

At the Coalface

Gender and Local Government in Botswana

Edited by Pamela Mhlanga, Susan Tolmay and Colleen Lowe Morna

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

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Acknowledgements

This report is part of the second phase of the research project that led to the Gender Links (GL) publication: *At the Coalface: Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa*. The aim of the second phase is to extend the research on gender and local government to all of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. The first phase of the research was conducted in four countries: Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa.

The research conducted in Botswana in 2008 involved interviews with 59 councillors in 5 localities and 48 women and men who participated in focus group meetings. Their views and voices bring this report to life and vividly illustrate the importance of local government in the governance of the country, and why gender should be at the heart of this process

Our partner in this project, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) Trust (Botswana) working with local researchers conducted the fieldwork. GL Gender and Governance manager Susan Tolmay coordinated and managed the research project, and GL Manager Alliance and Botswana Office Pamela Mhlanga conducted additional research with the assistance of the WLSA Botswana team. 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.

The report draws on the methodology and concepts in the original study edited by GL Executive Director Colleen Lowe Morna and Susan Tolmay. Pamela Mhlanga compiled, and Susan Tolmay and Colleen Lowe Morna edited the final report.

Our sincere thanks to our sponsors the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) for supporting this research project as part of overall support for the gender and local government project.

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.

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List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ARVs	Anti Retro Virals
BALA	Botswana Association of Local Authorities
BAM	Botswana Alliance Movement
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BDF	Botswana Defence Force
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BIP	Botswana Independence Party
BLP	Botswana Liberal Party
BNCW	Botswana National Council for Women
BNF	Botswana National Front
BMC	Botswana Meat Commission
BURS	Botswana Unified Revenue Service
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
BPP	Botswana People's Party
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDC	Central District Council
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
FPTP	First Past the Post
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GMS	Gender Management System
GU	Gender Unit
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IPU	Inter Parliamentary Union
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
LED	Local Economic Development
LIPWP	Labour Intensive Public Works Programme
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MELS	Marx Engels Lenin Stalin (Movement)
MLG	Ministry of Local Government
MVA	Motor Vehicle Accident
NDF	New Democratic Front
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NSPR	National Strategy for Poverty Reduction
PDL	Poverty Datum Line
PR	Proportional Representation
PS	Permanent Secretary
S & CD	Social and Community Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARDC	Southern African Research and Documentation Centre
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SEDC	South East District Council
SHAA	Self Help Housing Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee
WAD	Women's Affairs Department
WIDSAA	Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness

Foreword



Botswana is considered one of the most stable democracies in the SADC region, with a number of positive indicators of development including high literacy rates, access to education, and health. The country has also done remarkably well in providing universal access to treatment and care for persons living with HIV and AIDS. The estimated number of pregnant women living with HIV who received ARV therapy for preventing mother to child transmission is 95 percent.

Yet gender inequality is pervasive and women's empowerment is far from being realised. The Constitution of Botswana, the source of the rights and freedoms of women, has claw back clauses that fail to address contradictions between customary law and the Bill of Rights, leaving women's rights vulnerable to violation.

The area of gender and governance, particularly women in decision-making in the legislature and local government, reflects the challenges on the ground with regard to women's equal representation and participation in spheres of influence. Botswana has not reached the minimum 30 percent representation in either the legislature (11 percent), or cabinet (25 percent) or local government (19 percent). As the country gears for the 2009 elections there are fears that even these meagre gains could be reversed as few women won the primary elections.

The target date in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development for achieving gender parity in all areas of decision-making is 2015. Although at the time of writing Botswana was not yet a signatory to this Protocol, the target is clearly one that is aspired to. Between now and 2015, Botswana has two elections, in 2009 and 2014. A clear policy and deliberate strategy is needed to radically increase women's representation. This will require a concerted effort, which will include political party leadership, government and civil society. The national gender machinery, led by the Women's Affairs Department in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, has to take a clear lead in engaging all the key stakeholders in this uphill task.

An extension to the original study, *"At the Coalface: Gender and Local Government"* that covered four SADC countries (South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho and Mauritius) this report demonstrates both the challenges and possibilities at the local level. The lesson from the first study is that no country in the region is likely to make the SADC targets without adopting special measures. The example of Lesotho, which has a First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system at the local level but adopted a system of reserved seats for women that are rotated with every new election is pertinent to Botswana, which has a similar electoral system. With 58 percent women in local government, Lesotho is living proof that change is possible.

The evidence gathered in this research shows that even in their small numbers women in Botswana bring different perspectives and interests to local governance, and demonstrate a high level of commitment. They are concerned about every day issues - safety and security, education, infrastructure development. People appreciate their hard work, accessibility, empathy and strong community ties. Both male and female councillors were unanimous that more women are needed to make development and democracy at local government level vibrant and real.

But the mere presence of women in local government is not enough. The numbers must be linked to effective participation and transformation of predominantly male structures and processes, as well as attitudes so that both men and women realise their full potential and make an impact. The recently adopted SADC Gender Protocol is clear that what is sought is not just "jobs for the girls", but gender equality for the region.

So far, Botswana's women's policy and gender programmes have focused on mainstreaming gender at the national level. There is an urgent need for a national strategy to mainstream gender at the local level, accompanied by gender action plans and capacity building in each council. We hope that this report will be a catalyst for these next phases, as the original study has succeeded in doing in South Africa, Mauritius, Namibia and Lesotho.

Our experience of helping to develop gender policies is that starting at the local level - at the coalface of community life and development - is essential to long term success. Botswana has many outreach projects and training initiatives to raise awareness in all areas of development. Making gender equality a living reality at local government level is no doubt a high priority for this enlightened SADC country. We look forward to working with partners in ensuring that this research becomes a mobilising tool before the next elections, and in the months ahead. Pula!



Colleen Lowe Morna
Executive Director, Gender Links



Marching for equal representation at a workshop before the 2004 elections

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Overview: 50/50 by 2015

When the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State signed the Protocol on Gender and Development (Gender Protocol) on 17 August 2008 in Johannesburg they committed themselves to achieving at least 50 percent representation of women in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors by 2015.

The Gender Protocol is a comprehensive legal document that provides clear objectives, strategies and targets for achieving gender equality in SADC. There are 28 targets, as well as mechanisms for monitoring and tracking progress, including reporting by Member States every two years.

At the time of writing Mauritius, Malawi and Botswana had not signed up to the Protocol, though the former two countries were expected to do so shortly. Botswana has stated that the provisions are too mandatory. Botswana takes its regional commitments seriously, and the government says that it does not want to sign up to commitments that it cannot keep. Pressure is mounting from civil society groups for Botswana to stay in step with the rest of the region by at least making a commitment.

So far Botswana is the only SADC country in which the trend with regard to women in parliament has been backwards. In the 2004 elections the representation of women in parliament dropped by 6 percent (from 17 percent in 1999). Information available on women who have won the ongoing primary elections and are through to the general elections in October 2009 is not promising as a number of them have been dropped at this preliminary stage.

On the other hand the increase in women's representation at local government level from 15 percent in 1999 to 19 percent in 2004 suggests that there is potential to widen women's access to, and participation in, decision-making in Botswana. But there is still a long way to go to reach the 50 percent mark at every level of governance in the country.

This first chapter provides the background and context to the research; its rationale and theoretical underpinnings. The chapter locates the Botswana research in the context of the Gender Protocol and the campaign to ensure women's equal representation in all areas of decision-making. It shows how the campaign to increase women's representation in local government is not only an essential step towards strengthening participatory democracy, but will enrich the quality of governance and decision-making.

Botswana in the regional context

On average, SADC now has 21.9 percent women in both the lower and upper houses of Parliament; 3.5 percent higher than the global average of 18.4 percent as shown in table one. This is second only to the Nordic countries but still far short of their 40.8 percent average and considerably below the 30 percent target, let alone gender parity.

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

Region	Lower house	Upper house	Both houses
Nordic countries	41.4%		40.8%
SADC	**21.9%**	**21.9%**	**21.9%**
Americas	21.6%	20.1%	21.4%
Europe including Nordic countries	21.0%	19.5%	20.6%
Europe excluding Nordic countries	18.9%	19.5%	19.1%
Asia	18.3%	16.5%	18.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa (including SADC)	17.9%	21.1%	18.3%
Pacific	12.9%	31.8%	14.9%
Arab States	9.7%	7.0%	9.1%
Global average	**18.4%**	**17.5%**	**18.3%**

Source: IPU and Gender Links

Table two illustrates the huge variations in this average in the parliaments of the region from 37 percent in Angola to 7.3 percent in the DRC. The variations at the local government level are even greater, ranging from 58 percent in Lesotho to 6.4 percent in Mauritius.

Table two: Gender and politics in Southern Africa

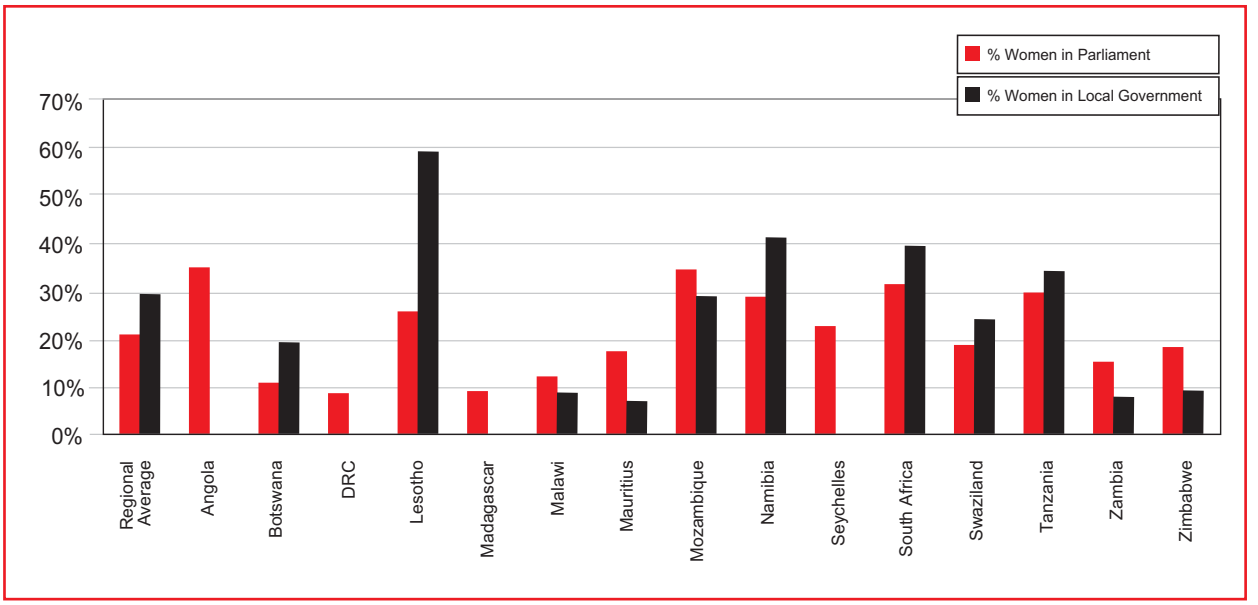
Country	% women lower house	% women upper house	% women both houses	% women cabinet	% women local government
Angola	37.0%		37.0%		unknown
Botswana	**11.1%**		**11.1%**	**25.0%**	**19.4%**
DRC	8.4%	2.5%	7.3%	16.7%	unknown
Lesotho	25.0%	29.0%	25.8%	27.8%	58.0%
Madagascar	7.9%	12.1%	8.8%		unknown
Malawi	13.0%		13.0%	12.5%	8.3%
Mauritius	17.1%		17.1%	10.0%	6.4%
Mozambiqe	34.8%		34.8%	25.0%	29.0%
Namibia	30.8%	26.9%	26.8%	24.0%	41.8%
Seychelles	23.5%		23.5%	25%	unknown
South Africa	32.3%	35.2%	32.6%	40.0%	39.7%
Swaziland	10.8%	36.7%	18.9%	18.8%	24.1%
Tanzania	30.4%		30.4%	14.8%	34.2%
Zambia	15.2%		15.2%	22.7%	6.7%
Zimbabwe	14.3%	33.3%	19.5%		9.5%
Regional average	**21.9%**	**21.9%**	**21.9%**	**19.5%**	**29.7%**

Source: IPU and Gender Links

As illustrated in Table two, at the time of writing this report only five of the 15 countries in the region had achieved or exceeded 30 percent women in Parliament (Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Namibia). And only five countries (Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Mozambique) had achieved this target at the local level.

With 11.1 percent women in parliament, Botswana is the third lowest in SADC on this count (ahead only of Madagascar and the DRC). At 19.5 percent women in local government, Botswana is fifth to last in the ranking of women in local government (ahead only of Mauritius, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi).

Figure one: Women in parliament and local government in Southern Africa:



Gender, democracy and local government

According to Atkinson (2002:2) "governance" is a broader term than "government" in that it encompasses the environment in which government, the institution, functions as well as its relationships with outside stakeholders. These external stakeholders include the electorate, the public, consumers of services and other non-state actors. It is therefore the function of government to ensure that all of these stakeholders are taken into account when performing the functions of government. The scope of governance therefore goes beyond the technical (service delivery) aspects and the political dimensions to civil society empowerment. Most definitions of good governance include four important components: transparency, accountability, efficacy and adherence to the rule of law.

Local government is a vital part of a democratic system, and women's equal participation is a key factor in building effective and participatory democracy. It is also an important entry point for women for a number of reasons, not the least of which because of its closeness to the people. Local council offices are geographically closer to communities than national offices, which mean they are easier to reach and that citizens should be able to interact with this level of government. Areas are broken down into constituencies and wards that have local politicians who community members can approach and interact with. It follows then that this level of government should be the most responsive to the very specific developmental needs of communities.

Local governance could thus be defined as processes through which stakeholders interact in determining the local developmental agenda and in managing resources to implement these developmental priorities (Evertzen 2001:5).

Because women have historically been relegated to the home, they spend most of their time in communities dealing with local issues which include service delivery and as such are the ones best acquainted with and most affected by these services. Women are also more involved in community activities and organisations and have a far better grasp of what is going on at the local level than their male counterparts. It follows then that their involvement in the decision making at this level of government would benefit both them and their communities.

Local politics is easier to gain entry into, having fewer requirements and because of it's proximity to the home enables women to combine their domestic responsibility with their participation in politics.

According to Beall (1996:1) "A gender sensitive approach to urban governance has two principal objectives; firstly to increase women's participation in human settlements development and, secondly, to foster gender-awareness and competence among both women and men in the political arena and planning practice."

The involvement of women in politics can generally be looked at in two ways: the equity or quantitative arguments and the efficacy or qualitative arguments.

Equity arguments

This school of thought argues that women should participate because they have a right to do so. This right is enshrined in most Constitutions and is based on principles of equality, democracy and legitimacy. "The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration, and sustainable development in all areas of life" (UN Women's Conference Beijing, 1995).

The justice argument is that because women constitute half the population (or over half as the case is in many African countries) they have the right to participate and be represented in equal numbers in decision-making structures. It argues that a society where women are not represented equally is undemocratic and unjust.



Gladys Kokorwe, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Efficacy arguments

This argument takes account of the fact that women and men are different and as a result they have different needs, expectations, views and priorities: "Socially conferred roles and responsibilities differentially determine how women and men contribute to and benefit from city life" (Beall 1996:3).

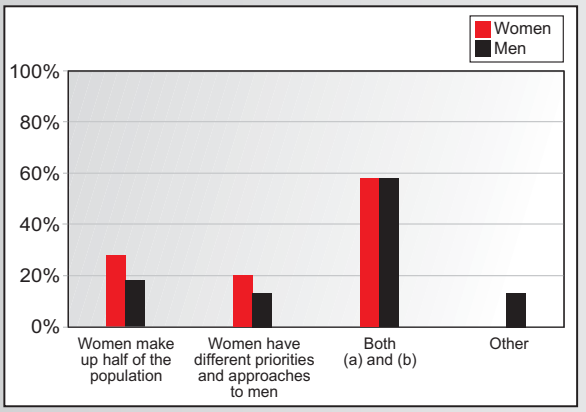
Women and men perform different tasks and functions. Because of their socially constructed roles, women most often perform the reproductive activities, which include all the domestic responsibilities as well as child rearing, and which are mostly based in the private sphere. As such they experience first hand the delivery, or lack thereof, of services, which include water, sanitation, electricity, health services and public safety. Men on the other hand inhabit the public sphere as politicians and participants in the so called economic ally productive activities. As a result men are not always aware of the inadequacies of services and as politicians they do not automatically represent these issues that are a concern for women.

This argument holds that women's participation in decision-making, especially at the local government level is crucial in order to ensure that the needs, interests and priorities of both women and men will be taken into account in the development and implementation of policies and programmes at the local level.

Equity and efficacy

In Botswana, local government respondents considered both the equity and efficacy arguments as relevant, with responses reflecting a strong leaning towards the efficacy arguments. Certainly this is reflective of the weak 'roots' of human rights, in particular women's rights discourse and practice, and how this has influenced the nature of democracy in the country; more concerted efforts are needed to ensure gender equality becomes a fundamental principle of Botswana's democracy.

What the councillors said: Is there a link between gender and democracy?



On the question of whether there is a link between gender and democracy, the majority of Botswana respondents agreed with the statement, with slightly more women (82.5 percent) than men (79 percent) agreeing that gender and democracy are linked. Interestingly more women (12.5 percent) than men (10.5 percent) disagreed with the statement. This raises the challenge of increasing efforts to broaden both men and women's understanding of the dynamics of gender equality, women's empowerment and their implications for achieving democracy.

In response to the question why 27.3 percent of women answered that women make up half of the population, with only 18.8 percent men agreeing with this statement. More women (18.2 percent) than men (12.5 percent) were of the view that it is because women have different perspectives and priorities than men. More men (56.3 percent) cited the reason as both because they make up half of the population as well as because women have different priorities and perspectives; a slightly lower percentage of women (54.6 percent) agreed with this statement. There were a high number of male respondents (12.5 percent) that were unsure about the response.

In the first *At the Coalface* study found that overall 63 percent of the councillors interviewed agreed with both statements with little difference between male and female responses. The countries involved in the first study included Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa, which all have high levels of women's representation in local government and Mauritius which has the lowest level of women's representation. Because women's representation in councils in Botswana is not significant, it is presently difficult to demonstrate the value of women's participation.

Focus group discussions demonstrated a stronger bias towards the efficacy argument. Gaborone men, for example, pointed out that the ability to execute responsibilities is more important than trying to balance the representation of men and women in decision-making bodies. Their view was that people should be elected into decision-making positions based on ability. According to the participants, women should take part in local government because they know their communities well due to their involvement in volunteer work. Women from the Central District (Mahalapye) were of the view that democracy had nothing to do with gender but rather that democracy is all about electing capable people regardless of gender. On the other hand they also indicated that women need to be part of local government since they are in a better position to deliberate on issues that they are accustomed to.

The women participants from the Kweneng District (Mogoditshane) pointed out that women should be allowed to participate in local government so that they could voice their views from a woman's perspective because *mme ke thari ya sechaba* (a woman has the people's interests strapped on her back). In their opinion, having women in local government is good for decision-making because both women's issues in particular and community issues will be addressed by those with first hand information.

Participants from a ward committee in the Kgatleng District (Rasesa Kgotla) argued that women need to fill leadership positions in local government to avoid male-dominated decision-making.

Rationale for the research

Gender Links' (GL) 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 not taking any action at all.

Local government sparks 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 in SADC) all have quotas of one kind or the other at local but not at national level.

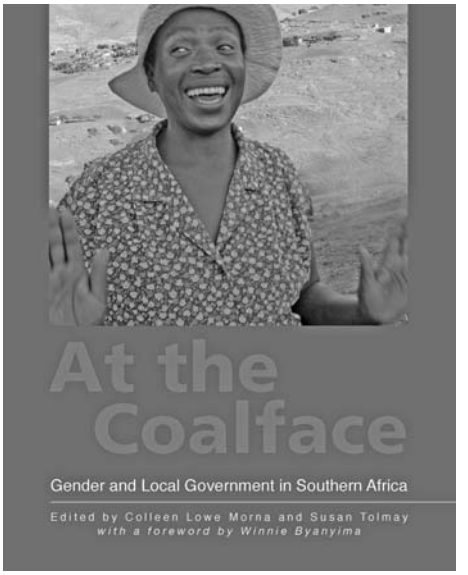
The discrepancy suggests that rather than being a reflection of commitment to women's participation at local level, the measures taken in the three countries are a case of male decision-makers giving way at local level while resisting such measures in the more coveted national arena.

To the other extreme of the 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 Zimbabwe) 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, and to ensure that all areas of decision-making are taken into account, pressure is increasing to ensure more even and greater participation by women in local government. As the campaign mounts to increase women's participation in decision-making at local level, the question that arises is: what is the least conflicting and most beneficial way for achieving this that will ultimately both empower women and change the attitudes of men towards gender equality?

In 2006, GL sought to answer these questions using case material from South Africa (that has adopted a voluntary approach to the 50/50 campaign at local level in the 2005 elections in a mixed constituency and PR system); Lesotho (that has a legislated quota in constituency-based system); Namibia (that has a legislated quota in a PR system) and Mauritius (which held local elections in 2005 in a constituency-based system, with no quotas).

This resulted in the groundbreaking study, *At the Coalface: Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa.* The study has since been launched in all four countries and used to develop strategies for mainstreaming gender in local government, to be followed by roll out of gender action plans in all districts. With funding from DANIDA, GL has extended the research to cover the remaining SADC countries.



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 local level - the coalface of delivery - through:

- Studying the experiences of Southern African countries in increasing the representation of women in local government.
- Examining how these experiences can be applied by other Southern African countries seeking to raise the quota for increasing women's participation in all areas of decision-making from thirty to fifty percent.

