

Sekhukhune Targeted Investigation Report 2024



WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN DECISION MAKING

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1. Background and Context

Women participation, female representation and gender equality are encouraged as per policies of different stakeholders in South Africa. Yet, there are stakeholders who still ignore women or don't make gender equality clear in their policies. Sekhukhune is one of the areas affected by mining and Twickenham Platinum Mine is one of the mines located at Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality. Communities living near the mines are affected by the mining. Gender inequality in mining communities is high. There is a high rate of poverty and unemployment among women and some are being excluded or do not have access to information about what is happening in their area. It is still an area where women are undermined and taken for granted. The Community Engagement Forum (CEFs) of Twickenham Platinum mine has very little female representation. Out of 42 people selected, only 2 of them are female. These two women got into the position because they automatically qualify for a seat given that they are ward councillors.

2. Problem description

Women leadership is a problem in the community of Magakala to which the villages Ditwebeleng and Morapaneng belong. This problem affects leadership in all community structures that are in the community most especially in relation to mining and the municipality. The fact that women don't have a space and are not given a voice is challenging. It leads to oppression of women as their voices are not heard and represented in the structures provided for participation in decision making. They are excluded when most important decisions are made that could change their lives and the lives of other women for the better such as business and leadership position. In these spaces women's voices are needed but they are not represented. Our focus in this targeted investigation is on female representation and leadership in participation structures of the municipality and the mine.

3. Investigation results

We conducted a survey in Morapaneng and Ditwebeleng village this year. Half of the respondents were 41-50 years old. One in three (35%) were young people. Roughly three out of four women were female (77,4%) and one in four were male (22,6%).

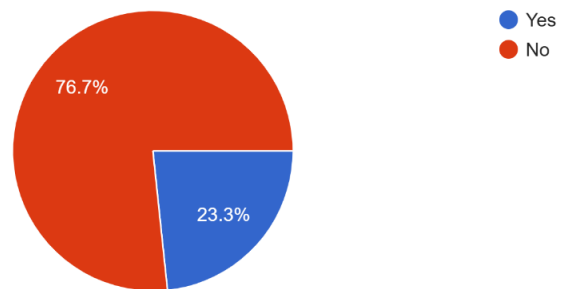
According to the survey people in the community think that it is important to have women in leadership positions. 90 % of the respondents said it is indeed important

When we asked why it is important to have women in leadership positions they said the following:

- Women have the right to take on leadership roles in the community and women have the right to lead in any work place.
- Women have strong leadership qualities. Many women have experience and they have qualifications too. Women in leadership positions inspire and empower other women especially young girls, to pursue leadership roles themselves.
- Women must get into leadership positions to help members of my community who are not working to stop poverty.
- Our government is a democratic and in a democracy all women should have an equal chance to lead.

We asked respondents from the two villages whether there are any women leaders or women in executive positions in their community. Three out of four women (76,7%) said no, one in four (23,3%) said yes. From those who knew women 4 respondents knew one women, one person knew two women in leadership positions and one respondents knew 4.

Are there any women you know in your community in executive position?
30 responses



One person commented that it is more middle age women that sometime get a chance to lead and hardly ever young women. In terms of women in business the picture was nearly the same: One out of four women (26,7%) said that they know women that have a tender. Three out of four (73,3%) did not know women with a tender.

When we asked why there are so few women in leadership positions, respondents shared:

- Women’s rights are always oppressed. As a community member I don't see any progress.
- Many women are scared to stand up and speak out for themselves. Women in our community are scared also to lead because they think no one will support them and they don't even believe in themselves. Often women don't attend meetings because they feel they are not being taken seriously when they speak. When there is a community meeting especially men don't support women.
- Our country does not believe in a woman as a leader and there is pressure from the men that a woman can't rule. Our country is also still a bit backwards. Years back there was lack of information in the community. Now it feels like there are some things that need to be explained to everyone to make them open up to gender equality.
- There has been no woman leader in my community since I was born. It is also because men like to think for themselves and in most cases men don't take women serious and oppress them.
- Women’s rights are often suppressed. Women often bear more family responsibilities, making it harder for them to balance work and personal life.
- We have not seen any women in a leadership role and we have not even given them a chance to lead. There are also limited openings or a glass ceiling might prevent women from moving up the career ladder.
- If we elect women here, we will be strong

87,1% of the respondents said that **the lack of female leadership is a problem in the community**. When we asked respondents since when it has been like that responses all indicated that it has been like this since a long time. Some said since apartheid, others since years back, many said it has been like that since they were born, others said since 1994. Some shared that the lack of women in leadership roles reinforces traditional gender roles.

When we asked respondents **whether they would vote for women during elections** nearly everyone (96,7%) said yes. Many said they would appreciate it because women tend to foster a more collaborative and inclusive work environment. Other advantages that were mentioned: Women leaders often prioritise sustainability and long-term solutions, they think for each other, about the whole community and keep it up. Women know the pain of what it means not to be working. They offer unique experience, ideas and approaches, leading to more informed decision making. At the same time some respondents were more cautious stating that there would not really be a difference, that women can't lead and that female leadership will not happen.

On the question whether we will be able to **solve community issues without women in leadership positions** the respondents were divided. A slight majority (54,8%) said yes while the rest said no. Then again nearly

everyone agreed (83,9%) that it is important to **have women in leadership positions in businesses or gender equality in community structures**. Respondents said we need their knowledge in order to share ideas, they are good in taking care of things, they can be leaders in business and they can also show man that's they can do it. They said women often excel in customer facing roles, they know how to safe money and know financial disciplining. 93,8% of the respondents said that they would support it if **women take the lead in business positions**.

We heard a few more view points in interviews:

A 35-years old female from Morapaneng does not know anything about the potential role women could play in leadership in the community and mentioned that she would be happy if someone could give her more information about it. She does, however, not see the importance of the CEF to have women and youth as selected members.

A 50 year-old female from Ditwebeleng has been living in the area since she was 7 years old. She knows about the CEF and described the role of CEF as the middle man between mine and communities when there are opportunities like jobs, bursaries. The CEF has people that the community speaks to if they need something from the mine. Their role is to make sure that locals are hired and to submits the CVS's at the mine, more especially if the offices are far. They serve as line of communication. She said: "The vacant posts are for everyone but since women have too many duties at home they are not elected and some of their husbands don't want them to get involved. The reasons differ. Sometimes when women are exposed to places were males are dominant it has an impact on their relationships and they put their marriages in danger."

A 76 year-old man from Ditwebeleng indicated that by culture, women are supposed to stay at home. Man provide for women and children. They are the ones who should be in the leadership role. He said: "Women need to be hands on and take care of the whole family so it is difficult for men to put lot of work on women since they have a lot one their plate. This our culture and it is keeps women away from trouble. They know their place. It is an honour for each man to see their women not getting involved in debates. It shows respect.

4. Action and Advocacy approach

Building on the diversity of voices and the openness from many interviewees we will continue to raise awareness through campaigns on women rights and education. We will do some training and capacity building, encourage women to run for leadership positions, provide support to women's organization's and engage political parties. We will develop a way forward on how to work together to address the issue in the community to make sure that during the next election of representatives for the Community Engagement Forum women are well represented.

We will engage with different stakeholders about the issue and advocate for the implementation of quotas or temporary special measures to increase women representation, for the provision of funding and resources for women leadership development programs and request that female candidates are supported with resources and in their networking.

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