

# Organisations in the Field of HIV/AIDS and Human Rights

**AIDS Consortium (AC) and AIDS Legal Network (ALN)**

**Carmel Marock**

**Department for Africa**



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**Sida Evaluation 07/40**

**Department for Africa**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction and Methodology

The Swedish Embassy brought Singizi cc on board, through the assistance of the Technical Support Facility (TSF), for Southern Africa in August 2007 in order to conduct an evaluation of two of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) partner organisations, namely the Aids Consortium (AC) and the Aids Legal Network (ALN).

Both the AC and the ALN organisations have a long history working in the human rights and HIV/AIDS fields, and in their relationship with Sida. The organisations applied to Sida in a collective application with the AIDS Law Project (ALP). These were accepted within the Sida Programme for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights. It was intended that the projects would “contribute to strengthen national NGOs in the area of human rights, address breaches of legal and human rights, and mobilise political and public support for the rights of people living with HIV or AIDS.”<sup>1</sup>

The ALN was formed in 1994. It has been funded by Sida since 1999. Justice Edwin Cameron established the AC in 1992. Sida has been funding the AC intermittently since 1999.

In order to achieve the requirements for this review, the evaluation team conducted a series of fieldwork research processes, including interviews with programme directors, staff members, board members, partners and donors. The team developed and distributed a survey to beneficiaries of the two organisations, and conducted focus group discussions with AC beneficiaries. An analysis of relevant documents was also conducted.

## Summary of Findings for the AIDS Consortium

At the levels of *governance and management*, it is clear that the AC appears to have emerged out of a period of crisis and instability, and has been able to move into a period of where they are building and refining internal systems and capacity. This puts the organisation in a position of strength, as it moves forward into the next period.

Another of the AC’s strengths lies in its *partnerships and networks*. The organisation has developed and maintained important relationships with partners such as COSATU, the TAC and the SACC, and has been involved in a number of campaigns on an ongoing basis with these organisations, all of which are nationally strong organisations in their own rights.

The AC also sits in a number of key forums and structures that provide it and its affiliate base with significant opportunities for promoting and sharing the views of civil society. This provides what has been described as a legitimate ‘voice’ for CBOs and other civil society organisations in the human rights and HIV/AIDS environment in South Africa.

There is broad consensus that the *organisation’s programmes and strategic focus* are on track, with several respondents who participated in this evaluation acknowledging that the organisation is, and needs to remain, flexible and continue to respond to the HIV/AIDS and related environment in South Africa, and the needs of its constituents. This pertains to the work the organisation is doing with regards to advocacy and information sharing, as well as to some extent to the training and capacity building offered.

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<sup>1</sup> HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, South Africa, Promemoria, 1999, 06, 23.

Respondents have positively reported on the AC's *programmes and activities*, and it is a clear strength of the organisation, that affiliates effectively and regularly use the resources and capacity building interventions that the AC makes available. Attendance at the monthly meetings is one indication of this.

One emergent issue pertains to the extent to which the capacity building of CBOs is achieving its intention, which is: (i) the development of the CBO receiving the capacity building, and (ii) ultimately impacting on communities served by these affiliates.

With regards to the development of CBOs, some respondents have raised questions about individuals receiving training from the AC and then leaving the organisation (either due to personal reasons or through moving to other organisations). The impact that this has on the ability of the organisation to strengthen requires further consideration. On the positive side, the training is intensive, and so those organisations that participate effectively, and hold onto their human resources in the post-training period, reportedly do benefit. However, it has been noted that this is not systematically reviewed and that there is not a clear methodology for assessing organisational impact.

With regard to community impact, it is again acknowledged that while there is an indication of the work that the affiliates undertake in the community, and the perceived value of these activities, the extent of this impact is unclear. It is felt that the AC may not possess the capacity to assess impact at a community level.

The issue of evaluating organisational and community impact is considered in more depth in the final recommendations of this report.

In terms of the *future direction* of the AC, the picture emerging suggests that the existing focus of the organisation is being met with positive responses at both a national and an affiliate level. Specifically, there is emphasis placed on the role that the AC can play in bringing with it a 'grassroots voice'.

There are also discussions about income generating activities with a view to increasing the AC's sustainability, but these are currently only in discussion, and would require resources and investment. These include looking at expanding the Cyber Café resources in Braamfontein, and seeking accreditation for the programmes that the organisation is currently running.

As outlined, discussions are also underway to expand the AC into the Limpopo Province and to set up a fully-fledged AC service in that province. These proposals are currently under discussion, but will have significant implications for the AC if the proposals are agreed-upon. While it is clearly valuable to ensure that the CBOs in the Limpopo Province have access to the range of AC services, there is also a need for the AC to consider whether the establishment of its own office is the most viable option, and to ensure that the appropriate capacity and resources are in place, that these resources can be managed if this option is pursued, also that this does not negatively impact on the operations in the Gauteng Province.

### **Recommendations at the Strategic Level for the AC**

- Consider the range of options for ensuring that the AC services are available in other provinces, and if the establishment of an AC office is pursued, then ensure that there is clear mapping of the implications of this type of expansion into other provinces. Then based on this analysis, determine what the requisite capacity requirements may be and develop a risk management strategy to ensure that operations within Gauteng are not negatively impacted on by the expansion process.
- A careful review of the training should take place to ensure that it supports organisational development as well as individual development. This may require certain aspects of the training to be strengthened (it is also noted that shifts towards accreditation need to be carefully managed lest it tips the programme towards the individual and away from an organisational focus).

- The organisation should develop a set of basic evaluative tools that can provide the organisation with feedback in a more systematic manner regarding the contribution they are making at the level of organisational and community development.

## Summary of Findings for the AIDS Legal Network

At the level of *governance and management*, it is clear that the ALN, like the AC, has emerged strong and significantly more robust out of a period of crisis. The organisation seems to have a committed body of board members that, although spread across the country and not all located in Cape Town, appear to have a hands-on approach to governance. It is also apparent that the management and leadership of the organisation are viewed as strong, although there is a concern about the levels of apparent staff turnover.

One of the issues raised by some of the interviewees (including board members and donors) pertains to a perception that the organisation will continue to struggle to attract and retain staff with the requisite skills<sup>2</sup>.

The other issue identified as a risk in 1999 was the danger that the organisation was dependent on donors. This issue also emerges in this evaluation. However, while some respondents suggested that this is an area of risk, others (including certain ALN donors) commented that NGOs cannot by definition be self-sustaining and that the imperative is that the organisation ensures that it has a consistent set of donors. Having said this, there is a concern that the balance of donors may need to be addressed as a risk management strategy.

With regards to *partnerships and networks*, the organisation appears to be contributing to national campaigns and processes in a significant manner. It has also spearheaded other campaigns. Further, it participates in national policy development processes insofar as they support increased human rights.

One issue that has been highlighted is the more limited role that the organisation plays in ‘national’ networks that operate from Gauteng. However, it does appear that as, for example, in the SANAC process, the organisation is able to contribute to these policy processes, and its expertise in human rights is recognised. Further, the organisation is playing an active role in enabling civil society to interact with the NSP through the development of key resources on the NSP. For these reasons it is the view of the evaluation team that this issue has been addressed and the challenge is to maintain and strengthen these relations, including enhancing certain partnerships where necessary.

One of the strengths of the organisation is that it has identified a strategic *focus*, which is considered its *raison d’etre*, and it has developed upon this in a consistent manner. This focus is around human rights and HIV/AIDS including issues pertaining to violence against women. Respondents agreed that the focus would not be fundamentally changing over the next period and that the emphasis is to sustain the activities that are currently taking place and to ensure that these are applied in a manner that takes the emerging context into account.

This flexibility within a sustained focus is evidenced in two key areas: (i) with regards to the *advocacy work* of the organisation; the ALN has emphasised its work within SANAC on the imperative for human rights, as well as its current strategic focus on the implementation of the National Strategic Plan. The new strategic focus on the NSP in the context of the ALN’s work is likely to be an important step in engaging with a critical national process. (ii) in terms of *capacity building and training* the organisation plans to shift its focus away from one-day workshops targeted at local CBOs and NGOs to sustained training for provincial organisations which can extend messages and information emerging there from to CBOs in the provinces. This shift is seen as very valuable, and offers the possibility of enhancing the

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<sup>2</sup> This risk was identified as far back as 1999 in one of the original Sida assessments

impact of the training that is offered. This can be pursued while the organisation continues to offer its training to organisations on a request basis, allowing it to meet specified needs and to receive an income.

Another emerging issue related to keeping and maintaining contact with the network base of the organisation. The evaluation process found that the ALN did not have a comprehensive database which could support sustained contact with its constituency. This is an area that needs to be reviewed.

In terms of moving towards the *future and sustainability*, it is evident that the ALN does not plan to significantly increase its income generating activities. However, it is anticipated that in terms of its values and focus, it will continue to rely on ongoing donor funding. This view is supported by some respondents who indicate that this will detract from the organisation's focus if it prioritises self-sustainability.

### **Recommendations at the Strategic Level of the ALN**

- The strategy that has been outlined to partner provincial NGOs should be developed further so that there is a shared understanding of the plan with regards to the training and the support that these organisations will receive.
- The relationship between the networks built in the provincial workshop, and the organisations that receive training, requires some consideration, and it is suggested that this could be a potentially valuable inter-relationship.
- While NGOs are always vulnerable in terms of high staff turnover, there is a need to ensure that there is a strategy in place to support staff in a manner that encourages them to stay in the organisation.
- Similarly, there should be a risk management strategy in place to manage the continued reliance on Sida as a primary donor. This should include concrete steps to be taken to minimise the risk and balance existing donor funding.
- There is a need to ensure that the organisation continues to strengthen its national engagements to maximise the benefits of these relationships and to ensure that its specific voice is heard in these national debates.

### **Recommendations for the Organisations**

It is noted that both the organisations have been able to re-build and create stable environments. Further, the services and programmes being offered by the organisations appear to be appreciated by the beneficiaries, and there appears to be a demand that these be offered more frequently and in a wider number of locations. This suggests a motivation for the on-going support of these organisations.

However, it is acknowledged that NGOs remain vulnerable and while their role is more critical than ever, so are the challenges facing NGOs in accessing funding, accounting to donors, retaining staff with the relevant skills and increasing their capacity.

This requires of the organisations:

- That they continue to form partnerships and networks and review more carefully how they can work with partners to maximise the usage of resources. For example, if the AC is to facilitate information sharing workshops, then it will be important that these are considered within the context of the workshops that the ALN delivers, and to consider whether these activities can be combined, as the beneficiary group is likely to be similar.
- Further, both organisations have been involved in different ways in engaging with national government structures, and it is noted that the revised NSP creates a framework to further these engagements. It is suggested that opportunities to engage with provincial and local governments should also

be explored within this changing context in terms of the different responsibilities that these two spheres have for the implementation of the NSP.

- With regards to the training that is offered, it is recognised that these focus on different elements to assist CBOs and NGOs to build community competence (as defined in the first section of this report). It is suggested that this be made explicit so it will be possible to determine success, and to put in place additional methods to evaluate the activities. This is seen as important so as to support on-going learning and development.

## **Considerations for the Swedish Embassy and Sida**

This document highlights certain strategic issues that could be considered by the Swedish Embassy and Sida to support the implementation of the organisational recommendations. Also to contribute to the further development of targeted organisations in the NGO sector so as to enhance the work that is being done to develop communities and support policies which promote and protect fundamental rights and freedoms of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

- It is recognised that there are capacity constraints facing donors. However, it is recommended that Sida consider how they can ensure that the NGOs they support benefit from the experience of the two organisations, and particularly how this knowledge can be applied to assist organisations with strategic planning and in the development of NGO staff capacity;
- There is a need to consider how Sida can assist the organisations to access other donors. This could take the shape of a coordinated forum of donors – although there are debates as to whether this is an advantageous arrangement for NGOs. Alternatively, Sida could serve as a broker and assist the organisations to access funds from other donors<sup>3</sup>.
- The need to understand impact, and to use this learning to shape future activities has been highlighted within this report. However, while organisations could be assisted to develop tighter monitoring mechanisms – and this is a recommendation – it is also suggested that Sida considers how it can support an evaluation process that enables organisations to develop a greater understanding of the manner in which they are contributing to organisational development and community competence at the level of impact. This would then feed into on-going learning and development of the organisations. It is noted that this could be done through the engagement of other organisations that specifically focus on evaluation studies in and around community competence within the context of HIV/AIDS;
- Finally, and related to the previous point, there is the recognition that donors increasingly require that organisations measure achievements more closely. This shift in expectation leaves NGOs vulnerable to changing requirements which further emphasises the need for donors to assist with both staff development and systems support.
- One specific aspect of this support could be to enable a process of documenting cases, drawn from the organisations that are funded by Sida, which illustrate ways in which NGOs have implemented their plans, effectively been involved in partnerships, in pursuit of their objectives and have developed systems that ensure accountability, innovation and continued learning.

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<sup>3</sup> This is compatible with the recommendation in the Sida Gap Analysis report which recommends a kind of a ‘Schengen visa’ for partners: once one donor approves a partner, other donors accept and support such an approval.

## List of Acronyms

AC	Aids Consortium
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALN	AIDS Legal Network
ALP	AIDS Law Project
ALQ	AIDS Legal Quarterly
ARASA	AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa
ARV	Anti-Retroviral
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
EXCO	Executive Committee
FHR	Foundation for Human Rights
HBC	Home Based Care
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (Netherlands)
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NSP	National Strategic Plan (on HIV and AIDS and STIs)
PPASA	Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa
PWC	Price Waterhouse Coopers
PWLAs	People Living with AIDS
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANAC	South African National AIDS Council
SANGOCO	South African National NGO Coalition
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLA	Service Level Agreement
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TSF	Technical Support Facility
UWC	University of Western Cape
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing

# Section A: Context

## 1 Introduction

The Swedish Embassy appointed Singizi cc, through the assistance of the Technical Support Facility (TSF) for Southern Africa, in August 2007 in order to conduct an evaluation of two of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) partner organisations, namely the Aids Consortium (AC) and the Aids Legal Network (ALN). This report focuses on the achievements of the two organisations against what they set out to do. It specifically focuses on their achievements in terms of impacting on national policy, gender and beneficiaries at a grassroots level. It considers whether the management of the organisations and their relationship with donors enables them to achieve their objectives and, within this context, to explore what obstacles have arisen, if any, in the implementation of the organisations' plans. Finally, the report considers the current strengths and weaknesses of the organisations, and points to possible opportunities that can be accessed.

The report tackles each of these issues by considering the perceptions of the different respondents including: Board Members, the Executive Directors, staff members, beneficiaries, partners and donors.

The evaluation team wishes to acknowledge that both Programme Directors showed every possible courtesy to the evaluation team, and made staff, documentation and other resources requested available for a smooth and efficient evaluation process.

## 2 Environmental Context

This section emphasises the continued importance of the work of the two organisations, and also highlights key national developments that have shifted. These are considered important, as they assist to frame the work in the two organisations and suggest key advocacy processes that may be required, as well as areas in which grassroots work may be required.

### 2.1 The Scale of AIDS in South Africa

Since the initial decision to fund the ALN and the AC in 1999, much has changed and yet little is different<sup>4</sup>. South Africans are dying of AIDS at a rate of around 1,000 people every day and the trends pertaining to prevalence indicate that while in 1990 there was a prevalence of 0.7% by 2005 this was 30.2%<sup>5</sup>. This picture is cause for great concern; and it is argued that to understand these figures and trends there is a need to reflect on the social and structural factors which exacerbate the epidemic. This includes: high population mobility, cultural factors and gender inequalities<sup>6</sup> as well as elements such as a general lack of openness around HIV and AIDS, widespread stigma and denial.

This evaluation suggests a need to explore further the inherent strengths of communities, such as a deep understanding of community contexts, understanding the impacts of HIV and AIDS through living it, solidarity, empathy, as well as practical, experience-based solutions. The growth in awareness of this is reflected in the revised National Strategic Plan (NSP) and suggests an increased understanding of the role of NGOs and CBOs within this context. This is outlined in more depth below.

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<sup>4</sup> This section draws on a study commissioned by Sida: *The Current HIV/AIDS Epidemic & Response in South Africa: Sida desk study and gap analysis*

<sup>5</sup> This figure is indicated in the official *National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS and STI, 2007–2011*, Department of Health, 14 March 2007

<sup>6</sup> SADC Report. Expert Think Tank Meeting on HIV Prevention in High-Prevalence Countries in Southern Africa, Maseru, Lesotho 10–12 May 2006.

## 2.2 The National Strategic Plan, 2007–2011

South Africa's policies and plans relating to HIV/AIDS has been an area of significant contestation and the Department of Health has now embarked on its course to redesign the National Strategic Plan (NSP) of 2000–2005. The NSP of 2000 gave rise to the establishment and expansion of key programmes, such as health education, voluntary HIV counselling and testing (VCT), prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) and antiretroviral therapy (ART).

In May 2006, the SANAC, under the leadership of its chairperson, Deputy President Mlambo-Ngcuka, mandated the Health Department to lead a process of developing a new five-year NSP, for the years 2007–2011. The *HIV & AIDS and STI Strategic Plan for South Africa 2007–2011* flows from the *National Strategic Plan of 2000–2005* as well as the *Operational Plan for Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Care, Management, and Treatment (November 2003)*. It represents the country's multi-sectoral response to the challenge with HIV infection and the wide-ranging impacts of AIDS. The process of redesigning the NSP started with a rapid assessment of the implementation of the NSP 2000–2005. In September 2006, a report of the assessment highlighted the following findings:

- All stakeholders embraced the NSP 2000–2005 as a guiding framework.
- It served to broaden the involvement of agencies beyond the Health Department and gave rise to the establishment and expansion of key programmes.
- However, stigma and discrimination remain unacceptably high and this has been a deterrent to the utilisation of some of the services.
- Also, there have been some serious capacity deficits, especially in rural communities.
- The two major weaknesses of the NSP 2000–2005 were poor coordination at the level of SANAC, as well as lack of clear targets and a monitoring framework.

The NSP for South Africa (2007–2011) is summarised below, as it shapes the context in which NGOs will need to consider their strategic role. This is particularly important, as the principles within the plan commit government to playing a supportive leadership role through: ensuring effective communication and partnerships, promoting social change and cohesion, and ensuring sustainable programmes and funding.

The primary goals of the NSP, as stated in the plan, are to:

- Reduce the number of new HIV infections by 50%
- Reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS on individuals, families, communities and society by expanding access to appropriate treatment, care and support to 80% of all people diagnosed with HIV

The four main areas that constitute this NSP include: (i) prevention, (ii) treatment, care and support, (iii) research, monitoring and surveillance and (iv) human rights – access to justice and law reform.

In addition, some of the key features of the NSP include a mandate for the Health Department and research institutions to measure progress towards reaching these goals and create a special unit in the Health Department to monitor the plan's implementation.

### 3 Project History

Both the AC and the ALN have a long history as organisations working in the HIV/AIDS field and with regards to their relationship with Sida. The two organisations applied to Sida in a collective application with the ALP. These were accepted within the Sida Programme for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights. It was intended that the projects would “*contribute to strengthen national NGOs in the area of human rights, address breaches of legal and human rights, and mobilise political and public support for the rights of people living with HIV or AIDS.*”<sup>7</sup>

The ALN was formed in 1994. It has been funded by Sida since 1999. It was initially funded for the period 1999–2001. There was a subsequent agreement that covered the period 2001–2004, where the focus of the Sida funding was capacity building, education and training, research and networking and advocacy. During this period, the organisation went through a time of turbulent management. However, before the end of this period the organisation had developed strategies to address these problems. In the context of this organisational uncertainty, Sida adopted an approach to commit funding on an annual basis. Thus, while the agreement addressed the period 2004–2007, this relied on annual renewal. This evaluation addresses this long relationship and considers the effect of the events that took place. However, it focuses largely on the period 2004–2007.

