



WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Women's Aid Organisation
P.O. Box 493 Jalan Sultan
46760 Petaling Jaya
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Malaysia

Tel: +60 3 7957 5636
Tel: +60 3 7956 3488 (counselling)
Fax: +60 3 7956 3237
Email: wao@po.jaring.my

WAO ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Collated and written by Ivy Josiah, Executive Director, on behalf of the Hon. Secretary, WAO Executive Committee 2005/2007.

Reports written by:

Ivy Josiah

Shoba Aiyar

Thillai Mohanadas

Vizla Kumaresan

Daljeen Kaur

Chin Oy Sim

Saralah Devi Mahendran

Wong Su Zane

Annie Varghese

Meera Samanther

Alice Nah (Migration Working Group Report)

WAO Beginnings and History

In 1979, the late Tun Tan Siew Sin was honoured with the Tun Razak Award for his invaluable contribution to the country. He generously donated his cash award of RM30, 000.00 to establish a shelter (Refuge) for battered women and their children. A protem committee headed by Puan Sri E.N. Chong had its first meeting in November 1981. It took 9 months to lay the groundwork and to form a core group of volunteers. These pioneer volunteers worked as a collective to formulate the operating principles of self-help and self-empowerment for battered women who turned to WAO for help.

In June 1982, WAO received temporary registration as a society and a single storey house was rented as WAO's Refuge and office premises.

In 2007 WAO is celebrating her 25th anniversary on the theme "Celebrating 25 Years for Women". Planned activities include celebrations at Actors Studio Bangsar on 5 June 2007 and Arts Exhibition fund raiser in late July 2007.

WAO Philosophy

The fundamental belief of Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) is that no one deserves to be battered. We believe that all human beings have the right to self-determination and should have control over the conditions that shape their lives.

WAO Vision

To create a society that upholds the principles of substantive equality where all women enjoy their human rights in every sphere.

WAO Mission

To promote and create the respect, protection and fulfilment of equal rights for women and to work towards the elimination of discrimination against women, in particular the elimination of violence against women.

WAO Objectives

1. To provide on request to women and their children suffering from mental, physical and sexual abuse, temporary refuge services that empowers and enables them to determine their own future.
2. To offer emotional and social support to women and their children who request for it, resident or otherwise, and offer support and after-care.
3. To undertake and encourage research into any of the factors that contributes to the inequality and subordination of women.
4. To undertake and advocate with government and non-government organisation the eradication of factors that contributes to the inequality and subordination of women.
5. To create awareness and better understanding among individuals, public and relevant agencies on the issues of violence against women and the underlying inequalities.

1.0 TRUSTEES

Toh Puan Datin Dr. Aishah Ong

Rashidah Abdullah

Noor Farida Ariffin

Puan Sri Chong Eu Ngoh

2.0 WAO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2005-2007

The following members of the Executive Committee (EXCO) were elected for a two-year term (2005-2007) at the 22nd Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 7 May 2005 at 10.00 a.m. at WAO Centre, Petaling Jaya.

President:	Meera Samanther
Vice - President:	Shanthi Dairiam
Secretary:	Mok Chuang Lian
Assistant Secretary:	Rozana Isa
Treasurer:	Yeow Ai Lin
Assistant Treasurer:	Sharon Hariharan
Committee members:	Vivienne Lee Iskandar Musfiza Mustapa Wathshlah G Naidu (<i>resigned June '05</i>)
Co-opted member:	Carol Chin (<i>w.e.f. August '05</i>)

The EXCO held 5 committee meetings in 2006.

3.0 WAO COMMITTEES, GROUPS AND COALITIONS IN 2006

1) Staff & Finance Committee	Meera Samanther Mok Chuang Lian Yeow Ai Lin Ivy Josiah
2) CEDAW Shadow Report Group	Ivy Josiah Tashia Peterson Vizla Kumaresan Meera Samanther Nik Noriani Nik Badli Shah, Toni Kasim (Sisters In Islam, SIS) Zarizana Abdul Aziz (Women's Centre for Change, Penang, WCC)

