

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



What we have learned in Eswatini OCTOBER 2020



"To be a great leader, you must consider everyone's view, whether male or female and together we can bring about change in the society."

Thokozile Mashinini, Drivers of Change SADC Protocol@Work Summit winner 2020.
Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini

The Centres of Excellence (COE) for Gender in Local Government is a visionary programme run by Gender Links, a Southern African NGO, in partnership with local government associations across Southern Africa. In Eswatini, GL partners with the Eswatini Local Government Association (ELGA). 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 Eswatini, the COE programme has been running since 2009 working with 12 councils. This analysis compares progress across six councils for which GL has comparative data for the period from 2016 to 2020. These are Ezulwini Municipal Council; Lavumisa Town Board; Mankayane Town Board; Manzini Municipal Council; Mbabane Municipal Council and Piggs Peak Town Council. Five COE councils are implementing the *Sunrise Empower Women, End Violence Campaign*. Six COE councils are implementing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRHR) campaigns. The programme covers a population of 240,434, 21% of the population. It reached 4484 beneficiaries between 2016 and 2020.

Key indicators in the six councils

Outputs				
No. of COE's Baseline 2016	6			
No. of COEs follow up in 2020	6			
No. of Gender Action plans	6			
No. of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Action Plans	6			
No. of councils supporting the entrepreneurship programme	5			
No. of SRHR Action Plans	6			
Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Other	Total
No. of beneficiaries - 2016	300	450	0	750
No. of beneficiaries - 2017	350	500	0	850
No. of beneficiaries - 2018	400	490	0	890
No. of beneficiaries - 2019	946	1048	0	1994
Total	1996	2488	0	4484
Outcomes	Baseline (2016/17)	Follow up (2019/20)	Variance	
Women's political representation				
% women councillors in Eswatini		15%		
% women councillors in COEs	12%	15%	3%	
Political and public participation				
% women mayors/deputy mayors	29%	33%	4%	
% women chairing committees	13%	32%	19%	
Gender Progress Scores - attitudes (%)	51%	63%	7%	
Gender management system and budgeting				
Gender and Local Government Score (%)	55%	65%	10%	
Community Citizen Score (%)	46%			
Highest score (%)	61%	86%		
Lowest score (%)	33%	56%		
Workplace policies and practise				
% women employed in COE councils	33%	46%	13%	
% women managers in COE councils	48%	45%	-3%	
% councils that provide maternity leave	100%	100%	0	
% councils that provide paternity leave	33%	91%	58%	
Infrastructure and social development				
% women accessing land	41%	34%	-7	
% women allocated housing	32%	36%	4%	
% councils with streetlights	100%	100%	0	
Economic power to end violence	2015 cohort	2019 cohort		
Total number of women at the start of the course	214	70		
No. of women who completed the course	140	58		
% women that completed the course	70%	83%		
% women completed a business plan	81%	55%		
% women implemented a business plan	67%	24%		
Monthly income in USD	\$22	\$188		
Relationship control score (%)	63%	64%		
% women experiencing less or much less violence	86%	16%		
% women using a computer	70%	69%		
% women that have an email address	60%	41%		
% women surfing the Internet	50%	34%		
% women that have a Facebook account	50%	29%		
% women that have a Twitter account	15%	5%		
% women that have a website	0%	3%		

Key results

- **Women's political representation is low:** Women constitute 15% of all councillors in Eswatini. The COE councils mirror the national average, a three percentage point increase since 2012. The next elections are scheduled for 2022.
- **But women's representation in leadership has increased:** The proportion of women mayors and deputy mayors on the other hand increased from 29% to 33%. Of particular significance is the increase in the proportion of women chairing committees from 13% to 32%.
- **The Gender Progress Score, which measures gender attitudes, has increased** from 51% to 63% as a result of positive changes brought about by increased awareness campaigns by councils for their respective ward councils.
- **The Gender and Local Government Score, which measures 25 indicators for gender-responsive governance,** has increased from 55% to 65% over the period. The lowest score increased from 33% to 56% while the highest score has increased from 61% to 86%.
- **The proportion of women employed by councils** increased from 33% to 46%. However the proportion of women managers decreased slightly from 48% to 45% (still relatively high, showing the important role that women play in council administration in Eswatini). 91%
- **Almost all councils (91%) now have paternity policies,** compared to one third at the start.
- **Infrastructure and social development:** All councils have street lighting. In 2020, the councils allocated 34% of land to women compared to 41% in 2012 (a seven percentage point decrease). On the other hand they allocated 36% of housing to women in 2020 compared to 32% (a four percentage point increase).
- **Economic power to end violence** - GL trained 214 survivors of GBV from 10 councils 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. Seventy percent of all participants completed the course. In the second phase GL supported the COEs to implement the programme. Completion rates increased to 83%. The proportion of women completing and implementing a business plan, however, decreased from 81% to 55% and from 67% to 24% respectively, indicating some possible challenges in the second phase of the

training by the councils. However, women's monthly income increased to \$188 in the second phase, compared to \$22 in the first phase. IT indicators were higher when GL implemented the programme; but in both phases over two thirds of the women learned to use a computer for the first time. Relationship control (63% and 64%) is high in both phases.

