An Interim Evaluation of the Global Links Documentary Program

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary i – v  

Background 1  

Evaluation Objectives and Evaluation Design 2  

Data Collection Methods and Sources 2  

Limitations of the Study 4  

Study Findings 5  

Cross Source Analysis 6  

Conclusions and Summary 15  

Suggestions and Recommendations 17
An Interim Evaluation of the Global Links Documentary Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Global Links (GL) documentaries are half-hour broadcast-quality programs, produced in English, French, Spanish, and International versions. The overall goal of Global Links is to raise awareness on development issues among general public TV viewers, primarily in developing countries. The objective is specified as “To reach millions of television viewers around the world with informative, high-quality documentaries on issues in economic and social development (Global Links Program Brochure).” Thus far, 13 half hour documentary videos have been completed.

The program was initiated as a pilot to reach a broader audience, beyond those who are reached by the World Bank Institute (WBI) policy seminars. The GL program is supply driven and broadcasters are contacted to create an audience around the world. WBI also promotes this program through the World Bank field offices (Resident Missions). The cost of production of each GL documentary is approximately $100,000.00 with a total cost of 1.2 million dollars for the 13 programs.

Evaluation Objectives

The main research question for this study is: “Has the program achieved its stated objectives?” As laid out in the program objective, the main goal is for the general literate public in developing countries to increase their awareness of social and economic development issues. This overarching objective was broken down into a more specific set of research questions. They are as follows:

- Is the program reaching the target audience?
- Did the documentaries convey the intended message?
- Is GL program informative, easy to understand, and engaging?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this program?
- Based on audience perceptions, should the program continue as is?

The study does not address the issue whether the audiences have increased their awareness on social and economic development issues around the world, as a result of GL programs.
Data Collection Methods and Sources

In the absence of data on viewership and/or audiences’ rating on GL programs, voluntary audiences had to be selected to view the documentaries to obtain their feedback. The following steps were employed in collecting data.

- Feedback from the GL broadcasters via e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face interviews.
- Informal discussions with about 150 residents who have access to TV, in and around Kampala, Uganda, to gather any evidence of having seen GL program.
- Selecting voluntary audiences\(^1\) (a list given below) to view a GL program and allowing them to respond to a follow-up questionnaire and to involve them in a group discussion to reflect on the documentary.
- Conducting a focus group discussion with a smaller number of viewers immediately after a documentary was shown to them.
- Study the treatment of selected documentaries and match the views of the respondents regarding what they understood against the intended message/s of the GL program.
- Feedback from the field office/resident mission staff (via e-mail and telephone conversations) who are familiar with the program.
- Feedback from World Bank staff who viewed GL program.
- Study secondary data (documented materials) available in WBI.

The audiences providing reactions and feedback on the documentaries were the World Bank headquarters’ employees (39), secondary school teachers (52), students (26) and journalists (23) from Uganda, teachers (6) from Chile, group of university students (10) in the US, two media persons from Uganda and eleven TV broadcasters.

Limitations of the Study

This study does not attempt to measure the impact of Global Links on the intended audience, i.e. TV viewing general literate public. A single field opportunity was used to meet a small segment of the “general literate public.” Therefore, a few volunteer groups were shown the documentaries for their feedback.

Inability to assess all 13 programs and to receive feedback from audiences with different cultures is a severe drawback in this evaluation. Only one country case (Uganda) was studied with three different groups of audiences and this group is only partly representative of the general literate TV viewing public in the country.

\(^1\) Initial plan was to follow up with an audience who had seen the GL program (this was not possible to accomplish due to limitations described). Instead, a group had to be selected to show the documentary to get their feedback. About 150 Kampala residents were asked whether they saw any GL program and only two recalled having seen a GL documentary.
Information on other existing TV programs similar to these GL educational documentaries was not available for any comparative analysis. This limited any assessment on the need to have mass media products such as Global Links for developing countries. A lack of a careful needs assessment prior to launching Global Links makes it difficult to identify the information gap (if any) that has been filled by the GL program.

**Summary Findings and Conclusions**

The findings in this assessment, except in the case of the eleven TV station managers who responded, are based on five documentaries on the Global Links program. Thus the views reflect only a sub-section of the documentary series and perceptions of a small number of audience groups.

The following summarizes the evaluation questions and the findings:

- **Is the GL program reaching the target audience?**

  There is evidence, based on feedback from broadcasters, that at least 26 countries have broadcast the program. According to feedback received, eleven countries have aired 10 or more of the documentaries from the series while six countries had shown 6 to 9 of the programs. Ten out of the eleven broadcasters who responded had allocated TV prime time for this series. There was no record of audience reach for this specific program, hence it is not possible to report whether the program is reaching the target audience. Furthermore, there is no direct evidence to support how many viewers there have been for the GL program.

- **Did the documentaries convey the intended message?**

  From the responses given by the audience, and by matching them with the intended messages of the program, it appears that the audience got the message clearly. All groups, teachers, students, and journalists said that the message was clear. However, in some cases it was not clear whether the intended message was political or not. Several understood the message to be more like advocacy and promotion for certain political regimes. Therefore, within the main message, there was a group who clearly identified the message as political.

