

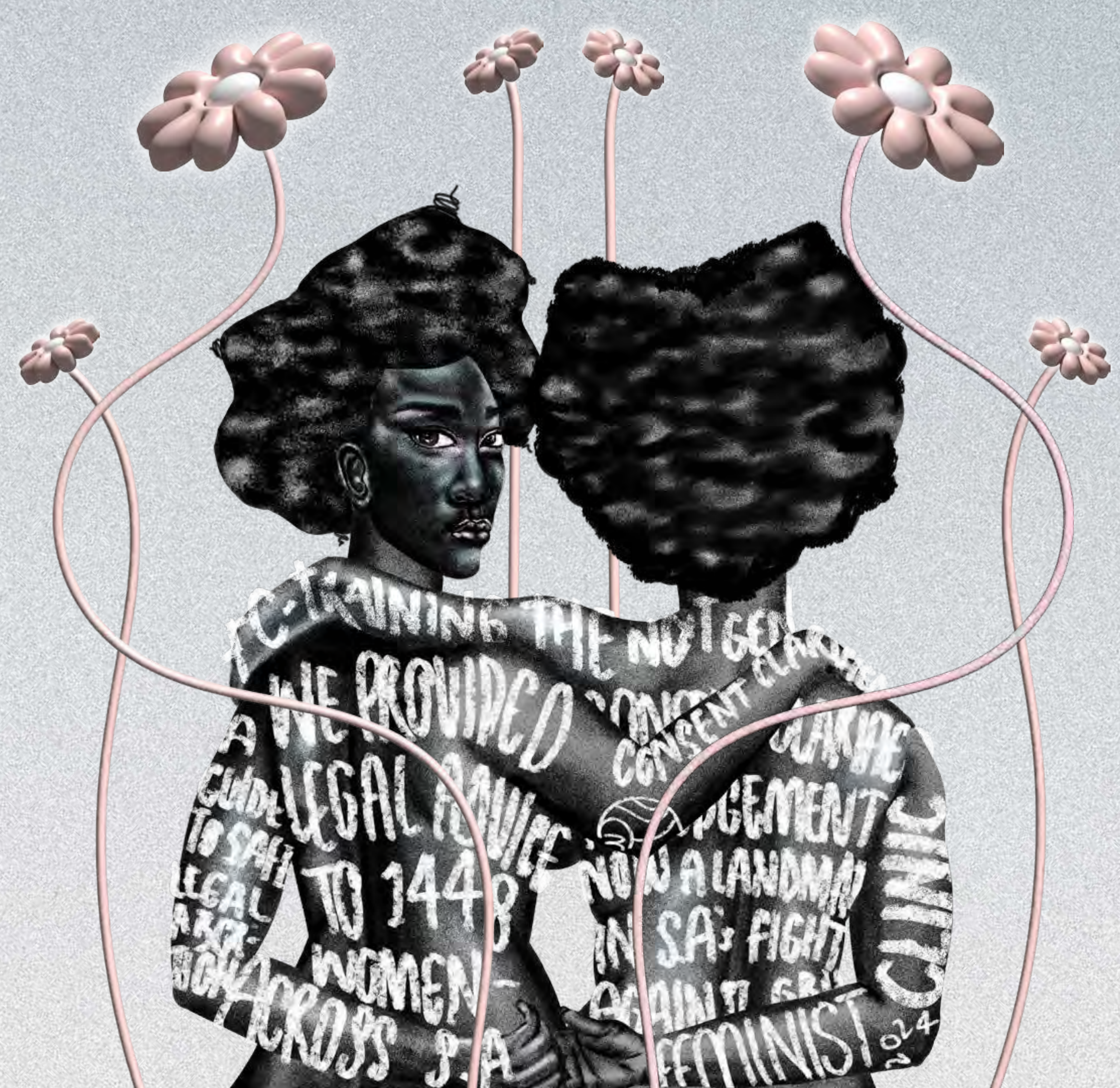
ANNUAL REPORT 2024



WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

2024 *Our Year of -*

COURAGE, CONVICTION *and*
SOLIDARITY



1.	OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE	
2.	ABOUT THE WOMEN’S LEGAL CENTRE	
3.	OUR FOCUS AREAS	
4.	BEHIND THE SCENES: OUR TEAM	
5.	LITIGATION	
6.	ADVOCACY	
7.	LEGAL ADVICE	

8.	COLLABORATIONS	
9.	EDUCATION	
10.	IN THE MEDIA	
11.	FINANCIAL OVERVIEW OF 2024	
12.	OUR FUNDERS & DONORS	
13.	CONTACTS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	

CONTENTS

1.

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



1448

Women assisted through
the legal advice unit

386K

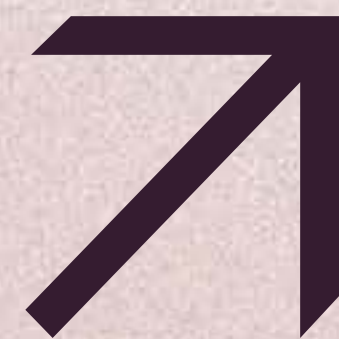
People reached through our
social media campaigns

11

Cases in litigation across
four focus areas

1.

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



2024 was a year of deep reflection, transition and renewal at the Women's Legal Centre.

We began the year with a facilitated review of our programmatic work, asking ourselves the hard but necessary questions:

Are we responding to the most important issues for women in our communities? Are our strategies effective in a rapidly shifting world? This moment of pause was both grounding and illuminating.

