

WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2003

Collated and edited by Ivy Josiah Executive Director on behalf of the Hon. Secretary,
WAO Executive Committee 2003/2005

Reports written by:

Annie Varghese
Jaclyn Kee
Jesse Ang
Wathshlah G. Naidu,
Shoba Aiyar
Viji Ramanathan
Mary Selina
Chong See Mun

1.0 THE FOLLOWING WERE ELECTED AT THE 20th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 27th APRIL 2003 AT 10.00AM, BILIK ANGGERIK, APDC, JALAN DUTA, KUALA LUMPUR

President:	Meera Samanther
Vice - President:	Shanthi Dairiam
Secretary:	Mok Chuang Lian
Assistant Secretary:	Sharon Hariharan
Treasurer:	Yeow Ai Lin
Assistant Treasurer:	Carol Chin
Committee members:	Vivienne Lee Iskandar, Sharon Kaur Noelle Lim
Co opted member:	Musfiza Mustapa (during Exco meeting)

The EXCO conducted 9 committee meetings in 2003

1.1 WAO COMMITTEES, GROUPS, COALITIONS

Staff Committee	Meera Samanther Mok Chuang Lian Yeow Ai Lin Ivy Josiah
House Group	Meera Samanther Vivienne Lee Iskandar WAO staff
CEDAW Core Committee:	Sharon Kaur Wathshlah G. Naidu Ivy Josiah Rozana Isa Shanti Dairiam (IWRAW, AP) Represenantivs from SIS & WCC Penang
Fundraising Group	Datin Alissa Fitri Vivienne Lee Iskandar Yeow Ai Lin Meera Samanther Ismarani Kalil Ivy Josiah
DV /JAG, chaired by WAO	WAO Social Workers Lee Shook Fong Wathshlah G. Naidu Jacyln Kee Meera Samanther Ivy Josiah

Sexual Harassment /JAG Chaired by WCC Penang	Wathshlah G.Naidu Lee Shook Fong Jaclyn Kee Ivy Josiah
Anti – Rape Taskforce Chaired by AWAM	Jaclyn Kee Lee Shook Fong Ivy Josiah
Anak Angkat Coordinator	Shoba Aiyar
Volunteer Coordinator:	Jaclyn Kee Annie Verghese
Public Education	Ivy Josiah Jaclyn Kee Annie Varghese Ismarani Kalil
Website Design & Content	Jaclyn Kee
NCWO Representatives:	Shanthi Dairiam Subbalakshmi Aiyar Wathshlah G. Naidu Lee Shook Fong
Malaysian Coalition for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (MCPCSA) Reps	Viji Ramanathan Jesse Ang Chong See Mun
Malaysian Aid Council Representatives	Chiam Jet Yin
Coalition on Rights of Women Under Islam	Ivy Josiah Jaclyn Kee
Women's Agenda for Change	Meera Samanther Ivy Josiah

2. PATRON

WAO did not have a patron in the year 2003

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 2003 WAO had 79 listed members and approximately 43 active volunteers

5. STAFF

Refuge

Subbalakshmi Aiyar	Social Worker
Normah Mohd Nor	Night Social Worker
Jessie Ang	Social Worker
Nazlina Abd. Ghani	Social Worker
Chong See Mun	Social Worker

Child Care Centre (CCC)

Vijayaledchumy Ramanathan	Senior Social worker
Mary Selina Santhanasamy	Social Worker
Mary Fatima Vasupillay	Night Supervisor
Engammah Anumiah(Vijaya)	Child Minder
Rinawati Kasrat	Child Minder (<i>resigned 7/11/03</i>)

Executive Staff

Ivy N. Josiah	Executive Director
Annie Varghese	Administrator
Sharmini Kanesamoorthy	Accounts Executive
Rozana Isa	Project Manager (<i>resigned 30/4/03</i>)
Ismarani Kalil	Projects Executive (<i>wef 2/5/03 – resigned 2/8/03</i>)
Aneesa Alphonsus	Programme & Projects Coordinator (<i>wef 3/10/03</i>)

Project Contract Staff

Wathshlah G. Naidu	Lawl Reform Officer
Lee Shook Fong	Law Reform Officer (<i>resigned 15/6/03</i>)
Jaclyn Kee	Communications Officer (<i>resigned 30/8/03</i>)

7.0 WAO SERVICES

Refuge	133 women and 115 children
Face to Face Counselling	91 women
Telephone Counselling	1492 calls
Child Care Centre	21 children

7.1 Refugee Services

In the year 2003, WAO provided shelter for 133 women and 115 children. Out of the 133 women, 68 women sought shelter because of domestic violence.

The number of domestic violence cases decreased from 81 cases in 2002 to 68 cases in 2003. However there was a big increase in the number of foreign domestic workers who sought shelter. There were 26 cases of foreign domestic workers and 12 trafficking cases compared to the previous year of 19 foreign domestic workers and 3 trafficking cases. We also had women who needed shelter for other problems such as single mothers, refugee and asylum seekers and women who were homeless or faced financial problems.

In assisting foreign migrant workers, the social work was more demanding as we had to deal with several agencies: police, embassies, immigration, labour department, the courts and also agents and employers. Paper work increased, as there was a lot more documentation and reports. Social workers were also out of the office with their clients as most of the foreign migrant workers are not familiar with our country and do not know their way around and are often afraid to go out on their own.

As for the domestic violence cases, even after eight years of the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act we still face difficulty assisting our clients in obtaining the Interim Protection Order (IPO). This is partly due to the fact that many women do not want the police to arrest their husbands. When this happens, the police do not open an investigation file on their case and in turn the women are not able to obtain an IPO. Most of the women want documentation and a deterrent like the IPO to stop the violence but at the same time, they do not want their husbands to be charged. Protection without criminal proceedings and charges need to be instituted as one of the options in implementing the DVA, a system, which is available for example in Singapore.

Focusing advocacy on improving the implementation of DVA is an urgent agenda for WAO in 2004.

And as happens every year, this year again saw a visit by an abusive husband, who accompanied by the police, turned up at WAO's gates demanding for his wife and children leave the refuge. EXCO members and social workers met up with the PJ Police to express our concern and dissatisfaction and concern over misuse of police powers. The Police did acknowledge their mistake in this issue.

Foreign Nationals

Aside from Malaysians, we also had residents from Pakistan, India, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Cambodia, and China. Refuge services are expanding and it is good to know that we are known for offering shelter to any woman in crisis.

Liaising with the immigration and embassies was an important part of the social workers job. However, this often proved to be frustrating due to the lack in proper co-operation from these agencies.

Public Education programmes

Social workers were also kept busy in assisting the WAO Public Education programmes by participating in regular radio and television talk shows in all languages covering a range of issues.

