

WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2001

Prepared by Ivy Josiah, Executive Director on behalf
of the Hon. Secretary, WAO Executive Committee
2001/2002

1. THE FOLLOWING WERE ELECTED AT THE 18TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2001 AT 9.30 A.M. BILIK RUKUN, RUMAH UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY MALAYA, PETALING JAYA

President:	Meera Samanther
Vice - President:	Shanti Dairiam
Secretary:	Asha Dhillon (resigned August 2001
Assistant Secretary:	Sharon Hariharan
Treasurer:	Yeow Ai Lin
Assistant Treasurer:	Carol Chin
Committee members:	Fawzia Hanoum Ariff
Co opted members:	Nathalie Plante

The EXCO conducted 7 committee meetings in 2001

1.1 WAO COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Staff Committee	Meera Samanther Asha Dhillon (resigned August 2001) Yeow Ai Lin Ivy Josiah
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House Group	Nathalie Plante Meera Samanther Fawzia Hanoum Ariff WAO staff
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DV /JAG committee:	WAO Social Workers Lee Shook Fong Wathshlah G. Naidu Jaclyn Kee Meera Samanther Ivy Josiah
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CEDAW Core Committee:	Noraida Endut (WCC, Penang) Nik Noriani (SIS) Rozana Isa Wathshlah G. Naidu Ivy Josiah Shanti Dairiam (IWRAW, AP)
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Anak Angkat Coordinator	Jessie Ang
Volunteer Coordinator:	Jaclyn Kee

2. PATRON

WAO did not have a patron in the year 2001

3. TRUSTEES

The trustees are as follows:

Toh Puan Datin Dr. Aishah Ong
 Rashidah Abdullah
 Noor Farida Ariffin
 Puan Sri Chong Eu Ngoh

4. MEMBERSHIP

In 2001 WAO had 79 listed members and approximately 25 active volunteers.

5. STAFF

Refuge

Subbalakshmi Aiyar	Social Worker
Normah Mohd Nor	Night Social Worker
Jessie Ang	Social Worker
Nazlina Abd. Ghani	Social Worker
Enizahura Abdul Aziz	Social Worker

Child Care Centre (CCC)

Vijayaledchumy Ramanathan	Senior Social worker
Mary Selina Santhanasamy	Social Worker
Engammah Anumiah(Vijaya)	Child Minder
Mary Fatima Vasupillay	Night Supervisor
Rajalakshimi Rajaratnam	Child Social Worker (resigned 23 September 2001)

Executive staff

Annie Varghese	Administrator
Rozana Isa	Project Manager
Hasimah Sanusi	Accounts Executive (resigned November 30 2001)
Ivy N. Josiah	Executive Director

Project Contract Staff

Lee Shook Fong	Legal Reform Officer
Wathshlah G. Naidu	Legal Reform Officer (wef February 01)
Jaclyn Kee	Communications Officer (wef 1 March 01)

6.0 WAO SERVICES

Refuge	115 women and 111 children
Face to Face Counselling	95 women
Telephone Counselling	1,071 calls
Child Care Centre	18 children

6.1 HOUSE GROUP Report by Nathalie Plante

The House Group is made of volunteers and staff. It is a forum where staff members can discuss their cases and get support and input from the volunteers. Problematic situations as well as day-to-day issues at the Shelter and Child Care Centre are raised and discussed in a sharing and constructive way. In 2001, the monthly House Group meetings were combined with the regular staff meetings. The lack of volunteers in the House Group and the duplication of information the social workers were sharing in both these meetings motivated that decision. But this in turn has moved the objective of the House Group from supporting the residents in their evolution and initiatives towards supporting the social workers in their efforts to support the residents.

The House Group met 6 times in 2001. We hope that a new wave of volunteers will come and join our meetings. We could then re-evaluate the role of the House Group and define new objectives that are more up-to-date with the needs of the women coming to us for help and the needs of the organisation.

6.2 REFUGE Report by Shoba Aiyar

2001 has been a very demanding year for the social workers, as we did our level best at helping our clients deal with their the main problems. These are the fear, anxiousness and anger of the various abuses inflicted on them and the ancillary ones like finance, child care and housing.

Our case load at the Refuge increased to 115 cases compared to 105 in the previous year together with an increase in phone calls after various public education programmes. Out of the 115, 71 women sought shelter because of domestic violence.

