



WLAC

WOMEN'S LEGAL AID CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

1.0 ABOUT US

The Women's Legal Aid Center (WLAC) is a non-governmental organization. The organization is a successor to the Legal aid scheme under Shirika la Uchumi la Wanawake Tanzania (SUWATA), which was the Legal Aid Scheme for women. SUWATA legal aid scheme for women was founded in 1989 and officially registered in 1994 under the Companies Act. Cap R.E 2002. In 2019 WLAC complied with the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Act No.3, 2019, and obtained a certificate of registration with 00NGO/R1/00924. The founding members are professional lawyers who volunteered to provide legal assistance to women in need of legal aid services on a pro bono basis. Members of the organization are individual and institutional (WLAC established paralegals).

WLAC has its headquarters in Kinondoni District, Dar es Salaam and one field office at Kagera in Muleba District. WLAC has established 23 paralegal organizations. The organization has been providing legal assistance to Women and Children in Tanzania for more than 30 years of experience. WLAC is proud of being a pioneer of Paralegal, Police Gender and Children Desks, and Mobile Legal Aid in Tanzania.

VISION

A society that respects and promotes women's and children's rights.

MISSION

Our Mission is to work towards promoting women and children rights through civil and socio-economic empowerment; access to justice; and advocacy for pro-gender legal and policy frameworks in Tanzania.

WLAC VALUES

WLAC core values are: Integrity, Equality, Transparency, Accountability, professionalism, Voluntarism and volunteerism.

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE POLICY

WLAC is committed to fostering a culture that promotes safety and human dignity. It has a zero-tolerance approach to exploitative and abusive behaviours and relationships. The Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy sets out the WLAC's commitment to the prevention and management of sexual exploitation and abuse and reporting mechanisms within WLAC. It emphasizes the importance of reporting actual or suspected inappropriate behaviour related to sexual exploitation, abuse and acts of misconduct. This is to ensure decisive action - including investigation of allegations and appropriate disciplinary and/or criminal prosecution- is taken.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women's Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) is pleased to present its report for the year 2023 programme implementation. The report covers three Strategic Plan (SP) (2021-2025) i.e. (1) Legal Aid and Advocacy for reforms (2) Enhanced community awareness engagement in civic and socio-economic rights and (3) Institutional sustainability and diversification. WLAC through its interventions thrived toward promoting women and children rights by promoting gender equity and equality at all levels through awareness raising, access to justice, and advocating for gender reforms in the country. WLAC interventions aligned with national, region, and international strategies to deliver a common goal on gender equality, and elimination of all forms of violence against women and children (VAWC) as stipulated under per NPA/VAWC, Generation for Equality (GEF) the Africa we want and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2023 is the sixth regime Government under President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan shown some progressive reform in terms of civic space and promotion of freedom of expression in the country, this was evidenced through different aspects such as there were no threats and attacks relating to human rights CSOs and NGOs, lifting the ban for some media. This situation was a paradigm shift in terms of political perspective and freedom of expression and opened up for civic space in the country thus contributed to a safe environment for human rights actors to implement programs. Further to that the

government through a Committee Commission appointed by the President was tasked to Improve Criminal Justice Institutions in the country so as to build citizen's trust and confidence in the rule of law.

Through legal aid education and assistance, women have increasingly improved their awareness, knowledge, and ability to protect and claim their rights in both formal and informal institutions and ultimately improved their well-being and social justice.

WLAC used several forums to influence legal frame works reforms on the rights of women, through government led initiatives such as the Presidential commissions on criminal justice report, study conducted by the law reform commission and legal committee. Through these forums, WLAC provided its inputs as to what could be included for the well-being of women and children in Tanzania.

WLAC through Legal Aid and Advocacy for reforms program assisted a total number of **2585** new and **5039** ongoing women and children seeking legal redress to access justice through the court system and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism. The ADR was very key for timely justice as it saves time. A total number of 1898 of cases were finalized.

WLAC in collaboration with Washington and Lee University School of Laws based in the United States of America, undertook a joint fact-finding mission on effective implementation of inheritance Laws to prevent Women abuse in Tanzania. Objective of the fact-finding mission is to develop a report to be used as advocacy tool for advancement of women's inheritance rights. The report findings are a tool for advocacy purposed.

WLAC through strategic aim three on enhanced community awareness engagement in civic and socio-economic rights provided community awareness on the rights of women and children through radio, TV, IEC materials, social media and village meetings and reached over **1.5** million people.

3.0 KEY RESULT AREAS: STRATEGIC AIM & EXPECTED RESULTS

STRATEGIC OUTCOME ONE:

Access to Justice for Women, Children and Refugees is broadened and improved

OUTPUT ONE: Legal Aid is efficiently offered by WLAC through stationed legal aid clinics, mobile legal aid, hotline and remand homes.

