

Gender Links Evaluation Report

1 Introduction

The following feedback report covers our primary research with Gender Links (GL) as part of the 2014 PPA evaluation. This feedback report will not be included as a case study or annex in the 2014 PPA Evaluation Report. Instead, relevant examples and learning from this research will be referred to and incorporated into the overall findings of the fund-level evaluation report.

We invite GL to respond to points of accuracy and interpretation from this feedback report as part of good validation practice and our commitment to shared learning and collaborative working.

1.1 Background to the 2014 PPA Evaluation

The 2014 PPA evaluation examines all 41 PPA holders and £360 million of funding over the three years of this round of PPA funding (2011 through April 2014). The 2014 PPA evaluation is a fund-level evaluation that seeks to identify and explain the effects of the PPA portfolio and the added value of strategic funding. This means that the evaluation is focused on identifying and analysing patterns of effects and changes across the fund. This also means that agencies are not being such subject to a performance assessment or individual assessment.

The focus of the 2014 PPA evaluation is to better understand the effects and impacts achieved from the current round of PPA funding, particularly understanding how the flexible nature of PPA funding has influenced the type of investment decisions that organisations take and the extent to which these investment decisions are of strategic importance for the organisation, its countries of operation, the sector(s) in which it works, and ultimately how these investment decisions achieve results for intended beneficiaries.

A revised Theory of Change to frame the PPA evaluation was developed in close cooperation with PPA agencies throughout the autumn of 2013 which then informing a revised Evaluation Strategy and Evaluation Framework that was circulated in May 2014. This Evaluation Strategy builds on our lessons learned from the both the 2012 PPA Mid Term Evaluation and the 2013 GPAF Mid Term Evaluation, particularly the additional learning that comes from engaging directly with agencies in an evaluation process that is clear, highly consultative and proportionate.

1.2 Rationale for conducting primary research with a sample of PPA agencies

Our rationale for conducting primary research with a sample of agencies was driven both by the structure of the Evaluation Framework and by our experience of how to work more effectively with agencies. The 2014 Evaluation Framework Evaluation is designed to track how the investment decisions that agencies have chosen to make and the flexibility to make those decisions adds value to the work of agencies compared to other types of funding. Moreover, the opportunity to meet with agencies enables us to better understand how and why they work the way that they do; how internal and external factors affected strategic decisions processes; and why some decisions were prioritised over others, information that is often not present in the agencies' annual reports. Understanding these variables allow us to trace how certain investment decisions have resulted in changes to capacity and results. The sample of 12 agencies was agreed with DFID in December 2013. This sample constitutes 28% of the total number of PPA holders and has been purposively selected to be broadly representative of the range of PPA holders. For more information on the research sample, please see Annex D of the Evaluation Strategy.

1.3 Organisation profile of Gender Links

Gender Links (GL) is a Southern African NGO promoting gender equality and justice, established in 2001 and headquartered in Johannesburg. The organisation has grown from 3 to 60 staff members since 2001 and has established country offices in Mauritius, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. GL coordinates the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance that brings together national coordinating networks, regional theme clusters and interest groups to lobby for the implementation of the Protocol. GL leads advocacy campaigns across its three core programme areas – media, governance and justice, supports

its advocacy work through research and works closely with local governments to mainstream gender across institutions. Since 2011, GL has been receiving a PPA grant worth £624,867, representing 15% of its Annual Income (£4,177,858) and all of the organisation's Unrestricted Funds in 2013/14. GL is a "Tier 1" organisation (e.g. primarily work through direct delivery to beneficiaries). Its Annual Income places the organisation as part of the "medium" PPA agencies in 2013-2014 with a medium dependency on DFID's PPA funding (above 10% of Annual Income). Additionally, GL is a unique case study in itself, as it is the first southern-based agency to receive PPA funding across a portfolio of UK-based PPA agencies.

2 Research approach

2.1 Consultation and research process

Our research agenda was tailored to primarily meet the needs of the overall Fund-level evaluation, however we attempted to incorporate the learning priorities of GL to the extent that was possible. At all times we attempted to balance the needs of our research against placing an unfair research burden on GL. A timeline of the consultation and research process is summarised below.

We first held a first phone meeting with GL on 3rd April, 2014. This meeting was used to clarify different elements of the proposed research process, establish lines of communication and start outlining a time table for the development of research plans.

Following the review and analysis of the entire portfolio of 2014 PPA Annual Reports in June, July and August 2014, we then shared a list of indicative key points of interest for further research with GL on September 5th. The key points of interest were then reviewed with GL on September 15th before being refined and finalised with GL on September 28th.

The primary research schedule was agreed in collaboration with GL. The key primary research period spanned six days (first half of December 2014). Based on our assessment of where many of the investments and changes to capacity took place, we agreed that it would make sense to focus our resources on changes at the Headquarters level (South Africa) and at two of GL's country offices (Mauritius and Botswana).

The key primary research visits, conducted by Juliet Walton and Raphaëlle Bisiaux, were as follows:

- December 1st – High-level meeting with GL (Johannesburg, South Africa)
- December 1st to December 3rd – Headquarters interviews at GL (Johannesburg, South Africa)
- December 4th to December 6th – Country offices interviews (Mauritius and Botswana)
- January 26th – Feedback presentation with GL's staff (Skype from London)

2.2 Data sources

Multiple data sources informed our primary research phase with GL. These included interviews and group discussions with individuals at GL, analysis of previous PPA Annual Reports, logframes, the Independent Progress Reviews from the 2012 Mid Term Evaluation and review of primary and secondary sources materials that were shared by GL. A full list of people consulted and materials reviewed is included in the Annexes in Section 5.

2.3 Strengths and limitations of approach

We found that our research approach satisfied our learning objectives for GL. A key strength of the approach was the collaborative way of working with GL. The organisation fully cooperated with the research process by granting us open access to personnel and data. Our iterative approach to gathering qualitative data also allowed us to follow emerging lines of inquiry as our understanding of the organisation and effects of PPA funding improved.

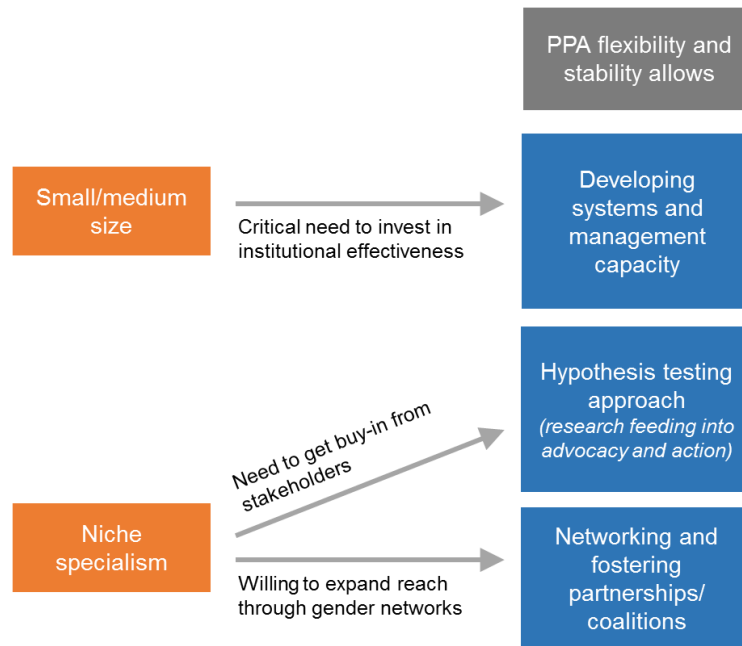
Our research approach did have some limitations. We needed to divide our research time in order to understand the dynamics of two different country offices. Additionally, due to the subjective nature of qualitative data, it was also sometimes difficult to validate or test reliability of data. The data collected from the research visits was, however, used in conjunction with other sources of information, in particular the Annual Report.