As authoritarianism gains momentum globally and anti-rights movements strengthen, we knew that internal resilience would be key. We turned inward to strengthen our organisation, to build systems that are responsive, agile and grounded in feminist values.

This year also brought leadership transitions, both at Director level and within our Board of Trustees. These changes required courage and solidarity. It was during this time that we felt the power of sisterhood, as many of our partners and supporters reached out, reminding us that we do not walk alone.

Throughout the year, the extraordinary women who make up the WLC carried this organisation with skill, heart and conviction. Our collective strength is visible across every page of this report, in the courtroom, in communities, and on the international stage. We ensured that women were advised, supported, represented, and that the feminist legal framework we are building continues to grow.

Our litigation work advanced feminist jurisprudence in our Courts, and we continued our post-judgment advocacy

to make sure that women were aware of the new changes in law and policy. Accountability work is critical and our advocacy and engagement with government structures ensured that policy and legislative development was being informed by women.

Community engagements kept us rooted in community, ensuring that our work was continuously informed by the lived realities and experiences of ordinary women in all their diversity.

We were inspired by the young feminist activists who joined us for the 2024 Feminist Clinic who reassured us that when women gather, change is possible.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the WLC over the past year. The work that we have done and the impact that we have had is possible because of our collective efforts.

2.

ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

Who We Are

The Women's Legal Centre (WLC) is a prominent African feminist legal organisation that has championed women's rights and equality for over 25 years.

We are the only public interest law firm in South Africa dedicated solely to advancing women's rights. Our team of attorneys, candidate attorneys, paralegals, and support staff specialise in feminist litigation and strategic legal interventions to effect systemic change.

Based in Cape Town, our impact extends nationally, regionally, and internationally, fostering collaboration and progress in the pursuit of gender justice.

Our Vision

A sustainable future where every woman, regardless of her background, is free from violence, enjoys equal rights, has access to justice, and can realise her full potential.

HOW WE WORK

We advance our mission through **five interconnected pillars:**



WE LITIGATE

We fight for systemic change through feminist litigation grounded in intersectionality and substantive equality. In every case, we centre the lived realities of women and challenge laws that fail to protect them.

WE ADVOCATE

We engage Parliament, regional and international treaty bodies, and other institutions through written and oral submissions that advance the rights of women.

We also participate in conferences, workshops and forums, and use media advocacy to amplify our work across both mainstream and social media platforms.

WE PROVIDE FREE LEGAL ADVICE

At the heart of our work is the Legal Advice Unit (LAU), a daily touchpoint for women seeking legal support.

Women contact us via walk-ins, phone calls, WhatsApp, email and social media. Our paralegals provide tailored legal advice, removing financial barriers to justice.

The LAU does more than respond to need; it reveals systemic failures. These insights inform our litigation, advocacy and policy reform, keeping our work grounded in lived experience.

WE COLLABORATE

We believe that collective action is transformative.

Through partnerships with communities, we strengthen grassroots access to justice by equipping human rights defenders, activists, and first responders with the tools to support women and advance their rights.

Our collaborations extend across South Africa and into regional and international networks, holding both the state and private sector accountable for fulfilling their legal obligations to women.

WE EDUCATE

FEMINIST CLINIC

Legal education in South Africa continues to lack a feminist perspective, leaving many legal practitioners unequipped to address gender-based discrimination. The WLC is uniquely positioned to fill this gap. Through our Feminist Clinic, we train and mentor young Black women law students to understand intersectional feminism as a powerful legal tool to challenge discrimination, drive transformation in the legal profession and to become change agents in the fight for gender justice.

CANDIDATE ATTORNEY PROGRAMME

Each year, we employ two candidate attorneys who gain hands-on experience in feminist lawyering, working closely with our legal team and contributing directly to strategic litigation and legal advice.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

By providing internship opportunities to young women studying law, we influence how they understand and use the law - not as neutral, but as a means to advance women's rights and gender justice.

2. ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

3. OUR FOCUS AREAS

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 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.



OUR LEGAL EXPERTS

CHARLENE MAY	ATTORNEY, HEAD OF PROGRAMMES
KHENSANI MOTILENI	ATTORNEY
SENAMILE MADLALA	JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

WOMEN’S RIGHTS TO LIVE 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.



OUR LEGAL EXPERTS

BRONWYN PITHEY	ADVOCATE
CHRISCY BLOUWS	ATTORNEY
ANDREA-JOY JANTJIES	JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

3. OUR FOCUS AREAS

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND 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.

OUR LEGAL EXPERTS

KHULISO MANAGA	ATTORNEY
CHARLENE MAY	ATTORNEY, HEAD OF PROGRAMMES
KHENSANI MOTILENI	ATTORNEY
SENAMILE MADLALA	JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

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 even more crucial.

OUR LEGAL EXPERTS

CHRISCY BLOUWS	ATTORNEY
ANDREA-JOY JANTJIES	JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

3. OUR FOCUS AREAS



WOMEN’S RIGHTS TO LAND, HOUSING 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. 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.

Our mission is to ensure that women are provided with secure tenure, economic freedom, and a safe, accessible, and healthy place to call home.

