



# For All Women

## 40th Annual Report

**Women's Aid  
Organisation**



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# About WAO



## This year, WAO is 40.

While the first steps towards creating WAO were taken in 1980, we were formally registered in 1983. WAO has worked in feminist solidarity ever since to achieve better outcomes for women's rights in so many ways.

Our WAO Hotline is widely accessed by women and children throughout the country, we serve thousands of women and children in crisis annually and our extensive network of partners spans east to west, north to south.

We push forward evidence-based training initiatives and share our data widely through our research publications. Our award-winning and impactful advocacy campaigns have helped change and shape laws, policies, public attitudes and perceptions. We have a robust media presence and strong brand recognition in Malaysia.

We are pleased to share with you this Annual Report for 2022. The path to equality is long and arduous, yet we tread it steadfastly with principles, purpose and passion. As you read, we ask that you recognise the criticality of cultural change for a populace that supports equality and non-discrimination for all women. We look forward to conversations with all on achieving this critical change.

With the voices of women and girls survivors inspiring and motivating us, we will always work for substantive, structural, and cultural change to make Malaysia a better country for women.

**Team WAO**



## From the President

WAO will be 40 years old in 2023. This long life is a testament to its resilience and the relevance of its vision of equality for women and its mission to eliminate violence against women.

2022 was critical for the work of WAO. It was the period of the post pandemic crisis and it was 2022 that established how its strategic and innovative approaches brought WAO out of the pandemic without disabling the crisis support for women caught in abusive situations. WAO not only survived the chaos and uncertainty of the pandemic but also ensured that women in crisis situations that came to WAO for assistance not only survived but remained whole. In quantitative terms, WAO was able to provide support one way or another for 4009 women in 2022. More than ever, because of the debilitating effect of the pandemic women in abusive situations required a strengthening of their capacity to push back against power relations which denied their sense of dignity and self-worth. This is an agenda that has to be continued in the post pandemic stage. WAO's service division has been cognizant of this critical agenda and is well on its way to focusing on building the capacity of the women to rise above the trauma of their experience and take control over their lives.

At the same time WAO has been mindful of the need to transform societal attitudes that may legitimise violence against women and for the need to promote equality for women as a societal value. Hence much attention has been paid to implement a vibrant and wholistic advocacy programme towards enabling social transformation. This advocacy has been backed by the capacity building of sectors of the community, so they will in turn be enabled to condemn violence against women and work towards ending it within their communities. The focus for capacity building has been mainly on the B40 sectors of the population and on relevant of agencies.

Finally, an important key to the success of the programme is financial adequacy for sustaining the many dimensions of the programme. The dynamic and viable fundraising efforts in 2022 is an indicator of the relevance and success of WAO's programme in 2022.

**Shanthi Dariam**

**WAO President 2021-2023**



## From the Executive Director

I am so honoured to be WAO's Executive Director in her 40th year. I stand together with so many amazing women and men who have worked in solidarity to bring into being, and to keep going, this incredible feminist fighter for women's rights, the Women's Aid Organisation.

I have been mining the WAO archives and found this, from the first Protem Committee that was held on 21 October, 1980 when deciding on our name: "The name Women's Aid Organisation is short and neat, and it doesn't limit us to any specific sort of aid to any specific sort of woman."

Fast forward 40 years, and here we are. WAO serves all women. It matters not their race, religion, creed, passport or lack thereof. We serve all women.

These pages demonstrate the depth and breadth of our work to make Malaysia a better country for women. Our strategy is clear, the work is planned out, and our incremental outputs all move us steadily towards what we want to see -- equality and non-discrimination for all women in Malaysia.

In this journey, I am constantly amazed, delighted and humbled by the outputs of the WAO team. Whether the passing of a law that protects women's rights, or the support given to a woman survivor to access safety, or enabling knowledge on gender equality for people who would otherwise not know, or ensuring we have staff, money, policies and processes in place -- I recognise all work done by the team as achievements to be celebrated. Our challenges are large, but the sisterhood, commitment and passion of the WAO team is the constant support that enables me and keeps me believing that we can, indeed, surmount even the biggest challenges and achieve great things for women in Malaysia.

WAO people are smart, creative, compassionate, strong-minded and vocal. We know what we need to do, and we harness all resources available to us to get it done.

We need to build a strong, sustainable WAO. In our staff, among our volunteers and, increasingly, within our membership, lies our next 40 years. I am confident that a fabulous future lies ahead for Women's Aid Organisation.

**Sumitra Visvanathan**

**WAO Executive Director**





## #TeamWAO for All Women

**WAO is pleased to record 242 members for 2022.**

#TeamWAO operates united in our purpose -- to serve women in crisis and change the communities we live in to be better for women.

WAO's people comprises our nine EXCO, 50 staff-members and 126 volunteers. We are all frontliners in this struggle.

For us, our goal is clear and simple: to make Malaysia a better country for all women.

Find out more at: [www.wao.org.my/volunteer](http://www.wao.org.my/volunteer)  
[www.wao.org.my/be-a-member](http://www.wao.org.my/be-a-member)



# Executive Committee

# Trustees

Toh Puan Dato’ Seri Hj Dr. Aishah Ong  
Rashidah Abdullah  
Dato’ Noor Farida Ariffin  
Puan Sri Chong Eu Ngoh

The Executive Committee (EXCO) were elected for a two-year term (2021 – 2023) at the 38th Annual General Meeting held on 18 April 2021. This EXCO held 13 EXCO meetings in 2022.

## President:

Shanthi Dairiam (11 of 13)

## Vice President:

Joyce Segajanantham (13 of 13)

## Secretary:

Malligah Suppiah (13 of 13)

## Assistant Secretary:

Marica Van Wynen (10 of 13)

## Treasurer:

Anitha Ramakrishnan (6 of 13)

## Assistant Treasurer:

Jacqueline Tegjeu (9 of 13)

## Committee Members:

Petra Gimbad (12 of 13)  
Majidah Hashim (11 of 13)  
Jasmine Kuan (4 of 13)

\*2022 EXCO meeting attendance shown in brackets.

# Staff

Sumitra Visvanathan  
*Executive Director*  
Yu Ren Chung  
*Advocacy Director & Deputy Executive Director*  
(study leave from 10 Sept 2022)

## Services

Charlene Fay Murray  
*Director of Services*  
Manissha Kaur  
*Head of Case Management (study leave from 31 Aug 22)*

Vaneezha Muniandi  
*Head of Case Management (from 5 Dec 22)*

Gunawathi Ramachandran  
*Social Worker*  
Louise Tan Min Yue  
*Social Worker (until 18 Sep 22) / Head of Campaigns (19 Mar 22)*  
Wan Alyssa Liana Binti Wan Azhar  
*Social Worker*

Yoong Carmen  
*Social Worker (until 9 Apr 22)*  
Nurhamizah binti Md Saliman  
*Social Worker*

Rosmawati binti Yaacob  
*Social Worker (until 24 Feb 22)*  
Liew Hui Qi  
*Social Worker (until 31 Mar 22)*

Claire Chew Pei Lin  
*Social Worker*  
Mogana Devi Nadesan  
*Social Worker*  
Raynna Sha Pillai a/p Jayarajan  
*Social Worker (from 1 Mar 22)*  
Shivakaaminii Ponniah  
*Social Worker (from 25 July 22)*  
Siti Zaleha binti Mohd Ali  
*Social Worker (from 20 June 22)*

Joanne Melissa Wong  
*Head of Programmes*  
Aliah binti Hisham  
*Programme Coordinator*  
Sim Ja Ling  
*Programme Coordinator (until 13 May 22)*

# Staff

Grace Low Jia Mey  
*Programme Assistant (until 28 Feb 22) / Programme Coordinator (from 1 Mar 22)*  
Wong Gwen Lyne  
*Programme Coordinator (from 12 Jul 22)*  
Jerome Christopher  
*Driver*

Tan Yih Jiun  
*Services Outreach & Psychosocial Coordinator*  
Daphne Low Wei Ing  
*Head of Shelter*  
Elaine Choy Yee Ling  
*Shelter Officer (from 4 Apr 22)*  
Deeviya a/p Vigneshvaran  
*Shelter Coordinator (from 9 May 22 until 22 Nov 22)*

Saraswathy a/p Balakrishnan  
*Child Care Provider*  
Nur Amalina Syahmah Shaharudin  
*Child Care Provider*  
Nisha Balachandran  
*Child Care Provider*  
Aisha bibi binti Shahul Hameed  
*House Mother*

## Capacity Building

Nazreen Nizam  
*Director of Capacity Building*  
Jaskirath Kaur Sohanpal  
*Capacity Building Officer (until 31 Mar 22)*  
Gaayathrey Balakrishnan  
*Capacity Building Officer*  
Yeap Si Xin  
*Capacity Building Officer (from 7 Mar 22)*  
Adelina binti Zulkifli  
*Capacity Building Officer (from 21 Mar 22)*  
Natasya Nadzmi Binti Mohd Lotfan  
Nadzmi  
*Capacity Building Officer (from 18 Apr 22)*

## Advocacy

Abinaya Dhivya Mohan  
*Head of Campaigns (until 31 Aug 22) / Director of Advocacy (from 1 Sep 22)*  
Kiran Kaur  
*Advocacy Officer (until 31 Mar 22) / Senior Advocacy Officer (from 1 Apr 22)*  
Rusni Tajari  
*Senior Advocacy Officer (until 31 Mar 22)*

Sharifah Shazana binti Syed Salim Agha  
*Head of Research*  
Isabel Chung Yin Hooi  
*Research and Advocacy Officer (until 30 Sep 22), Research Project Manager (Data) (from 1 Oct 22)*  
Nur Anis Fasieyah binti Mohamed Farid  
*Research & Advocacy Officer (until 30 Sep 22), Research Project Manager (from 1 Oct 22)*

## Partnership & Development

Amnani Fatin Abdul Kadir  
*Director of Partnership & Development*  
Alicia Lee Syin Syin  
*Community Engagement Officer (until 4 Feb 22)*  
Jean How  
*Community Engagement Officer (from 22 Feb 22 until 1 Jul 22)*  
Ames Sia  
*Digital Content Developer (until 31 Oct 22)*

## Operations

Yap Lip Sue  
*Finance Manager*  
Sarah Ho Mei Leng  
*Finance Officer*  
Camelia  
*Finance Assistant*  
Sunitha Rengasamy  
*Administration Specialist (until 28 Feb 22) / Accountability Manager (from 1 Mar 22 until 21 Nov 22) / Head of Accountability (from 22 Nov 22)*  
Kavitha Malar Kandasamy  
*Administrative Assistant (from 7 June 22)*  
Shuba Vashani Perimbanayagam  
*Head of People & Culture*  
Astrid Van Dort  
*Saksi Coordinator (from 7 Nov 22)*



# Volunteers

Chin Oy Sim  
*EXCO Administrative Matters*  
(Volunteer Advisor)

Tashia Peterson  
*EXCO Administrative Matters*  
(Volunteer Advisor & Transcriber)

Carol Chin  
*Child Care Centre*  
(Volunteer Advisor/Fundraiser)

Remy Ch'ng  
*Membership*  
(Data Volunteer)

Reia Peterson Koay  
*WAO Festival*  
(Youth Engagement Volunteer)

Tia Anis  
*Annual General Meeting 2022*  
(Registration Volunteer)

