



**Recharge:** WAO staff and volunteers at a retreat in Penang, March 26-28.

**WAO Statistics**  
(January to May 2010)

**Shelter residents:**  
66 women /  
36 children

**Telephone counselling:**  
630 callers

**Face-to-face counselling:**  
68 clients

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# INROADS

Vol. 2, April - June 2010

## ‘HE HIT ME WITH THE BASEBALL BAT’

**W**HEN you first meet Kerry\*, 28, a petite mother of two, you’d never be able to imagine half the hell she’s gone through. And her account of her marital life in

Kuala Lumpur is incredibly heart wrenching.

Her eyes well up the moment she talks about her husband.

When she married at the age of 22, Kerry could never have imagined that her husband would turn out to be such a monster. She would later find out that her husband grew up in an abusive environment as his father regularly beat his mother, accusing her of infidelity, in front of the children.

Tragically for Kerry, history would repeat itself. Her husband was insanely jealous and constantly accused her of cheating on him. But she loved him so she did everything to “make it work” during the four years of marriage.

“My husband frequently slapped me until my lips bled – I would have to face my colleagues and pupils the next morning. But I thought I could take it and had to put up with it for the sake of my marriage and family.

“He hit me with everything he could find – hangers, a pipe – he even whipped me with the mobile phone charger cord.

When he came home at 3am, and if I looked sleepy while heating up his food, he’d hit me.”

When she was five months pregnant with her son, and living at her mother’s in 2008, Kerry was punched and kicked by her husband in front of her daughter and mother. Naturally, her mother tried to stop him but to no avail.

“He then dragged me into the car and hit me with the baseball bat. I tried to escape but he held on and continued hitting me.”

After that episode, the couple moved to his mother’s tiny house. There, Kerry swallowed pills in a bid to end her life. When her husband discovered this, he brought out jumper cables and whipped Kerry in front of his family members until she was barely able to stand. Of course, he avoided her belly. But the rest of her

body was not spared.

Her in-laws refused to take Kerry to the hospital, for fear of legal repercussions. Instead, they treated her profusely bleeding wounds at home. Her husband then took her elsewhere, to continue hitting her. He was simply deranged.

Holding a job had been difficult for Kerry. She quit her job because her husband said he didn’t like the boss looking at her. He even caused trouble at her workplace. Nevertheless,



\* name changed to protect identity

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Find us also on Facebook

**No woman deserves  
to be battered!**

## REACHING MORE WOMEN IN NEED

SOCIAL worker Noor Diyana Yahaya, 24, has been at WAO for nine months and has already seen her project efforts pay off.

"I worked on the *Single and Pregnant* booklet for six months. After I wrote it, the process involved lots of editing and I also had to ensure that the English and Malay versions were in sync.

"Since the booklet has been distributed by Malakoff Corporation Berhad (which funded its print), we have started to see a huge increase of such cases. Usually, we get three

or four single, pregnant women per year but in June alone, we have had six or seven women.

"It gives me a sense of fulfillment knowing that these women now have somewhere they

can turn to because in the past, they might not have known who to call, where to go, or what to do, and may have had to resort to baby dumping. Now more women can be informed

of their options through the booklet.

"Although WAO's focus is still mainly on domestic violence, we do take in single, pregnant women because they have nowhere else to go. Other places only take in children or expect the women to pay. With the grant from Malakoff, we can help more women who are in dire need."



☐ For details on the ***Single and Pregnant*** booklet, see next page.

### 'HE COULD HAVE KILLED ME'

> FROM PAGE 1

Kerry obeyed all his rules, hoping the violence would end if she behaved "correctly." That meant also having to cut off all contact with her mother and sisters.

Shortly after her son's birth, Kerry found a job and the couple moved out. But there was no end to the abuse.

"One night, he made me take off my clothes, whipped me and forced me out of the house. I hid behind the big pipe, hoping the neighbours, who were having a Christmas party, wouldn't see me as I was totally naked.

"He made me beg him to let me in. He kept calling me a whore. When he finally let me in, he started kicking me."

The immense humiliation that night was the last straw. In the middle of the night, Kerry ran away and hid in a drain in a dark alley. She knew her husband would be looking for her.

