

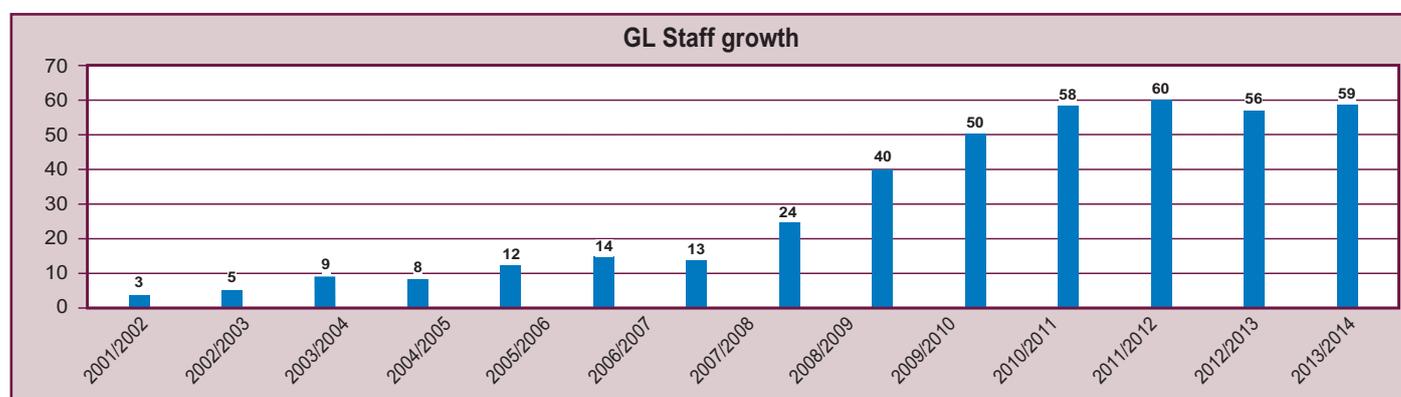
Human Resources

By Vivien Bakainaga, HR Manager



Vivien Bakainaga

Total number of GL staff	59 staff members
Sex disaggregation	44 women (75%) and 15 men (25%)
Geographical set up	Head office in South Africa 9 Country offices in SADC region
Staff demographics	Staff originate from 13 countries
Outcomes	Staff development, staff retention and employee wellness



After the steep growth in staff numbers from 2010 onwards, GL staff growth tapered off in 2014, dropping slightly from 60 to 59. With funding uncertainties looming in 2016, GL is going through a process of right-sizing through consolidating programmes and departments and trimming upper-level management; optimum use of available human resources, and automation of certain functions, to ensure quality over the quantity. GL scaled back country offices in

Namibia and Swaziland to project sites. The two country managers have gone onto consultancy contracts. The last Executive Committee meeting put a freeze on hiring in order to balance the HR Budget for 2015. GL has to maintain a proportion of not more than 25% on support staff. For the first time in 2014 GL had to use its reserves to cover some of the HR Budget. This has led HR to look for ways of working smart.

Sex disaggregated data of GL Staff										
	2010/2011		2011/2012		2012/2013		2014		2015	
Women	40	80%	41	70%	44	73%	47	77%	44	75%
Men	10	20%	17	30%	16	27%	13	23%	15	25%

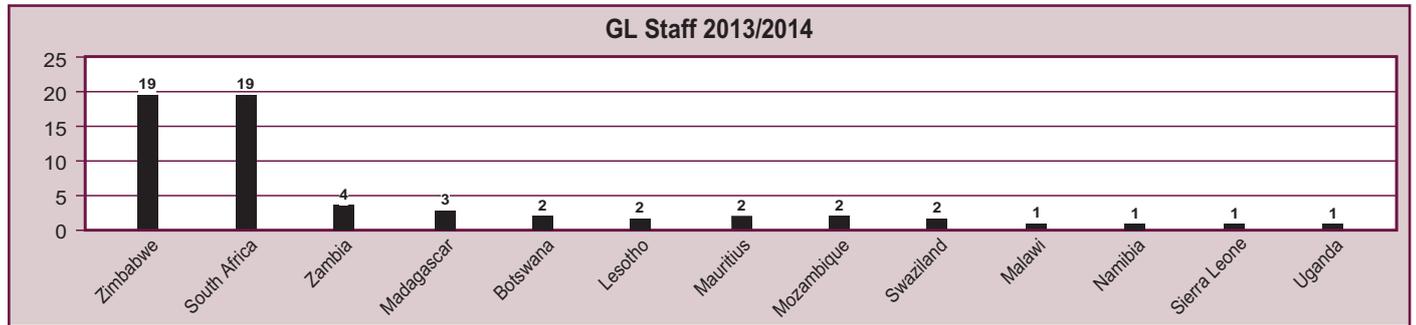
GL promotes gender equality in its recruitment policies. Although by the nature of GL work the majority of staff are women, GL has recruited a male as the Head of Finance and Administration which will increase the