The 4 social workers were fortunate to get help from our two law reform officers who untiringly informed us of the various legal remedies and procedures and empowered each one of the women and us when it did not look so hopeful. By holding our social workers' meetings weekly, we were able to express our feelings, doubts, perceptions or reservations of a client and by collectively brain storming, we were able to case "manage" more professionally. Our work involved ascertaining relevant details, conduct counselling sessions and give out relevant information on resources to enable a woman to make her choices and bravely move along.

The domestic violence patterns have not varied much - perpetrators abused the women in various ways that were both physically and psychologically degrading. At times, the residents felt so ashamed that they did not want to reveal the details. After making a decision to leave the abusive situation, many women realised that they are not alone when they come to the shelter. They had for the first time, been able to share their ordeal and have people believe and understand them without prejudice. Best of all, they shared their experiences and supported each other, often dispensing words of advice like, 'don't make the same mistake I did' or 'you are still young, you can do it without his support'. This resident-to-resident support in some ways makes our jobs easier. While some residents left the shelter to stay independently there were others who did return to their husbands or partners either due financial constraints or lack of family support.

Group work sessions were conducted to facilitate discussion on the dynamics and issues of violence. These sessions greatly empowered the women to fight for what was just and not merely succumb to the abuse of power. Most were supportive of WAO's work and wanted to help in our advocacy work by giving testimony of their abusive relationship or to highlight at the lack of resources there are in the community to help them with their problems. Residents gave many interviews on radio, television and to the print media.

Group work also involved 'feeling' exercises to bring out previous experiences when they were angry, sad, afraid, brave, happy and disappointed. Sessions were held to develop their hopes and aspirations helping them to look forward to a tangible goal. Through these sessions, we were able to identify the needs of the women and tailor make programmes, events and issues that needed to be addressed. For example, many of the women wanted to learn to use the computer or learn typing and thus the computer lab was formed, consisting of 3 computers and a printer, exclusively for the residents and their children. More and more women now know how to play CDs, watch a movie, write poems and stories with graphics and type formal letters using the computer. Volunteers and staff took turns to teach the women these skills.

The children who came with their mothers were another source of inspiration for the social workers to carry on the cause. There were many children who gave testimony of how they felt when the abuse took place and what they would like the situation to be. This got us thinking that we have to start public education and gender sensitizing exercises at the primary level itself. When there were sessions for the children, efforts were made to address their perceptions of domestic violence and how to resolve conflicts amongst themselves.

In the course of the social work, there were also many challenges. There have been many violations of the IPO and the police appear to be dragging their feet, slow to take action against the perpetrators. The social workers can only offer shelter protection and words of support. However, the women eventually have to return to the reality of living on their own, and constantly have to live in fear and face the prospect of reliving their abuse. Many a time, frustration is felt at the lack of protection and understanding from government agencies.

Expecting a woman to hide and live in fear is very dis-empowering and unjust especially since we have laws that are supposed to protect women.

We hope that this year the advocacy will be stronger, more committed and effective. Our domestic violence law is just, but it is still questionable how effective it is in practice. Many women who have tested the law are losing their patience and their trust in the system. At WAO, we hope to make the system work and hold it accountable.

6.3 CHILD CARE CENTRE

Report by Viji Ramanathan

Since it was set up in March 1990, WAO Child Care Centre has helped 176 children belonging to 79 mothers.

No. of children at the Centre at the beginning of 2001	5
No. of children at the Centre at the end of 2001	6

In 2001, 18 children belonging to 10 mothers used the services. There were 13 intakes during the year, belonging to 7 mothers.

Children who left the Centre in 2001

12 children left the Centre during the year.

- 7 children belonging to 4 mothers went to live with their mothers
- 3 children belonging to 2 mothers went to live in permanent children's homes
- 2 children belonging to a mother went to live with relatives.

Programmes for children

As usual, the children at the Centre were busy with school and schoolwork. There was also plenty of fun and playtime. Staff and volunteers helped children with their education and other programmes at the Centre.

There were also ample opportunities for children to discuss their feelings and thoughts individually, as well as in groups. Group discussions, activities and projects were especially popular with the children and turned out to be great ways for them to learn and play.