- Examining the impact of women at local level and proposing strategies for overcoming barriers to their effective participation and contribution.

Structure of the report

Chapter one starts with an overview of women's participation in political decision-making globally and across the region and places Botswana in the regional context. It highlights some key gender, democracy and local governance concepts and sets out the arguments for the involvement of women in politics, which can be looked at in two ways; the equity or quantitative arguments and the efficacy or qualitative arguments. This Chapter sets out the rationale for the study.

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 gives background information on Botswana, including the electoral system and how local government works in the country.

Chapter three concerns women's ability to access local government.While there are no legal impediments to women accessing local government in Botswana the study found that the structures within which women have to function still remain largely patriarchal and in some instances are obstructive to women's entry into the political arena. The chapter explores the barriers that women face in accessing local government and concludes with some of the strategies that can be implemented to ensure that women are able to enter this crucial area of decision-making.

Chapter four focuses on women's participation and the factors that either enable or hinder this. The chapter highlights that numbers only are not enough and that for any legitimate change to take place women need to be empowered to participate effectively. It attempts to measure this participation by drawing on findings from council meeting observations and in-depth interviews conducted with women and men councillors, as well as the focus group discussions. The chapter shows a number of barriers to women's effective participation in local government but goes on to illustrate that it is possible for barriers to be turned into enabling factors.

Chapter five attempts to demonstrate what women bring to local politics and whether it makes a difference to the lives of women in their communities. The chapter draws on examples of the work that women are doing to illustrate the importance of their participation. It also gives the views of male councillors and questions whether attitudes are beginning to change in the way that they see women and whether they view the participation of women as important to both them and the communities.

Chapter six looks at the functions of local government and the extent to which gender is incorporated into the every day work of councils. The study draws on examples gleaned from interviews with councillors and focus groups and shows that women are beginning to influence councils' agendas. However, it does highlight that much of the work that women councillors do addresses only the practical needs of women and that more needs to be done to address the strategic needs of women in communities.

Chapter seven follows on from the previous chapter by examining how councils can begin to address the needs of women in a more strategic way. The chapter explains some key concepts around practical and strategic needs and approaches to gender. It highlights the importance beginning to address the causes of women's marginalised status in ways that will have a meaningful impact on their lives. The study shows the importance of a systematic approach to gender which includes developing policies and strategies that address all gender concerns within councils.

Chapter eight summarises the key findings and recommendations of the study.



Pamela Mhlanga and Same Bathobakae discuss council issues *Photo: Susan Tolmay*



Gender consultant Imelda Molokomme and GL Gender Justice Manager Loveness Jambaya-Nyakujarah *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Concepts, context and methodology

For women to make a difference, they must first be at the table where decisions are made. At that table they must be able to make their voices heard both by virtue of their numbers and because they are empowered to speak out about the things that concern them. When they do speak out, their voices must be heard and translated into policies and decisions. It is only then that effective change can take place, not just for these few women but for all the women in our region. This chapter sets out the conceptual framework for the research; the country context and the research methodology.

Conceptual framework: Access, participation, transformation

At the Coalface, Gender in Local Government in Southern African builds on, and is informed by the conceptual framework first put forward by Thenjiwe Mtintso (1999:33-52) A Board Member and former Chair of GL and former Chair of the South African Commission on Gender Equality (CGE). This framework, elaborated in *Ringing up the Changes*, is illustrated in Figure two.

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. 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.

The "critical mass"

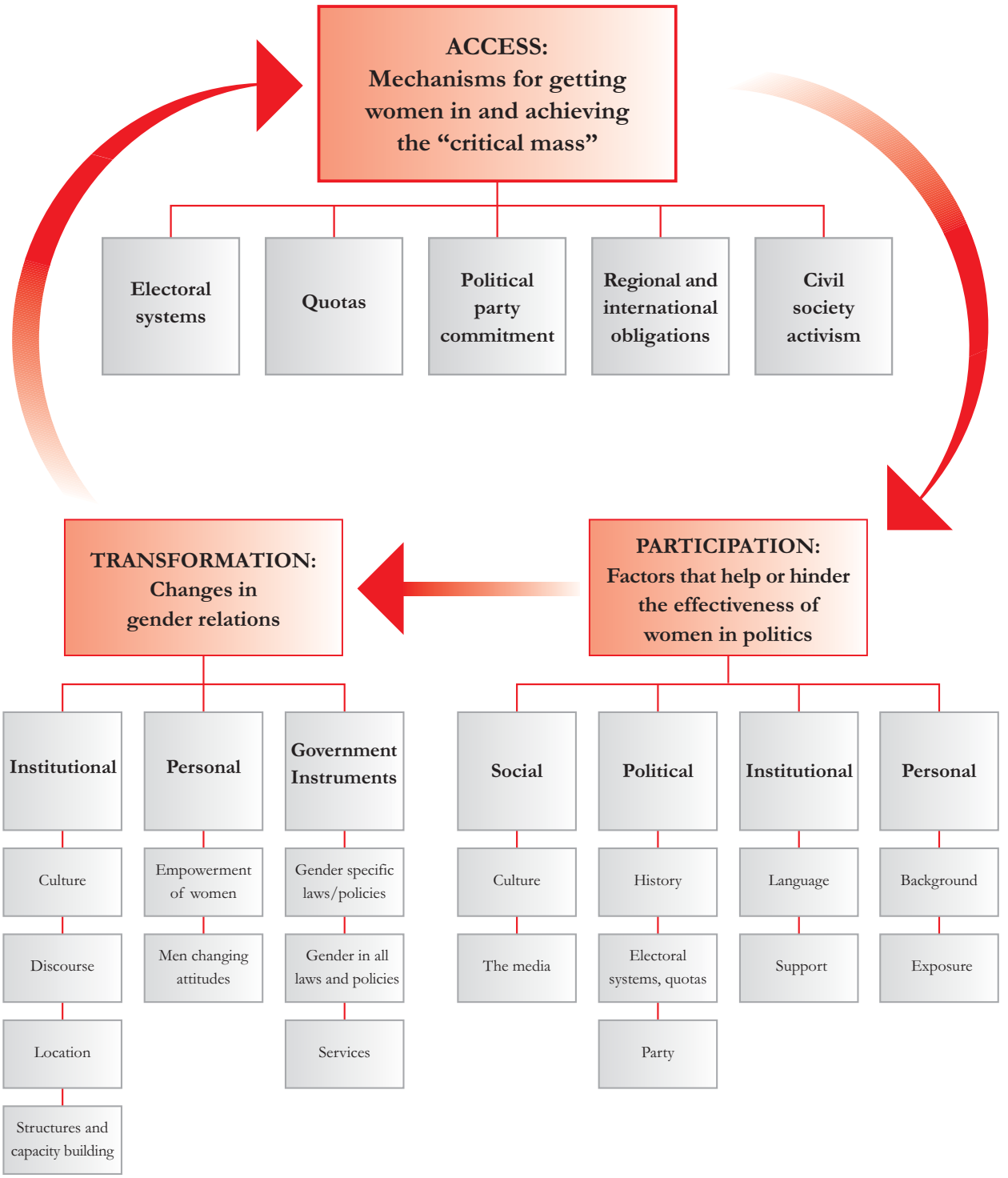
A question that frequently arises in access debates is the extent to which women have to be represented in specific numbers in order to make a difference. Put differently, how critical is the critical mass? How magic is the figure 30 percent?

The notion that to make a difference, women should constitute a "critical mass", can be traced back to research by Danish political scientist Drude Dahlerup (1991:10) 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."

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

Figure two: Conceptual framework



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." (2000:5)

However, as Britton points out (2003:219), 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."

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 and either directly or indirectly positively influence processes and structures in mainstream environments.

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. (2003:378)

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.

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 a new understanding begins.

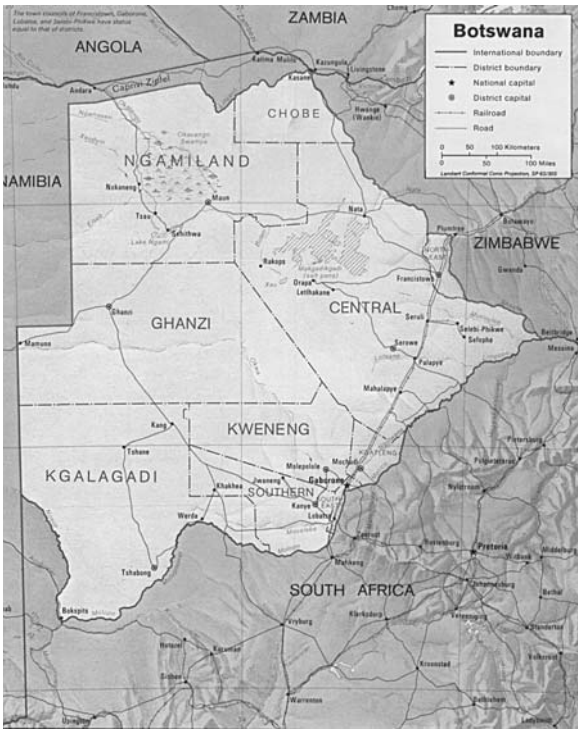
Thus when women enter decision-making, the concept, content and form of politics and governance, and the way that they are practiced, begin to change. Power relations shift. Outcomes begin to be informed by the new paradigm. But there is a constant struggle because the tools for transformation are often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

Country profile

Botswana is a landlocked country situated in southern Africa. The capital city is Gaborone. The country is surrounded by South Africa in the south, Namibia in the west, Zambia in the north and Zimbabwe in the northeast. The country's surface area is 582,000 sq km. In 2007 the population of the country stood at just under two million, the majority of whom are women, partly as a result of the long tradition of migrant labour to South Africa.

The official language of Botswana is English and the indigenous language is Setswana. Botswana has numerous ethnic groups and Bangwato, Bakgatla, Balete, Bangwaketse, Bakwena, Batawana, Barolong and Batlokwa are considered to be the main ethnic groups. Other ethnic groups include Basarwa, Bakgalagadi, Batswapong and Bakalaka.



Batswana have a three-tier settlement system made up of nucleated villages, cattle posts and lands (CSO, 2005). Most of their activities take place in the village. Pastoral farming takes place in the cattle posts and the lands are used for arable farming.

The Kalahari Desert makes up two thirds of Botswana. About 80 percent of the population is concentrated in the fertile east of the country along the line of rail from South Africa in the south to Zimbabwe in the north. In 2007 59 percent of the population lived in urban areas, signifying marked rural urban migration (WHO/UNAIDS/UNICEF 2008).

The Botswana economy is heavily dependent on mining but with increasing emphasis on diversification. Diamonds are the main source of foreign exchange followed by beef, which is mainly exported to the European Union. Diamonds constitute 50 percent of government revenue, 33 percent of Gross Domestic Product and 70 percent of foreign exchange (www.botswanadirect.co.bw). In 2003/2004 Botswana's foreign exchange reserves were over $5.3 billion, the highest in Africa (Matemba, 2005). However, unemployment and poverty are still high within certain segments of the population.

Government is tackling poverty through the 2003 National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (NSPR), which focuses on providing opportunities for sustainable livelihoods through employment growth, well targeted safety nets for those unable to access employment opportunities, and developing capabilities through social investment programmes targeted at the poor (United Nations System in Botswana, 2007:9).

HIV and AIDS remains a priority for the country, in terms of addressing its health, social, economic and other dimensions and their impact on the country's development. The pandemic is one of the reasons for the decline in the country's economic growth. Studies suggest that without HIV and AIDS, Botswana's economic growth would have been 1 to 2 percent higher (United Nations System in Botswana, 2007:5). Botswana is committed to meeting target 7 Goal 6 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of halting and reversing HIV and AIDS by 2015. While clinical interventions have yielded positive results, more is required to address prevention of the pandemic.

According to the 2008 Epidemiological Fact sheet on Botswana by WHO/UNAIDS/UNICEF, the HIV prevalence rate among young people 15-24 year olds in 2007 was 5.1 percent for men and 15.3 percent for women. The estimated anti retroviral (ARV) therapy coverage (both sexes) rose from 44 percent in 2007 to 79 percent in 2007. The estimated number of pregnant women living

with HIV who received ARVs for preventing mother to child transmission is 95 percent (high estimate). The estimated number of children 0-17 years orphaned due to AIDS in 2007 was 95 000, with a higher number of maternal orphans (85 000) than paternal orphans (81 000) in 2007.

Leadership and the electoral system

Before colonisation, the dikgosi (chiefs) were the main political leaders of their merafe (tribes). Bogosi was patrilineal with succession passing mainly from father to son. The bogosi is no longer an office of males alone. Botswana has had the experience of women chiefs. In 2000 Rebecca Banika became the first woman chief and Mosadi Seboko was installed in 2003 (Matemba, 2005). The kgosi met with his people in the kgotla that was mainly attended by men to discuss issues of concern of the morafe. Women only attended the kgotla on request. The dikgosi's powers were reduced in 1891 through the 'Order-in-Council'. This legislation made the dikgosi answer to the British, not their people because the customary law could only prevail if it was compatible with the British law (Morapedi, 2002).

Box one: Woman becomes chief of Balete

In 1950 the late *Kgosi* (chief) Seboko I, King of the BaLete *morafe* (ethnic group) in Botswana is said to have disappointedly remarked at the birth of his daughter: "Well, it's a woman. What can I do? It's my child" (*Mmegi*, 14 December 2004).

Little did he know that 53 years later, this girl, now known as *Kgosigadi* (chieftainess) Mosadi Seboko, would capture the attention of the world's press and make BaLete proud as their first female paramount chief.

It is this novel event that on 3 September 2003 attracted presidents, priests, diplomats, community leaders and thousands of people from all over Botswana to Ramotswa, the capital of the 33,000 strong BaLete. These people had come to witness what in every sense was a rare event when for the first time in the country's history, a woman was installed paramount chief in a ceremony complete with the bedecking of a leopard skin around her shoulders – the ultimate symbol of authority of a crowned chief (*IRINnews*, 29 October 2003).

Found in Matemba Y. H (2005) ***A Chief Called "Woman": Historical Perspective on the Changing Face of Bogosi (Chieftainship) in Botswana 1834-2004.*** JENDA A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies, ISSN: 1530 – 5686 Issue 7

After independence, the powers of dikgosi were not restored, but the new government agreed to give the dikgosi recognition whilst simultaneously reducing their powers (Morapedi, 2002). The establishment of councils in 1966 further reduced the dikgosi's powers. The roles that the dikgosi used to perform such as managing stray cattle and land allocation were transferred to the local government through Matimela Act of 1968 and the Tribal Land Act of 1968 (Morapedi, 2002).

Botswana is a multi-party democracy. Since independence, Botswana has been using the first-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system for both

parliamentary and local government elections. The president is the head of state and is indirectly elected. The president of the party with a majority of elected members in parliament assumes the office. This system has seen to it that the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) remained the ruling party ever since independence.

As has been observed elsewhere, FPTP does not allow for diverse representation of the population and therefore hampers the gender equality campaign. The general elections in Botswana are held every 5 years with the members of parliament and councillors directly elected. Since independence, the elections have been freely and fairly contested. In fact, this is one key factor that has led to Botswana being described as the 'shining example of democracy'.

Botswana has a number of parties registered with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) despite the country's small population. These include, among others, Botswana Liberal Party (BLP), New Democratic Front (NDF), Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Marx Engels Lenin Stalin (MELS) Movement. Botswana Democratic Party has been in government since 1965 but its popularity among the electorates has been decreasing. Between 1965 and 1999, the BDP popular vote decreased by 24 percent from 81 percent (BDP, 2002). Botswana National Front (BNF) is the main opposition party and Botswana Congress Party (BCP) is its runner up. Other parties such as MELS have not been doing well since they have not had representation in council or parliament.

The Botswana Peoples Party (BPP), which was the first opposition party in the country, has not won a constituency since 1989 and the Botswana Independence Party (BIP) won a constituency in 1974 only (BDP, 2002) and this is weakening the voice of the opposition thereby compromising the democracy of the country. Weak opposition in the country is also due to party factionalism which is not a new phenomenon in Botswana. In 1966, the BPP split to form the BNF and the BNF itself has undergone factionalism to form at least seven different parties itself (www.aceproject.org).

Governance and elections

The Office of the President has been responsible for elections, and managed the process from 1965 until 1986, under the directorship of the Permanent Secretary (PS) to the president. The Supervisor of Elections took over from the PS from 1987 to 1997. Elections in Botswana are a responsibility of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC, 2005). The IEC was established in 1997 to manage the electoral process and to provide civic and voter education with the aim of increasing participation and voter turnout during elections. The IEC faces a great challenge of voter apathy among Batswana in its endeavour to increase people's participation in the electoral process. The IEC has identified cultural, historical, social and political problems as the causes of voter apathy. The youth has been identified as the most apathetic section of the Botswana society (IEC, 2002).

Although more women go out to vote than men, more women are now becoming apathetic (IEC, 2005). According to Maundeni (2004) Botswana's democracy is compromised since the IEC does not have a mandate to issue the writ of elections, as these are a responsibility of the President and the Minister of Local Government. The President and the Minister of Local Government have explicit political interests. The President issues the writ of parliamentary elections and the minister of local government issues the writ for local elections.

In 1999, the BDP won the parliamentary elections with a popular vote of 57 percent (37 seats), BNF 26 percent (6 seats), BCP 12 percent (1 seat), Botswana Independence Party 4 percent, Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM) 5 percent (BDP, 2002)). In 2004, the parliamentary seats were increased from 40 to 57. In 2004 the ruling BDP won 44 seats, followed by the Botswana National Front (BNF) with 12 seats and the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) won one constituency.

Representation of women

Botswana is signatory to a number of regional and international gender instruments that provide the basis for the increased or equal representation and participation of women in decision-making. These include the 2005 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, signed in August 2008, requires that Member States endeavour to reach the target of 50 percent women in all areas of decision-making positions by 2015.

How is Botswana faring? In the 2004 elections only four women got elected in the 57 constituencies. The President nominated three more women as specially elected members of parliament (Dube, 2005). It has been noted that the special nomination of women into parliament is not adequate since only women from the ruling party are elected neglecting women from the opposition parties (Madisa, 1999). This brought the total to 11 percent; 6 percent lower than in the previous elections.

Local government in Botswana

Organisational structure

Local government in Botswana aims to facilitate people's involvement in development as it involves democratic participation and devolved decision-making (Ministry of Finance and development Planning, 1997). The Ministry of Local Government (MLG) is responsible for policy formulation and implementation. The councils are responsible for the implementation of the policies formulated by the ministry.

The local government is made up of district councils (rural) and urban councils. There are 10 district councils, 2 city councils, 3 town councils and 1 township council.



Ministry of Local Government, Gaborone, Botswana *Photo: Janine Morna*

The district councils were established through the Local Government (District) Act of 1965 and the urban councils are regulated through the Township Act of 1955. Apart from these Acts, there are others that govern the operations of the MLG. These include the Children's Act; Unified Local Government Service Act; Customary Court Act; Chieftainship

Act and Local Police Act. The MLG is also responsible for implementing laws from other ministries. These laws include the Stock Theft Act, Penal Code, Public Health Act, Water Act, Education Act, Public Roads Act, Tribal Territories Act and Sanitation and Management 1998 (Directorate of Public service Management Service Management, 2005).

Functions

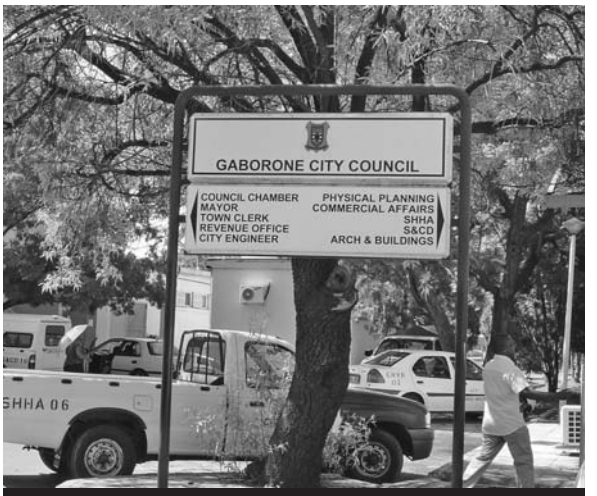
The statutory responsibilities of councils include primary education, primary health care, tertiary and access roads, as well as water (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 1997). Other responsibilities include sanitation services, social and community development, remote area development and administering Self Help Housing Agencies (SHHA). Urban areas deal with the administration rates on properties and some functions, such as remote area development, are only relevant to the district councils. Councils can undertake other functions related to those specified by the statutes and as advised by the Minister of Local Government. Because of their limited administrative capacities, councils receive considerable assistance from central government. Councils have their own jurisdiction but their activities are coordinated through various mechanisms and forums organised by central government.

Council committees

Councils operate through committees which have delegated authority to make decisions and which then report to the full council.

Standing committees include:
- Finance committee
- Education committee
- SHAA committee
- Health committee
- Social welfare committee
- Works and infrastructure committee
- Town planning committee
- Audit committee

The finance and education committees are obligatory and councils have the discretion to establish other committees.



Gabarone City Council *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA)

The Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA) which was established in 1983 provides a platform for chief political and executive authority of all councils to come together to raise matters of concern and operate as a pressure group towards the central government. According to the BALA Strategic Plan (2006 -2010) the association's key result areas are institutional support for the secretariat, policy advocacy, lobbying and networking, leadership and local democracy, research, publication and documentation, capacity building and intellectual exchange, local economic development, as well as funding and finance.