OUR LEGAL EXPERTS

CHARLENE MAY	ATTORNEY, HEAD OF PROGRAMMES
KHENSANI MOTILENI	ATTORNEY
CHRISCY BLOUWS	ATTORNEY
SENAMILE MADLALA	JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

4. BEHIND THE SCENES: OUR TEAM

THE LEGAL TEAM



CHARLENE MAY

ATTORNEY, HEAD OF
PROGRAMMES



BRONWYN PITHEY

ADVOCATE



AMANDA STEMELE

ADVOCATE, HEAD OF
LEGAL ADVICE UNIT



CHRISCY BLOUWS

ATTORNEY



KHENSANI MOTILENI

ATTORNEY



KHULISO MANAGA

ATTORNEY

4. BEHIND THE SCENES: OUR TEAM

THE LEGAL TEAM



SENAMILE MADLALA

JUNIOR ASSOCIATE



ANDREA-JOY JANTJIES

JUNIOR ASSOCIATE



SHEILA MATROOS

PARALEGAL



BUSIWE NKOLOZA

PARALEGAL



ARETHA LOUW

LITIGATION SECRETARY

4. BEHIND THE SCENES: OUR TEAM



ANNETTE BROOKS

FINANCE OFFICER



RUTH DAVIS

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR



NWABISA NTSHIBELO

RECEPTIONIST



ZAKKIYYA ABDURAHMAN

GRAPHIC DESIGNER



ESTELLE MALGAS

OFFICE ASSISTANT

THE SUPPORT TEAM

4. BEHIND THE SCENES: OUR TEAM

THE BOARD
OF TRUSTEES



ANIEKA GAMIET

BOARD CHAIRPERSON



PUMLA DINEO GQOLA

TRUSTEE



BUHLE LEKOKOTLA

TRUSTEE



JAMEELAH OMAR

TRUSTEE

4. BEHIND THE SCENES: OUR TEAM

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



DEIRDRE SMYTHE

TRUSTEE



REBECCA HLABATAU

TRUSTEE



NOXOLO SILEVU

TRUSTEE



SIPHOKAZI MTHATHI

TRUSTEE

5.

LITIGATION

**ABORTION ACCESS**
INFORMING, EMPOWERING,
INCLUDING

Despite abortion being legal and free in South Africa, many women still face barriers to access, from stigma to misinformation to illegal providers. In 2024, WLC took bold steps to close that gap.

We published a practical guide that helps women understand:

- Their rights under the law
- Where to access safe services
- How to spot illegal or dangerous providers
- What to do when denied care

To extend access to women with intellectual and cognitive disabilities, we translated the guide into Braille, which formed part of a pilot project to make our legal tools more inclusive.

Since we released the guide, 840 women have reached out to us for assistance to access abortion services.

We also shared legal tips on abortion access across our platforms, ensuring that rights are not just protected in law, but reachable in life. Access to accurate information about abortion rights and services remains limited. Download and share our guide to ensure that every woman knows her options.

To Access The Guide



Click here

**PROTECTING THE RIGHT
TO EDUCATION WHILE
CONFRONTING THE ANTI-
RIGHTS MOVEMENTS:
THE LS MATTER**

In a growing wave of global backlash against gender rights, South Africa is not immune.

In 2024, WLC took a stand in the LS v Hoërskool Stellenbosch case, a pivotal challenge to transphobia and discrimination in schools. But our work didn't stop there.

As we defended the rights of LS, a transgender learner, denied the freedom to express her gender identity at school, we were also required to confront a coordinated attempt to deny access to basic education to transgender and gender diverse learners.

There is a growing presence of anti-rights opposition in the spaces where we litigate, advocate, and engage with government on policy and law reform. Our partners also report an increase in anti-rights organisations operating at community level, spreading misinformation and working to walk back the rights and services available to women in all their diversity.

We have been working with partners to oppose these interventions, not just to protect our clients, but to hold the legal line against a movement that seeks to roll back hard-won constitutional rights.

**ADOPTION AUTONOMY:
DEFENDING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO
DECIDE**

In 2024, we returned to court to defend a major win for women's reproductive autonomy.

In TT & BM v Minister of Social Development, the South Gauteng High Court had ruled in favour of two women whose decisions to place their children for adoption were unlawfully obstructed by the state.

The Department of Social Development appealed, and we responded in the Supreme Court of Appeal, standing firm on the principle that women have the right to make choices about their futures, and their children's, free from state interference that is harmful, discriminatory and violates their right to privacy.

Our legal team argued that the Department's Practice Guidelines:

- Ignored the legal rights of women
- Undermined the best interests of the child
- Gave social workers unchecked power to override women's decisions

We challenged the state's position and defended the right to privacy, dignity, and bodily integrity - values that are not negotiable.

We now await judgment from the Supreme Court of Appeal on this critical matter.

5.

LITIGATION



STANDING STRONG AGAINST STEREOTYPES — IN THE LAW AND IN LIFE

The Coko Case: Consent Clarified, Dignity Defended

In 2024, the Women’s Legal Centre was admitted as *amicus curiae* in a case that asked a fundamental question:

Can a man be excused for “mistakenly” believing a woman said yes to sexual acts, when didn’t?

The Supreme Court of Appeal said no.

In *Director of Public Prosecutions, Eastern Cape v Coko*, the SCA overturned a dangerous High Court ruling and reaffirmed that reckless disregard for consent is not a defence.

The Court accepted WLC’s feminist legal analysis, which demonstrated how the High Court had failed to apply the correct test of *dolus eventualis*, allowing reckless disregard for consent to masquerade as innocence.

“An accused acts with *dolus eventualis* if he foresees (based on the facts) the possibility that the complainant does not consent, but nevertheless continues to act (recklessly so), while appreciating that he may be acting without the complainant’s consent, therefore ‘gambling, as it were, with the right to security of the person, bodily integrity and dignity of the person to whom the act is directed.’”

This judgment is now a landmark in South Africa’s fight against gender-based violence. It sets a precedent that consent must be respected — not assumed — and that ignoring uncertainty is not innocence, but criminal recklessness.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Consent is not just a legal principle. It’s engrained in our social cultural and fabric.

