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**Amplifying
Women's Voices**”

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 Women's Legal Aid Centre
 @WLAC Tanzania

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR 2024

1.0 ABOUT US

The Women's Legal Aid Center (WLAC) is a non-governmental organization that evolved from the Legal Aid Scheme under Shirika la Uchumi la Wanawake Tanzania (SUWATA), which was originally established as the Legal Aid Scheme for Women. SUWATA was founded in 1989 and officially registered as WLAC in 1994 under the Companies Act, Cap R.E. 2002. WLAC complies with the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Act No. 3 of 2019 and has obtained a registration certificate with **00NGO/R1/00924**.

The founding members of WLAC are professional lawyers who volunteered their services to provide legal assistance to women. The organization's membership includes both individual members and institutional members, specifically paralegals established by WLAC.

WLAC has headquarters in Kinondoni District of Dar es Salaam and has a field office in the Muleba District, Kagera region. Additionally, WLAC has established 23 paralegal organizations dedicated to providing legal assistance to women and children in Tanzania for over 30 years. The organization is proud to be a pioneer in creating paralegal services, Police Gender and Children Desks, and Mobile Legal Aid programs 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 prioritizes safety and human dignity. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards exploitative and abusive behaviors and relationships. The Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy outlines our commitment to preventing and addressing incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as the reporting procedures within WLAC. It emphasizes the importance of reporting any actual or suspected inappropriate behavior related to sexual exploitation, abuse, or misconduct. This is to ensure decisive action ensure decisive action - including investigation of allegations and appropriate disciplinary and/or criminal prosecution- is taken. , which may include investigating allegations and pursuing appropriate disciplinary measures or criminal prosecution is taken.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board of Directors of the Women's Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) is pleased to present the annual report for the year 2024. The report covers three Strategic Plan (SP) (2021-2015) 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 NPA/VAWC, Generation for Equality (GEF) the Africa we want and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This report outlines the situation in the country during 2024, highlighting various incidents and events that have had both positive and negative effects on women and children.

Climate change: The occurrence of Kambangwa Hidaya has caused significant destruction, including damage to infrastructure, homes, trees, and agricultural land. Some roads have been devastated to the point where travel was impossible, particularly the road from Mtwara to Dar es Salaam. Many houses have been destroyed, leaving families homeless. This situation is especially detrimental to women and children, as they often rely on agriculture and local vendors for their livelihoods, both of which have been severely affected. As a community, we must strengthen our response mechanisms to address these natural hazards.

Human rights Violention: Media reports have highlighted an alarming increase in cases of human rights violations, including abduction and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which have resulted in the tragic loss of women's lives. There have also been instances of children being abducted and killed under the guise of witchcraft. Additionally, incidents of abduction by unknown individuals create uncertainty and pose a threat to peace and security within communities. It is essential for community members and the relevant government authorities to collaborate in order to ensure peace and security in the country and to protect and safeguard the rights of all individuals.

Political: In 2024, a Local Government election took place, marking a significant increase in women's participation in the electoral process. From October 11 to 12, 2024, the voter registration exercise was conducted, resulting in a total of 31,282,331 registered voters. Among them, 16,045,559 were women, while 15,236,772 were men. On November 27, 2024, a total of 26,963,182 citizens—equivalent to 86.36% of those qualified to vote—took part in the election. Although Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) won the election with 99.01% of the votes, the number of women elected to local government positions was disappointingly low. This highlights the ongoing need for community awareness and education regarding the importance of women's representation in decision-making roles.

Access to justice: Access to justice is a significant need for many vulnerable women and children in the country. Increased awareness of their rights among community members has encouraged more women to assert their rights in cases of violations. This marks a shift from previous years when many individuals were hesitant to take legal action against a spouse or family member in disputes, particularly in cases of gender-based violence (GBV). In 2024, a total of **1,842 new clients were assisted**, exceeding the organization's annual target by 23%.

The WLAC is pleased to announce a significant achievement: we successfully finalized **379 cases** in favor of our clients. As a result, women have realized their rights in various areas, including the acquisition of land, monetary benefits, properties such as motor vehicles and motorcycles, household items, as well as access to monthly child support.

Additionally, WLAC has been granted observer status under **Reference No. OBS.571** by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). This occurred during the 79th Ordinary Session held from May 14 to June 3, 2024, in a hybrid format in Banjul, Gambia. Holding this position will allow WLAC to enhance our advocacy efforts at the regional level and submit periodic activity reports to the Commission.