1.2 Legal assistance provided

a total number of 2585 new client and 5039 ongoing client's women and children receive legal aid service on difference cases. the 3rd quarter has more cases compared to other quarters for the year 2023. This huge difference was caused by the 26% of the reported cases are probate cause, this was due to the fact majority of resident of Msimbazi river bank were in the process of being compensated to pave a way for a project that is supported by the world bank. That being the case some of the owners were deceased therefore heirs needed to file probate case so as to be eligible for such compensations.

Quarter	New Client	Ongoing Client/
Q1	622	1178
Q2	512	1,442
Q3	938	1383
Q4	513	1,036
TOTAL	2585	5039

There is a decreased of 1,079 new clients compared to the year 2022. This is due to the fact that the two field offices in Kibondo and Kasulu in Kigoma were closed and there was no operation for the year 2023.



Cases Finalized in favor of clients

To ensure timely justice for civil cases especially child maintenance WLAC applies Alternative disputes resolution (ADR). This helps to serve time and resource. For the reporting period over **309** cases were scheduled for reconciliation.

“For quite a long I was struggling to get my rights but I didn’t know what to do or where to go until I was advised to go to WLAC” This is a common statement by majority of women who come to WLAC. This indicate that legal empowerment interventions are very crucial in women’s access to justice.

As I appeared in court for hearing of my petition for divorce, I remembered the advice from my lawyer on how to present documentary evidence on acquisition of matrimonial properties. My husband’s advocate criticized to the magistrate that it would take the whole day to finish giving evidence, but the magistrate allowed me and cautioned the advocate to follow the procedures. Thereafter the advocate asked the magistrate to adjourn the case to allow him to consult his client (my husband) and perhaps reorganized their evidence. The judgement was fair and I received either 50% or 40% from every property listed as matrimonial properties (most of them being landed property) despite my husband’s argument that the same were acquired before the marriage. The legal advice received at WLAC gave me confidence and I was able to demonstrate how I contributed to the matrimonial properties. Without legal advice I would not been able to do that.”

Legal Aid Client May 2023.

Legal empowerment is a tool towards Women’s access to justice

Client “D” came to WLAC in September 2023, complaining that her husband chased her from her matrimonial house because she reported her matrimonial problem at the Marriage reconciliation board at Mkuranga Ward. Soon after she filed a divorce petition, she was coached to request an interim order to go back to her house pending the determination of the matrimonial proceedings. Early October 2023, the District Court of Mkuranga ordered the client to go back to her house until final determination of the case and execution of the judgement. The client went back to her house and on 13th November the judgement was delivered and the client was given 30 percent of the matrimonial house.

Thanks to WLAC:

I was saved from becoming homeless

Client M who has been cohabiting with her male partner for two years since March 2021. They acquired a house at Kimara and a hardware business at Masaki Dar es Salaam. Sometimes in end of November 2023, her partner told the client that he was no longer interested to continue with the relationship and he started to abuse the client verbally and physically including asking the client to vacate the house they are living, and he gave her shillings 2,000,000/- to pay rent after living a house. The client went to local government office to report the matter but when the client's partner was summoned for reconciliation, he said that the client is not her wife rather a tenant in his house and he also said that he had given the client notice to vacate the house. The client, came to WLAC to seek advice and was advised not to leave the house, until their case is determined by the court, she was also referred to Police Gender and children desk at Kimara for assistance with the abuse issues, the client's partner was summoned and warned not abuse the client or chase her from the house until their case is determine in court.

After obtaining form no 3 from marriage conciliatory board, the client filed her application for presumption of marriage at the Primary court at One stop Judicial center, Temeke where she is applying for a declaration of presumption of marriage and division of properties acquired jointly, she was also coached to request for an interim order to remain in the house and was given to her on 10th December 2023. The case is pending hearing and the client's partner has stopped abusing and threatening the client.

Clients Forum empowered women on the rights of women and girls to access and benefit from innovation and technological change.

Through client's forum, 30 women came together to learn and share experience the importance of women and girls' rights to access and benefit from technology as a tool towards promoting gender equality and economic empowerment. Women leaned how they could creative in use technology to create solution of some of the challenges facing women and girls.



Legal education offered : A total of 3,382 people was reached with legal education on women’s rights through one-to-one discussion with legal aid clients, media, bulk sms, and publications disseminated to the public and commemorations of International Women’s Day



OUTCOME 1. 2: Policy and Legal frameworks on the rights of Women, Children & Refugees are reformed and enforced

1.2.1. Fact finding mission on effective implementation of Inheritance Laws to prevent Women abuse in Tanzania:

In February 2023, WLAC in collaboration with Washington and Lee University School of Laws based in the United States of America, undertook a joint fact-finding mission on effective implementation of Inheritance Laws to prevent Women abuse in Tanzania. Objective of the fact-finding mission is to develop a report to be used as advocacy tool for advancement of women’s inheritance rights.