- **Is GL program (1) informative? (2) Easy to understand? (3) Engaging?**

  2 Five documentaries are the ones on Bangladesh, Chile, Peru, Korea and Uganda.
  3 A question was asked in the survey “what was the main message you received from this documentary”?
The mean scores for these three aspects were around 4.0, ranging between 3.8 and 4.8. The journalists’ group and the university students were less supportive and both groups awarded “engaging” only an average rating (3.0). While the journalists awarded an average rating for accuracy of information, the university students rated average for the program’s “informative” aspect.

- **What are the strengths and weaknesses of this program?**

  From general comments and feedback, the technical quality of the production of GL programs is judged to be excellent. Being able to cover so many countries and to bring up various country experiences and cross-cutting themes together are strengths of this program.

  Those countries with a demand for educational programs, but which cannot afford to have such programs, benefit from GL. The capability to translate these into foreign languages as required by the broadcasters is an added advantage.

  As stated earlier, documentaries on Uganda and Peru were not seen as balanced and fair. Too much focus on political figures was observed by many respondents. This impression could distort the agenda of the Global Links objectives. While the cost of the program is not known to most audiences, the few who were aware of cost of this program felt the returns to be comparatively less unless the GL program is extended to multiple users and have a strong component to recover costs.

- **Based on audience perceptions, should the program continue as is?**

  As mentioned before, this evaluation is restricted to a limited audience, and to a limited number of GL documentaries. This selection, is in no way representative and the findings cannot be generalized to the “general literate public” nor to the whole Global Links series which contain 13 programs. However, some useful observations and comments are provided in this report for further improvements, if the GL program is to continue.

  Based on audience perceptions, the GL program is informative, easy to understand and engaging. Since an impact study was not undertaken, the information collected is inadequate to conclude whether the viewers’ awareness (due to GL program) on social and economic development has improved or not – or had any impact at all. The responses from the broadcasters were positive and they would prefer to continue with the GL program. However, audience feedback to support such a decision is absent.

  The concern over political emphasis in at least two of the documentaries would be a negative aspect if the program is to be continued as is. Therefore, the future programs may be better received by the audiences if political affiliations are less obvious.
Suggestions and Recommendations

- Global Links could establish a built-in monitoring system by enforcing the contractual agreement requirements\(^4\) and following up on a small audience group from a few selected countries.
- A careful needs assessment to identify the existing gaps that the GL program is aiming to fill in the field of economic and social development would help the recipient countries to benefit more from the GL program.
- Although the GL program has invested money in the production of the program, less emphasis has been paid to how the countries have been using this program. There was no in-built promotional programs (i.e., short advertisements about the program before GL is aired) to ensure viewers are aware of the broadcast.
- As audiences observed, some of the specific issues on political affiliations could be avoided to give the documentary a balanced view.

In addition, the following suggestions are made in order to facilitate future evaluation procedures of Global Links or similar programs:

- Measurable and definable objectives with indicators of expected program outcomes;
- Clear idea of audience – does the program expect behavioral changes of the audience as part of the program objectives?
- Development of questions for benchmark study – including some tracer elements for follow up in the survey (for this, the message has to be identified). The program needs to specify expected outcomes to identify whether what is planned is achieved. Absence of baseline data does not allow measurement of outcomes or expected changes.
- Development of a utilization strategy would help the program managers to assess the achievements and the cost-benefit of the GL program.

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An Interim Evaluation of the Global Links Documentary Program

\(^4\) The Agreement specifies that the broadcasters “provide GL with information regarding the date and time of each programme transition.”
Background

Global Links (GL) documentaries are half-hour broadcast-quality programs, produced in English, French, Spanish, and International versions. The overall goal of Global Links is to raise awareness on development issues among general public TV viewers, primarily in developing countries. The objective is specified as “To reach millions of television viewers around the world with informative, high-quality documentaries on issues in economic and social development (Global Links Program brochure).” The mid-year activity program ’98, of Global Links states, “Drawing on the knowledge resources of the World Bank, Global Links documentaries can play a significant role in helping to raise awareness and understanding of development challenges and solutions among broad audiences in developing countries.”

With this goal as background, the content of the GL program is driven by the themes of five divisions in the World Bank Institute (WBI). Thus far, 13 half hour documentary videos have been completed. The Program Brief on Civic Education and Outreach states, “Licensed with 45 broadcasters, reaching more than 100 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America, Global Links documentaries provide informative and engaging programming to millions of viewers on a wide range of issues in economic and social development: education, the environment, health, governance, economics, knowledge and information and other timely and critical topics.”

The GL program is supply driven and broadcasters are contacted by WBI and, in some cases, External Affairs (EXT) to create a captive audience around the world. WBI also promotes this program through the World Bank field offices (Resident Missions). The cost of production of each documentary is approximately $100,000/- with a total cost of 1.2 million dollars for the 13 programs. While some countries receive the GL program free of charge, some pay for the series. The price per documentary varies from US$ 100 to 500.00. Although the GL program initiated as a supply driven program, later on it has created some demand inside and outside the Bank. To-date, Global Links has been able to recover about $30,000.00 from the sales of GL program.

Evaluation Objectives and Evaluation Design

The main research question for this study is: “Has the program achieved its stated objectives?” As laid out in the program objective, the main goal is for the general literate

5 In this paper, the terms GL “program” and GL “series” are used interchangeably. The GL program consists of 13 half hour documentaries.

