



## WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2007

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## WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Coordinated & edited by Ivy Josiah, Executive Director, on behalf of the Hon. Secretary, WAO Executive Committee 2007/2009. Meera Samanther, President assisted in editing the report.

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**Kerina Francis**

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## WAO Beginnings and History

In 1979, the late Tun Tan Siew Sin was honoured with the Tun Razak Award for his invaluable contribution to the country. He generously donated his cash award of RM30, 000.00 to establish a Refuge (shelter)<sup>1</sup> for battered women and their children. A protem committee headed by Puan Sri E.N. Chong had its first meeting in November 1981. It took 9 months to lay the groundwork and to form a core group of volunteers. These pioneer volunteers worked as a collective to formulate the operating principles of self-help and self-empowerment for battered women who turned to WAO for help.

In June 1982, WAO received temporary registration as a society and a single storey house was rented as WAO's Refuge and office premises.

In 2007 WAO celebrated her 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the theme "*Celebrating 25 Years for Women*".

## WAO Philosophy

The fundamental belief of Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) is that no one deserves to be battered. We believe that all human beings have the right to self-determination and should have control over the conditions that shape their lives.

## WAO Vision

To create a society that upholds the principles of **substantive equality** where all women enjoy their human rights in every sphere.

## WAO Mission

To promote and create the respect, protection and fulfilment of equal rights for women and to work towards the elimination of discrimination against women, in particular the elimination of violence against women.

## WAO Objectives

1. To provide on request to women and their children suffering from mental, physical and sexual abuse, temporary refuge services that empowers and enables them to determine their own future.
2. To offer emotional and social support to women and their children who request for it, resident or otherwise, and offer support and after-care.
3. To undertake and encourage research into any of the factors that contributes to the inequality and subordination of women.
4. To undertake and advocate with government and non-government organisation the eradication of factors that contributes to the inequality and subordination of women.
5. To create awareness and better understanding among individuals, public and relevant agencies on the issues of violence against women and the underlying inequalities.

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<sup>1</sup> The Refuge is also referred to as the Shelter

## 1.0 TRUSTEES

Toh Puan Datin Dr. Aishah Ong  
 Rashidah Abdullah  
 Dato' Noor Farida Ariffin  
 Puan Sri Chong Eu Nghoh

## 2.0 MEMBERSHIP

In 2007 WAO had 129 listed members and approximately 35 active volunteers.

### 2.1 WAO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2007-2009

The following members of the Executive Committee (EXCO) were elected for a two-year term (2007-2009) at the 23rd Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 7 May 2005 at 10.00 a.m. at the WAO Centre, Petaling Jaya.

President:	Meera Samanther
Vice - President:	Shanthi Dairiam
Secretary:	Mok Chuang Lian
Assistant Secretary:	Tasha Kamaruddin (resigned on 3/11/2007)
Treasurer:	Yeow Ai Lin (resigned 12/6/2007)
Assistant Treasurer:	Carol Chin ((appointed Treasurer on 12/7/2007)
Committee members:	Sharon Hariharan (appointed Asst. Treasurer on 12/7/2007) Wong Yut Lin Vizla Kumaresan Musfiza Mustapa (co opted as a Committee Member on 12/7/07)
Staff In attendance	Ivy Josiah (Executive Director) Sharmini Kanesamoorthy (Finance & Administrative Manager) Annie Varghese (Projects & Administrative Manager) Shoba Aiyar (Social Work Manager)

The EXCO held seven (7) committee meetings in 2007.

### 2.2 WAO COMMITTEES, GROUPS AND COALITIONS IN 2007

1) Staff & Finance Committee	Meera Samanther Mok Chuang Lian Yeow Ai Lin (resigned 12/6/07) Carol Chin (wef 12/7/07)
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	Sharon Hariharan (wef 12/7/07)
Staff In attendance	Ivy Josiah (Executive Director) Sharmini Kanesamoorthy (Finance & Administrative Manager)
2) Legal Aid Centre (LAC) Representatives	Meera Samanther Jessie Ang
3) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Programme Coordinator	Shoba Aiyar
4) Anak Angkat Coordinator	Saralah Devi Mahendran
5) Volunteer Coordinators	Annie Varghese Mardiah Yaakob Chuah Soon Chern Samsukri Glanville Gowri Shanmuganathan
6) Website Design & Content	Thillai Mohanadas Jac SM Kee
7) Fundraising Guidelines Committee	Meera Samanther Jac SM Kee Chin Oy Sim Rozana Isa Vizla Kumaresan Musfiza Mustapa Sharmini Kanesamoorthy Annie Varghese Ivy Josiah
8) National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) Representatives	Shanthi Dairiam Nazlina Abdul Ghani
9) Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) Representatives	Ivy Josiah Meera Samanther Shanthi Dairiam Shoba Aiyar Thillai Mohanadas Kerina Francis
10) Malaysian Coalition for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (MCPCSA) Representative	Daljeen Kaur

11) Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) Representative	Ivy Josiah
12) <i>Article 11</i> Representatives	Chin Oy Sim Ivy Josiah Meera Samanther
13) Member in the National Advisory Council (formerly known as NACIWID)	Ivy Josiah
14) <i>Migration Working Group</i> Representatives	Kerina Francis Ivy Josiah Meera Samanther Wong Su Zane

### **3.0 STAFF**

#### **Refuge**

Shoba Aiyar	Social Work Manager
Normah Mohd. Nor	Night Supervisor
Jessie Ang	Social Worker
Nazlina Abd. Ghani	Social Worker
Saralah Devi Mahendran	Social Worker ( <i>resigned December 07</i> )
Wong Su Zane	Social Worker
Siti Salina Shamsudin	Social Worker ( <i>w.e.f. January 07</i> )

#### **Child Care Centre (CCC)**

Mary Selina Santhanasamy	Child Social Worker
Daljeen Kaur	Child Social Worker ( <i>resigned December 07</i> )
Engammah Anumiah (Vijaya)	Child Minder
Hanif Muk'awanah	Child Minder
Kalayivani Vasuthevan	Child Minder

#### **Executive Staff**

Ivy N. Josiah	Executive Director
Annie Varghese	Projects & Administrative Manager
Sharmini Kanesamoorthy	Finance & Administrative Manager
Shoba Aiyar	Social Work Manager

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### **Programme Officers**

Chin Oy Sim	Programme Officer ( <i>resigned December 07</i> )
Kerina Marie a/p Francis Xavier	Programme Officer ( <i>w.e.f. May 07</i> )
Thillai Mohanadas	Programme Officer: Communications

### **Administrative staff**

Ruhil Amal binti Abdul Razak	Administrative Assistant ( <i>w.e.f. September 07</i> )
Puspawati Ismail	Accounts & Admin. Asst. ( <i>resigned May 07</i> )
Alice Priscilla Thangamany	Accounts & Admin. Asst. ( <i>July 07-November 07</i> )
Mariam Salleh	Librarian

### **Project Assistant**

Mardhiah binti Yaakob	Projects Assistant ( <i>w.e.f. July 07</i> )
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### **Contract Staff**

Rishadarmah Palaniandy (Joel)	Administrative Assistant ( <i>February 07-June 07</i> )
Puspavalli Krishnasamy	Administrative Assistant ( <i>April 07-May 07</i> )
Eva San	Short Film Producer ( <i>April 07-June 07</i> )
Rozana Mohd Isa	Researcher and Writer ( <i>April 07-December 07</i> )

## **4.0 WAO AFFILIATIONS**

WAO is an affiliate member of:

- National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO)
- Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC)
- Malaysian Coalition for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (MCPCSA)

### **4.1 WAO Coalition Work**

WAO is a member of the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)

WAO acts as secretariat to two coalitions

- *Article 11*
- *Migration Working Group*



## 5.0 WAO SERVICES & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### Introduction

Women's Aid Organisation operates in three centres, the WAO Refuge, the WAO Child Care Centre and the WAO Centre, rendering services to women in crisis.

Since the opening of the **WAO Refuge in 1982**, we have provided shelter to women who seek refuge primarily because of domestic violence, and on occasion single pregnant mothers. In recent years WAO is assisting in cases dealing with domestic worker abuse and trafficking. Providing counselling and shelter to Refugee women is yet another recent expansion of our core services.

Furthermore, we have continued to help women through telephone and face-to-face counselling by giving them emotional support and helping them access services provided by various agencies such as the welfare, police and the courts.

The **WAO Child Care Centre, opened in 1990** is a centre for children of ex-residents who have left both our refuge and their former abusive situations to start new lives. With little support elsewhere to help them rebuild their lives, especially in terms of childcare services, the WAO CCC aims to not only provide the children with their physical needs, but also to support them emotionally and mentally.

In November 2004, WAO opened its third centre, the "**WAO Centre**". The centre often referred to as the 3rd Centre, is an administrative and advocacy centre that also acts as a resource for the public. It is also used by the social workers to meet with their clients for counselling.

Enrollment in local colleges, 2005

	2007	2006
Refuge	100 women & 77 children	97 women & 88 children
Face to Face Counselling	75 women	105 women
Face to face counselling for refugee women	119 sessions	118 sessions
Incident report taking	242 reports	20 reports
Community training for Asylum seekers	118 persons	250 persons
Telephone counselling	1200 calls	1475 calls
E-mail enquiries	158 e mails	181 e mails
Programmes for children of ex-residents	12 children & 24 youths	26 youths
Anak Angkat recipients	32 children	50 children

It has been quite an eventful year as the social workers have been rendering an extensive array of services as seen in the above table, including taking on public education and advocacy.

## **5.1 Refuge Services**

As for the shelter services, there has been an increase of women who had sought shelter and in particular domestic violence victims (66). There were 13 single women who were pregnant and nine (9) migrant domestic workers, three (3) women who were rape victims, one trafficked and eight (8) were suddenly asked to leave their home due to a crisis. There were 77 children who had come with their mothers. Three domestic violence cases had come back in the same year.

50% of the residents were below the age of 30 years. Amongst the Malaysians we had a good mixture of Malays, Indians and Chinese. 25 % of the residents were from Indonesia, Middle East (Iran, Iraq, Turkey), India and Myanmar. 47 % of the residents stayed between one to three weeks, 31% stayed between one to two months. 15% stayed between 2-3 months and only six (6) had stayed for more than 3 months.

### **5.1.1 Domestic Violence Survivors**

It is challenging when dealing with domestic violence survivors. Many had very fixed ideas as to what they wanted to do next. The women waited out and watched how the perpetrator was going to react to their leaving the abusive situation. Among the abusers were husbands, boyfriends, cohabitates, parents or relatives.

Most did not want to go to the police station initially or take any action against the perpetrator as they did not want to ruin the perpetrator's career and reputation. However, after knowing their rights and having interactions with other women in the shelter, at least 12 sought our help in making a police report, applying for an IPO and mentally being prepared to take action against the perpetrator/s.

Among the survivors whose were battered by their husbands, 12 went back to their husbands, citing they wanted to give him another chance or had a child or mother who was sick or ailing who needed her attention. For those who went to live independently, we gave loans from the *Tun Tan Siew Sin Memorial Fund* for initial deposit for rent and other expenses. They were given clothes, bedding and some cookware and food, all of which were donated by well wishers from time to time.

While at the shelter many took the opportunity to learn new skills like word processing, surfing the net, dancing, relaxation exercises, cooking, drawing and journaling. Time at the shelter was also personal time as they never had the time or space for themselves.

Most gave feedback that it was quite an experience staying at WAO and it had helped change their mindset as well as becoming more determined. This feedback is more than enough for the social workers to strive in their work and have satisfaction that their work has had a positive impact on their clients.

### **5.1.2 Migrant Domestic Workers**

In the case of nine (9) migrant domestic workers, the abuse was mostly from their female employers or agents. Some of them fled their employment as they were unhappy working and did not have a choice of switching employers.

In nearly all the cases, the management of the cases was smooth flowing as the social workers were able to persuade the employers or agent to reimburse the wages and money for their passage back to their country. There was one interesting case of an Indian national who was on holiday here with her employers from Saudi Arabia and she fled because she could not take the abuse. She spoke a different Indian dialect and it was an effort to get a translator and help from the Indian embassy. After about three months, and with great difficulty in getting her a one- way immigration pass, she managed to get home on a sponsored ticket.

### **5.1.3 Single pregnant women**

Social workers developed a rapport with the 13 single women who were pregnant as they stayed longer at the Shelter. We ate with them, spent long hours with them, touched their stomachs to feel the child's heart beat and even worried when they were not in labour around their due date. A basic manual about pregnancy and child birth was created as many had fears about labour and delivery and even about their bodies. A social worker and an intern spent time in discussion with them to come up with this manual. Family planning and STD/HIV was another alien topic to them, which they regretted not knowing about earlier.

## **5.2 Programmes for Women and Children at the Refuge.**

While managing the cases, the social workers conducted weekly House meetings to remind residents of House policies and Shelter duties, conduct art therapy, hold discussion groups on self help, self development, reproductive health and skills building.

It was not all rosy at all times, as there have been disputes and things went missing. After House meetings and warnings were issued some of the missing items were found.

There were a few residents who left the Shelter over the weekends and we could not contact them as to why they left without saying a word.

We had some dedicated volunteers like Nang Ngui, Racheal, Hana, Kim, and Joyce who complemented our work. Not forgetting are our dedicated interns like Joey and Jamie from TAR College.

The children of residents were not left out as our social worker Salina took pains to assess their level of learning and gave them either remedial work or structured activities. Salina attended to and recorded about 35 of the children's experiences and stories of how they had lived in their homes.

### 5.3 Women with Court Cases

Social workers continued monitoring three (3) court cases; a rape case, a sexual assault case and an IPO violation. These cases have dragged on for four years with the help of 'pro-bono' watching brief lawyers.

It has been both exasperating for the client and the social workers due to adjournments sought by the public prosecutor or defence lawyer. At other times the magistrate had some other engagement and the case was postponed.

The complainant is often not consulted upon if the next dates are suitable but just given orders to attend next court hearings. Most of the time complainant is only aware about the postponement on the day of the hearing.

### 5.4 Specific activities in collaboration with sponsors

In collaboration with **Quota Club**, both our ex-residents and shelter residents (50 women) had the benefit of learning new skills such as word processing, surfing the internet, yoga, cooking and bead making.

Bead making had the greatest impact and in fact the club won an international award for best "seed" programme. Women are taught to string beads of various shades and sizes into various designs of chains, ear ring and bracelets. Around ten women have been given seed money to start the business, Quota Club purchased for them three different pliers, strings, hooks, screws and beads and taught basic techniques of beading. The women then come up with different combinations and designs and sell them either to their friends or to Quota Club, whose members then sell them at fares or functions.

With **ABN Amro Bank**, the collaboration started with the intention to give interest free loans for low cost houses to our ex-residents. However ex residents faced other financial challenges and were not able to take up this offer. During the two meetings with ABN Amro Bank, the bank officer ended up giving financial advice, budgeting tips and how to get out of debt.

Further their fear of not being able to pay up the loan with their small earnings was the deciding factor of not taking up the loan offer in addition to not getting suitable housing in KL city.

**Mothers' Day** was sponsored **by Kamdar Sdn Bhd**. Each woman was given a gift hamper and voucher worth RM 150 to buy any merchandise from their outlets.

Our **year end gathering** at the Refuge was celebrated grandly, with lots of fun and laughter by our ex-residents and their children, volunteers, members and donors. This year around 100 people turned up and every resident was given a 'Giant' recycle bag filled with goodies sponsored by **Nestle, Johnson and Johnson, Brian Lariche** and others.

We also had many who sponsored food and drinks for the party and were entertained by the children from our CCC and volunteers. It was quite a memorable party as it was a platform for all our ex-residents to meet up old friends and share their feelings and needs with their social workers.

We would also like to thank **Lakshmi Ganesh** and her friends who provided food at every festive occasion this year. Our gratitude goes out to **Gardenia Confectionary** for donating bread twice a week and **Malayian Flour Mill** for flour and oil.

### 5.5 Telephone Counselling

The number of calls was less than previous years (1,200 calls compared to 1,475 in 2006). The callers knew of our numbers through the telephone operators, friends, siblings, media such as TV3, and Radio Wanita FM.

This year we found many women calling back to relate how they had handled their crisis and what decisions they had taken. There were many who called on behalf of the client to get advice on how to help the concerned party.

The social workers also did have many interesting calls other than domestic violence calls. Four (4) such calls were from neighbours and a taxi driver who wanted to help domestic workers who were either confined or abused. The helpful neighbour, after seeking advice from us, volunteered to get help either by getting the security to call the police or they called police themselves, who then rescued them and left them with their agents. We followed the case with all parties concerned through phone calls until they boarded the plane to their home country.

### 5.6 Face to Face counselling

There were 75 cases most of whom we met with at the WAO Centre. We also went out as we had callers who were in psychiatric wards and a disabled home and needed intervention as they were wrongfully confined by their spouses, so that they could not get custody or maintenance. Our social workers went to see them to assess the situation and later had either their family members come in to help the client. Having our presence there changed the minds of the doctor who then discharged them to their maternal families.

Another interesting case is that of a foreign domestic worker who was in prison. WAO had a criminal case at a magistrate's court and that magistrate asked us to investigate the case as she felt the worker was wrongfully charged and her employer who had a shared account with the worker was trying to get her salary out.

With the help of two lawyers (Sreekant Pillai and Meera Samanther) the social worker (Saralah Devi Mahendran) and the programme officer (Kerina Marie) managed to see the client in prison to ascertain what she needed. WAO must record its thanks to Sreekant Pillai.

The social worker managed to get her salary and brought her to a bank to change the money to a bank draft (accompanied by police) before going back to jail to serve her sentence and was eventually deported back to Indonesia.

### 5.7 E-mail Enquiries.

There were 158 enquiries which consisted of domestic violence matters(42), queries on legal rights(34), reports of child abuse(4), sexual harassment (5), single pregnant woman (1), rape(1), foreign domestic worker problems (7).

Other queries included migration matters (6), incest (1), assault (1) financial help for single parents (5) and information on WAO (50).

## 5.8 The Child Care Centre

The CCC is very different from other children's home, in that it caters to the children of mothers who suffered domestic violence and the possibility of their children witnessing it or being victims of violence themselves.

The CCC takes up to 15 children who are 12 years and below.

A full team of five (5) staff consisting of a supervisor, child worker and three child minders work on rotation in looking into the various needs of the children. Mothers visit and stay over on the week ends or call to speak to their children regularly. The children can stay as long as two years so as to allow the mothers to settle into a vocation, have some savings and eventually have a home so that the children can join her and settle in as a family.

The centre has a time table and roster. The children wake up around 6 or 7 a.m. shower and make up their beds. They have breakfast and get ready for school. Others exercise in the garden and then settle in to complete their homework or some studies before going to school in the afternoon. All the children go to school, be it preschool or primary school. They also have chores to do like cleaning the tables, sweeping, taking in the clothes, ironing their clothes and watering the plants.

The difference in our home is that a child worker or supervisor is there to supervise their homework and give extra attention. Volunteers and a tuition teacher help with remedial work or pay attention to slower learning children in the private study room.

The Child Worker conducts group work or individual sessions with the children in the cabin, which has been converted into a therapy room. She discusses various issues that may be troubling them like the impact of violence on their lives, coping with a troubled past, bullying, personal safety, enhancing their esteem, or even sharing a personal issue or secret. Once or twice a week, there is a children's meeting to air their stories, complaints and requests.

Each child has a file where progress and various developments are noted. Medical and developmental history is taken on admission for future purposes such as counselling or when seeking medical treatment for an ailment, if it comes. There are formal quarterly mother-child sessions to discuss progress and concerns and also informal get-togethers like tele matches and outings to foster better relationship between mother-child and CCC staff.

The most memorable part will be going out over the weekends, either to a place of interest, swimming, picnicking or to see a show. There have been a few groups lead by volunteers such as Adele Shireen Hariharan, Suresh Kumar G., Sharon Hariharan, Carol Chin, Patricia Wong, Eva San and Corrine Gomez who take turns giving the children an outing and a good time.

There are consistent volunteers like Impaljit Kaur, Urmila Devi, Joginder Bedi who come on weekdays to help with reading or maths and many others like Allison Cheong, Mei Ching, Dina Djumic, Eunice Ong, Jessica, Rachel Neng, Kala Devi Subramaniam, Vivek and their friends who drop by on weekends to have play sessions with the children.

In the beginning of the year there were eight (8) children and by end December 2007, there were ten (10) belonging to three (3) mothers. Five (5) children of two mothers left to stay permanently with their mothers.

A total of 19 children from eight (8) mothers stayed at the CCC during the year. The length of stay is as follows:

3 weeks	5 children
6 months to a year	6 children
2 years	4 children
Over 2 years	4 children

The ages of the children are:

3 to 6 yrs	(8 children)
7 to 11 yrs	(11 children)

Ethnicity:

Indian	14 children
Malay	4 children
Pakistani	1 child

Sex:

Female:	11 children
Male:	6 children

As part of upgrading staff skills, one child worker went for a week long play therapy workshop, others attended health talks organized by Jabatan Kesihatan Kelana Jaya, talks on gender and social work, HIV and Youth. English classes were made available for child minders.

## 5.9 Working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Our work with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began in 2003 by sheltering two refugees and their children. The work expanded in 2004, whereby, 2 social workers took turns to be stationed at UNHCR premises at Bukit Petaling to counsel women who were traumatized by a crisis such as sexual assault or domestic violence.

In 2005, three (3) social workers took turns to continue the counselling; as UNHCR staff found more women to refer for counselling. For a holistic approach in helping survivors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), the social workers organized two (2) support groups to add on to the counselling sessions.

In 2006, in addition to the counselling and running the support group, UNHCR approached us with new projects such as community prevention workshops, of which **we conducted six (6) weekends** and recorded 20 Incident Reports of women who experienced SGBV.

In 2007, the social workers concentrated on Incident Report Taking of SGBV. Our office was received many phone calls the refugee community. Refugee women and their leaders also came personally to make appointments for our weekly Tuesday Incident Report Taking sessions.

There were 241 reports taken, an average of four (4) per day, sometimes it stretched to seven (7)

with so many women were at our doorway, waiting to share their plight.

The incident report taking assisted some of them to get registered with UNHCR. After listening to their stories, the social worker will either refer her to UNHCR for a registration appointment or to ACTS (A Call to Serve) medical clinics in Bukit Bintang and Puchong for medical attention or to a community leader for further assistance like housing and food or for counselling by our social workers to heal the hurt.

The reports were about rape (171), attempted rape-(22), DV (3), sexual harassment (11), trafficking (11) others issues (21). Other issues include unregistered married women who were pregnant, or needed financial help, not having a job or afraid to stay alone when their spouses had been arrested or had disappeared.

The social workers further conducted the **counselling services** on Thursdays in the refugee community centres either at Bukit Bintang, Jalan Imbi or Plaza Pudu. There were 119 counselling sessions, an average of two to three a day. Most of the cases were those who had come for incident report taking and the social worker felt there was a need for counselling session to help them with their emotions and overcome the guilt and fears. Others were cases referred to WAO by UNHCR or their community leaders. The cases were about rape (89), attempted rape (10), domestic violence (4) sexual harassment (6) and others (10). Others included being anxious to speed up the resettlement process, husband arrested and or deported, worried about their babies and pregnancy.

Most of the women had other issues beside the main issue. Many of them voiced their fear being in Malaysia, missed their family / husband in Myanmar, were depressed about their circumstances and even thought of suicide.

### **5.9.1 Empowerment Workshops for women refugees**

Since 2006, WAO started a series of community training for refugees to create awareness on SGBV issues. During our community training in 2006, we observed most of the refugee women depended on their male community leaders to make decisions for them. There was a need for another type of training for the refugee women to empower them to be able to analyze their problems and decide for themselves.

WAO designed an empowerment module and conducted six (6) one- day empowerment workshop for the refugee women from October to December 2007. These workshops benefited 116 women from various groups. Participants commented the sessions were helpful for them especially in building their capacity, help them to learn how to think and express what they want, taught them step-by step in problem solving, strengthened their will power and built their capacity and understanding of the roles of NGOs in Malaysia.

The trainers observed that participants responded differently. During the workshops for the Chin community; the older group was not able to express themselves and often waited for other people to speak for them but the younger participants they had lots of creative ideas, and dared to express themselves and were willing to change.

In another workshop for the Myanmar Muslim women, even though they are illiterate, in one of the exercises, the participants related how they admired Tun Mahathir's leadership and wanted to



emulate him. They were quite aware of what was happening in and around KL. One woman was empowered to state, "During Mahathir's time, RELA only arrested undocumented immigrants once a year. Since Abdullah came into power, RELA and raids are every where, every time!"

We gave shelter to seven (7) women from Myanmar. Although language was a problem, we made sure there was an interpreter who came regularly and spoke with them. They expressed how they enjoyed living in our shelter and learned skills just like our local women.

## 6.0 ANAK ANGKAT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

There were 32 children of 19 mothers who received RM 60 per month for either their schooling expenses or travelling expenses. The mothers would like to thank the following sponsors:

St. Patrick's Society (10 children)

Lion's Club and Mrs. Kathleen Chin ( 2 children)

The following sponsored one child:

Puan Zameema Banu	Ms Indra Kulasegaran
Ms. Dorothy NG	Dr. Tuen Kan Sim
Mr.Robert Gan	Mrs Annapoorni Chandrasekhar.
Ms Alison Manuel	Mr. Chee Lip Jinn
Ms.Juliana Solomon	Mdm Young Lee Fen
Ms Mageswari Nagaraju	Ms. Ong Suat Cheng
Pn Siti Rubiah	Cheryleen Shepherdson
Ms.Chai Hoi Thing	Pn Tengku Falidah
Mr. Keat Khoo	

The sponsors were given progressive reports of the family and the child they sponsored. They were also invited to meet them at the year end annual gathering at the refuge.

The social worker coordinator, Saralah, worked very closely with the mothers and their children into seeing to their educational and emotional needs. She would call them at least every month to find out how they were doing and enquired how the children were studying. Through this interaction, she made an assessment of some of their children's needs when discussing with both mother and child and thus organized special 'camps' for them. Mothers also had one to one sessions with Saralah or other social workers to ventilate their frustrations or to get new ideas how to cope or deal with their child/children. Being a single mother and organizing the family budget was most challenging. These sessions with the social workers renewed their confidence in being a single parent.

### 6.1 Other forms of assistance for mothers

WAO managed to get sponsorship of RM 1,000 per month from **ZJ Advisory** for two women who had problems with their health and financial situation. This money helped the two families immensely as in addition to their salary, they were able to lead a better quality of life

Quota Club sponsored seed money between RM 3,000-RM 5,000 for two (2) women to start their own business. One bought a second hand van to transport school children while the other woman expanded her noodles stall at a food court.

Part of our outreach programme involves assisting ex residents with their children. During the June holidays, a one-day motivational camp for 20 teenagers was organized at our CCC. In June, a career assessment was done for the teenagers to ascertain what kind of careers would be suitable for their kind of personality and skills. In the same month, there was also a 3 - day primary school camp for 12 children to teach personal safety and learning how to survive if they were on their own in the house.

At the end of the year, 24 teenagers had a one-day camp to evaluate the programmes organized for them and give suggestions as to what they could do after 'graduation'. Ten (10) teens who had attended various camps over the past five (5) years graduated at this camp.

## **7.0 LEGAL AID CLINIC PROGRAMME**

**The activities and objectives of the LAC/WAO clinic are:**

1. To assist WAO social workers in the refuge with telephone calls (give out information on domestic violence, divorce procedure, sexual harassment etc).
2. To assist WAO clients to lodge police report and accompany the clients to hospital.
3. To inform chambering students on NGO work and advocacy.

Prior to coming to WAO, the chambering students start their training at LAC/AWAM/WAO/SIS Training. The syllabus includes family law, syariah law, and domestic violence, violence against women, gender sensitization, feminist perspectives of the law, (conducted by Meera Samanther) and the helping process ( conducted by Wong Su Zane).

WAO receives one student each from LAC-KL and LAC-Selangor per batch. There are four to five batches a year. The students are expected to spend 12 days at the refuge usually on a Monday or a Friday. They not only attend to the telephone calls but also accompany WAO clients to the court, immigration, hospital, embassy and the National Registration Department, help clients to lodge a police report, give legal advice on the phone and see face- to-face clients and document cases.

In addition, the students do some research and co-facilitate discussion groups with the social workers on various issues for the residents. Most often, after 'warming up', the students leave their desk to spend their time with the women and their children. They have lunch with the women chatting and becoming friends with the women. The students are very accommodating to the needs of the women.

WAO had ten (10) chambering students from December 2006 to November 2007.

### 7.1 Types of calls the chambering students handle:

Domestic Violence	45
Divorce procedure	52
Maintenance	10
Custody	14
Financial Problems	8
Foreign Wife	4
Single Mother	4
Sexual Harassment	5
Problem with the Police	2
Interim Protection Order	6
Bankruptcy	4
Marital Problems	6
Housing Problems	2
Conversion to Islam	2
Will/EPF	1
Division of Property	1
Adoption	2
Miscellaneous	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>173</b>

### 8.0 INTERNS AT WAO

WAO hosted eight (8) interns in 2007 from Germany, Canada, United States and Malaysia from January to September. During their time with WAO, the interns were given in-depth experience regarding domestic violence, its impact on women and children and advocacy for women's human rights.

Being an integral part of the WAO team, interns handled everything from phones calls, organizing children's and women programmes, researching and writing, drafting WAO newsletters, accompanying women to courts, police stations and hospitals, and volunteering at our public education booths.

While most volunteered at the Refuge and CCC, some interns assisted in advocacy, public education and fund raising activities.

As 2007 was the 25th anniversary celebrations, interns also joined us in organising events. Petra Walther an intern from Germany taught Salsa to the women, staff and volunteers which were performed at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations on 5 June 2007 at Actors Studio. Miriam Hahn helped in research on migration issues.

The interns' contribution to WAO work is invaluable and our work culture and environment became more dynamic with their presence. We thank the following:

1) Petra Walther	Guternberg, University Mainz, Germany	29 January – 3 June
2) Dharshini Subbiah	McGill University USA	15 May – 15 August
3) Amy Powers	University of Utah, USA	19 May – 4 July
4) Nithya PrameKumar	State University of New York, USA	21 May – 30 August
5) Miriam Hahn	University of Augsburg, Germany	1 June – 19 July
6) Seow Boon Kia	University Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia	11 July – 16 August
7) Goay Ju Ee	University Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia	11 July – 16 August
8) Ann Hui Ling	Help College University	11 July – 16 August

## 9.0 VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS

At WAO we make a distinction between volunteers and members. Not all volunteers are members. Members are eligible to attend and vote at AGMs.

### 9.1 Volunteer Development

In 2007, orientations and meetings were held every first and third Saturday of each month. Initiated by the Executive Director in 2006, these regular meetings for the members and volunteers was to create an opportunity to get together on a consistent basis to discuss issues, update volunteers on upcoming and ongoing events, plan for future fundraising events as well as to develop an independent group of volunteers who are able to assist the organisation. We also wanted to make sure that any volunteer or member can feel assured that they can meet with WAO staff every (two) 2 Saturdays of the month. These fortnightly meetings are coordinated by Annie Varghese and Mardhiah Yaakob.

We conducted 12 volunteer orientations on an average of one every month. In total 54 volunteers went through the orientations, out of which 15 remained as volunteers and another 5, became members.

The majority of volunteers comprised college students and working adults. New volunteers became aware of WAO through the media, website, friends, university / colleges, magazines and seminars. We had 98 volunteers in total for 2007. However, it was also noted that a large percentage of these volunteers were not active as they had only attended the orientation to learn about the organisation out of curiosity. Most of them were unable to join any of the activities on a regular basis due to work, studies or personal reasons. However, despite all this, we were fortunate to have retained a good number of them who were able to commit to volunteer at the Refuge and CCC.

Besides the regular orientations and meetings, other NGOs and friends of the organisation were also invited to conduct talks to volunteers on topics such as Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Feminism and Muslim Women's Rights. We would like to thank Rozana Isa, Vizla Kumaresan, Yati Kaprawi from Sisters-in-Islam and Manohari from AWAM for their invaluable time to conduct these talks to our staff and volunteers.

The buddy system that was introduced in October 2006 is working well. New volunteers are paired with old volunteers to give them encouragement in participating in the various activities held at the centre. In line with the need to bring in more volunteer participation; five (5) old volunteers were identified to help with the volunteer orientations conducted. Samsukri Glanville, Gowri

Shanmuganathan, Chua Soon Chern, Stephanie Chuah and Yvonne Ng were given a one-day training on how to conduct volunteer orientations. As of November 2007, they began taking turns to conduct volunteer orientations and this has been tremendously helpful as it relieves staff of this task.

In 2007, we saw a number of events participated by the volunteers. Among them were the *Fiesta Feminista (June 07)*, *WAO Jumble Sale (July)*, *My Family Showcase Exhibition (August 07)*, *The Body Shop "Walk of Love" (August 07)* in conjunction with *Hari Wanita 2007* and the *WAO Garden Sale (October 07)* held at the WAO Centre.

WAO would like to record its thanks to the volunteers who have consistently contributed their time and energy to WAO.

## **10.0 ADVOCACY**

Our advocacy work is in essence upholding the human rights of women by using the CEDAW framework and in particular WAO focuses on the implementation of CEDAW, reform of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA), rights of women in the family, women in migration issues including rights of refugee women in Malaysia.

Documentation and bringing real life experiences of women into our lobby efforts to bring about a law and policy change is an effective strategy.

At WAO we document the experiences of women who have been battered, do not have protection from interim protection orders, been abused and exploited by an employer, betrayed by a husband who converted their children without her consent or sexually harassed by police on the pretext of checking a woman's migrant status. These and more are the stories that compel WAO to strengthen our advocacy work.

Within WAO to keep track of our advocacy and to strategise we meet on a fortnightly basis at Staff meetings. We also have an internal advocacy group made up of programme officers, social workers, the ED and President of WAO.

### **10.1 Implementation of CEDAW**

The CEDAW framework of substantive equality, non discrimination and state obligation is core to our understanding of discrimination against women and forms the basis for our lobbying efforts for law and policy reform.

### **10.2 Advocacy by the Joint Action Group Action Group on Gender Equality (JAG)**

An effective advocacy strategy is to form coalitions and have united voices. WAO continues to work closely with the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) coalition to lobby on laws pertaining to rape, sexual harassment, Islamic family law, workers' rights and laws that discriminate against women.

Once again JAG met over a three - day period on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July at the Shah's Village Hotel, PJ, to evaluate its work. We updated each other on our respective work, and evaluated our joint work.

JAG reiterated its strategy to reach out to women's groups with large memberships, like women's wings of political parties to share with them our goals and objectives in our advocacy work for gender equality.

### **10. 2. 1         *JAG challenges Culture of Sexism in Parliament***

On 10 May 2007, there were sexist remarks made by Barisan Nasional parliamentarians Bung Mokhtar Radin and Said Yusof in parliament to MP Fong Po Kuan of DAP. JAG responded to this by issuing a press statement on 15/5/07 demanding a public apology from these MPs and to end all sexism and gender discrimination in parliament.

JAG also organised a peaceful protest outside Dato Sharizat's office on 15/5/07. About 60 people carrying placards and banners, participated in the hour-long protest, which started at 11am.

On 16 May 2007 Bung Mokhtar Radin made an apology to all Malaysian women for his "unintended remarks" but retracted his statement following a Cabinet directive to first discuss the matter with the Ministry of Women and Family Development. Disappointed with the poor response, JAG issued another press statement dated 17/5/07 demanding a long term solution to end all sexism and gender discrimination in parliament.

On 2 July 2007, JAG met with Y.B. Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri Bin Abdul Aziz, the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Caucus on Human Rights to voice our concerns over the impunity with which MPs can make sexist and derogatory remarks in Parliament. JAG also proposed an amendment to the Parliament's Standing Orders in relation to the code of conduct by parliamentarians.

Following that meeting JAG had the opportunity to meet with the Y.A.B. Tan Sri Dato' Seri DiRaja Ramli Bin Ngah Talib, the Speaker of the House of Representatives on 19/7/07.

In these meetings JAG demanded that concrete sanctions be enforced against MPs making sexist remarks and to take positive steps to cultivate gender sensitivity among MPs.

### **10. 2. 2         *Fiesta Feminista (FF) 15 – 17 June 2007 at University Malaya***

FiestaFeminista (FF) 2007 was a two – day event jointly organised by JAG and the Gender Studies Programme of University Malaya. Fiesta Feminista showcased a range of activities covering issues under four broad areas:

- ✓ Feminism
- ✓ Gender and Development
- ✓ Human Rights and Democracy
- ✓ Social Movements and Women Organising

The 2007 theme was "Embracing Diversity", in recognition of how acknowledging and celebrating diversity is a necessary step towards bridging and addressing differences.

The objectives of FF 2007 were:

- To forefront and popularise feminism in Malaysia such that anyone who has an interest in learning more about inequalities and injustice in society, particularly between women and men and who wants to actively change this situation has an avenue to do so;
- To bring together a broad range of people, women in particular, to discuss, exchange ideas, evaluate, and strategise around issues of feminism, human rights and democracy in Malaysia;
- To create a space in which the next generation of feminist leadership in Malaysia can participate and take charge as to facilitate a smooth and effective transition between the current and future leadership of the women's movement.

WAO played an active role in organising the event. Vizla Kumaresan, Meera Samanther and Lee Wei San were on the FF organising committee. Staff, volunteers and members of WAO also volunteered. Social Worker Wong Su Zane gave a presentation on 'Voices of Refugee Women'. The presentation gave participants the opportunity to hear first hand from refugee women, their experience of living in Malaysia. Participants also listened and watched as the women relayed the trials and tribulations of fleeing their homeland, and the challenges that they confront in a new country.

### **10. 2. 3        *Response to the MWFCDC on the Draft National Policy on Women 2007 and the National Plan of Action for Women's Development***

On 18 June 2007, JAG members attended a Focus Group meeting on the review of the Plan of Action for Women's Development at the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCDC).

JAG was invited to the meeting to discuss specific sectors of the Draft Plan of Action. However, we were not aware that the National Policy on Women (NPW) was being revised at the same time.

At the meeting we were given a draft copy of the six – page draft NPW 2007 which we found to be too brief considering the nature and importance of the document.

JAG gave a written response where we stated strongly that the National Policy on Women and its subsequent Plan of Action needed more time for review. Unlike the existing NPW, the draft NPW 2007 did not provide for a mechanism of enforcement, priority areas nor time lines.

We urged the Minister not to rush the NPW and its plan of action as these documents will form part of the blueprint for the protection and advancement of women in this country. There was no official response for a while until 17 December when JAG members received a draft National Action Plan for Women's Development without a revised NPW 2007.

JAG will continue to monitor the outcome of our letters and proposals on the NPW and the National Plan of Action for Women's Development.

**10.2.4      *50:44 Merdeka Celebrations: 'Remembering the peoples who built this nation at the Annexe, Central Market, KL, 6 – 16 September***

Described as a celebration of everyday people, 50:44 lauds the people that have helped built this nation for the past 50 years since Independence and 44 years since we became Malaysia.

Organized by KOMAS from 6th-16th September (Malaysia Day), the event brought together people from all parts of Malaysia including Sabah and Sarawak. Civil society organizations together with communities celebrated struggles and forgotten stories with 10 days of forums, conference, road shows, workshops, theatre, gatherings, parties, films, books and exhibitions.

JAG organised a workshop 'Gender and Sexuality' which was held on Friday 7/9/07. It was a half day event and JAG gave a talk titled 'What is Feminism'. The talk was a short introduction to what is feminism, women's rights and the women's movement.

**10.3            *Reform of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994***

**10.3.1        *Lobbying the AG's Chambers***

In 2007 WAO continued its efforts lobbying for the reform of the DVA and its protocols. In May 2007 the Attorney General's Chambers posted on its website the proposed amendments to the DVA. WAO responded in a letter to the AG's chambers welcoming the amendments and attaching the several proposals and memorandums on the DVA sent by WAO or by JAG.

It was again pointed out to the AG's Chambers that the Penal Code (PC) and Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) had to be amended too for the DVA to be more effective. Proposed amendments by the AG's Chambers which were supported by the MWFCDC were only limited to the DVA.

However, there was no response from the AG's Chambers regarding the matter. When the AG's Chambers were contacted later in the year, we were informed that the proposed amendments to the act were still with the drafting department.

**10.3.2        *Documentation of cases***

Throughout the year WAO was getting more complaints regarding the Interim Protection Order (IPO). One repeated complaint was the ignorance of Investigation Officers of the IPO. Women found it frustrating that the Police could not give them sufficient protection that they needed.

WAO's staff then took an active role in contacting these police stations involved and guiding them through the process of obtaining an IPO. Besides this there were also cases where women did not apply for an IPO simply because they were not informed of the IPO or were advised by police not to do so.

In November 2007, a family member of an alleged murder victim approached us for help on the case. It was alleged that the victim was abused throughout the marriage and the family feared that her death was a result of domestic violence. WAO wrote a letter to the CID Director Commissioner, Yang Bahagia, Datuk Christopher Wan Soo Kee's office, requesting police assistance and attention to investigate the murder within the context of domestic violence. We gave a detailed account of



the alleged domestic violence as described to us by the family members. The case is still under investigation.

WAO realised the need to increase our documentation on DV cases and to collect sufficient data which will help identify further weakness in the DVA processes.

#### **10.4 The Migration Working Group ‘Protecting the rights of migrants, refugees, and stateless persons’**

Since this network was brought together in March 2006, nine (9) new members have joined the MWG network. They are CARAM Asia, Health Equity Initiatives, Malaysian Trade Union Committee (MTUC), Migrant Care, Building & Wood Workers International (BWINT), Council of Churches, Malaysia (CCM), Education and Research Association for Consumers, Malaysia (ERA Consumer) and Asian Outreach.

The following are NGOs linked within the MWG Network:

1. Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO)
2. The National Human Rights Society (HAKAM)
3. Labour Resource Centre (LRC)
4. Tenaganita
5. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
6. Amnesty International Malaysia (AI)
7. Penang Office for Human Development (POHD)
8. A Call to Service (ACTS)
9. All Women’s Action Society (AWAM)
10. Malaysian Care
11. Shelter
12. Pusat Komunikasi Masyarakat (KOMAS)
13. ALIRAN
14. Legal Aid Centre (Kuala Lumpur)
15. Malaysian Bar Council
16. Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC)
17. Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility, Asia (CARAM Asia)
18. Health Equity Initiatives
19. Migrant Care
20. Building & Wood Workers International (BWINT)
21. Council of Churches, Malaysia (CCM)
22. Education and Research Association for Consumers, Malaysia (ERA Consumer)

The objectives of the group are as follows:

- Promote greater networking, collaboration and consultation,
- Design joint lobbying and advocacy strategies amongst Malaysian NGOs and individuals working on migration issues and with migrants, and
- Build capacity

## Co-coordinators and Secretariat of the MWG 2008

The newly elected co-coordinators of the MWG Network are:

- Alice Nah, HAKAM
- Ivy Josiah, WAO
- Florida, Tenaganita

WAO still remains secretariat of the MWG.

### **10.4.1      *World Refugee Day, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007***

The MWG came up with a Joint Press Statement urging the government of Malaysia to ‘*Observe International Obligations for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees*’.

The statement endorsed by 14 organisations was published in the press. It highlighted the fact that Malaysia is host to an estimated 950, 000 asylum seekers and refugees, who come from Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa and civil society concerns about the way they are treated in Malaysia. For most part, they are punished as illegal immigrants rather than recognized as a vulnerable population in need of our protection and assistance.

### **10.4.2      *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Advocacy Workshop***

The MWG organized its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Advocacy Workshop from 15-17 August 2007. This was attended by 20 organisations working on migration issues. The objectives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Advocacy Workshop were:

- a. Bring NGOs and individuals working on migrant issues and with migrants to come together.
- b. Discuss our experiences of working with migrants and law enforcement agencies.
- c. Review the lobbying and advocacy mechanisms available to us at national, regional, and international levels (with deadlines and deliverables).
- d. Plan joint lobbying and advocacy strategies (with deadlines, methods, working mechanisms and campaign themes)

Several international and regional organizations were present as resource person/experts, namely: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Migrant Forum in Asia, Forum Asia, Refugee Council of Australia and MATAHARI, Boston, USA.

After much discussion at the Advocacy Workshop, members of the MWG realised the urgent need of migrants to seek redress in the country regardless of their status. Therefore, the MWG came up with a joint lobbying campaign called ‘*The Right to Redress Campaign*’ which it plans to launch on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008.

### **10.4.3 50:44 Merdeka Celebrations: 'Remembering the peoples who built this nation**

Organised by KOMAS, the 50: 44 Merdeka Celebrations was held from of 6<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> September at Central Market Annex and ended with a big gathering of communities and NGOs on 16<sup>th</sup> September to remember "Malaysia Day."

The MWG was given a one day slot on Saturday 8/09/07 to organise the event titled '*Celebrating Labourers, Migrants and Refugees*'.

The MWG took great efforts in getting migrant and refugee communities to participate in the event. Together we organised several activities such as talks, film screening, food tasting, traditional music, dance performances, handicraft exhibitions and colouring competition for children.

The objective was to not only highlight the experiences of the migrant community in the Klang Valley but also the rich tradition and culture of our migrant population from neighbouring countries which are very much part of the Malaysian cultural landscape.

The event received the biggest support from the public and had the most number of participants through out the 50:44 events.

### **10.4.4 Bangladeshi Workers Outsourcing Crisis**

On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2007 Malaysia suffered a breakdown in the outsourcing system and as a result many Bangladeshi workers were left stranded at the KLIA airport. Some Bangladeshi workers demonstrated at the Bangladeshi High Commission.

The MWG immediately called for an emergency meeting and the following Taskforce were set up to help with the crisis:

Taskforce A = Coordinating meetings with Officials, Media and Groups of Interest

Taskforce B = Provide humanitarian aid for the stranded workers.

Taskforce C = Help the workers seek redress.

Members of the MWG also got together and came up with a Joint Memorandum to "*Halt the Implementation of the Outsourcing Policy and Initiate a Comprehensive and Effective Migration Policy that Safeguards the Human Rights and Dignity of Migrant Workers*"

This Memorandum was then presented to the Bangladeshi High Commissioner to table it in his meeting with the Malaysian government regarding the matter.

### **10.4.5 Ikatan Relawan Rakyat (RELA) Taking Over Immigration Detention Centres**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007, it was announced by Bernama that the People's Volunteer Corps (Rela) will be given the responsibility of guarding all 14 detention depots for illegal immigrants by year end.

The news was very alarming to the MWG as RELA is not trained to run detention camps not to mention the disrepute of RELA with regards to their “policing” of migrants. The MWG decided to get the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) to help us with the matter. A meeting was initiated with the Commissioner of SUHAKAM, Dato’ N. Siva Subramaniam who was also sent a joint MWG statement on RELA taking over Immigration Detention Centres.

The MWG was invited to a **Roundtable Discussion** on Migrant Workers in Malaysia, organised by SUHAKAM on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2007. SUHAKAM invited government agencies and facilitated a dialogue with MWG representatives. From this dialogue the AG’s Chambers were particularly sympathetic that migrants become “illegal” as result of irresponsible employers however the Director General of Immigration and his officers were non committal about immigration policy.

## **10.5 Article 11 Coalition**

In 2007, WAO continued to play an active role as the co-secretariat of the *Article 11* coalition. However, it was a quieter, less eventful year for the coalition compared to 2006. This was primarily due to the Prime Minister’s call, in July 2006, for a halt to all interfaith discussions and particularly the successful *Article 11* public forums that had been held between March and July that year. He stated that these would cause tension in Malaysia’s multi-religious society. The media was also warned not to stir up unrest and create friction among the public with reports on religious issues, which was interpreted by most newspapers to be a gag order on reports relating to the coalition.

As a result, the coalition discontinued its road show of public forums and was constrained in its public education activities.

*Article 11* was formed in mid-2004 in response to cases that highlighted the problems faced by some Malaysians, involving the interpretation of certain provisions of the Federal Constitution. The coalition is named after Article 11 of the Federal Constitution, which guarantees every person the right to profess and practise his or her religion. Its members are drawn from a spectrum of diverse organisations including religious, women’s rights and human rights groups as well as the Bar Council.

*Article 11*’s mission is to ensure a Malaysia that (i) upholds the supremacy of the Federal Constitution; (ii) protects every person equally, regardless of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender; and (iii) is firmly established in, and upholds, the rule of law. The scope of its work includes the areas of conflict between civil law and state Islamic law enactments, protection of fundamental liberties and access to justice.

### **10.5.1 Public education: videos**

As the coalition was unable to hold public forums, it explored alternative avenues of information dissemination in 2007. In March, the group held a press conference to launch a video series to better inform the public on its mission and to counter the misinformation and attacks against its work.

The video series comprised three videos: English and Bahasa Malaysia videos which explain the *Article 11* coalition, its missions and objectives and a third video containing a forum in Bahasa Malaysia in which four Malaysians discuss the pressing issue of “*Kebangkitan Islam dan*

*Pemerintahan Berperlembagaan*” (Islamisation and Constitutional Governance). The videos were circulated on the Internet and also distributed as VCDs/DVDs.

During the second half of 2007, the coalition began work on a video on the freedom of belief, which will be launched later in 2008.

### **10.5.1 Court advocacy**

*Article 11* members continued to represent persons who required assistance to pursue legal remedies, and also held watching briefs, in cases involving constitutional rights.

WAO’s President, Meera Samanther, held a watching brief for women’s groups in Subashini’s case, which was heard in both the Court of Appeal and the Federal Court in 2007. Subashini sought legal redress a result of the legal dilemmas and infringement of rights caused by her spouse’s actions following his conversion to Islam. The Federal Court handed down its judgement in December, stating, alarmingly, that the consent of one parent alone is sufficient to convert a child into another religion.

Meera also served as watching brief lawyer for women’s groups in Lina Joy’s case, involving a Malay woman who had embraced Christianity and sought the government’s recognition that she no longer professed or practised Islam. The Federal Court’s May 2007 decision in that case was also unfavourable, as a majority of the judges held that by implication, conversions from Islam were within the syariah courts’ jurisdiction and the government agency’s policy in requiring an Islamic religious authority to confirm Lina Joy’s renunciation of Islam was thus correct.

### **10.5.2 Media advocacy**

As a result of what was effectively a media gag order, *Article 11* rarely issued press statements and letters to press editors in 2007. However, the coalition’s member organisations, including WAO, continued to be active in this regard. WAO Programme, officer Chin Oy Sim was also interviewed by various radio, television and print media, especially foreign media and particularly in relation to Lina Joy’s and Subashini’s cases.

### **10.5.3 Public education and other advocacy**

*Article 11* conducted briefings for groups and individuals who wanted to know more about their rights under the Constitution and/or about the coalition and its work. In March 2007, the coalition launched its revamped website, [www.article11.org](http://www.article11.org).

Various briefings were also held for decision-makers. In addition, the coalition:

- Met Datuk Maximus Ongkili, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department; and
- Presented its views at the Parliamentary Select Committee on Unity and National Service’s public hearing on the topic of inter-religious relations.

#### **10.5.4 50:44 Merdeka celebrations**

From 6-16 September, various civil society organisations organised a 10-day extravaganza of forums, conferences, workshops, theatre, gatherings, parties, concerts, exhibitions and more, to celebrate 50 years of independence and 44 years since the country became Malaysia.

A specific theme was assigned to each day, with 12 September being designated “Race and Religion” day. On that day *Article 11* held an event to raise awareness and initiate discussion about the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion and some related cases and issues. During the event, various video clips were screened, followed by a discussion session with two invited speakers, Haris Ibrahim and Astora Jabat.

##### **Article 11 comprises:**

- All Women’s Action Society (AWAM)
- Bar Council Malaysia
- Catholic Lawyers Society
- Civil Liberties Society, Protem Committee (CLS)
- Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism & Taoism (MCCBCHST)
- National Human Rights Society (HAKAM)
- Sisters In Islam (SIS)
- Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
- Vivekananda Youth Movement, Seremban
- Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO)

## **11.0 PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Public Education takes on many forms at WAO, through talks, press interviews, radio shows, magazine articles, post cards, posters and booths at ground events.

WAO was on radio 3 times, on television 12 times and at the same time gave 14 talks and presentations to specific audiences. We were widely featured in six (6) magazines and in the newspapers both local and international.

While WAO planned for the radio interviews most of the trainings and public education events were on an invitation basis.

### **11.1 Talks and Training Sessions**

In total we gave 14 talks and presentations on an invitational basis. Most of the social workers, programme officers and the ED were involved in this aspect of our work.

