ANNUAL REPORT

2017/18

LEGAL AID AND CONSULTANCY CENTER (LACC)
MANBHAWAN, LALITPUR
NEPAL

Tel: +977-1-5543111/5542999
Email: info@laccnepal.org
Website: www.laccnepal.org
Advisors:  Adv. Mahendra Prasai
                      Prof. Dr. Shashi Adhikary (former chairperson of LACC)
                      Sr. Adv. Bijaya Kanta Mainali

Prepared by: Anita Neupane Thapaliya
                      Samjhana Ghimire

Layout/Design: Computer Log

Publisher: Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC), Manbhawan, Lalitpur

Date: August, 2018

Published: 500 copies
**FOREWORD**

*Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC)* is an independent, non-profit, legal aid organization. A pioneer in its field and the first of its kind in Nepal, the center provides free legal support, combating gender-based violence and human trafficking and promoting *access to justice*. Above all, it is committed to elevating the political, legal and cultural status of women and children, defending their interests and eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against them.

LACC was founded in 1987 by Prof. Dr. Shanta Thapalia alongside a group of women lawyers, rights advocates and professors. Since its foundation, the center has sought to protect and promote the *dignity, well-being and rights of women and children in Nepal* and its activities operate on three distinct yet interconnected levels: (1) lobbying government and policy bodies for legislative change; (2) providing free legal services to women and children; and (3) running rights awareness and gender sensitization programs at a grassroots level.

In recent years, LACC has seen real progress across these three areas. In 2016 (2059 B.S.), for example, the center brought landmark cases to the Supreme Court to secure relief funding for victims of sexual violence and uphold non-discriminatory processes in citizenship applications. LACC also runs a *counseling and advice helpline*, and offers assistance with mediation, appeals and court representation that are free of charge to all clients. The center also organizes a range of outreach programs, including *mobile advice camps in communities* and gender awareness workshops.

Further, the center is proud of its role in assisting the next generation of strong female lawyers. Through mentoring, leadership training and practical experience, LACC is working to ensure not only that these young women have the skills to succeed, but also that the center’s legacy and vision continue to be felt moving forward.

LEGAL AID AND CONSULTANCY CENTER
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE

**Preliminary**

A. Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 5
B. Organizational Structure ............................................................................................................... 6
C. Executive Board Members ......................................................................................................... 6
D. Sources of LACC Funding ........................................................................................................... 7

## CHAPTER TWO

**Programs implemented by LACC over the 2017/18 fiscal year**

A. Free Legal Aid Services ................................................................................................................ 12
B. Training Sessions .......................................................................................................................... 13
C. Workshops/Seminars/Interaction Programs .............................................................................. 14
D. Meetings ........................................................................................................................................ 15
E. Outreach Programs ....................................................................................................................... 15
F. Database Management .................................................................................................................... 16
G. Public Interest Litigation ............................................................................................................... 17
H. Publications .................................................................................................................................... 18

## CHAPTER THREE

**Other Activities**

A. Annual LACC Day ......................................................................................................................... 19
B. Distribution of Awards ................................................................................................................. 19
C. Strategic Plan ............................................................................................................................... 19
D. Coordination with National and International Organizations .................................................... 20
E. National and International Exposure ............................................................................................ 21

## CHAPTER FOUR

**Achievements and Challenges**

A. Achievements ............................................................................................................................... 22
B. Challenges and Mitigating Measures ............................................................................................ 23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJWS</td>
<td>American Jewish World Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Commission on the Status of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDRC</td>
<td>District Disaster Risk Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EACEA</td>
<td>Educational, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender Based Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPGBVPR</td>
<td>Integrated Platform for Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDRMC</td>
<td>Local Disaster Risk Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOLJ</td>
<td>Ministry of Law and Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOWCSW</td>
<td>Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHRC</td>
<td>National Human Rights Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTOT</td>
<td>National Training of Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWC</td>
<td>National Women Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSF</td>
<td>Open Society Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMO</td>
<td>Project Management Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>Public Service Announcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOT</td>
<td>Training of Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHRC</td>
<td>United Nation Human Rights Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPR</td>
<td>Universal Periodic Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDRC</td>
<td>Village Disaster Risk Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