3.0 KEY RESULT AREAS: STRATEGIC AIM & EXPECTED RESULTS

STRATEGIC OUTCOME ONE:

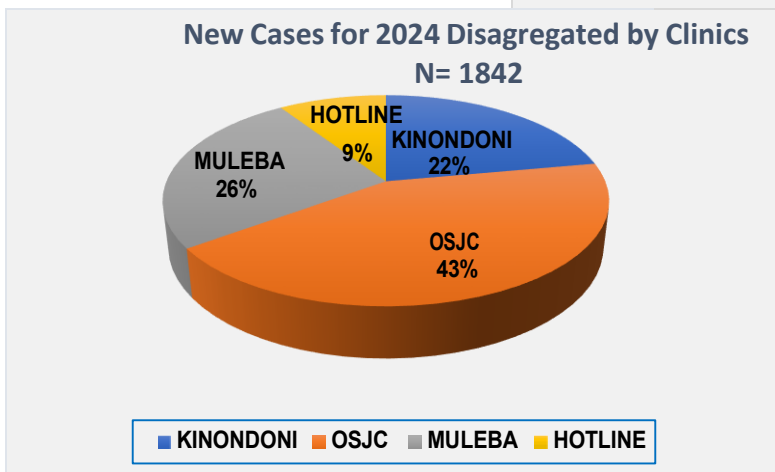
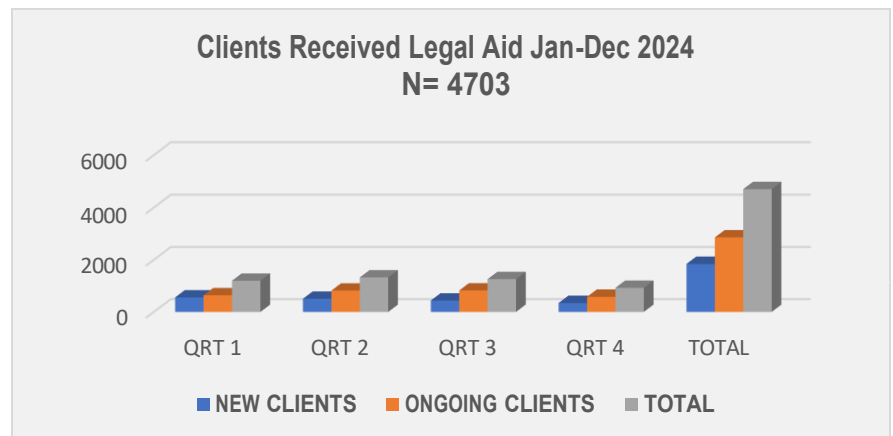
Access to Justice for Women, Children and Refugees is broadened and improved

OUTPUT ONE: *Legal Aid is efficiently offered by WLAC through stationed legal aid clinics, mobile legal aid, hotline, remand home visits*

Legal assistance provided:

WLAC has offered legal aid services to a total number of **4703** (1842 new and 2861 ongoing clients against the target of 1500 new clients hence exceeding the target of new client by 342 which is 23%.

(See Appendixes fig A)

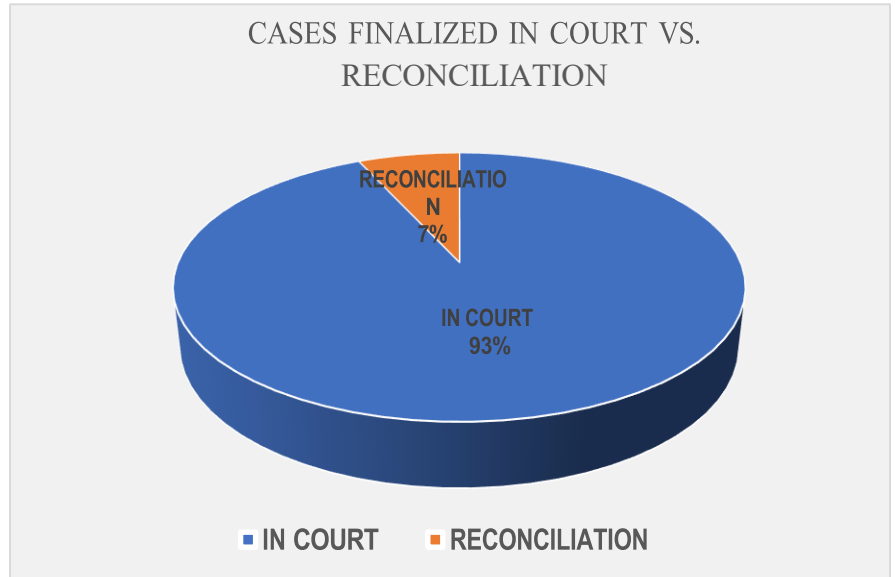


Data source WLAC client database

43% of cases were received at One Stop Judicial Centre (OSJC) Temeke where family cases i.e. Matrimonial, inheritance (probate) and Juvenal cases are heard and determine. The existence of OSJC has been a relief to clients since most of services are availed in one building. This processes has served time, and transport costs for clients.

