# ORGANISATIONAL FEEDBACK REPORT

Gender Links

SEPTEMBER 24, 2016
SANDRA AYOO
Evaluation Consultant

## Background

This report provides organisational feedback based on data gathered from two programme evaluations of the European Union (EU) funded Lesotho Governance Programme and EU-Funded Alliance Programme in Southern Africa. Data was also gathered from GL staff strategy meeting in September 2016. The report also makes recommendations on areas for improvement to add to the success and value of the organisation. The report highlights some strengths and opportunities as well as weaknesses and threats to inform the organisation's future strategic planning process. The report uses the framework of the institutional scorecard (See details in Annex A) developed by GL and adapted from the institutional reviews made in the course of applying for various donor funds to highlight some of the key strengths and opportunities as well as weaknesses and threats which will inform the organisations future strategic planning processes and board meeting in October 2016.

## Purpose

The purpose of this organizational feedback is to assess the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation and make recommendations which will add to the success and value of the organisation. The feedback will specifically assess the extent to which flexible funding provided through the Programme Partnership Arrangement (PPA) of UKAID over a five-year period has contributed to a strong and sustainable organization.

## Key Performance Area

## I. STRATEGIC POSITIONING

### a) Strengths and Achievements

- **Organizational resilience towards a disruptive world and good systems thinking** – Gender Links' strength is in critical anticipation of change in the context and repositioning itself in a disruptive world e.g. change in donor funding mechanisms, change in population, SDGs, etc. "*I will start by saying the one I really think about Gender Links is its critical anticipation of change and its positioning of their own… we had fundraising the other day -- what we are talking about now is we are not talking about survival for the next six months, even twelve, we are putting a plan in place and now creating a more sustainable future and that's a big difference between the way Gender Links does stuff than a lot of other organizations*" (Stakeholder).
- GL can read the political dimensions in the region and know what is going on.
- Articulate work around SDGs – the Protocol has been revised and aligned to the SDGs.
- **Connecting the local and international** – GL speaks two languages, the local and the international by bringing issues from the ground to national, regional, and international platforms – GL is a good bridge in bringing practical realities to those platforms through the implementation of the Protocol.
- Gender Links implements a wide range of activities – Huge efforts to raise women's voices at international level; strong technical expertise in gender mainstreaming; multi-skilled staff and produces lots of materials that can be used in raising awareness.
- **Gender Links is a regional force to reckon with** – "*But I think the Gender Links is a very big organization. It has etched out its own history. I am not sure if any other*

*member of the Alliance would have pushed the Gender Protocol or co-ordinate it in the manner that Gender Links has done" (Regional stakeholder).* "*I think they have garnered sufficient respect in the region and every country, we know them very well, they have created the partnerships across the spectrum -- Well apart from that, as I have already said they are well respected, we all look up to them. They have done a good job with the Barometer. They should continue to do what they do as a catalyst for change in this region*" (National stakeholder).

**b) Opportunities and New Ways of Working**

– What is the need in SADC? GL should respond to this question without wearing the gender lens.
– How do we position ourselves to meet those needs? GL should respond to this question wearing the gender lens. GL has to position itself as a solution to problems or technical versus as activism.
– Implementation of the SADC Gender Protocol and the SDGs is crucial. Key needs are in gender budgeting to implement SDGs is big for governments, monitoring and evaluation. There is a big drive at the international level to improve datasets and data collection and analysis.

**c) Weaknesses and Areas for Improvement**

– The Protocol@work summits and paper Barometers are expensive – learn from GEM summit's use of technology and move to digital platform.

**d) Threats**

– **Gender Links not being visible in South Africa** – being a middle-income country, fund-raising for South Africa is a little bit difficult.
– **Changing context nationally and globally** – changing demographic to a more youthful population, advance technology, urbanization, migration, youth unemployment, etc. are pertinent to GL's work.
– **Alliance work conflictual** – Despite the huge successes of the women's movement in Southern Africa through the Gender Protocol Alliance, the work is conflictual around issues of resources and perceptions of ownership. Should GL continue to exert its energy building a strong regional network or rather look inward to reinvent itself as an organization? The choice is for GL to build itself as a strong regional organization versus building a strong regional platform which it has no control over.
– **Barometer as a product** – GL is producing and selling regional Barometers. In view of the potential conflicts with some members of the Alliance, should GL sell the Barometers for sustainability of Alliance work or for its own sustainability?

**e) Recommendations**

– **Gender Links should use its huge knowledge base to reinvent itself** – GL should take time to reflect on the knowledge it has generated to begin a new cycle or to regenerate itself with this knowledge base – the Barometer, media publications, Roadmap to Equality.

