



GENDER LINKS
FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE



A leading Southern African NGO that is working from local, to national to regional level, with strong African and global links, to give women equal voice, choice and control by 2030!

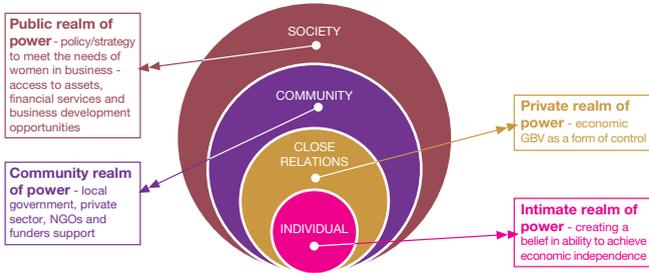
WHO WE ARE

Formed in **March 2001**, Gender Links (GL) is a Southern African NGO, headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, that promotes gender equality and justice across the fifteen countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. GL is committed to an inclusive, equal and just society in the public and private space in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. GL's Vision 2020 is of:

- An independent, strong, vibrant, principled self-sustaining organisation guiding Southern Africa to a free, democratic region based on equity for all.
- A voice of the voiceless, especially women who constitute the majority of those globally who are denied a voice.
- A leading African NGO and globally renowned centre of excellence on gender.
- An organisation with deeper roots.
- An organisation with two wings: one not for profit and the other generating income to help sustain the organisation.



WHY WE EXIST

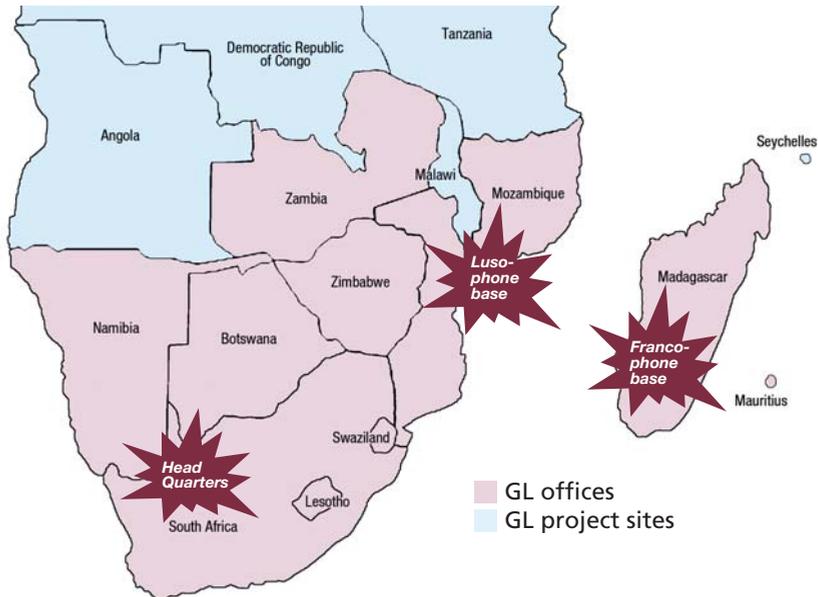


GL's Theory of Change recognises that gender is the most cross-cutting of all forms of inequality and exclusion. Reinforced in formal and informal ways, gender inequality begins in

the home; is perpetuated by the family; schools; work place; community, custom, culture, religion and tradition as well structures within society more broadly - the media, new media, popular culture, advertising, laws, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary and state. While society readily identifies other forms of inequality, gender discrimination is so **normalised** that it often goes **unnoticed**, including by women who have been socialised to accept their inferior status. Gender inequality follows the **life cycle** of most women from cradle to grave. Despite changes in laws and Constitutions, many women remain minors all their lives - under their fathers, husbands, even sons, and as widows subject to male relatives. Women and girls in Southern Africa remain the **majority of the poor; the dispossessed; the unemployed; the voiceless; those whose rights and dignity are daily violated and denied; those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.**

