest men) to the other.

Box seven: Getting the balance wrong

The village of Bethanie is about an hour's drive west from the municipality of Keetmanshoop, the town regarded as the capital of the south. The village and town share a similar political landscape: located in the south; previously strongly supportive of the opposition DTA, but shifting more and more to Swapo Party as the opposition in Namibia splinters, and southerners reluctantly accept that their best bet is to hitch their wagon to the ruling party.

Apart from their size, the two localities differ in one other crucial respect. All of Bethanie's five councillors are women. Only one of Keetmanshoop's seven councillors is a woman. How does this come about when the legislation stipulates that any council with less than ten members should have three women?

Of the five Bethanie councillors, two are from Swapo Party. As Swapo Party stuck to its zebra principle of one woman, one man, with a woman first on the list, the party initially had both a woman and a man on the council. However the man died, and the next person on the list was a woman. So now there are two Swapo Party women. Two of the opposition members are from the DTA, which had two women at the top of its list. The fifth is from the Congress of Democrats (CoD) that also placed a woman first on the list in this area.

In Keetmanshoop, Swapo Party has three out of the seven seats. A man topped this list, then a woman and then another man. That is how the only woman on the council, Fiina Elago, got in. Two other seats went to the CoD. They too had a man and woman. But the woman died and the next person on the list was a man; this is how the second woman in the council got replaced. The other two seats went to the rate payers association and DTA who had men at the top of their lists. The upshot is that there is currently only one woman in the council.

Councillors and residents in both localities said there is need to get the gender balance right. "The zebra is good, but having all or nothing is not good," observed Elago (the only woman in Keetmanshoop council.) One of the constraints she faces as the only woman on the council is that she constantly gets invited to ceremonial events where the presence of a woman is deemed important: "I can't be at all places!" she exclaims. The CoD's Arnold Losper (one of her six male colleagues) agreed: "As the only woman she is stretched; she has too many obligations."

In Bethanie, women interviewed during the focus groups said they were proud of the 50/50 campaign and had no objection to having all women in the council. But a man in the male focus group observed: "It should be 50/50; not all or nothing." Another added that the fact that the five women get on "has led to complacency. Diversity is important for robust debate."

An issue that has long been a concern in Namibia is whether the PR system is the best for local government. The 1992 Local Authority Act proposed that only two elections be held on a PR basis, with the 2004 local government elections held on a ward basis. A survey by the Institute for Public Policy Research in 2002 found that about half the respondents favoured keeping the PR system. This helped Swapo Party to make the case, through an amendment bill in parliament, that the PR system be continued.[54]

Swapo Party justified the move on the basis that the PR system has proved effective in favouring the inclusion of smaller parties, reduced racial tension and helped to guarantee gender balance. The Namibia Women's Manifesto Network that is driving the 50/50 campaign supported Swapo Party's move, calling for the list system to be applied to all future local elections because "research worldwide has shown that the party list system is more favourable for achieving gender balance than in the constituency or ward-based system." [55]

But, as University of Namibia political scientist Phanuel Kaapama points out, the system also has its pitfalls:

> The amendment can be abused to defeat the spirit of local democracy and citizen participation, by undermining the choice of local voters, both the electorate and their elected local political office bearers could end up being manipulated by those who call the shots in their respective parties. Moreover this presents a clear testimony that the policy as amended is threatening to undermine the discretion of the electorate to nominate and hold their elected authority office bearers individually accountable in subsequent elections.[56]

This view is shared by a number of opposition parties (see Box eight).

Box eight: Whose representative?

Ilme Schneider, a DTA councillor in the City of Windhoek, does not agree with the PR system for local government in Namibia. She feels that it makes the party too powerful and that local councillors should have more contact with the electorate and autonomy to make decisions.

"As a local councillor you are very much in contact with the community and you should be able to take decisions based on what you hear from the public and not what your parliamentarians up in the ivory tower says that you should be doing," she said.

The selection of party lists has at times been contentious with complaints that party headquarters interfere in the selection of the list and change them after the election.[57] Gender is one of the complicating factors in this manipulation of lists and has been used both to promote women as well as settle scores. Schneider says that it is undemocratic for the community to put names forward only for the central committee to decide on where to put them on the list. In her own case she decreed: "If I'm not number one I'm not going to be on the list."

54. Kaapama, F, "Namibia local government elections: Implications for the General Elections" (2004); Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Election Talk No 14, 12 July 2003.
55. The Namibian Women's Manifesto Network 50-50 pamphlet.
56. Ibid
57. Hapwood, G (2006) Guide to Namibian Politics, Namibia Institute for Democracy, p. 25.

She believes the ward system which was supposed to have come into place in the previous elections would be a much better one. While she enjoys being a councillor and has strong roots in her neighbourhood she is not sure if she will continue to be a councillor once her term is up because of the DTA's waning electoral strength.

Schneider was number one on the DTA list for Windhoek in 2004 but she was the only DTA member that got a seat. While she thinks that she could win a ward seat in the 2008 elections because she is popular in her locality, she is not sure if the DTA will garner enough votes to retain a seat in council elections run on a PR basis.

Swapo Party has argued that the PR system favours minority parties. But it also favours Swapo Party in opposition strongholds, giving the party the opportunity to gain seats in councils that still remain wary of the ruling party. Swapo Party's stronghold is in the north of the country, while the south has traditionally been opposition territory, although with the dissipation of the DTA it is increasingly moving towards the ruling party, if only because of the perception that this is critical for local economic development. As reflected in Box nine, however, the result of the PR system in the south is that there are instances in which Swapo Party councillors are elected without speaking the local language or having any connection with local communities, even though they may be competent.

Box nine: Knowing your councillor

Fiina Elago, a Swapo Party councillor and the only woman on the Keetmanshoop Council, is by all accounts a well educated, well connected and competent councillor who has earned the respect of her male colleagues and played a key role in bringing better governance to the Council (see Chapter five). But there is a hitch for women in the community who look to her for leadership as the only woman councillor.



Women in Keetmanshoop
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

In a focus group meeting of ten women at the Community Centre in the former black township of Tseiblaagte only three women said they knew or had interacted with Elago.

In an interview, Elago spoke passionately about the things that concern her, including the housing committee that she chairs. "I try as much as possible to go into the community to see how they are doing things; that is the only way to know the needs. I go into the locations."

In addition, she said, the Council holds monthly community meetings where suggestions are made on how to do things better. She cites the example of the community proposing to the Council that it use borehole

instead of tap water for the parks; "a brilliant idea, since we have a water shortage" and a big debt overhang with NAMWATER.

Yet few of the women in the focus group that comprised women randomly selected from the township seemed aware of these meetings or of the workings of the Council. "She has never called a meeting for women," one focus group participant said. "We can't say much about what she is doing because we don't know her."

"Fiina comes from the north; there is a communication barrier; that is one of the problems," another participant, speaking through an interpreter, added. "Most of us here are Nama. We do not speak English. We should be represented by local people on the Council."

The women said that they did not know about the Council's housing projects. They reeled off a long list of frustrations and concerns: lack of sewerage and sanitation in the township; lack of homes, jobs and business opportunities; illegal shebeens that stay open late and are fuelling alcoholism; child abuse; drugs and violence. Women need to be in leadership, they said, but they also need to be accessible.

Other than the suitability of the PR system to local government in Namibia, the other major concern raised in interviews, especially with civil society, is the inconsistency between the different levels of government with regard to gender representation.

The issue is a complex one. Namibia reflects the best and worst of electoral systems when it comes to women's representation. The legislated gender quota and PR system at local level has delivered high levels of women's representation but there are growing doubts as to the suitability of the PR system at local level. To the other extreme are the regional councils that are chosen on a constituency basis but in which women have the least representation (11 percent in the Councils; and only three out of 13 Regional Governors). This low level of women's represen-tation is typical of constituency systems that are not accompanied by any form of quota.

Short of changing the electoral system at regional level, the 50/50 campaign has put forward options for requiring that parties field equal numbersof male and female candidates, or that each constituency has a male and female candidate for regional elections.[58] As discussed earlier in this chapter, the first option carries no guarantees, unless women are fielded in safe seats. The second (one woman, one man in each constituency) is an innovative idea that has not been tried elsewhere; Namibia could be a first. The third option (reserving seats) is now tried and tested in a number of countries at local kevel (India, Uganda and Lesotho) but has its drawbacks.

The significance of Namibia applying its mind to how gender balance might be achieved at regional level is that if local government ever switches to the ward system (and there is mounting pressure for this to happen) there will be a tried and tested solution from the Regional Councils on how to ensure that there is not a drop

58. The Namibian Women's Manifesto Network 50-50 pamphlet.

in women's representation. It may also be the case that (as demonstrated by the women who won in the open seats in the 2005 Lesotho local elections) women in Namibia have had sufficient exposure at local level to be able to contest ward elections without special measures being adopted. Another option at local level is to consider the mixed system that South Africa opted for (see Case study four) although this too has its pros and cons.

The least complicated area for Namibia to get the gender balance in better sync is at national level, where the PR system seems set to continue, and women have been making steady progress without legislated or voluntary party quotas, though at 26 percent this still falls far short of SADC's parity target. The introduction of legislated quotas like those at local level would not only rectify the situation but send a strong signal that the government takes the SADC target seriously at all levels; as well as erase the unfortunate perception that the only reason for the progressive stance at local level is that it is less important.

Quotas and mixed systems

The mixed PR and FPTP system in South Africa is designed to harness the best of both electoral systems (with the PR system more friendly to women and minorities and the FPTP enhancing individual accountability). Initially however, this system disadvantaged women, as they performed worse than men in the ward seats. The ANC's determination to iron this out in the 2006 elections reflects a growing confidence by women to contest traditional constituency elections without the help of "special measures", despite some inevitable resistance by would-be male ward councillors who (like those in a Lesotho) felt they had been badly done by.

The South African example reflects the importance of determination by the dominant party to get the gender balance right. But is also raises questions as to how committed the ANC is to extending this principle to all levels; and the discomfort with the future of women's representation being so heavily on the whims of one party.



Photo: GCIS

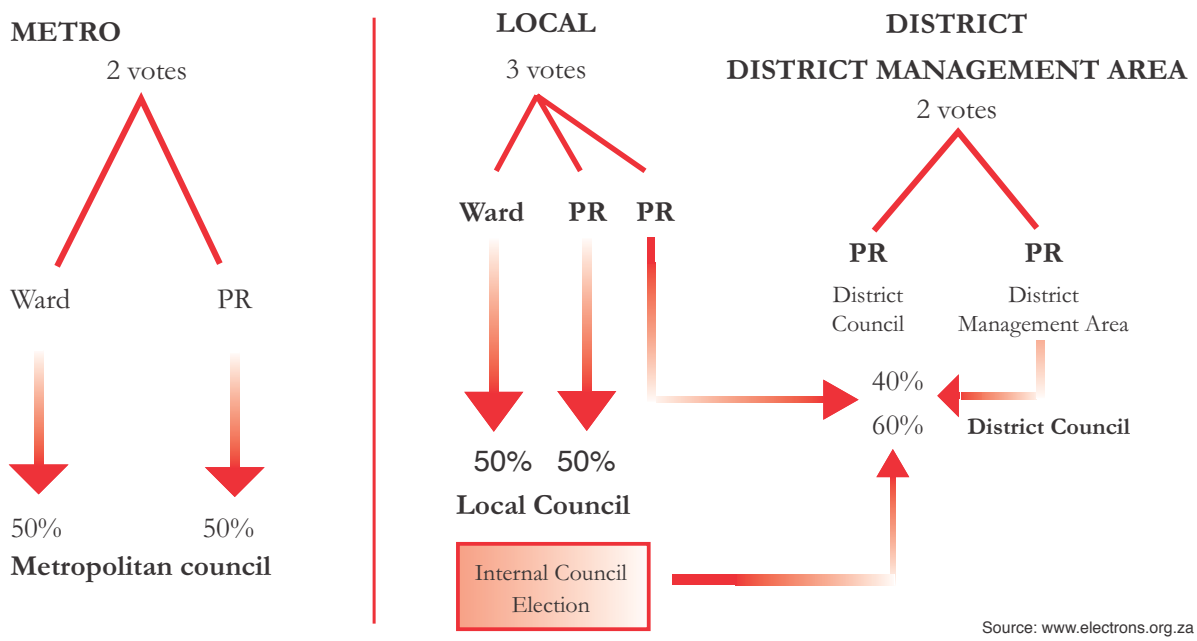
CASE STUDY FOUR

South Africa: Conflict and compromises

In South Africa, national elections are conducted on a simple PR basis while local elections are conducted on a mixed system that involves both the PR and FPTP system. Like Namibia, South Africa bears the geographical and spatial scars of its apartheid past. South Africa similarly grappled with what is the best electoral system at local level, given the need to heal the wounds of racial segregation as well as ensure that residents can be represented by candidates of their choice.

To try to avoid the kinds of dilemmas that Namibia now confronts, South Africa opted for the mixed system from the outset, in the hopes of harnessing the best of both worlds. Ward seats mean that residents can vote for a candidate of their choice. PR seats give all parties the possibility of being represented in councils where they might otherwise be excluded; for example in the case of the ruling ANC in the posh former whites-only suburbs that are not likely to be pro ANC but represent a significant revenue base.

Figure four: How local government elections take place in South Africa



Source: www.electrons.org.za

Figure four illustrates how the system works. For metropolitan councils, each voter has two votes: one for the ward councillor (or candidate of their choice) and the other for the PR vote (or party of their choice). For local councils, voters have three votes: one for the ward, the other for the PR and the third for the district PR vote.

District councils are constituted on the basis of two PR votes by District Management Area Voters plus one PR vote by local council voters and one representative from local councils.

In sum, metropolitan and local councils have an even split of ward and PR councillors while in the case of district councils the split is 60:40.

Initially, gender took a low priority in the complex negotiations on how to restructure and transform local government and did not feature in the debates on how the electoral system would affect women's representation.

Table 19: Gender and local government in South Africa

Year	% women ward	% women PR	% women overall
1995	11%	28%	19%
2000	17%	38%	29%
2006	37%	42%	40%

Source: Gender Links 2007

As reflected in Table 19, in the first local government elections in 1995, women won a mere 11 percent of the ward seats and 28 percent of the of the PR seats, for an overall total of 19 percent (significantly less than in the 1994 national elections in which women won 27 percent of the 400 seats in the National Assembly).

At the time of negotiations on the White Paper on Local Government in 1998, the Cape Town-based Gender Advocacy Project (GAP) raised a number of concerns with regard to women's representation as well as facilitating their effective participation in local government. GAP and the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), a constitutional body established to "promote and protect" gender equality, made a submission to the then minister responsible for local government, Valli Moosa, on how the situation might be rectified.

The outcome of these negotiations is reflected in the Municipal Structures Act 1998. Given women's poor performance in the ward seats, one significant gain was to adjust the balance of ward/PR seats in local and municipal councils from the original 60:40 ratio to the equal balance described earlier in this chapter for local and municipal elections.

The Act fell short of legislating a quota as advocated by GAP and the CGE. However it required that parties "seek to ensure that 50 percent of the candidates on the party list are women, and that women and men candidates are evenly distributed though (sic) the list."[59] The weakness of this wording is that it encourages, but does not oblige parties to adopt a zebra system for the PR seats, and places no obligation on them to field women candidates in the ward seats.

The significance of this is underscored by the different functions of ward and PR councillors. The latter chair ward committees and receive resources to do so. They also have many more specific functions than the PR

59. Municipal Structures Act 1998, Schedule 2, Part 1, section 5(3).

councillors (whose name in this context is often considered unfortunate, given the other common meaning of the acronym -Public Relations).

The upshot of the gains made by the women's movement is reflected in the 2000 elections, in which parties (especially the ANC) heeded the call with regard to the PR seats, boosting representation by women on these seats from 28 percent in 1995 to 38 percent in 2000, while that for ward councillors went up from 11 percent to 17 percent for an overall total of 29 percent (see Table 19).

As the 2006 elections drew near, gender activists challenged political parties not just to increase women's representation generally, but to do so in the *ward* seats. Soon after the SADC Heads of State agreed to increase the target for women in decision-making from 30 percent to 50 percent at their summit in Gaborone (see Chapter One), the ANC announced that it would adopt the 50 percent target for *both* ward and PR seats at the local level; becoming the first party in the region to pledge its commitment to a parity target.

To its credit, the ANC worked hard to make this happen despite resistance in many quarters. Nandi Mayathula Khoza, Member of the Mayoral Committee for the City of Johannesburg, and a key proponent of the 50/50 campaign within the ANC, recalls that

> It was not easy. Even though we had this as an ANC policy, there was an outcry when it came to the implementation. Some men said they were being sidelined. But women were now prepared, in Johannesburg for example, through the Women's Dialogues that we had been holding.[60] From time to time we heard that the 50/50 campaign is not a council policy, it is an ANC policy. We had to be careful, to leave it to ANC structures to run with the process. The ANC had a good strategy. It made sure that the process started at branch level, with each branch nominating a male and female. But to make sure that we had equal numbers of women and men candidates in the ward seats the ANC (at national level) had to have the last word, and this is where tension came in. I know of cases in which women and men were sidelined; but we are happy that the outcome is close to 50/50 ward and PR councillors; definitely an improvement on the 2000 elections.

The ANC's big achievement in the 2006 elections was not only to field 53 percent women candidates overall (of whom 46 percent won) but to substantially increase the proportion of women ward councillors to 40 percent of the total ANC ward councillors. The upshot (see Table 19) is that women ward councillors increased from 17 percent in 2000 to 38 percent in 2006 while PR councillors increased from 38 percent in 2000 to 43 percent in 2005 for an overall total of 40 percent (compared to 29 percent in 2000). Whatever tension might have existed at the time of the elections in March 2006, new women ward councillors appeared relaxed, confident, and ready to tackle new challenges in the field observations for this research later that year (see Box ten).

60. The City of Johannesburg have held various women in dialogue seminars, the first of which was the Women in Dialogue cum Women Empowerment Summit was convened by the City of Joburgs's Women's Caucus held in August 2004. See also Case study seven and Boxes 21 and 26.

Box ten: Settling in as a ward councillor



Laurah Modise

Photo: Susan Tolmay

After the final rush of campaigning for the March 2006 local elections ANC Councillor Laurah Modise is settling into her new role as ward councillor in Blekkiesdorp, part of the Sol Plaatjie local council in the Northern Cape province of South Africa.

She says that while there was no real resistance to her being a councillor, "there will always be some people who are opposed to me." The previous councillor, a man, worked full time for De Beers (the diamond mining company), mostly night shifts, which meant he was not accessible most of the time.

Modise sharpened her skills for her current job by serving as a member of the ward committee under her predecessor. The ANC scouted her out as a possible ward councillor as it sought to boost women's participation in the 2006 elections. She won the party primaries against her predecessor. Six women and men contested the constituency seat in the 2006 elections, which she won.

A volunteer for the last 15 years, Modise is driven by "the passion to work with people and to do community work…I see to the basic needs of the community such as housing, water and electricity. I have to attend all council meetings and then report back to the community on what happened.

"I have fortnightly meetings with the ward committee members and community meetings every second month and whenever something urgent comes up send out flyers for people to attend an urgent meeting even if one had been held recently.

"Urgent issues would include when a crime has been committed or when the community is complaining about taverns. I have also been trying to deal with the people who have to live in shacks so that they can get houses, and I took it to council and then the Mayor didn't give me enough time to address it at the usual meeting so I had to call an urgent meeting with the community because I wanted it to go through because I want these people to get houses. They need to get ownership of the places that they are living in.

"It is very important for us (as women councillors) to educate our women and we need to encourage our women to join women's organisations where they can meet with other women and interact with them and know what they are doing, it is an eye opener.

"I think that if women are educated and join organisations they will hear what other women have to say and how other women live. This is something that I want to do. I must meet with all of the women and we must sit down and discuss what we can do as women to change our ward into a better ward to be an example to others, to stop crime, to see that our children go to school."

Looking ahead, an oft-raised concern is the extent to which other political parties share the ANC's vision around gender parity in politics, and the dangers that too many of the advances rest on the shoulders of one party. While the ANC has the strength in parliament to introduce legislated quotas, it has shied away from doing so. Are other parties heeding the call?

Table 20: Gender and local government by political party in South Africa

Political party	Women	Men	Total	% women	% councillors
ANC	2400	2852	5252	46%	79%
DA	299	700	999	30%	10%
IFP	196	480	676	29%	5.5%
ID	41	106	147	28%	1.3%
UDM	22	68	90	24%	0.7%
ACDP	22	65	87	25%	0.7%
PAC	13	78	91	14%	0.4%
VFP	9	62	71	13%	0.3%
AZAPO	2	20	22	9%	0.1%
Others	65	198	263	25%	2.0%
TOTAL	**3069**	**4629**	**7698**	**40%**	**100%**

Source: Gender Links 2007

Table 20, a breakdown of the proportion of women per political party following the 2006 local elections shows that with 46 percent women, the ANC came close to delivering on its 50/50 promise. The same cannot be said for the other 96 parties, most of who succeeded in getting only a quarter or less women into local government on their party tickets.

The table shows that the three main opposition parties, the Democratic Alliance (DA), InkathaFreedom Party (IFP) and the Independent Democrats (ID) succeeded in getting 28 to 30 percent women in as councillors without using quotas.

They maintain that this is evidence that quotas are not necessary. Indeed unlike Namibia (Case study three) where parties have specific targets (even if these are not observed) in South Africa most opposition parties openly oppose targets and quotas of any kind (Box 11).

Box 11: DA says quotas are not necessary



Janet Semple

Photo: DA website

Janet Semple, representative of South Africa's main opposition DA on the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women and head of the DA Women's Network (DAWN), is proud that the DA has 30 percent women councillors who were "not imposed."

The DA, she said, addresses diversity in all its forms (gender, race, language, geographical position, religion etc) without resorting to quotas which it believes are undemocratic. The DA, she maintains, is a party of "merit". DAWN aims to give women that specific training and development to enable them to participate on an equal footing, she said.

Although there are more DA women at local (30 percent) than at national level (21 percent), the women at national level are very strong, Semple maintains. The DA has women mayors in Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Midvaal. With party leader Tony Leon stepping down before the 2008 elections, there is the possibility that the DA could have a woman leader for the next election, she said (Mayor of Cape Town Hellen Zille is tipped as a possible successor).

According to the DA official, the DA have had "endless discussions" about numbers and particularly about what level the quota should be pegged at. "In an ideal world we would have 52 percent women in decision-making", she says but adds that sometimes too much emphasis is placed in the numbers to the detriment of other issues like gender stereotypes within the party and its work. Semple noted that the DA ensures that portfolios within the party are distributed according to merit and not gender: thus the spokespersons for safety and security, water affairs and forestry and justice are women while those for health and education are men.

The qualitative aspects raised by Semple with regard to women's effective participation (see Chapter four) are important. However, the extent to which the success of women in the local elections in South Africa has rested so heavily on the ANC, which accounts for 79 percent of all women councillors compared to 68 percent of the vote is a source of concern and one that requires other parties to apply their mind to the issue. Political parties come and go. Laws give ongoing guidance. The Human Sciences Resource Council (HSRC) has put forward three recommendations with regard to gender and local government in South Africa:

> Firstly, (there is need for) stronger legal obligations to include women on the party lists (i.e. a quota) is required of all parties, not just those who choose to respond to the recommendations of the Municipal Structures Act. Secondly, parties should perhaps be obliged to include women as ward councillors too, in order to break down the negative distinction between the two types of councillors. Thirdly, more clearly defined roles and responsibilities for PR councillors, especially in so far as their interaction with the community is concerned, will help to dispel the impression of them as a lesser sort of representative, as well as allow for more effective articulation of the needs of the community by those councillors[61].

61. Bentley, K., Cherry, J. & Maphunye, K. (2004) Guidelines to enhance the representation and participation of women in local government in South Africa..

The other question raised by the recent local government elections is the extent to which the ANC will be willing to take up the 50/50 campaign in national and provincial elections scheduled for 2008, either through voluntary party or legislated quotas.

President Thabo Mbeki has nailed his flag to the mast when it comes to women in his cabinet and the appointment of a woman deputy president. This is Mbeki's last term, so he personally will not be affected by the election outcome. But what legacy does he plan to leave at national and provincial level, where women's representation continues to hug the 30 percent minimum, as cabinet and local government march ahead? These will be key questions for debate at the ANC's national congress in December 2007.

Where next?

The preceding pages demonstrate the rich body of experience and knowledge (not always well known!) being generated by local government on quotas and electoral systems. This section draws out some of the lessons that have been learned and how these can be applied by SADC countries as they seek to make good the 50/50 commitment.

Quotas gain acceptance, but they should be short term

A key message to emerge from all four countries (even Mauritius that does not have quotas) is that quotas or "special measures" of some description are essential for jump starting women's increased participation in decision-making at local level. The research also shows that no matter what the electoral system – whether FPTP, PR or mixed – quotas are possible, and they are strongest when they are legislated, rather than just voluntary.

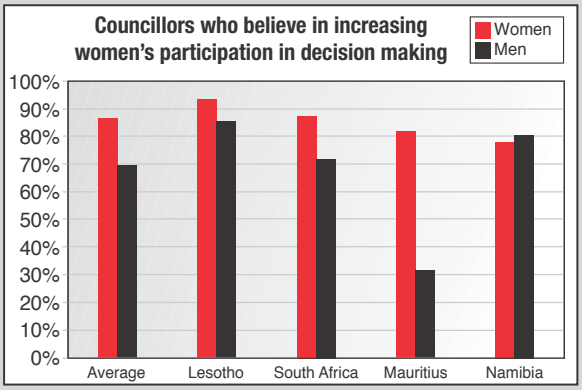
Some combinations are less contentious than others. An effective way for rapidly increasing women's participation in decision-making is the combination of the PR system and legislated quota like Namibia, but the system itself might not be ideal. The most contentious combination is legislated quotas in constituency systems (like Lesotho). The mixed system in South Africa is a compromise, to which legislated and voluntary quotas can also be applied. But it runs the risk of creating two different types of councillors: the "real" or ward councillors and the PR (and "less genuine") councillors.

What is significant, however, is that no matter what the situation or type of quota applied, initial hostility has died down relatively quickly, and the anticipated backlash has not materialised. Dahlerup notes that globally, there are instances of controversies over quotas returning with each electoral cycle, but than in many instances where there have been "vehement discussions about the introduction of quotas, the conflicts died down once the quota system was in place." [62]

The growing acceptance of quotas among councillors in all the case study countries is consistent with the global trend described at the beginning of this chapter towards applying quotas in a wide variety of continents, countries and contexts.

62. Dahlerup D (2005) "Increasing Women's Political Representation: New Trends in Gender Quotas" in "Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, A Revised Edition" (2005), International Idea, p 141.

What the councillors said:



Overall 81 percent of the councillors (87 percent women and 69 percent men) said they believed in the use of quotas to increase women's participation in decision-making.

This is even higher than in the survey carried out in *Ringing up the Changes* in 2004 (78 percent women, 66 percent men and 76 percent overall supporting quotas). The first study covered politicians in all areas of decision making (parliament, cabinet and local government.) The finding in this study that covered local councillors only reflects both a high degree of awareness at local level, as well as the greater degree of conscientisation four years on.

Significantly, despite all the controversies over the introduction of the quota in Lesotho, councillors here showed the highest degree of support for the quota. Councillors in Mauritius, the country with the lowest proportion of women in local government in the study and especially men (32 percent) showed the lowest support for quotas. It is significant that of all the countries, Mauritius had the largest gender gap (difference in responses by women and men) to this question.

The slightly lower support for the proposition by women than men in Namibia (the only country in which this is so, also the country that has had a quota at local level for the longest) is interesting. It may reflect some of the frustrations described in this chapter with the PR system in relation to local level politics and/or the fact that women in Namibia now feel able to compete in elections without resorting to quotas.

It should also be noted that while the majority of respondents answered in the affirmative to the question, many of them qualified their answers, saying that quotas should be for a limited time and that capacity/capability should also be taken into account.

Focus group discussions with women, men and civil society groups in the various communities yielded many similar responses. Some of the comments made in favour of quotas during the focus groups during the meetings included:

- They are a good thing because most of the time it's men that are in decision-making and most policies don't address women's issues. (Woman participant, Maseru, Lesotho focus group.)
- Quotas were a very good idea that should have been in practice a long time ago. If we had quotas back then, there would be no problem of poverty or HIV/AIDS. Woman participant, Thaba Mokhele, Lesotho focus group.)
- Without quota's we won't see more women in decision-making. (Male participant, Msunduzi, SA focus group.)
- It should be 50 percent and this should not be the limit it can be more than 50 percent. (Civil society participant, Sol Plaatjie, SA focus group.)

Those who did not support quotas (mainly men) cited quotas as a violation of their rights. Not surprisingly, many men in Lesotho held this view:

- Generally people thought that quotas were bad for three reasons: they are imposed, it creates conflict between women and men and governance should be based on democracy – the people should be given the choice to vote for the person they want based on the qualities of that person including their leadership qualities. (Male participant, Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho focus group.)
- Quotas were a complete violation of ones right to vote. (Male participant, Mkh'ono, Lesotho focus group.)
- Quotas have a limitation, if we want to vote for a man that has qualities that we like then we are limited and can't vote for who we want. We want to be able to vote for someone who has the qualities that we like. (Woman participant, Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho focus group.)

Others said that everyone should compete on merit. Examples of such comments include:

- If everybody is educated equally and is given equal opportunity, then why would we need a system like this? (Civil society participant, City of Joburg, SA.)
- As a result of quota's people without qualifications are put into positions just to fill the quota. (Male councillor, Breede Valley, SA.)
- Quota systems even in sports, are not working. Performance and merit must be the determining factors as to whether one should be in local government or not. (Civil society participant, Nelson Mandela Bay, SA focus group.)

The majority of women and men councillors, and those interviewed in focus groups emphasised that quotas alone are not enough. As a participant in the civil society focus group in eThekwini, South Africa, put it: "Quotas are a good thing but should be accompanied by a programme that will take women through (the process), there is no use having 50 percent women in local government who are just there but they can't make any decisions or give valuable input in terms of strategic thinking and taking the council forward." Several others emphasised that quotas should be a temporary measure:

- Quotas are good but they should not be used for a long time without reviewing their necessity because they are discriminatory. (Male councillor, Serupane, Lesotho.)
- Quota's are good until women are fully represented then they should be phased out. (Woman councillor, City of Cape Town, SA.)
- Quota's are good for the time being but they should be phased out – the flipside is that women's opinions are minimised because of views of tokenism. (Male Councillor, Cape Winelands, SA.)
- I think it is a good system, provided we do not abuse it, also women should not be put there just because they are women, but because they are capable. (Woman participant, City of Joburg, SA focus group.)
- They are a good start, but actually experiencing equality is another story altogether. The quota system is only the beginning of the process. (Civil society participant, Msunduzi, SA focus group.)

Why only local?

A recurrent theme in this chapter is the extent to which countries have been more willing to take special measures to increase women's participation at local than national level. This reflects in:

- Lesotho introducing a controversial quota for the 2005 local elections but not the national elections in February 2007.
- Local government being the only area in which Namibia has introduced a legislated quota,

resulting in wide variations in women's political representation (from 11 percent women in regional councils to 43 percent in local government.)

- Local government being the only area in which women's representation is mentioned (albeit in a loose way) in a South African law and the only area in which the ANC has taken a 50/50 stance.

Moliehi Matabane, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Lesotho says that in the case of her country the reason might be the fact that local government needs the boost most, since there are higher levels of sophistication at other levels. A more cynical view is that power politics are much more contentious at provincial and national levels, and that local government is less contested terrain. This is the more likely of the two explanations. Both skirt the central issue from the point of view of this research: that if governments are genuine both about participatory democracy and gender equality, they would have made women's representation at local level a priority.

Conclusions

Local government in Southern Africa is relatively new in many countries, and the jury is still out on the extent to which governments are committed to seeing it work. Those countries that have taken the SADC 50 percent commitment to women in decision making seriously have seen local government as a good experimenting ground for implementing special measures, not necessarily because they are committed to women's participation at local level, but because introducing such measures at this level where power is less contested is seen as safer than at national level.

This has given rise to a number of different models for rapidly increasing women's participation at local level showing that no matter what electoral system is in place change is possible. This is a strong message to those who are dithering and giving various excuses as to why they can't achieve the 30 percent let alone 50 percent for women in local government that time is running out. Despite initial outcries and resistance in some instances, the feared backlash has not occurred and quotas are gaining wide acceptance.

But as Anna Balletho, a former MP from Spain has warned, quotas can be a double edged sword: "On the one hand, they oblige men to think about including women in decision-making, since men must create spaces for women.

On the other hand, since it is men who are opening up these spaces, they will seek out women who they think they will be able to manage - women who will more easily accept the hegemony of men."[63] This observation underscores the importance of ensuring not just that women access local government, but that they are also empowered to participate effectively.

63. Dahlerup D (2005) "Increasing Women's Political Representation: New Trends in Gender Quotas" in "Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, A Revised Edition" (2005), International Idea, p 148.



Women in Noupoort in the Norther Cape province of South Africa participate in a community meeting
Photo: Susan Tolmay



Sheila Bappoo, Minister of Social Security and National Solidarity, Mauritius *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

When 'your sari is not needed'

Participating in local government

"Local government is said to be an entry point but it is also one of the most hostile environments for women to work in. They understand the issues, but they do not have the opportunity to put their ideas into practice. In meetings it is the men who take the lead, who are more vocal. They dominate the conversation, especially at village level."

-Rosa Namises, Gender activist, Namibia.

Gorgeous! Absolutely gorgeous! That is the thought that first comes to mind when one sees 31 year old Lovena Sowkhee in her well tailored outfit. Many have made the mistake of thinking that's all there is to her; a mistake that has prevented one of the country's most talented councillors from progressing to national politics.

A municipal councillor from 2000 to 2005 in the Beau-Bassin-Rose Hill area of Mauritius, Sowkhee

was the only non parliamentarian asked by her party, Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM) to speak in a public gathering on May Day 2005. Her leaders asked her to wear a sari because this is "how a woman (of Indian descent) should look in public." Putting party first she obliged and agreed to be the crowd puller. The event attracted huge media publicity. She got a seat in the central committee of her party soon after.

But when it came to giving tickets for candidates in the July 2005 general elections, Sowkhee had a rude shock when her name failed to appear on the official list. All of a sudden her sari was not needed any more. Her competence as a lawyer apparently had nothing to do with politics. She did not "have the right profile." Worst of all, her party claimed to have "indecent pictures of her with an old man" and therefore could not let her stand as a candidate.

Sowkhee has been attracted to politics since her school days. A social activist, she served as class captain and head girl. Her interest in gender justice encouraged the young Sowkhee to study law in England. She became involved in advocacy for women's legal rights. In 2001 Sowkhee was appointed to a ministerial committee to review all laws in Mauritius pertaining to women. NGOs called her to make presentations and talk on the Domestic Violence Act. But she never thought that she herself would be subject to so much psychological violence in the political arena.

"This was so absurd that it was too much to believe. I considered it a joke and laughed." But back home she could not control her anger and her tears. "I had been used by the party which I joined to fight communalism, to fight discrimination and now I was the one being discriminated against. Giving me a ticket meant that a man would lose his.



Lovena Sowkhee *Photo: Loga Virahsawmy*

Socio religious groups have a stronger lobby and they decide who should get tickets. Women do not fall into this category," Sowkhee said.

The young politician had no choice but to slam the door of her party. But she could not stay out of politics. Believing that "the job must be done from inside with help from outside" she accepted a ticket offered by the opposition Labour Party to be a candidate for the municipal elections in Beau-Bassin-Rose-Hill.

Mercifully her former party did not attack her during the electoral campaign. "Maybe they knew they were losing and there was no need for character assassination. They were quarrelling between themselves to see who would get elected," she reflected.

The Labour Party and backbone of the ruling Social Alliance (AS) has among the most progressive gender provisions in Mauritius, although it has fallen short of introducing legislated quotas (see Chapter three). "At least now I am respected for what I am: A professional woman fighting for gender justice. I wear my sari according to my whims not on the order of a political party. I have a voice and my voice counts."

She cautions, however, that even in the progressive environment of her current party in which women are encouraged to participate in debates "we must be more careful than men. One single mistake and we are looked down upon."

Building on her previous experience, she has knuckled down to work in her local constituency. "I started a kindergarten where parents could leave their children during holidays. This allowed them free time to look after themselves or do their shopping."

In an island that markets itself as a cyber leader yet where the majority of people, especially women, are not connected to the Internet, Sowkhee plans to make IT work for women: "The computers are here. Women must be trained to use them." Sowkhee believes that more collaboration between central government and local government will help projects move faster.

Reflecting on her experience in local government she says that "sexist remarks and unwarranted jokes about women are at their best in politics." If these attitudes are not changed, she said, it will be impossible for women to succeed in local politics, let alone "get a foot in the door" of national politics.

This chapter concerns the barriers to women's effective participation in politics at local level. The chapter begins by describing how local government in the case study countries is constituted, and how it works. It then presents the findings of the observation of council meetings in this study from a gender perspective. Drawing from the responses to the questionnaire on barriers to effective participation, as well as qualitative examples from the field work, the chapter highlights the various obstacles faced: ideological, institutional, personal and political. The chapter concludes that women in politics generally, but in local government specifically, encounter an array of challenges that make it difficult to assess their impact since it is virtually impossible to isolate gender from the myriad of other factors that hinder or enhance performance.

How local government works

To understand the barriers that women face, it is necessary to first understand how local government itself works.

Structure

The structure of local government varies across the four case study countries (see Table 21). All four countries have three to four different categories of local authorities. The primary division is between urban and rural.

Table 21: Structure of local government in case study countries

	Lesotho		Mauritius		Namibia		South Africa
1	Municipality	5	Municipality	3	Municipality I	1	Metropolitan council
				15	Municipality II	46	District council
10	District Council	4	District Council	14	Town council	231	Local council
128	Community council	124	Community council	17	Village council	19	District management area
139		133		49		302	

Source: Gender Links 2007

Municipalities are the most urban of the authorities and are found in the large cities and towns. South Africa has six **metropolitan councils** also referred to as "unicities" defined as "large urban areas with high population density, an immense movement of people, goods and services, extensive development and multiple business districts and industrial areas. They represent centres of economic activity with complex and diverse economies."[64] Examples are Johannesburg and Cape Town. The municipalities and metropolitan councils are unitary structures; in other words they are not subordinate to any other structure.

In Namibia, the town and village councils are also unitary structures. They are not subordinate to regional councils. The municipalities are divided into category I and II according to size. As settlements expand and develop they can be upgraded from a village to a town and a town to a municipality.

In all the other case study countries (except Namibia) there is a two tier system in the rural areas with district councils being the upper tier and community, village or local councils being the lower tier. Elected members of these councils are nominated to sit on the district councils which cover a wider geographic area.

In Lesotho the chairpersons of each community council as well as one councillor who is elected from each community council and two gazetted chiefs sit on the district council.

In Mauritius village councillors are elected to sit on the district councils. In South Africa district councillors are both appointed (from local councils) and directly elected. South Africa has a further 19 district management areas which are sparsely settled rural areas such as deserts and wild life reserves but with the need for some services. These areas fall within the jurisdiction of a district council.

Governing arrangements

In Lesotho, Namibia and Mauritius the councillors elect a mayor for the municipal councils and chairpersons for village/community and district councils. These normally serve on a one year rotational basis. Although the mayors are political

64. South African local government elections website; www.localelections\municipality

heads, they are ceremonial in the sense that they do not have executive powers.

In South Africa the Municipal Structures Act provides a variety of arrangements through which councils are governed. The Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for each of the provinces decides which of these structures applies. The possible systems are:

- **Executive mayoral systems** have an elected executive mayor who must appoint an advisory mayoral committee where the council has nine or more members. This is similar to cabinets in national politics. An example of this is the City of Johannesburg.
- **Executive committee systems:** This body is elected by all councillors and invested with executive authority. As the body is chosen by all councillors, it is often a multi party structure.
- **Plenary systems:** In this, all councillors together form the executive authorities. It is common in the smaller local authorities.

Table 22: Mandatory committees in each country

COUNTRY	FINANCIAL/ MANAGEMENT	SOCIAL	ECONOMIC
Lesotho	Finance and planning	Social services	Land administration
Mauritius	Finance	Public health ,Welfare, Public works	
Namibia	Management committees		
South Africa	Audit and tender committees		

Source: Gender Links 2007

In all four countries, there are certain statutory requirements with regard to committees (see Table 22). These go by different names, but generally include financial oversight as well as (in each country) some social/economic functions. Local authorities may also establish committees as they deem fit (for example, as described later in this chapter, many Namibian municipalities and councils are establishing HIV and AIDS committees.)

The management committee in Namibia is equivalent to the executive committee system in some South African local authorities, but it is obligatory for every council. The management committee, which has executive powers, comprises the mayor, deputy mayor plus three to five other councillors according to the size of the council. The executive must comprise the majority of the full council. Former Namibian Deputy Minister of Local Government Gerhard Toetemeyer has said that Namibia is in "dire need of innovation that addresses the fundamental shortcomings in the running of local authorities from village to large towns."

He advocates that Namibia have an executive mayor for the Municipal I structures- Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund - and that it consider metropolitan (or clusters of councils) in the more urban areas, as South Africa has done. He believes that for the smaller towns and village councils where "presently a village secretary has too much power" some collective executive systems (comparable to the plenary system in South Africa) should be introduced.[65]

South Africa has another provision (not found in the legislation of the other case study countries) for ward or constituency councillors to set up committees

65 Weidlich, B, "government urged to review structures", The Namibian, September 7, 2006

of ten members of their communities to assist in their functions. The council decides how the ward committees are chosen but the Act specifies that they should feature diverse interests within the ward and must endeavour to ensure the equal representation of women.[66] As discussed in Chapter six, these structures are potentially a powerful way of strengthening participatory democracy, especially for women, on the ground.

Conditions of service

The conditions of service for councillors differ radically across the four case study countries with fees and allowances of up to ten times higher in South Africa (the biggest and richest country in the study) than in Lesotho (the poorest).

South Africa is the only country with both full time and part time councillors. In all the other countries, councillors are only part time (including mayors and chairpersons of local and district level structures).

In both Lesotho and Mauritius, fees are determined by the Minister of Local Government and are token. At the time of writing this book in 2007, community councillors in Lesotho received an allowance of M1000 (about $140) per month inclusive of transport, while district councillors received R1500 (about $215) per month. This is also true for Part II municipalities, town and village councils in Namibia; but not for Part I municipalities that are free to remunerate and provide allowances as they deem necessary. In Mauritius only mayors and presidents of district councils are remunerated.

In South Africa the Constitution entitles each municipality to set its own salaries, but the national government can impose an upper limit. A new remuneration scheme creates a six grade system based on total municipal income and population. The system has resulted in big increases in salaries with part time councillors benefiting the most (from R45 000 or about $6500 to R112 000 or about $16 000 per annum). There have been warnings that these increases will cripple poor rural councils with narrow tax bases.[67]

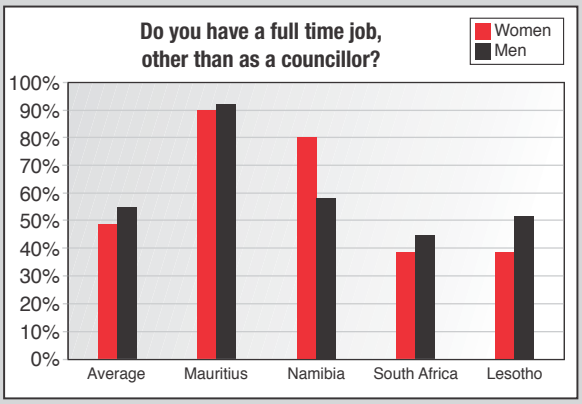


Ward 15 Committee, City of Tshwane *Photo: Rochelle Renere Davidson*

66. Municipal Structures Act 7 and 73 and Item 6 of schedule 1 of the Municipal Electoral Act.

67. Local government bulletin, Community Law Centre, University of the Western Cape (2006) Volume 8, Issue 2, May 2006, p6.

What the councillors said:



On average more men (56 percent) than women (49 percent) councillors have other full-time jobs. Namibia is the only country where more women councillors (80 percent) had other full-time jobs compared to the men (57 percent). Both women and men councillors in Mauritius (90 percent and 93 percent respectively) had the highest proportion of other jobs. These findings reflect the fact that in Mauritius and Namibia being a councillor is part time and largely voluntary. Councillors in Lesotho and South Africa (where being a councillor can be full time) are least likely to have other full-time employment. Many of the councillors interviewed for this research said that although they are expected to be part time they in fact work full time especially after hours and at weekends.

Staffing

All local authorities in the case study countries are underpinned by a bureaucracy, with a head of administration and divisional heads. Both Lesotho and Mauritius have local government commissions that are responsible for recruitment, promotion, conditions of service, discipline and dismissal of staff. In South Africa this task is performed directly by the local authorities who also have the power to discipline and dismiss staff. There have been increasing instances of staff and consultants being deployed to local government from central government due to management crises.

Legislation in Lesotho, Mauritius and Namibia requires all local authorities to have heads of administration called town clerks or chief executive officers (CEO's), in the case of towns and cities and secretaries in the district, village and community councils. In South Africa the legal requirement is for a municipal manager; chief accounting officer and chief financial officer. The head of administration is normally referred to as the chief executive or municipal manager.

Meetings

In the 41 council meetings observed for this research (see **Annex F**) the researchers found that full meetings of council take place at varying intervals from once a month to once every quarter, depending on the council. Agendas for the meetings are distributed prior to the council meetings and councillors are expected to be familiar with their contents. In most cases the speaker[68] or the chair of the meeting will guide the councillors through the agenda allowing inputs from the councillors. Motions are agreed, seconded and approved or declined.

Sometimes there is scarcely any debate: in Mauritius two of the meetings observed lasted ten minutes as all the items on the agenda had been pre-approved by committee members prior to the council meeting.

68. Only South Africa has speakers at local level.

In Namibia the management committee system common to all councils means that often decisions are taken in these executive bodies and brought to meetings merely as a formality.

In South Africa there is a strong culture of councillors caucusing the issues within their parties prior to the council meeting. It is at these meetings that decisions are taken and that spokespersons are elected to speak on the issue in council. This also limits debate.

South African researchers noted that the smaller councils seemed more able to deal with 'grassroots' concerns and agree on issues than in the larger councils which were highly politicised.

Because local government is new and does not carry the baggage of tradition (as in Mauritius) and apartheid (as in Namibia and South Africa) and because none of the councillors are steeped in the rules (or knowledgeable on how to stall debate) meetings in Lesotho displayed greater freshness and vibrancy than elsewhere in the case study countries. These meetings lent themselves to more qualitative analysis than in the other countries that focused more on quantitative analyses of the meetings (see also the section on methodology in Chapter two).



Talking gender in Jo'burg

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Gender lens on council meetings

What is it like for women, many of whom are in local government for the first time, to participate in these meetings? Research by the World Bank on local councils in India found that controlling for other factors women scored 24 points lower than men in a 100 point scale of political participation.[69] In observations of 11 council meetings in Namibia, Mauritius and South Africa, GL devised a detailed spread sheet of all the interventions made by councillors, divided into male and female. This was further sub-divided into decision-makers, whether male or female (speakers, mayors or deputy mayors) and ruling party/ opposition.

Table 23 shows that while opposition voices accounted for a total of 34 percent of the interventions (25 percent men and nine percent women) – roughly consistent with opposition strengths in the councils - women's voices only accounted for 27 percent of the total, with men (73 percent) dominating all meetings.

This was especially so in Mauritius (the country in the study with the lowest proportion of women (17 percent in the two council meetings observed, but 100 percent male voices). Yet even in South Africa and Namibia, with around 40 percent each women in local government, men dominated meetings 71 to 73 percent of the time. To the extent women spoke, about one third of these came from opposition parties.

69. "Panchayats as Inclusive Organisations", World Bank (1999) p14.

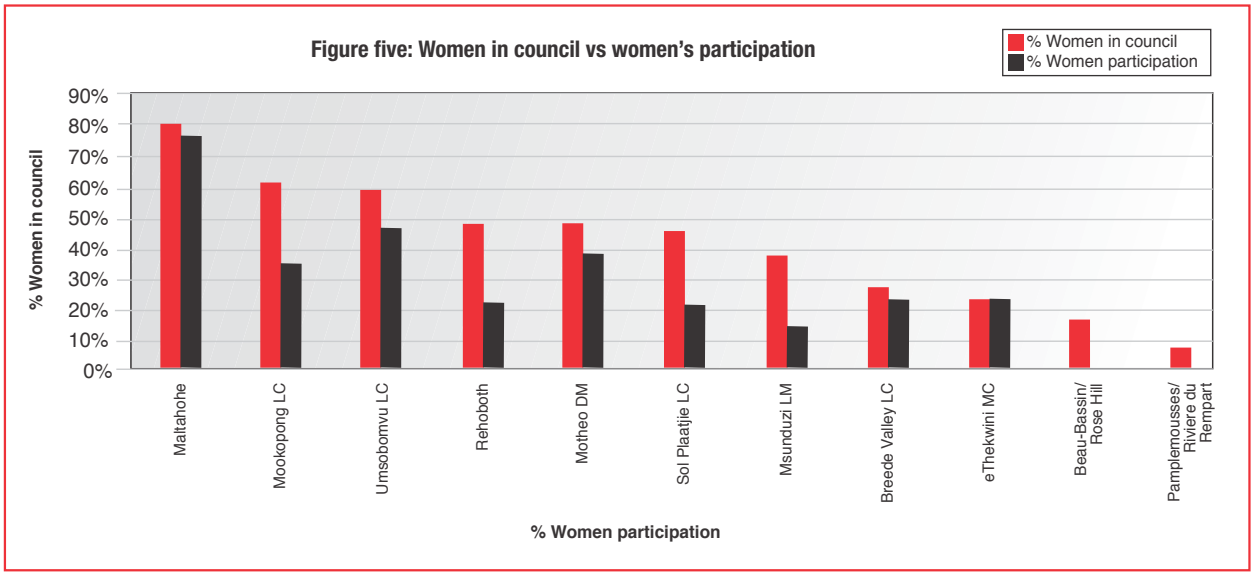
Table 23: Women's participation in council meetings

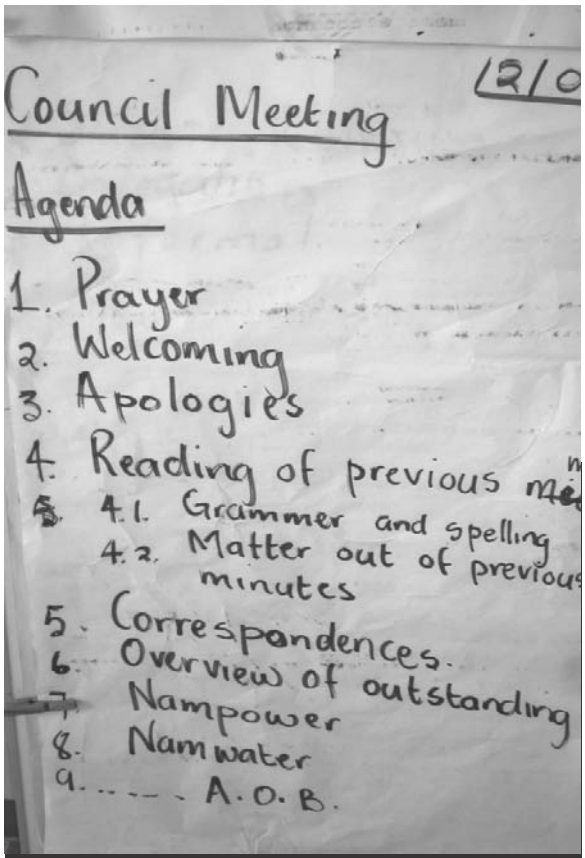
Country/ Council	% Women in council	Mayor/ Chair	Total interventions	WHO SPEAKS															
				MEN								WOMEN							
				DM		RP		OP		Total		DM		RP		OP		Total	
				No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
NAMIBIA																			
Maltahohe	80%	M	9	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	2	22%	2	22%	2	22%	3	33%	7	78%
Rehoboth	50%	M	74	51	69%	6	8%	0	0%	57	77%	10	14%	0	0%	7	9%	17	23%
Sub total			83	53	64%	6	7%	0	0%	59	71%	12	14%	2	2%	10	12%	24	29%
MAURITIUS																			
Pamplemousses Riviere du Rempart	8%	M	7	4	57%	3	43%	0	0%	7	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Beau-Bassin/ Rose Hill	17%	M	1	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Sub total			8	5	63%	3	38%	0	0%	8	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SOUTH AFRICA																			
Motheo DM	50%	F	15	0	0%	5	33%	4	27%	9	60%	1	7%	1	7%	4	27%	6	40%
Msunduzi LC	39%	F	26	3	12%	6	23%	13	50%	22	85%	3	12%	1	4%	0	0%	4	15%
eThekwini MC	23%	M	86	18	21%	22	26%	26	30%	66	77%	7	8%	4	5%	9	10%	20	23%
Mookgopong LC	63%	F	11	3	27%	1	9%	3	27%	7	64%	3	27%	1	9%	0	0%	4	36%
Umsobomvu LC	60%	F	60	2	3%	24	40%	6	10%	32	53%	10	17%	18	30%	0	0%	28	47%
Sol Plaatjie LC	47%	M	92	2	2%	27	29%	44	48%	73	79%	0	0%	7	8%	12	13%	19	21%
Breede Valley LC	28%	F	44	1	2%	22	50%	11	25%	34	77%	2	5%	6	14%	2	5%	10	23%
Sub total			334	29	9%	107	32%	107	32%	243	73%	26	8%	38	11%	27	8%	91	27%
TOTAL			425	87	20%	116	27%	107	25%	310	73%	38	9%	40	9%	37	9%	115	27%

DM=Decision Maker; RP=Ruling Party; OP=Opposition Party; M=Male; F=Female

Source: Gender Links 2007

Note: As per the methodology section found in Chapter two, two different methodologies were piloted for council meeting observations. The findings of the more qualitative approach used in the Lesotho council meetings can be found at Table 26.





Bethanie meeting agenda

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Overall the findings showed a higher level of participation by women in councils with more women and where women led meetings (see Chapter five).

However as illustrated in Figure five, with the exception of eThekwini in the KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa where women constitute 23 percent of the total and spoke 23 percent of the time in the meeting observed there were no other instances in which women's voices were equal to their strength in the council (although women in the Maltahohe council in Namibia, who constitute 80 percent of the council and made 78 percent interventions came close).

In the Msunduzi municipality women make up 39 percent of council members but only contributed to the discussion 15 percent of the time. The mayor, a woman, accounted for most of these. The only other woman who participated expressed concern about the effect of the electricity problem on old age homes. Showing that it is not only women who raise "women's concerns" a male councillor asked why the municipal manager referred to the people who fix electricity as "his guys" and questioned if

there are not any women around to deal with the problem. Despite the opposition making 50 percent of the contributions, none of the women in opposition spoke.

In Rehoboth, Namibia, women councillors constituted 50 percent of the total participants, but only 23 percent of the conversation. The woman deputy mayor accounted for 14 percent of the interventions, and a woman in opposition for the other nine percent (see Box 18). Most of the interventions by the deputy mayor were to second proposals made by the mayor, who accounted for 69 percent of the interventions turning the meeting into a virtual one man show. Once when the deputy mayor intervened to say that they had changed a decision cited by the mayor, the mayor insisted that the decision held because he had chaired the meeting. The deputy mayor's contributions were reduced to saying the prayer at the beginning and proposing that flowers be sent to the family of a prominent member of the community who had passed away at the end of the meeting.

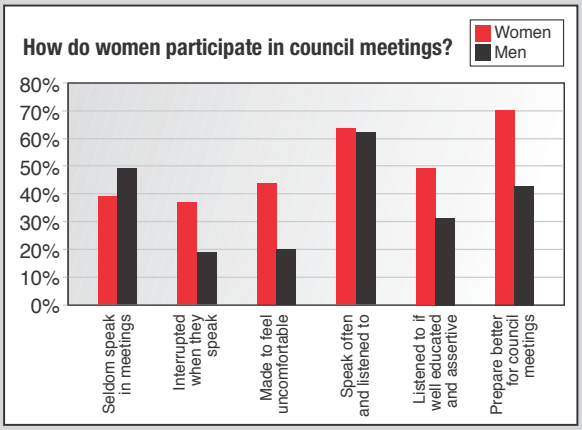
In the Umsobomvu local council in the Northern Cape, South Africa women make up 60 percent of council but only contributed to the discussion 47 percent of the time. The female mayor chaired the meeting. She made ten out of the 28 interventions by women but was the final decision-maker on a number of issues. The mayor was firm and clear on the council's policies and procedures and appeared to command the respect of the councillors. She also nominated another woman councillor to sit on the district health committee. The other woman councillor who spoke frequently was the only councillor in her second term. When women talked they raised day to day concerns such as not phasing out high mast lights in all areas because children throw stones at street lights which renders them useless until globes are replaced at the expense of the council.

In the response to the questionnaire, women and men councillors generally felt that women contribute to discussions, but women perceived a higher level of inhibiting factors than men (see box).



eThekwini Council Meeting *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

What the councillors said:



In response to various options regarding women's participation in council meetings, a fairly high proportion of both male and female councillors agreed with the statement that women "speak often and are listened to." Men were more likely than women to say that women "seldom speak in meetings." Women on the other hand agreed far more strongly with the statements that women are interrupted when they speak (38 percent women compared to 17 percent men); are made to feel uncomfortable (43 percent women and 20 percent men) and are listened to only if they are well educated and assertive (48 percent women and 31 percent men). Women (70 percent) also agreed more strongly than men (43 percent) with the statement that women prepare better for meetings than men.

Barriers to participation

Speaking at a workshop for Maseru women councillors organised by the Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) in December 2006, Rethabile Mohloli, Animator for Development Peace for Education, painted a graphic picture of the expectations of women councillors on the one hand and the barriers they confront on the other. Among the roles she cited are attending monthly community meetings; conferences in Maseru; travel through their constituency to reach the remote communities to hold public gatherings; monitoring development in the community and monitoring HIV and AIDS.

Yet, she noted, women councillors are exposed to gender violence as they travel long distances; politics is a rough game; local government itself is fraught with conflicts (in the case of Lesotho especially with the chiefs); women are shy to speak in public; women are discriminated against and "said to be empty vessels and are undermined even if what they are saying is right." On top of all that, Mohloi observed, women are said to be "emotional and sensitive; to be taking things too personally."

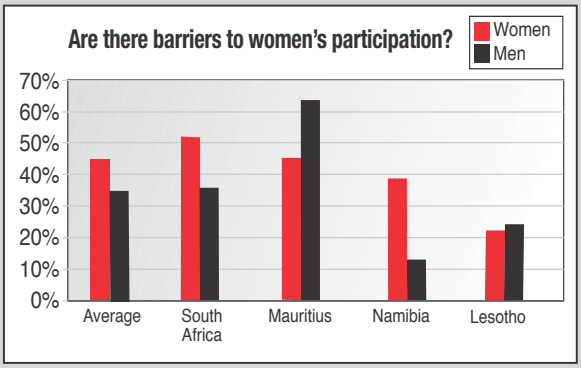
In this study, GL asked women and men councillors first if they perceived barriers to women's participation and second what they perceived these barriers to be.



