

ANNUAL REPORT



WOMEN'S
LEGAL
CENTRE



2022

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01

ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

WHO WE ARE

The Women's Legal Centre (WLC) is a prominent African feminist legal organisation committed to advancing women's rights and equality. Through a comprehensive approach that encompasses litigation, advocacy, education, legal advice, research, and training, the WLC actively works towards empowering women and challenging gender-based injustices. With a dedicated team of attorneys, candidate attorneys, paralegals, legal advisors, and support staff, the WLC specialises in feminist litigation, employing strategic legal interventions to bring about systemic change. While based in Cape Town, the WLC's impact extends across national, regional, and international levels, fostering collaboration and driving progress in the pursuit of equality for women.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK IN JUST AND FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS

Our focus lies in advocating for the recognition and protection of labour rights, with a special emphasis on women who work in precarious conditions, such as domestic workers, migrant workers, farm workers and sex workers.

Despite existing labour laws in South Africa, women continue to face barriers with regards to accessing employment and securing decent working conditions, making our mission all the more crucial.



WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY

We believe that women should have independent and equal access to land without facing the risk of losing their rights at the time of the dissolution of their relationship with their partner. Our mission is to ensure that women are provided with secure tenure, economic freedom, and a safe, accessible, and healthy place to call home. Unfortunately, women often face significant barriers in obtaining legal ownership and tenure rights. We address these challenges by taking on cases that seek to extend land ownership and tenure security to women in their own right. Additionally, we strive to prevent loss of tenure during critical life transitions such as divorce or separation, or death of a partner or spouse.





EQUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

We are dedicated to advancing and recognising women's independent rights within relationships. We also believe that women should have equal access to resources and rights both during the course of a relationship and in the event of its dissolution.

Our mission is clear: to advocate for fair access, equal rights, and lasting empowerment for women in all stages of their relationships.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

We understand that navigating the healthcare system can be daunting for women, hindering their ability to make autonomous choices about their physical and mental well-being. Furthermore, there is a lack of accountability mechanisms within the state healthcare system.

We take on cases that champion women's rights to make reproductive choices and advocate for non-coercive, violence-free, and discrimination-free access to reproductive healthcare.



WOMEN'S RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM VIOLENCE

At the WLC, we stand firm in our commitment to address violence against women through litigation, law reform, advocacy, protection, and access to justice.

In South Africa, women face grave violations of their rights to safety, dignity and privacy which impacts negatively on women and society at large. We take action to combat these infringements, focussing on improving access to state protection from violence, particularly sexual and domestic violence, for women and (girl) children.

Our goal is to establish an accessible justice system that acknowledges and supports the unique needs of women affected by violence. We strive for optimal service and protection provided by both the state and private entities, aiming to reduce secondary victimisation.

HOW WE WORK

STRATEGIC LITIGATION

The WLC is a public interest law centre, placing strategic litigation at the core of our work. However, we recognise that litigation alone is insufficient.

STRATEGIC ADVOCACY

Therefore, we complement it with strategic advocacy, engaging stakeholders such as government departments and parliament to drive policy development, legislative reform, and effective implementation.

PARTNERS

To achieve substantive and systematic social change for women, we partner with civil society organisations.

Together, we utilise strategic litigation and advocacy, ensuring that our efforts yield tangible results.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In addition, we conduct education and training initiatives within communities and women's rights organisations. By enhancing their capacity and skills, we strive to empower them to address the issues that affect them and the communities they serve.

LEGAL ADVICE

To provide immediate support, the WLC operates a Legal Advice Unit. Led by a dedicated attorney and supported by two paralegals, we offer daily legal advice on matters related to our focus areas.

WHAT MAKES US LEADERS IN THE FIELD

IGNITING CHANGE WHILE EMPOWERING WOMEN

For over two decades, the WLC has fearlessly stood as the only public interest law centre entirely dedicated to advancing women's rights in South Africa. Our remarkable journey is a testament to our unwavering determination and resilience, achieving what others deemed impossible.

In a legal domain often overlooked, the WLC is home to a dynamic team of women lawyers who are subject matter experts willing to share their knowledge and co-create spaces.

We boldly embrace a feminist intersectional ideology, recognising the deep-rooted connections between various forms of discrimination and oppression. We proudly champion the rights of women, fighting against injustice on every front.

At the heart of our mission lies the genuine connection to women's lived realities and experiences of discrimination in our country. It is their experiences that fuel our passion

and drive us to push boundaries, reshape narratives, and challenge the status quo.

We are determined to break barriers and pave the way for lasting social change. In our pursuit of justice, we embrace creativity, viewing the law as a canvas for transformation. Unlike traditional lawyers, we revel in the freedom to think outside the box, equipped with the support and encouragement to defy conventions.

As the lone voice in the public interest law sector, we tackle discrimination head-on, both externally and within our own working environment. We acknowledge the immense challenges, but we rise above them, emboldened with an unwavering spirit and an unyielding belief in a future where women's rights are truly honoured.

Together, with our clients, supporters, partners, and courageous women across the nation, we continue to forge a path towards a more equal and just society.

ATTORNEY PROFILE

CHARLENE MAY



“I ground myself each morning, taking a deep breath, and following where my energy leads.”

Born impatiently at home in Elsiesriver, on the Cape Flats in Cape Town, my journey reflects my eagerness from the outset. I embraced the promise of democracy while studying at Elsiesriver Senior Secondary and the University of the Western Cape for my LLB during the dawn of our Constitution. Early exposure at the WLC as a paralegal ignited my passion for strategic litigation.

After practical training at UCT, I served as a Candidate Attorney with the Legal Resources Centre, focusing on land law and non-profit organisations. Transitioning, I pioneered the equality

focus area. In 2017, I joined the WLC, encompassing all focus areas to fuel my restless spirit and diverse interests.

Notably, I drove the WLC v The President case, securing Muslim marriage recognition in South Africa, affirming rights to freedom of religion and equality. The Mhlangu case underscored domestic workers' rights to occupational health and safety, undoing historical wrongs.

As an ESCR Net member, I steer the Women's Working Group, amplifying women's voices in global rights discussions. Additionally, I chair

Sisonke, advocating for Sex Worker decriminalisation in South Africa.

Personally, I don't really have hobbies – I am too impatient and restless to apply myself to anything with dedication to do it well.. I wish I was more creative and had the patience to apply myself. In winter I have been known to knit a square or even a full scarf, and in summer I live in the water with my kids, which provides the perfect distraction for just the right amount of time. No motivational quotes for me – I ground myself each morning, taking a deep breath, and following where my energy leads.

02 THE DRIVING FORCE THAT KEEPS US COMMITTED

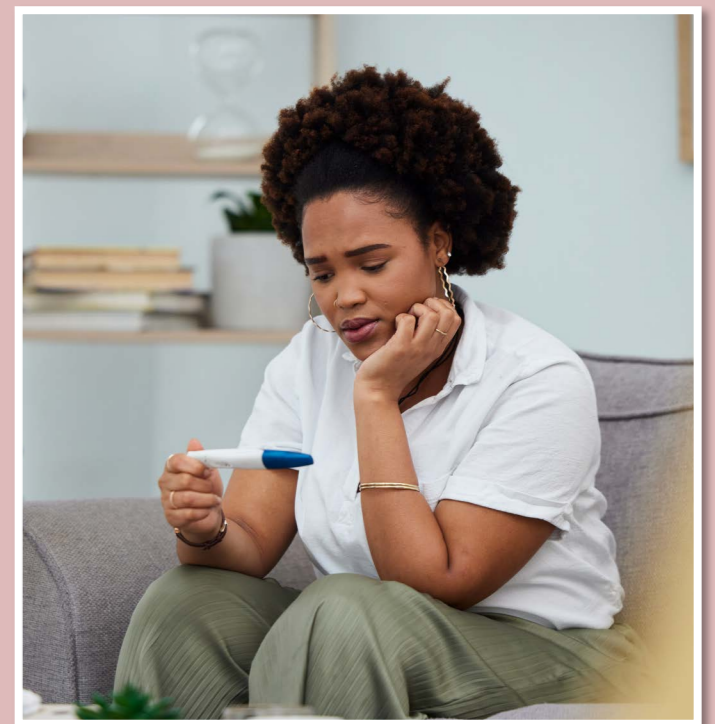
DEFYING A DYSTOPIAN REALITY: COURT VICTORY FOR WOMEN CHOOSING ADOPTION OVER FORCED MOTHERHOOD

TT/BM v MINISTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHERS

UNFOLDING COERCION AND VIOLATION OF RIGHTS

In a world resembling the dystopian story of “The Handmaid’s Tale,” where women are stripped of their bodily autonomy, two young women in Gauteng faced a similar reality. They made an earnest decision not to become mothers following the births of their children, but the Department of Social Development denied their choice to place their children up for adoption. Against their wishes, the Department invoked the National Adoption Guidelines and

hindered the adoption process. The women’s rights to privacy and dignity were ignored by the Department as the young women’s parents were informed by the Department’s social workers of the women’s pregnancies and adoption plans without their consent. One client was pressurised by her parents to change her mind about the adoption, while our second client’s mother considered fostering the child despite the client’s adamant belief that it was not in the child’s best interest to do so.



FRIVOLOUS INVESTIGATIONS AND FRUSTRATIONS

To compound matters, the Department launched baseless investigations into both the adoption process and the facilitating adoption agency, causing unnecessary delays and mounting frustrations. The Department and social workers attempted to justify their actions by claiming compliance with the Practice Guidelines on National Adoption.

INTERVENTION AND COURT PROCEEDINGS

Recognising the injustice faced by the young women, the WLC intervened on their behalf to safeguard their rights and took the case to court in December 2020. The WLC sought not only to review the Department’s conduct but also to challenge the Practice Guidelines on National Adoption. We argued that the policy violated not only our clients’ rights but also the rights of any woman seeking to lawfully place her child up for adoption. The guidelines disregarded reproductive health rights, enforced motherhood, ignored proper consent, and perpetuated stereotypes that questioned the integrity of their decisions. Privacy, dignity, and overall well-being were all at stake.

