

The Virtual Resources Centre (VRC)

Building on the core resource base that has been established using material from the GMBS, and popularised with trainers at a training workshop, GL has sought to ensure constant updating and usage of the Virtual Resource Centre.

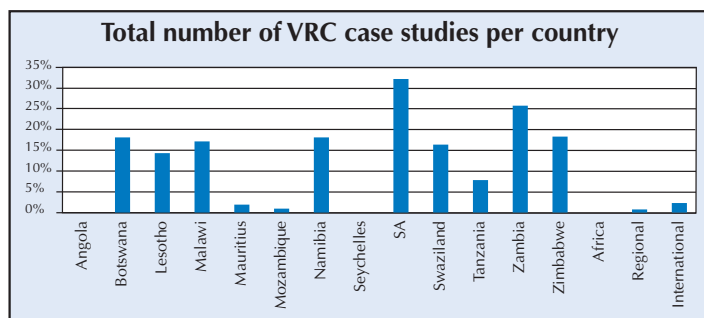
As one of several follow ups to the GMBS, the VRC consists of a virtual resource centre on its website consisting of case studies from the GMBS that are indexed and can be searched by country, theme and functional area. These case studies are accompanied by training notes. The VRC was tested with trainers in March 2004 and adjustments made to make this resource as user friendly as possible. A key issue in media training is that case material dates easily. It needs to be constantly updated. The VRC provides a unique mechanism for doing so. It is also a way for actively engaging trainers and monitors around the region in gathering and sharing material.

Activities during 2005/2006 included:

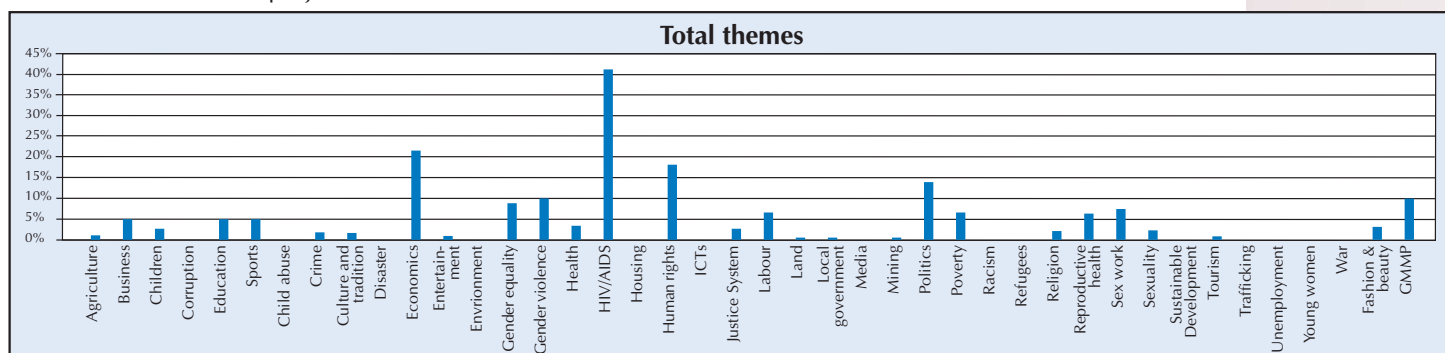
- Updating the VRC.
- Managing the VRC.
- Honoraria to trainers and monitors to send in material.
- Discussion forums on new material.
- In-country workshops with media trainers, linked to the "IT for Advocacy" workshops.

Outputs

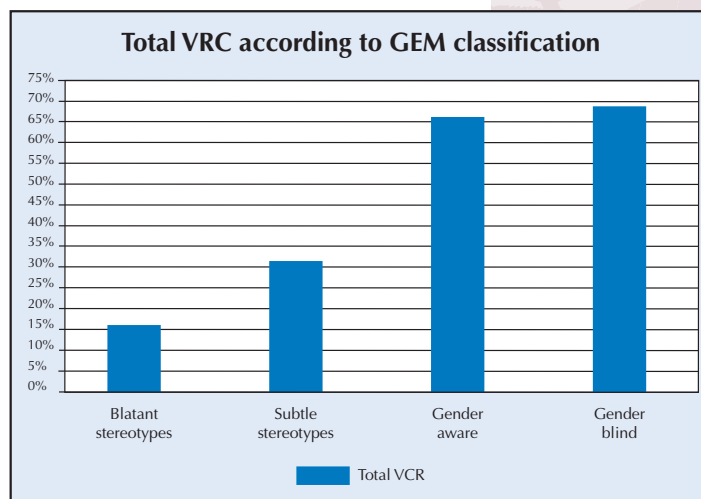
A total of 183 new case studies were added to the VRC in 2005/2006, exceeding the target of ten per month or 120 in total. The country break down of the case studies is illustrated in the graph. As might be expected, given the size of the country and its media, South Africa generated the largest number of case studies, but there are case studies from a number of other countries as well. Clearly language remains a barrier, with the lowest number of items from the French and Portuguese speaking countries.



In terms of themes, most articles are on HIV/AIDS, followed by economics, human rights, politics, and then the GMMP and gender violence. The large number of articles on HIV/AIDS and economics is related to projects done in this area.



The next graph shows what kind of case studies are generated in terms of the Gender and Media (GEM) classification used by the VRC. This shows that the largest number of case studies are those classified as gender blind. There has been an encouraging increase in the number of gender aware case studies. More will be added from the 2006 Gender and Media Awards.



With regard to outreach, an extension to the NIZA "IT for Advocacy" workshop contract enabled GL to hold workshops with trainers in five (though not the full ten) countries covered in the project. As an addendum to the original project, this did not take account of university holidays and other logistic factors. However, the five training workshops reached 51 media trainers in the countries where they were conducted (Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania).

Next steps

- As part of its efforts to raise core funding, GL will seek to secure resources for a full time training coordinator part of whose task will be to manage and market the VRC that GL believes is critical for gender and media training, and has applications in media training more broadly.
- Another important dimension of these fund raising efforts is to secure the services of a translator to be able to reach French and Portuguese speaking countries.
- Conscious efforts need to be made to develop more cases studies from the region, in order to have variety and diversity in the resource centre. This can possibly be done in collaboration with GEMSA networks.
- Continuous efforts to market the VRC, including through the SAMTRAN IT workshop for trainers, as well as more in-country and on-site training workshops.