3 Findings

3.1 Summary of organisational model

GL is among the agencies that have used the PPA in a distinctive way, which we will term the “Outreach Model”. This model, by definition, is an attempt to summarise the strategic direction of the organisation, and hence key factors that influenced the decision about the use of PPA funds, rather than necessarily the present state of the organisations.

Diagram 1: The ‘Outreach Model’



The essential features of the model are:

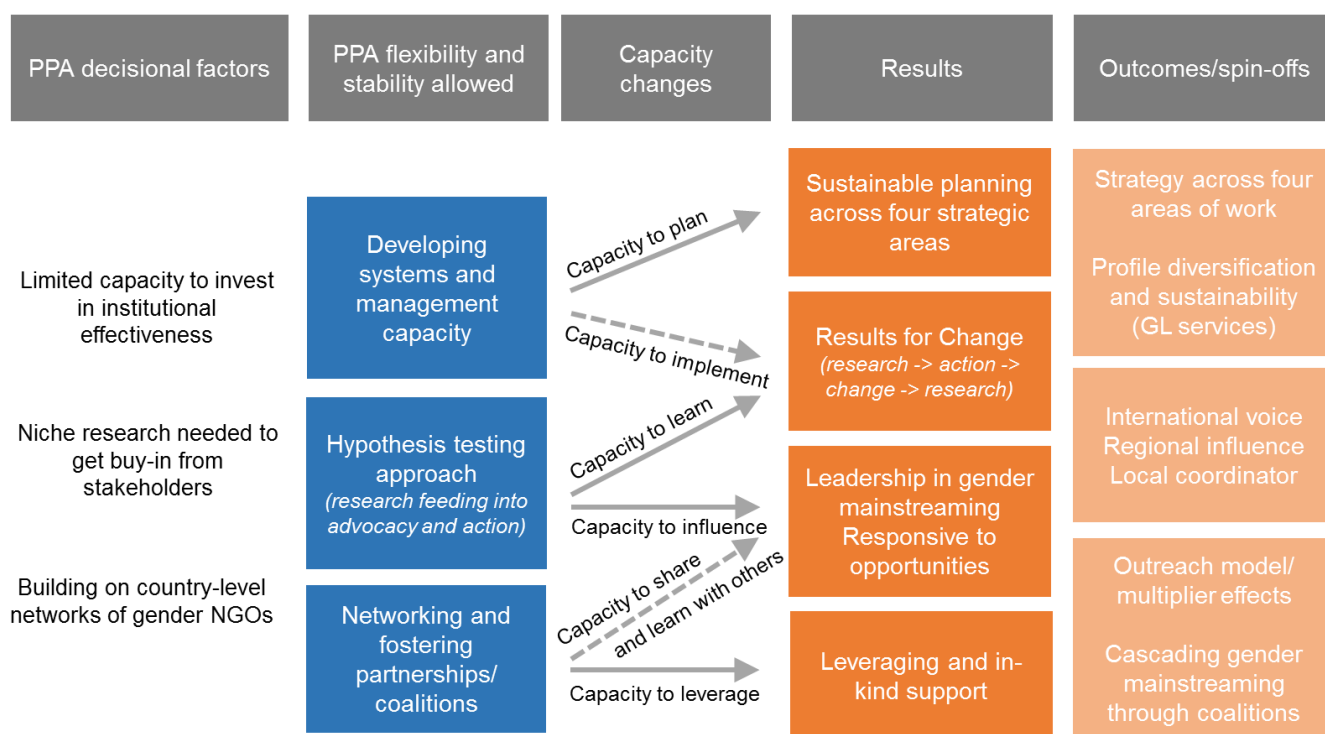
- Small/ medium size organisations such as GL are willing to establish their presence as sector leaders in their distinctive niche in the sector;
- Since they cannot compete in terms of scale of operations with other organisations, they are driven to focus on ‘reaching out’ to a range of different stakeholders and beneficiaries to make their work noticeable in a number of networks and platforms, in order to ensure the securing of new funds and potentially influence larger organisations;
- To develop a comparative advantage and make their voice heard by the largest number of beneficiaries and actors in the sector, they are driven to invest in niche research that can directly feed into advocacy and action. Through an ‘hypothesis testing approach’, they develop a niche specialism in an area of interest and keep their focus on small-scale research projects that can have a large impact on a range of governmental and non-governmental actors;
- In turn, to support this approach, they respond to a critical need to invest in developing their internal systems and enhance their management capacity. This is achieved through the strategic development of solutions that aims at reducing the burden of administrative and management activities, in proportion to the size of the organisation;
- Additionally, the enhanced management capacity allows a more sustainable planning of activities and supports the outreach model by securing multiplier effects through networking approaches and investment in efficient media and dissemination solutions;
- The flexibility and the stability of the PPA have been critical in allowing these changes to happen.

3.2 Strategic decisions

As indicated on [Diagram 1](#), GL was strongly driven in its investment decisions by the willingness to establish its presence among a range of actors that can help them advocate for and exemplify the GL approach to gender mainstreaming. In developing a strategic plan to conduct research-based advocacy, GL aimed to expand its role as a local coordinator, with a regional influence and a presence in international debates.

As shown in [Diagram 2](#), realising this objective required flexibility and responsiveness in the use of GL funds.

Diagram 2: Causal chain from Strategic Decisions to Results for Gender Links



We found during the in-depth research that GL's decision around the use of PPA funds was driven by the willingness to reach out to a range of different stakeholders and beneficiaries and to make their work noticeable in a number of networks and platforms (being a local coordinator, with a regional influence and an international voice¹). As a research-based advocacy organisation, GL works with the assumption that advocacy should be supported by recent, specific and rigorous evidence, as a persuasion tool for governments and media stakeholders to commit to gender mainstreaming.

Following the elevation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development into a Protocol (28 targets to be achieved by 2015), GL made a strategic decision in terms of shifting its focus on the implementation of the Protocol. As part of GL's PPA decisional process, the organisation decided to allocate PPA funds to the development of its systems and management capacity, the development of its research capacity to test specific hypothesis that could enhance gender equality and the establishment of GL as a coalition leader that can rely on partners' capacity to implement the Protocol in the SADC region.

