

## **In this edition**

### **Current Affairs**

- The Launch Event of the 2013 edition of the State of Local Governance Publication, *Active Citizenship Matters*, ignites a spark in conversations
- *Active Citizenship Matters* creates powerful ripple effects amplifying the voice of civil society in local governance
- BESG Executive Director tackles the funding issue for the local governance and democracy sector
- Celebrating Idasa: Pioneering GGLN member says farewell with a powerful message to the sector

### **Update from the Sector**

- Minister Richard Baloyi's report on the Local Government Turnaround Strategy to the Portfolio Committee on COGTA
- Environmental Monitoring Group reveals the true cost of the City of Cape Town's smart water meters

### **Update from Members**

- BESG attends landmark housing summit
- Afesis celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday
- GGLN hosts various Learning Events
- Isandla Institute hosts first Roundtable Dialogue for 2013

### **Update from GGLN Secretariat**

- GGLN Grant Opportunities for 2013/14

Dear Colleague,

The GGLN Secretariat is pleased to present the first edition of the newsletter for 2013!

This edition aims to provide you with an update of key events for members of the network as well as collective efforts of the GGLN that have made an impact in the sector in the past six months.

The 2012/13 grant year was a productive period for the network. The most notable output of the various activities is, without a doubt, the 2013 edition of the State of Local Governance Publication, *Active Citizenship Matters*. The publication has already had the desired effect in critical corners as the first section of the newsletter outlines. The GGLN Secretariat is pleased with the results of the publication and encourages all members to utilize *Active Citizenship Matters* as a tool to ignite honest, sincere and productive dialogue between community and local government structures.

The past year has also seen dramatic changes in terms of the network. Firstly, the previous GGLN Coordinator Ronald Mukanya, said goodbye in November 2012. Gabeba Gaidien was appointed as the new Coordinator in January 2013. We thank Ronald for his valuable contribution to the 2012/13 grant year and wish him well in his future endeavours. Pioneering GGLN member Idasa closed their doors after 27 years which is a powerful realization for the sector. This newsletter pays tribute to Idasa in the form of an official statement from the network and an interview with former COO for Idasa, Ivor Jenkins. Furthermore, Cameron Brisbane from BESG tackles the funding issue from a CSO point of view.

Please see our new sections which include updates from parliament and a profile of the work done by other organisations which touch on service delivery issues.

We also congratulate Afesis-Corplan on their milestone event especially considering the turbulent economic period for civil society!

A special word of thanks to BESG, Afesis-Corplan and The Black Sash for their contribution to this newsletter! **Happy reading!**

**GGLN Secretariat – May 2013**

A full list of GGLN members can be found at our website:  
<http://www.ggln.org.za/ggln-members>

**Contact us:**

Phone: (021) 683 7903/ Email: [ggln@isandla.org.za](mailto:ggln@isandla.org.za)

Fax: (021) 683 7956

## **GGLN News:Current Affairs**

**The GGLN launches *Active Citizenship Matters*, the fifth edition of the annual State of Local Governance Publication:**



***“The relationship between the State and the Citizen has to shift. The State has to find ways to act with Citizens, not on behalf of them”, Mirjam van Donk, Director of Isandla Institute***

As the South African democracy crawls through adolescence and stumbles into adulthood, active citizenship has become a hot topic in civil society. The National Development Plan commissioned in 2012 underlines an active citizenry as a critical success factor to realize its implementation.

Yet, what does the notion of an active citizenry mean for our country in the practical sense considering the current context of the South African political society? Even more crucial, how does the nature of our active citizenry define the relationship between the state and community and how does it contribute to the moulding of a healthy, pro-poor participatory democracy?

These represent some of the issues for reflection by civil society in the local governance sector and are in fact captured as such in the GGLN's fifth State of Local Governance publication themed *Active Citizenship Matters*. The publication, a compilation of research outputs with a strong lens on the nature of active citizenship in a local government context in South Africa, was launched on 14 March 2013 in Cape Town.

Dr. Bridgete Gasa, a Commissioner with the National Planning Commission, attended the proceedings as the keynote speaker and officially accepted the publication as a contribution from civil society to the National Planning Commission's knowledge pool.

“We need to have a clear understanding of what it means to have active citizenship,” said Mirjam van Donk, Chairperson of the GGLN Reference Group, at the launch of the publication. “The relationship between the state and the citizens has to shift. The state has to find ways to act with citizens, not on behalf of them”, said Van Donk. The recurring theme in the publication is that the notion of citizenship is multi-dimensional, and embraces many forms of engagement within communities, civil society and the state.

