

RESULTS REPORT 2024



Our Growth

2013



In 2013, the Legal Aid Society (LAS) was officially registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act on November 19, with Justice (R) Nasir Aslam Zahid serving as its chairperson.

2014



In 2014, LAS signed its inaugural project agreement with Development Alternatives International (DAI) and the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), focusing on eight districts in Sindh. During this year, the Legal Advisory Call Centre was also established.

2015



By 2015, LAS expanded its reach by establishing district offices in Dadu, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Hyderabad, and Khairpur.

2016



In 2016, LAS secured its first grant from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Democracy and Labour for an Alternative Dispute Resolution initiative aimed at alleviating court congestion in eight judicial districts of Sindh.

2017



In 2017, LAS established a district office in Sanghar. LAS also launched a sustainable juvenile literacy program within a young offenders' detention facility in Sindh to enhance basic literacy and legal awareness among youth in the juvenile justice system.

2018



In 2018, LAS formed a public-private partnership with the Law Department of the Government of Sindh to expand the Legal Advisory Call Centre (LACC), which was subsequently renamed the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre (SLACC).

2019



In 2019, LAS broadened its scope to bolster the state's response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). The Sindh Government adopted a Sexual Violence Response Framework—a five-year roadmap for government reform and policy action on SGBV.

2020



In 2020, LAS initiated work on issues concerning the rights of religious minorities and women's legal rights to property.

2022



By 2022, LAS inaugurated its Islamabad office and expanded operations into Gilgit-Baltistan. The organization also began addressing climate resilience issues and established a Human Rights Defender Help Desk. Additionally, it launched the Musaliha International Center for Arbitration and Dispute Resolution (MICADR), which is recognized by the High Court as a dispute resolution center.

2023



In 2023, LAS further expanded its geographical scope to include other provinces of Pakistan such as Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A mediation center was established at the Islamabad High Court, along with an Anti-Rape Crisis Cell at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences Islamabad.

2024



Looking ahead to 2024, LAS launched the Naz Assist, Pakistan's 1st Free Multilingual Legal Advisory Chatbot and established another Anti-Rape Crisis Cell at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center Karachi.

VISION

To connect vulnerable and disempowered end users of justice with effective and expedient services for the delivery of justice. LAS starts by listening to the voices of the vulnerable and disempowered within the legal system and combines their needs with the values of equity, fairness and inclusion to change the way in which we view and tackle present day challenges facing the attainment of justice in our society.



MISSION STATEMENT:

Human Security: Protecting, Promoting and Ensuring knowledge of and access to fundamental freedoms/rights

Access to Justice:



Facilitating swift legal support for end-users of the justice system while strengthening the capacities of both demand-side and supply-side stakeholders

Gender & Child Security:



Enabling vulnerable segments of the population to access protections and rights through legal empowerment and targeted interventions

Climate Resilience, Sustainability & Security



Addressing societal needs intensified because of climate emergencies by building grassroots knowledge for mitigation and fostering communal awareness

LAS APPROACH AND PHILOSOPHY:

LAS employs the globally-tested NAMATI approach – Know the Law, Use the Law, and Shape the Law – a comprehensive framework for advancing legal empowerment and reform.

KNOW THE LAW

focuses on improving access to legal information and advice, equipping communities with knowledge about their rights and available resources.

USE THE LAW

involves offering practical support and representation to help individuals navigate legal systems and advocate for their rights.

SHAPE THE LAW

aims to influence legal and policy changes, build the capacity of legal professionals, and promote legislative reforms to enhance justice systems and address systemic issues.

OUTREACH OVER THE YEARS



RULE OF LAW SITUATION GLOBALLY AND IN PAKISTAN

The 2023 World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index reveals a concerning global trend regarding the rule of law, indicating a continued decline across many nations

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

6 billion people  live in countries where the rule of law has weakened from 2022 to 2023.

82 countries  experienced a decline in their rule of law scores between 2022 and 2023

77%  of countries have experienced a decline in Fundamental Rights.

