



23rd ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012



Key-hole garden

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1.0 Introduction

The Lesotho Council of NGOs' (LCN) principal objective is to stimulate and support civil society organisations in their development efforts. In pursuit of this mission, the Council aims to assist its member organisations to diagnose and fulfil their own needs as well as the needs of the society they serve. This calls for strategic engagement with the broader governance and development agenda in Lesotho and the SADC region in ensuring a systematic and substantive partnership on social transformation initiatives.

It is for this reason that LCN aims at building capacity of member NGOs and also aims at assisting member organisations to be increasingly effective in meeting their goals and enable them to initiate and maintain self-supporting and self-sustaining development. LCN provides an epitome of high NGO platform towards deliberate efforts to address the challenges facing Lesotho. It does this by linking issues of governance, human rights, poverty, environment and agriculture and economic justice. LCN sees human development as integrated initiatives, thus, needing responsive interventions and comprehensive approaches.

It is noted that LCN and her member organisations as part of the broader civil society agenda are seen at the moment as one of the legitimate forces to influence policy change processes due to their strategic positioning in the development arena. This is further strengthened by the fact that they are usually closer to the people's needs and actions. They are recognised as organisations that speak on behalf of the poor, since in most contexts, they are able to influence policy change in areas of governance and development. They are also best positioned to enhance both vertical and horizontal accountability in socio-economic-political and cultural spheres. The Coalition Government in Lesotho presents the best opportunity for this role.

The role of civil society does not go without challenges, it is in this context that it is noted that the fight against poverty and political instability is a long-term war which needs concerted effort by government, private sector and civil society. It is accepted by most development actors in Lesotho that Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) continue to play a significant role in poverty eradication strategies as well as engendering and sustaining democratic culture and values.

Although there are still many challenges to be overcome, the civil society in Lesotho remains a viable sector in addressing the issues of development and governance. The institutionalisation of dialogue processes in the country has demonstrated the fact that civil society has a role to play in the development and governance agenda of the country as evidenced by its involvement during the long conflict marathon Lesotho took from 2007 - 2012. The fact is that the capacity of civil society has to be enhanced if a meaningful progress has to be registered in the areas of development and governance. A meaningful progress cannot be registered unless both human and financial resources are available for civil society's work. At the moment there is a decline in donor funding in the country; it is therefore essential to explore alternative options from which civil society organisations can be assisted in order to continue its operations.

LCN's Annual Report for the period 2011/2012 highlights the achievements, challenges and lessons learnt by LCN in the period under review. The summary is based on quarterly reports which are detailed on the approved 2011/2012 Plans and Budgets. The report covers major activities undertaken in 2011/2012. This Report is structured into sections of overall core projects and programmes commitments, organizational development, networking, resource mobilisation and funding initiatives. The context in which LCN operated will form part of the Report for better appreciation of LCN's contribution to Lesotho's development. Under each section, the Report will highlight key achievements, challenges and lessons learnt. It should be noted that in most cases the achievements are assumed since the activities' impact are more on the long-term scale. The Report will further highlight the work of LCN Commissions for this period.

2.0 Country Context:

The context in which Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) programmes were responding to was mapped mainly by the high prevalence of abject poverty where about 725,000 people are vulnerable to hunger, weak governance and economical instability as evidenced by the global recession that had affected SACU resources. The HIV and AIDS epidemic though said to be stabilised at the moment, is still high at the rate of 23%, thus making the country the third in the world of those countries that are hardest hit by HIV and AIDS, a situation detrimental to the lives of ordinary citizens, particularly where unemployment rate is more than 40%. In this period, there is a clear indication that the effects of climate change are beginning to impact negatively to agricultural productiveness. These challenges are exacerbating food insecurity as the priorities of the government lack evidence that it is responding to these challenges adequately.

Public institutions are weak as a result of many factors that include corruption, limited capacity and poor legal framework. These affect negatively their ability to respond effectively to the challenges of corruption that is rife, poor service delivery for both rural and urban communities in Lesotho. In a situation where government accountability is limited, the poor and excluded are the most vulnerable victims of the situation. The opportunity for their involvement in efforts for effective policy engagement is very limited. Furthermore, global recession that had been experienced in the past three years has affected the aid flow in most developed and developing countries and this had been evidenced by the limited resource flow for both government and civil society organisations.

