

## **WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2002**

Collated and edited by Ivy Josiah, Executive Director on behalf of the Hon. Secretary, WAO Executive Committee 2002/2003

Contributions from Rozana Isa, Annie Varghese, Wathshlah G. Naidu, Jesse Ang, Lee Shook Fong, Jacyln Kee, Viji Ramanathan, Chong See Mun

1. THE FOLLOWING WERE ELECTED AT THE 19TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2002 AT 2.30 P.M. BILIK ANGGERIK, APDC, JALAN DUTA, KUALA LUMPUR

President	Meera Samanther
Vice President	Shanthi Dairiam
Secretary	Mok Chuang Lian
Asst Secretary	Sharon Hariharan
Treasurer	Yeow Ai Lin
Asst Treasurer	Carol Chin
Committee Members	Fawzia Hanoum Ariff (resigned 16/8/02)
Committee Member	Vivienne Lee Iskandar
Committee Member	Sharon Kaur

The EXCO conducted 5 committee meetings in 2002

### 1.1 WAO COMMITTEES, GROUPS, REPRESENTATIVES

Staff Committee	Meera Samanther Mok Chong Lian Yeow Ai Lin Ivy Josiah
House Group	Meera Samanther Vivienne Lee Iskandar Fawzia Hanoum Ariff WAO staff
DVA /JAG committee:	WAO Social Workers Lee Shook Fong Wathshlah G. Naidu Jaclyn Kee Meera Samanther Ivy Josiah
CEDAW Core Committee:	Sharon Kaur Wathshlah G. Naidu Ivy Josiah Rozana Isa Shanthi Dairiam (IWRAW, AP)
Sexual Harassment / JAG: chaired by WCC Penang	Wathshlah G. Naidu Lee Shook Fong Jaclyn Kee Ivy Josiah
Rape Taskforce: chaired by AWAM	Jaclyn Kee Lee Shook Fong

Anak Angkat Coordinator:	Jessie Ang	
Volunteer Coordinators:	Jaclyn Kee Annie Varghese	
NCWO:	Shanthi Dairiam Shoba Aiyar Wathshlah G. Naidu Lee Shook Fong	
Malaysian Aids Council:	Chiam Jet Yin Julia Yong	
Malaysian Coalition for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse:	Viji Ramanathan Jessie Ang Jaclyn Kee	

## 1.2. PATRON

WAO did not have a patron in the year 2002

## 1.3. TRUSTEES

The trustees are as follows:

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

## 1.4 MEMBERSHIP

In 2002 WAO had 74 listed members and approximately 35 active volunteers

## 1.5 STAFF

### Refuge

Subbalakshmi Aiyer	Social Worker
Jessie Ang	Social Worker
Nazlina Abd Ghani	Social Worker
Normah Mohd Noor	Night Social Worker
Chong See Mun	

### Child Care Center

Vijayaledchumy Ramanathan	Senior Social Worker
Mary Selina Santhanasamy	Social Worker
Mary Fatima Vasupillay	Night Supervisor
Engammah Anumiah (Vijaya)	Child Minder
Rinawati Kasrat	Child Minder

### Project Contract Staff

Lee Shook Fong	Legal Reform Officer
Wathshlah Naidu	Legal Reform Officer
Jaclyn Kee	Communications Officer

Executive Staff

Annie Varghese

Rozana Isa

Sharmini Kanemoorthy

Ivy N.Josiah

Administrator

Projects Manager

Accounts Executive

Executive Director

**2.0 WAO SERVICES ( the numbers below may change, TBC)**

Refuge	126 women, 118 children
Face to Face Counselling	87 women
Telephone Counselling	1468 calls
Child Care Centre	27 children
Sexual Assault Helpline	44 calls ( September – December 2002)

**2.1 REFUGE**

In the year 2002, WAO provided shelter for 126 women and 118 children compared to 115 women and 107 children in the previous year. Out of the 126 women, 81 women sought shelter because of domestic violence. There were 18 women migrant workers, ( 15 foreign domestic workers and 3 trafficked women), 10 single mothers, 17 cases involving rape, incest, financial and housing problems.

The three trafficking cases one of them are from Cambodia and two from Indonesia. These three women jumped out from the window of the apartment flat where they were lock inside by their captors. One of them broke her leg when she jumped from the second floor. The other two jumped from the first floor. They are now safe and back in their countries.

We have two Iraqi women and their children who were detained in Indonesia when they attempted to go to Australia to join their husbands.. They were sent to Malaysian's camp in Sabah and then to the Semenyih's Camp in Selangor. However they qualified for refugee status from the Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees in KL and allowed out from the camp. The two women and their children are now on a monthly special pass from Immigration. Both the Iraqi women are waiting to join their husbands in Australia.

