



GENDER LINKS
FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

2021 to 2025 Strategy



#VoiceandChoice



**GENERATION
EQUALITY**
REALIZING
WOMEN'S
RIGHTS FOR AN
EQUAL FUTURE

5 GENDER
EQUALITY





Gender Links (GL) is a leading Southern African Women's Rights Organisation whose work has been widely acclaimed across the continent. Two times winner of the *Mail and Guardian* "Investing in the Future Award", GL has also received **Top Women, Drivers of Change and African Union** awards for its outstanding contribution to advancing women's rights in this sub-region.

Formed in **March 2001**, GL is headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, with offices in ten Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, including a Lusophone base in Mozambique and Francophone base in Madagascar.

Described in an evaluation as a "small organisation with a large footprint," GL has a web of close to 600 partners with whom it works to promote gender equality. At the policy level, GL coordinates the **Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance** that campaigned for the adoption of this unique instrument in 2008 that brings together global and international commitments to gender equality. In 2016, SADC updated the Protocol to align it to the **Sustainable Development Goals**. The Alliance has four theme clusters: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) including gender violence; Women's Political Participation; Economic and Climate Justice. GL and Alliance partners produce an annual #VoiceandChoice **Barometer** tracking progress towards attaining gender equality in SADC.

In its **gender and governance** programme GL spearheads the 50/50 campaign in the region. GL has played a key role in putting **gender on the local government agenda** in ten SADC countries through 432 councils that have joined the **Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government**. This includes gender responsive budgeting and service delivery, with new areas like SRHR and Climate Justice enriching this model. The councils cover a population of 40 million people or 34% of the population in the ten countries where they are found.

Pioneering work on the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign in the **gender justice programme** has expanded to include 365 day action plans to end gender violence. GL has pioneered tools for **measuring gender violence** tested in seven SADC countries, and used to strengthen 365 day National and Local Action Plans for Ending Gender Violence.

GL has worked with **2000 survivors of gender violence to reclaim their lives through entrepreneurship training** linked to local economic development. The programme is anchored by councils that provide support, mentorship, access to finance and infrastructure. An assessment of the pilot phase of this project in 2015 showed that 85% of participants said they now experience less or much less GBV. Rebranded the **Sunrise Campaign** because of the fresh start and new hope that this has given participants, GL has mounted a global campaign to raise funds for sustainable solutions to GBV that change lives and deliver agency.

In twenty years of visionary work GL has reached over 200,000 direct beneficiaries. An analysis of the **Drivers of Change** stories collected this period showed that 65% of women said they had become more aware of their rights; an even higher percentage (73%) said they now had greater confidence; 52% said they could claim their rights and 49% had improved their self- image.

As founding chair of the Global Alliance on Gender and the Media (GAMAG), GL is a global and regional **thought leader on gender and the media**. GL works with **108 Centres of Excellence for Gender in the Media**, including twelve public broadcasters and 11 media training institutions that have opted to become **Centres of Excellence for Gender in Media Education**.



GL's visionary **Sustainability Hub** formally launched in 2021 includes two social entrepreneurship units - GL Services and GL Cottages - that contribute to the **GL Future Fund**. The hub also houses the **Grant Making Unit** that manages the Global Affairs Canada Women Voice and Leadership Fund in South Africa. The hub is also establishing a **Fund Raising Unit**.

Find out more about GL's Twenty Years of Service:
<https://genderlinks.org.za/about-us/who-we-are/gl20/>

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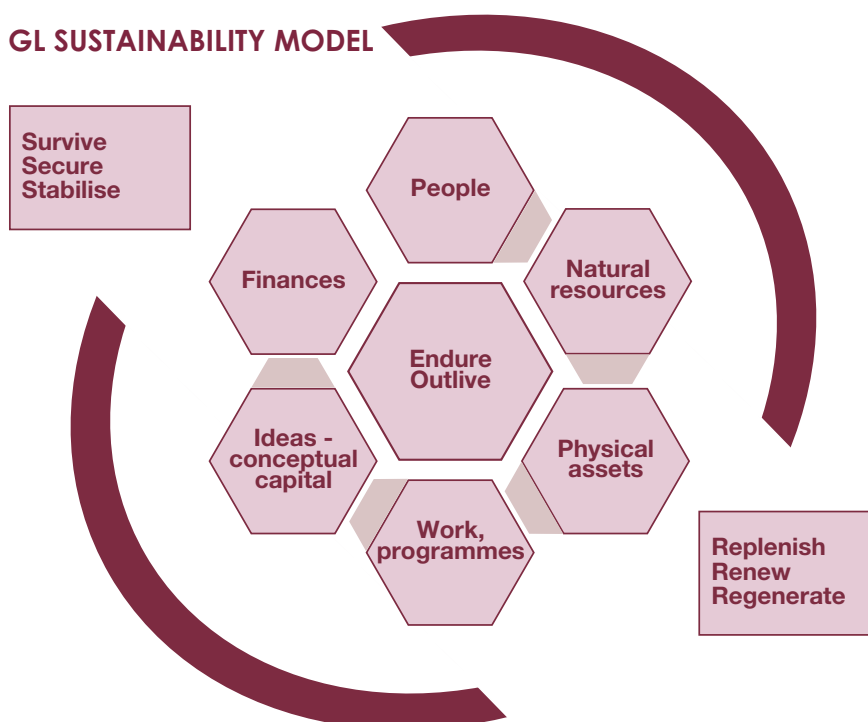
When we started working on this strategy in 2020, we had no idea that it would turn out to be a year like no other. By April 2020, every one of the ten Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries in which GL has offices had gone into lock down as the COVID-19 pandemic struck. None of us could predict, and we are still unsure, what the “new normal” would look like.

The silver lining to this dark cloud is that less travel and more time with our families gave us the space to reflect. We drew on all the strengths that have made GL the resilient organisation that it is today. *Making IT work for Gender Justice* has

been a GL slogan from inception in 2001. GL and partners pivoted quickly to working from home. Strong teams internally and externally made it possible for human warmth and support to be transmitted through cyber space. We took giant leaps, learning to let go and trusting those on the ground to do some of the work we used to deliver directly.

At its virtual meetings in November 2020 and May 2021 the GL Board revisited and honed the **sustainability model** that is at the heart of this strategy. We strive to create an organisation that will *endure* and *outlive* all of us. In tough times, such as the ones we are going through, we survive, secure and stabilise, while making sure that we *replenish*, *renew* and *regenerate*.

GL SUSTAINABILITY MODEL



People are at the centre of who we are; what we do and the change we seek to bring about. We are able to create multiplier effects because of the web of partnerships that we have across the SADC region. Our diverse board, staff and alumni carry the GL flag through good and bad times. We came together as the GL family for a virtual 20th

anniversary celebration on 17 March 2021. This event also witnessed a leadership handover from our founding CEO Colleen Lowe Morna, to our new Executive Director Kubi Rama. We are delighted that Colleen remains as Special Advisor to our new Sustainability Hub. This is an example of regeneration and renewal.

Finance will always be necessary for sustainability. After the crushing funding crisis we experienced in 2017, I am happy to report that GL is clawing its way back to 2015 funding levels, even during a pandemic. True to our slogan - "don't get angry, get smart" we are establishing a Fund Raising Unit as part of the Sustainability Hub which is also tasked with seeking out new funding streams. Grant Management represents exciting new possibilities for GL. After many years of campaigning for funding for women's rights in the global south, we are positioning ourselves to be an intermediary for such funds to reach smaller organisations. This is a true coming of age.

None of this is possible without **ideas, and conceptual capital**, the one area that invariably suffers during crises. The 2021 -2025 Strategy presets six goals for women's rights that we pursue in our **Programme** work (policy and movement building; SRHR; gender and the media; women's political participation; local action for gender justice; gender and climate justice). It also presents six

strategies for building an effective institution (sustainability; results for change; communicating results; investing in people; good governance; sound financial management and value for money). **Preserving our planet** is a cross cutting theme in our work and practice. If COVID-19 has taught us anything it should be not to wait for the next pandemic - climate change - before taking action.

On behalf of the GL Board, I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Amplify Change and the United Nations Trust Fund that supported the development of this strategy; as well as our partners who helped us draw up this road map in the uncertain haze of a pandemic. As the African proverb goes: *if you want to walk fast go alone; if you want to walk far, go together!*

Aluta continua!



Emily Brown
GL Chairperson





This strategy provides a roadmap for Gender Links as it navigates its way through the COVID-19 pandemic in search of *an inclusive, equal and just society in which women and girls in all their diversities exercise their **voice and choice** in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and related regional, continental and global instruments.* Crafted against the bitter-sweet backdrop of a pandemic and our twentieth anniversary, the 2021-2025 strategy presents a radical re-thinking of GL's work and ways of working. It is a testament to our stubborn hope even in the worst of times.

COVID-19 and women's rights

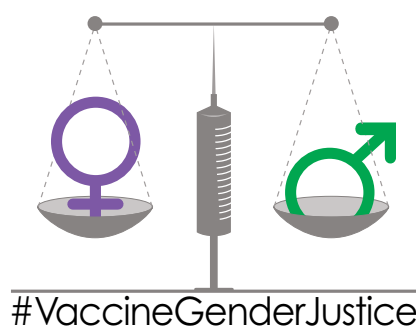


Like the HIV and AIDS pandemic before it, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the gender fissures in Southern African society. At the time of writing, over three million people had been infected by the virus in Southern Africa, 75% of these in South Africa. Unlike the rest of the world, where men constitute the majority of those infected and those who die from the infection, in South Africa and Eswatini the opposite is true. The dearth of sex disaggregated data in other countries makes it difficult to assess what the status is across the region. What is not in dispute is that as in any other emergency, women constitute the majority of those affected.

Women comprise the vast majority of frontline health workers¹, those performing unpaid care-work in the home, and those in precarious work, including the informal sector, sex workers, domestic workers and migrant workers who lost their livelihoods because of hard lock-

downs that restricted movement of people. Women are also the majority of those in the retail, food service, and hospitality, some of the industries facing the most widespread business closures.² SRHR services are under threat. The lockdown restrictions have once again highlighted the crisis of **gender-based violence**, particularly intimate partner violence that South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa has referred to as the "twin" pandemic that compromises even further women's lack of #VoiceandChoice.

Yet less than 10% of citizens in the region have been vaccinated. On 9 August, Women's Day in South Africa, partners in the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) fund managed by GL petitioned the president to speed up vaccine roll out. On 17 August, SADC day, partners in the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance petitioned Heads of State to provide sex disaggregated data on vaccine roll out under the hashtag #VaccineGenderJustice.



GL's VISION



Over the last twenty years, GL's vision has evolved incrementally from a region in which women and men are able to realise their full potential and participate equally in all aspects of

¹ <https://www.who.int/news/item/03-05-2021-expanding-reach-addressing-gender-barriers-in-covid-19-vaccine-rollout>
² <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13545701.2021.1876906>

public and private life in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development to its current vision. Key changes include:

- The emphasis on diversity and inclusion, in accordance with the SDG mantra, “leave no one behind.”
- The specific focus on women and girls. While GL remains committed to working with men and boys who constitute about one third of direct beneficiaries, our African feminism policy brief concluded that we need to be unequivocal about our primary target.
- The change of “full potential” to “voice and choice” in the public and private space, in accordance with the #VoiceandChoice slogan adopted by the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance in 2018.
- Broadening our normative framework from the *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development* to include related regional, continental and global instruments that may go further than this sub-regional instrument. An example is the SADC SRHR strategy that is bolder than the SADC Gender Protocol on SRHR.

As part of developing this strategy GL undertook a Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities (SWOT) analysis (see Annex A). This draws from comments made by staff and Board in the 2020 Organisational Development Score (Annex B) and focus group discussions at the regional SADC Protocol@Work summit in March 2021, followed by GL@20 celebrations. Key findings are summarised below:

GL's strengths

- A strong well recognised brand reaching from local to national to regional to global level, anchored in SADC by dynamic country offices.
- Strong strategic partnerships with civil society, local authorities, community

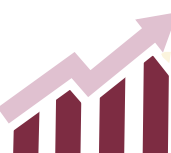


based organisations, faith based organisations, government and the private sector.

- A visionary programme of action that has put gender on the agenda of the media and local government in SADC; popularised the 50/50 and Sixteen Days of Activism campaigns and evolved into a far reaching “Voice and Choice” Campaign encompassing SRHR; the media; women's political participation and climate justice.
- A focus from the outset on sustainability which has helped the organisation to weather many storms and has now evolved into a novel Sustainability Hub that includes income generating units; a Fund Raising Unit and a Grant Management Unit.
- A strong institutional base underpinned by a diverse community of staff, associates, service providers and partners; a commitment to “Making IT work for Gender Justice” robust governance; policies; an integrity and compliance unit; results for change - monitoring, evaluation, innovation, learning, knowledge creation and management unit; a communication for social change unit; sound financial management based on Value for Money.

GL's challenges

- A huge agenda and reach with many inter-connected threads that need to be better focused to ensure real impact.
- Learning to let go and trusting partners to take ownership.
- Capacity and financial constraints of partners to take over; this is especially true of the Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government and media institutions hit both by the COVID-19 pandemic and rapidly changing realities as a result of digital technology.
- Backlash and push back on sensitive subjects such as LGBTIQ, sex work and safe abortion.



- Shrinking civic space in some countries of the region, for example Eswatini.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has put tremendous stress on staff and partners, even as creative solutions are continuously sought.
- The full impact of COVID-19 on funding for visionary advocacy work is likely to be felt in the period of this strategy. GL is bracing for potential funding cuts just as the organisation had started to make a steady recovery after severe cuts in 2017.

GL's goals

Against this backdrop GL has formulated six goals for women's rights that the organisation will seek to contribute to; and six goals to improve institutional effectiveness. The latter mainly focus on Gender Links' internal capacity, extended to partners through the Grant Making Unit (GMU) that we hope to expand significantly during this period. Institutional strengthening of grantees will form a strong component of all on-granting activities.














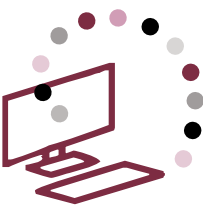


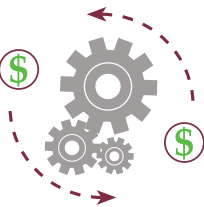
VISION 	An inclusive, equal and just society in which women and girls in all their diversities exercise their voice and choice in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and related regional, continental and global instruments.					
GOALS - Women's rights	1 Policy and movement building	2 SRHR	3 Gender and Media	4 50/50	5 Local Action for Gender Justice	6 Gender and climate justice
	 A strong Southern African women's movement advocating for #VoiceandChoice and holding government to account for global, African and regional commitments.	 Women and girls exercise #VoiceandChoice over their bodies through the full attainment of Sexual and Reproductive Health for all.	 Gender equality in and through the media gives women equal #Voice as citizens.	 Women and girls exercise equal and effective #VoiceandChoice in the public sphere through their participation in politics and decision-making .	 Gender responsive local government enhances #VoiceandChoice for women, girls and youth in marginal communities.	 Halt the cataclysmic destruction of the planet through innovative links between gender and climate justice in our work and practice.
GOALS - Institutional Effectiveness	1 Sustainability	2 Results for change	3 Communicating results	4 Investing in people	5 Good governance	6 Sound financial management, value for money
	 A strong and sustainable organisation that includes a fund raising unit; grant making and income generating capabilities.	 A robust and transparent system and processes for planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning, innovation, knowledge management and sharing.	 Making IT work for gender justice through "fit for purpose" use of digital technologies to give visibility to the work of partners and beneficiaries.	 Engaged, capable staff, partners, and associates with the motivation, facilities and tools to deliver high quality work.	 Strong, continuously updated policies and practices overseen by a diverse, compliant and accountable governance structure	 Strong and compliant financial policies, systems and practices that result in zero tolerance for corruption as well as Value for Money.

Table 1: GL's VISION AND GOALS 2021 to 2025

Priority actions



Women's Rights - #VoiceandChoice

1. **Policy and movement building:** As secretariat to the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance GL will co-ordinate evidence gathering for the annual #VoiceandChoice Barometer to benchmark progress against key normative frameworks. While the COVID-19 pandemic persists, the Alliance will drive the #Vaccine GenderJustice campaign. GL will support all the #VoiceandChoice theme clusters in conducting effective campaigns including through resource mobilisation. GL will facilitate global linkages through its co-leadership of the UN Women Action Coalition 6 - Feminist Movement Building.
2. **SRHR:** The #Voiceand Choice SRHR campaign will hone in on four areas that have gained traction over the last three years: Adolescent SRHR, teenage pregnancies, and safe abortion and child marriages, lobbying for progressive policies and laws, attitude and behavior changes.
3. **Gender and Media:** The #Voiceand Choice media programme will use the results of the Gender and Media Progress Study to lobby for gender equality in and through the media. Results relating to specific themes such as SRHR and Women's Political Participation will be used to highlight women's lack of voice in public and private spaces. GL will make effective links between the media and all its programmes.
4. **50/50:** Women's equal and effective participation in decision-making: The #VoiceandChoice Gender and Governance Programme will use the gender audits of elections now conducted for all SADC countries, GL work with its country offices and Alliance partners to develop strategic 50/50 campaigns linked to upcoming elections. In Zimbabwe, GL will build

on its successful campaign for a quota for women in local to ensure that this is implemented in the 2023 elections. Similar campaigns will be designed around the several elections taking place in 2024. GL will continue to spotlight its niche area - local government - in gathering and publicising data.

5. **Local Action for Gender Justice:** In this second sustainability phase of the Centres of Excellence (COE) for Gender in Local Government Programme that first involved ten stages to become a COE, GL will work with the more experienced "hub" councils to mentor neighboring "spoke" councils. GL will work with the COE's on the SRHR, 50/50, Gender and Climate Justice and other programmes. GL will train the "hub" councils in running the Sunrise Campaign, Empower Women, End Violence, making the link between economic empowerment and sustainable solutions to gender violence.
6. **Gender and climate justice:** GL and Alliance partners will design a series of campaigns linked to the 2021 #VoiceandChoice Barometer that draws links between the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate change crisis. These campaigns will run at regional, national and local level.