THE TRIUMPHANT VERDICT

On November 19, 2022, a historic moment arrived when the Gauteng High Court ruled in favour of the WLC and their clients, delivering a powerful verdict. The court recognized and protected the right to privacy for the clients, their minor

children, and prospective adoptive parents. It prohibited the Department from separating the children from their prospective adoptive parents. The Practice Guidelines on National Adoption were declared inconsistent with the Constitution and the Children’s Act, rendering them invalid. The court further condemned the Department’s conduct as a breach of the women’s rights to dignity, bodily and psychological integrity, decision-making regarding reproduction, and privacy. The rights of the minor children were also acknowledged, highlighting the Department’s failure to act in their best interest. Individual social workers involved in the case faced potential disciplinary action, and the judgement would be shared with relevant magistrates to raise awareness of the unlawful conduct.

A CLEAR MESSAGE OF EMPOWERMENT

This monumental judgement emphasised the utmost importance of upholding women’s rights to bodily autonomy and decision-making regarding their reproductive health. It acknowledged the vital role adoption plays in society and reinforced the rights of women to choose not to be mothers. The state was reminded of its duty to eliminate barriers and prevent discrimination against women who opt for the adoption process. In a time when women’s reproductive health rights are increasingly threatened, this victorious judgement provided much-needed clarity and guidance to ensure the respect, protection, and promotion of these fundamental rights.

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS:
CLIENT TESTIMONIES THAT SPEAK
TO THE HEART OF OUR MISSION**



Thank you message from a client after a judge ruled in her favour: “Good morning AJ, I hope you’re still basking in that victory. You were amazing yesterday in court and we are proud of you and sincerely grateful!”

“Dear Chriscy and Andrea-Joy, I can never thank you enough for all the assistance you have provided through out, i felt your presence in all the consultations and briefings we had though you are far. I am so much satisfied with yesterday’s presentation and would not take away anything from it.”

“Dear Senamile, I hope you are well and warm

today. I wish to thank you once again for your work and efforts in representing me. You did amazing izolo!”

Twitter Comment: “I am their client and they’ve carried me with the utmost dignity for over two years through different cases that came about as a result of my rape.”

“Thank you so much Bronwyn. I highly doubt I would have made it this far without your support and the support of the WLC. I truly stand on the shoulders of giants.”

“Hi Bronwyn, Wonderful, thank you so much, exciting time, thank you so much for all the hard work with this application, he didn’t realise what he was letting himself in for, coming after me.... Lol I have my sister army to defend me.”

“Thank you for the update. I have read through your submissions and the decision and I am very pleased with the positive outcome. I am

also deeply moved by the contents of your submissions and with the benefit of hindsight, I’m glad we pushed the points in limine. I owe you many thanks.”

“It’s great to hear some good news regarding my case. Thank you so much! I felt very looked over during my initial experience with xxx and was never even updated about Z’s appearances before the tribunal etc. So I’m relieved to know that I’ll have someone looking out for me this time around.”

“Woohoo! This is such a relief! Thank you for sending this through, and I really appreciate the WLCs help in getting me to this stage.”



03

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIRPERSON

THULISILE MLHUNGU

It is with immense pride and a sense of purpose that I address you as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Women's Legal Centre (WLC) in our annual report for the year 2022. The WLC, founded in 1999, is an African feminist public interest law centre, and has always been committed to achieving substantive equality for women in all aspects of their lives. It is a privilege to lead this organisation during a period of transformation and impactful growth.

In 2016, we witnessed a pivotal change in leadership that reshaped the WLC into the dynamic and visionary organisation that it is today. We embarked on a journey that redefined our vision, mission, and staff complement and we are now entering the 7th year of implementing our new organisational direction. Our dedicated team of women lawyers, who are not only experts in the legal field but also passionate activists in the communities they serve, has been at the forefront of driving our mission forward.

I am honoured to lead a board of 9 strong and diverse

trustees, each bringing their unique expertise to the table. Our board members include academics, lawyers, advocates, community activists, feminist scholars, finance practitioners, and human and social justice practitioners. Together, we provide strategic guidance to achieve the ambitious goals we set out in 2021.

The year 2022 was marked by significant challenges, including the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a shifting global landscape. However, our dedicated staff delved deeper into our strategic focus areas, expanding our reach both regionally and globally. We are not only building an African feminist legal centre that responds to the evolving needs of our clients but also contributing to a global dialogue on women's rights and gender equality.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year, we cannot overlook the critical role that our supporters, partners, and donors play in our journey. Your unwavering commitment to our cause fuels our determination to



make a difference in the lives of women and marginalised communities.

In the midst of uncertainty and change, our commitment remains resolute. We are proud of our past achievements, and we are even more determined to work towards creating a world that is equitable, dignified, and just for all. Together with our staff, clients, stakeholders, and donors, we will continue to shape the feminist reality that our society so desperately needs.

Thank you for your trust, your support, and your partnership on this transformative journey. With your continued support, we look forward to making an even greater impact in the years to come.

With gratitude and determination.

Thulisile Mhlungu

Chairperson of the Women's Legal Centre

04

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

SEEHAAM SAMAAI

As we reflect on the year 2022, it becomes clear that we continued to operate in a world marked by significant challenges, including the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, we at the WLC remained steadfast in our commitment to justice, equality, and the empowerment of women.

2022 was a defining moment as we began to navigate the complexities of a post-COVID world. This landscape was further shaped by a broader economic downturn, the feminisation of casualisation of employment, and a concerning pushback on bodily rights, especially witnessed in the USA. The closing of spaces for women's voices and the challenges women faced in accessing justice remained significant concerns.

In the face of these challenges, the WLC persevered in our mission to create safe spaces for women and ensure that women's voices were not only heard but also heeded. One of our significant achievements was instituting litigation in the Caroline Peters case against the Minister of

Justice. This case challenges the constitutionality of the legal provision criminalising individuals who name a sexual offender before they plead, a critical issue in the fight against sexual violence.

Another landmark victory for us in 2022 was the Muslim personal law case, the WLC vs. the President of South Africa, which reached the Constitutional Court. This ruling recognised Muslim marriages as legally valid and declared certain sections of existing legislation unconstitutional. The Court emphasised that the non-recognition of Muslim marriages infringed on various human rights, including the right to equality, dignity, and access to justice for women in Muslim marriages.

Our commitment to igniting change while empowering women remained at the forefront of our work. We recognised that our clients often lead intersecting lives and must navigate systems that were not designed with their needs in mind. To address this, we adopted a holistic approach, providing a "basket of care" for our



clients.

Throughout the year, we continued to advocate for policy and legislative reforms in areas such as violence against women, sex work, sexual health, reproductive rights, and hate crimes. We also took steps to integrate human rights defender work into our activities, collaborating with organisations like the Cape Flats Women's Movement, activists, and human rights defenders to disseminate information and effect change.

Our partnerships with national networks, including Public Interest Legal Organisations, the South African Women Lawyers Association, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, the Black Lawyers Association, the Legal Practice Council, and the Law Society of South Africa, were instrumental in advancing our shared goals. We remain committed to working together for a more transformative legal profession.

In the realm of gender transformation, we celebrated Lady Justice Mandisa Maya's appointment as Deputy Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court as she stepped down as President of the Supreme Court of Appeal. Her journey serves as a reminder of the importance of ensuring gender diversity across

all sections of the legal profession and the judiciary.

On a governance level, in accordance with the principles of the Legal Practice Council, WLC proudly boasts a diverse board comprised of remarkable women who are leaders in their respective fields. Together, we are working toward a more

equitable world for women and a more just society for all.

As we move forward into an uncertain future, we remain resolute in our mission to create a feminist reality—a world that is equitable, dignified, and just for all. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, clients, stakeholders, and donors for

their unwavering support in our ongoing journey for justice.

With gratitude and determination,

Seehaam Samaai

Director of the Women's Legal Centre

05 OUR TEAM

TRANSFORMING LIVES, TRANSFORMING OURSELVES

23 YEARS OF CELEBRATING THE EVOLUTION OF THE WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE: 1999 - 2022

Over the past 23 years, the WLC has undergone a remarkable journey, both in its people composition and its impact on the lives of the women we serve. Founded in 1999, the centre began with a vision to advocate for women's rights and champion gender equality. Still going strong, our diverse team, led by Seehaam Samaai, stands as a testament to how committed we remain to our mission.

From its humble beginnings, the WLC has grown into an organisation with majority of staff being women of colour, reflecting the rich diversity

of our nation and the world in which we live. Our team, consisting of legal experts and dedicated support staff, works passionately to provide essential legal guidance and support to women facing various challenges.

This transformation goes beyond our organisation; it is emblematic of the progress our country has made in striving for equality and justice for all. As our nation evolves, so does the WLC, always adapting to the changing needs and challenges of women in South Africa.