3) Legal Aid Centre (LAC) Representatives	Meera Samanther Jessie Ang
4) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Programme Coordinator	Shoba Aiyar
6) Anak Angkat Coordinator	Saralah Devi Mahendran
7) Volunteer Coordinators	Musfiza Mustapa Thillai Mohanadas
8) Website Design & Content	Jac sm Kee
9) National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) Representatives	Shanthi Dairiam Shoba Aiyar
10) Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) Representatives	Ivy Josiah Meera Samanther Vizla Kumaresan Shanthi Dairiam
11) Malaysian Coalition for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (MCPCSA) Representative	Daljeen Kaur
12) Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) Representative	Ivy Josiah
13) <i>Article 11</i> Representatives	Chin Oy Sim Ivy Josiah Meera Samanther Vizla Kumaresan
14) Member in the National Advisory Council (formerly known as NACIWID)	Ivy Josiah
15) <i>Migration Working Group</i> Representatives	Ivy Josiah Meera Samanther Suzanne Wong Shoba Aiyar Jessie Ang
16) The All PJ ProAction Committee (APPAC)	Meera Samanther

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

In 2006 WAO had 113 listed members and approximately 97 active volunteers.

5.0 STAFF

Refuge

Shoba Aiyar	Social Work Manager
Normah Mohd. Nor	Night Supervisor
Jessie Ang	Social Worker
Nazlina Abd. Ghani	Social Worker
Saralah Devi Mahendran	Social Worker
Wong Su Zane	Social Worker

Child Care Centre (CCC)

Mary Selina Santhanasamy	Child Social Worker
Daljeen Kaur	Child Social Worker
Engammah Anumiah (Vijaya)	Child Minder
Hanif Muk'awanah	Child Minder
Kalayivani Vasuthevan	Child Minder

Executive Staff

Ivy N. Josiah	Executive Director
Annie Varghese	Projects & Administrative Manager
Sharmini Kanesamoorthy	Finance & Administrative Manager
Shoba Aiyar	Social Work Manager

Programme Officer

Vizla Kumaresan	Programme Officer (<i>resigned Dec 06</i>)
Chin Oy Sim	Programme Officer (<i>w.e.f June 06</i>)

Administrative staff

Thillai Mohanadas	Administrative Assistant (WAO Centre)
Puspawati Ismail	Accounts & Administrative Assistant (Refuge)

Project & Contract Staff

Nabila Nasir	Projects Assistant (February – July 2006)
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6.0 WAO AFFILIATIONS

WAO is an affiliate member of:

- National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO)
- Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC)
- Malaysian Coalition for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (MCPCSA)

6.1 WAO Coalition work

WAO acts as secretariat to two coalitions

*Article 11
Migration Working Group*

7.0 WAO SERVICES & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Introduction

Women's Aid Organisation operates in three centres, the WAO Refuge, the WAO Child Care Centre and the WAO Centre, rendering services to women in crisis.

Since the opening of the **WAO Refuge in 1982**, we have provided shelter to women who seek refuge primarily because of domestic violence, and on occasion single pregnant mothers. In recent years WAO is assisting in cases dealing with domestic worker abuse and trafficking. Providing counselling and shelter to Refugee women is yet another recent expansion of our core services.

Furthermore, we have continued to help women through telephone and face-to-face counselling by giving them emotional support and helping them access services provided by various agencies such as the welfare, police and the courts.

The **WAO Child Care Centre, opened in 1990** is a centre for children of ex-residents who have left both our refuge and their former abusive situations to start new lives. With little support elsewhere to help them rebuild their lives, especially in terms of childcare services, the WAO CCC aims to not only provide the children with their physical needs, but also to support them emotionally and mentally.

In November 2004, WAO opened its third centre, the "**WAO Centre**". The centre often referred to as the 3rd Centre, is an administrative and advocacy centre that also acts as a resource for the public. It is also used by the social workers to meet with their clients for counselling.

2006 Figures

Refuge	97 women and 88 children
Face-to-Face Counselling	105 women
Face-to-Face Counselling for Refugee women	118 women
Telephone Counselling	1,475 calls
Child Care Centre	29 children
E-mail enquiries	181 e-mails
Programmes for teenagers of ex-residents	26 youths

WAO services are quite varied, ranging from managing case work of the women who sought shelter, programmes within the Refuge, outreach programmes for ex-residents and on going counselling for ex residents and women who do not need shelter. As of the last four years we have organised special youth development programmes for the teenage children of mothers who have sought the assistance of WAO.

Social workers attend the court cases of our ex residents, arrange for watching brief lawyers and give support to women who have to go through an arduous court system with cases dragging on to 3 years.

