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HLANGANISA
COMMUNITY FUND
FOR SOCIAL AND GENDER JUSTICE

HLANGANISA POST

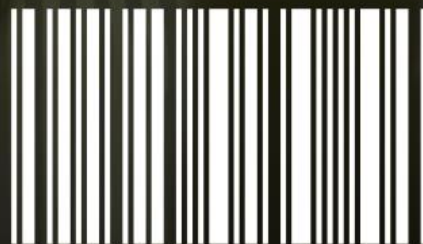
Power & Promises

**Will the Election
Change the Fortunes of
Women in SA?**

30 Years

**After Democracy:
Reflecting on
Women's Progress**

**A Historic Milestone in
the Fight Against
Gender-Based Violence
in South Africa**





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Guiding thought by CEO

Leadership Reflections: A Mid-Year Review

by Bongwiwe Ndondo

As we reach the midpoint of 2024, it is a moment of immense pride and gratitude to reflect on the incredible strides made by the Hlanganisa Community Fund. Our commitment to social and gender justice continues to drive our efforts, and the first half of this year has been marked by significant achievements and impactful initiatives.

One of our most notable accomplishments has been the successful execution of our dialogue platform debate with eight political parties. This event not only amplified diverse

voices but also fostered a deeper understanding of the political landscape ahead of the national elections

The dedication of our team and partners has been instrumental in these successes. Our regional collaborations in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have strengthened our collective impact, allowing us to address social justice issues on a broader scale. The SEF project, focusing on youth advocacy, has been particularly inspiring. By addressing pressing concerns such as unemployment and gender-based violence we are empowering the youth to become catalysts for change.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our staff, partners, and community members for their unwavering support and dedication. Together, we are building a future rooted in justice, equity, and empowerment. As we navigate the second half of the year, I am confident that we will continue to make meaningful progress towards our shared vision.

In solidarity,

Bongwiwe Ndondo

CEO, Hlanganisa Community Fund

This Quarter's Highlights

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Breaking Barriers: Reflecting on Women's Progress 30 Years After Democracy



In April 2024 we hosted a landmark event "The Status of Women: 30 Years After Democracy," a gathering that brought together thought leaders, activists, and community members to reflect on the progress and challenges faced by women in South Africa since the advent of democracy.

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Power and Promises: Will the Election Change the Fortunes of Women in SA?



In May 2024, Hlanganisa Community Fund & Women Inspired Solutions for Empowerment (WISE) hosted a political debate aimed to critically examine the gender policies and commitments of various political parties ahead of the 2024 elections in South Africa.

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From Kanyama to Mzuzu: Sustaining Hope, Community Resilience and Innovation



Support visits were conducted to eight Hlanganisa partners in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe as part of the Mhare Programme which seeks to support community-based organisations in mainstreaming disability in their local gender-based violence responses.

A Historic Milestone in the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence in South Africa



In May 24, 2024, a significant step was taken towards eradicating gender-based violence & femicide (GBVF) in South Africa. President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the National Council on Gender-Based Violence & Femicide Bill and the National Prosecuting Authority Amendment Bill into law.

Fostering Collaboration for Social Justice: Highlights from Hlanganisa's Annual Partners' Convening 2024



In July, 2024, Hlanganisa Community Fund hosted its Annual Partners' Convening, bringing together over 124 community-based organizational members from our regional footprint with the aim of creating a collaborative environment for learning, sharing, and connecting, fostering organizational sustainability and capacity building.

Partner Profile: Forum For Youth Development

Empowering Women and Girls with Disabilities: A Journey Towards Justice and Equality



Women and girls with disabilities face multiple layers of discrimination. In Malawi, despite advances in gender equality over the past decade, the country ranks 145 out of 1888 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII), reflecting high levels of inequality in reproductive health, women's empowerment, and economic activity.

Breaking Barriers: Reflecting on Women's Progress 30 Years After Democracy

The Hlanganisa Community Fund in April hosted a landmark event "The Status of Women: 30 Years After Democracy," a gathering that brought together thought leaders, activists, and community members to reflect on the progress and challenges faced by women in South Africa since the advent of democracy. The event was a resounding success, generating insightful discussions and widespread media coverage.

The event underscored the undeniable progress made in various areas, such as increased female representation in government and improvements in legal frameworks protecting women's rights. However, it also highlighted significant gaps that remain, particularly in addressing gender-based violence and economic disparities. One of the critical takeaways was the call for a renewed commitment to intersectional approaches that consider the diverse experiences of women across different backgrounds. The need for stronger enforcement of existing laws, enhanced support systems for survivors of violence, and greater opportunities for women's economic empowerment were emphasized. The discussions also pointed to the importance of engaging younger generations in the fight for gender equality.

Bongiwe Ndondo, delivered an inspiring keynote address that set the tone for the day. She presented research findings Hlanganisa conducted on political parties and



their gender manifestos, focusing on their commitments to women's rights and gender equality in the upcoming elections. This segment provided a platform to access political accountability and encouraged a critical examination of how each party intends to further the cause of gender justice. She emphasized the importance of continued advocacy and action to achieve true gender equality. Her words resonated deeply with the audience, sparking a series of engaging panel discussions and interactive sessions.



Gender lens is blurred

Asanda Mathlale asandamathlale@icj.ac.za

As Evelyn Dyer and the 2024 national elections draw near, Hlanganisa Community Fund For Social and Gender Justice held a Gender Justice Emergency Debate on April 16, to tackle pressing challenges that continue to affect women.

The organisation's CEO Bongiwe Ndondo conducted a presentation based on gender analysis of election manifestos.

"We decided to do a gender analysis of four manifestos to assess what the manifestos said about women, mostly because our Constitution is anchored on gender equality and there are numerous policies that speak to women's rights," she said.

Ndondo added the last census data revealed that 51.2% of the population of SA is women, which shows an increase of more than a million compared to the previous census result.

The parties chosen by Hlanganisa for the gender analysis of election manifestos were the ANC, DA, EFF, IFP and JEFF.

The gender framework used to decide which parties to use included:

- Minimum compliance
- Employment
- The indicator framework points used were as follows:
- Gender sensitivity
- Party
- Legislative priorities
- Political pledges with socio-economic priorities
- Provision of services

Policy strategist and analyst Thokozile Mokofo.

Hlanganisa Community Fund for Social and Gender Justice CEO Bongiwe Ndondo.

Dndondo's findings in the analysis concluded that since the dawn of democracy in 1994, women continued to be marginalised.

"Based on what the [political] parties are presenting, there was a lot of gender blindness in how society viewed socio-economic issues.

"There is no appreciation that women continue to be impacted differently from men and often disproportionately from men.

"As long as we do not have the gender lens, we will continue to deliver services in the same manner we have been. We will continue to look at

Programme director Cathy Mabinane.

Advocate Brenda Mabinane-Pajoo.

issue with a gender-neutral lens that does not recognise women's needs in society."

The chairperson of the organisation Lebo Ramafiso highlighted that 30 years into the country's democracy, particularly a black people and the LGBTIQ+ community, citizens could not speak of the past 30 years as only down and gloom, but equally could talk about the successes that have made people's lives as desirable as they hoped they would be.

"I say that because we cannot underestimate what it means to live in a democratic SA. Thirty years ago the race was

unpredictable. I witnessed people being necklaced and killed. People say it was a peaceful transition and there was no war, which is partially a myth because township were war-torn."

She concluded that to emerge into a democracy with the kind of hope that the country had and opportunities in citizens' task advantage of, was evading short of a miracle.

"I don't want us to dwell on the statistics and what happened to SA 30 years ago in a way that almost makes us lose out on the momentous occasion of what election day means."

Power and Promises: Will the Election Change the Fortunes of Women in SA?

On 20 May, Hlanganisa Community Fund and Women Inspired Solutions for Empowerment (WISE) a political debate titled "Power & Promises: Will the Election Change the Fortunes of Women in SA?" This platform was designed to critically examine and discuss the gender policies and commitments of various political parties ahead of the 2024 elections. The event aimed to bridge the gap between political promises and the lived realities of women in South Africa, fostering accountability and encouraging informed voting.

The dialogue was moderated by Cathy Mohlahlana and it featured representatives from major political parties, including the African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Freedom Front Plus (FF+) Rise Mzansi and Action SA. Each representative presented their party's manifesto, highlighting their plans and policies to address gender disparities and promote the empowerment of women.

Bongiwe Ndondo, CEO of Hlanganisa Community Fund, opened the event with an empowering keynote address, emphasizing the necessity of integrating a gender lens into all political and socio-economic discussions. She stressed that issues affecting women should not be seen as women's issues alone but as critical societal challenges that require collective action.

Throughout the event, there were engaging

discussions on various topics, including gender-based violence, economic empowerment, political participation, and access to education and healthcare. Ndondo highlighted the findings of a gender analysis conducted by Hlanganisa on the election manifestos. This analysis revealed that, despite South Africa's progressive constitution, many political manifestos still exhibit significant gender blindness, failing to adequately address the unique challenges faced by women.