- **Scenario planning strategic workshop with systems lens** – Gender Links should look at its strength vis-à-vis the changing needs and environment and reposition itself to remain relevant. "*If things change and we are fixated on what we have been doing so well we are going to be obsolete in a short while. So maybe we need to take a step back and think of what if we were not there, what if we were to stop doing a Barometer tomorrow and then look at what you have and then reassess the need … We need to take a step back and look at where the globe is going, look at where Africa is going and then after we look at that we put the agenda of Gender Links and say, where is Gender Links going to, where is the gender justice filter going to and then we look at us*" (GL stakeholder).
- **Create online or digital platform and data portal for the Barometer** – Similar to the mode of conducting the GBV indicators study, Gender Links should consider working with credible national research bureaus or national statistics bureaus and organizations like FEMNET and Afro-Barometer that works in other countries to increase the credibility, audience and the readership of the regional Barometer.
- **Strengthen current work instead of expansion** – for example, in governance focus on women's effective participation, implementation of gender policies for media houses and gender action plans by local government.
- **Coordination of Alliance network** – Considering the human resource and funding constraints, GL should consider separating and concentrating on products like producing the Barometer for which it has accumulated wealth of experience and work with Alliance members to re-strategize alternative models for building country networks.

## II.   GOVERNANCE

### a) Strengths and Achievements

- **Gender Links has a sound governance structure** is composed of the Association, the Board, and the Committees.
- **The Board and GL Association** adheres to the routine formalities to maintain oversight. The Board meets regularly – twice a year and the meetings are well-documented for institutional memory. The Chair of the Board commented that "*We met twice for the first time last year. We used to meet once now we have Board meetings twice a year, you know, just to address things more closely. Because we felt one Board meeting per year was stretching it a bit and so we meet in May and in October because come October we would have dealt with the summits and those kinds of big events, media awards and then we can reflect, you know and see where we at and so on, especially in terms of the budget and staff and looking ahead*."
- **The Board is comprehensively informed** by the Executive and are engaged in any happenings in GL. The Board is not taken by surprise. "*Unlike other boards that wait until the Board sits when there would be a lot of things that happened prior to the Board sitting, the GL CEO keeps the Board regularly informed, which I find efficient, I find it professional but I also find it, again, part of the accountability aspect where you are kept up to the minute. I mean even on things that are minute -- whose birthday it is. In some spaces the Board would only be informed when there is a crisis*."
- **The Board has committees** that oversee programmes and institutional growth in support of executive and the board. GL Board has got different committees which Board members volunteer to work on based on their areas of expertise. The committees

support the Board and the organisation. The committees deliberate prior to Board meetings and produce reports that go to the board, before the actual Board meeting. The decisions of committees get fit into the Board discussions and Board resolutions. Now these resolutions are as a result of a work that has taken place prior to the Board meeting. The different chairpersons of the different committees reporting on their activities.

– GL Board committees save money by having Skype meetings. One Board member commented that, "*But also very important, which brings me to something that, you know, because we have been experiencing financial challenges, the Board took a decision, that look here, we will not take any Board fees, we will not have a moratorium until our financial situation improves.*"

– **The Association oversees activities of the Board and appoints Board members**. This provides another tier of checks and balance. According to the Board Chair, "*The Association has oversight. We make recommendations to them and in their meetings they will discuss it and accept the resolutions that are being proposed by the board. So it moves on, you know, after the Board meeting we have to ensure that that happens, so that I become the link between the Association and the Board*.

**b) Opportunities and New Ways of Working**

– Founding members, retired board and retired staff join the board as a resource and institutional memory.

**c) Weaknesses and Areas for Improvement**

– **Succession plan** – Focusing on institutional succession plan versus grooming an individual is not sustainable due to staff turnover and other constraints. One respondent mentioned that "*But for me a succession plan is more linked to the institution memory and continuity and less to the notion of a new CEO or any executive. What I am saying is the process needs to be broadened more to be an institutional one because at the end of the day even though we have strong personalities that run the organization, the reality is the organizations are things of themselves and they have systems -- And I think we need to think about what those systems are for an institution memory so that in the absence of any one individual and if you focus on institutional memory you have a deeper emphasis of personalized succession.*"

– Some people see GL as the CEO because of her personal commitment – there is need for more visibility of Board members and members of the association to avoid overburdening one individual. One respondent commented that "*The big thing for me with Gender Links is that it has been led by Colleen and it's not in a negative way but she has a lot of knowledge. Kubi also used to have a lot of knowledge, I don't know where she is now. I don't know if that knowledge is at every level of the organization. For donors when we suddenly do not interact with Colleen but with other people, just like, sometimes I'd be disappointed by the quality that came out.*"

## d) Threats

- CEO overworked due to diminishing donor. She currently covers the role of Programme Director, Country Operations Manager, Media Programme Manager, Justice Programme Manager, and Finance Manager.

## e) Recommendations
- Gender Links should develop a succession plan that focuses on the institution rather than an individual.
- Gender Links should urgently conduct a thorough capacity assessment vis-à-vis available funds and to identify an optimum personnel size to manage the businesses of the organization and relieve the CEO of a heavy workload.

## III. PROGRAMME OF ACTION

### a) Strengths and Achievements

**Overall Programming Achievements**
- Gender Links has well-developed Theory of Change that informs all GL programming.
- GL straddles policy (especially SADC Gender Protocol) with people's lived experiences on the ground and the role of CSOs in advocacy.
- Partnerships with institutions like governments, the ministries of gender and local government, media houses and media training institutions, CSOs through Alliance
- GL keeps detailed documentation of value for money and in-kind support for all project interventions.
- SGP is the most driven compared to other Protocols – set the pace for other networks. GL has become a reference point, you talk about gender, you talk about GL (UN Women).
- The Alliance national networks are stronger.
- GL includes men and men's groups in gender equality work, for example, the South Africa's Men's Forum.