Institutional effectiveness

1. **Sustainability:** GL will invest in developing state of the art systems for grant seeking and grant making, integrated as far as possible with its new financial system. The Fund Raising Unit (FRU) will research new opportunities; track performance; help to target more effectively and train managers. The Grants Management Unit will seek out new opportunities to serve as an intermediary. GL Services offerings (research, gender audits; training and productions) will be streamlined to

ensure that efforts are focused on income generating activities that leverage off GL's wealth of knowledge ("turning a wealth of knowledge into wealth" to quote one external evaluator). GL Cottages and Conferencing will continue to develop new strategies to survive during the pandemic. GL will seek to triple investments in its endowment fund, the GL Future Fund, to reach the \$3million target.

2. **Results for change:** GL will streamline existing surveys and invest in data verification and cleaning to enhance monitoring, evaluation, innovation, knowledge creation and learning. As part of GL's Transparency Policy, GL will regularly update all data on the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) portal and invest further in data visualisation.
3. **Communicating results:** All research will be packaged in multi-media formats compatible with social media. GL will improve use of communication analytics tools to target specific audiences and gather feedback.
4. **Investing in people:** GL will continue to improve its online HR Management system and training tools. GL will facilitate COVID-19 vaccinations for staff and partners so that face to face engagements can resume.
5. **Good governance:** GL will review all its policies to standardise them and ensure compliance with the laws of all the countries we work in. The COVID-19 and Green Office policy will be updated in line with the

evolving context. These and the Zero Tolerance for Corruption policies will form part of staff, partner and grantee contracts. Staff and partners will be trained in all policies and their application. The Compliance Unit will continuously update and monitor the compliance register as part of risk mitigation. The GL Association and Board will be continuously renewed in accordance with the Memorandum of Incorporation and trained in corporate governance.

6. **Sound financial management, value for money:** GL will complete its move from Sage Pastel to Sage Intacct, a platform more conducive to NGO finance with multiple donors and operating in multiple currencies. GL will include grantees as users and train them in the new system. GL will facilitate grantee access to Sage One at reduced cost through an arrangement reached with the Sage Foundation as part of their institutional strengthening. GL will include value for money (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity) in its procurement, finance monitoring and evaluation. Staff and partners will be trained on VFM using the manual developed by GL for its work.

Table II overleaf presents fifty indicators that GL will use to measure progress. Per GL's Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, they include impact, outcome, output, outreach and process indicators. These are derived from a variety of sources including:

Type of indicator	Example	Barometer	GL tool	Communication analytics	GL workshop tracking
Impact	SADC Gender and Development Index				
Outcome	Gender and local government score				
Outreach	Website hits				
Output	No of participants (Men/Women/Other)				

In addition, GL has several qualitative tools that are used to measure change. These include "I" Stories or first-hand accounts; the GL annual learning journey written by staff; Drivers of Change profiles; Most Significant Results stories, institutional profiles and SADC Protocol@Work case studies.

Indicator	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025 (Projected)	Notes
Indicators linked to our vision and the overall impact of our work						
SADC Gender and Development Index		64%	68%	66%	70%	Lobbying and advocacy efforts will result in legislative and policy changes across the region particularly in relation to quotas for the representation of women in political decision making; Adolescent SRHR; safe abortion and child marriage. This will increase the country and regional scores in the SGDI.
SADC Citizen Score Card		55%	67%	60%	65%	GL will work with partners to popularise changes policy and legislative framework that will result in increased gender responsive governance.
Gender attitude score (regional)		59% (2012)	64%	61%	65%	Based on the analysis of the Gender attitudes score in 2020 GL will be embarking on targeted campaigns to change gender attitudes.
GL overall ODS score		83%	82%	87%	90%	GL will strive to retain a consistent and robust ODS.
GL legitimacy ODS score		89%	80%	91%	91%	The 11 percentage point increase in this ODS score from 2015 to 2020 reflects the updating of GL's vision post 2015.
Indicators linked to our work						
GL Programme score ODS		89%	85%	92%	92%	The 7 percentage point increase in this ODS score from 2015 to 2020 reflects the consolidation of GL programmes under the umbrella of the #VoiceandChoice campaign.
<i>Policy and Movement Building</i>						
No of Alliance MOUs		22	24	19	35	An increase of 16 MOUs with Young Women's Organisations in 16 countries.
No of summit case studies		742 (2013)	1836	2694	3974	This is an increase of 1280 case studies over five years comprising two Summits with an average of 40 case studies per country x 16 countries per Summit.
<i>Voice and Choice - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</i>						
% green SRHR scores in the 12 indicators of the SADC SRHR strategy measured in the #VoiceandChoice Barometer				26%	33%	In 2020, the percentage yellow scores (showing promise) is 37%. Ongoing lobbying and advocacy on key SRHR concerns such as adolescent SRHR, safe abortion, teenage pregnancy and child marriage will result in some countries progressing from yellow to green in relation to the 12 indicators.
No GBV survivors trained entrepreneurship			1350	660	2000	As Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government take on ownership of the programme the number of women trained will be increased.
% experiencing less violence			85%	87%	89%	It is heartening to see the high proportion of women experiencing less violence; this must be retained and improved.

Table II: Fifty indicators that will be used by Gender Links to measure change 2021 to 2025

Indicator	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025 (Projected)	Notes
No of summit SRHR case studies		77 (2013)	152	489	1129	This is an increase of 640 case studies over five years comprising two Summits with an average of 20 SRHR case studies per country x 16 countries per Summit.
No of SRHR news stories				169	250	As more media practitioners are trained in SRHR coverage the quantity and quality of coverage should improve.
<i>Voice and Choice - Gender equality in and through the media</i>						
% women sources in the news		19%	20%	21%	30%	The slow pace over 15 years needs to be accelerated through concerted advocacy.
% women in media management		27%	34%	34%	40%	Increasing the proportion of women in media management in Southern Africa is an achievable target.
<i>Voice and Choice - 50/50 Women's equal and effective participation in decision-making</i>						
% women in parliament	25%	25%	27%	29%	35%	The slow pace over 15 years needs to be accelerated through concerted advocacy.
% women in local gvt	30%	24%	22%	20%	30%	The regression is partly a reflection of better data collection in more recent years but is worrying and requires urgent action.
% women in cabinet	21%	23%	24%	29%	35%	Although the pace is slow there is steady progression. This is an area in which rapid change is possible.
<i>Voice and Choice - Local action for Gender justice</i>						
No of local gvt COE's		350	432	380	300	This is an area for consolidation, following an initial broad brush approach. 100 "hubs" will each target an average of at least two "spokes" bringing the number of active COEs to 300.
No of COE hubs				73	100	
Proportion of population covered		18%	34%	43%	18%	The COEs will cover a lower proportion of the population but deliver greater impact.
Gender in local gvt Score (regional)			66%	67%	70%	With greater focus the quality of services delivered will improve.
<i>Indicators linked to institutional effectiveness</i>						
<i>Sustainability</i>						
GL ODS Score sustainability		89%	85%	92%	92%	The creation of the GL Sustainability Hub has created high expectations that need to be sustained.
Funding in dollars	845 239	3 962 668	4 968 739	3 314 737	4 000 000	GL is clawing its way back to 2015 funding levels; this will need to be sustained.
Total no of donors	17	12	21	34	20	GL will seek to reduce the number of funders; increase the larger grants and reduce the number of small grants that add to the administrative burden.
Smallest grant (dollars)	5141	1708	3 878	739	5 000	
Largest grant (dollars)	132 586	1 557 501	1 530 755	970 904	2 000 000	
Sub granting amount (dollars)				388 539	1 000 000	Currently GL is managing one fund for GAC (Women Voice and Leadership). The number of grants and amount would increase with the AC Partnership and other grants.
No of sub grants				60	80	

Indicator	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025 (Projected)	Notes
Own income (dollars)	0	316 628	601 338	157 072	500,000	The COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected income in 2020; the GLSH will work hard over the next five years to increase income generation streams.
GL Future Fund (dollars)		297 503	642 092	1 236 626	3 200 000	The target of the GLFF is to reach the \$3mn mark by 2025.
Results for change						
No of events	67	203	483	715	800	This is inclusive of virtual gatherings that have the potential to greatly increase numbers.
No of direct beneficiaries	1656	11 885	13 969	40 794	60 000	
% women	60%	63%	69%	64%	64%	GL gender policy aims to ensure that at least one third of all its participants are men.
% men	40%	37%	31%	35%	36%	
% others				1%		Monitoring participation of non-binary persons is an important new indicator for GL
Communicating results						
Facebook followers			627 718	369 194	700 000	The COVID-19 pandemic coupled with strategic communications training is resulting in a marked improvement in GL's online presence.
Twitter followers			3440	7004	15 000	
Investing in people			3455	7667	15 000	
GL ODS score for HR		76%	79%	82%	85%	It is heartening to see these scores improving; this trend needs to be sustained.
GL ODS score for partnerships		77%	78%	87%	90%	
No of offices	1	3	9	8	6	This is an area of consolidation as GL adopts more flexible and cost effective ways of working; with some country offices becoming project sites, and more work through partners.
No of staff			45	39	40	
Good governance						
GL ODS score governance		81%	75%	84%	87%	It is heartening to see these scores improving; this trend needs to be sustained.
No of Association Members			6	8	8	Regular renewal, ensuring regional diversity and expertise will be the key criteria.
No of Board Members	6	10	13	10	10	
Sound financial management, policies and procedures						
Physical resources		81%	81%	90%	90%	GL will ensure that the “engine” room of the organisation is well fuelled and functions smoothly.
Electronic resources		85%	83%	89%	90%	
Administrative and financial routines		85%	83%	87%	90%	
Financial policies and procedures		89%	83%	85%	90%	



Gender Links promotes gender equality and justice in the sixteen countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This vast region from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the north to South Africa in the south confronts a myriad of challenges as it attempts to address the needs and aspirations of its 360 million people, 40% of whom live in extreme poverty. Per capita incomes range from \$256 per annum in Zimbabwe to \$5099 in Mauritius. The greatest challenge for SADC continues to be the need to build a life for its people free from poverty, disease, human rights abuses, environmental degradation and gender inequality.

Women remain the majority of the poor, the dispossessed, the landless and the unemployed. Violence Against Women Baseline studies conducted by GL in seven SADC countries show lifetime prevalence rates ranging from 25% in Mauritius to 86% in Lesotho.³ Sexual violence against women and girls remains one of the major causes of HIV infection. Marital rape is pervasive and contributes to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. For every two people enrolled in HIV treatment, five become newly infected. Women, and especially young women, account for 58% of those living with HIV in the sub-Saharan region and bear the greatest burden of care.

Women's lack of voice, choice and control over their bodies remains one of the major causes of unequal power relations with men. Key SRHR concerns in Southern Africa include significant percentages of sexually active adolescents below the age of 16; multiple concurrent sexual relations; increasing trends of inter-generational

sexual relations; low levels of consistent condom usage during sex and high levels of maternal mortality. Almost one quarter of all pregnancies end in unsafe abortions, a major contributor to maternal mortality especially among young women. The UNFPA estimates that 43% of women in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced gender-based violence (GBV) in their lifetime.

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens fragile gains made. As communities in Southern Africa are forced to stay at home, women and girls are at a heightened risk of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, child abuse, and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), in some crisis settings, levels of GBV skyrocket to 70%. Anecdotal evidence points to reduced family planning services, low uptake of ARV treatment, a rise in teenage pregnancies, child marriages and unsafe abortions under the COVID-19 lockdowns. Vaccine roll out is only just beginning in most countries. Aid cuts threaten the SRHR advocacy gains

Several other forms of exclusion intersect with gender to compound the misogyny associated with patriarchal norms. These include race, class, the rural/urban divide, age, disability, occupation (especially sex work), sexual orientation and gender identity. The often multiple burdens of exclusion result in even higher levels of violence for certain categories of women. For example, disabled women experience high levels of stigma and cultural myths relating to their impairments as well as high levels of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse.

³ Violence Against Women Baseline studies in South Africa, Mauritius, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho - see <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page/gender-justice-measuring-gbv>

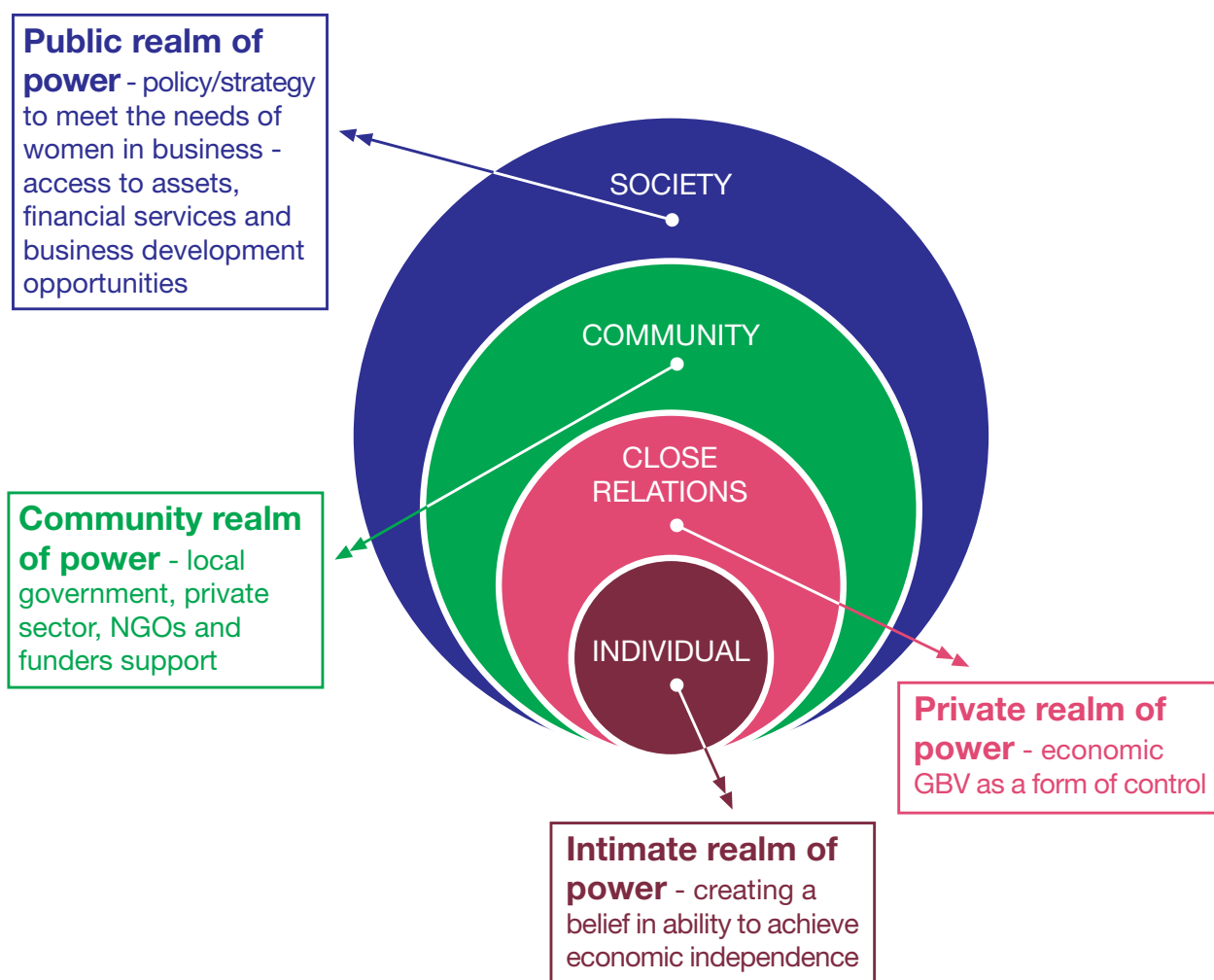
Political mapping of Southern African countries

Category	New liberation	New liberation	Older liberation and civil war	Old democracies	One party-multiparty	Monarchy	Conflict
SADC countries	South Africa Namibia	Zimbabwe	Angola Mozambique	Botswana Mauritius	Tanzania Seychelles Zambia Malawi	Swaziland Lesotho	DRC Madagascar
Features of each category	Constitutions crafted around the time of the Beijing conference	Gender tangential to liberation war	Women emerged strongly in second wave struggles	Socially conservative	Progressive tendencies over-shadowed by social conservatism except Tanzania and Seychelles.	Socially conservative	Flux
Women in parliament	High (30% and above)	Low (15% and below)	High (30% and above)	Democratic traditions Low (20% and below)	High only in the Tanzania and Seychelles	Low (15% and below)	Low (15% and below)

The status of women is closely linked to the political context within each country. In Southern Africa, this context includes colonisation, decolonisation, the switch from one party to multi-party politics, liberation struggles from white minority rule and occupation, as well as the ideological inclinations of dominant parties. To cite just one example of the different country contexts, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) is a traditional monarchy in which the king takes a new “maiden” wife each year. The mountain kingdom neighbours South Africa with its state-of-the-art post-apartheid constitution that recognises the right to different sexual orientations and under which abortion has been legalised.

These differences between countries also represent possibilities for a “push me, pull you” regional approach in which progress in one country can be used to nudge neighbours forward. Founded shortly after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, SADC has its roots (and relatively strong coherence) in the anti-apartheid struggle. Post-apartheid, SADC's major focus is on infrastructure, trade and economic integration. However, the regional body, which is headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana, also tackles many cross cutting social concerns such as migration, health, HIV and AIDS, climate change and gender equality. SADC has spawned several Regional NGOs (RNGOs) working across a variety of social justice themes⁴. These include two WRO: Women in Law Southern Africa and Gender Links.