Background

A. Introduction:

A pioneering legal resource organization, Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC) was established in 1987 by a group of women lawyers. Its mission is the empowerment of women, the furthering of their socio-legal status and the protection of women’s and children's rights. LACC’s approach to combating injustice is to offer comprehensive support that encompasses a number of interconnected areas. Provision of free legal aid is LACC’s core service and comprises telephone counseling, psycho-social counseling, mediation, legal advice and court representation. However, LACC is also committed to promoting change across a number of other platforms, including policy intervention, human rights training, awareness initiatives, advocacy campaigns, sensitization, research, and networking. Additionally, LACC has also been involved in drafting legislative bills and publishing legal information.

Through these initiatives, LACC has provided legal services to 24,562 women and children since its foundation. Our four professional, full-time lawyers are currently handling 975 legal cases concerning marginalized women and children. Of all the cases the organization has managed, 95% have been successful in ensuring complete access to justice for those affected.

LACC similarly works to encourage and prepare women to play leading roles in Nepal’s social, legal, political and economic development. To this end, it offers mentoring for women law students, leadership training for women leaders and capacity building for women lawyers, all with a view to supporting women in their respective professions. Through training seminars, workshops and door-to-door legal counseling, we have been able to raise awareness among women of their legal rights and the discrimination that exists against them. LACC also grants scholarships to women law students in an effort to combat the high dropout rate among women students after marriage.

Overall, LACC’s activities operate on three distinct yet interconnected levels: (1) lobbying government and policy bodies for legislative change; (2) providing free legal services to women and children; and (3) running rights awareness and gender sensitization programs at a grassroots level. With the support of its donors, LACC has fought since its inception for female empowerment, gender equality, women rights, conflict management, disaster management, legislative reforms, and legal aid – and these remain our key areas of focus moving forward.
B. Organizational Structure:

LACC has a General Assembly, which acts as the organization’s most senior managing body. There are nine members of its Executive Committee, each elected for a three-year term. The Committee is answerable to the Annual General Assembly, which meets each year. The Executive Committee makes all organizational decisions with input from the three members of its Advisory Committee.

LACC has an Executive Director who reports to the Executive Committee. The Director is the leading position within LACC. S/he is a full-time paid member of staff responsible for the day-to-day running and management of LACC. Alongside these responsibilities, the Director also leads the team that implements all the organization’s activities under various projects. From LACC’s central headquarters, the Director is responsible for facilitating specific activity planning and providing technical support to district-based staff, including management of administrative and financial concerns for the organization on a national level.

C. Executive Board Members:

- Anita Neupane Thapalia – Chair Person
- Prof. Dr. Sabitri Malla – Vice Chair Person
- Advocate Rabina Shresha – General Secretary
- Ms. Hemlata Mudbhari Dhital – Treasurer
- Advocate Shital Subedi – Member
- Advocate Uma Tamang - Member
- Advocate Sajani Joshi – Member
- Assistant Prof Manisha Poudel – Member
- Ms. Manju Pandey – Member
D. Sources of Funding at LACC:

1. Strengthening access to justice for women in Nepal through documentation of their identity and institutionalizing paralegal services

   Donor: OSF (Justice Initiatives)
   Agreement period: Jan. 2016 to Dec. 2017
   District: Jhapa and Kanchanpur
   Project Status: Completed
   Budget: NRs. 7,395,600/-

   Objectives:
   - To raise awareness of legal identity issues and to lobby civil society and government partnerships to ensure access to legal identity documents, particularly for women and marginalized groups
   - To promote the institutionalization of paralegals to demonstrate the effective role that paralegals can play in strengthening identity documentation processes, particularly for vulnerable groups.

