

# Assessing the Effectiveness of Gender Focal Persons in South Africa: Government's Response to CGE Findings and Recommendations

2023

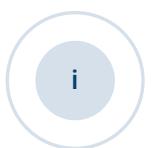




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**ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GENDER FOCAL PERSONS/POINTS  
IN SOUTH AFRICA:  
GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSES TO  
CGE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>APP</b>    | Annual Performance Plan   |
| <b>BPfA</b>   | Beijing Platform of Action  |
| <b>CEDAW</b>  | Convention on The Elimination of Discrimination Against all forms of Violence |
| <b>CGE</b>    | Commission for Gender Equality  |
| <b>COGTA</b>  | Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs                                |
| <b>DAFF</b>   | Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries                             |
| <b>DALRRD</b> | Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform                  |
| <b>DBE</b>    | Department of Basic Education   |
| <b>DDG</b>    | Deputy Director-General   |
| <b>DHS</b>    | Department of Human Settlements   |
| <b>DMRE</b>   | Department of Mineral Resources and Energy                                    |
| <b>DPE</b>    | Department of Public Enterprises  |
| <b>DPSA</b>   | Department of Public Service and Administration                               |
| <b>DPWI</b>   | Department of Public Works and Infrastructure                                 |
| <b>DSBD</b>   | Department of Small Business Development                                      |
| <b>DSD</b>    | Department of Social Development  |
| <b>DWS</b>    | Department of Water and Sanitation  |
| <b>DWYPD</b>  | Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities                      |
| <b>GBVF</b>   | Gender-Based Violence and Femicide  |
| <b>GESF</b>   | Gender Equality Strategic Framework   |
| <b>GEYODI</b> | Gender, Youth and People with Disabilities                                    |
| <b>GFP</b>    | Gender Focal Persons  |
| <b>GRB</b>    | Gender Responsive Budgeting   |



|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>GRPBMEA</b> | Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing |
| <b>GU</b>      | Gender Units   |
| <b>HR</b>      | Human Resources  |
| <b>IDP</b>     | Integrated Development Plan  |
| <b>ILO</b>     | International Labour Organization  |
| <b>MTSF</b>    | Medium Term Strategic Framework  |
| <b>NGM</b>     | National Gender Machinery  |
| <b>NGPF</b>    | National Gender Policy Framework   |
| <b>NMBM</b>    | Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality  |
| <b>NSPGBV</b>  | National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence                           |
| <b>OSW</b>     | Office on the Status of Women  |
| <b>OTP</b>     | Office of the Premier  |
| <b>PGM</b>     | Provincial Gender Machinery  |
| <b>PSC</b>     | Public Service Commission  |
| <b>PSET</b>    | Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority                     |
| <b>PWD</b>     | People With Disabilities   |
| <b>SADC</b>    | Southern African Development Community                                     |
| <b>SAPS</b>    | South African Police Services  |
| <b>SMS</b>     | Senior Management Service  |



## FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2013, the CGE produced a research report titled 'Assessing the Effectiveness of Gender Focal Points in South Africa'. The summary of the research findings was:

- Gender focal persons (GFPs) are generally appointed in the lower ranks of the public service, in direct contradiction to the prescripts of the National Gender Policy Framework (NGPF), which requires GFPs to be appointed at the level of a director or upwards.
- GFPs are generally located in units responsible for and burdened with performing functions unrelated to gender mainstreaming.
- Government institutions are still reluctant to establish fully dedicated gender-mainstreaming units. GFPs and gender-mainstreaming units of government departments are unlikely to have dedicated budget allocations.
- GFP units are widely perceived as effective in coordination/liaison activities and managing events relating to gender mainstreaming. However, they are perceived as ineffective in participating in and influencing departmental decisions affecting this area.

Given the recommendations made based on these findings, the CGE made a follow-up to establish the extent to which the recommendations had been applied, hence this study. The follow-up was in line with the CGE's mandate, which includes protecting, promoting, and monitoring gender equality in South Africa.

It was established that there had not been substantial progress with respect to the effectiveness of GFPs. Overall, the GFPs are still:

- Appointed in the lower ranks of the public service in direct contradiction to the prescripts of the NGPF.
- Burdened with work outside of their direct functions and responsibilities as prescribed by the NGPF.
- Facing challenges related to inadequate staffing, resources, training, skills, and capacity building within their units.
- Not having the necessary monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the proper functioning and coordination of GFP units.

The study also established that there are still government departments at the national, provincial, and local levels that either do not have a GFP post or reasonable alternative structures in place to perform the function of GFPs.

The CGE further recommends that the role and positioning of the GFP units must be reconfigured to reflect a clear understanding of the role of GFP units and their positioning. In addition, the CGE recommends that GFP units be moved to the Director General's offices or any office that will allow them an opportunity to influence policy directly.

The CGE acknowledges and appreciates the hard work of the research team, namely:

- Ms Mpelo Princess Malebye (Project Leader)
- Ms Lindelwe Motha
- Mr Edward Thabani Mdlongwa
- Mr Prince Gontse Motaung
- Ms Monalisa Jantjies



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission for Gender Equality is a Chapter 9 institution established in terms of Section 181 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Chapter 9 institutions are a set of institutions geared towards supporting and promoting democracy in the country. Section 187 of the Constitution outlines the mandate of the CGE to promote respect for, protection, development, and attainment of gender equality.

The CGE also has powers to “monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise, and report on issues concerning gender equality”.<sup>1</sup> The Commission for Gender Equality Act elaborates on this mandate.

In 2013, the CGE undertook a study that produced a report titled ‘Assessing the Effectiveness of Gender Focal Points in South Africa’.<sup>2</sup> The study covered a wide array of national and provincial departments to determine the effectiveness of gender focal persons (GFPs). As part of this project, several recommendations were made by the CGE, which in 2022/23 the CGE sought on which to follow up. It has been just under a decade since the study was published, and the CGE deems it sufficient time for institutions to have addressed some of the key findings and recommendations emanating from the 2013 report. In this 2022/23 study, the CGE followed up on the recommendations, which included some of the national government departments and the GFP units in some provinces and in local government. The exercise is derived from the mandate of the CGE, which includes the role of monitoring work done by public and private institutions and following up on their work relating to the attainment of gender equality.

The report begins by outlining the research problem, followed by the background in Section 3. Section 4 covers the research objectives, Section 5 the legislative and policy components, Section 6 outlines the methodology, and Section 7 unpacks the findings. The latter part of the report covers the overview of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in Sections 8, 9, and 10, respectively.

## 2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The 2013 study was prompted by feedback and insights gained during interactions with GFPs and through the findings of studies conducted by other institutions, particularly the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) at the time.<sup>3</sup> Through these studies and through insights gained through regular interactions with GFP units the CGE established that GFP units faced numerous institutional, functional, resource, and practical challenges in discharging their responsibilities and carrying out their work.<sup>4</sup> These challenges included the following: Firstly, GFPs are generally appointed in the lower ranks of the public service, which is in direct contradiction to the prescriptions of the NGPF, which calls for these posts to be appointed at the level of director or upwards.<sup>5</sup> This results in GFPs usually being appointed at a lower government ranking and denying these institutions access to the necessary resources while also preventing them from exercising the authority they need to shape policy decisions and implement policies and programmes on gender mainstreaming in the public service.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Commission for Gender Equality. Research Report: Assessing the Effectiveness of Gender Focal Points in South Africa, 2013. Available at <https://cge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/assessing-the-effectiveness-of-general-focal-points-in-south-africa.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 53.





Secondly, GFPs are generally located in units responsible for, and burdened with, performing functions unrelated to gender mainstreaming, thus creating a greater likelihood that gender mainstreaming would be marginalised or struggle for limited resources. Thirdly, government institutions are still reluctant to establish fully dedicated gender-mainstreaming units or appoint GFPs with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for gender mainstreaming.<sup>7</sup> As a result, many of these institutions do not make provision for the development of the necessary skills and training. They do not provide the necessary internal processes and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure proper internal accountability by GFPs or their supervisors on gender mainstreaming. The GFP units do not have the budget allocations to carry out their work adequately.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the CGE undertook the study to conduct an in-depth analysis of the situation of GFP units in South Africa to formulate appropriate policy recommendations to address challenges.

### 3. BACKGROUND

In 2013, the CGE undertook a study to determine the status of GFP units and assess their capacity and effectiveness in assisting government departments to formulate and implement effective action plans to promote women's empowerment in line with the Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA). The GFP units are part of the national machinery to promote gender equality.<sup>9</sup>

The overall objective of the 2013 study was to compile the findings and formulate recommendations for policymakers on the actions to adopt to ensure that the work of GFP units is enhanced.<sup>10</sup> The CGE undertook this study as part of its Constitutional mandate to strengthen and deepen constitutional democracy in South Africa by promoting, protecting, developing, and attaining gender equality.<sup>11</sup>

The CGE, in the 2022/23 financial year, conducted a follow-up assessment on the implementation of recommendations of the 2013 GFP study following the 2013 study. The 2013 study was conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. An opinion survey was sent to 176 government departments (national and provincial) and 28 district and metropolitan municipalities.<sup>12</sup> The questionnaire sought to explore and examine several important themes relating to the work of GFPs. Among these were recruitment processes for GFPs: capacity, skills and resources, roles and functions, effectiveness and impact, and the future of GFPs. In addition, as part of the qualitative part of the study, face-to-face/in-depth interviews were conducted with GFPs and their supervisors from ten selected national and provincial departments.<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, the CGE's findings in the 2013 study have been echoed in other African countries experiencing similar challenges to those of South Africa. For example, a study on GFP units in Rwanda and Uganda found that GFP units hinged on individuals and donors who operated ad hoc. GFP units were characterised as informal, voluntary, and unclear terms of reference were contributed to their invisibility in organisations.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the ineffective performance of GFP units was often due to an informal approach used to establish, operationalise, and nurture them.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Mangheni, M.N.; Musiimenta, P.; Boonabaana, B.; Tufan, H.A. 2021. *The Genesis and Performance of Gender Focal Person Structures in Rwanda and Uganda National Agricultural Organisations: A Critique*. Sustainability 2021, 13, 10290. Available at <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810290>



Consequently, institutionalising the structure would require that the pioneering champions and donors successfully negotiate the embedding of GFP units into the mainstream, eventually guaranteeing the allocation of adequate human and financial resources from national budgets and establishing accountability systems. These findings show that the issue of GFP units is a challenge within the South African context and that the issues apply broadly even in other African countries.

In brief, the study highlighted the following number of key issues of concern for policymakers:

- GFPs are generally appointed in the lower ranks of the public service, in direct contradiction to the prescripts of the National Gender Policy Framework (NGPF), which calls for GFPs to be appointed at the level of a director or upwards. This general low ranking of GFPs in government denies these institutions access to the necessary resources while preventing them from exercising the authority they need to shape policy decisions and implement policies and programmes on gender mainstreaming in the public service.
- GFPs are generally located in units responsible for and burdened with performing functions unrelated to gender mainstreaming. This creates a greater likelihood that gender mainstreaming will be marginalised or become a struggle for limited resources.
- Government institutions are still reluctant to establish fully dedicated gender-mainstreaming units. They appoint GFPs with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for gender mainstreaming. Many of these institutions do not make provision for the development of the necessary skills and training in this regard. In addition, the necessary internal processes and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure proper internal accountability – either by GFPs or their supervisors – on the work of gender mainstreaming are lacking.
- GFP units and gender-mainstreaming units of government departments are unlikely to have dedicated budget allocations.
- GFPs are widely perceived as effective in coordination/liaison activities and managing events relating to gender mainstreaming. However, they are perceived as ineffective in participating in and influencing departmental decisions affecting this area. In terms of factors undermining the effectiveness of GFP units or gender-mainstreaming units in government, it can be concluded that limited resources, poor understanding of the role of GFPs, and lack of skills and policy guidelines on the role of GFPs all play an important role in all levels of government.
- The findings of the 2013 study revealed a strong preference by the participants for the posts in GFP units not only to be retained but also to be given the necessary resources and authority to influence decisions on gender mainstreaming.

Some of the key policy recommendations to emerge from the 2013 study on GFPs include the following:

- CGE pointed out that senior management in government needed to be thoroughly familiar with the general content of the NGPF, as well as the specific provisions relating to the work, status, level of appointment/rank, competencies, functions, location, and other crucial aspects of the post of GFP. This would be important to ensure that the GFPs are afforded conditions appropriate for effectively implementing gender-mainstreaming policies.
- CGE recommended that government departments, local authorities and other institutions of government with positions of GFPs already in place undertake a thorough review and evaluation of the post and its related responsibilities to determine the scope of responsibilities necessary to ensure effective gender mainstreaming.



