

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Working for Non-discrimination and Equality



FWLD

Working for Non-discrimination and Equality

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEDAW : Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CRC : Child Rights Committee

CSNCR : Civil Society Network for Citizenship Rights

CSO : Civil Society Organization

ECSR : Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee

FWLD : Forum for Women, Law and Development

GoN : Government of Nepal

ICCPR : Human Right Committee

IEC : Information, education and communication

LGBTQI+ : Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex

NHRC : National Human Rights Commission

NJA : National Judicial Academy

NWC : National Women's Commission

OCMCs : One-stop-crisis Management Centers

PIL : Public Interest Litigations

RHRWG : Reproductive Health Rights Working Group

SGBV : Sexual and Gender Based Violence

SRHR : Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

UN : United Nations

UPR : Universal Periodic Report

MESSAGES FROM CHAIRPERSON

“ *The year 2023 was productive in terms of programmatic achievements and organizational development. We look forward to working with you all to realize both women and girl’s rights as enshrined in our new strategic plan which runs from 2023 to 2027.* ”



I am delighted to write this message. My involvement in FWLD work started twenty-five years ago and in just a few years I have witnessed its growth under the leadership of its executive Directors Advocate Sabin Shrestha. His leadership, vision, and decades long commitments to secure meaningful changes for victims and survivors have created a truly unique organization driven by an amazing team he has built and grown exponentially over the past 25 years.

On the eve of its 28th anniversary, FWLD has become a leader in its field, the human rights organization with field operations in Legal Identity (Citizenship/Birth Registration), Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV), Access to Justice and Legal Aid, Disaster and Climate Change, Anti-Human Trafficking and Safe Migration, Child Rights and Social & Economic Rights at the heart of its work.

FWLD has now over 60 staff and consultants, with programmes in all over in Nepal. In 2023 supports and works with thousands of extraordinary individuals who, despite

challenges that sometimes seem insurmountable including oppressive political systems, fear of reprisal, bureaucracy, and corruption, will not stop fighting for justice. And that is why FWLD’s work is so important and that is why the dedication and expertise of its staff is at the core of the organisation’s success.

I want to thank FWLD staff and our partners for working relentlessly to prevent impunity, protecting victims and survivors, and empowering them to drive their fight for justice. I am also thankful to our donors for enabling us to grow and expand the reach and impact of our work. Most of all, I want to thank the victims and survivors that trust us. We are privileged to be working with and supporting them. Without their views about their priorities, needs and expectations, we cannot deliver the truth and justice they want and deserve.

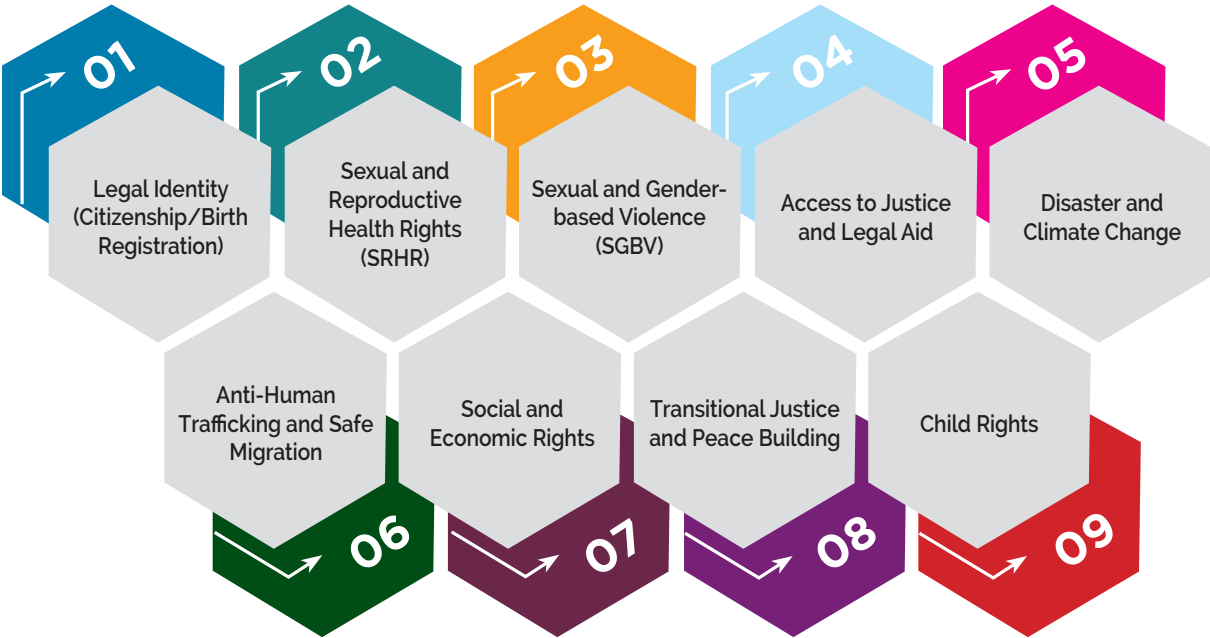
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Geeta Aryal". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sr. Advocate Geeta Aryal

WHO WE ARE & HOW WE WORK

Established in 1995, Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD) is an autonomous, non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) that is dedicated for the protection, promotion and enjoyment of human rights. It envisions a world where human rights are fully realized, social injustice and discrimination are eradicated, and equality prevails. FWLD have been engaging through programming, research and advocacy to protect the rights of women, children, minorities and marginalized groups; and implementing a range of strategies, including policy advocacy, evidence-based research, filing public interest litigations (PIL), capacity enhancement initiatives, providing legal assistance and support, and providing technical support to the Government of Nepal (GoN) in law-making processes. FWLD has played a significant role in movement-building and influenced several critical changes for the effective legal mechanism to obtain legal identity; combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); protect and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), transformative gender equality, and access to justice for Nepali women, children and marginalized communities.

The main areas of FWLD work are as follows:



Since its foundation, FWLD has been advocating for accountability mechanisms for the protection of human rights, and has collaborated with relevant agencies in number of intersecting topics, including National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), National Women's Commission (NWC), National Judicial Academy (NJA), Nepal Police's Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Directorate, federal and provincial parliaments and their relevant committees, and various municipalities. FWLD is accredited with special consultative status of Economic and Social Council of UN (ECOSOC), and is affiliated with various national-level networks of civil society organizations, serving in different capacities. With a robust network of lawyers at the federal, provincial, and district levels in Nepal, FWLD engages with government officials, legislative committees, judicial actors, UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), journalists, law colleges, and youth networks. Aiming to strengthen their capabilities and improve their working modalities to effectively provide services and implement existing laws and policies, it collaborates with both formal and informal justice actors, and engages in capacity-building initiatives for law enforcement agencies and local judicial institutions such as judicial committee members, police, One-stop-crisis Management Centers (OCMCs), public attorneys, court officials etc.

Aligned to its founding principle, FWLD constantly works to reform the discriminatory laws and the discrimination embedded in society and culture; and to create institutions that promote the rights of women and marginalized groups taking into consideration the cross-cutting effects of laws, and understanding of intersectionality. It has successfully used PILs as a tool on several issues, including on enforcing SGBV laws such as criminalization of marital rape, equality between son and daughter to rights to ancestral property, equal citizenship rights, access to SRHR, and rights of sexual and gender minorities etc. In addition, networking and collaboration FWLD has been working in close collaboration with Reproductive Health Rights Working Group (RHRWG) in furthering the SRHR movement in Nepal, including successfully advocating for guaranteeing reproductive health rights as fundamental rights, and the inclusion of reproductive health services in vital services during pandemic like COVID. Furthermore, FWLD, acting as the secretariat for the Civil Society Network for Citizenship Rights (CSNCR), has been organizing a range of initiatives aimed at advocating for the reform of gender biased laws and promoting gender equality nationality laws in Nepal.