Beside the regular radio and television programmes we were also interviewed by newspapers and magazines on various topics although focus was mainly on domestic violence and foreign domestic workers issues.

Women's & Children's programmes

As for the women and children's programs at the shelter, we conducted group sessions for our residents on various issues. Some of topics that the social workers and volunteers covered were:

- *Past experience, reflection and effect in life*
- *Teamwork among residents*
- *Self blame and self discovery*
- *Gender differences*
- *Communication*
- *Rights as a woman*
- *Attachment & Expectation*
- *Family Planning*

Aside from the above sessions, several recreational activities were organized for the current residents, ex-residents and their children. We accompanied residents and their children on a hiking trip in Bukit Kiara followed by a picnic, to 3 movie screenings, a performance at the Philharmonic Auditorium, KLCC, Disney on Ice and River Dance shows at Bukit Jalil Stadium. We really had a great time.

One volunteer also conducted aerobic classes for our residents in the shelter, which the women found very useful. Besides that, there were also volunteers and interns to help the residents and their children with their studies and basic language lessons in English and Malay.

Some of the residents and ex-residents attended computer classes conducted by NCWO and Yayasan Salam Wanita. Mothers for Mothers donated several second hand computers for our ex-resident's children. One of the interns took some of the residents to an Internet café to show them how to set up and start e-mail accounts.

Social workers and Child Care Centre staff had weekly meetings and thorough discussions about their cases. By doing this social workers were able to get feedback and fresh insight on how they could best help their clients.

The year 2003 has been a busy and wonderful year and together with all the WAO staff and volunteers we were able to help women and children.

7.2 Child Care Centre (CCC)

The CCC opened in 1990 and by end 2003, a total of 96 mothers and their 209 children have used the services of the Child Care Centre. In 2003 in total 21 children stayed at the CCC with 12 new children entering the CCC.

Children in the Centre at the beginning of the year	9
Intake of children during the year	12
Children who left during the year	12
Children at the Centre by end of 2003	9

Breakdown of the 21 children who stayed in the Child Care Centre in 2003 follows:

3 – 5 years olds	attending kindergarten	6 children
7 – 12 year olds	attending primary school	13 children
13 years old	attending secondary school	1 child
1 ½ year old	not attending kindergarten	1 child

All 12 children who left in 2003 went on to live with their mothers.

Children who needed temporary stay

In 2003, 4 children stayed at the Child Care Centre as a temporary measure. Specifically 3 children from one family (aged 2, 3 and 4 years) stayed in the Child Care Centre for one week, while their mother sought treatment at the hospital and 1 child, aged 12 years, who was abused by employer stayed at the Centre for 3 days, awaiting follow up action by the Welfare Department. All four children's cases were subsequently handled by the Welfare Department.

Activities for children

In addition to the usual homework, extra classes and class tests, there were three (3) children who sat for UPSR exams in 2003. As such there was much anxiety among the children and staff, preparing for this examination. There were also children who lagged behind with schoolwork and needed to catch up – therefore needing extra support and coaching. Getting children to be interested in studying was another hurdle. Staff, volunteers, as well as some of the children at the Centre helped with coaching those children who needed extra help.

As there were children of varying ages, their needs were different, and attention had to be given to this when organising activities, discussions, or just minding the children.

However when it came to having fun and recreation, all children took part, as one big happy group. In 2003 too, there were many outings, like, swimming and trips to places of interest, organised and facilitated by volunteers and staff.

However, if activities were not formally organised for them, the children knew how to initiate and organise something for themselves.

Children from the Refuge too joined the children at the Child Care Centre for various activities, including study, outings and fun events. Children always enjoyed the interaction with other children and the opportunity to make friends.

While some volunteers came to the Centre for a specific purpose like coaching children with schoolwork, or, taking them on outings, others just visited the Centre with goodies and gifts, or just to say hello and interact with the children. Children are always happy to have volunteers at the Centre.

Mothers

Staff continued to ensure that mothers could and did spend positive time with their children when they visited the Centre. The mothers who could not visit, often due to their job schedules, kept in touch with their children over the telephone.

One of the major problems mothers faced were finding suitable jobs, coping with the time demands of the jobs, and keeping the jobs they had. Finding and keeping suitable accommodation was also a problem for many mothers.

Follow-up programmes

Mothers and children who had left the Centre continued to keep in touch, by calling to talk to the staff or coming to the Centre. Reasons mothers and children called ranged from their wanting to share their achievements, setbacks, or just to be in touch.

Some mothers sometimes brought the children for counselling, or to have their children meet friends as well as to be in a friendly environment with other children. Most children who leave miss their friends who they leave behind. Visiting the Centre does give children the opportunity to meet with their friends, or make new friends at the Centre.

In 2003, mothers and children were invited to many activities either organised by or offered to WAO. There were therefore many opportunities when staff of Refuge and Child Care Centre got to be in touch with ex-residents and their children.

In 2003, staff of the Child Care Centre together with Refuge staff, visited homes of 5 ex-residents.

Emotional Support

There were group activities and individual sessions when children could express their opinions or talk about their feelings. It is important to remember though that children express themselves when they feel comfortable doing so, not necessarily during organised activities.

Being from violent homes, all children believe violence is wrong and unacceptable. This however did not prevent violent behaviours in the children. Some children continued to miss their violent fathers, while others had enough and wanted to have nothing to do

with their fathers. There were children, on the other hand, who nurtured thoughts of having parents reconcile and live as a family.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

Women's Aid Organisation's is a member of the Malaysian Coalition for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (MCPCSA), since it initiated in 2001. The MCPCSA comprises organisation that are interested in the prevention of child sexual abuse. PS The Children (PSC) is the NGO specifically working with child sexual abuse, as well as the secretariat for the Coalition.

Coalition meetings of partners were held monthly. Viji Ramanathan, Jessie Ang and Chong See Mun have represented WAO during these meetings.

Some of WAO staff attended workshops and/or training relating to CSA conducted by PSC. Staff who have attended trainings for conducting these talks do help with public education on CSA.

In 2003, three organizations, who are also partners in the Coalition, namely, Women's Development Collective (WDC), All Women's Action Movement (AWAM), and PS the Children (PSC) have got together and conducted training of trainers, with the aim of training more trainers.

WAO staff helped conduct two-day workshops in Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil in 2003.

8. ANAK ANGKAT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

Many mothers with children who are survivors of domestic violence have opted to live separately from their abusive husbands. Those who have been through our shelter services and sought help when deciding to stay independently are often given financial assistance through the Anak Angkat Sponsorship Programme for their children's educational and traveling expenses. Though it is only RM60 per month, this amount goes a long way for many of them.