As part of our advocacy, we launched a campaign asking women to share a time when their consent was violated.

We gave examples:

- “*I said yes to a drink — not yes to you groping me.*”
- “*I said yes to dinner — not yes to sex.*”
- “*I said yes to a selfie — not yes to your hand up my skirt.*”

The engagement on social media was strong, but behind the scenes, many women reached out privately to share that they had similar experiences — yet felt burdened by the fear and shame that society places on survivors of sexual violence to speak out.

Not because it didn’t happen, but because of how society views women who speak out about their experiences.

The fear of being blamed.

The fear of being called a liar.

The fear of not being believed.

And the shame unjustly attached to surviving sexual violence.

Too often, women are expected to carry the full burden of saying no, while men are excused for not bothering to check.

The Coko judgment reminds us: consent is not the woman’s job to prove; it’s the man’s duty to obtain, confirm and respect.

5.

LITIGATION



EQUAL PROTECTION FOR EVERY UNION THE FIGHT FOR RECOGNITION: MUSLIM MARRIAGES & THE CONSTITUTION

For too long, women in Muslim marriages have faced unequal treatment under South African law. They've lived, raised families, and built communities, without the legal protections afforded to other married women.

In *Women's Legal Centre Trust v President of the Republic of South Africa*, the Constitutional Court changed that.

The Women's Legal Centre, as applicant in this case, secured a landmark ruling requiring Parliament to ensure Muslim marriages are treated in the same or similar way as all other legally recognised marriages.

The Court affirmed:

- Muslim marriages must be recognised by law and failure to do so is discriminatory
- Women must have equal access to legal remedies when marriages break down
- The law must reflect the lived realities of all South African women
- Children born in Muslim marriages have the right to the same protection as other children in law

Building a Unified Law for All Marriages

Since the judgment, WLC has played an active role in shaping the future of marriage law in South Africa, working with the Law Reform Commission, the Department of Home Affairs, and Parliament.

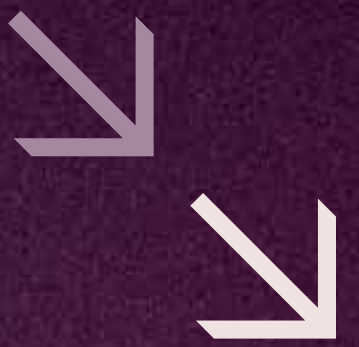
We've contributed to:

- The Green Paper on Marriage (2019)
- The White Paper on Marriage (2023): now official government policy
- The Marriage Bill: a proposed single law for all forms of marriage, including civil, customary, Muslim, and other unions

The goal: One law. Equal rights. Full protection. For all forms of marriage and family in South Africa.

Although the Bill lapsed before the 2024 election, it has since been reintroduced and the Women's Legal Centre remains deeply engaged in the process to ensure that no woman is left behind.

A 25-YEAR JOURNEY TO RECOGNISE MUSLIM MARRIAGES



5. LITIGATION

A 25-YEAR JOURNEY TO RECOGNISE MUSLIM MARRIAGES

1999 –

1999

HUNDREDS OF WOMEN LEFT WITHOUT LEGAL PROTECTION.
Between 1999 and 2014, WLC advised 753 Muslim women who were unable to access divorce, housing, or inheritance rights due to the state’s failure to recognise their marriages. These were not isolated cases; they were symptoms of a broader, systemic injustice that undermined women’s rights to equality, dignity, access to justice, and social security.

December

2014

WLC LAUNCHES ITS CASE
Women’s Legal Centre Trust v President of the Republic of South Africa
A public interest case to secure full legal recognition of Muslim marriages.

June

2018

WESTERN CAPE HIGH COURT RULES IN OUR FAVOUR
Court confirms state’s failure to recognise Muslim marriages is unconstitutional.

December

2019

SUPREME COURT OF APPEAL UPHOLDS RULING
Women’s rights to equality, dignity, and protection must be upheld.



5. LITIGATION

June

2022

A 25-YEAR JOURNEY TO RECOGNISE MUSLIM MARRIAGES

CONSTITUTIONAL COURT CONFIRMS FINAL VICTORY

- Marriage and Divorce Acts declared unconstitutional.
- Parliament given two years (until June 2024) to fix the law.

2022 -

2024

WLC DRIVES LEGAL REFORM

- Submissions on Draft Marriage Bill (2022 & 2023)
- Submissions on Divorce Amendment Bill (2023)
- Pushing for full protection for women in Muslim marriages.

May

2024

VICTORY: PRESIDENT SIGNS THE DIVORCE AMENDMENT ACT

- Muslim marriages now recognised in the Divorce Act
- Women can access legal divorce, protection for children, and fair division of assets.

**WHAT THIS MEANS
FOR *Women***



- Muslim marriages are now legally recognised under the Divorce Amendment Act
- Muslim women can now apply for a divorce through the courts and are no longer limited to religious processes
- Muslim women are entitled to equitable distribution of assets and recognition of inheritance claims

6.

ADVOCACY

THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW68)

At this year's CSW, the Women's Legal Centre hosted a virtual event titled **“Realising the Right to Public Healthcare for Women Living in Poverty.”**

The discussion brought into focus the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that create barriers for women working in precarious conditions, including Domestic Workers, Farm Workers, and Sex Workers, when trying to access basic public healthcare. The panel also explored how race, gender identity, migration status, and poverty intersect to deepen exclusion.