Men dominate meetings

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

What the councillors said:

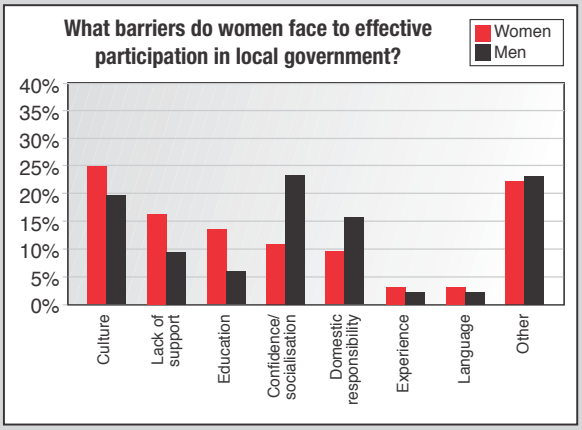


Overall 42 percent of the councillors (46 percent women and 36 percent men) said there are barriers to women participating in local government; a figure much lower than in Ringing up the Changes (which included respondents in the executive, parliament and at local level) in which 83 percent of participants perceived the existence of barriers.

Although many councillors said there were no barriers, they went on to give examples of barriers. Researchers believe that they possibly misunderstood the question to mean legislative and administrative barriers rather than structural barriers.

Not surprisingly over 64 percent of the men (compared to 44 percent women) in Mauritius, where women constitute 6.4 percent of local councillors, agreed with the statement.

South Africa, the country with the second lowest proportion of women in local government in the study had the highest proportion of women (53 percent) who perceived the existence of barriers (compared to 34 percent men). Namibia the country with the second highest number of women in local government (42 percent) showed the biggest difference between the views of women (39 percent) and men (13 percent) to barriers, with Namibian men having the lowest perception of barriers. Lesotho, the country with the highest proportion of women in local government (58 percent) also had the lowest proportion (around 25 percent in each case) stating that there are barriers to women's participation.



With regard to what these barriers are, women (25 percent, compared to 19 percent men) cited culture as the biggest barrier. 23 percent men cited confidence and socialisation as the biggest barrier. Women ranked this fourth (11 percent). Women cited lack of support as the second biggest barrier (16 percent) while men said that domestic responsibility was the second biggest barrier (15 percent).

Interestingly domestic responsibility topped the list of barriers in Mauritius (37 percent) and Namibia (31 percent), where lack of support was given the same weighting.

South Africa and Mauritius were the only countries where language was cited as a barrier; a reflection of the multi ethnic nature of the countries. Researchers, however, witnessed language to be a major impediment in other countries (for example in Namibia, where English is the official language but Afrikaans is the language of every day conversation.)

Reflecting the newness of local government in Lesotho, councillors there cited confidence and socialisation as the biggest barrier; compared to Namibia (which has the oldest gender quota for local government) where no councillors cited this as a barrier.

Ideological barriers

While at national level the barriers to women's effective participation are increasingly cited as personal, political and institutional, at local level it is the ideological barriers - culture religion, racism etc that feature most strongly in discussions about barriers to women's effective participation. Sexism cuts across all of these.

Culture and socialisation

Despite the differences in their geographical location, social, political and economic and ethnic backgrounds, patriarchy is the one cross cutting feature of all the case study countries. While local government may seem an obvious political sphere for women because of its closeness to the people and impact on daily life, it is here that many people still hold strong cultural beliefs that women are not capable of being leaders and that they should not occupy public spaces.

Lesotho, South Africa and Namibia have dual systems of customary and codified law. Customary law is protected by the Constitution in Lesotho. The South African and Namibian Constitutions state that where there is a conflict between custom and the Constitution the Bill of Rights takes precedence. But the daily reality for the majority of women in all three countries is that women remain minors all their lives: under their fathers, husbands and finally even brother-in-laws and sons. Although Mauritius does not have this dual system, its multi-ethnic, strongly religious communities (the majority of whom are Hindu, followed by Muslims) are also steeped in patriarchal ideologies and traditions.

Sheila Bappoo, veteran politician, minister of women's affairs for 13 years and now Minister of Social Security and National Solidarity contends that the curse of Mauritius is "our patriarchal society coupled with the mentality we have at political party level. The lobbies, be it on terms of ethnicity, culture or religion, are very strong and women do not form part of these lobbies. There are more candidates to be fielded at Local Government, women should have had a better chance but we live in a male world. We have missed the boat because of that. We do not even have a woman Mayor or a President. The male domination is anchored in our society."

A young woman from Rundu, Namibia noted: "It's still part of the culture that they (men) believe that women should be at home with the children and the husband must go to work and bring in the money and then he will control everything and will buy everything for you including your underwear, and shoes and clothes for children." Councillor Mosiuoa Buno from Thaba Mokhele community council in Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho said that culture is a barrier to women being able to participate effectively because "men do not believe that women can lead, they believe that women are children."

A participant in the Lesotho civil society focus group added: "Women are trapped in a cultural boundary. They are not supported by the chiefs or the community who believe that they are not good decision-makers; that they can't drive development. They accept whatever the elders say."

These sentiments were echoed by many of the councillors and participants in the focus groups in all four countries. A woman councillor in the Ratau community council in Lesotho said: "In our culture men have the final word in decision-making, in this council women don't participate a lot because they honour that fact". The woman went on to say that women in Lesotho are raised to respect men in that they don't argue with them and that a man's word is final. Consequently this is a problem because they don't feel free to participate in council because men are present.

As a result women face barriers within the council from men who don't believe that they should be there and from members of communities, who they are there to serve, who are also of the opinion that women belong in the home. A particular challenge that women councillors face is their relationship with the chiefs in councils and in communities.



Women and chiefs square up in local government

Traditional authorities are a powerful force at local level in Namibia, South Africa and Lesotho. Their relationship with local government and the gender implications of this are complex.

Both in South Africa and Namibia, the chiefs virtually ran rural local government under previous regimes and worked closely with the apartheid authorities. In South Africa, chiefs vehemently opposed the clause in the Constitution that customary law should be subjected to the Bill of Rights. But both the new ANC and Swapo Party governments were careful not to alienate the chiefs. The institution of chieftaincy is deeply entrenched in Lesotho. The recent introduction of elected local government is a direct threat to the authority of the chiefs and has been the source of considerable tension.

In all three countries, chiefs are the custodians of customary law. They are expected to administer customary law and preserve the culture, language, traditions and traditional values of the community. However, in South Africa and Namibia, where the Constitutions expressly state that the Bill of Rights is supreme, they are not allowed to apply any custom, practise or tradition that is discriminatory or violates the Constitutional Rights of any person. They are also expected to be politically neutral.

Borrowing the logic that it is better to have the chiefs on side than opposing local government provisions have been made for chiefs to be represented within local government in both South Africa and Lesotho. In South Africa, the ANC did not accede to the demand made by chiefs for 50 percent representation on elected councils, but did increase this from ten to 20 percent. In Lesotho, two seats per council are reserved for chiefs, elected to these positions by their peers. They are also free to stand for elections in the wards if they wish.

Traditional authorities also have their own parallel structures on the ground. In Namibia, chiefs may appoint a Chiefs Council or a Traditional Council to assist with administration. South Africa is the only country in the region that has introduced legislation to ensure women's representation in these parallel traditional structures. The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (2003) stipulates that women must comprise 33 percent of traditional councils and that 40 percent of its members must be democratically elected. The remaining members are selected by the chief in terms of custom.

A criticism of the Act is that it makes provision for women to succeed to positions of traditional leadership, without saying how this is to be achieved. While there are some instances of women traditional leaders, this is rare. The Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee (PLPC) argued that the Act and its amendments "constitute, we think, an intricate set of balances of the demands of the key stakeholders. Essentially they revolve around simultaneously enhancing the role of traditional leadership institutions and requiring them to be transformative." However, the committee recommended that the Act be kept under review; in particular that the "issue of gender equality as it applied to the succession of traditional leaders needed to be addressed further."[70]

All three of the case study countries have an assembly of traditional authorities. In Lesotho it is called the College of Chiefs and in Namibia and South Africa the Council of Traditional Leaders. In Namibia Article 102 of the Constitution requires government to establish a Council of Traditional Leaders. The function of the Council is to advise the President on the control and use of communal land and on other matters referred to it by the President. Former President Sam Nujoma described the role of the Council as a "bridge between modernity and tradition, and to ensure that the values of hard work, honesty, family, integrity and community are imparted to our society, especially the youth."[71]

Each traditional authority may send two representatives to the Council. They are appointed for five years and may not be members of parliament, regional councillors or leaders of a political party. Any draft legislation that deals with communal land must be shown to the Council of Traditional Leaders who have 90 days to make comments and recommendations before this goes to the National Assembly.

In all three case study countries, traditional leaders are bound to give support to central, regional and local government. They have no role in the demarcation of local authority boundaries and their official role with respect to local government is mainly an advisory and facilitative role.

In South Africa, traditional authorities are expected to advise the government in developing policy and legislation impacting on rural communities; participate in national evaluations of programmes that impact on rural communities; facilitate community involvement in the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and enter into service agreements with municipalities regarding the provision of services to rural communities.[72]

70 Report of the Portfolio Committee on Provincial and Local Government on the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Bill, 29 October 2003.

71 State of the Nation Address, 30 April 1999.

72 Gender Equality in local governance (2006) Commission on Gender Equality p. 20.

In Lesotho, one of the most contentious issues is that chiefs no longer have jurisdiction over the distribution of land (see Chapter nine). Because the transfer of powers from the chiefs to local government in the "mountain kingdom" is so recent, the impact of a traditional system that theoretically has little power but in practise exercises tremendous sway is a contentious issue, especially for women councillors.

Box 12: The chief problem in Lesotho

Field work for this study showed that the relationship between the chiefs and the councillors in Lesotho is fraught with conflict and in many instances is a barrier to women councillors being able to perform their duties effectively.

At a workshop of women councillors from the Maseru district convened by the Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) in December 2006, many participants highlighted the challenges that they face when dealing with chiefs. One of the councillors commented that "working with the chiefs is very difficult because there is a lack of understanding about the roles and responsibilities of both the chiefs and councillors".

Participants complained that at best there is lack of support and at worst obstruction by chiefs. Complaints included the fact that chiefs continue to levy charges on the community and in some cases intentionally misallocate land belonging to community members to sabotage councillors. Demarcation of boundaries is another cause of conflict with constituents not knowing what areas are controlled by which chiefs.

According to Matseliso Mapetla, a gender specialist at the National University of Lesotho, "There is confusion within local administration about who is responsible; is it the chiefs, the councillors or the MPs? Who at the end of the day has authority?"

Moliehi Matabane, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government said that several workshops had been held to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the new local authorities in relation to chiefs: "we are working that out, we will continue with our capacity building to ensure harmony."

But in interviews across the country councillors said that things are still far from clear. Adeleide Lemao from the Khomokhoana Council in Leribe noted that "in the village there are some chiefs who don't understand; they think we are going to take their work."

Mosiuoa Buno, a male councillor from Thaba Mokhele community council in Mohale's Hoek says that a core problem is that "people don't have a clear understanding what local government is all about and some councillors are challenged especially with regard to grazing land."

He went on to explain that for a long time the grazing lands (pastures) have been controlled by the chiefs and the men. In women's only constituencies, when women try to control these lands the men challenge them. In such a situation the tendency is for the chiefs to ring their hands.

While male councillors also face challenges from the community Buno believes that these are relatively minor compared to those faced by women: "With the men councillors it is just the naughtiness of boys, stealing away at night and taking the cattle to graze in preserved grazing areas and hiding or running away but for women councillors they do it in the daylight and let the cattle graze on preserved land."



Marefiloe Mahao

Photo: Susan Tolmay

Marefiloe Mahao, a councillor in the Mathula community in Mafeteng, said one of the sore points in the relationship between councillors and chiefs is that chief's can no longer levy fines for offences. These monies are now being collected by community councils and given to the district councils. As a result of the lack of understanding of these processes chiefs feel dispossessed and have become uncooperative, making working relations unpleasant.

Another councillor from the same district, Pulane Ranooe is proud of the fact that she stood successfully against three men and two women in an openly contested constituency and won. But she alleges that she faces resistance from some of the men who work closely with the chiefs. The biggest problem she has faced as a councillor is the poor turn out at *pitsos* (public gatherings) that she has organised through the chief whom she relies on to send out invitations. She is convinced that the chief is not sending the invitations out on time. It is at these meetings that people are given information. Poor participation hinders her ability to perform optimally.

Racism and sexism

In both South Africa and Namibia, local government has traditionally been a white male preserve in the urban areas, and traditional authorities in rural areas. Apartheid entrenched both gender and racial hierarchies. The legacy of this intersection is felt in all areas of government but is most acute at the local level where lower levels of education and exposure (see next section on personal agency) add to a sense of inadequacy.

In the village of Bethanie in the Hardap region of southern Namibia, the all woman council is not well educated or sophisticated. Vice Chairperson Regina Ikela complained that white people in the community (mostly farmers) refuse to come to meetings that they call, and insist on holding separate meetings with the councillors. As reflected in the focus group with the male villagers this undermines the credibility of the councillors and fuels a perception that they are lackeys.

A study on gender and local government in South Africa by the Commission on Gender Equality found that:

> Women are discriminated against on the basis of gender, race and culture. Issues such as language, education and socio economic status all contribute to their marginalisation in local authorities. In many municipalities, administrative staff structures tend to be representative of the

previous political order, and new councillors, as representatives of the new political order, also face subtle undermining from every angle, including their own party structures and the "old order" staff. Women find themselves in the cross fire between corrupt racist and sexist officials and councillors.[73]

Low self confidence

In the research, many women spoke about how the combination of ideological barriers leads to an inferiority complex, lack of self confidence and not believing in themselves. As a woman councillor from Msunduzi put it: "In some cases women are more clued up but men are the ones who speak. Even though they might not be saying anything substantial the way they are saying it makes them come across as knowledgeable."

Deveena Sandya Luchoomun Boygah, Vice President of the District Council of Pamplemousses-Riviere du Rempart in Mauritius notes that "the culture of the village forbids a woman from coming forward. Men feel threatened when they see a woman knowing too well that we can be as good if not better. I was on the ground day and night when the virus of Chikungunya was at its peak and yet I am a woman. There is a big leap from being elected at village level and going to the District Council itself. Men, very often, are not prepared to give women this chance."

Minister Indira Seebun adds that "Women in rural areas are shy and we have to give them the means to break new grounds and challenge stigmas attached to public women." Women councillors in all the case study countries spoke about the sense of inadequacy that they have felt at one time or the other.

Box 13: Fighting a feeling of inadequacy



Nozibele Mtyali *Photo: Judith Mtsewu*

Councillor Nozibele Mtyali, from Ukhahlamba metropolitan council in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa says her experiences of male domination within the family while she was growing up and her belief in the ideals of a non-sexist and non-racist society played a key role in her decision to join the ANC in 1990.

But it hasn't been an easy road. Although Mtyali has been a councillor for six years and is now in her second term, she cites "low self-confidence" as the major challenge that she still faces. Some of the issues linked to this are that women often have a lot of self doubt; "I also had this on my arrival," she says. She often felt ill-equipped to engage and she worried about her language (English) competency and feared the response of her colleagues.

But she began to grow when an opening became available in the Mayoral Executive Committee and she was asked by the mayor to be part of it. "I grew out of my shell." She says that "It helped having a female councillor to provide support and mentor me along the way." Another thing which made things easier was the positive feedback she received from her female colleagues about her performance in the Council.

73. "Gender equality in local governance" (2006), Commission on Gender Equality

The PHD or "pull her down" syndrome

One of the tests of the oppression of any particular group in society is the extent to which that group internalises its own oppression and takes this out by oppressing others. In gender debates, "the mother-in-law" syndrome is a well known one: older women who have been denied power and agency all their lives often lord it over daughters-in-law over whom society gives them some power and control.

It is important to note that men "pull each other down" all the time but this is usually dressed up in very different language like "manoeuvring" and "strategic positioning", "sidelining" and other forms of institutional intrigue. For women, the "pull her down" or PHD syndrome as it is often called occurs in the context of women whose own sense of agency has been undermined undermining the agency of others.

It is an important comment on the barriers that women face at the local level, where all the ideological forces mentioned earlier in the chapter are often experienced in a more acute form than at the national level, that the PHD syndrome came up repeatedly in interviews, (far more so than in the first study, Ringing up the Changes, that covered all political spheres - cabinet, national and local). Researchers also observed some instances of "PHD" first hand.

Box 14: An open display of "PHD"

At the council meeting observed in Lekwa Teemane, South Africa two women councillors whispered, giggled and exchanged notes throughout a meeting chaired by the woman mayor. At first the mayor turned a blind eye on the distractive and openly disrespectful behaviour. Finally, however, she called them to order and issued a warning.

A male councillor intervened and called a mini-caucus for the ANC councillors where he raised his concerns about the behaviour of the two councillors, as well as the lack of unity between members and highlighted that this created a bad image of the party. It is also the kind of behaviour that fuels the perception that women are not supportive of each other.

Many councillors and focus group participants identified "PHD" as a constraint that they found difficult to explain. Women councillors in Khukhune in Lesotho said they believed that women are jealous of one another and that they that they do not want to see other women succeed; that is why "a woman cannot vote for another woman."

A woman in one of the regions of the City of Johannesburg echoed similar views: "Women do not push for other women to be in the forefront. They do not support each other; instead they tend to bring each other down quite a lot. I think we are just jealous of each other."

Others believe that the reason is the socialisation of women and the fact that they have been brought up to believe that men are better or smarter than them. According to Councillor Pulane Ranooe from Lesotho: "Maybe it is in women's nature that women don't support one another until there is a man at the head."

Councillor Agnes Kafula from the City of Windhoek in Namibia added that generally women have the problem of not nominating each other. She believes

that if women support each other they will get the support of their male counterparts, "We need to support and empower our women at grassroots level."

A woman in Grootfontein, Namibia said that knowledge has a role to play: "It's good to promote women as councillors although there is still a problem with women supporting each other. This is caused by lack of knowledge"

A woman from another region of the City of Johannesburg added: "I really don't know which school women really need to go to, where they can learn be supportive of each other." She acknowledged that women have been socialised to think that men are better leaders and that there is always a judgement factor where women are concerned. But she is trying to change that and as a leader in her community she is trying to ensure that there is gender balance and equal representation from all sectors in the ward on committees.

Other women in the group added to what she was saying. "Due to the cultural socialisation that women have gone through, particularly that of being submissive, we as women have not really adjusted and come to terms with the issue of leadership. Also there is the fear of failure because men are watching us with a magnifying glass, waiting to see us fall. So it is all about the background that we come from, and hence we always wonder what will happen when we take the step of being a public figure and leader. It is also about being comfortable with the role that you know of, one which you have always played successfully, without any fear of failure."

Another focus group participant in the City of Johannesburg agreed: "We are brainwashed and are afraid to speak up, but I think it is high time that we stood up for the truth and advocated for women's empowerment."

A woman councillor from eThekwini believes that the long term solution is by raising awareness among women and changing the way children are socialised. This sentiment was echoed by a member of the civil society focus group in Sol Plaatjie who noted: "The way we are brought up affects how we behave, we have always been brought up to believe that men are in charge. We need to now bring our children up to believe that we are all equal and then things will start straightening out." They add that women need to be conscientised and to change their mindsets and that the need for role models is crucial in this process.

Women in the Cape Town focus group noted that one of the reasons why women are constantly under attack and attack each other is that they have to "constantly prove themselves in everything that they do. Women constantly have to fight for people to understand who they are and to protect everything." These women believed that empowering women councillors and helping them to develop their self confidence is the key to overcoming "PHD".

Personal agency

As the previous section illustrated, the dominant ideologies and ethos can be undermining of women, resulting in low self confidence. Related factors that can undermine women's agency are low levels of education and exposure; inappropriate training and capacity building; age as well as juggling work and family responsibilities.

Low levels of education

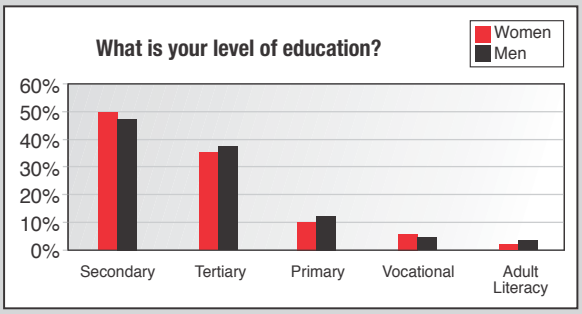
There is no education requirement for becoming a councillor and the research found that education levels vary greatly from primary school qualifications to some with post doctorate degrees. Lower levels of education do however dominate with post

graduate education being the exception rather than rule.

Ironically, as will be explored further in Chapter eight, many of the functions of local government (such as expenditure oversight and decisions on whether or not to outsource services) are highly technical and require a certain levels of skill and experience.

"Nowadays a municipality is a business," notes Bazil Brown, Swapo Party councillor for Keetmanshoop. "If you can't read or write or write or have the necessary experience you will struggle. I know it would not be politically correct to set educational criteria for local government, but at least councillors should be given rapid and relevant capacity building to be able to perform their tasks."

What the councillors said:



The questionnaire asked councillors which level of education they had achieved: primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational or adult literacy. The study revealed that the majority of councillors had secondary school education (50 percent women and 48 percent men) followed by tertiary education (35 percent women and 36 percent men). Compared to the findings in Ringing up the Changes (that included cabinet ministers, parliamentarians and councillors) in which over half of both women and men had tertiary education, the study shows that levels of education in local government are lower than in politics generally.

There are country variances to the findings. Namibian councillors have the highest level of education with 58 percent of the respondents stating that they have tertiary education followed by secondary at 43 percent. Councillors in Lesotho had the lowest levels of education with 46 percent saying they had primary education only, followed by secondary (40 percent). In Mauritius most councillors (69 percent) had secondary education followed by 19 percent of them having tertiary education. Similarly in South Africa the majority of councillors (47 percent) have secondary education followed by tertiary education at 45 percent. South Africa has the highest number of councillors with vocational education at 5 percent.

These findings show that there aren't big differences in education levels between women and men councillors. Yet women seem to feel this more acutely. As a woman councillor Nobomvu Mgqaliso in the Kopanong local council in the Free State of South Africa noted: "Women are afraid to participate because they don't have the qualifications. They do have skills but not qualifications – they feel ashamed."

"Being afraid to be a leader can also be attributed to the lack of education, because women were the one's who were mainly disadvantaged previously," added a woman in the Johannesburg women's focus group. "Although we may have the natural leadership skills, but the constant reminder and the limitations of not being educated prevents us from being bold and taking the bull by the horns, and getting into leadership."

Laurah Modise of the Sol Plaatjie local council in the Northern Cape province of South Africa says that low levels of education undermine confidence:

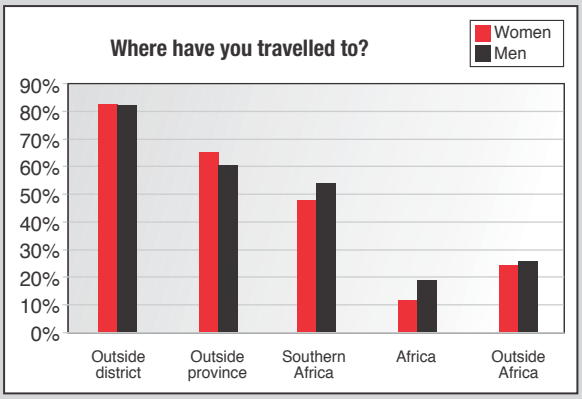
"When you speak to those that are learned it will seem that you are saying nothing and it will show because some would grin and then if someone realises that this is happening she won't talk again."

More than twice as many women (14 percent) than men (6 percent) cited education as a barrier to women's effective participation. This is an indication that it's not necessarily formal education that is the barrier as much as it is exposure and experience. As the woman councillor from Kopanong noted: "Historically men have had all the information, this now needs to be shared". She added that this is especially so in rural areas where "women's voices are not heard".

Exposure

Formal qualifications are only part of the story. Many of the skills of politicians are acquired on the job. As a male councillor in Msunduzi, in the KwaZulu Natal Province of South Africa put it: "Experience is essential to leadership." Travel and exposure are an important means of adding to this skills base.

What the councillors said:



In response to the question on the extent of their travel and exposure, most councillors said that they had travelled outside their district and within their country. More men (55 percent) than women (47 percent) had travelled within Southern Africa.

Just over one fifth of the women and men interviewed had travelled abroad and an even lower percentage had travelled within Africa beyond the SADC borders. In contrast, almost all cabinet ministers and parliamentarians interviewed in *Ringing up the Changes* had travelled abroad. This reflects the much lower level of exposure at local level.

Country variances show that Lesotho councillors (89 percent) have travelled within Southern Africa the most. This is to be expected given that the tiny nation is completely surrounded by South Africa. Mauritian councillors (56 percent) are more likely to have travelled abroad; also consistent with the fact that the country is an island and is one of the more affluent Southern African countries. Compared to councillors from the other countries Namibian (32 percent) and South African (15 percent) of councillors have travelled the most within Africa

Language

The irony in all four case study countries is that while English is the official language and therefore the language of Council meetings, it is not the first language of the majority of the people in any of them. A corollary to lower levels of exposure and education is that more so than at national level, councillors struggle to participate effectively in the official language. This is being dealt with differently in each country.

All council meetings and workshops observed in Lesotho took place in Sotho; an important contributory factor to the high level of engagement observed in these meetings.

In Mauritius documentation for meetings can be either in English or in French. The minutes of meetings are in French or English. Discussions are held in French and English but some councillors speak in Creole, the language of every day communication. In village councils most of the discussions are in Creole.

In Namibia, researchers observed many councillors struggling with English during meetings. In Rehoboth the only opposition member present (a woman) exercised her constitutional right to speak in her home language (Afrikaans). Occasionally the mayor answered her back in English and other times in Afrikaans. Most of the meeting took place in English, and all the documentation was in English.

More so than in any other country, councillors in South Africa cited language as a major barrier to participation. This is understandable considering that there are 11 official languages in the country and yet in practice there is one official language, English. Councillors speak a range of languages and yet all of the documentation and proceedings pertaining to local councils are in English.

In parliament, interpretation is provided in all 11 languages. Yet in the observation of council meetings in South Africa, only three councils, Johannesburg, eThekwini and Breede Valley, provided interpretation, greatly enhancing participation in the meeting (see Chapter five).

One councillor mentioned that during caucus discussions some councillors would laugh at the weak English competency of some councillors; a reaction that made other councillors refrain from making further contributions for fear of being ridiculed. Several female councillors admitted to being self-conscious of their English competency and often opted to keep silent rather than risk speaking "incorrect" English.

The civil society focus group in eThekwini comprising several individuals who work closely with councillors felt especially strongly about this issue. They say that the documentation for council meetings is usually technical (for example government Acts, IDPs, budgets, municipal finance and management documents). These are difficult even for English speaking people to understand.

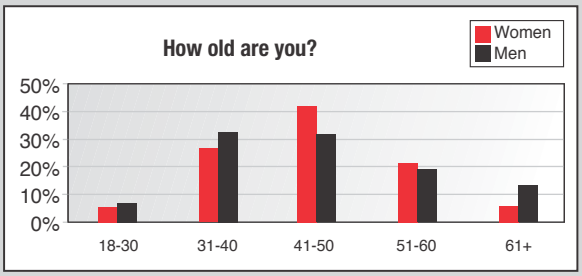
The documentation and discussions also affect the ability of councillors to give feedback to their communities. As one participant noted some of the councillors "don't go to their communities because they don't know what it is that they are supposed to be telling them because they don't understand what was discussed or the decisions that were taken."

Women in the City of Johannesburg feel that too much emphasis is placed on education and knowing how to speak English to a point where it becomes quite threatening to the upliftment of women. They feel that "the language barrier contributes to misinterpretations and understanding of what a person was trying to say. It just becomes a complicated situation and some take advantage of someone who is not fluent in English, by using terminology that the person will not understand."

Age of councillors

The only requirement to become a councillor in all the case study countries is that one should be able to vote for a municipal council which means that candidates should be 18 years or older. Given that being a councillor is a part time job in many countries, local government appears to attract older people.

What the councillors said:



Most of the councillors interviewed for this research fell in the 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 age categories, with more women (41 percent) than men (31 percent) in this category, and more men (32 percent) than women (28 percent) in the 31 to 40 category. One explanation for this could be that women between the ages of 31 and 40 are having and raising children and that they are more available for this kind of work once their children are grown. Again the difference between men (12 percent) and women (five percent) in the 61+ age group could also be as a result of women's added domestic responsibilities in raising and looking after grandchildren and especially children who have been orphaned by the growing incidence of HIV and AIDS in the region. There were very few councillors (five percent women and six percent of men) who fell into the 18 to 30 category suggesting that local politics holds little interest for young people.

Overall, the majority of both male and female councillors are over 50. Several of the focus groups, especially in Namibia, expressed concern that there is so little interest by young people in local government. The age profile of councillors has implications for their agency, as well as for how capacity building interventions are designed.

Inappropriate capacity building

Older people come with a wealth of experience, but with lower levels of formal education. Adult training is a specialised field. It needs to be conducted in a way that draws on and validates these life experiences; is not threatening and is directly applied to the tasks at hand. How capacity building is conducted is especially important for women, who start from a background of low self-confidence.

The eThekwini focus group echoed the views of many of those interviewed for this research when they said that they feel that women councillors are "thrown in at the deep end." They said that training offered is not only inappropriate but "is a problem when it's done only in English because by the end of the training no one has actually learned anything because they didn't understand the language medium in which it was done."

A participant in the women's focus group in the City of Johannesburg added: "No one was born to be a councillor; you will learn to be effective as a councillor only if you are given the opportunity to learn."

A participant in a civil society focus group in Maseru, Lesotho, noted: "Lesotho has become a 'perfect' global example for increasing women's participation in local government. Yet these women have been set up for failure. They do not understand their roles."

GTZ expert Rajeev Ahal criticised what he described as the "workshop mania" that had gripped the country since its first democratically elected local authorities came into place in 2005. He noted that dozens of organisations had been offering training that is not targeted or coordinated, and that has been consuming a lot of the councillors time.

Mathato Mantso, Chairperson of the Khomokhoana Council in Leribe, Lesotho, agreed. "We did not receive proper induction" she said, "yet the expectations are high. The community expect us to deliver."

Field observations of a variety of councils showed how low levels of education, age, gender, inappropriate training and education are conspiring to reduce the effectiveness of councillors; especially women.

Box 15: Odds stacked against all female council



Fredrick and Ikela
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

With a women only council-of-five, woman chair and vice chair, the village of Bethanie in the southern Hardap region of Namibia is the only one in this study to have such a predominance of women. Despite the complex politics of the region, there is no pull-her-down syndrome here, nor hint of in-fighting in the Council.

A sway area for Swapo Party and the opposition, the council has three opposition members and two Swapo Party members. Anna Fredrick, the chair who smiles when she circles the "over 60" tick box in the questionnaire and is proud to be introduced as a home maker, belongs to the opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA).

Her deputy, Regina Ikela is a much younger Swapo Party stalwart who went into exile, studied agriculture in the east bloc and has struggled to get recognition for her qualifications since she came back. She has a relatively junior administrative post in the ministry of agriculture. But as she speaks English and is more educated than Fredrick, it is Ikela who represents the Council in many formal meetings.

Despite the age and political gap, the two get along well. Fredrick refers to Ikela as her "right hand woman." They have great plans for the sleepy village on the fringes of the Namib Desert. Ikela's agricultural training tells her that there is water beneath the ground of a piece of land owned by the church and complex negotiations have begun to get the church to give up the land so that the council can start a fish farm as an income generating project in the area where unemployment runs at over 80 percent and alcoholism is high.

But the council is in such debt and daily turmoil that all that is in the distant future. Like many local councils in Namibia (see Chapter eight) Bethanie owes NAMWATER, the water parastatal, over N$300 000 (or about $43 000) and there seems little hope of getting out of the debt trap. Fund raising efforts by the council are a drop in the bucket of the big water bill; "the bottom line is that people here are too poor, and we are not allowed (by central government) to set our own tariff," Ikela sighs.

She adds that with her as the most highly educated member of the council, and no financial background among the councillors, they are struggling to make sense of the council finances. Training offered by the

Ministry of Local Government after the elections "came too late" and has apparently not assisted the councillors in understanding or unravelling the books.

The upshot is that despite their best efforts, the councillors are viewed by the community as being ineffective. Women interviewed in a focus groups expressed their support for the 50/50 campaign, but stressed that "this council is in crisis."

Men in the community were far harsher in their criticism. "These women are not literate or qualified; they have no skills," one man said. "Instead of asking us for help they try to do things themselves when they are not capable."

Referring to the chair another added: "She is a senior citizen, steeped in the old way of thinking. There are no new approaches."

Discounting the efforts that the council is making to start a fish farm, the men accused the council of lacking strategic vision: "They do not think proactively. There is no innovative or independent thinking."

The men maintained that given its location as the shortest route to the sea from South Africa, Bethanie should be able to set itself up as a major cross roads and commercial centre. They believe that underpinning the lack of business skills in the council is the lack of gender balance: "50/50 should not mean everything or nothing."

Both Fredrick and Ikela said they would have preferred some men in the council, but added they had no control over the list system that had led to this state of affairs. They believe that they are doing the best they can in difficult circumstances.

In Lesotho, Ahal said a major omission in capacity building initiatives is gender training. While gender dynamics are at their most intense at this level, he noted, little thought had been given to the gender dynamics of training (how to ensure that women and men are equally comfortable with training) as well as the gender content of training (ensuring that women and men benefit equally from local government interventions). This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter nine.

Juggling time

In addition to coping with the challenges of their new jobs, women councillors – like most women in the region – have to shoulder the dual burden of their political work and home work; and for part time councillors a full time job as well. As a City of Johannesburg woman focus group participant put it: "It is quite difficult to be a career woman, because of the roles a woman has to play, of being a mother, wife and care giver in the home."

Box 16: Mother, councillor, station manager



Councillor Kaija Shililifa

Photo: Susan Tolmay

Councillors Kaija Shililifa has a full-time job as the only woman station manager in the whole of Namibia. She works a full day that starts at 7:00 and ends at 16:30. The challenge that she faces as a councillor of the Tsumeb Municipality is that the municipality has the same working hours so the problem arises that when she has to do something for the municipality she has to do it in office hours which conflict with her work. While her boss has become supporting he sometimes doesn't like it when she does council work.

She is also the mother of a four month old baby, a wife and she's studying. "Its tough" she says, "You come home and you are frustrated. The municipal meetings are sometimes at two thirty and they finish at five thirty or six and you come home and it's late." Having meetings during working hours doesn't really work for councillors who have jobs. "The best would be to have councillors from the community who do not have jobs and they can commit themselves to the council work because for someone who is working it is really difficult," she says.

Elaine Trepper, a councillor in the City of Windhoek, juggles being a teacher, a mother and a councillor – all of which she regards as full time jobs. The principal of the school she works at has learned to be supportive after initially having reservations about the time needed for council work and the effect of this on her teaching position. "One of the hardest things I've had to do is to employ someone to take care of my child," she said. Trepper added that the support of her husband has been crucial to her success. Councillor Victoria Kauma from Rundu in Namibia agrees that balancing roles is much easier when the load is shared with a caring spouse.

But many men think that it's simply not possible for women to balance personal and political roles. A participant in the male focus group of Vacoas-Phoenix, Mauritius, argued that: "Women going into politics would also mean that they are giving up their roles as mothers and wives."

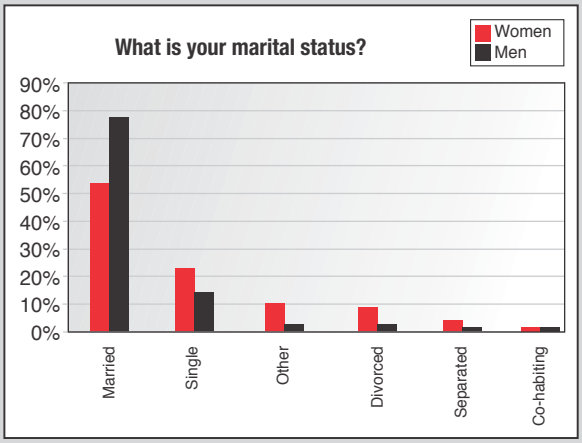
According to Councillor Mosiuoa Buno from Mohale's Hoek in Lesotho, "Another problem is with regard to the spouses of the women councillors who feel jealous and do not want their wives to speak to other men and to come home late or be away. They make comments like "it's as good as not having a wife" or "I might as well get another wife".

Women in Kopanong, South Africa said that many husbands have a negative effect on the ability of women to perform their council tasks: "Their husbands will tell them not to do certain things, like attending meetings until 11:00pm." They believe that women always think about their husbands first

and if their husband tells them not to do something they will listen to him. They feel that councillors don't do things because they have to go home and cook for their husbands.

Nozibele Mtyali from Ukhahlamba district in South Africa says that more often than not women councillors do not have partners who are understanding of the demands of the work of a councillor: "Society and men have yet to adjust to the demands that come with being a working woman." She says that many of her councillor colleagues have gone though marital problems and even divorce because of the demands of their work; a finding corroborated by the research.

What the councillors said:



In response to the question concerning marital status, the study found that male councillors (77 percent) are more likely than women (55 percent) to be married and that women (23 percent) are more likely than men (14 percent) to be single. The findings are similar to *"Ringing up the Changes"* which covered all spheres of politics in which 19 percent women and 14 percent men were single. The higher portion of single women at local level is consistent with the high levels of migrant labour, especially in Lesotho. Women (eight percent) are twice as likely as men (three percent) to be divorced. This is also similar to the findings in *Ringing up the Changes* (12 percent female and two percent male divorcees.)

The higher proportion of single and divorced women to men in local politics is an indicator that women find it more difficult to balance their political and family responsibility and that many lack personal support. A question that arises is what kind of institutional support is given to women to assist them in balancing these roles. For example, Vusi Richard Lukhele, a male councillor in Umjindi asks why local authorities do not have day care centre at the municipality.

Institutional

Institutions are a microcosm of our society. Institutional transformation is both a litmus test *of*, and a pre-requisite *for* societal transformation. *Ringing up the changes* documented the changes in institutional norms and culture that are starting to take place in national political structures, particularly in countries that have achieved the "critical mass" of 30 percent. To what extent is the same true at local level?

Meeting times

Meeting times are an important indicator of the extent to which institutions have changed to accommodate women as opposed to women changing to accommodate institutions.

Hemraz Jankee, a male councillor in Vacoas/Phoenix, Mauritius (the country with the lowest proportion of women in the study) notes that "meetings are

held quite late at night and women have to look after the family after a day's work, it is therefore difficult to attend meetings."

In contrast women councillors in Thaba Mokhele, Lesotho (the country with the highest proportion of women in the study) said that the presence of women has resulted in meeting times being set for much earlier so that they can reach home safely. Researchers observed women councillors at a meeting in Thaba Mokhele voting to have council meetings twice instead of once a month. They said they preferred to have short meetings more regularly than long meetings less regularly.

Male councillors in Khoelenya, Lesotho said the presence of women ensured higher levels of punctuality so that meetings end on time and women reach home safely. They add that previously, "governance meetings were held at the chief or anywhere where there was a quorum of men present. But now things have changed, we have to meet at a certain place at certain times."

In most instances in South Africa council meetings take place during office hours. This works for full time councillors but might not be convenient for part time councillors. In Namibia, where all councillors are part time and the majority hold other jobs, meetings take place all start after office hours and finish late.

Dress and debate

Councillor Ilme Schneider of Windhoek, Namibia, says that since there have been more women in council the dress codes have relaxed. "Before independence you would never see a woman in slacks and after independence it was a little frowned upon but some of the women ignored it and wore slacks so now it's accepted."

Unlike some of the parliamentary sessions observed in *Ringing up the Changes*, researchers did not observe any derogatory or sexist comments being made to or about women during the council meetings. This could be due to the more reserved way in which these meetings are conducted generally (as compared to the brusque Westminster style of most parliaments).

It should also be noted that unlike parliaments, where researchers observed debates taking place on gender issues in *Ringing up the Changes*, none of the 41 meetings observed directly addressed a gender concern. In Mauritius the Council meeting of Grand Port/Savanne District Council raised issues with gender implications, for example, infrastructural problems in villages, recovery of debts, organisation of meetings in villages, purchase of lighting materials and lorries, scavenging services, problems of hawkers, and closure of a pre-primary school run by a village council. All these have a direct implication on women and children. But no reference was made to how the measures could affect or improve the lives of women except for the closure of the pre-primary school. This shows that there is still not a high level of gender awareness or discourse in councils, whether in countries with high or low levels of women's representation. The extent to which gender is mainstreamed in the thinking and work of councils is explored in greater depth in Chapter nine.

Support mechanisms

Researchers identified very few support mechanisms for women at local level. Child care facilities are non existent, even in the big metros like Johannesburg. While at national level there are a variety of women's caucuses and support structures, at local level GL only found evidence of a woman's caucuses in one council (Johannesburg) established by the former speaker. Few capacity building initiatives have been designed especially for women.

Strategic positioning

Where women are located within decision making structures has an important bearing on their ability to participate effectively. Table 22 showed that one third of all the interventions made by women councillors were by women in decision-making positions of the council. Yet available data from the case study countries suggests that women are absent from the top decision-making positions of councils.

Table 24: Women in top positions in local government

	Total Mayors/ Chairpersons	No. of women	% women	% women in council
Lesotho	20*	9*	45%	58%
Mauritius	9	2**	22%	6.4%
Namibia	46	13	28%	42%
South Africa	283	113	40%	40%

* This figure is for the sample
** Elected in November 2006

Table 24 shows that in all countries there is a lower proportion of women in the top decision-making structures compared to their representation in the council overall. The lowest is Mauritius, with two women mayors (recently appointed in November 2006). Mauritius is also the country with the lowest proportion of women councillors. Lesotho, the country with the highest proportion of women councillors, also has the highest proportion of women in top positions (45 percent).

Councillor Agnes Kafula from the City of Windhoek in Namibia remarks that: "Men are in the majority as mayors and deputy mayors, and we want to see a balance in the decision-making structures." Kaija Shililifa from Tsumeb in Namibia adds: "We should be having more women in key ministries, as ministers and permanent secretaries. Women only serve as councillors but not as mayors or chairperson on portfolio committees - you don't have power if you just sit there."

Women in South Africa echo these sentiments. Councillors in the Kopanong local council in the Free State said that women are just there in name but they don't have a say in the decisions that are made in the council. The Mayor of the Xhariep District Council in the Free State, Magazine Petersen, adds that many women still believe that men are the only ones who can do things such as be Mayor.

Where women are placed in the leadership of committees is also of significant. The tendency is for women to be assigned to 'soft' areas like social and health issues. These decisions are often made by the party, without individuals being consulted about their preferences. There are often gender dynamics underpinning the decisions.

Table 25: Areas of women's service in local government

Country	Management/ Finance/Admin				Development				Infrastructure				Safety and security				Social and cultural				HIV/AIDS			
	W	M	T	%W	W	M	T	%W	W	M	T	%W	W	M	T	%W	W	M	T	%W	W	M	T	%W
Lesotho	9	14	23	39%	9	12	21	43%	1	0	1	100%	0	0	0	N/A	13	9	22	59%	6	3	9	67%
Mauritius	2	7	9	22%	1	4	5	20%	0	4	4	0%	0	0	0	N/A	3	12	15	20%	0	0	0	N/A
Namibia	4	2	6	67%	3	6	9	33%	2	2	4	50%	0	0	0	N/A	2	0	2	100%	3	0	3	100%
South Africa	17	28	45	38%	12	25	37	32%	8	11	19	42%	4	5	9	44%	21	12	33	64%	0	0	0	N/A
TOTAL	32	51	83	**39%**	25	47	72	**35%**	11	17	55	**20%**	4	5	9	**44%**	39	33	72	**54%**	9	3	12	**75%**

W=Women; M=Men; T=Total

In most countries, information on the committees of local government, let alone who chairs local government, is difficult to obtain. To get an understanding of the gender dynamics in the leadership of committees, GL conducted a mapping of the committees for which it had information from the field visits. As described at the beginning of the chapter, most of the statutory committees pertain to finance, management and administration. Other committees are created by the councils. They can be categorised broadly into development; infrastructure; safety and security; social and cultural and HIV and AIDS. Table 25 shows that women are most likely to be chairs of committees which deal with HIV and AIDS (where these committees exist, mostly in Namibia); as well as social and cultural issues. In Lesotho one HIV/AIDS committee was set up during one of the council meetings observed and a woman immediately elected as a chairperson.

Undoubtedly making HIV and AIDS a council issue (see also the story of Councillor Karolina Pieters at the beginning of Chapter two) is one of the ways in which women are having an impact in local government. As discussed in Chapter six on whether or not women make a difference, the nurturing role associated with women or "women's interests" need to be brought into the public domain. However, to participate fully and effectively, women should not be confined to these roles. It is heartening that overall in the case study countries women constitute 44 percent of the safety and security and 39 percent of the finance and management committees; areas that would normally be associated with men. However, it is a concern that women constitute only 35 percent of the chairs of the development committee and 20 percent of the chairs of the infrastructure committee. The table also demonstrates the importance of having a critical mass of women to be able to assign to different leadership roles. Mauritius, with six percent women has the worst record for women in committee leadership in all the different committees.

The 2005 Annual Report of the Mauritian Human Rights Commission notes with concern that "at the level of the municipal and village councils there are few women occupying top positions. Not a single woman is now a Mayor of a town in Mauritius or President of a District Council. There is one woman Deputy Mayor and another one is Vice President of a District Council." The report further notes that "women in this country should speak with one voice in order to considerably increase representation of women in politics, as empowerment of women has now gained momentum. All women's organisations and political parties should start working towards

this objective by the year 2015 as per the Millennium Goals."

Relationship with the administration

The relationship between councillors and the administration can help or hinder progress. In theory, the administration should provide a professional rump that fills in the skills gaps; provides management support to the councillors and ensures smooth administration as politicians come and go.

In practise, the researchers observed considerable tension between the bureaucracy and councillors who are mostly part time; earn less; know less and are less well educated than their staff; yet have the ultimate political responsibility for delivery. As Councillor Ignatius Mathatha of the Khomokhoana constituency of Leribe, Lesotho noted: "We are having problems with the administration. The district secretary is educated and feels that she is superior to us; she does not understand her duties."

Political factors

A host of political factors have a bearing on the effective participation of women at local level. These include attitudes towards gender within the party itself and where women are positioned within political parties.

A home for women?

The political party is the home of all politicians. It should be the structure that nurtures and grows leaders; supports them through their travails; and constantly seeks to develop new talents. As a civil society participant in the Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa, focus group noted: "Participation is linked to political knowledge. Obviously if one does not understand how politics work it will be difficult for them to participate."

Yet often, as demonstrated by the experiences of Lovena Sowkhee whose party valued her more for her looks than her talents as a politician, even as political parties trumpet gender equality on the outside, they are often among the most sexist institutions in society on the inside. In all of four countries at the time of writing this study there was only one woman leader of a political party (the Independent Democrats in South Africa; also a very minor opposition party). Only one party, the Congress of Democrats (CoD) in Namibia, has a female Vice President.

Hemraz Jankee, former Mayor of Municipality of Vacoas Phoenix in Mauritius notes that "women have been sidelined from politics and local government because of the on- the-ground reality. Meetings are held at night, and men use the vulgar and harsh language. Sometimes men came to meetings drunk and started swearing. We were ourselves embarrassed towards women and wanted to protect them. By trying to protect them we did a disservice and kept them out of politics. Fortunately this has changed and women are now prepared to face the challenge and we are here to help them. I think it is a win-win situation as there are more and more women coming forward in meetings. And this also has helped men to change their attitudes and their language."

According to Dev Virahsawmy, a former councillor and former member of parliament, political parties are controlled by men: "All political parties have their women's wing but this is an eye wash as these women do not have any power."

Old boys network

One would imagine that because of the "grassroots" nature of the issues being dealt with at local government level the processes would be less

politicised. On the contrary, political shenanigans on the ground can be more complex, personal andvicious than at national level. Often in these situations women become embroiled in bigger power plays that they may not even be aware of or have the experience to navigate.

Underpinning the culture of most political parties is "an old boys" network that works to the benefit of men. Roukaya Kasenally, a lecturer of the University of Mauritius argues that "Politics across the world and more specifically in Africa has been a network for male dominated exchanges. Women, therefore, find it difficult to break into this masculine circle."

Box 17: Cooking the outcome

Evidence of the "old boy's political network" at play surfaced in many council meetings in the form of predetermined decisions and agendas that forestalled debate and limited participation by women.

In Mauritius two of the council meetings observed in Beau-Bassin/Rose Hill and Vacoas/Phoenix lasted for less than ten minutes because all the items on the agenda had the prior approval of respective committees.

In South Africa, at virtually every meeting the ruling ANC held a meeting beforehand and appointed spokespersons on issues (invariably men) who presented a fait accompli at the meetings.

The researcher who observed the council meeting in the Masilonyana local council in South Africa noted that the issues on the agenda had been discussed by the ruling party during their caucus prior to the meeting and it that the meeting was merely a platform for the opposition to object to any decisions taken on items. The chairs (only males) from each committee's such as infrastructure, spoke on behalf of the ANC, in relation to any item that fell under that committee.

Similarly an ANC party caucus meeting ahead of the Tshwane Metro Council meeting elected spokesmen on various issues. The same person spoke over and over again because they were the chosen voice on the subject. Women hardly participated in the meeting. Even when it came to the few instances of conflicting views, mostly men spoke.

In Namibia, the management committee or executive committee system means that decisions can conveniently be referred to this body that often only comprises the ruling party.

In Rehoboth, Namibia, researchers observed the frustration of the one woman opposition councillor present as all major decisions got deferred to the Management Committee (MANCO) that comprises only ruling party members. In particular on the day of the meeting, one of the agenda items concerned a petition by residents who had gone on a march about the lack of flush toilets in their neighbourhood. By deferring this matter to the management committee the council effectively postponed any action for at least a month, since the council only meets monthly. It also meant that there was no public debate on a burning concern of the community (in Namibia, as elsewhere in the case study countries, meetings of the council are open to the community).

These observations of councils at work, often appearing just as rubber stamps, raise important questions regarding the governance structure of councils outlined at the beginning of the chapter. While the executive structure is understandable in large metros like the City of Johannesburg, it is not the best for inclusive decision-making and seems unnecessary in Namibia where councils are relatively small. As discussed further in Chapter five, the full plenary system that operates in Lesotho (where all council members have the final decision) is not only more democratic; it also facilitates greater participation by women.

Working for the opposition

A number of women from opposition parties interviewed in the course of the research indicated that in addition to the usual barriers that they face as women councillors, they have the added challenges of being in opposition.

Councillor Amanda Botha from the Emakhazeni district council in Mpumalanga said that her constraints include the fact that she is seen as the opposition and not as a councillor. She said that she is not informed of events such as funerals which is something she feels deprives her of being part of the community.



Amanda Botha *Photo: Nontobeko Dlamini*

"They view me as the opposition which is wrong, because we are only the opposition during election but once we are in council, then we need to work as a team." She adds that she is not recognised as a councillor, because she is in the opposition: "I have raised this and told them that that I will not work like that. I believe I need to be given a chance and the credit to do my job. We now have to roll up our sleeves and work together because we all have good ideas, which will contribute towards the development of the community."

What she doesn't understand is that it is the women councillors who treat her this way. She believes that people should be showing that there is unity within the council: "Service delivery has to be the priority and not the political party affiliation. If we are to pull this wagon through, we need to stand as a united front."

Ilme Schneider, a DTA councillor in Windhoek sees her position differently. The women from the ruling party and her get a long quite well and they talk about issues in a straight forward manner: "There is no party political thing that we don't say this or we don't say that, we talk straight".

She believes that being an opposition councillor allows her to push issues that no one dares to, such as issues around a textile plant and the building of the State house. "Some people in the ruling party came to me and said you are going to be shot for saying things like that, and I said you just watch me, I won't be shot and none of you will be shot either, and it also made them a little braver to speak up against the President." She adds: "I am independent enough that I can do a lot of things that the ruling party can't, traditionally, but then they see that I get away with things and then they try it."

Women opposition councillors in Msunduzi and Greater Sekhukhune in South Africa said that as

women from opposition parties they don't receive or have access to information on issues of gender equality or of relevance to their work as councillor.

Similar sentiments were expressed by councillors in Namibia (see Box 18).

Box 18: Fighting from the fringes



Katrina Benz

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

On the few occasions that she spoke during the Rehoboth Council meeting, DTA Councillor Katrina Benz elected to do so in her mother tongue Afrikaans.

Alone on the opposition bench in a council comprising herself, four members of the ruling Swapo Party and an absent CoD councillor, Benz used each occasion to raise the tough issues that the council seemed to want to skirt: alleged irregularities in the appointment of the CEO; correspondence she had not received; and what the council planned to do about residents who had gone on a march over the absence of flush toilets in their neighbourhood.

"I told them at my swearing in ceremony that I'm not going in this for myself but for honesty. I know some councillors don't like me, but I would be a zombie if I agreed with everything people said," a feisty Benz said in an interview the following day.

The first time councillor who had only been in office for a few months after replacing a deceased male councillor from her party works in a complex political environment. During the struggle for Namibia's independence, Rehoboth, with its majority mixed race population who call themselves "Basters" threatened to form a break away state. Sixteen years later, suspicion of the ruling party is just so many inches beneath the surface.

But the community has split along the lines of those who feel it is politically expedient to cast their lot with the ruling party (represented in the council by deputy mayor Cecilia McNab-Sherally) and those still staunchly DTA, even though it is a crumbling edifice. As one woman in the focus group put it: "the Basters still stand by their case but it is time to change. There was no progress here." Now that Swapo Party has a slim majority in the council, the women say that "things are beginning to happen."

Benz believes this is all the more reason why a strong opposition is needed, to play a watchdog role over a council that she says is often too cosy within itself, with rumblings of corruption and nepotism never far from its corridors.

But being a thorn in the flesh is not an easy role to play. Benz maintains that since she began five months ago, she has been denied access to much of the background correspondence and documentation that she

has sought. In particular she had still not had access to the council's audit report, despite the criticisms from central government of over spending and need for scrupulous oversight.

She said the system whereby most decisions are taken by the management committee comprising only Swapo Party members who come to meetings to announce that "it is so decided" is undemocratic and disempowering.

As a woman councillor Benz believes that she has a responsibility to women; "it breaks my heart to see the level of abuse by men." She has started a campaign against illegal shebeens because she says drugs and alcohol abuse are at the root of many gender related problems in the neighbourhood. Another of her concerns is that the council has no affirmative action plan for women, either in its employment practices or in the awarding of tenders.

Asked if she is able to form an alliance with Deputy Mayor Cecilia McNab Sherally over these issues she said that she got "little support from the two Swapo Party women" and the deputy mayor "agrees with everything the mayor said"; as observation also made in the course of this research (see earlier section on "gender lens on council meetings.")

Ironically, Benz said that she had a closer relationship with the male chair of the management committee, also a Swapo Party member because he is independent minded. Researchers observed that the MANCO chair spoke 30 percent of the time (compared to the 39 percent of the time in the case of the mayor) but he was the only one in he council to challenge the mayor. McNab Sherally spoke 14 percent of the time (mostly to second motions made by the mayor) and Benz nine percent of the time (mostly to raise questions that were not answered).

Referring to the chairperson of the management committee as a man of integrity, Benz said that "it makes little difference to me if a person is a man or a woman. I get on better with principled men than with women who are on the council just to serve their party."

While her work is "stressful" Benz has the support of her family, her party and her community; this she says gives her the strength to go on.

"As a woman in opposition I judge myself according to how the community feel. I am not one to give up easily. I can't see things going wrong and do nothing. I may be wrong, but it is better that I speak my mind than that I remain silent."

A participant in the men's focus group observed that Rehoboth needs both women like McNab Sherally who is in a leadership position as well as Benz who is in the opposition. "Both are passionate and productive. They have a positive vision for the town. They play a constructive role."

Being an independent

For those who prefer not to allow their personal vision of politics to be hijacked by the rough and tumble of mainstream politics, running for office as an independent candidate may be an attractive proposition.

In *Ringing up the Changes* and this study, GL observed a growing trend in the region for women councillors to shed the baggage of mainstream politics by going it alone. The trend was especially pronounced in the 2005 local elections in Lesotho where independents constituted 18 percent of those who won seats (the second largest group after the ruling party.)

Box 19: Going it alone

Patience Tsoho, an independent councillor in the Matsatseng community council in Quthing, Lesotho was a farmer before she decided to go into politics. "My decision to go into local government was motivated by my wish to represent women," she says unequivocally.

But it hasn't been an easy path. She stood for election as an independent candidate as the only woman against six men with the backing of their political parties and won. Resistance surfaces in the form of "street talk" that she chooses to takes no notice of because she believes that it comes from people who are weak as they feel intimidated by because she gets things done. These people question her ability to do the job because she doesn't stand for any political party.



Patience Tsoho

Photo: Susan Tolmay

Although being an independent candidate got her out of petty political squabbles it may have limited her room for manoeuvre now that she is in office. When she reports back to council and puts forward ideas for development her reports are delayed and the responsible committees drag their feet.

She believes that the reasons for this behaviour are not only because she is an independent but also because she is a woman as most of the complaints that she receives are from men.

She says that these male councillors have even scolded the district council secretary, who is also a woman, for taking decisions in her favour when they don't believe such decisions should have been taken.

While the majority of the council are women (seven of the 13) she believes they do not participate effectively and that they do not have a clear vision as to what they want to achieve. She the woman chairperson of the committee (a member of the ruling party) calling off a trip for her to get training in Botswana "On the day I was supposed to leave" because she "wasn't a party member despite the fact that

I wasn't going for the party but rather for the community."

Despite these challenges Tsoho is encouraged by the fact that women have the ability to now stand on their own. "Women have suffered enough. They must take the opportunity, use it wisely and become independent persons. By my being here it gives me courage that my dream about women and equality will finally take shape and form. My wish is that women in this country understand that they have responsibility for their own lives."

Conclusions

Women's access to local government is just the beginning. There are multiple barriers to women's effective participation in this sphere of governance. These factors- ideological, personal, institutional and political - are common to all areas of political decision-making. But they are experienced more intensively at local than at national level. Women councillors have to work in a generally hostile environment in which culture, custom, religion and tradition are stacked against them. They also have to figure out how to carve a niche for themselves amid the power of traditional chiefs often backed by the state. But every barrier to participation also carries an opportunity, because if reversed these factors could become a powerful force for transformation at local level.



Maseru councillors at a workshop

Photo: Susan Tolmay

Claiming new spaces – Enabling factors

"Having more women will make a difference only when women are strong enough to make their voices heard and have the capacity to make a difference."
- Teri Mantsebeng, Lesotho Women's Institute, Maraben Village, Lesotho

The Labour Party approached Sandya Luchoomun-Boygah to stand for the December 2005 village elections in Mauritius on the eve of the birth of her second child by caesarean section. Inspired by her father's dying wish that she become a politician, Luchoomun-Boygah went on the campaign trail three weeks after the birth of her child. "I was still very weak but the hardest decision was to stop breast feeding my baby. I had to put the baby in the care of a nanny as I

was leaving home very early in the morning and coming back after midnight."

