# NETWORK News

# IDP as remedy for the gender deficit

Government planning generally still suffers from a "gender deficit". Has integrated development planning brought any relief in this regard? JAAP DE VISSER and SHIREEN TITUS (right) explore the issues in this article.

Government planning, and specifically local government planning, must be based on people's needs. Those needs are determined by their activities and priorities – what people do and what they find important. For example, if a local businessperson sells fruit and vegetables on the street and finds it important to have a prime spot where customers will be tempted to buy the goods, local government must take that need into account as far as possible. A persistent complaint is that women's needs do not find their way into government planning. Consequently, plans and projects suffer from what we call a "gender deficit".

## The invisible woman

A reason for the "gender deficit" in planning is that women's work is rarely defined and valued. Their work is more likely to be valued in relation to motherhood, to being a wife or to other broader community activities. Despite the fact that this work is valuable for the development of healthy communities, it is often not referred to as "work" because it is not remunerated (although it saves government millions annually if considered in financial terms) and does not carry any social status, institutional power or influence. To illustrate this, a few proven examples are listed of ways in which government agencies and planners in developing countries keep women invisible in their analysis of people's needs:

- They use generic terminology without describing gender or age, such as "producers, consumers, unemployed".
- Housework is generally not defined.[1]
- If they are forced to compile gender profiles they concentrate on the condition of women without looking at the relative position of women, for example their position in relation to men or the position of historically disadvantaged women in relation to privileged women.
- They presume that women and children will automatically benefit when men are central to the project.

In addition, the value that government and others attribute to women's activities determines how they socialise and this eventually influences the value they attribute to themselves. Another negative spin-off then manifests itself: internalised oppression of women. The prevailing perception of women's value needs to change. It will require creative methods of involving women before a situation is reached where they can comfortably participate and share their views.

## Integrated development planning

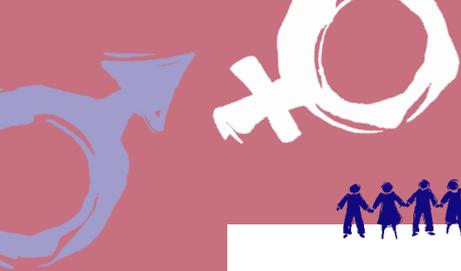Integrated development planning (IDP) has been hailed by many, not in

FOCUS ON: LOCAL GOVERNMENT

the least by the current government, as the solution to many municipal planning inadequacies. The question we pose here is whether IDP in itself is the answer to the problems of the "invisible woman".

The Municipal Structures Act and the Municipal Systems Act establish broad principles for a system of participatory democracy in municipalities. In a fundamental shift, the Municipal Systems Act introduces a new legal definition of a municipality. According to section 2(b) of the Act, the municipality consists of the political structures, the administration *and the community*. Sections 4 and 5 of the Systems Act list the rights and duties of the municipal council and the rights and duties of the local communities respectively. In launching this new definition of a municipality and setting out the rights and obligations of municipal residents and the council, the Systems Act makes a concerted attempt at rejuvenating the battered relationship between residents and the municipality. The Act legislates what can be called a "social pact" between residents and the municipality. The framework put forward by the legislation and the prominent place that public participation is afforded in it shows a remarkable commitment to ensuring public participation.

> ❜ Officials that deal with IDP and public participation need sufficient awareness, sensitivity and skill to tackle the lop-sided gender relations in our communities ❜

## What is IDP?

IDP is a strategic planning model for local government. Section 35(1) of the Systems Act refers to IDP as the municipality's "principal strategic planning instrument". In section 25, the Systems Act lists a few features of the plan. It says that the IDP:
- Links, integrates and co-ordinates plans;
- Aligns the municipality's resources and capacity (e.g. budget) with the implementation of the plan;
- Forms the basis on which the budget must be based; and
- Is compatible with national and provincial development plans that are binding on the municipality in terms of legislation.

IDP is not very different from the general strategic planning that other government agencies and the corporate sector does. However, a component that distinguishes IDP from "ordinary" strategic planning is the fact that municipal planning must be *developmentally oriented*. The implication is that IDP must take into account the practical needs (e.g. housing, health care, food, water) and strategic needs (e.g. social security and education) of communities. The notion of public participation is central to the IDP model. Therefore, IDP is "strategic planning together with customers".

The full participation of women in IDP is fundamental to its success. The reason for this is that women's activities are still – as perpetuated by the gender roles prevalent in communities – central and directly linked to municipal services such as water, electricity, sanitation, storm-water drainage, refuse collection, etc. These services are a necessity for women to care and nurture their families.

## What about the practice?

Municipalities have recently concluded their first IDP under the new legal framework. What are the lessons that can be learned from this first introduction to developmental planning?

### *Obtaining citizen's input*

The most difficult aspect of the IDP exercise appeared to be obtaining public input generally, let alone involving women in the process. The many consultation requirements in the legal framework were usually adhered to in a formalistic and uncreative fashion.[2] This was compounded by tight deadlines. In general, the problem created by the regulatory framework was that strategic planning and public participation was conducted because of and strictly according to legal requirements rather than as a sensible management tool. Considering the above limitations and the lack of lateral thinking one can certainly imagine that the added responsibility on government officials to involve women would be received with scepticism.

In order to achieve this successfully the local government officials that deal with IDP and public participation will need to have sufficient awareness, sensitivity and skill to tackle the lop-sided gender relations prevalent within our communities.

