

The Centres of Excellence (COE) for Gender in Local Government:



What we have learned in Botswana OCTOBER 2020



SRHR Workshop Chobe District Council drama performance Mahalapye.

Photo: Gomolemo Rasesigo

The Centres of Excellence (COE) for Gender in Local Government is a visionary programme run by Gender Links (GL), a Southern African NGO, in partnership with local government associations across Southern Africa. In Botswana, GL partners with the Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA). The programme aims to ensure women's equal and effective participation in decision-making, and to translate this into gender responsive governance through gender action plans whose progress is measured by the Gender and Local Government Score Card.

In Botswana the COE programme has been running since 2016 working with 32 councils, 8 urban and 24 rural. Twenty councils are implementing the *Sunrise Empower Women, End*

Violence Campaign. Fifteen councils are implementing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) campaigns. The councils in this programme cover a population of 1,121,655 or 55% of the total population of Botswana. The programme reached 4,066 direct beneficiaries between 2016 and 2020.

Botswana has started implementing the "hub" and "spoke" programme in which older established "hubs" provide mentoring and support to mentee "spoke" councils that are still in the initial phase of the programme. There are four hub and six spoke councils. This analysis compares progress across 14 councils for which GL has comparative data for the period from 2016 to 2020.

Key indicators in the 14 councils (2016 - 2020)

Outputs			
No. of COE's Baseline 2016		14	
No. of COEs follow up in 2020		14	
No. of Gender Action plans		14	
No. of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Action Plans		14	
No. of councils supporting the entrepreneurship programme		11	
No. of SRHR Action Plans		11	
Beneficiaries			
No. of beneficiaries - 2016		1244	
No. of beneficiaries - 2017		1236	
No. of beneficiaries - 2018		873	
No. of beneficiaries - 2019		713	
Total		4066	
Outcomes	Baseline (2016/17)	Follow up (2019/20)	Variance
Women's political representation			
% women in local government overall	19%	18%	-1%
% women councillors in COEs	19%	18%	-1%
Political and public participation			
% women mayors	14%	0%	-14%
% women chairing committees	21%	20%	-1%
Gender Progress Scores - attitudes (%)	55%	66%	10%
Gender management system and budgeting			
Gender and Local Government Score (%)	52%	59%	7%
Community Citizen Score (%)	61%		
Gender responsive budgeting			
Total contribution by councils to gender work		USD\$56 754	
Workplace policies and practise			
% women employed in COE councils (2016)	53%	55%	2%
% women managers in COE councils	38%	41%	3%
% councils that provide maternity leave	100%	100%	0%
% councils with sexual harassment policies	50%	44%	6%
Infrastructure and social development			
% women accessing land	64%	66%	2%
% women allocated housing	63%	53%	-10%
% councils with streetlights	92%	94%	2%
% women on water/sanitation committees	44%	44%	0%
% of water and sanitation committees chaired by women	15%	36%	21%
Economic power to end violence			
	2015		
Total number of women at the start of the course	109		
No. of women who completed the course	109		
% women that completed the course	100%		
% women completed a business plan	100%		
% women implemented a business plan	56%		
Monthly income in USD	41		
Relationship control score (%)	82%		
% women experiencing less or much less violence	96%		
% women using a computer	68%		
% women that have an email address	49%		
% women surfing the Internet	15%		
% women that have a Facebook account	8%		
% women that have a Twitter account	6%		
% women that have a website	6%		