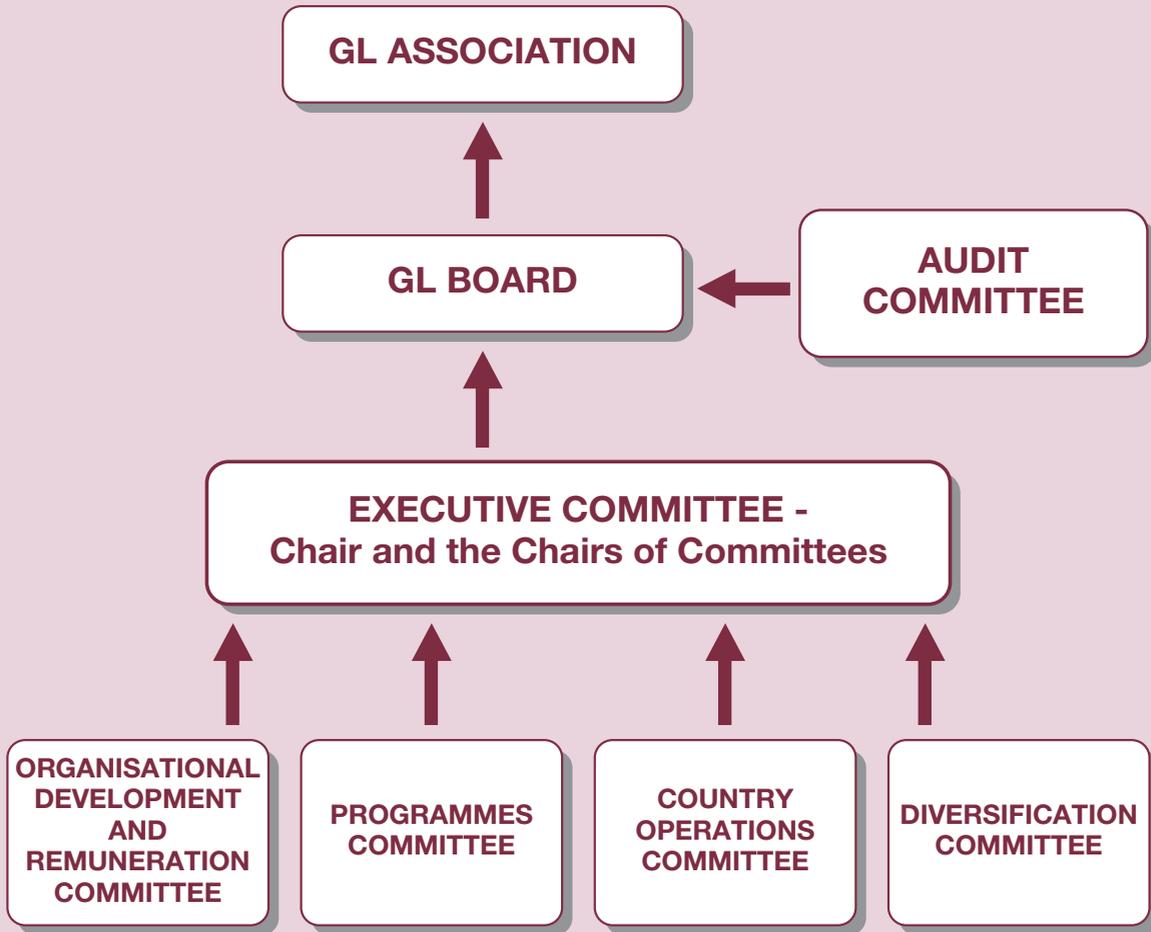
WHERE WE WORK

Gender Links has offices in ten registered SADC countries, including a Lusophone base in Mozambique and Francophone base in Madagascar. GL's Botswana office also serves as a liaison office with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).