### *IDP as a 'specialist exercise'*

A valuable part of the legal prescriptions in the IDP framework is the notion of central management of the process: IDP must be managed at the highest political and administrative level (i.e. municipal manager and the executive) in the municipality to ensure genuine integration and political legitimacy. This creates an opportunity for women's involvement to be carefully "mainstreamed" into the process from the political level

*Shadrack Abakah, Agenda*

right down to the technical level. The problem is that government elites and bureaucracies tend to be hostile to mainstreaming efforts. In addition, IDP was often outsourced to consultants or assigned to town planners. Political oversight was sometimes limited. The mainstreaming of gender is also made difficult by the friction and lack of trust that exists between politicians – who may have gender equality as a mandate – and officials who are responsible for implementation. Consequently gender mainstreaming success stories are still limited.

### Barriers to active participation of women

Some of the barriers hampering women's involvement include the following:[3]
- Lack of time caused by a heavy domestic workload and family responsibility (triple shift)
- Timing of meetings
- Lack of mobility
- Lack of experience and confidence
- Lack of education and training
- Limited access to information

- Difficulty in talking to outsiders
- Lack of familiarity with procedures
- Deference to men
- Fear of retribution from their partners (e.g. physical violence)
- Fear of retribution from other community members for challenging the gender roles
- Specific cultural constraints
- Internalised oppression
- Lack of trust in government and the possibility of actual change

The barriers listed above in lieu of the lack of value granted to the women's activities and input could prove to be destructive to the success of the public participation process. Consequently, government planning will continue to focus on what men do and what men find important, turning the hope of ever achieving a full community perspective or gender equality into a pie in the sky. The mere presence of these barriers will require additional care to ensure that government officials are aware and sensitive to these barriers facing women and incorporate mechanisms to deal with or mitigate barriers. It will also require

women's participation to be carefully facilitated to ensure that women feel comfortable and safe to participate. The success of IDP is dependent on this.

### What can be done?

The above limitations to women's involvement can be overcome if local authorities ensure the following when planning and implementing their public participation process:
- Selecting appropriate staff and ensuring that they have the skills to not only engage communities generally, but also to actively involve women
- Training staff in relevant skills such as gender awareness, using gender analytical tools and gender mainstreaming to operate in this context
- Training in confidence for women
- Creating an environment that makes women feel comfortable and assists them to define and express their ideas
- Selecting the time and place of meetings to ensure that women can attend without too much difficulty
- Childcare provision
- Create awareness in communities regarding the new face and responsibilities of municipalities
- Creating awareness among men and women of how valuable women's activities and subsequent input is for municipalities' strategic planning
- Work through women's organisations that have already built a rapport with women in the community
- The public participation method must be flexible to suit women's surrounding environment, taking into account that there may be diverse groups of women in the area

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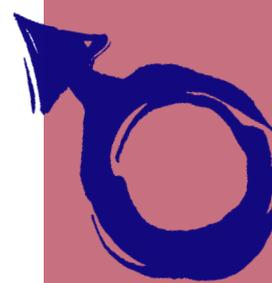
- Ensuring that women are kept informed throughout the process
- Sustaining the involvement of women in all stages of the process
- Providing sufficient time for the consultation process
- Carefully monitoring and evaluating the extent and quality of women's participation and how it develops

### Conclusion

The outer parameters of a municipal public participation policy are now clear and public participation is at least on every municipality's agenda. This is a step forward in itself, but it is clearly not enough. The above barriers hamper the extent and success of the development initiatives set out in legislation and policy. In spite of legislative reform, change does not happen automatically. Therefore, one cannot presume that local authorities automatically will take special care to involve women in public participation processes.

When engaging communities in the IDP process, municipalities should carefully incorporate gender analysis tools into the methodology of their choice. If a gender analysis is not properly integrated into the fact-finding process, it becomes too easy to leave it as an additional responsibility to be dealt with last and fall victim to the "dead-line".

The specific involvement of women in public participation will place municipalities in a position where they can better determine the circumstances and needs of communities. Simultaneously, it would empower women to change their own destinies by influencing the strategic plan of the municipality. Constructive efforts to find the invisible woman and close the gender deficit are therefore warranted. ⚥

*Shireen Titus is a member of Getnet's panel of trainers. Jaap de Visser was a member of Getnet's local government reference group.*

### References

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2  D Atkinson: A Passion to Govern, Centre for Development Enterprise Johannesburg, 2002, page 45.
3  JM Molneux: Mobilisation without emancipation? Feminist Studies Vol 1 no 2, 1985.

# Pressure for gender analysis in development budgets

An important conference on gender, food security and trade was held in Zurich in September. Getnet director Pethu Serote delivered a keynote address at the conference and shares some impressions.

The theme of the Aprodev Good conference was *"No security without food security – No food security without gender equality"* and the focus areas were food security, gender and trade liberalisation. Aprodev is the association of development and humanitarian aid agencies in Europe and Good is a unit of the association that works specifically with the gender orientation of development.

The discussion on food security looked at availability, access, production and consumption and the role women and men play in this cycle. The conference acknowledged that food security was a complex issue and it also took into account the global, national and household levels of food security. The gender dimensions of food security were clearly addressed by most speakers on the subject.

As Aprodev sees advocacy as central to its work, the focus on the gender analysis of government budgets was meant to enhance their efforts in this area. They have already done some work towards a gender analysis of the European Union's development budget and the decision at the conference was to take this work further by encouraging their project partners whose governments receive development aid from the EU to do the same. This will strengthen Aprodev's lobbying and advocacy work in the EU countries.

With regard to trade liberalisation, the discussions condemned the dumping of cheap subsidised food produced in the industrialised countries. Also deplored were the restrictions on the rights of developing countries to support and protect their domestic producers and the limited access exporters in developing countries have to markets in the EU and other developed countries. The conference was critical of the policies of the World Trade Organisation, especially of Trips (trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights). Delegates committed themselves to continuing to take up these issues in different forums.

