



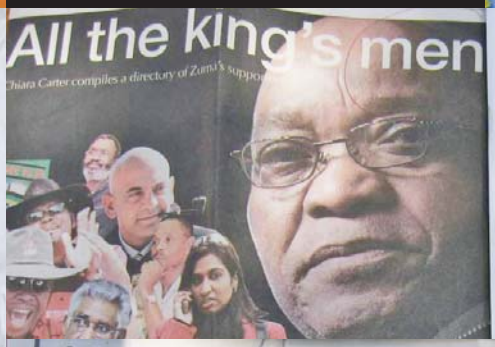




GENDER AND MEDIA DIVERSITY JOURNAL











Gender, Diversity, Elections and the Media

Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC)

The Gender and Media Diversity Journal is an output of the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC). The GMDC is a physical and virtual resource centre based in Southern Africa, with linkages in Africa and across the globe. The centre envisages media that are diverse, representative, responsive, and professional, and a citizenry, women and men, who are empowered to engage critically with their media. It facilitates the collection, connection and dissemination of information and resources relating to gender, media and diversity. The centre also collaborates on research, education and training.

The GMDC is a consortium of media NGOs and tertiary institutions. Working with an advisory group, Gender Links and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network manage the centre. The advisory group includes:

- African Women and Child Feature Service, East Africa (Rosemary Okello)
- Highway Africa, Pan African (Chris Kabwato)
- Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ), Pan African (Shehnaaz Bulbulia)
- Inter Press Service, Pan African (Paula Fray)
- Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), SADC (Jennifer Mufune)
- Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), South Africa (William Bird)
- Norwegian Council for Africa, Norway (Guro Almas)
- NSJ, SADC (Donna Mpengula Tomas),
- Polytechnic of Namibia, Namibia (Emily Brown)
- Rhodes University, South Africa (Jude Mathurine)
- SAFAIDS, SADC (Tariro Chikumbirike)
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  - Zambia, Rose Nyondo



The objectives of the GMDC are:

- Promote more analytical, responsive and contextual journalism.
- Develop and share a body of knowledge on gender and media diversity.
- Publicise the work of media scholars, students and practitioners.
- Provide resources that makes the links between media theory and practice.
- Create a space for participatory discussion and debate on gender and media diversity.
- Develop global and local partnerships with strategic organisations.
- Become a centre of excellence on new approaches and fresh thinking.

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 2

NEWS BRIEFS 4

IN FOCUS: Gender, Diversity, Elections and the Media

Towards 50/50 7

Key issues: women in governance in Southern Africa 8
By Colleen Lowe Morna and Susan Tolmay

South Africa: women soar to new heights, but is gender equality in any closer? 16
By Colleen Lowe Morna, Kubi Rama, and Lowani Mtonga

Electoral systems and gender in southern Africa 28
By Patience Zirima

Representation of women in political party executive committees in Lesotho 33
By Violet Maraisane

Changing men's mindsets in Ghana 38
By Loveness Jambaya Nyakujarah

Advocating for 50/50 in Malawi 39
By Lowani Mtonga

Tanzania: courageous MP leads the way 43
By Bestina Magutu

Debating leadership 45

Botswana at the coalface – women as leaders 46
By Pamela Mhlanga, Susan Tolmay and Colleen Lowe Morna

The Great Debates: gender equality, quotas, polygamy, and leadership 55
By Saeanna Chingamuka and Deborah Walter

Open letter to JZ on women's rights 64
By Colleen Lowe Morna

Kyrgyzstan fight for gender quotas pays off 66
Nurgul Asylbekova

Beyond numbers: gender in political awareness 73
By Sibongile Mpofu

Reassessing political parties women's wings 81
By Saeanna Chingamuka

Political struggles worth it for Zimbabwean politician 84
By Miriam Sibanda-Madziwa with Lucia Matibenga

New political party putting "Women Forward" 87
By Laura Lopez Gonzalez

Karolina Pieters, persevering to make a difference in Namibia 90
By Mandla Masingi

Gender, politics and media 93

Women, elections, stories and style: female politicians strengthen their voices 94
By Paula Fray, Patricia A. Made and Mercedes Sayagues

South Africa: election coverage through a gender lens 102
By Colleen Lowe Morna and Deborah Walter

Walking the talk: media during Zimbabwe's 2008 harmonised election 106
By Koliwe Nyoni

Elections further marginalise women with disabilities 118
By Tracey Sibanda

Faustina Sinyangwe, media ignores women politicians in Zambia 125
By Perpetual Sichikwenkwe

Free and fair media: election watchdogs 127

Electoral conflicts in Africa: interrogating the media and feminine connections 128
By Bonnie Ayodele

Angola Solta a Tua Voz - Angola, Lift up your Voice 136
By Michael Bodakowski and Luis Kandongongo Jimbo

Violations of media freedom in the 2008 Angolan elections 141
By Human Rights Watch

Maria Ivone Soares, from radio to blogs in Mozambique 146
By Fred Katerere

Opinion: Media must take electoral responsibilities seriously 148
By Lowani Mtonga

MEDIA WATCH 151

Strategic communication against gender-based violence 152
By Tanya Owen

Sakaza Mngani: Kidz Community Radio 158
By Fiona Lloyd

Female migration to South Africa: official, social and media perspectives 164
By Sandra Roberts

Media and communication for gender and development 170
By Valentina Baù

ELECTIONS CHECKLISTS 175

Transformative Leadership Checklist 176

Inter Press Service (IPS) Guidelines for Coverage 182

NEW PUBLICATIONS 184

EDITORIAL



Editorial

By Deborah Walter

Of course, every country looks to their leaders at any point in time to help move the nation in a direction that will benefit all citizens. Elections happen throughout the world, on an annual basis, and it is this trust in leaders and government that bring people to the polls. However, for Southern Africa, the focus of this edition of the Gender and Media Diversity Journal on gender, elections and media is timely for a number of reasons.

In many Southern African countries, democracy is still fresh and evolving, and the political landscape is rapidly changing. South Africa has just emerged from a hotly contested election. Angola recently had its first peaceful elections in 30 years. Last year's Zimbabwe elections brought the country into a state of crisis affecting the whole region. Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, and Mauritius will soon have their own elections. Added to this, the signing of the Protocol on Gender and Development by the majority of Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders last August adds momentum to ensuring that this change includes a transformation in gender representation. The Protocol commits states, among other important provisions, to ensuring 50/50 representation in decision-making by 2015.

To meet the 2015 deadline, there is a need to move quickly to put in place concrete measures towards gender equality, with some countries still having very far to go. There are huge variations of women's participation in the parliaments of the region from 43% in South Africa to 7.3% in the DRC. The Protocol commitment recognises that women's role in government is a right, but also that ensuring both genders a place at decision-making tables simply makes for good governance. Women bring unique perspectives and priorities to government, whether at regional, national, or local level. Within all of this change, there is a need for citizens to engage critically with leaders and governments, to ensure that we have the transformative leadership needed to take the region forward politically, economically, and socially.

South Africa's recent rise to 43% moved the country from 17th to 4th in the global ranking of women's representation in Parliament. Only Rwanda (56%), Sweden (47%) and Cuba (43.2%) are now ahead. Yet, as Colleen Lowe Morna, Kubi Rama, and Lowani Mtonga of Gender Links discuss, gender equality is not just about numbers, but whether gender aware policies and programmes are implemented by both women and men politicians.

The writers point out that women still face a subtle glass ceiling within political parties in South Africa and gender increases rely mostly on quotas implemented by the ruling African National Congress. Despite the numbers, there is no clear indication of the party's plans for gender and women's empowerment.

It is evident from contributors across the region that a number of factors promote, or hinder, gender equality in government. Patience Zirima explores the role of electoral systems (proportional representation versus first past the post), highlighting the examples of Zimbabwe and Angola, while Violet Maraisane examines the difficulties of women ascending to political party executive committees in Lesotho.

Given the power that electorates vest in government, it is critical to constantly review and question what we look for in leaders. Based on research conducted in Botswana, Pamela Mhlanga, Susan Tolmay and Colleen Lowe Morna illustrate that women "bring

a different brand of leadership into local government, and that they have the ability to address issues and concerns at the core of community development and democracy."

As a way of questioning and evaluating leaders, Gender Links organised a series of debates around the topics of transformative leadership. The "Great Debates" explored such issues as gender equality, quotas, polygamy, and leadership. Writers Saeanna Chingamuka and Deborah Walter share the insights gathered from panellists and participants in South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia. Though opinions differed widely, it is clear that ongoing dialogue and debate are vital to clarifying what we expect from our leaders.

Showing that the fight for representation is not unique to Africa, Nurgul Asylbekova recounts the experience of gender activists in Kyrgyzstan, who struggled against an all-male parliament to successfully ensure that the country's new elections code included not only 30% women, but also 15 % of people under 35-years old; and 15% of people representing various ethnics.

There are often arguments from those opposed to affirmative action measures such as quotas that woman should rather prove their capacity to lead. The examples of Zimbabwe's Lucia Matibenga, profiled by Miriam Sibanda-Madziwa, and one of South Africa's newest political leaders, Nana Ngobese-Nxumalo of Women Forward profiled by Laura Lopez Gonzalez, show how women clearly have this capability.

Countering cultural and social stereotypes are a leading factor in gaining ground for women's representation, and media is at the centre of this. Positive portrayals of women leaders can help to break stereotypes and coverage is everything during an election campaign, yet media still tend to shy away from women in politics.

Mozambique's Maria Ivone Soares, in a profile by Fred Katerere, says that journalists continue to prefer to interview male politicians, disregarding women politicians. "There is need to sensitise journalists on issues of gender so that they do not look down on women politicians as incapable of performing the same way as the male counterparts," she says. Paula Fray, Patricia A. Made and Mercedes Sayagues describe how Inter Press Service worked with African media and politicians to try to help bridge this gap, building capacity of both to engage with the other.

As Lowani Mtonga notes, "Elections can hardly be called free and fair when certain political players are denied access to airwaves and other vital media outlets to sell their campaign message to the electorate without bias." And this includes women politicians.

As some of us head into elections, and others monitor elected leaders on their political promises, it is important that citizens play an active role in engaging with our governments. We hope that this edition of the journal will inspire discussion on gender, elections, governance, and leadership, and create more dialogue on media's and women's roles.

We invite comment and feedback on this issue, as well as contributors for future issues. For information about upcoming themes and contributors guidelines, please contact the editor on: editor@genderlinks.org.za.

Happy reading

NEWS BRIEFS

SADC "Care Work" and "Gender Protocol" videos

The Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance, a network of 40 national and regional NGOs that campaigned for the adoption of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, has produced a video case study on gender and governance in the Southern African region. Entitled *Roadmap to Equality, a Case Study of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development Adopted by Heads of State in August 2008,* the video shows how civil society organisations successfully lobbied for the adoption of a unique regional instrument with 28 concrete targets and timelines for the achievement of gender equality. The video also explores how this is being used to lobby for one of the targets, 50% representation of women in decision-making by 2015.

As part of GEMSA's campaign to support care workers, GEMSA produced a ten-minute video on care work, entitled *Making Care Work Count*. The video highlights the experiences of care workers in seven Southern African countries and provides a platform for these individuals to articulate the kind of government support and policy changes they need to carry out their work effectively and efficiently. In addition, the video includes interviews with several regional experts and policy makers to shed light on the challenges of care work in Southern Africa. It concludes with a few "best practice" examples, in countries like Mozambique and Botswana, to illustrate the types of provisions governments can adopt to support informal care work in their countries.

Source: http://www.genderlinks.org.za and http://www.gemsa.org.za



Let Us Grow care worker, South Africa. *Photo: Trevor Davies*

Care Work Campaign 2009



GEMSA Mozambique's Clementina Comate explains SADC Protocol and care work. *Photo: GEMSA*

In April 2009, GEMSA embarked on the second phase of their care work project. GEMSA is conducting a "situation analysis" of care work in the following twelve countries: Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The purpose of this study is to assess the current policy provisions/guidelines for care workers. Through desktop research, qualitative interviews and focus groups, GEMSA will identify gaps in data and policy. GEMSA will use the research to form individual country reports and develop a "model policy handbook" for the region. GEMSA aims to engage governments and the public and create a platform for care work issues.

Source: http://www.gemsa.org.za/

Happy Birthdays - *Sister Namibia and Grocott's Mail*

Sister Namibia turns 20 this year! The magazine was founded in 1989 on the eve of independence by a small collective of women from different backgrounds to develop a magazine for and by women to ensure that women's voices regarding their contributions, needs and aspirations would be heard loud and clear in the new Namibia. Following national liberation, the liberation of women from oppressive civil and customary laws, beliefs and practices was put firmly on the national agenda throughout the twenty years of publishing *Sister Namibia* magazine. The June issue of the magazine will focus on looking back where the magazine has come from, achievements, and the way forward.

Source: http://www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=20284

South Africa's oldest independently owned newspaper company, *Grocott's Mail*, marks its 140th anniversary on 4 May with the launch of a major historical exhibition and a seminar on press freedom. The exhibition is a partnership between the paper, the Albany Museum, Cory Library and the National English Literacy Museum, sponsored by Mondi Shanduka Newsprint and the Legal Aid Board. Large panels will present the colourful history of the press in South Africa, as well as the specific story of *Grocott's Mail*. The exhibition will become an enduring legacy for public education about newspapers. Part will be housed in the renovated Eastern Star Museum under the auspices of the National English Literary Museum; other parts will rotate through the Africa Media Matrix building, home of the Rhodes journalism school.

Source: http://www.journalism.co.za/

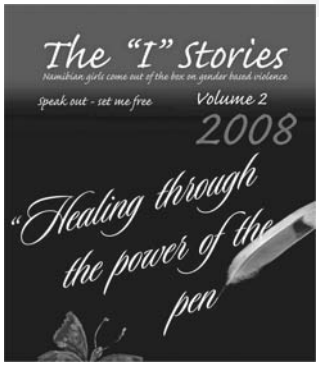
IPS launches Gender Wire

Only 22% of the voices we hear and read in the news today belong to women. IPS news agency covers frontline issues such as elections, health, education, armed conflicts, corruption, the global financial crisis, food insecurity, and climate change, asking an often forgotten question: What does this mean for women and girls? The Gender Wire is part of an IPS media and communication programme about gender equality and the empowerment of women. Through independent journalism, media and NGO training and publications IPS is working with women's organisations worldwide to strengthen the voice, visibility and impact of gender equality efforts. To subscribe to the free weekly newsletter, write to mdg3@ips.org or visit IPS Inter Press Service http://ipsnews.net/_newsletter/genderwire.asp and www.ipsnews.net

Source: IPS

Namibia: 'I' Stories - Girls speaking out

GEMSA Namibia launched the national *"I" Story* booklet in early March with 300 women attending a Gala Dinner organised by Women of Substance in Namibia. Launched by the First lady of Namibia, Madam Penehupifo Pohamba, Minister of Fiance Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhilaa and Deputy Minister of Education Becky Ndoze Ojo, the booklet shares Namibian girls' experiences with violence, covering topics such as gender based violence and abuse, incest, rape, HIV and AIDS, economic abuse, etc. According to Pohamba, violence in homes, schools and even on streets affects the progress of young girls and women to contribute effectively to nation building and growth.



Women entrepreneurs empowered in Mauritius

Launched on the eve of International Women's Day 2009, a pilot course on finance and accounting hopes to change the way small-scale women entrepreneurs do business in Mauritius. The objective is to tackle the problem of feminisation of poverty, directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources, including credit, land ownership and inheritance, lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision-making process. The project is composed of two main activities:

- A manual entitled "Kontabilite an Kreol" written in Creole by Saskia Virahsawmy-Naidoo and edited by Dev Virahsawmy. The manual consists of nine sections that deal with basic accountancy, budgeting and costing.
- Delivery of training by Saskia Virahsawmy-Naidoo in Flacq and Beau Bassin Rose-Hill.

The four-week course attracted 27 diverse participants: two of them cannot read, write or count. Another participant is a 70-year old great grandmother of 70-years, who decided to follow the course because she is now looking after the business of her belated husband.

M&G scoops Kuiper award

The 2008 Taco Kuiper Award for Investigative Journalism, South Africa's largest journalism prize, was awarded to the *Mail & Guardian* for its extraordinary commitment to a complex arms deal story. The winners were

reporters Sam Sole, Stefaans Brummer and Adriaan Basson. The judges commended them and editor, Ferial Haffajee "for their doggedness in chipping away at the edifice of secrecy and steadily filling in the detail of what must rate as one of the most important stories of this era." Judges recognised the team for the use of the full range of investigative techniques: cultivating sources, accessing court documents, chasing down international records and using the internet to track down individuals in obscure places. Runners-up were television programme Carte Blanche for a story on police corruption in Hammanskraal, and *City Press,* for their story on tender corruption for a new Sowetan hospital.

Source: http://www.journalism.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2211&Itemid=37

SafAIDS awarded at SA AIDS Conference

SafAIDS walked away with the Discovery Health Community Award for Best Paper Presentation under the Community Exchange Encounters Track at the South African AIDS Conference 2009. Under the Global Fund Round Five of activities, SafAIDS, in partnership with the National AIDS Council (NAC) and Population Services International (PSI) conducted 14 media trainings with more than 50 journalists and editors in Zimbabwe under four thematic areas, namely stigma reduction, Provider Initiated Testing and Counselling (PITC), TB and HIV, and treatment literacy. These activities were undertaken between December 2008 and March 2009. Through these undertakings, SafAIDS realised that the media has an important role to play in disseminating accurate and relevant information to the public.

Source: http://www.safaids.net/?q=node/893



SafAIDS scoops award

Portal for HIV/AIDS communication

Soul Beat Africa has launched a new HIV/AIDS theme site, which focuses on sharing information related to communication and media around HIV/ AIDS. The theme site also has a special focus area on multiple concurrent partnerships (MCP) in order to support the work of initiatives such as Soul City's Onelove Campaign. Soul Beat Africa aims to be a space for communicators across Africa to share communication for development knowledge, experiences, materials, strategic thinking and events, and to engage in discussion and debate. This site is meant for practitioners, media makers, academics, researchers, and others who are using or are interested in communication for social change in Africa. The site focuses specifically on Africa, providing an opportunity for the unique experiences and issues of the continent to be shared and debated, while helping to strengthen communication for development and social change.

http://www.comminit.com/en/africa/hiv-aids.html



Towards 50/50



Where women belong *Photo: Gender Links*



Key issues: women in governance in Southern Africa

By Colleen Lowe Morna and Susan Tolmay



Abstract

Although all of the countries in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) have made legal commitments to gender equality in decision-making, current progress and strategies to increase representation differ widely. The following contribution outlines key issues and facts around gender and decision-making in the region, related to elections. Overall, each country needs clear strategies for increasing not only women's representation, but also active participation in governance, which may include quotas and capacity building. Media also plays an important role in ensuring gender equality in governance.

Key words

gender and decision-making, governance, elections, quotas

Gender Protocol and decision-making

When Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State signed the Protocol on Gender and Development (Gender Protocol) on 17 August 2008 in Johannesburg, they committed themselves to achieving at least 50% representation of women in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors by 2015. The Gender Protocol is a comprehensive legal document that provides clear objectives, strategies and targets to accelerate progress to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women in SADC. There are 28 targets, as well as mechanisms for monitoring and tracking progress, including periodic reporting by SADC Member States every two years.

At the time of writing Mauritius, Malawi and Botswana had not signed up to the Protocol,

Key targets in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

Representation

- By 2015, women should hold 50% of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors.
- Any measures taken (to increase representation), legislative or otherwise, should be accompanied by public awareness campaigns.

Affirmative action

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

Participation

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

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

On average, SADC now has 22.4% women in both the lower and upper houses of Parliament; higher than the global average of 18.4%. There are huge variations in this average in the parliaments of the region from 43% in South Africa to 7.3% in the DRC. The variations at the local government level are even greater, ranging from 58% in Lesotho to 6.4% in Mauritius.

The table below compares gender in decision-making comparing 2004 – 2008. However, at the time of writing, South Africa has just finished national elections, in which women soared to 43% in Parliament.

Gender and politics in Southern Africa 2004 – 2008

Country	2004	2008	Difference	SADC Ranking (15)	Global Ranking (134)	Local government
Average	19.2%	21.9%	2.7%			29.7%
ANGOLA	15.0%	37.3%	22.3%	1	8	
BOTSWANA	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	13	97	19.5%
DRC	10.2%	7.7%	-2.4%	15	109	
LESOTHO	17.0%	25.8%	8.8%	6	35	58.0%
MADAGASCAR		8.8%	8.8%	14	110	8.5%
MALAWI	13.6%	13.0%	-0.7%	12	87	8.3%
MAURITIUS	5.7%	17.1%	11.4%	8	67	6.4%
MOZAMBIQUE	34.8%	34.8%	0.0%	2	13	29.0%
NAMIBIA	26.9%	30.0%	2.9%	5	28	41.8%
SOUTH AFRICA	32.8%	32.6%	-0.2%	3	17	40.1%
SWAZILAND	16.8%	18.9%	2.1%	9		24.1%
TANZANIA	21.4%	30.4%	9.1%	4	22	34.2%
ZAMBIA	12.7%	15.3%	2.6%	11	76	6.6%
ZIMBABWE	13.3%	18.5%	5.2%	10	76	9.5%

The African country of Rwanda with 56.3% women in its parliament shows that parity can be achieved. Elections are an opportunity to increase women's representation, raise issues of gender inequality and women's human rights violations and to press for building gender sensitivity into accountability systems.

Equity vs. efficacy

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

Equity arguments

This school of thought argues that women should participate because they have a right to do so. This right is enshrined in most Constitutions, based on principles of equality, democracy and legitimacy. "The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration, and sustainable development in all areas of life" (UN Women's Conference Beijing, 1995). The justice argument is that because women constitute half the population (or over half as the case is in many African countries) they have the right to participation and representation in equal numbers in decision-making structures. It argues that a society where women do not have equal representation 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). Women and men perform different tasks and functions. Because of their socially constructed roles, women most often perform the reproductive activities, which include all the domestic responsibilities as well as child rearing, and which mostly occur 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



Efficacy arguments propose that women's care giving roles make them more responsive to such issues as schools and clinics.
Photo: Trevor Davies

public safety. Men on the other hand inhabit the public sphere as politicians and participants in the so-called economic ally productive activities. As a result, men are not always aware of the inadequacies of services and as politicians, they do not automatically represent these issues that are a concern for women.

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

Participation

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

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

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

Electoral systems

Global evidence shows that the type of *electoral system* in place has a bearing on women's chances of election. Results globally show the *proportional representation* (PR) system to be far more conducive to the election of women as opposed to the *constituency* or *First Past the Post* (FPTP) system.

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

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

Quotas – lessons from the region

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

All five of the SADC countries that have achieved or exceeded 30% representation of women in local government - Lesotho (58%), Mozambique (29%), South Africa (43%), Tanzania (34%) and Namibia (42%) - have some form of quota.

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

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

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

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

Evidence from the region shows that quotas, both voluntary and legislated or constitutional, can be

Key considerations

- Four of the six countries (Mozambique, Angola, South Africa and Namibia) that have achieved or exceeded 30% representation of women in local and national politics follow the PR electoral system. Tanzania and Lesotho are the only two countries in this category that have a First Past the Post System.
- All of the countries that have achieved and exceeded the 30% target have some form of quota.
- Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Namibia all have voluntary party quotas. These are measures taken by political parties (all ruling parties in these cases) to guarantee the inclusion of women on their party lists. But, there are no sanctions for non compliance with a voluntary quota.
- Constitutional and legislated quotas are mandatory measures. The advantage of such quotas is that they apply to all political parties and there are sanctions for non-compliance.
- Tanzania has a constituency electoral system and constitutional quota at national and local level while Lesotho has a constituency system and legislated quota at the local level.

implemented effectively, yielding large gains for women in government. Political party commitment to gender equality is crucial and this needs to become more than merely encouraging women to participate. If political parties are genuinely committed to the principle of gender equality this should be explicitly stated in their manifestos, policies and structures.



Tsepo Molefe, left, challenged Lesotho's legislated 30% quota for women in local government in 2005. Mateboho Tsepane, right, won the council seat for the area after the High Court upheld the law. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Enabling Factors

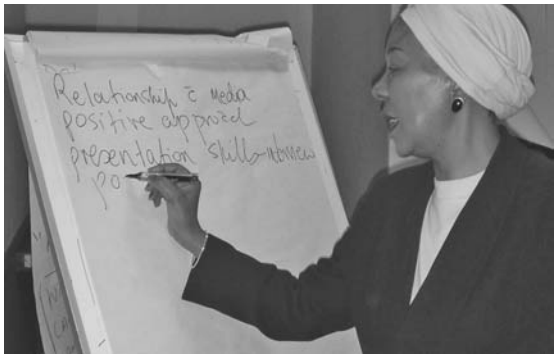
In spite of the barriers women politicians face, research shows many examples of women who are managing to overcome these obstacles. There are several examples of how disabling factors can potentially become enabling agents that can enhance women's ability to participate effectively.

- Experience - A combination of a good career profile and community mobilising has proven to be important in providing advantages to aspiring politicians and those already occupying political office to make a difference.
- Background and grounding - A background of working through party structures, understanding systems and processes within parties, and being well networked as well as steadily building a profile, have created good opportunities for women to have a better chance of becoming decision makers both in their parties as well as in council.
- Support - A critical factor in advancing women in politics and decision-making is the support from family, friends, peers, communities and gender activists. This is both in terms of access to decision-

making positions and structures and once in those positions.

- Role Models - Role models and mentors play a key role in inspiring aspiring women politicians and those already in power to focus on their goals and provide a support base for success.

- Capacity Building - There is recognition that targeted training for both aspiring women politicians and those already in offices is essential to provide support as well as build skills of women councillors in particular to be effective.



Ntombi Setshwaelo of Emang Basadi in Botswana teaching lobbying skills *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Media coverage

Part of any initiative to encourage women in decision-making must also include the media, both in terms of sensitising media to gender balance in political coverage, and also building the capacity of women politicians to engage with media.

The Gender and Media Baseline Study conducted in 2003 in twelve Southern African countries by Gender Links (GL) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) showed that women constitute, on average, 17% of news sources. While women sources in Southern



6 NEWS SATURDAY STAR June 30 2007 INSIL

60

If the Iron Lady mantle fits, wear it, Geraldine

Fraser-Moleketi proves she's no soft touch

Michael Schmidt

Big-haired, bespectacled and with the hectoring style of a schoolmistress, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi may be one of the youngest of South Africa's old leftie politicians, but her attempt to crush the public sector strike has invited comparisons between herself and a conservative icon, Britain's Margaret Thatcher.

Like Britain's Iron Lady, who took on – and beat – the might of the mineworkers, led by National Union of Mineworkers leader Arthur Scargill, our minister of public service and administration has faced down Cosatu leader Zwelinzima Vavi.

Comparisons between Britain's Margaret Thatcher and Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi are inevitable.

Graphic: Sibusiso Dubazana

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Still, despite the mettle Fraser-Moleketi's military training instilled, it seems cruel to compare her to the "Iron Lady". After all, she was reduced to tears by strikers who crudely slagged off her ma and pa.

And of course, the two women were born into totally different worlds, in different eras, Thatcher in 1925 into the genteel lower middle-class Methodist environment of the town of Grantham, where her father balanced his life as a grocer with his work as a Tory town councillor.

By contrast, Fraser, as she was then, was born in 1960 into a working-class coloured life in Lenadowsne, where her father worked as a schoolteacher and her mother as a factory worker.

In private life, she and Moleketi – an ANC intellectual heavyweight who would easily outclass the mousy Denis Thatcher – spend precious time together pounding the pavements as sweaty joggers.

And she is sometimes to be seen at the Eastgate mall, doggedly steering her children in her shopping trolley through the crowds. Not necessarily a woman of the people, but among them nonetheless.



Sunday Times, July 25 2004

Exposed: Hillary the superbitch

Book 'reveals' Mrs Clinton as an abusive adulteress

ANDREW DONALDSON: London

THE next US president after either George W Bush or John Kerry will be a manipulative, spiteful, adulterous bigot not above using abuse to solve domestic disputes — former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

This is according to a controversial new book by Christopher Anderson, whose *American Exile: Hillary Clinton's Path To Power* paints a disturbing portrait of a ruthless politician he describes as "the most famous, most complex, most loved/hated/admired/ reviled woman — perhaps person — in America".

Drawing on the testimony of various "new" insider sources as well as published accounts, Anderson argues that there have been inevitable comparisons between Hillary and Argentina's legendary Eva Peron.

"Sex, power, money, lies, scandal, tragedy and betrayal were the things that defined the lives of both women," Anderson writes.

Among the book's more startling revelations concern how US history was shaped — and will continue to be shaped — by an arrangement between the Clintons known simply as "The Plan". Anderson also "reveals":

● How Hillary registered like a bride at a gift store and left the White House with $400 000 worth of "gifts" paid for with taxpayers' money; and

● How she is using the forthcoming US elections in November as a springboard for her own future presidential candidacy.

Anderson claims that White House staffers had for years been murmuring about The Plan: that, once the Clintons left the White House "they would reverse roles: in return for all the sacrifices Hillary had made over the years — all the dreams and ambitions

'Hilla the Hun' was how Bill described his wife to one of his lovers

put on hold, not to mention the heartache and searing humiliation she had to endure because of his rampant womanising — Bill would throw himself behind his wife's political career".

He also claims that contrary to Bill's comments in his recently-published memoir, *My Life*, the former US president was a sex addict who had innumerable affairs with the knowledge of his wife.

In return, Hillary had an affair of her own — with Vince Foster, a close friend of her husband's who went on to become a White House staffer during the Clinton administration. Foster committed suicide in 1993, allegedly in a fit of depression.

Their relationship began when Clinton was still governor of Arkansas. A former bodyguard, LD Brown, claims that Foster would pitch up at the governor's mansion the moment Bill left town on business. Often, Foster would stay the night.

Brown confesses to being amazed at how "public" the affair was. Once, he says, Foster and his wife, Lisa, joined the Clintons for dinner and, afterwards, walking back from a restaurant in Little Rock, Foster and Hillary fell behind and, directly behind the backs of their spouses, groped one another.

"He'd be kissing her — and I mean real heavy, open-mouthed, tongue-down-the-throat stuff — and then he winked at me," Brown recalls. "They didn't care who knew."

But Anderson claims Hillary never let her extramarital activities cloud her political judgment. The same, however, could not be said for her husband.

And that's when she allegedly began beating and abusing Bill — not that Hillary apparently ever needed much of an excuse to fly off the handle.

Shortly before he lost his 1974 congressional campaign, they had a blazing row in which she described him as "chickenshit". Campaign worker Ron Addington, who was chauffeuring the couple, recalls Hillary, screaming at the top of her voice, telling her husband: "You're going to lose, asshole! You're going to lose!"

It was the sort of behaviour that would often be repeated in their relationship.

Anderson claims that Clinton often sported unexplained cuts and bruises and that he once claimed that a bump the size of a goose egg on his forehead was the result of walking into a door.

Hillary's penchant for throwing objects at her husband — from coffee cups to bunches of keys — was apparently well known.

Clinton has suggested that when, in August 1998, he confessed to his affair with Monica Lewinsky, Hillary was so devastated that she looked as if she had been punched in the gut.

But Anderson claims that it was actually Hillary who did the hitting. She jumped up, screaming obscenities. "What do you mean?" she yelled. "What are you saying? Why did you lie to me? You stupid, stupid, stupid bastard!" Then she slapped him hard across the face.

This was in marked contrast to the way she had previously dealt with her husband's "chronic" infidelities. His relations with "hundreds of women" was always something she could "box off".

"But so long as their political partnership was to work, she counted on her husband to be candid with her when they faced a genuine crisis."

Anderson's book is also littered with other examples of Hillary's considerable temper. When she was younger, her daughter Chelsea would cry herself to sleep whenever she yelled at her father. "Hilla the Hun" was how Bill described his wife to one of his lovers, Gennifer Flowers.

In this regard, Hillary would frequently make it clear to her husband that, while he was off chasing other women, her own needs were not being met. Trooper Roger Perry, a member of the Clinton security detail in Arkansas, recalls one Sunday afternoon argument in which she told her husband, "Look, Bill, I need to be f***ed more than twice a year."

POWER COUPLE: Bill and Hillary Clinton attend a reception in New York last month. A new book claims that behind the scenes Hillary would often hit the former US President Picture: AFP

Africa increased from 17% to 19% between the regional GMBS in 2002 and the GMMP conducted across 76 countries in 2005, this was still below the global average of 21%. Moreover, women remained almost invisible on topics such as economics, business, sports, and not least of all – politics.

Even where women are represented in occupations, their voices are not heard in equal proportion to their representation. For example, in the GMBS, of all the politician sources, only 8% were women, and this figure doubled to 16% in the GMMP. However, neither of these figures reflects the strength of women in parliaments where the regional average has ranged from 19 to 21.9% between 2005 and 2008. In Malawi male politicians dominate the news as sources across print and electronic media at 28% compared to only two percent of women in the same occupation.

The *South African Glass Ceilings in Newsrooms* report largely reflects these findings. The study found that there are still clear differences in the way that male and female journalists are assigned to cover different beats, men dominate in all of the harder beats, including politics (71%).

What this highlights is that women's political participation is one of the most problematic areas of reporting and that the views of these women are underrepresented and sometimes misrepresented in the media. The tension between women politicians and the media is also due, to a certain extent, to the fact that women have not had the same level of exposure as men and are often reluctant or wary in their dealings with the media.

Generally, women politicians have a difficult relationship with the media and the often say that women politicians are less accessible than their male counterparts are. According to women politicians, there is a tendency, as with women in business, to portray these leaders as unusual success stories, "Iron Ladies," or focus on any wrong-doing or scandals.

Media silence on woman trailblazer



Councillor Same Bathobakae
Photo: Susan Tolmay

Same Bathobakae, BNF member and the recently elected Chairperson of the South East District Council is the only woman chairperson of a district council. Yet her election was seemingly a non-event. She recounts how the electronic coverage of her acceptance speech blanked out key points she made about women and leadership, including the significance of her election on gender and governance in the country. She also noted the absence of her face and voice in the print media, which profiled her party's success and not hers. Bathobakae's frustration with negative media coverage is shared by other women politicians, and must be addressed squarely as a strategy for advancing women's agenda to achieve success in the political arena**.**

Notes:
Information contained in this overview of gender and governance has been excerpted from research and fact sheets produced by Gender Links, including research for the GL series of *At the Coalface: Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa*.

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Writers Bio
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South Africa: women soar to new heights, but is gender equality any closer?

By Colleen Lowe Morna, Kubi Rama, and Lowani Mtonga

Abstract

South African elections on 22 April significantly increased the numbers of women in Parliament. It is evident that women played a leading role in the nation's elections, including comprising 55% of voters. Yet, entrenching a culture of gender equality must go beyond the numbers, so that South Africa is able to meet all targets set in the Protocol on Gender and Development by 2015.

Key words

elections, gender equality, Jacob Zuma

Women's representation soars to 43%

South Africa has soared from 17th to 4th place in the global ranking of women in parliament following the national and provincial elections that saw a 9% increase in women's representation in the national assembly from 34% to 43%. Only Rwanda (56%); Sweden (47%) and Cuba (43.2%) are now ahead of South Africa. This is the largest increase since the first democratic election in 1994 in which women's representation jumped from 2.7% to 27%. At provincial level, women's representation has increased from 32% to 41%.

The results put the country firmly on course to achieve the Southern African Development Community (SADC) target of 50% women in political decision-making by 2015. Much of this increase is due to the African National Congress (ANC's) and Congress of the People (COPE's) 50/50 election lists as well as improvements in women's standing in other opposition parties. That two opposition parties the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Independent Democrats (ID) have women leaders; the ANC has a woman spokesperson; the

Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) fielded a woman candidate in its stronghold Kwa-Zulu Natal province; and one woman (of Women Forward) mounted a party of her own, all contributed to challenging the predominantly male face of politics.

Having two women – Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) chair Brigalia Bam and CEO Pansy Tlakula - running an exemplary election further advanced the standing of women in this election. Women comprise 55% of registered voters. This debunks the myth that women are not interested in politics. The peaceful conduct of the poll - despite this being the most hotly contested election since 1994 - enabled women and men to vote freely across the country.

Background

The 2009 South African pre-election period was characterised by a highly successful registration exercise as exemplified by massive voter turnout against a background of mudslinging and rising political temperature among political parties across the country. The worst incidents occurred in the politically volatile province of Kwa-Zulu Natal where supporters of the ANC and IFP clashed during rallies. The various political parties fiercely contested the elections. Commentators and political analysts believed that opposition parties including the new Congress of the People (COPE) offered a real challenge to the ANC.



Women contesting in the polls *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

The election results illustrate a clear three-way race for the national ballot by the ANC, DA and COPE. While it was clear that the ANC would win the election the critical question was whether or not the party would achieve the two thirds majority. It was also very difficult to predict how much of the electorate would support COPE and the DA. The ANC did not achieve the two-thirds majority coming close with 65.9% of the national vote. The DA performed slightly better than the predicted 15% with 16.66% of the vote. The year began with in-fighting for the leadership of COPE and an inward focus rather than an intensification of their election campaign in the crucial first quarter of this year. These internal crises affected COPE's performance in the election and resulted in a low showing in the election (7.42%). The real losers in this election have been the smaller parties. The increased support for the DA and support for COPE took support away from the ID, African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), United Democratic Movement (UDM) and others, each of which have captured less than one percent of the vote. The IFP lost its traditional stronghold Kwa-Zulu Natal to a resounding victory by the ANC.

The gender perspective

From a gender perspective, the ANC's strong performance means a substantial increase in women's representation as the party's list comprised 50% women and 50% men. Table 1 gives the proportion of votes garnered by each party. As South Africa has a Proportional Representation (PR) system, these percentages determine how many seats each party will get in parliament. Since our immediate post election report on 30 April, the IEC has put out official lists of the new Members of Parliament (MPs) and the new Members of the Provincial Legislatures (MPLs). Where

TOWARDS 50/50

their sex could not be determined from their names, Gender Links (GL) has verified these to give the following gender disaggregated breakdown:

Table 1 - Election results by party

National	Election result (%)	No. of seats	No. of women	% Women 2009	% Women 2004	Difference
ANC	65.90	264	130	49.2	37	12
DA	16.66	67	20	29.9	21	9
COPE	7.42	30	15	50	NA	NA
IFP	4.55	18	4	22.2	35	-13
ID	0.92	4	1	25	25	0
UDM	0.85	4	0	0	33	-33
FFP	0.83	4	0	0	0	0
Other	2.00	4	0	0	0	0
ACDP	0.81	3	1	30.9	25	6
UCDP	0.37	2	1	50		
TOTAL	**100**	**400**	**172**	**43**	**34**	**9**

The graph above shows that COPE, the third largest party with 30 seats, leads the way with 50% women followed by the United Christian Democratic Party (which has only two candidates; one of whom is a woman). At 49.2% the ANC is just shy of the 50% target, but it has by far the largest number of women, accounting for 130 out of the 172 or 75% of the women who will take their seats in parliament this week.

The IFP and the DA, which do not believe in quotas for women are expected to send 29.9% and 22.2% women to the national legislature. The UDM and FFP have attained four seats in the national legislature and neither party features any women in the top four candidates on their lists. The ID too has achieved four seats with only one woman in the top four candidates.

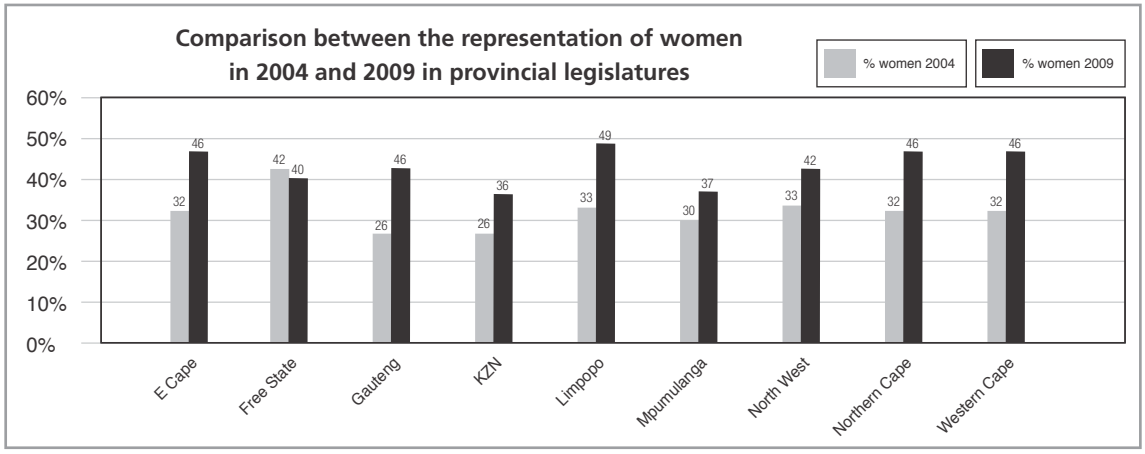
A comparative analysis between the representation of women in the 2004 and 2009 election shows that the ANC has made a substantial shift from 37% to 49.2%. The DA has also moved from 21% to 30%. The IFP has dropped from 35% to 22%, but its overall presence in the new parliament has also reduced substantially.

Still of concern though is the dependence on the ANC. Much of the increase in women's participation is attributed to the ANC's 50/50 quota. At 35% the DA as the official opposition party is still well below the 50% mark. Short of a legislated quota, the only way that the 50/50 can be achieved in the next election is for *all parties commit to the 50/50 principle.*

Provincial results

The chart below shows the representation of women in provincial legislatures. A comparison between the representation of women in the 2004 and 2009 provincial elections shows that there has been an increase in

women's representation in all provinces except the Free State where there has been a slight decline from 42% to 40%. In Limpopo and Gauteng there have been 16% increases.



Provincial premiers

A first major test of the ANC's 50/50 principle came with the appointment of provincial premiers. Only one woman, Thandi Dibakoane, headed the ANC's provincial list in Mpumalanga. Guided by the resolution at its Polokwane Congress in December 2007 that the 50/50 principle be observed in all areas of decision-making, the party's National Executive Committee (NEC), which decides on premiers, discarded the party lists altogether. Despite rumblings of dissent from provincial structures, four of the eight premiers to be announced by the ANC in the provinces in which it has a majority are women. These are Hazel Jenkins in the Northern Cape; Noxolo Kiviet in the Eastern Cape; Maureen Modiselle in the North West and Nomvula Mokonyane in Gauteng.

The latter is a particularly telling case in point of the gender parity principle being applied, as incumbent Paul

ANC goes 50-50 on premiers

Matuma Letsoalo and **Mandy Rossouw**

The ANC achieved its 50-50 of gender balance when it nominated four women and four men to head the provincial governments it controls.

Gauteng housing minister Nomvula Mokonyane was appointed Gauteng premier on Thursday as the ruling party showed that it was serious about women empowerment. In another surprise announcement Eastern Cape legislature speaker Noxolo Kieviet was announced as premier. Kieviet won over more prominent politicians such as acting premier Mbulelo Sogoni and veteran politician Mcebisi Jonas.

In the North West, Luthuli House overlooked all the big names and settled for Maureen Modiselle, who is the MEC for finance.

Those who did not make it include provincial chairperson Nono Maloyi and former premier Edna Molewa.

In the Northern Cape the party chose Bo Karoo district municipality executive mayor Hazel Jenkins. A teacher by profession, she beat favourite John Block to the post. Jenkins has served two terms as deputy chairperson of the South African Local Government Association.



Northern Cape Premier Hazel Jenkins (left) and North West Premier Maureen Modiselle

Mokonyane came into the picture late, just before the announcement as it had been generally assumed that Paul Mashatile, who had been acting for six months, would hold on to the post.

Mashatile became premier after Mbhazima Shilowa resigned in protest at the treatment of former president Thabo Mbeki to join the Congress of the People. Mashatile is earmarked for a national post.

"The question of two centres of powers would have meant that we have nine men and as a leading organisation it would have been a wrong situation to be in. Women and their capabilities must be recognised," said ANC general secretary Gwede Mantashe.

Free State chair Ace Magashule, Limpopo chair Cassel Mathale, Mpumalanga chair David "DD" Mabuza and KwaZulu-Natal chair Zweli Mkhize were appointed as premiers of their respective provinces.

The ANC's process to appoint premiers in eight of the country's nine provinces was threatening the unity of the ANC under Jacob Zuma's leadership.

Tensions within the ANC reached boiling points this week, as provincial structures clashed with Luthuli House over the appointment of premiers.

The ANC's alliance partners — Cosatu and the SACP, which supported Zuma throughout his political and legal troubles — have publicly accused the ANC of deliberately sidelining leftist leaders in some provinces when selecting premier candidates.

What appeared to complicate matters for the ANC was the 50-50 gender policy and the party's position taken during the Polokwane conference that party chairpersons should automatically become premiers to avoid two centres of power. With all ANC provincial structures headed by men, Luthuli House was under pressure to comply with the 50-50 gender parity by deploying women premiers in some provinces. However, some ANC members see this as strategy by ANC officials to deal with comrades not favoured by Zuma's core group within the ANC.

"Take the issue of Gauteng premier Mashatile for instance. Until last week's election, it was almost a foregone conclusion that he would be the obvious choice for the ANC as the Gauteng premier candidate. Now Mokonyane has suddenly been brought to the picture. Why?" asked one ANC leader.

An ANC insider said that ANC officials' decision to remove Mashatile from the provincial government was partly because he was seen as an outsider by the Zuma's core group.

Mashatile was one of the ANC leaders who supported ANC executive member and businessman Tokyo Sexwale to take over as ANC president prior to the party's 2007 conference. He only threw his wait behind Zuma after Sexwale withdrew from the contest.



Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane. Photo: Oupa Nkosi

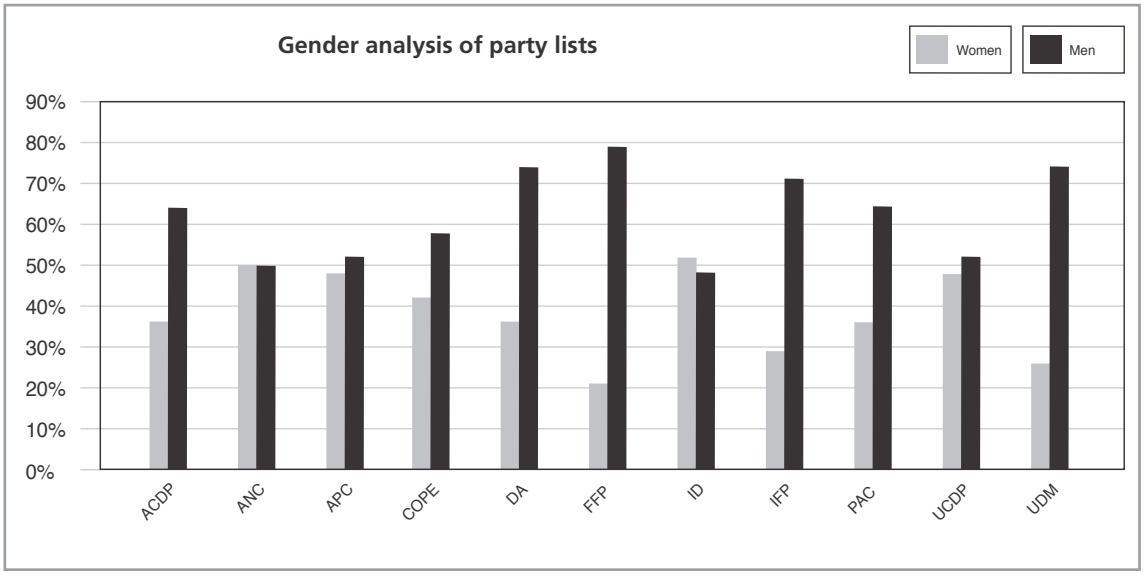
Mashatile who heads the ANC provincial list clearly expected to be reappointed to his position. He will now be succeeded by the former MEC for Safety and Security dubbed "Mama Action" by the media. Mokonyane comes with strong credentials and fewer questions marks over her tenure than Mashatile. She also testified during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on abuses against women during the apartheid era and has taken a strong stance against gender violence in the province of Gauteng.

Gender analysis of party lists

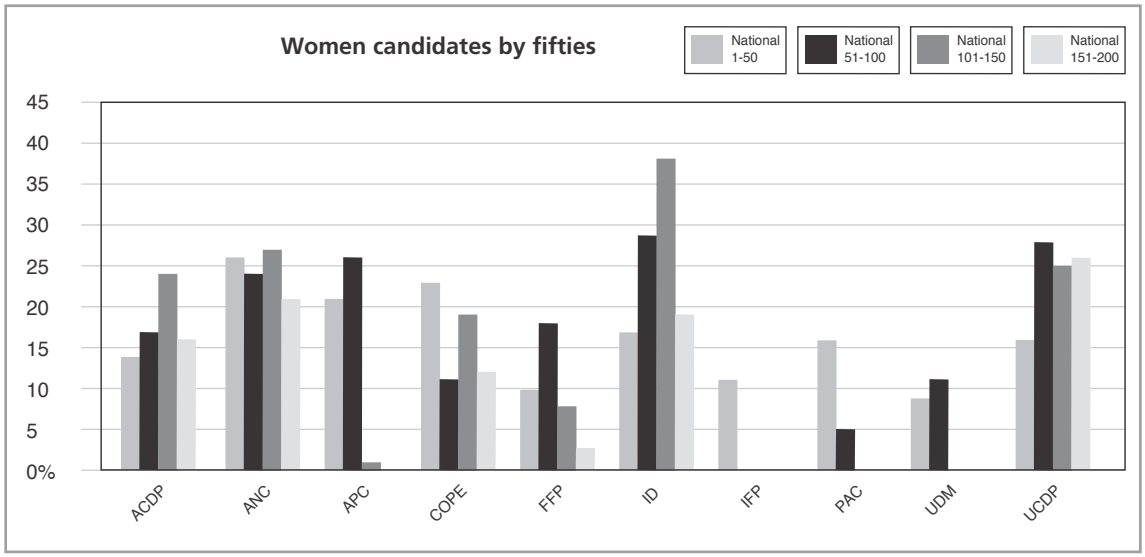
A total of 42 political parties submitted their candidates' lists to the Independent Electoral commission (IEC) by 2 March for the 2009 national and provincial elections. However, participation varied considerably. Some political parties contested for the national assembly and provincial legislatures, while others contested in national assembly elections or provincial legislatures only.

Only 11 political parties contested the elections for the national assembly and all nine provincial legislatures. These were the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), African National Congress (ANC), African Peoples Convention (APC), Congress of the People (COPE), Democratic Alliance (DA), Freedom Front Plus (FFP), Independent Democrats (ID), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), United Democratic Movement (UDM), Pan African Congress of Azania (PAC), United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP). Three parties registered to compete in the national assembly only. Fourteen parties contested the elections for the national assembly and one or more of the provincial legislatures while 14 contested in one or more provincial legislatures only.

The chart below shows the proportion of women and men on the national lists for the eleven parties that contested the election nationally and in all nine provinces. The graph shows that the ID had the highest proportion of women on their list (52%), followed by the ANC (50%). The APC has come close to parity with 48% women on the list. The FFP (21%) and UDM (26%) had the lowest proportion of women on their lists. ACDP and UCDP had between 30-40% women on their lists. The five remaining parties had 25% or below representation of women on their lists. The FF Plus came in last with only 21% women on the list.



Numbers only tell part of this story. It is crucial to look at where women were located on the lists. If women were located low down on the lists even if the party had a high proportion of women, it is likely that they would not be elected into parliament. An analysis of women in the first 50, second 50, third 50 and fourth 50 candidates revealed interesting trends.



NB. The DA is not included because their party is not done in a hierarchy but per province.

As is illustrated by the graph above the ANC had the most women candidates in the first 150 candidates on the party list. It was therefore likely that the ANC would again take a very high representation of women to parliament. All the opposition parties, if indeed they were serious about including 50% women in their delegations to the national assembly, should have had at least 25 women in the top fifty candidates. This would have ensured that they were able to take 50% women to the National Assembly. None of the opposition parties have 25 women in their first 50 candidates. COPE and the APC come closest with 23 and 21 women respectively.



Patricia De Lille on the campaign trail
Photo: Independent Democrats (ID)

Gender analysis of party manifestos

Political parties release their political manifestos during an election period to sell their policies and programmes to the electorate. Invariably, all manifestos promise to improve the lives of the people in the field of health, security, agriculture, infrastructure, education, housing, justice. They also promise to combat crime. However, the manifestos fell short of mainstreaming gender and the promotion of gender equality and enhancing the status of women. There was little reference to the promotion of gender equality and participation of women in leadership positions. Political parties that mentioned gender did so in a vague way. Some parties did not feature gender at all in their manifestos nor did they mention it.