**Media Programme**
- Seminars on topical gender, media and diversity issues through GMDC partners and through COP.
- The media programme utilized new media to share good practice: COP discussion and knowledge platform on GL website contributions by interns; publicizing GMPS results
- Tap into SABA –SADC dialing sharing content.
- Gender and Media Summits was hosted by public broadcasters and will be hosted in 2017 by the Department of Information and Broadcasting Botswana (BTV and Radio Botswana).
- Marketing COE model, media monitoring tool, score card regionally globally-SABA, AuB, CBU- networks.

**Alliance Programme**
- Alliance would not be what it is without GL's leadership, spaces at the SADC Secretariat and CSW, the passion of Colleen, and dedication of staff to manage it.

- The post 2015 Protocol adopted by Head of States in Swaziland.
- Alliance has gained space in mainstream civil society through SADC-CNGO and SAT.
- New areas; SRHR and LGBTI training – capacity from the Other Foundation.
- Alliance has Continental and global networks – FEMNET, CIVICUS, WMG, Post-2015 Coalition.
- Stronger country level strengthening through consultations – Gender machinery lobbying.
- Firmer ground for social media.
- Learning from other coalitions – Women's Major Groups, Post 2015 Women's Coalition, Beyond 2015, FEMNET, CIVICUS, Africa Civil Society Circle, AU engagement.
- GL provides written guidelines to Barometer Researchers. One Barometer researcher said that, "*You do get a comprehensive document guiding you on what the chapter should look like in different areas from a technical perspective that you need to cover, so that has been very useful because we do have a document that you do have to g back to and to make sure that you are on track and that has developed and improved over time. So that has been an excellent tool that they have introduced.*"

## Governance Programme
- Over 429 COE in ten SADC countries localised the SADC Gender Protocol. This covers 17% of the population of the 10 countries.
- COE contributed to 93% of the costs of the programme: in-kind support and Gender Action Plans.
- The programme has committed GL staff and a cadre of council staff – GL staff. There are about 958 Gender Focal Persons and Gender Committees.

## Gender Justice Programme – Entrepreneurship and GBV
- We have an evidence base for showing that in this target market personal agency and economic independence can reduce GBV. Powerful message that can be leveraged.
- The key regional achievement is that 91% of target group completed a business plan and 79% followed through on the plan.


## b) Weaknesses and Areas for Improvement

## Alliance Programme

- **Difficult to make the distinction between GL and the Alliance**. "*We know that Gender Links is trying to say that it is different from the Alliance but for us as focal point, we really don't see the difference between Gender links and the Alliance. So much that our expectation is that Alliance is a branch of Gender Links. They always say they are two different entities but at focal point it's not clear to us and there is a lot of conflict with regard to how does the Alliance get its budget its financial independence that Gender Links gets. So that has not been cleared and since it has not been clear to focal point at the National level its difficult, our collaboration has become so difficult that there is always an issue as to who should fund the activities of the Alliance at National level*" (National stakeholder).
- "*Alliance is just a baby of Gender Links, and Gender Links is not transparent enough to let us know its relationship with Alliance. Now if it would let us know the extent to which*

_it is related to Alliance because at one point I don't know whether I am invited by either of the two_" (National stakeholder).

- "_An independent Alliance is the best way to go but the problem is that since it was initiated by Gender Links, I think the Gender Links management is refusing to let it go. But if they are not letting go, let them take responsibility of the National efforts as well. So for me it's always difficult to separate Gender Links and the Alliance because whatever form of meeting or coordination, it will always be Gender Links spearheading the process.so we are saying that those who are going to New York can we also meet as the Alliance_" (National stakeholder).

- "_Separation of powers is not also cleared up in that regard, not power per say but roles and responsibilities. We do but you find that there is that Interdependence between Gender Links office at the National Level and Focal point. Because for example you find that if funds from South Africa will be channeled through Gender Links and not directly to Focal Point and as such it drives you at one point or another, you have to agree with Gender Links office in terms of how the activities are sponsored. What roles is Gender Links supposed to play, for example when it comes to report writing, is it the mandate of the Focal point alone or are those responsibilities to be shared with Gender Links country office_?" (Alliance stakeholder).

- **Weak national presence in Swaziland** – "_I think they have garnered sufficient respect in the region and every country, we know them very well, they have created the partnerships across the spectrum. I think where at country level usually they are identified as a person, the individual capacity has been wanting to me sometimes to the point that we represent the Alliance as CANGO, we are not sufficiently briefed_" (Alliance stakeholder).

- **Improve planning and coordination at the national level** – "_I think if they just improve the connection at National level and themselves in terms of coordination, the planning processes, and the Alliance partners if they have a calendar of the agenda so that we can take the activities into our annual programs, so that they are not just coming from the side because they might risk losing priority. If you come in between our programs you might find us completely prioritized and tight. So if we can plan and share plans so that they are integrated then things can be great_" (Alliance stakeholder).