During this reporting year, the country held at least two elections, Local Government Elections (October 2011) and National Assembly General Elections (May 2012). The Local Government Elections provided the country with necessary legitimacy for local authorities' management and was the second test since 2005. The obvious challenge that faced local government is a limited resource base and this affects the level of service delivery particularly on the mandate given to local authorities. Another emerging challenge is the tension between the Local Government Ministry and some of the Community and District Councils particularly after the split of Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). This tension limits the capacity of both central government and local authorities to effect participatory development.

At the national level, the National Assembly Elections has produced a coalition government and during this reporting period much has not yet progressed apart from the tensions between the coalition government and Democratic Congress. The coalition government is led by the All Basotho Convention (ABC) with two main partners, namely; Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and Basotho National Party (BNP). The coalition government is faced with some challenges ranging from consolidation of power, governance and development. Another challenge is the enactment of relevant laws since their majority in Parliament is far

too narrow and the test is to improve on lobbying and negotiations with the main opposition party and others. The attention of the Council has been on conflict management to resolve some of the political tensions seen post general elections.

The population of Lesotho is estimated at 1.88 million growing at an average of 0.1% per annum with a highly literate population but largely unskilled labour force. Due to her geo-political situation, her economic development is highly influenced by her membership and participation in activities of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the Common Monetary Area (CMA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The real annual average GDP growth rate is rated at 3.9% and this is considered as a decline caused mainly by a decline in agriculture which is principally based on crops. Since 2009, the country is still faced with economic challenges due to the Southern African Custom Union (SACU) where the SACU dividend declined significantly. The revenue from SACU makes 58% of the national revenue of which the annual budget is based on and because of the decline, some of the crucial priorities had to be dropped thus increasing poverty in Lesotho.

The policy frameworks such as Lesotho Vision 2020, Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) – National Plan of Action have not contributed much to the challenges of weak governance, HIV and AIDS, poverty and injustice experienced by the majority of Basotho, although the blue prints offered hope of better development that would benefit the poor and excluded. 43% of the population lives in poverty while 40% of these lives in abject poverty and this is a challenge for the new government and civil society formation. LCN programmes were taking place in this kind of environment.

3.0 Programmes and Projects

The Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) projects and programmes form part of the organisational development and governance agenda. They are basically aligned to the Strategic Plan of the Council which is coming to an end in 2012. Based on the Strategic Plan, the following were the Six Strategic Focus of which the programmes and projects were based on:-

- ☞ Strengthening civil society,
- ☞ Environment protection and stewardship,
- ☞ Economic justice,
- ☞ Good governance and accountability,
- ☞ Responding to HIV and AIDS,
- ☞ Harnessing information technology

Following the above-mentioned Strategic Focus, the programmes and project implemented during this reporting year included the following:-

- ☞ Capacity Building Project
- ☞ HIV and AIDS Technical Assistance Project
- ☞ Global Fund Round 8 Project
- ☞ Democracy and Human Rights Programme
- ☞ Civil Society Forum

3.1 Capacity Building Project

The overall goal of the Capacity Building Project and Programme is to facilitate effective participation of NGOs in national efforts and to address Lesotho' development challenges by enhancing their capacity to engage in government's policy making processes. It further aims at addressing the capacity limitations of the Lesotho Council of NGOs as an umbrella body, in coordination, governance and leadership. The life span of this project is four years with extension of 12 months that would end in June 2013 and it has been funded by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). The following were key activities implemented during this reporting period:-

- ☞ Demonstration of food security and climate change adaptation initiatives
- ☞ Information Sessions (COP 17)
- ☞ Workshop on Climate Change
- ☞ Budget tracking
- ☞ Community Parliament
- ☞ Economic Justice Policy Dialogue

It is assumed that the above mentioned intervention has impacted positively to development of skills for civil society organisations. The beneficiaries of the support included women's groups, youth and senior citizens who are members of LCN. It is hoped that the skills impacted to them will improve the ability of the organisations to manage and engage effectively with other sectors including the government.