2. Strengthening access to justice for women in Nepal through documentation of their identity and institutionalizing paralegal services

   Donor: OSF (Justice Initiatives)
   Agreement period: Jan. 2018 to Dec. 2019
   District: Jhapa and Kanchanpur
   Project Status: Ongoing
   Budget: NRs. 9,952,500/-

   Objectives:
   - To contribute to the process of institutionalizing the role of paralegals in line with government plans and policies for the new federal framework.
   - To demand government accountability in reducing discriminatory administrative procedures behind applications for legal identity documents.
   - To increase access to legal identity documents for the poor and those in marginalized communities, to ensure that they are able to assert their rights and entitlements along with access to public services.
3. ‘Legal Desk’ for addressing post-earthquake cases of gender-based violence and marginalized communities

Donor: American Jewish World Service (AJWS)
Agreement period: Jan. 2017 to Dec. 2019
District: Sindhupalchowk and Kavrepalanchowk
Project Status: Ongoing
Budget: NRs. 15,200,000/-

Objectives:

- To support access to justice and human rights through the Legal Help Desk.
- To strengthen the roles of key stakeholders and local communities in responding effectively to the impacts of environmental disaster

4. Integrated Platform for Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in Nepal (IPGBVPR)

Donor: World Bank/ National Women Commission
Agreement period: Oct 2017 – Sept 2019
District: Lalitpur
Project Status: Ongoing
Budget: NRs. 2,598,000/-

Objective:

- To contribute to access to justice for women survivors of violence through free legal aid.

5. Access to justice and legal identity through free legal aid for women and children

Donor: KIOS (The Finnish FGO Foundation for Human Rights)
District: Kathmandu, Kaski and Banke
Project Status: Completed
Budget: NRs. 4,000,100/-

Objectives:

- To operate Help Line Centers and provide legal aid, paralegal support and mediation services.
- To ensure more effective implementation of existing laws and policies by re-energizing local level service enforcement agencies.
6. **Breaking the Cycle:**

Donor: EACEA (Educational, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, acting under powers delegated by the European Commission)

Agreement period: Oct 2017 – Sept 2018

Location: Kathmandu, Nepal

Project Status: Ongoing

Budget: NRs. 2,479,502/-

**Objective:**

- To promote projects and initiatives to combat GBV among youth around the world;

- To explore non-formal methods of combating gender-based violence and build effective institutional frameworks and governance in the field of GBV;

- To expose and challenge attitudes of tolerance towards GBV among young people. To empower young people to resist GBV and develop attitudes of self-respect and self-value through active participation in the proposed activities;

- To provide educators in formal and non-formal educational settings with information and tools for working with young people towards the prevention of GBV;

- To contribute to policy development on the prevention of GBV in educational contexts on a national and international level;

- To foster cooperation and exchange between participating bodies in the field of youth GBV.

7. **Gender & Protection in Recovery and Reconstruction, Humanitarian Program**

Donor: OXFAM, Nepal

Agreement period: July 2017 – March 2018

Location: Kathmandu, Dhading, Nuwakot, Gorkha, and Sindhupalchowk

Project Status: Completed

Budget: NRs. 999,000/-

**Objective:**

- To develop resource materials on citizenship, vital registration, and the roles and responsibilities of local government in the new federal structure.

- To facilitate the work of OXFAM partners across the respective project districts regarding the legal issues involved in citizenship and vital registration

- To support OXFAM partners as facilitators in raising awareness about pertinent legal issues.
8. **Sajhedari Bikash: Training related to anti-human trafficking**

   Donor: USAID/PACT  
   Agreement period: June 2017  
   District: Banke, Bardiya Dang, Surkhet, Kailali and Kanchanpur  
   Project Status: Completed  
   Budget: NRs. 279,270/-  

   **Objective:**  
   - To increase awareness regarding human trafficking laws and legal processes, and to reduce human trafficking

9. **Sajhedari Bikash: Training related to anti-human trafficking**

   Donor: USAID/PACT  
   Agreement period: December 2017- January 2018  
   District: Banke, Bardiya Dang, Surkhet, Kailali and Kanchanpur  
   Project Status: Completed  
   Budget: NRs. 286,500/-  

   **Objective:**  
   - To increase awareness regarding human trafficking laws and legal processes, and to reduce human trafficking

10. **Access to justice in conflicts relating to women’s rights, particularly property rights and the establishment of sustainable livelihoods**

   Donor: International Alert  
   Agreement period: March 2018 - April 2018  
   District: Kathmandu  
   Project Status: Completed  
   Budget: NRs. 200,400/-  