BALA has been mandated to establish a programme that aims at transforming cities, towns and rural

areas into viable economic entities. Local Economic Development (LED) is one such strategy that the councils utilise to push alleviation of poverty and lack of employment, thereby promoting growing local economies. Councils are to build partnerships with private and other development agents to enhance economic growth. They are therefore responsible for reviewing existing procedures and regulations which could help create a more conducive and enabling environment for promotion of LED.

Political structures

Most councillors are elected but the Minister of Local Government appoints some councillors. 38 of the 101 nominated councillors are women. Councillors are elected every five years using the first-past-the-post electoral system. Councils are divided into wards and each ward is represented by an elected councillor. The leaders of urban councils are called mayors, and those of district councils are called chairpersons. Mayors and chairpersons are generally elected every year by the councillors.

Local government in Botswana works with the *kgotla* (traditional village assembly) and the village development committees (VDCs). *Kgotla* is a forum that is traditionally used by the *kgosi* to communicate with his *morafe*. The local government may also use this institution in its activities (www.clgf.org.uk). Members of the VDCs are elected by the *kgotla* and undertake self-help activities (ibid). Traditional leaders (chiefs) continue to enjoy respect in the rural communities and have been integrated into the modern public administration system in Botswana. As chairpersons of customary courts they handle about 90 percent of civil and criminal cases in the country. The chiefs continue to preside over *kgotla* where matters of concern to the tribe are discussed. At the local level they collaborate with councils and district commissioners in the formulation and implementation of local development plans (www.clgf.org.uk).

Table three provides information on the number of seats obtained by the key political parties in 2004,

Table three: Total seats obtained by political parties per district council (2004)

COUNCILS	BAM	BCP	BDP	BNF	BPP	IND
Central District Council	1	6	127	4		1
Francistown City Council		2	16			
Gaborone City Council		3	11	16		
Ghanzi District council			13	7		
Jwaneng Town Council				7		
Kgalagadi District Council			13	9		
Kgatleng District Council		5	10	8		
Kweneng District Council		2	47	17		
Lobatse Town Council			4	8		
North East Dist. Council			16		3	
North West Dist. Council	8	5	31			1
Selibe Phikwe Town Council		5	9			
South East District Council		3	12	5		
Southern District Council		1	26	23		1
TOTAL	**9**	**32**	**335**	**105**	**3**	**3**
PERCENTAGES	**1.85%**	**6.57%**	**68.79%**	**21.56%**	**0.62%**	**0.62%**

Source: IEC, 2005

including independent candidates. It shows the dominance of the BDP, particularly in the Central District. The BDP overall obtained just over 68 percent of the council seats. Whilst this information is not disaggregated by sex, it is important to note that if the BDP took the commitment to gender equality seriously, it could have taken advantage of its clear lead at this level to use affirmative action measures to bring more women into local government. It remains to be seen whether the 2009 elections will be any different.

Women in local government in Botswana

The under-representation of women of in local government is demonstrated in Table four. While overall representation increased by a mere 4.4 percent in the 2004 elections, the proportion of women mayors or chairs dropped from 10 percent to none.

Table four: Gender representation in Local Authorities (1999 and 2004)

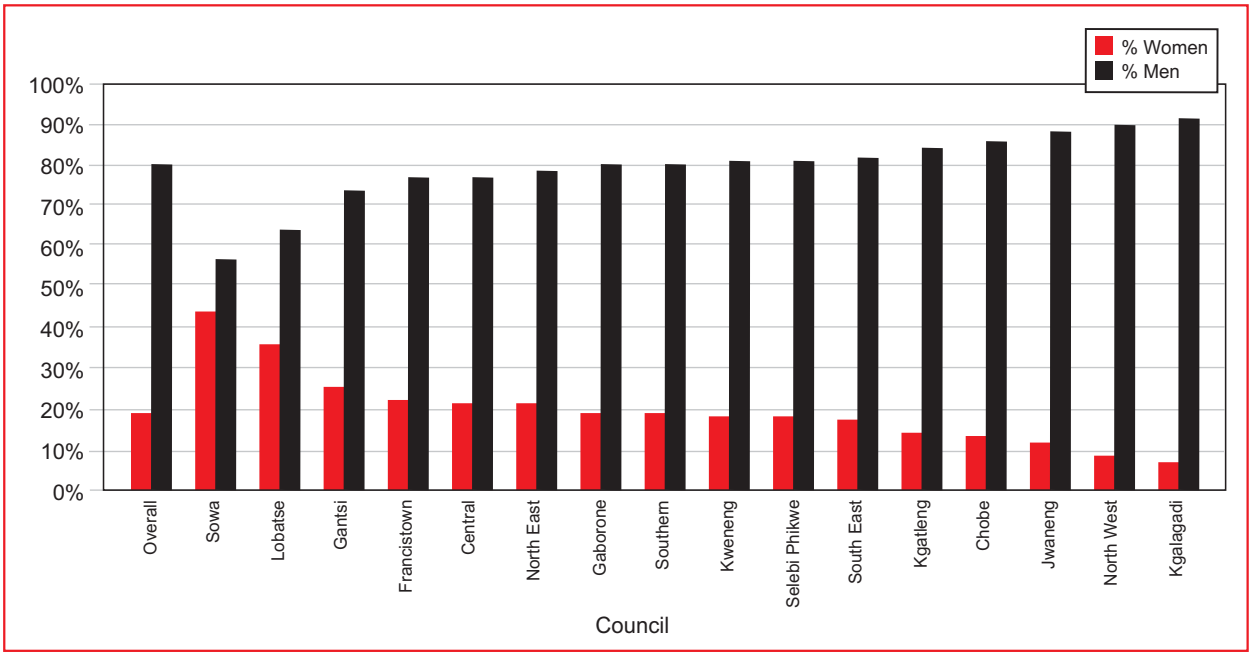
POSITION	WOMEN	MEN	%WOMEN	WOMEN	MEN	%WOMEN
	1999			2004		
Mayor/Chairperson	1	10	10%	0	15*	0%
Councillors	70	409	15%	115	482	19.4%

** At the time of collecting data, Sowa Township Council had neither a Chairperson nor a Mayor*

Source: Women's NGO Coalition and SARDC WIDSAA, 2005 and Gender Links, 2008)

Figure three shows that women's representation in local government ranges from 7.7 percent in the Kgalagadi District Council to 42.9 percent in Sowa Township.

Figure three: Representation of women per local authority in Botswana



The next general elections are scheduled for 2009. All indications are that there is need for some critical action if the representation of women is to increase. The BCP fielded over 195 candidates at council level in the primary elections; 22 of these were women, of which 7 won. Overall 37 contested for parliamentary seats and four women won unopposed.

Out of 8 women fielded by the BDP in the primary elections, only 3 women won parliamentary seats and 63 councillor candidates made it through.

Box two: 'Stand Up for Your Rights', Nasha urges women



Dr Margaret Nasha, Minister of local government

Photo: http://masielatrustfund.org.bwl

The Minister of Local Government Margaret Nasha, speaking at the launch of the Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA) Women's Commission on 10 December 2008, said "Women have the power in politics because they have the numbers. In all the political parties, about 60 percent of the voters are women".

"At the branch and constituencies, it is the men who are holding top positions while the majority of the voters are women who voted against their fellow women who stood against those men," Nasha said. She added that women who show interest in standing up against men in top positions in politics continue to be addressed as 'this woman', regardless of how much they have achieved in their careers.

Nasha asserted that when she took over the Ministry of Local Government, she made it a point to nominate more women to balance the scales in councils but was met with hostility from both men and women. "You women joined the men who were insulting me over the decision", she said.

The Minister requested the councillors to ask their political parties to stop making them stand for elections in difficult wards that they know they are bound to lose. She told them that they are the ones who raise the money for the parties, they sign during the campaigns and cook for everyone.

"Why can't you speak and be heard? The primary elections are over and there are no women candidates", she observed.

Adapted from the article by Chandapiwa Baputaki in Mmegi - *allAfrica.com 10 December 2008*

A recent milestone was the launch of the BALA Women's Commission in December 2008, with 16 Commissioners representing all the councils. According to the Coordinator of the Commission, Malebogo Kruger, Deputy Mayor of Lobatse town council, one of the main agendas of the commission is to "fight for the 50 percent of women in decision making positions". This will include direct engagement with political parties to transform and take this issue on board, including fielding women in 'safe' constituencies where women stand a chance to win. They also want to lobby government to change the electoral system so that more opportunities for women are created for them to participate in elections and win as leaders. Operationally the commission will prepare a yearly planner and use that as a basis for implementing activities; the Commission wil not depend on the

main body to take issues forward. Ultimately the Women's Commission wants to "transform local government into a gender sensitive space".

Research methodology

Desk top research and Literature review

Desk top research involved the review of a range of documents to get an understanding of the workings of local government in Botswana. Documents reviewed included academic and NGO studies on local government, various laws and policies that have implications on institutions, structures and operations of local government, and information on gender equality in Botswana. One observation was that research on gender and local government in Botswana is very scanty. This area is under-researched and where studies exist, local government is usually mentioned in passing and through presentation of basic sex disaggregated statistical information.

Sample

The sample was in line with the first phase of the *At the Coalface* study in which researchers attempted to interview ten percent of councillors in the country with the smallest number of councillors (Namibia), six percent in countries with medium numbers (Mauritius and Lesotho), and three percent in the country with the largest number of councillors (South Africa). Botswana falls within the small category. Table five shows the sample of local authorities covered and number of councillors interviewed (59 councillors in 5 localities).

Table five: Research sample

Country	Total local authorities	Local authorities covered	% councils	Total councillors	Total councillors interviewed	% Councillors
Botswana	15	5	33.3%	591	59	10%

Table six gives a detailed breakdown of the areas visited and the type of local authority (City, town, district or township). The research covered a good balance between the three main types of local structures, which also translates into a balance between urban, peri- urban and rural.

Table six: Sample councils

City Council	Town Council	District Council
Gaborone	Lobatse	Kgatleng
		Kweneng
		Central
TOTAL 5		

The central district also has the largest number of councillors (172), although not necessarily the largest percentage of women councillors.

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 seven summarises the gender breakdown of the interviews conducted for the research: 41 women (69.5%) and 18 men (30.5%).

Table seven: Gender breakdown of research sample

Country	Total councillors interviewed	Women interviewed	% women	Men interviewed	% men
Botswana	59	41	69.5%	18	30.5%

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. Table eight shows that overall the researchers interviewed 69.5 percent ruling party and 30.5 percent opposition party.

Table eight: Political party breakdown of research sample

Party	% Representation in local government	Number interviewed	% Interviewed
BAM	1.85%	0	0%
BCP	6.57%	4	6.8%
BDP	68.79%	41	69.5%
BNF	21.56%	14	23.7%
BPP	0.62%	0	0%
Independents	0.62%	0	0%

How the research was conducted

The research was conducted using the following techniques:

Structured one-on-one questionnaires

Researchers administered a one-on-one questionnaire to councillors in each of the localities according to the sample. The list of interviewees is attached at Annex A.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.

Focus groups

The outcomes from these interviews are included in the book in the quotes, anecdotes, boxes and case studies that give the research a human face.

Researchers sought to conduct focus groups in the localities researched with a minimum of three people from the following groups:

- Civil society groups,
- Male constituents where there are women councillors,
- Women constituents where there are women councillors.

Table nine: Summary table of focus groups

Locality	Civil society		Women constituents	Men constituents	Total participants
	women	men			
Lobatse	5	2			7
Gaborone (Bontleng & Broadhurst)			6	6	12
Serowe	4	3			7
Central (Mahalapye)			3	2	5
Kgatleng (Rasesa Kgotla)			8	2	10
Kweneng (Mogodistshane)			7		7
TOTAL	**9**	**5**	**24**	**10**	**48**

Table nine shows that the researchers conducted 7 focus groups in six localities. A total of 48 people took part in the focus groups, 69 percent women and 31 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 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 two council meetings, the localities were Lobatse town council (a council meeting of 14 councillors), and the Central district council (a council meeting of 140 councillors). 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.

Researchers kept detailed quantitative records of interventions by women and men the 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.

Measuring change

Assuming that women have been able to access decision-making in significant numbers, and that the

barriers to their effective participation have started to relent, the question then becomes what difference this makes and how this difference can be measured. This is the main focus of this study, which devised a number of yardsticks for measuring change. These included:

Institutional transformation

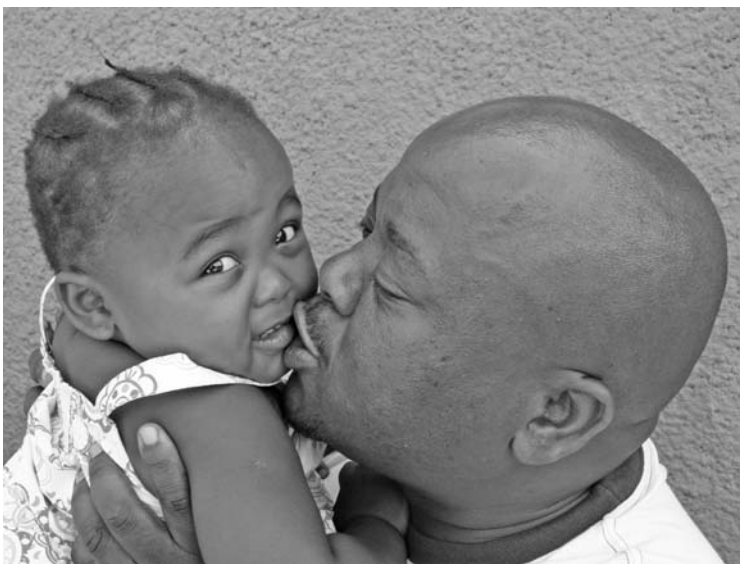
- Infrastructure changes, such as the provision of adequate toilets and facilities for the increased number of women who may have recently accessed these previously "men only" clubs.
- Creation of a more family friendly work environment; dates of recesses, sitting hours and child-care facilities.
- Changes 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 promoting gender equality.

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.

Transformation of key tools of government

- The existence of laws and policies to remove of all forms of discrimination against women and that have a direct bearing on improving the status of women, such as domestic violence legislation.
- The extent to which a gender perspective informs all laws and policies.
- The extent to which gender considerations are built into the delivery of all services.



Men's attitudes are a key test *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Limitations of the study

Councillors are busy people, juggling their full time work with council responsibilities. This sometimes made it difficult to secure appointments with them. Further, finding gender disaggregated data at both local and central government level proved to be a challenge.

Ideally in-depth interviews would have been conducted with all 59 councillors, rather than just seven. There is always scope in a study of this nature for more qualitative research.

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 through their own anecdotes and stories in the pages that follow.



Pamela Mhlanga conducts an interview with Ditlhogo Mmualefe *Photo: Trevor Davies*



Kgatleng District Councillors *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Accessing local government

Local government may seem an obvious place for women to have a strong presence because of its closeness to the community 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.

There are no legal barriers in Botswana to women accessing local government or any form of public office. The Botswana Constitution is not unequivocal in providing for equality before the law, but it does

prohibit discrimination. Unfortunately, non discrimination does not apply to matters of personal law (such as marriage), an area in which women's lives are most regulated. This potentially compromises women's rights in this sphere as they are not protected where either covert or overt discrimination exists.

Some progress has been made in eliminating discrimination in matters of personal law, for example, the Abolition of the Marital Power Act (2004) which removed the legal minority status of a wife, and made both spouses equal in all respects. However, women still have to navigate a complex a system of law in which several legal frameworks co-exist, including Roman Dutch, statutes, customary and peoples' living law. Coupled with the largely patriarchal environments and structures within which women have to function, this can prove to be obstructive to women's entry into the political arena.

The men and women from the ward committee in the central district were clear that culture was a barrier for women having access to and participating in local government. They said that the culture does not allow a woman to 'outshine' a man thus preventing men and the rest of the society from voting for women. This chapter explores the barriers to women accessing local government and the strategies for change.

Women's absence from local government

Table ten shows that of the 16 local authorities, three have only one or two women in the council (Jwaneng, Kgalagadi and Chobe), with women being outnumbered by a large margin in the Kgalagadi district council (92 percent men). It is also interesting to note that the largest district council (Central) only has a 22 percent representation of women (38 women councillors out of 172). One of the smallest councils (Sowa township council with seven councillors) has almost 50 percent women representation, three women councillors out of seven. Both city councils (Gaborone and Francistown) have not reached even a minimum 30 percent in council, at 20 and 23 percent respectively.

Overall only two councils, Sowa and Lobatse have achieved higher than 30 percent women's representation. These figures clearly point to the slow progress in women's access to local government.

Barriers to access

Several factors conspire to keep women out of local government in Botswana. These are ideological; social; political and financial in nature.

Patriarchal beliefs

Politics is a hostile environment for women because there is still a strong belief that women do not belong in politics. Patriarchy restricts women to the private sphere where they are expected to be wives, mothers and carers. This is demonstrated in comments from the Lobatse focus group of civil society participants who said that female councillors "do not behave like women once they get into council" and that "they just want to 'shine' (show off)". This kind of response reinforces the stereotypes and notions about where a woman is said to belong, and that she does not deserve the power that comes with being a leader in the public sphere. The same Lobatse civil society focus group pointed to the fact that spouses can sometimes prevent their wives from entering politics due to the way the men in that arena behave, such as use of foul language. This again reinforces the patriarchal belief that women cannot handle themselves in power positions in the public space and are better off being wives in the home.

Table ten: Women and men councillors per local authority

Name of Council	Type of local authority	Total Councillors	Women	% Women	% Men
Gaborone	City	35	7	20.0%	80.0%
Francistown	City	22	5	22.7%	77.3%
Selebi Phikwe	Town	16	3	18.8%	81.3%
Jwaneng	Town	8	1	12.5%	87.5%
Lobatse	Town	14	5	35.7%	64.3%
Sowa	Township	7	3	42.9%	57.1%
North West	District	55	5	9.1%	90.9%
North East	District	23	5	21.7%	78.3%
South East	District	22	4	18.2%	81.8%
Southern	District	62	12	19.4%	80.6%
Kgatleng	District	27	4	14.8%	85.2%
Kweneng	District	78	15	19.2%	80.8%
Central	District	172	38	22.1%	77.9%
Gantsi	District	24	6	25.0%	75.0%
Kgalagadi	District	26	2	7.7%	92.3%
Chobe	District	7	1	14.3%	85.7%
TOTAL		**598**	**116**	**19.4%**	**80.6%**

Box three: Challenging patriarchy

As one of only seven women councillors in the 35 member Gaborone City Council, Andretta Makaka has had her share of challenges. She is a BNF member and represents the Mosekangwetsi ward. She became a councillor in 2004, and recounts how, during the time she was campaigning she had to reckon with family and community resistance to her standing for political office. Her campaign efforts took her out of the home most of the time and she used to come home at night and was still expected to cook. She had to negotiate with her family to do household chores so that she could be free to campaign.



Councillor Andretta Makaka
Photo: Susan Tolmay

During her campaign, part of her support structure was a group of young men who campaigned with her. There were allegations of adulterous relationships with the young men, aimed at weakening her campaign efforts. However, in spite of this she persevered and won the elections. After proving that she could do it, her family support has been unwavering, and her husband is now proud of her achievements.

Recently appointed Deputy Mayor of Lobatse town, Malebogo Kruger challenges the Setswana proverb which says *ga di etelelwe ke namagadi pele* (women cannot lead).



Councillor Malebogo Kruger
Photo: Susan Tolmay

A member of BDP, Kruger represents the Peleng East ward, and is serving her first term in office, having been specially nominated in 2004. She is one of the five women in the 13 member council, and has had to develop the skill of making her voice heard in council where men have dominated discussions and sought to marginalise the women. She says in cases where there has been intimidation and attempts to block her advancement of an agenda within council, "I faced it head on". She refuses to believe that she belongs to the "weaker sex", and she points to the need to have a mix of skills and tact to have influence and a strong presence in council.

Botswana is full of contradictions when it comes to progress towards achieving gender equality. Governance remains one of the last bastions of male power that will require concerted effort to break through. It was only in 2007, forty years after independence that Botswana eventually recruited its first women soldiers to private and officer ranks (afrol News/IRIN, 22 November, 2008). The Botswana Defence Force (BDF) Commander Lt-General Tebogo Masire was quick to point out that there shall be no preferential treatment and that the female soldiers "will be required to walk 100 kilometres in the burning sun with a pack on their back, just as male soldiers do" (ibid).



Botswana Defence Force recruited its first women soldiers in 2007
Photo: Trevor Davies

Ntombi Setshwaelo, spokesperson for Emang Basadi, one the leading women's rights organisations that have pioneered voter education and support for women in politics in Botswana, has been reticent about the claim that Botswana has gone some way towards closing the gender gap in governance. She was quoted as saying that a challenge still exists in "positions that matter – decision making. I can only cite one woman who heads a public sector company, and another who heads a private sector company." (afrol News/IRIN, 22 November, 2008) She further said that "there is awareness, but there is lack of political will and passion" (ibid).

A July 2006 report by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) assessing the extent to which Botswana had implemented its commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), concluded that "politics still remains the domain of men".

In the non-political sphere, the 2003 data on women and decision making cited in the CPA report highlighted the fact that there were 14 percent women in private sector boards, and overall constitute 27 percent of decision makers in the private sector.

But in the civil service women make up 30 percent of decision- makers, with 67 percent as permanent secretaries. The governor of the Central bank and the Attorney General are women. However, a worrying trend emerged from the early 2008 cabinet reshuffle, in which two women ministers were dropped from cabinet.

Women in politics often step outside the box of socially acceptable norms and structures. Politics requires women to be outspoken and to engage with men in various capacities in the pursuit of different issues in society. As a result they are often labelled and called names by society when they pursue careers in politics. The media is no exception. Prior to the 2004 elections, Emang Basadi noted that the media "were partly responsible for women's apathy towards aspiring for political office" (CPA 2006:9). In fact that media was "found to be less open about the achievements of women politicians than those of their male counterparts and tended to treat women politicians as objects rather than political protagonists" (ibid).