numbers of male employees. GL Zambia office is run by male staff, the Country Manager and Programme Officer. The percentage of male staff has slightly increased from 23% in 2014 to 25% in 2015.

GL staff 2014

As a regional NGO, GL attracts multinational professionals mainly from SADC countries. GL has a diverse staff compliment from 13 countries, 57 from

SADC region, one from Sierra Leone and one from East Africa (Uganda). Zimbabwe and South Africa have the highest number of staff (19) respectively. The average age of GL staff is 37 years.



Staff movement

Reason	No left	Corporate Services/ country finance	Exec	Alliance	Media and Comms	Cottages	Replaced
Retirement	1						
Failed to make probation	1						1
Personal/ better offer etc	9	6	1				5
Total	11	6	1	0	0	0	6

Eleven staff left GL last year; a turnover of 15% for potentially avoidable reasons, and 4% for unavoidable reasons such as retirement, end of contract, failing to meet probation requirement, disciplinary reasons and to further their studies. More than half of the staff who left were corporate service or country finance staff, reflecting both the generally mobile nature of this work sector, but also some of the challenges GL faced in implementing new systems. Four staff left from the governance/country cluster and the Deputy CEO stepped down in the executive cluster. The Alliance, Media and Communications and GL Services did not lose any staff in the period under review. Significantly of the eleven staff who left, GL only replaced six, as part of the right-sizing exercise currently being undertaken in anticipation of lower budgets in 2015 and 2016.

GL's principle is to re-structure through natural attrition to avoid retrenchment: gradually and seamlessly. GL believes that once seeds are planted they can remain dormant during a dry spell but bounce back to life in the rainy season. For example, GL scaled down the Namibia office after the NEPAD grant ended, but retained its registration and the services of the country manager with potential new funding on the horizon.



Retaining good staff

Attracting and retaining good staff remains a key goal. Over the last year GL has taken the following steps:

- Job evaluation:** In June 2014 GL benchmarked its salaries against a reputable company Averil Ryder, and it fared favourably. GL addressed a few anomalies identified. GL grants 5% cost of living adjustment every year and has a notch system that awards an additional 5% to strong performers.

- **Other Staff benefits:** In 2014, GL introduced a staff medical aid scheme and risk covers for all staff. GL offers free financial expertise for staff retirement annuities and other financial planning.
- **Flexibility:** GL allows staff to work from home under certain circumstances.
- **Affirming good performance:** In addition to the remuneration linked performance system, GL has annual staff awards that recognise a variety of contributions including team work, resource mobilisation, innovation, writing, photography, financial management, performance and improved performance.
- **Promotions and opportunities:** GL identifies potential for growth, if someone leaves, GL first looks within before advertising and teams pull together to cover gaps if one player is short. For example, Madagascar Country Manager was promoted to Director of Francophone, SA Governance Manager was promoted to Deputy Governance Manager; Governance officer was shifted to Monitoring and Evaluation where he has had in-training to perform at high level M and E officer. Swaziland Programme Officer was transferred to HQ to maximise his skills in audio and visual; when the IT officer left, the Audio Visual officer filled that gap smoothly, The HQ Finance Officer was transferred to Lesotho as Finance and Admin Officer when there was a gap and for her regional exposure. Finance Assistant was moved to Reception, the driver has potential to grow and has been assigned other duties as a Logistics Officer.
- **Staff wellness programme:** This programme enhances the work life balance through team building activities, offering health talks to staff, financial talks, physical exercise and community responsibility.

- **Capacity building:** GL identifies, maps and grows leadership talent within. It encourages learning including on the job learning as reflected in the GL Learning journey. GL places importance on individual staff development and gives 5 days study leave to staff members who are doing studies. One of GL staff who was granted a scholarship to study in Ireland for her masters returned in October 2014 and is now working in the CEO's office as special projects officer.