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# The empty promises of equality

In South Africa men currently have a more substantial sense of democracy, equality and citizenship than women. CELESTE FORTUIN argues that the situation of women will be vastly improved in this regard if local government fulfilled its constitutional obligation to introduce gender in its functions, services and policies.



*Illustration: Dina Cormick, Agenda*

In the past seven years local government has undergone a series of transformation processes redefining its purpose, scope and activities in a developmental context. Missing from these processes has been the articulation and affirmation of the important link between gender and governance, specifically in the local government context.

### Integrating gender

Getnet has run gender training programmes with municipalities over the past five years, hoping to make gender part of their policy and planning processes.

In Getnet we saw the advent of IDP as a unique opportunity to mainstream gender in all the processes of local government. By integrating gender with all the key components of an integrated development plan, from the needs analysis to the formulation of the budget, municipalities can play a dynamic role in improving the lives of women and men in communities.

The experience of our training programmes with councillors and officials, however, suggests that there is very limited understanding of gender and of its relevance to local government. A common misconception is that "gender" refers only to women's empowerment, and that it has no relevance to men. An assumption of our work is that gender refers to the relations between women and women, women and men, and men and men. It is important to acknowledge that gender relations are socially constructed and varying from culture to culture. The most important assumption of our work is that, because gender roles and relations are socially constructed and not inherent or innate to people, they can be changed.

Central to Getnet's approach to introducing gender in institutions and policies, is an analysis of the power relations between the women and men in those institutions, and the role both women and men can play in transforming those relations. As an organisation we place strong emphasis on how the transformation of gender relations can be tackled co-operatively by women and men. Our workshops are not exclusively for women councillors but for all councillors, and since the workshops are aimed both at raising gender awareness and building councillors' governance skills, they are attended equally by male and female councillors. This gives us a good chance to be effective in raising the gender awareness of both and to begin dialogues in councils about approaching gender issues in an integrated manner.

### Relevance to governance

Three significant benchmarks suggest that gender is rated important by our current government: its ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw), its adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and the passing of the SA Constitution of 1997.

Both Cedaw and the Beijing Platform prioritise equality in politics and government, and outline measures member states have to introduce to realise this. Article 7 of Cedaw says the state must ensure equal treatment for women and men in government. The Beijing Platform for Action urges countries to take steps that will ensure women's equal access to – and full participation in – power
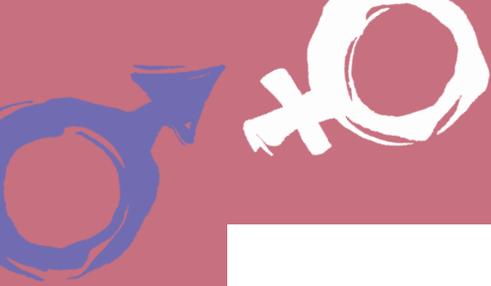
structures and decision making that will increase their capacity to participate in decision making and leadership.

South African society is still trying to break out of the stereotypical perception that men are more suited to political office than women. Political parties appear to be endorsing this perception in the composition of their party lists, and voters have followed suit in the elections. Local government politics in South Africa generally has tended to be masculine, and this culture persists in the democratic era. Although women have more than 50 percent of the vote, the ratio of male to female councillors remains disproportionate. Out of the 8 037 councillors elected in the 2000 municipal elections, 72 percent were male and 28 percent female.

Gender becomes increasingly relevant to governance when there is unequal representation and restrictions and barriers to women's citizenship, and when there are no significant changes in women's living conditions and access to basic services. In our work with structures, Getnet has become aware of the lack of co-ordination between what we commonly refer to as the "gender machinery" and local government. There is no structure that specifically deals with promoting and monitoring commitment to the principles of gender equality by local government.

### Governing for equity

A municipality in a small town is often the community's only sense of "government". Being so close to communities, local government makes governance more "real" to people. Women's experience of local governance

> **' Gender is still not regarded as an important element of developing citizenship and governance '**

also becomes their experience of the meaning of democracy, equality and citizenship. Considering that women and men have different, unequal experiences because of their different gender roles, one can conclude that men have a more substantial sense of democracy, equality and citizenship than women.

Local government legislation and planning still does not adequately reflect the central role women play in municipal functions and activities. The Municipal Structures Act and the Municipal Systems Act do not reflect any measures to address women's disadvantaged position in society. Officials are guided in their performance by these laws and regulations, so the absence of specific "gender measures" is likely to render gender unimportant in their daily activities.

The cornerstone of democratic governance in South Africa is the equality of all citizens. Our constitution guarantees full citizenship to all South Africans, which includes equality before the law and prohibits unfair discrimination, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of race, gender and sex, among others. Because of its close proximity to the community, local government has more potential than any other sphere of government to contribute to meaningful improvements in the conditions of women and their status in communities.

However, it appears that gender is still not regarded as an important element of developing citizenship and governance. By introducing gender concerns in the functions, services and policies of local government we will be providing more substantial equality and citizenship than the formal equality currently prevailing in the laws and corri-

# Women can make their voices heard in councils

Ward committees potentially are vehicles for women to set the agenda of the development work they undertake in their communities. LINDIWE NDLELA explores the possibilities.

Legislative space for community participation in local government was created by the Municipal Structures Act of 1998. This law makes it possible for municipalities to establish structures called ward committees that allow for citizen participation in the affairs of municipalities.