*Active Citizenship Matters* includes studies which reflect the reality at grassroots level in some of South Africa's key social sectors including human settlements and access to water. The various papers draw on the complicated web of relationships that underscore the South African development sector with the citizen at the centre of the process.



“Citizenship is profoundly political and deeply contextual,” emphasized Van Donk. “And that context acts as a canvas on which identity is formed and citizenship is claimed.”

“As we explored the notion of active citizenship over the past year, we realised that there is a normative slippage that can be quite dangerous. We had to examine our definitions of good citizenship. Do we include people on the margins? Do we have assumptions about certain populations? What do we see as an accepted modality of citizenship? Is it speaking in organised meetings? Is it taking to the streets?”

The contributions in Active Citizenship Matters reflect a wide range of experiences, but as Van Donk points out in the introduction to the publication, the proverbial elephant is the “deafening silence” about the role of political parties in active citizenship. This may reflect the fact that many civil society organisations have become disheartened with the politics of the day. On a more positive note, it may also reflect the fact that these organisations are reclaiming political space that has erroneously been left to political parties to occupy.

Civic activism has a history,” Thapelo Tselapedi from the Socio Economic Rights Institute of South Africa, explained. “After many years of engagement more sophistication comes in. In the case presented in this paper protest is seen as the only way to engage with a state that is unresponsive and aggressive.”

Mike Makwala from Planact told a similar story, reflecting a more sceptical look at the intersection between active citizenship and the self-interest which can motivate leaders’ actions.

The potential for conflict in community engagement processes may not be as acute if citizens and officials learn to change the story that they are both hearing and telling.

Dr Rama Naidu from the Democracy Development Programme spoke about the role of dialogue in building active citizenship. “When people are given a chance to talk, they will tell you that they know what is going wrong. Listening to what people have to say opens the door to harness the energies and capacities of communities,” he said.

To build trust we need to have a different methodology of engagement, one that is built on respect and trust and listening,” Van Donk commented.

Ownership of space and place is a vital component of active citizenship, according to Isandla Institute’s Tristan Görgens. “What is needed now is to (re-)claim the mixture of cunning intelligence and practical wisdom, rooted in the voices of marginalised communities, that enables ongoing, robust engagements between stakeholders and creates opportunities for the co-production of solutions,” he said.

Africa Centre for Cities’ Director Edgar Pieterse agreed that neighbourhood-level engagement was vital. “Ward committees operate on the wrong scale and they are broken,” he said. “Concrete opportunities for involvement as envisaged by Tristan are much smaller, and provide much more effective ways of allowing people to get involved in issues they are really interested in, and to build skills along the way.” In the light of what seems to be the “misfiring” of participatory democracy, Pieterse proposed a virtuous cycle of neighbourhood improvement with “integrated community development systems that can generate rich social ecologies of work”.

Elroy Paulus of The Black Sash presented the Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project (CMAP), a Black Sash initiative aimed at presenting a systemic approach for realising active citizenship. CMAP was implemented in all nine provinces in 2010-2012. “The definition of active citizenry must not be based on the interpretation of the concept by a particular state,” he said. “With CMAP we are able to demonstrate how accountability, monitoring and advocacy can add stakeholder legitimacy to the state’s framework of active citizenship. The citizens realise that they are active holders of fundamental rights, not passive users of public services.”

The importance of this position of strength was emphasised by Lesego Loate of The Mvula Trust, whose work with the women of Strydkraal and Apel showed how active citizenship can be transient. He found that the women worked together and formed organisations, but lacked collective agreement about how to work together in engaging the state. “This lack of agreement weakened their capacity to engage with local officials and government,” he said. “The problem was that they tended to view their organisations as being in competition with each other, rather than having strength in numbers. “Citizens need to be empowered so they can engage with the municipalities from a position of strength,” he said, “but the state also needs to be able to engage with a citizenry that is not totally organised.”

Nontando Ngamlana, Executive Director of Afesis-Corplan, honed in on the various barriers to effective citizen engagement in her presentation. She underscored the lack of political will, the state’s ill-capacity to engage the marginalized citizen, classism and poor civic education as some of the factors to be addressed. Furthermore she highlights the importance of political champions inside the various state sectors to promote innovative and meaningful citizen participation in key local government processes.

Walter Fieuw, from the Community Organisation’s Resource Centre, presented a paper which makes a strong case for community-led partnerships with local government entities based on innovative micro-initiatives from the community. “Informal Settlement Upgrading is about more than land and housing. It’s about realising equality and citizenship in our cities.”



Bridgette Gasa from the National Planning Commission was enthused by the discussions and accepted the publication in a positive spirit. “It starts here. We need to get this right,” she said. “Reducing poverty has been a goal for a long time ... the NDP has analysed the factors that cause poverty, and goes further than that. I believe the NDP enjoys support because we are on the right track. We want to start implementation, rather than striving for unity before we start implementation.”