3.2 HIV and AIDS Technical Assistance Project

This Project is meant to contribute to the development of an effective civil society in the implementation of the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2011-2016. It contributes to LCN Capacity Building Programme. It is funded by the World Bank and following are key activity areas:-

- ☞ Mapping Exercise
- ☞ Development of Training Plan
- ☞ Conduct Trainings

The above-mentioned activities have proven that there are some gaps which needed to be closed in as far as HIV and AIDS programming is concerned. LCN managed to interview 113 organisations to assess their capacity needs and gaps. The Project's focus is Maseru, Leribe, Berea, Thaba-Tseka, Mafeteng and Butha-Bothe.

3.3 Democracy and Human Rights Programme

The programme's objective is to improve the capacity of democracy and human rights organizations to respond to human rights abuses and support the building of a strong democracy and democratic governance in Lesotho through coordination and training. During this reporting period, LCN has managed to implement the following activities:-

- ☞ Democracy and human rights dialogues for October 2011
- ☞ Engagement on national issues
- ☞ Local Government Elections and National Assembly Electoral Education
- ☞ Post Elections Dialogues

The implementation of these interventions has contributed significantly to the development of the culture of democracy and human rights in Lesotho as evidenced by the level of maturity in accepting the elections outcome. In the previous elections people and leaders of some of political parties rejected the elections results. It is assumed that this trend would be maintained as various dialogues had been held and it is important to note that most of activities related to this programme were implemented by the member organisations.

3.4 Civil Society Forum

The Civil Society Forum (CSF) is a partnership programme between LCN and PACT which started in 2011. It is a platform for civil society to engage and debate issues related to development. The CSF provides a venue for civil society actors to share, learn, coordinate and act on matters of collective concern. Below are key issues addressed by the CSF during this reporting period:-

- ☞ Resource Mobilisation Training
- ☞ Civil Society and Government Partnership
- ☞ Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation

The participants of these fora were drawn from different organisations ranging from women groups, youth groups and other thematic groups. In the next year, LCN will to lead this programme with the support of PACT. The assumed impact of this project is seen as deepening of the culture of dialogue and debate as evidenced by the number of people who attended and appreciated the topics discussed.

3.5 Global Fund Round 8 Project

The overall goal of this Project was to scale up interventions on four indicators that had not performed well during the life cycle of the grant at no cost extension. The extension part of the Project was meant to develop and implement comprehensive grants management within LCN. Some of the activities implemented during the reporting period included the following:-

- ☞ Evidence-Based Advocacy
- ☞ Support to SRs (FIDA and LBLC)
- ☞ Monitoring and Evaluation

Since this project was coming to an end, LCN managed to get an extension aimed at finalising some of the activities that were being implemented. The project is officially closed and LCN has applied for another project but this time as SR.

4.0 Resource Mobilisation and Funding Initiatives

LCN depends heavily from resources given by different donors both in Lesotho and outside Lesotho. These funds are based on proposals submitted and LCN has to comply with the contents of the contracts signed and implementation plan. Below is a table that reflects on the donors that supported LCN work during this reporting period:-

Table 1

Project	Donor	Period	Grant Total of the Support
Elections observation	Irish Aid	April – June 2012	220,042.00
Capacity Building	ACBF	2007 - 2013	1,420,525.18
HIV/AIDS Technical Assistance Project	World Bank	2010-2015	290,494.30
PR for CSOs	Global Fund	2011- 2012	
Democracy Education	OSISA	2012	79,716.13

5.0 Networking

The objective is to link with and participate in the local, regional, continental and international networks in order to share best practices and experiences in the region on issues of development, fundraising, civil society organisations, poverty reduction, monitoring programmes etc.

LCN hosted the SADC CNGOs mission who had come to assess the preparedness of the country for the 2012 National Assembly election. The assessment was done with the Democracy and Human Rights Commission, particularly by arranging appointments for interviews. The conclusion of the assessment was that Lesotho was making good progress in preparing for the 2012 election, although a few things needed to be followed up.