The conversation featured voices from across the globe:

- **Khuliso Managa**, WLC Attorney, South Africa
- **Mariam Al Tibi**, Communications & M&E Officer, Democracy & Workers Rights Centre, Palestine
- **Kholi Buthelezi**, National Coordinator, Sisonke National Movement, South Africa
- **Ida Le Blanc**, General Secretary, National Union of Domestic Employees, Trinidad & Tobago

The session was facilitated by **Chriscy Blouws**, WLC Attorney.

Together, these fierce advocates reflected on the lived experiences of women globally and the urgent need to dismantle systemic barriers to healthcare, not just in policy, but in practice.

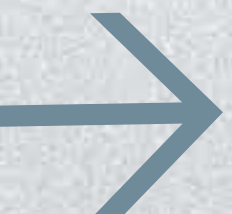
Our struggles and our freedom are interconnected.

STANDING WITH PALESTINE:
AFRICAN FEMINISTS. LAWYERS. ACTIVISTS.
UNAPOLOGETIC.

The WLC stood in solidarity with the international community to prevent and not be complicit in the systemic violation of rights taking place in Gaza towards the Palestinian people through:

- Supporting our South African legal team at the International Court of Justice at the Hague
- Joining 76 national & international human rights organisations and lawyers as *amicus curiae* in the fight for international accountability in the DCI-Palestine et al v Biden et al case.

As lawyers, activists and feminists, the WLC is committed to upholding the rule of law and advocate for adherence to the principles of basic human rights. It is our duty to speak out against injustice and we will not be silenced.



7.

LEGAL
ADVICE

ENSURING ACCESS TO
A RESPONSIVE JUSTICE
SYSTEM

Every day, women across South Africa reach out to us in person, by phone, over email and WhatsApp, seeking legal advice, clarity and hope. In 2024, the Women’s Legal Centre provided direct legal support to **1 448** women.



WHAT WOMEN CAME TO US FOR:

FOCUS AREA	TOTALS
Women’s Rights to Work in Just & Favourable Conditions	6
Equality in Relationships	33
Women’s Right to Live Free from Violence	81
Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights	841
Women’s Rights to Land, Housing & Tenure Security	3
General	484
TOTAL	1448

WHAT THE DATA TELLS US:

Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights
Women are still facing systemic barriers to abortion access. More than half of all queries we received related to SRHR showing how critical this area remains.

Violence and Harassment

- 60 women sought advice related to domestic violence
- 9 cases of harassment, including 6 in the workplace
- 19 cases involved elder abuse and sexual violence
 - This signals an urgent need to deepen our outreach and referral pathways for these overlooked groups.

Intersectional Needs
Many women come to us with multiple, overlapping issues, from eviction threats and divorce to protection orders and harassment. These realities show why our approach must remain holistic and individual-centred.

Referrals and Support
We don’t work alone. Women needing legal representation are connected with partners like Legal Aid South Africa and ProBono.Org. Those seeking psychosocial support or shelter are referred to Mosaic, Callas Foundation, Triangle Project or local shelters such as Saartjie Baartman Centre.

7. LEGAL ADVICE

MAKING THE LAW EASIER TO UNDERSTAND, ONE POST AT A TIME

In 2024, we launched our Legal Advice Tips series on social media to expand our reach and equip more women with the legal knowledge they need to protect their rights.

During the course of the year we shared 34 posts focussing on different issues affecting women, from domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace, to safe abortion access and marriage rights, using short, accessible content to explain the law, outline available protections, and guide women on what steps to take.

The engagement was positive, confirming the strong public appetite for simple, reliable, and empowering legal content, particularly on topics where shame and stigma often keep women from speaking out.

Topics that resonated most with our audience included:

- Women's rights in Customary Marriages
- Sexual harassment in the workplace
- Sexual violence
- Domestic violence

LEGAL ADVICE TIPS 

LEGAL ADVICE TIPS

In 2024, we brought the law to your timeline, reaching nearly 60 000 people

 131

34 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Covering everything from marriage, inheritance and maintenance to abortion, domestic violence and workplace rights.

34

60 000 VIEWS

Most viewed topics:

- Customary Marriage Rights
- Sexual Harassment at Work
- Sexual Violence

 60 000

552 LIKES

Showing growing public interest in accessible legal content.

 552

8.

COLLABORATIONS



BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS BORDERS

FROM GRASSROOTS GATHERINGS TO **GLOBAL EXCHANGES**,
WE WORK WITH OTHERS TO EXPAND **ACCESS TO JUSTICE**,
DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING, AND BUILD **COLLECTIVE POWER**.

WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE × PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Empowering the next generation of SRHR activists

In 2024, we partnered with Penn State's Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies for their "Reproductive Justice and Culture" programme. Together, we explored the challenges and opportunities for reproductive justice in South Africa.

We were joined by our partners at Gender Dynamix, Triangle Project and Sisonke, who each contributed powerful insights:

- **Decriminalising Sex Work in South Africa with Sisonke:**
Students explored the push for decriminalisation and how criminalisation affects sex workers' access to healthcare and basic services.
- **Legal Gender Recognition with Gender Dynamix:**
This session unpacked the legal and personal implications of legal gender recognition, and how its absence reinforces discrimination and exclusion.
- **LGBTQIA+ Access to Education with Triangle Project:**
Students engaged on the barriers and opportunities for LGBTQIA+ students and the importance of safe, inclusive learning environments.

WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE × YORK UNIVERSITY

Documenting the impact of grassroots feminist activism

We welcomed four students from York University (UK) for a two-week programme that spotlighted our Human Rights Defenders initiative.