   **Objective:**  
   - To collect and document outcomes from the conference which can serve as guidelines for the government in considering resources to meet the needs of victims of conflict.
CHAPTER TWO

Programs implemented by LACC over the 2017/18 fiscal year

A. Free Legal Aid Services:

At a time when the government's efforts in providing legal aid were nominal, LACC reached out directly to those most in need to provide legal aid services. These services include legal counseling, family mediation, paralegal services and litigation, as well as financial support for court procedures. Since its establishment, LACC has provided services to 24,562 women and children, and our four professional, full-time lawyers are currently handling 975 cases concerning marginalized women and children. So far, 95% of cases have been successful in ensuring complete access to justice.

LACC has established district offices in five different districts: Jhapa, Kanchanpur, Banke, Kavrepalanchowk and Sindhupalchowk. Along with these districts, LACC is working in many other districts of Nepal in line project demands, including Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot, Nepalgunj, Makwanpur, Ramechaap, Dang, Dailekh, Surkhet, Accham, Kailali, Morang and Panchthar among others. During the period from January to June 2018, 2,122 cases have been supported through free legal aid services. The cases typically include domestic violence, rape, marital rape, divorce, partition of property, forgery, alimony, maintenance, bigamy, cybercrime, as well as other issues.
B. Training:

LACC organized several training sessions and workshops as part of a number of projects in different locations. The main aim of the training sessions was to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the participants on issues related to gender equality, local disaster risk management systems, the role of paralegals, and VCCHT, among others. The training sessions conducted by LACC though 2017/18 included the following:

- Paralegal training conducted in Jhapa and Kanchanpur on legal identity issues.
- Refresher training for paralegals conducted in Jhapa and Kanchanpur.
- Training in disaster management for LDRMC members conducted in Sindhupalchok and Kavrepalanchowk.
- Capacity-strengthening training on human trafficking issues conducted in Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet, Kailali and Kanchanpur.
- National level Training of Trainers (NToT) on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), especially targeting the younger generation (16-25 years old).
- In-house, capacity-building training organized at LACC to strengthen and develop the skills of its staff.
- LACC provided technical support as part of an eight-day mediation training program organized by Lalitpur Municipality and Mediation Nepal.

Table 1: Details of training programs conducted by LACC in 2017/18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training initiative</th>
<th>No. training sessions</th>
<th>No. attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paralegal training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refresher training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership training</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster management training</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity strengthening training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National level Training of Trainers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house capacity building training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>571</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Workshops / Seminars / Interaction Programs:

Our one-day workshop on "Gender-Based Violence for Youth" was carried out using informal methodologies to explore GBV, gender roles and stereotypes. The workshop was inspired by a report on good practices. The aim of the workshop was not only for the participants to acquire key skills but also to reflect on issues surrounding violence against women. Similarly, our one-day seminar on "The Role of Youth to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence" was also accompanied by press conferences with local stakeholders, allowing us to report the results of the project, to present the findings of our research and to disseminate the lessons learned.

A national workshop on "Sustainable Livelihood, Access to Inheritance Property Rights and Access to Justice for Women Victims / Survivors of Armed Conflict in Nepal" was also organized by LACC. The program took a discussion-based format, above all emphasizing access to inheritance property rights and sustainable livelihoods for women who have been victims / survivors of armed conflict.

Table 2: Details of workshop and seminar programs conducted by LACC in 2017/18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of program</th>
<th>No. programs</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>No. participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender-Based Violence for Youth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14th, 15th, 16th June 2018</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Livelihood, Access to Inheritance Property Rights and Access to Justice for Women Victims / Survivors of Armed Conflict in Nepal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29th March 2018</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of Youth to Eliminate Gender Based Violence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27th July 2018</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>159</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Meetings:

Paralegal Exchange Meetings were organized in two districts – Jhapa and Kanchanpur – with the objective of sharing ideas, problems, challenges and successes concerning paralegal work. The event provided a platform for discussion of current plans and working strategies for the implementation of paralegals into existing frameworks. It also reviewed the role of the paralegal and suggested measures for managing problems and challenges effectively. Most importantly, it provided an excellent platform for paralegals to share their experiences and exchange practice-based knowledge that they acquired while working across a variety of contexts and settings.