JUSTICE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Civil Justice:

In 2023, **66%** of countries reported declines in Civil Justice scores, highlighting difficulties in providing timely, affordable, and accessible justice to citizens

Criminal Justice:

Similarly, **56%** of countries experienced declines in Criminal Justice scores, suggesting systemic issues within criminal justice systems worldwide.

OVERALL RANKING AND TRENDS



★ Global Rank: Pakistan ranks **130th** out of **142**

countries in the 2023 WJP Rule of Law Index, indicating a decline in its rule of law performance.

★ Regional Context: Within South Asia, Pakistan is positioned **5th** out of **6** countries, with only Afghanistan ranking lower.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF DECLINE

Civil Justice:



Pakistan ranking
129th
globally

Criminal Justice:



Pakistan ranking
99th
globally

Fundamental Rights:



Pakistan ranking
125th
out of **142**

ACCESS TO JUSTICE:



CONTEXT:

In 2024, the pendency of cases in Pakistani courts rose by **3.9%**, with the total reaching **2.26 million**. Each day, 2,600 new cases enter the district judiciary, and 6,800 cases are added to the overall justice system. Despite a sanctioned strength of 4,000 judges, only 3,000 are currently working, averaging just 13 judges per million people. This shortage and backlog significantly delay access to justice.

Additionally, a Legal Needs Assessment by LAS highlights that religiously marginalized communities predominantly face consumer and civil issues, remain unaware of the legal nature of their challenges, and harbor deep mistrust toward the justice system. These combined issues underscore a critical access to justice problem, exacerbated by both systemic delays and the marginalized communities' disconnection from the legal process.

LAS contribution to address Access to Justice issues:



25.5 M

Outreach through
SMS campaigns &
social media



34,965

Queries registered
by SLACC



20,070

Community
Members Engaged



797

Legal Clinics on Alternate
Dispute Resolution and
Rights of Religious Minorities



690

Cases diverted
towards ADR



676

Cases Filed through
Litigation



356

Community
Paralegals Engaged



214

Supply Side Actors
trained



14

Public Interest Cases
Filed



10

District Peace
Committees Revived



4

Research and Policy
Products Produced

GENDER AND CHILD SECURITY:



CONTEXT:

Women in Pakistan face significant challenges in property ownership and marriage rights due to deep-rooted social, cultural, and legal barriers, including economic dependence on men, limited access to legal and administrative resources, and the lack of essential identification documents. This issue is compounded by inadequate legal awareness, weak institutional support, and a complex legal framework that hinders women, especially those nearing adulthood, from negotiating terms in marriage contracts and accessing their rightful inheritance. Further, the lack of political will and necessary reforms leaves women vulnerable to exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

LAS contribution to address Gender and Child Security issues:



7125

Community
Members Engaged



387

Legal Clinics on Women's rights to
legal and matrimonial property and
rights under Muslim Family Laws



315

Supply Side Actors
trained



261

Community
Paralegals Trained



6

Public Interest Cases
Filed



2

Research and Policy
Products Produced

CLIMATE RESILIENCE, SUSTAINABILITY & SECURITY



سول دستاویز کی حفاظت
2022 کی سیلاب کے دوران
معلوماتی کلینک - عمر کوٹ
GET FREE LEGAL ADVICE FROM A LAWYER
TOLL FREE: 0800-70806

CONTEXT:

Pakistan experienced severe monsoon weather in the summer of 2022 with rainfall equivalent to almost thrice the national 30-year average submerging 1/3 of the country and impacting over 33 million individuals. Over 80 districts across Pakistan were declared as 'calamity hit', with 23 of those in Sindh. According to our mapping study, 88.88% of respondents had lost some form of documentation during the floods.