Also, it has been consistently engaging with UN treaty monitoring and other international mechanisms for promoting accountability towards advancing gender equality and women's human rights. Since its establishment, it has coordinated the preparation of all civil society's CEDAW Shadow Report since Nepal's initial report (in 1999) until sixth periodic report reviewed in 2018, and has also submitted separate additional information to other Human Rights Treaties Bodies such as Universal Periodic Report (UPR), Child Rights Committee (CRC), Human Rights Committee (ICCPR) and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee (ECSR) on the specific issues, including citizenship, birth registration, reproductive health rights, SGBV, employment and economic rights etc.

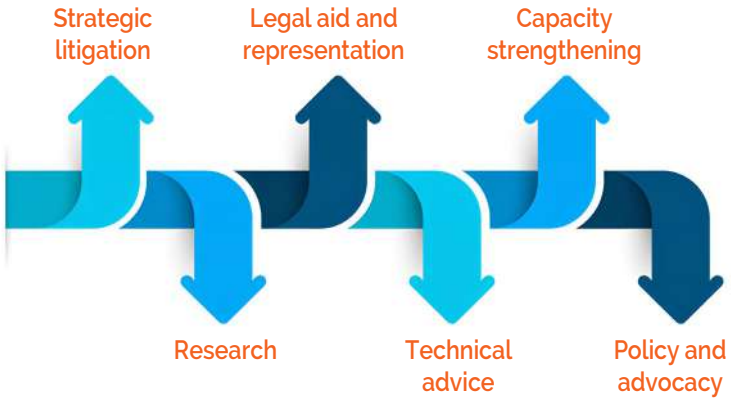
FWLD has developed and disseminated various information, education and communication (IEC) materials that promotes justice and accountability towards gender equality and women's rights, and has implemented range of awareness raising campaigns and initiatives to build public opinions such as forum theatre, community outreach events, mobilization of champions etc. In order to provide tech-based assistance to general public, it has developed a mobile application called 'Mero Adhikar' (My Rights - <https://onelink.to/42ucwv>) to disseminate legal information, relevant laws, court decisions, international law, and also provides contact information of law enforcement agencies, judicial committee members, legal aid organizations, and a list of pro bono lawyers, facilitating access to justice.

FWLD' s approach is anchored in four principles



Who we work with

We work with diverse constituencies of stakeholders, parliamentarians, policy makers, justice actors, law enforcer, first and foremost survivors, including survivors' groups that have come together to collectively seek justice and accountability. We work with national governments, regional and international institutions, legal and justice actors, authorities, civil society and human rights organizations and UN agencies. Our areas of collaboration and partnerships include:





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the year 2023, FWLD impacted communities through interventions in the areas of legal aid and psychosocial support, capacity building and awareness raising, and research and advocacy.

Apart from the legal aid services of more than 15596 beneficiaries and capacity building sessions of Parliamentarians, policy maker, lawyers, local leaders, government officials, law enforcers, media persons and including justice actors, FWLD developed impactful policy papers and research to inform our advocacy initiatives.

FWLD managed to conduct different trainings to capacitate duty bearers to serve citizens effectively and engage in societal problem-solving. In this regard, 1132 people were equipped with skills on different topics as far as the mission of each category is concerned. Further, 8,396 people were reached during awareness raising activities conducted in various districts to enlighten people on laws as part of legal identity documentation, child right, anti-human trafficking and GBV prevention.

In sum, FWLD accomplished significant achievements with important lessons learned that will continue to inform our future engagements.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

2023 in numbers

75

---○ Trained as community paralegals,
survivor advocates or grassroots
champions

46

---○ High-level discussion events

55

---○ Media articles and press releases

+4500

---○ Received legal information

15596

---○ Received legal assistance

1132

---○ Capacity building trainings for
justice actors

7

---○ Radio program

+1221
k views

---○ People reached through 33 videos
for social media on Legal Identity,
SGBV, Child Right and Anti-Human
Trafficking

INTRODUCTION

This year coincided with the end of the implementation of FWLD strategic plan 2018-2023. This annual report serves as accountability tool on how FWLD have implemented our milestones as part of being accountable to general public, stakeholders, as well as development partners. Furthermore, the report will facilitate FWLD management to make informed dynamic decisions.

FWLD contributed to ensure that women/girls fully enjoy their rights in line with the constitution guarantees women's rights as a fundamental right, reaffirms the right to safe motherhood and reproductive health, education, health, employment, equal pay, social security and property rights and guarantees inclusion of women in all state bodies on the basis of principle of proportional inclusion.

In the pursuit of justice and empowerment, FWLD has made significant strides in the 2023, marked by unwavering dedication and impactful outreach. Through our array of legal aid services, FWLD successfully served 15,596 individuals, providing invaluable assistance to those seeking to assert their rights. Our FWLD Centers, paralegal and legal help desk, alongside our Mobile Legal Clinics, have become pillars of support for communities across Nepal, offering accessible avenues for legal guidance and representation. Furthermore, our innovative "Mero Adhikar Mobile App" has emerged as a transformative tool, facilitating legal empowerment for over 10,000 individuals nationwide. This digital platform has democratized access to legal resources, empowering right-holders with vital information at their fingertips.

FWLD achievements are attributed to dynamic and innovative approaches meant to bring services closer to citizens notably community dialogue sessions, mobile legal aid clinics, mock based capacity building, research based advocacy and awareness raising, to name a few. Connected to that we cherish the efforts of FWLD staff and smooth collaboration and partnerships with different GOs/INGOs/NGOs and UN agencies that animated the realization of the above achievements. FWLD contributed to ensure that women/girls fully enjoy their rights as they should in line with the constitutional rights.

PARALEGAL AND LEGAL HELP DESK SUPPORT

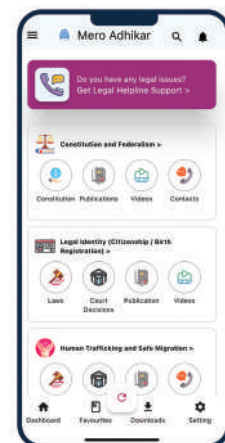
15, 596

RIGHT-HOLDERS seeking legal assistance through **FWLD centers and legal help desk.**