6 In addition to broadcasters around the world, there is also another consumer group within the Bank who uses Global Links programs for training purposes. Global Links’ footage is utilized for producing training videos for HD division, and several others within KP division use the documentaries for education programs. This evaluation does not include those programs.
public in developing countries to increase their awareness of social and economic development issues.

This overarching objective was broken down into a more specific set of research questions. They are as follows:

- Is the program reaching the target audience?
- Did the documentaries convey the intended message?
- Is GL program informative, easy to understand, and engaging?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this program?
- Based on audience perceptions, should the program continue as is?

Based on a retrospective study, level I data\(^7\) provided viewers’ perceptions of the GL program. Due to the small number of respondents in each of the viewer categories, the descriptive data (frequencies, percentages and average scores), and qualitative data were used in interpreting the findings. Limited resources did not allow a representative sample to be studied. Similarly, the study did not go beyond Level I data and thus, did not address the issue whether the audience has increased its awareness (Level 2) on social and economic development issues around the world as a result of GL programs. Several methods of data collection, as detailed under “data collection methods and sources” below, were used in order to obtain a wider variety of audience feedback. The main part of the data come from Uganda, where the evaluator had the opportunity to spent several hours with groups of students and teachers from secondary schools. Uganda was selected since that was the only field opportunity available for this study, given the limited resources.

**Data Collection Methods and Sources**

Primary data for this study were limited to the compilation of the number of countries covered by GL, frequency and time of broadcast, estimated audience size; and audience’ as well as TV station managers’ (broadcasters’) perceptions of the series of GL documentaries (the GL program).

Secondary data such as the number of TV sets, the number of households owning TV sets, and the number of households that the broadcasters reach were also available for most of the GL countries. What was not available were the data on the actual program reach and the audience feedback. Thus, this study attempts to fill that gap.

**Data collection methods**

\(^7\) Level I data measured viewers’ reaction to the GL program using a questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions.
In the absence of data on viewership or viewers’ rating on GL programs, a voluntary audience\textsuperscript{8} had to be selected to view the documentaries to obtain their feedback. The following steps were employed in collecting data.

- Feedback from the GL broadcasters via a structured survey, e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face interviews.
- Informal discussions with about 150 residents with access to TV, in and around Kampala, to gather any evidence of having viewed GL program.
- Selecting voluntary audiences\textsuperscript{9} (a list given below) to view a GL program and allowing them to respond to a follow-up questionnaire and to involve them in a group discussion to reflect on the documentary.
- Conducting a focus group discussion with a smaller number of viewers immediately after a documentary was shown to them.
- Study the treatment of selected documentaries and match the views of the respondents regarding what they understood against the intended message/s of the GL program.
- Feedback from the field office/resident mission staff (via e-mail and telephone conversations) who are familiar with the program.
- Feedback from World Bank staff who viewed GL program.
- Study secondary data (documented materials) available in WBI.

The audiences providing reactions and feedback on the documentaries were the following:

1) World Bank employees (N=39) who watched the program on their own interest. These staff commented on the Korea, Chile and Peru documentaries.
2) School teachers and students from Mengo senior high school (N=28), Mekerere College (N=30) and Namagunga High School (N=6 + focus group discussion) in Uganda.
3) Ugandan journalists (N=23) who came together on a program organized by the World Bank in Kampala. These different groups were shown the education documentaries on Korea, Bangladesh, and Uganda.
4) Teachers from Chile (N=6), viewed the “Chile Education for All” document and provided their views.
5) A group of university students (N=10) also viewed the Chile documentary and provided their feedback via a structured survey form which consisted of both open as well as closed-ended questions, and
6) Two media persons from Uganda (a media specialist from the Ministry of Information and the station manager of Uganda Television, UTV).

\textsuperscript{8} In this case, voluntary audience means a group of volunteers who view the program to provide their feedback for the purpose of this evaluation.

\textsuperscript{9} Initial plan was to follow up with an audience who had seen the GL program (this was not possible to accomplish due to limitations described below, in page 4). Instead, a group had to be selected to show the documentary to get their feedback.
Limitations of the Study

The Global Links documentaries are half hour videos which, according to the contractual agreement with TV stations, allow two broadcast sessions per program per year. It is difficult to disentangle the effects of Global Links on the TV viewers, from other programs that are going on simultaneously. In the absence of any baseline information, any change or increase in awareness due to GL program cannot be assessed. Similarly, the absence of measurable and definable objectives with indicators of expected outcomes also inhibits gathering impact data. Therefore, this study does not attempt to measure the impact of Global Links on the intended audience, i.e. TV viewing general literate public.

A single field opportunity was used to meet a small segment of the “general literate public.” About 150 Kampala residents, who had access to TV sets were asked whether they have seen any GL documentaries. Only two claimed to have seen any one from the series. Therefore, a few volunteer groups were shown the documentaries for their feedback. This is an artificial setting and those who participated knew there will be a discussion after they view it, and therefore, their reaction and feedback cannot be generalized to the “general literate public” who watch these in their natural environment.

Inability to cover all 13 programs and to receive feedback from audiences with different cultures is a severe drawback in this assessment. The international time zone also made it difficult to contact some countries over the phone. Low response rate from broadcasters was another limitation. Only one country case (Uganda) was studied with three different groups of audiences and this group is only partly representative of the general literate TV viewing public in the country.