According to Gasa, there is a disjuncture between policies and the funding for their implementation. The commission wants to find ways to track spending and how it links to what is happening on the ground. She added, “If we don’t deal with things like infighting within and between political parties, those kinds of wars stand in the way of development of citizens. Then we can rewrite the NDP in whatever way we want, but we won’t see the effective implementation of the plan. We need to make space for political freedoms and also make sure they don’t stand in the way of development.”

“It wasn’t so much that the system of local government wasn’t functioning,” she said. “It was more about: ‘I am not given space to influence that which is having an impact on my life. I need to be empowered in terms of how I will interact with the policy. I must have a say in decisions’.

*“It raises a fundamental question about the role of NGOs and NPOs and citizen organisations ... people want so much more than an IDP presentation,” Dr. Gasa.*

The GGLN is affiliated to LogoLink, an international learning initiative on citizen participation and local governance. According to Silvio Caccia Bava, from the LogoLink secretariat in Brazil, “the contexts may be different but the challenges are the same. We have to provide voices for groups who are invisible”.

“Democratic institutions have their credibility enhanced through active engagement with citizenship,” said Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay from the Indian NGO PRIA. “Problems begin in the democratic governance cycle. What is said in elections does not appear in policy, or policies are not backed up by resources. We need to put participation to the forefront, demand transparency and accountability in the heart of the governance cycle.”

## **GGLN News: Current Affairs**

### **Minister Trevor Manuel acknowledges the 2013 edition of the State of Local Governance (SoLG) Publication at a civil society meeting, University of Cape Town**

The GGLN is amazed by the transparency, depth and quality of dialogue at its various forums that trigger powerful moments of realization for local government officials, community representatives and civil society organisations alike. The extent to which critical stakeholders in community development discover “that they don’t know what they don’t know” the easier the shift to “knowing what they don’t know” and the easier it becomes to fill the gaps. The forums at the launch event of the State of Local Governance Publication as well as the various Learning Events are particularly productive in this regard and have added immense value to the thought processes of other key civil society sectors in terms of their theory of change. It would appear that these communities find resonance in the work of the local governance sector at these forums when it becomes clear that systemic change in terms of these critical issues can only happen through a participatory democracy which has to be nurtured carefully and consciously.

At the other end of the scale, the message which resonates in the 2013 SoLG publication *Active Citizenship Matters* was enthusiastically acknowledged by the National Planning Commission. This was evident in NPC Commissioner Dr. Bridgete Gasa’s keynote address and participation at the launch. It was further echoed by Minister Trevor Manuel, who acknowledged the publication’s content at a civil society meeting at the University of Cape Town (held on 10 April 2013) and quoted from various papers throughout his input.

### **GGLN Member invited to SALGA Roundtable discussion post SoLG 2013 Launch**

After the launch of the 2013 State of Local Governance publication *Active Citizenship Matters*, significant interest was expressed by several organisations and institutions in the work done by The Black Sash and other members of the GGLN. One such organisation was the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

SALGA’s role is to represent, promote and protect the interests of local government, transform local government to enable it to fulfil its developmental role, raise the profile of local government, ensure full participation of women in local government, perform its role as an employer body, and develop capacity within municipalities.

The GGLN and its members were therefore encouraged when SALGA asked requested two members (The Black Sash and Afesis-corporation) to make an input at a Roundtable discussion with the Local Authority Action for Southern Africa (LAACTSA) on 10 April 2013. Due to the short notice Afesis-corporation had to decline the invitation, but Elroy Paulus of The Black Sash was able to represent the GGLN and present the findings of the Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project (CMAP), documented in the 2013 State of Local Governance publication.

It was useful to engage with LAACTSA and SALGA and compare different mechanisms through which civil society participation can be promoted, as well as the constraints of formalised, invited spaces.

The engagement with SALGA enabled us to seek their assistance in acquiring future support for civil society formal permission to monitor local government services at a municipal level - even though this will continue as a practice informally when such permission is not granted

For more information about LAACTSA - see <http://www.actsa.org/page-1451-LAACTSA.html> or email [elroy@blacksash.org.za](mailto:elroy@blacksash.org.za) –

SALGA is keen to engage with civil society in the future. A summary of SALGA's Annual Performance Plan can be viewed on the SALGA website ([www.salga.org.za](http://www.salga.org.za)). A summary of its submission to Parliament can be accessed from another GGLN members' website shortly, namely Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG's) - at [www.pmg.org.za](http://www.pmg.org.za) - please email [elroy@blacksash.org.za](mailto:elroy@blacksash.org.za) or [info@pmg.org.za](mailto:info@pmg.org.za) if you are unable to access from PMG's site successfully.

