



VALUE FOR MONEY CASE STUDY

TITLE	Leveraging and saving money through the GL News Service (GLNS)
MANAGER	Katherine Robinson
PROGRAMME OR UNIT	Communications
NATURE OF SERVICE/PURCHASE	Provision of media & communications
DATE/S	April 2013-March 2014
DONOR/S	DFID PPA

Synopsis

The Gender Links News Service (GLNS), formally known as the Gender Links Opinion and Commentary Service, is an innovative multi-media project that aims promote gender equality in and through the media, to provide the media with fresh views and voices on current affairs. The service has its roots in the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS), which showed that women's voices and gender issues are grossly underrepresented in the media.

The media is one of the most powerful forces for influencing societal attitudes and perceptions thus the primary purpose of the GLNS is to encourage a communication for change by putting gender issues on the agenda, generating debate and shifting people's mind-sets in the hope to inspire change and give rise to tangible impacts on society and its citizens. The service is not only multimedia and of regional relevance but is trilingual, with news and opinion in English, Portuguese and French.

Summary¹

ITEM	RANDS	NOTES
PPA expenditure	R 5 400	151000 of PPA funds was allocated to GLNS of which only 5400 was spent
Other donors – B	R267 465	Hivos
Total expenditure (include planning, interns etc.) – C	R272 865	Total expenditure from Apr 2013- March 2014

¹ see GLNS VFM evidence excel sheet:
-Summary, PPA, HIVOS, Hivos carry over, GLNS tracking

ITEM	RANDS	NOTES
Total no of stories (include newspapers) – D	331	This figure includes 195 online articles produced cumulatively by all GLNS services and an additional 136 hardcopy articles ² produced during summits between period Apr 2013- March 2014
Cost per story C/D	R 824	
Total no of times used	X 3.3	Average usage per article (number of times GLNS articles were used/republished)
No of times read on website	22 608	This is the approximate sum of cumulative reads of articles on the website
Facebook likes	1578	Cumulative number of FB likes online articles garnered
Tweets	422	Cumulative number of tweets online articles garnered

The above summary table provides an overview of the GLNS outputs with relating costs, expenditure, usage and audience reception. The GLNS cumulatively across the English, French and Portuguese platforms produced 331 products, each costing an average of R 824 per product, each used an average of 3.3 times in mainstream media. In terms of reception, readership and potential impact the online pieces garnered approximately 22 608 reads, 1578 Facebook likes and 422 tweets.



Katherine Robinson, GL editor and communications manager working with student journalist Jethro Kwenani on the regional summit supplement. Photo: Ruth Ayisi

The GLNS also aims to train, build capacity and mentor aspiring journalists to not only become better reporters, but also media producers who are balanced, ethical and gender aware. During the SADC Gender Protocol@Work Summit season, GL's media department and the GLNS commission student journalists from universities as well as Gender in Media Education (GIME) institutions to cover the events. In doing so, the GLNS provides on the job training; subscribers and mainstream media with coverage of summits across the region and increases outputs, in less time and at a lower cost.

² Online newspapers

Economy

Procurement procedures

During the 2013 summit season, GL worked with media lecturers from institutions of higher learning across the SADC region to select their best performing media students to take part in the summit reporting and gender and media on the job training. Students nominated by their lecturers were provided with Terms of Reference; a list of deliverables and paid an average stipend of R250 per story published. Students were also trained and guided by their very own lecturers contracted by the GLNS and media department to ensure deliverables were met.

HR savings of summit papers³

No of interns – A	54	
Cost - B	R 111 000	Average cost of board, lodging, travel and payment for stories
Cost per intern	R 2 056	
No of stories written by interns - C	136	cumulative stories written
Cost per story written by intern C/B	R 816	
Compare cost per story with cost per story by intern	R 875	Service normally pays between R750 and R1000 per story
Total savings	R 8 000	

HR savings achieved by using interns

By commissioning media students as opposed to professional writers and seasoned journalists, the GLNS is not only contributing to GL's Theory of Change by collaborating with institutions of higher learning to provide on the job gender and media training to media students, but reduces content production costs, while simultaneously increasing content as well as rate of content production.