⁴ Examples include AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA); Southern African AIDS Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS); SADC Lawyers Association; Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI).



GL's **Theory of Change** recognises that gender is the most cross-cutting of all forms of inequality and exclusion. Reinforced in formal and informal ways, gender inequality begins in the home; is perpetuated by the family; schools; work place; community, custom, culture, religion and tradition as well structures within society more broadly-the media, new media, popular culture, advertising, laws, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary and state. While society readily identifies other forms of inequality, gender discrimination is so **normalised** that it often goes **unnoticed**, including by women who have been socialised to accept their inferior status. Gender inequality follows the **life cycle** of most women from cradle to grave.

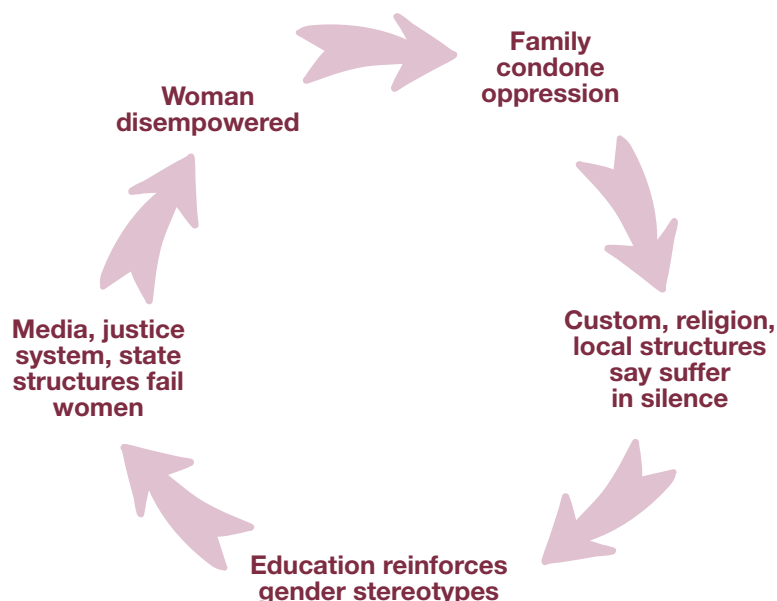
Despite changes in laws and Constitutions, many women remain

minors all their lives - under their fathers, husbands, even sons, and as widows subject to male relatives. Women and girls in Southern Africa remain the majority of the poor; the dispossessed; the unemployed; the voiceless; those whose rights and dignity are daily violated and denied; those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

Behaviour is mediated by cognitions i.e. what people know and think affects how they act.

Individual behaviour is the fundamental unit of group, organisational, community, and national behaviour. The individual behaviour of women and men both shapes, and is shaped by their social environment and its multiple levels of influences i.e. interpersonal, community and public policy (McLeroy et al., 1988).

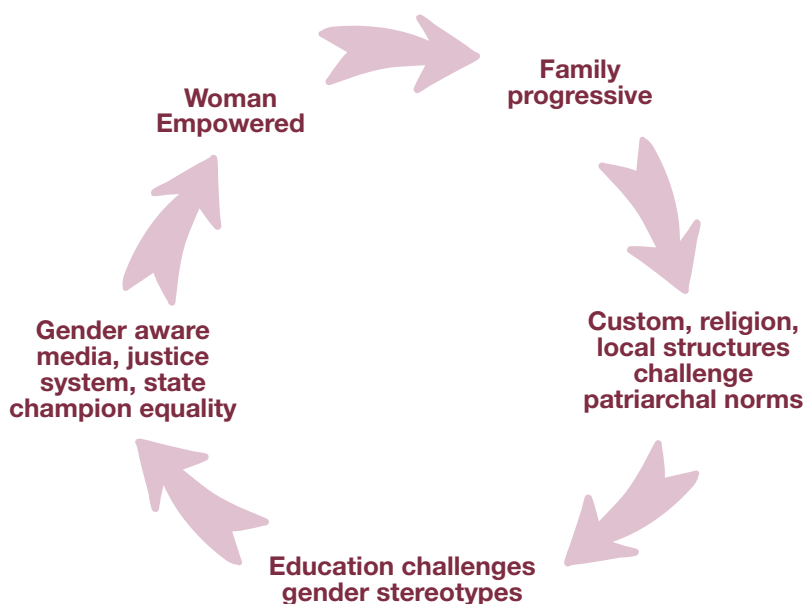
Vicious negative cycle of inequality



The ecological model often used in gender analysis illustrates the *vicious negative cycle* that reinforce gender inequality. Like an onion, layers of attitudes, customs, culture, traditions, practices and norms that reinforce the inferior status of women wrap around and entrap the individual woman. For example, a woman who dares to speak out against violence she is experiencing in the home is often told by close family (including female relatives) to go back into the abusive relationship and make it work. The community, including religious and traditional authorities, at best turn a blind eye, at worst condone this violence within the private sphere. Steeped in patriarchal norms and traditions, state structures and processes (such as the police and criminal justice system) fail women. Instead of becoming the “voice of the voiceless”, the male-dominated media denies survivors of violence their own voice, reporting their experiences through heavily biased court reporting; often sensationalising and trivialising their experience.

Each one of these layers can equally become a *virtuous positive cycle* challenging these deeply entrenched values, attitudes, systems and norms. Unlike sex, a biological given, gender is a *social construct* that can be deconstructed. The media may be a part of the problem, or it can be part of the solution. State policies, laws and structures can be transformed to champion gender equality. Communities can be mobilised to reject negative practices, attitudes and tendencies. Women and girls can be mobilised to claim their rights. The growing men-for-change movement is testimony to the fact that boys and men can rise above and challenge social norms - hence the slogan, “men of quality believe in equality.” GL remains committed to working with men in all its programming, while recognising that the primary focus at this time must be women and girls (see GL Theory of Change <https://genderlinks.org.za/about-us/values-and-principles/gender-links-theory-of-change/>)

Vicious positive cycle of equality

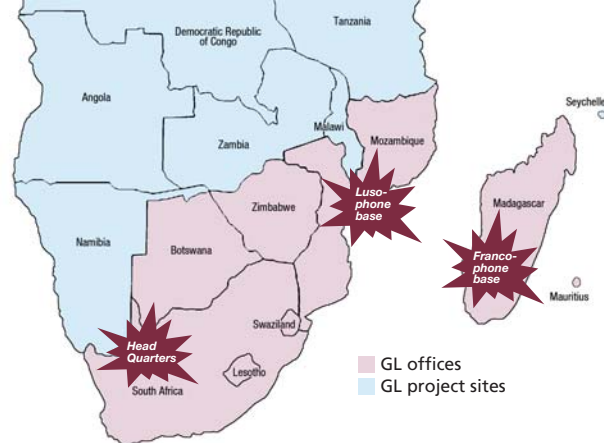


Vision






Gender Links (GL) is committed to an inclusive, equal and just society in which women and girls in all their diversities exercise their voice and choice in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and related regional, continental and global instruments.

Geographical positioning

Gender Links has offices in ten registered SADC countries, including a Lusophone



base in Mozambique and Francophone base in Madagascar. GL's Botswana office also serves as a liaison office with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

GLOBAL AND CONTINENTAL	SGG 5, CEDAW, BEIJING PLUS 25, ICPD, MAPUTO PROTOCOL		
REGIONAL	  SADC Protocol@Work Summit Sommet Protocole au travail de la SADC		
PILLARS	VOICE	CHOICE	CONTROL
Cross cutting themes	SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS		CLIMATE JUSTICE
GENDER LINKS FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE	POLICY AND MOVEMENT BUILDING	LOCAL ACTION FOR GENDER JUSTICE	COMMUNICATIONS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
GL PARTNERS - NATIONAL AND LOCAL	Southern Africa  Gender Protocol Alliance	 DURA / ISIPHALA / HUB CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE for Gender in Local Government	 Gender and Media Diversity Centre
PROBLEM STATEMENT	Rhetoric- reality gap. Patriarchy & contradiction between constitutional and legal provisions and the realities of women's lives: political, social, economic, expressed at the individual, family, community, societal level.		

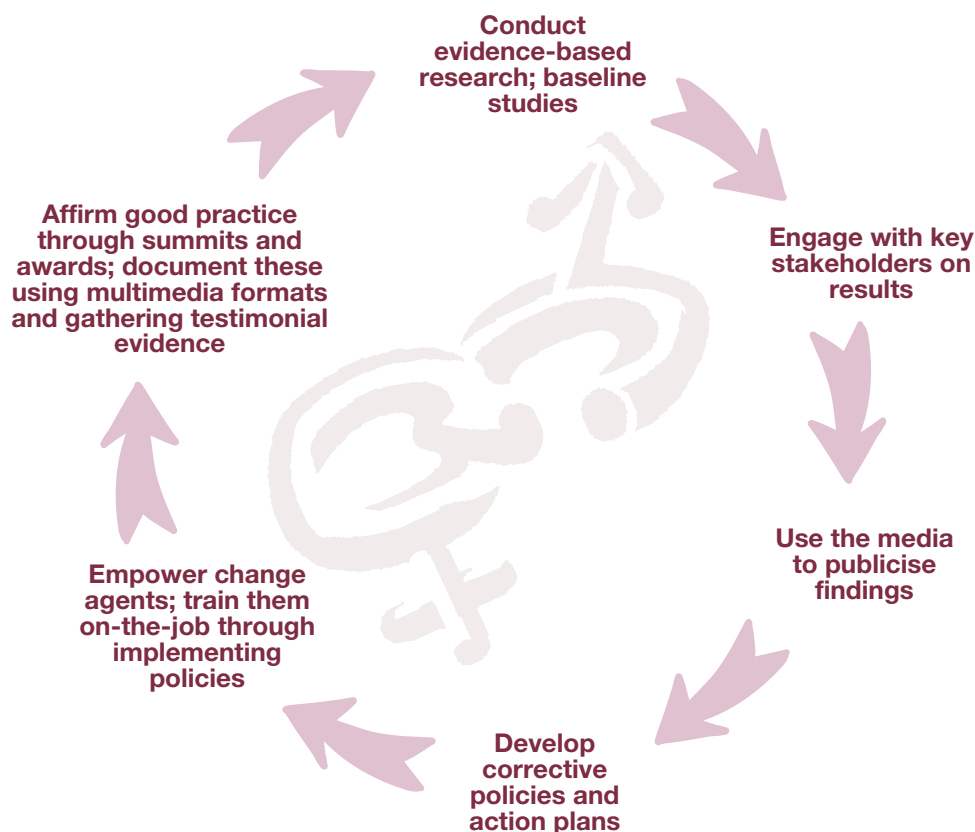
Working with partners at local, national, Southern African and international level, GL realises its vision through:

- Three programme areas: Policy and Movement Building (which coordinates the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development); Communications for Social Change (including traditional, mainstream and new media); and Local Action for Gender Justice (the Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government).
- Four cross cutting themes: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) including Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); women's equal and effective political participation; gender and climate justice.
- A Sustainability Hub with two income generating units, GL Services and GL Cottages contributing to the GL; a Fund Raising Unit and Grant Management Unit.
- Results for Change achieved through robust planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning, knowledge management, sharing and innovation.

- Institutional effectiveness through good governance; care for staff, associates, and partners; compliance with integrity policies; transparent financial management, zero tolerance for corruption, value for money and use of digital tools.

GL's way of working

In all its programmes, GL conducts evidence-based research and produces multi-media products in different languages. These are launched at high profile events with maximum outreach achieved through mainstream, community and social media. The results are used to develop corrective action plans. GL builds capacity on gender mainstreaming through on-the-job learning as action plans are applied. These are constantly reviewed and adapted to ensure innovation. Knowledge is gathered, validated, shared and affirmed at annual SADC Protocol@Work summits. Evidence based research measures the change that has taken place, as this cycle is repeated.



1 POLICY AND MOVEMENT BUILDING



Goal: A strong Southern African **women's movement** advocating for #VoiceandChoice and **holding government to account** for global, African and regional commitments.

Specific objectives

- Promote and strengthen advocacy for the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and other gender normative frameworks using the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance networks at both regional and national levels.
- Strengthen partnerships with the existing and new partners in line with the current priorities including young women's organisations in all countries.
- Conduct campaigns to change gender attitudes from an overall score of 61% positive gender attitudes in 2021 to 65% by 2025.
- Increase the lobbying and advocacy capacity of the movement to effectively undertake their mandate at national and local levels.
- Mobilise funding for Women's Rights, including through GL's Grant Making Unit (GMU)

What we have achieved

The mandate of the Policy and Movement Building programme is to coordinate the work of the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance, research and advocacy. Some of the key achievements of the programme are:

- **Accelerating women's rights campaigns:** Through the Alliance networks, GL has pushed the envelope on the campaign for implementation of the SADC Gender Protocol, women's increased and meaningful participation in politics, sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR), economic justice and climate change.

- **Strengthening the women's movement for gender equality and women's empowerment:** The Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance, established in 2006, through its regional and national networks reinvigorated the women's movement heightening the voices of women's NGOs across the region.

- **Measuring change:** GL and the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance produced ten editions of the *SADC Gender Protocol Barometer* between 2009 and 2018. The Barometer consolidated the status of progress made on the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. Progress is measured using two yardsticks, the **SADC Gender Development Index (SGDI)** which is based on empirical data collected on 23 indicators on six areas (Governance, Education and training, Productive resources and employment, economic empowerment, Sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS and Media and information and communication) and the **Citizen Scorecard (CSC)** based on citizen perception. The Alliance also administers a **Gender Progress Score** used to measure changes in attitude towards gender equality, and the **Knowledge Score Card** is used to gauge how well the SADC Gender Protocol is known. Since 2010, the Alliance and partners have convened the annual **SADC Protocol @Work summits**, at district, national and regional level, showcasing how this instrument is being used at local and national level, by the media, government and civil society, to bring about change.

- **Built a strong Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRHR) network as part of the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance:** In 2019, Gender Links produced the inaugural #VoiceandChoice Barometer that measured 100



indicators on SRHR in the region, including those drawn from the gender attitude survey. The 2019 Barometer, served as the first civil society shadow report on the SADC SRHR strategy

score card adopted by SADC member states in November 2018. Out of the 20 indicators identified by governments, the Alliance found 12 that could be measured across all countries. The Alliance country and regional partners implemented SRHR campaigns relevant to their contexts.

- **From local to global, Generation Equality Action Coalition Six, Feminist movement building and leadership:** GL is one of the civil society leads for the *Generation Equality Action Coalition Six: Feminist Movement Building and Leadership*. Through the global platform GL and the Alliance are sharing Southern African feminist movement building strategies and contribute to the global agenda. The action coalitions Action Coalitions are global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that are mobilising governments, civil society, international organisations, and the private sector to catalyse collective action; spark global and local conversations among generations; drive increased public and private investment; and deliver concrete, game-changing results for girls and women.⁵

What we have learned

- **Partnerships strengthening and common purpose is an important foundational principle for the Alliance Programme and its networks:** While the GL networks are well established across the region context specific collabo-

orative initiatives implemented in a coordinated manner is crucial to sustaining the Alliance.

- **Capacity building remains key for the successful implementation of the SADC Gender Protocol:** Through knowledge sharing and learning interventions GL and the Alliance strengthen their ability to lobby and advocate for policy and legislative changes that will result in sustainable change for women and girls in SADC.
- **What is not count counted does not count:** The array of research and evidence underpinning the Alliance work ensures that the programmes are responding to real needs of communities, countries and the region overall. The availability of data and evidence allows for strategic linkages across different thematic areas. For example, there is increasing evidence that supports the nexus between gender-based violence prevention and economic power for women and girls.
- **Resource mobilisation remains a major challenge for coalition building within the gender movement:** Lobbying and advocacy for increased funding for feminist movement building at national, regional and global level is an urgent ongoing priority.

What we will do in 2021-2025

- **Evidence driven advocacy and lobbying:** Utilise the evidence gathered in the annual #Voice and Choice SRHR Barometers and through the case studies presented at the #Voiceand Choice Summits to lobby and advocate for changes in policy and legislative frameworks to improve the status of women and girls in all their diversity. Policy and legislative shifts and their subsequent implementation will result women and girls realising their full potential in their public and private lives. Key campaigns will include safe abortion, sexual diversity, GBV preven-

⁵ <https://forum.generationequality.org/action-coalitions>

tion and mitigation, climate change and women's effective political participation.

- **Strengthening and extending partnerships towards generation equality:** The Alliance country focal points will map and form young women's clusters within the Alliance structure. The national young women's cluster will be represented on the regional Alliance structure. The Alliance will integrate the Generation Equality agenda into its local, national and regional activities. The Alliance Young Women's Clusters will lead the ASRHR campaigns at local, national, regional and global level.
- **Harnessing the demographic dividend of the SADC's burgeoning youth population:** Champion adolescent SRHR across the Southern African region. Lobby and advocate for stand-alone Adolescent SRHR policies that include access to SRHR services without third party consent. The Alliance youth cluster will campaign for enabling teenage pregnancy policies and lobby for the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Child Marriages.
- **Changing attitudes critical to attain gender equality:** GL and Alliance will conduct awareness raising campaigns to change gender attitudes from an overall score of 61% positive gender attitudes in 2021 to 65% by 2025.
- **Resource mobilisation, capacity building and building sustainable**

feminist movements: Increase the lobbying and advocacy capacity of the movement to effectively undertake their mandate at national and local levels by providing training and the requisite resources.

How we will measure change

- GL and Alliance partners will produce the annual *#VoiceandChoice Barometer* to measure progress on the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender Development and other relevant frameworks. The two key indicators for measuring change at the macro level are the SADC Gender and Development Index (SGDI) as well as the Citizen Score Card.
- Conduct analyses of the case studies submitted to the *#VoiceandChoice Summits* to establish what works.
- The Gender Progress Survey will be administered in 2025 to measure changes in gender attitudes. This will be administered every five years.
- GL will track the number of memoranda of understanding signed with partners particularly youth organisations and the level of participation by partners.
- Progress on campaign implementation will be tracked using virtual feedback forms and engagements.
- Institutional strengthening through mapping of networks and theme groups as well as fund raising.



