

RESULTS FOR CHANGE



Daniel Chirundu, Director of Health and Environmental Health Services at Kadoma City Council.

Photo: Gender Links

"I am the Director of Health and Environmental Health Services at Kadoma City Council in Zimbabwe. The catchment population of my department is 96 116 people. Women constitute 52% of the catchment population. The main area I focus on is building capacity for my organisation on gender issues. Our main goal is to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed in all our activities.

My initial exposure to gender issues was through my basic training that I viewed it as another academic excursion. Our council was then enrolled for the Centre's of Excellence programme under Gender Links. I was given formal training and I became a

gender activist. I am proud to say this shaped my perception of gender to a large extent and the fact that I have two daughters reinforced my calling.

Gender Links has been an unfailing partner. GL opened our organisational eyes and provided capacity building. We have reached a point where we require all our cooperating partners to incorporate gender in all projects. We have built the capacity of GBV victims and we have gone further to establish a community of gender practice in Kadoma code-named Kadoma Gender Forum. Any organisation that is doing work that has an impact on GBV is free to join. We document best practices and share them with the public."

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

By Monica Bandeira, M&E Manager



Monica Bandeira

GL has placed a great deal of emphasis in the establishment of good Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tools and systems that enable it to monitor implementation and impact at different levels. Through this, GL is able to respond timeously and effectively to changes that occur in the environment. In 2015, GL launched a new system for collecting internal activities data using Epi Info, a public domain suite of tools designed for the global community of public health practitioners and researchers by the US-based Centre for Disease Control. Epi info provides for easy data entry form and database construction, a customized data entry experience, and data analyses with epidemiologic statistics, maps, and graphs for public health professionals who may lack an information technology background. Epi Info™ is used for outbreak investigations; for developing small to mid-sized disease surveillance systems; as analysis, visualization, and reporting (AVR) components of larger systems; and in the continuing education in the science of epidemiology and public health analytic methods at schools of public health around the world¹.

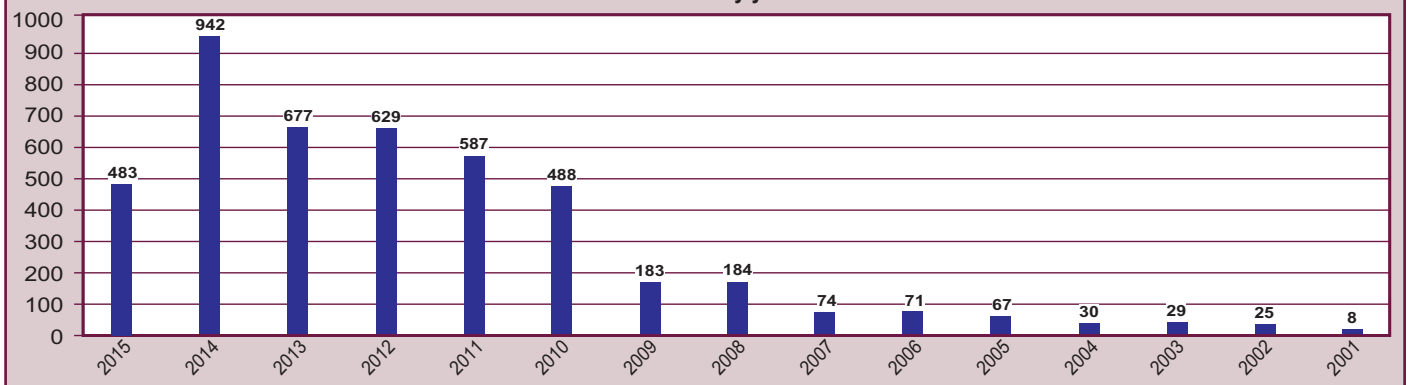
True to form, GL has taken this tool and customised it to its own needs in tracking work with over 500 institutions - media houses and local councils that have committed to become Centres of Excellence for Gender, as well as a multiplicity of partners and networks. The M&E unit successfully developed the system with staff to create an effective and efficient

way of collecting and analysing M&E data. Staff report that the system works well, with few disruptions. The system now allows GL to pull out data on activities, participants, and events as and when needed. Reports automatically pull data at a regional and country level. This has allowed GL to produce a monthly M&E overview report which provides an opportunity to proactively manage projects. The unit has improved country access to the system by moving the Epi Info database to the cloud, hereby decreasing downtime and the frustrations that accompany it.

In 2015 GL also advanced M&E by investing in a generic online platform for creating customised online surveys, questionnaires, and application forms. GL had previously invested a great deal in these using an external contractor to design these forms from scratch. A few hard lessons showed that customising a generic tool tried and tested by millions of people around the world is a more cost effective option. The M&E team tested the new online platform for different projects in 2015 with pleasing results, especially in the final assessment of the pilot project offering entrepreneurship training to 1500 survivors of gender violence.

With offices in 10 countries, it is important that GL finds contextually appropriate ways of collecting and analysing data about the work it does. GL continues to push itself to find innovative solutions to Monitoring and Evaluation as this is seen as central to how it works. Without monitoring our interventions and impact we are unable to remain relevant and responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries we work with.

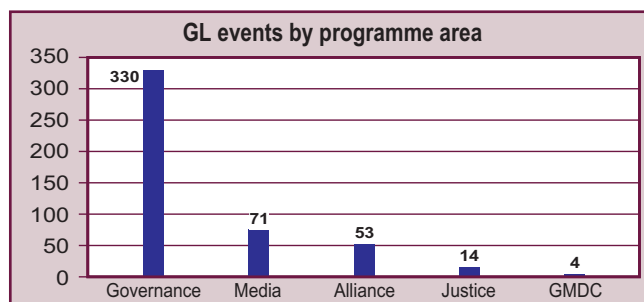
GL events by year



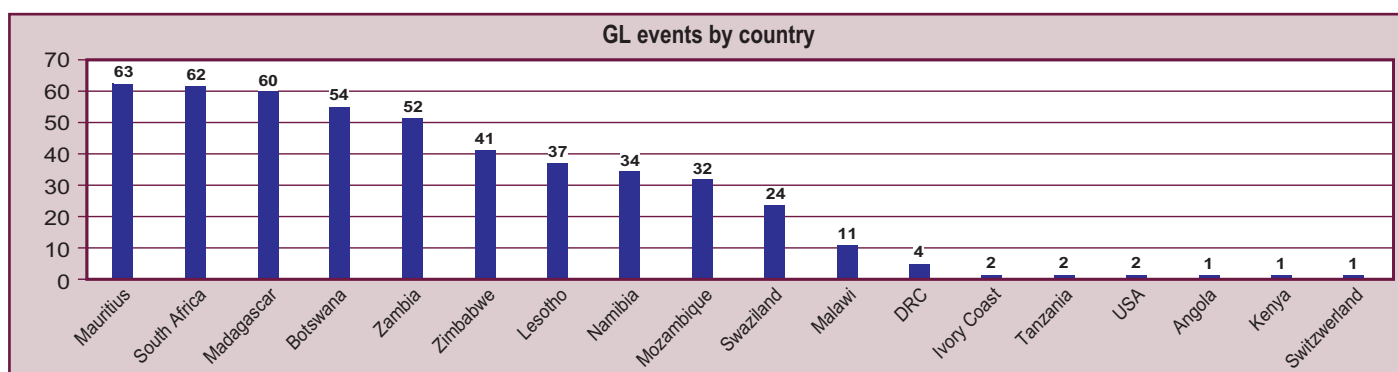


Leading the march: GL CEO Colleen Lowe Morna and Rose Tamae in Orange Farm, South Africa. Photo: Gender Links