PARTY	QUOTA	GENDER SPECIFIC REFENCES OR INFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
African National Congress (ANC)	• Committed to 50% percent women in the list, parliament and government	• Upscaling the Prevention for Mother to Child transmission of HIV to 95% • Combat violence and crimes against women and children by increasing the capacity of the criminal justice system to deal with such violence. • Vigorously implement broad based economic empowerment and affirmative action policies and adjust them to ensure that they benefit more broad sections of our people, especially the workers, youth, women and people with disabilities.	• Non-sexism a guiding principle throughout the manifesto (Contradictory in light of the history of the leader of the ANC and comments made by Malema about rape). • Massive expanded public works programme linked to home-based care, crĔches, school cleaning and renovation, tree planting and school feeding.
Congress of People (COPE)	• No quota	• Clause 7: Respect for the values and the principles of the South African people. (respect for the dignity of women, protect the innocence of children.) • Clause 12: Broadening people's participation in the Economy put measures to strengthen the implementation of the Employment Equity Act (Affirmative Action) and Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment • Establish a Women's Development Fund to focus on funding and assisting women to engage in productive economic activity	• Not mainstreamed
Democratic Alliance (DA)	• No quota	• No specific women's projects. • Only mentions women in its introduction. "...men, women and children living anywhere in the country are able to go about their daily business in their communities knowing that they are safe from criminals; that their local government provides basic services quickly, efficiently and affordably; that the public transport system allows them to move around quickly and safely."	• Gender is not mainstreamed in the manifesto. • The manifesto is issue based, but is not specific about the beneficiaries. It dwells on the detail of how the DA will run government rather giving a broad picture of issues.
Independent Democrats (ID)	• No quota	• Guiding vision - ID is determined to build an inclusive nation, where every South African is given the skills, resources and prospects to meaningfully contribute to the shared prosperity of our nation.	• The manifesto is issue based but does not mainstream gender within the issues.
INKATHA	• No quota	• Moral Challenge (Crime) **-** Most morally repugnant crimes such as murder, rape, violent assault and crimes against children, women and the aged.	• Gender is not mainstreamed in the manifesto under any thematic area.
United Democratic Movement (UDM)	• No quota	• Creating jobs for all south African, quality education for all south Africans, safety and justice for all South Africans (Violent crimes, as well as crimes against women and children, are of particular concern to us.	• Gender is not mainstreamed in the manifesto. • It talks in general terms about creating jobs, offering quality, safety and justice, and safety for all south Africans.

PARTY	QUOTA	GENDER SPECIFIC REFENCES OR INFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER SPECIFIC REFENCES OR INFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	• No quota	• Extending the roll-out of antiretroviral treatment and the prevention of mother to child transmission programmes • The role of women as mothers of our country's children is an essential building block for healthy families and a healthy society). • Supports the measures which are aimed at protecting women and children as vulnerable citizens against abuse).	• Gender is not mainstreamed in the manifesto. Manifesto only talks about issues in general terms with specifically mentioning who the beneficiaries will be. For example, under housing ACDP says "will incrementally provide access to adequate housing for all.
United Christian Democratic Party (UDCP)	• No quota	• Does recognize the need for • gender equality by adopting • the South Africa's National • Policy Framework for • Women's Empowerment and • Gender Equality. • Giving access to employment to all women. • Ensuring equality to all mankind • Putting in place a strong gender commission that will effectively implement gender equality policies. Women will be actively involved in the definition, design, development, implementation, and gender-impact evaluation of policies related to economic and social changes. • Special courts dealing with sexual offences against women will be established will be established countrywide.	• Although the manifesto has a gender clause, gender is not mainstreamed. It hardly mentions promoting women in leadership positions or allowing men and women to participate in all spheres of life.
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)	• No quota	• Legislating for mandatory life sentences for serious crimes such as rape, murder, child abuse and women abuse.	• Gender is not mainstreamed in the manifesto. • Dwells on problems facing South Africa and blames ANC for them. PAC offers solutions to the problems but does not say who the beneficiaries of the reforms will be or who will drive these programmes.
Freedom Front Plus (FF P)	• No quota	• Only mentions Women's and Children's rights in broad terms**.** Appreciates the role which women fulfill in public life and civil society on every possible terrain. Supports women's rights, but knows that it can only be realised in practice through the empowerment of women through the creation of opportunities and training.	• Gender is not mainstreamed in the manifesto. • Gives prominence to championing the cause of Afrikaners and promoting individual languages. It subscribes to parochial interests rather than broad issues affecting South Africa. Al
African People's Convention	Manifesto not yet available.		

TOWARDS 50/50

The analysis shows that only the ANC made any real effort to mainstream gender in its manifesto. It translated the 50% party quota in its party constitution into the party list. The ANC asserts "it has been 15 years of struggle for gender-equality, 30% of all our parliamentarians, provincial legislature members and councillors are women and 43% in cabinet. ANC policies will further increase women representation in parliament and government to 50% by 2009."

While the ID lists exceeded the 50% representation of women in the party list the manifesto was disappointingly deficient of gender content. The manifesto dwelled on providing solutions to the problems for the environment, building houses and homes, sustainable energy etc. Similarly, the PAC made no mention of the meaningful participation of women in decision-making positions.

The United Democratic Movement (UDM) did not mention the participation of women in politics or decision-making positions. The party talked about creating jobs, providing quality education, quality of health care, safety and justice for all South Africans, as though women and men are the same and are affected equally by these policies.



Women making their voice heard *Photo: Democratic Alliance*

The DA believed that all South Africans should have the capacity to influence the way the country is run and pledges to create a constituency-based electoral system which would make public representatives directly accountable and responsive to their voters. The gender implications of this were not explored, even though it is undisputable that the PR system that pertains in South Africa has played a major role in promoting women's participation in politics.

Several parties including the UCDP, ACDP, IFP, FFP and UDM referred to women and children as vulnerable people in society and as victims. This assumes that women have the same needs as children. Children require protection; women need to be empowered to protect themselves.

It is unfortunate that few parties made the link between women being the majority of voters (see next section) and the need to craft messages that specifically address their concerns. The power of the women's vote, keenly watched and courted in older democracies (for example in the recent US election) is one that political parties in South Africa are yet to grasp.

Women as voters

The IEC began voter registration in November 2008 and opened more than 19,000 polling centres, training over 59, 000 officials for the exercise. Initially, the IEC targeted 22 million voters at the cost of nearly R200 million. By time the registration process closed in February, a total of 23,174, 279 had registered as voters for both national and provincial elections representing an increase of 12% from the 2004 national and provincial elections when there were 20 674 926 verified voters on the roll.[2]

Voter registration statistics released by the IEC showed that in all the provinces more women than men have

registered. Overall, women constitute 55% of all registered voters; this runs as high as 58% in the Eastern Cape.

Table 3 - Women and men voters by province

	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Eastern Cape	1,772,489	1,283,166	3,055,655	58%	42%
Free State	755,370	630,206	1,385,576	55%	45%
Gauteng	2,782,162	2,676,688	5,458,850	51%	49%
KwaZulu-Natal	2,548,839	1,926,378	4,475,217	57%	43%
Limpopo	1,360,851	895,222	2,256,073	60%	40%
Mpumalanga	923,818	772,207	1,696,025	54%	46%
North West	858,354	799,190	1,657,544.00	52%	48%
Northern Cape	298,018	256,882	554,900.00	54%	46%
Western Cape	1,418,474	1,215,965	2,634,439.00	54%	46%
National	12,718,375	10,455,904	3,174,279.00	55%	45%

Another notable feature was the "Obama effect" in South Africa. The elections attracted many young people. Some 12 million, or over half of those who registered to vote, are between the age group of 18-39. Of these, 6.4 million or 53% are young women and 5.6 million (47%) are young men. The upsurge in voter registration can be attributed to the aggressive advertising campaign carried out by the IEC through radio, newspapers, television and billboards urging people to vote as well as the formation of COPE and the generally more dynamic election landscape than in the 2004 elections.

While the ANC was out rallying in full force for Jacob Zuma, opposition parties mobilised support against the controversial ANC leader. In and amongst all the political wrangling one important fact was ignored. Women voters constitute 5% more than men voters. Neither the media nor political parties noticed this and emphasised this as a key election issue.

Conclusion

Although South Africa has not reached the 50% women representation in parliament it has made significant progress towards achieving the 50% in the 2014 election. A concern though is that women face a subtle glass ceiling within political parties. The DA, COPE and other parties have not fielded many women at the top of the national provincial lists. Indeed even the ANC national has fielded two men as number one and two on the national list. The glass ceiling stops women from moving into the highest levels of leadership within parties.

This leads to another area of concern. The ruling party, the ANC, has pushed a gender agenda in the last two administrations. In this election it has not been apparent what the new president's commitment to gender and women's empowerment is and how this will play itself out in appointments and more importantly in government's programme. On the numbers and in their



Jacob Zuma addressing supporters in Rustenberg *Photo: ANC*

manifesto the ANC made clear commitments to women's representation and advancement generally. However, members within the party contradicted these through their behaviour and practices.

Despite having women leaders, the ID and DA do not see themselves as championing the cause of gender equality, believing in the dictum party first and woman second. The other opposition parties group women with children. This perpetuates patriarchal values that need to be dismantled to achieve gender equality. Women and children have very different needs and require different strategies to address these needs. The parties have to engage with the needs of women separate from the needs of children.

As the new government gets busy with the first days of the new presidency, it is hoped that the numerical commitment to representation will translate into implementing the principles of gender equality enshrined in the Constitution. This will include:

- encouraging debates that promote women's rights, including the debate that started during this election on whether or not polygamy has a place in a constitutional state with gender equality as a cornerstone of its democracy;
- establishing and supporting strong, independent and fearless structures for promoting gender equality, including addressing the current dysfunctionality of the Commission on Gender Equality;
- applying the 50/50 principle to his all government structures;.
- repudiating those who mocked and vilified Jacob Zuma's rape accuser outside the Johannesburg High Court, and creating a conducive climate for the woman, who lives in exile as a result of the threats on her life, to reclaim her citizenship by returning home, as a way to demonstrate leadership and respect for all survivors of any sort of violence;
- ensuring that the government of South Africa is at the forefront of the struggle to ensure that all 28 targets set by the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development are met. These include halving gender violence by 2015; ensuring women's equal

participation in all areas of economic life; recognising and remunerating the work of caregivers.

It is imperative that the government extends its commitment to the representation of women in decision-making positions to making a difference in women's daily lives. Issues such as better health care, housing, water, access economic opportunities amongst many others must move beyond rhetoric to reality. Gender advocacy groups and watchdogs have their work cut out in the coming period. While much has been achieved in making the rights for women enshrined in the Constitution a living reality this election, in many respects the battle has just begun.

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Electoral systems and gender in southern Africa

By Patience Zirima

Abstract

The article focuses on electoral systems in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and assesses which systems are more conducive to increasing the number of women in parliaments. Analysis of the two systems, First Past the Post (FPTP), used in countries such as Zimbabwe, and Proportional Representation (PR), used in Angola, among others, shows that PR creates a more conduce environment for more women in Parliaments. Angola saw an increase in women after Parliamentary elections in 2008, whereas Zimbabwe saw a decrease, despite advocacy by different groups, including political parties. Other examples show variances in different countries such as Tanzania, where the country uses FPTP, but has constitutional quotas for women. The article also looks at the role of media in elections and promoting empowerment of women in politics.

Key words

politics, media

Legislating equality

At their 2008 Heads of State Summit, SADC leaders adopted a 50% target for equal representation of women in decision-making positions. The signing of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development raises state commitment from the 30% agreed in the 1997 Gender and Development Declaration, despite the fact that, 11 years on, only five countries in the region (Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and most recently, Angola) have even attained the 30% target in parliament. Angola's recent increase to 38% women in parliament in the 2008 elections, up from 16.4% has nonetheless helped raise expectations of the possibilities of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in the region. The Protocol states that Member States shall, "endeavour that, by 2015, at least 50% of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors are held by women including the use of affirmative action measures." (SADC 2008)

Towards this end, the SADC Gender Unit is crafting a regional strategy for accelerating the achievement of the 50/50 target. Head of the SADC Gender Unit,

Magdeline Mathiba-Madibela highlighted that the strategy is necessary to guide member states' efforts to achieve gender parity goals. She indicated that, "it will provide coherent and standardised efforts at national level towards achievement of the goal; provide a catalyst for action; form a basis for monitoring and evaluation as well as for resource mobilisation purposes." (Mathiba-Madibela 2008) The strategy is also necessary because efforts to increase the representation of women in political and decision-making positions have been slow and progress is inconsistent, due to lack of focused action and little coordination. Furthermore, some countries in the region have regressed due to non-responsiveness of political parties, failure to capitalise on successes, absence of strategies at all levels, and lack of political will. (SADC 2008) The strategy highlights the need to have a co-coordinated effort by all sectors to achieve the 50% target. Not only do the usual suspects - governments, political parties and non-governmental organisations - have a role to play, but so do inter-governmental organisations, parliaments, the public service, private sector, and the media.

The justification for a concerted effort to increase the number of women in decision-making is to obtain a "critical mass... for sustained balance in the development agenda as well as for equity in focused attention to development priorities for women and men and subsequently progressive transformation in processes and programmes." (SADC 2008, 8)



Sophia Tlali speaks at Gender protocol Alliance meeting, August 2008
Photo: Trevor Davies

Electoral systems

One of the most important factors affecting women's access to political positions, which media largely ignores, is a nation's chosen electoral system. History shows that women have a better chance of election under the Proportional Representation (PR) system (especially in conjunction with a quota system,) compared to the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system. These are the two systems used by SADC countries for elections. Moreover, the countries that have achieved at least 30% women in political decision-making positions increased the number of women in parliaments through a combination of an enabling policy environment, party and constitutional quotas, and political commitment to the cause.

For example, Angola uses the PR system. Under this system, the electorate votes for the party and the candidates are taken from the party list in order of their respective position on it. The logic behind the system is to translate a party's share of the national vote into a corresponding proportion of parliamentary seats. Parties present a list of candidates to the electorate and the voters vote for the party.

In Angola, of the 220 members in the National Assembly, 130 are elected by PR. Although not legislated, the government, led by the Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), introduced a 30% quota for women. The Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA) notes that the PR system combined with a voluntary party quota, especially where there is a dominant ruling party, has in the past led to relatively high levels of women in the legislature. Interestingly, MPLA won 81.64% of the total vote in the 2008 elections and there are 40.3% of MPLA female candidates in the legislature. (EISA 2008) The National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA), which received the second largest number of votes, has 25% women. However, the other three smaller parties have no female representation in parliament.

Electoral systems and quotas in the SADC region								
Country	% women in parliament			% women in local govt	Electoral system		Quota	
	Lower	Upper	Combined		Const/ FPTP	PR	Legal	Party
Angola	37		37			YES	None	Ruling MPLA 30% NA
Mozambique	34.8		34.8	29		YES	None	Ruling FRELIMO, 40% at all levels
South Africa	32.3	35.2	32.6	40.1		YES*	None	Ruling ANC, 50% in all elected structures
Tanzania	30.4		30.4	34.2	YES		30% NA, 30%HR(Zanzibar) 33% local govt	None
Namibia	30.8	26.9	29.8	41.8	YES (regional)	YES (NA, LG)	50% local govt	Ruling SWAPO 50% Opposition COD 50%, NUDO 50% candidates at all levels
Lesotho	25	29	25.8	58	MMP (National), YES (LG)		30% local government	None
Seychelles	23.5		23.5	57.7 (not elected)	YES		None	None
Mauritius	17.1		17.1	6.4	YES		None	MMM 20% candidates at all levels
Swaziland	10.8	36.7	18.9	24.1	YES		If women less than 30% in parliament then 4 women elected to House of Assembly by House 50% Senate	Political parties are banned
Zimbabwe	14.3	33.3	18.5	9.5	YES		None	ZANU-PF 25% of candidates House of Assembly
Zambia	15.2		15.2	6.6	YES		None	None
Malawi	13.0		13.0	8.3	YES		None	UDF 25% NA
Botswana	11.1		11.1	19.5	YES		None	Opposition BNF and BCP 30% candidates (not applied)
Madagascar	7.9	12.1	8.8		YES		None	None
DRC	8.4	4.6	7.7			Open party list	None	Ruling PPRD and oppositions MLC and RCD 30% candidates
Regional average	21.9	21.9	21.9	29.7				

Sources: Ringing up the changes (2004) GL, www.ipu.org, www.eisa.org.za,
* At national level it is a straight PR system but at local government it is a mixed system

Other countries that demonstrate this are Mozambique with 35.6% and South Africa with 32.75% female representation in 2005. In the 2009 elections, the African National Congress (ANC) top 100 party list included 50% female candidates. Constitutional quotas have also proved effective in increasing the number of women in decision-making positions. The constitution of Tanzania for example allocates 30% of all parliamentary seats to women following constitutional amendments effected in 2005, which means women have reserved seats in Parliament, despite election outcomes. During the 2005 elections, 95 members of parliament were women, with 75 elected by the National Electoral Commission, drawn from lists submitted by the parties in parliament, based on the number of votes won by the parties represented in Parliament. Tanzania therefore has a 30.3% female representation in parliament.

Tanzania uses the FPTP electoral system, which an Inter-Parliamentary Union study showed is unlikely to see more women in positions of power. The study suggested that the PR system elects more women than under FPTP in established democracies (SARDC 2000). Members of



Mozambican women taking campaigning seriously
Photo: Amandio Vilanculo/IPS

Parliament under the FPTP system represent well-defined constituencies, which can be cities, towns or regions. The system allows for the election of an individual candidate representing a geographical constituency regardless of whether or not they belong to a political party.

One negative outcome arising from this system is that in Africa's male-dominated societies and party set-ups, voters are less likely to select women candidates, thus the need for instituting quotas. Botswana, another country that uses FPTP currently has 11.5% women in Parliament. The country will be holding elections in 2009 under this system. Without constitutional quotas as in the case of Tanzania, it is unlikely that a sizable percentage of women will make it to Parliament. In a 2007 article published on the eve of the countries primary elections, Botswana National Front (BNF) spokesperson, Moeti Mohwasa said that they would not consider affirmative action for women, "You cannot reserve any constituencies for women. As much as we encourage women, we do not want a situation where there is tokenism." (Mooketsi 2007) Another news article related to Botswana's primary elections paints a dire picture of women in politics, "Chances are that more women will be dropped from decision-making positions after the ongoing party primaries and 2009 general elections. The women will revert to singers in party choirs, cooks during party conferences and fundraising agents." (Nkala 2008)

In a scenario where everything was equal, Mohwasa's assertion may be valid, but gender inequality pervasive in the region limits women's chances of entering the political sphere. In most countries, women have lower literacy levels, therefore higher unemployment, and their access to productive resources remains limited. These factors hinder their participation in politics. In order to redress these imbalances, there is need for affirmative action that will ensure that women participate on an equal footing with men, in order to achieve the "critical mass" mention previously.

Zimbabwe is another country that uses the FPTP system and has not had a good record for representation of women in parliament. The Zimbabwe elections in 2008 saw only 14.29% women elected into parliament down from 22.2% in 2005. This is despite that the two leading parties, the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), both campaigned for the election of women candidates. ZANU-PF in 2005 also adopted a 25% quota for female candidates.

Zimbabwe's cabinet appointed in 2009 replicated this trend. Gender equality was sacrificed during attempts to resolve the crisis that plagued the country after elections in March and June 2008 failed to produce an acceptable result to all parties. Zimbabwe's current cabinet comprises 35 ministers, five ministers of state, 10 resident ministers, and 19 deputy ministers. Of these, there are only 10 women in Cabinet, translating to 14.5%, despite that the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 19) Bill, 2008, which set conditions for the inclusive government involving the 3 parties, ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations, acknowledges the "need for gender parity, particularly the need to appoint women to strategic Cabinet posts." Again, we see a government making commitments towards gender equality but without delivering on these promises.

The year 2009 is a crucial deciding year for increased representation of women in southern African parliaments, and a test for increasing diversity, with seven countries, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa, holding elections. This includes Presidential elections for Angola, DRC, Malawi and South Africa, and it is unlikely that a woman will hold the highest office in any. Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa will be holding parliamentary elections. Of these countries, Botswana uses the FPTP system whereas the other three use the PR system.

The media, elections and gender

In addition to electoral systems and affirmative action measures, media also has a central role to play to ensure fair and representative government. A report by MISA-Zimbabwe on the county's 2008 elections highlighted that the media has a fundamental role to play in the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), of which gender equality is vital. The report argued that

it is the ethical responsibility of the media to report in an objective, accurate and balanced way regardless of gender, socio-economic status and any other stratifications from which discrimination springs. Recognising this, the statutory Instrument 33 of 2008 of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission on media coverage of elections states that in election broadcasts and election publications, no broadcaster shall broadcast any elections programme or advertisement that initiates violence or advocates hatred based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion or political conviction and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

According to one journalist at a workshop in Namibia in 1999, media is also about power. "Information is power whatever perspective you hold. Those who disseminate information, especially in this age of information revolution and technology have enormous power – power for good and evil, power for right and wrong. Power to bring down governments, power to raise up new economic ideologies..." (SARDC 2000) If we subscribe to the view that the media holds such enormous power, we can assume that the media also has the power to raise issues of gender equality and to guide discussions on increasing the percentage of women in decision-making positions.

The MISA report in the Zimbabwe elections also confirmed what is already widely suspected, that women are under-represented in the media, both as sources and subjects in the news in election coverage. In one of Zimbabwe's Sunday papers for example, in the period covered from 17 January to 18 April 2008, there were 69% male voices as compared to 31% female voices quoted. This was also the trend in other media monitored. Although the legislative framework guiding the reporting of elections exists, the situation on the ground is different and therefore there may be a need for punitive measures in order to ensure that the media follows the rules in terms of reporting in a gender-sensitive manner. One area where media could provide a gender perspective on elections is to interrogate the electoral systems and affirmative action measures the leaders put in place, compared to their national and international commitments on the issue.

Conclusion

Despite the mixed outcome in elections in the region, to date, SADC has reached the third highest percentage of women in politics at Parliamentary level in the world. The region has a 22.4% representation, surpassed only by the Nordic countries at 40.8% (Americas is next at at 21.4%. At country level, five countries have achieved more than 30% representation at parliamentary level. These are South Africa at 43%, Angola with 38%, Mozambique, 37%, Namibia at 31% and Tanzania at 30.3%. Hopefully, with the upcoming elections, more countries will make progress towards achieving 50/50 parity.

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Writers Bio

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Representation of women in political party executive committees in Lesotho

By Violet Maraisane

Abstract

Women are clearly visible in political rallies and other political activities in Lesotho, yet within political parties women hardly ever ascend to higher positions in executive committees, which ultimately translates into fewer women in parliament and cabinet. This paper examines the representation of women in executive committees of three major political parties in Lesotho, the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD), the All Basotho Convention (ABC) and the Basotho National Party (BNP). Among these parties, only the ruling LCD has committed itself to elevating women politically though a quota system while the BNP believes "women do not have to be wheel-chaired into elective positions," and the ABC is simply silent about women.

Key words

representation, political parties, executive committees, gender

Introduction

Lesotho's political parties have always been male dominated with minimal representation of women in their higher ranks. However, women in Lesotho constitute a significant proportion of the population as well as the electorate. Since women are noticeable in many political rallies and in voting queues, their absence in high echelons of political parties can therefore not be ascribed to their lack of interest in political affairs, rather, it can be mainly attributed to the patriarchal nature of Basotho, which bestows decision-making powers and headship on males.

Historically, the entrenched gender stereotypes and expectations of the Basotho patriarchal society have always conferred decision-making processes in the hands of males. As Makoa (1977) attests, the absence of gender balance from the first political parties, the Basotholand Progressive Association (BPA) and the Lekhotla la Bafo (LLB) seems to have initiated prevailing attitudes towards women, namely that women are inherently inferior to men.

Throughout the evolution of political parties in Lesotho, this situation has changed little. Even today, few women hold higher positions in political parties. Although women represent 58% at local government level, the 2004



Mountain kingdom Lesotho still struggling with gender equality *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

parliament was only 17% and in 2008, 25.8%, still far from the 2005 target of 30% set by SADC, much less the elevated 50% target agreed by leaders when they signed the 2008 Protocol on Gender and Development.

This is despite Lesotho's ratification of several conventions, protocols and agreements that are binding and calling for equal participation of women and men in politics and high decision-making positions. Lesotho has ratified the 1997 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), though with reservations, which calls for measures to further the advancement of women in political and public life. The country was also part of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, which culminated with the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Beijing Platform for Action includes agreements aimed at enhancing the participation of women in power and decision-making and the creation of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

Furthermore, in 2000, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women launched the global 50/50 campaign, aimed at ensuring equal representation of women and men in public office, with an emphasis on national Parliaments. The campaign seeks to bolster women's participation in all decision-making processes worldwide. Most recently, in August 2008, Lesotho was one of the signatories to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, which commits regional leaders to ensure gender equality in decision-making by 2015.

In addition to international protocols and agreements, Lesotho has created national strategies. The Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili launched the 50/50 Representation in Parliament campaign during Commemoration of International Women's Day in May 2006. Lesotho's



Minister of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation (Left), Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili (middle) and Wife of the Prime Minister, Mathato Mosisili during the launch of 50/50 Representation in Parliament *Photo: Violet Maraisane*

national Gender and Development Policy also commits the Government to promote and facilitate equal representation and participation of women and men, including those with disabilities, in politics and at all levels of decision-making structures.

However, despite all the efforts, strategies and interventions, representation of women is still very marginal and one could describe it as tokenism. Even after ratification of these protocols, the majority of women serve in central committees as ex-officio members by virtue of their presidency in women's leagues. Parties rarely elect them to strong positions of power in the central committees.

Representation of women in executive committees

Reviewing the executive committees of the three major political parties in Lesotho (classified as major based on how they fared in the 2007 general elections, as well as the previous term), it is clear that there is a long way to go to achieve gender equality in these higher decision-making positions.

The table below demonstrates numbers of males and females in the current executive committees of the three parties.

Table 4 - Party Executive Committees for the current term

	(2008 -2012)			(2005-2008)		
Party Name	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD)	10 (77%)	5 (33%)	15	10 (77%)	5 (33%)	15
All Basotho Convention (ABC)	8 (89%)	1 (11%)	9	-	-	-
Basotho National Party (BNP)	13 (73%)	5 (27%)	18	12 (88%)	5 (29%)	17

The table preceding shows that in LCD, among the 15 executive committee members, only five (33%) are women. In ABC, only one (11%) woman is in the committee among the nine members and in BNP, among the 18 members only five (27%) are women. This shows that mainly men dominate the committees and women's voice is thus minimal.

For the previous term, since the ABC was only established in 2006, the present executive committee is their first democratic executive committee, hence the absence of figures. Females still made up only 33% in LCD and only 29% in BNP.

As can be seen in the table above, the numbers of women in the central committees of these parties are very low. There has been little change in the number of women committee members between the previous committees and the current ones. This directly affects the representation of women in national parliament as women elected to parliament start showing their prowess from political party structures.

Women in executive committees

Women elected in the committees usually hold positions that do not enable any meaningful contribution on women's issues. For example, among the five women in the LCD executive committees of the previous term and the current one, four of the women were elected as members while one is the Deputy Secretary General. That is, a woman was in the position of Deputy Secretary General in the previous committee, and the same female was re-elected to the position in the current committee. In the BNP, three of the women elected are also just members and two are Vice Chairperson and Organiser. In the previous committee of the BNP, four of the women were members while only one was elected as Organiser. For the ABC, the only woman that elected into the executive committee is the Assistant Spokesperson.

This means women are not likely to bring any meaningful impact in advancing a women's agenda in the party committees. Political parties, as major deciders of nominations for public office, thus contribute to the under-representation of women in the public arena. In its *Lesotho Report: African Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2006)* the Government also attests that women's issues have failed to appear in the party's agendas and parties do not take proactive measures to encourage the inclusion and participation of women in their governance policy-making activities.

Policies on women within the three parties

Political parties are the major determinants of the presence or absence of women in their higher echelons and ultimately in the national legislature, and so they are largely able to change the present status quo. While other parties in Lesotho have embraced efforts to empower women, such as through quotas, others still feel women should prove they are capable of election into the high ranks of the parties, while others are silent on women.

Among the three parties under study, the ruling LCD is the only one that has adopted a policy of ensuring that at least 30% of the members of its central committee and committees on all other levels are women. The party's Executive Secretary Tsie Sekoere pointed out that they would rather have a bigger number of members of the executive committee in order to reach the 30% quota. This however may not help, because the numbers would still be skewed and the quality of members will depend on the caliber of women.

The BNP's approach on the other hand is that women should not be pushed into elective positions but they need only be encouraged to stand for elections. The party's Secretary General Ranthomeng Matete said his party believes that merit should be the criterion for appointment, irrespective of gender, that if a person has the requisite qualifications, he or she merits appointment. The BNP's stance is that "the party has no problem with the participation of women in positions of power, but this should rest on their free and voluntary choice in relation to elective positions, and on merit in the case of appointive positions."

Meanwhile, the constitution of the ABC provides for election of a women's league but it does not say anything



Lesotho women agree with 50/50 representation of women in parliament *Photo: Violet Maraisane*

about empowerment of women. The ABC's Secretary General Macaefa Billy observed that even though women dominate the ABC, they are not interested in voting for or electing each other. Billy, who is also a leader of a factory workers trade union, explained that, surprisingly, even in the trade union, where most members are women, they still elect men rather than vote for each other. His party, he said, realises the need to empower women educationally so that they can vote for other women. As for policy on women, his party is considering developing one because Lesotho is signatory to binding conventions on advancement of women.

Conclusion and recommendations

In light of the above, it is evident that political party mechanisms for advancing the status of women in Lesotho are inadequate. More efforts need to be taken to ensure at least 30% representation of women in executive committees of political parties. As stated in a report on *Lesotho: Political Party Quotas*, "If gains are to be made in women's representation at a national level then the under representation of women within leadership structures of the political parties has to be addressed."

It would benefit Lesotho to adhere to the conventions, agreements and protocols that the country has already ratified to empower women. Political parties should also create and enabling environment that would bolster the confidence of women so they can stand for election into high ranks. Furthermore, women should be empowered through training, so that they do not have to be pushed into elective positions but will be aware of the need for them to vote for and elect each other.

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Writers Bio

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Changing men's mindsets in Ghana

By Loveness Jambaya Nyakujarah

Andrew Opoku-Agyeman, member of the local assembly in Ghana, is an eloquent testimony to how men can become allies to facilitate women's participation in decision-making and achieving gender equality. When Opoku-Agyeman contested a local council position in 2002, he competed with an aspiring woman candidate. Like most of his male counterparts, he castigated and insulted her, not as an equal, competent opponent, but based on her gender – she was a woman, therefore incapable. He gave her names, as well as instructed other men and boys not to vote for women.

For instance, at one of the campaign platforms he argued, "A woman who has a husband and children should not be in politics but should be in the kitchen." Opoku-Agyeman was re-elected. This is despite that, as a councillor in the Tema Metropolitan Assembly, he was a member of the Women and Children Committee of the Assembly from 2002 – 2004.

He eventually saw the light when Women in Law & Development (WILDAF) formed and trained three coalitions in Ghana including The Coalition of Women in Governance (COWIG). WiLDAF trained members in areas of human rights, planning and programming, budget and gender budgeting, lobbying, advocacy, networking, and coalition building. Opoku-Agyeman was part of this training.

After the training, he decided that he would not compete in the next election. Instead, he has since started grooming a woman to take his place in September 2010. The Tema COWIG has also started programmes to ensure the election of more women to the Tema Metropolitan Assembly during the 2010 District Assembly election.

According to WILDAF, along with such typical social stereotypes, weak representation of women in decision-making is linked to women's burden of domestic responsibilities. Kafui Kuwonu, Programme Manager with WiLDAF, says that forming women and governance coalitions in seven countries, coupled with capacity building sessions, is helping to empower women to be active citizens and influence decisions in political, economic, and other domains.



Encouraging women voters in Ghana *Photo: WiLDAF*



Advocating for 50/50 in Malawi

By Lowani Mtonga

Abstract

For a country with miserably low representation of women in parliament, only 13% and lying fourth from the bottom in the region, Malawi's 2009 elections present an opportunity for Malawi to increase gender equality. However, women still face significant challenges in joining politics. One of these is resources, and the country's decision to increase fees for parliamentary candidates has made this challenge even more of an obstacle.

Key words

elections, gender, parliamentary fees

Context of Malawi 2009 elections

Given that in 2009 South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, and Malawi, all have elections, it seems reasonable to expect that governments take necessary steps to ensure that they are working towards the 50% women in decision-making goal set in August 2008 by SADC leaders. Malawi has a long way to go when it comes to reaching 50/50. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union database, at 13% Malawi ranks 89th in the world in terms of representation in Parliament. The country's 2009 presidential and parliamentary elections are gripping in more than one aspect. Not only will these be one of the most hotly contested since the dawn of multi-party politics in 1993, but ironically the ruling Democratic People's Party (DPP) will contest for the first time after assuming power through the back door. The elections are also significant potential opportunity for increasing participation of women.

President wa Muthalika, who was elected president on the United Democratic Party (UDF) ticket in May 2004, unceremoniously resigned in February 2005 to form DPP. This paved the way for a mass exodus of MPs from the UDF and the largest opposition Malawi Congress Party (MCP) to the newly founded DPP. By 2006, DPP had over 70 MPs in parliament amassed through defection, with an exception of six who won through by-elections. Power hungry Bakili Muluzi who served as president for two consecutive terms of five years in 1994 and 1999 was barred from contesting the elections, leaving his party, the UDF, in panic to find a replacement and negotiating for an electoral alliance with the main opposition Malawi Congress Party, without real bargaining power.

Compared to any other, this election has attracted the highest number of contestants, 1,097 in the 193-person one-chamber parliament, as well as the highest number of women candidates. A total of 237 female candidates (22% of total) are contesting, many of them, 35%, standing as independent candidates after receiving raw deals from their political parties in the primary elections. However, despite the larger number of women candidates, women in the country still face significant challenges in gaining office, and the country still lags far behind when it comes to gender equality in decision-making.

Resources key challenge for women politicians

The decision early this year by the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) to hike the fee for parliamentary candidates from K 5,000 (about US$ 35) to K 100,000 (US$ 705) came as a great surprise. The increase had serious repercussions for women vying for political office in the 19 May elections. The low representation of women in decision-making positions stems from a plethora of obstacles. Apart from lack of access to education, unsupportive and undemocratic party structures, inimical electoral systems, violence and intimidation, patriarchal and other harmful traditions that relegate women to the kitchen, lack of resources pose a serious challenge for women to engage in a meaningful political campaign. Elections, especially in Malawi, have become frighteningly commercialised, with candidates spending huge sums of money to drum up support. During the primary elections, women politicians struggled with the large amount of money now needed for campaigns.



Emma Kalinya - NGO Gender Co-ordination Network

Photo: Gender Links

Although cultural and traditional barriers are still strong, the huge numbers of women who have shown interest to contest in the elections offers hope, a unique opportunity to increase women representation in parliament. However, debilitating issues like hiking of fees can mar the attainment of that goal. Not many women, especially those in the rural areas, can manage to pay such a colossal sum of money. Most will be discouraged and will throw in the towel before they even try. The high fee that has been charged is not only an unnecessary financial burden on the women candidates, but begs the question whether the MEC, as an organisation, is gender sensitive and committed to seeing more women in parliament in 2009.

The decision shows that the MEC is ignoring the needs of women and out of touch with Malawi's obligations and commitments to gender equality under various gender policies and statutes at local, regional, and international levels. With the SADC Protocol, government has again committed itself to removing barriers and taking necessary steps that stand in the way of achieving gender equality in decision-making. The high election participation fee is one such obstacle. The Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Gender Coordination Network, a key driver of the national 50/50 campaign, undertook a programme to support women candidates, with K168 million (about US $1.18 million) funding from Norwegian Aid, in an effort to counter the challenges of resources.

Gender equality must be a priority

However, financial resources alone will not guarantee more women in office. Malawi's "winner takes all" electoral system is not women-friendly, and political parties have no party quotas. NGOs, community based organisations, media and traditional leaders should make gender an election issue for 2009 – including organising a roundtable with political leaders to interrogate their commitment to equality. NGOs cannot afford to be neutral. They should be more vocal on gender issues

than ever before. Like freedom, more equal representation will unlikely be delivered, if not demanded. This places responsibility on NGOs in the gender sector, such as the Society for Advancement of Women, Women's Voice, Civil liberties Committee and other human rights NGOs, to vigorously campaign for women 50% women in parliament.

This is imperative because not only is gender is a human rights issue, but male politicians often fail to make a difference in national development. Many consider women less corrupt, less pompous, more understanding, and more accountable and transparent than their male counterparts. For example, many current African leaders have failed to provide effective leadership. Many are not transparent or accountable, amassing millions of dollars while the country wallows in economic meltdown and abject poverty. They focus on personal aggrandizement and wealth at the expense of improving the lives and welfare of the people.

For example, former president of Malawi Bakili Muluzi is answering corruption charges involving 1.7 billion kwacha of donor money stashed in his personal account. Former president of Zambia Fredrick Chiluba also faces corruption charges involving billions of dollars. Late Sani Abacha of Nigeria is another paragon example who amassed billions of US dollars in foreign banks. This is minus other past corrupt leaders such as Mobutu Sese Seko (DRC), Marcus Nguema (Equatorial Guinea) and Jeane Emperor Bokasa (Central African Republic).

As political leaders milk their impoverished nations, MPs also have subtle ways of stealing. They construct lucrative packages for themselves at the expense of the people they purport to serve. For example, the male-dominated Malawi parliament has performed dismally over the past fifteen years (with the last five years being the worst). However, every year MPs raise their perks to senseless levels. At one point, they even threatened to strike for better pay. In 2008, they moved a motion that each MP should get 500 liters of fuel per month. What they will do with all this fuel defies any reasoning. Where on earth does an individual use 500 liters of fuel a month? Most of the MPs live in cities and towns and rarely visit their constituents.

Malawi: Holding MP's accountable to safe motherhood promises

By Dingaan Mithi

A campaign by the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood (WRASM) Malawi, calls on aspiring candidates and MPS to declare, and act on, commitments to the health and well-being of the nation's mothers. "Mothers have delivered for the nation, without their votes, aspiring members of parliament (MPs) would not win," observed President of the Association of Malawian Midwives (AMAMI) Lennie Adeline Kamwendo. The campaign challenged aspiring MPs to sign a declaration committing themselves to combating maternal mortality. Based on the declaration, WRASM will track progress of all MPs who sign the document, to strengthen safe motherhood efforts in the country. The advocacy campaign is part of efforts to lobby legislators for more resource allocation in the country's national budget.

WRASM chairperson Darlington Harawa says members of parliament are responsible for ensuring more resources for interventions in safe motherhood. "MPs make a lot of promises during campaigning, but they need to be result-oriented in making sure that maternal deaths are reduced," he stressed. Kamwendo echoed this sentiment, encouraging Malawians to hold MPS other officials accountable to ensure progress. "MPs must always be accountable to improve maternal health, most of them make many promises but when they go into parliament they forget," she laments. Kamwendo explains that the advocacy campaign will continue after the general elections. "The MPs will be held accountable for as long as possible, they must give back. We can't continue to lose women, we will talk to them and those in decision making positions," she emphasised.

Dingaan Mithi is programme officer for Journalists Association Against AIDS in Malawi



MPs must remember campaign promises to mothers
Photo: Trevor Davies



Journalists interviewing Malawian politician Lillian Patel at the media workshop *Photo: Gender Links*

Women bring different perspectives to politics and having more in women parliament will make a difference in the lives of the people. There is ample evidence that women perform as well as, or sometimes even better than men. For example, the outgoing Malawi Second Deputy Speaker of parliament Ester Mcheka Chilenje Nkhoma controlled parliament proceedings better than speaker Louis Chimango, who was often indecisive. Furthermore, her constituents hailed her for using her constituency fee to improve their lives. She channelled money to development projects that made a difference in the lives of the people.

This is not to say that every woman makes a good leader, or that every man makes a bad one, but given the recent track record of male-dominated governance, it is time to give women the floor. There is also a need to flag gender perspectives in electoral processes in other countries, as they prepare for their own polls. An active citizenry, civil society, and media who continue to put pressure on governments to consider how their decisions and actions are reflecting their gender commitments will go a long way to ensuring 50/ 50 in SADC.

Writers Bio
Lowani Mtonga is working for Gender Links as Gender, Media and Elections Project Coordinator.



Tanzania: courageous MP leads the way

By Bestina Magutu

Popular and vocal Member of Parliament (MP) Anne Kilango Malecela received the honour of the Tanzania Woman of Courage Award 2009, bestowed by the United States Embassy in Tanzania. The annual award recognised Malecela's courage and leadership in struggles to improve the lives of Tanzanians when she challenged party leadership to confront the question of corruption, despite the threat this posed to her personal safety.

"Women are born leaders and the government won't be complete without them," says the MP. The U.S. Mission in Tanzania also nominated Malecela as this year's candidate for the 2009 International Women of Courage Award. "Every woman has leadership talent," adds Malecela, "regardless of whether in politics, business, or in the home raising children."

Malecela's success is an inspiration to current and aspiring women politicians in Southern Africa, as well as an example of what voters get when they elect women to decision-making posts. In Malecela's Tanzania, this is particularly important ahead of local government elections set for October this year and the general elections next year. However, other nations with upcoming elections - South Africa, Malawi, Botswana, Mozambique, Mauritius and Namibia will all be going to the polls this year – should also take note of this example of vibrant female leadership.

Recognising that women face a number of challenges entering the public arena, from access to campaign finances to gender stereotypes, the Tanzanian government took a pro-active approach to successfully reach the 30% target set by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for 2005, achieving 30.4% women in Parliament.

Of the 97 seats that went to women in the 2005 elections, Anne Kilango Malecela was one of 17 women MPs elected from constituencies, while the remaining are in Parliament through special seats reserved for women, nominated by their political parties or the President. In addition, the country has seven women ministers (26%), five Deputy Ministers (25%), and recently President Jakaya Kikwete appointed four (out of 12) female judges for the court of appeal.



The United States Chargé d'Affaires Larry André (right) presents a certificate to Member of Parliament for, the Honorable Anne Kilango Malecela, (left) who was selected as the 2009 Tanzanian Woman of Courage. *Photo: Embassy of the United States (Tanzania)*

The next step is for Tanzania to reach the 50% by 2015 target agreed in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development signed by regional leaders, including Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete, in August last year. No SADC country has yet achieved gender parity in parliament and only five (Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Namibia) have achieved the 30% target.

Despite progress, Tanzania gender activists are calling on the government to come up with a distinctive machinery to fulfill its promise of equal representation in the parliament.

According to participants at an event organised by the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), lack of economic capacity and support can derail female aspirants political careers ahead of the 2010 general elections, making the 50% goal difficult to implement.

Anna Komu, a special seat MP, as well as the 2005 presidential running mate for the opposition party Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema), agreed that finances make it difficult for women to contest for leadership both within the political party, as well as for public offices such as Parliament.

"Women lack enough support from members of the public, as well as party members. They are expected to earn that in exchange for giving out material things, yet they are at an economic disadvantage," says Komu. "It's custom for politician to offer gifts such as wrappers, sugar, salt, and even money during the campaigns as a way of earning votes from the public."

Media is one of the most vital tools for political publicity and "selling" a politician, yet most media in Tanzania rarely feature women as sources of news. When they do, there is a tendency to give poor coverage, or focus on petty or negative issues.

Ananilea Nkya, Executive Director of TAMWA, a member organisation of the gender activist coalition Feminist Activism (FemAct), believes that Tanzanian women are ready to contest in the constituencies, citing that 17 out of 18 women nominated by the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in the 2005 general elections were successful. "This proves that women are competitive enough," says Nkya.

According to Nkya, more nominations of women to contest various posts in the constituencies is the right way to implement the goal of equal representation, differing from the ruling party proposal to create more special seats for women.

It is not yet clear how the government is going to implement the 50% target, as there is no special mechanism in place yet. What is clear is that, as women like Anne Kilango Malecela show, there is no doubt that women have the courage and capacity to lead.

Writers Bio
Bestina Magutu is a writer from Tanzania.

Debating leadership



Local councillors hard at work in Maseru, Lesotho *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*







Botswana at the coalface – women as leaders

By Pamela Mhlanga, Susan Tolmay
and Colleen Lowe Morna

Abstract

As part of the second phase of research that led to the Gender Links (GL) publication: *At the Coalface: Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa*, research was conducted in Botswana in 2008 that included interviews with 59 councillors in 5 localities and focus group meetings with 48 women and men. The views and voices reflected in this research illustrate the importance of local government and why gender should be at the heart of this process.

Key words

gender, politics, leadership, local government

Gender equality in Botswana

Botswana is considered one of the most stable democracies in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with a number of positive indicators of development, including high literacy rates, access to education, and health. The country has also done remarkably well in providing universal access to treatment and care for persons living with HIV and AIDS. The estimated number of pregnant women living with HIV who received ARV therapy for preventing mother to child transmission in 2007 was 95%.

Yet gender inequality is pervasive and women's empowerment is far from being realised. The Constitution of Botswana, the source of the rights and freedoms of women, has claw back clauses that fail to address contradictions between customary law and the Bill of Rights, leaving women's rights vulnerable to violation. The area of gender and governance, particularly women in decision-making in the legislature and local government, reflects the challenges on the ground with regard to women's equal representation and participation

in spheres of influence. Botswana has not reached the minimum 30% representation in either the legislature (11%), or cabinet (25%) or local government (19%).

So far, Botswana is the only SADC country in which the trend regarding women in parliament has been backwards. In the 2004 elections the representation of women in parliament dropped by 6% (from 17% in 1999). Information available on women who have won the ongoing primary elections and are through to the general elections in October 2009 is not promising, as a number of them have been dropped at this preliminary stage. As the country gears for the 2009 elections there are fears that even meagre gains could be reversed. On the other hand, the increase in women's representation at local government level from 15% in 1999 to 19% in 2004 suggests that there is potential to widen women's access to, and participation in, decision-making in Botswana. However, there is still a long way to go to reach the 50% mark at every level of governance in the country.



Kgatleng District Councillors *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

Of the 16 local authorities, three have only one or two women in the council (Jwaneng, Kgalagadi and Chobe), with women being outnumbered by a large margin in the Kgalagadi district council (92% men). It is also interesting to note that the largest district council (central) only has a 22% representation of women (38 women councillors out of 172). One of the smallest councils (Sowa township council with seven councillors) has almost 50% women representation, three women councillors out of seven. Both city councils (Gaborone and Francistown) have not reached even a minimum 30% in council, at 20 and 23% respectively. Overall only two councils, Sowa and Lobatse have achieved higher than 30% women's representation. These figures clearly point to the slow progress in women's access to local government.

Women and men councillors per local authority

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

What women bring to politics

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

Since 2004, she stepped up the registering of orphans, and ensuring that they have access to food at places that are nearer to them. She has worked hard to ensure that persons with disabilities gain recognition and are not hidden away in shame, have greater access to mobility (wheel chairs), and are also economically empowered to gain independence. She proudly talks of



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

Edwin Phalane who has a disability, and whom she assisted to get a youth grant, and who is now operating an ice cream vending machine and earning an income.

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

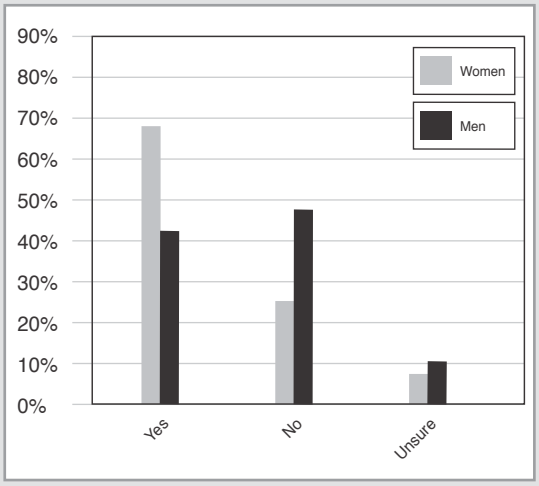
One of her exciting projects was founding a football team, and because of her love for sports, she has provided sports gear to teams, as well as resources. One of her dreams is to support the formation of a women's football club.

Salome Lesole is just one example of what women bring to leadership. While not all women are the same, there are certain perceived qualities and characteristics that they bring to their work that not only enhances but also enriches good governance.

Interests and concerns

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

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



Women (67.5%) agreed far more with the statement that women bring different interests and concerns to decision-making than men (42.1%). These findings correlate with the first *At the Coalface* study, which found that on average 61% of women and only 39% of the men agreed with the statement. When asked to explain their views on the issue, the following were some of the responses:

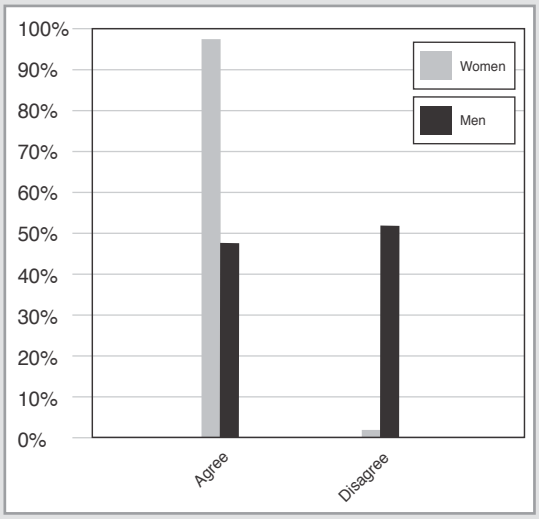
- They fight for women's rights
- Women are more accountable for effective development than men. They do care and are willing to help.
- As wives and mothers women are more loving and responsible, even politically
- Men tend to be selfish representing their own interests only unlike women who would care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

Sensitivity to local concerns

Linked to whether or not women have different interests and concerns is the issue of whether or not women feel more strongly about local issues. The theory runs that because of their daily involvement in matters like water,

sanitation and hygiene, it is fair to assume that women have a greater sensitivity to these issues at the level of public policy.

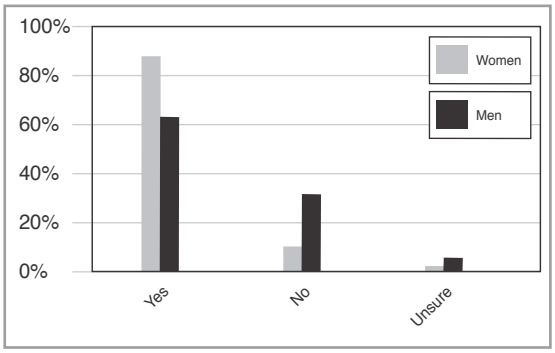
What the councillors said about women's sensitivity to local concerns?



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

In the focus group discussions, Gaborone men said that having a woman as a councillor has made a difference to their lives because of their commitment to community service. They said interaction between the councillor and the constituents improved, as compared to the time when a man councillor led their ward. Women from the Kweneng district highlighted the fact that women councillors interact with their people since they are seen at funerals, visit their constituents at their homes, and provide advice where possible. They preferred women councillors to men since women are more approachable than their male counterparts are and have shown that they care about the wellbeing of the people.

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, represent everybody's interests. However, 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.

Do women have the responsibility to raise other women's issues?

More women councillors agreed, (87.5%) compared to men (63.2%). These findings concur with the previous *At the Coalface* study, which found that overall 83% of all councillors (86% women and 76% men) agreed. Similarly, in the first *At the Coalface* study, many women councillors interviewed said they wanted to demonstrate that women can lead, become a "voice" for women, and raise "women centered" issues. Some comments from councillors include:

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

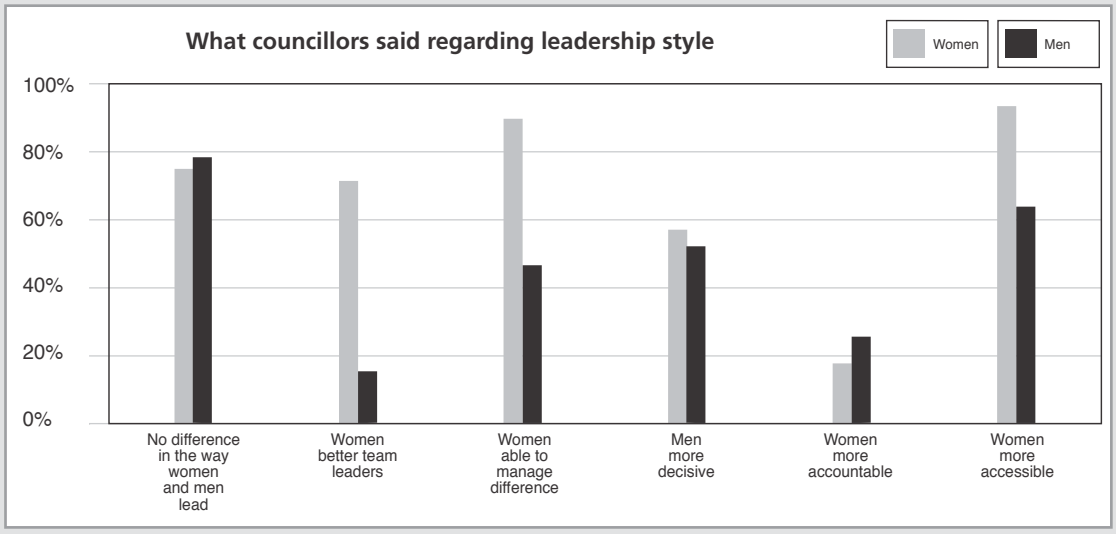
These findings resonate with global findings on women in decision-making. A survey of women's political experience carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1999 including 187 women from 65 countries showed that 89% of women politicians consider that they have a special responsibility to represent the needs and interests of women (IPU, 2000).

Leadership style

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



Mmapula Motshegwe, Nkidi Raiye, Baesi Nanisa Gare, and Betty Morolong are part of the Labour Intensive Public Works Programme (LIPW) in Khatleng Photo: Susan Tolmay



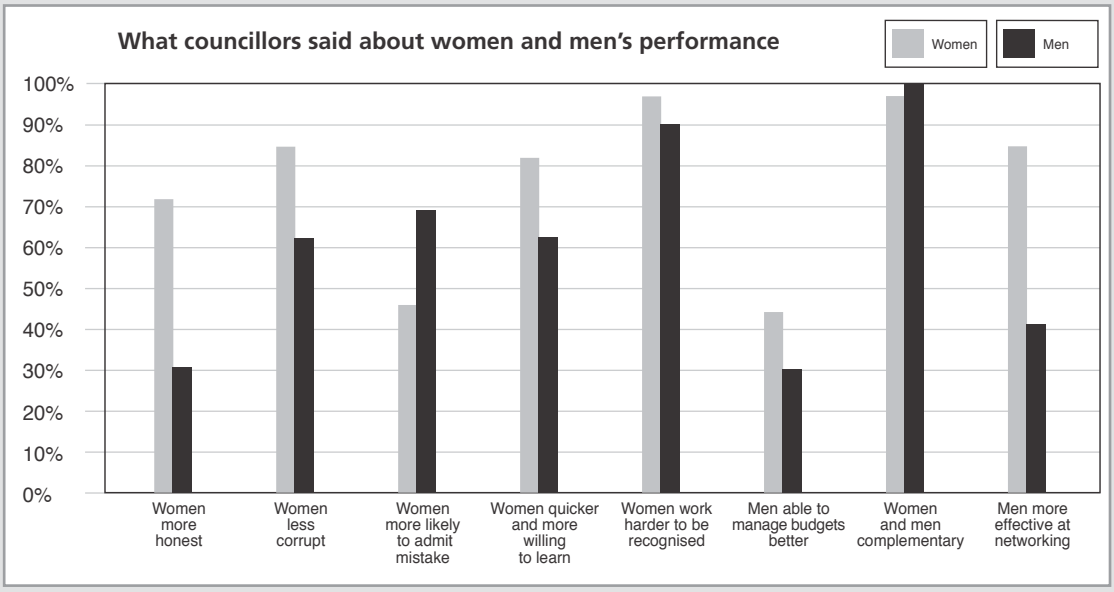
The men and women from the Kgatleng district Village Development Committee (VDC) noted that in terms of service delivery, women councillors are doing a great job since they take their work seriously, unlike men who are said to be interested in "scoring points with women" (making themselves attractive in the eyes of women).

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 a number of statements.

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

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



There was a big discrepancy (40.9%) in perceptions as regards the statement that women are more honest than men are, with 72.5 % of the women agreeing with this statement compared to only 30.6% of men. This resonates with the first *At the Coalface* study, which found a 32% discrepancy. As in the first *At the Coalface* study, women and men tended to agree that women have to work harder than men to be recognised. A majority of the women in this study (82.5%) compared to 63.2% men believe that men are quicker and more willing to learn than women. The reverse was true in the first study.

Impact

There are mixed views on the impact that women have made in communities. There are still many barriers for women to overcome before they can really start making a significant impact in Botswana. The trends discerned from this study show that with time the contributions and "value add" of women will turn the tide of governance at local level, and that the process is incremental. The impact of women in local government is very difficult to measure when there are so few of them.

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

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

- Men and women in civil society from the central district say they believe in the women councillors, and that they are making a difference. In particular, they noted that they had worked well with other women in the village committees, particularly on home based care, and in VDCs. They want to forge closer ties with the councillors.
- Men and women from the VDC central district highlighted the fact that women are better at delivering on commitments as compared to their male counterparts. Although they noted that the women councillors might not be well educated "they are doing a good job . Notably, they are involved in home based care, and also taking care of both men and women alike. They are outstanding in carrying out the mandate from the constituency.
- In the Kgatleng district, the men and women from the VDC say that women have proven that they are effective in their assignments and they can be easily located when needed. The woman councillor in the ward meets with the committee and helps in the programmes undertaken by the VDC. She extends her commitment by availing her vehicle to be used by the village development committee of the ward in executing community work.



Markets are important for women: Buntle Kegodile Informal market Gaborone West *Photo: Susan Tolmay*

- The women from the Kweneng say that the women councillors interact with their people since they are seen at funerals and visit their constituents at their homes and provide advice where possible. They preferred women councillors to men since they considered women more approachable than their male counterparts and have shown that they care about the wellbeing of the people.
- Gaborone women say their ward councillor takes the constituents seriously as she listens to their problems and works hard to see the people leading a good life. One of the participants was thankful to the councillor for informing her about orphans' policy and assisting her to register her late sister's children for the programme. They were also grateful to her for having dealt with a drainage problem that occurs in their area during the rainy season.

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

- The men and women from civil society in Lobatse felt that women councillors in their community have not made any positive impact in their organisations. According to them, it is the same as a council comprising of men alone. Women councillors are said to go to council to enrich themselves.
- Women from the central district said they were not linked to the woman councillor in their ward, and that she does not participate in community work. They further said that that they do not know anything about what she does in council.

Conclusions

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

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

Writers Bio
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The Great Debates: gender equality, quotas, polygamy, and leadership

By Saeanna Chingamuka and Deborah Walter



Abstract

In essence, transformative leadership is about change. However, what do we mean by "transformative leadership" and "transformative politics"? How will we recognise transformative leaders, and what kind of transformation and change do we want from them? Why and what role should women play in transforming politics and governance? Recognising that Southern Africa will be holding a wide number of elections in the next two years, Gender Links and partners hosted a series of debates between February and April 2009 in an attempt to answer some of these questions.

Key words

elections, transformative leadership, gender equality, gender quotas.

The Great Debates

"In the first years of our freedom most people would have tended to vote ANC, now it is no longer quite so straightforward. People are asking questions, which is a good thing. I mean that is what democracy is."

– Nobel Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu

Although the above quote refers to South Africa and the country's dominant party, the African National Congress (ANC), the principle could apply to any country. A healthy democracy is one in which the electorate asks questions, interrogates progress, and makes an informed decision on voting day. Moreover, in the most robust democracies, the electorate's role and decision-making power does not end at the polls; they are also part of holding their government and leaders accountable. More and more, voters are realising how much power they wield to shape their governments. Tired of corruption, systemic poverty, and inequalities, they are looking for a very different kind of politics and governance.

A series of debates organised by Gender Links and partners offered a platform for citizens to come together and discuss transformative leadership - what type of change they want to see, and the qualities of a leader most capable to achieve this.

Each debate centred on a proposed motion, which was open to panellists and audience for comments. These included:

- Debates on the motion: "Men have failed to show visionary leadership in SADC: It is time for women to take over because they have better leadership qualities" during two gender and local government strategy workshops in Botswana and Zambia in February.
- A debate on the motion, "Is the personal political?" convened by the GMDC, Gender Links, Constitution Hill, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Critical Thinking Forum of the Mail and Guardian Newspaper to commemorate International Women's Day on 8 March 2009.
- A debate on the motion "Quotas for women in politics: Malaise or progress for the women's movement?" held during a meeting of the Southern African Protocol Alliance on 19 March with a panel of politicians and academics for and against.
- A debate on the motion: "Does polygamy have a place in Africa?" hosted by the international arm of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) with one man and one woman for and a man and women against the motion. The live audience included citizens of five Southern African countries, and several others phoned in from across Africa.

Although the opinions often varied, it is the process itself, of open dialogue and critical thinking about what kind of leaders can bring the country and the region forward, which contributes to a more informed electorate. The result from these debates is a proposed checklist, found at the back of this publication, to help ask some of these critical questions about leadership, gender, and transformation. The following outlines some of the issues raised during these debates.

"Men have failed to show visionary leadership; it is now time for women to take over"

This first debate began by questioning what transformative leadership means. Keiso Matashane-Marite, of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Zambia, listed qualities such as: a leader facilitates change; they have respect for the rule of law; they encourage both women and men to participate in governance; they operate in a system that ensures that the governance structures are transparent, inclusive and participatory; and they respect diversity. The speaker pointed out that SADC is battling with many challenges, including the feminisation of poverty and HIV and AIDS. She argued for equal representation of women in government, with the illustration that, "If you live in a country where, for example, black people are in the majority, you would expect the government to mirror this – the same applies to women and youth."

Professor Nkandu Luo concurred, noting that male leaders in Zambia "have a lot to answer for and that women would certainly do a better job." She pointed out that she could not understand how Zambia is one of the world's poorest countries, yet it controls 60% of Africa's water. She highlighted being prepared to change as an important quality of a good leader, as well as being inclusive. Further, she argued, "a good leader thinks beyond their nose." Other qualities are empathy, humility, being knowledgeable and having a love for people. She closed by saying that "the time is now for women take over leadership."

Elijah Rubvuto of the Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) posed the question, "If women have better leadership qualities then why haven't they taken over?" His argument was that men are still in leadership because the voters, the majority of which are women, have placed them there. He added that it is important to look at systems and structures and how these either help or hinder women's participation, admitting that men and



Susan Tolmay, Gender Links, commenting during the "Great Debate

women competing on an equal slate has not worked that well.

When the debate opened to the floor, one speaker said that women do not support one another, and as a result are not voted into leadership. The speaker added that women must change their attitude, before change will occur. Another participant countered that the systems within which women have to operate must change, and this points to the need for a quota system. Another participant echoed this view, adding that it is important to conduct research in rural areas and to conscientise women in these areas.

To sum up moderator, Matrine Bbuku Chuulu, Women in Law Southern Africa (WLSA) Regional Coordinator, highlighted the importance of understanding the issues, including those that hinder women's progression and the need to develop strategies so that goals can be set and achieved. Women need to start challenging the restrictive patriarchal systems and these systems have to be transformed by progressive leaders.

"Is the personal political?"

Following the media attention of the private life of South African president, Kgalema Mothlante, Gender Links hosted a debate to discuss the question of whether the private lives of politicians are fair game for media coverage, and an indicator of public capacity. The panellists reflected a wide range of views, including the following.

- It depends on asking at which point a public figure's life becomes in the public interest. If a leader abuses his or her position, then that is in the public interest.
- We all have different beliefs and although the media often argues for the public's right to know, we have to ask: which public? There are many publics, some of which may believe there is a right but others may find it [delving into privacy] offensive. There are three instances where it may be relevant: if a person campaigns on a moral platform and their private life does not live up to it, if it [their private life] is illegal and if their financial problems indicate they may not be good fiscal managers.
- Political leaders are held to a higher standard and there should be personal accountability. However, the speaker felt that the media at times intrudes into the private lives of politicians which should not be acceptable and raises questions about the media's intentions in sensationalising various issues for instance Motlante's personal life.
- One journalist pointed out that the public has the right to know and it is the role of the media to inform citizens. Another noted that when one takes public office, they give up their lives and as such, when their private lives are exposed, they should not be shocked. In fact, this is what transformative leadership is about, living a transparent life that society can imitate.

Some participants in the debate pointed out that the public has the right to know, but at the same time, journalists should be able to draw a line by leaving out politicians private lives and concentrating on the work that politicians do on the ground. The debate also ignited the issue of polygamy and whether this practise squares with progressive leadership, particularly given that the ANC president is a polygamist.

A female participant commented that, "This is Africa. We are Africans. We should resist taking [on board] Western notions ... there are a number of men who have more than one wife," she said, adding that if she chose to be a second wife it was part of her culture. Such comments seemed to retreat into culture that ignored decades of struggle by women across Africa for equality and progress within traditional practice or religious belief. In response, a different speaker said that culture was being used for the wrong reasons and underscored the importance of finding a balance and talking about what this culture is all about.

In conclusion, moderator SA Human Rights Commissioner Pregs Govender pointed out that progressive leadership also comes with responsibility on the part of those who seek power, who ultimately are role models in society. Culture and gender equality in political parties is a contested space and this is an issue that should be looked into as we attempt to move from quantity to quality leadership. Transformative leadership requires that politicians be accountable.

"50/50 and the Women's Quota, Malaise or Progress by the Women's Movement?"

On this occasion, the debate was rooted in one of the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which calls for all states to reach a 50/ 50 target of representation of women in politics and decision-making structures. The moderator of the debate referred to Lesotho, a country that in 2005 implemented the quota system for local government positions. The system has been successful and has increased the number of women in local government. As such, the quota system should be taken to the higher level of governance. One of the panellists said that she was in favour of quotas to achieve 50/ 50 for the following reasons:

1. Quotas are a way to achieve quantity representation and it goes well with the population numbers of women and girls.
2. Electoral systems have not been able to bring transformation that the region would want to see. Quotas can therefore complement the PR or FPTP systems.
3. The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development of 1997 was not binding and the 2008 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development is not yet binding. Therefore, quotas can play a role in achieving 50/ 50 by 2015.
4. Even if quotas are voluntary, we should ensure that they become a law and this is largely dependant on the party that wins elections.

In contrast, Thandi Mzondi of the United Democratic Party in South Africa pointed out that her party does not believe in quotas. They generally feel that quotas are a kind of a token whereas women should prove that they could actually lead. Women should be capacitated to deliver and be chosen for any leadership post. Another supporter of quotas pointed out that



Women politicians share their views at the Great Debate *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

she strongly supports legislated and constitutional quotas. Quotas can not be used in isolation including economic and social measures. It is important to level the play field part and implementing quotas cannot be on willingness of parties. When we look at quotas we need gender sensitive and constitutional equality. There is need for institutional transformation because we can not always assume that quantity or quality can change society. On the other hand, we do not acknowledge the quality of men as leaders and an assessment of the political environment is vital.

The debate continued with different speakers airing their views on why when it comes to women's participation, there is talk about quality, but not when it comes to male leaders. Women, just like their male counterparts, should be allowed to learn on the job and at the same time, the same women who are put in decision-making positions should claim their space. One speaker asked the female politician how her party would achieve 50/ 50 if they do not want to implement quotas. In response, the female politician said that they are working on capacitating women, as well as black men who were also disadvantaged during apartheid and therefore should be included in capacity building. The question is can we afford women who are in political positions, but do not push the gender agenda. Quantity and quality thus go together. We need to ensure that we put in place gender mainstreaming mechanisms. There is also the feminisation of deputy positions and this need to be looked into.

There was a consensus in the house that advocated for quotas. There is a need to not only focus on parliament but also the corporate sector. Networking is ever important as women can learn from each other. Women should be given support hence the role of the watchdogs. Power games should always be remembered and it is important to bring man to such debates. There is also a general delay at party level and we should therefore retaliate through the power of the vote and remember that longevity is key.

Debating polygamy - election hot topic


Background

Who will Zuma's First Lady be?

Zuma's threats to judges should worry law-abiding South Africans

Perhaps one of the most hotly debated topics arising out of the elections demonstrated how the personal *is* political, whether politicians like it or not. The polygamous lifestyle of expected President to be Jacob Zuma, leader of the African National Congress (ANC) became part of the elections dialogue, especially amongst gender and women's rights activists. The mainstream media focused on such logistical matters as security costs and which wife would accompany the new President during official functions. On the other hand, while traditionalists argued cultural choice, gender activists questioned the practice's place in a constitutional democracy that provides for guarantees of gender equality.

As part of Gender Links' "Great Debates" ahead of the 22 April South African elections, a live debate aired during SABC News International's "African Views" brought together four panellists to debate on the question: Does polygamy have a place in Africa? Somewhat surprisingly, the discussion did not directly link to the upcoming elections and Jacob Zuma's impending presidency. Reference to the possibility of having a polygamous president only occurred at the end of the discussion. Yet the previous months' media attention undoubtedly inspired the newfound interest in the topic.

Neil Higgs of Innovation and Development TNS Research Surveys outlined findings from a research survey of 2000 metro respondents about polygamy.

The survey found that only 18% agreed the practice did not pose any problems. Not surprisingly, there were large variations by gender and culture. The research showed that 80% of black females disagreed with the practice, as well as 55% of black males, 78% of Indians and Asians, 85% of coloureds and 86% of whites. Of Zulus, a culture where polygamy is still practiced in some cases, 41% of Zulu males agreed with the practice, as opposed to 16% of Zulu women. This cultural and gender divide was mostly, but not entirely, continued in the substance of insights from the panellists and comments from audience members.

The question of culture vs. constitution

Much of the debate, both during the SABC International events and in other venues, focused on constitution versus culture. Most people who argue for the right to practise polygamy, do so based on arguments of culture and tradition. According to Inkosi Mpiyezintombi, Deputy Chairperson of the Kwa-Zulu Natal House of Traditional Leaders, all people have the freedom to choose the kind of relationship they want. Entering into a polygamous union is not compulsory or forced; a woman chooses whether to be in such a relationship.

Julia Mabale, Commission for The Protection of Culture, Religious, and Linguistic Communities, echoed this sentiment, adding that women are empowered to say yes or no to additional wives. She further argued that polygamy is a longstanding practice that actually promotes family and social units. Both Mabale and Mpiyezintombi were of the strong belief that polygamy is a part of certain cultures, suggesting that it is inappropriate to put these practices into Western-style contexts. According to both, there are practical reasons for the existence of such unions, such as the need to procreate (if the wife is not able) and to prevent men from engaging in outside relationships.

It is clear that when it comes to respect for cultural diversity, feelings are very strong. Yet there are diverse opinions on the definition and functions of culture. Colleen Lowe Morna, Executive Director of Gender Links pointed out:

> "Polygamy is not a product of any given culture. Mormons are white, various Muslim groups are polygamous. Polygamy is not a function of any particular culture, it is a function of patriarchy. The definition of this is the superiority of men over women. And if we accept that this is an unacceptable ideology, as much as apartheid was a function of racism and we rejected it, if we reject sexism, we cannot subscribe to a system where men can have many wives, but women can not have many husbands."

Although traditionalists suggest that polygamy encourages a family unit, according to Bafana Khumalo, Commissioner of the Commission for Gender Equality, this supposed harmony may actually be very divisive. "Even the children are classified as being of the great house or the juniour house. And the problems that happen with succession are a disaster." He proposes that such unions often cause competition for scarce resources – from love to material needs. Khumalo added, "Given that we are building a society based on a human rights culture, where all people are equal. I think any system that seeks to give more advantage to one gender is problematic."

According to Mpiyezintombi, such human right arguments are steeped in Western culture, and do not recognise these cultural differences. Lowe Morna countered this argument, stating that polygamy is fundamentally unequal, and thus has no place in a constitutional democracy. Lowe Morna pointed out that all people in the country, not just certain cultures, are governed by the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Constitution recognises culture, but is very clear that when there is a contradiction between this and Bill of Rights, the Bill of Rights supersedes. She added that as a society, South Africa has chosen to ascribe to an ideal of equality, including gender equality. The concept of polygamy is built on patriarchy, which by its very nature gives men power over women. As such, the practice of polygamy and equality do not square.

Lowe Morna noted that in South Africa the Law Reform Commission had debated the issue extensively and come to the conclusion that polygamy is unconstitutional. However, in order to avoid a backlash, the Law Reform Commission avoided calling for a ban on polygamy, opting instead for the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (1998) giving women in customary marriages the right to sue for a divorce, and to equal inheritance of property. The hope is that polygamy will die a natural death for financial reasons and as thinking on gender issues progresses. This was largely the case, until the rise of Zuma, South Africa's new president, whose ascendancy poses new challenges.

Polygamy and the constitution

Would polygamy stand the test of a Constitutional Court challenge? It seems difficult to see how provisions for equal rights between women and men could possibly be squared with a system that allows men to have as many wives as they want yet women to have only one husband! Furthermore, if every man had six wives, a very large number would have none, since women comprise half the population. How equal or fair can such a system be for men, let alone for women!

What kind of respect does Jacob Zuma have for the women that every few months he acquires? Ah, I can hear some readers say, but they marry him willingly! In response, I would ask you to name one situation in which there is a power imbalance in society in which the underdog is not said to "willingly" do what the master wants. We would do well to scrutinise the sub-text, like the fact that one of Zuma's wives (Nkosozana) divorced him before pursuing a successful career as foreign minister while another (Kate) committed suicide after writing a damning letter about Zuma's lifestyle.

Clearly, it's not all a case of happily ever after. Is this relevant to the leadership debate? Should we be like the French, who believe that the private lives of politicians are out of bounds (except when a woman minister has a baby out of wedlock!) or like the Americans, who believe so passionately that the personal is political that they almost impeached a president for telling half truths about his philandering?

To me it's not about copying one model or the other but about putting our leaders through a battery of tests that include reflecting in their lives the fundamental values of our Constitution. As I see it, even without all the other blots in Zuma's copy book, his big-chief attitude towards women, not to mention failure to recognise that a woman wearing a kanga might in fact not be asking to have sex, disqualify him from leading this great nation. It's high time we find the voice to say that if any leader does not show equal respect for women and men – in deed as in word – he or she is simply not fit to rule.

- excerpted from "Polygamy and progressive leadership do not square" By Colleen Lowe Morna

Each of the panellists on the SABC International debate indicated that such ongoing public dialogue helps society assess its values and ideals, and gauge the nation's progress to achieving these. Yet, during the pre-election dialogues on this particular issue, respect for diverse opinion, but more importantly the sanctity of all people to express such opinions, was not always apparent.

Colleen Lowe Morna's article (excerpted above) "Polygamy and progressive leadership do not square" appeared in the *Mail and Guardian* 10 February 2009. The article subsequently appeared on the *Mail and Guardian*'s online edition, where it was open to comment by readers, who are able to post their own reactions alongside the original article .

Much of the responses followed similar lines as the above debate, questioning the tensions between culture and equality. The following comments have been copied from reactions posted about the article.

"While I also agree that it's necessary to treat cultural customs with respect, the fact that a group of people have been doing something for a long time (as their forefathers did before them) isn't, in itself, enough to make it okay. Rape is also as old as the hills, as is slavery. I'm not equating the matter at hand with these two examples, merely trying to point out what I see as problematic reasoning."

- Clarien Luttig on February 10, 2009, 11:58 am

"Polygamy is fair since both the senior wife and the new one have to agree on the marriage. The marriage cannot continue without the senior wife's consent. The imposition the idea of equality of gender is not compromised because the husband does not deal with his wives as 'half-wives' but as complete human beings."

- Zimbali Kwela on February 10, 2009, 2:00 pm

"I should still meet a happy woman in such a marriage. They are merely forced to accept it, due to cultural constraints."

- Paul Carolus on February 10, 2009, 1:30 pm

"Please remember the children that are involved. Each of these unions usually yields offspring who are all entitled to be maintained, loved and supported. One of the most difficult issues in SA right now is children who are not adequately supported by their fathers... Men having multiple marriages and therefore many children is simply not in the best interests of children."

- Sally Dix_Fairwwather on February 10, 2009, 6:40 pm

"Tradition is fine... until cultural norms contribute to illness, death and decimation of your own people. How are Jacob Zuma's personal behaviours (not his rhetoric) helping to influence young people of South Africa and reduce the consequences of HIV/AIDS?"

- Keith Watson on February 10, 2009, 10:59 pm

Ongoing dialogue and debate

However, in some instances, there is a seeming opinion that Lowe Morna, and so presumably others like her, do not even have the right to question culture, or even raise the topic. It seems ironic that individuals will argue that everyone has the right to choice and opinion to engage in polygamy, yet at the same time, state that others do not have the right to their own differing opinions.

"I don't know how the M&G has managed to permit such an extreme prejudicial commentary like the one I have just read...It's such a disgrace for a public platform, like this, to be used by any opinionated person, who has no culture, to throw insults at our African cultures. It's abysmal to say the least."

- Siphiwo Qangani with kangaroos on February 10, 2009, 2:50 pm

"If you can't reconcile with our many cultures you are of course free to leave and live in Europe."

- Freddie Fillis on February 10, 2009, 9:56 am

"I think its an eye opening what you said .You are challenging the Zulu empire. who do you think you are?"

- kevin kunene on February 10, 2009, 10:02 am?

"As much as we all don't think Zuma is not the person for the job, lets not get all preachy. I think you are imposing your own sense of conservative morality onto people whom you truly do not understand."

- Dave Harris on February 9, 2009, 9:22 pm

In response to these comments, Lowe Morna noted: "It is interesting to me that the majority of those who chose to comment on my article telling me to go back to Europe etc are white men (those who have access to technology no doubt, and who are unrepentant in their patriarchal views). As it turns out, I am an African, born and bred, and my husband of 25 years is the oldest son in a polygamous family. We have raised his 8 brothers and sisters, and seven half brothers and sisters, and treated them equally."

Lowe Morna adds

> "In Africa, as Ali Mazrui once famously said, 'there are no illegitimate children, only illegitimate parents from time to time.' I wish that my mother-in-law, the only surviving spouse in this three-some, could have been present at the SABC International debate, or was able to contribute to the M and G online debate; unfortunately, she does not speak English and she is not literate. However, as the older wife who had to put up with a second wife and then care for all her children after she and the father died, my mother-in-law could tell the man who seem so affronted by the polygamy debate a thing or two about what it means to be at the receiving end of a polygamous relationship. She, like so many other African women, will go to her grave with so much on her chest that society expected her to endure in silence. Is that the best our constitutional democracy can give us?"

In some the instances mentioned above, the comments did not counter opinions and arguments, but rather argued that Lowe Morna did not have the right to even raise these. If we are aspiring to a an inclusive democracy as well as striving to elect transformative leaders, such dialogue and debate is imperative. As commentator Rhulani Kubayi said on the M&G comments:

> "It's okay to talk and argue about things. That's how cultures evolve. In fact, the worst that could happen to any culture (or any practice for that matter) is to be static. We need to hold these things against the light and decide if they are worthwhile."

During the SABC International Debate, Kubi Rama, deputy Director of Gender Links, pointed out that there is a need to look at the context in which women make these culturally based choices. Another M&G commentator notes, "(Some) women agreed to female circumcision too, didn't they? But surely no one thinks this proves that female circumcision is consistent with gender equality."

Of course, some women make the conscious choice to enter or accept a polygamous marriage. Yet, going back to the Innovation and Development TNS Research Surveys findings, 80% disagreed with the practice and only 16% of Zulu women (one of the cultures in which polygamy is still widely accepted) agreed with the practice. Cultural expectations are powerful, and have great influence over the life "choices" that people make. Perhaps it is indicative that women in rural areas, with less education, and who are more economically poor, are more likely to choose polygamy than those who have access to more opportunities.

Conclusion

Regardless of where one stands on the issues of polygamy, or any other cultural matter, it is imperative that society encourage dialogue and debate. Open dialogue means that we can celebrate the diversity of cultures and retain all of the positive aspects, while realising that cultures are fluid. Change can contribute to a stronger culture rather than being a destructive force.

The "Great Debates" centred on the role of the media in advancing democracy and transformative leadership, how quotas can enhance quantity and quality leadership and ultimately the value of having women on board in politics and decision-making. Such debate is even more important during elections periods and with regard to leaders.

Continued dialogue is also important to engage with, support, and challenge leaders. The checklist found at the back of this publication is one tool to assess and challenge leaders with. Live debates, writing of commentaries, and using new media such as online bulletin boards are all ways for citizens to be active participants in democracies.

Writers Bio
Saeanna Chingamuka is the Coordinator of the Gender and Media Diversity Centre and Deborah Walter is the Editor at Gender Links.

Open letter to JZ on women's rights

By Colleen Lowe Morna



Dear President-elect Jacob Zuma

As I write this letter to you, I am looking at the invitation to your inauguration on Saturday 9 May. I must say that I have never felt so ambivalent before about being invited to an event at the Union Buildings. Maybe I am just shocked that I even made it onto the guest list. I would not rank up there with Jonathan Shapiro (or Zapiro) as one of your most prominent detractors (I see the shower head is to remain in his cartoons..) but I certainly have been a vocal critic.

Also on my desk is the 18-24 April edition of the *Economist,* calling you "Africa's next Big Man." In one of its more measured assessments of an incoming African president, the *Economist* puts its finger on the nub of the matter: what will you use your bigness for? Will the patriarchal underpinnings of that phrase just become a natural extension of unbridled power, or will you use your "bigness" to accept your shortcomings and the advice of those around you?

If the latter, there is the incredible possibility that your presidency might create for South African women even more space than that of Thabo Mbeki, whose checkered legacy has as one of its bright spots his progressive stance on women. It was Mbeki, you will remember, who appointed 42% women to his cabinet and who, in the words of former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, could be counted on "to be on the right side of the argument where women's rights were concerned."

You, on the other hand, start with the cards stacked against you: A rape case in which the judge failed to find sufficient evidence to convict you but in which you famously inferred that an HIV positive woman who regarded you as a father, dressed in a traditional wrap around skirt was asking for sex; in which you said you took a shower to prevent yourself getting infected.

You did nothing to stop those baying for your rape accuser's blood outside the court house. As you prepare to take office, she lives in exile, unsafe in the land of her birth because she dared to take up a case against the "Big Man."

You are openly defensive about having several wives (though I doubt you would countenance any one of them having several husbands) and have not espoused any coherent policy on women's rights (or on many other issues for that matter).

In fairness, however, there are some hints that you

could use your "bigness" in ways useful to our cause. One of the great ironies of your ascendancy is that some strong women rights activists silenced under Mbeki are finding their feet again.

Pregs Govender, who "resigned from parliament but not from politics" over her disgust at spending on arms while hundreds of thousands died of HIV and AIDS is back in public life as a commissioner in the Human Rights Commission. And, under the interim administration of Kgalema Motlanthe, Barbara Hogan replaced Manto Tshabalala-Msimang as minister of health, giving a breath of fresh air to an era of disastrous policies on HIV and AIDS.

On the numbers front you have, so far, upheld the African National Congress (ANC) policies of gender parity. Bar a few anomalies (like you and Motlanthe both being at the top of the election list) the ANC list followed the "zebra" pattern of one woman, one man, agreed at Polokwane, with the result that 49.2% of the ANC's candidates and 42.7% of overall candidates to parliament are women. That places South Africa fourth in the world where women's representation to the legislature is concerned (after Rwanda, Sweden and Cuba).

Despite signs of revolt from the provinces, you are reported to be sticking to the gender parity principle in the appointment of premiers. An obvious case in point is passing over Gauteng provincial chair and incumbent Paul Mashatile for the former MEC of safety and security Nomvula Monkonyane. She comes with strong credentials and less questions than Mashatile. Her choice is not only good for gender equality; it's good for governance.

The focus inevitably turns to your new cabinet and to your policies. The assessment of your "bigness" by gender activists will go beyond numbers. Yes, we will look at whether you carry the 50/50 principle through to cabinet. But we will also scrutinise the caliber of the women you bring in. Will you, for example, victimise Hogan for having been the only member of the cabinet to speak out openly against barring the Dalai Lama from visiting South Africa, or will you celebrate and welcome principled, independent thought?

When ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema calls Democratic Alliance (DA) leader Helen Zille a "racist little girl" will you reprimand him for sexism and racism, mindful that it is highly unlikely that a male politician in this country would ever be called a "racist little boy"? Or will you just let that pass, as you did the witch hunt outside the court room?

Will you seek to strengthen the National Gender Machinery or will you allow it to continue in disarray? Will you ensure that the credibility of the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) is restored or replaced by a viable alternative? Will you open a national debate on the idea that there should be a ministry of gender equality and women's empowerment where such structures have failed dismally in every other country and seek the best possible option before this is implemented?

Will you openly invite your rape accuser back to reclaim her citizenship and offer her the protection to which she is entitled? Will you encourage the debate that has started since your rise to power on whether polygamy is a violation of a Constitution that has gender equality as one of its cornerstones, regardless of your personal position on the issue?

It is in anticipation of positive responses to all the above that I take a seat at your inauguration. For leadership is ultimately a lot more than narrowly escaping this or that court conviction. It is about how bigness is used.

Yours sincerely



Colleen Lowe Morna
Executive Director, Gender Links.



Kyrgyzstan fight for gender quotas pays off

Nurgul Asylbekova

Abstract

Protests against unfair elections held in March 2005 forced the former President of the Kyrgyz Republic to flee the country. Although the male-only parliament put in power during those elections remained, the incident launched a process of constitutional reform in which gender experts and women's non-governmental organisations took an active part, therefore transforming gender relations in the country.

Key words

elections, quotas,

Context

Kyrgyzstan gained its independence in 1990 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As an agrarian-and-industrial country with fairly developed infrastructure in Soviet times, Kyrgyzstan very quickly lost its manufacturing industry as a result of non-transparent and unfair privitsation of national property. This triggered a socio-economic stratification of the population with a violent division into regions, clans and ethnic groups and with access to resources reduced for many vulnerable groups, including most remote mountainous communities, the elderly, young people, the disabled, ethnic minorities and women.

Women make 50.6% of Kyrgyzstan's population. The economic collapse, reduced employment in national budget supported areas of economy and public control system impairment in social protection favoured the growth of traditions and religion within society. These factors resulted in increasing discrimination and violence against women in various forms and spheres: social, economic and cultural life. Despite a better degree of higher education that young women have in comparison to young men (55.6%) the labour market preserves vertical and horizontal segregation concentrating women in the lowest positions, poorly paid or shadowed sectors of economy, which run high risks with no social protection and guarantees. The debarment of women from privatisation resulted in failure to build up sustainable women's capital, which would have helped women to gain a strong footing in politics and decision-making. Patriarchal considerations

make access to land difficult for women. Every year nearly 12,000 women approach law enforcement officers, crisis centers and courts with family violence issues; about 60% of marriages in rural areas are concluded through the kidnapping of brides with two-thirds of them never asked for any consent.

Kyrgyzstan occupies 112th place in terms of human development index and 162nd place in terms of the Transparency International index. However, there is a positive factor in the development of Kyrgyzstan – an adequate openness of Kyrgyz society compared to that of other countries in the region. The civil society of Kyrgyzstan is the most active in the region, and as such performs the role of catalyst for democratic processes, including establishment and development of national gender policy. It is noteworthy that 70% of the leaders and staff of non-governmental organisations are women.

Kyrgyzstan has ratified the main international conventions on the rights of women and adopted a national law on gender equality and domestic violence. For example, The Law on Gender Equality provides for special measures (not more than 70% of persons of same sex) to be assigned as Judges of Constitutional Court of Kyrgyz Republic, Judges of Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic, Members of Central Elections Commission and Auditors of Chamber of Accounts of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Campaigning for gender representation in Parliament

However, despite achievements in formulating national gender legislation, high levels of corruption, the clannish nature of the ruling circles, growth of poverty and its feminisation, and enhancement of patriarchal forces caused the following challenges:

- strengthening of traditional stereotypes about the role of women only as a mother and a housewife;
- decreasing number of women in governmental institutions;
- rhetorical strategy of authorities in relation to gender equality; and
- lack of consideration of hidden barriers for women in politics.

Consequently, there was *no* representation of women in Parliament after the Parliamentary elections in 2005. Active participation of non-governmental organisations in protest actions against unfair parliamentary elections forced the former President of the Kyrgyz Republic to flee. The incident launched a process of constitutional reform in which gender experts and women's non-governmental organisations took an active part, advocating for gender equality in the country.

The women's movement actively responded to the single sex parliament, and resulting single sex government formed by the parliament (the only women headed the State Committee on migration). Right after the March 2005 elections and protests, the leading women's organisations – The Agency of Social Technologies, Center of Assistance to Women, Association of Crisis Centers, Forum of Women's NGOs, and "Diamond" Association, with the support from the Soros–Kyrgyzstan Foundation conducted regional round tables in to analyse the situation. As a result, gender regional agendas were defined and the delegates to a National Forum selected. In April 2005, the National Forum took place, in which more than 100 women's organisations participated from all regions of Kyrgyzstan.

The Secretariat of the National Council on Women's Affairs, Family and Gender Development under the President was included in the organisational committee of the Forum. A meeting between the acting President Kurmanbek Bakiev and representatives of the women's movement were the first result of activity of the Secretariat. The meeting, (32 minutes only) was to agree on the necessity for systemic changes to be introduced. The representatives spelled out the challenges to implementing international and national commitments in a situation where women were absent at the level of decision-making.

We have prepared for this meeting very well having prioritised our needs and we have prepared a package of the most important proposals. The decision was

made to focus on the absence of women in the parliament and in the government right away and to request establishment of the position of Special Representative on gender matters in the parliament. Acting President expressed his nice surprise to our brevity and accuracy and promised to consider our proposals.

Soon after the meeting, a Decree of the President was issued to establish the position of Special Representative of the President in the parliament on the matters of gender development. The Organisation Committee developed functional duties, and three candidates proposed for this position. However, as soon as the position was established, various groups in the Presidential Administration started to lobby appointment of their "own" women, who did not have adequate gender expertise, or those who was not connected to women's movement. Because of this fighting, Secretariat staff that supported the women's movement, executive secretary Baktygul Toigonbaeva and Taalaigul Isakunova, were deprived of their positions. However, the candidature proposed by women's movement, Anara Niyazova, a leading gender expert and one of the authors of the Law on Gender Equality, as well as one of the best lawyers in the country, was appointed for the position of Special Representative.

The importance of the first victory was confirmed – Anara Niyazova was in constant contact with women's movement. A great amount of work happened in the parliament and seven deputies, including the Speaker, established a group of deputies on the issue of gender equality and institutional gender expertise in the parliament. With the support of the Parliamentary project of the UNDP, a series of seminars on gender legislation and meetings of women's organisations with the deputies were held. Memorandums stated the intention to support draft gender laws and to cooperate with women's organisations. The first Parliament hearings about the status of implementation of international conven-tions on human rights including CEDAW took place. Women's organisations perfectly prepared for parliamentary hearings. Although sessions on the implementation of CEDAW took only 2.5 hours, this was the most saturated and acute moment of the hearings. As a result of this work, the following proposal was included into the language of the new Constitution: In the Kyrgyz Republic men and women should have equal rights and opportunities (article 13, p.4).

However, along with progressive proposals, the provision stating that Kyrgyzstan should be secular state was removed from the constitution. It should be noted that after March events, the stirring of political forces at all levels occurred, both progressive and nationalistic, radical religious and criminal. Every day a meeting of some sort took place. In order to attract the attention of politicians and society to the matters of gender equality, the Organisational Committee of the Forum developed a concept of non-traditional symbolical actions.



Anara Niyazova, Special Representative of the President to Parliament (2005-2007) *Photo: Nurgul Asylbekova*

To promote the message on the fact that single sex parliament is not a norm, on an early morning, representatives of several women's organisations presented cards and flowers congratulating Parliamentarians arriving to work on Women's Day 8 March. The text of the card was the following:

Dear elected representative of the people!

Today, in the eve of the International Woman's Day we would like to congratulate women – Members of Parliament. In a view of the fact that there is not a single women in the parliament of Kyrgyzstan, let us to congratulate You, because March 8 is the day of political, economic and social equality of men and women. We hope that you will protect our interests and rights of women in the parliament, because 51% of your voters are women.

With respect, women's movement of Kyrgyzstan.

In the evening of the same day, a party was arranged called "Alternative March 8," where prominent women leaders and men who supported gender equality issues were invited. The programme of the party included performance "the history of women's movement" and a strong message was spelled out that the women of Kyrgyzstan have a right and deserve to be represented in the parliament. This action created a furor covered by mass media. This was very positive and attracted a lot of attention.



Handing out the cards and flowers to Parliamentarians during "Alternative 8 March" *Photo: Nurgul Asylbekova*

Advocating for gender rights

Strengthening of radical religious forces at the level of decision-making manifested in decriminalisation of polygamy, supported by the Minister of Justice and Ombudsman of that time! At the same time, the Ombudsman initiated consideration in parliament to criminalise abortions made before 22 weeks on social indications. Both initiatives were presented under the rhetoric on the necessity to humanise the Criminal Code, protect the rights of women, children and embryos.

In response to these threatening signals, the women's movement disseminated a message to the President and MPs with the requirement not to support these amendments. During parliamentary vacations, when all MPs meet their voters locally, representatives of women's organisations expressed their indignation with regard to these initiatives. In addition, they conducted a "Fax attack," messages were sent to the faxes of all MPs with the long list of the signers. When reception offices of MP started receiving these 10 pages lists, MP's secretaries scared that they would run out of expensive fax paper just switched their fax machines off. However, the effect was reached!

Before the consideration of amendments to Criminal Code on decriminalisation of polygamy, the activists of women's movement together, other non-governmental organisations, and some political parties conducted an action "For Secular Kyrgyzstan" in front of the building of the Parliament.

We fixed white canvas on a regular linen rope with regular clothes-pegs with achievements of Kyrgyzstan in terms of formation of the national gender policy – ratification of conventions, adoption of the main laws, while on the red canvas with black letters we wrote kickbacks occurred after 2005 – lack of women in the parliament and in the government, loss of provision on the fact that Kyrgyzstan should be secular state, and the initiatives on decriminalisation of polygamy and criminalisation of abortions.

The Chair of Human Rights Committee under the President has come. All journalists rushed to interview him. He said,"In general, I am against polygamy, but if a wife is sick, paralysed, or she cannot have children and she agreed, then why not?" I asked, "what if a husband is paralysed, or an impotent man and so he cannot have children, does it mean that a wife can have second husband?." He claimed: "how can a husband be an impotent man, if he got married?". So, I said, "But do you have statistics on what is the growth of acquired impotence and sterility in men? Do you know that according to urologists; in Kyrgyzstan 40% of men have problems with potency? And do you have the data on how many men live with paralysed wives and have not left them yet? I think there are few of those. Now men leave healthy wives with three, four children!"

This topic was showed in all news channels. In the evening when I came home my husband sat with a frown and said, "Now everybody will think that I am impotent man!"

Because of all these actions, when it came time to vote on these amendments in Parliament, each MP mounted the rostrum and spoke on the inadmissibility of this amendment. On 15th speech against decriminalisation of polygamy the Speaker of the parliament, worried about the time limit, requested to start the procedure of voting, but the MPs required allocating additional time to be able to express their opinions on this matter. The results of the voting were stunning: despite the absence of women in the parliament, and despite of the fact that many MPs have a second wife aside, 73 MPs voted against and only two MPs vote for!

This action was a demonstration of the unity of women's movement organisations with other progressive forces of civil society. The development of proposals for the new Elections Code was the next action on lobbying special measures.

Elections code

Women's organisations were included in the organisational committee on the preparation of a Civil Forum on elections, and managed to include the matter of special measures for female representation in parliament into the agenda. Zebra was selected as a symbol of the action, as the requirement of 50% representation of women in higher legislative body of the country. Striped kerchiefs and signs with zebra print and with the writing "Women + men = strong parliament" were made.

The activists arranged meetings with practically all chairs of parliamentary committees in order to find out their positions and try to persuade them on the necessity to support the notion of quotas. The position of the major share of MPs was the following: "Never! Never! Never! Forget it!" They did not hide that such a provision would reduce their personal chances to be elected for the next term, because women would be real competitors for them.

Prior to MPs went to parliamentary vacations, another action was arranged before the building of parliament "New face of Kyrgyzstan." A figure was made from plywood in business suit with MP sign, with funny braids and a hole instead of a face, where each participant of the action could peep out and have her picture taken. Underneath, there was a writing "Member of the Parliament may be like this too!"

To promote the notion on female political leadership, women's organisations used any causes. On June1 – the Day of Protection of Children, an action was arranged for mothers and children, domestic migrants living in slums around Bishkek. They went to the city centre,



Putting women's faces in parliament *Photo: Nurgul Asylbekova*

where a concert was organised and children received free ice cream. The slogan of the action was "Different mothers are important in the parliament too!" In their interviews, the activists asked, Who will represent the interest of this group in Parliament – of the most poor and vulnerable groups? Their voice is not heard, their rights are not protected, and their interests are not taken into account.

In the course of regional discussion of draft electoral code, the women's movement was mobilised again locally. The message from women's movement was disseminated in all round tables in the regions. In parliamentary hearings on electoral rights, women's organisations again were the most active and well prepared. The Moderator of the hearings – the chairperson of the Committee on constitutional establishment and rule of law even said, "Dear women, electoral code is not only the matter of gender quotas, but also of many others, so let other people express them too!"

Finally, a round table was arranged with the participation of parliament Speaker, the representatives of Presidential administration and the heads of international organisations.

The speaker was placed right in the center of the table to make it impossible for him to leave, and taking advantage of the presence of the heads of international missions, the activists of women's organisations just attacked him. As the arguments, the provisions of the international conventions and the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan were cited. The speaker was rather open and he said that majority of MPs does not support quotes for women, but that he, personally, understood inequality of the opportunity for women to participate in political life along with the man and that he would try to persuade his colleagues to adopt these measures.

The outcomes

In autumn of 2007, as part of the constitutional reform, these joint efforts resulted in the following provisions introduced into the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan: the Parliament should be elected based on 100% proportional system. The new Code on Elections included the provision that during the identification of the list of candidates, a political party should take into account the following representation:

- not more than 70 % of the same sex, at the same time each third candidate would be a representative of another sex;
- not less than 15 % of people under 35years old; and
- not less than 15 % of people representing various ethnics.

Thus, after the introduction of gender quotas, the parliament of Kyrgyzstan obtained the following gender dimension:

- 26 % of women MPs
- Deputy speaker– woman
- Women are in the leadership in 6 committees from 12:
- Head of Committee on defense, security and court reform;
- Head of Committee on social policy;
- Deputy head of Committee on land, agriculture, environment protection and disaster;
- Deputy head of Committee on education, science, culture and information policy;
- Deputy head of Committee on youth, gender policy, physical culture and sport;
- Deputy head of Committee on Parliament ethic and regulation.

Changed membership of the parliament changes Cabinet as well: five women among 23 members of Cabinet of Ministers (21%)! Women were assigned for the position of vice Prime minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Labor and social development, Minister of Education and Science and the Chair of State committee on migration and employment. In addition, women are appointed as the heads of Constitutional Court, Supreme Court and National Academy of Science

During a year of their work in the parliament, women - MPs made enormous work to perform their obligations before women's movement on inclusion of gender matters to the agenda of the parliament:

- First special Parliament hearing on implementation of family violence law;

- First special Parliament hearing from 1998 on international and national commitments on gender equality at decision making level;
- Progressive edition of gender equality law (include definition of sexual harassment and special measures for women in civil service);
- First ever woman was appointed as state secretary in Ministry of justice, another woman was appointed as deputy minister in the same Ministry;
- Two women were appointed as head of districts in Bishkek and Osh province.

As a result of the campaign, "gender quotas" for political leadership are supported and promoted not only by women groups, but also are included into the agenda of NGO sector as the most relevant subjects providing an opportunity to feel one's own power and make politicians to take women's movements into account. According to International Parliament Union data 2008, Kyrgyzstan was recognised as a country where progress on women's political representation is the most dynamic in the world!

We have understood again that there is nothing impossible and that the matter of achieving our goals is only the matter of selection of effective strategy. If our strategy is clearly thought out and well organised, if one can form a partnership, establish networks and involve people to cooperate, one would be able to attract required resources. The matter of support to be provided to women's movements locally is important, which, unfortunately, is not a priority for donors currently. However, the case of Kyrgyzstan is evidence that namely multiyear investments to women's movement made our achievements a reality. Because namely women activists, volunteers of women's organisations performed all this huge work mobilising people and attracting public attention to discrimination of political rights of women. They are still in the front line of fighting for the democracy in Kyrgyzstan.

Writers Bio
Nurgul Asylbekova is the UNDP Country Programme Gender Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan. Before coming to UNDP, she coordinated Women's Programme of the Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan for four years, and is a member of International Gender Policy Network.



Female face of Kyrgyz Parliament *Photo: Nurgul Asylbekova*



Beyond numbers: gender in political awareness

By Sibongile Mpofu

Abstract

Over the past decade, gender activists around the world have clamoured for increasing numbers of women in politics and decision-making. In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in particular, gender activists have made some inroads in attaining more equal gender representation. However, sadly these numbers have not translated into quantifiable results for women in the region, particularly those in the rural areas – who constitute the majority population in SADC and the majority of voters. Not only do women still lag behind when it comes to election to offices, but they also have less participation in the electoral process as a whole, most worryingly, as voters. Media is an important determinant in levelling the playing field between women and men during election campaigns, and that when women go to vote, they are not only adding figures in Parliaments, but also looking beyond the election.

Key words

elections, media, women, democracy

Introduction

The mass media is an important part of the political system and democratisation. It gives election candidates and political parties an opportunity to talk directly with the electorate. Media is the prime source of information the electorate has about political candidates. How the media portrays political issues and election candidates can elect or defeat leaders. Keane (1993) argues that democracy comprises procedures for arriving at collective decisions in a way that secures the fullest possible and qualitatively best participation from interested parties. For Nzongola-Ntalaja and Lee (1997), democracy entails a political community in which there is some measure of political equality among people.

While independence resulted in the birth of democratic development in Africa, democracy on the continent is still far from reality. Many countries have witnessed dismal results since independence, where marginalised

groups in society continue to be suppressed, politically, socially and culturally, and are unable to exercise their right to not only choose their rulers, but to govern through those people (Chole 1993).



Nigerian men queue to vote at a polling station in Katsina, northern Nigeria, 21 April 2007 *Photo: Tiggy Ridley/IRIN*

The issue of democracy is closely tied to elections and the concept of the public sphere. All groups in society should have unequivocal access to, and participation in political socio-economic and cultural spheres. For this to happen, all groups should have access to the media, where they participate in debates on national issues, where they are empowered to elect their governors and tell them how they want to be governed. In Southern Africa, earlier research shows that women, despite the fact that they are the majority population in the region, still lag behind in political representation. In addition, despite the large numbers, women in the region still lag behind in voter turnout. Scholars have noted that cultural attitudes against women's involvement in politics persist among both men and women. With patriarchy still entrenched in most societies, there has been a trend where culture and other institutional structures, including the media, have continued to hamper women participation in the electoral process.

Early voting trends

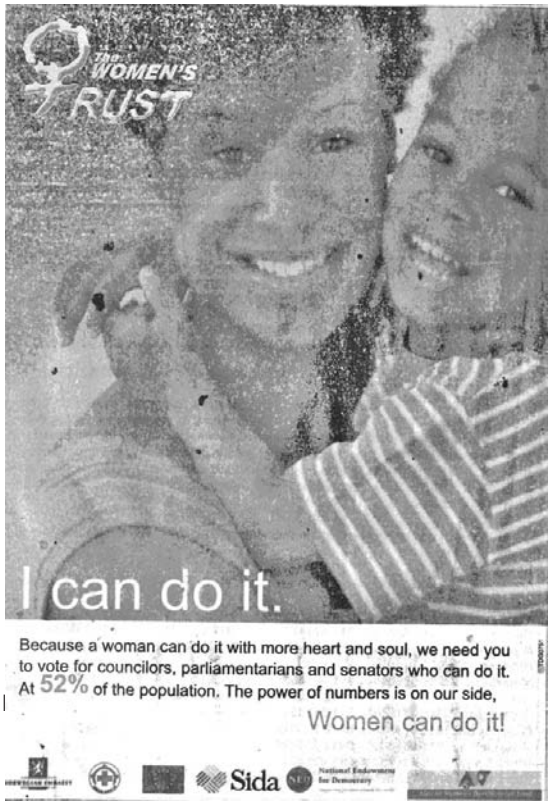
Social scientists have predicted changes in voting patterns that have emerged in both developed and developing world. In the early 60s, party affiliation, social group allegiance, consideration of issues was uppermost in determining voting patterns across the world (Nimmo 2001). Today, that order has been reversed. There is now a scenario where a candidate's personality is the most crucial factor, followed by issues. Political party affiliation is no longer crucial in determining whether one wins or lose an election. Scholars attribute this to the influence of media that allows candidates to communicate with electorate directly and also of media reportage that concentrates on the candidate's personality more than their qualities as leaders or what they stand for (Nimmo 2001). More so, if the candidate is a woman, media tends to scandalise female candidates to such an extent that female candidates feel discouraged and become unwilling to stand as political candidates. Such media coverage scares away potential women candidates and voters.

According to Graber (2001), media coverage is the lifeblood of politics because it shapes public perceptions that in turn form the reality on which political action is based. She argues that media do more than depict the political environments; they are political environments themselves. This is largely true of African media systems. Instead of being watchdogs for society, they have actually become an extension of the ruling states, or a weapon by those with the economic and political muscle to silence and further marginalise the already marginalised groups in society.