HOW WE ARE RUN

GL's apex structure is an **Association** chaired by founder member and communications expert **Kubeshni Govender Jones**. Members include former City Press Editor **Ferial Haffajee** (South Africa); head of International Affairs at the University of Johannesburg **Pinkie Megkwe** (Botswana); **Ambassador Thenjiwe Mtintso** (South Africa), Botswana Attorney General **Dr Athalia Molokomme**; **Monique Rakotoanosy** (Madagascar) and **Keabonye Ntsabane** (Botswana). GL is governed by a 12 member board from eight SADC countries. The **Board** is chaired by **Emily Brown** (media studies expert, South Africa/ Namibia). Members include **Pat Made** (former Director General, Inter Press Service); **Loga Virahsawmy** (G.O.S.K, Mauritius); renowned gender activist **Sara Longwe**; former deputy chair of the Lesotho Independent Electoral Commission **Rethabile Pholo**; former head of the SADC Gender Unit **Magdeline Madibela** (Botswana); founder member of **Emang Basadi** in Botswana **Ntombi Setshwaelo**, Chair of FEMNET and the NGO Coordinating Council of Malawi **Emma Kaliya**; men-for-change activist **Mbuyiselo Botha** and Deputy Chair of the South African Commission for Gender Equality **Thoko Mpumlwana**. **Adrian Dowie** (CA, South Africa) chairs the audit committee, with **Robinah Kapawa** and **Magdeline Madibela** as members. CEO **Colleen Lowe Morna** (Zimbabwe/South Africa) is an ex-officio member of the Board.



WHO FUNDS OR HAS FUNDED US

Type of funder	Examples
Bilateral	UKAID, DANIDA, Sida, Government of the Netherlands (MDG 3 grant and Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women (FLOW)), Irish Aid, CIDA (Canada)
Multilateral	EU, UNFPA, UNWOMEN through the UN Fund for Gender Equality, UNESCO
Foundations	Ford, Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa, Foundation for Human Rights, Commonwealth Foundation, Southern African Trust
International NGOs	Hivos, Diakonia, Global Fund for Women, World Association for Christian Communications, Norwegian Church Aid
Joint Funds	Amplify Change
Corporate sponsors & partners	Lux Hotels (Mauritius); SAGE Pastel Foundation; Google Africa; Microsoft

Over the last fifteen years, GL has received grants from a wide range of donors - bilateral, multilateral, foundations, International NGOs and a few corporate sponsors and partners. In any given year, GL has put out up to 40 funding applications; managed twenty or more donors, and furnished 20-40 funding reports. GL has a proud reputation for timely and thorough reporting.

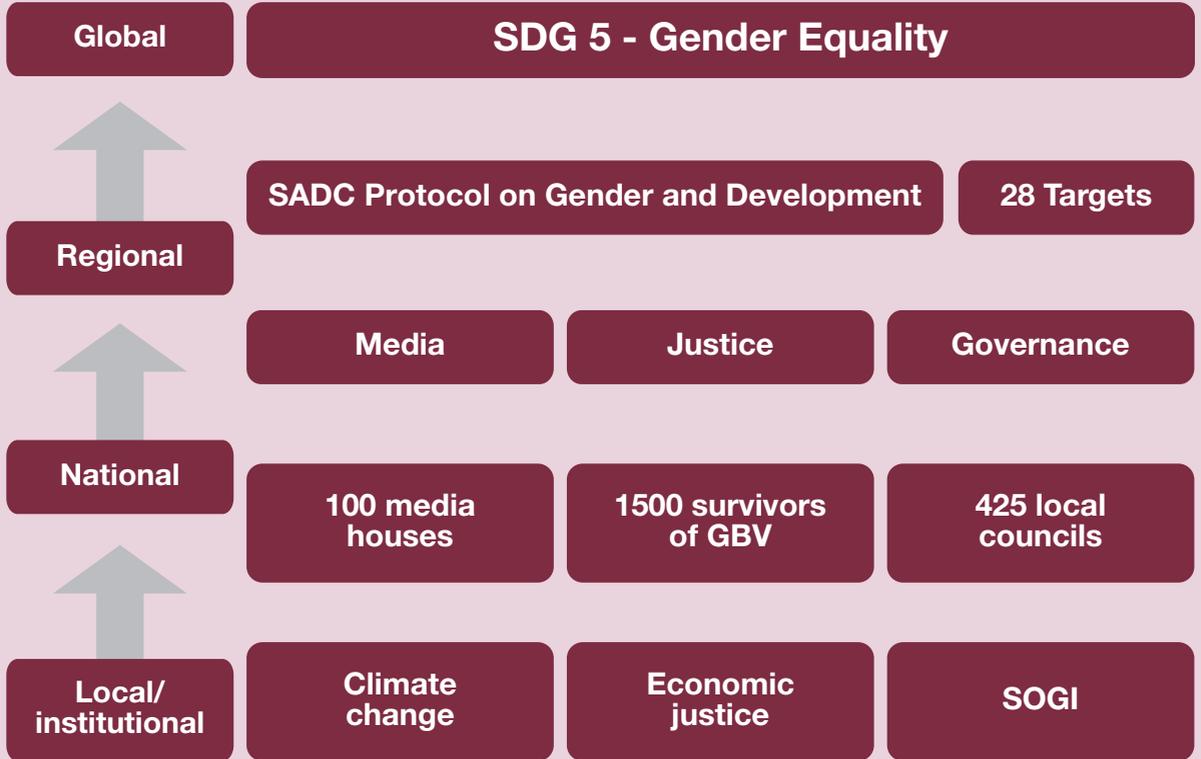
“The FLOW team has the highest regard for Gender Links as a reliable and dedicated organisation, implementing impressive work that has a major impact on women's rights.”
- Friso Weigman,
FLOW Team Leader