Cases Finalized in favor of our clients (Won):

Through legal aid services WLAC has assisted women to attain three rights through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and court system for the 2024 a total number of **379 cases were finalized in favor of our clients**. That being the case women has acquired properties in terms of house, plots, motor vehicles, and in monetary and this helps them to improve their livelihood. (See Appendixes fig B)



“My name is S.A (initials) 72 years, a widow and resides in Dar es Salaam. In 2016 I came to WLAC seeking a legal assistance on a land case whereby my land was trespassed by two people who claimed to have purchased it from a person named MH.

The journey was not easy, I almost gave up due time to financial constraints. Sometimes I had to walk due to lack of money for transport.

In November 2024 I successfully executed against one Respondent who paid me 11,500,000/-I have used the money to build a three room house which I am happily living with her grandchildren.



**It Took Me 8
Years to
realize My
Land rights.
Land Case
No. 329/2016**

Without Legal Aid Service: a widow at 67 years of age would have become Homeless.

DB is a 67-year-old widow residing in Rubya Village, Muleba District. She had a probate case where her two brothers denied her right to inherit from their parents' estates. DB and her two children lived with her mother for approximately 30 years after being chased away by her brothers-in-law in 1994.



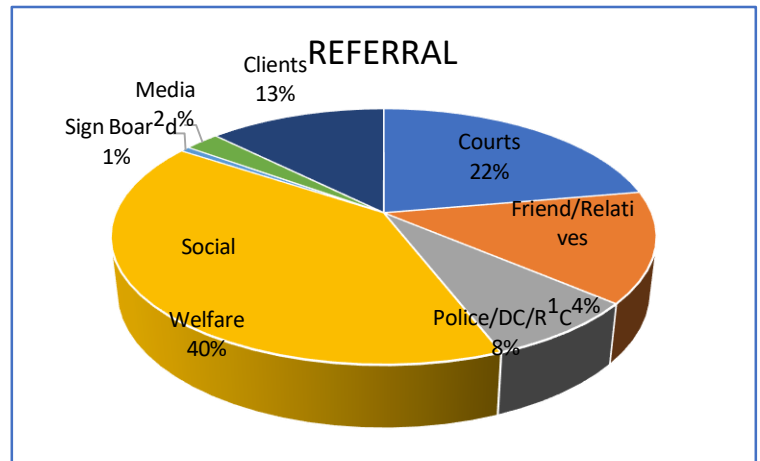
Her parents welcomed her and her children into their home, where she raised her children. After her father passed away in 2000, the clan ruled during the customary distribution of his property that DB and her mother would inherit a house and a plot of land, while her brothers were given their own properties, including plots of land.



Unfortunately, after her mother died in 2022, chaos ensued. Her two brothers began the process of evicting her, claiming inheritance rights to their mother's plot of land. They argued that DB, who had only been taking care of their mother, had no right to own the property. Her elder brother applied for administration of their mother's estate, excluding DB as an heir. Consequently, DB sought legal assistance from WLAC.

WLAC assisted her in court by opposing the distribution of property; the matter was not successful in Primary Court then WLAC assisted her to file an Appeal to the District Court where it was declared that DB is the legal co-owner of the property as she is the surviving co-owner. DB is happily living in the house as a legal owner and has started poultry which helps her to earn income.

Clients' referral Pathway sustained
 WLAC continued referrals from other service providers. **40%** of referrals are from Social Welfare offices on cases of child



Clients Forum organized

In 2022 WLAC established a client's forum which aimed at provide space for women to air their views, peer support and also legal empowerment in general. The Forum has been aThis forum is an essential Platform for women to learn, share and discuss issues which affects them positively or negatively and discuss for solution. WLAC outsourced different people with expertise on entrepreneurship, wellbeing and counselors to speak to women. Client forum has been a hub for women to increase their knowledge on legal matters and became peer supporters of one another.



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

African Commission for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) observer status

WLAC's has expanded its advocacy at regional level through acquiring **observer status under Reference NO.OBS.571** for African Commission for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) which was granted during the 79th Ordinary Session held on 14th May to 03rd June 2024 in hybrid format in Banjul Gambia. This position enables WLAC to submit periodic activity report to the Commission. The initial activity report to commission is due for submission in May 2026.



Training to Caucus of Tanzania Education Network / Mtandao wa Elimu Tanzania (TEN/ MET) on Education Act and Policy

WLAC through the TENMET networked worked towards advocating for child right to education especially on re-entry police and eradication of corporal punishment. Further to that WLAC facilitated training to 25 TEN/MET Members on the rights of child education under the Law of the Child, Education Act and the amended Education policy.