Our workload in the refuge is increasing and ever challenging every year. This year we have residents from Indonesia, Iraqi, Australia, India, Cambodia and Thailand. Since we had so many other nationalities staying in the refuge we needed to liaise with Immigration and embassies. Liaising with the immigration officers and police officers is another very frustrating task for the social workers whenever we deal with them.

There were 87 women who came for face-to-face counseling and 1468 of telephone counseling calls for the year 2001. Our work involved:

- Face-to-face counseling to outside clients and residents in the refuge.
- Assist clients in seeking protection, employment, housing, childcare service, referral services to government bodies, NGO, private sectors etc.
- Regular House meeting with the residents to help residents resolve their grievances and ensure the smooth running of the refuge.

- Weekly social workers' meetings to enhance a common understanding and better case management for every client. It also helped us to strategize our social work plan by sharing our experiences.

### **Women's Programme**

Women's support group session as and when the need arise. The issues discussed include understanding of the legal system (IPO, divorce, child custody and etc), family planning, defense skill, Yoga, self-discovery, parenting etc.

- Enrichment programme, such as English language classes by one of our dedicated volunteers, computer classes in co-operation with a project called Mothers For Mothers and sewing classes .
- Outings for the residents such as bringing them for movies, parties, and festive celebrations.

### **Children's Programme**

- Daily activities for the children in the refuge such as coaching them in their studies, coloring, reading, supervising them in using the computer etc.
- Children's support group sessions by Viji and Nazlina. The issues include personal safety, anger management, self-exploration, communication skill and so on.
- Outings for the children in co-operation with our Child Care Centre.

It would have been impossible for five social workers to make all the above-mentioned activities happen without the strong support of all the refuge staff and the staff from the Child Care Centre.

Many of our ex-residents play an active role as resource persons helping the residents in the refuge in terms of sharing their experiences, finding employment, housing, childcare and so on. This may show that they were empowered enough through our helping process to want to help others.

## **2.3 CHILD CARE CENTRE (CCC)**

The CCC received 21 new children belonging to 10 mothers. Between 1990 to 2002 the WAO Child Care Centre had helped 197 children belonging to 92 mothers.

Children at the CCC at the beginning of 2002	6
Intake of children during the year	21
Children who left during the year	18
Children still at CCC by the end of 2002	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

In 2002, 27 children belonging to 14 mothers used the CCC's services.

Of the 27 children who were at the CCC in 2002

kindergarten children	9
primary school	17
secondary school	1

### **Children who left in 2002 (18)**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 11 children | belonging to 5 mothers, went to live with their mothers. In these families, mothers were able to take all their children back.   |
| 2 children  | (of 5 children), belonging to one (1) mother left the Centre; one stayed with his mother while another stayed with grandparents. Three siblings of these children continued to stay at the Centre. |
| 2 children  | belonging to one (1), mother left to stay with grandparents.   |
| 3 children  | belonging to 2 mothers went to live in permanent children's homes.   |

### **Activities for children**

As usual, school-going children at the Centre were busy with school and homework. Staff and volunteers helped coach the children.

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 interact.

In 2002 however, there were more preschool children, which meant that a lot of effort went into minding the children. As such, there was more need for separate activities to run concurrently.

Children, of all age groups, got together when it came to singing, dancing and drama.

There were also fun events and outings, like, swimming and trips to places of interests, organised and facilitated by volunteers and staff. Children also organised their own picnics in the garden and the nearby playground.

In addition to regular one-off activities, seven children from the Centre, together with children from another Children's Home benefited from a six-month Wetlands awareness programme, which was organised by Raleigh International. This programme involved classroom sessions, swimming lessons, and actual visits to the Wetlands.

One of the children in the Centre also participated in a six-month Teater Muda Programme, run by five Arts Centre where participating children were introduced to basic elements of music, movement, drama and visual arts.

We had a few but, good volunteers helping the children through the year. Children also received many treats and goodies from neighbors and donors.

### **Mothers**

Most mothers were in touch with their children on a regular basis by telephone; spending their off days and holidays with their children. Mothers either stayed at the CCC with their children or took them out.

While we noticed that the number of mothers attending mothers' gatherings went down, CCC staff were able to keep in touch with mothers during their visits and phone calls.

Most mothers had problems finding and keeping their jobs. They also had problems finding suitable accommodation. Women had to move from one accommodation to another each time she moved jobs, had a difficult landlord, or found a cheaper place to live in. Most mothers held low paying jobs; financially it was always a struggle for them.