Here are key quotes from the party representatives during the "Power & Promises: Will the Election Change the Fortunes of Women in SA?" event:

Tshgofatso Mashabela, EFF Tshwane Secretary | Councilor:



"The EFF prioritizes the eradication of gender-based violence and economic empowerment for women. We believe in a radical approach to dismantle the systemic barriers that oppress women in our society."

Tumi Ramakoaba, Publicity Secretary of the IFP Women's Brigade in Gauteng:



"The IFP is dedicated to creating safe and empowering environments for women. Our focus is on practical support and policies that address the unique challenges women face, especially in rural areas."

Tammy Breedt from the FF+ Youth and Women:



"The FF+ aims to enhance security and legal protections for women, and we are pushing for policies that promote gender equality in all sectors. Women's rights and safety are non-negotiable."

Vuyiswa Ramokgopa, Rise Mzansi, Candidate for Gauteng Premier:



"Rise Mzansi is committed to building a new social contract where women's rights are central. We need to ensure our policies are inclusive and address the root causes of gender inequality."

Lerato Ngobeni, ActionSA's National Spokesperson & a Councillor in the City of Johannesburg:



"ActionSA's policies are centered on practical solutions for women's empowerment. We advocate for better education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women."



Cat Moji, ATM NEC Member:



"The ATM believes in holistic approaches to gender equality. We are focused on community-based solutions and ensuring that women's voices are heard in all spheres of decision-making."

Mapaseka Steve Letsike, ANC NEC Member & LGBTIQ+ Human Rights Activist:



"As the ANC, we recognize that gender equality must go beyond mere representation. We are committed to creating policies that ensure substantive equality and address the intersectional challenges faced by women and the LGBTIQ+ community. It is imperative that our approach is inclusive, leaving no one behind in our pursuit of justice and equity."

At the conclusion of the "Power & Promises: Will the Election Change the Fortunes of Women in SA?" event, Advocate Brenda Madumise offered powerful closing remarks. She emphasized the critical need for political accountability and the importance of ensuring that gender equality remains a priority in all political agendas. Madumise called for continuous engagement with political manifestos and urged women to hold political parties accountable for their promises. She stressed the importance of informed voting to ensure that elected leaders are committed to creating substantive and lasting change for women across South Africa.



Madumise's closing message underscored the necessity of collective action and solidarity in the ongoing fight for gender justice, reminding attendees that the pursuit of equality is not just a women's issue but a societal imperative that demands everyone's involvement. While much progress has been made, significant work remains. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the political representatives, speakers, participants, and media partners and event sponsor First for Women who contributed to making this event a success. For further details on the event and to watch the full discussion, you can view the recording on the Hlanganisa Community Fund YouTube channel.

TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Meet Our New Hlanganisa Community Fund Changemakers

We are excited to welcome our new Programmes Team!



Mesadi Malinga, Puseletso Maila, Khomotso Majoafi, Believe Hlahla, Mpho Matobako and Nomthandazo Gabela.

From Kanyama to Mzuzu: Sustaining Hope, Community Resilience and Innovation

By Chiedza Chagutah

Support visits to eight Hlanganisa partners based in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe were conducted during the second quarter of the year. All partners visited are part of the Mhare programme, which seeks to support community-based organisations in mainstreaming disability in their local gender-based violence responses.

The first engagement was in the bustling compound of Kanyama, followed by Chibombo, a two-hour drive from Lusaka in Zambia. The visits then proceeded to Zimbabwe, starting in the green Hauna Valley, characterised by winding roads in the Eastern Highlands, and Chipadze in Bindura. Shortly after, the next destination was Malawi, beginning at Nampeya trading centre under the Chikweo traditional authority. The visit to BLAYACO in the vibrant Chemussa on the outskirts of Blantyre was followed by a seven-hour bus ride to Lilongwe before heading to Chipata in Zambia, with the last visit conducted in Mzirawaingwe in Mzuzu, in the surrounds of Nkhata Bay.

This series of visits testified to the breadth of communities Hlanganisa partners with. Many of these community-based organisations rely heavily on both the funding from Hlanganisa and the support of their communities. Each organisation has found innovative ways of



collaborating with other community leaders, providing valuable information to their communities. A key challenge that many communities face is the accessibility of education facilities for learners with disabilities, further compounded by stigma against these learners, prompting parents to keep their children at home while others go to school. The local chief in Mania applauded the work being done by the Forum for Youth Development in equipping his community with skills to advocate for the right to education, particularly for young girls. However, some parents that Hlanganisa met with in the community lamented, "There is no use in taking our children with disabilities to these schools because they do not learn anything." They cited that teachers did not give their children the attention needed for



them to succeed. This community is still reeling from the effects of Cyclone Freddy over a year ago. For a community heavily reliant on agriculture, two consecutive years of drought have worsened their situation.

