



## WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2009

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

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Ambiga Sreenevasan

Grace Lim (Co-opted on 14/07/2009)

Yvonne Ng (Resigned 09/06/2009)

Staff in attendance Ivy Josiah (Executive Director)

Sharmini Kanesamoorthy  
(Finance & Administrative Manager)

Annie Varghese  
(Projects & Administrative Manager)

Wong Su Zane (Social Work Manager)

-w.e.f July 2009

**iv. WAO Committees, Groups and Coalitions in 2009**

- 1) Staff & Finance Committee
- Meera Samanther  
Mok Chuang Lian  
Sharon Hariharan  
Carol Chin

Staff in attendance Ivy Josiah (Executive Director)

Sharmini Kanesamoorthy (Finance & Administrative Manager)

- 2) Legal Aid Centre (LAC) Meera Samanther
- Representatives Jessie Ang
- Nazlina Abdul Ghani
- 3) Coordinator for United Nations High Wong Su Zane

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Programme

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 4) Anak Angkat Coordinator   | Jessie Ang   |
| 5) Volunteer Coordinator   | Annie Varghese<br>Ariane Le Jeune  |
| 6) Website Design & Content  | Thillai Mohanadas<br>Ariane Le Jeune   |
| 7) National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) Representatives    | Shanthi Dairiam<br>Nazlina Abdul Ghani   |
| 8) <b>Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) Representatives</b> | Ivy Josiah<br>Meera Samanther<br>Shanthi Dairiam<br>Shoba Aiyar (until August 2009)<br>Thillai Mohanadas<br>(until March 2009)<br>Kerina Francis |
| 8.1) Fiesta Feminista  | Vizla Kumaresan (Co- Coordinator)  |

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
|   | Gowri Shanmuganathan            |
|   | Kerina Francis                  |
|   | Meera Samanther                 |
| 8.2) Sexuality Group                      | Meera Samanther                 |
|   | Kerina Francis                  |
|   | Ivy Josiah                      |
| 9) Penan Support Group                    | Wong Su Zane                    |
|   | Ivy Josiah                      |
|   | Meera Samanther                 |
| 10) Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC)          | Ivy Josiah                      |
| Representative                            |                                 |
| 11) Member of the National Advisory       | Ivy Josiah                      |
| Council (formerly known as NACIWID)       |                                 |
| 12) Migration Working Group               | Kerina Francis                  |
| Representatives                           | Ivy Josiah                      |
|   | Meera Samanther                 |
|   | Wong Su Zane                    |
| 13) SUHAKAM Sub Committee on CEDAW        | Ivy Josiah                      |
|   | Kerina Francis                  |
| 14) Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance | Shoba Aiyar (until August 2009) |

Malaysia (RRAAM)

Wong Su Zane  
(w.e.f September 2009)

15) Association of Southeast Asian Nations      Lee Shook Fong  
(ASEAN) Women's Caucus                              Ivy Josiah

**v. Staff**

**Refuge**

Shoba Aiyar                              Social Work Manager  
(resigned August 2009)

Wong Su Zane                              Social Work Manager  
(w.e.f. 15 July 2009)

Normah Md. Nor                              Night Supervisor

Jessie Ang                              Social Worker

Nazlina Abdul Ghani                      Social Worker

Umadevi a/p Rajah Denram      Social Worker

Siti Salina bt Shamsudin              Social Worker  
(Resigned February 2009)

Puveshini Rao Suabramaniam      Social Worker  
(w.e.f. September 2009)

**Child Care Centre (CCC)**

Mary Selina Santhanasamy Child Social Worker

Engammah Anumiah (Vijaya) Child Minder

Hanif Muawanah Child Minder

Kalayivani Vasuthevan Child Minder

**Executive Staff**

Ivy N. Josiah Executive Director

Annie Varghese Projects & Administrative Manager

Sharmini Kanesamoorthy Finance & Administrative Manager

Shoba Aiyar Social Work Manager

(resigned August 2009)

Wong Su Zane Social Work Manager

(w.e.f July 2009)

**Programme Officer**

Thillai Mohandas Programme Officer

(Resigned March 2009)

Kerina Francis Programme Officer

(Resigned October 2009)

**Administrative Staff**

Ruhil Amal binti Abdul Razak Administrative Assistant

(Resigned April 2009)

Joanne Yoong

Administrator (May – June 2009)

Ammy Juliet Jefery Gilimon  
2009)

Administrator cum Projects Assistant (w.e.f. July

**Projects Assistant**

Mardhiah Yaakob

Projects Assistant

(Resigned February 2009)

Suzaidatul Joanna Sukarjo

Projects Assistant

(w.e.f. December 2009)

**Contract Staff**

Rimla Tariq Changi

Programme Officer

(1 February 2008 – 31 January 2009)

Noor Diyana Yahaya

Social Worker: Women's Programmes

(August 2009 to February 2010)



## 1.0 WAO SERVICES

### 1.1 Statistics for overall services

	2009	2008
Refuge	127 women & 122 children	120 women & 91 children
Face to Face Counselling (FFC)	138	72 women
FFC for refugee women	50	60 sessions
Telephone counselling	1228	1318 calls
E-mail enquiries	174	146 e-mails
Child Care Centre ( CCC) children	24	18 children

#### 1.1.1 Refuge services

The Refuge, also referred to as the Shelter, has seen an increase in residents over the past three years. Last year we registered 127 women and 122 children. There were 119 new residents.

Reasons for seeking shelter	Number	Percentage
Domestic violence	89	74.8
Single mother pregnancy	6	5.9
Rape	1	0.8
No place to stay	7	5.9
MDW Abuse	4	3.4
Family problems	2	1.7
Trafficked	3	2.5
Others	7	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 1.2 Profile of women at the Refuge

36 women stayed for less than one week, 23 stayed up to two weeks and the rest stayed between 1 to 3 months. Only eleven women stayed for more than three months. 92 of the residents came from the Klang Valley. We had 1 woman from Sarawak. In terms of age, 6 women were below 20 years of age, 100 were between 20 to 39 years, and 4 were aged fifty years and above.

Nationality-wise, 94 were Malaysians, 11 were from Myanmar, 6 were from Indonesia and the others were from countries such as Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Iraq.

The diversity in the ages and ethnicities of the women adds to the challenges we face but makes our work more interesting. Language is not generally a barrier, even when we had some Myanmar women and indigenous Sarawakians at the Refuge. Initially they could not understand us but, with sign language and a mixture of simple English and Malay, communication was possible and the clients could tell us their needs. Older women and younger women who were miles apart in their thinking became good friends, like mothers and daughters, or sisters. When hearing each other's stories, their own difficulties often felt trivial and they gave one another encouragement and companionship, something that they may not find elsewhere. ***Some residents continued their friendships even after leaving the shelter.***

There were also misunderstandings and it was not always easy to settle the disputes, as each woman claimed to be right or wanted her way. Although the staff intervened if necessary, the residents were generally left to settle their own disputes. They thus learnt to negotiate and settle their differences amicably.

### **1.1.3 Domestic violence survivors**

Out of the 119 women seeking shelter, 89 were survivors of domestic violence, compared to 62 in the previous year. Out of this, only 22 went back to their husbands after they had a chance to think about their options. Those who returned did so for various reasons, including: the need to settled financial issues; their children wanted to be with their fathers; foreign spouses depended on their husbands to renew their social visas; or they just wanted to give their husbands another chance after the husbands promised to change.

#### ***Dynamics in domestic violence***

Every year our beliefs about domestic violence are reinforced as we again find that all the women were psychologically abused, 95% were physically abused and about 35% were sexually abused. 80% of the perpetrators were intimate partners (husbands, co-habitees or boyfriends) and the rest were close family members. 35 partners had a history of abuse in their families and 25 of these partners had been systematically abused in some form everyday. This had resulted in many of them [the women feeling so helpless that they attempted suicide.

34 of them the domestic violence survivors had never left their homes before. Only when the violence became unbearable and they feared the abuse, did they flee to WAO, either on their

own or with the assistance of friends. At least 22 had attempted to leave once and there were 9 who had left home more than 5 times. Each time, the family members reconciled the spouses, or the woman's husband came searching for her.

Interestingly, 40% of the women said there was no real "reason" why they were abused; abusers just did it when they fancied doing so. About 90% felt their partners were jealous and suspected that the women were cheating on them, especially when the women refused to give in to the partners' sexual desires or when they dressed attractively. The women felt these suspicions were unjustified as they were confined to either their homes or offices. The insults and vulgarities they were subjected to were just as bad as, or worse than, being physically violated. Many of the women just did not want to elaborate further, as their experiences were too painful, or beyond description.

### ***Police reports***

At the Refuge, the social workers attend to the residents as soon as they arrive, providing a listening ear first, enquiring how to assist them and then eventually informing them about the options such as making police reports, getting medical help and/or obtaining Interim Protection Orders (IPOs). This year 41 survivors of domestic violence had made police reports prior to coming to WAO and we only assisted 25 women to make police reports. As many as 17 women did not want to make police reports as they felt it was shameful to go to the police station, or they just wanted to be left alone.

#### **1.1.4 Migrant Domestic Workers (MDW)**

Once again, there was a lot of media coverage in the newspapers on "maid" abuse (e.g. <http://www.mmail.com.my/content/maid-abuse-malaysia-shelter-full-horror-stories>).

At WAO we prefer to use the term "domestic worker" rather than "maid" as the former is rights-based, and recognises the rights that a domestic worker should have, as an employee.

The Indonesian Embassy now has a shelter within their compound and this has to some extent decreased the numbers of women needing our services. At our shelter there were 4 migrant domestic workers: 2 from Indonesia and 2 from Cambodia. They came to us through referrals from the police, embassies or members of the public. Most were between 20 to 39 years of age, although we had one young woman who was only 16 years old.

All 4 women were abused by their employers and were dissatisfied with the payment of their wages.

For three cases it took less than 2 weeks to help settle their issues, while the fourth case took 3 months. The MDW either returned to their embassy (1) or to the agencies (1), or returned to their home country. One MDW went on to live independently in Kuala Lumpur.

As soon as a MDW comes in, the social worker listens to her story to find out what she expects WAO to do. She is informed of all the possible choices available in her case. Most often, police reports have been made prior to the MDW coming to the shelter. However, the social worker follows up with the investigating officer on the status of the case, to find out if the abuser is being charged or if the MDW could get her passport, belongings and wages. Sometimes we help the MDW to negotiate with her employer to get her salary and a flight ticket home.

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

In order to facilitate their return abroad, the social workers go to Putrajaya to obtain the “checkout memo” before the departure date. The social workers themselves drive the MDWs to the airport and see them safely onto the planes. In turn, the MDWs called or wrote to say they had arrived safely.



### **1.1.5 Single pregnant women**

There were 6 women between the ages of 20 years to 29 years who sought shelter to “hide” their pregnancy. One was a student who lived alone and wanted support towards her last trimester.

While at our shelter, they learnt about family planning, empowerment and soft skills such as how to write a resume, and interview and presentation skills.

The women revealed that they had known about family planning but did not pay much heed to it as they did not anticipate getting pregnant while they were single, and would only have considered family planning options after marriage. All 6 of them had consensual relationships. However, their boyfriends abandoned them when they found out about the pregnancy.

Most had not gone for pre-natal checkups and were sent immediately to the nearby ‘Klinik Kesihatan’. WAO’s social worker, Nazlina, talked to them about the delivery process, how to look after their bodies and post-natal hygiene. Most often, Nazlina acts as our ‘bidan’ and adviser, providing information to the expectant mother.

All the women except one gave their babies up for adoption, arranged by the hospitals where they delivered. Some of them brought their babies back to the shelter to show them to their friends and to spend some time with their infants before handing them over to the adoptive parents. These are always tearful farewells, and thus some prefer to turn their babies over at the hospital and return home immediately.

The one mother who decided to keep her baby planned to find a baby sitter and her boyfriend had begun saving up for a wedding and their life together.

### ***The Malakoff Project: A booklet for single and pregnant women***

Social workers mooted the idea of handbook for women at the Refuge. We received funds from Malakoff Corporation to hire a writer for this project which was completed end March 2010.

#### **1.1.6 Challenging Cases**

Although the majority of WAO’s cases are domestic violence cases, we deal increasingly with refugee-cum-trafficking situations. We highlight 2 such cases below:

##### ***Case 1***

A young Myanmar woman who had been trafficked to Malaysia stayed at the Refuge for more than 18 months. Collaborating with Trafford, Thailand, World Vision Myanmar/Vietnam and UNIAP-Myanmar, and NGOs located in Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia and Vietnam, we were able to locate her family members in Myanmar whom she had not seen for at least 7 years.

The young woman was able to get proof of identification and a letter for her to return to Myanmar in late January from the Myanmar government. It took us another 6 weeks to get her a one-way travel document from the Myanmar Embassy. The police and immigration authorities were helpful in providing assistance to obtain her “checkout memo” and special passes.

Malaysia Airlines Berhad also assisted by sponsoring one flight ticket to Yangon and one return flight ticket for a social worker to accompany her during the trip. The woman is now home with her family members in Kyaing Tong.

## **Case 2**

This is a trafficking case that involved a 9 year old Sri Lankan citizen, Suki. Thani, her mother, had been referred to WAO by Renuka, a lawyer. According to Thani, she had asked her sister’s friend, a Malaysian whom she had met in Sri Lanka, for help to send Suki to France where another sister resided. Thani wanted a better future for her daughter as Sri Lanka was still reeling from the civil war. The Malaysian woman brought Suki back to KL and tried to falsify her passport. The Malaysian immigration authorities caught them and immediately sent Suki to the Child Protection Centre (run by the Welfare Department) since she was needed as a witness under the Anti-Trafficking Act.

Thani flew in from Sri Lanka when she heard about the detention of her daughter and contacted the Sri Lankan Tamil Refugee group who in turn sought help from Renuka.

At WAO everyone, including the Executive Director, tried to persuade the welfare and immigration authorities that Suki should be placed with her mother Thani at our shelter, or conversely we requested that Thani be permitted to stay with Suki at the Child Protection Centre. However, all we managed to do was to secure limited visits for Thani so that Suki could spend some time with her.

