

# WAO ANNUAL REPORT

## 2010



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Final edits by the Executive Committee 2009/2011 and copy editing by Sarah Thwaites

**April 2011**

# CONTENTS

1.	WHO IS WHO IN WAO .....	4
2.	WAO SERVICES .....	8
3.	SUPPORT SERVICES FOR EX-RESIDENTS .....	18
4.	INTERNS AT WAO .....	24
5.	VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS .....	26
6.	SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS .....	27
7.	PUBLIC EDUCATION .....	37
8.	WAO IN THE MEDIA .....	41
9.	ADVOCACY .....	48
10.	FUNDRAISING .....	77
11.	GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS .....	84

# 1. WHO IS WHO IN WAO



## Trustees

Toh Puan Datin Dr. Aishah Ong

Rashidah Abdullah

Dato' Noor Faridah Ariffin

Puan Sri Chong Eu Ngoh

## Membership

222 members and 30 volunteers

## WAO Executive Committee 2009 – 2011

The following members of the Executive Committee (EXCO) were elected for a two-year term (2009 – 2011) at the 26th Annual General Meeting held on 26 April 2009 at the WAO Centre, Petaling Jaya. The EXCO held 9 meetings in 2010.

<b>President</b>	Meera Samanther
<b>Vice President</b>	Vivienne Lee Iskander (co-opted on 22 March 2010)
<b>Secretary</b>	Chin Oy Sim
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Mok Chuang Lian
<b>Treasurer</b>	Carol Chin
<b>Assistant Treasurer</b>	Sharon Hariharan (resigned 2 June 2010) Sharon Kaur (w.e.f. 1 July 2010, resigned 13 September 2010)
<b>Committee Members</b>	Lee Shook Fong Ambiga Sreenevasan Grace Lim
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	Ivy Josiah (Executive Director) Sharmini Kanesamoorthy (Finance & Administrative Manager) Annie Varghese (Projects & Administrative Manager) Wong Su Zane (Social Work Manager)

## WAO Committees, Groups and Coalitions in 2010

**Staff and Finance Committee**      Meera Samanther  
Mok Chuang Lian  
Sharon Hariharan  
Carol Chin  
Vivienne Lee- Iskander

**Staff in attendance:**

Ivy Josiah (Executive Director)  
Sharmini Kanesamoorthy (Finance & Administrative Manager)

**Legal Aid Centre (LAC)  
Representatives**                      Meera Samanther  
Jessie Ang  
Nazlina Abdul Ghani

**Coordinator for United  
Nations High Commissioner  
for Refugees (UNHCR)  
Programme**                              Wong Su Zane

**Anak Angkat Coordinator**              Umadevi Rajah Denram

**Volunteer Coordinator**                      Annie Varghese  
Ann Nicole Nunis

**Website Design and Content**              Bob Kee (Volunteer)  
Ann Nicole Nunis

**National Council of Women's  
Organisations (NCWO)  
Representatives**                              Shanthi Dairiam  
Nazlina Abdul Ghani

**Joint Action Group for Gender  
Equality (JAG)  
Representatives**                              Ivy Josiah  
Meera Samanther  
Shanthi Dairiam

Wong Su Zane  
Sarah Thwaites (w.e.f. May 2010)  
Valerie Mohan (w.e.f. July 2010)

**JAG Fiesta Feminista** Meera Samanther  
Diyana Yahaya

**JAG Sexuality Group** Meera Samanther  
Ivy Josiah

**Penan Support Group** Wong Su Zane  
Ivy Josiah  
Meera Samanther

**Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC)  
Representative** Ivy Josiah

**Member of the National  
Advisory Council (formerly  
known as NACIWID)** Ivy Josiah

**Migration Working Group  
Representatives** Ivy Josiah  
Meera Samanther  
Wong Su Zane  
Sarah Thwaites

**Reproductive Rights Advocacy  
Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)** Wong Su Zane

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

## **Staff**

### **Refuge**

Wong Su Zane	Social Work Manager
Normah Md. Nor	Night Supervisor
Jessie Ang	Social Worker
Nazlina Abdul Ghani	Social Worker
Umadevi a/p Rajah Denram	Social Worker
Puveshini Rao Subaramaniam	Social Worker
Noor Diyana Yahaya	Social worker (w.e.f. March 2010)

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

Mary Selina Santhanasamy	Child Care Supervisor (resigned December 2010)
Engammah Anumiah (Vijaya)	Child Minder
Hanif Muawanah	Child Minder
Kalayivani Vasuthevan	Child Minder (resigned December 2010)
Mazmyra Zafia	Child Care Supervisor (w.e.f. 4 October 2010)

### **Administrative Staff**

Ammy Juliet Jefery Gilimon	Administrator
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### **Projects Officers**

Suzaidatul Joanna Sukarjo	Projects Assistant (resigned February 2010)
Ann Nicole Nunis	Projects Assistant (w.e.f. May 2010)

### **Programme Officers (Contract staff)**

Sarah Thwaites	Programme Officer (27 May 2010 – 26 May 2011)
Valerie Mohan	Programme Officer (1 August 2010 – 31 July 2011)

### **Management Staff**

Ivy N. Josiah	Executive Director
Annie Varghese	Projects & Administrative Manager (resigned January 2011)
Sharmini Kanesamoorthy	Finance & Administrative Manager
Wong Su Zane	Social Work Manager



## 2. WAO SERVICES

### 2.1. Statistics for overall services

Service	2009	2010
Refuge	127 women & 122 children	138 women & 93 children
Face to Face Counselling (FFC)	138	124
FFC for Refugee Women	50	21
Telephone Counselling	1228	1544
Email Enquiries	174	297
Child Care Centre ( CCC) children	24	16

### 2.2. Refuge services

The Refuge has seen an increase in the number of women who have sought temporary shelter in 2010. Out of the 138 residents, 125 were new residents (entering for the first time).

Reasons for seeking shelter	Number	Percentage
Domestic violence	88	71.2
Single and pregnant	20	16.0
Rape	4	3.2
No place to stay	2	1.6
Migrant domestic worker abuse	2	1.6
Sexual harassment	2	1.6
Trafficked	1	0.8
Others	6	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100</b>



## **2.3. Profile of women at the Refuge**

Twenty-nine residents stayed for less than a week while another 29 residents stayed on for one to three weeks. Only 17 residents stayed for a period of more than three months. The rest of the residents stayed between one to two months. The vast majority of the residents, 103, were from Wilayah Persekutuan and Selangor. We also had a resident from Sarawak and one from China. In terms of age, 98 residents were between the ages of 20 and 39, while 17 residents were 40 and above and 10 residents were younger than 20 years of age.

In terms of nationality, 93 clients were from Malaysia and 17 were from Myanmar. The remainder were from Indonesia, Cambodia, Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, China, Iraq, France, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Although the client group in the Refuge is diverse and made up of different cultures, geographical backgrounds and languages, the women generally got along with each other. When required, the staff communicated with residents who spoke a language other than Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil with the help of an interpreter, usually from UNHCR. The ties that are forged here in the Refuge sometimes carry on after the residents leave, and the residents and interpreters sometimes help each other by looking out for jobs, accommodation and other resources.

### **2.3.1. Domestic violence survivors**

Out of 125 clients, 88 were survivors of domestic violence. Out of the 88, 62 residents decided to break the cycle of violence and not go back to the abusive situation. The women who did return to the abusive situation did so owing to reasons such as giving a chance to the husband, for financial reasons, foreign spouses needed to renew their social visit passes and the children's schooling.

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

This year, the breakdown of the type of abuse shows a high number of physical (94.3%), psychological (96.6%), financial (64.8%), social (53.4%) and sexual abuse (35.2%). These figures show that in any violent household/situation, the woman is subjected to multiple forms of abuse. It is also interesting to note that the high number of financial abuse cases manifest in many ways, including, taking the woman's money, depriving her of money and also using the woman's name to take loans that are not serviced, causing her to be blacklisted. In short, these women remain disadvantaged by being subjected to financial abuse whether or not they have a job and financial independence.

Interestingly enough, approximately 38% of the women said that the perpetrator abused them for no reason at all. A large number, approximately 45%, cited triggering factors such as jealousy, suspicions and financial problems that brought on the abuse. Substance abuse by the perpetrator was also a factor, including alcohol (30.7 %) and drugs (22.7 %), mainly being ice,

“shabu”, “ubat batuk”, etc. Most of the time it was a mixture of reasons, for example, an overly jealous husband is suspicious of his wife and starts hitting her under the influence of alcohol.

37.5% of perpetrators and 27.3% of the women came from a violent background. 80% of the women were abused by their husbands or ex-husbands while abusive parents and boyfriends made up another 8% each. Most of the abusers were intimate partners of the women compared to family members and relatives.

Many of these women, around 47 of them, had left the home on a previous occasion. Out of this number, 33 had attempted to leave at least once before and 12 left more than five times. They reconciled with their husbands for various reasons, especially after intervention by the families.

### ***Police reports***

As part of our services at the Refuge, women get assistance in getting a medical check up, going to the welfare department, courts and also the police station to make reports and give statements. Sixty-three of the domestic violence survivors had lodged police reports prior to coming to the Refuge. However, during their stay at WAO, we assisted 34 women in making reports. Some of these reports were follow up reports as some women made incorrect reports or they needed to give additional information. Out of the 88 women who were survivors of domestic violence, only 25 requested for an Interim Protection Order (IPO). Sixteen of them received their IPOs, two are still in process and the rest did not get an IPO as the police did not open investigation files as their cases were not deemed serious enough.

### **2.3.2. Single pregnant women**

The recent spike in the number of single pregnant women in the country also affected the intake at the Refuge. There were 20 single pregnant women in the shelter throughout 2010, a tremendous shift from six in the previous year. Out of these, 11 were between the ages of 20 and 29, two were between the ages of 30 and 39 while seven were less than 20 years of age. Thirteen were unemployed, while two were students and the rest were working. All but three of the single pregnant women had had consensual sex.

During their stay at WAO, the pregnant women were sent for pre-natal check ups on a regular basis and were also given information on nutritional intake, post-natal care and pre-natal advice. Since most of them were first-time mothers, they were also given counselling on how to deal with the stigma and also deal with the stressors that they might be faced with. They were also briefed about the options available to them and their babies. Information on family planning was given to them.

Out of the 17 women who said they knew about family planning, only two admitted to using contraceptives. One of the women did use a condom, but nevertheless got pregnant. The other 15 who did not use contraception gave reasons such as they felt that they would not get pregnant or their partner did not approve. Another three were rape survivors.

After the pregnancy, 14 of the women gave their babies up for adoption either to people that they knew or to couples selected by the welfare department in the hospital. The medical social worker helped them with this process. Five women decided to keep their babies with them and one decided to have the baby taken care of by her parents and relatives. The latter wanted her mother to take care of the baby with an arrangement that her mother “adopt” the baby.

### **2.3.3. Migrant Domestic Workers (MDW)**

Throughout the whole of 2010, WAO received only two migrant domestic workers who were abused. One was from the Philippines and the other from Vietnam. Both of them were between the ages of 20 and 39.

The Social Workers would first ascertain what the problem was (non-payment of wages, withholding documents, deprivation of food, etc) and see how best to help the client. This may include dealing with the respective embassies, police, immigration department, airlines and also finally driving them to the airport. One of the clients was abused financially by the employers as they were withholding her payment while the other thought that the employer was going to cheat her and ran away before anything could happen. The latter ran aimlessly into a car and was brought by the driver to WAO.

WAO had negotiations with the employer and also the embassy to find a way to best help the worker. The Philippines embassy was very prompt and swift in taking action and our client was able to return home in a matter of two months with all expenses paid.

The other client from Vietnam stayed with us for two to three weeks. While attempts to help her were underway, the client began to work, enabling her to earn and save money to return to Vietnam.

## **2.4. Challenging situations**

In 2010, we had some tense situations whereby perpetrators caused a disturbance at our premises. Some of the perpetrators even came with the assistance of the police, private investigators and lawyers. The perpetrators demanded to see their wife or take away the children as they had managed to obtain interim custody of the children. However, with the assistance of our friendly police station officers, the WAO staff managed to keep the situation under control.

## **2.5. Women’s Programmes at the Refuge**

Throughout the year, various activities and programmes were carried out and none of them would have been possible if not for the efforts and dedication of our volunteers such as Vivienne Lee, Goh Poh Kim, Annie Ng, Devi Doraisamy, Shamini Subramaniam, Padmini Nagalingam, Cheah Phaik Lin, Jeannie Yap Wan Yi and Aina Nurazmi.

Many of the activities and programs would not have been possible if not for the support of various partnering organisations such as *Malakoff*, *Quota Club*, *Soroptomist International* and the *Pride Foundation* to name a few.

Through our diverse volunteers and partners, we were able to design a wide variety of programmes and events catering to the many different interests of the women living within our shelter. Programs such as cooking lessons, yoga lessons, beading lessons, English language classes and computer classes were held almost weekly, complemented by talks on breast cancer awareness and general health and hygiene. We also conduct occasional outings to educational locations such as the Aquaria, movie outings and recreational activities to parks and forest reserves. Our Annual Gathering was coordinated this year by Puveshini Rao and assisted by Jessie Ang. This year's event saw the gathering of 150 residents and ex-residents and their children for some fun, food and games.



*Yoga class*

## 2.6. Children's Programmes at the Refuge

The Refuge housed 92 children who came in with their mothers in 2010. The children's ages ranged from newborns to 18 year olds. They came from various degrees of abusive situations and also were in need of physical, psychological and social support.

The children were assessed to gauge the impact of their home environment on their development and also to gain a better understanding into their mental schemas. Social Workers who were not in charge of their mothers' cases were assigned to the task of talking to them.

Besides this, as of 2010, children were each given a pocket file that was theirs in which to keep their personal belongings and books. Children were also given workbooks on English, Bahasa Malaysia, Science and Mathematics to facilitate learning. They also do arts and crafts work and have outdoor activities. On top of that, we talk to the children about good values, adopting a positive attitude and coping mechanisms. These activities are carried out from 10am to 12pm every morning.

The people in charge of the children's programme for the year 2010 were Puveshini Rao assisted by Diyana Yahaya. Foreign interns who came to work in the shelter also lent a big hand in helping with the kids, namely Kristina B. Toft and Anja Melita.

## 2.7. Collaboration with sponsors

### ➤ Malakoff Corporation Berhad

This year, in a continuation of last year's sponsorship from *Malakoff Corporation Berhad* we have continued to employ an officer to carry out the women's program as well as the English and computer classes. Malakoff had also printed and distributed 3,000 copies of the "Single and Pregnant" booklet. We continue to also utilise a fund set up last year by Malakoff to assist single and pregnant women starting their new life.

### ➤ HongKong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC)

Through *HSBC's* support we were able to carry out four separate activities for the women and children within the Refuge as well as the children from our Child Care Centre (CCC). Their support ranges from financial support as well as human resources in carrying out activities such as a High Tea at the Hilton Hotel in celebration of Mother's Day, a guided tour at the Aquaria KLCC, a whole day and lunch at Berjaya Times Square Theme Park, as well as hiking at the Bukit Cerakah.

### ➤ Thank you to other sponsors

WAO must put on record our thanks to donors who have been supporting us for over ten years. *Gardenia Confectionary* for donating bread and kaya to both the CCC and the Refuge every week. *Malayan Flour Mills* gives flour, cooking oil and sugar 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.

## **2.8. Women with court cases**

Social workers and an advocacy programme officer continued accompanying our nine clients who had court cases. In one of the cases, the court had “subpoenaed” a social worker to be one of the witnesses for the case.

Among the cases, five are rape cases, of which three involved minors. The other four cases are a divorce under fasakh, child custody, a migrant domestic worker abuse case and a sexual harassment case. Progress was seen in most of the cases as the clients testified and various witnesses came to give evidence.

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 (APP) for her defence. In this gang rape case, there were four charges however the accused were acquitted of all the charges due to lack of evidence.

In another case of a minor who was raped, the case was prolonged for four years. Thus far she and most of the witnesses have given their testimonies. However, there has been no further development since November 2009. WAO has sent a letter to the head of the prosecution unit in Selangor to ask for a meeting to discuss this case.

In the foreign domestic worker abuse case, the client has given her testimony and is ready to go back to Indonesia. Most likely the court will be deciding whether there is a prima facie case in early 2011.

There were two rape cases where the accused have been sentenced. In one of the cases, our client was abducted and raped by two brothers and both of the accused were sentence to 16 years in jail and three strokes. The other case involved a minor who was raped by the mother’s ex-boyfriend. The accused was convicted and ordered to serve a total of 38 years in jail and 16 strokes.

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

## **2.9. Telephone counselling**

There was a spike in the number of counselling calls received in 2010 – 1,544 calls compared to the 1,229 in 2009, an increase of 25.6%. Every month we received up to an average of 130 calls. Most of the callers called about domestic violence issues while others called about legal matters, sexual harassment, being single and pregnant and some called just to have someone to talk to.

Most of the clients were from the Klang Valley although there were calls from other states including Sabah and Sarawak. The call numbers were exceptionally high right after a television talk show or a press interview marking the important role of the media in disseminating information.

Through the sheer number of calls, it is evident that this mode of service is the most popular. Sometimes we get calls from third parties who wish to help. We often encourage the callers to get the women to call us directly so that we can offer something more than information, someone to talk to and who is willing to listen to her story.

## **2.10. Face to face counselling**

There were 145 women who came in for face to face counselling in 2010 compared to 138 the previous year. Some of the clients came in because they could not speak over the phone (working, husband at home etc) and many others needed a space to express themselves without being judged. They felt more comfortable in a face to face setting instead of talking on the phone. Their problems were similar to those of those who called in for telephone counselling

## **2.11. Email enquiries**

We received an average of 25 emails per month and a total of 297 emails by the end of 2010. Some of the emails were follow up emails from the same person.

The public sends emails to request information about our services, procedures on getting birth certificates, welfare aid, shelter homes, housing and sometimes on crisis issues. WAO is currently a popular option for students researching on women's issues requesting for interviews and information. Although some would come only to interview us about our services (which they could easily get from the website) many others wanted us to give our opinions on matters such as violence against women, the women's rights movement in Malaysia, single pregnant women and sexual harassment among other issues.

WAO ensures that all emails are responded to immediately. As an email is a very one-dimensional mode of communication, the language and tone that the message carries are given utmost priority to ensure that the clients feel reassured and get the support that they need.

## **2.12. Working with female asylum seekers and refugees**

### **2.12.1. Collaboration with UNHCR**

Our work with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began in 2003 by sheltering two refugees and their children.

In April 2008, UNHCR approached WAO to provide the Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) counselling. WAO agreed to support UNCHR by providing counselling services on an 'as and

when needed' 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 2010, WAO provided 21 counselling sessions. These cases involved rape, attempted rape, sexual harassment, depression and domestic violence. There were also other issues such as difficulty in coping in Malaysia.

WAO provided shelter for 19 refugee women of whom 13 were referred by UNHCR. Most of them were from Myanmar, two of them from Sri Lanka and one from Iran. Fourteen of them were domestic violence survivors, two were rape survivors and two of them were referred to us by their community members because they had no place to stay. Another refugee who had resettled in Sweden came back to Malaysia because she wanted to bring her three other children to be reunited with her in Sweden. Her children are currently staying in the WAO Child Care Centre while waiting for the resettlement process to be completed.

### **2.12.2. Collaboration with ICMC**

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) approached WAO to assist them in their refugee programme in Malaysia. This programme aims to recruit 25 women from various refugee communities to form a Refugee Women Protection Corp (RWPC) who will in turn raise awareness in their community on Gender Based Violence (GBV) issues and provide assistance for refugees who suffer SGBV.

WAO was contracted to conduct training of trainer's workshops for refugee women who were recruited under RWPC by community leaders.

### **2.13. Legal Aid Clinic (LAC, Bar Council)**

For the past ten years or so, the WAO Refuge has hosted chambering students. 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, maintenance, 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 three main areas; syariah law training, family law training and NGO based work. Syariah and family trainings are conducted by LAC-KL at their premises, whereas the women NGOs' training is conducted by SIS/AWAM/WAO at Sisters in Islam's premises. In addition to briefs on family law, the students learn about the different issues in a family dispute, and in particular about domestic violence. Other topics include violence against women, 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 a two hour session on basic helping skills.



WAO receives one student each from LAC-KL and LAC-Selangor per batch. There are four to five batches a year. In 2010, we had ten students: Natasha Qystina Raman, Lim Qi Si, Rehna Perumal, Toh Lee Khim, Kathlyn Lee Sue-In, Sharifah Raquan, Nurul Syafirah bt Zulhaimy, Kee Huey Sin, Lew Geok Chin and Sharifah Nurul Aini bt Sayed Abdullah who came once a week for 12 weeks in a stretch. They are required to be on duty either on Monday or Friday, from 10am until 4.30pm. 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, documented cases and compiled data of residents and ex-residents. 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 three times at LAC-KL to discuss issues and problems pertaining to the chambering students.

Types of calls/cases the chambering students handled in 2010:

<b>Types of cases</b>	<b>Number of calls</b>
Domestic violence	25
Divorce procedure	26
Maintenance	11
Custody	19
Adoption	2
Single mother	3
Sexual harassment	2
Housing problems	4
Financial problems	5
Marital affairs	6
Adoption	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>

## 3. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR EX-RESIDENTS



The Refuge is a response to a crisis situation when a woman needs a safe place for herself and her children. When deciding to lead an independent life away from violence, she faces many challenges; she has to cope with finding a job, housing, child care and earning enough money to support her family.

WAO realised this as far back as June 1985, when we developed the Anak Angkat Programme to help women who decided to make it on their own. Single mothers have a right to support and we have been lobbying for the government to set up affordable child care centres, offer low cost housing and financial support for survivors of domestic violence.

### 3.1. The Child Care Centre (CCC)

The CCC, established in 1991, is a very special children's home, and is only for the children of our clients who have previously sought shelter at the Refuge. The children may have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse themselves. The children stay with us from one month to three years, but sometimes longer. This is time given to allow the mother to sort out her life – her job, establish her network of support, be able to have some financial stability and most of all be able to get a home of her own.

The children are between three to twelve years old. The number of children in our facility is kept to a maximum of 15 so they can be given specialised care and attention by a group of dedicated and trained full time staff consisting of a supervisor and three child minders who work on rotation. We also keep to a maximum of 15 children as we only have two bedrooms.

All their expenses like text books, exercise books, stationary, school travel costs, school 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, developmental and academic details are maintained.

The supervisor usually helps the mother with school transfers or enrolment into 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 members know about our home and if there are concerns and issues, the concerned teacher or headmistress calls us and discusses with us openly.

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 knows what is going on. Mothers

take the children home during the school holidays unless they are unable to as they have yet to establish their own home.

### **3.1.1. Number of children**

In 2010, we had 18 children staying at the CCC. There were eight boys and ten girls from 11 mothers. Some children stayed for less than a month while others have been living at the CCC up to three years.

The following table shows the number of children and the length of their stay.

<b>Length of stay</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
3 years	1
2 years	1
1 year	8
6 – 11 months	7
Less than 1 month	1

### **3.1.2. Refugee children**

Four children from Myanmar stayed at the CCC in 2010. Three children from Myanmar entered the CCC in July 2010. As Refugee children cannot be registered in a regular school, these children are home schooled. They are being taught mathematics, English language, science and general knowledge by our intern, Oliver Glasder.

Another boy from Myanmar stayed for about two weeks. His mother and other siblings were at the Refuge. As he was more than twelve years old, Refuge policy did not allow him to stay at the Refuge and he was sent to CCC while waiting for resettlement.

### **3.1.3. The Smile Buddy Programme**

In 2010, Ms. Urmilah Dass initiated “The Smile Buddy Programme” which was conducted by 15 volunteers for six weeks. The objective of the programme is for the children to improve their social skills, increase their self-esteem, learn to build trust and cooperate with other people in the group. Each child was given a buddy who mentored the child throughout the programme on these various skills.

We would like to thank the following volunteers who gave up six weekends to be with the CCC children:

*Vignesh Pillai, Vickneswar Rao, Vighnes Vithiatharan, Suthen Thomas, Devanand Raj, Suman Pillai, Kalashini Sivarajah, Meetha Menon, Salina Abdul Aziz, Gayathiri Jambulingam, Kamini Davaindran, Chitra Sridharan, Annie Hariharan, Anne Malini Fernando and Puveshini Rao.*

#### **3.1.4. Other activities**

The children also attended Yoga classes, dance classes, tuition classes, and activities on independent living skills and sessions on building their character. Some of these sessions were sponsored by the Bharathanjali Dance Academy.

#### **3.1.5. Volunteers at the CCC**

The staff are supported and complemented 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:

*Urmilah Dass, Joginder Kaur, Impi Jassel, Vara, 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 and Rahul.*

HSBC and KPMG have taken the children out for birthday parties, visit to the bird park, aquaria KLCC and weekend activities with the children.

There were two volunteer meetings at the CCC in March and September 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. A book was started to write up on each volunteer's lesson plan and remarks to ensure continuity.

#### **3.1.6. Male interns at the CCC**

For the first time in the history of WAO we had a male intern from Germany, *Philipp Kaufmann*, working at the CCC. He taught the children and took care of the children in all their daily routines. He has been a good male role model for the children. Sadly, he left CCC in August 2010.

We were fortunate to get another male intern, *Oliver Glasder*, who arrived in time to take over Phillip's duties. Oliver is also from Germany and he has adjusted himself well with the CCC children.

### **3.2. Anak Angkat (AA) sponsorship programme – 70 children received sponsorships**

It is now 26 years since we began the above scheme. This programme has played an important role in helping our ex-residents who have decided to stay independently with their children. This programme helps our mothers by giving them financial support amounting to RM70 per month. Their monthly earning is just enough to cover their accommodation, food, and transportation expenses. This sponsorship has helped reduce a single mother's financial burden by lending a helping hand to meet their children's educational needs such as school fees, bus fare, books, stationery etc.

Every year we have generous sponsors who voluntarily contribute. Our sponsors vary from companies, associations, and members of the public. A social worker is assigned to handle the programme, all decisions as to who should receive this financial help are discussed at the social worker's meeting. The sponsorship will be given by assessing the monthly earnings of the mother and the number of her school going children.

A brief description of the child and his/her mother will be sent to the sponsors. Periodically, copies of progress reports of the child, photographs and updates of the child will also be sent to them. Annually, the sponsors, mothers and the sponsored children will be invited to our annual gathering which is usually in December. This will give them a chance to meet with the child and mother. Most of the sponsors usually bring gifts for the children, and take photographs with them.

In 2010, we had more sponsors as compared to the previous year. In 2010, there were 43 sponsors as compared to 33 in 2009. As a result, the number of sponsored children increased to 70 whereas in 2009 there were only 43 sponsored children.

#### **The list of sponsors who sponsored a child in 2010:**

Anna Maria Fenandez	Martin Harrod
Anandi Roy & Michel Rollot	M'sian Formosian Women's Assoc.
Arne Hayn	Mikhail Sivaneindren
Chan Whye Ling	Modal Rantau Inti Sdn Bhd
Chin Kean Wai	Mok Tuang Wah
Chris A Ewin	Norasiah bt Ismail
Dr. Jayalakshmi Pailoor	Ooi Mei Yoong
Dr. Sarada Narayanan	Paul James Sapwell
Dr. Tan Lee Nak	Premila Sivam

Eswari Nagaraju

Raymond Soong Huat Lye

General Electric International Inc

Russell Faulkner

Gunathevi Sinnadurai

Rozlinda Binti Azlan Cheelandy

Hoong Ngen Cheong

Reuben Franklin

Hwang Min Wen

Subbiah / Kamal Gehi

Indra Kulasegaran

Toh Yung Fei

Jacqueline Ann Surin

Tracy Toh

Julian C. H. Lee

Karla Ranie

Karthik Ramu

Maheswary Supramaniam

Kieran Mulloy

Mageswari Nagaraju

Lynette Yeow

**These are the sponsors who sponsored more than a child in 2010:**

Deloitte Consulting (SEA) Sdn Bhd (4 children)

Mahani and Friend (2 children)

Maureen Teoh (5 children)

Renee Marcia Chandran (2 children)

Rumah Amal Nur Enjah Mariam (RANEM) (3 children)

Soroptomist International Club of Damansara (5 children)

Soroptomist International Club of Shah Alam (3 children)

Yayasan Tun Abdul Hamid (7 children)

**Ms. A:** *"Thank god the sponsorship money was banked in on time, if not I don't know what I will do at that time, thank you so much."*

**Ms. B:** *"It's very helpful for me in paying my son's school expenses."*

### 3.3. Tun Tan Siew Sin Memorial Fund

Upon the passing away of our patron Tun Tan Siew Sin in 1988, the TTSS Memorial fund was set up in 1990 to provide financial assistance, some seed money when women need to set up their home or start a business. Loans ranging from RM300 to RM1, 000 are given to our ex-residents. In 2010, five women benefited from this fund. We have about RM15,000 left in the fund. We started with RM29, 000 and to date have given out loans amounting to RM23, 000 and received repayments of RM3,100. Most of the women who borrowed are very poor.

### 3.4. Other forms of assistance for mothers

*Soroptomist Damansara* sponsored 4 ex-residents to attend a one day training at Women Institute of Management for ICT-e-bay. Besides that, they also sponsored RM200 per month for groceries for a year for an ex-resident who is a client with special needs.

*Quota Club* donated a special needs motorbike for an ex-resident. *Quota Club* also donated several starter kits for several residents who are interested to do beading when they leave WAO. This bead project has been ongoing for the past five years.



## 4. INTERNS AT WAO



This year we had a diverse group of interns wanting to do social work, child care, counselling, and advocacy work. The presence of interns contributed to a more dynamic work environment.

WAO hosted eight foreign interns from the US, Germany, America, Sweden and Denmark. During their time with WAO, the interns gained in-depth knowledge about domestic violence, its impact on women and children and advocacy for women's human rights.

Interns have always been an integral part of the WAO team. The interns, much like the staff, are exposed to an array of tasks: answering phone calls, organising 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 fundraising activities.

We thank the following interns for their involvement and assistance:

Interns	Institution	Period
Philipp Alexander Kauffman	Antarabudaya Exchange Programme, Germany	August 2009 – August 2010
Karin Long	University of Oregon, USA	4 January – 20 March 2010
Jessica Waters	University of Montana, USA	25 January – 20 July 2010
Ida Axelsson	Jonkoping University, Sweden	3 March – 30 April 2010
Anja Melita Petersen	Metropolitan University College, Denmark	30 August – December 17 2010
Kristina Toft	Metropolitan University College, Denmark	August 30 – December 17 2010
Colette Johnson	University of Oregon, USA	1 September – 3 December
Oliver Glasder	Antarabudaya Exchange Programme, Germany	August 2010 – August 2011



#### **4.1. Student clinical psychologists at the Refuge**

Ms. Urmila Dass assigned three of her students, Cheah Phaik Lin, Jeannie Yap Wan Yi and Aina Nurazmi, to do their practicum at the Refuge. These three women conducted counselling sessions and group sessions on life skills for our residents.

#### **4.2. Philipp Kauffman at the CCC**

Philipp Kauffman came to WAO under the Antarabudaya Student Exchange Programme (AFS). The AFS programme allows foreign students to gain a better perspective and insight into Malaysian lifestyle and culture.

Due to his experience in working with children in Germany, Philipp was soon absorbed into the WAO CCC where he was helping with the day to day care of the children. He was outstanding as he was very patient, culturally sensitive and had a positive attitude. He was fondly known as “abang” (older brother) and was an inspiration and good role model to the children. He worked in the CCC full time from Monday to Thursday and spent one day a week at the WAO Centre to get a feel of the other areas of WAO’s work.

#### **4.3. Interns work on our newsletter *Inroads***

The interns helped to write and compile two newsletters in 2010. *Inroads* is one away we reach out to the public, donors, volunteers and members. *Inroads* is uploaded onto our website: <http://www.wao.org.my/INROADS.htm>

## 5. VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS



In 2010, we reached out to members and volunteers alike via the e-groups. They were kept abreast of WAO events and from time to time given information on issues affecting women.

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 totalled 222 in 2010.

### 5.1. Volunteer development

A highlight last year was WAO's working relationship with the accounting firm KPMG. On 17 August we gave a talk at the KPMG premises about volunteering at WAO. KPMG then allowed for their accountants to volunteer once a week for a full day at the Refuge and WAO Centre from September to October 2010.

In 2010, orientations and meetings were held every first or third Saturday of each month. These fortnightly meetings were coordinated by Annie Varghese, Suzaidathul Joanna and later by Ann Nicole Nunis. However, due to the increased number of fundraising events that took place on weekends, there were months when we were not able to carry out the meetings. There were also orientations conducted on a one-on-one basis.

We conducted 10 volunteer orientations on an average of two every other month. In total, 57 volunteers went through the orientations, out of which 28 remained as volunteers and another 29 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, seminars and public education booths. We had 98 volunteers in total for 2010. 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 and regularly at the WAO Centre.

### 5.2. Volunteers at the WAO Centre

We want to put on record our thanks to Laura Wong Heng Wun, Chu Tang Wong, Jolene Lim Saw In and Rosalind Boey who come in once week to the WAO Centre to cut and file newspaper clippings and assist in administrative work.

## 6. SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS



WAO is well known for being innovative in our public education outreach. We were the first to persuade the newspapers to run a series of articles on violence against women and women's rights in the family, organise 16 days of events at the KLCC LRT to commemorate *16 days of Activism against VAW*, produce radio shows, mount a billboard campaign and publish colourful brochures on VAW.

With a growing awareness that both the organisation and the staff needed to be more clued in about using new technology, WAO applied for funds from an ICT – VAW project managed by Empower to conduct in-house training in the strategic use of ICT tools.

### 6.1. Social media training for WAO in October 2010

The training for 13 WAO staff and one staff member each from Empower and SIS was held on 15 and 16 October 2010 at Iverson Training Centre in Centrepont, Bandar Utama, and was conducted by Julian Matthews and Anita Devasahayam from Trinetizen Media Sdn. Bhd. The two-day programme provided hands-on training on how to utilise social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, digital photography, digital audio and multimedia story telling. These are new ways we can connect and engage with the community.

Almost immediately after the training Ann Nicole Nunis produced a “photo story” about WAO to be used for fundraising publicity.

### 6.2. WAO website

WAO was the first women's organisation in Malaysia to set up a website in 2000. Since its launch, the website has received over a million hits.

The information uploaded onto the website includes 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 as consistently as possible, with older articles put in the archive section.

### 6.2.1. Sections within the website



Screen grab of the 2010 WAO home page.

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.

The website is divided into various sections to enable easy navigation and reference. The sections are as follows:

- **Home (Main page):** Summaries of articles, updates, headers and small 100 x 100 pixel graphics.
- **About Us:** Basic information about WAO (history, objectives, mission and vision), WAO services and contact details.
- **Research:** Findings from WAO's research (for example, the 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 1994, the abuse of migrant domestic workers and CEDAW (the UN 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 reports, annual statistics, *Inroads* (newsletter) and WAO brochures.
- **Violence Against Women:** Information on violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, child sexual abuse; in both Bahasa Malaysia and English.
- **Archive:** Archive of all published articles on the website.

### 6.2.2. Updates to the website

There were approximately 23 updates in 2010, with an average of two new articles every month. This is at a lower frequency than 2009, where the website was updated with an average of three articles every month.

Since 2010, four new publications have been made available online under the WAO Publications section. These include:

- Annual Report
- Annual Statistics
- Choose to be Safe (in Bahasa Malaysia)
- Inroads - Newsletter
- Single and Pregnant: What Are My Choices (English and Bahasa Malaysia versions)

These publications are in addition to other publications already made available online. The publications are as listed below:

- 25th Anniversary publication
- Self Help booklet (English and Bahasa Malaysia version)
- Organisational Brochure (English and Bahasa Malaysia version)
- Service Brochure (English, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil version)
- Why Reform the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994?

### 6.2.3. Postings

Twenty-three articles, which include announcements, press statements, news articles, updates on fundraising activities and memoranda were posted in 2010.

POSTED 2010	ITEM
30 Dec 2010	<a href="#">Stand Up Against Hatred and Threats Against LGBT</a>
29 Dec 2010	<a href="#">Receiving Death Threats for Giving Hope</a>
17 Dec 2010	<a href="#">Federal Court's Cowardice Disappointing</a>
10 Dec 2010	<a href="#">Press Statement on Shamala Case</a>
10 Dec 2010	<a href="#">Only 5% of Rape Cases Brought to Court</a>
8 Dec 2010	<a href="#">Malaysia Struggles Baby Abandonment</a>
6 Dec 2010	<a href="#">Press Statement on Child Marriages</a>
3 Dec 2010	<a href="#">Rapid KL Women Only Buses on Trial Run</a>
12 Nov 2010	<a href="#">Top Court Throws Down Mother's Conversion Challenge</a>
9 Nov 2010	<a href="#">Drop Section 498 in the Penal Code</a>
20 Oct 2010	<a href="#">It is a violation of labour laws</a>
20 Oct 2010	<a href="#">Six lose jobs after becoming pregnant</a>
16 Sept 2010	<a href="#">MalaysiaKu Street Party</a>
2 Sep 2010	<a href="#">Raise funds for WAO - Purchase Lactacyd intimate Daily Feminine Hygiene Wash</a>
12 Aug 2010	<a href="#">Routine Punishment Includes Caning for Burmese Refugees in Malaysia</a>
14 July 2010	<a href="#">All Female Badminton Tournament</a>
14 July 2010	<a href="#">Buddha - The Splendor of Enlightenment</a>
6 July 2010	<a href="#">Joint Press Statement: Removal of Reservation on CEDAW</a>
15 June 2010	<a href="#">Wine and Dine with a Wonderful Cause</a>
18 May 2010	<a href="#">Bung-Cha-Cha</a>
11 March 2010	<a href="#">Support the Right to Freedom of Expression in Malaysia</a>
4 March 2010	<a href="#">An Open Letter to Datuk Seri Hishamuddin</a>
25 Feb 2010	<a href="#">Open Letter to Dato Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein</a>

#### 6.2.4. 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 2010 was 154,581, which is an increase of 9.1% from 2009 (128,658 visits). 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 2009 (177,385 visits), the number of visits increased in 2010 by 5.2% to 196,709 visits. The total number of hits in 2010 was 507,930, however in 2009 we received 1,269,304 hits. Note that the total number of hits and visits for 2010 are numbers taken from April – December 2010 and not January – December 2010. Only historical logs from the month of April 2010 are retrievable from the server.

#### Website hits from April to December 2010

Month	Total Hits	Total Visits	Unique Visits	Total Page Views
December 2010	140937	13553	10909	35429
November 2010	173784	16129	12843	42640
October 2010	131653	13780	9955	36143
September 2010	195667	19147	20082	51763
August 2010	223162	19240	14457	50673
July 2010	182834	18052	14131	43185
June 2010	170552	16674	12770	43101
May 2010	176062	17598	13674	39564
April 2010	205380	19532	13488	48363
<b>Totals</b>	<b>507930</b>	<b>196709</b>	<b>154581</b>	<b>2118550</b>

### Comparison between 2009 hits and 2010 hits

Month	Hits (2009)	Hits (2010)
Jan	110,499	N/A
Feb	91,668	N/A
Mar	112,301	N/A
Apr	113,754	205,380
May	112,434	176,062
Jun	103,858	170,552
Jul	107,475	182,834
Aug	104,688	223,162
Sep	103,224	195,667
Oct	107,163	131,653
Nov	109,959	173,784
Dec	92,281	140,937
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,269,304</b>	<b>1,600,031</b>

#### 6.2.5. Geographical locations of visitors

The majority of visitors to the website were from the Malaysia. This is determined based on the IP address of the visitors who come to the site. IP addresses are the addresses assigned to each computer on a network, such as the Internet. This is how the geographical location of the visitors can be tracked.

This is only a rough estimate as detailed logging information is not provided by the web host. This is based on the manual analysis of GeoIP information from accessible raw log data retrieved from the server (April 2010 – March 2011).

The top 10 countries from which visitors access the website are as follows:

Country	Percentage
Malaysia	81.80%
United States	4.87%
United Kingdom	1.63%
Singapore	1.59%
Australia	1.34%



Canada	0.66%
India	0.56%
Germany	0.53%
Indonesia	0.43%
Other	6.59%
Total	100.00%

### 6.2.6. Top keyword searches

The following is a sampling of data of the common keywords used to locate and visit WAO's website via search engines:

**Keyword**

- WAO
- Women's Aid Organisation
- WAO Malaysia
- Rape
- Women Aid Organization
- International Women's Day Malaysia
- Domestic Violence in Malaysia
- Women's Aid Organization
- Sexual Harassment
- Khalwat
- Penderaan Wanita
- Violence Against Women
- Gangguan Seksual
- Keganasan Terhadap Wanita
- Women Aid Organisation
- Hari Wanita Sedunia
- Keganasan Rumah Tangga
- Women's Rights in Malaysia
- Women's Aid Organization in Malaysia

### **6.2.7. Website redevelopment – A new look**

The WAO website is currently undergoing the planning and developing stages of a website revamp. Since the birth of the WAO website 11 years ago, WAO has not changed much of the website interface. We want to have a new look for the website that will make it brighter, more interactive and visually appealing for our web visitors. With the help of Bob Kee, a web design expert from Civic Solutions Network, WAO hopes to launch their new website by June 2011.

WAO would also like to take this opportunity to thank the ***Austrian-German-Swiss Bazaar*** for their generous sponsorship of the website redevelopment costs.

### **6.3. Facebook – WAO Malaysia**

To date we have over 800 friends.

*A little bit of herstory:* In November 2008, we ran a Facebook campaign for 16 Days of Activism. The Facebook activity was to encourage users to put up the logo which contained the slogan 'defending women, defending rights' throughout the 16 days to show their support. The project received a good amount of support from a wide range of users. It managed to garner about 700 supporters to join in the Facebook group.

However, management of the group was limited to two staff, as the group was only accessible through their individual accounts, there was a need to have another account that would enable other staff to access and manage this group in their absence. This is how the WAO Facebook account came into being. The account that was registered at the time was called 'WAO ORG'.

In December 2008, WAO advocacy staff began experimenting with the Facebook account and its use to further the advocacy work of the organisation. The name 'WAO ORG' however, was found not suitable and in January 2009 was changed it to 'WAO Malaysia'. This marked the birth of WAO's online profile 'WAO Malaysia'.

WAO was the first human rights NGO in the country to have its own Facebook profile account.

The difference between the Facebook profile and the website is that the profile is able bring the issues to individuals without individuals having to go look for them, but this of course was limited to Facebook users. The profile also provided a platform for communication and interaction with WAO. Facebook users are able to comment on postings and put out their thoughts on various issues from women's rights to the political environment in the country.

A conscious decision was made to keep the language simple and down to earth when interacting with Facebook friends in order to reach out to a wider group of Malaysians and not just the 'converted'.

In 2009, some of the issues or activities highlighted through the Facebook profile were the Gabungan Mansuhkan ISA rally, Stop Whipping in Malaysia: Justice for Kartika campaign, Cindy Lauper's Give A Damn campaign against violence of LGBTIQ community in the US, the arrest of

activist and lawyers involved in relation to the 1Black Malaysia campaign and also to garner support for YB Elizabeth Wong after the release of intimate photographs.

It was also during this time in 2009 that the organisation was going through financial challenges and many fundraising activities were publicised using the Facebook profile. Some of these events were the WAO futsal tournament, Eve Ensler's 'The Good Body', Zouk Queen of Heart's night, DiGi's Love to Save Project and WAO's jumble sales.

WAO also received personal messages and enquiries regarding services, volunteering and sometimes abusive husbands wanting to know whether slapping your wife is also considered domestic violence.

In 2010 we put up 104 posts, which included:

- Statements, quotes, videos: 20
- News reports: 57
- Publicising projects of other organisations: 15
- WAO events: 12

We had 100 posts by friends of WAO, many of them wishing WAO a happy birthday in September.

Here is an interesting post by Natasha on 5 August 2010:

*"I was at pasar malam Taman Connaught tonight. I love that pasar malam. It's 11.30pm but I don't care. The place is still heaving. I'd fought the sweaty crowd and had just gotten up that bloody hill. On my way down. "Women's Aid Organisation" I turned my head. One chinese uncle manning a stall had read out the front of my shirt. It's a tiny tee, bright red with white lettering, and I love wearing it. "Can I ask you something ah?" He motions me to come closer. "Yes uncle?" "I ask you one question ah." Oh shit, he's going to ask me some smart-alecky question like, what do you do if a man gets beaten by his wife, that happens doesn't it so why don't we do something about that huh? "If a woman wants to get a divorce ah.." Stress on the word woman. "Then she must pay a lawyer five thousand ringgit ah to get it done." Me, nod. Oh yes ah? Okaaay, so what?? "If the man and the woman go together ah, only two thousand five hundred ringgit." Me, nod. Hadn't known that. "But if a woman goes alone need to pay more. So I want to ask, your organisation can do it for free or not?" I'm taken aback. I'm sure it was a quizzical look that was on my face. Uncle offers quickly. "Why I'm asking ah is because my daughter's husband has been beating her for the past 7 years. He beat her so much ah until she cannot tahan\* anymore, now she move back to my home. But five thousand dollars ah, where to find." Me, slow nodding. I feel winded. What a deeply personal thing to tell me, a perfect stranger. And I had thought he was going to act clever with me. "What kind of man beats his wife ah?" "That one cannot call a man lah uncle." "Yalor." Looks at the ground and shakes his head. "That one is a beast lah." This poor father is making my eyes smart. "I'm so sorry about your daughter uncle. Sorry I don't work there so I don't know. But I'm very sure they could help your daughter. Why don't you give them a call?" "Ya I know also sure they will help. That's why lah I thought maybe you work there, got their number." "Call 103 lah uncle, the TM directory one. Find it on the internet ke. Wait ah." I try to look for it in my phone book. Shit it's not there.*

*"Aiyah, never mind, tomorrow I call 103. I forgot about that telekom directory. Thank you ah you reminded me." "Sure sure uncle." Pause. Don't know what to do now. "OK ah uncle, make sure you call them. I'm so sorry again ya. Good luck, hope everythings alright soon." Wave wave, smile smile. For him mine was a purposefully slow walk away. So was looking down so my ponytail wouldn't block the words on the back of my shirt: STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. I hope he makes that call. And I'm glad I wore that t-shirt to."*

## 7. PUBLIC EDUCATION



### 7.1. Talks, seminars and workshops

Within 12 months we gave 33 talks at workshops, conferences and roundtable discussions organised by other organisations.

No.	Date	Title and Topic	Organised by	Presenter
1	Jan 23	Workshop on Violence Against Women	Vocational Training Opportunity Centre YWCA	Su Zane, Nazlina & Ivy
2	Feb 22	Talk on WAO Services for Community Based Practise (CBP) Programme Orientation Day	Monash University Sunway Campus	Diyana
3	Mar 09	“One Malaysia from a Gender Perspective” at the Forum “Paving The Way Forward For Equal Opportunities in High-Level Decision Making Positions”	ASLI	Ivy
4	Mar 12	Sex education	SMK Shah Alam Sek. 24	Uma & Puveshini
5	Mar 20	Single mothers overcoming sexual harassment	Sakthi Easwari Temple	Puveshini
6	Apr 02	WAO Services	Agensi Kaunseling dan Pengurusan Kredit	Nazlina
7	Apr 10	Gender and ‘Say no to social ills’	UiTM Melaka	Nazlina
8	Apr 10	Celebration of Life, Asian Women – Prophets, Healers and Reconcilers	Christian Conference of Asia	Ivy
9	Apr 15	Health impact of domestic violence	Universiti Malaya	Diyana
10	Apr 17	Mobile legal clinic: Muslim women’s rights	Sisters in Islam	Nazlina
11	June 15	Mobile legal clinic: Muslim women’s right	Sisters in Islam	Nazlina
12	June 24	Islam and Gender	Sunway College	Meera
13	June 25	The Impact of Gender on Health	Selangor Cancer Society	Ivy

14	June 28	Adolescence and mental health	SMK Taman SEA	Puveshini & Uma
15	Jul 14	Talk at INTI College	Inti College	Su Zane
16	Jul 28	Violence against women	Asrama Semai Bakti, FELDA	Nazlina
17	Aug 05 – 08	Mobile legal clinic: Muslim women's rights	Sisters in Islam	Nazlina
18	Aug 09	Sexual Harassment	Monash University	Uma
19	Sept 02	Violence in Relationships	Monash University	Su Zane
20	Sept 15	Leadership in the 21st century: tapping the extraordinary potential of women, New Delhi, India	Vital Voices, USA	Ivy
21	Sept 24 – 26	ASEAN People's Forum : VAW	APF committee, Vietnam	Ivy
22	Sept 24	Domestic Violence	UiTM Women's Open Debating Championship	Su Zane
23	Sept 25	Gender	Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita, Perlis	Nazlina
24	Sept 27	National Unity Forum: Making 1Malaysia Work	ASLI & CPPS	Ivy
25	Oct 12	Workshop on Public Diplomacy & Media Skills The role of NGOs in public diplomacy	Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations	Ivy
26	Oct 25	Peranan NGO dalam menangani kes – kes keganasan	Hospital Selayang	Nazlina
27	Oct 28	WAO Services	New Era College	Su Zane
28	Nov 5 – 6	Public education booth on WAO Services	WOMANist/KADINist: International Istanbul Women's Meeting 2010	Annie & Ann
29	Nov 11	"Creating awareness on a woman's strength"	Brahma Kumaris	Ivy
30	Nov 14	National training and study session for Human Rights Defenders in Malaysia: Fact-finding and documentation of Human Rights violations	FORUM ASIA & ERA Consumer	Ivy
31	Nov 29	WAO Services	YMCA	Ivy

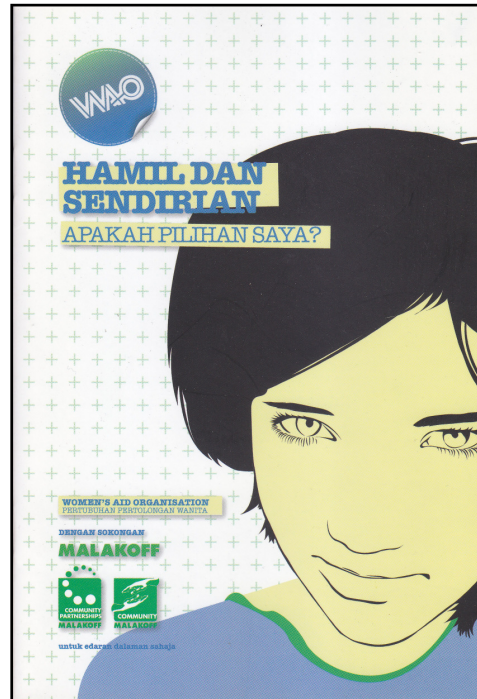
32	Dec 11	Good cop Bad cop at the RTD on Gender Responsiveness at Police Stations	Centre for Women Leadership, Binary University College	Ivy
33	Dec 14	NGO Shadow Report: Reviewing the Malaysian Government's Implementation of the CEDAW	UNDP	Ivy
34	Dec 15	Myths and Facts about Baby Abandonment	SUHAKAM	Ivy



*WAO's Annie Varghese (far left) and Ann Nicole Nunis (far right) in Istanbul in November*

## 7.2. WAO publication

In 2010, we published the Malakoff sponsored “*Single and Pregnant, What are My Choices?*” in Bahasa Malaysia and English. The launch of the booklet was attended by the then Deputy Chief Secretary of the MWFC, Datuk Dr. Noorul Ainur. This booklet is very popular and Malakoff will be sponsoring the reprint in 2011.







## 8. WAO IN THE MEDIA

We made a conscious effort last year to track the number of times WAO has appeared in the media whether radio, television, print and online newspapers. Whilst we had released 7 press statements under JAG, WAO herself released 5 letters to the editors, and 3 were published. Most times it is the media that initiates an interview or the call for a comment on a current issue.

No.	Date	Title	By	Media
1	Jan 11	STAR ONLINE: Non-payment of alimony	Ivy	Newspaper
2	Jan 13	ASTRO AEC: Date rape, domestic violence and baby dumping	Su Zane	TV
3	Jan 19	In- Style Magazine: Ivy	Ivy	Magazine
4	Jan 20	Asyik FM: Women's issues	Nazlina	BM Radio
5	Jan 26	Her World: Adultery	Ivy	Magazine
6	Jan 26	Wanita Hari Ini: Child abduction case	Nazlina	TV
7	Jan 27	Asyik FM: Women's issues	Nazlina	BM Radio
8	Mar 02	Bernamea TV: International Women's Day	Ivy	TV
9	Mar 09	Utusan Melayu: Apabila hamil sendirian	Diyana, Meera & Ivy	BM Newspaper
10	Mar 08	Lite FM: Women in decision making positions	Ivy	Radio
11	Mar 08	Bernamea Radio: Women in decision making position and IWD	Ivy	Radio
12	Mar 09	ASTRO Awani: Women in decision making positions	Ivy	TV
13	Mar 09	Bernamea: Child marriages	Ivy	Radio
14	Mar 12	BFM: Women in decision making positions	Ivy	Radio
15	Mar 24	Harmoni: Child Abuse	Su Zane & Nazlina	BM Magazine
16	Apr 01	Malaysian Insider (BM): Gender segregation on public transport	Ivy	Newspaper

17	Apr 01	NTV7: Sex workers	Su Zane	TV
18	Apr 04	NTV7: Sexual harassment	Nazlina	TV
19	Apr 06	Utusan Melayu: Alam Perkahwinan: Remaja usah terlalu teruja	Ivy	BM Newspaper
20	Apr 18	Malaysiakini: Rape: Badruddin should retract statement	Meera	Online Newspaper
21	May 06	Guang Ming Daily: WAO's services	Su Zane	Chinese Newspaper
22	May 07	NST: Social work as a profession	Nazlina	Newspaper
23	May 10	Sin Chew Daily: WAO's Services	Su Zane	Chinese Newspaper
24	May 12	NTV7: Single Pregnant Women Booklet	Ivy	TV
25	May 12	Guang Ming Daily: WAO's Services	Jessie	Chinese Newspaper
26	May 19	Malaysiakini: Polygamy: Bung Moktar Jailed 1 Month, Fined RM1,000	Meera	Online Newspaper
27	May 24	Radio 988: Single mothers and their struggles	Su Zane	Chinese Radio
28	May 26	NTV7: Domestic workers	Su Zane	TV
29	June 04	Traxx FM: Strategies to tackle issues of abandoned babies	Diyana	Radio
30	June 06	New Straits Times: Baby hatch	Ivy	Newspaper
31	Jun 10	Sin Chew Daily : Domestic Violence	Su Zane	Chinese Newspaper
32	June 21	Malaysiakini, Letter to the Editor: Refugees	Sarah	Online Newspaper
33	June 28	Indiana Public Media: Human trafficking situation, WAO and the instances of human trafficking it has encountered	Ivy	
34	July 02	Streets, NST: Fine dining in aid of WAO	Meera & Jessie Ang	Newspaper
35	July 07	The Star: Removing reservations to CEDAW	Meera	Newspaper
36	July 09	Merdeka Review Penan's issue – Interview on the NGO's independent report	Su Zane	Online Newspaper
37	July 09	Malaysiakini (Chinese) Penan's issue – Interview on the NGO's independent report	Su Zane	Chinese Online Newspaper
38	July 17	TV Selangor: Penan issue	Su Zane	TV

39	July 21	Malaysiakini (Chinese): Penan Mission Report	Su Zane	Chinese Online Newspaper
40	Aug 02	The Star: Rape	Ivy	Newspaper
41	Aug 04	The Star: Rape and support mechanism	Su Zane	Newspaper
42	Aug 05	Sin Chew Daily: Death sentencing on child rapist	Su Zane	Chinese Newspaper
43	Aug 06	China Press: Death sentencing on child rapist	Su Zane	Newspaper
44	Aug 08	NST: Tan Chong gives RM32,349 to WAO	Ivy & Annie	Newspaper
45	Aug 04	Puteri UMNO bantah pelajar kahwin awal	Ivy	BM Newspaper
46	Aug 06	BFM: In conversation with....	Ivy	Radio
47	Aug 04	Ada jalan atasi kebuntuan	Ivy	BM Newspaper
48	Aug 19	The Star: "Sisters are doing it for themselves", in conjunction with Women's Day 25 August	Meera	Newspaper
49	Aug 23	AI FM: How to start a new life after divorce	Su Zane	Chinese Radio
50	Aug 23	Utusan Melayu: Sekolah Harapan bakal cetus epidemik hamil luar nikah pelajar - NGO	Ivy	BM Newspaper
51	Aug 24	The Nut Graph: Baby abandonment	Ivy	Online Newspaper
52	Aug 25	New Straits Times: Baby abandonment	Valerie	Newspaper
53	Aug 28	RTM Talk Show: Abandoned babies	Su Zane	TV
54	Aug 30	AI FM: How to cope with divorce	Su Zane	Chinese Radio
55	Sept 14	Nanyang Siang Pau: Feature article on violence against women	Su Zane	Newspaper
56	Sept 11- 14	Nanyang Siang Pau :Feature articles on Violence Against Women	Su Zane	Chinese Newspaper
57	Sept 21	NST: Teenage Rape : Counselling, Education Vital to Fight Sex-Related Social Ills	Ivy	Newspaper
58	Sept 22	NTV7: Sex Education	Nazlina	TV
59	Sept 30	NST: Paint it Purple fundraising event	Ivy	Newspaper

60	Oct 06	BFM: Sex Education	Ivy	Radio
61	Oct 16	The Star: "Female civil servants can take up to 90 days maternity leave"	Meera	Newspaper
62	Oct 19	Utusan Melayu: Dua beradik rogol pelajar kolej dipenjara 16 tahun, sebatan tiga kali	Meera	BM Newspaper
63	Oct 20	New Straits Times: Pregnant women losing jobs	Sarah	Newspaper
64	Nov 02	Sin Chew Daily: Abandoned babies	Su Zane	Chinese Newspaper
65	Nov 04	Radio 988: Single and Pregnant women	Su Zane	Chinese Radio
66	Nov 09	The Sun, Letter to the Editor: Remove section 498 from the Penal Code	WAO	Newspaper
67	Nov 12	Malaysian Insider: Top court throws out Hindu mother's conversion challenge	Meera	Online Newspaper
68	Nov 24	Bernamea: 16 Days of Activism	Ivy	TV
69	Dec 03	The Star: Women-only public transport	Ivy	Newspaper
70	Dec 08	International Herald Tribune: Baby abandonment	Ivy	Newspaper
71	Dec 09	Free Sarawak Radio: Sexual violence in the Penan community	Su Zane	BM Radio
72	Dec 10	Malaysiakini: Only 5% of rape cases brought to court	Ivy	Online Newspaper
73	Dec 13	Malaysiakini: Letter to the Editor: Federal Court's cowardice in Shamala case	WAO	Online Newspaper
74	Dec 30	Malaysiakini: Letter to the Editor: Support for Seksualiti Merdeka and the "Saya Gay, Saya OK" campaign	WAO	Online Newspaper

## “Apabila hamil sendirian”

Oleh NOOR FAZRINA KAMAL

Gambar MOHD NAIM AZIZ

HAMIL dan bersendirian, suatu situasi yang tidak ingin dilalui oleh wanita. Namun itu yang mungkin akan ditempuh oleh wanita atau anak-anak gadis yang terlanjur dan mengandung di luar ikatan perkahwinan.

Bagi gadis atau remaja yang sedang berhadapan dengan situasi mengandung sendirian mungkin tidak ada masa atau semangat untuk membaca artikel ini.

Tetapi mungkin ada sesuatu boleh dilakukan oleh orang sekeliling yang prihatin dalam membantu gadis yang telah terlanjur akibat hubungan terlarang.

Bukan niat untuk menyetujui atau berkongsi dosa-dosa yang telah dilakukan golongan ini. Tetapi lebih kepada untuk menghalang mereka daripada melakukan tindak tanduk lebih buruk seperti menggugurkan kandungan atau membuang bayi yang bakal dilahirkan.

Apabila mengandung luar nikah fikiran dan emosi wanita atau gadis terbabit pasti bercampur aduk antara malu dan takut. Mereka juga tentunya tidak dapat membayangkan bagaimana kehidupan pada masa akan datang.

Kedaaan itu boleh membawa perbuatan-perbuatan yang di luar kewarasan manusia.

Justeru kehadiran buku Hamil dan sendirian; Apakah pilihan saya? mungkin tepat pada waktunya sebagai panduan untuk wanita yang mengandung sendirian.

Buku yang diterbitkan dalam dua bahasa Melayu dan Inggeris mengandungi maklumat lengkap tentang perubatan dan perundangan serta tindakan-tindakan yang boleh dilakukan ketika mengandung bersendirian.

Buku hasil kerjasama Pertubuhan Pertolongan Wanita (WAO) dan Malakoff Corporation Berhad (Malakoff) diterbitkan sebagai sebahagian daripada kempen Memperkasa Kehidupan (Empower for Life).

Penulis buku, Noor Diyana Yahaya berkata, idea menghasilkan buku panduan tersebut tercetus setelah melihat begitu banyak kes akibat keterlanjuran sosial yang terjadi di kalangan rakyat di negara ini.



Dr. Noorul Ainur Mohd (tiga dari kanan) dan Ivy Josiah (dua dari kiri) bersama wakil WAO lain menunjukkan buku Hamil dan sendirian; Apakah Pilihan Saya pada majlis pelancarannya di Kuala Lumpur baru-baru ini.

Katanya, banyak pendapat diutarakan dan berapa banyak langkah yang telah diambil tetapi tiada juga jalan penyelesaian bagi menghalang perbuatan seperti membuang anak daripada terus berlaku.

"Dengan pengedaran buku ini kepada orang awam diharap dapat membantu golongan wanita ini dalam mencari arah tuju selepas mengandung dan ditinggalkan pasangan.

"Mengandung bersendirian memang satu isu yang besar kerana ia bukan sahaja melibatkan emosi malah segala-galanya. Di WAO kami sedaya upaya membantu golongan ini melalui setiap proses daripada penjagaan ketika mengandung, bersalin, cara diet dan seterusnya sokongan yang diperlukan oleh orang keliling.

"Dalam buku panduan yang diterbitkan ini juga mengandungi langkah seterusnya yang boleh diambil oleh si ibu selepas melahirkan sama ada mahu menjaga sendiri bayi tersebut atau diserahkan kepada keluarga angkat," jelasnya ketika ditemui selepas majlis pelancaran buku *Hamil dan Sendirian; Apakah Pilihan Saya di Kuala Lumpur* baru-baru ini.

Turut hadir dalam majlis tersebut ialah Timbalan Setiausaha Am bahagian Polisi dari Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat, Datuk Dr. Noorul Ainur Mohd, Pengerusi Malakoff, Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali dan Pengarah Eksekutif Pertubuhan Pertolongan Wanita, Ivy Josiah.

Sementara itu, menurut Abdul Halim syarikat tersebut telah menyumbang sebanyak RM66,500 kepada WAO dengan tujuan untuk menambah kemudahan kelas bimbingan kehidupan, perbelanjaan perubatan untuk penghuni WAO dan menerbitkan buku panduan untuk wanita mengandung yang berseorangan.

Beliau berkata, pihaknya memilih untuk bekerjasama dengan WAO kerana percaya dengan reputasi pertubuhan tersebut yang benar-benar memperjuangkan nasib wanita yang teraniaya.

"Inisiatif ini juga telah melahirkan beberapa pekerja sosial yang akan mengajar dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris dan kelas komputer kepada ibu-ibu tunggal sebagai satu usaha untuk golongan ini memperkasakan kehidupan mereka dan mempunyai kewangan sendiri.

"Sebagai tambahan, beberapa lagi kursus seperti masakan dan jahitan manik turut dianjurkan untuk mempertingkatkan taraf hidup golongan yang terabai ini.

"Selain itu, Malakoff dan WAO juga tidak lupa untuk membangunkan kembali semangat dan keyakinan diri golongan ini supaya mereka lebih positif dalam menghadapi kehidupan yang mendatang," jelasnya.

Sementara itu menurut Ivy, di pusat perlindungannya kini sedang menempatkan kira-kira 22 wanita yang memerlukan bantuan dan ada 13 kanak-kanak.

"Sejak ditubuhkan WAO menerima kira-kira 100 hingga 130 wanita setiap tahun, sementara panggilan telefon untuk meminta bantuan pula kira-kira 500 panggilan.

"Kami memilih untuk menghasilkan buku panduan ini kerana kami mahu wanita yang

memerlukan pertolongan tahu ke mana harus dituju," katanya ketika berucap pada majlis pelancaran buku panduan tersebut.



## 9. ADVOCACY

The year 2010 saw several issues of significant concern to WAO highlighted in the media, including child marriage and so-called 'baby dumping'. The year also saw some disappointing decisions from the highest court in the country, the Federal Court. The Federal Court refused to answer constitutional questions relating to the unilateral conversion to Islam by one parent in the case involving Shamala Sathiyaseelan. The Federal Court also refused to address questions relating to the constitutional validity of Section 498 of the Penal Code.

There were murmurings from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) of the possibility of a Gender Equality Act and a meeting about this was convened with government officials and NGO representatives. However, despite the talk, no such bill has been tabled in Parliament.

A further disappointment from the MWFCD was the lack of an already overdue government report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

The year ended however on a positive note with regard to domestic violence advocacy. In December 2010, WAO held discussions with the Police and the Welfare Department. The Welfare Department is currently coordinating an inter-agency manual that will set out the roles and responsibilities of each agency directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act 1994.

This advocacy section of the WAO 2010 Annual Report includes the following areas:

- Issues of concern highlighted in the media in 2010, including 'baby dumping', child marriage, women-only public transport and pregnant women losing their jobs
- Monitoring the Domestic Violence Act 1994
- World Refugee Day
- Penan Support Group report
- The possibility of a Gender Equality Act
- Section 498 of the Penal Code
- Coalition work in 2010:
  - Joint Action Group for Gender Equality:
    - JAG nominations to SUHAKAM and United Nations positions
    - 25 years of JAG
    - Bung Mokhtar's illegal polygamous marriage
    - Malaysian government's lifting of reservations to three CEDAW articles
    - Shamala Sathiyaseelan's case in the Federal Court
    - Support for Seksualiti Merdeka and the "Saya Gay, Saya OK" campaign
  - CEDAW Shadow Report
  - Coalition work with JERIT - Amendments to the Employment Act
  - Convention on the Rights of the Child Shadow Report
  - Migration Working Group



## 9.1. Issues of concern in the media in 2010

The media highlighted several issues pertaining to women, including ‘baby dumping’, child marriage, women-only public transport and pregnant women losing their jobs. WAO responded to these media reports through the release of press statements and comments to the press.

### 9.1.1. ‘Baby dumping’

WAO was concerned through the year at the media attention given to ‘baby dumping’. In August 2010, the government proposed charging parents who abandoned their newborns with murder, thereby subjecting them to the possibility of a death sentence. Ivy Josiah made numerous comments for several media outlets calling for increased and improved sex education. She also highlighted the lamentable societal pressures and lack of empathy that led women to believe that abandoning their babies was the only option available to them.

News Article

#### **“Capital punishment not the answer, say NGOs”**

*The Star*, 13 August 2010

PETALING JAYA: Capital punishment may not be the solution to baby dumping as proper education should be given to the young to prevent them from committing such a crime, said Women’s Aid Organisation president Ivy Josiah.

She said sex education and access to help for pregnant mothers would be preferable to punishing offenders with the death sentence.

“Show us the research and evidence that capital punishment will help prevent crime. Drug trafficking, which is punishable by death, is still going on,” she said yesterday.

She added that the death of a baby was a sad thing but society should also lament the “uncaring” environment that drives a mother to abandon her newborn baby.

The Cabinet has agreed with a proposal by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry that those who abandoned their babies resulting in death should be investigated under Section 302 of the Penal Code for murder.

Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Commissioner Mohammad Sha’ani Abdullah said the Government should get more feedback from the public before deciding on the issue.

He said such a decision should not be made in haste because it was not one that can be resolved by using legislation.

MCA Public Services and Complaints Bureau chief Datuk Michael Chong said the baby dumping problem was due to lack of proper guidance for the young.

“Most cases involve young people. They are ashamed and afraid that their actions will result in rejection. So instead of seeking help, they chose to dump their babies.”

Chong added that measures such as counselling and family support were important to prevent people from abandoning their babies.

### 9.1.2. Child marriage

In July 2010, a meeting took place with WAO, Sisters in Islam and federal opposition parliamentarians about the prevalence of child marriage. During this meeting, WAO highlighted that permitting children under the age of 18 years to marry contravened international obligations under treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as Malaysia’s own Child Act 2001.

Although it has been heartening to hear statements from the Minister of Women confirming that she condemns the marriage of children, it is nevertheless concerning to note that she has made further statements indicating that nothing will be done to change either the civil or Islamic family laws to legally forbid such marriage.

Non-Muslims in Malaysia are able to marry when they reach 18 years of age, although non-Muslim females between the ages of 16 and 18 can marry with the authorisation of the Chief Minister. For Muslims, the minimum age of marriage is 16 years for females and 18 for males, with an exception that permits Muslim girls and boys below these ages to marry with the Syariah Court’s consent.

Letter to the Editor by WAO

**“Flawed logic used in justifying teen marriages”**

*The Star*, 7 August 2010

The Malacca Chief Minister’s rationale that permitting children to marry is a “practical” move in preventing cases of unwed teenage mothers and other social problems, is irresponsible and dangerous.

Marriage is held to be the lifetime union between two consenting adults. How can girls below the age of 16 and boys below the age of 18 be allowed to make such a life altering decision?

The only decisions children should be making about their future are what interests them, what great things they want to achieve in life and maybe what flavour of ice cream they want after school. Please don’t assign them a life with limited choices in order to legitimise sex and pre-marital pregnancy.

Furthermore, it should also be noted that for Muslims, children born within six months of the

marriage ceremony may not be able to register the father's name on the birth certificate rendering the child "illegitimate", although WAO believes this status and the term itself should no longer be used.

Teenage pregnancies should be dealt with applying well-planned social and education policies. Children should not be forced to enter into a decision that even most adults struggle with.

*VALERIE MOHAN, Women's Aid Organisation*

Ivy Josiah's comments were also published in several newspapers, including in the article below.

News Article

**"Shahrizat hopes judges exercise discretion"**

*New Straits Times, 3 August 2010*

KUALA LUMPUR: Women leaders from both the government and non-governmental organisations have slammed the move by the Malacca government to allow underage Muslims to marry.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, while acknowledging that marriages involving Muslim minors would still require the approval of the Syariah Court, hoped the judges would continue to exercise their discretion.

She reiterated that the ministry's stand on underage marriage was "morally and socially unacceptable".

"It should not be encouraged as it is detrimental to the development and well being of the child. "Placing the heavy burden and responsibilities of parenthood on children can deprive them of their rights to a full and harmonious development," she said, adding it would affect the child's psychological, emotional and physical development.

Puteri Umno chief Datuk Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin, in a text message, said the ruling would not prevent unwanted pregnancies as the individuals involved were not serious about setting up a family.

"They are more interested in having fun without thinking about the consequences. Marrying them off at an early age could also lead to a broken marriage and an increase in divorces. These young couples would not be prepared to deal with certain responsibilities, including financial ones," she said, stressing that such social ills should be nipped at the bud by parents who were responsible for their children's morals and religious education.

Rosnah, who is also the deputy health minister, said parents should always know the whereabouts of their children and the latter's friends.

Women's Aid Organisation executive director Ivy Josiah said women's groups believed that individuals should marry at the age of 18 or older regardless if they were Muslim or non-Muslim. Malaysia was a signatory to two United Nation conventions, the convention of the Rights of the Child and The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the conventions, along with the country's Child Act, stipulated that women below 18 were children, she said.

"It doesn't matter if the family agrees. We need to adopt universal standards. It is not just an issue of age. There are repercussions on the child's health, mentally and physically. We must also look at the maturity of the individuals."

### 9.1.3. Women-only public transport

The year 2010 saw an increase in the number of public transport services providing women-only buses and train carriages. WAO provided comments for media outlets to note that although such measures may make women temporarily feel "safe", segregation is not the answer to sexual harassment. Education and awareness-raising of the need to respect each other is required.

News Article (excerpt)

#### **"RapidKL women-only buses on trial run"**

*The Star*, 3 December 2010

Women's groups have welcomed the move by RapidKL to introduce women-only buses but stressed that more needs to be done to tackle sexual harassment at its roots.

They also commented that this should only be a temporary measure to send out the right message to the masses.

"What is worrying is that there may be separate queues, shops, cinemas and other public space for men and women in the future," said Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) executive director Ivy Josiah.

"This may also lead one to think that separating women from men is the way to stop sexual harassment. What is worrying is that there may be separate queues, shops, cinemas and other public space for men and women in the future. What we need is an overall mindset change," she said, adding that the women-only buses should only be an option and not be made compulsory.

All Women's Action Society (AWAM) senior programme officer Abigail de Vries also commented that the service would not tackle the problem of sexual harassment at the roots.

"We understand the need for a women's only bus service as women face harassment in public

transport daily. But this service does not solve the problem of harassment. It is not a magic bullet. Until men and society at large learn to respect women and treat them accordingly, sexual harassment will continue," she said.

#### **9.1.4. Pregnant women forced out of jobs**

In October 2010, reports came to light in the media about women who were forced out of their jobs because they were pregnant. These reports are of significant concern, especially so as it is likely that many similar situations go unreported so the extent of the problem is unknown.

News Article

##### **"Six lose jobs after becoming pregnant"**

*New Straits Times*, 20 October 2010

KUALA LUMPUR: Six women claimed they were forced to resign from their jobs just because they were pregnant.

Claiming they were treated unfairly, they then approached the MCA public services and complaints bureau for advice.

Bureau head Datuk Michael Chong said the six women were all from different private companies, who got pregnant while working for the companies.

He said two of the women were sacked immediately as they were still under probation while the other four were bullied into leaving their well-paying jobs.

Chong said upon realising their employees were pregnant, most of the employers had picked on the women by either giving them difficult jobs, or none at all, resulting in the women getting frustrated and stressed at work.

"When I talked to the employers, some even told me they would not have hired the women if they knew they were going to get pregnant."

He added that all the cases had been referred to the Industrial Court and the Labour Department. Most of the women had already been compensated for their grievances. Chong said it was unfair for these women to be discriminated against because they became pregnant. He appealed to employers, especially those from the private sector, to treat women well and fairly and not resort to dirty tactics to force them to leave the company.

One of the women, who did not want to be identified, said she had been employed as a software engineer at an information technology company for five years when she became pregnant in April.

In August, the employer told the 29-year-old to leave the company, claiming the company was not doing well and he could not afford to pay her salary. She was given a choice of leaving with three months' salary as compensation or stay on with a 50 per cent pay cut.

Last month, her employer threatened to withdraw the salary compensation if she did not accept it immediately. She then took the cheque and left the company but maintained she was the only employee to be treated in such a way.

"I was the only employee in the history of the company to ever get pregnant," she claimed. She advised women seeking jobs to understand their future companies' policies regarding their rights and benefits before accepting employment.

WAO provided a response which was published in the following article.

News Article

**"It is a violation of labour laws"**

*New Straits Times*, 20 October 2010

KUALA LUMPUR: Forcing an employee out of the company for being pregnant is not only discriminatory but also a violation of labour laws.

According to All Women's Action Society Malaysia (Awam), employers tend to have the perception that women become unproductive once they were pregnant.

"But this is completely unacceptable and it shows that the companies are ignorant about labour laws," said senior programme officer Abigail De Vries.

She said a number of women had approached Awam over the years with similar issues.

"The problem is not uncommon but more should be done to eradicate discrimination of women at the workplace," De Vries added.

Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) said it condemned employers who discriminated against women because of their gender.

"Dismissing a female employee because she is pregnant, or treating her so badly that she sees no other option but to resign, is punishing a woman for claiming her reproductive rights," said WAO's programme officer Sarah Thwaites, adding the government currently does not monitor the extent of this trend of forcing pregnant women out of their jobs.

"The Women, Family and Community Development Ministry and the Labour Department should encourage women who have been discriminated against to come forward and make complaints to their offices throughout the country," she said.

Thwaites added that employers needed to know that they may face legal repercussions as everyone had the right to work and raise a family without being bullied and discriminated against.

## **9.2. Monitoring the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994**

In 2010, WAO continued documenting cases and addressing the negative experiences of women who had bravely come forward to report domestic violence to public authorities. We comprehensively documented 12 cases of domestic violence this year.

Aside from these cases, the report which contained 31 cases from our 2009 National Roundtable Discussion on the Implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, Malaysia, 1994, "Upholding the Rights of Women Seeking Protection from Domestic Violence" was used to lobby for reform to the DVA.

Although Malaysia has made voluntary pledges to include psychological violence in the DVA, during the Universal Periodic Review process in 2009, the government has yet to table the amendments.

In 2010, WAO sent out numerous letters to the Welfare Department as well as to the Royal Malaysian Police. In the letters sent to the Welfare Department, WAO requested a follow-up to the inter-agency meeting held in 2009. This was because we could see that there was a severe lack of communication between the different agencies that dealt with the DVA. This problem could only be resolved with all the agencies coming together to work out the gaps.

With the letters sent to the Royal Malaysian Police, we were trying to arrange for a dialogue session mainly in order to air our grievances with the manner in which certain police officers were treating women who came to police stations to lodge a report of domestic violence. We also wanted clarification from the police as to their procedures in cases of domestic violence especially with regard to the number of days it takes the police to serve an Interim Protection Order (IPO) on an offender as well as the number of days a victim had to make a statement from the time the initial report was lodged.

### **9.2.1. DVA Inter-Agency meeting initiated by the Welfare Department**

On 6 December 2010, WAO was the only NGO invited to attend the inter-agency meeting initiated by the Welfare Department. Present were representatives from the Welfare Department, the Royal Malaysian Police, the Ministry of Health, the Magistrate's Court, the Islamic Religious Development Department and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.

The first part of the meeting saw the different agencies sharing their problems in implementing the DVA as well airing their opinions on how all the agencies could work together to solve these problems. Among the issues raised were different procedures in different courts around

Malaysia when it came to issuing IPOs as well as the extraordinary length of time it took to serve an IPO on an offender.

The main purpose of the meeting was so that the Welfare Department could present the proposed inter-agency cooperation document it was coordinating. The document clearly stated each agency's roles and responsibilities when it came to managing cases of domestic violence under the DVA. The document was quite comprehensive and the Welfare Department invited agencies to give their feedback if they thought any sections should be amended.

WAO brought up the fact that some of the problems women were facing involved the Immigration Department. First, in cases where a victim of domestic abuse is a foreign spouse, her visa can only be renewed with the cooperation of her husband and if he declines to cooperate then legally she would not be permitted to stay in Malaysia. This causes an unnecessary burden and is dangerous for victims of domestic violence who are foreign spouses as their husbands can threaten not to renew their visas if they lodge a police report. Second, WAO has documented cases where a husband has taken a child out of Malaysia despite the fact that there is an IPO containing the child's name. The Welfare Department agreed that this was a pressing issue and invited WAO to submit a section on the Immigration Department for the inter-agency document and also stated they would make sure that Immigration Department was invited to be present at the next inter-agency meeting.

On 20 December 2010, WAO sent a document highlighting possible amendments to the inter-agency cooperation document. This included a new section on the roles and responsibilities of the Immigration Department.

### **9.3. World Refugee Day**

On World Refugee Day (20 June), WAO released a letter to the editor which was published in *Malaysiakini*.

Letter to the Editor by WAO

**"Refugees bring rich cultural diversity"**

*Malaysiakini*, 21 June 2010

It was World Refugee Day yesterday. So it is timely to reflect a little bit on the experiences of refugees who have come to Malaysia seeking safety.

Refugees currently in Malaysia come from about 40 different countries, but they have all been through similar experiences such as persecution and war and abuses of their human rights. It is difficult to imagine being forced to leave your home and become separated from members of your family to seek safety and security in another country. It is a terribly courageous and brave thing to do.

For many years, refugees have sought safety in Malaysia. Among them are women asylum



seekers who, while caring for their families and attempting to make a living, endure threats to their safety and security.

World Refugee Day is a good time to not only reflect on the experiences of others with compassion, but also to think about the rich cultural diversity refugees have brought with them to Malaysia and to value this as an important part of the layers that make up our society.

*SARAH THWAITES, Programme Officer, Women's Aid Organisation*

#### **9.4. Penan Support Group Report**

In July 2010, a report entitled “A Wider Context of Sexual Exploitation of Penan Women and Girls in Middle and Ulu Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia” was released which was the result of a fact-finding mission by the Penan Support Group (PSG), FORUM-ASIA and Asian Indigenous Women’s Network (AIWN). Wong Su Zane, our social work manager, took part in the fact-finding mission. SUARAM was the lead organisation for the mission.

At the press conference accompanying the release of the report, which was held in the parliament building, Su Zane spoke about the seven new cases of sexual assault which came to light through the fact-finding mission and the systemic undermining of the autonomy and sustainability of the Penan people.

In August, Bukit Aman police recorded a statement from the PSG SUARAM member John Liu as part of the Sarawak police investigations.

Press Statement from the Penan Support Group

##### **“No More Denials: NGO Fact Finding Mission Reveals More Sexual Abuse Cases Among Penan Communities”**

6 July 2010

Following the findings of the National Taskforce Report of September 2009 (Laporan Jawatankuasa Bertindak Peringkat Kebangsaan Bagi Menyiasat Dakwaan Penderaan Seksual Terhadap Wanita Kaum Penan Di Sarawak), which confirmed cases of sexual violence and exploitation of Penan women and girls, a group of non-government organisations set out to investigate further the situation in Sarawak when informed that there were other Penan women and their families who wanted to share their stories of sexual violence and exploitation. Furthermore the NGOs were motivated to document new evidence in light of Sarawak state government leaders’ repeated refusals to acknowledge that Penan girls were sexually abused by timber workers and their apparent rejection of the National Taskforce Report findings.

The report entitled A Wider Context of Sexual Exploitation of Penan Women and Girls in Middle and Ulu Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia is the result of a fact-finding mission by the Penan Support

Group, FORUM-ASIA and Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN).

The fact-finding mission visited three (3) Penan communities and one (1) Kenyah community and listened to evidence from a further thirteen (13) Penan communities.

The mission found that women were willing to share their stories, but they did not want to go to the authorities owing to past police responses and further obstacles including the lack of identity cards, language barriers and the prohibitive cost of travel.

Seven (7) previously undocumented cases are described in the report. The cases all point to systematic patterns of violence. Themes include harassment, abduction, rape, physical assault, emotional abuse, coercion into marriage and desertion upon pregnancy.

The documentation of these cases refutes those who in the past rejected the veracity of the Penan women's claims.

The purpose of the report is not only to record instances of sexual violence and rape, it is also to contextualise these crimes in the political situation in Middle and Ulu Baram, Sarawak. This report further confirms that the treatment of the Penan people is intrinsically tied to the wider political situation and demands a political solution.

This wider context within which the sexual violence has taken place includes the systemic undermining of the autonomy and sustainability of the Penan people, which is caused by:

- the denial of their land rights;
- the denial of basic citizenship rights for many through a failure to register and issue ID cards;
- state neglect of their welfare including a failure to guarantee adequate access to basic services such as education and health care; and
- state failure to provide a supporting environment of the right to redress.

The situation facing Penan communities has been documented previously in various reports over the years. The impact of logging and 'land development' on the Penan communities, their land and their rights was detailed in the NGO report "Not Development, but Theft" in 2000. The SUHAKAM Report (2007) on Penan in Ulu Belaga highlights the abject poverty in which many Penan communities live and states clearly that the Sarawak state government, as the primary duty bearer, is chiefly responsible to ensure the Penan people's right to life and standard of living. The National Taskforce Report (2009), while confirming the allegations of sexual abuse, also makes reference to the poverty the community faces, as well as the lack of access to health care and education among other issues.

The lack of respect and protection afforded to Penan women and girls, as can be seen by their various experiences of sexual violence and exploitation, is tied to the lack of respect and

protection shown to the Penan community as a whole.

The report provides recommendations for all sectors of the Malaysian community, including the federal and Sarawak governments, the federal parliament and the Sarawak state assembly, intergovernmental bodies, SUHAKAM, non-government organisations and Bursa Malaysia.

These recommendations aim to support changes resulting in a future where Penan communities have the power to determine the direction and pace of their development, secure in their land and communities and respected for their culture, and above all, enjoy their human rights without discrimination.

### **9.5. Meeting with MWFCDD about a Gender Equality Act**

In September 2010, WAO attended a meeting with the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCDD) about a possible Gender Equality Act. Karen Lai from Women's Centre for Change, Penang, gave a presentation about the need for such legislation. Since this meeting there has been little word from the government about whether or not a bill has been drafted.

### **9.6. Section 498 of the Penal Code**

In 2009, the husband of TV personality Daphne Iking took another man (the third party) to court for 'enticing' his wife. The third party was charged under section 498 of the Penal Code, which states,

"Whoever takes or entices away any woman who is and whom he knows, or has reason to believe, to be the wife of any other man, from that man, or from any person having the care of her on behalf of that man, with intent that she may have illicit intercourse with any person, or conceals, or detains with that intent any such woman, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both."

Throughout 2010, the case continued in court and WAO President Meera Samanther held a watching brief together with Honey Tan from Empower. The case was referred to the Federal Court for the resolution of questions about the constitutional validity of section 498 of the Penal Code, in that it was discriminatory towards women and violated article 8 of the Federal Constitution. In November 2010, the Federal Court refused to answer the constitutional questions. The judges were of the view that the criminal trial had to be dispensed with first before the constitutional questions were answered. Thus the matter was sent back to the magistrate's court for resolution. In early 2011, the case was resolved in an out-of-court settlement.

It is unfortunate that the Federal Court did not address the questions concerning the constitutional validity of section 498, as this was seen by women's human rights groups as an ideal opportunity for shedding light on the discriminatory nature of the law and calling for it to be repealed. Section 498 is discriminatory in several ways:

- It considers wives as incapable of making autonomous decisions.
- It treats women as the property of their husbands.
- It violates Malaysia's legal obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which directs states to repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

WAO and Sisters in Islam released a joint statement about section 498 of the Penal Code to coincide with the "One Day, One Struggle" campaign organised by the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights on 9 November 2010. This statement was published as a letter to the editor in The Sun newspaper.

Letter to the Editor by WAO and SIS

**"Drop Section 498 from Penal Code"**

*The Sun*, 9 November 2010

TODAY, Women's Aid Organisation and Sisters in Islam, in solidarity with the global campaign "One Day, One Struggle", organised by the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR), renew the call for the abolition of Section 498 of the Malaysian Penal Code which restricts a woman's right to decide on matters relating to her own body.

For the last year women's groups in Malaysia have campaigned for the removal of Section 498 of the Penal Code on "enticing or taking away a married woman". Unfortunately, no amendments have been made to the law and Section 498 remains.

As women's groups in Malaysia campaigning for women's rights and gender equality in a multicultural society, we join hundreds on this day in countries such as Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Sudan, Nigeria, Ghana, Iran and Palestine who are taking action against violations on the basis of sexuality.

Section 498 was adopted from the Indian Penal Code, which was drafted at a time when women were perceived as the property of their husbands – passive agents with merely reproductive functions, with no self agency or rational minds of their own.

This perception of women is outmoded and irrelevant in contemporary Malaysia. Every woman has the right to make decisions over her own body. Consensual intimate relationships between adults should not be the government's concern.

Section 498 contravenes the provision of equality between men and women evident in Article 8

of the Federal Constitution, as well as contravening international human rights treaties that Malaysia has ratified.

As a party to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 1995, Malaysia should pay attention to Article 2(g) of CEDAW which refers specifically to discrimination within penal provisions and states that parties to the convention should "repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women."

The government's commitment to women's human rights will be examined soon at a meeting of the CEDAW Committee. Malaysia was due to report to the committee in 2008, but as yet has not completed its report.

When the report is completed and the government does appear before the committee, the retention of regressive laws such as Section 498 will reflect negatively on Malaysia's commitment to human rights.

We call on the government to remove Section 498 from the Penal Code.

## **9.7. Coalition work**

WAO has been, and continues to be, involved in advocacy work through participation in coalitions, as many voices advocating on an issue carry more weight.

WAO belongs to many coalitions but these are not necessarily always active. WAO is most active in the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG), whose activities are outlined below. We are affiliate members of the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) and the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC). WAO also acts as the secretariat to the Migration Working Group (MWG). In addition, WAO was one of the pioneer members of the Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance of Malaysia (RRAAM), which was formed in 2007. WAO is also involved in some aspects of JERIT's work, as elaborated below.

Soon after the 12th General Elections, SUARAM and Empower brought together civil society groups to form the Coalition for Good Governance (CGG) to support and monitor the Pakatan Rakyat state government's efforts in Selangor. The NGOs involved in the Coalition of Malaysian NGOs (COMANGO), led by Empower and SUARAM, took part in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. WAO is a member of both CGG and COMANGO.

### 9.7.1. Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)

In 2010, JAG expanded its membership with the welcome addition of two more organisations, Perak Women for Women Society (PWW) and Sabah Women Action Resource Group (SAWO).

JAG now consists of seven organisations:

<b>JAG Member Organisations in 2010</b>	
<b>Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)</b>	PO Box 493, Jalan Sultan, 46760 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Tel: 03 79575636 / 0636 Fax: 03 79563237 Email: <a href="mailto:wao@po.jaring.my">wao@po.jaring.my</a>
<b>All Women's Action Society (AWAM)</b>	85 Jalan 21/1, Sea Park, 46300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Tel: 03 78774221 Fax: 03 78743312 Email: <a href="mailto:awam@awam.org.my">awam@awam.org.my</a>
<b>Women's Centre for Change (WCC)</b>	24-D Jalan Jones, 10250 Penang Tel: 04 2280342 Fax: 04 2285784 Email: <a href="mailto:wcc@wccpenang.org">wcc@wccpenang.org</a>
<b>Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER)</b>	13 Lorong 4/48E, 46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Tel: 03 77844977 Fax: 03 77844978 Email: <a href="mailto:empower05@gmail.com">empower05@gmail.com</a>
<b>Sisters in Islam (SIS)</b>	7 Jalan 6/10, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Tel: 03 77856121 Fax: 03 77858737 Email: <a href="mailto:sisters@sistersinislam.org.my">sisters@sistersinislam.org.my</a>
<b>Perak Women for Women Society (PWW)</b>	52 Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, 31400 Ipoh Tel/Fax: 05 5469715 Email: <a href="mailto:perakwomenforwomen@gmail.com">perakwomenforwomen@gmail.com</a>
<b>Sabah Women Action Resource Group (SAWO)</b>	Lot 23-3, Block C, Damai Point, 88300 Kota Kinabalu Tel/Fax: 088 269291 Email: <a href="mailto:sawo2@streamyx.com">sawo2@streamyx.com</a>

Over the course of 2010, JAG held events, nominated individuals to serve as SUHAKAM Commissioners and for positions within United Nations bodies, and produced seven press statements.

### 9.7.1.1. JAG nominations for SUHAKAM Commissioners and UN positions

In February 2010, JAG nominated Maria Chin, Meera Samanther and Ivy Josiah as candidates to serve as SUHAKAM Commissioners. Unfortunately these nominations were unsuccessful.

In May 2010, JAG nominated Ambiga Sreenevasan for the position of United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion. Unfortunately, although Ambiga received support from the Chairperson of the Human Rights Council, H.E. Alex Van Meeuwen, her nomination was ultimately unsuccessful.

In December 2010, JAG nominated Shanthi Dairiam for a position on the newly-formed United Nations working group on discrimination against women in law and practice. There are five positions on the Working Group, one from each region including Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Caribbean and Latin America, and Western Europe. In early 2011, we learned that Shanthi was one of three selected nominees for the Asian region, however the individual eventually selected for the Asian region position was Kamala Chandrakirana from Indonesia.

### 9.7.1.2. JAG turns 25 years old

In March 2010, JAG celebrated its 25 years in existence. To mark this milestone, JAG held a press conference and released the statement below.

Press Conference cum briefing to Members of Parliament

#### **“JAG turns 25 years: A Women’s Status Report – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly”**

24 March 2010

In 1985 the Joint Action Group against Violence against Women (JAG) <sup>1</sup> organised a historic workshop cum exhibition on VAW calling for law reforms to rape, prostitution, domestic violence and amendments to all laws that discriminate against women. The workshop also highlighted issues on the negative portrayal of women in the media and sexual harassment in the workplace. The 1985 workshop raised public awareness on violence against women and led to the formation of several new women’s rights organisations which joined JAG. Since then the membership of JAG has evolved and in 2010 JAG, now known as the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality comprises five (5) women’s groups, namely:

- ✓ All Women’s Action Society (AWAM)
- ✓ Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (Empower)
- ✓ Sisters In Islam (SIS)
- ✓ Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO)
- ✓ Women’s Centre for Change (WCC), Penang

Since 1985, JAG has diligently documented, monitored and lobbied for law and policy reforms

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<sup>1</sup> In 1985, JAG included the Association of Women Lawyers, the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) Women's Committee, the Selangor and Federal Territory Consumer's Association (Women and Media section), University Women's Association and Women's Aid Organisation (WAO).

on all aspects of women's human rights. Several strategies were adopted to advocate and lobby about the government's duty to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

For instance, on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008, JAG reminded the newly elected Members of Parliament (MP) about their election promises on gender equality issues and published "Kotakan Kata" which summed up a list of pending law and policy reform.

When analysing JAG's advocacy efforts and government response we detect a pattern of promises made but not kept. The government makes all the right noises and moves - receiving memoranda, setting up taskforces and committees, conducting studies, holding dialogues and organising huge conferences and public campaigns but all to no avail as they have not followed up with actual delivery.

The lack of political will is supported by a political creed of divide and rule whereby a divisive discourse of race and religion continues to be perpetuated by the government and political parties. For instance, after the 2008 General Elections, the Government set up the "Sekretariat Pembelaan dan Permekasakan Wanita Islam" (SENADA) for issues related to Muslim women only, while the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) deals with non-Muslim women's rights. SENADA, which is now under the MWFCD, only serves to perpetuate a false divide between Muslim and non-Muslim women. It also defeats the purpose of the MWFCD to be inclusive and representative of **all** women's rights issues.

The government's power appears to be limitless given a menu of oppressive laws, such as the Internal Security Act, Sedition Act, discriminatory provisions in the Penal Code and Syariah enactments which are selectively used to silence dissent and curb differing views. No one has been spared from the brunt of these oppressive laws whether media, NGOs and politicians.

JAG's efforts in the past 25 years have seen historical movements of lobbying, documenting and monitoring for law reform. Our national history has seen a myriad of the good, bad and ugly side of law and policy reforms and implementation. Some of the more **positive achievements** are the amendments to the Penal Code to include wider definitions of rape; the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act; and amendment to the Guardianship of Women and Infants Act, including a cabinet directive giving all mothers the equal right to sign official documents to manage the affairs of their children. Also welcome was the amendment in 1997 to the Distribution Act to allow a surviving wife to inherit the whole of the estate instead of only one-third.

Similarly in 1995 Malaysia ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and shortly after, the One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC) was established in hospitals nationwide. Other good news includes the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1995 and the establishment of the toll free Talian Nur hotline for women in crisis. In 2002, an amendment to Article 8 of the Federal Constitution guarantees women equal rights.

While it is admirable that efforts have been made to establish and implement new law reforms, we must not let it overshadow the lack of effort to execute them effectively.

Issues which have been discussed but with **little follow up and commitment** for improvement



include the reforms to Islamic Family Law, the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976; recognising psychological violence as a form of domestic violence; amendment to the Local Government Act 1976 enabling local government elections to be held, the enactment of a Sexual Harassment Act, and amendment to the Parliamentary Standing Order to curb sexist behaviours and remarks.

Committees such as the National Advisory Council for the Integration of Women in Development (*NACIWID*) and even the Cabinet Committee for Gender Equality appear to be ineffectual.

The **ugly side that degrades women** still continues to shock and appal those working towards a progressive nation today. Sexism reigns in the debates in parliament and among politicians, marital rape has yet to be recognised and the sexual abuse of Penan women was an eye opener. Recently the use of Section 498 to sue a wife's alleged boyfriend is both demeaning and outdated. Degrading too are the sexist and discriminatory comments made by Perak ADUN Hamidah Osman about how women can run households, but cannot run state governments. Even uglier is the fact that child brides are still evidently in existence in our country today. Women are being sentenced to whipping for the first time under Syariah Law. Women who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers are vulnerable to both sex and labour trafficking. Orang Asal and Orang Asli rights are still not on the main agenda, and the increase in women contracting HIV/AIDS is not addressed.

While we acknowledge that positive changes have taken place in light of JAG's 25 years of advocacy, we are disappointed and angered that the full realisation of gender equality has been sluggish. Each time an issue arises, the authorities are quick to respond with more reports, studies and conferences, but fail dismally when it comes to taking effective comprehensive action.

JAG realises that a lot more has to be done in order to eliminate gender inequalities and discrimination. We urge Members of the Parliament and in particular the Parliamentary Gender Caucus to keep raising women's issues and fulfil their duty to the citizens in keeping the government honest to their commitments.

*This statement is released by JAG comprising: Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (Empower), Sisters In Islam (SIS), All Women's Action Society (AWAM), Women's Centre for Change (WCC), Penang*

### 9.7.1.3. Protest at Bung Mokhtar Radin's illegal polygamous marriage

In 2009, the Kinabatangan MP Bung Mokhtar Radin entered into an illegal polygamous marriage without fulfilling the required procedures and conditions under the Islamic Family Law (Selangor) Enactment 2003. The marriage generated a chorus of criticism from women's groups and the public, who demanded his resignation.

On 20 April 2010, Bung Mokhtar pleaded guilty at the Gombak Timur Lower Syariah Court to the charge of committing polygamy without the consent of court and a marriage registrar.



Press Statement by the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality

**“Law Breakers Must Resign”**

18 May 2010

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, are gathered here to protest strongly against law makers who intentionally break laws that are enacted to ensure principles of justice and equality.

We are extremely concerned about the action taken by the Kinabatangan Member of Parliament Bung Mokhtar and Zizie Ezette A Samad to enter into an illegal polygamous marriage.

Bung Mokhtar and Zizie Ezette were married on 16 December 2009 without fulfilling the required procedure and conditions under the Islamic Family Law (Selangor) Enactment 2003. This includes evidence that he could be just and the marriage does not cause harm to his existing wife and children. The law also requires the judge to listen to the views of Bung Mokhtar’s existing wife to determine if the above conditions could be met.

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

Bung Mokhtar’s conduct as well as his notorious reputation of sexism in parliament tarnishes his credibility as an elected lawmaker. Furthermore, at no time has Bung Mokhtar expressed regret or apologised for his conduct, but in fact, defended his actions. As the Deputy Chairperson of the Barisan National Parliament Backbencher’s Club, Bung Mokhtar’s conduct has also tainted the stature of his office and the august house.

Law makers should NOT be law breakers.

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

**Maria Chin Abdullah**

Executive Director, Empower

*For and on behalf of the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG), which comprises: Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER), Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO), Women’s Centre for Change (WCC) Penang, Sisters in Islam (SIS), All Women’s Action Society (AWAM)*

On YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MDy0HFbOPM>

Or visit the Bung blog: <http://bungchacha.blogspot.com/>

#### **9.7.1.4. JAG's response to Malaysia's removal of reservations to articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

On 6 July 2010, the Malaysian Government announced that it was planning to remove its reservations to three CEDAW articles. On 19 July, the United Nations Secretary-General officially announced the removal of reservations to the following articles:

**Article 5 (a):** To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

**Article 7 (b):** To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; and

**Article 16 (2):** The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

The Malaysian government still has reservations to the following five CEDAW articles:

**Article 9 (2):** States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

**Article 16 (1):** States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

**(a)** The same right to enter into marriage;

**(c)** The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

**(f)** The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation, and in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount; and

**(g)** The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation.

Upon news of the removal of reservations, JAG released a press statement welcoming the government's actions and also urging the government to ensure the practical realisation of the intent of the articles.

Press Statement from the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality

**“JAG welcomes the government’s removal of three reservations to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and urges the government to remove the remaining five reservations”**

6 July 2010

The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) welcomes the government’s announcement that it has removed three of its reservations to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>2</sup> This move – which addresses discrimination against women in public life, child marriage and stereotyping of women and girls – is a step in the right direction towards Malaysia’s commitment to end discrimination against women in all aspects of our public and private lives. In addition, the government must also take every measure necessary to fully implement the provisions of CEDAW in order to fulfil its international obligations and to truly give effect to the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

JAG also congratulates the government on its appointment of the first two female Syariah Court judges for the Federal Territories of Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur. We urge all state governments to follow this example, which is a concrete step forward in the process of ending the discrimination against women in holding public office as Syariah Court judges.

The appointment of the two female Syariah court judges is in line with the government’s removal of its reservation on Article 7(b) of CEDAW, which requires governments to enable women’s participation in the formulation and implementation of government policy, to hold public office and to perform all public functions at all levels of government. It is also in keeping with the 2006 national fatwa on the right of women to be appointed as judges.

While JAG agrees with the statement made by the Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil in condemning child marriage as a human rights violation, we urge her and the government to take the next necessary steps to amend the civil and Islamic family laws to set the minimum age to marry at 18 years, with no exceptions.

This would comply with the Child Act 2001, as well as Malaysia’s obligations under Article 16(2) of CEDAW, which prohibits child marriage, and Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines children as anyone under the age of 18. It would also conform with the government’s duty to protect children’s well-being and ensure their right to education, as stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and generally agreed upon in the international community.

Currently, non-Muslims in Malaysia can marry at 18 years of age for both males and females,

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<sup>2</sup> When a government accepts an international convention such as CEDAW, it can assert reservations to parts of that convention. Reservations are not meant to be permanent as they prevent the full and effective implementation of that convention.

though non-Muslim females between the ages of 16 and 18 can marry with the authorisation of the Chief Minister. For Muslims, the minimum age to marry is 16 years for females and 18 for males, with an exception for Muslim girls below 16, who are able to marry with the Syariah Court's consent.

Recent data showing the rates of pre-marital HIV testing in Malaysia indicate that there are high numbers of girls under 16 years of age who intend to marry.<sup>3</sup> Shockingly, 32 girls under 10 years of age undertook the pre-marital HIV test in 2009. No boys in that age group were tested, and only 2 boys in the 10-14 age group were tested, compared to 445 girls. The data indicates that girl children are getting married, and to men who are much older than them.

It is appalling that the government would allow girls to marry at such a young age and that the law provides for this. The government must amend both civil and Islamic family laws to ensure that all boys and girls are protected from child marriage.

JAG welcomes the lifting of the government's reservation on Article 5(a) of CEDAW, which requires the government "to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women."

Given the government's professed commitment to end all laws that discriminate against women, as well as its position as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, JAG urges the government to remove its five remaining reservations, which relate to nationality and marriage and family relations, and to amend the related domestic laws.

The laws that must be amended include several provisions in Islamic Family Law that discriminate against women and the constitutional provision that recognizes only Malaysian men, and not Malaysian women, as having the right to confer citizenship on children born overseas. This leaves Malaysian women with considerable difficulties upon their return to Malaysia, as their children are considered foreigners and do not enjoy the rights of citizenship, such as attending government schools.

JAG congratulates the government on its initial steps to remove reservations to CEDAW and urges the removal of all of the remaining reservations and a more active commitment to implementing the provisions of CEDAW to move towards ending all forms of discrimination against women in Malaysia.

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<sup>3</sup> *UNGASS Country Progress Report – Malaysia*, March 2010. Note that the statistics have since been amended and the updated statistics can be found at:

[http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2010/malaysia\\_2010\\_country\\_progress\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2010/malaysia_2010_country_progress_report_en.pdf)

#### 9.7.1.5. Disappointing outcome of Shamala Sathiyaseelan's Federal Court case

In November 2010, the Federal Court declined to answer constitutional questions in Shamala Sathiyaseelan's case about the unilateral conversion to Islam of her children by her husband. JAG released a press statement to coincide with Human Rights Day on 10 December. It was published in Malaysiakini on 13 December.

Letter to the Editor from the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality

##### **"Federal Court's cowardice disappointing"**

*Malaysiakini*, 13 December 2010

In a joint statement issued on Human Rights Day (Dec 10), women's rights groups expressed disappointment at the lack of courage displayed by the Federal Court as it has neglected to resolve conversion issues presented before them.

The recent majority decision by the Federal Court, which was in effect a decision to not to make any decision, leaves Shamala and others, mainly women, in similar situations without clarity as to their legal rights.

In 2002, Shamala Sathiyaseelan approached women's groups seeking help. Her husband had converted to Islam and had also converted their two children without Shamala's knowledge, let alone her consent.

Eight years and many court hearings later, Shamala is still left in limbo.

On Nov 12, 2010, the Federal Court shirked its responsibility to execute justice by declining to answer constitutional questions relating to the validity of the unilateral conversion of children to Islam by a father. The federal court had cited Shamala's absence as the excuse for neglecting to answer the constitutional questions.

In past court decisions, Shamala's equal rights as a parent were denied and she was told to raise her children in a religion that was not her own. She was understandably compelled by circumstances to flee the country with her children.

The Federal Court did not give due regard to the circumstances that caused Shamala to flee and yet she had turned to this Court to resolve the vexed question that confronts her and many others.

Both international conventions and Malaysia's domestic legislation concur that women and men must have equal rights to make decisions pertaining to their children.

Section 5(1) of the Guardianship of Infants Act 1961 clearly states that both parents have equal

rights with regard to matters relating to the upbringing of their children. And yet the courts continue to evade their duty to uphold the rights of women as equal guardians.

The Federal Court's refusal to answer crucial and critical questions in this high profile case leaves us no closer to achieving clarity. In the meantime, an array of injustices against non-convert spouses continues to be perpetrated in light of this legal loophole.

Courage and political will from the structures of our democratic government – from parliament and the judiciary – are required at this time to affirm the equality of all Malaysians.

#### **9.7.1.6. Support for Seksualiti Merdeka and the “Saya Gay, Saya OK” Campaign and Azwan Ismail**

Seksualiti Merdeka is a festival supported by Malaysian NGOs and other organisations (including the Malaysian Bar Council, SUARAM, Empower, PT Foundation, United Nations, Amnesty International, KRYSS, Purple Lab and Matahari books among others) and individuals. Every year they host a sexuality rights festival in Kuala Lumpur.

In December 2010, Seksualiti Merdeka launched a video project entitled It Gets Better in Malaysia which was in response to increasing accounts of suicides and attempted suicides by LGBT teenagers and adults around the world. The message simply was, even though things can be rough, it can get better.

There were four videos posted online, the first by singer Peter Ong on 9 December 2010, followed by engineer-writer Azwan Ismail on 15 December, university student Kavidha on 17 December, and Pastor Joe Pang on 20 December.

Within a week of Azwan Ismail’s video (It Gets Better in Malaysia: Azwan Ismail “Saya gay, saya okay”) being posted, there were over 150,000 views and 3,400 comments. Most of these comments were vicious and rude, and most worryingly some threatened violence and murder towards Azwan Ismail and Seksualiti Merdeka members. The other three videos received some negative comments, however these came nowhere near the extent of the response to Azwan Ismail’s video.

The Perak mufti, PAS Youth and Muslim bloggers urged JAKIM to take action against Azwan Ismail but JAKIM later came out to say that they could not do anything.

Press Statement from the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality

**“Stand up against hatred and threats against LGBT”**

30 December 2010

Joint Action Group For Gender Equality (JAG) is greatly concerned with recent announcement in Star (Dec 29) that the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (Jakim) intends to take action against Azwan Ismail for posting a video on YouTube entitled “I'm Gay, I'm OK” as part of



a video campaign launched in response to accounts of suicides and attempted suicides by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) teenagers and adults.

We are appalled that government authorities have not condemned the threats of murder and violence against Azwan Ismail and other members of Seksualiti Merdeka who were involved in the campaign, but instead have fanned violence and hatred with homophobic and discriminatory statements.

Women have never been strangers to discrimination. That is why women's groups seek to uphold Article 8 of the Malaysian federal constitution that clearly guarantees that, "All persons are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of the law."

JAG stands by Seksualiti Merdeka's attempt to reach out to Malaysians who face overwhelming feelings of loneliness, fear or hopelessness resulting from the stigma and discrimination against them for being LGBT. They should not be persecuted for trying to address a human issue with understanding and compassion.

JAG is deeply concerned with the culture of hatred and intolerance bred in Malaysian society today against those who are different, be it on the basis of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. This demonisation of the "other" goes against the true inclusive and tolerant spirit of being Malaysian.

As Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated:

"Neither the existence of national laws, nor the prevalence of custom can ever justify the abuse, attacks, torture and indeed killings that gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgender persons are subjected to, because of who they are or are perceived to be.

"Because of the stigma attached to issues surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity, violence against LGBT persons is frequently unreported, undocumented and goes ultimately unreported and unpunished. Rarely does it provoke public debate and outrage. This shameful silence is the ultimate rejection of the fundamental principle of universality of rights."

Azwan Ismail is not the first gay Muslim man in Malaysia nor will he be the last. Being gay is not a crime, however, hate speech as per Sections 211 and 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 and making threats to commit acts of violence as stated in Section 503 of the Penal Code are crimes under Malaysian laws.

We urge Malaysians to stand up to such hatred and violence and reach out to all those who are discriminated against in peace and compassion.

*Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) comprises: Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), Sisters in Islam (SIS), All Women's Action Society (AWAM), Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (Empower) and Perak Women for Women Society.*

### **9.7.2. CEDAW Shadow Report Group**

WAO is coordinating the writing of the second Malaysian NGO CEDAW shadow report. Our Programme Officer, Sarah Thwaites, is the shadow report coordinator. A writing group was established in late 2008 and draft chapters have been prepared.

The Malaysian government submitted its combined initial and second report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2006. Malaysia's third report to the CEDAW Committee was due in August 2004 and the fourth periodic report was due in August 2008. Upon the delay of the third report, the CEDAW Committee requested that a combined third and fourth report be submitted in 2008. To date, Malaysia has produced a draft combined third and fourth report however this has yet to be finalised and submitted to the Committee.

In August 2010, to coincide with the two year anniversary of the due date of the Malaysian government's report to the CEDAW Committee, WAO sent a letter to the Minister of Women requesting information about when the government report is due to be completed. To date we have yet to receive a response.

Two meetings of the shadow report writing team were held in 2010. When the government report is finalised and becomes available, the draft shadow report will be revised to include a critical analysis of the government report.

### **9.7.3. Coalition work with JERIT on the amendments to the Employment Act**

JERIT (Jaringan Rakyat Tertindas or Oppressed People's Network) is a coalition of NGOs and individuals interested in workers' rights.

In 2010, the government was planning to introduce several amendments to the Employment Act 1955 that were not favourable to workers. These amendments were to be tabled in parliament in the November session. Most Malaysians were unaware of these amendments and the serious implications they would have on their rights as workers.

There was to be a new category of "contractor of labour". Previously all contracted workers (even if they were hired through a contractor) were considered employees of the principal. The amendment would mean that the contractor of labour is recognised as the employer and not the principal. Thus the principal can escape from paying benefits to the workers and the contractor can also say he is not the actual employer if EPF and SOCSO are not paid. A worker will also not be able to launch a cause of action against the principal.

Under the current law if a worker worked for more than five years he/she would be given eight weeks of notice if their employment is to be terminated. Now the move is to standardise termination notices to four weeks regardless of length of service. So even if the worker has worked for more than 20 years he/she will only be given one month's notice to find a new job.

Currently overtime wages have to be paid within seven days of the payment of normal salary. Now the move is to extend it to 30 days. Many workers need the overtime wages to make ends

meet. Another proposed change is a sexual harassment clause to be inserted into the Employment Act. This clause was drawn up without much consultation with labour and civil society organisations. It also does not provide adequate protection for victims of sexual harassment.

JERIT planned several campaigns and events to raise public awareness of these proposed amendments as well as to prevent them from being passed into law.

In October 2010, public leafleting was done every Friday in various areas around the Klang Valley. The leaflets were in Bahasa Malaysia and outlined the proposed amendments and the detrimental effect they would have on workers' rights. WAO participated in the KL Sentral and Pasar Seni sessions.

On 1 October 2010, JERIT organised a press conference at the Bar Council to highlight the proposed amendments to the press. It was well attended by members of the Malaysian media who were surprised that amendments with such far reaching consequences were not made known to the public.

On 7 October 2010, WAO attended the JERIT-planned demonstration at the PERKESO building which coincided with World Day for Decent Work. Here a memorandum was presented to the Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam. The memorandum outlined the reasons why the proposed amendments should not become law and also called for the government promise of minimum wage to be implemented instead.

On 2 December, WAO attended a meeting with the Parliamentary Labour Caucus. The purpose was to explain to them the negative impact the amendments would have and also to garner their support to oppose the amendments. After the meeting the members of the caucus suggested that we have a press conference with them the following week in parliament to highlight the issues that we brought to them and to officially submit a memorandum to the caucus as well as to the Minister of Human Resources. The caucus also agreed to raise a motion in parliament that would include all the issues in the memorandum while the labour budget was being debated in parliament.

The proposed amendments to the Employment Act 1955 were withdrawn by the government. The Minister announced that the amendments would be revised and tabled during the next parliamentary session.

#### **9.7.4. Convention on the Rights of the Child Shadow Report**

On 10 and 11 August 2010, WAO representatives attended the Shadow Report Consultation for the Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC). A number of NGOs and individuals attended and pledged to write sections of the report based on their work expertise. WAO pledged to write a report on domestic violence and its effect on children.

WAO has produced a draft report "Children and Domestic Violence" for the CRC shadow report. It began by highlighting the Domestic Violence Act and the relevant articles in the CRC i.e. Article 3 – Best interests of the child, Article 4 – Protection of rights and Article 19 – Protection from all

forms of violence. Three case studies were also provided. It then went on to describe the effects domestic violence had on children as well as the warning signs.

The report explained the protection available to children under the DVA as well as the challenges faced by children who experienced domestic violence. These issues include the right to shelter, the right to education, the child's right to access his/her parents, the abduction of children in domestic violence cases, guardianship, confidentiality as well as the assessment of risk by the police and the welfare department.

WAO also documented 15 case studies of children who were victims of domestic violence to highlight the impact of domestic violence and the need for improved protection.

#### **9.7.5. Migration Working Group**

The Migration Working Group (MWG) annual workshop was held in November 2010. This year we had a public programme for two days prior to the MWG evaluation and planning meeting.

The public programme, which was open to civil society, presented an overview and update of migration laws, policies and practices in Malaysia. During the internal evaluation and planning meeting, the new coordinators for 2011 were elected. They are Gloria Bon, Alice Nah and Daniel Lo. WAO will be the secretariat for the MWG in 2011.

Generally the MWG had a quiet year focusing on building the website. On 24 May 2010, Temme Lee, the coordinator for 2010, issued a letter to the editor, "Amnesty for undocumented migrant workers".

WAO representatives on the MWG include Ivy Josiah, Wong Su Zane, Sarah Thwaites, Valerie Mohan and Meera Samanther.

## 10. FUNDRAISING



In 2009, WAO struggled against the onslaught of the global financial crisis and worked all year round to secure funding. The hard work paid off as some of the funders from 2009 continued their sponsorship into 2010. In order to avoid the 2009 predicament when we were left with enough funds for only 8 months of operations, WAO decided to raise funds in a more proactive manner. Besides securing institutional funds from foundations and corporations, we organised our own events and constantly placed ourselves in the forefront so that potential donors would remember to include us as fund recipients. Yayasan Sime Darby, Gift to Asia via Asia Foundation, Malakoff Corporation and Hong Leong Foundation all donated funds for specific projects.

Whilst Yayasan Sime Darby stepped in to fund our Refuge services for 2010, Hong Leong Foundation agreed to take care of the CCC for one year (May 2009 – April 2010). We were very fortunate as these donations were a tremendous boost to our funds.

Vivienne Lee worked her magic once again in 2010 and persuaded another restaurant to sponsor the total costs of dinner and drinks for one night, during which WAO sold seats to the event and received the entire proceeds. Faithful WAO friend, Ms. Florence Fang of Malaysia Tatler collaborated with Mastercard Worldwide and initiated a fundraising project through the sale of the Malaysia Tatler coffee table book which featured full page Malaysia Tatler portraits printed on high quality paper and beautifully bound together. Each book was sold at RM500, and this effort brought in funds amounting to more than RM160, 000.

*"It was a night filled with goodwill at the Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur as **Malaysia Tatler and MasterCard Worldwide** welcomed the crème de la crème of society to celebrate the publication of Malaysia Tatler's 21 Years of Excellence coffee table book. A beautiful cloth-bound book launched in honour of the magazine's 21 years in the country, the pages in the book featured the most notable faces in Malaysian high society – as captured by the lenses of the talented photographers who worked with Malaysia Tatler over the years. The event touched a warm chord in everyone's hearts when it was announced that all proceeds raised from the sale of the books would be channelled to the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO). This is an organisation that seeks to end violence against women and also children, by sheltering them in safe places and helping them in every way possible."*

Sometimes, unpredictably, we are contacted by funders who may have gone ahead with their own internal fundraising. The Body Shop was one such surprise. We were genuinely pleased to receive a cheque from them via their "candles of conscience" sales this year. The other funder was Guardian who came through once again this year. We were also pleasantly surprised when we received an email from Ashmore Foundation in the UK. One of our ex-volunteers cum intern, Ms. Shamanth Paramisavam who is currently employed by that organisation had recommended WAO as one of the beneficiaries for their CSR project beyond the United Kingdom.

Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun decided to spring a surprise too when she urged the Tan Chong Group to direct their annual Dumpling Festival proceeds to WAO.

News Article

**"Tan Chong gives RM32,349 to WAO"**

*New Straits Times*, 8 August 2010

KUALA LUMPUR: Tan Chong Group recently donated RM32,349 to the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO).

The cash was raised during a "Dumpling Festival" for the group's staff two months ago. The event featured a charity auction and sales. At a cheque presentation ceremony held at Wisma Tan Chong in Jalan Ipoh, the group's deputy managing director Datuk Rosie Tan said WAO was selected because the welfare of women and children had always been close to the company's heart.

Tan said guest-of-honour Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun had suggested that the money be given to the advocacy group for its work in assisting women who were domestically abused.

"We raised about RM17,000 and decided to top up the amount ringgit for ringgit," she said, adding that it was only possible with the generous support of the company's staff.

Also present at the ceremony was Tan Chong Group head of human resources Geh Thuan Hooi. Geh said the annual festival, which was first organised three years ago, had also raised funds for disabled groups.

In total there were thirteen events organised by various individuals, corporations and our office in 2010. Although we were not directly involved in organising most of these fundraising events, we did set up booths, help arrange for publicity, or sell tickets for some of them.

In total, we raised approximately 1.7 million ringgit in 2010. With our expenses now amounting to 1 million ringgit per annum, it has become imperative that we raise at least 1.5 million ringgit per annum in order to sustain all the services and programmes carried out by WAO.

## **10.1. Fundraising Highlights**

### **YAYASAN SIME DARBY (YSD)**

***JANUARY 2010***

WAO had written in to Yayasan Sime Darby (YSD) with an appeal for institutional grant at the end of 2009. YSD came through with a pledge of RM360,000 under their Community Development pillar to promote the well-being of the community. The money was used for salaries of social workers, expenses and activities in the Refuge, food and groceries, electricity and water, telephone and internet connection, administration expenses, repairs and maintenance and capital expenses.

We are indeed very grateful to YSD for their support and thank them for their continued support.

### **LAILA'S LOUNGE**

***MAR – DEC 2010***

Ramesh Vadiveloo has been helping us raise small amounts of funds right from his days in Club9 & Six. When he moved work to Laila's Lounge, he continued his fundraising for WAO. He has been holding small gigs at Laila's the past year called "Girls & Guitar gig nite" where he opens the floor to local talents – all women. The show has been well received by his regular patrons and he was able to constantly raise small amounts of funds. In 2010, he organised three events in June, October and December. In the spirit of giving, he also put up a "wishing tree" in aid of WAO and raised substantial funds.

WAO is always happy to work with generous people who utilise their valuable time to do their bit for the organisation, such as Ramesh. We thank him for his untiring efforts and assistance.

### **MALAKOFF CORPORATION BERHAD "SINGLE AND PREGNANT" PUBLICATION**

***APRIL 2010***

Having read the increasing number of baby dumping cases in the papers, WAO initiated the publication of a book for single mothers titled "Single and Pregnant – What are my choices?" both in English and Bahasa Malaysia. It was timely when Malakoff Corporation turned to us for their CSR initiative called the "Empower for Life Initiative" programme. Malakoff readily agreed to sponsor the booklet and they also helped fund a social worker who conducts empowerment sessions, including computer and English language classes at the Refuge.

### **MPH BOOKSTORES – GALS Read card**

***MAY 2010 – FEB 2011***

MPH bookstores, one of the leading bookstores in Malaysia decided to transform their store at the Curve outlet into a concept store focusing on women. They created a female MPH Reader's Membership card catering for women – MPH Gals R.E.A.D.S Membership card.

With the membership fee of RM20 for two years, female members were able to enjoy privileges at MPH outlets nationwide, and additional privileges at the MPH The Curve.

Entire proceeds of the RM20 were donated to WAO as the sole beneficiary. We managed to receive RM6, 800.00 as total donation from this programme.

**UNITED WAY INTERNATIONAL GRANT****MAY 2010**

General Mills Foundation which is the holding company of Häagen Dazs ice cream came to us initially with a one off donation of ice cream for our Refuge and Child Care Centre.

This initial contact went further when they nominated us for the General Mills International Giving Program. Our application was a success and we received RM52,000 from United Way International (UWI). General Mills is one of the donors for UWI. The donation from UWI was used for the WAO Child Care Centre.

**ALLIANCE FINANCIAL GROUP (AFG) Berhad****JUNE 2010**

AFG launched their "Staff Donation Program" in June 2010. This programme provides a platform for AFG employees to make monetary contributions for a minimum consecutive period of six months via a monthly salary deduction. The bank has also agreed to match the donations. The staff donation programme was well received by many in Alliance.

**HONG LEONG FOUNDATION****JUNE 2009 – 2010**

WAO approached Hong Leong Foundation early last year with an appeal for a one off donation for repair and renovations for the Refuge. They responded by "adopting" the WAO Child Care Centre for the year May 2009 – April 2010. They donated RM143,000 for the one year besides organising a series of educational and fun activities for the children.

**BHARATHANJALI DANCE ACADEMY****JULY 2010**

Bavani Kanesamoothy, owner of Bharathanjali Dance Academy, picked WAO as part beneficiary of her dance drama titled "Buddha, The Splendor of Enlightenment". Bavani choreographed the dance drama herself with an ensemble of 79 dancers bringing Indian classical dance and philanthropy together in a show to raise funds.

The money donated was used to employ a tuition teacher for the CCC. Besides that, she had also engaged the services of an institution called "Character Genius" where our children were sent to build their character learning about friendship, responsibility, respect, freedom, manners, sharing, pride, self-control, patience and much more. Twelve of our children have attended the course offered by Character Genius thus far. These sessions are still ongoing twice a week and each session lasts one and a half hours.

The children learn about moral values, motivation, empowerment, how to deal with personal issues and problems plus providing them with the space to express themselves.

**GUARDIAN MARKS ITS 43<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY BY SUPPORTING WAO****JUNE 2010**

Continuing their funding support that was given in 2009, Guardian once again came forward to donate proceeds of their Charity Bonanza that was carried throughout 2010. They had donated RM100,000 to WAO in 2009 from the same sale. We received a total of RM100, 000 once again from this campaign. WAO takes this opportunity to thank Ms. Yuswanis, our liaison in Guardian for her unwavering support.



**BAR ITALIA DINNER*****JULY 2010***

Vivienne Lee Iskander, a WAO member and volunteer, managed to persuade the restaurateur and owner of Bar Italia (a fine dining establishment in Kuala Lumpur), Mr. Paolo Guiati, to whip up (and sponsor) an Italian buffet dinner for approximately 50 people. Assisted by Ivy Josiah, Meera Samanther and the staff of WAO, they were able to convince their friends and acquaintances to attend the dinner with a minimum donation of RM500 per person. We managed to raise RM30,000.00.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Mr. Paolo Guiati who readily agreed to sponsor the venue, food and wine for a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

**AUSTRIAN GERMAN SWISS CHRISTMAS CHARITY BAZAAR (AGS)*****AUGUST 2010***

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 Third Centre since 2004. This year, however, they were only able to support us for half the rental as they had decided to extend the amount collected to other worthy causes as well. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to AGS for their consistent support.

**SANOFI AVENTIS – LACTYCD*****AUGUST 2010***

Sanofi Aventis approached WAO early last year with the intention of raising funds through the sales of their feminine hygiene wash. The special pack of Lactacyd Intimate Daily Wash is sold at RM33.88 in all leading pharmacies and RM5 from the sale of each pack will be donated to WAO. They hope to sell 10,000 packs.

**ITO SUPPORTING COMMUNITY, Japan*****SEPTEMBER 2010***

ITO Supporting Community is a non-profit organisation established by the Buddhist Community Shinnyo-en to provide support for economically impoverished people in various parts of the world. They sought to review several charities in Malaysia and found WAO to be a suitable match. The founder's daughter and her entourage visited the CCC for a signing ceremony and were very impressed by the organisation when told about our work and services. The money was used for the purchase of proper playground equipment for the CCC and improving the kitchen facilities. In total they donated RM12,000.

**MALAYSIA DAY*****SEPTEMBER 2010***

For the first time in the nation's history, September 16 was declared a public holiday to commemorate the formation of Malaysia. This was indeed a time for celebration, and to mark this, the owners of Opus, Cava and Leonardo's hosted an evening of talks, exhibitions, performances, workshops and fun-filled activities under tents specially set up for that purpose all along Jalan Bangkung, a residential part of Bangsar. WAO was one of the NGOs involved and we set up a booth during the street event.

### **AMERICAN EXPRESS – GIVE2ASIA PROJECT**

Give2Asia is a non-profit corporation founded by The Asia Foundation to promote charitable giving. WAO made an application for the Give2Asia Grant and was successful in securing donations for its Refuge Crisis Intervention services.

The grant received was used to for the operations of the WAO Refuge, such as social work services, face to face crisis prevention and legal aid. Each year an average of 100 women and 80 children were given the chance for a fresh start in life. The grant was from January to December 2010.

### **BUDIMAS CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

***NOVEMBER 2010***

Budimas has been supporting WAO for the past two years – they retained us on their recipient list yet again. Every month we receive RM500 from them to be used for groceries and sundries. We received from them a pledge to donate from 2011 to 2013. We take this opportunity to thank Budimas for their continuous support.

### **SP SETIA FOUNDATION**

***NOVEMBER 2010***

Like Budimas, SP Setia came through for us this year once again to help with the funding for our monthly groceries. They have pledged to donate up to a maximum of RM10,000 from November 2010 until October 2011. We are indeed very thankful for their consistent support.

### **LEO TECH SINGAPORE**

***JUNE – DECEMBER 2010***

Mr. Andres Varela from Leo Tech in Singapore called WAO in June to say that he had a client who has RM30, 000 and he was looking at WAO as the beneficiary. However, his criterion was that it had to be for a specific project. We sent him a proposal requesting for the sponsorship of a policy paper to raise awareness of children’s rights and lobby for these rights – in domestic violence situations in particular. The funds would also be used to hire a full time researcher cum writer. He readily accepted the proposal.

## 10.2. Events in collaboration with others to benefit WAO

At these events, WAO helped with publicity and set up a stall.

MONTH	FUNDRAISING EVENT / PUBLIC EDUCATION BOOTH
January	Charity Concert & Bazaar @ MAS Skypark Terminal, Subang
February	Kyoto Protocol Charity Gig & Booth @ Tropicana City Mall
March	IWD 100th year Anniversary by 3R at Central Park One Utama
March	ZOUK - Queen of Hearts
May	MPH Gals READ Card Launch @ The Curve
June	Dumpling festival @ Tan Chong Motors
June	All female gig @ Laila's Café & Lounge
June	AFS Alumni Booth
July	Contours Charity Walk @ Taman Tun Dr. Ismail
July	Contours Badminton tournament
July	BUDDHA The Enlightenment Musical
September	Malaysiaku Street Party @ Jln. Bangkung, Bangsar
November	Malaysia Tatler & MasterCard Charity Cocktail @ Mandarin Oriental
November	AAM Christmas Bazaar
November	AGS Christmas Bazaar

## 10.3. Events organised by WAO

MONTH	FUNDRAISING EVENT / PUBLIC EDUCATION BOOTH
June	Jumble Sale @ Amcorp mall
June	Jumble Sale @ Amcorp mall
June	Bar Italia Charity Dinner
October	Paint it Purple Party @ Leonardo's, Jln Bangkung, Bangsar



## 11. GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

<b>AWAM</b>	All Women's Action Society Malaysia
<b>AGS</b>	Austrian German Swiss Christmas Charity Bazaar
<b>CCC</b>	WAO's Child Care Centre
<b>CEDAW</b>	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>DV</b>	domestic violence
<b>DVA</b>	Malaysia's <i>Domestic Violence Act 1994</i>
<b>EXCO</b>	WAO's Executive Committee
<b>ICT</b>	information and communication technology
<b>IPO</b>	Interim Protection Order
<b>IWD</b>	International Women's Day
<b>IWRAW-AP</b>	International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific
<b>JAG</b>	Joint Action Group for Gender Equality
<b>HAKAM</b>	National Human Rights Society
<b>LAC</b>	Legal Aid Centre
<b>LGBT</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
<b>MCCBCHST</b>	Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism
<b>MDW</b>	migrant domestic worker
<b>MWFCD</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-government organisation

<b>PWW</b>	Perak Women for Women Society
<b>RRAAM</b>	Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance of Malaysia
<b>SAWO</b>	Sabah Women's Action Resource Group
<b>SIS</b>	Sisters In Islam
<b>SUHAKAM</b>	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>VAW</b>	violence against women
<b>WAO</b>	Women's Aid Organisation
<b>WCC</b>	Women's Centre for Change, Penang