A total of 39 children of our ex-residents were recipients under the scheme for the year 2003. We thank the following donors for their contributions:

<i>Kiwanis Club</i>	<i>Indra Kulasegaran</i>	<i>Anna Maria</i>
<i>Dr. Tuen Kam Sim</i>	<i>Vivienne Lee Iskander</i>	<i>Robert Gan</i>
<i>Sunway Rotary Club</i>	<i>Hanim Mohamad</i>	<i>Yap Soon Nam</i>
<i>Tracy Wong</i>	<i>Zeenath Begum</i>	<i>Cho Fong Kuan</i>
<i>Puan Sri Jamilah</i>	<i>Dato' Sulaiman Sujak</i>	<i>Mrs. Annapoorni Chandrasekhar</i>
<i>V. Ravindran</i>	<i>Chong Kun Lai</i>	<i>Lee Mei Lin</i>
<i>Kathleen Chin</i>	<i>Iolanda</i>	<i>Catherine Teoh and friends</i>
<i>Sabriya Khan</i>	<i>Lakshmi Ganesh</i>	<i>Lim Kim Kai</i>
<i>Lee Chin Chwee</i>	<i>Rajah Pakiri</i>	<i>Lynette Yeow.</i>

This year, the mothers were not only given financial support but activities were organised to assist them in other areas such as housing and developing their skills. Counselling was continued on an individual basis or through mothers' support group meetings held once a month.

Mothers and their children were treated from time to time to holidays, movies or foreign shows that came to town such as *"Disney on Ice"* and *"Riverdance"*. In August, fifteen families were sponsored to stay the weekend at a local hotel. For some it was the first time they experienced staying in a hotel.

In addition, some of the children were given counseling when the need arose. Furthermore 2 camps were organized by WAO. While the primary school children camped out at the at the Rukun Tetangga hall, Section 14, the older teenagers' camp was held at the Dusun -Eco Resort. The camps were enjoyed by all and in fact, the children have expressed that they would like us to conduct several such camps in future. The children were taught how to cope with domestic violence in particular and other forms of abuse. Communication skills, assertiveness were among the topics taught to them during this camp.

Some children attended computer skills lab organised by Lions' Club during the school holidays.

In short, there were lots of events and skills building workshop for the residents and their children, which took enormous effort and time to coordinate, in addition to disbursing their monthly monies.

Next year sees older children leaving the Anak Angkat programme as they have finished their studies and new children joining the scheme. Nevertheless, the scheme needs more sponsors and funded activities to empower the children.

9. INTERNS AT WAO

WAO hosted 7 interns in the year 2003. The students from Malaysia, USA, Denmark and Canada came to WAO to learn and gain in depth experience regarding domestic violence and women's human rights. They were an integral part of our staff team who handled everything from phones calls, organising children's and women programmes, researching and writing, drafting of the WAO newsletters and accompanying the women to courts, police stations and hospitals. The interns were invaluable in making our work at WAO easier and dynamic.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1) Serene Sin University Putra Malaysia | December 2 (2002) – May '03, |
| 2) Amelia Larsen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark | March 19 – June 15 '03, |
| 3) Valerie Grenier, McGill University, Canada | May 8 – June 15, '03 |
| 4) Mah Xian Zhen, Wellesley University, USA | June 9 – August 30, '03 |
| 5) Lauren Weisserk, Claremont McKenna University, USA | July 9 – August 1, '03 |
| 6) Angie Garet, Sarawak Women for Women Society, | July 14 – September 30 '03 |
| 7) Ina Ahrensback, Aalborg University, Denmark | August 14– December14, '03 |

10.0 RESEARCH & ADVOCACY

WAO works with other women's groups to advocate for law and policy reform.

The JAG against Violence against Women has divided the work involved. While WCC Penang is primarily responsible for work on the Sexual Harassment Bill, AWAM is chairing the Anti Rape Task Force and Sisters In Islam leads the advocacy on Syariah family laws.

WAO is responsible for the DVA, CEDAW and foreign domestic workers.

JAG met throughout the year to review the progress or non-progress of the various memorandums we had submitted to the MWFD and AG chambers. At the annual MWFD Dialogue on 23 April 2003, JAG submitted a joint memorandum (WAO collated and edited it) on the various laws and policies that continue to discriminate against women. As a group, we also registered our disappointment that there has been no action by the MWFD on the various law reform proposals submitted by women's groups. JAG also asked for transparency on the grants given out by MWFD.

In 2003, Sisters in Islam took the lead on issues pertaining to Islam that discriminated against women. In response to the polygamy issues, a new coalition was formed. Called the Gabungan Hak Wanita Dalam Islam comprising Sisters In Islam, All Women Action Society (AWAM), Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), Persatuan Isteri dan Keluarga Polis (PERKEP), Persatuan Suri dan Anggota Wanita Perkhidmatan Awam (PUSPANITA), Persekutuan Pertubuhan-Pertubuhan Wanita Malaysia (NCWO), Persatuan Pekerja Wanita (PERWANIS), Wanita PERKIM Kebangsaan, Wanita Inovatif Jayadiri (WIJADI), Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), Women Candidacy Initiative (WCI) and Wanita IKRAM. The Gabungan launched an anti monogamy campaign, "1 suami = 1 isteri" and plans to conduct research on the impact of polygamy on women and children. WAO is an active member of this coalition.

10.1 Monitoring the DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT (DVA 1994)

Monitoring of the DVA continued in 2004, focusing more on the need for protection of domestic violence survivors and their children.

10.1.1 *Monitoring the agencies*

Findings from monitoring the agencies are that there are irregular and non – professional services in enforcing the Domestic Violence Act. Notwithstanding this, the social workers have established a good working relationship with the police, welfare as well as the courts.

10.1.2 *Reform proposals by Law and Policy Implementation Sub Committee*

The Law and Policy Implementation Sub Committee of the Ministry of Women and Family Development's National Steering Committee on Violence Against Women, of which WAO is the co-chair, completed the discussions on the Domestic Violence Act 1994. Initially the draft memorandum the "**Review & Proposals for Amendments of**

the Domestic Violence Act 1994” was prepared by the representative from the Attorney General’s Chamber.

The Joint Action Group (JAG) (comprising Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO), AWAM, Women’s Center for Change (WCC), Sisters in Islam (SIS), Women’s Development Collective (WDC) and Malaysian Trade Union, Women’s Section) convened and redrafted the memorandum to include specific items that were left out. Women’s Center for Change, Penang and WAO rewrote and edited the Memorandum. JAG’s edited version was again reviewed by the Law and Policy Implementation Sub Committee and a final Memorandum incorporating comments and feedback from various agencies and organisations was presented to the main committee and the Ministry of Women and Family Development on 19 May 2003.

The Ministry of Women and Family Development has agreed to lobby the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development to review and amend the DVA, however there has been no official response from both ministries as to the progress of studying the proposed reforms.