The AC was established in 1992 by Justice Edwin Cameron in order to ‘promote a non-discriminatory response to HIV/AIDS based on people’s basic human rights as enshrined in the South African Constitution’<sup>8</sup> Sida has been funding the AC intermittently since 1999. The initial funding contribution was from 1999–2001. Between 2001 and 2004, the AC’s main source of funding was the European Union but, in 2004, the organisation again approached Sida to consider funding for the period 2005–2007<sup>9</sup>. The period 2000–2004 was plagued by a series of leadership and management crises in the organisation, and so Sida conducted a pre-award survey (conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers – PCW) in order to ascertain the extent to which the organisation had “adequate internal controls and accounting procedures to receive, disburse and fully account for funds received from Sida”<sup>10</sup> The Embassy of Sweden and Sida made a decision to fund the AC in December 2004 for the period of 2005. It was also decided that the Embassy would re-assess contributions for the 2006/7 period. In 2005, a compliance review was conducted by PCW and again a favourable outcome was obtained and support was continued for another year.

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<sup>7</sup> HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, South Africa, Promemoria, 1999, 06, 23.

<sup>8</sup> Extracted from <http://www.aidsconsortium.org.za>.

<sup>9</sup> Extracted from Assessment Memo, Sida, 26/10/2004.

<sup>10</sup> Pre-Award Survey Report on the AIDS Consortium, PWC, 3 November 2004

## Section B: Methodology

### 4 Scope of Work

The scope of the evaluation, as set out in the Terms of Reference<sup>11</sup>, is summarised below as follows:

1. A general description and analysis of the overall results of the organisations' programmes, and the extent to which they have fulfilled (or not managed to fulfil) their vision and stated objectives.
2. An analysis of the role/s that the Aids Legal Network and Aids Consortium play in the HIV/AIDS field and the extent the organisations have contributed to the national policy and legislation on HIV/AIDS.
3. An overview of the role and contribution of the organisations (at local, provincial and/or national levels) to address the intersection of HIV/AIDS and gender in SA;
4. An assessment of the results (or impact) of the organisations' programmes at grass-roots and/or affiliate levels.
5. An analysis of the effectiveness and overall management of the ALN and AC programmes, including issues relating to governance structures and the monitoring and follow-up of the projects by the different stakeholders (e.g. the Board);
6. An analysis of the organisations' funding profiles and the extent to which the ALN and AC have diversified their funding.
7. Identification and analysis of the obstacles and challenges that are encountered by the organisations in project implementation.
8. An assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the present programmes of ALN and AC and ascertaining whether any change in the strategic direction and scope of the organisations' core business is necessary.
9. Concluding analysis of the key opportunities for the future of the organisations, in terms of organisational management, programme delivery and sustainability.

Note that the imperative to undertake an assessment of the extent to which Aids Legal Network and Aids Consortium have collaborated was in the original terms of reference, but it was subsequently agreed that this would be reviewed within the context of the partnerships and networks that each of the organisation has adopted more broadly.

### 5 Approach Adopted

In order to achieve this analysis, the following methodological approach was adopted for the evaluation:

#### 5.1 Interviews with Programme Directors

As a starting point, the Singizi team interviewed the Programme Directors of each the AC and the ALN. These interviews were designed specifically to focus on the following:

- Brief history of the organisation.
- Geographic areas in which the programme operates.

<sup>11</sup> The full Terms of Reference are attached as an Appendix to this document

- Current strategic focus of the organisation and services/activities related to this.
- Any expected/anticipated changes in strategic direction in the future.
- Contributions to national/local policies, strategies and related.
- Organisational profile, including: governance, management, staffing and capacity.
- Description of and discussion regarding beneficiaries, partners and networks, and funding and donors.
- Issues pertaining to performance monitoring.
- Opportunities for the future and issues pertaining to sustainability.

A structured open-ended qualitative interview schedule was developed for these interviews, and is available on request. These interviews, which were conducted face-to-face, were captured and transcribed and analysed for reporting purposes.

## **5.2 Interviews with Staff Members**

Following the interviews with the Programme Directors, selected staff at each of the organisations was also interviewed.

In the case of AC, the discussions took the form of a focus group discussion with staff members after a weekly management meeting. In the case of ALN, this took the form of one-on-one interviews with select staff members. The interviews with staff specifically aimed to elicit information on the following:

- Perceptions of current strategic focus of the organisation and services/activities related to this.
- Any expected/anticipated changes in strategic direction in the future.
- Contributions to national/local policies and strategies.
- Organisational profile including: governance; management; staffing and capacity.
- Description of and discussion regarding beneficiaries.
- Description of and discussion regarding partners and networks.
- Opportunities for the future and issues pertaining to sustainability.

A structured open-ended qualitative interview/focus group discussion schedule was developed for these interviews, and is available on request. The AC focus group discussion and the ALN staff interviews were transcribed and analysed for reporting purposes.

## **5.3 Interviews with Board Members**

The evaluation team also conducted a series of interviews (telephonic and/or face-to-face depending on the availability and preference of the individual concerned) with most of the organisations' Board Members (past and present), with a view of eliciting information on the following:

- Information on how the individual came to be a Board Member and additional relevant biographical information.
- Perceptions of governance of the organisation, including: roles and responsibilities, functions and structures, etc.
- Perceptions of management of the organisation (at an operational level).
- Views on strategic focus of the organisation, how this has changed over time, and what this may look like in the future.

- Organisational performance and monitoring related questions.
- Perceptions of relationships with partners and networks.
- Perceptions of funding and donors.
- Opportunities for the future and issues pertaining to sustainability.

A structured open-ended qualitative interview schedule was developed for these interviews, and is available on request. The data was transcribed and used for reporting purposes.

#### **5.4 Interviews with Partners**

In terms of external respondents, the team asked each organisation to provide names and contact details of some of their partners or other organisations operating within their network in order to obtain a sense from these organisations of their perceptions of the value added by the AC and ALN to the sector. These ‘partners’ may have partnered up with the respective organisation on specific projects or worked in close collaboration with one or both of the organisations on a regular basis. The interviews focused on eliciting information on the following:

- Background information on the organisation being interviewed.
- Information on the nature of the relationship with the AC or the ALN.
- Perceptions of the AC or ALN as a partner.
- Perceptions of these organisations’ contributions to: HIV/AIDS, Human Rights, Gender, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) and others.
- Perceptions of challenges and achievements of the AC and the ALN.
- Perceptions on the issues regarding sustainability of the organisation, considering respondents’ knowledge of the sector and context.

A structured open-ended qualitative interview schedule was developed for these interviews, and is available on request. The data was transcribed and analysed for reporting purposes.

#### **5.5 Interviews with Donors**

The Singizi team also conducted a series of interviews with donor organisations. The purposive samples in this regard included some donors linked specifically with either the ALN or AC, and some donors that fund neither of these organisations, but are active in the HIV/AIDS sector more broadly. In the case of donors linked to the organisations under review, the interviews aimed to elicit information on the following:

- Background information on the donor organisation and their overall strategic imperatives and foci for funding.
- How funding priorities influenced their decision to fund the AC or the ALN.
- Other types of organisations funded.
- Funding relationship with the AC or the ALN.
- Views of the organisations’ performance in relation to funding.
- Views on the greatest challenges and achievements of the organization.
- Views on the direction the organisation should take strategically in the future.

- Plans for continued funding.

Those donors interviewed that do not directly fund the AC or the ALN were asked a more generic set of questions, including:

- Their priorities for funding in the HIV/AIDS and related area, such as gender issues, human rights issues, LGBT issues, and so on.
- The types of organisations and programmes that they fund.
- Perceptions of funding in the sector at large.

Structured open-ended qualitative interview schedules were developed for these interviews, and are available on request. The data was transcribed and analysed for reporting purposes.

## **5.6 Surveys and Focus Groups with Beneficiaries**

The Singizi team also conducted some pieces of research at the level of the beneficiaries of each of the organisations under review as follows:

### *5.6.1 Survey of Beneficiaries*

The evaluation team developed a brief and targeted survey questionnaire for beneficiaries of both the ALN and the AC. The surveys aimed to elicit information on the following:

- Primary HIV/AIDS or related focus of the organisation/individual being surveyed.
- Brief description of the organisation, where relevant.
- Ratings of perceived usefulness of the ALN or the AC services.
- Perceptions of how the organisations under review could better assist beneficiaries in the work that they do.

In the case of the AC, 650 survey instruments were posted to beneficiary organisations along with the AC's quarterly newsletter package at the beginning of September 2007. Only a small number of surveys (7) were returned in this way. In addition, the Singizi team attended one of the AC's monthly beneficiary meetings, at which over 120 beneficiary organisations were in attendance. The team requested to conduct focus group discussions with the beneficiaries in order to collect some additional qualitative data from respondents. The AC agreed, and on the 25th of September 2007, a Singizi research team split the 120 plus attendees at the meeting into 5 groups and conducted focus group discussions with these groups. The focus group discussions aimed to elicit more qualitative information of beneficiary perceptions of the AC and questions included:

- Perceptions on the value added by the AC
- Perceptions on how the AC has supported organisations (and individuals) to better serve their constituencies/clients
- Recommendations for how the AC could better support beneficiaries

The survey was administered at this meeting (at the start of the focus group discussions – see below) and a tally of 100 surveys were completed in this way. As such, a total of 107 AC surveys were completed and analysed for reporting purposes. This represents approximately 10% of the AC's reported 1046 beneficiaries.

Of the 107 respondents to the survey, 14 (13%) reported that they were affiliates in their capacity as individuals, and 89 (84%) reported that they were affiliates representing organisations. 4 (3%) did not

provide a response. 104 (96%) of these organisations reported that their primary focus as an organisation (or individual service provider) was HIV/AIDS and health related. The remaining four organisations reported that their primary focus was human rights related. A few organisations added that they also had gender (12) or human rights (31) as an additional focus. Respondents were based in Gauteng, although 22 (20%) of respondents reported that they also operated nationally. The findings are, therefore, strongly biased towards the perceptions of Gauteng affiliates.

A structured open-ended qualitative focus group schedule was developed for the groups, and is available on request. The data was transcribed and analysed for reporting purposes.

In the case of the ALN, the Singizi team received a spreadsheet of beneficiaries from the organisation and sent out emails or faxed questionnaires to all the organisations outlined on this list (a total of 180 organisations). Singizi then conducted telephonic follow-ups to these organisations in order to obtain the highest return rate possible. In some instances, where beneficiaries agreed, team members completed telephonic interviews with beneficiaries to complete the surveys. A total of 27 surveys were returned from ALN beneficiaries, and these have been analysed for reporting purposes. This represents 15% of the total list of 180 beneficiaries contacted.

The majority of respondents to the survey were NGOs and included well-known and long-established organisations such as Black Sash, SA Red Cross Society and Lifeline. A complete list of respondents is available on request. Respondents in the survey are spread across the various provinces in terms of head office location, as well as areas of operation, the highest number per province located in the Western Cape.

## **5.7 Document Review**

As outlined, Singizi was also given access to a series of documents from the Swedish Embassy and Sida, as well as from the organisations. These are listed in Appendix 4. These documents were also reviewed as part of the analysis process.

## **5.8 A Note on the Analysis**

In the analysis process, the Singizi team has reviewed the input and data from each group of respondents separately, and discussed these under key themes and questions. This approach has been adopted to allow for (i) a ‘clean’ analysis of each group of respondents, (ii) the identification of any issues that emerge for a particular group of respondents and (iii) the cross-comparison of responses across groups so as to ascertain the degree of shared understanding across different groups.

In discussion and conclusion sections, these views are then integrated to provide a comprehensive picture.

## **6 Limitations**

It is noted that in an evaluation study of this nature, the vast majority of respondents interviewed for evaluation purposes have a vested interest in ensuring that the organisation continues to receive funding, and therefore that there is a positive evaluation outcome. This is the case in this instance for staff, board members, partners and recipients. Whilst this does not suggest in any way that the findings are not valid, there is a need to read the evaluation report with an understanding of this dynamic.

This is highlighted because while there was significant consistency in the views expressed, which lends further validity to the outcomes outlined in this report, it was found that neither organisations collect information on impact. This hindered the ability of the evaluation team to verify the findings from this process. This issue is considered within the report, resulting in certain recommendations being made pertaining to impact – both at an organisational and at community level. The implications of these recommendations are considered at the level of each organisation, and at the level of Sida.

## Section C: Review of Aids Consortium

### 7 Activities, Results and Vision of the AIDS Consortium

The AC is, in essence, a ‘network organisation primarily concerned with servicing people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS through its affiliate constituencies. By providing communication, capacity, information, collective services, leadership and guidance to [its] affiliates, [they aim] to help shape the response to the fight against HIV/AIDS in various communities’<sup>12</sup>. To undertake this work, the organisation has nine fulltime staff members (which includes two unfilled posts). The existing staff include: Executive Director, Administrator (vacant), Finance Manager, Training Manager, Trainer (vacant), Training Coordinator, Affiliate Officer, Communication Manager, Librarian, Distribution Officer and Frontline Facilitator.

The AC provides a series of services to its affiliates. The AC’s activities are divided as follows: the first set of activities involves a set of core activities around advocacy, communication and information sharing on human rights and HIV/AIDS. The second involves building the capacity of affiliate organisations through intensive capacity building programmes that focus on Human Resources (HR) development, strategic planning, project management, computer literacy, etc. These programmes consist of:

- 3 months of pre-assessment visits to ensure suitability of candidates
- 6 months of ‘classroom based learning’ with the opportunity for experiential learning on site between modules
- 3 months of formal mentoring, peer support and monitoring

These services are outlined in more detail in the table below, and the outcomes and achievements are also indicated<sup>13</sup>:

<b>Programme Areas</b>	<b>Proposed Outcomes</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<b>Capacity Building and Affiliate Development Programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training – one day workshops</li> <li>• Training – Phase based training – this focuses on an intensive organisational capacity building programme for affiliates</li> <li>• Mentorship</li> <li>• Visitation by AC/Monitoring</li> </ul>	Improving the capacity of CBOs through an intensive capacity building programme that focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Resource Mobilisation</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Computer literacy</li> <li>• Financial management</li> <li>• Human resource management</li> </ul>	Successful implementation of programme to CBO affiliates 60 organisations trained in 2006 financial year

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> This data has been extracted from various sources, including the AC Website, the Agreement between Sida and AC on Support during 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007, Report from AC to Sida for the period July 2006–June 2007.

<b>Programme Areas</b>	<b>Proposed Outcomes</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<b>Information and Resources Programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Cyber Café</li> <li>• Distribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a fully functioning, responsive and user-friendly information and resource centre</li> <li>• Build the capacity of member organisations with respect to access to information and effective communication in regard of HIV/AIDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource Centre Usage 4380 visits in 2006 and 1625 visits between Jan and Jun 2007</li> <li>• Cyber Café servicing between 120 and 400 affiliates per month</li> <li>• Distribution packs sent out quarterly</li> </ul>
<b>Affiliates engagement programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership</li> <li>• Advocacy and networking</li> <li>• Monthly meetings</li> <li>• Committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote practical networks with community based organisations and other institutions, including the private sector, that focus on responses to the HIV and AIDS epidemic at a community level</li> <li>• Work with and monitor government at all levels to improve the quality of services, especially as an impact on the epidemic</li> <li>• Support and participate in campaigns undertaken by both the consortium and other relevant stakeholders, which seek to promote basic human rights and address socio-economic inequalities as the impact on the spread of HIV/AIDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1046 affiliates and updating of affiliate database</li> <li>• 133 new affiliates in 2006</li> <li>• Engagement in several advocacy programmes and representation on a number of national forums, including SANAC</li> <li>• Monthly meetings with good attendance (approx 10% of all affiliates)</li> <li>• Affiliate committees meeting regularly</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Profiling</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>	As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated website</li> <li>• Representation on a number of national forums, including SANAC</li> <li>• Press releases</li> </ul>

**Figure 1: AC Programme areas, outcomes and achievements**

As indicated above, the AC is largely achieving its stated programme goals. Perceptions on these and other aspects of the organisation are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

## **8 The Role of the AC in Strategic Partnerships and Networks in the Region: Contributing to National Policy and Legislation**

The AC has established partnerships with a number of organisations on various advocacy campaigns. The organisation reports that it regularly partners with organisations such as COSATU, the ALP, the TAC and the SACC. These partnerships focus on various campaign activities, and some of the recent campaigns have included the ‘One in Nine Campaign’<sup>14</sup> and various campaigns related to the National Department of Health.

The AC also participates in a number of national forums, including:

- Participation and consultation on the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on HIV/AIDS and STIs.
- Sitting on the NEDLAC AIDS Task Team.

<sup>14</sup> The One in Nine campaign was established by seven women’s rights and AIDS organisations in February 2006 to demonstrate support for Kwezi\*, the woman who laid a charge of rape against Mr Jacob Zuma. The Campaign is so named because only one in every nine women who are raped actually report that rape. The campaign focuses on violence against women in South Africa

- Health representative for SANGOCO.
- Representing NGOs on SANAC.
- Representing civil society on the task team developing the Health Charter.
- Sitting on the Joint Civil Society Monitoring Forum.

This section considers the extent to which these partnerships have enabled the organisation to contribute to the national policy and legislative environment.

### 8.1 Perceptions of Board Members

Board respondents generally viewed the AC's relationship with partners as positive, despite reports of occasional in-fighting. One respondent stated that relationships with the TAC and other organisations were important for the AC and reported that:

*“The AC is an activist organisation as well...a rights based organisation...not a conservative group that is not challenging government and people who abuse rights. We associate with progressive groups and networks pushing for rights”.*

Another Board respondent suggested that the focus of such partnerships was again on ensuring that the AC best supported its affiliates. The respondent commented that *“the return on the relationship with the TAC is that AC affiliates are getting treatment”.*

Linked to the above, another board member reported that partners also *“release pressure on us in terms of lack of resources with regards to doing some things. We have the membership, but we tap into existing resources. We don't have to pull in money for those things to happen”.*

Finally, a number of Board respondents commented generally on the importance of partners and networks in ensuring that there is a 'collective voice' around HIV/AIDS issues in the country. As one respondent commented:

*“Really the issue is to build a critical mass in terms of strengthening our collective voice on the things that we all agree needs to be done. Ensuring that everybody wins in the process without feeling undermined or being marginalised by another organisation”.*

This view was emphasised by another Board respondent who commented that at the most elementary level, the AC allows *“CBOs to make their voices heard”.*

Further, a respondent felt that the work of the AC contributed in many ways to national thinking, sometimes less directly, and in other instances quite specifically:

*“You cannot say that AC has caused this or that policy. But you can say that legislation regarding ARVs – obviously the TAC gets credit for that – but the TAC is supported by the AC and so many others. We contribute incrementally. And it is an important role. The AC was asked to coordinate civil society contribution to the National Strategic Plan for AIDS”.*

### 8.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff

Management and other staff were also asked to comment on the AC's relationship with partners and the AC's context in networks more broadly. Management and staff respondents recounted the many partnerships and networks that the AC has tapped into, and provided examples of some of the campaigns that the AC has worked in partnership with other organisations on. In general, staff reported high levels of satisfaction with these relationships and no strategic concerns were raised.

