

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING A MORE JUST AND EQUAL BC



Working to advance gender equality requires guts, patience and, at times, a healthy dose of outrage. It can take years, decades even, to see the impact of the work. At West Coast LEAF we know that we cannot afford to rest on our past success if we want to ensure that we achieve true substantive equality and justice for all women and people who face gender-based discrimination.

Our team is mobilized to do our part to dismantle the barriers that keep people silent in the face of gender discrimination and sexual assault. We are actively engaged in the work of shifting the systems we want to improve or to rebuild those we want to dismantle.

This past year, our project work was heavily focused on gender-based violence and sexual assault. Recently, we brought together a group of high-level stakeholders from across the justice system to discuss what our institutions can do to dismantle the barriers to reporting sexual assault. Shortly, we are launching a complementary report that shifts the focus from institutions to survivors, centring the voices of women who have experienced

sexual assault. Ensuring that women's voices are heard in the effort to end sexual violence is key to ending sexual assault.

We know that public awareness and education about the ways in which sexism and misogyny work to undermine equality and justice is critical if we want to make enduring change. So, we've developed and piloted Only Yes Means Yes, our workshop for post-secondary students about sexual consent, informed by the input of a diverse advisory committee and community feedback. The demand from post-secondary campuses across BC is enormous. This is a hopeful reality. Demand is also high for our booklet about online harassment and abuse, *Is that Legal?* Thanks to our partnership with Legal Services Society we were able to revise, republish, and translate it into multiple languages.

Our education programs and resources offer information about our rights and responsibilities and also effective ways to help put a stop to rape culture.

With this constellation of projects, we are shaping future research and policy development and laying the groundwork to strengthen the rights of women who have experienced sexual assault. We believe that the system, not just individuals, must take responsibility and change if we are actually going to end sexual assault. We believe that it's possible to work with the system to ensure that change happens. We believe we can help give rise to a society that affirms the dignity of all people. We believe survivors.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the women who are responding to the clarion call of truth and demanding justice for themselves and for their communities.

I'd like to express our gratitude to you, our generous donors, our steadfast funders, and the incredibly bright and dedicated people that serve this organization as staff, on the board, and in countless volunteer positions, including those who bigheartedly serve as pro-bono counsel. I humbly thank you for your sustaining commitment to advancing equality and towards building a more just and equal BC.

Amber Prince, President, West Coast LEAF



OUR MANDATE

West Coast LEAF is the first and only organization in BC dedicated to using the law as a strategy to work towards an equal and just society for all women and people who experience gender-based discrimination. Since our founding in 1985, we have helped bring about some of Canada's most important feminist victories for reproductive rights, workplace standards, fairness in family law, legal protections from sexual harassment, and more.

In collaboration with community, West Coast LEAF uses litigation, law reform, and public legal education to create social change. While we are focused on issues in British Columbia, we also take action in matters of national significance that are important to the equality and human rights of people in British Columbia. We aim to transform society by achieving:

- Access to healthcare
- Access to justice
- Economic security
- Freedom from gender-based violence
- Justice for those who are criminalized
- The right to parent

OUR VISION

West Coast LEAF envisions an equal and just society for all women and people who experience gender-based discrimination.

We recognize that gender-based inequalities threaten the safety, well-being, and human rights not only of women, but also of Two-Spirit people, intersex people, gender non-conforming people, trans people of all genders (not only women), and people with non-binary gender identities. West Coast LEAF is committed to an inclusive vision of feminism that defends the right to be free from discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression.

West Coast LEAF recognizes our responsibility to work for the full realization of the rights of Indigenous peoples. In the context of historic and ongoing colonial violence and injustice, West Coast LEAF understands that fulfilling this responsibility requires a deep and continual commitment. We respectfully acknowledge that our office is located in Vancouver on traditional, ancestral, and unceded Coast Salish homeland, including the territories of the $x^w m \theta k w \acute{y} \acute{o} m$ (Musqueam), $Skwxwú7 mesh$ (Squamish), and $S \acute{a} l \acute{i} l w \acute{a} t a ? / S e l \acute{i} l w \acute{i} t u l h$ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We understand that many of us are uninvited guests to these territories. As an organization that includes many settlers, we take responsibility for learning and seeking long-term transformation in our relationships with Indigenous peoples and land.