But her mother and in-laws supported her throughout the campaign. "My in-laws knew that I was interested in politics and there was no point in stopping me. They helped with the children as my husband was accompanying me everywhere. My baby is now seven months old and my eldest son is four years old."

Despite resistance from one or two men in her neighbourhood, Luchoomun-Boygah won fare and square, becoming the district councillor for Pamplemmousses/Riviere du Rempart and one of the six percent women councillors in this Indian Ocean Island.

Challenging gender stereotypes runs in the veins of this politician whose first contact with the different people of a rainbow nation started from her cradle.



Sandya Luchoomun-Boygah
Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

"My father had a shop in the Village of Riviere du Rempart and there were so many things in that shop that it was called "la boutik sinoi" (the Chinese shop). I was born and grew up in this shop and learnt the different techniques to communicate with people. I am what I am because I was taught to be independent."

Working in the shop she learned the art of communications, public relations, customer service and business: all good skills for politics.

"I can assure you that although I was only four years old I could make paper packages and serve clients. I used to help my dad to weigh rice and measure oil by the quarts. I was allowed to talk to members of the public. My father taught me how to communicate and the importance of customer care." She also used to follow her father, a grassroots social worker, around the village.

Luchoomun-Boygah grew up in an atmosphere free of gender stereotypes and sex discrimination. Children were taught how to take responsibility. "We were all equal in my family. When it was time for us to go abroad for our University education, my brother, my sister and me had the same chances. Coming from an Indian family this may sound odd as boys get better chances to go abroad than girls."

One Christmas Luchoomun-Boygah and her sister decided to break taboos by celebrating Christmas and doing so in public; two no-no's for young women back then. "My dad bought a machine for making chips which was something new in Mauritius." The two set up the machine, made chips and sold to them on the streets. "This brought some sparkle and some 'joie de vivre' in our village for Christmas."

After studying for degrees in economics and technology at an Indian University, Luchoomun-Boygah went of to study for a degree in software

engineering in Canada. "Even when I was at the University in India I wanted to go beyond academia. I used to attend workshops on personality development and had access to a human trainer. I learnt a lot from him and whenever I was on holiday I would follow him all over India. I learnt how to reach my goal and soon realised that my goal was to become a politician. I said it in an audience of 428 students and got an award for that as I had a well defined and concrete goal."

Her father had wanted her sister to be a politician but she let him down. "One day I went to my dad and offered him the most beautiful gift of his life. I told him I would become a politician. Two years ago he blessed me on his dying bed and made me promise not to deceive him." Luchoomun-Boygah is now an icon not only in her village, Riviere du Rempart, but of the whole district of Pamplemmousses/Riviere du Rempart. Her dad would have been proud of her.

The previous chapter explored the barriers to women's effective participation in politics. This chapter explores what factors help to enable or facilitate effective participation. Stories like that of Luchoomun-Boygah offer valuable insights into the combination of factors that enhance the effectiveness of women on the ground.

For a start, Luchoomun-Boygah's father was a progressive man, exposing her at an early age to public life in a conservative village. Challenging taboos gave her the confidence and experience to stand for elections. She has university degrees in non traditional disciplines. Unusually for a woman in politics she always wanted to be in politics and had the support of her father who made her promise at his death bed that she would not let him down. In the campaign she had the support of her family, including her in-laws who might have been expected to protest especially when going into politics involved choices like weaning a three month old baby.

In short: with the right combination of factors, personal, political, ideological and institutional, there is no reason why any woman who wishes to should be barred from a political career, even in the most conservative of countries and situations. Every one of the barriers in the previous chapter can be turned around into an enabling factor. This chapter highlights four key enabling factors: numbers (the critical mass); the kind of background and grounding that help to enhance effectiveness; support systems, networks and structures as well as appropriate capacity building; mentoring; on-the- job training and learning on the job.

How critical is the critical mass?

At a workshop facilitated by MWO-GEMSA (Media Watch Organisation-Gender and Media Southern Africa Network) and Gender Links (GL) in February 2005 prior to the Mauritian general elections, Rama Sithanen (now Minister of Finance) presented a paper in which he argued that "symbolic representation hardly makes a difference. Without a critical mass of women MPs they will not be able to influence the political output." [74]

The section on concepts in Chapter two traced the origins of the "critical mass" theory; the idea that to make an impact women must constitute at least a third of the participants in any given institution. The section argued that while numbers are not a panacea, they are an important ingredient in creating an enabling environment for women in politics. To what extent is this borne out by field observations?

More women, more sway

Chapter four recorded observations of how often

[74] Le Mauricien 19 February 2005

women and men spoke in 11 council meetings in three countries. It showed that there was no situation in which the proportion of interventions by women equalled the proportion of women in the council chambers for those meetings. The conclusion drawn from this is that no matter what the situation, men dominate the conversation. What is clear, however, is that where there is a higher proportion of women and of women in leadership, women tend to participate more.

Figure six: Level of participation versus percentage women in councils

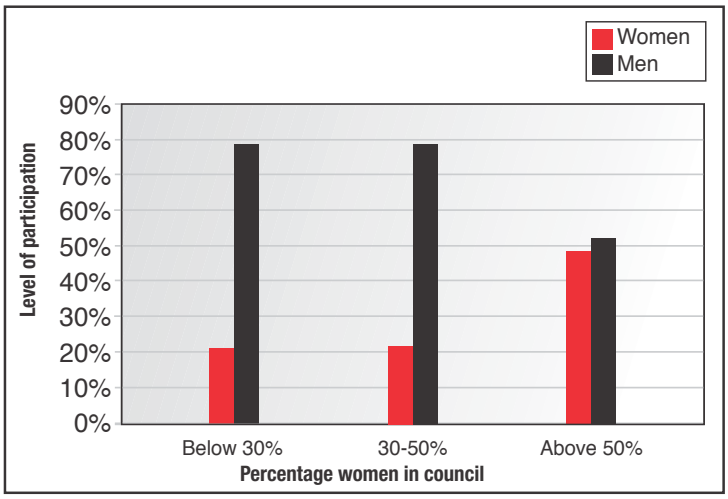


Figure six shows that where women constituted below 30 percent of the participants, they spoke 21 percent of the time. Where women constituted 30 to 50 percent of the participants, they spoke 22 percent of the time (not much different to when they constituted below 30 percent). However, when women constituted more than half of the participants, they spoke a little less, but almost as much as men. The conclusion that might be drawn from this finding is that the "critical mass" is indeed not 30 percent but gender parity!

Box 20: Lively debates in Jo'burg and Windhoek

Council meeting observations in the cities of Johannesburg in South Africa and Windhoek in Namibia (the largest municipalities in both countries) reflected high levels of participation by women. In both of these councils women are represented in high numbers with 44 percent women in the City of Johannesburg and 40 percent women in the City of Windhoek.

More women than men attended the meeting observed in the City of Johannesburg. As mentioned in Chapter four, Johannesburg is one of the few council's that provide interpreters. The agenda included the budget and street names.



City of Joburg Council meeting
Photo: Lori Waselchuk

Consultations with women on a Women Development Strategy in August (Women's Month) in South Africa (see Chapter nine) showed that street names are a source of concern for women who have found that in emergencies they are not able to direct emergency services because of the absence of streets names

especially in the former black townships. A woman councillor from a faith-based political party spoke passionately on street names in her locality. Her comments struck a chord with the other councillors, many of whom wanted to respond.

The Windhoek meeting observed dealt largely with the budget. A woman opposition councillor expressed her dismay at the way the council deals with bread and butter issues. Others joined in by raising concerns about the budget deficit that could have been avoided through proper planning. Two women opposed what they regarded as high water and electricity rates which they said primarily affect poor women. The deputy mayor, a woman from the ruling Swapo Party urged residents to negotiate the settling of outstanding bills. She cautioned that the city could not provide quality services unless these debts are settled.

Compared to many of the other meetings observed, the researchers noted the confidence with which women participated and the substantive nature of the debates in the cities of Windhoek and Johannesburg. The fact that more women than men attended the meeting in Johannesburg (suggesting quite a few absentee male councillors, since there are more of them) and that three men were absent from the Windhoek meeting (while all the women came) also suggests a higher level of commitment on the part of the women councillors.

Participants in several focus groups said that without larger numbers of women in local government it is difficult for them to make any difference. Women in the civil society group of Vacoas-Phoenix, Mauritius said: "Unfortunately there are not enough women councillors. If there were 50 percent women lots of problems would have been solved."

In Namibia women and men interviewed in separate focus groups in Grootfontein, where there are six male and one woman councillor, had similar views. A woman participant noted: "There is only one woman councillor but it is not enough, it is difficult for only one woman to make a difference we need more women." Men agreed. "There are too many men for women to stand up and speak out because they feel intimidated."

Tsumeb similarly has only one woman and six male councillors. A woman focus group participant noted: "The council is dominated by men so she can't really make a difference. She might say something and the men will say they'll try to do it but they won't. If there were equal numbers it would make a difference – but because she's just one it doesn't." But a male participant in the separate men's focus group said: "30 percent is enough. It should not be more than that, definitely not 50 percent."

In South Africa women and men in Msunduzi also felt that numbers are important: "If you have enough women, a larger number, it will be easier for them to make a difference." This observation is borne out by participation in the executive structures of the City of Johannesburg (see Box 21).

Box 21: Gender balance empowers women at the top in Jo'burg



Nandi Mayathula-Khoza
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

The City of Johannesburg has an executive mayor system (see Chapter four) and the mayor appoints a ten member mayoral committee that is the equivalent of a cabinet. This structure is one of the few top decision-making structures in local government in South Africa in which there are equal numbers of women and men. Nandi Mayathula-Khoza is the Member of the Mayoral Committee responsible for Community Development and a key champion of gender mainstreaming in the city (see Chapter nine).

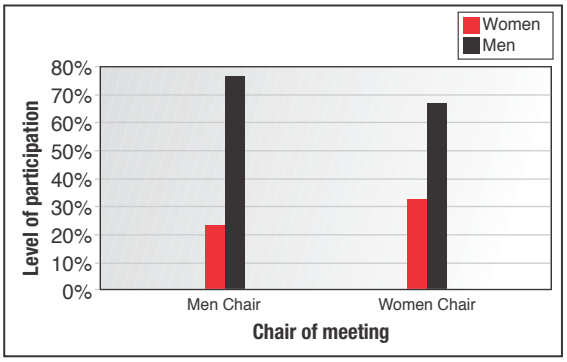
She says that having gender balance in this top decision making structure makes a difference to the way decisions are made. "Many of these women have been part of the women's dialogues (see case study seven). These women bring a gender lens to the policies of the city. Whenever we get a report on a policy or programme, we ask how women and men are benefiting. Where we do not believe that the process is impacting equally on both, we send the policy back, and tell our officials to go back to the drawing board.

"We are able to do that with confidence because we have the clout (in the mayoral committee). It is very difficult for women's voices to carry through, to be heard and be taken seriously when there are few of you. We can caucus; support each other outside and come back inside with an agenda on which there is no compromise. We are also fortunate that we have the support of the men in the committee, starting with the mayor himself who appointed 50 percent women to his inner circle."

Women leaders and the critical mass

Another important issue is the role played by women in leadership positions. Chapter four that dealt with the barriers to women's participation noted that what is at stake is not just women getting into powerful places but where they are located within these. The numbers show that even where there are high levels of women in local government this does not translate into a similar proportion of women as mayors and chairs or chairs of committees and that women are more likely to be shunted into the "soft" areas rather than committees like finance where the big decisions are made. But does women's presence in top positions make a difference to the level of women's participation?

Figure seven: Women in leadership versus levels of participation



When the figures in Table 23 from the quantitative observation of 11 council meetings are analysed according to the extent to which women contributed in meetings chaired by men versus those chaired by women (Figure seven) the finding is that there is indeed a higher level of participation by women in meetings chaired by women (32 percent, compared to 22 percent in the case of meetings chaired by men).

However, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is not necessarily the case that women speak more when a woman is in the chair. For example, researchers in Lesotho made a note that both male and female leaders need to be aware of the social barriers that many women still face, and to consciously encourage them to participate (see Case study six).



Women in Lesotho speak their mind

With 58 percent women in local government, Lesotho provided a unique testing ground for critical mass theories. As has been stressed throughout, numbers do not occur in a vacuum. Lesotho may have high numbers of women in local government but it is also a conservative country steeped in patriarchal traditions with chiefs holding considerable sway at local level (see Case study five).

Yet in practise, because of the mountainous terrain and migrant labour patterns, Lesotho has a strong matriarchal culture. Many households are headed by women, or are *defacto* run by women while the men are away. Local government is also relatively new in Lesotho. While there are a myriad of teething problems (see Chapter eight) what is refreshing about Lesotho is that rules, norms and council traditions have not yet been set in stone as they have in other countries. The result is that whereas in other countries council meetings are often a rubber stamping exercise with little debate (see Chapter four) in Lesotho there is real debate on bread and butter issues. Meetings also take place in Sotho, facilitating a high level of participation.

Against this backdrop researchers in Lesotho piloted the use of a UN tool (table 14) for measuring the *qualitative* level of women's participation in the 16 meetings that they observed. This tool attempts to measure not just what women say, but the extent to which they actually influence decisions. The six point scale goes from

- Having no say to expressing an opinion (classified for the purposes of this research as low level influence).
- Participating in group discussions; to contributing to a decision made by others (medium level of influence) and
- Vetoing decisions made by others to having final authority over decisions (high level of influence).

Table 26: Women's participation in council meetings in Lesotho

% women in council	% women chairs	Level of influence		
		High	Medium	Low
50%+	63%	Makhoarane CC		
		Likila CC		
		Serupane CC		
		Mapoteng		
		Mathula CC		
		Khoelenya CC		
		Thaba Mokhele CC		
				Matsateng
30% - 50%	0%			Ratau
				Motanasela CC
				Mafeteng DC
		Makaota CC		
				Mohale's Hoek DC
				Quthing DC
			Makaota CC	
below 30%	100%	Butha Buthe		

Table 26 summarises the findings from the meetings observed by mapping the meetings in which women had a high, medium and low level of influence against the proportion of women in each of the councils, as well as the percentage of women chairs in the meetings. The results show a high degree of correlation between having over 50 percent women in the meetings and as chairs and high levels of influence by women over the decisions taken. Conversely where women constituted 30 to 50 percent of the total, and there were no women chairs, the extent of influence ranged from medium to low.

The only exceptions to this pattern were Butha Buthe where high levels of participation were observed despite the council being male dominated; Makaota where women participated well in adiscussion on HIV and AIDS despite being in the minority and Matsatseng where despite high numbers of women and a woman chairperson participation was low. In the latter case, the researchers noted that despite an open environment only three out of the six women spoke. They noted the need for chairpersons of meetings, whether male or female, to be aware of the fact that some women are still shy and self conscious in public forums such as this and need to be deliberately encouraged to speak out.

The meeting in Motanasela (one of the councils with lower numbers of women and a low level of participation and influence recorded) concerned consultations between the Deputy Minister of Education and the council. Researchers recorded a high level of discussion among the women prior to the meeting but virtually no contribution during the meeting. This is an interesting reflection of power dynamics at play, with the women

apparently shy to speak in the presence of a senior politician.

In Mkh'ono, three women proposed that a meeting be called with the village chiefs to discuss grazing lands in response to a concern raised by a woman on "the uncomfortable working relations between the council and village chiefs." However, the male chair played a dominant role and made the councillors feel uncomfortable when a member of the council took a while to clarify his or her point.

In general, however, women participated well in the meetings observed; raising pertinent issues and taking important decisions for the community (see Box 22).

Box 22: Women councillors in Lesotho flex their muscles

Overall, the observation of council meetings in Lesotho raised a wide variety of issues over which women expressed opinions and exercised their decision-making powers. Examples include:

- **Land:** Assistance to the community in getting documents to prove that they hold title to land (Ratau).
- **Relations with chiefs:** Lack of communication between chiefs and councillors on land issues, with a decision (taken by a woman) that councillors have the authority and power to enforce laws and by laws and that the chiefs should stop interfering and co-operate (Likila).



Mamosenyei Lemao

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

- **Meeting times:** Changing of the council schedules from one long meeting once a month to two shorter meetings twice a month to accommodate time constraints of women and also so that community concerns are dealt with more efficiently and effectively (Likila and Thaba Mokhele).
- **Disabled children:** Care for disabled children who are being neglected by their families (concern raised by a woman councillor); decision taken (by a woman councillor) that all councillors have to ensure that there are vocational schools for disabled children in their villages (Serupane).
- **Conduct of councillors:** A woman councillor to be prosecuted for damage caused by her livestock to show the community that it is a serious offence and also to enhance accountability within the council; show transparency and boost confidence in the council (Mapoteng).
- **Preservation of natural resources:** Fines to be made for abuse of natural resources, including fire wood, grass and herbal plants (Mathula).
- **HIV and AIDS:** Establishment of an HIV and AIDS committee. The meeting included a briefing by an HIV and AIDS committee from a different electoral division and motivation for an HIV and AIDS committee at district level. Women participated actively, stressing the importance of accurate information and expertise. The vice chairperson (a woman) chaired the meeting and gave everyone a chance to speak. All councillors voted in favour of establishing the committee and elected a woman chairperson (Makaota).
- **Support groups:** Decision to form support groups to assist women who are struggling with their daily duties (Khoelenya).

Background and grounding

There is no school, course or template for becoming an effective politician. From the President of the United States to the chair of a village committee in Southern Africa, politicians come with a wide variety of backgrounds with regard to education, exposure and experience. Politicians with impressive educational qualifications can be ineffective leaders. But politicians with limited education and exposure can also be ineffective because they are unable to cope with their oversight functions as they do not understand what it is they are overseeing. Using examples from the field, this section of the study explores some of the factors in the background and experience of women councillors that enhance their effectiveness on the ground.

Education

As noted in Chapter four, education levels among councillors in the case study countries vary greatly from five years to post doctorate degrees with lower levels of education predominating. A woman participant in a City of Johannesburg focus group argued that passion is more important than formal qualifications: "Let us put people who are passionate, irrespective of education level because people can always be trained to be leaders".

But in many of the discussions held both with councillors and constituents, education and empowerment were seen as being inextricably linked. For example a young woman in Rundu, Namibia, commenting on how far women have come, noted: "Nowadays a woman can have her own money and budget and buy what she wants. Most women are educated now. Education plays a major role in the empowerment of women."

A man in the Maseru focus group added: "Education is the key difference. Educated women are the ones. who question their rights and gender equality. Even if they are in rural areas, if they have been educated women have different views about rights etc."

While lack of education is seen as a barrier to participation, education is seen as a way of empowering women councillors to be more effective. As a woman in Grootfontein, Namibia put it: "We must be there, the leadership of women should be accommodated by education and training."

Councillors in the City of Tshwane see education as the way out of the challenges that women face in local government. The Executive Mayor, Gwendoline Ramokgopa has a PhD and this is seen as the reason for the respect she commands and her ability as an effective leader. In Keetmanshoop, Namibia, researchers witnessed the respect that the only woman in the council commanded among her male colleagues, and ability to be effective, because of her higher level of education, exposure and political connections.



Education is key

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Box 23: The power of knowledge

In the village of Bethanie, about 100 km west of Keetmanshoop in southern Namibia, male residents complained that the all-woman council did not have the necessary education and skills to run the council (see Box 15).

In the municipality of Keetmanshoop, there is only one woman out of the seven councillors, Fiina Elago (see Box seven). Yet she commands the respect of both her male colleagues in the ruling Swapo Party as well as those in the opposition Congress of Democrats (CoD). The key to this is her financial and technical skills, as well as her government contacts.

"She is just a competent human being," says Swapo Party councillor Bazil Brown. "Fiina is literate, so in arguments people listen. If she keeps quiet, it is because she is frustrated because of men fighting about nothing. When she talks, you know she is going to talk sense."



Fiina Elago *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

"When you are a woman in public office, it helps to have technical skills," Elago said. "I think what has also helped a lot is that for the past 15 years I worked for home affairs. I have worked at the borders, with different people. Customer care is a very useful skill in politics."

Because of her job with home affairs, Elago "has links with higher authorities," Brown added. "She works closely with central government. When things are going wrong she can pick up the phone and she knows who to talk to."

Brown notes that Elago is the person on the council most fluent in English, Namibia's official language (that few speak as a first language). As a result of spending many years in exile during Namibia's liberation struggle, she also speaks fluent Portuguese. The fact that Elago is fluent in Oshivambo (the language spoken in the north, where Swapo Party has its foothold) is seen as an advantage in getting things done in a council that has always had a lukewarm relationship with the government.

While participants in the women focus group bemoaned the fact that as Nama speakers they are not able to communicate well with Elago (see Box eight) male focus group participants praised her skill and expertise. "She is very good; has more experience than the men in the council," one of the men said. "She has really helped to turn this council around."

"Elago is a very strong woman," adds CoD councillor Arnold Losper. "As chair of the management committee she did a lot to bring down the debt of the council (from N$4.7 million to N$1.8 million)."



Arnold Losper
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

During the field work for Ringing up the Changes four years ago, researchers found the municipality of Keetmanshoop in turmoil. [75] The fact that it had three Swapo Party women councillors (something former President Sam Nujoma liked to trumpet when he visited the town) got overshadowed by the political shenanigans of a council split between Swapo Party and the opposition, with one member of the politically neutral rate papers association being the king pin.

Much to Swapo Party's dismay, the council voted to outsource the town's water management to a South African company, resulting in protests by residents who alleged that councillors were getting kickbacks. None of the old councillors got voted back in the 2004 elections, but one of the Swapo Party women councillors is now one of the country's three regional governors.

As chair of the powerful management committee following the elections, Elago won the support of the council (which has four opposition members, compared to Swapo Party's three) in mounting a legal challenge to the water management contract. A debt rescheduling agreement has been agreed with NAMWATER, the parastatal water supplier.

Last year, as a result of political manoeuvring, the council elected a new chair of the committee, with Elago now serving as deputy. Both Brown and Losper agree that the reason for this was "purely ethnic; nothing to do with her competence" as Losper puts it.

"I ran the committee in a straightforward way," Elago comments. "Maybe they were not pleased that I was very strict with money. I said we can't spend what we don't have and what we have we must spend wisely. When they wanted to increase council allowances (as the law allows for in Namibia, see Chapter four) I said: look here, let's not pay ourselves more until we are out of debt. They were not happy."

"After they pushed her out we regretted it," Brown reflected. "It's a case of one step forwards, two steps backwards." Elago, he added, "handled it very well. She is mature. She is smart. She does not let things like that get her down." "There are times when you want to quit," Elago confesses. "But

74 Lowe Morna C. (ed) 2004, Ringing up the Changes, Gender in Southern African Politics, Gender Links, p231

in politics you need to be strong. My motto is: smile even when you are down. Don't let your opponents know. Later you can go and stress by yourself and do all those other kinds of things."

The ebullient councillor has thrown herself into her work as chair of the housing committee. "She is not only passionate about the finances of this council but also about relieving poverty, housing, making sure that everyone has a roof over their head," Losper noted.

Elago says she is also fighting hard for more women councillors in the 2008 elections and would not mind "if we had all women in this council." She is also at loggerheads with the CEO over the absence of women in the town's senior management (see Chapter Nine) as this is "totally against the provisions of the Affirmative Action Act."

Reflecting her entrée into politics she says "there are always ups and downs. But the fact that you can help someone; make a contribution to development; that is what makes me happy. I don't regret becoming a councillor; who knows I might even consider running for national elections next time around!"

Activism

Many councillors come from backgrounds of social and community work. These backgrounds may not necessarily come with high level educational skills. But as the vignettes that follow show, they are empowering and grounding backgrounds for work in local government.

A labour of love

Down to earth and humble: this is the impression that one gets from former unionist and Councillor Alice Titus, the straight talking speaker and previous Mayor of the Breede Valley local municipality. She believes that being yourself is key to gaining the trust of constituents and she understands the importance of addressing people on an equal level. "As Mayor, I wore the chain three or four times, then I asked myself: Why must I go with the chain to ordinary people, poor people who live in shacks and wear a big chain. The minute they see that they shy away, I know this, because I did it as a child."



Alice Titus *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

The first woman on the national executive of the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) and chairperson of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in the Overberg and Boland area, she worked her way up from being a domestic worker to saving money so

that she could go to college. Now in her twelfth year in local government, Titus says that she has seen changes. As a unionist she had a key interest in following the progression of women in the working ranks in the municipality and is proud to say that today women have moved from only occupying the lowest levels to being at all levels in the administration.

Being a strong, outspoken woman hasn't made her life easy; with a strong personality comes backlash and resentment: "The bossy, pushy tag that I get is mostly from the males and it's simply because they feel threatened. And everywhere in society men have that fear because women have come out and proven that we can do the same as men and even do it better. It does not distract me from what I must do, because I have a passion for women."

From the outside in

Councillor Bertha Mohulatsi decided to run for office in South Africa's 2006 local elections after several years of fighting from the other side of the fence as a community activist because she saw that "the councillors didn't take note of the people on the ground."



Bertha Mohulatsi *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

After her husband died during apartheid era the council tried to take her home away because they said that she couldn't afford to pay for it. She joined the Kimberley civic association and initiated several negotiations with them about the problems in the community.

In 1991, she worked with the council to raise money for making an old aged home safe and liveable. The house had no security; frequent rapes occurred on the premises and outdoor toilets were used for abortions. After negotiations with Dutch donors, the council put up toilets and lights in the house; security and a fence. "We also consulted with the council to get doctors and nurses and now there are plans to have a kitchen and a laundry."

After 1994 she was involved in the change of ownership of houses and the reallocation of land. In 2006 she decided to become a councillor because the previous male councillor "did nothing for the community. I decided that because I had experience with local government I would stand to become a councillor so that I could help people where I can." But being a councillor gives her leverage to be able to do her community work more effectively.

Social work

As a Girl Guide in her youth and social worker for 48 years, Rozy Khedoo believes being a councillor is just an extension of the work that she is most passionate about. "When you see misery around you, how can you be apathetic? Child trafficking is something that is unheard of in Mauritius and yet this is very much a Mauritian reality.

"Women go into sex work to feed their families, young boys and girls are now trying to commit suicide because they cannot bear the violence in the house, young children are being raped. The list is very long."



Rozy Khedoo *Photo: Loga Virahsawmy*

Khedoo lives in Tombeau Bay, where HIV and AIDS, drugs and prostitution are daily realities. Women also have concerns about refuse collection, bad sanitation, sewerage and schooling for children. She went into local government in 1991 not because she was close to a political party but because she is close to the people.

She formed her own political group called "Groupe Unitaire de Baie du Tombeau" (United Group of Tombeau Bay). All 12 members of this group, which included two women, were elected. Khedoo became the first Mauritian woman to hold the office of Vice-President of a District Council, that of Pamplemousses/Riviere du Rempart. She was also the only woman among the 35 male councillors. She had the courage of her convictions and was respected for that. "But it was very difficult for me especially when I asked for better infrastructure for my village. Priorities were given to the regions where the main political parties were present."

In 2005 the Majority Party asked her to stand as candidate in the general elections. She accepted. "From the onset I knew I was fighting a lost battle in a party that was formed on the eve of the elections by a woman, asking women to vote only for women."

Like a good warrior Khedoo went on the battle-field. She lost the battle but won the war when she was elected in the Village Council Election of December 2005. She is now a councillor on the District Council of Pamplemousses/ Riviere du Rempart.

Throughout Khedoo has had a focus on helping women. "My constituents come to see me on a daily basis. My doors are always opened. Even when I cannot help them personally I know where to send them. The main problems of these women are poverty and unemployment. The NGO Trust Fund for the Integration of the Vulnerable and private sectors have helped quite a few of them. They are now heading their own small enterprises or are working for other small industries."

Support systems, networks and structures

Behind every great person, male or female, is invariably another. Politics is a loud but also lonely business. Support systems and structures are the key to the success of most effective politicians and local government is no exception. These systems and structures can be personal (family); political (party structures to support women); institutional (structures in council to support women) as well as formal and informal networks with civil society.

Personal support

Chapter four demonstrated the painful choices that women often have to make between being a politician and having a family life. But the research also yielded many examples of supportive families and the difference this makes to women politicians.

Box 24: A family affair

Councillor Theresa van der Merwe a first time councillor in the City of Joburg says that having a safe home environment with a supportive husband and children is at the root of her success because home is where one seeks refuge.



Theresa van der Merwe

Photo: Nazeem Variawa

"My husband is also proud of what I am doing and so are my children and they all share and encourage me in all events. I think without them all it would have been much harder to cope with and to see the importance of what I do. The support structure that they are means a great deal to me. I would not want to come home from work and find a stressful and tense environment, I need to relax and that is what my husband ensures."

She regrets that being a councillor has resulted in her losing time with her family: "I have lost a percentage of quality time with my family, but I try to make up for that on the days that I am not doing council duties. I try and create a balance."

She does so by ensuring that she sets aside some family time and some "me" time, because she feels that it is important for women to do some introspection and to see the broader picture and the direction in which they are going. She makes sure that exercise is part of her weekly regime and manages to swim and do yoga once a week and she clears her diary on Saturday's for two hours of relaxation and spiritual growth.

Despite the loss of her time she believes that she has gained a lot as well: "I have actually gained insight into the lives of the people in the community. I now know how people live and the conditions that they live in and this has strengthened my character….these in turn give you a reason to wake the next day and want to make a difference and keep you determined and motivated to go on."

Political support

Chapter four chronicled the various ways in which political parties, the "home" of any politicians, are still in many ways steeped in patriarchal traditions and sexist practices despite rhetoric to the contrary. The reverse is also true: political parties can offer invaluable support to budding women politicians.

Parties can implement quota systems which prescribe that a certain number of seats have to be allocated to women. They can also provide training, support and mentoring for women who enter the political arena and they can also show their support for women by ensuring their inclusion in the decision-making structures of the party. Although political party women's wings are contentious (see Chapter four), for some women these provide a safe space and nurturing within the party.

In South Africa although the main opposition DA does not support quotas it does appear to offer a

good support system to women councillors. The Association of Democratic councillors (ADAC) provides training on a regular basis, (not just when councillors are new) on a ranges of issues, for example the redistribution of electricity (reds), Gautrain and the development of the airport (all pertinent current issues). Within the party there are also workshops on basic issues like how to chair meetings and take minutes (practical skills that people may not have come across) and they constantly engage with the councillors to establish what their needs are and they try to address these because they see training as a crucial issue.

Support is also provided through its women's wing DAWN (DA Women's Network) which appears to have avoided some of the pitfalls of women's wings in some parties where they end up being glorified hospitality arms of the party. In Lesotho, the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) also believes in empowering women through its women's wing.

Box 25: Dawning of a new era for women

Before the launch of DAWN in 1991, the DA struggled internally with whether to have a separate woman's organisation at the risk of it being marginalised from the mainstream or having it to ensure that the focus on women's empowerment is not lost. The latter argument won the day.

DAWN comprises branches in all provinces that anyone who is a member (including men!) can choose to join. According to Janet Semple a skills audit currently being undertaken aims to determine what is needed to level the playing field for women.

One of the aims of DAWN is to increase the number of women in national government where the gender gap in the party is bigger. "It's too early to tell whether this has been an effective strategy, the next elections (2009) will show or prove that".

Speaking on behalf of the LCD, Mathabiso Lepono, Minister of Gender advocates for and encourages women to be involved through the LCD women's league which advocated for women to stand for local elections and encouraged women to vote for women. LCD also encourages women in the community to support women; an important role in a country where culture and patriarchy still make it difficult for women to occupy these public spaces.

Council support

While there are several examples of women's caucuses at national and regional level, there are virtually none at local level, a gap identified in Chapter four. Ringing up the Changes, identified at least three kinds of institutional structures in parliament that help to make women more effective. These are:

- Informal multiparty women's caucuses like the Women's Caucus in Botswana and the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus that has a secretariat within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
- Portfolio committees that focus specifically on gender equality (like the Committee on the Quality of Like and Status of Women in South Africa) and
- Portfolio committees in which gender is combined with other areas, like HIV and AIDS.

The Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) is in the process of conducting an audit of all these structures across the globe with a view to identifying their impact and which has worked best. As one of the few "women's structures" identified in a local council, the Women's Caucus in the City of Johannesburg offers important insights for other councils.

Box 26: Safe spaces for women

Nandi Mayathula-Khoza describes the women's caucus that she championed in her role as Speaker of the City of Johannesburg before the 2004 elections as "a space in which women could be free as a group to empower each other in the council."



Women councillors in the City of Joburg
Photo: Lori Waselchuk

The history of the caucus dates back to August 2002 when a workshop on "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" identified the need to establish a Women's Multiparty Women's Caucus comprising all women councillors from political parties represented in the Council.

The council approved the establishment of the committee, chaired by the Speaker, with the assistance of a Steering Committee chaired by Councillor Sinnah Ramakhula. The caucus met monthly. The office of the speaker gave administrative support.

The caucus aimed to

- Make the Council a gender sensitive structure on issues of service delivery, development and equal representation, as part of transformation.
- Ensure that gender is taken into account in policy formulation, planning and budgeting processes.
- Promote women empowerment amongst women Councillors and women from the City of Johannesburg community.

- Work on areas of common concern amongst women in the City of Johannesburg for example, women and child abuse, rape, battering, equitable services delivery such as child care facilities etc, and to identify and lobby for policies and programmes to address these concerns.
- Network, lobby and liaise with other women Councillors and other women empowerment projects and organisations locally, nationally and internationally, around Local Government and Gender.
- Create a support system for women in and outside Council.

Among activities that the caucus undertook include:

- The establishment of a Women's Sector Forum that undertook several consultations with women in the City of Johannesburg on their needs and priorities. An example of the outcomes of these meetings is a woman in Ennerdale working with the city to turn an open space notorious for crime into a park.
- Hold sector meetings, for example on women in tourism, transport etc. One outcome of these meetings was a commitment by the Johannesburg Road Agency to train more women in road construction.
- Convening a major dialogue on "Johannesburg Women celebrating Ten Years of Democracy and Together Building a Better Life." A major outcome of this meeting was to galvanise support for the South African Local Government Association 50/50 campaign for the 2006 local elections as well as debate the draft gender policy developed by SALGA (see Chapter nine).
- Serve as the key interlocutor for the "Gender, Communications and Local Government" empowerment partnership with Gender Links from October 2004 to May 2005 (see case study six) that included development of a gender policy; documenting experiences of the councillors (the I Stories) and participation in the Sixteen Days of Activism on Gender Violence Campaign.
- Facilitate a number of personal support initiatives through the Women and Councillor Support/ Wellness Committee including 27 women participating in the "New Face of Leadership Personal Leadership and Modern Mentoring Challenge."

The activities of the women's caucus ceased at the time of preparations for the 2006 elections and at the time of writing this book had not resumed under the leadership of a new woman speaker. However, those who participated in establishing the caucus attest to the role that it played.

"At first I was not attracted to the idea of a woman only forum but after working in the multiparty caucus I saw that it does build women on an individual and a collective basis and it is a space where we engage with other parties and see how they deal with women's issues and learn from other cultural groups," noted Nomapelo Maqanda of the ruling ANC.

"Through the multiparty caucus I learnt that the problems that women face in our society cross all political boundaries," added the DA's Patricia Brugman-Richards.

"The multiparty caucus helped us as women to unite and become one voice. We were talking about one thing, women's issues, irrespective of politics," reflected the ANC's Sinnah Ramakhula.

Civil society support

Networking with civil society is a powerful tool for enhancing the performance of councillors. As a handbook on local government notes: "Women politicians do not automatically give priority to gender issues. For this reason establishing links with women's organisations to inform and sensitise each other is mutually very important." [76]

Among ways that this networking can be mutually beneficial listed in the handbook include:

- Mobilising women voters to vote for women candidates.
- Access to research and information.
- Providing think tanks and spring boards for ideas.
- Partnering in the implementation of projects.
- Lobbying for positions and policies that women politicians may face party constraints in lobbying for, including increasing women's representation.
- Serving as a watchdog on gender issues and sending out red light signals when necessary.

The research yielded several examples of women councillors working together with local Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs to advance their agendas.

Box 27: Partnerships for progress

Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), is a regional organisation whose primary aim is to improve the legal, socio-economic and political situation of women. WLSA has been involved in action research, training and education, lobbying and advocacy, legal advice services and networking. WLSA is also one of the leading organisations in Lesotho, which has led awareness efforts that local and international communities been involved in, in order to advance the livelihood of women.



Mpho Mankimane (WLSA) and Councillor Pulane Ranoe

Photo: Susan Tolmay

As an opportunity to mainstream gender, WLSA has established links with local government councils in various districts. In particular, WLSA collaborated with local government in the Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in 2006. As planning and organising of activities took off, a lot of councillors men and women alike, responded more positively by getting involved and participating in a number of activities such public gatherings and fun walks.

The team also collaborated with other stakeholders in sensitising the public to advocate against gender violence and to bring a stop to this violation of human rights. Councillors have also been included in the gender awareness and legal rights education programme on Inheritance and Property Rights which WLSA is currently running.

76. Gender and local governance (2001); SNV-Netherlands Development Organisation handbook p35.

The Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) has been working in the area of local government for the past 14 years. One component of this work is building the capacity of specifically women councillors and women from community-based organisations on gender and local government. The three-day training module increases participants' knowledge about the legislative framework for local government.

GAP sees this gender training as important as women do not automatically know what women's and gender issues are about or they do not give it adequate priority. The assumption is not necessarily that women who fill public office lack skills and capacity and therefore the need for training. What GAP has learnt over the years is that knowing certain areas goes a long way in building the confidence of women to participate in governance processes at the sphere of local government.

In 2004 the Local Government and Gender Project developed a more comprehensive two week training programme, specifically with the aim of equipping women with knowledge and skills to enable them to stand as councillors in the local government election that were to take place in 2005. Specific skills that women were trained around were: facilitation, writing, public speaking and financial skills. In the evaluations women acknowledged that although they had to be away from their families and work for a week at the time they appreciated the in-depth training. They stated that not only did the knowledge and skills they gained make them more confident to take up public office and be part of various community and governance processes, it also helped in developing networks with other participants at the training. Thus, although capacity building may be perceived as glutted, the impact of these should not be underestimated.

Relevant capacity building

No matter what the background, experience, education or support systems that women councillors have, there is a lot to be learned about what it means to be in local government. The previous chapter pointed to the many pitfalls of current capacity building initiatives described by one interviewee as "workshop mania". As a woman councillor in the Greater Sekhukhune Council in Limpopo put it: "We need to be more than numbers, we need to be capacitated." The question is, what kind of empowerment strategies would best achieve the goal of drawing on the extensive experience and life skills of councillors, while equipping them with the know how to run a modern council?

Targeted and ongoing learning

A major concern in the training observed is that very little of it seems to be preceded by a needs assessment to assess what the councillors actually need. From the number of comments received on training being sporadic, once off, and in the form of a quick induction courses received after the elections, a clear plea from councillors is for training that is planned, systematic and ongoing, supporting them through the different cycles of the council calendar and relevant to their work.

CASE STUDY SEVEN

Gender and the city of Jo'burg

Councillor Sinah Gwebu has been a ward councillor in the City of Johannesburg since 2000. When she started she set herself a target: "To prove to the male councillors and others that I could deliver." Now in her second term as councillor she says that she is more confident because of the support offered to her by the Multi Party Women's Caucus (MWC) and a unique capacity building project that she participated in: the Gender, Local Government and Communications pilot project undertaken with Gender Links and the University of Witwatersrand from October 2004 to May 2005.



Sinah Gwebu

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

"I am more networked than before; I know more NGO's, more government departments and their various roles that all these stakeholders play in society. Also I have learned more about policy making and implementation and the processes that are involved in coming up with policies. Personally I have gained knowledge that nobody can take away from me. I now have experience in how to deal with my own issues as an individual."

Nandi Mayathula Khoza, the speaker at the time and now MMC for Community Development says in the new council formed after the 2006 elections it is easy to spot the 24 councillors who took part in this ten module course linked to the calendar of the council because of their confidence and the way that they are able to articulate gender issues: "They speak freely; they see the bigger picture (when it comes to gender equality); they know how to put forward their arguments; they are effective; you can see that they are really involved in decision-making."

The project had its roots in the gaps identified in gender discourse and practise at local level in Ringing up the Changes, first officially launched in partnership with the city as part of a long standing strategic partnership that has included collaborating in research and campaigns like the Sixteen Days of Activism. GL approached the Speaker who is responsible for the councillor training with the idea of a programme for empowering councillors in the City in a way that they would find most relevant.

The (then) Speaker involved the Head of Councillor Training and Capacity Building Shirlyn Serobatse, and the Multiparty Women's Caucus (MWC) that she chaired. The caucus facilitated several focus group discussions to identify the kind of training that councillors would find most useful. It surfaced from these discussions that councillors had a range of needs, from "hard" technical skills like not being able to use a computer and the Internet to "soft" skills such as communicating effectively and understanding transformative leadership. The range of training needs identified, including business and driving skills underscores the multiplicity of needs at local level.

The consultations also led to a number of important decisions to

- Include both women and men in the training;
- Seek accreditation for the course with the University of Witwatersrand so that the councillors could receive certificates (a major concern, given that many councillors lack formal qualifications).
- Have the training over an eight month period, in half day to one day sessions, with assignments in between.
- Only certify those who attended eight out of the ten modules and complied with course output requirements that included several individual and group assignments.



City of Joburg councillors during training
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Based on the needs assessment and focus group discussions, and drawing on the experience of helping to produce a "Gender Tool Kit for SADC Decision-Makers" GL, a gender specialist from Wits University and the MPWC designed a ten module course dovetailing the Council calendar

The modules covered three broad areas

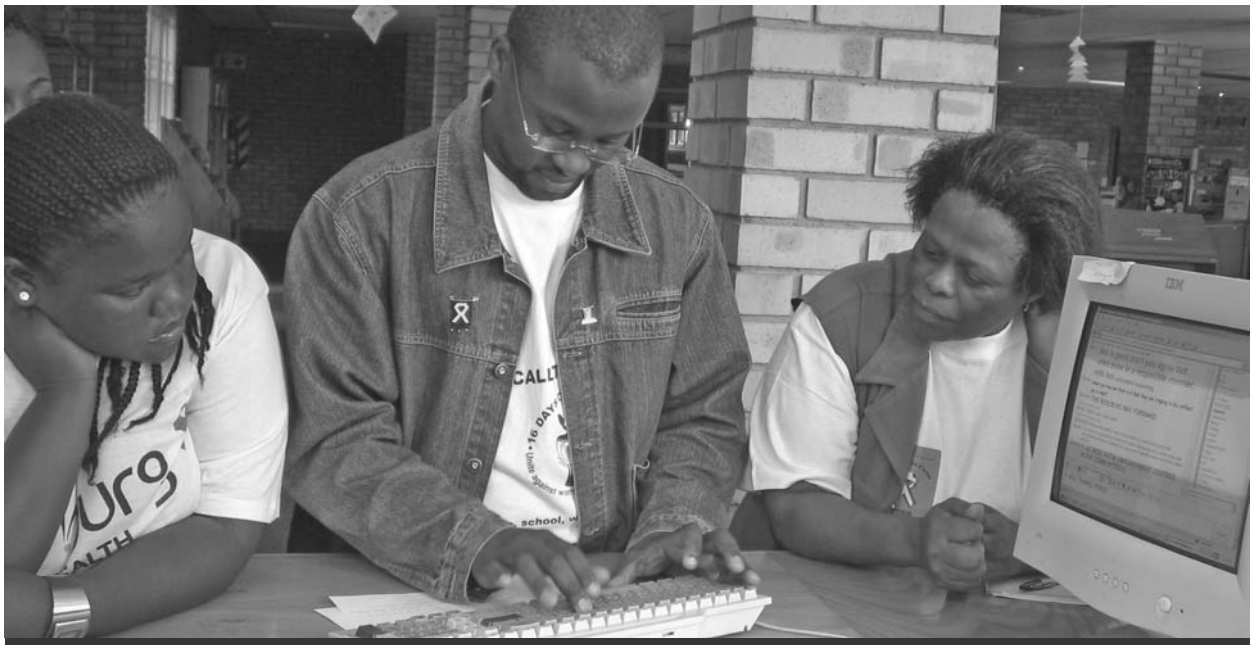
- Gender concepts and analysis;
- Communication for social change;
- Transformative leadership.

Table 27: The Gender, Communications and Local Government Course

SKILLS	KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
Strategic uses of information technology	Gender analysis	Deepening appreciation of diversity
Writing	Policy formulation	Tolerance
Running campaigns	Monitoring and evaluation	Assertiveness
Debating		Understanding and using power

As illustrated in Table 27, these involved a mix of skills, knowledge and attitude training. The course ran over an eight month period so that in between there would be time for reading, assignments and application, with specific dates tied to the Council diary.

The different modules focused on, and applied to specific organisational processes. For example, the gender planning and budget modules dovetailed to these processes in the Council. The modules on debating, public speaking and the media took place towards the end, as councillors began to prepare for elections. A highlight of the course included a journalist from the South African Broadcasting Corporation conducting mock interviews with the councillors.



GL trainer Mothibi Mohomane with City of Jo'burg Councillors *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

As far as possible, all learning was directly applied. For example the sessions on gender violence, HIV/AIDS and communication skills were directly linked to the Sixteen Day campaign on Gender Violence that the councillors championed in their wards that became hubs for the cyber dialogues that took place during the campaign. The City of Johannesburg formed the main hub, providing a venue each day of the campaign for live discussions chaired by councillors, with other decision-makers joining in during the lunch time cyber chats facilitated by GL.

Course participants played a key role in organising an event on International Women's Day on 8 March 2005 in which they linked up through cyber dialogues to the Beijing Plus Ten review taking place in New York, and conducted their own assessment on the ground on how far South Africa has progressed in the Ten Years since the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Flexibility remained a watch word through out. For example, when it surfaced that many councillors had limited facility with and access to IT, GL formed a partnership with a sister NGO Women's Net that has since provided additional IT training to those needing it. GL also made suggestions to the City IT department through the Speakers office for ensuring that all councillors have access to the Internet.

The course resulted in two significant outputs: a draft gender policy for the City (see Chapter nine) and a book of first hand accounts of the experiences of the councillors from a gender perspective (the City of Johannesburg "I" Stories). As agreed at the outset, the course ended with the issuing of certificates to those who had fulfilled the requirements at a high level event attended by senior politicians and families of the councillors.

Box 28: What made the Jo'burg project special

When Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka awarded certificates to the 24 councillors who graduated, 19 women and five men in 23 September 2005, she highlighted several unique features of the project:



City of Joburg councillors at the certificate ceremony
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

- The importance of political champions like Nandi Mayathula-Khoza.
- The unique partnership between an NGO (Gender Links), academic institution (the University of Witwatersrand) and the nation's largest municipality (the City of Johannesburg).
- Designing the course with councillors, to meet their needs and those of the Council, making it one of the few training courses involving women in decision-making designed to suit their schedules.
- The holistic approach to leadership skills including gender analysis, communication (including IT) and transformative leadership training.
- The inclusion of men that made for robust debate and led to a cadre of male champions of gender equality in the City.
- Tangible processes and outcomes to ensure that gender becomes embedded in City practices. Key among are the draft gender policy developed as part of the course (see accompanying documents) and the structures that will be established as part of the process. (In their evaluations, one councillor commented that the course "opened my mind and changed my attitude to wards gender issues.)
- The "I" Stories constituted an important contribution to gender and local governance discourse; an area that has hardly been touched on in the broader gender and governance discourse and one that is of vital importance to the future of the nation

Mentoring

Because it is personalised, targeted and on-the-job, mentoring is a highly effective form of capacity building for adults. Several councillors, especially in South Africa, raised the need for properly structured mentorship programmes. Many see it as a simple way of sharing knowledge and skills from experienced councillors to new ones as well as a simple and inexpensive way of way of building the capacity of councillors.

Janet Semple of the DA in South Africa says mentorship is an important part of what the party's women's wing DAWN does. Against the background of the hostile environment that women encounter, "the mentorship is extremely important to show women the ropes and how things work and to be there for them. You often find that once you get there your whole support system falls away and you are left on your own. It's very important to nurture them when they start off and to keep that nurturing going once they get there and to give them support not only in practical terms but emotionally as well." They also encourage women in the party who aren't involved in politics to go into politics and then once

they are there they get formal training.

Councillor Nozibele Mtyali from Ukhahlamba District in South Africa is testament to the benefits of mentoring. She says that when she started as a councillor she had low self confidence but that she began to grow when the Mayor asked her to be part of the Mayoral Executive Committee. She says that she grew out of her shell and that what helped was having a female councillor to provide her with support and being her mentor.

The civil society group in eThekwini believe that mentoring is crucial in enabling and empowering women, they say that there needs to be an accompanying programme so that women understand their roles and see them through the five year term because most councillors only find their feet in their last year.

A participant in the civil society focus group in Lesedi said that "what needs to happen is for those with experience, both men and women, to remain as mentors to this new breed of leaders. A woman councillor in Umjindi added: "When you are in office you are in a position to mentor other women into leadership. This assists in the motivation of women to view leadership positively and as something that is not only meant for men." Men in Lekwa Teemane also saw the benefit in mentoring and felt that councillors should take it upon themselves to mentor colleagues without the same degree of experience until they "can stand on their own."



Focus group in Lekwa Teemane *Photo: Nontobeko Dlamini*

Box 29: Making mentorship her business

Councillor Alice Titus, a three time councillor and former Mayor of Breede Valley makes mentorship her business. Noting that in her experience the biggest barrier to women's effective participation is lack of assertiveness and self confidence she believes that this can be overcome by talking to and motivating women.

"I have identified two women from the community that have a lot of capacity but do not have self confidence, and very consciously I have drawn them near to me and I am taking them to those places where I see that there is a future for them, they are not aware of it.

"The one's confidence is up by 40 percent, so much so that when I've identified a need for a motivational speaker to address a certain group I send her, under the pretext of helping me out. So if everybody could be serious about contributing, not in cash, but in kind and working collectively we will get there and break down that barrier."

The danger, she cautions, is that not all women feel the same way and that some women are afraid of empowering other women because, "there's a threat that if I empower you too much you will get me out of my job and my position, and that's a real problem."



Alice Titus

Photo: Susan Tolmay

But she believes that if the threat is identified and you can get women into smaller groups to talk about the "Pull Her Down syndrome" (see Chapter four) "you will find that women open up because if you relate your experience, where you've come from, what you've encountered along the road, how you got to where you are, women start to realise that they have got no reason to feel threatened.

Growing on the job

As in any area of politics, much of the learning in local government takes place on the job. As the vignettes below reflect, for those who stay the course there is nothing to beat the experience that they gain by growing on-the-job.

Once, twice, three times

Now in her third term Speaker of the Cape Winelands District Council Mpumi Hani feels that experience has been her best teacher. In the beginning, she says, people used to ask: "Are you sure of what you are doing?" But she says that as time has gone by and as woman councillors have interacted with voters they have shown that they are capable and this has resulted in the voter's changing their minds and accepting that there is a place for women in local government.

She feels that she has grown with all of the years of experience. In the last election she was number two on the party list, voted for by many branches. She attributes this to the fact that "people are starting to see that women are working very hard even working more than men". Women occupying top positions is especially important in challenging stereotypes, she says. The municipality is in the process of setting up a gender desk which will ensure service delivery according to gender happens and that gender issues are dealt with.



Mpumi Hani *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Sitting on many councils



Agnes Kafula *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Two years into her term, Councillor Agnes Kafula of the Windhoek Council believes that in the end experience may be the best teacher for a councillor.

She says that it is difficult being a first time councillor and recalls that: "The first two or three months weren't easy months because it was as if I had just started classes in grade one but I managed to go through that process."

She goes on to list all of the bodies and council's she now sits on: "I was chosen out of the 15 councillors to represent the City of Windhoek on the council of the University of Namibia (UNAM) as a member of the council. Out of that there are a number of other committees within the UNAM establishment on which I have been elected to stand." She also serves as a member of the executive and a member of the management committee of ALAN (Association of Local Authorities of Namibia).

While she never received any training for any of the councils she sits on she feels that in the two years that she has been a councillor she has gained a lot

of experience: "I am now at a level where I can express myself and address the community and it can be a function where I can address a big audience, sometimes the Mayor nominates one of the councillors to address some of the functions. So it's that experience that I have gained. I can go and say what I need to say with confidence and without fear. All women have gained."

I'd do it again



Mathato Mantso *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Mathato Mantso, Chair of the Khomokhoana Council in Lesotho owes her current position to the one third quota for women in the country's first local government elections in 2005. But less than two years into her new job she is confident enough to say: "I think in future we should just have open elections. We don't want a quota. Women should stand on their own feet."

Her council consists of eight women and three men. In accordance with the law in Lesotho, two of these are chiefs. "Women outnumber men, but we get things done. There is a good level of co-operation," she said. "It is important to have women who are strong and powerful; that think quickly. Even in the house women are powerful, even if they may not know it. We have to discover the power within us."

Mantso accepts that for some women politics is still inhibiting. She says there is no difference in attitude in Lesotho towards those women who openly contested the elections and those who came in through the quota. But she argues that "for our credibility it is important to stand on our own and win."

Conclusions

The examples in this chapter reflect to a new breed of strong and competent women politicians at the local level. While many barriers exist, the more women who enter this sphere, the more the barriers will fall. Field evidence shows that numbers do make a difference. But they need to work in concert with enabling factors – the backgrounds and grounding of the women; their support networks and systems; as well as targeted, ongoing capacity building and networking to ensure not just presence, but effective participation. Without effective participation, there can be little hope of meaningful transformation.



Kaija Shililifa and her daughter

Photo: Susan Tolmay

Give her the car wash –

What women bring to local politics

"Women have tried to enter politics looking like men. This will not work. We bring our differences, our emotions, our way of doing things, even our tears to the process."

- Ann Tibaijuku, Executive Director,
UN HABITAT, Tanzania

Kaija Shililifa is an even tempered woman. But when the male colleagues in the seven-member council of Tsumeb on which she is the only woman councillor wanted to turn down an application by a woman to set up a car wash, she blew a fuse. Using her clout as chair of the powerful management committee she asked: "The three other cars washes, who owns them? It is men. Now why can't we give an opportunity to this woman who

also wants to progress? They tried to say 'no' but I said, let's give this woman a car wash and see what she will do. It's up to her."

The woman is now putting up her car wash. "Sometimes you have to tell men," grumbled Shililifa, "that they have had their chance. Now we must also benefit. Men can be very difficult."

Not that Shililifa lacks experience in dealing with men. Other than being the only woman in the council, Shililifa is the only woman station master in the whole of Namibia. She also prides herself on being a student, mother and wife. Politics, she says, "needs a go-getter." In just two years as a councillor, she has not only learned the ropes but is determined to make a difference in her community: especially for women.

Like other councillors in Namibia who came in fresh after the 2004 elections, her only orientation consisted of a week's training and a note to say the rest she could learn from the CEO. But on the day the councillors were sworn in the CEO resigned. With a degree in public management and background as a unionist in the transport sector, Shililifa got stuck into her reading pack that included the Local Authorities Act and Code of Conduct so that "I knew what was wrong and what was right, where to go and where not to go."

Elected soon after to chair the management committee where most of the decisions get taken in local authorities in Namibia (see Chapter four) Shililifa has had frustrating moments, like when she goes out into the community "and they just look at you, but if you go there with a man they listen."

Her strategy when she is feeling undermined is to remain calm. "Sometimes you can influence (the men); it depends on how you deal with them. But



Women can also have car washes

Photo:

sometimes they start with their stories, you lose your temper, you lose your game. You have to be cool to get it right."

By earning the respect of the men in the council, Shililifa has bough herself space to manoeuvre. While she wants "the whole community to be empowered" and feel ownership, she also believes that it is important for women councillors to take up gender issues.

"We tend to misunderstand the term gender and some think that when we talk of gender we are talking about women, but gender is about balance, we want balance in the community where we live, so if we have a project for unemployed people it shouldn't just be unemployed women but you should also consider unemployed men, there should be a team of men and women in the community. Men and women should be treated equally."

However, she believes that as a woman councillor she has a special responsibility to empower women for whom the playing field is not level. For a start, she says, "I want all women to be part of the decisions taken regarding the running of the municipal office."

She makes it a point to ensure that women get to participate effectively: "When we have groups I always ensure that women are the leaders, men can

be part of the group but they cannot be the leader of that group. We didn't benefit (in the past) so why can't we lead now? And then we start learning, leading from a small group then to a big group, you become the leader of this small group and then at the end of the day you become a minister. It's about starting small and growing."

To empower women, she adds, "We have to start small projects that can generate income." In Tsumeb there is only one such project. It's an agricultural project. They sell their vegetables to make a profit and then they sell from their houses, and the council put up sheds in the town where women can sell their fruit and vegetables." The Tsumeb Cultural Village is one such initiative that was started by the previous Mayor. Women who work at the village say that their lives are different with more women being in local government. They believe that women councillors fight for the rights of women during council meetings and they call meetings to discuss various projects.



Women can also have car washes

Photo:

As chair of the management committee Shililifa is strict about money, but she also sees the human side: "The problem of revenue collection is always brings difference among the councillors. Some think that when community members don't pay rates and taxes you disconnect their electricity. Some councillors don't think that there is a need. You always have differences and they are what make me grow. We were all new in the field."

Shililifa believes that the long term solution is to weed out wastage and corruption so that resources can benefit those who need them, of whom the majority are women. She believes that every woman should be acquainted with the municipal budget and become active watchdogs. The more women get involved in local government, she says, the more corruption will be eradicated. In her relatively short stint as a councillor, Shililifa says she can see already "that I make a difference." That gives her the energy to go on.

This chapter concerns the unique agendas, interests, perspectives, styles and skills – if any – that women bring to local government. One school of thought argues that by simply being present, women make a difference. They become role models, shattering the myth that only men can walk the corridors of power. This is especially important at local level, where the forces of culture, custom and tradition are most felt.

However, this research builds on the findings of many other studies which show that even though women are not homogenous, and may in some instances be regarded as "men dressed as women" they do share certain common concerns as a result of their lived experiences as women. As in the case of Shililifa, who believes in empowering the whole community but is unapologetic about opening specific opportunities for and affirming women, this theory holds that women are more likely to be responsive

to the concerns of women because of their own experiences.

A distinction is made between women's interests that derive from their reproductive role (for example maternity leave) and perspectives, or a different way of looking at things as a result of ones background (such as, in the case study above, a determination to fight corruption to ensure that rates can be kept down for poor families, the majority of whom are women). A further distinction is made between women's natural empathy with other women and their sense of responsibility to represent other women. As in the case of Shililifa, many women in the study expressed the idea that as women they are duty bound to help uplift other women.

Finally, this chapter explores the extent to which women bring a distinctive leadership style to local politics. One argument runs that to characterise all women as caring, good communicators, good at multi tasking etc is to exacerbate gender stereotypes. Another line of thought runs that in so far as the skills associated with child rearing have been kept out of the public domain, society is the poorer, as these skills would be a great asset in the public arena. In particular, communities highlighted accessibility; good communication, consultation and consensus building skills as qualities they appreciated about their local councillors.