Similarly, LACC also ran coordination meetings with new local stakeholders in Jhapa and Kanchanpur. The meetings helped to build networks and enhance ties within the communities, which is very important in executing our activities at the local level. Further, the meetings served as a platform for representatives from both state and non-state actors to come together and discuss existing problems related to vital registration documents. Coordination meetings between DDRC and VDRC district and local committees for disaster management were also held in Sindhupalchowk and Kavrepalanchowk. The meetings presented an opportunity for members to update one another on developments and to discuss plans. Above all, the meetings helped to instill a sense of ownership in the community and strengthen existing networks.

E. Outreach Programs:

Over the past six months, LACC has run various initiatives to increase awareness among women and children of their rights and the remedies available to them under the current legal system. As part of these outreach programs, mobile legal camps, radio programs, publications, and other communication methods were used across project districts.

Altogether, LACC organized seven mobile camps across five districts (Kavrepalchowk, Sindhupalchowk, Kaski, Banke and Lalitpur), reaching 250 people. In close collaboration with local government and the National Women and Children Office, LACC organized further mobile camps in Jhapa and Kanchanpur. Mobile camps were a major medium for reaching members of the public and assisting them in obtaining vital registration certificates. It was also pivotal in explaining the importance of such documents for asserting rights and legal entitlements. Furthermore, on the 108th International Women’s Day, LACC joined Rise and Shine and Aanandit Upakar Kendra to lead a legal empowerment program for groups of single women in Nakhipot in the Lalitpur district.
Likewise, public service announcements on disaster management and gender-based violence issues have been regularly disseminated through local FM radio in the Sindhupalchowk and Kavrepalnchok districts. A public service announcement was also developed highlighting the importance and uses of legal identity documents and then disseminated through local FM in the Jhapa and Kanchanpur districts. Similarly, an informative calendar with passages addressing issues around disaster management and gender-based violence was published and disseminated widely in the project districts. In some cases, these publications have even been used by scholars as reference material while undertaking research. A booklet addressing similar issues has also been published as an advocacy tool for use at the grassroots level. Success stories from participants and trainers in the field have also been published to inspire communities to act in similar ways.

F. Database Management:

Data is one of an organization's most valuable assets. It provides the foundation of knowledge and is a key tool in effective decision-making. LACC believes that better data management helps in obtaining better results. LACC has always been guided by the fact that data management is central to assessing situations in their proper contexts. We believe that well-documented information and statistics will help us to identity the gaps in our practice and challenges that must be faced in the future. As data is one of the most important tools for advocacy, LACC has developed online software for the purpose of managing data and analysing cases.

During the six month period from January to July 2017, a total of 776 cases benefited from our legal aid services across three distinct projects targeting women and children; (1) legal aid for sexual and gender-based violence, (2) legal aid for groups affected by natural disaster, and (3) legal aid for the establishment of formal legal identity before the State. Of these 776 cases, 266 have been registered in various courts for further litigation.
LACC has also been collaborating with the National Women Commission (NWC) and is providing legal services to cases referred by the NWC. From January to June 2018, 192 cases have been registered in different courts and so far 18 of these cases have been decided by the courts. LACC has also been proactive in developing software to manage data from its cases. Across two districts, Jhapa and Kanchanpur, 1,034 individuals applied for legal identity documents, including citizenship and vital registration documents, during a six month period (January – June 2018). Similarly, 1,222 cases of applications for legal identity documents have been initiated under another project in five different districts: Kathmandu, Nuwakot, Dhading, Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk.

G. Public Interest Litigation:

LACC has filed several Public Interest Litigation cases which have received positive responses from the Supreme Court. Between January and July 2017, the apex court delivered its verdict in favor of three writ petitions filed by LACC. The petitions included the provision of immediate relief funds for victims of gender-based violence, property rights related to missing members of a family, and the right to claim citizenship using the mother’s name. The Supreme Court’s verdicts have enabled a large section of the population to assert property rights – primarily women, displaced individuals and survivors of gender-based violence whose family members have been missing for some time.

- In May 2011 (2068 Jestha), a writ petition regarding property rights of missing family members was filed by Adv. Anita Neupane Thapaliya on behalf of LACC. Under existing law, if a person holding rights to property is missing or has disappeared, members of their family cannot make use of or claim rights to the property for twelve years. However, familial duties and responsibilities are automatically transferred to the second guardian of the family. Due to the complexities of this area of the law, LACC filed a petition requesting that an order be made to the Nepal government to pass new legislation clarifying the legal situation. On January 4th 2017 (20 Poush 2073), the Supreme Court gave its verdict (through the bench of Justices Hon’l Om Prakesh Mishra and Hon’l Kedar Prasad Chalise), issuing a mandamus on behalf of the petitioner.

- On March 26th 2015 (12 Chaitra 2071), (writ no. 071-WO-0753), a PIL case was filed by LACC together with Jury Nepal. The issue concerned the provision of immediate interim relief funding to a victim of gender-based violence immediately after filing a FIR with
the police. On February 26th 2016 (21 Mag 2072), the Supreme Court issued a directive order to the Government for the provision of immediate relief funding to victims of sexual offences and gender-based violence. The directive order was given by the full bench of the Supreme Court of Nepal, headed by Chief Justice Kalyan Shrestha and Justice Devendra Gopal Shrestha. This case is a landmark judgment in favor of the victims of GBV cases.

- On February 2nd 2015 (19 Magh 2071), a writ petition regarding applications for citizenship by virtue of a mother-child relationship was filed by LACC. The facts were as follows: a woman born in the Lalitpur district of Nepal married a man from Tibet who had been living and running a business in Nepal for 30 years. He later died following the birth of two daughters. When the time came for the daughters to apply for citizenship – as they intended to pursue further study – the relevant authority refused their application on the grounds that the relationship between a mother and child was insufficient, despite being guaranteed in the Nepalese constitution. On September 26th 2016 (10 Ashoj 2073), the Supreme Court issued its final verdict in favor of the petitioners, affirming that citizenship could be established by virtue of a mother-child relationship.

H. Publications:

- A Leadership training manual for women on "The Federal System and the Representation of Women"
- A workbook on citizenship
- A workbook on vital registration
- A workbook on the security fund for single women
- A workbook on violence against women and a woman’s legal rights
- A good practice guide on ending gender-based violence: "Breaking the Cycle"
- An action guide on the prevention of gender-based violence among young people: "Breaking the Cycle"
- A Report on "Breaking the Cycle"
- A calendar for 2075
CHAPTER THREE
Other Activities

A. Annual LACC Day:
The 32nd Annual LACC Day was held on 17th August 2018. The program was chaired by Hon’ble Mohna Ansari, Anita Neupane Thapaliya (Executive Chair), Prof. Dr. Shashi Adhikary (Advisor), Mahendra Prasai (LACC Founder), and Surya Kiran Gurung (LACC Founder). Representatives from various national and international organizations and institutions attended the event. A documentary entitled "Pahichan" related to issues surrounding legal identity was also launched on the occasion. Hon’ble Mohna Ansari was awarded with the 'Prof. Dr. Shanta Thapalia Women Empowerment' award. A Certificate of Honor Award was also given to OSF and TAF for their continuous support of LACC. Staff members were also awarded for their contribution to LACC for more than 15 years. At the event, LACC Founders, Adv. Suryakiran Gurung and Adv. Mahendra Prasai expressed their joy and gratitude in watching LACC’s development as part of their speeches.

B. Distribution of Awards:
LACC established its 'Women Empowerment' award in 2010 (2067). The award is dedicated in memory of the late Dr. Shanta Thapalia, the original founder of LACC. This year, LACC granted the award to Hon’ble Mohna Ansari, a human rights activist and a member of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal. Certificates of Honor Awards were also given to Neetu Pokharel from OSF and Nandita Baruwa from TAF. Among LACC’s own staff, Advocate Chandeswori Tandukar, Advocate Punyashila Dawadi, Advocate Sakuntala Basnet, Mr. Nawaraj Thapaliya and Ms Hari Maya Magar were presented with awards and letters of appreciation for their unwavering contribution to LACC’s objectives for over 15 years.

