



## **Gender and the South African Local Government Elections 2016 Briefing Note 1 –Gender & Political Party Manifestos**

### **1. Synopsis**

This is the first in a series of briefing notes on gender and the upcoming local government elections in South Africa. This briefing note concerns how well gender considerations are reflected in political party manifestos. Future briefing notes will look at where women are in political party lists, and on gender in the campaign, the conduct of the poll and the outcome of the elections.

GL will, during August 2016 (as part of its Women's Month activities) publish the full Gender Audit of the South Africa 2016 Elections. GL is working closely with other partners in this monitoring. They include the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Women's Commission; the Commission for Gender Equality; South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) and Media Monitoring Africa (MMA).

What our analysis reveals is that while a few specific measures are identified to address women's situation in relation to access to rights and services, in the main, parties fail to mainstream gender their manifestos. In contrast, parties pay far greater attention to the youth as a category, with clearly identified measures to ensure their participation in the economy, in decision-making and development opportunities. The gendered dimensions of youth, ie the differences in the experiences of young women and men, are not explored in any of the party manifestos.

### **2. Context**

2016 marks 60 years since the 9 August 1956 women's march on the apartheid government's discriminatory policies, and 22 years of democracy in South Africa. For the 2016 local government election, Gender Links foregrounds issues of gender equality, assessing both the extent to which women are represented in party candidate lists, and whether issues of gender equality are taken up in party manifestos.

It might be asked why gender considerations should be an issue in these elections, and indeed remain a focus for debate at this stage of our democracy. The realisation, globally, is that for a country to reach its full potential, it needs to harness and nurture ALL its talent, and the potential of its working population. In a context where women constitute 51% of the population, and half of a country's potential talent base, a nation's competitiveness depends on how it educates and utilises its women.

The World Bank notes that there can be no growth in the absence of equity, and that there is a direct correlation between gender equality and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country. Globally, estimates place women's contribution to a country's GDP at 35-45%, without factoring in the unpaid care work that women bear in addition. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap analysis report for 2013 reveals that while progress has been made in addressing gender gaps in education (now at 93%) and health (96%), not enough measures have been put in place to address women's economic participation (60%)

and political empowerment (21%). South Africa is ranked 17 out of 136 countries in this study, having closed the gender gap by 75%. Our gender gap for women's economic participation stands at 65%, and that for women's political participation at 39%.

Studies indicate that women are far more vulnerable to and deeply affected by poverty, unemployment and inequality, as a result of patriarchy which underpins women's subordination (Stats SA, 2012; Status of Women in the South African Economy, 2015). Poverty levels are higher for women than men, and poor women are further below the poverty line than men, compounded by race, class and geographic location. We see institutionalised challenges in women's access to land and land ownership, with insufficient data available and measures to accelerate women's access to land, credit, business finance, technology, extension services and markets. Women-headed households have less access than men to public and private assets, such as property ownership, water-born sewage, electricity for cooking, and water.

The levels of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence against women and girl children in particular, is a critical issue hindering women's advancement and development. In this sector, we see significant under-reporting of GBV, lack of funding for interventions, and duplication and inadequate coordination among stakeholders tasked with addressing prevention and response mechanisms. Overall, we see a lack of monitoring and evaluation of GBV interventions, inadequate access to justice and services for survivors of GBV, and impunity of offenders. The criminal justice system fails women due to inadequate training for police and justice officials, and secondary victimization by the police and in the courts. Violence against women is exacerbated by the culture of silence surrounding this phenomenon, and by women's economic dependency on their abusers.

In addition, there are certain cultural and religious practices that undermine equality, violate constitutional rights and cause harm to women and girls. These include issues relating to forced and early child marriage, associated practices of abduction of girls for marriage (ukuthwala), virginity inspection (ukuhlolwa), allegations of witchcraft and assaults and killings of elderly women, and discriminatory practices associated with widowhood, across diverse cultures. Many religious denominations interpret their religious scripts in a patriarchal way and undermine women's equality. There is a general neglect of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) issues, rural women, women with disabilities and sex workers, as well as violence against these communities. While we have seen gains in terms of girls' access to education, with South Africa reaching parity in enrolment figures and attendance for girls and boys in primary education, there is concern at the drop-out rate of girls over the age of 15, influenced by teenage pregnancy and GBV at schools.