Then of course, there were the fun events, like swimming and trips to places of interests organised and facilitated by volunteers and staff. Children also enjoy regular picnics in the playground, or even in the garden of the Centre. Children had fun even planning and preparing the goodies for their picnics.

Six children from the Centre, together with children from two others Homes were involved in a coral reef awareness programme by Raleigh International. This programme saw the children spending ten Sundays at swimming lessons and classroom sessions where the children were introduced to coral reefs and their importance in the environment; all in preparation for the final snorkeling

experience at Pulau Redang. The children also visited the Ma'Daerah Turtle Sanctuary as part of this trip.

Mothers

The Mothers spent their off-days and holidays with their children. Sometimes mothers took the children out for family time, and usually they spent time with their children at the Centre.

There were 11 gatherings of mothers. On some occasions, children were included for part of the meetings. We noticed that the children enjoyed this, and they looked forward to these gatherings. The Mothers not only had a chance to discuss their plans, their children and raise issues but also used these meetings to air their feelings, views and opinions of their status as single women and survivors of abuse. Children who had left the Centre and their mothers continue to be in touch with the Centre. Sometimes it is just to say hello, and at other times for assistance or support.

7. ANAK ANGKAT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

Anak Angkat Programme was set up with the aim to help subsidise the educational costs (school books, bus fares, uniforms, stationary, pocket money) of the children of the ex-residents of WAO who have decided to stay on their own.

This sponsorship programme has been a tremendous help for our ex-residents who have decided to establish an independent life style as single parents to help alleviate their financial burden.

In 2001, 27 children from 19 mothers were the beneficiaries of this program by 20 sponsors.

Dr. Solai Velayudhan	Dato Sulaiman Sujak
Ms. Kathleen Chin	Ms. Lim Ling Ling
Mr. Prayoon Damrongchietanon	Mr. Tony Lau
Mr. Robert Gan	Ms. Jenny Chin
Ms Annapoorni Chandrasekharan	Mr and Mrs V. Kanesan
Mr. Bernard Solomon	Ms. Cho Foong Khuan
Mr. V. Ravindran	Ms Tracy Wong
Ms. Indra Kulasegaran	An Anonymous Donor
Dr Fatimah Yakin	
Mr. Ismail Abdul Halim	
Ms. Debbie Dennis	
Dr Tuen Kam Sim (Mission Synergy (M)	
Sdn. Bhd.)	

8. INTERNS AT WAO

WAO hosted 7 interns who were students from Malaysia, USA and Australia. Interns came to WAO to learn first hand about domestic violence and women's human rights. As

they were learning more about gender issues they assisted the staff in various projects. From handling the phones, organising children's and women programmes, researching and writing, the interns were invaluable in making our work at WAO easier and more dynamic. WAO has been fortunate to have hosted very committed young feminists who will be a force to reckon with in their own communities.

March 5 - June 15, Samantha Radford, University of Monash, Australia

March 15 - April 1, Tasya Nyam, Help Institute, Petaling Jaya, Selangor

June 4 - September 30, Chan Pei Ling, Universiti Malaya

June 18 - August 4, Tonushree Jaggi, BHUMI Program, Harvard, USA

June 28 - September 14, Asako Chihaya, University of Oregon, USA

July 2 - September 14, Kathryn Philips, University of Oregon, USA

August 2 - September 14, Pauline Ngoc Nguyen, Harvard, USA

9. RESEARCH & ADVOCACY

9.1 Monitoring The Domestic Violence Act (DVA)

WAO continued in the monitoring of the DVA, focusing more on violations of the interim protection orders, court cases and police attitude and professionalism. Research also focused on the ineffectiveness of the IPO as it was too generally worded. WAO produced a sample IPO which listed a number of prohibitions so that it becomes clear to the perpetrator that domestic violence encompasses a series of actions. Although there has not been a comprehensive report of the monitoring in 2001, we have produced the following documents:

- Flow charts of the procedures involved in obtaining an IPO.
- A proposed IPO both in English and Bahasa Malaysia.
- 30 documented cases of women faced difficulties in getting protection.
- A paper "Malaysia's Experience with the Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) Malaysia"
- Guidelines/ Protocols for the Police, Welfare and Courts

The findings from the Monitoring were presented at various forums:

1. The Law and Policy sub committee, National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women (NSCVAW) of which WAO was the co-chair. The sub-committee began its deliberations on the issue of domestic violence by studying the proposed reforms to the law and protocols under the DVA 1994. WAO was able to provide evidence for the following challenges:
 - i. lack of coordination between the agencies;
 - ii. process of implementation various between districts;

- iii. varying process of IPO application;
 - iv. inconsistent regulations within the agencies;
 - v. lack of trained personnel - gender sensitised.
2. The Implementation Committee of the DVA, Welfare Department
In 2001 , there were 2 meetings chaired by the Director of Welfare. Besides highlighting the lack of coordination between agencies, WAO was bale to persuade the Welfare Department to work with WAO to design a poster on domestic violence to be displayed at police stations and welfare departments nationwide.

This is quite an achievement as WAO has been advocating for 2 years for the need to put up posters at welfare offices and police stations to inform women that domestic violence is a crime and that they can seek help and protection.

3. Asia Pacific Regional Consultation with United Nations Special Rapporteur For Violence Against Women, Organised by Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law And Development in collaboration with Law & Society Trust, Sri Lanka 12 – 13 August 2001.

WAO was represented by Lee Shook Fong and Wathshlah G. Naidu who presented a paper on “Malaysia’s Experience with the Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) Malaysia”

9.2 Monitoring the Fulfillment of the Malaysian Government’s Obligation to Women’s Equality- A CEDAW Baseline Report on Marriage and Divorce

- i) Finalising and Improving the Baseline Report

Based on the feedback from IWRAW Asia Pacific, several areas needing further research were identified. It was decided that secondary research will have to suffice. The data in terms of statistics were updated by June 2001. The first draft of the revised baseline was submitted to IWRAW Asia Pacific in November 2001. The subsequent feedback gathered from IWRAW Asia Pacific identified the need for additional research and for the baseline report to be rewritten in a narrative format.

- ii) Monitoring and advocacy

The creation of a new ministry for women, Ministry of Women and Family Development in March 2001 has warranted a review of strategies by the Malaysian Core -Committee. The newly appointed minister and her team has had to design and organise the ministry from scratch, as there was no detailed planning for this new ministry. Thus, several attempts to hold a meeting with HAWA have been postponed because the Director General and her officers were too busy with structuring the new ministry.

Nevertheless, a meeting was held with the Ministry of Women and Family Development on 27 June 2001. It was chaired by the new KSU, Datin Faizah M. Tahir. The objective of the meeting was to introduce CEDAW and the Baseline

Report to the new ministry and its officials. The meeting was also held to identify and prioritize the recommendations outlined in the baseline report. By and large, the meeting was a success as the ministry agreed to facilitate an inter-ministerial (sectoral) meeting to introduce CEDAW to other relevant ministries and agencies so as to put into place the recommendations.

The inter-ministerial (sectoral) meeting was held on 12 November 2001 and was a great success. The government participants were given an in – depth understanding of CEDAW, its principles of non – discrimination and the obligations on government. It is fair to say that they began developing an understanding of the government’s obligation to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women upon ratification of CEDAW. Their understanding of the gender disparities faced by women because of the impact of government laws and policies surfaced during their group presentations.

The representatives from various ministries were very receptive when the “Baseline Report on Marriage and Divorce, Article 16 of CEDAW” was introduced. The format and style of the baseline report enabled the participants to understand and follow the discussions that were subsequently held. The greatest achievement would be the response from several ministries, which requested a follow-up meeting to further discuss our recommendations and strive for a workable solution to the problems. **The Ministry of Education** suggested a meeting to look at the present textbooks that were still featuring stereotypical gender roles. **The Ministry of Health** was very interested to look into the reproductive rights of women in this country. The representative from the **Attorney General’s Chambers** is willing to provide any information required in the future. The other participants were equally forthcoming in their willingness to forge a working relationship with us.

While WAO will continue to work with the new ministry it has also identified other policy bodies that will have influence and impact on promoting equality. Two key bodies are :

- i) National Advisory Council on Integrating Women in Development (NACIWID)
- ii) Human Rights Commission, Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

Article 8(2)

In line with the recommendation in the Baseline Report, WAO played major role in lobbying for the amendment to Article 8(2) of the Federal Constitution. WAO was able supply the necessary documents/papers to assist the minister Dato Shahrizat A. Jalil in her presentation to the Cabinet and Parliament. The amendment to Article 8(2) was gazetted on 27 September 2001 to include the term 'gender' as a ground for discrimination.

Monitoring Guardianship Act

Although the Guardianship Act was amended and an administrative directive was issued in August 2000, WAO continued monitoring to see if the directive had trickled down to the front desk officers. Some women did face unnecessary questions or were asked to produce more documents if they applied for their

children's passports. WAO has been monitoring the passport application forms and until now, the forms still require the signature of father/guardian. The form has not been amended to include the word 'mother'. WAO will write to the Ministry of Home Affairs to highlight these inconsistencies.

We received two complaints from mothers who had tried to transfer their children's school and been denied. WAO contacted the Ministry of Education and was told that a letter had been sent to all states informing them of the directive.

iii) Promoting CEDAW and the Baseline Report

We have actively and deliberately named CEDAW and its principles in press releases, letters to the editors and feature articles in both English and vernacular papers. WAO has also actively participated in radio and television interviews to promote the principles of CEDAW.

We have embarked on a project to publish a simple brochure on CEDAW in 4 languages. The first draft in English is in the process of being edited.

We have also planned to upload the baseline report on the WAO website.

Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) Abuse

a) Refuge

A total of 19 migrant women sought shelter at WAO. 18 were Indonesian and 1 was Sri Lankan. The women sought shelter because of abuse by the employers or agents. The abuse ranged from poor working conditions, non payment of wages, physical and psychological violence including rape.

An in-house survey was conducted with the FDWs. The FDWs were required to fill in a questionnaire, which comprised three main sections:

- i) pre-departure stage (preparation at their home country);
- ii) post arrival stage (orientation by agency at receiving country - Malaysia);
- iii) post employment stage (their experiences after they left their employers).

The FDWs were also asked to share their experience living and working in Malaysia in an essay format to complement the quantitative questionnaire.

The objective of the survey was to look at the standards practiced by the sending and receiving country. From the moment the FDW was recruited until they arrive in Malaysia their working conditions were captured in both quantitative and qualitative methods. As the number of respondents is still small (12), we hope to fill up more questionnaire forms before tabulating and analyzing the data.

b) Immigration

WAO's advocacy for the exemption of special pass fee of RM100 since its increase from RM20 was partially successful when the Immigration announced exemption for WAO only on 30/8/01. In October 2001, the exemption was approved and the first batch of 4 FDWs had their special passes renewed at no cost.

c) Ministry of Human Resources (MoHR)

On 16 October 2001, WAO handed over a Memorandum to the MoHR on Rights of Migrant Workers focusing on FDWs, particularly advocating for the following:-

- i) Standard employment contract for FDWs
- ii) Guidelines for employers in recruiting FDWs outlining their role and responsibilities as employers.

d) Alliance with other NGOs

WAO participated in the National Consultation on Migrant Workers coordinated by Tenaganita. WAO facilitated Tenaganita in their Focus Group Discussions which was conducted at our Refuge with the FDWs on their awareness of health issues particularly knowledge of HIV/AIDS. WAO joined Tenaganita and other organizations in the Campaign on Right to Redress for migrant workers.

WAO was also part of the Joint Action Committee Against Racism, Racial Discrimination and other Racial Intolerance coordinated by SUARAM.

e) Participation in Conferences

In connection with our work on the FDWs, WAO attended several conferences to promote the issue and advocate at a regional and international level.

Rozana Isa attended "The Intersectionality of Race and Gender in the Asia-Pacific"- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) Lobby Training Workshop in Preparation for World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Chiangmai, Thailand from 24-26 Jan 2001.

Meera Samanther and Rozana Isa attended the NGO Forum and Asia Regional Preparatory Meeting for WCAR in Tehran, Iran from 17-21 Feb 2001.

Meera Samanther attended the Asia Pacific NGO Networking Meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal in Mar 2001.

Meera Samanther attended an APWLD Workshop on Ethnicity, Religion and Women's Rights in Indonesia from 26-30 June 2001.

Meera Samanther and Rozana Isa attended the WCAR- NGO Forum in Durban, South Africa from 27 Aug- 7 Sept 2001 where they presented testimonies at the NGO Forum.