In addition, there was supervision and programmes devised for interns, volunteers and women's clubs, conducting programmes for woman and children at the Refuge, public education talks on TV, radio and for magazines, in colleges and social clubs helping students and researches with their studies

The shelter services are the most challenging of the social workers' job. After receiving the telephone call from a woman for help who needs shelter, the social worker has the task of making her comfortable in a house full of strangers who have varied personalities. Then there are the exercises of interviewing and ascertaining all the information to help her reflect, plan, make decisions and to act.

Planning what to do next can be the most difficult for the residents who have experienced domestic violence. Due to the years of abuse and oppression, many find it difficult to seek solutions and problem solve. Some become too dependant and take their time or wait for social workers to help them throughout the way and there are many who just need the affirmation of their decision.

Our work in empowering women is important especially since many are still ignorant of their rights and opportunities. Coupled with case management, the workers had the task of conducting women's, children's programmes and house meetings to attend to numerous grievances and disputes. The latter was quite rampant in 2006, as there were conflicts in personalities of the women at the Refuge. Nevertheless, the workers are more alert to the possibilities of tensions and attend to conflicts immediately, through regular house meetings.

Responding to migrant women is a new area especially when they are refugees and trafficked women. Language, culture, even eating patterns can be a challenge. Luckily with technology of teleconferencing, we managed to use the services of interpreters to talk and discuss with our clients. Social workers had a briefing session from Tenaganita on how to respond to women who were trafficked.¹

The end of 2006 was eventful when an enraged husband rammed his truck into our gate and threw flower pots onto our van at night. Luckily for the solid wooden door and closed windows, the women did not know what had happened until someone thought they had heard something and went to peep through the window. Normah, the night supervisor calmed them and contacted the both the Executive Director and relevant morning staff to attend to the incident. A police report was made immediately made that night by Normah accompanied by the Executive Director. Another similar incident happened a few months later, where another enraged husband damaged the locked gate when his wife and child did not meet him at a stipulated time. To date there has been no progress in the police investigations.

Out of the 97 women, there were 64 women who sought shelter because of **domestic violence** last year. We had varied experiences with them; some were very angry with what their husbands had done to them, some wanted to charge their husbands, others just wanted to leave the abusive situation and be in a safe environment. There were 31 women who gave reasons that the situation at home was so unbearable that they had to leave. Twelve of them actually said they were too scared to stay at home and six of them wanted to pursue other avenues to deal with their husbands.

Although many left their homes and marriage, they had some family support. In fact, there were three women, who had the backing of their in-laws to come to our shelter as their sons would not listen to their advice.

Nearly all of them made police reports but only 14 applied for an Interim Protection Order. Out of this only six (6) got it without any difficulty, while the others faced delays from police and welfare agencies. Some did not pursue with the IPO as they were afraid to jeopardize their husband's jobs.

24 women out of 64 women went back to the abusive situation, citing reasons that they wanted to give their husbands another chance as these husbands agreed to change their ways, some women returned as they putting their children's interests first, such as schooling. There were six (6) women whose children were sick and had to go back.

For the women who wanted to stay independently, we helped them with loans from the Tun Tan Siew Sin Memorial Fund for deposits, household ware and furniture.

Telephone counselling was more in demand this year, we received 1, 475 calls and this may be attributed to WAO on popular TV programmes such as TV 3 Wanita Hari Ini, Astro's Vanavil, Surya FM and THraga, and on Radio AIFm(Mandarin). Some calls came the same day; many came even months after the programmes were aired.

There were also many who 'blocked' the phone lines or there were a few men who said it was inappropriate of us to talk about women's rights! There are others who

¹ Tenaganita has many more years dealing with Immigration authorities and assisting women trafficked into Malaysia from the Asia Pacific region.

expect a lot from us after the talk, especially on legal remedies and financial help and yet others who want us to talk to both parties and not only take the women's side.

E-mail and SMS have been the latest form of communication between new and old clients and with the social workers. We took turns to respond by e mail enquiries

And as usual, our ex-residents and their children do keep in contact. Many call us often to share their frustrations and jubilant moments. Being a single parent and the only wage earner has put immense pressure financially, socially and psychologically on them.

Those who call us feel only we can help and understand their plight in seeking solutions. This is indeed an honour, but the challenge is for staff to meet all of the expectations.

