

Bulletin



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Comment

By Dr Greg Munro, Secretary-General, CLGF



A recent report issued by the World Economic Forum ranking progress towards closing the gender gap, a key step in reducing inequality, showed Rwanda as the leading Commonwealth country at number 5, with New Zealand, Namibia, South Africa and the UK all in the top 20. These rankings in and of themselves do not mean very much. However they serve an important purpose in highlighting the challenges that face us in addressing global inequality, and in demonstrating the progress that countries can make by proactively taking policy decisions that promote gender equality and support women's engagement whether in politics, access to service, the workplace, academia or business.

CLGF is actively using its advocacy and programme work to demonstrate and reinforce strategies for gender equity across local government. At a strategic level CLGF's Aberdeen Agenda, which is part of key principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter, sets out clear targets for greater inclusivity, and our Framework Partnership Agreement signed in 2015 with the European Union also reinforces the importance of improving gender equity.

The challenge is how to deliver these commitments on the ground. With this in mind, the projects which CLGF delivers with its members include a focus on gender empowerment. Through the DFID-funded programme, featured in this edition of the *Bulletin*, CLGF has worked to open up local consultations on identifying local economic priorities to women; provided training for women keen to develop small businesses; and opened up market access to women traders. Councils have recognised that they must be proactive in addressing the gender gap and have integrated specific policy measures to ensure that gender is addressed throughout the LED cycle.

Women are also under-represented in local leadership across many countries of the Commonwealth. There are many reasons for this - family commitments, party bias, lack of resources, cultural norms and the threat of violence are just some of the factors affecting women's participation in the political process. While there are some definite successes there are still some 12 Commonwealth countries which have local government where less than 10% of councillors are women.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), signed in 2015, will underpin CLGF's development work over the next 15 years. SDG 5 *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls* has as one of its prospective targets (5.5.1) *the proportion of seats held by women in local governments*. This must be a rallying point for CLGF and its members; access to better data will help us to chart progress, highlight local inequalities and signal the need for proactive measures.

Through its programmes and activities, CLGF is championing women leaders in local government in the Commonwealth, supporting prospective candidates in Sri Lanka, providing leadership training in the Pacific, strengthening enabling legislation and gathering stories and good practice from women leaders in a range of countries. At its conference in Malta, 21-24 November 2017, CLGF hopes to launch a Commonwealth network of women leaders to spearhead achievement of SDG 5 across its work, to ensure that women's voices are better heard in local government throughout the Commonwealth.

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Supporting localism in Pakistan

Local councillors from across Pakistan came together for a two day workshop at the beginning of April. Top of the agenda was setting the priority activities for a new programme to support local councils associations in more effectively representing their members and helping them to deliver better services for their communities.



In January 2017, in partnership with the Local Councils Association of the Punjab (LCAP) CLGF signed a grant agreement with the EU Delegation of Pakistan for a three year project running from 2017 to 2020. Worth €1.7 million and largely funded by the EU, the programme seeks to strengthen Pakistan's national local councils association - the Association for Development and Local Governance (ADLG) - and the four provincial associations.

Delegates attending the workshop - Strengthening the associations of local governments and their members for enhanced governance and effective development outcomes in Pakistan – discussed their needs and priorities and created a plan of how they will take the project forward to meet the objectives and priorities of their members.

As well as helping to build the institutional and delivery capacity of Pakistan's local government associations at provincial and national level, the programme will support advocacy, capacity building and training, exchange of good practice, and peer to peer support.

Direct benefit to councils

In the second and third years ten district councils will benefit directly from the project. Enhanced awareness and increased capacity of the councils will allow them to play a full role in territorial development; in turn, this will successfully demonstrate the use of the territorial approach to local development and this can be disseminated more widely. The

ten councils will be selected through an open and transparent process.

By the end of the project the LCAs aim to be more active member organisations, delivering against an action plan, agreed with their members, and raising the profile and voice of local government in all four provinces.

