

At the Coalface

Gender and Local Government in Swaziland

Edited by Colleen Lowe Morna, Susan Tolmay and Judith Mtsewu

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 *At the Coalface: Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa* which aims to extend research on gender and local government carried out in Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa to all of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

The research, which was conducted in Swaziland in 2008, involved 53 councillors in 19 localities who gave of their time for in-depth interviews. 76 women and 33 men participated in focus group discussions. Their views and voices are the heart of this work.

Gender Links (GL) worked in partnership with Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Trust (WLSA), Swaziland who conducted the desktop research and some fieldwork. Ncane Maziya and Bheki Maseko conducted the remainder of the fieldwork in Swaziland. GL Governance Programme Officer Judith Mtsewu co-ordinated the research in Swaziland; carried out the in-depth interviews and the case studies. 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.

Our sincere thanks to our sponsors the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the British government for supporting this research 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

AMICAALL	Alliance of Mayors' Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CANGO	The Co-ordinating Assembly of Non-governmental Organisations
CBO	Community based organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality
CPF	Community Police Forum
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
EBC	Elections and Boundaries Commission
FBO	Faith Based Organisations
GIDD	Governance and Institutional Development Division
GFPs	Gender Focal Points
GL	Gender Links
GMS	Gender Management System
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
NDS	National Development Strategy
NERCHA	National Response Council on HIV & AIDS
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PSI	Population Services International
RA	Regional Administrator
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SGC	Swaziland Gender Commission
SCOGWA	Swaziland Committee on Gender and Women's Affairs
SWALGA	Swaziland Local Government Association
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
WB	World Bank

Foreword



The Kingdom of Swaziland has been slower than most other countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region in moving towards democratic reform. The first parliamentary and local elections since King Sobhuza suspended the Constitution in 1973 took place in 1994 and 1995 respectively. However, as political parties were banned they could not contest the elections. Even with the new Constitution which came into effect in February 2006 political parties remain banned.

Gender inequality in Swaziland is still a major challenge and in spite of the provisions in the Constitution which set out special measures to be taken to increase women's representation in parliament, these have not been complied with and women still remain under represented in all areas of political decision-making. This also despite the fact the Swaziland is a signatory to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, adopted in August 2008, which requires Member States to ensure that by 2015 women are represented in equal numbers in all areas of decision-making in both public and private sectors.

The only area of political decision-making in Swaziland where women's representation is more than 30% is in the Senate where they constitute 40% of members. However, had the Constitutional provisions been properly applied there would be 43.3% women (the King only appointed seven instead of eight women out of the 20 members that he appoints to the Senate). He also only appointed two of the five women that he is constitutionally required to appoint to the House of Assembly. None of the four women from the regions were appointed, a Constitutional requirement where women constitute less than 30% of the House.

The system of local government in Swaziland is complex and is divided into two systems, rural and urban. At this level of government there are no special measures and as a result women are under represented in both urban and rural local government, but less so at the urban level. Women make up 24% of urban councillors; 11% of *Indvuna* and 18% of *Bucopho*. The lower representation of women in the rural system is not that surprising considering that it is at this level that patriarchal belief systems and structures are the most glaring. But interestingly it is also at this level, the coalface of development, where women could conceivably have the greatest impact.

The country's draft National Gender Policy which has been in the pipeline for the past two years acknowledges that women's participation in politics and decision-making is limited mainly because of the deeply engrained socio-cultural belief that "authority and wisdom is the natural preserve of men." The legal system in the country also reinforces this belief system by perpetuating the minority status of women.

Between the publishing of this report and 2015 (the target date for achieving gender parity in all areas of decision-making) Swaziland has just one election, in 2012 (urban local government) and 2013 (Parliamentary and *Tinkhundla*). Short of a miracle, a great deal of hard work and strategising will be required.

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 constituency system at the local level but adopted a system of reserved seats for women that are rotated with every new election is pertinent to Swaziland which has a similar electoral system. With 58% 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 Swaziland bring different perspectives and interests to local governance. They are concerned about every day issues - education, HIV and AIDS, housing, roads and transport and markets. They are also seen as hard working; accessible; close to the people and to local issues.

But being a woman councillor comes with many challenges; the structures within which they operate are male dominated and still largely patriarchal; they lack resources, exposure and support and there are just not enough of them. Councillors and constituents interviewed for the research agreed that increasing the numbers of women councillors is a good goal to strive for.

But numbers alone are not enough. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development is clear that access is just part of the story. Women must also be able to participate effectively in decision-making. What the Protocol seeks is not just jobs for the girls, but gender equality for the region.

The draft National Gender Policy focuses 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.

We look forward to working with partners and local government stakeholders in ensuring that this research becomes a mobilising tool before the next elections and the months ahead as we move towards realising gender equality in the country and the region.



Colleen Lowe Morna
Executive Director, Gender Links



Progress a must for future generations

Photo: Trevor Davies

Overview: 50/50 by 2015

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

This first chapter provides the background and context to the research; its rationale and theoretical underpinnings. The chapter locates the Swaziland

research in the context of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development 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 just a have to do but one that will enrich the quality of governance and decision-making.

The regional context

On average, SADC now has just over 23% women in both the lower and upper houses of Parliament; 4.8% higher than the global average of 18.4% as shown in Table one. This is second only to the Nordic countries but still far short of their 40.8% average and considerably below the parity target.

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	**23.7%**	**20.0%**	**23.2%**
Americas	21.7%	20.1%	21.5%
Europe including Nordic countries	21.3%	19.4%	20.9%
Europe excluding Nordic countries	19.3%	19.4%	19.3%
Sub-Saharan Africa (including SADC)	18.1%	21.4%	18.5%
Asia	18.0%	16.5%	17.9%
Pacific	13.0%	32.6%	15.2%
Arab States	9.7%	7.0%	9.1%
Global average	**18.5%**	**17.6%**	**18.4%**

Source: IPU and Gender Links

The variations at the local government level are even greater, ranging from 58% in Lesotho to 6.4% in Mauritius.

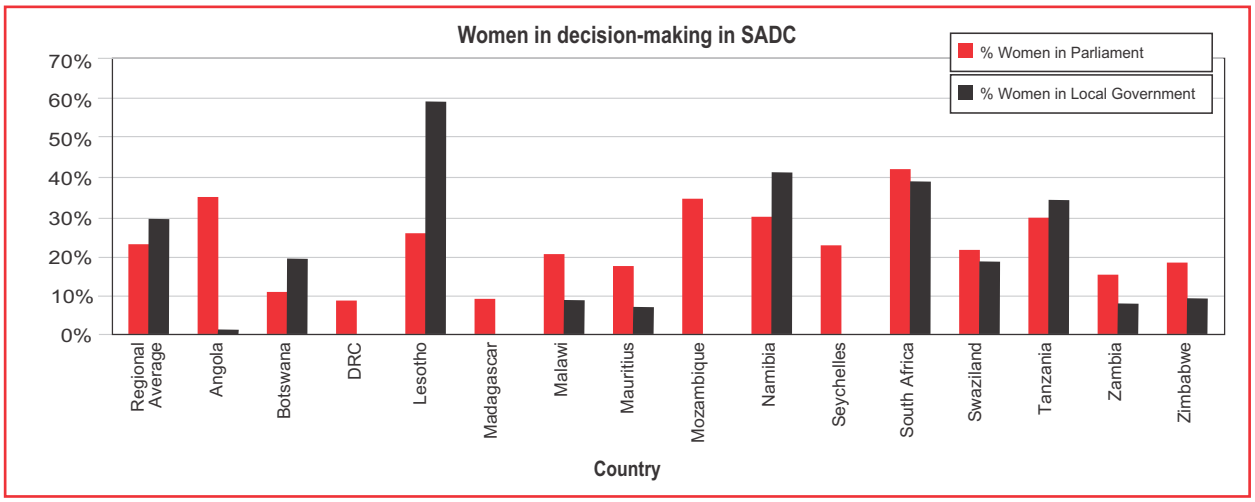
Table two: Gender and politics in Southern Africa

Country	% women lower house	% women upper house	% women both houses	% women cabinet	% women local government
Angola	37.3%	-	37.3%	-	unknown
Botswana	11.1%	-	11.1%	25.0%	19.5%
DRC	8.4%	4.6%	7.7%	16.7%	unknown
Lesotho	25.0%	29.0%	25.8%	27.8%	58.0%
Madagascar	7.9%	15.2%	9.4%	-	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%	29.8%	24.0%	41.8%
South Africa	43.0%	29.6%	41.4%	40.0%	39.7%
Swaziland	**14.0%**	**40.0%**	**22.0%**	**26.0%**	**18.0%**
Tanzania	30.4%	-	30.4%	14.8%	34.2%
Zambia	15.2%	-	15.2%	22.7%	6.7%
Zimbabwe	14.3%	24.7%	18.2%	-	9.5%
Regional average	**23.7%**	**20.0%**	**23.2%**	**19.5%**	**29.2%**

Source: IPU and Gender Links

Figure one shows that at the time of writing this report only five of the 15 countries in the region had achieved or exceeded 30% women in Parliament (Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Namibia) and local government (Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Mozambique).

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



Swaziland in the regional context

The Constitution of Swaziland describes gender relations in the country as follows:

> *The Kingdom of Swaziland like most societies is a patriarchal society. Swazi culture tends to promote group rights over individual rights. Group rights are mainly defined in family, kinship and clan arrangements defined in patriarchal terms. A combination of patriarchy with a preference for protection of group rights over those of individuals creates an environment conducive to marginalisation of women and violation of their rights. The low status of women in Swaziland is further entrenched by both customary and common law practices. Certain laws (customary and common laws) especially those pertaining to marriage in community of property, inheritance, and succession need to be harmonized so that women and girls can exercise their constitutional rights. In addition, cultural practices and stereotypes further exacerbates the low status of women (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act, 2005: 2).*

Swaziland is signatory to a number of regional and international gender instruments which advocate for increased or equal representation and participation of women in decision-making positions, such as the African Charter on Human And Peoples' Rights (African Protocol), 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. Swaziland only ratified CEDAW in 2004, (Swaziland Constitution 2005:5). In August 2008, the King joined other SADC Heads of State in signing the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. This requires that SADC Member States endeavour to reach the target of 50% women in all decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors by 2015.

Table three: Women and men in decision-making structures in Swaziland

	Women	Men	Total	% women
National Level				
Senate (Upper house)	12	18	30	40%
House of assembly (lower house)	9	56	65	14%
Combined houses	21	74	95	22%
Cabinet	5	14	18	28%
Public Service (Principal Secretaries)	4	12	16	25%
Directors	11	47	58	19%
Local level				
Urban Local Authority	19	61	80	24%
Indvuna	6	49	55	11%
Bucopho	59	275	334	18%
Combined local government	84	385	469	18%

Source:http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/swawomenrepresent.htm; http://www.ipu.org/parline/reports/2302.htm, http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=44635 , Elections and Boundaries Commission

Table three shows that women in Swaziland constitute 22% of members of parliament (close to the regional average) but this is skew as women comprise only 14% of the House of Assembly compared to 40% of the Senate or upper house. While there are 24% women in urban local government, women comprise a mere 11% of *Indvuna* and 18% of *Bucopho* or rural local government, giving an overall average of 18% women at the local level; considerably lower than the regional average of 29.2%. The system and how it works is described in greater detail in Chapter two.

The **Draft National Gender Policy** acknowledges that women's limited participation in politics and decision-making "is associated with the socio-cultural perceptions and inhibitions that authority and wisdom is the natural preserve of men. This is reinforced by the prevailing legal system, particularly Swazi law and custom which perpetuates the minority status of women."

This Draft National Gender Policy details both the current and other planned processes to cascade and entrench gender in Swaziland society. It also explores the establishment of the Gender Management System (GMS), gender structures and strengthening systems already in place like the Gender Unit. The Gender Policy is unfortunately still in a draft form, but as the Co-ordinating Assembly of Non-governmental Organisations (CANGO) pointed out (Sizakele Hlatshwayo, personal interview, 22 January 2009), there has already been a significant amount of consultation involving civil society and other relevant and strategic stakeholders to move the processes forward.

The Report of the Commonwealth Expert Group (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2008:10) makes the point that "Swaziland has some considerable way to go before it meets the provisions laid down in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which the country signed at the SADC Summit in South Africa in August 2008."

A key concern is that Constitutional provisions for increasing women's representation in political decision-making at the national level (these do not apply to the local level) have not been observed. The 2005 Constitution stipulates several measures to increase the number of women in Parliament.

- Section 86: the House of Assembly shall appoint four women, one from each region, if females are less than 30 percent of the House.
- Section 95: the King will appoint 10 members into the House of Assembly, half of whom shall be women.
- Section 94: the King shall appoint 20 people into the House of Senate, eight of whom shall be women. The House of Assembly shall appoint 10 people into the Senate, five of whom shall be women. Thus at least 50% of the indirectly elected Senators and 43% of all Senators must be women according to these Constitutional provisions.

Table four compares constitutional requirements versus the reality in Swaziland during the last elections, highlighting the extent to which these provisions were ignored.

Table four: Constitutional requirements versus actual representation

	Total	Women	Constitutional requirement	Shortfall	% required	Actual %
House of Assembly						
Elected	55	7	None		None	12.7%
Provision: Section 86: the House of Assembly shall appoint four women, one from each region, if females are less than 30 percent of the House			4	4	28.6%	0.0%
Appointed (10 members appointed by the King)	10	2	5	3	50.0%	20.0%
Total appointed	*14*	*2*	*9*	*7*	*64.3%*	*14.3%*
Total	**65**	**9**				**13.8%**
Senate						
Elected from House of Assembly	10	5	5	0	50.0%	50.0%
Appointed by the King	20	7	8	1	40.0%	35.0%
Total	**30**	**12**	**13**	**1**	**43.3%**	**40.0%**

It is also significant (see Table five) that the proportion of women in the House of Assembly declined by 2.5% in the last elections.

Table five: Gender representation in previous elections (House of Assembly)

Year	Women Elected	Appointed	Total	Men	Total Seats	% of women
2008	7	2	9	56	65	13.8%
2003	9	0	9	46	55	16.3%
1998	2	0	2	53	55	3.6%

Source: EISA. (http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/swaquotas.htm, accessed 6 May 2009, 2008 figures confirmed with the Elections and Boundaries Commission

Gender, democracy and local governance

Democracy is about fair representation of all interest groups in society. The fact that women are not represented in proportion to their presence in the population is the first marker that this principle is being violated. Women have a right to equal representation and participation in political decision-making, whether they make a difference or not.

But what the governance discourse emphasises is that democracy is not just about representation. Equally important, it is about participation and citizenship, which give people voice in their lives, thus enabling the development of better policies and responsive service delivery and greater accountability. Contemporary democracy requires the full participation of all sections of society not just in casting the vote, but also in the decision-making processes and allocation of resources.

Dr. Athalia Molokomme, current Attorney General of Botswana argues that gender equality is an issue of basic human rights, as affirmed in a number of international and regional instruments (1997:128). She further argues that "any country or regional community which ignores gender issues but still hopes to achieve democracy and development, does so at its own peril." (Molokomme, 1997:124).

According to Atkinson (2002), *governance* is a broader term than *government* in that it encompasses the environment in which government, the institution, functions and 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 an important entry point for women for a number of reasons, including its closeness to the people. Local council offices are geographically closer to communities than national offices. They are easier to reach and more accessible. Areas are broken down into constituencies and wards that have local politicians, often known to communities who they can approach and interact with. It follows then that this level of government should be the most responsive to the specific developmental needs of communities. Local government is directly aligned with one of the core tenets of democracy - that of devolution of state power to the people. It is through local government that the vision of government is concretised to real and tangible processes for the electorate.

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 often best acquainted with and most affected by lack of services, for instance. 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 also easier to gain entry into, having fewer requirements and because of its proximity to the home enable women to combine their domestic responsibilities 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; there are the equity or quantitative arguments and then the efficacy or qualitative arguments.

Equity arguments

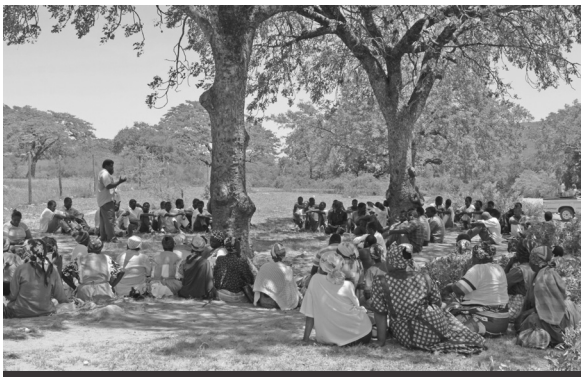
This school of thought argues that women should participate because they have a right to do so. This right is enshrined in most Constitutions and is based in principles of equality, democracy and

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 society where women are not represented equally is undemocratic and unjust.

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).



Men still dominate local meetings in Swaziland

Photo: UNDP

Women and men perform different task and functions. Because of the socially constructed roles that are attributed to women they 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 economic 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 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.

This view is borne out by the following statements made by councillors:

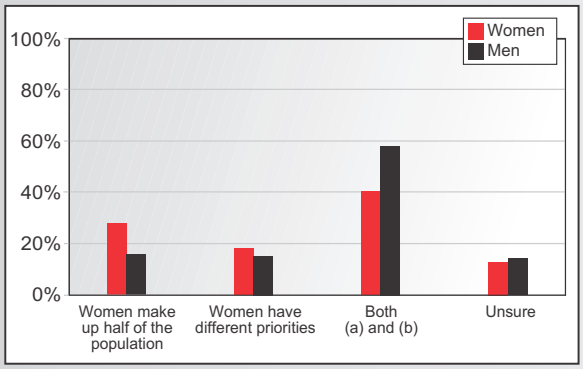
Yes, even if we are different, women know about issues of poverty because of their care and nurturing responsibilities. Women are used to these roles; through which they show compassion for the community. Women are also more aware of women's needs; if in the Council there are only men, women's issues will not be addressed (Councillor Mfanekisile Mashaba, 28 January 2009).

The values that women are said to bring into Council are the same values that they are said to have in the home. Women are the ones most involved in the household. They respond mostly to the needs for the children and the husbands and partners and are the first ones to identify family needs and attempt to find ways of responding to these, more than men as they are often absent from the home (Councillor Duma Zwane, 29 January 2009).

Equity and efficacy

In Swaziland, local government respondents believed there is a link between gender and democracy, but were less certain as to why this is so.

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



When asked if there is a link between gender and democracy, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement with marginally more men (91,7%) than women (82,1%) agreeing that gender and democracy are linked. Interestingly all of the respondents who said there is no link were women (10,7%). A fair number (7,1% of women and 8,3% of men) said they were 'unsure'.

Asked to give a reason for the link, 47% of the respondents (39% women and 57% men) answered that it was both because they make up half of the population and because they have different priorities and approaches to men. There were rather a high number of participants (15% men) and (8.5% women) that were unsure about the response.

These findings differ from the first *At the Coalface* study which found that overall 63% of the councillors interviewed agreed with both statements and there was very 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.

The lack of certainty as to why there is a link between gender and governance in Swaziland probably reflects the fact that gender and governance discourse is still relatively new. Interestingly focus group participants found the efficacy argument more important than the equity one, as illustrated in some of the comments below:

- It is a good thing (women participating in local government) so that we also see what they can deliver different from men. We have experience of being led only by men and the development and progress we were hoping to see has been very slow in coming when it is just been men only in the Councils. So the intention is, through a mixed Council in terms of gender, to create opportunities to share ideas between men and women in order to advance community development and enable progress (Khuphuka focus group (11 women and 5 men)).