The GL’s primary audience is in the developing countries and in the absence of Nielsen type surveys in these countries, data on audience reach is either limited or unavailable. The audience reach would be only estimates based on population with access to TV sets.

Information on other existing TV programs similar to these (GL) educational documentaries, was not available for any comparative analysis. This limited any assessment on the need to have mass media products such as Global Links for developing countries. A lack of a careful needs assessment prior to launching Global Links, makes it difficult to identify the information gap (if any), that has been filled by the GL program.
Study Findings

The findings in this evaluation are grouped according to the respondent categories. The first section is based on the feedback received from broadcasters; second, the resident missions (field office staff); and third World Bank employees. The fourth category is based on a particular documentary viewed by different audiences. These groups were teachers, students, and journalists. Each group viewed one of five documentaries on either Bangladesh, Chile, Korea, Peru, and Uganda. While the broadcasters’ views reflect an overview of part or all of the GL series, all other views are on one documentary only.

Cross Source Analysis

1) Broadcasters’ feedback

Over 45 broadcasters are licensed to air GL program and several modes of communication such as fax, telephone and e-mail were used to collect detailed feedback from these broadcasters. However, the response rate from them was low. Only about a third (15) responded to the initial request made for base information on Global Links broadcast time and the frequency that the programs were aired. In the second round, only five returned the detailed survey and four were contacted over the telephone. One TV station manager (UTV, Uganda) was interviewed face-to-face.

Another effort was to request those GL broadcasters who participated in the International TV Market Place in Paris, in April '99, to respond to a questionnaire. Although about eight GL broadcasters had participated in the fair, only one had returned the survey totaling six who completed the survey. In addition to this, five broadcasters were interviewed over the telephone. Altogether, using different modes, eleven broadcasters provided their feedback to this study.

The program description of Civic Education and Outreach for FY’99 mentions that over 100 countries would have aired the documentary series, via the 45 or more broadcasters. It was hard to find supporting evidence for this claim. Due to the low response rate for the survey, evidence show that only about 40 countries have aired the GL program. Some countries like Argentina\textsuperscript{10} and Spain cover a territory of about three countries each. The number of documentaries aired differs from country to country and this depends on the contractual agreement as to how many documentaries were given to each broadcaster. Table 1 shows the country, the number of documentaries, and times they were aired. While some documentaries were shown only once, others were aired two or more times.

\textsuperscript{10} Argentina station covers Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, while Spain extends its territory to countries in Europe and Africa.
Eleven countries, at the time these data were gathered, had shown 10 or more (10-13) documentaries. Six countries have shown 6 to 9 of the GL series/documentaries. As far as timing is concerned, only about six countries have shown any of the series in the first half of 1998, the rest of the countries have started showing the series since July 1998 and later. Most contracts, except in Canada and Brazil, are for a period of one year with an agreement to air the program twice a year. As the table shows, even though some countries are licensed to broadcast the program, there was no evidence to indicate that the GL program was aired.

Table 1: Global Links countries and number of documentaries aired

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Contract start date and Duration of contract in years ( )</th>
<th>Verified by Broadcasters</th>
<th>Number of Documentaries Aired</th>
<th>Single (S)/ Multiple times (M)</th>
<th>Aired During</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina (2 stations – cover 3 countries)</td>
<td>3/97 (2 years)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>7/97 (1)*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X X -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3 not aired yet)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>(1)*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>X -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>11/97 (3)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>X -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada 1</td>
<td>6/98 (4)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada 2</td>
<td>3/98 (4)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada 3</td>
<td>2/99 (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada 4</td>
<td>4/99 (3 mos)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (5 Stations)</td>
<td>7-8/98, 4/99 (1) year for each station</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>8/97 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>8/97 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>12/97 (1)*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>3/99 (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1/98 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>2/98 (1)*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan (2 stations)</td>
<td>1/99, 5/99</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>2/98 (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>1/98 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>6/98 (1)*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>8/97 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria (3 stations)</td>
<td>12/97, 3/98, 1/98 (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>8/97 (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>- X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>9/97 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 Data provided in table is gathered with the assistance of Ms. Christina Hoffman of WB IKP division.
| Seychelles | 4/99 (1) |   |   |   |   | X |
### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Contract start date and Duration of contract in years ()</th>
<th>Verified by Broadcaster</th>
<th>Number of Documentaries Aired</th>
<th>Single (S)/ Multiple times (M)</th>
<th>Aired During</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain (5 stations)</td>
<td>5/98, 6/98, 11/98, 8/97, 8/97 (1 year for each station)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>S/M</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*one station</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>8/98 (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>12 (9 aired)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Martin</td>
<td>9/98 (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>8/98 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>12/97 (1)*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>S/M</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
<td>7/98 (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda 1</td>
<td>12/97 (1)*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda 2</td>
<td>5/99</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>6/98 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (5 stations)</td>
<td>8/98, 10/98, 2/99, 7/99, 7/99 (1 year for each station)</td>
<td>X (1 station only)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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* = contract is renewed.

The feedback from the broadcasters revealed the absence of any consumer surveys. Most of them do not expect any audience feedback on these TV programs. It was not possible to give an account of how many would have viewed GL documentaries. A Brazilian broadcaster wrote,

> “With regards to the audience feedback, we unfortunately may not give you a certain answer about it. Even though, we can ensure you that FUTURA is transmitted within the whole Brazilian territory reaching about 6 million people.”