In the health sector, women face economic, domestic, cultural and legal barriers to health care and sexual and reproductive health rights and services. It is estimated that 56% of people living in rural areas worldwide do not have access to essential healthcare services, and South Africa is no exception to this trend. Men's risk taking behaviour contributes to women's ill health, particularly in relation to their HIV infection rates. HIV/AIDS prevalence among the youth aged between 15 and 24 indicates this is higher for females (8.1%) than for males (4.0%). Particular vulnerabilities of women with disabilities and those living with HIV and AIDS, need to be addressed, with instances such as forced sterilisation of HIV positive women and women with disabilities indicative of prejudice and discrimination at the hands of health care workers.

In 2008, South Africa joined SADC Heads of State in adopting the Gender and Development Protocol, committing to time-bound targets to spearheading women's development and attainment of socio-economic rights, including the attainment of 50% women's representation in all leadership positions. In 2015, South Africa joined the world community in adopting the Sustainable Development Goals, taking up a new agenda for 2030, including goal 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

This analysis considers measures put in place by political parties to ensure women's equal access to services, opportunities and rights guaranteed by our Constitution.

### **3. Party commitments to gender equality: Manifestos**

The above analysis indicates that some parties have identified specific measures which would benefit women, and most have proposed measures from which women, as community stakeholders, would benefit. Nonetheless, parties cannot be said to be particularly gender-aware, in that they have not mainstreamed gender throughout their manifestos, by clearly indicating measures that would address the systemic challenges and barriers women experience in access to rights and services, outlined earlier in this brief. Gender mainstreaming requires an analysis of such structural challenges and the implementation of specific measures to ensure equal access to rights and services.

By comparison, most of the parties have revealed an understanding of particular challenges experienced by the youth as a sector, and have detailed specific interventions in response. These include measures designed to ensure young people's participation in the economy and in municipal decision-making processes, in accessing training and entrepreneurial opportunities, and in addressing social challenges experience by the youth. As with parties' manifesto commitments on other issues, measures for the youth are not gender mainstreamed, in that they do not stipulate how challenges experienced by young women are likely to be overcome to ensure equal access.

<b>Political party</b>	<b>Specific measures for women</b>	<b>Other measures which would benefit women (but no gender analysis)</b>	<b>Measures for youth</b>
<b>ANC</b>	<p>An increase in provision of electricity and water to households reduces the burden on rural women in gathering these resources, but the manifesto does not address the access challenges to these commodities experienced by women-headed households. An increase in primary piped water and free basic water would benefit women-headed households.</p> <p>The prioritising of women as extended public works programme (EPWP) beneficiaries (60%) is acknowledged as a key intervention to increase women's economic participation.</p> <p>Commitment to work with all sectors to end violence against women and children.</p>	<p>Commitments to a programme to address unemployment, poverty and inequality, singling out in addition sectors such as "farm workers, the rural masses, urban and jobless workers and middle strata", but failing to acknowledge and address the particular vulnerabilities of women in these sectors.</p> <p>Manifesto is silent on systemic interventions required to ensure women's equal access to land, business financing, opportunities and support measures.</p>	<p>Acknowledgement of 40 years since the Soweto student uprising, committing municipalities to focus on the youth, such as developing programmes for youth councils and youth cooperatives in municipalities.</p> <p>Measures are identified to support youth enterprise, development and employment, and include youth in municipal measures to adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Encouraging local businesses to target young people and to take advantage of programmes to promote youth employment.</p> <p>Youth constitute 50% of EPWP beneficiaries.</p>
<b>COPE</b>	<p>Commitments to empowering women in all walks of life through the creation of a dedicated "women's fund", and by especially encouraging women to engage in small, medium and micro businesses.</p>	<p>No specific measures are referred to in addressing structural barriers to women's advancement within the economy, or accessing existing SMME support interventions. Housing, energy, water and sanitation commitments are silent on issues relating to women's access to these resources.</p>	<p>Measures addressing youth unemployment and skills are referred to, but none specifically targeting young women.</p> <p>Measures such as youth forums to foster youth as active citizens to engage with municipalities and decision-makers</p>