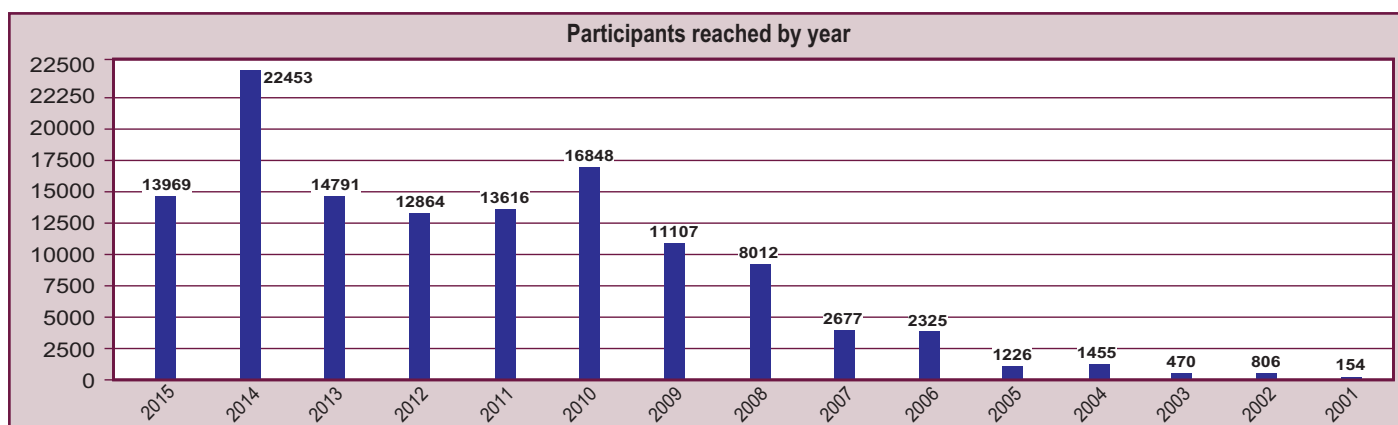
During 2015, through its five programme areas, GL ran 483 events, down from 942 in 2014. Many of the Centres of Excellence (COEs) that GL worked with were in their final stages, resulting in fewer events, and more wrapping up. As part of ongoing efforts to reduce logistic costs, as well as promote peer learning and sharing, COE's clubbed together in several instances, or combined stages, reducing the number of events.



Working with local councils across ten countries continued to be the main focus of GL in 2015. This is evidenced in the Governance programme having held the highest number of events during 2015 (330). Media events decreased considerably to 71 in 2015 from 312 in 2014. Alliance and Justice also saw a decrease in its number of events from 2014 to 2015.

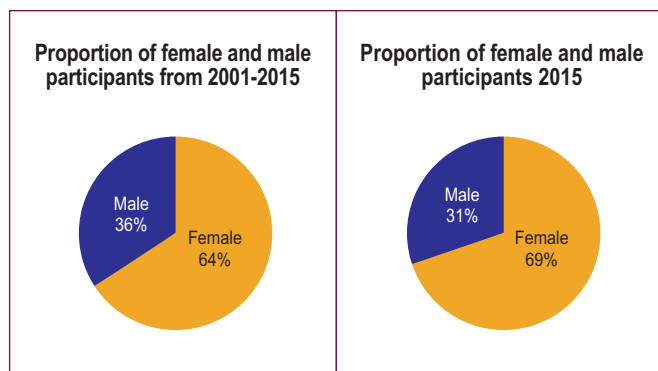


In 2015, GL Mauritius had the highest number of events (63) followed by South Africa (62), Madagascar (60), and Botswana (54).



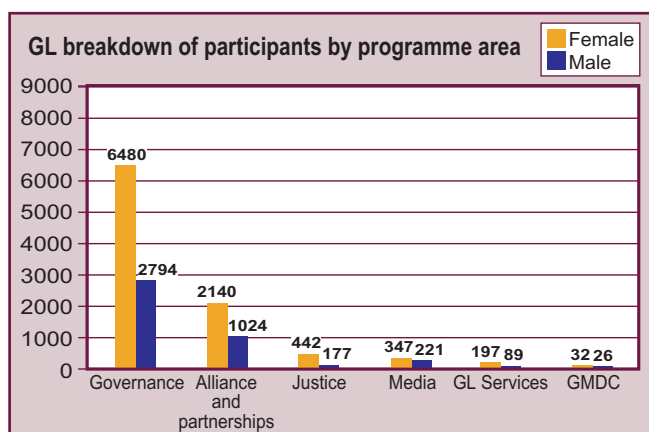
2015 saw GL reaching a total of 13969 participants. Despite the decrease in number of people reached from 2014, there has been an increase in the average number of participants per event from 23 in 2014 to 28 in 2015.

| Breakdown of participants reached by year | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Year | Female | Male | Unknown | Total |
| 2001 | 103 | 51 | | 154 |
| 2002 | 536 | 270 | | 806 |
| 2003 | 301 | 169 | 118 | 588 |
| 2004 | 852 | 485 | 36 | 1373 |
| 2005 | 739 | 451 | 272 | 1462 |
| 2006 | 1276 | 777 | | 2053 |
| 2007 | 1543 | 1134 | 3101 | 5778 |
| 2008 | 3111 | 1800 | 1203 | 6114 |
| 2009 | 6306 | 3598 | 10901 | 20805 |
| 2010 | 3488 | 2459 | | 5947 |
| 2011 | 8526 | 5090 | | 13616 |
| 2012 | 7675 | 5189 | | 12864 |
| 2013 | 10332 | 4459 | | 14791 |
| 2014 | 14072 | 8381 | | 22453 |
| 2015 | 9638 | 4331 | | 13969 |
| Total | 68498 | 38644 | 15631 | 122773 |



As in the past, the governance programme, which focuses on local government, reached the highest number of people (9274). The GL Alliance programme reached 3164 people, while the Media programme reached 568. The proportion of females to males is relatively stable across programmes, although the proportion of males is over 40% for the GMDC programme.