It was encouraging to see the level of cohesion in many communities, particularly the spirit of volunteerism. The common thread was that volunteers have been the engines driving the momentum that Hlanganisa partners have achieved in mobilising local events, dispensing information, and widening their reach.

Community-based paralegalism has also been a common approach to addressing the high levels of gender-based violence. Action for Positive Change used funding from Hlanganisa to build a one-stop centre in Chief Chinyaku's village, serviced by 18 community-based paralegals trained by the paralegals at the local hospital. The Forum for Youth Development has also adopted paralegalism by creating disability forums for each village and training paralegals using the CBO toolkit produced by Hlanganisa. Ulemu Noone Excluded has also used their one-stop centre located at the local hospital to provide paralegal advice to GBV survivors. This truly demonstrates the critical role that community-based paralegalism has as an entry point for survivors who would otherwise remain silent.

Other innovations used by Hlanganisa include social entrepreneurship. Of note is the Ruvimbo simulation centre based in Chipadze, Mashonaland Central in Zimbabwe. Their emphasis is on enabling financial independence for women and girls with disabilities. They provide their members with start-up capital, and profits are reinvested into the enterprise. Many members exclaimed how their lives have been enhanced by this



initiative, especially regarding the community's perception of their contributions as members of society.

Service delivery is substandard in many communities, including bad roads, poor sanitation, energy crises, and limited access to clean water. In Malawi, inflation has dealt a huge blow not only to low-income households but also to organisations dependent on funding, as the value of the initial amount erodes significantly before they can implement their planned work. The zeal shown by Hlanganisa partners

Meet The Author



Chiedza Chagutah
Senior Manager: Program
Development & Knowledge
Management

FEATURE ARTICLE

Overcoming First-Time Voting Anxiety and Navigating the Voting Process

Voting for the first time can feel overwhelming, but it's also an incredible opportunity to make your voice heard and help shape the future. In this edition, we're sharing the stories of two of our organization's young first-time voters who faced their fears, navigated the voting process, and found the confidence to cast their ballots. Through their experiences, we hope to empower other new voters to overcome their anxieties and recognize the power they hold to create the change they want to see in the world.

Sikhanyiso's Story



I started my day like any other, waking up with mixed emotions and a flurry of thoughts. My unease stemmed from the fact that many people my age were not voting, and I felt like

an outcast as I was the only young person there.

I had spent the entire week contemplating which political party and candidates to vote for while trying to understand their manifestos and policies. This process left me feeling confused, especially with the peer pressure from friends urging me to vote for specific parties. To navigate this confusion, I decided to educate myself about the voting process. I recognized that mistakes are common even among experienced voters when choosing leaders. I began to view the voting process as a selection panel where candidates are applicants for a job. I asked myself what steps I should take to choose the right leader.

I assessed the current state of my country and identified the qualities I needed in a leader based on our nation's needs. For instance, if my country required constitutional reforms, I would look for a candidate with expertise in constitutional law and economic knowledge. I examined the candidates' policies and manifestos as if they were resumes, evaluating them based on my country's requirements. By the end of the day, I was able to select a leader using this diagnostic approach.

Casting my vote was significant because the future of the country involves the youth, and



as a young person, I felt a strong sense of responsibility. Voting for the first time made me feel empowered, knowing that my vote could contribute to shaping the country's future.

Overall, the election process went smoothly. Voters participated in a free and peaceful election, and the process was conducted democratically.

Gaofengwe's Story



As a first-time voter, I felt a bit uncertain about the candidates, but after researching their policies, I knew my vote mattered.

It was important for me to participate because every voice counts, and I wanted to be part of shaping the future.

The overall experience was seamless and I will definitely be voting again in future elections.

Here are some helpful tips for first-time voters to overcome anxiety and navigate the voting process:

Prepare in Advance

- Research the Candidates and Issues: Familiarize yourself with the candidates, their platforms, and any measures or propositions on the ballot.
- Know Your Polling Location: Find out where your polling place is ahead of time, and check its hours of operation.
- Review Voting Requirements: Understand what identification or documents you might need to bring.

Practice Self-Care

- Get Plenty of Rest Make sure you're well-rested before heading out to vote.
- Stay Hydrated and Nourished: Eat a healthy meal and bring a water bottle, especially if you anticipate waiting in line.

Arrive Early

Consider voting early or arriving at your polling place when it opens to avoid long lines and potential stress.

Go with a Friend or Family Member

Voting with someone you trust can make the experience less intimidating and provide emotional support.