<b>DA</b>	No reference is made to women or gender equality in this manifesto.	Measures to ensure access to education, healthcare and services, and the eradication of poverty and crime, yet no reference to challenges experienced by women in accessing such rights and services.	Using EPWP to foster youth development and employability. Addressing social issues faced by youth through substance abuse interventions and the provision of public, sport and recreational amenities.
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<b>Political party</b>	<b>Specific measures for women</b>	<b>Other measures which would benefit women (but no gender analysis)</b>	<b>Measures for youth</b>
		Measures to help vulnerable people out of poverty by assisting them with skills development, training and support. Commitment to supporting informal economy stakeholders offers a measure to facilitate women's economic development in this sector. An envisaged 'basket' of free basic services for indigent households would ensure monthly access to 50 kWh of free electricity, 6 000 litres of water, and rates rebates would benefit womenheaded households in situations of poverty, although the manifesto does not make reference to this as a priority stakeholder group	

<b>EFF</b>	No reference is made to women or gender equality in this manifesto.	Envisaged land reform programme speaks of equitable allocation of land for residential purposes, but does not address the issue of current land reform mechanisms and processes, envisaged land tenure and ownership models, and current flawed approaches to addressing challenges experienced by women in securing access to and ownership of land. Local economic development measures are silent on issues relating to women's economic empowerment and overcoming structural challenges to women's participation in the economy, although women would stand to benefit from envisaged measures to support informal	Provision of a bursary fund to enable deserving students to study at the university of their choice, and ensure provision of residential accommodation to all students. Establishing and supporting municipal based professional sporting codes.
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<b>Political party</b>	<b>Specific measures for women</b>	<b>Other measures which would benefit women (but no gender analysis)</b>	<b>Measures for youth</b>
		traders, and provision of free basic services to indigent households.	
<b>FF+</b>	No reference is made to women or gender equality in this manifesto.	Commitment to fostering diversity, yet for the recall of affirmative action, and silent on matters of gender transformation. Job creation and economic growth measures are limited to support for private sector expansion, with no mention of women's representation or participation within this sector.	No youth specific measures are mentioned.

<b>IFP</b>	The manifesto states that 'women and children should feel safe in our streets', but does not speak to how it intends to address sexual violence or violence against women in children – whether on the streets or in homes – beyond a commitment to the rule of law and to creating security in communities.	Reference to job creation and service delivery, but scant on detail in terms of what is envisaged, and silent on ensuring women's access to these measures.	No youth specific measures are mentioned.
<b>UDM</b>	Measures envisaged supporting economic development, including UDM councils to create a local business environment that supports youth, women and people with disabilities to be entrepreneurs. Intention to replace ward committees with sustainable development councils, representative of local communities, including the categories of youth, women and people with disabilities.	Measures ensuring access to water, energy and housing, yet no mention of any to address women's challenges in accessing these commodities. 'Put Community First' campaign envisages free access to basic services for the indigent, which would benefit women headed households in situations of poverty, but this is not specifically addressed in the manifesto.	Reference to creating a local business environment that supports youth to be entrepreneurs, and ensure representation of youth on local sustainable development councils.

### Gender awareness rating – Voice, Choice, Control

Score out of five	ANC	COPE	DA	EFF	FF+	IFP	UDM
1) The importance of women's participation is highlighted and there are strategies for addressing this, including affirmative action.	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
2) There is a gendered analysis of local economic development and specific strategies for addressing women's equal access and participation.	3	4	2	2	1	1	3
3) There is a gendered analysis of access to resources such as land, housing, and credit and how to redress these gaps.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4) There is a gendered analysis of access to services such as water, energy and sanitation and how to ensure that women and men access these equally.	4	2	2	2	1	1	2
5) There is a gender analysis of social challenges, especially GBV, HIV and AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and how to ensure that local government promotes women's rights.	2	1	1	1	1	2	1
TOTAL out of 25	11	9	7	7	5	6	10
% (Score x 4)	44%	36%	28%	28%	20%	24%	40%

Our rating findings, therefore, rank the political parties sampled as follows, in terms of the extent to which they are gender aware, and propose measures to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of women and their increased quality of life:

Party	Percentage	Ranking
ANC	44%	1
UDM	40%	2
COPE	36%	3
DA	28%	4
EFF	28%	4
IFP	24%	6
FF+	20%	7

Whether voters – and women voters in particular – are swayed in their voting choices by these commitments, remains to be seen. It stands to reason that any party tapping into the issues impacting directly on a majority voting bloc such as women, should enjoy statistical advantage over its competition. Contentions within the ruling party, shifts in the balance of

power between the ANC and its official opposition, the DA, as well as rising contender, the EFF's all indicate that in many municipalities, the vote is up for grabs. Might a party responsive to the everyday needs of the majority of the electorate – that of women – swing that vote? It would appear that no party thus far has identified this opportunity!