Since 2001, GL has reached 122773 people through its programmes. The proportion of males and females has remained fairly stable over the years, with men representing 36%, more than one-third of those reached. In 2015, the proportion of men dipped to 31% as a result of GL's entrepreneurship programme that focuses exclusively on women.



Anushka Virahsawmy preparing for the Gender Action Planning Workshop on Local Action to End GBV in Black River, Mauritius. *Photo: Gender Links*

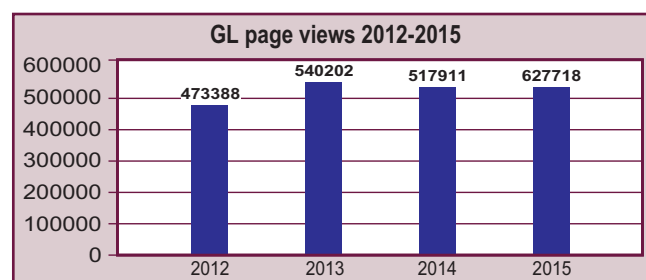
| Breakdown of participants reached by country for 2015 | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Country | Female | Male | Total | % Female | % Male |
| Madagascar | 1888 | 990 | 2878 | 66% | 34% |
| Botswana | 1067 | 378 | 1445 | 74% | 26% |
| Zimbabwe | 950 | 447 | 1397 | 68% | 32% |
| Mauritius | 814 | 530 | 1344 | 61% | 39% |
| Zambia | 888 | 427 | 1315 | 68% | 32% |
| South Africa | 944 | 435 | 1379 | 68% | 22% |
| Namibia | 737 | 241 | 978 | 75% | 25% |
| Mozambique | 744 | 267 | 1011 | 74% | 26% |
| Lesotho | 404 | 198 | 602 | 67% | 33% |
| Swaziland | 447 | 121 | 568 | 79% | 21% |
| Angola | 275 | 108 | 383 | 72% | 28% |
| DRC | 276 | 73 | 349 | 79% | 21% |
| Malawi | 87 | 71 | 158 | 55% | 45% |
| USA | 56 | 12 | 68 | 82% | 18% |
| Ivory Coast | 21 | 16 | 37 | 57% | 43% |
| Tanzania | 22 | 10 | 32 | 69% | 31% |
| Switzerland | 15 | 3 | 18 | 83% | 17% |
| Kenya | 3 | 4 | 7 | 43% | 57% |
| Total | 9638 | 4331 | 13969 | 69% | 31% |

At 2878, Madagascar reached the highest number of people (66% female). GL's international reach grew, with events in the USA (at the CSW); Geneva (at the annual meeting of the Global Alliance on Media and Gender); in Kenya and Ivory Coast (for GL Services).

Outreach

GL employs a communication strategy that ensures that a high number of people are reached through various online platforms. One of the main avenues for this is the GL website and over the last few years, including the one under review, there has been an emphasis on using Facebook and Twitter to profile the organisation and its work. Information is also regularly sent out to our mailing list through our contacts database.

GL website



During 2015, GL had a total of 627,718 page views for its website. This represents a 21% increase on the 517,911 hits in 2014. 221,541 people visited the GL website in 2015 - 172,198 new users (78%) and 49,343 (22%) returning visitors.

| Most accessed pages on GL website for 2015 | | | |
|--|--|------------|-----------------------|
| Ranking | Page | Page views | % of total page views |
| 1 | Gender Links Survey Manager - Survey Centre | 144,631 | 23.04% |
| 2 | Gender Links Survey Manager - Home | 101,737 | 16.21% |
| 3 | Gender Links - Gender Links for Equality and Justice | 32,022 | 5.10% |
| 4 | Facing up to the real causes of xenophobia | 10,978 | 1.75% |
| 5 | Gender Summit 2015 | 6,193 | 0.99% |
| 6 | 16 Days of Activism | 5,599 | 0.89% |
| 7 | SADC Gender Protocol | 4,799 | 0.76% |
| 8 | Francais | 4,520 | 0.72% |
| 9 | About us | 4,248 | 0.68% |
| 10 | Young girls, never fall for rich men | 4,044 | 0.64% |

The table shows that the most visited pages during 2015 were those linked to the different online surveys that have been developed. This was followed by access to the Gender links home page and an article that contained “xenophobia” in its title. In as much it is an 2008 article, the reads may have been influenced by the spate of violent xenophobic attacks that happened in South Africa in 2015.

| Origin of views of GL website for 2015 | | | |
|--|----------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Ranking | Country | Page views | % of total page views |
| 1 | South Africa | 51,625 | 23.30% |
| 2 | Kenya | 20,582 | 9.29% |
| 3 | United States | 17,653 | 7.97% |
| 4 | India | 10,279 | 4.64% |
| 5 | Mauritius | 10,256 | 4.63% |
| 6 | Zimbabwe | 8,488 | 3.83% |
| 7 | United Kingdom | 7,585 | 3.42% |
| 8 | Mozambique | 6,326 | 2.86% |
| 9 | Indonesia | 6,179 | 2.79% |
| 10 | Netherlands | 5,969 | 2.69% |

Most views come from people based in South Africa, accounting for almost half of the total page views for the website. This is not surprising given that the organisation is headquartered in South Africa. The fact that four African countries have made it onto the list of the top ten countries to access the GL website is excellent news, as the organisation emphasises its work in Africa. In fact 62,531 page visits or almost one quarter of all page views originated in Southern Africa (the highest for all regions), demonstrating that

GL outreach strategies are working: attracting keen interest in the home region, but also attracting a large number of hits from Africa and abroad.

GL Facebook and Twitter

| Breakdown of GL Facebook statistics over time | | | |
|---|------|--------|------|
| | Like | Female | Male |
| 2012 | 1883 | 60% | 40% |
| 2013 | 2483 | 65% | 35% |
| 2014 | 3023 | 63% | 35% |
| 2015 | 3440 | 64% | 34% |

When looking at the path people take to access the GL website, the majority or 64% do so through Google, followed by direct access to the website (22%) and through Bing (4%). This indicates that GL has increased online exposure and appears easily on online search engines.

As at December 2015 the GL Facebook page had garnered total of 3440 followers, up from 3023 the previous year, a 13% increase. This is slower than what GL would wish. This has resulted in a more aggressive new media strategy in 2016. At 64%, GL attracts a higher proportion of women Facebook followers than men (34%). The remaining 2% may comprise who do not identify as either men or women, as Facebook accommodates numerous gender identities for users. Since GL posts are primarily in English, Portuguese and French, the majority of followers speak English, followed by French and then Portuguese. Most followers are of Southern African origin, however GL has many international followers.

