

WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2008

Coordinated & edited by Ivy Josiah, Executive Director, on behalf of the Hon. Secretary.

Reports written by:

Ivy Josiah

Annie Varghese

Shoba Aiyar

Jessie Ang

Wong Su Zane

Nazlina Abdul Ghani

Thillai Mohanadas

Kerina Francis

Rimla Changi

Sharmini Kanesamoorthy

i. TRUSTEES

Toh Puan Datin Dr. Aishah Ong

Rashidah Abdullah

Dato' Noor Farida Ariffin

Puan Sri Chong Eu Ngho

ii. MEMBERSHIP

In 2008, WAO had 188 listed members and approximately 35 active volunteers.

iii. WAO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2007-2009

The following members of the Executive Committee (EXCO) were elected for a two-year term (2007-2009) at the 24th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 21 April 2007 at 10.30 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) Vicky Alahakone (co opted on 27/3/2008)
Treasurer:	Yeow Ai Lin (resigned on 12/6/2007)
Assistant Treasurer:	Carol Chin (appointed Treasurer on 12/7/2007)
Committee members:	Wong Yut Lin

Vizla Kumaresan

Sharon Hariharan (appointed as Asst Treasurer
on 12/7/2007)

Musfiza Mustapa (co opted on 12/7/2007)

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 nine (9) committee meetings in 2008/09.

iv. WAO COMMITTEES, GROUPS AND COALITIONS IN 2008

1) Staff & Finance Committee

Meera Samanther

Mok Chuang Lian

Sharon Hariharan

Carol Chin

2) Staff In attendance

Ivy Josiah (Executive Director)

Sharmini Kanesamoorthy (Finance &
Administrative Manager)

3) Legal Aid Centre (LAC)

Meera Samanther

Representatives

Jessie Ang

Nazlina Abdul Ghani

- 4) Coordinator United Nations High Wong Wong Su Zane
Commissionerfor Refugees (UNHCR) Shoba Aiyar (Representative)
Programme
- 6) Anak Angkat Coordinator Siti Salina Shamsudin
- 7) Volunteer Coordinators Annie Varghese
Mardiah Yaakob
Chuah Soon Chern
Samsukri Glanville
Gowri Shanmuganathan
Yvonne Ng
Stephanie Chuah
- 8) Website Design & Content Thillai Mohanadas
- 9) National Council of Women’s Shanthi Dairiam
Organisations (NCWO) Nazlina Abdul Ghani
Representatives
- 10) Joint Action Group for Gender Ivy Josiah
Equality (JAG) Representatives Meera Samanther
Shanthi Dairiam
Shoba Aiyar
Thillai Mohanadas
Kerina Francis

- | | |
|--|---|
| 12) Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC)
Representative | Ivy Josiah |
| 13) <i>Article 11</i> Representatives | Ivy Josiah
Meera Samanther
Rimla Changi |
| 14) Member of the National Advisory
Council (formerly known as NACIWID) | Ivy Josiah |
| 15) Migration Working Group
Representatives | Kerina Francis
Ivy Josiah
Meera Samanther
Wong Su Zane |
| 16) Coalition of Good Governance (CGG) | Wong Su Zane
Rimla Changi
Ivy Josiah |
| 17) Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance
Malaysia (RRAAM) | Shoba Aiyar |
| 18) APWLD VAW Taskforce | Meera Samanther |

v. STAFF

Refuge

Shoba Aiyar	Social Work Manager
Normah Mohd. Nor	Night Supervisor
Jessie Ang	Social Worker
Nazlina Abdul Ghani	Social Worker
Wong Su Zane	Social Worker
Siti Salina Shamsudin	Social Worker
Uma Devi a/p Rajah Denram	Social Worker (w.e.f. June 2008)

Child Care Centre (CCC)

Mary Selina Santhanasamy	Child Social Worker
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

Programme Officers

Kerina Marie a/p Francis Xavier	Programme Officer
Thillai Mohanadas	Programme Officer: Communications

Administrative staff

Ruhil Amal binti Abdul Razak	Administrative Assistant
Mariam Salleh	Librarian (until 31 October 08)
Sakinaton Suhaili	Accounts & Admin Assistant (June 08 – September 08)

Project Assistant

Mardhiah binti Yaakob	Projects Assistant
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Contract Staff

Rimla Changi	Programme Officer (w. e. f. February 08)
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1. 0 WAO SERVICES & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Statistics for 2008

	2008	2007
Refuge	120 women & 91 children	100 women & 77 children
Face to Face Counselling(FFC)	72	75 women
FFC for refugee women	60	119 sessions
Telephone counselling	1318	1200 calls
E-mail enquiries	146	158 e-mails
Child Care Centre (CCC) children	18	15 children

1.1 Refugee Services

The Refuge also referred to as the Shelter has seen an increase in residents over the past three years. Last year we registered 120 women and 91 children. There were 90 new residents and five (5) women returned for the same reason within the year. The others were ex-residents from previous years. As such, data analysed would be for 115 women. Sixty two (62) were domestic violence survivors, nine(9) single pregnant women, eight(8) migrant domestic workers, two(2) trafficked women, five(5) were raped, and six(6)with other kind of problems such as being sent out of their homes or hostel suddenly, five(5) had family problems or had a crisis that needed them to get away, six(6) had financial problem, four were refugees sent by UNHCR and eight(8) other sorts of problems.

There were ninety one children (91), mostly belonging to mothers from domestic violence situations.

1.2 Profile of Women seeking shelter at the Refuge

Thirty two (2) women stayed for less than one week, twenty three stayed up to two weeks and the rest stayed between a month to two months. Only eleven had stayed for more than three months. Ninety two of them came from the Klang Valley. We had three women from Sarawak. There were eleven who were below 20 years of age; seventy four were between 20 to 39 years. There were five (5) who were fifty years and above.

76 were Malaysians, 14 from Myanmar, nine (9) from Indonesia and others from countries such as Philippines, Cambodia, Pakistan, Nigeria India and Columbia.

The diversity of age and ethnicity made our work interesting and challenging. Language is not a barrier as seen when we had some Myanmar women and indigenous Sarawakians. They could not understand us initially, however, with sign language and a mixture of English and Malay, the messages were easily communicated and clients could tell us of their needs. Older women and younger women who were miles apart in thinking and speaking became good friends, like mothers and daughters, older and younger sisters. When hearing each others' stories, theirs often felt trivial and they gave one another encouragement and companionship, something which they will not find else where. Some residents continued their friendships even after leaving the shelter.

There were also misunderstandings and it was not easy settling the disputes as everyone seem to be right or wanted their way. Although there was intervention from the staff, it was left to them to settle it by themselves as these were practices for them when they lived independently. They learnt to negotiate and settle their differences amicably.

1.2.1 .Domestic Violence Survivors

Out of the 115 women seeking shelter, 62 were victims-survivors of domestic violence, compared to 66) in the previous year. Out of this, only 16 went back to their husbands after they had a chance to think about their options. Those who went back had financial issues to settle, children wanted to be their fathers, the foreign spouses depended on their husbands to renew their social visa or that they just wanted to give the husband another chance after he promised to change.

Dynamics in domestic violence

Some interesting facts about the domestic violence dynamics were that all were psychologically abused, 95% were physically abused and about 40% were sexually abused. 53 of the perpetrators were intimate partners (husband, cohabite, boyfriends) and the rest were close family members. 27 partners had history of abuse in their families and 18 were systematically abused in some form everyday. This had resulted in many of them attempting suicide. In fact our records state that out of 41 residents who thought about it, 32 were domestic violence survivors, out of which 23 actually attempted suicide. They said they took

an overdose of sleeping pills or mixture of pills drank Clorox, cut their wrist and two of them hung themselves from the ceiling fan.

25 of them had never left their homes before and only when the violence became unbearable and were too scared of the abuse to come after an argument, fled to WAO with the assistance of friends or on their own. At least 15 had attempted to leave once and there were seven (7) who had left their home more than five (5) times. Each time the family members reconciled them or the husband came searching for her.

Quite interestingly, 45% of the women said there was no real “reason” why they were abused; abusers just did it when it fancied them. About 80% felt their partners felt jealous and suspicious of the women and suspected that the women were cheating on them, especially when the women refused to give in to the partners’ sexual desires or when they dressed attractively. The women felt these suspicions were unjustified as they were confined either to their homes or their offices. The insults and vulgarities were just as bad as or worse than being physically violated. Many just did not want to elaborate as it was too painful or beyond description.

Police reports

At the Refuge, the social workers attended to the residents as soon as they arrive, giving them a listening year first, enquiring how to assist them and then eventually giving them informed options such as helping make police reports, getting medical help, obtaining IPO’s(Interim Protection Orders). This year 31 had made police reports prior to coming to WAO and we only assisted 13 to make them. As many as 39 women did not want to make police reports as they felt it was shameful to go to the police station or just wanted to be left alone. We, however, managed to get IPOs for six (6) of them.

Challenging cases

There were two instances where family members and the husband became very abusive and brought harm to the women while they were with us. They were lots of tense moments for all of us but these are the real battles we had to fight for the women.

The first case involved two (2) sisters married to two brothers for five (5) years who were physically, mentally, financially and socially abused by their in-laws. The sisters were not allowed to contact their family members who were from another country. Family members finally managed to contact WAO who went to their rescue. They then lodged a report with the Police Station.

The family brought a posse of police, lawyers, religious authorities and welfare officers twice to search our Refuge for one of the sisters who had a son. The husband had managed to get a interim custody order for his son from the syariah court and the posse wanted to search our premises for his son. (The other sister managed to leave the country although she was

detained at the airport). WAO refused to allow the family members or her husband to enter the Refuge. We gave them official letter stating that the woman and her son are no longer with us and insisting that the lawyers and religious officers have no right to search our premises. When they came back the second time, we did allow female welfare officers and a senior police officer to enter and search the premises.

However, both the woman and her son had left our shelter before that search and have returned safely to her family overseas.

In the other case, the woman was detained and made to stay in the lockup when she went to make a police report against the husband who gave chase to her when she went to get her belongings from the matrimonial house. She thought her husband was still in detention being questioned by the police. The husband had earlier falsely declared she had stolen his mother's jewellery and the police detained her for questioning. Luckily, WAO and Amer Hamzah, a lawyer from the Bar Council managed to get her out on police bail the next day but she was made to report at the police station every week and then every month. WAO intervened, and this exercise came to a halt after instructions of a senior police official.

The husband later took away both her children at different instances, knowing well he was violating the IPO. No action has yet to be taken against him. She however managed to get custody of the children, as the husband had violated the IPO.

WAO is more prepared now, having experienced the worst and learning more about the legal and police systems.

Ending in a positive note, nearly all the survivors have expressed in the checkout forms that they were grateful that there was such a place such as WAO, where they learnt many things, especially learning to stand up for themselves, understanding stereotyped gender roles and gender discrimination. Developing skills to have a new beginning was also mentioned.

1.2.2 Migrant Domestic Workers (MDW)

There were nine (9) migrant domestic workers from Indonesia (4), India (4), and Cambodia (1). They came to us through the police, Embassy or people who saw them stranded and lost. Most were between 20 to 30 years of age, although we had one young woman who was only 17 years old.

Five (5) of the eight (8) were abused by the employers, whereas the three (3) others were dissatisfied with their wage payment or did not like working for the employers.

It took less than two weeks to help settle their issues and they were either back to their home country (4) or went back to agent (2). One (1) MDW is still at WAO and another went to stay and work with a different employer, despite having no proper documents.

As soon as the MDW comes in, the social worker listens to her story and finds out what she expects WAO to do. She is informed of all the possible choices to be done in her case. Most often, police reports are done prior to coming to the shelter. However, the worker follows up with the investigation officer, the status of the case, if abuser is being charged or if she could get back her passport, belongings and wages. Sometimes they help negotiate with employer to get her salary and flight ticket home.

While at the shelter, they join in the sessions - language, reading and writing classes, yoga, using the computers, outings and taking part in discussions and sharing stories of their home country.

Nearly all (7) of them received their wages, however, only four (4) had their tickets purchased by the agent/ employer. In order to facilitate their return social workers go to Putrajaya to get out their checkout memo before the departure date. The social workers, themselves drive them to the airport and saw them safely to the plane. One or two of them called or wrote back to say they had arrived safely.

