Summary Report

Women in Leadership and Politics: Capacity Building Workshop for Speakers of Local and District Municipalities, Limpopo Province

Outputs

Location: Tshipise Forever Resort, Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo.	**Date : 22-23 August, 2013**
	Project Code:
Partner(s): Human Sciences Research Council, Limpopo Legislature	**Target group: Speakers of Local and District Municipalities**
Number of participants: 42 **-Men: -Women:**	
Political parties represented: One	

Indicator verification: □ **yes**   □ **no**

Summary

1.**General context** – South Africa has made remarkable progress in ensuring gender equality in representation in political leadership. However, gender equality is narrowly viewed in terms of male and female representation. Consequently, while there is a near parity in numbers in the political landscape, women leaders continue to experience gender discrimination and bias both politically and privately. The environment in which they work is hostile to their needs as women. Further, because the approach to political leadership appointments has been largely one of affirmative action, many of the women appointees, who themselves grew up in contexts of gender discrimination and bias, come into leadership with very little leadership skills and experience. The workshop, therefore, sought to address the foregoing issues. 2. **Objectives** – The workshop aimed to: (i) help participants clarify issues of gender bias, discrimination and inequality in leadership and politics; (ii) identify possible strategies for addressing these imbalances and injustices in their capacity as leaders; and, (iii) assist participants to develop knowledge for enabling successful navigation of leadership, especially by women. 3. **Summary of activity** The workshop comprised the following sessions: Thinking about Gender: The Basics; Personal Mastery for Women Leaders; Women in Leadership: Thriving as a Leader; Women in Politics: Building Capacity and Resilience. The workshop adopted a participatory approach and facilitator presentations were interspersed with small and whole group discussions, brainstorming, reflective activity sheets and video clips.

Analysis of activity
What was appreciated?
The participants claimed to have found the workshop content relevant to their roles as leaders/politicians; They also appreciated the sharing of the workshop objectives and the attempt that was made to meet them. They were of the view that information was presented at the right level and workshop participation and interaction was encouraged. They pointed out that the facilitator demonstrated knowledge of topic and the workshop facilities were adequate.

What was controversial?

Almost all participants pointed out the lack of sufficient time to cover workshop content intensively. The workshop was tagged to the annual provincial speakers' forum and therefore the agenda of this forum took prominence, eating into the time that had been allotted to the workshop.

Some of them also pointed out that they should have been provided with notes so that they could avoid note taking during facilitation.

They felt that the workshop should not have been limited to only speakers. They were of the view that the workshop should be extended to all women leaders at municipal level as well as mayors and department personnel.

A few felt that a clear distinction between leadership and politics should have been made during the workshop.

Three of the participants were of the view that some of the materials were not pertinent and useful. The facilitator had prepared materials in advance of the workshop but when the workshop time was taken up by the agenda of the Speakers' Forum, she had to readjust the sessions. Thus, she did not use some of the materials that were already in the manuals which were given to participants at the start of the workshop.

"Outcomes"

Participants pointed out that as a result of the workshop, they had learnt the following: the difference between gender and sex and that gender is socially constructed; the need to do away with stereotypes; the importance of listening to people; what keeps women out of politics; advantages/disadvantages of being a woman in leadership; the relationship between gender and power; qualities of effective leadership; how to build self-confidence and capacity; and, the importance of networking.