Giving the opening remarks at the event along with LCAP Chairperson Syed Asghar Shah Gilliani, CLGF Deputy Secretary-General Lucy Slack explained: "CLGF has been working in Pakistan since 2004 supporting the Pakistan local councils associations, and was actively involved with the advocacy campaign for reintroducing elected local government, in line with the Commonwealth Aberdeen Principles. Now local government elections have been held across all the four provinces and local council associations re-established, this is an important moment to strengthen and reinforce their role as advocates for all local councils in their provinces."

"Local council associations are important in supporting councils in their work by advocating for them, supporting training and policy development and sharing good practice. This project will pilot a multi-stakeholder approach to promote a more participatory, accountable, responsive and inclusive development planning and budgeting." She continued: "By the end of the project all the LCAs will be active membership organisations, delivering against an agreed action plan and raising the profile and voice of local government in all four provinces."

“ We are very pleased to be working in partnership with CLGF to develop and implement this important programme. This project will make sure that our associations are on the right track to develop their vision and strategy and will have the institutional capacity to continue to represent, support and strengthen our local councils ”

LCAP Chairperson
Asghar Gillani

Boosting community wellbeing

As CLGF's project - Strengthening local government in delivering development - funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) comes to an end, we celebrate the success by taking a look at some of the outcomes and the legacies making a difference in three regions.

Focused on three regions, Southern Africa, West Africa and South Asia, the project sought to improve local economic development and support decentralisation. CLGF's extensive membership and relationships with national and regional associations and governments meant that the project delivered results on the ground and also made an impact at strategic level, securing long term commitment to the role of local government in achieving the SDGs.

All the regions held dissemination events where the outcomes of the projects were shared with other councils in their region to facilitate learning.

In Swaziland's capital, Mbabane, the mix of urban and rural economies produces high levels of both economic performance and poverty. Building on earlier work around sustainable development, the CLGF project supported the up-scaling of greening initiatives and extension of activities to more low income communities. The projects helped reinforce an understanding about the role of the environment in sustainable local economic development, as well as providing an opportunity to generate income. Capacity building projects centred on waste management

– reusing and recycling materials; this included composting and producing commercial products from waste materials with the development of recycling centres, organic gardens and sanitation units. After only two years, the original targets were overtaken with more than a thousand low income community members benefitting; the creation of 900 climate smart gardens and production of more than 3000kgs of compost. To date, as well as impacting on hundreds of citizens, the projects have increased food security, improved socio economic status and strengthened environmental management. This approach has been extended to communities outside Mbabane.

In Ghana, the newly created assembly in Ayesnuano District has a largely rural population of 60,000. Through a CLGF sponsored workshop, key Assembly staff were trained in the concepts of LED and, based on this, developed a project focused on the production of palm oil having realised that the large supply of palm nuts available locally could be used as a basis for new products. Working with the small scale industries board, a number of trainers were trained to produce



soap using palm oil and the activity was targeted towards economically marginalised women - demonstrating the value of working in partnership and the link between economic development and social wellbeing.

In Narandrapur Union Parishad rural council, CLGF supported a workshop on participatory budgeting. Following this, the council arranged for its budget meeting to be telecast live through local TV channels. There was also a hotline number that citizens could use to ask questions and give reactions. Alongside this, citizens' thoughts on the budget were captured at ward level meetings where LED was discussed for the first time and the council is looking to support more LED projects like supporting artisan families to sell wooden crafts. The Council has been able to use the LED approach to create greater buy in from local businesses to support local revenue streams; with a more responsive approach to service delivery being made possible through the payment of business taxes.

Anuradapura Municipality worked in partnership with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to promote markets for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) in North Central Province. Inspired by discussions at meetings of the LED Forum, members held an exhibition of the work of the MSMEs with more than 200 businesses taking part. To further support the businesses, the organisers invited buyers, suppliers, investors, financial institutions including banks and micro credit organisations, government institutions and the general public. The main exhibits were agriculture products and services, ornamental fish, bakery items, milk products, ready-made garments, batik, shoes, bags and other leather products, electronic items, bulbs, furniture, floriculture products, handicrafts, jewellery items and food and beverages. Again supporting social wellbeing, the majority of the entrepreneurs were women, engaged in small scale cottage industries. This was financed by Anuradapura LED Forum with the remaining costs shared by the other partners like the Central Bank and other banks and private sector institutions. Anuradapura Municipal Council provided the public space and drinking water to participants free of charge. This was a clear demonstration of the economic and community benefits when communities work in partnership.