10.1.3 Advocacy with the ministries

The Joint Action Group on Violence against Women (comprising WAO, AWAM, Women’s Center for Change, Sisters in Islam, Women’s Development Collective and Malaysian Trade Union, Women’s Section) decided that we should initiate a meeting with the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development to review the Domestic Violence Act.

Subsequently, a letter requesting a dialogue with the Minister of National Unity and Social Development was sent. It was also suggested, in the letter, that the Ministry form a committee comprising Ministry representatives as well as representatives from the women’s groups to study the proposal submitted by the Law and Policy Implementation Sub – committee of the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women.

10.1.4 International advocacy

East Asia and South East Asia Regional Workshop on “Domestic Violence Legislation: Moving Towards Regional Networking and Strategies” 1-3 December 2003, Bangkok Thailand

WAO participated in this workshop organised by UNIFEM Bangkok to foster regional collaboration as well as to enhance understanding of the concepts and approaches to tackle domestic violence – in particular the rights-based and restorative approaches to protect women’s human rights in the context of domestic violence. The workshop also aimed to share experiences of effective strategies and lessons learnt in eliminating and redressing domestic violence as well as to highlight domestic violence as a regionally-shared development issue and place the adoption of DV legislation as a national priority in order to comply with CEDAW obligations in each country. Finally it aimed to strengthen links among parliamentarians, civil society groups, and governments to advocate effectively for the passage of domestic violence legislation in each country.

10.2 Monitoring the fulfillment of the Malaysian government's obligation to women's equality – a baseline report on marriage and divorce – article 16: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The baseline report on article 16 was completed in 2003. It has been distributed at various seminars as well as workshops. It has been a source of reference especially with regards to issues related to marriage and divorce for both Muslim women and women of other faiths and beliefs. The report also is being used too for the CEDAW Shadow Report

10.3 Malaysia's first Shadow Report on the implementation of CEDAW

WAO has taken a lead role in the promotion and implementation of CEDAW by being an active participant in producing Malaysia's first Shadow /Alternative Report. WAO has started to work with the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO), which chairs the group of NGOs and academics, which are researching and writing the shadow report.

A meeting to initiate the writing of the CEDAW Shadow Report was held on 5 January 2003. This was facilitated by the National Council of Women's Organisation (NCWO). A briefing was given to representatives from various NGOs. Shanti Dairiam and Bandhana Shresta from IWRAW Asia Pacific were the resource persons.

Themes and chapters for the shadow report were identified. Group leaders for each theme identified and plans for a follow up meeting for team leaders to discuss actual mechanics of writing alternative report.

The following are the chapters that WAO is responsible for as group leaders:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Group 1 | Ivy Josiah (WAO) |
| Article 1 | (Discrimination Against Women) |
| Article 2 | (Policy measure undertaken to eliminate discrimination) |
| Article 3 | (Equality of Women) |
| Article 4 | (Temporary Special Measures) |
| Article 9 | (Citizenship) |
| Article 16 | (Marriage and Family) |
|
 | |
| Group 2 | Jaclyn Kee (WAO) |
| Article 5 | (Customary Practices and Stereotypes) |
|
 | |
| Group 3 | Lee Shook Fong, Mah Xian Zhen (WAO) |
| Article 6 | (Trafficking and Prostitution) |
|
 | |
| Group 10 | Wathshlah G.Naidu (WAO) |
| General Recommendation 19 (Violence Against Women) | |

Several meetings were held in preparation for the shadow report. Group leaders and other interested individuals met to discuss the process, timeline and some time was allocated for groups to begin working on their respective chapters - identify focal points,

writers, research and work plan. Follow up meetings were held with group leaders to discuss the status of the report, problems encountered and how we intend to proceed.

Meetings were held on the following dates:

- 23 January 2003
- 7 May 2003
- 16 July 2003
- 31 July 2003
- 13 August 2003

WAO has been actively gathering data for the various chapters that we are responsible for. The respective group leaders assessed government laws and policies, as well as looked at the effectiveness of state action with regards to specific issues. Most of the data were gathered from looking at secondary research, papers written on the issues, existing statutory laws and from the media.

Interviews were also conducted with relevant agencies or organisation like the Indonesian Embassy, Association of Recruitment Agencies (PAPA), Majlis Adat Istiadat Sarawak, academics and other NGOs.

10.3.1 Working with SUHAKAM

Following the successful convening of the dialogue session with 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, WAO managed to establish a good working relationship with SUHAKAM.

WAO was 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.

10.3.2 Working with the National Machinery

The Ministry of Women and Family Development, who had the task of preparing the CEDAW Government Report called for a meeting with relevant groups to gather feedbacks and comments on their draft government report.

The NGO Shadow Report working groups had a meeting on 16 February 2003 to discuss the response to the government shadow report.

On 25 February 2003 the group leaders attended the meeting with the Ministry of Women and Family Development to give their feedback. Written comments on each chapter were submitted to the Ministry.

10.3.4 Promoting CEDAW and the Baseline Report

Raising awareness through media advocacy has been good. Every 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.

The staff at WAO is also more knowledgeable on how to promote CEDAW. The staff have been using the CEDAW brochure extensively to promote the principles of CEDAW.

A simple brochure on CEDAW Shadow Report has been published. This is an informational brochure to increase awareness on the Shadow Report, its mechanisms and inputs on how to hold the Malaysian government accountable under this treaty. It is aimed for the NGOs and other civil society groups, acting as both a tool for public education as well as advocacy.

10.3.5 International Intervention

CONSULTATION ON IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND DIRECTION 2003-2005: UPDATING CONCEPTS, ADDRESSING NEW CHALLENGES, 30 August – 2 September 2003, Kuala Lumpur

The overall objective of the training programmes conducted by the International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific (IWRAW – AP) is to develop knowledge and skills on the application of the principles of the CEDAW Convention to processes that advance women's rights.

IWRAW Asia Pacific invited a group of fifteen key resource persons and partners to take part of an initial consultation on training activities and direction for 2003-2005. The consultation was to identify and set the basis for future training activities and expert group meetings that will facilitate updating of concepts and development of methodologies needed to address emerging challenges to women's rights claims. All participants had an opportunity to advance their own thinking on the ways evolving international human rights norms can be applied in advocacy efforts at the national and international level.

REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON ARTICLES 16 AND 5 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN, October 9-12, 2002, Colombo, Sri Lanka

This Consultation was organized by the International Women's Rights Action Watch, (IWRAW) Asia Pacific. It was a four day consultation on Article 16 and the strong interlink it has with Article 5 of CEDAW.

NGOs from countries, which have been working on Article 16 and those that are directly affected by dual, multiple laws or have laws that are heavily influenced by religion, have been invited to the meeting. These consist of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka from South Asia and Malaysia from South East Asia.