### 8.3 Perceptions of Beneficiaries

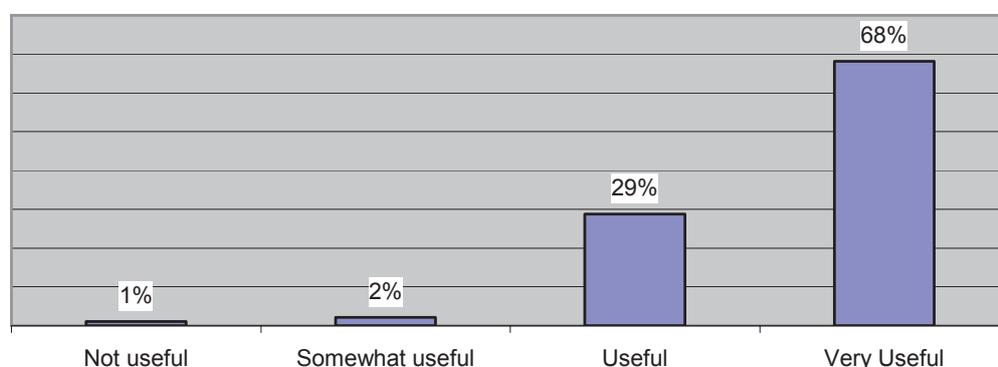
A profile of the AC's beneficiaries who participated in the survey and focus group discussions is available in sections 5.6 (methodology) and in section 10 (which focuses specifically on beneficiaries).

The extent that the AC enables organisations to network and, in this way, access information and participate in advocacy activities was highlighted by affiliate respondents who commented on the importance of various of the AC activities which they perceived to be supporting these objectives. These include: monthly meetings, receipt of quarterly reports, information and newsletters and participation in advocacy campaigns organised by the AC and its partners.

Affiliate respondents were asked to rank activities (such as monthly meetings or use of cyber café, etc.) that they participated in from 'not useful' to 'very useful'. Responses from the survey (augmented by data from the focus group discussions) were as follows:

**Figure 2: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Monthly Meetings<sup>15</sup>**

**Perceptions of Monthly Meetings (n=94)**



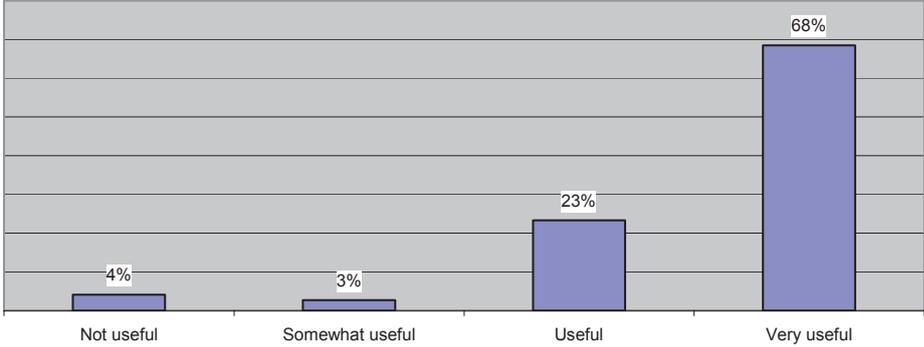
In terms of monthly meetings, as indicated in the figure above, the vast majority of affiliate respondents perceive the monthly meetings as very useful. The small number of respondents who provided lower ratings did not provide reasons for these. Comments on the monthly meetings included:

- *“It helps us to network with other organisations and get new information that helps us with our work” (survey respondent)*
- *“Because one gets exposed to a lot of information that is new and thoroughly researched” (survey respondent)*
- *“Because when they mention anything like meetings or trainings they do keep their promises and they do useful things for us all the time. They give us information for free. They always update us with what is happening and they train us for free just to gain some skills and knowledge” (survey respondent)*
- *“It helps me a lot as in the rural areas, I do not get a lot of the information that we need. We only get that information from meetings like this” (focus group respondent).*

Affiliate respondents rated perceptions of the AC's mailed out quarterly package very highly.

<sup>15</sup> Please note that in all graphs, the figure N denotes the population who answered the question. So, for example, in this instance, 94 respondents answered the question of the total number of survey respondents, which was 107 respondents.

**Figure 3: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Quarterly Information Package**  
 Perceptions of Quarterly Newsletters, Information, Reports (N=73)

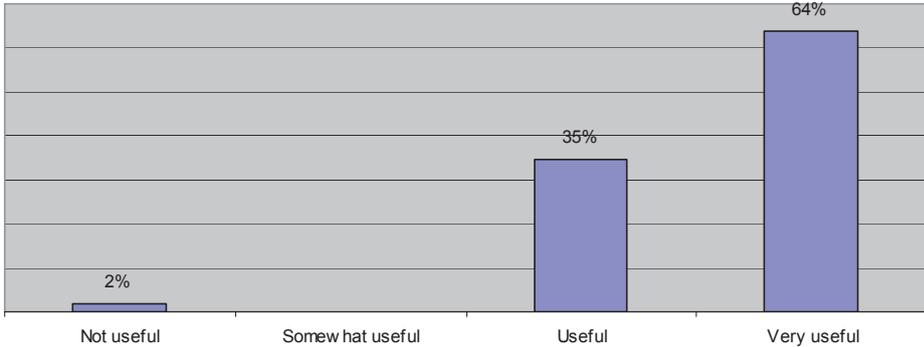


Comments on this included:

- *“It keeps us informed and updated with what’s happening” (survey respondent)*
- *“It keeps us updated and informed and we learn about other developments around us” (survey respondent)*
- *“It assists with reporting and also reminds us about important activities and what others are doing” (survey respondent)*
- *“This serves as a good reference to the work done by AC and other affiliated members” (survey respondent)*
- *“The quarterly news is good for people who sometimes don’t have time to attend meetings but want to be involved” (survey respondent)*

Finally, affiliate respondents were requested to indicate their perceptions of the AC’s advocacy and related campaigns.

**Figure 4: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Advocacy Campaigns**  
 Perceptions of Involvement in Advocacy Campaigns, etc, Reports (N=55)



Affiliate respondents were again very positive in this regard. Comments included:

- *“Advocacy provides us with the knowledge on important matters such as legislative matters that involves government relations to the public” (survey respondent)*

- *“Helps us to raise issues so that the government can assist” (survey respondent)*
- *“Our participation in such campaigns popularises the work we do with the churches, schools and NGOs around our community” (survey respondent)*
- *“As activists we are advocating for one goal” (survey respondent)*
- *“It gives us a platform to easily express our view and our opinions and enable us to approach relevant departments and structures” (survey respondent).*

#### **8.4 Perceptions of Partners**

Partners interviewed for this purpose were requested to indicate the nature of their relationship with the AC and the value of these partnerships. All three partners reported that their relationship had been ongoing, but was further concretised in a civil society HIV/AIDS conference last year<sup>16</sup>.

The TAC respondent indicated that the TAC and the AC have a long-standing relationship, and that the two organisations share resources and networks. For example, the respondent indicated that *‘AC sometimes sponsors one or two buses for the TAC public actions. During the hard time of the AC, the TAC helped them’* the respondent indicated that the partnership is valuable for the TAC as it has the opportunity to *“reach the AC affiliates that would not normally be part of the TAC”*.

When asked about the extent to which the partnership was formal or informal, the TAC respondent indicated that *‘the partnership has more meaning than any formal partnership. It is based on where organisations are coming from and the commitments we have to our constituents. That is the basis’*.

The respondent from COSATU indicated that their partnership with the AC revolved around the campaigns and activities that they performed together, such as work towards the National Strategic Plan.

A respondent from the SACC indicated that it came to partner with the AC as they *‘sought a place where resources could be collectively harnessed, could build capacity’*. The respondent indicated that the *‘joining of forces’* of organisations such as the AC, the SACC, COSATU, the TAC and others permitted *‘more visibility’*, but that this needed now to be translated into something more formal.

When asked to indicate their perceptions of the AC as an organisation, and its contributions to issues of human rights and HIV/AIDS, partner respondents were very positive about the role of the AC and complimented the organisation on its achievements to date.

One partner commented that their monthly meetings were critical, as they *‘integrate important themes into their meetings and it guarantees that key issues are on the table’*. Another partner reported that the work of the organisation on national bodies, such as SANAC, was critical as it *‘brought CBO concerns to a national level’*.

#### **8.5 In Summary**

In terms of *partnerships and networks*, the evidence suggests that the AC is viewed as a serious and active player, contributing to important advocacy campaigns and national debates and forums, where the organisations regularly represent the interests of civil society and provides a voice for CBOs. Partners clearly value the relationship that they have with the AC and view the organisation as significantly contributing to the collective voice.

<sup>16</sup> On October 27 and 28, 2006 350 delegates from civil society met to discuss and assess the national response to HIV prevention and treatment, and to devise programmes to share knowledge and experiences. The Civil Society HIV Prevention and Treatment Congress included such organisations as the AC, COSATU, the SACC, SANGOCO and the TAC.

## 9 The Role of the AC in Addressing the Intersection of HIV/AIDS, Gender and LGBT in South Africa

This section specifically considers the extent to which the AC has managed to integrate gender and issues pertaining to LGBT involvement in their HIV/AIDS work.

### 9.1 Perceptions of Board Members

Board respondents commented specifically on questions pertaining to whether or not they believe there is also an appropriate and sufficient focus on issues such as gender, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) and male involvement/awareness in their work.

Board members indicated that these issues were largely addressed in the ongoing work of the AC, and were included as a special focus on some of the monthly meetings. One Board respondent indicated that the focus of the organisation had increasingly been placed on gender and that issues pertaining to women and the role of men had become paramount. Another board respondent felt that gender issues had been central to the work of the AC from the start and that this focus continues across the entire organisation's current work.

The AC reportedly recently held a special session on the subject of LGBT at one of its monthly meetings. According to one respondent, the AC also was reportedly active in recent campaigns around the murdered activist lesbian women in Soweto (July 2007).

### 9.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff

A management respondent commented that gender is central to the focus of the organisation, and that this is considered within the context of the need for community change, *'our work has become increasingly community driven and in a context where gender issues have become more prominent. But all work is underpinned by human rights'*. This view is shared by staff members, who also commented that the CBO nature of affiliates and concerns around gender issues are shaping the work of the consortium.

Respondents reported that the monthly workshops and one-day training workshops are one mechanism to expose themes, such as gender, human rights and others, and to facilitate training, workshops and discussions around emerging issues within these themes. As one management respondent commented,

*'We use a themed approach. Annually we develop themes for the year. They are obviously flexible. But certainly if there is a human rights theme, we would pick up some of the current issues and themes. With a women's theme we picked up a lot of domestic stuff and so ran a series of training workshops on legal advocacy on women's issues. We selected participants quite strategically so that there would be nodal point of strength in that regard. At the same time we realised that in the road to social change – where women play a major role – you have to include men. We are firm believers in partnerships and so we have targeted men's organisations and worked with them and with women'*

The AC also recently ran some sessions around LGBT issues. As a management respondent commented, *'this has also been a focus. We highlighted last year that this was an area of huge human rights violations. It is a monthly theme this year'*.

### 9.3 In Summary

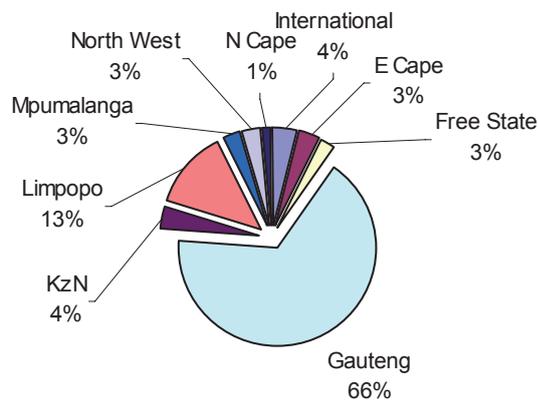
This section suggests that there is a consciousness of the imperative to integrate these issues into the mainstream work of the organisation. This can be attested to in terms of the listings of monthly meeting themes, which have recently included: Youth, Women's Month, Role of Gender and Culture in the HIV/AIDS response, and Human Rights and HIV. The organisation also recently included LGBT issues in their monthly forums. These themes are also reflected in the organisation's newsletters.

## 10 An Assessment of the Perceived Impact of the Organisation's Programmes at Grassroots Level

According to the AC, its beneficiaries (termed affiliates) consist largely of community-based organisations (CBOs), some larger NGOs and individuals providing specific services (such as home-based care workers, etc). Affiliates are required to apply to the AC for membership, and when accepted, sign a service level agreement (SLA) with the organisation outlining both the roles and responsibilities of the AC, as well as those of the affiliate. These applications and SLA processes have been designed to ensure that the values of the AC are upheld.

According to the AC, it has an estimated 1046 affiliates nationally (and internationally). The distribution by province is outlined in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5: Distribution of AC Affiliates**

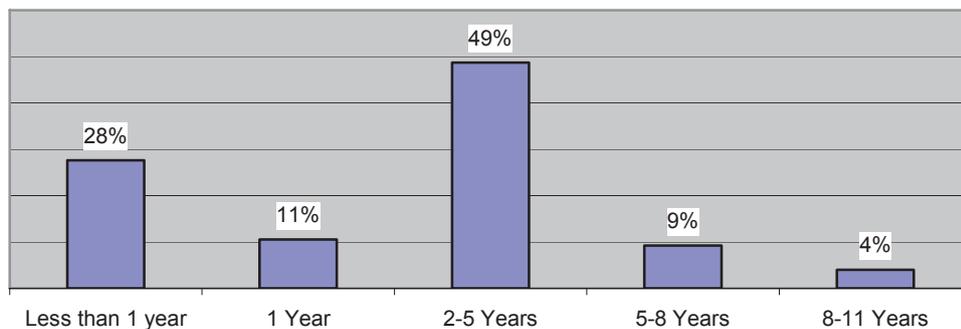


The AC is presently undergoing a process of updating its database of affiliates and getting affiliates to renew their membership with the AC. A new database is presently being developed, and a total of 369 affiliates have currently been included. As a result, the evaluation team was only able to verify 35% of the total database and it is noted that the total number (1046) may reduce once this exercise has been finalised.

As indicated previously, a survey was distributed to members of the AC. In this survey, respondents were requested to indicate the number of years that they had been members of the AC. The distribution in years is represented in the figure below (this is based on the 76 responses received to this question):

**Figure 6: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Years of Membership**

**Affiliates: Years of Membership of AC**



As indicated, almost half of the affiliate respondents have been members of the AC for 2–5 years, and a total of 72% have been affiliates for one year or more. These figures are significant, considering that the vast majority of affiliates are small CBOs, and that the traditional landscape of CBOs is subject to rapid change and relative instability. It speaks of a relatively consistent membership, which suggests that organisations believe that they are deriving value from the relationship and the many of organisations participating in the AC have achieved some form of viability. An in-depth impact study would be required in order to assess whether or not the AC has contributed in any direct manner to the stability and/or sustainability of these organisations.

### **10.1 Perceptions of Board Members**

Board members indicated that a clear focus of the AC is about building the capacity of CBOs, individuals and other civil society organisations working in the fields of HIV/AIDS, gender, human rights and related areas, such as LGBT. Affiliates, in turn, are viewed as the ‘channel’ that links the organisation to people at the level of the community.

A board member indicated that there were some challenges working with and building the capacity of CBOs. The board respondent commented that *‘there is a risk working with grassroots CBOs. Learners die. Learners are trained and then move on to get a job. Donors have unrealistic expectations...you cannot expect a week-long training on financial accounting for CBOs to result in – two weeks later – books that are perfect. It is safer to work with more established organisations, but the needs are greater in these organisations’*.

Another board member reiterated this view, stating that *‘we find that people get trained and look for other work’*, or *‘it is a double-sided sword. Once you upskill someone, then they need money’*.

The issue of staff/volunteer turnover is an issue that was also raised by affiliates themselves, and is outlined in section 10.3 of this report.

### **10.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff**

Management and staff respondents from the organisation stated that the key manner in which the organisation is supporting affiliates is through the organisation’s CBO capacity building training. It was indicated that this programme emerged in response to a need to build the capacity of CBOs to conduct their work in the communities in which they operate. Respondents indicated that their affiliates had an understanding of HIV/AIDS related issues but that there was a great demand for programmes to support the actual work of the organisation, such as fundraising. As one staff member commented, *‘there is such a huge demand for the training, but we are just scratching the surface’*. Another respondent commented that it was gratifying to see some sense of growth in these organisations:

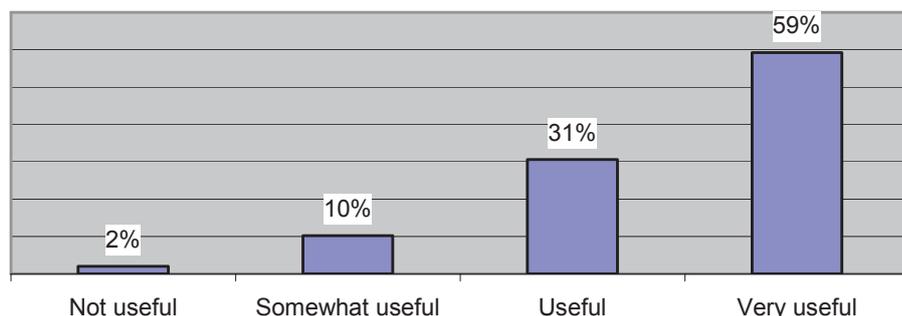
*‘When we started this programme, there were organisations that were nothing, but as time goes on, they report back to us and things are happening and they are getting funding and acquiring resources and they report positively’*.

### **10.3 Perceptions of the Beneficiaries**

With regards to support that beneficiaries are receiving at grassroots level, affiliate respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of AC activities including: Cyber Café, Resource Centre, Training Workshops (one-day) and Capacity Building Training.

Respondents were asked to provide their perceptions of the Cyber Café and the PC skills training.

**Figure 7: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Cyber Cafe**  
**Perceptions of Cyber Cafe (N=49)**



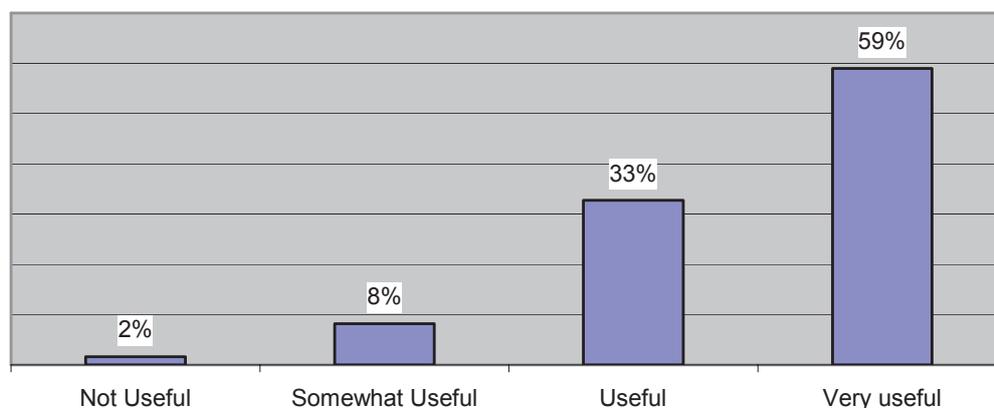
As indicated in the figure above, the vast majority of affiliate respondents rated the Cyber Café as useful or very useful. A small number of respondents ranked this as ‘somewhat useful’. Some of these respondents (as well as respondents in the focus group discussions) reported that there was a need for Cyber Cafes in other locations to increase access, as well as a need for more computers at the current site. As one focus group respondent commented, *‘we need more computers, because we come here from Soweto and you are given limited time because you have to give other people a chance’*.