Box four: Media silence on woman trailblazer

Same Bathobakae, BNF member and the recently elected Chairperson of the South East District Council is the only woman chairperson of a district council. Yet her election was seemingly a non event.

She recounts how the electronic coverage of her acceptance speech blanked out key points she made about women and leadership, including the significance of her election on gender and governance in the country. She also noted the absence of her face and voice in the print media which profiled her party's success and not hers.

Bathobakae's frustration with negative media coverage is shared by other women politicians, and must be addressed squarely as a strategy for advancing women's agenda to achieve success in the political arena.



Councillor Andretta Makaka
Photo: Susan Tolmay

Women are "their own worst enemies"

As in many other SADC countries the largest numbers of voters in Botswana are women (IEC 2005). In the 2004 elections, they constituted approximately 57 percent of the voters (http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61555.htm)[1]. Despite women being the majority of voters this has not correspondingly translated into a large number of women being elected into positions of decision-making. 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

[1] Accessed on 22 January 2009

culturally society has turned women into their own oppressors as they too tend to see men as better leaders than women." (SARDC/ WIDSAA, 1998:43)

It has often been observed that women, who are usually the majority voters, tend to vote for men. This, argues Thenjiwe Mtintso, GL Board member and a former MP with the African National Congress (ANC) is "mainly because their own lived experiences have conditioned them to be subordinates." (Gender Links, 2007:72)

The above observations are reinforced by the feedback on the quota system by the three women only focus groups in the Central district, Gaborone and the Kweneng district discussions. None of these groups fully supported taking affirmative action steps to increase women's representation and participation in politics. The Kweneg district women argued that this approach could be unfair to men.

Electoral systems

Global evidence shows that the type of electoral system in place has a bearing on whether women get elected or not. The *proportional representation* (PR) system has been shown to be far more conducive to women being elected as opposed to the *constituency* or *First-Past-The-Post* (FPTP) system.

The **proportional representation (PR)** or *list system* is the system whereby the electorate vote for political parties which are then allocated seats in parliament according to the percentage of vote they received. In this system the individual candidates placing on the list is what determines whether they get in or not, i.e. The higher a candidate is on the list the more likely they are to get a seat. In a *closed list system*, the political party determines where candidates sit on the list and this is usually based on democratic nomination processes within the party, whereas in an *open list system*, voters determine where candidates sit on the list.

In the **Constituency or FPTP** system citizens vote for candidates, who represent the party in a constituency, rather than the political party. The winning candidate is the one who gains more votes than any of the other candidates even if it's not an absolute majority. The system is also known as "the winner takes all" because even though a party may have received a significant percentage of the votes, they could still have very few or no representative in parliament.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, Botswana's FPTP electoral system is viewed by women as a stumbling block to standing for political office (CPA, 2006:10). The ruling party is opposed to quotas, although in the 1999 election, there was a deliberate effort to field women candidates in safe seats, which at the time resulted in the increase of women representation from 8 to 18 percent (ibid). This figure decreased to 11 percent after the 2004 elections.

There is an observation that the Botswana parliament "has played a minimal role in advancing the cause of women in decision-making positions in as far as both policy and law are concerned" (CPA, 2006:11). Changes in the electoral laws have been slow, and have not sought to address the gender gaps. Thus even though changes such as reducing the minimum voting age from 21 to 18 have opened up opportunities for more citizens to vote, this does not necessarily translate to wider space for women to participate in politics as candidates. There have been calls for changes of the electoral system to a PR one, to not only widen the chances for the opposition to have a stronger presence in parliament, but to open another door for women representation to increase (EISA, 2004).

Political parties and voluntary party quotas

Research and empirical evidence has shown that political parties are most often the main entry point into political office. As Ballington and Matland point out "parties are entrusted with perhaps the most strategic responsibility in democracy: to prepare and select candidates for election and to support them in positions of leadership and governance" (2004:2). They further point out that "bureaucratically-based systems that have incorporated rules guaranteeing women's representation are a significant advantage, especially if they include a party quota guaranteeing women a certain percentage of the candidacies" (ibid).

Clearly affirmative action by political parties can be a step in the right direction for increasing women's representation in politics. Women's wings in political parties are the party structures that have the mandate to accelerate the increased representation of women in the party, parliament and local authorities. Most often, however, they are marginalised as they are not taken seriously and instead serve the welfare needs of their parties such as fundraising, choir development and campaigning activities (Women's NGO Coalition and SARDC WIDSAA, 20O5).

Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)

The BDP is the ruling party. It does not have a quota for women, and is not supportive of affirmative action. The current chairperson of the BDP women's wing, Tebelelo Seretse, argues that quotas for women address the symptoms not the causes and therefore focuses on initiatives to support women's empowerment in increasing the gender representation of women in positions of power (Therisanyo, 2007b). Women of the BDP are encouraged to contest for offices of power in the party's structures, parliament and local government.

According to the former chairperson of the BDP, Botlogile Tshireletso, the party is making measured progress as it leads in women empowerment initiatives. Women constituted 21 percent in the 2005-2007 central committee (Therisanyo,2006.) Tshireletso further emphasises that "gender equity should not be made an urban area talk shop, far removed from the realities facing women in rural areas and that the spirit of self esteem should be inculcated in the girl chid as real empowerment is mental" (Therisanyo, 2007a). Seretse stresses that as the women's wing they intend to "inculcate that women can do anything they aspire at a tender age and not let cultural stereotypes shackle them, so that they may replace those who will be retiring from politics." (Therisanyo, 2007a).

Despite its negative position on quotas, the BDP government can point to some milestones in achieving the empowerment of women at the national level. In 2004, for example, the government spent P5 million on gender sensitisation workshops; P6 million on financial assistance to NGO, CBOs and Women's Groups and more than 90 percent of requests on gender training had been honoured (BDP, 2004). The former president of Botswana Festus Mogae showed his commitment to increasing women's representation by using his prerogative to appoint three women to the four available slots (Therisanyo, 2007b).

Botswana National Front (BNF)

The BNF is the main opposition party in the country. The party to do well in the urban areas. Its constitution stipulates that 30 percent of the members of the Central Committee shall be women, which is an important indicator of commitment towards achieving gender equality within the party. Six of 18 (33.3 percent) members of the Central Committee of the BNF are women. This meets the

30 percent constitutional requirement. However, the party has not always translated this commitment into fielding women candidates in safe seats.

Botswana Congress Party (BCP)

The BCP is the second most popular opposition party after the BNF. It was formed as a faction from the BNF. The BCP is the fastest growing opposition party in the country. On the issue of gender equality, the BCP is committed to "the renaissance of women's roles in social, economic, cultural and political arenas through strengthening legal instruments to protect women by the abolition of customary and modern laws that discriminate against women (BCP, 1999); facilitating economic participation of women and devising mechanisms that would record and reorganise the work that women do (BCP, 1999); strengthening health services for women; making education and training more accessible to women and promoting the political participation of women" (BCP Manifesto, 2004).

According to the party's constitution, 30 percent of the governing body of the party, the Central Committee, shall be women. Like the BNF, the BCP has not yet put measures in place for achieving the stipulated 30 percent. Nevertheless the BCP's efforts towards increasing the representation of women are measurable. In the current Central Committee, 26 percent of the members are women. According to the 1999 party manifesto, should the BCP win the elections, it will implement a quota system to ensure a fair representation of men and women at both national and local level through the transformation of the electoral system.

Financial

Financial resources are a crucial factor in winning votes in a constituency system. It has been noted that in Botswana the increase of constituencies from 40 to 57 prior to the elections in 2004, required a renewed strategy by all political parties to meet the target set by SADC, particularly in light of increased competition. Finances are part of that strategy in order to mount more effective and far reaching campaigns. Aspiring women politicians and Emang Basadi have consis-tently highlighted the lack of resources as one of the major obstacles to 'winning' in the political arena. Civil society partici-pants in the Lobatse focus group discussion were more explicit about what the lack of resources means to women candidates. They said that women had no money and other resources to 'buy votes' (enticing the electorate with goods, food) as is the norm with men politicians.



Money talks in elections *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Malebogo Kruger, Deputy Mayor of Lobatse town council pointed out that "finance is an issue - it is very expensive to campaign". Some of the considerations include transport, communications, publicity materials (although political parties usually provide basic publicity materials for all their candidates). In her case Kruger also had support staff and a small office to manage the mobi-lisation of the electorate. Women candidates have to make a lot of personal sacrifices to support their political aspirations. Neo Kesenogile, BDP Councillor in the Kweneng District Council had to use her personal savings for campaigning, otherwise her campaign would have suffered; there is a constant struggle to balance home and family responsibilities and political ambitions.

Strategies for change

There is never a shortage of reasons why women can't be elected to decision-making. But there are plenty of examples, both in FPTP and PR systems, of significant increases in women's participation in decision-making as a result of deliberate measures being taken. The key factor is political will. If this exists, other measures will follow.

Quotas - lessons from the region

Quotas have been implemented effectively in the SADC region. All five of the SADC countries that have achieved or exceeded 30 percent representation of women in local government - Lesotho (58 percent), Mozambique (29 percent), South Africa (40 percent), Tanzania (34 percent) and Namibia(42 percent) - have some form of quota.

Voluntary quotas are measures taken by political parties to guarantee the inclusion of women on their party lists or in their structures. The drawback to this form of quota is that there are often no sanctions for non-compliance with the result that they are often promises that remain on paper and are not implemented. South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) and Mozambique's ruling FRELIMO have 50 and 40 percent voluntary quotas respectively.

Constitutional and legislated quotas are mandatory measures which dictate, through the Constitution or relevant electoral laws that a certain percentage of seats or positions are set aside for women. The advantage of this form of quota is that they apply to all political parties and there are sanctions or penalties for non-compliance such as rejection of lists by Electoral Commissions or disqualification from elections. Namibia has a PR system as well as a legislated quota of 30 percent at local level. More relevant to the case of Zambia is Lesotho which has a FPTP system and legislated quota at the local level.



Lobatse Town Council *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Box five: Lesotho women lead the way in local government

Lesotho is the shining example when it comes to women's representation in local government in the region (and globally), with 58 percent women in this sphere. The reason for this is that for the first local government elections in Lesotho in 2006 instituted a 30 percent quota for women through the Local Government Amendment Act of 2004. Every third constituency was set aside for women. These constituencies will rotate over three successive elections after which the quota system will be reviewed.

This process had its challenges as an aggrieved male councillor instituted a case against the Independent Electoral Commission ahead of the 2005 elections on the grounds that his constitutional right to contest the elections in a constituency of his choice had been violated by the reservation of constituencies for women only.

The Lesotho Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal to have the 30 percent reservation for women declared unconstitutional upholding the High Court ruling that affirmative action can be applied to redress structural imbalances. This landmark judgement is significant for the SADC region as it upholds the principle of affirmative action in increasing women's representation in decision-making and meeting the targets set by Heads of State.



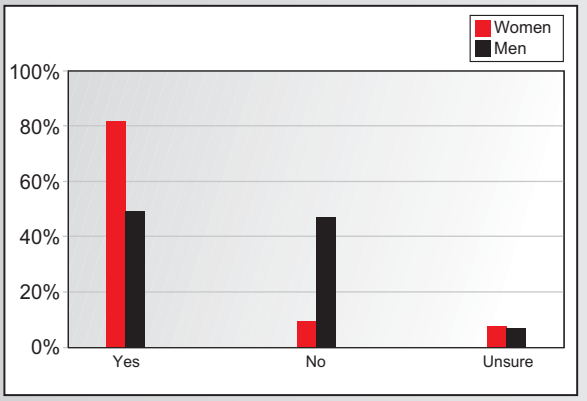
Challenging quotas in Lesotho *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

In Tanzania, Articles 66(1)(b) and 78(1) of the Union Constitution provides for 30 percent of the seats in the national assembly to be allocated to women only based on the percentage of votes that each party garners. This while women are free to stand as candidates in this FPTP system the Constitution guarantees women 30 percent of the seats in the assembly through a PR mechanism for distributing these seats.

Quotas - the view from the ground

In the interviews conducted with councillors, the majority supported quotas, but in a less enthusiastic way than in other countries that have been part of this research. There were also mixed views from the participants in the focus group discussions. The general population still needs to understand quotas more as a democratic imperative, and less as a tool

What the councillors said about quotas



Overall 71 percent of the councillors interviewed (82.5 percent women and 47.4 percent men) said they believed in the use of quotas to increase women's representation in decision-making at the local government level. This is lower than the first *At the Coalface* study conducted in Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and Lesotho where 81 percent of respondents agreed with the use of quotas.

This figure is also lower than in the survey carried out in *Ringing up the Changes* in 2004 with 76 percent overall supporting quotas (78 percent women, 66 percent men). This 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 a lower level of awareness and conscientisation at local level in Botswana four years on.

to be used to take power from one sector of the population to another.

Focus group discussions with women and men constituents as well as civil society representatives produced mixed reactions and some strong views. For example, some participants considered quotas undemocratic. Gaborone men were of the view that women should not be given special measures as this puts men at a disadvantage and this is undemocratic.

Likewise the Lobatse the civil society group felt quotas would be harmful to democracy because "people are being given positions for the mere fact of being women". In fact they went on to argue that women are unable to deliver because of the quota system; a participant cited an example where some specially elected councillors made it clear that they do not owe the community anything since the people did not elect them. The women from the Kweneng district voiced the distrust of the general population who viewed quotas as introducing unfair competition.

On the other hand some participants were supportive of quotas, but cautioned against these being used as a form of tokenism. They called for commitment by political parties to properly conceptualise and mainstream the system so that it is beneficial to all, particularly women. The women and men from the VDC in the central district support quotas, but noted resistance from political parties, particularly the decision making structures that are male dominated.

This was echoed by the men and women from the Kgatleng district VDC, who felt that the "power hungry" male led political parties were blocking an otherwise important process for ensuring women moved forward in decision making. Women from the Kweneng district felt that women are underrepresented in local government, so effective use of quotas would ensure that their voices are heard. However, they cautioned against its use to promote unfair competition. Women from Gaborone also supported quotas, but wanted the quotas to be competency based. This was a recurring theme

amongst the participants who supported the quota system.

Conclusions

Removal of barriers that limit women's access to decision-making positions in local government should be a priority of the Botswana government and political parties. There are two general elections between 2009 and 2015, and both should be opportunities to put in place policy measures, backed by legislation and targeted programmes to change the current status quo.

Evidence from the region shows that quotas, both voluntary and legislated or constitutional, can be implemented effectively yielding large gains for women in local government. Botswana has not reached the minimum 30 percent of women in decision-making in local government, and prior increases have been minimal (from 15 percent in 1999 to 19 percent after the 2004 elections). A number of tactful measures, aside from the political party entry point have to be deployed, including the exercise of the prerogative of the Minister of Local Government in specially appointing councillors.

Political party commitment to gender equality is crucial and this needs to become more than merely encouraging women to participate. If political parties are genuinely committed to the principle of gender equality this should be explicitly stated in their manifestos, policies and structures. The ruling party must take the lead in this regard, particularly since it has been in power for over 40 years, and women have played a lead role in maintaining its power as voters and supporters; women must take their place at decision making tables at all levels.



Decision-making should include active participation *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Participation

The previous chapter focused on how women get their foot in the door of decision- making structures and processes (access), and have a presence where power is exercised and decisions that change lives and shape futures are being made. However, once women are sitting at decision making tables, then what? Can they really influence change, can their voices be heard?

Many studies have shown that it is possible for women to be in decision-making but to be effectively excluded because of the institutional barriers to their participation. Hassim and Meintjes (2005:15) have this to say about linking access to decision making to *effective* participation: "... increased representation

on its own is of limited use in advancing gender equality; representation needs to be underpinned by increased participation of women in all forms of decision-making in society."

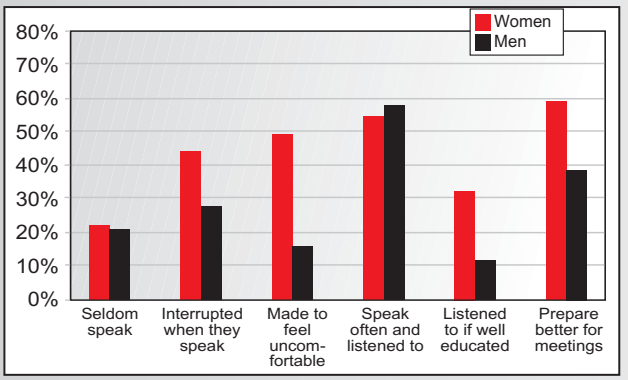
In short, Hassim and Meintjes echo the thinking behind the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter one, which acknowledges that women's presence in decision-making is critical but not enough. They must have the ability to exercise power, and their ability to do so is dependent on a range of factors.

This chapter attempts to measure the extent of women's participation in local government in Botswana and the barriers to their effective participation. Conversely, the chapter explores factors that enable effective participation by women. Potentially, every disabling factor can be turned into an enabling factor. This is important because it is only through effective participation that women can change the institutional character of local government, its agenda and the services that it delivers.

Measuring participation

Once women have gained access to local government there are high expectations for them to perform effectively. At 19 percent women councillors in Botswana are heavily outnumbered by their male counterparts, and as they pointed out during interviews, whilst they can speak, there are still a number of factors that hinder their ability to make their presence fully felt, including intimidation by male councillors and lack of self confidence, amongst others. This view was also shared by most of the men and women interviewed in focus group discussions.

What the councillors said on women's participation in council meetings



As the graph shows, more than half of the respondents, both women and men agreed that women speak often and are listened to with more men (57.9 percent) than women (52.5 percent) agreeing with this statement. Interestingly, the *quality* of the engagement is the critical issue. More women councillors agreed with the statement that they are interrupted when they speak, and made to feel uncomfortable (42.5 and 47.5 percent respectively, compared to 26.3 and 15.8 percent by men on the same issues).

Both this study and first phase of the *At the Coalface* study conducted in Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa have found that more women feel that they are listened to only if they are well educated and that women feel that they prepare better for council meetings. These issues point to the fact that women are not always judged by the same standards as men, and they often have to work to be recognised.

Participation in meetings and debates

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 women scored 24 points lower than men in a 100 point scale of political participation (1999:14). As the evidence from the above shows, there are subtle and overt barriers that hinder women's ability to effectively participate in council meetings and debates. This finding is critical, as it points to the need to transform pervasively sexist and patriarchal institutional processes for women to make a difference to the governance agenda.

In observations of two council meetings in Botswana, 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 (mayors or deputy mayors) and ruling party or opposition.



Behind the barbed wire at Kgatleng District Council *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Table 11: Women Councillors participation in council meetings

Council	Total cllrs	Women	% women in council	Mayor/ Chair	Total interventions	WHO SPEAKS															
						MEN								WOMEN							
						DM		RP		OP/Ind		Total		DM		RP		OP/Ind		Total	
						No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Lobatse	14	5	36%	M	7	1	14%	2	28%	3	43%	6	86%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%	1	14%
Central District	172	38	22%	M	68	26	38%	25	37%	2	3%	53	78%	6	9%	9	13%	0	0%	15	22%
TOTAL	**186**	**43**	**23%**		**75**	**27**	**52%**	**27**	**65%**	**5**	**46%**	**59**	**79%**	**6**	**9%**	**9**	**13%**	**1**	**14%**	**16**	**21%**

DM = Decision maker; RP = Ruling Party; OP = Opposition; Ind = Independent

Table eleven provides the evidence that men dominated all the meetings (79 percent), with women participating only 21 percent of the time. Overall women constituted 23 percent of the two councils that were observed, so they participated in almost equal proportion to their representation . Women constitute 22 percent of the Central district council, and they participated in proportion to their strength. Interestingly there are no women from the opposition in the Central District Council, and the majority of the women were specially appointed by the Minister of Local Government. Both factors could have had an impact on their ability to speak and assert themselves. In the Lobatse Town Council women constitute 36 percent of the councillors, yet their participation was extremely low at 14 percent. In this particular meeting, the woman's intervention came from the councillor from the opposition.

Issues raised

The Lobatse Town Council meeting was a full council meeting which centred on two issues, namely the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC) functions and management of cattle slaughtering and export, as well as the Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS). The record of the BMC discussion shows that men asked a number of key questions regarding the management and slaughtering of cattle within the BMC. The woman councillor's intervention was with regard to the grading and export of the cattle. The dynamic of this meeting seems to stem from the fact that cattle rearing and management remains predominantly male in Botswana, and thus men have authoritative knowledge and interest in these issues.

The Central District Council meeting was a full council meeting, which focused on a recently amended Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) Act. A presentation was made by an officer from the MVA Fund. The interventions by the women councillors ranged from seeking clarification as regards reimbursements to the fund where a guilty person is indigent or bed ridden, support to dependents of a bed ridden breadwinner, the interpretation of the Act to cover those who cause accidents under the influence of drugs and the number of times the MVA fund can cover accident victims. The trend during the meeting was that women councillors' questions were predominantly, but not always, underpinned by welfare and social concerns.

Positions occupied in Councils

Table twelve provides striking evidence of where women are placed in the senior leadership of 15 councils. At the highest level of Chairperson or Mayor there are no women at all. At deputy level, women make up 40 percent of the leadership and at Council Secretary level there are only 20 percent women. It is important to note that mayors and



Lobatse Town Council *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

chairpersons are elected by councillors in office at the time.