- The presence of women in government positions does add value in the sense that women have concrete ideas to share and are more likely to deliver to the people (Male focus group participant: Ngwenya Village focus group).
- It is important to have women in power because women know family problems better than men. Also, that if a woman were elected she would know the people affected by hunger and would represent them well by providing help to the poverty stricken people and orphans (Male participant Magazini focus group).
- If both men and women work together they will help one another; what a woman cannot do can be done by a man and in that way work goes on. The involvement of women is a good idea because a woman shows being powerful when her husband passes away a home keeps going through the hands of a woman as children continue going to school and everything that was done by a man is done by the woman without a hassle (Female participant: Nkungu focus group).
- Women make a difference because they know the lives of people in homesteads better and provide help accordingly unlike men who do not do that because they move from work to their homes where they even close doors and if there are gates they go to the extent of locking gates. A woman knows the difficulties faced by other women; take for instance if there is no clean water supply in the area, a woman when is elected to become a councillor or member of parliament she will raise the issue because she has been through the pain of getting unclean water (Female participant: Nkungu focus group).

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 most recently in South Africa) and not taking any action at all.

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

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

To the other extreme of these countries that have achieved rapid strides in women's participation in

local government are a host of SADC countries in which women councillors constitute less than ten percent of the total. In these countries (such as Malawi, Mauritius Zambia and 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 % in August 2005, 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, 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 the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom 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 coalface of delivery through:

- Studying the experiences of Southern African countries with different electoral systems and approaches to quotas in increasing the representation of women in local government.
- Examining how these experiences can be applied by other Southern African countries seeking to comply with the decision by Heads of State at their 2005 Summit, to raise the quota for women in all areas of decision-making from thirty to fifty percent.
- Examining the impact of women at local level and proposing strategies for overcoming barriers to their effective participation and contribution at local level.

Structure of the report

Chapter one starts with providing the background and context to the research; its rationale and theoretical underpinnings. It highlights some key concepts around gender, democracy and local governance 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. It covers the regional and country specific context within the broad theme of gender. The chapter unpacks the numbers regarding women's representation across governance structures and

locates the Swaziland research in the context of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development and the campaign to ensure women's equal representation in all areas of decision-making.

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 Swaziland, including the electoral system and how local government works in the country.

Chapter three examines women's access to local government. The chapter covers some of the dominant barriers and those specific to Swaziland, one of the major ones being culture. The chapter investigates in some detail the concepts of latent power, quotas and the *"Vote for Women"* campaign and their contribution to women's pursuit of access into local government structures. Finally, the chapter recommends some strategies which could be used to enhance and enable access of women into local government. But the chapter goes beyond just pointing to the challenges and also seeks to show that despite the barriers there are some small gains that Swaziland women can be proud of.

Chapter four discusses the necessity for access in terms of pure numbers (quantity) to be coupled with effective participation by women. In the same way that there are factors that can either enable or hinder access so too are there are factors that either enable or hinder the effective participation of women in local government.

Chapter five explores what women bring to local politics and whether it makes a difference to the lives of women in their communities. While the study shows that women may have different concern and interests, it highlights the importance of them not being stereotyped into raising only the "soft" community and welfare issues which are generally associated with women, as well the importance of men raising these issues. 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 more strategic needs of women in communities.

Chapter seven explores how this institution can begin to address and be responsive to women's needs as the norm. The highlight of the chapter is that it also introduces key gender concepts which are critical in the gender mainstreaming in the way the institution operates and delivers on its mandate.

Chapter eight concludes by summarising the key finding and recommendations of this study, across the various areas.



Lutsango - delivering reeds

Photo: UNDP

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 most 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 Africa builds on, and is informed by the conceptual framework first put forward by Thenjiwe Mtintso (1999:33-52) ambassador to Cuba, Chair of GL and a former Chair of the South African Commission on Gender Equality (CGE). This framework, elaborated in *Ringing up the Changes*, is illustrated in Figure 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"

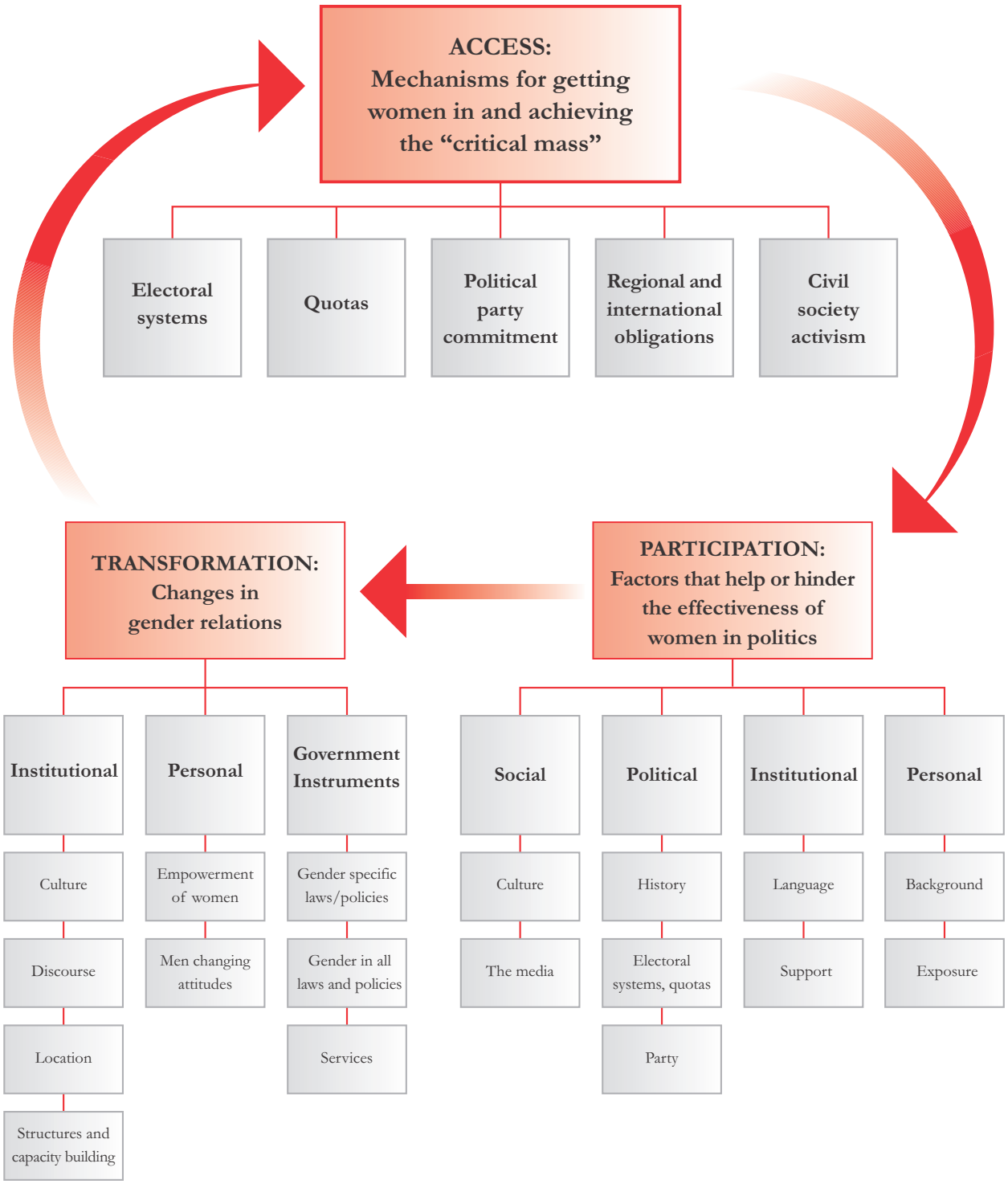
A question that frequently arises in access debates is the extent to which women have to be represented in specific numbers in order to make a difference. Put differently, how critical is the critical mass? How magic is the figure 30 percent?

The notion that to make a difference women should constitute a "critical mass" traces 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 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

Figure two: Conceptual framework



reach high office have often appeared not to bring distinctively female values to their office (2000, p.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, outsourcing, 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.

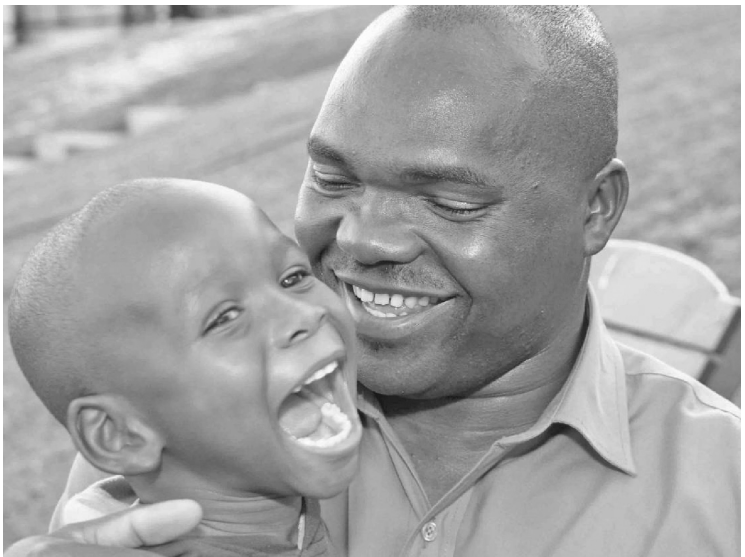
Transformation

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 that need to be transformed.

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

- The **empowerment of women** to take their equal and rightful role in all areas of social, economic and political endeavour and
- **Changes in the attitudes of men** to allow women to take their rightful place as well to free men of those burdens of masculinity that prevent them from working as equal partners with women.



Attitudes of men are a key gender indicator: Bheki Maseko and his son *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Country profile



Source: http://www.places.co.za/swaziland/swazimap.html

The Kingdom of Swaziland is as a landlocked country, with an estimated land area of 17,364 square kilometres, making it the smallest country in Southern Africa. It is bordered to the north, south, and west by South Africa, and to the east by Mozambique. The capital of Swaziland is Mbabane. The nation, as well as its people, are named after the 19th century King, Mswati II (The National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS policy, June 2006:1; www.wikipedia.com). The country has two official languages, namely isiSwati and English.

Swaziland has a population of 1,141,000, of whom 52% are women. The majority of Swaziland's population reside in rural areas with only about 23% residing in urban areas. Those who live in rural areas are periodically ravaged by drought, resulting in food crises that threaten hundreds of thousands with hunger. More men (52%) than women (48%) reside in rural areas, whereas in urban areas it is women (51%) who outnumber men (49%). The UNDP 2007/8 report put the adult literacy rate at 78.5% for females and 80.9% for males (http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP?swa1.htm, accessed 06 May 2009).

The current HIV prevalence in Swaziland is considered to be the highest in the world (UNAIDS, 2004). Estimates are that about 1 in 5 persons are HIV positive in the country and the national prevalence is estimated to be at 26%. Of the HIV infected persons, about 15,000 are children under the age of 15. The epidemic in the country is generalised and primarily driven by heterosexual transmission but with more women infected than men with UNAIDS estimates putting women 15 years and older at 52% of those infected (http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/swaziland.asp, accessed 11 May 2009).

The economy of the country is primarily agrarian even though the manufacturing sector has grown over the years and the economy is very closely linked to that of the Republic of South Africa. While the country experienced high economic growth levels at 9% on average in the late 1980s, in recent years the economic growth has slowed down considerably to reach an average rate of 3,4% in the period 1990-1992. The majority of the wealth (56.4%) is estimated to be held by 20% of the population compared to only 4.3% being held by the poorest 20% of the population. (The Second National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2006-2008, April 2006; Prioritised Action Programme on Poverty Reduction, March 2002: 4). The GDP growth rate is estimated to be at 2.9% by the International Monetary Fund and the unemployment level is placed at 40% (http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP?swa1.htm, accessed 06 May 2009).

One of the sectors worst hit and devastated by the HIV and AIDS pandemic is the agricultural sector

(National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS Policy, June 2006: 6). A study on subsistence agriculture in the country found that due to AIDS related sickness and deaths, 38.5% of the households suffered reduction in areas under cultivation, 47% decline in crop yield, 42% change in cropping pattern, 31% diversion of labour to care for the sick, 22% increase in health costs and 39% loss of regular remittances. All of this has contributed to the increased levels of poverty in the country from 66% in 1995 to 69% in 2002.

Government

The head of State is the king or *Ngwenyama* (Lion), currently King Mswati III, who ascended to the throne in 1986 after the death of his father in 1982 and a period of regency. By tradition, the king reigns along with his mother or a ritual substitute, the *Ndlovukati* (She-Elephant). As the monarch, the king not only appoints the prime minister, who is the head of government, but also appoints a small number of representatives for both chambers of the *Libandla* (parliament). The Senate consists of 30 members of which ten are elected by the Assembly while 20 are appointed by the King. The House of Assembly has 65 seats, 55 of which are occupied by elected representatives and ten are appointed by the King. Elections are held every five years.
(www.wikepedia.com, accessed 6 February 2009)

The country is divided into four administrative regions: Hhohho, where the capital city, Mbabane, and Government ministries are located; Manzini, which contains the largest industrial site in the country; Lubombo, where most of the agricultural plantations are located and Shiselweni which is the least developed region in the country. The main urban settlements are Mbabane, capital of the Hhohho district, with an estimated population of 73 000 people in mid-2005, and Manzini, capital of the Manzini district, with a population of 25 571 at the 1997 census (EISA, 2008: 5-6). The country is further subdivided into 55 *Tinkhundla* (constituencies) for political purposes.

Local government in Swaziland

Organisational structure

The Decentralisation Policy (2006:13) describes the decentralisation process as having four main levels.

Regional level: Swaziland is divided into four administrative geographic areas called Regions. The Regions are Hhohho, Manzini, Shiselweni and Lubombo.

The "Traditional" Tinkhundla-based system: According to Section 79 of the Constitution, "The system of government for Swaziland is a democratic, participatory, *Tinkhundla*-based system which emphasises devolution of state power from central government to *Tinkhundla* areas and individual merit as a basis for election or appointment to public office Constitution."

The Decentralisation Policy says that the *Tinkhundla* system has been adopted as a political philosophy and system of governance as well as an administrative instrument for service delivery to ensure that Swazis directly participate in governance and development. The main aim of local government is to provide citizens with affordable and non-interrupted quality services (Decentralization Policy, 2006:7).

The *Tinkhundla* elections (for the 55 *Tinkhundlas*) coincide with national elections; the most recent ones took place in September 2008. Elections take place every five years which means that the next *Tinkhundla* elections are due to take place in 2013.

The new Ministry of *Tinkhundla* Administration and Development established in February 2009 is responsible for Regional Administration, *Tinkhundla* Administration (excluding City Councils, Town Councils and Town Boards), Rural settlement, Decentralisation and National Physical Planning. The 55 *Tinkhundlas* in Swaziland, together with the Decentralisation Directorate, now fall under this Ministry, thus retaining the separation between the urban and rural divide of local government.

Each *Inkhundla* is headed by a Regional Administrator (RA), who is the political head of the region. He or she is appointed by the King and reports to him for any traditional duties. The duties of the RA include overseeing the operations of the *Tinkhundlas* within his or her region and taking responsibility for chieftaincy matters and all other matters that are regulated by Swazi law and custom (UNDP, 2003). In terms of the King's Order No. 23/1978 and the Constitution, the RA has the same status and has the same rights and privileges as a Deputy Minister.

Chiefdom level: Each of the 55 *Inkhundla* comprises of a number of *imiphakatsi* (chiefdoms), administered by chiefs on behalf of the King. The *Tinkhundla* centres are supposed to serve as forums for development activity and efficient delivery of government services at the "grassroots" level.

In each *Inkhundla* there is an *Inkhundla* committee which is the executive council of the *Inkhundla*. This committee is made up of the *Indvuna*, who is elected on the *Inkhundla* every five years and who heads the *Inkhundla* committee as well as *Bucopho* who are democratically elected (every five years) representatives from each of the chiefdoms *(imiphakatsi)*. The local member of Parliament (MP) sits on the *Inkhundla* Committee in an ex-officio capacity.

Urban Government: Co-existing with the traditional structure is the modern urban government system which comprises of:

- City Councils: There are two City Councils in Swaziland, namely Manzini and Mbabane.
- Town Councils: There are three town councils in Swaziland which form the second grade of local councils. They are Pigg's Peak, Nhlangano and Siteki. These three councils are still in their infancy and because of this their ability to contribute to economic development in their respective areas of jurisdiction is very limited.
- Town Boards: There are seven town boards namely, Ezulwini, Lavumisa, Matsapha, Vuvulane, Mankayane, Ngwenya and Hlathikhulu. All the towns administered by Town Boards are towns only by official proclamation. They are economically undeveloped, with the result the constituents cannot rely on them for much except some limited administrative services

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development is the political head of the entire Urban Local Government System (City Councils, Town Councils, and Town Boards). Currently, the main Act that guides the work of the Local Government Authorities is the Urban Governance Act. The Local Government Bill (2008) is expected to be enacted soon.

Urban Local Government elections were recently amended from a three to five year cycle and the last election took place in 2007. These elections are for the 12 City and Town Councils and the Town Boards. The next urban local government elections will take place in 2012.

Table six summarises the distribution of the local authorities and provides an approximate population for each of the districts.

Table six: Distribution of local authorities

District	Number of authorities		Approximate population
	Urban	*Tinkhundla*	
Hhohho	4	14	295 000
Manzini	4	16	360 000
Shiselweni	2	14	210 000
Lubombo	2	11	305 000
TOTAL	**12**	**55**	**1 170 000**

Source: www.clgf.org.uk, Swaziland profile

Council Committees

The Urban Government Act, Local Government: Act 8/1969 Section 19 (1) states that a council may from time to time establish committees for general or special purposes that it may deem necessary and may delegate council powers and duties to such committee as it deems fit. The committees will however not have the power to:

- levy rates; or
- borrow money; or
- make by-laws; or
- any other power which by this or any other law is expressly required to be exercised by the Council.

The committee rules are that:

a) Each committee member must report its proceedings to the Council.
b) In no case shall any act of any committee of a Council be binding upon the Council until submitted to and approved by the Council.
c) The number of members of a committee, the term of office of its members and the quorum for the transaction of business shall be fixed by the Council.
d) The Chairman of the Council shall be an ex officio member of every committee without the power to vote and shall not be counted in the quorum.
e) The Chairman of any committee shall be a councillor appointed either by the Council or by members of the committee from among their numbers.
f) Every councillor shall be appointed by the Council to serve on at least one committee.
g) The committee's tenure shall terminate and cease to exist on the 30th day of April in each year, unless previously dissolved at any time, after notice of motion to that effect by the vote of the majority of the whole Council.

The Council shall appoint a finance committee for regulating and controlling the finances of the Council. This composition of this key finance/management committee does not include a gender principle (Urban Government Act, 2006: 15 - 16).

Standing Committees

Section 40 (1) of the Urban Governance Act states that "where a Council is of the opinion that the management committee is or will not be able to carry out or fulfil such powers, functions and duties satisfactorily, Council may request the Minister of the Council with such powers, functions and duties to establish a standing committee.

Swaziland Local Government Association

The Swaziland Local Government Association (SWALGA) was established in 2004 to address the needs of the 12 urban councils, including helping them to develop and access funding.

Its membership is made up of the representatives of the 12 Councils in Swaziland which fall within the Urban Local Government structure. These Councils pay an annual fee that varies depending on the size of the Council. At the time of writing Manzini and Mbabane both paid R20 000 per annum while the other Councils paid between R5000 and R15 000 per annum.

Top management of the Association is made up of five members: the President, Vice President, Secretary General, Vice General and the Treasurer. The full executive of SWALGA consists of 17 members: the five office bearers and a representative from each of the Councils. The *Tinkhundlas* do not form part of SWALGA.

Research methodology

Desk top research and Literature review

A range of key documents and policies were reviewed to get an understanding of the workings of local government in Swaziland including local government laws and policies, academic and NGO studies and reports on gender and local government.

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). Swaziland falls within the category of the smallest number of councillors. Table seven below shows the sample of local authorities and the number of councillors interviewed (53 councillors in 20 localities). A full list of interviewees can be found at **Annex A.**

Table seven: Research sample

	Total local authorities	Local authorities covered	% councils	Total councillors	Total councillors interviewed	% Councillors
Swaziland	67	20	30%	427	53	12,4%

Table eight alongside gives a detailed breakdown of the region and the total number of interviews conducted per region. All regions are represented, albeit to differing extents. Manzini has the most numbers because it is the biggest, with the most *Tinkhundlas*. The research covered a broad geographical spread and a good balance between the three main types of local structures, urban and rural.

