

Latin American Women's Rights Service: **35 years**

defending the rights
of Latin American migrant
women in the UK



Latin American Women's Rights Service
Annual report 2017-2018
35th Anniversary special edition



The Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)

is a human rights, feminist organisation led by and for Latin American migrant women in the UK. Our work is dedicated to support the immediate and long-term needs of Latin American migrant women exposed to violations of their fundamental human rights; facing violence against women and girls, exploitation or trafficking; enduring difficult living and working conditions in low paid, and facing barriers to social protection. 5,000 women use our services every year, benefitting from practical and emotional support, learning new skills and improving their own opportunities. We strive to provide essential tools for women to empower themselves in their pursuit of personal and social change.

Our year at a glance

266
women joined
in our integration
programme

93%
improved their
knowledge
about rights

85%
improved their
wellbeing

339
survivors
of violence
supported to
find safety

70%
found LAWRS
through word of
mouth

285
school students
better able to
lead healthy
relationships

57
volunteers
involved in our
award winning
scheme

1,890
hours of
comprehensive
wellbeing
support
offered

1,691
advice and
information
sessions

46
young women
and girls developing
their potential and
seeking the change
they want to see

40%
of our drop in
service users
accessed more
than 1 service in
a single visit

**Evidenced
based campaigning
work to tackle
violence against
women and girls,
labour exploitation
and reduce the
impact of Brexit**

515
women
supported in
Southwark

124
women
supported in
Haringey



Photo by Angeles Rodenas

I was trafficked into the UK in 2007

As soon as I arrived, they took my passport and locked me for 3 years as a domestic slave. Of course, they never paid me and were physically abusive.

When I was able to run away, I met my ex-partner who wouldn't let me out of the house, unless it was with him. I wasn't allowed to work, but he never gave me money or even bought me clothes.

He made me feel worthless, as if I was there only to give him children and look after them. I endured physical and sexual abuse for 7 years.

One day, I gathered the courage to report him to the police. What held me back for so long was that I had no idea about the system, I don't speak English, and I'm undocumented.

But everything changed since then. Social Services referred me to LAWRS where a caseworker helped me to apply for a non-molestation order and found me an immigration

solicitor who is helping me with my application to the Home Office. I feel safer now.

LAWRS caseworker is also working with my social worker to find me a safe accommodation, helped me with food, and gave me information about LAWRS English courses and social activities I can join. She even helped me to register with a GP for the first time and I'm on a waiting list to start counselling therapy in Spanish at LAWRS.

I still feel the pain from all the abuse. I'm still scared because I don't have papers yet... and I'm still scared of him and of the traffickers finding me again, but now I know that I'm not alone.

Mónica

Perú, 34 years old

*Names have been changed to protect identities

“I feel stronger and I have hope that my two boys and I can still have a bright future”

Words from our Chair

Everyone at LAWRS is delighted to celebrate our 35th Anniversary with our users, funders and friends. A lot has changed since LAWRS was established in 1983, and yet, not enough has changed. Gender based violence continues to threaten the lives and well-being of women and girls. Poverty, institutional discrimination and lack of opportunities keep them at a disadvantage and entrenches their inequality for generations to come. For Latin American women living in the United Kingdom these issues are compounded by the twin threats of a hostile environment policy on migrants and Brexit.

This means we know that there is still a lot of work ahead of us. Throughout our 35 years of existence we strived to adapt to the changing needs of the women we serve whilst keeping in mind the necessity to contribute to creating an environment that protects migrant women and that provides us with full and equitable economic, social and political rights. We have traditionally

done this through our advice and counselling service as well as our workshops and campaigns. Recently we have renewed our commitment to Human Rights by implementing an eight-month consultancy to better embed them into our culture and our work. We have also reinstated our in-house employment rights service and gained accreditation as a Living Wage employer. We have continued to expand our service take up by Brazilian women as well as increased their representation at every level of the organisation. We are also increasing our collaboration and strengthening our partnerships with other women, migrant, and social justice organisations in order to become more effective in addressing our users' concerns.

We look forward to continuing on the path that we set for ourselves 35 years ago with renewed commitment to our cause in the face of the challenges ahead of us. We are working on addressing the impact of the hostile environment

policies and the consequent loss of trust in public services and the police, which has closed pathways of support for migrant women. We are working on addressing the uncertainty created by the Brexit vote and the notorious increase of anti-migrant sentiment fuelled by a number of political figures both nationally and internationally.

We have continued to respond to the feeling of instability and lack of protection, and to the increased barriers that migrant women face when in need to access services, safety, and justice. We are implementing strategies to better represent the women in our community by looking at more ways to include them in our strategic planning and programme development.

We are looking at ways to become better, more effective, and more sustainable so we can continue supporting and advocating for women who are vulnerable and at a disadvantage for the benefit of women, our communities and the country.

Gisela Valle



Specialist services for Latin American migrant women in the UK

Zero tolerance to violence against women and girls (VAWG)

Lack of English, lack of knowledge and difficulties to navigate the system, as well as systemic barriers to access support linked to cuts to public services, legal aid, and hostile environment policies, greatly increase the vulnerability of migrant women to VAWG, and prevent them from leaving abusive situations. A high percentage of the women we supported had no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and faced a number of additional challenges including deteriorated mental health and immigration barriers.

Our VAWG holistic programme supports women survivors of VAWG (e.g. domestic violence, sexual violence, harmful practices, trafficking for sexual exploitation, etc.) into safety and protection and in rebuilding their lives free from violence. Through specialist

339 Women
facing violence supported

+50 Women
supported to access other legal advice services relevant to their situation

+ Women supported
in sex work/prostitution

275 Women
victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence

64 Survivors
of harmful practice, including honour based violence and forced marriage

28 Women
in high risk supported

93% Changed
their living conditions

77% Ended
abusive relationships

78% Improved
their wellbeing

advocacy support, legal and practical advice, and confidence building groups we carry out a process of empowerment and healing that has a lasting impact on women's lives. We liaise with the police, social services, and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment

Conferences, and have an active role in various VAWG Forums, advocating for improved responses to migrant victims. We also provide training for statutory agencies and professionals to improve identification and responses to VAWG.



1983

LAWRS opens its door offering advice and information on welfare rights, employment, housing, immigration, health and prevention and care

50,000 Latin Americans in the UK (estimated)

The Sex Discrimination Act (Amendment) further strengthens women's rights giving them greater equality with men in employment

LAWRS has a key role in setting up a crèche in the Latin American House

LAWRS starts to offer English classes

LAWRS supports the creation of the Latin American Women's Aid project to provide refuge for Latin American women affected by violence

Introduction of new local taxes sparks 'poll tax' riots in London

**1,890
Hours**
of specialist
wellbeing support
to 433 women

83% Improvement
in subjective wellbeing

83% Gained
coping strategies

79% Improved
their ability to access
practical help

241 Accessed
assessments and/or
one-to-one therapy

89 Women
accessed crisis
intervention

7 Cases
of trafficking
identified

103 Engaged
in group work

26 Survivors
of harmful
practices

Overcoming the impact of trauma and abuse

LAWRS counselling and psychotherapy service provides culturally sensitive, language specific and gender informed support to women and girls over 16 years old, survivors of any form of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, harmful practices, trafficking, and exploitation. Our tailored therapeutic approach is rooted in feminist principles with a focus on empowering and enabling women to reach their own potential as unique and valuable individuals, and to recover from abuse. Emerging issues this period were the great impact that hostile environment policies and the uncertainty caused by Brexit on the mental health and overall sense of security of women in vulnerable situations, particularly for those with insecure immigration status. As a result, the presentation of cases was more complex and has

required increased liaison with statutory services and partner organisations. Due to insufficient funding and increasing demand, we operated all year with waiting lists.

Preventing and challenging VAWG

Increasing awareness of women's fundamental human rights through education is central to our work. This year, 116 women participated in group activities. These activities provided a space for women to discuss sensitive topics like sexual violence, coercive control, domestic abuse and victims' rights, everyday sexism, forced marriage,

among others. Participants reported that the sessions provided them with a better understanding of the indicators of violence and abuse, and how to address them. We also stepped up our prevention work with young people by working with our Sin Fronteras youth group (see below) and by delivering a whole-school approach to preventing all forms of VAWG in three London boroughs.

Our prevention work in primary and secondary schools:

- 285 students better able to lead healthy relationships.
- 40 students supported through group work.
- 98 school staff trained to identify and address indicators of abuse.
- Over 3000 students, staff & parents reached.



Las Divinas, a Latin American lesbian women's group is formed with the practical support and encouragement of LAWRS

Channel Tunnel opens, linking London and Paris by rail

LAWRS starts to offer counselling services

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women affirms that violence against women violates their human rights.

As part of the Criminal Justice Act, marital rape is declared illegal in the UK

1993

LAWRS' 10th Anniversary

1,691 Sessions
of legal advice to tackle and prevent poverty, debts, homelessness & exploitation

717 Women
accessed our drop in sessions

214 Supported
through casework

240 Supported
through our helpline or email

Tackling poverty, debts, homelessness, and labour exploitation

The housing crisis, austerity measures, welfare reform, lack of access to legal aid, and reduced avenues of support available have continued to push more women into destitution and at risk of becoming homeless. As a result, our specialist advice, advocacy and casework support in housing, welfare benefits, and money and debt continued to be highly demanded.

Most women using this service were experiencing in-work poverty and facing multiple and complex problems requiring dedicated casework. In response to the endemic and often severe levels of exploitation affecting our community, this year we also started offering employment rights advice. Most welfare enquiries were related to in-work benefits, reflecting the situation of

90% Secured benefits
they were entitled to

66% Secured housing
and/or improved their living conditions

93% Reported
an increased understanding of the rights and legal options

79% Supported
to open their personal tax account (government online account), to better manage their finances

precarious employment affecting our community. We also supported women with large and multiple debts resulting from penalty fines, unsecured and payday loans, bank credits, and service suppliers. In terms of housing, difficulties to secure suitable tenure, statutory and non-statutory homelessness, disrepair and infestation, illegal eviction, alarming over crowdedness, and harassment continued being prevalent through

this programme. Our external surgeries provided support in family law advice, immigration, community care, and welfare appeals. In addition, we worked with Doctors of the World to support undocumented women to access healthcare. Most women accessing support from this programme were also referred to other complementary services offered at LAWRS.

A new Asylum and Immigration Act withdraws welfare benefits from certain categories of asylum seekers, affecting a great number of members of the LA community

Trade Union reform and Employment Rights Act extends the right to maternity leave to all women workers

Significant number of applications for asylum from Ecuador due to continuing economic and political instability



Exodus from Colombia due to political situation. Many sought refuge in the UK.

First MP comes out as a lesbian

182 Attended
informative workshops
on rights

338 Accessed
our external surgeries on
welfare appeals, family
law, immigration,
community care, or
access to health

+124 Women
accessed ESOL classes

+36 Women
supported at CV clinic

+48 Attended
employability
workshops



“I didn’t have a place to live. When I came to LAWRS the caseworker explained what my options were and helped me regain control of my life. Now I can give my children a home, I learned to assert my rights and I have more hope in the future.”

Laura
Colombia, 57 years old

Gay partners given
equal immigration rights

LAWRS starts a Young Mothers’
project to widen educational,
economic, and social opportunities
for young LA single mothers

1999

Immigration and Asylum Act leads to asylum seekers being ‘dispersed outside London’ and provisions that reduce access to rights previously held by asylum seekers in terms of benefits, housing, etc.



Volunteers from La Visita project
start supporting women who are in
prison, a group that is particularly
vulnerable and isolated

Offering opportunities for development, integration, and independence

Women's empowerment, integration and participation (WEIP)

WEIP is an international project led by LAWRS, offering a holistic programme of complementary activities to provide development and integration opportunities to migrant and refugee women. Funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund European Commission programme. WEIP is delivered in four European countries, in partnership with three other women organisations.

With a holistic approach, this programme accompanies women through a journey that involves a full needs assessment, access to support, employability workshops, ESOL classes, work experience, and job hunting.

The employability workshops enhanced women's understanding of the local labour market and rights and increased their job

266
Women
benefited from
WEIP activities
in the UK

126 Attended
4 courses of ESOL classes

84 Improved
their skills and job prospects

66 Participated
in cultural and recreational
activities

prospects. Our CV clinic and career coaching service provided individual support and guidance for personal development and job search. We also ran cultural integration activities and outings that gave participants their first opportunity to receive information about those places, access to recreational activities, and to step into emblematic spaces and feel

entitled to enjoy their city. Finally, we delivered awareness raising training to professionals about the challenges faced by migrant women. The sessions had a specific focus (e.g. impact of trauma, identification of victims of trafficking, etc.) and aimed to improve available support provided by statutory and voluntary services.

LAWRS, in partnership with Islington Training Network, is given a grant from the European Social Fund to increase and improve educational, vocational and employment opportunities for LA women

Flexible working is introduced allowing parents of children aged under six or of disabled children under 18 years the right to apply to work flexibly

Creation of the Volunteering programme

Same-sex couples are granted equal rights to adopt

2003

LAWRS' 20th Anniversary

Creation of a fully equipped crèche to enable service users to leave their children in a safe space when they use LAWRS' services

Investors in People accreditation obtained

+59 Professionals
increased their awareness
about the challenges faced
by migrant women thanks to
our trainings

+Increased visibility
about the need to provide
better responses to the
integration of migrant
and refugee women at the
national and EU levels

+Worked in partnership
with organisations in Italy,
Poland and Spain acting as
lead partner



2004

Gender Recognition Act

Latin Americans in London
estimated to be 100,000

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 is
passed giving same-sex couples the
same rights and responsibilities as
married heterosexual couples

LAWRS starts to offer specialised
advice to prevent Violence
Against Women and Girls

Partnership with the Latin American
Elderly Project to assist older people
facing housing problems

LAWRS sets up its website
www.lawrs.org.uk

LAWRS Works with the UK Section
of Amnesty International to develop
a campaign to highlight issues facing
Latin American migrant and refugee
women survivors of domestic violence

LAWRS is awarded the
Quality Mark for Advice in
casework for the first time

**2,370
Hours**
of casework and
administrative
support

60% of the volunteers
who completed their
placement either secured
a job at the level of their
skills or accessed further
education opportunities

1,800 Hours
organising groups
and integration
activities

715 Hours
of interpreting

650 Hours
dedicated to our
counselling services

**+Awarded Volunteering
Team of the Year** by Voluntary
Action Islington, shortlisted
for the Team London Award
2017, and recognised by the
Mayor of London

Providing professional work experience

We involve volunteers in our work as part of our overall aim to enable Latin American women to increase their life chances in the UK through a comprehensive volunteering programme that offers relevant work experience, regular supervision, training and development opportunities, and team activities.

Most of our volunteers approach LAWRS to overcome barriers into jobs that match their skills, a situation that often pushes qualified women into low skilled, low paid jobs. Thanks to the diversity of services offered by our organisation, LAWRS represents an excellent opportunity for many Latin American migrant women to gain work experience in the UK, and develop new skills, enabling them to develop their full potential and increase their work opportunities in the UK. Our volunteers' contribution is

“Volunteering with LAWRS gave me the opportunity to build up my skills, get a job, and make a difference in my community”

key in enabling LAWRS to deliver excellent quality services and programmes, reaching the most vulnerable. They are also important ambassadors, in a unique position to promote our values and demonstrate positive commitments to human rights, gender equality, and cultural identity in the Latin

American community in London. Last year our team was awarded Volunteering Team of the Year in the Borough of Islington, was shortlisted for the Team London Awards 2017, and was recognised by the Mayor of London for its exemplary contribution to volunteering.

LAWRS is awarded
Investing in Volunteers
for good practice in
volunteer management



LAWRS launches the “say no to
violence against women” campaign

Maternity Leave is
extended from 26 to 39 weeks

LAWRS starts campaigning for the
recognition of the community as
an ethnic group, advocating for the
inclusion of “Latin American” in
ethnic monitoring

2008

Financial crisis plunges the UK
into a deep and long recession

LAWRS joins campaign against the
“no recourse to public funds” rule

85% would not have been able to access the service without having creche support

48% Used creche services within the last 5 years are single mothers

794
Sessions
of childcare activities with a total of 226 children



Our crèche – ensuring access of women with children

Being more inclusive by reaching out and accommodating the needs of the most vulnerable women in our community is one of our strategic goals. As many of our service users migrate as single mothers, find themselves as the main carers of children as a result of gender abuse, or are unable to cover the costs of childcare, providing free childcare is crucial to enable access. During this year, free crèche support was offered to women with children accessing all of our programmes.

With the support of Trust for London, LAWRS commissions Queen Mary University to undertake the largest research exercise into the LA community in the UK

2010
Equality Act

LAWRS launches the project Wider Opportunities, Better lives to provide newly arrived Latin American migrant women with enhanced opportunities for integration

Home Office hostile environment policy comes into effect; this leads to women staying in abusive relationships and not daring to get help because they fear they will be deported. Cases reported of women who went to the police over abusive relationships being arrested and deported, of rape victims arrested and survivors of domestic violence being denied refuge forcing them to return to their abusers or be deported

LAWRS opens a branch in the Borough of Southwark

Around 400,000 people join a march in London to oppose the coalition government's spending cuts

Speaking up: migrant women leading social change

We continue to step up our social change work by carrying out policy, advocacy, and campaigning upholding the rights of Latin American and migrant women. Our work is focused on advancing VAWG survivor's rights, labour rights, migrant women's rights, and the impact of Brexit. Our work is based on the evidence collected through our direct contact with women with lived experiences.

We are active members of various strategic groups, women's rights campaigns and networks in the women and migrant sectors, working at the regional, national and European level. We continue to increase visibility of our community through research. This year, we were partners in an (ESRC) funded research project led by King's College London, which found that 4 in 5 Brazilian women in London have experienced some form of VAWG, and that most incidents happened in the workplace (*We can't fight in the dark*, 2017).



Step Up Migrant Women UK

Step UP Migrant Women UK

Women with insecure immigration status are frequently denied access to safety and justice, and find themselves trapped in situations of violence, fearing being detained, deported or made destitute.

We launched the Step Up Migrant Women UK campaign (SUMW) to secure safe reporting pathways for migrant women victims of crime. Supported by over 30 migrant women and social justice organisations, we call for a firewall to protect victims' rights above immigration control. We worked with the GLA Victims Commissioner in helping organise a series of roundtables, and produced

a report reflecting the experiences of victims of different ethnic backgrounds. At national level, we secured the inclusion of safe reporting in the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill consultation responses from several organisations and networks. Migrant women directly affected by this issue have an active role in the campaign, participating in meetings and consultations with decision makers and in the production of campaign material, attending events, speaking at events, and featuring in media content.

www.stepupmigrantwomen.org

No Longer Invisible: the most comprehensive study on the Latin American community in London is launched. Research by Queen Mary University, commissioned by LAWRS and Trust for London.

LAWRS is a key player in setting up the Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK)

2012

Southwark Council recognises Latin Americans as an ethnic group

Britain hosts the 2012 Summer Olympics and Paralympics

LAWRS is involved in the preparation of the UK's Shadow report to the UN Committee on the Status of Women on the implementation of the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

LAWRS launches a violence against women campaign "Love does not kill but violence does" and a video "Invisible women"

Advocating for better responses to victims of severe labour exploitation and trafficking

We increased our capacity to engage in policy and advocacy work for the rights of migrant women in situations of severe labour exploitation and trafficking, flagging the need for appropriate enforcement of employment rights in low-paid jobs.

Last year, we gathered and analysed the cases of more than 200 women affected by different types of labour abuse in the cleaning, domestic work, and hospitality sectors. This data supported our work to inform and influence government agencies, public bodies, stakeholders, private companies, and agencies to improve the exercise of migrant women worker's labour rights. We actively engaged in advocacy work with relevant stakeholders

and decision makers, and participated in inquiries, academic research and reports, sharing the experiences of women working in precarious sectors and raising our voices against abuse and exploitation.

Following our principle of seeking the empowerment and participation of those directly affected, we run a Women Workers Group, with 50 women employed

as cleaners and domestic workers. We run information sessions, workshops, and training to increase their ability to advocate for themselves.

Members of this group participated as speakers in roundtables, conferences, academic publications and in the media, including a presentation to the Chair of the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.



Photo by Angeles Roden

30th anniversary at City Hall

2013

Lambeth Council recognises Latin Americans as an ethnic group

LAWRS receives the Air Europe/LUKAS Human Rights Organisation of the Year Award 2014, achieved through popular vote by members the LA community

Inclusion on strategic groups established by the Mayor's Office

2014

Islington and Hackney Council recognise Latin Americans as an ethnic group

LAWRS increases partnership alliances to offer advice on employment and family law and on appeals to welfare rights tribunals

Sin Fronteras:

Our innovative work with young women and girls

Sin Fronteras (No Limits) provides a space where young Latin American women can develop their own potential, agency, and aspirations. No Limits uses the arts as a means of empowerment to learn new skills, access new experiences, build leadership skills, and support other young women to engage in action for change. All project activities are chosen, designed, and led by the young participants.

During this period, a total of 46 young women participated in 47 sessions of activities that combined arts and focused discussions covering a range of key topics, including gender roles, stories of migration, hate crime, mental health, and women's rights. No Limits also produced the short documentary A Thousand

Steps (Mil Pasos), which allowed participants to explore and discuss important matters affecting their lives (e.g. stories of migration, age discrimination, identification with community spaces in London, etc.). Mil Pasos was screened

at Rich Mix, followed by a Q&A of the young film-makers. We also organised 11 outings to arts exhibitions, LGBT+ and women's rights related events. No Limits also engaged in civic and social participation.



★ Fronteras ★

LAWRS launches the "No Limits" project to empower Latin American Young women and Girls in pursuing personal and social change by using the arts

LAWRS, in partnership with Fair Work (The Netherlands), Focus on Labour Exploitation (UK), and Migrant Help, piloted a project for the Pro-Active identification and support of victims of trafficking for labour exploitation

LAWRS is the UK Charity Achievement Award Runner Up and London winner for Valuing Volunteers 2015 by the Lloyds Foundation

Hosts and leads on the "Migrants Contribute" campaign in the run up to the General Elections

2016

UK voters in a referendum opt to leave the European Union (Brexit)



Encouraging women to seek the change they want to see: our Community Activists programme

We are proud to report the start of a transformative programme of community organising at LAWRS. Through this programme we aim to open a space for women to collectively empower themselves through culturally relevant practices, and to embed community organising as a core aspect of our work. The ultimate aim of this project is to ensure that the voices of the women we support not only inform but are at the forefront of our policy and campaigning work.

We currently facilitate a group of Latin American migrant women directly affected by violence and abuse, and another one of women workers. All activities are proposed by the women themselves to meet their needs.

2016

David Cameron resigns, succeeded as prime minister by his home secretary, Theresa May

The Greater London Authority adds 'Latin American' as a sub-category within the 'Other' ethnic group

LAWRS strengthens its partnerships to open up new advice surgeries on immigration law and access to healthcare for undocumented women

A new research report "Towards visibility: the Latin American community in London" is launched, resulting from LAWRS partnership with Queen Mary University

Facilitating access to services and increasing local participation

We continue working in boroughs with large concentrations of Latin Americans in partnership with local agencies to address the needs of vulnerable women and their families, and with women to encourage take-up of local services and increase their engagement in civic life. We inform officers, councillors, and public services boards; we forge links with key voluntary sector service providers to create new provision for our community; we run workshops and engage women in local consultations and events.

Working locally in Southwark

Our Southwark outreach service continues to address the varied and complex needs of Latin American migrant women in the borough. Our work this year involved one-to-one specialist support, welfare and debt advice, signposting and referrals to other local services, group work, and local advocacy.

515 Women
attended informative workshops, events, presentations, networking and group sessions

36 ESOL classes
for the elderly group FULA

32 Weekly yoga sessions
for the elderly group FULA

12 Outings in London

22 English – Spanish
language exchange cafe

22 Informative sessions
at maternity group

11 Information
workshops

Through this work we continue targeting some of the most vulnerable groups in the community. We provided weekly sessions for elderly Latin Americans at the 'Latin American Future' (FULA) project, and offered a range of activities for pregnant women and new mums at Espacio Mamá. We continued to evidence

the importance of having a specialist and holistic approach to this work, as most beneficiaries presented an array of needs. We also actively engage in local advocacy and representative work voicing the needs and contributions of the Latin American community in Southwark through various networks and forums.

Westminster and London Bridge terrorists attack

LAWRS launches the Step Up Migrant Women UK campaign

LAWRS' volunteering team is awarded Volunteering Team of the year in the Borough of Islington and is recognised for its contribution by the Mayor of London

LAWRS is officially accredited as a Living Wage Employer, showcasing our support for a Real Living Wage

LAWRS launches a specialised service to prevent and combat abuse among LGBT Latin American women and women with no access to public funds

93% Group sessions
attendees improved
their wellbeing

84% Workshops
attendees increased
their confidence on the
subject

124
Women
supported in
Haringey



34 Women
received advice
in housing, welfare or debt

62 Women
attended 11 informative
workshops

1 Course
First Steps in
Social Enterprise

2 ESOL courses

Working locally in Haringey

Our tailored support for Latin American women living in Haringey aims to improve their quality of life, tackle hardship and reduce vulnerability to abuse. This year we ran a consultation to assess the needs and priorities of the women accessing our project, which identified improving English language skills, skills for work, maternity rights, and labour rights as key issues to tackle. This consultation informed the design and delivery of our work, which also involved a programme of informative workshops on a range of topics, including employment and maternity rights, and welfare benefits. In addition, we continued striving to establish effective partnership work with a number of local organisations, with local networks, and with the local authority to increase their awareness of the needs of Latin American women in the borough.



LAWRS leads WEIP project, which aims to provide migrant and refugee women (MRW) in four EU countries (Spain, Italy, Poland and the UK) with enhanced opportunities for integration

LAWRS is a partner in King's College London research project "We can't fight in the dark" on violence against women and girls among Brazilians in London

2018

100 years since (some) women
finally gained the right to vote

Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK, progressing the integration of the Latin American community as a whole

LAWRS continued to convene CLAUUK – the Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK - in its fifth year of operation. CLAUUK is made up of 14 Latin American organisations, working jointly to pursue the recommendations of the No Longer Invisible (2011) and the Towards Visibility (2016) reports, which were funded by Trust for London and conducted by Queen Mary University in partnership with LAWRS. During this period, the organisations continued to work jointly to advocate for key issues affecting Latin Americans.

CLAUUK achieved the official recognition of Latin Americans as a



distinct ethnic group in Southwark (2012), Lambeth (2013), Hackney and Islington (2014), and by the GLA Group (2016), which includes the Greater London Authority, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, Transport for London, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the London Legacy Development Corporation. We continued advocating and

campaigning for recognition in Newham, Brent, Haringey and Wandsworth.

This year, we continued increasing our community's political participation through a voter registration campaign for the snap general elections. The campaign was widely disseminated by community media.

LAWRS starts organising with women workers and survivors of violence

LAWRS joins the Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) network



LAWRS celebrates its first 35th Anniversary



Plans for the future

To continue delivering high quality services, distilling lessons from our work and improving the way in which we measuring our impact; ensuring that our services respond and meet women's needs, are more empowering and encourage independence.

To continue pursuing action for social change, empowerment and mutual support by supporting and enabling Latin American women to raise their voices, campaign, and to take more control over how they assert their rights and access services.

To continue pursuing human rights, diversity and inclusivity reaching out to the most underrepresented groups such as disabled women, Lesbian, bisexual, and trans women, older women, and African-Latin Americans; ensuring that all Latin American women are able to access

and benefit from LAWRS' work. To secure a strong, well-resourced and sustainable organisation to deliver our mission; investing in the development of our staff team and volunteers, and implementing an organisational trauma-informed framework.



Our staff

Alma Gatica
 Daniele Alexandre
 Eliana Ricardi
 Giorgina Mendez
 Illary Valenzuela
 Isabela Giorgio
 Jhoanna Mosquera
 Lucila Granada
 Maria Jose Belen
 Myriam Bell
 Nahir de la Silva
 Nunkui Baldajos
 Ornella Ospina
 Patricia Pons
 Priscila Brandao
 Silvia Córdoba
 Tamyá Bustamante
 Veronica Gutierrez

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And a big thank you...

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Muchas gracias!

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