

Quotable quotes

"We are changing what used to be local government to mainstreaming gender in the grassroots"



Fact box

COUNTRY	Lesotho
COUNCIL HOUSE	Senekane
Baseline score	38%
Latest score	58%
Population/audience	44,210
Key characteristics	
Contact person	Nkhalika Makhabane
Designation	Community Council Secretary
Contact details	58513116

In 2010, Senekane became a Centre of Excellence for Gender Mainstreaming in Local Government. It has been 3 years since their relationship with GL started, and in that time, Senekane has made a 20% increase in their score from when the first scorecard was administered. The current 2013 score is 58%, whereas the initial baseline score was 38%. The progress is evident in the number of female representatives in the council.

As in many councils in Lesotho, when the COE process was first introduced to the councillors it was met with a lack of understanding. Many of the councillors were not sufficiently informed about the topic of 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. However in this council women have more influence as they are the majority.

The council has a total of 18 councillors. Women represent 50% of the councillors compared to men who represent 50% of the councillors. Due to the fact that the council chairperson is a female, she automatically chairs the finance committee and the management committee. Men chair 1 committee and a woman chairs 2 of the committees. There is no gender committee at the council, however there is a gender champion and a gender focal person.



Both women and men participate equally during council meetings, and the chairperson who in this case is a woman finalizes all council member motions, hence the council is so progressive when it comes to issues of gender. At public gatherings the councillors note that women attend

and are more active during meetings that address social issues, whereas men participate and are likely attend meetings about job creation, politics and crime.

The council has lists that show the number of males and females who are allocated land. More women have land and houses based on the number of letters received from the community requesting land. These lists are available.

Senekane community council has a Local Economic Development plan in place, and market stands are currently in the building process. These stands will benefit both women and men who do informal trade.

Senekane has a policy on climate change which outlines the challenges and the plans that the council has in place to combat climate change. The activities include planting trees, water dialogues and recycling. The council encourages the community to have a clean environment, even though there is no waste management plan in place. The council participates in preventative campaigns, and the members feel that they still have a lot of work to do.

The council faces several challenges. For example, there are no street lights in the area, and the roads that lead between houses are gravel and unmarked, posing challenges when there are emergencies. The biggest challenge is the budget cut that the council faces, as the cuts negatively affect the fight against Gender Based Violence. For as long as there are budget cuts, the levels of GBV will remain unchanged.

The council does not have running water in the yard, nor do they have functional ablution facilities; the council building is being rented as the permanent, government provided building is being built. The small water pumps in the village have been looked after by women. The water committees have women as chairs.

The council has given land to care groups that work with people living with HIV and AIDS. There are lists of all the care workers in the area and the support groups. The council takes part in awareness campaigns and provides condoms to the community in an effort to promote healthy sexual practices. The council feeds orphans and other members of the community who need food for survival.