Renewal and succession planning



2015 will be a test of GL resilience with further succession planning on the horizon. The CEO and founder signified her intention to step down in August 2015.

GL is in the process of recruiting an Executive Director. As part of the exit strategy, the CEO will focus on building GL Enterprises, the income generating arm of GL. The CEO will not be far removed from GL. She and the Executive Director will sit on the finance committee of the Board. She will continue to guide and mentor the incoming incumbent. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer stepped down in September 2014 and has offered consultancy support to GL when needed. This has facilitated smooth and successful handover.

GL has seen successful transitions in Botswana, where the retiring country manager handed over the baton to a younger manager. In Zambia, the founding country manager handed over to a GL associate - the former CEO of one of GL's Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government. Following the tragic passing away of the Lesotho country manager reported last year, another GL partner in Lesotho has successfully filled her shoes.

The Director of Operations also handed over to a new Head of Finance and Administration. This post has been recast in light of the lower budget in 2015.

GL Wellness Programme

The GL wellness programme has been strengthened to focus on core concerns: work life balance, which incorporates the mind, body and soul. GL offers staff annual



Ntombi Mbandlanyana at her staff baby shower.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

health checks with a health practitioner who carries out the tests on site and gives staff health talks. Staff have access to a financial advisor. Staff are involved in community responsibility activities for example during 2014 Christmas GL staff contributed Christmas presents and party to less advantaged children of Orange Farm, clothes were donated to women's shelter in Johannesburg, Botswana office visited the Women's prison. The wellbeing of staff is part of GL value system and part of the overall budget. GL takes staff wellness seriously and has allocated R3000 per staff member. Staff are encouraged to participate in wellness activities that foster teamwork. Staff elected a representative to coordinate wellness activities at head office; the finance officers do the same at country level. This year wellness plan was part of planning where all departments and country offices planned for the wellness activities.

Staff Development

Staff development is focused on identifying, mapping and growing leadership talent within GL. The performance management system is structured to support growth and identify any gaps for capacity building. Training of staff has been on-going with the introduction of new systems. Staff have undergone training on the new systems to strengthen institutional systems, knowledge management, learning and effectiveness to ensure smooth transitions at various levels. The introduction of a new financial system, Pastel Evolution and SAGE VIP, GL trained all staff on these systems to ensure smooth transitions from the old systems to the new system. GL has held in-house training that are targeted to the core work of GL and staff who are directly responsible.

In 2014, GL staff participated in various wellness activities:

- GL has a walking club that hikes once in a month to different hiking places around Johannesburg.
- Night out to the theatre, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Whitney Huston.
- Lion Park Outing with Country Staff and Corporate Services.
- Soweto Tour.



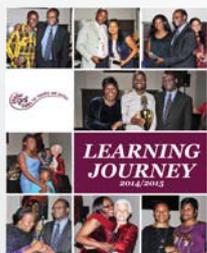
GL Cottages hosted children from Orange Farm for its Christmas Party.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Examples of in-house training undertaken during 2014

Course	Date	No. of people trained	Trainer
Share Point	9 Jan 2014	4	PCB Paul Boulle
MS Project	16-17 Jan 2014	15	M Cot Corporate Training
Google Hangout	24 Jan 2014	8	Tinashe Padare
Intranet	24 Jan 2014	8	Simone Shall
Audio Visual	24 Jan 2014	8	Albert Ngosa
Pastel Training of Administrators	29 Jan 2014	4	Siyasa Consulting
MS Project	19 - 20 Feb 2014	7	M Cot Corporate Training
Finance Training use of Procurement Module	12 March 2014	10	Siyasa Consulting
Leadership and Team Management	2 - 4 June 2014	18	Anna Harris
Pastel Evolution (Core level 1)	1 - 5 Dec 2014	2	Pastel Training

Learning-on-the-job is the most valuable capacity building that GL staff go through, as attested in the annual GL Learning Journey:

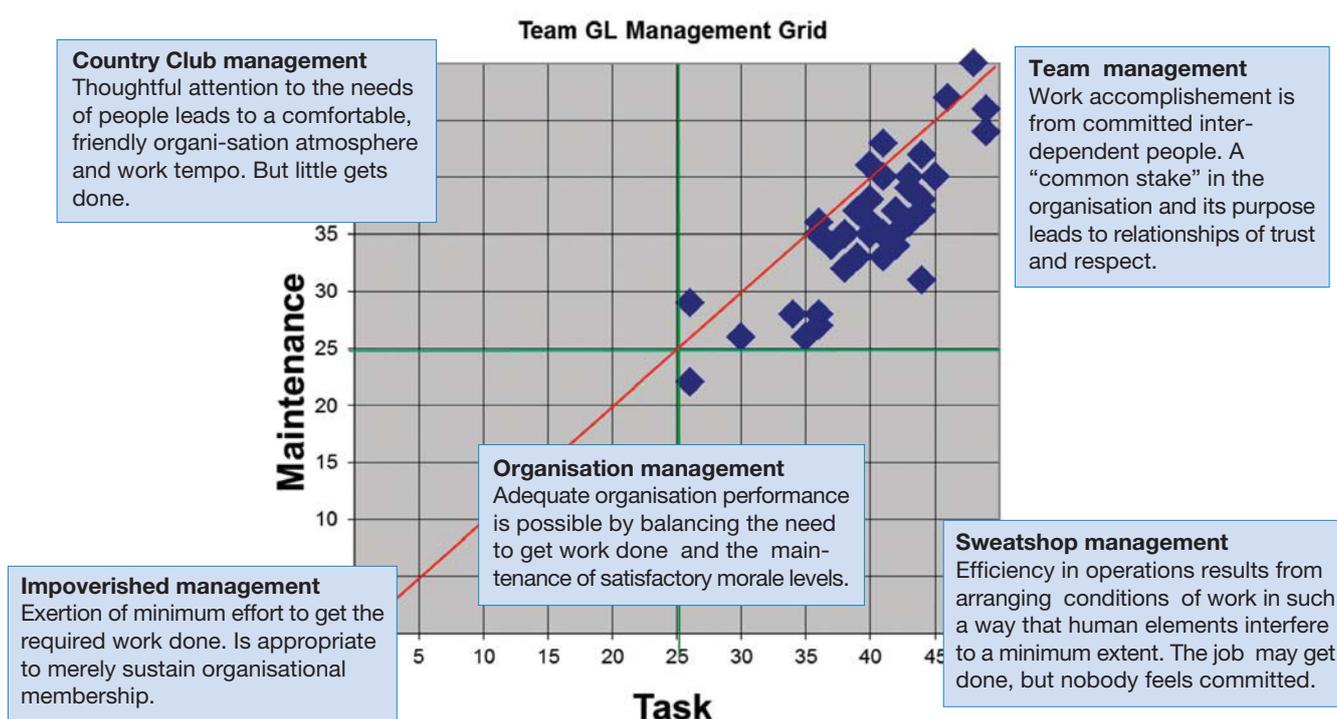


Introduction to the GL Learning Journey by GL CEO Colleen Lowe Morna

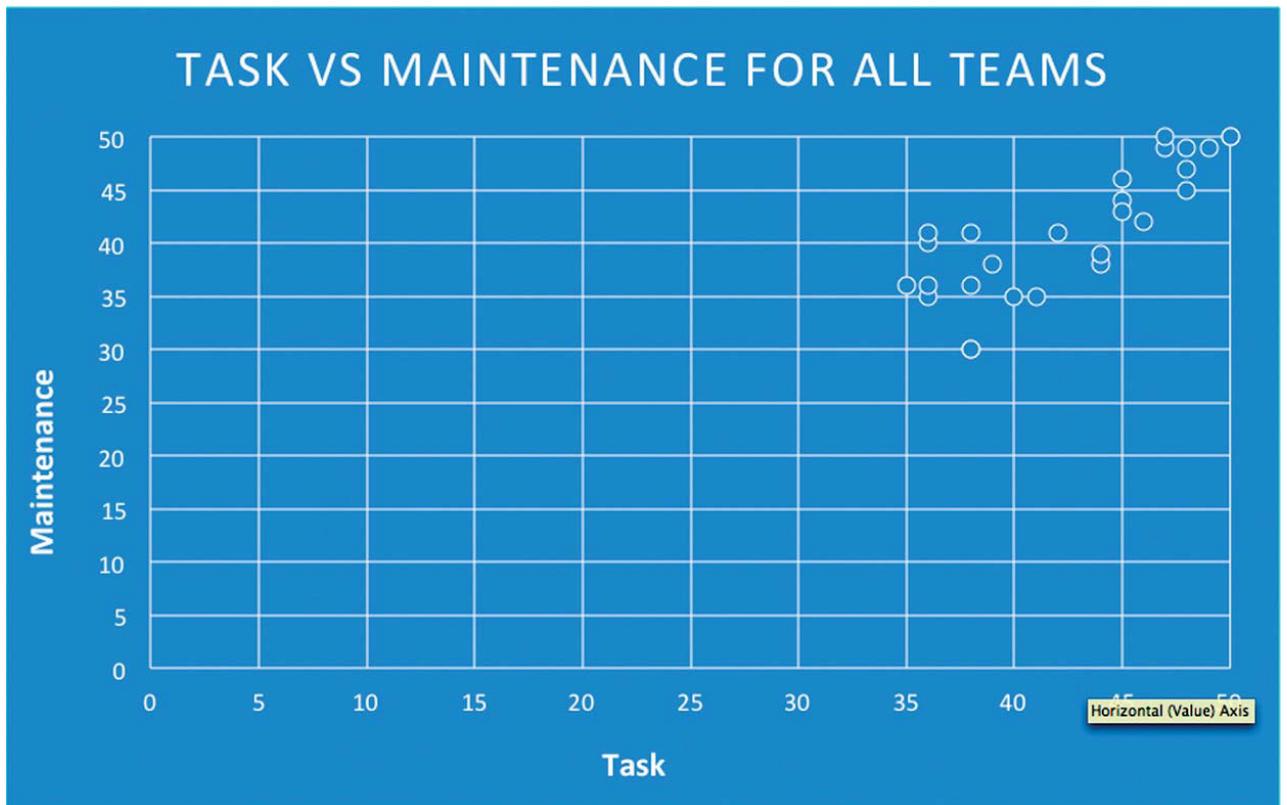
2014: Countdown to 2015, the deadline for the 28 targets of the SADC Gender Protocol, and the Millennium Development Goals; an eventful year for Gender Links, referred to by at least two staff as a university like no other. Each year, staff share their learning for the previous year as part of ongoing individual and organisational growth. Change is a strong theme that runs through these pages. We live in a world of breathlessly fast technological innovation that demands we move with it. GL's philosophy is one of "Making IT work for gender justice." So in 2014, with the support of the DFID Programme Partnership Arrangement (PPA) grant, GL undertook a range of systems upgrades: Finance, Human Resources, Monitoring and Evaluation and Website. Not all went well, especially on the financial side, where we had to re-implement a set up that did not meet the complex accounting needs of an NGO with 23 donors, about 12 different currencies, and work with over 400 institutions, each undertaking a ten stage process. This tested GL's resilience all the way up to Sage Pastel headquarters where a high level team had to place its case and demand better performance. There is seldom right and wrong in these matters; only better and worse, the ability to change when change is not working, to see the silver lining in the dark cloud, and to do even better the second time around. No pain, no gain, is another theme that runs through these pages, as is learning from mistakes. In November, GL sat on a panel at the annual BOND meeting in the UK to share how successful NGOs learn from mistakes. It was reassuring to note that we certainly are not alone in trying things that have not always worked exactly