Children who had left the Centre and their mothers continued to keep in touch. Mothers would call or come to the Centre, to share their successes, setbacks, their children, or just to be in touch. Mothers sometimes brought the children for counselling, or to bring them back to familiar and friendly environment. Most children who leave miss their friends who they leave behind. Visiting the Centre does give children the opportunity to meet with their friends, who may still be with the Centre.

This year the staff had to face the realities of children whose education had long been neglected. Getting children to catch up on what they missed at school was one of our priorities.

We had children who missed their siblings, as they lived elsewhere. Children had sisters and brothers, who were either with their mother, their father, relatives, or another Children's Home. In these cases, children rarely get to meet their siblings. The mothers too have to divide their available free time, visiting their children who are in various locations.

We noticed that children felt and indicated that violence and violent behaviour of their fathers were wrong, and many children tended to be violent themselves. Many found violence as a way of communicating their dissatisfaction. There were also the children who missed their violent fathers. It is always a long and difficult process, for understanding and change to occur.

Finding suitable permanent Children's Homes for children whose mothers could not take the children to live with them, was also a challenge.

Generally the children were well and improved in their studies and all staff and volunteers will testify that the CCC children are a joy to work and play with.

### **3. 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 2002, 29 children from 20 mothers were the beneficiaries of this program by 23 sponsors.

Adelyn Tsai	Mission Synergy
Anna Maria	Puan Sri Jamilah
Annapoorni	Ravindran V.
Chic Fashion House	Robert Gan
Chong Kuan Lai	Shanthy Pragasam
Choo Fong Kuan	Tony Lau
Datuk Sulaiman Sujak	Tracy Wong
Dr Fatimah Yakin	V. Kanesan
Indra Kulasegaran	Vivien Lee
K. Ganesan	Wong Loo Min
Kathleen Chin	Zeenath Begum
Lee King	

#### **4. INTERNS AT WAO**

2002, was another year of both local and foreign interns. We hosted interns who were students from Malaysia, USA and Finland . Interns came to WAO to learn first hand about violence against women within the framework of women's human rights. As they were learning more about these 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.

1. Norizan bt Hassan, HUKM, Malaysia	May - June
2. Chua Sook Ning, Taylor's College, Malaysia	April - August
3. Jessika Spangberg, Malmoe University Sweden	May - July
4. Nazish Ansari Georgetown University Law Centre, USA	June - August
5. Shaline Rao, Harvard, USA	June - August
6. Jocelynn Liu, Oxford University, United Kingdom	August - September
7. Sari Anne Mari Roppo from Aalborg University, Finland	September- Dec.
8. Serene Sim, from UPM. Malaysia	December - May 03

#### **5. ADVOCACY**

##### **5.1 Monitoring The Domestic Violence Act (DVA)**

Monitoring of the DVA was continued by WAO, focusing more on the need for protection of domestic violence survivors and their children.

##### **i) Monitoring the agencies**

##### **Monitoring the police**

Following letters that were written to the Ministry of Women and Family Development regarding attitudes of police officers dealing with domestic violence cases, a meeting



was held in July with the Director General of Women's Affairs Department, Ministry of Women and Family Development.

As a result of our social workers' good rapport with the Petaling Jaya District Police Headquarters, a meeting was held in September to share the experiences of WAO with the Investigating Officers from the Sexual Assault Unit. In the meeting, it was addressed that there was a crucial need to coordinate and streamline the procedures and management of domestic violence cases between other agencies such as the Welfare Department and the hospitals. WAO recommended for the Petaling Jaya District Police Station to play a major role in facilitating a meeting between the agencies. Following that, another outcome of the meeting was the handing over of the domestic violence posters (posters from the Department of Welfare) to the 12 police stations under the jurisdiction of Petaling Jaya District.

### **Monitoring the Welfare**

WAO's advocacy with the welfare produced results when a poster on domestic violence was designed by the Department of Welfare with input/consultation from WAO and displayed at welfare departments nationwide.

### **Monitoring the Courts**

WAO project officers and social workers continue to monitor the progress of the court cases involving domestic violence cases. Besides monitoring the delays in court hearings, WAO social workers also work closely with the lawyers and public prosecutors who are representing the domestic workers.

#### Dialogue with the Chief Registrar of Courts

Following a letter requesting for a meeting to discuss the disparity and non-uniformity in court procedures relating to the Interim Protection Order (IPO) for survivors of domestic violence, a dialogue was held on 16 May 2002.

During the meeting the following areas were covered –

1. Application Process of the Interim Protection Order
  - The necessity of the presence or involvement of the Welfare Department Officer when applying for the IPO
  - The availability of the IPO application form
  - The inclusion of other persons in the IPO application form
  - The jurisdiction of the IPO
  - Immediate issuance of the IPO
2. The necessity for the presence of the domestic violence survivor during renewal of the IPO.
3. Serving the IPO
  - serving of the IPO by the victim
  - monitoring the servicing of the IPO
  - status of the IPO – whether it has been served or otherwise
4. Powers of arrest –
  - Violation of the IPO
5. Contents of the IPO – Specific terms in the IPO
6. Proceedings of Domestic Violence Cases

## ii) Law and Policy Implementation Sub Committee

The Law and Policy Implementation Sub Committee of the MWFD National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women of which WAO is the co – chair, completed the discussions and a draft memorandum was prepared by the representative from the Attorney General’s Chamber. The Joint Action Group (JAG) convened, and redrafted the memorandum in November to include specific items that were left out. WCC Penang and WAO re wrote and edited the Memorandum which is to be presented in 2003 to the main committee and MWFD.

## iii) International intervention

WAO both participated and presented a paper at the Asia Regional Workshop on Strengthening Partnerships for Eliminating Gender–Based Violence which was held in Kuala Lumpur. It was organised by the Government of Malaysia, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Ivy Josiah presented a paper titled “WAO Refuge : You Can’t Beat a Woman”.

Ivy Josiah also represented WAO at the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Violence Against Women Consultation in August 2002. The Consultation, organised by Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

## **5.2 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

The feedback gathered from IWRAW Asia Pacific, identified the need for additional research and for the baseline report to be rewritten in a narrative format. A researcher was hired for two months to substantiate and fill the gaps. The researcher drafted questionnaires, collected data from the Bar Council, carried out specific qualitative interviews with both Muslim and non-Muslim divorced women in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor as well as conduct interviews with family lawyers in Kuala Lumpur. She finally analyzed and tabulated the research data. Any new development in laws and policies was incorporated in the baseline report. A core committee meeting was held on 25 July 2002 to finalise and to incorporate the feedback from the other members. IWRAW AP submitted their final comments and feedback on 7 November 2002. The baseline report was completed and distributed to participants of SUHAKAM’s Roundtable Discussion on CEDAW.

### **Monitoring and Advocacy**

Following the meeting with NACIWID in March 2002, we initiated a meeting with SUHAKAM (Malaysian Human Rights Commission) on 24 September 2002. It was attended by Dato’ Ranita Mohd. Hussein the HR Commissioner with the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) in charge of the Treaties and International Instruments Working Group and her officer. The Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) is aware of the discrimination faced by women in the country and is keen on working towards equality. They have become our ally in using CEDAW especially after the successful convening of the dialogue session on 24 September 2002.

The following issues were agreed upon during the meeting with Dato' Ranita on 24 September 2002.

1. SUHAKAM will facilitate a meeting between the government and NGOs, once the government report to CEDAW committee is complete
2. SUHAKAM will integrate a gender component in its work and policies.
3. WAO will conduct a session on gender orientation for the officers and staff of SUHAKAM.

The session on Introduction to Gender for Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) Officers and Staff was successfully carried out on 25 October 2002.

WAO was also asked to be part of the committee organizing the SUHAKAM Roundtable Discussion on CEDAW in conjunction with the International Women's Day 2003. The Round Table Discussion on Rights and Obligation Under CEDAW, held on 17 March 2003, brought together representatives from government agencies and NGOs. The Chairperson of the Equal Opportunity Commission in Hong Kong, Ms. Anna Wu was also invited as a guest speaker.

WAO also organised a Workshop on CEDAW for Radiq Radio (Center for Independent Journalist). Another workshop on gender was held for media practitioners from 17 – 18 September 2002.

### **Shadow Report**

The Women's Development Collective proposed that the Woman's' agenda for change coordinate the Shadow Report. WAO organised meeting in November for the WAC committee with IRAW Asia Pacific to know more about the Shadow Report process. The evening session was beneficial as we learnt more about the objectives of a Shadow Report to the Government CEDAW Report and the need to monitor and strategize plan of action to use the concluding comments that will be given by the CEDAW committee to the Malaysian government.

The WAC committee was also made aware that the NCWO is also planning to coordinate the Shadow Report among NGOS and we may be duplicating efforts./

No decision was made as to whether the WAC should take the lead to coordinate the writing of the Shadow Report.

### **iv) Promoting CEDAW and the Baseline Report**

Advocacy through the media has been encouraging. very opportunity that we get is made full use of by highlighting CEDAW and its many principles.

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.

Work to produce a simple brochure on CEDAW began in 2002. to be published. English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil in 2003.

### 5.3 Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) Abuse

#### Services- Counseling and Case Management

In year 2002, 18 women migrant workers sought shelter at WAO. Of the 18 migrant women, 18 were from Indonesia and one from Cambodia.

15 of them were brought in to Malaysia as foreign domestic workers. The abuse ranged from poor working conditions, non-payment of wages, physical and psychological violence including rape. Most of them escaped abuse either by running away, assistance given by neighbours or rescued by police acting on public reports.

There were 3 migrant women were trafficked for sexual exploitation in Malaysia. Out of the 3 women trafficked, 2 were from Indonesia and the other from Cambodia. All three of them escaped their traffickers through jumping off the buildings (hotels and apartments). WAO assisted by contacting their embassies and making arrangements for their return home. All the three did not want to testify against their traffickers in court.

WAO has successfully helped some of the FDWs to:-

- **Claim for their Unpaid Salary**  
reclaim their unpaid salary through negotiations with their employment agency so that the employment agency will get in contact with the employer. WAO helped 6 of them to claim their salary from their employer through the recruitment agency.
- **Proceed with the Criminal Charges**  
Provide support to the FDW in the process of charging the perpetrator, giving statement to the police and testimony in court. WAO has also developed a protocol to appoint a watching brief lawyer for the FDW to monitor the proceedings.

At of 31 Dec 2002, there are 3 FDWs who had their cases pending in court (Two (2) for rape charges and one (1) for assault).

- **Claim for Compensation through a civil suit**  
Assist in appointing a lawyer to help the FDW file for compensation and damages through filing a civil suit.

At present there is one case pending in the Klang court.

Of the 15 FDWs, 4 of them returned to Indonesia with an exit memo from Immigration. 2 of them decided to stay out on their own. Four were sent to the agency. One was referred to the embassy. As of 31 Dec 2002, there were 4 FDWs who were still staying in WAO pending their court proceedings.

All 3 of the women who were trafficked returned to their home country following issuance of one-way pass from their respective agencies and an exit memo from Immigration. All three of them did not want to testify against their trafficker whom they only knew by their first name.

### **Advocacy**

Aside from providing support to the FDW in claiming for their unpaid/ underpaid wages, in seeking claims for the abuse suffered, WAO continues to advocate for the implementation of a standard employment contract for FDWs with the Ministry of Human Resources and the ratification of the Convention on the rights of migrant workers and their families.

### **Networking with NGOs- Local/ Regional/ International**

WAO works closely with other women's organizations to keep them informed of new cases and developments of FDW issues.

### **International Advocacy**

WAO has worked with the National Commission on Violence Against Women-Indonesia, the Consortium for Defense of Indonesian Migrant Workers (KOPBUMI), the Institute of Advocacy on Indonesia Migrant Workers (known as *Solidaritas Perempuan*), the Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility in Asia (CARAM-Asia), where these organizations have contacted WAO for the following:

- resources and information on the FDW issue
- to seek WAO's assistance in locating abused FDWs
- to participate and share experiences in workshops/ conferences

Due to our prior contact with the National Commission on Violence Against Women in Indonesia, WAO was able to assist a representative from this Commission who was a member of the Indonesian Government delegation to negotiate on the details on a Memorandum of Understanding between Indonesia and Malaysia. Specifically, WAO's position paper on the need of a standard employment contract was a useful reference for the negotiation.

### **Media Highlight**

The FDW issue was highlighted in the Malay Mail's fortnightly column on "Know Your Rights".

### **Participation in Conferences/ Consultations**

WAO was invited to participate in a few consultations to share our experience in Malaysia at the national and regional level.

Meera Samanther and Lee Shook Fong participated in the Annual Consultation with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Migrants (Mrs Gabriela Rodriguez) with Asian Migrant Organisations & Migrant Support Organisations organized by CARAM-Asia from 2-3 June 2002 in Kuala Lumpur. The consultation was aimed at developing a strong and effective reporting and monitoring system on the situation of migrant rights in Asia, developing a mechanism of working with the Special Rapporteur to monitor the implementation of obligations of states to protect migrant rights in Asia and simultaneously strengthen the mandate of the Special Rapporteur to protect and promote the human rights of migrants in Asia.

Meera Samanther and Ivy Josiah attended the National Consultation on Foreign Domestic Workers organized by Tenaganita in Kuala Lumpur on 31 July 2002. Meera presented a paper titled "Is the Domestic Worker Safe At Home?".

As a follow-up to the national consultation, Meera participated in the Regional Summit on Foreign Migrant Domestic Workers in Sri Lanka from 26-28 Aug 2002 organized by CARAM-Asia in collaboration with among others Asia Pacific Women in Law & Development (APWLD), International Organisation for Migration (IOM),

Canadian Human Rights Foundation, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Indonesian's National Commission on Violence Against Women

## 6. PUBLIC EDUCATION

### A. CAMPAIGNS/EVENTS

There were seven public education campaigns or events in 2003, some of which are a combination of public education and fundraising. The campaigns are:

1. **International Women's Day 2002:** In collaboration with 3R and AWAM, a full-day event ending with a concert was held at KLCC on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2002. The thrust of our message was increasing awareness on our work on domestic violence and foreign domestic worker abuse.
2. **Forum on Sexual Assault Management:** Co-organised with the British Council, a dialogue session with two experts from UK on Sexual Assault Management was held on 12 April 2002, with participation from press members and NGOs.
3. **Launch of Single Mothers' Needs Assessment Survey:** The survey was published and launched on 9 May 2002 by YB Datin Faizah of the Ministry of Women and Family Development, with press members from 10 media organisations (Malay, English and Chinese).
4. **Hari Wanita Law Reform Campaign:** Annual public education and law reform campaign with The Bodyshop held on 20<sup>th</sup> August, continuing from 2001's postcard campaign. The thrust was on informing the public of their right to vote; and to appeal to various Ministries to amend the laws and policies related to domestic violence.
5. **Women's Aid Organisation 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations:** In addition to celebrating WAO's 20<sup>th</sup> year of work, two additional resources were launched at 8 September 2002 – the second edition of WAO's Self Help Booklet for Domestic Violence Survivors; and WAO's new extension of services in the form of a Sexual Assault Helpline. Although the media publicity for the additional service was consciously tempered due to concerns of adequate resources, there were 41 calls received from the line from September 2002 to December 2002.
6. **Press Conference on the Handover of Domestic Violence Posters to the Police District Headquarters of Petaling Jaya:** The two posters handed over were on domestic violence, and were aimed to increase public awareness on the issue, as well as to demonstrate the cooperation which exists between WAO and the particular police station on domestic violence.
7. **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence:** Also an annual campaign held yearly from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December. The theme for 2002 was "Rock, Soul and Blues: Musical Expression Against Violence Against Women, conceived in collaboration with Ogilvy. Buskers were at

the Putra & STAR LRT stations throughout the campaign performing to engage the public on the issue.

## B. PRINT MEDIA

WAO was featured in the newspapers and magazines more than 130 times throughout 2002 on news reports, women's sections, lifestyle sections, computer sections and feature sections. These included:

1. **Comments and Features:** highlighting of campaigns, public education materials, comments on violence against women cases, hearings of WAO's clients' court cases, government announcements and policies and other current issues.
2. **Letters and Statements:** notably on International Women's Day with the message on violence against women in the workplace – including sexual harassment and foreign domestic worker abuse; and with other NGOs on: amendments to the legal and policy provisions for incest; life imprisonment and public canning for incest survivors; on the Terengganu Hudud Ordinances; on the mandatory death penalty for rape of children; on differences of opinion in Islam; on the judicial decision of the Razali Pilen rape in detention case; repeal of the Internal Security Act with WAC; and gender discrimination in parliament with WAC.
3. **Know Your Rights:** from March 2002, WAO began a series of fortnightly articles on the Sunday Mail known as "Know Your Rights". It provides basic legal information to women on issues which may affect them, and starts with a case study from WAO's telephone counselling line and face-to-face counselling. From 10<sup>th</sup> March 2002 to 29<sup>th</sup> December 2002, 22 articles were published, covering topics: sexual harassment; domestic violence; rape and sexual assault; child sexual abuse and child abuse; divorce, maintenance and custody for Civil and Muslim cases; foreign domestic worker abuse; rights as a foreign spouse; registering to vote; khalwat; division of property; and guardianship and child registration.
4. **Collaterals:** public education materials were developed in 2002, which serves as additional resource for WAO, including: incest posters developed with DYR (an advertising firm) and the Ministry of Women and Family Development; Hapuskan Keganasan (Domestic Violence) posters developed with the Welfare Department; Drop the Label series of posters on gender discrimination in words produced by Novacom; the second edition of WAO's Self Help Booklet for Domestic Violence survivors; and the publication of the Single Mothers' Needs Assessment Survey.

## C) RADIO

WAO was featured at least 26 times on the radio: Radio 4, Radio 6, THR Raga, BBC World, MIX FM, MY FM, ERA Radio and Nos Radio/Dagblad Trow. These are for interviews, issue-based programmes and community service announcements. 2002 also saw the continuation and beginning of regular radio programmes:

1. **Radio 4:** Once a month radio programme began in February 2002 until December 2002. Topics covered included issues that affect young women, impact of violence against women as well as empowerment of women. Language: English
2. **Radio 6:** Continuing from 2001, 12 radio programmes from January 2002 until September 2002 on various issues affecting women and women's rights were developed and aired. Language: Tamil
3. **THR Raga:** Began as guests in their programmes sporadically on February 2002 to regular programmes once a month from November 2002. Language: Tamil.