After a few weeks, at the conclusion of the court case, Suki was sent to an immigration detention centre that same day. Again we tried to insist that Suki should be returned to the Child Protection Centre and not kept at the KLIA Airport detention centre for 2 days before being flown out to Sri Lanka, but to no avail. A formal complaint was made to the Anti-Trafficking Council which is the coordinating body that monitors the implementation of the Anti Trafficking Act.

Finally, after negotiations with members of the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) party and immigration authorities, we managed to arrange for both mother and daughter to be sent to Sri Lanka together.

### **1.1.7 Women’s programmes at the Refuge**

Throughout the year, numerous activities were carried out as part of the women’s and children’s programmes. None of these would have been possible if not for the efforts and dedication of many of our volunteers, such as Ngan Yu, Annie, Poh Kim, Vivienne, Kavita, Mrs

Doraisamy, to mention just a few. Through our diverse volunteers, we were able to design a variety of programmes that catered to the different interests of the women at the shelter. The programmes ranged from baking lessons, to beading lessons, computer classes, yoga activities and English classes.

We attended a Christmas dinner at the Bangsar Seafood Garden Restaurant. The Annual Get Together at the Refuge was successfully organised by Umadevi and assisted by Noor Diyana. We managed to gather around 150 women (ex-residents and residents) and their children for food, fun and games

### Children performing at the Annual Gathering



#### 1.1.8 Children's programmes at the Refuge

In 2009, we had 105 children stay at our refuge temporarily with their mothers who sought shelter. The children ranged in age from newborns to young adults of 18 years. During the children's stay at the refuge, our social workers undertake the responsibility of conducting activities that are beneficial for the children's mental, physical and also social development. Social workers also carry out assessments for the children to identify and evaluate their coping mechanisms in situations involving violence.

The children's programmes generally take place from 9.30am to 11am and are conducted by our social worker, Uma, and our intern, Alex. The activities provide the children with the opportunity to engage in both indoor and outdoor activities such as games, art, singing, dancing, story-telling, puzzles and etc. Attention is also given to the children's education, and they are tutored in basic subjects such as Mathematics, English, Malay, Science and general knowledge. In addition, the children's programme includes discussions and sharing about positive attitudes, and the importance of cleanliness and safety.

#### 1.1.9 Collaboration with Sponsors

- **Project with Malakoff Corporation Berhad**

This year, in conjunction with Malakoff Corporation Berhad's sponsorship we employed an officer for the women's programme. With the new officer, WAO was able to conduct English classes and computer classes. Besides that, Malakoff donated several computers to our refuge. With the new facilities in place, we are now carrying out computer classes for more women.

With Malakoff's contribution, WAO has now started up a fund for five single pregnant women who wish to start a new life after they give birth. Furthermore, the women' programme officer also researched and wrote a booklet on being single and pregnant that was launched on 20 April 2010.

➤ **Medical Health Camp**

A group of 4 medical students from the School of Medicine & Health Sciences, Monash University, volunteered with us to conduct health-related programmes and to raise awareness on breast and cervical cancer. Together with Quota Club, the students also conducted a half-day health camp in June 2009 at the refuge. During the camp, the women were informed about the importance of taking care of themselves, to get check-ups on their health, the importance of good nutrition, etc. Around 35 residents and ex-residents attended the health camp.

➤ **Home-Based Child Care Training Camp**

We conducted a half-day training programme in collaboration with Quota Club at the Singgahsana Hotel. The training not only exposed the women to an opportunity to set-up a home based childcare under the guidance and financial assistant from the Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita (JPW). At present, 3 women are awaiting results from the Secretariat of the Projek Asuhan Prihatin on whether or not they will be able to participate in that programme.

➤ **GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd**

While the main focus of most of our women's programmes have been to provide the women with skills, some of our programmes this year focused on employment. A notable program is the single-parents employment program with GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, where the women were offered flexible working hours and conditions for job opportunities within Giant, Cold Storage and Guardian Pharmacies.

### **Thank you to other sponsors**

WAO must put on record our thanks to donors who have been supporting us for over 10 years. *Gardenia Confectionary* for donating bread and kaya to both the CCC and the Shelter every week. *Malayan Flour Mills* gives flour, cooking oil and sugar every month. *Brian Lariche* manages to collect groceries, toiletries and detergents for our Refuge every month. A very special thanks to all donors and sponsors who donated groceries and to all those who sponsored food and door gifts and presents for our year end gathering.

## **1. 2 Women with Court Cases**

This year, the social workers and the advocacy programme officer continued accompanying our 7 clients who had court cases. In 2 cases, the court had “subpoenaed” the social workers to be one of the witnesses for the cases.

Among the cases, 4 are rape cases (2 involved minors), 1 is a domestic violence case, 1 is a violation of an interim protection order, 1 is a divorce under fasakh and 1 is foreign domestic worker abuse case. Progress was seen in all the cases as the clients testified and various witnesses came to give evidence. Judgement on the cases will be given in 2010.

There were challenges within these court cases, for instance, in one of the cases (gang rape), the file had gone to four different courts because the magistrate was transferred and the client had four different Deputy Public Prosecutors (DPP) and Assistant Public Prosecutors for her defence. In this case of gang rape, there are 4 charges however the accused was acquitted of one charge because lack of evidence, the other 3 charges are cases which are currently on trial.

In yet another case of a minor who was raped, the case was prolonged for 3 years, thus far she and some of the witnesses has given their testimony. In this case, however, we must commend the session’s judge who was sensitive and allowed the case to go on despite the defence lawyer losing his papers and wanting several postponements.

There were 2 rape cases began the trial in 2009. One of the case were prolonged five years, the client had finished her testimony. The other case which involved a minor who was raped by mother’s ex-boyfriend, the case was postponed 4 times. During the last hearing in December 2009, the accused requested the case to be postponed again as his lawyer was not there but the session’s judge insisted for the trial to be continued even without the defence lawyer.

One domestic violence case from 2005 finally went to court in August 2009. Her husband changed his plea to guilty. He was fined for RM700. We thought that this was unusually low as it appeared that the court did consider the history and length of abuse the client went through. To note that maximum fine for a Section 323 offence, i.e. causing hurt under the Penal Code is RM 5,000.

In another case of a violation of an Interim Protection Order (although the investigation on the initial DV report is still ongoing) the magistrate made a decision that the accused i.e. the ex-husband of our client was not guilty. The client was not happy about the judgement and she has filed an appeal.

WAO would like to record our thanks to the watching brief lawyers for who represented our clients. They are Norleini Kamal of Mssrs Rusmah Arunan & Associates, Renuka S. from T. Balaksubramaniam Advocates & Solicitors and Meera Samanther.

## **1. 3 Telephone Counselling**

There was a slight decrease in calls from the previous year; 1229 in 2009 compared to 1318 in 2008. In the first half of the year, we received an average of 130 calls a month and it slowly dwindled to about 80 a month. Most of the callers called in for domestic violence issues although there were other issues such as marriage problems, problems with their children and rights in a marriage. Most of the callers were from the Klang Valley, but there were callers as far as Sabah and Sarawak and the East Coast. Many knew of our numbers from the telephone operator or after reading about us and our services in the various newspapers and magazines.

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

#### **1.4 Face to Face Counselling**

The number of women who sought this service increase from 72 to 138 this year. Only about 14 of them were our ex-clients and residents who wanted us to spend time with them. There were many new clients who did not need shelter but wanted counselling and guidance about their problems and issues similar to those phoning in. These women were happier to be meet a social worker in person as they could communicate better and have a clearer understanding of their solutions than if they talked over the phone.

#### **1.5 E-mail Enquiries**

We received 174 e-mails and it comes to an average of 15 emails a month. Some of them are follow-up e-mails pertaining to domestic violence or their rights in a marriage.

However, there were months in the middle of the year where there were more than 24 enquires and these were from college students and researchers who wanted to know more about our services or wanted to interview a domestic violence survivor. They were mostly for their term paper or projects whereby they had about a week to complete. Sometimes it was quite frustrating as the students do not read and research much and ask a lot of basic questions for which they could have easily obtained the information from our website. There was one situation where the students gave us 100 sets of questionnaires but WAO declined!.

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

In 2009, we received several emails from Australia agencies which supported refugees. Their clients were in Australia seeking refugee status.

## **1.6 The Child Care Centre (CCC)**

The CCC is a very special children's home, only for the children of our clients who had sought shelter at the Refuge. The children may have witnessed or underwent domestic abuse themselves. The children stay with us from one month to 3 years or more. This is time given to allow the mother to sought out her matters - her job, establish her network of support, be able to have some financial stability and most of all to be able to get a home of their own.

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

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

### **1.6.1 Routine at the CCC**

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

In the evening there is play time in the garden, more homework, and tuition and by 9 pm, all must be in bed.

Mothers visit or stay over during the weekend or on their off days every week. They are also encouraged to call and speak with their children as often as possible. This is to reassure the child that their mother is very much in touch with them and know what is going on. Mothers take the children home during the school holidays unless they unable to as they have yet to establish their own home.

### **1.6.2 Number of children**

In 2009 we had 24 children staying at the CCC. There were 12 boys and 12 girls from 11 mothers. Some children stay for only a couple months while others have stayed up to 3 years.

The following table is showing the number of children and the length of stay.

Length of stay	Number of children
3 Years	4
2 Years	3
1 Year	4
4 months	4
3 months	6
2 months	2
1 month	1

### **Refugee Children**

There were 4 refugee children who were in the CCC from April till August. One of the children attended kindergarten, while the other school going children were unable to go to school because they were refugees. However, the volunteers and teachers conducted language and maths classes for them. All of them have left WAO, as we were able to find a place with a teaching facility for refugee children in Selayang.

### **1.6.2 Volunteers at the CCC**

The staff are supported and complimented by a bigger group of volunteers who consistently come every week on different days to give extra classes in languages, science, maths, and drawing and counselling sessions. Sometimes they took the children for outings like swimming, going to the playground, aquarium or movies.

We put on record our thanks to these volunteers –

*Joginder Kaur, Impi Jassel, Vara, Rosita, Mr. Raj, Sharon Hariharan, Carol Chin, Sharon, Shireen Hariharan, Patricia Wong, Rachael Chew, Lee Su Ann, Eva San, Ling Fei Wen, Petra Gimbad, Melody Song Faye-Lynn, Michael Ooi, Denise and Dr. Jaya.*

There were two volunteer meetings in March and September respectively to introduce one another and to learn more about the CCC. Volunteers responded positively and wanted to be in the loop to know about the development of all the children and the activities. A book was started to write up on each volunteer's lesson plan and remarks so that the others could read for continuity.

### **1.6.3 Intern and male volunteer counsellor in Child Care Centre**

For the first time in history of Child Care Centre we have a male intern from Germany Philipp Kaufmann working in Child Care. He is teaching the children and taking care of the children in all their daily routines. He has been a good male role model for the children.

From September until December 2009, there was a male volunteer counsellor Lee Suan Seng who came in every week Tuesday to do individual and group counselling for children.

### **1.6.4 Donors support the Child Care Centre**

In 2009, we were fortunate to secure funding for the CCC from the Hong Leong Foundation, General Mills Foundation and the Kuok Foundation. The Hong Leong Foundation gave us money for 12 months starting April 2009 to May 2010, whilst the General Mills Foundation, (the latter being managed by United Way International) donated their sum of US \$ 15,000 to be utilised in 2009. Some OCBC credit card holders continue to direct their ringgit points to the CCC.

## **1.7 Working with asylum seekers and refugees**

Our work with the office of the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR) began in 2003 by sheltering two refugees and their children. The work expanded in 2004, whereby, 2 social workers took turns to be stationed at UNHCR premises at Bukit Petaling to counsel women who were traumatized by a crisis such as sexual assault or domestic violence.

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

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

In 2009, WAO provided 50 counselling sessions. These cases involved gang rape, rape, attempted rape, harassment and domestic violence. There were also other issues such as difficulty in coping in Malaysia and depression.

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

### **1.8 Legal Aid Clinic (LAC, Bar Council)**

The activities and objectives of the LAC/WAO clinic are:

- To assist WAO social workers in the refuge with telephone calls (give out information on domestic violence, divorce procedures, sexual harassment etc).
- To assist WAO clients to lodge police reports and accompany the clients to the hospital.
- To educate chambering students on NGO work and advocacy.

Prior to coming to WAO, the chambering students have training in 3 main areas; syariah law training, family law training and NGO based work. Syariah and family law trainings are conducted by LAC KL at their premises, whereas the women NGOs' training is conducted by SIS/AWAM/WAO at Sister in Islam's premises. During the syariah law training by a practicing syariah lawyer, the students will learn about different types of cases handled by the syariah court and their jurisdictions in family matters such as divorce, types of divorce, child custody and maintenance.

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

In addition, information is given to them on the violence against women issues, gender sensitization and feminist perspectives of the law. The latter is presented by Meera Samanther, the President of WAO. Wong Su Zane and Nazlina, our social workers conduct simple counselling techniques.

WAO receives one student each from LAC-KL and LAC-Selangor per batch. There are 4 to 5 batches a year. Last year (2009), we had ten (10) students, Tan Ai Yin, Heng Siew Yee, Chong Hui Lee, Chan Weili, Wan Rosalili Wan Rosli, Shamitha Vasavan, Ng Hsiao Shih, Natasha Qysana Ramen, Sharon Lai Yie Ling and Lim Qi Si who came once a week for 12 weeks in a stretch. After completing four weeks, they had to attend a mid term review to discuss their experiences and problematic cases at the allotted placements. Each handled telephone calls, face to face interviews, documentation of cases, compiling data of residents and ex residents. The students looked into the Immigration Act and its procedure to see what avenues foreign spouses had to renew visas and obtaining passports for a Malaysian child whose mother is foreign. They also accompanied some of the women to the courts, police stations and clinics.

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

Types of calls/cases the chambering students handled in 2009:

<b>Types of cases</b>	<b>Number of calls</b>
Domestic violence	48
Divorce procedure	50
Maintenance	13
Custody	20
Rape	8
Single mother	5
Sexual harassment	3
Housing problems	4
Financial problems	9
Marital affairs	3
Adoption	4
Others*	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>

## 2.0 SUPPORT SERVICES FOR EX RESIDENTS



### 2.1 Anak Angkat (AA) sponsorship programme

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

In 2009, WAO decided to increase the Anak Angkat sponsorship amount of RM60 to RM70 per child per month accordingly to match the rising cost of living. WAO still managed to find 32 sponsors to sponsor 43 children from 25 mothers.