As the HR saving table above demonstrates, by commissioning student interns, GLNS saved approximately R8000. Furthermore, not only did the GLNS publish 136 articles, but did so within the space of only one month (April 2013—Summit season across the region) written by students. This shows a high production rate, increased outputs and impact within a concentrated period. By leveraging funds, yet saving R8000, in the space of one month the GLNS produced approximately 41% of what the GLNS produced in 12 months.

³ see GLNS VFM evidence excel sheet: HR & cost savings



Green savings and cost reduction –learning from 2013 summit⁴

	2013	2014	NOTES
Cost of hard copy newspapers	R 48 040		1000 prints per 12 country supplements (12000 prints) at R3.92 per print
Cost of online newspapers		R 1 794	12 summit newsletters sent via email to 59811 recipients at 3c per email
TOTAL Savings		R 46 206	

Green Savings achieved

The GLNS is an online service, thus does not incur any printing costs and leaves a light carbon footprint since articles are not produced and printed in hardcopy. Its online nature also reduces its overall footprint since news and opinion is disseminated via email and social media platforms.

The 2013 Summit News was however produced in hardcopy and distributed to summit delegates and participants. A thousand copies of each country supplement were also sent back to SADC countries with delegates to share with their networks and partners. Although the supplements were very well received and garnered positive feedback from participants and readers, the GLNS and media department used the printing costs and 'footprint' of these supplements as a learning curve for the recent 2014 Summit News, which were online newsletters disseminated via email and social media.

As seen from the green savings and cost reduction table above, producing online newsletters radically reduced costs, left a much smaller carbon footprint in terms of printing and distribution; increased dissemination and reach (59811 emails sent vs. 12000 prints as well as 2864 Facebook friends and 1537 Twitter followers) and allowed for diverse multi-media content.

⁴ see GLNS VFM evidence excel sheet: Green savings

Efficiency

Previous knowledge of using interns

GL's Media Department, the GLNS and the GMDC— as part of their mandate to mainstream gender in the media and to achieve gender equality in and through the media— have always worked closely with aspiring journalists and media training institutions. Through Memorandums of Understanding, GL secured commitment from these GIME institutions.



Students reporting at the summit in Johannesburg

Guarantees of quality and timely delivery

Media lecturers selected their most mature, professional and best performing students. The students were also provided with Terms of Reference, specific deliverables, were trained, and supported by their lecturers contracted by GL. Students were required to produce extra content to ensure back-up copy in case some failed to deliver on time. Lecturers and editors also wrote articles when copy was short. Finally, students were paid per deliverable, thus if articles were not publishable or not delivered, they were not paid their stipend. Lastly, students were further incentivised to produce timeous and quality content, because the best performing student was selected by their lecturer to attend all-expenses paid trip to report for the GLNS at the Regional Summit in South Africa.

Monitoring contracts

The contracts issued to lecturers who were editing, providing guidance and editorial support to students, were also monitored and measured against the same deliverables that the students were expected to meet— contracts and stipends were measured against deliverables and stories published.

IT used to enhance efficiency

All summits had media rooms with hired laptops to ensure students had easy access to IT and internet to research and compile their articles as well as to submit via email to their respective lecturers. However, students were given the flexibility to work in a space of their choosing and off their personal laptops.

Using local partners to enhance efficiency

Using media partners and GIME institutions of higher learning in the respective Southern African countries, greatly enhanced efficiency because these institutions were already familiar with GL's work; had signed memorandums of understanding; had already been trained in gender and media reporting; able to easily select students to report and finally

had the capacity to guide and support their students. This saved GL time and money since GL did not have to source, train and hire journalists to produce this content.