1.2.3 Single pregnant women

There were nine (9) young women between the ages of 17 years to 27 years who sought shelter to hide their pregnancy from the people around them. One was a student who lived alone and wanted to be supported towards the last trimester.

While at our shelter, they learnt about family planning, empowerment and soft skills such as writing their resume, interviewing skills and presenting themselves.

The women revealed that they knew about family planning but did not pay too much heed to it as they would consider these options only after marriage. They did not anticipate getting pregnant while they were single. Six (6) of them had consensual relationships; however, their boyfriends abandoned them when they knew about the pregnancy. Two (2) of them were raped by strangers.

Most did not go prenatal checkups. They were sent immediately to the nearby 'Klinik Kesihatan'. Social Worker, Nazlina, talked to them about the delivery process, how to look after their bodies and post natal hygiene. Most often, Nazlina acts as our 'bidan' giving out information for the expectant mother and new babies.

All of them except one gave the baby up for adoption arranged by the hospitals they delivered at. Some of them bring the baby back to the shelter to show them to their friends and to spend the last moments before handing over the baby to the adoptive parents. It's always a tearful farewell and that's why others hand their babies over at the hospital and go home straight away.

The mother who decided to keep her baby will find a baby sitter and her boyfriend is saving for a wedding and their life together.

1.3 Programmes for Women and Children at the Refuge

The residents not only have sessions with their social workers to resolve their issues, they get inspiration and renewed interest from group interaction, be they formal or informal. This year, there were lots of opportunities for the women to learn new skills such as learning English through conversations, drawing and art appreciation. WAO is fortunate to have a pool of consistent volunteers such as *Phang Ngan Nui, Rachael Liz James, Joyce, Senade, Jalene Wellington, Vivienne Lee- Iskandar. Annie Ng and Yoh Poh Kim* are assigned by the Quota Club to conduct yoga and bead jewellery. Jessie Ang coordinated the programmes and special requests that came to work with the women. Each volunteer come on specific days of the week and spends at least a good two hours with the women.

Outings are a favourite among the residents. It was quite amazing that many did not know how to take the LRT or the buses and have never seen popular spots in the Klang Valley. Interns, volunteers and staff took many of them to see these places just to have some fun and to get out of the Shelter. Of course, those who were at risk did not join in. On festive occasions, they were treated to lunches and teas at hotels.

There were also formal educational sessions such as making a proper police report, about power and control in domestic violence, knowing their rights in various situations, labour practices, health related topics such as HIV/Aids, reproductive health, nutrition and parenting skills.

1.3.1 The Rhythm in Bronze (RiB) WAO Project

RiB is a gamelan ensemble, which performs new music on the expanded Malay gamelan set. The RiB/ WAO Project is part of a larger project called The RiB Community Outreach Program's which is made possible through the sponsorship of HSBC in the Arts.

RiB chose to work with women at our Refuge to provide a distraction for women and children from their problems and give them an opportunity to channel their feelings through music.

The project also aspired to use music as a healing property for emotionally battered women and children. It is widely recognised by music therapists and other experts that there are physiological benefits from the sounds and vibrations of gong instruments, and that playing percussive instruments is one of the most therapeutic formats of music making. This activity launched our own 'nightingale', who penned a song dedicated to WAO. She has managed to get a pool of residents and they come together once a month and jam together at our shelter.

The project took place from August to December 2008 and ended with a simple performance held on 13 December 2008. The women performed two numbers. This event was attended by members of RiB, Five Arts Centre, WAO staff and EXCO.

1.3.2 Children's Programmes at the Refuge

Under the guidance of social worker Salina, children were given remedial work everyday. In addition, they had to have physical activity by playing in our grounds or at the playground nearby. Initially the children were shy or insecure and clung on to their mothers, however peer pressure and the persuasiveness of the staff made them open up. Salina was able to record and make an assessment if there was a history of abuse and follow-up care was carried out with mother's consent.

1.3.3 Specific activities in collaboration with Sponsors

Quota Club has to be credited for bringing in Annie and Kim, who for the past two years, taught Yoga and bead stringing respectively, showing patience even if there was one resident. The bead project not only gave them something to do but also gave the women jewellery to wear. They felt good wearing jewellery and would do more than one set to match their dresses.

The Club members have also brought in other members to teach baking and many have used the simple recipes to launch their part-time business. One member brought in lots of lace to make covers for different things. This was not as popular as many did not know how to use the sewing machine or have interest in it.

Quota Club gave out seed money to lend and one woman who took a small loan to make cheese cakes for Christmas. Many women have been encouraged to use this facility.

They also sponsored a medical camp for residents and ex-residents to screen basic health risks like diabetes and blood pressure. Next year they propose a bigger and better camp.

Soroptimist Club of Damansara has been a great partner to work with. They too are very keen on helping our single mothers. Besides sponsoring five children under our AA project, they have sponsored a tea party and outings for children to the Science Centre.

Their most recent project is helping five (5) ex-residents learn how to ride/drive either the motorbike or a car. This project was the idea of a single mother who had transport and financial problems. By having a licence and a vehicle, life would be easier and have more opportunities for outings and learn new skills. Some mothers are just at the stage of sitting for the written exam, some have started with the lessons and one is just identifying her school.

In addition, this Club has offered to sponsor skills classes for single mothers. The mothers have to identify the classes but actually they prefer the money for their teenage children who are not the Club's target beneficiaries.

A sudden development took place with the Royal Bank of Scotland (formerly ABN- Amro bank) in December. They found some houses for auction and alerted women who was the list of the single mothers, a list given to the Bank a year ago. Three (3) of them have been given the clearance to get the housing loan to buy single storey houses in Rawang. Finally this joint project is succeeding.

In addition, RBS offered temporary jobs to our single pregnant women, who took turns to go to the office to earn extra money of about RM 700 a month. Eventually one of our residents was offered a permanent post for that job. Both the Bank and she are very happy with this arrangement.

1.4 Women with Court Cases

This year, the social workers and a programme officer continued accompanying our four (4) clients who had court cases. Progress was seen in three (3) of the four (4) cases as the clients were heard and various witnesses came to give testimony. Judgement on the cases will be given in 2009. The concerns for WAO and the clients is whether justice was well served and the information given I court was satisfactory as most of the offences happened on 2003.

In one of the cases (gang rape) for instance, the file has gone to four different courts because the magistrate was transferred around and the client had four different Deputy Public Prosecutors (DPP) and Assistant Public Prosecutors for her defence.

In another case, we are witnessing the violation of an Interim Protection Order without completing the investigation or being charged for the offence which were the grounds in securing an IPO. The social worker and the client herself have written in to find out the reason but till today there has been no explanation. The client is not interested in pursuing her case and wants to get on with her life.

In yet another case of a minor who was raped, the case has prolonged for two years, thus far she has given her testimony. In this case, however, we must commend the magistrate who was sensitive and allowed the case to go on despite the defence lawyer losing his papers and wanting several postponements.

Only one (1) case (abused migrant domestic worker) is still pending and not heard even once because the defence lawyer had High Court matters, the magistrate went on maternity leave, the magistrate went on a course, the DPP could not make it or the court was undergoing repair.

WAO would like to record our thanks to the watching brief lawyers for who represented our clients. They are Nuliny Yusof, Nitya and Syezwani of Mssrs Rusmah, Arunan & Associates, Sonia Anirudhan and Meera Samanthar.

1.5 Donations in kind for the Refuge and CCC

WAO must put on record our thanks to donors who have been supporting us for over 10 years. **Gardenia Confectionary** for donating bread and kaya to both the CCC and the Shelter every week. **Malayan Flour Mills** gives a sack of flour and carton of oil every month. **Brian Lariche** manages to collect groceries, toiletries and detergents for our Refuge every month. Not to leave out **Lakshmi Ganesh** and her friends who do not forget to give the Shelter and CCC residents a delicious spread every festive season.

A very special thanks to all donors and sponsors who donated groceries and to all those who sponsored food stuff, door gifts and presents for our year end gathering.

1.6 Telephone Counselling

There was an increase of calls from the previous year; 1318 in 2008 as to 1200 in 2007. In the first half of the year, we received an average of about 130 calls a month and it slowly dwindled to about 80 a month. Most of the callers called in for domestic violence issues although there were other issues such as marriage relationship problem and those pertaining to children and knowing their rights in a marriage. Most of the callers were from the Klang Valley, but there were callers as far as Sabah and Sarawak, and the East Coast. Many knew of our numbers from the telephone operator, and they knew of our existence after reading about us and our services in the various newspapers and magazines.

The telephone has been a very popular mode of seeking assistance, not only for themselves but for their relatives and on behalf of a victim. We always encourage the callers who are calling on behalf of an abused woman to get the woman herself to seek help.

Some memorable calls are to the police stations when neighbours call about abused wives or children or domestic worker. This is a tricky situation as some callers refuse to get involved but want to know the development. Luckily, in most instances, the victims cooperate and go with the policemen to be rescued or take further action against the abuser. One particular case was that in Kepong mid last year, where a step father was arrested and charged soon after one of our social workers made a report. The mother and the two children were rescued before. The control by the perpetrator was so enormous that mother could not get herself to save her children but the concerned neighbours who heard the crying and the beatings everyday alerted us. We then called the 'teledera' lines, the welfare department and all the lines possible to rescue them.

1.7 Face to face counselling

The number of women who sought this service came down slightly from 75 to 72 this year. About 20 of them were our ex-clients and residents who wanted us to spend time with them. There were many new clients who did not need shelter but wanted counselling and guidance about their problems and issues similar to those phoning in. These women were happier to be meet a social worker in person as they could communicate better and have a clearer understanding of their solutions than if they talked over the phone.

1.8 E-mail Enquiries

We received 146 e-mails and it comes to an average of ten a month. Some of them are follow-up e-mails pertaining to domestic violence or their rights in a marriage.

However, there were months in the middle of the year where there were more than 15 enquires and these were from college students and researchers who wanted to know more about our services or wanted to interview a domestic violence survivor. They were mostly for their term paper or projects whereby they had about a week to complete. Sometimes it was quite frustrating as the students do not read and research much and ask a lot of basic questions for which they could have easily obtained the information from our website.

The queries regarding problems were sometimes long winded or too brief with few facts, but we took it as a challenge to address them tactfully, encouraging them to call to clarify further and give more choices after a better understanding of their issues. This mode of communication is getting popular as they can pour out their woes in the privacy of their home or office, especially from distant places. The other e-mails were about procedures how to get a birth certificate, registration of child of a single woman to school, adoption procedures, about housing, business and personal loans, legal referrals and relationship problems.

1.9 The Child Care Centre (CCC)

The CCC is a very special children's home, only for the children of our clients who had sought shelter at the Refuge. The children may have witnessed or underwent domestic abuse themselves.

The children are aged between three (3) years till 12 years. The number of children in our facility is kept to a maximum of 15 so as to be given specialized care and attention by a group of dedicated and trained full time staff consisting of a social worker, a supervisor and three (3) child minders who work on rotation. All their expenses like text books, exercise books, stationary, school travel and fees, uniforms, shoes, bags, medical and dental care are borne by WAO. However, the mothers are encouraged to contribute, at least, pocket money for their child. A personal file is opened for each child wherein the child's personal details and developmental and academic details are maintained.

The supervisor usually helps the mother with the school transfers or enrolment into the kindergarten. Having established a good working relationship over the years has made it easier to send our children to the schools and kindergarten nearby. The school staff themselves know about our Home and if there are concerns and issues, the concerned teacher or headmistress calls us and discusses with us openly.

Routine at the CCC: There is a routine to be followed at the CCC. The children wake up between 6 to 7 am and clean themselves up before having breakfast. A common prayer is usually said before every meal. This is followed by the children either boarding the school bus to go to school or to do exercises in the garden. Those who stay back will help with chores such as hanging up clothes, sweeping, watering the plants, putting away the dishes and then getting ready to do their homework or study. At about 11.30 am they have their lunch, change and wait for the school bus to take them to school. Usually the kindergarten children come back first, followed by the primary school children. They all have lunch together before having a short nap in the afternoon. Some of the upper primary children skip the nap and do their home work or read.

This is also the time when the social worker will have counselling sessions with a child or conduct group work. Some of them have a need to talk about their families, how they feel about the abuse, their parents, their home situation, their loss of friends and relatives, bullying, school friends, etc. Occasionally the children may exhibit attention seeking traits and unusual behaviours such as bedwetting, stealing, telling lies, stammering, fighting or touching private parts of others. Either the social worker or the supervisor deals with these concerns and if they are more specialized, the child is referred to the doctors at the University Hospital or to an NGO that deals with it. Other concerns are the children's poor performance in their studies as they may have missed long periods of school or have not gone to school at all.