The following sponsored one child each:

Mikhail Sivaneindren (Thanam) General Electric International Inc.

Julian C.H. Lee

Mageswari Nagaraju

Dr. Saradha Narayanan

Manjulla Dev

Karla Ranie

Malaysian Formosian Women's Association

Gunathevi Sinnadurai

Jacqueline Ann Surin

Sandeep Singh

Kanagambigai Letchmanan

Dr. Tan Lee Nak

Meinhardt (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd

Tracy Toh

Mrs. Jayalakshmi Pailoor

Chin Kean Wai

Mangala Gowri Subramaniam

Jana Rumminger

Toh Yung Fei

Cheong Oi Keng

Ananthan

Cheng Mee Kam	Indra Kulasegaran
Renee Marcia Chandran	Arne Hayn
Eswari Nagaraju	Subbiah/Kamal Gehi
Paul James Sapwell	Association British Women in Malaysia (ABWM)

The Soroptimist International Club of Damansara (5), Yayasan Tun Hamid (7) and Mahani and Friends (2) sponsored more than one child as indicated in brackets.

***“This money helps me so much, it is difficult to save any part of what I earn” said one AA mother.*** Mothers look forward to this support as it is a great relief for some of them, especially when they earn between RM 500 to RM750 per month, and have more than three (3) children. The money was used for schooling expenses and pocket money.

The sponsors are informed of their sponsored child/children at the beginning and are provided updates of their sponsored child/children’s progress in school. The sponsors were given progress reports of the family and their sponsored child.

Every year, WAO invites the Anak Angkat’s sponsors to our Annual Get-Together event to meet up with the mothers and their Anak Angkat child/ children. The sponsors can get to know their sponsored child/children better during this event. Some of the sponsors also brought gifts and took photos with the sponsored family.

## **2.2 Other forms of assistance for mothers**

***Quota Club International*** provided loans to our women to start their business and attend trainings or courses. Three (3) of our women have had their request for loans approved by Quota Club, one for a tailoring course, another for a kindergarten teacher training course and another for the start-up capital for a sundry shop.

***Soroptimist International Damansara*** has been funding some of our women to take up their driving license. Five (5) women are currently undergoing driving lessons.



### 3.0 INTERNS AT WAO

In 2009, from January to October, WAO hosted 11 interns in 2009 from Canada, United States, Australia, Germany and Malaysia. During their time with WAO, the interns gained much in-depth experience in domestic violence, its impact on women and children, and advocacy for women's human rights.

Being an integral part of the WAO team, the interns performed many tasks: answering phone calls, organizing children's and women's programmes, researching and writing, drafting WAO newsletters, accompanying women to courts, police stations and hospitals, and volunteering at our public education booths.

While most volunteered at the Refuge and CCC, some interns assisted in advocacy, public education and fund raising activities.

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

No	Name	From	Period
1	Andrei Xydas	University of Melbourne, Australia	19 January – 27 February
2	Ariane Lejuene De Schiervel	Antarabudaya Belgium	January 09 – January 2010
3	Candice Popke	University of Lethbridge, Canada	11 May – 19 June
4	Brittany Corsiato	University of Lethbridge, Canada	11 May – 19 June
5	Rebecca Jean Peacock	Alma College, USA	28 May – 11 June
6	Loy See May	University Tunku Abdul Rahman, M'sia	25 May – 29 August
7	Madeline Gribbon	University of Oregon, USA	6 June – 30 August
8	Michaela Corr	University of Oregon, USA	22 June – 4 September
9	Liew Suet Li	Mount Holyoke College, USA	8 June – 15 August
10	Tanya Stone	Edith Cowan University, Australia	13 July – 16 October

No	Name	From	Period
11	Alexandrine Cardine Dube	AFS Canada	July 09 – Dec 09
12	Philip Kauffman	AFS Germany	Aug 09 – Aug 2010

### 3.1 How did the interns contribute?

Ariane Lejeune de Schiervel was an intern who came to us through the Antarabudaya Programme, a student exchange programme that provides foreign students an insight into Malaysian lifestyle and culture. Ariane opted to work with us to learn about WAO’s work and services. Besides being absorbed into the projects department, Ariane was also responsible in changing the design of our WAO website.

Ariane also worked on an internship Powerpoint presentation which was designed by us and put together by Brittany Corsiato . This presentation was created to familiarise would-be interns on what to expect during their time with us.

Madeline Gribbon had come to us from Oregon and worked at the WAO Child Care Centre. Maddy, as she was fondly known, initiated the **“Letters to America”** pen pal project with another NGO based in Oregon called ‘Womanspace’, for the children at CCC. She helped the children with the initial process of the pen pal project by getting the aerogrammes needed for the letter writing. The **“Letters to America”** project is still currently continuing at the CCC.

The WAO newsletters are one way of us reaching out to the public and our members on the work and services we provide for the mothers and their children. We have been fortunate that our interns contributed greatly to the publication of our newsletters in 2009.

WAO received our very first male intern at the end of 2009 – Philipp Kauffman, who came to us under the Antarabudaya (AFS) programme. He requested to work with children and soon found his niche with the CCC and was adored by everyone. He is always fondly known as “abang” or “annai” (in Tamil) by the children and has done very well as a male role model for the older children. Philipp is here for 11 months and will complete his internship in August 2010.



## 4.0 VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS

In 2009, we reached out to members and kept them updated through an e-group. At WAO, we make a distinction between volunteers and members. Not all volunteers are members and not all members volunteer regularly. However, the EXCO is made up of members and all members are eligible to attend and vote at each AGM. Ultimately the EXCO is accountable to its members which total 176 members.

### 4.1 Volunteer Development

In 2009, orientations and meetings were held every first and third Saturday of each month. These fortnightly meetings were coordinated by Annie Varghese, Mardhiah Yaakob and Ariane Le Jeune. However, due to the increased amount of fundraising events that fell on weekends, there were months when we were not able to carry out the meetings.

We conducted 8 volunteer orientations on an average of one every other month. In total, 48 volunteers went through the orientations, out of which **20 remained as volunteers and another 19 became members.**

This year, we saw more working adults as volunteers. New volunteers became aware of WAO through the media, website, friends, universities/colleges, magazines and seminars. We had 98 volunteers in total for 2009. However, it was also noted that a large percentage of these volunteers were not active as they had only attended the orientation to learn about the organisation out of curiosity. Most of them were unable to join any of the activities on a regular basis due to work, studies or personal reasons. However, despite all this, we were fortunate to have retained a good number of them who were able to volunteer at the Refuge and CCC.

### 4.2 Volunteer Activities

We arranged two (2) talks for volunteers last year. Jessie Ang, a social worker spoke about Domestic Violence while Suren S. from Malaysian Aids Council spoke on HIV and AIDS. Volunteers helped out in most public education and fundraising activities, administrative work, jumble sales, setting up booths and selling tickets for charity premieres.

## 5.0 WAO WEBSITE ([www.wao.org.my](http://www.wao.org.my))



WAO was one of the first women's organisations to set up a website and 2009 makes it our 10th year of our website in operation. Since its launch, the website has received over a million hits.

The information uploaded onto the website include press statements, memoranda, letters to the editor, feature news and editorials where WAO was quoted, public education campaigns and activities, and fundraising events. The website has been a useful resource for students, funders, journalists, new volunteers and researchers and the general public who want to know more about WAO's work and services, the status of women in the country and current issues related to women's rights. It is updated constantly, with older articles put under the Archive section.

### Hosting Details

Web hosting company : Integricity.com

Domain Hosting company : MYINC Sdn Bhd

Integricity.com is still hosting WAO's website at no cost in support of our work.

### 5.1. Sections within the website

In 2009, we re-designed the website to give it a new look with a new colour, **RED**, and **highlighted our appeal for funds**.

In the past one year, the website's main page continued to broadcast our urgent appeal for funds that led to readers opting to donate by credit card.

**WAO WOMEN'S AID ORGANISATION  
PERTUBUHAN PERTOLONGAN WANITA**

Home About Us ▾ Advocacy ▾ Research ▾ Support Us ▾ WAO Publications ▾ Violence Against Women Archive



**25**  
CELEBRATING  
**25 YEARS**  
FOR WOMEN  
**WAO**  
1982-2007  
PUBLIC SERVICE  
MESSAGE

*No woman deserves violence, ever. Violence against a woman is a crime, and a violation of her human rights.*

**WAO COUNSELLING LINE: 03 7956 3488**

**URGENT APPEAL**

*WAO is in need of funds.  
Every donation counts.*

**Donate Now**



**RM200** will provide one woman with 5 days away from the abuse at the WAO Refuge

Snippet of the initial work on the Main Webpage

**WAO WOMEN'S AID ORGANISATION  
PERTUBUHAN PERTOLONGAN WANITA**

Home About Us ▾ Advocacy ▾ Research ▾ Support Us ▾ WAO Publications ▾ Violence Against Women Archive

**HONG LEONG FOUNDATION**  
ADOPTS  
**WAO**  
Child Care Centre  
2009 - 2010



Thank you!



**NO WOMAN  
DESERVES VIOLENCE, EVER!**

Violence against a woman is a crime,  
and a violation of her human rights.

**WAO COUNSELLING LINE: 03 7956 3488**

Thank you to the  
Austrian-German-Swiss  
Christmas Bazaar

for supporting the rent of the  
WAO Centre in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

**EVERY DONATION COUNTS**

**Donate Now**



**RM100** will provide  
4 women with telephone  
counselling sessions  
by professional social workers

Snippet of the current Main Webpage

Sections within the website were further separated to enable easy navigation. Research & Advocacy was separated to distinguish between the research and advocacy work conducted by WAO.

- **Home (Main page):** Summaries of articles updates, headers and small 100 x100 pixel graphics.
- **About Us:** Basic information of WAO (History, Mission & Vision, Objectives), WAO services and contact details.
- **Research:** Findings on WAO's research (Single Mother's Survey) and compilation of statistics from the Royal Malaysian Police (2000-2007)
- **Advocacy:** Advocacy work in issues related to the Domestic Violence Act, the abuse of Foreign Domestic Workers and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women).
- **Support Us:** Link to donate immediately, become a member or volunteer, information on other ways to support WAO, and vacancies available.
- **WAO Publications:** Electronic version of the annual report, annual statistics, INROADS (newsletter) and WAO brochures.
- **Violence Against Women:** Information on Violence Against Women: Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Rape, Child Sexual Abuse; in both Malay and English.
- **Archive:** Archive of all published articles on the website.

## 5.2 Updates

There were approximately 46 updates in 2009, with an average of three (3) new articles every two months. This is at a higher frequency than 2008, where the website was updated with an average of one (1) article every month.

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

1. Annual Reports
2. Annual Statistics
3. 25th Anniversary publication
4. Self Help booklet (English and BM version)
5. Choose to be Safe (BM)
6. Quarterly Newsletter
7. Organisational Brochure (English and BM version)

8. Service Brochure (English, BM, Chinese and Tamil version)
9. Why Reform the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994?

### 5.3 Postings

46 new articles, which include announcements, press statements, and memoranda, were posted on the website in 2009.

POSTED 2009	ITEM
11 Nov 2009	Chic Pop Charity Street Market
02 Nov 2009	WAO Luau Charity Fun Run
15 Oct 2009	Quit picking on JAG, says CIJ
15 Oct 2009	The Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ): Stop targeting critics
07 Oct 2009	WAO rubbishes 'sedition' complaints
07 Oct 2009	Stop the whipping of Kartika (Eng) (BM)
07-Oct-2009	Movie Premier - Michael Jackson's "THIS IS IT"
04-Sept-2009	WAO Garden Sale
25-Aug-2009	Kartika Case - Memorandum on Justice for Kartika
25-Aug-2009	Joint-Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) - Justice for Women
24-Aug-2009	Kartika Case - Kartika to be caned after fasting month
21-Aug-2009	Kartika Case - Urgent Action needed: Malaysia Stop Whipping, end corporal punishment for all offences
17-Aug-2009	Charity Movie Premier - G-FORCE
17-Aug-2009	The Pixel Project - It's time to end violence against women. Together.
13-Aug-2009	World March for Peace and Non-Violence Kuala Lumpur (WMKL)
06-Aug-2009	Sassorosso - WAO Fundraising Dinner
06-Aug-2009	Mentholatum Lipbalm Charity Campaign
15-June-2009	IT consultant wheels a grand deal for grandma and charity
12-June-2009	Letter to the Editor: Leadership by example: accept diversity and engage in dialogue
4-June-2009	Alleged royal violence not a 'personal matter'

POSTED 2009	ITEM
12-May-2009	3R Walk @ Capsquare
11-May--2009	Arrests of lawyers a blatant transgression of the rule of law
11-May-2009	Coalition for Good Governance (CGG) condemns crackdown on dissenting voices
29-April-2009	Women Personal Protection Workshop
28-April-2009	DEKLARASI MEI 1, 2009
27-April-2009	Joint Press Statement Deaths and Conditions of Detention of Migrants and Refugees
16-April-2009	Welcome Back Elizabeth Wong as State Ex-co and Adun of Bukit Lajan. End Sexualised Politicking
16-April-2009	Joint-Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) Lauds Reinstatement of YB Elizabeth Wong
15-April-2009	Press Statement by YB Elizabeth Wong ADUN Bukit Lajan
10-April-2009	The Trishaw Man Ride
08-April-2009	WAO Jumble Sale at Amcorp Mall - June 6 & 7
01-April-2009	International Relationship Day at Leo Club
26-Mar-2009	Give Peace a Chance - Charity Art Exhibition
26-Mar-2009	WAO Jumble Sale at Amcorp Mall
13-Mar-2009	Queens of Hearts Invade Zouk Club KL
10-Mar-2009	THE GOOD BODY by Eve Ensler
5-Mar-2009	Independent Women - A Fashion Auction by Local Designers
2-Mar-2009	Need for a broad sexual harassment law
19-Feb-2009	WAO Jumble Sale at Amcorp Mall
17-Feb-2009	Joint Press Statement: Dirty politics cost the people a good state representative
16-Feb-2009	Joint Press Statement: Dealing with issues and gauging the effectiveness of politicians; not sensationalised and sexualised politics
6-Feb-2009	Joint Press Statement: Treatment of Rohingya and Bangladeshi 'Boat People' in Asia
23-Jan-2009	WAO Charity Futsal Tournament 2009
19-Jan-2009	Why was a woman not fielded?
8-Jan-2009	Handmade Jewellery Club's Charity Drive
7-Jan-2009	Letter to the Editor: Allow Youth to Mingle

