



# WAO TURNS

# 40!



A **tribute**  
to 40 years of  
relentless effort  
towards women's  
empowerment  
and rights  
advocacy

# EDITORS



## HIPAYAH

- "unpredictable, fun & sometimes funny" - a friend
- forgets directions, remembers lyrics
- fav genre is anything on the female experience

## POPPY

- just a girly gal whose life revolves around her Kitty cat yola & her blossoming plant babies
- currently in her #YogiLife era
- LOVES livin' the beach life. HATES getting sunburnt #ItsComplicated

## ANGELINE

- the living embodiment of the phrase "no talking before coffee"
- enjoys exercising her freedom to go out but most of the time prefers to stay indoors
- has a low sense of humour & loves puns

# WAO

## ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

AND

## PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

IN MALAYSIA SINCE...

# CONTRIBUTORS

- Joyce
- Li Ann
- Isma

# 1980'S

The initial conception of WAO emerged from the dedicated efforts of six friends intent on providing their friend and her children a refuge from domestic violence.

WAO gains official recognition as a society.

Subsequently, Tun Tan Siew Sin envisioned the idea of setting up a haven for abused women and generously donated RM34,000.

WAO marked a milestone by purchasing its first property intended as a women's refuge.



## 1981



## 1983



## 1985



## 1982

WAO registers to the Registrar of Societies Malaysia (ROS).

A woman and her children became the first residents of WAO's rented refuge premise in September 1982, after discovering the organization through a Malay Mail feature.



## 1984

In its first operational year, the WAO shelter housed 57 women and 75 children, and counselled 200 women over the phone.

In the same year, the Joint Action Group Against Violence Against Women was formed. [Later renamed as Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAGGE)]

## 1988

WAO expanded its operations by establishing a childcare centre.





W

*You are WORTH it*

You deserve to be treated  
with respect, kindness & love.

A

*You are AMAZING*

Just the way you are.  
Your honest and authentic self.

O

*Own your uniqueness*

and empower yourself to thrive  
in every aspect of life.

## BECAUSE OF YOU, 40-YEARS ON

Because of you, I was inspired to be a  
Crisis Support Officer.

A privilege to serve as one of you.  
Astonishing to be able to observe you.

I often wonder every now and then,  
how everyone just works so unconditionally  
as well as so selflessly. Whether it is  
to contribute an hour here or take on  
an extra duty slot there.

Because of you, stepping forward to  
lend courage and knowledge. You help others  
brave up and in turn, step forward.

Because of you, someone now knows better.

Because of you, WAO is 40-years on.

Because of you, kindness and compassion  
continue to uplift others.

Because of you. Driving Change.  
Impacting Lives. Making a Difference.

*Thank You*



*Domestic  
Violence Act  
1994*

**1994**

Dato Napsiah binti Omar introduced the Bill for Domestic Violence Act in Parliament. The Act was gazetted on 7 July 1994.



In 2000,  
Dato Dr Siti Zaharah  
Sulaiman presented  
the Bill for  
Child's Act in Parliament.  
The Act was then gazetted  
on 1 March 2001.



**2001**

- WAO
- All Women's Action Society
- Women's Centre for Change
- Association of Women Lawyers
- Justice for Sisters
- EMPOWER
- Family Frontiers
- KRYSS Network
- Perak Women for Women Society
- Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor
- Sabah Women's Action Resource Group
- Sarawak Women for Women Society
- Sisters in Islam
- Tenaganita

**2009**

The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAGGE) expanded to include 13 more organisations alongside WAO.



# 40 Years and Beyond

by Kon Li Ann (WAO Ambassador)

In this poem we honour the hands, mouths and hearts at WAO, an unwavering and fearless force that rose to challenge societal norms, driving the enhancement of women's rights in Malaysia. Their dedication and passion have kindled hope and empowered countless lives. Thank you, WAO, for being the guiding light on the path to equality and for transforming the lives of women with your unwavering commitment.