From Malaysia, the CEDAW Core Committee member organisations that were involved in writing the baseline Article 16 report participated, namely Sisters in Islam and WCC Penang. WAO representatives presented a paper focusing on the complexities arising

due to existence of dual laws; and weak institutions referring to both civil and Syariah legal systems (i.e. discrimination in the substance of the laws, weak enforcement mechanisms, and gender insensitiveness). WAO also proceeded to analyze the role of the state and how it regulates the conflict of interest between men and women institutionally; and politicization of women's rights for political gains; the role of law at the national level; and the (non) fulfillment of its international obligations.

11.0 WAO WEBSITE www.wao.org.my

Having been set up on 16 November 2000, WAO's website has been in operation for three years and four months now. It is updated on average, once a month, with previous articles put under the archive web page. Thus far we have over 19,435 visitors. The website has been a useful resource for students, funders, journalists, new volunteers and researchers.

11.1 Hosting Details

Web hosting company : Nerraw.net
Domain Hosting company : MYINC Sdn Bhd

11.2 Sections within the website

1. Home/Index (Mainpage)

- Dynamic page
- Summaries of articles updates, headers and small 100 x 100 pixel graphics.

2. About Us

- Static page
- Basic information of WAO (History, Mission & Vision, Objectives)

3. Research & Advocacy

- Dynamic page (as and when there are updates on this area)
- Findings on WAO's research & advocacy work in issues of the Domestic Violence Act, the abuse of Foreign Domestic Workers and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women)
- In 2003, the Single Mother's Needs Assessment Survey findings was added to this section

4. Violence Against Women

- Static page
- Information on Violence Against Women: Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Rape, Child Sexual Abuse
- In both Malay and English

5. Services

- Static page
- Information on the services that WAO provides: Counselling, Shelter, Child Care Centre

- In 2003, WAO's new service, the Sexual Assault Helpline was added. The number of the Sexual Assault Helpline is also on the Mainpage in flash (due to the relatively new-ness of the service)

6. News

- Dynamic pages
- First news item on Index/Home page
- Links to other new articles, announcements, press statements etc.
- WAO's fortnightly column in Sunday Mail – Talking Points & Know Your Rights – has been consistently updated in this section.

7. Links

- Dynamic page
- Links to other organisations, websites and online communities on women's issues.

8. Support us

- Dynamic page (as and when the funding details changes)
- How WAO is funded, who are our funders, how users can help support WAO

9. Archive

- Due to feedback about the difficulty in finding the archive page on the website to access previous news and information, a link to this section has been set on the Mainpage.

11.3 Number of Hits on Website

Counter: **Free Tracker** (www.extremetracking.com)

The total visitors to website from February 2002 – February 2003: **18464** (see table 1 below for break-down of hits per month)

It is notable that the website saw its highest hit since its inception in **September 2003**, with a total number of visitors of **1954**.

The average number of visitors per month increased significantly from 2002's 550/month to: **1539** hits/month

Most of the visitors to the website are from: **Malaysia, United States of America, Australia, Japan, Singapore, United Kingdom & Canada**, although 59.42% of the total visitors to the website are geographically unknown (see table 2 below for geographical breakdown of visitors to the website, up to the minimum of 10 visitors)

Feb	1219	
Mar	1499	
Apr	1231	
May	1229	

Jun	1243	
Jul	1676	
Aug	1577	
Sep	1954	
Oct	1471	
Nov	1103	
Dec	1190	
Jan	1433	
Feb	1639	

Table 1: Number of hits to www.wao.org.my, Feb 2002 – Feb 2003

Domains / Countries		Unique Visitors		
-	Unknown	19875	59.42%	
.my	Malaysia	6978	20.86%	
.com	United States	1363	4.07%	
.au	Australia	1176	3.51%	
.net	Network	1135	3.39%	
.edu	US Educational	416	1.24%	
.jp	Japan	386	1.15%	
.sg	Singapore	370	1.10%	
.uk	United Kingdom	325	0.97%	
.ca	Canada	230	0.68%	
.nl	Netherlands	86	0.25%	
.nz	New Zealand	81	0.24%	
.id	Indonesia	67	0.20%	
.org	Non-Profit Organizations	50	0.14%	
.hk	Hong Kong	46	0.13%	
.sa	Saudi Arabia	41	0.12%	
.ae	United Arab Emirates	41	0.12%	
.tw	Taiwan, Province of China	41	0.12%	
.de	Germany	40	0.11%	

.fr	France	38	0.11%
.se	Sweden	37	0.11%
.ch	Switzerland	37	0.11%
.bn	Brunei Darussalam	36	0.10%
.kr	Korea, Republic of	33	0.09%
.th	Thailand	31	0.09%
.at	Austria	30	0.08%
.dk	Denmark	27	0.08%
.be	Belgium	25	0.07%
.ph	Philippines	24	0.07%
.it	Italy	22	0.06%
.in	India	20	0.05%
.gr	Greece	18	0.05%
.fi	Finland	17	0.05%
.za	South Africa	17	0.05%
.es	Spain	16	0.04%
.no	Norway	16	0.04%
.ie	Ireland	15	0.04%
.gov	US Government	14	0.04%
.mx	Mexico	11	0.03%
.mil	US Military	10	0.02%

Table 2: Geographical breakdown of visitors to www.wao.org.my; November 2000 – March 2004; up to the minimum of 10 visitors
Articles posted on the website

07-Jan-2003	Press Statement - Perlis Policy on Polygamy
07-Jan-2003	Joint Press Statement - Death Penalty To Child Rapists
07-Jan-2003	Press Statement - Mandatory Death by Hanging for Child Rapists
07-Jan-2003	Press Statement - Sex Education to Curb Illegitimate Children
07-Jan-2003	Event: Rock, Soul & Blues - 16 Days Activism on Gender Violence
07-Jan-2003	Know Your Rights – Register to Vote
07-Jan-2003	Know Your Rights - Rights Under Remand
27-Feb-2003	International Women's Day 2003, Kuching, Sarawak
27-Feb-2003	Joint Press Statement - International Women's Day 2003

