



DEVELOPING A LOCAL GENDER ACTION PLAN

Objectives

The objectives of this module are to apply the learning in the previous modules by:

1. Identifying the key gender issues in local government.
2. Developing local level action plans for addressing these.
3. Agreeing on how these action plans will be taken forward.

KEY GENDER ISSUES LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Exercise one: Why is gender an issue in local government?

As you build up to developing your action plan, it's important to remind ourselves why gender is a key issue in local government. The chart below shows the different areas of work of local government. Your facilitator may ask you to “buzz” in pairs for a few minutes about why gender is an issue in the work of local government, or if time permits to act out a few scenes showing why this is so. The fact sheet at the end of the exercise gives some useful pointers.

FUNCTION / POWER	Municipality	Town	Village
SECURITY AND EMERGENCIES			
Fire protection	*	*	* (fn1)
Ambulance services	*	*	* (fn1)
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING			
Housing	*	* (fn1)	* (fn1)
Town planning	*	*	* (fn1)
TRANSPORT			
Transport	*	* (fn1)	* (fn1)
Other	* (fn2)	* (fn1)	* (fn1)
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION			
Water and sanitation	*	*	*
Refuse collection and disposal	*	*	*
Cemeteries and crematoria	*	*	*
Slaughter-houses	*	* (fn1)	* (fn1)
Environmental protection	*	*	*
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS			
Theatre and concerts	*	*	*
Museums and libraries	*	* (fn1)	* (fn1)
Parks and open spaces	*	*	*
UTILITIES			
Gas services	*	*	*
Water supply	*	*	*
Electricity	*	*	*
ECONOMIC			
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	*		
Economic promotion	*		
Buy and sell land and building	*	*	*
Tourism	*	*	*

Source and adapted from: www.clgf.org.uk and Advocacy in Action (LAC 2004).

fn1: Service provided with the Minister's approval.

fn2: Aerodromes.



Fact sheet: Key gender issues in local government

Environment and health: Pollution, lack of adequate services such as sanitation, sewerage and fuel impact on the environment and are also health hazards. Women are disproportionately affected because they perform the majority of the tasks around the home and care for the sick. Public health care facilities are often inaccessible. The reproductive health needs of women are also often poorly serviced.

Water: Women play a central role in the management of water and sanitation. Women, and to a lesser extent children, are primarily the ones who draw water for household use, transport it home, store it until it is used, and use it for cooking, cleaning, washing, and watering. Women are often responsible for negotiating with their neighbours for access to water supply, evaluate water sources, analyse supply patterns, lobby relevant authorities, and launch protests when water availability reaches dire levels.

Sanitation: While men participate in the decision-making on the type and building of sanitation units, their maintenance is seen as the responsibility of women since cleaning the house and toilet are regarded as women's work. Women encourage or discourage, teach and supervise young children's use of sanitation units. Small aspects of design can make a big difference between the use and non-use of these facilities. For example, many mothers are fearful of their children using pit latrines because of the size of the hole and yet they are often not consulted in the design of these facilities.

Crime and security: In addition to the high levels of crime that affect both men and women in Southern Africa, especially in poor areas, women are the main victims of domestic violence and sexual offences.

Land and housing: Although men and women are theoretically eligible for housing and land subsidies in most countries, these services are invariably registered in the names of men. Ironically, urbanisation is increasingly accompanied by a diversity of household types, with single adult households and women-maintained families emerging as an important and growing household form. Single adult households are invariably headed by women.¹

Electricity: Access to electricity has major implications for women, both with regard to security and fuel for cooking and heating.

Transport and mobility: Often women need to travel into residential areas at times when transport is planned for people travelling out. For example, domestic workers come to work in residential areas in the early hours of the morning when most residents are going out to work in the city. The domestic workers are thus forced to leave their children with relatives, and live in cramped quarters with their employers. The multiple roles of women mean they must often take several short trips in a day, often on routes that are poorly serviced and dangerous.

The informal sector: Women constitute the majority of informal traders especially in the so-called survivalist sector. Instead of providing simple facilities like market stalls that can help women to work in safe and hygienic environments and make a more decent return from their long hours of work, local authorities often harass women traders and charge them with breaking by-laws.

¹ Beall, J (1996), "Urban governance: Why gender matters".



Exercise two: Understanding the policy context

Before you start on your Gender Action Plan, it is important to understand what guides this. The Namibian government is signatory to a number of regional and international commitments aimed at advancing the rights and status of women in the country. Examples of these instruments are, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) which advances gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and regionally the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (CDGD) which is in the process of being adapted and elevated to a the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. These documents can be found on the CD Rom **F10 - F14**.

In the case of Namibia there is a draft Gender Strategy for Local Government that may be given to you in hard copy; otherwise it is also available on the CD ROM **F15**. The aim of this strategy is to give effect to government commitments to gender equality at the local level through practical steps for ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in and through local government. Your facilitator may also do a short power point presentation on what is contained in the document. You will notice that the action planning framework is structured around the provisions of the policy document. This is because the action plans are an implementing tool for the strategy. They will help to ensure concrete actions, with measurable outcomes and indicators.



Exercise three: Developing a Gender Action Plan

Participants will be asked to break into groups according to their areas of work and complete the gender action plan framework, making it relevant for their particular Council. The framework is in the manual. It is also available electronically on the CD ROM **F16**.

The fields to be completed are:

- Who - who/which department will be responsible for the action?
- What is the baseline data - what is the starting point, use the questions in the framework to guide your discussion.
- What is the target/indicator - what is the ultimate goal of the council and how will achievement of this goal be measured, use the questions in the framework to guide your discussion.
- When - what is the timeframe in which this should be completed?
- Budget - what is the budget required for this action to be completed?



Source: Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Gender Training Manual and Resource Guide