2 SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS



Goal: Women and girls exercise #VoicandChoice over their bodies through the full attainment of **Sexual and Reproductive Health** for all.

Specific objectives

- Lobby and advocate for universal Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) as part of the #Voice andChoice campaign spearheaded by the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance and local councils in 10 Southern African countries.
- Lobby for the development, funding and implementation of Adolescent SRHR (ASRHR) policies in 16 Southern African countries in line with the Maputo Protocol, Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development and the SADC SRHR Strategy 2019-2030.
- Build a robust Young Women's Movement in the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance and provide a platform for adolescent girls' to contribute to ASRHR policies and practices.
- Strengthen ASRHR responses and services at local level with a special emphasis on mitigating the impact of COVID-19.
- Advocate for safe abortion policies, the domestication of the SADC Child Marriages Law and effective teenage pregnancy policies.
- Build women's agency and economic power as a strategy to improve women's and girl's SRHR and prevent gender-based violence.

What we have achieved

- **SRHR Article in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development:** The Alliance successfully advocated for a standalone Article on SRHR in the

updated SADC Gender Protocol (2016). The Article cross references provisions in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The Alliance also worked with health NGOs to advocate for the SADC SRHR strategy adopted by Health Ministers in November 2018. This includes a colour-coded score card with 20 indicators that governments have committed to track.

- **A strong Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRHR) network as part of the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance:** In 2019, Gender Links produced the inaugural #VoiceandChoice Barometer that measured 100 indicators on SRHR in the region, including those drawn from the gender attitude survey. The 2019 Barometer served as the first civil society shadow report on the SADC SRHR strategy score card adopted by SADC member states in November 2018. Out of the 20 indicators identified by governments, the Alliance found 12 that could be measured across all countries. The Alliance country and regional partners implemented SRHR campaigns relevant to their contexts.
- **Local action plans:** GL worked with the 100 Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government that have been supporting the Sunrise Campaign, Empower Women, End Violence, to develop local level SRHR action plans. These included working with junior councilors to conduct a Rapid Assessment of Youth SRHR facilities and to conduct awareness around these.
- **SRHR action plans and campaigns:** Alliance focal networks in 15 countries implemented 40 national level campaigns and 177 local level campaigns in 10 countries.
- **Results during this period include:** removal of VAT and making sanitary ware available in schools in seven

SADC countries; the raising of the age of child marriages to 18 for girls in Mauritius; decriminalisation of homosexuality in four SADC countries. Initial doubts regarding the competencies of local authorities on SRHR are being dispelled by councils like Murehwa in Zimbabwe that devised a strategy for sustaining SRHR services under COVID-19 lockdown.

What we have learned

- **Evidence gathering and participatory research:** Alliance partners contribute to the Gender Responsive Assessment (peer review) of laws; case study collection, and analysis of campaigns. Youth conducted the Rapid Assessment of SRHR Services in Southern Africa. GL research has a strong emphasis on citizen engagement through scoring or assessing performance. Our motto is "making every voice count, and counting that it does."
- **The power of feminist movement building:** The #VoiceandChoice campaign re-energised the Alliance and made it relevant to current campaigns including #MeToo, #TimesUp, and (within Southern Africa) the #TotalShutdown campaign. Partner ownership of the campaign is underscored by pivoting to virtual campaigns during #COVID-19 lockdowns. New ways of working will be integrated into future programming to create multiplier effects, reduce costs and realise green savings.
- **The power of audits, learning and sharing between countries:** The 2019 mapping of SRHR SADC laws updated in 2020 and curated in an online data base is a rich repository of regional experience that will be drawn on to develop model ASRHR and safe abortion policies and checklist. It will also be used to share good practices on applying the SADC Model Law on Child Marriage.

- **Engaging with research findings:** GL works with partners to develop multi-media products and messages from campaigns appropriate to each national context, including in local languages. These are disseminated at working meetings to apply the research (such as those proposed with councils to strengthen ASRHR policies); mainstream media and social media. Keeping issues in the public eye puts pressure on policy processes. GL also offers partners coaching on data literacy to empower them to speak authentically on research findings. Partners determine their own advocacy strategies based on the findings.
- **Developing policies and action plans:** For example, the preliminary findings from the ASRHR research will be used to probe why two fifths of all youth fail to access services as long as they are not accompanied by another adult; fees being charged and whether these are appropriate.

What we will do in 2021-2025

- **Mount concerted ASRHR, safe abortion and child marriage campaigns to counter the regressive tide of the COVID-19 pandemic:** Ten out of 16 SADC countries do not have stand-alone ASRHR policies and some expire in 2020. The Alliance will seek to ensure that all SADC countries commit to progressive ASRHR policies. Six SADC countries still have different ages of marriage for girls and boys. The Alliance will seek to ensure 18 is the minimum age of marriage in all cases. Only two SADC countries have provision for abortion on demand. The Alliance will seek to ensure that countries take steps to liberalise abortion laws.
- **Youth led campaigns:** Involving youth in a meaningful way in SRHR work is important as they have different needs from adults. With the surge of HIV infections amongst youth for example,

it is important to include them in sexual behavioural campaigns that will foster change amongst peers.

- **Using digital platforms:** GL will strengthen the use of mobile technologies and the Community of Practice platform to communicate SRHR campaigns and results.
- **Evidence based programming:** Production of SRHR research products including relevant Audits, model laws and policies and the #Voice and Choice SRHR Barometer.
- **Cascade the Sunrise campaign to 100 local councils:** Work with local councils in ten countries to harness the Sunrise campaign and roll it out as part of their local economic development initiatives.
- **Linking survivors of GBV to LED and capital:** GL will build capacity of hub councils link GBV survivors to LED opportunities. GL is identifying private sector companies that can sponsor survivors of GBV with start-up capital for their businesses.
- **Review local council SRHR action plans to be more youth responsive:** The ASHR Rapid Assessment findings for specific localities will be used to strengthen the youth responsiveness and sensitivity of local SRHR plans, as well as take corrective action at the health facilities. This forms part of a

broader GL initiative to review the SRHR and Gender Action plans of the COEs in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic based on a survey and

How we will measure change

- GL and Alliance partners will produce the annual #VoiceandChoice Barometer to measure progress on the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender Development and other relevant frameworks.
- Track policy and legislative changes on safe abortion, teenage pregnancy and the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Child Marriages.
- Progress on campaign implementation will be tracked using virtual feedback forms and engagements.
- Measure changes to Sunrise participants' experiences of violence and levels of income by administering the Gender Empowerment Index (GEI) at base- and end-line.
- Establish how much capital Sunrise participants have accessed using the online assessment tool to track progress.
- Do a comparative analysis of the changes in the council's SRHR plans to include youth responsive service delivery and track implementation of the plan through local council gender scorecards.



3 GENDER AND MEDIA



Goal: Gender equality in and through the **media** gives women equal #Voice as citizens.

Specific objectives

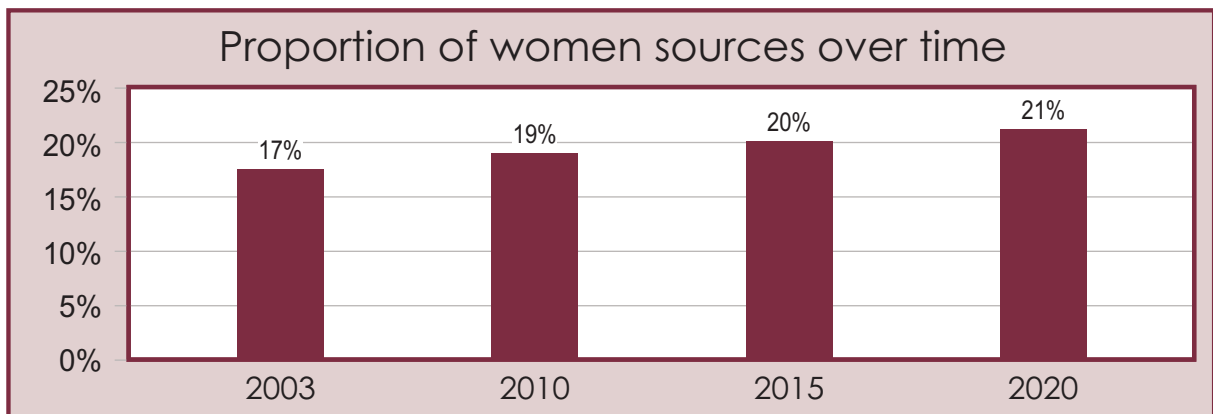
The 2021 to 2025 objectives of the programme are to:

- Accelerate progress on attaining gender equality in and through the media through advocacy and lobbying based on the latest Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) 2020.
- Strengthen media capacity to improve on gender in both institutional and editorial practices.
- Contribute to strengthening the gender and media movement in Southern Africa and beyond.

- Contribute to knowledge dissemination and strengthening of content on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights.

What we have achieved

- **Gender and Media Research:** GL has led some of the most cutting edge research work on gender and media that has been used to inform media training, advocacy and policy. The organisation coordinates the Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) every five years which is the most extensive longitudinal research study on gender equality in the news media in Southern Africa, spanning from 2003-2020, assessing representation of women's voices in news content.



- The latest GMPS conducted in 2020 reveals women's voices have increased from 17% in 2003 to 21% in 2020. The study also provides information on media coverage of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights issues in the media. Beyond studying media content, GL has conducted studies on gender in media education, gender in media houses, gender in media regulation and gender in media development organisations.

- **GL media training:** The portfolio has diversified itself serving as both a core programme area of work but also sustains itself through media consultancies. The programme leads the organisations efforts to support the media in gender sensitive reporting on various key gender equality issues in the region. Through the media Centres of Excellence process, GL offered on the job training for journalists in 108 media houses from 2011-2015. The media training was tailored around

the provisions of the SADC Gender Protocol including Health and HIV and AIDS Gender based violence amongst others. GL media portfolio managed to attain media training consultancies in organisations such as the African Union, UN Women, GIZ to train the media on gender sensitive reporting. GL has also worked with journalism and media studies departments in institutions of higher learning to enable them to mainstream gender in journalism curriculum as well as to conduct gender and media research. GL's work with journalism and media training institutions forms part of the Centres of Excellence for Gender in Media Education (GIME) project. Together with institutions of higher learning GL has in the past conducted Gender and Media Literacy training courses as well as run seminars on gender and diversity issues. GL has also worked with institutions such as Sol Plaatje Institute of Media Leadership at Rhodes University in developing a Gender and Media Leadership course.

- **Global advocacy:** GL chaired the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG) from 2014-2016. GL achieved its target of working through GAMAG to develop a post 2015 position paper and petition supported by 500 member organisations around the world to include specific and measurable global targets and indicators on media, ICTs and their gender dimensions in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) This strengthened GL's reputation as a key organisation with expertise on gender and media driving the gender and media agenda from regional to global level.
- **Policy framework for gender responsiveness in and through the media:** Through the media COE process GL created innovative partnerships with the media. By 2015 at least Ten public broadcasters had joined the COE process, which was two thirds of the total number of public broadcasters

in the region. Media houses engaged in the process developed policies which encouraged them to promote gender equality in the media 85 media COEs developed gender policies to guide their operations. The gender policies covered all facets of media operations including, policy framework, working environment and editorial content and programming. Media COEs have developed as part of efforts to create an enabling environment for gender equality to flourish. This includes the existence of sexual harassment policies. Beyond 2015 due to lack of funds and the uncertainty on the gains made on the COE process GL did not continue with this initiative however, 85 media COEs developed gender policies to guide their operations.

What we have learned

- **To become more demand driven:** Beyond GL conducting research studies and training media houses the organisation's work has transitioned to a more demand driven approach where GL media training and as well as media research services have been sought by various stakeholders. This contributes to sustain the programme in a time when there is continued dwindling resources for media development work.
- **Flexibility when working with the media:** The media is a constantly changing terrain with new information and technologies changing the way journalism is practiced. Sustained approaches to improving gender equality must be embedded in institutional commitments. The media is also a sector where practitioners move around more frequently between media houses as such institutionalised training is more effective to have a broader reach within a particular newsroom.
- **Diversifying and strengthening approaches to push for gender equality in media:** The issue of gender

equality is still not high on the agenda 20 years on since GL started this work and it is important for feminist media activists such as GL to find more innovative ways, new avenues and better strategies to bring this to fore and give more gains. Although the proportion of women's voices have increased slowly there have been noticeable qualitative gains in increasing under reported issues in the media and the media gaining more consciousness on the need to reflect women's voices in the media and the visible decline in stories that carry blatant stereotypes becoming less today than clearly than they were as they were 20 years ago.

- **Peer learning:** Sharing amongst media practitioners is a good example of learning amongst media houses and

journalists of a particular and cultivates increased interest. Knowledge sharing at the SADC gender summits have provided a learning platform for media as well as the opportunity to network with other sectors.

- Constant monitoring is key in benchmarking progress and showcasing examples of good practise. The media monitoring conducted by GL since 2003 has given insights efforts done by the media and the change this might be bringing on the ground. Media monitoring gives an opportunity to constantly take the pulse of what is happening in the sector and these insights are used to adjust strategies and optimise the campaign for gender equality in and through the media and ICTs as well as influence media training and engagement.



What we will do in 2021-2025

- **Promoting freedom of expression and opinion online:** GL will influence policy and practice through effective promotion and protection of women's rights to freedom of opinion and expression on and offline with the view to develop a gender-sensitive approach to freedom of expression. GL will undertake an advocacy campaign to promote women's freedom of expression based on the results of the GMPS as well as a baseline survey on online gender based violence that will collect evidence on how online GBV hinders freedom of expression and opinion online.
- **Transition to Communications for Social Change:** The gender and media programme will now be known as the Communications for Social Change programme. In addition to the programme being research and advocacy driven and primarily focusing on mainstream media it will incorporate the daily communications to give visibility of the work done on the ground across programmes. This will strengthen how the units work together especially in advocacy campaigns on different themes. With the convergence of traditional and digital media, GL sees an opportunity to focus on how media platforms can strengthen communication in order to contribute to broader social change.
- **Monitoring the media in terms of how they portray women as well as issues:** Periodic media monitoring will remain central to GL's work. Monitoring will continue to give up to date status of how media represents and portrays women in news content. This monitoring will include media monitoring of SRHR, Women's Political Participation and other women's rights issues as they appear in the media. GL also intends to do a follow up study to track progress on gender and the media by September 2025 to provide comparative data.

- **Media training:** Strengthening media capacity especially in an attempt improve women's voices. Through its training arm, the media and communications portfolio will prioritise training media personnel on a consultancy basis where need has been identified. This will allow the programme to be self-sustaining. Therefore, the programme will contribute more meaningfully to the Gender Links Services portfolio through the training expertise and knowledge gathered over the years. It will also focus on strengthening media reporting on SRHR in Southern African in line with the #VoiceandChoice campaign.
- **Collaboration and Relationships:** To strengthen relationships among, and collaboration between, GL and partner organisations which include gender and media organisation as well as journalism and media studies departments in institutions of higher learning to achieve programme priorities more effectively.

How we will measure change

- GL will continue to produce the SADC Gender and Media Progress Study and coordinate the Global Media Monitoring Project in the region to track the status on progress made on increasing women's voice in the media as well as portrayal of gender issues in the media.
- Where training has happened, GL will track the stories that have been produced. Beyond the number of stories produced, GL will do qualitative analysis on what thematic areas the media is tackling and how this is changing what the media prioritises. Another qualitative dimension to this will be inquiry into how citizens' attitudes and perceptions are being influenced by what the the media reports on issues such as SRHR for example.

4 50/50 WOMEN'S EQUAL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING



Goal: Women and girls exercise equal and effective #VoiceandChoice in the public sphere through their participation in politics and decision-making.

Specific objectives

- To promote increased women's political participation (WPP) to reach the target of 50% at all levels of decision-making from top leadership to local government in accordance with the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and Sustainable Development Goals.
- To employ country specific approaches to the 50/50 campaign targeting countries based on each political and socio-economic context.
- Adopt a multipronged approach targeting key gatekeepers and stakeholders in WPP including political parties and election management bodies (EMBs).
- Localise the 50/50 campaign, by working with Centres of Excellence (COEs) and women's networks at the local government level.
- Increase the capacity of women and men politicians to advance women's political participation at all levels through a WPP Academy.
- Involve youth, especially young women and promote intergenerational exchange and learning to groom young women to raise their voices on key issues affecting them and to become the leaders of the future.

What we have achieved

- Over the last 15 years Gender Links has tracked women's representation at all levels of decision, conducting the first comprehensive study on women's participation at the local government level.

- Each year women's representation across ten indicators is reported on in the SADC Voice Choice Barometer.
- Gender and election policy briefs for gender audits of elections now conducted for all SADC countries,
- In 2020 Gender Links in partnership with the Women in Local Government Network in Zimbabwe successfully lobbied the president to adopt a 30% gender quota at the local government level.
- After years of campaigning, Mauritius adopted a gender neutral quota at the local government level in 2012.

What we have learned

- ***It is time to redouble our campaigning and lobbying for 50% women in all areas of decision making.*** There has been slow and uneven progress across the region in increasing women's representation in parliaments and regression at the local government level. Each country has a different context and while there are common general principles, each campaign should be tailor made for each country. CSOs need to be more responsive and seize advocacy and lobbying opportunities as they arise, to push the 50%-50% agenda. It is also important to build the capacity of CSOs in effective organizing. Even in countries that have quotas it is essential to conduct advocacy and lobbying for them to be enforced.
- ***It is essential that targeted 50/50 campaigns are undertaken throughout the electoral cycle and well ahead of elections*** to ensure enough time for campaigns to be effective and yield results.
- ***The campaign is not just a once off activity, it is a process*** and CSOs need sustained financial support to continue to influence the electoral cycle past election day. There is need to identify cost-effective means of tracking and

keeping the advocacy publicly alive and enduring.