In the morning, Kerry walked all the way to her workplace. Her employer – who had previously been advising Kerry not to accept the abuse – knew to call WAO.

"(Former WAO social worker) Auntie Shoba told me to lodge a police report and go to the KL General Hospital for the medical report. When I got to the Refuge, she paid for the cab, gave me clothes and money."

But during the five days she was at the Refuge, Kerry could only think of her children, whom she had to leave behind when she fled. Especially since she was still breastfeeding then. So, she went back and was assaulted within months.

After she managed to leave with the kids, her husband had her arrested on false allegations and even accused her of child abuse.

Later, on separate occasions, Kerry's husband stalked her and abducted her children. However, she eventually managed to get the children back through the courts. And she says that the staff members of WAO have seen her through every step of the way.

Kerry is very disappointed with the system. Despite her having an Interim Protection Order, her husband has continued harassing, stalking and threatening her, especially when she tried living on her own. Kerry cannot stay with her mother for fear that her mother, too, would be assaulted again.

"The WAO Refuge is the only place I can truly feel safe – it's such a relief to be away from him. If WAO didn't exist, I wouldn't know what to do. Nobody (other than my mother) was willing to help me. My mother cannot help me because she would be in danger. Here, the social workers protect me from my husband."

Kerry is currently at the Refuge and is waiting for her divorce to be finalised. She wants to make a fresh start soon, but fears her husband will kidnap the kids again once they start schooling.

Her advice to women in abusive relationships is: "Don't ever go back. Don't even think of 'giving chances'. I stood very firm in my decision to leave because I constantly focused on the worst things he did to me and realised that he could have killed me.

"I have learnt that if a man even slaps you once, he will do worse things to you in the future."

# WAO IN THE NEWS

MIO NEWS STARMETRO, THURSDAY 6 MAY 2010

## Help for battered women

Yayasan Sime Darby pledges RM360,000 for WAO refuge centre

**B**ATTERED women and their children can seek solace at a refuge run by the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), thanks to a RM360,000 pledge by Yayasan Sime Darby (YSD) to help fund the running of the centre.

The initiative is in line with YSD's commitment under its Community Development pillar to promote the well-being of the community, particularly those who are less privileged, irrespective of race, culture, religion, creed or gender.

A mock cheque presentation was held recently at an event organised in conjunction with the celebration of International Women's Day by 3R, a television programme produced by and for young women in Malaysia.

WAO was one of the co-organisers of the event, which was themed "Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities, Progress for All".

YSD council governor Datin Paduka Zaitoon Othman presented the cheque to WAO executive director Ivy Josiah.

"Sadly, violence against women and children is rampant in our society. YSD feels that we can contribute to help alleviate this victim's

ordeal.

"Through YSD's contribution of funds to help run the safe haven, we hope that we will be able to help these victimised women and children, who have gone through such bad times, to put the past behind them and lead better lives," Zaitoon said.

She added that the women and children had nowhere else to turn to.

"At WAO, at least 53% of those who spend time at the refuge centre are able to improve their lives significantly after their stay there.

"Thirty per cent of the centre's former residents are able to live independently, while 23% are living with their families and friends. There is a chance for them to live a better life," she said.

The centre provides shelter and protection to an average of 100 women and 120 children every year.

With about 1,115 sq m (12,000 sq ft) of space, the centre has five bedrooms, six bathrooms, a kitchen, an administration office and a store room.

Residents usually stay for between one and three months, and during



**Much-needed aid:** Zaitoon (third from right) presenting the mock cheque to Josiah (third from right). With them are (from left) 3R hosts Kartini Arifin, Celina Khor, YSD council member Caroline Russel and 3R host Rafidah Abdullah.

their stay, they participate in a variety of programmes organised and conducted by the centre.

These include English language, computer and cooking classes to improve social skills and enhance awareness for better health, as well

as empowerment sessions aimed at enabling survivors of violence to take control of their lives.

WAO's seven dedicated staff members also offer counselling sessions. The centre also provides activities for women and children, like

camp and ex-residents' programmes.