WHO WE WORK WITH

Described in an evaluation as a “small organisation with a large footprint,” GL has a web of close to 600 partners, with 150 formal MOUs. Through its media and local government COE work, GL has over **500 institutional partners**. There are 25 civil society partners in the Alliance, and these connect with hundreds more NGOs, CBOs and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) on the ground. GL also partners with ministries of **gender and local government**. GL is partnering with the **Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA)** in a Gender and Media Summit. GL chairs the **Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG)**, is a member of **FEMNET** and of the **Women's Major Group**. GL shares learning with partners at annual **SADC Protocol@Work** Summits. In 2016, GL held consultative meetings with Alliance and local government partners in all SADC countries on the Post 2015 agenda.



PROGRAMME OF ACTION



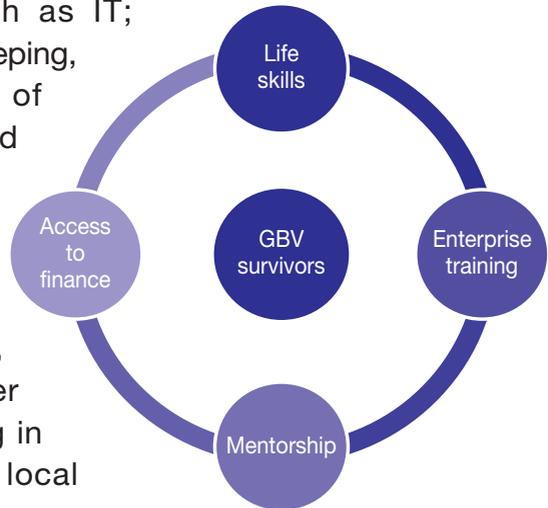
WHAT WE DO

At the policy level, GL coordinates the **Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance** that campaigned for the adoption of this unique instrument in 2008. Originally aligned to the Millennium Development Goals, the Protocol brings together global and international commitments to gender equality. In 2016, the Protocol was aligned to the **Sustainable Development Goals**. GL and 25 partners produce an annual **Barometer** tracking progress towards attaining gender equality in SADC. GL integrates the targets of the Protocol into its cutting edge work on **gender and the media** that includes research, monitoring and on-the-job training of journalists. GL also uses the media to get information to a wide variety of audiences. In its **gender and governance** work GL spearheads the 50/50 campaign in the region, with a special focus on local government where GL works with councils in ten countries on gender responsive budgeting and service delivery, with new areas like Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights as well as Climate Change enriching this model. Pioneering work on the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign in the **gender justice programme** has expanded to include 365 day action plans to end gender violence; gender prevalence and attitude surveys in seven countries; and ground-breaking work on **ending violence and empowering women: community by community**.

Ending Violence Empowering Women

This life skills and entrepreneurship programme for women that have experienced gender based violence has been run in 101 councils in 10 SADC countries and has helped **1350 survivors of gender violence reclaim their lives**. The programme focuses on a combination of:

- Life skills training including confidence building; writing; public speaking and decision making and understanding gender as a social construct.
- Business skills development such as IT; marketing, market research, record keeping, financial management, developing of business plans, applying for tenders and accessing finance.
- Networking has been introduced as a means of identifying potential support arrangements such as mentorship, for sourcing business opportunities, developing relationships with other businesses in their areas or working in collective to access tenders from local government with local partners.



Working with local councils

Key to the success of the project is the link to local councils that form part of GL's Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government. In South African 11 councils in three provinces - **Limpopo, Gauteng and Western Cape** - participated in the pilot project from 2013 to 2015. These include **Bitou, Blouberg, Cape Agulhas, Emfuleni, George, Mazikama, Midvaal, Mossel Bay, Phalaborwa, Vhembe and Witzenberg**. The council's worked with GL to identify women to work with that had sought support services for GBV from council programmes. This anchored the programme within an existing structure and provided additional support for participants. Council's linked the *Empower Women, End Violence* programme in existing programmes. This resulted in clearer understanding and strategy around ending GBV and the economic empowerment of women; including their integration into SMME programmes with local government. This unique model has had several benefits; the potential for long term sustainability of the project, ongoing monitoring and support of the women and enhancing local governments work in economic mainstreaming. One of the key expectations is that the competence of the participants will grow though mentorship for increase their eligibility for tenders with the councils and even the private sector.



Making a difference



Key results of the pilot project in South Africa include:

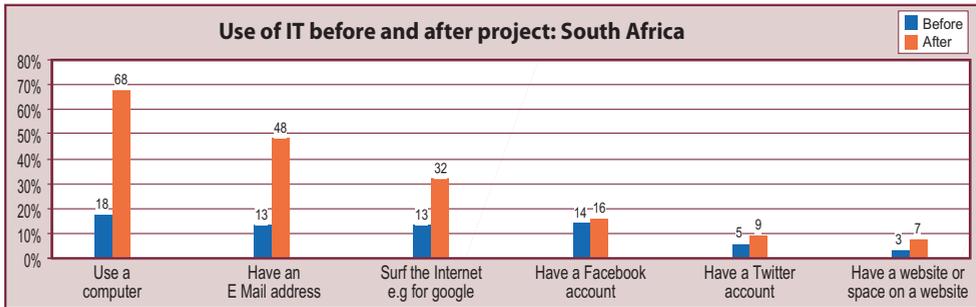
- 72% grew their businesses and added new products
- 79% completed a business plan; 54% followed through on the plan
- 69% found new markets.
- 65% opened a bank account.
- The average increase in income per month rose from a negative position to R532.
- 74% indicated experiencing less or much less gender based violence.



Participants were able to run businesses more effectively: “I have learned about marketing, pricing and to have good relationship with my customers. Now I provide my children with all their needs and spoil myself. I used to sell food on the street but now I am doing safety and security services. I was a victim of violence and abuse from my partner and he always shouted at me. Now he has changed and things are not hard like before. I have employed two women in my business. My business is still small but I can now take care of my children. Women must change, be recognised and be independent.”

Jeaneth Mbetse from Phalaborwa

Making IT work for gender justice

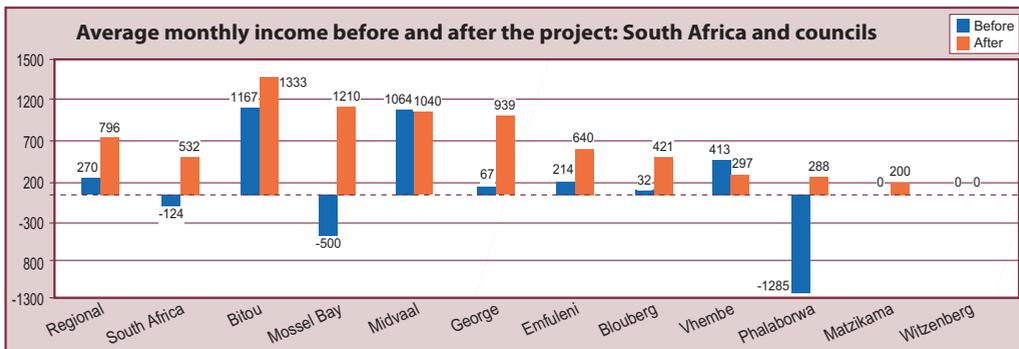


68% of the South African participants now have E Mail (compared to 26% at the start); 67% use a computer (compared to 31% at the start); 29% surf the Internet (compared to 27% at the start); 12% have a twitter account (compared to 7% at the start) and 6% have a website or space on a website (compared to 2% at the start).