- **Knowledge building is key**, it produces evidence and creates a basis for public engagement. As part of civic engagement and advocacy, cutting edge policy research should be conducted on a continuous and cumulative basis. Lack of confidence is a by-product of the social system that blunts women's ambition for political leadership.
- **It is essential to include young women** in the campaign and mobilisation as the future leaders. African parliamentarians and leaders are the oldest in the world and yet Africa has the most youthful population. Young women raise issues that are pertinent to them such as menstrual health, teenage pregnancies, child marriage and safe abortion, which have largely been overlooked by legislators to date. In advocacy for a quota for women, activists you call on States to disaggregate MP and local councillors data by age and sex. All research should also include age disaggregated data to track progress.
- **Advocacy needs to include political party structures:** Where legislated TSMs are not possible, voluntary party quotas have shown to be effective in increasing women's representation in South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia for example. Political parties should have clear guidelines on how they seek to achieve gender inclusiveness. This will require a review of party constitutions and re-alignment of women's leagues so that they can play more active roles to enhance women's engagement within the parties. It is crucial to engage political parties in any 50/50 campaign advocacy for more inclusion through implementing voluntary TSMs and complying with them
- **Electoral management bodies are key players throughout the electoral cycle** and should ensure gender is a key consideration throughout the electoral

process and through developing policies or strategies for the EMB to incorporate gender issues.

- **We need to deepen our research on WPP** by moving beyond just the numbers. The numbers are easy to measure, but there is little research on the qualitative difference women make once in decision making positions.
- **Peer learning across the region** through exposure and study visits between countries have the potential to forge change and bring government officials on board, through learning from good practice across the region, for example the study trip Zimbabwe officials went on to Mauritius to learn how they increased representation of women in local government almost fourfold.

What we will do in 2021-2025

- Conduct research and produce evidence-based advocacy tools that make the case for increasing women's representation and participation in political decision making.
- Continued awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership in all campaigns
- Strengthen structures that promote mentorship and inter-generational learning through young women in local government networks or other formal structures such as junior parliaments and councils.
- Include a specific quota for young women in lobbying and advocacy with targeted mentoring programmes for young women.
- Facilitate exposure and study visits between countries that are in the process of electoral reform and countries that have undergone electoral reform and/or adopted quotas, to learn from good practice across the region.
- Work with alliance and local government partners to implement country specific 50/50 campaigns in the lead up to elections before 2030:

A photograph taken from behind a person with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt. The t-shirt has green text printed on the back. In the background, another person is partially visible, and there are trees and a utility pole under a blue sky with clouds.

**50 / 50 CAMPAIGN
TOGETHER AS**

	Next elections before 2030	Electoral system	Quota	WPP context	50/50 STRATEGY
Angola	2022 2027	PR	Legislated	Have achieved 30% but WPP at national level decreased seven percentage points since 2009	Work with EMB and political parties to enforce the 30% quota. Advocate for 50% quota at all levels
Botswana	2024 2029	FPTP	None	Lowest representation at national level, 11% and 18% at local level decreased by one percentage point since 2009	Advocate for electoral reform - to a mixed or PR system with a legislated quota at all levels
Comoros	2023 2028	FPTP (TRS)	None	Only 17% representation at national level	As this is a new SADC country conduct research on WPP to inform advocacy and lobbying strategies for electoral reform and legislated quota at all levels
DRC	2023 2028	Mixed	None	Low representation at national level (18%), but increased 6 percentage points since 2009. 27% at local level	Advocate for legislated quota at all levels
Eswatini	2023 2028	FPTP	Constitutional - 30%	WPP both at national and local level decreased four and three percent respectively to 18% and 15% despite a constitutional quota of 30%	Advocate for the enforcement of the 30% constitutional quota, and for this to be increased to 50%. Long term advocate for electoral reform. Continued awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership
Lesotho	2022 2027	Mixed	30% at local level	At the local level women's representation has decreased 18 percentage points from 58% in 2009 to 40% in 2021. Lesotho also saw decrease of three percentage points at national level	Work with electoral commission to enforce the 30% quota at local level. Advocate for the quota at local level to be extended to national level and lobby for the quota to be increased to 50%. Continued awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership
Madagascar	2024 2029	Mixed	None	WPP has increased at the national level to 18% and 7% at the local government level still well below the 50% target	Use the Mauritius example to advocate for quotas at local and national level. Continued awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership
Malawi	2024 2029	FPTP	None	WPP has increased both at the national and local level since 2009 to 20% and 15% respectively. 2017 the Law Commission recommended that Section 62 of the Constitution be amended to provide for a quota. Nothing has happened since the recommendations were made	Advocate for recommendations of law reform commission to amend the constitution to be adopted, continue putting pressure on govt to comply with the Gender Equality Act. Continued awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership
Mauritius	2024 2029	Mixed	Legislated quota local	Mauritius increased WPP to 20% at national level in last elections. At the local level representation increased fourfold in the 2012 elections to 26% but decreased in the last election to 22%	Work with electoral commission to enforce the 30% quota at local level. Advocate for the quota at local level to be extended to national level and that it be increased to 50%. Continued awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership
Mozambique	2024 2029	PR	Voluntary party	One of the highest representation in the region, 42% at national level, 34% at local level (decreased from 36% in 2009)	Advocate for all parties to adopt quotas and or legislated quota of 50%. Continued awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership
Namibia	2024 2029	PR	Voluntary party	Best performer at the local level with 45% women's representation, 36% at national level	Continued 50/50 campaign to ensure no more regression. Advocate for legislated quota at local level to be extended to national level and increase to 50%. Awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership

	Next elections before 2030	Electoral system	Quota	WPP context	50/50 STRATEGY
Seychelles	2025 2030	Mixed	None	23% women's representation at national level, has stayed the same since 2009	Longer term - Advocate for a 50% legislated quota at all levels. Awareness raising and public education on the importance of women's leadership
South Africa	2024 2029	PR - N Mixed -L	Voluntary party	Best performer at national level, 46% and 41% at local level. Country has to change the PR electoral system at the national level by 2022 in line with constitutional court ruling	Follow the electoral reform process closely and strategise on how to ensure gains are not lost with new electoral system. Advocate for a legislated quota at all levels
Tanzania	2025 2030	FPTP	Constitutional - 30%	Has achieved over 30% at both national (37%) and local (30%) levels, but with minimal progress over the last 12 years. Need to move beyond 30%	Step up 50/50 campaign to ensure no further backsliding. Advocate for Constitutional quota to be raised to 50%
Zambia	2021 2026	FPTP	None	There have been marginal increases in women's representation since 2009, but still remains very low at 17% at national and 8% at local level. There is currently a Constitutional amendment Bill underway	Actively participate in the Constitution Amendment Bill 10 process and ensure there are provisions to increase women's political participation. Advocate for legislated quotas at national, local level using the Zimbabwe and Mauritius models
Zimbabwe	2023 2028	FPTP	Constitutional 30% national and local level	Implementation of the quota at the national level resulted in an increase of 17 percentage points from 18% in 2009 to 35% in 2021. 30% quota for local government adopted in 2021	Work with electoral commission to enforce the 30% quota at national and local level. Advocate for increasing quota to 50% quota at all levels.

How we will measure change

- Track women's representation measured through the ten indicators for WPP. The annual *#VoiceandChoice Barometer*, measures progress on the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender Development and other relevant frameworks.
- Track the number of countries with changes in electoral systems or quotas in favour of women.
- Learning and knowledge production through case studies submitted to the *#VoiceandChoice Summits* to establish what works.
- Number of women in local government and young women in local government networks or other structures, formed or strengthened.
- Number of political parties and EMBs adopting gender policies and quotas.
- Number of young women entering politics.

5 LOCAL ACTION FOR GENDER JUSTICE



Goal: Gender responsive local government enhances #VoiceandChoice for women, girls and youth in marginal communities.

Specific objectives

The 2020 to 2025 objectives of the programme are to:

- Expand the mainstreaming gender in local government Centres of Excellence programme (COE) to 10 countries from the current seven to cover 410 local councils increasing the proportion of the population covered from 43% to 45%.
- Increase the number of hub councils to 90 to support 320 spoke councils in ten countries.
- Support local councils to increase their gender in local government scores from 67% to 72%.
- Replicate the effective youth council model operating in Zimbabwe and Zambia in eight additional countries to ensure young people's voices are included in local government programming and decision making.
- Augment ownership and sustainability of gender responsive governance through resource centres, customised capacity building packages and mentorship models.

What we have achieved

- **Outreach:** The Local action for Gender Justice programme reached 443 COEs in Southern Africa. The councils cover a population of 42 million people or 43% of the population in the seven countries.
- **Putting gender on the local government agenda:** The COE programme put gender on the agenda of local government in Southern Africa, and is localising the targets of the Southern

African Gender Protocol through the local-level gender action plans.

- **Gender responsive budgeting, contributions to the COE process:** COE councils have specifically designated budget allocations for gender projects especially for awareness campaigns. The councils contribute in kind through resource persons, venues and catering for some of the COE workshops.
- **GBV campaigns:** At least half of the COEs have been involved in the Sixteen Days of Activism campaigns with some COEs taking part every year. Councils also craft 365 Days Campaigns to end GBV. The COEs collaborate with the community and institutions that work to fight GBV and HIV and AIDS. The campaign has become a platform for dialogue between policy makers and the community. With some members of the community now able to use IT for advocacy during the Sixteen Days campaigns, networking has become stronger and accountability aspects more visible for local government.
- **Learning and sharing:** The programme promotes learning and sharing through Protocol@work summits, on the job training and study visits.
- **Gender certification:** Since 2017, the programme awards certificates to participating local authorities to affirm good gender performance. The highest performing councils are awarded a platinum rating.
- **Establishing the hub and spoke model:** The model selects strong urban and rural councils that can serve as 'hubs' for the COE process, twinning with weaker councils, and rolling out the process through peer learning and sharing. The model is deepening the COE process and is being successfully rolled out Zimbabwe through 10 hubs and 84 spoke councils.

- **Young people's voices count:** In Zambia and Zimbabwe junior councils play an important role in decision making and programming to ensure local government is youth responsive.
- **Passing the baton to GFPs:** The programme trained 243 Gender Focal Persons (GFPs) from local councils who have been trained in the COE process and the Sunrise campaign.

What we have learnt

- **Involving local councils in programme design:** Involving local councils in programme design results in greater ownership and long term sustainability of the programme. Inception workshops and reference groups is the first step in the roll out of the programme.
- **Making young people's voices count:** Youth involvement in the programme is important for intergenerational sustainability through creating 'future' gender responsive leaders and for youth responsiveness local governance.
- **Navigating the political space:** Target countries are likely to adopt varying approaches to the COE programme as political and economic contexts differ. Political buy-in is critical to ensure that the programme is rolled out effectively. The Ministry of Local Government in Zimbabwe adopted the Hub and Spoke as the gender programme of choice and included performance in employee score cards to measure progress.
- **Learning and sharing:** It is important to document best practices, cascade it into new councils, and promote peer learning.
- **Walking the talk:** Buy-in from the council leadership accelerates programme delivery and allocations of budgets. Leadership requires the council to report on progress of costed action plans.
- **Citizen participation for accountability:** Involve citizens in assessing local councils' gender responsiveness. Citizen participation is critical to ensure that



local councils are providing gender responsive services and programmes.

- **Peer learning and sharing:** GL creates multiplier effects through facilitating sharing of good practices. The "each-one-teach-one" model runs from the COEs at local level to the national networks. Audits of laws and policies are used to identify what works; these are turned into models and checklists. Alliance networks share successes daily on a WhatsApp group; this creates creative competition to do better.
- **Tackling poverty to end violence:** Poverty is a major contributing factor in gender-based violence. Local Economic Development and Social Development is the best strategy to address issues of low SRHR and GBV.
- **Creation of a networking space for survivors:** The entrepreneurship training should allow for the support of women at different stages of development to avoid losing opportunities for women who have more advanced ideas or established businesses and who would benefit from a different approach. GL is piloting networking in four countries.

What we will do in 2021-2025

- **Hub and spoke model for sustainability:** GL will build the capacity of COEs through the hub and spoke model to improve sustainability and ownership of gender responsive governance.
- **Innovation through technology:** GL will use of mobile technologies including apps to provide a platform for gender responsive governance resources and one-stop platforms for monitoring and evaluation. The hub and spoke model will be accompanied by an app to track gender responsive service delivery.
- **Partnership building:** Strengthen partnerships with local government ministries and associations to endorse the programme as a gender programme of choice.
- **Increased commitment and ownership:** Capacity building of senior

council management such as town clerks and CEOs to ensure that gender equality is prioritised in councils. This will add onto the continuous capacity building of GFPs and Gender champions.

- **Promote diversity in programming:** Include groups such as including youth (e.g. junior councillors), key populations (sex workers and PLWHA), gender and disability and promoting sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) in the programme.
- **Leverage on learning platforms:** Showcase good practices in gender mainstreaming at local government level through the #Voice and Choice summits.

How we will measure change

- Administer the local government gender scorecard every two years. The scorecard will be done by the council, the community and an independent panel of judges during the #VoiceandChoice Summits. This will ensure that the score is triangulated provide a verified performance score.
- Analyse of the case studies submitted to the #VoiceandChoice Summits to establish what works and to share these amongst all councils in ten countries.
- Monitor the number of memoranda of understanding signed with ministries of local government and local government associations and the level of involvement by these groups.
- Track budget allocations and in-kind contributions made by the councils to the COE process.
- Conduct gender responsive service delivery assessments using an online survey. The results will be analysed and shared with councils to improve services and gender responsiveness.
- Evaluate gender responsive campaigns being rolled out at local level to assess gender responsive programming and outreach.

6 GENDER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE



Goal: Halt the cataclysmic destruction of the planet through innovative links between gender and climate justice in our work and practice.

Specific objectives

- Ensuring women and men's equal and effective participation in decision-making around climate change.
- Strengthening gender mainstreaming at all levels, especially local government, to ensure that women and men's specific needs are addressed.
- Partnerships with climate change focused and humanitarian organisation to draw expertise and lead effective campaigns.
- Increase the capacity of women and men politicians to advance gender and climate justice.
- Involve youth, especially young women and promote intergenerational exchange and learning.
- Ensure internal policy and practice promotes a green working environment.

What we have achieved

- Annual research for the climate justice chapter in the annual *#VoiceandChoice Barometer*, which will be our baseline for future Barometers which measure progress on the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Gender Development and other relevant frameworks.
- Coordinating SADC Gender and Climate Change cluster of the Alliance.
- Integrated into Sixteen Days of Activism campaigns and local level advocacy work.
- Sharing of best practices on climate justice during Protocol@work summits.
- Capacity building on gender concepts in climate change.

- Internal Organisational Policy on Climate change which includes paperless office; recycling,
- Road transport for short distances, planting of trees by board members and staff, including Policy on Environmentally Sustainable Management of used PPE at Gender Links. Green workspace - Go Solar, Go green: Gender Links has remained committed to maintaining green office workspaces. This is because GL believes that less cluttered, green friendly and aware offices make for more holistic and pleasant working environments. At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, GL took a further step in the area of electricity and energy conservation for its offices in South Africa. In consultation with its donors, GL was able to pivot and negotiate for funds to install solar equipment. This has greatly reduced bills for the Head office.

What we have learned

- **There are few campaigns and initiative to address climate justice:** While the climate crisis is arguably the biggest threat of our time, countries have been slow in adopting and implementing international agreements on climate change. There are just a few climate justice campaigns or initiatives at the local level, where it matters most.
- **Women are underrepresented in decision-making on climate change** from the local to national level, despite bearing the brunt of the climate crisis.
- **There are links between COVID-19 and climate justice** which need highlighted - reflection on the COVID-19 responses, or lack of, must inform how the SADC region shapes climate change adaptation for generations to come.
- **The climate crisis presents the perfect opportunity** for policymakers to focus on building a future that uses a gender

lens and addresses the concerns of the most vulnerable members of society.

- **Data on climate justice is not disaggregated by sex** making it difficult to quantify the links between gender equality and climate justice.

What we will do in 2021-2025

- Conduct research on the links between gender and climate justice to inform advocacy and campaigning, including advocating for climate justice indicators to be disaggregated by sex.
- Conduct learning sessions for Alliance and local government partners on climate justice and its links to gender justice.
- GL and Alliance partners will design a series of campaigns linked to the 2021 *#VoiceandChoice Barometer* that draws links between the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate change crisis. These campaigns will run at regional, national and local level.