The social work profession can be demanding and stressful and as social workers do experience burn out, so as 2007, WAO will be making arrangements for debriefing sessions with professional counsellors for the all of WAO staff dealing with case management.

7.1.2 Programmes for Women & Children at the Refuge

Refuge residents came together to participate in group activities organized for them by the social workers, interns, chambering students and volunteers. With the assistance of Quota Club, WAO was able to organize many activities for women and children.

Careena Chong an intern from UUM, conducted group exercises on issues of sex and gender, diets and topics related to self-esteem.

Another intern, Laura from Germany, conducted few discussions on self-exploration and self-esteem.

Claire Elias a volunteer conducted several baking classes for refuge residents in April.

Vanitha Chandrasegaram a clinical psychologist from Help University College started a project with WAO "Drama Therapy" from February – August 2006, altogether 14 sessions. Vanitha also conducted a similar project in the Child Care Centre.

On a regular basis the following were conducted:

House meeting: Disputes were often addressed through House Meetings held by the night social worker, Normah, every fortnight or when required. WAO also had the day social workers facilitate House Meetings.

Children's programme: Jessie, Saralah and the interns conducted children's programme in the mornings, which consisted of remedial school work, singing, art therapy and fun activities. Su Zane conducted several discussions through fun activities to talk about violence in their family.

Mother and Children Programme: Su Zane conducted few activities that brought together mothers and their children to have fun and play.

7.1.3 Collaboration with Quota Club

In 2006, Quota Club provided a lot of assistance to WAO in conducting programmes for women. This included outings and sessions on skills building and personal development.

Yoga Class : 8 sessions
Line Dance : 4 sessions
Make –up class : 1 session
Tea Party : 4 sessions
Handicraft : 6 sessions

Quota Club also sponsored “*My Life, My Emotions, My Personal Note Book*”. This project is quite similar to the Scrap Book Project where each resident is given a scrap book. This book is in 4 languages. Women can write down their memories, their thoughts about their stay in WAO.

7.2 Child Care Centre

Since the opening of the Child Care Centre (CCC) in 1990, the support services for the, the mothers, who are ex residents from the Refuge, have expanded to support for their teenage children through youth camps and self development workshops.

The **CCC** is very different from other child care centres as it is possibly the only centre in Malaysia that caters specifically to the needs of mothers who have been victims of domestic violence.

At the CCC, the children are given a safe home with a secure and stable environment. Their food, clothing and educational requirements are cared for. More importantly, their emotional needs are given supportive attention by qualified social workers. The mothers frequently go to the WAO Child Care Centre to spend time with their children, and are assured to see that their children are well cared for whilst they are striving to build a future for their family. The goal for the mothers is to set up their own homes and to have their children back with them and to become one family unit. The mothers usually take six (6) months to a year to achieve this goal.

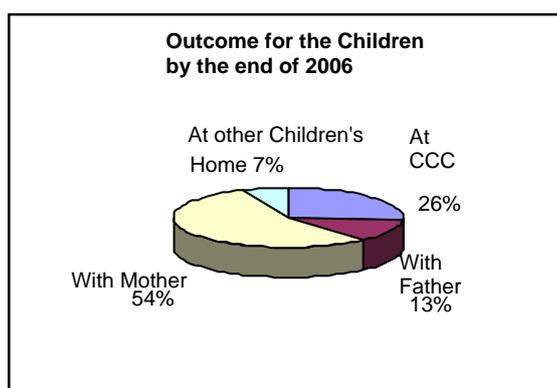
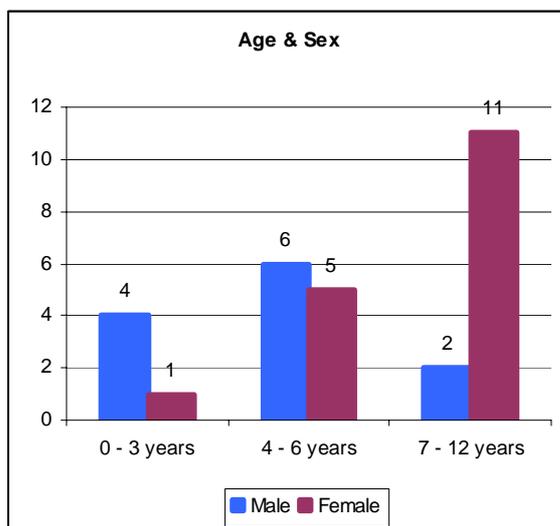
Between 1990 and the end of 2006, a total of 126 mothers and their 276 children have used the services of the CCC.

