

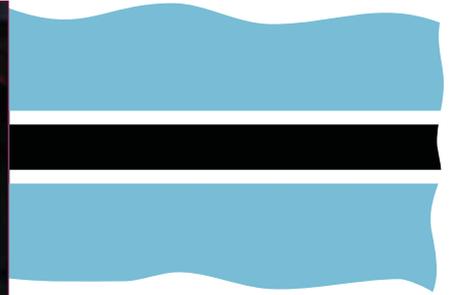
BOTSWANA



Gomolemo Rasesigo - Country Manager



Keletso Metsing - Programme and Finance Officer



Country	Botswana
Association Member	Athalia Molokomme
Board Member	Ntombi Setshwaelo
Staff Members	Gomolemo Rasesigo and Keletso Metsing
When registered	2009
Alliance focal network	Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (BOGONGO)
Government COEs	27
Media COEs	7
Key partners	Botswana Association of Local Authorities, Gender Affairs Department, BOCONGO, UNFPA, UB Media Studies, Press Council Botswana, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, American Embassy, SADC Gender Unit, SADCNGO and Ministry of Local Government and rural development

Protocol@Work Summit facts

- The Botswana Summit brought together 150 participants, 53 men and 127 women from local government institutions, media, government and civil society organisations.
- 44 entries were made by 38 women and 6 men, in 16 different categories amongst the winners the presenters were 10 women and 2 men.
- 19 Local Councils were represented, amongst them Honourable Mayors, Councillors, Secretaries and staff. The summit also hosted NGOs, faith based organisations, representatives from the Botswana Police Stations and University of Botswana.
- Various media houses covered the event including Mmegi, The Voice, Daily News and Botswana TV.

The winds of change swept through the office, and succession planning had to be implemented to ensure a smooth transitioning and hand-over to new staff. In June 2014 Gender Links Botswana bid farewell to country manager Keabonye Ntsabane who had been with GL since the Botswana office opened in 2006. During the Botswana Summit GL HQ and country staff organised a farewell, to thank and pay tribute to the footprints she left at GL and in Botswana.

Background

In 2009, GL opened a satellite office in the capital city of Gaborone to cascade its regional gender mainstreaming programmes at the local level. This was a strategic move since the headquarters of SADC are also based in Gaborone. There are currently two full time employees, as well as one intern and a part-time office assistant.

The mandate of the office includes strengthening the GL profile in Botswana, providing national programme support to mainstream gender in media and governance at a local level and to ensure the efficient implementation of planned activities in these areas.

Since its establishment, the office has managed to build strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs which have resulted in receiving both financial and in-kind support for the implementation of gender action plans in local councils. In addition, this partnership led to a memorandum of understanding being signed between GL and the Gender Affairs Department. The Department then collaborated with GL to conduct the Botswana Gender-Based Violence Indicators Study. The Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA) is another close partner. This collaboration has yielded positive results and contributed to the development of GBV action plans in 27 councils of Botswana including districts and sub districts. BALA's

financial and human resource support has greatly helped in gender training for local government and the councils continue to show case their gender responsive governance at the annual Gender Summits. The councils also demonstrate willingness and ownership by paying for their own transport and accommodation during this period.

Key achievements

- 27 councils completed stage four and five of the Centres of Excellence programme, and compiled their gender action and GBV plans, which are now online. Seven councils submitted plans for the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign.
- Advocacy workshops for aspiring women politicians competing for council seats in the 2014 general elections were held between August and September. The workshops reached a total of 120 women as part of the Women in Politics training.
- The Botswana office managed to raise local funds from the Department of Gender Affairs for the Summit and councils contributed by sponsoring transport and accommodation for their participants at district summits.
- GL Botswana maintains a good relationship with UNFPA and has been given bridge funding for two years to carry out gender mainstreaming work.
- Ninety-two survivors of gender violence were trained in entrepreneurship development skills and were able to produce business plans.
- A second "I" stories booklet containing first-hand accounts of gender violence was published and launched in 2014.
- The Botswana office had the opportunity to host the DFID evaluator from the 3 to 5 December. During their visit they met with some major partners like BOCONGO, SADC Gender Unit, Department of Gender Affairs, BALA, Lobatse District Council and the Attorney General. The meetings were a success and demonstrated the good work of GL Botswana.

Key challenges

- Councils do not have funds deliberately earmarked for gender mainstreaming. Those that are able to carry forward their gender plans do so by using funds budgeted for other activities.
- The transfer and shifting of the trained gender focal persons to different areas proved to be a challenge, as the momentum is hindered and new focal persons have to be trained.
- Media COEs do not take full ownership of the gender mainstreaming process, and fail to implement the gender policies they have developed with GL. There were also some cases where journalists who had undergone training moved to other media houses that are not COEs.
- There is a small pool of local funders within Botswana which hinders the rolling out of existing work and new programmes such as the entrepreneurship training.