Table eight: Sample councils

Region	Total interviewed	City Council	Town Council	Town Board	*Inkhundla*
Hhohho	11		Pigg's Peak	Ngwenya	Manzana
					Mbabane East
					Mbabane West
Manzini	27	Manzini		Matsapa	Kwaluseni
				Mankayane	Mkhiweni
					Mtsongwaneni
					Lamgabi
					Velezizweni
					Ngwempisi
					Manzini North
					Nhlambeni
Shiselweni	4				Sandleni
Lubombo	11		Siteki	Vuvulane	Hlane
TOTAL	**53**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**13**

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. Due to delays and challenges in locating the newly appointed women, these comprised 55% of the total sample compared to 45% men (see Table nine which also provides gender breakdown per region).

Table nine: Interview breakdown per region

Region	Total no of people interviewed	Women	Men
Manzini	27	55.2%	45.8%
Shiselweni	4	0	16.7%
Lubombo	11	20.7%	20.8%
Hhohho	11	24.1%	16.7%
TOTAL	**53**	**55%**	**45%**

Political parties

As mentioned, political parties are banned in Swaziland. The interviews were therefore conducted with individual councillors, with no focus on their political party affiliation or non-affiliation.

How the research was conducted

The research made use of the following techniques:

Structured one-on-one questionnaires

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

Semi-structured interviews

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

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

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

Focus groups

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 ten shows that in-country researchers conducted 15 focus groups in six different localities. A total of 109 people took part in these focus groups, 70% of the participants were women and 30% 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.

Table ten: Summary table of focus groups in Swaziland

Locality	Civil society		Women constituents	Men constituents	Total participants
	Women	Men			
Hlane (4)	8	5	25	10	**48**
Lamgabhi (1)			5		**5**
Ngwenya (4)	10	5	2	3	**20**
Ngwempisi (4)	12	7	7	3	**29**
Nhlambeni (1)			3		**3**
Manzini North (1)			4		**4**
TOTAL	**30**	**17**	**46**	**16**	**109**

Council meeting observations

To establish how women participate in local government and whether this participation is effective or not researchers observed three council meetings in Manzini City Council, Mbabane City Council and Pigg's Peak Council. 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 at the council meetings; some chaired by women, others by men etc. to assess the extent to which women participate in different scenarios.

Limitations of the study

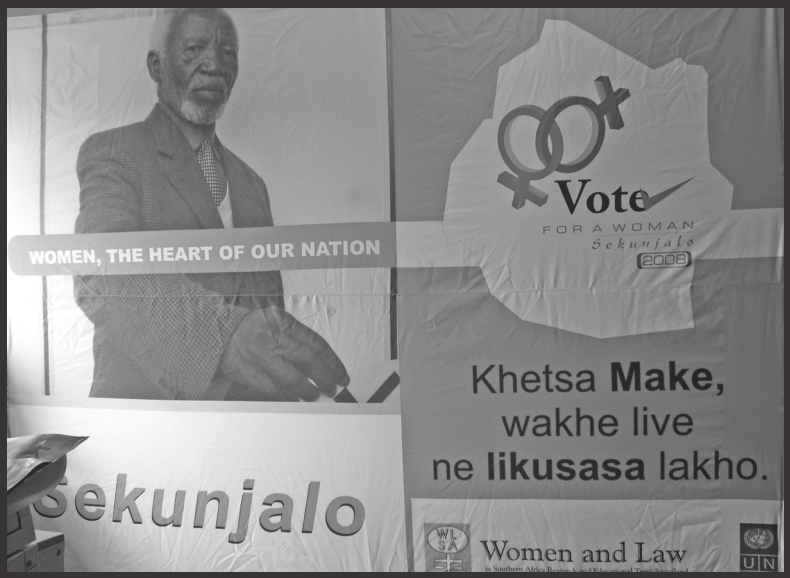
One of the main limitations of the Swaziland research was getting it completed on time. The September 2008 elections resulted in some delays because of the processes that take place after elections before councillors take up their positions in the councils.

Contacting the councils and councillors proved challenging in many instances. Due to time and budget constraints a decision was made to conduct some outstanding interviews telephonically.

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



SADC flags *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*



"Vote for Women" campaigning material *Photo: Judith Mtsewu*

Accessing local government

Local government may seem an obvious place for women 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.

While there are no legal impediments to women accessing local government, in Swaziland the structures within which women must function still remain largely patriarchal and in some instances are obstructive to women's entry into the political arena.

The doors are still not opening

The earlier chapters showed how over a ten year period Swaziland has only shifted marginally in terms of gender representation. The latest figure of 22% women in parliament and 18% at local level, with only one more election to go before 2015, shows that Swaziland is still a long way from achieving the SADC target of gender parity in all areas of decision-making by 2015.

The last urban local government election took place in 2007 while the elections for the *Tinkhundla* took place in September 2008. The next urban and rural local government elections will be in five years time, in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Table 11 tracks the representation of women in urban local government over the past 10 years and shows progressive increases in women's representation. However, it shows that at this rate of progress Swaziland is unlikely to meet the 2015 parity target.

Table 11: Past elections - Urban Local Government

Election year	Total number of councillors	Number of women	% of women
2007	80	19	23.7%
2005	78	13	16.6%
1997	72	5	6.9%

Source: WLSA (Report of the Snap Survey into women in Positions of Decision-making, Leadership and Influence in Swaziland)

Table 12 below provides a detailed breakdown of the results of the 2007 Urban Local Government results per Council. None of the Councils reached the 50% mark in terms of women's representation; most are significantly lower.

At the time of the 2007 election none of the Councils had women Mayors, a situation that has since changed with the Mankayane Town Board and Vuvulane Town Board now being led by women Mayors. These numbers are still nowhere near where they need to be if the targets in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development are to be met, but they are a promising start.

Table 12: Urban Local Government - 2007 Election

Type of Council	Local Authority	Total Councillors	Women	% Women	Mayor (w)	Deputy Mayor (w)	CEO/ council secretary
City Council	Manzini	12	3	25%	0	1	1
City Council	Mbabane	12	2	17%	0	0	0
Town Council	Hlathikhulu	5	0	0	0	0	0
Town Council	Siteki	8	1	13%	0	0	0
Town Council	Nhlangano	8	2	25%	0	0	0
Town Council	Mankayane	5	1	20%	0	0	0
Town Council	Piggs Peak	7	2	29%	0	0	1
Town Board	Ezulwini	5	2	40%	0	0	0
Town Boards	Vuvulane	3	1	33%	0	0	0
Town Boards	Ngwenya	5	2	40%	0	0	1
Town Boards	Lavumisa	5	1	20%	0	0	0
Town Boards	Matsapa	5	2	40%	0	0	1
TOTAL		**80**	**19**	**24%**	**0**	**0**	**4**

Table 13 provides a break down for rural local government. The figures show that with women constituting 11% of the *indvunas* and 18% of the *Bucopho*, the cards are even more heavily stacked against women than men in the rural areas.

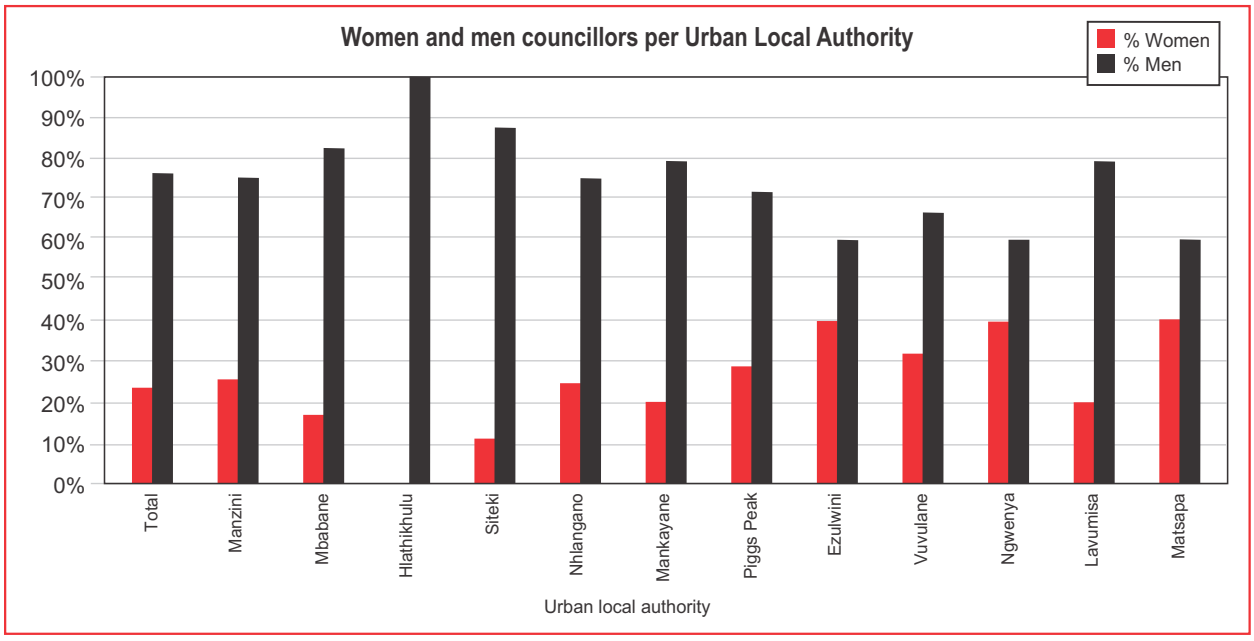
Table 13: *Tinkhundla* (Rural Local Government) - 2008 Election

Total *Tinkhundlas*	Total *Indvunas*	Women *Indvunas*	% women *Indvunas*	Total *Bucopho*	Women *Bucopho*	% women *Bucopho*
15	55	6	**11%**	334	59	**18%**

Source: Elections and Boundaries Commission, 26 May 2009

Figure three shows that women's representation in urban local government ranges from 0% in Hlathikhulu to 40% in Ezulwini, Ngwenya and Matsapa. Chapter one highlighted the importance of women participating in local government and includes excerpts from focus group discussions as well as in-depth interviews with councillors that strengthen the argument that a local government institution without women weakens the sphere and disadvantages the communities being served by it.

Figure three: Representation of women and men councillors per Urban Local Authority



Yet despite the evidence that women's participation at the local level is key, there still continue to be a number of barriers that prevent women from gaining entry into the decision-making structures of this level of government.

Barriers to access

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

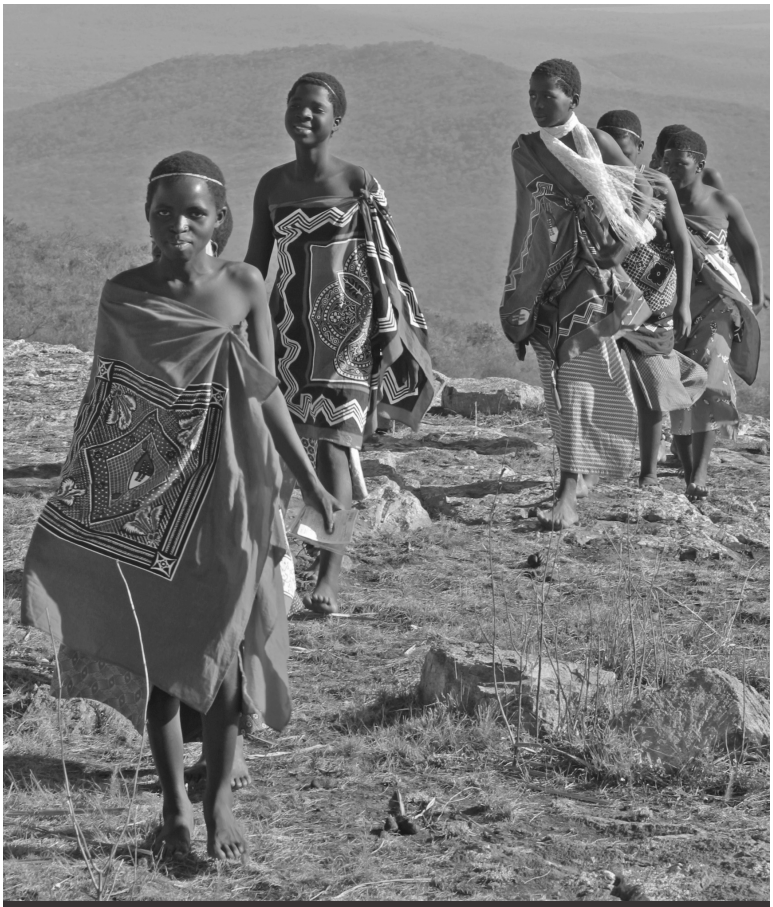
Culture and patriarchy

The Draft National Gender Policy recognises the under-representation of women in decision-making is grounded in patriarchy and socio-cultural perceptions that decision-making is the preserve of men because they are wiser and more capable. The legal system and customary laws which perpetuate the minority status of women are also major contributing factors to women's inability to access local government. This is highlighted by for example, the traditional structures which do not allow for women to hold certain positions like being a Chief, *Umgijimi* (chief's runner) or *Indvuna* (headman) or be a member of *Bandlancane* (Inner Council).

Councillor Duma Zwane from Manzini City Council noted that women struggle to access credit and finance if they do not have consent of their husbands. The draft National Gender Policy asserts that "the low status of women in Swaziland is further entrenched by both customary and common law practices" (March 2006: 2). In addition, the following cultural practices can be said to perpetuate women's minority status, such as Polygamy, the Kuzila, Emalobolo, mourning (and the restrictions linked to it), Kwendzsisa, Kungenwa and inheritance rights (Draft National Gender Policy, 2006:8).

The Draft National Gender Policy talks about the need "to harmonise the Swazi cultural belief systems and practices and modern laws, in order to eliminate the existing conflicts which undermine gender equality, and ensure than the constitution is translated into gender responsive legislation" (Draft National Gender Policy, 2006:16).

The in-depth interviews revealed the extent of patriarchal attitudes in Swaziland. *Bucopho* Sifiso Motsa of Ngwempisi *Inkhundla* from the Chiefdom of Lushikishini maintained that in the presence of men, women are expected to remain silent and let men speak; women should listen and only speak when spoken to first. Also culturally, a man has the right to disallow his wife from participating in local government or any government office, should he choose to do so.



Culture and tradition are a strong influence *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Box one: Marriage and local politics

Mayor Nontobeko Motsa* in her second term and current Mayor of a Town Board is only one of two women mayors in the whole of Swaziland.

Getting to be in this high and esteemed position did not come easy for Motsa who shared with researchers her experience of the discussions and negotiations she had to enter into with her husband about her decision to run for elections in local government.

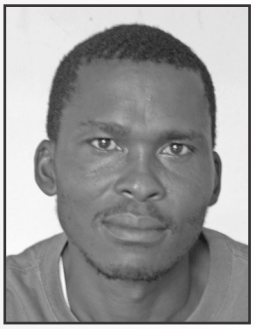
When she suggested to her husband that she wanted to run for elections, he initially said that by participating in elections, "I would be exposed to other men". His other fears were that through her participation in Council, she would debate and would then also want to debate in the home and this would lead to fights as this would be a challenge to his authority.

After several discussions and attempts to convince and allay his fears, he finally agreed, but not happily. Fortunately none of his fears have materialised and they are still together: "He agreed even though he was still not fully happy with the decision, but as a couple we are fine and still happy."

This case study is an illustration that there is still the expectation that if a woman is married, she must get permission from the husband to run in elections. In the event that he says no, then the likelihood is that she will not continue.

• *not her real name*

From a male perspective



Councillor Sifiso Motsa is in his first term in office as a Bucopho at the Ngwempisi *Inkhundla* from the Chiefdom of Lushikishini.

He says: "As a married man, culture gives me the right not to grant my wife permission to participate in elections or local government."
Motsa stressed that when a husband does not support a wife's decision to stand for public office, the community is likely to be reluctant to vote for her because of her own husband's unwillingness to support her.

"All the women in my council are married and by that we can assume that their husbands do support them because if they did not support them, then the women would not be in Council," Motsa added.

Some male councillors interviewed did however maintain that it is important to discuss this with their wives and in some cases this amounts to more than "merely informing" them.

A community member noted: "Women do not freely participate in meetings because they know that men are superiors and are not to say anything before them. Women have strong ideas and share them with their husbands at home and the points they raise in meetings are the ones that are from their wives' minds" (Lushikishiki focus group).

Institutional culture

Most governance institutions are by nature very masculine in the way that they function. Gender activists argue that having a critical mass of women helps to change the culture of institutions.

Inkundhlas with no women

Table 14 below shows that out of 12 municipal councils in Swaziland, one municipal council and out of 55 *Tinkhundlas*, seven councils do not have any women at all. This means that out of the 67 local authorities (a mix of urban and *Tinkhundlas*), eight or 12% have no women councillors.

Table 14: Councils with no women councillors

Type of Council	Local Authorities	Total	%
Town Council (12)	Hlathikhulu	1 (12)	8%
***Tinkhundla* (55)**	Ngudzeni		
	Matsanjeni		
	Somntongo		
	Siphofaneni		
	Matsanjeni North		
	Mpolonjeni		
	Mhlambanyatsi	7 (55)	13%
TOTAL (67)		**8 (67)**	**12%**

Chairperson Mxolisi Mkhatshwa of Mtsongwaneni *Inkhundla* posed a relevant question: "When an *Inkundhla* has no women, who then takes up women's issues? The answer is sadly - no one… There has been no women in this *Inkundhla* and it does not look like it is ever going to happen. This is the situation despite the fact that women do run for elections. Part of the challenge is the fact that this is a rural area and so the challenges around gender issues are greater. As it is, men are already planning ahead for the 2013 elections" (Mxolisi Mkhatshwa, 29 January 2009).

Lack of support from women

The qualitative interviews and focus groups repeatedly raised the issue of women not supporting each other. The reasons are steeped in the patriarchal and cultural system that oppresses them.

Former Deputy Mayor Khanyisile Mamba from Manzini City Countil noted: "Women seldom support women candidates. Women tend to rather vote more for men than for women, because if women were voting each other, women would be leading everywhere, but this is not the case because women do not vote for each other. Even in the last elections, when you looked at the lines of people waiting to vote, it was mostly women, but at the end, men won. Women also say that another reason they do not vote for women is that once these women in are in positions, they start to look down upon other women in communities. (Deputy-Mayor Mamba, personal interview, 4 December 2008).

Male and female councillors and community members who participated in the focus groups argued that women were less likely to support each other than men. Reasons cited ranged from women not trusting one another; to women being jealous of other women in leadership and women not voting for women because they do not offer bribes because of limited resources. Others said that women become proud and "full of themselves" once in positions of power and they look down on other women.

This is an oversimplification of a complex issue. The tendency for any oppressed group of persons to internalise their own oppression is a common phenomenon. As a study on women in Zimbabwe observes, "Ironically, society has made women the custodians of the very cultural values that lead to their oppression. In that respect it is tempting to conclude that politically, socially and culturally society

has turned women into their own oppressors as they too tend to see men as better leaders than women" (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). Some interviewees noted that women fail to support each other because it is against the Swazi culture to be led by women.

Box two: Lack of support from women makes councillor want to quit



Councillor Makhosazana Shongwe, a councillor in the Ngwenya Town Board is one of only two women in her council in the Hhohho Region, at the time of the interview in December 2008 she had only been in council for less than one term, after taking over leadership of the constituency from a male councillor.

Shongwe shared her experience as a woman candidate trying to gain entry into a constituency previously held by a man and revealed how a woman from the community expressed the view that they wanted to elect the previous male councillor because they were sceptical about her ability to handle herself once in Council: "They said that they feared that I might not be able to handle myself in Council as I might be overwhelmed or might not be able to represent the community issues as expected by the people".