+10,000

RIGHT-HOLDERS downloaded the **"Mero Adhikar Mobile App"**

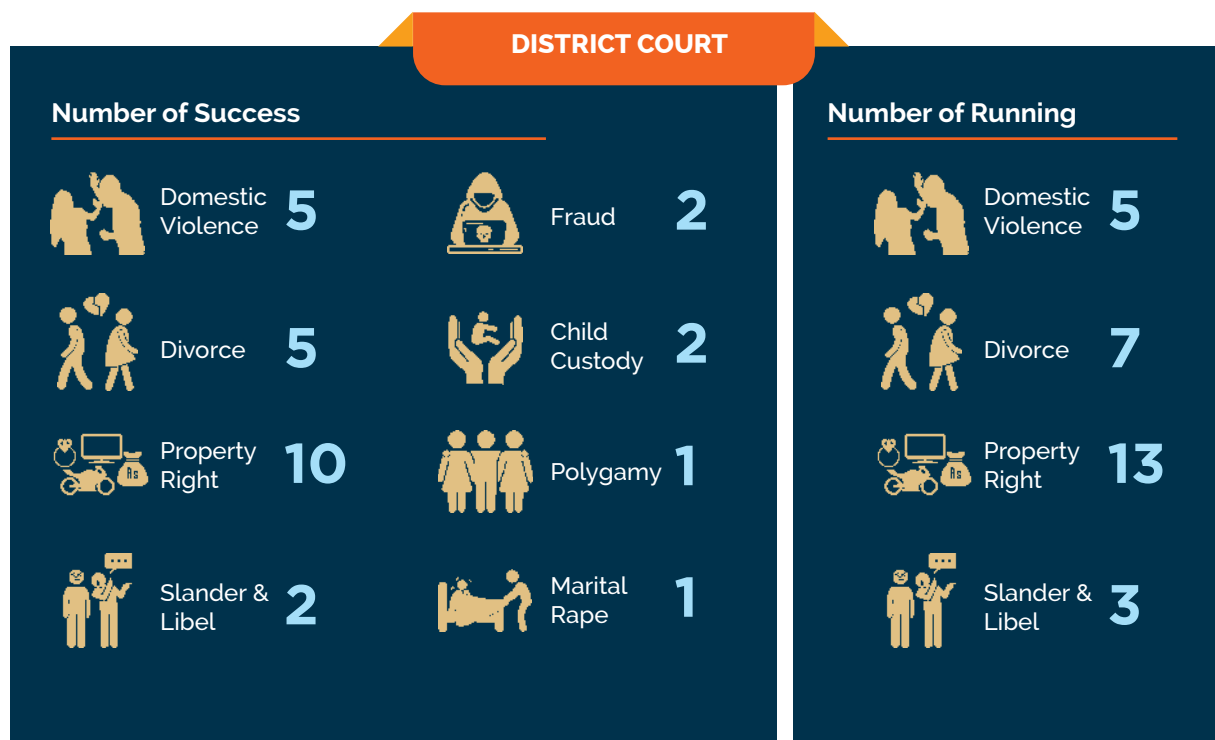


LEGAL SUPPORT

Legal Aid Services

FWLD provides legal information, assistance and representation to individuals and communities to facilitate their access to justice. Also work with partners to increase victims and survivors' rights awareness and knowledge of avenues for legal redress which is particularly challenging in fragile and conflict contexts. Recognizing the critical importance of survivor-led justice, FWLD first support and empower them to recognize and assert their legal rights and provide them with legal advice and representation, if they wish.

In 2023, FWLD reached more than 4500 people with legal information and assistance and represented more than 231 individuals. The accessibility of comprehensive array of legal support such as counselling, advice, and facilitation at relevant authorities for necessary documentation.



Isha and Her Mother's Journey to Citizenship Certificate

ISHA retains a faint memory of her father as someone who frequently engaged in arguments with her mother. On a freezing night, as usual, he got into a heated argument with her mother and eventually forced both Isha and her mother thrown out of the house. She remembers spending that chilly night under open sky with her mother. Subsequently, Isha's mother took her to her maternal home. A week later, upon returning, they were informed by their rented room owner that her father had vacated the room, taking all his belongings, and he never returned.

Isha was raised solely by her mother, and faced numerous challenges along the way. Isha nurtured a dream of pursuing education abroad to bring happiness to her mother's life. However, this aspiration was shattered when her hopes of obtaining citizenship denied by the concerned authority due to the absence of her father. With the legal assistance of FWLD, Isha filed a case in the High Court. On April 18, 2023, the High Court provided verdict in her favor. After successful litigation, she finally secured her citizenship certificate on August 14, 2023.



LEGAL VICTORY

High Court orders Birth Registration and Citizenship in the name of Mother

B. RAUNIYAR, 27 years old, grew up in his maternal home. His mother has a citizenship by descent. She is a person with disability. Mr. B's mother was married to a worker in a factory who used to live in a rented room in Biratnagar. Her family married her to the worker without inquiring much about his background as he agreed to marry his mother despite her disability. Within a year of marriage, the man left the house without saying anything. Since then, he has been missing. He was born and then raised by his maternal relatives. When he went to inquire about the citizenship certificate, he was asked to apply for a birth registration certificate. Then, he went to the ward office where he was verbally denied birth registration because he was not able to present his father and his citizenship certificate as well as his parents' marriage certificate. Thus, with the support of FWLD, he filed a writ demanding order of mandamus and other necessary orders to be issued in a way that ensures all his rights.

Responding to the writ filed by Mr. Rauniyar, High Court Biratnagar on 2nd October 2023 issued order of mandamus in the name of his respective ward, instructing them to provide him with his birth registration certificate as well as recommendation for citizenship certificate.



FROM LOSS TO BELONGING: Mamata's Journey to Citizenship and Acceptance

MAMATA PARIYAR, has never had the opportunity to see her father, and all she knows is that his name is Mathura Pariyar. Tragically, she lost her mother, Geeta Pariyar, at the tender age of four. Left with a void that only a parent's love can fill, Mamata found solace and care in the warm embrace of her aunt, who happened to be her mother's sister. As Mamata sought a citizenship certificate for a sense of belonging and identity, she faced rejection. The authorities refused her request, citing the fact that her father had passed away long ago without holding citizenship at the time of his death. Additionally, she had lost her mother. The authorities informed her that a change in the law or a court decision were necessary prerequisites for her to be recognized as a citizen through her mother. Consequently, with the legal support provided by FWLD, she submitted a writ petition to the Supreme Court on September 6, 2021.

Finally, after 2 years of legal battle, the Supreme Court, on October 29, 2023, at last rendered a favorable decision in Mamata's favor, issuing the writ and thereby granting her a citizenship certificate through her mother's name.

It was a moment of profound significance, marking the culmination of a journey of Mamata that had started with loss and longing and ended with the warmth of acceptance and belonging.



Paralegal and Legal Help Desk

In 2023, FWLD embarked on a targeted initiative to empower individuals without citizenship, aiming to facilitate 15,000 individuals in acquiring citizenship certificates through our Paralegal and Legal Help Desk. Originally planned for implementation in five districts, the scope of our services expanded significantly, reaching additional districts across Nepal. By year-end, our efforts culminated in the successful facilitation of citizenship certificates for a total of 15,328 individuals across various districts. Noteworthy districts included Dhankuta, Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Mahotari, Dhanusha, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, Tanahu, Nawalparasi (west), Rupandehi, Kapilvastu, Dang, Banke, Kailali, Doti, and Achham, where our dedicated team of volunteers played a pivotal role in driving this impactful outcome.



Strategic Litigation, PIL and Individual Writ

FWLD uses strategic litigation as a key approach to achieve rapid, significant and systemic changes in the law, practice or public awareness by taking carefully selected ground-breaking and landmark cases. We use domestic, transnational and international justice and human rights mechanisms to support our cases and secure justice.

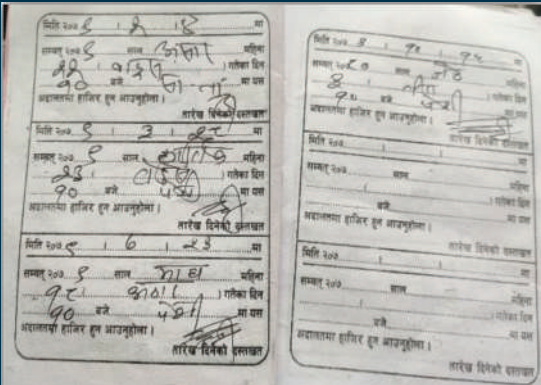
FWLD has been providing legal support to the individuals facing citizenship certificate denials for many years. In 2023, FWLD initially planned to assist 50 individuals with legal support, but during the mid-term review, this number was revised down to 25 cases. This adjustment was necessary due to the extensive documentation required before filing a case, which can be time-consuming. This often leads to frustration and discouragement among individuals, potentially causing them to leave their efforts. Moreover, many incidents of denials to implement courts' judgements from the authorities in the recent days have discouraged the individuals to go through the courts rather than they want facilitation support. Despite these challenges, FWLD supported 25 individuals in filing writs in 2023, facilitated by the arrangement of lawyers across different districts.



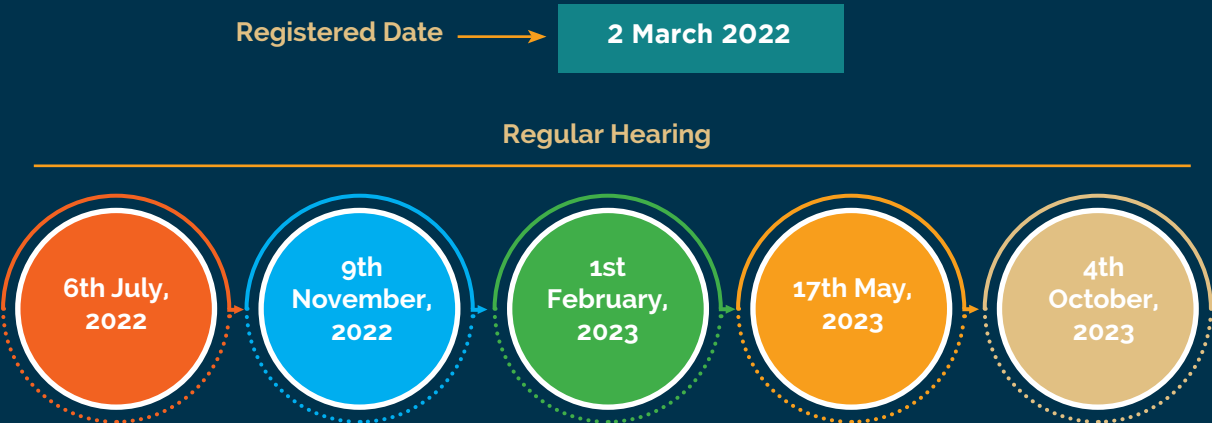
Provide continued support for ongoing litigation on the decriminalization of abortion in Nepal

The Writ on Decriminalization of Abortion along with other crucial demands was drafted

and registered in the Supreme Court of Nepal on 2nd March 2022. The Supreme Court had allocated the writ to the Constitutional Bench given the nature of the claim in the writ petition that required legislative amendments and even repeal of certain legal provisions. However, due to certain disturbances in the judicial organ of the State, there had been a delay on the part of the Supreme Court in providing the hearing date. Nevertheless, the Court, after more than a month provided the first hearing date for 18th March 2022.