#### 5.4 Website Traffic

Counter: Advanced Web Statistics 6.4 (build 1.814); Awstats (from WAO's hosting service administration panel)

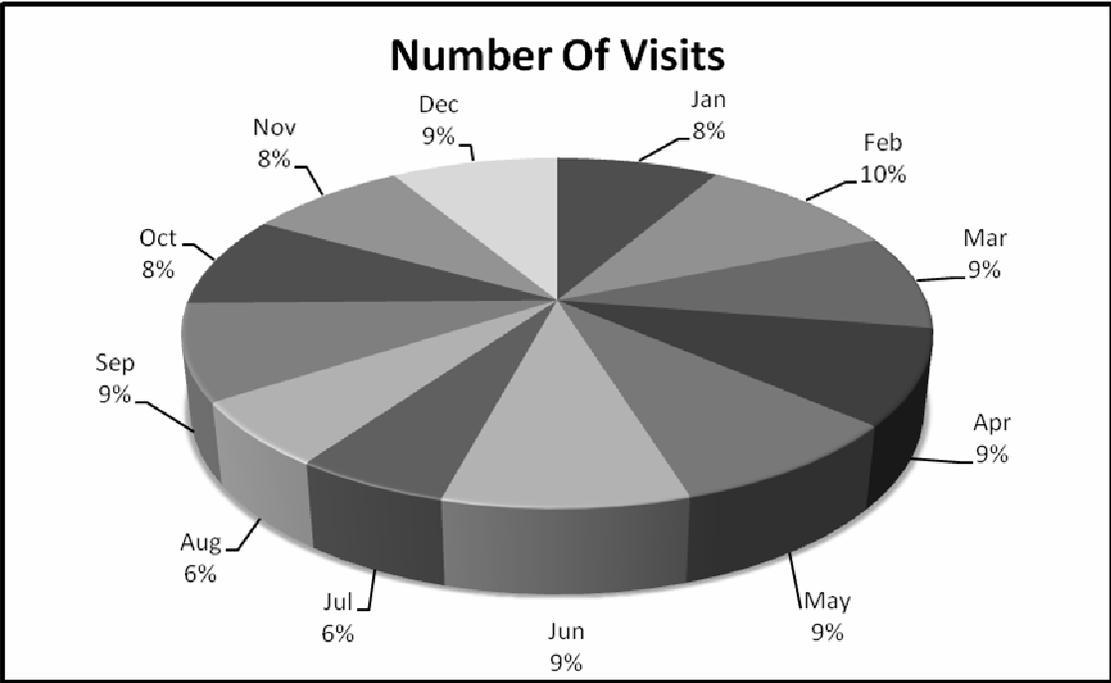
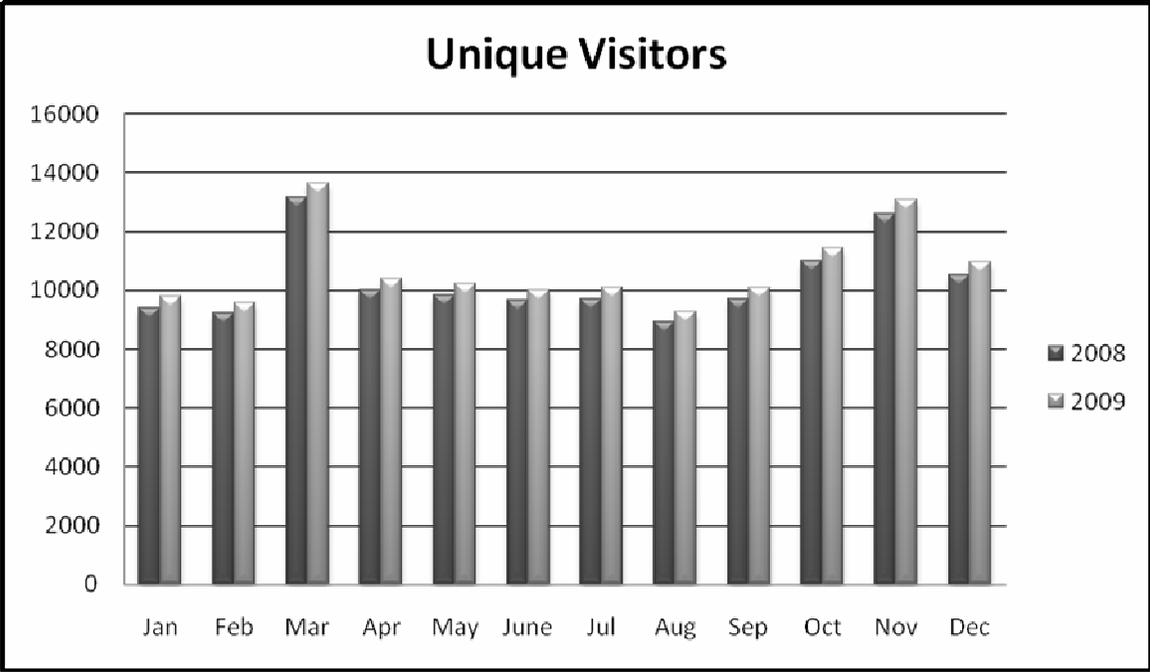
The total number of unique visitors to the website in 2009 was 128,658, which is an increase of 3.89% over 2008. Tracking of unique visitors indicates the number of people who visited the website more than once within a specific period of time, i.e. users that return to the website.

Compared to 2008, the number of visits dropped in 2009 by 1.6% to 177,385 visits. The total number of hits in 2009 dropped by 18% to 1,269,304 hits, as in 2008 we received 1,547,931 hits.

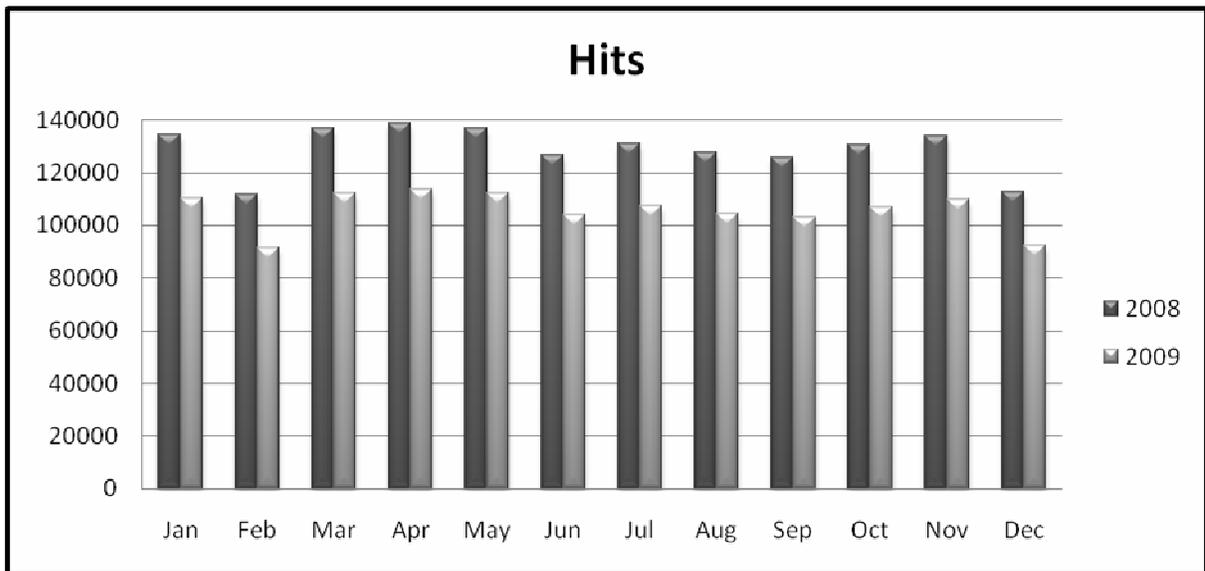
Please refer to the table below for the breakdown of the traffic.

**5. 4. 1 Number of Visitors and Visits**

Month	Unique visitors (2008)	Unique visitors (2009)	Number of visits (2008)	Number of visits (2009)
Jan	9,412	9,778	14,669	14,802
Feb	9,221	9,580	12,323	18,486
Mar	13,156	13,668	15,440	15,565
Apr	10,022	10,412	19,113	15,662
May	9,847	10,230	19,240	15,682
June	9,653	10,029	17,394	15,872
July	9,717	10,095	15,059	9,990
Aug	8,949	9,297	13,551	10,752
Sept	9,703	10,081	13,512	15,788
Oct	11,008	11,437	13,670	15,062
Nov	12,609	13,100	13,662	14,484
Dec	10,541	10,951	12,622	15,240
<b>Total</b>	<b>123,838</b>	<b>128,658</b>	<b>180,255</b>	<b>177,385</b>



Month	Hits (2008)	Hits (2009)
Jan	134,755	110,499
Feb	111,790	91,668
Mar	136,953	112,301
Apr	138,724	113,754
May	137,115	112,434
Jun	126,656	103,858
Jul	131,067	107,475
Aug	127,668	104,688
Sep	125,883	103,224
Oct	130,686	107,163
Nov	134,096	109,959
Dec	112,538	92,281
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,547,931</b>	<b>1,269,304</b>



#### 5. 4. 2 Geographical Locations of Visitors

The majority of visitors to the website, similar to 2008, were from the United States, Japan and Malaysia. This is determined based on the IP address of the visitors who come to the site. IP address is the address that is assigned to each computer that is on a network, such as the Internet. This is how the geographical location of the visitors can be tracked. It is noteworthy that Malaysians rank the top amongst the three countries who find WAO's website useful.

The top ten countries from which visitors access the website are as below:

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Malaysia</b>	82.31%
<b>United States</b>	4.63%
<b>Singapore</b>	1.66%
<b>United Kingdom</b>	1.55%
<b>Australia</b>	1.44%
<b>Canada</b>	0.76%
<b>Germany</b>	0.47%
<b>India</b>	0.46%
<b>Asia/Pacific Region</b>	0.44%
<b>Indonesia</b>	0.36%
<b>Thailand</b>	0.27%
<b>Hong Kong</b>	0.27%
<b>Other</b>	5.38%
<b>Total</b>	100.00%

## **5.5 Reviewers & Referrers**

45.30% of visitors to the website either type in the address directly, or have the website bookmarked. 90,532 visitors were referred to the website by search engines, other websites, emails or hard disks.

Currently, there are 3,314 different webpages or URLs that link to WAO's website, including local NGOs, newspapers, UNIFEM, blogs and Wikipedia. In 2007, there were only 2,815 different webpages linked to WAO website, showing an increase of 500 links to the website.



## 6.0 PUBLIC EDUCATION

Talks, press interviews, radio shows, magazine articles, post cards, posters, booths at ground events on Facebook, website and the internet; all of these constitute public education tools for raising awareness on WAO, the work of WAO and human rights issues.

In 2009, we were ever present in the papers and online media including radio. The many fund raising events were also an opportunity to distribute our brochures and pamphlets.

Publications: While working on a guide book on single pregnancy in 2009 and was published and launched in 2010, we managed to write and produce the annual WAO- body Shop VAW brochure to highlight internet violence during *16 days of activism*.

### 6.1 Days of activism: “Take back the Tech” - Reclaiming ICTs to end violence against Women

The 16 Days of Activism Global Campaign has been used as an organizing strategy by individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women by raising awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue at the local, national, regional and international levels

To commemorate *16 days of Activism*, we moved to a new area of VAW to produce the annual WAO- Body Shop brochure on the theme **“Be safe online and off line”**. In collaboration with Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) we held a press conference to launch the **“Take back the Tech”** campaign which began on 25 November, International Day Against Violence Against Women and spanned over a period of 16 days ending on 10 December, International Human Rights Day .

"Take Back The Tech!" is initiated and organised by the [Association for Progressive Communications, Women's Networking Support Programme \(APC WNSP\)](#) .

While CIJ organised several activities from using social networking tools and the Short Messaging Service (SMS) to share messages on ending violence against women to producing audio programmes and creating a blog for the Tamil community, we uploaded the brochure on our website and were interviewed on radio.