WAO also runs a volunteer and internship scheme whereby the public help out at the centre with fund-raising efforts or activities aimed at boosting public awareness.

## Help for single parents

Company gives RM66,500 to women's group

**T**HE Malakoff Corporation Berhad (Malakoff) in collaboration with the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) unveiled the "Empower for Life" initiative for single parents.

Women, Family and Communication Development deputy secretary-general Datin Dr Noorul Anwar Mohd Nor was the guest of honour. The company gave RM66,500 to WAO to conduct essential living skills classes, cover medical expenses for residents in their refuge



**Generous contribution:** (From right) Abdul Halim Ali presenting a mock cheque to (second from left) WAO executive director Ivy Josiah while (left) WAO president Meera Samanther and (third from left) Dr Noorul Anwar Mohd Nor look on.

said this initiative would help to highlight the importance of reaching out to women in crisis.

Under this initiative, WAO has

also developed a booklet for single pregnant women on medical and legal matters.

The booklet *Single and pregnant: What are my choices?* is published in both English and Bahasa Malaysia.

"This booklet is an integrated aid to end child abuse and works as an avenue for us to save and change lives, to reach out and help women who feel scared and alone," said Dr Noorul Anwar.

"Social worker Noor Diyana Yahya, who compiled the booklet, said many pregnant women who came to the WAO centre were alone, scared, depressed, angry and even embarrassed.

"This book will serve as a guide and help them with their pregnancy process physically, mentally and emotionally as well as guide them in their options to either opt for adoption or to keep the baby," added Noor.

"It is never easy to be a social worker and while my work may be exhausting, I am inspired by these courageous women who try to find solutions.

"It's also satisfying to know that

we are helping people to improve their lives and make them self-reliant," said the 25-year-old.

**»This handbook would serve as a guide and help them with their pregnancy process physically, mentally and emotionally«**  
 HOD DIYANA YAHYA



**Helping women:** (Third from left) Ivy Josiah, Noor Diyana Yahya, Dr Noorul Anwar Mohd Nor, Meera Samanther and social workers from WAO with the booklets.

## Ada jalan atasi kebuntuan

Oleh ROHANI IBRAHIM

“Pengarah Eksekutif Pertubuhan Bantuan Wanita (WAO) Ivy Josiah ketika dihubungi berkata, kempen Kami Prihatin perlu meningkatkan kesedaran di kalangan golongan lelaki supaya bertanggungjawab dan tidak mengambil sikap lepas tangan dalam hubungan dengan teman wanita.

“Ada wanita yang membuang bayi kerana tidak tahu berbuat apa-apa setelah teman lelaki mereka menghilangkan diri apabila mengetahui wanita itu mengandung.

“Sementara golongan gadis juga perlu dididik bahawa hubungan seks luar nikah bukanlah cara untuk membuktikan cinta mereka kepada teman lelaki,” katanya sambil menambah ada juga wanita yang hamil kerana dirogol dan kemudiannya membuang bayi yang dilahirkan.

Jelas Ivy, masalah buang bayi yang semakin meningkat di kalangan masyarakat juga memberikan mesej bahawa kesedaran mengenai langkah-langkah pencegahan kehamilan sangat rendah di kalangan mereka yang terlibat dalam gejala ini.

Justeru, jelasnya, usaha yang menyeluruh diperlukan untuk membendung gejala ini seperti penganjuran kempen kesedaran Kami Prihatin, pendidikan kepada golongan lelaki supaya tidak memperlakukan golongan wanita sewenang-wenangnya dan kemudian lepas tangan serta pendidikan seks terutamanya pengetahuan mengenai pencegahan kehamilan.

— Utusan Malaysia, April 9, 2010

Creating a hatch without a catch > page 4

# LAW BREAKERS MUST RESIGN

Check out: [bungchacha.blogspot.com](http://bungchacha.blogspot.com)

Press statement — May 18, 2010

**W**E, the undersigned civil society organisations, are gathered here to protest strongly against lawmakers who intentionally break laws that are enacted to ensure principles of justice and equality.