West Coast LEAF promotes substantive equality, an approach that recognizes and celebrates differences. Rather than treating everyone the same, substantive equality ensures that historically disadvantaged people can actively participate in society and access justice. We strive to ensure that the equality principles in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which advance the rights of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, are fulfilled.



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WE WORK IN FOUR MAJOR AREAS: LITIGATION, LAW REFORM, PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH



LITIGATION

We develop challenges to unjust laws and policies that have a significant impact on gender equality and human rights.

2017/2018 HIGHLIGHTS: 6 CASES

- **Single Mothers' Alliance v BC:** We are defending the right to fair and equal access to the family law system in the aftermath of relationship violence. Our constitutional challenge against the Province of BC and Legal Services Society will be heard in BC Supreme Court.
- **BCCLA and JHSC v Canada:** We highlighted the disproportionate impacts of solitary confinement on women, particularly Indigenous women and those with mental health concerns. The case, heard in BC Supreme Court, challenges the constitutionality of indefinite solitary confinement in federal prisons. We will again intervene when the government's appeal is heard by the BC Court of Appeal in November 2018.
- **Denton v BC (Workers' Compensation Board):** We defended workers' rights at the BC Court of Appeal. To protect meaningful and equal access to justice, courts must retain discretion to hear Charter claims against an administrative decision.
- **Schrenk v BC Human Rights Tribunal:** We stood for the principle that workplace protections against harassment must apply to all harassers, not just supervisors.
- **National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:** We are participating to highlight how gender inequality contributes to ongoing violence against Indigenous women and girls, in the context of historical and ongoing colonial oppression and injustice.
- **Trinity Western University and Brayden Volkenant v Law Society of BC:** We intervened to affirm that equality in education is not just about how many law school seats might be made available, but about treating everyone as worthy of dignity and respect.



LAW REFORM

We track and monitor how legislation and policy affect gender equality; do in-depth research and writing on legal and policy issues; and engage with decision-makers to push for change.

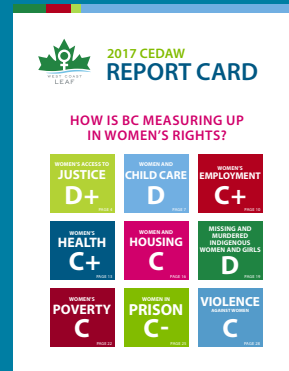
2017/2018 HIGHLIGHTS

2 REPORTS

- 9th annual CEDAW Report Card
- Justice Reform for BC, in coalition with BC Civil Liberties Association, Pivot Legal Society, and Community Legal Assistance Society

5 LETTERS

- To the BC Attorney General regarding funding of family law legal aid
- To the Premier, and also to the Minister of Health, regarding access to the abortion pill Mifegymiso for rural women in BC
- To the Minister of State for Child Care regarding implementing comprehensively accessible child care
- To candidates in the BC provincial election, urging them to work to eliminate accessibility barriers to obtaining income assistance (an open letter)
- To provincial and federal ministers of justice on funding for immigration and refugee legal aid



6 SUBMISSIONS & BRIEFING NOTES

- To the Fair Wages Commission with a focus on closing the gap between the living wage and the minimum wage and addressing the gendered dimensions of economic insecurity
- To the provincial budget committee on budget priorities with an emphasis on legal aid
- To the federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women on women's poverty
- To the Parliamentary Secretary on the structure of the Human Rights Commission
- To the Minister's Advisory on BC's poverty reduction strategy
- To legislators calling for BC's Ministry of Children and Family Development to eliminate policies and practices that require parents to have an open child protection file to access child care support

PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION

We help people of all ages learn about the law through a critical social justice lens and empower them to access their rights.



SPEAKERS BUREAU



1,380

people reached in more than **27** talks

WORKSHOPS

We reached participants **1,788** at **97** workshops:

- 1,367 at 61 youth workshops
- 287 at 19 Only Yes Means Yes pilot workshops
- 134 at 5 other adult workshops

Demand is high for our booklet about online harassment and abuse, *Is that Legal?* Thanks to our partnership with Legal Services Society we were able to revise, republish, and translate it into multiple languages.

MENTORSHIP



9 youth facilitators trained, with **34** active facilitators



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We engage with community through coalition-building, partnerships, and collaborations, taking guidance from advisory committees with lived and professional expertise, and contributing to public conversations.