### 6.2 Talks & Trainings

No		Title of talks Conducted	Organised by	By
1	Jan 22	Talk at Ramos Harta	ASLI	Ivy

2	Feb 14	Volunteer Orientation: <i>Domestic violence</i>	WAO volunteers	Jessie Ang
3	Feb 17	<i>Violence against women</i>	FELDA, Kelana Jaya	Nazlina
4	Mac 26	MAC monthly meeting: <i>Violence against women</i>	Malaysian Culture Group	Ivy Josiah
5	Mar 04	Community Awareness Week: <i>Violence against women</i>	UM Faculty of law	Ivy
6	Mar 04	<i>Sexual harassment</i>	Kolej Kediaman Tun Syed Zahiruddin, UM	Kerina F.
7	Mar 07	<i>Violence against women, a talk for customers</i>	MPH Bookstore	Ivy
8	Mar 08	<i>Domestic violence &amp; Violence against women</i>	Inner Wheel Club	Meera S.
9	Apr 18	<i>Sexual harassment</i>	MWFCD at Shah Alam	Nazlina
10	Apr 18 & 25	Seminar Menangani Keganasan Terhadap Wanita: <i>Peranan agensi – agensi yang berkaitan</i>	Women's Development Office	Nazlina
11	May 20	<i>Internship opportunities</i>	University of Lathbridge	Annie
12	May 25	<i>Reproductive health</i>	FRHAM	Su Zane
13	May 26	<i>Effectiveness of marriage tribunal</i>		Shoba
14	May 27	<i>Reproductive rights</i>	FRHAM – RRAAM	Shoba
15	June 25	<i>Domestic violence</i>	SFX Church	Shoba
16	Jul 05	KL YMCA Deaf Club Workshop: <i>Women and Mental Abuse</i>	YMCA KL	Jessie
<b>No</b>		<b>Title of talks Conducted</b>	<b>Organised by</b>	<b>By</b>
17	Jul 30	The Gender Dimension to 1Malaysia at <i>"1Malaysia: Mendalami Perspektif Rakyat"</i>	Institut Tadbiran Awam Malaysia (Intan)	Ivy
18	Jul 31	Reach to Recovery Training 2009: <i>Socio-cultural issues and the impact on gender and diseases and legislation on the rights of women</i>	Breast Cancer Welfare Association	Ivy
19	Aug 29	<i>Protecting yourself from VAW</i>	Management & Science	Nazlina

			University	
20	Aug 17	Bengkel Akta Keganasan Rumahtangga: <i>Akta Keganasan Rumahtangga</i>	PDRM	Nazlina
21	Oct 22	Kursus Penolong Pegawai Penyiasat Seksual, Keganasan Rumahtangga dan Penderaan Kanak – kanak: <i>Pengalaman &amp; Peranan NGO mengendalikn mangsa wanita kes seksual &amp; keganasan rumahtangga</i>	Bahagian Siasatan Seksual Kanak – kanak (D11), Jabatan Siasatan Jenayah	Nazlina & Su Zane
22	Oct 26	National Unity Forum: <i>Towards 1Malaysia – Removing impediments, strengthening unity</i>	Sunway University College	Ivy
23	Oct 29	Community Social Service	Asia Summit	Ivy
24	Nov 16 - 17	Training CEDAW Training for Gender Focal Point Officers	SUHAKAM	Ivy
25	Nov 19	<i>Peranan NGO dalam membantu mangsa</i>	Hospital Serdang	Nazlina
26	Nov 25	Media Forum on <i>ICTs to end VAW</i>	UNFPA	Ivy
27	Nov 12	Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP): <i>Youth and gender awareness / sensitivities</i>	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Ivy
<b>No</b>		<b>Title of talks Conducted</b>	<b>Organised by</b>	<b>By</b>
28	Dec 04	<i>Violence in the family</i>	Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences	SuZane
29	Dec 09	<i>Role of NGOs : Work Of WAO</i>	Hospital Selayang	Nazlina
30	Dec 10	<i>Women’s Human Rights</i>	European Union Ambassadors	Meera

### 6.3 Press Interviews

No	Date	Title	By	Media
1	Jan 09	RTM: Domestic Violence @ 3 <sup>rd</sup> Centre	Ex-resident	TV
2	Jan 15	NTV7: Breakfast Show on "Rape: Facts to know"	Ivy	TV
3	Feb 12	RTM Galeri Mandarin: Gangguan Seks yang dihadapi oleh Wanita dalam Negera	Su Zane	TV
4	Feb 18	Malaysiakini TV: Elizabeth Wong controversy	Ivy	Online TV
5	Apr 16	NTV7 Breakfast show on Women of the Year & Toxic Relationship vs. Abusive Relationships	Ivy & Shoba	TV
6	Apr 16	Astro: News Talk	Su Zane	TV
7	Apr 17	The Star: Rape	Ivy	Newspaper
8	May 08	RTM: Kes penceraian yang tertangguh lama dan kes penderaan	Nazlina	TV
9	May 13	Media Prima : Voice Recording for WAO	Annie	Radio
No	Date	Title	By	Media
10	May 28	United Daily: Rape	Jessie	Newspaper
11	Jun 07	RTM 2: Domestic Violence against Domestic Workers	Su Zane	TV
12	Jun 15	Bernamea Radio VAW	Ivy	Radio
13	Jun 15	Ai FM: Day Off for Migrant Workers	Su Zane	Radio
14	Jul 01	The Sun: Conversion issues	Ivy	Newspaper
15	Jul 02	Therocknews.com: Human trafficking	Su Zane	Radio
16	Jul 26	The Malaysian Insider: Caning of Women	Ivy	Online Newspaper
17	Aug 04	Selamat Pagi Malaysia: Isu & Cabaran Wanita Kini	Nazlina	TV
18	Aug 04	My FM: Foreign domestic issues	Su Zane	Radio
19	Aug 06	Berita Harian: Man jailed for marital rape	Meera	Newspaper
20	Aug 11	Asiacalling.org: Section 375A of the Penal Code	Meera	Radio

21	Aug	New Sunday Times: Section 498	Vizla	Newspaper
22	Sept 09	Radio 24: The Hot Seat on Violence against Women	Ivy	Radio
23	Sept	Fairly Current Show: Section 498	Vizla	Internet
24	Oct 04	RTM 2 Program Vasantham: Menangani Keganasan Terhadap Wanita	Uma	TV
25	Oct 06	Magazine interview: Foreign domestic workers	Su Zane	Magazine
26	Oct 07	Astro Vizhuthugal: The Importance of Women's Awareness	Uma	TV
27	Nov 18	Aniqah Magazine: Incest	Nazlina	Magazine
28	Nov 18	BBC: Penan issue	Ivy	TV
29	Nov 18	Malaysian Insider: Women in Refuge	Jessie & Diyana	Online Newspaper
<b>No</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Media</b>
30	Nov 23	BFM: The bigger picture on 16 Days of Activism	Ivy	Radio
32	Dec 03	Traxx FM: Violence against women	Ivy	Radio
33	Dec 10	TV3 Nona: Sexual harassment in the workplace.	Nazlina	TV
34	Dec 21 & 28	RTM : Violence the family	Su Zane	TV
35	Jul	Her World: Woman of the Year	Ivy	Magazine

## 7.0 ADVOCACY

As 2009 opened, the political environment appeared to be even more challenging as the new Prime Minister Dato' Seri Najib Abdul Razak had another cabinet reshuffle as he moved Dato Dr. Ng Yen Yen, the Minister of the MWFCDC to the Ministry of Tourism while the former minister, Dato Sharizat Jalil who was heading a secretariat: Protection and Enhancement of Muslim Women (Senada in BM) was reinstated as Minister of the MWFCDC. She was also appointed a Senator to enable her to be a Minister as she had lost her parliamentary seat in 2008 and was no longer a Member of Parliament.

Dato Sharizat very quickly called a meeting with the JAG and NCWO whereby we faithfully went over again the discriminatory laws, policies and practices. Dato Shahrizat told the gathering that she has learnt better and will focus on action. She in fact accepted our ideas of setting up NGO- MWFCDC committees to look at law reform and follow up on reforms that have been already prepared by the Attorney General (AG) such as the Islamic Family Law (IFL) and DVA.

Dato Shahrizat however did not deliver on any of her promises.

The early part of 2009 was spent responding to rumours that reform to the IFL law will be passed in Parliament. We at JAG tried to adopt new ways to lobby in response to proposed amendments that were very problematic.

For WAO's specialised work on the DVA moved forward a little as we had YB Senator Datuk Chew Mei Fun, the Deputy Minister of the MWFCDC who opened a few doors to further our lobby for standardisation and clarity in procedures related to the DVA. The CEDAW Shadow Report 2 Group stalled in its work as the government report was not ready and we did not have a full time programme officer to coordinate this area of work. WAO continued to work at a feverish pace with JAG and coordinated activities for the MWG.

It was also a year of new shocks as we tried to cope with the news of a cow head incident and that of a Muslim woman sentenced to be whipped for drinking beer.



## **7.1 Implementation of CEDAW**

The CEDAW framework of substantive equality, non discrimination and state obligation is core to our understanding of discrimination against women and forms the basis for our lobbying efforts for law and policy reform. CEDAW Concluding Observations and the principles of the Convention are mentioned in every press statement that was released by JAG or WAO.

### **7.1.1 CEDAW Shadow Report Two Group in collaboration with NCWO**

Malaysia was due to send in the combined 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> periodic report by August 2008, however by end 2009 the government report was yet to be sent to the CEDAW Committee.

Following up on the October 2008 meeting with the MWFC, the NGO Shadow Report Two team met twice in 2009 and continued to research and monitor in their respective area of work. As the coordinating body, WAO received 3 outlines for the proposed Shadow Report Two. WAO itself did not have a full time staff to coordinate this programme but will do so in 2010.

### **7.1.2 "From Discrimination to Substantive Equality" CEDAW Shadow Report Training, 26 – 28 February 2009, Shah's Village Hotel, Petaling Jaya**

We began the year with training for 15 NGOs who were going to be involved in the CEDAW Shadow Report writing. With trainers from IRAW Asia Pacific, WCC Penang and WAO, 24 participants including 4 participants from East Malaysia went through 3 day programme with the last day dedicated to assigning tasks for specific chapters for Shadow Report Two.

### **7.1.3 Suhakam Women's Rights Sub Committee**

In 2009 it was only WAO, AWAM and SIS who were active in this committee conducting two (2) trainings for MTUC leaders and gender focal points. Representatives from the Bar were absent for most meetings. Chaired by Tan Sri Dato' Asiah Abu Samah, the committee designed trainings on CEDAW. The 3 NGOs conducted the sessions with the SUHAKAM staff providing the logistics.

The training for the Gender Focal points at Genting was particularly interesting as we were able to present the Concluding Comments, i.e. recommendations from the Committee in 2006 and assigned the working groups in the training to design action plans for implementation. To date none of the recommendations have been implemented.

## **7.2 Reform of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994.**

As advised by the AGM in 2008, WAO focused on documenting and lobbying for reform. We produced a report with 34 cases and a list of remaining challenges on policy and protocols to the DVA.

On the run up to the roundtable discussions on the DVA, we had two meetings with Welfare department. At that meeting, the Department brought together welfare officers from all over Malaysia for a one to one meeting with WAO. The welfare officers shared similar challenges faced by their offices when they went about getting Interim Protection Orders (IPOS) for their various clients.

### **7.2.1 DVA 1994 National Roundtable Discussion with NGOs and Welfare Department**

In 2009, with funds from Asia Foundation, WAO organised its National Roundtable Discussion on the Implementation of the Domestic Violence Act *titled 'Upholding the Rights of Women Seeking Protection from Domestic Violence'*.

The purpose of the National Roundtable Discussion was to bring together service providers beyond the Klang Valley to document their experiences on the use of DVA, in order to gather information on how victim-survivors of domestic violence get protection through the DVA.

WAO documented and compiled 34 cases from January to June 2009, which was then used to identify the existing challenges faced by women when seeking protection under the DVA 1994. These findings were then shared with participants at the National Roundtable Discussion which was held on 22 July 2009, at Shah's Village Hotel, Petaling Jaya. The event was attended by service providers from 11 States who also shared their experiences with us. Service providers included NGOs, shelter homes, welfare departments, community organisations and lawyers.

During the course of the Roundtable Discussion participants were given information on the background and history of the DVA 1994 and WAOs key role in lobbying for reform of the Act. It was also a privilege to have Malathi Dass, lawyer and member of AWARE, Singapore (an NGO) to share the Singapore experience with us and a local Criminal Lawyer, Datuk Baljit Singh to give us a criminal lawyer's point of view on the recent proposed amendments made to the DVA 1994 in 2007.

### **7.2.2 National Roundtable Discussion with Heads of D11 Divisions in Malaysia on the Implementation of the DVA 1994**

Following the Roundtable Discussion with service providers and from feedback from participants, WAO then called for a National Roundtable Discussion with PDRM's D11 Division heads to present the challenges faced by service providers in accessing the law and presenting proposed amendments to the DVA 1994. The D11 Department currently oversees and attends to domestic violence cases. The D11 Division of Bukit Aman was very receptive of this and offered to host the event. This was held on 27th October 2009 at Quality Hotel, Shah Alam.

The event was attended by WAO's President, Executive Director, Social Workers and Programme Officer. On behalf of the Police it was most favourable to have Deputy Commissioner of Police, Datuk Acryl Sani Bin Abdullah Sani chair the discussion which was attended by heads of D11 department from all states including Federal Territory, Labuan and Putrajaya. Also present was Tuan Salahuddin Hidayat, Legal Advisor from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD). This meeting marked the first consultation between Police personnel and NGO representatives to come together and work on the issue of domestic violence.

It was a fruitful discussion and overall the Police were receptive to complaints and suggestions put forward particularly suggestions on having to fast-track the process of obtaining the IPO and to the expansion of the definition of the DVA 1994 to include emotional, psychological, and mental abuse. We were also informed by Tuan Salahuddin that the new proposed amendments to the DVA 1994 included provisions for stalking and persistent communication. However, there was still strong reluctance on the suggestion to extend protection to non-married couples and dating partners.

As an outcome of the meeting it was suggested that both parties continue to hold further discussions such as these in the future and WAO was ensured that the D11 department of Bukit Aman will help us call for a meeting with the AG's Chambers to further discuss the reform of the DVA 1994.

### **7.3 Coalition Work**

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

WAO belongs to eight (8) coalitions but not necessarily active in all of them. We are affiliate members of the National Council of Women's Organisation (NCWO) and Malaysian Aids Council (MAC). *The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)* is not a legal entity but it has become a recognised entity made up of five (5) organisations, (WAO, SIS, WCC Penang, AWAM and Empower). WAO acts as the secretariat to two (2) coalitions namely *Article 11* and the Migration

Working Group (MWG). Suaram acts as the secretariat to the *Gerakan Mansuhkan ISA (GMI)* coalition of over 50 civil society groups, lobbying for the repeal of the Internal Security Act (ISA). WAO is one of the pioneer members of the newly formed Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM) formed in 2007. Soon after the 12<sup>th</sup> general elections, Suaram and Empower brought together civil society groups to form the ***Coalition of Good Governance (CCG)*** to support and monitor the Pakatan Rakyat state government's efforts in Selangor. The NGOS involved in Coalition of Malaysia NGOs for the writing of the UPR, known as COMANGO led by Empower and Suaram kept NGOs informed of the Human Rights Council.

#### **7.4 Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)**

JAG met for our annual Evaluation and Planning in April where we decided to focus our efforts on the reforms to the Islamic Family Law, start a sub-committee to discuss issues on Sexuality and even consider inviting new members into JAG.

##### **7.4.1 Rights of women in the family**

In June we got word that the AGs chambers had proposed amendments to 3 laws.

- Law Reform (Marriage & Divorce) Act (LRA)
- Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) Act 1984 (IFL)
- Administration of Islamic Law (Federal Territories) Act 1993, (Act 505)

Although the IFL had proposed amendments to secure the rights of Muslim women in the family, the government also decided to tackle the issues of conversion of children by amending the above laws. JAG prepared FAQs and a briefing paper to reiterate that any amendment must recognise and uphold the following four (4) principles:

1. that the civil court shall have exclusive jurisdiction to all matters relating to the dissolution of marriages contracted under civil law;
2. the religion of a child below 18 years of age shall not be changed by parent without the consent of the other; and
3. the converted spouse should not abdicate his duties and responsibilities under the civil marriage.
4. The rights and obligations as presently guaranteed in the LRA and other related laws are made available to parties in civil marriage without being compromised or varied.