## TALKS CONDUCTED IN 2007

No.	Title of Talks Conducted	Organised By	Talk / Speech By
1	"Respecting Women"	Taylor's College	Annie Jac Kee
2	"Socio-culture issues and the impact on gender and diseases. Legislation on the rights of women"	Breast Cancer Women's Association	Ivy Josiah
3	"WAO and Our Services"	Malayalee Women's Association	Ivy Josiah
4	"Sexual Gender Based Violence"	Malaysian Care	Shoba Aiyar
5	"Sexual Harassment" at the Human Rights Awareness Week	Taylor's College	Ivy Josiah
6	"Feminism 101"	Monash University	Ivy Josiah
7	Awareness Program on "Domestic Violence"	Amnesty International	Shoba Aiyar
8	"Feminism"	WAO volunteers	Vizla Kumaresan
9	"WAO's Services"	Superbiker's Club and Rotary	Annie Varghese
10	"Youth against Social Ills"	SMK Sri Permata	Nazlina Abd Ghani
11	Discourse on Peace	Bahai Community	Shoba Aiyar
12	"Undang-Undang berkaitan Hak Wanita"		Nazlina Abd Ghani
13	"WAO shelter services and How To Work with Women in Need"	PT Foundation	Shoba Aiyar
14	"Keganasan Terhadap Wanita"	Institut Teknologi Utama Felda (ITU)	Nazlina Abd Ghani

### 11.2 Television, Radio, Press, Magazines

In 2007, we were featured on both local and international radio on various issues ranging from issues on violence against women to current issues affecting women.

Though WAO was offered nine (9) slots on Wanita FM during 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, these slots were eventually reduced to three slots. Radio stations were reluctant to discuss issues, which were considered to be provocative on air.

WAO was interviewed on television 12 times, mostly on RTM2, TV3 and Astro. We were also widely covered in the press. One of the biggest coverage was a six -page feature story on China Press on WAO's services and issues on violence against women. Both The Star and NST also ran stories of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Marie Claire worked with FJ Benjamin (La Senza) to feature women personalities including WAO President Meera Samanther to interview young and older women on their aspirations for the nation, as 2007 was the 50<sup>th</sup> National Day of Malaysia.

No.	Title of Article	Date of Article	Name of Media
1	A Right to be Safe	June 2007	News Straits Times
2	Arresting Marital rape	26 Nov 2007	The Star (LifeFocus)
3	A Grand Quarter Century	25 Nov 2007	The Star (LifeFocus)
4	16 Days of Activism	25 Nov 2007	The Star (LifeFocus)
5	Home is Where the Hurt Is	25 Nov 2007	The Star (LifeFocus)
6	Unique Platform	29 Oct 2007	The Star (LifeFocus)
7	Firm Brings Early Ramadhan Cheer	24 Sept 2007	The Star (Central)
8	Women's Groups Outraged Over Murder	18 Sept 2007	The Star (Nation)
9	Bikers to Hit the Streets In Aid of WAO	17 Sept 2007	The Star (Central)
10	Move to Stop Violence Against Women	4 Sept 2007	The Star (Metro)
11	BMW for Hole-In-One	23 Aug 2007	The Star (Central)
12	Invitation to Half of Malaysia	22 July 2007	The Star (LifeArts)
13	Activities Galore at Carnival	26 June 2007	The Star (Central)
14	Women Feted at Festival	25 June 2007	The Star (Central)
15	Lasting Refuge for Women	16 June 2007	The Star (Central)
16	Divorce A Costly Matter	11 May 2007	The Star (LifeFocus)
17	Women and Children Feted at Hotel's Mother's Day Party	12 May 2007	The Star (Central)
18	Share the Good Life with Kids	27 Apr 2007	The Star (Central)
19	A Third of Cases Concern Alimony	22 Apr 2007	The Star (Nation)
20	Helpline For Those Blackmailed	10 Apr 2007	The Star (Focus)
21	Private Acts Go Public	10 Apr 2007	The Star (Focus)
22	1.3million Grant for Women	3 Apr 2007	The Star (Central)
23	Women's Aid Organisation	21 July 2007	China Press
24	Aspirations For the Future	Aug 2007 Edition	Marie Claire

### 11.3 Comments to the Press and Letters to the Editor

We can safely say that WAO is always called upon to make comments on issues affecting women. We also have issued letters to the editor which most times gets printed in Malaysiakini; these letters are available on the WAO website.



#### 11.4 Talks, seminars and conferences attended by WAO

No.	Title of Conference / Seminar	Organised By	Attended By
1	Understanding the Nature of Religious Hate Discourse : Why Context Matters in the Working of Conspiracy Theories	Sisters In Islam (SIS)	Chin Oy Sim Ruth Eva San
2	Feminist & Theory Movement	WAO	Social workers
3	Gender Based Violence	Solidaritas Perempuan, Jakarta	Nazlina Abd Ghani
4	Human Trafficking	Human Rights Committee (Bar Council)	Kerina Francis
5	Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse Awareness Workshop	PS The Children	Siti Salina
6	Emotion In Life and Relationship	Calvary Life Centre	Jessie Ang Nazlina Abd Ghani
7	Counselling Techniques of Emotional Therapy	Calvary Life Centre	Shoba Aiyar
8	Seminar Penderaan Kanak-Kanak dan Wanita	Hospital Ampang	Wong Su Zane Siti Salina
9	2nd Advocacy Workshop	Migration Working Group (MWG)	Shoba Aiyar Wong Su Zane Kerina Francis Meera Samanther
10	Dramatherapy Awareness Workshop	Help Institute	Nazlina Abd Ghani Siti Salina
11	International Visitor Programme on Trafficking In Persons in the US  International Visitor Programme on NGO Management	State Dept. USA	Nazlina Abd Ghani  Sharmini Kanesamoorthy
12	Experiential Therapy Through OH cards Moritz Egetmeyer	KL Counselling Centre	Jessie Ang
13	Social Worker Conference Asia Pacific	Asian & Pacific Association for Social Work Education (APASWE)  Institute Sosial Malaysia  School of Social Sciences, University Sains Malaysia (USM)	Wong Su Zane

14	Seminar on Social Remedy	Institute Sosial Malaysia	Nazlina Abd Ghani
15	Professionally Accountable Practise (PAP) Model Course	Welfare Department Malaysian Association for Social Workers (MSW)	Siti Salina
16	Crisis Intervention "Using Art and verbal Therapy"	New ERA College	Wong Su Zane
17	Reaching Out To Young People In HIV Prevention & Ending GBV	All Women's Action Society (AWAM)	Mary Selina
18	Crisis Intervention "Grief and Loss"	New ERA College	Wong Su Zane
19	Conference on Asylum and Islam	UNHCR	Normah Nazlina Abd Ghani
20	Regional Training on Monitoring The Right To Health	Health Equity	Shoba Aiyar
21	Roundtable Discussion on Outsourcing Policy	Tenaganita	Kerina Francis
22	Gender Equality From The Perspective of the Al-Quran	Sisters In Islam (SIS)	Thillai Mohanadas
23	TOT on Facilitation Skills	All Women's Action Society (AWAM)	Thillai Mohanadas
24	South East Asia National Human Rights Implementation Strategies, Jakarta	IWRAW Asia Pacific	Ivy Josiah Chin Oy Sim
25	Gender and Syariah Training	Sisters In Islam (SIS)	Kerina Francis Thillai Mohanadas Saralah Devi Siti Salina Meera Samanther
26	Updating of Concepts, Addressing Contexts and New Challenges	IWRAW Asia Pacific	Ivy Josiah
27	Inter-Parliamentary Caucus for Good Governance, Kuala Lumpur	ASEAN	Kerina Francis Meera Samanther

## 12.0 WAO WEBSITE ([www.WAO.org.my](http://www.WAO.org.my))

This is the 8<sup>th</sup> year of WAO's website in operation. Types of information uploaded into the website includes press statements, memorandums, letters to the editor, republishing of WAO Talking Points column, featuring news and editorials where WAO is quoted, public education campaigns and activities, and fundraising events. The website has been a useful resource for students, funders, journalists, new volunteers and researchers and the general public who want to know more about WAO's work and services, the status of women in the country and current issues related to women's rights.

It is updated on average, once a month, with previous articles put under the archive web page.

### **Hosting Details**

Web hosting company : Integricity.com  
 Domain Hosting company : MYINC Sdn Bhd

Integricity.com is still hosting WAO's website at no cost in support of our work.

#### **12.1 Sections within the website**

A new section was added to advertise available job vacancies at WAO.

1. Home/Index (Mainpage): Summaries of articles updates, headers and small 100 x 100 pixel graphics.
2. About Us: Basic information of WAO (History, Mission & Vision, Objectives)
3. Research & Advocacy: Findings on WAO's research & advocacy work in issues of the Domestic Violence Act, the abuse of Foreign Domestic Workers and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women)
4. Violence Against Women: Information on Violence Against Women: Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Rape, Child Sexual Abuse; in both Malay and English
5. Services: Information on the services that WAO provides (Counselling, Shelter, Child Care Centre, Sexual Assault Helpline)
6. News: New articles, announcements, press statements etc.
7. Links: Links to other organisations, websites and online communities on women's issues.
8. Vacancy: Information on current job vacancies.
9. Support us: How WAO is funded, who are our funders, how users can help support WAO.
10. Join us: Link to volunteer application form and membership form
11. Archive: Archive of all published articles on the website

#### **12.2 Updates**

There were approximately 30 updates in 2007, with updates occurring almost every other month.

This is at a higher frequency than 2006, which was on average, updated once every two months. The traffic to WAO's site continues to show a steady increase in visitors and hits (see below).

### 12.3 Articles Posted

30 articles were posted on the website in 2007

POSTED 2007	ITEM
12-Dec-2007	<a href="#">Letter - End Crackdown on Civil Society's Right to Assembly Immediately</a>
8-Dec--2007	<a href="#">Joint Statement - 'No' to Sexist MPs, 'Yes' to More Women Candidates!</a>
7-Dec-2007	<a href="#">Joint Statement - Rela Taking Over Detention Centres</a>
25-Nov-2007	<a href="#">Campaign - 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence</a>
Oct-2007	<a href="#">Fundraising: Donation Boxes at Giant Hypermarkets</a>
Oct-2007	<a href="#">Fundraising: 1901 Pledges 50 sen per Coney Dog to WAO</a>
Oct-2007	<a href="#">Fundraising: 3 Nation Charity Ride with WAO</a>
25-Sept-2007	<a href="#">Joint Statement: Restore Public Trust in Judiciary</a>
23-Aug-2007	<a href="#">Tenaganita Statement: Freeze Recruitment of Domestic Workers</a>
1-Aug-2007	<a href="#">Statement: Concrete Sanctions Against Sexist Remarks</a>
1-Aug-2007	<a href="#">Letter: Numbers Not Necessarily a Reflection of Reality</a>
20-July-2007	<a href="#">Event: Half of Malaysia</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">Letter: Constitutional Right of Belief is Made Illusory</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">Joint Press Statement: Respect Women and End All Sexist Comments</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">Joint Press Statement: Long Term Solution To End All Sexism and Gender Discrimination in Parliament</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">Joint Press Statement: End All Sexism and Gender Discrimination in Parliament</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">Press Statement: Sexist Remarks by Members of Parliament</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">Letter to the Editor: Clarification of Decision Under 'Duress' - Context of Pressure Around Religion, Law &amp; Family</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">FAQs: Status, Rights and Responsibilities - What Happens When A Spouse Converts To Islam</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">Letter to the Editor: Straying from National Service Aims</a>
16-May-2007	<a href="#">Press Statement: Constitutional Compliance is the Paramount Consideration</a>
17-Mar-2007	<a href="#">Press Statement: Article 11 Video Series Launch</a>
22-Mar-2007	<a href="#">Memo: Ending Impunity for VAW through CEDAW</a>
17-Mar-2007	<a href="#">Featured News: WAO Pertikai Kajian UKM Fokus Seks, Moral</a>
27-Feb-2007	<a href="#">Memorandum: Protect the Rights of Wives and Children Upon Conversion of Husbands to Islam</a>
27-Feb-2007	<a href="#">Press Statement : Protect the Rights of Wives and Children Upon Conversion of Husbands to Islam</a>
27-Feb-2007	<a href="#">Letter: Males Shouldn't Be Aroused by Female Athletes</a>
27-Feb-2007	<a href="#">Letter: Chastising Irrational Suggestion to Prevent Rape</a>
14-Feb-2007	<a href="#">Featured Editorial : Growing the Talent Pool</a>
02-Feb-2007	<a href="#">Press Statement: Protect the Rights of Refugees</a>

### 12.4 Website Traffic

Counter: Advanced Web Statistics 6.4 (build 1.814); Awstats (from WAO's hosting service administration panel)

The total number of unique visitors to website in 2007 is 111,969, twenty thousand more visitors than 2006. Tracking of unique visitors indicates the number of people who visit the website more than once within a specific period of time, i.e. users that return to the website. WAO's website

received more than 1 million hits in 2007 alone. Please refer to the table below for breakdown of the traffic.

#### 12. 4. 1 Number of Visitors and Visit

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits
Jan 2007	8957	12119
Feb 2007	9296	12709
Mar 2007	11382	15572
Apr 2007	9280	12087
May 2007	8608	11163
Jun 2007	8008	10462
Jul 2007	8883	12053
Aug 2007	9643	13598
Sep 2007	9654	13747
Oct 2007	9636	12947
Nov 2007	10087	13177
Dec 2007	8535	11006
<b>Total</b>	<b>111969</b>	<b>150640</b>
Total in 2006	91341	121777

#### 12. 4. 2 Geographical Locations of Visitors

The majority of visitors to the website, similar to 2006, are from the United States, Australia and Malaysia. This is tracked through the IP address of the visitors who come to the site. IP address is the address that is assigned to each computer that is on a network, such as the internet. This is how the geographical location of the visitors can be tracked. It is noteworthy that Malaysians rank the top amongst the three users who find WAO's website useful.

The top ten visitors to the WAO site are as below:

Countries	Hits
Malaysia	60267
Unknown	25941
United States	5863
Australia	2669
Singapore	1813
United Kingdom	1749
Network	1135
Japan	881
Canada	876
Hong Kong	496

#### 12. 5 Reviewers & Referrers

45.30% of visitors to the website either type in the address directly, or have the website bookmarked. 54.60% of visitors are directed from search engines such as Google, Yahoo, MSN and

Alta Vista, while around 0.05% of visitors visit WAO's website through links from newsgroups. Currently, there are 2,815 different webpages or URLs that link to WAO's website, including local NGOs, newspapers, UNIFEM, blogs and wikipedia. In 2006, there were only 2,080 different webpages linked to WAO website.

### **13.0 SPECIAL EVENTS: PUBLIC EDUCATION CUM FUNDRAISING**

#### **13.1 COIN JAR PROJECT – Small Change for Better Change**

The coin jar project was introduced as a small scale on going fundraising effort to raise funds for the organisation. These jars which were hand painted by the volunteers, interns and residents of the Refuge were distributed to volunteers, members and Rotary Clubs. People are encouraged to put their loose change into the jars held by them for a period of 6 months. Each jar carries a serial number for monitoring purposes. Thus far, 40 of these jars have been distributed to members, volunteers and Rotary Club members.

In 2007, we have raised RM 1,087.30 from the total collections.

#### **13.2 SERVCORP – PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 3 : AT WORLD'S END CHARITY PREVIEW (23 May 2007)**

Servcorp Malaysia began working with WAO in 2006 by their first ever large scaled fundraising campaign in aid of WAO and Makna bringing us *Pirates of the Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest*.

In 2007, Servcorp continued the charity movie preview in aid of WAO's Child Care Centre. In addition to the proceeds from the tickets, Servcorp pledged to match the same amount of donations collected. With working partners Tanjung Golden Village (TGV) and Buena Vista International (BVI), Servcorp was able to raise RM18, 534.00 from sales of the movie tickets.

Special thanks to Nanie Kalil for continuing to raise funds for WAO.

#### **13.3 1901 – HELP US HELP THOSE IN NEED (August – September 2007)**

1901, the first ever local hot dog store in Malaysia decided to collaborate with WAO in August 2007 to raise funds for the Refuge and Child Care Centre. Through the sale of their Coney Dog hotdogs, 1901 pledged to donate 50 cents from each sale of the Coney Dog for a period of two months. WAO raised RM3,000 from this collaboration.

#### **13.4 DONATION BOXES IN MAJOR GIANT HYPERMARKET (September 2007 – April 2008)**

In August 2007, WAO was approached by GIANT to collaborate to raise funds. Giant's offered to place their donation boxes in 30 major GIANT hypermarkets in the Klang Valley. The project started in September 2007 and is continuing until April 2008.

The WAO donation boxes placed at 30 major Giant outlets received tremendous response from the public. Many were seen dropping their loose change into the boxes. The donation to WAO will go

towards the organizational expenses, which include costs for food, medical needs, transport, utilities, Refuge and CCC maintenance, and more importantly to sustain the existing services.

### **13.5 MY FAMILY SHOWCASE EXHIBITION (24 – 26 August)**

*My Family Showcase Exhibition* was brought to us by Expo Grand Consultancy, an event based company that pledged to raise RM25, 000.

The exhibition was a one stop information centre with participation from various government bodies and private sectors that attracted families to attend more exposure on social awareness and current happenings. Activities lined up included games stalls for adults and children, colouring competition, exhibitions by the health industry and information technology booths.

WAO ran an information booth with help from volunteers for 3 (three) days. A total of 15 volunteers helped throughout the 3 (three) days

### **13.6 CROWNE PLAZA MUTIARA KUALA LUMPUR (August )**

Crowne Plaza Mutiara Kuala Lumpur launched a fundraising campaign on 30th March in conjunction with International Women’s Day. Working partners with Crowne Plaza was designer Hideaki Lim and Zuc Boutique – a shoe boutique located in Lot 10. The hotel placed donation boxes at the hotel’s main lobby and at Zuc Boutique to encourage patrons to drop their loose change. In addition Zuc Boutique also pledged to donate RM1.00 for every pair of shoes sold for 2007. Aside from this initiative, WAO was also a beneficiary to the Crowne Plaza Charity Golf Tournament that was held on 26th August. WAO received RM13, 000 in total.

### **13.7 3 NATION CHARITY RIDE (3NCR) WITH WAO (19 October – 21 October)**

The 3 Nation Charity Ride was first organised in 1994 jointly by Super Bikers Club Malaysia (SBCM), Penang Motor Sports Club, Team 27 Motorcycle Club of Singapore and Team Hanuman of Thailand. This is the biggest event on the regional biking calendar and has been participated by thousands of big capacity motorcycle and bikers from as far as Hong Kong, Brunei and Indonesia.

In 2007, Super Bikers Club Malaysia (SBCM) chose WAO as the receiving beneficiary. The Club was very active in securing sponsorships and went one step further and raised funds through their annual gala dinner by auctioning items donated by sponsors. WAO received RM74, 600 from the 3 (three) Nation Charity Ride and Dinner.

### **13.8 GIANT / SHARITY PACK CARD 2006 / 2007**

Sharity Greetings collaborated with Giant Supermarket to raise funds through the sales of festive greeting cards and WAO was selected as part beneficiary from this fundraising drive. With the tag line, “*In Aid of Malaysian Charities*”, the cards were sold at RM5.99 for a pack of 5 cards throughout all the Giant Supermarket stores nationwide. However, there was poor response and sales were low. Sharity who had pledged to donate RM5,000 per organisation, held a cheque presentation ceremony in June 2007.

### 13.9 ONE RED LILY FLORIST

In an effort to contribute to society, *One Red Lily* decided to support WAO through the sale of the floral arrangements as well as hampers sold at their outlet on a monthly basis. For every order received, *One Red Lily* pledged to donate RM1.00 to WAO.

Established in 2002, *One Red Lily* is a new online florist committed to providing customers with high standards of service for floral arrangements and deliveries. Currently operating primarily in the Klang Valley and providing FREE delivery to areas in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya.

Thank you to WAO volunteer and member, Grace Lim who owns *One Red Lily* for her continuous support.

### 13.10 LA GOURMET RESTAURANT

La Gourmet Restaurant agreed to raise funds through a unique fundraising idea by *180 degrees* ( a design company) to place table cards with message on them. On the outside, the card reads: “*Domestic Violence does not EXIST*” however, when lighted with a candle, the message changes to read:

“If you don’t witness Domestic Violence, it does not mean it doesn’t EXIST”,

Out of sight shouldn’t be out of mind..

Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO) shelters victims of domestic violence who are tired of hiding. With your support, these women and children can be free from violence.

To change their lives and make a difference all we need is one Ringgit.

Your donations are welcome at the cashier.

Collections were low in 2007 and the campaign is still ongoing into 2008. This creative idea is the second time 180 degrees is working with WAO.

### 13.11 ZJ ADVISORY – WAO ADOPT A FAMILY PROJECT

ZJ Advisory agreed to sponsor two (2) families under the *Adopt a Family Project* initiated by WAO. After identifying 2 (two) ex-resident’s families that are in need of monetary assistance, ZJ Advisory sponsored RM1, 000 per family for one (1) year. The money was to be used for basic needs i.e. rent, food, transportation etc as well as children’s educational needs i.e. school fees, bus fees, tuition fees, books and anything related to the children’s educational needs.

We take this opportunity to thank ZJ Advisory for their support.



### **13.12 JUMBLE SALE / GARDEN SALE**

To get volunteers more involved we began with a jumble sale in 2005 at a flea market in Amcorp Mall by selling second hand items. However our first attempt drew in poor response.