WEST COAST LEAF IN THE MEDIA

83 articles, radio and TV spots

22,395 unique website visitors

4,125 resources downloaded



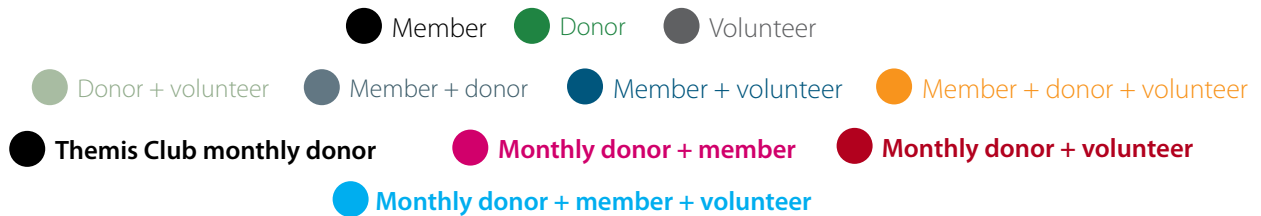
ZAHRA JIMALE
DIRECTOR OF LAW REFORM, WEST COAST LEAF

GETTY NEWS VANCOUVER

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2017/2018 FINANCIALS

REVENUES

Grants	\$ 451,238
Fundraising	339,338
Endowments & interest	7,225
Education fees & Other	<u>7,847</u>
Total	\$ 805,648

EXPENSES

Accounting & audit	\$ 8,245
Office & equipment	45,565
Governance	8,289
Fundraising	50,647
Program costs: Other	41,037
Program costs: Staff and contractors	611,585
Rent	<u>54,696</u>
Total	\$ 820,064

THANK YOU for supporting the record-breaking 2018 Equality Breakfast



Executive Director Kasari Govender, left, with Equality Breakfast keynote speaker Robyn Doolittle.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2017/2018 PROJECT FUNDERS



LAW FOR THE FUTURE FUND



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We are grateful for the continuing support of the Law Foundation of British Columbia



We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia

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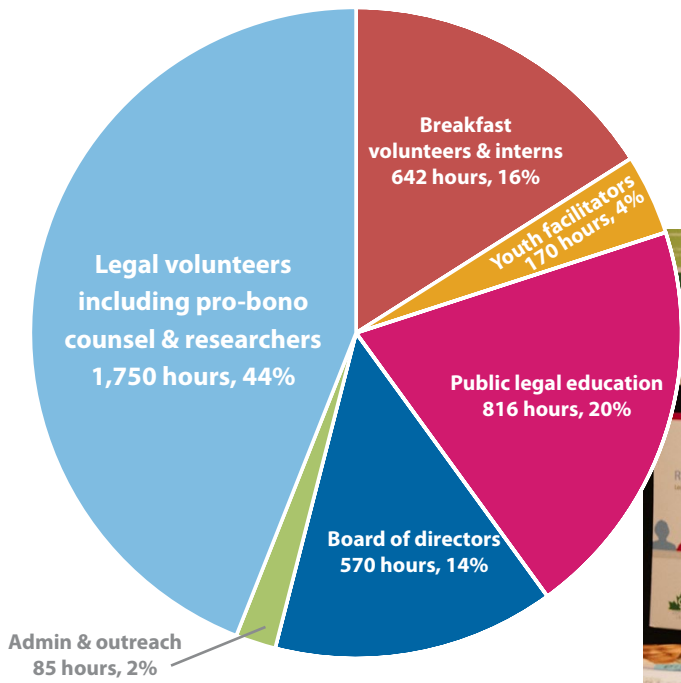
We acknowledge the government of Canada for funding through Status of Women Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

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- Caitlin Anderson, Administrative Assistant (starting November 2017)
- Afie Bozorgebrahimi, Youth Program Coordinator (until September 2017)
- Victoria Chen, Office Manager
- Kasari Govender, Executive Director
- Zahra Jimale, Director of Law Reform
- Nour Kachouh, Youth Workshop Coordinator
- Basya Laye, Director of Development and Engagement
- Raji Mangat, Director of Litigation
- Kendra Milne, Director of Law Reform (until July 2017)
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- Sharon Xia, Event Manager and Donor Coordinator

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OVER 4,000
VOLUNTEER HOURS IN 2017/2018





West Coast LEAF is a federally registered charity and an incorporated BC non-profit society. We're governed by an elected Board of Directors, run by a dedicated staff, and supported by active and committed volunteers. Our family of staff, volunteers, members, alumni, and supporters includes legal professionals, community organizers, social service providers, community groups, unions, and students.



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