- **Inadequate remuneration of barometer researchers** – Researchers payment not commensurate with the level of effort. "_But I also think I don't want to say that it's not enough money that they pay us but sometimes you do compare the amount of work and what you are being paid for it's really a lot of work. That would be one of my recommendations, to really look at the remuneration in comparison to the amount of work done_" (Barometer researcher).

- **Barometer country reports not up-to-date**. "Also to be honest sometimes especially on the chapter that I am working on, the information that comes from the country researchers, is not up to standard. So for me if we had very solid country reports, it makes the job a lot easier" (Barometer Researcher).

- Some donors feel that the summit is very expensive and should not be help every year. One respondent asked of the summit, "_Does it need to be a summit? I mean you can also just, through your work, you know, compile a book of case studies and publish it or make inserts in the newspaper, you know. Because the Summit is... yes, you bring people together, they have nice food, and they have good motivational speech, and then what? As donor, we just see, you know, beautiful food and speakers._"

**Media Programme**
- Weakened gender and media movement (GEM summit swallowed by the SADC Gender Protocol Summit).
- Lack of ownership amongst key partners-GMDC.
- Media do not consider gender a priority area-bottom line.
- No resources allocated to gender mainstreaming.
- COE model costly and results not immediately evident.

**Governance Programme**
- Need to strengthen achievements – quality versus quantity, depth vs breath
- Change of personnel in local government – affects ownership and sustainability.

**Gender Justice Programme – Entrepreneurship and GBV**
- Mixed results from councils.
- Pilot was well funded but was widespread, expensive and set very high targets but thin on how to get there.
- High costs in terms of time, funding and logistics.
- Not aligned closely enough with COE programme.
- Difficult to impact at a society level.
- Did not involve partners and families.
- Most of the women were over 40.
- Getting funding for the businesses is difficult.
- Small amounts available for follow up which is creating some challenges.

**c) Threats**
- Donors and private sector have different requirements – need to adapt.
- It is hard to find seed capital for the women's entrepreneurship programme.
- Gender Links is concerned that the DA may not be a gender friendly contact for the programme in South Africa.
- Perception that GL will "copy and paste" programming from South Africa context and impose of other countries.
- FLOW councils very spread out.
- Limited staff and resources for women's entrepreneurship programme.
- Need to raise money for South Africa.
- What would GL be without Alliance? – Need scenario planning.
- The narrative around gender equality, gender justice needs to be nuanced and refreshed, should be updated continuously vis-à-vis changing contexts e.g. citizen base more youthful than before and they are technologically savvy, situation of migrants, etc.
- GL is too busy and operates in silos because of overspecializing – GL not in spaces like people's summit in Zimbabwe – social movement of citizens and also was not active at SADC-CNGO meeting.
- Is it necessary to produce the Barometer every year versus some quick updates?
- Case studies format lacks details on process of change in a person's life – put in more structure and analysis. Can GL do case study inserts in newspapers?
- Alliance members were not there during the launch of the regional Barometer to show solidarity. There were last minute cancellations.

**d) Opportunities and New Ways of Working**

**Media Programme**
- Move from supply to demand driven approach. Demand driven thematic training (ten theme areas from COE manual and past GL thematic training packages) upcoming UNWomen peace and conflict reporting; Media management and leadership training, gender media and elections training GBV reporting. Topical issues.
- Partnerships through SABA/GL for the 2016 Gender and Media Summit in Namibia and partnerships with universities.
- The programme is working with interns.

**Alliance Programme**
- Effective use of social media, newsletter, list serve for communication and advocacy
- Online campaigns e.g. SRHR.
- Alliance exploring new fundraising models like consortiums.
- Using regional, continental and global networks for advocacy.
- Improved detailed planning in line with strategy, donor deliverables.
- Organisational advocacy strategy – Advocacy and networking coordinator.
- Finalising Roadmap to Equality Book, Alliance video – use as tools for advocacy, information.
- Strengthening of the Alliance at country level – leveraging to popularise new Protocol.
- Post 2015 relevance – review of tools, research methodology and SDGs.
- Rebranding – new logo, review of Alliance pamphlets.
- Partnership with interest Groups – Men's sector, FBOs, LGBTIAQ, Youth.
- Tapping onto expertise of Alliance EXCO leadership.
- Cross programme synergies e.g. SRHR training.

**Governance Programme**
- Monitor local government elections in the region to develop refresher training for new councillors and new council staff.

**e) Recommendations**

**Media Programme**
- Strengthened partnerships through the Gender and Media Diversity Centre and Global Alliance on Media and Gender.
- Community of Practice (COP) on gender and media-knowledge and resource sharing.
- Leading trainer on gender and the media through thematic workshops (e.g. elections, climate change) for different target groups.
- The media programme to start working on like a business model because funders are reluctant to fund media work.

