

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



On 8 October 2002, readers of the respected French newspaper *Le Figaro* are reported to have seen double. They received two versions of the newspaper. One had the usual mix of crime, politics, international upheaval and business. Another covered the same basic issues, but women produced the newspaper from beginning to end.

The feminised experiment edition, called *Le Figaro Femmes* had the same overall layout, but contained an opinion piece about women being sidelined internationally, a story about the male-female wage gap, a profile of United States National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, the three women candidates for the Argentinian presidential elections in March, and a story on women from Cote d' Ivoire demonstrating against conflict in their country. In short, according to Agence France Press, the paper contained articles "short on violence and long on relationships, gender justice and families."

The question we constantly ask ourselves at Gender Links is: if one newspaper can "feminise" its news for one day, and see the difference, then why can't the news be feminised every day? What effect would that have on the way we see the world, perhaps even on world peace and security? For those of us who are both passionate media practitioners and advocates of gender equality, the *Le Figaro* experiment must surely give us the courage to march on.

Background

Sexist attitudes and stereotypes remain one of the major impediments to the achievement of gender equality. Mass media plays a key role in shaping public attitudes. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the mid term Beijing Plus Five Review, and at other major gender gatherings, the difficulty of persuading the media to take up issues of gender equality has arisen as a major frustration. Equally important is the perspective from which stories are told. Empirical studies show that the overwhelming majority of news sources are men. Women invariably feature either as sex objects or as victims of violence in the media. Ironically, although women constitute the majority of media consumers, little attention is paid to what they would be interested in knowing. Assumptions may also have been made about male attitudes to progressive coverage on gender issues. Indeed, the burden of masculinity is one that is coming in increasingly for discussion and scrutiny. It needs to feature more in media debates.



Swapping roles at a GL training workshop

Approaches

There have been several different approaches to gender and the media. These include:

- ❑ Empowering women journalists;
- ❑ Creating alternative media for women's voices to be heard;
- ❑ Establishing women's media watchdogs that regularly comment on content, raise alerts and take up campaigns;
- ❑ Seeking to bring about gender balance in media institutions as well as in its editorial content.

None of these approaches is mutually exclusive. Each has an important role to play in ensuring a fair representation and portrayal of women in the media. GL has, however, specifically chosen to focus on the last of these strategies because:

- ❑ In the long term there is no alternative to ensuring that the mainstream media reflects and promotes gender equality;
- ❑ We believe that male *and* female journalists need gender training;
- ❑ Several organisations- such as the various media women's associations in Southern Africa- are focusing on the first two of these approaches. We welcome these as important and complementary initiatives. But we believe our niche is to engage with the mainstream media as well as seek to bridge the gap between gender activists and media practitioners.

Partners

GL's objective of mainstreaming gender in the media and sharpening the communication skills of gender activists makes it essential that we work through existing networks and institutions.

GL is part of the African Gender and Media Initiative (GEM) – a partnership between three organizations committed to promoting gender equality in and through the media. Its two partners in this initiative are Inter Press Service, a global development news network that has been in the forefront of mainstreaming gender in its coverage; and the African Women and Child Feature Service that has been active in policy debates on gender and the media in East Africa.

“ Since its inception the impact of Gender Links work has been felt not only in the SADC region, but also in the rest of Africa.

Gender Links has brought new meaning to gender mainstreaming within and outside the media through training, content development and production of various manuals in areas such as gender violence, HIV/AIDS, special conference publications and many others.

Through the African Gender and Media Initiative in Africa (GEM) whose partners are Gender Links, Inter Press Service and the African Woman and Child Feature Service (Nairobi, Kenya), GL and its partners have shown that gender is not only good journalism, but it also makes good business sense.