Familiarize Yourself with the Voting Equipment

If you have concerns about the voting machines or process, review any available information on the type of equipment used at your polling place. Some election offices provide demonstrations or practice ballots online.

Ask for Help if Needed

Poll workers are there to assist you. Don't hesitate to ask for help if you're unsure about any part of the voting process.

Use a Voting Checklist

Create a checklist of things to remember, such as bringing your ID, knowing the names of the candidates, and understanding the ballot measures.

Focus on the Importance of Your Vote

Remember that your vote counts. Think about the impact your vote can have on your community and your future.

Stay Calm and Confident

Practice breathing exercises or mindfulness techniques to help reduce anxiety. Remind yourself that many people are voting for the first time, and it's okay to feel nervous.

Celebrate Your Participation

Voting is an accomplishment, especially the first time. Plan a small celebration or reward yourself after you've cast your ballot. By following these steps, you can reduce anxiety and feel more confident navigating the voting process.

COMMUNICATIONS FEATURE ARTICLE

The Hidden Narrative: The Art of Storytelling for Community-Based Organisations

By Prudence Siweya

Storytelling is not just about conveying information; it's about unveiling the hidden narratives that shape our communities. For community-based organizations (CBOs), effective storytelling means digging deeper to uncover the untold stories that truly resonate with people. These hidden narratives are often the most powerful, as they reveal the heart and soul of the community and the transformative impact of the organization's work.

Every community is filled with invisible heroes – individuals whose contributions may go unnoticed but are vital to the fabric of the community. In rural areas, this often manifests in everyday acts of kindness that aren't formally recognized as charity. For instance, many individuals selflessly take care of children in their neighbourhood while the parents are at work, providing a crucial service without any expectation of payment or formal acknowledgment. These unsung heroes are the backbone of community resilience, offering support and stability that allows families to thrive.

By focusing on these remarkable individuals, community-based organizations (CBOs) can highlight the often-overlooked acts of kindness, resilience, and dedication that keep

their initiatives thriving. For example, sharing the story of a grandmother who looks after several children in the village so that their parents can earn a living not only celebrates her contribution but also underscores the importance of community solidarity. These narratives bring to light the informal networks of care and support that are essential in rural settings. These stories resonate deeply because they reflect the true spirit of community and the collective effort required to address social issues.

Stories have the unique ability to evoke emotions and create lasting connections. When people feel emotionally invested, they



Images Inspired By "Unsung Community Heroes"



are more likely to support and engage with the cause. By crafting stories that touch the heart – whether it’s a tale of triumph over adversity, a moment of unexpected kindness, or a story of profound personal growth – CBOs can build a loyal and passionate supporter base.

Storytelling is a great way to challenge stereotypes and change how people see things. By sharing different stories from the community, CBOs can break down barriers and help people understand and empathize with each other. When we highlight stories from marginalized or underrepresented groups, we make sure everyone’s voice is heard, creating a more inclusive story that truly shows the community’s diversity.

Lastly, A single powerful image or a well-crafted video can tell a story more effectively than pages of text. visuals can make a story even more powerful. Photos, videos, and infographics can capture moments and emotions in a way that words sometimes can’t. CBOs can tell stories that not only inform but also inspire and mobilize. This approach ensures that the stories resonate deeply, leaving a lasting impact on both the community and the wider audience.

Meet The Author



Prudence Siweya
Communications Specialist at
Hlanganisa Community Fund



Images Inspired By “Unsung Community Heroes”

GRANTS FEATURE ARTICLE

Empowering Grassroots Organizations: The Journey from Funding to Impact

By Tshenolo Ramokgopa

Grassroots organizations are the backbone of community-driven social change. At Hlanganisa Community Fund, we believe in empowering grassroots organizations and formations by providing the financial support they need to transform their ideas into tangible impacts. Our journey from funding to impact is a testament to the power of collective action and the vital role of community-led initiatives in fostering social justice and development.

Grassroots organizations are uniquely positioned to understand and address the specific needs of their communities. They bring local knowledge, cultural competence, strengthening the social fabric of their communities and a deep commitment to their causes. The organizations often operate in challenging environments with limited resources, addressing issues such as gender-based violence, advocating for land rights, and access to public services and social justice amongst other social change issues whilst transforming societal structures, norms and behaviours. In an effort to create an equitable and inclusive world that addresses inequality, poverty discrimination, human rights violation and environmental degradation. Their work is essential in bridging gaps left by systemic issues, larger institutions and government

programs.

Funding As The First Step Towards Empowerment

One of the cornerstones of our support is our tailored technical and programmatic capacity building. Our capacity-building initiatives are designed to enhance the skills, knowledge and leadership capacity and the operational and strategic capabilities of the organizations. This includes workshops and training on governance, advocacy, and community mobilization, as well as one-on-one mentoring and peer learning opportunities.