Last year's presidential election in Zimbabwe exposed some of the impediments that hinder women's fair and free participation in the electoral process. According to Mafundikwa (2008) the freeness and fairness of an election has been given a patriarchal definition, which gives women fewer choices during the elections. The media has largely perpetuated this biased view, which is silent on gender issues as being central to electoral issues. The biased coverage and non- articulation of issues by the media has largely contributed to poor voter turnout over the years.

A brief recap of voter participation in Zimbabwe shows that the turnout for both the parliamentary and presidential elections held in 1990 was 54% of the registered voters, out of the potential eligible voting population of 5.4 million (Sithole 2002). In the 1995 Parliamentary elections voter turnout was again 54%, while in the 1996 Presidential election it was 31%. According to Sithole (2002), this low turnout was due

to election boycott by opposition candidates claiming an uneven playing field in favour of the ruling ZANU-PF.



The Women's Trust in Zimbabwe advocates for women to support women candidates

Voter apathy in the 1996 presidential election may have been because voters had given up on power to influence political outcomes through the vote (Sithole 2002, 10). Voter turnout in the February 2000 parliamentary election was 48.3% and in the March 2002 presidential election was 52.7% of the 5.6 million registered voters. While no statistics are available to see ratio between women and male voters, it remains a fact in African societies that women still face many impediments to participate in politics.

To find out women's perceptions on this matter, gain understanding of why women do not vote, and factors that entice women to vote, interviews and in-depth questionnaires were administered to women respondents selected from different social stratum in Bulawayo, in Zimbabwe. Though based in one city, the location is ideal as it gives input from both urban and rural perspectives.

Results from interviews and findings

The questionnaires administered to respondents were coded thematically to simplify the handling of the many individual responses and to get an overall pattern of the responses. Nachimias and Nechimias (1982) postulate that coding is the process of classifying responses into meaningful categories to enable simple description of the data and allow for statistical analysis. The questionnaire had six elaborate questions covering various identified variables such as the frequency of voting by women, factors that prevent them from voting, factors that encourage them to vote, suggestion to encourage more women to vote, the role of the media, as well demographic information.

1. Voting Frequency

Of the 20 respondents, five women (25%) said they vote in every election, while 10, representing 50 percent said they vote in some elections. A further five said they have never voted. The aim of this question was to get an overview of voting frequency among women in the population sample. From these findings, it becomes clear that voting frequency is very erratic, where the majority of the sample votes in some, and not all elections.

2. Factors that prevent women from voting

The following pie chart shows factors that hinder women's participation in the elections.

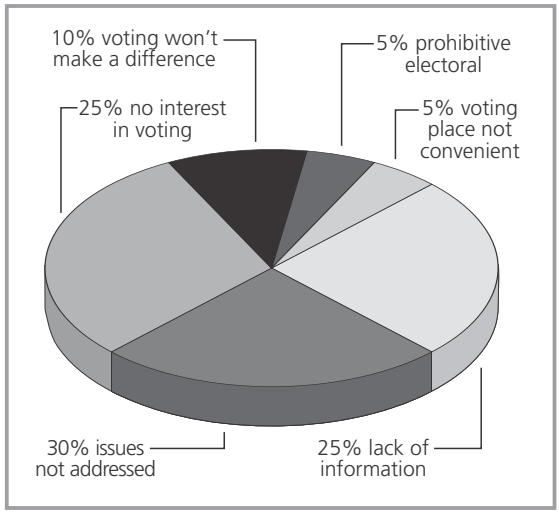


Figure 1: Pie chart showing factors that hinder women's participation

Of the respondents, 25% expressed no interest in voting, while 30% said politicians do not address issues that matter to them. A composition of this group of respondents further indicated that they do not vote because they feel that their vote would not make a difference. True to most so called "democracies" in Africa where electoral systems are so politicised and structured in such a way that they legitimise and push the agenda of the ruling party. This is reason why the electoral process has lost its glimmer. "Why should I trouble myself voting when I know that my vote will not make any difference? In the end, the governing party always wins, so it is pointless," said Lindiwe Sibanda.

A further 25% of the respondents said lack of information about issues made it difficult for them to make informed decisions during the elections. As a result, some ended up shying away or letting friends and relatives tell them who to vote for. Ten percent felt their vote would not make a difference, while 5% of respondents cited prohibitive and unfriendly electoral laws as one of the major factors that impinge on their participation in the elections. This group of professional women drawn across varying economic sections spoke strongly about how they have failed to vote because of changes in their identity due to marital status, job transfers as well as citizenship.

Under the General Laws Amendment Act, voters have to produce proof of residence to register in the voters roll. Now, with the patriarchal nature of society, these requirements are in the name of husbands or other male guardians (Mafundikwa 2008). This on its own becomes a major hindrance for women voters in the urban areas. Under the new Zimbabwe Citizenship Act, voters needed to renounce their foreign citizenship or that of their parents, failure to which one is not eligible to vote. The requirement affected a number of women voters in both urban and rural areas, who lacked information on this. Five percent of respondents indicated that voting places and times were not convenient for them to go and vote.

Most interviewees on this category said they felt obliged to remain looking after the household or to tend to farming duties so that their husbands could have the chance to go and vote. "The voting point, which is



Women, especially in rural communities, my find it difficult to leave their responsibilities to vote *Photo: UNDP*

usually in a school or local clinic, is very far from my homestead and as a result, we cannot all go to vote. My husband goes instead," said Constance Sibanda from Siganda. In other instances, women, particularly in the rural and commercial farming areas vote on condition that they do what their spouses, councillors (majority who are men) or ward chairpersons tell them. This on its own is a violation of the right to free and fair election espoused in constitutions and indeed the SADC election guidelines.

2. Factors that encourage women to vote

Many women indicated that more information on issues would encourage them to vote, as well as confidence that their vote will make a difference to their quality of life. Ten percent said knowledge that peers have voted would entice them because that gives them a sense of belonging and they would therefore have a general feeling that their concerns would be heard. Another 10% felt that relaxation of voter registration requirements would improve their voting in the future.

Interviewees also cited other factors that could encourage more women to vote and the majority, 60%, noted that if more women running for office would entice them to vote. A further 25% felt that women should be educated on issues important on their lives. Another 15% said more convenient voting locations would improve numbers of women voters.

Results from this case study show that high level of interest and availability of issues play a critical role in encouraging women to vote. This therefore indicates the importance of the media's role in the election process. Inculcating interest in any election requires an open public space, where all groups in society air their views on issues that concern them, their lives and their society in general. Such debates, done in an unbiased, free and open manner, would separate progressive democracy from democracy without empowerment.

3. The role of the media

Respondents felt the media has a role in increasing the numbers of women voters. Respondents were asked an open-ended question on what they felt the media should do to make sure that all citizens are equally empowered to make informed decisions during elections. These are some of the suggestions.

- Media should exercise the role of a public sphere by allowing all parties to enunciate their manifestos. They should not be selective.
- We need non-partisan approach when it comes to communication and more so, during the elections.
- Media should inform by advertising.
- Media should be educative and tackle important issues that affect the lives of every citizen.
- Cover all election candidates.
- Cover as much stories on the plight of women in Zimbabwe.
- Politicians should include women in the decision making process and the media should make this happen.
- Media should disseminate in all languages.
- Media should criticize political parties positively so that people are informed.
- All citizens should be equally empowered by the media.

These responses bring to the fore the critical role of the media during the electoral process. The potential for mass media to influence public opinion is great due to exposure, trust, and the fact that the media is the sole window to political reality. As a result, the electorate tends to align itself with the images they see in the media; their perceptions of candidates and decisions on who to vote is mostly based on what the media has shown or told them. According to Louw (1999), media should strive to publish fair, balanced and accurate information that serves their communities. When a candidate or party is attacked, the right of reply should be given.

The media responds

Political writers in Zimbabwe's newsrooms acknowledge that they have failed the women constituency during elections, but are quick to mention that, while there are structural and institutional hindrances within the newsroom and industry at large, women are also their own worst enemies. This buttresses recent comments by Vice President Joyce Mujuru that the problem with women was that they do not support each other. She was lamenting at the country's quota system, which she said had failed to see more women representation in both Parliament and Cabinet improve.

Speaking during the swearing in of deputy ministers of state under the new inclusive government, the Vice President indicated that lack of confidence and resources by women has affected their representation in political positions. Responses indicate that news is inherently selective and biased. Selection is endemic to the definition of the news and the news production process. The questions however, which this paper sought to unravel was on the selection criteria on which stories to cover during an election and how to cover them. Journalists were asked to comment on the following questions:

- What information is most important for voters to know about political candidates and what is the least?
- Have their newspapers or media outlets given fair coverage to women political candidates and if not why not?



An elderly woman uses walker to vote in one of the polling booths in Zimbabwe. *Photo: The Chronicle*

- Do women candidates have control over their image or the information conveyed about them?
- What is the relationship between mass media and political candidates?

All the five journalists interviewed felt that political parties, biographies, policies, and why they want election into office are the most important factors that voters need to know about an election. "People want to know what they have done in the past and what they will do once in office," said one senior journalist in Bulawayo. Regarding fair coverage for women political candidates, a senior editor at a local daily, the *Chronicle* said the paper had not given any special attention to women candidates. "Women are not as aggressive as men when it comes to campaigning. Some men go the extra mile and always bother journalists to cover them. Women do not have contacts in the newsroom like some men do," he said.

Following is an excerpt of an interview with one of the journalists.

Question: From your experience as a political writer, do women candidates have control over their image or the information conveyed about them?

Answer: They do not have control over their image. Men speak on behalf of women.

Question: What is the relationship between mass media and political candidates? For example, do candidates have incentives or opportunities to try to influence how the press covers them?

Answer: Some candidates offer incentives to journalists like free transport to their rallies, food and beer. They also invite journalists for a few drinks and I believe that makes journalists cover them. In the newsroom, journalists are known to align themselves with certain politicians.

Question: What needs or incentives do the media themselves have for political candidates to come forward and discuss openly their issues or what they stand for?

Answer: We sometimes do profiles of candidates where one can walk into the newsroom and give his or her profile. Unfortunately, that information does not reach all politicians so focus is given to a few who are close to journalists.

Question: In your view, do you feel the Zimbabwean media does justice o the coverage of elections, especially at the representation of both male and female candidates?

Answer: I think there must be some form of balance in terms of coverage. The media should give women some space to campaign. We need to hear more female voices in our stories.

Question: What do you think can be done to address the shortcomings in the coverage of elections to ensure a fair and democratic process?

Answer: The media should come up with guidelines on coverage of elections. These guidelines should include among other issues things like for every three political stories one must have a bias on women candidates.

Another political journalist, Paul Nkala said there is a general tendency to neglect women candidates and whenever they get coverage, it is usually a small story, which is not visible in the newspaper pages. He said while this is not a written down editorial policy, the trend has been that male candidates receive coverage because they are forthcoming with information and easy to talk to.

"It is my humble observation that women candidates need to be confident and more open to marketing themselves rather than wait for reporters to look for them and solicit for interviews," said Nkala. "Male candidates put out every effort in their quest for winning the hearts of reporters. Some can go to the extent of providing transport and taking 'general care' of reporters' welfare, including editors who have a final say on what appears in the paper," noted Nkala. With regards to what the media should do to enable a fair and democratic coverage of elections, he said there was need for the media to avoid being used as mouth pieces for political parties and focus on their core business, that of being the mirror of society.

Conclusion

From speaking with some members of the electorate as well as journalists, it is evident that:

- cultural practices still subjugate women when it comes to elections;
- there is need for more coverage on issues that impact on women;
- women voters want to see more women stand in as candidates; and
- media needs to spruce up its election coverage so that its representative of every group in society and the mass media itself are not free from gender stereotypes.

To sum up, the Zimbabwean media, which is still very patriarchal in nature has not helped the situation of gender balanced reporting. Editors and political reporters still favour male stories. The polarisation of the Zimbabwean media that reached alarming levels in the run-up to the presidential elections of 2007, made the situation worse for the electorate as the media tended to cover personalities, and not issues of concern to voters.



Voting in Mauritius *Photo: Gender Links*

The situation noted above is not only peculiar to Zimbabwean women, but to other African societies still grappling with male dominancy in all spheres of life. What came of the interviews with journalists really shows that media in Southern Africa still face the challenge of redefining their roles when it comes to elections. What is now clear is that media aligns themselves along party lines, instead of serving the interests of the population. They become political agents of mostly male candidates. Unless drastic changes are brought into newsrooms in the form of enforceable election guidelines, women would continue to play second fiddle to men in elections.

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Writers Bio
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Reassessing political parties women's wings

By Saeanna Chingamuka

Abstract

One cannot ignore the important role that women play in politics. At least most political parties acknowledge the role that women play in political sustainability; so much that they have women's wings or women's assemblies for the party. Among the several roles of the women's wings is main-streaming gender in party policies, plans and programmes, with the longer-term objective of narrowing the wide gender gaps that currently exist in social, cultural, economic and political spheres. However, looking at examples from South Africa and Zimbabwe, it is clear that there is a need to reassess women's wings of political parties.

Key words

elections, political women's wings

Women participate in elections

As the monitoring of the media coverage of the recent South African elections took off, one could not help notice a particular group of the population that featured almost everywhere. At political rallies, this group was in the forefront singing and dancing for politicians. Journalists also went to this group of the population to source news, particularly about service delivery. Not to mention that to go with the reports, the journalists would capture the photos of this population so that they could illustrate the levels of poverty in the South African society.

On Election Day, as journalists captured long queues of voters who waited patiently to make their mark, this group of population was also there. It composed the largest number of people in the queues. Or, was it my imagination! So I searched for some information, and I was right, women composed 55% of registered voters in South Africa, and it is this group of the population that I noticed everywhere.

It is clear that women are an important part of elections. Recognising this, most political parties have women's

wings, which work to advocate gender equality and women's' empowerment.

Political women's wings – ANC

According to the African National Congress Women's League Constitution amended and adopted at the 4th National Congress (August 2003), some of the aims and objectives of the League include to:

- mobilise, organise and unite South African women to participate in the struggle for the liberation of all oppressed groups;
- spearhead the emancipation of women within the African National Congress and its structures and at all levels of government and South African society as a whole.
- promote among and through women, national consciousness, patriotism, unity and a sense of accountability at all levels;
- combat discrimination in public and in private life and institutions and to work actively towards the dismantling of the patriarchal system, the elimination of laws, customs and structures which militate against equality and to oppose any strengthening of patriarchy;
- campaign for an end to all forms of violence against women, children and other vulnerable groups; and
- campaign for a culture and recognition of women's rights as human rights.

To this end, one would assume that women's wings of political parties are concerned about the position of women in society and as such strive to ensure that political parties respect and promote women's rights. However, incidences involving women's wings in the past leave a lot to be desired with regard to the values that they stand for. It is often argued that women and men participate equally in politics and the existence of women's wings (or councils, leagues, or sections) is widely used as an illustrative example. An analysis of these structures tends to show that they have reinforced the stereotypes that assign women an inferior status by serving as the hospitality wing of the party.



Women are an important part of elections, as voters, monitors, and candidates. *Photo: Lori Waselchuck*

Most ANC Women's League leaders have openly denied that they are feminist. Feminism is presumed to be a Western notion that has been imposed on educated women by whites. Second, feminism is associated with women who burn bras and challenge patriarchy openly, which does not go down well with traditionalists. However, in simple terms feminism is about advocating for women's rights.

At one of the debates convened by Gender Links on the road to the April 2009 elections, asked about polygamy, one ANC Women's League top brass actually said that it was her choice to get married to a man with several wives. She underscored that polygamy is a traditional practice and posed the question, "who am I to challenge culture?" To this effect, she reiterated that it was part of her culture and she should practice it.

ZANU PF's and MDC Women's League

In 2007, the ZANU PF's Women's League in Zimbabwe went through a test when the central committee meeting of Zimbabwe's ruling ZANUPF party called for President Robert Mugabe's installation as president for life. This declaration meant that the party was giving Mugabe the leeway to contest the March 2008 elections. The ZANU PF Women's League, which is among Mugabe's loyal followers, led the campaign to have Mugabe declared president for life. The then Women's League chairperson declared that Mugabe should be president for life and that if any person attempted to remove him, the ZANU PF women's League would march in the streets and even remove their clothes (a sign of serious support) for Mugabe's candidature in the 2008 elections.

What was interesting was that such fanatical support for continued male dominance was in total contrast to the group's determination to fight for gender equality. It came at a time when Joyce Mujuru could have stood for presidency, considering that her appointment to vice presidency in 2005 had sparked debates around Zimbabwe bracing itself for a female president. Therefore, the Women's League should have pushed for succession and Joyce stood a better chance of being a successor.

Recently, Zimbabwe's MDC-T women's wing failed to exert its influence when its leader chose the cabinet members for the transitional government. As one gender activist commented on the qualities of a good leader on the Gender Links electronic discussion board, the fact that a small number of women made it to the transitional cabinet of Zimbabwe was a sign of bad leadership. All parties had a carte blanche and an opportunity to appoint more women into cabinet, but they chose not to despite the existence of the Global Political Agreement that demanded that women enter into substantial positions in government. Zimbabwe also subscribes to a number of regional and international conventions that support the increase of women in politics and decision-making.

The role of women's wings

The instances cited here provide evidence that the role of women's wings of political parties need assessing. Women's wings of political parties should be viewed as one avenue that is responsible for ensuring the promotion of gender equality within political parties. Thus, research must assess some of the obstacles that women's wings face in carrying out their mandate and reassess the roles that this structure should actually be playing. Bearing in mind that political parties are among the most important institutions affecting women's political participation, civil society should capitalise on the existence of women's wings to demand change within political parties. Most women within such structures are quite vocal and would benefit from capacity building on how to address obstacles to demanding equality. The influence that women have within political parties is therefore a key determinant of their prospects for political empowerment, particularly at the national level.

Women's wings should consider taking their political parties to task when it comes to nominating candidates to run for elections. This is because it is far more difficult to win elections without the backing of a political organisation, especially at the national level. Hence, women seeking an entrée into politics must usually turn to political parties and garner support from their female colleagues already established in women's wings. The real test for political parties is thus to move beyond the rhetoric on gender equality to reform their systems, structures, selection procedures and attitudes to make inroads for equal representation of women and men in positions of power and decision making. In addition, political parties should prioritise providing resources to women's wings so that they can fully carry out their mandate.

The media spectacle of women participating in the election process clearly demonstrates that these women have faith that their lives can be made better by casting their ballot. It is high time political parties pay back the people who vote them into power by ensuring that achieving gender equality comes on top of the to-do list.

Further, outspoken women who have the chance to speak to the nation about the status of women and gender inequalities should represent the plight of women fairly. The woman in the village who is in a polygamous relationship and does not have the chance to speak about polygamy as an unjust practise would want her fellow empowered women to denounce the practice and ensure that the government supports the eradication of these. Otherwise misrepresenting such plight would turn out to be democracy betrayed where women's wings are just cosmetic structures.

Writers Bio
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Political struggles worth it for Zimbabwean politician

By Miriam Sibanda-Madziwa with Lucia Matibenga

Zimbabwean politician and trade unionist Lucia Matibenga has experienced discrimination and violence at the hands of male politicians from both her own political party and the ruling party. Matibenga narrates how the political experiences of the past 12 years have helped deepen her appreciation of local politics. The experiences have also forced her to constantly take a step back and reflect on where she and her party are headed in their quest for a democratic society. She also recounts how the personal intra-party squabbles forced her to engage with the media while at the same time picking up vital political survival skills where men dominate and often resort to setting women against each other and violence to gain a political upperhand.

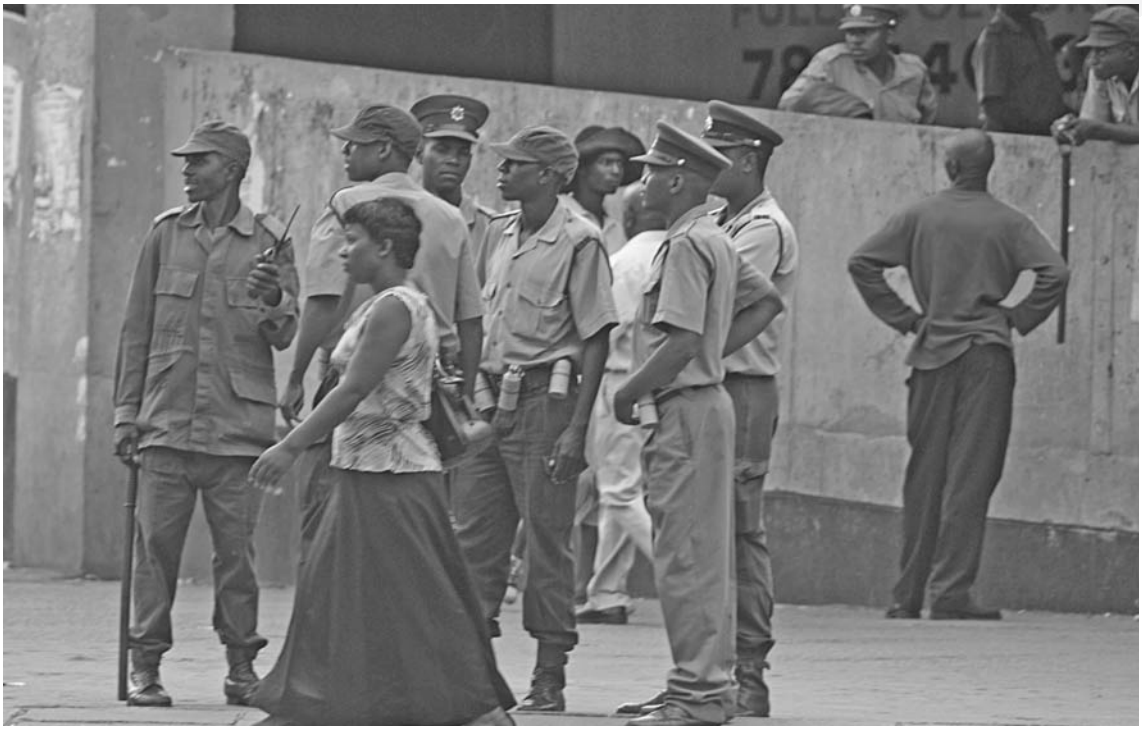
As a *mujibha* (auxiliary force) in Zimbabwe's liberation war tasked with taking food, clothing and medical supplies to the front line, I was happy when we finally attained independence in 1980. A year later, I disengaged from politics, completely optimistic everything would flow smoothly from then on.

I got into trade unionism while working for a clothing retailer and rose through the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) ranks. Through trade unionism, I found myself back in politics 16 years later in 1997 when ZCTU and civic organisations formed the National Constitutional Assembly to lobby for a new constitution. Two years later, I was a founding member of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

My first assignment after the formation of MDC was contesting for a Parliamentary seat in Shurugwi. It was a huge constituency and my biggest challenge was finding resources to campaign. There were no party primary elections to chose candidates because all that was needed was bravery to be able to stand up to the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)'s violence.

I was not naive. I knew that campaigning would be tough but I was confident I would measure up. However, I had not budgeted for violence of the magnitude we experienced. The violence was so much that I was confined to campaigning at night. It was just too dangerous to campaign during the day because ZANU-PF supporters were going around beating up anyone suspected of supporting my party.

I lost to the ZANU- PF candidate and decided to challenge the result in court because I felt strongly that the entire election process was not free or fair. Sadly, I did not get any fairness in the courts; neither did I get any support from my party leadership. The party leaders were reluctant to support my challenge and only allocated me a lawyer after I had the initial court documents drafted privately. Although I lost in court, the challenges showed me that people have amazing willpower once they decide to support a cause. The women who were brave enough to testify made me fully appreciate the sacrifices Zimbabweans were making in supporting the MDC. I still remember one woman telling the court how she hid her party T-shirt in a pot and covered it with mealie-meal to avoid detection by ZANU - PF militia who were going door-to-door searching for MDC campaign materials.



Police armed with teargas and button sticks on a day of a planned MDC march in the CBD on Harare, they were seen at every corner in the city to stop Marchers from attempting to march *Photo: Annie Mpalume/IRIN*

In 2002, I became interim chairperson of the MDC women's assembly and was responsible for coordinating the Presidential election campaign. Although our candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai lost, the campaigning boosted my political growth. I travelled throughout the country and had the chance to meet with party supporters and discuss their aspirations. When the 2005 Parliamentary elections were held, I opted to help fellow women in their campaigns to get into the legislative assembly. My objective was to get more women into Parliament and thus increase women's voices in the Legislative Assembly.

Despite my hard work and noble intentions, fewer MDC women candidates made it into Parliament, which was disheartening. In retrospect, the poor performance by women in the Parliamentary polls was a harbinger of the turbulent times I was soon to face within her party. I had been elected national chairperson of the women's assembly unopposed at the second congress in 2006. Surprisingly, a year later the party leadership decided to remove me alleging that I was ineffective. Initially I did not believe that a party driven by such strong democratic principals could do this to me. But, I soon realised the leadership was bent on pushing me out. Why? I still do not know today. I fought back with all I had including going to the courts to challenge my ouster.

The courts ruled in my favour but the leadership disputed the ruling and refused to reinstate me to my post. However, I am proud and can still walk with my head held high because I was able to register my unhappiness and I tried to get a reprieve. Although I was smaller than the leadership, I had made my point. I am also sure the party learnt its lesson and will not mishandle an issue of any member like that again. Sometimes during the debacle, I remember asking myself "what is the difference between us and ZANU PF which we accuse of being undemocratic?" As a founding member of the party, I would tell myself that the party itself is good and it was just a few individuals creating these problems. I was sure we could work through our differences. I was also encouraged because there were party members who stood up for me and said openly that what had happened

was wrong. Even more gratifying is that even to today, I receive phone calls from people who were at the forefront of harassing me apologising.

Soon after the delimitation exercise, two male supporters approached me from Kuwadzana in the capital, requesting me to stand as a second candidate in the newly divided constituency. It was a big surprise. I wondered how I could leap from Gweru to Harare. Was it right to make such a move after the friction I had had with the party leadership? I had a lot of questions and concerns but after consulting widely, I decided to go for it.

My successor in the women's assembly was allocating fellow women candidates "safe'" constituencies where victory was guaranteed. Although I had officially communicated my intention to contest, my name was not on the party's list of women candidates. Another surprise was that mine was the only constituency where there was a woman candidate and primary elections were ordered. I am the only sitting woman Parliamentarian from the MDC who went through primaries. I contested against two men and won resoundingly and went ahead to be the party's candidate in the March 2008 elections.

Compared to Shurugwi, campaigning in Kuwadzana was a piece of cake. The constituency was smaller and more accessible. Although I received little support from the women's assembly, my biggest resource was the support I enjoyed from Kuwadzana residents. "I was never sure of the outcome of the polls so, when I learnt I had won, the first thing I did when I heard I had won was to get down on my knees and thank the Lord.

I have come to appreciate the critical role that the media plays in politics. Initially, I was reluctant to talk to the media about my struggles with the party leadership. I was not sure how the leadership would take it. I was afraid speaking up would make my situation worse. But, I then realised the leadership was telling its side of the story so I had to put my position across as well. I was lucky the media gave me space through interviews and profiles. I also got to learn how party members felt about my ouster through the media.

The media coverage led to the launch of "Friends of Lucia Campaign" an initiative that provided moral support that helped me survive the episode. I have also learnt that as a woman politician, you have to be yourself all the time. It is political suicide to pretend to be what you are not. You have to be consistent and once you take a decision do not look back. You have to be principled because there is the danger of losing direction when the political stakes go high.

Above all, I now appreciate the importance of resources. Resources, be they financial, material or human are critical. Without resources, you cannot campaign neither can you help the poor and needy that look up to you as their leader. This level of high expectation is because over the years, the role of politicians and legislators has been distorted or rather expanded to include being welfare officers.

I remain optimistic especially with the establishment of an inclusive government in February that has representatives from the country's three main political parties. I am hoping that as a politician I will now be free to move around my constituency and implement programmmes that I promised during my campaign without threats of arrest or harassment. Overall, looking back, it has all been worth it. I have learnt a lot of lessons about African politics and in my own small way I believe I am making a difference in the lives of Zimbabweans.

Writers Bio
Miriam Sibanda-Madziwa is a Zimbabwean freelance print and radio journalist. Her major areas of coverage are gender, health and development. Besides being a media activist, she also runs a community based organisation – Tupone for Community Development Trust – in Binga in the southern part of Zimbabwe.



New political party putting "Women Forward"

By Laura Lopez Gonzalez

A new women's party has entered the fray of South African politics, hoping to give a voice to the nation's women. Using *next Wednesday's election* as a trial run for local government elections down the line, they may not be in it to win it, but they are providing a much needed platform for issues some say have been left off national agendas for far too long.

Nana Ngobese-Nxumalo, a long-time gender advocate and granddaughter of Chief Albert Luthuli, former African National Congress (ANC) president and Africa's first Nobel Peace Prize winner, launched Women Forward (WF) in 2007. With a burgeoning membership of more than 30,000 and strongholds in some of the country's poorest areas, the party is looking to break the current mould of male-dominated South African politics and provide women with a channel to communicate their needs to government.

"I think its time for us to recognise female leadership that is different from male leadership," said Ngobese-Nxumalo, head of the party and its presidential candidate. "Women are naturally more caring, more inclusive and work more in a cooperative environment than men do I'm not saying they're not competitive, just that they are less competitive [then men] and work for the greater good of the group."

Her belief in women's roles in politics is somewhat an of an inheritance, her grandparents' legacy. "What actually strengthened the argument for female leadership, for me, was that my grandfather wrote about it a lot. He wrote about his mother's role in his upbringing as a man who became who he was. He acknowledged the fact that every speech he wrote, had to be edited by his wife," she said. "Not many current leaders would actually admit that their wife contributed an idea."

After working for more than 10 years as a gender consultant, Ngobese-Nxumalo joined government in 2005 –a move that opened her eyes. "I decided to get into government in 2005 to more or less find out how government dealt with gender issues," she said. "What I found is that how government understands working with women on the ground, is basically doing things for them. There is no relationship – if we are going to build houses for you, we will call you after we build the houses."

"Women out there were almost like passive recipients of what government thought would be good for them," she said. "For me, what it actually said was that government does not have a conversation with women on the ground."

The party's hope to help facilitate this conversation is partly why Women Forward is using this year's national elections as a trial run, choosing to focus instead on 2011's local government elections.

"Local government is key to the development of people on the ground because that is where the delivery of services actually happens, where you find the local councils and women's voices are just not there." What this means, according to Ngobese-Nxumalo, is that issues like schooling, health and gender-based violence remain largely off the local agendas.

"Women's issues are still seen as private matters, what happens behind closed door," she said. "When people talk about service delivery they talk about what happens outside of the home... by the time you get to women's issues, it's like, 'Oh, he slapped you on the face? It doesn't matter.' It matters to me and it should be part of the agenda of government - if it is not, we are short changing 50% of the population."

Although many gender advocates say a platform for women such as WF is long overdue, some take issue with what they say are the party's romanticised and stereotypical notions about women.

"I'm not sure this is so helpful, this thing that women are nurturing and caring. Women are not a homogenous group [and] I don't know if that is helpful in advancing gender equality," said Carrie Shelver is programmes coordinator with People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA). "I would have hoped that they would have come up with a far more radial agenda."

Writer, academic and feminist, Pumla Dineo Gqola is a professor at the University of Witswatersrand. "Again it's very much a discourse that women are softer, that they are the foundation of the community... many of those ideas around nature somewhat romanticise what women are; it translates into iconography, which is what the party symbol, the rose. really is," said Gqola. She added that a woman's party should not necessarily be assumed a feminist one and that WF had never claimed to be.

Sheila Meintjies, head of political studies at Wits University, added that while some of the party's characterisations about women did seem somewhat essentialist, that WF was likely to provide voters with a bit of fresh air amid a political climate laden with masculine overtones.

"In the context of a very masculanist approach from the ANC, it's somewhat a relief to have a political party that offers a different set of values," she said. "We need to have platform of this kind, and it might garner some



Women Forward launching campaign manifesto *Photo: Women Forward*



Women Forward Door to Door at Tiyani Mahatlani *Photo: Women Forward*

support from women who feel that no political parties offer them a manifesto that really focuses on the role women play in caring for children and family. Women are the ones that bare that brunt and also bear the brunt of increasing poverty, which has a very strongly female face."

The face of poverty in South Africa was one of the reasons University of Venda Professor Tshifhiwa Nangammbi became the party's main organiser in the relatively poor and largely rural Limpopo province and the party's secretary general.

"I joined the party because this is what I believe in – rural development. That s where our politics should be focused on and I don't believe that what's going on," she said. "Where I come from, most of the rural community does not work. For them, and for to really go out and look for job it takes as lot of effort – they have to have something on paper, a certificate and the education system is less than in other areas."

The party now has the bulk of its membership in the province.

"I think we're so popular in Limpopo because people understand what we are trying to achieve, especially rural women because they believe in working for themselves," she said. "They understood quite well what WF stood for, and that the party's goals are relevant, part and parcel of what they are already doing in their everyday lives."

Writers Bio
Laura Lopez Gonzalez is a specialist reporter on health and development.



Karolina Pieters, persevering to make a difference in Namibia

By Mandla Masingi

A community leader, former local government councilor and a teacher - all three combine to help paint a picture of Karolina Pieters. Born in Namibia's capital Windhoek, Pieters is a hard worker who not only strives for the benefit of her family, but for the entire community at large. Growing up, Pieters always dreamt of becoming a teacher, a calling driven by a deep love children. "I always wanted to be a teacher one day, I love children very much," Pieters said.

Even growing up in a family where finances meant that continuing education to a higher institution of learning was not possible did not deter her from accomplishing her dreams. "After completing my high school studies in 1973, I worked at a local shop. Due to the poverty at home, my parents could not afford to take me to a higher institution. I worked for myself so that I could gather money to further my studies," she said.



Karolina Pieters as councilor visiting her constituents

It was not until 1980 that Pieters saw her dreams becoming a reality. She worked as a teacher at Noord Oorweg Primary school in Maltahohe, although she was not a qualified teacher. In 2001, through distance learning, she graduated with a Teaching Certificate from Azalia College in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Although she started teaching professionally in 2002, Pieters was not satisfied and enrolled with the University of Namibia to graduate with a Basic Education Teachers Diploma in 2005.

Growing up in a country, at a time where racism and apartheid were at a centre stage of life, it would have been difficult for Pieters to avoid being politically active. "Although I kept it a secret, because had police known about my political activism I could have woken up in jail. My involvement in politics started when I joined the Suid Africa Politics Organisation (SWAPO) in 1973," Pieters revealed

A teacher for 28 years, Pieters became a councillor of Harka district in Maltahohe after the general elections in 2004. "I became a councilor in Maltahohe when I was teaching there, while working for the community."

Pieters was led to local government through the community service she was already doing. "I was looking after abandoned and orphaned children, as well as old people. I was also involved with an HIV organisation, the Catholic Aids Action, as a chairperson. Therefore, when elections came in 2004, I was asked to join the council and I did not hesitate, as this would allow me to do my community work smoothly."

One of Pieters most shining examples of the difference local leaders make is the Ama Buruxa cultural group. Ama Buruxa is a traditional group that Pieters and her collaborator Simon Anton established in 2001. Pieters says that the establishment of the Ama Buruxa traditional group was motivated by the need to pay school fees and to raise funds for the orphaned children.



Ama Buruxa *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

"We used to perform regularly for the tourists, charging R500 per performance. This money helped to bye food and toiletries for the vulnerable and orphaned children. As well as providing economic benefit, the Ama Buruxa cultural group provides a form of sharing the uniqueness of the Nama culture they have inherited," Pieters said.

Before Pieters resigned this year (2009) as a councilor in the district of Harka, she, like many women politicians, was exposed to criticisms and lamentations from community members, especially the traditional males and male journalists, merely because she was a woman. "Sometimes, you feel it from the male side in the media," she said. "They were also challenging me with questions and complaining.

"In our Nama culture, the woman must always respect the husband; she must be the lower one in the family," explained Pieters. "Sometimes there are people who are criticising us because we are women. This might be because previously men were the only ones ruling, so people do not understand it when a woman is in the leadership position."

Councillor an oasis in the desert for vulnerable children
By Colleen Lowe Morna

The Ama Buruxa (Nama for *"Simply Amazing")* Culture group, founder by Karolina Pieters, comprises abandoned children whose colourful traditional patchwork outfits, melodious voices, and captivating dance moves serve to entertain, raise funds, and celebrate local Nama culture. Most have lost one or both parents to HIV and AIDS or gender violence. Cultural activities help to make sure the children never forget their roots and remain firmly grounded. They are also a form of healing. The triplets, Shireen, Sherita and Sheroleen came to the home at the age of six, living their until their teens. Paul Aeb witnessed his father stab his mother to death while Paul Hanse saw his mother kill his father in a drunken stupor in an area renowned for its high level of alcoholism. She is out of jail but the boy is afraid to go home.

When the 2004 local government elections came around and the party scouted about for women candidates to make good its promise of a "zebra" list - one woman, one man - Pieters came under pressure to run for public office. She did so on one condition, that she "bring my children into the Council with me" and make them part of the Council's business. Leveraging her position as deputy chair of the council, Pieters persuaded the nearby lodge to provide a soup kitchen twice a day, five times a week. The Council then began assisting with transport to get supplies from the Catholic Aids Council based in Mariental, 111 km away. Pieters formed and chaired a council HIV and AIDS committee that brings together 25 Community Based Organisations with Council members once a month and is spearheading an awareness programme in the community. She has trained as a counsellor and is negotiating with the Ministry of Health to establish a programme for administering anti retroviral drugs for those living with AIDS.

Despite all these, Pieters believes that one day Namibia will see a female president taking over the reigns. She says that it is possible for a female president to take office, pointing out that "if they can be ministers. why can't they be presidents."

"Our deputy Prime Minister Libertina Amathila will rise up because she speaks and she is very strong. Even though they are criticising her and write things in the media, it does not bring her down. She works very hard. I think she is one of the brave women that can become president in Namibia," Pieters said.

Pieters acknowledges that media is a relevant factor in the country as they help to hold the government accountable, so that they will deliver. "But sometimes they don't write things that are true and if they were going to use that energy to empower women it would be a different story," she said.

Pieters mentions that during her time as councilor, she found media people to be very curious; they would want to know if the person being appointed in the position of a councilor has the credibility to head that position. "If there is something that goes wrong media is very quick to come on board. I think it is a good thing to have the media to awaken us and make us aware of what is happening around us," Pieters said.

Pieters has words of advice for young women aspiring to become political leaders. She says that they need to work very hard, "The only advice I have is don't just sit in your house... go out there and work. Try to help the vulnerable and orphaned children and the old people," she said. Pieters believes that if women can stand together, speak out, and work hard to fight alcohol abuse, domestic violence, HIV and domestic violence the world would be a good place to be. She adds, "You will never be appointed a councilor if you only stay in your house and only take care about your own babies without going out and work."

"There are a lot of things happening in our communities, like alcohol and drug abuse, someone must stand up for that. The raping of our children, I hate it. HIV and AIDS, someone must stand up for that also. And there are many, domestic violence in our community and if women can stand up and work for those things this world will be a peaceful place one day," Pieter's said.

Writers Bio
Mandla Masingi is a communications assistant with CMFD (Community Media for Development) Productions.

Gender, politics and media



Flashback Hilary Clinton's election campaign: Sexism is still alive in the USA







Women, elections, stories and style: female politicians strengthen their voices

By Paula Fray, Patricia A. Made and Mercedes Sayagues

Abstract

Throughout 2008, 2009 and into 2010 women and men throughout Southern Africa and beyond will go to the polls. Elections are big news in Africa, just as the coverage of politics and elections worldwide become fodder upon which the mainstream news media thrive. Women's entry into the political arena as female politicians championing their parties' agendas or other political, economic and social issues; as political candidates vying for public office; or as voters who use the power of the vote to make a statement about the issues that are important to them, are stories that have emerged in Africa's media. This article looks at some of the representations of women's political issues, and at identities of women politicians that emerge in the media during elections. Based on the Inter Press Service (IPS) Global News Agency's "Strengthening Women's Voices in Elections in Africa" Project, this article reviews some of the outcomes of pro-active engagement between the media, female politicians and women's activist groups.

Key words

gender, governance, elections, media coverage

Women politicians face media challenges

Sarah Palin and Pamela Mburia live thousands of miles away from each other on opposites sides of the globe and their life paths may never cross. However, the two women have something in common: as aspiring female politicians, they both have had their battles with the media. Looking back on her bid as the first woman running for vice-president of the United States on the 2008 Republican-party ticket, Palin lashed out at the media, which she felt had done her more harm than good. Her reading habits, her spending spree on clothes and her family's personal lives made sensational headlines and stories. Palin believes the media did not give her a fair chance and that the media constructed an identity of her for the American public that was not authentic.



ILLUSTRATION: FRA

Attack of the Lipstick Pitbull

Polls show women voters are willingly surrendering to Sarah Palin, writes David Usborne

Democrats may not want to believe it but there is fresh evidence that the addition of Sarah Palin, the "hockey mom" governor of Alaska, to John McCain's ticket is winning him women voters in droves.

In a tidal shift that could prove decisive, enormous numbers of women who previously favoured Barack Obama have had their heads turned since the introduction of Palin, according to a new ABC/*Washington Post* poll.

The Palin phenomenon shows no signs of fading, in spite of a drip-drip of news revelations that hardly flatter her.

This week, *The Washington Post* reported that after becoming governor in 2006 Palin started charging taxpayers a "per diem" allowance for days she spent in her private the mansion in Juneau that she has never cared for.

Nor does there seem to be much room left for Palin to defend her claims, repeated in Republican television advertisements, that she opposed the now infamous "Bridge to Nowhere" project in Alaska, with clear evidence that, at first, she supported the wasteful scheme.

But for now, at least, women seem to be falling in love with Palin. They are not the only ones. A Gallup poll this week showed McCain opening a 15-point lead over Obama among independent voters who are not members of either of the main parties.

But it is the hockey mom wars that will preoccupy the generals of both camps. Although white women favoured Obama over McCain before the conventions by 50-42 percent, the 41 percent. That is a 20-point change.

"The poll is wrong," said David Plouffe, the Obama campaign chief, on hearing the numbers.

"I don't think you'll find many others that back up a 20-point reversal. We certainly are not seeing any movement like that. Polls, from time to time, particularly on the demographic stuff, can have some pretty wild swings."

At Obama HQ in Chicago they certainly hope so. Yet there can be no doubt that the race has been transformed since the end of the St Paul convention and that it can be traced back to the anointing of Palin, the "lipstick pitbull", and the blinding rock star status she has since assumed. McCain's campaign events are drawing crowds the likes of which he has never seen before.

The question, however, is avenues of retaliation, including deploying women surrogates to try to plug the dam. Hillary Clinton was in Florida speaking for him on Monday and plans are afoot to send forth Governor Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas and Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri soon.

Rather than attacking Palin directly, they will try to focus voters' attention on matters of policy, in particular those women who voted for Clinton, whose policy priorities are just about diametrically opposed to Palin's.

If the McCain menagerie cannot believe its luck, it is not admitting to it. Strategists have seen a doubling in just seven days of "Women for McCain", female grassroots volunteers for his candidacy. They are now to be deployed across the swing states to canvass for him every Monday evening between now and elec- bands and boyfriends are watching football on TV.)

Palin has become just the ticket for McCain, even though a few Republicans still fret she might overshadow him.

"She's a daring and exciting pick that has really rejuvenated support and respect for Senator McCain," said Crystal Benton, the campaign spokeswoman.

"When she said she'd stand up to the ol' boys network in Washington, that really inspired a lot of women."

In a sign of the campaign's growing confidence in her, final details have been agreed for Palin not simply to give a sit-down interview with ABC, as was originally expected, but to give the network's main anchor, Charlie Gibson, full access over two days.

Gibson should have the opportu- particularly about the per diems claimed by the governor when she reportedly spent 312 nights in Wasilla over 19 months. Also her husband, Todd, reportedly claimed expenses from the state for trips that he made.

Can hockey moms really swing American elections? Sixteen years ago, Bill Clinton's campaign mastermind Mark Penn identified "hockey moms" as a key group of voters. This group of white, suburban, middle-class voters – so-called because they spend a significant amount of time ferrying children to and from sports activities – helped propel Clinton into the White House.

In 2004, George Bush's then-strategist Karl Rove focused on the so-called "security moms" who could be scared into voting Republican by playing up fears of terrorism after 9/11. This backfired because there were not enough of them to women were more inte healthcare, which John Ke to talk about, so they fail for him.

In 2008, pollsters have the phrase "Sex and the Cit because of the surge of among unmarried wome has consistently polled w women voters.

Two months ago the pol them overwhelmingly s Obama over McCain.

The arrival of Palin changing that. But the interest in her among w reflected in the latest reveals that there is no suc a monolithic "female vote

The single, low-incon who turned out for Clinto million – are increasingly by Republican women about Palin's deeply co

According to feminist media researcher and assistant professor of Communications Studies, Mary Douglas Vavrus, "That the institutions and texts of mass media largely structure public life and suffuse it with meaning, is crucial to understanding politics and political campaigns in contemporary United States. News media are integral to the process of initiating, perpetuating, and even expanding identities of persons associated with or thrust into the political-public realm." (Varus 2002) Yet, while Palin may complain of too much media focus and a negative portrayal of her identity, she was highly visible and she did have a voice.

Mburia, on the other hand, believes that the media in her country, Kenya, not only do not give women politicians their due, they largely render women politicians invisible. Mburia ran for parliament in the East African nation's 2007 controversial polls. Like many women in the public arena or seeking to enter it, Mburia found in the run-up to her country's 2007 polls that at first the media often ignored her voice and the issues important to the lives of women.

Several research studies on the media in Southern Africa, for example, clearly show that both the state and privately owned media gravitate towards those in positions of power and formal authority in the public, as the primary newsmakers and newsworthy voices, but these criteria do not easily extend to women. A case in point is South Africa, where although women constituted more than 30% of representation in government at the national level, 28% at the provincial level and 28% at the local level, research conducted on the 1999 and 2004 general elections in the country showed an absence of women's voices in election-related news. In addition, in the Gender and Media Baseline Study, women politicians constituted only 8% of the sources in the category of "politicians"

who spoke in the news stories monitored for one-month in 12 countries across Southern Africa.

IPS encounters

Mburia joined several other African women politicians in 2007 at a seminar convened in Johannesburg, South Africa by the Africa office of Inter Press Service (IPS) global news agency to find ways to strengthen their voices in the media. IPS, the world's leading alternative information provider, has consistently introduced programmes and strategies since the 1980s to increase women's and other marginalised groups' access to freedom of expression in and through the media. Moreover, the agency's Africa network has worked for the past two years to give greater voice and visibility to women politicians and to issues of priority to women voters. Training was key to showing IPS's network of African journalists how easy it is for the media to tell only one side of the political story through only the voice of one sex. The journalists were re-trained and the agency's editors provided guidance on covering elections from a gender perspective, or with women as a central focus of the news coverage.

Accustomed to strategies aimed towards its own journalists and editors, the agency this time stepped out to work with women politicians and aspiring politicians to help them understand how to engage the media as knowledgeable and credible sources on the gender equality and rights dimensions of the political, economic and social issues in their countries. The frank and candid discussions between journalists from West, East and Southern Africa and female politicians at their face-to-face training session provided each side with a chance to interrogate and admit the gender biases and prejudices that keep the media from giving women a voice, and which cause women politicians in Africa to shy away from the media.

At the end of three-day encounter, which included discussions on issues such as gender and governance, gender and HIV and AIDS, gender violence, women, politics and news, and practical sessions where the



Women politicians and media engage during "Polls to Polls" encounter. *Photo: IPS*

journalists worked with the politicians to improve their understanding and perceptions of the media, the women politicians gained insights into issues to put on their political agendas. They also gained tips on how to increase their media profiles, as well as new confidence to talk freely about issues in women's lives, which the media often dismiss as so-called "soft news" best handled by female journalists.

The journalists, on the other hand, noted a better understanding of why covering elections, politics and governance from a gender perspective added more depth and an essential side of the story and analysis on democratic processes, such as elections. The resulting stories in the elections series entitled "From Polls to Polls" also revealed that male journalists could report stories from a woman's perspective.

Moreover, for an aspiring candidate like Mburia, the lessons from the IPS encounter were put to practice right away. Three months after the workshop, Mburia said in an interview that she received more media coverage after the November workshop and in the run-up to the December polls, because she felt better prepared and had been more pro-active to engage the media.

Other female politicians from Ghana, Cameroon and Lesotho, who attended the workshop, said they had a better understanding of how the media operates and were much more confident to approach the media. In turn, they reported that they were better prepared and in command of the subject they were being interviewed on.



Akua Sensa Dansua, Member of Parliament from Ghana, gives the media her views on why more women should be in politics. *Photo: IPS*

Journalists interviewed after the workshop also noted changes in their work. The majority of the journalists said they had covered stories on female politicians and issues pertaining to women since the workshop, and a number reported planned stories of such coverage. They also said they had they had made a conscious effort to seek female politicians to voice their opinions and they now had a better understanding of the difficulties female politicians face.

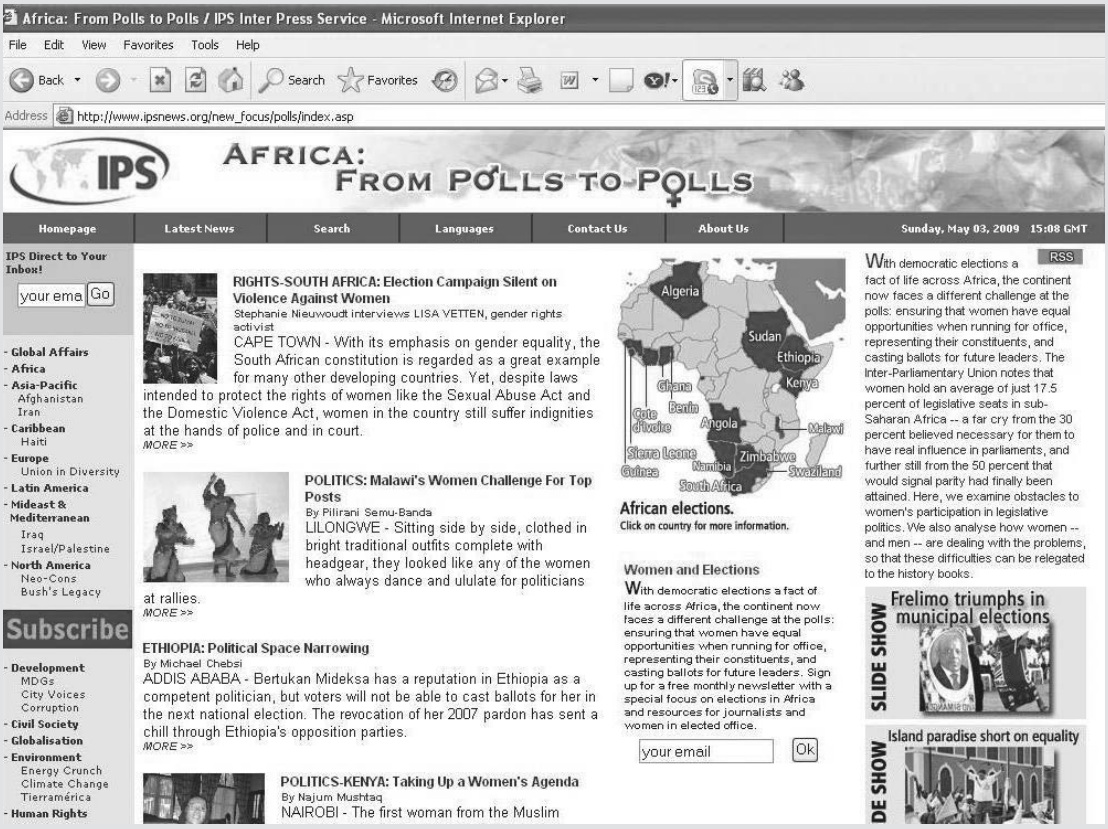
Media spotlight misses men's private choices

I always have a nagging feeling that the Africa we write about is a shadow of the one we live in, that the journalistic chasing after facts and figures misses so much of the active forces and discourses that shape behaviour and attitudes. The perceptions of women politicians by men and women alike are very important -- this came out in the stories. Mentioning their domestic and personal lives is important; the absence of equivalent examinations of their male counterparts is a glaring omission. In the unequally shared tasks of life on this continent, men's private choices are not subject to the same kinds of public pressure (media, religious, bar-room) as women's.

- IPS Africa editor Terna Gyuse

The personal becomes comfortable

IPS produced some 100 stories on elections held across Africa in 2007 and 2008 in the IPS Africa series "From Polls to Polls," which were translated into French and Kiswahili. IPS re-packaged these stories into 100 radio bulletins. In addition, as one of the editors of the stories, Mercedes Sayagues writes below, new narratives on female politicians and issues important to women did appear. However, there are still the grey areas where editors wrestle with how to tell the texture of female and male politicians' lives without falling back into gender stereotypes.