MEET OUR TEAM



SEEHAAM SAMAAI: *Director*
6 years at WLC

LEGAL TEAM



BRONWYN PITHEY:
Advocate
6 years at WLC



AMANDA STEMELE:
Advocate
1 year at WLC



CHARLENE MAY:
Attorney
5 years at WLC



CHRISCY BLOUWS:
Attorney
4 years at WLC



KHULISO MANAGA:
Attorney
2 years at WLC



KHENSANI MOTILENI:
Attorney
6 months at WLC



SENAMILE MADLALA:
Candidate Attorney
1 year at WLC



ANDREA-JOY JANTJIES:
Candidate Attorney
1 year at WLC



BUSIWE NKOLOZA:
Legal Advisor
7 years at WLC



SHEILA MATROOS:
Legal Advisor
6 years at WLC



ARETHA LOUW:
Litigation Secretary
14 years at WLC

SUPPORT TEAM



ESTELLE MALGAS:
Office Assistant
14 years at WLC



NWABISA NTSHIBELO:
Reception
14 years at WLC



ANNETTE BROOKS:
Bookkeeper
5 years at WLC



RUTH DAVIS:
Office Administrator
6 years at WLC

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



THULISILE MHLUNGU:
Board Chairperson



PUMLA DINEO GGOLA



BUHLE LEKOKOTLA



ANIEKAH GAMIET



SIPHOKAZI MTHATHI



DEIRDRE SMYTHE



REBECCA HLABATAU



NOXOLO SILEVU



JAMEELAH OMAR

23 YEARS OF ADVANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

<p>1999</p> <p>THE WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE OPENS ITS DOORS</p>	<p>2002</p> <p>CHALLENGING THE CRIMINALISATION OF SEX WORK S v Jordan and Others</p>
<p>2003</p> <p>RIGHTS OF MINORS TO ACCESS ABORTION WITHOUT PARENTAL CONSENT Christian Lawyers Association v Minister of Health and Others</p>	<p>2005</p> <p>CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE TO THE RULE OF MALE PRIMOGENITURE & INHERITANCE RIGHTS OF GIRLS AND ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN UNDER CUSTOMARY LAW. Bhe and Others v Magistrate, Khayelitsha, and Others</p> <p>CIVIL PRESCRIPTION IN SEXUAL OFFENCES CASES DAMAGES CLAIMS ONLY COMMENCES WHEN THE VICTIM ACQUIRES MEANINGFUL KNOWLEDGE OF THE WRONG SUFFERED. Van Zijl v Hoogenhout</p>
<p>2007</p> <p>INHERITANCE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN MUSLIM MARRIAGES Daniels v Campbell and Others</p>	
<p>2008</p> <p>RIGHTS TO PROPERTY IN CUSTOMARY MARRIAGES Gumede v The President of the Republic of South Africa and Others</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF SEX WORKERS Kylie v the CCMA Others</p>
<p>2016</p> <p>RIGHT TO HOUSING EQUALITY Klaase and Another v Van der Merwe and Others</p>	<p>2018</p> <p>CRIMINAL PROSECUTION PRESCRIPTION PERIODS FOR SEXUAL OFFENCES Levenstein and Others v Frankel and Others</p>
<p>2022</p> <p>MUSLIM WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO EQUAL PROTECTION IN MARRIAGE The WLC v The President and Others</p>	

06

IMPACT LITIGATION

VICTORY FOR MUSLIM WOMEN AS CONSTITUTIONAL COURT JUDGEMENT RECOGNISES THEIR RIGHT TO EQUAL PROTECTION IN MARRIAGE

THE WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE v THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS

INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH:

During the apartheid era in South Africa, the state used a distorted version of Christianity to validate its oppressive policies and exclude certain identities, including Muslims. As a result, Muslim marriages were not recognised or protected by the legislative framework. Two decades into democracy, there are still no legal safeguards for those married according to Muslim religious rites. This lack of recognition has significant consequences for Muslim women's rights.

They face challenges such as:

- Equal access to divorce as their male partners.
- Limited access to maintenance orders beyond a brief period of iddah.
- Unequal division of marital property upon divorce.



These women bear the burden of social vulnerability and economic disadvantage within their marriages, with limited legal remedies available to them.

IMPACT:

After a seven-year legal battle, the Constitutional Court recognised this vulnerability in June 2022. In the case of the WLC Trust v The President and Others, which was launched in December 2014, the Constitutional Court finally handed down a judgement to protect the rights of Muslim women. This ruling marks an important step towards achieving equality and justice for those affected by legally unrecognised Muslim marriages. The Constitutional Court also acknowledged the discrimination faced by Muslim women based on their gender and religious beliefs. These women, who marry according to their religion, have been denied access to the same relief and remedies available to women married under the Marriages Act or the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act. The Court highlighted the vulnerability of Muslim women within their religious communities and families, recognising the unequal power dynamics that may exist during marriage negotiations. This is especially significant in a country like South Africa, where patriarchal norms and stereotypes persist, shaping women's roles in the home and society.

The Court ordered that the Marriage Act and Divorce Act are inconsistent with constitutional rights as they fail to recognise Muslim marriages. Similarly, certain sections of the Divorce Act violate the rights of children born from Muslim marriages. The common law definition of marriage, excluding polygamous and Muslim marriages, were declared invalid. The Court suspended the declarations of invalidity for 24 months, giving the government time to remedy these violations.

DURING THIS INTERIM PERIOD:

- Existing Muslim marriages can be dissolved according to the Divorce Act.
- Muslim marriages will be treated as marriages out of community of property under the Divorce Act, except in cases of agreement or living arrangements to the contrary.
- Division of assets will be done justly, regardless of when the marriage was concluded.
- For husbands in polygamous Muslim marriages, relevant factors and agreements will be considered.

The state must pass new legislation or amend existing laws within 24 months (June 2024) to recognise Muslim marriages as valid and regulate the consequences of the dissolution thereof. The WLC is actively working to ensure this legislative framework provides equal recognition and protection for Muslim women.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER, PLEASE FOLLOW THIS LINK



ADDRESSING THE RIGHT TO PUBLICLY NAME PERPETRATORS



DS v AA

CASE SUMMARY:

In the case of DS v AA, a woman was raped by her ex-boyfriend in 2015. Seeking healing, support, and to protect others, she shared her experience in a closed social media group where participants were assured their posts/information would remain confidential and not shared on public social media platforms. But her posts were spread without her consent, leading her ex-boyfriend to obtaining a protection order against her in the Magistrate's Court claiming his reputation has been harmed.

IMPACT:

The WLC has been working tirelessly to ensure that women can exercise their freedom of expression without constraints. In March 2022, the Western Cape High Court on appeal recognised the survivor's right to speak freely about her experience and overturned the protection order. They

acknowledged that her aim was to be heard, seek healing, and protect others from similar harm. The court emphasised that negative inferences should not be drawn when a survivor does not press criminal charges, as the secrecy, fear, and shame surrounding sexual exploitation often hinders reporting to the police.

The ruling rejected the notion that survivors should remain silent and be cautious about sharing their experiences.

Crucially, the court affirmed that the survivor's story was valid, despite the absence of a criminal conviction. This decision recognised the challenges women face in reporting sexual violence and highlighted that the lack of conviction does not diminish the truth of the act.

If you or anyone you know needs counselling or support, reach out to Rape Crisis on this number: 021 447 9762

PETERS v THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AND ANOTHER

CASE SUMMARY:

Ms. Caroline Peters, a dedicated community-based activist in the fight against violence against women, is currently facing criminal charges.

Her crime? She posted on her social media pages about a rape victim she was supporting during a court hearing, sharing the accused's name and rape charges against him before he had entered a plea.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE CURRENT LAW:

The law protects the identity of those accused of sexual offences until they enter a plea. This silences activists, complainants, victims and individuals from publishing the name and details of perpetrators accused of a sexual offence for the period of time between when they appear in court and when they plead to the charge/s. The current law is an unjustifiable limitation on the right to freedom of expression and has the additional effect of potentially hindering the identification of those responsible for violence against women, making it harder for victims to seek justice.

IMPACT SOUGHT:

Ms. Peters enlisted the WLC to challenge the relevant provisions in the Criminal Procedure Act. Our goal is to declare these provisions unconstitutional and



invalid, arguing that that they are irrational and infringe upon the rights to freedom of expression and equality. This case is brought against the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services as the custodian of the legislation.

By challenging these provisions, the WLC aims to protect complainants', victims' and activists' rights to speak out and support victims without fear of criminal charges, and assist in bringing

those perpetrators to justice.

At this stage the National Prosecuting Authority has not made a decision whether it will proceed with a prosecution against Ms. Peters. The outcome of this charge could have significant implications for those advocating for justice and accountability in cases of violence against women.

A VICTORY FOR WOMEN'S PROPERTY RIGHTS: COURT RULES HOUSING POLICY UNCONSTITUTIONAL FOR EXCLUDING WOMEN

ABDULLAH AND WLC v THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN

CASE SUMMARY:

In the early 1990's, Mrs Abdullah applied for housing for her family through the City of Cape Town's housing allocation policy. However, this policy excluded all women as beneficiaries, disregarding their contributions as breadwinners. Women like Mrs Abdullah, despite working and ensuring their families have access to housing, were dismissed and denied the right to apply for housing under the policy. As a result, women were unable to sign agreements with the City for housing units, and their personal details were not recorded in the city's database or billing system. Consequently, when housing unit transfers occurred, properties were solely transferred to male beneficiaries, leaving women without access to housing to which they had jointly contributed. The implementation of this policy also made women vulnerable to eviction as they had no proof of co-ownership.

INTERSECTIONAL LENS:

In 2020, Mrs Abdullah took her case to the Equality Court, seeking justice and the legal recourse to evict occupiers her ex-husband had placed in the house without her consent. The WLC Trust intervened as co-applicants, arguing that the policy was unconstitutional and discriminatory. We urged the court to declare the policy unconstitutional and to prohibit the City of Cape Town from continuing to implement it. The WLC Trust presented evidence that the policy violated women's constitutional rights by excluding them from official documentation related to the property. This lack of recognition prevented women from defending their rights of ownership and occupation when challenged. Mrs Abdullah's case represented thousands of women who believed they were co-beneficiaries under the policy.

IMPACT:

In September 2022, the Equality Court delivered a significant judgement. It declared the policy inconsistent with the Constitution, recognising its discriminatory nature towards women. The court also found that the agreements entered into under the policy went against public morals and values by perpetuating discrimination. The City of Cape Town was ordered to ensure that both spouses are recorded as co-



owners when transfers become due for houses allocated under the policy.

This ruling marked a triumph for women's property rights, challenging discrimination and affirming their equal ownership in housing. It brought justice to Mrs Abdullah and set an important precedent for women's rights and equality in housing policies.

The City of Cape Town has a Housing Needs Database that shows around 52,249 beneficiaries who were allocated housing until March 31, 1998. However, the information in this database doesn't include details about the beneficiaries' marriages or the type of housing they were allocated. This creates a gap in important information, making it difficult for the City to identify the women affected by the policy. If you believe you were a beneficiary of housing under this policy, it is crucial to verify your position and ensure the City of Cape Town has correct information recorded.

ATTORNEY PROFILE

BRONWYN PITHEY



“Outside my advocacy, you’ll find me in the mountains, trail running with my beloved border collie, or sharing cherished moments with loved ones around a cozy fire or kitchen table”

Growing up in Gauteng’s Vaal Triangle near Sharpeville, I was deeply moved by the social injustices of the 1970s through my mother’s medical work. This fueled my path to become a lawyer and social justice advocate.

My journey led me to the University of Cape Town, where I obtained a BA LLB and later an LLM in Criminal Justice. Engaging in student politics, I chaired the Law Students Council and I provided pro bono legal services at the UCT Law Clinic.

After completing my articles and becoming a qualified attorney, I soon realised that conventional legal practice wasn’t my true calling.

In 1994, I joined Rape Crisis Cape Town. There, I initiated the court support program for complainants in sexual offences cases, a program that has grown over the years.

In 2000 I joined the National Prosecuting Authority where I oversaw sexual offences, domestic violence, and child justice in the Western Cape, and contributed to the expansion of Sexual Offences Courts and Thuthuzela Care Centres nationally. I also served on the South African Law Reform Commission on the redrafting of sexual offences legislation.

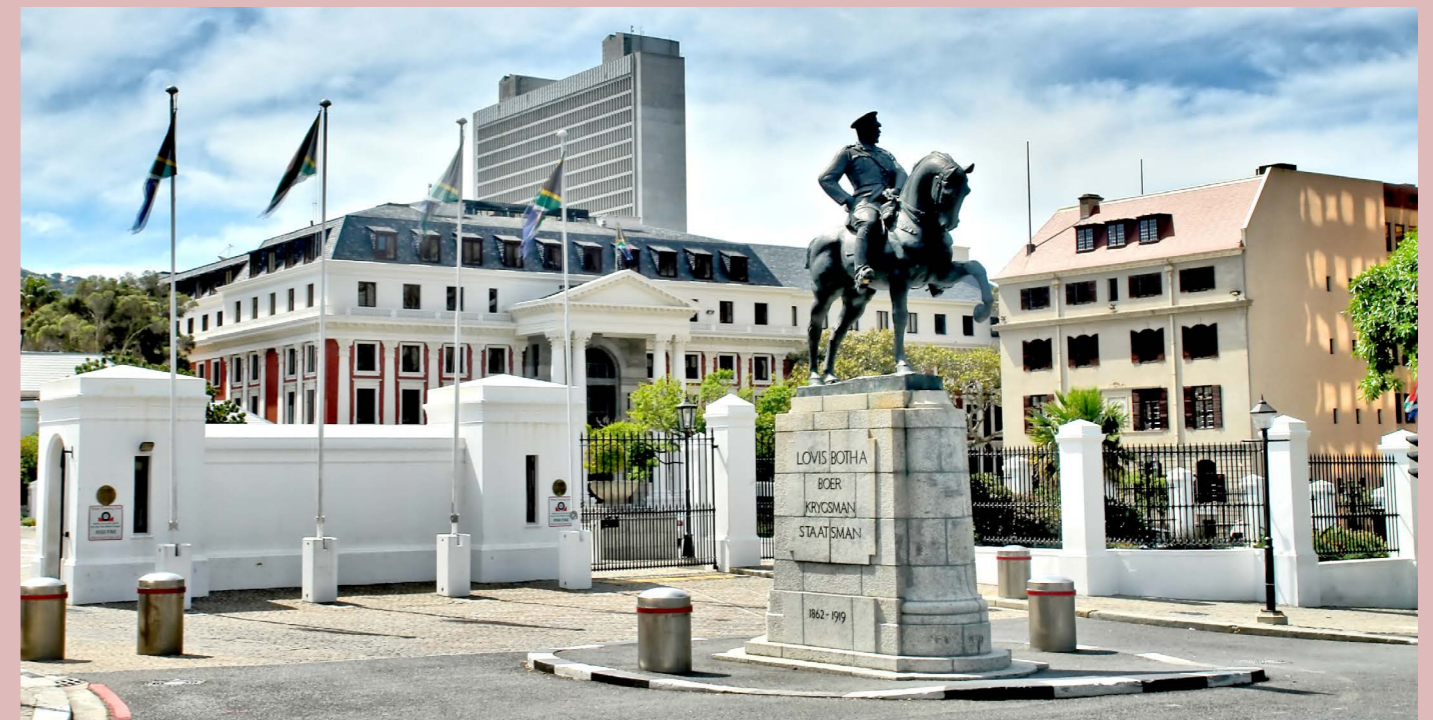
In 2016, I joined WLC as the programme lead for the Right to be Free from

Violence. I remain active in global networks combating violence against women, including the International Feminist Legal Network, and the Gender Responsive Research and Advocacy through CEDAW.

I co-edit the Commentary on the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 for JUTA.

Outside my advocacy, you’ll find me in the mountains, trail running with my beloved border collie, or sharing cherished moments with loved ones around a cosy fire or kitchen table.

07 STRATEGIC ADVOCACY



WOMEN’S VOICES ARE HEARD IN PARLIAMENT

THE “THREE GBV ACTS”

On 28th January 2022, the President signed three important Acts into law:

- **The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 13 of 2021.**
- **The Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Act 12 of 2022.**
- **The Domestic Violence Amendment Act 14 of 2021.**

While the first two Acts came into operation on 31 July 2022 and 5 August 2022 respectively, the Domestic Violence Amendment Act is expected to only come into operation in 2023.

WLC continued to play an active role with partners in ensuring these Acts were passed into operation and contributed to the drafting of the Regulations for the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 13 of 2021. Formal

written submissions were also made to the Department of Justice on the draft Regulations to the amended Domestic Violence Act.



ADVOCATING FOR COMPREHENSIVE HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION

The WLC and Triangle Project joined forces to advocate for the recognition of hate crimes through written submissions and an oral presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development. The focus was to ensure that the Hate Speech and Hate Crimes legislation considers the various forms of discrimination faced by women and other vulnerable groups.

We emphasised the need for an intersectional lens, illustrating that violence and sexual offences cases reported by individuals with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual characteristics (SOGIESC) are often not recognised as hate crimes.

Our goal is to ensure that once the Prevention & Combatting of Hate Crimes & Hate Speech Bill is enacted, government and civil society will have access to more accurate data, enabling us to collectively address the challenge of hate crimes.

Implementation of the Bill will provide better understanding and awareness among law enforcement, prosecutors, and the judiciary about the extent and impact of these crimes. It will reinforce their constitutional obligation to address hate crimes effectively.

Our advocacy in support of the Bill is driven by the high levels of violence

experienced by women in their diversity within South African society. This Bill sends a clear message that hate-motivated crimes and speech will not be tolerated.

As we monitor the progress of the Bill through the legislature, we pay homage to the memory of victims such as:

Anele Bhengu Masixole, Bonang Gaela, Limakatso Puling, Phelokazi Mqathana, Thapelo Sehata, and countless other lesbian and transgender women who lost their lives due to hate-motivated rape and murder.

INFLUENCING POLICY, LAW REFORM AND PRACTICE

ADVOCATING FOR DISCRIMINATION-FREE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND EQUAL EDUCATION FOR YOUNG GIRLS IN THEIR DIVERSITY: PROVIDING LEGAL EXPERTISE TO COALITIONS AND NETWORKS ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN WITH DIVERSE SOGIESC FOR A DISCRIMINATION FREE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

The WLC, in collaboration with civil society partners, plays a crucial role in advising the Department of Basic Education on policies and guidelines that aim to provide equal educational opportunities for children with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and sexual characteristics in South African schools.

As a result of this collaboration, the Department of Basic Education has developed Guidelines for the inclusion of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in schools. Additionally, they have created the Protocol for Elimination of Unfair Discrimination in Schools. These documents are currently undergoing public consultation sessions.

This work is of utmost importance as it strives to guarantee access to education for all children, regardless of their backgrounds. By promoting inclusive learning environments, we empower young girls with diverse identities to thrive and succeed in their educational journeys.

REDEFINING MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY: THE WLC MADE SUBMISSIONS TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION ON THEIR INVESTIGATION INTO MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY REGIMES AND RIGHTS.

The WLC was invited to make submissions to the South African Law Reform Commission's Project 100E, which is examining the matrimonial property systems in the country. Our expertise in family law allowed us to highlight important aspects in our submissions. We emphasised the need for these systems to recognise the unique challenges faced by women in relationships. This includes their difficulty in negotiating a fair and equal matrimonial system, as well as the significant contribution of women's unpaid care work to marriages and life partnerships. Our goal is to ensure that the existing legislative framework aligns with the Constitution and acknowledges the realities faced by women.

SUBMISSIONS ON THE DRAFT FIREARMS CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2021 TO CIVILIAN SECRETARIAT FOR POLICE SERVICE

The WLC made both written and oral submissions to the Civilian Secretariat For Police Service in May 2022. We focused on the clauses which suspend the processing of the application for a competency certificate to own a firearm made by a person against whom an interim protection order is in force in terms of the Domestic Violence Act or the Protection from Harassment Act. We also focused on the suspension of firearm

licences and the declaration of persons as unfit to possess a firearm where an interim protection order is issued in terms of the Domestic Violence Act or the Protection from Harassment Act, the nature of which involves an element of violence. It is hoped that the Bill will be introduced into Parliament in 2023.