Sharmila Ravindran & Tan Sue Yen  
*Legal/Fundraising*  
(Volunteer Lawyers/Fundraisers)

S.Saravana Kumar & Nur Hanina Mohd Azham  
*Tax Compliance*  
(Volunteer Lawyers)

Jillian Chia  
*Privacy & Data Protection Compliance*  
(Volunteer Lawyer)

Rajsurian Pillai  
*Legal*  
(Volunteer Lawyer)

Sachpreetraj Sohanpal & Amanda Sonia Mathew  
*Court Case*  
(Volunteer Lawyers)

Honey Tan Lay Ean & Tay Kit Hoo  
*Court Case*  
(Volunteer Lawyers)

Chua Yi Ying  
*Court Case*  
(Volunteer Paralegal)

Sara Irina  
*Power Up Bazaar Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate/CSO)

Amira  
*Power Up Bazaar Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate)

Joni Ferrier  
*Power Up Bazaar Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate/CSO)

Aisyah  
*Power Up Bazaar Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate)

Ayesha  
*Power Up Bazaar Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate)

Meera Samanther  
*Legal Volunteer*  
(Lawyer)

Erin Wong  
*Power Up Programme*  
(HR Volunteer Trainer)

Kalaichelevi  
*Power Up Coconut Candy*  
(Volunteer Trainer)

Ting Siew Dieng  
*Power Up Stitching Forward*  
(Volunteer Instructor)

Courtney Tai Sook Yee  
*Power Up Stitching Forward*  
(Volunteer Instructor)

Audrey Lee Yan Ying  
*Power Up Stitching Forward*  
(Volunteer Instructor)

Amber Frances Low Zhen Ling  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

S. Amuthavathi Pillay  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Audrey Lee Yan Ying  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Christa Hashim  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Nor Hidayah Abdul Rahman  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Hilda Pillay Cajon  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

# Volunteers

Jaewon Park  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Chan Wei June  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Kaberi Dutta  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Maalinie Kalithas  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Nadia Kazlina Mohd Kamil  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Ruth Ting Siew Dieng  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Selen Egit  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Seo Hyun Lee  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Syahirah Ruslan  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Thatchayani Karthigesu  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher)

Tania Anis  
*Power Up English Club*  
(Volunteer Teacher/CSO)

Ashileen  
*MyBuddy*  
(Mentoring Volunteer)

Azlina  
*MyBuddy*  
(Mentoring Volunteer)

Choi Kuen (Valentina)  
*MyBuddy*  
(Mentoring Volunteer)

Dr Cheah  
*MyBuddy*  
(Mentoring Volunteer)

Lisa  
*MyBuddy*  
(Mentoring Volunteer)

Sue-Ann  
*MyBuddy*  
(Mentoring Volunteer)

Amira  
*WAO Fest Power Up Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate)

Peh Ah Eng  
*WAO Fest Power Up Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate)

Jaewon Park  
*WAO Fest Power Up Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate)

Kartene  
*WAO Fest Power Up Booth*  
(Volunteer Sales Associate / Clients Needs Assessment Calls)

Nadia Kazlina Kamil  
*CFLI Graduation*  
Small group facilitator

Beatrice  
*Power Up*  
(Client Personal Needs Assessment Calls)

Evangeline  
*Power Up*  
(Client Personal Needs Assessment Calls)

Priya  
*Power Up*  
(Client Personal Needs Assessment Calls)

Shangari  
*Power Up*  
(Client Personal Needs Assessment Calls)

Zhou Yen  
*Power Up*  
(Client Personal Needs Assessment Calls)

Jessica  
*Power Up*  
(Volunteer Social Media)

Kevaldeep Kaur  
*TINA Hotline*  
(Crisis Support Officer)

Pamella Lim Yin Yin  
*TINA Hotline*  
(Crisis Support Officer)



# Volunteers

Cynthia Lauren a/p Arallanthu  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Chan Wei June  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Natalia Vera Aw  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Ayesha Sofia binti Mohd Faiz  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Wong Yen Ni  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Sara Irina binti Md Rijaluddin  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Nalini a/p Velaitham  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Anna Jhia Jhia Tan  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Aishah Madinah Binti Haris  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Lim Tien Chia  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Lai Yih Yin  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Tan Jia Li  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Dharshini a/p Mugunam  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Kavita Gopalan  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Alya Aisyah Fadil Binti Norfadilah  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Alicia Wong Shu Pei  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Harriet Anabelle Anak Manggon  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Adrian Paul Lajium  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Shangari Subramaniam Beames  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Calley Cristal Cheah Tsui Yen  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Tan Qin Ru  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Yeow Sook Chan  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Chloe Low Jo Yan  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Christine Tee Yi Kui  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Daarshini Ramesh  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Eunice B  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Louise Manjaji  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Priyatarshinni  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Rachel Tan Mei Chien  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Tania Anis binti Mohtar  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

# Volunteers

Thisha Vigneswaran  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Yamuna a/p Sundarasakaran  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

P'ng Yi Ting  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Kavitha Suriakumaran  
*TINA Hotline*  
 (Crisis Support Officer)

Peter Xavier  
*Powerhouse*  
 (Volunteer Programme Facilitator)

Wayne Marthelez Samarakkody  
*Powerhouse*  
 (Volunteer Badminton Coach)

Mok Chuang Lian  
*Staff Activity*  
 (Volunteer Hiking Guide, Fundraiser)

Syahirah Ruslan  
*Christmas Surprise*  
 (Volunteer Giftgiving)

Tabitha Elizabeth Fernandez  
*Christmas Surprise*  
 (Volunteer Giftgiving)

Nadia  
*Christmas Surprise*  
 (Volunteer Giftgiving)

Ivan Zuzartee (WLWCWS)  
*Power Up Bazaar*  
 (Fundraiser)

May Low  
*Power Up Bazaar*  
 (Volunteer Sales Associate)

Adib Asraf  
*MyBuddy*  
 (Mentoring Volunteer)

Tan Si Ling  
*MyBuddy*  
 (Mentoring Volunteer)

Winson Boey  
*MyBuddy*  
 (Mentoring Volunteer)

Leow Wei Wen  
*MyBuddy*  
 (Mentoring Volunteer)

Ivy Josiah  
 Advocacy Volunteer

Tan May Lee  
 Advocacy Volunteer

Melissa Mohd Akhir  
 Advocacy Volunteer

# Trainers

Lily Ngiler  
 Power Up Baking & Icing

Priya  
 Power Up Baking

Lydia Herath  
 English Class for Women

Carol Edwin  
 English Class for Women

En Nadzrin  
 Power Up WhatsApp Business

Hui Shan  
 Power Up Finance & Accounting

Accenture  
 International Medical University IMU

Najiba Karimi  
 Power Up Stitching Forward

Asriyah  
 Power Up Bomboloni

3R (Anushya, Catherine)

Farah  
 Digital Marketing

Cikgu Garang  
 Traditional Kuih Class

Dressing Paula  
 Styling Workshop

Coach Peter  
 Shelter Badminton

Teacher Cynthia Anand  
 Math & Science Teacher

Teacher Danem  
 Shelter Yoga





## WAO Strategy 2020-2030: A Better Country for Women

WAO serves all women and children affected by gender-based violence and discrimination. We view our wide-ranging initiatives through the eyes of women survivors based on their lived experiences within the diverse communities they are from. Our foundation is a gender-progressive approach to our services and capacity building model, no matter what the survivor's background is. We are also actively linked to intersecting and wide-reaching civil society networks to ensure the rapid and tailored responses required for the survivor and or designated communities.

We bravely address all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination through service and advocacy, including everything from domestic violence, to pregnancy discrimination, to child marriage. WAO goes into communities at the grassroots level to provide tailored training and capacity building geared at both changing attitudes and equipping communities to identify and respond to gender-based violence.

WAO plans to concretise our existing engagements with the private sector through the roll-out of a programme aimed at the corporate sector. This programme called Level Up aims for tangible results, through initiatives and metrics to track progress and help corporations mainstream gender equality. We believe we can positively impact and improve women's economic empowerment and create an enabling business environment for women in Malaysia.

In 2024, we look forward to sharing with you a review of the first phase of our strategy.



# A BETTER COUNTRY FOR WOMEN

## WAO STRATEGY 2020-2030:

Through sustainable social impact to create an equal and inclusive Malaysia in which all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination are reduced and eventually eliminated, and where women’s and girls’ rights in all aspects of life are protected, recognised, and celebrated.

### The Goals

Women have full access to support services, justice, and protection for sustainable freedom from gender-based violence and discrimination, facilitated by effective legal frameworks and capacitated state and non-state actors.

Cultural norms and mindsets have shifted to embrace gender equal institutions at every level of society, and to reject gender-based violence and discrimination.

There is gender equality in the workplace, and an environment exists that is conducive to women’s full political, economic, and social participation.

### Six Transformative Changes

Strengthened legal frameworks exist and work to enforce women’s rights, and prevent and address gender-based violence and discrimination.

Women and girls know their rights and are empowered, supported, and resourced to claim them, including from gender-based violence and discrimination.

Society demonstrates intolerance for gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls with an environment enabling women’s full political, economic, and social participation.

Gender equality in the workplace is protected by law, advanced and promoted by public and private actors.

Adequate public and private resources are devoted to addressing and eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination.

Women’s access to justice and protection and healing from gender-based violence and discrimination is guaranteed & facilitated by state and community actors.

## How WAO Works

We **innovate** to identify and implement the best ways to serve survivors of gender-based violence, build the capacity of enforcement officers and communities, advocate effectively for stronger laws and protections, and succeed in changing attitudes on gender equality.

Bringing about gender equality requires collaboration and cooperation of many stakeholders, and we **interact** with all of these — policymakers, the police, hospitals, Members of Parliament, welfare officers — to do so, while always keeping the voices of survivors at the forefront.

We work to **improve** the legal framework on gender-based violence and discrimination so it’s more protective of survivors, and to improve the implementation by building the capacity of enforcement officers and communities to respond to such violence and discrimination.

We work to **inspire** survivors, communities, and society at large with the vision of a life free from violence and discrimination and in which every woman enjoys equality and non-discrimination, the same inspiration which drives WAO. At our core, survivor voices and survivor needs guide all that we do.

## WAO Teams

**Advocacy** improves public policies and laws, and builds public awareness on violence against women and gender equality through research, campaigns, and other initiatives.

**Operations** works to achieve support for a productive and values-based team, maintaining accurate and accountable financial systems, and work processes that fully support staff needs and wellbeing.

**Services** supports women and children survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination through providing information, case management, shelter, reintegration and empowerment programmes, and other interventions.

**Partnerships** ensures WAO has sufficient resources to function including through grants partnerships with entities, support from individuals and through building a network of WAO supporters.

**Outreach** raises public awareness and changes mindsets to ensure survivors know how to get help and to build public rejection of gender-based violence and discrimination.

**Capacity Building** improves community response to gender-based violence and discrimination by training community groups, companies and government front liners.





## Services for All Women

WAO's Services work and accomplishments in 2022 were guided by our Six Transformative Changes. Throughout the year, the Services team focused on ensuring women's rights were safeguarded by addressing gender-based violence and discrimination through our support frameworks. In addition to that, Services worked to address mindsets, even deep within communities where we had the opportunity to conduct programmes, to ensure women and girls were fully supported throughout their empowerment journey.

WAO recognises that change has to be holistic.

We are mindful of the need to address both the practicalities of a survivor's needs and her strategic needs. We ensured strong synergy between case management and the empowerment programmes we run, with Services staff and volunteers working to ensure a survivor finds her core strength, regains self-belief and has awareness of her rights for a sustainable life free from violence and discrimination.

Case Management

Shelter

Programmes



Since the beginning of the pandemic, WAO has been working to adapt our service provisions despite the challenges and stumbling blocks the endemic phase has set in place.

Our initial hypothesis that the pandemic will bring an exponential rise of women in crisis, mirrored the views of many international experts, was proven to be accurate. The rise of gender-based violence (GBV) incidents experienced amongst women and girls were aptly named the “Shadow Pandemic” by the World Health Organisation. In our view, while we may have moved to endemic stage with COVID-19, the Shadow Pandemic of GBV continues.

WAO prioritised post crisis mitigation measures, especially around mental health support, for women who are emerging from their crisis after being trapped in situations of abuse with very little support throughout the last two years. It has become increasingly clear that the journey in ending GBV against women requires a different approach as the one we have been accustomed to. Ending violence against women and girls requires an investment in prevention and addressing harmful societal attitudes, as well as a transformation in the criminal justice systems and other broken public service systems so that it delivers for all survivors.

Fundamentally, the belief that anyone can provide “safe and timely interventions” within the current system is false. Even the best quality NGO service will be insufficient if systemic failures within the public service are not addressed or improved. Hence,

the work that WAO does is so critically important. We not only provide crisis services for survivors to the best of our abilities, but we also collect that data, and channel it into WAO Advocacy for law and policy reform. To this end, the Services team actively participated in sharing lived experiences with the Government’s multi-stakeholder platform (Jawatankuasa Menangani Keganasan Rumahtangga), internal sharing of data and information within WAO (especially with advocacy and research colleagues) and participated widely in talks, forums and conferences.

In 2022, normalcy of pre-pandemic life seemed to sluggishly restore, however, the lasting impact of the pandemic on marginalised groups of women and their children, who were trapped in situations of abuse and inequality were here to stay, as supported by data collected by WAO throughout the year.

A total of 4009 individuals reached out to WAO in the reporting year to seek support in GBV crises. Although the numbers significantly decreased as compared to 2021, our hotline still retained 70% of distress calls. A noteworthy comparison would be that pre-pandemic, WAO attended to only 50% of the current calls we receive at present day.

WAO as an organisation has grown exponentially in work areas and capacity, to cater to the ever-growing needs of our clients and their children. For Services, we pivoted to provide holistic care and support even when it didn’t fit our original strategies, as we understood that healing needs to be a 360 degrees approach. From providing

care packages of basic necessities to embarking on skills training and business development education for women, our aim was simple and forward -- to undo the effects of the pandemic which has pushed the progress of survivors’ years backwards. In real terms, we have seen examples of clients who were on track in recovery but have instead fallen back into other crises, for instance economic hardship.

As such, the Services division of WAO took the opportunity in 2022 to focus on recovery, as we moved out of pandemic mode as a nation. The recovery of the self, the recovery of their economic opportunities and conditions, the recovery of the systemic failures which weren’t sufficiently in place to ensure women had an avenue to seek redress and justice, and most importantly, the recovery of their mental and emotional health. WAO’s focus was also to reignite the government’s accountability in prioritizing the need to improve redress and reporting processes, and to continue to foster better ties with state stakeholders for better cooperation and symbiotic support.

The torch which WAO carried for the last two years needed to be lowered, and responsibilities which are essentially those of the State needed to be handed back, so that WAO could re-focus on the recovery process of our survivors in a strategic manner, ensuring their recovery is sustainable and safe. We needed to move out of the emergency operation mode that we had been running for the last two years, before we started to “run on empty”.

During the Pandemic up till the middle of 2022, WAO’s hotline and TINA services remained 24 hours to cater to the needs of survivors in crisis and who are unable to access support from enforcement agencies. As the pandemic eased up and public health conditions and support significantly improved, we revised our hotline hours to 14 hours a day from 8am to 10pm daily and maintained TINA’s reach to be 24 hours. The above decision was made in confidence that the state’s hotlines and emergency numbers have returned to their full operations potential, and that with the absence of Movement Control Orders meant survivors were more able to seek interventions and access emergency health services as and when needed.

Nonetheless, as we eased into the endemic phase in 2022, WAO was still very aware that crises can happen at any time of the day, hence only our on-call social workers were still tasked to handle emergencies, as per our pre-pandemic modus operandi.

The frontliners of the Hotline and TINA service is staffed by our Crisis Support Officers. WAO’s very own Crisis Support Officers (CSOs) are trained for this duty. Their tasks entail responding to hotline calls, providing emotional support, and advising on relevant legal rights and options of the survivors undergoing any forms of sexual and gender-based violence. They assist WAO’s social workers by triaging the cases and referring them forward to social workers as needed. CSOs go through months of theoretical and practical training, in addition to role-playing sessions and call-shadowing sessions, to be chosen



to be on duty. They volunteer on a rotational shift of a 4-hour basis every week.

At present, there are approximately 25 active CSOs working earnestly behind WAO's Hotline Duty. CSOs meet with the Head of Programmes and Services Outreach Coordinator monthly to discuss the latest operational and legal information and seek debriefing. As the reach to TINA remained at an all-time high with barely a 20% reduction from 2021's figures, the Crisis Support Officers (CSOs) undertook further extensive training sessions in May 2022, to manage TINA WhatsApp messaging line, which were previously under the care of Social Workers and a dedicated staff member. As such, TINA's management was put under CSO rotation, and we were able to sustain its 24-hours service and minimise the risk of social worker staff burnouts.

In total WAO received a total of 1827 TINA WhatsApp clients and 2182 Hotline Callers for GBV related needs.

The CSOs are a mainstay of WAO's services. Here are some perspectives from CSOs who supported WAO's work in 2022:

## CSO Voices

*Staffing the hotline for WAO can be a daunting experience - I never know what to expect when I pick up a call. I am grateful every time a survivor makes the first call and I get to share with them the many ways the laws of our country can protect them. This information empowers the caller - survivor or friend, who usually starts off feeling alone and unsure of what to do. I am most appreciative of my volunteer work when I hear a caller change their tone from defeated to hopeful over one phone call or when a third-party call to find out how they can help someone in an abusive relationship.*

- CSO Dharshini M, 2022

*Whenever I share with others that I am currently volunteering with WAO's Crisis Support Officer Program, I often get questions on how I find the time to show up for our survivors who call the hotline at night while balancing a full-time job, a relationship and a demanding pet. I won't say it's been easy these past few years, but I can wholeheartedly say that this has been one of the best decisions I've made. The experience helped me grow, both professionally and personally, while at the same time, allowing me to contribute more concretely to a community of women and children whom I care about very deeply - all around a schedule that best fits me. For those who are still unsure about volunteering, remember that every little effort counts. I hope that, like me, you can look back at your first day of duty fondly as you pick up the next call to lend a shoulder for a brave sister in need.*

- CSO Alya Aisyah Fadil, 2022

## Case Management and Social Workers

The crux of Case Management services has remained the same throughout the years. The social workers serve as an avenue for survivors and concerned individuals to access information and support that can help women better understand their situation, choices, and rights – and to move towards living a life free from violence.

Social workers provide not only crisis management and safety planning, but information and assistance in seeking redress and interventions with the authority, utilizing the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) as a basis to obtain legal protection orders. Their work is not limited to the above, but also to ensure survivors and their children are well represented and protected by means of their basic rights. Interventions include school transfers, documentation replacements and retrievals and

assistance in assimilating back into their normal lives, free of fear. In 2022, social workers returned from their hybrid work settings to in-office settings. Face to face interventions and other forms of social work interventions which were conducted online were once again conducted in person to aim to provide survivors a more personal approach.

In 2022, social workers assisted a total of 207 women and 207 children in case management. Out of which, 138 women were survivors of domestic violence. 40 women were assisted successfully in obtaining protection orders and a total of 286 face to face intervention (FFCs) were conducted. As case management of clients goes beyond the initial FFCs and Shelter interventions, a total of 9604 social work interventions were conducted between nine social workers.





One of the most sought-after services was counselling and emotional support.

Understanding that the impact of survivor struggles under the weight of the pandemic, WAO acknowledges that mental health services in Malaysia is a scarce and expensive service which can hardly be afforded by the middle class, let alone the B40 community.

The lack of mental health care services is part and parcel of the broken system which many countries experience, and Malaysia is one of those countries which faces this constraint.

As such WAO has been providing mental health services to women and children who have come forward to see our support. In 2022, 105 women and children received free counselling/ clinical therapy support from WAO. The sessions were facilitated by professional therapists, counsellors, and mental health practitioners in training through our partnership with Thrive Well and the MyBuddy pool of volunteers.

With funds generously provided by RCE Marketing and a private donor, WAO was able to provide the support which was very much needed in our survivors' journey of healing.



The Programmes Division continued engaging women and children to further prevent the prevalence of GBV. Through participatory assessments and client-centred approaches, programmes were curated to not only assist women in the process of recovery to better attain emotional and financial independence, but also, strategically, to reach out to marginalised groups of women to raise their awareness on their rights, the services and avenues available to exit the cycle of violence.

The aim of our carefully structured approach is to provide women with skills and avenues to realise their potential, knowing that starting afresh as a single parent or getting out of abusive environments can be an intimidating move.

The various programmes described next were conducted in 2022, to better support women in their journey towards self-sustainability and empowerment. WAO's Programmes benefited 265 women through our skills training sessions, with 50 new participants.

## MyBuddy

MyBuddy is a volunteering opportunity where one acts as a mentor, peer support, and friend to women from the Power Up Programme or WAO survivors. They would support the women whether in their careers or personal life, providing relevant guidance and emotional support.

The programme aims to complement WAO's case management work for survivors or participants from the Power Up Programme and provide additional

support beyond the social worker or program facilitator's capacity. Currently, we have 30 volunteers trained to be MyBuddy mentors.

Since its induction in late 2021, the program had helped 15 women feel supported and empowered through personalized mentorship and care.

One survivor, named Jill\*, had reported improved levels of mental health well-being, and resiliency in securing jobs and working hard in her jobs due to the support of her MyBuddy. Jill had been clinically diagnosed and receiving treatment for her PTSD and Depression diagnosis but had found the support and faith of her MyBuddy to be a driving force for her to empower herself.

*MyBuddy does help me coping with my depression and anxiety also when I was alone. It benefited me. Overall, myBuddy "Anna" is good to talk to and she's responsive to me. Now I don't text her as often as I used to. I'm coping better thanks to her.*

*\*Names changed to protect the client's identity.*

## English Club

English is widely spoken in Malaysia and having a basic command of it gives access to job opportunities, communication skills, and in daily conversations.

WAO recognises this need from the community and by assisting them we would empower their lives and bring forth a difference. WAO also hopes to empower a community of women who seek to learn and better their lives and their quality of life.



WAO organized five online English Language classes from April to May of 2022 for refugees conducted by instructor Carol Edwin. The women learned the basics of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, speaking, and listening skills. As mastering the language requires constant practice, WAO decided to launch English Club in response to the high demand from the women who wanted a platform to continue learning the language.

Hence, following the English Language Course, the English Club was formed to provide a platform for continuous learning in a safe and non-judgmental environment for them. For this pilot programme of 10 weeks, the WAO Programmes Team recruited about 21 volunteers to conduct online weekly sessions every Tuesday 8pm to 10pm with the participants. This club is also an opportunity for WAO volunteers and funders to contribute and have a personal experience working with WAO Clients. We launched the English Club on 14 June 2022.

After a successful 10 weeks of piloting the English Club, the participants requested to extend the programme as they really found the English Club to be effective. And with that, we launched another 10 weeks of English Club that commenced on 20 September 2022 which was fully coordinated and managed by the volunteers under the supervision of Programmes Coordinator, Gwen Wong

*It was an amazing programme overall!*  
– Ms N.K.  
*I'm thankful this course really helped me thank you again and again.*  
– Ms A.E.  
*I love the help and the way of engaging in learning English.*  
– Ms H.N.  
*Learning English programme is very useful for me.*  
– Ms N.T.N.

## Christmas Project by The Grub Hub and Stitching Forward

This project was a collaboration between WAO Power Up programmes – Stitching Forward and The Grub Hub. The collaboration brought the women from these two programmes to come together and create a Christmas Pack that could be sold as gift sets for the holiday. The goal of this project was to benefit the women from both programmes by generating side income and showcasing the skillsets and talent of these Power Up women.

14 women from the Stitching Forward team and four from The Grub Hub team participated in this project. The Stitching Forward team had four tutorial classes in October 2022 led by volunteers Courtney, Ruth, and Audrey to produce the three products: Christmas Bottle Holder, Crochet Christmas Stocking, and Christmas Drawstring Bag. The Grub Hub team produced Chocolate Chip Cookies, Pineapple Tarts, Mini Macarons and Brownie Cookies.

*I learned good teamwork and how to better manage my time. I also learned a new sewing skill as I have never sewn a drawstring bag before.* – Ms R.  
*I am so thankful to WAO for this opportunity to learn new skills and your constant support to our growth in becoming better at sewing.*  
– Ms S.

*This was a beneficial experience to elevate myself by learning a new skill. Thank you to WAO for organizing this collaboration and project.”* – Ms G.  
*“I was initially scared when I took on this project as I didn't know if I could finish with good quality products. But I slowly gained confidence over the course of this project as I produced everything successfully.*  
– Ms F.

## The Grub Hub

The Grub Hub is a programme that leverages artisanal food preparation to empower marginalized grassroots women and equip them with complementary and supplementary skills to achieve economic empowerment. This platform provides entrepreneurship skills and inspires women to create their unique delicacies besides building confidence towards being financially independent.

The women from The Grub Hub that benefited from the food preparation classes have produced marketable high-quality homemade food products such as delectable cakes, sweet and savoury tarts, cookies, and traditional *kuih*. In addition, these classes have

also instilled creativity and innovation among the women as they are able to research and develop their food products in a safe and encouraging environment.

The women that have joined The Grub Hub programme in 2021 have flourished in their respective entrepreneurial journeys. Given that digitalization is essential in this ever-changing economy, we introduced WhatsApp Business App to the Grub Hub women to incorporate into their businesses. As a result, they have learned to upscale their work with a more efficient business process and improved customer experience.

Equipped with skills, knowledge, and determination, in 2022, the women have successfully fulfilled large orders that had a minimum quota of 20 products per order. The Grub Hub has also worked with reputable organizations such as Turner International Malaysia, Dressing Paula, Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia (REHDA) who have in turn, become our happy clients.

The Grub Hub also participated in multiple bazaars that year featuring a wide array of products prepared by 20 of them. Our biggest bazaar yet is the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) Fest located at Publika Shopping Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. These bazaars are the perfect platform for women to practice their entrepreneurial skills such as project management, networking, communication, and marketing to prepare them for more opportunities to come in the future.



## Success Story from The Grub Hub

“Katryn”, a baker and a mompreneur of a three-year-old, dreamt of starting a bakery business from home. Determined to change her fate, “Katryn” joined Power Up in 2021 and participated in various programmes such as baking and decorating and marketing courses covering social media marketing, Canva graphic design, photography and videography editing, and financial literacy. These workshops taught her the nitty gritty of running a business and boosted her confidence in bringing her dream to reality.

In 2022, professional pie-maker Ms. Jessie Khaw took “Katryn” under her wing and taught her to make delicious homemade chicken pie, beef pie, and curry chicken pie with egg.

Ms. Jessie also took the time to teach “Katryn” marketing skills to jumpstart her business. Within three months, Kelly sold 500 pies and generated around RM1,500 in sales. Her growth did not stop there. Kelly also received two large corporate orders and participated in six weekend bazaars in the Klang Valley.

Today, her pies are sold every weekend at the Taman Cheras Yulek Market, and she is making a steady income in addition to her catering orders. “Katryn” has greatly supported the many women who have joined The Grub Hub programme. She plans to expand her baking business to provide a comfortable life for her daughter and herself.

## Success Story from Stitching Forward

“Natasha” is a mother of four from Afghanistan. In 2022, she joined Power Up to teach a crochet course in the Afghanistan community. Through dedication and perseverance, she empowered 12 women within her community to create their own crochet products such as bookmarks, turtle keychains, baskets, dolls, and coasters. They are now part of Power Up’s intermediate crochet class as they continue to hone their skills. In their recent project for the WAO FEST in September 2022, they produced goods worth RM900 for sale.

Through the program, she has discovered a brand-new identity for herself and her community. She has gained self-confidence through active participation in various workshops and improved her English to converse better with the people around her. Her life is more fulfilling now as a teacher, boosting her mental and emotional health tremendously.

Now with multiple income-earning opportunities as a teacher, a Cuci Ceria Project seamstress, and a crochet entrepreneur to support her children’s education, “Natasha” hopes to continue providing a safe space and supportive environment in her classes for more women to come together to crochet and share about their lives. She is grateful for the opportunities that WAO has provided to become the empowered woman she is today.

# Shelter and Child Care Services

## The Refuge

WAO runs one of the few shelters in Malaysia which provides support for survivors of violence, around Domestic Violence for women and their dependents.

Our shelter has been the essence of our assistance, and the very core of what our organisation stands for, a safe place for women experiencing GBV. Through our open shelter concept, WAO’s clients can return to the normalcy of their lives with adequate protection and support, without cutting them off from the world of opportunities. Our model allows women to recover, thrive and grow at their own pace, while ensuring their safety and protection remains top priority.

Although 2022 was a year of recovery, WAO took incremental stages of relaxing the operations of our shelter, to prevent further Covid-19 related outbreaks. SOPs were revised from time to time, with the guidance of our Ministry of Health protocols to ensure public health safety.

Quarantines for new clients were implemented until August 2022 to ensure we optimised the safety of our existing clients in shelter. Our vigilant and carefully thought-out processes allowed shelter residents to remain safe throughout the pandemic and endemic, with swift actions in place whenever outbreaks of virus came forth.

In 2022, WAO housed 42 women and 24 children at our premises.





## The Child Care Center (CCC)

Challenges come with new opportunities. WAO Child Care Centre had risen from the ashes in 2022 after it was burned down in the year of 2016. The constructed Child Care Centre was completed and officially handed over to WAO by the REHDA Youth in April. YB Hannah Yeoh graced the handover ceremony, while acknowledging the need for a child protection unit and highlighted the lack of affordable and quality childcare in Malaysia.

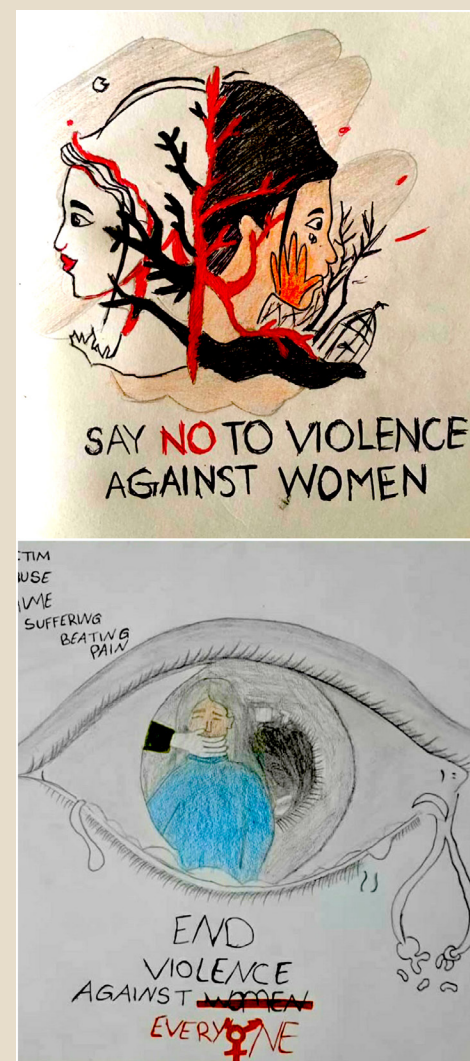
The premises was explicitly designed to meet the needs of our children who required more trauma-informed care and counselling. It is important to provide a safe environment for children, so they can be physically, emotionally, and socially secure.

It has been proven that a child with a secure attachment to their caregiver will exhibit lesser at-risk behaviours. However, survivors who escaped from an abusive situation would need to prioritize their livelihoods, and single mothers in need of childcare in Malaysia remains an obstacle for single mothers to place their children in a safe environment.

The WAO Child Care Centre strives to provide a safe and secure environment for children to heal and provides a helping hand for single mothers. However, the process of obtaining permits for the CCC to be operational took a substantial time of the year. It was only in December that WAO was able to utilise the new space to conduct classes and activities for children. Prior

to that and throughout the pandemic, exclusions were made to ensure CCC services were made available to mothers at the Refuge premises itself, so to ensure the process of independence was not hampered. The Child Care Providers provided care, assistance, and educational support at the refuge while the CCC was set up and permits were obtained.

In 2022, a total of 30 children benefited from the CCC services WAO made available, in the form of day-care services. There was no residential care support which was made available due to the delay in CCC's reopening.



Artwork by the children of WAO's Kid Circle







## Advocating on Rights for All Women

WAO's Advocacy team is guided by the work of our services team and builds on that of the capacity building and partnerships teams. Most importantly our work is derived from the lived realities of women and children. Our campaigns and strides towards policy and legal reform is based on research geared towards ending gender-based violence and achieving gender equality. Our publications are available at [www.wao.org.my](http://www.wao.org.my). WAO's advocacy work is supported by Yayasan Sime Darby, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and other partners.

Campaigns

Research

Case Advocacy



2022 saw various changes in the socio-political landscape, we moved out of COVID-19 lockdowns and adapted as restrictions were lifted. The opposition was elected into government in 2022 following months of speculation and political pandering. Nevertheless, COVID-19's effects on gender equality and violence against women still persisted. Despite hopes of a drop in cases, they remained high. The team adapted to a return to in person meetings, renewing stakeholder relations and developing campaigns and research projects taking into account uncertainties, both political and COVID-19.

Nonetheless, we achieved critical progress in 2022. We took forth our milestone research report on public attitudes on violence against women in presentations across the globe, secured funding for a new two-year long research project on gender and carework. With our partners, we expanded our gender responsive budgeting initiative to include training of ministries and carving inroads with government officials. We grew our coalition - Gender Budget Group - to a group of 21 civil society organisations and 18 academics. In a major milestone, the coalition saw a clear commitment to gender responsive budgeting from former Prime Minister Ismail Sabri and buy-in from the Ministry of Finance to lead the GRB initiative with other ministries. Additionally, two bills advancing our public policy reform goals were tabled and passed in the Dewan Rakyat with sufficient support from political parties across the board.

To cap it off, we successfully received coverage on this bill in both national and international media.

## Gender Responsive Budgeting

### Engendering the National Budget

#### **The Transformative Changes:**

- Adequate public and private resources are devoted to addressing and eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination
- Society demonstrates increasing intolerance for gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls within an environment conducive to women's full political, economic, and social participation

Following our success as a newly formed coalition 2021, along with our partner ENGENDER, we launched a new initiative as part of the project - The Gender Responsive Budgeting in Practice Programme (GRBiP). GRBiP was launched on 4th of July at the Ministry of Finance (MoF) with the presence of the national budget team, and thirteen ministry representatives who had attended our GRB 101 training in October 2021. The launch was followed by a day-long workshop for the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) and Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives (MEDAC) each.

These workshops were followed by two shorter coaching sessions resulting in the ministries presenting their efforts and challenges in implementing gender responsive budgeting. Prior to these workshops, through engagement efforts with MoF, we were able to secure a

commitment towards GRB firstly in the ministry's pre-budget statement and then in an announcement by then Prime Minister Ismail Sabri at an NCWO women's day event in August stating that the budget will focus on a gender lens for the B40 community. There were several outputs and efforts that worked in pushing for this including the publication of 5 policy briefs and a memorandum by the Gender Budget Group as well as a WAO memorandum which is available on our website.

This progress towards institutionalising GRB and gender mainstreaming may take time, however, WAO and Engender's success in leveraging opportunities and growing media understanding of gender responding budgeting is a step towards gender equality.

These successes also direct our programming for 2023. In particular, the WAO annual budget memorandum has had a definite impact on gendering the national budget in 2023 and has ensured adequate public resourcing at least in childcare policies to allow women to return to the workforce and contribute to the labour force as well as towards ending gender based violence in Malaysia via strengthened allocations to the D11 unit of the police force for training.

## Law Reforms

### Anti-Sexual Harassment Law

#### **The Transformative Changes:**

- Strengthened legal framework to prevent and address gender-based violence and discrimination, and achieve gender equality

The Anti-Sexual Harassment Act was passed successfully in parliament in July 2022. This was in part through the efforts of the ASH Coalition, of which WAO is a part of. We undertook various advocacy activities with our sister organisations in ensuring that the bill was passed. These efforts included pushing for a review of the bill to include key recommendations such as organisational duties. We engaged with the then Minister of Women, Attorney General's Chambers, Dato' Sri Azalina Othman in her capacity with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Women and Children's Affairs as well as with MPs from both sides of the political divide. The coalition campaign to #ReviewTheBill was successful as the Ministry announced that it would be reviewed before tabling.

In the lead up to its tabling in parliament, the coalition had engaged with various stakeholders including corporate entities and WAO worked on securing several international media interviews and features on the bill. It was passed into law in July 2022 and gazetted in October 2022. Since then, the coalition has been following up on the publishing of guidelines and regulations as well as the tribunal set up as necessary for the ASH Act to be implemented.



# Ending Domestic Violence

## #MakeStalkingACrime

### **The Transformative Changes:**

- Strengthened legal framework to prevent and address gender-based violence and discrimination, and achieve gender equality

In early 2022, WAO had engaged with the Law Ministry under the Prime Minister's Office to push for the review and tabling of the amendments to the Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code to criminalise stalking.

Through sufficient media pressure, sharing of survivor stories and sustained engagement with government agencies, we were happy to see that the amendments tabled in the October parliamentary sitting and passed in the lower house. However, the win was short-lived as parliament was dissolved to enable elections before the amendments were passed in the upper house. WAO continues efforts to ensure that the amendments will be reviewed and tabled in 2023.

Nevertheless, there is an increased consensus on strengthened legal framework to protect all in Malaysia against stalking as well as larger awareness on stalking in itself. Media reporting has begun to use the term stalking frequently based on the cases and the public are able to share about the experiences on social media calling out their stalkers - not just as harassment.

## Multi-Stakeholder Response to Domestic Violence

### **The Transformative Changes:**

- Women's access to justice and protection from gender-based violence and discrimination is guaranteed & facilitated by sensitised state actors  
- Adequate public and private resources are devoted to addressing and eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination

The past year we continued cooperation with the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) as well as other government agencies to better our collective responses, advocacy and data collection to domestic violence.

As part of the National Committee on Domestic Violence or the Jawatankuasa Menangani Keganasan Rumah Tangga (JKRT) - a committee set up in 2019 following several advocacy efforts by WAO - we have successfully advocated for the inclusion of domestic violence questions in the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS), highlighted gaps in shelter service provision, and supported the government's efforts in developing a national public awareness raising strategy as well as establishing new shelters and guidelines on handling domestic violence.

Through consistent efforts, WAO has also pushed for the government to recognise that protection and support under the Domestic Violence Act extends to non-citizen survivors and for this to be stated in the guidelines on handling DV cases by the government.

WAO sits on the various sub-committees of the JKRT focused on Protection, Data, and Advocacy and Capacity Building. Through these engagements, we have provided feedback and input on the direction of the committees. For example, we have highlighted the importance of moving away from victim blaming behaviour, and refocusing advocacy strategies towards addressing risk factors of domestic violence that are consistent with international standards. We have also contributed towards the data committees' effort to streamline collection of domestic violence data at the national level.

The JKRT has met twice throughout the year and there have also been six sub-committee meetings. We look forward to continue participating and pushing for necessary changes in 2023 including the streamlining of Domestic Violence messaging and support.

WAO also continued to participate in the Selangor state interagency meeting on domestic violence.

# Public Attitudes

## Malaysian public attitudes and perceptions towards violence against women

### **The Transformative Changes:**

- Women's access to justice and protection from gender-based violence and discrimination is guaranteed & facilitated by sensitised state actors  
- Adequate public and private resources are devoted to addressing and eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination

Following the launch of our milestone report in 2021, in 2022, we focused on disseminating the initial findings and recommendations. This led to distribution of the report and research briefs to parliamentarians, government stakeholders and a presentation to the National Domestic Violence Committee. We also submitted abstracts to the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum, of which, one on preliminary findings of the impact of community attitudes on survivors' help-seeking behaviours, was successful and presented at the global forum in Mexico in September.





Further analysis of data collected is underway and we hope to be able to provide a comprehensive policy paper based on this in 2023 as well as use the findings to strengthen national, state-level and WAO advocacy.

Findings from the report was successfully utilised as part of advocacy campaigns on gender sensitivity trainings and in government engagements with the hope of increased awareness on the importance of addressing the root causes of violence i.e. poor community attitudes towards violence against women and gender equality.

## Single Mothers Project

### ***The Transformative Changes:***

- *Women's access to justice and protection from gender-based violence and discrimination is guaranteed & facilitated by sensitised state actors*
- *Adequate public and private resources are devoted to addressing and eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination*

In 2021, we embarked on a small-scale research project to understand the barriers faced by single mothers and survivors of violence in accessing aid. The interviews with single mothers from WAO's pool of respondents were completed, analysed and data consolidated. This data was also used to support policy recommendations in our WAO Gender Budget Memorandum that was sent to policymakers and MoF for Single Mothers.

We were also able to share some preliminary findings at various stakeholder engagements and research roundtable discussions. A complete policy brief based on the project findings will be released in 2023.

## Endemicity, Care, and Gender: Towards Developing Resilience in Malaysia's Essential Care Workforce and Infrastructure

### ***The Transformative Changes:***

- *Gender equality in the workplace is protected by law and continuously advanced and promoted by public and private actors*
- *Society demonstrates increasing intolerance for gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls within an environment conducive to women's full political, economic, and social participation*

The research team had applied for and received a grant from Women Rise Initiative under Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to lead a multi-team, two-year research project on Malaysia's essential Care Workforce from a gender perspective.

In 2022, the project remained in its initial stages of developing methodologies, timelines, hiring and securing expertise. WAO will be working closely with our partners from University of Alberta, University Malaya, Ministry of Health, Talentcorp and the Economic Planning Unit as well as external research data consultants in executing this project.

The care burden, disproportionately shouldered by women, worsened worldwide throughout the pandemic. In Malaysia, the she-cession persists, as women's unemployment has not recovered similarly to men's and unemployment rates within more vulnerable groups, such as single mothers, remain much higher. The increased care burden itself impacts mental health, presently understudied in Malaysia, reflected in high rates of suicide amongst women.

This project focuses on the burden of care work, formal and informal, paid and unpaid, considering social identifiers, such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status across a spectrum of essential care workers, such as doctors, cleaners, nurses, social workers, and domestic workers, residing in varying household and familial configurations (e.g. single mothers, intergenerational households), across the pandemic and in transitions into endemicity.

This research aims to collaboratively strengthen underlying care sector vulnerabilities, mitigate the gendered impact of the pandemic, and ensure resilience in the essential care workforce and infrastructure in times of crisis. This will be achieved by uncovering the gendered and uneven impact of the pandemic and the transition to endemicity on women essential care workers in Malaysia, through assessing existing policies and developing strategies to shape gender-transformative change.

## "Negotiating Ideations: The Role of State-Led Identity-Making in the Progress of Women's Rights in Malaysia" in the Australian Journal of Asian Law

### ***The Transformative Changes:***

- *Society demonstrates increasing intolerance for gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls within an environment conducive to women's full political, economic, and social participation*

The research team successfully authored an article of a special edition of the Australian Journal of Asian Law.

The article traces the progress of women's rights in Malaysia by reference to law reforms between 2017 and 2022, from the position of a civil society organisation advocating for those reforms and using a gender-focused lens. In examining the law reforms in this time period which have succeeded and law reforms which have been stalled, the article argues that the law reforms achieved were ones the state views as congruous with its wider identity-making project for citizens.

Consequently, issues at odds with entrenched values imposed on citizens by dominant state narratives become difficult to reconcile, resulting in stalled progress. The article reimagines a top-down identity-making approach through the lens of transformative justice.



## CEDAW NGO Coalition

WAO coordinated the CEDAW NGO Coalition engagements with representatives of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD).

The Malaysian Government submitted their sixth periodic report to the CEDAW Committee in April 2022. Subsequently, the coalition led by WAO reviewed the report and began preparations for the CEDAW NGO Shadow report submission due in 2023. The coalition held a two-day CEDAW orientation workshop for CSO members as part of efforts to improve understanding of CEDAW mechanisms and reporting.

In December 2022, the coalition began preparation towards the submission of additional information, list of questions and critical issues to the Pre-Sessional Working Group held in February 2023 to assist with the committee's review of the state party report and development of questions for the government.

Throughout, the article touches on issues close to WAO's key works, such as domestic violence law reform, the progress of laws addressing sexual harassment and stalking, and reforms around child marriage, as well as the wider work of women's groups in Malaysia in the fight for gender equality.

## SAKSI

### *The Transformative Changes:*

- Society demonstrates increasing intolerance for gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls within an environment conducive to women's full political, economic, and social participation

SAKSI is a WAO initiative on gender-progressive journalism launched in 2021. In 2022, WAO had received renewed support from the US Embassy to develop a SAKSI website and host workshops to equip citizen and professional journalists in reporting with a gender lens.

SAKSI had provided gender-progressive coverage of the November elections and carried out interviews with various persons from marginalised communities and electoral candidates. We revived and grew our social media pages and were also the official media for the Malaysia Women and Girls' Forum held in December 2022.

The WAO Advocacy and Capacity Building teams continue to grow SAKSI under the guidance of the Executive Director. The next year will see expansion of SAKSI coverage and engagement with more citizen journalists and media practitioners.

### *The Transformative Changes:*

- Women and girls GBVD survivors know their rights and are empowered, supported, and resourced to claim them

The advocacy team continues to engage with the services team in strategising for the handling and escalation of complex and unresolved cases of gender-based violence and discrimination to relevant authorities.

Through regular inter-team meetings and discussions, obstacles in case management for different groups of survivors are raised to the advocacy and capacity building teams for integration into their respective advocacy efforts and programmes.

For 2022, issues highlighted include non-citizen survivors' access to justice and protection, child custody and issues concerning protection orders.

Local Media coverage in English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil both online and offline: **310**

Independent and International media coverage: **50**  
(Al Jazeera, Vice News, Channel News Asia, Coconuts KL, SAYS and South China Morning Post)

**Total coverage: 360**  
(Mostly on Stalking, Gender Responsive Budgeting and responses to instances of violence against women).







# Capacity Building for All on Women’s Rights

During capacity building work, we always uphold the core values of being survivor-centric, feminist, embracing intersectionality, and collaborative. The team harnesses its strengths to deliver culturally relevant, survivor-centric modules and, most importantly, equally accessible to all, especially to women and children in need of support. 2022 has taught us that managing resistance is an important element when it comes to training.

Challenging harmful beliefs and behaviours in participants may be complicated; however, we, as facilitators, must be equipped with sufficient knowledge on how to manoeuvre around these instances in a firm yet educational manner.





In 2022, WAO's Capacity Building team continued to engage with the community to advocate for an end to gender-based violence through diversified outreach. This outreach encompasses interactive talks and workshops, roundtable sessions, and physical and online consultations.

During capacity building work, we always uphold the core values of being survivor-centric, feminist, embracing intersectionality, and collaborative. The team harnesses its strengths to deliver culturally relevant, survivor-centric modules and, most importantly, equally accessible to all, especially to women and children in need of support.

Knowledge is put at the forefront, as well as recognising gender and human rights. All our modules aim to create better awareness and foster a deeper understanding of gender-based violence and its root cause, the inequalities present in society.

In all our activities, whether it is a talk, workshop, or educational forum for members of different groups, whether they are individuals, the public, or representatives from agencies, these inequalities, and the impact of this has been emphasized. By doing this, we highlight the intersectionality rooted in ground realities, and these groups can better act in their respective ways.

In 2022, as we transitioned towards an endemic phase of COVID-19, there were more opportunities for physical engagements. These included programmes with grassroots communities, corporations, universities

and colleges, hospital frontliners, and government bodies, including policymakers, lawmakers, and law enforcement - all committed to gender equality and gender-based violence in Malaysia while empowering women and children, and prioritising their rights.

Through our programmes, we work with grassroots communities, policymakers, organisations, corporations, lawmakers, and law enforcers to bring about gender equality, end gender-based violence in Malaysia, and observe children's rights and empowerment.

It was an incredibly fruitful year in terms of engaging with students, some notable ones being the Unicef Young Leaders program, UTAR Medical Students Gender & Health Training, and TARUC Sexual Harassment Awareness session. The #GirlsTakeover platform also remained active throughout the pandemic, and after a long hiatus, we had an online session with them covering the topics of Gender, Power, and Consent. We also collaborated with Women:Girls to deliver a Trauma Informed Coaching Workshop for their girls' coaches.

We carried on with grassroots outreach by widening our engagement with the refugee community and with B40 women. We completed the Engaging Men in Accountable Practices in a Training of Trainers and trained six key figures to mobilise male allies training in their respective communities. We also continued engagement with other NGOs like DHRRA by delivering a session unpacking online violence. We explored more niche topics like the intersection

of gender inequality with climate change with Sahabat Alam Malaysia. Regarding our engagement with the corporations, we carried out comprehensive GBV training for Wilmar, YSD, and United Nations Gender Results Group and one-off training for companies like Organon, Malaysian Sheet Glass, and IndustriALL Global Union.

Besides maintaining a solid working relationship with corporate organizations engaging with us long-term, we have also branched out onto new organizations. These organizations, such as FGV Holdings Berhad, promise more work to be done with new corporate audiences.

In 2022, we also committed to deepening our engagement with government agencies by collaborating with Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita (JPW), conducting talks on gender, and 2-day GBV workshops with Klinik Kesihatan staff from two different municipalities - Cheras and Putrajaya.

Besides that, we went on to present the role of the NGO in supporting OSCC survivors at multiple hospitals around Klang Valley and other talks on Unpacking Gender and Rape Culture with Suhakam, Psychological First Aid and WAO Services at the UNHCR offices, organised by Medicine du Monde.

We have engaged with a total of 24,278 individuals through various activities - training, workshops, panels, consultations, and events in 2022. A considerable proportion of this was reached via online sessions

on Facebook live with Sinar, and three different live streams with JPW Skuad Waja covering gender, sexual harassment in the workplace and GBV, and various other public engagement talks and activities.

2022 has taught us that managing resistance is an important element when it comes to training. Challenging harmful beliefs and behaviours in participants may be complicated; however, we, as facilitators, must be equipped with sufficient knowledge on how to manoeuvre around these instances in a firm yet educational manner.

We learnt more about the gaps in government systems during multi-agency meetings (e.g., how counselling and Talian Kasih are programmes under MOH and JKM, not established departments)

It is essential to have a standard referral system across the nation, bolstered by multi-agency cooperation to ensure the information given to survivors is consistent and efficient.

Most girls/college students have a higher understanding of GBV. Existing modules for girls/college students need to include more critical thinking activities for them.

More training needs to be done to encourage more engagement of young men and boys in GBV prevention programme in the community.



**1. Strengthened legal framework to prevent and address gender-based violence and discrimination**

- \* Evidenced throughout all of Komuniti Selamat linked with WAO's efforts guiding of government good practices, whether at Federal, State or district levels.
- \* All initiatives are framed on feminist legal theory and practice in substance (written law and procedures), structure (institutions and mechanisms) and culture (attitudes, and responses).
- \* Utilising the internal WAO ASCC avenue (advocacy, services, capacity building), legislative and SOP reform is mainstreamed within each Ministry and various communities to address lived experiences of GBV

**2. Women's access to justice and protection from gender-based violence and discrimination is guaranteed & facilitated by state actors**

- \* Continuation of engagement with the federal and state government agencies and stakeholders to maintain engagement with women for further support
- \* Dissemination of a Komuniti Selamat toolkit where state actors are mentored for on-ground and internal usage.
- \* Consultations, roundtables and task forces with state actors on DV (KWPKM JKRT)

**3. Women and girls GBV survivors know their rights and are empowered, supported, and resourced to claim them**

- \* Girls Takeover network: Continuous engagement with girls to empower them with the knowledge of the 3Rs to address GBVD in their communities became advocates in their personal capacity by voicing out their opinion in civil society movements and networks
- \* Squad Saksi : Saksi is creating space and building capacities for citizen journalists to reclaim their narratives and push back against GBVD in the media
- \* Grassroots: UNHCR Engaging Men in Accountable Practices workshop, JPW Komuniti Selamat training building up to TeamTINA engagement of empowering community advocates
- \* CSO/support provider training: UN Gender Results Group, DHRRA, Sahabat Alam Malaysia, Medicine du Monde, Women:Girls and UTAR

**4. Adequate public and private resources are devoted to addressing and eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination**

- \* Mainstreaming OSCC workshop with MOH for a GBV sensitisation training for frontliners / healthcare staff of Klinik Kesihatan
- \* Level Up program with corporations, advocating for mainstreaming gender equality in corporations' operations through capacity building

**5. Gender equality in the workplace is protected by law and continuously advanced and promoted by public and private actors**

- \* Corporate trainings on SH and DV to create awareness amongst the private sector workforce.
- \* Training on gender bias and SH with IndustriAll to create awareness in the labour union fraternity.
- \* Level Up: integrating gender sensitivity into corporations via incorporating best practices that are translated into policies with time-based indicators. Corporations in turn will drive their industries to place emphasis on gender equality

**6. Society demonstrate increasing intolerance for gender-based discrimination against women and girls within an environment conducive to women's full political, economic and social participation**

- \* Training developed based on Anti-Sexual Harassment Law
- \* More engagement and coordination among CSOs on GBV and DV

	Training and consultations	Online reach
Girls and youth	65	
Government	1023	819
Grassroots	22324	22489
Colleges	494	450
Corporations	357	
CSOs	15	
Total	24278	





## Supporting All in WAO

Supporting WAO behind the scenes is our operations team – finance, people and culture (human resource management), and accountability.

The team oversees financial accounts, supports project budget management, handles procurement, manages recruitment and talent development, manages facilities, and ensures compliance with standards and obligations, among other responsibilities.

People & Culture

Accountability

Finance



# People and Culture

People and Culture in WAO aims to recruit, retain, and motivate excellent staff, and to create a working environment where all staff can achieve their full potential to reach WAO's objectives.

In 2022, we saw a few resignations and staff going on sabbatical to continue their studies. This happened due to burnout which started due to COVID-19. Most wanted a change in experience as well as higher income with better benefits.

People and Culture has been actively recruiting.

One of the main changes and implementation that had to be worked on in 2022 are related to the changes in Employment Act and this is a work in progress.

As a one-person team, the People and Culture Manager has been actively working on improving policies and implementing the changes due to Employment Act. The team was also heavily involved in Talent Acquisition and Talent Management, in addition to other important HR areas.

# Accountability

The Administrative Specialist role was revised to Accountability Manager in March 2022 and expanded into an Accountability team in mid-2022 with the addition of team member, Kavitha Kandasamy. Apart from the day-to-day administrative support, staff laptop and phone management, facilities management as well as licensing compliance of the WAO headquarters and services centre throughout 2022, the Accountability team supported the Executive Committee and Executive Director to carry out 13 EXCO meetings and six staff meetings in 2022 as well as the 39th Annual General Meeting in 2022, with a sponsored broadcasting venue from Tashia Peterson and technical support from an external partner.

The Accountability team also commenced and facilitated the licensing applications, including to Jabatan Kebajikan Malaysia, for the newly rebuilt WAO Child Care Centre and the WAO Refuge which was up for renewal in the first quarter of 2023.

The Accountability team coordinated the first phase of the CHS Self-Assessment, opted into and carried out by WAO as a member of the international certifying body, the CHS Alliance, in 2022. This included staff surveys, partners surveys, and a desk review of the documentation for the whole of WAO. The Accountability team head also sat in the CHS Self-Assessment Committee comprising EXCO members Majidah Hashim, Petra Gimbad and Jasmine Kuan and led by Majidah Hashim, an experienced monitoring and evaluation practitioner, to prepare the initial review and reconciliation of the documentation review of the entire organisation.

Of the 9 Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) core values, WAO was able to self-assess at the highest score for 8, namely: -

- Policies, strategies, and guidance are designed to prevent programmes having any negative effects such as, for example, exploitation, abuse, or discrimination by staff against communities and people affected by crisis, and to strengthen local capacities.
- External communications, including those used for fundraising, are accurate, ethical, and respectful, presenting communities and people affected by crisis as dignified human beings.
- Policies and strategies include a clear commitment to coordination and collaboration with others, including national and local authorities without compromising humanitarian principles.
- The organisation contributes to learning and innovation in humanitarian response amongst peers and within the sector.
- The organisation has the management and staff capacity and capability to deliver its programmes.
- A code of conduct is in place that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people.
- A code of conduct is in place that establishes, at a minimum, the obligation of staff not to exploit, abuse or otherwise discriminate against people. Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) requirement to fulfil this

indicator: the organisation needs to have a code of conduct that includes the obligation of staff and associated individuals and entities, not to sexually exploit, abuse or harass people and to comply with reporting obligations.

- Policies and processes governing the use and management of resources are in place, including how the organisation:
  - a) accepts and allocates funds and gifts-in-kind ethically and legally;
  - b) uses its resources in an environmentally responsible way;
  - c) prevents and addresses corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest and misuse of resources;
  - d) conducts audits, verifies compliance and reports transparently;
  - e) assesses, manages, and mitigates risk on an ongoing basis; and
  - f) ensures that the acceptance of resources does not compromise its independence.

The Accountability team contributed to the preparation for the two legal suits involving the organisation (both of which were part of the Agenda in WAO's previous AGMs), both of which have been resolved without any order against WAO, with the support of the pro-bono lawyers assisting us, Messrs Tan Partnership and Messrs Raj Sach.

The Accountability team took over responsibility on WAO's obligations vis-à-vis the Internal Revenue Board in the last quarter of 2022 and has successfully set up a pro-bono partnership with leading Malaysian tax counsel Saravana of Messrs Rosli Dahlan Partnership to fortify its tax compliance. Additionally, it was able to secure Skrine & Co to work together on WAO's privacy and data protection policies.



The Accountability team facilitated and conducted an additional Anti-Fraud Training, 2 Procurement Trainings and 2 CHS Trainings for all staff in 2022. The Accountability team arranged with the Free Tree Society to run their Nature Education Programme at Taman Tugu Kuala Lumpur and an Art Workshop for members at Petaling Jaya in 2022. Naturally, WAO did not draw from donated funds for members activities and all such activities were self-paying.

The Accountability team was able to extend the continuous learning efforts to WAO members through activities organised by other departments within WAO, such as the WAO Conversations and WAO Festival by our Partnerships team and the Nasi Lemak Session by our Advocacy team. To this end, the Accountability team conducted a survey to better understand members and the activities that interested them, and will commit to implementing more (albeit self-paying) activities among members in the coming years.

In accordance with the concept of feminist co-leadership practised within WAO, apart from revising the policies and procedures under the Accountability team's scope, we also assisted other teams through preparing the Finance Policy on Expenses Thresholds and Authorized Signatories and took the initiative to secure a complimentary seat to a training on the amendments to the Employment Act and proceeded to revise the Human Resources Standard Operating Procedure to a Policy level document, including engaging in consultation with staff on the same especially where the revisions were practices not already being embraced by WAO.

The Accountability team head also served as the WAO Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse focal point and prepared the WAO posters on Sexual Harassment for the People & Culture team.

The annual staff retreat was a necessary investment into the well-being of the staff body that fosters camaraderie for a cohesiveness in the WAO staff body. The Accountability team sought feedback on, planned and carried out the 2 nights and 3 days long annual staff retreat for 2022 at Port Dickson.

## Finance

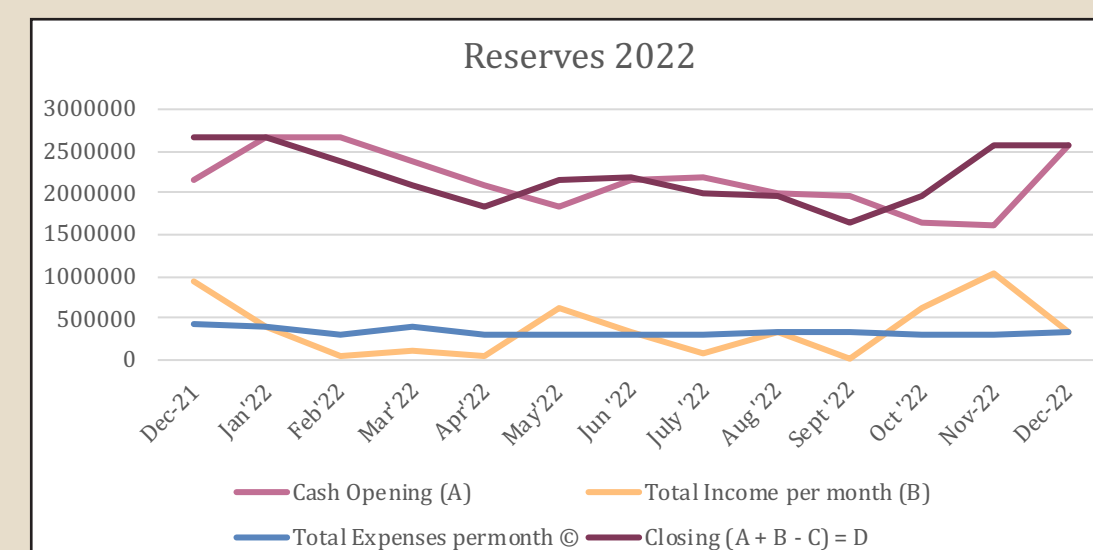
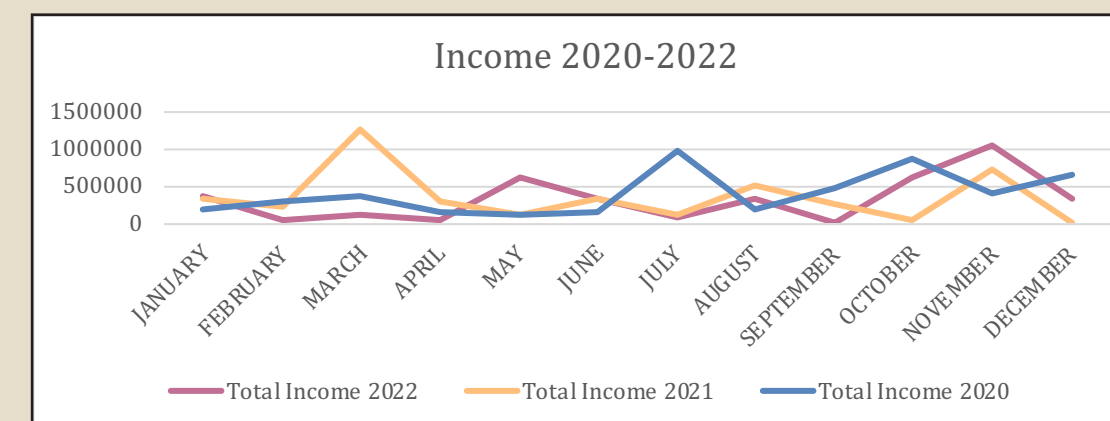
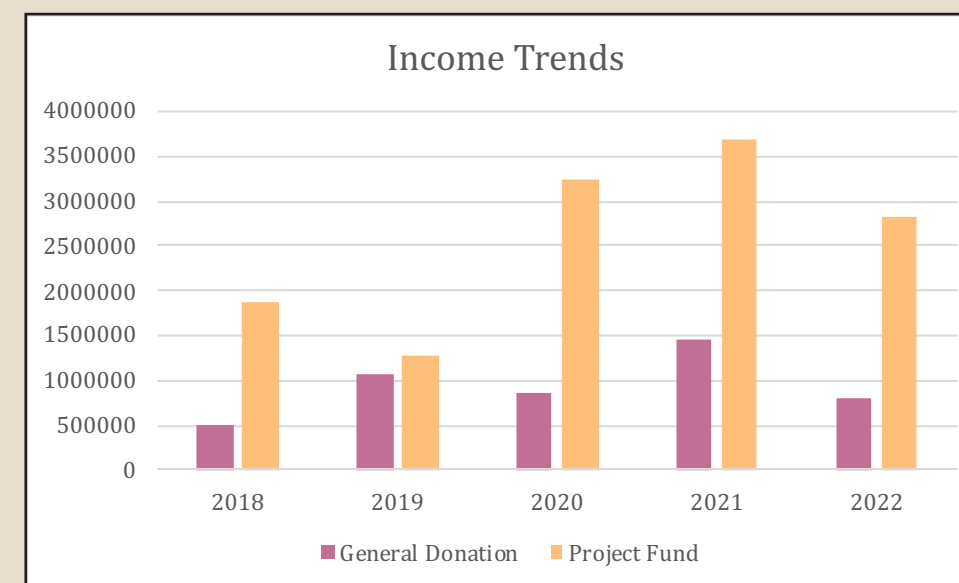
Our Finance team supports all of WAO's work, ensuring our accounts are kept well, our bank balances are healthy and we are able to access the funds WAO needs to get work done.

We are a team of three -- a Finance Manager, and two Finance Officers.

We have worked to ensure our policies and processes are updated, accounts and documentation is prepared for all audits. In 2022, we faced three audits from our major donors, including the United Nations. We passed all the audits.

The most important thing we do is to develop and monitor WAO's budget -- all income and expenditure, making sure that we are liquid and have sufficient money to meet all our expenses and, especially, to make sure staff are paid on time.

Finance works closely with the Partnerships team for fundraising. In the next pages, we have analysed our income and expenditure.







## Partnering with all for WAO's Development

The Partnerships team brought in more funding than ever before. This is what we do best. We have a clear strategy and direction, the teams plan, anticipate, respond and execute. Partnerships recognises the need and supports by bringing in the funding support needed to keep WAO fully resourced.

Income trends demonstrate the tremendous work done over time to fully resource WAO and her work. It also demonstrates the continued importance and strategic value of Project Funds (restricted to certain activities) whereby WAO establishes our key priorities and presents the related actions to major donors for support. This is critically important, especially in view of the progressive dip in general donations (donations from individuals), which reduction is linked to the state of the Malaysian economy and economic prosperity of Malaysians.

Fundraising

Partnerships

Changing Mindsets



In post pandemic 2022, we as a community faced the challenges of not only the economic downturn and inflation, but also discovered that domestic violence cases were not decreasing and that women and children's mental health had become a growing concern.

Our goal in 2022 was to develop more partnerships and to create more public education and community engagements that are meaningful and enriching which will empower audiences:

- to learn about gender base violence;
- to understand survivor perspectives;
- to equip individuals with bystander intervention tools;
- to recruit volunteer advocates to get involved in the elimination of violence against women and girls; and
- to fundraise towards services for gender based violence.

Our WAO Volunteer Induction Program led and facilitated by the Partnerships Team and WAO Ambassadors, who are trained volunteers on gender-based violence topics, had evolved the Induction Program to incorporate selected gender-based violence topics with documentary film screenings along with group discussion for participants to understand in depth the issues and advocacy work around it. In 2022, WAO had inducted an estimated total of around 65 volunteers and received volunteer registrations in the range of 130 sign ups.

We can't do it alone. Partnerships paved the way for free services for survivors.