Phone: WLAC staff, Students from Lee University School of Laws at TAWIA offices, Ubungo Dar es Salaam

1.2.2. A fact-finding study on community awareness and recognition of women’s and girls’ collective land rights in Muleba, Kagera region was conducted.

WLAC deployed two methodologies i.e. questionnaire and Focused Group Discussions (FGD). The study findings revealed that majority of land is owned by men individually by 73% while 27% women owned land individually. Majority of women own land with their spouses, and it becomes difficult to make decision on the usage of land and proceeds acquired through agriculture. The Respondents highlighted that there is no equality between men and women when it comes to land ownership therefore, they recommended for awareness creation to communities to ensure equal opportunity for collective land rights. Report highlighted different types of abuses women suffer in the inheritance contact and recommendation to justice stakeholders on prevention and addressing the situation is under review for final report.

“Currently we have land for farming activities. Women can obtain land for farming; and there is no land for individual distribution for residential purposes”

Village chairperson from Nyakanyasi village”

1.2.3. Four consultative meetings and dialogue with community and religious leaders on women's land and property rights was conducted to strengthen referral pathway for women access to justice.

WLAC consultative meeting with religious and community leaders addressed the gender disparities and advocate for collective land rights in the community. Inheritance laws were discussed and equal distribution of deceased estates due to the fact that one way of land acquisition is through inheritance and customary law discriminate women and girls to inherit from husband or father.

1.2.4. Convention on Elimination of All forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW)

Tanzania is not yet scheduled for the 2023 reporting consideration we will continue to follow up report next year. WLAC continues to collect information on CEDAW concluding observations and recommendation on the status and implementation since last reporting. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CEDAW

STRATEGIC AIM TWO:

Enhanced community awareness engagement in civic and socio-economic rights

OUTCOME 2: A well-informed community that takes action against the violation of women, children and refugees' rights

2.1.0. Sensitized community on civic and socio-economic rights:

WLAC commemorated International Women's Day (IWD); the theme for the women's day was Digital: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality (Ubunifu na Mabadiliko ya Teknolojia ni Chachu katika kuleta Usawa wa Kijinsia). WLAC shared experience with clients on how they can use technology to advance their business for economic sustainability.

Umiliki wa ardhi wa Pamoja huimarisha uchumi katika ngazi ya familia na Jamii. Wanawake huchangia sehemu kubwa ya mapato ya kilimo kuboresha usalama wa chakula afya za Watoto



2.1.1 Village meeting awareness on women's land rights in Muleba

Community awareness raising on legal and human rights is key toward addressing gender equalities in our community. WLAC conducted community meetings in 7 wards in Muleba district. The awareness focused on land collective ownership. This programme addressing the disparity among women and men in community and thus provide solution that will benefit both men and women through collective land ownership.



2.1.1 Secondary schools' campaign on women's land rights was conducted to .5 schools of Dar es Salaam

1,100 students and 16 teachers (678 female and 416 male) from Hananasifu, Turiani, Kambangwa, Salma Kikwete and Mzimuni) and were reached with messages on gender equality and equity, individual and collective land rights, during a discussion some students revealed that they were owning landed property under guardianship. This was a motivation to other students who did not know that children can own and benefit from land ownership. **Photo: students from Kambangwa secondary school, Dar es Salaam displaying posters on women's land rights during a dialogue**



WLAC provided community awareness to women groups and students on women land and property rights. There is a vital reason as to why WLAC focus is on youth; since it is the generation that needs to understand and pick up issues to amplify change in the community. Youth voices need to be incorporated to ensure sustainability of the changes in relation to women and children rights. **Photo: students from Mushabago secondary school, Muleba district participating in dialogue conducted at their school on women and girls' land and property rights**



2.1.1 Raising awareness on women's rights on Mwanamke wa Shoka Kitchen party Gala during IWD organized by EFM

WLAC has increased media engagement to reach wide coverage. For the reporting period WLAC provided legal awareness to community through community radio and social media. WLAC aired radio adverts and sessions through EFM whereby over 1.5 million people were reached. Feedback received through hotline on our program and legal aid service on different legal issues.



2.3 Stand for her land campaign (S4HL)

The Stand for Her Land Campaign is the global initiative focusing on closing the gap between law and practice for millions of women to realize their land rights. In Tanzania S4HL campaign is working to address discriminatory socio-cultural norms that hinder women from realizing their land rights, promoting women's participation in decision making, and building grassroots women's voice, agency, and leadership in climate action. In Tanzania, a total of 25 taskforce members are implementing the campaign. WLAC is a founder and member of the S4HL Campaign being a member WLAC is contributing to the campaign her programs on women's land and property rights.