While it would be dangerous to stereotype women as better performers than men and vice versa, communities also viewed women as more diligent, thorough and honest than men: observations that may well derive from the spotlight that women feel themselves to be under as they claim new spaces.

The politics of presence

Both the literature and international experience confirm the view that when women, who are perceived to belong to the private sphere, enter public domains, the two spheres begin to merge. Such a merger, it is argued, changes the attitudes of both women and men about their roles.

Abzug and Jain argue that the very presence of women in decision-making forces society's perception about them to change.[77] Beyond Numbers notes: "The process of increasing the proportion of women in legislation is part of a larger phenomenon of changing political images so that politics starts to be regarded as a normal activity for women." [78]

Quota specialist Drude Dahlerup illustrates this cultural change with an anecdote from Norway which at the time had a woman prime minister (Gro Harlem Bruntland). A boy asked his mother: "Mamma, can a man become a prime minister?"

South Africa's ambassador to Cuba, GL Chair and former African National Congress (ANC) Deputy Secretary-General Thenjiwe Mtintso adds:

> You need to show, at a simplistic level, to those who grapple with practical needs, that women can be leaders. It does not matter what they do or do not do. The fact that a woman can sit in her rural area and begin to imagine another woman being president is important. Right through your life you have been socialised to believe and experience women as care givers at home. You have no other reference point that says women can go to parliament.

77 Ibid

78 Karam,A. (1998) "Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers" International IDEA: p151.

The importance of role models featured frequently in the focus groups and interviews for this research. Janet Semple, Head of the Democratic Alliance Women's Network (DAWN) in South Africa noted that "strong role models are very important at this stage of our democracy; women who people can relate to."

Women in Maseru, where there is a woman mayor said "It is significant for women that the Mayor is a woman, she is a role model." They added, however, that women needed to be strong in order to make their voices heard and to make a difference.

In Namibia young women and men in particular commented on the importance of role models. As a young woman in Rundu put it: "It is important for women to participate in local government so that they encourage other women to take part in decision-making… When women see other women in high positions they are encouraged. Women in decision-making serve as role models for other women."

A young woman in Tsumeb added: "It is important for young girls to have roles models. It is important for them to see more women making decisions. It will make a big difference because you like what you see and aspire to something. It's important for girls to see strong women who are doing things that have previously only been done by men." Men in Grootfontein agreed that more women should be involved in local government because it is good for women to have role models.

In South Africa a civil society participant from Nelson Mandela Bay Council in the Eastern Cape noted: "Women councillors are role models to other women in the community. Women in communities are likely to feel they are better able to participate now that they have a female councillor than when they had men councillors.

A man in the City of Johannesburg focus group added:

> By bringing in women we are trying to move away from our history of demoralising and depriving women of equal opportunities in life, especially situations that were perpetuated by cultural and religious beliefs. Having them in the government indicates to other women in the community that they can also be part of decision making in South Africa. When they see their female counterparts participating in local government it encourages them to be part of the processes within local government. Not only in the field of politics, but also in all the fields in which women were denied participation. I have never seen the participation of women in such large numbers, particularly in the previous government. That in itself is what will encourage other women and show them that they can participate in various sectors in industry in this country.

Another woman participant observed: "The participation of women in government has created a positive image of women's potential and capability in leadership and previously male dominated roles and positions in all sectors."

Young women in Dundee, in the Kwa Zulu Natal province of South Africa said that "as a young person it is important to see women in decision making, to learn form them, they are role models." Civil society participants in the Sol Plaatjie council in the Northern Cape province of South Africa pointed to Minister of Education Naledi Pandor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Nkosazana Zuma as examples of role models.

Concerns and interests

Do women have different concerns and interests to men? If so, how are these different? And is it possible, given the many different strands of feminist thought, to talk about "women" as one sub-category of people?

The "myth" of sisterhood

Phillips challenges the notion of "sisterhood" which attributes particular qualities to women, seeing them as representing common and general "women's interests". She argues that women are not homogeneous, do not have universally shared interests and perspectives, and do not speak with one voice. She argues that "the prevailing terms of contemporary politics suggest the triad of sex, race and class" as being critical intersections.[79] These intersecting factors are especially relevant in South Africa and Namibia (see Box 30).

79. Phillips,A. (1991) "Engendering Democracy." Oxford: Policy Press: p51

Box 30: "I don't believe in the gender thing

Councillor Ilme Schneider of the opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) in Windhoek Namibia says that quite frankly she "believes more in competency than the gender thing." But she adds: "That's my position as a white German speaking person. I can say that easily because my culture supports me. But I know that for my black colleagues it's a totally different matter.

"I will always stand up for the gender thing, but for myself I don't believe it. I think you are either competent for the job or you are not, no matter what you are. It's not a high priority or issue for me personally. I usually tend to shy away from projects that involve women."

Requested pic from Sarry

She acknowledges, however, that "women do have to work harder than men to be recognised which is why they are more able to cope with stress because, especially in the black communities, they are the ones that hold the family together and they hold on to their jobs, while the men tend to gallivant, run around and do what they want."

She also believes that women bring "a greater sense of community, of what's happening in the group and they tend to take that more into consideration and find a diplomatic way while the men tend to be this is it and it's because I say so. Women have gained very much, there's more responsibility towards the community women are less power conscious, they have more feeling and responsibility towards the community they are trying to represent."

Schneider said she decided to go into local government to enhance democracy in Namibia: "After independence I saw that Namibia is a very small economy which is very dependent on government contracts and no one wants to be seen in the opposition parties. I decided that's not very good for democracy or my country either. I have four children and it's not very good for their future so I became a member of the biggest opposition party at that time, the DTA and they put me up as a candidate."

She said that men are more concerned with power gains no matter what happens with the community and "there the 50 percent is very good if we can manage that although I still believe that competence is the most important factor above gender."

Others in the study emphasised that depending on their race or class, women may have conflicting interests. For example, rich women might want a squatter camp demolished while poor women might want it upgraded to a formal settlement.

At several localities in Namibia, researchers encountered conflicts between women councillors, women shebeen owners and women in the community over home-based liquor stores referred to in Southern Africa as shebeens. While these provide a living for many women in former back townships, the easy access to liquor fuels alcoholism and gender violence. Women in many communities have gone on protests to have them closed.

Municipalities like the City of Windhoek are introducing more stringent controls in the issuing of licences; for example that no two shebeens will be within 200 metres of each other and that first preference for licences will be given to street corner locations with lights. But women residents say that these measures are insufficient and that rules get flouted, especially with regard to opening and closing hours. They blame the shebeen queens for their children, husbands and partners becoming alcoholics. Women councillors have found themselves caught in between the women business owners and the women in the community.

Women and window dressing

Some constituents expressed the view that women make no difference and that when they get into positions of power they behave just like men.

A civil society participant from eThekwini, South Africa alleged that "there hasn't been a lot of difference because most women are there for 'window dressing', just to say to the world that we have this many women in local government."

A woman in the City of Johannesburg focus group complained that "right now there should be a huge difference in terms of service delivery but some women just want to shine in wealth and forget about the poor people down there. Our voices must be heard as women living in the community, but they are not."

A woman in the Maseru focus group added: "At times women do ignore other women. They go into politics for themselves and their families. Sometimes we as women feel that if we had voted for men we would have been better off." Another participant said she had voted for a man after an experience she had with a woman in charge of social welfare for the disabled refusing to distribute food packages to disabled people in her community.

"Women become councillors only to become 'men councillors'. They bring about no change and act no differently to men councillors," said a woman participant from Buffalo City in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.

A participant in the Msunduzi focus group in the Kwa Zulu Natal province of South Africa said that although the ideal is that "women who are elected will take on other women's issues they are co-opted into a male dominated system and they have to somehow perform in that environment. Half the time they are trying to prove that they are capable of being in such positions. The issues that are important and that do affect women end up taking a back seat and go to the bottom of the priority list. The problem is with the system which needs to be changed to make it more women friendly."

High expectations on the ground

Because councillors deal with bread and butter issues such as whether people have water, electricity and basic services there tend to be higher immediate expectations of them than of MPs in situations in which their hands might be tied by the financial and administrative problems that plague local government (see Chapter eight).

In this context, views about whether women make a distinctive mark are often coloured by general frustration with local government. A male constituent in Vacoas-Phoenix, Mauritius alleged that: "Councillors in general cannot take any decisions. We do not see our councillors both male and female." "Local government doesn't do enough to change the lives of women on the ground; there is only a certain elite group that benefit," added a civil society participant in the Sol Plaatjie Council, Northern Cape Province, South Africa. "There are a lot of poor women who don't know where to go with problems."

In Lesotho many qualified statements about whether or not women make a difference by pointing out that local government is still new; roles and responsibilities are still being clarified and there is a general lack of understanding about local government and how it operates.

Common interests and concerns

Women, like men, are not homogenous. Britton identifies four main categories of women in the South African parliament: national politicians, parliamentary leaders, community workers and those who are alienated.[80] Of these, the "feminist activists" are most likely to be found amongst the first two categories. But Britton argues that the "community workers" are key to linking parliament with communities.[81]

The ANC's Mtintso cautions against rigid categorisations of women into feminists and non feminists. She points to the importance of the support of women who are sympathetic to gender issues, but may not define themselves as "feminist activists" provide to those who are vocal about the issue:

> After sitting in decision-making for sometime, I have seen the qualitative difference that women bring, even if they don't speak. One woman will stand up. The feminist will motivate the other women to get up and motivate what she is saying. The fact that other women are there gives the feminist confidence. You know that when the chips are down, you can call on their 'woman instinct.'

80 Britton, Hannah, 2003: "From Resistance to Governance: South African Women's Transformation of Parliament", unpublished, p 235.

81 Ibid, page 255.

The notion that no matter how women define themselves, there is a certain "woman instinct" that binds them came through strongly in other interviews for this research. As a male councillor in Lekwa Teemane South Africa put it: "Both men and women are advocating for the same objective, which is bettering the lives of the community; irrespective of colour, gender or origin. However women will always guard against abuse of their female counterparts, which is normal."

Sweetman explains: "The link between personal identity and leadership style is a complex one. There is no guarantee that women leaders will promote gender equality, and there is also no guarantee that male leaders will not do so. Bureaucratic and democratic principles dictate that leaders should represent the interests of others, even if those interests are at odds with their own. However, while some leaders can and do represent agendas that they do not share personally, this principle is often forgotten: there is a very clear relationship between personal identity and experience, and commitment to furthering a cause."[82]

82 Sweetman, Caroline, ed, "Women and Leadership", Oxfam GB 2000: p6

Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, Member of the Mayoral Committee for Community Development in the City of Johannesburg added: "Women represent the issues of women and men equally, but they are biased towards the issues that affect women specifically. We have this drive to try and ensure that we are impacting positively on the lives of women. Whatever we discuss and decide on, we try to ensure that women participate in the process."

Women, added Mathabiso Lepono, Minister of Gender in Lesotho "know what the needs are with regard to the issues such as families, electricity, water etc. If women are elected into decision-making they will make decisions to help reduce the burden of women in rural areas."

"Women councillors have definitely created more opportunities for women specifically," said a woman participant from the Buffalo City Council in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. "Women are now starting to feel part of the process. Their views are valued."

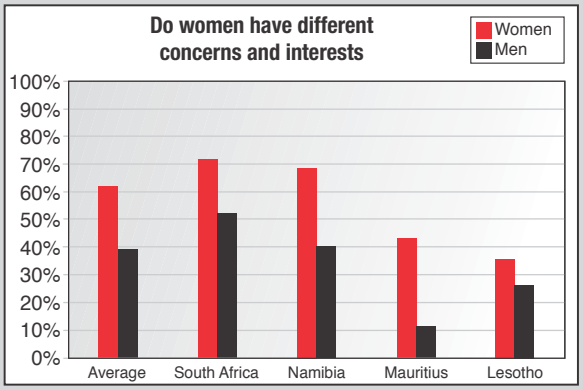
In response to a woman who said she had suffered at the hands of another woman during the women's focus group for the City of Johannes-



Male constituent focus group in Lekwa Teemane, South Africa *Photo: Nontobeko Dlamini*

burg another participant said: "For me personally I am very happy that women have been uplifted and put in these positions. The problems we have experienced in our ward prior to having a female councillor were really terrible. People were getting killed during election time and the crime was quite high. I really have always had a problem with having a man as a councillor, because they really don't care about our problems."

What the councillors said:



Asked whether women in local in local government have different interests and concerns to men the majority (53 percent) of councillors said that they did. More women (61 percent) than men (39 percent) agreed with this statement. Women in South Africa (71 percent) and Namibia (69 percent), the two countries which have had women participating in local government the longest agreed most with the statement. South African men (51 percent) and Namibian men (40 percent) showed the highest levels of agreement amongst the men.

Only 11 percent of the men in Mauritius, the country with the lowest number of women in local government, agreed with the statement. However 44 percent of the women in Mauritius agreed with the statement. Lesotho, the country in which local government is newest had the lowest levels of agreement with the statement but the gap between women's (35 percent) and men's (28 percent) perceptions was the narrowest.

The following are some of the responses received in answer to a qualitative question in the questionnaire on what these interests are:

- Women are more concerned about basic community and social needs for example caring for orphans, building shelters, elderly and volunteering while men do not feel that these are issues of concern.
- Women are more concerned about abuse, domestic violence, economic empowerment of women and clinics, shelters and hospitals. Men are more concerned about roads, infrastructure for self benefit.
- Women are much more passionate because of their background of caring and families. Cleanliness of the city and crime are a priority.

Issues seen as being closer to the hearts of women in the focus groups included child abuse, gender violence, drug abuse, services such as water, sanitation and electricity, housing, human development, poverty alleviation, people with disabilities, HIV and AIDS, education, child-headed households and crime.

"When women come in the place changes," said a participant in the Windhoek men's focus group. "You see a lot of dustbins going up. Child care centres get established. Old age homes get built. There are soup kitchens for the vulnerable. Illegal shebeens are closed down. Women are more effective at dealing with community issues."

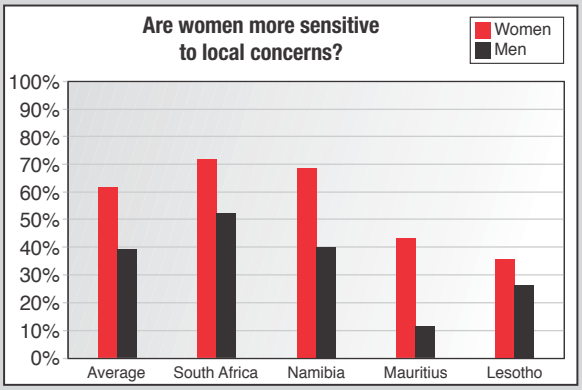


Women constituents in Litjotjela, Lesotho *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Sensitivity to local issues

Councillors and constituents concurred that women not only feel more strongly about certain issues compared to men but also that they are particularly passionate about issues at the local level.

What the councillors said:



Asked whether they agreed with the statement "women are more sensitive to local concerns than men", an overwhelming majority of councillors (81 percent) agreed with the statement but more women (90 percent) than men (66 percent) agreed. The biggest discrepancy between female and male responses was in Namibia where all the women agreed with the statement compared to only 53 percent of the men. Mauritius the country with the highest number of men agreeing with the statement also showed the smalled discrepancy between the views of women (83 percent) and men (75 percent).

Participants in focus groups and interviews expressed similar views. "Because women are sensitive to immediate surroundings they see things that men don't see, men are very technical," said a participant in the women's focus group in Cape Town, South Africa.

A man from the Umjindi council in Mpumalanga,

South Africa, spoke of streets that were being named in their area: "Street names in townships were non-existent during the time when a male councillor was responsible for a certain ward, but the people who advocated and pushed for street names to be established were the female councillors, and one of them is now the speaker here. This is the only ward that has street names in this municipality."

"Local government is about the bread and butter issues and women make superb representatives in local government because they are very much on the ground and they are aware of the issues and know what's going on in their communities whereas men are not so involved because they take their cars and go of to work and that's where they stay all day," added the Democratic Alliance Women Network's (DAWN's) Janet Semple. "They're not going to the clinics or libraries or sports facilities, not seeing the potholes in the road or that the street lights aren't working. Women by their very nature are caring and nurturing and are more passionate about the issues on the ground, they don't only know about them they care about them because it's important."

Box 31: Eyes and ears on the ground

Councillor Thelma Mananga of Buffalo City in the Eastern Cape says her work is complementary to that of President Thabo Mbeki. While he watches out for the big picture, she keeps her eyes and ears to the ground as a councillor. "It is my responsibility to help him achieve his goals, to engage with women on the ground and to hear their needs," she says.



Thelma Mananga

Photo: Judith Mtsewu

As an ANC councillor she feels that this is her most important task, because while issues like crime appear to be neglected by the national government, they are burning concerns to communities.

She has new ideas about addressing crime: "The common approach is to address crime by bringing in the police and taking people to jail. But this is not my personal approach. My interest is in the causes: what causes a person to commit crime? What can I then do to help this person leave their life of crime? My first step is always to interact with these people to listen to their own stories. Through this approach, I am able to form relationships with these kids to the extent that once arrested, some would ask me to visit them. In our interactions I would try to identify their passion and interest, because it is this that will get them off the life of crime."

It is while engaging with communities and specifically women at public gatherings that Manage realises how much work still needs to be done. "As women we have many issues and there are some issues we haven't even begun to address adequately such as the plight of children, education and the dignity of

women. Some of the issues that we face as a community pertain to abandoned and abused children, children who grow up in violent homes, these are important to me."

She talks about HIV and AIDS and how the women are the ones who live with and care for people infected and affected by the pandemic. While the government is most concerned about the roll out of a national treatment plan, the concerns at local level are very different. "For example, home-based care depends on knowledge and so those involved have to be empowered to help those infected and affected. This needs doctors to link up with home based care providers to help create the environment for improved health."

Mananga is frustrated that government ministers and male councillors seem blind to these every day concerns. "There is a link between national and local government but Ministers at national level seldom know what is happening on the ground," she said.

"Male councillors tend to focus solely on the big issues often stated in election manifestos such as housing, electricity, roads. They do not think about all these other issues I have mentioned. It is likely to be women councillors who will take these matters into consideration at all."

Women's issues versus women's perspectives

A civil society participant in eThekwini, South Africa warned of the dangers of stereotyping women as only being concerned about "soft" issues linked to their reproductive role in society:

> Women are concerned about these (socio economic) issues more because it is women who are most affected by the issues like water and safety. But they do also think of other issues – there are women who own, run and are interested in business, mineral and energy. There is a woman who has a business in granite. There is the danger of stereotyping women into certain portfolios – soft issues like health and social and development – there needs to be a shift in that women should be able to deal with all issues and men should also be encouraged to deal with the issues that stereotypically set aside for women.

Beyond Numbers makes a useful distinction between women's issues, and women's perspectives as follows:

> Women's issues mainly affect women for biological reasons (for example, breast screening, reproductive rights) or for social reasons (e.g. sex equality or child care policy. Women's perspectives are women's views on all political concerns. Some research indicates that although broadly the same issues are significant for both sexes, women's perspectives on issues differ from those of men. For example, research carried out in Britain in 1996 showed that although both women and men prioritised economic issues, women were more concerned about part time work, low pay and pension rights, while men were more concerned about unemployment.[83]

A woman participant in Matsatseng, Lesotho gave an example of how women might have different perspectives to men on a similar issue. The mountain

83 International Idea, 1998: "Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers" p 136

kingdom has a huge soil erosion challenge, with gulleys carved deep into the mountain slopes. Male decision-makers are concerned about this from a conservation point of view. Women have been raising the need to build bridges over the gulleys or "dongas" so that children who have to walk over them can get to school.

In South Africa DAWN's Semple noted that having more women's perspectives in policy making is also critical at a national level because "there's not enough emphasis on issues that affect women and perhaps if we had more women we'd have better schooling, better health." In Mauritius, Rozy Khedoo has insisted on observing the kind of lived realities of women that society would rather forget about at first hand and making them her business and that of her council (see Box 32).

Box 32: Who feels it knows it



Rozy Khedoo *Photo: DannyPhillipe*

Sitting in a brothel for two long days without anything to eat is not the road that many women would dare to travel. But Rozy Khedoo did it. Not because she wanted to know the function of a brothel but because she had to get two young girls in their early teens out of the hell of prostitution. She fought and she won. The two young girls, who were both raped before they even know what sex meant are now working. The brothel has now been dismantled.

Khedoo recalls vividly the day she disguised herself as a man in order to see at first hand what was happening to all the girls who were being picked by men in her region. Khedoo lives in a region called Tombeau Bay, where HIV and AIDS, drugs and prostitution form part of the daily life of the citizens. Women are also affected by issues of refuse collection, bad sanitation, sewerage and schooling for children, "I have to use different approaches to help citizens of my Village."

"Teenage pregnancy is rife in my region and over and above this I know young girls were being raped and getting pregnant and they did not know what to do with their babies. I also heard and saw two or three women sympathising with these girls and telling them that they could be given night jobs while their babies would be looked after.

"I wanted to know what these night jobs were. I knew there was something fishy having seen men picking these young girls up and putting them in private cars. For me this is a kind of unofficial trafficking that we cannot close our eyes to. Disguised in my male accoutrement, a male friend of mine agreed to accompany me. One night we followed one of these cars, which took us to a discotheque in the North of Mauritius. The horrors I saw cannot be described."

Against this background Khedoo decided to go into politics in 1991. She formed her own political group

called "Groupe Unitaire de Baie du Tombeau" (United Group of Tombeau Bay). All 12 members of this group, which included two women, were elected. Khedoo became the first Mauritian woman to hold the office of Vice-President of a District Council, that of Pamplemousses/Riviere du Rempart. She was also the only woman among the 35 male councillors.

Khedoo has been consistent in helping women in her village since she was first elected as Village and District Councillor in 1991. "My constituents come to see me on a daily basis. My doors are always opened. Even when I cannot help them personally I know where to send them. The main problems for these women are poverty and unemployment."

The civil society focus group in Pamplemousses/Riviere du Rempart consisting of two men and three women confirmed that "we meet Mrs Khedoo once a month and furthermore when we need her we do not hesitate to phone her and make an appointment."

A male constituent in the area recalled how Khedoo had intervened when the community had a problem with a fish factory causing a bad smell: "A parliamentarian would not have been able to do what Ms Khedoo did."

Rozy Khedoo has also taken 150 vulnerable off the streets through a special Centre for these children opened five years ago. Her next project is to open a centre for young women who become pregnant. "In 2004 when we did a survey we found out that there were 50 young girls between the ages of 13 and 16 with babies that they did not know how to care for. We did the same survey 2005 and most of these girls have disappeared. What has happened to them? You do not need to be a wizard to guess. They are of course doing sex work." Her challenge now is getting the resources to accomplish her mission so that hundreds of young girls can come out from the underworld of prostitution.

Call of duty

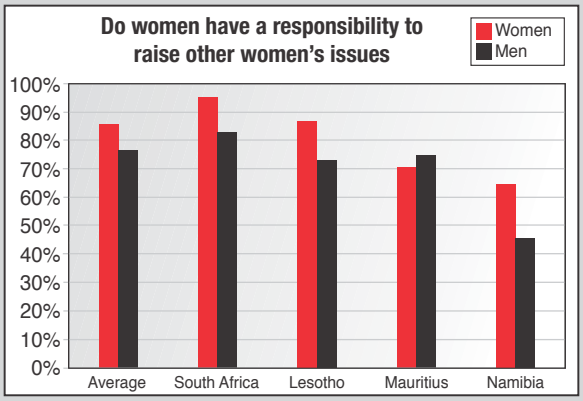
For many women at local level, the more pertinent question is not whether they have different interests to men, but rather whether they have a responsibility to represent women.

A few interviewees stressed that it should not be the responsibility of women to raise women's issues; as a male councillor put it: "We live in a democracy that focuses on human rights." Placing the women's concerns on women only "limits women's potential," he said.

A civil society participant in the Msunduzi focus group believed that too much expectation is placed on women councillors: "Councillors are just people and we expect them, because they are women, to be amazing and represent all of womankind – but they are all just women, some are good, some are bad at their jobs. But because they are women we expect them to do all this miraculous stuff. Essentially the women in these positions are just women who suffer from the same thing that men do and that's protecting their positions, 'doing what's best for me'. Not much has been done by women to reach out to other women. I don't actually think that it's the responsibility of women to do that."

But a survey of women's political experience carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1999 including 187 women from 65 countries showed that 89 percent of women politicians consider that they have a special responsibility to represent the needs and interests of women (IPU, 2000). Similarly this study shows that the majority of councillors, especially women, believe that it is the responsibility of women councillors to represent other women.

What the councillors said:



Councillors were asked whether women have the responsibility to raise other women's issues. Overall 83 percent of all councillors (86 percent women and 76 percent men) agreed that women have the responsibility to raise other women's issues. The graph shows that there is concurrence across all countries with little difference between women and men's views. Interestingly Mauritius, the country with the lowest number of women councillors, is the only country where more men (75 percent) than women (71 percent) agreed with the statement.

Asked to explain why they felt that it is a woman's responsibility to represent other women, a male councillor said if women came in on a special quota for women they had a duty to give something back. Another added: "There is a legitimate expectation that women in decision-making should take up the issues of other women." A third male respondent said: "Because of their experiences women should fight for other women's rights."

Most of the women councillors believed that because women are disadvantaged and marginalised it is their responsibility to "give voice to the voiceless." Comments included:

- Based on previous experiences, women and children were not recognised and were oppressed.
- Women in position of power have to change this legacy.
- Because of the past oppression and our background of patriarchal society, not all women are assertive enough to raise their issues, therefore they should be represented and that's what councillors are there to do.

Many women felt that occupying positions of privilege in society carries obligations. There was a strong belief that these issues will continue to be sidelined if women don't address them: "If we (they - women) don't (take responsibility for women's issues) who will?" Women also saw themselves as a conduit for other women to access the corridors of power. Comments included:

- We are the doors to places where there have been no doors previously, we can open avenues for women.
- Women Councillors are the doors to where there were no doors.
- Women in positions are the mouth piece for those that cannot speak for themselves.

Box 33: Why women should represent women



Selma Taukuheke *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Selma Taukuheke from the Grootfontein Municipality in Namibia believes that as a councillor it is her responsibility to help other women as she is the eyes and ears of the people. Coming from a struggle background she believes that being a being a councillor isn't difficult because nothing stops a woman from performing better than her male partners: "Every woman can do it," she says.

Although she hasn't been a councillor for long she pulls out a sheath of handwritten pages with ideas that she has to ensure "that at the end of the day people have something to eat. There are some women who are suffering, sometimes we hear about suffering but we have not seen it with our own eyes, but I am the one that walks around the location and what I see has made me want to do something to help them."

Her list of 17 projects includes the type of project and what is needed and they range from irrigation, poultry and catering projects to domestic work, yard cleaning and house watching. She plans on taking these ideas to the council and the CEO to see if the municipality will provide assistance to start these projects. She will also be looking for funding from embassies and other funding agencies: "I shall not surrender". She believes that women's lives have improved since there are women in local government. "If I walk around my eyes are open to see things and report problems. My ears also now open. I consult with everyone and I have discussion with people so I understand things better. I stay in the location and I stay with the people and I inform them of everything."

In Rundu in Namibia Victoria Kauma believes that "as women councillors if we do not educate women we are failing in our responsibilities. It is a big responsibility to go out and address women at church events and through women's leagues; have a planned programme to go and explain the importance of women in politics." She believes that women are gaining experience and confidence as leaders of the community. "People are becoming closer to women in leadership."

Leadership styles

Globally, there is a growing body of literature in business, management and leadership studies that shows that women do have a different way of going about things that is an asset in a world where relationships and diversity are becoming more important for success than raw power. The research revealed strong perceptions that women at local level bring different styles and values to leadership.

"Women are naturally organisers, caregivers, decision-makers and all these roles that they play," a participant in the City of Johannesburg women's focus group said. "Women have it in them to naturally lead and think of what is a priority for the people, which is different from men. Although they may need to have capacity built around the different concepts within local government, they are always able to stay focused on what they came here for. Men naturally lose focus, once money is flashed in front of them, because they care too much about image."

Box 34: Venus and Mars?

In the study councillors were asked whether they agree with the statement "There is no difference in the way that women and men lead" more men (64 percent) than women (57 percent) thought that women and men have the same leadership style. But while the majority of councillors (60 percent) agreed with the statement they cited the following examples of the differences that they perceive:

Comments by women councillors

- Men see tasks and we see people.
- Women get the job done and men get someone else to do the job.
- Men don't think about women when planning and as a result, they exclude them. Women think about everyone foe example in terms of development issues, women ask the community about what they want."
- Women use hearts and minds in taking decisions while men go for goals and glory.
- Men sit around having lots of meetings but no decisions are made and no action is taken, women are more practical and creative and see things in a totally different way.

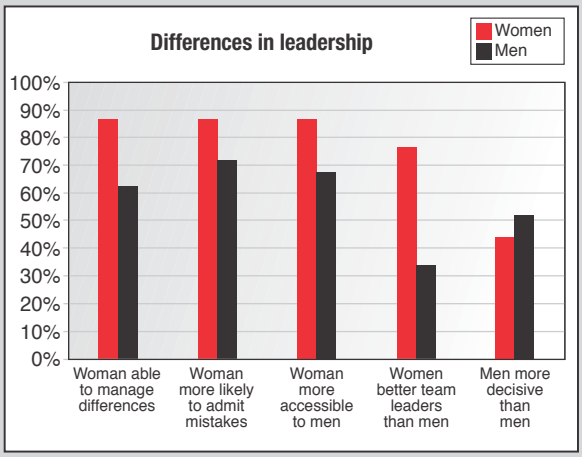
Comments by male councillors

- Men look at things in black and white (right and wrong) whereas women tend to see things differently.
- Men are macho, women are prepared to change and have a different approach to being winners.
- Women are very straight to the point when they speak. They are soft and manage differences better than men. This is important in decision-making.

Councillors were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

1. Women are better able to manage difference.
2. Women are more likely to admit that they've made a mistake.
3. Women are more accessible than men.
4. Women are better team leaders than men.
5. Men are more decisive than women.

What the councillors said:



The graph shows that more women agree more with all of the statements except the last one (men are more decisive than women) which more men agreed with. This response also had the smallest gender gap (eight percent). Women and men agreed most strongly on the statement that women are more likely to admit their mistakes. The greatest difference in the views of women and men (43 percent) concerned the statement that women are better team leaders than men. A fairly high proportion of both women (86 percent) and men (62 percent) agreed that women are better at managing diversity.

Accessibility

In all countries, except Lesotho, more women believed that they were more accessible than men (86 percent women compared to 67 percent men). The discrepancy between women and men's perceptions was largest (63 percent) in Namibia and smallest (20 percent) in South Africa.

The focus groups, especially with hose women, strongly supported the view that women councillors are more accessible than men. Comments made included:

- It is like in the home. You find the kids are not comfortable relating to their fathers, because they fear them, but they relate to their mothers. The same applies to the community; people do not do things because they want to; but they do it out of fear or because they do not want to be victimised or left out. With a female councillor it is different; people do things because they relate to her and because they want to and they respect her. (Woman participant in the Region 8 Johannesburg focus group).
- Women are far more futuristic and their concerns are more on the needs of the youth. Further they are able to pick up on issues relating to the community. Men are pragmatic, but women have an empathetic approach to issues. (Male councillor, Mbombela, South Africa).
- It is also important to have women there because they have struggles and they know what it's like to be a woman and it's easier for a woman to go to a woman with a problem. (Woman participant, Dundee, South Africa).
- Women are more accessible than men, so that whenever help is needed, they are always available to assist. Women are not afraid of anything. They are brave, can be trusted and are reliable. They are also hard workers and good listeners. (Woman participant, Lesedi, South Africa).
- Even though there are no visible changes because of the short time that they have been in office, there is a hope that things will changed for the better because women come done to the people and talk to the people, it is different to the past because men weren't able to come down to the people. (Male participant, Matsatseng, Lesotho).
- We know we can count on our women councillor who is always ready to help. She attends all our events. She really works hard for her ward. We like being with her as we know we can trust her. But unfortunately there are not enough women councillors, if there were 50 percent women lots of problems would have been solved. (Woman participant in Vacoas-Phoenix, Mauritius).
- Women are positive especially when dealing with women. Women are ready to help everybody, men, women and children. It is not fair of always having men in politics. (Civil society participant, Vacoas-Phoenix, Mauritius).
- Most women pay attention to the people, they pay more attention than men. When you go to a woman and tell her your problem she really starts to think about you and your problem can be understood, women are more concerned and sympathetic. (Male participant, Grootfontein, Namibia).
- We feel free to go to the offices of our Deputy



Women in... Namibia

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Mayor. Her door is always open. Just having women in the council is reassuring. Women have a heart. They are accessible. They care about our issues. (Women, Rehoboth, Namibia).

Consultation and consensus building

A question that frequently arises is the extent to which women in decision-making apply what are seen as the traditional feminine values of care and concern to challenge the traditional hierarchical notions of power.

A growing body of research and literature shows that contrary to the stereotypes that abound about women bosses, they are in fact perceived by their staff as more sympathetic and caring, and are clear winners in the supposedly "male" skills of planning and teamwork.[84]

An assessment of the needs of local communities conducted in Namibia by the Namibia Elected Women's Forum found that "female politicians were seen to be doing their rounds, talking to people in the communities, listening to their problems, and making an effort to help them."[85]

Responses by councillors to the questionnaire showed that women councillors regard themselves as better team leaders than men. Constituents also believed that women are less hierarchical; better communicators and consensus builders. While some thought that being less aggressive than men weakens the effectiveness of women, others thought that being compassionate and less confrontational enhanced the leadership potential of women.

84. See, for example, Grimwood,C and Popplestone R (1993) "Women, Management and Care." London, MacMillan.
85. Macha, K (2003) "The Needs of Local Communities", Friederich Ebert Stiftung and the Namibia Elected Women's Forum, p.11.

DAWN's Janet Semple believes that "women bring a completely different approach to decision-making than men do, they're not nearly as confrontational and they are much better at problem solving than men because they have to solve problems. You can't go through your day without confronting problems."

Several participants felt that women are less hierarchical and that this contributes to better dispute resolution:

- As soon as women came into LG there was an immediate change in the way that things were done, decisions used to be made from the top, people at the grassroots were never asked what they want but women looked around and have made changes. (Woman participant, Cape Town, South Africa).
- A male is dominant at all times and wants to be at the top of the pie at all times. Men are more competitive than women even when it is unnecessary. Men do not try to solve something; instead they demand that it is to be done in one way, which is their way. There is no deviation from what he wants to be done. Women have quite considerable influence in everything that they do, whether at home or anywhere else. (Civil society participant, City of Johannesburg).
- Men end up being dictators whereas women end up being doers, they have different leadership styles. (Woman participant, Msunduzi, South Africa).
- When men disagree a woman can come in and resolve the dispute, they explain better than men. Women can bring better perspectives and ideas. (Male participant, Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho).
- The chain of command on how to access information is a lot easier since there are women. (Headwoman, Rundu, Namibia).



Councillor Patience Tsoho hard at work *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Transparency, better access to information, information sharing and feedback provided by women councillors featured in a number of the responses. Comments from constituents in different countries included:

- The most remarkable thing is that she (their councillor) is able to consult with us and take our concerns and give us feedback – whether something has been taken through or rejected, she always gives us feedback. (Male participant, Matsatseng, Lesotho).
- Women bring information to the women, they help women to understand. We are not afraid of the women as we were with the men; we were scared and embarrassed to speak to the men so now it's better with women. (Woman participant, Kopanong, South Africa).
- Women get a mandate, they have meetings and they come back to the community to report back, men forget, they only come to the community when there is a problem. (Woman participant, Kopanong, South Africa).

Box 35: Getting a mandate

In Noupoort in the Northern Cape province of South Africa researchers observed a meeting chaired by the woman mayor Nombulelo Hermans and attended by all councillors as well
as members of the community (mainly women).

The Mayor explained to the community members that they should bring any problems they have to the attention of the councillors so that they can try to solve them. She added that if they can't be solved the councillors will advise them of that, "we'll see what we can do and what we can't".



Community meeting at Noupoort
Photo: Susan Tolmay

She explained that there are laws that have to be complied with and they should all work together. She explained some technical terms like IDP, the Integrated Development Plan, so that they understood what she was talking about.

They discussed projects community projects; payment of services and the need for community members to understand the importance of this. She also explained that if they can't afford services and they earn less than R1600 a month that they should apply for assistance from the municipality. Most of the questions posed by the community were from men (6 questions, 5 from men).

The Mayor listened to the concerns and questions and summarised all the issues raised at the end. She referred the community members to the relevant councillors and accepted responsibility, good and bad for all of the actions taken by the previous council. This was the second meeting with this community and the Mayor advised us that these kinds of meeting take place about six times a year.

Commenting on his vice chairperson and community activist Karolina Pieters (see Chapter two) Hans Joseph, Chairperson of the Maltahohe Council in Namibia said that in his area "women go to constituency meetings to get information on developments within the constituency and this information is shared with the council and they have discussions. Women also work harder and they approach things in a different manner to men and they are more connected with the community."

Participants in the male focus group in Maltahohe remembered that at a time when residents went on a march over electricity in the village being cut, Joseph had been at a workshop in Luderitz. "The women councillors came together, organised, went into the community and explained the financial problems that the council is facing. They diffused the tension and managed the situation very well."

In South Africa, the ward committee system (see Chapter four) provides a structured forum for councillors to organise community participation. As Elsabe Jacobs describes (Box 36) in a nation of different races and ethnic groups, getting everyone on board is a critical challenge

Box 36: Getting all on board in the rainbow nation



Elsabe Jacobs

Photo: Photographer???

Councillor Elsabe Jacobs has only been a councillor in the Umjindi local council in Mpumalanga, South Africa since March 2006 but her focus is on consulting with and including all of her constituents in the issues that affect them.

One of the 50 percent ward councillors in South Africa (see Chapter three) and a member of the DA she speaks about the importance of ward committees and how they should be inclusive of all sectors of society.

Her constituency in Ward six of the Umjindi Municipality which includes the Barberton CBD includes a great diversity of cultures and ranges also from very poor to wealthy constituents.

At the time of the interview, ward council elections had just taken place. The elections created a lot of tensions because she insisted that she didn't "want the committee to be made up of only white members. I'm a person who believes in having a very strong foundation so that you can also have open communication channels, particularly if it is a big ward. You must have people on the ward committee who can inform you all the time of what is happening in each section of the ward."

She began by dividing her ward into eight sections based on geographical locations. In each of these sections the person voted to stand on the committee had to reside in the block and commit to staying in that block until the council term ends.

Jacobs enlisted the help of an engineer friend who got a map of the ward and divided it into blocks A-H. Individual maps for each block helped residents and those standing for elections to know their locations and boundaries. Meetings with churches and schools followed. Principals, teachers and church leaders helped to distribute the maps on their notice boards.

Before she calls committee meetings Jacobs goes to each block with the relevant member to gather information on all the issues that need to be addressed, and documents them. From this information a memo is drawn up and sent to community members prior to the meeting and serves as the meeting notification as well as the agenda. "I have already started this process in one section, and so far it is going well," she says.

This homework makes it possible for meetings to focus on solutions rather than problems: "I want us to discuss what we are going to do about them and prevent them from happening again. By so doing we are planning ahead. I want us to spend time on the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the next five

years. Once all the issues and problems of each block have been noted, I will call a ward committee meeting where we will go over all the issues mentioned in each block and see what needs to be prioritised."

She adds that she doesn't necessarily know everything but that being visible and getting the community inputs is something she can do. "The municipal manager has to be involved to give me guidance. At this moment I have no clue on what has to be really done for a successful IDP, what I can do is to be visible to my people, and get their inputs."

Performance

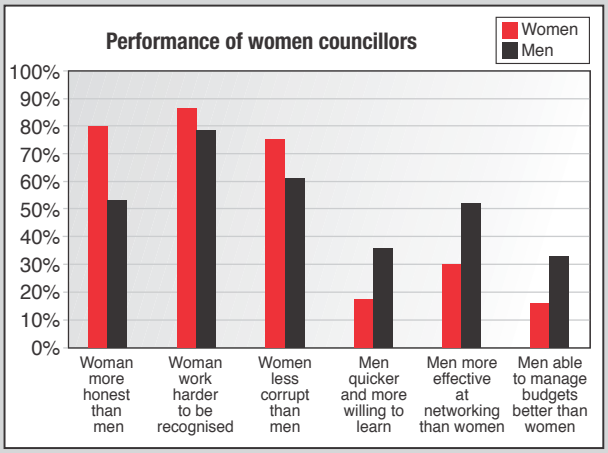
Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is famous for saying that "in politics if you want anything said ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman."

Chapter four listed the many barriers that women face to being effective leaders at a local level and some comments related to the fact that women do not have the capability to do the job. However much of the evidence in this chapter suggests that women are just not only equally capable to, but are also more conscientious than men. Many interviewees said that women are more concerned about communities and local concerns, which is of great importance considering that this is where local government is focussed. It follows that if women understand their communities and the issues related to them, they should be better able to address these issues.

Councillors were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

1. Women are more honest than men.
2. Women have to work harder to be recognised.
3. Women are less corrupt than men.
4. Men are quicker and more willing to learn.
5. Men are more effective at networking than women.
6. Men are able to manage budget better than women.

What the councillors said:



The graph shows that the closest concurrence between women and men's perceptions related to the question about women having to work harder to be recognised with 87 percent of women and 78 percent men agreeing with the statement. Namibia had the closest concurrence between women (81 percent) and men (80 percent) on this point. Not many men or women thought that men are quicker to learn than women; manage budgets better or are more effective at networking. The biggest gap between perceptions of women and men concerned the question on whether women are more honest than men (80 percent women agreed compared to 52 percent men). However, more than half the men (60 percent) and 75 percent of the women believe that women are less corrupt than men.

Integrity

A relatively new area of study concerns whether the participation of women in decision-making contributes to greater transparency in governance. An example is the debate sparked off by Dollar, Fisman and Gatti of the World Bank. The authors point out that over the past few decades, research has established differences in behavioural characteristics across gender, for example the fact that women are more likely to exhibit "helping" behaviour and greater integrity. The study found a high degree of negative correlation between the representation of women in parliaments (using Inter-Parliamentary Union data) and the International Country Risk Guide's corruption index (CORRUPT). The authors concluded:

> Increasing the presence of women in government may be valued for its own sake, for reasons of gender equality. However, our results suggest that there may be extremely important spin-offs stemming from increasing female representation: if women are less likely than men to behave opportunistically, then bringing more women into government may have significant benefits for society in general.[86]

Although generalisations in this complex area are dangerous, there is logic to the argument that any system of governance that is more responsive to all interest groups in society also becomes more transparent. For example the civil society focus group in Sol Plaatjie in the Northern Cape province of South Africa noted that since the increase in the number of women councillors, there had been a "change in the tender process and there is now an effort to ensure that women are visible and included."

In the IPU study, 80 percent of respondents said that women change politics and restore public confidence and that their presence increases transparency.[87] In the figures quoted above in it noteworthy that more than half of the men and nearly three quarters of the councillors interviewed in this study agree that women are less corrupt than men.

In Namibia Councillor Kaija Shililifa (profiled at the beginning of this chapter) said she believes that corruption will be eradicated if more women participate actively because she believes men are corrupt. But men in Tsumeb, who complained that the previous woman mayor did not perform well and praised the new male may or for pulling the council into shape said that men are better at handling budgets and that women are more corrupt.

But a man in the Windhoek, Namibia focus group asserted that "women are more honest and trustworthy. Men are crooks. If we had more women in power we would have less corruption." Reflecting on experiences in the Keetmanshoop Council (see Chapter Five), Arnold Losper added that one advantage of women is that "they are willing to take a stand. Women are stronger than men."

The civil society focus group participants in Pamplemousses/Riviere du Rempart in Mauritius said that in their experience, "women are less corrupt and are concerned about good lighting, entertainment for women, children, old people and the disabled."

86. Dollar,D. Fisman,R. and Gatti,R (1999), "Are Women Really the Fairer Sex? Corruption and Women in Government." Policy Research Report on Gender and Development. Working Paper Series No.4. Washington, World Bank.

87. Inter-Parliamentary Union (2000), "Politics: Women's Insight." IPU: p4 and p45

Hard work

An issue on which there is strong consensus in the literature and in the research is that on average women tend to work harder than men. A number of studies show that women, perhaps because of a sense of privilege and obligation, put extra effort into their work and in preparing for debates[88].

This seems to confirm Jain's assertion that once women enter spheres of power they act as "exemplars". She argues that because women they have been denied opportunities to enter such spheres they "over-perform". As they know the hope that other women place on their presence in such powerful positions to change their lives they operate with a vision and mission[89].

Several comments (for example that made by Hans Joseph in reference to his deputy Karolina Pieters in the last section) reflected a perception that women work harder than men. Some women councillors said that they feel pressurised to prove their worth because their capability is doubted by men.

A male councillor in Khoelenya, Lesotho says, "Since women are new in local governance, they still are happy when given constituency work, they do it on time and because they want to prove that they can also lead, they over-research and are always ready to report to the constituency more than men. Men however don't feel the same pressure because their ability never gets called into question, irrespective of whether they are in fact capable or not."

88. See, for example, Brill,A. Ed (1995) "A Rising Voice: Women in Politics World Wide." New York, the Feminist Press.
89. Jain D. (1997) "Minds,Bodies and Exemplars: Reflections at Beijing and Beyond."

Men in Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa noted that "women are more thorough and will likely do a thorough investigation prior to making decisions whereas men might not. They are driven by the need to understand things before deciding about them. Men are more forceful, to the point where they might even be inclined to apply their physical strength instead of being wise about their decisions."

A male councillor in the Frances Baard district council in the Northern Cape, South Africa believes women are more thorough, "A woman mayor is better than a male mayor in most respects. Men take shortcuts and women don't."

A civil society participant from Khoelenya, Lesotho believed that woman are more persistent, especially with regard to issues that are close to their heart: "Women's attitude differs from that of men when it comes to obligations for their special interest groups, They press very hard to reach finality on such issues. For example, the community in Khoelenya know very well that every month end they have to contribute some money for burial plan of the village. This happened after local government elections. This was drafted by the women and they are monitoring it monthly."

Filler pic *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Multi tasking

UK researcher Julia Ross notes that in the age of globalisation, successful businesses are those that move fast into a networking mode with the centre's role one of co-ordinating the activities of the different satellites; and successful leaders of tomorrow those who are lateral thinkers, used to performing many tasks at the same time and have a supportive, rewarding approach that brings out the best in people.

She considers that women have an advantage over men "partly because they have often had to learn those very skills in their child rearing capacity and partly because they do not have to unlearn authoritarian behaviour."[90]

Men in Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa echoed a similar view: "Women's experience within the home environment gives them an advantage over men. This is valuable experience. Leading isn't just about what one can do physically but what one can do mentally."

The women's focus group in Vacoas Phoenix added that "women perform their multiple roles very well including their social work. Women are more devoted than men. We rarely see the men. We know we count on our women councillors especially Madvhi Etwaree who is always ready to help us. She attends our events. She really works hard for our ward. We like being with her as we know that we can trust her. But unfortunately there are not enough women councillors. If we had 50 percent women, lots of problems would be solved."

In South Africa, the dual system of ward and PR councillors (see Chapter three) creates an interesting dynamic in that ward councillors tend to be more

closely connected to PR councillors who are sometimes not sure of their role. With the recent elections, women now constitute 38 percent of ward councillors. The case of Najma Ahmed (Box 37) is unusual in that she went from being a ward to a PR councillor (the reverse is true for many of the new councillors). The extent to which she is being missed by her community as a male ward councillor takes over provides an interesting insight into the different leadership qualities of women and men discussed in this chapter.

90 Ibid.

Box 37: Missing our woman ward councillor

When Najma Ahmed, a councillor now in her second term in the Msunduzi Municipality, was approached by the Democratic Alliance in South Africa to stand as a candidate in one of the wards in the 2000 elections she was overwhelmed and excited.

"It never struck me that I would be popular or that I would be fully recognised or wanted, but I said, what's there to lose, if I can make a difference in somebody's life, why not?" I stand for good clean governance, I want to be accountable and really try and put a smile on somebody's face and to really reach out to people."



Councillor Naj Ahmed with women from the Emma Barter home in Pietermaritzburg *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

So she stood as a ward candidate against a male candidate and won. She spoke about the campaign and the importance of being honest: "When campaigning you have to be yourself and gain the people's trust, you don't have put up fancy stuff and camouflage, people can read you and see through you generally. That's my strongest quality being concerned about people and showing interest, that's important in any sphere of life, you can't be false."

In June of 2006 Ahmed had just been elected as a PR councillor for the ANC. Previously a councillor for the DA she left the party because she felt that she was not being recognised for her work and that she was more aligned to the ideologies of the ANC. A male DA councillor Peter Green had won the ward seat. Being a PR councillor means that she is no longer responsible for a particular ward. As a PR councillor she goes where she is deployed by her party or where she is needed. She says that she still has constituents from her previous ward her calling for assistance, "I can't say no or turn people away, where I can help I do, if I can't I refer them to the ward councillor. If they fail with him they come back to me".

A women focus group meeting with some of her previous constituents reflected how much they had valued her leadership. During her time as ward councillor they said that they had "very definitely" seen changes with becoming more visible. They described her as "a peoples person; not out or up there." If you had a problem "you phoned her and the problem got sorted."

The constituents described the new councillor as "male and very absent, conspicuous by his absence, we haven't seen him." Waste in the area, which Ahmed used to deal with had resurfaced as a problem: "you phone and nothing is done." The residents said that they were able to network better with a woman than a male councillor: "Women have more feeling; they are more personal, when something gets discussed with them they react. When you discuss it with a man, unless it's going to bring honour and glory to him he's not interested. Women have an ear, they hear. They always call back and follow up."

The group of women felt let down by their new male councillor: "Promises and promises but they never deliver. The only person we've ever seen taking her promises seriously is Councillor Ahmed. They promise the earth to get our vote and then you never see or hear from them again – nothing is done."

Men constituents in the same area pointed to fundamental differences in Ahmed and Green's leadership style and sense of priorities. Ahmed, they noted spent a lot of time helping individual people with problems. In contrast Green spends less time on that and more time on policy and promoting the interests of business. They too had not met or spoken to Green.

The main difference between the two councillors, they said, is that women are accessible and empathetic: "You can get to her; she has empathy and can feel for the problem because she can relate to the problem." When they had problems with the health system Councillor Ahmed had been the one to sit at the hospital and sort things out; "she gives more than the average eight to five councillor. She has become a role model."

Asked about the differences between women and men councillors at local level more broadly one male participant said: "Women seem to know more about the socio-economic upliftment of communities because they understand, they are more competent and less confrontational and they find solutions to a lot of the problems and look at things from a different perspective."

Conclusions

The key question grappled with in this chapter is: to make a difference, do you have to be different? The biological differences between women and men are clear enough. But the differences relating to concerns, interests, capability and style are less clear and always run the risk of stereotyping. Women, the discussion stresses, are not all the same nor should they be. Each one is an individual, coming from her own particular context (geographical, racial, ethnic and socio-economic). All these factors shape the realities and outlook of women.

Yet, no matter where women come from, they have certain shared experiences, "identities" and "instincts" as women that often translate, in positions of power, into a sense among many women that they have a responsibility for taking up the concerns and interests of other women.

Within these decision-making structures there are issues that women feel more passionately about than men, especially at the local level. If the essence of democracy is that every interest group should have the chance to represent its own interests, then the largest such interest group in any society are women and their voices must be heard (see Chapter One).

More importantly, these views and priorities, long neglected in the public sphere, bring crucial new perspectives to policy making and to more responsive governance. Thus, for example, while it is important to fight soil erosion in Lesotho (a priority of predominantly male decision-makers) it is also important to build bridges over the dongas so that children can get to school.

The nurturing qualities associated with women have for too long been a missing ingredient in mainstream politics. As the examples in this chapter show, women are generally seen as more accessible; better at communicating; concerned about the every day issues that get lost in big picture politics; more thorough; hard working; diligent and having greater integrity. The clear message is that having women in local government is not just a pre-requisite for representative democracy; it is also indispensable to transforming governance and society.

i



A young girl listens intently as the adults gender and local government

Photo: Judith Mtsewu

Measuring Change –
New men in local politics

"The most interesting aspect of the Swedish Parliament is not that we have 45 percent representation of women, but that the majority of women and men bring relevant social experience to the business of parliament. This is what makes the difference. Men bring with them experience of real life issues, of raising children, of running a home…And women are allowed to be what we are, and to act according to our own unique personality. Neither men nor women have to conform to a traditional role."

- The Former Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Birgitta Dahl

Chief Toka Letsie is one of two chiefs that sits on and represents the other chiefs in the 22 person Quthing District Council as determined by local government legislation in Lesotho (see Chapter four). Men make up the majority of councillors at the district level and most chiefs in Lesotho are men. However, Letsie inherited his chieftaincy from his mother; the reason, perhaps, why he is more open to having women play a role in the decision- making of the community.

As described in Chapter four, there has been considerable tension between the chiefs and local councillors (especially women councillors) in Lesotho since the 2005 local elections. "Councillors and chiefs appear to have conflicting interests and this confuses people," noted a civil society participant in Quthing.

"Chiefs believe that they should be ruling communities and don't see where the councillors fit in," added another. "There is confusion within communities regarding roles; they do not know where to go with their issues. Some chiefs still think that women should not have opinions with regard to governance. "



Chief Toka Letsie *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

But Letsie does not share these views. On the contrary he believes that having women in local government is good, "because we should share everything including work. And it is important for women to be there because they are exposed to many life experiences and they are flexible and they are all over."

Despite the resistance to quotas among men in Lesotho including a high court challenge (see Chapter three) Letsie believes that the quota system is good, "because it is a step towards gender equality and all sections of society are being given a chance to exercise their ability in decision-making" he says.

He does not believe, as others do, that it is necessarily unfair, "as the government simply pulled up a section of society that was suffering from marginalisation for a very long time."

Letsie says that there has been a change since the increase in participation of women at local level because women now feel more confident to exercise their ability. Letsie welcomes the fact that women councillors are seen a role models. He adds that there have been changes in service delivery, for example there are now village nurses who help with basic health services and assist pregnant women.

Letsie admits that there is resistance from chiefs to local government but says that he believes in local government and strongly supports it. "In the beginning there was friction due to misunderstandings and the fact that chiefs felt threatened." However, he maintained that a series of workshops with councillors and chiefs have helped to clarify roles and mandates. He believes that this new system works because previously chiefs had limited resources and mandate to access all areas of people's lives.

But culture still plays a big role. According to Letsie, "The minority status of women and cultural practices still limit women from accessing decision-making structures. People in the urban areas understand about gender equality but people in rural areas and villages still treat women as minors and this will take some time to change."

The challenge, according to the chief, is for government and other stakeholders that are involved in making laws and implementing them to inform and educate citizens and translate the laws from



Women in... *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

English into Sotho. Whilst work has been done with WLSA (Women and law in Southern Africa) Letsie advocates that this should be extended to cover larger parts of the country because many people are not informed or enlightened. He believes that councillors are also in need of such education.

One of the measures of the extent to which the participation of women is beginning to transform gender relations in society set out in Chapter two is whether the attitudes of male councillors and men in society more broadly are beginning to change.

In Chapter four women and men cited culture, tradition and socialisation as the single biggest barriers to women's effective participation in politics. The influence of chiefs arose as a particular concern in all countries except Mauritius. But, as illustrated in the case of Chief Letsie, not all men are the same. Despite resistance in some circles, attitudes are slowly changing.

This chapter traces both the resistance and the changing attitudes among men as a result of the participation of women at local level. It questions whether the new rhetoric in support of the 50/50 campaign now increasingly being heard among men in the region is being internalised in the home, the first and most basic unit of governance in any society. Through examples and case studies, the chapter further probes to what extent men themselves are becoming champions of gender equality, through contributing to the empowerment of women; taking up gender concerns in councils and advocating the merits of gender balance for good governance.

Resistance

Participants in many focus group discussions felt that male councillors, especially those representing parties that have adopted quotas, are under pressure to be "politically correct" by supporting measures like quotas even when they don't believe in them. But a woman councillor from the Cape Winelands in South Africa echoed the view of many women when she said that "Men say one thing but their actions say something else."



Male focus group participant, Keetmanshoop Namibia *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

In interviews with both male councillors and constituents it became apparent that often resistance to the advancement of women is not far from the surface.

In Lesotho a male councillor in Mkh'ono said that "men are afraid of women councillors. Men hate

women when they are powerful because they will not get their way all the time." Another view expressed is that women in power do not respect their husbands, and that this is threatening Sotho culture. Commenting on resistance to quotas the Butha Buthe civil society focus group said that "men do not want to be "governed" by women."

A man in a City of Johannesburg focus group took the view that women "want men out of the government structure. Perhaps they have been oppressed to the point where they just feel they want to be heard no matter what."

A group of men in a different region in the City of Johannesburg highlighted the resistance that men feel towards women moving into decision-making. "There is still that perception and ideology that men have, that they will not be ruled or be told what to do by a woman. For example when the president appointed Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (as deputy president) men in shebeens, and anywhere where they met, were going on about how Thabo (the President) had made a mistake, because there is nothing that this woman is capable of doing."

Young men interviewed in Tsumeb, Namibia, insisted that: "Women are only good for making babies and staying in the kitchen, a house without a woman is not a house". They believe that women are less capable and are always "stressed." Ironically the reason given for this is because women have to make sure that their husband and children are cared for.

According to these young men, "Women can be secretaries, but that is all." Asked their opinion on equal rights they respond by saying, "Why not?" Quizzed further they respond by saying: "Yes, but we must have equal rights up to a certain stage."

Further into the discussion the young men had taken a complete turn, saying: "We don't really think that women should be equal, they can't be in top positions like Mayor or President." Asked why, they explained: "The mayor is the head of the municipality. It's a big job and responsibility and women aren't capable yet. They have small minds. For example as a married woman she can't do the job properly because she will be thinking about her kids and her husband. To be a mayor is like a fine performance vehicle and we can't put a fine performance vehicle into the hands of an amateur which is women, women can't uplift the community."

The young men criticised African governments for "taking on western beliefs because we are African." They believe that governments have "accepted things without considering the ramifications, for example accepting the Constitution without realising what it means in terms of gender equality and culture (they essentially cannot be married). We need to appreciate equal rights but still obey our culture." One man in the group did however say that some cultural norms are problematic and that "raping, beating and killing women could not be considered part of culture and that it should not happen."

A headwoman, Rebecca Kambunda, and some men consulting with her in Tsumeb said that men's attitudes in this area remain a major challenge. The men in the focus group discussion charged that it is the women who have it all wrong: "Gender is a big problem in Namibia. Women misunderstand what gender means. They believe in equality but the Bible says you must not change." In Mauritius (see Box 38) the researchers encountered a male councillor who held and openly expressed similar views.

Box 38: Swimming against the tide

Most male councillors these days subscribe to the rhetoric if not the practise of gender equality. In Mauritius, Councillor Abdool Raouf Khodabaccus of the Port Louis Municipality, is swimming against the tide. But he does so with refreshing honesty.