We are extremely concerned about the action taken by the Kinabatangan Member of Parliament Bung Mokhtar and Zizie Ezette A. Samad to enter into an illegal polygamous marriage. Bung Mokhtar and Zizie Ezette were married on 16 December 2009 without fulfilling the required procedures and conditions under the Islamic Family Law (Selangor) Enactment 2003. This includes providing evidence that he could be just and the marriage would not cause harm to his existing wife and children. The law also requires the judge to listen to the views of Bung Mokhtar's existing wife to determine if the above-mentioned conditions could be met.

As a Member of Parliament who makes laws, Bung Mokhtar has set a bad example to other citizens. His disrespect for a law that was enacted to protect the interest of women and children and minimise the unjust impact of polygamy, could further encourage more men to continue with the ongoing practice of marrying illegally without the permission of the court.



#### Bung-led bigamy:

Kinabatangan MP Bung Mokhtar pleaded guilty to marrying a second wife without the court's consent.

Bung Mokhtar's conduct as well as his notorious reputation for sexism in Parliament tarnishes his credibility as an elected lawmaker. Furthermore, at no time has Bung Mokhtar expressed regret nor apologised

for his conduct but he has, in fact, defended his actions. As the Deputy Chairman of the Barisan National Parliament Backbenchers' Club, Bung Mokhtar's conduct has also tainted the stature of his office and the august house.

Law makers should NOT be law breakers. Bung Mokhtar must resign, and should not be nominated to represent the citizens of Malaysia again. We expect our leaders to behave in a responsible, respectful and accountable manner. Obey the law or you will be voted out.

Marina Chin Abdullah  
Executive Director  
Empower

For and on behalf of the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) which comprises:  
Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)  
Women's Centre for Change (WCC) Penang  
Sisters in Islam (SIS)  
All Women's Action Society (AWAM)

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## Creating a hatch without a catch

“ Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) executive director Ivy Josiah said it was crucial that there was public assurance that there would be no legal repercussions on the mother of the baby.

"People must be assured of no judgment, no punishment. They don't want to be caught and don't want to be punished. If this hatch is to be a success in saving babies' lives, that assurance has to be there."

With that in mind, the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, through the Welfare Department, is in discussion with the relevant agencies, like the police,

National Registration Department (NRD) and Health Ministry, to come up with standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the operation of baby hatches, and make sure that "everybody understands and wants the same thing," said Welfare Department director-general Datuk Meme Zainal Rashid.

"Our concern is the baby's life. If the baby has been placed in the baby hatch, then we don't consider that as abandonment. We will work with the police to make sure that prosecution is not an issue," she said.

— *New Straits Times*, June 6, 2010



## FUNDRAISING & EVENTS

### Evening of Italian cuisine

*Grazie infinite* to Paolo Guiati, owner of Bar Italia, who hosted a charity dinner on June 25 to benefit WAO. All dinner proceeds are going towards sustaining the WAO Refuge and Child Care Centre services.

### AmEx lends a hand

The WAO Refuge will receive much-needed support this year from American Express through a partnership with Give2Asia, which is a foundation founded by Asia Foundation ([www.give2asia.org](http://www.give2asia.org)) to promote philanthropy to Asia.



The funds will contribute towards the operational costs and much-needed repairs to the house itself.

### Gym gear fundraiser

All-women's gym Contours Express is donating part of the proceeds from its merchandise sales to WAO. Among the items on sale until July are T-shirts, headbands, gym bags and socks. For details on Contours Express, browse [contoursexpress.com.my](http://contoursexpress.com.my).

### Shop and contribute to WAO



Guardian Pharmacy is holding a charity promotion until June 30 at all its outlets and WAO is one of the event's beneficiaries. A RM2 donation entitles shoppers to get a Guardian Charity Card that offers 20% off products of 24 participating brands such as Bio-essence, Maybeline, Oral B, Himalaya, Nivea Visage, Clinelle, Bio-Life, Kordel, Blackmore's, and Seven Seas. So drop by a Guardian outlet and support WAO while shopping!

### Charity Indian dance drama

From July 30 to 31, the Bharathanjali Dance Academy is staging *Buddha – The Splendor of Enlightenment*, a dance drama that features the life of Prince Siddharta in his quest for enlightenment. The production is narrated in English and proceeds will partially benefit WAO's Child Care Centre. It will be staged at the KLCC Plenary Hall.