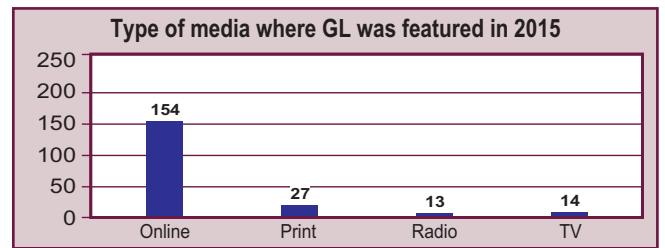
From the USA, GL has 271 followers, 109 from the UK and 81 from Canada. South African followers (820) make up the majority, followed by from Zimbabwe (302), from Mauritius (278), Botswana (170) and from Zambia (124). During 2015 twitter followers remained relatively static at 3035 in 2015. As at the end of 2015, GL had tweeted just over 2300 times. GL is also seeking to amplify its outreach through twitter in 2016.

Facebook post reach and engagement varies depending not only on the content, but also the time at which GL posts. Different posts garner varying degrees of engagement-comments, likes and shares. The above post is one of GL's post that had the widest reach in 2015. GL

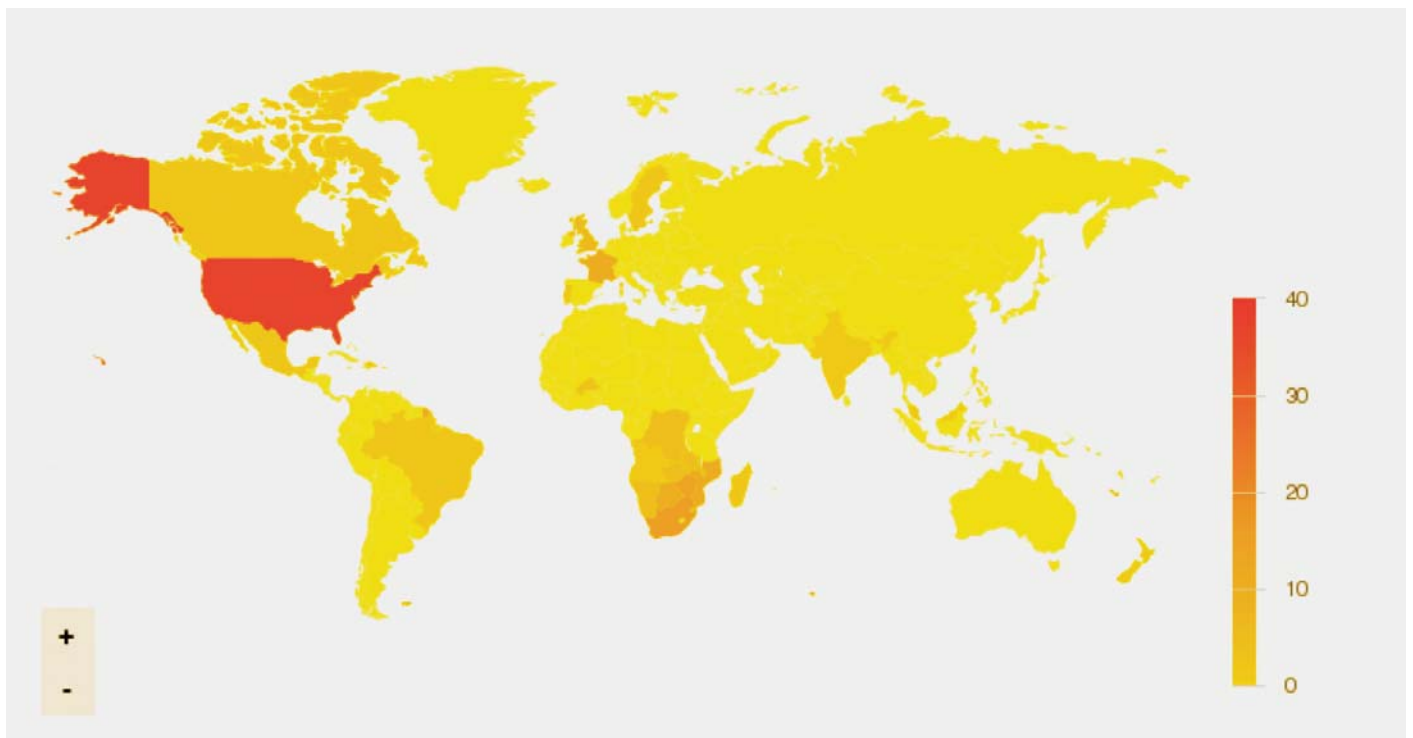
shared a story from the Times newspaper that talked about the sentencing of Oscar Pistorius. It was especially popular because the Oscar Pistorius case had a huge following and also this verdict came about, during the Sixteen Days of Activism Campaign so it had so much significance. It is clear that this issue remains important to many followers, since it garnered a high level of engagement and reached over 5300 on Facebook.

GL in the News

GL places a great deal of emphasis and effort in the use of the media to raise awareness of its work and gender related matters that are of importance. GL views the media as a major player in shaping gender opinions and attitudes in societies. As such, it works actively through these channels to create impact.

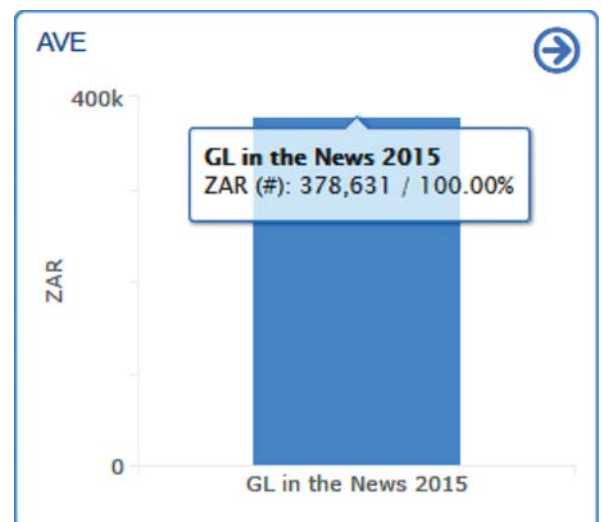


In line with the move towards online access to news, GL used online avenues to highlight its work, appearing 154 times there. GL was also featured an additional 54 times through print, radio, and TV news channels. This means that GL was featured 208 times during 2015. This indicates that GL is able to attract media attention and is contacted in relation to various gender-related matters.



Heat map of people accessing GL news items.

