



Ncane Maziya - Country consultant



Nosisa Nkwanyana - Accounts and admin intern

## 15 years of service

- Competed "At the Coalface" Research on Women's Participation and Representation in Leadership and Political decision making in 2008.
- Registered an office in 2012.
- Centres of Excellence Programme grows to 24 active councils driving the gender agenda.
- Successfully held 3 national summits.
- Conducted and completed the Entrepreneurship programme in 10 councils in the three provinces with 214 women GBV survivors.
- Rolled out the Media COE programme in six media houses.
- Swaziland has successfully completed and launched 3 national barometers.
- **Key partners:** Local Government Association of Swaziland (SWALGA); Deputy Prime Minister Gender and Family Issues Affairs Unit (GFIU); Ministry of Tinkhundla Development and Administration; Ministry of Housing Urban and Development; Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/ AIDS in Africa (AMICAALL); Swaziland Sexual Reproductive and Human Rights; National Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations (CANGO); the Deputy Prime Minister's (DPM) office and the Gender and Family Affairs Issues Department.

Gender Links Swaziland registered on 26 July 2012. Due to funding challenges the office had to downscale operations in 2015, mainly focusing on successfully completing ongoing projects that also ended in 2015. The full time country manager worked on a consultancy basis. However through hard work and commitment the country consultant, with support from two interns, signed an MOU with The Tinkhundla Ministry that paved the way for cascading GL's work at village and community levels. The Swaziland office also cascaded the COE process to 12 more Tinkhundlas (village councils) in addition to the 12 district councils totalling 24, the number of committed councils in the COE programme. The COE process is clear evidence of good partnerships and excellent synergies with partners namely SWALGA, CANGO, Ministry of Housing Urban and Development, the DPM's office and the Gender and Family Affairs Issues Department.

## Key achievements

**Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government:** GL Swaziland inducted and orientated 30 members and new councillors into the COE process. The office completed all COE stages in the 12 original urban COE's, backstopping this work through additional programming, support, monitoring and evaluation. GL cascaded the COE process to a further 12 rural Councils (bringing the total to 24, 36% of the councils in Swaziland) through training of 67 gender officers and supporting them in rolling out the COE's. 5 12 councils have adopted action plans and one (Mbabane) council has adopted a gender policy shared as good practice on gender responsive governance at the national Gender Protocol@work summit in March 2013. These cover a population of 760,000; approximately quarter of the population of Swaziland. The COEs include the capital city, Mbabane and all the 4 regions of the country.

**Ending violence, empowering women:** GL Swaziland successfully completed the pilot entrepreneurship and life skills programme with 214 women in 10 selected councils. The project ran in Hlatsi, Lavumisa, Mankanyane, Manzini, Mbabane, Ngwenya, Nhlanagano, Pigg's Peak, and Siteki. Key results from the pilot show that 81% of the participants in the programme completed a business plan. With 72% followed through on the plan whilst 67% of these grew their businesses, 65% added new products and 50% found new markets. 49% started a business and 27% opened a bank account. The average monthly increase in income per for the Swaziland participants rose from R206 to R350. Overall, 76% indicated a positive change in their financial status after the programme.

One of the most important factors in the determination of increased personal agency is the changes in perceptions of gender equality. Gender attitudes are measured by the Gender Progress Score (GPS); at 70% the participants GPS score in Swaziland is higher than the community GPS score (64%) after the project. This shows a higher level of gender awareness on the part of participants, but the need for more work within some councils. In Swaziland 86% of the women indicated that they had experienced less or much less violence since doing the programme.

The Entrepreneurship project as anchored within local councils through the COE process. This approach was important in creating an enabling environment for emerging entrepreneurs to start and grow sustainable businesses, become self-reliant, confident and improve their agency to deal with GBV in their lives and sphere of influence.