Polls to polls series

I was surprised. In the second paragraph of the second story of the series, taboo words popped up: sanitary pads and periods, of the biological, not the grammatical kind. A male reporter was writing and he had no problems describing without euphemisms the effort of Thabitha Khumalo, a parliamentarian in Zimbabwe, to supply sanitary pads as a matter of dignity and hygiene.

The fourth story, also written by a man, starred another taboo word: menopause. A sociologist in Guinea explained that women, busy as homemakers at a younger age, enter politics later, around menopause, when the kids are grown up, the family less critical, and the husband more supportive. Older women as assets to society; menopause as a door to a career - that is unusual.

Ten years ago, few male reporters would have felt comfortable writing about these topics, in these words. All the media training on gender across the continent is paying off. Oprah Winfrey's ability to talk about any issue has made the personal, comfortable. Gender stereotyping is eroding. Women's issues are gaining legitimacy and visibility.

This came through clearly in a series of 32 stories on women and elections in Africa that I commissioned and edited for IPS between September and November 2008. We did stories, profiles

and slideshows. We ran portraits of veteran women politicians in Guinea and Sierra Leone, stories on tough members of the opposition in Zimbabwe and Cameroon, and profiles of the first female mayors in Senegal, Madagascar and Mozambique.

Other stories described politics-as-a-men's-club in Swaziland, Ghana and Ethiopia, interrogated and made visible the violence against women candidates in Kenya and Malawi, and the increase of women in Parliaments, to 35% in Angola and 52% in Rwanda was reported as significant political news.

Balancing act

Some reporters, however, were reluctant to ask personal questions from women politicians. I insisted: how many children and their ages, how do they combine work and family life? Bring out the texture of their lives. Gender reporting manuals advise not to ask women these questions, to keep it professional. I think we should interrogate men and women alike. Start asking male politicians how they share domestic and family responsibilities, if they cook, change nappies and watch school plays.

The interest goes beyond the anecdotal. Research by the Inter-Parliamentary Union finds that the single most important deterrent for women to enter politics is their domestic responsibilities. Early on, IPS Africa editor Terna Gyuse and I had a spirited online editorial discussion about fashion. The profile of Sierra Leone's Zainab Bangura mentioned, in the lead, her spectacular wardrobe. Is it relevant to the story how a politician dresses? Against the IPS guidelines, which say no, I said yes.

If a woman dresses in a way that people notice, she wants them to notice: style and fashion as a personal and political statement. Just look at Michelle Obama. I argued with Terna, who wears dreadlocks, that his choice of hairstyle is a political statement that should be included in his profile.

Most male politicians wear boring clothes; that is why no one notices. Just check out the annual African Union heads of state group photo. However, some do use clothes as a branding tool: Jacob Zuma prancing around in leopard skin and assegai, Thabo Mbeki suited and buttoned up, Madiba (former President Nelson Mandela) in his loose, patterned shirts. Muammar Gaddafi understands (and enjoys) dress power. So do West Africans. Terna relented, and the references to turbans, boubous and kohl-lined eyes stayed, and made the stories more colourful.

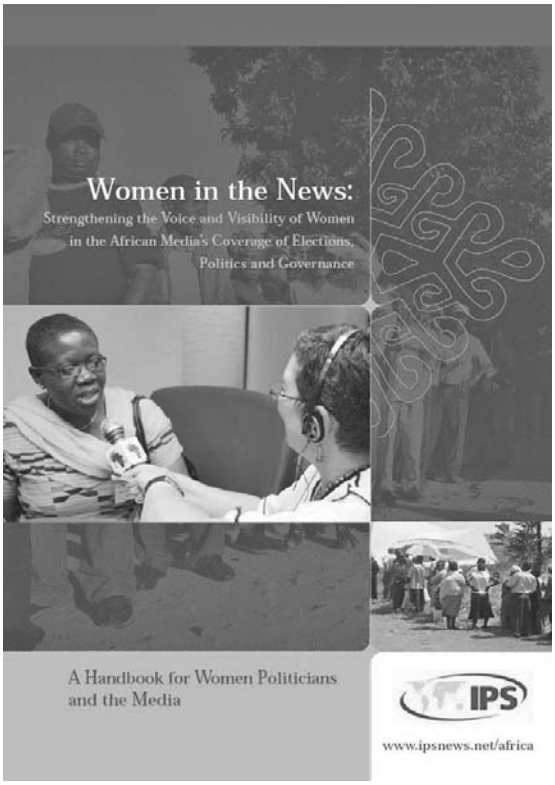
Very puzzling in the IPS Africa coverage of elections was the absence of HIV and AIDS in the stories, from high or low sero-prevalence countries. Except as a background fact about Swaziland in one story, neither journalists nor politicians nor voters mentioned it. Why? I asked around, and some of the reasons given were:

- People are saturated of talking about AIDS.
- Working in a box: this is political reporting, not AIDS reporting.
- The response to AIDS belongs to NGOs, donors and activists; elected officials have little to do with it.
- An AIDS platform does not garner votes.
- Politicians said boring stuff about AIDS.

The opinion pollster AfroBarometer also regularly reports that less than one-third of Africans put AIDS among their top three priorities. I let it be. Mentioning AIDS is not mandatory. Editing means striking a balance between standardising and keeping the writer's style, so we can hear the voices of these strong, resilient, courageous women, who are fired up about public service.

Inter Press Service has long had a global commitment to mainstreaming gender in the media. Since 1975, the organisation has actively pursued initiatives to enhance its reporting through the production of editorial policies and toolkits – such as a Gender Glossary and media manuals – to support the initiatives. The IPS Africa project "Strengthening the Voice and Visibility of Women in Elections" sought to increase the quality and quantity of reports on women in politics; enhance reporters and women politicians' capacity to engage and develop a sustainable model for replication and adaptation. It did so by:

- identifying and mentoring more than 50 reporters across the African continent to produce stories that reflected the gender dimensions of elections in their countries;
- hosting a pilot training workshop in South Africa which brought together women politicians and journalists from across the continent;
- linking reporters to politicians by commissioning interviews as well as hosting a press conference post-training in Johannesburg, South Africa;



- producing over 100 stories posted on to a dedicated website for use by partnering media;
- translating stories into Swahili and French;
- producing a Checklist for reporters (see an excerpt at the end of this journal);
- producing the *Women in the News: Strengthening the Voice and Visibility of Women in the African Media's Coverage of Elections, Politics and Governance* handbook for women politicians journalists. The handbook, for use by trainers or individuals for self-learning, is available on the IPS Africa website. More than 1000 copies of the handbook were downloaded before the end of the project. Almost 1000 printed copies were distributed in English and French to gender and media organisations; and
- producing electronic tools that included monthly newsletters and online resources.

Reflecting on the IPS Africa project "Strengthening the Voice and Visibility of Women in Elections" has reinforced our belief that the absence of the opportunities to put the learning into practice limits training. The project is unique in its efforts to bring journalists and politicians together but shares the challenges of organisations the world over who strive to ensure that training has sustained value.

The project, which IPS Africa aims to extend into an ongoing programme through sustainable partnerships, has highlighted the value of a training methodology that links the training – whether actual workshops, the use of the handbook or checklist and coaching – to the production of stories and/or the opportunity to test interview skills through encounters with reporters. The project further enhanced this by giving women politicians access to the knowledge and experiences of other women politicians and activists through linked resources such as a news-letter that provided resource-driven stories. The newsletters contained, for example, interviews with former Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi who spoke on the process of gaining the respect of peers, while campaigner Luta Shaba outlined the steps for a success campaign. There is in an ongoing need for additional resources. Our post-project

evaluation recorded a desire for additional electronic tools to support the existing Handbook and Checklist (available at the back of this journal) as well as expanded coverage.

In extending the project, IPS Africa aims to expand its impact by translating the Handbook into various African languages with an appropriate re-edit to ensure regional relevance. Clearly, the Handbook is only the foundation of support. The evaluation process showed that potential users needed support into translating the Handbook into training activities as well as simplifying some of the concepts into user-friendly explanations. The production of additional electronic tools that can be easily distributed must support this re-editing process.

The lessons learned from this initial project will help develop a programme that supports initiatives across the continent – seeking to replicate the training while expanding coverage. Africa's women politicians deserve more than just a bigger spotlight – they need informed coverage that adds to the debate on elections, politics and governance. And it would benefit all if we in the media continue to challenge ourselves on how we can do it better.

Notes

For more information on the "Strengthening the Voice and Visibility of Women in Elections" project, go to http://www.ipsnews.net/new_focus/polls/index.asp. Resources are also available for downloading.

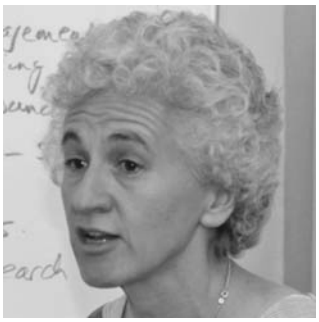
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Writers Bio

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South Africa: election coverage through a gender lens

By Colleen Lowe Morna and Deborah Walter



Abstract

South Africa's April 2009 elections resulted in 45% women's representation in Parliament, somewhat ironic given the fact that media coverage itself only featured 24% women sources and gender barely mentioned. Qualitative monitoring revealed numerous examples of gender stereotyping from the media, but also a wide range of positive coverage. Experience from the Gender Links Opinion and Commentary Service demonstrates that a gender perspective can translate into unique stories interrogating issues of national interest to both women and men. As the key source of information for the electorate, it is important that media cover a broad rang of issues and perspectives, particularly related to the nation's key priorities, and the priorities of both genders.

Key words

election coverage, media monitoring, gender

A gender perspective on election news

World Press Freedom Day on 3 May came just a few days after the dust settled on the 22 April South African elections, an achievement event for the country in that the elections and media coverage were - by and large - certified as free and fair. Yet, how true is that when viewed through a gender lens? Media watch-dogs such as the Freedom of Expression Institute have bemoaned the lack of depth and issue coverage in the elections; this also reflects in the coverage of gender issues.

Freedom of expression means that all views and voices are heard. Formal censorship is only one way to silence certain voices. A far more pervasive and worrying form of silencing is when the views and voices of certain segments of society are persistently and systematically excluded from the media. That is more often than not the case with gender.

Gender Links in partnership with Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) monitored, and will continue monitoring until 15 May, election coverage in the country. They will conduct a debate on the findings with key editors and stakeholders before releasing a comprehensive report at the end of May. However, as of this writing the trends are fairly clear.

On the plus side, while women constituted only 10% of all sources in the 1999 elections, that figure has risen

Women Sources – Top 5	
Die Berger	44%
RSG	38%
EP Herald	38%
Daily Sun	32%
SAfm	30%
Women Sources – Bottom 5	
Sunday Times	1%
Weekends	20.8%
Umhlobo Wenene	20.7%
Sowetan	18.8%
Motsweding	18.8%

Source: Media Monitoring Africa

to 24%. That is higher than the global average of 21% women news sources in the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) of 2005.

However, considering that women now constitute 43% of members of parliament, and 52% of society, the inescapable conclusion is that we are only half way to where we need to be. As well, this 24% is the same as in 2004 and 2009, showing that there has not been much headway in improving women's voices over the last four years.

Monitoring by MMA also shows that that gender as a topic only received 0.6% of media attention (compared, for example with 22% for election logistics). Among those that featured gender as a topic and issue in the election were ETV in a 7pm news bulletin; SABC morning and evening news in hour long debates; SABC International in two panel discussions at the Electoral Commission (IEC) headquarters and the *Mail and Guardian* in a special supplement.

The stock response from editors is that they report that which is newsworthy. Sure, men lead most political parties. However, Helen Zille leads the official opposition Democratic Alliance. And the ruling African National Congress (ANC) spokesperson Jesse Duarte is a woman.

Qualitative monitoring

Qualitative monitoring yielded several examples of blatant gender stereotypes such as the prominent coverage given to Zille admitting that she used Botox (*Sunday*



Mail&Guardian October 31 to November 6 2008 3

The sugar behind Shikota

A number of prominent personalities are putting their money behind the new party

Mandy Rossouw

The "Shikota" movement has enlisted one of South Africa's most influential businesswomen as a key backer and fundraiser.

Industrial Development Corporation chair Wendy Luhabe broke cover this week to reveal her role in the new political formation started by her husband and former Gauteng premier Mbhazima Shilowa and former defence minister Mosiuoa Terror Lekota.

Luhabe has sent a text message to her friends, which reads:

"Dear friends and colleagues, for those of u who wish to support the initiative to convene a successful national convention planned for Nov 1 and 2, you can support by sending a contribution to the national convention fund ... please pass this on to other concerned South Africans."

Luhabe confirmed that she is involved in financing the new movement, while Shilowa said she will "contribute some of her own money".

"I am helping with the fundraising and giving money as well," she said.

Luhabe pioneered Women Investment Portfolio Holdings (Wiphold) and the Women Pri-

keting Council and Vendome, she is a director of the JSE and has business interests in Ogilvy, Resilience Company and Ralph Blackie and Associates.

Luhabe is also the chancellor of the University of Johannesburg.

According to Shilowa, Luhabe's efforts have already borne fruit. He said: "What we want to do is to ensure South Africans contribute to this party. Wendy's SMS says: I think it's exciting times, contribute. Some will contribute R100, others as much as R250 000."

Shilowa revealed that the movement has borrowed the fundraising model made famous by United States presidential candidate Barack Obama, which invited campaign contributions via the internet and cellphones.

He said an IT company had volunteered to send bulk text messages to groups of people, asking them to forward SMSes worth at least R10 as a contribution to the movement.

The *Mail & Guardian* has learned that a number of top business people are being lobbied for contributions. Other black entrepreneurs, said by ANC sources to be backing the movement, include Stanlib chairperson Saki Macozoma, SAA CEO Khaya Ngqula, former justice minister and Bowman Gilfillan partner Penuell Maduna, mining boss Patrice Motsepe and empowerment tycoon Mzi Khumalo.

All have denied involvement in Shikota. It is understood that many business people are hanging fire until the party is officially launched.

Shilowa said a number of CEOs, whom he declined to name, were helping to organise the movement's weekend convention and had used their connections to secure the Sandton Convention Centre as a venue.

Parliamentary sources told the *M&G* that some MPs and councillors have been offered their full salaries and additional cash to join the movement and quit their government jobs.

"People are not only getting their annual salary, but an increase as well. If you're an MP you get R5 000 more, and councillors R2 000," an ANC MP said.

Shilowa admitted to offering salaries to those who quit their jobs to support him, but added this would apply only to those who worked full-time for Shikota.

Former ANC Women's League deputy president Kiki Rwexana this week became the first sitting MP to resign her position. As a committee chairperson she would have earned an annual package of at least R533 125.

Said Shilowa: "I have to say to Kiki: I want you to come out and organise women for us. Then I can look at at what point we put her on the payroll."

Shilowa explained that the ANC follows the same practice – if Luthuli House recalls people from Parliament to work at the party's headquarters they get paid salaries.

"Those who we will employ full-time once the party is set up we will pay. But you cannot pay someone simply to leave Parliament or as councillor. You won't have enough money to do so because you will ask people to leave paid jobs and then come here."

Shilowa pledged, once the big money starts coming in, to declare its sources in line with the policy that political party funding must be made public.

"We will go to big business, but because they have yet to contribute I don't have to indicate who they are. But once they contribute, I will let you know.

"[We don't have them yet] but it doesn't mean we won't get them."

Certain key players in the banking, mining and business sector, as well as CEOs of parastatals, have been mentioned as possible funders of the initiative but when contacted, denied involvement.

Making a contribution:

Times, 28 December); references to Zille as the "poster girl" and references to COPE leader Mbalima Shilowa's wife Wendy Luhabe as the "Sugar behind Shikota" (*Mail and Guardian,* 31 October).

The male dominance of politics has been underscored by several articles bearing the headline "All the President's Men" (for example the 28 August cover of *Financial Times*; and an article in *The Star* on 7 April). Several other articles bearing the title "All the presidents' women" such as the *Sunday Independent* on 25 January and *The Star* on 26 January referred to rumours and allegations concerning a young woman said to be carrying the baby of President Kgalema Motlanthe, who is separated from his wife.



Much of the media focus on President-elect Jacob Zuma's polygamous life style centred on who would be the first lady and what it would cost tax payers to have such an extensive first family, rather than what this reflects about his views on the Constitution and women's rights. To its credit, the *Mail and Guardian* ran an opinion piece by Gender Links on the subject that prompted several online responses. SABC International also hosted a debate on the subject with two for and two against, in front of a regional audience and with questions phoned in by viewers across Africa.

Sexist comments like ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema's offside on women who are raped not asking for taxi money in the morning prompted spirited debate and a well positioned piece in the *Mail and Guardian* (30 January). This in turn prompted a debate on whether or not the personal is political.

The *Mail and Guardian* Critical Thinking Forum partnered with Gender Links, the Human Rights Commission and Constitution Hill in posing this question to a



6 News
THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT NOVEMBER 9 2008

Woman with her heels on the ground

Wendy Luhabe is well titled but she does not assume that political credibility and entitlement go together

FIONA FORBE

At 51, Wendy Luhabe has a string of impressive titles to her name. She chairs the Industrial Development Corporation. She is the chancellor of the University of Johannesburg. She is a self-described social entrepreneur and a regular commentator. She is also a wife, a mother and a millionaire. But membership of the ANC does not feature in her profile.

"Membership cannot be used as a measure of commitment to a cause," she points out. Yet, like millions of South Africans around her, she has supported the comrades all her life. Politically she has never known any other home.

But in recent weeks she has watched her husband, Mbhazima Shilowa, walk away from the ANC to help found a new political party with a number of other dissidents. And her allegiance might go with them if they strike the right chord.

"If the intention is to put the country first and not the party then yes, they would have my support," she says. If the intention is to unify rather than polarise South Africa, then they could also count on her. "From what I have heard, I have a sense that that's the attempt they are exploring," she claims.

And what she is hearing goes well beyond pillow talk. Soon after Shilowa tendered his resignation and along with Mosiuoa Lekota began to float the idea of forming a new political party, Luhabe began to tap into her networks to mobilise financial support for their cause.

For that she has been dubbed the sugar behind the Shilotas. But it's a new title that fazes her little.

"I like the idea of the constituency feeling a responsibility with respect to the financial health of an initiative or political party," she says.

"We have all gone to our circle of people, either friends or business associates, and asked them to contribute," she explains. "I am contributing to it, as many people who feel strongly about what is being proposed are doing."

How deeply people are digging into their pockets she claims not to know. "I have not had sight of the bank account, but that's irrelevant whether people are contributing R50 or R1 000."

What matters is the response, she argues. "The energy is there. Everybody that I have sent requests to have said, 'Absolutely. We will make a contribution'."

But her efforts were stalled this week when the ANC Youth League accused her of abusing Absa Bank as a platform to help line the party's coffers. The bank was quick to refute the allegation and in a terse statement Luhabe said it was unfortunate that the Youth League hadn't checked its facts before shooting from the hip in a bid to intimidate those who don't share their own political views.

The young militants duly swallowed their words and retreated back into their trenches.

It is an example of the polarisation that Luhabe believes has led the country to this point. But rather than see it as a crisis, she welcomes it as a long overdue opportunity waiting to be harnessed.

She has rarely been reticent about expressing her political views. And today is no exception. But her words carry more weight than ever now as she aligns with her husband, a man who many say has boldly been brandishing his political ambition on his sleeve for a number of years. Together they make for a formidable pair.

"It's like a second transition," Luhabe says. "It has given us an opportunity as South Africans to stand up and be counted again, instead of abdicating to a few individuals who do not feel accountable to the rest of the nation."

The irony is that it wasn't meant to be this way. In hindsight, the ANC's decision to recall Thabo Mbeki has become the gift they never intended it to be, she believes. "A gift this country will only appreciate 10 to 30 years from now."

It somehow forced a decision to launch a new political party and has got South Africans talking again, casting a sharp light on the murky side of political life.

But rather than wipe the slate clean, she believes the nascent party should learn from those who went before them and build on the foundations they put in place.

"And I think what has been achieved over the past 15 years is quite remarkable."

But the failings are glaring.

"A country like South Africa, that is so wealthy, should not have the levels of poverty that it has. A country like South Africa should not have children who die of hunger, who do not have access to food, to health, to education. It is a crime," she says, "because we are not a poor country."

Luhabe is loathe to point the finger of blame in any one direction, arguing that each and everyone of us collected in some way in the current state of affairs. "Where were we? We were right here, in this country" but "we abdicated to government".

But the time has now come to "take a step back and really look at what we want to do with the future of the country".

Luhabe cautions against the culture of entitlement which she believes has swelled into the national psyche and has subsequently hampered progress.

She would support a call for compulsory social service to help nurture a nationwide compassion "about the needs that exist" all around us. She urges for a thought leadership that would reinforce those kinds of ideals.

"If people don't begin to make it part of the thinking process of the society", it simply won't happen, she believes.

She refuses to countenance mediocrity and as the country moves forward she casts her mind back to the poor performance management in the previous government.

"It sends the wrong message... It suggests that we are a government that tolerates mediocrity. I don't want to be led by a government that tolerates mediocrity quite frankly."

And in managing performance she calls for the acute need to manage expectations. "We don't have the luxury of the past 15 years," she says. "People are running out of patience."

Yet she is reticent to contemplate her husband as the man most suitable to take the country forward.

"We must choose the president that we want. That's why I am excited by an electoral system where the nation chooses its political leaders, not the party," she says.

Should that opportunity come knocking on Shilowa's door, Luhabe says she would stand firmly behind him.

And if Shilowa gets what he wants, Luhabe will not be confined to Mahlambandlopfu. She will be a first lady to watch out for.

Strong views: Wendy Luhabe, the businesswoman and wife of Mbhazima Shilowa, is excited about what she sees as the 'second transition' – an opportunity for South Africans to stand up and be counted instead of 'abdicating to a few individuals within the ruling party' PHOTOGRAPH: JEREMY LEMMON

panel of all the political parties, providing the substance for a special supplement on Gender and the Elections by the *Mail and Guardian* (March 20). Throughout the period, GL ran Gender and Leadership debates that resulted in a checklist of transformative leadership.

On a positive note, several newspapers ran lengthy profiles of prominent women in politics, including new and emerging leaders in opposition parties. Examples include "Cope's eager new girl on the block (Lynda Odendaal) in the *Sunday Independent* on 21 December; "Woman with her heals on the ground" (Wendy Luhabe) in the *Sunday Independent* of 9 November; "The love of my country has guided me" (COPE's Lyndal Shope) in *The Star* 7 November; "On the campaign with superwoman" (Helen Zille) in the *Saturday Star* of 18 April and "Die-hard had to eat her words" (former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka) in the *Sunday Independent* of 29 April.

While white male commentators and analysts predominated in all media, the *Mail and Guardian* is to be congratulated for its frequent use of black female experts and opinion shapers like Nikiwe Bikitsha and Phumla Gobodo-Madikizela, who shed refreshing views on the issues (like the Sunday lunch disputes in Bikitsha's home over whether to vote COPE or ANC).

Experts speak on media's election role...

"Need to go beyond the rally; we have to address key questions around gender and women."
- Paula Fray, International Press Service.

"People are a bit jaded about promises that have been made. Media ought to come with a citizens agenda, media have a responsibility to fill in the gaps, where is xenophobia, media etc."
- Guy Berger, Head of the School of Journalism & Media Studies, Rhodes University

"Journalists need to take the point of view of the voter not the politicians or political party. Media need to probe the veneer, cost the various manifestos and coverage should go from the point of asking what does the voter need to know and what do they not know."
- Tawana Kupe, Dean of Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand

The *Mail and Guardian* also consistently consulted "ordinary" women and men in equal numbers for their views on the elections. The newspaper's election cover, showing Zuma and Zille, and flagging a supplement on women's economic empowerment, is an example of the gender balance that GL and media partners who promote gender equality in and through the media hope will be achieved in future coverage.

Other social issues

Gender was not the only important social issue left off the media agenda. Hot button issues like poverty, education, crime, gender violence, HIV and AIDS, shaped little coverage. The key national concerns of crime and HIV/AIDS were virtually missing from the media's election coverage - with 1% and 0.25% respectively. With the national emergency caused just last year by xenophobic attacks that rocked the country and cast a dark cloud across the nation from the international community, it is thus a surprise that only 0.3% of coverage featured poverty, race and racism, and just 0.1% refugees.

What about the voters? How often were their views consulted? If it were, surely the voices of women would have rung loud and clear. By accessing women, and seeking a gender perspective, media may have more successfully forced politicians to respond to these social issues that shape daily concerns. As women tend to bear disproportionate responsibility related to challenges such as HIV/AIDS, children, and household services, ensuring their voices would have provided a way to engage with politicians on concretes measures planned for the country's development.

GL Opinion and Commentary Service

Under the banner of "fresh views on everyday news," the GL Opinion and Commentary Service (GL Service) strives to provide gender perspectiveson current events, and this included the April elections in South Africa, as well as other upcoming elections around the region. This includes offering commentaries from writers around the region on voting, campaigning, and elections issues, as well as highlighting efforts of non-governmental organisations and civil society in their attempts to highlight concerns missing from the campaign agenda.

As part of Gender Links' encouragement of vibrant debate on leadership, several commentaries focused on questions of conscious. Prompted by a conversation with her 12-year-old daughter about Jacob Zuma's treatment of women, GL's Deputy Director Kubi Rama pondered who, as a woman voter, deserved her support. Though conceding that the ANC's commitment to 50/50 is laudable, she questioned Zuma's judgement in his treatment of women, the logic of taking a shower as an HIV



Councillor Patience Tshoho at work *Photo: Susan Tolmay*


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Gender an election wild card

Published:Feb 23, 2009

Zuma's belief in female equality is questionable and the opposition is similarly unfocused, says Kubi Rama

A CONVERSATION with my 12-year-old daughter regarding the possibility of Jacob Zuma becoming our next president has triggered a series of uneasy questions.

- SA Elections 2009

Her concern and indeed quite vehement opposition to his election is that Zuma has not treated women very well. The evidence she presented was his rape trial, specifically the way Zuma's supporters vilified the young woman concerned. This future voter was clearly not impressed.

It got me thinking, not as a gender activist, but as a female voter. I want to vote. Yet, looking ahead to the forthcoming elections and the options available, I ask myself what the contesting parties have to offer me. As part of their campaign to attract votes, parties create manifestos outlining strategies to address the needs of all South Africans. This includes addressing inequality.

The Times

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prevention strategy, and his inaction to stop the demonisation his accuser during the 2006 rape trial.

She also queried the lack of specific strategies of the Democratic Alliance (DA), who "opposes ANC policies and strategies without providing viable alternatives," or how the Congress of the People (COPE) will articulate its plans for gender equality. Rama points out that:

> "I want to do the responsible thing as a citizen and exercise my right to vote. However, if none of the parties responds to my needs as a woman who still lives in society where women and men are not equal,I am faced with a serious dilemma."

This article received widespread response, including republication in South Africa's *The Times*, *Women 24, The Sowetan, and Daily News.*

Likewise, commentaries by younger writers Judith Mtsewu and Mandla Masingi grappled with various perspectives on the upcoming vote, clearly showing that the younger generation had something to say on the topic. Again, both received positive feedback and widespread coverage. Along with republication in print media, Mtsewu's's article also sparked at least two radio debates.

Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre, Women's Net and the Political Studies Department of Wits University analysed campaign manifestos as the related to GBV and organised a debate to bring the issue to the attention of politicians, as a campaign issue. The debate challenged political parties to explain to voters ahead how they plan to combat rape and domestic violence - both significant challenges to the country's development. *The Sowetan* and the online news portal *Women.24*, picked up GL Service commentary by Lisa Vetten and Sally Shackleton, and the United Nations affiliated IRIN News published a differently authored piece on the event. Yet, given that studies suggest that domestic violence affects as many as one in two women in some parts of South Africa and prevalence rates indicate a woman killed every six hours, it is surprising that the issue and the event did not attract wider coverage.



More women's voices on political change

By Judith Mtsewu

As we enter 2009, it seems the year ahead will be full of change and challenges, not least in the political landscape. The worsening political situation in Zimbabwe, the emergence of a new political party ahead of upcoming elections in South Africa, and the first presidential elections in Angola since 1992 (and only the second since the country's 1975 independence), are just a few examples of how politics shape the region we live in.

Though times and stereotypes are changing, both men and women often consider this political domain a male one, assuming that men should like and excel at politics, much the same way that they should like and excel at sports and technology, for instance. Yet, more and more women, especially young women, are developing more interest in politics, and making their opinions known.

Ten countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) will have elections over the next three years. If women do not take an interest in politics, they miss opportunities to have a say in how governments run, which of course affects everyone.

In my circle of friends, along with my love for sports (with cricket topping the charts), my above-average interest (compared to that of an "ordinary" woman – whoever she is) in politics stands out as different. I often contend with comments, mostly from men, on how odd this is interest is – "Wow, so you have an opinion on the United State's invasion of Iraq?" Yeah, I do and I stand by it.

Throughout most of my life, I have been selective with whom I talk to about politics, because many of my friends did not share this particular interest with me. As a result, I would find myself seeking male friends and any cab driver who would dare listen to me.

At the same time, I was fully aware that I was feeding and perpetuating the stereotype - that by virtue of being a man, the person must be interested and knowledgeable about these issues. Fortunately, as it turns out, my experience is testimony that this is not true.

In the recent past, I have noticed a change. There are more conversations about our political environment among my friends, male and female, and they, not me, are initiating these. There were two turning points.

The first was the election of Barack Obama. The second one, right here at home, was the creation of the splinter party largely from the African National Congress (ANC), which led to the formation of the Congress of the People (COPE). I am not suggesting that prior to these two events women in

general had no interest in politics. However, I know that with my friends, it was certainly less visible.

I was not too surprised when, on a visit to a hair salon, I heard conversations about Obama's historic win and on a visit to a curios shop in Melville, I heard the Kenyans there claim him as their son, celebrating his win with a braai. When I went to a graduation party, I ended up being part of a discussion about COPE's youth movement as initiated by one of the guests at the party. The latter made the party much more interesting, especially for those who do not dance, cause talk we can.

More and more of the conversations around the dinner table, and during other activities we busy ourselves with, are about the political landscape that is taking shape in the world and in South Africa. I am hearing real questions asked about the potential changes that president Obama in the United States and COPE in South Africa might possibly bring to our lives, communities, and respective countries.

Most importantly, I am seeing more young women taking interest in how their own political decisions are responsible for the environment they work, live, and possibly raise children in, as well as the world they want to leave for future generations. Along with an opening up of dialogue, there seems to be increasing awareness that an individual has a stake in changing the course of a country and can reclaim some of the power handed over to politicians.

For me personally, the Obama and COPE moments have compelled me to act like the change agent I have always believed myself to be. I do want to be actively involved in creating the type of society I want to live in today and tomorrow, and raise children in.

Perhaps the lack of "struggle credentials," which still tend to command the most respect within our political system, have further marginalised young people from the political arena. As for me, I believe I am no less deserving of an opportunity to shape the place I call home. More significantly, I am hearing a lot more young people and women say this and own the moment.

We must encourage young people, women, and those who often shy away from engaging in politics, changing the face of politics in the process for good. And, of course once the conversations gets going, action is not far behind. And, that should make for very interesting times ahead indeed.

Judith Mtsewu is the Governance and Justice Programme Officer at Gender Links, based in South Africa. This article is part of the GL Opinion and Commentary Service that provides fresh views on everyday news.



Democracy and participation *Photo Colleen Lowe Morna*

Another example, authored by Mongezi Mhlongo and Nomancotsho Pakade of Behind the Mask, described how the lesbian, bisexual, gay, transsexual, and intersex (LGBTI) community came face to face with the ruling party, African National Congress (ANC) and opposition, Democratic Alliance (DA), to question the parties' policies regarding LGBTI issues. Organised by the Joint Working Group (JWG), the Elections Seminar was an opportunity to engage with the community on issues such as hate crimes, hate speech and threats to constitutional protections, amongst other things.

According to the article, though organisers invited all the major political parties, only the ANC and DA showed up for this meeting, which saw ANC representatives defending Jacob Zuma's alleged anti-gay speech at the Rhema church. The ANC admitted to having not done much on LGBTI issues since the passing of the Civil Union Act in 2006, citing that these issues are still taboo within the party.

Questioned about their silence when LGBTI people are murdered based on their sexual orientation and absence in marches condemning hate crimes Madlala-Routledge said, she has been vocal in support of the LGBTI struggle in South Africa.

> "You can see my speeches on the internet, but yes, I agree we need to speak out and condemn such crimes as people in the positions that we are in.' Madlala-Routledge also raised, amongst other things, that the ruling party represents society and that some members of society still hold backward views regarding homosexuality."

> Only alternative media, such as the HIVOS sponsored *Citizen Journalism* portal, included this story in their election coverage. Again, the LGBTI community represents a significant part of society, and human right abuses, including murder, against the community still happen on a regular basis. It thus seems that the media missed an opportunity to cover an underreported issue, as well as highlight politicians lackluster response (only two parties showed!) to the issue.

Yet, it is not just in South Africa where the task is falling to NGOs to highlight key social issues. A commentary by Dingaan Mithi in Malawi described how the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood (WRASM) Malawi chapter is calling on aspiring candidates to declare, and act on, their commitment to ensuring the health and well-being of the nation's mothers ahead of Malawi's 19 May parliamentary and presidential elections.

> "Mothers have delivered for the nation, without their votes, aspiring members of parliament (MPs) would not win," observed President of the Association of Malawian Midwives (AMAMI) Lennie Adeline Kamwendo. "Mothers walk long distances to access health care and they must be empowered."

> The campaign challenges all aspiring MPs to sign a declaration committing themselves to combating maternal mortality. Based on the declaration, WRASM will track progress amongst all MPs who sign the document, to strengthen safe motherhood efforts in the country.

The article goes on to describe how the commitment statement contains ten key action points, including increasing resource allocation and ensuring transport and communication resources are in place, as well as influencing district assemblies, constituencies, and traditional leaders to combat maternal mortality.

Given that Malawi has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world, it would seem reasonable that such an issue would feature in political campaigns, and that media would seize on issues with such impact on the population, as a way of calling politicians to speak on specific and concrete actions that they intend to take.

Other GL Service commentaries not only help to break stereotypes, but also provide for entertaining reading. Looking ahead to the Mauritius 2010 elections, Loga Virahsawmy described in an article how men in this traditionally conservative nation are working hand in hand with women to see that the "common sense of gender equality prevails."

> Councillor Jean Claude Sunasee is among those who want to share in this battle. He hopes that more men are prepared to help female village councillors to get a foot in District Councils. "There are two women councillors in my village and whenever our meetings finish late or there is a function in our village, I make it a point to leave them in front of their doors in my taxi. Mauritius is becoming a dangerous place and women cannot walk alone at night."

The article recounts how when he first married, he immediately helped his wife Marie Anne open a little shop so that she could become economically independent. He adds that both genders are equal in his house, "All my children, two girls and one boy get the same treatment. I am building a house for my son at the moment and as soon as I have saved enough money I will build for my two girls as well."



Marie Anne and Jean Claude Sunasee *Photo: Loga Virahsawmy*

Such perspectives provide for a unique perspective on elections and politicians, adding further evidence that the personal is political. Sunasee's commitment to gender equality is not just a theoretical concept, but also one that he practices in his home and in his work.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, media showed some positive as well as stereotypical reporting of women during the 2009 South Africa elections coverage. While media monitoring identified a gap in elections reporting from a gender perspective, the experience of the GL Commentary Service shows that there are many elections issues that exists, are interesting, and the media simply misses.

According to media monitoring Africa, some of the possible areas that media could cover during elections are:

- gender-based violence, including security, justice system and treatment of survivors;
- female poverty, esp. black rural female poverty as one of the most marginalised populations in South Africa;
- access to land, credit and housing;
- public service delivery, in particular access to welfare and appropriate health services including HIV/AIDS testing, counselling and treatment; and affirmative action and wage inequity.

A gender approach means more quality information for the electorate as a whole, and offers unique perspectives for media consumers. As the key information channel for the electorate, it is important that media delve deeper into the issues concerning the average voter, as well as reflect perspectives of the nation as a whole, and this includes the more than half the population, who are women.

Writers Bio
Colleen Lowe Morna is the Executive Director and Deborah Walter the editor at Gender Links



Walking the talk: media during Zimbabwe's 2008 harmonised election

By Koliwe Nyoni

Abstract

The article highlights findings of media monitoring undertaken by MISA-Zimbabwe during the period of the harmonised election period beginning January to slightly after 29 March, 2008. It highlights:

- the political context in which Zimbabwe's elections were held:
- the significant number of women who participated (as registered voters) and contested (as parliamentary, senatorial and council candidates) in the election and the actual result, which is a mere 13% representation in parliament;
- the manner in which the Zimbabwean media portrayed and featured women candidates and voters;
- opinions of selected candidates on whether the role the media played during the said period and highlighting specifically whether the media contributed to their result and what they think can be done in the future for the media in Zimbabwe to maintain it's role during elections; and
- recommendations that came out of the research for the media, women's support groups and the politicians themselves.

Generally the findings of the report were that there that because of the polarised media and political environment in Zimbabwe, the lack of gender policies within the newsrooms and the general failure of political parties themselves to support their women structures, Zimbabwe still has a long way in achieving gender equity especially in governance issues

Key words

governance, elections, gender equality, media monitoring

Zimbabwe's political context

Over the past decade, Zimbabwe's political scene has undergone drastic changes with the formation of what has become the strongest opposition party in the country since independence in 1980, the Movement



Despite the risk of being a member of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a significant number of Zimbabwean women especially in the urban areas form the base of the MDC's support.
Photo: MISA Zimbabwe

for Democratic Change (MDC). The Trade Union Movement formed MDC in 1999. Since then Zimbabwe has held four elections - in 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008. The MDC alleges that the Zimbabwe African National Unity-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) rigged all except the initial harmonised election of 2008. In a dramatic turn of events, the MDC, in 2005, split to form two rival factions over the whether to participate in the country's senatorial election; the faction led by Arthur Mutambara was pro the election

In the election of 29 March 2008, Robert Mugabe, president of the country for 28 years, lost to the MDC candidate, Morgan Tsvangirayi in the presidential race, and the opposition MDC – won control of parliament from Mugabe's. Following this result there was apprehension within the ruling party, causing the withholding of the presidential results and a violent crackdown ahead of a 27 June 2008 run-off against MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, who as a result, stepped down the second round of the race.

Statistically, 99 women out of 779 (13%) candidates contested in the House of Assembly elections. According to the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPS) database, 32 women were elected to the House of Assembly on 29 March. The increase in the number of parliamentary seats to 210 from 120 means there are more women in parliament (25 in 2005), though the percentage decreased slightly from 16.7% to 15.2%

Concerning local government polls, 661 of the 3,831 aspirants who ran in October 2008 were women (just over 17%). Of the 198 candidates who ran for the Senate, 64 were women (32.3%), of which 23 won, meaning 24.7% of the senate is women. (WIPSU 2008).

During the political melt down, Zimbabwe's economy collapsed; the country's inflation and unemployment rates reflecting the general deterioration of the manufacturing industry and production. Also in that period, media repression increased, as the Mugabe government noticed that as long people were able to speak and question them, the opposition was continuously strengthened. The government shut down privately owned daily newspapers, and the only privately run television station, Joy TV, switched off. This left a monopoly and polarised both the print and broadcasting industry.

Today the Zimbabwean media represents the interests of only a certain section of the community, i.e. the ruling elite from the dominant political parties, as well as prominent business people in the country. Political allegiances divide the media, which also consequently is becoming discriminatory along gender lines; women rarely feature.

Portrayal of women in Zimbabwean media

Walking the Talk was a media-monitoring project that sought to determine the representation of men and women in the media during the coverage of the March 2008 harmonised elections. Researchers analysed selected hard news and features stories pertaining to the polls published between 1 January 2008 and 30 June 2008. The study monitored weekly newspapers, on-line publications and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporations' (*ZTV)* main news bulletins.

The analysis was mainly quantitative to ascertain the number of times that media mentioned women as sources or subjects in these articles, while the qualitative analysis focused on the portrayal of women in the stories. The qualitative aspect of the monitoring used the Gender Links Gender &

6 THE STANDARD, 27 APRIL 2008
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Vote recounts suspended as Zanu PF loses

BY KHOLWANI NYATHI

BULAWAYO — The recount of votes in the Bulilima East constituency in Matabeleland South was suspended temporarily last week after losing Zanu PF candidates held an alleged secret meeting with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC).

ZEC officials were forced to apologise profusely to the opposition MDC as temperatures reached boiling point over the meeting held outside the counting centre at Plumtree High School.

MDC (Mutambara) candidates who won the Bulilima East and Bulilima parliamentary and senatorial seats respectively accused Zanu PF of trying to manipulate the process, saying the meeting showed the commission was not independent.

Bulilima was among 23 constituencies where recounts were ordered by the ZEC following Zanu PF claims that its candidates were prejudiced by deliberate miscounts blamed on polling officers.

At Plumtree High School the recounts almost turned chaotic after Zanu PF politburo member, Eunice Sandi-Moyo, who lost to Lutho Tapela of the MDC-Mutambara led protests against the process.

On Saturday last week she told ZEC officials she would ask for another recount after accusing them of failing to communicate to her key issues affecting the process.

Matters came to a head on Sunday when Sandi-Moyo, the Zanu PF losing candidate for Bulilima East, Mathias Ndlovu and several other Zanu PF supporters held the meeting with the provincial elections officer, Jotham Nyathi.

"We know Zanu PF called for these recounts so that it could try to win back its parliamentary majority," said Norman Mpofu, the MDC (Mutambara) victor in Bulilima East.

"They are now confirming our fears. We had no problems when it came to council seats because their major preoccupation is winning parliamentary seats."

The recounting was suspended for a few hours until Zanu PF, MDC and ZEC agreed the complaints should be put in writing.

Nyathi denied Zanu PF was trying to influence the process, insisting they were not discussing anything related to the elections.

Sandi-Moyo walked out of the counting centre after the dispute, lashing out at the MDC members: "After all, it was us who called for these recounts and we have the right to seek clarifications when necessary."

The Zanu PF officials caused more delays when they asked for each and every voters' roll used in the constituency to be cross-checked because they claimed they had evidence some MDC supporters voted twice.

After the rigorous exercise the results remained unchanged.

The recounts have so far confirmed the results released after the elections — Zanu PF losing its parliamentary majority to the opposition for the first time since independence.



ARTHUR Mutambara

Media (GEM) classification system (Lowe Morna and Ndlovu 2008). The qualitative monitoring identified issues such as the following categories of stereotypes.

- *Blatant stereotype (BS)* **-** where women are presented in stereotypical roles such as victims or sex objects, whilst men are portrayed as strong businessmen or leaders.
- *Subtle stereotype (SS)* **-** Articles or images that reinforce notions of women's domestic and men's public roles as normal. Articles or images in which women are referred to according to personal relationships that have no relevance to the story.
- *Gender-Blind (GB)* **-** refers to stories that lack balance in sourcing and perpetuate stereotypes by using gender based language.
- *Gender aware (GA)* - which comprises gender balance of sources and gender-neutral language, and Challenges stereotypes.

So generally, the monitoring focused on:

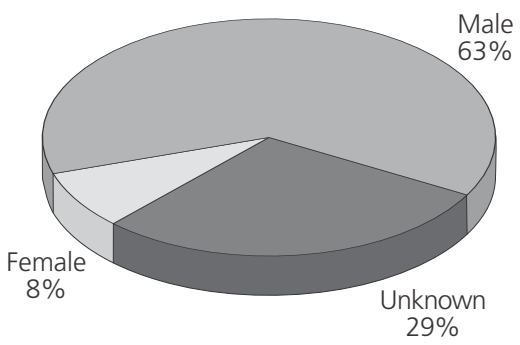
- whether the media were gender sensitive in terms of coverage of male and female candidates in the election;
- how general electoral issues affecting both men and women were covered with respect to the need for gender equity in media coverage; and
- whether there was equal access to the media for the different political parties and candidates contesting in the election.

Apart from the above questions, the survey also broadly looked at whether or not the media discriminates against citizens on the basis of social status in their coverage of issues related to elections.

Findings

- The majority of monitored articles are gender biased giving prominence to male voices, men feature more as sources and subjects.
- Men are portrayed as the voice of authority in the stories.
- There are few examples of gender aware stories.
- When included, stories depict women mainly as victims.
- Most articles mention women as subjects and not sources (opinion-givers/ makers).
- The women mentioned in stories are rarely quoted in their political capacity.

Overall percentage representation by gender of sources and subjects in monitored media



As posted on the "Waking the Talk" blog, entities, including the Women's Trust and the Ministry of Gender and Women's Affairs, mounted advertising campaigns urging for greater and more active participation by women in political affairs. Some of the adverts particularly call for more women to be elected into political office. This is commendable but the following was also characteristic of media coverage.

- The media week failed to follow-up on the commercials, as they did not carry much of serious editorial content arising from the advertorials as they relate to the participation of women in the elections.
- Males dominate voiceovers in most of the commercials. For instance, in some of the advertorials by Zanu PF and Independent Presidential candidate Simba Makoni flighted by ZTV, it appears the role of women has been confined to dancing, singing and ululating while men attend to the serious business of articulating the issues.
- While there were efforts by media including *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Standard* and ZBC/TV to bring the various political party manifestos to the attention of the public, little analysis of these manifestos occurred, especially where they relate to critical issues such as the empowerment of women and such pertinent issues as land reform, health, economic indigenisation and others.
- For example, in its story on the enacted Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Bill, *The Sunday Mail* (March 9-15, 2008) does not critically interrogate how the legislation will empower previously marginalised groups, including women and the youths.

The gender analysis revealed a bias towards men in terms of sourcing and as subjects of news among journalists. Reading the articles it becomes evident that most newsrooms are yet to mainstream gender into their reporting. There is no deliberate effort to create space for women to speak and comment on issues from their perspective along the entire story writing chain. To this end, the monitoring shows that coverage of the 29 March 2008 harmonised polls and the subsequent 27 June 2008 Presidential run-off was a "male affair" involving high ranking male political leaders. This is so despite the fact that all the three main political parties have women in top leadership positions who the media could have interviewed. As a result, media coverage of the elections revolved around these dominant male figures and rarely delved into the issues affecting the majority of voters who were women.



A significant number of ZANU PF's women's league members have resigned themselves the role of praise singers for their male counterparts. An elderly woman chants ZANU PF slogans in Mbare, Harare. March 2008. *Photo: MISA Zimbabwe*

Portrayal of women in the media's election narratives: a critical perspective

From the election stories in which featured women, there is a clear patriarchal tendency in which the media sees women through men, thereby stereotyping women whilst covering various issues. In the case of the "President's Daughter Bona Votes" *(The Sunday Mail*,

30 March, 2008) the impression is that Bona Mugabe warrants media attention only because she is the President's daughter, not because of her right to exercise her voting rights as an adult.

On the country's only television channel, ZTV, in all the stories in which Vice President Mujuru featured, she is not portrayed as anything more than a ZANU PF functionary who is where she is because of the party she belongs to and not as a politician in her own right. Similarly the coverage of Tracy Mutinhiri and Lucia Matibenga on *ZTV* news ZTV on 1 and 2 March points to the fact that women are viewed as part of political party collectives, not as citizens who are in politics in their own right.

In the report on a campaign rally in Marondera, Muthiniri gives an account of the work as Senator in the last three years. The report, however, focuses more on her call for voters to vote for ZANU PF, without a focus on her. In the case of Lucia Matibenga, *ZTV* focuses on her as the MDC-T candidate for the Kuwadzana constituency without much reference to her political experiences as a female politician, particularly her unilateral and undemocratic ejection as chairperson of the MDC-T Women's Assembly. This is not the case with stories on male politicians like President Mugabe, whose personal experiences and descriptions of a personal nature often featured through wide-ranging interviews and long news articles. It is within such frameworks that women did not receive much media space with regard to issues of substance pertaining to their rights as politicians and citizens with full citizenship rights.

Opinions of selected women candidates on the media

The report selected a few candidates that were part of the harmonised election and they included Trudy Stevenson (MDC), Professor Rudo Gaidzanwa (an independent candidate), Margaret Dongo (Independent Senatorial candidate and former ZANU PF) and Priscilla Misihairambwi - Mushonga (MDC–Mutambara faction spokesperson, and candidate). The intention of the interviews was to get a general feeling of whether the candidates felt that the media played its prescribed role during the said period; highlighting specifically whether they felt that media contributed to their result and what they think can be done in the future for the media in Zimbabwe to maintain it's role during elections.

The general feeling from the women was that the media was simply polarised and that as women candidates they were caught in between the struggle of the two major male contestants within the race, i.e. Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirayi. They did not receive the requisite media coverage during their campaign, and the little coverage they garnered was simply because of their alignment to the two.

However, for the few times that the candidates did appear it was usually because they paid for space in the media or they had done something controversial. Trudy Stevenson for example received coverage for a legal case against Nyasha Chikwinya (rival candidate of ZANU PF) over voter registration and allegations of potential rigging. She was also featured on *The Sunday Mail* in a ZANU PF advertisement hat depicted her as a victim of MDC orchestrated violence. ZANU-PF did not get permission from her to use the picture.



Zimbabwe's first lady, Grace Mugabe, was among the few notable women who were visible and active during Zimbabwe's 2008 election. Here she is joined by her husband, Robert Mugabe,on his campaign trail, March 2008. *Photo: MISA Zimbabwe*

Misihairambw-Mushonga, on the other hand believes she received a fair amount of publicity during the elections, but only when she spoke on behalf of the MDC- Arthur Mutambara faction, and not as a candidate with individual capabilities. She generally felt that Zimbabwean media itself has become a political player, as both the public

and private media took positions aligned to preferred candidates. Both Gaidzanwa and Dongo, who were independent candidates, had to pay for media space in the form of adverts, which was a very expensive option. Dongo said that both the private and public media were biased and because as independent candidates they did not fall into either of the major sides of the election race, they were completely left in the dark.

Recommendations

The following were the recommendations of the research;

- That Zimbabwe must have a genuinely independent electoral commission whose responsibilities must include the regulation of media coverage in the interest of objective and balanced political reportage
- That there should be an independent body through which the media can regulate themselves along professional lines
- That the *ZBC* must be transformed into a public broadcaster whose editorial content must reflect a multiplicity of political views and ideas.
- Those stringent operational regulations such as those contained in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Broadcasting Services Act be scrapped to pave way for diversity and pluralism in Zimbabwe's communications sector.
- Media organisations such as the MISA-Zimbabwe should take steps to broaden gender awareness in newsrooms while at the same time engaging women's groups to help women develop confidence to engage with the media

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Writers Bio
Koliwe Nyoni is a trained journalist and mother of a four-year old boy, who has worked in both the print and broadcasting sectors in the Zimbabwe. Nyoni has also corresponded for Women's media such as the *Africawoman* and *Gender Links*. Currently, she works for the Media Institute of Southern Africa's Zimbabwe Chapter as the Assistant Programmes Officer responsible for gender and the media programming and the broadcasting diversity project.



Elections further marginalise women with disabilities

By Tracey Sibanda

Abstract

It is estimate that In Africa, 60-80 million people are living with disabilities, meaning that this group has significant electoral weight. People with disabilities could provide crucial votes that can make a difference for a winning candidate, but only if they include them in the entire electoral process. In view of the many challenges faced by people with disabilities as they try to register or obtain identity cards and other documents, election support networks should recommend that voter registration be extended and more effectively publicised, and be done in places accessible for people with disabilities. As well, voter education must keep this group in mind, and media must access this group for voices and opinion, so campaigns and politicians consider their priorities. The current situation provides fertile ground for the further marginalisation especially of women with disabilities.

Key words

disability, elections, gender

Untapped vote

It is ten years since the Organisation of African Union declared the period 1999 to 2009, the African Decade of the Disabled Persons, a recommendation taken in cognizance of the plight and rights of people with disabilities. However, after ten years and despite a few inspirational changes, people with disabilities are still marginalised. Women with disabilities (WDs) in particular face the brunt of marginalisation, stigma and challenges related to being differently abled. Responsible authorities have done little to protect WDs and uphold their rights, not even fellow able-bodied women politicians. Most candidates are not aware that the untapped vote and that people with disabilities can make a huge difference to their career and country, especially at this time.

With the significant numbers of elections taking place in Southern Africa over the next few years, it is an ideal time to take notice of this segment of the population. Currently, the specific issues affecting women with disabilities go unnoticed. Last year during election

coverage in Zimbabwe, few stories focused on issues of disability. It was as if for a moment, the world stopped for this sector.