Effectiveness

Alternative options considered before commissioning students

Hiring fewer seasoned journalists and writers was an option, however as per HR savings, this costs more both in time and money and has less impact: GL would have to spend time sourcing journalists, spend time and money training them and pay them a market related fee as opposed to a student stipend. In doing so GL would hire less journalists, produce less content and ultimately have less reach—54 students were involved and produced content.

Multiplier effects of summit news and using interns

By collaborating with GIME institutions, GL not only benefits from the training they provided to these institutions, but these lecturers and institutions consolidate this knowledge by putting their gender and media training into practice—guiding their students. In addition, a number of students are provided with the same training and are given the opportunity to learn and practice gender sensitive reporting. They are also exposed to the gender summit, which opens their eyes to numerous gender related issues from GBV, to governance and even climate change. The students who made it to the regional summit, were not only given the opportunity to travel but able to report on regional gender issues, also able to network with fellow journalists from across the SADC region.

Thus, the intervention is effective in reaching and influencing institutions of higher learning; aspiring journalists who build a gender aware politics and tangible journalistic portfolio; mainstream media who republish and finally readers and consumers of this content—once again at little cost and in a short space of time.

Shared ownership of process and outcomes

The collaboration with GIME institutions, institutions of higher learning as well as contracting lecturers to guide the process ensures these institutions comply and commit to their responsibilities outlined in memorandums of understanding and furthermore they are putting into practice their gender training, teaching and guiding their very own students. Thus because the process is to some degree produced by these institution's students and lecturers, they themselves own the process and content production, guided only by GL's training and specified deliverables.

Long-term benefits

Numerous long-term benefits flow from this intervention. Many students not only continue to write and contribute to the GLNS and partnerships with GIME institutions and universities are deepened and strengthened. However, on a broader scale these factors together contribute greatly to the advancement of gender equality in and through the media by in the long run increasing women's voices in the media and putting gender issues on the agenda in mainstream media.

The Universities and GIME institutions consolidate their gender and media training which ultimately influences curricula and teaching methods, reaching all media students who enrol

at those institutions. All these students including the 54 directly involved in the gender and media on the job training, will soon be entering newsrooms and media houses producing mainstream content, which will undoubtedly be influenced by their gender aware reporting.

Following the 2013 Summit, Dyson Mthawanji—a student from the Malawi Polytechnic Journalism who contributed to the summit newspapers sent an email to GLNS editor Katherine Robinson expressing his desire to share what he learnt with his peers at the polytechnic:



Dyson Mthawanji

“Dear Katherine, I write to thank you for the training on Opinion and Commentary Writing which you offered to me and others during the SADC Gender Protocol Summit 2013 in Johannesburg-South Africa. The training was very fruitful and enlightening for me.

“The knowledge I have acquired from the training has helped me with skills, which have enabled me to start a weekly opinion column at my college campus back home. My opinion column aims at

campaigning for gender equality among the students community. The main objective is to enlighten the students to respect and promote gender equality. They should not wait to do so until they graduate and start work. Next week I will make a special presentation to share with my fellow journalism students the knowledge I got from the training of Opinion and Commentary Writing. Interestingly, many students are willing and ready to attend my presentation.”

Mthawanji also wrote a number of articles for the GLNS during the year. His most popular story was *Child labour and child marriage perpetuate gender inequality*. The piece critiqued customary practices that hinder women’s rights and equality. The piece was published on the International Day Against Child Labour, drawing links between the on-going problem of child marriage in Malawi. The article was republished 17 times, including by two Malawian newspapers and one South African Magazine.

Mthawanji shared his experience of writing the story and the impact it had on the Malawian community and his journalism career. He has since graduated from the polytechnic and is now working as a fulltime journalist at *The Nation*—a weekly newspaper in Blantyre, Malawi.