SOUTH AFRICAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION ISSUE PAPER 42, PROJECT 100 ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: THE CRIMINAL LAW RESPONSE

The WLC made detailed submissions to the SALRC on various questions posed in its Issue Paper on the criminal law response to domestic violence. We addressed questions such as "Do the existing substantive crimes adequately cover domestic violence" and "If you believe that there should be a single offence of domestic violence, how should it be framed?" The WLC highlighted that by the creation of an offence of domestic violence, the recognition in law may elevate the conduct of domestic violence perpetrators to that of criminal conduct per se and thereby require proper and adequate policing, rather than the current attitude that is all too prevalent in SAPS that domestic violence is a private matter that can and must be dealt with by means of the civil remedies as provided by in the Domestic Violence Act. In addition, the 'Inquiry concerning South Africa under article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women' CEDAW/C/ZAF/IR/1 12 May 2021 in which the WLC played a central role, found that "The failure to criminalise all forms of domestic violence fall short of a clear message against this offence..." The WLC indicated its support of this sentiment as expressed by the CEDAW Committee.

DECRIMINALISATION OF SEX WORK: ENGAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During 2022 the Department of Justice held various consultations and requested written input on the draft legislation to decriminalise sex work. The WLC has been working with sex workers to advocate for the decriminalisation of their profession for over 10 years. Our submissions emphasised the government's international as well as constitutional obligations to decriminalise sex work. The ongoing criminalisation of sex work continues to perpetuate colonialist prejudice and beliefs which perpetuate the lack of recognition of women's agency regarding their sexual autonomy and the decisions women make. These stereotypical beliefs have no role to play in a democratic society. We argued that irrespective of the populist views held by many that sex work should remain criminalised, the department is bound by its constitutional obligations to uphold the dignity, privacy and equality for all its citizens. The Department gazetted a draft Bill seeking to decriminalise sex work in November 2022 for public comment.

EMPOWERING AFRICAN WOMEN THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

WLC'S STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

PUTTING AFRICAN BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH ON THE GLOBAL AGENDA: WLC'S IMPACT ON THE UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR'S OPINION

We shared two reports with the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to an adequate standard of health, shedding light on the challenges faced by African Black women in accessing healthcare and the issue of forced and coerced sterilisation. Our aim was to provide an intersectional feminist perspective to inform her understanding and recommendations. We emphasised the unique position of women, particularly African Black women, within public healthcare systems and their struggles for sexual reproductive health rights. By highlighting human rights violations such as forced and coerced sterilisation in public healthcare settings, we aim to shape international human rights law principles.

OUR INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND HOUSING: ADVOCATING FOR THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HOUSING TO ADDRESS THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF GLOBAL WARMING TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

As climate change increasingly affects our environment and daily lives, the WLC recognises its impact on women's rights. Understanding that women face multiple struggles, we emphasise that climate change disproportionately affects ordinary women. By submitting our recommendation to the UN Special Rapporteur, we aimed to ensure an intersectional lens was applied in analysing the effects of climate change on the right to adequate housing. We specifically highlighted how

poor Black women living in informal settlements face greater vulnerability during winter conditions as flooding and heavy rainfall often result in the loss of their homes and their ability to provide shelter for their families. Our advocacy aimed to protect and empower these marginalised communities.

UNITING AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTHCARE: PETITIONING THE UN COMMITTEE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH EQUITY

The COVID-19 pandemic shed light on the unequal access to life-saving medications, vaccinations, and medical equipment. It also exposed racial discrimination in accessing these resources, where medications and vaccines are often tested in global south countries but become unaffordable once approved and available. In partnership with ESCR Net, the WLC petitioned the UN Committee on the Eradication of Racial Discrimination to address these gross inequalities and their impact. As a result, the Committee issued a statement urging states to take stronger measures in ensuring equal access to medication, vaccines, and equipment, pushing for a more just and inclusive healthcare system.

CHAMPIONING WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO LAND AND HOUSING: WLC'S SUBMISSION TO UN COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

The UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights is currently developing a General Recommendation on Land. The WLC submitted our perspectives to the Committee, emphasising the importance of addressing women's

intersecting experiences of discrimination and accessing and owning land and housing. Our submission highlighted the detrimental effects of corporate capture and extractive industries on land ownership, subsistence farming, and housing. We emphasised the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and the consequences of forced displacements on livelihoods, food security, and other interconnected rights related to land and housing. Through our advocacy, we aim to promote an inclusive and feminist intersectional perspective in the Committee's normative framework for the right to land.

ADVOCATING FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE AND WOMEN IN THE CARE ECONOMY AT UN EVENT

As part of ESCR Net, the WLC actively participated in a side event at the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Our focus was on highlighting the vital role of the care economy in our society and the disproportionate impact that displacements and harmful industries have on women's unpaid care work. The discussion aimed to bring attention to the intersection between loss and damage caused by climate change and its effect on women's care work. We emphasised the urgent need for sufficient provisions to address this issue, as women often bear the burden and are disproportionately affected on the frontline of care work. Through our participation we sought to advocate for climate justice and promote the empowerment of women within the care economy.

GENDER RESPONSIVE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY THROUGH CEDAW (GRACE) PROJECT

In October 2021, the Co-Impact Foundation awarded International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP AP), The George Institute for Global Health (TGI), the WLC, the CEDAW Working Group Indonesia (CWGI), Key Affected Populations Health and Legal Rights Alliance (KESWA), and Jagori Women's Resource Centre in India a three-year grant for a project focused on strengthening the ability of country-based civil society organisations (CSOs) to hold their governments accountable on issues related to gender-based violence (GBV). This project is oriented towards conducting strong, evidence-based research on the links between recommendations made by the CEDAW committee and on-the-ground implementation of these recommendations. The WLC identified domestic violence as its focus and more specifically the CEDAW Inquiry concerning South Africa conducted under Article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW on state of domestic violence in South Africa (Inquiry process from 2013 to 2019). The CEDAW Committee published its findings and recommendations in 2021 to which both the South African government and civil society had the opportunity to respond. In 2022 the project concentrated on drafting a country-specific research plan with a particular focus on domestic violence as a lens through which research would identify CEDAW-aligned legal and policy interventions that prevent violence against women perpetrated by men, and to protect women.

ATTORNEY PROFILE

KHULISO MANAGA



“ My current favourite thing to do is to introduce myself as a professional feminist to unsuspecting members of society.”

I was born and bred in a small town in Venda, Limpopo where I spent most of my younger years and made the fondest memories of growing up in a much simpler time with all the hope of our new democracy. My family and I later moved around quite a bit in my foundational years which made the idea of moving across the country for my tertiary education not quite as daunting as it should have been.

I completed my LLB at the University of Stellenbosch in 2019 and became an admitted attorney not long after in 2021.

Growing up in a culture and home that was both highly patriarchal and matriarchal at the same time, I've identified as a feminist for as long as I can remember. It was only during my time in university however that I was able to articulate the feminist principles I now value and where I was able to understand what it meant to become a social justice warrior and activist.

In getting involved in almost every student society I could get my hands on in my university space, I was able to grasp two fundamental things; first,

that the law, in the right hands, with the right intentions, can be a powerful tool for social change, and second, that the law, if inaccessible and created without the real needs of people in mind is in essence worthless.

I now get to be a professional feminist as an attorney at the WLC and work within the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights program where we aim to have the rights of women to bodily autonomy and security of the person upheld.

08 EDUCATION AND TRAINING



The #KNOWYOURCODE was created to ensure that all women are aware of their rights in the workplace.



The Code regards all forms of harassment as a form of unfair discrimination, which is a barrier to equality in the workplace.

#KNOWYOURCODE



The Code is intended to address the prevention, elimination, and manage all forms of harassment present in the workplace.

The Code Recognizes That Harassment Can Take Many Forms Including:



- Physical abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse



On the 3rd of March 2022, the Minister of Employment and Labour signed into law the new Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace. The new Code replaced the Amended Code of Good Practice on the Handling of Sexual Harassment Cases in the Workplace of 2005.



WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE



#KNOWYOURCODE

A Quick Guide on The New Code on Harassment in the Workplace in South Africa

THE RIGHT TO JUST AND FAVOURABLE WORKING CONDITIONS

#KNOWYOURCODE

The objective of the workshops was to ensure that women understand their rights at work and their right to a safe work environment through the new Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

Workshop: ENS ProBono Family Law Series – Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services
Date: 28 September 2022
Location: Michell's Plain

On September 28th, the WLC participated in the ENS ProBono Family Law Series by conducting an informative workshop on accessing sexual and reproductive health services in South Africa. The workshop covered various essential aspects, including family planning services, contraceptives, sexual health services, and safe and legal abortions. Our aim was to empower individuals by providing knowledge about their rights and guiding them on where to find free and accessible services and ultimately make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM VIOLENCE

Workshop: The path of the Sexual Offences Complainant through the Criminal Justice System
Date: Friday 25 February 2022
Number of attendees: 57
Participating Organisations:

- ProBono.org
- Show Me Your Number
- Access Chapter 2
- Siyamthanda MPC
- Sun of Joy Foundation
- Social Health Empowerment
- Tholwane E Molemo
- Ubuntu Crisis Centre
- APWA
- Smart Guys
- Nurses at A Go
- THINK
- Social Change
- Phongola Bud
- Lifeline JHB
- Zakheni Training and Development
- Sisonke
- New Generation Community Org.
- Mpumelelo Community Project
- Youth Org. United

Summary: Our Violence Against Women team, at the request of ProBono.org and its partners who provide advice and support to victims and survivors of sexual violence, conducted a comprehensive workshop that covered a range of topics, starting with an overview of the criminal justice system and the distinctions between criminal and civil law. Participants gained an understanding of the various Courts involved in the legal process, including Magistrates' Court, Regional

Court, High Courts, the Supreme Court of Appeal, and the Constitutional Court.