For tickets, log on to [ticketpro.com.my](http://ticketpro.com.my) or call (03) 7880-7999. For details, log on to [bharathanjali.piczo.com](http://bharathanjali.piczo.com) or call 017-884 8647 (Bavani) or 016-2214766 (Lavania).



### WAO needs your help

WAO's annual organisational expenses total approximately RM900,000. These include costs for food, medical needs, transport, utilities and Refuge and Child Care Centre maintenance. All cash donations to WAO are tax-deductible. We are honoured that many have chosen WAO to be the beneficiary of their fundraising events as it is a constant challenge for us to raise the funds needed to enable us to continue serving the many women and children who walk through our doors.

### Mobile media

We're now broadcasting our messages audio visually through TV screens in taxis since Citymedia launched its "Media on the Move" campaign to raise awareness about WAO. So far, 90 taxis have been fitted with customised TV screens, with more pending. We hope to reach more citizens with this campaign.

### Making informed choices

Malakoff Corporation Berhad, in collaboration with WAO, has launched a booklet called *Single and Pregnant: What Are My Choices?* The booklet, published in English and Bahasa Malaysia, is a guide for single pregnant women on pregnancy matters, informing them on their options, the pregnancy process, and the organisations that can help them with going through pregnancy on their own. The booklet will be handed out to various NGOs, increasing women's access to this valuable information.



### MPH card exclusively for women

The MPH Gals R.E.A.D.S card offers holders awesome discounts on spa treatments, at dining outlets, even on wedding gown rentals. The card retails at RM20 and all proceeds from card sales will go to WAO.



# WAO WISHLIST

## Basic needs

Towels  
Shampoo  
Combs  
Talcum powder  
Women's toiletries  
New undergarments for women and children (all sizes)  
Laundry detergent  
Toilet rolls

## Medical needs

Panadol – syrup for children  
Cough syrup  
Dettol  
Burnol  
Vicks

## Household needs

Bedsheets  
Rubbish bags

Pillows and pillow covers  
Curtains  
Fluorescent lights (small & big)

## Groceries

Eggs  
Powdered milk

## Weekly provisions

Chickens – 2 birds  
Fish – 1 kg  
Vegetables  
Cabbage  
Corn  
Leafy Vegetables  
Beans  
Cauliflower  
Tomatoes  
Potatoes  
Red and Green Peppers

## IMMEDIATE NEEDS

- Sofa set for living room and waiting room of Refuge and CCC
- Milo
- Rice
- Diapers (small)
- Powdered milk (for babies and children)

Tofu  
Bean sprouts  
Coconut milk and grated coconut  
Fish cakes/fish balls  
Fresh noodles  
Onions  
Garlic  
Ginger

## The Women of WAO

### President:

Meera Samanther

### Vice President:

Vivienne Lee Iskander

### Secretary:

Chin Oy Sim

### Asst. Secretary:

Mok Chuang Lian

### Treasurer:

Carol Chin

### Asst. Treasurer:

Sharon Hariharan

### Committee Members:

Ambiga Sreenevasan  
Lee Shook Fong  
Grace Lim

### Executive Director:

Ivy Josiah

### Finance & Admin

**Manager:** Sharmini Kanesamoorthy

### Projects & Admin

**Manager:** Annie Varghese

### Administrator (temp):

Suwarnalata Gunasekaran

### Programme Officer:

Sarah Thwaites (volunteer)

### Admin Asst:

Kiranjeet Kaur

### Projects Asst:

Nicole Anne Nunis

### Social Work Manager:

Wong Su Zane

### Social Workers:

Jessie Ang  
Nazlina Abd Ghani  
Umadevi Rajah Denram

Noor Diyana Yahaya

Puveshini Rao Subaramanian

### Night Supervisor:

Normah Md. Noor

### CCC Supervisor:

Mary Selina

### CCC Child Minders:

Vijaya Anumiah  
Hanif Muawanah Muhyi  
Kalayivani Vasudevan