AWC Features has partnered with Gender Links since its inception. We have watched the organisation grow from humble beginnings to becoming an authority in this field. We are very proud to have been associated with Gender Links and all its partners in Southern Africa. ”

Rosemary Okello
Executive Director
AWC Features
Nairobi, Kenya

Partners that GL has worked with in specific projects in the media field are illustrated in the table below:

TABLE ONE: PARTNERSHIPS

PROJECT	PARTNER
Gender in Media Training- a Southern African Tool Kit	Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ)
Gender and Media Baseline study	Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)
Gender mainstreaming Training of Trainer	NSJ Trust
Gender Violence training	
Regional workshop in Lesotho	Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Unit
Angola	Angola Media Women's Association (AMUWA)
Botswana	Women's NGO Coalition, World View, Media Studies Department, University of Botswana
Lesotho	WILSA
Malawi	Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ)
Mauritius	Media trust
Mozambique	NSJ Trust
Namibia	Polytechnic of Namibia
Swaziland	Swaziland Institute of Mass Communications
Seychelles	Ministry of Social Development
South Africa	Media Studies Dept, University of Natal, Peninsula Technikon, National Community Radio Forum, Africa Eye News Service, Offices on the Status of Women in North West and Free State Provinces.
Zambia	ZAMCOM
Getting smart - strategic communications	Women's Media Watch
Gender, HIV, Media Campaign	Centre for Applied Legal Studies, Media Studies Department, University of Botswana. Sixteen Days of Peace WILSA, WN, WMW, City of Johannesburg, Masimanyane, Men's Forum.
World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)	AWC, World Space
Zimbabwe	Inter Press Service (IPS)
GEM column service	AWC, IPS
Gender and governance	SADC Parliamentary Forum, SADC GU

Strengths and achievements

At a strategic planning workshop in June 2002, Gender Links identified a number of important strengths and achievements including:

Strategic positioning

- Much of the work that GL is undertaking is of a pioneering nature. It has a strong focus on creating simple practical tools that work and can be replicated.
- The strong partnerships that GL has built help to ensure that we work with and through the relevant institutions, rather than on their behalf.
- GL has leveraged its voice at local, regional and international level, including through its partnership with the National Community Radio Forum in South Africa; membership of the SADC Media Trainers Network (SAMTRAN); the substantive role that it played at the Know How Conference and recent invitation to form part of a global team of experts on gender and the media.

Funding

- GL has made major strides in its fund raising efforts, raising some R5.8 million for its project work in the 2002/2003 financial year.

Advocacy, policy and research

- Helping to firmly establish the issue of gender equality as central to freedom of expression.
- Initiating, with MISA, the first ever gender and media baseline study for the region - one of the most comprehensive ever to be undertaken anywhere in the world (see also media cuttings).

Training

- Pioneering pilot projects on gender mainstreaming with three media training institutions;
- Producing and testing a manual for Southern African media trainers on mainstreaming gender in media training with the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and the NSJ Trust;
- Undertaking an extensive and comprehensive project to train the media in covering gender violence covering nine South African provinces and twelve countries in the SADC region and starting a new round of thematic training on gender and HIV/AIDS.

Content creation and ICTS

- Undertaking the first comprehensive study on the use of new information technologies by African women NGOs (“Net Gains:African Women Take Stock of ICTs”) and several evaluations of ICT projects;
- Demonstrating through newspapers at major conferences how gender can be mainstreamed in coverage and ICTs used for advocacy (examples include the Know How GEM and the WSSD GEM).

Communication skills of gender activists

- Producing, with Women’s Media Watch, a practical guide called “*Getting Smart: Strategic Communications for Gender Activists.*”
- Using this manual to help NGOs develop communications strategies and campaigns, including a major campaign on gender violence during the Sixteen Days of Activism on Gender Violence.

Institutional

- The strong institutional base that has been established through a committed and hands-on board and recruitment of well qualified, able staff;
- The network of partners and associates that GL works with through the SADC Gender and Media Network, as well as the trainers and researchers whom we regularly work with;
- The synergies that we can start to see developing in our work through sustained interaction at an institutional level.

Linkages and synergies: GL and the PON

GLs association with the Polytechnic of Namibia (PON) is one example of how we have tried to build synergies in our work. GL's first contact with the PON occurred during the study that we undertook for the NSJ Trust on the media training needs of the Southern African region. This association deepened through our membership of SAMTRAN, which the PON played a key role in initiating. When we sought to organise a training workshop for Namibian media on covering gender violence, the PON readily agreed to partner with us. This successful partnership led to a series of further engagements including:

- A three year pilot project on mainstreaming gender into entry level media training including an innovative community media journalism project that produces an annual supplement called "Echoes" carried by the *Namibian* newspaper.
- PON serving on a peer review team of "Gender in Media Training" and participating in the first training of trainers using this manual;
- PON and the Media Monitoring Project in Namibia partnering with GL and MISA in the Gender and Media Baseline Study;
- PON participating in the development and testing of the training manual that GL is producing on gender, HIV and the media;
- Two students from PON receiving further hands-on training on mainstreaming gender in the media through participating in the production of the *WSSD GEM* .