Even though it is not a must that municipalities establish ward committees, this is one of the new features of our local democracy that must be applauded. Communities have never had a forum such as this one to interact with and advise government on various issues. As such, it is to be expected that ward committees will be viewed with some suspicion as to whether they will fulfill their intended purpose.

### Establishing committees

The new municipalities are now almost two years old and most of them have established ward committees. They are made up of the ward councillor and up to 10 other members of the community to serve as consultative forums for the municipality. In electing the 10 members, women must be equitably represented in the ward committee. This puts women in a very

strategic position with regard to representing the needs of other women in this structure. It is important that women participate in their numbers in ward committees and other community representative structures, but is more important that they represent the real needs of women when they get in there.

### Powers and functions

The Act is not elaborate on the powers and functions of ward committees except to say that they have the power to make recommendations on any matter affecting the ward they represent as well as to perform any duties and exercise any powers the municipality may delegate to them. By exercising the power to make recommendations to the councillor or council, the committee becomes a very important vehicle for women to participate in to have a voice in governance.

The relationship between women and local government services has been written and talked about much and often. Municipalities have a constitutional obligation to ensure service delivery to their communities. The fact that municipal

services enhance the life of women in our country is beyond debate. Women depend on these services, which include water and sanitation, electricity, childcare facilities, recreational facilities, shelter and so on, to fulfill their reproductive role as homemakers and caregivers in society. By participating in ward committees women will ensure that they influence decisions on how these services get delivered.

Also, municipalities are in the process of exploring different ways of delivering services, including either employing private sector principles in service delivery or even bringing in the private sector in differing degrees. This debate has so far excluded the community voice and, glaringly, also the voice of women in communities. Ward committees can help make that voice heard.

### Overcoming shortcomings

The community elects ward committees and there are no standard guidelines for municipalities to follow to ensure that there is compliance with legislation. A brief survey Idasa con-

ducted of 10 municipalities at the end of last year showed that ward committee members were nominated in some instances. The detailed reports on the findings of ward committees in these municipalities can be found on the Idasa website (www.idasa.org.za).

Firstly, one of the biggest shortcomings of the ward committee system is that not only do the committees have to be representative of women, they also have to be representative of the diverse interests that exist in that particular ward. One ward may have more interests than can be represented in the committee. Women's issues may be marginalised or subsumed in others.

Secondly, it is not clear how the 10 people consult or should consult with the rest of the community in the ward to ensure that they truly represent it in that structure. Lack of consultation with the rest of the community may compromise the legitimacy of such structures. It is therefore important for women structures in the community to ensure that they interact with their ward committees to ensure that issues are represented and taken to the council.

Thirdly, it must be noted that the issues facing women are cross-cutting and therefore should be considered in all the sectors represented in ward committees. This is an opportunity for women's organisations to constantly be raising the issues with the ward committee.

> ' In electing the 10 members, women must be equitably represented in the ward committee '



*Eric Miller, Agenda*

*Lindiwe Ndlela is the Co-ordinator of Idasa's Local Government Centre in Cape Town*

# Rethinking co-operation with the state

At a conference in India, the importance of re-emphasising a feminist politics with its ethos of inclusion, equity and equality emerged, writes CELESTE FORTUIN

In October, KIT Gender, based at the Royal Tropical Institute in the Netherlands, hosted a conference on gender, citizenship and governance in South Asia and Southern Africa.

The conference followed a gender equity action research programme initiated by KIT. Various organisations from the two regions conducted action research projects aimed at effecting "good governance" from a gender perspective. The outcomes of these projects contain valuable information for gender activists in the local government arena and will be published by KIT in a conference report due in February. The conference took place in Kerala, in the south of India.

### Feminist values

It was marked by in-depth discussions of current issues affecting governance from a feminist perspective of politics. The tone of the debate was set by Gita Sen, professor at the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, who in her speech reflected on what it is that constitutes "feminist politics" in this era of fundamental global change. In the context of fundamentalist political uprisings, Sen challenged gender activists and feminists to rethink the relationship between feminist politics and identity politics and, alternatively, feminist politics and social construction politics. With nationalism and fundamentalism prevailing, it becomes important to re-emphasise a feminist politics with its ethos of inclusion, equity and equality, while also recognising that women are not a homogenous group. Activists expressed concern that these values might have become lost with the professionalisation and "NGO-lisation" of the women's movement.

### Mainstreaming

Throughout the conference one felt compelled to reassess the dominant views and approaches of feminist politics and gender work. The debate around "mainstreaming" as an effective strategy was continued at this conference, with some arguing that mainstreaming has produced more confusion than direction. As one participant remarked: "Why mainstream when the stream is dirty!" If we take into account how much has been achieved since mainstreaming was introduced, is it still the ideal approach, or is it necessary to redefine and re-strategise around this?

Central to this debate is how gender activists view and engage the state in development and transformation processes. Is it possible for current state institutions to be effectively transformed into more gendered institutions, or is a recasting of these institutions needed? What came out of this discussion is that we need to remain critical of the role of the state in development processes; the powers at play within state institutions as well as power and ideologies manifesting in communities under the state. While sometimes coming close to calling for revolutionary action, delegates agreed that evolutionary processes of influence were perhaps not useful anymore, and that what was needed was the strength and support of a mass-based women's movement.

### Gender-balance

Many campaigns for equitable governance focus on increasing the participation of women in politics. Many gender activists in South India and Southern African are campaigning for a



*Karin Mason (World Bank), Kathy Albertyn (SA), Magret Verwijk (Netherlands) and Kristina Concalvez (Unicef)*

quota system for women's representation in the different spheres of government in their countries. What is at stake here is increasing the number of women in politics, with an ideal of a democratic 50/50 balance. The campaign is directed at changing national constitutions and legislation, to compel political parties to increase the representation of women in their ranks.