- This review should also address the widespread problem of failure to integrate gender mainstreaming into organisational strategic plans.
- It was recommended that institutions develop effective internal strategies for ensuring the effective allocation of financial/budgetary resources for the work of gender mainstreaming in government.
- CGE recommended that government departments, local authorities, and other relevant institutions where this practice is currently taking place should desist from either assigning GFPs additional functions and responsibilities unrelated to gender mainstreaming, unless it was determined that such an arrangement is consistent with best practices to promote gender mainstreaming and gender equality in government.
- The study found evidence that many government departments (at national and provincial levels) and local authorities do not post a GFP or a reasonable alternative structure to perform the function. It was therefore recommended that Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, together with the CGE, initiate public hearings. All state/public institutions that have failed to create the position of GFP or equivalent institutional mechanisms for carrying out gender mainstreaming functions will be called before the committee to account for and give assurances of, effective actions to be taken to address this failure to comply with the provisions of the NGPF.

## 4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to assess progress on how all three spheres of government have taken on board the recommendations of the 2013 CGE study on the effectiveness of GFP units in South Africa. This assessment is the second in the assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of GFP units to assist government departments (national, provincial, and local governments) in formulating and implementing effective action plans to promote women's empowerment. In terms of objectives, this exercise seeks to:

- Determine the state of GFP units in government departments at national, provincial, and local levels
- Assess whether there is improvement in institutional capacity (i.e., skills, financial, and other resources) for GFP units to perform their functions
- Assess whether the effectiveness of GFP units in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in government has been successful following the study conducted by the CGE in 2013
- Determine the scope of work undertaken by GFPs apart from functions and responsibilities of gender mainstreaming.

## 5. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

South Africa, as part of the global community, participated officially for the first time at the fourth women's international conference hosted in Beijing in 1995. That was the conference where gender mainstreaming was adopted as a key strategy for enabling gender equality within the global community.<sup>15</sup> That, as a result, marks the Beijing Platform for Action Declaration<sup>16</sup> as the key international framework that has led to the adoption of gender mainstreaming and GFPs as the officials responsible for implementing gender mainstreaming within all spheres of governance. Be that as it may, officials in the South African context have not implemented

<sup>15</sup> True, J., & Mintrom, M. (2001). Transnational networks and policy diffusion: The case of gender mainstreaming. *International studies quarterly*, 45(1), 27-57.

<sup>16</sup> Beijing Platform for Action Declaration 1995. [BPfA E.pdf \(un.org\)](#)



protocols, practices and legislation, nor prioritised GFP units.<sup>17</sup> Gender issues are perceived and are still regarded as women's issues in South Africa. Women's activism in South Africa is closely woven into the complex political history of resistance. GFP units' issues are met with the very same resistance.<sup>18</sup> The inherited legacy of the past, particularly for black women, includes oppression and discrimination based on gender, and on factors such as race, class, religion, ethnicity, and geographic location, which interplay in the development of women. The existing international discourse and vision promoted the concept of National Gender Machineries (NGM), as one mechanism to address women's inequalities. The vision was to develop structures, mechanisms, and strategies for achieving equality for women in all spheres of life, both private and public.

South Africa has also ratified several international and regional instruments echoing the promotion of gender equality in addition to the BPfA, which include the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Development Goals that expired in 2015 and were adopted as Sustainable Development Goals with 17 goals,<sup>19</sup> African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), not the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, and SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that advocates for member states to legislate 50/50 representation of women in all spheres. Moreover, South Africa has also ratified the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention on the attainment of equality in the workplace through the abolition of all forms of discrimination.<sup>20</sup> These policies, protocols and practices all strive to uphold human rights, equality, and development for all, especially regarding gender issues. This lens allows for scrutiny in responsive strategies for ensuring gender machinery. An assessment of development through understanding the impact and limitations of the desired policies and how they are mechanised in practice and by the state at varying levels of government.

Being a Member State of all these international frameworks obliges South Africa to domesticate and enshrine the provisions of those frameworks within the domestic policy and legislative frameworks, as well as programmes for the benefit of the intended beneficiaries. As the supreme law, the Constitution of South Africa is the key enabling legislation as provided under Chapter 2 (Bill of Rights). Supreme law does not give room for non-compliance, and the matter of human rights and gendered issues is not a conscientious decision but an obligation. It is thereby warranted that the departments, provinces, and municipalities take up the legislations mentioned above.

As a result, South Africa adopted NGPF in 2000, which was the enabling framework for mainstreaming gender in South Africa by the public sector, its entities, and the private sector. The GFP units are provided for under the NGPF and are geared towards executing the mandate of implementing gender mainstreaming to promote gender equality in the country. Utilising this policy in the study allows researchers to assess the responsiveness to the obligations of the NGPF. Among other clauses, NGPF requires state institutions, including government departments, to implement gender units (GUs) and create GFP units to drive gender-mainstreaming processes. The NGPF states that to be deemed GUs compliant, "The identified skills are related to the key programme areas of policy, gender mainstreaming, advocacy, coordination, planning, liaison, networking, and capacity building."<sup>21</sup> The NGPF prescribes the role, location, and qualification of GFPs as part of the institutional frameworks established by the South African government to mainstream gender across all spheres of governance.

<sup>17</sup> Madsen, D. H., Gouws, A., & Chiweza, A. L. (2021). Gender mainstreaming in Africa: Local translations and institutional challenges in Ghana, Malawi and South Africa. In *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy in Africa* (pp. 524-535). Routledge.

<sup>18</sup> Fester, G. M. (2008). *Women and citizenship struggles: A case of the Western Cape, South Africa 1980-2004*. London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom).

<sup>19</sup> Sustainable Development Goals 2015. See. [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)

<sup>20</sup> CGE (2010), Gender Barometer Report: Case Studies

<sup>21</sup> RSA (2000), South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality



The Minister must, by notice in the Gazette, make regulations on the qualifications, skills, and duties of the personnel to be appointed in the GFP units. In doing so, the provision and implementation of the facilitation are the realisation of a minimum of 50% representation of women in decision-making positions and structures must be achieved. The GFP unit mechanism forms part of the NGM. This structure was implemented to ensure that departments comply with gender mainstreaming directives in line with the BPfA provisions and localising through the NGPF.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

This study followed a mixed methods approach. According to the National Collaborating Centre for methods and tools,<sup>22</sup> mixed methods is a research approach whereby researchers collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data within the same study. Mixed methods research draws on the potential strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing researchers to explore diverse perspectives and uncover relationships between the intricate layers of multifaceted research questions. The study used interviews and open-ended questionnaires to obtain data.<sup>23</sup>

A questionnaire containing both closed and opened ended questions was designed and sent out to be self-administered. The CGE research team wrote to 41 national departments. Nine provinces were also invited to be part of the study through the Offices of the Premier. Where provinces had metros, they were also requested to participate. GFP units at the local government level are coordinated by their respective provincial heads through the Office on the Status of Women (OSW). Metros were reached through those offices. Following the previous study, the research team included as many national, provincial, and local level GFP units to mitigate the resistance and low response rates from government departments experienced in the past, and also to gain a broader national picture of the status of GFP units in the country. The questionnaires contained categories of questions aligned with the objectives of the research study, the previous study, and the relevant legislation. The questionnaires were sent by electronic mail to officials (primarily for the attention of GFP units).

Several follow-up communications were made following the need to better understand what questionnaire responses entailed. This aspect of the study included in-depth interviews with informants, i.e., GFPs and their superiors or any reasonable alternative in cases where there was no GFP from the sampled government departments.

A semi-structured interview guide was utilised for the purpose of guiding in-depth interviews. Like the questionnaires, the interview guide identified key areas that are aligned with the objectives of the study. In addition, a review and content analysis of secondary sources, mainly publications, reports, and other official documents on GFP units was conducted as additional sources of information and to triangulate the findings. Data was analysed thematically with a descriptive approach on graphs and tables. However, not all questionnaires had in-depth follow-up interviews. Some departments concluded that the questionnaire was sufficient to give a clear view of their institutions.

For the quantitative aspect of the study, the researchers followed the descriptive research design used to describe the state of affairs of an identified variable. The team used the questionnaire to ascertain the quantitative descriptive data presented below in the findings. A focus group guide was prepared as part of the study to sort more information from officials from CGE, which works closely with GFPs around the country. Following this, a focus group was also conducted.

<sup>22</sup> National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools. Appraising qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies included in mixed studies reviews: the MMAT. Hamilton, ON: BMJ Publishing Group, 2015. <http://www.nccmt.ca/resources/search/232> (accessed May 2017).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



## 6.1 SAMPLING

The research team utilised purposive sampling to sample the respondents for in-depth interviews, as they were readily available after completing the questionnaires. The research team interviewed officials from eight national departments, one provincial government, and two local municipalities. The low turnout was because other departments were reluctant to participate in interviews and preferred to fill out the questionnaire only, while others did not have the time due to their schedules. Furthermore, other departments did not want to participate, while others did not arrive for scheduled interviews.

Data was also collected from CGE staff who work closely with GFPs at national, provincial, and local levels. An in-depth interview was conducted with an official representing the CGE at the National Gender Machinery. There was also a focus group with CGE officials who work closely with provincial and local GFP units. The focus group had four participants.



**Table 1: Questionnaire respondents**

| Questionnaires completed  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| National government   | Provincial government  | Local government  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development</li> <li>• Department of Basic Education</li> <li>• Civilian Secretariat for Police</li> <li>• Department of Communications and Digital Technologies</li> <li>• Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs</li> <li>• Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment</li> <li>• Department of Higher Education and Training</li> <li>• Department of Home Affairs</li> <li>• Department of Human Settlements</li> <li>• Department of Mineral Resources and Energy</li> <li>• National School of Government</li> <li>• National Treasury</li> <li>• Department of Public Enterprise</li> <li>• Department of Public Works and Infrastructure</li> <li>• Department of Science and Innovation</li> <li>• State Security Agency</li> <li>• Statistics South Africa</li> <li>• Department of Sports, Arts and Culture</li> <li>• Department of Tourism</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Cape</li> <li>• Free State</li> <li>• Gauteng</li> <li>• Limpopo</li> <li>• Mpumalanga</li> <li>• North West</li> <li>• Western Cape</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EThekweni Municipality</li> <li>• Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality</li> </ul> |





## 6.2 LIMITATIONS AND RISKS

Based on the number of responses from respondents from a previous study done on GFP units, one of the significant challenges was getting a response from respondents. Many respondents would commit to filling out the questionnaire and doing the in-depth interview but then remain unresponsive.

Furthermore, some departments were left out of the study due to a lack of commitment and no responses to letters sent to them. The CGE experienced resistance based on recommendations from previous studies that were not considered by other departments and participation in this study was deemed futile.

Moreover, some departments did not have GFP units or a reasonable alternative as they were currently restructuring. The restructuring of departments became one of the limitations. Other respondents within the GFP structures did not have the relevant information as they had been moved from other departments.

## 7. FINDINGS

### 7.1 ABOUT THIS INSTITUTION/DEPARTMENT/MUNICIPALITY

Public sector gender work is governed by the NGPF of 2000. Each institution (national, provincial and local) is obligated to establish a GFP unit. The findings of the establishment of such units are covered in this section.

At national level departments that indicated that there is a GFP are the following:

- Civilian Secretariat for Police
- Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
- Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform
- Department of Basic Education
- Department of Higher Education and Training
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Human Settlements
- Department of Human Settlements
- Department of Mineral Resources and Energy
- Department of Public Service and Administration
- Department of Public Works and Infrastructure
- Department of Science and innovation
- Department of Small Business Development
- Department of Social Development
- Department of Tourism
- Department of Water and Sanitation
- National School of Government
- State Security Agency
- Statistics South Africa





The Department of Public Enterprises indicated that they had a reasonable alternative structure while the National Treasury indicated that there was no GFP in the department.

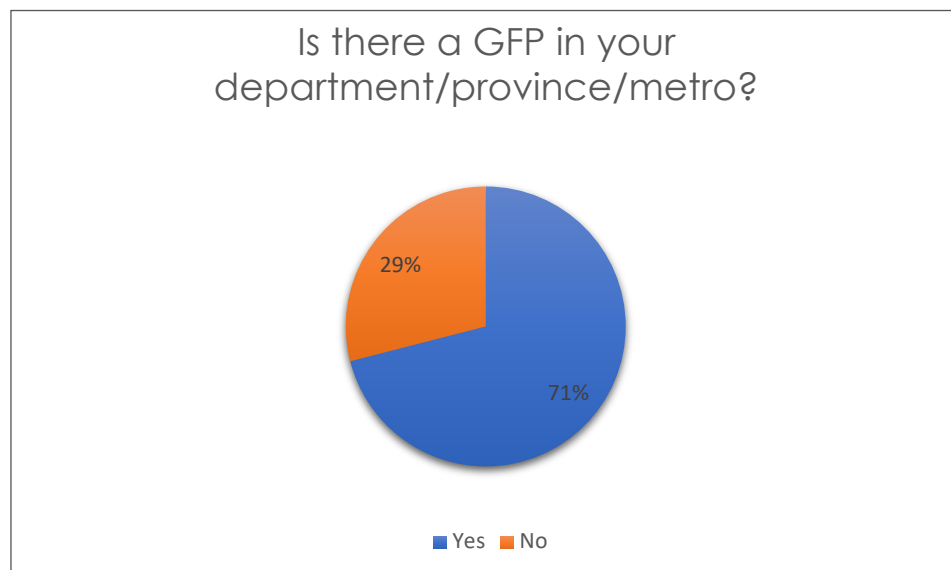
At provincial level, North West, Limpopo and Gauteng highlighted having a GFP unit while Mpumalanga highlighted that no GFP unit exists. The Western Cape indicated that no GFP unit exists, although the province did have a reasonable alternative structure exists.

At local level, eThekweni and Nelson Mandela Bay respondents highlighted that a GFP unit has been established.

While majority of respondents indicated that there was a GFP unit in their organisation ranging from establishment as early as 2001 all the way through to 2022, there were still indications that GFP units have not been fully established across the board as per the NGPF of 2000 – even over 22 years later.

## 7.2 ROLE OF THE GFP

The CGE questionnaire sought to establish whether GFP units existed within the department/province/metro. The results of this study illustrate the responses, and worryingly, the National Treasury was one of the departments that indicated that there was no GFP unit or a reasonable alternative structure within the department.<sup>24</sup> At the provincial level, the Mpumalanga Office of the Premier indicated that it also had no GFP unit or reasonable alternative structure within its office.<sup>25</sup> The National School of Governance (NSG), the Department of Small Business Development (DSDB), the Department of Social Development (DSD), and the Free State Office of the Premier, fell among the 71% of departments and premier's offices that reported having GFP units. Also evident in Figure 1, 29% of the respondents reported not having a GFP unit in their department/province/metro.



**Figure 1: Existence of a GFP in a department, metro or province**

Where a GFP did not exist, the CGE sought to establish whether a reasonable alternative structure existed. Figure 2 illustrates that just less than half (46%) of respondents indicated that they did not have a reasonable alternative

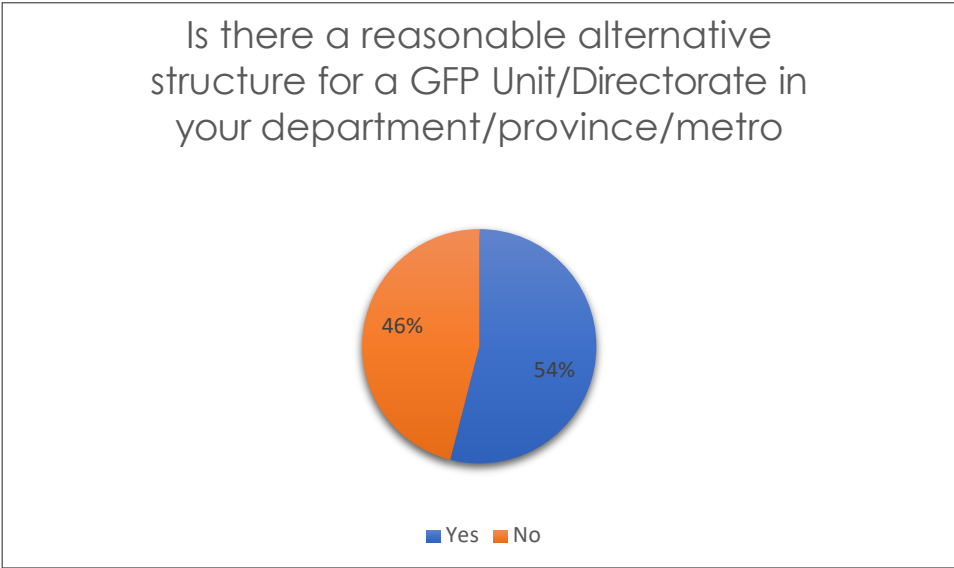
<sup>24</sup> Written response from the National Treasury, 8 December 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Written response from the Mpumalanga Office of the Premier, 23 January 2023



structure, while just more than half (54%) confirmed the existence of a reasonable alternative structure. This is across all three levels of government.

According to the NGPF, “All departments will be required to establish dedicated gender units or focal points to assist in formulating and implementing effective action plans to promote women’s empowerment and gender equality in the work of departments”.<sup>26</sup> The Western Cape Office of the Premier reported not having GFP units but has a reasonable alternative structure that monitors and reports on the implementation of the Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (GRPBMEAF) approved in 2018 by Parliament<sup>27</sup> among many other functions. In terms of government departments, the Department of Higher Education and Training reported not having a GFP unit. However, the department noted that it has a reasonable alternative structure called Social Inclusion and Equity.<sup>28</sup> The Social Inclusion Equity structure deals with all inclusion, equity, and transformation imperatives in the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA) system.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality also reported having a reasonable alternative structure instead of a GFP unit.



**Figure 2: Reasonable alternative structure**

As part of the work of GFP units, according to the NGPF of 2000, GFP units are required to implement national gender policy and many departments have indicated that their work includes the implementation of the NSP on GBVF, Gender Responsive Budgeting, assisting with the empowerment of women in SMS level, the implementation of Employment Equity Policies and Sexual Harassment Policies, and overall gender mainstreaming amongst others. From the responses, the GFP units are involved in a wide array of national gender policy implementation alongside specific gender policy issues as per the mandate and needs of their respective departments. For example, DHET is concerned with the implementation of the NSP on GBVF and gender equality initiatives as dictated by the Gender Equality Strategic Framework (GESF),<sup>30</sup> while DSBD is concerned with the monthly implementation of the NSP on GBVF, quarterly reporting on the GRPBMEA framework, and assessing its own departmental implementation of the 40% procurement target for women-owned businesses within the DSBD as per the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> National Gender Policy Framework, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> Written response from the Western Cape Office of the Premier, 30 November 2022

<sup>28</sup> Written response from the Social Inclusion and Equity Unit of the Department of Higher Education & Training, 17 January 2023

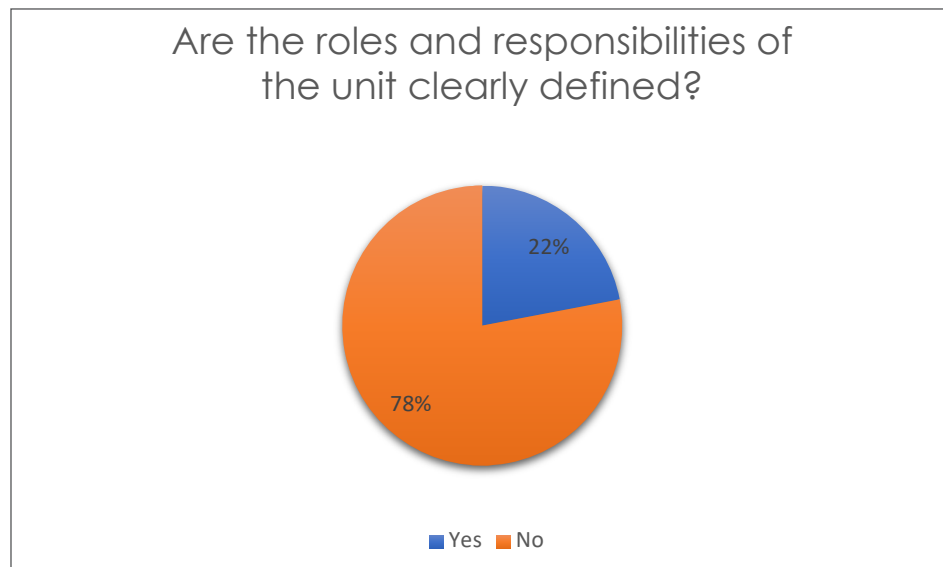
<sup>29</sup> Written response from the Social Inclusion and Equity Unit of the Department of Higher Education & Training, 17 January 2023

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



At the time of data collection, the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) was reviewing its organisational structure, which would ensure an independent function responsible for gender and other transformation imperatives in the department.<sup>32</sup> In terms of specific policies around the advancement of women, the Department of Science and Innovation noted South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, the Strategic Framework for Gender Equality within the Public Service, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>33</sup> and a few others. The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) has a special focus on developing energy and minerals sectorial policies, strategies and implementation plans to effect gender transformation in two sectors:<sup>34</sup> mineral resources and energy (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Clarity of role and responsibilities**

The mandate of GFP units and their roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated in the national policy, and the majority of the respondents indicated that this was the case. However, the clear definition of roles and responsibilities of GFP units within departments/provinces and metros were not as clearly defined as in the national policy.

The proportion is indicated in Figure 3, where only close to a quarter (22%) of respondents shared that the roles and responsibilities of the GFP in their organisation were clearly defined, while most (78%) felt that they were not clearly defined.

GFPs who responded to the questionnaire highlighted that the work of the GFP unit is understood by those undertaking the role, while interviews suggested that it was those outside of those directorates who did not seem to understand fully what their work entailed. This indicates that more work should be done to conscientize organisations on the work of GFP units and ensuring that their impact is elevated.

Throughout the study, it became evident that GFP units were often involved in gender mainstreaming within their organisations. However, this was not always clearly articulated as a streamlined position across the various tiers of the departments. In other words, what national departments were doing was not always clear to provincial departments or local governments. Therefore, there was a disjuncture in work among the three spheres of

<sup>32</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Science and Innovation, 14 November 2022.

<sup>33</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Science and Innovation, 14 November 2022.

<sup>34</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, 21 November 2022.



government. Furthermore, where roles and responsibilities were unclear, it was because GFP units were involved in programmes and projects that were not necessarily gender related.

GFPs also answered questions regarding their departmental plans: annual performance plans (APPs), strategic plans, and budgets. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) GFPs noted that its APP initiatives include GBVF programmes, gender and accessibility audits, and advocacy for mainstreaming gender, youth, and persons with disabilities.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the Department of Public Enterprises' (DPE) GFPs indicated that its APP initiatives encompass the department's internally focussed Gender Strategic Framework and a developed gender, youth and people with disabilities plan that is both internally and externally focussed.<sup>36</sup>

Some of the APP initiatives of the GFP unit in the North west Premier's office include the disaggregation of economic empowerment targets for women, youth, and persons with disabilities, facilitating capacity building and policy education workshops on gender mainstreaming, conducting policy analysis, and making inputs to inform policy reviews that ensure gender responsiveness.<sup>37</sup>

In terms of strategic plans among GFP units, Statistics South Africa acknowledged 'driving the transformation agenda' as central to the GFPs strategic planning process.<sup>38</sup> In the Department of Human Settlements (DHS), the Organisational Transformation Unit of the department is responsible for internal gender mainstreaming, amongst other functions, and the Sector Transformation Unit is responsible for external gender mainstreaming, amongst other functions.<sup>39</sup> An issue described as central to the strategic planning process of the two units is centred on obtaining buy-in from line units when it comes to the implementation of external and internal gender equity imperatives.<sup>40</sup>

For GFP units to function optimally, they require adequate human and financial resources from national budgets. Regrettably, the GFP in the Department of Public Enterprises reported budget constraints for gender-related programmes and activities within the department.<sup>41</sup> Although the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture GFP unit highlights its concern and dedication to the fight against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), the unit described itself as understaffed and underfunded, rendering it reliant on partnerships with external agencies for programme implementation.<sup>42</sup> Many respondents communicated the need for gender-responsive planning and budgeting within government departments.

Government departments/metros/premier's offices were asked if they had reviewed departmental policies and plans as per the NGPF of 2000.

Figure 4 depicts that more than half (61%) of respondents noted that their departments/metros or premier's offices had reviewed departmental policies and plans as required by the NGPF of 2000. However, a third (39%) had not reviewed any departmental policies or plans. Impressively, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has reviewed gender-related policies such as their Gender Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, and Disability Policy (although it is not completely gender-related like the other two).<sup>43</sup>

The Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS) Gender Policy was also reviewed in 2022,<sup>44</sup> while the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) reviewed its Employee Acquisition Policy.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, 24 January 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Public Enterprises, 30 September 2022.

<sup>37</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Northwest Office of the Premier, 15 November 2022.

<sup>38</sup> Written response from the GFP unit of Statistics South Africa, 7 November 2022.

<sup>39</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Human Settlement, 20 January 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

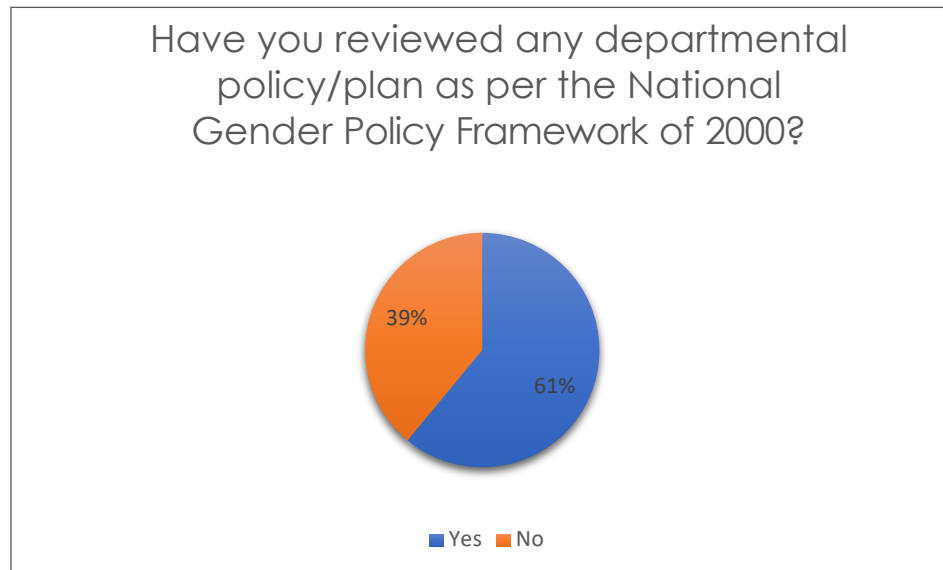
<sup>41</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Public Enterprises, 2 December 2022.

<sup>42</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Sports, Arts & Culture, 20 January 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 30 November 2022.

<sup>44</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Water and Sanitation, 20 October 2022.

<sup>45</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Home Affairs, 19 January 2023.



**Figure 4: Review of departmental policies and plan**

Many of the GFPs reported performing functions are unrelated to gender mainstreaming. Primarily, the structure of the unit entailed issues concerning other marginalised groups. This meant that issues relating to youth, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, HIV/AIDS, events planning, and overall employee wellness were all done by the GFP unit or shared within the directorate where they were situated. For example, in the Western Cape, gender issues were covered under human rights. However, due to understaffing, a GFP from one of the government departments indicated that they had been working on gender, youth, and persons with disabilities. The following are a few extracts from what was shared by respondents in relation to performing duties outside of gender mainstreaming:

“The unit also performs functions related to employee health and wellness and ethics management”.<sup>46</sup>

“Disability and youth mainstreaming, change management, employment equity, research, events coordination”.<sup>47</sup>

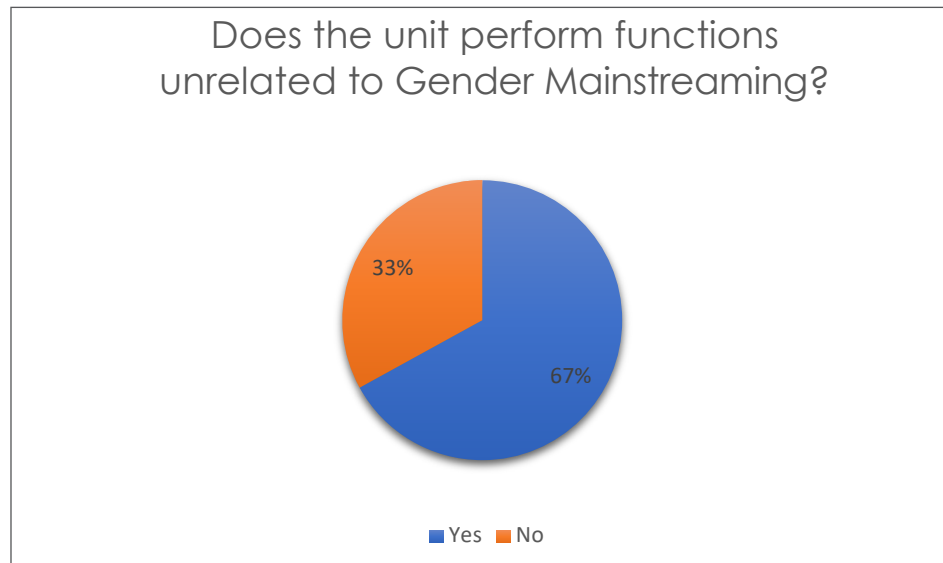
“A lot of events are required to be organised, instead of core gender-mainstreaming related issues”.<sup>48</sup>

It is also important to note that the results in Figure 5 are slightly distorted because as researchers analysed some of the completed surveys, they realised that respondents would reject that their GFP units or reasonable alternative structures performed functions outside of gender mainstreaming. This was the case even though respondents had noted being involved in mainstreaming youth, elderly, and people with disabilities, as well as employment equity assurance, and events coordination in sections of the survey that required them to detail their APP activities. In other words, more than half (67%) of departments/metros/premiers' offices reported performing functions unrelated to gender mainstreaming in relation to the third (33%) that did not report doing so. However, these numbers do not reflect the true state of affairs.

<sup>46</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Public Enterprises, 2 December 2022.

<sup>47</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the National School of Government, 26 January 2023.

<sup>48</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the DALRRD, 31 October 2022.



**Figure 5: Functions unrelated to gender mainstreaming**

Tied into this is where the GFP unit is located within the organisation to make meaningful contributions to departmental plans and make gender central to the mandate. The NGPF stipulates that all GFPs should be within the Director General's Office as the Accounting Officer. This is to ensure that "GFPs within this office [the office of the accounting officer] would therefore afford the GFPs easy access to all programmes and programme officials within the department, thereby creating an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming".<sup>49</sup>

In other words, GFPs should be placed within strategic offices to ensure access to departmental plans and processes for inputs on gender. This is important as it provides seamless access to information, officials, and processes planned and underway within the department. Housed elsewhere, GFP units are farther from information, officials, programmes, and processes, thereby inundating GFPs with red tape, resistance, and gatekeeping in relation to discharging their roles and responsibilities. To this end, the GFP in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development identified the location and status of GFPs as part of the issues central to the GFP's strategic planning processes.<sup>50</sup>

Very few departments at the national level indicated that they reported to the DG – one of which was COGTA. GFP units also reported moving from one branch to another during their lifespan, which often created confusion within the department and shifted the core functions of the GFP. To this end, the following was shared with researchers:

*"For the longest they did not know what to do with GFPs. The work of the GFP falls on my hands and the interns whose stay is not very long. I would train interns and we'd carry the work but when contracts expire I am left alone. I remember being placed at human resources and skills audit unit and now I am under special projects and diversity. This is all dependent on where the Director General sees fit. Often at times gender issues are seen as mundane and women's issues and paid no mind".<sup>51</sup>*

<sup>49</sup> National Gender Policy Framework, 2000.

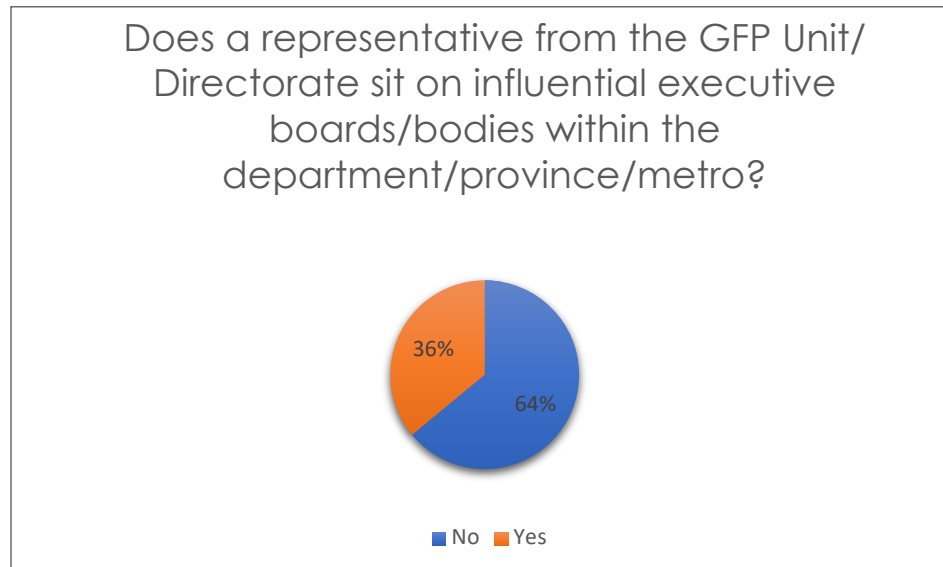
<sup>50</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, 15 October 2022.

<sup>51</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 12 December 2022.



Another concern was conscientizing officials of the GFP's work. Moving the unit complicated the officials' understanding of what the GFP sought to do in the organisation.

Figure 6 illustrates the participation of the GFP in influential executive boards/bodies within the department/metro/province. Responses indicate that more than half (64%) of respondents noted that they did not sit in on any influential executive boards/bodies within the departments/metros/provinces, and only a third (36%) acknowledged that they did.



**Figure 6: Seat on influential executive boards or bodies**

The placement of the GFP and the rank of the GFP also underpins the access and ability of the work of the unit to be ventilated within the organisation. Respondents indicated that the further they are from the DGs Office or the Mayor's Office, the more challenging it is for them to carry out their mandates as it pertains to gender mainstreaming.

Some of the responses indicated that the GFP reported to Director of Organisational Development and Service Delivery Improvement, Directorate within Human Resources, Chief Director of Human Resource Management, and the Chief Director of Compliance, Deputy Director of Corporate Support Services, Chief Director Administration/Corporate Services or Chief Director Strategy and Organisations Transformation.

One respondent indicated that although they may sit farther away than the policy requires, other avenues have been created so that GFPs are able to carry out their work. For example, at the level of the GFP in this national department, the respondent indicated that the Minister in charge had extended the meetings to the staff at the Chief Director level, thereby creating more space for them to engage. She indicated that this sitting (Extended EXCO) was out of the Minister's own volition and that with changes of political leadership, this could be done away with. Another respondent highlighted that "led by the Deputy Director General, the plights from the gender office are in a very good space to be highlighted at all levels".<sup>52</sup> It is evident through the findings that proximity to the Accounting Officer influences the ability to push through the work of GFPs, and the further the GFP sits from them, the more challenging it is to do so.

<sup>52</sup> Written response from the GFP Unit of the Department of Water and Sanitation, 20 October 2022.