Challenges

Our strategic planning workshop identified a number of threats and weaknesses that we chose to frame instead as "challenges". These include:

- The "quick fix" approach to a complex and controversial area of work, and need to recognize the "long haul" that we are in for;
- The short term, project nature of funding, and danger that this may not be renewed;
- The institutional implications of staffing being tied to particular projects and being hired on a short term basis;
- The need for GL to synchronise fundraising and donor reporting requirements with its own internal evaluation and planning processes;
- Coordinating with partner organisations to ensure harmony and avoid duplication;
- Creating linkages and synergies between the work that GL does.

Programme review and two year strategy framework

Taking account of these considerations, this report is both an annual report and an assessment of the strategic directions that GL will take in the future. We focus primarily on the period from March 2002 to the end of February 2003, our first full year of operation. However, the report also reflects activities in our start up year, from March 2001 to February 2002, as these have an important bearing on where we are now. The annual report should be read in conjunction with GL's strategy for 2003-2005 as the one follows from the other as illustrated below:

TABLE TWO: PROGRAMME REVIEW AND TWO YEAR STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

PROGRAMME	CATALIYTIC EFFECT	FUTURE
I. RESEARCH,ADVOCACY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT		
1) Gender and media handbook	Onsite launches and training Malawi,Zambia, Mauritius, Botswana Translation into Portuguese Sub editing handbook Gender and images	Continue with outreach Joint project (NSJ) Joint project (PON and Pentech) Joint Project SAMSO
2) MISA Gender Policy	Inclusion of gender in advocacy kit	Advocacy campaigns (see GMBS). Pilot projects with media institutions and media training institutions to develop gender policies (starting with ZAMCOM)
3) Gender and media baseline study	Examples for Zambia, Namibia handbooks, training material	Advocacy. Symposia at national level
II. TRAINING		
1) Pilot projects to mainstream gender in the media	“Gender in Media Training” (IAJ) Community journalism newspaper WAD proposal (PON)	
	Mainstreaming gender in basic journalism text book (PON) Practical training material for Zambian Gender in Media Handbook (ZAMCOM)	Work with one or two training institutions each year (FES)
2) Training of trainers using “Gender in Media Training”	In country training- Malawi, Mauritius	Trainers network/discussion forum Annual TOT Adapt manual to university needs Adapt manual to entry level training needs Develop training material for the electronic media
3) Thematic training		
Gender violence	ZAMWATCH Media Watch,Mauritius Improved coverage Better relations - media NGOs Programmes, supplements Partnership with community radio	Internal and external evaluation; application of lessons learned.
Gender HIV AIDS		Extend training to all SA provinces and countries of the SADC region
Gender; custom,culture, religion Gender and sustainable development		Make use of manual developed with IPS. Develop and apply training materials out of WSSD.
Gender and governance		Run training workshops for media linked to upcoming elections.Start with SA and Botswana next year.
III.CONTENT CREATION AND ICT's		
Newspapers at major conferences	Capacity building; practical demonstration of how to mainstream gender in the media	World Summit on the Information Society.
E GEM	“Glue” for the SADC Gender and Media Network,practical training material.	Maintain,develop, increase level of sophistication, monitor visits, get feedback, post training material.

PROGRAMME	CATALYTIC EFFECT	FUTURE
Rights Journal	Space for reflection, tool for monitoring, means of keeping the agenda alive	Make this a regular quarterly publication.
IV. COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF GENDER ACTIVISTS		
Getting Smart	Requests for training, Kenya and Zambia.	Training using the manual- drawing up communication strategies; Communication skills for decision makers - adapt; offer training
Sixteen Days of Activism campaign	Bringing together diverse NGOs in the gender violence field that do not normally harmonise their strategies.	Make this an annual event.
		GEM opinion service and training
V. GOVERNANCE		
Beyond numbers in Southern Africa study	Helping to shift the focus/ move the debate forward	Communications training for WIP
		Gender, governance and media study materials Local gvt
VI. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING		
Offices, staffing, running costs	Generating queries/requests	Core support for staff, IT, systems, governance, strategic planning, institution building.