Their visit included:

- A collaborative workshop with Scalabrini Centre
- A silent protest with Callas Foundation
- An in-depth interview with Wendy Pekeur from Ubuntu Rural Women and Youth Movement
- A community care experience with Maria Dlokolo at Gogo's Community Kitchen

Reflections from the students:

"An inspiring experience! We uncovered the importance of the Human Rights Defender Programme and learned so much from everyone we met." ~ Erin

"These two weeks deepened my passion for defending women's rights and showed me the power of local organisations driving real change." ~ Eloise

"The WLC and HRDs are truly inspirational. It's been a privilege to witness their incredible and much-needed work." ~ Kate

"Meeting these inspirational women was life-changing. Their grassroots efforts and community impact left a lasting impression." ~ Logan

8. COLLABORATIONS

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS - Creating shared spaces for learning, legal empowerment and solidarity

03.2024

In partnership with the SA Human Rights Commission, we hosted a public discussion on the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) to ensure that there was an understanding on the rights of domestic workers to access social security protection when injured or sick during the course of their employment.

06.2024

With Callas Foundation, we brought together First Responders and Community Activists to unpack the latest amendments to the Domestic Violence Act and strengthen community responses to GBV. We can only implement the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide if we work at community level reweaving our social fabric.

12.2024

Alongside Pro Bono.org and Mosaic, we facilitated a workshop on criminal vs civil legal processes in GBV cases, offering women tools to navigate the legal system and understand their options. Access to a responsive and accountable justice system is only possible if ordinary South African's know what their rights are.



9.

EDUCATION



FEMINIST CLINIC 2024

GROWING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FEMINIST LAWYERS

South Africa's legal system may be progressive on paper, but justice remains out of reach for many women. One reason is the persistent gap in legal education. Law is still taught without a feminist lens, leaving young lawyers unprepared to respond to the realities of gender-based discrimination and violence.

The Women's Legal Centre is changing that.

From 1 to 5 July 2024, we hosted our second Feminist Clinic in Johannesburg. The response was overwhelming. We received over 200 applications from law students across the country. Only 15 could be selected, representing 10 universities from across South Africa.

Over five days, students immersed themselves in:

- African feminism
- Intersectionality in law
- Reproductive justice
- Violence in learning spaces
- Bodily autonomy

They didn't just learn the law. They reimagined it and then committed to changing it!

We were joined by 9 phenomenal guest speakers - feminist lawyers, authors and human rights defenders, who brought depth, honesty and experience to every session.

From tough conversations about systemic injustice to empowering moments of sisterhood, the 2024 Clinic helped shape the future of feminist legal practice in South Africa.

Student Voices

"The feminist clinic made me think more out of the box. That it's not just facts and rules. We need to take into account context and our history."

"It teaches you the hardships of being a woman and gives you the tools to be a feminist, a good lawyer and an activist."

"It's the best decision you will make in your life."

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE, WHOSE GENEROUS SUPPORT MADE OUR 2024 FEMINIST CLINIC POSSIBLE.

Heinrich Böll Stiftung • The Elma South Africa Foundation
Maisha Solutions • Varsity College • Wallace
The Raith Foundation • Mason Office Solutions • Jutta
The Main House • Ford Foundation.



9.

EDUCATION



THE WLC INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

The WLC team is small and we recognise that we are able to do the work and have the impact because we partner and collaborate with others. Key to our impact is the work done by local and international interns.

During the period we hosted 5 interns who were able to contribute to research, development of strategies and supporting our outreach work into communities.

Intern Testimonials

"I've learnt so much about the incredible and much needed work they do, and the support they offer the Human Rights Defenders in their communities. They are a truly inspirational group of ladies" ~ Kate Hunter

"It has been amazing to get involved with work being done on the local level, and uncover the importance of the Human Rights Defender Programme for individuals and communities. We have learned a lot from everybody we have met." Erin Virtue

"It was both challenging and inspiring to be part of a team working on complex human rights issues. I grew not only professionally, but personally, gaining a deeper understanding of what it means to work with purpose. The experience gave me a strong sense of belonging and a renewed drive to contribute meaningfully to the legal field." ~ Frida Benzon

"I have learned so much in the last two weeks through engaging with WLC staff members, HRD's and local communities, further motivating me to pursue a career in defending women's rights. This experience has also taught me the importance of localised organisations, working on the ground, as they truly understand local contexts, ensuing genuine progress and change." ~ Eloise Eyre

"Witnessing the incredible impact they have on their communities was deeply inspiring and a testament to the power of grassroots efforts and strong local networks." ~ Logan Gardener

9. EDUCATION

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ON FEMINIST LAW

ATTORNEY CHRISCY BLOUWS**Event:** UCT Guest Lecturer**Topic:** Women's Rights in the online space

Chriscy's lecture emphasised the importance of women speaking out against violence and naming perpetrators. The lecture highlighted litigation using feminist principles like intersectionality for substantive equality and women's protection in South Africa.

ADVOCATE BRONWYN PITHEY**ATTORNEY CHRISCY BLOUWS****Event:** International Feminist Legal Network**Location:** City University Law School, London & Online**Topic:** A Feminist Approach to Litigation & Legal Advocacy

Our legal team presented on the topic of a feminist legal response to the silencing of women by their perpetrators through the use of criminal and civil laws such as defamation.