Only the TV station in Canada mentioned of Nielsen type mechanism, but for this particular series (GL) any such survey was not conducted. While most of the countries did not employ a systematic rating system for their broadcast products, even those who had such a system did not rate the Global Links programs. Most of the broadcasters expressed the opinion that the programs were good educational materials, but they could not tell what the general public’s views were about these programs.

Six broadcasters who returned the questionnaire perceived the series as informative, but rated it average on being engaging and relevant. While all of them had licensed the program for a general audience, some had specific target groups like students when
deciding air time for Global Links program. One TV station manager of an exclusive information channel wrote,

“Other information programs are spread across to accommodate the entire population. The Global Links documentaries are presently targeted to the secondary school students to the adult population.”

Despite the absence of a regular (formal) system to measure audience feedback on GL program, the broadcasters’ general comments were positive. Especially, in the Caribbean region, TV broadcasters expressed positive views because the people there attach high value to educational information and GL documentaries had been able to provide general information people like to know. This is quite evident from the comments from TV stations in Haiti, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. “We are certainly interested in renewing the contract and we should point out the different programs were well received by our audience.” However, on a follow-up conversation with this particular broadcast station [Haiti], it revealed that there was no systematic way to feel the audience pulse – they did not have a mechanism to do it. Nevertheless, that was the view of the broadcaster about the audience, despite any evidence. In Barbados, the population is receptive to educational films and the station requested an extension of the contract. The station manager said, “People like educational films. We have National Geographic, Expedition, and African Forum.” Another manager of an information channel (from Trinidad and Tobago) said,

“Our primary audience were housewives and secondary school students. These programs have inspired some members within these groups that they have actually requested that we show it at a later time so more of the population can benefit from them. Arising out of these requests, we have decided to re-broadcast all of these programs at a later time-slot (during our prime-time programming) which is still in the decision making process.”

All stations had chosen to give prime broadcast time to the GL program. This could be treated as a proxy indicator for value and importance attached to the GL program by these broadcasters. While some broadcasters paid for these documentaries others received the series free. Four out of the six who responded to this question mentioned the suitable or fair market price for a half hour program to be in the range of US $ 125 to 250/-.

When asked how the broadcasters came to know about the program, one said, “You contacted us.” Since the Global Links program started as a supply driven initiative, WBI had to contact broadcasters to have a reasonable distribution. Two broadcasters did not know how they were contacted, but knew the programs were coming from the World Bank. While some of the TV station managers had been contacted at the Annual International TV Market Place, others had been through informal contacts and via WB field offices.

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12 Although the TV station in Canada has Nielsen type mechanism, for this particular series (GL) any such survey was not conducted.
To sum up, the views of the broadcasters were that the program is useful to their TV station, but there is no feedback from their audiences. Bosnia’s response to the question on viewerhip was, “You know, young TV stations in Bosnia are battling with some basic needs (equipment, personnel, etc.) so the public opinion research does not get much attention.” Although this may not be representative of all, at least this speaks to some of the TV stations in the developing countries. Uganda TV station, UTV, had somewhat similar reaction. Their concern is to keep away from government criticism on programs UTV airs. UTV has been able to stay away from these criticisms, because the programs they air had been okay by the government. The TV station manager said, “As far as I don’t hear from the ministry [Ministry of Information], I am fine. If they [ministry] don’t like my programs, then they call. With Global Links I haven’t had any problems.”

2) Resident Missions’ feedback

Five resident missions (Bosnia, China, Peru, Uganda and Vietnam) associated with the GL program were contacted for their feedback. Three responded with suggestions and comments.

Uganda reflecting on the film “Waste Not a City,” wrote, “The film coincided with the outbreak of cholera epidemic in Uganda and emphasis was put on keeping the city clean by the city authorities. This film was very edifying.” The film was on the air at a time of need and the information was found to be useful to the public.

The Resident Mission had given several copies of the education video on Uganda to the ministry of education, but had no further information on their usage. A comment from a senior official at the Resident Mission was that the program reached only a small urban population.

Comments received from the contact person in China Resident Mission were positive. “All four TV stations, especially Hebei and Gansu TV stations, have expressed willingness to continue working with us [Global Links/World Bank]. They [Broadcasters in Chinese TV stations] said that our high-quality and well-designed programs are very useful and help enrich the content of their program and improve their popularity. They all asked ‘what is coming next’. Personally, I felt very encouraged by their feedback though most of them have not broadcast our programs yet.”

In Bosnia, the situation was different. The content of the documentaries was not seen as appropriate to the country situation. A field office person wrote,

“One general comment, if you allow me, is that this series of Global Links did not relate to people in ECA, especially in Europe and the kind of problems they have (transition economies, social and economic reforms, health, education etc.).”
With only three resident missions responding, it is difficult to arrive at a general conclusion. It was hard to see any consensus, each had comments pointing to different issues. However, concerns raised were related to the specific country context.