## ***GGLN News: Current Affairs: Opinion***

**The 3 April 2013 edition of the South African Civil Society Information Service newsletter included an opinion piece by Aid Effectiveness and Donor Funding Researcher, Alexander O’Riordan regarding the state of funding in the governance and civil society sector. This is a critical issue for the sector and earlier this year it was underlined when one of its pioneers and a longstanding member of the GGLN, Idasa, closed their doors after 27 years of service.**

**The Executive Director of the Built Environment support Group (BESG) hereby responds to this article.**

### ***NGOs are neither lapdogs nor puppets***

Alexander o’Riordan’s treatise on the demise of Idasa, published on the SACSIS website, creates an impression that local NGOs are passively facing extinction. It is based on a shallow piece of desk-top research and anecdotal remarks attributed to some faceless donors.

The domestic NGO industry is extremely diverse, both in field and style of operation. We are believed collectively to employ more people and reach more vulnerable members of society than government itself, with a fraction of the budget. There are many funder impact studies in the public domain that have without exception documented a flight of foreign capital from the NGO sector. They include prestigious bodies such as Inyathelo Institute for Social Advancement, which has a very close finger on the pulse of the international donor community. They mapped a 70% decline in American philanthropy in 2010 alone.

NGOs operate in multiple service delivery sectors, along a spectrum between pure service delivery and acting as watchdogs and advocates of change. The only commonality between us is that, as a rule, we reach the people that government is failing. It is true that wages are uncompetitive and we suffer systemic losses of staff to the state and private sector. That is a yolk that we do not choose – it is thrust on us by donors demanding value for money and a government which exploits the sector as a source of cheap service delivery. Ask the myriad child welfare agencies who carry our foster care and adoption placement services on behalf of the Department of Social Development, which will only fund a percentage of their basic staff costs and then poach their staff with offers of lucrative packages.

O’ Riordan’s article was published days before a Manager’s Forum of the Good Governance Learning Network. There were only 18 members in the entire country out of tens of thousands of NGOs. Now there are 17. Many of us have contracted; others before Idasa were forced to close shop.

The second largest member of the Network after Idasa showed similar resilience to changing times under the “new dispensation.” It successfully transformed itself from an organisation of landed liberal white ladies protesting the injustices of apartheid, to move deep into areas of poverty and administrative injustice suffered by the most vulnerable sections of our society. In the past two years, both organisations had to make deep cuts, in the process shedding 50-60% of its staff, which are its most valuable asset and resource. So goes the adage, “the bigger they are, the harder they fall.”

Smaller NGOs are also susceptible to haemorrhaging when donors withdraw. Our NGO, the Built Environment Support Group (BESG), supports a programme of democratising service delivery across uMgungundlovu District, the Deepening Democracy Project.

The District Municipality saw value in the work we proposed and entered into a strategic partnership with us to promote public participation in local government. An external evaluation of the project conducted last year gave positive acknowledgement to our ability to harness, train, and organise over 120 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) across the District into broad civil society clusters.

Those clusters are platforms for communities to engage collectively with their local municipalities, to ensure that planning and budgeting processes are no longer the work of planning consultants and bureaucrats alone, but are responsive to local needs as expressed by communities themselves. The evaluation also paid tribute to the struggles we face in working with many elected councillors and administrators who are at best indifferent and at worst hostile to being held accountable for poor decision-making and service delivery.

In spite of the visible success of the project, it faces two challenges with respect to funding. The first is the decline in the donor pool. Of the three donors who originally supported our project, one has left the country and another has ceased funding civil society organisations in favour of bilateral (state-to-state) agreements. The second is the tendency of donors to give project-based funding for short periods and expect tangible results when we are involved in deep institutional change management processes.

A consultant who has undertaken a deeper analysis of the OECD database quoted by o’Riordan found that only 1.8% of the funds were allocated to NGOs in the governance sector. The overwhelming bulk of foreign government funding to the country is tied up in departments of the state. A trickle of it reaches civil society in the form of sub-contract arrangements. Some NGOs will grab it for economic survival – as has happened with the President’s drive to create 5 million work opportunities through the Expanded Public Works and Community Works Programmes. We become service delivery agents of the state, in what can best be described as a “lapdog” mentality. Some will balk bravely at the strings attached to offers of funding, where they compromise or threaten the core values that underpin our work.

To give two examples from our own cupboard of skeletons: BESSG has geared more than R100m of state funding into community-driven infrastructure and housing projects. As a means of reaching more communities than we can through direct project work, we use a mixture of research and documenting pro-poor development practice to influence the way government develops and implements enabling policy around service delivery.