Strategic partnerships have given WAO the opportunity to expand our reach of services for survivors by way of

collaboration, sponsorships of specific programmes and corporate social responsibility engagements. Our long term strategic partner Yayasan Sime Darby have supported survivors of domestic violence indirectly through the sponsorship of our advocacy and capacity building team who work passionately in advocating for law reform and changes in policy to better serve survivors and to build capacities in gender based violence response.

Selangor Properties have always supported WAO's Refuge for many years and since 2020 they have sponsored WAO's Services Centre where our Hotline resides and where our case management and social work is stationed.

We are also grateful to have been awarded the grant from AVPN KKR Fund and L'Oreal to support and sponsor our services team. Tokio Marine Insurance came in to sponsor a year supply of food and essential items for our WAO shelters and the children's activity during our WAO Fest at Publika.

Our great supporters of mental health and sponsor RCE Marketing recognise mental health and counselling as a crucial component in overcoming trauma from violence without which our survivors would not be able to heal from their violent past.

Allianz4Good, Sephora, the Australian Embassy, Uniqlo and WAO supporters had stepped up to give Christmas presents for our shelter residents and WAO Power Up and Power House women and kids. Over 100 gifts were collected from our partners and the community who generously dropped off gifts for our beneficiaries. A team of 6 volunteers had coordinated the gift collection and 15 volunteers supported in gift deliveries in December. It was an

incredibly moving experience to have the Christmas Gift Giving completely coordinated by WAO Volunteers.

## Community and the Empowerment Ecosystem

In March we had conducted our first Volunteer Induction focusing on child marriage. In this special induction, WAO had invited our sister NGO partner Sisters In Islam to be part of this community mobilisation and public education initiative. We had invited representatives from corporate, government and did a call out to the general public. In this Induction, participants discussed the issues and unpacked their emotion together while empowering each other a way forward.

This is the way in WAO. Through community engagement is where we ignite and empower the community to mobilise and roll out in advocating for change.

Knowledge is power. WAO recognises this as a way forward in our advocacy towards the promotion of gender equity and coordinates various talks, webinars, forums and student engagements. We have conducted more than 100 public and private education and community engagement initiatives in 2022.

In one particular webinar which was hosted by Sokka Gakai Association, the Partnerships Director Amnani had given a talk on her journey into community service work through volunteering with WAO. She had inspired an audience of 4000 people to not give up and to contribute and give back in whatever capacity. From this webinar, WAO had received several volunteer sign ups as a result.

In total, WAO has engaged with more than 5000 individuals through our public education online sessions.

Rolling with the power of community engagement, the Partnerships team developed and organised the first WAO Fest 2022 which took place from 23 – 25 September at The Square, Publika. It was an event which played host to several public education programmes that encapsulated the work at WAO along with an outdoor bazaar promoting and supporting women owned businesses. We had officially launched our Level Up Programme in collaboration with BCSD and closed the three day event with an empowering drum circle that ignited the warrior spirit in the elimination of violence against women and girls.



## Dollars and (Common) Sense Resourcing Free Services for Survivors

In 2022, we felt the pinch of the recession. We noticed a stark difference in the individual gifts and corporate donations from previous years. Providing free services for survivors is an expensive endeavour most especially with the number of cases of GBV that have steadily increased.

Ensuring that the organisation is equipped to handle providing comprehensive services to the masses for free, with quality professional talents in the helm and at the same time guaranteeing salaries that match the level of expertise, is not easy. The financial sustainability of WAO falls in the hands of the Executive Director, Partnerships Team and Finance Team which is then supported and overseen by the Executive Committee Members (EXCO). This collaboration and teamwork between the EXCO and WAO Staff is crucial in ensuring that WAO’s work continues without a glitch.

## IPledge365 and WePledge

The Partnerships Team developed two fundraising campaigns to meet our two aims of fundraising and raising awareness on WAO and gender based violence. The #IPledge365 is a fundraising campaign which informs the public that domestic violence is not a one off event and that for some survivors, they live through violence everyday throughout the year for 365 days. Their contribution of RM1 a day for 1 year can support survivors in medical aid, food and shelter services. WePledge is a campaign which targets the private sector whereby corporates can contribute a donation to help cover services for survivors and WAO engages in a brown bag session (talk) on gender based violence for their employees.

WAO’s funds are derived from various sources which go through a due diligence process to ensure all funds are in line with WAO’s policies. The following below are sources of funds WAO works hard to attain :

- Grant Applications
- Foundations
- Corporate Sponsorship and Gifts
- Corporate Training Programmes
- Government Training Programmes
- Individual Gifts and Sponsorships
- Online Fundraising Platforms
- Donations in kind

If you want to know more about sponsoring WAO programmes, please do connect and email us [partnership@wao.org.my](mailto:partnership@wao.org.my)

## Thank You Major Donors!

RM100,000 and above		RM5,000 to RM19,999	
UNHCR	885,113.00	KOSÉ (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd	19,000.00
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)	770,470.61	Connie Tong May Kwei	15,000.00
Yayasan Sime Darby	591,717.02	DPL INTERNATIONAL SD	14,657.83
Loreal Fund for Women	180,884.00	St. Jude BEC (Sec.12 PJ)	12,600.00
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality	112,394.61	Unknown	11,565.00
Chong Chook Yew Sdn Bhd	100,000.00	UN Gender Results Group Risk Mitigation and Referral Training (UNGRG)	10,500.00
RM20,000 to RM99,999		Excel Force Msc Berhad	8,000.00
Syarikat Takaful Malaysia Keluarga Berhad	69,069.50	Havi Logistics (M) Sdn Bhd	8,000.00
Usdo Officer Symbol	66,345.00	Iskander bin Ismail Mohamed Ali	8,000.00
RCE Marketing Sdn Bhd	54,000.00	Wellous Sdn Bhd	8,000.00
Yayasan Hartalega	50,000.00	UPSI HOLDINGS SDN. BHD.	7,700.00
Allianz General Insurance	46,307.00	Latin Women's Association of Malaysia	7,500.00
Allianz Life Ins (M)	46,307.00	Wong Wan Loi	7,000.00
Allianz Malaysia Ber	46,307.00	Stonex Financial Ltd	6,917.66
Cummins Inc	44,703.03	BFM Media Sdn Bhd	5,260.00
Hong Leong Foundation	42,600.00	Pirabakaran A/L Vara	5,144.00
Chan Boon Kheng	30,000.00	Alttamur Gifts Sdn Bhd	5,057.32
Mangosteen Organics Sdn Bhd	30,000.00	Anantha Lakshmi Ananthashankar	5,000.00
Gvt. Canada	27,180.24	Tan Chia Huei	5,000.00
FormTech Engineering (M) Sdn. Bhd.	26,148.58	Zubaid Akbar Mukhtar	5,000.00
UK Online Giving Foundation	25,091.27		
GlobalGiving	23,262.93		
Kuok Foundation Berhad	20,000.00		
Pusat Khidmat Rakyat	20,000.00		





**WOMEN'S AID ORGANISATION, MALAYSIA**  
(Pertubuhan Pertolongan Wanita, Malaysia)  
Registration No: PPM-001-10-08041983  
(Established Under Societies Act 1966)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	Notes	2022 RM	2021 RM
<b>PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT</b>	6	1,948,967	1,680,217
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Non profit Merchandise held for sale	7	12,250	16,914
Sundry receivables, deposits and prepayments	8	44,495	44,293
Fixed deposits with licensed banks	9	1,548,033	1,970,466
Cash and bank balances	10	1,544,124	1,697,013
		<u>3,148,902</u>	<u>3,728,686</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Sundry payables and accruals	11	43,984	13,572
		<u>43,984</u>	<u>13,572</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>3,104,918</u>	<u>3,715,114</u>
		<u>5,053,885</u>	<u>5,395,331</u>
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>			
Accumulated surplus	12	<u>5,053,885</u>	<u>5,395,331</u>

The annexed notes form an integral part of the financial statements



**STATEMENT COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	Notes	2022 RM	2021 RM
<b>INCOME</b>			
Donation - General	13	796,756	1,498,537
Donation for projects / programs	15	2,832,173	3,624,740
Income from public education		7,165	13,650
Interest income			
- Current year income		12,431	95,293
- Over taken up in the prior year		(13,748)	-
Member's subscription		4,900	7,820
Merchandise sales		6,889	3,349
Other income		52,171	88,094
		<u>3,698,737</u>	<u>5,331,483</u>
<b>LESS: EXPENDITURE</b>			
Child Care Center expenses	16	357,637	380,005
Refuge Center expenses	17	1,449,398	1,606,142
WAO Center expenses	18	1,880,042	1,922,295
AGM expenses		6,600	1,346
Audit fee		5,500	5,000
Bank charges		734	731
Bad debts written off -			
Loan to residents written off (2022)		-	2,500
Depreciation charges		57,527	29,308
Expenses under taken up in prior year		-	17,845
Fine and penalty		-	483
Project expenses		282,745	273,976
		<u>4,040,183</u>	<u>4,239,631</u>
<b>(Deficit) / Surplus for the financial year</b>		<u><b>(341,446)</b></u>	<u><b>1,091,852</b></u>

The annexed notes form an integral part of the financial statements

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	2022 RM	2021 RM
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
(Deficit) / Surplus for the financial year	(341,446)	1,091,852
Adjustments:		
Depreciation	57,527	29,308
Interest income	1,317	(95,293)
Operating (Deficit) / Surplus Before Working Capital Changes	(282,602)	1,025,867
Changes in receivables and non profit merchandise held for sale	4,462	(22,092)
Changes in payables	30,412	(59,210)
Net Cashflow (Used In) / From Operating Activities	<u>(247,728)</u>	<u>944,565</u>
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(326,277)	(587,561)
Interest received	(1,317)	95,293
Net Cashflow Used In Investing Activities	<u>(327,594)</u>	<u>(492,268)</u>
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
	-	-
Net cash (outflow) / inflow	(575,322)	452,297
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward	3,667,479	3,215,182
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	<u>3,092,157</u>	<u>3,667,479</u>
Represented by :-		
Fixed deposits	1,548,033	1,970,466
Cash and bank balances	1,544,124	1,697,013
	<u>3,092,157</u>	<u>3,667,479</u>

The annexed notes form an integral part of the financial statements



## Afterword



## Afterword

### My Body, My Choice

Some days, I feel that my body is not my own. The puppet strings tug me heavily. You look at me up and down. The length of my skirt matters more than what I have to say. How much skin I choose to cover decides whether or not I deserve equal treatment and respect. I tug my top even lower to cover my midriff. You have made up your mind about me before you have even peeled my layers. My hopes and dreams, my aspirations for this country. Decisions are made for me, supposedly with my best interests in mind. The head of the family, the politician, the dictator. This is from years and years of resisting. Speaking a little softer, darling, listen to the men. Senyum lah sikit. I look left and then right and turn back. Ladies coach, lone women driver parking, brightly lit spaces. Being policed each day, where is our agency? Where is my bodily autonomy? The girl who is safe, free, and smiling, she is so beautiful.

Acknowledge that we have a problem. We have problematic attitudes embedded in the fabric of our society, the patriarchy, and harmful norms. This all needs to be challenged. We need allies, not protectors. Listen to what we have to say. Bury the draconic laws deep, deep into the ground. She can decide about her body. Information, education, and health services should reach all. She wants to help her sisters. My body is for me, and me only. You do not know what she wants, and you do not know what is best for her. It is her body; it is her choice.

**Adelina Zulkifli**





***This is the way.  
Thank you from Team WAO***