Khodabaccus believes that "we are having problems in our society because we are trying to go too fast. Problems have started to emerge when women started to ask for gender equality. The emancipation of women is to be blamed for the societal problems we are facing."



Abdool Raouf Khodabuaccus
Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

The councillor lived in an extended family with his three sisters. "My parents chose husbands for my sisters and my sisters did the same for their daughters. They are all happily married in a good family environment with healthy children. This is how it should be."

According to Khodabaccus the advent of a new revolutionary party, the Militant Mauritian Movement, in 1976 brought it loads of social and cultural problems. "My nieces, for example, started to challenge their parents and grand parents. How can you argue with your elders?"

"We saw the rise of new problems between boys and girls with mixed colleges, the access of magazines like *Paris Match, Le point* or *Elle*. Women went on the labour market with the opening of the Export Processing Zones (EPZ's) and this brought problems in the family. We were not ready to face all these problems."

Khodabaccus went on to say that films are partly responsible for this social degradation. Women and young girls imitate actresses. Dresses are getting shorter. Men being what they are get tempted easily with all these provocative dresses with the result that rape and sexual violence is on the rise.

"No, I do not believe in gender equality," he says firmly. "God decided it should be like that and who are we to quarrel with God? We cannot go against nature. Women are the weaker sex this is why the "rahem" (pity) is so strong in them." Women have pity on everything the Councillor said. "This is part of the reason why they cannot take decisions. Female councillors have too much "rahem" and cannot take decisions"

Khodabaccus confesses, however, that he feels "safer in the hands of a woman nurse than a male nurse. I liked my teacher because she was a woman. Women are caring and are good listeners." He believes that due to their sensitive nature women cannot take responsible posts. "All over the world women who have been in decision-making posts have failed. Take Indonesia, for example, women are suffering more than men and yet the country is ruled by a woman."

"My religion tells me that I must protect women and women in turn must protect the honour of their husbands. Women going politics goes against these basic principles. And to add insult to injury politics is tough, the language is vulgar. Women politicians tend to be like their male counterparts. They too use vulgar language."

When asked whether he helps his wife in the house, the Councillor said "I am going to be honest. I don't unless we have lots of guests and my wife cannot cope. But on the other hand I do not shout at my wife or nag her by telling her that the food is not well cooked or the house is not looked after properly." He has made one big concession to his wife and confession to himself: "Although my religion says I can have four wives I will never take four wives as I won't be able to treat them equally."

Khodabaccus has a daughter and a son and they are treated differently. "I treat my son like a real man. He has lots of liberty and can go out but the same rule does not apply to my daughter. I will never give her a mobile telephone, for example."

Although female councillors get the support of their male counterparts, Khodabaccus believes there are so many things that they cannot do because of their social status. "They are always having some kind of problems. Sitting time is not convenient or they have family problems. I agree that we should help them but this is very difficult."

The solution, he believes, is for women to bow out of public life: "Had women stayed at home there would have been less sexual violence in this country. Women must change their mentality. They are too independent and go out on their own too often and in so doing they are exposing themselves and are fishing for trouble. Men are tempted when they see all these beautiful women. I am a councillor and I know by the click of my fingers I can get a woman. Women like men who have money or who are in power."

Changing mindsets

In South Africa, head of the Democratic Party Women's Network (DAWN) Janet Semple believes that "until we get into the minds of men and work on their attitudes, we are preaching to the converted." She says that within the leadership of the DA both at national and provincial level some men support women, but many "are definitely paying lip service and you can see it in the structures." DAWN is strong where there has been full support form the male leadership within the party and vice versa.

Kauma from Rundu in Namibia believes that just by having women in local government where there are far more positions than in national government and greater visibility on the ground "we are on the right track to come together."

Quotas and mindsets

Interviews with men at national level in *Ringing up the Changes* showed how the heated debates over quotas in the African National Congress (ANC) played a key in role in changing the mindsets of men at the most senior level. Male ANC councillors made similar comments in this research.

According to Councillor Bojane Mabowa the City of Tshwane in South Africa "Attitudes towards women in local government are taking a long time to change because in South Africa men predominated in leadership positions. But President (Thabo Mbeki) this time decided to bring in the 50/50 quota. There are male councillors that feel betrayed and it will take long to accept that women can be in power." But, he added, having to step down made them think about what is keeping women out in the first place.

Councillor Bobby Cekisani of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in the Eastern Cape blames the slow pace of change on the attitude that "the man is the king of the house". He says that the rise of women has created fear amongst other men, especially men who are not politically competent. This results in resistance.



Bobby Cekisani at work *Photo: Judith Mtsewu*

ANC Councillor Derrick Ndlovu is the previous speaker of Umjindi in Mpumalanga, South Africa and now a member of the mayoral committee. He is also one of the full time councillors of the municipality. Reflecting on how the attitudes of men are gradually changing he noted that:

> When this issue of women empowerment was implemented and being instilled, men were not at ease and happy about it, but with time we had to accept that women are here to stay, for a long time. Before you would find that there were very few women participating in local government, and even then they were never given a chance to do anything. They were never elected into any positions of substance and you would find them in positions were they are supporting a man like in deputy positions. They were not involved in decision-making, because men tried to suppress them as much as possible, due to the fear of having women taking over.

Once men accepted that women are here to stay, then things began to change. The policies that the party I'm representing implemented also assisted in this shift of spaces in local government. I think men realised that there was no way for them to ignore the fact that women had come to stay. Some men feared losing their power, but now I guess things have changed, and you will see that our speaker is a woman, and the mayoral committee, is made up of a fair mix of women and men.

Male councillors in Lesotho expressed similar views on the effect of the 30 percent quota for women there in the 2005 elections (see Chapter three). Councillor Ingnatius Mathetha Vice Chairperson of the Khomokhoana council noted: "At first we were a bit worried about the women quota; why the division. But when the Independent Electoral Commission explained we understood the need to give women a boost."

Many women, he noted, other women contested and won in the open seats. They did so "because they are hard workers known to their communities and to people around. People voted for delivery."

He said he personally had not agreed with the 50/50 campaign until "I attended a course on agriculture and found women there, driving tractors. I could see that women are capable. I elected a woman (Mathato Mantso, see Chapter five) to be chair of our committee and she is a good chair. She works hard."

Working with women leaders

Many men in the focus group discussions said that having women in positions of authority, and working with them on the ground, is helping to change attitudes towards women in leadership.

A discussion in the Buffalo City men's focus group in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa on whether leadership is about brains or brawn reflects how simply having women leaders challenges prevailing stereotypes by sparking off debate.

Some suggested that women would not be able to cope with certain local expectations such as addressing crime levels and taxi violence. Other members of the group argued that leadership is not about physical strength but about being strategic and having a vision. It was about not even about having brains, one said, but being able to "use one's brain".

A male focus group in the Alexandra township of Johannesburg spoke warmly about their interaction with ward councillor Sinah Gwebu one of the councillors who helped to design, and participated in the Gender, Communications and Local Government pilot project (see Case study six). "She has proven to us that women are capable in the same way as men. It is from that perspective that I believe that as a community we need to learn to be respectful and accommodative as well as open minded with regards to the participation of women in local government," said one of the men.



Young boys fetching water in Lesotho
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

The group highlighted the importance of education and life skills programmes in schools. "You will hear of young boys saying that all the chores in the home are for girls, and they hang out in the street," another man in the group observed.

"It is this mentally that then contributes to the broader view of women in future. The challenge here is that we are trying to address this problem at the highest levels, when we should also be doing it at the lowest levels of development of men in society. Hence it is going to be a very long process to educate people to change their views and mindset on women. We need to have preventive measures put in place in order to secure the future of women's participation."

Having women in local government, said one of the men, "Encourages other women to be part of the processes within local government; not only in the field of politics, but also in all the fields in which women were denied participation. That in itself is what will encourage other women and show them that they can participate in various sectors in this country."

During the men's focus group in Kimberley, a young man gave a moving personal account of how female prison warders had helped him to transform himself from a criminal to a gender activist.

Box 39: From jail bird to gender activist

Speaking at the civil society focus group in Galeshewe, Kimberley, Nkosinathi Nowenkuku told participants how he had been brought up to believe that the man is the head of the household but how the women he encountered in prison helped him change his life.

When he was young Nowenkuku got involved with the wrong crowd and became a gangster. He committed robberies and rapes and finally ended up in prison. On arriving at the prison the one thing that surprised him the most was that many of the prison wardens were women and "even the head of the prison was a woman". He recalls how the prison head called him into her office and spoke to him. "She told me that I should stop being a gangster because I had potential and I could change his life if he wanted to." The prison head assisted him and paid for him to study theology through correspondence.

When he moved to Malmesbury Prison in Cape Town he found other women prison wardens there who encouraged prisoners to study further so that would find jobs once they were released. He says that spending most of his time with women who encouraged him had a remarkable effect on him. They said "If you believe in yourself and you have self confidence you will succeed in life."

He took their advice and has succeeded in changing his life. He is now an activist who works with men and boys to stop violence against women.

The political and the personal

While men are increasingly changing their language and public posture on gender equality, to what extent is this being internalised? Put differently, does the 50/50 campaign end at work or is it finding its way past the front door and into the home?

While much discussion in the focus groups centred on how women are balancing their home and public lives (see Chapter four) this discussion barely featured in relation to men. Many men openly said that they believed gender equality only related to the workplace - not to the home.

"This is a democratic country, but in my house I rule," said a man in the Windhoek focus group. "Its my law and I am happy to call myself an autocrat. Democracy is outside; inside these walls its autocracy."

"We can have 50/50 in politics, but never in the home," another man in the group said. "I must make the decisions. If she makes a decision, I must approve it. She must live according to my law. In this house I make the laws." The man added that "in certain circumstances" there is "justification for a man beating his wife."

As a male participant in the City of Johannesburg focus group added: "I think 50/50 relates only in the work place and not at home. At home I don't think it should apply because as a man I am the president of the family, and my wife is the deputy president. You can only take over as my wife in my absence. However when it comes to the workplace, it is a totally different story all together. Everyone in the workplace is equal, no one should benefit more than another."

A ward committee member in Mbombela in Mpumalanga, South Africa said, "Biblically the man is the head of the family, which is something that

still exists and should not be done away with. However that applies to the home and not at work, because everyone is equal at work. Therefore we must strike a balance of these two domains and whilst doing so also respect women."

Councillor Richard Vusi Lukhele from Umjindi in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa believes that there are two kinds of male councillors: "There are men who in their homes are used to women playing the submissive and sometimes complacent roles. These men have a difficulty in accepting women as their peers and as their superiors, in committee's for example.

On the other hand you have got your men who live with women whom they view as key partners in decision-making at home. These men in my experience have not had a problem with accepting the concept of women empowerment and participation in the workplace."

In Mauritius, Hemraz Jankee (see Box 40) spoke to the researchers about what it means to live your politics; how when the political becomes personal and vice versa the rigid lines between the two begin to blur and the things that matter in ones personal life also become the stuff of good politics.

Box 40: Learning to be a Dad

Forty years ago Hemraz Jankee, Former Mayor of Vacoas/Phoenix never thought that he would need training to become a dad. He also did not think that two women could light his way to become a caring man.

It was only when his son was born in 2002 that he faced the sweet reality. Men can be caring. Men do have emotions. Men can clean the house, cook dinner, change and bath a baby. He learnt to become a real dad doing the multiple jobs with his wife and his mother as his two "*gurus*".



Hemraz Jankee and his family
Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

"I was brought up in an orthodox Hindu family where girls did not have the same facilities and outlets as boys," said Jankee. "My brothers and I were allowed to go out, play football and meet friends while my sisters had to remain in the house and help with household chores. My parents were very severe with them. We were allowed to go out at night while my sisters had to remain at home."

Despite this background, he is now at ease doing everything in the house including looking after his son. "When my wife comes back home tired I am the one who takes over all household chores and I do it with pleasure. I do not have any problems when my wife is not in Mauritius. I cope very well with everything including looking after my only child who is a boy. I would like to add here that for me it does not make any difference having a boy or a girl. All children are equal just like wife and husband should be equal. I am sure my child will grow up with the same gender sensitivity."

Jankee has tried to put what he has learned in the home into practice in his work. When he became a mayor in 1995, Jankee set up a Federation of Women's Association of Vacoas-Phoenix which groups around 50 women organisations.

"Women organisations were doing their own little thing individually and sometimes not knowing what they were up to," he explained. "I therefore decided to group them under one very well structured umbrella with a proper budget so that they can organise a wide range of activities.

They have access to the cultural centre of the Council. They are also given a wide range of courses for free. Art and craft, sculpture, music and dance competition are organised for them on a regular basis. They get free transport for educational tours as well as for entertaining themselves at the beach. We are organising a national singing competition for music day June 2006 in collaboration with the National Women's Council."

Jankee acknowledges that it is not right for a council of 22 members to have only two women when women make up 52 percent of the Mauritian population. "Because of their multiple roles, it is difficult to get women in the political arena. Meetings are held quite late at night and women have to look after the family after a day's work, it is therefore difficult to attend meetings."

He agrees that one way of helping women to get a foot in municipal council is to remunerate them. "If they get an allowance or a salary, they can work as councillor's full time. Unlike members of parliament we are more like social workers. We are close to the community and women are very good at that. Being a councillor is the first step to become a member of parliament."

Jankee is keen that both women and men in the council undergo training offered by MWO/GEMSA on a range of issues: drugs, HIV and AIDS, gender discrimination, sexual harassment to the rights of the girl child. "I want my male councillors to know that women are as capable as men. I want them to grasp all the societal problems women are facing and find ways and means to deal with them."

The councillor believes that male councillors must know how to communicate with women, how to get them interested in politics and how to help them with problems they are facing. "We want to work in partnership with women. This is the only way to achieve inclusive democracy. And who knows may be we will find our future councillors among these women."

Men and gender in local government

An important test of the extent to which the presence and participation of women in local government is making a difference is how male councillors are beginning to incorporate gender issues into their own work and thinking. This section examines three areas: men who empower women; take up gender concerns and advocate the merits of gender balance for better decision-making.

Empowering women

ANC Councillor Derrick Ndlovu says "it should not always be the case that men must assist women. Whether male or female, we need to encourage one another to deal with challenges and succeed in service delivery." The research yielded several examples of men who make it their business to mentor and empower women as the vignettes below show.

Bojane Mabowa is an Azanian Peoples Organisation (Azapo) ward councillor in the City of Tshwane, the metropolitan council that includes Pretoria in South Africa. He is passionate about empowering young women. With an unemployment rate of 90 percent he says a lot needs to be done to create employment opportunities for the youth. "Right now, in my ward we have a skills development project for young women and we just got First National Bank to fund some of these projects. Because when you teach and train a woman you are teaching and training a nation, but when you teach and train a man you are only training an individual."



Bonjane Mabowa and his right hand lady
Photo: Rochelle Renere Davidson

Mabowa admits that women councillors do not always receive the support of the men: "Men have a lot of pride and sometimes the male councillors do not support the women councillors and they tell the community not to trust them. But we must defend the women in local government and trust their leadership."

He personally firmly believes in the capability of women and says that they have added a lot to local government because they are sensitive to the issues that the community faces daily. However he sees women's lower levels of education and exposure as challenges that need to be overcome if they are to become competent leaders.

Mabowa is trying to address these obstacles by working closely with and mentoring one of his female ward committee members. "I wish to see my successor being a woman. My right hand person is a woman, the coordinator of the ward committee. I take her everywhere I go so that the community can see that she is a good candidate for next term" he says.

Working closely with a woman has also benefited him as a councillor "because there are a lot of issues that women and young girls go through and they may not feel comfortable coming to me but they will go to her and then we can address the issues."

He believes that as more women work and contribute to the community this will result in the community being more open to voting for women in the next elections. He proposes that they way ward committees are made up will also contribute to changing attitudes because if there are equal numbers of men and women on these committees women will earn the trust and confidence of their communities.

A meeting with some of the ward committee members these corroborated what the councillor said. There are equal numbers of women and men on the committee which they say is the policy of the councillor. This is also a provision in the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (see Chapter four) that is not always adhered to. They believe that it is the way the committee has been organised that has resulted in all sectors of the community being included.

"Because of the way he has organised the committee now elderly people, the disabled and the unemployed are at the forefront of discussions in the community. There has been better attendance at community meetings because of the women that volunteer,"

said one member of the ward committee. They add that people who don't support women are in the minority because Mabowa discourages such attitudes towards women.

The committee commented that since more women have been involved in the community, violence and sexual assault are being better reported because there are women police and women feel they have someone who will listen to them. They also stated that women in the community are becoming more open because there are women in leadership positions that they can go to and that women act quickly while men usually delay. According to them "Now everybody is included in reviving the community."

Richard Vusi Lukhele is the ANC executive mayor of the Umjindi local council and has been a councillor for eight years. Lukhele says that local government is still in the process of transformation and gender balances is key to this.

He says that transformation is important especially when going out to the constituents because they see that there are both women and men participating in local government: "This gives people in the community the opportunity to relate to all councillors and it gives them a choice of which councillor they would feel comfortable relating to," he says. The mayor believes that including women in this sphere of government is important so that their views and challenges are addressed.

On resistance from men Lukhele says that there are two kinds of men: "There are those men who from time to time display tendencies of being frightened and threatened by having women, men who have the gender stereotypes, and then the other section of men welcomes the deployment of women, due to their own confidence."

He said that some of this resistance is linked to the quota system which many men did not support, "but I believe it was a necessary measure and it was long overdue, because there was no other way to make men understand the need for including women in decision making structures. Representation of all genders is crucial," he says. He also believes that the system needs to be implemented with consideration for other factors, such as capability and skills and that where these do not exist training should be provided.

Lukhele says that the Umjindi council supports women wherever possible and has identified women's reluctance to speak in meetings as an area that needs to be addressed. "On realising that women are afraid to talk during caucus meetings, we suggested that



Richard Vusi Lukhele *Photo: Nontobeko Dlamini*

they should have their own separate caucus on the same issues and items that will be on the agenda that we (men) would caucus on in our separate meeting. Once these separate caucuses have taken place we then convene to discuss these issues as a political party."

This came about after the mayoral committee realised that some women are more assertive than other women (usually the women who have been in council for a longer period) and who challenge the men and raise issues and then there are women who quiet and less assertive.

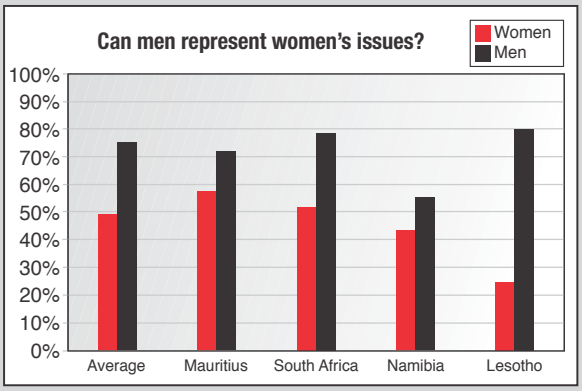
The belief was that by having separate caucuses the less assertive women would feel more comfortable discussing issues and have an opportunity to make a contribution before the general meeting. "It also presents an opportunity for women to support each other, and allows the mature councillors to mentor the new ones," Lukhele said.

Men who take up gender issues

Gender awareness is not just about women being empowered to speak up. It is also about men being empowered to take up gender issues. Mayor Lukhele's predecessor in the Umjindi local council and a loyal member of the ANC Councillor Derrick Ndlovu explains: "In the political party that I represent, we are encouraged to ensure that women are represented fairly in whatever structures or committees that we set up. It is within that context that men in this municipality have begun to take women issues seriously and are now trying to also address the issues that mainly affect women in the community. Hence in many meetings, you find men raising issues related to women."

One of the questions asked of all councillors was whether *men* can represent women's issues. The answers to this question reflect a growing confidence among men, but lack of conviction among women, that this is possible.

What the councillors said:



Overall men (76 percent) were far more likely than women (49 percent) to believe that men are able to represent women's issues. This is true in all countries in the study, with men in Lesotho (80 percent) far more confident than women (21 percent) that men can represent women's issues. The gap between the views of women and men on this question was lowest in Namibia, the country that has had a fairly high representation of women in local government the longest. As in Lesotho, men in South Africa (78 percent) and Mauritius (71 percent) exhibited a high degree on confidence in their response to this question, but women (53 percent in South Africa and 58 percent in Mauritius) were more likely to concur with what the men said than in Lesotho.

In the field work, researchers met a male councillor in Lesotho (see Box 41) whom the women in the council commended for his gender sensitivity both within the council and in his work as a councillor.

Box 41: The man who champions home based care



Mothobi Ntili *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Outside Councillor Mothobi Ntili's house in the panoramic shadows of the Lesotho Highlands Water Development scheme is a garden that he is careful to explain does not belong to him.

It is his contribution, and that of other members of the HIV and AIDS support group that he helped to initiate to the nutrition of orphans and People Living with AIDS (PLWA) in the community.

A soft spoken farmer and member of the Moteng Council that has six women, three men and two (male) chiefs and is chaired by a woman, Ntili spoke about how the council has embraced women's participation as well as his passion, helping care givers (mostly women) for PLWA as well as the growing number of orphans in the community.

While the 30 percent quota for women in the 2005 elections had been controversial, Ntili said that he supported it "because it gave women a chance to participate." He believes that the quota will be necessary for a few more elections "because women are still warming up, but a few years from now it will not be necessary."

He voted for a woman chair because "I wanted a woman to hold the position, so that women can get exposure. She has performed well. When she needs help she knows how to ask for assistance."

He personally stood as an independent candidate in his constituency (an openly contested constituency in which four out of the five candidates were independents) because he "believes in development, not in politics."

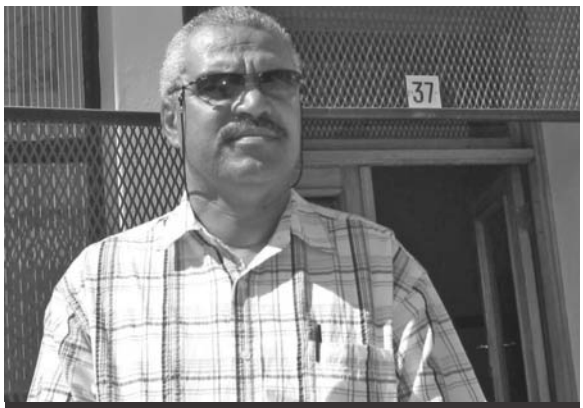
Ntili is a member of the agriculture committee and within that has formed his HIV and AIDS support group "after we noted the increase in child headed households. We had to do something. We had to inform and educate the community. We had to do whatever we could to help. We try to ensure that every person living with HIV has a garden; we supplement that with gardens in our homes and we also have some communal gardens," he said. In addition, the councillors set an example to the rest of the community by agreeing that they would donate R20 every month from their allowance (of R1000 per month) to buy clothes; food and medication for the orphans.

As in many other local authorities in Lesotho a key challenge being faced is conflicts with chiefs over who controls land. "Before women could not apply for land; now they can do so. This is a significant improvement," he said. He would like to see a quota of at least one third of the land in the area being owned by women; a position that will be strengthened by the new land Act (see Chapter eight).

He notes that women and men do have different concerns; for example women in the council have raised the issue of gender violence and the inadequacy of police responses. There are also differences in style: "Women want to reach consensus on everything; men are more decisive," he said. But in general, he believes that "the concerns of the council should be concerns of women *and* men because we are one council, one community."

Advocating gender balance

In Keetmanshoop, Namibia, where the council went from having three out of seven to one out of seven women (see Chapter five), Swapo Party councillor Basil Brown believes the council is the poorer, and that Namibia should be doing more to avoid these drastic swings despite having a legislated quota.



Basil Brown *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

"Personally I think that it is good to have gender balance, and I also believe that women are better politicians because they are more honest. Men use their minds while women use their hearts. If you use your mind in combination with your heart you will get the balance. A council that is run only by minds becomes dictatorial." Where men are dominant he says, "they act like lions, instead of focusing on the real issue. Women have a tendency to concentrate on whatever is on the table."

Brown believes that one of the challenges of local government in Namibia and the region is that councillors have not learned that local government is a business and needs to be run as such (see Chapter eight). He says the Keetmanshoop council is bloated; no business would have kept on 160 employees as the council has done. The gender balance in the council is also highly skewed (see Chapter nine) and this is not healthy because Brown also believes that "women are better workers."

A business man, Brown believes that his main contribution to the council is his business acumen. He is fulsome in his praise of the only woman in the council Fiina Elago (see Chapter five) whom he says made a positive contribution to getting the council out of debt as chair of the management committee, and is now championing social causes like housing. But he notes that as the only woman she is stretched and unable to be available to all the women in the community.

If the council had better gender balance, "we would have better relationships with the community because women know how to interact and work with people. A woman can tell you a bad thing nicely," Brown argued.

Unfortunately, he says, most men have not embraced the value of gender balance not just for better decision-making in local government, but also in the home.

As Brown speaks, tears well in his eyes with the memory of the death of his only son and business partner, Diego, in a car accident a few weeks before the interview. His two daughters, both of whom went to university, are his only solace. "In my personal life I have always treated my children as my friends and I have believed in them as human beings, whether they are boys or girls," he explained. "That is why I am in so much pain."

Like the growing number of "new men" in local government, Brown looks forward to the day when women and men are equal, and when men are free to express their emotions.

Conclusions

Southern Africa is a society in transition. Like every other society in the world, patriarchy is the one cross cutting factor in every country and among every racial and ethnic group in this region. A litmus test for whether or not the presence and active participation of women at local level is making a difference is the extent to which the attitudes of men are beginning to change.

The more open and blatant resistance of men at this level compared to the national arena (compare Chapter six in *Ringing up the Changes*) is not surprising and the honesty is a reminder of the challenges ahead. The recognition that even as men say the "right" things in public places they may be leading a different reality in their homes is also important in planning strategies for overcoming these challenges.

However, this chapter also abounds with examples of men (including a chief!) who have embraced the 50/50 slogan in their personal and political lives, and feel more wholesome for doing so.

As the former speaker of the Swedish parliament reminds us in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, it is only when women and men are free to be themselves, making their own unique contributions free of what society expects them to be, that we can begin to talk about transformation.



Cecelia McNab-Sherally, Deputy Mayor, Rehoboth, Namibia

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Measuring change

Gender in the daily work of councils

"Sometimes being in local government is like being on a battlefield with no ammunition."

- Cecilia McNab-Sherally,
Deputy Mayor, Rehoboth, Namibia

Inadequate lights, bins and sanitation; poor roads; illegal shebeens; meetings held in English which residents do not understand; a market day that they do not have enough information on; lack of economic opportunities and access to finance: These and many more issues packed the agenda of the consultation between the Windhoek municipality and women of Katutura, the former black township and largest high density suburb of the Namibian capital on 25 October 2006.

One of a series of "meet the community" meetings organised twice a year by the council, the meeting offered an illuminating window on the concerns of women on the ground as well as the challenges confronting councillors. In April the council meets to engage with the constituents and to collect their concerns. In October the councillors report back on the issues raised in the previous meeting.

Two councillors, Mwadhina Veico of the South West Africa Peoples Organisation (Swapo Party) and Werner Claasen of United Democratic Front (UDF) addressed the well attended meeting at the Katutura's Women's Centre.

At the previous meeting in April residents had raised concerns about the failure to translate City documents into local languages. Although English is the official language in Namibia, very few speak this as a first language (see Chapter two). Community members especially wanted the monthly newsletter "ALOE" to be translated because it contains a lot of information on the municipality and issues that affect the public.

The councillors agreed but cited budget constraints as the main reason for not translating all information into local languages. Councillors could not give the criteria for translating information. They said that they needed to consult with the City's management committee and provide feedback at a later date. Sceptical residents cautioned that the City should not increase its fees to the public to subsidise the translation. They stressed that the City needed to find other, less expensive, ways of distributing information to residents in mediums that they understood.

The importance of being inclusive surfaced in the discussion on the market day being planned for November. Pensioners asked how they would benefit as they have no projects to produce goods for sale. Others raised the concern that they had no skills or experience in running such projects; some could not even read or write. There were questions about transport, safety and security. Some even complained about the short notice given.

The councillors explained that the market day was a pilot project and that next year it would be better organised and that they would structure the event to include all senior citizens. The City Police present at the meeting assured the public that there would be tight security at the venue. The councillors advised that they would inform the participants about the transport arrangements through the media.

Several questions concerned trade licenses for businesses such as shebeens; self employment and income generating projects run by women. They complained that women, who form the bulk of informal traders in the country, do not have enough information on how to go about applying for licenses to run businesses. They reiterated that much of this information is distributed in English, which they do not understand. The women lashed out at banking institutions which they say discriminate against women when they apply for loans. The procedures, they said, are onerous and banking institutions are inaccessible for women; as one participant put it: "They only look after those who have and not the "have not's".

The issue of poor sanitation in settlements dominated the meeting. Further concerns included insufficient rubbish bins; this is a health hazard because the settlements are dirty as a result of residents dumping refuse anywhere. They requested that the City provide more bins.

On water and electricity the residents complained

that they can't afford some of the services provided by the City. They complained about the faulty billing system; overcharging and instances in which they had not received their bills. Councillors noted that the fact that many residents don't have post office boxes makes it difficult for the council to maintain contact. Residents complained about the long distances they have to travel to reach the municipal offices to enquire about their bills. Councillors gave the residents information on customer care centres in the City that they could go to for assistance.



Poor infrastructure

Photo: Nontobeko Dlamini

Other issues raised included roads and infrastructure and the fact that there were no lights in certain areas, posing a safety risk especially in the settlements where crime rates are high. The residents requested that the City and police to do something about this situation. The residents also raised the need for bridges so that all zones are accessible, especially during the rainy season when school children suffer. Residents expressed their hope that the City would remedy the situation before the next rains.

Participants felt that Katutura is neglected despite the fact that all residents pay for services rendered by the municipality. Constituents wanted to know the difference between the rates being paid by Katutura residents and those being paid by residents in the more affluent former white suburbs. The councillors avoided giving specific details which annoyed the mainly female audience.

The meeting should have ended with the election of a zone committee to act on behalf of the residents and forward their concerns to the City. The councillors noted that residents should not wait for many months before their concerns are taken care of and expressed the hope that this committee would take up the challenges faced by residents. However, the election of office bearers did not take place as many participants had left the meeting by the time the meeting ended.

Welcome to a fairly typical meeting between a predominantly women audience and their councillors in a Southern African city; a meeting that speaks volumes about the high levels of expectation on the ground; the frustrations over historical legacies and backlogs in poor townships; and the apparent inability of local authorities to address many of even the most basic of these concerns.

As researchers for this study went around the case study countries, they encountered stories everywhere of local marches, demonstrations, sit-ins and even lock-ins of councillors as a result of local frustration with service delivery.

In Namibia, a mayor had been locked in his office until midnight. Earlier in the year, Windhoek councillors were taken hostage for 24 hours. "There is a general loss of faith in local government," said a participant in the Windhoek civil society focus group. "It's a crisis of service delivery."

In Lesotho where the controversy over the elections (see Chapter three) has been followed by a high level of confusion as to the roles and responsibility of local government vis-a-vis the central government, especially with regard to finances, "local government has been somewhere between potentially effective and ineffective," says the GTZ's Rajeev Ahal.

Matseliso Mapetla, a gender expert at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) notes that:

> Because Lesotho has a history of women being at the forefront of local development, many women on the ground continue to do good work for local government; despite the odds. In the absence of men, and as long as they don't challenge men, they are allowed to get on with tending to the daily needs of the community, often with very little resources or support. If they focus on the practical and not the strategic needs, then it is okay. It is okay to talk about bread and butter issues; to fund raise and try to resolve debts. But when women start to push the boundaries, to talk about land for example, then they are in dangerous territory.

This chapter explores what difference, if any, women are making in the every day business of local government against the background of the huge challenges that local government confronts. The chapter begins by outlining the functions of local government; the developmental role that is envisaged for local authorities in many countries; the powers and confusion over division of labour between national and local (and in some cases regional and provincial)government as well as the extent of financial independence and muscle.

The chapter then demonstrates, through examples, how despite these obstacles women are doing what they do best on the ground - getting on with it and trying to find solutions. The examples show how women councillors are opening new spaces for, and being more responsive to, women on the ground: but mostly in practical areas like small enterprise.

However, as these practical challenges are confronted, so they begin to prize open strategic doors. In many municipalities, for example, women councillors and their constituents are raising questions about the tendering process, and how women can benefit from this. The presence of women in councils has ensured that HIV and AIDS is placed on the agenda of local government to the extent that in Namibia (see opening of Chapter two) such committees are being established by most councils, even though they are not a statutory requirement.

And in Lesotho, the questions that women are beginning to raise about land as a result of local government being given authority over its distribution are an indicator that land will not remain a sacred cow for long. The main conclusion drawn, however, is that in the absence of a more systematic approach to gender mainstreaming, these more strategic interests of women will be continuously marginalised in favour of the more immediate "damage control" skills so urgently required at local level, and which women have both the inclination and the immediate need to provide.

The work of local government

An important starting point is to understand what local government actually does. In every country, there are the traditional utility, infrastructure and service delivery roles of local government. As a result of the recent discourse on democracy and decentralisation (see Chapter one) local government is also increasingly seen as a driver of local economic development initiatives. This at times contributes to a blurring of lines between

local and other spheres of government. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the general state of confusion over finances, with councils across the region either in heavy debt (as witnessed in Namibia) or virtually insolvent, as witnessed in Lesotho.

Competencies

In all countries local authorities are mainly concerned with the basic services that affect people's daily lives such as water and sanitation, refuse removal and electricity, culture, recreational, leisure and sports and facilities.

Table 28 shows, however, that the competencies and powers of local authorities differ across the four case study countries and in the different types of local authorities. In general, local authorities in South Africa and Namibia have the greatest number and range of functions while those in Mauritius have the least number of functions.

All local authorities have responsibilities for emergency services (fire protection) and ambulance services (except in Lesotho and Mauritius). Only local authorities in South Africa (metros) have a policing function or a civil protection function (at metro, district and local level.)

Table 28: Competencies of local government

FUNCTION/POWER	LESOTHO	MAURITIUS		NAMIBIA			SOUTH AFRICA		
	Local govt	Municipal/ district	Village	Munic	Town	Village	Metro	District	Local
SECURITY AND EMERGENCIES									
Police							*(fn3)		
Fire protection	*	*(fn1)		*	*	*(fn4)	*	*	*
Ambulance services				*	*	*(fn4)			
Civil protection							*	*	*
EDUCATION									
Pre-school		*	*						
Primary	*								
Secondary									
Vocational and technical		*							
SOCIAL WELFARE									
Kindergarten and nursery		*					*		
Family welfare services	*								
Welfare homes									
Social security	*								
PUBLIC HEALTH									
Primary care							*	*	*
Hospitals									
Health protection	*	*(fn3)	*(fn3)				*	*	*
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING									
Housing		*		*	*(fn4)	*(fn4)	*(fn3)		*(fn3)
Town planning	*	*		*	*	*(fn4)	*	*	*
Regional planning									

FUNCTION/POWER	LESOTHO	MAURITIUS		NAMIBIA			SOUTH AFRICA		
	Local govt	Municipal/ district	Village	Munic	Town	Village	Metro	District	Local
TRANSPORT									
Roads	*	*					*		
Transport	*			*	*(fn4)	*(fn4)	*(fn3)		
Urban roads		*					*	*	
Airports							*	*	
Other				*(fn2)	*(fn4)	*(fn4)			
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION									
Water and sanitation				*	*	*	*	*	*
Refuse collection and		*		*	*	*	*	*	*
disposal									
Cemeteries and crematoria	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Slaughter-houses				*	*(fn4)	*(fn4)	*	*	*
Environmental protection	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Consumer protection		*					*	*	*
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS									
Theatre and concerts		*		*	*	*			
Museums and libraries		*	*	*	*(fn4)	*(fn4)	*(fn3)		
Parks and open spaces	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*
Sports and leisure	*	*	*				*		*
Religious facilities		*					*		*
UTILITIES									
Gas services				*	*	*	*		
District heating									
Water supply	*			*	*	*	*	*	
Electricity				*	*	*	*(fn4)	*	
ECONOMIC									
Agriculture, forests and	*			*					
fisheries									
Land allocation	*								
Economic promotion	*			*			*	*	
Buy and sell land and buildings				*	*	*			
Trade and industry		*							
Tourism				*	*	*	*	*	

fn1: Port Louis only; fn2: Aerodromes; fn3: This is a discretionary service by the local authority; fn4: Service provided with the ministers approval.

Source and adapted from: www.clgf.org.uk and Advocacy in Action (LAC 2004)

By far the most common and largest number of services across the four countries relate to the environment and public sanitation (water and sanitation; refuse collection and disposal; cemeteries and crematoria; slaughter houses; environment protection and consumer protection).

Culture, leisure and sports (including theatres and concerts; libraries and museums; parks and open spaces; sports and leisure facilities) are also a key function of all the local authorities with religious facilities an added function of metros and local authorities in South Africa and Mauritius.

Local authorities in South Africa and Namibia are responsible for electricity and water while those in Lesotho are only responsible for water and those in Mauritius have neither responsibility.

All authorities except those in Lesotho, village councils in Mauritius and district councils in South Africa are responsible for housing. Only local authorities in Lesotho, municipal councils in Mauritius and metro councils in South Africa are responsible for roads. While local authorities in Mauritius have no responsibility for transport, those in Lesotho, Namibia, metro and district councils in South Africa are responsible for local transport including airports (the only country in which a local authority has this responsibility).

Functions concerning education are limited. Only local authorities in Mauritius and metro councils in South Africa have a responsibility for pre schools. Only local authorities in Lesotho have responsibility for primary school education and in Mauritius for vocational and technical education.

All authorities except those in Namibia are responsible for health protection but only South African local authorities are tasked with providing primary health care. Councils in Namibia and South Africa have the greatest range of local economic promotion functions (including tourism) while those in Mauritius have the least (municipal councils have some trade and industry responsibilities).

Only local authorities in Lesotho and municipalities in Namibia have agriculture, forestry and fishery responsibilities. While local authorities in Namibia have responsibility for buying and selling land and buildings that they own, Lesotho is unique in that it is the only country in which local authorities have responsibility for land distribution (previously the responsibility of the chiefs).

Approaches

Underpinning the different competencies of local government are different approaches to local government in the case study countries, from the more traditional "essential services" model in Mauritius, to the more developmental approaches in South Africa and Lesotho.

Local Government in Mauritius dates back to 18th century French colonial rule when the country was divided into eight quarters or districts each having a Conseil de Commune comprising local residents responsible for roads and bridges.

Following the identification of gaps between central government and people on the ground the government encouraged the setting up of village and district committees overseen by civil commissioners in the rural areas, later placed under the direct control of the Ministry of Local Government. In contrast, the cities of Port Louis, and the towns of Curepipe, Quatre Bornes and Beau Bassin-Rose Hill were raised to municipality status.

However, it has always been clear that local authorities owe their existence to the central government and

can only exercise their functions within the limits laid down by the central government. As illustrated in the section on competencies (and partly because it is a small island) only very localised functions have been devolved to local government while matters such as roads and health are centrally managed.

In contrast, because of its history and the more recent timeframe within which democratic local government has emerged, South Africa has pioneered critical thinking in the region on the developmental role of local government, consistent with the notion of "spheres" rather than "tiers" of government (see Chapter two).

This concept of "co-operative" governance is enshrined in the Constitution and reflected in local government legislation. Chapter four of the Municipal Systems Act addresses community participation and the structures for achieving this (the ward committees, see Chapter four). Chapter five of the Act concerns the adoption by all municipalities of Integrated Development Plans (IDP's) which are to be "development oriented." The IDP's are intended as multi sector programmes covering everything from water, sanitation, roads, electricity and housing to human development, land reform, poverty alleviation, tourism and local economic development.

The Act places strong emphasis on performance measurements; each council has to "set appropriate key performance indicators as yardsticks for measuring performance, including outcomes and impact, with regard to the municipalities development priorities and objectives set out in its IDP."[91]

Local government in Lesotho has also been borne into the current decentralisation discourse with its greater emphasis on development and citizen participation. The government there has stressed the importance of this sphere of government for strengthening public service delivery; entrenching democratic roots and realising the government's developmental goals as set out in the National Vision 2020. Councils are described as the Gateway for local development, including mainstreaming responses to HIV and AIDS.

The processfor the new councils includes:

- Briefing at District level;
- Preparation of Community Council fact sheets.
- Area wide pre planning workshops with stakeholders.
- *Lipitso* or village meetings to identify priorities.
- Preparation of Community Council Action Plans (CCAPs).
- Cost estimates of the plans by the technical departments of the districts.
- Preparation on the District Council (DC) Plans.

However, according to a senior advisor of the Ministry of Local Government, while there has been "political decentralisation there has been no sector decentralisation." For example, he maintains that water and other responsible ministries have not decentralised their functions. This means that local councils are essentially planning in a vacuum.

Namibia has been involved in a process of reforming local government following consultations in 1996 that led to the launch of the Decentralisation policy in 1998 (see Chapter two). The policy envisaged devolving responsibility for a number of functions held by central government to local government by 2002. But progress has been slow. Most of the ministries affected by the immediate decentralisation of functions have not made any substantial progress towards the completion of action plans for doing so.[92]

91. The Municipal Systems Act 2000, Section 41(1)(a)

92. The Local Government System in Namibia (2006) Commonwealth Local Government Forum profiles.

Roles and responsibilities

The grey areas with regard to competencies reflect in the confusion on the ground in most countries over who is responsible for what with councillors often feeling that they are not able to make decisions. The examples from the field work in Namibia (see Box 42) demonstrate how the confusion and bottlenecks affect work on the ground.

Box 42: Whose role, whose responsibility?

Soon before researchers visited the municipality of Rehoboth, members of the community had been on a march about the absence of flush toilets in their area. Councillor Katrina Benz of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) complained about the issue being referred to the management committee, because she said this would delay it by another month (see Chapter four).

But Deputy Mayor Cecilia McNab Sherally said the council's hands are tied: "We need ministerial approval to build flush toilets. People have to understand that there are processes that we have to follow. Budgets must be prepared and approved."



Still no flush toilets in some areas
Photo: Nontobeko Dlamini

Agnes Kafula a Swapo Party councillor in the City of Windhoek municipality also complained that local authorities aren't able to make any decisions: "Whatever we do as a local authority we cannot make any decisions. Everything has to go through the line ministry for approval, which is the Ministry of local government and housing." She believes that not enough opportunity is given to women councillors to lead as the majority in leadership positions are men.

Another level of confusion surfaced between local and regional councillors at the Windhoek community meeting described at the beginning of this chapter. In Namibia, municipal, town and village councils are not subordinate to regional councils (see Chapter four). A heated debate developed during the meeting between the City councillors and the regional councillor who claimed that he was not consulted about the meeting taking place in his constituency.

According to the regional councillor regional authority councillors are the representatives of demarcated constituencies and as a result they should be consulted when developments or matters are raised by their subjects. He added that as City councillors represented the City of Windhoek and not the constituencies. The regional councillor declared openly that regional and local authorities were not working together for the good of Namibian's citizens.

This public row between the two authorities is an example of blurred lines between regional and local government in this instance. This does not bode well for the constituents' faith in these authorities; part of the reason why they left early.

In Lesotho the main confusion concerns the responsibilities of councillors vis-a-vis the chiefs (see Box 12). In South Africa, complaints revolved around tensions between councillors and the bureaucracy as well as provincial government.

Sinah Gwebu, a ward councillor in the City of Johannesburg complained that: "There are times when you have a community obligation and role to play because you have been in their situation, but because you are a councillor and politician you are faced with restrictions in the way that you may want to attend to community problems. We as councillors are mandated by the party's policies, therefore no matter how much you want to help people and know how to do it the party policy may restrict you. It is very frustrating to deal with issues of hierarchy on a daily basis, because it delays service delivery. You find yourself prioritising on certain issues, which means others are left unattended and neglected."

Naj Ahmed of the Msunduzi municipality in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, stressed that the provincial and local governments need to have more corporate governance. She says that she has been dealing with a land issue (informal settlement) which should have been dealt with by the public works department but which has been dragging on for many years.

"The problem is that part of the land is owned by the council and part by province and this has resulted in many delays, because officials at that level are not responsible and they don't make things happen or



Naj Ahmed (far right) at a Msunduzi gender training workshop

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

be efficient and effective in resolving the problems and you have to wait for year, make many phone calls, go to numerous meetings and things don't go as fast as you would like them to." She says that even at local government there are many bottlenecks. She believes that not all of the departments function properly because they don't have enough staff capacity and that too much emphasis is focussed on senior management instead of "foot soldiers at the ground level."

Bertha Mohulatsi of the Sol Plaatjie municipality in the Northern Cape province of South Africa believes that officials are the cause of the delays in service delivery. She believes that they take too long to sort out the problems that they are given: "We tell them when pipes have burst and we phone or go to them but they don't help us, not all of them but most of them." She is concerned when matters aren't dealt with because "they should realise that they are working with the people at grass roots level and that these are bread and butter issues and be aware that the people on the ground are suffering. When problems aren't solved the people say that the council has failed but they just think of the Mayor and the councillors they don't realise that there are officials that are working with the issues and that they are the ones that are preventing things from happening."

Revenue collection and constraints

Although local government is the tier of government closest to the people on the ground, it also often has the least resources, especially councils servicing the poorest communities. Each council's budget is made up of a mix of government grants and fees that local councils are able to levy. This mix varies widely in different countries from South Africa where local authorities are expected to be virtually self sufficient to Lesotho where councils currently get all their money from central government. In South Africa, local government is allocated about three percent of government revenue compared to 40 percent for national government and 57 percent for the provinces. However, local government is said to have more fiscal capacity than provincial government and is expected to raise 90 percent of its revenue through levying of property taxes; levies on businesses; user charges and the provision of water and electricity. However, many councils do not collect a significant portion of the revenue each year, resulting in financial deficits at the end of the year.

Elsabe Jacobs in the Umjindi council in Mpumalanga, South Africa feels frustrated because she has many ideas for development but she sees the official and their budgets as a barrier: "I'm very frustrated because I have so many ideas and things I would like to present to the mayoral committee, but it feels as if there is a barrier, especially when it comes to the property development section. They are complaining that there is no money on the budget." She believes that the council is using the budget incorrectly by giving all the loans to property developers. She says that by charging levies on financing they can generate revenue and she also believes that property investment and sales would generate further revenue which could be used to finance social development projects.

In Namibia, the Ministry of Regional and Local Governments is urging municipalities to become self sustaining financially but in 2005 many still relied heavily on central government transfers. Several were facing prolonged water and power shut downs because of their debts to parastatal suppliers.[93]

Councillor Victoria Kauma of Rundu in Namibia says that although she is adjusting to being a new

93. Hapwood, Graham (2006) "Guide to Namibian Politics", Namibia Institute for Democracy p.25.

councillor, "The financial programmes are challenging.. because we have to work out ways of generating income." Because the town is growing very fast they have problems with old equipment. In the informal settlements they have portable water and electricity but refuse removal has not been implemented because roads have not been developed. Roads and infrastructure are a big challenge with no more than 10km of road being tarred and the rest being gravel. The Local Authorities Act makes provision for health services but generally local government doesn't provide this.

Councillor Kaija Shililifa of Tsumeb in Namibia says that revenue collection is a source of tension in the council: "Some think that when community members don't pay rates and taxes you disconnect their electricity and others don't think that there is a need." She believes that councillors "take things too politically, we tend to forget that this is local government." This, she maintains, is leading to regression: "Namibia towns are becoming villages, we are moving backwards. At the municipal level we have to start educating our communities, we need to communicate with the communities that there are no more free services."

In Mauritius the main source of income is a central government grant which provides about 60 percent of the municipal council and 75 percent of the district council revenue. Funds raised by local government include fees and charges; general rates; tenants tax; interests of investments; housing rentals and construction charges.

In Lesotho at the time of writing virtually all local government resources came from central government. Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government Moliehi Matabane says that "local government relies 100 percent on subventions from central government. We are at the beginning of the process. Issues of decentralization are still being worked out; what revenue they can collect; what they keep; what they remit to central government. Even when this is worked out, local government will still rely for the foreseeable future on central government. The capacity of councils to generate their own resources must be gradually built."

When councils do get around to drafting by-laws (model laws were distributed in September) they will have the power to raise revenue from resources such as grass for thatch; roofing; sand from the rivers and ranging.

While some councils had received their capital budget according to a formula that had been worked out, others had not. The permanent secretary insisted that these delays should not be seen as failure: "this was our first democratically elected government; we have just started; there is a lot of experience to gain. We can't expect to get it right in one year."

But according to the NUL's Matseliso Mapetla, "It has been almost two years now, and local government is barely functional; things have not been moving according to promise. It is politicized. Central government is having trouble letting go."

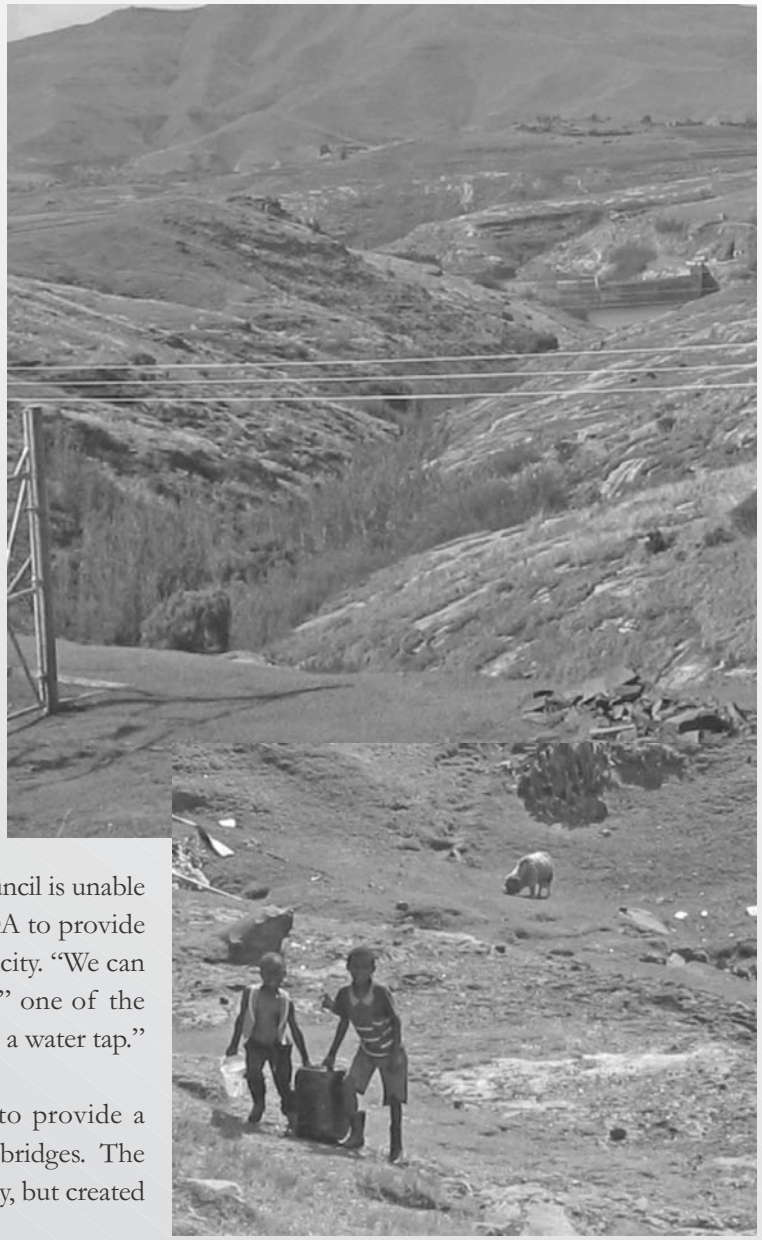
And on the ground frustration is mounting. At the Maseru women's focus group, participants spoke of the several meetings they have participated in and development plans for their areas "but there are no resources to implement them." Mayor of Maseru Malijane Morahanye echoed this view: "I want to construct roads but I have no money; fix street lights but I have no money." Even Maseru gets 90 percent of its budget from the central government.

In Khomokhoana in the Leribe District, Councillor Ignatius Mahatma described the council's budget position as "embarrassing. We thought we would be able to collect revenue through allocations for markets; quarries; natural resources but central government

collects the revenue. We only have two public toilets from which we can collect revenue."

Fellow councillor Mamosenyei Lemao says that some councillors are threatening to pull out. Mathata confirms that the credibility of the councillors is at stake: "The public are disappointed that nothing is happening in the councils. The women and men who were elected are idling. They have been set up for failure."

Box 43: Living in the highlands with no water



Nowhere is the perception of failure by local government in Lesotho starker than in Moteng, the area nestled in the shadow of the multimillion rand Lesotho Highland Development Authority (LHDA) that exports power and water to South Africa's thirsty industrial heartland while the villagers have no water and electricity of their own.

Participants in the women's focus group said that they had been "happy initially" about the 30 percent quota for women that resulted in a council in their area of three men; two chiefs and six women with a woman chairperson. "But the elections have not brought about any significant changes," one of the women complained.

They found it unbelievable that the council is unable to levy any taxes or pressure the LHDA to provide them with running water, if not electricity. "We can hear the water gushing into the dam," one of the women said. "Yet we do not even have a water tap."

All the LHDA had done had been to provide a community hall, a road and a few foot bridges. The project dislocated many homes, they say, but created few jobs.

"When the construction came to an end, so did the jobs." While there is no running water above the ground, the women worry about the billions of litres that pour through a tunnel under them: "There was no *pitso* (public meeting) to explain this to us," the women said. "If this pipe should burst that would be the end of us."

At the community meetings that take place with councillors twice a month several other concerns have arisen; for example the need for Adult Basic Education and support for HIV orphans.

A participant in the male focus group said in these circumstances of non delivery it becomes difficult to judge the performance of women because "the problems are not about women or men; they are about central government."

Mothobi Ntili (see Box 41) says the council is doing what it can to raise resources even before the fund raising powers of local councils are clarified. The council, he said, has been able to raise R3000 ($425) to R5000 ($715) through levies on thatch and ranges. The Council is also trying to resolve the LHDA issue by raising R500 ($70) each from those who want to get connected to electricity and then negotiating with the power authority to do so.

But Ntili conceded that the fact that the council has had no money from central government "is affecting our credibility; we are not taken seriously."

Matau Moreki (see book cover), the secretary to the council, is equally frustrated. "We can't do anything with the little money we have raised. The people are beginning to act up. They say, 'you are just earning salaries and you are doing nothing for us.' It is really a terrible situation to be in; when so much is expected and yet you can do so little."



Moteng women's focus group

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Beating the odds

Despite the odds that councils face, researchers found examples of women councillors making the best of a bad situation and using whatever room they have to make a difference.

Fighting financial constraints

In Namibia researchers found a number of examples of innovative approaches to overcoming debt problems faced by councils, even though these are not likely to make a big dent without major debt reduction. However, the efforts being made sent a positive signal that councillors are not just sitting back.

In Maltahohe at the time of visiting the council owed about R180 000 ($25 000) for electricity and R536 000 ($76 000) for water. In a desperately poor community with an 80 percent unemployment rate that is not a debt that can easily be redeemed. According to Deputy Chair Karolina Pieters (see opening of Chapter two) the council has met with the minister and permanent secretary responsible for local government in an effort to get central government support "but I do not know if they will help us out; we brought that problem onto ourselves."

Although the problem was in fact inherited from the last council, the group of five new councillors (four women and one man, the chair) have taken it upon themselves to try and get the council out of debt. In addition to running a home for close to 400 children, Pieters is at the forefront of the debt reduction initiative. As a man in the community put it: "Nothing ever gets her down. Now she is trying to solve the debt problem too."

The crux of the problem is that the previous council bought cheap popularity by charging low rates for water and electricity. Through negotiations with the community, water and electricity rates have been increased. This is complicated because at village level in Namibia the minister has to approve and gazette any increases in rates.

Among the plans in the pipeline are turning a council house into a bed and breakfast facility for tourists venturing into the desert and using this to raise funds for the council. A braai (Bar -b-que) committee is holding fund raisers and another committee is recycling and selling old bits of iron that clutter the village (helping to clean up in the process).

Further south in Bethanie, the village council has also been plagued by the problem of previous councils failing to adjust tariffs and running into a debt of some R300 000 ($43 000) with NAMWATER. The post of CEO is vacant following the suspension of the former chief executive for financial mismanagement.

The all-women council, which does not have a high level of education (see Box 15) have struggled with the procedures for increasing tariffs. According to Vice Chairperson Regina Ikela "we only received financial training in 2006. This should have been the first training we got."

But the team, led by Anna Fredrick as chair with Ikela as her "right hand woman", have sought the assistance of a neighbouring village on how to raise tariffs.

They have also written to the Minister of Local Government asking for assistance. And like the councillors in Maltahohe, those in Bethanie have many income generating ideas. "We farm goats in this area and they do very well," noted Ikela. "We think that the council could start a goat project."

In Keetmanshoop, an hour's drive to the east, the municipality is embroiled in a legal battle over the outsourcing of water management to a South African company by the previous council.

Although the council is still not entirely out of the woods, the former chair of the management committee and only woman on the council, Fiina Elago, is credited with getting the council back on its feet financially (see Box 23).

Basil Brown, a fellow Swapo Party councillor and businessman believes that what the council needs to understand is that local government is a business: "you have to understand business to make business."

He and Elago are promoting the idea within the council that Keetmanshoop should be marketed as the shortest transit route to the west coast from South Africa, creating commercial and tourism opportunities.

Housing

As mentioned earlier, housing is a local government competence in all countries and one that is close t the heart of women councillors. In Maltahohe, Pieters is working to upgrade a squatter camp into an informal settlement. In Keetmanshoop, Elago is the chair of the housing committee. In Rehoboth, Swapo Party deputy mayor Cecilia McNab Sherally has also made housing her main concern after becoming a councillor for the first tine in the 2004 elections.

"When I was appointed, I felt excited and afraid . It is a very responsible task; but you realise the power in you to do good. I see what the needs are in the community; the water taps that are off; the aged who need care; I bring these issues to the Council and I fight for them. Our motto as councillors is that the political campaign is over. It is time to leave our jackets outside. We are here to deliver services; to make an impact. Housing, it happens, is my passion."



Karolina Pieters chairs the housing committee in Maltahohe, Namibia

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Box 44: How I got my dream house

Beverly Izaaks beams when she talks about her new home. "When I woke up the first night, I could not believe it, I was dreaming! I mean, really dreaming! I realised that for 13 years while I had been living like a nomad, going from one house to the next with my children, I had not been able to dream."

Izaaks is one of the women in Rehoboth who has benefited from the national Build Together project in which individuals can access loans of N$32 000 ($4500) choose their own supplier, and provide their own labour to become proud house owners. Owners pay off the debt at a rate of N$287 ($40) per month.



Rehoboth housing project
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Whereas in the past most housing opportunities went to men, Sherally has made it a point to ensure that women get a foot in the door, literally and figuratively: "I am not ashamed to say that I am aggressive in making sure that women benefit. As a woman councillor I motivate other women to participate. I tell them you do not know your power unless you claim it."