Table 12: Women leaders in local government

Position	Women	% Women	Men	% Men
Chairperson/Mayor	0	0%	15*	100%
Dep. Mayor/Dep. Chair	6	40%	9	60%
Council Secretary	3	20%	12	80%

**At the time of collecting the data, Sowa Township Council had neither a Chairperson nor a mayor*

Source: Gender Links, 2008

As things stand, it is unlikely that there could be a critical mass of women or gender sensitive men in most councils in Botswana that could swing the vote towards the election of a female mayor or chairperson. It remains to be seen whether the tide

will turn with the new crop of councillors that will take up office after the 2009 elections. Tactical lobbying and awareness raising is critical, both within the council and by civil society, political parties and other interested stakeholders. The current Minister of Local Government is a woman.

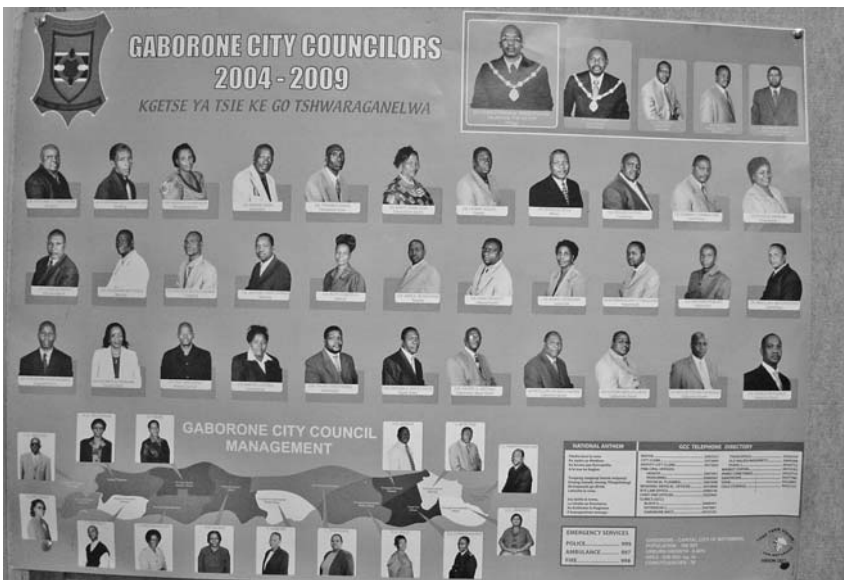
The research also found that there does not appear to be a system in place that ensures that women are represented onto or are elected as chairpersons of committees. This further hinders their ability in making decisions within the council. Women councillors that are nominated by the Minister or Local Government are also excluded from committees as one councillor attested to being prevented by her party from participating in any of the council committees.

Numbers make a difference

In the feedback from three of the focus groups (Gaborone men, women from the central district, and men and women from Lobatse civil society) participants asserted that the lack of a critical mass of women in local government hampers effective participation and reduces their influence. The Gaborone men said the "voices of women are not audible", and this compromises their visibility. The women from the Central District said there was "nothing to show" that women are making an impact because of their under-representation. The Lobatse civil society group noted that because women are outnumbered, they are silenced when they need to make meaningful contributions. It is evident therefore that numbers do make a difference in terms of impacting on the nature and quality of participation within local government.

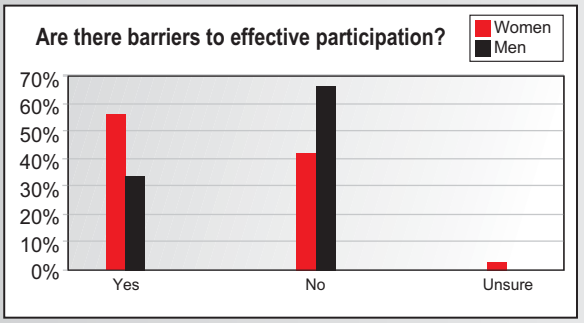
Barriers to participation

The interviews with councillors, both men and women highlighted some major barriers to the effective participation of women councillors. Whilst there is a general perception that once in power women will easily take on the role of leadership due to their familiarity with bread and butter issues, this is not always the case. Some of the barriers include lack of resources, lack of support including from family, deeply held cultural norms, practices and beliefs about a woman's place in society that stop women from realising their full potential. The Lobatse civil society focus group, for example, talked with distaste of reports of some women councillors who did not "behave like women", including apparent inappropriate dress sense (wearing trousers at funerals and not wearing head scarves).



The type of electoral system in place affects the number of women elected *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

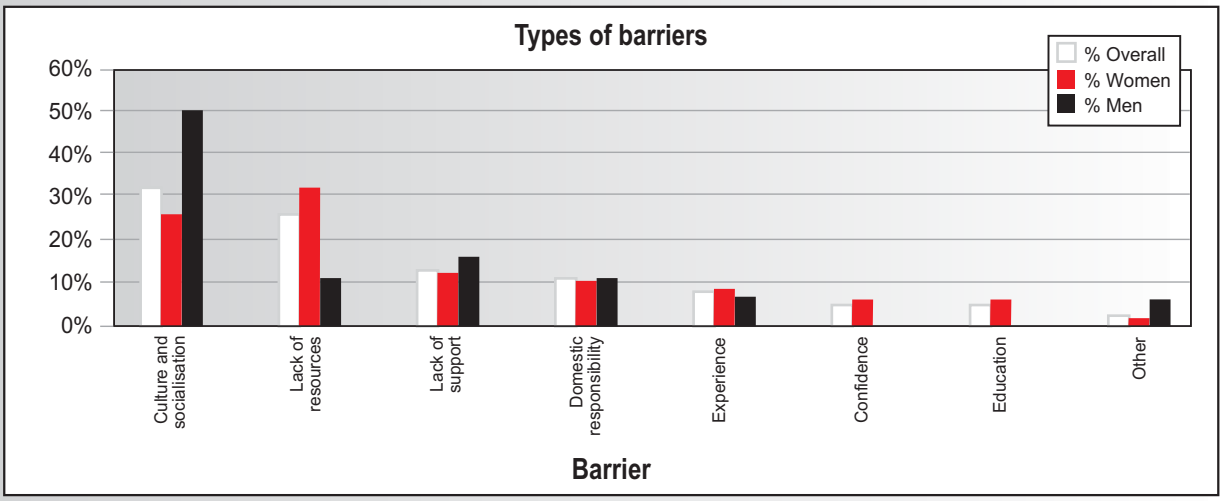
What the councillors said about barriers to participation



Overall 49 percent of the councillors interviewed agreed that there are barriers to women participating in local government with more women (56.4 percent) than men (33.3 percent) agreeing with the statement. This is slightly higher than the first *At the Coalface* study which found that of overall in the four case study countries (Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa) 42 percent agreed with the statement (46 percent among women).

It is interesting to note that a fairly high proportion of the councillors (49 percent) disagreed with the statement, with men significantly higher (66.7 percent) than women (41 percent). This is unsurprising considering that much still needs to be done to sensitise both men and women, including those in leadership, about the critical importance of mainstreaming gender and women's empowerment in governance, whilst at the same time dealing with resistance to change and patriarchal attitudes. This response clearly demonstrates the high levels of gender blindness.

Councillors were also asked to identify the barriers and to list up to three that women councillors face in local government. The graph below shows that at 31.7 percent culture and socialisation was the biggest barrier identified with more men (50 percent) than women (26.6 percent) considering this the biggest barrier. Women regarded lack of resources as the biggest barrier (31.3 percent), compared to 11.1 percent of men. Lack of support (12.5 percent women, 16.7 percent men) was the third highest rated barrier, followed by domestic responsibility (10.9 percent women, 11.1 percent men) and experience (7.8 percent women, 5.6 percent men).



Ideological barriers

Culture and socialisation

There has been slow, though measurable progress in reversing the marginalisation of women in Botswana society. At the formal level, as pointed out earlier in this report, policy and legislation has elevated the issue of gender equality onto the national platform, and made it imperative to address women's empowerment. However patriarchal attitudes remain tough to transform, and this still permeates all levels of society. As highlighted earlier, it is only as recently as 2007 that women in Botswana were recruited into the army. Many areas of custom and tradition still deny women their rights to full dignity, and this translates into hard-to-penetrate barriers for women to participate in decision making.

A number of the focus group participants cited culture as a significant barrier to women's participation in local government. The Lobatse civil society focus group noted that some women councillors were being labelled "incompetent" due to lack of experience in politics; this suggests that a sexist double standard is being applied for women, as inexperienced men rarely face similar prejudice. This is rooted in a culture that still places women in the private sphere and thus the reluctance to open up opportunities for women to participate in the public sphere.

Kgomotso Mogami, BDP Councillor for the Government Ward, Gaborone city, was emphatic about the deeply ingrained sexist double standard in politics. She cited the often stated statement, particularly by men who say that for a woman to become a politician "*o tshwanetse gonna le bokgoné*" (she must be competent and have the ability), whereas the same standard does not apply to men. She said culturally "women are supposed to be facilitators and supporters of men, caring for babies and being in the kitchen". She pointed out that often the highest position that women will have in party structures is that of secretary.

Some focus group participants pointed to the need for women to be "bold" and to "speak up" within councils. Their view was that cultural norms and practices were disempowering women from speaking out. According to the men and women of the Kgatleng District VDC, women are not free in council because their male counterparts despise them (they do not think they are good enough to be in power). They also discussed the fact that spouses are said to prevent their wives from effective participation because of suspicions of infidelity, and do not assist their wives with family chores of child care and the upkeep of the home.

Women not supporting one another

The men and women from the Central District VDC said one barrier to women's effective participation in local government was that women are "their own enemies because of being jealous of one another". This therefore prevents them from electing other capable women. They further said women are driven by jealousy to an extent of electing a man who is well known for irresponsibility just to ensure that a woman loses a chance of getting into a position. This is one of the most common responses heard when conducting this kind of research, namely that women do not support each other (at best) and pull each other down (at worst).

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. (Gender Links 2007:120)

The problem with this barrier is that it is often misunderstood as jealousy and very seldom interrogated. It is also used by men as an excuse or a justification for women's low representation, saying "Women don't support each other so why should we support them?" Far more needs to done to help women understand this phenomenon, including the causes and effects.

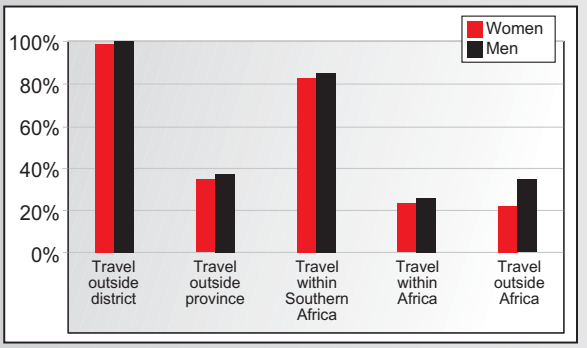
Lack of confidence

Interestingly, only women identified both lack of confidence and low levels of education as barriers. Gaborone BNF councillor, Andretta Makaka, acknowledged that initially she struggled to assert herself in council meetings, however, after receiving training (including on how to present herself and speak on issues) and gaining experience, she can take on the men and express herself well on any of the issues.

Neo Kesenogile, BDP Councillor Kweneng District Council, acknowledged that the bad attitude of male colleagues in council can be intimidating and because they outnumber women they can attack them with impunity unless they get protection from the chairperson of the council. However, with the support of other women and experience, confidence levels increase.

Lack of confidence emanates from the ideological barriers mentioned above, from the messaging that women have received throughout their lives that they worthless and subservient. These factors, linked as well to lack of education and exposure, have resulted in women lacking confidence and not believing in themselves.

What the councillors said about travel and exposure



Almost all women and men, when asked about the extent to which they had travelled and been exposed, said that they had travelled outside their district and also within southern Africa, although slightly less women (80 percent) had travelled within southern Africa (compared to men at 84.2 percent).

In terms of travel within Africa, more men (26.3 percent) had travelled than women (22.5 per cent). Approximately 10 percent more men (31.6 per cent) had travelled overseas than women (20.0 per cent). This finding reflects higher levels of exposure for men than women; a contributory factor to women's lack of confidence.

Institutional barriers

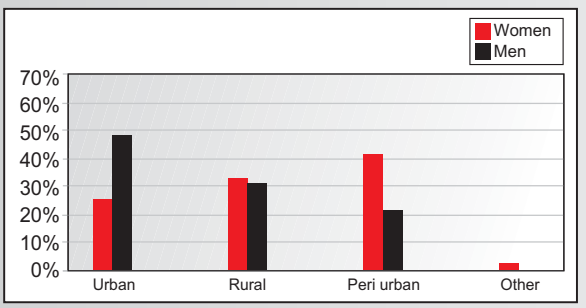
Hassim and Meintjes (2005:15) point out that "institutional norms and procedures and the nature of processes of deliberation can undermine the extent an impact of women's voice in the public sphere". Likewise, institutions which do not take account of the specific and different needs of women and men can be disempowering. Decision-making structures that have been established and run based only on the needs and circumstance of men can prove to be obstacles for women. From the evidence in the graph on barriers, the biggest barriers that women councillors in Botswana face are as lack of resources followed by culture and socialisation.

Lack of resources

Lack of resources was the second biggest barrier overall but was the biggest barrier identified by women councillors to effective participation. Councillor Bathobakae of South East District council (Tloweng), highlighted some of the financial issues she faced when she was mobilising to be elected as councillor. For example, she did not have a car and she had to use personal resources to support the community such as buying food at funerals, providing crockery and cutlery at gatherings and providing her neighbours with access to her electrical supply when needed.

These financial demands have implications on family resources. As Deputy Mayor Kruger of the Lobatse town council pointed out, when women have husbands and a family, the financial demands can cause tensions in the home and a lot of resistance from spouses. She explained that she was lucky because her husband considered that the money from their family business was jointly owned and could be used for their mutual benefit, so she was able to use some of these resources for campaigning.

Where councillors are located as regards constituencies



The research found that whereas women and men were almost evenly represented in rural constituencies (32.5 and 31.6 percent respectively), there were markedly less women (25 percent) than men (47.4 percent) in urban constituencies. This trend continues with regard to peri urban constituencies, with women councillors dominating these constituencies, at 40 percent compared to 21.1 percent men. Rural constituencies are generally more vast and therefore more difficult to get around (especially for women with no transport). They are also generally worse off when it comes to services.

Lack of support

Lack of support was identified as the third highest barrier with more men (16.7 percent) than women (12.5 percent) perceiving this as a barrier. This barrier cuts across both the institutional and the ideological barriers. Women often referred to lack of support from male colleagues within councils and from family, in particular spouses. Likewise a number of the participants from the focus group discussions referred to women councillors' husbands being unsupportive.

Eunice Mguni, a Gaborone councillor representing Phakalane, said that initially her family was unsupportive because "they were worried about how people would view her", and also because of the financial toll this would have on the family. However, now they are fully supportive. This testament was echoed by Councillor Neo Kesenogile of Kweneng District Council who said that her decision to want to stand for elections received mixed feelings from her family. While her siblings and their children were supportive of her, Kesenogile's husband said that he did not want his wife to be a politician and asked her to go back on her decision.

Men and the institution

Men dominate all areas of local government including decision-making. Until recently, there were no women Mayors or Chairpersons of councils in all 16 councils. Leaders of councils (chairpersons, mayors) are elected by the councillors under their authority on an annual basis. As men make up the majority of councillors in all councils it is rare to find women breaking through.

There is no gender mainstreaming strategy within local government. This, coupled with lack of targets and affirmative action, means that women simply do not get the chance to exercise leadership in local government structures. This has implications on the ability for these institutions to transform and embed gender equality principles in a way that empowers women and benefits communities.

The approach taken by Councils, all of which are run by men save for one, to relegate women's empowerment to social and community development departments, focusing on training women in traditional trades (like sewing and knitting) undermines women's empowerment. There is also a perception that a focus on women's empowerment is doing women a favour to the exclusion of men, and that being gender neutral means that the playing field is being levelled and both men and women will participate equally.

Inter-party politics

Local government functions within a political framework. Politicking can be a barrier to both women and men. A recurring theme from focus group discussions was that party loyalty often interferes with the ability to serve communities, as some of the councillors heed the call of the party first and the communities second. Most felt that loyalty should be to the people who voted them into power. Party politics also limits women's ability to support one another, for example in electing women into decision making positions within council. At times women have no option but to vote for men into certain positions, because the party has adopted that person as the preferred candidate and all members must comply with the decision.

Another dimension is the tensions between ruling and opposition parties, and the impact this has on whether or not women councillors can be effective. At times a motion can fail to go through because it has been presented by a councillor from a party that is not in the majority. This trend can have serious

consequences for effective service delivery to communities by government, which is supposed to serve everyone in the community.

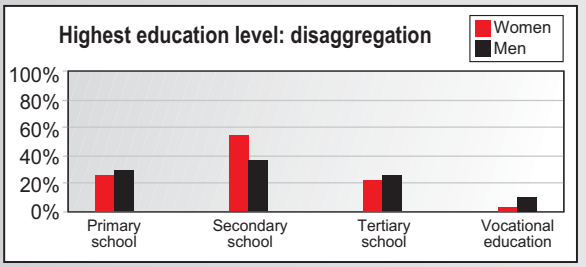
Personal barriers

Education

The Local Government (District Councils) Act (Cap 40:01) does not make provisions for the minimum education levels required in order to qualify for membership in the council. The study, as shall be discussed below, revealed that the minimum educational attainment for councillors was secondary school. Few male councillors, and even fewer women councillors had attained tertiary education. At 81 percent, Botswana has a high adult literacy rate (WHO/UNAIDS/UNICEF 2008). It is also one of the few countries where this rate is slightly higher amongst females than males, at 82.2 and 82.1 percent respectively (ibid).

The education sector in Botswana has enjoyed sustained investment over time, with the Department of Non Formal Education in the Ministry of Education taking the lead in implementing the literacy programme. This may augur well for women, however, as was observed by some of the participants in the focus groups, it is also important for women to be educated on strategic political processes, including all systems and procedures relating to local government, so that they can combine their 'book' knowledge with on the ground knowledge.

What the councillors said about education levels

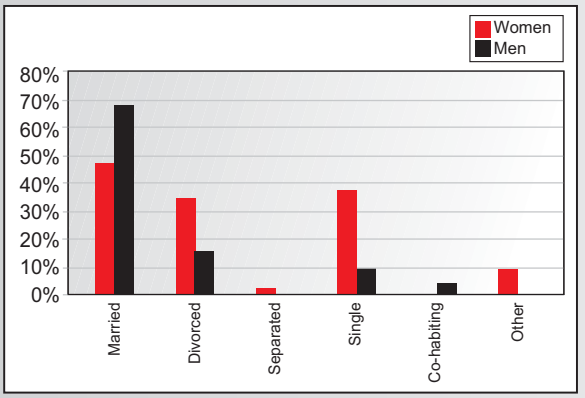


The study revealed that less women had primary school and more secondary school education as their highest level of education than men. Slightly less women (22.5 percent) had tertiary education than men (26.3per cent). Even less women had vocational training/education (2.5 percent) than men (10.5 percent). This study found that councillors did not rate lack of education as high on their list of barriers, and only a small percentage of women (4.7 percent) and no men identified this barrier.

Domestic responsibilities

The quantitative survey showed fewer women (10.9 percent) than men (11.1 percent) rate domestic responsibilities as a barrier, possibly because they have been socialised not to think of their domestic chores as a barrier, women have the burden of domestic or private responsibilities which they have to balance with their political and public duties. In addition many of them have other full time jobs so that they can support their families, resulting in them having to juggle their time between politics, work and home. Lack of support from husbands and families exacerbate this situation.

What the councillors said about marital status



The study found that male councillors (68.4 percent) are more likely to married than women (45 percent). Women are more likely to be single (35 percent) than men (10 percent). Fewer of the male respondents were divorced (10 percent) compared to 15.5 percent for women. These findings are similar to the findings from *Ringing up the changes* which found that women in politics show a higher likelihood of being single than men.

In the focus group discussions, participants cited women councillors' marital status as a barrier to effective participation. For example, the women and men from the Central District VDC, said that some women are afraid to participate in local government because of fear of being scolded by their husbands for coming late and for not doing household chores. This was echoed by women from the Kweneng district council who said spouses are not supportive of their wives at home to enable them to be more effective at work.

Enabling factors

In spite of the barriers mentioned above, the research yielded examples of women who are managing to overcome these obstacles. There are several examples of how disabling factors can potentially become enabling agents that can enhance women's ability to participate effectively.

Experience

A combination of a good career profile and community mobilising has proven to be important in providing advantages to aspiring politicians and those already occupying political office to make a difference.



Same Bathobakae, BNF member, Secretary General of the Women's League and now Chairperson of the South East District Council, has experience of land transfers from her work as a conveyancing secretary in various leading law firms. Coupled with this is her consummate skill in mobilising both men and women to work with her on various projects.

This experience laid the basis for her election in 2004 as a councillor, after having been defeated in 1999, and also enabled her to influence the work of the council as regards land management and planning. She explained how, after losing elections in 1999, she took a long term view of strategically mobilising the community in anticipation of the next election, including establishing

a club called "Just Friends" in 2000 to raise funds to support local institutions such as Tlamelong Rehabilitation Centre. She further influenced the setting up of an initiative called "*Badira Mmogo*" (lets work together), where members would donate a small sum of money which would be used to develop the community; she used this opportunity to campaign.

When she eventually became a councillor in 2004, not only was she the only woman from the opposition in the council, Bathobakae also became the first member of the opposition in the council to chair a committee (Physical Committee), and both BNF and BDP members chose her to lead this committee. She was able to discharge her duties well due to her knowledge of land management and transfer.

Background and grounding

A background of working through party structures, understanding systems and processes within parties, and being well networked as well as steadily building a profile, have created good opportunities for women to have a better chance of becoming decision makers both in their parties as well as in council.



