



SWAZILAND



Benedict Bennett - Board Member



Ncane Maziya - Country Manager



Thandokuhle Dlamini - Field Assistant

FACT FILE

Country	Swaziland
Board Member	Benedict Bennet
Staff Members	Ncane Maziya - Country Manager Thandokuhle Dlamini - Field Assistant
When registered	26 July 2012
Alliance focal network	Coordinating Assembly of None Governmental Organisations (CANGO)
Governance COE's	12
Media COE's	6
Key partners	Local Government Association of Swaziland (SWALGA), Deputy Prime Minister Gender and Family Issues Affairs Unit(GFIU), Ministry of Housing Urban and Development, Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/ AIDS in Africa (AMICAALL)



Climbing every mountain: GL board and staff members after the signing of the MOU with the Swaziland Association of Local Authorities (SWALGA).

Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini

Elections alert: Swaziland's last chance to go for 50/50!

It is that time again, five years later, and the people of the tiny mountain Kingdom prepare to cast their votes: a time to elect their parliamentary representatives and shape their destiny. It is time for every Swazi, young and old, boy and girl, man and woman, to exercise their right to vote and be voted for. It is the time and opportunity for Swazi women to rise to the occasion and shine like bright stars atop the mountain... climb that mountain!

Swaziland gained its independence in 1968 from Britain. There are two chambers of parliament, the House of Assembly and the Senate. Of the 65 members of the House, 10 are chosen by His Majesty, King Mswati III. Swazi's elect the other 55. In the Senate, King Mswati III chooses 20 of the 30 senators. The House of Assembly chooses the other 10.

The Swaziland Constitution promotes a minimum 30% representation of women in parliament. However, because this is determined by the outcome of the election process, women have not yet achieved this minimum so far. At local government elections in 2012, GL coined the slogan "50/50 start with 30: women and men in politics and decision-making". Unfortunately, women's representation declined from 18% to 14%.

All we need is at least 30 women of valour! 2013 should therefore be a turning point for women. Our Kingdom, much like the rest of Africa, is steeped in culture. Women do not feel at ease to venture into politics... some for fear of intimidation by their spouse, community and even other women. It is time for our sisters and mothers to step out and climb the mountain... after all, even Mount Everest has been conquered!

GL achieved a major milestone in Swaziland in 2012 with the registration of its office and appointment of a resident Board Member. GL obtained offices in central Mbabane, across the road from the Prime Minister's office that houses the gender unit. Following a request received at the third Gender Justice and local government summit, GL engaged closely with this unit in aligning its national policy and action plan to the SADC Gender Protocol, and costing implementation. GL Swaziland prepared to host its first national summit in 2013.

Key achievements

- GL in partnership with Government (DPM's) office facilitated the Gender Responsive Budgeting workshops; Gender Focal persons attended from Government Ministries and the civil society organisations attended the training. The office in partnership with the CANGO and the DPMs office (GFIU) successful launched the Swaziland Country Barometer.
- Supported Mbabane City Council in developing the Councils' Gender Policy.
- **Civic Education:** Collaborated with Ministry of Housing during the Civic Education exercise that preceded the elections. The objective was to educate candidates participating in the Local Government Elections on how to balance the participation of women and men in decision and leadership positions.
- **Training of Trainers workshop:** Programme managers from the 12 local authorities in Swaziland and representatives from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development , DPM's office (GFIU) and SWALGA participated in the Training of Trainers workshop aimed at building the capacity of women candidates to campaign and deal with the media ahead of the November 2012 local government elections. The training coined a 50/50 campaign slogan, "From 30% to 50/50 women and men in decision-making"
- **Launch of the 50/50 campaign:** With the slogan, "From 30% to 50/50 women and men in politics and decision-making", the campaign was launched on 3rd November 2012 and the event created public awareness on the importance of 50/50 representation of men and women at all levels of decision-making.
- **Training of the media on gender and elections, gender based violence and HIV and AIDS reporting:** The training was premised on the 2010 Gender and Media Progress Study findings that, women in Swazi media constitute only 19% of news sources.
- **Rolling out women in politics training:** In October 2012, Gender Links in partnership with programme managers from 12 local authorities undertook training for candidates at the Global Village. The training focused on how to be assertive, how to campaign and how to communicate with the media in order to strengthen chances for winning.
- **Local action to end GBV:** Successfully worked with four local councils in

Siteki, Mbabane, Manzini, Piggs Peak to plan roll out of the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign.

- **Verification:** Successful verification with eight councils and the gathering of case studies, institutional and changing lives articles.

Key challenges

- Getting in country funding for the COE cascading process.
- Signing of Statements of Commitment by the councils.
- Transfers of key staff in the COE councils resulting in having to redo stage 1 in almost all the councils.
- Late start in implementing the 2012 Local Government elections 50/50 Campaign.

Lessons learned

- The TOT held in Lesotho opened our eyes on how to cascade the COE process; a good learning experience that highlighted the need to raise a good country profile in order to attract in country funding prospects.

Key priorities for 2013

- Intensify fundraising for the COE cascading process
- Finalise cascading of COE with the remaining four old councils and to start work with the new ones.
- TOT with gender focal persons and gender champions from all the councils, both old and new.
- Expanding COEs council to 24 and getting all the old outstanding COE councils to sign the Statement of Commitment.
- Strengthening partnership with SWALGA in light of the new members and Executive Committee.
- Signing the MOU with the DPM's office Gender and Family Affairs Issues Unit.
- Getting political will and buy-in from the Ministry of Local Government
- Preparations for the National and Regional Summit bringing synergy to media, alliance, and governance work.
- Collaborating with Swaziland Women Parliamentary Caucus (SWPC) in implementation the project "50% women in leadership and decision-making positions."



Giving visibility to GL Publications.

Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini