

Women's Link Worldwide is an international non-governmental organization working to advance women's rights through the implementation of international human rights law and the use of international tribunals and strategic litigation. As a clearinghouse of legal precedent from national and international courts, Women's Link is a resource for advocates and organizations dedicated to furthering women's rights through legal avenues. Women's Link attorneys also undertake legal advocacy projects designed to promote human rights norms.

## Current projects

### Compiling case law and maintaining web-accessible database

Women's Link's website maintains a database of judicial decisions on women's rights focusing specifically on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and violence against women. This database is unique in that it provides both case summaries as well as direct access to case law from national and gender discrimination, regional and international tribunals.

Compiling national and international case law in one centralized location fosters creative legal strategies for implementing international standards, and provides Women's Link the advantage of cross-regional comparisons in its advocacy endeavors. Working at the national and international level simultaneously and directing its efforts toward the judicial branch, Women's Link focuses on the substantive content of case law as well as exploring multiple approaches for effective advocacy via the judiciary.

### Using national courts to effect social change

Through case studies gathered from local litigation efforts to advance women's rights across six countries-- Spain, Poland, South Africa, Thailand, Australia and Colombia --Women's Link's *Gender Justice* project seeks to systematize lessons-learned from advocates asserting social change through national courts. *Gender Justice* provides national advocates with an array of strategies for working with the judiciary using cross-regional comparisons and international standards.

### Challenging Colombia's penal code to liberalize abortion law

Through the *Gender Justice* LAICIA initiative, Women's Link is constitutionally challenging Colombia's penal code provisions that, without exception, criminalize abortion. Liberalization of the law would further women's reproductive rights in the country and set an important precedent in the region. The LAICIA initiative demonstrates the use of high impact litigation as a means of strategically advancing human rights issues and will hopefully provide an example for NGOs around the world on engaging the courts.

### Using strategic litigation to address race and gender discrimination in Spain

In partnership with the Open Society Institute's Justice Initiative, SOS Racismo and other Spanish NGOs, Women's Link is engaged in an examination of systemic discrimination against migrants and other racial minorities in Spain. Applying its methodology—an examination of national and international case law and diverse advocacy strategies before the judicial branch—this project monitors the application of anti-discrimination legislation on the grounds of race and gender in national courts, measuring it against EU and international standards for use in potential strategic litigation before national and international tribunals.

Founded in 2001, Women's Link is based in Madrid with offices in Latin America and the United States. It is currently supported by the Ford Foundation, the Libra Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, the Global Fund for Women and private donors.