Salome Lesole, BDP Councillor in the Central District, based in Orapa, was already a seasoned politician by the time she was elected in 2004. She carved out a clear and deliberate path to attain leadership within local government. She started off as a member of a cell committee because her agenda was "to understand how politics works on the ground". She then moved on become a member of a ward committee, where, she says: "I made sure I was Secretary so that I can have better access to decision making". She later became a branch secretary and subsequently the region. She is now in the National Women's Wing, deployed to the Kweneng region.

This background has stood her in good stead within council because she is Vice Chairperson of the Consultative Forum, which consults with communities quarterly at sub district level. She is also Vice Chairperson of the Trade and Liquor Committee, amongst others. This has ensured that she plays a strategic influential role in the work of the council.

Support

A critical factor in advancing women in politics and decision-making is the support from family, friends, peers, communities and gender activists. This is both in terms of access to decision-making positions and structures and once in those positions.



Malebogo Kruger, Deputy Mayor of the Lobatse town council says that her ***family support*** translates into "behind every successful woman is a man". Her husband is 100 percent behind her. She recounted how her husband even helped her to campaign by being her driver during the 2004 elections. In fact he is the one who pushed and said she could do it when she was hesitant.

Her children also played a visible and lead role in her campaign. She does acknowledge that for other women this is not the case and some women politicians even experience violence because of their political ambition.

Kruger also attributes her support to the community, particularly women, and says that one of her key motivations for going into politics was the community that came en masse to her house to ask her to stand for elections because they had confidence that she could play a good role in reducing poverty.

With regard to ***political party support***, some women councillors said their political parties had played a positive role in their political careers. Others felt that the party provided very little support. Conversely a Gaborone councillor talked of the party being an "old boys club" where women cannot interact with their male peers socially otherwise they would be viewed as prostitutes, whereas that is where some important decisions are made. She explained that they have tried to push for a quota but "nobody is listening to us", and that "men do not want to move from where they are". She also pointed out that during campaigns for elections, the party does not support them at the most crucial stage - primary elections - and most women do not have the resources to "buy votes" which men do.

Most of the councillors talked of receiving very good ***community support*** from both men and women. Same Bathobakae, BNF councillor and Chairperson South East District Council, who has won the primary elections unopposed, talked of receiving consistent support from both men and women during her campaigns and in office, including old men and women who tended to be more conservative. Neo Kesenogile, BDP Councillor Kweneng District, said initially the community had mixed reactions, but since assuming office the love and support from them has been enormous. For example, they are always willing to cook for her when she does home visits.

A number of the councillors mentioned the training they received from ***gender organisations and other institutions*** such as the training from BALA on lobbying skills building, and Gender Links on how to engage the media, as well as political strategy by Emang Basadi.

Role models

Role models and mentors play a key role in inspiring and keeping aspiring women politicians and those already in power focused on their goal and to also provide a support base for success.



Enuice Mguni, Gaborone BDP Councillor (Phakalane), credits her mother, a former BDP councillor, now retired, with the success she now enjoys as a politician. She says initially she did not like her mother's political work, since it kept her very busy and there were always people demanding her attention. After a while she grew to understand her mother's important role and has followed in her footsteps.

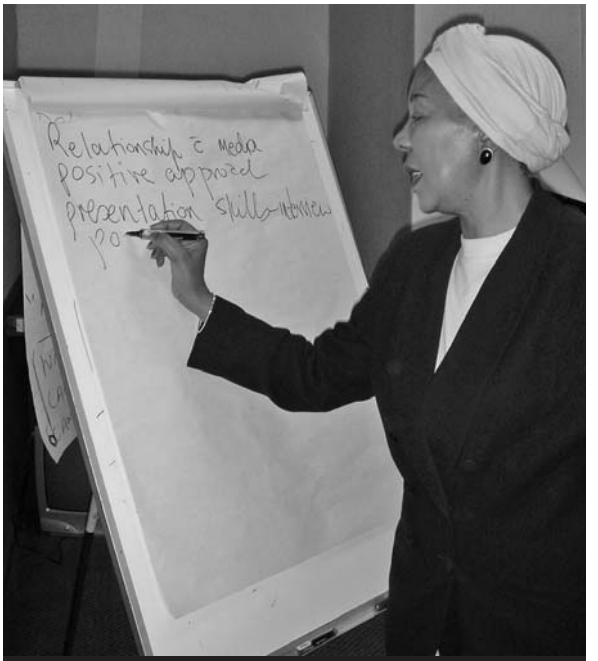
Same Bathobakae, BNF Councillor South East district council (Tlokweng), says the late Maitshwarelo Dabuta, former BNF leader and Member of Parliament, inspired her. She says she enjoyed the way he spoke on issues and would attend his rallies and practice speaking and presenting herself like him. This has inspired her to be an articulate and clear speaker.



Molefe Molefe, BCP Councillor Kgatleng district council (Boseja South ward) says that Motsei Madisa Rapelana of the BCP is one of his role models. She is a seasoned politician who has broken through many barriers and has a long political career. As a result her does not question women's ability to lead and says "some women are more powerful and capable than men" and should thus be supported to achieve their political ambition.

Capacity Building

There is recognition that targeted training for both aspiring women politicians and those already in office is essential in providing support and building skills of women councillors in particular, to be effective. The content over time has evolved to address both practical skills required to function effectively in office, as well as strategic skills such as policy analysis. BALA, Emang Basadi and Women's Affairs Department in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, are some of the association, organisations and institutions providing this training on an ongoing basis. BALA, for example, provides skills training for women politicians who are already in office, and has trained more than 100 women politicians over the past four years since the last elections. This includes lobbying skills, public speaking, use of the media and others.



Ntombi Setshwaelo of Emang Basadi teaching lobbying skills

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Conclusions

In the previous chapter a number of tactical processes and measures were identified as necessary in order to accelerate women's access or entry into local government. Without these measures, the multiple obstacles would be difficult to tackle. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, access is only the beginning because once they are elected and become members of local councils, women face a number of similar and new obstacles that hinder their effective participation. These barriers can be divided into three main categories: institutional, ideological and personal.

Women work in institutions and communities that remain steeped in custom, culture and patriarchy. They often lack the resources and support they need to be effective. There are still too few women in decision-making positions to make a real difference to these structures. What is required is for institutions to be transformed and systems to be put in place that will enable women to participate more effectively. Women also need to work together to find solutions to these barriers and to create enabling environments.

Several examples show that disabling factors can just as soon be turned into enabling factors. Families can be unsupportive but they can also be supportive. Councils can disempower councillors through lack of information and training or they can provide this support and empower all councillors, men and women. Thus this chapter highlights the problems, but it also points to the possibilities. What is required is a concerted effort to ensure not just that women get into local government, but that they have the skills, support and capacity that they need to be effective agents of change.



Same Bathobakae believes in walking the talk

Photo: Susan Tolmay

Making a difference

Always impeccably turned out, Same Bathobakae, Secretary General of the BNF Women's League, new Chairperson of the South East District Council (SEDC) and BNF councillor (Tloweng) exudes quiet confidence and humility. She is currently serving her first term in office, and when she became a councillor in 2004 she was the only woman from the opposition. She says she told herself "I am going to show them I can do my work, I have no fear".

She has a special interest in law from her work experience includes working with three law firms. She has a competency in conveyancing and undertook secretarial studies, which has stood her in good stead

over time in her work as a councillor. She has always wanted to promote the rights of individuals, for example, seeing men and women in her community having access to access to and control of land.

Her vision as the new Chairperson of SEDC is to encourage more people to participate in council and see how councillors contribute to change and represent their interests. This will go a long way towards increasing the accountability of the councillors to the constituents. She also wants to work with council staff to make sure that project implementation improves and that projects are completed on time. A project she is proud of, and which is the subject of one of her first motions, is the grading and paving of a road with special interlocking bricks to prevent water logging. It is the first road of its kind in Tlokweng and will go a long way towards easing the problems with road access in the area.

Another achievement she is proud of is when, in early 2008, she defeated a motion of no confidence by the ruling party of the then chair and vice chair of the council. She demonstrated her ability to follow due process and foster democracy where her colleagues had given up. By sticking to the letter of the Standing Orders of Council, she was able to use the process to highlight the importance of transparent and credible processes within council.

Bathobakae's experiences as councillor and now as Chairperson of council, will no doubt pave the way for more concrete work to change the quality of lives of men and women in Tlokweng and elsewhere. She has faced challenges and has remained unfazed because, as she put it "I was born a leader".

This chapter explores what qualities women bring to leadership. It concludes that while not all women are the same, there are certain perceived qualities



Wet roads, electricity poles in Tlokweng, Botswana *Photo: Janine Morna*

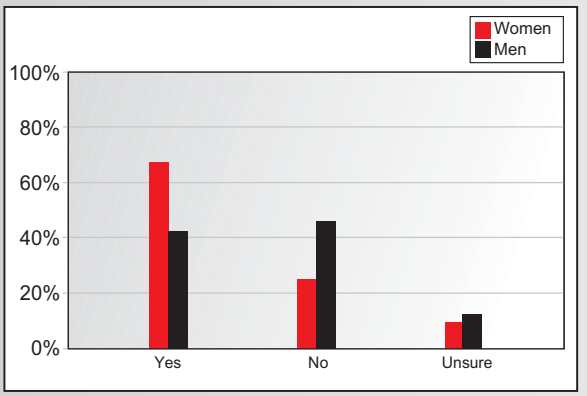
and characteristics that they bring to their work that not only enhances but enriches good governance. The chapter also reflects on how having women in decision-making impacts on the attitudes of men, and whether or not these are changing in Botswana.

What women bring to politics

Interests and concerns

A recurring theme in the focus group discussions and from the discussions with the councillors was that women bring a different brand of leadership into local government, and that they have the ability to address issues and concerns at the core of community development and democracy. This was well articulated by Gaborone men, who said that women councillors are better than their male counterparts in getting a mandate from the community due to their qualities of being meticulous, compassionate and having good communication skills. They said women councillors are more concerned with social issues because they treat their communities as an extended family. Likewise the women in the Central District said that women councillors are better than their male counterparts in service delivery because they are "naturally" responsible, and that they address social issues better as an extension of their role as mothers and community volunteers.

What the councillors said about women's different interests and concerns



Women (67.5 percent) agreed far more with the statement that *women bring different interests and concerns to decision-making* than men (42.1 percent). These findings correlate with the first *At the Coalface* study which found that on average 61 percent of women and only 39 percent of the men agreed with the statement.

When asked to explain their views on the issue, the following were some of the responses:

- They fight for women's rights.
- Women are more accountable for effective development than men. They do care and are willing to help.
- As wives and mothers women are more loving and responsible, even politically.
- Men tend to be selfish representing their own interests only unlike women who would care about other people's concerns and interests.
- Women are confronted with a lot of social issues and therefore feel for their community.
- Women's ideas are more relevant to people's lives.
- A woman always tries to look at the welfare of other women.

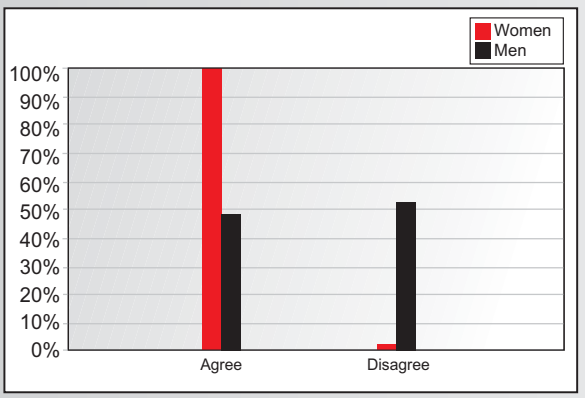
Sensitivity to local concerns

Linked to whether or not women have different interests and concerns is the issue of whether or not women feel more strongly about local issues. The theory runs that because of their daily involvement in matters like water, sanitation and hygiene, it is fair to assume that women have a greater sensitivity to these issues at the level of public policy.



Refuse removal *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

What the councillors said about women's sensitivity to local concerns



Asked whether they agreed with the statement "women are more sensitive to local concerns than men", the majority of women (97.5 percent), responded positively to the statement, compared to only half of the men (47.4 percent). This resonates with the findings in the first *At the Coalface* study which found that 81 percent women and 66 percent of men agreed with the statement. A male councillor said "women are brave and can handle every pressure more than us men".

In the focus group discussions, Gaborone men said that having a woman as a councillor has made a difference to their lives because of their commitment to community service. The interaction between the councillor and the constituents was said to have improved as compared to the time when their ward was led by a man councillor.

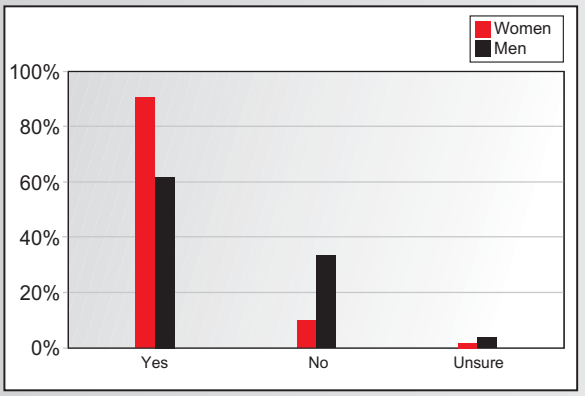
Women from the Kweneng district highlighted the fact that women councillors interact with their people since they are seen at funerals and visit their constituents at their homes and provide advice where possible. They preferred women councillors to men since women are more approachable than their male counterparts and have shown that they care about the wellbeing of the people.

The men and women from the Village Development Committee (VDC) in the Kweneng District said they always approach the woman councillor in their work and she is more than willing to assist. The committee preferred a woman councillor to a man councillor.

Responsibility to women

Do women have a responsibility to raise and represent women's issues? In an ideal world the answer should be, not necessarily, purely because elected candidates should, as a matter of course, be representing everybody's interests. But evidence shows that as long as gender disparities persist, it is natural to expect women to be more sensitive to the concerns of other women; and for women decision-makers to feel that they have a responsibility to deliver on these concerns.

What the councillors said about women raising other women's issues



Councillors were asked whether women have the responsibility to raise other women's issues. More women councillors agreed with this view, (87.5 percent) compared to men (63.2 percent).

These findings concur with the previous *At the Coalface* study which found that overall 83 percent of all councillors (86 percent women and 76 percent men) agreed that women the statement with concurrence across all countries in that study which covered Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa) and with little difference between women and men's views

Similarly to the first *At the Coalface* study, many of the women councillors interviewed said that they wanted to demonstrate that women can lead, become a 'voice' for women, and raise 'women centered' issues. Some comments from councillors include:

- Show other women that it's important that their ideas are heard.
- I feel most women are oppressed and it's our duty to raise their concerns.
- I am able to encourage and give some form of support to other women to go into politics.
- It is my responsibility because what concerns other women concerns me too.
- Women are out numbered so it is my responsibility to raise issues.

Women are more likely to care and to respond to issue like domestic violence, child abuse.

These findings resonate with global findings on women in decision-making. 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).

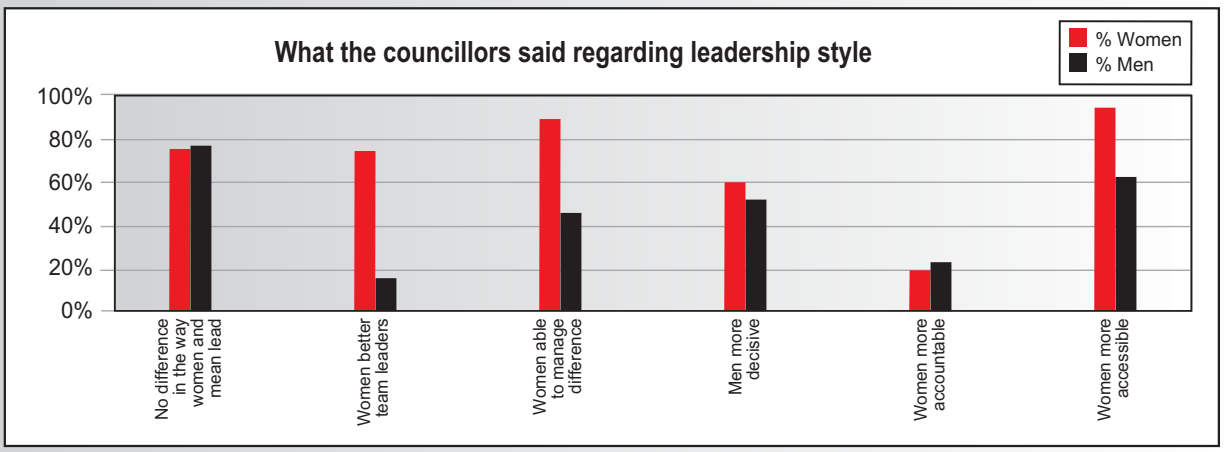
Leadership style

Councillors were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements regarding leadership style:

1. There is no difference between the way women and men lead.
2. Women are better team leaders than men.
3. Women are better able to manage difference.
4. Men are more decisive than women.
5. Women are more likely to admit that they've made a mistake.
6. Women are more accessible than men.

What the councillors said regarding leadership style

Slightly more men (79 percent) think that there is no difference in the way that women and men lead. 75 percent of the female respondents agreed with this statement. More than half of both male and female respondents agreed that men are more decisive than women (57.5 percent women, 52.6 percent men). The biggest difference in viewpoints (56.7 percent) was with the statement that women are better team leaders, with women strongly agreeing (72.5 percent) with this statement and only a very small proportion of men (15.8 percent) believing this to be the case. All of these findings resonate with those of the first *At the Coalface* study.



The men and women from the Kgatleng District VDC noted that in terms of service delivery, women councillors are doing a great job since they take their work seriously, unlike men who are said to be interested in 'scoring points with women' (making themselves attractive in the eyes of women). Women from the Kweneng district said that women councillors are able to get the mandate from their constituencies because they interact well with their communities.

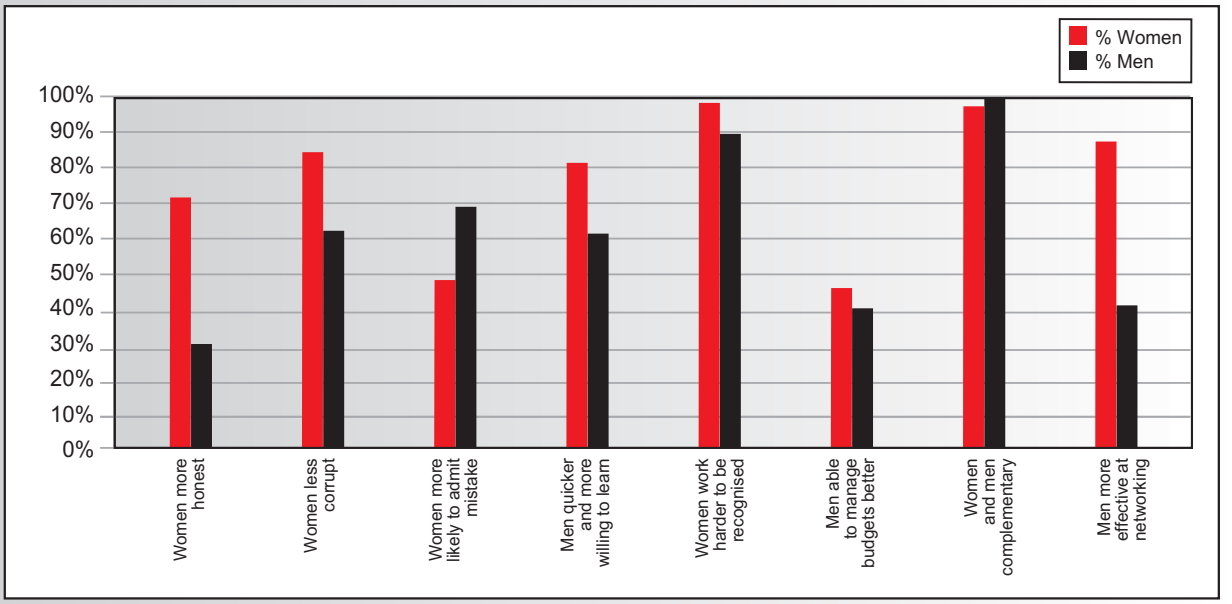
Gaborone men were open about their preference for a woman councillor. They said that the interaction between the councillor and the constituents had improved as compared to the time when their ward was led by a male councillor. The woman councillor is said to be compassionate as she has an ear to listen to peoples' problems.

Performance

If women understand their communities and issues better than men, it follows that 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 are less corrupt than men.
3. More likely to admit they've made a mistake
4. Men are quicker and more willing to learn.
5. Women have to work harder to be recognised.
6. Women and men have complimentary strengths, all of which are important to decision-making.
7. Men are able to manage budget better than women.
8. Men are more effective at networking than women.

What the councillors said about women's and men's performance



The biggest overall points of agreement in terms of performance in this study were with regard to the statements that women work harder to be recognised (97.5 percent women, 89.5 percent men), and that men and women work together in a complimentary way (97.5 percent women, 100 percent men).

There was a big discrepancy (40.9 percent) in perceptions as regards the statement that women are more honest than men with 72.5 percent of the women agreeing with this statement compared to only 30.6 percent of men. This resonates with the first *At the Coalface* study which found a 32 percent discrepancy.

As in the first At the Coalface study women and men tended to agree that women have to work harder than men to be recognised. A majority of the women in this study (82.5 percent) compared to 63.2 percent men believe that men are quicker and more willing to learn than women. The reverse was true in the first study.

Impact

There are mixed views on the impact that women have made in communities. As discussed in chapter four there are still many barriers for women to overcome before they can really start making a significant impact in Botswana.