However, two important questions arise when we critically examine women's participation in governance and the role of the state in development and security issues from a feminist and women's movement perspective. Should the aim be to get a gender balance in governance, or rather to have gendered governance processes? What are the substantive issues of governance and equality imbedded in this campaign?

In Namibia, a quota system of affirmative action was introduced to increase women's participa-



*Nalini Nayaka (India), Pregs Govender (SA) and Gita Sen (India).*

tion in local government. This resulted in a "gender balance" of 45% women to 55% men representatives, which is better than many other countries have fared. In terms of their constitution this quota system was only to be used for the first two local government elections in Namibia, and it is currently under review. However, no impact studies show if governance at this level has qualitatively improved since the gender balance was achieved. What is missing in the quota system campaign is an emphasis on achieving governance by both

women and men that is more equitable and provides substance to formal equality.

The outcomes of this conference point us to a re-examination of our politics, strategies and political values. As gender activists, we need to re-examine our co-operation with the state and participation in development processes that are consistently violent, harmful and detrimental to the majority of people, who are poor and are women.  ☿

*Celeste Fortuin is the local government trainer at Getnet*

# Awid Forum inspiring, challenging

BY PETHU SEROTE

In October the Washington-based Association for Women's Rights in Development (Awid) held its 9th International Forum, which brings together feminist women and men working in the field of gender equality to share experiences and new insights from their work. This year the focus was on globalisation: its impact on various aspects of women's lives and how it affects the struggle for gender equality.

The forum, held in Guadalajara, Mexico, dealt with the following themes: women's rights and the new global order; women's rights and economic change; young

women and leadership; gender equality and new technologies; and feminist organisational development.

This "biggest women's conference outside of the UN Conference for Women" hosted over 1 200 participants from different countries and continents. There were four plenary sessions, 140 workshops running parallel to one another and 35 poster sessions, running at the same time as the workshops. The sheer volume of activities taking place simultaneously was almost unsettling.

Besides meeting its stated objectives, the Forum provided a good space for networking and sharing of experiences and

expertise. The different speakers were good, inspiring as well as challenging in their analyses of globalisation and where the women's movement generally, and feminists specifically, were located with regard to issues and challenges facing the world.

Of the many speakers, the one who struck the strongest chord with me was Sisonke Msimango, a freelancer working in the area of gender and HIV/Aids and involved in the Youth Against Aids Network in Pretoria. She spoke eloquently about the values that seemed to have become lodged in the middle of the conference, questioning why Aids was not at the centre of the dialogue in a conference purporting to be concerned with the rights of women.  ☿
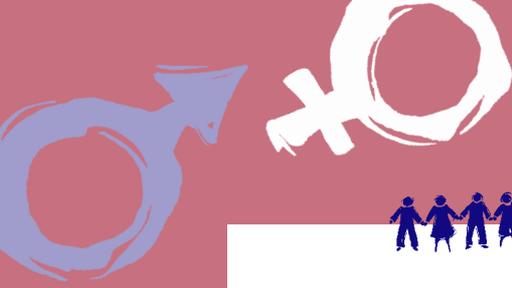
# Bold steps needed by municipalities

*By Fowzia Achmat*

The question of gender is still sensitive in local government. Very few municipalities are serious about implementing gender equity or even have gender equity policies to implement. We can rightfully expect local government to approach gender with far more seriousness, because it is both a developmental issue and a human rights concern.

Gender issues are present – and need to be addressed – in the internal as well as the external operations of municipalities.

In the internal operations the gendered division of labour and levels of authority is still very obvious to see in the council and administration. Women staff often occupy most of the administrative and clerical positions while the management positions are dominated by male employees. Practical constraints, directly related to gender roles, can also severely limit the opportunities of women in the municipal workplace, particularly women councillors. Meetings are often planned without taking into consideration the domestic responsibilities of women.

Another factor that hampers gender equity is the prevailing culture in local government. Historically, municipal institutions have been male-dominated and although there is a shift towards including more women, the assumptions, attitudes and values in the institution still reflect a male bias and outlook. This is obviously a reflection of what happens in our broader society, where cultural and traditional practices are often

> **'** Why should women councillors feel more responsible than male councillors for gender issues? **'**

equally upheld by men and women.

The external environment in which the local authority operates is also characterised by the marginalised position of women. Race, class, economic position and social status are all factors that do not only determine the specific needs of people in a community, but also how much power they have to influence the political process. The skewed gender order adds to the disadvantaged position of women.

As consumers, producers and community managers, women are intimately affected by the decisions and actions of the municipality, even if these are not specifically aimed at them. In fact, gender-blind policies can often increase the workload of women and further marginalise them.

When basic resources and facilities are absent or inadequate, women are forced to spend more time performing domestic tasks. Their physical and psychological burdens increase with these deficiencies.

Women are employees and also self-employed and therefore make a significant contribution to the economy, yet their contribution is undervalued and often goes unacknowledged. For example, municipal regulations can create problems for the informal sector, where women are in the majority.

Historically, women in our country have been active in the management of community affairs, which makes them particularly qualified to participate in democratic participatory processes. However, community politics are still dominated by men and in spite of their unquestionable competence women are often not consulted

or involved in development initiatives. When they are included, it is often assumed that they will be taking care of the time-intensive aspects of organisation.

Women clearly should be represented on the councils and in the administrations of local government because without this representation we cannot talk of gender equity. However, simply "adding women on" does not necessarily mean that gender issues are being addressed. The question is whether women councillors should feel more responsible than their male counterparts for gender issues. Male councillors are presumably democrats too, with an equal role to play in addressing gender issues. Creches, speed bumps and parks are their concerns too because not only are they fathers but as elected representatives they also serve the children in their communites.