**Alliance Programme**
- The secretariat should make use of interns to gather the primary data for the Barometer and then the remaining responsibility of analysis and writing given to researchers.
- Face-to-face meeting for Barometer researchers. One Barometer researcher commented that, "*I recall that was when the researchers had a meeting and we all were there and that was before we had the task of writing, we were able to get a sense of the direction of either Colleen or the Secretariat had, what their vision for that year's Barometer was and how they expected it to shape up so that there are continuous threads running*

*throughout the themes of the Barometer. It always helps when we sit with Debbie who does the editing, to sit with Colleen…you know to sit with the team really, to get the understanding of what it is that they really want and the direction."*

**Governance Programme**
– More analysis of the effectiveness of local government implementation of gender action plans in light of budgetary constraints at this level of government.
– Gender Links' focus will be on depth rather than breath – fewer local governments more focus on depth.
– Reviewed resource materials.
– Strengthening thematic areas.
– Gender Responsive budgeting in councils.
– Local Government Scorecard.
– Gender and elections campaigning and advocacy.
– Gender justice and local government summits – ownership and locally driven versus GL driven.
– Robust and diligent monitoring and evaluation.
– Increased regional and in-country fundraising.

**Gender Justice Programme – Entrepreneurship and GBV**
– **Funding and in kind support**: The entrepreneurship programme needs to create sustainability by diversifying the funding and in kind sources to include the private sector in each country.  In kind support can take the form of mentorship, donations of equipment such as computers, training, volunteerism etc. as per pledge form.
– **Manuals and training model** could be packaged for sale for use by other organisations.
    – **Visibility** – The programme will produce inserts/articles for relevant newspapers for broader circulation of aspects of entrepreneurship training such as a weekly series with media COEs; maybe as a co-branded initiative e.g. with a corporate
    – Social services – HIV positive – disabled – GBV -  potential areas of support for entrepreneurship training.
    – Tap the in-country Foundations.
    – Funding for Women – Arrangements with banks - need to be well equipped to negotiate in terms of their requirements for risk, transactional costs.
– Need comprehensive strategy for next phase by the end of this year.

## IV.    INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING/EFFECTIVENESS

### a) Strengths and Achievements and New Ways of Working
– GL has physical assets – Cottages and the two buildings on corner Marcia.
– Country offices own vehicles – Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Namibia.
– The core staff and long-serving employees joined GL as interns – internship is good strategy to attract staff, reduce workload of senior staff, and brings in new blood.
– Great website with lots of information (Is there a plan for marketing the website?).
– New Pastel financial operating system finally in place in all GL countries and Cottages running as branches under the same roof.
– Internet issues now minimal after fibre installation.
– Committed and dedicated staff.

– Doing more with less, for example Skype meetings with country staff and board committees.
– Gender Links Cottages is self-sustaining and contributing to financial stability of GL. The Cottages has:
  – Introduced GL events and shuttle services.
  – Increase annual net profit by 10% - net income in 2015 was R1 250 263.00.
  – Profit target for the year 2016 is R1.4 million.

## b) Weaknesses and Areas for Improvement
– Turnover of staff – GL attracts competent people but retention is a challenge.
– Diffuse leadership to others in the organization.
– GL is not big enough to get administrative funding but GL should be seen as a strategic partner – CLM should make herself more visible in London.
– Absence of proper routines.
– Inadequate planning to enforce routines.
– Lack of strict internal controls-laxity.
– Evidence of not paying attention to detail.
– Reactive approach as opposed to being proactive –which was time consuming and hence expensive. Working backwards –pre-audit.
– Inaccuracy of information.
– Not optimizing on available systems.
– Not meeting statutory requirements /organizational documentation.

## GL Cottages
– Decreased income from GL which contributed to 30% of income.
– Re-zoning issues affect our ability to hold events and have a liquor license.
– Staff shortages affected our marketing drive (Debrah & Shekinah).
– Some of the travel websites have not yielded any bookings.

## c) Opportunities for Improvement
– Nedbank Proposal to be finalised by December 2016.
– GL Services could link with big private sector players like KPMG to access funding if it can fit well with the KMPG model.
– Training Institute to develop LGBTI course for the Department of Social Development –
– Corporate Fund raising through PRASA.
– Partnerships with the Social Justice Initiative.
– Gender Links has invited several corporates to entrepreneurship events: MTN, Transnet, Motsepe Foundation, Nedbank Foundation, and Coca Cola.
– Need to follow up with all the mobile companies for potential business vendor opportunities.
– Gender Links to approach companies that could potentially supply goods to the women at cost or as sponsorships for follow to training, for example Dischem.
– Involve corporates in technical training such as training women to use their products productively.
– 28 on Marcia – New GL Bed and Breakfast facility.

**d) Threats**
- Insufficient financial resources.
- Limited human resources causing multi-tasking. Gender Links staffing has reduced by more than half from it's peak of 51 staff in 2013 to 30 staff in 2016.
- Organizational structure-procedures, systems and processes.
- Lack of accountability –who is responsible for what.
- Putting effort in wrong areas which do not drive desired results – important over the urgent brewing future crisis.
- GL has developed sound administrative and operational systems and policies but there is lack of attention to details in the policies.
- Genuine lack of information/knowledge.
- Inadequate training.
- Decreased income from NGO sector because of decreased donor funding.
- The capacity of the regional secretariat of Gender seen as much stronger than its country representatives/offices.

**e) Recommendations**
- Building functional teams –people are the greatest asset.
- Optimising on the existing systems to get the best value.
- Use of CRM module for databases of customers and service providers, Stock inventory module for Cottages and GLSvs, contracts.
- New way of problem solving- Lateral thinking across all units of Gender Links and Income generating depts. Holistic solutions.
- Centralisation of some functions e.g. Housekeeping for Cottages and N.P.O to reduce costs and still be effective.
- Decentralisation of other functions to increase effectiveness.
- Put in place policies relating to income for good cash flow mgnt.
- Best use of human resources optimising on staff hours-smart working.
- Implementation and tightening of internal controls.
- Physical registers that are signed off manually for checks and controls. Introduce inter-departmental snap checks and mini audits e.g. assets.
- Routine, routines, routines!! –to avoid slippages in key result areas.
- Putting in place calendar system with all important submission deadlines for statutory and management requirements.
- Tag system to trigger Authorisations for entries into control accounts.
- GL services could link with big private sector players like KPMG to access funding if it can fit well with the KMPG model.
- Re-zoning issue has to be intensified so that we can market events vigorously.

**V. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**a) Strengths and Achievements and New Ways of Working**
- Gender Links has started raising funds through local initiatives.
    - R40 000 from Nedbank.
    - R20 000 from SAT Ukhamba Function.
- Unqualified Audit.
- Proven successful financial sustainability in some offices.
- Capacity building of other business units on budgeting.

- Unifying business operations through the system.
- Operationalising the new financial system.

## b) Weaknesses
- Financial policies outdated, not aligned with new financial systems.
- Routine checks of documents from the country offices and give oversight of country accounts.
- SETA registration has lapsed.
- Soft copies of the three courses for accreditation have not yet been traced.
- First Partnership fund raiser canceled due to speaker being unavailable.
- Funding Uncertainty – major contracts ending.
- Sustaining the size of operations across the region.
- Operationalising and optimisation of the system (real-time visibility across the organisation).
- Streamlining processes and improving productivity.
- Running a global business efficiency.
- Handling financial consolidation efficiently.
- Sustainability is under threat.

## c) Opportunities for Improvement
- Promotion of alternative funding.
- Vigilant efforts in income generating units.

## d) Threats and Areas for Improvement
- People are resistant to paying for the publications they are used to getting free.
- GL is not big enough to get administrative funding but GL should be seen as a strategic partner. GL CEO should make herself more visible in London, Brussels, and other relevant capitals.
- Funding has dropped significantly.

## e) Recommendations
- Do interim audits to spot and correct issues.
- Continuous improvement of processes and controls.
- Continuous self assessments-improved financial accountability.
- Integrative approach across functions.
- Integrated feedback approach on systems and processes effectiveness.
- Continuous support system and setting achievable goals.
- Active risk management and role definitions.

## VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## a) Strengths and Achievements and New Ways of Working
- GL has monitoring and evaluation system in place.
- Great use of technology and website to collect and analyze M & E data.
- Data captured by project officers in country offices.
- Online tools used by GL in data collection.
  - Online Surveys

- Summit applications
- Scorecards
- Planning and Reviews
- Result measurement framework - Performance indicators
- Impact evaluation
- Case studies, I Stories, Drivers of Change
- Internal and external Evaluations
- Logical framework ( RFC Framework)
- Monthly Reports -
- Performance Appraisals
- Partnership feedback forms
- Testimonials
- Quiz
- 360 Degrees feedback
- Tracking Sheets
- Automated reports
- Calendar
- Weekly Checklist
- Monthly reports
- Attendance register
- Summit applications!!! Online GEM summit forms rolled out and a major success. No more unsuccessful entries, rejected entries, formatting challenges.
- Online GEM summit judges scorecards linked to the applications. Judges can now pre-score entries virtually from wherever they are.
- This is a key VFM cost saving for GL. No need to fly in judges to do the scoring.
- Epi Info has been a key innovative solution to GL data gathering, processing and visualisation tool.
- Summit applications!!! Online GEM summit forms rolled out and a major success. No more unsuccessful entries, rejected entries, formatting challenges.
- Online GEM summit judges scorecards linked to the applications. Judges can now pre-score entries virtually from wherever they are.
- This is a key VFM cost saving for GL. No need to fly in judges to do the scoring.
- Epi Info has been a key innovative solution to GL data gathering, processing and visualisation tool.


## b) Weaknesses and Areas for Improvement

- Great M & E system not backed with diligence in data collection and entry – for example, there were major gaps in baseline and follow-up for Lesotho evaluation.
- Effective evaluations are not the key findings but also the process is important – deserves the same attention given to financial audits: cumulative evidence, good attitude.
- Analysis of data collected from various sources and surveys using excel is difficult and time consuming. To mitigate this GL is in a process of developing an automated database system such as Epi Info and survey Gizmo.
- Errors when recording data.
- Tracking is a challenge considering the vast amount of reports generated.

- Tools change in response to new ideas and experiences and may render gathered data useless.
- Linked reports quality is compromised when one person in the chain does not deliver.

## c) Opportunities and New Ways of Working
- Improve in impact analysis and reporting. More longitudinal tracking and reporting on beneficiaries.
- Outcome measuring.
- Analysis of information gathered from surveys to make good judgements on projects.
- To use appropriate tools in monitoring GL activities in all countries as well as measure outcome for good documentation, fundraising and learning activities.
- Strengthen the M&E function by adhering to set reporting standards and dates.
- Use of online M&E tools to gather data and ask beneficiaries to feed in directly. This helps in gathering rich data.

## d) Threats
- Programmes and GL partners do not value and plan for M&E.

## e) Recommendations
- GL should train and support gender focal persons in councils and media houses to input data directly on GL website to cut down costs and build capacity for sustainable reporting.
- GL should identify data sources for programme indicators and methods for data collection – interim reports should be cumulative.
- Synchronise the M&E function with the Finance unit. Progress should be proportional to expenditure.

## Annex A: Gender Links: Organisational Score Card

| NO. | KEY PERFORMANCE AREA | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| | **STRATEGIC POSITIONINIG** | |
| | *Vision, mission and core values* | |
| 1 | GL has a clear vision, mission and core values | |
| 2 | The vision, mission and core values are known & internalized by governance, management & staff and shared with new governance, management and staff | |
| 3 | The vision, mission and core values are regularly reviewed to ensure relevance | |
| | *Formulation of relevant strategies* | |
| 4 | GL understands and regularly reviews the political context within which it works | |
| 5 | GL has clear, comprehensive strategies | |
| 6 | The strategies have been developed in a participatory manner and are well known by the whole team | |
| 7 | The strategies are reviewed regularly | |
| | *Legitimacy for its work* | |
| 8 | GL has a strategy for communicating about itself (e.g. brochures, flyers, annual reports etc.) | |
| 9 | GL is a well known player within its field confirmed by its participation in public thematic discussion/debates, being used as a reference point, invitation to give talks/contribution in different forums etc. | |
| 10 | GL regularly disseminates information and/or shares learning and insights from its work with other interested parties through organized forums. | |
| | **GOVERNANCE** | |
| | *Governance structures* | |
| 11 | GL has an independent governing body (board) besides the management team with a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities | |
| 12 | The Board meets regularly, minutes are taken and maintained | |
| 13 | The Board plays its oversight role and policy direction in GL | |
| 14 | The Board has equal gender representation | |
| 15 | The Board is renewed regularly | |
| 16 | GL has a clear governing constitution that is reviewed and updated regularly | |
| | *Application of democratic rule* | |
| 17 | The routines and practices of GL are fair and transparent | |
| 18 | Decision-makers are held accountable for the decisions they make | |
| 19 | There are clear, formal lines/systems for decision making that involve as broad participation as practical | |
| 20 | GL does not exclude participation by people on account of their sex, ethnic or religious affiliation | |
| | **PROGRAMME OF ACTION** | |
| | *Planning for implementation* | |
| 21 | GL has a strategic plan aligned to the vision and mission | |
| 22 | GL has annual plans drawn from the strategic plan | |

| NO. | KEY PERFORMANCE AREA | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| 23 | Planning is done in an integrated and participatory manner and is understood by everyone involved in implementation | |
| 24 | The plan clearly defines the expected activities, indicators and results and is used for monitoring and evaluation | |
| 25 | Planning takes into account the gender perspective and PLWA | |
| 26 | Planning takes into account the PLWA | |
| 27 | There is flexibility for the planned activities to be adjusted in case of significant changes during the implementation period | |
| | *Working methods* | |
| 28 | GL's working methods are reflected in the policy and other steering documents | |
| 29 | GL allows its stakeholders to critically and openly examine the work methods; GL responds constructively to feedback from stakeholders | |
| 30 | Work methods are regularly reviewed in a participatory manner | |
| | *Reporting and documentation* | |
| 31 | GL documents what it considers important either for dissemination or for archiving | |
| 32 | GL reports to the donors on a timely basis according to their requirements | |
| | *Follow up* | |
| 33 | GL has systems, tools and routines for regular follow-up to compare quality and quantity of results against plans and ensures that follow up takes place | |
| | **Partnerships and target groups** | |
| 34 | Findings from these follow-ups are usually discussed in relevant forums | |
| 35 | GL has well defined target groups | |
| 36 | GL is known by the defined target groups | |
| 37 | The relationship between GL and the target group is alive – characterised by free interaction and expression. | |
| 38 | Target group accepts/appreciates the work of GL as addressing their needs. | |
| 39 | GL has partnerships with national and external NGOs | |
| 40 | GL has a mechanism for involving the target group in its processes e.g. planning, monitoring and review | |
| 41 | Feedback from the target group is taken seriously by GL and is always acted upon | |
| 42 | GL conveys relevant information to the target group effectively and on a timely basis | |
| 43 | GL actively participates in relevant networks. | |
| 44 | GL has been involved in joint activities with other network member organizations | |
| 45 | Through the networks GL has been able to acquire new information, work methods, skills etc. | |
| 46 | Those who participate in networks always give feedback to the other relevant staff in GL | |
| 47 | GL has leadership/coordination role in some of the networks | |
| 48 | GL regularly reviews participation in networks to ascertain those that are beneficial and those that are not | |
| | **INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING** | |
| | *Physical resources* | |