Until now, the hearing dates received in the said Writ Petition is as follows:



In short, the writ petition includes the following claims:

- a) Repeal the entire Chapter 13 of the Country Criminal Code, 2017 to uphold the decision made by the honorable Supreme Court in the case of Laxmi et.al vs. Government of Nepal to separate the issue of abortion from criminal law and also to uphold the fundamental rights ensured by Article 38(2) of the Constitution of Nepal and also the intention of the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights Act, 2018 enacted for the implementation of Article 38(2) of the Constitution of Nepal;
- b) Because the definition of abortion in Section 2(d) of the SMRHR Act, 2018 is unable to bring a clear distinction between miscarriage and induced abortion, there exists an immense risk of criminalization of even a miscarriage. Thus, the definition of abortion in Section 2(d) of the Act needs to be revised/re-written;
- c) Repeal the phrase mentioning "The licensed health worker who has fulfilled the prescribed standards and qualification.... in the licensed health institution" under Section 18(1) of the SMRHR Act, 2018 to create an enabling environment for implementation of the Government's program to provide services even during the times of emergency and blockage or unavailability of transportation.
- d) To repeal the phrase mentioning 'twenty-eight weeks' in Section 26 (c) of the SMRHR Act, 2018
- e) To repeal the phrase mentioning 'twenty-eight weeks' in Section 15(b) (c) (d) and (e) of the SMRHR Act, 2018.

Emergency Response and Legal Responses

On the night of November 3rd at 23:47 NPT, Nepal experienced a significant ML6.4 earthquake centered in the remote hilly district of Jajarkot, approximately 330 km west of Kathmandu. The earthquake resulted in over 150 reported deaths and several hundred injuries directly attributed to the collapse of vulnerable building structures, leading to the destruction of thousands of homes.

In the aftermath of the disaster, individuals encounter various legal challenges related to discrimination in relief distribution, different types of GBV, loss of legal documents among many. In response, FWLD provided free legal helpline services in Jajarkot and Rukum West district with the aim of supporting those affected and offering free legal services to address the legal complexities arising from the situation.

The major areas of free legal helpline services are as follows:

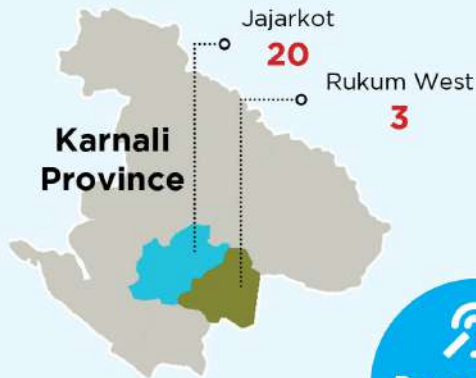
- Cases related to Sexual and Gender Based Violence
- Child sexual abuse, violence and issues of child protection
- Incidents of discrimination, denial and exclusion
- Re-acquisition of Citizenship Certificate, Birth Registration Certificate, and Other Legal Documents lost or damaged due to earthquake

FREE LEGAL HELPLINE SERVICE

for individuals affected by earthquake

November 9 - December 20
2023

Number of cases reported



Ethnicity of Service seekers

Dalit	8
Chettri.....	7
Brahmins	4
Indigenous.....	4
Madhesi.....	0
Muslim.....	0
Other	0



Sex wise data of Service Seekers



Age of service seekers

< 20	21-39	40-59	60 >
1	14	7	1



Education wise data of Service seekers

Literate	Illiterate
20	3

Nature of cases

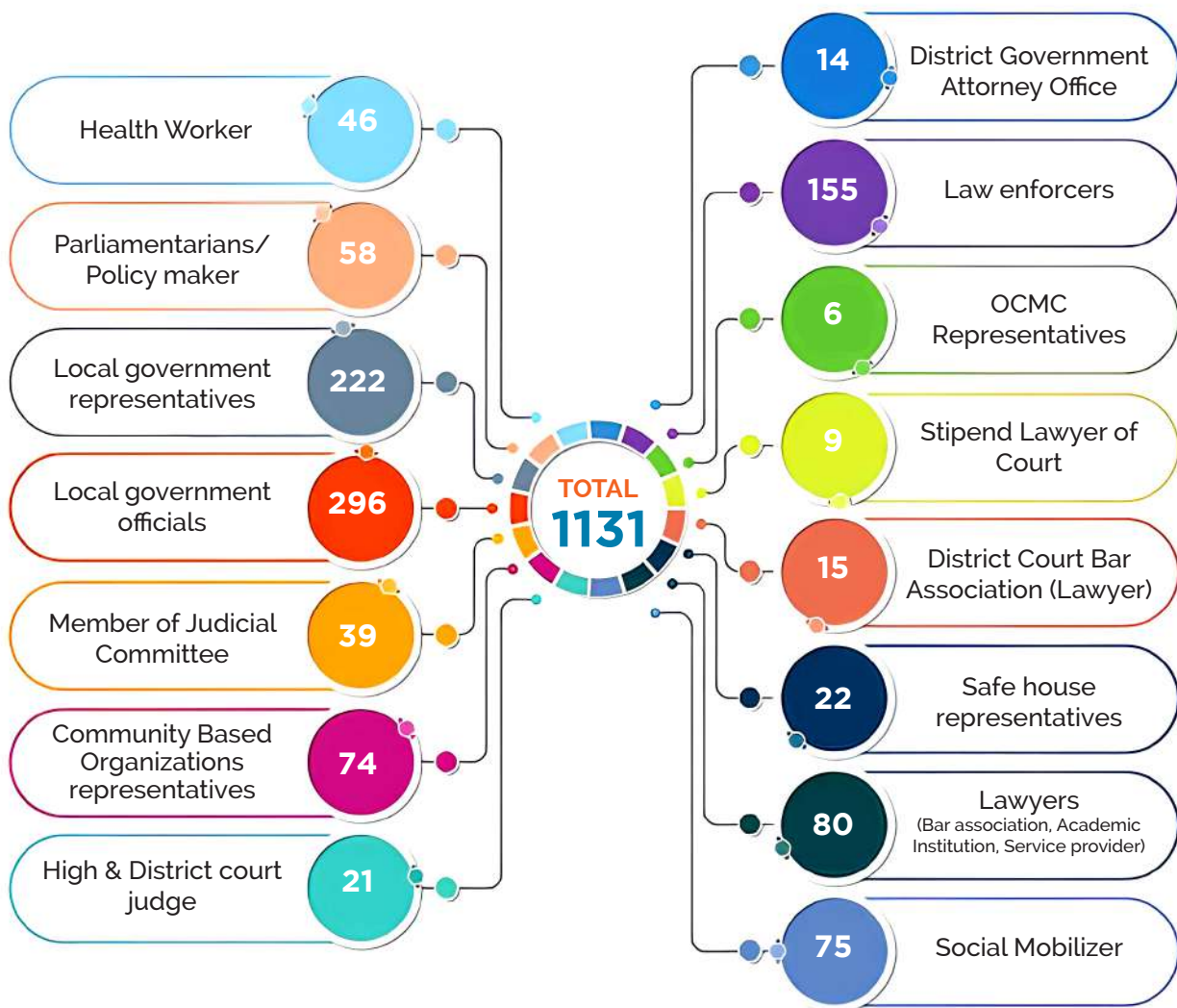


CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CHANGE

The Building Capacity for Change Programme (Capacity Building Programme) develops new ways of building the capacity at national, provincial and local levels for advocacy and reform.