LAS contribution to address Recovery of Civil Documentation issues:



7543

Community
Members Engaged



1710

Individual who sought
legal advice through
one-on-one consultations



1400

Individuals provided
service delivery and
financial assistance to
recover documents



224

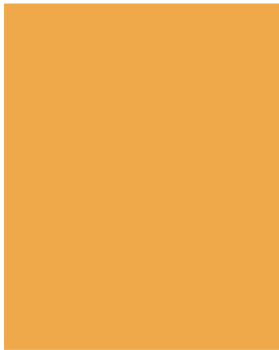
Legal Clinics on Civil
documents and
social protection
schemes



258

Supply Side Actors
engaged

SUCCESS STORIES



A Journey of Resilience for Custody

Shazia endured daily physical and verbal abuse from her husband, Shabbir Ahmad, which led her to separate from him to protect her 2.5-year-old daughter. Recently, Shabbir forcibly took their daughter from Shazia's care, prompting her to seek legal help for her return. Our dedicated legal team filed a petition under Section 491 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1908, to regain custody. Despite jurisdictional challenges that transferred the case from Karachi to Sukkur, our teams worked together tirelessly. Their efforts paid off when the court ruled in Shazia's favor, granting her custody of her daughter.

A Fight for Justice Against Cyber Harassment

Following her marriage to Nadir on July 4, 2020, Farzana experienced significant post-marital distress. Her spouse engaged in a pattern of blackmail, threats, and harassment, inclusive of unauthorized distribution of private and compromising photographs and videos through social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. Undeterred by this emotional and mental abuse, though, Farzana sought legal recourse. Our team assisted in registering a FIR with the FIA Cyber Crime Wing, resulting in Nadir's arrest. He subsequently filed a bail application, which was successfully opposed by our legal team.

Recognizing Mental Trauma Compensation in Pakistan

Shahid was promoted to restaurant manager in May 2020 and was abruptly terminated on 13-12-2021 without prior notice. Legal Aid Society's lawyer, Zahid Hussain, filed a case in the Senior Civil Judge Court, Karachi, seeking damages for the mental trauma Shahid endured. The Court awarded him 0.5 million rupees and two months' fuel charges as compensation. This landmark ruling marks the first recognition of mental trauma as grounds for compensation in Pakistan, a significant development in tort law, particularly for vulnerable religious communities.

Justice Served: 17-Year Sentence for Couple

LAS secured a 17-year sentence for a married couple involved in abducting and assaulting a 10-year-old girl from Jinnah Hospital. The couple drugged her and husband assaulted her while the wife recorded. The victim later led police to the offenders, resulting in their arrest and the rescue of another minor. The investigation revealed the couple's pattern of abducting and assaulting minors.

TESTIMONIALS:

“ From my experience in Pakistan, I haven't come across any organization that offers free legal advice with such clear and precise guidance. It's crucial that these services continue, as they provide immense support to those in need. ”



“ I strongly believe that SLACC should expand its services to other provinces like Islamabad and KPK, offering free legal assistance to more communities. I'm extremely satisfied with SLACC's support and would be more than willing to provide my personal two-story building in my hometown for free legal services, should there be a need in KPK or nearby regions. ”



“ The SLACC agent guided me with professionalism and kindness, all while I was in the comfort of my home. Their advice resolved my issue seamlessly. I urge SLACC to continue helping others, especially women who are unable to leave their homes. You've made a tremendous difference in their lives. Thank you! ”



“ I gained valuable insight into how support is provided to those in need, and I received guidance on my personal matters. I would recommend ensuring continuous follow-ups with the police and other relevant institutions to maintain the effectiveness of the system we're working to establish. ”



“ I have attended many trainings on various topics, but this one truly stood out. I want to express my sincere thanks to Ma'am Summaya for dedicating her time to train individuals in rural areas. We will do our best to implement the knowledge we gained.



“ We gained a wealth of new knowledge through the stories and case studies shared during the session. I plan to use this understanding to make more informed decisions about children's rights and raise awareness within my community.



“ We need to raise awareness among men about these laws (Women's Rights to Legal Property), so they can become familiar with them too. This will be highly beneficial since the enforcement of these laws largely depends on the men in our communities.



“ This session was truly timely and necessary. Every trainer demonstrated a strong command of their respective topics. The efforts by the prisons department and CWP in organizing this workshop are highly commendable, and I hope similar initiatives are extended to other staff members and JPOs.



OUR TEAM:



