

PARTNERSHIPS

By Loveness Jambaya Nyakujarah ~ Alliance and Partnerships Manager



Networking: Loveness Jambaya Nyakujarah, Alliance and Partnerships Manager (left) during gender action planning training in Seychelles, January 2012.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna



“The Gender Justice and Local Government Summit in 2012 made me realise the importance and benefits of strong mutual relationships between local government, local communities and civil society. Transformation and striving for gender justice becomes an achievable goal when we all clearly understand the added value of each stakeholders’ role and involvement. The summit exposed me to the 50/50 and the 365 Days of No Violence Against Women campaigns. The faith-based sector would make a lot of progress by adopting and adapting these campaigns for the faith community. Because of what I learnt at the Summit on mobilising local communities for sustainable campaigns, NCA Church, will among several strategies, work with Gender Links and the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance to involve churches in the 50/50 and 365 Day of No Violence against Women campaigns. I would like to commend Gender Links for its excellent work within the region especially its commitment to the conscientisation and skilling of the faith community.”
Phumzile Mabizela, Senior Policy Advisor: Gender Justice for Norwegian Church Aid. NCA supports the work of the Alliance through the Secretariat based at Gender Links.

Programme	Partners
Media, including Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC)	61
Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance	25
Governance	18
Justice	1
Total	105
Geographical spread	
Angola	1
Botswana	10
DRC	2
Lesotho	3
Madagascar	10
Malawi	7
Mauritius	4
Mozambique	3
Namibia	5
Seychelles	1
South Africa	13
Swaziland	3
Tanzania	10
Zambia	9
Zimbabwe	12
Sub total	93
Regional	5
Africa-Kenya	2
International	5
Total	105

Described in our 2005 evaluation as a “small organisation with large footprints”, Gender Links is an organisation founded on partnerships. Over the last five years our “giant footprint” has been to establish offices in nine countries, GL continues to work in catalytic ways through a wide range of inter-locking partnerships.

Smart partnerships across sectors have seen GL’s programmes develop in depth and reach as well as enhance value for money through multiplier effects. As Danielle Berlanga Gonzalez, Media Watch Organisation member from Mauritius puts it in her feedback to GL: “Alone we can do little. Together we can do better. Yes, we can make our voice heard. “

In line with Gender Links Policies and Regulations, the organisation conducts an annual review of its partners to celebrate successes but also learn from mistakes in order to improve the relationships.

Partnership strategy

In the 2009, as part of “next steps” recommendations, GL undertook to enter into MOUs with long term partners to ensure that benefits/rewards, responsibilities, and risks of all projects implemented with partners are shared. GL strengthened its Monitoring and Evaluation system to

achieve this. At the time of writing, GL had or was close to concluding 105 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU’s), compared to 56 the previous year - an 88% increase.

This increase is accounted for to some extent by the growing work at institutional level with the media and local government Centres of Excellence on Gender Mainstreaming. GL is working to ensure that it has MOU’s with the over 200 institutional partners with whom it currently works.

GL has also become more adept at coalition building, in order to manage partnerships more effectively. The Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance is GL’s flagship coalition building initiative. This consists of 15 national gender coalitions; eight regional theme clusters and two interest groups - the men’s sector and Faith Based Organisations. Media training and Development NGOs come together in the Gender and Media Diversity Centre - a knowledge hub that seeks to “collect, connect and collaborate”. In the work on gender and local government, GL has agreements with most of the umbrella local government associations in the region. In all programmes, these links extend from national, to regional to international (see partnership strategy table).

GL PARTNERSHIPS 2011/2012

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY	REGIONAL PARTNERS	INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES
SADC Gender Protocol		
Building a coalition of regional and national NGOs that promote gender equality.	MOUs with 8 regional NGOs to lead theme clusters; MOU’s with 15 national coalitions of gender NGOs e.g. BOCONGO in Botswana; the Women’s Coalition in Zimbabwe; the Gender Coordinating Network in Malawi. The Alliance represents the gender sector in the SADC Congress of NGOs (SADC CNGO). The Alliance also enjoys a close working relationship with the SADC Gender Unit.	GL is a member of FEMNET, which convenes the Africa caucus at the annual meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women; GL convenes the Southern Africa caucus on behalf of the Alliance at CSW; produces hard copy and online newspapers and conducts cyber dialogues. GL has applied for ECOSOC observer status, and has observer status with the World Bank and IMF. CIVICUS is a key partner of the Alliance.
Media		
Direct approaches to media houses to join the Centres of Excellence for gender mainstreaming in media; building long term institutional relations with media regulators and training institutions.	Media houses working on gender policies in 14 countries through the Centres of Excellence process. 63 MOUs have been signed with media houses that join the COE process though 109 media houses are part of the COE process. MOU’s with media studies departments of universities as part of the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC) that “collects, connects and collaborates” in research, curriculum development.	International partners of the GMDC include the International Federation of Journalists based in Brussels; the International Media Women’s Foundation (Washington); the World Association of Christian Communicators that conducts the Global Media Monitoring Project (Toronto); University of Gothenburg Media Studies Department; Network of Indian Media Women.
Governance		
Formalising links with local government associations and/or gender/local government ministries; approaches through these to over 100 COE municipalities.	GL is working with 143 Councils within ten SADC countries. MOUs agreed and statements of commitment signed or in final stages in ten countries where GL is working. Some of these cover the ten municipalities in the country that have signed up as Centres of Excellence in Gender Mainstreaming (COE’s); others have direct MOUs with GL.	International partners with whom GL regularly interacts on governance include the Inter Parliamentary Union (Geneva); International IDEAS (Stockholm); the DANIDA Women in Africa fund grantees; the DFID Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF) Grantees.
Justice		
Formalising links with gender and justice ministries for the GBV indicators project.	MOUs with Gender Ministries in Mauritius and Botswana and the Mauritius Research Council; sits on South Africa’s National Council on Gender Based Violence.	MOU with the UN ECA Africa Centre for Women; participated the UN DAW (now part of UN Women) Expert Group on National Action Plans to End GBV; member of the Secretary General’s Africa UNlte campaign advisory group.

Programme and geographical spread

Of the 105 partners that GL signed MOUs or a working agreement with, 61 (60%) are from the Media department, the oldest in the organisation. GL's founding vision sought to promote gender equality in and through the media. Some 26 (42%) of the MOUs have been signed with media houses under the Centres of Excellence for Gender in the Media programme which has seen Gender Links working directly with 109 media houses in 13 SADC countries. The other media houses are yet to sign MOUs. The remaining 35 (57%) are either MOUs or a working agreement between GL and the GMDC.



Pat Made, Zimbabwe Board Member, Loveness Jambaya Nyakujarah, GL Alliance Manager and Fanny Chirisa, WIPSU at the GL-WIPSU 50/50 Launch in Zimbabwe. Photo: Trevor Davies

The Alliance programme works with 25 partners, 20 of whom have signed MOUs with Gender Links. The Alliance is also the custodian of the partnership portfolio within Gender Links. The programme works closely with many other partners like the SADC Gender Unit even though there is no formal agreement yet. The Alliance has a formal relationship with the SADC CNGO (Congress of NGOs) and serves as the gender representative for Gender NGOs within the SADC CNGO steering committee.

Through the Alliance, GL is a member of Africa-wide organisations such as FEMNET (see accompanying reflections by the Former Executive Director of FEMNET Norah Matovu Winyi).



Aina, representative for the SAHA Programme at the Gender Justice and Local Government Summit in Johannesburg, April 2012. Photo: Gender Links

Programme SAHA Intercooperation and GL signed an MOU on the 6th July 2011 to take forward work in eight councils that SAHA had been working with as part of COE process. This is because SAHA had to end its work in Madagascar in December 2011. Partnering with GL helped to ensure continuity of the work. The idea of the partnership came when a representative of the program SAHA met the GL Madagascar Country Manager, Ialfine Papisy at the embassy of Norway during an evaluation of the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. Following a presentation of the GL COE process by Papisy at the meeting, Programme SAHA became interested in the COE project. They were already working with several councils throughout the country on governance and local economic development with assistance from Swiss Cooperation.

“Dear all at Gender Links

I greatly enjoyed working with each one of you. The reason we worked together very well while I was at FEMNET was because the two organisations are both engaged in communication and we complemented each other's efforts. We used each other's communication space to share with various audiences about things that are of interest to them.

In particular, in 2011 you worked with FEMNET to produce the daily stories during the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 55th session. This inspired many not in New York with us.

It was also great working with GL during the Leadership Conference we held in Zambia - sharing with the political leaders the statistics on the performance of women participation in leadership and decision making. This was very useful technical input, which grounded the discussions on the trends and on the strategies to adopt to change them for the better.”

Norah Matovu Winyi, former Executive Director of FEMNET Gender Links partner works closely around the Alliance work based in Nairobi, Kenya

Governance has 18 MOUs: seven with local government associations; nine with Centres of Excellence for Gender in local government and one with a government ministry.

Geographically, 93 (89%) of the partners are located in Southern Africa with the largest number in South Africa (13). Botswana, Madagascar, and Tanzania have the second highest number at ten. Seychelles and Angola have the least number with one formal partner each. Gender Links is working to penetrate these countries. For example, in Seychelles talks are at an advanced stage with some media houses showing interest in joining the COE process. Ten of the partners are regional organisations. Two are Africa-wide and the remainder five are international organisations

Why partner with GL?

In March 2011 GL sent out an online questionnaire to its partners, and received 38 responses. Some of the reasons cited in response to the question “why partner with GL” included:

- Common vision - *Having the same objectives for the empowerment of women and promoting gender equality, we have always believed in sharing resources and capacity building - Ameenah Soferan, MWO-GEMSA - Alliance focal point.*
- To ensure sustainability of programmes that would otherwise be phasing out.

- Knowledge creation and sharing - "Thanks for your newsletter. I love your work Gender Links" - *Ruth Oladusi, commenting on the Alliance newsletter*
- "We carried out sensitisation on climate change and sustainable development at local government in partnership with Gender Links. In my personal capacity, chaired a panel, chairperson of jury panel on Climate Change for the Mauritius Mini-summit." - *Mauritius*
- "For networking purposes, learn from one another; create employment opportunities; get ideas on how we can improve our own lives and learn how to work with government institutions." - *South African now based in Australia*
- Joint programmes with Gender Links - media literacy, gender mainstreaming in local government, the SADC Gender Protocol Campaign (see for example the accompanying quote from the head of the Gender Unit).



"I wish to confirm SADC's interest in working with Gender Links in advancing the Gender Mainstreaming Project to other Member States... As indicated SADC seeks to standardise the approach as much as possible in line with the Namibia and Seychelles."

Magdeline Madibela, Head - SADC Gender Unit

organisation. The area that stands out as lower than the others is joint implementation.

Partners identified some key areas that Gender Links could improve:

- The partnership could be further strengthened through joint implementation and also having regular and formalised

channels of communication. These communication channels could also facilitate feedback between Women's Affairs Department and GL - *Botswana*

- Translation of documents into French for the benefit of Francophone countries - *Madagascar*
- Regular communication and improved coordination - *Tanzania*
- More prior consultations for projects especially at planning level - *Mauritius*
- Setting up performance indicators on the activities being carried out by the councils - *Mauritius*
- Agree on mutual benefits from the beginning - *Kenya and Uganda*
- More can be done in capacity building for non-gender organisations such as CIVICUS - *South Africa*
- Gender Links should be aware and consider country differences when drawing budgets, contracts and other plans and this should be reflected in all projects - *Gladness Munuo - Tanzania*
- The GMDC should build the capacity of NGOs who are not experienced in areas such as research, monitoring, and evaluation and be able to link up more with academia. A GMDC linking programme for organisations such as ourselves to highlight our research would be ground breaking - *Zimbabwe*

Partner's ratings and areas for improvement

Consultation	8
Administration and coordination	8
Relationship management	8
Sharing of resources	9
Awareness raising	9
Joint implementation	7
Monitoring and evaluation	8
Mutually beneficial nature of partnership	8
How powerful is GL in the work you do together?	9
How positive is GL in relation to the work you do together?	9
TOTAL/100	83

The partner questionnaire asked partners to score GL on a scale of one to ten on key partner issues. The table reflects the average score for each question, with an overall score of 83%.

Respondents rated GL highly on sharing of resources; awareness raising; GL as a positive partner and powerful

Moving forward

Gender Links recognises that partnerships will only last if GL takes time to nurture relationships, a key competence of the Alliance and Partnerships portfolio. GL will work hard to ensure that there is always clarity about the purpose of partnerships; seek to listen more and improve on the quality of the relationship. GL takes partners' views seriously and will continuously improve methods for gathering feedback.