Empowerment also involves creating platforms for collaboration and networking. We facilitate connections between grassroots organizations, enabling them to share best practices, resources, and experiences. By fostering a sense of community and solidarity, we amplify their collective voice and impact. These networks also provide opportunities for joint initiatives and partnerships, further strengthening their ability to effect change.

Measuring Impact

Understanding the impact of our funding is crucial. We employ robust research and data driven decision-making to understand the issues and the interconnectedness of these



issues and how they impact the marginalised by bringing an intersectional approach to ensure that all voices are part of the solution. We also employ robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the outcomes of the grants we offer. This helps us identify what works and what doesn't, allowing us to continuously refine our approach. It also ensures accountability and transparency, both to our funders and the communities we serve. By measuring impact, we celebrate successes and learn from challenges, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. As we look ahead, we understand that the journey from funding to impact is ongoing and requires sustained effort and adaptation. We are proud to be part of this journey, supporting community-driven change and witnessing the profound difference that the organizations make in their communities.

Meet The Author



Tshenolo Ramokgopa
Grants Manager at
Hlanganisa Community Fund

A Historic Milestone in the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence

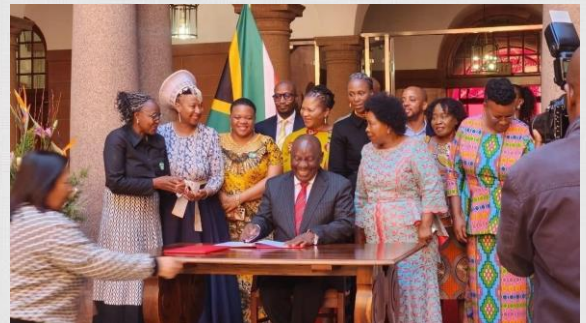
On May 24, 2024, a significant step was taken towards eradicating gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) in South Africa. At the Women’s Memorial at the Union Buildings, President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Bill and the National Prosecuting Authority Amendment Bill into law. This momentous event marks a historic moment for gender justice in our nation.

The newly established National Council on GBVF will spearhead a multi-sectoral approach to address GBVF, providing strategic leadership and ensuring the safety and security of women across South Africa. This council is a testament to the national commitment to eliminate GBVF through coordinated efforts involving government, civil society, and private organizations.

Hlanganisa Community Fund welcomes this groundbreaking legislation, which supports and amplifies our on-the-ground efforts to combat GBVF. The council's establishment reinforces our mission to promote social justice and gender equity, enhancing our capacity to make a meaningful impact. The National Prosecuting Authority Amendment Bill, effective from July 1, 2024, further complements these efforts by ensuring a more effective judicial response to GBVF, holding perpetrators accountable and delivering justice.

Our involvement in this historic moment

reflects our ongoing dedication to ending GBVF. The presence of Hlanganisa representatives at the signing ceremony underscores our commitment to supporting and working alongside the National Council on GBVF and other stakeholders.



Moving forward, Hlanganisa is committed to raising awareness and educating communities about the new measures and protections established by these bills. By empowering individuals with knowledge, we can foster a more informed and proactive community ready to advocate for their rights and contribute to the nationwide effort to end GBVF.

As we celebrate this significant advancement, we reaffirm our dedication to building a safer and more equitable society for all.

“Hlanganisa is committed to working tirelessly to ensure the vision of a GBVF-free South Africa becomes a reality” says Bongwiwe Ndondo, CEO of Hlanganisa.

Fostering Collaboration for Social Justice: Highlights from Hlanganisa's Annual Partners' Convening 2024

By Puseletso Maile

From July 9th to 11th, 2024, Hlanganisa Community Fund hosted its Annual Partners' Convening, bringing together over 124 community-based organizational members from all our regional footprint which includes Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. This event aimed to create a collaborative environment for learning, sharing, and connecting, fostering organizational sustainability and capacity building. The convening covered a range of critical themes, including leadership in challenging contexts, advancing access to justice, and movement building.

The convening commenced with a strong focus on creating a culture of respect and wellness. Participants were reminded of the importance of adhering to a code of conduct, which emphasized respecting boundaries, avoiding discriminatory behavior, and ensuring consent for privacy. This agreement established a foundation of mutual respect and collaboration, ensuring all participants felt safe and valued. By upholding these principles, attendees demonstrated their commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive atmosphere.