according to plan. But the margin for error in the non-profit sector is slim. The ability to take corrective action quickly and decisively is key. Problem solving and agency is the other theme that resonates in the Learning Journey. A branch may fall during a storm, but it regenerates soon after. What is important is that the roots and trunk be solid enough to remain standing. We start 2015 confident in the knowledge that the fundamentals of GL – its core values and systems – remain intact and improve all the time. This is a big year programmatically, as we reposition for the post- 2015 agenda, and internally, as GL undergoes its most extensive succession planning yet. We start the year knowing that by passing many challenging micro tests in 2014, we can withstand the even greater macro tests in 2015. *Yes we must, and yes we can!*

GL Team Assessments

GL administered the Blake and Mouton team assessment questionnaire in December 2014. The questionnaire assessed the balance between task and maintenance in the workplace. The explanation of each quadrant is given below:



The results show a healthy team, with all staff who responded to the survey falling within the “winning team” quadrant. The task and the maintenance scores are equally high. GL staff understand the organisations purpose and have a stake in GL's success. This has created a team environment based on trust and respect, which leads to high satisfaction and motivation with high results.



The graph below demonstrates that GL has created an environment where staff feel safe to be innovative and creative. The team scored highest (88%) on finding new ways of doing things followed by team members being open minded (86%). Lower scores included team members expressed honest views (79%) and team members stick out their necks (73%).

Team Survey results collected December 2014