In 2000, we led a research study into the impact of national housing subsidy scheme. It exposed many of the ills associated with “RDP housing” that is poorly located, undersized, and shoddily built. Government has since made several fundamental changes in both policy and regulation of the housing industry. However, the local conduit for European Union funding that underpinned the study had its own agenda and hired a public relations company to raise banner headlines. A national newspaper carried a front page story on the study headed, “Government service delivery a failure.” It destroyed our relationship with the National Department of Housing for two years.

A similar instance arose in 2011, when we exposed the awarding of a R2.1bn housing contract in the rural area of Vulindlela, outside Pietermaritzburg, without a tender. We are still picking up the pieces, but had we remained silent on these matters we would be betraying our core constituency and the CBOs whom we were supporting at the time.

Therein lies a final chapter missing in o’Riordan’s article: A government that speaks of civil society with a forked tongue. Our Constitution and local government legislation, and many prominent political leaders including the Deputy President and former Minister of Public Service and Administration, all talk to the need to promote and support a strong civil society to hold government to account. But it was a blot on the copybook of our first two State Presidents to accuse civil society of being “puppets of foreign governments” for speaking out with an independence of mind. Similarly, look at the hostile response of the majority party when its alliance partner, COSATU, convened a conference to engage with civil society.

Today, Stats SA cannot be challenged in demonstrating that we have deeper levels of poverty now than we did in 1994. And international NGOs cannot displace the rainbow nation of NGOs that supports and defends the poorest of the poor in our own backyard, simply because they are closer to those with the purse strings who call the shots.

Cameron Brisbane  
Executive Director  
Built Environment Support Group  
6<sup>th</sup> April 2013

## **GGLN News: Current Affairs**

### **GGLN Statement on the closure of Idasa**

*The GGLN is deeply saddened by the news of the closure of Idasa, which recently closed its doors after 27 years in the governance sector.*

*Idasa, founded by Alex Boraine and Frederik van Zyl Slabbert in 1986, was undoubtedly a pioneer in its field in the civil society sector. The organisation facilitated dialogue between critical stakeholders during the most tense periods of the apartheid era, when negotiations were sensitive and shaped the nature of South Africa's political transition.*

*Idasa was also a critical voice during some of the most definitive chapters in the early stages of the South African democracy. In addition to the analytical scope its work provided, Idasa was a valuable source of guidance and capacity building for the local governance sector.*

*Idasa has been an active member of the GGLN for almost a decade. The recent challenges that beset the organisation and ultimately led to its demise, while in some respects unique to Idasa, are similarly felt by other member organisations of the GGLN. Pertinently, the lack of value attributed to the local governance NGO sector and its collective practice by the South African government, the international donor community and domestic philanthropic organisations is particularly worrying.*

*Whilst we express our appreciation for Idasa's invaluable contribution to the development of the South African democracy, the GGLN as a civil society network in the governance sector strives to draw the lessons to be learned from this difficult chapter. We trust that, in the not too distant future, the Board of Idasa will take time to reflect and share lessons with the rest of the sector so that we may draw valuable insights and strength from their experience.*

**GGLN Reference Group – 9 April 2013**

**Please see following section which pays tribute to Idasa's legacy as a pioneer in the governance sector.**

## **GGLN News: Current Affairs**

### **Idasa's farewell after 27 years of service**

Ivor Jenkins started off at Idasa in 1990 as the regional office of Pretoria's Director. In 1997 the Idasa offices across SA integrated into two democracy centres – one in Cape Town and one in Pretoria. The Pretoria office was called Kutlwanong Democracy Centre and he became the Director of that Centre until his position changed to become the Chief Operating Officer. During the 23 years with Idasa he managed local, national and international political projects of a wide variety of foci for Idasa, while at the same time focusing on fundraising. Ivor managed 140 staff and was a member of Idasa's board and executive. In this interview, Ivor Jenkins shares some of his insights about Idasa's journey and the governance sector.