ADVOCATE BRONWYN PITHEY**Location:** Rhodes University**Topic:** S vs Coko & The report on matters of sexual harassment and GBV & harm in South African University spaces

WLC Advocate Bronwyn Pithey presented on the landmark case S v Coko and the report on sexual harassment and violence against women in South African universities. She was joined by Sibongile Ndashe, Dr Corinne Knowles, and Prof. Siphokazi Magadla.

ADVOCATE AMANDA STEMELE**Event:** Unisa Law Clinic & Legal Aid SA Career Day

Amanda joined a panel at this event, sharing insights on the vital role the WLC plays in championing justice for women.

9. EDUCATION

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ON FEMINIST LAW

ATTORNEY CHRISCY BLOUWS
ATTORNEY SENAMILE MADLALA

Event: Social Justice, Hunger & Constitution Symposium

Our work at the WLC extends far beyond legal advocacy. As part of the conversation at the Centre for Social Justice’s symposium, Chriscy & Senamile emphasised the intersection of human rights and social justice, focusing on the harsh realities faced by women in South Africa. From hunger to criminalisation, we continue to champion the rights of marginalised women, ensuring their voices are heard where it matters most.

ATTORNEY CHRISCY BLOUWS

Event: Equality Now Trends Report Launch on Rape, Laws, Policy & Access to Justice in Africa

Chriscy joined a panel to discuss key insights from the report and explore how we can drive meaningful change together.

ATTORNEY KHULISO MANAGA

Event: Human Rights Watch Conference on access to SRHR and Obstetric Violence in Africa

Khuliso joined this important conference that explored access to SRHR and Obstetric Violence such as forced and coerced sterilisation. She shared our work and lessons learned with other activists and lawyers from across Africa.

ATTORNEY KHENSANI MOTILENI

Event: ESCR Net Membership Convening

Khensani attended this important convening of activists across the globe to develop strategies, share lessons and ideas to shape economic, social and cultural rights internationally.

10.

IN THE MEDIA

SHARING OUR *Voice.*
SHAPING THE *Narrative.*

TV ↘		
ATTORNEY	CHRISCY BLOUWS	
MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC	
Cape town TV Workers World Labour TV Show	Chriscy featured on Cape Town TV’s Workers World Labour TV Show where she discussed women’s rights to be free from violence in the workplace. The conversation covered defining sexual harassment, its application in the new code, and the pervasive nature of violence in South Africa, reinforcing patriarchal norms.	
SABC News	Harassment in the Judiciary	
ATTORNEY	KHENSANI MOTILENI	
MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC	
eNCA	Celebrating the Appointment of Justice Mandisa Maya	
eNCA	Divorce Amendment Act	
ATTORNEY	KHULISO MANAGA	
MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC	
Newzroom Afrika	Obstetric Violence	

10.

IN THE MEDIA

SHARING OUR *Voice.*
SHAPING THE *Narrative.*

TV

ADVOCATE JUNIOR ASSOCIATE	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
BRONWYN PITHEY ANDREA-JOY JANTJIES	Cape Town TV The Womxn Show	CEDAW and SA Government’s International legal obligation to address DV in SA
	Cape Town TV The Womxn Show	Coko case Our legal team joined Lenina Rasool on The Womxn Show to discuss the critical issue of consent in rape cases, specifically unpacking the legal victory in the Coko case, where the judgement clarified the importance of consent to further protect women.

10.

IN THE MEDIA

SHARING OUR *Voice.*

SHAPING THE *Narrative.*

RADIO

ADVOCATE	BRONWYN PITHEY	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
		Cape Talk	Deveney Nel Case Bronwyn was interviewed on Cape Talk where she shared her expert opinion on the Deveney Nel case.
		Cape Talk	Judicial Matters Amendment Act
		SAfm	SCA Judgement on Consent & Intentional in Rape Cases
ATTORNEY	KHENSANI MOTILENI	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
		Cape Talk	Department of HA statement on registering Muslim Marriages Certificates

10.

IN THE MEDIA

SHARING OUR *Voice.*

SHAPING THE *Narrative.*

RADIO

ADVOCATE	CHRISCY BLOUWS	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
		Kfm	WLC's African feminist approach to addressing GBV, advocating for justice & advancing equality for women in SA
JUNIOR ASSOCIATE	ANDREA-JOY JANTJIES	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
		Radio 786	Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
ATTORNEY, HEAD OF PROGRAMMES	CHARLENE MAY	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
		Cape Talk	Proposed Marriages Amendment Bill

10.

IN THE MEDIA

SHARING OUR *Voice.*
SHAPING THE *Narrative.*

ONLINE ↘

ATTORNEY, HEAD OF PROGRAMMES CHARLENE MAY	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
	Post Newspaper	Recognising & Regulating Polygamy in SA
JUNIOR ASSOCIATE ANDREA-JOY JANTJIES	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
	Radio 786	Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
	1000women.co.za	Andrea-Joy contributed to an article on social, economic & implementation barriers that undermine effectiveness of three new GBV laws

10.

IN THE MEDIA

SHARING OUR *Voice.*

SHAPING THE *Narrative.*

ONLINE

ATTORNEY CHRISCY BLOUWS	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
	De Rebus	De Rebus WLC Attorney Chriscy Blouws was featured in the August issue of De Rebus, South Africa’s leading attorney journal. In the feature, Chriscy spoke about her passion for law, her dedication to feminism, and the changes she’d like to see in South African legislation, particularly those affecting women’s rights
		Speaker at Equality Now’s Trend Report Launch on Rape, Laws, Policy & Access to Justice in Africa.
ADVOCATE BRONWYN PITHEY	MEDIA PLATFORM	TOPIC
	News24	Deveney Nel Case News24 reached out to our advocate, Bronwyn Pithey, for her expert opinion on criminal capacity and the processes in place for high risk children accused of violent crimes.
	Weekend Argus	Systemic Barriers survivors face and the unwavering pursuit of justice needed to overcome them.