However, we did not give up and the jumble sale is now a regular volunteer activity that does bring in funds.

In 2007, we decided to organise a garden sale to reach out to our own neighbourhood around the WAO Centre. Volunteers and members were requested to send in their second hand usable items to be sold. We received tremendous response and had trinkets to household items for sale. A total of RM1, 800 was collected.

### **14.0 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS: CELEBRATING 25 YEARS FOR WOMEN**

To commemorate 25 years of WAO, we had events throughout the year. We began at the AGM in April 2007 by cutting a birthday cake.

#### **14.1 Logo**

Arc Worldwide's design (refer to front page of the Annual Report) was made into banners and incorporated into our organisational brochure and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary mugs. Our grateful thanks to Kien Eng, Valerie and Teresa of Arc Worldwide who designed most of public education materials and collaterals; they have been working with and for WAO pro bono for the past ten years

#### **14.2 WAO Video**

A 25 minute video depicting the work of WAO, interviews with our pioneer president, volunteers, residents and women's group was produced. The Communications officer worked with Eva San, a part time video maker who went through 25 years of photos articles, newspaper clippings to select visuals, events and watershed moments in WAO's herstory. Thank you to Eva and Thillai for their efforts.

The video was screened at our Celebration Party on 5th June.

#### **14.3 Fukuya – WAO Fundraising Dinners, 24 & 25 April**

To capitalise on our anniversary WAO with Fukuya – one of Kuala Lumpur's finest Japanese restaurants – raised substantial funds for our Refuge and Child Care Centre. Fukuya kindly agreed to fully sponsor dinners for two nights limited to only 30 dinners per night, at a minimum cost of RM500 per person. Diners were treated to a six course exquisite seasonal Japanese cuisine, specially prepared by Chef Ando Takao, who has 37 years of culinary experience.

This fund raiser dinner was organised by WAO member, Vivienne Lee and her friend Didi Abdullah.

#### **14.4 Celebration Party at Actors Studio, 5th June**

WAO organised a party with a difference by using a theatre space.

We began with light snacks and drinks in the foyer of Actors Studio Bangsar and then guests were ushered into the theatre beautifully decorated with fabric, candles and flowers. Thanks to Shegar who transformed the foyer and theatre space.

Speeches, dance, songs and performances including the video made up the programme. Well known artistes such as Joanna Basse, Sukania Venugopal, Shanthini Venugopal, Judimar Hernandez, Elaine Pedley and Marion D' Cruz all chipped in to make the evening fun and meaningful. WAO's newly designed website was also launched that night.

Pioneer president Puan Sri Chong Eu Ngoh gave a spirited and witty speech recalling WAO's beginnings and affirming WAO's growth.

One fun moment was the burst of fire crackers on stage and a host of 15 volunteers surrounded the seating space to serve to every guest cup cakes encrusted with our logo. Among the guests were pioneer volunteers, members, residents and friends from government, NGOs, political parties and embassies including press.

WAO thanks the following for their respective contributions:

Venue sponsored by: Faridah Merican, *The Actors Studio*

All the performers: Marion D'Cruz  
Judinar Hernandez  
Elaine Pedley  
Sukania Venugopal  
Shanthini Venugopal  
Joanna Bessy  
Vidhya Balan

Back stage help: Deeya Menon, *Thri Quettra*  
Val Ram, *Thri Quettra*  
Vanitha Krishnamurthy

25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY logo  
& programme booklet design by: *Arc World Wide*

Programme booklet sponsored by: Charles Lau, Delima Printel

Gifts sponsored by: *FJ Benjamin*  
*Rampai Niaga Sdn Bhd (The Body Shop)*  
Deepak Sharma, *Bellissima (M) Sdn Bhd*

Food sponsored by: *La Bodega*  
*Rose Carterers*  
*Andrea Villa, Caffè 1920*  
Mrs Bain  
Mr & Mrs Jeya Gobi  
*Coca Restaurant*

The banner sponsored by:	Rozrin EFadzly, <i>Absolute Printing &amp; Design</i>
Microphones sponsored by:	Raymund Joseph, <i>Revival Productions Sdn Bhd</i> Terrence Dass
House music by:	Kubhaer Jethwani
Flowers sponsored by:	May Chong, <i>My Fair Lady</i>
Decorations by:	Shegar, <i>Eye Design</i>

#### 14.5 “Half of Malaysia”- an arts fundraiser, 28th July at Rimbun Dahan

WAO was very fortunate to have *Five Arts Centre’s* offer to co-organise an art exhibition to raise funds for WAO. It was upon the advice of Marion D’Cruz of *Five Arts Centre* that we approached *The Edge* for sponsorship of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication and the art exhibition catalogue.

These two publications would have cost RM 30 000, so it was a welcome relief when Edward Stanislaus of *The Edge* responded positively to our appeal.

Together with Gabriel Lim and Adrian Kisai from *Five Arts Centre*, who were are indebted to for all their hard work, we took several steps to organise *Half of Malaysia*. First, appealing to artists to donate their works. The artists who readily agreed to donate their work were:

- |                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Bayu Utomo Radjikin           | 13) Ramli Ibrahim            |
| 2) Bernice Chauly                | 14) Reena Clare              |
| 3) Chin Kon Yit                  | 15) Sharaad Kuttan           |
| 4) Choh Kok Kheong               | 16) Sharifah Zuriah Aljeffri |
| 5) Farish Nor                    | 17) Simon Ong Seong Huah     |
| 6) Gan Siong King                | 18) Siow Yin Yoong           |
| 7) Jacqueline Ann Surin          | 19) Sivarajah Natarajan      |
| 8) Jasmine Raj                   | 20) Tan Kien Eng             |
| 9) Nazim Esa                     | 21) Tara Sosrowardoyo        |
| 10) Negotiated Settlements       | 22) Wong Hoy Cheong          |
| 11) Nirmala Dutt Shanmughalingam | 23) Yee I-Lann               |
| 12) Norhayati Kaprawi            |                              |

While some artists created new works for this fundraiser, others contributed existing pieces. Many of the artists generously agreed to contribute all proceeds from the sale of their works to WAO while some took just 20% to cover costs. The prices of the art works were marked up by 40% to 50%, and ranged from RM500 to RM15, 000. There were 31 pieces on exhibition and for sale. WAO raised RM 80, 000.

The Rimbun Dahan arts space in Kuang, Selangor was magical on the night of the opening on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July with a performance by cutting-edge gamelan group, *Rhythm and Bronze*. Actors Studio was again kind enough to lend us the use of the gamelan set for free.

Heartfelt thanks to Angela Hijas and Hijas Kasturi of Rimbun Dahan who hosted the dinner and provided the gallery space.

#### **14.6 Publication : Celebrating 25 Years For Women**

The publication “Celebrating 25 Years For Women” sponsored by The Edge chronicles WAO’s “herstory” from 1982 to 2007. It was a photo essay of 25 years. Writings by Rashidah Abdullah, Ivy Josiah and Meera Samanther captured the work and spirit of WAO. 2000 copies were distributed NGOs, government departments, donors and well wishers.

#### **15.0 HELP SEEKING AND POST-CRISIS CHANGE RESEARCH**

In 2006, the EXCO set up a committee to devise a research project. The committee comprising Meera Samanther, Sharon Hariharan, Wong Yut Lin, Shanthi Dairiam and Shoba Aiyar developed a proposal for “Help-Seeking and Post-Crisis Change among Domestic Violence Survivors in Malaysia: Identifying Barriers and Enabling Factors”

Broadly, the proposed study aims to improve the overall understanding of domestic violence in Malaysia and factors the surrounding it. The focus of the study will be on **help-seeking and post-crisis change** based on the experiences of survivors of domestic violence in Malaysia. The study was to be conducted over a period of 18 months.

##### **Specific objectives of the research on help seeking and post-crisis changes:**

1. To investigate the help seeking and post-crisis changes experiences of survivors of domestic violence in Malaysia and the factors involved in these processes within a multi-ethnic context.
2. To determine what are the enabling factors that make women leave the violent situation for good or what factors make women cope better once leaving the violent situation, i.e. to:
  - (a) obtain a clearer understanding of how changes occur in the way women view the violence that triggers them to seek assistance, helps them to define the violence as a violation of their rights, and or leave abusive relationships.
  - (b) identify factors that help women cope with the difficulties of establishing an independent life after seeking help
3. To explore the extent of community support available to survivors of domestic violence, particularly if WAO had played a part in help-seeking and post-crisis changes.
4. To investigate the effectiveness of related institutions or service providers (i.e. Police, Welfare Department, hospitals, legal system) in the process of help seeking and post-crisis change of domestic violence survivors through the experiences of the latter in their dealings with the various institutions.
5. To advocate and disseminate the research findings widely to the public and relevant institutions to bring about reform

In 2007, a funding proposal was sent to Global Fund for Women but unfortunately it was not accepted. The committee is now exploring to see how WAO can work with the Women’s Development Research Centre (better known as KANITA), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

## **16.0 A SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS PROJECT: PRODUCTION OF A HEALTH KIT**

In December 2006, the Embassy of Finland confirmed funding of RM 80, 000 to WAO to produce a Health Kit (Family Planning Kit). This sexual and reproductive health project for the benefit of Refuge residents and other NGOs providing services for women involves developing a Health Kit in 2 languages (2000 in total) that will contain:

- A description of family planning choices
- Information on domestic violence as a health issue
- Protection against domestic violence
- A list of useful telephone numbers to seek help and information

This kit will be given to every woman who seeks refuge or face to face counselling and to our ex residents (500 women per year). Another 500 will be distributed to 5 women's organisations that have contact with women for counselling, namely, Sisters -in - Islam, Women's Centre for Change, Penang, All Women Action Society and Sarawak Women for Women Society

The project which was due to be completed by end December 2007 is unfortunately delayed and will be completed by June 2008.

## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AWAM</b>	All Women's Action Society
<b>CCC</b>	Child Care Centre
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>DV</b>	domestic violence
<b>DVA</b>	Domestic Violence Act
<b>EXCO</b>	WAO's Executive Committee
<b>IWD</b>	International Women's Day
<b>IWRAW</b>	International Women's Rights Action Watch
<b>JAG</b>	Joint Action Group for Gender Equality
<b>HAKAM</b>	National Human Rights Society
<b>LAC</b>	Legal Aid Centre
<b>MCCBCHST</b>	Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism & Taoism
<b>MDW</b>	migrant domestic worker
<b>MWFCD</b>	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
<b>NCWO</b>	National Council of Women's Organisations
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>SIS</b>	Sisters In Islam
<b>SUHAKAM</b>	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
<b>UNDP</b>	UN Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>VAW</b>	violence against women
<b>WCC</b>	Women's Centre for Change, Penang
<b>WDC</b>	Women's Development Collective