For experience and information sharing, an exchange visit to the Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations (CANGO) in Swaziland was undertaken. The delegation included both the secretariat and representatives of the Board of Directors. While CANGO benefited more from LCN in this exchange visit, the main lesson for LCN was that in terms of advocacy on human rights violations, CANGO was more vocal and highly influential.

The Secretariat and the Board of Directors further participated in the 8th Civil Society Forum organized by SADC CNGO in Maputo, Mozambique. The forum comprised all national umbrella bodies, trade unions, faith-based networks and development partners based in the SADC region with various discussions around the theme; *the SADC we want*.

In January 2012, civil society organisations and other stakeholders were brought together in what has been termed the NGO Week to engage in various developmental sessions. The preliminary activities (pre-NGO Week) included planting trees in Qoaling as well as engaging in various sporting activities with the community. Other than civil society organisations, the NGO Week itself was graced by the presence of academia and development partners such as The American Embassy in Lesotho, EU Delegation to the Kingdom of Lesotho, UNDP, PACT Lesotho etc. The NGO week activities comprised discussion sessions on topical issues such as governance and elections, education, gender, climate change etc. The NGO Week culminated into Annual General Meeting (AGM) which reviewed both narrative and financial reports for 2011 implementation.

At the Commissions level, there has been a total of twelve (12) Commission meetings held in 2012 alone. The meetings discussed and strategized on issues ranging from Commissions annual budgets and plans, community parliament, Members of Parliament Salaries Amendment Act, climate change, LVAC, electoral

education etc. Member organisations were paid visits by different units of the Council as another form of networking.

6.0 Supporting Programme

These are programme support which support the key LCN programmes and include human resource, information and communication and information technology.

Human Resource

Currently LCN has the following staff complement to do its work;

- Executive Director
- Programme Director
- Finance and Administration Manager
- Information Officer
- HSDC Coordinator
- AENRC Coordinator
- EJC Coordinator
- Grants Manager
- Administrative Secretary
- Driver and two volunteers

During this period LCN has been challenged by a high staff turnover. In this reporting period alone eleven (11) staff (substantive and volunteers) left LCN with the office failing to replace them to an equal number. This has hampered the continuity and rate of implementation. The main driver of the high attrition rate was coming to an end of the Global Fund Round 8 Phase One grants in May 2012. Seven (7) staff members were off-loaded as a result of phasing out of Global Fund Round 8 grant.

6.1 Information and Communication

The main objective of the Unit is to ensure that there is sharing of information within and beyond the civil society sector as well as communicating effectively with the public through different communications channels within and beyond Lesotho. One issue of the NGO WEB was produced for this reporting period and covered various development and governance issues. Three hundred (300) copies were distributed across civil society organisations, government departments, development partners, political parties and media houses. The unit keeps regular and continuous updates on the LCN Website with News, upcoming events, press release/position papers/statement, press conferences. The Information and Communication Unit has experienced growing hits on LCN website, an improvement that is linked to continuous and regular update of the website. LCN Face book page is a very busy facility that has connected LCN activities with the outside world.

As an attempt to archiving information and serving as source and hub of knowledge material, the unit has launched the process of a library establishment within LCN. Sizable amount of library equipment and materials have been secured. Skills of a librarian have been sought to index materials in the library and put them in order; 485 materials have been classified and catalogued so far.

6.2 Information Technology

The Information Technology is being supported by one volunteer. Both programmes and administration have received good support from this unit. It is in the plans of the Council to improve on the IT and be competitive with global trends particularly on the area of fighting computer viruses.