Other comments included:

- *‘It provides us with a platform to easily carry out our duties. Most of us operate in areas where resources and infrastructure are not easily accessible’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘I travel in the rural areas and those areas don’t have Internet. So for me it is a great honour for the AC to give me the ability to ‘cyber’. They are in the process of helping me to open a small café where people can come and use computers for information. It helped me a lot’ (focus group respondent)*

Affiliate respondents were also very positive about the perceptions of the services and information offered at the Resource Centre.

**Figure 8: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Resource Centre**  
**Perceptions of Resource Centre (N=61)**



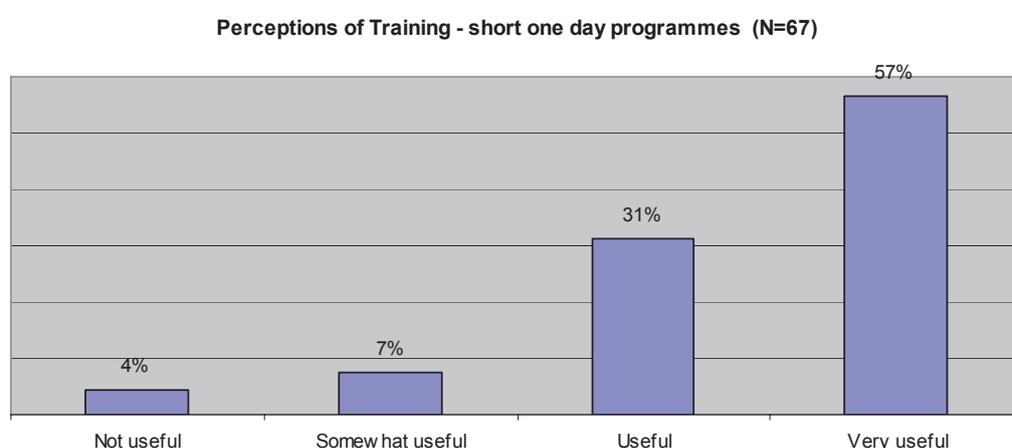
As indicated in the figure above, affiliate respondents were once again very positive about this service. Responses included:

- *‘We get more information on how to care for people with HIV/AIDS by reading through some of the materials at the resource centre’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘Most of us come from areas where you don’t have resources. It gives you the guideline on the field you are in. They (the AC) provide you with everything you need from point A to B’ (focus group respondent)*
- *‘When we do research, we find the librarian very informative and she is always helping us with whatever we need. Some resources they don’t have at the clinics and we find them there’ (focus group respondent).*

One respondent felt, however, that the ‘service was not consistent’, and that there were times when there were no people to assist.

As evidenced in the figure below, affiliate respondents also rated the AC’s one-day training programmes very highly.

**Figure 9: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of One Day Training Programmes**



Positive comments included:

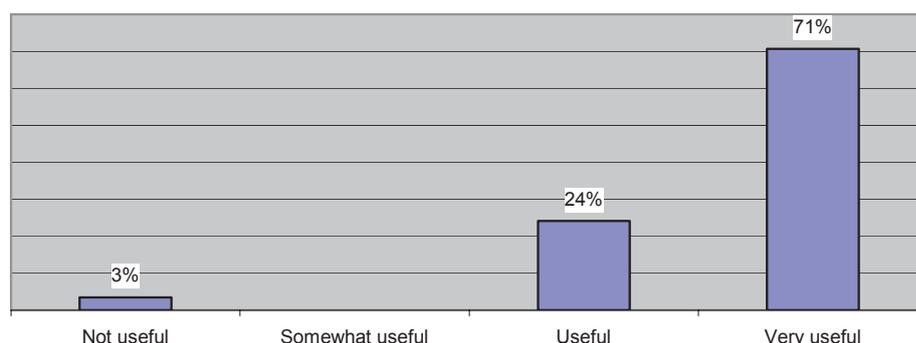
- *‘The workshops are a good space for learning’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘It provides more information especially on human rights issues affecting people living with HIV/AIDS’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘These keep us informed on important issues on HIV/AIDS and other social issues’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘It empowers me to empower the community afterwards’ (survey respondent)*

A few affiliate respondents commented that they felt that some of the training programmes needed to be extended to be delivered over a few days, as required, as current training was sometimes seen as too short. Another respondent also indicated that there was a need to look at providing attendees with certificates for some of the programmes.

Respondents were also very positive about the capacity building training.

**Figure 10: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Capacity Building Training**

Perceptions of Capacity Building Training (N=58)



Comments included:

- *‘We have a difference on HR, filing, governance and computer literacy’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘It motivates the workers and encourages us to go on’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘Their capacity building programme is very helpful and useful’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘It’s massive. You feel more qualified and it gives you the courage and confidence’ (survey respondent)*
- *‘The capacity building training is helping a lot, especially in HR because we didn’t know how to deal with these issues. Now we have informed policies on HIV/AIDS, we have a disciplinary committee and so on and it has really helped’ (focus group respondent)*

Two concerns that emerged in the course of the survey and focus group discussions with regards to the capacity building programme were that: (i) sometimes those individuals who attended the training did not return to the workplace/service and implement what they had learnt and (ii) staff turnover meant that if only one individual per organisation was permitted to attend, this capacity was easily lost.

Comments included:

- *‘We have a challenge. Someone comes to capacity building training, and then he doesn’t implement. This is wasting resources’ (focus group respondent)*
- *‘The AC only allows one person to go for training. They should allow at least three as people move on and get jobs elsewhere’ (focus group respondent).*

#### 10.4 Perceptions of Partners

A partner commented that the AC is perceived as making a substantial contribution to the community organisations at a grassroots level,

*‘They contribute a lot. I don’t know where to begin. I will keep on talking about their community level intervention, which is very important. If you are at policy level, you put it on paper, you cross your fingers and you hope it happens, but the AC is working at ground level. That is their strength. They are important and needed very strongly. COSATU cannot struggle at that level. There would be a huge gap for us if the AC were not there. They are organised and educated, and provide skills to take care of people living with HIV/AIDS’*

When asked what they perceived the greatest challenges of the AC were, two of the partners reported that they felt the organisation had very limited capacity in order to fulfill their mandate. As one partner respondent commented,

*Well, sometimes I feel that they do not have enough capacity in terms of human resources. They have a huge pool of members so this is very challenging. Unlike me, if I need to talk to workers, I can just go to Checkers or Coca Cola, but they have to go to the people at a community level. They have challenging work. If they had enough human resources, they could be across the whole country because I don't think they are all over the provinces. For me, I ask: Why can't they have AC offices all over the country? Then people would not have to phone Joburg if they needed help'.*

## 10.5 Perceptions of Donors

Donors also expressed positive views on the perceived impact of the AC's programmes at a grassroots level.

A CIDA respondent (CIDA provided funding to the AC in the past, but is not presently a funder) indicated that one of the successes of the AC was its ability as an organisation to *'create a sustainable network of good, small CBOs'*, and to expose these CBOs to critical skills, such as computer literacy and proposal writing among others.

A respondent from Belgian Aid indicated that the AC was in touch with civil society in a context where *'national politics are ambiguous'*, making a strong civil society contribution even more important.

A respondent from OXFAM America indicated that the AC is recognised by grassroots organisations *'as a leader and organisation that has an interest in little organisations and their development'*. The respondent commented that *'I go out there. I talk to these people. These people are happy with the support they get from the AC'*.

Ile de France also reported that they were satisfied with the work of the AC, but felt that there was a need for the organisation to have more focus on medical and health related HIV/AIDS issues, rather than organisation capacity building issues. The respondent commented that the organisation needs to

*'work much more on a medical item, to explain more what is HIV/AIDS...to professionalise some of the models so that the community members who are coming are not only coming for administrative and financial models, but for medical education as well. Because there is still a lot of ignorance on these issues in the CBOs'*.

## 10.6 In Summary

Specifically, affiliates are extremely positive about the services that they receive through the AC, and report that they are deriving significant benefit from the relationship with the AC. However, many of the affiliates seek additional and on-going training, and some suggest that this should be formalised. Further, the AC acknowledges that there are gaps in understanding impact at the level of organisational change and development, as well as in increasing community competence, although anecdotal evidence suggests that the benefits are viewed as important. One issue to consider is the concern raised by some respondents that capacity building sometimes has the adverse affect, as individuals then leave the organisation and leave a gap in terms of skills just newly acquired.

With regards to coverage, the AC's operational focus and activities are largely in and around Johannesburg, and affiliates further away are largely only exposed to the quarterly information packages that are mailed out. Ways to expand access to the services provided by the AC is a discussion currently taking place within the AC – and certainly resonates with requests from affiliates – but the interviewees highlight the need to consider the implications of this in terms of both budget and expanded human resources.

Partners and donors are also positive about the role that the AC has played, and is playing, in building the capacity of civil society and CBOs in terms of human rights and HIV/AIDS. As outlined, however, there are concerns about the significant mandate of the organisation in the context of limited resources, human and otherwise.

## 11 An Analysis of the Effectiveness and Overall Governance of the AC Programmes

The AC is a section 21 company based in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. The organisation presently has 9 Board Members and the governance structure consists of the following:

- Non-Executive Board of Directors
- Management Committee
- Finance Committee
- Affiliates Development Committee

As indicated the organisation has eleven plus staff posts in the organigram, of which nine are currently filled.

This section provides an overview of the effectiveness of these governance arrangements from the perspectives of the different role players.

### 11.1 Perceptions of Board Members

Board members were requested to indicate their views of how the AC is governed as an organisation.

Overall, current board respondents reported that they are largely satisfied with the functioning of the board at present. One respondent commented that the board was generally *'doing a good job'* but that there was *'always room for improvement'*. The respondent commented that having the board devote more time to fundraising and funding related issues was one area that required some additional focus.

Board respondents (past and current) also felt that there was a clear delineation of governance-related and operational roles and responsibilities. Some respondents reported that crises in the organisation in the past resulted in a period where board members were more operationally focused, but that this had been reduced as the problems were addressed allowing the board to play a more appropriate role.

As one board member commented:

*'you know there was a time when I was personally worried...I found myself doing operational work. Since 2005 we have slowed down in getting involved in operations. We don't leave the Executive Director to struggle alone, but we do help her to work strategically and to solve problems.'*

Board respondents indicated that at present, there is no confusion of roles and responsibilities. As one Board respondent commented, *'the board provides oversight. There is no blur or confusion'*. Respondents indicated that this was also assisted by a manual that the organisation has in place for board members. Induction processes are conducted to ensure that board members are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Board respondents also commented on the appropriateness of the individuals serving on the board, expressing satisfaction with the high level of skills and strategic input in this regard. One respondent commented that

*'We constantly ask ourselves if the board, as currently constituted, can deliver on its mandate as currently defined. If you work in the HIV /AIDS sector, should you have lawyers around the table, or should you just have medical people? The skill set that the board has at this point is sufficient to meet the role it should fulfill.'*

The one skill set that was identified as lacking from the board is that of an individual with financial skills. Board members explained that this was as a result of the previous member with this set of skills having resigned for personal reasons.

One board respondent also suggested that one of the challenges faced by the board was keeping representatives from the affiliates on the board. He commented that:

*‘The board is structured in a way that individuals are people who were brought into the AC, but had never been members of the AC. So there needs to be affiliate representatives on the AC. But to do that, the affiliates have to cut the umbilical cord with their organisations while they serve on the board. Two affiliates on the board could not rise to challenge. They could not attend four meetings. If somebody misses three or four meetings, they are a liability to the board but we have to have the affiliate voice. There is now a new person...’*

The new person was recently inducted to the board, but has not been serving long enough to establish whether or not they will be able to attend and engage in the meetings.

## **11.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff**

The AC management and staff were positive about the governance structures and current board members of the AC. These were seen to be functioning well after a period in the past where the board was, by necessity, too operationally focused due to the management crisis in the organisation. A management respondent reported that their focus had now reverted to the strategic, and commented that *‘I think we have got it right now’*.

A management respondent also indicated that the governance committees were functioning well. It was explained that these committees are largely constituted by affiliates, who are compensated for their activities in this regard in terms of transport and refreshments. Each affiliate on a committee is required to sign an MOU that outlines roles and responsibilities and a management respondent indicating that *‘if they don’t pitch or participate, it kind of works itself out and we recruit other members to take their place’*. However, this was not seen to be a major concern at present.

## **11.3 In Summary**

The findings indicate that there appears to be a strong governance structure in place, and that it is operating effectively. It was clearly indicated that there was a period in which the board needed to get involved in operational issues brought on by the management crisis in the organisation in the past, but it was reported that the board is now functioning strategically and is not getting involved unnecessarily in operational issues. The board also appears to provide strong strategic support for the organisation.

# **12 An Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Management of the AC Programmes**

This section considers the effectiveness of the management arrangements within the organisation. As with the other sections, these are considered from the perspectives of the different role players and then an overarching analysis is provided.

## **12.1 Perceptions of Board Members**

Board respondents were requested to indicate their perceptions of how the organisation is being managed at an operational level. It was explained that these findings need to be located in the context of a recent history of operational and management problems in the organisation. Whilst these are not recounted in full for the purposes of this report, it should be noted that problems with mismanagement emerged in the organisation in 2003. These challenges resulted in the organisation facing severe financial problems, and resulted in a review process to consider whether or not to close the organisation. In late 2004 a decision was made to keep the organisation going, and emergency committees were set up to save the organisation from closure<sup>17</sup>. Thereafter, the organisation went through a recovery

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<sup>17</sup> A summary of the internal AC crisis is outlined in its *Strategic Review Report, 5 April 2006: Report and Recommendations from the strategic review process, Feb–Mar 2006*.

period with the appointment of a new acting Executive Director, followed by a brief period in which the post was permanently filled, and, when this proved to be problematic, back to an acting Executive Director until the present person was employed in April 2006.

Board members' comments on the present management of the organisation were overwhelmingly positive. Comments included:

*'It is far more effective now than it was. Cannot tell you how tidy things are compared with the chaos of the past.'*

*'The place is transformed. There is a vast improvement especially since [the current Executive Director] was appointed. The morale is high amongst staff. The dead wood has been pushed out. There has been some broom-sweeping. At one stage the staff were very politicised...Most of those people have moved on. The calibre of the staff has also improved'*

One board respondent commented that there had been some concerns about the fact that the new incumbent was white. As he reported, *'the expectation was that the AC would hire an all black staff'*. But he went on to say that, *'She has proven us [the Board] right in our decision to hire her'*.

Another board respondent felt that the organisation had finally worked itself into a situation in which it was able to fulfil its potential. As the respondent commented, *'we had a painful journey but you know we needed to go through there. This is where the AC should be now.'*

In summary, the AC board is presently very positive about the management of the organisation and the skills and competence of the current management team.

## **12.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff**

The AC managers interviewed for this evaluation process outlined that the AC recently (2006) conducted a strategic review process in order to 'sharpen the vision' of the organisation. The review was conducted in the context of an acknowledgement that the organisation had been 'in crisis' for the preceding three years (between 2003 and 2006) as a result of mismanagement – financial and otherwise. An initial impact assessment conducted in 2003 found 'i) that the EXCO was not acting in the best interests of the organisation; ii) a lack of operational performance monitoring; iii) unauthorised use of programme funds for core costs; iv) poor management and communication and low morale; v) unplanned and reactionary financial management; vi) no financial reporting; and vii) unjustified spending on excessive and unexplained stipends and costly consultants'<sup>18</sup>.

The organisation was, however, able to pull itself back from the brink of financial collapse and begin to rebuild between 2003 and 2006, resulting in a review of the strategic focus of the organisation, as outlined above. The review was a comprehensive process that was conducted in consultation with beneficiaries, staff and other key stakeholders.

As stated previously, in April 2006 a new Executive Director was employed by the organisation, and several staff members were replaced with new individuals.

One of the first activities that took place thereafter was a "re-branding" of the organisation, with a change in logos and overall look and feel. A management respondent reported that

*'A big achievement was a change of logo and that was very indicative of a new vibrancy. The old one was tired and stale and people saw us as having problems but now people are sitting up and taking notice and we are now making things happen. Our newsletters and things reflect who we are.'*

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<sup>18</sup> The AIDS Consortium, *Strategic Review Report, 5 April 2006: Report and Recommendations from the Strategic Review Process, February–March 2006*.

The changeover in staff is also seen as positive by management. As one staff member commented:

*'I found that information was not shared before and people were not taking ownership and a lot of team building was required and the initial thing was to get the right people in place. The "passengers" left but I think our current team are strong. Most are new and they are performing well. There are only three people who are here from the old team. I think people do take ownership now. There is new blood and energy'.*

This energy was apparent in interviews with the AC staff members, who reported high satisfaction with their jobs, although there were some requests for benefits, such as staff wellness programmes. As one staff respondent commented, *'there is no funding for team building or wellness and the environment that we work in is stressful and we need to unwind. Can't someone fund that?'*

Staff also state they felt that there are strains on the capacity within the organisation. For some, there were simply too many affiliates and too little time to service each one in terms of the requests that the AC is reportedly bombarded with. Another staff respondent indicated that one of the things that sometimes strained the capacity of the organisation was that it was viewed as a 'one stop shop'. The respondent indicated that

*'We have sort of become a lifeline and the homeless and jobless and so on come here wanting jobs and food. This is a real challenge. We have some contacts of places, but you find that government doesn't fund places of shelter and so on. The ideal situation would be to refer, but you sit on the phone for hours for this person. Some won't leave. People think if you come here you get help with anything'.*

A final management-related issue that emerged the interviews pertains to reporting, monitoring and evaluation activities. Respondents at a management and lower level agreed that there was not enough focus within the organisation on reporting and on appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to empirically understand the impact of the work that the AC is doing. One staff member commented that *'you get so busy doing work that is important that you neglect to report on it. As a result, the organisation doesn't get as much profiling as it should'.*

A management respondent reported that one of the ways in which impact could be better assessed would be to encourage affiliates to report with simple monitoring tools. However, it was acknowledged that this would likely be a challenge and would require capacity building and training. The respondent acknowledged that NGOs in general are *'very bad at M&E'* and that this needed to be reviewed in order to move forward.

It was indicated, however, that the kind of reports required for donors were successfully prepared and delivered by the organisation. The challenges, rather, lay in understanding the outcomes and impact on the ground, and thereby understanding the real contributions of the AC.

### **12.3 Perceptions of Donors**

When asked to share their views on the activities of the AC to date, one respondent from CIDA (who are not currently funding the AC) commented that *'they have been slightly above average, quite frankly. There was a time where there were problems, but that has settled down now'*. The CIDA respondent indicated that he felt there were some challenges in terms of staff capacity to uphold contractual obligations, especially in terms of reporting timeously. The respondent also indicated that the organisation needed to adhere to protocols in terms of communication.