The National Gender Policy calls for departments/provinces/metros to have monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms in place to ensure proper internal accountability by GFPs or their supervisors on gender mainstreaming.<sup>53</sup> To this end, respondents were asked if their departments/provinces/metros had M&E mechanisms for departmental projects/programmes in line with national gender policy. As seen in Figure 7, just over half (56%) of respondents revealed that their organisations had M&E mechanisms for departmental projects/programmes in line with National Gender Policy. However, results also show that almost half (44%) of respondents indicated that their organisations/departments did not have any. For instance, Statistics South Africa reported that “the department’s Monitoring and Control Unit is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of gender programmes on a quarterly basis”.<sup>54</sup> The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality formed part of the group of responses that noted not having M&E mechanisms for departmental projects/programmes in line with the National Gender Policy.<sup>55</sup>

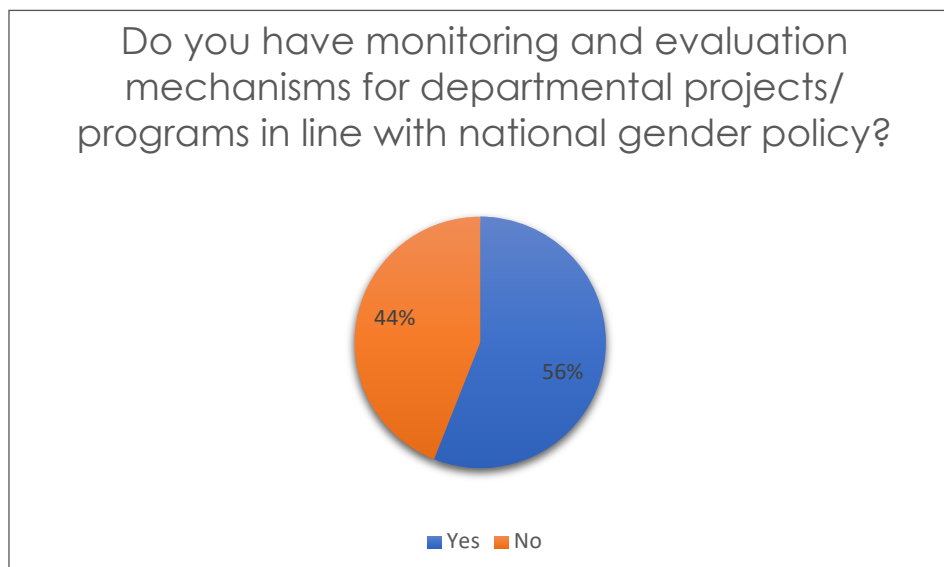


Figure 7: M&E mechanisms

### 7.3 STAFF COMPLEMENT

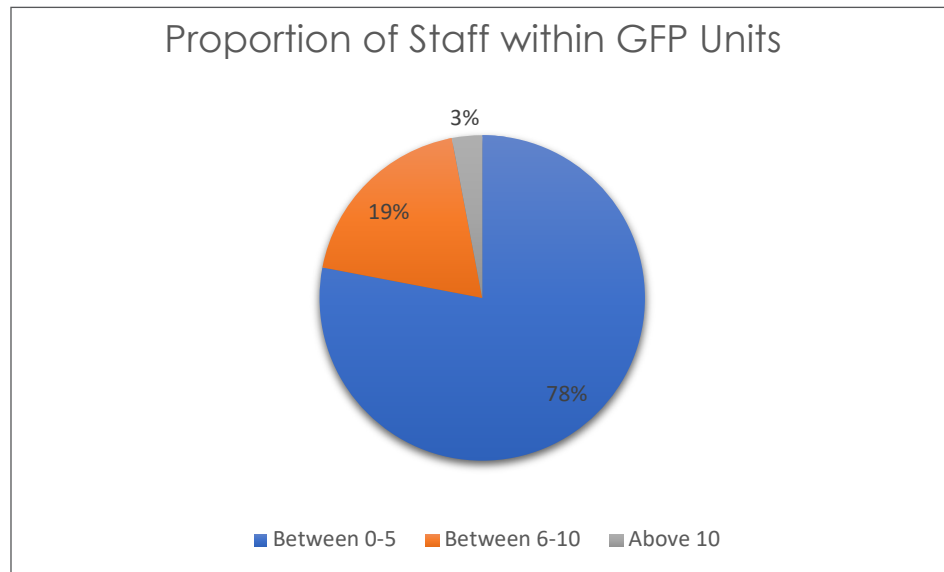
GFP work is driven by the people within the unit. The findings illustrate that most (78%) of the units had between 0 and 5 members of staff, followed by between 6 and 10 staff (19%), and very few of the GFP units had a staff complement of more than 10 (3%). This shows that, in general, GFP units are quite small within various organisations. The pie chart below illustrates this (see Figure 8).

<sup>53</sup> National Gender Policy Framework, 2000.

<sup>54</sup> Written response from the GFP unit of Statistics South Africa, 7 November 2022.

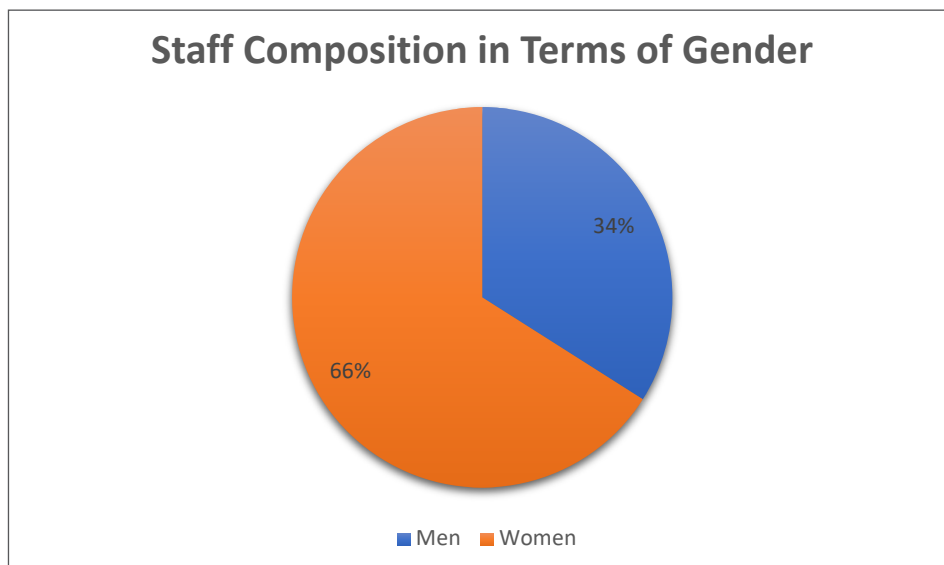
<sup>55</sup> Written response from the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 31 January 2023.





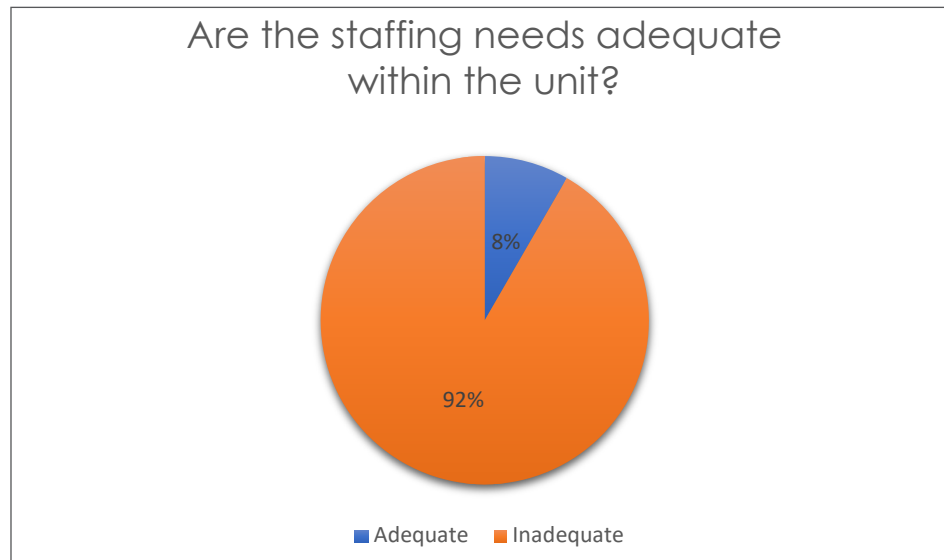
**Figure 8: Proportion of staff within GFP units**

With regard to the staff composition in terms of gender, the findings show that overwhelmingly most of the staff of the GFP units were staffed with women (66%), followed by men (34%) (see Figure 9). There were no gender non-conforming staff who are GFPs.



**Figure 9: Staff composition in terms of gender**

A very interesting finding from the questionnaire relates to the staffing needs within the GFP. Most (92%) respondents indicated that the staffing needs were not adequate. Few (8%) respondents highlighted that the staff complement was adequate for the needs of the GFP (see Figure 10).



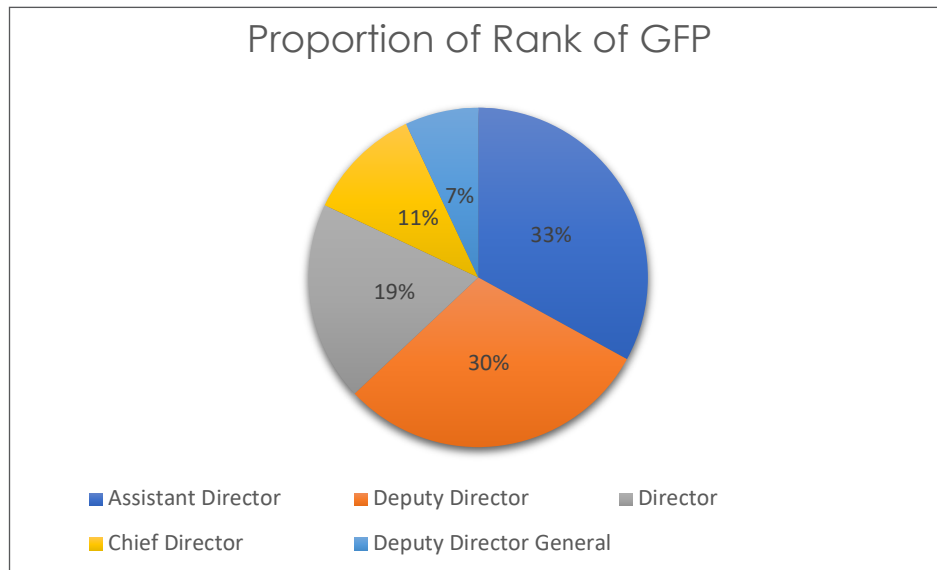
**Figure 10: Staff adequacy in GFP unit**

In addition to the issue of staff inadequacy for the GFP unit, it also emerged from some of the in-depth interviews conducted that some of the GFPs were carrying out huge loads of work beyond just the GFP unit work. For example, in NMBM in Gqeberha, one of the respondents pointed out that two people were responsible for a number of functions that included work relating to gender, women, youth, and persons with disabilities.<sup>56</sup> In another interview, an official from a national department also had similar sentiments, pointing out that they were not part of the strategic planning process and did not have enough influence due to their position as a sub-directorate within the unit. In addition, their scope of work went beyond gender issues to include diversity and disability issues.<sup>57</sup>

Regarding the staff composition as it relates to positions, rank, and level of the GFPs employed from Assistant Director to Deputy Director-General (DDG), the findings of the study as depicted in Figure 11 illustrate that the respondents indicated that the majority of GFPs were employed at a lower rank than the policy requires: Assistant Director (33%), followed by Deputy Director (30%), Director (19%), Chief Director (11%), and DDG (7%). Consequently, as some respondents have indicated, the lower rank of employment limits the GFP unit with regard to influence and authority to bring about change. Respondents indicated that part of the issue with the rank is that the unit was not taken seriously.

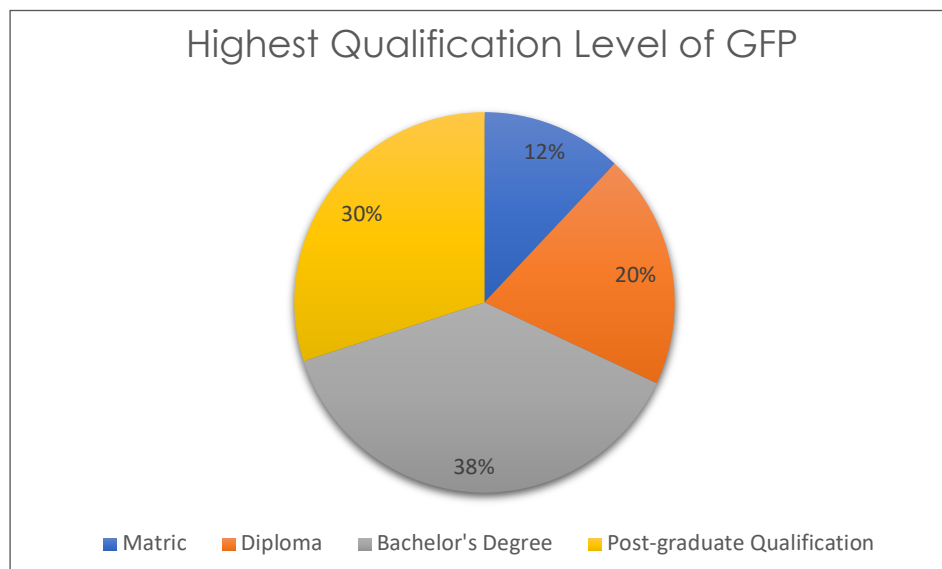
<sup>56</sup> Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan (NMBM) Official: Interview, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

<sup>57</sup> Department of Tourism (DoT) Official: Interview 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022.



**Figure 11: Proportion of rank of GFPs**

With regard to the highest qualifications within the GFP, the findings reflected in Figure 12 illustrate that most of the staff have a bachelor's degree (38%), post-graduate qualification (30%), diplomas (20%), and matric (12%). The rank at which most of the GFPs are placed within the various organisation does not correspond with the NGPF, which recommends that GFPs be appointed at the level of Director and that GFPs should be located in the Director-General's office.<sup>58</sup>



**Figure 12: Highest qualification level of GFP**

The final part of the findings regarding the staff complement of the GFP was a question about whether there are vacancies within the GFP.