We met with the MPs, Pakatan Rakyat, MCA and Dr Koh Tsu Koon to alert them to the flaws in the proposed amendments which although allowed the non Muslim wife to file for divorce proceedings in the civil court did not accord her full rights to maintenance and authority over her right to decide the religion of her children to name a few. Below an excerpt from the JAG briefing paper for MPs:

*“We understand that the Government had agreed upon 3 principles when formulating these amendments to deal with the issue of the conversion of 1 spouse to Islam in a marriage registered under the LRA namely:*

- *that the civil court shall have exclusive jurisdiction to all matters relating to the dissolution of marriages contracted under civil law;*
- *the religion of a child below 18 years of age shall not be changed by parent without the consent of the other; and*
- *the converted spouse should not abdicate his duties and responsibilities under the civil marriage.*

*JAG upholds each individual’s freedom of faith and belief.*

*However, the proposed amendments do not reflect the 3 principles agreed upon, but may have unintended negative impact which may lead to national disunity. Furthermore, the proposed amendments do not take into account amendments to other Acts of Parliament that must be undertaken in order to deal with issues of conversion in a holistic manner such as the Distribution Act, the Guardianship of Infants Act and the Inheritance (Family Provision) Act.”*

Finally it was announced in July that the Rulers' Council had advised the government not to table the amendments in parliament but to have further consultations as many groups were unhappy with the proposed amendments.

#### **7.4.2 Fiesta Feminista**

The Fiesta Feminista Steering Committee had a busy year in 2009. Apart from the committee’s regular quarterly meetings where members update on progress of working group activities, and other issues pertinent to organising the next FF, a variety of activities designed to achieve the FF objectives of inter-movement and leadership building among its members were organized.

As part of its skill-building programme, a one-day workshop on critical thinking was organized in April, conducted by Dr. Carmen Nge. Other skills identified for future learning are facilitation skills and effective communication.

The annual substantive knowledge-building workshop the Political GHIs organized by the Political ABCs working group, was held in July in KANITA, USM around the issue of macroeconomics and understanding the financial crisis. The organizers were fortunate to have feminist economist from the DAWN network (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) Dr. Marina Durano from the Phillipines to facilitate the 2 day workshop. Participants included those from the steering committee, KANITA staff and a few Penang-based activists, with whom the FFSC felt necessary to build connections with. Participants received a primer on macroeconomics, neo-liberal globalization and discussed personal initiatives in their daily lives that allowed them to use this knowledge.

The Political ABCs also organized a series of talks around the issue of sexuality, identified as an issue that FFSC felt was pertinent to discuss and learn more of. The first talk was held on 29 April, titled *The Sex Stakes: Positioning Sexuality on the Agenda of the Malaysian Women's Movement* by tan beng hui. The talk was attended by approximately 20 people from JAG organisations. The talk examined why the women's movement in Malaysia (viz-a-vis JAG) today has taken the position it has on sexuality, the consequences of that positioning, and ways to move forward. The second talk was held on 10 November 2009, on the subject of Female Genital Mutilation in Malaysia, by Dr. Rashidah Shuib, of University Sains Malaysia. The talk was an eye-opening discussion on the little-known prevalence of this practice in Malaysia.

FF ended the year with a movement-building working group organized a 2-day JAG dialogue in September designed around the theme of "How do we unite rather than divide the women's movement?"

The dialogue was part of the working group's objectives to work on both building relationships within the women's movement and between women's movement and other social justice movements. Participants included members of JAG and individual feminists, and were facilitated through Open Space Technology, a new method of facilitation method designed to generate discussion organically and spontaneously.

### **7.4.3 Sexuality Group**

Taking off from the decision by JAG to start a sexuality group in terms of advocacy, learning workshops were run by tan beng hui and several meetings took place to plan for documentation and activities. This JAG activity however did not see the participation of WCC Penang.

#### **7.4.3.1 Documenting Human Rights Violations of Transsexuals in Malaysia**

In September 2009, a couple of members from the JAG Sexuality group as well as members from the respective JAG organisations started a documentation project to document violations on the transgender community in Malaysia. It was of concern that though the violations are quite rampant and severe, these violations are often ignored and fell below the radar. The commencement of the documentation was as a direct result from SUHAKAM's position at an international meeting that there were no issues of sexuality in Malaysia and that they have yet to receive any formal complaints.

The project aims to document these violations to provide evidence that may be used to further advocate for the rights of the transsexual community. The JAG Sexuality group works in collaboration with the PT Foundation's TS programme.

The group aims to document at least 50 cases and will use the findings from the cases to produce a report on the violations, which will then be presented to SUHAKAM. This is scheduled to take place in mid 2010. So far as for 2009, the group has managed to document 23 cases.

It is also hoped that through this project, Mak Nyahs in return will become aware of their rights. The group also aims to train the outreach workers and staff there to do this by themselves in hope that this would turn into a self-sustaining project for PT.

**7.4.3.2 Projek Sentuh: Seksualiti & Tubuh: In conjunction with 16 Days of Activism against Violence Against Women, 5 November 2009**



*Projek Sentuh* was organized by JAG organisations All Women’s Action Society (AWAM), Pusat Kesedaran Kommuniti Selangor (EMPOWER), Sisters in Islam (SIS), Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO) in order to address the issue of discrimination on the basis of sexuality and to highlight the impact and range of sexual regulations and moral policing in Malaysia. In order to reach new audiences, particularly Malay-speaking youth, *Projek Sentuh* was designed as an activism-cum-art event that would break new ground in raising awareness through contemporary art and performance.

The organisations collaborated with several contemporary Malaysian artists from various disciplines such as theatre, visual artists, videographers, graffiti artists and writers, such as Shieko, Tan Hui Koon, Fairuz Sulaiman, Rumah Anak Theater, Julya Ooi, Lost Generation Space and Aisyah Baharuddin.

The project consisted of two elements: an interactive and thought-provoking art installation designed as a house with different rooms that audiences would walk through, and theatre performances to enable audiences to experience a journey of a person discriminated against on

the basis of sexuality. The theatre performances were devised prior to the event through a 9-day workshop, conducted by the artists.

All content for *Projek Sentuh* was based on five real case studies illustrating the breadth and depth of sexual regulations and moral policing in Malaysia, namely violence against transgendered persons, 'khalwat' (close proximity) raids by religious authorities, sexual morality, and discrimination on the basis of sexual expression and appearance. These cases formed the content of the installation, and were the basis of the theatre workshop.

The event was staged as part of Pekan Frinjan, a monthly independent arts, culture and music event held in Dataran Shah Alam. Pekan Frinjan is fast growing in popularity among urban, Malay-speaking youth. Approximately 200 people, mostly university students, attended the event and walked through the installation and theatre performances and was well received. Leaflets were circulated explaining the five case studies and explaining what discrimination on the basis of sexuality to supplement information in the installation.

Report by AWAM

#### **7.4.3.3 Press Conference**

##### **One Day One Struggle – Malaysia: Penal Code Section 498: Out of Date, Out With It!**

On November 9, 2009 a press conference was held at the WAO Centre to draw attention to Section 498 of the Malaysian Penal Code. The section pertains to "Enticing or taking away or detaining with a criminal intent a married woman". The press conference marked the start of a media campaign to highlight the law that discriminates against women, and to call for its abolishment. The press conference was also to support the international *One Day One Struggle Campaign* organised by the CSBR.

Section 498 gained attention when the husband of a local celebrity pressed charges against another man for trying to entice his wife. The group's research had shown that prior to this, the law had been used six (6) other times the first being in 1933 and the last in 1956.

"It has been argued that the law was put in place to protect women in the case of them being kidnapped or taken against their will by another man. The law criminalises a person from "taking or enticing away" or "concealing or detaining" a married women with an intention of having sexual relations. But, there already exists provisions in the Penal Code that would enable the prosecution of such a crime.

It has also been argued that the law is in place to protect the sanctity of a marriage. It is our position that the State should have no place in matters pertaining to personal matters between consenting adults. If a marriage is breaking down, it is then up to the individuals involved to seek recourse to remedy it should they choose to do so” Press statement.

The media campaign was organised by the All Women’s Action Society (AWAM), Empower, Sisters in Islam (SIS) and Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO). The message that was communicated via the media campaign was that this law was discriminatory towards women as it denied women’s autonomy over their own bodies. Instead, it treated women as property of their husbands. Also, it perpetuated the stereotype that women are inferior while men are superior. It is an archaic law that does not apply to women in Malaysia any more.

This was not the first time the law was highlighted, as it was also raised in a memorandum to the Malaysian Government in 2005. This campaign marks the beginning of a longer and more sustained campaign to lobby for the repeal of the law.

Following the press conference, there was a recording for an online talk show called “The Fairly Current Show”. The show was aimed at informing members of the public about the law in a simplified manner. It also highlighted the international campaign. It aired online 2 days after it was recorded. There was also a radio interview with a local English language station, also aimed at raising public awareness of this discriminatory law.

#### **7. 4. 6 Kartika: Stop Whipping in Malaysia**

In 2008 the Kuantan Syariah High Court imposed a RM5, 000 fine on 32-year-old Kartika and ordered that she be caned six times after she pleaded guilty to drinking beer at a hotel in Cherating on July 11, 2008. The news broke in August 2009 and almost immediately JAG went into action. SIS took the lead and went to visit Kartika and we began a series of initiatives, press statements, press conference, Facebook and international interventions to stop the whipping. A memorandum was handed to the prime minister on 25 August during the MWFCD national celebrations of Hari Wanita.

The Pahang Religious Affairs Department did defer the caning in August and it was reported that this will hold until after the Muslim fasting month last year on the advice of Pahang Syariah chief judge Datuk Abdul Rahman Yunus.

## **MEDIA STATEMENT 30 Sept 2009**

The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (**JAG**), Suara Rakyat Malaysia (**SUARAM**) and National Human Rights Society (**HAKAM**) are gravely concerned that the Pahang Syariah Court of Appeal had heard and decided the revision of Kartika Dewi Sukarno's (**Kartika**) sentence of whipping without all the relevant stakeholders in attendance to present arguments, or the public being informed of the hearing.

Furthermore, on 18 September 2009, Sisters In Islam (SIS) had filed a separate application for revision and stay of execution of Kartika's whipping and this application has yet to be heard by the Pahang Syariah High Court.

We are also puzzled at the speed with which the Syariah court is intent on carrying out the sentence when many civil society organisations and prominent individuals and scholars have expressed doubt as to the propriety of the maximum sentence of RM5, 000 fine and six strokes of whipping imposed on Kartika, a first offender, who had pleaded guilty and expressed remorse on many occasions.

We are concerned that the Syariah Court is taking to heart to statements made by the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of Islamic affairs, Maj-Gen (R) Datuk Jamil Khir Baharom ("Syariah court to have more bite", NST, 24 April 2009) that the lack of implementation of the sentences of whipping "is the contributing factor to the increase in syariah-related crimes each year as the people think the laws too trivial." The Minister is incorrect in relating the lack of whipping to an increase in "syariah-related crimes" as studies have shown that whipping, like capital punishment, is not an effective deterrent to the commission of crimes.

The fact that Kartika herself seems intent on being whipped should not prevent the authorities from doing what is just and compassionate in all the circumstances of the case. As human rights defenders, we are committed to securing a treatment for her that protects her human rights and the human rights of others in similar circumstances, and to ensure that there is no deterioration of human rights standards in Malaysia.

Kartika's decision may be compared to the decisions made by Hindu widows in the past. The practice of 'sati' (now outlawed in India) meant that widows were burnt on the pyres of their deceased husbands. There were arguments that if a widow chose to immolate herself then there should be no interference. Clearly this is not a practice that should be condoned on the principle of free choice.

The important issue here is the deterioration of human rights standards as applied by the state of Pahang. If the whipping of a woman takes place under Syariah law, a bad precedent is set in Malaysia – especially when women are expressly excluded from being whipped under S289 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

If Kartika is whipped, the perception of Malaysia as a moderate Muslim state will be permanently jeopardised.

We urge the Federal and State Governments to review whipping as a form of punishment as it violates international human rights principles which regard whipping and other forms of corporal punishment as cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

In Kartika's case, we are especially concerned that general principles of sentencing were not applied: she was a first-time offender, she showed remorse and pleaded guilty, and there was no violence in the commission of the offence. Her sentences were completely disproportionate to the offence committed.

We further urge the Federal and State Governments to conduct a comprehensive review of all laws pertaining to Syariah criminal offences, with a view to repeal such laws. In 1997 and 2005, SIS submitted memorandums to the Government on Syariah criminal offences, raising several issues of concern including the fact that several provisions in the laws have no basis in Islamic legal theory and practice, conflict with the Federal Constitution and conflict or overlap with the Penal Code and other federal laws.

Finally, we remind the relevant authorities that justice must be tempered with compassion; and that justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done so that Malaysians can be confident of the processes in the Syariah courts.

Towards the end of 2009, it went all quiet as there was no news on how the government will handle this issue. Kartika herself was reported to say that she wanted to be left alone, receive her punishment and did not want NGOs contacting her.

## **7.5 National Taskforce Report on Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Penan Women and Girls in Sarawak**

2009 was spent chasing up the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) to release the Report by National Taskforce set up in late 2008 to investigate sexual abuse of Penan girls and women. The National Taskforce headed by Dato Noorul Ainur Mohd Nur, Director General, Women's Development Department whereby Prema Devaraj who represented WCC Penang and Ivy Josiah from WAO set out into the Baram area of Sarawak and visited remote Penan villages to interview the community. The Taskforce Report, findings and recommendations were finalised in 2008 and yet there was no sign of the Report until July 2009.

Both WCC and WAO sent a letter to YB Senator Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Minister of Women, Family and Community to draw her attention to the status of the National Taskforce Report.