Women Judges and Magistrate international Day

For the year 2024 WLAC has collaborated with different stakeholders on issues of women and children reforms. WLAC participated in commemoration Women Judges and Magistrate international Day With the theme "Judicial stress & gender role" "(Mwanamke katika utoaji haki: Tafakuri ya msongo wa mawazo na majukumu ya kijinsia)".



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

Tanzania is not yet scheduled for the 2024 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: A well informed community that takes action against violation of women, children and refugees rights

Sensitized community on civic and socio-economic rights

3218 community members i.e. women, men, and people with disabilities in 9 villages at Ngenge and Rushwa Wards in Muleba district were reached through village meetings sessions on women land and property rights focusing on how to safeguard their land rights through joint ownership



Case Study on Community Awareness sessions in Muleba

Community awareness through village meetings has led to positive changes in mindset, as family members have begun including women on land titles. For example, WLAC assisted 7 Families in changing their land titles to include women as co-owners. This shift in mindset is a significant step toward advancing women's land rights, as it breaks down cultural barriers that once prevented women from owning land.

Students Forums

4319 students were reached through campaigns on women and girls' land rights in 10 schools i.e. 5 schools in Dar es Salaam and 5 schools in Muleba. Students were curious to know their rights and the advantages of land ownership.



"A child's voice is powerful: believe it, protect it, and act on it."



13,450 IEC materials, i.e. posters and self-help kits on land, were printed and distributed to community members through meetings and awareness sessions. These publications were written in user-friendly language to help raise awareness and provide a useful reference for community members.



AMPLIFYING WOMEN'S VOICE

"A woman's voice on land rights echoes through her family, her community, and her country."



Media and social media:

WLAC produced a documentary to showcase success stories WLAC's interventions. The documentary was shared and disseminated through social media platforms for wider reach and engagement. On Instagram the video reached 41,000 views and 347 likes. It also has a wider interaction and referred 97 people to visit the WLAC profile.



Civic education during Local Government I election.

WLAC applied for the permit to provided civic education for the upcoming Local Government I election. The application was granted and WLAC will utilize the opportunity to sensitize and advocate for women to participate and contest to take part in decision making authorities.

WLAC has participated initial sessions organized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for orientations conducted to Civil society organizations



Child safeguarding through strengthening referral pathway.

WLAC in collaboration with schools through Making African Church Safe (MACS) programme held joint meeting with stakeholders on child protection: to six catholic schools. (Michael Archangel, Aquinas, Edmund rice, Kilasara, Marie Correson, walimu Nyerere pre and primary school (Butiama) and Fransalian, The meeting aimed at strengthening the utilization of referral pathway among service providers for the purpose of safeguarding children rights in the country.



STRATEGIC AIM THREE:
Institution sustainability and diversification

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

Governance:

- 4 Board meetings** were conducted for the year ar 2024 and Board of Directors provided inputs and decisions which contributed to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization performance.
- Annual General meeting** was held on 12th July 2024 where members received and approve annual report and audited report for year 2023, and appointed the auditor for year 2024

Staff Affairs:

Staff retention and Turnover:

Staff Resignation: Two staff resigned namely Ms Grace Daffa who was the Legal Aid Manager resigned March 2024 and Ms. Abia Richard who was a Legal Officer, Ms Abia resigned from January 2024. Ms. Abia Joined Danish Refugee Council (DRC) while Ms. Daffa Joined Independent Grievance Mechanism (IGM) in Shinyanga Region. During the exit interview it was revealed that the reasons for resignation is for green pasture and change of working environment

Staff Capacity Building:
Reflection and planning and Team building

WLAC held a reflection session and planning for the year 2025 which was followed by a selfcare exercise where WLAC staff participated in hiking and team building exercise at Magoroto Forest Tanga.



4.0 PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR 2024.

- 4703** (1842 new and 2861 ongoing clients) women and children accessed justice through legal assistance.
- 379 cases were finalized** in favor of our clients.
- Increased legal education to youth on land rights and VAC: 4319 students were reached through campaigns on women and girls' land rights in 10 schools i.e. 5 schools in Dar es Salaam and 5 schools.
- Increased community knowledge on legal and human rights specifically land rights through village meetings, IEC materials, media and social media. Over 5M people were reached.
- WLAC was granted **observer status under Reference NO.OBS.571** for African Commission for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR).

5.0 CONCLUSION

WLAC is committed to promoting gender equality and contributing to national strategies that ensure women have equal rights and opportunities in political and socio-economic spheres. We view legal empowerment as a vital tool for achieving justice and strengthening the rule of law. To make real progress in these areas, we must acknowledge the crucial role that legal empowerment plays in combating injustice and enhancing the participation and inclusion of women in decision-making processes. By equipping ordinary people with the knowledge and tools to effectively engage with institutions, we can foster a more just and equitable society.