3) World Bank officials’ feedback

The GL program is screened for the WB headquarters staff during the lunch hour with prior announcements. The number of those who attend vary from about 15 to 50. This opportunity was used to obtain their feedback, on the GL documentary, by administering a short questionnaire immediately after the show. The findings in this section is based on responses from a total of 39 World Bank employees on three documentaries- Korea, Chile and Peru. The audience was asked to rate the documentary, on a 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) scale, for its clarity, usefulness of content, delivery of the message and its suitability to different audience groups.

These respondents, except the viewers of the Peru documentary, felt that the documentaries were informative, easy to understand, and engaging. The ratings awarded for these were above average. As far as the suitability of the documentary for various audiences was concerned, policy makers, as well as the general literate public, received an above average score—around 4.0 (3.9 to 4.1) where as the suitability for other categories was lower. For Korea and Chile, the open-ended responses were not completed by almost all viewers due to time constraints. On the Peru program, four responded with lengthy comments.

In the case of Peru, although the respondents, except one, mentioned that the message in the documentary was clear and easy to understand, the message they received was mentioned as the following:

- “very clearly, there was a message that the Bank doesn’t care about displacing vendors outside downtown Lima. The Bank is not for the poor, but for the managers of enterprises.”

- “The main message is that the Bank endorses Fujimori. The other message is that the Bank supports wild capitalism and cares nothing for the vast body of Indians working in factories and plantations.”

13 Ratings based on a five point Likert scale where 1 denoted minimum and 5 maximum. The term ‘average’ is referred to 3 and “above average” refers to 4 or 5.

14 Average score refers to the arithmetic mean value.

15 The message in the documentary was, as the title “Road to Recovery,” suggests, to show how the lives of Peruvians were dramatically transformed by the economic turnaround in their country (GL program brochure).
Another respondent for whom the message was not clear wrote, “*subtle message; objective is not very clear.*”

The Peru documentary was regarded as a political program by all those who commented.

The following comments to the question on “Is the documentary [Peru] balanced and fair?” revealed that it was not balanced according to the respondents.

“The position taking in favor of a controversial political leader. It was not clear if it was the position of the World Bank or not.” Another said, “Not balanced- see my writing on previous questions. Recommendation: STAY AWAY FROM ENDORSING POLITICAL LEADERS.” Yet another felt, “As a general documentary, it is somewhat balanced. It would have been better to avoid politicians being shown.”

Under the question, “any other comments” they added:

- “Should the World Bank be involved in such a costly programs? World Bank is not CNN,”
- “I am not aware of the cost involved. However, benefits must be seen in the context of the costs as well.
- If the costs are not prohibitive, it may be useful as a ‘general information’ documentary,”
- “I wish the Bank could reach the poor in Peru. I have been there, in several places, and seen extreme poverty.”

4) Teachers’ feedback

A total 52 Ugandan teachers, from three senior secondary schools, watched three different documentaries to provide feedback. Six teachers from Chile commented on the Chile documentary.

In general, respondents had positive comments about the documentary they viewed. Average scores for the documentaries being informative, easy to understand, accurate and engaging were 4.0 or above on the five point scale. Most of these teachers were happy to be exposed to the new information in the video. While the teachers rated the
documentaries high for their suitability to policy makers, the suitability ratings for general literate public were average, around 3.5. One teacher said, “*Future products should have targeted groups.*” The teachers were asked to rate, on a five point scale, the “ability to capture the documentary’s theme-education for all.” Sixty percent out of 52 teachers rated it “satisfactory.” Another 10% said “more than satisfactory or excellent” with another 22% saying it was “less than satisfactory” or “not at all satisfactory.”

The teachers, in Uganda, were asked whether these documentaries would be useful as class-room teaching material. They were hesitant to give an answer and when one teacher said, “*I guess only subject would be ‘general paper’ and we would need all facilities to show these in the class-room,*” other teachers joined in the dialogue expressing that they did not see a fit within their curriculum. Also, they were concerned about the facilities such as electricity and generators which are needed to run these programs.

Sixty nine percent (N=36) of the Ugandan teachers mentioned that these programs should be balanced. They felt that only the positive side was highlighted in all these programs without any mention of the downside of the program. The following comments expressed the views of some of those who felt this imbalance: “*Only positive aspects are shown, how about the negative side of it in as far as the culture of the people?*,” “*future products should try to show benefits and shortcomings of the projects,*” and “*include the negative effects of the affirmative action,*”.

The six teachers from Chile commented on the Chilean case. While all of them felt the documentary was balanced and the program portrayed the “*realities of the Chilean education system,*” “*the progress in education introducing technology,*” and “*sequential stages of the education reform,*” one felt that the documentary was balanced, but “*it is not updated and it stays in the surface of the problems....*” This person’s recommendation for future products was “*much better to deepen more in some of the themes or some of the interviews or stories.*” Another commented “*I missed an example of private education and a vision of the [Chilean] teachers.*”

Overall, teachers expressed their satisfaction with the programs they viewed. For them, the documentaries were informative, easy to understand and engaging. However, there was an element of disconnect – not being able to understand the cultural setting in which the educational policies were made. Commenting on the Korean education documentary which highlights the industrial society, one teacher said, “… this conflicts with our cultural values. They should show how the education can be used to help in the agricultural sector, otherwise the education given encourages students to turn their backs to the soil – yet, we depend on the soil for survival.”
5) University Students’ feedback

Ten university graduate students in a U.S. university viewed the documentary on “Education for All: Chilean Experience.” The group was from developing as well developed countries. One was from Chile. Overall, seven said the documentary was less than satisfactory and three were satisfied. The average score for the documentary being informative, easy to understand, accurate and engaging ranged between 3.0 and 3.8.