STRATEGIC AIM THREE:
Institution sustainability and diversification

Outcome: Improved financial resource, Governance and program diversification for sustainable development:

3.1 Board Meeting

WLAC board meetings are held on quarterly basis and for the year 2023 a total of 4 quarterly Board Meetings were held. Guidance and directives issued to Management to ensure that WLAC is continuing with the agenda, vision and mission of the organization despite of challenges on resource mobilization.

3.2 WLAC Annual General Meeting

WLAC Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 19th May, 2023. The General meeting received and approved the 2022 annual report and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2022.

3.3 Staff Affairs

3.3.1 Staff retention and Turnover

WLAC managed to maintain a total number of 8 (7 Female & 1 Male) staff and 4 Legal Officer Volunteer (2 Female & 2 Male).

3.3.2 Staff Capacity Building

3.3.2.1 Two Advocate attended 5 days training a Data Driven Advocacy training session on Art of Trial Advocacy Skills in Litigations in Litigations offered by Freedom House in collaboration with the National Institute of Trial Advocacy and Baker MacKenzie a global Law Firm.



3.3.2.2 Staff and interns attended PSEA inhousing: Training: Every quarter staff and interns receive refresher training on Prevention of Sexual, Exploitation and Abuse to protect themselves and our beneficiaries.

3.3.2.3 Inhouse training to Lawyers: Interns and Lawyers received training on legal skills, interview skills, Drafting skills and Filling documents through Judicial online system.

3.3.2.4 Continous Legal Education (CLE): Four Advocate received CLE as compulsory learning coordinated by Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) to equip Advocated with the new trends and learning to improve knowledge. Therefore Advocated received training and shared the knowledge acquired to Lawyers and intren during Monday meeting held every week to Lawyers and interns.

3.4 Audit

3.4.1 The external Audit

The external Audit was conducted and WLAC received unqualified opinion for the year 2022.

3.4.2 Internal Audit:

WLAC outsourced the internal audit services. The report was presented to the Board Audit Committee and recommendations forwarded to the Board for further action.

3.5 Compliance with Law

3.5.1 Monthly contribution submitted to Higher Educations Students Loan Board (HESLB), National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and Workers Compensation Fund (WCF) as required by Law.

3.5.2 Monthly tax returns for Pay As You Earn (PAYE), Skills Development Levy (SDL) and annual tax returns were submitted to Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) on time.

3.5.3 WLAC complied with the Non-Governmental Organization Act (NGO) on reporting requirements.

3.5.4 Submission and publication of bi - Annual income and Expenditure.

4.0 PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR 2023

4.1 Main Achievements and Development for the year 2023

4.1.1 Award on Access to Justice category

WLAC contested for nomination and received a certificate of recognition award on access to justice category through implementation of Maputo Protocol award that were held in Nairobi Kenya. This award shows a huge milestone that WLAC has demonstrated toward women rights in Tanzania through litigation cases, provision of legal aid services and advocacy at national and international level.



4.1.1.1 Legal education to community: 6186 people received legal education on women's rights and procedures as a tool to improve ability of women to assert their rights. Women are becoming aware of their rights and have the confidence to asserts their rights in case they are violated.

4.1.1.2 Increased women confidence towards claiming their rights and self-representation in court of law. This progress has been possible through coaching programs and client forum as a safe space whereby women have been encouraging one another on how to stand firm for their rights.

4.1.1.3 Women had access to land and other property got property in terms of houses, farm, land or plot and cash money through inheritance and matrimonial cases. **15** received cash and or property, **13** house/farm through inheritance while **17** through matrimonial cases.

4.1.1.4 A total of **1898** case finalized in favor of our clients and **17** case lost on technicality and lack of merits.

4.2 Lessons Learnt

4.2.1 Awareness raising on women's rights and due procedures, complimented with legal assistance and advocacy for policy and legal framework reforms on women's rights remains a key towards women's legal empowerment and access to justice. There is still a big number of women who need to be made aware of their rights and receives the needed support to overcome social and cultural barriers that undermine their rights.

4.3 Going Forward 2024

Testimonies from clients inspires WLAC and keep on improving and serving community members in advancing women and children rights in Tanzania. Our legal empowerment and access to justice program assisted a total of **2585** new and **5039** ongoing clients (women and children) received legal services through legal aid clinics, hotline services, mobile legal aid and One stop Judicial Centre at Temeke. Additionally, **6186** people received legal education on women's rights and due procedures as a tool to improve ability of women to assert their rights. The impact of our work by community members, a vivid testimony from clients who received our service.

“For quite a long I was struggling to get my rights but I didn't know what to do or where to go until I was advised to go to WLAC”

