

EWMI-PROLoG Legal Aid Grants Program Access to Justice for Women and Minorities

The Promoting Rule of Law in Georgia Activity (PROLoG) is a five-year program funded by USAID and implemented by the East-West Management Institute (EWMI). The purpose of PROLoG is to strengthen the justice system, to ensure due process, judicial independence, and the protection of human rights. The activity is designed to address key challenges in the rule of law sector and capitalize on opportunities for accelerated rule of law and justice sector reforms where there is political will and/or interest from civil society. The primary goal of the PROLoG Legal Aid Grant Program is to increase access to justice for women and minority groups by supporting local NGOs. GYLA and TI, long-term partners of EWMI, have been implementing legal aid projects since 2015 under the PROLoG grants. In addition, PROLoG has identified seven projects that will deliver legal with the aim to identify strategic litigation cases appropriate for promoting the rights of women and minorities before the courts of common jurisdiction, the Constitutional Court and the European Court for Human Rights.

Minority-Focused Projects

ადამიანის უფლებების მწვლეობისა და მონიტორინგის ცენტრი

EMC

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)

The project increases access to justice for religious, ethnic and sexual minorities by addressing restrictions on freedom of religion for non-dominant religious groups, discrimination based on religion and ethnicity, inconsistent state policies toward restitution for takings of religious properties during Soviet times, issues related to construction of places of worship, problems of low political representation and integration of the Azerbaijani community, transparency of the State Agency on Religious Affairs, proselytism and discrimination in public schools, restriction of freedom of assembly and freedom of expression towards the LGBT community, and hate-motivated crimes. The project includes strategic litigation and awareness building activities, and covers Tbilisi, Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and parts of Guria populated by religious minorities. EMC's project includes trainings and information sessions for representatives of ethnic and religious minorities, media and religious leaders on issues of religious freedom and non-discrimination.

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Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)

The project ensures the protection of freedom of religion, providing legal aid and increasing access to justice for religious, ethnic minorities and the victims of racial discrimination. The project will focus on analysis of state policies and changing discriminatory practices and legislation through strategic litigation. The project aims to address problems such as property-related barriers faced by religious groups, including the construction of new houses of worship, restitution of property confiscated during Soviet times, purchase of state property by religious groups, unequal tax treatment of religious groups, discriminatory practices at public educational institutions, discrimination on ethnic grounds, including during the election process, racial discrimination, and residence permits for foreign citizens. TDI conducts field visits and regular monitoring in Tbilisi, Achara and Kvemo-Kartli regions, and provides consultations and legal representation to religious,

ethnic minorities and victims of racial discrimination. TDI's partner organization is the Union of Azerbaijani Youth in Georgia, based in Kvemo-Kartli.

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Gender-Focused Projects



Georgian Democratic Initiative (GDI)

The project increases access to justice for women, girls, and representatives of ethnic and religious minorities who are victims of domestic violence or discrimination due to cultural or religious factors. The project provides consultations and legal representation for the target groups in Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda and Adigeni municipalities in Samtskhe-Javakheti, and Khulo and Shuakhevi municipalities in Adjara. The project also engages in strategic litigation in the common and Constitutional courts of Georgia. GDI partners with the Center for Participation and Development. In addition, GDI has partnerships in each municipality with attorneys who are involved in the local cases under GDI's supervision.

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Georgian Trade Union Confederation (GTUC)

The project increases access to justice for women, representatives of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities, and people with disabilities by addressing discrimination in the workplace. The project focuses on issues of unequal treatment of applicants at the hiring stage and during employment, unjustified termination of contracts after maternity leave, the lack of a state-funded maternity allowance for self-employed women, the use of service contracts as opposed to labor contracts for female workers, and sexual harassment in the workplace. The project also looks at the implementation of the Law on Public Service from the perspective of the rights of women and vulnerable groups. The project includes twelve trainings on labor rights and discrimination issues in the workplace, which are being carried out in Tbilisi, Lagodekhi, Gurjaani, Senaki, Poti, Zugdidi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Gori, Dusheti, Kazbegi, Oni, Lentekhi, Mestia, Rustavi, Khelvachauri and Akhaltsikhe.

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Human Rights Center (HRC)

The project increases access to justice for women and ethnic minority groups in Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Shida Kartli by addressing failures of the state to prevent and investigate domestic violence, femicide and early marriage, and failures to respond to gender, religious and ethnic-based discrimination and violence. The project provides consultations and legal representation for target groups in Tbilisi, Kvemo-Kartli, Shida-Kartli and Kakheti, and engages in strategic litigation in courts of ordinary jurisdiction, the Constitutional Court, the European Court of Human Rights, and before the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

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Partnership for Human Rights (PHR)

The project increases access to justice for women, including women with disabilities, by targeting multiple layers of gender inequality and discriminatory practices in the fields of health and safety, political and public life, cultural and family life, and the economic and social life of women. PHR works through its office in Tbilisi and also provides consultations and legal representation to the project's target groups in Imereti to engage in strategic litigation in Georgia's courts of ordinary jurisdiction and the Constitutional Court of Georgia. PHR's legal aid for victims of domestic violence is based on a strategy that aims to put control in the hands of the women, enabling them to be decision-makers in the process. Victims of violence and discrimination get practical knowledge and skills in gathering evidence, filing complaints that hold perpetrators liable, and requesting damages through civil law mechanisms.

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SAPARI

The project prevents and combats violence against women and girls by addressing problems such as domestic violence and the violation of women's property rights, and raises society's awareness of the problem of female genital mutilation (FGM). The project provides legal aid and conducts strategic litigation for women and girls from Tbilisi, Samegrelo and Kakheti. Sapari also offers psychological support to the victims of violence. The project includes awareness raising activities, including working meetings with different branches of government on gender-based violence.

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EWMI Partner Organizations



Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) – GYLA provides legal aid to marginalized populations, with the aim of identifying strategic litigation cases appropriate for promoting the rights (including due process rights) of minority groups and women before the common courts of

Georgia, the Constitutional Court and the European Court for Human Rights (ECtHR). Such legal aid may also serve to identify legislative flaws as well as deficiencies in the work of the state, and develop best practices for representation in the courts. GYLA provides legal aid to women and other vulnerable groups through its Tbilisi office and eight regional offices, and provides legal consultations, court representation and strategic litigation. To improve vulnerable groups' access to GYLA's legal aid program, GYLA conducts field visits throughout the country, and its website is equipped with a chat feature to facilitate online consultations.

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Transparency International Georgia (TIG) – TIG provides free legal aid through its Advocacy and Legal Aid Centers in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi and Zugdidi. Legal aid activity is based on a strategic litigation approach, and seeks to effect change to policies, laws, regulations and the enforcement system. Through its Mobile Clinics, TIG lawyers deliver legal services to the people living in remote areas. The primary focus is the regions where problems related to illegal dismissals and property rights violations are reported.

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