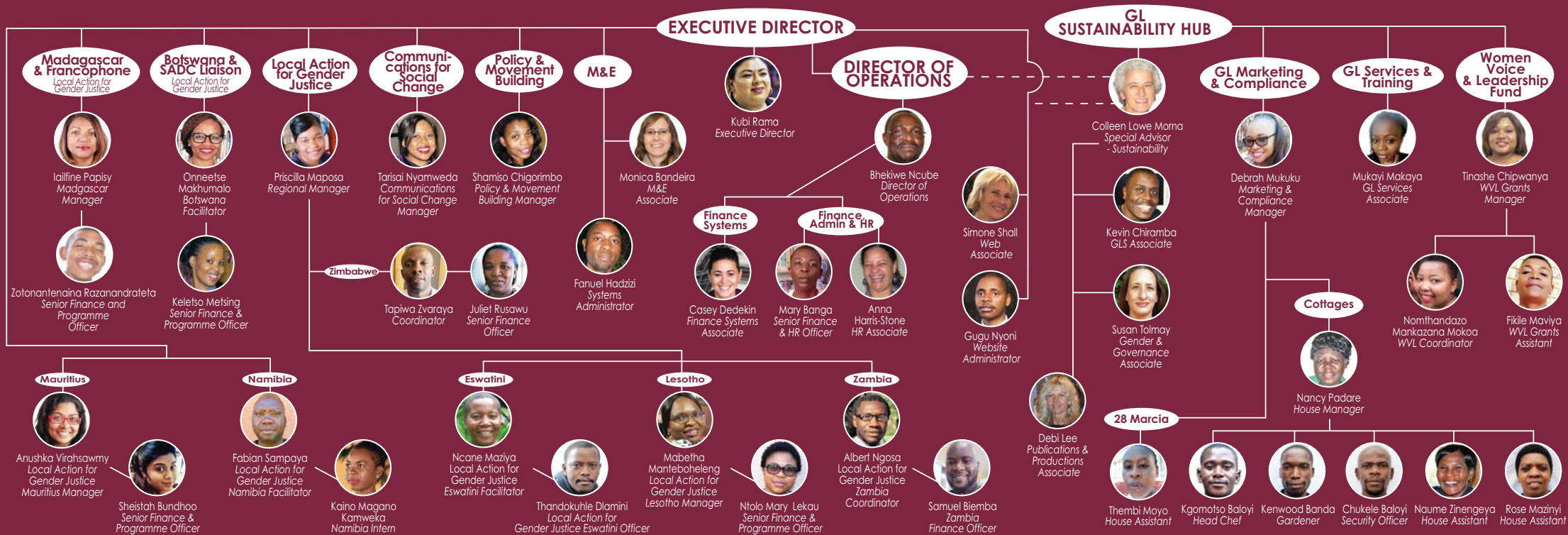
- Seek out and document best practices on climate justice to be showcased during Protocol@work summits.
- Work with local councils to develop and implement gender aware climate justice policies and action plans.
- Ensure compliance with internal Organisational Policy on Climate change to promote a green working environment.

How we will measure change

- Number of campaigns implemented at national and local levels.
- The number of Gender and climate justice entries to the Protocol@work summits.
- Tracking the proportion of women in decision-making on climate from community groups to national government.
- Number of countries and councils with gender aware climate change policies and action plans.
- Number of countries providing sex disaggregated data on climate change indicators.



GENDER LINKS ORGANISATIONAL CHART 2021



1 SUSTAINABILITY



Goal: A strong and sustainable organisation that includes a fund raising unit; grant making and income generating capabilities.

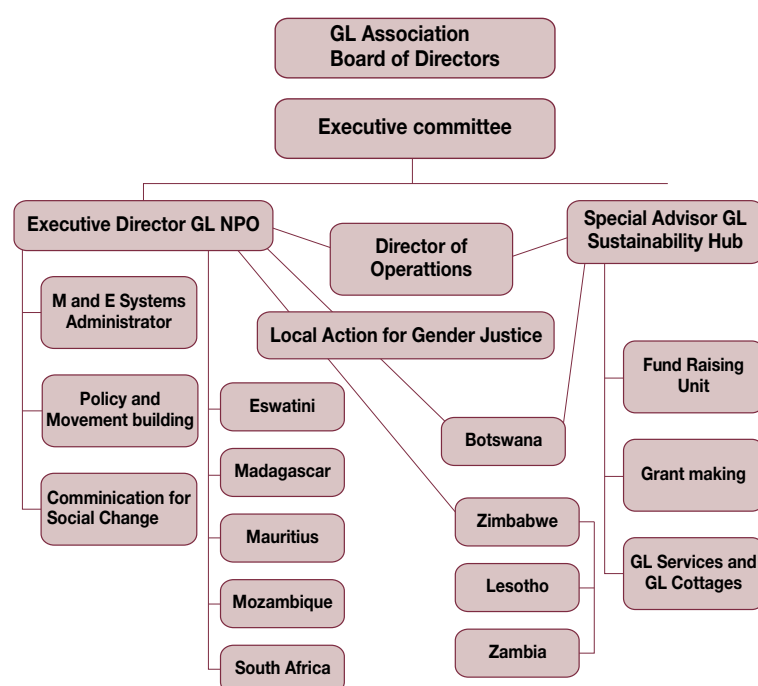
Specific objectives

- To create and conceptualise the GL Sustainability Hub (GLSH).
- To create a dedicated Fund Raising Unit that tracks GL's fund raising efforts; helps to direct these more effectively, and builds the capacity of staff and partners to fund raise.
- To strengthen the Grant Management Unit (GMU) and position GL as strong Southern Africa Grant Making entity;
- To grow Gender Links Advisory Services into a global brand that is renowned for advancing institutional gender mainstreaming programmes;
- To position Gender Links Training Institute (GTI) as a world class institution for training in gender, gender and media, gender and political governance;
- To position GL Resources as authentic reference sources of information on gender reporting within the SADC Region;
- To position Gender Links Cottages (GLC) as the "one-stop shop" for all accommodation needs, conferencing, catering, tours and events management in Johannesburg with a strong safety record on COVID-19.
- To generate revenue that contributes towards GL's long term sustainability strategy by investing operating profits in the Gender Links Future Fund, while continuing to self-fund and sustain all operations concerning the GL income generating units.

What we have achieved

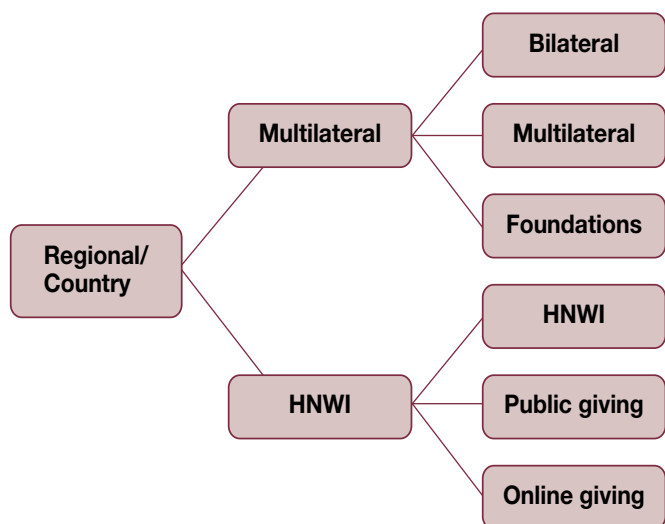
Creating the GL Sustainability Hub: In 2021 GL achieved its goal of creating a "bird with two wings": the NGO carrying

out GL's core programme delivery, and a Sustainability Hub concerned with long term sustainability. As part of GL's succession plan, the founding CEO Colleen Lowe Morna handed over to the former Deputy CEO, Kubi Rama, now the Executive Director. Lowe-Morna is now Special Advisor to the Sustainability Hub that comprises three units: A Fund Raising Unit (FRU); Grants Management Unit (GMU) and GL's two income-generating units, GL Services and GL Cottages.

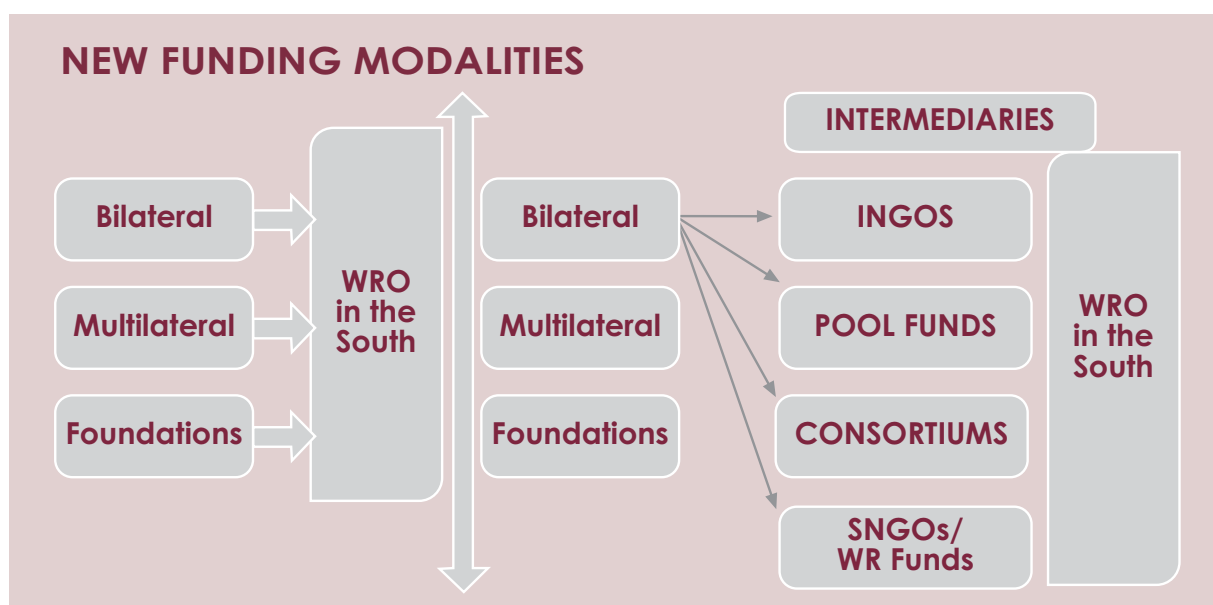


Fund Raising Unit (FRU)

Like any other NGO, GL puts out 50 to 60 funding applications each year with varying results. Globally, the Association of Women in Development (AWID) has found that only 1% of aid goes directly to women's rights organisation. GL has been part of global advocacy efforts to ensure that WRO secure the funds they need to do their work effectively. The purpose of the FRU is to help GL better navigate traditional funding (bilateral, multilateral and foundations) both in its regional and country offices, as well as explore new types of funding.



In the new areas, the link between the FRU and GL's social entrepreneurship ventures is deliberate. GL is exploring potential new types of funding such as corporate social responsibility funds; High Net Worth Individuals; public and online giving. For example, during its 20th anniversary celebrations, GL ran a live online giving platform that generated \$10,000 in untied funds. The value of such funds is both the branding opportunity and the fact that they can be invested in the GL Future Fund. This is a new area in which GL still has much to learn.



Traditional funding modalities are now far more complex. In the past, GL benefitted directly from funds set up by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies. As a result of budget cuts in northern capitals, these funds are now being pooled or made available to consortiums; or being channeled through intermediaries (usually larger northern NGOs). In addition to being more difficult to access, these “trickle” down amounts are much smaller than in the past. A high degree of agility and skill is required to access ever dwindling resources, especially amid a pandemic. The role of the FRU is to advise senior

management on emerging trends; gather information on opportunities; assist in preparing proposals (especially the larger grants); curate useful documents and information needed for applications and due diligence; track performance; conduct regular reviews and on-the-job capacity building.

Grant making

As part of studying the funding landscape, GL has noted the trend in recent years towards the emergence of strong and capable southern NGOs that can themselves serve as intermediaries.

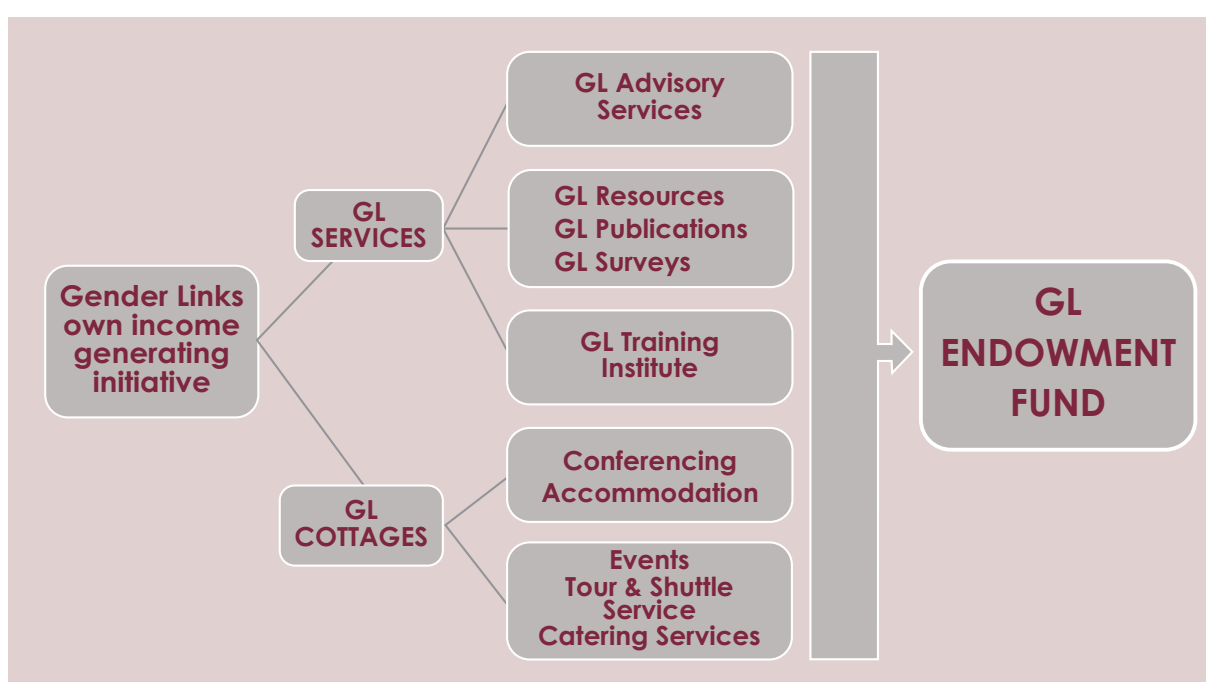
In 2019, Global Affairs Canada contracted GL to manage its Women, Voice and Leadership Grant in South Africa (approximately US\$3.1 million). This provided GL the opportunity to set up a Grants Management Unit (GMU) and all its related systems. GL currently manages over 40 multi-year core, networking and rapid response grants for women's rights organisations across the country. GL leveraged an additional \$66 000 in funding from UKAID for the COVID-19 Rapid Response Grants.

To support the technical components of Grants Management, GLS developed its own end-to-end online based platform that supports the entire grants making cycle from Grant Call Announcements, online based Concept Notes, automated email acknowledgement notes, online based Full Grant Application Proposals. These are

supported by online scoring systems for both Concept Notes and Full Applications. The functionality allows for both quantitative and qualitative scoring and comments. This cloud based system also allows uploading of documents and images. The Grants Management platform interfaces with the GL Sage Pastel system which accommodates the financial aspects of grants management. The online platform also takes into account Due Diligence administration and reporting. All submissions are stored in the cloud, accessible and retrievable at any time. The system is operational and functioning smoothly.

Although only in its second year of granting, GLS is confident that the grants management system is working well and strong governance structure are in place to effectively roll out the grants making processes.

What we have achieved



Gender Links “own income generating” portfolio comprises two dynamic independent business units, Gender Links Services (GLS) and Gender Links Cottages (GLC). These two portfolios were inspired by an external evaluation that suggested that GL should leverage its physical and intellectual assets, turning a “wealth of knowledge into wealth”. Within GLS are three complimentary units, GL Advisory Services, Grant Management, GTI and GL Resources.



Over the last decade, **Gender Links Advisory Services** has serviced close to 100 **consultancy contracts for a range** of bilateral and multilateral agencies, donors and NGOs. These cover policy and strategy development; research; gender audits, institutional and systems support, evaluations and speaking engagements.

The **Gender Links Training Institute (GTI)** provides training in Gender Main-streaming, Gender Responsive Budgeting, Gender and Media Monitoring and Entrepreneurship Training Course. A unique selling point for GTI is its ability



to also produce customised and client specific training modules.

GL Resources: This unit is responsible for selling, marketing and promoting GL produced publications, books, reports, photos and Surveys through the online book shop as well as the UK-based African Books Collective.



GL Cottages and Conferencing is a bed and breakfast facility close to the GL offices that is run commercially to service GL's needs (about 20% of the time) and those of other clients (mostly like-minded NGOs) the rest of the time. This is a social entrepreneurship venture dedicated to service excellence. GL Cottages endeavours to keep up with the latest hospitality industry trends and provide customers with innovative solutions offering flexible arrangements to increase convenience to customers. Like all hospitality industries the GL Cottages experienced a severe blow as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns. However, the GLC has become an icon of GL resilience, bouncing back whenever the situation permits.

What we have achieved



FUTUREFUND for GENERATIONEQUALITY

SAVED BY
GL ALREADY



- \$1 mn
- Saved by GL - own income

CHALLENGE
FUND



- \$1 mn
- Match Fund - Anonymous Donor

GL TO RAISE
BY 2025



- \$1 mn
- To raise
- 14 months

From the beginning, GL has had an endowment fund comprising income generated through GL Services, the GL Cottages and Conferencing Centre, interest earned and private donations. Presently this stands at about \$1 million. We have been promised \$1 million on a match basis by an African philanthropist. Our challenge is to raise another \$1 million by 2025. At \$3 million the fund will yield approximately \$300,000 per annum to be applied to the core costs that have been so severely affected by funding cuts. The GL Future Fund (GLFF) is at the heart of GL's sustainability strategy.

What we will do in 2021-2025

- Further develop the GMU through improved grant and financial management systems.
- Develop guidelines for the FRU for approval by the Board.
- Make a list of targeted Corporates; find out which area their funding focus is and what CSI budget they have available; create tailored custom made pitch for each of them, that aligns with their goals.
- Enrol interns that will assist with organising fundraising events and mobilising.
- Acquire 18A Status with SARS to issue Tax certificates to private donors.
- Complete the process of patenting key GL intellectual property and ensure this is done routinely.
- Complete Services SETA accreditation for the GTI in South Africa.
- Promote GLS Surveys online in a targeted way, focusing on the relevant organisations that can make use of GL Resources.
- Target book distributors in all the SADC countries, and identify more distributors in South Africa to carry and promote GL publications.



- Implementation of the “Hotel Eye” App at GL Cottages.
- Enhanced branding and positioning and brand awareness -we need to decide who our specific customers are and tailor make our product offering to suit that clientele.
- Product diversification - GLC will need to set up a coffee shop and create outdoor bar area. For winter, GLC will introduce outdoor boma fires and introduce traditional foods.
- Leveraging off the GL networks and smart partnerships with travel and tours.