The main message was clear, but some were not sure whether a balanced picture was portrayed in the message. One comment to that effect was:

“[the main message was to] To show how successful Chile has been with regard to educational reforms that started in the 80’s. If objective is to show what Chile has done to improve educational expansion...the video is not enough because it only shows snapshots of people and some schools. Perhaps it’d be interesting to include the essential parts like what has the impact of educational reforms have been on the quality of education, that is in the teaching/learning process and whether these new policies really enable people to have a better way of living accordingly to the Chilean social, political, and economic context.”

There was also confusion about whether the message is “GNP equals development.” Also, questions were raised about whether these documentaries are promoting or imposing “World Bank Ideology” in the developing countries. One student from a developed country wrote:

“I thought too many scientists and professionals have been produced and became problematic in some developing countries. The video seems to be promoting exactly these kinds of people (the elite), who can relate to the developed countries’ mentality because they experienced the educational system based on competition. I do not know if this is the type of education that produces adults who can solve problems in their home country.”

All in all, the university student group awarded lower ratings on all aspects, compared to other respondents, with the exception to the journalists.

6) Journalists’ feedback

A group of Ugandan journalists who attended a World Bank training program in Kampala, Uganda were asked to watch the Uganda Education documentary and to provide feedback. Extensive comments were provided by this group. Almost all agreed that it was informative, easy to understand, engaging, and relevant. While the accuracy of the information provided in the documentary was questionable to some, many thought it was unbalanced. Eleven out of 23 (45%) said the documentary was not balanced and
five (22%) said it was fair and balanced. The rest said “the documentary was somewhat balanced.” The reasons they gave for ‘not being balanced’ was mainly due to the lack of regional representation, lack of mention as to what happened in the education system before the reforms, portrayal of only the positive side of universal primary education (UPE) and not the downside attached to it in the implementation process etc. The comments related to this were numerous. Some examples are:

- “… the dead education system in the north is not mentioned anywhere. It also tends to misrepresent the reality in the country sides. UPE has organized a political program and simply introduced it to be used for govt.”
- “It was fair compared to the unanswered questions e.g., what would be the fate of the children after UPE.”
- “The documentary is fair, but needs to encompass the various parts of Uganda so that viewers can see the education reform nationwide to be able to have comparison.”

The responses to the question on “least interesting” part of this documentary, for the journalists, were the political promotional aspects of the video. The following comments illustrate their views:

- “The glory given to Museveni government—I think it is blown out of proportion.”
- “The recovery attributed to good government of NRM regime. It sounded more of propaganda!” and
- “The opening part of the documentary has a lot of political propaganda messages and it tends to be a public relations program for the government.”

Another aspect that was commented up on was the format of the documentary. What they viewed was the hosted version and they seem to prefer the non-hosted version. They felt it was, “… becoming monotonous” and wrote, “… the woman was given much time in the documentary.” Another said, “The actors didn’t have enough time to give complete messages to the viewers. They are often cut half way the message and viewers have to guess what the actor wanted to say.”

On the contrary, what was interesting to this audience was the relevance of the documentary at that time when UPE is implemented and how children of AIDS victims are now able to go to school. Several comments pointing to these two aspects are as follows:

- “The documentary featured the relevance of education on the population as opposed to the past system where education was a privilege to the able few.”
- “The way the number of school going children increased when the universal primary education system was introduced in 1997.”

16 A non-hosted versions of GL documentaries are also available.
• “What interested me most was the 3 young children whose parents died of AIDS, ... struggling to survive, and later the golden chance of UPE lands on them.”
• “Most interesting part was ...when younger children were working hard to survive after the death of their parents.”
• “The orphans are now able to go to school and there is the continuos training of teachers,” and “The film touched the main problems of education in Uganda.”

Suggestions for further improvements were mainly directed at making these types of programs more balanced and less politically oriented.
• “All the media should be used. Journalists from within [the country] should be used for they know the facts better.”
• “I would suggest that in future print media and radio should be given due attention,”
• “Should be more critical and examine shortcomings rather than simply praise the norm.”

Making the ‘population more sensitized,’ ‘being representative and to be balanced’ were the main messages conveyed for future improvements in making such a documentary.

They felt the general literate audience to be suitable for this documentary. However, one journalist, referring to the Ugandan general audience, said:

“This is not captive enough for our general public. This [documentary] is too serious. They will watch it if it is a story or a drama. This is not the way to portray a message to the general public to increase awareness in this culture. On the other hand, radio would be the media if you are to reach more people. How many would have access to TV?”

The overall comments about the documentary were positive, except that a 45% of the respondents viewed it as not being balanced. To involve more local person in the production and to have a better representation of all regions were common comments. They were also of the view that TV is not the best media to reach the majority of the population in their country (Uganda).

Conclusions and Summary

To reiterate, the findings in this assessment, except in the case of TV station managers who responded, are based on five documentaries on the Global Links program. Thus the views reflect only a sub-section of the documentary series and perceptions of a small number of audience groups.

