

# Women empowerment essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## Introduction

Women participation and leadership role in governance is imperative to good governance to ensure (i) demographic representation and participation of communities in legislative and policy making processes; (ii) representative articulation of needs towards human development; and (iii) contribution [pic]to government effectiveness and accountability.

Although there has been an improvement and recognition of the importance and role of women in governance in recent times, their role and participation has been limited by inadequate capacity, failure to recognize women skills and competencies by most governance structures and marginalizing institutional and cultural practices. Irrespective of the constitutional provisions, women still experience a hostile governance environment that hinders their effective participation and leadership role.

## South African Context

Since 1994, the South African government has introduced policies, programmes and institutions to ensure women participation, emancipation and created opportunities for women development. For example, (i) gender equality is a fundamental tenet under the Bill of Rights of The Constitution of South Africa, and the country has adopted sophisticated rights-based legislation with explicit reference to gender equality; (ii) the South African government is a signatory to regional and international instruments that promote gender equality; (iii) gender considerations are integrated into government policies and programmes;

(iv) In 2005 South Africa was the 11th country to launch the 50/50 campaign; (v) the Women Empowerment Unit was established to identify factors that hinders women full participation in the legislative making processes; (vi) Commission on Gender Equality was established; (vii) municipality Structure Act (1998, 11 (3) stipulate equal gender representation; the National Gender Machinery has been institutionalized; and (viii) the Ministry for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities is a central co-coordinating point for the advancement and protection of the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities.

Some of the key achievements towards women governance participation and leadership role to date include:

- The representation of women in parliament has increased from 25% in 1994 to 44% after April 2009 elections;
- The number of women Ministers and Deputy Ministers increased from 18% in 1994 to 40% in the 2009 election;
- Women constitute 42% in Provincial legislatures and 40% of all elected councilors at the Local Government Level;
- 30% of women in the National Council of Provinces are women;
- Five of the nine provinces are led by women Premiers,
- three of the country's six metropolitan cities are led by women Mayors; and
- South Africa is rated third globally in women representation in Parliament after Rwanda and Sweden.

The Strategy/Approach: The overall objective of the programme is aimed at improving women participation and leadership role through capacity development within political parties and other political formations, i. e women parliamentarians and councilors.

The thrust of the programme approach is:

- Local ownership of the programme at provincial level to ensure sustainability;
- Monitoring mechanisms to ensure relevance and impact, and expand on the current knowledge base on women participation and leadership role;
- Multistakeholder approach to ensure broad participation and support;
- Non-partisan approach to diversify input to enrich the programme; and
- United Nations interagency collaboration to broaden competencies and expertise and knowledge base.

Envisaged Outcomes

- Improved women participation and role within governance institutions;
- Increased number of women parliamentarians and councilors within governance structures;
- Effective governance institutions ;
- Improved governance performance;
- Increased attainment of the Constitutional provisions, in particular the gender equality;
- Increased awareness on the importance of women participation and leadership within governance structures; &
- Progressive change of mindset about women participation and leadership role within governance institutions;

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the Training programme include: Women parliamentarians and councilors; South African governance institutions; Political parties; Civil society organisations; Labour organisations; and South African legislation institutions.

## Progress to date

The first phase of the training programme was conducted by Gender Links, a Southern African NGO based in Johannesburg. Women from nine provinces participated in the training.

[pic]Gender Links has a reputation for conducting high quality research which it uses to inform policy and strategies, quick action and excellent delivery. These are underpinned by a strong institutional structure that includes a high profile but hands on board; experienced staff and management team; sound financial management and accountability and a strong monitoring and evaluation unit. GL is an accredited training institution with the Education, Training, Development, Practices Sector Education Training Authority (ETDP SETA).

## Module 1: Gender Awareness

The objectives of this module were to: equip participants with key gender concepts for application in their work and to familiarise participants with key national, regional and international commitments for achieving gender equality.

The Outcomes of the training programme include:

- Women in decision making empowered to integrate gender into all their programmes.
- Enhanced women's confidence and ability to use their power for more effective service delivery.
- Women from political parties who attended the training included gender and women's representation on their party's agenda.

## Module 2: Gender and Media Literacy

The objective of this module were to: Understand the concept of media literacy; Understand the provision of SADC protocol on Gender and Development and apply them to their different context; Understand the gendered dimension of governance; Gain skill to hold media and leaders accountable; Figure out how to build gender into campaigns; and Develop their IT for advocacy.

The outcomes of the training programme include:

- 128 women participated in online chat on the cyber dialogues.
- 128 women empowered on the usage of internet to do research and with skills to critically engage with the media
- Increased awareness on the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.
- Enhanced ICT literacy skills
- Enhanced understanding of the impact of the media literacy course

Second phase:

Phase two will focus on gender mainstreaming within policy formulation processes, programme development and monitoring and impact assessment.