| NO. | KEY PERFORMANCE AREA | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| 49 | GL has comfortable and pleasant working space | |
| 50 | Staff have the equipment and resources they need to be able to work | |
| 51 | There is space for meetings and interactive events | |
| 52 | GL ensures that its physical assets are insured, safe and secure at all times | |
| | *Electronic resources* | |
| 53 | There is formal procedure manual of hardware, software and instructions on the use for organisational information systems | |
| 54 | Staff are trained and receive support in how to use IT effectively | |
| 55 | Technical problems are solved within short periods of time without disrupting work. | |
| | *Administrative and financial routines* | |
| 56 | GL   has an administrative and operational policy that is in use. | |
| 57 | There are established systems and routines in all areas of GL work; these are clear and transparent. | |
| 58 | Administrative decisions are made in an effective manner (consistently and promptly) | |
| | *Human resources* | |
| | *Selection and recruitment* | |
| 59 | GL   has a recruitment policy that is applied in all cases | |
| 60 | All positions in GL have clear and operationalised job descriptions | |
| 61 | All people working in GL have relevant qualifications, skills  and experience | |
| 62 | GL   has engaged enough people commensurate to the planned activities. | |
| | *Capacity building* | |
| 63 | GL has a staff development policy; encourages learning and supports capacity building; regularly updates the knowledge of staff through relevant refresher - courses/workshops | |
| | *Roles and responsibilities* | |
| 64 | GL has a documented structure that is known to staff members; Duties and responsibilities area allocated according to the structure | |
| 65 | Every member of staff  has a clear job description stating the responsibilities and the reporting lines | |
| 66 | The structure is regularly reviewed, especially when strategies change and the structure effectively facilitates coordination of activities | |
| | *Performance, discipline and reward* | |
| 67 | There a system of appraising staff performance periodically in order to identify capacity gaps and also assess rewards and incentives? | |
| 68 | Cases of poor performance are addressed effectively | |
| | *Work environment and communication* | |
| 69 | Staff have regular staff meeting where they are able to freely express their feelings and opinions | |
| 70 | The relationship between the management and staff is cordial | |
| 71 | GL have a clear and effective mechanism for handling staff grievances as well as cases of indiscipline. | |

| NO. | KEY PERFORMANCE AREA | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| 72 | Management does not discriminate against staff on account of their sex, ethnic or religious affiliation | |
| 73 | GL has HIV and gender workplace policies that are well known and implemented | |
| 74 | GL has a wellness programme that is budgeted and assists staff to cope with balancing work and other needs. | |
| | **SUSTAINABILITY** | |
| | ***Financial policies and procedures*** | |
| 75 | GL has a written financial policy that is in use | |
| 76 | GL has committed and qualified finance manager/accountant to carry out all finance related activities of the organisation | |
| 77 | The Executive Director has a basic understanding of financial accounting | |
| 78 | GL has a written purchasing and procurement policy that is in use | |
| 79 | GL has a comprehensive fixed assets policy | |
| 80 | GL has the ability and capacity to develop good proposals for donor funding | |
| 81 | The accounting system provides for accumulating and recording expenditures by grant and cost category shown in the approved budget | |
| 82 | All vouchers are filed with all original supporting documents chronologically | |
| 83 | Monthly management reports are generated and reviewed | |
| 84 | Rejected transactions are promptly analysed and corrected by a supervisor | |
| 85 | Back up copies are maintained and stored in a secure, fire resistant area? | |
| 86 | GL has no difficulty with financial reports to donors – accuracy and timeliness | |
| 87 | There budgeting procedures in place and budgets are taken seriously | |
| 88 | Accounts are audited annually and comments by auditors taken seriously to improve financial management | |
| 89 | GL ensures value for money from service providers | |
| 90 | Travel is managed carefully to ensure best value for money and lack of wastage due to cancellation, change of plans etc. | |
| 91 | All staff, especially managers, are trained in financial systems and held accountable for any transactions they are involved in or budgets that they manage. | |
| | ***Long term financial planning and resource mobilization*** | |
| 92 | GL's resource mobilization strategy embeds sustainability needs | |
| 93 | GL has diversified sources of funding | |
| 94 | GL has/is building an asset base | |
| | **MONITORING AND EVALUATION** | |
| 95 | GL has internal project monitoring, evaluation and management systems and indications on how they contribute to good, accountable performance by GL . | |
| 96 | GL has mechanisms to monitor & support operationalization of amended and/or new policies | |
| 97 | Organisational reporting is based on results rather than just on activities | |
| 98 | GL has a mechanism of incorporating new learning and experiences from these follow-ups into future plans; these are reviewed regularly to ensure relevance and effectiveness | |

| NO. | KEY PERFORMANCE AREA | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| 99 | GL uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to document results | |
| 100 | GL packages and communicates the results of its work effectively and to a variety of relevant stakeholders | |

*Adapted from institutional reviews made in the course of applying for the DFID Governance and Transparency and MDG 3 Fund; UNIFEM VAW Trust Fund; as well as an evaluation by Diakonia*