Another donor respondent (OXFAM) with a longer relationship with the AC, however, indicated that reporting issues were *'solid'* and that they had never had to *'chase reports'*. The respondent also felt that the AC was more than fulfilling its obligations, and that the relationship was very positive:

*‘Sometimes as donors it is good when we have a good partner that is out there doing the best work and communicating. We value the partnership with AC. I have attended the board meeting and the AGM. I have seen a level of transparency that I don’t see in other organisations’.*

The Ile de France donor respondent indicated that there was ‘great reporting’ on the part of the AC, and that this was important, as the politicians in control of the funding took such reports very seriously. The respondent commented that *‘this is why they [French elected leaders] came to South Africa last year. It was important for them to come and visit some of the CBOs and the AC’.*

#### **12.4 In Summary**

At the level of operational management, it is clear that respondents see the organisation as having successfully emerged from a serious management crisis, and that the current Executive Director and the staff team are considered strong and capable of taking the organisation forward. Donors also generally express satisfaction with the AC’s accountability and reporting.

There are concerns raised, however, about the capacity of the organisation to fulfil its mandate. Both AC and external respondents (such as donors) comment on the limited human capacity of the organisation to manage its significant task. The staff body itself indicates that it is currently stretched in terms of meeting the needs of affiliates, and that there is broad acknowledgement that the organisation will not be able to expand its services without serious consideration to the manner in which internal capacity can be built and expanded either prior to, or parallel with, these developments.

### **13 An Analysis of the Organisation’s Funding Profile**

The AC receives funding from a variety of donors, which presently include:

- Sida
- HIVOS (Netherlands)
- Oxfam America
- Ile de France in conjunction with the Department of Health
- Belgian Development Corporation

The AC reports that approximately 25% of its funding is from Sida.

The AC reported that some of the donors were ‘quite new’ and had been brought on board as a result of the activities of the current Executive Director.

It should be noted that the AC is also currently in discussion with Irish AID regarding proposals for expanding into the Limpopo Province. The proposals include opening up a fully-fledged AC centre in Limpopo, including a resource centre and a cyber café, as well as putting in place resources to replicate services, such as the monthly meetings and training workshops.

#### **13.1 Perceptions of Board Members**

Board members were also requested to indicate their perceptions of funding issues facing the organisation. A number of concerns were raised in this regard:

Firstly, some board respondents felt that limited funding impacted on how much the AC could do as an organisation. As one respondent commented, *‘entities like a mining company require a resource (the ground) to mine. If you run out of land, you are done. But the AC requires a budget to carry out its mandate. Can you succeed with two million when you really need ten?’*

Another board respondent felt that the AC operated well, considering the budgetary limitations. She commented that *finance is an issue in terms of adequate funds to do what needs to be done. But they do remarkably well with what they have. There is good value for money at the AC?*

This respondent also commented that the AC operated in an environment in which there was significant competition for funds and resources. He commented that *you don't want to compete with a sister (actual affiliate) who is feeding 1000 kids in Soweto...but the capacity building does help these types of organisations to sustain work and to carry out their own mandates?*

Another issue raised by board respondents related to the reliance on donor funding cycles – and decisions pertaining to continuing or ceasing funding in relation to these – and the absence of “fall-back plans” in the event that anticipated funds do not come through. Another respondent reiterated this view and commented that there appeared to be *never more than nine months worth of funding lined up* and that this contributed to a sense of instability around funding, especially in the absence of a set of reserve funds.

Another board respondent reported that many donors were not interested in funding human rights organisations and commented that *corporate donors don't like to fund human rights organisations. If you are funding a nice little group of orphans, they'll give you money. They are not going to fund a human rights organisation?* The respondent also commented that government departments also did not like funding the AC, as *government won't fund organisations that criticize them?*

Some board respondents acknowledged that there was a need to continue to explore and access different aspects of the donor pool, but commented that this took time and was resource intensive, especially for the Executive Director:

*Donors don't want to meet anybody but the Executive Director. The Executive Director gets pulled in all directions – governance, fundraising, HR, programmes. I understand where it comes from, but the Executive Directors just cannot do it all. Funders don't want to see a development officer. There are enormous funds to be tapped, but there is not an Executive Director in this country that has the energy to tap it?*

Finally, board respondents indicated that many donors (although it was acknowledged that Sida was expressly not one of these) will not fund core costs, and will only fund programmes and/or interventions. This further limited the extent to which AC can build and enhance internal capacity. As one respondent commented:

*Some donors won't fund salaries and we don't have robots to carry out the work. We are small, but we do a lot of work...it should be easy for any donor to see that we are not about creating a huge bureaucracy. To support our affiliates we need people properly qualified to provide that support?*

When asked how donors, and Sida in particular, could better support the AC, some board respondents indicated that increased funding from Sida would be welcomed. Other respondents added that Sida funds were viewed in a particularly positive light in the organisation, as they do not come with *all these rules and obligations that other donors have?*

Another respondent suggested that donors need *a much stronger network in this country?* The respondent suggested that donors should get together and discuss who, what and how they were funding, and better coordinate across their organisations. The respondent suggested that *they could even partner in longer funding contracts. Instead, the way it is now is that an organisation gets a million Rand from each?*

Board respondents also suggested that, in general, longer donor funding cycles (longer than one year) would assist organisations such as the AC to plan better.

### 13.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff

AC managers interviewed for this process indicated that AC's financial crises of the past had been resolved, but that funding remained an obvious concern for the organisation on an ongoing basis.

The Executive Director reported that when she came on board, there was sufficient funding for a few months only, and that she took an active decision to start fundraising. She commented that *'I felt passionate about the model of the AC and wanted to turn the funding situation around. I have just started developing these [donor] relationships'*.

One of the primary concerns raised about funding by the AC staff and management was the fact that many donors do not contribute to the core funding of the organisation, creating a situation in which salaries, rental and other monthly expenses are constantly under strain:

*'It is a challenge that funders still loathe to support core costs like salaries. For the kind of work that we do, we need outstanding people. One of the challenges before was that low paid staff could not deliver. I believe you need to look after people. Sida is funding core costs and we get a bit from others but that is still a serious challenge. They often expect fantastic programme delivery but do not want to pay the salaries'*.

Other emerging issues are the imperatives to expand. A management respondent reported that expansion into other provinces meant an expansion of funding, and that this remained an issue that was under review.

### 13.3 Perceptions of Donors

Donor respondents were requested to indicate their overall priorities for funding, and how these linked to their funding of the AC. Each donor organisation indicated that they had specific priority areas in HIV/AIDS, but that the specific reasons for funding the AC were linked to its work in supporting CBOs and grassroots organisations. Comments included:

- *'...so we are talking about supporting HIV/AIDS research and strengthening public sector work... and local NGOs (and this is where the AC fits in), strengthening and building the capacity of beneficiaries and other networks to enhance their role' (CIDA)*
- *'Their proposal fits in with our sector priorities...the AC project is included in Belgian aid for local NGOs – it is a specific type of funding that we have. They also work with other organisations' (Belgian Aid)*
- *'We know their work. We know that they had some problems, but have moved on from that. We don't fund CBOs, but we can reach them through the AC' (OXFAM America)*
- *'We did a study by one of our people who is working in Aids prevention...when he saw the link between the organisation [AC], the CBOs and the affiliates – how they worked together and the content of the work – we decided to work with the AC (Ile de France)*

The Belgian Aid respondent indicated that the relationship was new, whilst OXFAM America indicated that their relationship with the AC goes *'way back'*.

### 13.4 In Summary

Respondents reported that there are challenges in obtaining the commitment of some donors to contribute to operational costs, and that this needs to be addressed. Other funding issues emerged including the challenges that NGOs generally face in terms of being able to make longer strategic plans, as financial survival is generally dependent on short cycles of funding, and a battle to compete with other NGOs across the sector. Some respondents also spoke to the challenge – or seeming contradiction – of sometimes needing to compete with organisations that they are also supporting.

## 14 An Assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges and Opportunities

The section begins with an outline of some of the relevant issues raised by role players about future opportunities. It then provides a brief analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and challenges that appear to be emerging from the research findings for this review with a view to consider the implications of the AC's readiness to tap into these opportunities.

### 14.1 Perceptions of Board Members

Board Members were asked to comment on their perceptions of the future of the AC and ways in which the AC could ensure sustainability in going forward. Board members suggested that the organisation has the opportunity to expand into other provinces. Whilst the AC has affiliate members in other provinces, most services including training, monthly meetings, advocacy campaigns, the cyber café and resource centres are all focused in Gauteng and, even more narrowly, around Johannesburg.

According to board members, there is a discussion within the AC about setting up an AC base in Limpopo (where the organisation has 13% of its affiliates), or a set of decentralised centres across the province. One board member reported that he hoped to see the organisation spreading into all nine provinces and setting up similar bases there.

Issues raised by board members pertaining to sustainability in going forward included the possibility of beginning to charge affiliates for services (they are currently not charged) as they become more sustainable organisations in their own right. As one board respondent commented, *'they work with the poorest of the poor, so it is difficult. But as affiliates grow, the AC should start charging more membership fees'*.

Another board respondent reported that he felt that issues of sustainability in the long term would need to be driven by the context and environment in South Africa around HIV/AIDS.

### 14.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff

Management respondents indicated that issues around sustainability were increasingly being looked at by the organisation. Some income generating proposals are currently being reviewed including expanding the Cyber Café to another venue and making it available to paying customers. Services would include access to computers and the internet, as well as PC literacy and typing courses. The organisation is also reportedly looking at increasingly offering some of its training programmes to corporates, and may even consider creating a network of fee-paying corporate affiliates.

The other issue raised by management and staff with regards to a possible point of future direction, relates to current proposals for expanding into the Limpopo Province. As outlined previously, a management respondent indicated that discussions are currently underway with Irish AID, a Limpopo-based organisation called CHOICE, and the AIDS Foundation. Current proposals include opening up a fully-fledged AC centre in Limpopo, including a resource centre and a cyber café, as well as putting in place resources to replicate services such as the monthly meetings and training workshops. There are also proposals for an intensive five-year CBO capacity building training initiative in the province. Limpopo is the area in which the AC has its second-largest group of affiliates, but the primary reason for the selection of this province is as a result of Irish AID priorities in this geographic area. The respondent indicated that CHOICE would be involved in some of the technical skills training, and that the AC may share offices with the organisation if the proposals came through. Discussions are still underway in this regard.

### 14.3 Perceptions of Beneficiaries

A final question in the survey and in focus group discussions asked beneficiaries to indicate their perceptions of how the AC could support beneficiaries more effectively in the future.

One of the repeated themes emerging were requests for more of what the AC is already doing, namely: more information, more training (additional and longer training as well as on-going), more computers in the existing cyber café and more cyber cafes in general.

Some affiliate respondents also indicated the need for the AC to spread its services to different provinces and regions, so that people living in other areas could access their services more readily.

Another theme that emerged consistently relates to funding for the CBOs. Some specifically requested additional training programmes on fundraising, whilst others directly requested that the AC support the CBOs by providing them with funding. In one of the focus group discussions, this issue resulted in a short debate amongst affiliate respondents. When one respondent argued that the AC should be financially assisting and supporting affiliates, another respondent argued that this was not the role of the AC, and that the organisation could only assist to build capacity in other ways.

Many other affiliate respondents also called for material support in one form or another, including equipment, salaries, and groceries for PLWAs. On one level, these requests indicate the levels of desperation that some of the organisations and individuals feel in terms of accessing sufficient resources. One HBC worker, for example, reported that she desperately needed rubber gloves when cleaning and caring for terminal patients at their homes, but did not have any funds for this. On the other hand, it reveals a need for the AC to look at ways that its affiliates can be supported to access resources.

A further issue with regards to programmes and strategic focus is that the organisation is increasingly looking towards accrediting its programmes, both as a possible avenue for future sustainability, as well as because of an increasing call from affiliates for some form for formal certification. As one affiliate respondent commented,

*'Issues around skills and skills development and career progression are also becoming more important. People [affiliates] want to know if they are going to get a certificate, and hence our focus on accreditation. We have just appointed a consultant and we are going to develop a plan to look at accreditation.'*

#### **14.4 In Conclusion**

At the levels of *governance and management*, it is clear that the AC appears to have emerged out of a period of crisis and instability, and has been able to move into a period of building and refining internal systems and capacity. This puts the organisation in a position of strength, as it moves forward into the next period. This view is shared by donors, who report satisfaction with the AC's reporting and accountability.

Another of the AC's strengths lies in its *partnerships and networks*. The organisation has developed and maintained important relationships with partners such as COSATU, the TAC and the SACC, and has been involved in a number of campaigns on an ongoing basis with these organisations, all of which are nationally strong organisations in their own rights.

The AC also sits in a number of key forums and structures that provide it and its affiliate base with significant opportunities for promoting and sharing the views of civil society. This provides what has been described as a legitimate "voice" for CBOs and other civil society organisations in the human rights and HIV/AIDS environment in South Africa.

There is broad consensus that the *organisation's programmes and strategic focus* are on track, with several respondents acknowledging that the organisation is, and needs to remain, flexible and continue to respond to the HIV/AIDS and related environment in South Africa, and the needs of its constituents. This pertains to the work the organisation is doing with regards to advocacy and information sharing, as well as to some extent to the training and capacity building offered.

Respondents across the board have positively reported on the AC's *programmes and activities*. Affiliates are effectively and regularly using the resources and capacity building interventions that the AC makes available which demonstrates a clear strength of the organisation. Attendance at the monthly meetings is one indication of this.

One emergent issue pertains to the extent to which the capacity building of CBOs is achieving what it intends, which is: (i) the development of the CBO that is receiving the capacity building, and (ii) ultimately impacting on communities served by these affiliates.

With regards to the development of CBOs, some respondents have raised questions about individuals receiving training from the AC and then leaving the organisation (either due to personal reasons or through moving on to other organisations). The impact that this has on the ability of the organisation to strengthen requires further consideration. On the positive side, the training is intensive, and so those organisations that participate effectively, and hold onto their human resources in the post-training period, reportedly do benefit. However, it has been noted that this is not systematically reviewed and that there is not a clear methodology for assessing organisational impact.

With regard to community impact, it is again acknowledged that while there is an indication of the work that the affiliates undertake in the community, and the perceived value of these activities, the extent of this impact is unclear. It is felt that the AC may not possess the capacity to assess impact at a community level.

The issue of evaluating organisational and community impact is considered in more depth in the final recommendations of this report.

In terms of the *future direction* of the AC, the picture emerging suggests that the existing focus of the organisation is being met with positive responses at both a national and an affiliate level. Specifically, there is emphasis placed on the role that the AC can play in bringing with it a 'grassroots voice'.

There are also discussions about income generating activities with a view to increasing the AC's sustainability, but these are currently only at a discussion stage, and would require resources and investment. These discussions include expanding the Cyber Café resources in Braamfontein, and seeking accreditation for the programmes that the organisation is currently running. The AC reports that it has brought on board a consultant to begin looking at the possibilities for accreditation of some of its programmes, especially components of the affiliate capacity building programmes. This is being investigated as CBO respondents increasingly articulate a preference for accredited programmes that can be certificated. In addition, if the programmes can be accredited, the AC may consider offering some of its training programmes to paying customers, such as corporates.

As outlined, discussions are also underway to expand the AC into the Limpopo Province and to set up a fully-fledged AC service in that Province. These proposals are currently under discussion, but will have significant implications for the AC if the proposals are agreed-upon. While it is clearly valuable to ensure that the CBOs in the Limpopo Province have access to the range of AC services, there is a need for the AC to consider whether the establishment of its own office is the most viable option, and to ensure that the capacity and resources are in place for this, that there is capacity to manage these resources if this option is pursued, and that this does not negatively impact on operations in the Gauteng Province.

## **15 Recommendations Emerging**

This section provides key recommendations specific to the AC. Other cross-cutting recommendations are contained in the final section of this report which includes strategic questions for the Swedish Embassy and Sida to consider.

### **15.1 Recommendations at the Strategic Level of the AC**

- Consider the range of options for ensuring that the AC services are available in other provinces, and if the establishment of an AC office is pursued, then ensure that there is a clear mapping of the implications of this type of expansion into other provinces. Then based on this analysis, determine what the requisite capacity requirements may be and develop a risk management strategy to ensure that operations within Gauteng are not negatively impacted on by the expansion process.
- A careful review of the training should take place to ensure that it supports organisational development as well as individual development. This may require certain aspects of the training to be strengthened (it is also noted that shifts towards accreditation need to be carefully managed lest it tips the programme towards the individual and away from an organisational focus).
- The organisation should develop a set of basic evaluative tools that can provide the organisation feedback in a more systematic manner about the contribution that they are making at the level of organisational and community development.

## Section D: Review of Aids Legal Network

### 16 Activities, Results and Vision of the AIDS Legal Network (ALN)

The AIDS Legal Network (ALN) is a non-governmental human rights organisation based in Cape Town, South Africa. The organisation is committed to “the promotion, protection and realisation of fundamental rights and freedoms of people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS through capacity building, education and training, research, networking, campaign, lobbying and advocacy activities.”<sup>19</sup> The ALN has a total of five staff members including: one Director; two trainers (one funded by Sida); a networking, campaigns and advocacy person responsible for provincial activities, and a logistician.

The primary focus of the organisation is to “respond to legal and ethical challenges presented by HIV/AIDS realities.”<sup>20</sup> The organisation has committed itself to a set of activities based on this objective. The table below highlights the proposed deliverables and the extent to which they have been achieved.

Programme Areas	Proposed Outcomes	Achievements
Networking and Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of HIV/AIDS realities and challenges from a human rights perspective amongst civil society</li> <li>• Develop and enhance the capacity of civil society enabling an effective human rights based response to HIV/AIDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular publications which have an increasing distribution network (including ALQ and other forms of media such as newsletters as well as radio, television and newspaper articles)</li> <li>• Regular Provincial Meetings, networking seminars and public debates</li> </ul>
Human Rights Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness and understanding of fundamental human rights, HIV/AIDS, principles of equality, non-discrimination, human dignities, equal access, etc</li> <li>• Facilitate a process to change behaviours and attitudes</li> <li>• Capacitate the communities and public at large with the knowledge of human rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One and two days workshops on request on HIV/AIDS, Gender, HIV/AIDS and the law, Gender based Violence and HIV/AIDS, Human Rights, Sexuality, Paralegal training as well as train the trainer workshops</li> <li>• Running a Legal Advice Desk.</li> </ul>
Social Policy Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and increase awareness in the gaps in implementing existing legislation and policies</li> <li>• Promote the implementation of these laws</li> <li>• Identify and recommend policy changes to address gaps and improve the quality of life of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Reports (specifically using the ALQ)</li> <li>• Lobbying through different forums (details in the report)</li> </ul>
Lobbying and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and ensure a more adequate and effective response to human rights and ethical challenges pertaining to HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• Promote and facilitate a holistic and integrative rights based response to all HIV/AIDS realities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in campaigns of partners</li> <li>• Initiating certain key campaigns with a focus on non-discrimination</li> <li>• Organise an Annual Human Rights Conference</li> </ul>

<sup>19</sup> Extracted from [www.aln.org.za](http://www.aln.org.za)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Programme Areas	Proposed Outcomes	Achievements
Organisational Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and maintain the organisational capacity and resources</li> <li>• Enable and ensure adequate and effective implementation of the Projects objectives and activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff is involved in meetings which ensure that there is a shared understanding of the values and direction of the organisation</li> </ul>

**Figure 11: ALN Programme areas, outcomes and achievements**

The organisation provided the evaluation team with copies of the ALQ, as well as copies of the campaign materials and resources. Further, the organisation provided lists of organisations and individuals that attend their provincial workshops and training sessions. These served to verify activities although they do not provide an indication of impact and the organisation does not have a cogent system for determining impact. This is an issue that is explored further in this report.