Financial status

The report contains GL's audited accounts for 2002/2003. These show that GL raised approximately R5.8 million for its activities, of which R3.8 million was spent and R2 million carried over to the current financial year, in which GL has raised a further R4 million towards its operations. As detailed in this section of the report, GL is proud of the balance that has been achieved between the various functional areas of its expenditure. Overhead and staff costs have been kept at below half the total. The bulk of our spending goes directly into training, research and publications.

We are deeply indebted to our sponsors who include: the Ford Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation; Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA); Open Society Foundation (OSF); Hivos; the European Union Foundation for Human Rights; the EU CWCI Fund; the Mott Foundation; the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA); Voluntary Service Overseas and the Global Fund for Women. GL has also received funding from DFID (UK). We are especially grateful to Hivos for providing us with three year funding, one-third of which is core support. This long - term approach helps to facilitate our planning and is an important recognition of the need to sustain our efforts.

Staffing

None of the work that you will read about in this report would have been possible without the dedicated effort of GL's staff who labour long hours and often go well beyond the call of duty in their execution of their tasks. Special thanks to our core staff: Senior Researcher Alice Kwaramba, Programme Officer Ayanda Bekwa, intern Sheena Louw and IT/HIV AIDS co-ordinator Lindiwe Nkutha who sadly left us in June 2003 to complete her studies; as well as our associates Nonqaba waka Msimang, Liesl Gertholtz and Jacob Ntshangase who conducted most of our training, and Lydia Levine for designing our website. We look forward to strengthening our staff and institutional base in the future, as well as expanding our network of partnerships.

Colleen Lowe Morna
Executive Director, Gender Links

Gender Links spreads its wings across the Indian Ocean

By Loga Virahsawmy*



Two years ago, Gender Links meant nothing in the far-flung Indian Ocean Islands of Mauritius and Seychelles. Today, such has been the advocacy and training work of GL in these two islands that some residents think the organisation is a huge multinational employing hundreds of people.

It all started in October 2001 with the launch in Mauritius of GL's flagship publication, *Whose News Whose Views* in front of a packed house at the Media Trust of Mauritius. In March 2002, GL director Colleen Lowe Morna and board member Ruth Ansah Ayisi returned to co-facilitate a workshop on covering gender violence, opened by none other than President Karl Offman. The workshop attracted wide interest and substantial media coverage.

A follow-up workshop in April to award certificates to participants based on post workshop assignments sparked the idea of having the first ever Media Watch Organization (MWO). Although Mauritius has a vibrant media and 230 years of media history, there has never been a media watchdog body in the island. We felt it strategic to begin such an organisation with an emphasis on diversity, and within that, a strong emphasis on gender equality.

In the months that followed, Mauritius participated in the Southern African Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS).

In March 2003, Vice-President of the Republic, Raouf Bundhun launched the regional GMBS as well as MWO. A two-day strategic planning workshop for MWO followed.

Our experiences gave us the courage to spread our wings to Seychelles that has close historical and cultural links to Mauritius. In November 2002, GL ran the last of its gender violence workshops in an island where there is no media training institution, let alone a debate on gender and the media. Survivors of gender violence spoke out for the first time. Their voices, and the workshop, received wide publicity in the local media.

At a follow-up workshop in March 2003, participants resolved to form their own Gender and Media Network-GEM-Plus. Seychelles and DRC were the only two of the 14 SADC countries that did not participate in the GMBS. With help from colleagues in Mauritius, GEM-Plus is now spearheading the Seychelles country study of the GMBS.

As we continue our advocacy work, I am constantly told: "We see, we hear, we listen, we read and we write differently." Anand Boolaky, who works at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and participated in the gender violence workshop, has started a very popular weekly programme on Mauritian television called "Portrait D'Elle" (Her Portrait) which looks at "invisible" people, especially women. MBC is one of the first pilot projects that GL is working with as a follow up to the GMBS in developing an institutional approach to mainstreaming gender in the media.

(*Loga Virahsawmy is President of MWO and a GL Board member.)