Enizahura Abdul Aziz and Lee Shook Fong attended the Tripartite Conference for Migrant Women's Rights organized by APWLD in collaboration with Migrante International in Manila, Phillipines from 11-14 Nov 2001.

10. PUBLIC EDUCATION

Talks: WAO gave 16 talks throughout the year to hospitals, colleges, the police and various organisations on issues of violence against women, as well as on WAO's roles and services.

Visits: WAO received 11 visits from universities, local and international organisations and associations as well as government agencies that were briefed on domestic violence and how WAO is organised as a Refuge.

Events: WAO had its annual public education campaigns; one on 25th August (Hari Wanita) with The Bodyshop with a Law Reform postcard campaign, another from 25th November – 10th December with Putra LRT where informational brochures on Violence Against Women were distributed and the theme was "Don't Turn Your Back on Violence Against Women". WAO also had exhibition booths at Low Yat Plaza on women's issues under the theme of "Beauty and Feminism" on 6th April; and at Amcorp Mall for International Women's Day on 8th March.

Training: WAO conducted a "Human Rights of Women" training in collaboration with International Women's Rights Action (IWRAP) Asia Pacific on 28th – 30th March, with participation from 14 different organisations. Ivy Josiah & Shoba Aiyar also conducted a training on the One Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) in Bangladesh for the Multi-Sectoral Bangladesh on Violence Against Women on 15th September.

Print Media: WAO was featured in the newspapers under the women's sections or feature articles at least 120 times throughout 2001. WAO issued press statements on International Women's Day and on International Human Rights Day, and organised a press conference on the abused foreign domestic workers at the Refuge.

Television: WAO appeared on television 10 times throughout the year as guest speakers on current women's issues or commenting on news related to women and children. WAO has appeared in all 4 free-to-air TV stations (RTM1, RTM2, TV3 and NTV7)

Radio: WAO was featured 14 times on the radio: on Radio 4, Radio 6, Radio 5, WOWfm and RFM. This also saw the beginning of regular shows with WAO as a regular host helping in the production of topics and themes, and as regular guests with Radio 6 (national Tamil radio station) as well as for the Infobits feature of Radio 4 (national English radio station).

WAO Resources: At least 100 students and researchers either received information from us or were given interviews by social workers, communications officer and law reform officers to assist them with their respective courses at college and university. This includes 84 queries for information on violence against women and WAO that was received by e-mail.

Internet: Apart from conventional airwaves, WAO began collaborating with Radioradio.com and Asian-Family.com, web-based radio sites, and was featured 4 times in both web-radio sites. The WAO website saw a total number of 4012 unique visitors, with a marked increase from merely 64 hits in January to 534 hits in December. From the month of August, the number of unique visitors to the website has averaged at a

steady 550 hits per month, which suggests that there is a continual following of surfers to WAO's website. The number of e-mail enquiries received for information displays the popularity of the website with students and researchers. In addition, we have also received around 25 number of e-mails for counselling or information to help personal crises and at least 80 requests by e-mails to be volunteers. The website is thus evidently becoming an increasingly important resource and outreach tool to the public on women's issues and WAO.

11. Volunteer Development

Jaclyn Kee undertook the task of coordinating volunteers and developing a volunteer base for WAO. One of the concerns expressed at the last AGM was the falling volunteer numbers and the need to expand our membership.

Jaclyn began this task on 19th April 2001, and she managed to conduct 8 volunteer orientation sessions (average of 1 per month). From 9 existing volunteers, the number of volunteers increased to 43 people, (excluding the existing 9) with 25 active volunteers.

Volunteer activities included women's programmes (arts & craft, aerobics, English and dance lessons) and tuition for the CCC children. A Jumble Sale was held in August to commemorate Hari Wanita with craft and foodstuff made by volunteers and the residents at Refuge. Volunteers also embarked on a "Beautify the Refuge" project by painting some rooms with paint donated by contact of volunteer. Volunteers were supportive during public education campaigns and in particular came out in full force during the 16 Days Activism Against Gender Violence in November.

Since most volunteers have access to the internet we started an e-group called wao_volunteers@yahoo.com as a method of communication, support and coordination. This e-group has some lively communication and we are definitely on a good start to rebuilding our volunteer and support base.