## **17 The Role of the ALN in Strategic Partnerships and Networks in the Region: Contributing to National Policy and Legislation**

The ALN was formed out of a commitment to establishing networks on law, ethics, human rights, and HIV/AIDS in every country in Africa. In keeping with this, the organisation has a long history of strong partnerships. In a Sida Assessment Memo (dated 2004.12.13) the imperative for the organisation to form viable partnerships to increase its grassroots capacity and lobbying and advocacy activities was emphasised as a key step for the organisation to increase its impact again.

This evaluation suggests that the organisation seems to have developed strategies to address this risk, and the organisation has a number of partnerships focused on policy and legislative work. The organisation also has partnerships that support grassroots work, but this is discussed in Section 19. Key partners identified include: KwaZulu Natal Network on Violence Against Women; Lethabong Advice Centre; United Sanctuary Against Abuse; Free State Network on Violence Against Women; Phaphamani HBC; Kwakhanya Support Group; Phalaborwa Foundation; One in Nine Campaign and PPASA.

The ALN has worked with these partners on a number of national campaigns and structures, including: The One in Nine Campaign; Legal Recognition of Domestic Partnerships; SANAC; ATHENA (international network advancing gender equity and human rights in the global response to HIV/AIDS). The organisation also works on a number of smaller campaigns, as these emerge and are deemed relevant.

### **17.1 Perceptions of Board Members**

Board members were also asked to indicate their perceptions of the ALN's partners and networks, and whether or not these were appropriate and/or functioning optimally. One board respondent explained that the ALN had a broad network of partners and organisations that it worked with, and that various groups worked together on specific campaigns and/or pieces of advocacy work. As one respondent commented:

*“A partner is an organisation that I can say to ‘I have a campaign to do and I need your support’. Then we meet to decide how to do it and who will do what. We work together towards the same objective”.*

Another board respondent reported that the ALN valued its networks, as it was the way that the organisation “plugged into the system and helps to get the message of the organisation out there and to bring new people in who wish to make use of the ALN's services”.

However, one board respondent indicated that one challenge with regards to partners and networks was that the organisation was not linked in to Gauteng networks in any meaningful way. Whilst the Gauteng network is seen as “overloaded”, it is also a hub on advocacy activity. The board respondent explained that some of the original networks with Gauteng organisations were broken in the period that the ALN was experiencing an internal crisis, and that these had not yet been completely re-established.

Another board member reported that sometimes there was a need to be cautious about whom the organisation partnered with for a particular campaign. He commented that “*partners need to have common views and objectives. We would not partner with anyone that would affect our independence, like a pharmaceutical company*”.

When asked specifically whether or not the ALN worked with the AC or the ALP, respondents indicated that the AC and the ALN generally had not worked together, as they tended to have a different focus, and that in the case of the ALP, there were instances in which the two organisations elected to work together, but that their scope as organisations was different.

## **17.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff**

The management respondent indicated that the ALN is networked into a number of national campaigns and structures, such as the One in Nine Campaign, the Alliance for the Legal Recognition of Domestic Partnerships, SANAC work, and so on.

In addition, the ALN’s networking activities involve provincial workshops which focus on public debates around current issues. The Director of the ALN indicated that these were initially Cape Town-based but are now also conducted in other provinces including Mpumalanga (where there is a strong focus on traditional healers and HIV/AIDS service organisations), Limpopo, North West, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Free State. The respondent indicated that these generally did not happen in Gauteng, which was seen as “over-resourced”.

The Executive Director of the ALN indicated that the ALN had recently undertaken a strategic review process outlining what the organisation will be focusing on until 2011, which has been earmarked as the next assessment point. The Executive Director indicated that this review took place in the context of the ALN’s involvement with the NSP and the priorities emerging from this process. The organisation is currently working on the development of four booklets on the NSP from a civil society perspective. The Executive Director indicated that the ALN was part of the consultation processes on the NSP, but that this “*had little impact*” and that the organisation decided that a better approach would be to “*support the process, but outside of government*”. For the next period, it was explained that campaign work and programmatic activities would increasingly focus on the NSP and civil society’s contribution thereto.

Executive Director indicated that the ALN has worked with the ALP on certain issues, particularly on SANAC, but that this is not a consistent arrangement and that they have different areas of focus and that there are complexities created by their location in the Western Cape rather than Gauteng, where much of the policy development work takes place.

Executive Director indicated that there had once been an attempt to work with the AC, but that this did not ultimately materialise. The management respondent indicated that this was primarily because they are not active in the same Province and there was not a specific activity in which they were jointly engaged. The management respondent commented that there would be no hindrances in principle in terms of the AC and the ALN working more closely together.

## **17.3 Perceptions of Beneficiaries**

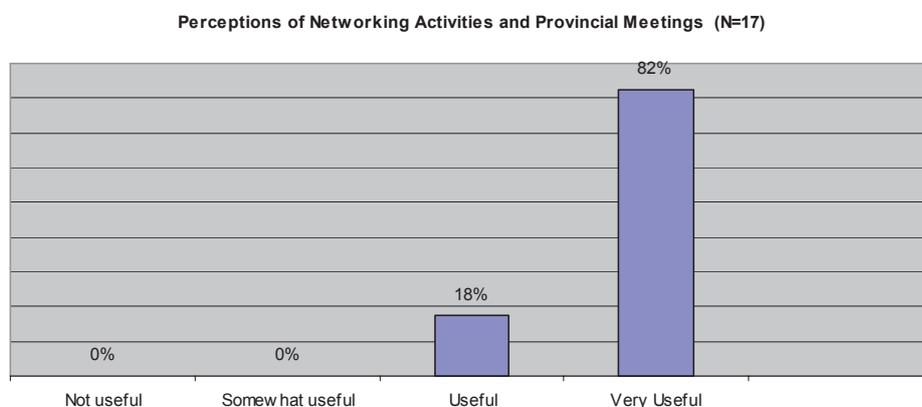
Beneficiary respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of ALN activities as follows:

- Networking activities such as provincial meetings
- Awareness raising campaigns

- Reading ALN newsletter, pamphlets, other documentation

Beneficiary respondents were asked to rank activities that they participated in from ‘not useful’ to ‘very useful’. Responses from the survey were as follows:

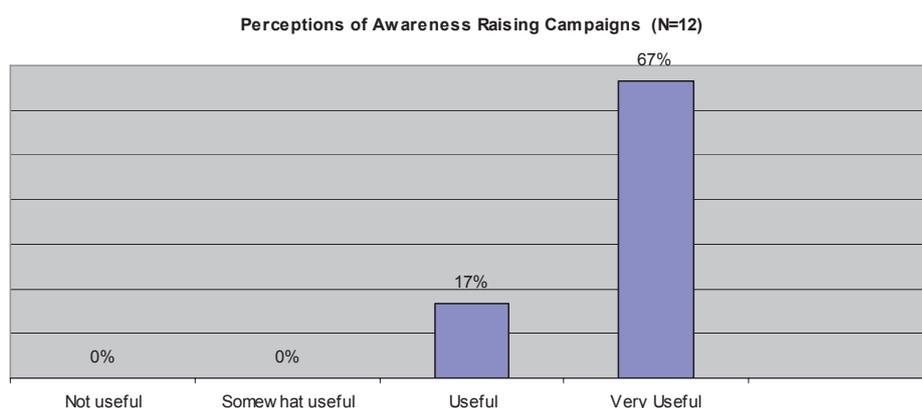
**Figure 12: ALN Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Networking Activities and Provincial Meetings**



As indicated in the figure above, 100% of beneficiary respondents considered the provincial meetings and other networking activities as useful or very useful. Comments included:

- *“Round tables that they have organised have really helped us to network”*
- *“These meetings and activities are essential to keeping the different organizations in contact with reality and with the practices that are prevailing. It challenges different schools of thought and promotes human dignity”*
- *“These meetings are effective as we meet other stakeholders and receive information updates from the ALN”.*

**Figure 13: ALN Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Awareness Raising Campaigns**



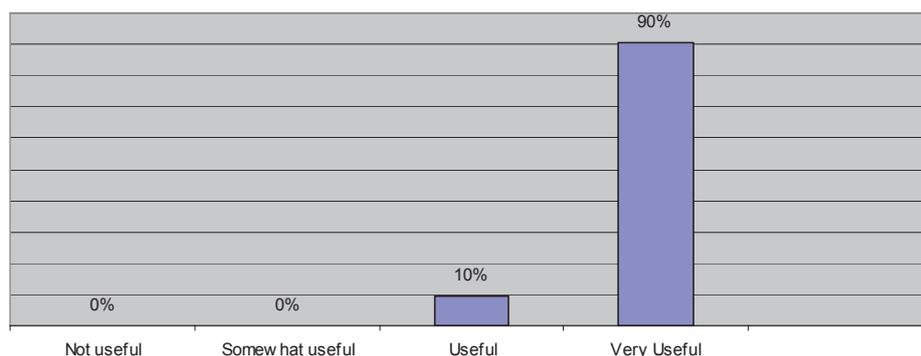
As the Figure indicates above, responses were very positive with regards to perceptions of the ALN’s awareness raising campaigns.

Comments included:

- *“They sensitise community members about reality versus myth”*
- *“100% excellent. We need more awareness from ALN”*

**Figure 14: ALN Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Newsletters, Pamphlets, Other Information**

Perceptions of ALN Newsletters, Pamphlets, Other Information (N=21)



As indicated in the table above, beneficiary respondents were very positive about the materials that the ALN produces, including the ALQ. Specific comments included:

- *“Their materials are very informative and understandable. Even my child could read and understand them.”*
- *“It has enhanced my knowledge of the current issues in SA pertaining to HIV/AIDS and human rights and also the gay and lesbian people and I can be able to talk about factual information pertaining to these issues when I am addressing the employees”.*
- *“This is very practical and informative. It educates as well as gives alternative views to be considered and debated”*
- *“It serves as a good reference for one’s work and it also empowers organisations and individuals on the legal issues in the fight against HIV/AIDS”.*

#### 17.4 Perceptions of the Partners

Partner respondents were requested to indicate the nature of their relationship with the ALN and how they came to be associated with the organisation.

Responses were obviously diverse across the group of respondents, but what was clear was that many of the organisations had been working with the ALN for an extended period of time. Most partners interviewed have been working with the ALN for at least 3 years, and some for up to 7 years, indicating long-term and ongoing benefit in terms of the partnerships.

Partner respondents were also required to describe what sorts of activities the partnerships involved. Again, these depended on the nature of the organisation, but what was clear was that the ALN often forms part of a ‘network’, and is seen as the legal and human rights wing of this network. For example, one respondent reported that her organisation, an educational prevention programme, was networked with a variety of organisations at a local level and the ALN was viewed as *“our backbone regarding legal matters”*.

In other cases, the ALN and the organisation join up in order to conduct advocacy campaigns together. As one respondent indicated by way of example, *“the last time we worked with the ALN it was a door-to-door campaign to listen to people about what they have to say about HIV and if ARVs are working”*.

Still further, other partner respondents indicated they had worked on specific activities with the ALN, such as writing manuals, conducting training, and so on.

Some respondents from these organisations indicated that partnerships, including their relationship with the ALN, were critical in terms of them conducting their work successfully. As one respondent commented, *“we strive for empowerment; we mobilise and provide information for marginalised communities. Partners help us to facilitate this work”*.

Another respondent commented that working in partnership with organisations such as the ALN produced a *“we’ feeling of working together. There is a lot of team spirit. To work as a collective entity is always a remarkable process”*.

Another partner respondent reported that one of the key issues related to the importance of the ALN’s contribution is that its influence and message is not localised in the Western Cape, and that the organisation has found ways to educate and advocate across the country. As one respondent commented,

*“The impact that they have is not just in Cape Town. It is felt and even enjoyed by the rural people that I am working with in the Limpopo. To me that is a real achievement”*.

Another respondent stated that despite the organisation’s influence across the country, it remained a challenge for the organisation to engage in the different institutions and systems in the country,

*“Human rights will always be a problem. Human rights are a basic right in the country, but people don’t know that and they don’t know how to exercise that right. So the challenge for the ALN is to continue to penetrate many other institutions such as schools, the education system, churches, etc.”*

### **17.5 Perceptions of Donors**

The evaluation team was only able to conduct interviews with two current ALN donors in the course of the evaluation process – the Levi Strauss Foundation and OXFAM Australia.

The respondent from the Levi-Strauss Foundation indicated that the ALN worked well in collaboration with other partnering organisations, and that, as an exercise in the future, *“it would be useful to track what perceptions [about the ALN] are amongst key rights, legal and other organisations”*.

The OXFAM Australia donor indicated that their contributions to the ALN were specifically with regards to funding the ALQ. However, one issue raised by the OXFAM Australia respondent is that they believe the ALN could profile themselves better. The respondent commented that *“other groups use the media more strategically. But, really it is not the ALN’s style...but could be used to their advantage.”*

### **17.6 In Summary**

In terms of partnerships and networks, the organisation has clearly tapped into a number of national networks, and has strong relationships with partnering organisations. It also indicates that in these interactions the organisation ensures that it has retained its focus on human rights issues. However, comments point to the complexity of engaging in national debates when based in Cape Town. Further, as indicated by a donor organisation, the ALN could potentially profile itself more effectively as an organisation.

## **18 The Role of the ALN in Addressing the Intersection of HIV/AIDS, Gender and LGBT in South Africa**

This section considers the extent to which the ALN manages to successfully integrate gender and LGBT issues in its work on HIV/AIDS. The evaluation team also reviewed a number of the publications and documents of the organisation which emphasise the manner in which these issues are integrated into mainstream training on HIV/AIDS and is the specific focus of many of the interventions. This includes publications which date from 2004 which focus on inequalities: Some inequalities are

more acceptable than others...<sup>21</sup> to articles such as ‘Sexual and Reproductive health and rights of women living with HIV’ and ‘A long road to travel’<sup>22</sup> as well as training manuals developed by the organisation and with its partners<sup>23</sup>.

### **18.1 Perceptions of Management and Staff**

The management and staff of the organisation emphasise that as part of its commitment to advocate for non-discrimination, it actively addresses both gender and issues pertaining to LGBT and integrates these into the work it does on HIV/AIDS. This is reflected in all its campaign work – and the organisation has developed a range of resources that advocate for non-discrimination – as well as the community workshops that it facilitates. The workshops consider issues of gender in terms of roles and stereotypes, the inequities that exist in society, as well as the *“correlation between the gendered context of society, HIV/AIDS realities and the extent to which rights and freedoms can be accessed and realised.”*<sup>24</sup>

### **18.2 Perceptions of Partners**

A partner respondent reported that one of the key issues related to the importance of the ALN’s contribution is that its influence and message is not localised in the Western Cape, and that the organisation has found ways to educate people across the country. As the respondent commented:

*“The impact that they have is not just in Cape Town. It is felt by and even enjoyed by the rural people that I am working with in Limpopo. To me that is a real achievement”.*

### **18.3 In Summary**

The ALN documents, as well as the comments made by staff, management and partners emphasise the extent that the organisation has managed to foreground these issues, and to integrate them into their work both at a national advocacy level, as well as at a community level.

## **19 An Assessment of the Perceived Impact of the Organisation’s Programmes at Grassroots Level**

The ALN also works with a number of organisations at a local level, and assists these organisations with capacity building, training and support. These organisations are both partners and beneficiaries. They are primarily organisations operating in the HIV/AIDS environment, with a focus on: research institutions, civil society, policy makers, NGOs and CBOs.

As indicated previously, for the purposes of this evaluation the evaluation team was provided with a list of 180 beneficiaries. However, the ALN was unable to provide a comprehensive list of all organisations that participate in their programmes. This is an issue that warrants attention in terms of keeping track of the outputs of the organisation.

However, the list provided already points to a large pool of beneficiaries. Further, an analysis of the respondents to the survey indicates that the majority of organisations have been working with the ALN between two and five years. This suggests a loyal group of beneficiaries, which is an important indicator that beneficiaries view the work of the organisation as relevant.

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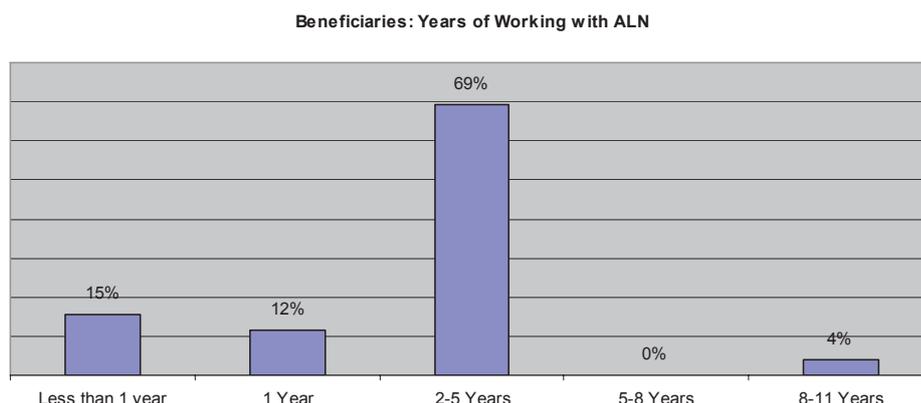
<sup>21</sup> ALQ, November 2004

<sup>22</sup> ALQ March 2007

<sup>23</sup> Gender Violence & HIV and AIDS: Break the Cycle Break the Silence, Published by KZN Network on Violence Against Women and ALN, 2006

<sup>24</sup> ALN, Funding Proposal submitted to Sida, December 2004–November 2007

**Figure 15: ALN Survey Beneficiaries: Years of Membership**



This section explores in more depth the nature of these activities and considers the extent that this has had an impact on community organisations working in the field of HIV/AIDS.

### 19.1 Perceptions of Management and Staff

The Executive Director indicated that when the organisation almost collapsed in 2002/3, this led to a strategic reprioritisation and the organisation reframed itself as a *“human rights organisation working in the context of HIV/AIDS, rather than an HIV organisation”* and that the organisation moved from a focus on overheads to a focus on programmes – in other words, the organisation was too focused on how it would pay for salaries and rental, and not focused enough on the content of its work and implementation of its programmes. The Executive Director indicated that the strategic reprioritisation gave rise to the current set of programmes (described in the introduction).

The Executive Director indicated that the only recent shift was that *“in the beginning, we identified communities and offered our services. Now, it’s the other way around and 85% of the workshops we conduct are based on request”*.

It was also mentioned that many of the organisations were prepared to pay for this training, which was seen as an indication of the value that was placed on this training.