FWLD finds itself in the unique position of being the organization dedicated to providing training on the principles and application of the legal identity, sexual and gender based violence, sexual reproductive health rights, anti-human trafficking child right and disaster & climate change adding value to the work of organizations through the application of the standards of equality and non-discrimination.

In the framework of enhancing service delivery to right-holders and boosting the capacity of duty bearers to deliver, FWLD trained a total number of 1132 (60.51% males and 39.49% females) from different categories on a wide range of topics throughout 2023.



Capacity Building Trainings

Local Level (Wards, Municipalities, DAO's)



To address the capacity gap within local government entities directly involved in providing services related to citizenship certificates and birth registrations, FWLD devised a plan to conduct seven one-day capacity-building trainings in seven municipalities, in collaboration with the respective municipalities. These trainings aimed to enhance knowledge on various aspects including the conceptual framework of legal identity, the human rights obligations of the state, constitutional and legal provisions, and the procedures involved in issuing legal identity documents. The trainings also aimed to cover jurisprudence developed by the Supreme Court on legal identity issues and circulars issued by relevant ministries. Additionally, the programs aimed to elucidate the roles and responsibilities of local governments in issuing citizenship certificates and birth registrations. Throughout 2023, FWLD successfully conducted nine capacity-building trainings for local government representatives and officials, in collaboration with 8 municipalities and metropolitan cities across various districts and one with the Palpa District Coordination Committee, including Birgunj Metropolitan City, Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City, Ilam Municipality, Pakhribas Municipality, Chaipur Municipality, Baglung Municipality, and Safenbagar Municipality, and in Palpa district involving all the ward chairs of entire 10 municipalities. A total of 434 local government representatives, comprising 222 government representatives and 212 government officials, with a gender distribution of 355 males and 79 females, participated in these trainings.

Parliamentary Leaders and Policy Makers

With the goal of enhancing the knowledge and understanding of federal-level parliamentarians and policymakers regarding legal identity issues, existing laws, and Nepal's international human rights obligations, FWLD aimed to facilitate four capacity-building trainings in 2023. These trainings aimed to empower them and contribute in reform of gender-discriminatory laws and policies and to ensure the full implementation of Nepal's international human rights commitments, particularly those related to citizenship and legal identity. By the conclusion of 2023, FWLD had successfully conducted four training sessions, strengthening the capacities of a total of 58 federal-level parliamentarians. Additionally, 12 government officials participated in these sessions. Among the



parliamentarians, 18 were male and 40 were female, while among the government officials, there were an equal number of males and females. These training sessions were designed to foster alignment between national laws related to legal identity and international human rights standards, with a particular focus on addressing gender discrimination, which often leads to the denial of legal identity documents and increases the risk of statelessness.

Community based Organizations, Provincial Networks and Lawyer’s Network on Citizenship Rights

FWLD aimed to conduct two capacity enhancement trainings for community-based organizations (CBOs), provincial networks, and lawyers, with the objective of enriching their understanding of the conceptual framework of legal identity, Nepal’s human rights obligations, constitutional and legal provisions, birth registration procedures, jurisprudence from the Supreme Court, and circulars issued by relevant ministries. These sessions included practical case studies and were designed to empower participants to provide grassroots-level support to individuals in need. In 2023, FWLD successfully organized two capacity enhancement trainings, bolstering the capabilities of 52 CBOs, lawyers, civil society representatives, and various networks. This enhanced capacity enables them to effectively address issues related to birth certificates and citizenship, thereby contributing to resolving challenges surrounding legal identity documentation.



Social Mobilizers



With the aim of fostering locally owned resource groups within communities and empowering individuals to assist those in need, FWLD organized five social mobilizers' trainings in Achham, Kailali, Banke, Rupendehi, and Ilam districts. A total of 75 social mobilizers, including law students, lawyers, and social activists, underwent training focused on legal identity issues, with a specific emphasis on citizenship and birth registration. The training encompassed legal provisions, procedures, Nepal's human rights obligations, Supreme Court decisions relating to citizenship rights and birth, and included the development of facilitation skills for community outreach programs.

Law Enforcers

A series of one-day orientation workshops titled "Role of Police in regard to Child Protection" were conducted across four districts, namely Kanchanpur, Kailali, Rupandehi, and Palpa, on January 17th, 18th, 26th, and 27th, 2023, respectively. The workshops aimed to enhance the capacity of law enforcement officials in dealing with issues concerning child protection. Led by distinguished figures including SPs Shyam Singh Chaudhary, Devendra Bahadur Pal, and Janak Bahadur Shahi, as well as DSP Birendra Thapa, and Inspectors Saraswoti Adhikari and Sabita G.C, along with legal experts Advocates Sabin Shrestha and Deepesh Shrestha, the sessions covered a range of topics. These included discussions on national and international legal standards related to child protection, insights into judicial decisions, the pivotal role of police officials in handling cases involving children, strategies for ensuring crime victim protection, and the specific rights of child victims. With the participation of 80 police officials, these orientations aimed to equip law enforcers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively safeguard the rights and well-being of children within their jurisdictions.



Lawyers, Bar Association, Academic Institutions, Service Providers

A series of professional development workshops aimed at capacity development for lawyers, bar associations, academic institutions, and service providers were conducted as part of our annual efforts. These workshops were designed to familiarize participants with legal litigation tools, emphasizing the strategic use of case laws and legal provisions. Four two-day orientation programs titled "Role of Stakeholders on Child Protection" were held on various dates and locations: February 14th-15th in Mahendranagar (Kanchanpur), February 16th-17th in Dhangadi (Kailali), March 13th-14th in Butwal (Rupandehi), and April 25th-26th in Nepalgunj (Banke). Each



program attracted lawyers, bar associations, court officials, members of judicial committees, representatives of child rights organizations and shelter homes, as well as local representatives. The sessions, led by legal experts such as Advocate Sabin Shrestha, Advocate Deepesh Shrestha, Advocate Kaushila Yogi, Advocate Renu Pradhan Shrestha, Advocate Shyam Raj Ghimire, and Senior Advocate Sunil Kumar Shrestha, delved into national and international legal frameworks concerning child protection, child justice, and the rights of crime victims, emphasizing strategies for their protection. These workshops were instrumental in enhancing the knowledge and skills of stakeholders in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children within our communities.

Multi Stakeholders



Empowering victims and survivors to identify and articulate their rights and their justice needs through legal information and assistance Supporting victims to advocate for victim-centered truth seeking and justice processes, and assist them to select the appropriate mechanisms. Advocating to ensure that survivors of human rights violations and abuses are put at the center of justice and accountability processes and Mechanisms improving access to justice for victims is paramount to reducing impunity for human rights violations and abuses. It depends on the courage and resilience of survivors and presumes that they are empowered enough to come forward to share their experiences, articulate their needs for improved legal and other services, and demand justice.

FWLD supports victims to become survivors and then advocates who can speak out and fight for themselves, their families but also their communities. This is critically important because human rights violations and abuses, including SGBV, not only affect the person they were perpetrated against, but others including families, communities and those who witnessed those crimes.