We began 2006 with 14 children and during the course of the year we welcomed 14 new children and four (4) former residents. The majority of children (15) stayed at the Centre for under a year. This was encouraging news as it signified that mothers were able to be independent and the children benefited by being reunited with their mothers.

By the end of the year a total of 29 children from 13 families benefited from the facilities. At the end of the year, there were eight children remaining.

Further information on the 29 children is provided below:

Ethnicity		
	Number	Percentage
Chinese	3	10.3%
Indian	21	72.4%
Malay	5	17.3%
Total	29	100.0%



Physical, developmental, educational and emotional needs of the children are addressed through Group work and individual sessions. Through drama, story telling and art work, the children are able to vocalize their emotions. Volunteers and staff assisted the children with their homework and prepared two girls for UPSR.

In 2006, volunteers, sponsors and staff organized and facilitated a number of fun activities. Among them were trips to the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO), Ostrich Farm, Port Dickson, Aquaria, movies, parties, picnics and swimming. The primary school children also participated in a workshop on magic and a children's camp. CCC staff also organized a Family Day filled with games and arts and crafts activities for mothers and children of the Centre.

Volunteers assist us in many ways including tutoring, conducting art activities and taking the children on outings. Our thanks goes out to Carol Chin, Sharon Hariharan, Patricia Loh, Rachel Chew, Carol Ng, Wahome, William Ng, Corrine Gomis, Urmela Singh, Impaljit Jassal, Kelly Chan, Joanne Lim, Elaine Chew, Sharon Lim, Kogilavani Govindarajee and Umami Nadirah.

Vanitha Chandrasegaram, a lecturer with Help University, conducted Drama Therapy sessions with the children.

We were fortunate to have five (5) interns with us during the year, Stephanie and Kristina from Germany, Diya Ghosh and Breana Charles from the US and a local intern, Careena Chong.

Stephanie, Kristina and Breana conducted arts and crafts sessions and School Holiday Programs. Careena tutored the children and conducted aerobics classes. Diya assisted us during Family Day.

7.2.1 A new study room

Staff and children welcomed a new space to the CCC, a much needed Study Room which was sponsored by the German Embassy. Prior to this, children studied in the living room which also was a TV room, and was not conducive for studying. Work on the room began in October and now houses the computers and a small library. In November we had an opening of the CCC Study Room with a party and Mr Jergen Bieber, the third Secretary of the German Embassy and his children were the guest of honour.

7.2.3 Staff Development

As part of staff development, Vijaya attended a course on child development organized by Majlis Kebajikan dan Pembangunan Masyarakat Kebangsaan Malaysia (MAKPEM). Knowledge gained by Mary Selina during the Victoria Readers beginning English course has helped us tremendously.

7.3 Face-to-face Counselling for Women refugees at the WAO Centre

WAO work with UNHCR began in 2003 with WAO sheltering two (2) Kurdish families from Iran, who were eventually resettled in New Zealand. After studying our services, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) approached us as an implementing partner to counsel the sexual and gender-based violence survivors in the asylum and refugee communities at their premises in Bukit Petaling.

The sessions began with one (1) social worker providing counselling once a week to about three (3) clients. In 2004, two (2) social workers provided counselling and conducted support group sessions for the survivors.

In 2005, three (3) social workers took turns to provide individual counselling once a week, not only to gain experience but to reduce the incidence of burnout from the intensive counselling sessions. Sometimes there were up to five clients per day, with each session lasting between 30 to 60 minutes.

In 2006 we were again approached by UNHCR to do new programme – incident taking of SGBV experienced by refugee women as well as continuing with counselling, training for the community and running support groups.

In the first half of the year, we concentrated on counselling and running a support group for about 15 women, who had survived some form of sexual abuse.

In the second half, we worked on formulating the module for the community leaders-both men and women to identify, understand and assist victims amidst their community. There were six weekend workshops conducted to carry out the module.

(Refer to Report below on **SGBV Community Training for Myanmar Refugee Men and Women Leaders**)

Incident report taking was conducted at the WAO Centre on a Tuesday. As UNHCR was down sizing its community service division, we were asked to assist them in reporting experiences that traumatized women who were victims of sexual, physical and psychological violence.

