

BGAG provides R15.5m worth of pro bono work

For the financial year ending 28 February 2015, South African lawyers from Bowman Gilfillan Africa Group (BGAG) provided 8,609 hours of pro bono legal services, to a rand value of over R15,5 million.



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Fatima Laher, BGAG's pro bono manager, said, "This is a phenomenal result for our firm ... We strive to ensure that our pro bono services reach those who are most in need and therefore most deserving. We also understand the importance of reaching out to individuals, communities, fledgling and micro enterprises, vulnerable groups and welfare organisations to offer access to justice and legal advice and services."

Ishishini Lethu Project

BGAG has collaborated with many non-profit organisations in Cape Town and Johannesburg (and elsewhere in Africa) to assist small businesses and start-ups by providing pro bono legal services through its Ishishini Lethu Project. It is this project which won the firm the coveted CSR award at the Africa Legal Awards in October 2014. "This is an encouraging and wonderful recognition of the work we do through our Ishishini Lethu Project," Laher said at the time.

2014 was a particularly successful pro bono year for the firm's Cape Town office as it collaborated with the Women's Legal Centre to service the Cape Town Magistrate's Court helpdesk, mostly assisting domestic violence victims to obtain protections orders. The firm successfully concluded its participation in the pilot project and now services the helpdesk on a weekly basis. BGAG also permanently maintains at least one candidate attorney at the Public Defender's Office.

In addition to helping individuals, BGAG has also assisted many pro bono clinics and non-profit organisations with their registrations as well as with compliance issues. The firm has also hosted several worthy public interest events and conferences.