#1 Need to invest in institutional effectiveness – to ensure sustainability. GL's PPA investment decisions included the earmarking of approximately half of PPA funds for institutional effectiveness,

As this is the area that often suffers in project-only funding and that yet is key to sustainability.

GL PPA Annual Report (2013-14)

As part of its decision to reach out to a range of different stakeholders, GL deemed that ensuring the sustainability of its work would benefit from investments in planning and management tools that would subsequently enable the organisation to be considered as a 'reliable' actor in the sector. Income diversification was a key result from GL

¹ As per GL's vision of their organisation.

PPA investment in planning across the organisation's four strategic areas: by firstly ascertaining funds from other sources (including in-kind support and partner contributions), GL could then allocate PPA funds as required between its four programme areas, ensuring they delivered GL's strategy.

The PPA is our budget glue. Here is what we want to do, here is the budget and here are the gaps. We simply fill them with PPA funds.

GL CEO interview, December 2014

#2 Strategic research investments to get buy-in from stakeholders – to advocate more effectively. In terms of its strategic positioning, GL decided to use the PPA funding to ascertain its capacity to seize opportunities to work with/ influence governments and its ability to be at the forefront of new thinking in gender mainstreaming. Using a flexible approach to the use of PPA funds, GL was motivated to break new grounds as part of its holistic approach to gender (e.g. Gender and Entrepreneurship work, Gender and Climate Change work²).

#3 Mainstreaming of media and investment in coalition work – to disseminate and encourage uptake of gender mainstreaming best practices. Finally, using the media as a cross-cutting tool in its work, GL decided to use the PPA to fund (1) its media work, a hard to fund area although a key area to enhance women's voice and (2) its media usages, for instance to publicize findings from research and to create momentums on online platforms (Google Hangout sessions, Online forums, Gender Links News Service, videos, etc.).

3.3 Summary of the use of PPA funds

The decisions about the use of the PPA funding were driven by several factors:

- A diagnosis that GL needed to invest in solutions for planning and management systems to accompany its growth; and
- The interpretation of the PPA as a one-off opportunity to access flexible funding that should be invested with a view of diversifying income for sustainability and establishing greater visibility across governments in the SADC region and among international organisations/ donors.

Major capacity investments included:

- Investment in new staff (finance officers, country managers, media officers), to support country offices and develop GL media work;
- Investment in financial system upgrade, to improve accounting and reporting across the headquarters and the country offices;
- Investment in planning (time and human resources), to design a five year strategy across GL's four areas of work;
- Investment in new country offices (five new countries including a Lusophone office in Mozambique), to expand GL presence and the implementation of the Protocol across the SADC region;
- Investment in the recruitment of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) manager, to strengthen M&E systems and evaluating the impact of PPA funding;
- Investment in building M&E systems (e.g. online surveys, media self-monitoring tool) and participation in SALP learning group;
- Investment in research capacity (Gender-based violence research, trainings³ and partnership work with Diakonia⁴), to ascertain the quality of GL's research outputs and enhance buy-in from local and national governments;
- Investment in capacity building (workshops, trainings and Annual Summit), to train local officials on gender mainstreaming and enable cross-learning among governments and coalition partners (Annual Summit); and

² GL is currently leading a campaign for an addendum to the Protocol on Gender and Climate Change, a cross cutting theme in all its programmes.

³ Bond courses on International Aid Transparency (IATI) and Value for Money (VFM).

⁴ Working with Swedish partner Diakonia to strengthen skills on climate change.

- Investment in media solutions (online platforms, tracking of publication mentions and advocacy results), to support the dissemination of GL work and assess GL's outreach.

Examples from GL's usage of PPA funding that was not previously clear in Annex G of the 2014 Annual Report includes:

- Investment in Alliance work (meetings, coordination work, trainings), to enhance the capacity of coalition partners and secure in-country support for GL's activities.

A detailed breakdown of GL's use of PPA funds is presented in [Figure 3](#).

Figure 3: GL PPA investments in 2013-2014

Area of investment	Type of investment	Examples	PPA amount	% PPA funds
Programme	Alliance	Support on costing, Regional Summit	£123,295	20%
	Media	Workshops (costs including facilitators), Commissioned work, Advertising, Knowledge, Communication	£126,807	20%
	Justice	Workshops, Trainings	£50,590	8%
	Governance	Establishment of Centre of Excellence	£11,415	2%
Institutional effectiveness	Salaries	M&E officer, media officers	£162,354	26%
	Operations and Capital	Administration, Finance system upgrade, Planning meetings	£101,723	16%
	Capacity Building	-	£20,736	3%
	Website	Website upgrade	£14,677	2%
	M&E	-	£10,840	2%
Learning/ Research ⁵	Knowledge	Research, Action planning trainings	£2,430	1%

Sources: GL Matrix of PPA funding allocation (2013-14) and GL PPA Annual Report (2013-14)

The results of these investments were:

- Improved efficiency in terms of financial management and donor reporting;
- Enhanced understanding of M&E and VfM, integrated as part of GL strategic framework 'Results for Change' and leading to evidence-based advocacy;
- Improved ability to respond to research and capacity building opportunities, such as a request from Botswana to conduct the Violence Against Women baseline research or the opportunity to establish a peer learning initiative around costing with governments in the SADC region;

⁵ PPA investments in knowledge creation (Learning/ Research) seem to have been more consequent than the figure presented in the 'Knowledge' category. Most of the PPA investments in the 'Programme' category refer to investments in research. Due to the research nature of the advocacy work done by GL, it was not possible to disaggregate these figures further.

- Stronger message around GL work communicated to governments and partners as a result of strategic planning across its core programmes, resulting in synergy effects across programme areas such as Justice and Governance;
- Increased visibility of GL work through the Alliance and the Annual Summits;
- Improved capacity to track advocacy impacts through the use of media tools;
- Improved capacity to secure additional funds, such as resources allocated by councils for gender work, Netherlands government FLOW fund⁶ for Governance and Justice work, and selective consultancy work; and
- Increasing recognition of GL work through the use of its PPA-funded tools across the sector; raising GL's profile as an 'unmissable' leader in the SADC region and as an influential actor internationally.

GL is the over performing child in school that always does its homework ahead of everyone.

External partner interview, December 2014

3.4 Key internal and external factors that informed investment decisions

Internal factors

We found that the primary internal factors that informed the use of funding related to the need to ensure sustainability through income diversification, the need to refine the organisation's strategy to enhance the credibility of GL work and the need to invest in solutions for management and delivery systems to accompany GL's growth.

These internal factors all relate to the status of GL as an organisation with limited opportunities of receiving unrestricted funding. The decisions around the use of PPA funds were therefore mostly driven by the ability to invest in areas that are otherwise hard to fund with project-only funding.