An excerpt from the letter sent in June 2009

*"... In November 2008, the Taskforce members undertook a 5-day mission to Sarawak to investigate these allegations and upon their return, their findings and recommendations were compiled into a report which was subsequently finalised in December 2008. Both WCC and WAO were made to understand that the Report was ready for submission to the Cabinet in January 2009.*

*We write to query as to the status of the important Report affecting the welfare of Penan and other indigenous women and girls in Sarawak. We would like to know whether the said Report has been submitted to the Cabinet and if so, what is the Cabinet's response to the Report's findings and recommendations. On the other hand, if the said Report has not been submitted yet, we would like to know the reason for this delay.*

*Your Ministry is tasked to protect the safety and look after the welfare of the population, including the indigenous population. Last October your Ministry showed exemplary quick action to investigate these serious allegations but the inordinate delay and silence over this Report since its completion is indeed worrying. It will be perceived as a lack of interest and commitment to the seriousness of the issue of sexual abuse, as well as, the plight facing the Penan and other indigenous communities in Sarawak. Any findings of sexual abuse cases should be tackled immediately with concrete action"*

In September 2009, almost after a year, the government finally released the report which basically confirmed that sexual abuse did indeed take place. Read this website for further information <http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/4940>

## **Penan Support Group**

When the abuses first emerged in 2008, SURAM and the Bar Council in a joint statement called for action and this statement garnered over 50 NGOs to come together, calling themselves the Penan Support Group. The Group kept informed through e mail and in November 2009, formed a mission into Ulu Baram, Sarawak to meet with communities to record cases.

Wong Su Zane from WAO was a member of this mission, and others included members from AWAM, SURAM, Bar Council and Sarawakian activists. A report is expected to be published in 2010.

## **7.6 RRAAM Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)**

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

"The three (3) strategies of RRAAM are multi sectoral alliance establishment; information and education; and research/evidence based advocacy. 2009 was the second year of activities and RRAAM is almost two and a half years old in June 2009. Members assessed that the achievements this year were more than expected. These included the Ministry of Health requesting to be a partner in state service provider seminars and deciding to review the Ministry's abortion policies and practices, the very positive response to and requests for RRAAM seminars and the beginning of the relationship with the Malaysian Medical Society [MMA] and the O and G Society.

RRAAM members continued to be very committed, active and influential and they are a strong team especially as public speakers and advocates. Members thought this was the key to RRAAM's effectiveness so far.

The year was busier than the previous year as RRAAM was also an International Conference on Population and Development 15 (ICPD) country partner of ARROW. There were a total of 5 one-day RRAAM seminars, Consultations or Dialogues plus a two-day Roundtable and planning meeting. All of these seminars reached a total of 429 people. Including invitations to RRAAM to speak at other organization seminars, the total people reached were 529 most of which were health service providers. All except one activity were comprehensively documented.

A Malaysian ICPD 15 country report titled *Increasing Access to Contraceptive Services and Information, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Education for Youth and Legal Abortion, Country Report on Malaysia: NGO Perspectives* was also produced in partnership with RRAAM member FRHAM as well as an overview of SRHR Indicators in Malaysia. This is the first Malaysian NGO ICPD report which focuses on contraception and abortion just as the ICPD 15 NGO GO Policy Dialogue was the first time that policy makers were engaged by NGOs on contraception and abortion issues.

More women were able to access legal abortion through referrals from the WOW website as well as from women NGOs and the Family Planning Associations. However the public hospitals have yet to change their restricted access to abortion services although there are promises that this will be done soon". (The above reports are excerpts from RRAAM Annual Report.)

#### **7.6 WAO's Engagement with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Structures and Processes**

WAO has been engaging actively with the ASEAN Structures and Processes since February last year. We have been participating in regional forums which bring together national women human rights groups to assess women's human rights agenda in Southeast Asia, provide substantive inputs to contents of ASEAN mechanisms (e.g. Terms of Reference of ASEAN human rights mechanisms including for women and children), identify national priority issues and common regional issues affecting women and children and develop strategies on moving forward in terms of engaging effectively in ASEAN structures and processes so that women's human rights perspectives are integrated and incorporated at all levels.

Upon return from regional meetings, WAO have been coordinating and facilitating face-to-face meetings and on-line discussions with NGOs to update developments in the ASEAN structures and processes, discuss and strategise on how to engage effectively with ASEAN structures and processes at the national level.

In February 2009, Meera Samanther attended the Regional Women's Human Rights Consultation on the ASEAN Human Rights Body (AHRB) [*known as ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)*] in Bangkok. This consultation provided a forum for national women human rights groups to collectively assess women's human rights agenda in Southeast Asia, provide input into the first draft Terms of Reference for AHRB from a women's perspective, identify national priority issues and develop strategies on moving on forward. Subsequent to this consultation, WAO has continued to discuss and strategise at the national

level alongside NGOs such as EMPOWER, All Women's Action Society (AWAM), SUARAM and IWRAW-AP on how to move forward and discuss our collective position on the ASEAN mechanism on women and children which is the ASEAN Commission on the Protection and Promotion of Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

At the Southeast Asian Regional Women's Human Rights Strategy Meeting on the ASEAN Structures and Processes in Chiangmai, Thailand in August 2009, WAO became part of the regional women's caucus, the Southeast Asia Women's Caucus on ASEAN (Women's Caucus) to engage with key ASEAN structures and in key processes towards ensuring the realisation and protection of women's human rights.

Following the regional consultation in Chiangmai, WAO coordinated a meeting with local NGOs, which was attended by EMPOWER, AWAM, Malaysian Aids Council (MAC), Sisters In Islam (SIS), IWRAW-AP to provide an update on the AICHR, ACWC and ACMW; discuss and draft Malaysia statement for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Working Group on ACWC Meeting; discuss national action plan with proposed activities given the USD2,000 allocation- parallel to ASEAN activities (calendar of ASEAN activities will be provided during the meeting); and appoint national focal point to the Southeast Asia Women's Caucus on ASEAN.

#### **7.8.1 National consultation on ASEAN structures and processes**

On Sept 15, with funds from IWRAW a national consultation on ASEAN structures and processes was organised with the objectives of:

- Introducing and updating progress on ASEAN structures and processes and the integration of women's Human rights within ASEAN processes;
- Exploring the relevance of ASEAN structures and processes in our national work;
- Developing national strategies on how to engage the ASEAN structures and processes; introducing the position of Malaysian civil society groups on advocating for just one human rights body
- Selecting a focal point for the Southeast Asia Women's Caucus on ASEAN (the Women's Caucus).

WAO (Lee Shook Fong) along with Empower (Honey Tan) have been in consultation with the International Division of Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) to provide input into the Terms of Reference of ACWC. WAO attended a meeting called by the

International Division of the MWFCDD on 17 September 2009 to provide civil society input into the final draft of ACWC TOR in preparation for MWFCDD's representation at the Special Meeting between Focal Points for ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), Senior Official Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) and ACWC Working Group.

Following a post national consultation meeting on 30 September, WAO and EMPOWER was appointed as the co-national focal points of the Malaysian Women's Caucus. The funds also allowed the production of a YouTube on ASEAN new mechanisms which will be completed by May 2010.

Ho Yock Lin from AWAM and Lee Shook Fong from WAO represented the Malaysian Women's Caucus to attend the Asean People's Forum in Cha'am, Thailand in October 2009.

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN People's Forum/ 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Civil Society Conference themed *Advancing a Peoples' ASEAN: Continuing Dialogue*, WAO was part of the Women's Caucus delegation in presenting women's perspectives in all the sessions and strategising on effective intervention approaches to integrate women's human rights perspectives in all discussions. WAO also signed a press statement as part of the Malaysian delegation to the 2nd ASEAN Peoples' Forum (APF)/5th ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC), *Advancing a Peoples' ASEAN: Continuing Dialogue* which condemned the government for non-consultation with the civil society in respect to the selection of the Malaysian representative to the AICHR.

In December 2009, WAO facilitated an on-line nomination of members from civil society groups as representatives for women and children to the ACWC. Three names were submitted to the MWFCDD- Shanthi Dairiam from WAO, Ivy Josiah from WAO and Maria Chin Abdullah from EMPOWER. The women's groups were glad that the government had opened up the process of nomination to the civil society. However, none of the nominees from civil society groups was selected. Further there was no official publication of the appointed nominees. The civil society groups were not informed of how the representatives were selected. WAO was informed via an SMS on 3 March that Dato' Dr Noorul Ainur Mohd Nur, Deputy Sec-Gen (Policy) of MWFCDD and Prof Datuk Dr Chiam Heng Keng of SUHAKAM have been appointed as representatives for women and children respectively to the ACWC.

## **7.7 Migration Working Group**

The MWG was set-up in March 2006 and is now 4 years old. The MWG continues to serve and uphold the rights of Migrants, Refugees and Stateless Persons in the country. The MWG opens its network to organisations and individuals who are keen on working together as a network on migration issues, to join the group. MWG holds strong affiliations with Migrant Forum in Asia, Forum Asia, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

### **7.7.1 The objectives of the group are as follows:**

- • Promote greater networking, collaboration and consultation,
- • Design joint lobbying and advocacy strategies amongst Malaysian NGOs and individuals working on migration issues and with migrants, and
- • Build capacity

### **Co-coordinators of the MWG 2008/2009:**

- Alice Nah, HAKAM
- Florida Sandanasamy, Tenaganita
- Kerina Francis, WAO

### **MWG Secretariat 2008/2009:**

Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)

### **7.7.2 Deaths and Conditions of Detention of Migrants and Refugees**

On 19 April 2009, a Bangladeshi newspaper reported that a Bangladeshi migrant worker, Ikhtiar, died in Lenggeng Immigration Detention Centre days after being tortured by the Malaysian police. Three days later, on 22 April 2009, The New Straits Times reported that a 25-year-old Liberian detainee was found dead in the same detention centre.

That year the (then Home Minister) Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar reported to Parliament a total of 2,571 deaths of detainees in prisons, rehabilitation centres and immigration detention centres between 1999 and 2008. He attributed these deaths to illnesses (including HIV/AIDS, septicaemia, tuberculosis, cancer, heart and blood diseases, and asthma) as well as fights and suicides.

The MWG have highlighted repeatedly the poor conditions of detention in immigration detention centres, which include overcrowding, poor sanitation, insufficient provision of food and water, and inadequate access to necessary medical and health services (including emergency care, treatment for chronic medical conditions, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV, and maternal health services).

The MWG was deeply concerned that particularly vulnerable individuals are not provided adequate protection and care in detention. They issued a joint press statement on 24 April 2009 to raise these concerns.

### **7.7.3 Memorandum to SUHAKAM on Poor Conditions of Immigration Detention Centres Contributing to the Outbreak of Leptospirosis**

On 12 May 2009, a 21 year old asylum seeker from Burma, Thang Hoih Piang, died of Leptospirosis and on 17 May 2009, a 26 year old asylum seeker also from Burma, Sa La Hin, suffered the same fate. They were both detained in Juru Immigration Detention Centre where they were infected by the disease.

In this memorandum the MWG urged SUHAKAM to view the seriousness of the Leptospirosis outbreak in Juru Detention Centre with concern and act independently to ensure that justice is done for detainees. SUHAKAM must make the parties responsible for both the outbreak of Leptospirosis in the Juru detention centre and the general deterioration of conditions in detention centres across the country (which include the absence of a doctor and medical personnel stationed in detention centres) accountable. The MWG further stated that overall; there have been an unacceptably high number of deaths of detainees in detention centres.

The MWG organised a press conference on 27 May 2009, to present the memorandum to SUHAKAM on the outbreak of Leptospirosis at Juru Immigration Detention Centre that lead to the two deaths.

### **7.7.4 Migration Working Group 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Advocacy Workshop 2009**

The MWG 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Advocacy Workshop 2009 was jointly organised by the MWG and Jaringan Utara Migrasi dan Pelarian (JUMP) Penang, from 2-4 October 2009 at Paradise Sandy Bay Hotel, Penang. The workshop this year was sponsored by UNHCR.

The objectives of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Advocacy Workshop were:

- To consolidate the network of NGOs and individuals working on migration issues.
- To build the capacity of members of the MWG on advocacy and the use of regional mechanisms, specifically to examine the relevance of the ASEAN Charter and Other Conventions of concern to NGO's working on migration issues
- To create a space where members can enquire further the processes involved and how cases of trafficking are handled from the Malaysian Police and to build bridges between the authorities and members of the MWG
  
- To provide members with an updates from UNHCR on the conditions of detention centres and migrant and refugee health issues

- To inform the group on the prevailing issues faced by Foreign Spouses
- Review and plan for future joint lobbying and advocacy strategies.

#### **7.7.5 MWG Secretariat 2009/2010**

SUARAM was elected the new secretariat of the MWG for the term of 2009/2010 relieving WAO of its secretarial responsibilities which it held from March 2006 to October 2009.

#### **Co-coordinators of the MWG 2009/2010:**

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

- Alice Nah, HAKAM
- Temme Lee, SUARAM
- Asha Lim, HEI

#### **MWG Advisor:**

Ivy Josiah, WAO

#### **7.7.6 2010 work**

After reviewing its previous work areas and styles the MWG decided to divide the group into 3 separate Working Groups to divide the MWG's workload. The existing Working Groups are:

- Anti-Trafficking in Persons (A-TIP) working group led by WAO
- Migrant Workers working group led by Tenaganita
- Refugees & and Asylum seekers working group led by SUARAM

#### **7.7.7 Foreign Spouses Support Group (FSSG)**

On 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009 WAO together with the MWG organised a 'Consultation with Non-Malaysian Spouses on Malaysia's Obligations under CEDAW'. This was the first gathering of foreign spouses organised for the purposes of compiling information on the discrimination female foreign spouses' encounter in Malaysia. The consultation was attended by 25 women out of which 17 were foreign spouses and one a Malaysian married to a foreign husband.

At the meeting, foreign spouses reported treatment that indicated the possession of limited legal personality and rights, in most if not all aspects of their lives. Attendees were greatly dissatisfied with the treatment they had been afforded by the Malaysian government. The group lead by Bina Ramanand, a foreign spouse, realised the need to start documenting the

experience of foreign spouses in Malaysia especially to improve advocacy work on status of foreign spouses. In April 2009 the group sat and devised a Foreign Spouses survey that was distributed widely in order to collect the responses of other foreign spouses on their experiences faced in Malaysia.

**Wanita MCA takes on the issue of foreign spouses rights**

A good opportunity opened up when the MCA Wanita held a one day forum on Foreign Spouses in Malaysia and the FSSG presented a detailed paper on the issues, challenges and recommendations. WAO helped with this presentation.