More information can be found on CLGF's website and knowledge hub and the lessons learned will be instrumental as CLGF goes forward with its work, scaling up pilots to allow countries to use LED to reduce poverty and adopt a national approach.

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News in brief

Localising the SDGs in Rwanda

To highlight the important role of local leaders in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and facilitate dialogue on their implementation, the Rwanda Association of Local Government Associations (RALGA) brought together high level, multi-stakeholders, including civil society organisations, at a meeting on 17 March in Bugesera District, Rwanda.

Acknowledging the support of CLGF (and the EU), RALGA Secretary General, Mr Egide Rugamba and Chairperson Cllr Innocent Uwimana explained more about their project – Strengthening local government's role as a partner in development. Further presentations emphasised the importance of agreement among all SDG stakeholders on a roadmap for their implementation.

Rwanda will soon unveil its Vision 2050 and present the third edition of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 3). Participants were called to incorporate the SDGs in national and local plans.

Going global with the SDGs

CLGF Secretary-General Greg Munro joined representatives of local and regional government networks from around the world at a meeting of the United National Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA) held on 24 April in Istanbul. UNACLA is the result of a concerted request by local government for a stronger partnership between local authorities and the UN system and, in particular, UN Habitat. Hosted by the Mayor of Istanbul, Kadir Topbaş, the event explored the role of local government in the global development agenda.

Following the Habitat III Conference in October 2016, the meeting undertook to look at implementing the New Urban Agenda, progress made in the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the crucial role that local and regional governments have to play in this. The session went on to address the role of UNACLA in helping the dialogue between local and central governments to implement the global agendas at local level.

CLGF Secretary-General Greg Munro said “With such extensive representation, it was a useful platform to share ideas and experiences and highlight the important work being done by our members to achieve the SDGs, especially in regard to the work around cities and the New Urban Agenda.”

Caribbean selects SDG pilot projects

The CLGF's new office in the Caribbean, established with EC support, is working with the national local government associations in Dominica, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to pilot the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Chairman of TTALGA (seated left) and Dr Perry Polar of CNULM (seated right) signing MOU

Selected on the basis of proposals submitted by five of the six Caribbean countries with national local government associations, nine countries took part in the launch of the CLGF Caribbean activities - based in Trinidad - in March 2016 and developed the selection criteria. Supported by the respective ministries responsible for local government, proposals focused on increasing understanding about the SDGs and the role and contribution of local government in policy development at municipal and national level. They also expressed a clear intention to improve governance systems in each of the countries.

Each country is running projects with three of its councils, nine in total for the Caribbean region, drawing on best practice in localising the SDGs - locally and internationally. The projects aim to support the development of models to implement the SDGs at local government level. Emphasis is being placed on aligning this work with the national development plans and policies of each country.

The nine pilot councils have initially involved themselves with activities that relate both to SDGs and existing and proposed local government functions, including waste management, local economic development, land use planning, and open space planning and management.

The project is very timely for Dominica, following storm Erika in 2015. With extensive damage to the physical infrastructure and the displacement of more than 700 people, strengthening local councils by localising the SDGs at community level is vital to help rebuild their lives and homes.

In Jamaica, the project is a good fit with the National Development Plan - Vision 2030 - which identifies the economy, environment

and governance as key areas for development. The project will focus on providing technical assistance to complete local sustainable development plans in three parishes. This will complement the local government reform agenda and directly contribute to promoting sustainable economic development and protecting vulnerable groups in these parishes.

For Trinidad and Tobago, as well as increasing understanding of the SDGs at both local and national level, the project will help develop local government capacity to implement the SDGs and create tools to support implementation and monitoring. To work towards these aims, the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Local Government Authorities (TTALGA) has signed an MOU with the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM).

The national local government associations in the three participating countries have taken on the project management function, and are positioning their pilot councils to begin implementation. The aim is to share the lessons learned from the projects, including the models created, by March 2018 nationally in their own countries, as well as regionally in the Caribbean.