<sup>58</sup> National Gender Policy Framework, 2000.



Figure 13 depicts mixed results in this regard, with slightly more than half (56%) of the respondents pointing out that there were no vacancies, whilst slightly less than half (44%) said there were vacancies within their GFP units. The mixed results speak to the challenges the GFP units face, with some not having the financial resources to hire more staff. Hence, there were unfilled vacancies. Equally, it could be that the GFP unit is full, hence no vacancies.

On the other hand, other units were not capacitated at all, which means there were vacancies. These mixed results from the questionnaire were reflected in some of the interviews conducted with GFP units. For example, in one of the GFP interviews conducted at NMBM, the respondent pointed out that she and the Executive Director were responsible for special programmes within their unit, which included women, youth, gender, and disability issues, which was a cross-section of multiple roles. Thus, they did not have vacancies for GFPs.<sup>59</sup> In another interview conducted with a GFP official at a national department, that official pointed out that there were two vacancies available for an Assistant Director and a Deputy Director, which needed to be filled to ensure their full staff complement within their GFP unit.<sup>60</sup>



**Figure 13: Vacancies within the GFP**

## 7.4 RESOURCE ALLOCATION

With regard to resource allocation, it was evident that most GFP units were either underfunded as they had many projects and the inadequacy of their budgets made it impossible for them to reach their targets. Some resorted to collaborating with other departments within their structures to meet all the intended initiatives by utilising the department's budget. Furthermore, some departments noted that they did not have any form of funding due to their positioning in their respective departments and had to share the budget allocated for that structure.<sup>61</sup> For example, some GFP units are positioned under the HR department and play an event facilitation role. In some cases, as they did not have their own budget GFP units relied on that of HR wherein they were housed.

<sup>59</sup> Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan (NMBM) Official: Interview, 16 February 2023.

<sup>60</sup> Stats SA Official: Interview, 28 November 2022.

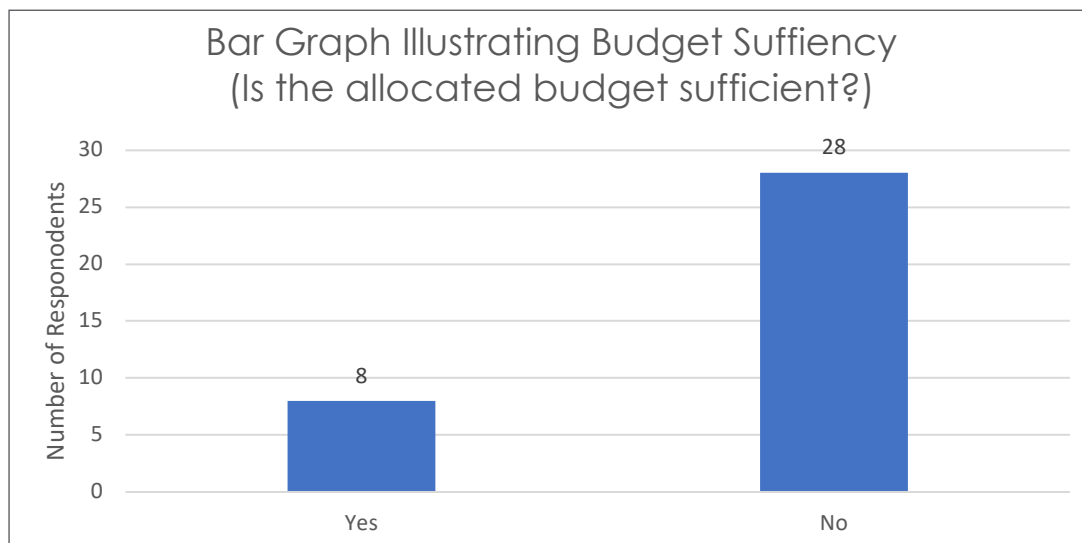
<sup>61</sup> Written response from the GFP unit of the National School of Government, 28 February 2022.



Moreover, it was equally noted that some GFP units managed to utilise the budget allocated for other gender-related projects. As mentioned, it was revealed that most GFP units or alternative structures had more than one responsibility under their banner. A GFP would be in charge of the disability, youth, and gender unit and would utilise the budget allocated for disability in some of the gender-related projects. Respondents also indicated that there is no budget allocation or no clear budget allocation for gender-related activities in some of the departments. One official, who asked to not be identified, described what they termed a "shadow budget". This budget was not official, and that is where gender-related programmes, events, and initiatives were covered. The "shadow budget" does not have dedicated funds, and the available funds are easily diverted to other "more important issues". The official mentioned that the unit's success for that year would determine if their work would be formally funded in the department's budget.

Nevertheless, a few departments argued that they have sufficient funds but lack participation from staff when it comes to gender-related activities/events. The latter also suggests that if there were vast participation in gender-related initiatives, the budget might not be adequate.

Figure 14 illustrates evidence regarding the adequacy of the budget. While just above a quarter of respondents (8) agreed that the budget meets their intended needs, the majority (28) argued that the budget is inadequate and reduces their scope of work and level of responsibility.



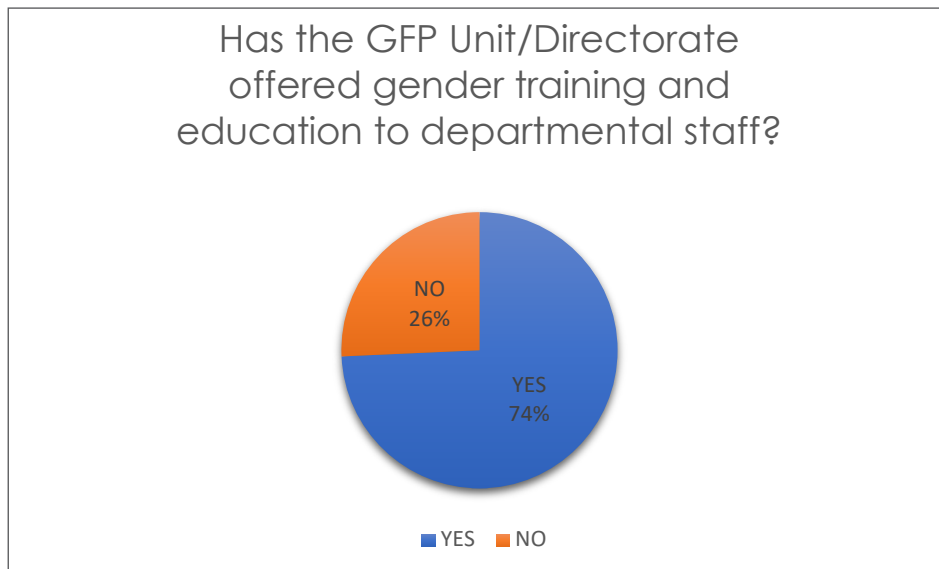
**Figure 14: Budget sufficiency**

It was also noted that in most departments, the budget is allocated under operations as GFP is placed under operations. The budget is allocated under human resource operations and a single pooled budget is allocated to different departments under operations and is generally not specific towards the various departments. The latter equally suggested that there might not be a specific budget set aside for GFP units as most (72%) of the departments could not provide a figure allocated to them directly as a unit. Moreover, it was revealed that some GFP units receive less than 1% of the annual budget allocated for the entire department. The issue of not having disaggregated data on the budget allocation made it hard to understand the allocation level for the gender units. There was no evidence of a clear budget allocated to units classified in terms of gender, persons living with disability and youth by respondents irrespective of the budget allocated to other departments, it is not necessarily for gender-related initiatives, but every unit under the directorate must utilise it for all their initiatives. As a result, there was no clarity on how much is directly allocated to GFP units.



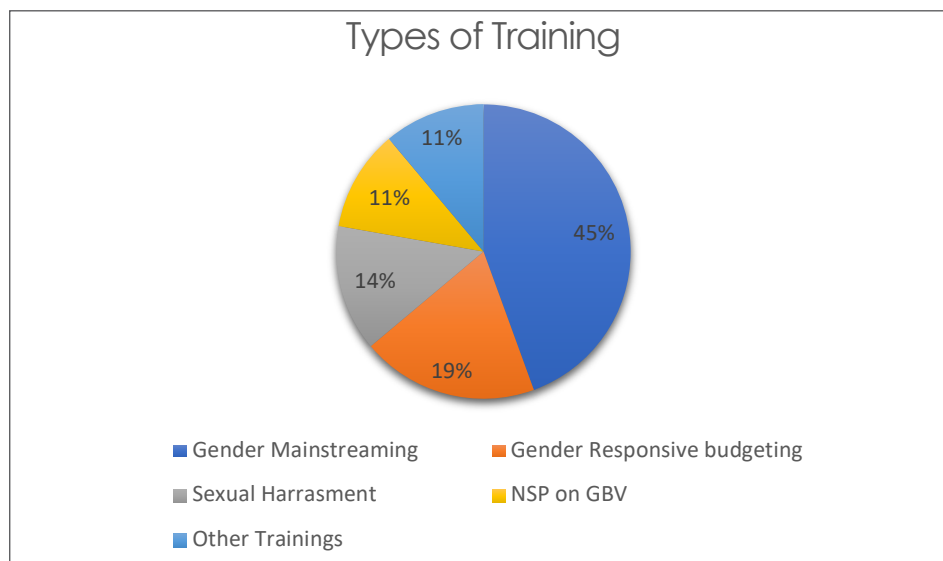
## 7.5 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Figure 15 depicts the proportion of departments that have had training and capacity building:



**Figure 15: Training and education offered**

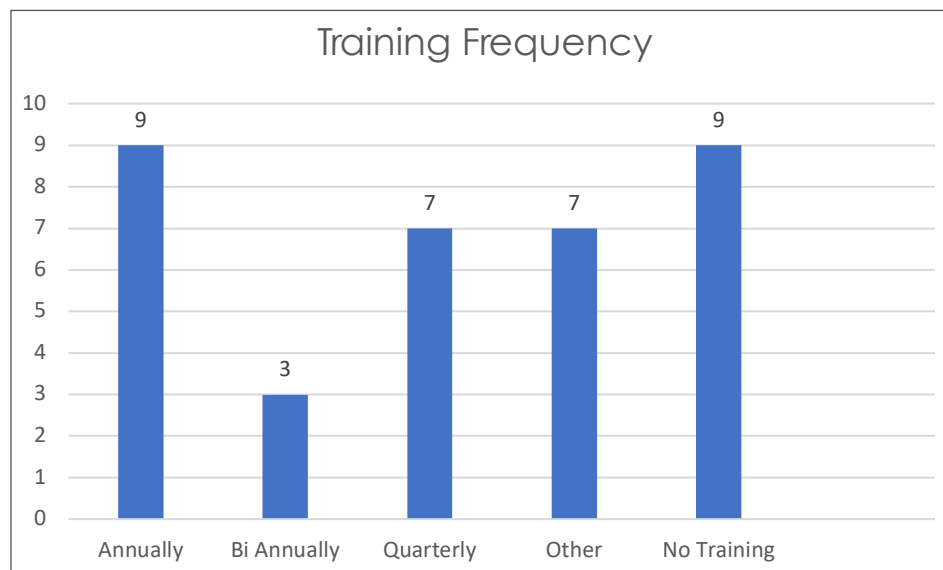
The evidence revealed that most (74%) of departments had undergone training and capacity building. However, the training provided is not adequate. Most of the departments have only gone through training on gender mainstreaming through the National School of Governance, which did not occur regularly enough to keep abreast of relevant matters. Figure 16 shows the types of training provided.



**Figure 16: Types of training offered**



While a few have undergone training on other gender-related issues, which include the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence (NSPGBV), gender responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and auditing framework, sexual harassment, and other training (youth mainstreaming, diversity training, disability mainstreaming, LGBTQI+ mainstreaming held by the DWYPD. It was also noted that most (74%) of the department's training only included the directorate, not the general staff and other departments within the organisation. The inadequacy of more training has hindered the process of sensitisation and redress within departments, as matters related to the GFP units are still misunderstood. Furthermore, a few (11%) of the respondents highlighted that most of the training is on other related issues, such as people living with disability and youth integration, as compared to gender-related aspects. Lastly, it was noted that the GFP units or alternative structures do not influence the type of training offered. Regarding who decides on training and capacity building areas, seven departments alluded that it was either the responsibility of the HR department or requests by staff (see Figure 17).