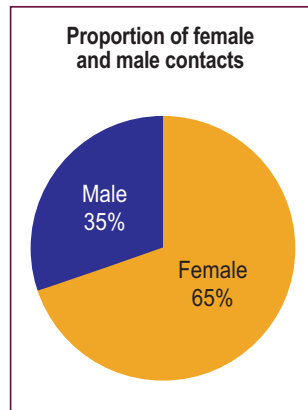
When looking at where GLs online articles are being accessed, the USA has the highest number followed by South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, which are countries we work in. These are closely followed by France, Botswana, and Mauritius. Our online articles in 2015 had a potential reach of 40,9 million readers. For 2015, GL managed to get online news space that would have cost the organisation ZAR 378,631.00.



GL List Serve

Over the years, GL has developed a contacts database from people attending its events. This contacts database has continued to grow and is now standing at 18,026 contacts: 65% females and 35% males, consistent with GL's beneficiary data.

| Number of new contacts per month for 2015 | |
|---|--------------|
| Month | New uploads |
| Carry over from 2014 | 17134 |
| January | 23 |
| February | 70 |
| March | 183 |
| April | 139 |
| May | 56 |
| June | 23 |
| July | 125 |
| August | 62 |
| September | 129 |
| October | 0 |
| November | 82 |
| December | |
| Total | 18026 |



Outcomes

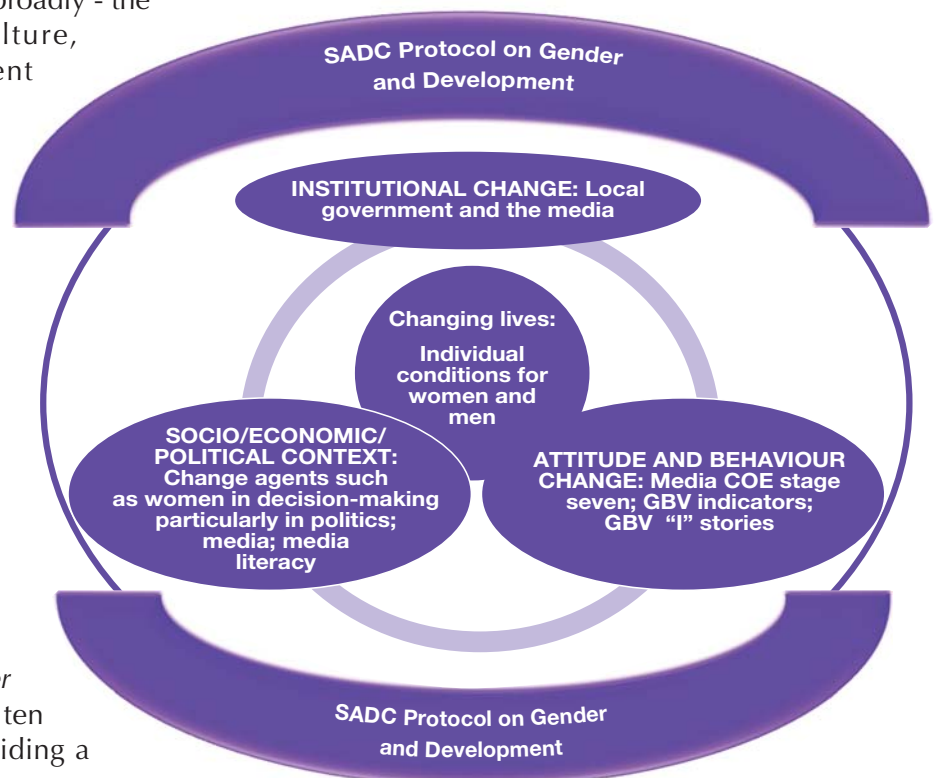
Gender Link's Theory of Change begins from the premise that gender is the most cross-cutting source of social exclusion. Reinforced in formal and informal ways, gender inequality begins in the home; is perpetuated by the family; schools; work place; community, custom, culture, religion and tradition as well structures within society more broadly - the media, new media, popular culture, advertising, laws, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, local and national structures. Gender inequality is so *normalised* that it often goes unnoticed, including by women who have been socialised to accept their inferior status.

Southern Africa, like many regions in the world, is confronting the chasm between progressive *rhetoric* of gender equality, and the *reality* of major social, political and economic gender gaps. On the one hand, this is the only region in the world to have adopted a legally binding *Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development* with 28 targets in ten sectors to be achieved by 2015, providing a

regional roadmap for the attainment of MDG 3 - gender equality. However, women remain the majority of the poor, the dispossessed, the landless and the unemployed. HIV and AIDS has reversed many of the fragile gains: women constitute the majority of those infected and affected by the pandemic which has taken its largest toll in Southern Africa.

Customary practices undermine Constitutions and laws, sometimes condoning gender violence, one of the most telling indicators of gender inequality. Violence Against Women Baseline Studies conducted by GL in six of the fifteen countries in the region shows that between half and two thirds of women in Southern Africa have experienced some form of violence over their lifetime, up to 20% within the last year.² These studies, which include an attitude survey, show that while the majority of men say they believe women and men are equal, a shockingly high proportion believe that a man has a right to beat his wife. Research showing that women lack voice and choice is corroborated by GL's 2010 Gender and Media Progress Study showing that women in Southern Africa constituted a mere 19% of news sources (compared to the global figure of 25% in the 2010 Global Media Monitoring Project).

GL's vision is a region in which women and men are able to participate equally in all aspects of *public and private life* in accordance with the provisions of the SADC Gender Protocol (SGP). GL believes that the *vicious negative cycle of inequality* can be turned into a *virtuous positive cycle of equality*.



| SGDI 2014 versus 2015 | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Country | 2014 | 2015 | Variance |
| Mozambique | 59 | 65 | 6 |
| Botswana | 66 | 69 | 3 |
| Namibia | 76 | 79 | 3 |
| Zimbabwe | 63 | 66 | 3 |
| Lesotho | 73 | 75 | 2 |
| Malawi | 58 | 61 | 2 |
| Mauritius | 77 | 75 | 2 |
| DRC | 47 | 48 | 1 |
| South Africa | 78 | 79 | 1 |
| Tanzania | 68 | 69 | 1 |
| Zambia | 61 | 62 | 1 |
| Angola | 58 | 58 | 0 |
| Seychelles | 82 | 82 | 0 |
| Swaziland | 67 | 67 | 0 |
| Madagascar | 61 | 60 | -1 |
| Overall | 66% | 68% | 1 |

At the *state level* GL, coordinates the SADC Gender Protocol Alliance that campaigned for the adoption and ratification of the SADC Gender Protocol, originally aligned to the Millennium Development Goals that expired in 2015. The Alliance produced a major gains and losses edition of the annual Barometer in 2015. 2015 marked a turning point in the region as the targets of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development expired in August with major gaps in almost all 28 targets.