The FSSG has now taken off on her own with Bina Ramanand (a foreign spouse) leading it and reporting to MWG when there is an activity or meeting with the government. WAO facilitates some of these meetings but does not attend them leaving it to the group to advocate for themselves.



## 8.0 FUNDRAISING

In 2009 WAO decided to raise funds in a more proactive manner. Besides securing institutional funds from foundations and corporation, we organised our own events and ensured that we were always in the forefront in order that potential donors would remember to include us as fund recipients whatever their various campaigns. The Asia Foundation, IWRAW Asia Pacific and the Malakoff Corporation all donated funds for specific projects.

Members and friends of WAO will be pleased to note that the Hong Leong Foundation agreed to take care of all the funding needs of the Child Care Centre for one year (May 2009 –April 2010).

Ms. Florence Fang of The Malaysia Tatler helped to ensure that the proceeds from two events, namely, the *Melium Tatler Charity Auction* and the *Zatenine Charity Auction* were channelled directly to WAO. We were also fortunate to be one of the 30 recipients for the *Bursa Edge Rat Race*. Sometimes, unpredictably, individuals contacted us offering to help; for example Mr. Frankie Tan, who organised “Trishaw Man” (more details about this project below). In total, there were 30 events organised by various individuals and corporations to benefit WAO.

Although we were not directly involved in organising most of these fund-raising events, for some, we set up booths, helped arrange for publicity or sold tickets to donors. A long-standing WAO member/volunteer, Ms. Vivienne Lee Iskander was part of the organising committee of a major fundraising event, the *Melium Tatler Charity Auction*. The funds collected eventually benefitted 6 organisations.

In total, we raised approximately 1.6 million ringgit in 2009. With our annual expenses now amounting to 1 million ringgit per annum, it has become imperative that we raise at least RM1.5 million per annum in order to sustain all the services and programmes by WAO.

Listed below are some highlights of all the fundraising events which were held:

### **AUSTRIAN GERMAN SWISS CHRISTMAS CHARITY BAZAAR (AGS): December 2008**

The AGS team once again came to our aid by giving us RM15, 000 which was to be used to offset the rental charges of the WAO Centre for 2010. By holding an Annual Christmas Charity Bazaar,

AGS has been supporting the rental of the WAO 3<sup>rd</sup> Centre since 2004. This year, however, they were able to subsidize only half the rental as the funds raised were not as substantial as in the previous years. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to AGS for their consistent support.

#### **DUBROVNIK MASQUERADE PARTY      MAR 28**

Ms. Dina Djumic, A WAO volunteer and member who owns Dubrovnik, a Croatian restaurant, decided to organise a fundraising event for WAO. She held a masquerade party for her patrons, other well-wishers and friends in her restaurant, during which, an auction was also held. Dina herself fully sponsored the venue and all the food consumed that night. We like to take this opportunity to thank Dina for her generosity and assistance.

#### **WAO CHARITY FUTSAL TOURNAMENT    MAR 29**

For the first time in the history of WAO, a Futsal Tournament was organised to help raise funds. Those who participated formed 3 groups: men's, women's and mixed categories. The response, mainly from corporate companies, was very encouraging. Some companies sent in up to 4 teams! We managed to obtain 23 teams to compete for the grand cash prize. Each team comprised 8 players, and had to pay an entrance fee of RM1,200 in order to participate. During the game, we provided booths for vendors who wished to sell their wares. There was a charge of RM500.00 for each booth. However, only 2 booths were taken up eventually. Fortunately for WAO, the venue and referees were fully sponsored by Sports Planet in Petaling Jaya.

#### **TRISHAW MAN – CYCLE FOR CHARITY    JUNE 06**

We were very fortunate to have been one of the beneficiaries of a unique fund-raising idea. Mr. Frankie Tan, in his quest to “give back” to society, decided to come up with the innovative idea of using a *beca* (trishaw) to cycle from Melaka all the way to Pulau Pinang - and back again – in order to raise funds for 3 charities of his choice. WAO was one of the lucky recipients. The Trishaw Man charity cycling event was launched by the Ketua Menteri of Melaka who then pledged to donate RM5,000 to each of the charities should Mr. Tan succeed in his daring venture.

**MIX FM SUPER CHIC CHARITY****JULY 05**

In conjunction with her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, Serena C and her celebrity friends congregated at Plaza Mont Kiara, and she hosted an event called *Super Chic Sunday*. The idea was to raise funds from the sales of second-hand items donated by Serena's celebrity friends. These items ranged from clothes, shoes and handbags to costume jewellery and much more.

The radio station, Mix FM also simultaneously ran an online auction for listeners to place their bids for the items (some bearing the names of famous designers) which had been donated by the celebrities.

On the day itself, the event attracted many curious bystanders – they later joined in the fun and donated generously to WAO. There were also performances by various local artists to add to the fun and festivities.

**DiGi – LOVE TO SAVE****AUG 05**

DiGi, a local telecommunications service provider, created a campaign which allowed the general public to donate to their favourite charity by going online and visiting a particular website (URL). It then required a mere 'click' for the person to lend support (there were no actual monetary donations from the public).

DiGi set aside RM 150,000 and promised to donate RM5 per click to the charity chosen by each participant of this programme. The campaign ran for 30 days from 1 June till 30 June. At WAO we send out appeals and reminders to all our friends to click and choose WAO. We managed to raise RM 10,000. There were 14 charities listed on Love to Save website.

**7AteNine CHARITY AUCTION – GREAT MEN IN SUPPORT OF WAO! AUG 08**

The ultra chic restaurant, 7ateNine, located in the heart of the Golden Triangle opened in 2006. To commemorate its third anniversary, the owners decided to keep the eatery's doors open for 36 hours continuously – thus offering patrons an unforgettable party. After kicking off the event with trendy music mixed by renowned disc jockeys, the all-day (and night) affair culminated in a

highly anticipated auction. Some of KL's most prominent and talented men sportingly lent their 'services and talents' in order to raise funds for WAO. Themed: "*Great Men in Support of Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)*" - some men offered to compose and perform an original song, some promised a year's worth of hairdressing services - the event succeeded beyond all expectations! All proceeds from the auction and part of the proceeds from the sales of tickets were dedicated to the organisation. WAO would like to thank Ms. Florence Fang, the Managing Director of Malaysia Tatler and Ms. Michelle Lee the proprietor of 7ateNine for dedicating their time, energy and other resources to benefit WAO.

#### **THE EDGE – BURSA MALAYSIA RAT RACE**

**AUG 11**

*The Edge-Bursa Malaysia Kuala Lumpur Rat Race* celebrated its 10th anniversary this year by having 159 teams consisting of five runners each, from 67 local and foreign, private and public-listed companies run beside each other. 20 charities were picked as beneficiaries of the proceeds garnered from the race. The run kicked-off with the 1km CEO Race, where 61 heads of organisations participated. This was followed by the 4.5km main race. The runners of the races started their sprints from the grounds of Bursa Malaysia, and returned to the same venue to reach the finish line. The Deputy Minister of Finance, YB Dato' Wira Chor Chee Heung was there to flag-off the runners. Our thanks to Dato' Yusli Mohamed Yusoff, Chief Executive Officer of Bursa Malaysia and Mr Ho Kay Tat, Editor-in-Chief of *The Edge*.

#### **SASSOROSSO ITALIAN DINNER**

**AUG 18**

Ms. Vivienne Lee Iskander, a WAO member and volunteer, managed to persuade the restaurateur and executive chef of Sassorosso (a fine dining establishment in Kuala Lumpur), Mr. Giovanni Koromilas, to whip up (and sponsor) an Italian buffet dinner for approximately 50 people. Aply assisted by Ms. Annie Varghese, Vivienne, Ms. Ivy Josiah, Ms. Meera Samanther and Ms. Florence Fang then convinced their friends and acquaintances to attend the dinner with a minimum donation of RM300 per person. Our special thanks to Ms. Ida Mariana and Ms. Maya Tan Abdullah who entertained the guests with their sultry vocals (without charge). Our deepest gratitude goes to Mr. Giovanni Koromilas who readily agreed to sponsor the venue, and applied his skills towards creating the wonderfully authentic Italian dishes. Conversation flowed freely that night and WAO raised RM15, 000.

## **GUARDIAN MARKS ITS 42<sup>ND</sup> ANNIVERSARY BY SUPPORTING WAO SEPT 08**

To coincide with its 42<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary, Malaysia's leading purveyor of health and beauty products, Guardian Pharmacy, organised a Charity Bonanza to help raise funds for three (3) charities - WAO being one of them.

Throughout the month of June 2009, a campaign named the Guardian Charity Bonanza invited customers to donate RM2 in order to receive an exclusive charity card, which entitled them to 20% discounts on 24 renowned health and beauty brands. In addition, customers enjoyed big savings on the first weekend of June: *Pack a Bag* meant that all they had to do was purchase a bag from Guardian at RM10, fill the bag with as many items from the participating brands as they could, then enjoy 30% discounts off the products they had packed.

## **THE MELIUM - TATLER CHARITY AUCTION      16 OCTOBER**

When the President of Melium, Dato' Farah Khan sat in discussion with Ms. Florence Fang, the Managing Director of Malaysia Tatler, they discovered that both the companies they represented were about to complete 20 years of successful operations in 2009. Instead of holding separate anniversary parties, they embarked on the idea of organising an unforgettable, double-billed event that would benefit 4 deserving charities.

An auction the likes of which had never been seen (or done) before in Kuala Lumpur was planned for. But in the run-up to the actual event, a website was created which not only had pictures of the products that would be put under the hammer, but via which potential bidders could put in their 'on-line bids'. Melium itself generously donated 40 out of the 80 items which were to be auctioned off. This was no mean feat; especially since the criteria was that each and every item either had to be a 'limited edition' piece or a highly desirable product with a retail price tag of RM10, 000 or more.

An organising committee consisting of several of the most influential women in KL met several times to brainstorm and report on ticket sales (RM1, 000 per guest) and who had bid for what at various stages of the whole 6 month process. One week before the actual auction was to be held, every single item had received a minimum on-line bid – which meant that if no one bid a higher amount on the night itself, it would go to the person whose name was on the website at the price he/she had keyed in, thus hastening the whole process.

At the event held at the Mandarin Oriental KL ballroom, it was truly amazing how everyone tried to outbid one another that night. Every item from exotic holiday and spa packages, one-of-its-kind handbags and watches, and even a week's stay in a ski lodge was snapped up by the enthusiastic crowd.

When Dato' Farah announced that the RM1 million target had been overshoot and that RM1.6 million had been collected, the hall burst into loud cheers. A late supper and light entertainment by dancers brought in from across the Causeway helped guests enjoy the last remaining hours of the evening. Since the whole night had been fully sponsored by Melium, Malaysia Tatler and the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, guests felt assured that all the money donated would be channelled directly to the four beneficiaries: Sisters in Islam, WAO, Rumah Nur Salam and Institut Tengku Ampuan Afzan.

#### **Projects organised by WAO**

1. Mar 28 Masquerade Party at Restaurant Dubrovnik
2. Mar 29 WAO Futsal Charity Tournament
3. Apr 04 – 05 Amcorp Mall Jumble Sale
4. June 06 – 07 Amcorp Mall Jumble Sale
5. Aug 18 Sassorosso Dinner
6. Sept 12 – 13 Garden Sale at WAO Centre
7. Oct 28 Michael Jackson Charity Movie Premier

#### **Projects organised by others with initial appeal from WAO**

1. Jan 10 Soroptimist Annual Dinner for WAO
2. Jan 19 Freeform Sdn Bhd – Chic Charity
3. Jan 06 RP Group (Watch Shoppe)
4. Mar 05 Zannotti Shoe Sale
5. Mar 10 Association of British Women Malaysia
6. Mar 13 ZOUK – Queen of Hearts Charity Event

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 7. Mar 18       | HELP University  |
| 8. Mar 26       | Art Loft - Charity Art Exhibition                        |
| 9. Apr          | Club 9 & Six Club  |
| 10. May 08 – 18 | West Metric – Home Dec Exhibition                        |
| 11. June 06     | Trishaw Man Launch & Ride                                |
| 12. June 18     | Cat Women Production – The Good Body                     |
| 13. Jul 05      | Mix FM Super Chic Sunday                                 |
| 14. Jul 24 – 26 | A Cut Above – Cut-A-Thon                                 |
| 15. Jul 25      | Rotaract Club of Bangsar                                 |
| 16. Aug 08      | 7AteNine Charity Auction                                 |
| 17. Aug 07      | Dutch Lady – Launch of Nutribus                          |
| 18. Aug 05      | DiGi Love to Save  |
| 19. Aug 11      | Rat Race at Bursa Malaysia                               |
| 20. Aug 12      | 3R – Whistle for Women                                   |
| 21. Sept 12     | St. Patrick Society Charity Dinner                       |
| 22. Sept 14     | Innerwheel   |
| 23. Sept 12     | G-Force Charity Movie Premier                            |
| 24. Sept 08     | Guardian Pharmacy – 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bonanza |
| 25. Oct         | Melium Tatler Ball                                       |
| 26. Nov         | KPMG – Sale of T-shirts                                  |
| 27. Nov 08      | IJM - LUAU Charity Walk                                  |
| 28. Nov 27      | ZOUK – Queen of Hearts Charity Night                     |
| 29. Dec 10      | RP Group – (Watch Shoppe)                                |

Post Script



Image from: [webpub.allegheeny.edu/.../s/swesoky/PSWS490.html](http://webpub.allegheeny.edu/.../s/swesoky/PSWS490.html)

## Glossary of Abbreviations

<b>AWAM</b>	All Women's Action Society
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>CCC</b>	Child Care Centre
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>DV</b>	domestic violence
<b>DVA</b>	Domestic Violence Act
<b>EXCO</b>	WAO's Executive Committee
<b>IWD</b>	International Women's Day
<b>IWRAW</b>	International Women's Rights Action Watch
<b>JAG</b>	Joint Action Group for Gender Equality
<b>LAC</b>	Legal Aid Centre
<b>MDW</b>	migrant domestic worker
<b>MWFC</b>	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
<b>MWG</b>	Migration Working Group
<b>NCWO</b>	National Council of Women's Organisations
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>SIS</b>	Sisters In Islam
<b>SUHAKAM</b>	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>VAW</b>	Violence Against Women
<b>WCC</b>	Women's Centre for Change, Penang