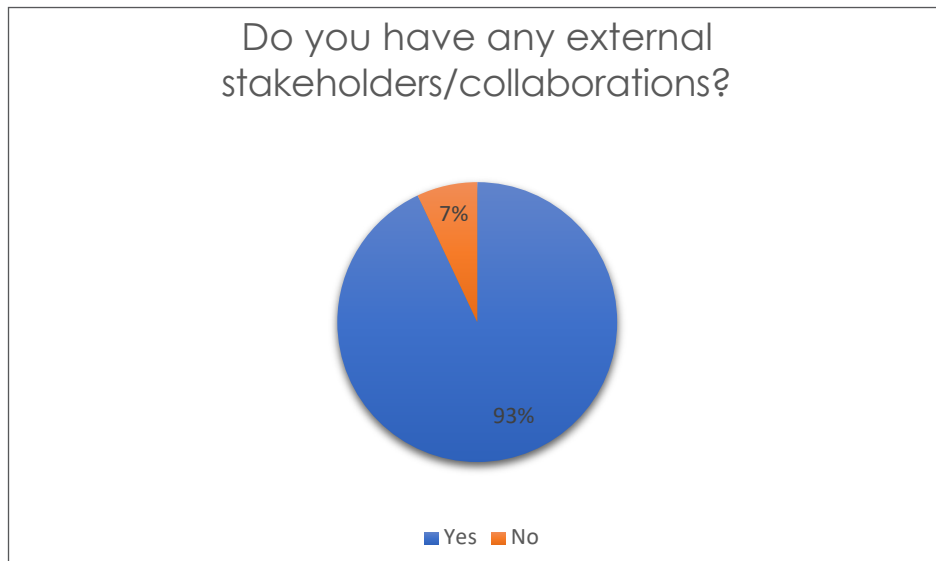
**Figure 17: Training frequency**

The figure 17 illustrates frequency of the training as per responses from departments as initiated by the HR Departments. Moreover, this also illustrates the number of departments that do not have any form of training.



## 7.6 GFP STAKEHOLDERS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Figure 18 depicts the respondents' relationships with external stakeholders:



**Figure 18: Stakeholder relations**

The study revealed that most (93%) of departments have relations with external stakeholders, while few (7%) do not. Respondents highlighted that the departments have a relationship with the DWYPD. However, their engagement is more on a reporting basis. Other stakeholder relations that were noted were a few departmental relations with civil society organisations, South African Police Services (SAPS), and Chapter 9 institutions, including the CGE and the South African Human Rights Commission. Some national and provinces mentioned the existence of the National Gender Machinery and Provincial Gender Machinery (PGM), where most departments meet to discuss gender-related issues. However, the departments noted that the National Gender Forum, where meetings across national department GFP units are no longer active and the functions have ceased. There was no clear indication of why the gender machinery is currently inactive as compared to other forums, such as the disability or youth forums.

The Western Cape<sup>62</sup> also noted provincial gender machinery that is also non-existent. The provincial gender machinery is a platform created for all GFPs to meet and share ideas on gender-related issues, similar to the national gender machinery. While other departments seemed to be working in isolation, the Department of Social Development enjoys collaborating with all nine provinces. This relates more broadly to the relations that DSD has with other provinces due to the nature of the department and social mandate across all nine provinces. It was further revealed that all departments form part of the Human Rights Forum as per the national requirement for accountability purposes.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, it should be noted that only one departmental respondent alluded to having relations with international stakeholders, which has hindered an opportunity to learn more strategies from other institutions within the country.

<sup>62</sup> Western Cape Premiers Office: Interview, 3 February 2022.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.





## 7.7 CGE VOICES

A CGE participant noted that the NGPF of 2000 was an important document, and even over 20 years later, the document reads with just as much relevance. The CGE official articulated this in the following manner:

“But we have not moved, how come when you read that document you feel like, I see this every day. It's a document of 2000, we are sitting at 2022/23, 23 years later, we have not moved even a needle (sighs)”.<sup>64</sup>

The CGE participant encourages us to reflect on the past 20 years of the policy and highlights that the policy still has the same backdrop wherein it was established. In other words, the landscape of the policy 20 years ago is still as it was. Very few gains have been made over the years; thus, very little progress in implementation is illustrated. The CGE is part of the National Gender Machinery (NGM) articulated in the policy, where Provincial Gender Machineries (PGM) are also covered. The policy outlines the various roles and responsibilities of the gender systems within the country to ensure a well-oiled machine. CGE has had representation on the NGM, and at the provincial level, as Provincial Managers of the CGE represent the organisation there. Local-level systems, including their GFP units, are also represented at PGM. The GFP units at local and provincial levels report to the provincial OSW in the Office of the Premier, while the national GFP units report to the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD), which was previously the national OSW in the Presidency.

Through its representation and participation in the NGM and across PGMs in the provinces, the CGE has noted that where the province had gender units more entrenched and outside the Office of the Premier within departments, the province was more effective in having tangible reform regarding gender in the province. In other words, a CGE official describes them as “national feeder functionaries”<sup>65</sup> where the national department coordinates far closer with their provincial and local departments rather than the stronghold being the province. The structure is primarily vertical rather than horizontal across the provinces and their various departments. At the level of NGM, the national GFPs did not know what the provincial-level and local-level GFPs were doing within the same department. Furthermore, it was noted that the provincial OSW represented all provincial and local GFP units, sometimes without specific knowledge of departmental work.

There was also a lack of coordination within the departments across provinces. There was seldom a relationship that binds the agenda in the departments across provincial and local departments, let alone with the national department that should be the leader of the strategy. Each department should have a gender agenda that is the central strategy across the country. This will assist in the planning, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation of the departmental performance regarding GFPs. Alternatively, the coordination should come from the OSW in the province, who would be better placed as a provincial DWYPD.

CGE participants also reported a lack of uniform and standardised reporting,<sup>66</sup> which is evidenced by the confusion about who the custodians of GRBPMEA are, for example, whether it is DWYPD or the DPME. The OSW coordinates the provincial agenda in provinces where nothing effective exists for departments and provinces alike. There is fragmentation within departments, which elucidates that there is not a single goal set within the same cluster of responsibilities.

<sup>64</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 13 March 2023.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023.



GFP units are working in silos, which hinders progress. Nevertheless, the current circumstances disallow for seamless coordination, coherent strategies, and effective reporting, as well as for the GFP area of the machinery to run with effective coordination of the various parts. The respondent highlighted that through an alternate structure such as the provincial DWYPD, for example, “the coordination will happen; the effectiveness will be there, and the relevance will be there”.<sup>67</sup>

This has been raised within the NGM forums, and the recommendation has been to introduce new legislation and policy to govern stronger intragovernmental relations. One of the CGE participants highlighted that this is not necessarily the best way to do it. Nothing prohibits the coordination and collaboration of GFP units and the legislative and policy environment that already enables officials. This was echoed by various other contributors who suggested that policy alignment is the better solution, proposing grounding gender, youth, and people with disabilities (GEYODI) as a framework from which to begin. This would require upskilling, elevating, and orientating the crosscutting approach as per the MTSF with specific strategic goals and roles. The CGE participants also highlighted that the range of resources of the CGE is not adequate to be everywhere, all the time. The CGE and other like-minded organisations must be resourced and capacitated to fulfil this.

The CGE officials noted some areas that echo the findings of the questionnaire and in-depth interviews. One of the issues relates to the functions of GFPs in taking on work unrelated to gender equality and women empowerment in particular. GFPs have been converted into “special projects/programmes” individuals. Where gender was integrated with all other marginalised groups within the Office of the Premier, on the other hand, with no specific gender focus, the province was not doing well in implementing gender mainstreaming through the PGM.<sup>68</sup>

It was also noted that some provinces are just not doing what the NGPF requires of GFP units. In one province, there was mention of the dissolution of the GFP and its machinery and the convergence of that with other functions to form a human rights directorate. While there is an important argument for the intersection of various issues, the legislation and policy call for gender to be central and a key driver in the work of the GFP units. Another province has moved the gender function outside the Office of the Premier as a unit, which is also a deviation from the policy. Therefore, there is no coordination in the province in the form of a PGM as envisioned by the policy.

Moreover, there is also a misconception that GFPs are skilled in dealing with all other marginalised groups, for example, in the North West.<sup>69</sup> While there may be similarities, there are nuances outside of the gender skillset of GFPs that disallow them to be authoritative voices on certain matters.

It was also noted that machineries like the youth machinery or the PWD machinery were functioning better than the gender machineries due to the GFPs being overloaded with other matters or not being professionally skilled in gender issues themselves. Moreover, it was noted by CGE participants that some GFPs were placed for compliance purposes, whereas other machinery places people with lived experience. The official noted that when it comes to gender issues, it is difficult to articulate that patriarchy affects us all. However, in various ways and while the number of GFPs is overwhelmingly women, it was not always clear that GFP women were resisting patriarchal standards within their positions.<sup>70</sup> Drivers of gender equality and women empowerment are sometimes set back by women themselves, who are actively complicit in their roles as GFPs.<sup>71</sup> The struggle is against the system of patriarchy overall, which must be fought by all.

<sup>67</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 13 March 2023.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 15 March 2023.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 13 March 2023.



The CGE participants also noted that the GFPs are meant to be appointed at the Director level to influence internal and external gender mainstreaming and contribute to the planning and budgeting of the organisations. Therefore, the rank ensures that gender is always considered a cornerstone of organisation policies and plans.

Currently, this is not the case, as also covered in the findings of the questionnaire, and it was also noted in interviews that GFPs double as events coordinators for Women's Day, Youth Day, Mental Health Awareness, or other such celebrations according to the calendar of the year. The current state of the GFP units does not reach its potential for gender equality as envisioned in the NGPF. Lessons should be taken from work done following the policy formulation to improve the existing systems and structures to ensure a practical environment where the work will reach its highest potential.

GFPs have been inundated with progressive policies, frameworks, and plans, such as the GRB and the NSP. However, they have not been able to cover the basics of gender responsiveness in terms of the organisational tools related to the development agenda, transformative agenda, and strategy.<sup>72</sup> It was noted that while these basics have not been covered, advanced level work has been even more challenging. A similar finding was noted in a CGE study on GRB, where GFPs are responsible for implementing GRB in organisations. In contrast, there should be a collaboration between the finance unit and GFP.<sup>73</sup>

The CGE participants noted that GFP units were under-resourced, underutilised, and sometimes under-skilled when they were there.<sup>74</sup> If the OSW is technically under-skilled as the coordinator in the province, then it compromises the stature, credibility, and coordination powers of the gender function in the province. Under-skilled technical leads on gender (GFP or OSW) compromise outputs of other relevant officials on gender issues. Consequently, either the work fell to the GFP alone, or the distribution of labour was coupled with a poor understanding of the requirements of execution of the tasks.<sup>75</sup>

The PGMs have also been characterised by meetings wherein issues are ventilated with no solutions.<sup>76</sup> This illuminates the concerns regarding the role and powers of PGMs, and by extension the GFP units. No accountability mechanisms exist and compliance with the gender agenda is voluntary.<sup>77</sup> The CGE officials further noted that the role of the CGE is limited in that the organisation is there to protect, promote, and monitor.

There have also been issues regarding the capacity of GFPs. CGE officials noted that some GFPs within provinces had been placed there without appropriate skills, contributing to the slow pace of progress regarding gender issues within the provinces, contrary to the questionnaire results. This speaks to the under-resourcing and the misplacement of GFPs. Much like at the national level, primarily covered in the questionnaires, the suitability of and quality of individuals working as GFPs was not always aligned and this did not always assist in moving the gender issue forward. Officials attributed the lack of skills of GFPs to the lack of political will to place competent and qualified people in those roles to take forward the struggle against gender inequality. This also relates to the location of GFP units regarding reporting within the various organisations. Officials mentioned that they were not within the office of the Accounting Officers and were not ranked appropriately to participate meaningfully at high-level organisational structures or forums.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> CGE, 2022. *Much ado about Little: Assessing second year of implementing Governments Gender Responsive Budgeting Framework*.

<sup>74</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 13 March 2023.

<sup>75</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 15 March 2023.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.



At a local level, CGE participants highlighted a disjuncture both vertically (to provincial and national) and horizontally (amongst local municipalities and corresponding organisations such as SALGA and COGTA). There is poor coordination between the various organisations, and the lack of standardised processes continues to challenge the work undertaken. In addition, the ever-changing political landscape at a local level hinders the entrenchment of gender programmes, processes, and policies due to the instability and fluidity of the movement of personnel, which resulted in a lack of political will and a decreased appetite for gender-related work.<sup>78</sup> Participants also highlighted that this continued to challenge the formalisation of GFPs, their work, and working relationships with stakeholders at the local level.