The trends discerned from this study show that with time the contributions and 'value add' of women will turn the tide of governance at local level, and that the process is incremental. The impact of women in local government is very difficult to measure when there are so few of them. The study did however point to interesting perceptions on the issue.

Expectations and reality

Because of the location of local government, councillors are dealing with a multitude of issues which have to do with basic rights (food, water, sanitation), and usually in circumstances where many people are impoverished. Once placed in positions of leadership under these circumstances, there are high expectations from constituents. This sometimes has the effect of frustrating women councillors because the nature of systems and procedures, as well as budgetary constraints can have the effect of delaying implementation of approved motions. As Eunice Mguni, Gaborone Councillor put it "sometimes you push and push, and are always talking", and the impact is hardly felt because implementation can be very slow. In the absence of anything tangible, the constituents may be of the view that the councillor is not making any difference.

Focus group participants generally have positive views about the impact women councillors have had:

- Men and women in civil society from the central district say they believe in the women councillors, and that they are making a difference. In particular they noted that they had worked well with other women in the village committees, particularly on home based care, and in VDCs. They want to forge closer ties with the councillors.
- Men and women from the Central District VDC highlighted the fact that women are better at delivering on commitments as compared to their male counterparts. Although they noted that the women councillors might not be well educated "they are doing a good job". Notably, they are involved in home based care, and also taking care of both men and women alike. They are outstanding in carrying out the mandate from the constituency.
- In the Kgatleng District, the men and women from the VDC say that women have proven that they are effective in their assignments and they can be easily located when needed. The woman councillor in the ward meets with the committee and helps in the programmes undertaken by the VDC. She extends her commitment by availing her vehicle to be used by the VDC of the ward in executing community work.
- The women from the Kweneng say that the women councillors interact with their people since they are seen at funerals and visit their constituents at their homes and provide advice where possible. They preferred women councillors to men since they considered women more approachable than their male counterparts and have shown that they care about the wellbeing of the people.
- Gaborone women say their ward councillor takes the constituents seriously as she listens to their problems and works hard to see the people leading a good life. One of the participants was thankful to the councillor for informing her about orphans' policy and assisting her to register her late sister's children for the programme. They were also grateful to her for having dealt with a drainage problem which occurs in their area during the rainy season.

Some participants were, however, critical of women's performance:

- The men and women from civil society in Lobatse felt that women councillors in their community have not made any positive impact in their organisations. According to them it is as good as council was made up of men alone. Women councillors are said to go to council to enrich themselves (*'Bomme ba makhansekara ba i le khanseleng go ja'*).
- Women from the central district said they were not linked to the woman councillor in their ward, and that she does not participate in community work. They further said that that they do not know anything about what she does in council.

Attitudes of men

Interviews in the study included the views of male councillors and men from communities on women's access to and participation in local government, and leadership in general. These yielded no overt signs of resistance to addressing gender inequality concerns. However, the experience of most women councillors revealed negative experiences with some male colleagues. The less visible forms of resistance ideologically and institutionally are the most difficult to tackle. There are, however, positive experiences of women councillors receiving support from male constituents and colleagues, which has contributed towards the achievement of their goals.



Mr Mpho Moruakgomo, BDP Councillor and Chairperson of the Kgatleng District Council, said that gender mainstreaming, spearheaded by the Women' Affairs Department in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, must take root in the council. He expressed concern that the council does not have the resources and capacity to address gender issues, and that although the department of social and community development focused on women's projects, this did not address the gender gap. For example the programme on sexual and reproductive health was silent on gender issues. He noted that the council's poverty reduction programmes are benefiting women more because they are the hardest hit, and that when resources go to women they are not wasted and go to families.



Molefe Molefe, BCP Councillor in Kgatleng district council, was open to engaging with gender activists and women councillors, and says he has voted some of them to chair committees within council. With regard to gender activists he says "they play a vital role in society by opening our eyes to issues in a gender sensitive way".

He also asserted that quotas are vital especially in Botswana which is patriarchal. He emphasised the importance of women to voluntarily stand for elections rather than to always wait to be specially nominated. "Women are numerically more than men in this country and therefore have a good chance of getting leadership positions", he said. He further said the attitude of women not voting for other women should change. In terms of how women councillors relate to their male colleagues, he said initially they were not forthcoming but eventually became more open.

Lesego Raditanka, BDP Councillor and Chairperson of the Central District Council (CDC), the largest in the country, pointed out women had voted for him for the 27 years he had participated in politics as a leader.

He emphasised the point that 'development is done by women'. Whilst he agreed in principle with the need to ensure laws are gender sensitive and women empowered, he pointed at the need for the law to 'be balanced' in addressing issues, so that men are involved and included. In order to ensure women have better opportunities to reach their potential, Raditanka talked of the need for women to own businesses, and said "it is high time we speed it up [business ownership]". The CDC, under the auspices of BALA, has supported training of women councillors.



Roy Mafunga of the BNF and Deputy Mayor of the Gaborone City Council has an understanding of gender issues noting that many people think that gender is synonymous with women. This according to him is due to the fact that gender issues are not well presented.

He believes that women still hold the view that they are oppressed by men and as a result they form a 'woman camp' and seek support from each other to the exclusion of men, which results in divisions between male and female councillors.

According to Mafunga, quotas tend to discourage women to work hard. He believes that a process should be followed if one seeks a leadership position and these processes are determined by the political parties. One should be nominated, undergo primary elections and be voted during general elections. He believes that women do not want to nominate one another and would rather vote for a men instead of woman. He argues that women are under represented because they do not support one another and this is the greatest barrier. He says that it is high time that women realise that the ball is in their court and they should take up positions but he stresses that women therefore should not expect to be treated differently from men.

Conclusions

While "making a difference" is always difficult to quantify, this chapter highlights strong perceptions that women bring different perspectives to local government; they are sensitive to local concerns and they feel a duty to represent women's issues and speak out for them. Women are more accessible and see the importance of working in consultation with communities. This is reinforced by the constituents themselves as highlighted in the feedback from the focus group discussions.

Men can obstruct women's progress and agendas but they can also be agents of change. Where men do not feel threatened by women and have worked with them as professionals, they see the difference that women can make and are open to supporting them.

The chapter that follows will attempt to measure the extent to which, even in such small numbers, women are making a difference in the day to day work of councils and in the more arduous task of mainstreaming gender in the work of local government in Botswana. This evidence is important in the campaign that needs to intensify before the 2009 elections and subsequent one in 2014, in order to increase women's participation at this level.



Markets are an important function of local government *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Gender in the work of councils

Salome Lesole, BDP Member and councillor Central district (Orapa Town), has made significant achievements during her first term of office. When she was elected as councillor, she brought with her a passion for youth development, persons with disabilities, women's and children's rights and workers' rights. She holds positions of authority within committees of council, and has used her position to addressing pressing needs of communities in a concrete way.

Since 2004, she stepped up the registering of orphans, and ensuring that they have access to food at places that are nearer to them. She has worked hard to ensure that persons with disabilities gain recognition

and is not hidden away in shame, have greater access to mobility (wheel chairs), and are also economically empowered to gain independence. She proudly talks of Edwin Phalane who has a disability, and whom she assisted to get a youth grant, and who is now operating an ice cream vending machine and earning an income.



Wheel chairs are a priority for councillor Salome Lesole *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

HIV and AIDS is also a priority focus for Lesole, and she supports peer education targeting people in the remote areas, such as cattle posts. She is also linking HIV and AIDS issues to women's empowerment, promoting safe sex, and female controlled methods of contraception, such as the female condom.

One of her exciting projects was founding a football team, and because of her love for sports, she has provided sports gear to teams, as well as resources. One of her dreams is to support the formation of a women's football club

This chapter addresses the extent to which gender concerns are reflected in the every day work of local government, and provides evidence that women are able to influence this agenda. The chapter begins with a description of how local government works in Botswana, including its competencies. The main issues and concerns are then analysed from a gender perspective. Interviews with women and men councillors, as well as focus groups, are used to probe the extent to which the limited number of women councillors in Botswana can influence the daily agenda.

How local government works

The role of local government is essentially to take government policies and programmes closer to the people. According to Kgatleng district council Chairman, Mr Mpho Moruakgomo, aside from providing infrastructure and bringing services to the electorates, councils are responsible for provision of local governance and sustaining local democracy. Town, city, township and district councils are guided by policies from central government, primarily those from the Ministry of Local Government. As highlighted earlier in this report, district councils were established through the Local Government (District) Act of 1965 (the Act) and the urban councils are regulated through the Township Act of 1955.

The local council elections are held simultaneously with parliamentary elections every five years. The electorates elect a council candidate of their choice in a given ward. The Minister of Local Government has the authority to appoint some councillors as special nominees.

Mayors lead urban councils and chairpersons lead the district councils. The mayor and the chairperson are not directly elected by the electorates but are

elected by the councillors who are in office at the time (Maundeni, 2004). They are not accountable to the electorates but to the councillors who have elected them. According to Maundeni (2005) this may lead to less commitment to better service delivery, and more to impressing the councillors who they are accountable to for securing a re-election. Councillors operate through committees that report to the full council and have delegated authority to make decisions. Section 24 (3) Local Government (District) Act requires that appointments to various council committees be "based on a cross sectional representation of all parties represented in the Council". According to the Act, every district council must have a Finance Committee and an Education Committee and councils have discretion to establish other committees.

Most councils have committees for staff, health, works, licensing, and social and community development. Extra committees are for accounts and audits which offer services to other committees. Councils are organised into various departments which among others include roads and engineering, real-estates and housing, public health, administration or council management. Other related responsibilities cover sanitation services, social welfare and community development and remote areas development as well as administering Self-Help Housing Agencies (SHHA).

Every council meeting other than a committee meeting is open to the press and the general public, however, it has been noted that the public hardly attends such meetings (Maundeni, 2004).

Finance

All local government authorities receive approximately 90 percent of their finance from central government for operations, and 100 percent for infrastructural development (development budget). The respective councils have to raise the rest of the funds. According to Part VII Section 44 of the Local Government (District) Act, other sources of revenue for the councils include taxes and rates levied in line with the council mandate, rents from property owned and administered by the council, moneys derived from licences and permits issues by the council, interest on investments, donations, endowments, contributions, and reimbursements.



Gaborone Civic Centre *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

All the councils' management staff that the researchers interviewed indicated that councils seldom get what they budgeted for. This was confirmed by Catherine Marakalala, Director Department of Finance and Procurement in the Ministry of Local Government (MLG), who said that councils sometimes get 75 percent or

less of what they asked for. The Ministry of Local Government (MLG) sets the ceiling, based on the information received from the Ministry of Finance, and all councils have to tailor and prioritise their budgets in line with the ceilings.

The revenue that councils collect to augment the budget is currently negligible and is not sufficient to fill the gap left by the finance from central government. In the 2008 financial year, the development budget was P800 million. However, as Catherine Marakalala, Director Department of Finance and Procurement in MLG pointed out, the capacity of councils' to collect revenue is a challenge due to a weak billing system, poor record keeping, and inadequate enforcement mechanisms.

Planning and budgeting in councils

The councils' planning and budgeting process is informed by the Five Year Development plan developed by each council. The development plan is aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP), the blue print for national development in the country, and the current cycle of implementation of this plan is almost complete (2009). The budget is objective oriented and developed based on the ceilings provided by the MLG, as directed by the Ministry of Finance.

The recurrent budget is standard and is submitted and approved annually, whilst the development budget is developed and submitted based on the needs of each council. In order to secure funds under the development budget, councils submit a project memorandum with respect to each project. Marakalala informed the researchers that in 2008, there were 747 projects submitted to the ministry for review, and the average budget for projects for 2008 was P800 million. The funds allocation is not dependent on the size of the council but on the ability of the council to justify their proposal.

The MLG indicated that approximately 70 percent of the budgets of council are spent on salaries and 30 percent on services and maintenance. For example, running primary health care services (clinics), paying nurses, servicing schools (feeding schemes), provision of support to destitute persons, home based care schemes.

The recurrent budget development process in council begins with heads of departments putting together information, which is consolidated by the Treasury Department. It then goes through all the council committees and ultimately goes before the Finance Committee before a full council is convened to approve the budget. Priority setting is essential, particularly since they have to operate within tight budget lines. By January of each year the budget should be ready. It is submitted to the MLG which consolidates the entire budget and submits it to the Ministry of Finance.

In the 2007/2008 financial year, Gaborone City's recurrent budget was P198 741 803, whilst Lobate town council's budget was 75 366 475 . The CDC's recurrent budget in the same year was P515 049 490, whilst one the small councils, Chobe district's budget was P49 188 300 (Ministry of Local Government District Councils Recurrent Budgets, 2007/2008).

Competencies of local government

Functions of the Council are set out in the First Schedule of the Local Government (District Councils) Act, and are outlined in Table 13 alongside:

Table 13: Functions of local government in Botswana

	Delivery authority	
FUNCTION/POWER	**Central**	**Local**
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION		
Police	*	*
Fire protection		*
Ambulance services	*	
Civil protection	*	
Criminal justice	*	
Civil justice	*	
Civil status register	*	
Statistical office	*	
Electoral register	*	
EDUCATION		
Pre-school		*
Primary		*
Secondary	*	
Vocational and technical	*	
Higher education	*	
Adult education	*	
SOCIAL WELFARE		
Kindergarten and nursery		*
Family welfare services	*	*
Welfare homes	*	
Social security	*	
PUBLIC HEALTH		
Primary care	*	*
Hospitals	*	
Health protection	*	*
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING		
Housing	*	*
Town planning	*	*
Regional planning	*	
TRANSPORT		
Roads	*	*
Transport	*	
Urban roads	*	*
Urban rail		*
Ports		*
Airports	*	

	Delivery authority	
FUNCTION/POWER	**Central**	**Local**
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION		
Water and sanitation	*	*
Refuse collection and disposal		*
Cemeteries and crematoria	*	*
Slaughter-houses	*	*
Environmental protection	*	*
Consumer protection	*	*
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS		
Theatre and concerts	*	*
Museums and libraries	*	*
Parks and open spaces	*	*
Sports and leisure	*	*
UTILITIES		
Gas services		*
District heating		*
Water supply	*	*
Electricity	*	
ECONOMIC		
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	*	
Economic promotion	*	*
Trade and industry	*	
Tourism	*	
Other economic services	*	

Source: Commonwealth local government forum - www.clgf.org.uk

- Education - to provide primary schools and other educational services related to primary education.
- Health and sanitation - take steps to promote and safeguard primary health, including the prevention of the occurrence or outbreaks of disease; to provide public toilets.
- Communications - to make, alter or maintain public roads, complementing any work undertaken by central government.
- Water supplies - to provide public water supplies other than those provide by the Water Authority.
- General administration - establish, maintain and control of markets, cemeteries, burial grounds, recreation grounds, assisting associations involved in the social development and community building including child and youth welfare, blind, indigent, infirm, aged and destitute persons.
- By-laws - to make and implement by-laws.
- Regulatory and licensing powers - to regulate, control and licence village level activities such as beer brewing.
- Abattoirs, beer depots and beer halls - to establish, maintain and operate abattoirs, beer halls and depots, and fix bye law reasonable fees, charges and tariffs.
- Park maintenance and development, street and traffic lightning, street names.

Council work through a gender lens

Local government has the potential to make a difference to the very day lives of citizens - especially women - because it is concerned with basic services. Every function performed by the council has a gender dimension. Despite the obstacles that they face, the evidence shows that women councillors are using the space that they have to make a difference.

Education

Education is essential for all communities. It is important for women because women are the main carers of children who have the responsibility for child development. Good schooling facilities (accessible, clean, safe and well functioning) eases the burden on women on two fronts, in terms of them not having to provide this function themselves as well as freeing them to participate in other activities while their children are at school.



Primary education is a local government competency *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Councils provide free educational facilities starting from infancy. Crèches are a good example of this service. Andretta Makaka, Gaborone Councillor, has moved two motions to address the gaps in providing good schooling facilities. First, she moved a motion for crèches to be established in her ward, where there is no facility at all and this motion was adopted and awaits implementation. Second, she moved a motion for security lights at schools in Gaborone and this was adopted and implemented.

Infrastructural Development (roads and transport)


Roads are important for drivers as well as pedestrians *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Infrastructural development is key in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in that lack of infrastructure, such as roads and clinics, has a negative impact on women's ability to move rapidly and facilitate trade and to access markets, for example, and primary health care for themselves and their children. Botswana councils have a primary responsibility for provision and maintenance of infrastructure.

Aside from moving a motion for a roads with interlocking bricks to address the water logging challenge in Tlokweng, Same Bathobakae's, Chairperson of South East District Council, the council is also attending to storm water drainage

systems and the demarcation of new roads. This is in direct response to repeated requests by constituents for roads so that they can have access to the land that has been allocated to them.

Eunice Mguni, BDP Councillor Gaborone (Phakalane) moved a motion to have a road linking Glen Valleyand Ledumang (Tsholofelo extension), and the project is currently underway. Neo Kesenogile, BDP Councillor Kweneg District, has submitted a similar motion for tarring of a road in her area and is following up on it on a regular basis.

Housing

In a society where men have historically had the exclusive right to buy and own land the equal and fair distribution and allocation of land and housing has the potential to change women's lives substantially. The right to own land and developments on the land means that women no longer need to be dependent on men for shelter for themselves and their children.



Nono Nteseng Kube - Makgophana LIPWP Kgatleng *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Aside from the SHAA, councils have the opportunity to motivate for funds from central government for special projects which allow them to build houses for low income groups, and more often than not, impoverished women in poor communities. Researchers were able to see a 42 housing project being implemented by the Kgatleng district council, with funds from the Labour Intensive Public Works Programme (LIPWP) under the Drought Relief Programme. Mr Mpho Moruakgomo pointed out that the main recipients of this programme are women and children (approximately 90 percent), as they form a large percentage of the destitute.

In 2008 the council was awarded P9 million for the housing project. Aside from providing sustainable shelter, this key implementers of the project on the ground are women, as they provide the labour which is paid hourly. This provides the impetus for women to enter the construction industry, albeit not at the management or professional level; it lays the foundation for potentially transforming the industry so that women start taking on the management and leadership in the industry.

Whilst the researchers were not able to determine whether women councillors are taking the lead in ensuring that this and other projects are effectively implemented, this presents an opportunity for them to address both a practical and strategic need for women, which could potentially yield meaningful results in terms of empowerment of women, provided continuous skills development is integrated into the project design, implementation and results.

Water and sanitation

Water and sanitation are indisputably two of the most basic and important services that are provided by local councils. Lack of access to clean water and sanitation facilities has enormous adverse affects on



Outdoor toilets, Gabane *Photo: Janine Morna*

the health of communities as well as the safety of women who often bear the burden of providing potable water and sanitation, but are often not consulted in the provision of these services.

Andretta Makaka, BNF Councillor for Gaborone, has raised concerns council regarding the lack of toilet facilities in her area, and pushed for, at a minimum, pit latrines. There has been no movement on this issue thus far, however, she says she still intends to raise it since it is not only the council's mandate but it is in the NDP and resources should be allocated to implementing the plan.

Safety and Security

Promotion of safety and security are critically important for people, particularly women, to ensure that they have freedom of movement and protection of their bodily integrity and freedom from violation. Well lit streets and infrastructure that enables one to seek safety when life is threatened are some of the basic services councils are obliged to provide to constituents.

Eunice Mguni, BDP councillor Gaborone (Phakalane) moved a motion to have street lights in Glen Valley Barracks and it was approved. The project is now before the Finance Committee for consideration. She also submitted a motion for a police station at Phakalane, which was accepted. Currently there was a caravan/depot. One of the actions required to implement this motion is for government to buy land in the area and start building the police station.

Malebogo Kruger, Deputy Mayor of Lobatse town council, who lives in Thema has noted that it is a new area and there is very little street lighting, so she has been pushing for something to be done in order to increase women's safety, particularly those coming from work and markets in the evenings.



Street lighting is a safety issue *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Conclusions

This chapter highlights the potential for women to utilise the opportunities and positions they have within councils to address some of the fundamental concerns of communities. The findings show that participation and influencing change within councils requires tact, skill, support from other councillors and a good understanding of procedures and systems of local government.

The examples in this chapter illustrate how women councillors have started to address issues that are sometimes sidelined or overlooked, such as pit latrines and targeted street lighting (schools). It shows the concern of women with education, health care, safety and security.

But much of the work that women councillors do only addresses the practical needs of women. While this is important, it does not address the causes of women's marginalised place in communities and ultimately does not change their status. What councils need to start thinking about is how to move from the practical to more strategic interventions that have a real chance of transforming the lives of ordinary women.



Playground in Gabane *Photo: Janine Morna*



Women demand their rights as part of Botswana's Vision 2016

Photo: Trevor Davies

From practical to strategic

Moving from "jobs for the girls" to gender equality for the nation requires a long term, strategic approach. This chapter grapples with how to advance from the practical to the strategic issues, so that gender is institutionalised in the structures and work of local government, through ensuring women's equal access, participation on to transforming agendas and service delivery.

It starts by setting out the key conceptual issues with regard to gender mainstreaming and then assessing the extent to which gender is being mainstreamed in local government in Botswana. The chapter concludes with a summary of what needs to be done to ensure effective mainstreaming.

Conceptual issues

As discussed in the previous chapter, the research found many examples of practical interventions that the councillors are making that are having an impact on the practical but not the strategic needs of women in the community. Moser (1993: 39-40) describes practical and strategic needs as follows:

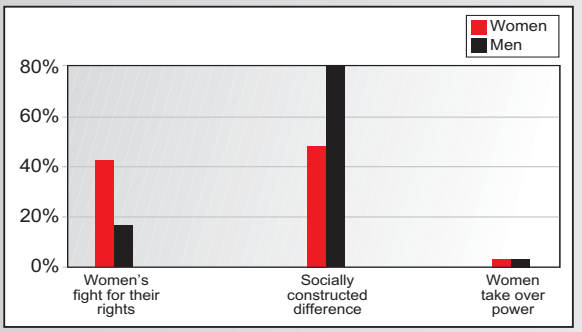
Practical gender needs are the needs that women identify in their socially accepted roles is society. Practical needs do not challenge the gender division of labour or women's subordinate position in society, although rising out of them. Practical gender needs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, 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.