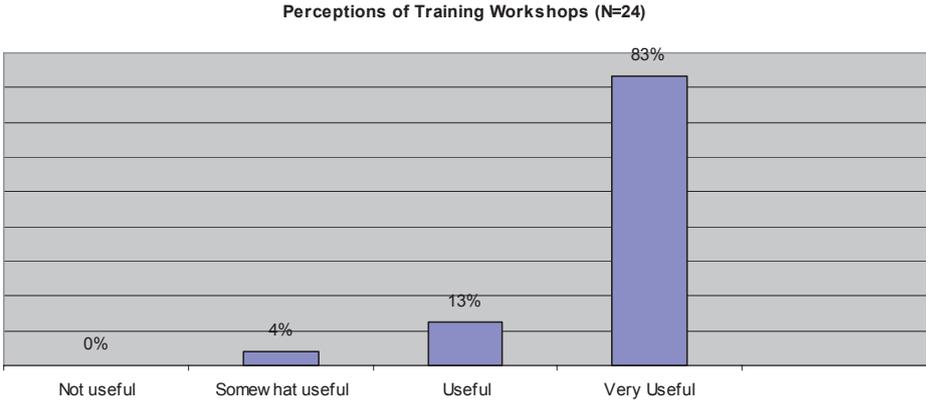
The Executive Director also indicated that in its work with organisations, it was *“trying to shift the focus and work less directly with communities and more and more with organisations which work at a provincial level. This includes a change from one-day community based workshops where you are not really making an impact. Our strength is in two to three day capacity building sessions with provincial partners at an organisational level.”*

### 19.2 Perceptions of Beneficiaries

Beneficiary respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of the following ALN activities: one to two day workshops conducted by the ALN, paralegal training, and using the legal advice desk.

Beneficiary respondents were asked to rank activities that they participated in from ‘not useful’ to ‘very useful’. Responses from the survey were as follows:

**Figure 16: ALN Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Training Workshops**

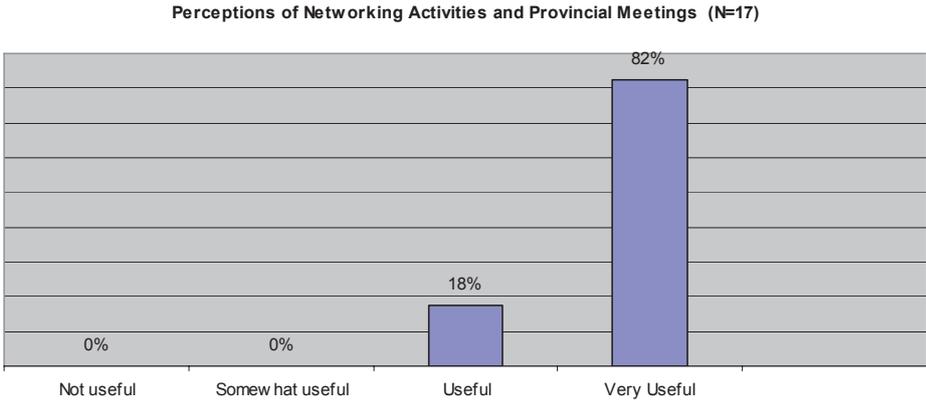


As indicated in the figure above, the vast majority of respondents rated the training workshops very highly. Comments included:

- *“The employees who attended the workshops could easily share information gained during these sessions with others and are able to talk freely about HIV/AIDS issues. Prior to this it was difficult even to mention the topic. Their perception of people infected with the HIV/AIDS has changed a little bit”.*
- *“Apart from being informative and thought provoking, it empowers the individuals to make a difference in their own lives and in their communities”*
- *“The information gained has assisted me to mainstream these issues into my own programmes and has also assisted me with my casework”.*

Only two of the beneficiary respondents reported that they had attended the paralegal training programme, and both reported that the programme was very useful. One comment was, *“it was of paramount importance to the organisation. Knowledge is power”.*

**Figure 17: ALN Survey Beneficiaries: Perceptions of Networking Activities and Provincial Meetings**



Finally, only four of the respondents indicated that they used the Legal Advice Desk, and all reported that this service was “very useful”. Respondents indicated that this had provided them with the advice that they required at the time.

Beneficiary respondents were also requested to indicate ways in which they felt that the ALN could better support them in terms of the work that they do. Some of the requests in this regard were very specific. For example, one organisation requested specific legal assistance with the organisation's targets (adolescents), whilst others requested specific foci in the training programmes.

Repeated across the responses was the request from many of the organisations for the ALN to deliver workshops in their specific communities and/or areas.

### **19.3 Perceptions of Partners**

Partners complimented the organisation's open door policy and stated that *"to be honest, whenever we needed support, there was no problem picking up the phone and asking for clarity or assistance. They have an open door policy"*.

Several partner respondents also commented on the organisation's professionalism, and the quality of their training and their materials and publications, and reported that their engagement with the ALN as a partner had enhanced their work in various sectors and constituencies. As some respondents commented:

*"People are really trusting of what the ALN is doing – mostly, the organisations and the community at large. They have empowered organisations that did not have a clue like home-based caregivers. They were just happy to wash their clients and see that they get treatment, but they didn't know anything about human rights, but now the ALN programmes speak to the people and the workers are informed."*

*"They have created a way of working together with a common understanding by working collectively. They are advocates as well. Their material has contributed a lot to the fight against HIV/AIDS and to understanding it better."*

### **19.4 Perceptions of Donors**

Donors reported that they specifically targeted the ALN as a result of its focus on organisations working in the community. One respondent from the Levi Strauss Foundation indicated that its funding to the ALN fell into a funding area targeted at *"building the capacity of HIV positive groups in high impact areas"*, with a specific focus on stigma and discrimination at the legal and policy level.

The Levi Strauss respondent indicated that he felt it was important that the organisation began to find ways to measuring its impact on the ground. He reported that *"It is one thing to parachute in and give a training but another to have the capacity to assess whether or not the work you are doing as an organisation is having an impact."* He indicated that there was a need for measurements and assessments of the deeper impact of the organisation. The respondent also suggested that there was a need to start focusing on a core target group and focusing more particularly around what activities they would need to conduct in order to support that target group and measure their impact at this level:

*"I would hope they get to a point to find a core target group that they work with..... to have a strategic framework that [would enable them to] say no [to some things not considered strategic]. They would need to come up with the measurements to develop criteria to determine why they work with particular organisations and how they work with them. They also need to follow up with the organisations to see how the information is internalized"*.

## **20 An Analysis of the Effectiveness and Overall Governance of the ALN Programmes**

### **20.1 Board Members' Perceptions of Governance**

Board members were requested to indicate their views of how the ALN is governed as an organisation by responding to questions pertaining to the functioning of the board, roles and responsibilities of board members, and so on.

In terms of the functioning of the board, board respondents were clear that the board is running well. It was reported that the board usually has one face-to-face meeting in the course of the year, and three telephonic meetings for the remainder of the year. None of the respondents indicated that the telephonic contact for three of the four board meetings was a problem. According to one respondent, the telephonic meetings were effectively chaired, and board members were supplied with the appropriate reports and documentations in order to play an effective oversight role.

One board member explained that in between meetings, board members tended to check various issues and documents by email, and ensured *“everything [was] being done according to standards”* on an ongoing basis.

Board members also reported that there was a clear delineation of governance-related and operational roles and responsibilities. One respondent commented that the board has

*“adopted a document clearly setting out the role of the board vis-à-vis the Director to make clear that we do not get involved in operational issues, but that we do have a final say over the strategic direction of the organisation, and have an oversight role to ensure good governance”.*

The board respondents stated that the board also countersigns all financial transactions in order to ensure financial oversight, and is also involved in the appointment and dismissal of staff members.

When asked about the appropriateness of the individuals serving on the board, respondents again indicated positive responses. One respondent commented that *“we have an actuary [actuarial scientist] assisting with finances, lawyers dealing with legal issues, and community activists to ensure that the board is not operating in an ivory tower”*

Individuals are reportedly re-elected to the board every year to various positions to ensure that individual board members remain committed. A respondent reported that *“at the last AGM we decided not to re-elect one board member who was not fulfilling his role adequately”.*

In sum, board respondents express overall satisfaction with their activities as board members, as well as with issues such as the delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the board members. No issues of concern were raised in this regard.

## **20.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff**

The ALN management interviewed stated that the current board is operating effectively. The Executive Director reported that the board was reshuffled after the management crisis in the organisation prior to 2004, and that it was not fulfilling its oversight function effectively.

The Executive Director commented that the board kept a strict focus on strategic issues, and was not involved unnecessarily in operational matters. The Executive Director indicated that the main contribution of the board was to ensure that the organisation was *“not derailing from our objectives”*. Nonetheless, it was reported that when it came to financial oversight, the board was very hands on and that *“no money can go out of the office without a board member being involved in this”*. This reportedly ensures transparent and accountable financial management. This is also facilitated by the fact that the necessary board members required for sign-off are based in Cape Town.

The Executive Director indicated that the Board also got involved in fundraising activities, and that this was an important contribution.

## **20.3 In Summary**

In terms of governance, respondents indicate that the board is functioning effectively, and that the delineation of roles and responsibilities is clear. The board appears to take responsibility for ensuring that the organisation carries out the agreed upon activities, and for ensuring the financial accountability of the organisation. Although board members are spread nationally, and that certain board meetings

are conducted telephonically, there appears to be sufficient capacity in Cape Town in order to assist with the more hands on responsibilities and the national board members indicate that they are able to support and engage with the organisation through the existing mechanisms.

## **21 An Analysis of the Effectiveness and Overall Management of the ALN Programmes**

In terms of governance, the ALN has a board with a total of five board members, which has four annual meetings – one of which is a face-to-face meeting after the AGM, and the other three are conducted telephonically. The board members have been stable and there is one member that has been on the board since inception ensuring continuity.

Like the AC, the ALN also went through a management crisis in the organisation a few years ago that almost led to the closure of the ALN. Part of this crisis was reportedly as a result of the specific incumbent in position at the time, but another part has been attributed to the organisation attempting to expand in a manner that was not sustainable in terms of effective oversight and management. The crisis was averted, and the present Executive Director was appointed in 2004. The organisation continues to have a high staff turn over. The current perceptions of board members on the management of the organisation are outlined in the section below.

### **21.1 Perceptions of Board Members**

Board respondents reported that the current Executive Director of the organisation is *“organised and dynamic”* and managed in a comprehensive fashion. Board respondents commented that staff generally worked under considerable pressure. As one respondent commented, *“we operate across South Africa, which places extreme pressure on staff who have to travel widely and be away from home leading to staff turnover”*. A Board Member commented that staff turnover in the organisation is an issue that needs to be addressed. The respondent reported that this has led to suggestions for the implementation of a staff retention strategy and to *“looking at ways of rewarding staff for longer service”*.

Board Members also indicated that they received reports from the organisation and that based on these they were able to make an assessment that the organisation was meeting its targets in terms of activities and programmes.

### **21.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff**

The Executive Director of the organisation commented that she was not completely certain about what all the problems in the organisation had been in the past, but stated that it was clear that part of the problem lay in the expansion of the organisation into two additional provinces, and the setting up of offices there, which meant *“large overheads that we could not manage”*. She commented that *“looking back, this was the beginning of the end... this led to a huge crisis and the offices had to be closed and the staff removed”*.

After this point, the organisation started *“everything anew”*, including refining the focus of the organisation and restructuring internally. Staff indicated that they were positive about the developments in the organisation and that the organisation is well managed and provides a supportive environment. One of the staff members that had worked in the organisation during the period in which it was most vulnerable commented that the organisation has now established acceptable procedures to facilitate procurement and financial management. It was stated that this provides a more stable organisation that can focus on the programme activities.

### **21.3 Perceptions of Donors**

Donor respondents all emphasised a shared commitment with the ALN to *“strengthen civil society’s response to HIV/AIDS”* and to support the sharing of pertinent information across civil society on human rights and related issues.

Donors emphasised that they have a good relationship with the ALN and indicated that they were “*one of the better partners in terms of reporting*”. Another donor respondent indicated that the organisation was exemplary in terms of reporting.

Donor respondents also reported that they had good and open communications with the ALN and that the relationship was generally positive.

## **21.4 In Summary**

In terms of management, a clear finding that emerges is that the current Executive Director has been able to bring the organisation back from the crisis that emerged in the pre-2004 period. The organisation is now viewed as accountable and on track. There are still concerns raised by board members, management and donors about the high staff turnover in the organisation. There were some suggestions that this was as a consequence of the extensive amount of travelling and pressure involved in the job. The board indicates that this matter is being reviewed and that strategies are to be put in place to address this. This issue will be highlighted in the recommendations.

## **22 An Analysis of the Organisation’s Funding Profile**

This section considers the extent that the organisation has been able to diversify its funding base. To understand this, the evaluation team considered what organisations the current donor base includes, and engaged with respondents to determine if this represents a stable group of donors. The current donors are: Sida, OXFAM Australia, Ford Foundation, Foundation for Human Rights and Levi Strauss Foundation. The ALN reports that approximately 50% of its funding is from Sida.

### **22.1 Perceptions of Board Members**

Board respondents raised very few concerns about funding-related issues. Members indicated generally that the ALN was extremely happy with its current donor profile, and that relationships with funders were strong and consistent.

Interestingly, two of the respondents indicated that the specific programme-based funding requirements of donors were important, as this kept the organisation focused on what it needed to deliver. This is in contrast with the AC, in which case respondents were requesting funds that were less programme-based and more able to be directed to core costs. Comments from ALN board members on this included:

*“It is most important to fulfill expectations of a donor and their funding for a specific activity. Funding is based on specific projects and not general use. We must use the money for what it is intended and deliver results and report on these. It keeps us focused on what we should be doing”*

*“Donors can support organisations – by seeing that an organisation does what it says it will”.*

One board respondent did comment, however, that it was noted that there was significant staff turnover and that if the organisation had funding for it, it should consider training additional trainers (in a train-the-trainer model) to “*go out and talk about human rights, so that staff need not travel so much*”.

Finally, all board respondents agreed that additional funding would not go amiss, but that the organisation needed to proactively pursue this funding and widen the donor base. There was, however, overall satisfaction that the current donor base was positive. As one respondent commented, “*the success has been retaining existing funders and getting increased funding. It must be a sign that we are doing something right*”.

### **22.2 Perceptions of Management and Staff**

The Director of the ALN outlined the profile of current donors, and indicated that the ALN did not face any critical donor and/or funding challenges. The respondent indicated that “*right now, we are sustainable enough to have principles about where we accept money from, and so some donors we say no to*”.

Management and staff argued that it was considered preferable to sustain a small but loyal group of donors. It was also indicated that this pool has been increasing their contributions over time, which suggests that the donors are satisfied with the quality of services that are provided by the ALN.

### **22.3 Perceptions of Donors**

There were mixed views expressed by donors about the need to expand the donors supporting the organisation. While some argued that the organisation should become self-sustaining, others argued that this is not realistic for an NGO. One respondent indicated that as a donor, the organisation had no expectations that the ALN should be seeking ways in which to become more self-sustaining:

*“It is a mad notion out there that this type of NGO should become sustainable. They would have to stop being what they are. They could charge some people a subscription for the ALQ, but not everyone. They would lose readers that are important. Otherwise we would push them into some kind of bizarre income generating stuff and they would lose focus. We have seen this, a lot of it. And organisations cease to be relevant”.*

One donor respondent suggested that it was more important that the organisation “*stuck to its principles*”, and the respondent indicated that:

*“One thing that impressed me was the shift from being an HIV/AIDS service provider organisation in its early beginnings, to clearly and unabashedly becoming and working as a human rights organisation now. It is great to see that kind of integrity. Being unyielding and invoking what the rights are under the South African Constitution and the human rights principles. Being persistent and unapologetic about the “silent issues” including gender violence and sexual diversity. There are very few organisations that provide that kind of capacity building to CBO groups really working on the ground. The ALN still stick to their principles. They don’t [conform] to that natural tendency of organisations to want to be liked”*

The respondent indicated that this steadfastness was, in his view, one of the organisation’s greatest achievements.

### **22.4 In Summary**

In terms of funding and financial issues, the findings suggest that the organisation has adequate funding from a consistent donor pool. The organisation suggests that it would prefer to “pick and choose” in a manner that allows the organisation to avoid some donors intentionally (for political and other reasons). There does not appear to be a strong will to extend the donor base and significantly increase the pool of funds at present. This perspective resonates with the views expressed by certain of the donors, who argue that they believe it is valuable that the organisation retains its principles and suggests that this may not be possible if the organisation adopts an income generating approach or broadens its donor base in a manner that reduces the ability of the organisation to respond in a flexible manner to community requests. However, there continues to be a reliance on Sida funds and this balance may need to be addressed in going forward.

## **23 An Assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges and Opportunities**

The section provides a brief analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and challenges that appear to be emerging from the research findings for this review with a view to considering the implications of this analysis in terms of the organisations readiness positioning to access these opportunities.

At the level of *governance and management*, it is clear that the ALN, like the AC, has emerged strong and significantly more robust out of a period of crisis. The organisation appears to have a committed body of board members that, despite their national distribution, appear to have a hands-on approach to governance. It is also apparent that the management and leadership of the organisation are viewed as strong, although there is a concern about the levels of apparent staff turnover.

One of the issues raised by some of the interviewees (including board members and donors) pertains to a perception that the organisation will continue to struggle to attract and retain staff with the requisite skills<sup>25</sup>. One respondent commented that:

*“There have been vacancies that have made it difficult to carry out work within a timeframe. [The Executive Director] has been up front with us about this. There are always vacancies. I have not asked those questions [about so much turnover, sustainability of staff]. I have heard from other sources that found it unbearable and had to leave. It was something that we did not go into. There are some issues that you choose to engage with, others you leave alone. Yes, on paper, the work was carried out. But as a funder how do you address issues of retention, compensation, staff morale, etc? I cannot speak to it, but I have heard”.*

The other issue that was identified as a risk in 1999 was the danger that the organisation was too dependent on donors. This issue also emerges in this evaluation. However, while some respondents suggested that this is an area of risk, others (including certain ALN donors) commented that NGOs cannot by definition be self-sustaining and that the imperative is that the organisation ensures that it has a consistent set of donors. Having said this, there is a concern that the balance of donors may need to be addressed as a risk management strategy.

With regards to *partnerships and networks*, the organisation appears to be contributing to national campaigns and processes in a significant manner. It has also spearheaded other campaigns. Further, it participates in national policy development processes insofar as they support increased human rights.

One issue that was highlighted is the more limited role that the organisation plays in ‘national’ networks that operates from Gauteng. However, it does appear that as, for example, in the SANAC process, the organisation is able to contribute to these policy processes, and its expertise in human rights is recognised. Further, the organisation is playing an active role in enabling civil society to interact with the NSP through the development of key resources on the NSP. For these reasons it is the view of the evaluation team that this issue has been addressed and the challenge is to maintain and strengthen these relations, including enhancing certain partnerships where necessary.

One of the strengths of the organisation is that it has identified a strategic *focus* which is considered its ‘*raison d’etre*’, and it has developed this in a consistent manner. This focus was defined as being that of human rights and HIV/AIDS, as well as issues pertaining to violence against women. One respondent reported that the organisation had recently re-committed itself to this:

*“We just had the Board’s strategic planning meeting and decided more or less to stick to the present focus, given the needs in the communities and the funding environment”.*

Other respondents agreed that the focus would not be changing fundamentally over the next period and that the emphasis is to sustain the activities that are currently taking place and to ensure that these are applied in a manner that takes the emerging context into account.

This flexibility within a sustained focus is evidenced in two key areas: (i) with regards to the *advocacy work* of the organisation: the ALN has emphasised its work within SANAC on the imperative for human rights, as well as its current strategic focus the implementation of the National Strategic Plan. The new strategic focus on the NSP in the context of the ALN’s work is likely to be an important step in engaging with a critical national process; (ii) in terms of *capacity building and training* the organisation plans to shift its focus away from one-day workshops targeted at local CBOs and NGOs to sustained training for provincial organisations which can extend this message to CBOs in the provinces. This shift is seen as valuable, and offers the possibility of enhancing the impact of the training that is offered. This can be

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<sup>25</sup> This risk was identified as far back as 1999 in one of the original Sida assessments

pursued while the organisation continues to offer its training to organisations on a request basis, which allows it to meet specified needs and receive an income.