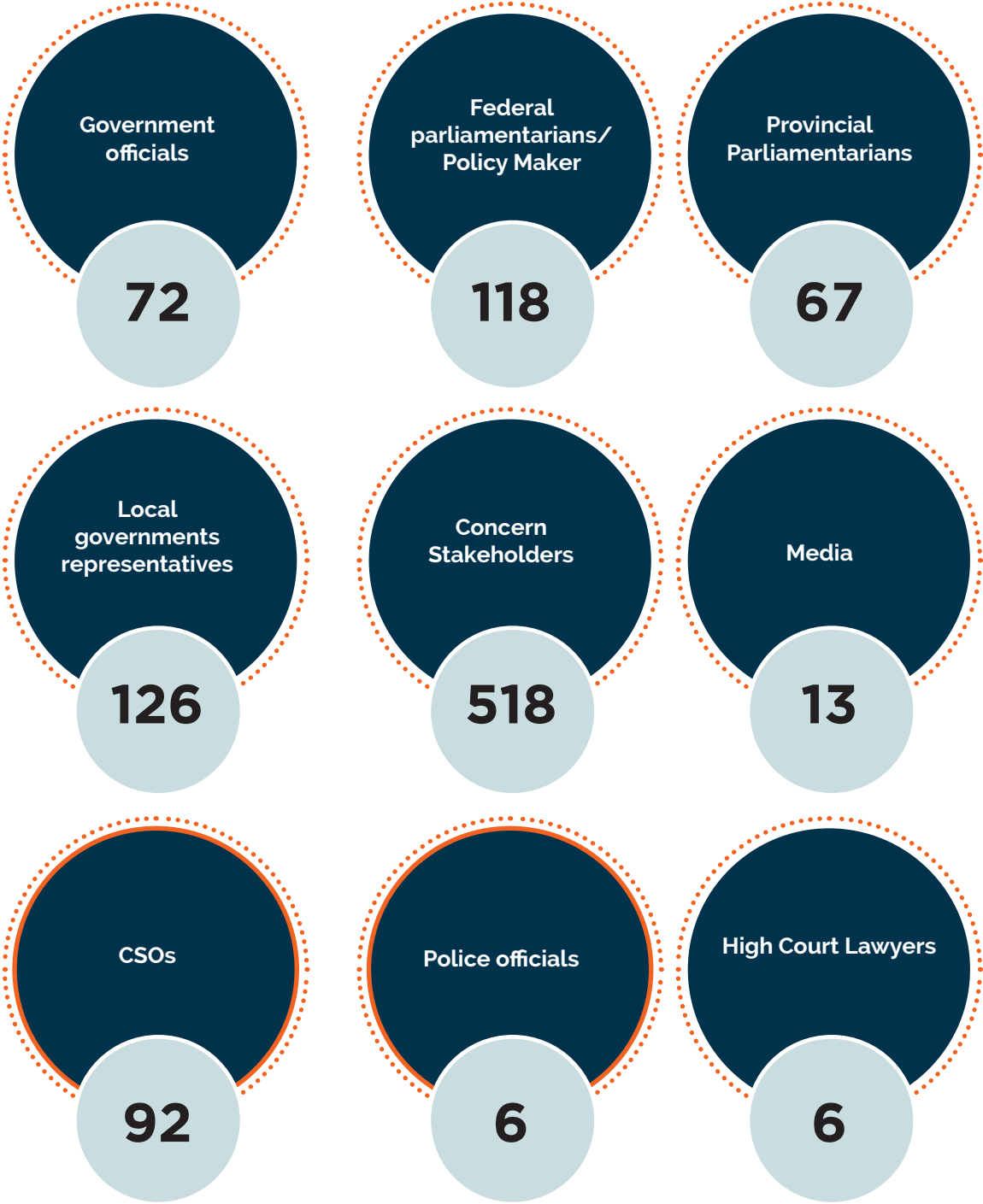
Media Persons

With the goal of equipping media personnel with accurate information and encouraging them to play an active role in disseminating information on citizenship-related topics to the general public, FWLD designed a plan to conduct four media orientation programs, aiming to reach 120 media professionals in 2023. As scheduled, FWLD successfully organized four media orientation programs in 2023, held in Kathmandu and Rupendehi districts. A total of 124 media individuals benefited from these orientation programs. The initiatives enhanced the media's comprehension of the obstacles encountered by individuals without citizenship certificates and led to extensive coverage of the events and pertinent topics.



POLICY ADVOCACY

FWLD conducts strategic advocacy with local, provincial and national decision makers and influencers. Through policy analysis and research, advocacy events, diplomatic meetings, and communications, we raise awareness of the issues we work on, contribute to critical debates and legal developments, and generate evidence that provides compelling arguments to advance our legal work and secure changes for the people we represent. We also support national champions to promote human rights and the rule of law.



Through advocacy at all levels, supported by research and policy analysis, we increase decision and policy makers' awareness and understanding of victims and survivors' fight for justice and accountability. We do so by amplifying their demands and priorities, and by calling for increased tangible actions to ensure their access to justice. In 2023, we generated new evidence on the discrimination, abuses and human rights violations committed against marginalized groups, including and women survivors of SGBV. We also worked with victims and survivors of the ensuring that their stories and calls would reach human rights institutions and national justice mechanisms.

Advocacy Meeting

Federal Parliamentarians and Policy Makers

With a specific aim to raise awareness among policymakers regarding discriminatory provisions in the country's Citizenship Laws, existing gaps, and challenging aspects related to law implementation, FWLD conducted two advocacy events. These events focused on the theme "Full Citizen, Full Rights: Equal Citizenship Rights" and engaged 60 esteemed members of the National Assembly and the House of Representatives, including 17 males and 43 females. The discussions centered around proposing actions to ensure equal citizenship rights, particularly through constitutional reforms aimed at addressing discriminatory laws.



The consultation meeting with Honorable Parliamentarians, orchestrated by FWLD on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, exemplified an outcome-oriented approach aimed at advancing legislative reforms in the fight against human trafficking. By engaging in comprehensive discussions and deliberations, the session aimed at achieving tangible outcomes, particularly in refining the definition of exploitation under human trafficking laws. Through the facilitation of Executive Director Adv. Sabin Shrestha, FWLD advocated for a definition aligned with the spirit of the Palermo Protocol, emphasizing adaptability to evolving trafficking patterns and a victim-centered approach. Furthermore, the inclusion of Infographics video served to enhance understanding and commitment towards aligning national laws with international standards. The active participation of Honorable Parliamentarians, including the insightful contributions of Honorable Jayanti Rai and Honorable Rajendra Laxmi Gaire, exemplified a collaborative effort towards outcome-oriented legislative reforms, ensuring the preservation of distinct identities of laws and prioritizing community needs and dignity. This outcome-oriented approach underscores FWLD's commitment to tangible progress in combating human trafficking and advancing victim rights within the legal framework.



FWLD orchestrated a dynamic discussion session, effectively engaging Honorable members of Parliament to address the crucial necessity for amendments to the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights Act 2075. Advocates masterfully presented a compelling case, shedding light on the prevailing implementation challenges and underlining the urgent need for revisions with vivid, illustrative examples. The session garnered a resolute commitment from parliamentarians, who pledged to prioritize the issue within the legislative agenda and collaborate closely with pertinent experts for well-informed amendments. This proactive stance marks a significant leap forward in advancing reproductive health rights in Nepal, laying the groundwork for impactful legislative measures and tangible enhancements in ensuring the welfare of citizens.

Province Parliamentarians and Policy Makers



Three advocacy dialogues were held in different provinces of Nepal, including Dhangadi and Butwal, and two in Kathmandu. The first dialogue focused on the "Provincial Policy on Children" in Dhangadi, organized by the Ministry of Social Development, Sudurpaschim Province,

in collaboration with UNICEF Nepal and FWLD. Ms. Jayanti Giri presented the provincial policy draft, followed by an open discussion involving stakeholders from various sectors. The second dialogue, held in Rupandehi, Lumbini Province, discussed "Provincial Policy and Programs relating to Children," with Ms. Sharada Bashyal presenting on laws, policies, and programs concerning children in the province. The final dialogue, titled "Need of Amendment in Act and Regulation related to National ID and Civil Registration," took place in Kathmandu during the 'Personal Event Registration Week,' chaired by Senior Advocate Ms. Geeta Aryal. Mr. Rudra Prasad Pandit and Mr. Navaraj Jaisi presented on vital event registration, while Executive Director of FWLD Advocate Sabin Shrestha discussed areas requiring amendments in existing laws. These dialogues attracted participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, CSOs, lawyers, and media personnel, aiming to address pertinent issues and shape policies to safeguard children's rights and improve vital event registration processes.