External factors

The key external factors that drove PPA investment decisions were the desire to make 'footprints' – in South Africa, in the SADC region – and be heard of by international organisations and donors. These 'footprints' are shaped by the decision environment in which GL operates – multiple actors (government, media, civil society) and opportunities arising rather unpredictably (joint working with governments) in relation to achieving the different goals under the Protocol by 2015.

Influence of the characteristics of PPA funding

The profile of GL as a first time PPA recipient also influenced GL's investment decisions in terms of earmarking the PPA to specific areas within the organisation. Being a first time PPA recipient with no other sources of unrestricted funding entailed a strong sense of accountability for every penny spent, a strong motive to invest in institutional effectiveness as no other funds were available for this type of investment, and the need to respond to DFID's influence in terms of investments in M&E and VfM systems.

3.5 Overview of the additionality of the PPA

Our discussions with GL staff revealed a number of additionality effects that are related to the PPA. Thanks to GL's choice to earmark and track the PPA funds within the organisation, the additionality aspects of PPA investments are clearly distinguishable from GL's other types of investments. A summary of what we found were the most notable additionality effects is presented below:

- PPA funding was used at a time where GL needed to make a step change in systems and capacity, which could not be solely funded by project-only funding;
- The predictability of PPA funding enabled GL to afford the time for reflection necessitated to design a five year strategy to shift its focus from campaign to implementation of the Protocol;
- GL could not have risked working with gender ministries on planning, costing, alignment and measuring Violence Against Women (VAW) without flexible funding such as the PPA. GL has had to move at the pace

⁶ ZAR 22 459 937, approximately GBP 1.3m, committed as part of FLOW 1 in 2014.

of governments, seizing opportunities where they arise (such as extending the VAW research to Botswana);

- Without PPA funding, GL would not have been able to register new country offices and *reach out to more countries* in the SADC region, in particular in Mozambique (Lusophone office), where GL's presence is deemed as politically strategic;
- The PPA also enabled GL to *invest in its research capacity* and the development of a series of gender tools that would have been difficult to fund otherwise, and that contributed to GL's income diversification generated through GL Services (consultancy and training);
- GL would have had difficulties funding its work in partnership with international agencies such as work with UN Women, UNESCO and the Global Alliance on Media and Gender which Gender Links chairs, that enabled them to *influence international processes* (development of gender indicators and targets);

GL's work on gender indicators has been influencing our work [UNESCO]. We've seen the successes they have had in South Africa. (...) GL also had a central role in helping us reaching communities using the media. (...) They are among our key global partners; they have shown leadership and have an impressive level of expertise and management capacity.

UNESCO interview, December 2014

- GL leveraged the PPA to *attract new funds*. In 2011/2012, GL allocated 36% of its PPA funds to the gender and local government programme. By 2013/2014, this has dropped to 2% as GL raised funds from other sources, notably the Netherlands government FLOW fund⁷ and partner leveraging (GL PPA Annual Report 2013-14).

3.6 Changes to capacity resulting from the PPA

We found that we were able largely able to understand how the capacity of GL changed from reviewing their Annual Report and that most remaining gaps were addressed through discussions with GL staff.

Key areas of capacity investments included:

- Improving operational and financial systems (update of GL Policies and Procedures, appointment of finance officers in-country, financial systems upgraded to automate accounting between GL headquarters and country offices);
- Aligning with the standards of bigger NGOs and donors requirements⁸;
- Developing M&E systems and tools and introducing VfM as part of the organisation's capacity (VfM concept introduced as a result of PPA funding; paradigm shift from M&E to Results for Change⁹, incorporating aspects of VfM and M&E under a single framework);
- Enhancing capacity to implement GL core strategy. PPA funding enhanced GL's leadership of the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance that campaigned for the adoption of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the PPA was used to support the implementation of the main components of the Protocol:
 - Investment in 300 Centres of Excellence (COE) for gender mainstreaming in local governments;
 - Investment in 100 Centres of Excellence (COE) in the media (mainstreaming gender in institutional practice and content through capacity building for media managers and journalists); and
 - Investment in Violence Against Women (VAW) baseline studies in six countries in the SADC region.

⁷ ZAR 22 459 937, approximately GBP 1.3m, committed as part of FLOW 1 in 2014.

⁸ GL participated in the Bond courses on International Aid Transparency (IATI) and Value for Money (VFM) which were cascaded in-house.

⁹ The organisation has conducted five in-house workshops for staff on the technical and conceptual issues relating to the GL Results for Change Framework. The workshops responded to the shift from a mechanical approach to monitoring and evaluation to a more substantive understanding of what constitutes evidence, how a counterfactual approach can be used, and how to incorporate aspects of social accountability. Refer to GL Results for Change Manual.

- Enhancing GL's capacity to conduct research-based advocacy by funding baseline studies that could then be used as advocacy tools with governments (e.g. PPA-funded Violence Against Women (VAW) baseline studies in six countries where GL operates);
- Improving capacity to respond to gender ministries as opportunities arise (e.g. request by the Botswana government to undertake the VAW Baseline Study); and
- Improving influence through the mainstreaming of media use across the organisation and capacity to track its audience/outreach through new systems/tools.

In terms of the changes in capacity resulting from the PPA, a key finding relates to the specificities of GL's coalition model¹⁰ and the capacity changes in GL country offices and GL partners. While the research did not intend to assess the capacity of GL partners, we found that:

- **Capacity changes for partners** – GL used the PPA funds to foster joint working with its partners, based on existing networks. GL explained during the in-depth research that they were not a grant-making institution and therefore did not use the PPA to directly fund partners' projects or capacity. What the PPA was invested in was rather the work at the Alliance level, and the activities such as workshops and trainings¹¹ were funded using the PPA in order to bring the Alliance members together. We understand that this may have implied building the capacity of partners in gender mainstreaming, but the question remains as to the sustainability of some of these partner organisations, some of which are small-scale organisations surviving on limited resources.
- **Capacity changes in GL country offices** – Regarding the capacity changes observed in GL country offices, we found that a number of these country offices were opened as part of PPA investments, but that they rely on very limited resources, both in terms of budget and staff (in both the cases of Mauritius and Botswana: one full-time Country Manager, one part-time accountant and one/two temporary interns). While these offices have a considerable influence on establishing GL's presence at the local level and delivering GL's approach in a range of different contexts – despite their limited size –, we commented on the potential risks that the precariousness of the country offices represent for the future of GL's in-country work as part of our suggestions to GL (see Suggestion section of this report). Interestingly, GL is also moving towards establishing project sites, for instance in Namibia and Swaziland, which are an effective alternative to establishing country offices.