From general comments and feedback, the technical quality of the production of GL programs is judged to be excellent. Compared with the message that the GL program intended to get across to the general audience, the study shows evidence that the audience captured the message. However, the political propaganda approach was seen as heavy by some groups and in some documentaries.

17 This audience is restricted to those who volunteered for this study.
Apparently, the problem areas for Global Links, as observed by the journalists, teachers and some World Bank officials, were the situations where the documentary highlighted or endorsed country’s political ideology. In the case of Uganda and Peru this political affiliation came up quite strong. Those who reacted against this affiliation questioned whether it is the role of the World Bank to “endorse” the political agenda of certain regimes. In general, moderate positive comments were received from those who were not familiar with the particular setting. Those who were more familiar with the setting had more negative comments about the documentary. “This is not the country I know of,” or “This is not my country” were comments when a native of that country viewed the documentary.

General comments about the programs being informative, engaging and relevant received ratings around 4 or 5 (on a 1-5 scale) by almost all respondents, with the exception of university students. The general literate public was rated as a suitable audience for GL series. However, all respondents felt the most suitable audience to be policy makers.

The following summarizes the evaluation questions and the findings:

- Is the GL program reaching the target audience?

  There is evidence that at least 26 countries have broadcast the program. According to feedback received, eleven countries have aired 10 or more of the documentaries from the series, six countries had shown 6 to 9. Ten broadcasters who responded had allocated TV prime time for this series. There was no record of audience reach for this specific program, hence it is not possible to report whether the program is reaching the target audience. Furthermore, there is no direct evidence to support how many viewers there have been for the GL program.

- Did the documentaries convey the intended message?

  From the responses given by the audience, and by matching them with the intended message/s of the program, it appears that the audience got the message clearly. All groups, teachers, high school students, journalists, said that the message was clear. However, in some cases it was not clear whether the intended message was political or not. Several understood the message to be more like propaganda and promotion for certain political regimes. Therefore, within the main message, there was a group who clearly identified the message as political.

- Is GL program (1) informative? (2) Easy to understand? (3) Engaging?

  The mean scores for these three aspects were around 4.0, ranging between 3.8 and 4.8. The journalists’ group and the university students were less supportive and both groups awarded “engaging” only an average rating (3.0). While the journalists

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18 A question was asked in the survey “what was the main message you received from this documentary”?
awarded an average rating for accuracy of information, the university students rated average for the program’s “informative” aspect.

- **What are the strengths and weaknesses of this program?**

From general comments and feedback, the technical quality of the production of Global Links program is judged to be excellent. Being able to cover so many countries and to bring up various country experiences and cross-cutting themes together are strengths of this program.

Those countries with a demand for educational programs, but which cannot afford to have such programs, benefit from GL. The capability to translate these into foreign languages as required by the broadcasters is an added advantage.

As stated earlier, documentaries on Uganda and Peru were not seen as balanced and fair. Too much focus on political figures was observed by many respondents. This impression could distort the agenda of the Global Links objectives. While the cost of the program is not known to most audiences, those who were aware of cost involved felt the returns to be comparatively less unless the GL program is extended to multiple users and have a strong component to recover costs.

- **Based on audience perceptions, should the program continue as is?**

As mentioned before, the study is restricted to a limited audience, and to a limited number of GL documentaries. This selection, is in no way representative and the findings cannot be generalized to the “general literate public” nor to the whole Global Links series which contain 13 programs. However, some useful observations and comments are provided in this report for further improvements, if the GL program is to continue.

Based on audience perceptions, the GL program is informative, easy to understand and engaging. Since an impact study was not undertaken, the information collected is inadequate to conclude whether the viewers’ awareness (due to GL program) on social and economic development has improved or not – or had any impact at all. The responses from the broadcasters were positive and they would prefer to continue with the GL program. However, audience feedback to support such a decision is absent.

The concern over political emphasis in the documentaries would be a negative aspect if the program is to be continued as is. Therefore, the future programs may be better received by the audiences if political affiliations are less obvious.

**Suggestions and Recommendations**
• Global Links could establish a built-in monitoring system by enforcing the contractual agreement requirements\textsuperscript{19} and following up on a small audience group from a few selected countries.

• A careful needs assessment to identify the existing gaps that the GL program is aiming to fill in the field of economic and social development would help the recipient countries to benefit more from the GL program. Similarly, the media culture of the recipient countries should be taken into consideration.

• Although the GL program has invested money in the production of the program, less emphasis has been paid to how the countries have been using this program. There was no in-built promotional programs (i.e., short advertisements about the program before GL is aired) to ensure viewers are aware of the broadcast.

• As audiences observed, some of the specific issues on political affiliations could be avoided to give the documentary a balanced view.

In addition, the following suggestions are made in order to facilitate future evaluation procedures of Global Links or similar programs:

• Measurable and definable objectives with indicators of expected program outcomes;

• Clear idea of audience – does the program expect behavioral changes of the audience as part of the program objectives?

• Development of questions for benchmark study – including some tracer elements for follow up in the survey (for this, the message has to be identified). The program needs to specify expected outcomes to identify whether what is planned is achieved. Absence of baseline data does not allow measurement of outcomes or expected changes.

• Development of a utilization strategy would help the program managers to assess the achievements and the cost-benefit of the GL program.

\textsuperscript{19} The Agreement specifies that the broadcasters “provide GL with information regarding the date and time of each programme transmission.”