Just 40 years ago, a spark ignited.  
Women's rights in Malaysia stifled, benighted.  
But WAO emerged, with courage profound,  
To shake the nation and unchain the bound.

A new dawn broke, a fierce brigade,  
WAO warriors, unafraid.  
Passion in their hearts, they took the lead,  
With purpose, power, their mission decreed.

A force of change, they roared aloud,  
Injustice scattered like a cloud.  
Survivors' hopes, they gently mend,  
With love and care, they fiercely defend.

Empowering women, they lit the way,  
Shattering darkness, bright as day.  
Hotlines, shelters, programs they extend,  
Beckoned in, a new world to befriend.

Through advocacy, their voices strong,  
They challenged systems, righted wrongs.  
With programmes diverse, they paved the road,  
For a future where every woman could be so bold.

Glass ceilings shattered, loud and clear,  
WAO's triumphs ringing near.  
From boardrooms high to assemblies of might,  
They championed dreams, reaching heights.

40 years of battles fought,  
Yet still, the struggle can't be bought.  
Challenges loom, they stand tall,  
Together, we rise, never to fall.

Keep fighting, WAO, our guiding light,  
In unity, we'll take our flight.  
Your legacy etched in history's scroll,  
With WAO, we'll reach our goal.

So, here's to WAO, fierce and free,  
Warriors of change, warriors like thee.  
With every step, a victory soar,  
Inspiring Malaysia forevermore.

In this poem of triumph's dance,  
Let's celebrate WAO's grand stance.  
With heart's entwined, we'll rise above,  
For 40 years and beyond, empowered with love.

IN THE YEARS TO COME,  
WAO MADE GREAT  
STRIDES IN PUBLICATIONS  
AND THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN  
MALAYSIA.

HERE ARE SOME OF WAO'S  
ACHIEVEMENTS....

- WAO celebrated key legislative headways; Parliament passed the Bill for **Sexual Offences Against children Act** & made amendments to the **Domestic Violence Act 1994**.
- Published **'TINA's Journey'**; a collection of words and poetry by survivors of domestic violence.
- Published reports: **"Perspectives on Domestic Violence"** and **"Human Trafficking in Malaysia: A Focus on Women and Children"**.



- The National Domestic Violence Committee was set up.
- Ground Breaking ceremony for the childcare centre rebuilding with REDA Youth.
- Developed **"Level Up"**; a WAO Gender mainstreaming program & **"WAO Girl"** empowerment program.

**2012**

- Coordinated and edited **'CEDAW & Malaysia'**, an NGO Alternative Report.



**2015**

- Launched **Think I Need Aid (TINA)**.
- Introduced **Crisis Support Officers**; trained volunteers that handle WAO Hotline.
- Published report: **'Working Together: Case Studies in Domestic Violence Response'**.

**2016**

- On 13/11/2016, WAO's Childcare Centre was burned down by fire caused by lightning.
- Published the guideline: **'Domestic Violence Shelter Standards and Toolkit'**.



**2017**



**2018**

- Capacity Building & Partnership Division was established.
- Distributed the WAO CEDAW handbook and training with members of parliaments.
- Launched **WAO Community Selamat**.

**2019**

- Published:
- **'The Status of Women's Human Rights: 24 Years of CEDAW in Malaysia'**,
  - **'Where's the Child: The Rights of Child Domestic Violence Survivors'**,
  - **'The Shelter Needs of Domestic Violence Survivors and the Availability and Accessibility of Shelters and Related Services in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur'**.



**40 YEARS OF SERVICE &  
40 YEARS OF GRATITUDE  
TO AN EVER GROWING  
COMMUNITY**

100 TAHUN PERJUANGAN WAO

Walk & Rally

Better home

WAO MALAYSIA AMAL  
PERTUBUHAN BERKESKUAN NUSIA  
INIKALAH LAJU ORGANISASI

Women's Aid Group needs volunteers

WAO  
The 1st advent, 1st day,  
1st equipment, 1st...

WAO  
The 1st advent, 1st day,  
1st equipment, 1st...

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The 1st advent, 1st day,  
1st equipment, 1st...