Mothers visit or stay over during the weekend or on their off days every week. They are also encouraged to call and speak with their children as often as possible. This is to reassure the child that their mother is very much in touch with them and know what is going on. A child is only allowed to stay for a period of two years. This is time given to allow the mother to sought out her matters - her job, establish her network of support, be able to have some financial stability and most of all to able to get a home of their own so that they have a home to go to during the school holidays or at end of their stay.

1.9.1 Number of children

In 2008, The CCC had 18 children, belonging to ten (10) mothers. The period of stay of the children is as follows:

Length of stay	Number of children
3 years	4
2 years	6
1 year 3 months	3
10 months	1
6 months	1
5 months	1
3 months	1
1 months	1

However, towards the end of the year, there were 10 boys and girls who went to primary school and five (5) went to a kindergarten. Two (2) of the girls sat for the UPSR exams and managed to do well for their ability. The supervisor and their mother were relieved as they were quite slow in their studies and they were able to go to Form One the subsequent year.

A refugee child: Of the four (4) who went to the kindergarten, one was a refugee child. With constant tutoring and sessions with volunteers and teachers, he was able to pick up on English, Maths, Science and religious classes. Eventually his mother and he were repatriated to a Scandinavian country and what he learnt at the CCC helped him to communicate with others and be able to go to a regular school. He was seven years old.

It was not all nice and cheery as from time to time, some the bigger children acted out quite a fair bit. There were lots of complaints from all quarters-children themselves, the staff, the teachers and even the mothers about some children stealing, taking things from others, spreading rumours, calling names and hurting the feelings of others. Many meetings and consultations among children, with child minders and even mothers were held to iron out the problems and miscommunications. Sometimes the ED's help was sought out by the mothers.

1.9.2 Volunteers at the CCC

The staff are supported and complimented by a bigger group of volunteers who consistently come every week on different days to give extra classes in languages, science, maths, and drawing and also to have some fun. Without the dedication of Joginder Kaur, Impi Jassel, Shobini, Lydia, Allison, Aishah, Rose, Vara, Rosita, Mr. Raj, Sharon Hariharan, Carol Chin , Shireen Hariharan, Patricia Wong, Rachael Chew, Lee Su Ann, Eva San, Ling Fei Wen, Petra

Gimbad, Gan Shuxian, Melody Song Faye-Lynn, Michael Ooi, Ling Fei Wen, Chong Sze Mei, Tan Swee Yen and Tan Chieu Mei, the staff would have 'burnt out' and not be able to give an all attention to the children. There was a volunteers' meeting in November to introduce one another and to learn more about the CCC. Volunteers responded positively and wanted to be in the loop to know about the development of all the children and the activities. A book was started to write each volunteer's lesson plan and remarks so that the others could read for continuity.

1.10 Working with Asylum seekers and Refugees

Our work with the office of the United Nations High Commissioners 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 2007, in addition to counselling and SGBV training for the community, UNHCR had approached us to do incident report taking. In 2008, UNHCR cut back on its funding. As such, the incident report taking and the community training projects came to an end. However, shelter services were offered for vulnerable women and their children. WAO voluntarily continued with the scheduled counselling from the previous year for two months (Jan-Feb) at our premises, wherein we saw 30 women with SGBV issues.

In April 2008, UNHCR approached WAO again to provide the SGBV counselling. WAO agreed to support UNHCR by providing counselling services on an 'as and when' basis. In November 2008, due to the increase in the demand for counselling services, WAO agreed to give counselling services at UNHCR premises on alternate Tuesdays.

Last year WAO provided 60 counselling sessions. These cases are; rape (45), attempted rape (4), assault (1) and domestic violence (10). There was a case where an 11 year old child whose uncle who stayed in their house attempted to rape her. WAO provided three (3) counselling services to the parents so that they are able to help the child and they themselves were able to cope with the situation.

WAO had provided shelter for six (6) refugee women from Myanmar. Four (4) of them were domestic violence victims. One woman and her son, who had stayed at our shelter for over six (6) months, were eventually repatriated to a Scandinavian country.

1.11 Legal Aid Clinic (LAC) 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 procedures, sexual harassment etc).
- 2) To assist WAO clients to lodge police reports and accompany the clients to the hospital.

3) To educate chambering students on NGO work and advocacy.

Prior to coming to WAO, the chambering students have training in three main areas; syariah law training, family law training and NGO based work. Syariah and family law trainings are conducted by LAC KL at their premises, whereas the women NGOs' training is conducted by SIS/AWAM/WAO at Sister in Islam's premises. During the syariah law training by a practicing syariah lawyer, the students will learn about different types of cases handled by the syariah court and their jurisdictions in family matters such as divorce, types of divorce, child custody and maintenance.

In addition to briefs on family law, the students will learn about the different issues in a family dispute, and in particular about domestic violence. For domestic violence issues, the students will be informed about provisions under the Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code and the Domestic Violence Act. Our publication, *Free from Violence* is given to all students, as a practical guide to explain to clients about the act and the procedures.

In addition, information is given to them on the violence against women issues, gender sensitization and feminist perspectives of the law. The latter is presented by Meera Samanther, the President of WAO. Wong Su Zane, our social worker conducts simple counselling techniques to help the client through their problems.

Last year (2008), we had eight (8) students, Tanusha, Chan Xiao Huey Nor, Aishah bt Md Yasak, Denise Tan Kae Ji, Lydia Lam Wai Kwan, Linda Sari bt Musta'ain, Heng Siek Yee and Tan Ai Yin who came once a week for twelve weeks in a stretch. After completing four weeks, they had to attend a mid term review to discuss their experiences and problematic cases at the allotted placements. Each handled telephone calls, face to face interviews, documentation of cases, compiling data of residents and ex residents. The students looked into the Immigration Act and its procedure to see what avenues foreign spouses had to renew visas and obtaining passports for a Malaysian child whose mother is foreign. They also accompanied some of the women to the courts, police stations and clinics. Tanusha P. completed a video of our social work.

Throughout the year, the NGO representative (from WAO, AWAM, SIS and LAC) met four times at LAC KL to discuss issues and problems pertaining to the chambering students.

2.0 SUPPORT SERVICES FOR EX RESIDENTS

2.1 Anak Angkat Sponsorship Programme

This programme which began in 1985 is a support service given to mothers who have just left the Refuge to live separately from their families. The survivors have made the decision to live independently with their children. The salary they receive may not be sufficient for the family expenses and this sponsorship of RM 60 per month helps the mother with a child's schooling expenses. If she has more children, she may receive for more than one child; however, this depends on how many donors there are in that year. A brief description of the child and her/his family is given to the mother on receiving the sponsorship. Subsequently, the child's exam results and progress of the family is given to the sponsor every half yearly. Sponsors are encouraged to communicate with the sponsored child and they could meet at our annual gathering.

There were 32 children belonging to 18 mothers. The following sponsored one child each:

Angel Lee	Thanam Dominic
Pang Ngan Yue	Annapoorni Chandrasekar
Arun Krishnalingam	Indra Kulasegaran
Robert Gan	Kalavathy Subramaniam
General Electric International Inc	Chin Kean Wai
Kanagambagai Letchmanan	Patrick Hijilhema
Eswari Nagaraju	Kamal Gehi
Mageswari Nagaraju	Dr. Saradha Narayanan
Manjulla Devi	Karla Ranie
ABWM	Meinhardt Sdn. Bhd.
Julian Lee	Cheong Oi Keng
Gunathevi Sinnadurai	Tracy Toh
Keat Khoo	Shareena Abd Ghani
Toh Yung Fei	

Soroptimist Club of Damanasara (5) and Kathleen Chin (2) sponsored more than one child as indicated in the brackets.

Mothers look forward to this support as it is a great relief for some of them, especially when they earn between RM 500 to RM750 and have more than three (3) children. The money was used for schooling expenses and pocket money.

2.2 Other forms of assistance for mothers.

Some of the corporate sponsors like Soroptimist Club and General Electric International Inc. gave more than the AA sponsorship. The Soroptimist Club, for instance sponsored the children for a motivation and a science camp at the Science centre, gave 'ang paws' for the children during our year end gathering. General Electric International Inc visited the mother who was ill and gave her additional assistance like medical supplements and food rations. The Royal Bank of Scotland is helping single mothers to purchase low cost houses

3.0 INTERNS AT WAO

As all years, 2008 was a year with many interns. WAO hosted 14 interns from Malaysia, New Zealand, Belgium, United States, Aceh and Australia. They were with the organisation from January right up to December. 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.

WAO has always been happy to host interns both local and foreign as they are an integral part of the WAO team. Interns handle everything from phone calls, organising children's and women's 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 WAO Centre, some interns assisted in advocacy, public education and fundraising activities.

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

NO	INTERNS	FROM	DURATION
1	Umi Nazrah Anuar	University Utara Malaysia, Malaysia	3 Dec 07 – 3 Mar 08
2	Fiona Lee Hui Xin	Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand	5 Jan – 5 Feb
3	Elif Sahin	Mid University Sweden	21 Jan – June
4	Roxanne Volberg	AFS Programme, Belgium	25 Jan – 5 July
5	Daisy Li	University of Washington, USA	22 Mar – 5 May
6	Cut Intan	Study visit from Aceh	5 Mar – 4 April
7	Martini	Study visit from Aceh	5 Mar – 4 April
8	Asaka Yamanaka	University of Washington, USA	22 Mar – 5 May

9	Lee Wong Ling	UTAR	2 June – 6 Sept
10	Ee Chien Fay	UTAR	2 June – 6 Sept
11	Asha Gill Harfeez	Curtin University of Technology, Perth Australia	6 June – 18 July
12	Stephanie Chuah	HELP College, Malaysia	1 July – 31 Dec
13	Kiran Dhaliwal	University Malaya	15 July – 30 Oct
14	Jacinta Tagal	Harvard University	28 July – 29 Aug

Some highlights of contributions by the Interns

Stephanie Chua came in as a volunteer in 2006 and became an intern in 2008. She worked on the 16 days of activism; she created the face book account for the 16 days of activism campaign. Besides helping out at the WAO Centre, Stephanie was also involved with the residents both at the Refuge and the CCC. Asha Gill produced our quarterly newsletter edition for April - June 2008. Kiran Dhaliwal is a practicing lawyer and came to intern with us as part of her Masters in counselling studies. We were fortunate to have her as she got actively involved in managing some of the challenging cases.

4.0 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 WAO Annual General Meetings.

4.1 Volunteer Development

In 2008, orientations and meetings were held every first and third Saturday of each month. These regular meetings brought old and new volunteers together to create and opportunity to get together on a consistent basis to discuss issues, update volunteers on upcoming and ongoing events, and plan for future fundraising events as well as to develop an independent group of volunteers who are able to assist the organisation.

Five (5) volunteer orientations and five (5) meetings were conducted at the WAO Centre. The orientations and meetings conducted every first and third Saturday of each month saw a steady following of new and old volunteers alike. The idea which was mooted by the Executive Director was to enable members and volunteers an opportunity to get together on a consistent basis to discuss issues, update volunteers on upcoming and ongoing events, and 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 were coordinated by the Annie Varghese our Projects Manager and Didie Yaakob our Projects Assistant.

A total of 69 volunteers went through the orientations, out of which 20 remained as volunteers and another seven (7) became members.

The majority of volunteers in 2008 comprised working adults, college students, single mothers and housewives. New volunteers became aware of WAO through the media, website, friends, university, college, magazines, seminars, brochures, banners outside WAO Centre, legal aid centres, booths, other organisations e.g. rotary, former clients, former interns and family.

Though we were fortunate to have 69 people attend the orientations many were not totally involved with the events and work at the organisation. Despite repeated calls inviting them for events, meetings, talks and other events, it was noted that many were silent volunteers who preferred to help if not physically but in areas where we needed funding as well as giving us donations in kind.

The buddy system which was introduced in October 2006 worked well till end 2007. However, in 2008 it didn't take off and was dropped during the early part of the year. The

concept of pairing old volunteers with new ones, while seeming innovative, lacked commitment from the volunteers themselves. Besides commitment, it became a chore for the office to keep reminding the volunteers to call each other via phone calls as well as emails.

Volunteer orientations were conducted by Samsukri Glanville, Gowri Shanmuganathan and Chua Soon Chern in 2007 and in 2008 we were fortunate to have two (2) more join the team – Stephanie Chuah and Yvonne Ng, a mother-daughter team who have been ardent volunteers with the organisation. We would like to thank all of them for their invaluable support.

Besides the regular orientations and meetings, other NGOs and friends of the organisation were invited to conduct talks on topics such as Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment and Human Rights, Women & Election (with AWAM), Child Sexual Abuse and WAO's Advocacy work. We would like to thank Siti Salina, Ho Yock Lin, Chian Yee, Madeline Yong, Shanon Shah and Kerina Marie Francis for giving their expertise and time to conduct these talks.

Volunteers were kept busy by participating in jumble sales, public education booths and fund raising events.

March 5-7	Booth at HELP College in conjunction with International Women's Day
April 12-13	WAO Jumble Sale at Amcorp Mall
April 19	Social Work Day at Sunway Pyramid
May 3-4	Arts For Grab at Central Market
May 10	Mother's Day event at Shalome Restaurant, TTDI
May 31	Elken Winners Night event at Bukit Jalil Stadium
June 15	AWAM Treasure Hunt at Times Square
June 21	Viva Vertical Women's Health Workshop at Talent Hub
July 12-13	WAO Jumble Sale at Amcorp Mall
July 16	Hospital Serdang Booth at Hospital Serdang
July 26	Women's Convention at PWTC
July 29-30	Monash NGO Fair at Monash University
August 20	Hari Wanita at The Apartment in KLCC - Launch of BodyShop VAW brochures

August 28-29	Budimas Charity Bazaar Raya/Merdeka at MAA building
September 24-26	"GO AWAY, GO SAFE, GO CELEBRATE" Gossip event at Taylors College
November 19	American Association Malaysia Christmas Charity Bazaar at Crowne Princess Hotel
November 23	Association of British Women Malaysia Christmas Charity Bazaar at Nikko Hotel
November 29-30	WAO Jumble Sale at Amcorp Mall
December 16 - 17	Booth at MAS office in Subang
December 21	Clay Making Charity Event at Damansara Utama

5.0 ADVOCACY

Documentation and highlighting the lived realities of women's lives is our advocacy strength. Furthermore WAO's vast network with government agencies, media and civil society groups is an added advantage. We work within the CEDAW framework by adopting a rights based approach. WAO focuses on reform to the Domestic Violence Act (DVA), CEDAW processes, and rights of women in the family, women in migration including asylum and refugee rights and freedom of religion.

Post 12th General Elections. The March '08 elections changed the face of Malaysian politics forever. There was a big shift whereby the Barisan Nasional fared badly. The BN lost five (5) states (Selangor, Penang, Perak, Kelantan and Terenngganu) to the opposition coalition or Pakatan Rakyat (PR). In Parliament out of the 222 MPs, there were 82 MPs belonging to the opposition parties, there used to be only 20 opposition MPS among the 119 MPs in the previous sitting. This meant the NGOs had more access to MPs as quite a number of opposition MPs use to be active in NGOS. In Penang and Selangor women's groups were invited to sit in state and local council committees.

There was also a reshuffle in the Cabinet. The former minister of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) lost her parliamentary seat. Dato Dr. Ng Yen Yen was made the new Minister of the MWFCD while the former minister, Dato Sharizat Jalil was given a secretariat to head. The Protection and Enhancement of Muslim Women (Senada in BM) is now responsible for issues pertaining Muslim women only.

This new structure had an impact on our work. At MWFCD meetings we were told that we cannot raise any "Muslim issues" although our work encompassed issues pertaining to all women in Malaysia irrespective of faith, religion, ethnicity or nationality. WAO is also not invited to input into SENADA meetings as their, meetings were only for Muslim women's groups or Muslim representatives of women's NGOs.

WAO together with JAG believe that this move creates a false divide between Muslim and non- Muslim women. It also disables the MWFDC from dealing holistically with all matters affecting women.

5.1 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.

CEDAW Concluding Observations and the principles of the Convention was mentioned in every press statement that was released by JAG or WAO. To educate WAO staff further on

CEDAW, we had a two - day training for the social workers and programme officers conducted by vice-president of WAO and CEDAW Committee member Shanthi Dairiam.

5.1.1 Initiation of the CEDAW Shadow Report Group in collaboration with NCWO

WAO took the lead again with NCWO to bring together NGOs to begin planning for the second Shadow Report. Malaysia was due to send in the combined 3rd and 4th periodic report by August 2008. The first CEDAW Shadow Report Group (CSRG) meeting was held on the 22nd of March 2008. The meeting was held in NCWO hall and was attended by 13 NGOs. Zarizana of WCC Penang shared with the group that Puan Margaret Ho of the MWFCD has informed the women's groups that she will be coordinating the government periodic report. The report which was initially due to be submitted in August 2008 to the CEDAW committee was pushed to December 2008. Note: WAO contacted the ministry in January 2009 and found out that the deadline has been pushed further to March 2009.

WAO was one of the organisations invited by the MWFCD to participate in a round-table consultation about the government's periodic report to the CEDAW Committee. The meeting was held on the 8th of October 2008 and was attended by various other ministry representatives along with members of women NGOs. The meeting was chaired by Datuk Faizah and Puan Margaret Ho who explained in detail what has been included and mentioned in the government's report. NGOs were also given a draft copy of the government report as reference for our Shadow Report.

Following the meeting, WAO organised another CSRG meeting on the 17th of October 2008. The meeting was chaired by WAO vice-president and CEDAW Committee member Shanthi Dairiam.

Shanthi explained the entire Shadow Report process and the timeline for submitting. She mentioned that the 3rd and 4th Shadow Report needs to be more about present issues and areas of discrimination that was mentioned in the first Shadow Report. Issues such as indigenous women and the privatisation of the health sector and accessibility to health should be given more importance.

Two (2) more Shadow Report meetings, one on the 28th of November 2008 and another on the 15th of December 2008 were held to divide up the work. The first outline for the second Shadow Report is was due on 31 March 2009.

5.1.2 Suhakam forms a Women's Rights Sub Committee

Women NGOs and the Bar Council were invited to be members of a new sub committee chaired by Tan Sri Dato' Asiah Abu Samah. The terms of reference for the NGOS are:

- 1) Work together with SUHAKAM to plan and host programmes to promote and raise awareness of the public and stakeholders on the importance of women's rights especially CEDAW.
- 2) To provide assistance and support in terms of knowledge, resource materials and facilitation when needed by SUHAKAM.
- 3) To become a channel for the members of the sub-committee to raise issues and problems concerning women's rights as long as it is relevant and in-line with the scope and jurisdiction of SUHAKAM's focus areas.

The sub committee's first activity was an in- house training for SUHAKAM staff from the 9th to the 11th of April 2008 in which WAO participated. The facilitators for the CEDAW training included trainers from WAO, AWAM, IWRAW AP, and SIS.

5.2 Reform of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994

5.2.1 Lobbying to table reform to the DVA

In 2008, WAO continued to lobby the AG's chambers and the MWFCDC regarding the above matter but did not get any response from them.

5.2.3 Documentation of DV 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. Social workers also mentioned that the reception that women received in the police stations were crude and unhelpful. Women who could not read or write found it difficult to lodge a police report. Those who sought help from the police to lodge the report found later on that the contents in the report were not accurate. Language was another issue when lodging a report as there were no interpreters present.

A lot of the 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. Most women found it extremely frustrating that the police could not give them sufficient protection and help that they needed.

WAO's staff took an active role in documenting more cases for information. Programme Officers visited the Refuge over a period of 3 months to document cases specifically related to the Domestic Violence Act. Programme Officers also went to the Police Station and the Courts with clients to gain more experience and knowledge about the proceedings. WAO has documented around 55 cases for the year 2008.

A number of interesting cases came up in the year 2008 that were related to Domestic Violence (please refer to the Refuge Services report)

5.3 Coalition Work

Advocacy through coalitions can be effective as joint voices over an issue carry more weight. Whether it is joint press statements, memorandums and events, we have been very involved.

WAO belongs to eight (8) coalitions but not necessarily active in all of them. We are affiliate members of the National Council of Women's Organisation (NCWO) and Malaysian Aids Council (MAC). The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) is not a legal entity but it has become a recognised entity made up of five (5) organisations, (WAO, SIS, WCC Penang, AWAM and Empower). WAO acts as the secretariat to two (2) coalitions namely Article 11 and the Migration Working Group (MWG). Suaram acts as the secretariat to the Gerakan Mansuhkan ISA (GMI) coalition of over 50 civil society groups, lobbying for the repeal of the Internal Security Act (ISA). WAO is one of the pioneer members of the newly formed Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM) formed in 2007.

Soon after the 12th general elections, Suaram and Empower brought together civil society groups to form the Coalition of Good Governance (CCG) to support and monitor the Pakatan Rakyat state government's efforts in Selangor.

5.3.1 Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)

We began the year with the JAG Evaluation and Planning Meeting from 11- 13 January 2008 organised by AWAM at the Rumah Telekom in Fraser's Hill. A lot of the discussion and plans focused on doable activities to capitalise on the coming elections in March. Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (Empower), a new member of JAG has members from both sexes did raise a question as to whether it was possible for JAG to include male members in the coalition meetings. JAG decided it was not yet time to have male members in our annual meetings as we still need to facilitate women representation in decision making bodies.

i) National Plan of Action for Women in Development

On 17 December 2007 the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCDD) provided JAG with the draft National Plan of Action for Women's Development for feedback into the document. JAG was given a very short period to give its feedback and only managed to pursue certain sectors of the draft Plan of Action, namely Women and the Economy, Women and Poverty, Women and Law and Violence Against Women

Besides these sectors JAG also highlighted to the Ministry other sectors that were not mentioned in the Plan of Action such as Trafficking in Persons, Migrant Domestic Workers and asylum seekers and refugees. On 24th January 2008 WAO collected all of JAG's feedback including invited academics, and submitted it to the MWFCDD.

ii) Kotakan Kata Elections Campaign

Pre-Elections: In the JAG evaluation and planning meeting held in January, members suggested to make a big push for the Sexual Harassment Act and to time it for the elections in March 2008

Using the slogan 'Kotakan Kata' (Honour Your Word) we came up with pamphlets to put political pressure. JAG leaflets *"Don't Vote for Sexist MPs"* in Bahasa, English and Chinese were distributed to voters urging them to reject a candidate who has been insulting to women. The pamphlet highlighted the many sexist comments by various MPs. There were many activities carried out before the elections among them were leafleting of sexist MP's pamphlet, writing letters to the PM and political parties and TV and Radio talk shows

On 2 March 2008, JAG together with the Women's Candidacy Initiative (WCI) II, went to Sungai Siput, Ipoh, the constituency Dato Seri Samy Velu to distribute the pamphlets and raise voter awareness about this minister's sexist comments.

Post-Elections: On 30 April 2008 JAG, members went to parliament to congratulate MP's on being elected and distribute folders titled 'Kotakan Kata' containing a list of promises that have been made by political parties during the elections. The folder contained a ruler symbolising a measure of the MP's performance. Included too was a flower to congratulate them on being elected. We received wide media coverage.

The new minister of the MWFC, Dato Dr. Ng Yen Yen also hosted JAG to a dinner to receive our feedback on the status and implementation of law and policy for women.

iii) JAG Evaluation and Planning Meeting 18th - 20th July

The second E & P was held at Eagle Ranch Resort, Port Dickson to review our elections strategy and to plan for joint activities.

iv) JAG meeting with YB Rodziah 5 August

YB Rodziah the assemblywoman for Batu Tiga, Selangor and the deputy chief of the Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) women's wing is in charge of women's development in the Selangor state government. JAG and many other women groups participated in a half day dialogue with her fellow assembly women on gender friendly policies.

v) Teresa Kok- Utusan Malaysia Controversy

On 12 October 2008 Utusan Malaysia published a short story titled 'Politik Baru YB J, which was allegedly targeted at Seputeh MP Teresa Kok whereby in a thinly-veiled plot a politician

becomes a target of an assassination. Teresa Kok was in fact arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA) on Sept 12 because she was apparently considered a potential threat to national security for inciting racial sentiments when she allegedly petitioned a mosque to reduce the volume for the *azan* (call to prayer). Teresa Kok had denied this happened and her non-involvement was later supported by the committee of the mosque involved. She was subsequently released on Sept 19.

In response to this new attack against Teresa Kok by Utusan, Empower on behalf of JAG came up with a press statement and held a press conference on 24 October 2008 outside Utusan Malaysia. JAG intended to present the statement to the Chief Editor of Utusan; however, we were told that the Chief Editor was busy

vi) Fiesta Feminista (FF)

FF 2007 was jointly organised by the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) and the Gender Studies Programme of University Malaya. The objectives of FF are as follows:

- To forefront and popularise feminism in Malaysia such that anyone who has an interest in learning more about inequalities and injustice in society – but 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. This, it is hoped, will also be a leadership building activity and contribute to facilitating a smooth and effective transition between the current and future leadership of the women's movement.

After the FF 2007 event, it was decided that the FF Steering Committee (FFSC) will continue to function while the current Organising Committees will be rapped up for the time being.

The secretariat for the FF was Women's Development Collective (WDC), however since its closure end 2007 the FF has not had a secretariat. The FFSC jointly agreed, with the permission of JAG that currently all funds and materials will be temporarily kept with the All Women's Action Society (AWAM).

The Coordinators for the FFSC are Syarifatul Adibah (SIS), Vizla Kumaresan (WAO) and Abigail DeViris (AWAM). There are three advisors on the FFSC and they are Cecilia Ng, Sussana George and tan beng hui.

The FFSC members comprise staff, volunteers and members of the five JAG organisations who have been actively involved with the organising of the FF 2007. Each JAG organisation has 4 representatives from its respective organisation in the FFSC. The representatives from WAO are Meera Samanther, Vizla Kumaresan, Gowri Shanmuganathan and Kerina Francis.

Eventually in 2008 new Organising Committees were formed by the FFSC in preparation for FF2010 and to open a space for younger feminist within the JAG circle to participate in FF. These organising committees were formed:

1. Political DEF's (knowledge and process building group)
2. Movement Building Group
3. Websters (Website Group)
4. Skill Building Group

For 2008 the FFSC has held seven (7) meetings. The meetings were very KL- centric and it was difficult for Penang members to fully participate. For this reason, the FFSC members decided to have rotating venues for the meetings. The last FFSC December meeting was held in Penang at the Women's Centre for Change.

5.3.2 The Migration Working Group (MWG)

The year 2008 marks the third anniversary of the formation of the MWG since its inception in March 2006. The MWG continues to serve and uphold the rights of Migrants, Refugees and Stateless Persons in the country. WAO still remains secretariat of the MWG for 2008/2009.

The MWG welcomed three more members to its network in 2008. They are Humana Child Aid Society, based in Sabah, Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Office of Human Development (AOHD) and Outreach to Foreigners (O2F).

The following are NGOs linked within the MWG Network to date:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) | 15. Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) |
| 2. The National Human Rights Society (HAKAM) | 16. Migrant Desk Melaka – Johor Diocese |
| 3. Labour Resource Centre (LRC) | 17. Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility, Asia (CARAM Asia) |
| 4. Tenaganita | 18. Health Equity Initiatives |
| 5. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) | 19. Migrant Care |
| 6. Amnesty International Malaysia (AI) | 20. Building & Wood Workers International (BWINT) |
| 7. Penang Office for Human Development (POHD) | 21. Council of Churches, Malaysia (CCM) |
| 8. A Call to Service (ACTS) | 22. Education and Research Association for Consumers, Malaysia (ERA Consumer) |
| 9. All Women's Action Society (AWAM) | 23. Asian Outreach |
| 10. Malaysian Care | 24. Humana Child Aid Society (Humana) |
| 11. Shelter | |
| 12. ALIRAN | |
| 13. Legal Aid Centre (Kuala Lumpur) | |
| 14. Malaysian Bar Council | |

25. Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Office
Of human Development (AOHD)

26. Outreach to Foreigners (O2F)

The MWG continues to open its network to organisations and individuals who are keen on working together as a network on migration issues, to join the group. MWG holds strong affiliations with Migrant Forum in Asia, Forum Asia, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

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 2008/2009

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

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

MWG Activities

i) Right To Redress Campaign – Launched 26 April

At the 2nd MWG Advocacy Workshop in 2007, the Network decided that we would embark on a Right to Redress Campaign in 2008. Many migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people suffer from unpaid wages, abuses in the workplace, violence, extortion and cheating, and have justice denied to them under the current legal and administrative system of Malaysia whereby they the migrant worker is deported or unable to stay in the country as he or she has to pay RM 100 for a special pass to pursue the case.

The slogan for the campaign is:

‘The Right to Redress equals the Right to be Heard, the Right to Stay and the Right to Work.’

The campaign was launched with a Forum on the Right to Redress for Migrant Workers and Refugees on 26 April 2008 at the Kuala Lumpur, Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH).

In this Forum, migrants, activists and lawyers highlight issues surrounding the *Right to Redress (R2R)*, highlighting the urgent need for reform so that justice prevails. The event was attended by Dato’ N. Siva Subramaniam from SUHAKAM, representatives from UNHCR, MTUC, refugee communities, NGOs, press and members of the public.

The MWG focused on the **R2R campaign** as the lack of access to redress through the criminal justice system is a critical issue that non-citizens in the country face.

ii) MWG Parliament Event - 7 May

On 7th May 2008, Cyclone Nargis ravaged the deltas and coastlines of Burma. An estimated 78,000 people are dead, while 56,000 remain missing. Around 2.5 million survivors are at threat of disease, exposure and starvation.

Even then the stubborn response *junta* military government, continued to restrict vital international assistance and to neglect their population in desperate circumstances. They remained lackadaisical to calls by the United Nations and the international community to assume their responsibilities.

These events had a direct impact on the peoples of Burma presently seeking refuge in Malaysia. They comprised between 80-90 percent of an estimated 100,000 asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons. They have either fled persecution for their political beliefs, ethnicity, and/or religion, or escaped torture, rape, violence, mistreatment and insecurity in their homelands.

On 22 May 2008, members of the MWG went to Parliament to highlight the issue in a press conference and to distribute folder to MPs containing information on the plight of refugees, and Malaysia obligations under International Treaties towards these people. The group came up with a self-designed folder with the title '**Malaysia My Refuge**'.

The MWG appealed to Members of Parliament (MPs) to recognize the realities faced by asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons in our country. In view of Malaysia's international obligations to protect and assist these populations they asked all MPs to support their recommendations to the Malaysian Government. The group managed to submit these folders to 54 MPs from both the ruling government and the opposition.

iii) World Refugee Day (WRD) 20 June

To commemorate WRD, the MWG posted out 32 informational folders "Malaysia My Refuge to all Cabinet Ministries. These folders contained information on the plight of refugees, and Malaysia obligations under International Treaties towards these people.

The MWG only received an acknowledgment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who thanked us for the information.

On 20 June 2008 the Burmese refugee leaders from the ethnic groups of Mon, Shan, Kachin, Chin, Karen and Karenni together with the MWG organised a full scale concert with traditional performances and cultural dances followed by a press conference at the Kuala Lumpur And Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH).

iv) Meeting the Minister of Human Resources 21 July

On 21 July 2008, the Minister of Human Resources, Datuk S. Subramaniam made a public announcement in the Star that all recruitment of foreign workers should come under the Ministry of Human Resources instead of the Ministry of Home affairs.

The MWG supported his statement and wrote to the Minister of Human Resources Department to arrange a meeting to further discuss the matter. The Ministry responded in a letter dated 24 August 2008 which proposed for a meeting between members of the MWG and the Human Resources Minister.

On 4 September 2008, 10 representatives of the MWG attended the meeting with the Human Resource Minister. Various issues such as the recognition of domestic work as work, the outsourcing policy, Special Pass and the lack of access to justice for migrant workers were discussed in the meeting,.

The outcome of the meeting was positive, with the Minister agreeing to look into our concerns and willing to have further discussions with the MWG. The MWG agreed to meet with the Ministry once every 6 months to have follow-up discussions.

v) A joint submission by members of the MWG and JUMP for the 4th Session of the Universal Periodic Review – September

In conjunction with Malaysia's Review by the Human Rights Council in Geneva in February 2009, the MWG and JUMP came up with a 10 page report on the Human Rights Violations faced by Non-Citizens in Malaysia.

This initiative was lead by Alice Nah of HAKAM, Co-coordinator of the MWG. Both members of MWG and JUMP contributed to the report. A press conference was held at WAO office on 8 September 2008, where the MWG UPR report together with other NGOs report was handed to the press.

vi) MWG 3rd Annual Advocacy Workshop 22 – 24 September

The MWG organised its 3rd Annual Advocacy Workshop from 22-24 September 200. This was attended by 22 organisations working on migration issues. This year the Canadian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur sponsored the MWG's Annual Advocacy Workshop.

The objectives of the 3rd Annual Advocacy Workshop were:

- a. Bring together all NGOs and individuals working on migrant issues and with migrants and to capacity build MWG members
- 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)

On Day One of the workshop the MWG held a National Consultation on the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which was facilitated by Ellene Sana of Migrant Forum Asia (MFA). On the following day we had a capacity building program on how to handle migrant cases. Joachim Xavier of POHD and Florida Sandanasamy of Tenaganita gave a presentation on Handling Complaints from Migrant Workers. The presentation included session on Immigration Matters, Documentation and Trafficking.

On the second half of Day 2 the MWG reviewed its work in the past in order to map their efforts thus far and prepare to plan activities for the coming year. On Day Three the participants of the workshop divided themselves into six groups to discuss and plan for future events.

The 2009 MWG Advocacy Workshop will be organised by POHD and JUMP from Penang.

5.3.3 Article 11 Coalition

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. The members of the coalition consist of diverse organisations including religious, women's rights and human rights groups.

The objectives are:

- ❖ no citizen shall be discriminated on the basis of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender
- ❖ parents (both mother and father) are equal guardians and have equal say in all aspects of the upbringing of children
- ❖ children shall be protected from any form of discrimination on the grounds of religion and in all cases, the interests of children shall be paramount
- ❖ the freedom of thought, conscience and belief for all persons shall be fully respected, guaranteed and protected
- ❖ every citizen has a responsibility to condemn discrimination and intolerance based on religion or belief
- ❖ every citizen has a responsibility to apply religion or belief in support of human dignity and peace.

The coalition focuses mainly on areas of conflict between civil law and state Islamic law enactments, protection of fundamental liberties and access to justice.

The year 2008 was a quiet one for Article 11. The year started with meeting held on the 30th of January 2008. The meeting was chaired by Oy Sim (ex- Programme Officer of WAO) and was called to view the final version of the Freedom of Belief video and to discuss how and when to launch and circulate it. It was decided that the circulation and launch would be done after the March '08 elections.

On the 10th of April Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi urged non- Muslims to inform their families before converting to Islam. He said that his government is coming up with a regulation that will require the person to take permission from his/her family members before converting. This particular came up after numerous cases of body-snatching, inheritance and other conversion issues.

Article 11 held its 2nd meeting on the 15th of April 2008 where the above mentioned issue was discussed. Article 11 members came to the conclusion that that the notification of informing the family members should not be a pre-condition. The coalition also agreed that the registering authority (for e.g. Jabatan Agama or National Registration Department) must notify the family and that no Muslim authority should inform the non- Muslims.

i) Public education: videos

As the coalition was unable to hold public forums, it explored alternative avenues of information dissemination in 2008. The secretariat on behalf of the coalition uploaded the 'Freedom of Belief' video on the Article 11 website and YouTube, a popular video sharing website in June 2008. The video can now be viewed by all members of the public.

The Freedom of Belief video was also shown in the Freedom Film Festival on the 7th of September 2008 in Kuala Lumpur. Ivy Josiah and Chin Oy Sim were representatives and resource persons for Article 11.

ii) 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.

iii) Media advocacy

As a result of what was effectively a media gag order, *Article 11* as a coalition rarely issued press statements and letters to the press. However, the coalition's member organisations, including WAO, continued to release its own press releases.

Article 11 released one press statement on the 13th of May 2008 on the Penang Syariah Court's decision to allow Tan Ean Huang to renounce Islam and practice Buddhism peacefully. WAO also released another statement as secretariat of Article 11 on the 15th of October 2008 on the Penang magistrate's court decision in regards to the disruption by protestors at a Article 11 public forum.

Throughout the year WAO Executive Director, Ivy Josiah was interviewed by various radio, television and print media in relation to the issues on conversion and impact of religion on national policy.

iv) 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.

Article 11 and JAG representatives continued to keep in contact with the Prime Minister's office but in vain. WAO on behalf of Article 11 and JAG representatives sent letters to both Y.B. Dato' Ahmad Zahid bin Hamidi and YB Datuk Mohd Shafie Apdal, Ministers in the Prime Minister's office but received no response from them. WAO will continue to follow up on the letters in the coming year.

v) Bar Council Forum "Conversion to Islam: Art 121 (1A) Subashini & Shamalah Revisited"

After much speculation and media upheaval, the Bar Council public forum "Conversion to Islam: Art 121(1A) Subashini & Shamalah Revisited" took place in the Bar Council Auditorium on the 09th of August 2008. WAO programme officer and intern attended the forum with other members of the public. The forum was cancelled mid way after police and angry demonstrators barged into the auditorium and demanded that the forum be stopped.

JAG and other Article 11 members condemned the attack on Bar Council and urged the public to open their views about holding discussions on pressing matters plaguing the Malaysian society. JAG also condemned the despicable act by unknown parties who threw kerosene bombs into the former home of Datuk Ambiga, president of the Bar Council. The home is now the residence of Datuk Seri Sharizat.

vi) Empower is the new Article 11 member

On the 22nd of August 2008, Article 11 welcomed a new member, Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (Empower) represented by Honey Tan and Maria Chin Abdullah. Empower is also a member of JAG and is secretariat of the CGG Coalition.

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)
- Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (Empower)
- Sisters In Islam (SIS)
- Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
- Vivekananda Youth Movement, Seremban
- Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)

5.3.4 Coalition of Good Governance (CGG)

In 2008, WAO joined a new coalition called the Coalition of Good Governance (CGG). The Coalition for Good Governance was "born" on 10 Mar 08, in response to the 12th General Elections results. About 50 non-governmental organisations came together to play an advocacy and monitoring role to the new Selangor State Government. Empower is the Secretariat and Chair of the coalition.

The CGG had an inaugural meeting with the Mentri Besar together with State Executive Committee members. A memorandum was submitted to the Mentri Besar on the criteria of appointing local councilors, with a demand for Local Council Elections by 2010. Some of the other demands also included institutionalizing meetings with NGOs; setting up of an Ombudsmen Office; passing a Freedom of Information Act in the State Assembly; and setting up various taskforces on Indigenous People; Urban Poor and Housing Needs; Youth; Gender Equality etc. The first meeting established biannual meetings with the Mentri Besar, and support from the Selangor State Government for victims of human rights violation.

CGG's principle is to collectively promote the principles of universal human rights, democratic rule, non-discrimination, transparency, accountability, sustainable development and people's participation.

CGG focuses on the following issues:

- Campaigning and lobbying for the restoration of local council government elections
- Institutionalizing mechanisms of civil society organisations engagement with state and federal governments

- Promoting transparency and accountability, including through the institutionalisation of an ombudsman office of good governance
- Protecting and promoting human rights, in particular freedom of information and support for victims of human rights violation

Apart from the above CGG also plans to liaise with the government and civil society organisations on issues such as housing and land rights for urban and indigenous people, worker's rights, health rights, social and cultural rights etc.

i) WAO's involvement with CGG

CGG consists of steering committees which comprises representatives from civil society organisations that function as Focal Points Organisation (FPO) for the Taskforces. One FPO will coordinate with each Taskforce and only civil society organizations can act as FPOs, not networks and coalitions.

WAO acts as the FPO for Faith and Culture. Below is the list of FPOs in CGG:

Each taskforce of CGG is led by a Focal Point Organisation (FPO):

- i. Local Government - EMPOWER
- ii. Freedom of Information Act - Centre of Independent Journalism
- iii. Ombudsmen Office - SUARAM
- iv. Urban Poor - PERMAS
- v. Indigenous People - KOMAS
- vi. Environment and Sustainable Development - Friends of Kota Damansara
- vii. Youth - Youth for Change
- viii. Gender Equality - EMPOWER
- ix. Faith and Culture - Women's Aid Organisation

ii) CGG Activities

The CGG organised two dialogues with the councillors. The first dialogue was between CGG and civil society councillors from six councils. Their views and requests for capacity training were brought up during CGG's second dialogue with the Menteri Besar on the 6th of November 2008. WAO participated in the meeting along with another meeting with the personal assistant of the MB on the 17th of November 2009.

5.3.5 Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)

RRAAM comprises NGOs' and individuals who are committed to promoting women's access to reproductive rights and services. It was formed in 2007 to inform, educate and advocate on reproductive rights issues. One of its objectives is to speak out on Malaysian women's access to contraception and abortion services. The Alliance is co-chaired by Dr. S P Choong and Rashidah Abdullah.

In 2007, Shoba Aiyar presented a paper on the experiences of women from the shelter on access to contraception and abortion services at a seminar on reproductive health, rights and miscarriages: problems and solutions to medical students, medical officers and some family planning associations in Seremban. A simple survey was done to find out how much the audience knew about this issue.

In 2008, the Alliance published an Information Brief. This is a four page brochure that aims to inform, address misconceptions and advocate for action. It is being distributed to health professionals, NGOs, policy makers, the media and to women themselves.

There were three (3) seminars held in the Klang Valley for NGOs and Family Planning Associations. Many participants gave feedback that the seminars were very informative, especially on the legality of abortion.

5.4 The Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a new and unique mechanism of the United Nations which consists of the review the fulfilment of each of the 192 UN member states on their human rights obligations and commitments every four years.

Malaysia was scheduled for review by the Human Rights Council (HRC) in February 2009 whereby our country's human rights record was reviewed through a process called the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This was a crucial opportunity for Malaysian NGOs to provide an alternative voice by submitting stakeholder reports that contain on-the-ground analysis of human rights issues in Malaysia, as NGOs are allowed to make their own submissions and recommendations to highlight issues of concern.

WAO joined the Coalition of Malaysian NGOs (COMANGO) to be part of the UPR process. COMANGO made up of 56 NGOs. Besides the COMANGO report, the Bar Council, Amnesty International (AI), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its Malaysian member organisation SUARAM, and the Migration Working Group (MWG) were among the NGOs which submitted their respective stakeholder reports on 8 September 2008 to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

A press conference was held to launch the Stakeholder Reports and share the contents. Representatives who were present at the press conference were:

- a) Honey Tan, Jerald Joseph and John Liu from COMANGO
- b) Nora Murat from Amnesty International
- c) Andrew Khoo from the Bar Council
- d) Alice Nah from Migration Working Group
- e) Cynthia Gabriel from FIDH
- f) Ivy Josiah (WAO)

The COMANGO 10-page report stated that after 51 years of independence, human rights in Malaysia remains a big concern. The report raised concerns on the politicizing of race and

religion, racial discrimination, violations of freedom of religion, denial of sexual rights and more sophisticated methods being used to stop freedom of assembly.

We also expressed concern over the privatization of the healthcare system, the rising violence and abuse against women and children and detention without trial.

Furthermore, the COMANGO report called for a number of Acts to be reviewed or repealed including the Internal Security Act, the Official Secrets Act and the Printing Presses and Publications Act.

The full COMANGO Report is available at www.empowermalaysia.org or www.suaram.net and www.wao.org.my.

5.5 Work with the MWFC

i) Revision of the National Service curriculum to include gender and sex education

As soon as Dato Dr. Ng Yen Yen took office in March 2008, she called for meeting with the Ministry of Defence which presented their curriculum for national service participants. As expected there was no reference to women's rights and sex education. The National Family Planning Board which falls under the MWFC formed a committee to develop a new training module of 10 hours on gender equality, reproductive rights and community responsibility. A TOT master trainers' workshop was held for National Service trainers from 18 - 21 November 2008 at Port Dickson. WAO was represented by Nazlina Abdul Ghani, Wong Su Zane and Ivy Josiah.

ii) National Taskforce to investigate sexual abuse of Penan girls and women

On October 6, The Star reported on the alleged rape, sexual abuse and exploitation of Penan girls and women by the staff of logging companies. Sarawak police were dismissive, insisting a report be lodged before an investigation commences. In an immediate response 33 NGOs released a joint press statement urging investigation by Bukit Aman and to set up a National Taskforce to investigate allegations.

On October 8, Minister of the MWFC, Dato Dr. Ng. Yen Yen announced the setting up a National Taskforce of which both WAO and Women's Centre for Change Penang were included as members. Prema Devaraj represented WCC Penang and Ivy Josiah from WAO set out with the taskforce into the Baram area of Sarawak and visited remote Penan villages to interview the community. The Taskforce Report, findings and recommendations have been finalised and is now in the hands of the cabinet for further action.

5.6 Regional Networks

WAO is involved in two (2) regional organisations namely ***International Women's Rights Action Watch - Asia Pacific (IWRAP AP) and the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)***

IWRAW Asia Pacific is a non-profit international women's organisation based in the South promoting the domestic implementation of international human rights standards by building the capacity of women and human rights advocates to claim and realize women's human rights. IWRAW has conducted trainings on CEDAW for WAO since 1995.

In October 2008, Ivy Josiah participated in IWRAW's *Southeast Asia Meeting on the Application of CEDAW Framework to Address Impunity in the Context of Violence against Women*, held in Kuala Lumpur.

APWLD's main objective is to enable women in the region to use law as an instrument of change for the empowerment of women in their struggle for justice, peace, equality and development. APWLD has several taskforces of which Meera Samanther represents WAO on the Taskforce on VAW. Meera has attended the annual consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous People in New Delhi, India from 13 October - 18 October 2008.

6.0 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 and the internet. In 2008, WAO received higher publicity via electronic, print media and the radio. We also managed to produce three (3) publications. We even created a FaceBook account for WAO.

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

6.1 Talks and Training Sessions

In total we gave 17 talks and attended 36 trainings / conference / seminar. Most of the social workers, programme officers, Executive Director, and the President were involved in this aspect of our work.

WAO conducted 5 in-house trainings, 3 were conducted by staff and 2 were conducted by Shanthi Dairiam.

TALKS CONDUCTED BY WAO IN 2008

No.	Title of Talks Conducted	Organised By	Talk / Speech By
1	" Domestic Violence"	Exxon Mobil	Thillai Mohanadas
2	" Domestic Violence"	WAO volunteers	Siti Salina
3	"The Role of NGOs in Combating Trafficking in Persons"	Tenaganita	Ivy Josiah
4	"Victims' Rights Under the Malaysian Legal System : Is the Existing Law Adequate?"	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (Law Faculty)	Nazlina Abd Ghani
5	"Women's Rights"	AIIESEC University Malaya (UM)	Ivy Josiah
6	"Membantu Mangsa Keganasan Rumahtangga"	University Putra Malaysia (UPM)	Nazlina Abd Ghani
7	Women's Day : The Challenges of Women	Help International College of Technology	Ivy Josiah

		(HICT)	
8	"Violence Against Women & Domestic Violence" at Exxon Mobil	Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation (MCPF)	Thillai Mohanadas
9	"Pencegahan dan Kecederaan" for Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Selangor at Puteri Resort Ayer Keroh. Melaka		Siti Salina Nazlina Abd Ghani
10	"WAO & Domestic Violence"	APEX Club	Meera Samanther
11	"Freedom of Religion, Custody, and Maintenance"		Meera Samanther
12	"Sexual Crime"	Serdang Hospital	Nazlina Abd Ghani
13	"Gender Equality and Women's Right Within Islamic Perspective"	Kelab UMNO Manchester	Ivy Josiah
14	"Advocacy"	WAO volunteers	Kerina Francis
15	"Domestic Violence"	FELDA	Nazlina Abd Ghani
16	"Hak Hak Wanita"	PUSPANITA	Nazlina Abd Ghani
17	"CEDAW"	Women's Institute of Management (WIM)	Ivy Josiah

6.2 Television, Radio, Press

In 2008, we were featured on both local and international radio on various issues ranging from issues on violence against women to current issues affecting women.

Compared to 2007, where WAO was on radio twice, in 2008, we were on radio twenty-four times.

BREAKDOWN OF RADIO SESSIONS IN 2008

No.	Radio Stations	Sessions
1	Germany Wide National Radio	1

2	Klasik National FM	1
3	Asyik FM	21
4	Business FM	1
Total		24

Asyik FM, a radio station dedicated for the Aborigines (*Orang Asli*) by Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) collaborated with WAO to conduct a radio series on a weekly basis for seven months (may – November 2008). Topics discussed covered many issues from violence against women, women’s rights to the WAO-Body Shop Stop Violence Campaign for Hari Wanita.

TOPICS ON ASYIK.FM

No.	Topics
1	Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)
2	<i>Keganasan Rumah Tangga</i> (Domestic Violence) - 3 parts
3	<i>Hak-hak isteri</i> (Rights of a Wife)
4	<i>Nafkah</i> (Maintenance)
5	<i>Surat Beranak</i> (Birth Certificate)
6	<i>Gangguan Seksual</i> (Sexual Harassment) - 3 parts
7	<i>Rogol</i> (Rape)
8	<i>Sumbang Mahram</i> (Incest)
9	<i>Perkahwinan Di Usia Muda</i> (Marriage at a Young Age)
10	<i>Penyalahgunaan Dadah</i> (Drug Abuse)
11	<i>Kempen Hentikan Keganasan Terhadap Wanita sempena Hari Wanita di Malaysia oleh WAO & The Body Shop</i> (Stop Violence Against Women Campaign by WAO & The Body Shop in conjunction with Women's Day in Malaysia)

12	<i>Perkahwinan Bangsa Asing</i> (Rights as a Foreign Spouse)
13	<i>Harta Pusaka & Wasiat</i> (Wills, Probate and Administration)
14	<i>Ibu Tunggal</i> (Single Mothers)

WAO was on television 16 times and were widely featured in six magazines and in the newspapers both local and international.

6.2.1 A Radio Public Service Message (PSM)

Surprisingly, Light FM created a PSM on domestic violence without our knowledge and cited our and phone number, the public was quite taken up with this PSM which is quite powerful and The STAR ran a story on this. You can listen to the PSM on our website.

6.3 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence 25 November – 10 December

Each year, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is organized all over the world from November 25, **International Day Against Violence Against Women** to December 10, **International Human Rights Day** to raise people's awareness on all forms of violence against women.

In Malaysia, WAO began to organize public education campaigns throughout the 16 days, since 1998. In 2006, WAO lead 16 days of activism, starting with the launch of posters on the domestic violence for all police stations, and for the following 15 days WAO in collaboration with the Malaysian Aids Council (MAC), Sisters In Islam (SIS) and Amnesty International (AI) worked with Radio and TV stations to raise awareness on VAW- 25 shows in all.

The campaign grew with more partners when Amnesty International Malaysia (AI), Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) and Sisters in Islam (SIS) joined WAO in 2004. In 2008, we welcome another 2 new partners, All Women's Action Society (AWAM) and Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER) but was not joined by Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC).

6.3.1 Facebook Online Activism

The theme for 2008 "**Defending Women; Defending Rights**" conveyed a message to all that defending human rights is not complete without defending women's rights.

WAO collaborated with Amnesty International (AI), Sisters in Islam (SIS), All Women Action Society (AWAM) and Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER), to experiment with online activism by setting up a group, on the world's most popular social networking website, Facebook called WAO - 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in Malaysia. This group was set up on 25 November 2008 and has 980 members till date. Spaecial mention to our intern Stephanie Chuah who worked with Arc World Wide to set up the FB page.



By becoming a member of this Facebook group, members of public participated and were involved in the fight against violence against women through online activities, where they were encouraged to join the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Facebook group - **“WAO - 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in Malaysia”**. Loggers were asked to:

- a. Put up our specially designed logo as their Facebook profile photo.
- b. View all the videos and information by various NGOs on the issues affecting women.
- c. Be informed on all the ground activities held all over Malaysia by visiting our Facebook group everyday throughout the 16 days.
- d. Join our T-Shirt designing activity.
- e. Print the theme on a piece of paper, or draw it on a piece of banner or paint it on the wall! Capture and upload the photo on this group to show support.

6.4 PRESS COVERAGE IN 2008

No.	Title of Article	Date of Article	Name of Media
1	Tambah suara wanita sebagai pembuat dasar	1-Jan-08	Berita Harian
2	Looking forward to a better year	1-Jan-08	Malay Mail
3	At least allow them to work	6-Feb-08	News Straits Times
4	Equal terms	6-Mar-08	The Star (Election2008)
5	Kids get a taste of college life	29-Mar-08	The Star (Metro)
6	Yen Yen to push for women's issues	8-May-08	The Star (Nation)
7	Lunch and free haircut for 11 mothers	14-May-08	News Straits Times
8	RM10,000 love gift for women	26-May-08	News Straits Times
9	Deraan keluarga	29-May-08	Harian Metro

10	Ivy Josiah - A fierce defender of women	3-Jun-08	News Straits Times
11	RM100,000 for WAO	6-Jun-08	New Straits Times
12	Single mums also feted at event	7-Jun-08	The Star (Metro)
13	Thai treat for 30 single mothers	10-Jun-08	News Straits Times
14	Artistes and super bikers aid WAO	30-Jun-08	The Star (Metro)
15	Ng won't say yes or no	21-Aug-08	News Straits Times
16	Small country, big dreams	30-Aug-08	The Star (LifeStyle)
17	NGOs submit report to UN on human rights here	8-Sep-08	The Star (Nation)
18	Group: Human rights better now	9-Sep-08	The Star (Nation)
19	Penan rape, sexual abuse: 'Bkt Aman should investigate'	8-Oct-08	The Star (Nation)
20	Task force on Penan sex claims	8-Oct-08	News Straits Times
21	'Have native women on panel'	9-Oct-08	News Straits Times
22	Penan task force to have indigenous rep	10-Oct-08	The Star (Nation)
23	NGOs cite non-action by Sarawak cops	10-Oct-08	The Star (Nation)
24	Usah campur hak umat Islam: Jakim	10-Nov-08	Berita Harian
25	Jangan buat umat Islam marah	11-Nov-08	Harian Metro
26	'Usah cakap semberono'	11-Nov-08	Harian Metro
27	Ingkari fatwa isu haram pengkid boleh jejas akidah	13-Nov-08	Berita Harian
28	Cooking up love with women's group	15-Nov-08	News Straits Times
29	Financial crunch hits NGOs	16-Nov-08	New Sunday Times
30	STRESSED OUT: Wrong priorities harming children	17-Nov-08	News Straits Times

31	Restaurant joins charity act	18-Nov-08	News Straits Times
32	Speak up against abuse	27-Nov-08	The Star (LifeStyle)
33	Appeal for aid	27-Nov-08	The Star (LifeStyle)
34	Forms of violence	27-Nov-08	The Star (LifeStyle)
35	Jualan amal La Senza bantu Pertubuhan Pertolongan Wanita	11-Dec-08	Berita Harian
36	Bear-ing glad tidings for abused women	12-Dec-08	News Straits Times

6.6 PUBLICATIONS

6.6.1 Choose to be Safe in Bahasa and English

A Self help booklet on the sexual and reproductive rights i.e. family planning of options with diagrams was written and published in English and Bahasa by mid 2008. Funded by the Embassy of Finland, the project began in late 2006 with the writer (Rozana Isa) discussing with the women at the WAO Refuge to assess the needs, knowledge and expectations of the women in the area of reproductive health. The writer gained valuable information on how domestic violence limits a wife's choices in choosing a family planning method or even refusing sex. With this input we came out with the title "Choose to be Safe" and cartoons on :

- Own your Body
- Love your Body
- Enjoy your Body

The women were also shown the first draft of the booklet to get back feedback so that we were at all times focused on ensuring that the booklet "spoke" to our target groups.

The printed booklets have since been given to women at the Refuge, (the Bahasa version is popular) and the feedback has been positive, as the diagrams were easy to understand. The booklets are also used to teach woman about family palnning methods

6.6.2 Realising Equality for Women: Malaysia's Obligations under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Funded by UNDP and the Canadian High Commission, we researched, wrote and designed a brochure on CEDAW which outlined the principles, the Malaysian governments' obligations and the role of NGOS. This brochure will be used for training and public education.

6.6.3 The annual WAO- Body shop Brochure on VAW

This year we made sure we had a Bahasa version of this popular brochure and a new section on "How to be a friend to DV survivors".

7.0 WAO WEBSITE (www.wao.org.my)

This is the 9th year of WAO's website in operation. Types of information uploaded into the website includes press statements, memorandums, letters to the editor, 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.

Just like in 2007, the website was 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.

7.1 Sections within the website

Two new sections were added to the website:

1. WAO Publications
2. Donate Now – online form

Other sections include:

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

7.2 Updates

There were approximately 28 updates in 2008, with updates occurring almost every other month. The traffic to WAO's site continues to show a steady increase in visitors and hits (see below).

Since 2008, several publications, which have been made available online under the WAO Publications section, include:

1. Annual Reports
2. Annual Statistics
3. 25th Anniversary publication
4. Self Help booklet (English and BM version)
5. Choose to be Safe (BM)
6. Quarterly Newsletter
7. Organisational Brochure (English and BM version)
8. Service Brochure (English, BM, Chinese and Tamil version)
9. Why Reform the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994?

7.3 Articles Posted

Articles posted on the website in 2008

POSTED 2008	ITEM
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21-Dec--2008	<u>Come Play with Clay-Charity Drive</u>
29-Nov--2008	<u>Joint Press Statement: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence</u>
25-Nov--2008	<u>16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence</u>
25-Nov--2008	<u>International Day Against Violence Against Women (VAW)</u>
16-Nov--2008	<u>La Gourmet Buffet Dinner</u>
16-Nov--2008	<u>Year End Jumble Sale</u>
17-Oct--2008	<u>Rockwills "Will for Charity" Campaign</u>
24-Sept-- 2008	<u>Universal Periodic Review (UPR): MWG Report</u>
24-Sept-- 2008	<u>"Education Fund for Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) Anak Angkat Programme"</u>
19-Sept-- 2008	<u>Project GOSSIP: I've Something to Tell You...</u>
8-Sept--2008	<u>Mapping areas of human rights concerns in Malaysia: COMANGO launches its report</u>
8-Sept--2008	<u>Universal Periodic Review (UPR): NGOs Launch Stakeholder Reports to the Human Rights Council</u>
20-Aug--2008	<u>Stop Violence in the Home Campaign</u>
11-Aug--2008	<u>Freedom of Belief Video by Article 11 Coalition</u>
11-Aug--2008	<u>Malaysians Should Have Democratic and Open Spaces for Discussion</u>
6-Aug--2008	<u>Memorandum on the Government Crackdown on Irregular Migrants in Sabah</u>
4-July--2008	<u>Joint Press Statement: Reject Calls For The Use Of The Armed Forces In The Preservation Of Public Order</u>
13-May-2008	<u>Uphold Freedom of Religion for All Malaysians</u>
10-May-2008	<u>Open letter to the government of Malaysia on the humanitarian crisis in</u>

	<u>Burma</u>
06-May-2008	<u>Letter from a refugee woman living in Malaysia</u>
26-April-2008	<u>Press Release: The Right to Redress for All Non-Citizens</u>
1-April-2008	<u>Joint Statement: Safeguard Rights of Women and Children Upon Conversion of Husbands to Islam</u>
1-April-2008	<u>"Erase the Violence" Eraser Campaign</u>
3-March-2008	<u>PM Announces New Cabinet</u>
3-March-2008	<u>Publication - JAG's brochure on Sexist MPs</u>
2-March-2008	<u>Joint Statement - JAG accelerates campaign against Sexist MPs</u>
5-Feb-2008	<u>Letter - Hard for migrant workers to seek redress</u>
26-Jan-2008	<u>FAQs: Status, Hak Dan Tanggungjawab: Apa Yang Berlaku Apabila Pasangan Memeluk Islam</u>

7.4 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. 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. In 2008, WAO's website received 1.5 million hits, exceeding the number of hits in 2007 by 500,000 hits.

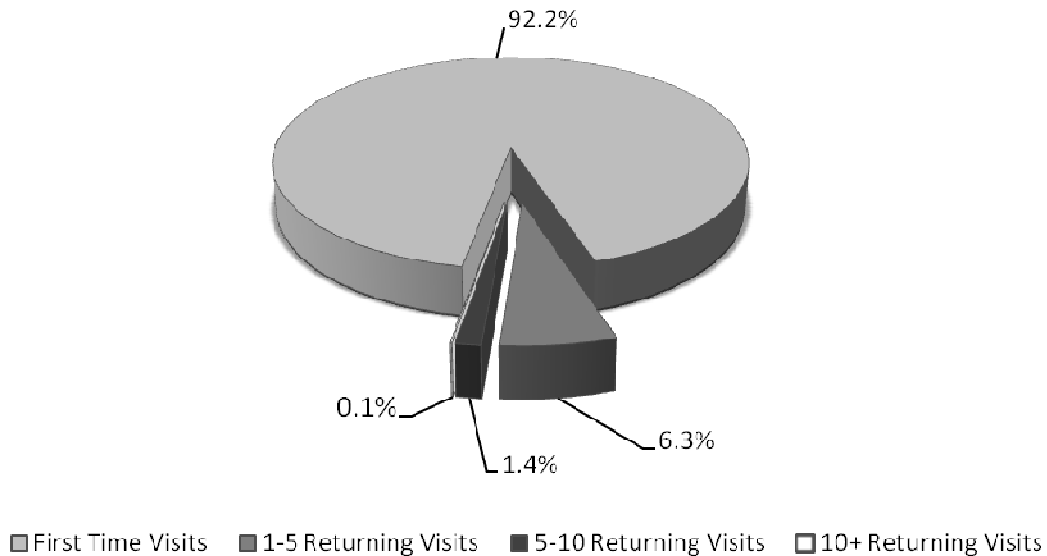
The total number of visits recorded in 2008 shows an increase of 30% from the previous year.

Please refer to the table below for breakdown of the traffic.

7.4.1 Number of Visitors and Visit

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Hits
Jan 2008	9412	14669	134755
Feb 2008	9221	12323	111790
Mar 2008	13156	15440	136953
Apr 2008	10022	19113	138724
May 2008	9847	19240	137115
Jun 2008	9653	17394	126656
Jul 2008	9717	15059	131067
Aug 2008	8949	13551	127668
Sep 2008	9703	13512	125883
Oct 2008	11008	13670	130686
Nov 2008	12609	13662	134096
Dec 2008	10541	12622	112538
Total	123838	196011	1547931
Total in 2007	111969	150640	1019573

Returning Visits



7.4.2 Geographical Location of Visitors

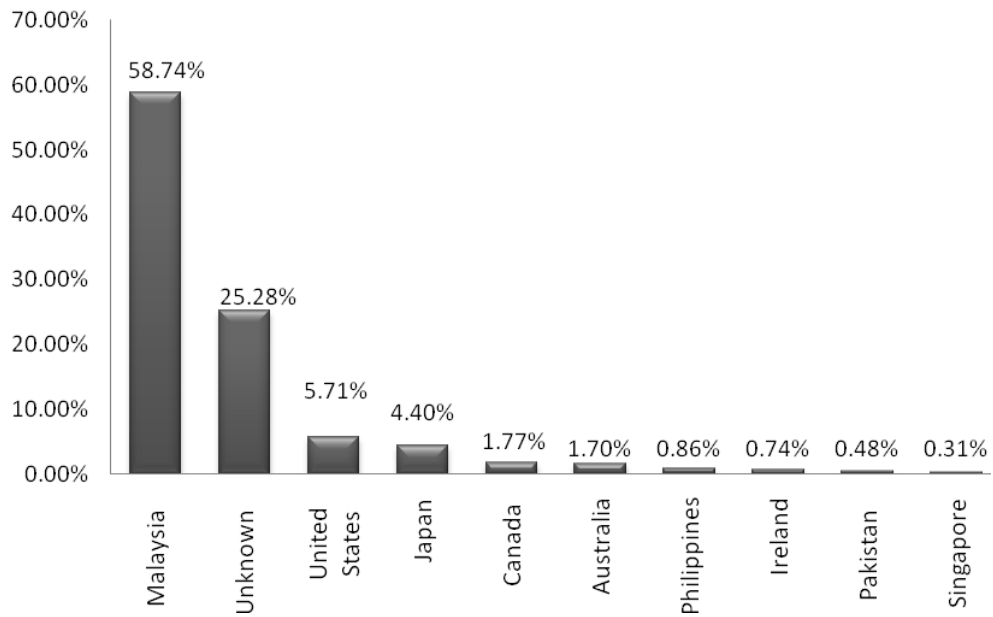
The majority of visitors to the website were from the United States, Japan and Malaysia, unlike 2007, where Australia was one of the top three countries. This is tracked through the IP address of the visitors who come to the site. IP address is the address that is assigned to each computer that is on 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	78347
Unknown	33723
United States	5863

Japan	7622
Canada	2357
Australia	2274
Philippines	1145
Ireland	981
Pakistan	644
Singapore	417

Percentage by Country



7.4.3 Reviewers & Referrers

46.07% of visitors to the website either type in the address directly, or have the website bookmarked. 53.84% of visitors are directed from search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN, while around 0.09% of visitors visit WAO's website through links from newsgroups.

Currently, there are 3,492 different webpages or URLs that link to WAO's website, including local NGOs, newspapers, UNIFEM, blogs and wikipedia. In 2007, there were only 2,815 different webpages linked to WAO website.

8.0 FUNDRAISING

2008 has been a trying year for the organisation as there was a mismatch between revenue and expenditure: a) the prices of all goods and commodities have risen b) donations have been slower in coming in, and the amounts are steadily dropping. We require RM900, 000 annually to make ends meet. By October 2008 we only managed to obtain only RM 500,000. Hence our kitty was fast getting dry. At RM 75, 000 per month if we needed to take drastic actions or we may cease to exist in six (6) months time.

With only RM500, 000 left, the EXCO had to make the tough decision to cut 10% of staff salaries and stop hiring to fill up vacancies, thus bringing down the monthly expenses. Then we embarked on an aggressive fundraising campaign.

Among our concerted efforts were:

- ✓ SMS alert to friends on dwindling funds.
- ✓ A personal appeal by Meera Samanther, President to prospective donors.
- ✓ Urgent appeals to foundations and corporations who used to fund WAO.
- ✓ Organising fundraising events (dinners, jumble sale etc).
- ✓ Wide media coverage WAO's funding needs.
- ✓ A special announcement on the WAO website.

Our efforts did pay off as we managed to reach RM 1 million by end December 2008. We aim to raise enough funds so that we can feel relatively safe giving us a buffer of least 12 to 15 months.

While we were assured that WAO has a good reputation, good friends and dedicated volunteers and staff we need to continuously and strenuously raise funds.

9.0 SPECIAL EVENTS: PUBLIC EDUCATION CUM FUNDRAISING

9.1 Education Fund for Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) Anak Angkat Programme

Love-Box Condoms was brought to us by Chastal Marketing Pte Ltd, the sole distributor to Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore. Besides Love-box condoms, they also manage brands such as IMPACT Sugar Free Mints and HIGHLAND STORM (Lozenges from Germany).

In conjunction with the International Women's Day in March 2008, they pledged to donate RM1.00 with every purchase of their Love- Box condoms which was put up at 50 Watson and 30 My News stores. The promotion was a success and Chastal Marketing managed to raise RM10,00.00. With the success of this campaign, Chastal Marketing decided to continue their on-going efforts of raising funds for the WAO Anak Angkat programme through the *"Education fund for WAO Anak Angkat Children" campaign.*

Chastal Marketing distributed the love-box condoms in 1,000 Independent Pharmacies throughout Malaysia from 1st October 2008 to 31st December 2008. With every purchase of these condoms in any of the independent pharmacies, RM0.50 was donated to the Education Fund. Chastal Marketing was targeting at raising RM20, 000 from this promotion.

WAO is happy that Chastal Marketing is continuing their efforts in raising funds for this programme. WAO would like to take this opportunity to thank by Chastal Marketing and the independent pharmacies for their unwavering support to WAO.

9.2 Coin Jar Project - Small Change for Better Change

The coin jar project was introduced as a small scale on going fundraising effort. These jars which were hand painted by the volunteers, interns and residents of the Refuge were distributed to volunteers and members. People were encouraged to put their loose change into the jars held by them for a period of 6 months. In 2008 we collected RM1, 573.00 from 22 coin jars.

9.3 Red Lily

In an effort to contribute to society, One Red Lily started supporting us in 2007 through the sale of their floral arrangements as well as hampers sold at their outlet on a monthly basis. For every order, One Red Lily pledged RM1.00 to WAO. The donations were very encouraging from this project. We take this opportunity to thank Grace Lim and her colleagues for their untiring support.

9.4 Jumble Sale / Garden Sale

Over the years, WAO jumble sales organised at flea markets have been rather successful. It began in 2005 and has been going on since. Besides being an activity for volunteers, the jumble sales were also a hit with repeat patrons who looked forward to us being there. Last

year we had 4 jumble sales in the year and managed to raise RM 5,465 in total. Having realised the popularity of these jumble sales, WAO has decided to turn it into a long term sustainable income earner by looking at starting our own thrift shop. The idea is still in its infancy but we hope to get it going by this year.

9.5 THE BODY SHOP – “STOP VIOLENCE IN THE HOME” CAMPAIGN

(Break the silence on Domestic Violence Campaign – Talk to Friend)

WAO’s public education programme has been strengthened by The Body Shop’s corporate social responsibility year after year. We began to collaborate with The Body Shop since 1996 and for the last ten years the Body Shop has sponsored the publication of WAO’s Stop Violence against Women brochure in English and Bahasa Malaysia.

This year, the brochure carries more information on domestic violence in line with the campaign focus on friendship and the importance of communication; so that people can be educated and made more aware to look out for tell tale signs of friends who may be suffering abuse at the hands of their intimate partners. This popular brochure is useful and informative for anyone wanting to know more about domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment; and where to go for help. At WAO, our social workers will testify that women call our telephone counselling line after they had picked this brochure.

Every year, The Body Shop® also raises funds for WAO by allocating one special edition product for sale. This year, those who want to show their support can purchase the special edition ‘For Me, For You’ Shea Lip Care Duo (RM38) from The Body Shop®, of which RM28 from every product sold is contributed to WAO. Over the years, The Body Shop has donated over RM 190, 000 to WAO’s operational costs. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank WAO member Ms. Grace Lim from One Red Lily for their kind sponsorship of the lilies for this event.

WAO is thankful to The Body Shop®, our longstanding partner for their contribution and commitment to the issue. Our heartfelt thanks to YB Dato’ Dr. Ng Yen Yen for taking the time despite her very busy schedule to join us to launch this event.

9.6 ROCKWILLS “Will for Charity” campaign

Rockwills Corporation, which pioneered professional Will writing in Malaysia, has for the past 13 years focused on building awareness of the importance of Wills. They have achieved success in getting more than 80,000 to write their Wills over the years. Even with these achievements, it has only reached a fraction of the population considering that as high as 90 per cent of population eligible to write their Wills have not done so.

Rockwills embarked on a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative by blending its business with community services. Having identified the Will as an instrument that can be used for a charitable cause, Rockwills approached WAO with the intention of nominating WAO as one of the beneficiaries in their “Rockwills Will for Charity campaign”.

9.7 Come Play with Clay-Charity Drive 21 December

When the SOS for funds went out late last year, we were fortunate to have friends and supporters from the public who came forward to lend a helping hand. One such person was Eva San, a volunteer and ex-intern of WAO. She came up with the idea of a clay art charity drive and roped in her friends to help. WAO would like to put in record our thanks to Eva and her friends for this lovely gesture.

9.8 La Gourmet – WAO Dinner, 5 December 2008

Our relationship with La Gourmet began in 2007 when they decided to help by placing the WAO donation boxes at the restaurant to collect proceeds which were directed towards the maintenance and upkeep of the WAO Refuge and Child Care Centre.

It is therefore, no surprise that La Gourmet House has once again come to assist WAO by organizing a fundraising buffet dinner on **5th December 2008**, offering guests live music and songs, scrumptious food and to end the evening on a high, a live salsa performance! Invitations were at a donation of RM200.00.

The fundraising dinner was a tremendous success and we managed to raise RM31,000 in one night. WAO would like to record our thanks to Mr. Anthony Valenzuela for sponsoring the food and venue for the dinner. Our thanks also go out to Ms. Leann Loh who came on board to help us voluntarily and gave three (3) of her paintings for auction on that night and Zamil Idris from Malaysian Idol who entertained the diners.

Pledges

This year we stepped up the appeal to friends of WAO to make a pledge toward WAO for period of 3 years. With the help of Vivienne Lee Iskandar, we managed to get three (3) pledges amounting to RM 16,000 pledged for years 2008 to 2010.