She recalled how after hearing this from the community and after being elected that she was certain the some community members had begun to plot her demise by spreading lies about her, "I was not surprised at this because during the induction process we were told that there are some in communities who will not be happy with our success and will attempt to derail us from focusing on communities. We were also warned that some might even tell lies about us to the media in order to get us removed as this might ultimately lead to a vote of no confidence."

Feeling despondent by the underhanded actions of the community, she contemplated quitting local government. Fortunately there were some members of the community who did support her and asked her to reconsider her decision, which she did, "They told me that they wanted me to stay on to help develop the area and that after 5 years, they want to be able to see specific changes to the area which I would have brought to their area."

Campaigning challenges

Resistance from communities

Campaigning was highlighted as being particularly challenging for women for various reasons. Firstly, women candidates have to operate in a society with deeply rooted patriarchal belief systems as referred to above as well as having to contend with men who are unhappy about women's inclusion in governance structures. According to Bucopho Sifiso Motsa of

Ngwempisi *Inkhundla*, during one meeting in his chiefdom, community members stated that they did not want to be led by women and women present responded by asking "for how long will we as women remain without rights and opportunities to participate?" This comment is indicative of the sometimes hostile environment that women have to contend with while running for elections; an environment that is both challenging and demoralising to someone unfamiliar with political environments.

Lack of resources

The lack of resources was cited as a challenge for women more than men candidates. Election campaigning requires resources, such as for travel expenses and (as the researcher was informed) also for bribes. Lack of access to transport is a limiting factor because it leaves candidates with only one option: to walk within and between localities while campaigning. Aside from the cost, these options also have time implications. Walking is more time consuming and it also limits the number of people that a candidate can see per day; whereas driving or using public transport reduces travelling time and enables the candidate to see more people in a day.

During a meeting held as part of the *"Vote for Women"* Campaign early in September 2008, women who lost nominations shared how part of the reason they lost was due to their inability to compete with the financial muscle of other candidates.

Women generally have limited access to resources, let alone for campaigning purposes. Even when they have access to resources such as the joint resources of a household, the decision on the use of these resources usually resides with the men. In short women are often not able to decide independently to use the resources for election campaigns unlike their male counterparts who have control over their decisions.

Linked to financial resources is the issue of "bribes" during campaigning. This issue was also mentioned in the report by the Commonwealth Secretariat on the Swaziland elections. This practice hurts democracy and the pursuit for good governance by diverting the election campaign from being issue and content based to being 'highest bidder' driven. As Chairperson Mxolisi Mkhatshwa of Mtsongwaneni *Inkhundla* puts it: "The people on the campaign trail were not very interested in one's plans for the future, they wanted to be paid for casting their vote in your favour. Both men and women were paying for votes and were not focusing on service delivery issues. The women who were able to pay, got the votes. Candidates are judged



Women are often not able to make independent decisions *Photo: UNDP*

by their financial muscle and their education rather than their capabilities. Because of money politics, even the people who end up succeeding are not the most committed to transforming and developing the country."

Juggling time

Another challenge is linked to the roles ascribed to women and the domestic responsibilities linked to these roles. Women's multiple roles and tasks make it challenging, if not impossible to campaign after hours. For instance, it is known that women bear a disproportionate burden caring for children and performing household chores, whereas generally men do not participate in these after work responsibilities, resulting in more time for them to campaign in their constituencies.

Gender equality seen as women's issue

The *"Vote for Women"* campaign also revealed that campaigns to increase women's representation and advance gender equality are often seen as sole responsibility of women. The few men who participated in the *"Vote for Women"* campaign were ridiculed by other men as being puppets of the women; a comment which reveals that communities do not see gender as an issue to be addressed by men and women, but rather by women only, thus making the campaign environment that much more challenging.

The Commonwealth Secretariat noted that in the last election there were no detailed guidelines for conducting campaigns. The report recommends that in future there should be a set of guidelines for campaigning and issue of financing should be considered for the purposes of levelling the playing field (Commonwealth Secretariat, September 2008:18).

In addition, women need to be empowered regarding electioneering and campaigning in general in order to increase their own chances of success during elections. Chairperson Mxolisi Mkhatshwa pointed to the need for women to be more strategic in their campaigns: "The women who decided to stand for elections decided as part of their campaign strategy to target mainly women in communities more than men. For example, these women did not target the youth in their attempt to get elected." (Chairperson Mxolisi Mkhatshwa, 29 January 2009).

Electoral system

The representation of women can be enhanced or hindered through the choice of an electoral system. There are two main types of electoral system:

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

A key feature of the electoral process in Swaziland is the absence of political parties. Parliamentary representatives are elected from the constituencies or *Tinkhundla* through a three stage electoral process. There are 55 *Tinkhundlas* which are then further divided into a number of chiefdoms.

The first stage involves public nominations of candidates from the chiefdoms, usually between four

and ten in each. At the second stage each chiefdom chooses the candidate who will represent it at the *Tinkhundla* level. The elected candidate then competes in the secondary elections after they have been introduced to the constituents. The election process ends with the candidates who receive the most votes becoming the representative for the constituency in the National Assembly (Kurume 2003:21)

The election for rural local government takes places at the same time with the use of two ballot papers: one for the election of the MP and another for the election of the *Indvuna* or community headman. *Bucopho* are also elected every five years and they constitute the *Inkhundla* Committee.

The urban local government elections for councillors are conducted under the first-past-the-post system on the basis of the universal adult suffrage in a separate process to the rural local government. Urban local authorities are divided into wards, through which the voting of councillors takes place. The term of office for councillors is five years.

Mayors are elected from amongst the councillors on an annual basis. The ward system is used to consult residents on council matters. Decisions are made by full council based on recommendations made by the various committees established under the Urban Government Act. The town clerk is the chief advisor in each local authority council or town board.

Challenges of the System

The Commonwealth Expert Group (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2008) observed that the rules for the nominations seem to have been somewhat opaque and recommended that the Elections and Boundaries Commission address this. It also referred to some cases of bribery during the recent elections and attributed this to the system in Swaziland of allowing people to stand as individuals and not as political party representatives.

According to Phakathi, 'The odds are stacked against women because of the structure of Swaziland's unique *Tinkundhla* system of governance where political parties are banned and people are elected on individual merit. In theory, any citizen can stand for elections and campaign for a seat in Parliament but women lack the political clout, financial means, understanding of the system and, crucially, the Chief's approval" (Phakathi, www.ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=44085, accessed 6 February 2009).

Mxolisi Mkhatshwa, Chairperson of Mtsongwaneni *Inkhundla* (interviewed 29 January 2009) notes that, "in order for more women to enter government, there needs to be more women appointed than elected as it is through appointments that women have a far greater chance of accessing government rather than competing with men. For instance, the work done by the women who ran against me was great, but the chances of them being elected still remained low."

Breaking barriers

Despite the challenges, women continue to seek access to local government and other decision-making structures. The low numbers make successful entry by other women that much more significant. Their success is achieved against the backdrop of the many obstacles that they need to overcome. The fact that some communities are beginning to give women candidates two terms in office bodes well for the national and civil society led efforts to improve gender representation.

Box three: Climbing higher

Khanyisile Mamba, former Deputy Mayor of Manzini City Council is the only female Deputy Mayor in Swaziland, a position she ascended to after only one term in council. What's more is that she has been the only woman in council until the recent elections when another woman was elected, making them two.

Mamba is a woman who has more than made her mark in the Council, according to the Mayor of Manzini City Council Owen Nxumalo. He adds that he has been consciously creating more space for her to learn and take on greater responsibilities within Council so she can develop and gain more confidence saying that his own wish is to be succeeded as Mayor by a woman at the end of his tenure.

Mamba has grown so much in her current position that she has already set her sights standing for a parliamentary seat. Not one to be held down, she plans on standing in the 2013 elections despite having tried and been unsuccessful in the 2008 elections. She explains the outcome in this way, "I would have won had women voted for me as they are the majority. This shows that women still do not support each other. Even in Parliament, there should be more women than men. I think there were four or five women who were elected and the required number was about 13 and because those elected were so few, the rest of the women in Parliament were appointed by the King."

But even though she did not win this time around, she is keen to try again in 2013. If she is again unsuccessful, she has committed herself to becoming the first woman Mayor of the Manzini City Council in 2013.

Strategies for change

There is never a shortage of reasons why women can not 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% representation of women in local government, Lesotho (58%), Mozambique (29%), South Africa (40%), Tanzania (34%) and Namibia (42%), have some form of quota.



Climbing higher *Photo: UNDP*

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 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.

Box four: 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 they instituted a 30 percent quota for women through the Local Government Amendment Act of 2004 being the first country in Africa to reserve constituencies for women. Every third constituency was set aside for women and these constituencies will rotate over three successive elections after which the quota system will be reviewed.

But, this process was not without hiccups because 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 choice had been violated by the reservation of constituencies for women only.

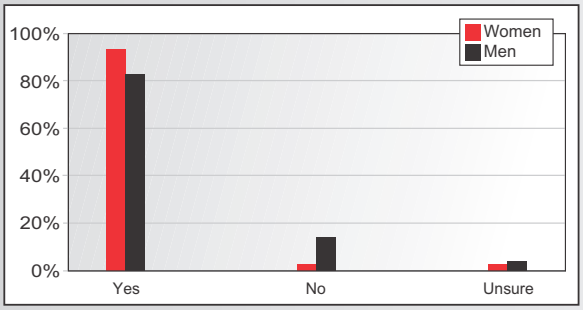
The Lesotho Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal to have the 30 percent reservation for women declared unconstitutional upholding the High Court ruling that the rotating quota of electoral divisions reserved for women was reasonably justifiable in Lesotho's circumstances. This landmark judgement is significant for the SADC region as it recognises the importance of affirmative action principals in increasing women's representation in decision-making and meeting the targets set and agreed by Heads of State.

Despite provisions in the Swaziland Constitution for quotas at the national level, referred to in the previous chapter, these provisions have not been implemented and thus women remain under represented and to date no similar measures have been proposed for local government this has not shifted the representation of women in any significant way. If the Swaziland government were serious about achieving parity in decision making structure they might consider following the Lesotho example of setting aside every third constituency for women and that these constituencies rotate over three successive elections and then review this system thereafter.

Quotas - the view from the ground

Interviews with Councillors reflected a high degree of support for quotas in Swaziland, including among men. These results show that there is growing awareness of the importance of getting more women into decision making structures in Swaziland lest the country be left behind by its SADC partners.

What the councillors said about quotas



Overall 89% of the councillors interviewed endorsed the use of quotas for boosting women's participation in local government with 10% more women (93%) than men (83%) agreeing with the statement.

Interestingly these figures are higher than those in the previous *At the Coalface* study which found that on average 81% (87% women and 69% men) of those interviewed supported some form of quota. They also concur with the other countries which found that more women support affirmative action compared to men.

Focus group discussions with women and men constituents as well as civil society representatives yielded interesting opinions. Comments included:

- "We had hoped that the 30% of women in leadership and decision-making would be covered; it is good to have such a percentage because people are not the same some can talk about women issues. When women are more there are more women issues to be attended to but at the same time there are those women who are nominated by the King and those do not care." (Manzini North focus group)
- "I am for the idea of 50/50 because men and women work well together to produce good results." (Lushikishiki focus group)
- "50/50 ratio is important because if men were to be alone in these positions they would develop men's issues only. Take for instance, men have a lot of interest in farming while women needed adequate water supply for their daily chores, so if there are men alone in the positions who would raise the issue of water because all the men would be concerned about farming." (Mgazini focus group)
- "Women should not be sidelined. In some chiefdoms there are women in the inner council but in other areas there are not, meaning that something was still lacking in awareness on the importance of women." (Velezizweni focus group)
- "In the past there was 18% involvement of women in local government and now about 27% of women are in local government, in near future I hope that the 50/50 ratio would be achieved. I think there must be education on the importance of both men and women working together so that by 2013 the 50/50 would be achieved." (Velezizweni focus group)

Others said that everyone should compete on merit and that only capable people should be appointed:

- "It is important to elect eligible... instead of being told about the percentage of men and women to be met. Capable people should be elected for such positions. (eNtandweni focus group)
- "I am against the 50/50 ratio because it sounds like a command, but capable people should be elected for leadership positions. Further they are compelled to 50/50 because America rules them." (Veleziweni focus group)
- "Capable individuals should be elected". (Nkungu focus group)

Table 15: Pros and Cons of quotas

For quotas	Against quotas
• Quotas for women do not discriminate, but compensate for actual barriers that prevent women from their fair share of the political seats • Quotas imply that there are several women together in a committee or assembly, thus minimizing the stress often experienced by the token women; • Women have the right to equal participation; • Women's experiences are needed in political life; • Election is about representation, not educational qualifications; • Women are just as qualified as men, but women's qualifications are downgraded and minimized in a male dominated political system; • It is in fact the political parties that control the nominations, not primarily the voters who decide who gets elected; • Introducing quotas may cause conflicts, but only temporarily.	• Quotas are against the principle of equal opportunity for all, since women are given preference; • Quotas are undemocratic, because voters should be able to decide who is elected; • Quotas imply that politicians are elected because of their gender, not because of their qualifications, and that more qualified candidates are pushed aside; • Many women do not want to get elected just because they are women; (women in politics • Quotas promote access by those who are incompetent • Quotas and competency are mutually exclusive; if you are in through quotas, you are probably not competent.

Table 15 above highlights the pros and cons of quotas for women in decision-making. Birgitta Dahl, former Speaker of parliament in Sweden, makes the point that quotas are but one of the mechanisms that can be used to advance gender representation,

> "One cannot deal with the problem of female representation by a quota system alone. Political parties, the educational system, NGOs, trade unions, churches all must take responsibility within their own organizations to systematically promote women's participation, from the bottom up. This will take time. It will not happen overnight, or in one year or five years; it will take one or two generations to realize significant change. This is what we are working on in Sweden. We did not start with a quota system. First we laid the groundwork to facilitate women's entry into politics. We prepared the women to ensure they were competent to enter the field; and we prepared the system, which made it a little less shameful for men to step aside. Then we used quotas as an instrument in segments and institutions where we needed a breakthrough" (Women in Politics: Beyond Numbers, 2005:143).

Political education

A key component of any election process is the political and voter education of the electorate. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (2008) the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) has the primary responsibility of facilitating civic or voter education. However, on a national perspective, very little or no voter sensitisation or civic education

was implemented. According to the Commonwealth Observer Team, the electorate was ignorant of most of the processes of the elections as observed during the last elections in Swaziland (2008). The report further recommends that people must be educated long before the elections so that when elections come, the education campaign is already entrenched.

But Taylor (2000: 108) argues that despite political education being critical, it does not necessarily imply that gender equality will be included. "There continues to be an absence of educational and awareness-raising programmes that address gender equality in political and public life, and that build consciousness among women that they can exercise considerable political power as a major political constituency" (Taylor, 2000:108).

In Swaziland, there was the *"Vote for Women"* campaign which was intended to encourage more communities to vote for women candidates during the recent 2008 elections. Unfortunately, the campaign started very late which has been given as the explanation for its limited impact.

Box five: *Vote for a Woman* campaign - Some challenges and lessons learned

The Ministry of Home Affairs' Gender Unit initiated the *Vote for a Woman* campaign with the aim of engaging with communities about gender issues, women's rights, elections, the Constitution and women's empowerment. The campaign, which ran over a period of 15 days, involved 49 campaigners, including both women and men and targeted all of the regions in Swaziland.

The Co-ordinating Assembly of Non-governmental Organisations (CANGO) and the Alliance of Mayors' Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level (AMICAALL) stress that in Swaziland there is need to do more work on conscientising the public about elections, and the need to participate as citizens. There is agreement that voter education is critical, especially because of the general apathy in Swaziland when it comes to elections. There is very poor knowledge about the election requirement and the election process in general.

CANGO also made the point that there is a need in Swaziland to conscientise Swazi citizens about the role of local government and gender. AMICAALL said that civic education campaigns should not be restricted to elections.

The researchers doing the field work in country observed that many of the people interviewed did not know much about gender initiatives, and the link between gender and democracy.

Members of the Velezizweni focus group said that people misinterpret the term gender and that communities need to be educated on what this term actually means. A male participant added that the misconception arises from the lack of information on women's rights and instruments such as the Beijing Platform for Action.

Participants of the Oshoek focus group said that Swazi people need education on their rights. For the Khabonina focus group there is not enough education on women's political participation and how the *Tinkhundla* system operates.

Some community members stressed that bringing women into governance should not lower standards. Traditional chiefs had the harshest words of criticism for the campaign. Chiefs from the eastern Shiselweni region complained that the campaign gave women an unfair advantage. Chief Dambuza Lukhele argued to the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) that elections should be based on individual merit and not on group status. "This campaign is biased, emotional and provocative, and unhealthy for a country such as Swaziland. What if other disadvantaged groups come up and also do their own campaigns?" Other comments on the campaign included:

- The focus on women through such campaigns as the *Vote for Women* campaign can be problematic for example during the campaign, men who were running for elections used the campaign to discredit women and to discourage men from voting for women. Men perceived this campaign as threat to them. (Chairperson Mxolisi Mkhatshwa)
- Some men said that they would not vote for women because of the Vote for Women campaign. They were intent on sabotaging this campaign and of making it fail (Mayor Sthembisile Mazibuko).
- The Vote for Women Campaign did not succeed that much in getting more women elected, but it did help raise more awareness (Wilkinson, 2008 /http://blog.sagred_interest.com/?p=48)

Some of the 33 women candidates reported receiving telephone threats from anonymous men who told them to desist from running, according Lomcebo Dlamini, coordinator of the rights group Women and Law in Southern Africa – Swaziland (WLSA) (Phakathi, accessed 6 February 2009, www.ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=44085)

Conclusions

Councillors interviewed believe that there is a correlation between gender and democracy. There is no legal impediment to women accessing local government, but their entry into this sphere is limited. Swaziland has some other interesting challenges, not the least being that political parties are banned. While political parties can potentially be a hindrance or barrier for women, they can also be a potential gateway for women's entry into politics in a society so deeply entrenched in custom and culture as Swaziland is. The backlash by men to the *Vote for Women* campaign is evidence of the cultural mountain that women have to overcome if they want to take their rightful place in decision making at the local level.

This chapter has also raised and attempted to address some questions on the issue of women supporting or not supporting one another. This is a very complex issue based on women's internalisation of their own oppression. Debates do, however, need to start to shift from access and quantity to how these numbers deliver change for ordinary women. It is essential to look beyond numbers to enhancing the quality and effectiveness of women politicians.



Swazi women need to be heard

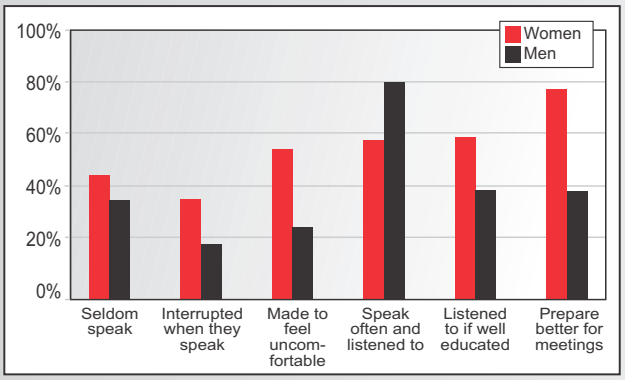
Photo: Trevor Davies

Participation

Once women have gained access to local government there are high expectations for them to perform effectively. Still in the minority in local decision-making structures in Swaziland, women experience difficulties in getting their voices heard.

This chapter attempts to measure the extent of women's participation in local government and the barriers to their effective participation. The chapter also 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.

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



When asked to assess the extent of women's participation in council meetings, far more women (44, 8%) than men (33, 3%) acknowledged that women seldom speak in meetings. Interestingly in the first phase of the *At the Coalface* study which was conducted in Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa, more men than women said that women seldom speak in meetings. This view by men was also expressed throughout the interviews where men often gave examples of women being vocal and very participatory and not at all silent, which is corroborated by the graph which shows that 80% of men believe that women speak often and that they are listened to.