The SADC Gender and Development Index (SGDI) used by GL to track progress in attaining gender equality increased by two percentage points from 66% to 68%, one percentage point higher than target. At 82%, Seychelles remained highest. Eleven SADC countries improved their performance, with Mozambique, which has been experiencing rapid growth, leading the way. Three countries remained static but only one (Madagascar) which has been experiencing political uncertainty, regressed. The Citizen Score Card (CSC) that measures public perceptions put progress at 67%, in line with GL's target and one percentage point higher than last year, with women's perceptions at 68% compared to men at 66%. All sectors except the media showed progress (this is because, as explained later in this section, the media data is still being updated). Education and health led the way. Uneven progress on women's political participation despite seven elections in the region in the year under review led to slower than expected progress on this front.

Citizen action exceeded expectation, with 1094 SADC Protocol@Work case studies gathered in 2015, bringing the total to 2953 during district, national and regional summits. Overall, GL has achieved its

target of building a strong coalition around the SADC Gender Protocol. The number of sector MOU's fell slightly short due to several regional NGOs scaling down. However, the Alliance has forged a strong relationship with SADC CNGO, the umbrella network for all NGOs in the region. The strengthening of country networks is creating multiplier effects as these take ownership.

The strong coalition building allowed the Alliance to mount a highly strategic campaign to strengthen gender provisions in the global Sustainable Development Goals, and to use these to lobby for reviewing the SADC Gender Protocol, aligning it to the SDGs, Beijing Plus Twenty and the African Union Agenda 2063. The Post 2015 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development is expected to be adopted at the SADC Heads of State Summit in Swaziland in August 2016. GL has in the meanwhile sought to integrate the targets of the SADC Gender Protocol in its core programme work.

In the **Media** programme, GL achieved its target of working through GAMAG to develop a post 2015 position paper and petition supported by 500 member organisations around the world. Although UN Member States may not be open to new additions before the adoption of the SDGs in September, the campaign has galvanised GAMAG; strengthened GL's work with the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) and ensured stronger gender and media provisions in the post-2015 SADC Gender Protocol.

"I must say thank you and congratulations for all the achievements borne of the hard work of the team you led to last week's events at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). It's clear that Gender Links has made a great sacrifice on behalf of the rest of the International Steering Committee, and GAMAG generally."

*Sonia Gill, Secretary General:
Caribbean Broadcasting Union*

In the **Governance** programme, women's political representation in the seven countries that held local and or national elections during the year vacillated.³ However, GL met its target of three countries making progress towards strengthening quotas. In Namibia, the ruling party adopted a 50% quota that led to women's political participation increasing from 25% to 38% in November 2014. Tanzania is strengthening its constitutional quota for elections later this year. GL facilitated a study visit by senior officials from Zimbabwe to Mauritius that resulted in a proposal

for the adoption of a quota for women in local government there.

In the **Justice** programme, despite several political challenges such as political instability and a change of government in Lesotho, GL met its target of working with two governments or provinces (Lesotho and the Limpopo Province in South Africa) to develop costed plans to end VAW using the baseline studies to set realistic targets and indicators. GL exceeded its target of 30 local action plans to end VAW by seven in the six countries where the study has been undertaken. A seventh country, Seychelles, is now undertaking the study. Following the successful launch of the Botswana VAW Baseline Study, the government has approached GL to assist with cascading the study to district level so as to broaden the sample at government cost: a reflection of political commitment. Botswana and Seychelles have challenged GL to extend this from a VAW to a Gender Based Violence Study (i.e. to include men's experiences of violence).

At the **institutional level**, GL integrates the targets of the SADC Gender Protocol into 529 Centres of Excellence for gender in local government and in the media.

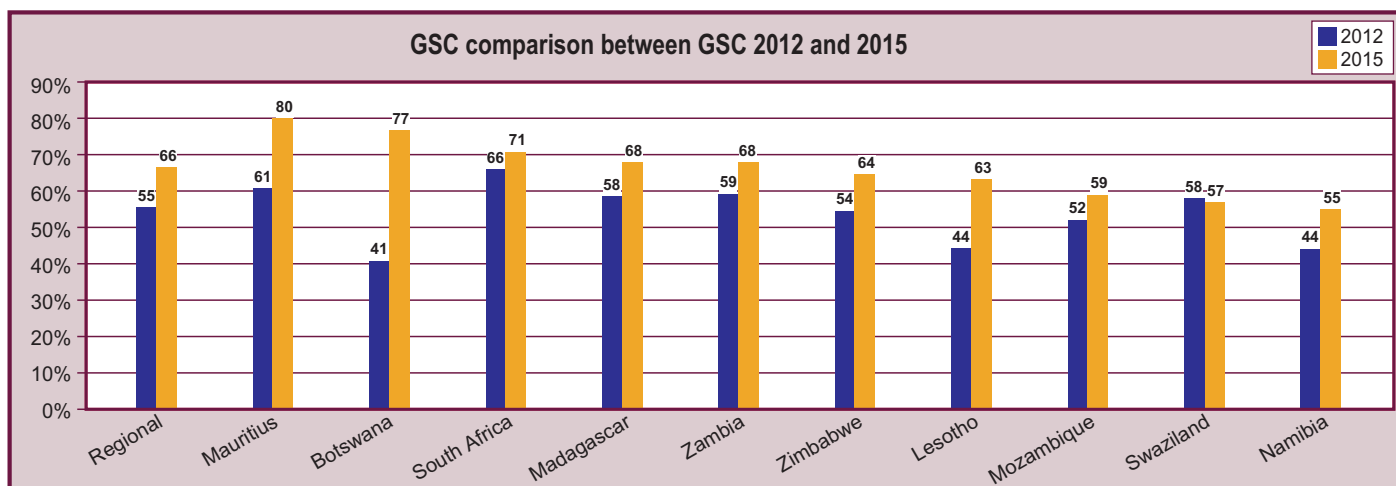


GL is working with 108 media houses (eight more than target) on a ten stage process that gets assessed each year. Two years ago, GL expanded the seventh stage (backstopping) to an additional ten steps on newsroom training thereby bringing the total stages to 19. Stage seven training is tailored around the 10 theme areas of the SGP. Overall, GL COE's completed approximately three quarters of the COE stages in 2015.

The Gender Score Card (GSC) comprises 20 questions used each year to measure the gender responsiveness of media COEs, with more stringent evidence requirements since 2014. The 20 questions cover the key gender and media indicators, namely policy framework, working environment, gender in programming and editorial content and gender management systems.