Research focus on local councillors

Researcher Thina Nzo is the latest member of the CLGF research network to share her findings by having her paper published in the *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*. The Bulletin caught up with her to find out more about her research and what being part of the Research Advisory Group means for her.

With local government in South Africa becoming an increasingly popular research subject, PhD student Thina Nzo decided to focus her studies on party politics and councillor representation. Thina explained: "Since 2006, citizens have been voicing more and more dissatisfaction with local decision making. I wanted to look at how citizens perceive local councillors and the dynamics of this relationship." She continued: "Citizens will obviously be unhappy when local services are poor, especially when development is slower in the former black African areas of the Apartheid regime. I wanted to understand how councillors use their representational role in decision making from a councillor's perspective."

A municipality in the Northern Cape where the ANC holds the balance of power at both provincial and local level was chosen for the research. As part of her research methodology, Thina was keen to use ethnography – the comparison and analysis of the characteristics of different people and the relationship between them. To do this, she spent 10 months shadowing the mayor and portfolio heads. Allocated a small office near the mayor, she was able to observe everything without directly involving herself in the decision making.

"I had no specific topic in mind – like housing or infrastructure - I just wanted to build up a view about the key topics of interest; and the conflicts quickly became evident" said Thina.

When the provincial party suggested erecting a statue to Nelson Mandela, local councillors and the community opposed the idea as it was not seen as a priority and they felt there had been little consultation. With little regard for this, they were overruled by the regional party, causing tension and emphasising the lack of autonomy of local councillors.

When allegations of administrative corruption in relation to the project were investigated by the municipal manager on the instruction of the mayor, the findings were not brought to the

knowledge of the council as they could have had implications for the council's governing party, making it very difficult to deal with issues like corruption.

Thina explained: "When councillors take the blame for such issues, we need to recognise the enormous pressure on them and the conflict that exists between local and provincial politics. The approach used was very much top down, rather than bottom up."

As part of the CLGF research family, Thina presented her paper at the research colloquium, a side event to the 2015 Local Government Conference in Botswana. "For a new researcher like myself, it was a great opportunity to trial my research before my university viva and take part in the conference and meet with practitioners. I would recommend anyone to take part in the conference."

If you would like to read more, Thina's paper has been published in the latest issue of the *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*. The CLGF Journal allows Commonwealth academics to submit their work for peer review and to be published. The views expressed in these papers, however, do not necessarily reflect the views of CLGF.



Research Colloquium 2017

If you are attending this year's Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Malta and undertaking research, join the Research Colloquium on 19 and 20 November 2017: *Local government resourcing and capacity – lessons from around the Commonwealth*. Join academics, policy makers and researchers as they discuss their research, with the outcomes presented to the main Commonwealth Local Government conference. For more information go to the conference website.

www.clgc2017.org



Increase your knowledge!

The Commonwealth Local Government Knowledge Hub is a searchable repository of research papers, reports, policy document and other materials related to local governance. Organised into eight themes: local democracy, local government finance, local government service delivery, women in local government, local government in small states, global development agenda, cities and urbanisation and local economic development - learn about the latest developments in Commonwealth local government.

www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub



Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance

Launched in 2008, the *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance* is a peer-reviewed e-journal, providing a forum for researchers and practitioners interested in local government ideas and practices. The journal brings together perspectives of researchers and local government practitioners to disseminate information, ideas and good practice across the Commonwealth.

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Conference website

Take a look at the Conference website. Find out how to reserve your place, access the evolving programme and discover more about practical issues like visas, accommodation and Malta itself. Confirmed speakers include Hon Dr Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta and the Rt Hon Baroness Patricia Scotland, Commonwealth Secretary General.

www.clgc2017.org



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For further information email clgc2017@clgf.org.uk or check out the CLGF 2017 Expo page on the conference website at www.clgc2017.org.

Event space for CLGF members

Commonwealth House

In June 2016, Queen Elizabeth II and the Commonwealth's Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland, launched a new concept of Commonwealth co-operation inviting three organisations, The Royal Commonwealth Society, Commonwealth Games Federation and Commonwealth Local Government Forum to move into the Secretariat offices opposite Marlborough House at 55-58 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JH.

The building is now called Commonwealth House.

For more information, contact: Info@clgf.org.uk



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