



# SWAZILAND



Benedict Bennett, Board Member



Ncane Maziya, Country Manager



Thandokuhle Dlamini, Intern

## FACT FILE

Country	Swaziland
Board Member	Benedict Bennet
Staff Members	Ncane Maziya - Country Manager Thandokuhle Dlamini - Intern
When registered	In progress
Alliance focal network	Coordinating Assembly of None Governmental Organisations (CANGO)
How many governance COE's	12
How many media COE's	6
Key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swaziland Local Government Association (SWALGA)</li> <li>Coordinating Assembly of None Governmental Organisations (CANGO)</li> <li>Gender Family Issues Unit (GFIU)</li> </ul>



Thobile Jele

"I used to look down upon gender activists, and thought they were simply trying to reverse the roles of men and women in the home and in the society. It was only when Gender Links informed me about gender issues that I realized that gender activism is actually about standing up for everyone's rights.

Through the partnership between my town council of Lavumisa and Gender Links, I have learned that men and women are equal, and that it is important to get communities to understand that despite the different gender roles between the two sexes, there is still equality. This has really changed my outlook on life, and I am now acting out these changes in the way I approach social issues.

I have seen in myself how important it is for people to be given the correct information, and that's why I'm planning on catching people in the community young by having a programme with schools where learners get a chance to understand gender roles in order to prepare them for the future. It is important to advise men that gender issues do not mean women's issues only! Gender issues are about all of us."

Read more: <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/thobile-jele---swaziland-2012-05-29>

**By Ncane Maziya**  
Country Manager

Gender Links started operating in Swaziland in 2009 under the leadership of Jabulisile Ndzingane. Ncane Maziya took over in February 2011. At the time of writing, GL was in the process of registering the office in Swaziland. In May 2012 the chair of the Swaziland Local Government Association (SWALGA) Benedict Bennett joined the GL Board.

The main area of work in Swaziland is the 12 Centres of Excellence for Gender in the local government, and the six media COEs. GL is in the process of signing an MOU with SWALGA.

### Key achievements



Swaziland: dancing to a new tune.

Photo: Gender Links

- Approval by the Ministry of Housing for signing of an MOU between SWALGA and GL.
- Development of seven action plans by councils.
- Conducting the 16 Days training on Gender Based Violence and cyber-dialogues with two councils in Swaziland.
- Partnering with Government (Gender and Family Affairs Unit) in the implementation of the National Gender

Policy Action Plan under the Information and Media theme in Swaziland (Alternate Lead Agency under the NGO sector).

- Recognition by the UNFPA and the US Embassy in Swaziland.
- Recognition and collaboration with the Coordinating Assembly of Nongovernmental Organisations (CANGO).

### Key challenges

- Fundraising - It is difficult to fundraise in-country, as the organisation is not yet legally registered.
- Staffing - Working without an intern for almost the whole of 2011 resulted in late submission of reports due to mounting work load.

### Lessons learned

I have gained a lot of information, confidence as well as public speaking skills, facilitation and training skills from the COEs programme. The experience has capacitated me in approaching issues of gender at different levels, e.g. Swazis believe strongly in their culture. Talking about gender issues was very difficult for me at first but after the enlightenment I find myself singing the same tune with the participants after my presentations. That gave me courage and confidence, as the Country Manager, I am now able to work with people from different levels of understanding on gender issues.

### Key priorities for 2012

- Registration of the GL Swaziland office;
- Complete all ten stages and sign Statement of Commitment with ten councils before the Local Government Elections;
- To continue work on Gender Action plans with outstanding councils;
- Encourage councils Managers and Board Members to adopt and implement their action plans;
- Broaden the media COE's
- Prepare for the first national Gender Justice Summit that will bring together the local government and media work.

### Deep roots

My association with GL dates back to 2003 when we developed the Swaziland Media Gender Watch Organisation (SMEGWA) through a Gender and Media workshop conducted by GL. That was my first learning journey. It was difficult sometimes to be involved as an Executive Committee member especially where you don't share the same vision with as members, but I am happy because it was a learning curve for me. Among other notable events I helped organise the launch of the Gender and Media Baseline Study and SMEGWA in 2004. SMEGWA members disappeared when I needed them. I had to shoulder all the work but the event was a success.

I did not realise that it was a journey leading to where I am today with GL. Since I started working full time for GL, I have learnt a lot from GL CEO Colleen Lowe Morna and Chief of Operations Kubi Rama. I appreciate working with them; they have enlightened my know-ledge and skills on gender issues. Working with people of different backgrounds is another learning journey; especially where we share information and experiences as well as socialising with other GL Country Managers through different forums. - Read more on the GL Learning Journey, <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page/results-learning>



Ncane Maziya first met GL through SMEGWA.

Photo: Gender Links