For example, in a historic move, for the 29 March elections an umbrella body for people with disabilities, the National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) conducted training for people with disabilities to take part in the harmonised elections, playing roles as election observers. For the first time, 48 people with disabilities (PWDs) in Harare and 29 from Matebeleland South and Bulawayo had the opportunity to observe the elections under the banner of the Zimbabwe Elections Support Network (ZESN). The media completely missed this relevant story with a unique perspective on the elections.

Moreover, female politicians who often struggle for support, failed to appeal to this community to cast votes in their favour, marginalising them in their campaigns. A report from the NASCOH said only 225 people with disabilities in the Greater Harare area voted in the elections, compared to a total of 310 950 votes which were cast, representing a mere 0.07% of the votes. This sad turnout brings into sharp focus the need to put into place comprehensive measures to ensure the participation of people with disabilities in the electoral processes of a country. Women politicians can also take note of this sector of society, and garner potential extra votes that would make a huge difference, for themselves and for other women. Perhaps female politicians should consider their own history of being sidelined in a male-dominated political arena, and realise the plight of their compatriots who have a disability and need their voices to be represented.

Rejoice Timire, who uses a wheelchair and is director of the Disabled Women Support Organisation of Zimbabwe, says going to a rally is a difficult venture, because of accessibility problems. She said that she hardly hears mention of people with disabilities at rallies, or even politicians addressing their issues. "When they are campaigning, they should talk about us. They want our votes, yet they do not talk about us, it's like we do not even exist in their vocabulary!" She however, encouraged other WD's to go to these rallies, make themselves visible and push for their issues to be addressed. "It is important that we participate in decision-making issues, because on their own, they have nothing to do with disability in their minds!"



Rejoice Timire, left, of the Disabled Women Support Organisation of Zimbabwe at work *Photo: Tracey Sibanda*

Timire said that although she is educated enough to run for political office, she feels she does not have the right stamina, especially in such as volatile political environment where violence is a regular threat. She noted that this could be a reason why there are even fewer able bodied women who are in the new inclusive government. "There are a lot of risks you have to take, even when it comes to voting. I know someone with a visual impairment who after having completed voting was told by some of the polling officers that they knew where he had cast his vote." She said he feared for his life. Although no one actually carried out the threat, that was enough to scare him from voting. In this regard, Timire called upon women politicians who want their vote to ensure that they can cast their vote in peace, in accessible areas, and ensure that their vote can be a secret.

Political marginalisation of people with disabilities

The NASCOH Research and Advocacy officer Tsarayi Mungoni, who has a visual impairment, said the political sphere generally marginalises women, but women with a disability are in a class of their own. They face a double-edged sword of prejudice, even from other women. He said as an intervention strategy, the media must conscientise WD's about the role they can play in the political arena, as once they are aware they will be willing

to participate. Mungoni said, "It is not only the woman with a disability that needs to be conscientised, but their families and the community as well, as marginalisation starts at family level."

He said next comes the role of the government, which should put in place affirmative action by putting in place a quota system in key government positions or disability desks in the president's office, to ensure inclusion. Mungoni cited the need for such intervention strategies until WDs are aware that they too can compete with others on a political scale. "Politics, especially in Africa, requires the survival of the fittest, but then women with disabilities view themselves as an endangered species and resign to fate, not keen on politics thinking it's a male domain, able-bodied male!" said Mungoni.



Tsarayi Mungoni, left, calls on politicians to pay attention to people with disabilities *Photo: Tracey Sibanda*

Another point he noted is that WD's have difficulty withstanding the violence that comes with politics, hence the need for women politicians to show extra support for them by calling for rallies in accessible halls and ensuring that they get front seats. Politicians and the media need to help change the attitude of society towards people with disabilities so that they can play their civic roles to their fullest potential. Mungoni said that if a woman politician wants to get an upper hand over their male counterparts, what a better place to start by garnering media attention as they focus on people with disabilities, giving them a voice as disability does not mean inability.

In terms of the media, Mungoni said media houses have gender desks and health desks (which do not mainstream disability), but no disability desks, hence the reason why journalists never ask politicians about what they will do for people with disabilities, or monitor their programmes implementation with regards to disability. The NASCOH programme officer pointed out the yearly-commemorated 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, which generally sidelines women with disabilities. He said most women's organisations exclude women with disabilities from their programmes, yet they purport to be human rights defenders. He said there is need for the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) and other bodies to mount a tenacious advocacy programme aimed at disability awareness within civic organisations. He said the funders must make mainstreaming disability a pre-condition for funding to compel these organisations to include women with disabilities.

He challenged women with disabilities to form their own organisations to articulate their concerns, with "anything without them is against them" being their guiding model. Mungoni called upon the women to represent themselves, have their principles enshrined, come out and speak out through various forums and have a constructive engagement with other women.

An analysis of the experiences of a number of people with disabilities shows that they encounter a host of formidable attitudinal and physical barriers, in addition to restrictive electoral laws, that effectively prevent them from participating in such vital, life-defining processes.

According to the Disability Update of 15 April 2008, Melina Masora (not her real name) no longer feels any inclination to vote in any election. The 32 year-old mother, whose primary means of mobility is a wheelchair, had a nightmare voting experience six years ago, that shook her to the core and made her decide never to vote again. Arriving at the polling station, she found that the pathway to the entrance of the polling station was not paved but sandy and peppered with gravel. Negotiating the sandy pathway on a wheelchair proved to be an arduous task. The real challenge, however, was when she reached the

door to the classroom, and was confronted with steps, which constitute a formidable barrier to accessibility for people in wheelchairs. A number of election officials, long on enthusiasm but short on disability handling experience, hastened to lift her wheelchair up the steps and through the narrow doorway.

Gritting her teeth, she went through the various processes only to find out that the polling booth was too high and too narrow for her. Although a desk was subsequently provided for her use, there was no screen provided and she marked out her ballot uneasily, casting nervous glances at the polling officials at the end of the classroom. At the end of it all, she felt emotionally drained. It was then that she resolved that she would rather stay at home during elections rather than submit herself to the indignities associated with the voting process.

Masora is not alone in her predicament. Those with visual impairments have equally emotionally trying experiences. They cannot vote with their trusted assistants who must stay outside while a polling officer, who could be from the same neighbourhood as this member of the electorate, leads her through the entire voting process. How do you cast your vote where you want when you are not secure regarding the secrecy of your vote? Women with hearing impairments do not even consider voting, as theirs is another harsh struggle. The whole communication process is a mammoth task since in the community itself it is not easy to communicate. How many polling officers communicate via sign language?

Kudzai Machingauta, who is a teacher at a high school in the Midlands area, says the non-participation of people with disabilities in the electoral processes of the country is so widespread that it should be a cause for concern. "I was involved in conducting the inspection of the voters roll in my area, and I can safely tell you that, in the ward that I was in, not even a single person with a disability came to inspect the voters roll. In fact, there was not even a single person with disability who was registered as a voter in the ward," she told other participants at a sectoral workshop for people with physical disabilities in the year 2007, but her story still holds water in this day.

Despite the existence of a number of provisions guaranteeing the rights of all people, including people with disabilities, to take part in the electoral processes of their countries, voting access is an issue of major concern for PDs. Most of who find it safer to stay at home and not vote rather than submit to the indignity of needing assistance at every turn to navigate innumerable of obstacles that are associated with inaccessible voting sites.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Zimbabwe is a signatory, guarantees the right for all citizens to have equal access to the conduct of public affairs directly or indirectly through freely chosen representatives. It guarantees the right to participate on general terms of equality in the conduct of elections; to register for, and vote in genuine periodic elections, referenda, and plebiscites, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage; to vote by secret ballot and to stand for election; to be elected; and to exercise a mandate once elected. These rights do not hold true for voters with disabilities.

The issue of accessibility acquires an added dimension for people with disabilities in the rural areas, who are constrained to make long journeys in order to inspect the voters roll or take part in the actual voting process. The ragged terrain that is a common feature of most rural areas makes it very difficult for people with physical disabilities to navigate even on the sturdiest of wheelchairs, which are extremely difficult and expensive to procure. People with visual impairments also face a number of mobility problems, including having to find an assistant who is willing to sacrifice his or her time to guide the individual to and from the polling station. Legislators need to situate polling stations in such a manner that they are accessible to people with disabilities. Results announcements on television should include sign language interpretation so that those who cannot hear are not left out.

We must also not forget the number of people who become disabled because of the violence that takes place during rallies, before, during and after the elections. There is a direct link between conflict, emergencies and disability. Conflict creates PD's



Poor infrastructure can make participation in elections nearly impossible for people with disabilities. *Photo: Amandio Vilanculos/ IPS*

through increased rates of injury, lack of medical care and disruption of medical health care services. Are governments and relief agencies able to tackle this imminent problem?

Empowering voters with disabilities

Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU), is a registered Zimbabwean non-governmental organisation established in April 2001 by a group of feminists. It is a vibrant feminist, non-partisan, women's organisation supporting women's political leadership and participation in governance. The organisation assists women in Parliament and Local Government in Zimbabwe (i.e. elected public/political office) and women candidates to elected political office. WIPSU aims to increase women's qualitative and quantitative participation in political processes, political processes and in policy and decision-making.

When interviewed for this story, Director of WIPSU Cleopatra Ndlovu said because women in general are marginalised in politics, it is even harder for women with disabilities who face double stigma, including in the communities that they would want to represent as a constituency. She said women with disabilities face issues that are unique to their sector and need representation, as they have a lot of untapped potential.

WiPSU views women's effective political participation as a basic human right and a pre-requisite for democracy and accountable governance. Democracy requires the full participation and equal representation of all citizens in political processes in a manner promoting their equality. Women with disability's participation will also make a qualitative difference to governance, because they have experiences and skills that also inform processes and decision-making. While some policy-makers are sensitive to the needs of women and children, few think about people with disabilities when they design programmes.

There is also need for a body that will monitor and correct the portrayal of WD's in the media and provide training for young professionals, youth and rural women on how to utilise the media for development and self-empowerment. Most authorities who ensure that elections take place have failed to recognise that

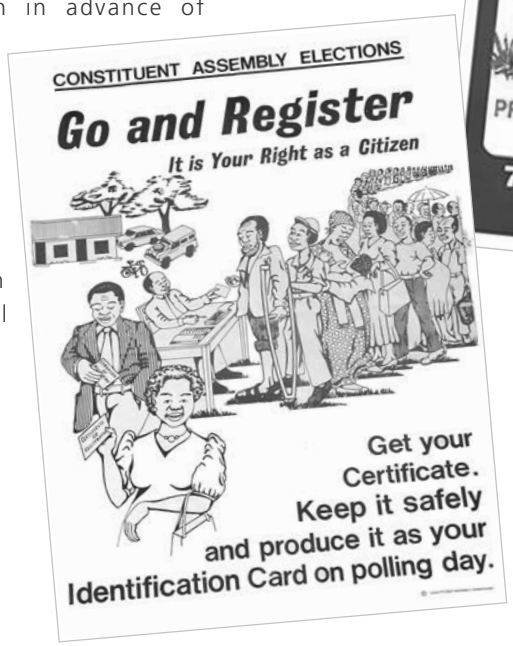
people with hidden disabilities, such as diabetes, epilepsy, or albinism have special needs. If elections are not peaceful, PD's will remain in roads as their assistants flee for their lives, as they cannot carry them. In situations like this, you find that women and children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and sexual abuse. The media must report on them and their stories should help in the understanding of their issues.

The issues that affect women with disabilities are manifold and include issues related to citizenship, education, employment, housing, violence, health, poverty, telecommunications, motherhood, sexuality, and reproductive rights. Negative stereotypes from both a gender and disability perspective compound the exclusion of women with disabilities from support services, social and economic opportunities and participation in community life.

Information is scarce when it comes to women with disabilities and even more limited for women with disabilities who are in politics or the media. The national news rarely features women who have overcome disability barriers. This lack of attention creates few female role models with disabilities. It is very clear that women with disabilities are not

www.ElectionAccess.org is a web portal operated by The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), a clearinghouse for information on the participation of people with disabilities in electoral processes. It includes country analysis of electoral laws and regulations related to people with disabilities, as well as examples of voter education materials.

Developed by the Ugandan Constituent Assembly Commission, this poster was a prominent part of the government's voter education campaign to encourage registration in advance of Constituent Assembly Elections. Featured prominently at the front of the line is a voter with a physical disability.





Developed by the Ghana Election Commission for the 2000 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, the poster depicts two voters with physical disabilities on their way to a polling station.



benefiting from most government and private sector development programmes as these are being developed with able-bodied people only in mind.

Meanwhile, National Disabled Women's Support Organisation Executive Director Farayi Cherera said the flight of donors since 2000 in protest at the land reform programme implemented by the government had negatively affected the welfare of people with disabilities. She said the plight of people with disabilities had worsened since local people do not have the spirit of assisting less privileged members of society. In order to fully gear themselves to the unique challenges of each disability category and enhance the capacity of this diverse group to take part in the elections, legislators need to hold sectoral workshops for the different disability groups so they can share their experiences and chart the way forward with unity of purpose.

Officially opening a workshop convened by NASCOH, Chairperson of the Zimbabwe National Disability Board (and first ever person with a visual disability to principal a school for able bodied high school students) Rosewitta Mudarikwa, urged people with visual impairments to create a forum to allow them to articulate issues of visual impairment with clarity, focus and compassion. "You have a role to play. Make sure you leave behind a legacy of independence," she said. "Make sure that those who come after us will salute us." She also underscored the fact that visual impairment was not a curse but was a form of identity. Although the impairment came with limitations and barriers, people can overcame these limitations and reduce the barriers.

Giving an overview of the challenges faced by visually impaired people in Zimbabwe, Mungoni underscored the fact that people with disabilities were operating in an environment characterised by vicious competition, with many issues competing for national attention. The absence of a Member of Parliament with a disability has exacerbated the situation, as the able-bodied parliamentarians cannot effectively articulate disability concerns on their own. As a result, the voice of WD's is inaudible. There is thus a need to fight this social exclusion and urgently come up with practical measures to dismantle barriers that society has erected against people with disabilities.

Other recommendations made by various people interviewed include the provision of free transport, as happened in Bulgaria, where various taxi companies committed themselves to transporting people with disabilities to the polling centers. Other recommendations included provisions for disabled people to cast ballots via alternative means, such as by post. As the African Decade of the Disabled Persons ends this year, people with disabilities should be part of evaluating the impact of the decade. At the same time, it is they can change the vote, if conditions exist for them to participate in the electoral process.

Unless disabled people are brought into the development mainstream, it will be impossible to cut poverty in half by 2015 or to give every girl and boy the chance to achieve a primary education by the same date - goals agreed to by more than 180 world leaders at the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit in September 2000. People with disabilities need to included in the development mainstream through a dynamic alliance of the UN system, governments, and agencies such as the World Bank, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and other groups worldwide. In order for this to happen, having their voices heard within governance, and through media, is imperative.

Writers Bio

Tracey Sibanda is working for the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, ZBC News as a sub-editor, English radio news, television and radio news presenter and independent documentary producer. At 27, she has been addressing disability issues for many years and has found a lot of untapped potential in this marginalised sector.



Faustina Sinyangwe, media ignores women politicians in Zambia

By Perpetual Sichikwenkwe

Faustina Sinyangwe is one of 22 female parliamentarians in Zambia, out of the male dominated parliament comprising of 150 seats. Sinyangwa, who is from the opposition party the Patriotic Front (PF) and Member of Parliament for Lusaka's Matero Constituency is facing a major challenge - expulsion from her party for accepting the government's invitation to participate in reviewing the national constitution, an invitation that her party refused.

Her political journey began way back when she was working for the Ministry of Education, where she headed the Education Broadcasting Services of the Ministry. "My job took me to all parts of the country. I had many experiences with the lives of the people and their suffering," said Sinyangwe.



Faustina Sinyangwe *Photo: Lusaka Times*

"I had worked for 32 years in the Ministry of Education as an educationist," she added. When I retired in 2003 at the director level, I furthered my education and later decided to join politics so that I could serve the people and put in my experience for the better of the people."

Sinyangwe's relationship with the media has not differed greatly from many other female politicians, who feel the media had not done its work properly to support their work. "Sometimes I wonder when you say you are promoting gender equality to 30 or 50% because I do not see efforts to support that. The media plays an important role, that of either building or destroying. I think when it comes to women politicians, they have dwelt more on the negative than positive of what we have done."

According to Sinyangwe, media sees it is normal to report or highlight negative things that involve female politicians and leave out the positive achievements. "If the media was supportive of female politicians, we were not going to have only 14% of women representation in Parliament, we would now be nearing the 50% SADC target," she explained.

Sinyangwe says the media finds joy in reporting negative things that involve female politicians but when there are good things that the same politicians have done in their constituencies, the media is not interested. "I can cite an example of a recent fight that involved two female MPs in the National Assembly, the media was too excited and headlines were seen on the front pages for some days."

"Another example I can give is that of MOBI television and Radio Phoenix who recently reported that I organised youths in Mandevu to call for the removal of Michael Sata, who is my party presidency, when I did not do that. They did not even bother to get my side of the story but just went ahead and published the story. What does that kind of reporting do to someone's image and reputation?" asked Sinyangwe.

Sinyangwe added that if the media aims to promote and support women politicians to achieve the targeted 50% representation in decision-making positions, they should be more interested in highlighting positive achievements of women politicians. This will include being willing to visit constituencies headed by women to see what women are doing on the ground other than thriving on negative and personal things.

She added, "Generally, when a woman does something wrong it is looked as extraordinary event by the media. Look at the same issue of those two female MPs that fought, even fellow women took it as an extraordinary thing, when they are not the first people to have fought."

Sinyangwe said their male counterparts treat women politicians differently. When the media want stories, they follow male politicians even to bars or other socialising places, while female politicians are at home doing the house chores.

She said there is need for the media to take the trouble to follow female politicians and give them equal coverage, adding that only a few journalists have tried to do so. She said male politicians were more privileged compared to female as they have more money through their businesses and high positions they hold. Through that, they stand a better chance of having access to the media.

Sinyangwe said if the country agrees to and supports calls for 50% women in decision-making by 2015, efforts should be seen from all stakeholders including the media. She said as a female politician, her challenge was the perception of her role as an MP by the electorate.

"People in communities think that an MP is there to do everything for them including burying the dead, feeding them and providing everything they need, forgetting that an MP is there to foster development through working with the people on the ground. This falls back on the media who I think they have not helped us much in highlighting and explaining the role of an MP," said Sinyangwe.

Sinyangwe said since Zambia will be holding its general elections in 2011, this was the right time for the media to start identifying and highlighting potential female politicians or candidates that would hold offices.

She adds, "There is also a challenge of finding a strategy that can be used together with the media to help retain the few MPs or female politicians that are in place and then add up on the existing number to reach the required target."

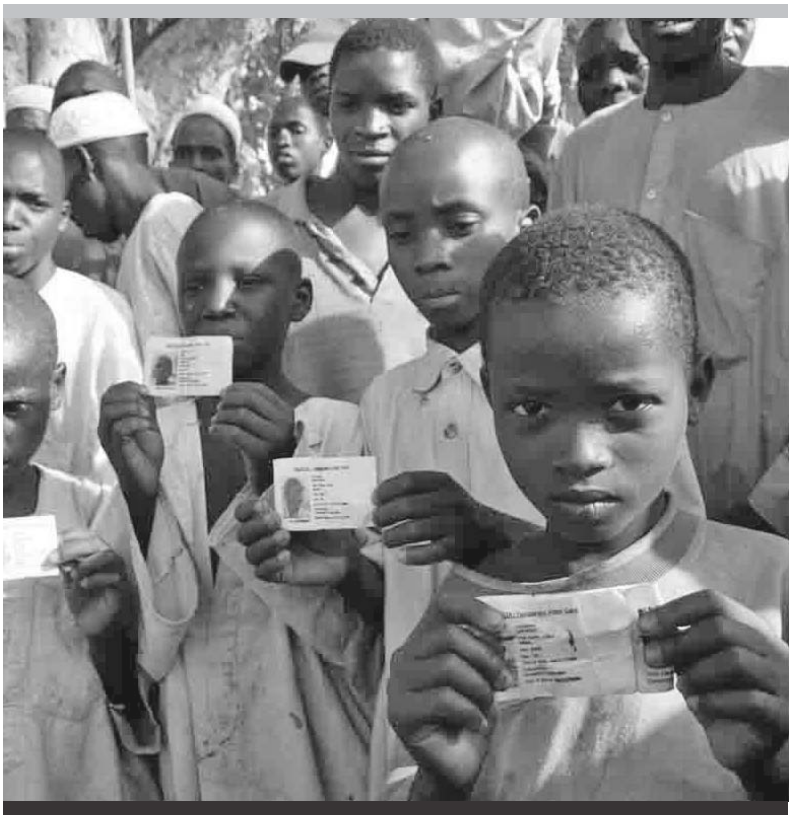
Sinyangwe who is one of the three vice chairpersons for the National Constitution Commission (NCC) said there is need to put in place a constitution that will address issues affecting women, such as affirmative action to support women in many areas, including politics.

"Yes we can compete with men but the fact is that we are vulnerable... We have had bye-elections where the media did not help women candidates to excel, and as a result, they all lost out. Media's role of covering female politicians should not only be seen during the run up to the general elections but should be a continuous process."

She said that it is best to have continuous capacity building for the electorate, explaining the role women play in politics and building on that at an early stage, but the media has not done so. "It is hard for a woman to be in politics, maybe 10 times harder, but we should persevere and compete with men and let them know that we are there to work and deliver," said Sinyangwe.

Writers Bio
Perpetual Sichikwenkwe is a journalist in Zambia.

Free and fair media: election watchdogs



Underage voters brandish their voter registration cards while waiting to cast their ballots in presidential elections at a rural polling station in Jigawa State, northern Nigeria, 21 April 2007. Despite looking not more than ten years old, their voter registration cards give their age as 18.
Photo: Tiggy Ridley/IRIN



Elections and electoral conflicts on Africa: interrogating the media and feminine connections

By Bonnie Ayodele

Abstract

A look at African transitional democracy shows the potential volatility and destabilising effects of elections. In Kenya, elections and electoral conflicts revealed the fragility of the state, while in Zimbabwe, elections led to the withering and collapse of institutions of state and economy. Similarly, in Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, elections have led to pockets of conflicts with serious socio-economic and political implications. The dimensions of electoral conflicts have stimulated debates on the issues of participation and governance, as well as the role of media in elections and electoral governance in Africa. Within this, there is a need to examine the media in electoral conflicts, for example, what roles are the media playing in provoking, reporting and managing electoral violence. Was there any "hate" story similar to the Rwandan experience in other countries? Finally, what is the gender perspective of electoral conflict?

Key words

elections, electoral conflicts, media, gender, democracy

Introduction

Elections are one of the most complex issues in most of Africa's transitional democracies. In Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Algeria, elections and electoral politics have challenged the stability and foundation of the nation. While conflicts following Kenya and Zimbabwe elections are recent examples in African developing democracies, the crisis of elections is an enduring problem of many African states. Indeed, elections in African democracies have revealed the fragility of the state and questioned the institutions of democracy. In many cases the structures of political parties, media, and the apparatus of state governance are failing to support the process of democratic consolidation (Ayodele 2004, 55). Elections remain a prerequisite and a major plank of democracy, as well as a pillar of democratic consolidation. Elections and democracy are therefore mutually reinforcing.

In African emerging democracies, where democratic institutions and structures were just evolving and yet to take firm root, elections are a litmus test of its democracy. The emphasis on elections as a cornerstone of democratic process is similar to the conception of liberal democracy upon whose most democracies in Africa is patterned (Ake 2003, 2). Thus, the character, content and process of the democratisation agenda was seen as synonymous to the introduction of "elections and multi-partyism" (Nzongola-Ntalaja 1997). In this light, most of the one-party democracy and military dictatorship in Africa gave way to multi-party democracy which was (erroneously) conceived as most desirable for the multi-plural character of most African states (Ayodele 2003, 23).

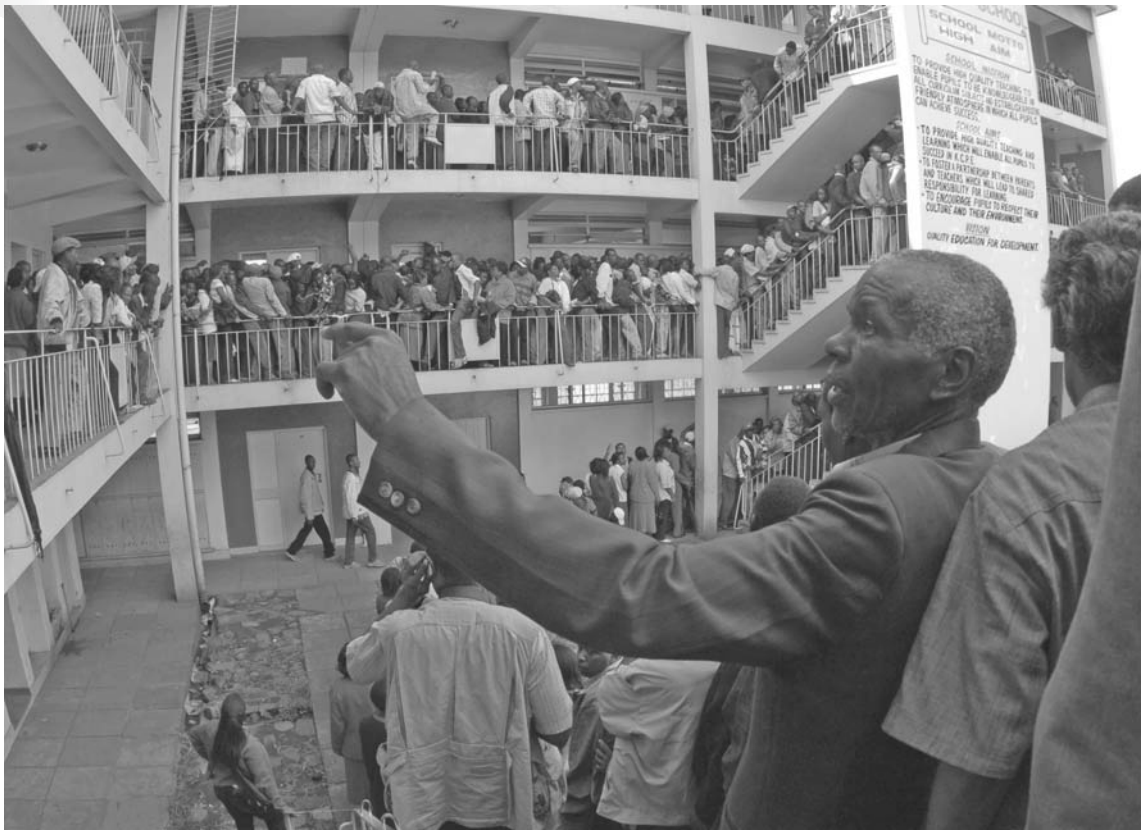
This paper is divided into three parts: the first focuses on the conceptual connection between democracy and elections with a view of linking election to democratic governance; the second examines the media vis-a-vis its roles in a democracy and electioneering process; and the third interrogates the connection between elections, electoral conflicts, the media and its impacts on the feminine gender.

Democracy and election: a conceptual linkage

The centrality of elections to democratic regimes must be discussed within the context of the conceptualisation of democracy. Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1989, xvii), drive home this point. These scholars define democracy to mean three essential conditions. These are as follows.

- One, meaningful and extensive *competition among individuals and groups,* especially political parties, for all effective positions of government power at regular intervals and *excluding the use of force*. This first condition implies that political competition is central to democratic processes and political competition could only be meaningful within the context of an election. In this case, individuals and groups can incline to contest as candidates - vote or be voted for (Ajayi 2005, 167-180). On the other hand, political competition accompanied by force erodes the principle of free and fair competition (elections) (Ajayi Ibid).
- Two, a highly inclusive level of *political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair election*, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded. This particular condition shows the legitimising appeal and the liberalisation of political participation and policies in a democratic process. The inclusion of all willing political parties and associations in the electoral process without creating hurdles that could hinder wider participation is very crucial for democratic process. The participatory concept in democracy could only be meaningful under an electoral system that expresses the wishes of the people.
- Three, a condition of *civil and political liberties – freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organisations* – sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation. This means that elections represent human rights and recognises civil and political liberties of individuals and groups to vote or be voted for, join any organisation of their choice without the instrumentality of coercion (Ajayi, op.cit).

The above three conditions express the connection between election and democracy. The participatory role is in the empirical sense wrapped up in the concept of representation and the linkage between the interests of the citizen with the policies of state (Cohen 1983, 85-87). The legitimacy role of elections in democracy has led to some scholars to re-define this as "electoral democracy." This reductionist concept of democracy is connected to the importance of elections in democracy. For Huntington (1991, 7), the analysis of democracy embraced a political system as democratic upon the context of selection and policy engagement. According to him, a political system considered as democratic to the extent that its decision makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic election in which candidates freely compete for votes from virtually all the eligible adult population. This is similar to the view of Weber and Schumpter (cited in Abrahamsen 2000, 68) who saw democracy primarily as a means of providing effective leadership through periodic election. The periodic election in virtually all democracy makes the reductionist concept understandable.



People queue up in their hundreds to vote in the 2007 general elections in Kenya, 27 December 2007. *Photo: Allan Gichigi/IRIN.*

It is important to examine briefly how elections could also de-legitimise and reverse democratic gains or dividends. In other words, elections can sustain and disguise authoritarian control, as in Zimbabwe, and act as instrument of regime change. The de-legitimising effect on democracy as Olaitan (2005, 43) observes needs to be deepened, this will reveal the seemingly tendency of democratic failure and electoral conflicts in Africa.

Many democratic regimes have collapsed on the altar of poor election management, indicating that the ritual of elections is not enough to sustain or guarantee democratic regimes. This negative role of elections has made scholars view elections as not the only primary building block for democracy (Olaitan, Ibid). As valid as this argument may be, the logic of democracy still makes people's participation the nerve centre of its property. People could only express their wishes, participation and legitimsation through the process of election conferring the power of governance on the people through election.

The media, elections and democracy

The second part of this paper focuses on the roles of the media in democracy especially during the elections. The media is undoubtedly an important institution in every society as its roles cannot be undermined. Modern democracies regard the media as the Fourth Estate of the realm.

Today's democracies can hardly survive without a good mass media. Cohen (1970, 17-47) characterises media as an informer, interpreter, and instrument of government, but also a participant in public policy processes, as the representative of the public, critic of government, advocate of policy and policy maker. The media is the voice of the people, providing a platform for civil society on government policy. According to

Abayomi (2004, 133), the media gives expression to peoples' vigilance against possible erosion of the gains of democracy and galvanise people for constructive engagement in governance, reflecting society and gives expression to present day realities. The freedom of the media is important for its democratic function. As noted by Bacon "the freedom of the press is one of the greatest bulwarks of liberty and can never be restrained but by despotic government (cited in Awolowo 2003, 133). In a similar fashion, Awolowo (op.cit) contends that the freedom of the media is no more and no less than the liberty of the citizen.

This is not however the case in authoritarian regimes where the liberty of the press is not guaranteed. The era of globalisation has brought to the fore more than ever the importance of the media. Improvement in mass media of both electronic and print media had shrunk the world to a village where both democratic and undemocratic nations are prone to the coverage of the international media. To report impartially, courageous and to criticise poignantly are hallmarks of good media reporting. Through this, the media performs the civic education of the masses and informs them about their rights including the right to vote and be voted for.

Perhaps, it is not an aberration, to say that the media is a major political actor in a society (Mu'Azu 2003, 370). In terms of ownership and roles of information dissemination, the media has become a political tool of government, individuals, groups, political parties and other interest groups. It has been used to service the interest of the individuals, groups and government even when it contradicts the established ethics. The era of liberalisation and globalisation had seen the media immense in politics than professionalism. The likes of CNN, Fox New and Al Jazeera carry political news that embraced the ideology of the owners and service their political interest.

This has been the situation in Africa, the media often promotes ethnic, sectional, or religious biased reporting. McQuail (2000, 4) opined that that the mass media are an essential element in democratic politics, providing a channel for wide debate, popularising candidates seeking office and distributing diverse information and opinion, but they also show preferences for the ideological interests of their founders. The media are sometimes biased on issues where they have vested interest. In addition, since the ownership resides under individuals or under government control, they are vulnerable to undue interference, sometimes compromising their social responsibility role of accountability. In some worst-case scenarios, objective reporting, integrity and truth are sacrificed on the altar of false or deception reporting and under this circumstance. The media becomes enmeshed in hate and propaganda new dissemination. This had happened in virtually all developing democracies in Africa.

In recent times, the media have become an active partaker and generator, the media have over the years been at the heart of inflaming the ember of political conflict. They remained very central in escalating and de-escalating of electoral conflicts in African developing democracies. (McCombs 2000, Mu'azn 2003, 375). The Rwanda experience readily comes to mind here, the mass media were at the center of the crisis. They contributed to the hate war despite their informed knowledge of the war and the reach of a large diverse audience, "Radio Kigali" became a willing tool in the crisis. It became the provocateur and stimulator of "hate reporting," using vulgar language like "cockroaches" and appealing to warring parties to hack, kill and maim their fellow Rwandans. This experience was one of the worst recorded disservices of the media in human history. As McQuail (2000, 38) pointed out, the most constant elements in (electoral) conflicts have been negative reporting of the media – especially how the media covers political conflicts. Similarly, Mathew (1994, 45) opined that the way and manner the media covers political conflicts especially electoral conflicts in Africa developing democracies points to the fact that the media have tremendous power to widen or reduce the incidence of political conflicts.

Elections and electoral conflicts: the media and gender connection

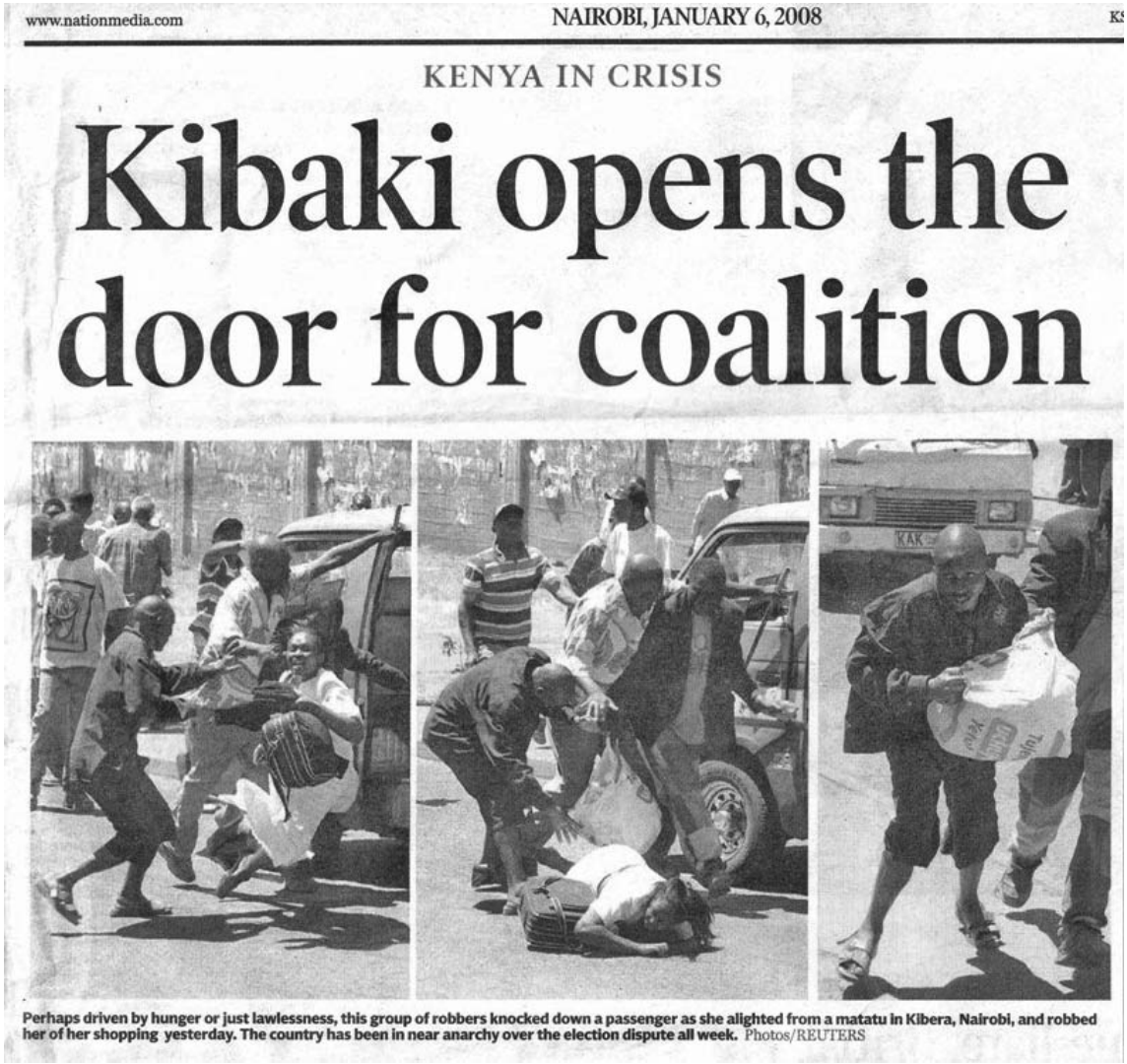
Having established the roles of the media in politics and democratic regimes, it is important to examine the link between electoral conflicts, the media and its gender

implications. Three cases are considered here, they are the Kenyan, Zimbabwean, and Nigerian scenarios.

The Kenyan case

Kenya was one of the most stable democracies in Africa, but that record withered by the deeply flawed December 2007 election, which saw the emergence of the incumbent President Kibaki declared winner against the leading opposition leader Raila Odinga, who many believed to have won the election. The dimension took a different turn when the supporters of the ruling and opposition party took the laws in their own hands, and the country quickly became chaos. According to Bernard Leflaaive, early recovery and food security cluster coordinator and consultant to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the election took an ethnic dimension, and tension remains high - hate, resentment and mistrust are widespread and people have few avenues to vent their feelings," (IRIN 2008) .The conflict claimed over 1000 lives with about 250,000 Internal Displaced People (IDPs)

The impact of the conflicts on Kenyan women was monumental. According to IRIN, hospitals reported an increase in rapes during the immediate post-


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KENYA IN CRISIS

Kibaki opens the door for coalition

Perhaps driven by hunger or just lawlessness, this group of robbers knocked down a passenger as she alighted from a matatu in Kibera, Nairobi, and robbed her of her shopping yesterday. The country has been in near anarchy over the election dispute all week. Photos/REUTERS

Woman is robbed getting off public transport during post-election violence in Kenya.

election period. "In the first two days of the violence, 56 people were treated for rape and admitted; there are so many other victims back in the slums who have not received any medical attention," Lucy Kiama, chief nurse at the Nairobi Women's Hospital, which specialises in sexual violence, told IRIN. She added that the number of rape survivors seeking treatment at the facility had doubled during the violence. Many women who came to the hospital, she added, reported that there were many more in the slums who had failed to seek treatment because of security reasons or fear of stigmatisation (ibid)

In some cases, electoral conflict allows the concept of "women as weapons of war" or "women's bodies as a battle front," when the conflict pits one group against another, such as ethnic violence. Conflict also provides an opportunity for crimes of opportunism, people taking advantage of the breakdown of normal protection mechanisms to rape (Nziwili 2009).

The media may not necessarily be the generator of electoral conflicts but their role of information dissemination could escalate or de-escalate electoral conflict. A fact-finding mission conducted by *Reporters* Without Borders, International Media Support (IMS), and Article 19 to investigate the successes and failures of Kenya's media during the post-election crisis in Kenya found that when violence erupted and spread, all the media joined together (sometimes in chorus) and printed long editorials, commentaries, articles and even joint front pages calling for national harmony. However, they failed to perform their watchdog role. The report notes that even the major media houses admitted failure in reporting the truth.

However, the fact-finding mission made some key recommendations to help the media cover and cope with crises:

- The Kenyan authorities should refrain from any attempts of censorship out of concerns about a repeat of the Rwanda syndrome – as expressed to the mission team - and take a less hostile and more trusting attitude to the media. They should appreciate the efforts of leading Kenyan media outlets to promote peace and not to aggravate the post-election violence. They should help the media to strengthen its self-regulation machinery and its capacity for working together and providing training, so it can more effectively cope with extreme crises.
- Kenya's political parties should stop using radio stations to rally and organise their supporters and confront the questions and criticism of the media honestly.
- The Kenyan media should continue to review its performance in the post-election crisis in a spirit of cooperation. It should set up a fund to help train journalists in investigative reporting and self-protection in places where there is violence and fighting. It should offer the public maximum information and insight into the crisis the media has been experiencing since the election. It should also strengthen its system of self-regulation and consulting together.

The Zimbabwe case

At the epicentre of the Zimbabwean crisis was the contestation over the March 2008 election between the ruling ZANU-PF and opposition party of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Though the election appeared to have been won by the opposition party, it was however, rejected by President Mugabe who sought re-run of the election. The crisis generated thereafter has produced a profound crisis of stability, economic and health with endless climate of violence.

The Zimbabwe electoral conflicts did not spare the feminine sex but there appear to be no evidence of the media playing "hate reporting." The media helped in internationalising the conflict, appealed for humanitarian intervention and consequently called for an end to the crisis. Women were active in calling for conflict resolution. For example, the Women's Coalition on Zimbabwe appealed to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland to stop the attack on women, calling for an end to violence in Zimbabwe and protection of women and girls, in the post election catastrophe (Women's Coalition in Zimbabwe 2008). The women went further,

describing the unfolding events in post-election Zimbabwe as a "silent genocide of the poor and powerless, due to political induced murders, criminal actions, and collapse of basic services resulting in deaths due to lack of health care, food, shelter for the displaced, of which most were women and children."

They went further to itemise the impacts of the post electoral conflict on women and men as follow:

- The post election murders, burnings, lootings and intimidation have most affected women and girls since its rural targeted and 80% of women live in rural areas.
- Over 800 homes were burnt, making it traumatic for mothers who have to feed the children and care for the sick.
- Over 10 000 people fled their homes.
- An estimated 7000 teachers have fled their schools as a number have been beaten in the eyes of parents and pupils.
- Doctors for human Rights report that over 2000 serious cases of physical torture and beatings, many they treated suffered serious fractures to an extent that most are permanently handicapped.
- The oldest victim of the post election violence is an old woman with 12 grandchildren all of them orphaned and whose son allegedly campaigned for the opposition.
- The youngest female victim is a 15-year-old girl who was stripped naked together with her pregnant mother forced to lie down and beaten on the breasts and buttocks, just as many women have been so battered.
- The youngest child seriously assaulted is only 3 years.
- More than 3,000 Zimbabweans die every weak due to AIDS; life expectancy for women is 34 years.
- Unemployment is 80% and inflation is 165 000% and the highest in the world.
- Women were 95% of the 200 000 made homeless and jobless by the government 2005 Operation Murambatsviina. Women's church gatherings are disrupted, women beaten up and abused while at prayer.



A young man lies wounded at a health clinic on the day of the country's presidential elections, Daura, Katsina State, northern Nigeria, 21 April 2007. *Photo: Tiggy Ridley/IRIN*

The Nigerian case

Nigeria is the most populous democracy in Africa and conflicts and violence characterise its electoral process. The Nigerian state has recorded many democratic reversals due to the problems of elections, the 1954, 1983, 1993, and recently 2007 General Elections have shown the vulnerability of the state and its inability to manage electoral conflicts.

What has been the role of the media in Nigeria's fledgling democracy? And what is the impact of electoral conflicts on the feminine groups. The media in Nigeria have been

a major political actor having enjoyed relative freedom; they remained vibrant and active in news dissemination and educating the public. The Nigerian media have positively contributed to democratic development, in fact they have remained eternal vigilant to keeping the light of democracy burning. However, because individuals and governments founded and own the media, some of their editorials and reporting is tailored along the thinking of their founders. Politicians also own some of these media and the influence thrown behind the party interest.

The liberalisation of the electronic media, such as television and radio, brought new dimensions to mass media in Nigerian politics. Television houses have given visual reporting better coverage, helping people assess issues more objectively. There is no doubt that men dominate politics in Nigeria, yet impact of electoral violence on women has been minimal. There are few cases of women and girls caught in the firing line, but there is little evidence pointing to violence that directly targets woman in elections.

Conclusion

As the paper shows, many African transitional democracies are fragile, especially during elections, when conflict may arise. In conflict, women are either directly targeted or indirectly affected by displacement and insecurity. The latter makes them more vulnerable to violence and may impact greater on women's day to day lives than men, as they are responsible for their homes, care of children, sourcing food, etc. Media has a vital role in democracy and elections, both to ensure fair an accurate reporting that will encourage peaceful processes, as well as play a watchdog role. As part of this, there is a need for media to recognise and report on the gender aspects of governance and elections, and especially during conflict, as the issues tend to get lost and forgotten among reconciliation efforts.

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Angola Solta a Tua Voz - Angola, Lift up Your Voice

By Michael Bodakowski
and Luis Kandongongo Jimbo

Abstract

The 2008 parliamentary elections in Angola marked a significant passage into new territory for people in Angola after 30 years of war. These were the first democratic elections since the failed attempt in 1992, which took Angola back to war until Jonas Savimbi's death in 2002. Search for a Common Ground initiated Angola Solta a Tua Voz, a musical project involving well-known national music celebrities, with the intention to open a public space for all Angolans, regardless of political beliefs or ethnic or regional associations, as an arena for public, non-violent discourse surrounding the parliamentary elections.

Key words

elections, democracy, music

Background

Although, as European Union Election Observers reported, the elections did not meet regional and international standards, the advent of the 2008 elections in Angola was a remarkable exercise in which the state, civil society and individual citizens had unique opportunities to participate in the governance process. For a large number of Angolans, these elections were the first in which they had ever voted. For those who had previously voted, they had only experienced elections as an impetus for a return to conflict. Many Angolans viewed elections not as a force for positive change to benefit the people, but rather to benefit the privileged few in power.

Nearly three decades of war between two divergent segments of society had not allowed for the creation of an open space for public debate and discussion about the development of the country, its governance, or public responsibility, nor has there been a public discourse of reconciliation and understanding following the cessation of violent conflict. The conflict in Angola, unlike many other African conflicts, resulted in a clear victory for the Movimento Popular de Libertacão de Angola (MPLA). As a result, there has not been a mutual need for reconciliation as we have seen in other cases around the world, such as South Africa and in Latin America. A common ground for all Angolans,

as a united people has yet to be created from which to continue the development of peace and democracy in the country.

Founded in 1982, Search for a Common Ground (SFCG), an international conflict resolution non-governmental organisation (NGO) has been active in Angola since 1997. SFCG seeks to transform the way the world deals with conflict - away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative problem solving. In collaboration with local partners using culturally appropriate means, SFCG works to strengthen societies' capacity to deal with conflicts constructively: to understand the differences and act on the commonalities. This approach entails empowering the excluded, increasing recognition of common humanity, and promoting interpersonal and intercultural understanding. SFCG-Angola has carried out activities with media, civil society, community members and the Angolan government. With offices in Luanda and Cabinda, a full-time radio production studio, and a community outreach toolbox that includes conflict resolution training, community organising, facilitation, and youth empowerment, SFCG seeks to transform Angolan society into a culture of coexistence, security, social justice and popular participation.

Musical voices for change

Search for a Common Ground initiated *Angola Solta a Tua Voz* to open a public space for all Angolans, regardless of political beliefs or ethnic or regional associations, as an arena for public, non-violent discourse surrounding the parliamentary elections - to help avoid the tragic fate of those in 1992, and usher in a new period of peace and prosperity. Music in Angola is an influential communication tool; people listen to what musicians have to say, and their music and words have power. Music is a medium that reaches everyone, regardless of social class or political belief. *Angola Solta a Tua Voz* utilised this medium in an effort to reach Angolans with its message of peace and understanding.



The music CD produced as part of the project features the country's most popular musicians from across Angola's musical and geographical landscape. Each song is a duet between musicians who normally would not perform together - merging generations of popular Angolan musicians and blending different styles of music from different areas of the country - and symbolically marking the beginning of a new era in Angola characterised by inclusion, participation, and unity. Thirteen musicians (including well known Angolan Fillipe Mukenga, O2, and Puto Prat) representing different cultures and traditions in the country were brought together to make music around the notion of celebrating diversity and promoting tolerance.



Musician Bigu Ferreira *Photo: Search for Common Ground*

Search for Common Ground worked together with two of Angola's foremost music producers, Bigu Ferreira and Walter Anannaz, to turn the idea into music. Ferreira

and Anannaz shared SFCG's vision that Angolans have the will to construct a nation where all Angolans can live in peace together and hold fair elections to continue consolidation of peace and democracy in the country. They brought together a star-cast of performers from across Angola including some of the most popular musicians as well as upcoming talents. The choice of musicians was important. It was necessary that musicians from varying political and ethnic perspectives, including women musicians, come together to sing as a single, cohesive group. Most importantly, all musicians were Angolans living in Angola. In composing the songs of the CD, the producers aimed to incorporate the ideas of equal justice and peace based in traditional music that would be easy to all listeners to understand.

SFCG launched Angola Solta a Tua Voz four months prior to the election, emerging from the need to encourage Angolans to participate in the election and to promote tolerance to divergent viewpoints that exist in the country. The CD was launched with a series of high profile events in Luanda, including a public concert attended by over 2,000 people. The concert took place right after American Rap artist 50 Cent performed in Luanda and built on the excitement surrounding the high-profile concert in the city. The event, held in Luanda's neighbourhood of Viana was open to the public and free of charge, making it accessible to all Angolans, regardless of their economic situation. The government was instrumental in security planning, and to their credit not one fight or incidence of violence occurred. The concert ended with Viana youth performing Kuduru (Angolan style of hip-hop originating in Luanda) on stage and was a chance for these Angolans to share their talent with the rest of the country.

In addition to the concert, three television programmes featuring the musicians and SFCG staff, as well as radio programmes, TV and radio spots, newspaper articles in every major newspaper and an invitation-only event for the media and VIP officials. CDs were widely



Angola Solta a Tua Voz concert *Photo: Search for Common Ground*

distributed through radio and TV stations, schools and music distribution channels, with the Angolan government participated as well. The National Elections Committee (Comité National Eleitoral - CNE) was given copies of the CD for use in trainings of provincial elections officials on how citizens should act in a democracy.

Using innovative tools and working at different levels of society, SFCG engages in a pragmatic long-term process of conflict transformation. With an overall programmatic goal of transforming Angolan society into a culture of coexistence, security, social justice and popular participation, the music CD *Angola Solta a Tua Voz*, was the continuation of another piece of music, *A Paz e que o Povo Chama,* which heralded the first peace accord in 1997. This song became the banner for peace and justice in Angola's long running civil war and was instrumental in promoting the reconciliation process in northern Angolan province of Cabinda in 2007.

Using music for public dialogue

Angola Solta a Tua Voz was instrumental in encouraging active citizenship and motivating Angolans to raise their voices and make their concerns and demands as public citizens heard. John Stuart Blackton, in speaking about state fragility, states that Angola faces a legitimacy gap - that the government of Angola is not legitimate in the eyes of the people, as it does not meet the needs of its citizens. A country with a government that does not rule for its people can serve as a tinderbox for conflict, people lack a non-violent outlet for grievances to be heard.

It is also important to understand however, that peaceful and fair elections and good governance are not a one sided process. It is equally important that citizens play their role in creating a peaceful, secure, and equitable society. Democratic governance is a process – an ongoing dialogue that occurs between a government and its citizens for positive change in society. Elections are a critical part of the governance dialogue for citizens to make their voices heard and demand responsibility of their government. However, as governance requires the active participation of both the government and its citizens, so do elections. Citizens have a civic obligation to participate responsibly. Citizens must make informed decisions in choosing candidates that will best meet their needs as individuals as well as the needs of the country as a whole.

Angolan society is diverse, comprised of different ethnic, linguistic, and social groups spread across a country over twice the size of France. Such variety brings differing opinion about what is right for the country, and what direction elections should lead the country in. Through three decades of war, Angolans were denied the opportunity to raise their voices so that the government could hear them. Through *Angola Solta a Tua Voz,* Angolans were encouraged to participate in a dialogue among one another and with the government.

Solta a Tua Voz was developed in cooperation with the CNE and the Angolan Government as a vehicle for voter and civic education. At first, parts of the CD, especially the song *Civismo*, by, Beto De Almeida and Nina, were sensitive in the way they criticised corruption. However, through a review committee comprised of government and NGO representatives, parties agreed upon content. The process of working with the government to agree upon the song lyrics was seen as an important step in them acknowledging what they saw was wrong with society, and what they thought needs to be done.