The vast majority of South Africans are still very much influenced by the stereotypical moulds of their upbringing. Many of these influences are linked to personal paradigms that do not respond well to the demand for change. It is therefore important that gender policies should be assessed, monitored and implemented by competent persons.

Gender education programmes at community level will also boost gender equity in local affairs. Such education will create awareness of social injustice, promote women's empowerment, build future leadership and encourage co-operation between women and men. ♀

*Fowzia Achmat is the IDP training and facilitation co-ordinator at the Foundation for Contemporary Research*

# Looking to education and training to improve local government

Interactions with local government officials and councillors highlight the challenges produced by transformation in local government. Getnet Board member MIHLOTI MATHYE (right) outlines some of the education and training needs.

Challenging and exciting developments have been, and continue to be experienced in local government. Service provision by any sphere of government is about meeting the basic and strategic needs of individuals, groups and communities. Local government has first-hand experience of how men and women in different contexts interact and access opportunities, resources and services. Close and trusting relationships have to be built between municipalities, individuals, interest groups and whole communities. Local authorities are challenged to develop programmes and design services to address the needs of people with different experiences and status.

Several mechanisms have been introduced to transform the way services are delivered and to facilitate participatory and inclusive development processes. Significant among these are the Constitution of South Africa, White Paper on Local Government, White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998, and the Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000. Transformation and people-centred principles are characteristic of these mechanisms, and include:
- Respect for the human rights of individuals and communities
- Transparency and provision of information for citizens to make informed decisions
- Consideration for the needs of various community groups
- Development of mechanisms to facilitate community participation
- Involvement of communities in decision-making
- Building capacities for effective participation and delivery

## Areas of training need

Interactions with local authorities and councillors (at seminars, workshops and conferences) highlight the challenges brought about by the transformation at local government level. This includes the shift from pure service provision to a transformative and redistributive approach. Also highlighted are capacity challenges for service providers and communities (service recipients). For the local authorities some of the challenges include: understanding municipal operations; role clarification among various structures; skills development and accumulation of knowledge; raising community awareness about municipal activities; sensitivity to the particular needs of marginalised groups; and the use of planning and analytical tools.

The development of particular skills is one of the objectives of a people-centred approach to service delivery. Municipal processes such as planning, budgeting and service delivery can be complex and difficult to understand. These processes do not only pose challenges for local councillors and officials, but local residents and groups with no skills and resources may also find it difficult to participate effectively. Areas of training need expressed by both male and female councillors and officials include: familiarity and understanding of local government policy and legislation, public finance management, performance management, integrated development planning (IDP), human resource management and gender training.

A review of some of the IDPs prepared by district and local municipalities suggests several things:
- Lack of familiarity with constitutional requirements in service delivery
- The complexity of IDP requirements
- Lack of planning skills on the part of municipal authorities (some of the IDPs are prepared by consultants)
- Lack of adequate resources (knowledge, people, skills) to

apply methodologies that facilitate community participation and involvement in local development processes

- Lack of practical considerations for the integration of gender in planning (while the outcome of some of the plans would benefit communities, and improve the quality of life of women in particular, this tends to be by default and not by design)
- Ignorance and inadequacy in the development of gender-sensitive indicators

Significant in the education and training scenario is the proactive packaging of training modules on a whole range of subjects relevant to local governance by training institutions (including NGOs and academic institutions). These "packages" are then offered to local authorities, who decide on the modules that best suit them, given available resources. A wide range of service providers offers training for local authorities. These include the South African Local Government Association, Department of Public Service Administration, Institute for Democracy in South Africa, Adult Basic Education and Training facilitators, Vista University and Mvula Trust.

It is not clear whether all of these institutions and organisations include participatory (gender planning) approaches in their training – one tertiary institution in the Gauteng ran a weeklong training programme on Gender and Local Government before the 2000 local government elections.

## What needs to be done

The general assumption is that the local government sphere is best placed to address the needs of local communities. The reality is that unless a people-centred, gender-responsive approach is applied in service provision, developmental plans will not necessarily have any significant impact on communities, and women in particular. The employment of participatory methodologies therefore becomes a challenge for both officials and councillors.

### *Participatory approaches*
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) consists of a set of practices, tools and methodologies that facilitate critical analysis and strategic action by margi-

## Examples of Gender Analytical Frameworks

| Gender Analytical Framework | Aims | Analytical Concepts |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Moser Framework | • Establishes gender planning as a type of planning in its own right<br>• The ultimate goal is the emancipation of women from their subordination and the achievement of empowerment and equity | • Women's triple role (reproductive, productive, community)<br>• Practical and strategic gender needs |
| Women's Empowerment | • Seeks to establish what empowerment and equality mean in practice.<br>• It helps planners assess the extent to which development interventions are supporting this empowerment | • Identification of five hierarchical levels of equality:<br>  – Control (ultimate equality)<br>  – Participation<br>  – Conscientisation<br>  – Access<br>  – Welfare (basic) |
| Social Relations Approach | • Analysis of existing gender inequalities in the distribution of resources, responsibilities and power<br>• Design of policies and programmes which enable women to be agents of their own development | • Disaggregation of information by race, class, gender, ethnicity etc<br>• Institutional analysis: family, community, market, state<br>• Dynamics: rules, activities, resources, power |

*Shadrack Abakah, Agenda*

nalised groups in development planning. It enables local individuals and communities to represent and analyse information about their livelihoods, health, development and self-actualisation, and to make plans or informed decisions in development planning. According to Akerkar (2001) participatory approaches like PRA tend to acknowledge people as groups (e.g. as "rural", "poor" or "the community" or "the poor", without inherent gender differences in access, control and decision-making. Caroline Moser and Caren Levy are amongst those who recognised – in the early 1980s – the need to include gender considerations in development. As academics at the University of London's Development Planning Unit, they developed a gender policy and planning method. This method addresses, among other things, policy approaches (e.g. welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment) as well as practical and strategic gender needs.