Researchers met with a group of women on one street who had become house owners as a result of the project and of the deputy mayor's persistence: "when the lights went on in our new homes we went onto the street; we had a street party," one of the women recalled.

Izaaks recalled the humiliation in the past of being evicted, "seeing your things on the back of a lorry. Now I have peace of mind." Together with Sherally the women in the neighbourhood have started a campaign to get illegal shebeens shut down and to get the legal ones to observe opening and closing hours. The women praised her for "always being on the ground; having ideas and building strong relationships with us." Men interviewed in a separate focus group said that "finally there is progress in this town. There are more jobs, there is more investment, there are more houses and tarred roads."

Electricity

Sometimes regarded as a luxury, electricity is one of those basics that can make a huge difference to the daily lives of women; greatly reducing the burden of finding fuel for cooking; enhancing security and learning possibilities. All of the case study countries have rural electrification programmes of one kind or the other. Researchers found among women councillors a keen interest in how to tap into these despite the myriad of barriers.

Indira Seebun who is now Minister of Women Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare in Mauritius recalls that as a councillor "bad lighting meant that women and children were exposed to problems. In all wards there are risky areas and sometimes women finish work late and children come out of tuitions late I therefore made it a point to make sure that all lightings were functioning properly. Proper infrastructure was my priority." In Lesotho (see Box 45), researchers met a remarkable councillor who had worked her way around several barriers to ensure that her constituents get electricity.

Box 45: Let there be light

It had just gone dark as visitors struggled through the unlit and potholed roads of Nyenyesi village to the home of Felicia Kompi in the Leribe district of Lesotho. But a warm glow emerged from inside the newly lit home where supper was cooking on a shinny electric stove and an electrically powered radio hummed in the background.

As she opened the door for the visitors, Kompi gave Councillor Mamosenyei Lemao from the Khomokhoana Community Council a big hug. "She is my hero!" Kompi exclaimed. For several years after she built her home in 2000, it remained in darkness, until Lemao set up a local committee; they all contributed R500 ($70) and she negotiated with the power authority in Lesotho to extend lights to over 200 homes in the community.



Lemao and Kompi

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

When the lights went on a fortnight earlier, "I could not believe my eyes," Kompi said. She waited excitedly for the weekend when her husband, who runs a taxi service between Lesotho and South Africa, came home. When he walked into the newly lit home he said to her: "Now we can retire in peace." A male councillor, Kompi is convinced, "would never have done what (Lemao) did. He would not have had the patience. He would have given up. This woman loves her community."

A farmer and widow, Lemao stood as an independent candidate in Lesotho's first local government elections in 2005. She did so, she says, under pressure from her community: "I indicated that I was not interested in politics but I agreed to stand so that I could help my community. I am not interested in this politics they are doing. My politics is working for the community."

Contesting in an open constituency, she stood against ten men and three women and won. "I think I won because I am always helping the poor in my village; people come with problems for me to help; they trust me," she said. Some of her male competitors did not take kindly to her winning. When they observed the trend during the counting of the ballot "some of them stood up and went out." But the women candidates said: "even if we have not won, at least we have a woman on the council. They were happy for me."

Like other councils in Lesotho, Khomokhoana has not received its subvention from the central government. "Up to now, we have nothing. But on my side I decided to make a group scheme to negotiate for electricity." A committee that she established went door to door making the financial collection necessary to give the group the financial clout to negotiate with the Electricity Board. Those with the money (R10 000 to R15 000 or $1500 to $2250) negotiated individual connections. But the majority contributed R500 ($70) to the group scheme. Meetings in Maseru followed. The process took three to four moths. But in the end the lights went on.

Why electricity? "This is what the people asked for. Most women in this area work in (Taiwanese) textile factories. They go to work early and come back late. Electricity is quicker, easier, cheaper and safer for cooking." Other demands are flowing: running water and roads for example. With the experience of getting electricity, Lemao knows what to do: "I have called a *pitso* (village meeting). I have suggested that we make contributions. I will soon be talking to the water authority." The community, she reflects, is restive: "They are moving much faster than the government."

While she has been a community activist all her life, Lemao says that even with all the challenges that face local government, being a councillor makes it possible to leverage her work and ideas: "Now I can call a *pitso*, I can mobilise. That is something I could not do working alone." At the time of the interview, Lemao had been approached to run for the national elections in Lesotho in February 2007. She declined because "I still want to be here in local government. I am not interested in the big elections. There are still challenges at local level but this is where I live, this is my life, this is where I can make a difference.

"At national level," she reflected, "favouritism, this and that plays a role. There is a lot of fighting; we women are not safe. Here I know that I have been chosen on merit. If you are in the big elections you are far from the people. Here, I am with the people. I am one of them."

Social and recreational facilities and social grants

Providing social and recreational facilities is another function of local government. One of the contributions of women councillors is to make such facilities accessible to other women.

In Mauritius, Minister of Women's Rights, Indira Seebun former mayor of Vacoas/Phoenix says the sexist environment that pervades politics is a major inhibiting factor to women's public participation at the local level. Seebun explained how she had to use all possible channels to get women interested and involved. She had personal talks with them and sometimes she used the media and gave talks in NGOs.

"We had a hall available for women for a variety of activities - paintings, art and craft and even secretarial training but they were not coming. On Saturdays we used to get one or two young students. But those more in need of these training were just not coming." Seebun, therefore, changed tactics and started organising social activities on thematic themes to get women interested. "I was not keen on doing that but this was a start to get them involved, to get them out of the house, to get them change their attitudes as I wanted them to be part and parcel of the Municipal Council. Social problems do no vanish

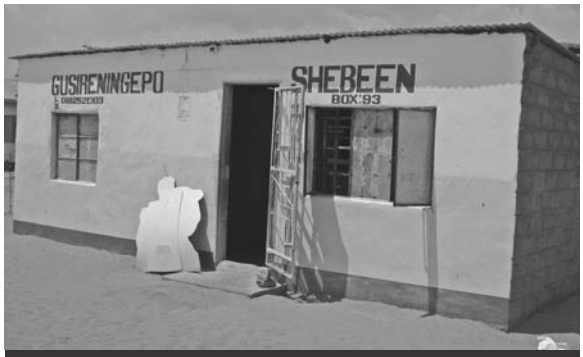
in one day; all stake holders must be involved. But unfortunately only one percent women attended."

In Buffalo City in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa women said that women councillors had helped to establish a community rehabilitation centre, a home for the elderly and a computer training centre in Mdantsane Township. Although initiated by the councillor these projects are now fully run and managed by members of the communities.

As described in the earlier part of this chapter, only local authorities in Mauritius actually administer certain types of grants. However, a major issue for many women on the ground is how to access existing grants (for children, the elderly, the unemployed, the retired, the disabled etc.) Among the projects initiated by women councillors in Buffalo City, mentioned by constituents in the focus group, included assisting women to access child grants, pension grants and also helping getting children documents so that they can also access these grants.

Small enterprises

Despite the financial constraints mentioned one of the areas in which women councillors can be visibly seen at work in all countries is in helping women to access economic opportunities in the small enterprise sector.



Shebeen in Rundu, Namibia
Photo: Susan Tolmay

A special meeting called by the Village Secretary of the woman dominated Bethanie village council in July concerned dilemmas over shebeens, an issue which had received a lot of coverage in the media. Shebeen owners, mostly women, had been demonstrating in front of the parliament building and had camped there for about two weeks following the closure of illegal shebeens by government. Unlicensed shebeen owners had been instructed to apply accordingly. At the village level, women councillors debated how they could assist shebeen owners to obtain licenses so that they could run legal businesses while being mindful of the high rates of alcoholism in the area.



Patience Tsoho's gardening project
Photo: Susan Tolmay

In other countries, councillors with a passion for farming often initiate gardening projects. In Lesotho, Patience Tsoho (see Chapter four) a councillor in the Matsatseng community council in the Quthing district was a farmer prior to becoming a councillor. Her dream is to see women becoming involved in agriculture. As a start to realising this dream she started a project called the "Teba Care Agricultural Project" in which 30 women are involved in developing gardens. As many of the women do not have running water in their home part of the project involved building water tanks. Using her farming experience she has taught women in her village to build the water tanks with the result that they now

have access to running water which they also use for their gardens. The produce from these gardens is used to feed the many orphans in the village.

In South Africa, Councillor Laurah Modise of the Sol Plaatjie Council in the Northern Cape described how she has been promoting gardening projects:

"In my area, Bloemande, we have small food garden called Bopanang, it was started by five women in 2002 but now there are only four. They started planting vegetables and then we started a soup kitchen. There was a man who would bring a pot and we picked vegetables from the garden and one would bring salt and the other would bring something else and we would make the pot of soup. We did this until the department of social services started assisting us financially.

They buy potatoes and other ingredients for the soup and the women get R1000 stipend between them. It operates Monday to Thursday and about 50 children and 30 adults benefit from it, but when the schools are closed there are more people. In winter social services get sponsors to provide bread as well. "I tried to link the women with the department of agriculture and they came to teach the women how to turn the soil and to plant the vegetables etc." The women were runner up in the female farmer of the year awards 2003 competition organised by the department of agriculture, land reform, environment and conservation in the Northern Cape – in the category of top producer for household food security.

"A few weeks ago we had a branch meeting where I addressed the women and I asked for about ten



Councillor Laurah Modise

Photo: Susan Tolmay

of them to work on a food garden and they asked me are they going to get paid. I had to say that no one was but that I would try to see where I could get seeds and equipment but that they would help their families 'what you sow is what you reap' and that they would have vegetables for their children but only one women volunteered because they were not going to get paid. We need to find ways of involving women in projects even if they don't get paid."



Community project in Wepener
Photo: Judith Mtsewu

Pushing the margins

As new doors and opportunities open for women, so they get a glimpse into areas previously closed to them. This section addresses some of the new issues being placed on the agendas of local councils as a result of women's participation.

Procurement

Local government out sources a variety of services and each year issues thousands of contracts. Many of these (for example waste and water management; road and infrastructure) are associated with male employees and male-owned companies. Both South Africa and Namibia have affirmative action provisions in their Constitutions and legislation. In these two countries especially, women are beginning to ask what is being done to ensure that women are empowered through contracting opportunities.

According to Councillor Victoria Kauma from Rundu, Namibia the council has a tender policy which provides for equal access to contracts for both women and men but she adds that certain groups of women have been exempted from the stringent tender requirements which means that they are awarded contracts without having to tender for them in the same way as other big organisations, thereby benefiting small women owned businesses.

In June 2006 a group of women from the Ukhahlamba District Council in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, met to discuss how to rejuvenate the Economic Empowerment Development Plan adopted in 2003 but that had proved dysfunctional because of its focus on small projects.

According to Coordinator of the Special Programmes Unit Search Tindleni the women formed the Ukhahlamba Women Economic Empowerment Forum, an executive group of about 15 women, as well as 5 women representatives from each of the four local municipalities of Maletswai, Elundini, Gariep and Senqu Municipalities.

The group defined policy objectives, identified stakeholders, policy processes and time frames. Furthermore, they identified the critical skills required to enable greater participation of women, response options to this skills' need and training options for these skills shortages. The discussion also included a decision to include quotas as part of the policy.

A draft policy has been finalised. This will be followed by policy dialogues in which communities will be asked to critique the draft. This process will be

followed by the necessary revision and thereafter the draft will go to the Council. If endorsed, it will become policy.

Two areas need attention to facilitate mainstreaming:

- Developing a District Council skills database: Women should play a pivotal role in the Technical Services especially because of the types of projects there. Their focus is amongst others infrastructure development, public works, facilities, water, sanitation. This skills database will enable the District Council to source people for contracts from their own (female) communities instead of externally.
- Budgetary influence – The projects targeted at women and vulnerable groups should receive more funding to enable success.

Civil society focus group participants in the council area spoke about how the women councillors have facilitated changes for women and created opportunities form them: "They have for example created spaces for women to be involved, always calling meetings to discuss things openly. There is the Women Economic Empowerment Forum which is for the economic liberalisation of women in the area and encourages participation of all women."

In the past these women did not feel their needs were catered for because there were no projects for them to participate in and no projects to assist them in developing skills. There were also very few business opportunities coming their way. But things are beginning to change; as one participant



Ukhahlamba women's focus group

Photo: Judith Mtsewu

put it: "Men used to get all the contracts. Since the inclusion of female councillors, women are able to compete for contracts with men, even for construction contracts. The change now is that women councillors are helping to create opportunities for women. The idea is to create a pool of skilled women from within the municipality. Men are often unable to achieve this because they have their own agenda which does not advance the needs of women. There is now improved community development."

A women focus group in Lesedi in Gauteng said that their female councillor had forged a spirit "that encourages 'doing-it-for-yourself'. She had been instrumental in "encouraging the municipality to involve women in tendering processes and projects." As a community they had started catering and cleaning companies to benefit from these opportunities.

Land

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Lesotho is the only country in the study in which land allocation is a local government competence, making local government a potentially powerful force on the ground, and exacerbating potential conflict with chiefs (see Chapter four). As women councillors flex their muscle, and with a new land act in the pipeline, important strategic questions are beginning to be asked about ownership of the means of production for the majority of the people in this mostly rural country.

According to Councillor Mothobi Ntili of the Moteng Community Council "conflict with chiefs is a problem; chiefs give land to their favourites." Mamosenyei Lemao from the Khomokhoana Community Council adds that "some still go to the chiefs for land; others understand that chiefs can't deal with land any more; that now we have to work together."

Local government advisor Rajeev Ahal pointed out that in Lesotho "land belongs to the king" and that for ten years the chiefs did not give out land; village development councils performed this function. However, the advent of local government has resulted in chiefs feeling undermined in two respects. First they are no longer the paid representatives of central government. Second, they are losing their control over natural resources."

Permanent Secretary for Local Government Moliehi Matabane says that there is need for land to be planned; surveyed and divided into plots before local authorities can distribute the land. "We have produced a handbook to assist councillors but the technical part has to be done by technical people. The constraint we are facing is that we do not have adequate resources of personnel to do that across the country."

She stresses, however, that as these "teething problems" are sorted out, women (who constitute over half the councillors in Lesotho) will have as much say over how land is distributed as men. "Women will be able to oversee land distribution. They have been the cornerstone of this country while men are away working on the mines. They are the ones responsible for land management."

In the pipeline, Matabane notes, is "a new land bill that will be tabled before parliament after the elections. The new bill addresses the issue of women having title to land. It is comprehensive, it has been cleared by cabinet and it is very progressive. Of course we anticipate heated debate, and it will take some time, but this is the direction we are going."

Read in tandem with the Married Persons Act that will finally free women in Lesotho of their minority status (also being debated at the time of writing this book)[94] the Land Act will be a revolutionary piece of legislation for women's rights.

94. Presently under both customary law and common law women are regarded as minors, without full legal capacity. Under customary law a woman in a perpetual minor under her father, husband and later son or brother-in-law. Under common law unless a woman marries under a pre nuptial agreement (which is rare) she marries in community of property under her husbands marital power and therefore is a minor in law.

Though gradual, changes in the rural landscape and power balance are already apparent in Lesotho. Chapter three recounts the fascinating case of Tsepo Molefe challenging the gender quota for the elections, and the woman who has acceded to the position, Mateboho Tsepane. She is convinced that Tsepo Molefe challenged her because of his cosy relationship with the chiefs and the fact that he is well known in the community for grabbing new pieces of land that become available. She is committed to a fair distribution of land and to women gaining access. In Moteng in northern Lesotho Matau Moreke is starting to ask questions about the position of women in the rural areas (see Box 46).

Box 46: "I'm not fine with the way things are"



Matau Moreki

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Matau Moreke (see cover) stands in the yard of her home on a steep cliff overlooking the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and declares that she is "not fine with the way things are."

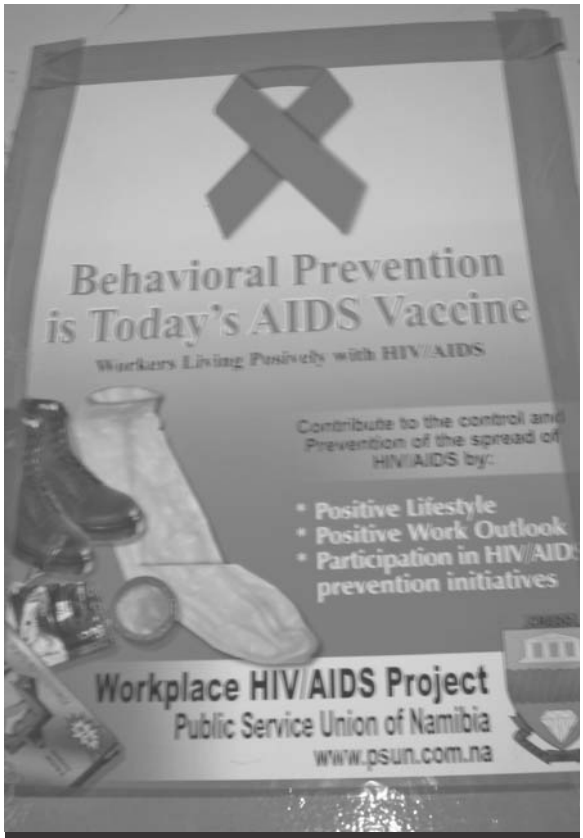
Like thousands of other Basotho women, she takes care of the home, children and fields while her husband is in Johannesburg ("maybe he has even married another wife!"). Yet she does not own the land she lives on or the cattle she manages. She can't even sell a cow if there is a crisis and she needs to raise money even though as far as she is concerned "they belong to both of us and we have children who need to be taken care of."

A married woman, she says, "can't own land until the Married Person's Act is passed." As Secretary to the Moteng Council, being able to allocate land means very little, she says, "when I cannot even own it myself."

High is the hills, she listens to the radio for news on when this act will be passed. Moreke is delighted to learn from a Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) researcher that the organisation will be conducting workshops on the rights of women in the area. "This is sharp," she says, raising a thumb of approval. "We need to be empowered."

HIV and AIDS

In all of the case study countries, and especially in South Africa, Namibia and Lesotho, HIV and AIDS is an issue that is inevitably being forced onto the agenda of local authorities, with women councillors often at the forefront of doing so.



Namibia HIV Poster

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

As noted earlier in this chapter, in most countries local authorities have limited responsibilities with regard to health except in so far as waste may add to health hazards. However, HIV and AIDS is far more than a health issue, and there is no way that local authorities can avoid becoming involved in the prevention, treatment or care associated with the pandemic.

The story of Karolina Pieters in Maltahohe in southern Namibia (opening of Chapter two) provided a graphic illustration of how one woman has literally brought orphans and vulnerable children into the council and forced the council to form an HIV and AIDS committee.

The Chairperson of Maltahohe, Hans Joseph attests to the changes that he has seen since he has been the only male in council with four women: "At the beginning of the term there was no HIV and AIDS committee. They have now developed committees and health care is also being addressed by the women councillors."

Fiina Elago, a Swapo Party councillor in Keetmanshoop notes: "HIV is not something we can run away from. Our own staff are infected and affected. We as women are more infected and affected than men. If a child is sick, if anyone is sick, it is the woman who has to take care of that person. As councillors we also have a major role to play in raising education and awareness."

In Lesotho councillors Marefiloe Mahao and Mataelo Sebele spoke about how the women in their council, the Mathula community council in the Mafeteng district, have been involved in educating people on HIV and AIDS and encouraging residents to go for testing with the result than many woman have disclosed their status and are supporting the councillors in their project. People living with AIDS are now getting treatment and being provided with food supplements and they have also started vegetable gardens which are being used for this purpose as well.

Mamosenyei Lemao from the Khomokhoana Community Council in Lesotho says that HIV and AIDS is "such a pressing priority that you might even forget to mention it." Councillors have been receiving training on HIV and AIDS education and

awareness. As in Moteng (see profile of Ntili in Box 41) councillors have started gardens and support groups for people living with AIDS.

Indeed Lesotho is pioneering the idea that local councils should become the "Gateway" to a holistic response to HIV and AIDS. There are three components to the project that is supported by GTZ, the German agency for technical cooperation. These are: making community councils and local leaders "HIV and AIDS competent"; empowering Community Councils to be the gateway to fighting HIV and AIDS and promoting demand-driven support systems at district and national levels.

A recent audit[95] of this programme, however, points out that while gender is mentioned in training materials, it is not mainstreamed in the overall programme. The audit mentions several gender dimensions to the pandemic in Lesotho (also true in the rest of the region).

These include the role of transactional and intergenerational sex in fuelling the pandemic; early marriages; female genital mutilation; reluctance of the society to talk about sex; unequal power relations between women and men and the effect of this on women getting men to use condoms; low usage of the female condom; the impact of migratory labour patterns; male initiation and the practise that young men must have sex with a woman immediately thereafter; multiple partners; gender based violence and traditional practices such as lobola or bohadi (bride price) which leads to men believing that they "own" their wives and can do as they please. The report makes several recommendations for mainstreaming gender more effectively into the Gateway approach.

95. Gender mainstreaming of GTZ Operations in Lesotho (2006), Consultancy report, GTZ

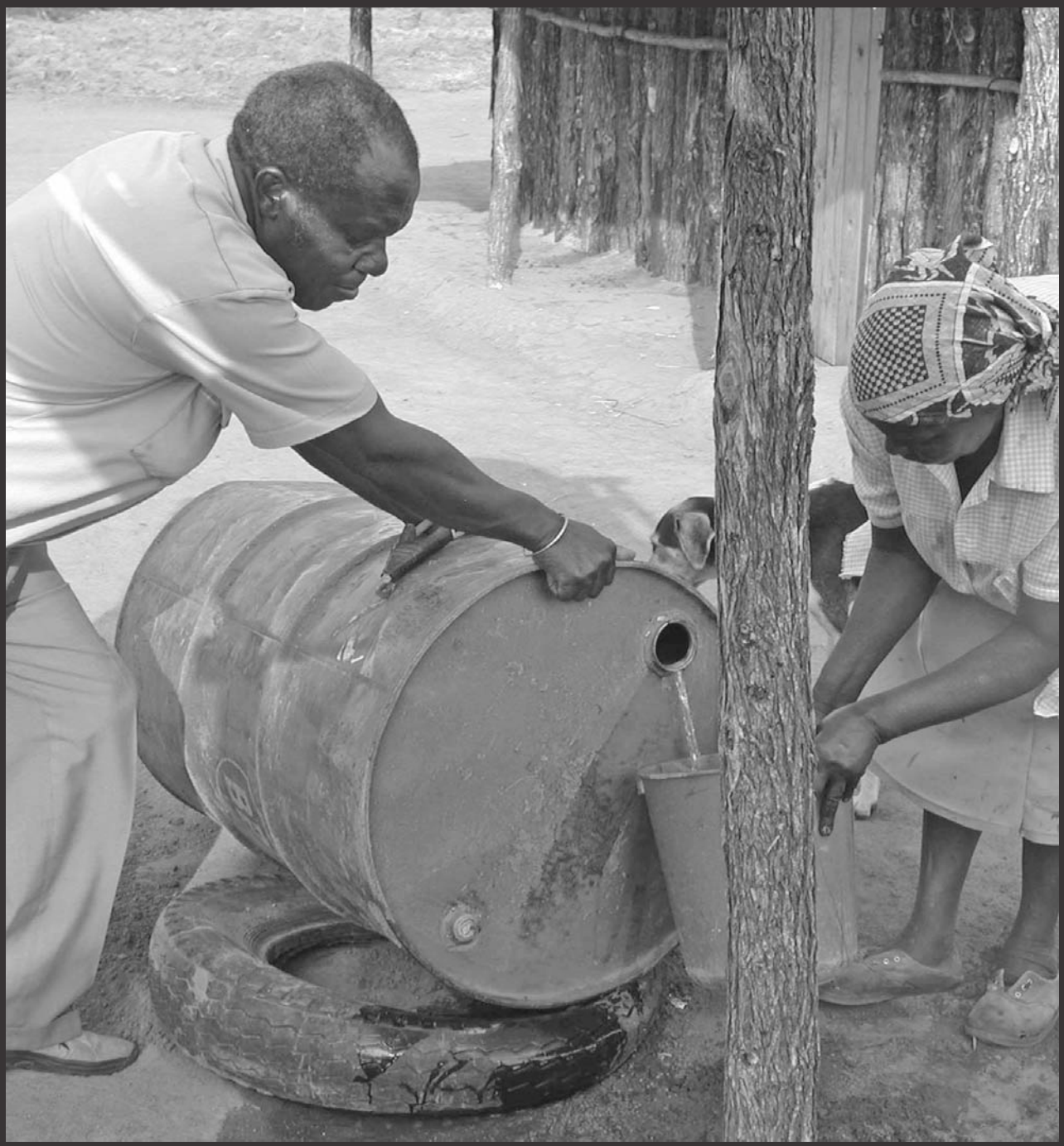
Conclusions

This chapter demonstrates the difference that women are making at a practical level in local government, despite the challenges faced in all countries. Several examples demonstrate how women are using the space they have, however limited, to deliver vital services such as electricity and housing to the community and to ensure that women benefit.

Addressing practical daily needs raises strategic issues. For example as opportunities are opened for small to medium scale enterprise, so women begin to ask questions about procurement and how they can benefit more meaningfully from the contracts issued by local government itself.

In Lesotho, where councillors are responsible for land allocation, women are inevitably beginning to ask questions about their own status and access to the means of production. Practical responses to the daily realities of HIV and AIDS also begin to raise questions about what underpins this pandemic. Gender power relations are at the heart of many of the answers.

The key question confronting local government is how to progess from a practical to a more strategic approach to gender issues. This is explored in the next chapter.



Gender mainstreaming at work

Photo: Shamiso Mapure

From practical to strategic
Gender mainstreaming

"Gender mainstreaming can simply mean integrating women at the top, without confronting the fundamental issues of gender equality. If there is no gender mainstreaming we will be tinkering and tailoring but we will not be transforming. I don't think we will achieve anything."

- Sheila Meintjes, Professor and gender activist, University of Witwatersrand



There are some women decision-makers that do not hesitate to fly the flag for gender equality wherever they may be. Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) responsible for Community Development in the City of Johannesburg is one of them. As Mayor of Soweto, Speaker of the City of Johannesburg and in her current executive post in which she has championed a Women Development Strategy (WDS),

Mayathula-Khoza has made it her business to empower women councillors and promote gender equality through the work of the largest municipal council in Southern Africa.

From her 13th floor office overlooking the busy train station and high rise offices of Braamfontein, Mayathula-Khoza laughs that she has grown with local government in South Africa, and made sure that gender is part of that growth in whatever corner she has occupied.

"I have served in all the different roles of local government - legislative, the executive, ceremonial," Mayathula-Khoza reflects. "Wherever I have been I have used my space to empower women because of the triple oppression of race, gender and class that the majority of women in this country have experienced. We have an important role to play in transforming local government which has been predominantly white and male. I have tried to get other women on board; to share that vision."



Nandi Mayathula-Khoza
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

A veteran of the Soweto student uprisings against the teaching of Afrikaans in black schools in 1970, Mayathula-Khoza cut her teeth in the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) in which "I was identified as a cadre who would be part of local government and make a difference by virtue of being involved in the struggle for democracy and knowing civic issues at community level."

Elected as a councillor on the Proportional Representation (PR) or list system in the first local elections in 1995, Mayathula-Khoza chaired the powerful tender committee in which she spearheaded a new affirmative action procurement policy. This involved provision for ensuring that the benefits of City contracts extended to all previously disadvantaged groups, including women. "Over the years we have seen more and more women winning tenders. I know that this has contributed to the quality of life not just of these women but also of the communities that they serve," she noted.

In 1997, Mayathula-Khoza rose to be mayor of the Southern Metro Council of Johannesburg, covering the sprawling former black township of Soweto where she grew up. "In those days the mayoral post was a ceremonial one, but I tell you I made good use of that space; not just kissing babies and shaking peoples hands. I made it a developmental role. I began to moblise and form people into a community; to become part of a forum. I called in members of the Executive Committee and asked what impact local government is making; how we are improving the quality of life; how we can become not just recipients of development but participants as well."

Mayathula-Khoza's passion for advancing the status of women led her to "mobilise women in the sector, in Soweto, Orange Farm and Lenasia. I strongly believe that you can't represent people if you don't involve them. We involved groups of women, and asked how they wanted to be assisted." The list was

long: employment, skills, poverty alleviation and a host of basic needs. It opened the eyes of the first time politician to what is meant by gender mainstreaming at local level.

In 2000, Mayathula-Khoza found herself Speaker of the City of Johannesburg, a new post that included being responsible for the capacity building of councillors. Among her first moves, she created a women's caucus in the City (see Box 26) that later served as the steering committee for a unique capacity building project on Gender, Communications and Local Government (see Case study seven). This project resulted in a draft gender policy for the City.

Following the 2006 elections, the community activist found herself deployed to the executive, responsible for a range of portfolios including heritage, human development, poverty alleviation and social cohesion: tasks that "I am really passionate about."

Mayathula-Khoza is aware that the City needs a comprehensive gender strategy that encompasses internal transformation as well as service delivery (see Case Study nine). But she has used her space to drive a Women Development Strategy (WDS) as part of the human development portfolio of her work. "This time around," she explained, "I do not have responsibility for the empowerment of women councillors as I did as Speaker. But I am responsible for the empowerment of women in the community, so I am able to pick up from where I left. I continue to make good use of whatever space I have."

This chapter concerns approaches to gender mainstreaming at local level. The chapter begins by noting that although there is a school of thought that now questions whether gender mainstreaming has been worth it, no alternatives have been put forward to systematic attempts to ensure that gender considerations are integrated into all areas of work.

While such strategies are abundant at national and regional level, they are scarce at local level. The strategies that exist have a strong emphasis on the empowerment of women, with little on changing the attitudes of men. Increasingly it is possible to identify women-specific projects within the work of local government, especially where women are well represented. However, there are few discernible attempts to ensure that gender is integrated into all areas of service delivery as well as set up Gender Management Sytems (GMSs) for ensuring that this happens.

Despite some gaps (many symptomatic of the piecemeal approach to gender mainstreaming in local government) the City of Johannesburg WDS offers important insights into how interrogating the work of local government from a gender perspective opens many possibilities for transformation at this level. This case study is referred to in some detail in making the case for more systematic approaches to gender mainstreaming in local government.

Conceptual issues

For the most part, approaches to gender at the local level have been a numbers game: getting women in. There has been little consideration of how such a presence can be leveraged to further the more important long term goal of transforming gender relations in society. As Professor Sheila Meintjes a political scientist at the University of Witwatersrand puts it: "The 50-50 is a scatter shot approach. What we need in local government are more feminists on board; to engage with them strategically."[96]

Beyond numbers

Referring to the process of developing Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) in local government in South Africa, Melanie Samson points to the inadequacy of assuming that as long as women

96. Civil society focus group discussion, 6 December 2006

participate in the process, obligations towards gender transformation will be met:

> Whilst ensuring gender equity amongst participants in IDP processes is an important goal in and of itself, it is incorrect to assume that women are inherently capable of identifying their practical and strategic interests, and that they will necessarily make interventions which promote the transformation of gender inequalities. If the equally important goal of ensuring that the content of the IDP is gender sensitive is to be achieved it is critical that councils develop the capacity of both community participants and officials to conduct gender analysis and utilise a gender framework when developing the IDP. Crucially, it must be a requirement that IDPs be assessed for their gender transformative potential.[97]

In Namibia, gender activist and former opposition Member of Parliament Rosa Namises is critical of NGOs for successful advocacy on numbers without sufficient attention to transformation:

> As NGOs we have reneged. We have lobbied to get women in and then not taken on the issues we want them to represent. We have not helped to build women to make gender equality happen on the ground; to get gender perspectives into simple issues like HIV and AIDS so that it is not just looked at as a health issue, but a reflection of gender power relations in society. Municipal health and waste are just seen as programmes; we don't ask how these impact on women and men and how women and men can impact on them.[98]

97. Samson, Melanie (2005) "Gender transformative developmental local government? Reinventing the Post Apartheid Local State within the context of Neo Liberalism." CODESRIA, p13.
98. Civil society focus group, Windhoek, Namibia, 27 October 2006

Approaches to gender

There are several different approaches to gender within the work of any organisation. These range from oblivion to emphasising the role of women to more gender aware approaches that place emphasis *both* on empowering women and changing the attitudes of men.

Gender blindness

In the gender blind approach, all human beings are viewed as being the same. This approach, by the far the most common, decrees that there is a universal set of laws and norms that should dictate the way society is organised. The approach overlooks the fact that the playing field is not level for women, and especially for certain categories of women. In South Africa and Namibia, the same argument can be made for race. Unless these discrepancies are recognised and built into policies and programmes, historical legacies continue to be perpetuated with little change.

Women specific

The women-specific approach views women as a special category, deserving special treatment in order to gain equality with men. There are two variants to the approach:

- The **welfare approach** sees women as an isolated category that needs physical inputs - food, fertility interventions (such as birth control) etc. These needs are related to women's constructed gender roles and their inferior status in society. Women are regarded as dependent on their male partners or family members or the state. This approach does not look at dismantling the system that oppresses women. If taken alone it will further disempower women since it ignores their intellectual and cultural capabilities, individual creativity and sense of responsibility.

- The **equality of opportunity approach** focuses on the creation of opportunities for women to enter spheres of authority, power and control. Fairness and equity are seen only as springboards with which to enter the male domain without necessarily changing the status quo in terms of power relations, dominant ideas and values. This approach wants women to engage in masculine activities in a masculine world. The approach tends towards numbers - getting women in - without much regard for what happens thereafter. It also assumes that women, by virtue of their sex, are gender aware or that they will automatically represent the interests of women. Gender transformation is assumed to occur "when women enter the fortress of power."[99]

Gender awareness

The gender aware approach does not look at women and men alone, but at the relationship between them; how societies are structured along gender lines, and the impact of these relations on the whole society. It explores the subordination of women and men, and examines how this relationship impacts on all aspects of life and society. The approach recognises differences in context, economic and political terrain. A gendered perspective is concerned with ensuring a gender analysis with regard to policies, programmes, planning strategies and evaluation. It looks at fundamentally transforming unequal power relations and changing society.[100]

Professor Meintjes explains this approach as follows: "If you don't deal with gender relationships and the power of men you will not make a shadow of difference. It does not help to have powerful women with a good understanding of what the problems are organised in a silo."[101]

99. "Gender and Local Government" (2005) FES Occasional Paper, p. 9
100. Ibid, p.10
101. Civil society focus group meeting Johannesburg, 6 December 2006.

Writing in *Beyond Numbers* Meintjes added:

> Gender mainstreaming can simply mean integrating women at the top without confronting the fundamental issues of gender equality. Political will within the political parties has to be fostered by feminist politicians who in turn must be both accountable to and supported by civil society lobbies. The transformation agenda of a cluster of feminist politicians is what ensures that policy and legislation transcend the mere presence of a critical mass of women. The danger is that these feminist politicians do not stay the course. The important factor seems to be the relationship between parliamentarians and the women's movement and NGOs committed to gender transformation. This calls for a commitment to ensuring that women's organisations continue to work together. The challenge is to ensure that this happens.[102]

Gender checklist for local government

The pitfalls of gender mainstreaming have led to some gender activists calling for a rethinking of this approach. It is argued that in paying lip service to gender mainstreaming, governments have effectively ensured that gender is everywhere and nowhere.

A painful upshot of gender mainstreaming for gender NGOs is that funding agencies are giving less money to these NGOs in favour of "mainstreaming" gender in the work of all NGOs. National plans and strategies for ensuring that departments take responsibility for gender are often sited by governments as evidence that gender has been "taken care of."

102. Meintjes, Sheila (2005) "South Africa: Beyond Numbers" in "Women in Parliament Beyond Numbers", IDEAS, p. 236.

However, the alternative route, of locating gender within specific structures like women's ministries, with token budget allocations and little influence over other line ministries, has led to gender being marginalised.

Mindful of the criticisms of gender mainstreaming, but in the absence of any credible alternative, this study takes the view that at local and every other level, all structures in society must strive to ensure that gender is integrated into their work. The study thus evaluates the extent to which gender mainstreaming is taking place in local government against a set of parameters that cover the broad spectrum of work in local government.

Gender policy framework

In theory, if gender were truly mainstreamed in an organisation, a stand-alone gender policy would not be necessary. However, until that is so, it is important for every organisation to have a gender policy.

Gender policies should be informed by such guiding documents as the Constitution, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development. The first test of how effective having a stand-alone policy is in driving gender mainstreaming is whether gender forms part of the mission, vision, code of ethics, guiding principles or any other documents that define and guide an organisation.

Institutional transformation

In a sphere of governance such as local government, institutions comprise elected and appointed officials. The elected officials constitute the governance structure. The extent to which this exhibits gender balance and sensitivity is one obvious measure of gender mainstreaming.

At an administrative level, gender mainstreaming concerns the range of administrative measures that need to be taken to ensure that hiring and promotion policies do not discriminate against women directly or indirectly; the creation of work environments that are family friendly and free of sexual harassment; as well as the re-orientation of the culture of an institution - its language and practices - to ones that encourage the best in both men and women.

Planning

Effective mainstreaming starts with the extent to which gender considerations are integrated into planning and the consultation processes that take place during planning. Gender policies that do not link to the main planning instruments, whatever these may be in each country, are not likely to be taken seriously in the work of the organisation.

Programmes and projects

The most important test of gender mainstreaming is the extent to which gender awareness is reflected in the deliverables of the organisation. At a programmatic level this is reflected in the selection of programme areas. Because women have been historically disadvantaged, one approach is to ensure that the specific needs of women are addressed through programmes specifically targeted at women.

However, this should not be at the expense of ensuring that women benefit equally from existing projects, or indeed that women benefit more, as a way of redressing the existing inequalities.

Gender management system

Across the globe, organisations have found it necessary to put in place what the Commonwealth Secretariat refers to as a Gender Management System (GMS) for ensuring that gender mainstreaming takes place. This consists of:

- **Structures:** Institutional mechanisms are critical for ensuring that gender mainstreaming takes place. Care must be taken to ensure that these structures are not marginalised, and that they are not regarded as just pertaining to human resource or internal institutional issues, but extend to the policymaking, planning and implementation arms of the institution. The responsibility for gender mainstreaming must be shared by all, and especially driven from the senior management level while ensuring that specific responsibility and expertise are vested in a Gender Unit (GU) or (in smaller organisations) a Gender Focal Point (GFP) empowered to perform a cross cutting function.

- **Monitoring and evaluation:** The only way to measure the gendered impact of policies, laws and service delivery is by having gender indicators as part of the monitoring and evaluation system. These, in turn, can only be meaningful if the organisation keeps regular, accurate and updated gender disaggregated statistics. These statistics must go beyond how many men and women are employed by the organisation (usually the most readily available statistics in any organisation) to gender disaggregated data for beneficiaries.

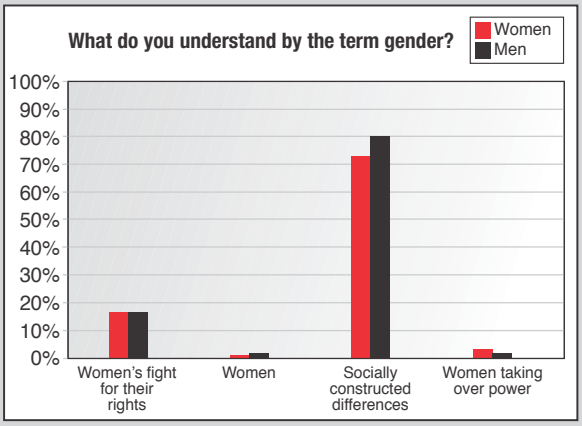
- **Gender budgeting:** Another useful measure in gender mainstreaming is resource allocation. The easiest gender related statistic to pick out in any budget is resources specifically targeted at projects for women. However, such resources usually constitute only a tiny portion of the overall budget (often not more than five percent). Far more revealing is the extent to which women benefit equally from the resources allocated to mainstream projects and the extent to which these projects help to redress gender imbalances, for example through promoting access by women to non-traditional areas of work. Gender budgeting therefore refers not only to expenditures earmarked for women, but also to an analysis of the entire budget from a gender perspective.

- **Capacity building**: While the GFP and GU need to have in-depth gender analysis skills, it is important that all members of the organisation, have the capacity and skills to identify, recognise and address gender issues in their work, and in the workplace. Ideally, such training should not be once off, and should form part of the organisation's overall transformation agenda.

Understanding of gender in local government

Councillors interviewed in this study displayed a good understanding of the meaning of the term gender and many of them said that they knew of instruments such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (especially the latter two). Most of the councillors also knew about national gender policies but few could identify policies at local level (largely because these still do not exist; see next section). It should be noted however that when asked further about the provisions of these instruments many councillors could not elaborate, suggesting that even though they may be aware of the instruments they have not really engaged with them.

What the councillors said:



Councillors were asked to choose which of four definitions of gender they found the most accurate: women fight for their rights; women; socially constructed differences between women and men and women taking over power.

Overall 76 percent of all councillors chose the conventionally accepted definition of gender (socially constructed differences between women and men) but more men (79 percent) than women (73 percent) chose the correct response. The second most common response was "women's fight for their rights" with 16 percent women and men choosing this as the meaning of gender.

The findings are similar to those in *Ringing up the Changes* that covered women and men in local and national politics as well as in the executive with 76 percent men and 71 percent women choosing the conventionally accepted definition. The fact that three years after this study there is a higher proportion of politicians that chose this definition underscores the extent of awareness raising that continues to take place in the region. The relatively high degree of awareness of what is meant by gender in the second study that focused purely on local government is encouraging as it shows that such awareness is not only at national level.

Table 29: Country differences in understanding the meaning of gender

Meaning	Lesotho	Mauritius	Namibia	South Africa
Women's fight for their rights	17%	33%	22%	16%
Women	1%	4%	2%	2%
Socially constructed differences	81%	54%	71%	79%
Women taking over power	1%	9%	5%	3%

Table 29 which illustrates the country differences shows that councillors in Mauritius showed the lowest levels of understanding the term gender with only 54 percent of councillors choosing the correct response but marginally more women (54 percent) than men (53 percent) chose correctly. 33 percent of councillors (32 percent women and 35 percent men) in Mauritius believed that gender means women's fight for their rights and nine percent (12 percent women and eight percent men) chose the option women taking over power.

Councillors in Lesotho had the strongest understanding of gender with 81 percent of

councillors choosing the correct meaning followed by South African councillors (79 percent) and then Namibian councillors (71 percent).

On the ground, while the majority of councillors understood the meaning of gender there appeared to still be a big perception that gender is a "woman's issue". Many of the woman councillors did not see themselves as part of the women's movement.

In South Africa the civil society focus group in eThekwini maintained that councillors do not take up gender issues and that gender doesn't feature in the budget. "We were at a workshop to come up with a provincial strategy on gender machinery and 99 percent of the people didn't understand gender issues, they don't even have it in their strategic planning," one of the participants observed. "What was needed as a starting point was to do gender education, on the basics like what is gender? Why gender mainstreaming? And training needs to happen with both women and men."

Policies and strategies

In some quarters, the question "what is gender mainstreaming?" may sound like old hat. In local government it is relatively new. While the concept has been flagged regularly in development circles at national level, there are very few policies or instruments that directly address the issue at local level. This section examines the policy framework in which gender mainstreaming takes place at local level through a review of what instruments exist at international, regional and national level that refer directly to gender mainstreaming at local level.

International and regional provisions

Among the international and regional instruments, there is only one that could be found in this research that has a direct bearing on local government. This is the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government which states that:

Women have the right to equal access to the services of local government, as well as the right to be treated equally in these services and to be able to influence the initiation, development, management and monitoring of services. The provision of services such as education, welfare, and other social services by local governments should aim to see women and men equally responsible for matters related to both the family and to public life, and avoid perpetuating stereotypes of women and men.

Women and men have the equal right to sound environmental living conditions, housing, water distribution and sanitation facilities, as well as to affordable public transportation. Women's needs and living conditions must be made visible and taken into account at all times in planning.

Women have the right to equal access to the territory and geographical space of local governments, ranging from the right to own land, to the right to move freely and without fear in public spaces and on public transport.

Local government has a role to play in ensuring the reproductive rights of women and the rights of women to freedom from domestic violence and other forms of physical, psychological, and sexual violence and abuse.

Gender strategies at country level

National gender policies in the case study countries made scant or no reference to local government. In Lesotho, Director in the Ministry of Gender Matau Futho Letsatsi noted that while there had been considerable mobilisation around the 30 percent quota for women there is no strategy for gender mainstreaming in local government and this does

not feature in the national gender policy. "There is a difference in numbers (of women in local government) but not much is going on. To make a difference women's voices must be heard. There must be a strategy. Councillors have not really started; they have not yet begun."

Moliehi Matabane, Permanent Secretary in the Lesotho Ministry of Local Government added that gender mainstreaming is "something that needs to be added. We need to work with the Ministry of Gender. There needs to be a gender agenda. The ministry should design a programme that addresses these issues at a local level."

In Mauritius, Paragraph 211 of The Government Programme 2005-2010 reads "It is essential to mainstream gender in all Government's programmes and policies." Paragraph 212 adds "government will sustain its actions towards the social, economic and political empowerment of women."

But Minister of Women Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare Indira Seebun notes that "there is no provision for gender in the Local Government Act. This is a big drawback that must be addressed urgently. We must know what the role of women in local government is."

In Namibia, at national level there has been a gender policy since 1997 accompanied by a national action plan. 81 percent of women and 87 percent male councillors in Namibia said they knew about this policy. But the policy makes no specific reference to local government. Maureen Kambala, acting CEO of the Association of Local Authorities of Namibia (ALAN) said that the organisation currently does not have a gender policy but that they are in the process of setting up a women's caucus which will be a platform where women can share their experiences. At the time of the interview Kambala said that they were working in partnership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to establish a plan of action and objectives.

The South African National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality envisages gender units in local government structures coordinated by the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) based in the Office of the President. This office also coordinates gender units in the offices of the premiers (provincial government leaders) and in practise has provided little direction to gender mainstreaming at local level. The policy makes reference to the fact that as the "hosting" ministry for local government, the Department of Provincial Affairs and Local Government (DPLG) should be playing an important role in driving gender mainstreaming. But the policy recognises that to the extent there has been any such impetus, it has come from the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

Such impetus, civil society organisations say, has "moved in ebbs and flows" as different champions of gender mainstreaming have come and gone within the association. Lack of coordination between SALGA and the DPLG has also been a deterrent. Both came up with frameworks for a gender policy in local government leading to confusion among councils as to which to follow. Neither has been officially published or distributed.

Gender policies at council level

At council level, researchers found that in most countries except South Africa there has not been any serious effort to either develop a gender policy or strategy in the absence of guidance either from national gender structures or those responsible for local government.

None of the local authorities visited in Namibia had gender strategies or policies. From discussions with

the CEO's of these councils it was evident that they had not applied their minds to the issue. To the extent gender had been considered at all this was seen as referring to institutional transformation rather than mainstreaming gender in service delivery. In response to whether they had gender policies, most councils said that they didn't but that gender issues were dealt with under the Employment Equity Act which they all said they complied with. Some had an Affirmative Action policy but ironically, none of the CEO's interviewed was a woman.

In Rehoboth, Deputy Mayor Cecilia McNab Sherally said the council had no gender desk or policy, "but we should have one." Mayor of Maseru Malijane Morahanye added: "we do not have a gender policy, but we would like to have one."

The research found that South Africa was the only country where some progress has been made in developing gender policies and even here the progress differs from council to council.

Table 30: Gender policies and plans in South Africa's councils

Province/ Council	Policy/Plan		Driver	Status	Comments
	Yes	No			
Eastern Cape					
Ukhahlamba		X	SPU		Women Economic Empowerment Development Plan - in draft format
Buffalo City		X			
Nelson Mandela		X			
Free State					
Kopanong		X			Women councillors are working towards a gender desk being implemented - no timeframes given
Masilonyane		X			
Motheo		X			Gender is addressed by a special programmes committee, which is chaired by the Mayor who is a woman
Gauteng					
Tshwane		X			
COJ	✓		Community development	Draft	Women development strategy being aligned with gender policy
Lesedi	✓		SPU	Rewriting	
KZN					
Endumeni		X			
Umzinyathi		X			
Msunduzi	✓		SPU/ Mayors office	Draft	
eThekwini	✓		Community participation and action support department - Office of Gender		There is a gender policy framework. They also have a gender programme with five focal areas

Province/ Council	Policy/Plan		Driver	Status	Comments
	Yes	No			
Limpopo					
Bela Bela		X			A gender desk is in the process of being established
Mookgopong		X			
Greater Sekhukhune		X			A gender desk has been recently established
Mpumalanga					
Mbombela		X			
Umjindi		X			
Emakhazeni		X			
North West					
Merafong City		X			A gender task team has been established
Southern District		X			
Lekwa-Teemane		X			
Northern Cape					
Umsobomvu		X			
Sol Plaatjie		X	Gender Manager		In the process of working on a gender strategic plan and policy. They have a Sexual Harassment policy awaiting approval from council
Frances Baard		X	Social development office dealing with gender and children		
Western Cape					
Breede Valley		X			Breede Valley gender forum to be re launched and work done on a gender policy to be scrutinised by the public
Cape Winelands	✓		SPU	Draft	The municipality is developing a gender equity strategy and they have a draft gender policy which is being circulated amongst senior staff and councillors.
City of Cape Town	✓			Draft	The municipality has a proposed Women empowerment and gender equity policy that is awaiting approval.

SPU - Special programmes unit / SPO - Special programmes officer

Table 30 shows that of the 27 councils visited only six (22 percent) had some form of gender policy or strategy. A further eight (30 percent) councils showed some progress towards developing gender strategies with the establishment of gender desks or committees. As the examples that follow show, where there has been progress towards developing gender policies and strategies at council level, these have invariably been driven by "champions" in the council with the support of NGOs or technical experts. While they have not been guided by an overarching gender policy framework for local government, councils have made every effort to link their policies to national instruments and to draw on best practise in gender mainstreaming; including ensuring a concern both with internal institutional issues as well as external delivery concerns.



Msunduzi devises a gender strategy
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Msunduzi Council in KwaZulu Natal has made strides towards developing and implementing a gender policy and strategy thanks to the impetus provided by its mayor Zanele Hlatswayo and former gender coordinator Lulu Malanda. This council approached Gender Links (GL) for assistance in developing a policy and strategy following the Gender, Communications and Local Government pilot project with the City of Johannesburg (see Case study seven)

Among the objectives of the strategy are to:

- Ensure that all programmes that are implemented at municipality level are gender sensitive;
- Build capacity and skills development programmes biased towards women;
- Ensure integration of gender programmes in all three spheres of government: local, provincial and national.
- Create a knowledge base of the heritage; lessons learned; promising practices and experiences.
- Monitor and evaluate the status of women in the municipality.
- Conduct ongoing research relevant to the needs of women.

Key strategic areas covered in the strategy and action plan include the creation of a gender management system; governance; economic growth and development; infrastructure; social services and development as well as institutional transformation. The eThekwini Municipality is unique in having commissioned a comprehensive gender audit of the area served by this municipal council that includes Durban and its environs. This involved:

- A gender analysis of the municipal organisation itself including employment equity reports and interviews with municipal officials.
- A gender analysis of the eThekwini metropolitan area including a review of the 1996 and 2001 census data; a review of the 2004 Quality of Life Survey and interviews with municipal officials and non-governmental organisations as well as
- A summary of the key gender issues in the municipal organisation and across the metropolitan area.

Making a link between the council and the South African National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality the eThekwini policy has used this audit to develop a gender policy framework with five focal areas:

- Occupational and community capacity building;

- Gender machinery project;
- Institutional development;
- Community action support; and
- Social integration.

The Sol Plaatjie municipality in the Northern Cape province is another example of how a municipality has taken the bull by the horns and is developing a gender strategy. Gender manager Kele Sebusi is in the process of developing a gender strategy and action plan following experience of developing a sexual harassment policy (see institutional change) and prompted by burning issues are around employment equity. She said that she had been working closely with the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) but has not had much help from SALGA and the OSW. She added that there is a gender forum in the province but that it is not inclusive as it involves mostly the provincial departments. The department has a budget to start running programmes once the strategic plan has been finalised. She added that political will is essential to the success of any project.



Speaker of Sol Plaatje Municipality, Monica Thole *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

The Cape Winelands District Council has a special programmes unit for gender. This is chaired by a male councillor. The municipality is developing a gender equity strategy and they have a draft gender policy. At the time of writing this it was being circulated amongst senior staff and councillors. There is a lot of introspection within the council about the promotion of women. Only women councillors (and the male chair) are involved in this process.

The City of Cape Town Metro has a proposed Women Empowerment and Gender Equity Policy that is awaiting approval. The policy has been in the pipeline since 2003 with public engagement with relevant civil society structures, councillors, officials, NGO's and academia. Following the presentation of the second draft to the then mayoral committee for comment in 2004 the policy went up on the internet for comment and the council organised 20 public participation workshops in September 2004. In October 2004 the council held 15 neighbourhood workshops and information sessions. The process of consolidating the third draft started in August 2005. After further consultations with women the consolidated policy was presented to the Social Development Portfolio Committee for consideration and referral to the executive committee for approval and to Council for endorsement.

Gender mainstreaming in the work of councils

How are policies translating into practise? Is there a difference between councils that have policies and those that do not? This section examines how gender is being taken account of in the work of councils.

Institutional transformation

Institutions are a microcosm of society and therefore

a good barometer of how gender is being taken into account in the work place. If councils are to champion gender equality, they need to begin at home. Significantly, many councillors interviewed understood a gender policy to be synonymous with having an employment equity policy. Yet this too is a weak area of practise.

Women and men in the workplace

Work place statistics are extremely difficult to obtain in local government. But available evidence suggests that the gender balance in council administrations is worse than in elected structures. In South Africa, a gender audit conducted by SALGA in 2004 showed that on average men comprised 92 percent of municipal managers.[103]

In eThekwini, one of the few councils for which statistics could be obtained, women constitute only 21 percent of the overall staff. Women constitute only 13 percent of directors and managerial positions, and just over six percent in executive management. A slightly higher proportion of women (22 percent)

are employed in middle management. Women also only constitute 11 percent of basic skilled workers, a large area of employment in any council, comprising heavy manual labour, normally associated with men. These statistics suggest that women are not only under represented in the top but also in the bottom rungs of local councils.

Statistics for Msunduzi reflect as similar pattern. Overall, women constitute 21 percent of the 3207 employees of the Council. Women constitute 16 percent of senior managers compared to a target of 28 percent. Women are most numerous in the professional category (48 percent) and as clerks (49 percent). They are also scantily represented in the lower rungs of plant and machine and elementary occupations.

Gender manager of the Sol Plaatjie municipality in the Northern Cape Kele Sebusi considers that her most important role is sitting on the appointments committee where she works closely with the equity manager. She is starting to be recognised and is able to make recommendations.

In Namibia, no overall figures could be obtained for women and men in the administration of local government. In regional councils, women constitute on average 33 percent of managers. But seven out of 13 regions have less than 30 percent women at management level while Caprivi has no women in management at all.[104]

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the situation at local level is even worse. The Tsumeb Council has seven councillors only one of whom is a woman (see Chapter six). The municipality does not have a gender policy but is guided by employment equity provisions in Namibian law. The municipality

Affirmative Action Report 2003 records that out of 157 staff, 22 (or only 14 percent) were women. There were no women at all in the top three categories of Executive Director, Senior Management, and Middle Management. Women only featured in the fourth tier of Specialised/Skilled/Senior Supervisory. They were most numerous in the casual/temporary and seasonal work categories.

In Keetmanshoop, Namibia there is only one woman out of the total senior management team of 14 and she is in the third tier (accountant, revenue and credit control). In an interview (see Box 23) Councillor Fiina Elago (also the only woman in a council of

103. SALGA Gender Audit Report (2004) p. 15

104. "Statistics on men and women in management positions in the Public Service on Namibia", (2006) Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

seven) cited the dearth of women managers as a serious indictment of the council.

Institutional culture

Institutional culture is another useful barometer of gender mainstreaming. Does the way in which institutions work change as a result of having a greater proportion of women?

Meeting times and lengths vary from council to council but in most instances they take place during work hours which shows that some cognisance is being taken of the fact that many councillors have family responsibilities (see Chapter five).

This also shows that some progress has been made since 2004 when councillors interviewed for Ringing up the changes complained about meeting times being late in the afternoon and going on into the evening.[105] In Namibia, however, after hours meeting times tend to suit councillors better because most of them have other full-time jobs.

Only one council visited had been grappling with introducing a sexual harassment policy, despite several accounts of why such a drive is critical. Kele

Sebusi of the Plaatjie municipality in the Northern Cape said the council had developed a sexual harassment policy (although this had not been approved by Council at the time of the visit) due to the number of cases, both external and internal that had been received.

She said that the process had involved consultative meetings to get input and comments from staff. While the general response has been positive some male managers had been resistant as they see this as a tool that will be used against them. Sebusi expressed concerned about buy-in form the politicians. She said that she would be working on a gender policy once the sexual harassment policy has been finalised.

Planning and participation

In all the case study countries, researchers found little evidence of gender being taken into account in planning. In Lesotho, councils are only just beginning to develop business plans. In Mauritius and Namibia, planning processes are in place but there is no evidence of these being informed by gender considerations.

In South Africa there has been much talk about ensuring the gender is integrated into the Integrated Development Plans (IDP's). But a study conducted by the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) showed that this has not happened in reality.

For a start, the study showed that local government in general is grappling with the challenge of shifting from pure service provision (including addressing basic needs of water and health services) to transforming and redistributing service delivery equitably to meet the strategic needs of women and men.

The analysis showed that most of the IDPs do not comply with the requirement to disaggregate the local population by gender. None of the priority needs identified in IDPs were differentiated by social categories, including gender.[106]

A key task of local government is to interact with communities and obtain their input into such plans. Around the region researchers observed such meetings taking place (see for example the City of Windhoek meeting with women in Chapter eight). Women participated in many of the public meetings.

105. Lowe Morna, C. edited, (2004) Ringing up the Changes, Gender in Southern African politics, p102.

106. "Gender Equality in Local Governance" (2006), Commission on Gender Equality p.12

Researchers also observed that slightly more women than men came to observe council meetings, underscoring the interest by women in communities in the work of local government.

A question that arises however is to what extent women in communities actually have an effective voice in the work of local government.

The CGE study on IDPs found that while most authorities indicated that women had been consulted, the plans did not reflect needs prioritised by women.

The study concluded that "generally municipalities addressed gender issues by default (focusing on issues that were conventionally assumed to have an impact on women) instead of strategy (ensuring that priorities addressed what women identified as needs and concerns).

In South Africa a key mechanism for ensuring public participation are the ward committees that form part of statutory requirements (see Chapter four). The Municipal Structures Act requires that women be adequately represented on ward committees.

However it is not clear whether women are expected to be represented on these committees as an interest group in their own right, or that half of those put forward by other interest groups (e.g. business) should be women. The latter obviously poses some problems as it could be seen to limit the choice of candidate by the various interest group.

This ambivalence has never quite been resolved, with the result that ward committees have not been monitored for compliance with the requirements of the Act as regards gender representation. Efforts to obtain statistics on the composition of ward committees proved unsuccessful as some of these were still being constituted at the time of the study soon after the 2006 elections.