3.7 Use of M&E tools

GL has developed and is using a number of M&E tools that the PPA has helped to fund. The key tools are discussed below:

- With the PPA, GL hired a **full-time M&E advisor** with the aim of using M&E as an internal function to expand the research capacity of GL. While M&E investments are usually donor-driven, GL chose to invest in M&E in order to develop its web-based tools and improve its ways of reporting advocacy and implementation successes. As part of its Results for Change approach (which includes GL VfM framework), GL now focuses on ensuring its results are attributable to its activities, and uses these results to inform its programming.
- The **SADC Gender Protocol Barometer** benchmarks progress by SADC countries towards achieving each of the 28 targets of the SADC Gender Protocol. The SADC Gender and Development Index introduced in 2011 is based on empirical data for 23 indicators. This is complemented by the Citizen Score Card which gives ordinary citizens an opportunity to hold their governments to account.
- The **Gender Score Card** is used to measure the performance of local governments where GL has established its Centres of Excellence to support gender mainstreaming. The Gender Score card also used in Centres of Excellence as part of the media project.

¹⁰ *We are a coalition, not a federation nor a confederation. We are partners, not funders. We do work with others because we have a common interest – a coalition of the willing ones.* GL CEO interview, December 2014

¹¹ It is important to note that in countries where GL does not have a country presence, DRC or Malawi for instance, the local Alliance members administer the funds themselves (instead of country offices), but GL has been reluctant to let the Alliance administer GL funds in this way due to the complexity of reporting the results of these activities to donors (DFID, EU).

- The **Gender based Violence Project** is a range of studies conducted in-country using indicators to measure gender violence. It is used by GL to review and strengthen governments' action plan towards gender mainstreaming and gender education.
- The **"I" Stories** is an annual project of GL, in collaboration with partnering organisations, to share first-hand accounts of women and men affected by gender based violence.
- GL also tracks its advocacy outreach using **Meltwater Media Monitoring**, a comprehensive media intelligence tool, designed to track, monitor and analyse the presence of an organisation and their work in global – primarily online – media.

3.8 Results of changes to capacity

Changes in the capacity of GL have led to a number of results (e.g. activities, outputs, outcomes) that can be traced to PPA funding. Examples of PPA-related results include:

- Stronger message around GL work communicated to governments and partners as a result of strategic planning across its core programmes; reputational effect as GL seen as breaking new grounds as part of its holistic approach to gender (e.g. Entrepreneurship work, Gender and Climate Change work¹² with Diakonia partner);
- Engagement from governments (gender mainstreaming work) thanks to GL's use of information collected/ research conducted as part of PPA-funded activities (VAW baseline studies, gender indicators and barometer research);
- GL's leveraging of funds from governments and institutional actors (e.g. request from Botswana to conduct a VAW baseline study); thanks to reputational effects, GL also secured in-kind support and was able to develop an in-house branch for consultancy work to diversify its income (GL Services);
- As part of different PPA-funded initiatives and in particular with local governments, GL secured funds from local councils to implement its gender mainstreaming approach. Country offices, as a result of their work with local councils, also managed to raise the profile of GL in the SADC region and have secured in-kind funding from a range of actors (e.g. Mauritius country office; in-kind support¹³ from the local councils, an advertising agency and the media),

With the PPA funds, we now have an office, we are able to conduct trainings and engage with the government and the media. We are seen as reliable and on top of our work.

Mauritius Country Manager, December 2014

- Dissemination and uptake of PPA-funded tools across the sector (e.g. Gender Score Card), increasing GL's profile as an 'unmissable' leader in the SADC region; dissemination in the UK as well through BOND and recognition of the quality of the work done by a Southern NGO; and
- Outreaching to a range of partners through the multiplier effects of the coalition model; ability to communicate and enhance uptake through a multi-front dissemination approach (trainings, ready-to-use tools).

3.9 Sustainability of key PPA investments

GL used the PPA strategically following the interpretation that the PPA was a one-off opportunity to invest in institutional effectiveness and increase income diversification to ensure GL's survival and sustainability as a rising actor in the SADC region. Since 2011, the organisation has been working with a share of its Annual Income that is PPA funded dropping from 18% to 15%. As such, after 3 years of receiving the PPA, GL is still dependent on this funding to the extent it was in 2011. However, the leveraging of new funds has been rather significant for this medium size organization, which suggests that GL is on a journey towards mitigating the risks of dependency.

¹² GL is currently leading a campaign for an addendum to the Protocol on Gender and Climate Change, a cross cutting theme in all its programmes.

¹³ £5,345 of in-kind support in 2014, such as: radio coverage of GL events by the Mauritian Broadcasting Corporation, venues for training offered by Municipal Councils, advertisement of Peace at Home campaign by La Sentinelle Ltd.

Unrestricted funding plays a crucial role for the present and the future of the organisation, and while the PPA was interpreted as a one-off opportunity to invest in institutional effectiveness and increase income diversification, GL would be affected by the potential ending of PPA funding.

Sustainability of capacity changes – The investment in systems tended to be in one-off capital cost. Nevertheless, the recurrent costs of new staff and resources are not yet being paid for themselves by the securing of new grants.

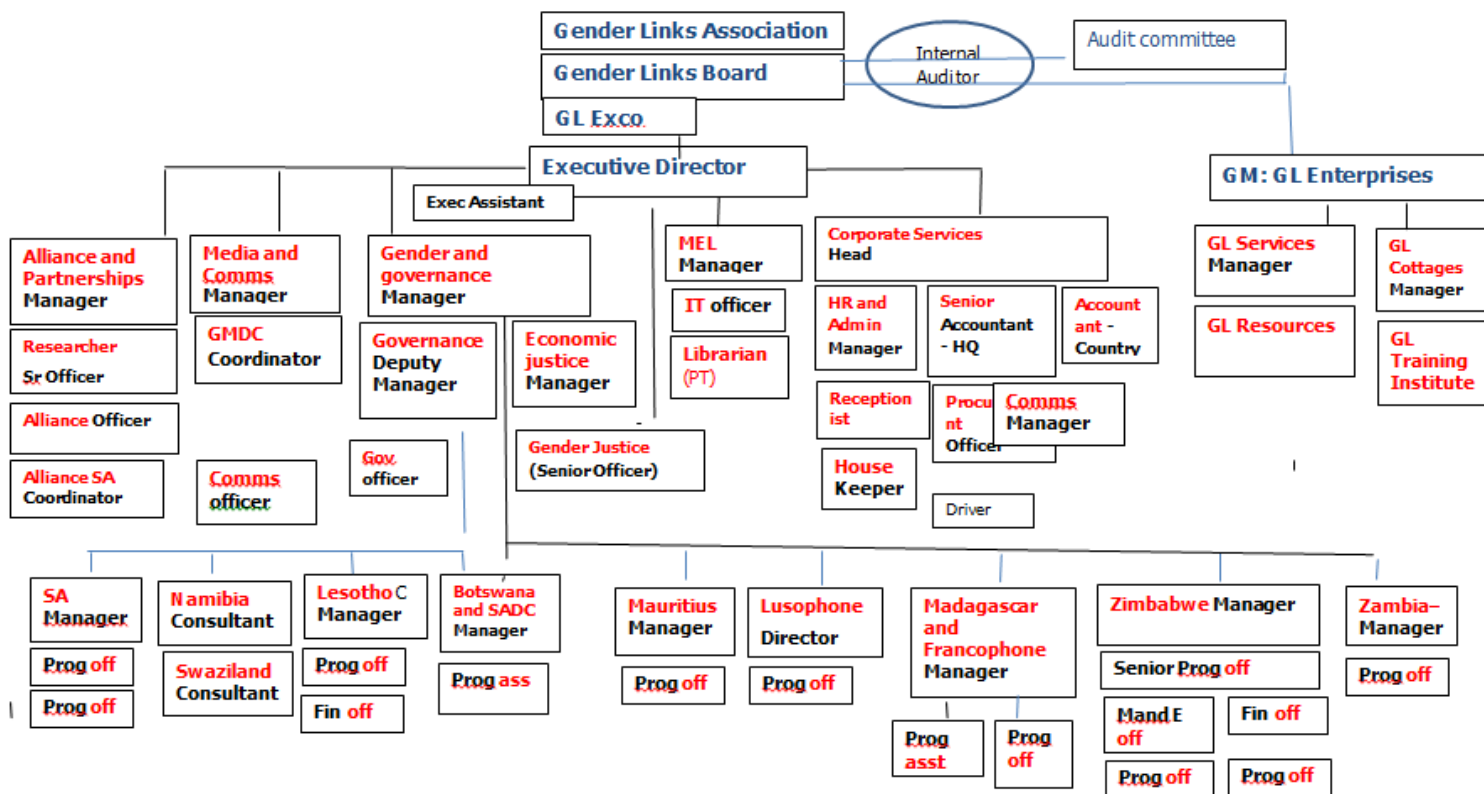
Sustainability of results – The use of PPA funds towards shifting the focus from campaigning to implementation can also be seen as producing sustainable step changes. Nonetheless, the capacity of GL to sustain its impact in its work with local councils and gender ministries can be put into question in terms of:

- Potential turnover of governmental staff; and
- Potential lack of sustainability of partner organisations within the coalition that would prevent GL to work in-country.

Overview of the sustainability of GL's top three investments:

- PPA investments in systems and management capacity – While GL directed part of its PPA investments towards hiring new staff (finance officers, country managers, media officers) that are reliant on PPA funding, the PPA investments in financial system upgrades have resulted in the establishment of improved management and finance processes that are likely to be sustained, in the eventuality of PPA funding ending.
- PPA investments in country offices – With respect to the sustainability of country operations, GL headquarters have been pushing forward the necessity to raise funds in-country. In addition, to support a sustainable approach to its organisational structure, GL has been conducting an analysis of critical mass factors for sustaining its offices, as opposed to having project sites. The results of this analysis entailed the downscaling of two country offices (Swaziland and Namibia), which did not jeopardise the work done in-country. Importantly, GL is trying to have a balanced approach towards the establishment of country offices, by assessing the added value of having registered offices (legitimation of in-country operations versus cost of maintaining country offices) and the opportunities for funding secured through in-country offices.
- PPA investments in income diversification – We found that an important aspect of GL's strategy in using the PPA funds relates to their ability to envisage long-term solutions that can ensure the sustainability of the organisation. GL have pointed out that as a southern based NGO, they do not have the same opportunities for donor funding than northern based NGOs (e.g. individual or corporate fundraising). As a result, GL has taken an income-generating approach to income diversification: through GL Services (consulting branch), the Gender Links Training Institute (in discussion at the time of writing), GL Resources (e.g. selling of publications) and GL Cottages (part of the profits used as core funding for GL).

Figure 4: Income diversification as part of GL’s draft organisational chart for 2015



3.10 Value for Money

GL’s approach to VfM

GL defines value for money as the “judicious and strategic management of resources to enhance economy, efficiency and effectiveness of our work to promote gender equality and justice in Southern Africa”¹⁴. The particularity of GL’s approach to VfM lies in that GL includes VfM within its Results for Change framework. This implies a more integrated approach to decision-making, both in terms of feeding results into future programming and considering the value for money of past and future impacts.

GL focuses on several areas as part of its tracking of VfM:

- *Cost savings:* Tracking of procurement savings, programme planning synergies, effective use of IT;
- *In-kind support:* Tracking of contributor, type of in-kind benefit (venue, posters, etc.);
- *Cascading:* Tracking of the training of trainers within the government and local councils;
- *Leveraging:* Tracking of advisory services, synergies in planning event, fundraising, local councils’ budget allocations for gender;
- *Going green:* Tracking of paperless offices, carbon efficient travel, electricity savings;
- *People power:* Job Evaluation and salary survey and GL Internship Programme;
- *Smart partnerships:* Through case studies, GL assesses the value for money achieved by working with the Alliance focal networks across 12 SADC countries;
- *Making IT work for gender justice:* GL Media monitoring is using Meltwater Media Monitoring, a comprehensive media intelligence tool, designed to track, monitor and analyse the presence of an organisation and its work; and

¹⁴ <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/page/vfm>

- *Social enterprise*: GL assesses its VfM through the benefits realised through social enterprise initiatives such as GL Cottages and the GL Services.

GL's main cost drivers are staff and workshops costs. To address this, GL has limited its use of external consultants and focused on hiring interns who could grow in the organisation and benefit from trainings on-the-job. While issues may arise in terms of the sustainability of funding staff costs if the PPA comes to an end, GL leadership team seemed to be aware of these and working towards a more sustainable solution (see Suggestions Section). With regards to the workshop costs, GL works to reduce these costs and create multiplier effects through good procurement practise, and in-kind support from partners.

We found that a key strength of GL's approach to VfM has been to apply the VfM principles to its work and make these its own. While GL may not comply with the strict use of the 4 'E's, they are a good practice example of an organisation that understands the mechanisms of VfM while keeping its VfM principles understandable and accessible to most of its staff and partners.

Influence of the PPA on GL's understanding of VfM

In December 2012, following the start of the GL PPA grant, the GL CEO attended a BOND workshop on VfM, and has subsequently run four in-house workshops on VfM. These have resulted in institutional case studies, housed on the GL website, and shared with partners at the November 2013 meeting of the Southern African Learning Partnership.

VfM aspects in relation to the use of PPA funds

Evidence cited by GL relating to the value for money of investments and examples of systems for managing costs includes:

- **Ability to develop an approach to VfM and train GL staff** – In-house workshops on VfM following GL CEO's attendance of a BOND workshop on VfM;
- **Ability to compare/ manage costs more systematically** – PPA investments in finance systems allowing a better tracking of funds across the headquarters and the country offices; and
- **Ability to illustrate VfM achievements** – PPA investments in VfM case studies in all country offices; systematic recording of VfM achievements.

VfM aspects in relation to being the first southern-based PPA grantee

As GL CEO and staff have pointed out during the in-depth research, GL is a unique case study in itself, as it is the first southern-based agency to receive PPA funding across a portfolio of UK-based PPA agencies. As such, GL is an example of the ability of UK unrestricted aid to be received and managed by organisations 'on the ground', which are less established than most UK-based organisations – with significant results in terms of the value for money achieved with respect to capacity strengthening and ability to leverage additional funding from international donors.

While GL PPA funding remains a case of its own, with limited room for comparison as no other PPA agency is non-UK-based across the PPA portfolio, the additionality effects of PPA funding have been well evidenced by GL, which constitutes a best practice example of the ways in which unrestricted funding can be effectively channelled to southern-based organisations and help these establish their work and reputation within their national and regional landscapes.

3.11 Learning and Innovation

Much of the learning and knowledge of the organisation is documented and available as 'learning products'. Additionally, the reputation of GL as a knowledge producer and innovation enhancer (ready-to-use and practical tools) appears to be widespread among the different external partners interviewed and is further evidenced by GL's active engagement/ invitations to engage in conferences, forums and international knowledge sharing events, mostly attended by GL CEO (see Suggestion Section about the potential precariousness of international networks).

It is important to note that GL reported investing only 9% of the PPA funds in Learning/ Research¹⁵ as part of its 2013/ 2014 Annual Report. Evidence was found during the in-depth research that GL:

- Invested in research projects such as the VAW baseline studies (reported under Programme rather than Learning/ Research); and
- Invested in a range of tools (M&E tools used to conduct research-based advocacy) and in action planning trainings that seem to have been reported under Institutional Effectiveness rather than Learning/ Research/Knowledge management.

Innovative tools and indicators

PPA funding has enabled GL to develop a range of online surveys, including the Gender Progress Score (GPS), the institutional Gender Score Card (GSC), the SADC Gender Protocol Knowledge Quiz and the Citizen Score Card. As indicated in the section 'Use of M&E tools', most of the PPA investments directed towards M&E in reality funded tools that are a central part to GL work and help the organisation to produce knowledge. The extent to which these tools are innovative lies in GL's ability to use PPA funding to enhance access and use of these tools – through an innovative use of online solutions (cyber dialogue in local languages, automated online gender surveys the results of which can be accessed in real-time, etc.).

Learning processes through the PPA Learning Partnerships

GL has contributed to learning within the PPA by helping shape the Gender Learning Group (GLP) and initiating the Southern African Learning Partnership (SALP) where GL has shared its learning and experiences on VfM.

Participation in PPA learning partnerships assisted GL in refining its Theory of Change, Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks to include knowledge, learning, innovation and Value for Money as part of a paradigm shift to "Results for Change" that includes several IT innovations such as the Gender Progress Score (GPS).

Knowledge management

As a result of the use of PPA funds, GL has created an online knowledge management system, investing in a new website and in processes to collect, record and store all learning products. As part of its approach to knowledge management and with a view of increasing income diversification, GL has developed a new branch, GL Services, that attempts to sell the publications and training handbooks to a range of actors – from NGOs to schools.

Sharing and uptake of new knowledge

- Dissemination systematically done through media platforms;
- Cross-learning during Annual Summit, reach both sector partners and governments;
- Cross-learning initiatives across local governments funded through the PPA;
- Uptake of gender mainstreaming tools by organisations across the sector (GL providing trainings in tools);
- Partnerships that leverage the work of GL and vice versa (e.g. Diakonia); and
- See above for sharing mechanisms through the PPA Learning Partnerships.

4 Suggestions

Our research with GL was not a formal evaluation and so it is not appropriate to make recommendations. Through our discussions, we did, however, identify suggestions that may be of benefit to GL. A list of these suggestions is provided below.

- **A key suggestion for GL relates to succession issues.** Formed as a small organisation with three staff members, that subsequently experienced a rapid growth in staff and activities, GL has started envisaging the implications of its key leadership staff leaving. During the in-depth research, we found that some key developments are taking place around succession. During the 2014 Board meeting GL CEO indicated its intention to stand down as the head of the NGO and to focus on growing the income-generating side of GL

¹⁵ Cumulatively since 2011.

to enhance sustainability over the next two years. As a result, GL has advertised for an Executive Director position, and is using the PPA funds to secure the services of a global head hunting agency to assist in this process.

- Although GL invested in routinized processes and a less centralised internal structure, we found evidence of a **strongly centralised management** and a strong lead from the leadership team. While GL headquarters have been granting more responsibility to its country offices, the organisation is tied to its responsibility to achieve a set of standards across its branches to report quality results to donors. It is important to note that the research focused on country offices that were receiving PPA funding due to their limited size and lesser ability to secure in-country funding (Mauritius and Botswana), and that this finding therefore may not apply to the range of GL country offices. An additional visit to the Zimbabwean GL office appears to confirm this hypothesis – with a greater ability to raise its own fund, the Zimbabwean office has been able to ensure greater autonomy from the GL headquarters while ensuring the quality and consistency of GL work.
- Although GL always interpreted the PPA funding as a one-off opportunity and has made investments accordingly, the question of the **sustainability of the range of activities currently funded or partly funded through the PPA** will be important to answer in the coming years. Particularly, the capacity of certain country offices to be run effectively in the absence of unrestricted funding can be questioned and GL may be faced with the need to secure additional in-country funding sources to continue its activities in the SADC region. GL's strategy has been to have a balanced approach towards the establishment of country offices, by assessing the added value of having registered offices (legitimation of in-country operations versus cost of maintaining country offices) and the opportunities for funding secured through in-country offices. Further in-country developments should therefore follow this logic, and thereby ensure the sustainability of GL's work where it operates.
- GL has pro-actively engaged in understanding its relationship with its partners. Nonetheless, we found that GL partners within the Alliance and other in-country networks GL operates with are of a range of size, and the **sustainability of some small-scale partner organisations** within these networks can be questioned. As part of its risk matrix, GL should consider the implications of losing some of its key small-scale partners in terms of the impact on GL activities in the SADC region – more particularly since GL had limited capacity to invest in building the capacity of these partners with its current PPA funding. A key aspect of GL's partnership strategy has been to partner with organisations *through networks*, which partially mitigates the above-mentioned risks. Post-PPA Alliance work and networking activities should continue to be planned for following this strategy, to further ensure the sustainability of GL's work where it operates.

5 Annexes

5.1 Outline of research plan

Areas of interest identified from the 2014 Annual Report	Profile of stakeholder(s)	Proposed data collection approach
<p>Strategic decisions and additionality</p> <p>What was the decision-making process leading to the allocation of PPA funds to Gender Links' activities?</p> <p>What has the PPA funded that would not have been funded otherwise?</p>	<p>Senior management staff and Board Members who are able to explain the internal and external factors that informed Gender Links' overarching strategy, especially in relation to strengthening institutional effectiveness and leveraging funds.</p> <p>Steering Committee of the Alliance and Gender Links' country-level management staff who are able to provide an overview of the additionality of PPA funding and how it has affected the organisation.</p> <p>Key external stakeholders or partners who are able to provide evidence on the additionality of PPA funding.</p>	<p>Approach: focus group discussions; semi-structured interviews. Possible review of planning documents. A sense-making narrative reconstructing the decision.</p> <p>Contextual factors: N/A</p> <p>Sampling: Purposive</p>
<p>Investment in capacity and the outcomes of this change in capacity</p> <p>How has the PPA built Gender Links' capacity (staff, tools, capacity building or research) across the campaign to implementation continuum? (Research → Advocacy → Action plan → Dissemination of Best Practice → Gaps in Research)</p> <p>What impact has this had on Gender Links' work and approach to its role in the sector?</p>	<p>Senior management staff from the Alliance, the Governance programme and the Media programme who are able to explain how capacity has changed and with what effects – especially for each of the different steps of Gender Links' approach to its work.</p> <p>Key external stakeholders or partners who are able to provide evidence on the effects of the related changes to capacity, such as stakeholders at different institutional levels (Governance programme) or gender focus persons trained.</p> <p>Beneficiaries that have become Gender Links staff as a result of capacity building (eg Zambia and/or Lesotho Country Managers).</p>	<p>Approach: focus group discussions; semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>Contextual factors: N/A</p> <p>Sampling: Purposive</p>

<p>Innovation and learning</p> <p>What were the added value and channels of impact of establishing innovative tools and indicators in the sector?</p> <p>How has the PPA enabled Gender Links to fund more 'risky' work?</p> <p>How did Gender Links' shift from M&E to Results for Change have an impact on achieving and demonstrating results?</p>	<p>IT and M&E staff who develop and disseminate innovation and learning products.</p> <p>Key external stakeholders (e.g. Government of Botswana) or partners (Alliance) who are able to provide evidence on the use/uptake of learning or innovations, especially innovations relating to the Gender based Violence methodology.</p> <p>Specific examples that are observable at the level of the Centres of Excellence were selected for closer observation.</p> <p>Senior management staff and M&E staff who are able to explain why the shift took place and what the added value was.</p>	<p>Approach: focus group discussions; semi-structured interviews; review of innovation or learning products.</p> <p>Contextual factors: N/A</p> <p>Sampling: Purposive</p>
<p>Value for Money</p> <p>How has the PPA enabled Gender Links to enhance their understanding of Value for Money?</p> <p>Did this lead to increased performance?</p>	<p>Financial management staff who are able to explain how Gender Links measure, monitor and report VFM – especially in relation to the automation of finance systems, the introduction of programme-level VFM case studies and the establishment of 'smart' partnerships within the Alliance.</p>	<p>Approach: focus group discussions; semi-structured interviews; review of systems and M&E data.</p> <p>Contextual factors: N/A</p> <p>Sampling: Purposive</p>
<p>Gender Links' coalition model</p> <p>What are the role of partnerships in Gender Links' programmes and the nature of the coalition model?</p> <p>How has the PPA enabled Gender Links to question/strengthen their model?</p>	<p>Project delivery staff involved in the coordinated delivery within the coalition.</p> <p>Possible external stakeholders or partners who are able to provide insights into the working relationship and the value addition of this partnership model.</p> <p>Senior management staff who are able to explain the changing role of Gender Links within the coalition model (from embedding good practices to accompanying institutions to take ownership).</p>	<p>Approach: Focus group discussions; semi-structured interviews; review of organisational structure.</p> <p>Contextual factors: N/A</p> <p>Sampling: Purposive</p>
<p>Gender Links' influence on mainstreaming of gender</p> <p>What has Gender Links' influence been on institutions and other PPA holders for the mainstreaming of gender?</p>	<p>Staff involved in the production of the Gender based Violence methodology.</p> <p>Key external stakeholders (e.g. from Diakonia) or partners who are able to provide insights into their use of the methodology/indicators and the added value in relation to the mainstreaming of gender.</p>	<p>Approach: focus group discussions; semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>Contextual factors: N/A</p> <p>Sampling: Purposive</p>

5.2 Documents reviewed

- PPA 2013 Gender Links Annual Report
- 2013 Gender Links PPA Logframe
- GL Strategy Document
- GL Strategic Budget
- Matrix of PPA funding allocation over the three years
- 2014 Barometer
- Post 2015 Indicators Matrix
- Six country studies pamphlet on measuring GBV
- Centres Of Excellence materials and learning papers
- Gender Policies and Action Plans
- GL Learning Journey
- Botswana COE Learning Paper
- Mauritius COE Learning Paper
- Programme VFM case studies
- Bond PPAs & IATI Meeting notes
- DFID Feedback on Annual Reports

5.3 People consulted

Johannesburg Headquarters

- Colleen Lowe Morna (CEO)
- Kubi Rama (DCEO)
- Miso Dhliwayo (Director of Operations)
- Monica Bandeira (MEL Manager)
- Vivien Bakainaga (HR Manager)
- Sifiso Dube (Alliance Manager)
- Sikhonzile Ndlovu and Kath Robinson (Media and Communication Managers)
- Linda Musariri (Justice Manager)
- Mariatu Fonnah and Anne Hilton (Governance and Entrepreneurship Managers)
- Mukayi Makaya (GL Services Manager)
- Debrah Mukuku (GL Cottages Manager)
- Isaac Zulu and Mme Mabetha (Country Managers – Zambia and Lesotho)
- Alliance Executive Committee
- South African Partners (SAWID, Sonke Gender Justice, Lets Grow, SALGA)
- Elizabeth Motshubi (Ministry of Gender, Botswana)
- Virginia Muwaniga (Chair of Women's Coalition, Zimbabwe)
- Alton Grizzle (UNESCO)

Mauritius Country Office

- Anushka Virahsawmy (Country Manager, Mauritius)
- Mrs N. Seereekissoo and Mrs J. Bhunjun (Gender Unit, Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare)
- MBC Media Team (National Media, Mauritius)
- Alliance members (Round Table, 10 participants)
- Loga Virahsawmy (Board Member and Francophone operations, Mauritius)
- Brian Glover (Equal Opportunities commission)
- Mr Sanjit Teelock (Advisor at the Ministry of Local Government and outer Islands)
- Team of Curepipe (Local Council)

Botswana Country Office

- Gomolemo Rasesigo (Botswana Country Manager)
- Mr Bakane (Gender Affairs Dept, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana)
- Magdeline Madibela (Head of Gender Unit, SADC)
- Bagaisi Mabilo (Executive Secretary, BOCONGO)
- Onalenna Rammekwa (Gender and HIV Mainstreaming Officer, BOCONGO)
- Dr Athalia Molokomme (Former Deputy Chair and Association Member)
- Annah Sebopelo (Alliance)
- Felicia Bakaile (IT officer, BALA)
- Moemedi Tsimanyana (LED Project officer)
- Martha Mosha (Media Studies Dept., Humanities, University of Botswana)
- Dr Athalia Molokomme (Attorney General)
- Spencer Mogami (Sunday Standard and the telegraph)
- Emang Bokhutlo (The Voice)
- Beata Kasale (The voice / GL media consultant)
- Pamela Dube (Mmegi newspaper)
- Georgina Koboto (Duma FM)
- Kelly Kasale (The voice)