One emerging issue related to keeping and maintaining contact with the network base of the organisation. The evaluation process found that the ALN did not have comprehensive database which could support sustained contact with its constituency. This is an area that needs to be reviewed.

Further, in terms of moving towards the *future and sustainability*, it is evident that the ALN does not plan to significantly increase its income generating activities. However, it is anticipated that in terms of its values and focus, it will continue to rely on ongoing donor funding. This view is supported by some respondents, who indicate that it will detract from the organisation's focus if it prioritises self-sustainability.

## **24 Recommendations Emerging**

### **24.1 Recommendations at the Strategic Level of the ALN**

- The strategy that has been outlined to partner provincial NGOs should be developed further so that there is a shared understanding of the plan with regards to the training and the support that these organisations will receive.
- The relationship between the networks built in the provincial workshop and the organisations that receive training requires some consideration, and it is suggested that this could be a potentially valuable inter-relationship.
- While NGOs are always vulnerable in terms of high staff turnover, there is a need to ensure that there is a strategy in place to support staff in a manner that encourages them to stay in the organisation.
- Similarly, there should be a risk management strategy in place to manage the continued reliance on Sida as a primary donor and this should include concrete steps that will be taken to minimise the risk and to balance existing donor funding.
- There is a need to ensure that the organisation continues to strengthen its national engagements to maximise the benefits of these relationships and to ensure that its specific voice is heard in these national debates.

## Section E: Recommendations and Lessons Learnt

This final section provides a discussion of key learnings, certain overarching organisational recommendations and then considers the manner in which the Swedish Embassy and Sida can strategically engage with their partnering organisations.

### 25 Key Learnings

This section explores some key learnings from the AC and the ALN that have emerged in the context of this evaluation report.

#### 25.1 Learnings in Governance and Management

Both the ALN and the AC have gone through, and recovered from, crises at the level of leadership and management which in both cases almost resulted in the closure of the organisations. NGOs are often small and are particularly vulnerable to the personality of the leadership and of staff turnover. In many instances, NGOs are led by individuals, rather than large management structures that internally contain checks and balances. This makes such organisations vulnerable to the types of crises evidenced here.

Some key lessons in this regard include:

- Ensuring that the boards are well selected, inducted and informed about their oversight roles and responsibilities. Having a strong and supportive board in place can assist an organisation to ensure that actions are expedited where problems are emerging rather than waiting for a crisis. The case of the AC indicates an example of a board operationally “taking over” the organisation for a period in order to prevent collapse.
- Related to the previous point about the importance of leadership, there is a need to develop a clear ‘profile’ of the kind of individual that will be able to lead and manage an NGO. Some of the characteristics that have emerged strongly from these NGOs are that an Executive Director should have ability to: work in an uncertain environment, manage administrative systems, motivate staff who are often under pressure and relate on a number of different levels with board members, partners, donors and beneficiaries.
- Ensuring that the organisation has the systems, capacity and resources it requires if it intends to expand. The ALN lesson taught that expanding the organisation without putting proper mechanisms in place to effectively manage this expansion almost brought the organisation to closure. As the AC potentially moves to such a position, it will be important to ensure that proper consideration with regards to resources and capacity has been developed.

#### 25.2 Strategic Focus of the Organisations

Another lesson emerging from this evaluation relates to the clear foci of the two organisations. Both the AC and the ALN have, at different points, reviewed and re-committed themselves to a human rights focus in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. In both cases, this clear focus is a real strength that assists the organisations to articulate their goals, develop their objectives and shape their programmes within a specific framework. Further, it enables partners and beneficiaries to understand how they can best relate to these organisations and what particular skills and knowledge base they can tap into in interacting with these organisations. The success of the work of both the AC and the ALN highlights the importance of maintaining this focus and developing a ‘niche’. However, respondents from both organisations also consistently emphasise flexibility within this, and the need to keep a constant eye out for shifts in the needs of constituents emerging from the grassroots level but have

continued to ensure that these are located within the core objectives of the organisation. Both organisations appear to have been able to balance organisational goals with organisational responsiveness.

Importantly the national context and the needs emanating in terms of the challenges pertaining to the implementation of the NSP all emphasise the continued need for this focus in addressing the various dimensions of the epidemic.

### **25.3 Establishing and Maintaining Credibility: From grassroots to a National Collective Voice**

It is never possible to talk of a single “national collective voice” in reflecting the priorities and needs with regard to HIV/AIDS; rather it is more appropriate to speak of a series of “voices”. Within this context, the AC and the ALN have both managed to achieve some success in terms of their ability to represent or reflect a specific civil society voice within national structures and at the level of national campaigns. In the view of the evaluation team, this represents an important achievement for organisations that have less than ten staff members and that survive on relatively lean donor funding.

This suggests establishing and maintaining credibility at two levels – from grassroots levels up to the AC and the ALN, and from the level of the AC and the ALN to the national level. The approaches adopted by the two organisations are different, with the AC operating with an affiliate base and the ALN developing a knowledge base through networks and partnerships. But it is clear that both organisations have managed to achieve some level of credibility with their constituencies that is evidenced, for example, in high attendance at meetings and with the positive perceptions emerging from this evaluation.

On the other hand, this provides the organisations with the credibility to represent constituents’ voices on national structures and in national campaigns, which serves to further strengthen the capacity of civil society to engage in national issues around human rights and HIV/AIDS. As one AC respondent commented, *“our biggest strength is our affiliates”*.

### **25.4 Complexities of Partnerships**

The final learning from these two organisations is that when considering and advocating for partnerships as a means to strengthen the voice of civil society and to maximise the usage of resources there is a need to also understand the dynamics of these partnerships.

Both organisations speak to the potential tensions relating to the phenomena that at times the organisations are partners while at other times they are competing for resources. Further, while there are shared goals there are sometimes competing interests in terms of the prioritisation of certain programmes.

These dynamics are considered healthy but suggest that a key learning is that there is a need for an understanding of what it takes to successfully initiate and maintain partnerships. Ways in which this has been achieved should be documented and shared with others initiating and working in partnerships.

## **26 Recommendations for the Organisations**

It is noted that both the organisations have been able to re-build and create stable environments. Further, the services and programmes being offered by the organisations appear to be appreciated by the beneficiaries, and there appears to be a demand for these to be offered more frequently and in a wider number of locations. This suggests a motivation for the on-going support of these organisations.

However, it is acknowledged that NGOs remain vulnerable and while their role is more critical than ever, so are the challenges facing NGOs in accessing funding, accounting to donors, retaining staff with the relevant skills and increasing their capacity.

This requires of the organisations:

- That they continue to form partnerships and networks and review more carefully how they can work with partners to maximise the usage of resources. For example, if the AC is to facilitate information sharing workshops, then it will be important that these are considered within the context of the workshops that the ALN delivers, and to consider whether these activities can be combined, as the beneficiary group is likely to be similar.
- Further, both organisations have been involved in different ways in engaging with national government structures, and it is noted that the revised NSP creates a framework to further these engagements. It is suggested that opportunities to engage with provincial and local governments should also be explored within this changing context in terms of the different responsibilities that these two spheres have for the implementation of the NSP.
- With regards to the training that is offered, it is recognised that these focus on different elements to assist CBOs and NGOs to build community competence (as defined in the first section of this report). It is suggested that this be made explicit so it will be possible to determine success, and to put in place additional methods to evaluate their activities. This is seen as important so as to support on-going learning and development.

## 27 Considerations for the Swedish Embassy and Sida

This document highlights certain strategic issues that could be considered by the Swedish Embassy and Sida to support the implementation of the organisational recommendations, and to contribute to the further development of targeted organisations in the NGO sector so as to enhance the work that is being done to develop communities and support policies which promote and protect fundamental rights and freedoms of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

- It is recognised that there are capacity constraints facing donors. However, it is recommended that Sida consider how they can ensure that the NGOs they support benefit from the experience of the two organisations, and particularly how this knowledge can be applied to assist organisations with strategic planning and in the development of NGO staff capacity;
- There is a need to consider how Sida can assist the organisations to access other donors. This could take the shape of a coordinated forum of donors – although there are debates as to whether this is an advantageous arrangement for NGOs. Alternatively, Sida could serve as a broker and assist the organisations to access funds from other donors<sup>26</sup>.
- The need to understand impact and to use this learning to shape future activities has been highlighted within this report. However, while organisations could be assisted to develop tighter monitoring mechanisms – and this is a recommendation – it is also suggested that Sida considers how it can support an evaluation process that enables organisations to develop a greater understanding of the manner in which they are contributing to organisational development and community competence at the level of impact. This would then feed into on-going learning and development of the organisations. It is noted that this could be done through the engagement of other organisations that specifically focus on evaluation studies in and around community competence within the context of HIV/AIDS;
- Finally, and related to the previous point, there is the recognition that donors increasingly require of organisations that they measure achievements more closely. This shift in expectation leaves NGOs vulnerable to changing requirements which further emphasises the need for donors to assist with both staff development and systems support.

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<sup>26</sup> This is compatible with the recommendation in the Sida Gap Analysis report which recommends a kind of a ‘Schengen visa’ for partners: once one donor approves a partner, other donors accept and support such an approval.

- One specific aspect of this support could be to enable a process of documenting cases, drawn from the organisations that are funded by Sida, which illustrate ways in which NGOs have implemented their plans, effectively been involved in partnership in pursuant of their objectives and developed systems that ensure accountability, innovation and continued learning.

# Appendix 1 Terms of Reference

## 1. Introduction

The partnership between Sida, the AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium began officially in 1999 when DESO delegated the right to the Embassy to sign agreements with the organisations, including AIDS Law Project. A joint decision to support the three organisations with the total budget of approximately 7.7 million SEK was part of the 1999–2003 country strategy, which recognised the challenges of HIV/AIDS and human rights in South Africa. A further reason to channel support in one joint decision was to enhance the synergy between the activities to achieve the results and overall goals within the three projects<sup>27</sup>. For example, whilst the work of AIDS Legal Network (ALN) and AIDS Law Project (ALP) focused on capacity development, lobbying and advocacy, research and legal services, among other things; the AIDS Consortium (AC) was more of a resource for information and communication network.

Since 1999, a number of extensions and new agreements for continued support were entered into between the Embassy and the organisations, with the total Swedish contribution of approximately 18 million SEK. Currently the Embassy is engaged in the process to review and define the key areas of Swedish support in South Africa within the HIV/AIDS during 2008–2011. This evaluation will also form part of the process to inform Sida when assessing new proposals for funding in the future.

These terms of reference for an evaluation deal exclusively with the AIDS Legal Network and the AIDS Consortium.

Overall, the goal of the evaluation is to map and probe into the achievements, challenges and constraints in the implementation of the AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium projects. The evaluation will also draw lessons learnt and (where possible) make concrete recommendations that will help formulate a set of challenges and possible objectives that could be pursued by the organisations in future work.

## 2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

To conduct a joint evaluation of the projects of the AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium funded by Sida/Embassy from the programme inception in 1999 up to date. At the same time, more focus should be placed in the last three years (2004–2007) when the Embassy entered into new agreements with the organisations.

## 3. The Assignment (issues to be covered in the evaluation)

The assignment shall focus but not be limited to the analysis of the following key issues:

1. a general description and analysis of the overall results of the organisations' programmes, and the extent to which they have fulfilled (or not managed to fulfil) their vision and stated objectives;
2. an overview of the existing strategic partnerships and networks, including in the region;
3. analysis of the role that the AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium play in the HIV/AIDS field? And to what extent the organisations have contributed to the national policy and legislation on HIV/AIDS);

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<sup>27</sup> The overall goal for all the three projects was to contribute to a decline in HIV/AIDS prevalence by helping to establish a conducive environment for effective HIV prevention, support and care in South Africa.

4. an assessment of the extent to which AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium have collaborated and supported the overall efforts of synergy with each other (*Please Note! a joint decision to support the organisations in 1999 was partly premised, among other things, within the frame that the organisations will collaborate with each other to enhance the synergy between their activities*);
5. an overview of the role and contribution of the organisations (at local, provincial and/or national levels) to address the intersection of HIV/AIDS and gender in South Africa;
6. an assessment of the results (or impact) of the organisations' programmes at grass-roots and/or affiliates levels;
7. an analysis of the effectiveness and overall management of the ALN and AC programmes including issues relating to governance structures, as well as issues connected to the monitoring and follow-up of the projects by the different stakeholders (e.g. the Board);
8. identification and analysis of the obstacles and challenges that are encountered by the organisations in the project implementation;
9. an analysis of the organisations' funding profiles and the extent to which the ALN and AC have diversified its funding, including achievements and challenges;
10. an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the present programmes of AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium, and ascertain whether any change in the strategic direction and scope of the organisations' core business is necessary, and
11. concluding analysis of the key opportunities for the future of the organisations, in terms of organisational management, programme delivery and sustainability.

#### **4. Methodology, Evaluation Team and Time Schedule**

The methodology should concentrate on the period from the inception of the programmes in 1999 to current. But an emphasis should be placed in the latter three years of cooperation, i.e. 2004–07.

In consultation with the AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium, the Embassy shall procure the services of a consultant with requisite competencies to carry out the assignment. The consultant will sign the contract with the Embassy and will consult regularly with all parties in terms of the progress of the evaluation. The methodology of work will include, but not limited to:

- project document review;
- interviews with present and past Board members of the organisations;
- interviews with the organisations' executive directors (past and present);
- interviews with relevant donors linked to the organisations;
- interviews with relevant officials at the Embassy of Sweden (Pretoria), and possibly with officials at Sida/Stockholm,
- interviews with affiliates or partner organisations of the organisations, including beneficiaries<sup>28</sup>.

The organisations shall provide the consultant with the necessary support in terms of interviews and available documentation regarding the assignment.

The assignment shall be carried out in July through to August 2007 and shall not exceed 25 (twenty five) consultancy days in total. This includes reading the documentation, interviews, field visits and report writing.

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<sup>28</sup> *Please Note:* In selecting partner organisations and beneficiaries, the evaluator will closely interact with the Embassy, AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium in order to arrive at a sufficient and 'representative' sample.

## 5. Reporting

The consultant shall prepare a report in English and the format and outline shall follow the guidelines in *Sida Evaluation Report – a Standardised Format* (attachment 1).

A preliminary draft report should be submitted to the AIDS Legal Network, AIDS Consortium and the Embassy for comments/input.

The final report must be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. It shall be analytical and react to key issues raised in the Terms of Reference (item 3 above), and clearly state conclusions and recommendations. Subject to decision by the Embassy, the report will be published in the series *Sida Evaluations*.

The report should be submitted within a week of receiving comments from the organisations involved and the Embassy. A hardcopy and an electronic version of the report shall be submitted to the Embassy, AIDS Legal Network and AIDS Consortium.

(Attachment) – Standardised Format: Sida Evaluation Report

## Appendix 2 List of Respondents Interviewed

The two tables below provide a complete list of the respondents interviewed per organisation:

<b>AIDS Consoritum</b>	
<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>AC Management and Staff</b>	
1 Denise Hunt	Executive Director
2 Nokuthula Mfaku	Training Manager
3 Roy Naidoo	Finance Manager
4 Rhulani Lehloka	Communication Manager
5 Bongani Sithole	Distribution and Cyber Café Officer
6 Phindi Malaza	Affiliates Information Officer
7 Martha Legong	Librarian
8 Dimpho Maruping	Front Line Coordinator
<b>Board Members</b>	
9 Maxine McCalla Kay	Former Board Member and employed by RHRU
10 Misty McWilliam	Former Board Member and independent development consultant
11 Debbie Matthew	Board Member, employed by AIDS Foundation SA
12 Bennedict Makola	Board Member and advocate of the High Court
13 Geoffrey Setswe	Board Member and HSRC Chief Research Specialist
14 Mabalane Mfundisi	Board Member and Director of Serongwanyane Technologies
15 Rose Thamae	Board Member and Director of CBO Let us Grow
<b>Partners</b>	
16 Luyanda Ngonyama	Former Gauteng TAC Coordinator, presently Advocacy Coordinator at ARASA
17 Jacqueline Mpolokeng	Policy Coordinator for HIV/AIDS and Occupational Health and Safety, COSATU
18 Teboho Klaas	Director of National Health Programmes, South African Council of Churches (SACC)
<b>Donors</b>	
19 George Murumba	CIDA
20 Jean-Jacques Waelput	Development Counsellor, Belgian Embassy
21 Marian Gotha	Regional HIV/AIDS Programme Officer OXFAM America
22 Armelle Guyomarch	Ile de France

**Figure 18: AC Respondents Interviewed**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>ALN Management and Staff</b>	
1 Johanna Kehler	Executive Director, ALN
2 Gahsiena van der Schaff	Networking/Lobbying/Campaign Coordinator
3 Sandy Okkers	Office & Financial Administrator
<b>Board Members</b>	
4 Isabella Mabengeza	Self employed in NGO
5 Pierre de Vos	UWC, Chair of Board
6 Asim Gani	Independent Actuarial Consultants
<b>Partners</b>	
7 Cookie Edwards	KZN Network on Violence Against Women
8 John Moerane	Lethabong Advice Centre
9 Margrieta Ruiters	United Sanctuary Against Abuse
10 Ngemi Mahasela	FS Network on Violence Against Women
11 Siphso Fakude	Phaphamani HBC
12 Sweetness Mzolisa	Kwakhanya Support Group
13 She Rasebotsa	Phalaborwa Foundation
14 Carrie Shelver	One in Nine Campaign
15 Vidah Manyana	PPASA EC
<b>Donors</b>	
16 Colin Collett van Rooyen	OXFAM Australia
17 Daniel Lee	Levi Strauss Foundation

**Figure 19: ALN Respondents Interviewed**

## Appendix 3 Geographic Profile of Survey Beneficiaries

As indicated the evaluation team developed a brief and targeted survey questionnaire for the beneficiaries of both the ALN and the AC. The details pertaining to provincial location are captured below:

Province	Based in	Operating in
National		22
Gauteng	99	64
Eastern Cape	3	10
Western Cape	2	1
Northern Cape	0	0
Limpopo	1	2
Mpumalanga	2	3
KwaZulu Natal	1	2
Free State	0	0
North West	1	2

**Figure 20: AC Survey Beneficiaries: Provinces Based in and Operating in**

The majority of AC respondents were based in Gauteng, although 22 (20%) of respondents reported that they also operated nationally. These findings are therefore strongly biased towards perceptions of Gauteng affiliates.

In addition, the Singizi team distributed a survey and conducted telephonic follow-ups to these organisations in order to obtain the highest return rate possible. The details pertaining to provincial location are captured below:

Province	Based in	Operating in
National		3
Gauteng	3	4
Eastern Cape	2	6
Western Cape	11	12
Northern Cape	3	5
Limpopo	3	5
Mpumalanga	1	5
KwaZulu Natal	4	7
Free State	0	2
North West	1	0

**Figure 21: ALN Survey Beneficiaries: Provinces Based in and Operating in**

The ALN respondents were spread across the various provinces in terms of Head Office Location, as well as areas of operation, although the highest number per province is located within the Western Cape.

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