The workshop delved into the legal framework surrounding sexual offences, addressing important aspects such as reporting the crime, the role of medical examinations, and the investigation process. Attendees learned about the procedures related to the arrest, summons, or written notice given to the accused, as well as the pre-trial phase and the subsequent trial process.

The workshop also emphasised the rights of victims throughout the entire criminal justice system journey. Participants were educated about the rights afforded to complainants and the importance of upholding these rights in sexual offences cases. By shedding light on these crucial topics, we aimed to educate and empower individuals with a clear understanding of the path that sexual offence complainants navigate within the criminal justice system and equipping them with the necessary knowledge to provide informed advice and support to women who seek assistance as victims of sexual offences.

Webinar: The International Feminist Lawyers Network of which the WLC is a member, held its second webinar on 13 December 2022, with WLC as the main discussant on Litigating Police Perpetrated Violence against Women.

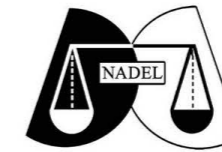
EQUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

National Wills Week: 12 – 20 September 2022

Information sessions were conducted to inform women on testate and intestate succession, how to draft a Will, and what spouses can or should do in terms of succession when their relationship is not recognised by law. Sessions were held on:

12 September: Silvertown Community Centre 14 September: Gogo's Kitchen in Gugulethu 20 September: Webinar on Zoom

The WLC collaborated with South African Women in Dialogue, Legal Aid South Africa, the South African Women Lawyers Association, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, and The Callas Foundation during National Wills Week. Together, we launched a comprehensive campaign focusing on advocacy, awareness, and providing information. We also supported the call from the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) for legal practitioners to register and offer free legal services during Wills Week. In addition, we hosted a webinar specifically for legal practitioners, addressing the impact of the non-recognition of relationships on estate and succession planning, as well as the effects of housing policies on property dissolution and access to housing. The webinar aimed to raise awareness among legal practitioners about the challenges faced by women and children in these areas.



Equality & Justice



WILLS WEEK
2022

FREE WILLS DAY WORKSHOP

The National Association of Democratic Lawyers
and Partners invite the Community of
Malmesbury to join us.

DATE: 17 September 2022

VENUE: Anglican Church Hall in Wesbank, Malmesbury

TIME: 10 am – 12 pm

FREE WILLS: 10 am – 3 pm



- What is a will?
- Who is competent to make a will?
- Who is competent to act as a witness to a will?
- What are the requirements for a valid will?
- What if I want to amend my will?
- Must I amend my will after a divorce?
- Who is disqualified from inheriting under a will?
- What are your rights as an older person?

LEGAL ADVICE UNIT

Over the last year, our Legal Advice Unit and the WLC Human Rights Defenders conducted a series of impactful workshops and training sessions. These initiatives were designed to enhance capacity and responsiveness at the community level. Through these workshops, we have equipped activists at community level to respond to the challenges they face in their communities. Some of the workshops were open to the public. By actively engaging with communities, we strive to create a more informed and empowered society that can effectively advocate for gender equality and justice.

From 28 March to 05 April the WLC had the pleasure of hosting a delegation from Nigeria. WLC Board Chair, Thulisile Mhlungu led the delegation during their visit to South Africa. Amongst the places that the delegation visited were the Human Rights Defenders in Athlone and the Saartjie Baartman Shelter. During these visits, the various organisations shared stories of hope while reaffirming our shared commitment towards fighting violence against women and advancing women's rights.



On 05-06 April 2022, stakeholder engagement took place about access to justice and network platforms, with organisations such as the National Prosecuting Authority, Mosaic, Department of Social Development and SAPS.



On 25 June 2022 a community engagement was held in Phillipi on marriage regimes, which was attended by more than 30 participants took place.



In July 2022 we held a Human Rights Defenders Retreat.



On 25 August 2022 a workshop on the WLC and its role at the OASIS school at the Women's Day Programme, reached more than 20 women.



On 31 August 2022 a Women's Day workshop in Langa took place.

The WLC attended a Women's Month Event hosted by the City of Cape Town and Trauma Centre in Langa which targeted more than 53 women in the community. The session engaged with women on issues that they face daily concerning access to justice and services.

ATTORNEY PROFILE

CHRISCY BLOUWS



“There is no greater gift you can give or receive than to honour your calling, it’s why you were born” This year I have been working hard to walk in my purpose and calling both professionally and personally.”

I am a daughter, a partner, a mother, an aunty, a friend, and colleague and I try my best to express myself through the same feminist ethos in every capacity.

Originally from Elsies River on the Cape Flats, I’m rooted in a community marred by poverty and violence, which fuels my commitment to social justice.

My journey as a human rights lawyer spans a decade in the public interest sector. I’ve been with the WLC since 2018, focussing on feminist jurisprudence, advocating for substantive equality and considering intersecting discrimination faced by women.

I contribute across the Women in Work, Land, Housing and Property, and Violence Against Women programmes.

Notable achievements include the Mahlangu case, which highlighted discrimination against domestic workers, their exclusion from essential socio-economic rights, and their lack of protection under compensation laws. In the S v P case, a successful appeal against a gagging order when a woman was restricted from discussing her rape by an ex-boyfriend. This underscored the importance of allowing women to speak about personal experiences of violence.

I hold a Deputy Chairperson position on the Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children’s Board, furthering my commitment to women’s rights.

Beyond my legal endeavours, music fills me with passion - I’ve been singing and dancing since primary school. Family takes precedence, and I love exploring and traveling with them, indulging in gourmet food and experiencing life’s flavours.”

09

FEMINIST SOLIDARITY & MOVEMENT BUILDING

VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINES: COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS SHARE EXPERIENCES ON SAFEGUARDING RIGHTS

Our Human Rights Defender Programme empowers women’s rights organisations and the feminist movement. These partnerships keep us connected to the lived realities of women in society.

By offering legal counsel to the social justice sector, human rights organisations, and civil society networks, we actively contribute to the enforcement of legal obligations by both

the government and private sector, ensuring the protection of women’s rights.

Meet two of our inspiring Human Rights Defender Partners, Avril Andrews and Wendy Pekeur. Through their voices, discover their experiences in their respective communities, and what it’s like to collaborate with the WLC.



AVRIL ANDREWS

ORGANISATION: ALCARDO ANDREWS FOUNDATION

WHAT’S IT LIKE TO KEEP WOMEN SAFE IN OUR AREA?

We do different things, we journey with the woman. If it’s Gender-based Violence, and in this case, if the woman is in trouble, then I use my referrals if the person must go to a shelter or a safe house.

Otherwise, we journey and empower the woman, to help her and her sister maybe, to come out of the situation. But firstly, we see that she’s safe or the child is safe, or the family is safe, so that’s what we’re doing.

And then also we use different organisations because we don’t have a social worker, we use the

Trauma Centre or other organisations just to assist social workers. Also, you’re in the area of First Resource Centre, then I use that social worker so that is what we do. And then we also use Saartjie Baartman.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO WORK WITH THE WLC?

We refer women to the WLC and I think it’s just good to know that we partner and collaborate. The WLC is very supportive of us with whatever we want to know. It’s just great to know that they are there to support us and to support women in the community. Thank you.



WENDY PEKEUR

ORGANISATION: UBUNTU RURAL WOMEN AND YOUTH MOVEMENT

It is hard to ensure the safety of women in our areas. That is why the prevention work we do is very important. We have women on the ground who intervene and report GBV

cases. We make immediate interventions e.g. arranging a safe room when a woman's life is in danger. Where necessary we will involve the police. Our GBV champions escort women to Court and assist them with applying for protection orders. We also walk alongside rape survivors and attend all Court

cases of survivors that came to us for assistance. With intimate femicide cases we currently support the families of the two slain women. If threats were made, we would report such to the police and the Courts. It is not easy as we also receive threats for interfering, as the perpetrators call it, with private matters. We make it our business.

In rural areas it is very challenging as Courts and police stations are not always in close proximity. We make sure women and GBV champions who support them get money for transport and food. We liaise with police stations and Courts to make sure women get the necessary help if they report matters. We will assist women with the completion of the protection order forms. We go out with more than 50 people for every Court case we support so that perpetrators don't target one or two people.

Here I refer to intimate femicide matters we work with: In rural areas it is hard to get

access to counselling services. We make the links between the survivors or families of the deceased and appropriate services. The WLC is always available to advise on matters that we contact them on. With one particular case where a rape survivor was imprisoned when the perpetrator made a counter claim we saw a speedy intervention in the evening when she was granted bail. We never knew that this was even possible. The counter claim was for physical assault, even a police officer could see that she could not be guilty as she is a very small built young woman and who suffered abuse at the hands of her boyfriend that day. She had a broken arm. These were gangsters who gang raped her in an area called Klaver and she feared for her life. As Ubuntu we managed to get her into a safe space after her ordeal.

The WLC's intervention was to ensure she gets legal assistance and be released from prison. This was something big for us as we felt justice is possible for women if you knock on the right doors.

ENHANCING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS:

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2022

The WLC forged meaningful collaborations and partnerships, leading to significant advancements in our collective pursuit of justice and equality for women. Through these dynamic alliances, we achieved remarkable outcomes and created lasting impact.

DECRIMINALISING SEX WORK:

Together with our partners, we strengthened the call for the decriminalisation of sex work, recognising the importance of protecting the rights and safety of sex workers.

PROTECTING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO ABORTION:

Through our collaboration with the Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition (SRJC), we successfully defended women's right to safe and legal abortion in the Constitutional Court,

ensuring that women have the autonomy to make decisions about their own bodies.

LEGAL EXPERTISE FOR GENDER DIVERSITY ADVOCACY:

We provided valuable legal input to the Gender Diversity Coalition, bolstering their advocacy efforts and promoting the inclusion and recognition of gender diversity.