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The 1st advent, 1st day,  
1st equipment, 1st...

- "Shadow pandemic" saw the rapid expansion of WAO's operations (including online).
- WAO partners with UN Agencies
- WAO publishes a gender responsive budget memorandum:

**"Facilitating Resilient and Sustainable Reforms to Support Women and Children"**

- Research team was established
- WAO Services Centre



WAO celebrates amendments to Section 507A of the Penal Code (Act 574), which makes **stalking a criminal offense** in Malaysia.

The anti-stalking and protection order provisions came into force on 31 May 2023



so,  
what's  
next for  
**WAO?**



2020

2022

2023



**Gender Responsive Budgeting-in-Practice (GRBiP) Programme**



WAO's persistent advocacy aided in achieving amendments to the **Employment Act 1955** on the following:

- **Paternity Leave & Maternity Leave**
- **Anti Sexual Harassment Legislation**
- **Anti Discrimination Against Women Act**

Together with ENGENDER & MoF, WAO conducted ministry training for: **"Gender Responsive Budgeting in Practice (GRBiP)"**

**WAO**

marches onwards,  
championing  
the cause of  
**women's rights & empowerment with unyielding determination!**



# betwEEn

JAN 2022  JUN 2023

# WAO

**ASSISTED**  
**455**  
**WOMEN**

**RECEIVED**  
**5.609**

**TINA WHATSAPP/  
SMS & HOTLINE  
ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



## me?

by Isma (WAO Ambassador)

I am me  
Or so they say

I am me  
Or so I think

But it seems  
That I don't exist

For I am  
A daughter  
A sister  
A wife  
A mother

But never just 'me'

It seems  
I exist

Only in relation  
To you

It seems  
I don't exist

Because it's convenient  
For you

But wait  
There seems to be me

When something is wrong

Then the blame  
Is fully on me  
And it's no one else's fault

So I do exist  
But only to serve  
And only for blame

For I am a woman

Soon  
I will realize  
That I don't need you  
To define who I am

As I am me  
A woman  
Existing  
As I am

Saya seorang yang **tabah**.  
Apa yang saya takut?  
Hingga hari ini hidupku  
tak begitu lepas dari  
penderitaan.

Dah banyak benda-benda  
buruk yang saya telah  
melalui -  
(masa aku kecil mak aku  
dipukul oleh bapa setiap  
hari. Bila bapa aku mati,  
setitik air mata pun tak  
terkeluar dari mata aku) -  
menjadikan saya lemah  
dan penakut.  
Dia menjadi saya penakut.

Sadie, Dewi, Bobo,  
Saya rindu kalian.  
Saya rindu canda tawa  
kalian semua.  
Kalian yang membuat saya  
cuba kuat, tidak sedih.



## EXCERPTS FROM TINA'S JOURNEY

**Beat me down,  
tear at me.**  
But how can  
he hurt our  
beautiful child.



**Angry** as I am when I  
see the hurt that I  
endured all the years.

Angry and the anger  
reigns in me.

Glows in my blood.  
Sweeps through me.  
Angry with myself.



# Inspirational quotes

"You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right."

-Rosa Parks

"Fight for the things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

-Ruth Bader Ginsburg



Stay strong through your pain  
grow flowers from it  
you have helped me  
grow flowers out of mine so  
bloom beautifully  
dangerously  
loudly  
bloom softly  
however you need  
just bloom

-Milk and Honey by Rupi Kaur



“We need women who are so strong they can be gentle, so educated they can be humble, so fierce they can be compassionate, so passionate they can be rational, and so disciplined they can be free.”

-Kavita Ramdas



Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) provides free and confidential services to survivors of domestic violence, rape, and other forms of violence. If you or someone you know is in need of our services, please contact:

 **WAO HOTLINE**  
**+603 3000 8858**

**TINA SMS/WHATSAPP**  
**+6018 988 8058**



Follow us on :



**@WOMENSAIDORG**  
**@WAOVOLUNTEERS**



**WWW.WAO.ORG.MY**