Ntombi Ramalatsa and Alinah Phiri
Midvaal Municipality.

Improved earnings



Across the region, earnings of women who participated in the project rose by 66% and by 123% in South Africa. The average income per month for South African participants rose from a negative position to R532 per month.

“Since doing the Gender Links training I can now sit down with my husband, talk about any issue and he does not get angry like he used to. The family is happy that I persevered through difficulties and they have learned from my new way of dealing with problems; to talk to people and not bottle problems inside. I am managing to raise my children with my small business and also I am proud of the person I have become. My training has also given me the confidence to help others. I created a support group where woman share their problems and give each other advice of how to work through their problems.”

**Vuyela Khomo from Blouberg*

Voice, choice and control

In the first fifteen years GL reached over 120,000 direct beneficiaries. In an analysis of the **Drivers of Change**, 65% of women said they had become more aware of their rights; an even higher percentage (73%) said they now had greater confidence; 52% said they could claim their rights and 49% had improved their self-image.

Susan Swart from Cape Agulhas, South Africa, took the microphone with confidence at the SADC Gender Protocol@Work Summit and declared: "I overcame, so can you!" Her emotional anguish of living with an abusive husband finally surfaced after her husband decided she was not good enough anymore and left her and her two kids to fend for themselves. She thought long and hard about the business ventures she could pursue. She registered a catering business and started with a donated chip making machine. In 2013, Susan attended the GL entrepreneurship training programme for survivors of gender violence and said that since then she has never looked back. As she put it: "GL taught me how to fly. I was encouraged to encourage others and was empowered to empower myself. I want to tell everyone that they can overcome, just like I have. My business is still growing and I know it will keep growing. Gender links has provided me with the platform and the freedom to be the best that I can."



“I write to express my support for the work by Gender Links to enhance the status of women in the SADC region generally, and in particular their pioneering work on the economic empowerment of survivors of gender violence. I was privileged last year to be a key note speaker at a breakfast meeting to share initial results of the *Empower Women, End Violence* project in South Africa. I heard at first hand survivors talk about how violence had eroded their sense of self-worth, and conversely how this project had helped them to regain their confidence. I should add that over the last year the AfDB has made use of GL Training through its GL Services arm. During 2015, GL provided gender training for my team, operational and non-operational staff in French and English, in South Africa and Abidjan. GL provided a professional service with an inspirational quality that has given us the jump start we needed at the AfDB for our gender mainstreaming efforts. Much of this is due to the hands on examples and experience from the field that GL staff bring to their work. GL hosted the Johannesburg training at the GL Cottages, part of GL's sustainability efforts reflecting the deliberate efforts not to be totally reliant on donor funds. We were very pleased with the customer service, spirit of enterprise and purpose that characterise GL and all its units.” - *Geraldine Fraser Moleketi, Special Envoy on Gender to the African Development Bank*



HOW YOU CAN HELP!



GL's work has been recognised through several **awards**. In October 2010 GL won the “**Investing in the Future Award**” administered by the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper for its Gender Justice and Local Government Summit. In 2009 GL received the “**Top Gender Empowered Government Agency or Parastatal Award**” from the Top Women Awards. GL has been a finalist in the **Drivers of Change Award** - Civil Society Category administered by the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper and the Southern African Trust three times, including in October 2015. In 2013 the **African Union** recognised GL's outstanding contribution to women's rights during the tenth anniversary of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.



Sifiso Dube, Alliance and Partnerships Manager, receiving the Drivers of Change Finalist Award in October 2015.

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