- 1. The closure of IDASA is a huge loss to the governance sector. How would you describe the legacy of IDASA?**

*Yes, I agree. It's a huge loss... the Governance and Democracy building sector has lost a key player for South Africa and the continent. To describe Idasa's legacy... (Idasa's) strength was its ability to see gaps and needs in societies where democracy was challenged/slipping and its ability to respond to these danger signs in good time thanks to its decisiveness. Idasa was recognized for this in the sector.*

- 2. How would you describe the current state of governance and democracy in South Africa and its evolution since the birth of our democracy?**

*It depends on how you measure democracy. We should acknowledge (and Idasa has always) the big leaps forward for South Africa. If we look over the last nineteen years it is quite impressive. Then we can jump and say yes...but...However, the emphasis must remain on the achievements made and the constitution is a huge highlight as a protector and promoter of democracy. We (and this is inclusive of citizens, politicians and civil society) haven't made the most of what democracy has to offer and thus our democracy has not lived up to its full potential. Yet, we should remember that democracy is a journey. It is healthy to remember this.*

- 3. Considering your answer to the aforementioned question, how do you see the role of civil society in the governance sector? What are their priorities?**

*Civil society organisations must ensure that they are financially sustainable. Secondly they must not consider themselves "high and mighty." We have a role to play as a critical alliance to democracy and the powers that be. I believe that civil society formations will change with the emergence of social movements. But civil society has a role to play and should always be around in its current form but in a more sustainable manner. The priorities are to support development in their capacity as a critic, monitors of the democratic process and also to educate the public. Civil society organisations have a critical role as facilitators of dialogue to build bridges between the power and the powerless.*

- 4. There is a strong civil society in the governance sector, committed to a healthy democracy. Are we doing enough to underline our value as a community? What should we do differently?**

*The emphasis of all our work should be the citizen in the community at grassroots level. Partnering with government is important but we shouldn't have an elitist approach but start working directly with communities and help to understand their role. The Scandinavian model is a good example, where citizens are empowering themselves to take charge of issues...not taking over from government but playing an active role in building their communities. Government, however, must empower communities to achieve this.*

- 5. What can we do, as civil society in the local governance sector particularly, to protect and honour IDASA's legacy?**

*Our emphasis should be on democracy and how it should operate at all levels. Democracy meaning that citizens' and communities' voices are included, on the table and those communities can take ownership of their own municipalities.*

## ***GGLN News: Updates from the sector***

### **National COGTA Minister delivers second progress report on Local Government Turnaround Strategy**

Minister Richard Baloyi briefed the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs on the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) when he presented the second progress report recently. This process included a review of COGTA's 2013/14 Annual Performance Plan.

The Committee expressed their concern about the following issues:

- The LGTAS as a permanent intervention with minimal impact
- Policy and legislative gaps
- Political interference in municipalities
- The non-achievement of Clean Audit 2014

The LGTAS report consists of 12 volumes, i.e. one for each province, one for national level and a final volume known as the Response Package.

Members of the PC expressed their concern about the LGTAS presence as a permanent intervention with no real impact. The Minister referred to the Response Package as the intervention to stabilize local government; however, this package is yet to be fully populated.

In terms of the report's definition of political interference in municipalities, the Committee decided it too limited and that the form of interference should be more carefully considered. The required amendments to various pieces of legislation are delayed mainly due to the Department's challenge to clearly allocate the Municipal Systems Act as a Section 75 or 76 piece of legislation.

The committee expressed their concern about the Department's failure to achieve their targets for a clean audit by 2014. The Committee labelled the targets as "over-ambitious" to start with.

In terms of the Annual Performance Plan for 2013/14, the Minister outlined the six programmes of the Department i.e.

- Administration,
- Policy, Research and Knowledge Management
- Governance and Intergovernmental Relations
- National Disaster Management Centre
- Infrastructure and Economic Development
- Municipal Government Support

The Minister reports that overall 74% of set targets have been achieved, 14% of targets were partially achieved and 4% of targets had not been achieved at all. One of the targets which concern Committee members is the high level of vacancies in municipalities and the lack of its ability to attract and retain the relevant skills to enable adequate service delivery. Only 79% of municipal management posts are currently filled. The other issue raised by the Committee is the lack of clearly defined targets in the plan as well as the lack of standardization in measuring backlogs and performance. The aforementioned makes it difficult to compare performance, identify and replicate best practice.

Other questions raised by the committee are as follows:

- Have COGTA's weaknesses as a department been identified?
- Who is monitoring the LGTAS and has it been documented?
- What is being done to assist municipalities with a poor revenue collection strategy?
- Where is the DPME's Municipal Assessment Tool?
- How will the Anti-Corruption model be monitored?

## **GGLN News: Updates from the sector**

### ***Leaks, debts and devices – a short film spotlighting the city’s water policy in low income communities.***

CAPE TOWN: A short film, debuted in Khayelitsha on 26 April 2013, tells the story of a poor community grappling with the stress of high water debt, leaking taps and the threat of having their water cut off on a daily basis because of the flow-restricting water devices installed by the city. *Leaks, debts and devices*, made by local civil society organisation the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG), visits water activist Nokuzola Bulana who, together with EMG and a group of women in Mahkaza, Khayelitsha, sought to work with city officials to address extensive water leaks and the resulting high bills in many low-income communities here.