27-Feb-2003	<u>Press Statement - "Snitch on Hubbies" to Curb Prostitution</u>
27-Feb-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Sexual Assault</u>
27-Feb-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Abusive Behaviour and Change</u>
31-Mar-2003	<u>Joint Press Statement - Malaysian NGOs on US-led Attack on Iraq</u>
31-Mar-2003	<u>Talking Points - Violence of War on Women</u>
31-Mar-2003	<u>Press Statement - International Women's Day 2003</u>
31-Mar-2003	<u>Campaign - "Monogamy, My Choice"</u>
31-Mar-2003	<u>Kesan Poligami Terhadap Wanita</u>
31-Mar-2003	<u>Women Do Not Provoke Rape</u>
31-Mar-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Polygamy</u>
31-Mar-2003	<u>Know Your Rights- Muslim Inheritance Laws (Faraid)</u>
30-Apr-2003	<u>Talking Points - Policing Powers, Checking Morality</u>
30-Apr-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Khalwat (Caught in Close Proximity for "Immoral" Acts</u>
30-Apr-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Harta Sepencarian (Property Acquired through Joint Effort)</u>
31-May-2003	<u>WAC on Political Prisoners under the ISA</u>
31-May-2003	<u>Talking Points - HIV/AIDS, Stigma & Religion</u>
31-May-2003	<u>Talking Points - May Day: The Invisible Workforce</u>
31-May-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Women and HIV/AIDS</u>
15-Jun-2003	<u>Event - Charlie's Angel: Full Throttle, Charity Premier</u>
15-Jun-2003	<u>Talking Points - Wonder (where's the) Woman Action Hero</u>
30-Jun-2003	<u>Talking Points - A Safer Space for Women</u>
30-Jun-2003	<u>Volunteer Speaks! Fiza's Experience at WAO</u>
30-Jun-2003	<u>Poem - <i>Suri</i></u>
30-Jun-2003	<u>June Dialogue Circle - Freedom of Expression & Censorship of Women</u>
30-Jun-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Rights as a Foreign Wife of a Malaysian Citizen</u>
31-July-2003	<u>Comment - "Sex in the City"</u>
31-July-2003	<u>Letter - Malaysian Airlines Discriminatory Retirement Policy</u>
31-July-2003	<u>Comment - 13 Year Old Boy Convicted of Murder</u>
31-July-2003	<u>Keynote Speech for Canny Ong's Memorial by Marina Mahathir</u>
31-July-2003	<u>Joint Press Statement - Censorship of the Arts</u>
31-July-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Drug Rape</u>
31-Aug-2003	<u>Fair Space for Open Discussion – Handover of Memorandum to SUHAKAM on Sexuality</u>
31-Aug-2003	<u>Memorandum to SUHAKAM</u>
31-Aug-2003	<u>Talking Points - Freedom to Create</u>
31-Aug-2003	<u>Talking Points - Macho, Macho Man</u>
31-Aug-2003	<u>Letter - "AirAsia Crew to Retire at 55"</u>
31-Aug-2003	<u>Know Your Rights - Child Abuse</u>
31-Aug-2003	<u>Dialogue Circle July/Aug - UN & Women</u>
30-Sep-2003	<u>Memorandum - Gender Bias Practices by Malaysian Airlines</u>

30-Sep-2003	Press Conference - Section 51 of the Law Reform (Marriage & Divorce) Act 1976
30-Sep-2003	Holding the Government Accountable - CEDAW Shadow Report Brochure
30-Sep-2003	Know Your Rights - Maintenance for Spouse & Former Spouse
30-Sep-2003	Talking Points - The Question of Rape?

Articles on WAO's website, notably from the Know Your Rights column, have also been reproduced in other websites (permission requested from: www.usj18.nwatch.net.my)

11.4 Other Websites

1. WAO is listed on the below websites as a useful contact:

<http://www.charitymalaysia.org/women.htm> - Charity Malaysia
<http://www.i-asianwomen.com.my/ngo/contact.htm> - I-Asianwomen.com
http://www.sigi.org/Resource/vaw_org.htm - Sisterhood Is Global Institute
<http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/VAWCamp/VAWdirectory.htm> - UNIFEM East and South East Asia, Asia Pacific Campaign on Elimination of Violence Against Women
<http://www.seri.com.my/spi/orglist.htm> - The Sustainable Penang Initiative - Directory of Environmental & Social Groups in Penang and Malaysia
<http://www.founder.net.my/ngo.htm> - Foundernet

2. The below websites provide a link to WAO:

<http://center.com.my/org.html> - Malaysian Centre
<http://www.hakam.org/links.htm> - National Human Rights Society (HAKAM)
<http://www.malaysia.net/aliran/ngos.html> - ALIRAN, NGOs List
<http://www.mom4mom.com> - Mom4mom.com (Online Community website for single mothers)
<http://www.arrow.org.my/docs/frame3.html> - ARROW, Useful Links, Women & Development
http://www.3r.com.my/link_content.html - 3R
<http://www.newwomen.net/> - Newwomen (NCWO) Portal
<http://www.big.or.jp/~aochan/malaysiasite/syoukaisita.html> - Big.org (Japanese site)
<http://www.sabah.org.my/bm/ngo/index.html> - Sabah
<http://www.mycen.com.my/central3.html> - TV Smith's Malaysia Central
<http://www.aviva.org/asiagrop.htm> - Asian Groups
http://dmoz.org/Society/People/Women/Issues/Domestic_Violence/ - Dmoz Open Directory Project
<http://center.com.my/org.html> - Malaysia Centre
http://www.mesra.net/links/Government/Non_Government_Organisation_NGO/ - Mesra.net, Malaysian Directories & Information
<http://www.isiswomen.org/womenet/index.html> - Isis International, Manila
<http://www.wluml.org/english/linkseng.htm> - Women Living Under Muslim Laws
<http://www.teennet.com.my/gaya.html> - Teen net

12.0 PUBLIC EDUCATION & MEDIA

12.1 Talks and Training

WAO gave 41 talks in 2004, which included trainings throughout the year to schools, colleges, corporate sectors, colleges, the police and various organisations on issues of violence against women, CEDAW, as well as WAO's roles and services.

12.2 Print Media

Aside from responding to issues, WAO is often called upon to comment on an issue. Yet another way of presenting our position was through our fortnightly column in the Sunday Mail.

Comments and interviews

- 1) 4 January 2003 - **Malay Mail** - "Family should come first, not Men's Lust!"
- 2) 6 January 2003 - **The Sun** - "Feminists kick up storm over Perlis' polygamous invitation"
- 3) 7 January 2003 - **The Sun** - "Women's groups target MB and Mufti"
- 4) 9 January 2003 - **New Straits Times** - "It's all about respect and honesty" – WAO on polygamy
- 5) 10 January 2003 - **Malay Mail** - "NGOS back Move" – on heavier penalties for those who commit rape
- 6) 11 January 2003 - **The Star** - "Family Last" – WAO called for "Family First, Polygamy last" approach
- 7) 11 January 2003 - **The Star** - "Other Penalties mulled" – WAO thanks government for heeding the objection for mandatory death for incest offenders
- 8) 11 January 2003 - **Berita Harian** - "Keluarga mangsa rogol tidak patut dihukum" – WAO on the proposal of incest law amendments.
- 9) 16 January 2003 - **New Straits Times** - "Artistes say no to violence against women" – WAO using music to bring awareness (16 Days Activism Campaign)
- 10) 11 February 2003 - **The Star** - "Candle Sale to help the needy" – Body shop candle sales in aid of WAO
- 11) 15 February 2003 - **Malay Mail** - "Women are not sexual objects, say NGO"