## D) TELEVISION

WAO appeared on television at least 15 times throughout the year, as guest speakers on current women's issues or commenting on news related to women. WAO has appeared in NTV7, RTM2, TV3, RTM1 and Astro RIA.

## E) INTERNET

1. **WAO Website:** The WAO website continued with regular updates once a month but for March and May 2002. Throughout 2002, there were 42 postings of articles, comments, press statements and announcements of events. This averaged out to about 3 to 4 postings a month. The number of hits has been steadily increasing, with a total hit of more than 13,000 visitors from January to December 2002. August 2002 showed the highest numbers of visitors (1,746 hits), and on average, there are more than 1,100 hits on the site, which almost doubled 2001's 550 hits per month. This indicates greater interest and reliability of reputation on WAO's website as a source of information by the cyber community. The visitors of WAO's website are in descending order, from Asia, North-America, Australia, Europe, Africa, South America and Central America. However, the geographical location of a large number of our visitors (59.42%) remains unknown.
2. **Collaboration with other web-based radio sites:** collaboration with Radiqradio.com was temporarily halted in October 2002 when Radiqradio faced difficulties in funding. Collaboration with Asian-Family.com continued intermittently with WAO as guest speakers.

## F. PUBLICATIONS

In 2002, WAO published the following:



1. Single Mothers – Survivors of Domestic violence, A Needs Assessment Survey
2. A Life Free of violence – a self help guide
3. Kehidupan Bebas dari Keganasan , panduan bantu diri
4. Stop Violence Against Women - the annual body shop brochure.

However, we did not manage to publish the Annual Review 2001 and we aim to do this in 2003.

## 7. VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

Jaclyn Kee undertook the task of coordinating volunteers and developing a volunteer base for WAO. She was assisted by Annie Varghese

- Throughout 2002, 48 volunteers were orientated in 7 orientation sessions. This averaged out to about 8 volunteers every two months.
- Some volunteers were active for a period of time, and then stopped for various reasons including moving out of the country, furthering their education, finishing their education/course requirements, changing jobs, or we have simply lost contact. A small proportion of volunteers did not start volunteering after the orientation because of unmatched expectations. Some volunteers remained active with us to date (about 20).
- Activities conducted by the volunteers in 2002 included helping out with the women's programmes (arts and craft, English lessons, aerobics and dance, etc.), helping out at the Child Care Centre (tuition and activities), a jumble sale (October 2002), producing WAO's newsletter (December 2002), providing transports for activities. Volunteers were exceptionally supportive during public education and fundraising campaigns. Coordination of activities was mainly through the e-group [wao\\_volunteers@yahoo.com](mailto:wao_volunteers@yahoo.com), and has thus far proved effective.
- A core group of volunteers (15 volunteers) has also committed to supporting the Sexual Assault Helpline, with training expecting to begin in 2003. A new e-group was formed (for reasons of confidentiality) for this purpose at [wao\\_sah@yahoo.com](mailto:wao_sah@yahoo.com).
- A WAO intern, Shaline Rao, produced a Volunteer Training Manual Draft in July 2002.

## 8. FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

WAO annual expenses stands at approximately RM 753, 000 and through public, project and government funding we managed to raise RM 714, 113 00, 000 in 2002. 9.2 % of our total funds collected come from the government , i.e the Welfare Department and the MWFD.

DAY	DATE	EVENT
<b>January</b>		
Wed	9	Levi Strauss Donation box collection RM 1,564.33

Sun	27	Independent Practitioners' Healthcare Symposium RM 7,000.00
<b>February</b>		
Thu	28	Malaysian Open Golf Tournament Canon / WAO RM 700.00
<b>March</b>		
Saturday	9	International Women's Day Kimberley Clarke Trading – RM 5,000.00 IWD Treasure Hunt – RM 2,840.00 The Body Shop IWD Donation box collection - RM 2,110.72
Mon	18	S.M.K. Assunta Women's Rights are Human Rights collection RM 1,000.00
<b>May</b>		
Wed	8	Bulgari Private Sale Proceeds from Sale – RM 17,500.00 Personal Donation – RM 2,000.00 Donation box collection – RM 1,070.00
Fri	17 Bharata	Bhaavam (an evening of Indian Carnatic Music & Natyam) RM 2,000.00
<b>June</b>		
Thu	13	Take Off With Us – Karen Barnes Performing Arts RM 5,000.00
Wed	19	Christie's Art Lecture & Dinner RM 20,000.00
<b>August</b>		
Tue	13	The Edge KL Rat Race RM 102,300.00
<b>October</b>		
Fri	25-26	LIT Singers performance (Riscon Sdn Bhd) RM 2, 500
Sun	27	WAO Jumble Sale at Mont Kiara RM 1,120.00
Wed	30	AD Classic 2002 RM 6,000.00
<b>December</b>		
Wed	18	Chain Reaction RM 31,236.9 – gross sales