How we will measure change

The GLSH will measure itself against the following 2025 targets and indicators:

- **GL ODS Score sustainability:** GLHS will seek to maintain or better the current score (92%).
- **Funding in dollars:** The GLSH will strive to bring GL's annual income back up to \$4million per annum; still lower than in 2015, but better than in recent years.
- **Total no of donors:** The GLSH aims to help reduce the number of donors (from 34 to a more manageable 20) while increasing the amount each gives.
- **Smallest grant (dollars):** GLHS will seek to raise the amount of the smallest grant, currently \$739, to at least \$5000.
- **Largest grant (dollars):** GLHS will seek to have larger grants in the mix, with the largest grant around \$2 million per annum.
- **Sub granting amount (dollars):** GLHS aims to increase on granting from its current level of close to \$400,000 an annum to \$1 million per annum.
- **No of sub grants:** The number of sub-grants will also be increased, from 60 to 80.
- **Own income (dollars):** GLHS will seek to restore own income (severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, to former levels of about \$500,000 per annum.

2 RESULTS FOR CHANGE



Goal: A robust and transparent system and processes for planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning, innovation, knowledge management and sharing.

Specific objectives

- Establish a seamless process from planning, to monitoring, evaluating, learning, knowledge and innovation.
- Increase the quality of quantitative and qualitative Results for Change data.
- Improve data verification and integrity.
- Improve data visualisation and dissemination.
- Enhance accountability to donors and beneficiaries by disseminating and engaging with our findings.
- Enhance a results-for-change culture within the organisation by creating a plan linked to decision-making processes.

What we have achieved

- GL pioneered and over time has honed the concept of **Results for Change**, encompassing M&E, knowledge, innovation and learning.
- We have developed **135 online surveys** through Alchemer platform and 91 reports on Google Data Studio.
- At the output level, GL gathers information on the number of events and beneficiaries through online forms.
- At the outcome level, GL gathers quantitative data through three surveys: a gender attitudes quiz; a citizen score card where the public rate their governments performance on gender and a SADC Protocol on Gender and Develop knowledge quiz to ascertain how aware the public is of the instrument.
- At every GL event, participant's fill in online evaluation forms that assists in

assessing the quality of GL's work and areas that need improvement.

- GL gathers data on cost saving and in-kind support through online forms.
- GL uses Alchemer for research on specific areas of work, for example the Gender Progress Score (GPS) or attitude survey and the Gender and Media Progress Study.
- The GL online tools facilitate easy data gathering. Participants are able to fill in surveys on smart phones, tablets and computers. The results are available in real time and analyses can be done rapidly because the data is stored in database.
- **Greater transparency and accountability**, GL is able to provide robust evidence for all our actions and decisions to stakeholders, donors and beneficiaries. Additionally, the M&E data we produce helps donors weigh their funds' efficacy in funded projects, which influences their current and

GENDER LINKS RESULTS FOR CHANGE MODEL



future funding plans. GL is currently a registered member with IATI and has data on the platform.

- **Improved project performance** - feedback forms, like the evaluation form, help us in better understanding the target population's needs. This helps

to define the scope of the project and design objectives that are relevant, measurable and achievable.

- Over the last five years GL has invested in data visualisation and is making progress in producing research reports in multi-media formats.



The launch of the 2019 to 2020 **Gender Progress Score** in August 2020 is an example of how GL is using M and E tools and giving visibility to the findings. Alliance and COE partners helped to gather over 35,000 responses to questions that measure attitudes across the SADC region. GL produced a regional and 15 country reports. These have been turned into power point presentations and infographics disseminated through social media. Participants in the study and launch, including individual councils, have access to the results through google data sheets on the GL website. The launch is being turned into a year- long campaign by linking questions to key dates. Partners will use the research to prompt radio talk shows and other inter-active ways of engaging with the findings. Read more: <https://genderlinks.org.za/gender-links-community/surveys/southern-africa-gender-progress-score-gender-attitudes/>

- GL has a strong tradition of gathering qualitative evidence in the form of personal accounts and testimonies of beneficiaries in follow up research, for example, in the case of those who participate in the Sunrise project "I" Stories. GL is encouraging partners to use digital technologies to produce vlogs - first-hand accounts in short video clips.

What we have learned

- Tools change in response to new donor requirements, ideas and experiences and may render gathered data inadequate. For example, different donors

have different age categories they want disaggregated.

- Too often staff and partners administer M and E without an appreciation of why this is being done.
- Quality checking of data and data integrity remain serious challenges, often surfacing well into the research project.
- Giving ownership of our M&E processes to partners is a double edge sword. It saves GL resources and releases the burden of doing everything for councils and partner organisations like WVL grantees. The challenge is that some councils fail to take ownership of the

project and GL has to carry the burden of training and capturing data for councils and partner organisations. Changes and transfers of Gender Focal Persons interrupts the work. Internet connectivity poses challenges in some local councils since most of our tools are online.

What we will do in 2021-2025

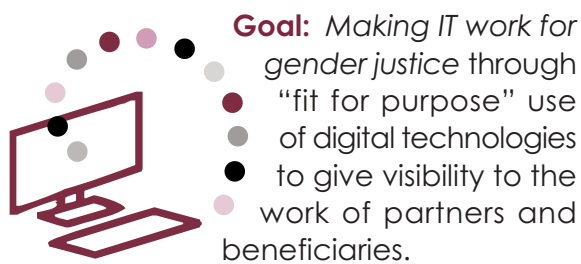
- Practical solutions to challenges such as working in offline mode so that connectivity issues are averted
- Sharpening the focus of best practices submitted at summits to elucidate how the SADC Gender Protocol is being used.
- Analysis of the qualitative evidence - Changing Lives, I Stories, Women in Politics profiles.
- Staff and partner capacity building to enhance appreciation of the value of M&E.
- Follow up IATI compliance training and implementation.

How we will measure change

- **Analysis of data collected from various sources and surveys.** GL will do further disaggregation of data to include sexual identity, disability, income, urban and rural.
- **Longitudinal tracking of participants in the Sunrise project.** Each participant will complete the GEI at the beginning of the programme to establish base-lines. These will be re-administered at the end of the process to measure change.
- **Qualitative data** (Drivers of Change, "I" Stories and institutional profiles.)



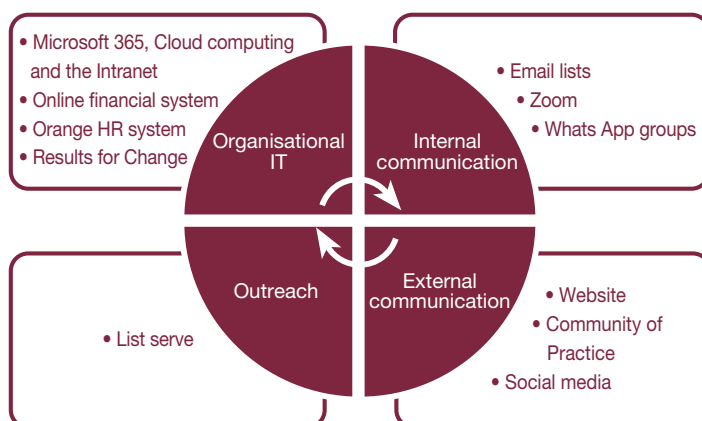
3 COMMUNICATING RESULTS



Specific Objectives

- Increase the visibility of GL works across all its different programme areas.
- Growing, engaging, and inspiring Gender Links' network of followers and supporters.
- GL programmes need to reach out to as many beneficiaries as possible, ICT provides an easier platform for this to be achieved.
- Use the latest social media platforms for information sharing and outreach.
- Be able to explain complex ideas in a simple and easy-to-understand way.
- Use digital media analytics and social media listening to feed into the overall organisational and contribute to the organisations priorities.

Since inception GL has had as one of its slogan's "Making IT work for gender justice." GL has harnessed the power of IT to work efficiently and effectively internally, as well as enhance the agency of the women with whom we work, as illustrated in the graphic.



What we have achieved

- **Having an online presence:** The use of online media can no longer be ignored in undertaking advocacy work. GL has established owned media through the GL website as well as social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram that sustain its online presence. This has assisted the organisation to reach far and beyond the borders of the SADC region. The organisations work can be read and engaged with in far reaching places. By December 2020 GL had accumulated 7004 Facebook followers on its regional Facebook page while on Twitter the organisation had 7667 followers. GL also has country specific Facebook pages which country office use to share country specific work. By end of 2020, these pages had followers that range from a high of 4039 in Madagascar to 520 in Namibia.
- **Use social media to effectively disseminate results:** GL has been successful in coordinating the creation and dissemination of digital content (websites, email, online actions, videos, social and multimedia content) for various projects including on SRHR to disseminate project results. For example, GL has created social media plans and editorial calendars based on the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Voice and Choice Barometer findings. Having this content in multimedia formats including in video formats has made this easier to understand.
- **Maintaining a diverse lists of contacts:** In order to stay connected to as many of GL's beneficiaries as possible the organisation has a bulk messaging system. The list serve has 6581 contacts that can be easily reached with one mail shot. The announcements include calls to actions, press releases, information and articles on gender-related

issues. The list serve is reviewed annually to keep it up-to-date. After every event or activity new participants are uploaded to the list serve. GL uses these announcements to direct traffic to the GL website and social media.

- **Digital campaigning:** GL has been a keen user of digital tools and platforms, community engagement tactics, and creative online content to help engage and inspire people to take action and keep gender equality on the agenda. GL with its partner organisations in the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance have run a multifaceted campaign with a strong online presence through the #Voice andChoice campaign. GL is currently leading the #VaccineGenderJustice Campaign which is calling on Southern African countries to provide sex, age and region disaggregated data to monitor vaccine roll out so as to ensure that vaccines are reaching marginalised communities.

- **Used webinars to focus discussions** on gender equality issues. This allowed for online discussions across countries on various thematic areas especially during periods like during Sixteen Days of No Violence Against Women GL ran targeted discussions on themes related to gender-based violence (GBV). This allowed for cross country information exchanges, developing a regional gender movement and to communicate in different languages across borders.

- **Development of an online Community of Practice:** The Southern Africa Gender Community of Practice is a virtual space that includes resources and surveys and gender and women's rights issues. The platform may be used to set up forums and petitions. GL uses the facility to bring together groups of interested people to discuss gender concerns across borders and languages. The discussions always end with recommendations for lobbying and advocacy on the issue. The GL

Community of Practice is a virtual space that includes resources and surveys and gender and women's rights issues. The platform may be used to set up forums and petitions. GL used the platform to create discussion on Safe Abortion and gather signatures to lobby for Safe Abortion legislation in the lead up to International Safe Abortion Day on the 28 September 2019.



What we have learned

- Need a detailed communications plan to ensure sustained engagement and growth. Communications also requires a dedicated budget for digital campaigning to reach a wider audience and a better targeted audience.
- The need for multifaceted approaches. Online communities are supported by some of offline presence to complement the actions that are happening virtually

What we will do in 2021-2025

- GL will develop a comprehensive digital engagement strategy designed to educate and mobilise existing as well as new audiences. This strategy will be linked closely to the offline campaigns that GL does on the ground.
- With digital campaigning getting increased attention GL will strengthen its capacity in developing and implementing online campaigns for change through methods such as petitions,

social media actions or creative online disruption tactics, and managing supporter communities (such as large mailing lists, online groups, subscribers, social media followers, online activist spaces). It will also increase knowledge and share and learn amongst its key partners in using digital campaigning or organising so as to strengthen each other's efforts in online activism.

- As part of its communications strategy GL will drive digital engagement through online content production, social media channel and distribution of multimedia work that engages audiences in its gender equality work.
- Contribute to the training and digital empowerment of staff, partners and beneficiaries in digital campaigning and organising skills to assist in improving online presence which give visibility to the work of partners and beneficiaries.
- Identify opportunities and lead planning and implementation of online campaigns around a variety of targets that meet our goals of growing and empowering the regional women's rights movement, including supporting bottom-up, user-generated campaigns for example in the Women Voice and Leadership programme.
- Doing more visual work to communicate project content as well project results. GL will produce more audio visual content utilise filmmaking and editing experience in its team and through associates to advance the organisations communications' objectives.

How we will measure change

- Track the number of influencers that follow the organisation and the GL content that influencers share, quote and follow on digital platforms.
- On digital platforms will measure the activity, reach, engagement (reads; comments shares, likes, visits) and follower rates on various platforms including the website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. With increased efforts on online communications and campaigns GL seeks to reach 15000 followers on both Facebook and Twitter and 5000 followers on its recently created Instagram account.
- Measure the number of videos produced in support of the projects and the video views garnered through this material.



4 INVESTING IN PEOPLE



Goal: Engaged, capable staff, partners, and associates with the motivation, facilities and tools to deliver high quality work.

Specific objectives

- Strengthen and develop an efficient, effective results-based human resource function for a dynamic, agile and responsive organisation that has capacity to meet requirements of all its stakeholders, donors, sub-grantees and partners.
- Prioritise the wellbeing of Gender Links staff and create a healthy, safe and

productive working space for staff members, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Provide effective management oversight and efficient support services from the South Africa Head Quarters, to allow for the optimal use of human resources for greater impact of GL' work across the SADC region.
- Maintain an organisation that has the right people in the right positions with the right skills to accomplish the goals of the organisation. Major staffing focus will be given to new areas of growth such as SRHR and grant-making.

What we have achieved

GL STAFF PROFILE: SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS 2020

No. of staff	Total 46			
Sex	M	F		
	17	29		
No of staff per unit	GL HQ	Country Offices & GLC		
	11	35		
Qualifications	Diploma	BA	BA in progress	Masters
	7	15	3	10
Length of service	Average	More than six years	Three years to six years	Less than three years
	6 years	19	8	8

- **A diverse, well qualified and stable staff:** GL has a total staff compliment of 46 staff in 2020; 14 deployed at Head Office in Johannesburg; 21 in the nine country offices and 11 hospitality staff at the GL Cottages and Conferencing, which forms part of GL's sustainability efforts. Over the past 5 years, the average staff compliment for GL has been 40 staff members and this will probably continue to be the reasonable and realistic target going into the 2021-2025 period.

On average, GL staff have served for six years. This is three times the global Length

of Service (LOS) of three years. Nineteen staff have served over six years; 8 staff three to six years, and only 8 staff less than three years. This shows great stability and resilience despite the funding shocks that GL has experienced in recent years. It also reflects a high level of staff loyalty. All GL professional staff (excluding GL Cottages staff) have tertiary qualifications. The highest number (15) have Bachelors' degrees; three are studying for Bachelors' degrees; ten (or close to one third of professional staff have Masters' degrees. Seven (less than a third) have diplomas. These figures reflect a highly skilled staff fit for the high

performance environment demanded by GL and its funders. GL therefore has no doubt that with this kind of stable and suitable staff profile; it is ready to take on the future.

• **Investment in robust HR Systems:**

Gender Links has successfully invested in a state of the art online automated, Human Resources Management system which tracks the full life cycle of a staff member from the time of job application, recruitment and selection, performance management, absence management (leave) time use, all the way to staff exit resignation.



• **Successful implementation of Covid-19 Protocols and vaccine roll out:**

GL won accolades as one of the first organisations to return to work after the first wave of the pandemic mid-2020. GL adopted a COVID-19

policy soon after lockdown, training of its staff members on all the safety protocols and procedures in line with the World Health Organisation recommendations. Measures taken include:

- Risk assessment and identification of staff members with comorbidities
- Flexible work from home policy to assist high risk staff
- Purchase of Personal Protective Equipment for staff: GL procured face masks, face shields and sanitisers for the offices
- Daily testing of temperatures for staff and visitors.
- Minimising contact among employees, clients, and customers by replacing face-to-face meetings with virtual communications e.g. conference calls, Skype, Zoom.
- Minimizing the number of employees on site at any given time e.g. rotation or shift work.
- Discontinuing nonessential local and international travel.

- Providing employees with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviours (e.g. cough etiquette and care of PPE).
- Public display of posters and signage on Covid-19 protocols in the office.

At the time of writing about one third of GL staff had been infected by COVID-19 but with no fatalities. None contracted the virus at the work place. 80% of GL staff have been vaccinated, a high percentage considering that less than 10% of SADC citizens have had this opportunity. This is testament to the high level of awareness in the organisation.

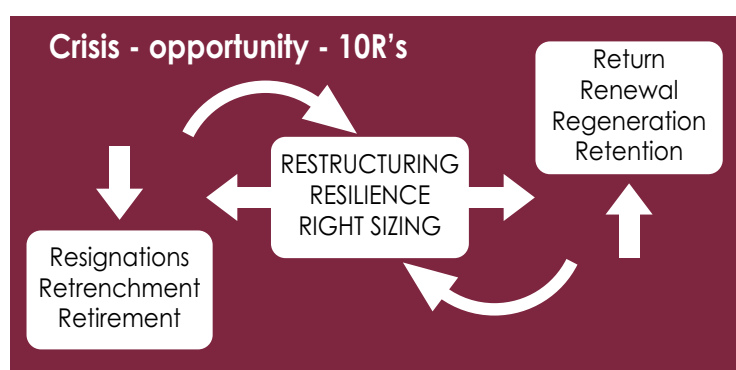
What we have learnt

- **Succession planning:** After a few false starts at seeking a successor for the CEO, GL studied two models of succession - one in which the founding CEO makes a clean break (the graceful exit) and another in which the CEO continues to support sustainability of the organisation (the mutual success model). The Board opted for the latter, given the precarious funding environment and this has been the winning formula.
- **Flexible contracts:** In 2021, GL reduced the full time staff complement, placing some staff members on Service Level Agreements in which they are paid according to time and deliverables. This has reduced the burden of full time staff costs, while increasing the level of skill and productivity.
- **Decentralisation of the human resources function:** Over the period during which Gender Links has not had a full

time HR Manager, we have learnt that this function can be devolved to frontline management in each unit/ country office.