- 12) 15 February 2003 - **The Sun** - "Prostitution and infidelity trivialized, say women's groups"
- 13) 16 February 2003 - **The Star** - "So cool to be caring" –WAO on possible community service that students can undertake
- 14) 27 February 2003 - **Berita Harian** - "3R adakan episod khas Hari Wanita"
- 15) 4 March 2003 - **Mingguan Sarawak** - "Fahami Tangani isu wanita, seru Marina Mahathir" sambutan rancangan 3R, WAO
- 16) 6 March 2003 - **The Star** – "The cops rescue abused maid from couple"
- 17) 6 March 2003 - **Berita Harian** - " Pembantu ruman Indonesia dakwa dipaksa makan najis" – WAO helps file police report
- 18) 7 March 2003 - **Sarawak Tribune** - "New 3 R show promises to be different from previous episodes" – WAO helps choose themes of 3R series
- 19) 8 March 2003 - **The Star** - "Justice for the women" – WAO on International Women's Day
- 20) 9 March 2003 - **Sunday Tribune** - "TV3 scouting for talent, promote network programs" – WAO celebrating International Women's Day with other NGOS in Kuching
- 21) 9 March 2003 - **Sunday Tribune** – " Happy Family Vital to stop Violence Against Women"
- 22) 9 March 2003 - **The Star** - " Fun day with serious message" – informational booths set up during IWD celebration
- 23) 9 March 2003 - **New Sunday Times** - "Combating the women trafficking problems" – WAO provides statements about the growing problem of trafficking.
- 24) 21 March 2003 - **The Star** – "Rapist's Attitude the Issue" – Letter to the Editor.
- 25) 7 April 2003 - **New Straits Times** – "*Unwanted attention at the workplace*"
- 26) 18 May 2003 - **Sunday Mail** – "*Women's groups unhappy*"

- with changes*"- WAO signs on the endorsement of the Memorandum on disagreements to the recently passed Islamic Family Law (state of Selangor) 2003
- 27) 25 May 2003 - **Malay Mail** – “*IPO must be served to protect victims*” Nazlina (WAO social worker) gives her views on the importance of obtaining an IPO
- 28) 2 June 2003 - **The Star** – *Colours of concern* – “Finding new ways to build awareness of a perennial topic is a tough job and WAO has roped in advertising agencies to help out.”
- 29) 4 June 2003 - **The Sun** – “*Foreigners escape vice ring*” – three Chinese women taken to WAO after their escape.
- 30) 5 August 2003- - **New Straits Times** - “*Charity screening of Charlie’s Angel movie*”. WAO’s fundraising event.
- 31) 8 August 2003- - **New Straits Times** - “*RM21,000 from film premiere*”. WAO’s fundraising event.
- 32) 8 August 2003- - **Malay Mail** - “*Public satisfied with sentence meted out to rapist – cop*”. WAO commends the judge’s decision.
- 33) 10 August 2003 - - **Malay Mail** - “*Photo – finish fundraiser for WAO*”. WAO’s fundraising event.
- 34) 13 August 2003 - - **Utusan Malaysia** - “*Tugas suri rumah makin rencam*”. WAO talks about the multiple burden faced by women nowadays.
- 35) 17 August 2003 - - **Sunday Mail** - “*Act on Sexual Harassment*”. Women’s organizations call for the Government and companies to be more responsible and stringent on the issue of sexual harassment.
- 36) 17 August 2003 - - **Sunday Mail** - “*Helpline for survivors of rape*”. WAO highlights the Sexual Assault Helpline that was established to offer services to survivors of sexual abuse.
- 37) 25 August 2003 - - **Berita Harian** - “*Mampukah wanita Malaysia jadi “superwoman”?*”. WAO talks about the multiple burden faced by women nowadays.

- 38) 29 August 2003 - **Malay Mail** - "*Hope of Unity, More Rights for Women*". WAO was quoted on what we want to achieve for women by the year 2007.
- 39) 10 September 2003 - **The Star** - "*Show concern over rape laws, agencies told*". Anti-rape Task Force's press conference on the presentation of the Memorandum on Laws Relating to Rape.
- 40) 13 September 2003 - **New Straits Times** - "*Groups laud housing aid for single mums*". WAO commends the governments move to give priority to single mothers to buy low cost houses.
- 41) 15 September 2003 - **New Straits Times** - "*Custody turmoil*". Women's groups highlighting the conflict between the dual judicial system as seen by the problems faced by non-muslim women whose husband converts to Islam.
- 42) 20 September 2003 - **Malay Mail** - "*NGOs Against MAS' Gender Bias*". WAO talks about the unequal treatment of the female cabin crew.
- 43) 22 September 2003 - **Utusan Malaysia** - "*Kempen tingkatkan kesedaran orang ramai*". WAO's and Body Shop's Violence Against Women Campaign.
- 44) 22 September 2003 - **New Straits Times** - "*Towards a wider definition of rape*". Anti-rape Task Force's press conference on the presentation of the Memorandum on Laws Relating to Rape.
- 45) 29 September 2003 - **New Straits Times** - "*On a chatline to the troubled*". An article on WAO's counseling services.

Sunday Mail "Know Your Rights" column by WAO

WAO continued with the fortnightly column in the Sunday Mail up till March. "*Know Your Rights*" highlights issues related to women's human rights based on WAO's case studies.

The following were the topics published:

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 12 January 2003 | - | Polygamy |
| 26 January 2003 | - | Adoption (Part 1) |
| 9 February 2003 | - | Adoption (Part 2) |
| 23 February 2003 | - | Maintenance for Spouse and Ex-Spouse |
| 9 March 2003 | - | Polygamy |
| 23 March 2003 | - | Muslim Inheritance Laws (Faraid) |

Sunday Mail "Talking Points" column

WAO started a new fortnightly column in the Sunday Mail in April 2003. Initially positioned as a "Know Your Rights" piece, it is now more focused on current issues related to women's rights. It is also aimed at initiating a debate on changing perceptions. The following are the topics:

6	April 2003	-	Violence of War on Women
20	April 2003	-	Policing Powers, Checking Women's Morality
4	May 2003	-	May Day : The Invisible Workforce
18	May 2003	-	Another look at Lipstick, Blusher and Paint
1	June 2003	-	HIV/AIDS, Stigma and Religion
15	June 2003	-	Wonder (where's the) Women Action Hero
29	June 2003	-	A Safer Space for Women
27	July 2003	-	Can I Say What I Think Now?
10	August 2003	-	Macho, Macho Man
24	August 2003	-	Freedom to Create
7	September 2003	-	The Question of Rape?
21	September 2003	-	Pop Quiz on the F – word

Note: All of the above articles on rights have been posted on the WAO website at www.wao.org.my

12.3 Television

WAO appeared on television 5 times throughout the year, as guest speakers on current women's issues or commenting on news related to women. WAO has appeared in NTV7, TV3, RTM 1 & ASTRO.