EMPOWERING THE SHUKUMISA CAMPAIGN:

We focused on strengthening the legal capacity of the Shukumisa campaign, equipping them to effectively address the challenges of violence against women.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

We championed inclusivity in the education system, ensuring that sexual orientation and gender identity are acknowledged and respected. Our collaborative efforts aimed to create safe and inclusive learning environments for all students.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVISTS:

Recognising the invaluable work of community-based activists, we prioritised capacity-building initiatives to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to address challenges in their respective communities. By providing support and resources, we enhanced their ability to effect change.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR EQUALITY:

Working on a global scale, we shared our experiences and promoted substantive equality. Through international collaborations, including litigation, advocacy, and training on economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR), we advanced the cause of women's rights beyond national borders.

These collaborations and partnerships have been instrumental in expanding our impact and advancing women's rights. We remain dedicated to fostering strategic alliances to effect meaningful change and create a more just and inclusive society.

ACTIVISM

#PATRICKMUSTFALL: EMPTY PROMISES – EMPTY POTS



PICTURED HERE IS OUR DIRECTOR, SEEHAAM SAMAII, WHO JOINED THE PROTEST.

On August 8, 2022, a group of over 50 working-class women from the Cape Flats gathered at Constantia Circle to protest the injustices of hunger, poverty, unemployment, and neglect faced by their communities. Represented by various organisations, these women came together to address the issues they face and advocate for equality, justice, and dignity. They named the patriarchy "Patrick" as the embodiment of the violence and inequality experienced by women which



cannot be separated from capitalism and the exploitation of the working class. This peaceful protest focused on the impact of food injustice on women, highlighting the need for accessible land for community food gardens, an end to profit-driven policies that prioritise unhealthy foods, employment opportunities, and the reintroduction of agricultural studies in education.

COALITIONS AND NETWORKS IN 2022

FORGING PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE IN 2022:

The WLC actively collaborated with a diverse range of coalitions and networks, amplifying our collective impact, and advancing women's rights. These strategic partnerships have strengthened our advocacy work and fostered meaningful change in various areas.



ASIJKI COALITION:

A powerful collective dedicated to advocating for the rights and well-being of women, challenging gender-based violence and empowering marginalised communities.



ESCR NET:

A network of organisations committed to promoting and protecting economic, social, and cultural rights.



THE SHUKUMISA CAMPAIGN:

Works tirelessly to combat violence against women and advocates for justice and support for survivors.



CAPE FLATS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT:

A grassroots organisation working towards social justice and gender equality in the Cape Flats.



THE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE COALITION (SRJC):

A collective focused on protecting and advancing the rights of individuals in matters of sexual and reproductive health.



PEOPLE AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION AND RAPE (PACER):

A collective focused on combating child exploitation and rape, advocating for justice and support for survivors.



GENDER DIVERSITY COALITION:

Dedicated to promoting inclusivity and equality for individuals of diverse gender identities.



GENDER RESPONSE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY THROUGH CEDAW (GRACE)

Conducts research and advocates for gender-responsive policies and practices relating to violence against women based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).



THE SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (SAWLA):

A voluntary, non-profit, and non-political organisation of women lawyers which was established in 2006. SAWLA is a networking forum for women in legal careers and aims to promote access to justice, advocacy for advancement of women, professional and leadership development and contribute to national and international dialogue and transformation in the legal profession.



INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST LAWYERS NETWORK (IFLN):

A global network of lawyers dedicated to promoting equality for women, women's rights, and feminist legal principles worldwide on issues relating to violence against women.

ATTORNEY PROFILE

KHENSANI MOTILENI



“I drink mimosas, read books, and practice law on the side.”

A dedicated social justice activist and attorney, I prioritise raising legal awareness among marginalised groups – women, LGBTQI+ individuals, children, and those differently abled.

Born in Soshanguve, Pretoria, I took a gap year before enrolling in a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Fort Hare, where I graduated. My second-year ranking within the top 3 law students earned recognition. During my studies, I engaged in leadership roles within the Law Student council and the Black Management Forum, serving as the

National Transformation and Academic Officer.

My journey led me to the Legal Resource Centre, where I completed community service as a Bertha Justice Fellow. Retained as an attorney in Forced Migration and Equality and Non-Discrimination, I then joined the WLC, focusing on Equality In Relationships and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights. Previously, I headed research and policy at the Social Justice Coalition, championing Black poor and working-class communities' constitutional rights

in informal settlements.

As an alumnus of the African feminist Macroeconomic Academy and the Friederich Ebert Stiftung - Fort Hare Autumn School for Social and Economic Democracy, I've honed my skills in feminist trade policy and a feminist approach to public services.

Currently a Canon Collins Trust scholar, I'm pursuing an LLM in Public International Law at the University of London, driven to create legal change for justice.

10 TRANSFORMATION OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Our mission here is driven by our commitment to providing opportunities for young feminist lawyers through our Candidate Attorneys programme, where we employ two candidate attorneys each year.

Additionally, our Feminist Law Clinic ensures that women law students at University level have access to feminist-based litigation training.

OUR FEMINIST CLINIC 2022:

In 2022, the WLC embarked on an exciting new initiative by hosting our first Feminist Clinic. The clinic was born from the realisation and recognition that there was an absence of feminist training within both the education system and the legal profession. This gap is most significantly recognised in the litigation field where there is an absence in feminist litigation and jurisprudence.

We accordingly sought to use our WLC Feminist Clinic as a space where young female future litigants will be exposed to the realities women face and will be introduced to this specialised and necessary way in which we tackle social issues and use litigation, advocacy, and education to bring about substantive equality for women and create feminist jurisprudence.



3 WEEK INTENSIVE PROGRAMME: 4TH – 22ND JULY 2022

THE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW:

WEEK 1: The WLC, the work we do, the way in which we work and the fundamental and feminist principles that underline our work and the sector we lead.

The students further interacted with members of the board where Pumla Dineo Gqola hosted an in-person session

with the students on her book the Female Fear Factory and engaged the students on how this female fear factory is perpetuated through the patriarchal society and community women live in.

WEEK 2: The second week looked at exposing the students to the more practical aspects of our work by having them work in the Legal Advice Unit while also taking on focus area work. Students further had an opportunity to

interact with the board chair Thulisile Mhlungu who hosted an in-person session with the students on wellness and the importance of prioritizing wellness within this sector and when working and identifying as a feminist.

WEEK 3: The third and last week focused on tying the work we do in the communities the students come from and planning for the community projects we expected them to launch.

LECTURERS:



SEEHAAM SAMAAI:

Feminist Litigation and Advocacy.
Barriers faced by women in the legal sector.



KHULISO MANAGA:

Clinic Co-Ordinator.
Legal Advice Unit Case Clinic Assignments.



CHRISCY BLOUWS:

Facilitator.
General Work Guidelines.
Naming of Perpetrators and the Right to be Free from Violence Programme.



PUMLA DINEO GQOLA:

Author; The Female Fear Factor.



AMANDA STEMELE:

The Legal Advice Unit.



THULISILE MHLUNGU:

Wellness in the public law space.



CHARLENE MAY:

Recognition of Muslim women's rights to equal recognition and protection in marriage.



MANDI MUDARIKWA:

Emerging threats to the women's rights sector.



BRONWYN PITHEY:

Naming of Perpetrators and the Right to be Free from Violence Programme.

11 UNIVERSITIES:



University of Cape Town



University of the Western Cape



Stellenbosch University



University of Pretoria



Witwatersrand University



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

University of Fort Hare



University of Limpopo



North West University



University of Free State



Varsity college Chatsworth



Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

2022 INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME:

This year we hosted 6 law students from 5 universities locally and internationally. By providing internship opportunities to young women studying law, we can influence how they view the law and will in future use it as a tool to advance the rights of women.

LAURA BLACK (UK) :	MINAAZ SALIE:	ABIGAIL ADAMS (USA):
Worked on Violence Against Women Programme Period : 14 Feb to 01 April	Stellenbosch University Graduate Worked on Equality in Relationships Period: 02 April 2022 to July	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Worked with SRHR Period: August to November
LEA DE HAAIJ (BELGIUM):	KATELYN SWARTBOI:	TAMIA KALLIS:
Humanitarian Action Sciences Worked in the Violence against Women Programme Period: September to December	(CPUT) PR students Period: September	(CPUT) PR students Period: September

STUDENT REVIEWS:

“Very fulfilled intellectually and emotionally. It gave my law degree more purpose and meaning.”

“I felt validated, inspired and educated.”

“I feel more confident going forward into the legal profession with an added feminist lens that I might not have received this early on without this programme.”



LLM/MPHIL COURSE AT UCT AND WITS

In September 2022, the WLC partnered with UCT’s Public Law Department, the Centre for Law and Society (UCT), and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (Wits), teaching the postgraduate LLM/MPHIL Sexual Offences and the Law course for 15 UCT students. The course covered the legislation, litigation of cases, and law reform in South Africa, drawing extensively on the practice of public interest and constitutional litigation in this field.



CANDIDATE ATTORNEY PROFILE'S

SENAMILE MADLALA



“ Guided by Audre Lorde’s words, “When I dare to be powerful to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid,” I stay aligned with my purpose.

A proud product from eMsinga, KwaZulu Natal, I carry the values of community, accountability, and integrity ingrained in me. My journey led me to Stellenbosch University, where I pursued an LLB and found my true passion in human rights. Ensuring marginalized communities access the socio-economic rights promised by the Constitution fuels my dedication.

My beginnings at the AgriBusiness Development Agency, fostering agribusiness growth, reflect my

commitment to community. But my heart was still with human rights work.

I joined the WLC in 2022, where I thrived in diverse roles, spanning from the Legal Advice Unit to engagement in various programmatic areas.