FWLD's initiatives aimed at driving tangible outcomes in advancing human rights and legal frameworks in Nepal. The consultation meetings conducted in Dhangadi and Biratnagar yielded significant results, including heightened awareness among stakeholders about the need for provincial laws on rehabilitation centers for human trafficking survivors. These meetings facilitated constructive dialogue among provincial assembly members, government officials, and civil society representatives, resulting in commitments to take necessary



legislative actions and address gaps in existing legal frameworks. Moreover, the discussions led to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in combating human trafficking and gender-based violence, paving the way for collaborative efforts to strengthen victim support mechanisms and ensure effective implementation of legal provisions. By fostering partnerships and mobilizing stakeholders, FWLD's initiatives have catalyzed concrete steps towards enhancing human rights protections and promoting a more equitable legal landscape in Nepal.

One-to-one Meetings with Concerned Stakeholders

In 2023, FWLD undertook a series of 11 one-to-one meetings, strategically designed to advance advocacy efforts centered around the passage of the Nepal Citizenship Act Amendment Bill. These high-level engagements involved influential political figures such as Honourable Sher Bahadur Deuba, President of the Nepali Congress Party; Honourable K.P Sharma Oli, Chairperson



of the CPN (UML) Party; and Honourable Narayankaji Shrestha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, among others. Additionally, discussions were held with key government officials including Mr. Phanindra Dahal, Coordinator of the Department of Peace Promotion, and Ms. Rudra Devi Sharma, Joint Secretary responsible for Citizenship and National ID Management. These dialogues were strategically aimed at addressing the challenges associated with the implementation of laws and court judgments, underscoring FWLD's commitment to navigating legal complexities and promoting effective policy frameworks. Through these targeted engagements, FWLD continues to play a pivotal role in driving legislative reforms and fostering a more equitable legal landscape in Nepal.

Throughout 2023, FWLD conducted four targeted one-to-one meetings with diverse stakeholders, all aimed at advancing the crucial objective of amending the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights (SMRHR) Act, 2018. These engagements were meticulously designed to ensure the protection of sexual reproductive health and rights of women and girls in Nepal. Initially, FWLD convened in-person meetings with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), stressing the urgency and significance of amending the SMRHR Act, 2075. Subsequent discussions with the National Women Commission (NWC), under the leadership of Honorable Kamala Parajuli, focused on strategic actions to expedite the approval process through key governmental bodies such as the Council of Ministers and the House of Representatives. Furthermore, meetings with the Ministry of Health and Population facilitated meaningful progress in addressing concerns raised by various ministries, thereby advancing the amendment process. Notably, FWLD facilitated a pivotal one-to-one meeting with Honorable Bhanubhakta Joshi, Chairperson of the House of Representatives' Health, Education, and Information Technology Committee, to deliberate on recommendations from international bodies and underscore the necessity of amending the SMRHR Act, 2075. These collaborative efforts underscore FWLD's unwavering commitment to legislative reforms aimed at safeguarding reproductive health rights and promoting gender equality in Nepal.



FWLD organized a crucial one-to-one meeting with the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizen to advocate for necessary amendments to the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act 2007, aligning it with the Palermo Protocol. The meeting, attended by senior officials including Joint Secretary Laxmi Kumari Basnet and Under Secretary Meena Poudel, commenced with FWLD presenting an insightful Infographics video elucidating the significance and obligations outlined in the Palermo Protocol. The Ministry officials commended the clarity provided by the video in understanding the Protocol's provisions and the government's obligations for implementation. FWLD then presented its proposed amendments, eliciting positive feedback from Ms. Poudel, who highlighted ongoing efforts within the Ministry to address several raised concerns, including the formulation of provincial and local-



level committees to combat trafficking. Discussions also encompassed amendments regarding compensation provisions and the impact of proposed changes on the definition of human trafficking vis-a-vis human smuggling within the Prevention of Money Laundering and Promotion of Business Environment Amendment Bill. The Ministry affirmed its commitment to incorporate FWLD's proposed amendments in the forthcoming law amendment, ensuring alignment with international standards and bolstering efforts to combat human trafficking effectively.

In a significant one-to-one pre-amendment meeting with Honorable Parliamentarians, FWLD urgently convened to address the proposed amendment bill on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Promotion of Business Environment, which encompassed amendments to various laws, including the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act (HTTCA) 2007. The proposed amendments raised concerns, particularly regarding the incorporation of human smuggling into the HTTCA, potentially blurring the distinction between trafficking and smuggling. FWLD emphasized the importance of aligning with international standards, such as the Palermo Protocol, ratified by Nepal. A compelling Infographics video underscored the Protocol's provisions, highlighting discrepancies with the proposed amendments. Parliamentarians acknowledged the necessity of addressing human smuggling separately and requested FWLD to submit clear written information on proposed modifications. FWLD promptly submitted a draft proposal, advocating for a nuanced approach to differentiate trafficking and smuggling, emphasizing Nepal's role in combating human trafficking as a member state of the Bali process. The committed engagement of parliamentarians and alignment with international frameworks reflect FWLD's steadfast commitment to advancing legislative reforms and combatting human trafficking effectively.



Local Governments and Representatives

Throughout the year, FWLD spearheaded three pivotal meetings, each meticulously designed to drive tangible progress in Nepal's human rights and legal frameworks. From refining definitions of exploitation under human trafficking laws to equipping board members and staff with skills to foster workplace safety, and from formulating local laws against gender-based violence to discussing the role of municipalities in combating human trafficking, FWLD's initiatives exemplify a targeted and effective approach. By prioritizing specific outcomes such as legal alignment, workplace inclusivity, and grassroots legislative action, FWLD remains committed to advancing human rights and fostering a more just society in Nepal.



Concerned Stakeholders

In 2023, FWLD organized a total of five advocacy events involving 518 stakeholders. The first event involved sending bulk SMSs to all 334 members of the federal parliament, including both the National Assembly and the House of Representatives, requesting to pass the Nepal Citizenship Amendment Bill. Another event focused on the legal identity of gender and sexual minorities. The third event, held in collaboration with Worec and Amnesty International, took place during the People's Forum as a side event. It addressed the challenges surrounding citizenship rights in Nepal, particularly for women, gender and sexual minorities, and orphaned children, while emphasizing the connection between statelessness, gender-based violence, and the impact on SDG Goals 5 and 16. The fourth event focused on the status of implementing court judgments in citizenship and civil registration cases, aiming to address key issues in citizenship rights by highlighting the challenges associated with the implementation of court decisions. Affected individuals were invited to speak during the event, sharing their struggles to underscore the difficulties in enforcing court rulings. Despite court verdicts in their favor, these individuals continued to face denial by authorities. Lastly, at another event, FWLD screened the short film "Matribhumi" during the 11th Nepal Human Rights International Film Festival. The film shed light on instances of citizenship denials based on the mother's name.



Civil Society Networks

FWLD plays a crucial role as the Secretariat of the Civil Society Network for Citizenship Rights (CSNCR), comprising over 40 civil society organizations dedicated to women's rights, child rights, and various other human rights issues. This collaboration is instrumental in conducting advocacy efforts, with member organizations often referring cases related to citizenship and birth registration of individuals without legal identity documents to FWLD for legal support. In 2023, FWLD organized two events for members of the Civil Society Network, with a total of 74 representatives participating. The first event involved comprehensive discussions aimed at formulating an action plan to address key issues faced by individuals without citizenship. This included preparing a position paper on the Citizenship Amendment Bill, engaging influential parliamentarians, issuing press releases, and planning mass campaigns or movements. Additionally, the program provided a platform to discuss concerns related to gender and sexual minorities, citizenship issues faced by persons with disabilities, and citizenship issues affecting street and orphan children. The second event focused on shedding light on persistent delays in amending the Nepal Citizenship Rule of 2063, aiming to raise awareness among various ministries about the significant impact of this delay. The event aimed not only to highlight existing issues but also to propose essential revisions to the Nepal Citizenship Rule. The collective presence of civil society representatives underscored the urgency and importance of resolving citizenship.