A central theme of the convening was the impact of leadership in challenging contexts. Discussions highlighted the influence of unhealed trauma on organizational

effectiveness, urging leaders to recognize whether they are "Peace Carriers" or "Trauma Carriers." Addressing deep-seated issues such as childhood trauma was identified as crucial for transforming leadership and fostering peace and empathy within organizations. Understanding brain functions and healing processes were emphasized as key steps in becoming more effective and compassionate leaders, capable of driving positive change in their communities.



Storytelling emerged as a powerful tool for communication and visibility during the convening. Organizations were encouraged to document and share their stories through various methods, including story circles, interviews, and visual documentation. This approach not only helps reach a broader audience but also preserves institutional



memory and enhances the impact of their work. Consistency and ethical considerations in storytelling were emphasized, highlighting the importance of obtaining consent when collecting information and ensuring that stories are complemented with other data. By strategically collecting and sharing stories, organizations can effectively communicate their impact and engage with their stakeholders.



Well-being and wellness were underscored as critical components for effective leadership. Participants reflected on their personal well-being and the wellness practices within their organizations. Maintaining physical, mental, and social well-being through active engagement, continuous learning, and fostering connections was emphasized. Leaders were encouraged to create environments that support growth and increased value for their teams. Practical ways to incorporate wellness into daily routines were discussed, such as performing good deeds, thinking quality thoughts, and intentionally creating healthier lifestyles. By prioritizing wellness, leaders can enhance their ability to lead effectively and sustainably.

The convening also focused on advancing access to justice and movement building. Discussions on access to justice highlighted the

vision of the ideal community-based paralegal office. Participants emphasized the need for qualified paralegals, social workers, finance officers, and administrative staff to create a robust support system. The importance of adequate physical and financial resources was also discussed, with a focus on creating sustainable and effective community legal support structures. These discussions underscored the need for a coordinated approach to engaging with donors and governments to secure the necessary resources for community-based paralegal offices. By standardizing these offices, communities can have reliable access to justice and legal support.

Exploring the complexities of access to justice, the convening delved into how traditional and legal justice systems can be harmonized to ensure that community-based paralegal offices effectively serve grassroots communities. Structured conversations and coordinated approaches to engaging with donors and governments were emphasized as crucial steps. By harmonizing different justice systems, it is possible to create a more inclusive and accessible legal framework that serves all community members.

The distinction between movements and organizations was also explored, highlighting the need to understand when to mobilize and when to organize. Participants were encouraged to evaluate their roles in service delivery and community empowerment, considering how power dynamics influence their work. Addressing core issues at their roots, rather than just surface-level problems, was underscored. Movements were recognized as often being short-term mobilizations with specific mandates, whereas organizations have ongoing mandates. Recognizing the difference and knowing when to mobilize versus when to



organize is crucial for achieving lasting social justice.

The convening concluded with an award ceremony to acknowledge the outstanding work of the participating organizations. This celebration of achievements served as a reminder of the significant impact these organizations have made despite the challenges they face. The gathering reinforced the importance of collaboration, shared learning, and mutual support in driving positive change in their communities. By recognizing the efforts and accomplishments of their partners, Hlanganisa underscored the value of each organization's contributions. This celebration not only honored their work but also inspired continued dedication and collaboration among the partners.

Hlanganisa's Annual Partners' Convening 2024 successfully created a space for partners to connect, learn, and grow together. The insights and discussions from the event will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening community connections and advancing the work of these vital organizations. The convening highlighted the importance of leadership, wellness, storytelling, access to justice, and movement building, providing a comprehensive platform for collaboration and growth. Through these collective efforts, the participating organizations can continue to make a profound impact on their communities and drive positive social change.



Meet The Author



Puseletso Maile

Project Officer: Research, Impact, and Learning at Hlanganisa Community Fund

FEATURE ARTICLE

Empowering Women and Girls with Disabilities: A Journey Towards Justice and Equality

By Mphatso Kapito - Forum for Youth Development (FOYODE)

Women and girls with disabilities face multiple layers of discrimination. Despite significant progress in securing their rights globally, millions continue to experience discrimination and violence, being denied equality, dignity, autonomy, and even the right to life.

In Malawi, despite advances in gender equality over the past decade, the country ranks 145 out of 188 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII), reflecting high levels of inequality in reproductive health, women's empowerment, and economic activity. Additionally, violence against women and girls (VAWG) and harmful practices (HP) remain serious issues, affecting people with disabilities as well. According to the Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS) 2015-16, 38% of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 years have experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime, and 24% have experienced such violence in the past 12 months.

In response to this challenging backdrop, we partnered with the Hlanganisa Community Fund in 2022 to implement the Mhare project. This initiative aims to improve access to fair and equitable justice for women and girls with disabilities.