For the CGE, with the role of oversight, monitoring, and advising, respondents relayed that the organisation lacks the appropriate position and power to hold organisations accountable through punitive measures. While it was useful and helpful to assist within these forums and organisations, participants highlighted that the non-compliance with the recommendations, for example, did not phase detractors, as they knew that no binding consequence would be applied.<sup>79</sup> This also extended towards participation in the CGE study. CGE participants highlighted that they were informed by stakeholders that non-participation and non-implementation would be of no consequence and would have no consequences. For example, some provinces and metros that requested to participate in this study did not do so as they saw their participation as nonessential or unlikely to result in positive outcomes.

Additionally, having not complied with the 2013 recommendations had no consequences, and according to them, the same would apply to the follow-up study.<sup>80</sup> Participants from the CGE highlighted that this was the sentiment of external stakeholders of the CGE. This raises the question of the role of the CGE regarding non-compliance, a long-standing internal question of the organisation according to CGE participants. Furthermore, the result is that leadership challenges were faced as the entire value chain is being corrupted, disrupted, or interrupted. This results in strain on CGE officials and across the provincial landscape.<sup>81</sup> CGE officials understood that the CGE is required to have trailblazers, pioneers, and leaders in gender discourse across the country at various levels of society. However, internal challenges often meant that other matters overshadowed that work.

CGE participants highlighted that despite these challenges, there have indeed been pockets of success often championed by strong leadership.<sup>82</sup> CGE participants highlighted that departments in their provinces were becoming gender responsive and implementing the CGE's advice. The CGE has been able to assist in beginning to formulate provincial gender policies and strategies where the CGE has worked closely with OTPs, OSWs, and GFPs in Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal, for example, to ensure that departments are coordinated regarding the plans of the province. The monitoring work that the CGE did was assisting in being informative regarding the relevance of the changes required in different departments. The relationships between CGE personnel and other government officials facilitated by GFPs often resulted in progressive changes that would incrementally lead to transformation regarding gender. Other low-hanging fruit contributes to the gradual changes mentioned by CGE officials by contributing to the IDP or assisting in gendering the APPs and ensuring that those local-level documents are gender responsive.

<sup>78</sup> CGE Official: Interview, 15 March 2023.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.



## 8. OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES IN FINDINGS

The findings in this study cover various areas important for the work of GFPs and the overall advancement of the gender agenda in this country. This section gives an analysis of the key issues and possible implications.

Firstly, the recommendations of the 2013 report highlighted that senior managers should be familiar with the NGPF to ensure that the work of GFPs, their appointment, rank, status, competencies, location and function are understood to ensure that GFPs can undertake their work accordingly. Similar to the 2013 findings, this study illustrates that GFPs are still appointed below the required rank, which should be at the Director level, according to the NGPF. The findings indicate that less than a quarter (19%) of the GFPs who responded to the questionnaire are employed at the level of Director. That means close to one in five GFP units are compliant with the policy. The National Gender Machinery Diagnostic Review Report<sup>83</sup> published in 2019 highlighted that a quarter (23%) were ranked at the Director level. The lack of seniority of GFPs in their organisations limits their decision-making abilities and their ability to contribute positively to key strategic plans and pathways set out by the institutions.

Related to this, the location of the GFP units is key to the translation of their work into departmental plans and the culture of gender equality programmes and processes within those organisations. Several respondents indicated that GFPs did not sit on influential bodies within their organisations where they could provide meaningful inputs on strategy and development for their respective organisations. This is a key function of GFP units outlined in the NGPF of 2000. This ties closely with the issue of rank and location of the GFP. Through the structures of government departments, provinces, and municipalities, power and influence are concentrated at the top amongst senior officials and the conglomerate of those members and units. Within such structures and meetings, decision makers on the direction of the organisations are coordinated and assembled. With GFPs often outside of those sittings/gatherings/forums/bodies, their contribution and the gender agenda is excluded and sometimes lost.

Furthermore, the proximity of the GFP to the Accounting Officer ensures that gender is always on the agenda, as GFPs can access, influence, and evaluate the work of the organisation. The NGM Diagnostic Review puts this aptly by articulating that the further GFPs are from the DG's office (where sometimes not even in any other strategic functions), for example, means that the "extent to which they can ensure gender mainstreaming within various government departments is limited, unequal and non-uniform".<sup>84</sup>

Another key issue relates to the allocation of other functions outside of gender issues to the GFP. The findings highlight that GFPs are often responsible for functions related to youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly, HIV/Aids, and other social matters. While the intersection of all such issues cannot be denied, the legislation and policy on gender provide for niche interventions that relate to the disparities that have gender as a central issue. Moreover, those functions were conflated and respondents often indicated that the human resource capacity was far below adequate regarding the need for gender equality and women empowerment, not to mention other responsibilities. The responsibility for other functions also meant that the already constrained financial resources allocated to GFP units had to be utilised across the various responsibilities. The respondents highlighted that the budget allocated to their department (if any) was inadequate in fulfilling their mandates and functions within their respective organisations. This speaks to the broader lack of funding for gender equality issues.

<sup>83</sup> Diagnostic Report with Recommendations for Reviving and Strengthening South Africa's National Gender Machinery (2019). Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 56.



Vacancies at GFP units tie in closely with the allocation of staff complement to projects outside of the gender agenda. The findings indicated that 44% of the GFP units had vacancies. That translates to just over half of the human capacity attempting to fulfil the mandate of the GFP while simultaneously having other functions within their work, without the appropriate rank. For any unit, this is a monumental task. In terms of reviewing departmental policies and plans as per the NGPF of 2000, more than half (61%) of GFPs reported having done so, while a third (39%) reported the reverse. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment reviewed gender-related policies such as their Gender Policy and their Sexual Harassment Policy. Other departments that reported having reviewed policies and plans as per the NGPF of 2000 had done so with both gender-related policies and those unrelated to gender. A few departments were in the process of reviewing their policies, plans, and programmes at the time of data collection.

The 2013 study found that the necessary internal processes and M&E mechanisms to ensure proper internal accountability – either by GFPs or their supervisors – on the work of gender mainstreaming were lacking. In the current study, almost half (44%) of GFPs who responded to the survey reported not having M&E mechanisms for departmental projects and programmes aligned with National Gender Policy. This proportion might not be in the majority. However, it is still worrying as it points to an existing gap in ensuring proper internal accountability in relation to gender mainstreaming within departments, metros, and Premier's offices.

Furthermore, there was no seamless coordination within the three levels of government within a single department. No coherent single gender agenda within departments existed, which has created a fragmented strategy and implementation of the gender agenda existed at a single level. OSW represents the entire province and provincial position without particular note of each departmental plan, process, and strategy. OSW across the country was not always best placed to represent the department across provinces at the national level.

Lastly, policies and planning documents are in abundance. The conversion from policy to practice is the key pillar in the measure of lives changed. GFP units did not indicate an urgent need for legislative or policy reform and it may eventually become necessary. The existing policies and legislation were adequate and appropriate to ensure the enabling environment wherein the work would take place.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be drawn from the discussions of the data gathered through the questionnaire, in-depth interviews with departmental officials responsible for gender mainstreaming in government, CGE officials, and the review of secondary published sources, including official reports, policy documents, and relevant literature.

Firstly, the CGE concludes that there has been little to no progress since the last CGE report on GFP unit effectiveness in 2013, based on the findings of this current study that showed that GFPs are generally appointed in the lower ranks of the public service in direct contradiction to the prescripts of the NGPF which call for GFPs to be appointed at the level of Director. The 2013 CGE GFP study recommended that it was of critical importance for senior management in government to be thoroughly familiar with the general contents of the NGPF, as well as the specific provisions relating to the work, status, and level of appointment/rank, amongst other issues.<sup>85</sup> This 2022/2023 study proves that these recommendations were not implemented. Found in the 2013 CGE report, the challenge still exists that GFPs are appointed at lower ranks within government departments and entities across all three levels – national, provincial, or local government – than prescribed in the NGPF.

<sup>85</sup> CGE.2013. *Assessing the Effectiveness of Gender Focal Points in South Africa*. Available online at <https://cge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/assessing-the-effectiveness-of-general-focal-points-in-south-africa.pdf>





Secondly, the CGE research team concludes that based on the findings of this study, GFPs continue to be burdened with work outside of their direct functions and responsibilities as prescribed by the NGPF. The questionnaire responses and some of the in-depth interviews revealed that GFPs are generally located in units that are responsible for, and burdened with, performing functions unrelated to gender mainstreaming, which includes issues relating to youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and events planning and coordinating. The 2013 CGE study recommended that “government departments, local authorities and other institutions of government with positions of GFP already in place, undertake a thorough review and evaluation of the post and its related responsibilities to determine the scope of responsibilities necessary to ensure effectiveness in the promotion of gender mainstreaming”.<sup>86</sup> Clearly, this recommendation has not been adhered to, and the challenges still exist.

Thirdly, the CGE concludes that GFP units continue to face challenges related to inadequate staffing, training, skills, and capacity building within their units. The findings indicated that almost half (44%) of the GFP units had vacancies. That translates to just over half of the human capacity attempting to fulfil the mandate of the GFP while simultaneously having gender-unrelated functions within their work without the appropriate rank. The 2013 CGE study recommended that “government departments at the national and provincial level, including local authorities and other relevant institutions, should undertake a thorough review of their gender-mainstreaming institutional arrangements, including internal processes and procedures for recruiting officials responsible for gender mainstreaming”.<sup>87</sup> This high vacancy rate shows there has been little progression in this recommendation, and the challenge still exists that GFP positions are not being filled.

Fourthly, the CGE concludes that GFP units are still faced with inadequate resources to carry out their functions, including both financial and human resources. The findings of this study show that most (78%) questionnaire respondents argued that the budget is inadequate and reduces their scope of work and level of responsibility. These findings show that little progress has been made since the CGE 2013 study and conclude that GFP units and gender-mainstreaming units of government departments are unlikely to have dedicated budget allocations and that GFP units are marginalised and struggle due to limited resources.<sup>88</sup>

Lastly, the CGE concludes that the necessary M&E mechanisms were lacking to ensure the proper functioning and coordination of GFPs work. In the current study, almost half (44%) of GFPs who responded to the survey reported not having M&E mechanisms for departmental projects and programmes aligned with National Gender Policy. This proportion might not be in the majority. However, it is still worrying as it points to an existing gap in ensuring proper internal accountability in relation to gender mainstreaming within departments, metros, and Premier’s offices. The CGE 2013 study pointed out that government institutions are still reluctant to establish fully dedicated gender-mainstreaming units and reluctant to appoint GFPs with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for gender mainstreaming.<sup>89</sup> As a result, the necessary internal processes and M&E mechanisms to ensure proper internal accountability, either by GFPs or their supervisors, on the work of gender mainstreaming are lacking in these institutions. This remains the case and is a challenge.<sup>90</sup>

Overall, from the findings of this 2022/2023 study, the same challenges as in the 2013 study still exist. This impedes the work of GFPs and illustrates that they are not seen as important. It is hoped that with some of the changes to the NGM legislation and its reconfiguration, which some of the participants in the study also highlighted, the issue of GFP unit mandates being taken seriously will be addressed urgently, and GFPs will be able to play the crucial and prominent role that they should be playing going forward.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.



## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The CGE recommends that recommendations made in their previous 2013 study be considered for a more effective approach. It was evident that ten years since the recommendations CGE made, some government departments still do not have GFP units or a reasonable alternative structure.

Furthermore, the CGE recommends that institutions develop effective internal strategies for ensuring the effective allocation of financial/budgetary resources for the work of gender mainstreaming in government.

The CGE further recommends that the role and positioning of the GFP must be reconfigured to reflect a clear understanding of the role of GFP units and their positioning. In addition, the CGE recommends that GFPs be moved to the Director General's offices or any office, allowing them to influence policy directly.

One of the significant challenges was workload-related issues, where one person dealt with many roles. Therefore, the CGE recommends that a GFP deals only with gender-related issues (solely) for efficiency purposes. In addition, government departments must collaborate with the CGE to establish roles for the GFPs and to fully elaborate on their duties for a more accountable approach.

The study still found evidence that government departments (at national and provincial levels) and local authorities either do not have a GFP unit post or a reasonable alternative structure in place to perform the GFP units' functions. It is, therefore, recommended that Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Women, Children and People with Disabilities, together with the CGE, initiate public hearings, at which all state/public institutions that have failed to create the position of GFP or equivalent institutional mechanisms for gender-mainstreaming functions are called before the committee to account for this lack, and to give assurances of effective actions to be taken to address this failure to comply with the provisions of the NGPF.









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