More women (34, 5%) than men (16.7%) believe that when women speak, they are interrupted, although those who disagreed was much higher. This finding is in line with the finding of the first research.

Both studies have found that more women feel that they are listened to only of 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 hard to be recognised.

According to Chairperson Mxolisi Mkhatshwa (29 January 2009): "There was a time when women were not participating that actively in debates but now that has changed and women are now participating freely and confidently. The main reason, I suspect, for them not participating freely at first was because women were not familiar with this new institution as most of them are used to the private sphere of the home."

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 controlling for other factors women scored 24 points lower than men in a 100 point scale of political participation (1999:14). But evidence from the responses above show that women face an uphill battle when it comes to participating in council meetings. Ultimately following access into local government, it is women's performance in Council that gets observed, evaluated and assessed. This performance for women begins in the Council meetings that are mandatory for all councillors.

In Swaziland, researchers observed three council meetings. The minimum duration of these meetings was an hour and a half, with some finishing later in the night. Table 16 is a summary of the women's representation and participation in the council meetings.

Table 16: Women's participation in council meetings

Council	Total councillors	Women	% women in meeting	Mayor/ Chair	Who speaks	
					Men	Women
					DM	DM
Manzini	12	3	25%	W	29%	71%
Mbabane	12	2	17%	M	80%	20%
Pigg's Peak	7	2	29%	M	100%	0%
TOTAL	**31**	**7**	**22,5%**		**64%**	**36%**

The table shows that on average women constituted 22.5% of those present and participated 36% of the time. But Pigg's Peak, the council with the highest representation of women, had the lowest and in fact no participation by women. Women participated most in Manzini, which had a woman chairperson. In Mbabane where there was a male chair, women participated in almost equal proportion to their representation.

In Mbabane the male Mayor was most vocal. But a lot of the issues he raised were of specific interest to women's quality of life in the city: for instance issues around public transport, buses and taxis, uncollected refuse bins, the unhygienic state of public toilets and informal trading business.

This shows that gender should not be treated as the sole domain of women and that men can champion gender in the Council's agenda.

Women in leadership

Table 17 shows that women make up a mere 7% of those in the highest decision making positions in council. This includes two of 12 (17%) Mayors, one of 12 (8%) Deputy Mayors and two of 55 (4%) *Indvunas* being women.

Table 17: Women in decision-making structures in local government

Position in local government	Total	Number of women	% women	Name of Council/ *Inkundhla*
Mayors	12	2	17%	Mankayane Town Board Vuvulane Town Board
Deputy Mayor		1	8%	Manzini City Municipality
Chairpersons/*Indvuna*	55	2	4%	KwaLuseni *Inkhundla* Hlane *Inkhundla*
TOTAL	**67**	**5**	**7%**	

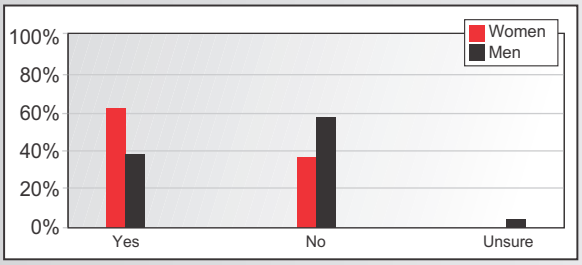
Only four out of the 12 (33%) Councils in urban local government have women CEOs. These four Councils are Manzini City Council, Pigg's Peak, Ngwenya and Matsapa Town Boards. This number is considerably higher than the figures for women in political decision-making.

But the appointment of women as CEOs comes with its own challenges. The Mayor of Manzini City Council, Owen Nxumalo, said that the appointment of a woman CEO met with backlash from the community. "Their main objection to the appointment was based on the notions of culture that women cannot be in leadership positions. "Uto kusithsela ini?" ("what will she teach us?"). The electorate is the group that is resisting change as they do not believe that women can lead." In terms of the *Tinkhundla* system, the *Indvunas* in each of the *Inkhundlas* operate as the chief operating officers. They are almost all men.

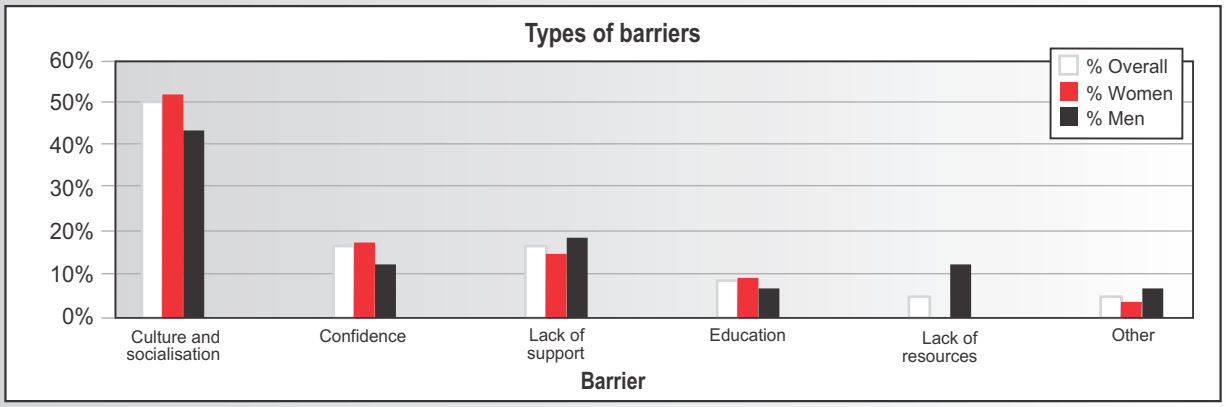
Barriers to participation

Interviews with councillors and focus groups, both women and men, highlighted major challenges that women face once they enter local government. There are high expectations for women who enter this sphere of decision- making which is still largely patriarchal in nature. They often lack confidence and have limited access to support and additional resources.

What the councillors said about barriers to participation



The councillors interviewed expressed different views when asked about the existence of barriers to women's participation to local government. Overall just over half of the respondents (53%) agreed that there are indeed barriers that prevent women from participating effectively in local government. However, far more women (65,5%) agreed with this statement compared to men (37,5%). This figure is over higher than the first *At the Coalface* study which found that overall in the four case study countries (Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa).



With regard to the types of barriers, it is not surprising that participants rated culture and socialisation as the biggest overall barrier, with half of the respondents (52,9% women and 43,8% men) believing this to be a barrier for women.

Confidence and lack of support rated second overall with 16% of respondents agreeing in both cases that these were barriers. There was however a difference in the views of women and men with women (17,6%) citing lack of confidence as the second biggest barrier and men (18,8%) citing lack of support as their second biggest barrier.

Ideological barriers

Culture and socialisation

In Swaziland the dominant mindset is unwavering in its belief that 'a woman's place is in the kitchen and not in politics'. This justifies men's and communities' undervaluing of women's participation in spheres of governance. As a result, women begin to doubt themselves and their ability to succeed in any decision-making structures. Society sees women as minors and the resulting view is that they are unable to make any constructive contribution to the development of society as communities lack faith in their abilities and competencies.



Challenging stereotypes: A Swazi women in battle dress *Photo: UNDP*

Bucopho Bongani Motsa noted that: "Some people do not believe that a woman can be a leader. My view is that women must be given opportunities to show their leadership skills. I think it is the mindset and our culture, which says that a woman's place is in the kitchen. Yet some of them can be as good as the men, if not better than men. So we have to change this mindset through civic education"

Lack of confidence

Lack of confidence, rated as the second biggest barrier for women (third for men) emanates from other ideological barriers such as custom and culture mentioned above, from the messaging that women have received throughout their lives that they worthless and subservient or about their abilities or lack of abilities. It is therefore no surprise that they start to internalise these views as they are bombarded with negative messages as girl children right up until and during adulthood. These messages are reinforced through various platforms, culture, media, education, religion amongst others. These factors, linked as well to lack of education and exposure, have resulted in

women lacking confidence and believing in themselves.

A female participant in the Ngwenya Village focus group noted: "We are raised in such a way that men are superior so a woman should shut up when a man speaks and must not be against his idea. Therefore, it means that we should start teaching our children back home that they should stand for themselves and voice out their concerns. To sum up, even today she is afraid to raise issues in front of men simply because of the way she was raised up. Our upbringing is the result of the way things are today."

Institutional barriers

Lack of support

Although councillors are offered an induction course this is once off. There are no formal structures for support or mentoring. Those interviewed all referred to individuals assisting them when requested and required, but the provision of support to councillors, and in particular women has not been institutionalised and takes place on an ad hoc basis.

Complaints about negative experiences in council as mentioned earlier are also dealt with on an ad hoc basis and decisions are the prerogative of the Mayor or Chairperson. It is encouraging to note that the one way some women councillors have responded to this lack of support structures is through supporting each other as women.

Lack of familiarity with the institution

Institutions often come with intricate and complex institutional arrangements. If one is unfamiliar with these arrangements, they are unlikely to participate effectively. Because institutions of governance have been dominated by men they have taken on a masculine character. Secondly, there are dominant values of the institution of governance and these dominant values assume that power is masculine.

The focus on institutions is important because even those institutions created to advance transformation, can undermine women's cause which they are meant to address due to their internal structural dynamics and in this way might even reinforce the very practices of gender injustice they seek to change. This can be attributed to power dynamics within these institutions and so questions regarding who in the institution exercises power and how this power is exercised are particularly relevant in unpacking some of these institutional challenges.

These masculine arrangements and values can manifest themselves in terms of how debate is conducted, the dress code etc. The language used is IsiSwati but council documents are in English. Women who have strong opinions and who articulate these invite disapproval from their male counterparts. As one councillor pointed out, "Having very strong positions on issues is not always welcomed and encouraged by colleagues in Council."

The meeting times for Council is another barrier, as these are often after hours. The main reason given by the councillors is that have day jobs and so meetings can only be held after hours. A late start for a meeting does not factor in that many women with and in families take on domestic responsibilities after hours – as they start to prepare for the family supper, help children with school work, get clothes and uniform ready (wash or iron) for the husband/partner or children in preparation for the following work or school day.

A final institutional barrier is the perception that appointed councillors are "second class". They are perceived to have less authority and are not necessarily supported by a constituency. This divide is used to

delegitimise any contribution that they might make and this impacts on women as the appointments by the King is to affect gender representation.

Lack of financial resources

A key cause for women's struggle to access local government is their limited access to and control over financial resources. Taylor (2000:107) makes the point that "the exorbitant financial cost of running for public office are a major barrier to the political participation of women, and their marginalised sector". Because of limited financial resources, it makes it hard for women who might want to run for elections to pursue this course.

Several councillors mentioned this as a major barrier for women in Swaziland. According to Chairperson Mxolisi Mkhatshwa, "The reason for women not participating in greater numbers is that they are poor and basically lack financial resources" (interviewed 29 January 2009). Most women do not have cars. This gives men more options in terms of when and where to campaign, whereas having no or limited transport impedes the reach of candidates who rely on public transport.

As Councillor Makhosazana Shongwe, a female councillor of the Ngwenya Town Board points out, limited access to transport is also a security issue. She shared with researchers how she had to walk to many of the households as she campaigned in her locality: "The houses are far apart, I often had to walk long distances in order to get to people's homes. I also timed my visits so that I would catch those who work in town on their return from work." Her strategy was to leave her house at about 4 pm in order to meet with those returning from work by about 18:15. She adds that she was careful not to be out too late at night because she was alone and, while her area is relatively safer than other areas there is always the risk of being raped because gender based violence in Swaziland is a problem.

According to a number of councillors interviewed for this research, 'bribing' or 'buying votes' seems to be a common occurrence. This puts women on the back foot because they do not have the same financial muscle as men. This 'buying of votes' also challenges the view that men are elected purely on merit and their extensive knowledge and experience, and instead implies that some wins are less about issues and competency and more about access to financial resources and the candidate's financial clout.

Social contradictions

Women in the home are expected not to speak and yet in the community or in Council they are expected to speak and to be vocal, defend positions and make arguments.

In the home men are told they are the 'head of the household' over women and yet they are expected to follow women leaders in local government. Thus, as men do not see themselves as equal to women, they are not able to be completely supportive of women once they are decision-makers in local government.

Double standards apply to women, for example, on the campaign trail, women were often asked – "what will you do for us?" The question in regard to women implies that women can and must only be elected into decision-making structures if they guarantee to bring something tangible and radically different to what men bring; that there must be clear expected outcomes to women's participation.

The challenge with this framing of women's role in governance and decision-making structures places the burden on the women to deliver on these expectations or fail the test and subsequently be 'voted out' of the institution.

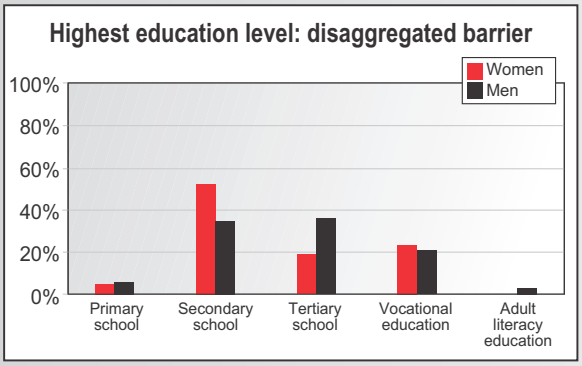
Personal barriers

Education

Education was seen as the fourth biggest barrier by councillors interviewed for the research with 8% of them believing that lack of education can be an obstacle to effective participation. More women (8.8%) than men (6.3%) thought this to be the case.

According to Councillor Mfanesikile Mashaba Siteki Town Council having an education makes a difference "because if you are not educated, they do not take you seriously. Education is important because then men will tend to listen to you, whereas if you are not educated they will look down on you."

What the councillors said about education levels



The study revealed that the majority of women (51,7%) have a secondary education and the majority of men (33,3%) have secondary education but almost twice as many men (33%) have tertiary education compared to women (17.2%.)

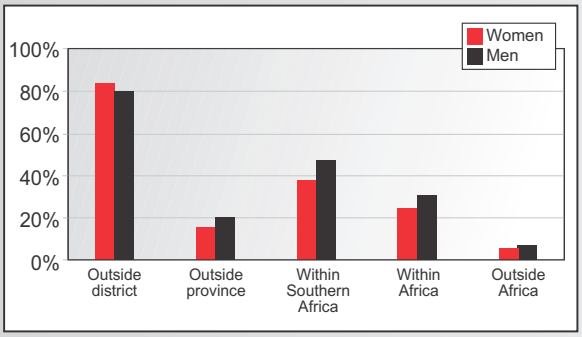
Councillors interviewed said that educated women are much more prepared to challenge men and their decisions than women who do not have high levels of education. Education is also one of the factors that can help build the confidence of a councillor.

But this view has been challenged by some respondents. A female participant from the Ngwenya Village focus group pointed out that previously her constituency was represented by a woman with no formal education who had been active; well known and very effective.

Lack of exposure

Women often begin at a disadvantage because they have had less exposure to politics broadly and decision-making in particular. One of the indicators of exposure is the amount of travel that women and men councillors have undertaken.

What the councillors said about travel and exposure



Asked about their travel the research found that more women (86,2%) have travelled outside of their district compared to 79,2 of men have travelled into other districts. But with regard to travel in the region, within Southern Africa, within Africa and outside Africa, the findings show that men have had greater exposure in all of these areas. Clearly men can be said to have travelled further than women. These trips are crucial in that they help build the knowledge of the person, provide networking opportunities and sharing of lessons broadly across different countries and practitioners in local government.

Enabling factors

In spite of the many barriers mentioned above, the research yielded examples of women who are managing to overcome some of these obstacles. Below are examples of how disabling factors can be turned into enabling agents that can enhance women's ability to participate effectively.

Support

A critical factor in advancing women in politics and decision-making is support. This support can come from various quarters, family, communities and peers to mention a few. Support from other women has often been found to be lacking and while women are often accused of not supporting one another, it is encouraging to note that the research found examples of this peer support and shows what an important enabling factor it is.



Bucopho Khonelia Zwane is a mentor and role model to her community- both men and women, but she highlights the importance of learning from others those things that she might not know. This approach is one that sees relationship building as mutually beneficial and as another avenue for learning.

A *Bucopho* in the Ngwempisi *Inkhundla*, she is in her second term in office. While there are now three women in her *Inkhundla* previously she was the only one and there were times when she needed support.

During her first term she came across an interesting project in another *Inkhundla* and she decided that she was going to try and bring it to Ngwempisi. "I travelled to the Mahlangatsha *Inkhundla* to get help and get information and learn." She recalls how she contacted one of the woman *Bucopho* who had shared the

project with her: "I called her and went to see her, even though I did not know her. She encouraged me to come and at the end, I even ended up sleeping at her house."

While she is not afraid to ask for help she also provides a lot of support for the councillors in her *Inkundhla*. She says that there are many new councillors and most of them come to her to ask for help or to ask for guidance regarding the work. "We work really well together and are very supportive of each other. As someone who has been in Council before, they see me as someone who knows more about Council business than them because of my first term experience, they see me as *'inkabi endala esaziyo'* (as the one who knows more than they do)."

She believes that it is very important for women to support one another and that learning from others is a very important factor that enables them to participate effectively.

This is just one example of the kinds of relationships and support structures that can begin to form between councillors and *Bucopho* in Councils. When councillors are not territorial but rather share information with the view to replicating good processes and projects it bodes well for 'cross pollination' of ideas and information sharing that will ultimately benefit the communities, which is the real purpose of councillors.

Internal support and mentoring

Former Deputy Mayor Khanyisile Mamba Manzini City Council is the only female Deputy Mayor in a local government Council in Swaziland. She has ambitions to run for national elections during the 2013 elections and if not able to, to become the first Mayor of the Manzini City Municipality. Mamba attributes part of her success in Council to the support she has received from the current Mayor, Owen Nxumalo, "Men were very supportive. The Mayor was also very supportive. We would share ideas and talk about issues. I have not had any negative experiences of not being supported in Council."

Nxumalo said that one of the strategies that he would use to boost her confidence was to encourage Mamba to chair more meetings, "In some cases, I have asked her (Deputy Mayor Khanyisile Mamba) to chair some of our constituency meetings such as the one with the ratepayers and I would go with her but she would be the one chairing the meeting. My purpose for going is to observe and monitor her performance and to provide her with feedback following the meeting. My role in such meetings is merely to provide guidance to her, if she needs it"

This working relationship between Deputy Mayor Khanyisile Mamba and Mayor Owen Nxumalo seems to have contributed to the high levels of confidence that the Deputy Mayor has. In the September 2008 elections, she attempted to become a Member of Parliament but was unsuccessful. But its her confidence and belief in her own abilities that make her say that 'she will run for Parliament again in 2013' and if she again does not win, then she will become Manzini City Council's first woman Mayor.

Background and grounding in the community

In Swaziland women's access to the sphere of local government is greatly enhanced when these women are active within their communities. According to *Bucopho* Zwane Ngwempisi *Inkhundla*, "Working in

the community enhances the chances of being elected into local government. I think my community involvement was the reason I got elected." She adds that women have a strong history of being active in the community, more so than men and this is what the community notices.

Women councillors profiled all attributed their success to their work in the community which meant that they were "already known to their main and home constituencies through this work".

More than one female Councillor or *Bucopho* shared their experience of having been either involved as a Rural Health Motivator, a caregiver or in one or other forum in the community. Although all of the councillors talked about some element of community involvement being the link between and reason for the community being comfortable to nominate them to stand for elections and their subsequent success in these elections, it was more women than men who shared this. Most of the women councillors and *uBucopho* shared how their own nomination process and election success was a result of the work they were doing in the community:

- "The community was very supportive. They told me that they were going to vote for me because I have shown that I can work with people especially the elderly. They also said You have also shown respect to all in the community, without making any distinctions" (*Bucopho* Zodwa Mabuza, 4 December 2008).
- "The community could see that I work well with community people. I treat all those I work with, with respect. They have all seen my work and the women of the community in particular believed that I could do something for them" (*Bucopho* Nomsa Dlamini, 4 December 2008).
- "I was a rural health motivator - in this role I would help the elderly and children and just helping in the community. Because of my work, they decided to promote me into becoming an *uBucopho*" (*Bucopho* Khonelia Zwane, 5 December 2008).