Often regarded with cynicism as too theoretical, Gender Analysis Frameworks serve several purposes including: situation/context analysis; planning and decision-making; facilitating information sharing, training or sensitisation to gender issues; and monitoring and evaluation.

They are based on the argument that in order to develop IDPs we need to address the power relations between women and men and the inequalities that exist between men and women, as well as other areas of social difference.

The development of indicators to measure performance is a key requirement of IDP. The IDP methodology consists of the following five phases leading to the completed plan: analysis, strategies, projects, integration and approval.

The integration of gender concerns should take place at the earliest possible stage of planning. The analysis phase is therefore critical in this regard. A number of "gendered" participatory approaches can be used to address different situations and objectives. Some analytical frameworks and their respective objectives are presented on the left. The presentation is informed largely by March et al. (1999).

### Conclusion

It would seem that most IDPs have gone past the analysis phase where the integration of gender concerns should ideally take place. However, participatory processes happen throughout in the implementation and development of plans, and there are still opportunities for training planners and councillors to be sensitised to issues affecting men and women and how society tends to influence what and how they should be served. Another opportunity for gender mainstreaming lies in the process of developing performance indicators by municipalities. Gender-sensitive indicators remain largely unheard of, and are likely not to be included in the performance indicators.

### References

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March, C., Smyth, I., and Mukhopadhyay, M. (1999). "A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks", Oxfam GB, Oxford.

# The electoral system and gender

A greater inclusion of women and other designated groups must form one of the cornerstones of our electoral system, writes COURTNEY SAMPSON.

South Africa currently has no official electoral system. The Constitution requires that a new electoral system be developed for the next round of national, provincial and local government elections (likely to be held 2004-6). To this end, an Electoral Task Team comprising 25% women has been appointed.[1]

South Africa used one electoral system for the national and provincial elections (June 1999) and two systems (mixed) for the local government elections (December 2000). The system used in June 1999 was a proportional representative system. In this system, political parties determined lists of candidates, from which political representatives were placed in the National Assembly and the Provincial Council.

The number of representatives was determined by the number of votes each party received.

A mixed system was, however, used in the December 2000 elections. Then there was a proportional representative (PR) list as well as a first past the post (FPTP) system in which the electorate voted directly for an individual candidate. Each voter therefore had two votes, one for a party and one for an individual, who stood as a candidate in a ward. In the latter system (FPTP) the winner takes all and no space is created for those who get the next highest number of votes.

The arguments in favour of the PR list hinge primarily on the basis that parties that are committed to ensuring inclusivity of designated groups according to the spirit of the Constitution, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) etc, can include such representatives in their PR list. A party can for instance include equal numbers of male and female candidates, a certain percentage of disabled persons etc. In the FPTP system, gender balance and the levels of inclusivity are directly determined by the will of the electorate. If one bears in mind that people vote per voting district for a ward councillor at local government level, then the bigger picture of inclusivity is often lost.

Men, generally, still occupy dominant positions in most communities and are often regarded by the electorate as the people who will do more for them. The historic gender imbalances can therefore prevent a more representative and inclusive representation of politicians in public office. South Africa's pre-democracy period paints a picture of exclusivity that needed to be addressed through a counterbalance of inclusivity, as a way to steer the country into a positive and constructive mode for all its people.

The SADC region as a whole committed itself to the achievement of equal gender representation at all levels of government by 2005.[2] Of the SADC states, South Africa (PR system) currently has the highest percentage of women represented in its national parliament (30%). This is followed by Mozambique's 28% (PR system), Seychelles' 24% (Mixed system) and Namibia's 19% (PR system). The countries with the lowest percentage of women are Swaziland (7% – FPTP), Malawi (8% – FPTP), Mauritius (8% – Mixed), Lesotho (9% – FPTP), Zimbabwe (9% – FPTP).[3] These statistics clearly indicate that where there is the political will to achieve a gender balance, the PR system works best.

South Africa's reasonable percentage of women in its National Assembly reflects a positive shift. The question, which remains to be addressed, is whether this has had any impact on the way in which the

> **'The statistics clearly indicate that where there is the political will to achieve a gender balance, the PR system works best'**



*Eric Miller,
Agenda*

electorate will behave, should there be a system that requires direct election of individuals. Has there been a fundamental shift in the attitudes of people towards women, because of the many faces of women in public office? This is a fundamental question in terms of the democratisation of our society and whether in fact our society is moving towards meaningful levels of appreciation that "women hold up half the sky" and that our society will forever be warped in the absence of meaningful input by women.

The other crucial issue is whether the role played by women in parliament has added obvious value to political decision making. For them to make fundamental shifts vis-a-vis the role of women, people need to experience obvious and radical changes in their lives. We must guard against a male hegemony that absorbs women rather than make way for freshness and deeper levels of humanity.

A greater inclusion of women and other designated groups must form one of the cornerstones of a South African electoral system. Such a system must also project a more pronounced sense of accountability to the people. There are currently high levels of accountability by politicians to their political parties and therefore, many would argue, indirectly to the people who voted for the party.