### **Ongoing activities throughout the year**

1. Body Shop Candles of Conscience began in August 2001, RM 10,887.00 (total received in 2002)
2. Sale of WAO merchandise

### **10. WAO's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

WAO's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration was held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2002 at Shah's Village Hotel and was attended by more than 150 people that comprised WAO Refuge residents, ex-residents and their children, the Child Care Centre children, members and volunteers including pioneer members and members of the Protem committee to form WAO, staff and interns, members from other supporting NGOs and members of the media.

The programme for the day began with a welcome speech from Meera Samanther, President of WAO. Following that, Ivy Josiah, Executive Director of WAO, led the participants through a journey of WAO, from her inception, her growth throughout the years and her position in the present day, acknowledging groups and individuals who were involved. Bringing life to the journey, WAO was thrilled to have Puan Sri E. N. Chong, who was a member of the Protem committee, say a few words and she shared with us her experiences in forming the Protem committee and setting up WAO as Malaysia's first shelter for battered women.

Chee Siew Yoke then spoke of her experience in the drafting of the Domestic Violence Bill and the barriers and frustrations the drafters faced with the issue of passing the Bill due to issues pertaining religion. She also spoke of the difference that she had experienced on how the Act had affected men and their attitudes towards domestic violence.

Shanthi Dairiam and Dulcie Abraham shared with the participants of how their involvement with WAO as volunteers became part of their personal progression towards their views and decisions in life, including personal and career choices and how it gave them an understanding on the issue of violence against women, how society condones abuse of women and how religion is sometimes used to endorse the subordination and abuse of women. Dulcie also paid tribute to WAO and her own progression from just a shelter for battered women to a centre of advocacy and part of the conscience of the nation in issues that are both domestic and international.

Ending Ivy's narration was a digital presentation, Looking Back Looking Forward, of the herstory of WAO, from how it all began as a rented refuge with 2 social workers to 2 WAO-owned centres with a staff of 16 strong. The presentation also covered the expansion of WAO's focus from predominantly domestic violence to a range of other issues of violence against women, women's human rights and rights of women as Malaysian citizens.

After the speeches, acknowledgements were given to several groups and individuals who have supported WAO for the last 20 years and recognition was also given to Mary Selina, who joined WAO on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1992 and Kak Normah who joined WAO

on 1 November 1992 as they are both the longest serving staff, having been with WAO for 10 years.

#### *WAO Self-Help Booklet*

15 years ago, WAO produced a simple Self-Help Booklet, which was targeted at giving women information about what to do in a domestic violence situation, helplines and myths and facts about domestic violence. With the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act 1994, WAO then launched the second Self-Help Booklet, which took into account of the developments since the DVA 1994. The project was funded by the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development. WAO's residents and ex-residents participated in the launch with an ex-resident sharing briefly with the participants of her experience in getting shelter and protection and building back her life.

#### *WAO Sexual Assault Helpline*

When WAO first opened its doors and telephone lines we received only **18 calls in 1982**. However, as the public became more aware of our services through several public education efforts, we **now receive over 1000 counselling calls and provide shelter to over 100 women per year**. WAO in its 20<sup>th</sup> year not only continues to provide shelter, telephone and face-to-face counseling to women and children, she has also extended her services to include another helpline with the support from other NGOs and women's groups and that is the WAO Sexual Assault Helpline.

In 2001 and 2002, there was a high incidence of reported cases in the media on rape and incest. Due to this, WAO was prompted to question the state and care of the survivors of rape and incest, whether they had any access to any services such as shelter and counselling. WAO was also concerned about the number of cases that goes unreported and wanted to address the lack of space and support for the survivors who have not come forward.

Although the main purpose of this line is to provide the much needed space and support for survivors of rape, incest and sexual assault to come forward and talk about their ordeal without fear of being judged, prejudiced and misunderstood, it is also to facilitate the process of healing and to provide critical information on getting immediate medical attention and how to report to the police, if needs be.

The WAO Sexual Assault Helpline is regarded as an enhancement to WAO's current services as WAO is growing to reach out to women in other violent situations. The launch of the helpline included participation from other NGOs and WAO interns.

The launches were then followed by lunch. Soon after the women and children let their hair down and participated in games, lucky draws and dances. The day ended with camaraderie and bonding of women who all gave to WAO reasons to mark the 20 years and celebrate being women.