12.4 Radio

WAO initiated a radio info drama series on air through THR.fm in Bahasa Malaysia and Tamil. This radio project is sponsored by the Ministry of Women and Family Development and THR.fm. This fortnightly programme on women's rights starts with the airing of the drama and is followed by a discussion between the DJ and a WAO staff.

The following are the topics, which were aired:

In Bahasa Malaysia (THR Gegar) the topics were

- Child Sexual Abuse and Incest
- Young marriages
- Substance Abuse
- Foreign Marriages
- Dowry
- Family property
- Single mothers
- Family relationships
- Second wife and poligamy
- Child custody and maintenance
- Sexual Harassment
- Empowerment
- Domestic Violence

In Tamil (THR Raga)

- Empowerment of young women
- Second wife - What should I do
- Child Custody and Maintenance
- Conversion
- Remarriage, single again
- Documents & registration
- Incest & Child Sexual Abuse
- Family relationships
- Gender stereotyping
- Foreign Spouse
- Sexual Harassment
- Violence Against Women

12.5 SPECIAL EVENTS

12.5.1 International Women's Day 8TH March

International Women's Day was held at the Waterfront, in Kuching, Sarawak on 8th March. Collaborating with 3R, the young women's television programme, as well as AWAM once again, we took activism for women's rights to East Malaysia and partnered with Sarawak Women for Women Society (SWWS) in making the event an awareness raising success. Most of the staff and 2 volunteers trooped to the Waterfront Kuching and set up an information booth and legal aid clinic which was opened throughout the day.

12.5.2 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, 25 November – 10 December

This will be the 5th year that that WAO joined this global campaign, and this year we organized a myriad of activities in honor of this global campaign.

25 November - We kicked off the campaign with 7 newspaper articles published over the 16 days in The Star newspaper.

30 November- A non-violent self-defense workshop was held at Shangri-La Hotel.

3 December - A radio talk show was aired on Radio 4, informing the public of their basic sexual rights. Man V. an organisation for men, who oppose gender violence, was invited to share their views.

4-10 December - 2500 whistles that were donated by Syarikat Prasarana Negara Berhad (SPNB) were distributed at KLCC, Masjid Jamek, Plaza Rakyat and Sentral LRT stations. WAO also set up information booths in these locations to increase public awareness of violence against women, and the services offered by us.

5-7 December – The Stonor Center kindly provided their premises for our film festival. featuring movies like *The Accused*, *The Color Purple* and *Malena* which dealt with issues such as rape and domestic violence.

6 December - Commemorating the Montreal Massacre, a short documentary about it was screened in Sunway College. WAO also set up an information booth to further educate the public about women's issues.

13. 0 PUBLICATIONS

We produced 4 newsletters and 2 brochures on CEDAW. The first brochure outlined CEDAW principles and the second brochure explained the process of the Shadow Report. Since we did not produce an Annual Review for 2002, Annual Review 2003 incorporated the 20th anniversary articles.

14. 0 VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

In 2003, we conducted 8 volunteer orientations on an average of 1 per month. Most of the new volunteers were aware of WAO from the website, through word of mouth and through our public awareness campaigns.

From 20 existing volunteers, the number increased to 43 (excluding the existing 9). There were various activities conducted throughout the year by volunteers including classes in arts & crafts, aerobics, English lessons, computer lessons and dance classes. As for the CCC children, there was always volunteers' coaching them.

A painting project was organized involving the residents and volunteers who managed to paint the rooms in the Refuge. The paint was donated through a contact of one of the volunteers. To facilitate easier communication, support and coordination an e-group called wao_volunteers@yahoo.com was started. During the 16 Days Activism against Gender Violence, we had a large number of volunteers who came in full force to assist us.

15. OUT-REACH PROGRAMME WITH THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES

WAO began providing counselling as an out-reach program with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) on 17 Sept 2003. In the previous year we had provided shelter for 4 asylum seekers, and the UNCHR then requested for one social worker to be based once a week as there were female refugees and asylum seekers who are surviving sexual and domestic violence. Chong See Mun was assigned to be stationed at the UNCHR every Wednesday.

By end December 2003, she had counseled 30 asylum seekers and refugees to date for the project. The clients were largely from Myanmar, who had sought refuge in Malaysia due to oppression of the Burmese military government.

The problems faced were:

- * *They might have experienced rape, sexual harassment, torture, or humiliation while in Myanmar.*
- * *In Malaysia, they might be experiencing or have experienced rape or sexual harassment by their co-tenant, the police force or a stranger.*
- * *They might miss their family deeply but are not able to return to their country of origin where they reside.*

- * *They are hardly able to contact their family due to financial difficulties as well as the poor communication systems in their country of origin.*
- * *They don't have legal status in Malaysia and are therefore constantly harassed by the authority (who threaten to send them to detention camps if they refuse or can't afford to bribe them)*
- * *They aren't able to secure a job, and are consequently unable to send money back to their family. This can make them feel guilty and engage in self-blame.*
- * *They are also worried about whether they can obtain a refugee status from UNHCR. If not, they would be stranded between countries, where returning to their own country would mean certain death by execution. Their greatest fear is the dead end road that would face them if they aren't able to obtain a refugee status.*
- * *Some of them present psychosomatic symptoms. For example, after an application for a refugee status was rejected, an individual suffered from a severe gastric problem.*
- * *Often they possess low self-esteem as well as a negative self-image.*

Counselling sessions help the women recognize their strong spirit, sense of survival, resilience and courage they possessed as they endured the hardships of living in what is effectively a limbo state in Malaysia.

16.0 VISITORS TO WAO

WAO received 6 visits from international organizations and associations from Philippines, Thailand, Mongolia, Indonesia, East Timor and Cambodia who were briefed on domestic violence and how WAO is organized as a Refuge.

17.0 FUNDARISING ACTIVITIES

Fundraising was particularly successful as we managed to raise RM1,000,000 which while was a great achievement, is not that large if we consider our annual running cost of about RM 700, 000. WAO's first charity film premier was a hit with Charlie's Angels. The Malaysia Tattler Ball and the innovative Bulgari photo project also brought in significant funds and publicity. Our thanks to Florence Fang of Tattler. WAO must also record our thanks to Datin Alissa Fitri who volunteered for both these events.

Notably WAO managed to receive project funds from the Finnish Embassy (women's programmes), Canadian (radio project) and British funds (CEDAW Shadow Report).

Governments funds (10% of the total funds raised) were granted to WAO from the Welfare Department and the Ministry of Women and Family Development.