The following excerpts from songs on the CD are examples of the call for change put forth by the musicians:

UM ABRAÇO A ANGOLA (A hug for Angola) - The people are tired of the fighting, put down your arms and raise your sickle, I speak to you "Mano" and "Comrad", give your hands for the future, I am only looking for a good life... In place of punches let's give hugs, instead of kicks, let's hold hands, Lets dot our "I's" and cross our "T's." Forget about political parties and think about our country... (MC CAPPA)

CIVISMO – *Everyday he puts on his suit and says*

he is working, but everything of his is stolen, his suit is stolen, his car is stolen, his lady is also stolen... As all bad things come to an end, wash your hands and come help, change your life, without harming anyone else... Now everything from him comes from work, his car comes from work, his mobile phone comes from work, his lady... comes from love. (Beto de Almeda)

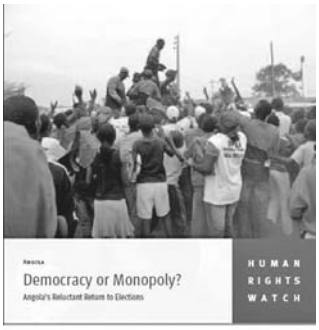
ANGOLA – From *body and soul, Let's give ourselves, we are at the time to shine, we are no longer afraid, everything depends on us. Our past is now history, let's forget it and begin our future now, the road is in front of us, Angola... Angola... In every face is a smile, in a every soul a light, full of euphoria, that can only be found in Angola... Angola... in Angola*
(Totó e Sandra Cordeiro)

McK, a popular young rapper, said, "It is my belief that this project will be remembered 30 years from now, marking the beginning of a new time here in Angola." The impact of the CD has been wide spread, and is still continuing at the time of this writing, six months after the elections. The amount of free radio and television coverage attests to the importance of the CD's message in a country where almost all media time needs to be paid for. TPA, the Angolan National Television channel, recently aired songs from the CD in its television line-up. As mentioned above, this CD marked the first occasion which all of the singers performed together under a single banner. Given the country's turbulent past, this was in itself a feat. One of the singers, Sandra Cordeiro, is continuing his spirit of volunteerism and civic duty by agreeing to work with SFCG on a different programme, Angola Big Sister, an initiative to train and encourage young women to be leaders in their communities.

SFCG produced the CD with the financial support of the European Union, Department for International Development (UK), and the Department of Human Rights and Labour of the US Government. These partner governments engaged in election work to ensure that marginalised voices and various opinions in Angola could be involved in the democratic election process. In addition, the CD would not have been possible without of the support of Angolan contributors, specifically, the artists themselves, who did not charge for their performances. The Angolan recording studio, Mayanga Producıes, provided reduced rates to make sure the CD was completed, eliminating the need to outsource production to a Portuguese studio, as was the case with the previous CD, *A Paz e que o Povo Chama*.

"I feel real pride in seeing this new younger generation of Angolan artists taking on this responsibility and using music as a messenger of peace, and as a tool to build the kind of society we want." - Felipe Zau, one of Angola's most revered musicians involved in both Angola Solta a Tua Voz and A Paz e que o Povo Chama.

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Violations of media freedom in the 2008 Angolan elections

By Human Rights Watch

Abstract

Parliamentary elections held in Angola in September 2008, the first in 16 years, brought resounding victory for the ruling Popular Liberation Movement of Angola (MPLA), in power since 1975, with 81.7% of the vote. However, observers noted that elections failed to meet regional and international standards. Urgent reforms are essential if the people of Angola are to be able to freely exercise their civil and political rights and vote for the presidential candidate of their choice in elections expected in 2009. Those reforms also need to be entrenched ahead of Angola's first local elections, scheduled for 2010. The following analysis of the media environment in Angola during the 2008 Parliamentary elections is excerpted from the Human Rights Watch Report, Democracy or Monopoly? Angola's Reluctant Return to Elections, resulting from research and interviews conducted between March and September 2008.

Key words

elections, freedom of expression, media

Introduction

Fourteen political parties and coalitions contested the elections, but only four opposition parties were able to secure representation in parliament, where the MPLA's landslide translated into 191 of the 220 seats. In the months before the election campaign, Human Rights Watch (HRW) raised doubts about prospects for the elections being free and fair. Dominated by the ruling party, the National Electoral Commission (CNE) lacked impartiality; the media environment was unfavourable to the opposition and freedom of expression restricted; unchecked intimidation and political violence by ruling party supporters prevented opposition parties from campaigning freely; and a climate of repression prevailed in the enclave of Cabinda, where armed conflict continued despite a 2006 peace agreement.

During the one-month official election campaign period, which opened on 5 August 2008, Human Rights Watch witnessed some improvement. Unlike during the pre-

campaign period, the police provided protection to opposition parties, meaning they could campaign freely. However, in many other ways the playing field remained considerably slanted in favour of the ruling party. The CNE failed in its role as oversight body, doing nothing to prevent or respond to major violations of election laws during the campaign, such as unequal access to state funds and to the state media. It also obstructed accreditation for national election observers from civil society. Polling day saw breaches of important safeguards against manipulation, such as the use of voter's rolls, and the CNE obstructed independent monitoring of the tabulation process.

Unequal access to state media

The "right to broadcast" time - an allocation of equal time on state radio and television - was the only space formally available to political parties during the campaign period, as no political debates between candidates were broadcast. Broadcasters generally respected the "right to broadcast." However, outside this provision for equal treatment framed in the Electoral Law, before and during the one-month election campaign the MPLA dominated the news broadcasts on the national state radio RNA, national state television TPA, and coverage in the state-owned daily *Jornal de Angola*, in both quantitative and qualitative terms.[1]

Observer groups noted systematic abuse of the state media by the MPLA.[2] The European Union Election Observer Mission (EU EOM) concluded that the Angolan state media failed to meet international election standards and fulfil provisions of Angolan law regarding equal treatment of contestants (EU EOM Angola 2008). Before and during the election campaign, however, only two Angolan civil society groups, the Political and Social Observatory of Angola (OPSA) and the Association Justice Peace and Democracy (AJPD), publicly expressed such concerns. OPSA highlighted an increased pro-MPLA bias in *Jornal de Angola* in the months prior to the election campaign, and observed that the state media were "transforming banal state acts into propaganda events" while giving "at times more space to an event of a MPLA local committee than to the leadership of any other party."[3] The complete absence of any voices critical of the government marked news broadcasts on state television and radio during the campaign.[4]

Human Rights Watch observed both qualitative and quantitative bias toward the MPLA. For example, during the last two weeks of the campaign, President Dos Santos's visits to provincial capitals, including Huambo, Saurimo, Uige, and Benguela, dominated public television and radio news bulletins. Coverage of the visits occupied a third of a 90-minute television news bulletin, also repeated in summary the following day.[5] The president's visits and other events associated with the inauguration of infrastructure projects received coverage without distinction between the role of party and state. The party-political character of the events, associating the new infrastructure projects with the MPLA, was emphasised by interviewing party officials who were present, or, in the case of television, including frequent shots of party flags and banners.

MPLA officials have tried to justify disproportionate coverage of MPLA campaign events in the state media on the basis that their public events were more numerous, and that extensive coverage of inaugural events for infrastructure projects was merely reflecting normal government activity (MPLA 2008).

State media tended to present the opposition in a negative way during the campaign. Opposition parties did not receive the opportunity to broadcast their opinions on unfair campaign tactics of the ruling party, or comment on accusations against them aired on the state media. For example, on August 28 TPA1 reported in the evening news that suspects had been stopped at Luanda airport while trying to illegally take large amounts of cash out of the country. The only individual who was named in the report was David Mendes, an official of the opposition Angolan Youth, Workers' and Peasants' Party (PAJOCA) and a well-known human rights lawyer. A police official recounted at length what had allegedly happened. Neither Mendes (who was not arrested or charged) nor a legal representative was given the opportunity to comment.[6]

In another case, on 1 September, leading opposition



Election campaigning in Angola *Photo: IPS*

party, the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA - National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), made use of its "right to broadcast" slot to present a letter it claimed showed a state-owned bank had donated the equivalent of around US$43,000 to the MPLA's election campaign. The same day, UNITA presented a formal complaint to the CNE, attaching the letter as evidence of an illegal donation to the MPLA. State television news said nothing about the allegation. The following night the evening news devoted 12 minutes to a claim by the MPLA and the bank that the letter was a forgery and accusing UNITA of abusing its "right to broadcast" time.[7] UNITA received no opportunity to respond. In addition, news bulletins broadcast on TPA1 during the campaign regularly covered events where erstwhile opposition party members announced they were abandoning their party and joining the MPLA. Coverage of such events culminated on the last day of the official campaign, 3 September.

That day, the TPA showed particularly strong political bias generally. MPLA events dominated its evening news in several provinces, including the president's rally in Luanda, despite the fact that all parties were holding events to wrap up their campaigns. Other parties' final campaign events received a maximum of two minutes coverage each, and public statements immediately followed the coverage of some of these events from dissidents or defectors calling on people to vote for the MPLA. For example, a public statement by a son of the famous UNITA general Samuel Chiwale followed coverage of UNITA's final campaign event. He justified his defection from UNITA alleging that his father's party was completely disorganised in Luanda and had no clear programme. A public statement followed the final event of PAJOCA from the leader of a former breakaway faction, Miguel Tetembwa, calling on voters to support the MPLA. The same broadcast featured an interview with a woman who was weeping as she talked about her painful experience of being with UNITA during the war. She said the current UNITA leader Isaías Samukuva was lying when he said UNITA had left its military past behind. The news broadcast on MPLA campaign events in several provinces also featured defectors from UNITA and the PRS.[8]

During the whole campaign period, *Jornal de Angola* featured a daily, unsigned column under the title "Right to broadcast," which ridiculed the radio and television airtime allocated to opposition parties one by one, while praising the MPLA spots. The column regularly attacked UNITA by blaming it for the country's destruction during the civil war. It is a well-known phenomenon in Angola that *Jornal de Angola*, the only daily and the cheapest and most widely distributed newspaper in the country, has for many years made use of controversial and at times defamatory opinion articles, written under pseudonyms, against opposition parties as well as individuals and groups perceived as critics of the government. With the daily comments on "right to broadcast" airtime, these methods became commonplace during the election campaign.

At the time, the journalist unions, the National Council on Media, and the National Electoral Commission remained silent in the face of the array of abuses. It took until three months after the elections for the RNA section of the Union of Angolan Journalists (Sindicato dos Jornalistas de Angola, SJA) to admit that the principles of equal treatment of election contestants were "systematically violated" in the state-owned media.(Lusa 2008).

The CNE failed to comment or take any action despite daily examples in the state media that legal provisions regarding equal access to the media were being violated. Equally, the National Council on Media failed to issue public statements or otherwise comment during the campaign to call attention to these violations of Angolan legislation, after having urged media professionals to respect the Electoral Code of Conduct in January 2008.[9]

Threats against independent media

In the months before the elections, journalists at private media outlets were sent a clear message of intimidation when the editors of two privately-owned weeklies, *Folha 8* and *Semanário Angolense*, were summoned to court for trials in libel lawsuits initiated several years previously. The lawsuit against *Folha 8* editor William Tonet, filed by the president's wife Ana Paula dos Santos, did not progress further, due to the absence of the plaintiff at the court session on June 13, 2008. However, the court convicted and sentenced *Semanário Angolense* editor Felisberto Graça Campos, facing three separate libel cases filed by government officials, to a six-month prison term, as well paying damages equivalent to US$90,000. Campos's appeal is pending at this writing and he remains at liberty.[10]

The new press law's lack of clarity regarding the definition of defamation and its criminalisation restrict freedom of expression as such, and pending libel lawsuits against journalists for defamation in the period leading to elections compound that restriction. Censorship of journalists in the state media became evident before the elections when Ernesto Bartolomeu, a popular presenter on TPA, received suspension for publicly criticising growing government interference in television. After the elections, Bartolomeu regained his job.

Throughout the election process, access to independent media was extremely limited outside of Luanda, which affected the right of voters to access information. Due to widespread illiteracy, radio broadcasting plays a crucial role in Angola's vast rural areas, but with a few exceptions in some provinces (Benguela, Cabinda, and Huila) the state radio RNA continues to be the only broadcaster outside of the capital.

No private radio station broadcasts public debates between candidates during the campaign, despite being able to do so. Privately owned radio stations have not been immune to government pressure to give more prominence to government views during the election campaign. For example, as local journalists told Human Rights Watch, Rádio Comercial in Cabinda frequently broadcast campaign speeches of the provincial governor in full, and airtime devoted previously to diverse opinions gradually reduced before the elections, a fact the journalists attribute to the radio's ownership by seniour MPLA officials.[11]

Implications for the media environment in a 2009 election

Since the 2008 elections, seniour government officials have filed further libel lawsuits against journalists of private media. In November 2008 Elsa Alexandre, a journalist for the private weekly *Jornal Angolense*, was informed of a libel lawsuit lodged back in 2005 by a general, the head of the national bridge company, and is awaiting trial. In January 2009, William Tonet of *Folha 8* was summoned to court for a further libel lawsuit filed in January 2008 by two generals, the heads of the president's Military Office and the External Intelligence Services. This lawsuit adds to another 22 lawsuits filed by the same generals against Tonet. His lawyer complained to Human Rights Watch that courts deal with these lawsuits separately, which increases judicial and other costs for his client.[12]

Further suspensions of state media journalists have occurred for legitimate criticism of the government. On 1 October, 2008, a seniour journalist and director of the private weekly *Novo Jornal*, Victor Silva, was sacked as a commentator by the state-owned RNA, on the basis that he had violated the radio station's editorial line by voicing during a debate programme critical comments about some of the president's newly appointed vice-governors. RNA took the programme off air immediately and two journalists who were working on it were suspended.[13] Political interference into privately owned radio stations has not stopped. For example, two journalists of Rádio Comercial in Cabinda reportedly received suspensions on the orders of the provincial delegate of the Ministry of Social Communication on October 10, 2008, for having criticised MPLA bias in the award of a journalism prize by the provincial government.[14]

Since the elections, the private media group Medianova has launched several new media outlets in Angola, including the weekly newspaper *O País*, the radio station Rádio Mais in Luanda, and the television channel TV

Zimbo. New private media outlets, especially local radio stations and television channels, contribute to increased diversity of information in Angola. However, when the new television channel started broadcasting for a three-month experimental phase it bypassed the pending adoption of the respective legislation and licensing mechanisms that should include a public tender for new television concessions. Similarly, Rádio Mais has announced a plan to launch in eight provinces, although the relevant legislation has not yet been passed. The government has not raised any legal obstacle against these media projects, in clear contrast with the alleged legal restrictions brought against Rádio Ecclésia. Several observers told Human Rights Watch the government's privileged treatment of Medianova's new outlets as compared with Rádio Ecclésia was politically motivated, since seniour government officials close to the president own Medianova.[15] At the time of this writing, Human Rights Watch is not aware of any concrete developments regarding the government's blockage of the Rádio Ecclésia signal extension since the elections

Recommendations

Among a number of other recommendations, HRW makes the following recommendations related to creating a media environment in Angola that would contribute to free and fair governance.

- Enact all necessary implementing regulations and laws relating to the 2006 press law, in line with international standards.
- Review the press law in order to decriminalise defamation and related offenses, in line with international standards.
- Enact legislation to guarantee that public media are accountable to the public and not the government, as stated in the press law.
- Enact legislation to establish fair and transparent licensing procedures for private radio and television, and ensure supervision by an independent body, as stated in the press law, in order to prevent discriminatory licensing practices and to enhance diversity of information throughout the country. Enact legislation regarding the establishment of the National Council on Media (Conselho Nacional da Comunicação Social) as an independent body, as stated in the press law, with sufficient powers to play its role effectively.
- Ensure equal access for all political parties to the state media beyond stipulated airtime during the official election campaign.

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Writers Bio

Human Rights Watch researchers conducted research and wrote this report, with the assistance of a consultant. Carolyn Norris, deputy director of the Africa Division of Human Rights Watch, and Ian Gorvin, seniour program officer, edited it. Clive Baldwin, senior legal advisor, conducted legal review. Charlene Harry, associate for the Africa Division, provided production assistance.

Notes

[1] According to the EU observer mission media monitoring, from 11 August to 3 September, quantitatively the MPLA occupied between 57 and 65% of airtime and space, UNITA between 12 and 19%, and the rest of the opposition parties together less than 4.8% on the public media (TPA1, RNA, and Jornal de Angola). European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) Angola, Preliminary statement, September 8, 2008.
[2] The EU EOM, the Pan-African Parliament, the United States Embassy, the Angolan Bar Association, the National Civil Society Electoral Platform, and the Council of Coordination of Human Rights.
[3] According to OPSA, the MPLA featured on the back or front page of 22 out of 91 editions of Jornal de Angola, while other parties only occupied the same space four times (UNITA three times and FNLA once). Observatório Político e Social de Angola (OPSA), "Posição sobre as eleições legislativas de 2008 em Angola," July 2008.
[4] Human Rights Watch interview with civil society representatives and journalists in Luanda, May to September 2008.
[5] For example, coverage of the president's visit to Saurimo on TPA1 evening news on August 23, with repeated coverage of the same event on August 24, 2008.
[6] Telejornal, TPA1, August 28, 2008.
[7] Telejornal, TPA1, September 1-2, 2008.
[8] Telejornal, TPA1, September 3, 2008.
[9] Conselho Nacional de Comunicação Social, "Deliberação," January 28, 2008, reproduced in Semanário Angolense, nr. 251,
[10] See "Angola: Doubts over Free and Fair Elections," Human Rights Watch news release, August 13, 2008, http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/08/13/angola-doubts-over-free-and-fair-elections. Also, two months before the elections the privately-owned Rádio Despertar was threatened with suspension by the government on a technical issue: its signal reached beyond the geographic area (Luanda) for which it was licensed. The issue was resolved and Rádio Despertar continued broadcasting.
[11] Human Rights Watch interview with local journalists in Cabinda, August 28, 2008. Rádio Comercial in Cabinda, Rádio 2000 in Huila, and Rádio Morena in Benguela were set up by senior MPLA officials before the 1992 elections.
[12] Human Rights Watch phone interview with André Dambi, lawyer of William Tonet, editor of Folha 8, January 21, 2009.
[13] Voz da América, O Apostolado (Luanda) and Lusa, October 17, 2008; O Apostolado, October 23, 2008.
[14] "Suspended for criticizing the award of the journalism prize" ("Suspensos por criticarem os métodos da atribuição do prémio de Jornalismo"), Portuguese News Network, October 22, 2008; Human Rights Watch phone interview with local journalist (name withheld), November 11, 2008.
[15] Human Rights Watch phone interviews with Catholic priest (name withheld), January 19, and with lawyer (name withheld), January 23, 2009.



Maria Ivone Soares, from radio to blogs in Mozambique

By Fred Katerere

At 18-years old, she decided politics was her calling and the decision has paid off well. Maria Ivone Soares is now one of Mozambique's most respected, outspoken politicians. At 29-years old, Soares is also one of Mozambique's youngest politicians, making her name as a politician, head of the external affairs department of Renamo, Mozambique's leading opposition party, as well as spokesperson for the party's election office. Talking of Soares' political career would not be complete without mentioning that she is also the secretary of women politicians in the Democrat Union of Africa (DUA), an organisation that represents both ruling and opposition parties with centre and centre right policies.

"When I entered politics my main job was to plaster the party's posters during the run up to 1994 elections," says Soares who has matured in media as well as politics, and now runs three online blogs. As Renamo's external affairs spokesperson, Soares is one of the country's most prized young politicians, but she is still wary of how Mozambican society treats women politicians.



Ivone Soares. *Photo: Fred Katerere*

"Most people view women politicians as being not normal, and some decide not to associate with me because of my choice to enter into politics, especially in the opposition," says Soares who holds a doctorate in communication science. She adds that many of her detractors were women working in the media, who still prefer to seek comment from men politicians as they look down upon women politicians.

Growing up in Maputo, Soares says she decided she wanted be part of the democratic revolution so she joined Renamo, which waged a 16-year old civil war with the ruling Frelimo to fight off socialism. Before deciding to enter into politics, Soares worked as a radio personality. She also contributed to local media with work published in the magazine Tempo and the independent weekly Savana, based in Maputo. Her ascendance to politics has also seen her being bold in her politics, through her blogs:
http://www.mariaivonesoares.blogspot.com
http://politicandomoz.blogspot.com
http://rabiscosdasoares.blogspot.com
Apart from the blogs, which she updates when her demanding political duties permit her time, she also writes poems for the blogs spots, which she hopes to publish in a book one day.

Married for five years to a former Italian politician who is now a business executive in Maputo bolsters her position as a politician, as she says she gets support from her husband. Soares adds that one of the biggest factors preoccupying her as a politician is the fact that most women politicians do not get support from their husbands or partners. "Husbands need to support their wives or partners who decide to enter into politics so that they prosper in their chosen field," she says. She also noted that some husbands abused their wives who were in politics, as they felt threatened by the power they could wield as politicians.

As Mozambique holds general elections on October 28, this year, Soares' task will be central as she organises press briefings on the activities of her party. However, she is aware that this is not an easy task, as she will be dealing with the media that she says are skeptical at times when she calls for a media briefing. "Most of the time, the publicly owned media do not want to cover events of the opposition as they mostly follow officials from the ruling party."

"Some of journalists lack resources and most of the time cover events when they are assured that there is a cocktail after the briefing, which affects the way they will report on events," says Soares. In her experience in dealing with the media, she says there is some corruption on the part of some journalists who ask for favours from politicians in order to report stories. "At one time I wanted a tape of a report published by one of the television stations and when I approached the journalist who had covered the event, he wanted to be paid personally to release the tape," said Soares. She says most of these incidences occur because journalists in Mozambique were "poorly paid and some of the time they ask for direct payment from sources." She noted that better remuneration of journalists and better training was two pillars that could lead reporters to be objective in their work.

She also notes that some journalists continue to prefer to interview male politicians, disregarding women politicians. "There is need to sensitise journalists on issues of gender so that they do not look down on women politicians as incapable of performing the same way as the male counterparts," she added. Soares' relations with other women politicians has been healthy and she says she receives support from her colleagues, but the same does not happen in society in general, who often do not respects women politicians, especially in opposition parties.

She also has a strong message to aspiring women politicians to follow their dreams. "Women who feel they have a calling into politics need to follow their dreams at a young age so that they get enough experience and gain confidence," she says.

Mozambique is one of Southern African countries with the highest number of women politicians elected to parliament or to ministry positions. The country's Prime Minister, Luisa Diogo, is one of the country's top female politicians and as the country goes to elections, it is expected more women will find seats in parliament and as ministers. However, time will tell when they country could have a woman president or a candidate who will campaign in future elections as a presidential candidate or lead a political party.

Writers Bio
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Opinion: Media must take electoral responsibilities seriously

By Lowani Mtonga

The performance of the media during an election period constitutes one of the cardinal pillars for the assessment of whether an election was free and fair or not. Elections can hardly be called free and fair when certain political players are denied access to airwaves and other vital media outlets to sell their campaign message to the electorate without bias.

Inadvertently, media practitioners are not aware that they have a large stake in the electoral process, as their conduct can heavily influence the outcome of an election. They have an important role to play in the dissemination of election information at all the stages of the electoral process: pre-election, during elections and post elections.

Despite this important role, media freedom is at stake during an election period. The abuse of media freedom is more pronounced in state run media organisations where the governing parties have used them as their mouthpiece. The large percentage of airtime is devoted to covering the ruling party while the opposition and other political players such as NGOs.

So, instead of presenting issues in a fair, objective and balanced manner and supporting the democratic process so that the voters make their own choices, the media have tended to abdicate their role. They have been used by politicians as a propaganda tool for the opposition. The result has been that programming and news content have lacked diversity because of suppression of divergent views, which has also affected the growth of a democratic culture.

During the presidential elections in Zimbabwe in 2008 the ruling ZANU-PF used all the government-controlled media houses such as Zimbabwe Television, *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and the *Sunday Mail* to churn out propaganda information to the exclusion of the opposition. The government received almost 100% election coverage.

Similarly, in Malawi during the 2009 elections the state broadcaster Malawi Broadcasting Corporation Radio 1 and Radio 2 and the state television channel Malawi TV gave the entire time to the ruling Democratic Progressive Party.

Presenting one-sided views in favour of one particular group is not only a violation of freedom of expression, which is so vital during an election period, but also denies the voters the right to information. Voters need to know policies, manifestos and programmes of all political parties so that they can make an informed choice of who to vote for. Nevertheless, media houses throw journalism ethics and editorial policies to the wind to please their political masters at the expense of the professional standards.

The only exception is South African Broadcasting (SABC) that has exhibited a high degree of professionalism and independence and an example of how public media should operate. It has its own problems, but is nowhere comparable to other public media organisations.

Print media is not entirely free from media freedom challenges. Some print media houses, because of their

ownership, also tend to side or have been used by political parties or individuals as a tool to vilify and carry out a smear campaign against political opponents while exalting their paymasters. It is also during this period that many journalists receive bribes from politicians in form of allowances, lunch, cell phones and other tangible benefits in return for media coverage.

Apparently, this is also the time when adhoc newspapers, mainly sponsored by politicians, spring up to as serve as a campaign tool. The newspapers are written without due regard to media ethics and thrive on misinformation and unearthing past scandals committed by rival politicians and bringing private lives of politicians in the public domain and little to do with issues. Women politicians become easy targets and are called all sorts of names.

Such vices are carried out with impunity in an environment that has broadcasting regulation and self-regulatory media bodies. For example, broadcasting licensees are supposed to adhere to a code of ethics. One of the requirements of the broadcasters is to ensure equitable treatment of political parties, election candidates and electoral issues during an election period. Licensees are also supposed to give a right of reply to victim of unfair media coverage so that they also present their side of the story.

Equally, press councils and Electoral Commissions have a code of ethics that journalist are supposed to adhere to. Electoral Commissions' code of ethics specifically related to elections. Sadly, the press ombudsman (media/press councils), election commissions and media regulatory authorities are weak in the region to police errant media houses. Media houses operate as though
they are above the law or exist in a vacuum.

Newspapers have suffered from over reliance on quoting same (single) or expert sources. For example, Malawian newspapers invariably rely on a single Chancellor College political science lecturer for many of their political stories. The danger of relying on the same source is that there is no divergent of views on the issue. This deprives readers of hearing the views of other people or sources not heard.

Of particular concern, are the missing voices of women. The 2003 historic Gender Media Baseline Study (GMBS) found out that the women in the region constitute only 5% of political stories as opposed to 79% for men. Judging by the number of sources who speak on political issues, the position may be worse than before or very little progress has been made. With so many women politicians around including female ministers, the newspapers can do better.

This disease of sidelining women views is pervasive in the SADC region. MISA-Zimbabwe carried out a media monitoring exercise in 2005 on the Zimbabwean parliamentary elections. The results revealed that women politicians were not covered as much as their male counterparts in making news. Women parliamentary candidates accounted for only 17% of the news compared to 83% men sources despite the fact they were 54 (in the 120 constituents) women participating in the elections.

The biggest threat to media freedom has also been journalists themselves who have become an enemy unto themselves. They practice self- censorship as means to gain favours from politicians or to protect their business interests thereby denying the voters the right to information. For example, newspapers that align themselves to the opposition or government will carefully select words or stories not to antagonise their business interests or personal relationships.

Hence, they will censor information to present their bedfellows in good light. It is therefore hardly surprising to see anti-government stories in pro opposition newspapers, while pro government media bash and discredit the opposition to the fullest. Such diametrical newspapers are destroying democracy and a threat to media freedom because of presenting one-sided stories instead of focusing on issues.

One of the issues that media has missed over the years is to interrogate political leaders and political parties about their commitment to gender equality. With the SADC Protocol on Gender and development signed in 2008 committing themselves to 50% women

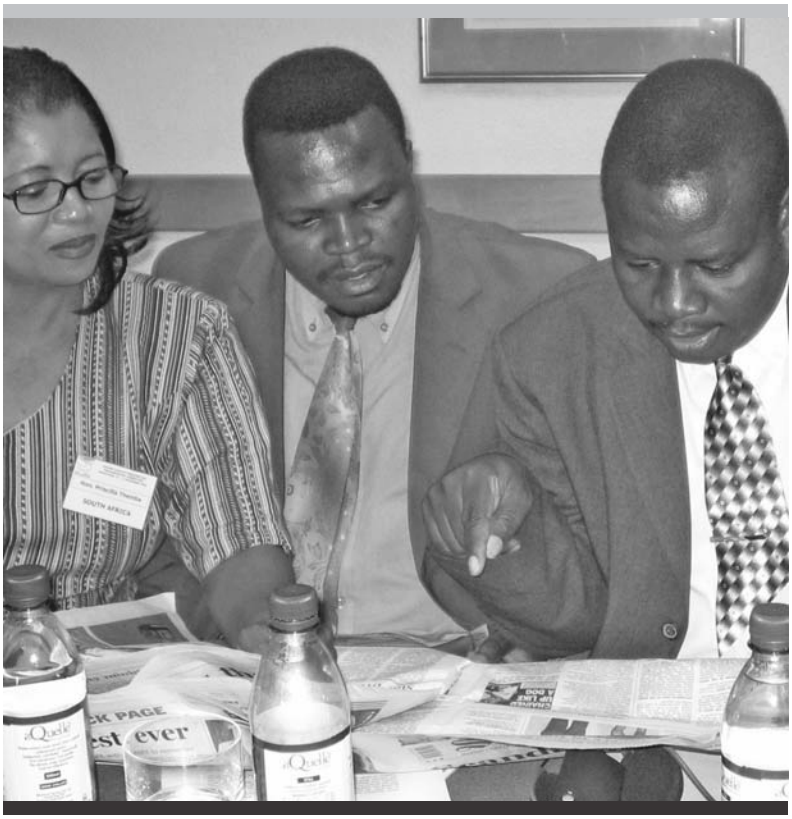
representation in decision making structures and parliamentary elections in five SADC countries, media houses have not taken a keen interest to ask various political parties and leaders about the measures that they have put in place to achieve the 50-50 target for women representation in all areas of decision making in 2015.

Some countries like Malawi and Botswana have not even signed the protocol and lying at the bottom of the Hence, the media do not go far enough to contextualize issues or set the agenda. They seem to be content with covering political campaign meetings.

A vigilant media can help bring about change by reminding political leaders during the election period about the thick gender protocols they sign at national, regional and international levels, not to mention the many political platforms committing themselves to gender equality.

Writers Bio
Lowani Mtonga is working for Gender Links as Gender, Media and Elections Project Coordinator.

Media Watch



SADC parliamentarians scrutinise the media *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*



Strategic communication against gender-based violence

By Tanya Owen

Abstract

Strategic Communication in the development and public health fields is communication that addresses what people need in order to voluntarily change their behaviour and sustain the change. A number of organisations and centres also refer to this as Communication for Development (C4D) and Communication for Behavioural Change (CBC). The this paper is based on content developed for a publication produce by Media Monitoring Africa, entitled *Empowering Messages: What You Should Know: Strategic Communication and Gender-Based Violence (GBV)*, produced after a study of communication in South Africa and Namibia, including media campaigns.

Key words

gender-based violence, media, strategic communication

Communication for change

Within the context of social development, strategic communication is particularly important because the attitudes and behaviours associated with social issues are usually well entrenched over long periods of time, and are often the result of strongly held beliefs and values. For this reason, facilitating changes in attitudes and action generally requires deeper and longer-term engagement with the values and emotions of intended audiences, and their perception of reality. Making changes to values, attitudes and behaviours requires both a voluntary decision by intended audiences to change, as well as commitment to make the change. Thus, within the context of strategic communication, messaging needs to be particularly powerful and well targeted to trigger and support change in deep-set attitudes and behaviour.

In the past, creating hype around social issues using guilt, shock and horror tactics was common practice. Over the years however, not only have people become desensitised to this type of messaging, but it has also been found that people respond better when presented with more personal and positive reasons why they should change. The only way to achieve impact is to come up

with smarter and more sensitive ways in which to create impact. Fortunately, creating impact is possible through communication planning, which enables one to think strategically about desired outcomes and formulate the best means to get there. In the context of social issues, one of the key means to developing effective communication is significant research into the intended audience, their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, and in particular, how to facilitate change in them.

While this approach focuses on individual impact, it does not ignore the importance of the social environment in facilitating (or inhibiting) change – intervention activities require both individual and community based approaches. However, individual change stimulated through media messages can provide a catalyst for community dialogue that leads to collective action and results in social change.

Ten core elements of a communication strategy

The following 10 steps are the elements for developing and implementing a communication strategy, particularly for a campaign. However, this process is not mechanical yielding automatic results. It needs hard work and lots of thought. Each step is critical and linked to the others. From the very beginning, we must give attention to two elements - objective and message - to ensure that work will yield results.

Strategising is about how to achieve objectives, but if we are unclear about our objective or get it wrong, then all the rest will be of little or no value. We also need to correctly define the single most important thing to say and how to say it to our intended audience in order to effect the desired change. This is of utmost importance as research indicates that, because people are exposed



Messaging during campaigns like 16 Days of Activism requires careful planning *Photo: Gender Links*

to numerous messages from both the media and their communities, they generally only absorb strong, succinct messages. The communication strategising process entails working your way through each element of the following framework, though not necessarily always in order with no revision. Each step may bring a new perspective or information, which in turn may require revisiting an earlier step, such as setting objectives, for further refinement:

1. Vision statement and background

This outlines the long-term vision of a significant reduction in gender-based violence, or one significant component of this (i.e. gender inequality in a particular community) and what has led to the need for a communication strategy. Vision statements should be the common and achievable goal shared by all stakeholders, as they relate to the long-term impact of multiple initiatives. Articulating the vision statement ensures organisers design and implement activities with the end goal in mind, and understanding the issue ensures that activities are on the right track. This should address: the extent of the issue and why it must be addressed; defining stakeholders, including those involved in the problem/issue; behaviours contributing to the issue and how direct this impact is; and what component of the issue and problem behaviour your organisation is best placed to address and where action is likely to achieve results.

2. Setting objectives – outcome statements

Intended outcomes need to be clearly articulated in outcome statements that clarify the purpose of the communication intervention (your objectives), and enable measurement and evaluation to take place. The purpose may be to educate, receive feedback about a community programme, or change a perception or attitude. It is important to be realistic – focus on your areas of knowledge and expertise, to achieve results. Recognise that your message alone is unlikely to result in widespread social change, but it can act as a catalyst to jumpstart the process in conjunction with other initiatives. Setting objectives is not a simple, one-step task but involves stakeholder and problem analysis in order to narrow down what can and should be achieved with your organisation's expertise and capacity.

3. Environmental analysis

This will define the environment for implementation of the communication intervention. It should explore the social, political and economic conditions that could potentially influence the effectiveness of your communication, and deal with issues like the public mood, the media's agenda, institutional agendas, concerns and attitudes of varying sectors and forces, what other initiatives and communication campaigns are being rolled out, the potential for improving the communication environment, etc. Environmental scans should also identify where community support for change and the communication campaign may be drawn from. Conducting research is highly recommended before progressing further.

4. Communication challenges

Considering broad objectives in the context of a defined environment will lead you to identify specific challenges that lie in the way of achieving the outlined objectives. Challenges may be in the following areas:

- Resources available (internal and external to the organisation)
- Availability and willingness of potential partners
- Language and literacy
- Competing messages and agendas
- Other major issues absorbing media/ community interest which could overshadow your message (e.g. a sporting event)
- Lack of community support (including people in prominent positions).

Only once challenges are clear will you be able to know the best approach to take to overcome identified challenges.

5. Identify your key intended audience/s

Now that you know exactly what needs to be communicated, you need to outline exactly to whom it must be communicated – the primary intended audience you want to effect change.

6. Insight mining – behaviour analysis

Now that you have a general understanding of who your intended audience is, it is necessary to probe deeper

into their thoughts, attitudes and behaviour regarding GBV, and specifically the issue your communication addresses. The objectives in doing so are to:

- establish the root cause for the particular attitude/behaviour in the intended audiences;
- identify the barriers to adopting the desired attitude/behaviour, including perceived negative consequences to adoption;
- identify factors that encourage the desired attitude/behaviour need.

This process should also explore the traditional beliefs and gender stereotypes that influence the problem attitude/behaviour, and people/groups that may support or inhibit change. Insight mining assists in making your message more relevant and noticeable to your intended audience by helping to define the core message and how to say it, so that it strikes a "sensitive spot" (positive or negative) with the majority of the intended audience and stresses the positive benefits of change. At this stage you should refer to models of behavioural change that help you to locate what stage your intended audience is at in the process of change, and thus help to pitch your message accordingly.

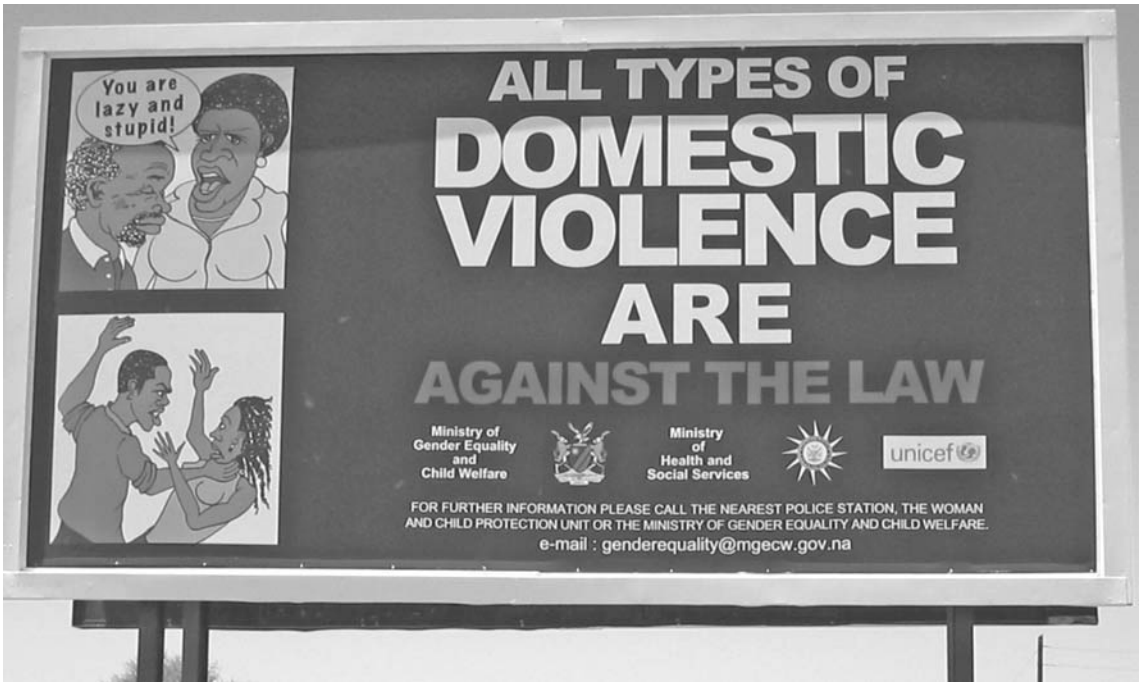
7. Establish a single message

Poorly thought-through messaging is almost always poorly received and easily forgotten. Not only is it important to develop an appropriate message for the intended audience, it is also important to speak with clarity and a shared purpose if collaborating with other organisations. A thousand voices speaking different messages with no single purpose will just make an indistinct noise that few will hear and take note of.

8. Determine the best media channels to use

You need to establish the best channels for communicating your message to the intended audience/s. This should be a two-part process. Not all campaigns will employ the second processes, but your campaign will be stronger if you do:

- Media Strategy - The first is a detailed distribution strategy document, called a media plan, which identifies in detail exactly which media and points of access to use to get the message across (see channel planning in section to follow entitled "Messaging") to the identified intended audiences.
- PR Strategy - The second is a media liaison or PR strategy consisting of a detailed plan of interviews,



Messages against GBV in Namibia *Photo: Gender Links*

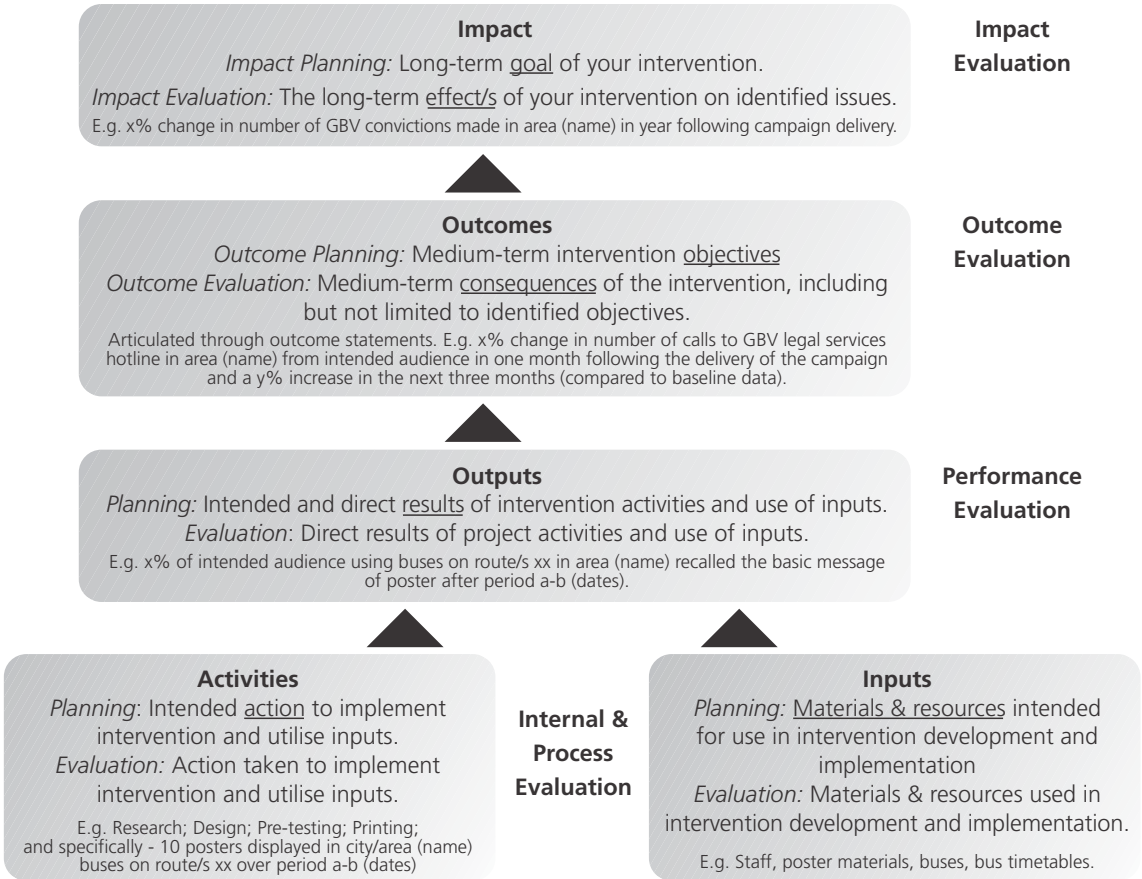
press briefings, media/journalists to be targeted, opinion pieces, etc. Included in this should be a statement of key messages and collection of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and answers. This needs to be developed and distributed to all organisation spokespeople so that they are prepared to deal with press inquiries. This is particularly important for campaigns whose objectives are to educate and inform, and especially for those campaigns that broach sensitive topics.

PR strategies also need to take into consideration a particular medium's market to attract interest, and then assist in formulating a PR message that also resonates with the medium's intended audience. For instance, a business-focused newspaper may need to have information framed around the significant economic costs of GBV to business and the economy.

9. Monitoring and evaluation planning

Deciding the means and manner in which the campaign will be monitored and evaluated is crucial prior to implementation. This is the only way to ensure that pre-campaign measurements are obtained for post-campaign comparison of identified indicators of success in achieving campaign objectives. You should also include testing of developed communications with intended audience members in your evaluation plans, to ensure that what and how you are communicating is achieving the intended response. Testing may require going back to the drawing board or adjusting the message and its medium, and re-testing it. The effort you put into testing at this point ensures that the time and resources put into development will result in the greatest impact possible.

Four Levels of Communication Evaluation – Understanding Activity to Impact



10. Developing an action plan

To put into practice the ideas resulting from strategising requires an action plan that spells out in detail what is to be done, who is responsible for doing it, what resources or skills will be needed, allocated budgets, and so on. This will also serve as a strategic management and co-ordination instrument to ensure objectives are met. An action plan is built and maintained in a table in electronic format so that it is easy to follow, distribute and amend.

Notes

The above article is adapted from Media Monitoring Africa's resource: *Empowering Messages, What You Should Know: Strategic Communication and Gender-Based Violence* (2009). The resource is available in hard copy and in PDF, downloadable from Media Monitoring Africa's website, www.mediamonitoringafrica.org. The resource and above article, including diagram, are subject to copyright provisions: (CC) Attribution 2.5 Media Monitoring Africa

Writers Bio

Tanya Owen has a Master in Public Policy and is the Organisational Development Officer at MMA, a position made possible through the support of Australian Volunteers International. Tanya is the primary author and editor of the Guidelines, which also had significant input from industry consultants Angela Ferreira and Jason Levin.



Sakaza Mngani: Kidz Community Radio

By Fiona Lloyd

Abstract

"Sakaza Mngani!" (meaning "Come on, let's broadcast!") is the rallying cry of the Kidz Community Radio Project, a South African national radio training initiative run by the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ). As part of the project, a handbook was developed for children to speak to other children about their experiences on the airwaves and offer advice to adults who manage kids' radio projects, as well as help community media facilitators explore participatory learning approaches and power-sharing. The process of participatory, inclusive radio also has the power to encourage diversity and change gender relations, as girls and boys learn to work collaboratively. This article shares insights from the project gathered in the handbook.

Key words

media for children, community radio

Introduction

Since 2003, the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, through its Kidz Radio training projects, has been working to transform the vision of the African Children's Charter into reality by developing training for children's media. Mosotho Stone (former co-ordinator of the project) describes what Kidz Radio means for him:

> "Many of us grew up in a society where there was a lot of intolerance. So this project is about building a different kind of society – to support kids to speak out, and to encourage adults to understand who kids are, and what they can do for their community. Kids are the most passionate people in the world. I've learned so much from them, as much as they would like to believe they learned from me."



Mosotho Stone

Palesa Mphambane (12), who presents a children's show on Jozi FM, sums up her passion for radio:

> "Children's TV is controlled by adults, but radio is something we can do on our own, with just a bit

> of help. I love radio because it allows me to express myself, and nobody judges me. Everything you talk about on radio revolves around your community, so it gives you relief when you can speak out all the things that you worry about. Radio is good for solving problems. It's like a friend to kids, because if you're bored, or feeling sad, you can always rely on it."

Many of the other young broadcasters echoed Palesa's words. Experiences of the children show that not only do such participatory media projects with young people contribute to media diversity, but also empower young presenters, producers and listeners on how to use their voices, and media, to affect change and create dialogue.

Kidz radio and gender

Does children's radio mirror the gender imbalances inherent in the adult world outside? The answer – in South Africa at least – seems to be a resounding "no." Girls are speaking out, and they are speaking strongly. They are also taking the lead in decision-making. So, how do the boys respond? Siphesihle (12) is part of the team at Durban Youth Radio:

> "I'm the only boy among four girls. It's a challenge, but I've been on radio for two years so I've learned to deal with it. At first, it was difficult. I think boys and girls do see things differently. Maybe girls see the world as unfair, and boys see the world as fair. This experience has changed me because I've learned to work together with the girls as a team. Now we sound great together!"

Kidz Radio mentor Collen Hans feels that boys are initially more inhibited than girls are when it comes to sharing their opinions on radio. "Maybe boys are somehow neglected in our society. They cannot express themselves like girls. We always see the girl child rising above. We try to narrow that gap," he explains.

Children's radio is about talking and listening; respecting differences and valuing diversity. As such, it provides an alternative to the stereotypes found in mainstream media, as many young people realise:

> "The media is putting an image in children's minds that looking like a star or model is the only way you will be accepted in society." (Media Monitoring Africa 2007)

Radio is an inclusive medium, which is why it is so empowering. Looks do not count; the important thing is how well you communicate. That is what makes it so liberating – for boys and girls.

Kidz radio & power-sharing

What advice do young broadcasters give their adult mentors? Kidz Radio presenters were quick to respond:

- "I would tell them that they must be prepared to step into kids' shoes and understand how kids see things. It shouldn't be hard because they were children once themselves." *Mbali (Durban Youth Radio)*
- "There's a time to be serious and a time to be funny. Put yourself into their mood. You know, kids can be quite tricky. They might start out really happy, but five minutes later they can be sad. Kids don't hide what they feel. They're very open and honest. Adults should never, never shout at kids because it hurts our hearts. We can't forget easily. It will take a long time to build trust again." *Palesa (Jozi FM)*
- "Try to use examples from real life. We can do radio ourselves, but we need adults to give us advice and tell us which way to go. There have to be a few restrictions because some things are not radio-friendly – you gotta have rules." *Siphesihle (Durban Youth Radio)*

Radio mentors agree that when children are given the space to express themselves freely, they bring fresh energy to all kinds of issues. As Collen Hans comments:

> "You don't need to tell them what to talk about.

> They will choose and vote on their own. That's the greatness about these youngsters. They are open-minded...I call them the children of light. If we can take those kids to parliament, this country will change!"

However, as children themselves point out, there is a difference between having space, and being abandoned. It is not always easy for mentors to strike the right balance. Mentoring is a dynamic, collaborative process; it demands the ability to respond to what is happening here and now to understand intuitively when to offer support, when to motivate, and when to pull back and let things flow. It is important to have a plan, and a clear set of mutually understood objectives, but it is equally important to be attentive to the needs of the moment.

A group of Norwegian children, interviewed at the end of a project called "Try Yourself," advised adults not to give too much, or too little assistance. Too much adult interference made them feel inadequate, and robbed them of the excitement of thinking up new ideas together. However, when adults were overly distant, the children interpreted it as a lack of real interest and commitment. In an article about the project, Louise Chawla and Anne Trine Kjørholt say that:

> "A true collaboration with children involves learning to observe when to follow the children's lead, and when to come forward with the practical and social skills that are needed to carry the project forward." (PLA Notes 1996)

Bush Community Radio in Cape Town is an inspirational example of how this can work in practice. On Saturdays, about 60 children, ranging from ages 6 to 18, run the station. Some handle live phone-ins; others write scripts; older kids work in the production studio. This is the Children's Radio Education Workshop (CREW) in action. CREW facilitator, Nashira Abrahams, says it may appear chaotic to outsiders but, "We know exactly what goes on here. Even if it looks like they're jumping up and down on the table it's normally for a reason!" (Bosch 2003)

For Tanja Bosch, a former Programme Co-ordinator at Bush Radio, CREW represents a "microcosm of South Africa," because the children come from so many different backgrounds:

> "Youth in post-apartheid South Africa embrace the alternative education and the spaces on the airwaves that Bush Radio offers, as a tool to carve out new spaces in which their ideas of self and other are imagined, produced and lived. While schools were once the site of political struggle and the negotiation of generational consciousness, music, popular culture, and radio have become the new critical sites for identity formation." (Bosch 2003)

On-air discussions tackle controversial issues, including HIV and AIDS, sexuality, and race. Even the youngest broadcasters, like the 7 – 11 year old BushTots, are given a platform to express themselves freely. Older mentors never interfere in a live discussion – no matter how hot the topic. Nashira Abrahams describes one such talk show:

> "One of the little girls talked about her auntie getting married, and her cousin was in the studio with her that day, and he told the children: 'You know, she's getting married and I'm very happy for her, but she's marrying a white man'. And all of them just looked into the microphone and said, 'No!' And we sat there and we said: OK what should we do? And we just decided to leave them, and what they did was they handled it in their own way. And one of them said: 'Doesn't she like being black?' And this little girl who's sitting there and talking about her auntie just went: 'No, she does like being black, but love knows no colour!'" (Bosch 2003, 157)

CREW mentors help children to explore their attitudes and assumptions, without imposing political correctness, or heavy-handed messages. Instead, they encourage spontaneity and authenticity. For example, during a BushTots show, a little girl was asked to name her role models: "It's my mother and my grandmother and Britney Spears!" she replied (Bosch 2003, 155).



Abrahams challenges the notion that if children have "too much power" on radio, it will lead to anarchy. "I hear adults on radio all the time whose behaviour I would class as irresponsible, and whose broadcast content I would say is more than inappropriate!" she says. "These are the very attitudes that prohibit young people from speaking their mind, and create the impression that they really don't know very much."

Sakaza Mngani! Handbook

The Sakaza Mngani! Handbook offers a mix of practical advice, real-world experiences and fun ideas for creative activities.

- Chapter One focuses on the story of the Kidz Radio Project, and its vision; children's radio in South Africa (case studies and examples); international children's radio initiatives.
- Chapter Two is a market-place of ideas from kids, mentors and teachers who work in the field of children's participation. It includes tips from Kidz Radio participants; tips from older people; thoughts on participation and power-sharing; guidelines on how to create a healthy environment for learning.
- Chapter Three explores a range of activities that you can use in your Kidz Radio training. For example. confidence-building games and energisers; activities to release creativity; role-plays; tools for teaching children interview skills, presentation techniques, and "writing for the ear."
- Chapter Four discusses the most popular formats in Kidz Radio: magazine shows (including drama, storytelling, interviews, radio diaries, jokes and phone-ins); and news (how to report the stories that matter most for young people in your community).
- Chapter Five is a library of articles, toolkits, handbooks and websites about children's radio – not just in South Africa, but in other parts of the world too.