Advocacy at International Level

Participating in the Women Deliver 2023 Conference in Kigali, Rwanda, 12th Asia Pro Bono Conference, Cebu, the Philippines and Global Summit on Gender Equality in Nationality Laws marked a pivotal moment in FWLD's international advocacy journey.

This platform served as a powerful conduit for us to amplify Nepal's progress in securing the right to safe abortion and human rights. We seized the opportunity to share strategic insights gleaned from our experiences, illuminating the path towards advancing reproductive rights as intrinsic human rights. Through dynamic discussions and compelling narratives, we showcased the significant strides made in Nepal's legal landscape, underscoring the imperative of recognizing safe abortion rights.

Our advocacy efforts, aiming squarely at tangible outcomes that empowered individuals to exercise their rights with dignity and autonomy. By spotlighting Nepal's achievements and advocating for the acknowledgment of safe abortion as a fundamental human right, we catalyzed transformative change on a global scale.



RAISING AWARENESS

The awareness raising activities promote understanding among different legal categories on important topics as part of engaging in them to be part and parcel in society problem solving. It also serves as an opportunity to enlighten citizens on their rights and entitlements, to be able to reclaim their rights, and fulfil their obligations. In the year 2023, 8,396 (56% women 44% men) from different categories were reached through different awareness raising sessions and campaigns.

Community Outreach Events

In 2023, FWLD organized a total of 50 community outreach events, serving as a pivotal platform for empowering individuals and communities to tackle pressing issues surrounding legal identity documentation and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention. These events convened diverse groups, fostering open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving. Through these engagements, community members were mobilized to actively contribute to finding solutions, instilling a sense of ownership and empowerment. Additionally, these events played a crucial role in raising awareness and educating community members, equipping them to become advocates and catalysts for change within their respective communities. By orchestrating these outreach initiatives, FWLD reaffirms its steadfast dedication to advancing social justice, empowerment, and community-driven solutions to address systemic challenges.



TV talk shows

Radio/TV talk shows enabled students to interact with the wider community around the country. It increased students' confidence to speak about their concerns and raise awareness publicly. This has also helped FWLD to reach a bigger audience through aired messages and

sharing the toll-free number shared during the talk shows. In addition to that, during the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, FWLD in collaboration with, conducted radio talk shows to increase understanding of community members on GBV with emphasis on GBV prevention, response and referral pathways.



Forum Theatres

Throughout 2023, a total of 21 forum theatre performances were conducted in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Kavrepalanchok, Nuwakot, Dhading, and Nawalparasi(East)/Nawalpur, reaching approximately 4890 individuals. These impactful performances raised awareness about recent legislative changes, sparking active audience participation in discussions on citizenship issues. Concerns, especially about the oversight of challenges faced by single mothers in citizenship matters, were expressed. While optimism exists regarding recent amendments addressing these concerns, lingering doubts persist about their effective implementation.



Infographic/Short Videos

A total of one infographic and sixteen short videos were developed and published in the various social networking sites of FWLD. The videos also have sign language and English sub titles. The videos were posted in the official Facebook page, Instagram and YouTube channel of FWLD.



Law against Offence related to Reproductive Health



Law against Sexual Harassment at Workplace



Law against Witchcraft



Law against Child Sexual Abuse



Law against Menstruation



Law against Dowry



Law against Human Trafficking



Law against Marriage without Consent



Law against Tech-based sexual violence



Law against Domestic violence



Law against Sexual Harassment



Law against Rape



Law against Polygamy



Law against Acid Attack



Law against Child Marriage



Law against Marital Rape

RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

In the realm of publication and research, FWLD's endeavors in 2023 were marked by a steadfast commitment to knowledge dissemination and academic exploration. Through a series of meticulously crafted publications, FWLD not only enriched its internal resources but also extended its reach to a broader audience, underscoring the importance of sharing valuable insights beyond the borders of Nepal. By spearheading initiatives such as the creation of a Practical Guide, FWLD aimed to empower individuals with practical information while catalyzing greater awareness and understanding of pressing societal issues. This dedication to scholarly pursuits and proactive dissemination strategies exemplifies FWLD's enduring mission to drive positive change through the power of knowledge.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

S.N	Name of the project	Funding agencies	Expenses
1.	Support to People Without Civil Documentation	UNHCR	33,229,163.19
2.	Legal Measures for ADDRESSING Child Protection and Gender Based Violence	UNICEF	8088,724.08
3.	Increasing the Effectiveness of Policy and Legal Measures to Address issues of Child Protection; GBV Child Marriage and Civil Registration in Nepal	UNICEF	586,214.21
4.	Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response	UNFPA/IPAS NEPAL	8,755,456.09
5.	Impact Assessment of Covid 19 on Access to Justice	UNWOMEN	1,831,855.77
6.	Strengthening Capacities of Women's-Disaster Risk Reduction	UNWOMEN	5144,651.30
7.	Prevention of Human Trafficking Through Strengthened Legislation	TAF	5394,574.60
8.	Ensuring Accountability Towards Sexual & Reproductive Health	CRR	345,076.50
9.	A Right-Based Participants and Accountability Project Aimed at Increasing the Accessibility and Quality of Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Women and Girls	CRR	2774,736.24
10.	Advancing the Rights of Women Engaged in Sex Work	CAC	224,700.00
11.	Addressing Sexual Violence in Nepal	EQUILITY NOW	1,518,035.30
12.	CSO's Allied Action on SGBV	DRL	2,627,926.97
Total			70,521,114.25

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At FWLD, nurturing a culture of continuous professional growth is fundamental to our operational excellence. Over the past year, significant strides have been made to bolster our organizational capacity, with a strategic focus on enhancing service accessibility and efficacy. Central to this effort has been the recruitment of skilled personnel, strategically aligned to complement our project goals and amplify our impact.



In tandem with recruitment initiatives, comprehensive training programs have been implemented to empower our staff with the requisite skills and knowledge. Notably, our annual sessions on safeguarding against sexual exploitation and harassment (SEA and SH) serve as a cornerstone in fostering a safe and inclusive workplace environment. These sessions not only ensure legal compliance but also equip our team with procedural expertise for effective case management, reaffirming our commitment to upholding the highest standards of professionalism and ethics.

Looking towards the future, our new strategic plan underscores FWLD's unwavering dedication to advancing gender equality and equity. Through innovative approaches, we aim to champion the rights of women and children, driving meaningful change in our communities. Furthermore, our steadfast commitment to transparency and accountability is exemplified through our annual Social Audit, a testament to our adherence to organizational values and objectives.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Our Networks and Collaborators

Our work was made possible by the generous support and contribution of our donors. We are committed to ensuring that this support and contribution is spent on efforts towards access to justice by the most vulnerable people: women and children.

We would like to sincerely appreciate each of our donors for enabling us to implement our strategic plan to achieve the mission of advancing rights of the most vulnerable women and girls in Nepal.



FWLD is indebted to its partners and collaborators, both at individual and organizational levels, through coalitions, well-wishers for the financial, technical, and moral support throughout the year 2023. FWLD is greatly beholden to the support from partners below:

National



- Human Right Treaty Monitoring Coordination Committee (HRTMCC)
- Legal Aid Working Group
- National Network for Safe Migration (NNSM)
- Legal Empowerment Network
- Nepal Alcohol Policy Advocacy (NAPA)
- Nepal SDG Forum
- Shanti Malika
- 1325 Action Group
- Technical Committee for Implementing Comprehensive Abortion Care Service
- Protection Cluster

International



- South Asian Task Force for Action on CEDAW
- Statelessness and Dignified Citizenship Coalition - Asia Pacific
- Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights
- Global to Local Network
- South Asian Reproductive Justice Accountability Initiative (SARJAI)

Government Institutions throughout the year, we collaborated with and received support from a number of government institutions which contributed to a successful year. Some of these include:

- Federal and provincial Parliament of Nepal
- Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens
- National Commission for Human Rights
- Ministry of Health and Population
- National Women Commission
- Women, Children and Senior Citizen Service Directorate

We would like to sincerely appreciate each of our donors for enabling us to implement our strategic plan to achieve the mission of advancing rights of the most vulnerable women and girls in Nepal.

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