We use the services of an interpreter, whom we had identified through the community programmes or on recommendation from UNHCR. A social worker will conduct the interview to ascertain the facts of a situation that needed her to have the SGBV incident report.

The social worker would then do an assessment and if need arises, refer her to various agencies such as a medical facility or to UNHCR for further action. Sometimes we refer them to their respective communities and at other times we follow up with counselling by a WAO social worker.

Friends or community leaders bring the women to our centre. If, they are 'cold cases' but are still traumatized by the events, the social worker would have a counselling session with her. Then, the social worker will write her report on the incident and state what the client wants. This will be sent to a focal point at UNHCR within a week, which is then sent to the relevant departments.

UNHCR uses the report as an introduction to the client's problems and further seek elaboration from the contents for their interview, so as not to traumatize her in re telling her ordeal all over again.

From August till December 2006, we have documented the incident reports of 20 women.

Our counselling services at the UNHCR premises ceased. Many women scheduled for counselling did not come for the appointments when registration for refugees closed. However, we continued this service at either our premises or at one of the community centres. The community outreach work has sensitized the community to our services. Further more, the community leaders (male and female) have been very resourceful in calling us when they have a woman who needs our help.

In total we attended to 118 women last year, some had more than one counselling session, and while others although needing counselling found they could not afford the transport costs to the WAO Centre.

7.4 SGBV Community Training for Myanmar Refugee Men and Women Leaders

As part of UNHCR 's efforts to get NGOS to work with and for the refugee community, WAO was asked again to raise awareness through training programmes for both men and women on SGBV for the various Myanmar communities around Malaysia .

Social workers wanted to embark on this community work and we learnt through trial and error on how to prepare a training module which consisted of interactive games, group discussions and presentations, lectures, psycho- drama and case studies.

The most interesting part in the preparatory stage was coming up with visuals in the form of photographs and pictures. The whole training module was pre-tested on male and female interpreters, who were going to help us with the translation.

The trainers were Su Zane Wong, Nazlina Abdul Ghani and Shoba Aiyar. Two men trainers Joseph Roy and Lam were recruited to do the men's workshop while the staff from WAO facilitated the women. However, at times, some of the male trainers were not available, and one of us would take turns to co-facilitate the men's training. The training ran over two full weekends in one of their community centres or homes.

The topics covered were - What are rights and needs, UN conventions, functions of UNHCR and how one can access them, Sex and Gender, different types of violence under SGBV, feelings of a victim and public perceptions, helping processes and techniques, how the leaders and community members can intervene and charting out the various community resources

We started our training in May 2006 with the Chin Community, which is the biggest ethnic refugee group in Kuala Lumpur. The training started with 16 women and 20 men leaders who were in separate community centres in the heart of the city.

The women were middle aged to elderly and were very soft spoken and humble. They wore their traditional costume- the braided sarong and plain blouse. They cooked their own kind of food for the meals. We had two interpreters to translate, it was a real challenge to get the women to engage in a conversation and share their knowledge about the topics. Some were victims themselves and when we spoke about the different forms of abuse and emotional state they go through, it really hit home.

Some were brave to talk about it and others spoke on their behalf. Some chose to be silent or left the room when they were affected by the topic. However, at the end of the two days, some of the women expressed how they now will not treat their boy and girl child differently and that what men can do definitely women can do too, especially in being leaders and making decisions in their lives.

However, with the men's group, the experience was different. The Chin men were more educated and vocal. They voiced out their opinions at about every segment and the trainers and UNHCR reps did their best in handling queries and opinions. Most of the men did not think men and women can experience equality and used their scriptures to justify that men were leaders and head of the home. Somehow, after the two days, they had broadened their outlook and were open to the idea especially when women were isolated and alone in a foreign land.

As such, very similar sentiments and perceptions were seen and experienced among other ethnic Myanmar minorities such as the Rohingya, Myanmar Muslims, Kachin, Karin, Karini, Mon, Shan and others. We even conducted training for Achenese men in a shack near the Putra Jaya jungle. Most of the trainings were around Kuala Lumpur, Puchong and Ampang.

In 2007 we plan to continue training for the communities and introduce a new training module to support the women who have expressed a need for more empowerment.

8.0 WAO CENTRE ACTIVITIES

The WAO 3rd Centre, as it is commonly known, opened in late 2004. Staffed by the advocacy, public education and fund raising personnel, 2006 saw a number of meetings and activities at the 3rd Centre.