Botswana country staff handing over a certificate of participation at the District summit.

Photo: Gender Links

- Botswana has still not signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which expires end 2015. However, the post-2015 revised Protocol in the pipeline presents an opportunity to encourage Botswana to join SADC in committing to a renewed Protocol.

Lessons learnt

- There is a need to closely support and monitor councils and media houses in their COE work, to ensure implementation and encourage ownership of gender mainstreaming initiatives.
- GL Botswana should work to strengthen relationships with relevant stakeholders and partners for leveraging and funding purposes.
- Finding alternate funding is crucial and the office must always keep the principle of value for money in mind, to ensure resources are used optimally.

Key priorities for 2015

- Local fund raising, as current funding soon comes to an end.
- Cascade COE work to five new councils. Conduct gender mainstreaming training with newly elected gender champions and women commissioners.
- Start lobbying for commitment to a stronger post 2015 gender agenda to ensure Botswana signs when the revised Protocol is finalised.
- Strengthen relationship with the SADC Gender Protocol Alliance.
- Hold 2015 District and National Summits, and host the Regional Summit ahead of the SADC Heads of State Summit.
- Complete phase three entrepreneurship training in ten councils and seek mentorship for emerging entrepreneurs.
- Select five new entrepreneurship FLOW councils, collect 100 "I" stories and launch another booklet with UNFPA funding.
- Strengthen media COE work through the implementation of the gender media policies and reach out to more media training institutions for the Gender in Media Education programme.

A downward spiral in women's political representation

By Ntombi Setshwaelo, Board Member, GL Botswana

Botswana continues to be lauded as a shining example of democracy and model of excellent political governance. However, after almost fifty years of independence the representation of women in politics belies that praise. During the first ten years after independence, female representation in Parliament was non-existent. Subsequently, between 1974 and 1989, the numbers hovered between 0% and 4%. The next election in 1994 brought on a modest leap to 7%, followed by a more encouraging soar to 18% in 1999 - albeit still way below the 30% target set by the 1997 SADC Declaration. From then on, a downward trends emerged. Ratios spiralled down to 11% in 2004, 7% in 2009 and 6% after the latest 2014 general elections.



The March 2015 UNECA Profile on Botswana aptly explains this downward spiral: "The main challenges to achieving gender equality continue to revolve around institutional mechanisms, funding, capacity enhancement, and research monitoring and evaluation." These challenges generally manifest in: 1) Absence of provision by the Botswana Constitution for quotas favouring women. 2) Political parties' failure to apply quota system effectively. 3) The first past the post electoral system, which is not conducive to women's access to higher political position. 4) Blindness to the critical connection between participation of women and socio-economic development. 5) Difficulty in recognising that women rights are human rights. 6) Extreme delays in ratification and implementation of legal instruments. 7) Gender Affairs Department undersized and financially under-resourced, considering that office's scope of work. 8) Women NGOs struggles to optimally fulfil their mandates or survive. 9) Low voter literacy levels of electorate. 10) Deterrents that disable women from standing for political office (social obligations, means, marginalisation, hostilities). 11) Poor media coverage of women's agenda.

The Botswana Government Beijing+20 report offers little assurance for women in politics, "So far there are no indications regarding the public agenda to consider modifying the electoral process to allow for deliberate measures to ensure that a critical mass of women is elected, for expediency in political decision making at all levels". The report also bleakly admits that the majority of international commitments that the Botswana government is party to are yet to be domesticated. For instance it took almost seventeen years for Botswana to ratify the Convention in 1996, and now almost twenty years later, it remains undomesticated.

Meanwhile, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development is yet to be signed and the MDGs are still far from being met. Botswana does not have a budget that is gender responsive, nor has anything been done to implement gender sensitive budgeting. Local NGOs working to advance gender equality have been crippled since most international donors withdrew their sponsorship after Botswana was declared a middle income country. For instance, Women's NGO Coalition, Botswana Caucus for Women in Politics and WILSA folded. Important initiatives suffered as a consequence - specifically those providing voter education as well as training of female political aspirants and community mobilisers - which had all played a decisive role in the unprecedented and unsurpassed 18% women parliamentarians in 1999.

We need to put renewed pressure on the Government of Botswana to expedite the domestication of international and regional instruments so they are held accountable for the advancement of gender equality lest we see women lose out again in the 2019 elections.



Keletso Metsing helping women in politics to create Email addresses.

Photo: Gender Links