Because of this high level of involvement in the community, communities seemed to use this as a basis upon which to select their leaders. This by no means only applies to women, but it is a significant issue precisely because a lot of the work that women do in communities often goes unpaid, is unrewarded and unacknowledged in general and so a support from community members can be said to be a sign of recognition for the work being done. While this is an important progression there is the danger that women will be kept in their stereotypical role as carers and that this will just become an extension of their reproductive roles in communities.

Community support based on delivery and good performance



Bucopho Zodwa Mabuza talks about the community support that she received when she was a *Bucopho*, saying that in the last term the community asked her to stand again so as to prepare her for a future position as an MP: "They said that they were happy with my work and were fearful of losing me."

She adds that it was the first time in history of the chiefdom and the *Inkundhla* for a person to come back for a second time. In both elections for the two terms, she came

first both terms. In the second election she won with 756 votes compared to the runner up who had only 104. She has ambitions of becoming an MP but while she is supported by her community she feels discouraged by the lack of support from the youth.

Experience and exposure

Previous work experience and exposure are other factors that greatly assist women when they enter local government structures and councils for the first time.



Nomsa Dlamini, *Bucopho* from the Nhlambeni Kashali *Inkhundla* is in her first term in office and had been part of this *Inkhundla* for three months at the time of the interview.

She says that having worked with men previously in the Community Policing Forum and the inner council where she was one of the only women among many men, she now feels freer and more able make her points in council.

As a street vendor she also gained experience working with people selling different food stuffs and being a member of ZC church has also given her opportunities to speak freely and get involved, "This has helped build up my confidence. I also feel that if I do not show confidence, then the issues that I raise will not be taken seriously."

Her experience working with communities is recognised as a great advantage by her colleagues, "When I do not say anything, my colleagues will ask me for my input and give me the platform as they say that I am used to working with communities and I need to share that."

Role models

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

Councillors interviewed said that one of the factors which might facilitate a change in the attitudes of communities towards women in decision-making is if they see existing women in decision making performing well and serving as examples for aspiring women politicians. The fact that there were a number of women interviewed who had been re-elected for a second term is testament to the fact hard work and commitment does pay off and in many cases councillors have gone on to become mayors and deputy mayors.

Capacity building

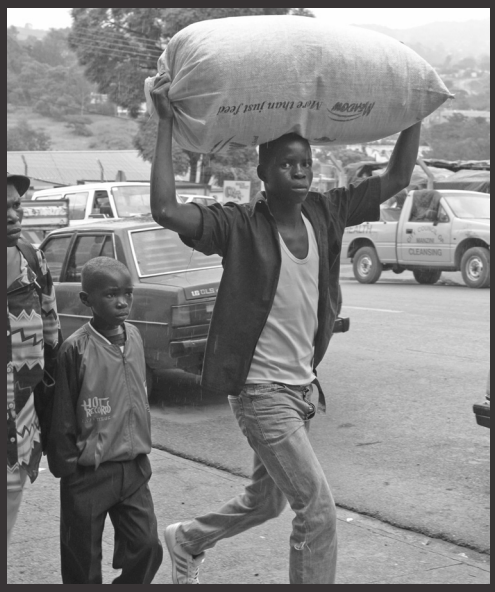
Training and capacity building, as long as it is targeted and relevant, can greatly enhance participation and performance of women councillors. Councillors spoke about the training they received from organisations such as CANGO, AMICAALL and the *'Vote for Women'* campaign and how this has helped build and improve their confidence levels and thus enable them to participate more freely in local government.

Conclusions

The previous chapter focussed on women's entry into the political arena and showed that without any mechanisms in place to facilitate women's entry they often face obstacles to just gain access to local government. But that is only the beginning of the process because it does not necessarily follow that that once in these institutions women's participation is automatic and there are in fact a range of factors that can hinder women from participating effectively These barriers can be divided into three main categories: institutional, ideological and personal.

The roles that women perform in local government will be enhanced if they feel enabled to participate freely. Creating an enabling environment in which women feel empowered to contribute in a meaningful way is crucial to ensure that they are able to add value to governance structures broadly and local government in particular. In the same way that there are factors that hinder women's effective participation, there are others that enable women's effective participation. Some of these are as follows: having the community support, exposure and community experience and support from both female and male leaders already in local government.





Gender benders in Swaziland

Photo: UNDP

Making a difference

Councillor Makhosazana Shongwe of Ngwenya Town Board is acutely aware that housing is a key concern of her constituents. "The community does not own the land it is currently occupying and people are prohibited from building brick houses," she said. Every year, during the rainy season, the houses leak, and people raise children in mud and stick houses. "This must change," the Councillor says.

"I raised the issue of the provision of brick houses with the CEO and the general lack of development in the area; the response was that the community, through the councillor should state their need as a first step. This will be the basis upon which the

Minister of Housing can be invited to respond to issues raised directly."



This response surprised Shongwe. She wondered why this engagement with the Minister of Local Government, councillors and communities had not happened sooner, during the terms of the previous councillors. It was also the first time that she learned that councillors and communities could make such requests to see the Minister of Local Government in order to present their case, "If I had known, then I would have made this request earlier, it is just that I did not know."

The letter requesting a meeting with the Minister of Local Government has now been sent with a request for a meeting. The aim of the meeting is to share with the Minister the community's challenges and problems as a result of living in mud and stick houses. "In winter, the houses leak and are generally unliveable and the government needs to be made aware of this."

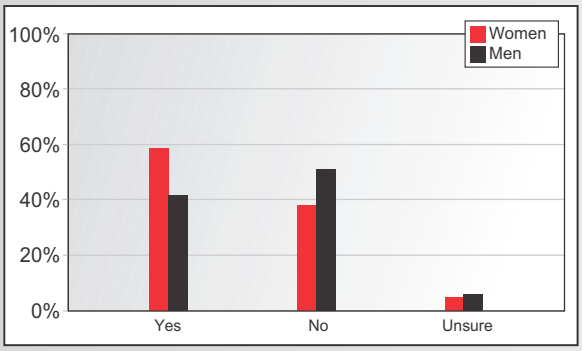
Once women have gained access to and are able to participate in structures of governance, do they make any difference to the lives of ordinary women in the ground? This is a difficult question to answer and interestingly it is never asked of men. One argument holds that it is unfair to expect women to necessarily care more about, or work harder for women. The other argument runs that in so far as women have different life experiences, it is reasonable to the expect that they should bring with them a different agenda and style, and that we should be able to measure what difference women make.

This chapter of the report grapples with the question of what women bring to decision-making. It also covers whether or not their presence makes a difference to the way in which men behave and conduct their business. The point of departure in this analysis is that ultimately the society we should work towards is one in which women and men participate equally and are equally concerned about all policy issues, from the "hard" financial and economic concerns generally associated with men to the "soft" community and welfare issues generally associated with women.

Interests and concerns

In the interviews, women in communities and women councillors said that women leaders are different from men.

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

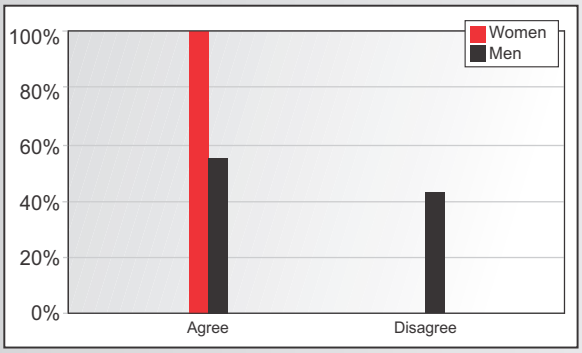


Councillors were asked if they thought that women in local government do in fact have different concerns and interests to men. More women (57,1%) than men (41,7%) agreed with this statement. This is slightly lower than the first *At the Coalface* study which found that 61% of women compared to only 39% of men agreed with the statement.

Sensitivity to local concerns

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

What the councillors said about sensitivity to local concerns



All of the women interviewed answered that women are more sensitive to local concerns than men. Men were a bit more divided on this, with just over half (54,2%) agreeing that women are more sensitive to local concerns and 45,8 % disagreeing with this.

This shows a higher degree of consensus on this issue among women and men than the first *At the Coalface* study which found that 81% women and 66% of men agreed with the statement.

Some of the councillors interviewed said the following when asked about sensitivity of women to local concerns:

- Issues like schools, soup kitchens, pre-schools, gogo centres, HIV and AIDS - these are all important issues to all of us as councillors. As someone elected by the people, my goal is to look out for communities.

As a female *Bucopho*, as women, we are the first to see the needs of the family. Men are often absent from the homes. Children also cal on the mother when they need something.

- People chose me based on my capabilities. As a rural health motivator I was involved in community associations.

The interviews with councillors and focus groups (in Ngwempisi, Manzini North, Hlane and Lamgabhi) revealed perceptions of qualitative differences in the way that women and men lead. Respondents said that women tend to bring to the local government sphere values and perspectives that enhance the democratic experience for the electorate. For example:

- A female participant of the Oshoek focus group said she could see the impact made by women appointed into positions of power. She gave the example of how a previous woman Minister of Health put the Mbabane Government hospital in good order and provided proper services to the people because she understood the plight of other women. Under a male minister before her, the respondent said that the hospital deteriorated to such an extent that people from around Mbabane had to travel to Manzini for medication.
- A female participant of the Lushikishiki focus group said that women politicians are able to pick up early warning signs and easily detect if something is wrong. She added that women are also good problem solvers; able to find solutions and respond appropriately.
- A male participant of the Mgazini focus group said that women understand family and local problems better than men. He added that women understand more acutely the effects of hunger and poverty and are better able to represent these issues.

Responsibility to women

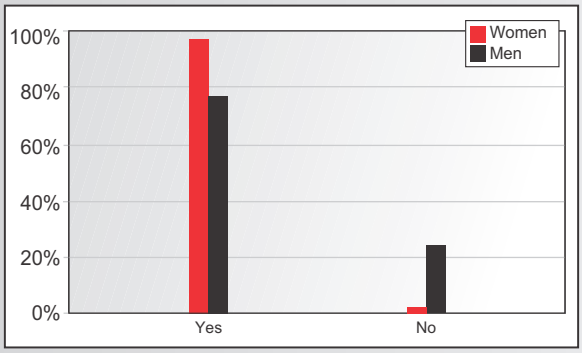
Do women have a responsibility to raise and represent women's issues? In an ideal world the answer should be, not necessarily, purely because elected candidates should, as a matter of course, be representing everybody's interests. But evidence shows that as long as gender disparities persist, it is natural 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 often happens when women get into positions of decision-making is that there is an expectation that they will take up women's issues. Is this a reasonable expectation?

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. Both women and men overwhelmingly agreed with the statement with 96.4% of the women holding this view compared to 73.9% of the men.

These findings correlate quite closely with the previous *At the Coalface* study which found that overall 83% of all councillors (86% women and 76% men) agreed that women have a responsibility to raise other women's concerns.



Similar to the first *At the Coalface* study, many of the women councillors interviewed said that one of the reasons that they stood to be councillors was because they saw women suffering and wanted to represent these women and become their "voice". Some comments from councillors in Swaziland include:

- Because women understand each other's problems, therefore women who are elected in local government have the role to represent others because they are in that position to represent women's problems.
- Because as fellow women we have been denied, so we need to advocate for our issues.
- Women in office should speak out for fellow women because some are afraid to speak out.
- Women in office must act as a voice for others who cannot speak out.
- Women have been disadvantaged, so women who are in elected office should take it upon themselves to speak for them.
- Because women have a low status in the community and don't have access to power, women in office can help to improve their status.
- Women have been oppressed for such a long time and they have been taken as second class citizens, and so there is a need to bring up these issues. Yes women in elected office therefore should raise these issues.



How familiar are men with women's concerns *Photo: UNDP*

These findings are also in line with global findings of 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).

Only 51,7% of the women agreed that men could indeed represent women, while a staggering 81,8% of men said that they could do this. Some of the reasons given as to why men could not represent women were:

- Most men raise issues of community needs, infrastructure, party affiliation. They hardly talk about women's issues e.g. abuse cases and gender equality, etc.
- Men may not be aware of all women's issues. Where there may be conflicts of interest the

women's issues may not be fairly represented.

- Because men do not know all the issues that affect women. Men do not know everything about women's issues and this necessitates that women highlight issues faced by other women.

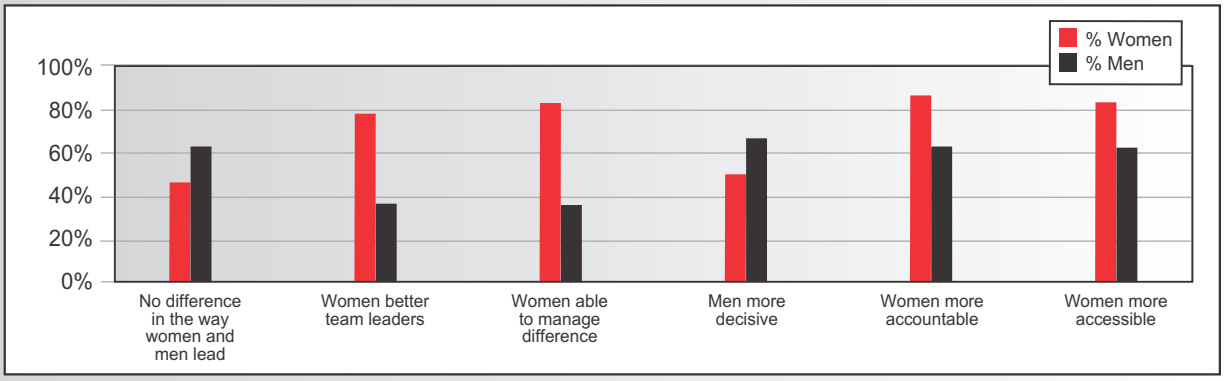
Leadership style

It is difficult to assess leadership style in this kind of research and evidence is based on opinion. For this study, 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 councillors said about leadership style

More men (62.5%) think that there is no difference in the way that women and men lead. An overwhelmingly number of women (79,3%) agreed that women are better team leaders compared to 37.5% of the men; this response showed the greatest difference in views between women and men along with the statement that women are better able to manage differences. Interestingly the closest correlation of views was that men are more decisive with 48% of women and 66.7% of men agreeing with the statement.

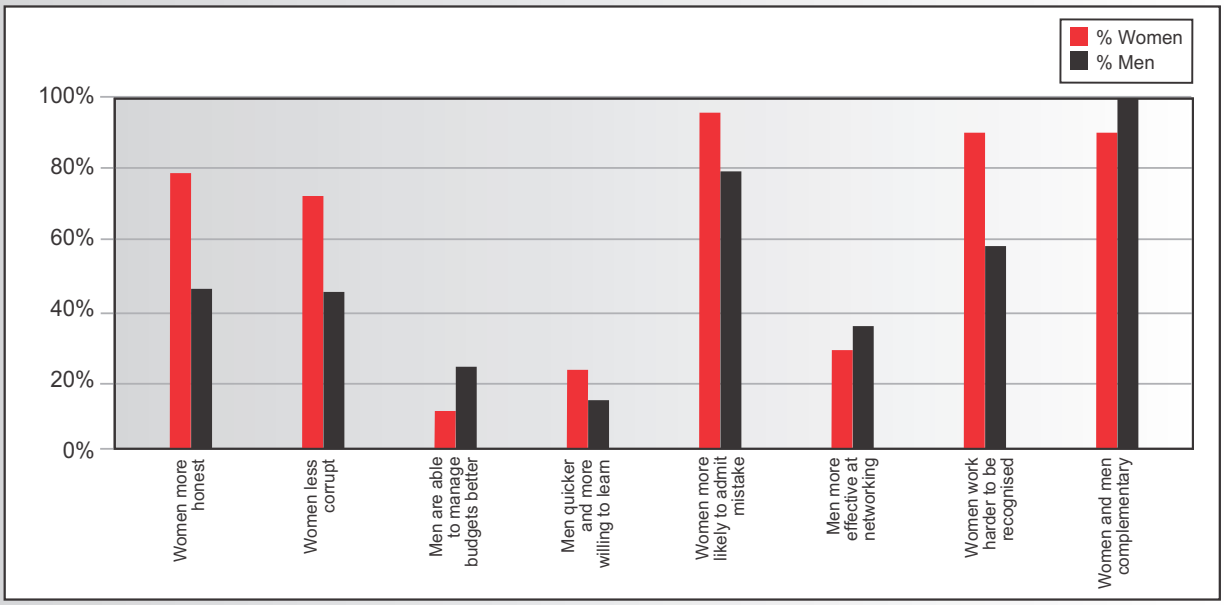


Performance

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 councillors said about women's and men's performance



The biggest overall point of agreement was that women and men have complementary strengths, all of which are important to decision-making followed by "women are more likely to admit that they made a mistake".

More men (25%) agreed that women are better able to manage budgets compared to only 10.3% of women. There was also little agreement with the statement that men are quicker and more willing to learn, showing that women are perceived as being willing and able to learn and develop their skills in these in all areas.

Impact

Throughout the research women were described as being courageous, hard workers, principled and critical of Council decisions. Asked whether women councillors make a difference, some community members said they could see changes in the development of the country, for example the provision of grants for the elderly, as a direct result of women's participation. Some also believe that women are more



accountable to their constituency and note that since women's involvement there have been more meetings and workshops. Male councillors said that having women made it easier to raise and discuss topics such as HIV and AIDS because women are more caring, supportive and responsive to their needs. Examples of comments from community members who participated in focus groups include:

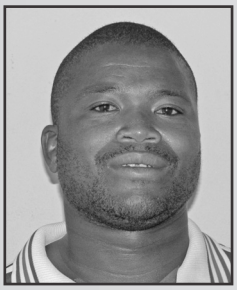
- I think that some female MPs deliver to their people, I would make an example of Pigg's Peak Member of Parliament Hlob'sile Ndlovu. You know when I heard that she was elected I was like that was the downfall of Pigg's Peak but she proved me wrong and developed the area such that she was re-elected to serve them for the current term" (Female participant in the Oshoek focus group.)
- We can see the difference made by women. The area is beginning to develop because their neighbours already have adequate water supply. Even though the development is slowly showing the way, the impact of women in parliament is the sign that they are doing a wonderful job. In the past, development skipped us in their area but now that there are women in local government they are no longer left behind (Female participant in the Lushikishiki focus group).

Respondents said that women are good listeners, and when people speak they are respectful instead of being confrontational. There is the view that councils are more effective now because they are able to share ideas and work out solutions that take into account both the views of men and women. This sharing leads to greater success in Council initiatives. Former Deputy Mayor Khanyisile Mamba Manzini City Council says: "I talk to the people and I ask them what their needs are and try to address these needs and help the orphans and the elderly. We sit for meetings in order to get their needs. In Mangwaneni, we meet monthly because there is a development project there."

The focus groups noted that before women joined councils, male councillors hardly ever called meetings until elections came around. A woman councillor said before her election, the male councillor in her locality did not engage with the community. This meant that as a community they felt like they did not have any avenue for sharing their ideas for the development of their locality or for expressing their expectations.

When asked about what as women they plan to do differently, several women councillors said that they plan to engage with the community to foster a meaningful relationships with the community.

Box six: Being led by a woman



Buchopho Bongani Motsa who is serving his first term in the Ngwempisi *Inkundhla* told researchers that prior to him joining local government he had a woman *Bucopho* in his locality who made a great impact.

According to him, this hard working councillor Lydia Maziya from Gazini Chiefdom was caring and consultative. She focused on orphans and vulnerable children as well as ensuring that her community had access to basic services. She scored highly with

the community when she engaged with the government to provide the area with electricity ensuring that all homes received electrification. She was also integral in ensuring that grazing land was fenced off.

Her consultative nature was evident in the community meetings that she called every two months and in which she tried to ensure that all groups and stakeholders were represented. In these meetings she created the space for all community members to speak and engage freely.

Sadly for the community she has not been returned to council as she chose to run as an MP and failed to get enough votes to become MP.

Attitudes of men

The information gleaned from the interviews and focus groups suggest that male councillors are largely supportive of their women counterparts, although this has not always been the case. As Bucopho George Maseko attests: "In the past, it was hard for men to accept being led by women. The main reason was based on culture. Culturally the leader can only be a man and not a woman and so women were not accepted at all. We did not accept that women too can be leaders."

Where male councillors have worked with women councillors they express progressive views. These are testimony to the fact that equal and constructive partnerships can be forged at the local level for the good of both women and men in communities.



Owen Nxumalo, current Mayor of Manzini City Council says that there has been progress over the past few years with the council going from no women to three out of 12 in the current term.

Nxumalo concedes that despite their dominance, men have not necessarily provided exemplary leadership. This observation has led to men and communities being more open to being led by women as men seem to have failed in their responsibility to deliver services to communities. "A lot of Swazis are beginning to recognise that women are very powerful and that women can do work sometimes better than men."

He adds that the *Vote for a Woman* campaign has benefitted women. "In the coming years, I am hoping for better, at least there must be 50/50. I am also looking forward to having a woman to be Mayor of Manzini. My deputy is a woman and I give her the opportunity to lead us. She is a strong woman."

The Deputy Mayor, Khanyisile Mamba, had the following to say: "Men were very supportive of me. The current Mayor is very supportive and we get along; we often share ideas with one another. We talk about issues before attending meetings. Even when I have moved motions, they support me."



Councillor Nomsa Dlamini said that she had not even considered running for elections. The chairman of the police in the area encouraged her to stand based on her work in the Community Police Forum (CPF). "Our police chairman in the area is the one who suggested that I stand for elections. We worked together in the CPF and he said his request was based on the work they had seen from me."



Bucopho **Mlondi Dlamini** from Manzana is supportive of women in decision-making and local government in particular. Dlamini became a gender activist after he attended a gender workshop facilitated by Gender Links where his conscientisation on gender issues began.

"I support women to participate in local government because of their passion because they want to see their communities being developed; unlike men who only want to drive their political agendas". He has also taken his work on gender to commu-nities, individual households and to churches in an attempt to preach the gospel of gender equality. He sees himself as someone who is enabling more women to participate in local government and in general.

Dlamini participated in the *"Vote for a Woman"* Campaign, leading up to the September 2008 elections. He recalls that before the campaign, there was very little activity and excitement about the elections. "Women knew their place; when elections came, all they needed to do was to go and vote for men." In some cases women did not exercise their rights and were even being told who to vote for.

He applauds the idea of the campaign because prior to this there were no other initiatives to sensitise women and educate them about elections, gender issues and the Constitution. According to Dlamini the campaign achieved some positive results because a lot of women decided to stand for elections, with the result that Swaziland now has more female *Bucopho*, whereas before there were none.

The campaign revealed the extent to which women felt disconnected and uninformed about some of these statutes intended to benefit them, such as the Constitutional provisions on gender equality.

Dlamini points to some of the challenges during the campaign period, including:

- The campaign started too late and needs in future to run over a longer time frame.
- The campaign would have benefitted from the involvement of more men as they would have engaged directly with men in communities.
- Material (T-shirts and posters) were limited.
- The design of the posters had the unintended consequence of alienating some women; for example, women in traditional attire may have been misconstrued to as targeting only certain types of women. Also, there was only one man who appeared; leading to the *Vote for Women* Campaign being seen as only a woman's issue.

Conclusions

Social change is hard to quantify. This chapter sought to explore whether women bring different values and style to leadership at the local level. In Swaziland, as elsewhere in this study, women are perceived to be more accessible and see the importance of working in consultation with communities.

An important indicator of the extent to which women make a difference is how their presence is viewed by men in decision-making structures. The interviews with male councillors highlighted the generally positive attitudes towards both the presence and contribution of women to decision-making.

The chapters that follow 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 Swaziland.



The informal sector at work

Photo: Trevor Davies

Gender in the work of councils

This chapter addresses the extent to which gender concerns are reflected in the every day work of local government, and the extent to which women are able to influence this agenda. The chapter begins with a description of how local government works in Swaziland, 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 women councillors in Swaziland can influence the daily agenda.

How local government works

Local councils are made up of both elected and appointed officers. Urban Local Government elections were recently amended to have a five year cycle. Mayors and Deputy Mayors are elected each year.

Councils work closely with structures at the community level which provide an important link between the community and the council. Evidence from the research shows that no special effort is made to ensure that women and men are equally represented on these committees.

The work of local government is regulated through the Urban Government Act (2006). The Local Government Bill (2008), still to be tabled, is to "reform and consolidate the laws on Local Government so as to establish a system of Local Government and Governance based on the *Tinkhundla* system and to bring them in conformity with the Constitution".

Finance

The Ministry of Local Government allocates about R15 million for the Urban Local Government authorities. This is divided between the twelve councils using a specific formula, with the main city councils like Manzini and Mbabane getting the biggest share of the budget.

Funds are disbursed through the Ministry annually; after each Council's budget for the year has gone through the necessary and mandatory public engagement processes they are submitted and approved. This entire process can take several months. Once approved the funds are disbursed on a quarterly basis.



Councils levy charges for market stalls *Photo: UNDP*

According to the Urban Government Act (2006:45), the revenues of the Council shall consist of:

- All rates lawfully levied by the Council;
- Such part as the Minster may determine of any fees and charges payable in respect of licenses and permits which have been lawfully issued or authorized for issue by the Council, whether under this Act or any law;
- All other fees, charges, rents and dues payable to or recoverable by the Council, or to which the Council is entitled under the provisions of this or any other law;
- One-half of all fines imposed by a court of competent jurisdiction within the municipality in respect of any contravention or failure to comply with the provisions of this Act, the Public Health Act, No 5 of 1969, or of any other law specified by the Minster by notice in the Gazette and of any subordinate legislation made hereunder or hereunder;
- Except as may be otherwise prescribed by the Minister, all charges or profits arising from any trade, service or undertaking carried on by the Council, in exercise of the powers vested in it;

- Interest on moneys invested by the Council except where other provision is made in respect thereof under the provisions of this or any other law;
- All moneys paid to the Council by Government as contributions, grants, endowment or otherwise, except where such moneys are paid with a condition as to the purpose for which such monies are paid;
- All sums raised by sales, leases, or other transactions of the council;
- All revenue derived by the Council from any other property vested in the Council, or by the administration of any public services;
- All sums otherwise accruing to the Council in the course of the exercise of its powers and duties;
- Such other revenues as the Minister, after consultation wit the Minister of Finance, may declare in writing to be revenues for the purposes of this section.

In the case of Manzini City Council, there are three main sources of revenue.

- Rates
- Payment for services provided
- A range of other income generating activities

The Manzini City Council has in the past tried to access loans through an agency linked to the World Bank but this was unsuccessful due to the credit rating of the Council. The World Bank has given the Council three years in which to improve their credit rating and then to reapply.

The Ministry of Local Government also give the Manzini Council and additional R11.5 million to be used primarily for the massive roads infrastructure required for some of the townships falling under Manzini. There is no timeframe linked to the money and the Council is expected to report regularly regarding these capital projects.

Planning and budgeting in Councils

The budgeting cycle in Council begins annually in September. This process is supposed to include a comprehensive consultation process with communities over a month-long period where people make inputs which are incorporated into the budget. Budgets are developed on an annual basis, but the projects might have an extended lifespan such as 5 years.

The public participation process is a new addition to the way Councils develop their budgets. On completion, the budget must undergo another public inspection phase, lasting ten days, for additional comments. These forums include both men and women. The purpose is to develop budgets that are people driven. Councillors and mayors cannot just complete the budget on their own. The two main international institutions that have been propagating for this are the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Members of Parliament and Councillors

In Swaziland, as elsewhere in the region, Members of Parliament get paid far more than councillors. Members of Parliament, whose primary responsibility is to develop legislation, get paid anything from R20 000 to R27 000 per month. In addition they get allowances such as the sitting allowance, for attending any official meetings, a car and housing allowance. *Bucopho* and councillors, including mayors and chairs of committees, get a mere R2000 per month. There is a R250 sitting allowance for every committee meeting attended (R300 for mayors and chairpersons).

Section 41 of the Urban Government Act states that the Council may, with the consent of the Minister pay such remuneration and allowances to the

members of the management committee, including temporary members, as the council may determine at rates approved by the Minister (2006:24).

Meetings after hours ignores the gender dimensions

Bucopho Zodwa Mabuza highlights the plight of many women councillors who do not have access to transport but who are expected to attend meetings at all hours without any remuneration. She recalls a particular bridge building project which meant she had to meet the engineers after hours on a number of occasions, "After attending about four of these, I then eventually told them that I was struggling to attend these mainly because of the issue of transport. For these meetings, I often had to hire a cab to attend at my expense because the meetings were far and were ending late at night (at about 20h30 or later) and at a time when the local taxis would no longer be operating. I decided to speak out and up because it was a big expense when one considers that were only being paid 2000 emalangeni. I brought this issue up in the meeting, but it changed nothing."

Competencies of local government

According to the UNDP Capacity Assessment of Local Government Institutions in Swaziland: "Modern local government came late to Swaziland" (UNDP, 2003) in that local government was only introduced after independence in 1968, with the passing of the Urban Government Act in the following year. Prior to independence, as part of the colonial administration, District Commissioners presided over appointed Advisory Councils which ran the two municipalities of Manzini and Mbabane. However, as local government institutions, they had little to do with community self-management. They were really extensions of the machinery of colonial government manifested by the almost absolute power that the District Commissioners wielded in the Advisory Council.

In terms of the current situation, municipalities (Councils and Town Boards) have the following general duties and powers;

- Control, manage and administer the municipality
- Maintain and cleanse all public streets and open spaces vested in the Council or committed to its management,
- Abate all public nuisances,
- Safeguard public health, and provide sanitary services,
- Establish or maintain any public utility service which it is required to maintain under any law
- Develop, control and manage any land vested in, owned or leased by the Council
- Take over and administer housing schemes for the inhabitants of the municipality
- Promote public health, welfare and convenience and develop sanitation and amenities of the municipality.

(The Kingdom of Swaziland Constitution, 2005, Chapter VII, Section 79)

The Constitution, Chapter XIII (p.29) articulates the primary objective of the *Tinkhundla*-based as a system of government that is closer to the people at sub-national or local community level progressively take control of their own affairs and govern themselves.

In terms of the distribution of service delivery competence, local government in Swaziland is responsible for town planning, housing, roads, water and sanitation, refuse collection and disposal, environmental protection, parks and open spaces, cemeteries and crematoria and slaughterhouses. Authorities have discretionary powers in the provision of sports and leisure facilities, welfare homes and tourism promotion. (www.clgf.org.uk/index.cfm/pageod/125/Swaziland, accessed 11 May 2009).

Table 18 summaries the functions of the different delivering authorities in Swaziland, the highlighted ones indicate local government functions.

Table 18: Functions of government in Swaziland

	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		
Primary school	*	
High school	*	
Tertiary education	*	
Adult education	*	
SOCIAL WELFARE		
Family welfare services	*	
Welfare homes	*	°
PUBLIC HEALTH		
Primary care	*	
Health protection	*	
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING		
Housing	*	*
Town planning		*
Regional planning		*
TRANSPORT		
Roads	*	*
Urban roads	*	*

FUNCTION/POWER	Delivery authority	
	Central	Local
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION		
Water and sanitation		*
Refuse collection and disposal		*
Cemeteries and crematoria		*
Abattoirs		*
Environmental protection	*	*
Consumer protection		
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS		
Museums and libraries	*	
Parks and open spaces		*
Sports and leisure		°
Religious facilities		°
UTILITIES		
Water supply		
Electricity		
ECONOMIC		
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	*	
Trade and industry	*	
Tourism	*	*

Source: http://www.clgf.org.uk/index.cfm/pageid/125/Swaziland, accessed 11 May 2008
° discretionary services by local authority

Challenges on the ground

More than two thirds of Swazis live in poverty. The unemployment statistics are very high, and women are more affected than men. Women also constitute the majority of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. The National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS Policy (2006), notes that Swazi women bear the brunt of several scourges including gender violence, traditional and cultural practices, HIV and AIDS, amongst others.

According to 2005 UNDP Human Development report HIV and AIDS in Swaziland worsened between 1991 and 2003 with the Human Development Index (HDI) declining from 0.583 to 0.498. The observed decline is attributed to deteriorating social and economic indicators, mostly as a result of HIV/AIDS (National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS Policy (2006: 5).

The Commonwealth Secretariat also referred to the fact that "the country has the highest rate of HIV prevalence in the world, 10% of the population are orphans and the life expectancy is now 31 years for newly born" (2008:18).

The overall national level of HIV prevalence at 42.6% recorded in the 2004 antenatal clinic surveillance survey is the highest in the world having rapidly multiplied by more than ten times from 3.9% in 1992 in a period of 12 years. Similar trends were observed in the four regions of the country with small variations from Hhohho region with the lowest prevalence of 40.3% in 2004 to Manzini region with the highest prevalence of 45.1%. Increasing

prevalence since 2000 was also noted in both urban (from 35,6% to 44.5%) and rural areas (from 32.7% to 40.3%), albeit with small differences between them. All education levels experienced increasing prevalence rates (National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS Policy (2006: 4).

In 2004, Swaziland acknowledged for the first time that it had an AIDS crisis. Prime Minister Themba Dlamini declared a humanitarian crisis due to the combined effect of drought, land degradation, increased poverty, and HIV/AIDS. The former United Nations special envoy on AIDS, Stephen Lewis, said "Swaziland stands alone with the world's highest rate of HIV infection after nearby Botswana made headway against the deadly pandemic" (www.wikipedia, accessed 6 Feb 2009). HIV estimates of 2007 estimate that there are 188 000 people in Swaziland who are living with HIV.



Ncane Maziya (left) with HIV and AIDS care givers in a remote village of Swaziland *Photo: Angel Films*

One of the key gender issues in Swaziland relating to HIV and AIDS is the role that women play in being the backbone of the care sector yet not being paid for this work.

Focus group participants lamented the state of transport; agriculture; lack of water or lack of clean water; access to housing, the lack of a social system network that assists citizens. Access to water has declined from 60% in the mid 1990s to 56% in 1998. An estimated 49% of the population does not have access to safe water and 30% lack proper sanitation leading to high incidence of water-borne disease MICS, 2000 (Draft gender policy, 2006: 21). According to World Vision, there are now a lot more people in Swaziland who are dependent on food assistance packages because of their inability to provide for themselves.

Council work through a gender lens

Local government has the potential to make a difference to the daily 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 they face, the evidence suggests that women councillors are using the space that they have to make a difference.

Education

The Second National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2006-2008 (2006), presents the various sector profiles of the Kingdom of Swaziland. According to the education statistics report of 2004, the country has a total of 546 primary schools and 218,352 students. There are slightly more boys (51,7%) than girls at the primary school level; almost equal numbers in secondary and high schools (50,5% girls and 50,3% boys) and at university level where men make up 51,9% of the total. The 1997 census recorded literacy to be 81.3% with men having slightly higher rates (82.6%) than women (80.2%).



A Nkungu focus group participant shared some of the challenges they face in the community, noting that in their area there is no pre-school and high school and their children have to travel about 5km to school. "When pre-school child leaves for school the parents hold their breaths until they return because young as they are, they face the risk of being knocked down by cars in town," he said.

Bucopho Nomsa Dlamini is one person for whom education is very important. The previous Council had started a school project, the construction of teachers' homes roofs, but had left it incomplete. Since the start of her term she has been able to restart the process liaising with the school principal regarding outstanding information and then taking the matter to the Council for their intervention. For her this is an important project because currently teachers have to stay far from the school because there is nowhere closer for them. "Educational facilities are key to education and important in this institution are teachers. Therefore teachers need to be comfortable. This is my contribution to advancing education. "

She is also planning to start a pre-school for those children whose families cannot afford school fees and as a result are unable to access pre-school. Pre-schools are important for the growth and development of both boy and girl children and they also free women up to participate in other activities outside of their reproductive roles. This particular project links to the soup kitchen project which she plans to also tackle in her term as *uBucopho*. The soup kitchen will be geared to benefit mainly orphans who often have to struggle to get food. Through soup kitchens, these orphans will be able to get at least one meal per day.

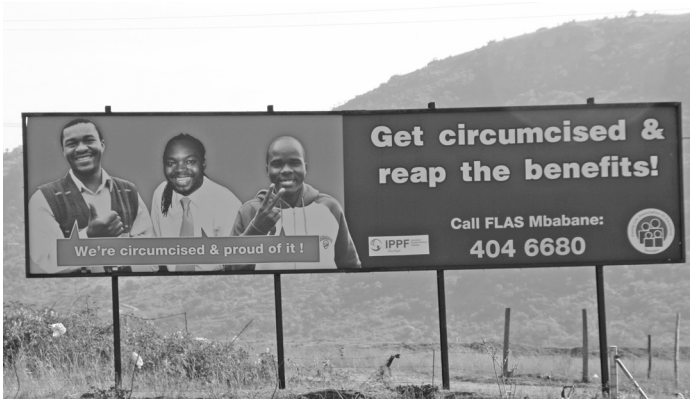
The fact that primary and high school are a distance apart was raised as an issue by both men and women. Travelling long distances to and from school is also a major security risk with there being cases where children have been raped. This also raises other local government issues such as ensuring that open public spaces are safe by cutting long grass regularly.

Chairperson Purine Bhembe of Kwaluseni spends a lot of her time trying to find people to sponsor the educational needs of the orphans and other vulnerable children she is in contact with. Her approach is to present the family or children to a possible sponsor to aid the children. She mainly tries to find people or organisations who can sponsor school uniforms, school fees, food and whatever else people feel like giving. "I form a bond with these children and that is why I keep doing it. If I could adopt all of them, I probably would."

HIV and AIDS

According to interviewees, women councillors tend to be the ones who raise issues of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs); HIV and AIDS, the plight of the elderly, social grants and schooling.

Bucopho Khonelia Zwane says she is the one who brings up issues on HIV and GBV in her Council. In the past, she has approached and invited organisations that specialise in the field of HIV and AIDS such as Population Services International (PSI) to visit her chiefdom and inform people about HIV and AIDS. The idea was for the organisations to facilitate information sessions in the community. "After approaching the Chief with my idea and informing the Council, I went to the community with this idea and they were excited and up for it."



They came and there have since been several VCT sessions resulting in more people now testing and being counselled, "and we are beginning to address the issue of the stigma now, there is now a new response and attitude to testing."

According to former ***Deputy Mayor of Manzini Khanyisile Mamba***, the Manzini City Council has a Lamvelase Clinic which is in its fifth year of existence. She says this is the only clinic in Swaziland that provides VCT free of charge. This clinic is a shared venture with AMICAALL (see box) and PSI. Information on clients is disaggregated by sex. The City Council also organised a march on World AIDS Day.

Alliance of Mayors Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level

AMICAAL's mandate is to build the capacity of municipalities to respond to HIV and AIDS by providing technical resources to municipalities, training the people and assisting them with the development of policies.

The board at the national level brings together mayors of all the 12 towns and then the mayors can invite associate members, in line with one of AMICAALL's guiding principles of working through partnerships that include ministries of health, education, and people in the HIV and AIDS sector, business sector, various church groupings and the UNDP.

While Swaziland's local government is still taking shape, AMICAALL plays a highly visible role in HIV and AIDS initiatives at the local level.

Housing

In a society where men have historically held 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 means that women no longer need to be dependent on men for shelter for themselves and their children. The participation of women on land allocation committees is critically important to ensure that women are taken into account in the process.



Houses in Matsapa *Photo: Judith Mtsewu*

The minority status of women means that their chances of owning the properties they live on are low. As one councillor noted, even when a woman can afford to pay for and buy her own house, legally she cannot enter into that contract with a third party without her husband's consent.