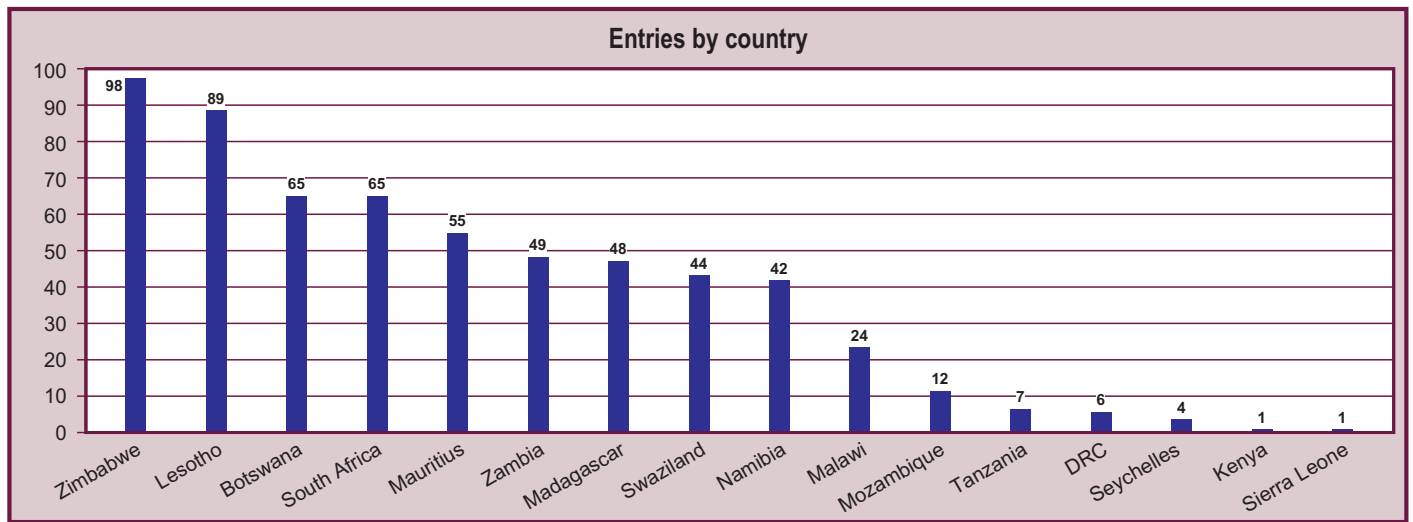
The average gender score for media COE's moved from 68% in 2014 to 78% in 2015, five percentage points higher than the target of 73%. As part of the 2015 stock take, and applying VFM principles, the media programme combined five earlier baseline studies on gender within media houses; in media content; advertising; education; tabloids and radio into one overall Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) aligned to the Global Media Monitoring Project. The media programme showcased the COE model at the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG) first general assembly in Switzerland in December 2015.

Through the 421 local councils in ten countries that have committed to becoming Centres of Excellence (COEs) for Gender in Local Government, GL reaches approximately 35, 865, 310 people in the SADC region, 26% of the population; a five percentage point increase from the previous year. GL uses a Gender Score Card (GSC) comprising 25 questions to measure gender responsiveness in the councils. In 2015 GL had 15 District Level Summits (DLS) in seven countries and three pre-summit verification workshops in three countries in the run up to the National SADC Gender Protocol Summits. The DLSs provided a platform for 238 local councils that had gender action plans to present their evidence to a panel of judges.



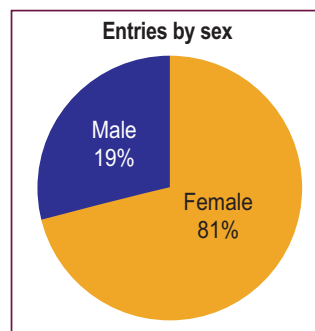
The Gender and Local Government Score Card comprises 25 questions used each year to measure the gender responsiveness of local government COEs, with more stringent evidence requirements during the 2014/2015 verification. Results show an increase from the targeted average of 65% (45% lowest, 80% highest) to the achieved average 66%, (lowest 45% in Swaziland and highest 96% in Botswana). Councils contributed R71 million or 71.2% to COE costs; slightly higher than the 70% target. This is commendable, considering that 75 new councils joined the COE process.

At the **individual level**, GL builds the capacity of Gender Champions and Focal Persons - Drivers of Change - to demand accountability through learning-by-doing. By 2015, GL had collected 713 profiles of Drivers of Change. The MEL team analysed these profiles using 30 measures of change linked to GL's Theory of Change. The tagging and research sought to answer the question: what has changed in the lives of these individuals, and how has that impacted on homes, communities, and on our societies?

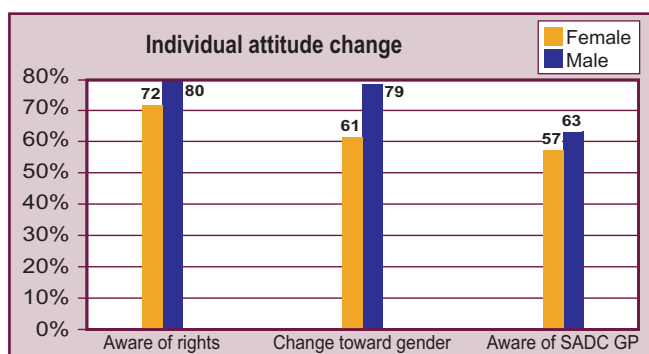


The graph shows that of the 713 Drivers of Change, Zimbabwe (98) registered the highest number, followed by Lesotho (89). The five countries with the lowest number of Drivers of Change are ones where GL does not have an office, but still seeks to do work through partners. Of these approximately one fifth were men, and four fifths women. The proportion of men is slightly lower than GL's overall statistics because as about one fifth of the sample come from the Emerging Entrepreneurs programme, that is targeted solely on women.

Women (72%) and men (80%) cited awareness of rights as the most significant change they had experienced. 61% women and 79% men reported changing their attitudes towards gender. 57% women and 63% men reported a greater awareness of the SADC Gender Protocol. It is interesting to note that "individual attitude change" has been more pronounced by males compared to those of women, who have participated in GL initiatives and were interviewed as drivers of change.



The impact of Gender Links work has also led to people in critical positions providing leadership for change in their communities and the associated change of attitude within their own communities. Gender Links has always included men in its programmes. The following, from an interview with a male driver of change from Lesotho, is informative on the impact of this important area of work.





Majalle Majalle, Councillor, Northern Districts Summit, Botha Bothe Lesotho. Photo: Ntolo Lekau

Majalle Majalle said that before he was elected as a councillor he did not want to hear anything about gender issues. He held the view that gender was against men. Later he received an invitation letter from Gender Links requesting a management meeting to be introduced to COE stages. He confessed that he wanted to decline the invitation but thought it might be stupid to decline and decided that he should give Gender Links a chance to come and see what they had to offer... from that day he was already a changed man... "In his village he is a role model, especially amongst the women whose partners he managed to change. He highlighted the fact that it is not easy as some people say he had become more like a woman, but that does not really bother him because he wants to see his village change and for the better... he has seen amazing support from a few councillors even though some are still reluctant... he is looking forward to changing more people's attitudes."