The studies that do exist on ward committees suggest that these committees are not functioning well; often suffering from a lack of commitment, financial and capacity constraints.[107] Outreach materials used by local government (see Box 47) are often gender blind or insensitive.

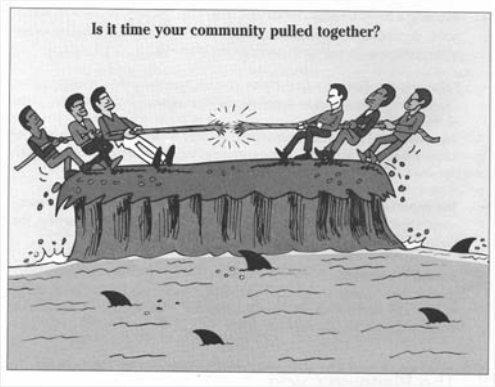
107. "Municipal ward committees, democracy and the social contract" (2003) DPLG.



Planning for the future

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Box 47: A Guide to Economic Development with no women



Six men on either side of a tug of war are depicted in a publication to make the point that communities may be pulling in different directions. But not a single image in the Handbook for Councillors and Officials on The Local Authorities Role in Economic Development is of a woman, suggesting that women are neither regarded as part of the problem nor of the solution. In the mind of the authors they simply do not exist.

The gender blindness that plagues local government generally reflects in publications such as this. On the face of it, the publication – sponsored by Barlow Limited, the National Business Initiative for Growth, Development and Democracy and a US-based NGO, the International Republican Institute – makes valid points about the need for local government to become an engine for economic growth and development at local level.

But the photographs of entrepreneurs and customers on the cover are all men. The illustration of a municipality "open for business" depicts only male construction workers outside. The person drowning in red tape is a man. The icon for a tool is a spanner. The town clerk and finance manager trying to figure it all out are men.

In short, it is as through women have no role to play in Local Economic Development (Led). Images and texts such as this send out subliminal messages that women don't exist. They do little to encourage the view that says if women are missing they need to be "led" into the economic arena through proactive measures.

By laws and regulations

Councils generate many by-laws and regulations. While there have been countless gender audits of laws passed by parliaments, researchers could not find any evidence of gender audits of by- laws and regulations passed by audits.

The case study below from Mauritius, on how a council has to withdraw sexist adverts from dustbins, provides fascinating insight into why gender audits of by-laws and regulations are long overdue



Council bi-laws affect every day life

Photo: Susan Tolmay

CASE STUDY EIGHT

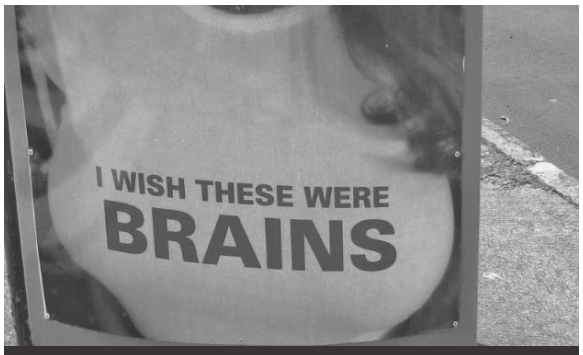
Looking at dustbins through a gender lens

This case study examines how local government can have an impact if it starts to look at policies through a gender lens.

Municipal councils in Mauritius found themselves under the spotlight when gender activists threw into question laws dating back to 1930.

In April 2006 the non governmental organisation Media Watch Organisation-Gender and Media Southern Africa Network (MWO-GEMSA) became aware of sexist advertisements on dustbins all over Mauritian towns. The T shirt advertisement had the words "I wish these were brains" printed across the breasts of a woman. "What can be more insulting to women than saying that their brains should be found in their breasts?" asked Loga Virahsawmy, Chairperson of MWO-GEMSA. The organisation wrote to the Sex Discrimination Division and the Minister of Local Government.





Mauritius advert campaign

Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

What transpired was that the legislation regarding the regulation of advertisements is outdated and there is no reference to sexist advertisements. The local government legislation is also silent on the issue.

The Advertisement Regulation Act dates back to 1930 and the interpretation of advertisement "includes any structure or apparatus erected or intended only for the display of advertisements" while Section 3 (1) stipulates that "The Authority may make regulations for regulating, restricting, or preventing within its own area the exhibition of advertisements in such places and in such manner, or by such means as to disfigure or injuriously affect:

(a) The view of the rural scenery.
(b) The amenities of any historic or public building or monument.
(c) The natural beauty of landscape."

Subsidiary legislation to this Act dates back to 1952 and it describes advertisement as "display in public place or to the public view of any announcement and includes any structure or apparatus erected or intended for the display of advertisements."

No mention is made of advertisements in the Town and Country Planning Act that dates back to 1954 while Section 22 and 23 of the Road Act of 2003 mentions "Control of Advertisements" and "Removal or alteration of advertisements". Both Sections mention display of advertisements and compliance with the law but the Act is silent on sexist advertisements.

More recently, in April 2005 the Commissioner of Police issued a police communiqué regarding cases that it had received on illegal posters. The Commissioner of Police drew the attention of the public to the provisions of the Criminal Code Act 202 on publication of materials without the description of the author and the Local Government Act regarding fees, dues and other charges. Again no mention was made of sexist advertisements. Prior to this case, in March 2005 the media had reported on measures taken by the Municipal Council of Port Louis regarding bill boards and increase of taxes. Again no mention was made of sexist advertisements.

However, the Municipal Council of Port Louis has guidelines for advertisements and paragraph 6 (4) stipulates that "Advertisements considered as offensive to public morality, religious or political or diplomatic susceptibilities, or bearing political slogans, or which is liable to cause breakdown in law and order, or of pornographic nature or considered indecent or sexist will not be permitted". And yet a sexist advertisement placed on waste bins throughout Mauritius and in front of the Municipal Council of Port Louis remained unnoticed by both female and male councillors!

The Town Clerk of the Municipal Council of Port Louis responded promptly to the Chair of MWO saying that "the matter is being brought before the appropriate committee to review the policy concerning advertisements to be affixed in public places." In the mean time the police flying squad went all over Mauritius removing the advertisements.

On 26 May 2005 the District Council of Grand Port Savanne called a meeting to discuss the complaint by MWO and to discuss how to exercise control on advertisements. The meeting made reference to the Regulations which date back to 1930 and which cover only environmental and aesthetical impacts. The police representative highlighted section 86 of the Criminal code "dealing with obscene matters" which he said could be sent to the State Law Office for legal interpretation in relation to sexist publications.

The deputy town clerk of the Municipality of Port Louis who was also present at the meeting made reference to the various provisions under section 103 and 104 of the Local government Act on "obligation to take out Municipal licence" and "application for licences" which regulates the granting of permits which could be used as guideline. No female councillor or female member of staff attended this meeting.

The Committee agreed that the Road Development Authority, the Local Authorities and the Commissioner of Police should work on guidelines.

On 17 June 2005 the Municipal Council of Port Louis called a meeting of all stakeholders to discuss the issue of advertisements. The Deputy Town Clerk pointed out that according to the Local Government Act 2003 under section (103) and (104), for any development, there is an obligation to take out a Municipal Licence. Therefore since a bill board is considered to be a development the council would have the final say on any

advertisement before it is affixed. The Road Development Authority (RDA) was also represented in this meeting. During the deliberations parties agreed that the RDA regulations currently being worked on should have the views of the various authorities.

The Municipal Council of Port Louis decided on the following immediate course of action:

- On receipt of a major complaint, the Local Authority concerned would in practice request the promoters to remove the advertisement.
- The committee agreed to the proposed setting of a flying squad at the level of each authority to tackle complaints pertaining to advertisements.
- It was also agreed that pending new regulations, the issue of complaints on the content of advertisements would have to be handled by way of discussions with those placing the advertisement.

Although the presence of women councillors did not impact on the final outcome, councillors responded to an outcry by women on the ground that forced them to examine a host of rules and procedures, as well as remove an offensive advertisement.

Gender specific projects

Gender mainstreaming should not be a case of a few isolated projects for women. However, when any institution starts to take gender seriously, an obvious indicator of this is the extent to which it adopts at least a few high profile "flagship" projects that demonstrate a commitment to gender equality.

For example, when a council starts to see its work through a gender lens, safety and security are no longer be just a general concern but one that hones in on gender violence as one of the worst forms of insecurity, not to mention violation of rights, in any locality. Such a council will begin to look at roads, street lights, parks, cemeteries and a host of services in a new light: contributing to the rights of women.

In Johannesburg when the City introduced Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) to combat petty crime in the city centre, the cameras began to pick up instances of attempted rape in dark alleys of the City. Those monitoring the TV alerted Johannesburg Central Police (a national competence).

But instances such as this coupled with the strong presence of women in the Council prompted the city to develop a comprehensive plan for ending gender violence as part of its Women Development Strategy (see Case study nine).

As described in Box 48, Councils around the Gauteng province have similarly taken up the challenge of giving local force to national efforts to end gender violence.



Nomatyala Hangana
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Box 48: SALGA takes up the 365 day campaign

You would imagine that the one time women and children might be safe is when they go to the cemetery to pay their respects to loved ones long departed.

Not in Johannesburg and its environs, where a conference held during the Sixteen Days of Activism on Gender Violence in 2006 heard that cemeteries had become the latest hot spot of criminals preying on vulnerable visitors, the majority of whom are women and children. Yet, the conference heard, it has not been the practise of councils to provide the security in cemeteries as is the case in parks.

One good reason participants to the conference, organised by the Gauteng province chapter of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) agreed, why councils should join the campaign to stretch the Sixteen Days of Activism to a year-long or 365 day campaign. The meeting, convened in partnership with the Department of Water Affairs (DWAF) GL and GEMSA, was the first initiative by local government after a "365 days of action to end gender violence" conference in May to discuss how to localise the proposed National Action Plan to End Gender Violence.

Issues covered included safety in public places like parks, cemeteries and taxi ranks; information on services available in communities; what local government can do to support places of safety and provide secondary housing for women forced to leave their homes. The over 200 delegates from the 14 councils also debated how the Take Back the Night campaign that is gaining ground around the globe can be taken into communities and sustained on a year long basis through initiatives to claim back spaces that have become unsafe.

The link between gender violence and HIV/AIDS, and how councils can mount awareness campaigns on the need for survivors of sexual assault to avail themselves of Post Exposure Prophylaxis within 72 hours of the ordeal featured prominently in the discussions. Delegates also debated how existing local government facilities could be upgraded to "one stop" centres for survivors of sexual assault to ensure that they receive comprehensive services under one roof

Drawing up action plans that covered a range of issues from services to campaigns, the councils mapped out how key dates in the calendar throughout the year can be used to raise awareness on the need to end gender violence. Deputy Minister of Local Government Nomatyala Hangana, who is also champion of the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign in government, closed the conference with a call to all local councils to develop action plans for ending gender violence. .

Gender in all programmes

Systematic efforts to mainstream gender into all programmes remain weak. The most extensive such effort that could be found in this research concerned the City of Johannesburg WDS.

CASE STUDY NINE

Jo'burg women demand a piece of the action

The innovative Gender, Communications and Local Government Project (Case Study seven) undertaken by the City of Johannesburg in partnership with Gender Links had a significant output: a draft gender policy. What the policy lacked was an action plan and buy-in from the City administration that would have to make things happen.

The subsequent process to develop a Women Development Strategy (WDS) throughout most of 2006 – including how women can position themselves to benefit from Soccer 2010 - offered fascinating insight into both the possibilities and challenges of gender mainstreaming at the local level.



Consulting on the WDS

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Background

The City of Johannesburg or *Egoli* (City of Gold) as it is often called is at once an exciting metropolitan (the largest in sub Saharan Africa) and a frightening place to be, especially for women. Crime has made Jo'burg notorious throughout the world as 'unsafe'. It is a perception that affects everyone's lives. Lack of policing, however, affects mostly those who live in poor communities – where street violence and intimate family violence are rife. The draft Gender Policy for the City of Johanesburg sets out a number of key gender issues for the City:

Environmental Health Services particularly affect women, who do most of the cooking and cleaning in the home and who also provide a great deal of the informal sector food provision across the city.

Increases in the number of households with flush toilets have been accompanied by increases in the absolute number of households with less than adequate sanitation facilities such as pit latrines and bucket latrines. Thus the proportion of households with access to flush toilets as decreased from 87 percent to 82 percent.

Although there are an additional 230 000 households with access to electricity for lighting, the proportion of houses have decreased slightly from 86 to 85 percent of all households between 1996 and 2001.

According to the 2001 census, one in five residents of the City live in informal settlements, with very few women owning their houses. Hostels present a particular challenge and gender dimensions. A study commissioned by the City showed that showers and toilets are often only accessible to men. Women were forced to use the bushes, which is both degrading and added to their vulnerability. The women also complained about lack of

refuse removal and the fact that blocked sewerage pipes had not been repaired for months.

Electricity is only profitable for the municipality if consumers pay their bills. This has led to some informal settlements not being electrified. The use of pre-payment metres has helped to resolve the problem, but sometimes consumers find ways of bypassing the metres. Studies show that the level of skill required for this means that the culprits are often not the poorest or least educated citizens. In general, electricity take up has not been as high as expected because it is still an expensive form of energy for the poorest sectors of society.

The multiple roles of women mean they must often take several short trips in a day, often on routes that are poorly serviced and dangerous. Women often require travel outside peak hours and to alternative destinations than men. For example domestic workers need to get to the suburbs at the very moment that men need to get to the City for work.

African women and men constitute 86 percent of those going on foot to work or school, compared to 62 percent of white women and men driving a private car to work or school. More African women use public transport bus and train than private transport as either a driver or passenger. One in three residents walk; one in four residents use mini buses; one in five drives; one in eight is a passenger; one in ten uses a bus or train. Men outnumber women in all income categories, except those earning R1 800 ($250) per month.

Box 49: Some women in Johannesburg are more vulnerable than others

Certain categories of women are particularly vulnerable. For example:

- *Domestic workers* constitute nine percent of the city work force. The difference in power relations and spatial distribution leaves domestic workers vulnerable especially where they depend on the employer for accommodation. As a result exploitation and abuse including sexual are common as is unfair dismissal. They have few if any social networks and mobility is circumscribed.

- *The informal sector*: A study among 466 women traders in Johannesburg found that the informal trading sector in the City attracts mainly young women who are unable to find permanent employment in the formal sector after leaving school.

- *Migrant women and refugees*: The 2001 censes recorded almost 90 000 foreign women living in the City of Johannesburg, or six percent of the women in the City. These are mostly from SADC countries. Those who are refugees or do not have a legal status face a myriad of problems: access to housing and shelter, access to employment; access to services like health, education and social/ community services

Source: Draft Gender Policy, City of Johannesburg

As Speaker of the City of Johannesburg, Nandi Mayathula-Khoza (see beginning of this chapter) had given her support to the councillor capacity building project that led to a gender policy. From her new vantage point in the executive as MMC responsible for Community Development after the 2006 elections, Mayathula-Khoza looked for an opening to take the process forward. She found this in the human development strategy of her broad-based portfolio that among others required the development of a Women Development Strategy.

"Already, the IDP included a women's health and a women's safety plan. I read and identified other areas that needed to be part of the strategy, like women's economic empowerment. We can't eradicate poverty and violence if women are not economically empowered. I retrieved all the documents I could find; the Women's Dialogues held while I was Speaker; the draft gender policy etc and asked my staff to put together a consolidated implementation plan; go back and consult with women and then get the plan approved."

Conceptual issues

Early in the process, GL raised concerns about taking the "women development" as opposed to the "gender and development" route. At a practical level, this is what had been mandated.

"I am responsible for human development, and women's development is part of that," Mayathula Khoza noted. "A comprehensive gender plan would need to include corporate services and we still have to work with them in broadening this plan."

At a more conceptual level in the engagements that followed the debate raised an important reality at local level: an inherent concern that women's empowerment might get lost in a more gendered approach. When one considers the extent of disadvantage of women at local as compared to national level, this concern makes sense. It served as a word of caution against taking too dogmatic an approach in seeking to support local level efforts to develop gender strategies.

Process

The process placed a heavy emphasis on empowering women in the community to make their voices heard. Over the month of August (Women's month in South Africa) Councillor Mayathula Khoza and her staff convened consultative workshops with women in all the eight regions of Johannesburg.

The workshops aimed to:

- Consult with women in all of the regions of the City of Joburg regarding the women and development strategy developed by the Department of Community Development;
- Incorporate the suggestions made by the women at each workshop into a region specific action plan identifying key objectives, actions, responsibility and timeframes.

At these sessions Mayathula-Khoza delivered the opening address and a representative from City of Joburg, usually the Regional Manager gave a presentation of the Draft Women Development Strategy highlighting the main features.

Following the presentations the women discussed actions to be taken in the following thematic areas: Economic development; Health; HIV and AIDS; Public Safety; the Environment; Arts and Culture; Sports; Transport; Housing; Infrastructure and services; World Cup 2010 as well as institutional arrangements.

Each group proposed an action plan including the objectives, actions to be taken, responsibility for the actions and timeframes. GL facilitators incorporated these suggestions into a planning framework using as its spring board the city's Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

Although many of the areas touched on fall directly under Community Development some (like transport and housing) fall under other departments or the quasi autonomous municipal entities like City Power, Johannesburg Water, Johannesburg Road Agency etc.

Using her vantage point as chair of the Human Development Committee that brings together almost all the City departments Mayathula-Khoza ensured participation by all key departments and entities in the process. During two workshops and in individual meetings, staff with the assistance of GL developed a comprehensive plan that at the time of writing was being forwarded to the Executive Committee through Human development Committee for approval.

Content

By whatever name, the WDS is a far reaching plan with specific time frames, responsibilities, targets and indicators. It builds on three existing women specific provisions in the IDP:



Women's Development Strategy takes shape

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

- The development of a Women's Development Strategy by Community Development.
- A women's health plan as part of the health portfolio and a
- Women Safety Plan as part of the safety portfolio.



The three programmes – one-liners in the IDP - are considerably elaborated in the strategy. For example the safety plan includes flagship projects to "take back" safe spaces that have been lost to women; the setting up of a network of women hawkers to work with the police and serve as a neighbourhood watch; securing public spaces; developing a master lighting plan; high profile campaigns on gender violence as well as a directory of services and support for places of safety.

The women's health plan includes provision of ante-natal care at all fixed health facilities in the clinic; improving access to Choice of Term-ination of Pregnancy and cervical cancer screening coverage. Separate from health, the plan has a section on HIV and AIDS with a strong emphasis on voluntary counselling and testing; gender aware public education programmes; provision of ARVs and support for care givers most of whom are women. The extensive roll out of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme envisaged in the plan has key implications for freeing women to become involved in economically productive ventures.

The plan also interrogates all the existing areas of the IDP with a view to ensuring that women benefit equally. Innovative suggestions include:

- Assistance to women in accessing social grants.
- Ensuring that women in Johannesburg benefit equally from jobs created under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) including through skills development and career guidance.
- Creating a gender disaggregated data base.
- Developing a programme to assist women in accessing credit.
- Ensuring that 30 percent of all city contracts go to women owned enterprises by 2010.
- A directory of sport facilities for women and girls and flagship Women in Sports programme and a
- Transport needs assessment for women.
- Devising a comprehensive strategy for ensuring that women benefit from Soccer 2010 as part of the "social legacy that the city is hoping for out of this major social event.

Box 50: 2010 - What's in it for women?

The World Cup 2010 has the potential to provide women with many opportunities. Among the key programme achievements of the Community Development Department over the next five years are to "establish key partnerships with communities and civil society organisations to ensure a social legacy from 2010." Empowering women to benefit from this global event clearly falls within this remit. However, lack of information and skills are key issues that need to be addressed for women to benefit.

Recommendations

- Conduct research on the World Cup 2010 and how women can be involved. Liaise with women from previous host countries (e.g. Germany) to learn from their experience.
- Develop a Women's 2010 programme including ways in which women can become involved in business ventures in a range of sectors including transport, construction, security, cleaning, tourism (including bed and breakfasts, crafts, ethno tourism, catering and entertainment). Creating opportunities in the transport sector (taxis and shuttle services) as well as security and emergency services (including more women police, private security guards etc) open the possibility of challenging gender stereotypes in these male dominated occupations. The programme should include ways of sustaining projects post 2010. All relevant departments and stakeholders, including women from all regions, should be involved.
- Conduct a skills audit to establish which skills exist and where skills development programmes are required. Women with available skills can be used to assist with training and mentoring programmes. Create a data base of jobs, available and potential skills.
- Educate women and raise awareness around 2010 and how they can be involved by involving women in local organising committees. Include information on the City of Joburg website.
- Encourage sports bodies to embark on development programmes and clinics for women leading up to 2010.
- Create opportunities for women in sports management bodies.
- Safety forums should be established which should include women from communities.

Except from the draft Women Development Strategy for the City of Johannesburg

Next steps

At the time of writing, the draft strategy was ready to be put to the full council through the Human Development Committee. Mayathula-Khoza is aware that the WDS is missing a key component in that it does not cover institutional issues housed with corporate services. She also needs buy-in from the Speaker who is responsible for councillor capacity building. She intends to convene all three to come up with a comprehensive gender action plan for the City.

The MMC is also aware that the plan needs to be underpinned by a Gender Management System (GMS- see next section). But she believes that mobilising so many departments through the WDS, including conservative

male dominated agencies like City Parks and the JRA is a key start for making the draft policy a living document.

"We now have a comprehensive document that also talks to opportunities like the 2010 World Cup," Mayathula Khoza noted. "The fact that we have most departments on board is a positive beginning. Once we all begin implementing we will see a positive
change and impact in the lives of women. The WDS means we are moving beyond mere representation of women, beyond the 50/50 in council towards 50/50 in the rest of our society."

Lessons learned

The case study offers a number of lessons:

- Using whatever political space is available to move ahead with gender mainstreaming, even if this may not answer to all the requirements at the same time.
- The importance of political champions in the process.
- Being flexible on approach and sensitive to concerns at the local level about empowering and affirming women.
- Linking plans, targets and indicators to existing mainstream plans.
- Involving and getting the buy-in of the bureau-cracy.
- Ensuring public mobilisation and participation.
- Having a "winner" in the pack like Soccer 2010 that sparks off the imagination of participants and sets a real challenge for gender mainstreaming.

The MMC regrets, however, that it is inevitably left to a few committed gender activists in positions of power to take up the case for gender mainstreaming: "It's a serious challenge. What about municipalities with no gender activists? The status quo just remains. There is no clear policy or direction. We have had to find our own way."

Gender management systems (GMS)

Best practise in gender mainstreaming suggests that little headway will be made unless gender considerations are built into organisational management systems. The Commonwealth Secretariat defines a **Gender Management System** (GMS) as "a network of structures, mechanisms and processes put in place within an existing organisational framework, to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the processes of mainstreaming gender into all areas of the organisation's work, in order to achieve greater gender equality and equity within the context of sustainable development."[108]

Structures

The principles that should guide the establishment of gender structures are that focal points be located in all areas of work; that they be coordinated by one apex structure that is strategically located in an office

108. Gender Management System Handbook (1999) Commonwealth Secretariat, p.11

that has a cross cutting function; that there be a political champion and oversight structure; and that work relating to gender be built into performance management and reward systems.

In Namibia, Mauritius and Lesotho, there are no gender structures at all at local level. In South Africa, while some council's have attempted to establish well thought through structures, in the majority of cases gender structures are in with a melange of others that has contributed to structural frustrations and ineffectiveness.



Street scene in Jo'burg

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Among the most innovative proposals for a GMS structure at local level is that found in the Msunduzi strategy (see Figure eight). The Msunduzi model is innovative for a number of reasons:

- It locates ultimate responsibility with the Municipal Council, through the Executive Committee (Exco).
- Within the administration, accountability is located with the City manager.
- The gender coordination function is placed in a high profile and cross cutting office (the Office of the Mayor).
- There are gender focal points in each unit. This covers both internal corporate services functions as well as the external service delivery functions. The manager of the IDP is specifically identified as a member of the internal Gender Forum, reporting to the City Manager.
- The GMS places a strong focus on ensuring external participation, through bringing stakeholders and ward representatives in an external Gender Council, advising a sub committee of the Council that also reports to Exco. Involvement by councillors through these structures is key.

In essence, the structure fans across the system, locating responsibility at key strategic points and ensuring ultimate political responsibility for gender mainstreaming. Where there could be weak linkages in the structure is between the external and internal arms; a link assumed to be provided through the Executive Committee but one that does not allow for much interaction between the operational arms. Such a structure could also prove cumbersome for smaller councils and might need to be streamlined. One of the difficulties in assessing this model is that it had not yet been put into place at the time of the research. However, conceptually the model has much to commend it.

Figure eight: Msunduzi gender machinery organisational chart

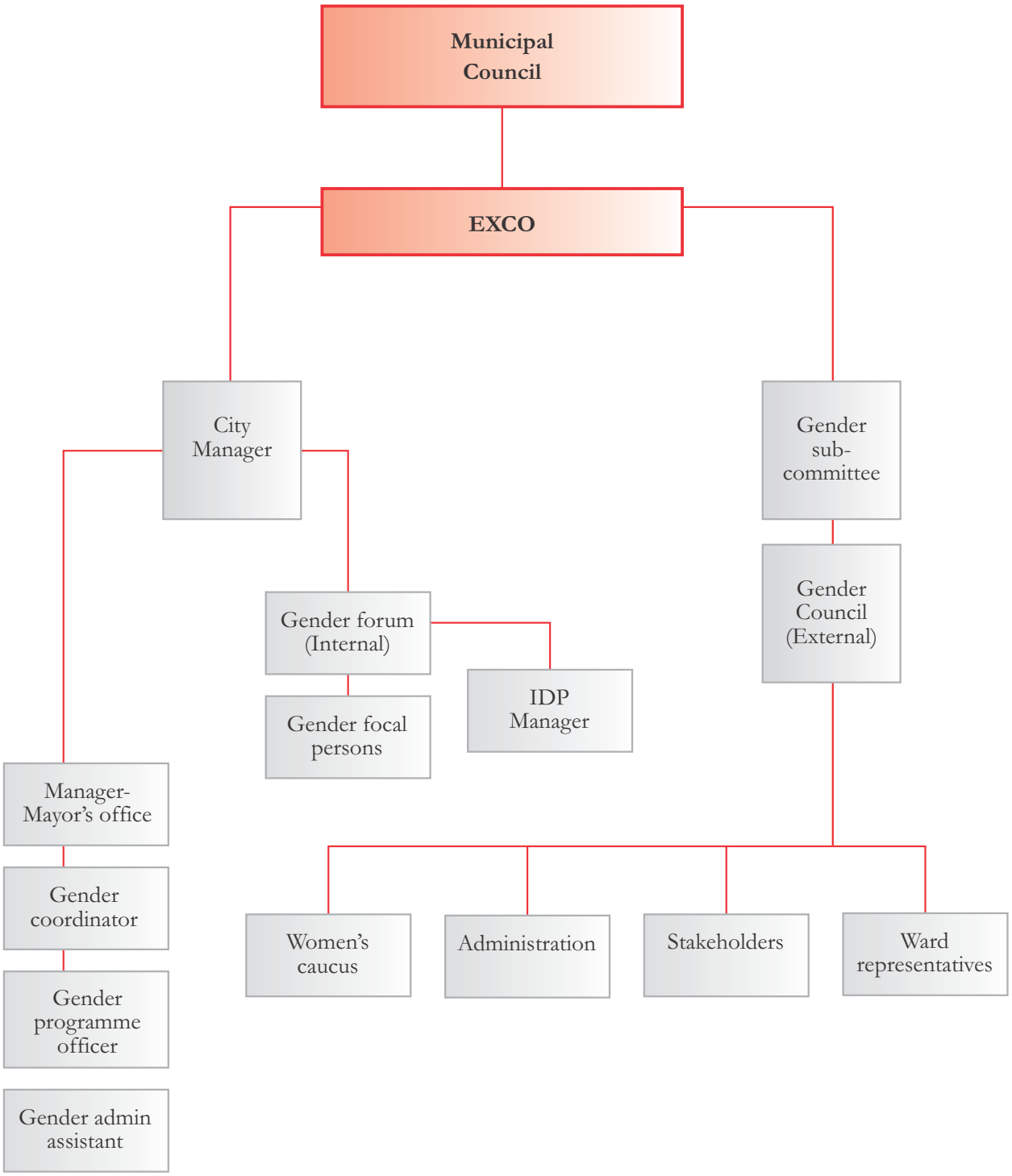


Table 30 shows that in the South African councils that did have policies or where such policies are in progress Special Programme Officers (SPOs) or gender managers in Special Programmes Units (SPUs) are driving the process. The problem with these special programmes units is that gender is lumped together with other issues such as children, disability and sometimes HIV and AIDS, which are all in themselves important issues. The result is that some of these units are stretched and run the risk of becoming dysfunctional with gender often falling to the bottom of the agenda even though it cuts across all the "special issues."

Often the units are event rather than policy driven. The drivers of these units expressed some of the challenges that they face (see box)

Box 51: Frustrations of an SPO

Special Programmes Officer (SPO) in the Lesedi Council in Gauteng Tshepiso Motlokoa aims to advance the mainstreaming of gender issues in the work of all departments and policies, but finds her position limiting.

She said that the gender policy adopted prior to the establishment of this unit had not been effective. This was primarily due to the lack of personnel a well as the lack of an implementation strategy for the policy. This has led to the unit rewriting the policy.

As she is not part of the strategic decision-making levels she is unable to actively participate and influence policy or to monitor the level of commitment on gender issues.

Motlokoa also complained that there is insufficient funding for income generation projects aimed at economic development for communities.

On a positive note, the SPO has been promised support by the Municipal Manager in her attempts to integrate gender awareness programmes into specific economic outcomes such as sustainability and access.

Maintaining that it is essential to follow the longer term strategic, rather than shorter term practical road she asks: "What use are awareness programmes, if these women are not able to sustain themselves and their families? They might go back to their families with new knowledge about their rights, but still empty handed when it comes to resources."

Budgets

Resource allocations have become an important area of focus for advocates of gender mainstreaming because they are a good indicator of the extent to which the concerns expressed on paper are being taken seriously in the implementation.

Much of the research on gender budgeting in recent times has emerged from South Africa, which has borrowed the conceptual model of Australian economist Rhonda Sharpe for looking at expenditure from a gender perspective. Sharpe identifies three kinds of expenditure:

- Gender specific targeted projects.
- Employment Equity related expenditure.
- Mainstream expenditure.

Her point of departure is that the first two represent a small amount of any budget and that the real area

that needs to be interrogated are mainstream expenditures: what proportion of funding goes to each sector and how expenditure is allocated within sectors against the extent to which these address priority needs for redressing gender imbalances in society.

Against this background **gender budgeting or accounting** may be defined as "the allocation of funds to ensure that money, which is needed for altering the unequal position of women in society, is set aside to correct this inequality."

Debbie Budlender, a specialist in this area, shows how questions raised by women MPs in relation to the national budget can be adapted for local government. For example:

- How much is spent and on what: How much will local government spend on providing public toilets, shelters, child care, water and other facilities?
- How are services delivered: Will local government provide a full range of services in informal settlements?
- How does possible expenditure relate to the informal and unpaid provision of services through household and family expenditure? Does expenditure assume unpaid contributions of women's time?
- Who is going to benefit in terms of access to safety: How much attention will local government pay to safety of women in planning and regulation of public transport, the provision of sub ways, street lighting etc.
- Who is going to benefit in terms of public sector employment? Does this include women?[109]

Research in South Africa has not only covered expenditure, but also revenue. The point is made, especially at local level, that taxes and user charges versus services rendered have a profound bearing on the lives of women. Budlender argues that revenue should include consideration of "unpaid labour as an indirect tax on women." She points out that:

> This work is relevant for the budget in several ways. For example, where local government does not provide easy access to water, electricity and other services, it is usually women who spend longer hours and more personal energy providing the personal needs for their families. When local government does not provide adequate sanitation and health services, it is usually women who spend longer hours caring for their families. Further, as women are forced to spend extra time and energy on these tasks, they are less able to earn adequate incomes on paid work. In economic terms we can therefore see unpaid work as a non monetary "tax" which women pay.[110]

While gender budgeting could be a powerful tool for gender mainstreaming at local level and is a key site for taking forward the arguments by feminist economists on care work, these ideas remain theoretical. They are yet to be implemented, tried and tested. Analysis of revenue and expenditure should form a key component of gender mainstreaming at the local level.

Monitoring and evaluation

To the extent that gender has not been built into the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of most councils, it is not possible to assess what benefits this would yield. However, the insights gained by the eThekwini Council when it disaggregated statistics on the City's customer satisfaction survey (see Box 52) points to the potential benefits to local government of gathering and analysing gender disaggregated data. This in turn is at the heart of effective monitoring and evaluation.

109. Budlender, Debbie (1997) "Gender issues at the local government level." CASE, p.34.

110. Ibid, p 36.

Box 52: Customer satisfaction through a gender lens

Like many other metro councils in South Africa, eThekwini regularly conducts customer satisfaction surveys. But it was only when the council commissioned a gender audit that it looked at this data in terms of how satisfied women and men are. The disaggregated statistics told a very different story to the aggregated statistics. Essentially they reflected the fact that there was not a single instance in which women felt as satisfied as men. Some examples are:

Household service

- Over 60 percent of the population is satisfied with their sanitation systems. However, a greater proportion of women (59 percent) were not as satisfied as men (65 percent).
- Over 70 percent of the population is satisfied with their electricity supply. A greater proportion of men (75 percent) are more satisfied than women (68 percent).
- Over 65 percent of the population is satisfied with their refuse removal systems. However, almost ten percent more men than women are satisfied with this system, and conversely a larger proportion of women were unhappy.

Housing

- A larger proportion of men (52 percent) than women (44 percent) were satisfied with their dwellings.
- Women and men gave similar reasons for their dissatisfaction with their housing. However, differences were expressed in the emphasis that men gave to access to dwelling and the absence of a garage (vehicle), and the priority women accorded to the poor quality of the structure and its need for renovation (physical structure).

Satisfaction with local area

- About half the population are satisfied with their neighbourhood area, with slightly more men being satisfied (51 percent) than women (46 percent). Women are more dissatisfied (29 percent) with their area than men (25 percent). These sentiments clearly translate into a call to improve neighbourhood environments for the benefit of both men and women.
- Men rate police stations far more highly than women whereas women rate access to health services, housing support services, crèches and pension payout points more highly than men.
- Almost 80 percent of the population feel that they have good access to the shops, with more men rating accessibility (82 percent) higher than women (77 percent).

Safety and security

- 33 percent of women feel unsafe in their area during the day, and of this proportion, 13 percent feel very unsafe. 26 percent of men feel slightly or very unsafe in their areas.
- Perceptions about local safety decline dramatically during the evening. Just over 30 percent of the population feel safe walking in their area after dark. 68 percent of women feel a bit or very unsafe, and of this proportion 40 percent feel very unsafe. 63 percent of men feel unsafe walking at night in their

areas, with over a third feeling very unsafe.

- Approximately two thirds of the population feel safe in their homes, with men (71 percent) feeling safer than women (64 percent). Almost a third of the population feel unsafe in their homes, with women feeling less safe in their homes (36 percent) than men, with 15 percent feeling very unsafe.
- Both men and women are similarly concerned about the safety of their area for bringing up children. Approximately 40 percent of the population feel that their area is safe, representing almost equally proportions of men and women. Notably, almost 45 percent of the population feel that their area is not safe for children, with women (48 percent) feeling this more strongly than men (42 percent).

Family life

- A significant proportion of men are more satisfied with their marriage or intimate relationships (58 percent) than women (40 percent). Almost 50 percent of women are non-committal about their relationship, and almost 15 percent are dissatisfied. Women are also not as happy as men with the time that they spend with their families. 72 percent of men are satisfied, compared with 62 percent of women.
- Almost 60 percent of men are happy with the amount of time they have at their disposal and how they spend their leisure time. However, this is the situation below 50 percent of women.

Social relations

Gender-based patterns emerge in the membership of organisations. Women are more involved than men in burial societies, savings clubs, faith-based groups, civic associations, community service organisations, women's clubs and youth organisations. Men are more involved than women in neighbourhood watch activities, political parties, social/recreational clubs, and sports clubs.

(Excerpt: Gender Policy Framework for the eThekwini Municipality, Final Draft Report)

Capacity building

An important key to gender mainstreaming is the recognition that gender awareness and analysis skills are not innate. A capacity building plan that provides tailor made training to different members of the organisation ranging from general awareness to gender planning, implementation and monitoring skills is essential to a successful strategy.

A handful of councillors said that they had received some training on gender. In the Cape Winelands district council the Speaker Mpumi Hani spoke about the training that councillors had received and continue to receive from GETNET (Gender Education and Training Network). The Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) also does a lot of training with councillors in the Western Cape. But Hani says that the problem often lies with the councillors themselves who chose not to participate in such training sessions

and believes that councillors need to take responsibility for their empowerment.

The civil society focus group in eThekwini maintained that women councillors go on training but when they return to council they are not given the space to implement what they have learned. "They are told that anything that is gender related are women's issues and they then have to do everything on their own without any support from their male colleagues" – it then comes back to the point of what is the point of being capacitated if you can't implement.

Civil society groups say that the problem with much of the gender training given to councillors is that it often excludes the male councillors. And while it is important to empower women there is growing support for the idea that if this empowerment doesn't take place together with the education of men, the process is going to be long and transformation will be slow.

In Mauritius Hemraz Jankee, Mayor of the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix echoed this view: "Gender issues are bread and butter issues which form part of our daily life and it is important for men to get a good grasp of that. We all need training. I want my male councillors to know that women are as capable as men. I want them to grasp all the societal problems women are facing and find ways and means to deal with them." Media Watch Organisation has offered to train the councillors on a wide range of gender issues including drugs, HIV and AIDS, gender discrimination, sexual harassment and the rights of the girl child.

Councillor Selma Taukuheke in Grootfontein Namibia expressed the need for guidance: "I need someone to talk to about these issues and to give other advice and guidance. From your questions I learn more, I will go and do better." Victoria Kauma in Rundu expressed the hope that the research being conducted would serve as an impetus for gender capacity building in councils.

Box 53: Councillors need capacity on gender

Victoria Mapefane is the speaker of Merafong municipality in the North West Province in South Africa. In her inaugural address she stated: "My election and that of a number of women to lead in this sphere of government is a reflection of my party and its government's commitment to gender equality."

Although Mapefane is passionate about gender she says that this is not necessarily the case for all of the women councillors. "There are many misconceptions of what gender equality actually means. There is a dire need in the community for intensive education around gender issues."



Speaker of Merafong Municipality, Victoria Mapefane *Photo: Rochelle Renere Davidson*

The Merafong council has a gender task team of which Mapefane is the chairperson but she says that there is a need to reconstruct this team so that they are able to meet the needs of the women in the community. "We want to form partnerships with NGOs that deal with women abuse and child abuse and even drug abuse." She says that there are women who have been forgotten in the discourse on gender violence and believes that women in rural areas are neglected.

Mapefane says that in her mining community constituency, many areas have been neglected. She laments the fact that skills and capacity are sadly lacking.

"We had a workshop on gender issues and that helped but we need more because many of our women councillors do not really understand what gender means." She also believes that the inclusion of men in the training is essential for change to happen: "The male councillors cannot really support gender equality until they go through thorough intensive training. We should also give them time and there should be lots of discussion informally to encourage a change of mentality."

The Speaker says that there is no support from provincial and national government: "They are not coming to our level; we can go to gender conferences and give recommendations but at the end of the day there is no implementation. We don't know what is happening at national level and they don't know what we are going through." She adds that they have only recently received information on policies around gender equality but these are all in English, a challenge for some councillors.

The two main challenges to local government, she says, are the lack of monitoring and evaluation systems as well as capacity to effectively mainstream gender into the work of councils.

Conclusions

This chapter shows that gender mainstreaming in local government is weak at best and non-existent at worst. There are no policies of strategies for gender mainstreaming in most countries let alone in councils on the ground. As institutions, local councils show little sign of change. While there are isolated examples of gender specific projects and of gender being mainstreamed in the work of councils this is not being done systematically. Gender management systems are sporadic and most gender structures work from a position of disadvantage. Where gender mainstreaming has had the most success this has been driven by dedicated individuals, often working in partnership with civil society. But as illustrated in the case of the City of Johannesburg WDS, there are structural weaknesses in such arrangements that could affect sustainability in the long term. No matter which way one looks at the situation what is needed is a country-wide and system-wide approach, not the piecemeal approaches that have hinted at the benefits of gender mainstreaming without really delivering these where they matter most: in the daily lives of women and men who make up the local constituencies.



Learners in Lesotho look forward to a new day

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Conclusions and recommendations

A follow up to *Ringing up the Changes, Gender in Southern African Politics* which identified local government as a missing link in the gender and governance discourse, this study sought to:

- Study the recent experiences of four Southern African countries with different electoral systems and approaches to quotas in increasing the representation

of women in local government.

- Study the extent to which the conflict generated by these different approaches was of a zero sum as opposed to a mixed motive approach, and the implications of this for the women subsequently elected into power.
- Examine how these experiences can be applied by other Southern African countries seeking to comply with the decision by Heads of State at their 2005 summit to raise the quota for women in all areas of decision-making from 30 to 50 percent.
- Examine the impact of women at local level and propose strategies for overcoming barriers to their effective participation and contribution at local level.

The final chapter of the book sets out the findings and recommendations of the study that included over 900 interviews (35 percent with men) in four countries over a one year period from 2006 to 2007.

Findings

With a growing number of Southern African countries from different political and electoral backgrounds showing that gender parity *can* be achieved in local government, there is no longer an excuse for any country in the region not to achieve this goal. However, if women are to make a difference in this sphere of decision-making - the "coalface" of service delivery - far more needs to be done to strengthen local government and to integrate gender considerations into its work. These are the key findings to emerge from the first comprehensive study of gender and local government in Southern Africa. Overall, the findings may be summarised as follows:

There is no excuse for any Southern African country not to achieve gender parity at local level: A key message to emerge from all four countries (even Mauritius that does not have quotas) is that quotas or "special measures" of some description are essential for jump starting women's increased participation in decision-making at local level. The research also shows that no matter what the electoral system – whether FPTP, PR or mixed – quotas are possible, and they are strongest when they are legislated, rather than just voluntary.

Examples like Lesotho, South Africa and Namibia (representing the constituency, PR and mixed electoral systems) show that the SADC target of 50 percent women in decision-making *can* be achieved in pretty much any situation, provided that there is the necessary political will.

No electoral system is perfect, but the mixed system may be the best: The debate about which electoral system is best is ongoing in Southern Africa and in the rest of the world. There are pros and cons to all systems. As illustrated in the case of Namibia - a finding that concurs with experiences around the globe - the PR system favours women's increased participation because as long as parties buy into the idea they have the power to position women on the list in a way that ensures they are elected.

However, as this study shows, the disadvantage of the PR system is that with its focus on the party rather than on the individual, the PR system is seen as having less accountability. This poses particular challenges at the local level, where the electorate have immediate concerns that they want to bring to the attention of elected officials.

The FPTP system is touted as a better model for accountability because the electorate votes not just

for a party but also for the individual representing the party. But women's representation in FPTP electoral systems where they are personally put under the public glare is low. The most common way of accelerating women's participation through quotas in the FPTP system is through reserving constituencies for women; a measure that (as illustrated in the case of Lesotho) is open to legal challenge.

This leaves the mixed system as possibly the most promising of the electoral systems for increasing women's participation at local level while also ensuring the direct accountability that is so important at this level. As illustrated in the case of South Africa, women are initially likely to do best in the seats voted on a PR basis in the mixed system.

However, with the necessary political will women's participation can gradually be increased in the FPTP or ward seats. These seats mean that the electorate has directly elected councillors, while the PR seats help to ensure more equitable distribution of power with regard to ethnicity, gender and race. As a compromise between the two main electoral systems, the mixed system is one that other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries would do well to examine as they grapple with the twin challenges of reviewing electoral systems and advancing gender equality.

The conflict generated by quotas has been of a constructive nature: The study emphasised that conflict is not to be avoided but rather to be managed. Conflict that is not managed may be destructive, while that which is managed can yield positive results that begin to transform our society.

Those who argue against quotas invariably warn of dire consequences. But this is not supported by the evidence. This study illustrates that no matter what the situation or type of quota applied, initial hostility has died down relatively quickly, and the anticipated backlash has not materialised. Case studies such as the normality that has returned to the constituency in Lesotho in which a male candidate took up a high court challenge against the quota show that despite resistance to quotas, rapid change is possible and does not lead to the backlash that is often predicted.

The motives for special measures at local level are suspect Highlighting the range in women's representation in local government from 1.2 percent in Angola to 58 percent in Lesotho, the study notes that where governments have been willing to take special measures to increase women's representation this is more likely to be so at local than at national level.

Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa (the three countries with the highest representation of women in local government) all have legislated quotas of one kind or the other at local but not at national level.

The discrepancy suggests that rather than being a reflection of commitment to women's participation at local level, the measures taken by the three countries are a case of male decision-makers giving way at local level (described by a focus group participant in Windhoek as "community affairs, rather than real politics") while resisting such measures in the more coveted national arena.

What is unfortunate, the study finds, is that measures to increase women's participation at local level appear to result from a calculation that local government is not as serious a sphere of politics than the national level, rather than because of a commitment to deepening democracy through

decentralisation and the equal participation of women.

Local government is an ambivalent testing ground for social change: In instances where governments have been reluctant to force the pace of change, women's representation is lower at local than at national level because the forces of culture, tradition and religion tend to be more concentrated at this level than at national level.

There are thus two contradictory approaches towards women's increased participation at local level. One seeks to increase women's participation because local politics is not seen as important as national politics. The other is afraid to rock the boat at local level for fear of a backlash. Either way, the approach to gender at local level is steeped in patriarchal power politics rather than an enlightened vision of responsive governance at the local level in which the equal participation of women plays an intrinsic role.

Women's voices are still muted: Through numerous personal accounts and case studies as well as quantitative data gathered through questionnaires, the study explores the many barriers to women's effective participation at local level. These are reflected in the 41 council meetings observed, where researchers found that there was not a single instance in which women participated in meetings in proportion to their strengths in such meetings.

While opposition voices accounted for a total of 34 percent of the interventions (25 percent men and nine percent women) – roughly consistent with opposition strengths in the councils - women's voices only accounted for 27 percent of the total, with men (73 percent) dominating all meetings.

Every barrier can become an enabling factor: Every barrier to women's increased participation has the potential to be turned around into an enabling factor. Socialisation, culture, custom, religion and tradition - the biggest barriers cited in every country- are dynamic forces. As illustrated in the chapter on the changing attitudes of men, there are many men in local government who have become champions of gender equality and are supporting the empowerment of women. Change may be slow, but it is coming.

Within political parties, sexist attitudes often hold women back. But political parties are also the home of every politician and when they decide to implement quotas, and support women through networks, mentoring, and their own public stance, political parties can become one of the most enabling factors for women in politics.

Women can be marginalised within decision-making structures by occupying junior positions and being shunted into traditional "care" areas of work rather than the more mainstream financial and management roles. Equally, when a conscious effort is made to ensure that women's voices are heard in all areas of decision-making, the evidence shows that women rise to the occasion. This learning-on-the-job is also one of the most effective forms of capacity building for women in local government, especially when it is accompanied by targeted, on-going support that is designed to enhance and complement the existing skills of councillors.

Women are not all the same, but they share certain bonds: The study emphasises that women are not

all the same nor should they be. Each one is an individual, coming from her own particular context (geographical, racial, ethnic and socio-economic). All these factors shape the realities and outlook of women.

Yet, no matter where women come from, they have certain shared experiences, "identities" and "instincts" as women that often translate, in positions of power, into a sense among many women that they have a responsibility for taking up the concerns and interests of other women.

Within these decision-making structures there are issues that women feel more passionately about than men, especially at the local level. If the essence of democracy is that every interest group should have the chance to represent its own interests, then the largest such interest group in any society are women and their voices must be heard.

Numbers make a difference: While numbers are not a panacea, and while this study takes the view that there is no "magical" critical point at which the number of women makes a dramatic difference to the extent of their influence on decision making, evidence abounds that numbers do matter.

This study found that where women constituted below 30 percent of the participants, they spoke 21 percent of the time. Where women constituted 30 to 50 percent of the participants, they spoke 22 percent of the time (not much different to when they constituted below 30 percent). However, when women constituted more than half of the participants, they spoke a little less, but almost as much as men. As noted in the relevant chapter, the conclusion that might be drawn from this finding is that the "critical mass" is indeed not 30 percent but gender parity!

Box 54: Mauritius the odd one out?

Among the most compelling evidence of how having substantial numbers of women in local governments makes a difference are the several differences noted between the views of councillors in Mauritius (the country in the study with the lowest representation of women) and those in the other three case study countries. For example:

- In response to the question of whether there is a link between gender equality and democracy, 88 percent of the councillors interviewed for this study agreed that such a link exists. Councillors in Mauritius agreed least strongly with the statement (59 percent men; 60 percent women).

- Overall 81 percent of the councillors (87 percent women and 69 percent men) said they believed in the use of quotas to increase women's participation in decision-making. Mauritius had the largest gender gap (difference in responses by women and men) to this question with 82 percent women, compared to 32 percent men, agreeing with the use of quotas.

- In the two council meetings observed in Mauritius, women said nothing at all despite constituting 17 percent of the participants.
- Asked whether women in local in local government have different interests and concerns to men the majority (53 percent) of councillors said that they did. More women (61 percent) than men (39 percent) agreed with this statement. Yet only 11 percent of the men in Mauritius (compared to 44 percent women agreed with the statement.)
- Councillors were asked to choose which of four definitions of gender they found the most accurate: women fight for their rights; women; socially constructed differences between women and men and women taking over power. Overall 76 percent of all councillors chose the conventionally accepted definition of gender (socially constructed differences between women and men). Councillors in Mauritius showed the lowest levels of understanding the term gender with only 54 percent of councillors choosing the correct response.

Change is starting to take place, but the challenges are immense: The study set out a number of parameters for measuring change. The summary of findings in Table 31 shows that while change is taking place, this is gradual and that the challenges at local level are greater than at national level.

Table 31: Measuring change

Personal transformation	Assessment
✓ The extent to which the attitudes of male decision-makers begin to change and they start to take up gender issues.	There are many examples of enlightened men at local level who now take up gender causes. However, examples of blatant resistance are more numerous at this level than at national level, and many men have not internalised the meaning of gender equality in their personal lives.
✓ The attitudes and confidence levels of women in mainstream positions so that women feel themselves to be sufficiently empowered to champion gender causes even within these often hostile and patriarchal structures.	There are similarly examples of women in local government with a clear understanding of gender mainstreaming, but many still prefer "the path of least resistance" focusing on practical rather than strategic gender needs.
✓ The extent to which gender stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of male and female decision-makers begin to change and that these roles and responsibilities are naturally inter-changed.	Women still tend to predominate in the "soft" areas of council work but an increasing number are playing leadership roles in the more hard core financial and management areas, especially where there is a higher proportion of women. Equally, there are examples of men taking leadership roles in areas like forming support groups for people living with AIDS.
✓ Creation of a more family friendly work environment such as dates of recesses, sitting hours and child-care facilities.	While there is evidence of some changes in sitting times in countries with a high proportion of women like Lesotho, councils are still heavily male dominated in their habits and ethos.

Institutional transformation	Assessment
✓ Infrastructure changes, such as the provision of adequate toilets and facilities for the increased number of women who may have recently accessed these previously "men only" clubs.	No specific infrastructure changes were identified in the case study countries to make local government more hospitable to women.
✓ Changes in the style of debate and discourse.	Except in Lesotho (where local government is new and meetings are conducted in Sotho) and in larger councils with a high proportion of women, the study found a stifling style and limited debate in most councils, with women's participation particularly limited.
✓ The extent to which women have influence within the institution vertically (management and leadership roles within the institution) and horizontally (are spread across the different areas of work).	Women are under represented in leadership roles both in elected office and in the administrative structures of local government. They also predominate in the secretarial and clerical categories and are under represented in the technical, financial and managerial areas.
✓ Whether or not there are structures in place for supporting women-decision makers and if capacity building is tailored to their needs.	Capacity building at local level is scatter shot and inconsistent with little emphasis on on-going, on-the-job support as well as the necessary mix between knowledge, attitude and skills training.
✓ Whether gender training is incorporated into capacity building for all councillors.	Gender training is not built into any of the formal training for councillors in the four case study countries. The gender training identified is offered by NGOs, some of whom have attempted to align this as closely as possible to council functions.
✓ To what extent gender is mainstreamed into performance agreements and institutional culture.	Gender is not mainstreamed in the performance agreements of key functionaries in any of the case study countries.
Transformation of key tools of government	**Assessment**
✓ Whether there is a gender policy and or strategy in place at national level for local government, and the extent to which this has been adopted and adapted by individual councils.	Out of the four case study countries, the only one in which there has been an attempt to devise a gender policy specifically for local government is in South Africa but this has not been finalised or distributed. South Africa is also the only country in the study in which the study found examples of individual councils devising their own gender policies strategies.
✓ The existence of a Gender Management System (GMS) including structures and gender disaggregated data with which to integrate gender considerations into planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.	The study did not identify any comprehensive GMS system in any country or council although there were pockets of good practice in some councils, such as the gender audits conducted by the City of Johannesburg and eThekwini in South Africa that provide relevant gender disaggregated data for planning, monitoring and evaluation.
✓ The extent to which there are women specific programmes in place, and to what extent these address practical and or strategic needs.	Where there is a strong presence of women, it is possible to identify women specific projects emerging. These often have a practical focus such as small enterprises for women, but practical needs often begin to raise strategic concerns.
✓ The extent to which gender considerations are built into the delivery of all services, and the extent to which this addresses practical and or strategic needs.	With a few exceptions, such as the Women Development Strategy (WDS) of the City of Johannesburg that itself is yet to be implemented, gender is not built systematically into the service delivery of any council observed in this study.

Attitudes of men are slowly changing: The more open and blatant resistance of men at local level compared to the national arena (compare Chapter six in *Ringing up the Changes*) is a reminder of the challenges ahead. The recognition that even as men say the "right" things in public places they may be leading a different reality in their homes is also important in planning strategies for overcoming these challenges.

However, this book also abounds with examples of men (including a chief!) who have embraced the 50/50 slogan in their personal and political lives, and feel more wholesome for doing so. This is a welcome sign that change is taking place; albeit slowly.

Women are making a difference at a practical level: The study cites numerous examples of ways in which women are making a difference at a practical level in local government (which suffers from many structural weaknesses in all countries) by helping to cut through red tape and providing access to housing, electricity and basic needs.

But as Matseliso Mapetla, a gender expert at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) notes in the study, there is a danger of women soldiering on and finding practical solutions to problems against enormous structural odds because they may just be left to get on with it without the fundamental structural barriers being addressed.

This is starting to prize open strategic doors: Practical interventions made by women raise strategic questions: such as in Lesotho where councils are responsible for allocating land and women are beginning to ask about access to title for land. Similarly, as women councillors work to facilitate small scale enterprise, questions are raised as to the council's own tendering procedures and how these can be made more accessible to women.

But gender mainstreaming is weak at best; non-existent at worst: The main conclusion drawn is that in the absence of a more systematic approach to gender mainstreaming, these more strategic interests of women will be continuously marginalised in favour of the more immediate "damage control" skills so urgently required at local level, and which women have both the inclination and the immediate need to provide.

Unless gender is systematically mainstreamed into the work of local government, increased representation of women at local level may become a case of "jobs for the girls" rather than gender equality for the region.

Civil society must bear part of the responsibility for these weaknesses: In Namibia, gender activist and former opposition Member of Parliament Rosa Namises is critical of NGOs for successful advocacy on numbers without sufficient attention to transformation: "We have lobbied to get women in and then not taken on the issues we want them to represent."

Despite the abundant rhetoric on ensuring responsive governance on the ground, NGOs in the governance sector have also poured much more time and resources into research and training at national rather than at local level. This reinforces the perception that local politics is a poor cousin of national politics, and that promoting transformation of gender relations at this level is a secondary priority.

Recommendations

The key recommendations to emerge from this study are that:

Local government should take its rightful place in the gender and governance discourse in Southern Africa: Local government, a little known sphere of decision-making in Southern African 50/50 campaign circles, should become a prominent area of focus in this campaign that has received a shot in the arm as a result of the recent decision by SADC Heads of State to raise the target of women in decision-making from 30 to 50 percent. This campaign should be intensified in the run up to the 2007 Heads of State summit in Lusaka where a case will be made for elevating the SADC Declaration on Gender and Develop-ment to a protocol. Part of the argument for such a move will be to ensure that the narrow focus on women in parliament is broadened to all areas of decision-making, including neglected areas of political decision-making.

SADC countries should learn from each other with regard to successful strategies for ensuring women's increased participation: The tendency both by politicians and activists is to scramble around for strategies to increase women's representation a few months before elections. This is often a case of too little too late. Examples now abound in the SADC region, especially at local level, of how to achieve significant increases in women's representation. These need to be studied; engaged with; adapted and implemented well in advance if the slogan "50/50 by 2020" is to be realised.

Each country should adopt a policy and strategy for gender mainstreaming at local level: In addition to national gender policies, each SADC country needs to have and overarching policy and strategy for gender mainstreaming at local level that provides a framework within which councils at local level can draw up their own work plans. Such planning would be strengthened by the elevation of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development to a binding protocol, and to specific references to local government being made in this an instrument. The recommendation on gender mainstreaming at local level informs the immediate follow up plans to the study (see Box 55).

Relevant capacity building: Policies and action plans need to be accompanied by relevant capacity building. Gender needs to be mainstreamed into all training offered to councillors. In addition, key staff and councilors require more in-depth gender analysis skills. Such training should be reinforced through long term back stopping and refresher courses.

Resource allocation: Initial research on gender budgeting at local level in the SADC region (especially South Africa) needs to be expanded and adapted for application in each country, as resource allocations are a key test of gender mainstreaming. Tracking how money is spent should also form part of the monitoring and evaluation system.

Monitoring and evaluation: The old adage that what is not counted does not count rings especially true for gender and local government. All councils should be encouraged to undertake gender audits; to use this information for planning; establishment of gender disaggregated data bases; and for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Ultimately, this is the only way to measure whether the increased representation of women in local government is

Box 55: Follow up plans

Following the initial launch of the study, GL plans to launch the book in all case study countries and across the SADC region over three years and to link the launches to strategy workshops with key policy makers and representatives of district councils on mainstreaming gender in local government.

The workshops will make use of the gender mainstreaming framework developed by GL as part of its governance programme and tested with three municipalities in South Africa. Local facilitators will assist in the development and implementation of gender action plans in local councils in each of the districts. The project, which will be piloted in the four countries that formed part of the study, will be cascaded to eight more countries over the following two years.

The key objectives of the programme are to:

- Launch the study, *At the Coalface, Gender and Local Government*, in all countries where the study took place.
- Accompany the launch with strategy workshops comprising policy makers at national level and district level councillors who are key to rolling out gender action plans in the councils. The key output will be an overall strategy for each country on mainstreaming gender in local government.
- Build the capacity of a core team of decision-makers on key gender issues and strategies at local level using the GL gender policy and action plan framework developed with three South African municipalities.
- Get buy-in for the roll out of gender action plans in each council with the support of local facilitators, and with a strong component on the role of local government in overcoming gender violence.