7.0 The life of the Commissions

LCN is organized into sectoral Commissions for effective coordination and management of members' programmes. The main objective of establishing the Commissions is to group NGOs with similar programmes or objectives together in order to facilitate the work of coordination by LCN Secretariat and networking among member organisations. Below are LCN Commissions and summarised activities:-

1. Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources
2. Disaster Management and Humanitarian Relief
3. Democracy and Human Rights
4. Health and Social Development
5. Economic Justice
6. Women and Children

7.1 Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources

Since the Commissions are meant to be a platform for sharing lessons and experiences, some NGOs shared their project experiences during Commission meetings. To mention a few, the Ex-Miners Association planted potatoes in Matelile, Mafeteng, LEJAC and Durham Link planted 7000 seedlings in Mathebe, Mafeteng while Development for Peace Education (DPE) planted 200 fruit tree seedlings (apples) in Mhaleshoek as an attempt to contribute in mitigating the effects of climate change and food insecurity. Upon realising these initiatives, the Commission undertook to provide technical and material assistance as well as organise media coverage to broadcast the initiatives as good practices to be emulated by civil society and members of the public in general.

On a similar note, during pre-NGO Week activities in January this year, the Commission organised LCN membership together with Qoaling Community to plant 1000 forest tree seedlings to stop a donga in Qoaling area. Seven months later the Coordinator went to monitor progress and it came out that about 75% of the trees survived. As a way of broadening our work the Commission has conducted more than 21 live programs with Thaha-Khuba fm. Members of the Commission were invited to participate in this program, which is a phone in program where listeners raise questions and seek clarifications. Apart from member NGOs other institutions such as the United Development program and the National University of Lesotho were invited. It is assumed that listeners now have more appreciation on climate change issues.

The Commission commemorated the international water week with the Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) in 'Muela, Botha-bothe. Communities who have been affected by construction of big dams in Lesotho were brought together in one place to raise awareness on the importance and level of access to water supply as understood from human rights perspective and the provisions of water policies in Lesotho.

Upon return from the Durban Conference on COP 17, a session was hosted for Commission members and other stakeholders to give feedback on issues discussed and the outcomes thereof as well as proposed

strategies different actors can employ in the fight against climate change. Thereafter, the Commission secured a regular radio programme on climate change at TK FM. Eleven (11) programmes have been hosted so far. The following organisations have been hosted on this live programme to share their experiences and/or expert knowledge on mitigating and adapting to climate change; Meteorological Services, Lesotho Girl Guides Association, (LGGA), Global Environment Facilities-Small Grants Programme (GEF), Technologies for Economic Development (TED), Serumula and Rural Self-Help Development Association, Faculty of Science & Technology, National University of Lesotho (NUL) and the Leribe Forestry.

7.2 Disaster Management and Humanitarian Relief

This Commission did not have Project activities apart from few Commission meetings. This is largely to the fact that there were no funds for both staff and programme. Even under these dire circumstances, LCN participated in the LVAC assessment. This helps us to develop an appreciation of disaster related matters and in future LCN would be able to engage effectively. Through our participation we are able to be part of activities aimed at addressing Prime Minister's clarion call on food insecurity in the country where around 725,000 people are reported to be faced with abject poverty.

7.3 Democracy and Human Rights

The Commission organised a seminar to assess the preparedness of the country in holding the 2012 National Assembly election. The subject was interrogated from various perspectives namely; political parties, academia, civil society organisations and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) itself. The main conclusion of the exercise was that indeed the country was ready to hold election, although some areas still needed follow ups. The conclusion was premised mainly on the IEC presentation. The increase in number and mobility of voter registration machinery had increased registration numbers. IEC had also organised television programmes for political parties' campaigns to widen scope of engagement between politicians and electorate before the fact poll etc.

The Commission continued monitoring build-up processes such as political campaigns and rallies, voter registration process and the use of state media and other state resources during campaigns. Political rallies went peacefully well with less abusive and provocative language to other contenders. However, in two cases in Maputsoe and Ha Thetsane' textile factories rallies of Democratic Congress were violently disrupted by a mob wearing the colours of the then major opposition parties. Around the same time there was unexplained armed presence of the army in the streets of Maseru and the nearby townships followed by a military statement indicating that whoever is disrupting the then prime Minister's rallies is provoking the army. LCN through DHR Commission released a statement condemning the two incidences of Maputsoe and Ha Thetsane'. However, on the same breath the statement talked to unexplained presence in the space as well as rebuking the army to refrain from making statements that threaten the public, especially when there are democratic and electoral structures and mechanisms to deal with electoral disturbances. In deed upon LCN statement, the army disappeared from the streets and no further public statements were made from the barracks.