C. Strategic Planning:
Previously, LACC developed a five-year strategic plan for the period from 2015 to 2019. At present, we are in the fourth year of the plan.
D. Coordination with National and International Organizations:

Over the course of the year, LACC has engaged in networking on both national and international levels. At the national level, LACC collaborated with like-minded NGOs, such as ATWIN, NNAGT and FWLD as well as sharing memberships with various organizations, including the NGO Federation, National Legal Aid Network, and the Women Security Pressure Group. LACC has also been a member of a number of different committees at ministerial level concerned with violence against women, including the PMO, MOWCSW, MoLJ, NWC and MoPR. In the broader international arena, LACC works as a member of different networks, each with a focus on particular issues, including CEDAW, UPR, CSW, UNHCR’s 1325 and 1820, as well as statelessness and access to justice. LACC has also been organizing parallel events on human rights issues at CSW forums in the USA. Further, LACC works in partnership with IWARA Asia Pacific, Beijing +15, CEDAW Shadow Committee, N-Peace and many others.

Importantly, LACC maintained its harmonious relationship with the Government of Nepal, the Supreme Court, the Nepal Bar Association, The Asia Foundation, International Alert, and various other organizations and institutions.

E. National and International Exposure:

Training of Trainers (ToT) in Madagascar

Training of Trainers (ToT) in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Legal Empowerment Program in Thailand

Study visit in Spain for Capacity Building Activities and Mobility
CHAPTER FOUR
Achievements and Challenges

A. Achievements:

32 years have passed since LACC’s foundation. In that time, its members have worked hard to achieve its goals and objectives. Even with limited resources, including restricted funding and staff, LACC is always striving to push its work forward.

LACC has been working in the field of transitional justice for many years and had filed a number of important writ petitions to order mandamus (mandatory orders) for laws to be passed which give rights to family members of missing individuals. After the property of the missing person has been divided equitably, the beneficiaries are now able to use their portion of the property to ensure a sustainable livelihood moving forward. This decision was delivered by the Supreme Court in 2017 (2074 B.S.), and the court’s positive verdict in the case represents an important step forward in the development of Nepali property rights. The Supreme Court’s order was incorporated into the “Bill to Amend the Act on Commission on Investigation of Disappeared Persons, Truth and Reconciliation, 2014”. This is a great achievement for LACC and is considered a key milestone in our work on transitional justice.

Similarly, LACC has recently been presented with the Award of Honor from Lalitpur Municipality and Mediation Nepal for its work providing technical support over an eight-day training session related to mediation. Working to establish a specialist mediation center, eight days of training for mediators was conducted in collaboration of Lalitpur Municipality and Mediation Nepal. In the training, LACC provided technical support and facilitated training led by the Mediation Council.
B. Challenges and Mitigating Measures:

LACC’s main objective is to protect and promote the rights and interests of women and children in Nepal. To achieve this goal and implement its activities, LACC has faced a number of key challenges:

- The demand for legal aid services is always high. However, legal aid services are rarely a primary interest for donors. As such, there is a lack of sufficient financial support for these central services – a factor which continues to be a major challenge for LACC.
- Limited staff and resources similarly contribute to caseloads that are difficult to manage and this too continues to present a significant challenge for staff.
- Due to the country’s new federal structure, Nepal is in a transitional phase of its political and legal organization, and an increasing number of new laws create additional challenges, as staff are repeatedly asked to adapt to changing legal frameworks. Therefore, a lack of sufficiently skilled human resources is a key challenge for LACC.
- Further, the government is still in the process of developing a coherent legal aid policy and the current policy is not favorable to NGOs, especially those providing legal aid services directly. In some cases, this has presented barriers for us in providing legal aid freely.

In order to meet the above challenges, LACC believes that it should work towards achieving the following mitigating measures:

- Development of skilled staff, by conducting various training initiatives
- Ensuring the availability of sufficient funding
- Ensuring the availability of sufficiently qualified staff and sufficient resources for their work
- Working to build support from the government and to collaborate with the government on the provision of legal aid services.