Releasing creativity

Maya Angelou once wrote:

> "We are all creative, but by the time we are three or four years old, someone has knocked the creativity out of us. Some people shut up the kids who start to tell stories. Kids dance in their cribs, but someone will insist they sit still. By the time the creative people are ten or twelve, they want to be like everyone else."

Angelou's words have a special resonance for people who work with children's media. For example, when the IAJ launched a Schools News paper Project, trainer Hugh Lewin was amazed to see how passionately the young participants responded – once they realised that they were being given the space to write their own stories in their own style:

> "Their words came alive on the page, because they had the freedom to focus on what was real; what they see and hear every day. Kids relax into creativity if they're not restricted by adult rules. When they're allowed to take charge of their own stories, the result is exciting. I don't blame teachers for trying to give children a solid foundation of grammar and spelling. But I would urge them not to suppress the joy of self-expression."

Mosotho Stone recalls his excitement at meeting a young broadcaster whose "joy of self-expression" flowed freely:

> "In Eshowe, at ICORA community radio, there's a brilliant kid who has a way of narrating a story by painting this imaginary picture. We hadn't done any radio drama training, but he knew how to change his voice from the jackal, to the lion, to the rabbit. In his story, Lion was one greedy king – a real tyrant; Jackal was a crooked somebody; Rabbit was like a social worker with brains. After that story was aired, a lot of listeners called the station, asking to hear it again. I didn't teach that kid. He taught me."

The handbook includes a chapter of activities for mentors who want to help children reclaim their creativity and unique voice. For instance, Johannesburg teacher, Veerle Dieltiens, encourages young people to write praise poems: not about grown-up leaders or politicians, but about themselves. She describes the process:

> "At first everyone is very surprised when they hear what I'm asking them to do. Many kids are shy to write about themselves in this way. But as soon as they get going, the ideas come pouring out. Afterwards, they read their poems out loud. There's a lot of applause and laughter. Warm laughter; it's never unkind. If someone is really reticent about sharing their poem with the rest of the group, I don't push them. I just ask them to read their favourite line. I think this activity encourages the kids to feel proud of who they are."

Mirna Kabwe, who came to South Africa as a refugee from DRC, was encouraged to create her own praise poem:

> I am like a tree planted by the river
> Which shall be forever strong
> I have such a great tradition
> When my voice comes out: what a sensation!
> My thoughts, my words, deserve declaration
> I am like Nelson Mandela
> Saying nothing is impossible
> I am wiser than George W Bush
> Knowing war does not settle anything
> I am black: a race some people criticise
> But I have proved them wrong
> I am not just another dark skin
> I am Mirna Musawe Kabwe
> A name given by my parents
> Passed from generation to generation
> To conserve a legacy
> What legacy you may ask?
> A legacy to succeed
> What I am
> What I will always be.

Talking about our world

> "You know, when we look at the world there's not much to be happy about. There's so many gangsters, people getting killed, global warming, people destroying ecosystems, harming kids and animals, littering. It's not a good world for children. It stresses you. It makes you forget how a child should be. But every morning when I wake up and I see the sun, I think: I'm still alive, and I've got my Mom and my friends."
>
> *Palesa Mphambane (Jozi FM)*

South Africa's young broadcasters are under no illusions about the world in which they live. Their choice of radio programming embraces it all, and mixes the fun with the serious. Popular topics include:

- How to say "No" to gangs and drugs
- Jokes
- Favourite sports stars
- Child abuse at home and in schools
- Dealing with exam stress
- Body image: the pressure girls face to be thin
- Homeless children
- Peer pressure

They don't shy away from issues like HIV & AIDS, either.

"The biggest problem is that children with HIV are not respected. Other kids say bad things to them. Swearing at them that they are nearly going to die and all of that stuff," says 13-year-old Siphiwe Ntshalintshali. "I think radio must keep telling kids who are HIV infected that they mustn't put themselves down. And radio must tell other listeners that they must be on their side. We are all the same people."

In the end, perhaps adults need children's radio as much – if not more – than the children do themselves. As NPR journalist, Susan Stamberg, points out:

"A microphone is a magic wand, waved against silence. A recorder preserves the stories that microphones catch. And radio casts the stories to a broad audience – bringing us together in special ways. We need more young voices, young stories in our lives. Make your microphone magical. Break our silence."

Notes:

This contribution is based on information from the publication *"Sakaza Mngani!" Kidz Community Radio Handbook,* which can be downloaded from http://www.mdda.org.za/themddaResearch.htm

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Writers Bio

Fiona Lloyd is an international media trainer, based in Johannesburg. She has worked in South East Asia, Southern Africa and West Africa, specialising in : conflict-sensitive reporting; children's community media; election reporting; HIV & AIDS journalism; and reporting human rights issues. In addition, she has trained many civil society groups (including Romani women and people living with HIV & AIDS) in citizen journalism skills, and communicating through media.

Fiona Lloyd also teaches participatory training techniques, and has run Training of Trainer programmes in South Africa, Indonesia, Thailand and Zimbabwe.



Female migration to South Africa: official, social and media perspectives

By Sandra Roberts

Abstract

Globally, more migration is taking place than ever before, and women are a significant and increasing population of these international immigrants. This increase creates more opportunities for exclusion, exploitation and abuse of women. This article discusses various gender implications of women's migration, before discussing how women migrants feature in newspapers. It includes a background context of xenophobia and how women may suffer abuse. It explores how immigration policy that is gender-neutral in its phrasing in reality makes women vulnerable or excluded. State officials also have scope to abuse or exploit migrants, which may have particular consequences for women. The final section looks at early data on coverage of migrant women in the media.

Key words

migration, xenophobia, media monitoring

Xenophobia and women migrants

South Africa is indisputably xenophobic, winning the title of most xenophobic country in the world (HSRC 2008). Certainly recent events, with the murder of Lucky Dube because "he looked Nigerian" and the xenophobic attacks in May 2008 support the idea that South Africans feel that they are unlikely to face consequences in attacking migrants. There is clear evidence that South Africans are very xenophobic, in terms of rejecting immigrants and associating them with job loss, crime and disease (Mattes et al. 1999). Hypotheses for xenophobia can be placed into three groups: the scapegoating hypothesis, isolation hypothesis and bio-cultural hypothesis (Harris 2002).

Most researchers link economic conditions to the upsurge in xenophobia and violence, suggesting that migrants have become the scapegoat for hostility based on continued deprivation. Some also point to international isolation and its effect of distancing South Africans from the rest of Africa. The final hypothesis locates xenophobia as being linked to physical otherness, such as dark skin and positioning of vaccination scars. Harris goes on

to explain xenophobia as the natural result of the tension between nationalism and regionalism. She quotes Wetherell & Potter (1992) in saying that patriotism is the positive side of nationalism, xenophobia and chauvinism the negative.

Migrants are stereotypically believed to be men (Dodson 1998, 8), and many stereotypes and assumptions about migrants are based on this idea. Ideas that migrants are here to steal jobs, commit violent crime and steal women clearly assume that migrants are male. This is not surprising, given the history of migrant labour to mines; however, the history of agricultural migration and domestic labour is also long-standing (Dodson & Crush 2004) and has always involved large numbers of women. An HSRC (2008) study linked xenophobia strongly to gender issues which mean that foreign men are dating South African women to which South African men feel entitled, also discussed in Gqola (2008).

Women migrants are among the most vulnerable, to abuse, trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation. In the xenophobic attacks last year, despite the low number of rapes reported, women are likely to have suffered. Considering official treatment of migrants, rapes were not likely to be reported, and rape is routinely used for the purposes of ethnic cleansing (Fuller 2008). Women migrants are also presumably easy victims because they often head houses alone or are unmarried (Dodson 2008). Immigrant women may also be caught in the middle in hostile situations as they may have South African partners, in which case xenophobic behaviour may adopt the guise of domestic abuse (Fuller 2008).

There is little (but increasing) gender-differentiated data on xenophobic treatment and attacks in South Africa. However, is likely that women suffer as much or even more than men do. Women are likely to bare the double stigma of being a migrant outsider and a woman. The next section discusses how South African policy discriminates against women.

In policy

Early migration law attempted to separate men from their families (this is true of both cross-border migration, and Apartheid migration from Bantustans to mining compounds and other jobs in cities) (Stahl 1981). The Immigration Act of 2002 gives mines and corporate interests the continued right to mass-recruit largely unprotected workers (Dodson & Crush 2004), continuing the system of migrant labour which has been long associated with social problems, including disrupted families and spreading HIV/AIDS through the multiple partners it encourages. Skilled women are also discriminated against through the skilled immigrant visa categories which emphasise more traditionally male skills and skills which women, particularly from the SADC region are not likely to have acquired, being generally less educated than men (Dodson & Crush 2004).

While South Africa wants foreign men for the (largely unprotected) labour they offer, women (often involved in cross-border trade) are less desirable or lat least less visible and largely left out of policy. Small-scale traders cross the border on temporary visitor's permits, buy goods in South Africa to sell in their home country (Dodson & Crush 2004, 100). There are no measures in place to support access to South African markets, despite efforts to position South Africa as a shopping destination. Women's migration is also more typically multi-purpose (as opposed to male migration which is generally for employment), including "trade, shopping and visiting friends or family, as well as some from of employment" (Dodson & Crush 2004, 101).

Women are also likely to feature prominently among populations of refugees based on the sexual violence and gender-based victimisation that women experience in countries affected by war and economic collapse. Although many female refugees or asylum seekers do not have the resources to come as far as South Africa (Hughes, et al. 2007, 12), there is anecdotal evidence that women are increasingly fleeing, often with their families, from Zimbabwe to South Africa. We shall see below that treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa is abysmal.

Mother, baby sleeping out in the cold

BY SOLLY MAPHUMULO

When Thembi Khoza and her 10-month-old baby Gift woke up this morning, they would have braved another cold night sleeping out in the open.

It would be the third night that Thembi would have spent trying to keep her infant warm and dry while lying on wet grass at a refugee camp in Primrose, Germiston.

The two are among the 17 000 people displaced as a result of xenophobic attacks in Gauteng.

Thembi (17), a Mozambican, arrived at the camp on Friday after she and hundreds of other foreigners were chased by a marauding mob from their shacks in Tsakane.

"He screams the whole night. All I have is a few clothes that I managed to grab before running away. Gift only has one pair of socks," the young mother said.

"We had some blankets, but he did not stop crying. There is not much we can do, we had to run away," Thembi said.

With more than 2 000 people seeking refuge, Thembi and her family were unable to get a place in the 12sq m tents set up to house the foreigners and resorted to sleeping in the veld.

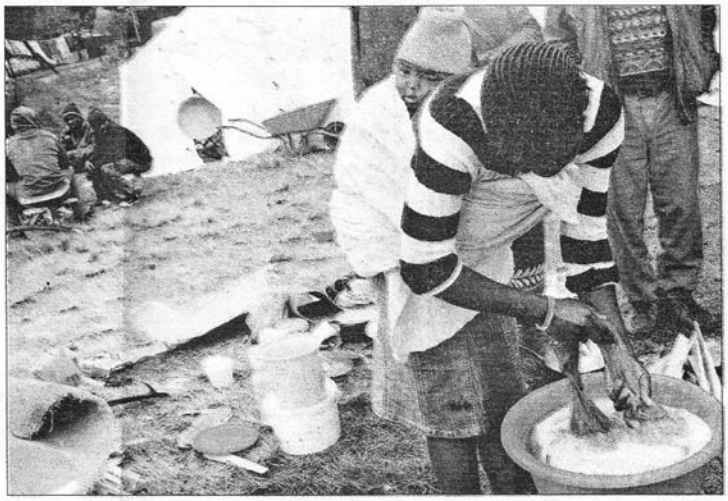
Thembi and her six siblings would go home at any time, if they had transport.

"My mother is the only person who will remain in South Africa. She works at a restaurant.

"We will have to try and find a school in Mozambique. We cannot go back there (Tsakane, in Brakpan). The people who told us to leave are the residents. They were our neighbours," she said.

Meanwhile at the Jeppe police station, Malawians were preparing to go back home. With their belongings packed, the group waited to board buses arranged by the Malawian government.

Faruk Ibrah said: "I don't have anything left here. I lost everything. These people want to kill us. I am going home, I will be safer there."



STRUGGLING: Mozambican Thembi Khoza (17) and her 10-month-old baby Gift found a temporary home at a refugee camp at the Jeppe police station in Joburg. But they were unable to secure a place in one of the tents.

PICTURE: BONILE BAM

Considering the high rate of gender-based violence in South Africa, a combination of official discrimination against and exploitation of migrants and a sense that there are no consequences to attacking migrants, put female migrants in a particularly vulnerable position. More so than South African women, who already face official indifference to allegations of rape and domestic violence and have little recourse (Vetten & Ludsin 2005). Immigration policy that has spousal visas dependent on the work visas of the spouse also may function to trap skilled migrants' spouses (largely women) in relationships that are abusive.

Women, while contributing to the South African economy (many petty traders together make a significant contribution) are apparently officially either unwanted or invisible visitors to South Africa. The proportion of women is likely to increase, as more children and women cross the border to flee war and economic disasters. The policy framework does not really address the current and future reality of female immigration and makes migrant women particularly vulnerable.

By officials

There is a lack of research about female immigrants generally and the specific difficulties they face. However, there is great scope for officials to abuse their position of power relative to immigrants. This potential for abuse exists from the initial contact with the Department of Home Affairs, at any point in contact with police and even on exiting the country.

At Home Affairs, on entering the country, the request for asylum status may be not even be filed without the paying of unofficial "fees," to officials at the Department of Home Affairs (Landau 2004, 8). This of course offers the potential of sexual exploitation of women. Migrants are unlikely to complain of fees or treatment, as they lack the official status and protection of citizenship. Refugees, in particular, are particularly vulnerable as deportation to their countries can be a death sentence. Once the application has been filed, it may be difficult to get work as few recognise the papers given temporary to those who have applied for asylum. This means more opportunities for exploitation.

Police are almost encouraged to harass immigrants, or at least there are few disincentives for the arbitrary arrest and detention of foreigners for police, and there are many benefits. Firstly, the arrest of "illegal" immigrants meet arrest targets, without putting police lives in danger, as the arrest of real criminals may. This is regardless of whether migrants have official papers, as they are easily destroyed or confiscated, or migrants are refused opportunities to produce them. Secondly, migrants who are often prevented from opening bank accounts often have large amounts of money on them, which can be paid to police who are poorly paid and have small chances of promotion (Landau 2004: 12). Thirdly, since a lack of documentation is associated with crime, by the very title of "illegal immigrants," police may appear to be doing a good job by harassing and arresting migrants. Such harassment is also made easier by the 2002 Immigration Act, which provides police with power to search and arrest foreigners, without the constraints applicable through the South African Constitution.

The employment of private security to supplement officials, both by Home Affairs, the police (sometimes in the guise of the now-infamous red ants) and in the running of repatriation centres, makes harassment of immigrants profitable too. Migrants are likely to suffer together with South Africans from forced removals, to the profit of private security, for instance. Lindela repatriation centre is another example; privatively run, it offers a fee per inmate. This has in the past led to the incarceration of South Africans (HRW 1998), and is likely to continue to, as more inmates mean more profit.

It is not clear how women particularly may fare at the hands of Home Affairs officials, private contractors or police, but considering the high levels of gender-based violence and the general treatment of immigrants, the prognosis is not good.

In media

One would expect media to reflect migrant women's invisibility in society. Media Monitoring Africa recently undertook two media monitoring projects on race and



Use of terms like "aliens" can serve to further stigmatise migrant communities.

xenophobia in the media. While the results of the studies are not finalised, it seems that media generally have done little to raise issues of particular importance to female migrants. However, preliminary coverage in mainstream newspapers shows some surprisingly positive findings on media's performance in this regard to immigration and xenophobia generally. The discussion below is based on MMA's experience monitoring during the period of the xenophobic attacks and general discussion from the results of the monitoring projects. The findings are preliminary and the time monitored in this section is more "quick and dirty" than otherwise, blurring the time of the attacks, the aftermath until the present.

"The media" has come under fire for playing a role in the xenophobic attacks of last year, and longer-term coverage of migration and xenophobia provides some support for this contention. Vigneswaren argues that the newspaper trend which cognitively separates the suffering currently experienced by non-white races during the Apartheid era and the that currently experienced by immigrants by "representing illegal migration as a purely post-Apartheid phenomenon." (Vigneswaran 2007, 12) This in turn supports the State's efforts to enforce immigration laws (Vigneswaran 2007, 6), the nature of which have already been discussed.

This is in addition to coverage that uses emotional words such as "tsumami," "flood," "pour" and similar words to refer to the movement of migrants over the South African borders. MMAP has commented on these stereotypical representations in previous research:

...there is no doubt that public attitudes have been formed by highly emotional media images that portray South Africa as "flooded" or "overrun" by undocumented migrants from the rest of Africa (MMA, previously MMP 2003: 84).

As opposed to general coverage, during the xenophobic violence, some media put unparalleled pressure on government to sort out the situation,[1] getting involved in giving information on how to help victims of the xenophobic attacks and even in some cases getting involved in distribution themselves. Media has continued



Safe, but for how long?

A desperate group of women and children were smuggled into a townhouse complex, writes **Thabiso Thakali**

Anna du Plessis* was driving home from work on Monday when a teenage girl knocked on her window, begging for help. She immediately thought of the shocking violence against foreigners seen on TV.

"I said to her 'Climb into the car', and suddenly I saw many people coming with young children," Anna explained. "I initially took them to a local place of safety, but it was full."

She hid the two women and six children and smuggled them into her townhouse complex and hid them in her garage. They are still there.

Already in the garage was Anna's piece-job gardener Bostance*, a Zimbabwean, who arrived for work on Sunday amid the mass violence. He is also still there.

In the group is Sarah*, who left Mozambique to visit her family who have lived in an Ekurhuleni informal settlement for 17 years.

Three days after her arrival, the 28-year-old mother found herself running scared for her life with her 2-year-old daughter, her sister-in-law Thando* and Thando's five children.

The group spent two nights in the veld with no food or blankets.

"I have never seen anything like this in my entire life and I would not want to return to that place ever again. But I don't know where to go because all my parents have passed away back at home," said Thando (38), whose youngest child is eight months old.

She said she fled the informal settlement with her children last Saturday after she had witnessed her neighbour being brutally killed by a mob who chopped off his hands.

"It was terrifying and I feared that my children were going to be killed because we had been told earlier that all the Shangaan-speaking people were going to be butchered," she added.

They were driven to beg for food on the main roads in Ekurhuleni until Anna drove past.

"I really felt sorry that I had to tell them to lie down in my car when we drove through the gates of my complex. I had to do something about their plight because I would also want to be helped in that situation," said Anna.

** Not their real names*



Suffer little children ... An East Rand woman has put her family's safety at risk to help others: nine people displaced by the recent Xenophobic attacks have been given refuge in a garage in a high security townhouse complex. Picture: Cara Viereckl

What you can do to help

Victims need food, toilet paper, nappies, blankets, toothbrushes, toothpaste, baby food, dummies and clothing.

Drop off points include: the Kempton Park Dispatching Centre, Spartan; Gift of the Givers, Fordsburg; the Alberton Disaster Management Offices, Alberton; the Springs Dispatching Centre, Springs; the Red Cross offices in Braamfontein; His People's Church, Parktown North; Metro Evangelical Services, Hillbrow; Women's Net, Newtown; Institute for Islamic Services, Laudium; Bedfordview Methodist Church; Rhema Ministries, Randburg; Central Methodist Church; Reiger Park Community Centre; Bosmont Methodist Church; Al Imdaad Foundation, Mayfair.

The SA Red Cross Society has set up an emergency appeal. **Donations can be made to:** Standard Bank: account number: 071760563 Branch: Constantia. Code: 025309

to cover the refugee camps and the overcrowding at the Central Methodist Church. However, much of this coverage has failed to highlight women as a particular population in migrant communities who face particular difficulties.

This is despite the surprising high use of female refugee sources in the aftermath to highlight the humanitarian situation. Media sourced migrant women as much, proportionally, than they feature in the population of migrants (Dodson 2008). This means that women migrants are represented as much as South Africans; however, whereas women constitute about 18% of foreigners, they are 51% of South Africans. This pattern of coverage seems likely to be similar coverage, which includes women, and children to elicit sympathy, and highlight a broader issue (think about images of famine regions for an example). The use of women's voices does not necessarily mean that women's particular concerns or issues were raised.

Another anomaly in the coverage of migration during the period is the seemingly unprecedented levels of analysis as opposed to event-based reporting. Event-based reporting always dominates newspapers, it being "news." Often event-based reporting does not explore context sufficiently to explain the situation well to the reader. It often assumes some previous knowledge of an area or event. Analysis and comment is restricted to a few pages (depending on the newspaper) often near the editorial. Events that are particularly prominent, or have a great deal of editorial commitment feature on these pages. The pieces are typically much longer than news stories. There was (and still is) much discussion about xenophobia and refugees. There was also a lot and a variety of coverage of how events affected children (some of which can be found in the children's section of the MMA website). This is all very good. However, generally gendered coverage has been lacking.

The lack of gendered coverage of foreign immigrants is not surprising given the lack of understanding we currently have of female immigrants generally. Such coverage could fill a gap in terms of how women in particular suffer from xenophobia, as opposed to the dominant – male - version currently visible throughout policy and society. This would raise the profile of women migrants generally and support initiatives to provide services to them. Civil society can help through putting women on the agenda when xenophobia is discussed and giving media content around migrant women.

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Writers Bio

Sandra Roberts has worked as a researcher in various corporate environments before joining the non-profit sector in 2003. She joined the Media Monitoring Project in 2005 as a project coordinator. Sandra has her cum laude in Sociology from the University of Johannesburg. Roberts is currently reading her doctorate on Mozambican migrants in Johannesburg at the University of Johannesburg with a thesis called "Social Trust in a Risky Environment: Mozambicans in Johannesburg."

Notes

[1] This is similar to what Harber notes about the coverage of *The Star* (2008, p. 173)



Media and communication for gender and development

By Valentina Baù

Abstract

This paper highlights how media and communication in developing countries can be an invaluable tool in raising awareness of and ultimately challenging gendered power structures. Participatory media allows for diverse voices, including those of women, to engage with channels of media communication to make their priorities and issues heard. However, as case studies demonstrate, when women are directly involved in such processes, a large number of complex factors need to be considered.

Key words

gender, media, development

Introduction

The evolution of gender in development has transitioned from no attention to women, to recognising women in development (WID), and finally to the importance of a power balance between genders in development (GAD approach) (Steeves 2008). In Einsield's words (2000, 176), "the question has essentially changed from 'where are the women and what are they doing?' to 'why are things as they are?"'

All development issues have gender implications. Such implications occur in both public and private spheres. Much of the writing on gender and development has not addressed communication issues directly, while those in the communication sector have often examined communication in narrower contexts: for example, how communication strategies might be used to address issues that have a direct impact on women (i.e. health), how message design processes might include women's participation, and so on (Einsiedel 1996).

Many studies in the 1980s, some focusing on communication issues, documented women's continued marginalisation and deteriorating status resulting from development. Sophisticated, persuasive communication interventions to promote contraceptive technologies, for instance, have often been insensitive and harmful to women. Anecdotes abound of unsuccessful projects whose planners failed to consult with women, and hence worsened their situation in the process (Steeves 2000).

Although it remains debatable whether the objectives of some gender and media development interventions are always attainable (Kamal 2007), this paper seeks to highlight that communication can be an invaluable tool

in raising awareness of and ultimately challenging gendered power structures. What needs to be recognised are the limitations that media can have when employed as a merely technical channel of communication. In order to utilise the media at their full potential, planning of development interventions need to effectively incorporate media. This requires an examination of gender communication patterns within a community and investigation of the issues that can be successfully tackled through media projects.

Through an overview of the debate around gender and communication, and case studies offering examples and insights into media interventions in the context of gender, this paper shows the impact that media can have on the social construction of gender.

The role of development communication in gender

Women – who are frequently the most disadvantaged gender in a society – are central to development, yet they have very little voice in the processes of development planning. The gendered nature of women's centrality varies by context and by level of consideration, and so does women's empowerment. Women often wield power at the grassroots, but lose power at higher levels of resource allocation (Steeves 2000). Development communication activity embodies models of social change that are implemented across political and cultural boundaries. Issues of gender, communication and development are grounded in global structures and processes of power, which condition access to and acquisition of economic and social resources (Wilkins 1999).

The communication approach embedded within empowerment models combines the use of appropriate media. This means using a variety of channels ranging from indigenous media, local and international media systems (Einsiedel 1996). Media provide critical sources of information and socialisation in many communities. In development communication, interventions are designed to use these technologies and processes strategically to promote defined social change (Wilkins 2000). This shows the potential of using such tools also to address gender issues, creating effective platforms for interaction.

In many development projects, however, the communication issue has been reduced to a merely technical one, such as "what messages, through which channels, for which audiences?" In the context of gender, Einsiedel (1996) suggests that an exploratory arena is that of the ethnographic accounts of communication practices that exist within a community, and particularly among women. These can either serve to inhibit conditions for change or, alternatively, to enrich efforts at information diffusion (ibid.). Thus it is important to employ an approach that looks carefully at the role that communication plays within a certain group or community and enhance its use as a means to establish dialogue, and not simply as a one-way flow of information.

Looking at communication patterns as an expression of one's cultural identity can help incorporate endogenous communication practices of women into development practice. Since individual and socio-cultural communication systems and practices are elaborated in the realm of everyday life, such practices can be applied to the indigenous modes of knowledge transfers, but also to the use of community media and the linguistic or discoursive practices underlying local communication processes (Einsiedel 1996).



Proudia Mosupi, who told her personal story of gender violence as part of Gender Links *"I" Story* project to mainstream women's voices and issues in media. *Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna*

Gender in the media

As Steeves (2000) emphasises, there are many ways to challenge gender powered relations and agendas at all levels of society. An assumption, though, is that the production of strategic communication, as in any other media industry, conveys the interests of dominant agents within a global system, becoming a site for ideology to be produced and reproduced (Wilkins 2000). This can be regarded as true in some cases. For rather than challenging inequality, or highlighting the important contributions that different groups within society make to a country's social, political and cultural life, mainstream media can often serve to reinforce disparity and render these contributions invisible. This is extremely significant for discussions of gender and development, given the role that the media play today in shaping attitudes and beliefs at all levels of society throughout the world (Hoare 2007). This is why, instead of focusing on media as isolated tools, we need to focus on processes of power that contribute to the production of communication interventions (Wilkins 2000).

One of the key assets that women have available is in fact "a purposeful use of the media to achieve broader social justice and gender justice aims, to challenge discriminatory norms and make visible solutions that lead to a change" (Sandler 2008). This author argues that the media's answerability and willingness to take corrective action depends largely on the drive that women's rights defenders provide towards the generation of high quality content for social justice, and on the power of choice that women and men together use to show a preference for media that promotes gender equality.

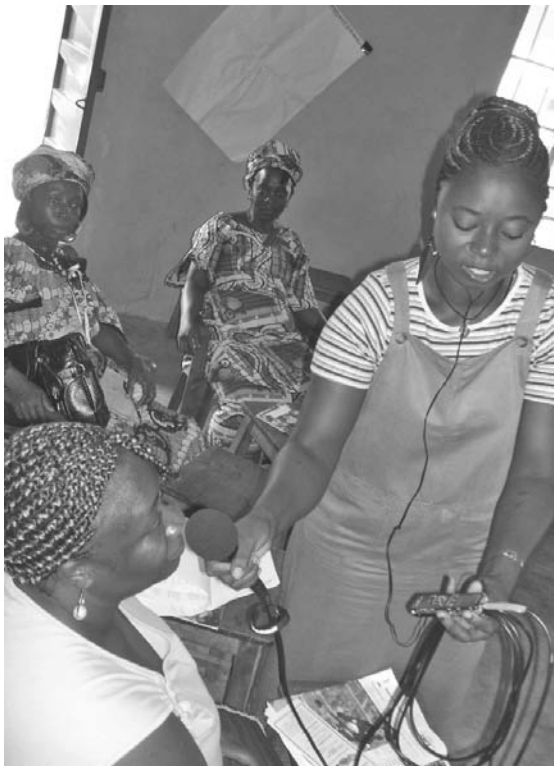
In many instances, for example, , media development organisations deliberately employ media as a vehicle for challenging unequal gender relations rather than sustaining differences. Since women are a more disadvantaged group than men are, media content promotes women's rights and social justice, and women's participation is now often a precondition for funding media projects (Kamal 2007).

When editors and journalists are successful at communicating messages on issues of importance to their communities – such as women's human rights, gender-based violence and social justice – those issues are better understood, better accepted and better represented in public policy debates contributing the overall goal of development, human rights and democracy (Abdela 2007). Abdela (2007) gives an example of how the power of the media can be a force for good by referring to the use that was made in Ethiopia of a documentary on female genital mutilation (FGM) produced by UNFPA. Local men who watched the film, many of whom had been unaware of the damage the practice had caused to women, reacted positively to suggestions that the practice of FGM should stop.

A participatory approach

The issues of communication as dialogue and the mechanisms involved in participation are crucial. They are particularly important at the micro-level of analysis within the public and private sphere, as they can help identify aspects characterising communication and decision-making within the households and how such processes are replicated within the public arena (Einsiedel 1996). A participatory model that conceptualises participation as an end itself engages in a social process by which groups with common interests jointly construct messages to improve their situation or change unjust social structures. In so doing, communication enables people to recognise their oppressive circumstances and act collectively to transform their situation. NGOs and local community organisations tend to support these approaches in attempts to contest dominant frames and structures (Wilkins 2000).

With reference to a participatory video exercise with *campesinos* in Colombia, Rodriguez (2001) explains how, through the implementation of projects involving participatory media, dramatically pre-established cultural codes and traditional power relations can be disrupted. Through this particular project, men and women who had only seen themselves as audiences had to reconstruct their self-perception and social context, as they became message producers and senders. Their point of view shifted from one of passive receivers with little control, to that of messengers



Participatory radio programmes with rural women in Sierra Leone
Photo: Daniel Walter

responsible for seeking and filtering information (ibid.).

Women, accustomed to having men "guiding" them and considering this natural, had to reframe their whole outlook on gender relations as they directed male actors for their own alternative soap operas. As Rodriguez (2001, 3) explains, "in some cases, where a woman's subordination to men is one of the main sources of her identity, revising one's convictions about gender relationships implies a complete reformulation of one's entire worldview." This shows how the production of media content through participatory processes allows for a reconsideration of gendered power structures.

Yet, although these interventions may seem valuable as a potential form of resistance, there are a number of concerns with their implementation. In their primary attempt to address local needs, some approaches may result in perpetuating in-egalitarian power structures within communities. This is particularly reflected across gender. Moreover, unless accompanied by concomitant changes in structural conditions, participation may not be sufficient to foster substantive social change (Rodriguez 2001). As Hoare (2007) highlights, in reality, the discrimination and lack of influence that women experience – particularly, but not only, in state-controlled and corporate media - are often reproduced in community media projects.

In her paper *Development On-air*, Kamal (2007) discusses a case study that clearly exemplifies this problem. In order to promote strong reporting on gender issues and ensure women's control over some editorial processes and broadcasts during the reconstruction and peace-building process in Afghanistan, between 2002 and 2006 the Canadian NGO IMPACS trained several female journalists and technicians and supported the launch of a women's radio station to be run and managed by women. In spite of the initial enthusiasm, however, it became clear that the women themselves had soon to resort to a rigid process of self-censorship for the station programming: they started playing minimal music and did not discuss controversial topics. This was to avoid criticism from local male political and religious leaders – who women believed to be monitoring the radio station (Kamal 2007).

While the station's journalists (all female) generally referred to women as their only audience during production decisions, it increasingly appeared that they were silently aware of the larger community within reach of their airwaves. Their material had to be filtered to conform to the expectations of their urban, educated, usually male, critics, and the intended final audience was therefore confounded with local power interests and conservatives mullahs. Hence, while designated for 'women audiences', the programming that resulted was often in reality developed with a much more complex and contradictory group of listeners in mind, as well as reflecting their priorities and interests (Kamal 2007).

This case study shows that although the media have a vast power to promote gender and justice, and that around the world the distortion by media of women's voice and women's lives in increasingly being recognised, the response is still been inadequate (Sandler 2008).

Conclusion

As a strategic intervention, development communication works with communication technologies and processes to promote social change, engaging in many substantive fields. Whether explicit or implicit, frameworks of development communication represent a source of power in their conceptualisation of the social change process and draw attention to the ability of communication processes and technologies to facilitate the strategic interests of marginal communities (Wilkins 2000).

By introducing the debate around the role that the media can play in the context of gender, this paper has reviewed diverging views and case studies to illustrate the different impacts that communication can have when applied to the gender development field. Overall, along with other development strategies, development communication efforts have often failed to improve the conditions of women on a global scale. This can be because, as a group marginalised from global, national and community power structures, women constitute a target more often than a participant in the production of development communication (Wilkins 1999).

Yet, as the case studies demonstrate, even when women are directly involved in development processes through interventions that employ communication as their primary tool, a large number of factors needs to be considered. If the media are to be just a technical means of communication, it is unlikely that social change will ever be achieved. However, if project planning carefully examines and implants cultural and structural components of a community – also through participatory processes - the media can have a great potential for success.

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Writers Bio

Awarded with a BA (Hons) and a MA focusing on communication theory and media practice, Valentina has seven years experience in the communication sector. Both academically and professionally, she has nurtured her interest for the media from a public relations and campaigning perspective first, to a development-focused use of communication channels in more recent years. She lived for several months in Sub-Saharan Africa, where she has contributed to the work of the international development department of the Italian Embassy in Mozambique on a theatre for development project for HIV/AIDS prevention. She currently works for Panos London, an organisation working on media development and communication for development programmes. She is also completing a part-time MSc in Communication for Innovation and Development at the University of Reading in the UK.

Gender Checklists



Sakina Mohamed, left, Eduardo Namburete, right, panelists at the Great Debate.
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Gender Aware Leadership Checklist

With elections taking place in at least ten Southern African countries over the next two years, and as part of its periodic seminar series, the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC) convened gender and leadership debates from February to April 2009. These included:

- Debates on the motion: "Men have failed to show visionary leadership in SADC: It is time for women to take over because they have better leadership qualities" during two gender and local government strategy workshops in Botswana and Zambia in February.
- A debate on the motion, "Is the personal political?" convened by the GMDC, Gender Links, Constitution Hill, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Critical Thinking Forum of the Mail and Guardian Newspaper to commemorate International Women's Day on 8 March 2009. The question was posed to all the major political parties contesting the 2009 South African elections and sparked a spirited debate on sex and politics.
- A debate on the motion "Quotas for women in politics: Malaise or progress for the women's movement?" held during a meeting of the Southern African Protocol Alliance on 19 March with a panel of politicians and academics for and against.
- A debate on the motion: "Does polygamy have a place in Africa?" hosted by the international arm of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) with one man and one woman for and a man and women against the question. The live audience included citizens of five Southern African countries, and several others phoned in from across Africa.

Using the example of Barack Obama participants were reminded that gender awareleadership is not only about women.

Obama: Towards a model of gender aware leadership?

Much has been made of US President Barack Obama's absent Kenyan father. Yet as he points out in his autobiography, "*Dreams from My Father,*" he owes the "best" in him to his late American mother and grandmother, as well as the women who now surround him: his wife Michelle and daughters Malia and Sasha.

While no leader is perfect, Obama has emerged as the symbol of hope in a world wallowing in political and economic despair. He is also a good example of the fact that male leaders can be as gender aware, if not more so, than some women leaders.

In his own life, Obama constantly refers to his wife as his best friend and chief confidante. The night before his inauguration he took time to write a letter to his daughters about why he had decided to run for the highest office in the land despite the personal costs and to plead for their understanding.

Obama had a higher rating among women voters than Hilary Clinton, and certainly a far more progressive agenda than the Republican Vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin. Although Obama has not succeeded in achieving gender parity in his cabinet, he has appointed powerful women, including Clinton, to key posts. Among his first acts as president was to repeal laws that permitted discriminatory employment practices against women, as well as those that curtailed women's reproductive rights.

Although it is early days, it's hard to imagine Obama being involved in or seeking to cover up sordid sex scandals in his personal life which he conducts with integrity. So far, Obama gets a thumbs up for showing us that good governance begins at home.



The scorecard that follows has emerged from a synthesis of the qualities of good leadership in the comments made by the hundreds of participants in this process. *Make this a living resource. Use it to score your leaders, at international, regional, national, local and community level: even in your work place! Forward with gender aware leadership! Forward with good leadership!*

Gender Aware Score Card

Please rank your leader on each of the following qualities where 1= very poor and 5= excellent.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Vision Good leaders take you to a place where you have never been. They are able to close their eyes and see way beyond time and place and then work towards achieving that dream. They are not bound by culture, tradition, religion, or "the way things are." They are interested in the way things could be. Only visionary leaders can, for example, see in their minds eye a society in which women and men are equal in every respect. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Empathy Empathy goes beyond sympathy in that an empathetic person identifies with the problems or situations of people and tries to understand their thoughts and condition, even if they are different to him or her. For example, a male leader will never have an unwanted pregnancy, but can still be empathetic to those who argue for choice of termination of pregnancy by putting himself in the shoes of a woman who finds that she is carrying a baby she does not want or will not be able to care for. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
3. The ability to inspire To inspire is to call on the higher being and motivate people to act in a certain way. The best leaders are inspirational. They have high levels of emotional intelligence. They know how to win people; get people on board; earn trust; respect and loyalty. To this end, good leaders always consult women and men, boys and girls, to ensure that their ideas have a high level of buy in. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Personal integrity Personal integrity is living in accord with the highest state of consciousness. It is about doing the right thing even when nobody is watching. The way a leader conducts his or her private life is an important indicator of personal integrity. For example, a male leader who beats his wife cannot claim to believe in gender equality, just as a corrupt woman leader cannot stand for the rights of the poor. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Humility Good leaders readily acknowledge that they did not climb the ladder on their own but owe their success to others, especially the often invisible forces in their lives, like their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. They celebrate their roots, however modest. In so doing, they connect easily with "ordinary" people, especially those who are most often marginalised in the corridors of power, like poor, black, rural, disabled women. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
6. Principles While there may be different interpretations of morality, every society has accepted standards of what is right and what is wrong. Good leaders have principles and values that they expound and live by. For example, leaders who believe in gender equality appoint equal numbers of women and men to work with them and treat them equally. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Respecting and promoting human rights for all Good leaders strive to ensure a society in which both women and men enjoy their human rights. They are consistent in their understanding that rights are indivisible. They react equally strongly and decisively to any form of discrimination, whether is be based on race, sex, ethnicity, disability, foreignness or any other form of otherness. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Ensuring the empowerment of women Good leaders understand that empowering women is an imperative that cuts across all forms of discrimination. As such, a good leader will allocate appropriate funds to programmes that are aimed at uplifting the status of women in society. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Leading by example A good leader is worthy of imitation; respects the rights of women and men of all hues and classes; is not afraid of manual labour; conducts his or her life in an exemplary way; and would never propose a policy or a rule that he or she would not be willing to live by. For instance if a leader who has multiple concurrent relationships is not likely to be able to lead a campaign against HIV and AIDS. How do you rate your leader against this quality	1	2	3	4	5
10. Confidence Being confident in oneself is having high self esteem- accepting your body, and your personality, and loving them. It is not thinking you are better than other people but being comfortable in your own skin. People who have high self esteem see the best in the women and men around them. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Diplomacy Diplomacy has been defined as the "art of telling someone to go to hell in such a way that they enjoy the ride." A good leader must be able to take a position and argue his or her case with the courage of conviction, but win other people over to his or her side in the process. Issues of gender are often met with resistance. A good leader must be able to argue these issues convincingly, without alienating those around them. This should not be mistaken for being all things to all people. Arguments must be consistent and rooted in principle. Good leaders are able to "agree to disagree." How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
12. Critical thinking To be critical means purposeful and reflective judgment about what to believe or what to do in response to observations, experience and arguments. Good leaders approach issues with an open mind. For example, a woman leader should not believe that all men are bad just as male leaders should not believe that all women are good. They should approach every individual and situation with an open and objective mind. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Patriotism While patriotism should never be blinding, it is a powerful anchor for good leadership. Being patriotic does not mean supporting all that is happening in a country. Indeed being patriotic may mean fighting the forces of patriarchy and or of undemocratic practices. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
14. Honesty Honesty means giving the actual and real facts; being truthful. Honesty comes with high levels of openness. By speaking the truth, one creates trust in minds of others. Good leaders should speak truth to power, even if this costs them their political careers. For example, a good leader should be willing to face up to the causes and consequences of HIV and AIDS, however poorly the government is addressing this pandemic. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
15. Transparency To be transparent means to be honest and easily understood. It also means the duty to account to those with a legitimate interest, for instance the electorate who are affected by your leadership. Being transparent implies that a leader is open about his or her take on women's empowerment in society. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
16. Accountability Accountability is the obligation to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in light of agreed expectations. While responsibility is the obligation to act; accountability is the obligation to answer for an action. Good leaders for instance should be answerable if by 2015 we do not have 50% representation of women in cabinet, parliament and local government. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
17. Responsiveness Responsive leadership means taking responsibility for quality outcomes and being responsive to the needs of women and men. Such a leader shows profound awareness of existing problems and anticipates problems that are still emerging. To this end, a good leader should be responsive to the needs of women who are still oppressed and can barely access economic resources to bail them out of poverty. A good leader gives women the hope that their situation is not permanent. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
18. Innovativeness Innovative leadership is about finding new ways of doing things and being open to new ideas. When there is fatigue around issues of gender equality, a good leader should find and promote new ways of attaining this ideal. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
19. Pragmatism A pragmatic person is one who is sensible and is guided by experience and observation rather than theory; who believes that "experience is the best teacher." A pragmatic leader would not, for example, pass a law decreeing that there should be an equal number of women chiefs, knowing that this would cause a rebellion, but rather look at where and how female chieftaincies have succeeded, and how this can be replicated. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
20. Responsibility Being responsible means being answerable for an act performed or for its consequences whether good or bad; intended or unintended. A good leader owns up to making mistakes and is willing to bear the consequences, even if this means losing his or her job. One of the most critical tests of leadership is knowing when to step down or step aside because even though you have tried your best, your presence (for whatever reason) is causing more harm than good. Good leaders are those who are able to go forward by every now and again stepping back; reflecting and even stepping down when the situation requires. How do you rate your leader against this quality?	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL					

Please add up your total score out of 100:

TOTAL = %

Inter Press Service (IPS) Guidelines for Coverage

Language

1. Does the story contain language that promotes sexism, gender bias or discrimination, or gender stereotypes.
2. Avoid language that promotes "ageism:" "…the 60-year-old woman candidate…" etc. There may well be stories where age has to be mentioned and analysed – an item on a by-election where all candidates are octogenarians, in defiance of national trends, for instance – but as a general rule writers need to be cautious about age.
3. Are there any specific adjectives used to describe the character or physical appearance of women politicians or candidates that convey bias?
4. Is the physical description of a female politician or candidate relevant to the story? Would you apply the use of physical description equally to men and women politicians or candidates.
5. Is the language used inclusive of women and men?

Do…

✓ Check carefully before submitting stories to ensure that no language, phrases or adjectives that perpetuate sexism and gender bias have been used.

✓ Use inclusive terms such as "women and men", "man and woman" – and pronouns such as "they" and "them" – to avoid the use of generic "he" and "man" for all people.

✓ Avoid words that exclude women, such as "chairman", "mankind", "manpower", "man-made", "man-to-man" and "gentleman's agreement", among others – or words that exclude men such as "housewife", among others.

✓ When using gender neutral terms such as "farmers", "traders", "entrepreneurs", "children", "detainees", "parents", "peasants", "professionals", the "poor" and "workers", among others, be sure to use sex disaggregated data in the story to show where woman are located in these groupings.

✓ Use the 'IPS Gender and Development Glossary' (available in English and French) and other sources on sexist language to avoid perpetuating discrimination and stereotypes in reporting on women in politics.

Don't…

✗ Describe women's physical appearance or the way they are dressed unless this is central to the feature. If you feel the need to describe what a female candidate is wearing, ensure that you do so in a way which does not discriminate against her (do not mention a woman's appearance while failing to describe that of the men she is competing with, for instance – and do not write about which woman is considered the "best dressed" of various female candidates, a categorisation not generally applied to men). In addition, guard against descriptions that simply endorse images which candidates are trying to put forward about themselves (a male candidate trying to appear "a son of the soil" through dressing casually, for example). Your job is to analyse campaign strategies – not further them.

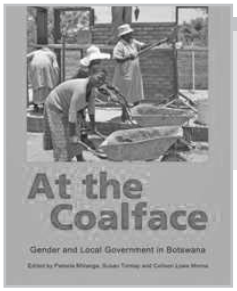
✗ Use "he" or "man" as generic terms for all people.

✗ Use words that exclude women, such as "chairman", including the phrase "male domain" unless used in italics or quotes as stated by a source, among others.

✗ Use words that exclude men.

✗ Use the language that demonises or trivialises women politicians.

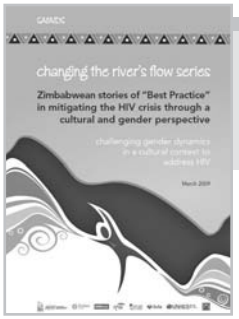
✗ Use language or phrases to describe women according to their marital or family status, while the same is not done to describe or label male politicians.



At the Coalface - Gender and Local Government in Botswana
By Pamela Mhlanga, Susan Tolmay and Colleen Lowe Morna

This report is part of the second phase of the research project that led to the Gender Links (GL) publication: At the Coalface: Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa. The aim of the second phase is to extend the research on gender and local government to all of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. The evidence gathered in this research shows that even in their small numbers women in Botswana bring different perspectives and interests to local governance, and demonstrate a high level of commitment.

Price: R100.00
To order: knowledge@genderlinks.org.za or phone +27 (0) 11 622 2877



Changing the Rivers Flow Series: Challenging Gender Dynamics in a Cultural Context to Address HIV

SAfAIDS in partnership with Seke Rural implemented a pilot project in Zimbabwe that used Community Dialogues to address harmful cultural practices. Positive results where noted and documented. From this project, SAfAIDS developed series of training materials and tools to support programmers, that are interested in advancing their work with communities on addressing culture. These materials have been packaged under the theme: *Changing the River's Flow Series - A Multi-Purpose Package*.

Download: http://www.safaids.net/?q=node/885



The Extraordinary Editor: A Handbook for South African Media Leaders
Co-edited by Guy Berger and Elizabeth Barratt

Published by the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF), the book is a series of articles by the country's leading journalists and media academics aimed at giving editors some ideas on how to effectively manage complex newsroom challenges whilst producing good journalism. It covers managing yourself, people, money, content, publics ... and change.

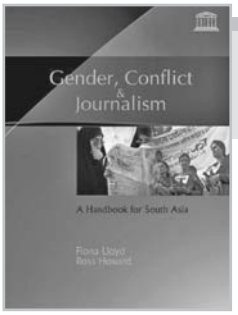
Download:
from http://www.sanef.org.za/



Multiple and Concurrent Sexual Partners: What's Culture Got to do With It? A Handbook for Journalists

The handbook contains findings of research conducted in Southern Africa by Soul City that confirmed that certain cultural practices, social norms, and beliefs promote and even institutionalise Multiple and Concurrent Sexual Partners (MCP) as socially acceptable and widely practised. The handbook discusses AIDS, MCP and culture, and reporting on HIV/AIDS and culture.

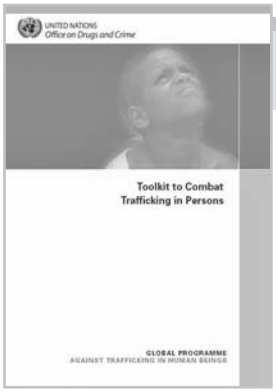
Download: http://www.onelovesouthernafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/mcp_handbook_for_journalists.pdf



Gender, Conflict & Journalism: a handbook for South Asia
By Fiona Lloyd and Ross Howard

This handbook was made by journalists, for journalists - especially those who recently entered the profession, and those who have experienced it enough to seek change. The book examines the influence of gender and conflict on professional journalism, and vice versa. It provides a compilation of emerging ideas, strategies and professional skills that journalists can wield against the entrenched traditions and new threats that constrain free expression and the achievement of gender equality and conflict resolution.

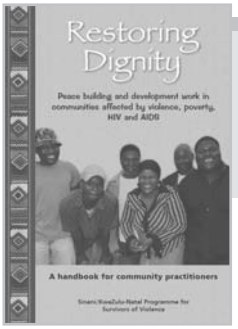
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Online Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Created by the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC)'s Global Programme Against Trafficking in Persons, this toolkit seeks to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and information to prevent and combat trafficking, protect and assist its victims and promote international cooperation. The Toolkit provides legislative explanations, discussion of issues, extracts of principles, guidelines, recommendations, directives, checklists, forms, etc. The Toolkit also showcases promising practices as illustrated by anti-trafficking interventions from around the world.

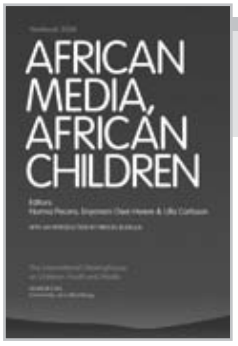
Download: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html



Restoring Dignity: Peace Building and Development Work in Communities Affected by Violence, Poverty, HIV and AIDS
By Usche Merk

This 103-page handbook published by Sinani/ KwaZulu-Natal Programme for Survivors of Violence discusses peace building and development work in communities affected by violence, poverty, and HIV and AIDS. Designed to be used by community practitioners, the handbook contains 4 parts that each provide information on different aspects of peace building and development.

Download:
http://www.survivors.org.za/



African Media, African Children
Norma Pecora, Enyonam Osei-Hwere, and Ulla Carlsson (eds)

This 10th Yearbook of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media contains essays reflecting a wide-range of issues related to children's media culture in Africa. For example, several address the role of entertainment television in Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, and Zambia and in the lives of Muslim children. Other essays introduce the reader to children-centered media from Ghana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, and the programmes of PLAN-International.

Price: €25 To order: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, University of Gothenburg clearinghouse@nordicom.gu.se

Concept and Editorial guidelines
The Gender and Media Diversity Journal (GMDJ)

The Gender and Media Diversity Journal is the biennial journal of the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC). The journal is intellectual but not academic. It provides up-to-date and cutting edge information on media diversity in Southern Africa and the space for the dissemination of research findings and projects; case studies; campaigns, policy developments; and opinion and debate on media practice in the region.Each journal focuses on a different thematic areas identified in consultation with the GMDC advisory group. Inaugural issues (before the establishment of the GMDC) focused on the Global Gender Media Monitoring Project and the second on the Gender and Media Summit held in September 2006 under the banner Media Diversity: Good For Business, Good for Democracy. Other issues have looked at tabloidisation of the media, media activism, and case studies based on the 2008 GEM Summit, under the theme - Critical Citizens, responsive media.

Why?

Despite its mission of "giving voice to the voiceless," the media worldwide is heavily biased towards covering the views of those in power, an elite group often defined according to race, ethnicity, class and gender. In Southern Africa, where democracy is a relatively new and fragile phenomenon, the media are still largely state dominated. The concept of a public media is weak. Albeit to different degrees, private and community media face political, organisational and financial challenges. Overall, whether in the public or private sphere, media ownership is concentrated in a few hands. The voices of those most affected by policies and unequal power relations in society are seldom heard even though they constitute the majority of news consumer population. Failure to understand and respond to audiences in all their diversity is also bad for business.

The journal aims to:

- Develop and share a body of knowledge on media diversity in Southern Africa.
- Promote more probing, analytical and contextual journalism.
- Share best practices on how to achieve greater diversity in media content, ownership and market share.
- Contribute to greater media literacy and responsiveness among ordinary citizens - women and men – in Southern Africa.

Each journal will contain:

- Introduction – editorial and news briefs
- Thematic focus – insights from experts in the regional and around the world.
- Media watch - reviews and reports of programmes, projects, research, policy and development related to gender and diversity in the media.
- Opinion and letters.

The Southern Africa Media Diversity Journal targets media workers and owners, policy-makers, researchers, lecturers, student journalists, activists and those individuals and organisations working towards media diversity in the region. Contributions are invited and solicited from groups and individuals such as these and commissioned by the editor.

Next issue: With the upcoming World Cup 2010 expected to have a major impact on the region as a whole, the next issue of the GMDJ will focus on gender, sports (particularly the World Cup) and media.

How to contribute

For further information and to request full contributors' guidelines please contact:
Gender Links
editor@genderlinks.org.za
Tel: + 27 11 622 2877

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