‘The City of Cape Town began installing smart water metering systems five years ago as a way of managing residential water use and increasing debt,’ says EMG researcher Taryn Pereira. The rollout of the devices was largely in low-income homes, rather than in wealthy communities where money is not a barrier to accessing unlimited water.

‘Each day, the smart meters allow the municipally-allocated 350 litres of free daily water through to each household,’ explains Pereira, ‘then the meter shuts off the water. But this leaves families without water for the remaining 24 hour period.’

Because of extensive leaks and often inherited debt due to the often informal nature of property ownership, some families find themselves owing the city thousands of rands for water they haven’t used. In response to this, the city has installed the water devices which Bulana says are punitive. ‘The city has said it will only fix household leaks and freeze high debt if people agree to have a water management device installed,’ says Pereira.

Through this film, EMG seeks to raise awareness around the impossible choice being faced by poor households in Cape Town: leaks and high bills on the one hand; punitive flow restricting devices on the other.

‘We hope that the story will inspire others to take what action they can to address environmental and social injustice where they live.’

Nokuzola Bulana’s activism is part of a process which brings together the community and local government in a dialogue which seeks to explore ways to create a just people- and water-centred demand management system.

City officials from the water and sanitation department, councillors and the sub-council manager have been invited to attend the screening of *Leaks, debts and devices*. Meanwhile Nokuzola Bulana will be available for interviews.

The film is available online at <http://vimeo.com/63819397>.

#### **For more information:**

Taryn Pereira  
Researcher: Climate Change & Water  
Tel: 021 448 2881

## **GGLN NEWS: Updates from members**

### **BESG: Landmark Housing Summit held in Msunduzi**

Perhaps it is fitting to set the tone with a quote from Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, in his address to Members of Parliament on 22 March 2011; "Service delivery in many municipalities is failing because communities and stakeholders are not sufficiently involved". The Built Environment Support Group (BESG) hosted a landmark Housing Summit in Msunduzi on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 in commemoration of World Habitat Day, under the theme, 'Changing cities, building opportunities'.

The summit was a first for the city, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal, and came at an opportune time as relations between the municipality and citizens had collapsed while the city was under provincial administration through the whole of 2010 and 2011. The Summit was attended by stakeholders from the different sectors across the city including Councillors, provincial and local government officials, Ward Committee members, community based organisations, and members of CBO local government "clusters" that are part of BESG's Deepening Democracy Project. It was opened by Councillor Eunice Majola, Chair of the city's Economic Development Portfolio Committee, who welcomed the opportunity to examine the challenges of human settlements. She emphasised that, by working with communities and the municipal administration, it would be possible to identify and tackle problems together and improve service delivery.

The objectives of the Summit were to:

- Facilitate information exchange about the main fiscal instruments and programmes that have replaced the old one-size-fits-all 'housing subsidy'
- Enable Ward Committees and Community Based Organisations to jointly identify development challenges facing the city
- Give officials the opportunity to present plans for new water, sanitation, and housing projects, and progress reports on projects which are currently being implemented.
- Enable participants to engage with officials on specific development needs as a precursor the annual IDP review process.

Cameron Brisbane, Executive Director of BESG, provided a contextual background to the Summit. South Africa has the largest fiscal commitment to state-subsidised housing in Sub-Saharan Africa. Over 2.3 million households have benefited from the national housing subsidy scheme since 1994. However the drive to deliver numbers has resulted in fragmented and polarised urban development characterised by badly built peripheral townships (structurally and spatially), with no work opportunities and amenities. We still have a backlog of 2.7 million households without adequate housing and security of tenure, residing in sprawling informal settlements where people cannot even access the most basic services.

➤



The Summit took place against the backdrop of the Outcome 8 Agreement signed between the Department of Human Settlements and the Presidency in October 2010, committing the Department among other measures to provide secure tenure and basic services to 400 000 households in informal settlements by 2014. This prompted the participants within the discussion to engage in city development concerns around housing, service delivery and indigent support, informal settlement upgrading, municipal budgets and project implementation, with one participant stating, “We need to re-visit the label informal settlements as some of them have been in existence for 20 years.”

Participants, civil society and the wider communities were encouraged to continue to engage with the municipalities through ward committee meetings as the vehicle for public participation in the municipality, and IDP and budget consultation meetings. In order to achieve sustainable and equitable urban development that allows for spaces to reflect on the state of our cities and the universal challenges of urbanisation, it is critical to stop building ‘walls’ and to start building more ‘bridges’.