- **Mental well-being:** Our HR consultant has focused on mental well-being especially during the time of COVID-19. She arranged a series of online seminars with experts that contributed greatly to staff morale during lockdown.
- **Work from Home:** The pandemic has taught us that with good systems, it is possible for staff members to work from anywhere in the world and still deliver efficiently as long as there are checks and balances in place with clear deliverables.

What we will do 2021-2025



- Maintaining a “revolving door” in which staff that resign, retire or are retrenched are replaced by new or returning staff that help to regenerate the organisation as it restructures, right sizes, and displays resilience in the face of many challenges.
- **Strategic recruitment:** As Gender Links continues to break new ground in grant-making space and SRHR, recruitment will be done very intentionally and targeted at acquiring fresh skills and adequate capacity for excellent service.
- **Maintain a committed team of Consultants and Associates:** Gender Links' success and service delivery depends on having a competent and committed workforce capable of delivering

the organisations' mission and responding effectively to donors, sub-grantees, partners and all its stakeholders. A combination of core staff, Associates and external services providers with expertise knowledge will be used to ensure efficient and excellent delivery.

- **Re-enforcement of organisational policies to stakeholders:** Future focus will be on sharing our Gender Links HR, Integrity and Finance policies with sub-grantees, partners, service providers and all beneficiaries of Gender Links. This is to ensure compliance by GL and strengthen the sector overall.
- **Vaccination roll-out campaign strategy to be shared with partners:** As Gender Links, over the next few years we will make it part of our corporate social responsibility to ensure that we spread the vaccination gospel to all our sub-grantees, partner's service providers and all who work within our spheres.
- **Strengthening of Human Resources practices and staff wellness:** Gender Links will further strengthen Human Resources practices by bringing in an HR Consultant who will conduct frequent training and offer wellness sessions to staff.

How will we measure change

- No of staff; at HQ and in country offices and levels of qualification. With a likely reduction in the number of field offices due to funding challenges, the number of staff may in fact reduce.
- Proportion of staff to associates becomes an even more important indicator than before, as associates generally provide a high level of skills.
- Average length of service.
- Average age of staff
- Proportion of HR costs to the budget overall.
- Proportion of support to programme staff.
- Proportion of budget spent on capacity building
- Proportion of staff fully vaccinated.

5 GOOD GOVERNANCE

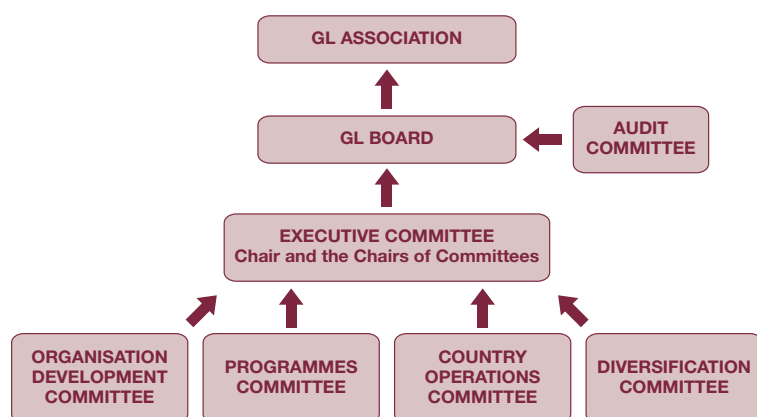


Goal: Strong, continuously updated policies and practices overseen by a diverse, compliant and accountable governance structure.

Specific objectives

- A strong, well respected, transparent and accountable governance structure that strikes a good balance between retention and renewal, providing regional diversity, expertise and strategic guidance.
- A strong, continuously updated suite of integrity policies that is well understood by staff and partners, applied and refined as appropriate.
- Compliance with statutory requirements by GL offices across the SADC region.

What we have achieved



- **GL has a well-established two tier governance structure:** The Association is GL's highest decision-making body. The Association appoints Board for three year terms of three years each (renewable based on performance). The Association monitors the performance of Board Members and reviews all Board decisions. These may be sent back for amendments. The Board appoints an Executive Committee

comprising chairs of committees which meet biennially ahead of board meetings in May and October. These committees are: the organisational development committee; programmes committee; country operations and diversification committee. The audit committee is an independent structure that reports to the Board. In 2021, three Board members retired; two joined the Association which provides an avenue for founding Board Members to continue to share their expertise and oversight. GL has three new Board Members from Eswatini, Mauritius and Madagascar. The twelve-member Board is drawn from 8 SADC countries with two Board Members from the UK.

- **Setting up an Integrity and Compliance Unit:** in late 2019, Gender Links set up an Integrity and Compliance function that monitors compliance.
- **Registration of an office in the UK:** In 2019 GL registered an office in the UK to assist in fund raising and representing the organisation overseas.
- **"A" rating by auditors on organisational risk and integrity:** GL takes pride in the fact that it has consistently received good reports from its major donors. In 2020, BDO Auditors awarded Gender Links an A-class evaluation report after carrying out the GL Organisational Risk and Integrity Assessment (ORIA). The GL Board reviews bi-annually the Risk Register and debates risk mitigating factors presented by management at every Board meeting. In 2021, Global Affairs Canada also issued an excellent evaluation of GL's systems, policies and procedures.
- **Absence of lawsuits over a period of 20 years:** Gender Links has been in existence for 20 years and there has not been a single lawsuit filed against the organisation in all of its country offices across the SADC region

• **Trademarking and Patenting of GL' name and Logo:** The GL board resolved in 2020 that the organisation's name, logo and intellectual property be patented for protection and reserving copyrights. This process is at advanced stages and being carried out by specialised patent lawyers in all the GL regional offices. The Gender Links name has already been reserved in Mozambique.

What we have learnt

- **Application of GL Memorandum of Incorporation statutes (MOI):** GL has encountered a few incidents suggesting that its original MOI needs to be updated to clarify procedures for the appointment of Board Members by the Association to ensure that this process is more rigorous.
- **Registration of satellite offices:** options vary from country to country from creating branch offices to independent registration. GL's unfortunate experience in Mozambique where a break-away board defied the authority of the regional board and had to be expelled has led to greater caution in the registration of new offices. The GL

Board nonetheless continues to explore potential off shoots, especially internationally.

What we will do 2021-2025

- Ensure strong corporate governance, checks and balances.
- Review and standardise all policies.
- Create a compliance register that is monitored monthly, quarterly and annually at all the appropriate levels.
- Offer online training for staff in all organisational policies.
- Ensure that sub-grantees and partners are fully oriented on all GL Governance and Institutional policies and where appropriate that these are incorporated into stakeholder's contracts.
- Training and capacity building of Board members as part of Board orientation especially in countries where Board members assist with financial oversight. The training will clearly outline responsibilities and roles of Board members.

How we will measure change

- Governance scores on the Gender Links Organisational scorecard significantly improved from 75% in 2015 to 84% in 2020. The target for 2025 is 90%.



6 SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & VALUE FOR MONEY



Specific Objectives

To ensure:

- Financial sustainability and budgetary control.
- Revise accounting Policies and Procedures in line with the South African Companies Act provisions on achieving sustainable compliance and synchronising donor reporting requirements and institutional auditing guidelines.
- Produce reliable and timely financial management information.
- State of the art systems that facilitate multi-country and currency operations.
- Unqualified annual audits completed within the first three months of the year.
- Support and capacity building for partners and grantees.

What we have achieved

- Regular updating of IT and financial policies, including the recent review of exchange rate policies, to ensure that these are in line with donor requirements.
- A strong underlying IT infrastructure with high internet speeds, regularly maintained.
- Move to Sage Evolution with country offices set up as branches. Grantees have independent licences to ensure that all grant reporting is on one platform.
- Eight sets of key Sage Intelligence Reporting (SIR) Financial reports presented monthly which included; (1) Chart 1 Summary, (2) Donor Reports for all current donors, (3) Country Reports, (4) Institutional Reports - all GL

project reports, (5) HR Report, (6) Operations Report, (7) GLC Report, (8) GLS Report.

- Unqualified audit opinions for institutional audits as well as Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) for our donor audits.
- All financial document storage is now digitised, making it possible for most oversight to be done virtually.
- Successful addressing of two difficult cases with WVL grantees: one suspected fraud, another non-performance.

What we have learned

- Systems are constantly being updated; GL must remain abreast of these developments.
- Strong finance management is at the heart of credible management.
- Financial management challenges provide the opportunity to revise policies, procedures and systems to ensure more flexible approaches that address inconsistencies and weaknesses in the entire system.

What we will do in 2021-2025

- Complete move to Sage Intacct which is designed for NGOs. Ensure maximum adherence to the policies and procedures that will be reviewed on an annual basis during the strategy period.
- Gender Links will remain accountable to the donor agencies and individuals who support its work.
- Completion of audit reports three months following the end of financial year, no management letter points and audit costs maintained year on year during the strategy period.
- Procurement policies and procedures strictly adhered to ensure optimisation of value for money (VFM) as well integration of donor procurement guidelines and thresholds in order to eliminate instances noncompliance with donor regulations relating to procurement rules and regulations.

- Indirect costs will be contained within 7-12% of direct costs.
- Statutory compliance in all offices.
- Annual registration compliance returns submitted accordingly as per the statutory controlling bodies, such as; the South African Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) and other Company registration regulatory authorities in other GL country offices.
- Firm checks are mandatory, for minimizing such illicitness and preventing abuse of resources. These will be addressed with complete financial planning, coordination and control. Currency risks will be managed through planned funds movement between stronger currency accounts and the functional currencies as well as the allocation to country projects for short term liquidity where necessary and adoption of appropriate exchange rate policies to eliminate exchange rate losses.

How we will measure change

- Gender Links will conduct organisational scorecard survey to measure

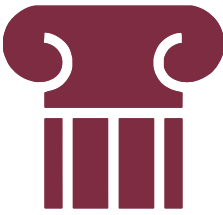





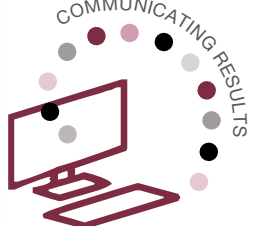



the impact of systems improvement, financial policies and procedures on the organisational long term planning, operational efficiency and allocation of resources across the programmes and units of the organisation.

- From annual financial statements, Gender Links will measure percentage change in the funding on an annual basis to ensure that the funding target is contributed to gradually throughout the strategy period.
- Evidence of new Grants Management Contracts annually will indicate the growth of sub-granting towards the 2025 target.
- Gender Links will always do quote comparisons in order to ascertain and measure value for money in each and every instance of procurement of goods and services and report on such on a monthly basis.
- Management decisions will be tested against the financial information provided to ensure all financial decisions can be attributed to financial information provided during financial reporting and updates.



ANNEX A: GL SWOT ANALYSIS 2021-2025

STRATEGIC PILLARS	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	GOALS
OUR WORK			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GL has clearly defined partners and target groups at local, national and regional level. GL is a sought-after partner because of the value it places on partnerships, donor relations and research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GL staff are not always able to attend partner events as there are competing priorities. Not all partners feel ownership. Sub-granting (e.g. with WVU) and downstream contracting (e.g. with the Alliances) introduces a new power dynamic. GL has to manage being a partner and being accountable for funds. 	<p>A strong Southern African women's movement advocating for #VoiceandChoice and holding government to account for global, African and regional commitments.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the last three years the Alliance has forged a strong, inclusive SRHR cluster including LGBTIQ organisations. Campaigns are taking shape and having an impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considerable push back on sensitive topics such as safe abortion, LGBTIQ, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, child marriages. Increase in GBV under COVID-19 lockdowns. 	<p>Women and girls exercise #VoiceandChoice over their bodies through the full attainment of Sexual and Reproductive Health for all.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong media monitoring base with the Gender and Media Progress Study and links to media training institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The changing media landscape as a result of digital technologies leaves little scope for engagement at policy level. Most traditional media houses are in survival mode; the more so during the pandemic. 	<p>Gender equality in and through the media gives women equal #Voice as citizens.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong research base especially on gender and local government with practical links between programmes, especially the Local Action for Gender Justice and Media Programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in laws and electoral systems clearly needed to bring about change take time. The initial broad brush approach has stretched GL leading to the need for greater consolidation. Need for much greater awareness among activists. 	<p>Women and girls exercise equal and effective #VoiceandChoice in the public sphere through their participation in politics and decision-making.</p>
	<p>The most extensive regional programme on gender responsive local governance ever undertaken by an NGO that has grown incrementally with increased local ownership through the "hub" and "spoke" programmes</p>	<p>The initial broad brush approach has stretched GL leading to the need for greater consolidation.</p>	<p>Gender responsive local government enhances #VoiceandChoice for women, girls and youth in marginal communities.</p>
	<p>COVID-19 has given added urgency to gender and climate justice debates. This is a cross cutting theme at GL - in the work of the Alliance, local government and media. GL has a green office policy and used green travel savings during lockdown to switch to solar.</p>	<p>Need for much greater awareness among activists.</p>	<p>The destruction of the planet is halted through innovative links between gender and climate justice in our work and practice.</p>

STRATEGIC PILLARS	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	GOALS
			
HOW WE WORK			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GL has established a dedicated Sustainability Hub with a Fund Raising and Grant Making Units; as well as two income Generating Units - GL Services and GL Cottages. GL invests any non-tied funds in the GL Future Fund, with a target of \$million by 2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for women's rights is increasingly constrained especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. On granting funds limited relative to the need. 	<p>A strong and sustainable organisation that includes a fund raising unit; grant making and income generating capabilities.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting and documentation is taken seriously at GL. Good system in place. Very strong with use of technology. GL reports to donors timeously and according to prescribed requirements. GL has a commendable culture of knowledge management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data quality and oversight need improving. Staff and partners do not always understand the surveys being undertaken nor engage with the results. 	<p>A robust and transparent system and processes for planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning, innovation, knowledge management and sharing.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GL use of social media and modern technologies and information sharing platforms. GL has strong links with mainstream and local media. The use of ICT platforms like community of practice & social media promotes GL visibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of the work remains invisible as we are not telling our stories effectively. 	<p>Making IT work for gender justice through "fit for purpose" use of digital technologies to give visibility to the work of partners and beneficiaries.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBOs given space to participate in GL activities. GL support and engage with partners and the commit to build stronger relationships, GL collaborate with local authorities, associations and ministries. GFP and gender committees in councils which ensure the implementation of gender work. GL has developed very good HR policies that are universally applicable and country specific. HR policy well documented and clear. GL has invested a lot in external expertise to ensure it creates a good working environment, complies with labor regulations and develops a professional staff that is well rounded. A lot of investment is put into staff development and affirmation. Smooth leadership succession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of some rural local authorities. Not enough technical personnel COVID-19 has kept us apart - need to get together more. The need to improve work-life balance; these lines are even more blurred in lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic and virtual operations have compromised some HR activities especially those geared at wellness. 	<p>Engaged, capable staff, partners, and associates with the motivation, facilities and tools to deliver high quality work.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong culture of fairness, integrity and non-discrimination. Establishment of the Integrity and Compliance unit. GL stays relevant to the emerging issues. Governance structures function well; virtual platforms used effectively for convening the Board and Association for critical discussions and timely decisions as the need arises outside of regular meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to be more vigilant about the MOI - terms ending, procedures etc Need for clarity on the role of country board members. 	<p>Strong, continuously updated policies and practices overseen by a diverse, compliant and accountable governance structure.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound financial policies and systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for greater adherence to routines. Procurement practice must improve. Audit must be completed within the first three months of the year so as not to interfere with normal processes through the year. 	<p>Strong and compliant financial policies, systems and practices that result in zero tolerance for corruption as well as Value for Money.</p>

ANNEX B:

	2010	2015	2020	Variance 2020-2021
Legitimacy for its work	89%	80%	91%	2%
Vision, Mission, and Core Values	83%	80%	91%	8%
Formulation of Relevant Strategies	76%	83%	86%	10%
Strategic Positioning Average	83%	81%	90%	7%
Governance Structures	80%	71%	84%	4%
Application of democratic rule	82%	75%	84%	2%
Governance Average	81%	75%	84%	3%
Planning for implementation	79%	81%	89%	10%
Working methods	76%	75%	84%	8%
Reporting and documentation	92%	85%	94%	2%
Follow up	78%	84%	89%	11%
Partnerships and Target Groups	77%	78%	87%	10%
Programme of Action Average	80%	81%	88%	8%
Physical resources	81%	81%	90%	9%
Electronic resources	85%	83%	89%	4%
Administrative and financial routines	85%	83%	87%	2%
Human resources	76%	79%	82%	6%
Institutional Strengthening Average	82%	82%	84%	2%
Financial policies and procedures	89%	83%	85%	-4%
Long term financial planning and resource mobilisation	88%	87%	93%	5%
Sustainability Average	89%	85%	92%	3%
M&E Average	83%	83%	88%	5%
Total Average	83%	82%	87%	4%

VISION

Gender Links (GL) is committed to an inclusive, equal and just society in which women and girls in all their diversities exercise their voice and choice in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and related regional, continental and global instruments.

MISSION

GL achieves its vision through a people-centred approach guided by the **SADC Protocol on Gender and Development** that is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, Beijing Plus Twenty and Africa Agenda 2063.

Working with partners at local, national, Southern African and international level, GL realises its vision through:

- Three programme areas: Policy and Movement Building (which coordinates the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development); Communications for Social Change (including traditional, mainstream and new media); and Local Action for Gender Justice (the Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government).
- Four cross cutting themes: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) including Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); women's equal and effective political participation; economic and climate justice.
- Results for Change achieved through robust planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning, knowledge management, sharing and innovation.
- Institutional effectiveness through good governance; care for staff, associates, and partners; compliance with integrity policies; transparent financial management, zero tolerance for corruption, value for money and use of digital tools.
- A sustainability strategy that includes a dedicated Sustainability Hub.

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