Key activities include:

- Launch of the research officiated by ministers, senior government officials.
- Five day workshop with Ministry of Local government, local government association, key councillors from each district on mainstreaming gender in the work of local government.
- Agreement on roll our of gender action plans to all Councils.
- Media coverage and awareness raising.

translating into gender equality for our nations and for our region.

In the foreword to this study, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gender expert Winnie Byanyima reminds us that equality between women and men "is the call of history.. there can be no turning back." The time is right for local government to take its place in what *Ringing up the Changes* called "the most important social revolution of our time."



Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Glossary

Closed list system is where the political party determines where candidates sit on the list, although this is usually based on democratic nomination processes within the party.

Conflict transformation refers to a change (usually an improvement) in the nature of a conflict; a de-escalation or a reconciliation between people or groups. Unlike **conflict resolution**, which denies the long-term nature of conflict, or **conflict management**, which assumes that people and relationships can be managed as though they were physical objects, the concept of **conflict transformation** reflects the notion that conflicts go on for long periods of time, changing the nature of the relationships between the people involved, and themselves changing as people's response to the situation develops over time. (Conflict Research Consortium (1998), University of Colorado, USA.)

A critical mass of women in decision-making is the point at which women, through a combination of numerical strength, enabling political environments, empowerment and conviction feel able to raise critical questions in mainstream environments.

Decentralisation is a policy through which many forms of power and responsibility are shifted from central governments to regional and local bodies.

Diversity means that each person brings individual characteristics of 'race', gender, nationality, religion, age, physical disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, and professional skill to the workplace. In order to effectively use diversity, the organisation does not merely recognise, manage or accept the individual differences of each person. The organisation encourages and values diversity.

Effective participation means the ability to influence and change processes as a result of being part of these processes. It is possible for groups of people to be included in decision-making processes yet have very little influence on these: being there and not there. Some of the ways in which participation can be measured include: the extent to which women occupy decision-making positions within the structure, e.g. chairs of committees; the extent to which women exert their influence in decision-making processes- see observation above; the extent to which practices and procedures have changed as a result of women's participation

"First Past the Post" (FPTP) is a voting system where citizens vote not just for the party, but also for the candidate who represents the party in a geographically defined constituency. Thus a party can garner a significant percentage of the votes, but still have no representative in parliament, because in this system "the winner takes all".

Gender describes the socially constructed differences between men and women, which can change over time and which vary within a given society from one society to the next. Our gender identity determines how we are perceived and how we are expected to behave as men and women. Thus while the fact that women give birth to children is biologically determined, the fact they perform the majority of household chores, predominate in the informal survivalist sector and in the lower paid "care" work in the formal sector are all socially constructed. What is important to stress is that gender relations are dynamic. They are shaped through the history of social relations and interactions. They vary over time and place and between different groups of people. They may also be impacted by other factors, such as race, class, ethnicity and disability.

Gender analysis refers to an analysis of the relationships between women and men in society, as individuals, as groups and within institutions. It identifies and understands the different social, cultural and economic realities, needs and interests of women and men and the inequalities of their relationship. It is an important tool for identifying barriers and opportunities for the advancement of women and reduction of gender inequities. It is intended to identify the gendered components of the problem, which is under consideration, whether at the level of international or national policy, or of micro-level interventions. Such problem identification would then be used to inform the process of planning interventions, whether in policy or programmes or systems of monitoring. Gender analysis alerts the user to further questions, which need to be asked, and issues, which need to be addressed. Gender analysis is best done in conjunction with other tools of social analysis to ensure that all forms of social relations that contribute towards inequity are considered and that gender relations are not seen in isolation.

Gender aware policies recognise that women, as well as men, have an important role to play in society; that the nature of women's involvement is determined by gender relations, which make their involvement different and often unequal; and that consequently women have different needs, interests and priorities, which may sometimes conflict with those of men.

Gender-blind policies recognise no differences between the sexes. They mistakenly assume that men and male norms represent the norm for all human beings. As a result, they incorporate biases in favour of existing gender relations and therefore exclude women. Thus for example, although no policy of the DTI sets out to discriminate against women, the fact that these policies fail to specifically highlight the different access that women and men have to resources, and consciously make an effort to redress this imbalance, will inadvertently lead to the status quo being perpetuated.

Gender budgeting or accounting: Because of the different locations of men and women in society and in the economy, no budget line is neutral. Gender budgeting involves both an analysis of allocations between sectors (such as defence versus social allocations) and within sectors to determine their impact.

Gender disaggregated data is the statistical information that breaks down the base information for the activity under analysis by providing the numbers of men and women affected.

Gender equality is where women and men are respected and valued as equals. This means that any differences between women and men are not used to justify a power hierarchy favouring one group over another. It would require:

- That decisions are based on the needs and or interests of both women and men
- Balanced representations and participation of women and men within policy and governance and
- A reallocation of power and redistribution of resources from men to women.

For gender equality to be a reality for all women and all women, other social inequalities would also have to be addressed.

A **Gender Management System (GMS)** is the network of structures, mechanisms and processes put in place within an existing organizational framework, to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the mainstreaming of gender into all areas of the organisation's work, in order to achieve greater gender equality and equity within the context of sustainable development. A GMS may be established at any level of government, or in institutions such as universities, inter-governmental or non-governmental organisations, private sector organisations or trade unions. The mission of a Gender Management System is to advance gender equality through promoting political will; forging a partnership of stakeholders including government, private sector and civil society, building capacity and sharing good practice. (Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender Management System Handbook, June 1999).

Gender mainstreaming: Is the sum of all the above processes, defined by the UNDP as: "Taking account of gender equity concerns in all policy, programme, administrative and financial activities, and in organizational procedures, thereby contributing to a profound organizational transformation."

Gender Policy – usually developed by particular organisations to provide a guiding framework and strategy, which intends to disrupt existing processes of gendering in relation to that organisation's work and practices.

Informal economy: Describes processes of income generation that are unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated.

Institutional barriers refer to the ways in which the rules, norms and practices of institutions can create and perpetuate inequalities. They can be legal - for instance a law that says women can't inherit land in their own name or that you can only access credit if you have land as collateral. They can also be based in practice and include socio-cultural behaviours, which restrict or inhibit women's opportunities. For instance, an organisation that expects its workers' to routinely work overtime will discriminate against parents with responsibility for young children.

Practical gender needs are the needs that women identify in their socially accepted roles is society. Practical needs do not challenge the gender division of labour or women's subordinate position in society, although rising out of them. Practical gender needs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and are often concerned with inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment. Thus, for example, when poor women are given the option of loans and opt for sewing machines rather than purchasing land and starting an agro business, this option satisfies an immediate practical need to generate income within a safe space. But it does not challenge the status quo or start to address the strategic needs of women to start to share control over economic resources that have traditionally been in the hands of men, and upon which greater wealth creation is based (Moser, 1995).

Proportional Representation (PR) or "list system" is a voting system where citizens vote for parties that are allocated seats according to the percentage of vote they receive. Individual candidates get in according to where they sit on the list.

Open list system where voters determine where candidates sit on the list.

Sex describes the biological difference between men and women. Men produce sperm; women become pregnant, bear and breastfeed children.

Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society. Strategic gender needs vary according to specific contexts. They relate to gender division of labour, power and control and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies. Meeting strategic gender needs helps women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position (Moser, 1995)

Structural inequalities are Inequalities in society based on the way the society is structured and affecting large groups of people. For example, in a society (like Apartheid SA), where it was legislated that only 'white' people could be political leaders it would not matter what the level of skill or education of a black person, they could never achieve equal status. When economic rules and practices assume that activities which can earn a wage are more valuable than activities which are unpaid but are equally necessary to a society's survival, then automatically the people performing the unpaid labour are structurally unequal to the people performing the paid labour.

Zebra style party list is a system where political parties alternate male and female candidates on the party lists.

References used for the glossary include:

Bennett, (2000); Elson (1998), Friedman (1999), Klugman (2000a), Meer (1999), Preston-Whyte E and Rogerson C (1991)

Annexes

ANNEX A: Areas and councils

Metro Councils/ Municipalities	District councils	Local /village, town /community councils
LESOTHO		
Maseru	Butha-Buthe	Ratau
	Leribe	Makhoarane
	Berea	Ntelle
	Mafeteng	Moteng
	Mohale's Hoek	Likila
	Quthing	Khomokhoana
		Serupane
		Mapoteng
		Motanasela
		Mathula
		Makaota
		Khoelenya
		Thaba Mokhele
		Matsatseng
		Mkh'ono
MAURITIUS		
Beau -	Pamplemousses	Albion
Bassin/Rose-Hill	Black River	Arsenal
Port Louis	Grand	Baie Cap
Municipality	Port/Savanne	Bambous
Vacoas Phoenix	Moka/Flacq	Bel Ombre
		Bois Cheri
		Bois des Amourettes
		Bon Acceuil
		Camp de Masque
		Centre de Flacq
		Cite Richelieu
		Cluny
		Cottage
		Fond du Sac
		Goodlands
		Grand Gaube
		Grand Sable
		La Gaulette
		LaHochet
		Long Mountain
		Mahebourg
		Mapou

Metro Councils/ Municipalities	District councils	Local / village, town / community councils
MAURITIUS cont		
		Mar D'Albert
		Mare Chicose
		Morcellement St. Andre
		New Grove
		Nouvelle France
		Pailles
		Petit Raffray
		Petit Sable
		Piton
		Pointe aux Piments
		Poudre D'Or
		Quatre Soeur
		Riviere de Creoles
		Roches Noires
		Rose Belle
		Triolet
		Union Park
NAMIBIA		
Walvis Bay		Arandis
Keetmanshoop		Uis
Windhoek		Maltahohe
Tsumeb		Rehoboth
Grootfontein		Bethanie
Rundu		Outapi
		Ruacana
SOUTH AFRICA		
Nelson Mandela Bay	Ukhahlamba	Buffalo City
City of Johannesburg	Motheo	Kopanong
Tshwane Metro	Umzinyathi	Masilonyana
eThekwini	Greater Sekhukhune	Lesedi
City of Cape Town	Emakhazeni	Msunduzi
	Southern District	Endumeni
	Frances Baard	Mookgopong
	Cape Winelands	Bela-Bela
		Mbombela
		Umjindi
		Lekwa-Teemane
		Merafong City
		Umsobomvu
		Sol Plaatjie
		Breede Valley

ANNEX B: Councillors interviewed

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
LESOTHO						
Maseru						
Lekoane	Ranteli	Lithoteng		Male	LCD	
Lekwene	Zacharia	Maseru Municipality		Male	LCD	
Lempetje	Malerato	Thamae	Female		LCD	
Morahanye	Malijane	Maseru Municipality	Female		LCD	
Masumu	Masumu	Ratau		Male	LCD	
Matsoso	Kuenane	Likotsi		Male		Traditional Chief
Mohlakola	Matieho	Ratau	Female		LCD	
Mokooane	Mateboho	Stadium Area	Female		LCD	
Mothobi	Fusi	Ratau		Male	LCD	
Nchothi	Mathabo	Makhoarane	Female			BAC
Nkohli	Matsepiso	Makhoarane	Female		LCD	
Nyai	Mkau	Maseru DC		Male	LCD	
Pentse	Pentse	Ratau		Male	LCD	
Talanyane	Tsepo	Makhoarane		Male	LCD	
Tefo	Matefo	Ratau	Female		LCD	
Telekoa	Tlhako	Makhoarane		Male	LCD	
Theko	Mpiti Khoabane	Ratau		Male		Traditional Chief
Butha-Buthe						
Majono	Mamotsoane	Butha Buthe District	Female		LCD	
Mokoko	Malesoetsa	Moteng	Female		LCD	
Moreki	Matau	Moteng	Female		LCD	
Nhlapho	Malan	Ntelle		Male	LCD	
Ntili	Mothobi	Moteng		Male		Independent
Tjekola	Moruti	Ntelle		Male	LCD	
Leribe						
Khethisa	Makhethisa	Serupane	Female			Traditional Chief
Khoboso Mantso	Mathato	Khomokhoana	Female			BNP
Lemao	Mamosenyehi	Khomokhoana				Independent
Letsela	Mateisi	Serupane	Female		LCD	
Mathata	Majakathala	Khomokhoana		Male		LPC
Monyatso	Monaleng	Serupane		Male	LCD	
Pokane	Mamontso	Serupane	Female		LCD	
Toeba	Matankiso	Khomokhoana	Female		LCD	
Tsietso	Matankiso	Serupane	Female		LCD	
Berea						
Masopha	Moeketsi	Motanasela		Male		Traditional Chief
Mohlakola	Maeeane	Motanasela		Male		LPC
Monyolo	Maisaac	Mapoteng	Female		LCD	
Mosoeu	Mamatseliso	Motanasela	Female		LCD	
Phapano	Bulara	Mapoteng		Male		Independent
Pitso	Malipuo	Matanasela	Female		LCD	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Potlakisane	Mateboho	Motanasela	Female		LCD	
Pule	Pule	Motanasela		Male	LCD	
Santi	Mantsoaki	Mapoteng	Female		LCD	
Sello	Manapo	Mapoteng	Female		LCD	
Tlalinyane	Sebete	Motanasela		Male	LCD	
Mafeteng						
Khotle	Zolo	Mafeteng		Male	LCD	
Mahao	Marefiloe	Mathula	Female			Traditional Chief
Mahao	Mafa	Mafeteng District		Male		Traditional Chief
Makheta	Manthisane	Makaota	Female		LCD	
Malefane	Maneo	Makaota	Female		LCD	
Maluke	Thaka - banna	Mathula		Male		Traditional Chief
Masilo	Manthabeleng	Mafeteng District	Female		LCD	
Mofolo	Makeiso	Mathula	Female		LCD	
Ranooe	Pulane	Mafeteng	Female		LCD	
Sebele	Mataelo	Mathula	Female		LCD	
Sefali	Theko	Makaota		Male		Traditional Chief
Thatho	Likeleko	Mafeteng District	Female		LCD	
Mohale's Hoek						
Bano	Mosiuao	Thaba Mokhele		Male	LCD	
Bereng	Mamohlalefi	Khoelenya	Female			Traditional Chief
Lebakae	Nkoane	Thaba Mokhele		Male	LCD	
Lesuhlo	Moleboheng	Thaba Mokhele	Female		LCD	
Makhube	Mahlomola	Khoelenya		Male	LCD	
Makopong	Manthatisi	Thaba Mokhele	Female		LCD	
Malebanye	Malebanye	Mohale District		Male		Traditional Chief
Maritintsi	Mampho	Thaba Mokhele	Female		LCD	
Monyatsi	Mapalesa	Thaba Mokhele	Female		LCD	
Mosaola	Joseph T	Khoelenya		Male	LCD	
Motiki	Manthabeleng	Mohale District	Female		LCD	
Motsoloane	Mamoeketsi	Thaba Mokhele	Female		LCD	
Quthing						
Fako	Marapelang	Quthing District	Female		LCD	
Lebasa	Sebuti	Matsatseng		Male		Traditional Chief
Lekhooa	Matebello	Quthing District	Female		LCD	
Lepetla	Paleho	Quthing District		Male	LCD	
Letsie	Toka	Quthing District		Male		Traditional Chief
Letsie	Manthatisi	Mkh'ono	Female			Traditional Chief
Matlama	Makhutlang	Matsatseng	Female		LCD	
Molapo	Kobo-Khobo	Mkh'ono		Male	LCD	
Moleko	Manthabiseng	Matsatseng	Female			Independent
Mphoko	Mapoloko	Mkh'ono	Female		LCD	
Ranthamane	Tumisang	Quthing District		Male	LCD	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Sehloli	Evaristus	Mkh'ono		Male		Independent
Tsoho	Patience	Matsatseng	Female			Independent
MAURITIUS						
Beau - Bassin/Rose-Hill						
Doucette Scarlett	Marcel Marie	Beau - Bassin/Rose-Hill	Female		PMXD	
Frans Lisianne Mirella	Chauvin Marie	Beau - Bassin/Rose-Hill	Female		MR	
Lovena	Sowkhee	Beau - Bassin/Rose-Hill	Female		Labour Party	
Mahashuvarum	Andee	Beau - Bassin/Rose-Hill		Male	MR	
Panchoo	Varouna	Beau - Bassin/Rose-Hill	Female		Labour Party	
Raman	Shaik	Beau - Bassin/Rose-Hill	Female		Labour Party	
Black River						
Cervaux	Sylvie Nicole	Black River	Female			Independent
Dolrette	Jeanne	Black River	Female			Independent
Erriah	Yolanda Marie	Black River	Female			Independent
Grosset	Dorina	Black River	Female			Independent
Niole	Jeanette	Black River	Female			Independent
Parker Suzelle	Doris Marie	Black River	Female			Independent
Perrine	Marie Therese	Black River	Female			Independent
Raggoo	Laxmi	Black River	Female			Independent
Ram Isabelle	Marie Pamela	Black River	Female			Independent
Pamplemousses						
Arjoon	Bhooneshwrsing	Pamplemousses		Male	Labour Party	
Arulandoo	Samy	Pamplemousses		Male		Independent
Aubert	Maire Noelle	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Bhurdool	Deepa	Pamplemousses	Female		Alliance Sociale	
Boygah	Luchoomun Deveena	Pamplemousses	Female		Alliance Sociale	
Buljeeon	Shri Vishan	Pamplemousses		Male		Independent
Chinapiel	Nima	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Chummun	Satyam	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Dookarun	Rani	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Ghoorbin	Sashiv Kumar	Pamplemousses		Male		MMM
Heeramun	Shivraj	Pamplemousses		Male	Labour Party	
Hois Martin-Bardin	Claudinette Shirley	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Jhowry	Mileswaree	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Jogessur	Sooriaydho	Pamplemousses		Male	Labour Party	
Jokhoo	Nareshkumaising	Pamplemousses		Male		Independent
Kawol	Davanand	Pamplemousses		Male		MMM
Khedhoo	Rozy	Pamplemousses				Independent
Khetha	Damini	Pamplemousses	Female			
Kistnen	Krishna	Pamplemousses		Male		
Lagaiete	Paulette	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Legallant	Marie Guillmette	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Nairu	Chengappa	Pamplemousses		Male		Independent

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Ragoobar	Sunali	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Ramkissoon	Mahess	Pamplemousses		Male		Independent
Saheeda	Husnoo Bibi	Pamplemousses	Female			
Simanarain	Noella	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Sooklall	Pran	Pamplemousses		Male		Independent
Toofanny	Aruna	Pamplemousses	Female			Independent
Grand Port/Sava						
Appadoo	Veeraj	Grand Port/Savanne		Male		Independent
Auckle	Oumesh	Grand Port/Savanne		Male		Independent
Baboolall	Angeerah	Grand Port/Savanne		Male	Labour Party	
Barah	Sunilduth	Grand Port/Savanne		Male		Independent
Botte	Marie Blancheneige	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Calloo	Ghanraj	Grand Port/Savanne		Male		Independent
Clarisse	Marie Claire	Grand Port/Savanne	Female		Labour Party	
Daumoo	Roodredeo	Grand Port/Savanne		Male		Independent
Dawa	Devina	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Dussoye	Sitwanatee	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Goonwantee	Clarisse	Grand Port/Savanne	Female		Labour Party	
Govinden	Pamela	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Hadeen	Bhoodevi	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Hureeram	Sooryadoo	Grand Port/Savanne		Male	Labour Party	
Hurnarain	Juddice	Grand Port/Savanne		Male		Independent
Lagaillarde	Marie Joceline	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Mirelle	Maria	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Naga	Sunil	Grand Port/Savanne		Male	Labour Party	
Needlhoo	Premchand	Grand Port/Savanne		Male	Labour Party	
Parmanand	Dwarkasingh	Grand Port/Savanne		Male	Labour Party	
Pillay	Latchamana	Grand Port/Savanne	Female		Labour Party	
Ramdharee	Soojata	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Ramduth	Basenoo	Grand Port/Savanne		Male	Labour Party	
Ramgoolan	Asha	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Ramkissoon	Mohinee	Grand Port/Savanne	Female		Alliance Sociale	
Ranmomdhur	Beedeeawtee	Grand Port/Savanne	Female		Labour Party	
Tanujadevi	Sookram	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Toinette	Ygette	Grand Port/Savanne	Female			Independent
Moka/Flacq						
Gookorlok	Aartee	Moka/Flacq	Female		Labour Party	
Jhundoo	Reeta	Moka/Flacq	Female			Independent
Mahadu	Sitwantee	Moka/Flacq		Male	Labour Party	
Ramdoyal	Syamla	Moka/Flacq	Female		Labour Party	
Vacoas Phoenix						
Etwaroo	Madvi	Vacoas Phoenix	Female		Labour Party	
Koonbee	Dabydoyal	Vacoas Phoenix	Female		Labour Party	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Sayed Nayim	Beekawoo	Vacoas Phoenix		Male	Labour Party	
Port Louis Municipality						
Back	Mary Rosemary	Port Louis Municipality	Female		Labour Party	
David Gracieuse	Jocelyn	Port Louis Municipality		Male	PMXD	
Kelvin Alcindor	Mike Keisly				PMXD	
Polmoyre	Mirella	Port Louis Municipality	Female		Labour Party	
Vadachellemo	Lunika	Port Louis Municipality	Female		Labour Party	
NAMIBIA						
Erongo						
Eises	Helmine	Uis	Female			UDF
Garas	Theress	Uis	Female		Swapo Party	
Herero	Francina	Walvis Bay	Female			COD
Kandjala	Adeheid	Walvis Bay	Female		Swapo Party	
Kauendji	Elizabeth	Arandis	Female			COD
Likoa	Magdalena	Walvis Bay	Female			DTA
Muhuurua	Daniel Utaapi	Arandis		Male	Swapo Party	
Namupala	Justine	Arandis	Female		Swapo Party	
Swaartbooi	Abrosius	Uis		Male		
Vushona	Johannes	Walvis Bay		Male	Swapo Party	
Hardap						
Beukes	Linda Lelanie	Rehoboth	Female		Swapo Party	
Hans Jacobus	Joseph	Maltahohe		Male	Swapo Party	
McNab Sherally	Cecilia Cornelia	Rehoboth	Female		Swapo Party	
Pieters	Karolina Elsie	Maltahohe	Female		Swapo Party	
Pimpanus Dax	Goerge	Rehoboth		Male	Swapo Party	
Swartbooi	Lena Magdalena	Maltahohe	Female			COD
Benz	Katrina	Rehoboth	Female			DTA
Karas						
Brandt	Lena	Bethanie	Female		Swapo Party	
Brown	Bazil	Keetmanshoop		Male	Swapo Party	
Elago	Fiina	Keetmanshoop	Female		Swapo Party	
Fredricks	Anna	Bethanie	Female			DTA
Iikela	Regina	Bethanie	Female		Swapo Party	
Losper	Arnold	Keetmanshoop		Male		COD
Kavango						
Kauma	Victoria	Rundu	Female		Swapo Party	
Mukoja	Joseph	Rundu		Male	Swapo Party	
Shikerete	Selegius	Rundu		Male		COD
Khomas						
Berietus	Kandundu	City of Windhoek		Male		Nudo
Kafula	Agnes	City of Windhoek	Female		Swapo Party	
Schneider	Ilme	City of Windhoek	Female			DTA
Trepper	Elaine	City of Windhoek	Female		Swapo Party	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Omusati						
Adona	G	Ruacana	Female		Swapo Party	
Ankylya	J	Outapi		Male	Swapo Party	
Kamati	B	Outapi	Female		Swapo Party	
Kayone	Sacki	Ruacana	Female		Swapo Party	
Kornelius	Lazarus	Ruacana		Male	Swapo Party	
Lukuambe	A	Outapi	Female		Swapo Party	
Oshikoto						
Shililifa	Kaija	Tsumeb	Female		Swapo Party	
Sipunga	Daniel	Tsumeb		Male	Swapo Party	
Otjozondjupa						
Botha	Hendrik	Grootfontein		Male		RP
Hangula	Paulus	Grootfontein		Male	Swapo Party	
Taukuheke	Selma	Grootfontein	Female		Swapo Party	
SOUTH AFRICA						
Eastern Cape						
Bobani	Mongamedi	Nelson Mandela Bay		Male		UDM
Cekisani	Bobby	Nelson Mandela Bay		Male		DA
Cupido	John	Buffalo City		Male		DA
de Bruin	Margaretha	Ukhahlamba	Female			DA
Elia	Ida	Ukhahlamba	Female		ANC	
Jantjies	Nomakwezi Marjorie	Nelson Mandela Bay	Female		ANC	
Kente	Zodwa	Buffalo City	Female		ANC	
Lengs	Nonkongozelo	Elundini	Female		ANC	
Lesley Lowe	Margaret	Nelson Mandela Bay	Female			DA
Leteba	Mamelo Patience	Elundini	Female		ANC	
Lindoor	Jan Stephanus	Nelson Mandela Bay		Male		ID
Lotsha	Ntombekhaya	Buffalo City	Female		ANC	
Magashela	Loyiso	Ukhahlamba		Male	ANC	
Mananga	Thelma	Buffalo City	Female		ANC	
Marawu	Thandiswa	Ukhahlamba	Female		ANC	
May Frolick	Shirley	Nelson Mandela Bay	Female		ANC	
Mcileka	Monde	Buffalo City		Male		PAC
Menge		Buffalo City	Female		ANC	
Mhlola	Ntombizandile	Buffalo City	Female		ANC	
Mlomo	Linda	Nelson Mandela Bay	Female		ANC	
Mntwapi	Ntombizandile	Buffalo City	Female			UDM
Motlooi	Xoliswa Gloria	Ukhahlamba	Female		ANC	
Mtyali	Nozibele	Ukhahlamba	Female		ANC	
Myira	Thabo	Buffalo City		Male	ANC	
Pungwani	Zolani	Malwtswai		Male	ANC	
Ranyele	Itumelong	Nelson Mandela Bay	Female		ANC	
Salman	Bongani	Elundini		Male	ANC	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Sauls August	Helen Mercedes	Nelson Mandela Bay	Female		ANC	
Seki	Mpumelelo	Nelson Mandela Bay		Male	ANC	
Sityi	Nombini	Buffalo City	Female		ANC	
Sokudela	Edith Nomathokazi	Ukhahlamba	Female		ANC	
Williams	Charmaine	Nelson Mandela Bay	Female		ANC	
Free State						
Botha	Phillipus Theunis	Masilonyana		Male		DA
Chalale	Mothibi Roseline	Masilonyana	Female		ANC	
Coakley	Winfred	Kopanong	Female		ANC	
Duma	Everlyn Hlekiwe	Masilonyana	Female		ANC	
Erasmus	Joseph	Mangaung		Male	ANC	
Hagemann	Helena	Kopanong	Female			DA
Jacobs	Thandiswa	Mangaung	Female		ANC	
Janse van Rensburg	Abraham	Kopanong		Male		DA
Kgoe	Seadimo Lydia	Masilonyana	Female		ANC	
Khutlane	Susan M	Mangaung	Female		ANC	
Khwinana	Matshediso	Kopanong	Female		ANC	
Kopane	Patricia	Mangaung	Female			DA
Leshosi	Lindiwe	Masilonyana	Female		ANC	
Letlaka	Lefulefele	Mangaung	Female		ANC	
Maema	Mabinare	Kopanong	Female		ANC	
Mafa	Nontutuzela Gladys	Masilonyana	Female		ANC	
Martens	Itumeleng William	Masilonyana		Male	ANC	
Matwa	Thomas	Kopanong		Male	ANC	
Mgqaliso	Nombomvu	Kopanong	Female		ANC	
Mothupi	Mitta	Kopanong	Female		ANC	
Ntombise	Ramoeletsi	Mangaung	Female		ANC	
Oganne	Motlhabane	Mangaung		Male		UCDP
Peterson	Magazine	Kopanong	Female		ANC	
Phalatse	Lebona	Mangaung		Male	ANC	
Saohatse	Georgina	Mangaung	Female		ANC	
Sekele	Mantoa	Masilonyana	Female		ANC	
Toba	Auma	Mangaung	Female		ANC	
Toki	Xolile	Masilonyana		Male	ANC	
van Straaten	Jacob	Masilonyana		Male		VFP
Gauteng						
Boloyi	Magdelene	City of Tshwana	Female		ANC	
Boya	Ruth Margaret	City of Tshwana	Female		ANC	
Buthelezi	Michael	City of Tshwana		Male	ANC	
Chauke	Mphoreng	City of Tshwana	Female		ANC	
Clarke	Suzanne	City of Joburg	Female			DA
Dani	Linda Bridgett	City of Tshwane	Female		ANC	
Ebula	Thomas Math	City of Tshwane		Male		PAC

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Gwebu	Sinah	City of Joburg	Female		ANC	
Kekana	Cedrick	City of Tshwane		Male	ANC	
Ledwaba	Dolly	City of Tshwane	Female		ANC	
Mabowa	Bojane	City of Tshwane		Male		Azapo
Madonsela	Vangile	Lesedi District	Female		ANC	
Maleka	Tamara	Lesedi District	Female		ANC	
Maloka	Lerato	Lesedi District	Female		ANC	
Marais	Hermanus	Lesedi District		Male		DA
Boshoff	Marie	Lesedi District	Female			VFP
Minnaar	Louisa	Lesedi District	Female			DA
Minnaar	Flip	Lesedi District		Male		DA
Mkhubu	Sibongile	Lesedi District	Female		ANC	
Mokoena	Jacob L	Lesedi District		Male	ANC	
Nontenja	Christobel	City of Joburg	Female			UDM
Ntuli	Mzobanzi	City of Joburg		Male		IFP
Nyambe	Thembalethu	City of Joburg		Male	ANC	
Pillay	Sigamoney	City of Joburg		Male		ID
Thipe	Sonto	City of Tshwane	Female		ANC	
Twala	Gabriel	City of Tshwane		Male	ANC	
Twala	Phindy	Lesedi District	Female		ANC	
van der Merwe	Maria Theresa	City of Joburg	Female		ANC	
KwaZulu Natal						
Ahmed	Najma	Msunduzi	Female		ANC	
Bhengu	Partric	Msunduzi		Male		IFP
Bisram	Pravesh	Edumeni		Male	ANC	
Brown	Brigget	Umzinyathi	Female			IFP
Chetty	Pops	Msunduzi		Male	ANC	
Dlamini	Tholakele	Msunduzi	Female		ANC	
Gobind	Rabichandra	eThekwini		Male	ANC	
Gumede	Vela	eThekwini		Male		IFP
Hlatswayo	Zanele	Msunduzi	Female		ANC	
Hoorzuk	Diana Gloria	eThekwini	Female		ANC	
Lawrence	Judith	Msunduzi	Female			DA
Lyne	Sandra	Msunduzi	Female			DA
Malunga	Eric	Umzinyathi		Male	ANC	
Mbatha	Winfreda	Endumeni	Female			IFP
Mchunu	Thembisile	Umzinyathi	Female			IFP
Mkhize	Nomzamo Irene	eThekwini	Female		ANC	
Mthembu	Khanyisile	eThekwini	Female		ANC	
Ngcobo	Siphiwe	Msunduzi	Female		ANC	
Nkosi	Dudu	Endumeni	Female			DA
Ntuli	Sibusiso	Msunduzi		Male		IFP
Nukani	Rita	Edumeni	Female		ANC	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Nxele	Petrous	Umzinyathi	Female	Male		IFP
Peer	Fawzia	eThekwini	Female		ANC	
Pillay	Rajamah	Msunduzi	Female			ACDP
Prinsloo	Billie Dorothea	eThekwini				DA
Reddy	Visviy Gopha	eThekwini	Female	Male	ANC	
Seymar	Shirley	Msunduzi				IFP
Singh	Dharamlal	Umzinyathi		Male	ANC	
Xulu	Bongani	Umzinyathi	Female	Male	ANC	
Young	Nokuthula	eThekwini	Female		ANC	
Zondi	Phillip Dolo	Msunduzi			ANC	
Limpopo						
Bapela	Mohlodi	Makhuduthamaga	Female		ANC	
Boikhutso	Rejoice Mmakgabo	Bela Bela Municipality			ANC	
Espach	Cornelius	Mookgopong		Male		VFP
Gravett	Don	Bela Bela Municipality	Female	Male		DA
Kekana	Paulina Monene	Bela Bela Municipality	Female		ANC	
Kgosana	Raisibe Elizabeth	Mookgopong	Female		ANC	
Lamola	Sarah	Mookgopong			ANC	
Maepa	Malakia	Greater Sekhukhune		Male		Azapo
Mahlangu	Mhawukelwa	Bela Bela Municipality	Female	Male	ANC	
Makgoba	Ramadimetja	Bela Bela Municipality	Female		ANC	
Maloka	Fatima Ellen	Bela Bela Municipality	Female		ANC	
Maluleka	Spando Evelyn	Bela Bela Municipality	Female		ANC	
Mampuru	Tfaytane Kgwedi	Greater Sekhukhune			ANC	
Marota	Colman	Greater Sekhukhune		Male	ANC	
Maseko	Funani Jerry	Greater Sekhukhune	Female	Male	ANC	
Masemola	Angel Selete	Sekhukhune	Female		ANC	
Matemane	Windy	Greater Sekhukhune	Female		ANC	
Modibetsane	Nomvula	Greater Sekhukhune			ANC	
Moeletsi	Zachariah	Bela Bela Municipality	Female	Male	ANC	
Mokoka	Kedibone	Sekhukhune	Female		ANC	
Monanye	Maria	Bela Bela Municipality	Female		ANC	
Monyamane	Sarah	Mookgopong			ANC	
Motene	Kgwadikatsoga	Greater Sekhukhune		Male	ANC	
Pretorius	Johannes	Mookgopong	Female	Male		VFP
Radebe	Ramokone Matilda	Bela Bela Municipality			ANC	
Rakgwale	Motlhabing	Mookgopong	Female	Male	ANC	
Roothman	Vear	Mookgopong	Female			DA
Seanego	Lina Ramasela	Mookgopong	Female		ANC	
Sindane	Veliswa	Greater Sekhukhune	Female		ANC	
Tshwane	Mahleako	Greater Sekhukhune			ANC	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Mpumalanga						
Botha	Amanda Albertini	Emakhazeni	Female			DA
Charles	Thulisile	Mbombela	Female		ANC	
Chibi	Doreen Thabisile	Umjindi	Female		ANC	
Chiloane	Sabeth	Mbombela	Female		ANC	
Mboshana	Sibusiso	Mbombela		Male		PAC
Hadebe	Michael	Emakhazeni		Male	ANC	
Jacobs	Ellsabe	Umjindi	Female			DA
Lange	Felicity	Mbombela	Female			DA
Lukhele	Richard Vusi	Umjindi		Male	ANC	
Mabila	Jacky	Emakhazeni		Male	ANC	
Mabuza	Nokuthula	Umjindi	Female		ANC	
Mac Pherson	Christian Daniel	Mbombela		Male	ANC	
Magugula	Pat	Umjindi	Female		ANC	
Magugula	Michael	Umjindi		Male		PAC
Maseko	Constance	Mbombela	Female		ANC	
Mashele	Nomhle	Emakhazeni	Female		ANC	
Matume	Nester B	Mbombela	Female		ANC	
Mdebele	Mfishane Elphas	Mbombela		Male		ID
Mohlala	Linkie	Emakhazeni	Female		ANC	
Motau	Clarah	Emakhazeni	Female		ANC	
Ndlandla	Veronica	Mbombela	Female		ANC	
Ndlovu	Derrick	Umjindi		Male	ANC	
Ngwenya	Xolani	Emakhazeni		Male	ANC	
Nkambule	Thandeni Germina	Umjindi	Female		ANC	
Nkosi	Thembeka Elias	Mbombela		Male	ANC	
Radebe	Emily Sonto	Emakhazeni	Female		ANC	
Rebecca Manyisa	Thembisile	Umjindi	Female		ANC	
Soko	Iris Thandi	Emakhazeni	Female		ANC	
Tau	Cecilia	Mbombela	Female		ANC	
Zulu	Siphiwe Minica	Umjindi	Female		ANC	
Zunguze	Happy	Umjindi	Female		ANC	
North West						
Buys	Ameline	Lekwa-Teemane	Female			DA
Duiker	Kebogile Lydia	Lekwa-Teemane	Female		ANC	
Hattingh	Charmaine	Southern District	Female			DA
Jansen van Vuuren	Valerie	Merafong City	Female			DA
Jasson	Mpho Mina	Lekwa-Teemane	Female		ANC	
Landsberg	Johannes	Southern District		Male		DA
Lee	Matseliso	Southern District	Female		ANC	
Letebele	Mosimanyane	Lekwa-Teemane		Male	ANC	
Madikizela	Nomthinjana	Merafong City	Female		ANC	
Makaka	Melba Nonkanyiso	Merafong City	Female		ANC	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Mamabolo	Nomthinjana	Southern District	Female		ANC	
Mapefane	Victoria	Merafong City	Female		ANC	
Martins	Magogodi	Southern District	Female		ANC	
Mathikge	Mantsho	Merafong City	Female		ANC	
Mathiso	Zibonele	Merafong City		Male	ANC	
Modise	Kate	Lekwa-Teemane	Female		ANC	
Moloi	Boitumelo	Southern District	Female		ANC	
Moraladi	Ditiro Meshack	Lekwa-Teemane		Male	ANC	
Motladifedile	Rebecca	Lekwa-Teemane	Female		ANC	
Motshabi	Aletta Letsie	Merafong City	Female		ANC	
Moweli	Zanisile	Southern District		Male	ANC	
Mxabano	Zinakile Flasie	Merafong City		Male		UDM
Ngantweni	Vuyani	Merafong City		Male	ANC	
Ngcobo	Florence	Merafong City	Female		ANC	
Ngxabani	Stella Xoliswa	Merafong City	Female		ANC	
Nonglula	Simakaleng Lilian	Merafong City	Female		ANC	
Pecil	Gloria	Lekwa-Teemane	Female		ANC	
Percival	Boet	Lekwa-Teemane		Male		VFP
Sebata	Julia	Southern District	Female		ANC	
Segakweng	Mankane	Merafong City	Female		ANC	
Segalo	Kabelo Manfred	Lekwa-Teemane		Male	ANC	
Van Jaarsveld	Rykhaard	Southern District		Male		VFP
Zwane	Thokozile	Southern District	Female		ANC	
Northern Cape						
Afrika	Angelina	Umsobomvu	Female		ANC	
Afrika	Michael	Frances Baard		Male	ANC	
Beyleveldt	Maria	Frances Baard	Female			DA
Booysen	Helen	Frances Baard	Female		ANC	
Chawarisang	Maria	Frances Baard	Female		ANC	
Coutts	Patricia	Sol Plaatje	Female			DA
de Kock	Katriena	Frances Baard	Female		ANC	
Doig	John Duff	Umsobomvu		Male		ID
Fillis	Devona	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
Gopane	Dikeledi	Frances Baard	Female		ANC	
Hermans	Nombulelo	Umsobomvu	Female		ANC	
Jabetla	Anthony	Frances Baard		Male	ANC	
Jokka	Dannis	Umsobomvu		Male	ANC	
Lenyibi	Patrick	Sol Plaatje		Male	ANC	
Leven	Rieta	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
Ludick	Rosy	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
Mdala	Nolizwe	Umsobomvu	Female		ANC	
Modise	Laurah	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
Mogwazeni	Monah	Frances Baard	Female		ANC	

Surname	Name	Council	Female	Male	Ruling party	Non-ruling
Mohulatsi	Bertha	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
Moremedi	Collin	Sol Plaatje		Male	ANC	
Mthukwane	Keitumetse	Frances Baard	Female		ANC	
Nene	Bukelwa Sylvia	Umsobomvu	Female		ANC	
Ngxazana	Ywendolike	Umsobomvu	Female		ANC	
Nkomo	Sebina	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
Reed	Juliet	Umsobomvu	Female		ANC	
Sebego	Mary	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
Steyn	Jacobs	Sol Plaatje		Male	ANC	
Stubbe	Dirk	Frances Baard		Male		DA
Thole	Monica	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
van Niekerk	Michiel	Umsobomvu		Male		DA
Williams	Lorette	Sol Plaatje	Female		ANC	
Western Cape						
Arendse	Marcia	Cape Town	Female		ANC	
Brink	Christelene	Cape Winelands	Female		ANC	
Bushwana	Nonkosazana	Cape Winelands	Female		ANC	
Claasen	Cynthia	Cape Town	Female			DA
Figlan	Archibold	Cape Town		Male		DA
Fortuin	Bettie	Breede Valley	Female		ANC	
Hani	Mpumi	Cape Winelands	Female		ANC	
Janse van Rensburg	Antoinette	Breede Valley	Female			DA
Jantjies	Lillian	Cape Winelands	Female			ACDP
Kahlberg	Norman	Cape Winelands		Male		DA
Kotyi	Princess	Cape Town	Female		ANC	
Mfutwana	Stella	Cape Winelands	Female		ANC	
Mkutswana	Mthwalo	Cape Town		Male	ANC	
Mthini	Zinzo	Cape Winelands		Male	ANC	
Nel	Naomi	Breede Valley	Female			DA
Ngxazana	Gwendoline	Umsobomvu	Female		ANC	
Pheko	Edmund	Cape Winelands		Male	ANC	
Philander	Cynthia	Cape Winelands	Female		ANC	
Richards	Lesley	Breede Valley		Male	ANC	
Ross	Solomon	Cape Winelands		Male		ID
Schaifer	Deborah	Cape Town	Female			DA
Serritslev	Anthea	Cape Town	Female			DA
Sheldon	Eileen	Breede Valley	Female			DA
Sidinana	Lungiswa	Cape Town	Female			ID
Titus	Alice	Breede Valley	Female		ANC	
Truter	Beatrice	Cape Town	Female		ANC	
van der Westhuizen	Sara	Breede Valley	Female			VFP
Watkyns	Brian	Cape Town		Male		DA

ANNEX C: Structured one-on-one questionnaire

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please circle one response only:

1. Are you a) Female b) Male

2. What is your age? a) 18 - 30 b) 31 - 40 c) 41 - 50 d) 50 - 60 e) 61+

3. How many dependants do you have? a) None b) 1 - 3 c) 4 - 8 d) 8+

4. What is your current marital status? a) Married b) Divorced c) Separated d) Single e) Cohabiting f) Other

5. What is your highest level of education? a) Primary school b) Secondary school c) Tertiary Education d) Vocational education e) Adult literacy education

6. How many terms have you been a councillor? a) Less than one term b) One term c) Two terms d) Three terms e) Other

7. Is your constituency/locality: a) Urban b) Rural c) Peri Urban/ informal d) Other

8. Have you travelled?
Circle Y=Yes/N=No

Outside your district	Y/N
Outside your province	Y/N
Within Southern Africa	Y/N
Within Africa	Y/N
Outside Africa	Y/N

HOW YOU GOT INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ROLE DEFINITION

9. Did you get into this position through: a) A party quota b) A legislated quota c) Independent of a political party d) Pressure groups (eg rate payers). e) Standing for election on behalf of your party f) Any other way

Note: if the answer to 9 is a) or b) go onto question 10. Answer c -f move on to question 11.

10.If you got into this position through a special measure do you feel

a) Positive about how you got here and your role.

b) Others feel you are a token because of how you got in

c) This has given you a special advantage in carrying out your role.

d) This undermines your role.

e)Initially made me feel negative, but now the situation is becoming normal.

f) None of the above.

11. Which of the following statements best describes why you are in local government? I am in local government because:

a) I am passionate. b) I want to serve my party. c) It is a job

d) It is a stepping stone to higher political office. e) Lobby groups put pressure on me.

12. Which of the following statements best describes your role in local government. *Choose only one.*

I am in local government primarily to serve: a) My political party b) Women c) Youth d) Men e) Women and men

GENDER ISSUES *Please circle one response only:*

13. Gender means: a) Women's fight for their rights b) Women c) Socially constructed differences between men and women d) Women taking over power

14. Do you regard yourself as a feminist? a)Yes b) No c)Unsure

Definition: A feminist is a person whose beliefs and behaviour are based on the social, political and economic equality of the sexes.

15. Do women in local government have different concerns and interests to men? a)Yes b) No c)Unsure

16. Explain:

17. Do women in elected office have a responsibility to raise other women's issues? a)Yes b) No c)Unsure

18. If yes, explain:

19. Can men in elected office represent women's issues? a)Yes b) No c)Unsure

20. Explain:

21. Are you aware of	The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	Y/N
	The Beijing Platform for Action	Y/N
	The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development	Y/N
	The existence of a national gender policy	Y/N
	The existence of gender structures at local level	Y/N

GENDER AND GOVERNANCE *Please circle one response only:*

22. Do you believe in the use of quotas for boosting women's participation in local government: a) Yes b) No c) Unsure

23. Do you think there are barriers to women participating in local government? a) Yes b) No c) Unsure

24. If the answer is yes, list three of these in order of priority, as well as how they can be overcome:

Barrier	How overcome
1.	
2.	
3.	

25. Which of the following statements do you agree or disagree with regarding women councillors:

- They seldom speak in meetings — Agree/Disagree
- They get interrupted when they speak — Agree/Disagree
- They are made to feel uncomfortable by their male colleagues — Agree/Disagree
- Speak often and are listened to — Agree/Disagree
- Are listened to only if they are well educated and assertive — Agree/Disagree
- Prepare better for Council meetings than men — Agree/Disagree

26. Which of the following statements do you agree or disagree with:

- There is no difference between the way that women and men lead — Agree/Disagree
- Women are more sensitive to local concerns than men — Agree/Disagree
- Women are better team leaders than men — Agree/Disagree
- Women are able to manage difference — Agree/Disagree
- Men are more decisive than women — Agree/Disagree
- Women are more honest than men — Agree/Disagree
- Women are less corrupt than men — Agree/Disagree
- Men are able to manage budgets better than women — Agree/Disagree
- Men are quicker and more willing to learn than women — Agree/Disagree
- Women are more likely to admit that they have made a mistake — Agree/Disagree
- Men are more effective at networking than women — Agree/Disagree
- Women are more accessible than men — Agree/Disagree
- Women have to work harder to be recognized — Agree/Disagree
- Women and men have complementary strengths, all of which are important to decision making — Agree/Disagree

27. Do you think there is a link between gender and democracy? a)Yes b) No c)Unsure

28. If your answer to question 27 is "yes", what is the reason?

a) Because women make up half the population and therefore should participate equally.

b) Because women have different priorities and approaches to men.

c) Both a) and b)

d) Unsure

29. Do you think that attitudes towards women in local government?

a) Are becoming more positive?

b) Are becoming more negative

c) Have not changed?

d) Are taking a long time to change?

30. In the next election do you think that voters will be: a) More open to voting for women?

b) Still reluctant to vote for women

c) Indifferent?

ANNEX D: Officials and experts interviewed

Lesotho

Futho-Letsatsi, Matau, Director in the Ministry of Gender
Lepono, Mathabiso, Minister of Gender
Mapetla, Matseliso, Gender specialist at the National University of Lesotho
Matabane, Moliehi, Permanent Secretary Local Government
Ahal, Rajeev, Advisor decentralisation and rural development, GTZ
Pholo, Rethabile, Public relations coordinator IEC Lesotho
Sekatle, Matumelo Pontso, Minister of Local Government
Tolwane, Sekwala, Leader of the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP)

Mauritius

Bappoo, Sheila, Chair Women's League of the Labour Party, Minister of Social Security and National Solidarity
Chauvin, Marie France Lisianne Responsible for the Women's League of Mouvement Republicain
Devi, Dookun Leela, Chair Women's League of the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien, Former Minister of Arts and Culture, Member of Parliament
Dhookira, Chit, Former Town Clerk, writer
Kasenally, Roukaya, Senior Lecturer in Mass Communication of the University of Mauritus
Mathur, R., Professor of Political Science of the University of Mauritius
Moothia, Violette, Chair Women's League of the Parti Mauricien Xavier Duval
Seebun, Indira, Former Mayor, Minister of Women Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare
Valayden, Rama, Leader of Mouvement Republicain, Minister of Human Rights and Attorney General
Virahsawmy, Dev, Former Councillor, Linguist and writer

Namibia

Benjamin,A, Chief Executive Officer, Tsumeb Municipality
da Conceicao, Maria, Executive secretary parliamentary affairs National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)
Getze, Reinhard Kalla, Secretary General Congress of Democrats (CoD)
Hugo,D, Chief Executive Officer, Grootfontein Municipality
Nous-Oas, Maureen, Acting chief administration officer, Association for Local Government in Namibia (ALAN)
Taapopi, Niilo, Chief Executive Officer, City of Windhoek
Ulenga ,Ben, President Congress of Democrats (CoD)

South Africa

Khumalo, Samke, Community Participation and Action Support Coordinator in Gender Programmes
Sebusi, Kele, Gender Manager, Sol Plaatjie Municipality
Semple, Janet, Head of DAWN (DA women's network)

ANNEX E: Civil society focus groups

Lesotho
AEO Agric
Lesotho red cross society
Matsoho a sebeletsan 'metso
M&S building consortium
Mekaling support group
Motlejoeng caterers association
Mountain taxi Association
Mpharane support group
South African ex-miners association
Transformation resource centre (TRC)

Mauritius
Comite Quartier - Camp Levieu
Senior Citizen Association
Movement pour le Progres de Baie du Tombeau (MPBT)
Forces Vives de Roche Bois

Namibia
Ama Buruxa cultural group
Daweb AIDS Club
Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA)
Gospel Mission
Namibia Womens Association (NAWA)
Nambia institute for democracy (NID)
Sister Namibia
Women's action for development (WAD)
Womens Soidtriry Namibia(WSN)

South Africa
ANC Youth League
Centre for Public Participation (CPP)
City of Joburg, region five, ward 83 committee
Commission for Gender Equality
Cooperative Likhanyile Cleaning
Galeshewe community policing forum
Galeshewe constituency office
Galeshewe multipurpose community centre
Ikamvelihle Rehabilitation Centre
Lesedi community services
Local clinic committee, Uitenhage
Midlands Women's Group
National network on violence against women (NNVAW) Northern Cape
National Council of African Women (NCAW)
Othandweni Association for Disabled
South African Youth Council
Targeted AIDS interventions (TAC)
UDM Youth Structure
University of Witwatersrand

ANNEX F: Council meetings observed

Country	Council	Type of council	Date
Lesotho	Ratau	Community council	3-Jul-2006
	Makhoarane	Community council	30-Jun-2006
	Butha-Buthe	District council	14-Jun-2006
	Likila	Community council	6-Jun-2006
	Serupane	Community council	9-Jun-2006
	Mapoteng	Community council	19-Jun-2006
	Matansela	Community council	23-Jun-2006
	Mafeteng	District council	14-Jun-2006
	Mathula	Community council	23-Jun-2006
	Makaota	Community council	22-Jun-2006
	Mohales Hoek	District council	26-Jun-2006
	Khoelenya	Community council	14-Jun-2006
	Thaba-Mokhele	Community council	12-Jun-2006
	Quthing	District council	13-Jun-2006
	Matsatseng	Community council	14-Jun-2006
	Mkh'ono	Community council	16-Jun-2006
Mauritius	Beau-Bassin/ Rose Hill	Municipal council	22-Jun-06
	Vacoas/Phoenix	Municipal council	26-Jul-2006
	Pamlemousses/ Riviere du Rempart	District council	31-Jul-2006
	Grand Port/ Savanne	District council	29-Aug-2006
Namibia	Maltahohe	Village council	19-Jun-2006
	Rehoboth	Town council	26-Oct-2006
	Bethanie	Village council	
	Windhoek	Municipality I	7 June 2006
	Ruacana	Town council	
	Grootfontein	Municipality II	
South Africa	Nelson Mandela Bay	Metro council	22-Jun-2006
	Masilonyana	Local council	6-Jul-2006
	Motheo	District council	30-Jun-2006
	City of Joburg	Metro council	22-Jun-2006
	City of Tshwane	Metro council	22-Jun-2006
	Msunduzi	Local council	26-Jun-2006
	eThekwini	Metro council	29-Jun-2006
	Mookgopong	Local council	26-Jun-2006
	Emakhazeni	District council	26-Jun-2006
	Umjindi	Local council	27-Jun-2006
	Southern District	District council	21- Jun-2006
	Lekwa-Teemane	Local council	4-Jul-2006
	Umsobomvu	Local council	4-Jul-2006
	Sol Plaatjie	Local council	5-Jul-2006
	Breede Valley	Local council	27-Jul-2006

Bibliography

Atkinson, D (2006) "Local Government, Local Governance and Sustainable Development: Getting the parameters right", HSRC Publishers.
Ballington, J (ed) (2004) "The Implementation of Quotas: African Experiences", Quota Report series, IDEA.
Beal J (2005) "Decentralising Government and Centralising Gender in Southern Africa: Lessons from the South African Experience." United Nations research Institute for Social Development Occasional Paper 8
Beall, J (1996) "Urban governance: Why gender matters", UCLG.
Beckman, P.R. and D'Amico F. (eds) (1994) "Women, Gender and World politics: Perspectives, Policies and Prospects." Westport, Bergin
Bentley, K., Cherry, J. & Maphunye, K. (2004) "Guidelines to enhance the representation and participation of women in local government in South Africa." HSRC Publishers
Brill, A. (ed) (1995) "A Rising Voice: Women in Politics World Wide." New York, the Feminist Press.
Britton, H (2003), "From Resistance to Governance: South African Women's Transformation of Parliament", (unpublished)
Commonwealth (2005) Commonwealth Report on the Conduct of Local Elections in Lesotho
Commission on Gender Equality (2006) "Gender Equality in local governance", Commission on Gender Equality.
Cooper and Lybrand (1994) "Women and parliaments in Australia and New Zealand", a discussion paper prepared for the Commonwealth Minister's Conference on the Status of Women (unpublished).
Dahlerup, D (1991) "From a small to a large minority, women in Scandinavian politics" quoted in Virginia Willis, "Public life: Women Make a Difference", Paper for the Expert Group Meeting on the Role of Women in Public Life, DAW, Vienna.
Dahlerup, D (2005) "Increasing Women's Political Representation: New Trends in Gender Quotas" in "Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, A Revised Edition" (2005), International Idea.
DAW (2000) "Public life: women make a difference," in "Women 2000", No 2, 1992
Dollar, D. Fisman, R. and Gatti, R (1999) "Are Women Really the Fairer Sex? Corruption and Women in Government." Policy Research Report on Gender and Development. Working Paper Series No.4. Washington, World Bank.
Frank, Liz (2005) "Namibia update 2005: The 50/50 Campaign: Women and Men in Government- Get the Balance Right" in "Written out: How sexuality is used to attack women's organising", International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and Centre for Women's Global Leadership.
Grimwood, C and Popplestone, R (1993) "Women, Management and Care.", London, MacMillan.
Hapwood, G (2006) "Guide to Namibian Politics", Namibia Institute for Democracy.
Hunter, J (2005) "Spot the difference. Namibia's Political Parties Compared", Namibia Institute for Democracy.
Inter-Parliamentary Union (1994) "Plan of Action to Correct Imbalances in the Participation of Men and Women in Political Life", IPU, Geneva.
Inter-Parliamentary Union (2000) "Politics: Women's Insight." IPU, Geneva.
Joseph, C (2002) "Gender and Local Government" Friederich Ebert Stuftung, Occasional Paper No 13.
Legal Assistance Centre (2004) "Advocacy in action. A guide to influencing decision-making in Namibia", Legal Assistance Centre.
Karam, A. (1998) "Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers" International IDEA.
Karam, A and Ballington, J ed (2005) "Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, Revised Edition" International IDEA.
Litvack, J and Seddon, J (1999) "Decentralisation Briefing Notes", World Bank.
Lowe Morna C (ed)(2004) "Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics" Gender Links.
Macha, K (2003) "The Needs of Local Communities" Friederich Ebert Stiftung and the Namibia Elected Women's Forum.
Molyneux, M (1984) "Mobilisation without Emancipation? Critical Social Policy"
Moser, C. (1993) "Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training." Routledge, London and New York.
Myers, R. (2002) "Local Government, Decentralisation and Gender", paper presented at the Caribbean Conference on Local Government Decentralisation, June 25-28.
Phillips, A. (1991) "Engendering Democracy." Oxford: Policy Press.
Pradesh, R and M (1999) "Panchayats as Inclusive Organisations" World Bank
Randriamaro, Z (2002), "The NEPAD, Gender and the Poverty Trap: The NEPAD and the challenges of financing for development in Africa from a gender perspective", paper presented at the "Conference on Africa and the Development Challenges of the New Millennium, Accra, Ghana".
Reynolds, S et al (2005) "Electoral System Design. The New International IDEA Handbook" International IDEA.
Sachs, A et al. (2001) "Report of the Commission on Constitutional and Electoral Reform" Mauritius.
Samson, Melanie (2005) "Gender Transformative Developmental Local Government? Reinventing the Post Apartheid Local State within the Context of Neo-liberalism", Paper presented at CODESRIA 11th General Assembly, December 6-10, Maputo, Mozambique.
Sweetman, C. (ed) (2000) "Women and Leadership" Oxfam GB.
Tip, I (ed) (2006) "Handbook on legislation and regulations for South Africa's local government elections 2006" IEC and EISA.
UNAM and SARDC-WIDSAA, (2005) "Beyond Inequalities 2005: Women in Namibia", UNAM/ SARDC Windhoek and Harare, 2005
United Nations (1995) "Report of the United Nations to the Fourth World Conference on women" United Nations
United Nations (1995) "The Beijing Platform for Action" United Nations.
United Nations Development Programme (2003) "What does it take to mainstream gender." Discussion paper. UNDP.



"Another path breaking study from Gender Links, which demonstrates the leading role of the SADC countries in our global struggle towards gender balance in politics."

Drude Dahlerup, professor of Political Science, Stockholm University, Sweden.

"This groundbreaking study provides important insights into an arena of governance that is too often overlooked and under-researched from a gender equality perspective. The contributions in this volume reveal that women face persistent challenges, whether being elected to politics or affecting policies at the local or national levels. The book at once highlights the important role that women's mobilisation combined and special measures have played in electing women to local politics, while at the same time highlighting the challenges that women face in influencing policy development and service delivery in Southern Africa. It is essential reading not only for academics and scholars, but also for practitioners, politicians and others seeking enhance women's contribution in local politics."

Julie Ballington, Programme Officer, Programme for Partnership between Men and Women, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva.



"If anyone wonders why and how women make a difference to politics and the quality of democracy, this book provides some answers by focusing on the significance of gender power and gender politics at local government level. I highly recommend this book to scholars, gender activists and the general reader alike. It brings the 'coalface' alive."

Professor Sheila Meintjes, Head of the Department of Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.



"This book is a welcome contribution to herstory. By documenting the stories of women leaders in local government, it begins to fill a big gap. Like *Ringing up the Changes,* it reminds us of the collective we are all part of. It reminds us of our vision of building peace, justice and socio-economic equality by changing patriarchal society so that our lives and those of our daughters, mothers, grandmothers and sisters will be lived without poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS. May many women and men read and be inspired by this book."

- Pregs Govender: Feminist activist, former MP, South Africa.