Key results

- **Women's political representation is low** - Women constitute 18% councillors in the COEs and in the country overall: one percentage point lower than in 2016. Following the 2019 elections there are no women mayors in the COEs in this sample. There are a range of reasons for women's low representation in political decision-making, in particular the First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system and lack of quotas for women. Other factors include lack of party support and exclusion from decision-making in party structures, financial challenges, patriarchal structures and systems that do not encourage women to take up political leadership positions.
- **The Gender Progress Score, which measures attitudes has increased** from 55% to 66% showing that attitudes towards gender are changing, as a result of awareness raising and campaigns within communities.
- **The Gender and Local Government Score, which measures 25 indicators for gender-responsive governance** has increased by seven percentage points from 52% to 59%. This is also a positive sign of progress since the introduction of the COE programme.
- **Councils are allocating a small budget to gender programmes** - the 14 COE councils have allocated Pula 602 200 towards gender specific programming, another positive indicator of commitment to gender mainstreaming.
- **Over half of those employed by councils are women** - Women employed by councils increased by two percentage points to 55% (more than half) showing that gender parity is possible. Another encouraging sign of progress in the work place is that the proportion of women managers increased from 38% in 2016 to 41% at follow up in 2019. All councils provide maternity leave and an hour for breastfeeding. There is need to advocate for paternity leave as currently no councils have this provision.
- **Infrastructure and social development** - Councils are making good progress regarding allocation of land and housing to women. Councils allocated 67% of land and 53% of houses to women at follow up.
- **Economic power to end violence** - GL trained 109 survivors of GBV from ten COEs in the first phase of the Sunrise Campaign, an innovate programme to provide entrepreneurship training to survivors of gender violence linked to council Local Economic Development (LED) programmes. All participants completed the three stage course, and 56% implemented their business plan. Most

encouraging is that 96% of participants reported experiencing less or much less violence at the end of the project. GL is currently undertaking a second phase of the project which involves training a further 228 women survivors of GBV from ten COEs. For sustainability the ultimate goal is to train and hand over the running of the programme to the COEs themselves.

- **Working with men and boys** has been identified as a key strategy in promoting gender equality. GL in partnership with Men and Boys for Gender Equality (MBGE) engages men and boys to address GBV and promote gender equality using a robust public education programme through various media, including radio and television shows, adverts, social media, and community presentations in *kgotlas* (public meetings) and workshops.

Lobatse Town Council best performing COE in Botswana

Lobatse Town Council joined the COE program in 2010 and has been leading light on gender mainstreaming.

The council has a gender action plan that incorporates the Post -2015 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The progress of the action plan is reported at council management meetings and full council.

The Council has established a robust gender management system which includes a gender champion (the Deputy town clerk) and a gender focal person. Councillor Tiny Dinoko is the council's woman commissioner and the Deputy Mayor. The council has a vibrant gender committee comprising representatives from the different departments, guided by the gender action plan. The committee has a gender mainstreaming coordinator who reports to council management. The gender committee members are reviewed on performance against the gender activity plan.

Through its Poverty Eradication Programme, the council has economically empowered 173 women and 33 men. They host Market Days and Women Expos' to expose beneficiaries to potential customers. The council solicited the Women's Finance House Botswana, to sensitize the community on their services and how they can access finance. Of the 36 market stalls 56% are allocated to women.

The council has also prioritised allocating land and housing to women, over half (55%) the housing available and 75% of land was allocated to women, showing the council's commitment to empowering women.

The council carries out campaigns to end violence. These include hosting commemoration events for International Women's Day, the 16 days of Activism against gender-based violence, Disability Day, AIDS Day and International Day of the Family. The council provides security services during the day in all primary schools. It also collaborates with stakeholders to refer abused children, youth and women to places of safety. The Lobatse town council has facilitated the formation of the GBV survivors support group.



Lobatse Town Council receive Certificate Hub and Spoke COE Training Gaborone. Photo: Mboy Maswabi



Photo: Keletso Metsing

Giving voice to the voiceless

Botlogile Tshireletso is the former chairperson of the caucus on women and politics. During her time in parliament Hon Tshireletso has championed and advocated for safe abortion in Botswana, decriminalisation of sex work and same sex relations in Botswana. She has said "abortion is an essential part of women's sexual and reproductive lives and is essential to women's right to bodily autonomy".

Making a difference

"Success it is not about the riches or material things one accumulates in life, it is all about having a positive impact in the lives of others." Olga Ditsie, mayor from Jwaneng and business-woman, is driven by a wish to see women empowered socially and economically. She holds various roles in the Jwaneng Town Council. She put forth two motions that were then adopted by the council during the Council Sitting.



Photo: Keletso Metsing

Youth action for change

Onkemetse Kwelagobe is a police officer, gender activist and youth mentor in Lobatse. She speaks fearlessly and boldly on gender issues in her area of Lobatse and is a member of the Lobatse District Gender Committee. Kwelagobe was recognised as one of the 50 young Batswana “change makers” for her work in gender issues and youth mentorship.



Photo: Keletso Metsing

Lessons learned and how they will be applied

- **Increasing women's representation in local government as councillors and mayors** - Women councillors should form a Women in Local Government Forum (WLGf) to strategise on the 50/50 campaign and use the upcoming Constitutional review as an opportunity for strong advocacy for electoral reform to change the electoral system and lobby for a gender quota at both national and local levels. A study visit to neighbouring Zimbabwe, where the WLGf has succeeded in lobbying for a quota in local government, could add impetus to the campaign.
- **Strengthening youth involvement:** Junior councils have proved to be an effective model for engaging the youth, especially young women in gender responsive governance in neighbouring Namibia and Botswana. This is a model that Botswana may wish to consider.
- **Strengthening gender budgeting** - Most local councils do not have funds earmarked for gender mainstreaming. Councils need capacity building on gender responsive budgeting and should develop a plan to advocate for more funds to be allocated for gender programmes.
- **Getting government buy-in for the “hub” and “spoke” model:** While this programme has great promise, it is still in its infancy and requires government buy-in for effective roll out.

Indicators by Council [Baseline in brackets]

Council	Overall score	Community score card	Gender progress score (attitudes)	% W cllrs	% W Mayors	% W Deputy mayors	% W chair comms	Gender responsive budgets	% W employees	% W in management	% land allocated to women	% housing allocated to women
Bobirwa Sub District Council	19 (30)	26%	53 (57)	0 (16)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (14)	0	47 (61)	64 (52)	0 (71)	0 (60)
Chobe District Council	0 (73)	26%	28 (58)	0 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0	79 (0)	20 (20)	58(56)	0 (70)
City of Francistown (HUB)	81 (70)	81%	56 (64)	15 (23)	0 (100)	0 (0)	14(20)	0	54 (52)	21 (33)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Gaborone City Council	53 (61)	53%	60 (61)	26 (22)	0 (0)	0 (0)	17 (17)	0	44 (51)	22 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Goodhope Sub District Council (SPOKE)	55 (47)	55%	81 (53)	29 (25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (43)	1101	65 (59)	48 (36)	0 (0)	30 (83)
Hukuntsi Sub District Council (SPOKE)	60 (51)	60%	80 (58)	15 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	17 (15)	0	43 (0)	14 (30)	0 (0)	74 (0)
Lobatse Town Council (HUB)	81 (72)	81%	66 (49)	26 (31)	0 (100)	100 (0)	30 (56)	16254	56 (54)	44 (31)	75 (48)	55 (54)
Mabutsane Sub District Council (SPOKE)	73 (54)	73%	55 (76)	20 (25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	29 (20)	657	65 (53)	56 (59)	0 (0)	0 (60)
Maun Admin Authority (HUB)	58 (45)	58%	78 (60)	10 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (10)	1500	51 (50)	62 (41)	0 (0)	0 (41)
Moshupa Sub District Council (HUB)	44 (72)	85%	77 (56)	0 (16)	0 (0)	0 (0)	36 (5)	13780	70 (39)	56 (64)	67 (67)	55 (67)
North East District Council	70 (50)	70%	66 (57)	11(17)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (14)	6750	60 (60)	36 (58)	0 (0)	0 (61)
Selebi Phikwe Town Council	74 (62)	74%	89 (56)	44 (38)	0 (0)	0 (0)	43 (43)	1832	52 (51)	53 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
South East District Council	71 (47)	71%	58 (63)	56 (32)	0(0)	0 (0)	43 (57)	14880	59 (37)	45 (27)	0(78)	0 (71)
Tsabong Sub District Council	34 (0)	34%	80 (59)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0(0)
Botswana	59%	61%	66%	18%	0%	7%	20%	USD \$56,754	55%	41%	66%	53%

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