Of concern is the fact that only 16% of participants said they experienced less or much less violence compared to 86% in the first phase. This might be due to the fact that the second phase is relatively recent. Overall, the results for handing over ownership of the programme to the councils are encouraging.

Best performing COE - Municipal Council of Mbabane (2017)

The programme started in 2012, when the Country Coordinator, Ncane Maziya introduced Gender Links to Benedict Mhlongo, the Chief Executive Officer of Mbabane Municipality.

Mbabane Municipality has developed a Gender Policy with a management system and there is a gender action plan in place.

The municipality is one of ten councils that has been active in the entrepreneurship programme and have taken full ownership of this programme. The project has shown the bright prospects of reducing gender-based violence (GBV) through a combination of life skills and entrepreneurship development within a framework of community and local participation.

The council has an LED plan that targets women, women with disabilities and youth entrepreneurs as key beneficiaries - 78% of stalls in market places and 93% of vending licenses are allocated to women. A total of 108 informal traders/vendors were trained in entrepreneurship (record keeping and management).

Women and men are both allocated land tenure. Under the Urban Development Plan, 40% of land and housing has been allocated to women.

The council has participated in both national and regional SADC Protocol@Work summits from 2013 to 2017. Mbabane Municipality won Best Urban COE in 2013 and 2015. In 2017 Eswatini and Capricorn Municipality conducted a joint summit held in Polokwane, South Africa. In this two country competition, Mbabane again won the Best Urban COE.



Mbabane team discuss reviewing their SRHR action plan.
Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini



Nqobile Valencia Nkambule.
Photo: Thando Dlamini

Champion of change

Valencia Nkambule is a gender champion at Siteki Council. She trains and empowers her community to prevent disease, develop their homes, educate children, raise school fees and start small income generating projects to help them sustain themselves. Nkambule encourages the elimination of poverty, empowering women and girls to take ownership of their success. She believes in, "equal involvement of women and men in decision making, community development, sharing duties, respecting one another and fighting gender-based violence."

Life skills for the future

Sibongile Nhlabatsi is a driver of change in Mankayane. She sensitises her community on gender related issues, empowers young girls on self-confidence and supports the less privileged. She teaches life skills at Mangwaneni, Mabovini and Mankayane town social centres. These skills include growing backyard vegetable gardens among others.



Sibongile Nhlabatsi.
Photo: Thando Dlamini

"Business knows no gender"



Nondumiso Maseko.
Photo: Thando Dlamini

Nondumiso Maseko is a young entrepreneur and start up business consultant from Mankayane. She strongly believes that when it comes to the entrepreneurial industry, business knows no gender, as woman can do any kind of job or choose any career they want to pursue. Maseko drives change in her community by helping the youth to start their businesses. She mentors them on how best to penetrate the industry of their choice.

Lessons learned and how they will be applied

- **Women's political representation** as councillors remains low. The promising increases in women's leadership - as mayors, chairs of committees, employees and managers is encouraging and shows that change is possible. In the coming 2022 elections, the Fifty Fifty campaign should focus on ensuring the government honours the 30% quota for women's representation in the constitution.
- **The COE programme** casts a gender lens on all council activities. It blends well with social services and activities provided by the Alliance of Mayors Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local level (AMICAAL) programmes. The SRHR and entrepreneurship programmes have added value to the COE process.
- **Buy-in and support from the Ministry of Housing Urban and Development is needed** for the programme to be sustainable. Ongoing partnership with Eswatini Local Government Association (ELGA) is key.
- **The gender management system and budgeting** should be strengthened. Progress in gender mainstreaming, as reflected by the Gender and Local Government Score card, needs to be sustained, and complemented by a more vigorous implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting.
- **Support for the Sunrise Campaign**, that has shown a promising start, needs to be sustained and strengthened by the councils, to achieve the desired result of a substantial decrease in the violence experienced by women.
- The **SADC Protocol@Work Voice and Choice Summits** provide platforms for information sharing and learning. Councils should be encouraged to participate more actively in these.

Indicators by Council

[Baseline is 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
Ezulwini Municipal Council	56 (61)	75%	61 (72)	38% (50%)	100% (100%)	0% (0%)	0% (50%)	N/A	44% (31%)	44% (67%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
Lavumisa Town Board	67 (53)	46%	64 (46)	20% (20%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	100% (0%)	N/A	50% (56%)	50% (43%)	34% (41%)	0% (0%)
Mankayane Town Board	68 (33)	50%	62 (50)	0% (10%)	0% (0%)	0% (100%)	0% (0%)	N/A	32% (21%)	20% (32%)	23% (0%)	36% (0%)
Manzini Municipal Council	76 (51)	50%	56 (50)	9% (25%)	100% (0)	0% (0%)	33% (33%)	N/A	50% (33%)	27% (63%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
Mbabane Municipal Council	77 (56)	57%	64 (57)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	0% (8%)	N/A	29% (32%)	29% (44%)	40% (0%)	40% (0%)
Piggs Peak Town Council	86 (44)		60 (49)	25% (13%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	25% (44%)	N/A	67% (33%)	67% (50%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)

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