Sewing addresses practical needs *Photo: Trevor Davies*

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.

How councillors understood the term gender



Men and women 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 most councillors chose the generally accepted definition of a "socially constructed differences between women and men", with more men (79 percent) choosing

this definition than women (50 percent). It is interesting to note that a negligible percentage of both men and women chose the definition "women taking over power", and none chose the definition "women". This reflects a fairly high level of understanding with regard to what is meant by gender.

The original *At the Coalface* study found that overall 76 percent of all councillors chose the socially constructed differences between women and men with but more men (79 percent) than women (73 percent) chose the correct response. It is interesting to note, however, that broken down per country the finding shows that Mauritius (the country with the lowest levels of women's representation in local government) showed lower levels of understanding of the term with only just over half (54 percent) of the respondents choosing the correct response and 33 percent choosing 'women's fight for their rights'. This shows a direct correlation between low levels of women's representation and low levels of understanding of the meaning of gender.

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 in the long run 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." (2005:9)



Women specific: Buntle Kegodile Informal market Gaborone West
Photo: Susan Tolmay

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 (2005:10).

In *Beyond Numbers* Meintjes writes:

> 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. (2005:236)

Malebogo Kruger, BDP Councillor and Deputy Mayor Lobatse town council, is clear about focusing on strategic ways of reducing women's poverty. She points out that when she works with women from poor communities, she does not take out money from her pocket to give them, she tries to create opportunities for them to be economically empowered and self sufficient. Likewise Salome Lesole, BDP councillor Central District Council, assists men and women from the Basarwa community with marketing their products in Orapa town. This is more sustainable than providing aid. Eunice Mguni, BDP councillor Gaborone, started an initiative for domestic workers to establish a Trust which would focus on their rights. She assisted them to develop the objectives and proposed actions, as well as starting the registration process. Although the project has stalled, she would still like to go ahead and revive it.

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."

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. In Botswana no evidence of gender mainstreaming was found.

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.

Policies and strategies

Across Southern Africa, the term "gender mainstreaming" 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.

The recently adopted ***SADC Protocol on Gender and Development*** does not make specific reference to local government but contains provisions of direct relevance for women at the community level, such as health, education, productive resources and employment and gender based violence. Popularisation of the Protocol at the local level is being done in Mauritius and is proving to be a very effective tool for raising awareness of gender issues and informing community level women, who have in the past been excluded from such processes, what their rights and entitlements are.

Gender strategies at country level

There are several interconnected frameworks that have influenced the approach of the Botswana government to addressing gender inequality and promote women's empowerment. Aside from committing to advancing the rights of women through adoption or ratifying regional and international instruments, the government identified six critical areas of concern from the 2005 Beijing Platform for Action (poverty and economic empowerment, power and decision making, education and training, women and health, violence against women including women's human rights, the girl child).

The post Beijing period in the 1990s saw some rapid institutional and policy developments to address women's empowerment. In 1995 a National Policy on Women and Development (women policy) was adopted. The underlying principle of the policy is that men and women are equal before the law and that "women and men are equally important for economic, social and political development" (CPA 2006:8). Other key features of the policy include the recognition of the multiple roles of women, equal access to resources, enhance participation in decision making and overall improve their status in Botswana society. These positive measures also include efforts to eliminate all negative socio cultural and economic practices as well as inappropriate laws, and ensuring women participate fully in all sectors of society (ibid).

The women policy was followed in 1998 by a National Gender Programme and the National Gender Policy Framework, which is the guide document for gender mainstreaming and provides strategies on how to address the six critical areas of concern identified

from the BPFA. Prior to this the national gender machinery was elevated from a unit to a department (Women's Affairs Department) in 1996/1997 and has the responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the gender programme as a cross cutting process within government. To support this are gender focal points in all ministries, and the Botswana National Council on Women (BNCW). WAD has conducted training on gender mainstreaming and gender issues in different line ministries. Problems of implementation remain in that much still needs to be done for gender mainstreaming to take root, as evidenced by gender gaps in almost all sectors of development in the country and a weak WAD.

The extent to which this policy and implementation strategy as regards gender mainstreaming has trickled to the local level is in question. In theory local government, though the Ministry of Local Government which has a gender focal point, receives policy guidance and support in its gender mainstreaming efforts. The researchers did not find any evidence of this, and in fact the two councils where in depth interviews were held, Gaborone and Mochudi, none of them have a gender policy. There is no link with WAD, which in any event is under resourced, understaffed and over stretched.

Whilst there are district gender officers deployed by the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (with oversight from WAD), there is no evidence of a direct link between them and council management and leadership as regards gender mainstreaming. NGOs intermittently work with local government, however, the more visible work in terms of gender and women's empowerment relates to ad hoc training undertaken with women politicians and general awareness raising of gender issues.

Gender policies and mainstreaming at the council level

No gender policies were in place in any of the councils where research was conducted. In most instances gender mainstreaming is simply understood to mean women's projects, and each time the council automatically refers to the work being done by the department of social and community development (S & CD). For example, Mpho Moruakgomo, Chairperson of the Kgatleng District Council referred to 'special projects' directed at women which are overseen by the department of community and social development. These include sewing, knitting, cooking aimed at economically empowering women, whom they acknowledge require specific empowerment interventions.

There is an emphasis in the councils on providing all the basic services equally to everyone in the community, and to be seen to be avoiding preferential treatment. This in itself is a misunderstanding of the notion of equality, as the equality standard cannot be applied in a situation of inequality as outlined earlier in this report; gender inequality exists in Botswana and cannot be addressed by treating everyone the same, when so many factors are impacting differently on men and women, with women bearing the brunt of inequality.



Economic empowerment *Photo: Trevor Davies*

The Gaborone city council has developed a training curriculum for women's economic empowerment, through the S & CD. It has been structured as a certified course. However, currently the council does not have sufficient staff in this department due to transfers and movements of staff to greener pastures. The department also does not have enough equipment, such as those used for knitting. Currently, what is on offer to empower women is sewing only, meaning that the council is not meeting the training curriculum requirements. The curriculum also entails consumer education, food and nutrition, home management and parenting skills.

As a requirement for completion of the course and for certification purposes women are attached to organisations dealing with arts, such as the Thapong International Artists' Workshop Trust or Madirelo Testing Centre in Gaborone. This is where they develop and enhance their skills on different trades, for instance making traditional chairs, crafting and pottery. The S & CD officer pointed out that with this certificate women stand a better chance of being absorbed in the industries. A few do establish their own businesses when they have access to capital. Challenges of achieving success under this programme include women dropping out for various reasons, or not being absorbed into mainstream businesses so their certificates gather dust.

Whilst S & CD activities within councils are being touted as women's empowerment projects, it must be pointed out that there is no evidence that this approach is fundamentally going to transform women's lives. There was no mention of integrating activities that raised women's assertiveness levels, critical consciousness of knowledge of their rights into these S & CD activities. In fact these activities seem to be an extension of stereotypical women's jobs within the home, whilst hey may bring in some money for women, are unlikely to radically change their situation; they seem to overall meet practical not strategic needs of women. Further, there was no evidence that the entire S & CD perspective and approaches were informed by a gender equality perspective, and that this was part of a larger effort to mainstream gender within councils.

With regard to gender training, there appeared to be no evidence of this. Instead in the councils that the researchers visited, reference was made to gender organisations or WAD coming in to talk to the councillors about gender. There is no comprehensive and targeted gender training initiative in any council. A number of the women councillors interviewed referred to training or exposure they received from interacting with gender organisations such as Emang Basadi, or training received through the Botswana Caucus for Women in Politics and BALA.



Capacity building is an important component of a gender management system *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Conclusions

This chapter starts by defining some of the key concepts and approaches to addressing gender inequalities, including the gender management system. The research shows that gender policies and programmes are still rudimentary in the local councils in Botswana. Whilst there is a gender mainstreaming framework and structures for achieving gender equality at national level, this has not made an impact at local government level.

Evidence shows that gender mainstreaming does not happen on its own. If there are no formal policies and programmes, addressing gender concerns is irregular and ad hoc. If there is no management system in place to ensure that gender is effectively being considered in all of the work that is done, and if monitoring and evaluation does not take place then there is a high probability that it will not occur. Botswana has a gender policy which sets a comprehensive strategic approach and principles to addressing the critical areas concerning women's empowerment in the country. The National Gender Programme sets out an implementation framework for achieving measurable progress in achieving gender equality. What is required is the systematic application and implementation of these policies and actions at the council level, coupled with gender training and capacity building for all councillors.



Working with the media is an important strategy *Photo: Trevor Davies*



Way forward: Gaborone street scene *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Conclusions and recommendations

The preceding chapters detail the findings of this research which are summarised as follows:

Women are under-represented in local governance: At 19 percent, Botswana has the 5th lowest number of women in local government in the SADC region. They are no women Mayors and only one woman Council Chairperson in the councils. In some instances the under-representation of women is dramatic, in that some councils have only one or two women councillors. While women participate in significant numbers in VDCs, they do not necessarily chair these. The traditional kgotla remains largely the preserve of men.

Botswana has still not signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development: Botswana is one of three countries that have still not signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The other two, Malawi and Mauritius, are expected to sign shortly. Botswana has signalled more fundamental difficulties with signing up to this key regional instruments that sets 28 targets for achieving gender equality, including achieving equal representation in all areas of decision-making by 2015. This weakens the muscle of those advocating for women's increased representation in political decision-making.

The electoral system has an adverse effect on women: Botswana follows the constituency or FPTP electoral system, which globally has been shown to be more unfriendly to women because constituents vote for candidates rather than the political party which is disadvantageous to women in a society that is still holds deeply patriarchal attitudes towards them. Changes in electoral laws have not addressed the need to amend the law to make it more amenable to increasing women's representation.

Political parties are not doing enough: As the gatekeepers to women's entry into politics, political parties have the potential to be enabling agents for women but in most instances they are unsupportive or openly averse to affirmative action. Very few political parties have affirmative action as a principle in their constitutions or manifestos and even fewer have taken concrete steps to translate affirmative action into a tool to increase women's representation and participation. Women's wings have yet to take more bold steps in transforming this state of affairs, and are in most cases do not have the clout to influence change, particularly at the top.

A quota would help: Botswana does have a legislated quota. The study found that the many councillors, women and men, believed that a quota would be useful for increasing women's representation in local government, whilst the general population's views gathered through focus group discussions caution should be exercised so that it is not used as a tool for tokenism and unfair competition.

Budget constraints and no gender budgeting: Councils are heavily reliant on central government for grants, and even revenue generated locally is still subject to central government approval for its use. This impacts on how effective councils can be in terms of service delivery. This is compounded by lack of a gender budgeting approach both at central government and local government levels; community needs and prioritised are assumed to be the same. Special 'women's projects' have little potential to empower women sufficiently to transform their lives and make them self sufficient.

Lack of resources: Both women councillors and constituents identified lack of resources as a key barrier both in terms of accessing local government at the time of campaigning, but also effective participation in that their resource base for supporting community initiatives is limited and overstretched; they were stories of councillors using their household goods to support communities, and digging into personal savings, as well as providing their own transport for community work.

Socialisation, culture and patriarchy: The study highlights patriarchy as a major force in shaping culture and practices as well as attitudes which form a major barrier for women to fully participate in local government. This barrier was identified by women and men councillors, as well as communities, with examples citied of the impact at personal level (confidence), family, within councils and their functions and the attitudes of male councillors. Conservative cultural attitudes are still embedded in communities and families that women should not

participate in politics and that they are not capable of doing so.

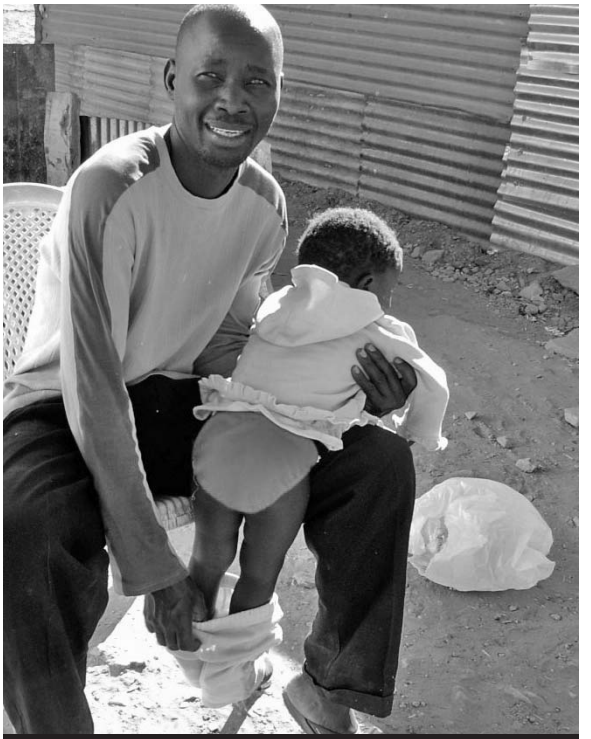
Women are not adequately supported: Whether in councils (from men in particular), or in the home, women councillors all attest to not being supported adequately. Much of this is linked to the conservative cultural and social belief systems that relegate women to the private sphere. There are little to no support mechanisms or systems in place for women councillors.

Women can and do make a difference: There is overwhelming evidence from this and similar research that women represent different interests and concerns than men. This is why it is important for women to participate in decision-making, so that issues that were previously sidelined or ignored in male-only councils come to fore and get addressed. The study highlights many excellent examples of the work that women are doing often in difficult circumstances with limited resources. The research also found that the majority of women feel a responsibility towards representing other women's issues.

But numbers do make a difference: A recurrent theme in the interviews is that while women make a difference there are not enough of them. Councillors as well as focus groups noted that it is difficult for women to begin to change institutions and policies where they are still in the minority.

Barriers can be overcome by enabling agents: While there are many barriers for women to overcome, many of the councillors interviewed highlighted factors that have enabled them to be more effective. These include: experience and grounding (political and work exposure), support (from council, other women, civil society and families), capacity building and role modelling.

Men can be brought on board: None of the male councillors interviewed openly resisted women's participation in councils. Overall the men interviewed (councillors and focus groups) seemed open to women participating in local government. What is needed is to bring them on board, and for them to move further, from merely encouraging women to more concerted support of women.



Men challenging stereostypes *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Needs are being addressed at a very practical level: Much of what is being done at the local level is addressing on the practical needs of women. And while this is important because of the bread and butter issues that are being dealt with, a more strategic approach would yield longer term gains for women.

Strategies for addressing gender inequalities are non-existent: No gender policies or programmes

were found in any of the councils visited. The women's "special projects" usually managed by S & CDs within councils are not meeting the basic requirements for effective gender mainstreaming to achieve measurable gains for women. The Women Policy and National Gender Programme are not making an impact at local government level.

Recommendations

Key recommendations emerging from this study are as follows:

Learning from SADC: Botswana is a member of SADC and has adopted the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children. The recently adopted Protocol on Gender and Development calls for at least 50 percent representation of women in all areas of decision-making by 2015. It reinforces a 2005 Summit position adopting the 50/50 policy. The Protocol also proposes the use of affirmative action measures to achieve this target. Botswana has the opportunity to learn from other SADC countries which have managed to achieve 30 percent and more women in local government, but specifically from Lesotho which has managed to achieve 58 percent women in decision making, with a constituency system and a constitutional quota.

Adopting and popularising the SADC Gender Protocol: A critical starting point is for Botswana to sign and popularise the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development as the majority of other countries in the region are doing. Failure to do so will severely hamper advocacy efforts to ensure women's equal participation in all areas of decision-making.

Develop and implement a gender strategy for local government and gender policies at council level: There is a good basis in the Women Policy and National Gender Programme for developing a gender strategy for local government, which should be devised and cascaded into policies at council level. WAD and the Ministry of Local Government can work collaboratively with partners and gender organisations to develop the strategy for mainstreaming gender in local government.

Gender mainstreaming and action plans: Once there is an overarching policy and strategy for local government, local councils should be trained on how to mainstream gender so that they can develop their own action plans for how the council will address gender concerns in all of the work that they do. It is essential that issues such as the equal representation of men and women in Village Development Committees and other local decision-making structures are taken on board.

Communities should be educated: Civic education on the role and responsibilities of councillors will be beneficial to both councillors and community members. Community members should be informed about the roles and responsibilities of councillors and what the councillors should be accountable for. Councillors will benefit in that unrealistic expectations of constituents will not have an affect on how they are perceived, and they are held accountable for their actual roles and responsibilities. It is also important that they are educated about the importance of women's participation in local government and the

importance of supporting them during elections and after they have been elected.

Support mechanisms: Associations aimed at enhancing the role of local government, such as the BALA Women's Commission should implement sustainable support mechanisms for women who are often entering politics for the first time. *Mentoring* of new councillors, for example, would make their learning process easier and would benefit the council in general by new councillors becoming more effective in shorter period of time.

More effective orientation and training for new councillors would also go a long way in assisting councillors grappling with understanding the institutional operations. A *Women's directory* of people and places that they can approach for assistance and support would address women's concerns that they are isolated and do not know where to go for help. The Botswana Caucus for Women in Politics can also facilitate this process through strengthening their supportive role to women already in political office.

Role of civil society: Strong partnerships should be developed with gender organisations to tap into their technical expertise in order to support the gender and local governance agenda. A number of the councillors interviewed benefited from training or some form of exposure provided by civil society groups that work on gender issues, such as Emang Basadi. Other local government authorities in the region, such as South African Local Government Association (SALGA), are directly benefiting from joint planning and training initiatives with civil society groups to enhance gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Botswana has the opportunity to tap into similar resources and expertise.



Drumming up support for local government *Photo: GCIS*

Annex A List of Interviewees

Surname	Name	Council	Province	Sex		Ruling party	Non-ruling party
Baipidi	Lekoba	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone	Female			BNF
Balebetse	Primrose	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Bonang	Tonic	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone		Male		BNF
Bosilong	Rosemary	Lobatse Town Council	South East	Female		BDP	
Dambe	Bene	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female			BNF
Dhlamini	Matilda	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female		BDP	
Disang	Elizabeth	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Jesi	Israel	Central District Council	Central		Male		BCP
Joubert	Anne	Lobatse Town Council	South East	Female		BDP	
Kabelo	Atsenye	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Kaeparura	N	Kgatleng District	Kgatleng		Male	BDP	
Keitirile	K	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng		Male		BNF
Kenaope	Agnes	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female		BDP	
Kerebotswe	Keotlogele	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Kerileng	Binkie	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone	Female		BDP	
Kesenogile	Neo	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female		BDP	
Kgafela	Ruth	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone	Female			BNF
Kgari	Ireen	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Kgopo	Maina	Central District Council	Central		Male		BCP
Kgosi	Simon	Lobatse Town Council	South East		Male		BNF
Kgosimang	Seka Tathego	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female		BDP	
Khan	Baitsupile Cheri	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female			BNF
Kohege	Mogomotsi	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng		Male		
Kole	Donald	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone		Male		
Kruger	Maleboga Barbara	Lobatse Town Council	South East	Female		BDP	
Lebogang	Elizabeth	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Lekota	Botsalo	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Lesiapeto	Bonwo	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Lesole	Salome	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Madome	Abel	Central District Council	Central		Male		BNF
Makaka	Andretta	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone	Female			BNF
Mallentze	Kentse	Kgatleng District	Kgatleng	Female			
Mantle	Molaodi Owen	Lobatse Town Council	South East		Male	BDP	
Mathoothe	Baratiwa	Central District Council	Central		Male	BDP	
Matlale	Calvin	Lobatse Town Council	South East		Male	BDP	
Matseka	Leano	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone		Male	BDP	
Matsila	Joyce	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female		BDP	BCP
Mguni	Eunice	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone	Female		BDP	BNF
Mogami	Kgomotso	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone	Female		BDP	BNF

Surname	Name	Council	Province	Sex		Ruling party	Non-ruling party
Molatlhegi	Kagiso	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone		Male	BDP	
Molefe	M	Kgatleng District	Kgatleng		Male		BCP
Molefi	Motsei	Kgatleng District	Kgatleng	Female		BDP	
Mollbatsi	Tlorlike	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female		BDP	
Motlopi	Babra	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Ndubo	Meisie	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Ntereke	Elisa	Lobatse Town Council	South East	Female			BNF
Ntsima	Esther	Kgatleng District	Kgatleng	Female		BDP	
Ntsosa	Sekao	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Ofentse	Kealeboga	Central District Council	Central	Female			BCP
Ontshameko	Segametse	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Pilane	Rosemary	Kgatleng District	Kgatleng	Female		BDP	
Raditanka	Lesego	Central District Council	Central		Male	BDP	
Ramodisa	Mary	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone	Female		BDP	
Ramotsebe	Emily	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Raphael	Zubeida	Lobatse Town Council	South East	Female		BDP	
Raphala	Bobby	Lobatse Town Council	South East		Male		BNF
Segone	Matsema	Kweneng District Council	Kweneng	Female		BDP	
Segwabe	Maria	Central District Council	Central	Female		BDP	
Seosenyeng	Mmoloki	Gaborone City Council	Gaborone		Male		BNF
Serema	Legodile	Lobatse Town Council	South East		Male	BDP	

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"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, 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".

Excerpt from Foreword to At the Coalface, Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa, by Winnie Byanyima



gender links
WLSA
Danida
DFID Department for International Development