To access Msunduzi Housing Summit Conference Report please click here <http://www.besg.co.za/msunduzi-housing-summit-2012.html>

### Afesis- Corplan: Happy birthday!

October 2012 marked Afesis-corplan’s 20 years of existence and proud affirmation that we have evolved into one of the key regional role players in the areas of our work. Afesis-corplan is a vibrant, dynamic development non-governmental organisation (NGO) situated in East London that is well recognised as a pioneer in the area of deepening participatory democracy and good local governance, community development and alternative settlement development approaches. To commemorate 20 years of excellent work, Afesis-corplan had a two day event which included site visits, a seminar and closed off with a gala dinner with its partners, sponsors and some communities we have been working with.



### Isandla Institute Roundtable on Deliberative Democracy and Social Accountability

On 23 April Isandla Institute convened a Roundtable dialogue on Deliberative Democracy and Social Accountability. The Roundtable reflected on the roles and expectations of civil society actors to help reinvigorate relations between the state, civil society and communities. It took its cue from the NDP, which presents an opportunity for various stakeholders to move beyond ‘diagnosing’ the nature and quality of participatory local democracy in the country to also explore ground-breaking models and practices of *social accountability* and *deliberative democracy* in order to help accelerate development.

A number of civil society organisations presented various models for social accountability practices while Jonathan Timm from the Department of Performance Management and Evaluation (DPME) in The Presidency presented the framework for community based monitoring of public services envisaged by his department. The morning session allowed for productive engagement between civil society and the DPME about monitoring practices and engaging civil society in this process from government. The afternoon session was addressed by Wilmot James MP, Federal Chairperson for the Democratic Alliance who spoke to the nexus between leadership, social accountability and deliberative democracy.

## **GGLN NEWS: Network Events**

### **GGLN Learning Events 2012/13**

#### **Project For Conflict Resolution & Development (PCRD)**

The PCRD Learning Event took place on 25 March in Port Elizabeth. The event was targeted at a small group of stakeholders including senior representatives from two municipalities

The monitoring and evaluation of local governance processes has been a key area of focus for various GGLN members who have designed and tested some of the better known M&E tools focused on community participation in local governance structures. The PCRD Learning Event allowed for some reflection on the strategic relevance and suitability of the tools including its design, the research methodology applied in utilizing these tools and how to leverage the outcomes by being more strategic about packaging and utilizing the key learnings generated via these surveys. The event was well attended by a small forum of targeted participants and local municipal staff from two different municipalities made a powerful contribution which will enrich the methodology of such surveys going forward. Furthermore, an informative discussion about the strategy of the DPME for local governance monitoring and evaluation shed some light on how this affects municipal operations and perceptions and its impact on community engagement.

#### **Planact**

The Planact Learning Event took place on 19 March at the Planact offices in Johannesburg. The event was targeted at community organisations as a capacity-building exercise focused on community-based monitoring.

The objectives of this learning event were to improve community based monitoring in terms of government performance (governance and service delivery) by learning from the monitoring practices of various organisations through research and practice. Planact gathered a few of the most prominent community organisations in its network to share the success stories of GGLN members monitoring practices. Black Sash presented their CMAP project, Afesis-Corplan presented the GGS survey and the Tswanarang Legal Advocacy Centre shared their success story about monitoring the capacity of the police to comply with the Sexual Offences Act.

#### **SERI**

The SERI Learning Event took place on 5 April in Durban. The event was targeted at selected civil society organisations focused on housing issues.

SERI's event focused on the issue of housing demand, allocation and housing waiting lists, stemming from a research exercise named "Jumping the Queue", Waiting Lists and Other Myths: Perceptions and Practice around Housing Demand and Allocation in South Africa. The learning objective was to present findings from research that GGLN members SERI and CLC had conducted and to get feedback from civil society on the implications for research and advocacy going forward.

#### **The Black Sash**

The Black Sash Learning Event took place in November 2012. The event was targeted at community activists as a capacity –building exercise to strengthen their knowledge on local government practice.

The purpose of this learning event was to provide Black Sash staff and GGLN members in the region with an opportunity to engage with the activists' guide "Making local government work", developed by the Local Government Action (LGA) forum. This workshop was in order to develop an approach for its use in a range of community engagements such as training, development, support, mentorship and advocacy.

## ***GGLN NEWS: Update from the Secretariat***

**As the network enters the 2013/14 grant period, a new range of opportunities are on the table to create and share knowledge towards nurturing a participatory democracy.**

***Members have submitted their applications for the following grant opportunities. Thank you!***

<b>Grant</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF GRANT</b>
Research	Support the generation and documentation of knowledge in the interest of nurturing a pro-poor participatory democracy
Learning Event	The primary purpose of the learning events is to facilitate knowledge sharing and peer-learning amongst GGLN members to strengthen civil society

***Please watch this space for additional opportunities later in the year!***