11.

FINANCIAL
OVERVIEW
OF 2024



INCOME STATEMENT

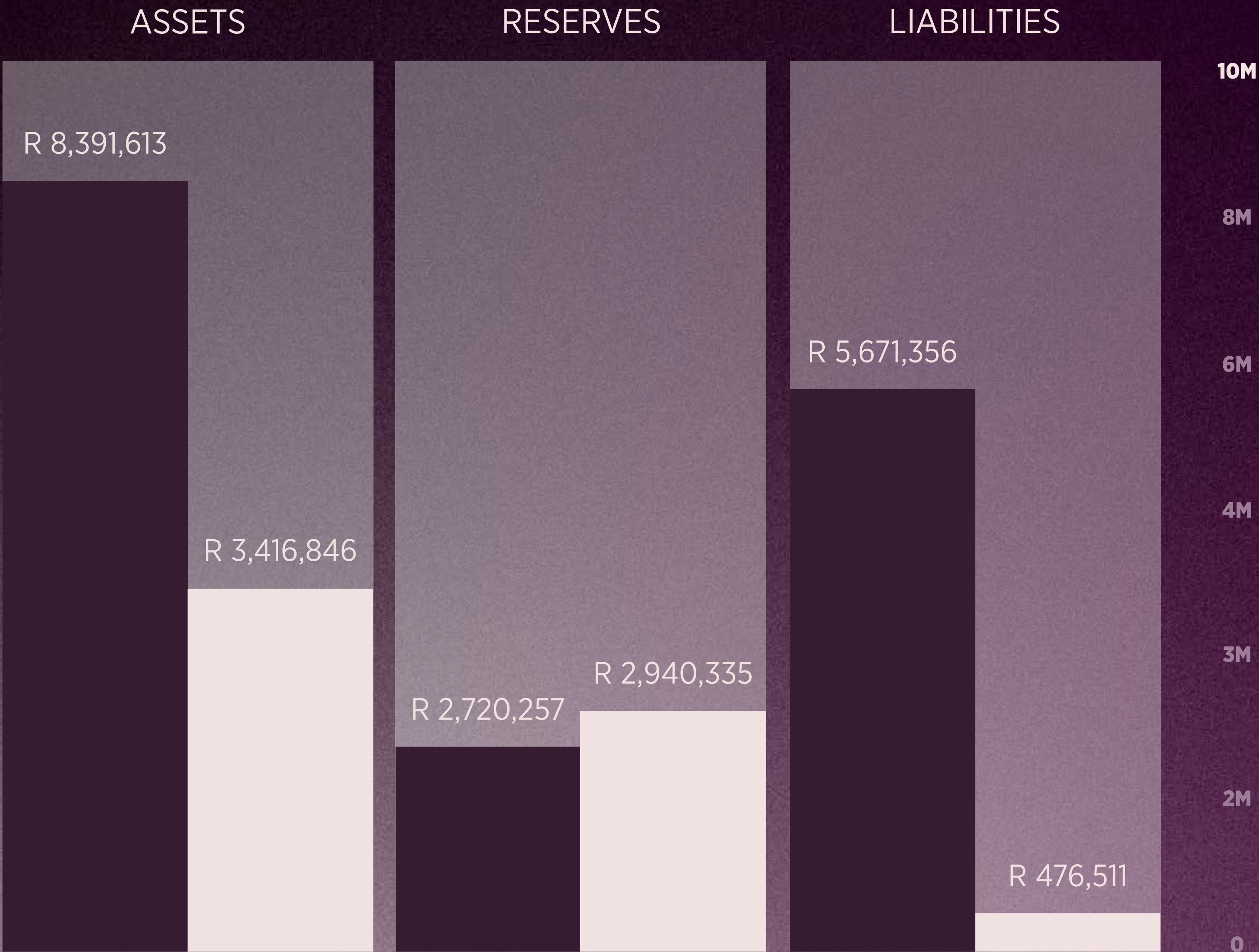
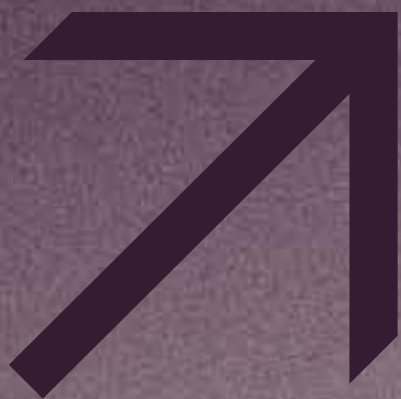
	2024	2023
REVENUE	R15 527 008	R16 068 907
OTHER INCOME	R170 256	R95 230
OPERATING EXPENSES	(R15 720 239)	(R16 098 419)
OPERATING DEFICIT/SURPLUS	(R22 975)	R65 718
INVESTMENT REVENUE	R243 053	R71 819
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	R220 078	R137 537

11.

FINANCIAL
OVERVIEW
OF 2024

2023

2024



12.

FUNDERS & DONORS



**THE WLC WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR *Funders*
AND *Donors* FOR THEIR CONTINUED *Support*
AND *Contribution* TO THE CENTRE.**

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13.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS **CHARLENE MAY • BRONWYN PITHEY • AMANDA STEMELE**

DESIGN AND LAYOUT **MOENIEBA ABRAHAMS • ZAKKIYYA ABDURAHMAN**

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