As far as voter registration was concerned, the increase in number and mobility of voter registration machinery seemed to have enhanced and improved registration processes. However, wide spread complaints about fraudulent transfer of voters' list in between constituencies meant to sabotage certain

candidates were heard. The Commission followed up this issue by engaging in the cleaning of voters list. The Commission found that mainly the claims were not real, that is, in Mahobong where allegations of “engineered” voters’ transfer were rife it came out that the number of voters transferred into the Mahobong constituency were almost equal to number that was migrated. Notwithstanding, the allegations of fraudulent transfers in Mohale’shoek constituency came out to be true.

The use of state media and other state resources were of paramount importance to the Commission. As indicated earlier on, IEC organised with Lesotho Television (LTV) to host on equal basis political parties to present their manifestos and campaigns for the May 2012 elections. While this was applauded as a good initiative by IEC, there was once again growing concern that DC enjoyed the unfair advantage because their rallies were always broadcasted on prolonged programmes on LTV at the detriment of other political parties. The Commission responded through the Conciliation Committee in a statement to stop the biasness and encourage coverage of other parties that were sidelined. Things started changing for better such that there was fairly equitable allocation of television space among political parties.

A number of DHRC members namely TRC, DPE, FIDA together with CCJP were awarded grants by IEC to do country-wide electoral education to raise awareness and increase public participation in election and governance in general. The role of the Commission remained popularizing the work through media and creating platform for information and experience sharing for participating organisations. The idea was also to respond to common challenges jointly from under the auspices of the Commission. A number of statements including the one responding publicly to allegations that our organisations were promoting certain political parties were released in a press conference to respond to such unsubstantiated accusations. The electoral education undertaken by these organisations is believed to have emancipated many Basotho from ignorance regarding their role in a democratic dispensation.

As part of its contribution in the consolidation of democracy and delivery of credible election in the kingdom of Lesotho, the Commission deployed a team of 150 election observers across the 10 districts in 47 constituencies. The observation teams were guided by the international standards of election observation; SADC Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation as well as the National Assembly Electoral Act 2011. While the mission observed a number of challenges, the conclusion was that this election has passed the test for free and credible election. The outcome of the election should be regarded as a true representation of the will of the people of Lesotho and should therefore be accepted by all.

After the poll it became apparent that no party had majority parliamentary seats to form government as provided by the laws of the land. Then debate went around exploring options on how a government should be formed in the absence of outright majority. However, the debate was characterised by a lot of misunderstandings, misinterpretations and distortions of the laws. Realising this, the Commission took a deliberate move to assemble experts from within NGO sector and elsewhere to interrogate in a more objective manner provisions of the Constitution and other laws on how a government should be formed in the circumstance. Having formed a collective position on how the government should be formed in the absence of outright majority, the Commission decided to take upon themselves to conquer and close media space to champion the debate on how the government should be formed. The move successfully warded off the power-laden interpretations of the law and it is strongly believed that the coalition arrangement as it stands today has been, to a great extent, the influence of the ideas of the very Commission.

7.4 Health and Social Development

It came to the awareness of the Commission that the Ministry of Education and Training was undertaking a number of reforms in the education sector. For this reason a deliberate effort was taken to monitor these reforms in terms of their implications on access and quality of education particularly for the marginalised groups. To achieve this, a seminar was organised to deliberate on reform areas including Rationalisation of School Fees, COSC vs. GCSE, Free Primary Education and Funding for Higher Education. A total of 24 people from 19 organizations participated in the seminar. After two-day deliberations on these subjects, policy recommendations have been compiled and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Training.

Upon incidences where two students were killed by other students at the Lerotholi Polytechnic, the Commission took upon itself to follow up and investigate the incidences that led to the killings. Upon completion of the investigation, the Commission produced a statement to condemn the ill-treatment and killing of students by other students as well as conveying condolences to the bereaved families. The statement was published on Public Eye, a local weekly news paper.