Through our partnership, we have witnessed significant progress. Women and girls are now challenging laws and policies that hinder their rights and increasing their participation in developmental structures, ensuring their voices are heard. The project has also empowered underprivileged women and girls to access social justice through paralegal support.

"I have seen women and girls with disabilities advocating for their rights and accessing social justice, which they were previously denied," highlighted Mr. Mphatso Kapito, the Executive Director of the organization. He also noted that during Cyclone Fred, which hit our area, Hlanganisa stood up and assisted



beneficiaries, including women and girls with disabilities, with assorted items. He added that the project has also empowered women and girls with disabilities economically.

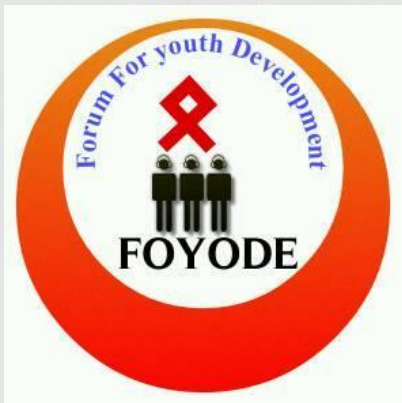
Stella Gundo, the Programs Manager, expressed her gratitude to Hlanganisa for their support, ranging from capacity building to financial assistance. She emphasized that being recognized as the best partner for 2024 has shown our commitment to working for marginalized communities and has motivated us to strive for even greater impact. This partnership underscores the importance of inclusive support and advocacy, ensuring that women and girls with disabilities are not left behind in the pursuit of justice and equality.

Meet The Author



Maphatso Kapito
Executive Director at
Forum For Youth Development

ABOUT FOYODE



Forum For Youth Development (FOYODE) is a youth organization working in SRHR linkage HIV/AIDS, Youth and Women Participation and Economic Empowerment, Climate Change, Gender Governance, and Human Rights.

HLANGANISA POST TRIBUTE

Remembering Mbali Nelly Mokgawa

With heavy hearts, we at Hlanganisa Community Fund mourn the untimely and tragic loss of Mbali Nelly Mokgawa, a dedicated Sisterhood Advocate whose life was violently taken on May 24th, 2024, due to gender-based violence (GBV).

Mbali was known for her passion, strength, and unwavering dedication to fighting for the rights of women and children. Her work as a Sisterhood Advocate was instrumental in bringing justice to many and shining a light on the pervasive issue of gender-based violence. Her legacy is one of bravery and relentless pursuit of justice. Mbali's work has left an indelible mark on our organization and the communities she served. As we remember her, we also renew our commitment to the cause she fought so hard for.

Mbali was more than just a colleague; she was a beacon of hope and a tireless advocate for justice. Her unwavering commitment to protecting women and children and her fearless pursuit of justice led to the arrest of dangerous perpetrators. Mbali's courage and dedication were evident in every action she took, and her legacy will continue to inspire us all.

When one of us dies at the hands she advocated against, we are faced with a profound sorrow and an urgent call to action. We grieve deeply, but we also stand united in



our resolve to fight even harder against the injustices she sought to eliminate. Mbali's tragic death underscores the critical importance of our mission and strengthens our determination to combat GBV with renewed vigour.

We stand in solidarity with the Victim Empowerment Centre and all those who are fighting for justice for Mbali. Her tragic death reminds us of the urgent need to combat GBV and create a safer world for all women. In solidarity, let us honor Mbali Nelly Mokgawa by continuing her mission and making her vision of a safer, more just world a reality. With heavy hearts, we at Hlanganisa

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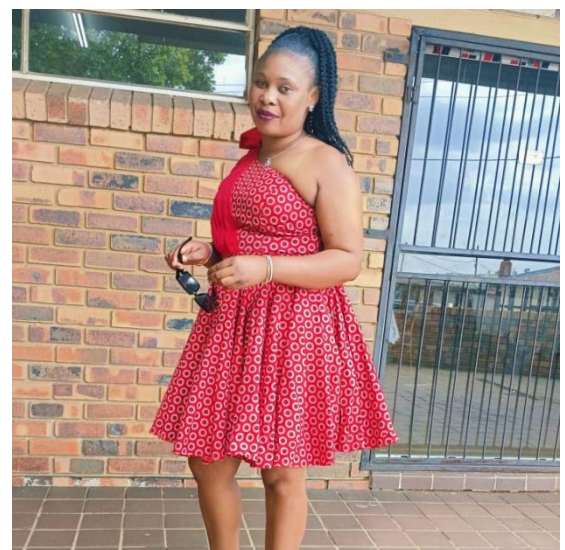
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