“In writing this piece, I discovered that I should use my journalism career to educate people and promote the rights of the girl child. At my university campus, many fellow students said they were not aware of how serious the problem of child labour and early marriage is in Malawi, until they read my article published in *The Daily Times*. One of my peers even came up to me and said that after reading the article he realised that there is need for all Malawians to join hands and ensure young married girls go back to school. I also received phone calls from people across Malawi appreciating and critiquing my article, after reading it in the *Weekend Times*. My tour in the Chitera area while writing the story also improved my interviewing skills I thank Gender Links for the platform because it is where I am sure I will keep on improving my profession.”

GLNS changing lives and making ripples

Gogontlejang Phaladi, a young activist and driver of change from Botswana, was invited by GL to attend the 2013 SADC Gender Protocol@Work Summit in Johannesburg, where she also attended a GLNS workshop. Editor, Katherine Robinson approached Phaladi and encouraged her to start contributing to the service. After writing her first piece, she grew confident in her writing ability and started writing more for GLNS, which led not only to her growth as a writer, but one of her articles had a powerful impact on her community and beyond.



Promoting individual and social change By Gogontlejang Phaladi

"I was overwhelmed with excitement when I went online to see the first article I had ever written published in my words and my voice, for the whole world to see! Most importantly, this gave me a lot of confidence to write more for GL.

It took me several days, to write my next story about how the Bokaa Police Station did not allow women wearing parents to enter the station, because the Chief's Kgotla was on the same property. My hope was to see the eradication of some aspects of the customary laws and cultural practices that marginalise and discriminate against women and girls.

It was an eye opener for the government because they were unaware of this unjust cultural practice that hindered women's access to the local police station. I was greatly humbled that the Government of Botswana re-posted my article on their official Facebook page. After reading the article, the Bokaa Chief called a Kgotla meeting and urged the villagers to start making preparations to move his office from the same compound as the Police Post so that customary practices do not hinder access. At the end of 2013, the United Nations gave the Botswana Government a deadline to eradicate all aspects of the customary laws that are unjust to women.

I was also interviewed on a live BBC World Radio show about my article and BBC World Radio—Africa requested that I be a panelist on debate session that was to be held in Botswana focusing on inheritance laws that make women second-class citizens. I would like to thank Kath for her guidance and especially for believing in me! Thank you Gender Links for giving me this exceptional platform."

Lessons learnt, improving programming and leveraging

As discussed in the Economy section, the GLNS learnt from its green and cost saving analysis of the hardcopy Summit News in 2013. In 2014, the Summit News was online, disseminated via email and social media—this enabled greater reach at less cost; allowed for diverse multimedia content (radio, video and writing) and journalists were able to contribute in their preferred medium, thus opening up the service to radio and video journalists.

In addition, with the GLNS's extensive and growing archive of video footage, audio content and photography from all across the SADC region, the communication department aims at

leveraging this content through putting the CAT DV archiving system online and revitalising the GL Photo Shop. By ensuring this diverse content is online, marketed and purchasable, the GLNS hopes to generate income by selling this footage and photography to partner organisations and media houses. The GLNS has received a number of requests for footage and photography, for example from the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Oxfam and even the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Market related prices for footage and photo sales⁵

VIDEO	PHOTO
R100 per minute of (Thematic) raw footage	R 100 for Medium (17312x1732) Jpg format
R2000 per minute of edited footage	R 200 for high resolution) EPS format
HYPOTHETICAL SALES PER ANNUM	
30 minutes of raw footage per year	R 3 000.00
30 hi-res photos sold per year	R 6 000.00
20 medium quality photos sold per year	R 2 000.00
10 minutes edited footage per year	R 20 000.00
POSSIBLE INCOME GENERATION	R 31 000.00

The table above is based on market related pricing and quotations from SABC, Pond5 and Shutter Stock, demonstrate the potential income that could be generated if GL was to leverage, market and sell existing footage. In one year, if GLNS was to sell 30 minutes of raw footage; 10 minutes of edited footage and 50 Photographs, approximately R31 000 could possibly be generated.

⁵ see GLNS VFM evidence excel sheet: Income generation