My unapologetic stance as an intersectional feminist shapes my work. I’ve contributed to Parliament submissions, gained court exposure, and had the privilege of representing the Ford Foundation fellowship at the 2023 UN Commission on the Status

of Women. This experience offered invaluable insights into technology and data’s role in advancing women’s rights.

Inspired by the WLC’s collaborative and education-centred approach, and guided by Audre Lorde’s words, “When I dare to be powerful to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid,” I stay aligned with my purpose.

ANDREA-JOY JANTJIES



“ Under the right conditions, small simple actions can produce large complex effects.” This philosophy resonates with my commitment to bring about change through meaningful actions.

I embarked on my academic journey by earning my LLB from the University of the Western Cape. During my time there, the transformative power of legal education and activism became evident through my involvement in the Street Law program and dedicated volunteering. A defining period arrived when I spent my vacations at the ENS pro-bono office, honing my skills as an activist and future lawyer, while contributing to various outreach and education initiatives.

In 2021, I began my internship at the Women’s Legal Centre, which allowed

me to delve into the realm of women’s rights and intersectional equality in the Equality in Relationships focus area.

Now a first year Candidate Attorney at the Centre, I’ve been fortunate to engage with all five of its focus areas. This multifaceted role has allowed me to partake in strategic litigation, advocacy efforts, international and parliamentary submissions, legal drafting, court exposure, and legal education. I’ve been an instrumental co-contributor to research into the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against

Women (CEDAW) in South Africa in relation to violence against women.

In this role, I’ve collaborated with remarkable women, shaping my passion for women’s rights. Guided by Catherine MacKinnon’s metaphor of butterflies effecting major change, I view my work as strategic interventions leading to transformation.

Quote: “under the right conditions, small simple actions can produce large complex effects.” This philosophy resonates with my commitment to bring about change through meaningful actions.

11 MEDIA ADVOCACY:

JULY



20TH: Bronwyn Pithey on SAFM Radio – Current crime statistics do not adequately reflect the true state of violence against women in South Africa.

JUNE



3RD: OpEd – South African women's fast-disappearing rights to access abortion services.



Women in Work: New Code on Harassment in the Workplace in South Africa

MAY



09TH: Instagram Live: Bwanya Judgement Q & A



11TH: OpEd – Difficulties women face when accessing the Magistrate's Courts to report domestic violence and how these very Courts designed to protect women are continuously used by perpetrators to further victimize and silence women.



12TH: Webinar – Gender Equality Today for A Sustainable Tomorrow.

MARCH

FEBRUARY

SEPTEMBER



28TH: Social media – Housing Scheme Constructed by Local Authority.

OCTOBER



14TH: OpEd – Advancing access to maintenance for women in permanent life partnerships.

AUGUST



3RD: Bronwyn Pithey – Television Newroom Afrika – Unpacking the three new Bills signed by the Presidency to address gender-based violence.



15TH: Bronwyn Pithey – Cape Talk Radio – How to obtain a protection order and how to ensure that it is enforced.

NOVEMBER



25TH Nov - 10TH Dec: 16 Days of Activism – UniTE! To end violence against women and girls.



28TH: Bronwyn Pithey – Cape Talk Radio – What is a protection order and how can it help victims of abuse?



30TH: Seehaam Samaai and Chriscy Blouws – Attended dialogue on the status of domestic work in South Africa.

DECEMBER



2ND: Bronwyn Pithey – News24 – SA Women's daily experiences are shrouded by violence. There is an urgent need for preventative measures to stem the tide of violence.



3TH: December – Webinar – Bronwyn Pithey – Litigating Police Perpetrated Violence Against Women.



5TH: Bronwyn Pithey – Television – ENCA – When the justice system fails women.



10TH: Bush Radio – Live Broadcast with Chriscy Blouws and Bronwyn Pithey.



12TH: Human Rights Activist - social media video – Silence hides violence – ending violence against women – Caroline Peters (WLC Humans Rights Defender).



13TH: Conference on Justice Education: Building Resilience and Strong Connections in Times of Global Challenges” – Seehaam Samaai / Khuliso Managa / Chriscy Blouws.



13TH: Human Rights Activist – social media video – Nosipho Daniels (WLC Humans Rights Defender) – the importance of mental and emotional support for women who have survived violence.

12

OUR LEGAL ADVICE UNIT

BRIDGING THE GAP: PROVIDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN IN NEED

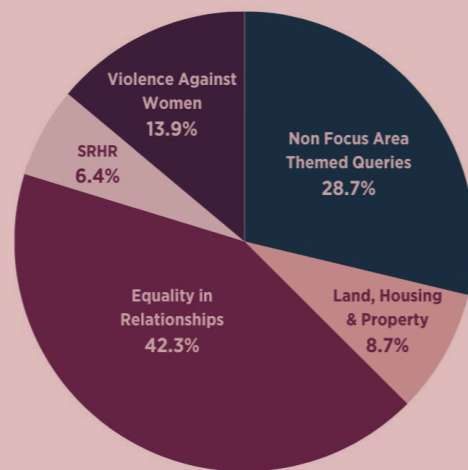
Our Legal Advice Unit, led by Amanda Stemele and supported by legal advisors Sheila Matroos and Busiwe Nkoloza, is driven by a deep passion for making a difference in the lives of women.

In 2020-2021, during the height of lockdown, the unit witnessed a surge in cases related to access to Courts, especially in matters of family law such as divorce, maintenance, and domestic violence protection orders. This trend has continued into 2022, alongside a significant number of general queries that fell outside our focus areas. As a result, we engaged in strategic planning and implemented a structured approach that aligns with our focus areas and ensures responsive access to justice. Working closely with women's

groups, movements, community-based structures, and organisations like SAWLA and our WLC Human Rights Defenders, our Legal Advice Unit serves as a direct link, providing vital advice and support to women in need. Through our interventions, we strive to identify and address systemic failures in the justice system and institutions, empowering women with legal recourse and promoting substantive equality, agency, and access to justice.

In 2022 the Legal Advice Unit has assisted more than 1524 women during this period. We will continue to build on this by working with relevant stakeholders and continuing to advance the rights of women in every way we can.

LAU STATS: JAN - DEC 2022



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A FINANCIAL VIEW OF 2022

THE AUDIT OPINION IS UNQUALIFIED. A FULL SET OF THE FINANCIALS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE OFFICE.

WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE TRUST

(REGISTRATION NUMBER IT 3486/98)
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER
2022

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Figures in R	2022	2021
Assets		
Current assets		
Trade and other receivables	1,066,983	919,967
Investment accounts - on call deposits	2,232,237	5,045,974
Cash and cash equivalents	257,463	602,320
Total current assets	3,556,683	6,568,261
Total assets	3,556,683	6,568,261
Reserves and liabilities		
Reserves		
Accumulated surplus	2,433,219	5,021,135
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Provisions	56,528	111,485
Trade and other payables	916,936	485,641
Deferred income	150,000	950,000
Total current liabilities	1,123,464	1,547,126
Total reserves and liabilities	3,556,683	6,568,261

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Figures in R	2022	2021
Revenue	14,654,691	15,567,049
Other income	171,461	142,702
Administrative expenses	(2,132,390)	(2,040,410)
Programme expenses	(15,481,243)	(13,792,560)
Deficit from operating activities	(2,787,481)	(123,219)
Interest received	199,565	201,759
(Deficit) / surplus for the year	(2,587,916)	78,540

ATTORNEY PROFILE

AMANDA STEMELE



“Ubuntu” guides my life; together, we can drive positive change and create a more just society for all.

Born and raised in Cape Town, my heart belongs to Mitchell’s Plain and Nyanga. After attending Highlands Primary and Portland High School, my passion for impact led me to study law at the University of the Western Cape, where I obtained my LLB in 2006.

Starting at the University of the Western Cape Legal Aid Clinic in 2007, I became an attorney in 2009. My journey truly ignited when I coordinated the UWC Satellite Clinic in Khayelitsha, immersing

me in community advocacy for social justice.

From a stint at the Office of the Public Protector in 2012 to becoming a Family Advocate in 2013, I always aimed to make a difference, especially in promoting women’s rights. Joining the WLC in 2021, I now lead the Legal Advice Unit, connecting the WLC directly to communities and women through collaborations and human rights advocacy.

I’m dedicated to change and justice, which led me to affiliations with the South African Women Lawyers Association (SAWLA) as the Western Cape Province secretary and an executive member of the National Association for Democratic Lawyers in the Western Cape.

“Ubuntu” guides my life; together, we can drive positive change and create a more just society for all.

14 WORKING TOWARDS A FEMINIST FUTURE

THE RIGHT TO JUST AND FAVOURABLE WORKING CONDITIONS

- Ensuring that we have input into the proposed legislation on decriminalisation of sex work.



EQUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

- Challenging the registration framework for customary marriages.



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND VRIGHTS

- Seeking redress for women who were forced and coercively sterilised.
- Ensuring that termination of pregnancy services are available to all women who need it.
- Ensuring that our education system is responsive to the needs of transgender girls in schools.



THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM VIOLENCE

- Challenging the laws protecting the identity of those accused of sexual offences before they plead.
- Challenging attrition in sexual offences cases and enhancing the rights of complainants.



15 FUNDERS & DONORS

The WLC would like to thank our funders and donors for their continued support and contribution to the Centre.

- AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND
- THE ELMA SOUTH AFRICA FOUNDATION
- FORD FOUNDATION
- IWRAW
- HEINRICH BOLL STIFTUNG 9HBS
- NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NDA)
- OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION (SA)
- WALLACE GLOBAL FUND
- RAITH FOUNDATION
- COMIC RELIEF
- LEGAL AID SOUTH AFRICA
- SAFE ABORTION ACTION FUND (SAAF)
- LUMINATE
- CONSTITUTIONALISM FUND
- PROBONO
- RED
- OTHER DONATIONS

16 CONTACTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Women's Legal Centre

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