



Quotable quotes

"We just need to believe in our self as women and have confidence so that we can proudly stand firm and take gender mainstreaming by storm"

Fact box

COUNTRY	Lesotho
Council	Makhoarane
Baseline score	41%
Latest score	50%
Population/audience	39,820
Key characteristics	Historical memorabilia
Contact person	Nthatsi Pelei
Designation	Community council secretary
Contact details	00266 58817987

Makhoarane council is situated in Morija area in Maseru. In 2010 Makhoarane became a centre of Excellence for Gender in Local Government. It has been 2 years and the councils gender score has risen from 41% to 50% (this score will be independently adjudicated at the March 2013 SADC Protocol@work Summit).

When the council started with the COE process the councillors were blind to gender mainstreaming. To date the council has worked very hard to mainstream gender in their policies and overall council and community activities. Both women and men participate equally in the council and during council meetings all decisions taken are on the basis of issues that affect both men and women.

Having gender incorporated in the council structure and employment, significant change is evident, for example, when the council creates jobs they now hire an equal number of men and women; this was not the case before the relationship with Gender Links. Recruitment solely happened on a first come first serve basis and men were the ones who got the employment before women could.

Under the Basotho law women could not apply for land and title deeds without the permission of their husbands now the council encourages women to apply for land and housing nor sign documentation without the presence of their husbands. Since the use of the SADC Gender Protocol the ministry and the councils have seen that this hindrance in women's lives causes nothing but feud and leaves many widows destitute after the passing of their spouses as families would take over the property and all its belongings.

Ntate Lebohang Mats'ela a community member admits that if it was not for GL he still would not know about gender equality, "I did not have any light on gender issues, but since working with Cllr Ts'epo Talanyane as a member of Makhoarane council my life has changed because I was able to help him form different committees in our community with both men and women. Before Gender Links one would not find men working with women on issues that were 'male-

dominated' through this relationship I am able to encourage men to participate at meetings and to be members of support groups.

The community was given chance to say how they felt about gender especially in the local government and how it was going to affect them and the community was very impressed and promised to work very closely with council, there were some community members that volunteered to work with different councillors in the spreading of gender and the SADC protocol especially because there community members that did not have any idea.

Even though the council has tried to work hard they were some challenges on the way like the one for budget, the council is not able to make their own budget as is done from the district level and as a results is not able to put some of their activities especially the ones that includes gender and its being told that those activities are not catered for and the other challenge is the one that women councillors refusing to be elected in any of the committees in the council, claiming that they were not suitable for those posts and took the secretaries ones, it was and still a serious problem because all members of the committees are all men. The council is trying to convincing women that they are also important part of the council and they need to take part in all aspects. The other problem was that the council did not record all their gatherings and has agreed to record and report back to the council after every gathering they have. The council agreed to work very hard so that they can be able to take gender issues to another level