Women have a critical role to play in enhancing that accountability and ensuring that the people's voices are heard more clearly, their needs addressed more meaningfully, their sense of belonging sharpened more poignantly.

This brief and basic article in no way suggests that the systems referred to here, are the only possibilities. There are a great number of other options that are being explored by the Electoral Task Team referred to earlier in this article. The key issues in this article is how women are affected by the systems we have used thus far and that issues related to women's representation should remain important.

### References

1. *The Task Team was appointed by the Minister of Home Affairs*
2. *SADC declaration on Gender and Development, Blantyre, Malawi 1977.*
3. *Dr Khabele Matlosa – Review of Electoral Systems and Democratisation in Southern Africa. Paper presented at South African Electoral System Roundtable – 9 & 10 September 2002, Cape Town.*

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# Getnetprogram bring nuwe dimensie

DEUR CECILE JONKHEID

'n Geleentheid om die Getnet Geslagsgelykheid Opleidingsprogram vir Plaaslike Regering in die mooie Franschhoek by te woon het my laat wonder watter nuwe dimensie so 'n werkswinkel aan die werksaamhede van 'n plaaslike owerheid en sy raadslede en werknemers sal gee. Die deelnemers was van die Overstrand, Boland en Overberg munisipaliteite.

Enigeen wat dalk gedink het dat 'n geslagsgelykheid opleidingsprogram die deelnemers dadelik in die twee kampe van 'n manlike en 'n (subversiewe) vroulike kamp sal verdeel, moet weer dink.

Tydens die sessie het dit duidelik geblyk hoe vreemd dit in ons samelewing is dat baie vroue, skynbaar gesus deur wetgewing wat hulle as gelykes verklaar, nog steeds baie bewus bly van hul tradisionele ondergeskikte rolle in die samelewing, die huishouding en die werkplek, veral ten opsigte van beleidmakende aangeleenthede. In die openbaar bestaan geslagrolpersepsies – dat vroue primêr versorgers en tuisteskeppers is – nog sterk en vroue moet hulle teen dié persepsies in as bekwaam bewys. Vroue word weliswaar nog bykans sonder uitsondering op vergaderings gevra om die notule te hou of die tee te skink.

Tydens die sessie was die belangrikheid om standpunt in te neem teen diskriminasie en daarvoor oplossings te vind beklemtoon. Terwyl die geslagte deur wetgewing op papier reeds gelyk gestel is, was die andersheid van vroue wat hulle veral vanweë die reproduktiewe- en versorgingsrol wat hulle in die gesinsverhouding speel weereens beklemtoon.

Nou terug by my eie werkplek kan ek nie anders as om met nuwe oë na die verskillende fasette van plaaslike regering te kyk nie. Geslagsgelykheid beteken veel meer as net gelyke geleenthede vir albei geslagte in die werkplek. Geslagsgelykheid in die gemeenskap en die bevordering van veral die vrou se rol en behoeftes met betrekking tot die geïntegreerde ontwikkelingsplan en die begroting het voorwaar 'n nuwe dimensie en 'n groot uitdaging gebring. ⚥

*Cecile Jonkheid is verbonde aan die Overstrand munisipaliteit.*

# GETNET'S TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

The Gender Education and Training Network is a non-governmental organisation based in Cape Town, South Africa. Our vision is to work towards the empowerment of women in the context of the democratisation of society. We work nationally and in the SADC region.

We have three programmes and a consultancy service.

## Gender Co-ordinators Programme

The Gender Co-ordinators Programme equips men and women with the understanding and skills to mainstream gender within their organisations.

### The programme is aimed at:

- Gender Co-ordinators
- Gender Focal Persons
- Gender Practitioners in NGOs/Organised Labour/Private Sector
- Men and women interested in deepening their understanding of gender in order to apply it in their organisation and community.

### Through a two-phase workshop of five days, the programme covers:

- Social construction of gender
- Interface between gender-based violence, HIV/Aids and poverty from a gender perspective
- Gender mainstreaming strategies
- Tools of gender frameworks and analysis
- Gendered analysis of government budgets

## Local Government Programme

The programme aims to enhance the competencies of councillors and officials to develop and implement gender sensitive integrated development plans (IDPs) and budgets. Additionally, issues of gender equity within councils are addressed.

### The programme is aimed at:

- Councillors from municipal and district councils
- Local government officials

### Through a two-phase five-day workshop, the programme covers:

- Gender awareness
- Gender issues in the formulation of IDPs and service delivery
- Gender analysis of local government's performance budgeting
- Considering gender issues in the transformation of councils' practices and procedures

## Masculinities Programme

The aim of the masculinities programme is to promote men's active participation in the search for gender equality. Based on discussions of the men's own experiences, the workshop provides a secure and non-threatening environment for men to reflect and discuss a range of gender issues relevant to their personal lives, work and community.

### The programme is aimed at men who are:

- Transformation officers
- Diversity trainers
- Human resource managers
- Members of men's groups or forums
- Interested in gender work

### Through a three-day workshop, the programme:

- Enables participants to reflect on how their socialisation, culture, tradition and religion affects relations between women and men.
- Examines the intersections between gender, HIV/Aids and violence against women
- Promotes social relations that contribute towards equity between women and men
- Assists individuals, organisations and institutions to formulate plans for change interventions.

## Consultancy Services

Getnet offers its existing training packages to NGOs, private sector and governmental departments at national, provincial and local level.

We also offer tailor-made services on request in the following areas:

- Gender awareness workshops
- Diversity workshops
- Gender analysis of policy
- Development of gender policies
- Gender and organisational change
- Gender audits

**For more information about our programmes and consultancy services, contact our programme administrator or visit our website at http://www.getnet.org.za.**