The Commission organised a skills building workshop on HIV and AIDS prevention Strategies on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission, HIV and AIDS National Plan 2011/2016 and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy. The presentations were sourced from experts from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare as well as from civil society organisations. A total of 40 people from 31 organisations were trained.

7.5 Economic Justice Commission

The Commission undertook a budget tracking exercise on the Ministry of Education and Training's Free Primary Education programme. The purpose was to investigate the efficiency and effectiveness in which resources are translated into education services and whether resources reach people they are intended for. The outcome of the exercise was not yet realised at the time of writing this report; data has been collected and is been analysed.

Under this Commission, the Community Parliament was organised at two chronological levels in which preliminary community parliament activities culminated into the National Community Parliament in which members of communities in parts of 9 districts of Lesotho were brought in one place in Maseru to address Ministers and top officials on various issues that describe the challenging realities of their respective communities. About one hundred and fourteen (114) community members participated in the Community Parliament. The parliament was hosted in partnership with DPE, RACE, CCJP and FIDA. A number of government official made commitments on the needs of the communities in this august forum. It is therefore the responsibility of the Council to monitor and advocate for inclusion of these commitments as part of the government plan in the coming fiscal year.

The Commission engaged in a national dialogue through radio media on the Members of Parliament Salaries Amendment Act of 2012 which provides that Members of Parliament will receive their salaries even after Parliament has been dissolved until the swearing in of the next Members of Parliament. The position of the Commission, which has been submitted to the speaker of 8th parliament, has been that the Amendment promotes unfair and unjust distribution of the national resources by those who have been charged with the powers to allocate and oversee the country's financial resources. It is proposed therefore that the Amendment be revisited, for it perpetuates economic injustice as it stands. The Commission is yet to hear from the Speaker on the position and recommendation.

7.6 Women and Children

The Woman and Children Commission held a one-day forum with representation from civil society organisations, health practitioners, lawyers, religious people, human rights activists, government departments and media to raise awareness on the Penal Act 2010 with particular interest on the abortion clause. The forum contributed in deepening understanding and clearing distortions/ misunderstandings across members of public and various media houses on the law.

In an attempt to integrate activities of the Global Fund within Commissions, the Commission organised three (3) training and awareness creating activities on human rights and human trafficking and rights based approach to HIV and AIDS. The trainings were held in Quthing, Leribe and Thaba – tseka respectively. Quite a lot of rural women and girls participated in the trainings. These trainings increased the knowledge and appreciation of legal frameworks pertaining to women’s rights, human trafficking and HIV and AIDS. The exercise responded to the concern that due to inherent tendencies of social exclusion and marginalisation brought by the scourge of HIV and AIDS, women and girls are left vulnerable where without proper advocacy on their rights their property is easily grabbed.

8.0 Policy and Leadership Support

The Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) Board of Directors has the overall responsibility for the governance and leadership of the organisation. They are responsible for ensuring that the Vision and Mission of LCN are upheld, approving the strategy and monitoring the organisations’ performance against agreed plans. It is in this context that the Board is important in making decisions and making policies that the secretariat base its activities and management on.

The Strategic Planning Process of 2008/2012 has come to an end and new strategy will lead the organisation in the next 5 years. The Terms of Reference have been developed and advertisement has been placed in the media.

According to the LCN constitution, the LCN Board should meet at least four times in a year. Though there were some challenges, the Board managed to fulfil its mandate. It is from these meetings where decisions were made based on the reports and recommendations from the Secretariat. The Board of Directors recruited the organisational head during this reporting period.

The Executive Committee on the other hand met several times during the year. Since they are charged with the responsibility of management support, they have been in contact with the office in many occasions including agreeing to represent the organisation in various meetings.

9.0 Conclusion

The challenge facing the organisation is the current situation where the work load is increasing from time to time while resource base is decreasing. There is less systematic approach to programme implementation due to many issues coming at the same time such as meetings and workshops. The organisation is challenged by the fact that its policy orientation approach is not strong enough to define the role of the different structures of the organisation.