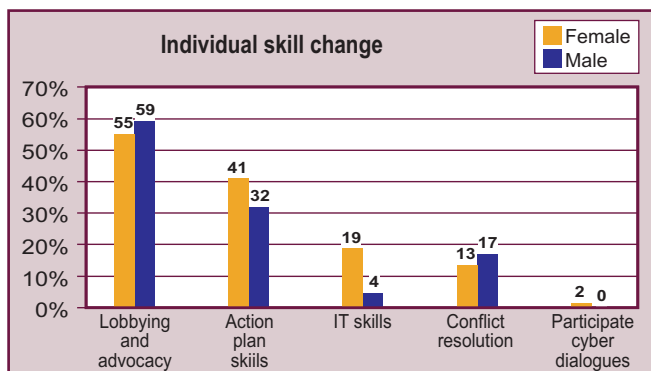
The ability to use new found economic freedom to extract oneself from abusive relationships was a consistent theme amongst women who had experienced GBV and participated in the entrepreneurial training programmes. Clara Muleya, young entrepreneur and Gender Links workshop participant said: "From self-pity to self-sufficient, Clara's Boutique is my testament that a woman can rise from being a victim to a survivor of gender based violence (GBV)."

Gloria Titos of Mozambique spoke about the impact of entrepreneurship training on her position within society: "As I move forward, sometimes I look back and realise how change happened in my life, I see such progress sometimes I do not believe that it is me who struggled for so many years both emotionally and economically. My life has changed and I am committed to changing other women's lives"

Olebile Moesi from Serowe in Botswana said: "After attending the Gender Links training I developed a passion for this business so much so that I decided to take my business seriously. I saved all the income generated and I kept business records. Now my business has grown and I have gained high self-esteem and that makes me believe in everything I do".



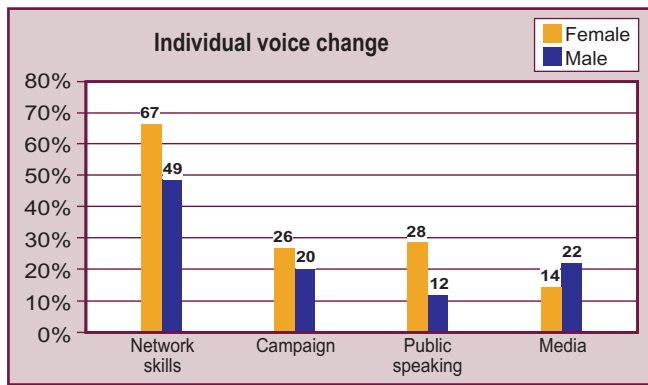
Gloria Titos from Mandlakazi council during the Entrepreneurship assessment in Mozambique. Photo: Gender Links



55% of the women Drivers of Change reported developing lobbying and advocacy skills; 41% action planning skills and 19% IT skills as a result of their interaction with GL. The results for men are similar, but with a higher percentage of men (17% compared to 13% in the case of women) reporting that they learned conflict resolution skills. These findings support the overall thrust of GL's work: changing the attitudes of men and empowering women.

Lucia Zulu in Zimbabwe added: "I learnt that to remain in business one has to maintain a capital reserve and this should never be used no matter how difficult the circumstances may become. Selling the right product at the right place and time is also another concept I took seriously and applied it in my business. This made a lot of sense to my situation and I also appreciated the importance of record keeping when in business. Everything I had done wrong in the past was corrected. My personal relations have improved significantly. My husband and his family are now coming back to ask for forgiveness and acceptance. I have forgiven them but my friends are discouraging me from taking him back because of the way he mistreated me."

Nathalie Gopee of Mauritius explained, "Gender Links taught me how to solve conflicts (in the family) in a peaceful way. I tried to apply the skills I gained there, and it worked. Now we share the family budget, and we allow ourselves a better standard of living, while still saving more".



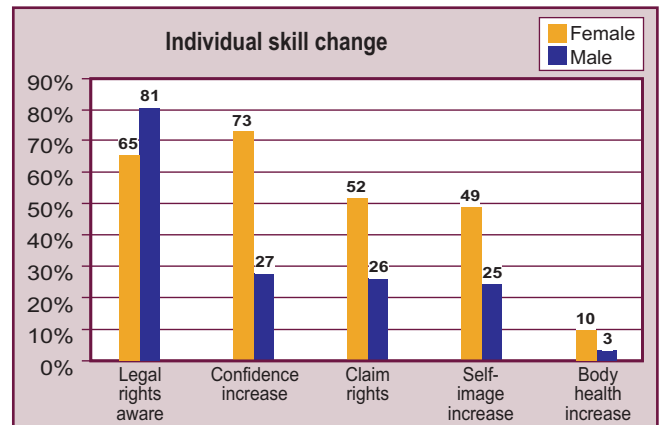
67% of women and 49% of men mention the improvement in their ability to network. 28% of the women reflect on the positive change in their public speaking skills. This is often linked to their increased confidence and improved self-image. “The change in my life has influenced the change in people surrounding me and those with whom I work. Although I must recognise that there have been changes in attitude in my community and Party, I would like to emphasise that I still face some challenges in moving the gender agenda forward. We need to join efforts to fight the barriers that are embedded within the cultural systems in which we live, ” says Maria Helena from Mandlakazi in Mozambique.



Livhuwani Magidi (right), a South African journalist. Photo: Gender Links

The role of the media is also an important aspect of the creation of a “voice” on gender issues. Livhuwani Magidi, a South African journalist, describes the GL work as exceptional. She remembers the session on sex and gender. According to her the discussion will

never end and the most interesting part of the discussion happens when a journalist begins to engage the readers or the listeners. “We have the responsibility to inform the readers and listeners and in that way we educate generations to come”.



The analysis of the Drivers of Change showed that while 81% of the men said they had now become more aware of their legal rights, 73% of the women experienced an increase in confidence; 52% said they are now able to claim their rights and 49% said their self-image had improved. “Even with a disability, I just want to show the world that despite my size and my limitations, I can make something of myself” says Nomcebo Dlamini, a survivor of gender violence who has undergone entrepreneurship training in Swaziland. “The Gender Links entrepreneurship programme came as an answer to the challenges that I was facing, it was such an exciting but enlightening training programme which mentored me to be a business woman. I realised that having the determination to do business is not good enough without the relevant business skills”.



Nomcebo Dlamini presenting under the emerging entrepreneurs category in Swaziland. Photo: Thando Dlamini

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/epiinfo/index.html>, accessed on 20 April, 2016.

² Violence Against Women Baseline studies in South Africa, Mauritius, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho pamphlet.

³ Four countries experienced slight declines in women’s representation in parliament or local government (Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius and South Africa); one achieved modest gains (Mozambique) and two achieved commendable gains (Madagascar from 14% to 21% women in parliament and Namibia from 25% to 38% women in parliament).