**The Swaziland SADC Gender Protocol Summit:** The 2015 Protocol@Work National Summit in Swaziland provided

another platform for showcasing best practices by entrants in five thematic areas covering Alliance, local government and media categories. There were 81 participants, 59 presentations from the 13 different categories; 13 winners and 10 runner-ups.

#### Protocol@Work Summit facts

- **81** participants - **23** males and **51** females. The participants included representatives from local government, different NGOs, CONGO, SWALGA and SA embassy representatives.
- 6 councils represented.
- 12 categories including Emerging Entrepreneurs (Start-up and Existing), FBOs, Economic Justice and Education, Climate Change, Governance, SRHR, GBV, Leadership, Media COEs, Local Government COE.
- **12** winners - **10** female (80%) and **2** males (20%).
- **2** media COEs entered.

**Sixteen Days of Activism:** Five Town councils (Hlatikhulu Lavumisa, Nhlanguano, Ngwenya and Hlati Town Councils) actively collaborated with Gender Links in conducting 16 Days Campaigns in 2015. Participants in workshops and marches included GBV survivors, caregivers working with the abused people, councillors, police in the Crime Prevention and Domestic Violence Unit and staff members from councils. The main purpose of the workshops was to review GBV action plans and facilitate dialogue on the 2015 Sixteen Days of Activism Campaign guided by the themes, “Peace Begins at Home” and “Promoting education for all”.

**Centres of Excellence for Gender in the Media:** GL worked collaboratively with the Media COE consultant in rolling out the COE work in Swaziland. The office assisted in organising training workshops and field trips especially during the 16 Days of Activism collaborative activities between the Governance and Media programmes.

#### Key challenges

- Delays with the signing of the MOU with the office of the Deputy Prime Minister caused further delays to rolling out the COE work with the Tinkhundlas.
- Strained financial support for the COE work and in upscaling country operations.
- Transferring of key people in the COE councils to other councils. GL Swaziland lost influential and committed GFPs who were key mobilisers for the effective roll out of the COE work. In councils such as Piggs Peak, GL Swaziland faced complications for strengthening achievements made within the council over years.

#### Lessons learned

- GL Swaziland learned a lot about working with governments through the smart political footwork to get buy-in from Tinkundlas Ministry. Though the MOU was final signed by the DPM's office, it was later taken to Cabinet for approval, resulting in further delays. The country

consultant had to leverage of the cordial relationship and good partnership with the Director from the Deputy Prime Ministers office under the Gender and Family Affairs Department to write a letter of support to the Tinkhundla so that the process can continue.

- It is essential to conduct a training of trainer's (ToT) workshop with new GFPs and GCs so that they are fully equipped with the knowledge and facilitation skills sets to advance the gender agenda within their councils and communities.
- Centrally and actively involve councils in all programme work including projects aimed at promoting gender equality, women's rights, empowering women and ending violence community by community.

#### Key priorities for 2016

- Increase fundraising efforts for GL programme activities.
- Strengthen content, approach, achievements and backstop current COEs.
- Strengthen content and achievements on the Entrepreneurship and Life Skills Programme in 2016 for further roll out in 2017 onwards.
- Focus on young people in the next phase of cascading the programme a bid to “Stop Violence Before it Starts” with younger generations.
- Strengthen current partnerships and increase collaboration especial with SWALGA, AMICAALL and other CSOs focused on cross cutting thematic areas such as HIV and AIDS, Climate Change, GBV, SRHR and LGBTI.
- Build strong partnership with the Swaziland Women Parliamentary Caucus (SWPC) to strategise on objectives focused on electoral systems reform and having quotas at local and national government levels. Start fundraising and preparing for the 2018 elections.
- Sensitise the chiefs and then their communities on gender, the COE project, ending GBV and promoting women's empowerment in the four regions of Swaziland.
- Maintain, increase and strengthen good relationships with GL partners in Swaziland.



Entrepreneurship training in Lavumisa for phase three.

Photo: Thando Dlamini