Bucopho Khonelia Zwane of Ngwempisi *Inkhundla* shared a story to show how housing can go a long way to restoring people's dignity. In her chiefdom, there was a family of an elderly mother and her son, both physically challenged, who were sharing a one bed roomed house and sleeping together in this house. This meant neither had privacy when bathing. *Bucopho* Zwane approached World Vision and asked them to help respond to this need. They came and saw the house and decided that they were going to build the family a proper home. This has already happened and now the mother and son, each have their own bedrooms in their new three bed roomed house. She says that there are many more such stories, "but I will try to help where I can."

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 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.

Bucopho George Maseko of Hlane noted that the three main issues for his locality are the water issue, agriculture and HIV/AIDS: "At the moment, we have a very poor supply of water. There is no water available in our home and we have to walk long distances to get to the river which is our regular supply of water. The shortage of water has implications for disease, family's ability to produce food for itself all consequences that worsen the social and material state of those concerned. In more than one interview people talked about the lack of safe drinking and also the broader implications such as for agriculture and livestock. Also, for those families that are carrying for those infected with HIV and AIDS, it becomes very difficult to do the caring without the water."

Roads and transport



Access to transport affect women *Photo: Judith Mtsewu*

Road infrastructure surfaced several times as a concern in the research. In the Manzini Municipal Council for example, there are many townships that still have gravel roads. The community has raised this as an urgent issue because this situation makes it very difficult for residents to access their homes, it also means that there is a lot of dust and so washing on washing lines gets dirty as a result.

Dense traffic in areas where there are crèches and pre-schools is also a safety issue. Gravel roads are very difficult to use, whether for walking or driving during the rainy season of Swaziland. The Manzini City Council has raised substantial resources to roll-out the tarring of roads.

Markets

With unemployment levels higher among women than men, informal markets have the potential to benefit women by economically empowering them and giving them a space to trade that is clean, safe and convenient.

Manzini City Council, as the hub of informal economy activity for all the towns in Swaziland, is acutely aware of the role that markets play in addressing poverty in communities. If these are not well managed, they can be a challenge. Thursdays and Fridays are market days in Manzini and it is on these days that all those who sell crafts and vegetables and other wares come to the Manzini market to trade.

Vendors have been designated spaces for selling by the Council so as to avoid them taking over pavements and pedestrian areas, which makes both pedestrians and shop owners unhappy. For this space vendors are required to pay a nominal fee of less than E2 a day which comes to less than E50 per month. Recently the Council of Manzini spent some money to renovate the markets.



Street vendors not operating from the designated Mbabane Market on the sign
Photo: Judith Mtsewu

The Council does not offer vendors any additional skills training but does recognise that this is an important sector which needs to be managed because it is constantly growing. Some women councillors are trying to engender their councils by deliberately targeting women in the community.

In ***Deputy Mayor Khanyisile Mamba***'s ward, Mangwanane, which is plagued by a high rate of unemployment especially among women, she has started holding female only meetings to try to find income generating projects for these women so that they can provide for their children. The care point in Mangwanane is run by the women, but they are volunteers and do not get paid for the work they do. The councillor is encouraging them to get involved in other projects which will offer them an income. With high levels of alcohol abuse in the area she hopes that these meetings and projects will provide women with alternatives and support in developing project plans.

Conclusions

The work of local government is in the main about responding to the specific and urgent needs of the community. This chapter highlights some of the disappointments regarding the delivery of services, but also some of the hopes expressed by focus groups in the communities at the greater inclusion of women in local government. As this sphere of local government takes shape in Swaziland, and as more women gain access, there is hope that this will help to fast track efficient, gender responsive delivery.

The examples in this chapter illustrate how women councillors have started to address issues that may previously not have received the same kind of attention by councils, such as HIV and AIDS, education, water and sanitation.

But much of the work that women councillors do only addresses the daily, 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.



Women's Protest March, Swaziland *Photo: Angel Films*

From practical to strategic

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.

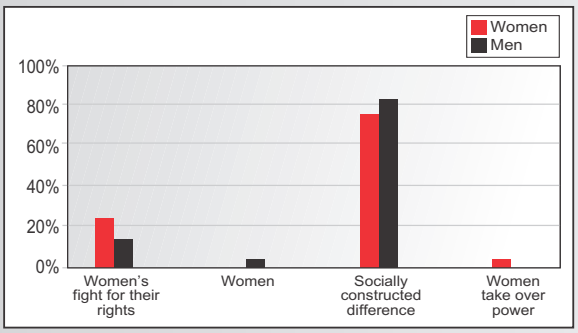
Moser (1993: 39-40) describes practical and strategic gender needs as follows: **Practical gender needs** are the needs that women identify in their socially accepted roles is society. Practical needs do not challenge the gender division of labour or women's subordinate position in society, although 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.

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.

This chapter explores the extent to which gender and local governance discourse in Swaziland is progressing from practical to strategic. The chapter begins by exploring how councillors themselves understand the term gender. It then presents some key gender planning concepts, and tests the extent to which these are known and applied in local government in Swaziland.

How councillors understood the term gender



Councillors were asked to choose which of the four definitions of gender they found most accurate: women fight for their rights; women; socially constructed differences between women and men and women taking over power.

Of the four definitions offered, the one that was chosen by both men and women is the generally accepted one for the meaning of gender referring to "socially constructed differences between women and men'. 74% of the women gave this as the correct answer and an even higher percentage of men (83%) chose it as the correct answer.

The first *At the Coalface* study found that overall 76 percent of all councillors chose the correct response but more men (79 percent) than women (73 percent) chose the response. In the original study, however, 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'. The high level of awareness in Swaziland on the meaning of the term gender reflects well on the awareness campaigns in the mountain kingdom.

Bucopho Mlondi Dlamini from Manzana noted during his interview that part of the problem in Swaziland regarding gender transformation is the way that this is communicated, resulting in backlash from men.

He gave the example of an image used in one campaign - a picture of a man with a baby on his back and walking behind him a woman holding a *'knobkirrie'* (club) as if to beat him with it. This image did not win the gender agenda any support from either women or men and instead it reinforced the myth that gender was about 'women taking over power' from men.

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)

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)

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 Swaziland 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.

The interviews revealed that the women councillors and *Bucopho* in Swaziland do not have a shortage of ideas about the types of projects that they plan to have for women in their respective communities. The approach is to get the Council and *Tinkhundlas* involved in some capacity and this often means providing the start up capital or the necessary work equipment.

Some of the project ideas that are either currently happening or are being planned are as follows:

- Chicken/poultry
- Piggery
- Filling handigas - financial support
- Building houses - provided cement and tiles.
- Running a pre-school - *Inkhundla* gave chairs for the children
- Planning sewing club
- Women's garden project.

These initiatives are to be commended because their starting point is that women in society seldom benefit from economic projects, yet they are the ones who carry the burden of the needs of the household, in the absence or presence of the employed or unemployed husband.

The approach recognises the complex and specific challenges that women face and attempts to address these. But the initiatives unfortunately do not go far enough in enabling women to redefine their relationship with society and in particular with men. Also, by their very nature, these are the type of projects that only respond to the women's practical needs such as enabling them to provide food for

their families, selling garden produce and generating some income through which the can pay their children's school fees and so forth. The extent to which they enable woman to act autonomously from their husband's is limited.



Welfare approaches *Photo: Judith Mtsewu*

Very few of the initiatives incorporate a capacity-building component. Women who get involved in these projects sometimes leave them without any new skills with which to progress into another economic sector such as a factory. In addition, the concern is that these project, despite being well-meaning tend to have a short life-span. They start and only survive for a few months, if at all. Suddenly the group members leave and only a few remain. They run out of material or have no equipment and so the project eventually collapses.

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.

The inadequate participation of women in decision-making indicates that women's concerns at different levels are either ignored or not dealt with because of this under-representation. Therefore it should

not be surprising that very little progress has been made in women's advancement. The Government of Swaziland is a member state of SADC and a signatory to SADC Gender and Development Declaration of 1997, which commits all member states to fulfil the 30% affirmative action of women in, political and decision-making positions by the year 2005, which the national constitution has endorsed. With the gender policy in place, it is hoped that the number of women in decision-making positions will increase at different levels of the government structures.

Gender strategies at country level

The government of Swaziland has undertaken numerous initiatives to ensure equal participation of women and men in achieving the national objectives of economic growth, self-reliance, social justice and stability – through involving women and men in the mainstream of the country's development. The Constitution (2005: 4 -5) articulates these efforts as:

- The National Vision 2022 articulated in the National Development Strategy (NDS), spells out a number of strategies aimed at eliminating development and as well as gender gaps and offering equal opportunities to all citizens irrespective of their sex. The NDS also emphasizes adoption of a gender-balanced approach to development in all national development plans, policies and projects.
- In March 1994, the Government launched the Swaziland Committee on Gender and Women's Affairs (SCOGWA) within the Ministry of Home Affairs, to serve as the main co-ordinating body for the development of a gender programme. Some of the achievements of SCOGWA include preparation of an issues paper known as the Gender and Women's Issues Paper: Swaziland Platform for Action for Equality Development and Peace, and lobbying for the establishment of the Gender Coordinating Unit. The Gender Co-ordinating Unit initiated and subsequently the Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in every ministry to promote gender mainstreaming in all sectors of national development.
- Furthermore, as part fulfilment of Government's commitment to promoting women's participation in development, Government appointed a nine member Task Force in 1997, to draw up a gender policy statement to inform the actual process of formulating a National Gender Policy. This initiative was carried out through ESRA which was the implementing tool for the NDS.

Swaziland does currently have a **Draft National Gender Policy** which has been in the pipeline for over two years but which is yet to be finalised. The policy document recognises the twelve critical areas of concern defined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action as very relevant to the situation of the Kingdom of Swaziland and promotes the implementation of actions by sectoral agencies. Ten thematic areas were considered especially critical in the overall advance of gender equality in Swaziland. (Draft Gender Policy:1)

- Culture, Family and Socialization,
- Poverty and Economic Empowerment;
- Health, Re-productive Rights and HIV and AIDS;
- Education and Training;
- Legal and Human Rights;
- Politics and Decision-making;
- Gender Based Violence;
- Information, Communication and Arts;
- Environment and natural Resources, and
- People with Disabilities.

The policy is guided by international and regional gender instruments, but also the national legal instruments. The policy goal of the draft Gender

Policy is "to buttress and promote government's effort in providing equal opportunities for women and me, boys and girls at all levels for the attainment of Gender equality, social justice and economic efficiency."



The National Gender Policy mainstreams disability *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Policy objectives include:

- To identify, conserve positive and mitigate negative aspects of Swazi traditions and cultures in order to promote equal opportunities and rights for both males and females in all aspects of development
- To integrate people with disability in the development process and to improve their socio economic status
- To ensure equal access by girls and boys, women and men to education, training, and health services, and control over resources such as land and credit for improved quality of life
- To ensure gender that gender sensitive laws exist and are enforced.
- To provide direction for the development of effective programmes for the prevention of gender-based violence.

Gender policies and mainstreaming at the council level

None of the Councils have gender policies. As stated earlier in the report, the gender focus within local government has in part been driven and supported by AMICAALL, as it has broadened its own messaging around HIV and AIDS.

There are numerous policy documents in Swaziland on decentralisation and local government but none that address the gender aspects of this.

The gender responsive work that has been done by some councillors and *Bucopho* has therefore not been as a result of a policy directive but rather as a consequence of personal interest. The hope is that through the Gender and Local Government study, the strategy and action plan that are expected to emerge from this, local authorities and relevant government Ministries in Swaziland will begin to engage with gender issues in more deliberate manner.



Gender mainstreaming requires fresh initiative *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Conclusions

This chapter starts by defining some of the key gender concepts and approaches to addressing gender, including the gender management system. The research shows that gender policies and programmes are non-existent in local councils in Swaziland. There is a need for a deliberate and

considered strategy with the support of organisations such as AMICAALL, Women in Law Southern Africa, and Gender Links.

Evidence shows that gender mainstreaming does not happen on its own. If there are no formal policies and programmes, addressing gender happens irregularly and on an ad hoc basis, if at all. 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 place then there is a high probability that it will not occur.

The country has different local government legislation in place, none of which unfortunately integrates gender. One hopes that once the Draft National Gender Policy has been finalised, these will be reviewed to integrate gender.



Quality and effectiveness are key *Photo: Trevor Davies*



Time for consultation *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Conclusions and recommendations

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

Women are still under represented in local governance: At 18% women are still under-represented in local governance; well below the SADC target of gender parity by 2015. Women are still very much in the minority when it comes to actual decision-making positions with very few of them being mayors and deputy mayors.

Policy Framework: The Draft National Gender Policy has been in draft format for the past two years and the principles are not sufficiently integrated

into the other relevant policies and legislation that focus on local government. The existence of policies and instruments for transforming society is important, but beyond this the policies need to 'speak to one another' and reinforce the priorities and gender is one of those priorities.

The electoral system has an adverse effect on women: Swaziland 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 still holds deeply patriarchal attitudes towards them.

Quotas: While provision for quotas have been made at the national level these have not been strictly applied and Swaziland is still very far from achieving the parity target agreed to by the Heads of State in 2008. The number of women candidates that the King can appoint via Constitutional provisions will not lead to the achievement of the target. Additional measures are required.

Socialisation, culture and patriarchy: Culture and patriarchy are still deeply rooted in the fabric of the Swazi society and this remains one of the biggest obstacles for women to overcome. Any progress on gender equality in Swaziland will need to devise interventions that target this particular hurdle.

Lack of resources: Women across the board identified lack of resources (both financial and physical) as one of their biggest barriers both to accessing and participating in local politics. They all lamented the fact that many of them do not have the money that is required for campaigning, which they say is necessary for calling meetings and providing 'bribes'. They often do not have their own transport and have to get around on foot or bicycle and the vastness of constituencies make this difficult.

Needs are being addressed at a very practical level: Much of what is being done at the local level is addressing only the practical needs of women. 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.

Women can and do make a difference: There is overwhelming evidence from this and similar research that women represent different interests and concerns to 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.

Now is the time! The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development provides new energy and time bound targets for achieving gender equality. This is an appropriate moment to seize the initiative at the local level.

Recommendations

Learning from SADC: Swaziland is a member of SADC and is also a signatory to the recently adopted Protocol on Gender and Development which calls for at least 50% representation of women in all areas of decision-making by 2015. The Protocol also proposes the use of affirmative action measures to achieve this target. Swaziland 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.

Popularising the SADC Protocol: The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development has the potential to meaningfully change women's lives by addressing the issues that continue to marginalise them in their communities. Local government is an appropriate place to start popularising the Protocol so that women become aware of the instruments that are in place to protect their rights.

Key gender instruments should be included in the Orientation Course for all politicians and officials across all spheres of government. The key issue that we are reminded of as we tackle gender is that so much has already been done around these or similar issues and so as we advance we need to build on what has already been developed. The development of national instruments should be located within the international and regional instruments. Both women and men need to know the scale and magnitude of the gender agenda.

Partnering with men: The many examples in the report about the positive attitudes shown by men is encouraging. It is possible for men not only to be supportive of the struggle for gender equality, but to also enable it. Men should also be targeted and be sensitised on issues of gender equality because the process of changing attitudes begins with awareness.

Align all policies around the gender principle: The consultation process on the Draft National Gender Policy should be concluded and the policy adopted and all policies and relevant legislation should be reviewed to ensure that they are gender aware.

Develop and implement a gender strategy for local government and gender policies at council level: Currently, gender is not on the Council agenda and as a result, it is not budgeted for. With the National Gender Policy as the overarching framework and the technical expertise of AMICAALL, a gender strategy for local government should be devised and cascaded into policies at council level, which should be budgeted for.

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. This training could happen with the Capacity Building Unit for Local Government.



Annex A List of Interviewees

Surname	Name	Council	Province	Sex
Bhembe	Purine Thembi	Kwaluseni *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Female
Dhlamini	Mlondi Zebeedi	Manzana *Inkhundla*	Hhohho	Male
Dhlamini	Sabelo	Ngwenya Town Council	Hhohho	Male
Dlamini	Ntuthuko	LaMgabi	Manzini	Male
Dlamini	Elijah	LaMgabi *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Male
Dlamini	Mduduzi C	Mankayane Town Board	Manzini	Male
Dlamini	Edna	Ngwempisi *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Female
Dlamini	Nomsa	Nhlambeni *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Female
Dlamini	Thobile	Hlane *Inkhundla*	Lubombo	Male
Dlamini	Sphiwe	Hlane *Inkhundla*	Lubombo	Female
Dlamini	Nomcebo Phillie	Vuvulane Town Board	Lubombo	Female
Dlamini	Dumile	Ngwenya Town Board	Hhohho	Female
Fakazile	Simelane	Enkalameni	Shiselweni	Female
Fakudze	Thulani	Ngwempisi *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Male
Gadlela	Dumisani	Matsapa	Manzini	Male
Gwebu	Betty	LaMgabhi *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Female
Lukhele	Sibusiso	Manzini City Council	Manzini	Male
Lukhele	Reggie	Piggs Peak	Hhohho	Male
Mabuza	Maria	Manzini City Council	Manzini	Female
Mabuza	Zodwa V	Manzini North	Manzini North	Female
Magagula	Johannes	Hlane	Lubombo	Male
Magagula	Bongile	Hlane	Lubombo	Female
Magagula	Bong'nkosi	Piggs' Peak Town Council	Hhohho	Male
Magagula	Almon	Sandleni *Inkhundla*	Shiselweni	Male
Mamba	Khanyisile	Manzini City Council	Manzini	Female
Manana	Faith	Mbabane West	Hhohho	Female
Maseko	George	Hlane	Lubombo	Male
Maseko	Sizakele	Hlane	Lubombo	Female
Mashaba	Mfanesikile	Siteki Town Council	Lubombo	Male
Masina	Paulina	Nhlambeni *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Female
Masuku	Thandi	Ngwenya Town Board	Hhohho	Female
Matsebola	Samkelisiwe	Sandleni *Inkhundla*	Shiselweni	Female

Surname	Name	Council	Province	Sex
Mavimbela	Richard	Siteki Town Council	Lubombo	Male
Mavuso	Lindiwe	Hlane *Inkhundla*	Lubombo	Female
Mavuso	Makhosazana	Piggs' Peak Town Council	Piggs Peak	Female
Mazibuko	Stembile B	Mankayane Town Board	Manzini	Female
Mkhatshwa	Mxolisi	Mtsongwaneni *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Male
Mphetwa	Zweli	Mbabane East	Hhohho	Male
Mthethwa	Khabo	Vuvulane Town Board	Lubombo	Female
Ndlovu	Dumisile	Piggs Peak	Hhohho	Female
Ngwenya	Hesane	Mkhiweni	Manzini	Male
Nhleko	Nkululeko		Manzini	Male
Nkambule	Ntombizile	Mkhiweni	Manzini	Female
Nxumalo	Victoria	Manzini City Council	Manzini	Female
Nxumalo	Owen Sabelo	Manzini City Council	Manzini	Male
Shongwe	Velte		Manzini	Male
Shongwe	Makhosazana	Ngwenya Town Board	Hhohho	Female
Sukati	Mmane	Manzini North	Manzini	Female
Vilikazi	Abigail	Ngwempisi *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Female
Zondo	Dolly	*Bucopho* Bankhundla-Enkalameni	Shiselweni	Female
Zubuko	Richard	Mkhiweni *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Male
Zwane	Duma	Manzini City Council	Manzini	Male
Zwane	Khonelia	Ngwempisi *Inkhundla*	Manzini	Female

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Key targets in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

Article 5: Affirmative action

- State parties should put in place affirmative action measures in order to eliminate all barriers that prevent women from participating meaningfully in all spheres of life and create a conducive environment for such participation.

Article 12: Representation

- By 2015, at least 50 percent of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors should be held by women.
- Any measures taken (to increase representation), legislative or otherwise, should be accompanied by public awareness campaigns which show the importance of the equal representation and participation of women and men in decision-making and that this is integral to, democracy, good governance and citizen participation.

Article 13: Participation

- State parties should put in place policies, strategies and programmes to ensure equal participation of women and men in decision-making.





"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

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