Funding from the Austrian German Swiss Association for rental of the Centre's premises was assured for one more year.

For our advocacy work, the WAO Centre acts as a hub for coalition meetings, evaluation meetings, press conferences, press interviews, meetings with researchers and possible funders. Aside from volunteer orientations, EXCO meetings were held here too.

Face to Face counselling for Refugee woman took place in the Counselling Room at the WAO Centre.

The Resource Room cum Library looked after by our part-time staff, Mariam Salleh was useful for staff, journalists and researchers.

9.0 ANAK ANGKAT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

It was a fruitful and wonderful year for the children of our ex-residents. There were 50 children who were recipients of the programme. The RM 60 per month received by the children was used for their schooling and transport expenses.

We would like to thank the following for their generosity:

Robert Gan	Dorothy Gan (2)	Indra Kulasegaran
Juliana Solomon	Annapoorni Chandrasekhar	Kathleen Chin (2)
V.Ravindran	Faridah Mohammad (13)	Tengku Falidah
Chin Kean Wai	St.Patrick's Society (10)	Toh Yung Fei
Zameema Banu	Modal Rantau-Inti Sdn.Bhd	Pramila Lee
Alison	Chong Pek Yee	Peter Lee
99 DA Group Centre (5)	Mission Synergy Sdn.Bhd	Lim Keng Hock

This year's coordinator Saralah Devi Mahendran, allocated two days to meet up with the mother and their child/children to discuss their educational progress soon after they finished their term exams. Many had progressed from doing poorly to an average score. There were a few children who had done very well and were proud to share this with Saralah.

The AA programme is also an opportunity for our **outreach programme** for ex residents as mothers to share their worries about their children, who had exhibited behavioural problems or had poor educational aptitude. Either the mother or child were counselled and motivated to do better. Many mothers had high expectations of their children but were not able to help them, as either they did not have the time, the energy or the resources.

To address the mothers concerns Saralah organized a one-day **motivation and a study skills camp**. The **Annual Youth Camp**, held in Port Dickson was organized by other social workers followed the earlier camp during last term holidays. The youths then joined all for the end of year party at the Refuge where they read moving poems and messages to their mothers

Home visits were conducted for some families and family conferences were conducted to iron out differences and challenges faced by them. In addition, there were many hi-teas; shows and events the families were invited to, through out the year.

10.0 LEGAL AID CLINIC PROGRAMME

To complement the work of the social workers at the Refuge, we sought the assistance of chambering student or pupils attached to the Legal Aid Centres (LAC) of the Bar Council of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor respectively. The students assist in informing women of their rights in marriage, choice of legal remedies including legal protection from the domestic violence

This joint cooperation with the Legal Aid Centre started four years ago. It started with one student from LAC Kuala Lumpur and since 2006, we have a pupil from LAC Selangor, who each come to the Refuge once a week, a Monday or on a Friday from 10 am till 4.30 pm.

10.1 Activities and Objectives of the Clinic

1. To provide free legal advice to our telephone and shelter clients
2. To expose the chambering students to the various problems faced by WAO clients in the hope that they will then use the skills and empathy to deal with other such clients upon entering the legal practice
3. To instil in the students advocacy skills for legal reform
4. To encourage volunteerism of their time and effort upon entering practice.

The chambering student starts by attending the LAC/AWAM/WAO/SIS training for one day. The syllabus includes family law, Syariah law, gender issues, violence against women and feminism. Listening and helping skills are also incorporated.

Upon arrival at the Refuge, the student has to read the Refuge operational manuals and past reports to have a 'feel' of the work. Usually a student from the previous batch helps to orientate and give pointers to the new student. Then she is put in the deep end-so to speak to handle the cases as they come. Occasionally, the social workers or the coordinator is around to assist her initially or when cases are complicated for the student.

Social work is very demanding, and having the chambering students has helped our social workers look at situations more practically in the face of law and its realistic application. We are happy that at times the students are also willing to take out their shoes and spend time with the women and their children in the various rooms of the refuge; budding them, chatting with them, playing and singing with them.

This year, we have had 9 students who had handled the telephone lines(117), face to face interviews (16), recording documentation of cases (11), gathering more information on some points of law (8), accompanying women to the courts(9), police stations(4) and the hospital(1).

11.0 INTERNS AT WAO

WAO hosted 11 interns in 2006 from America, Australia, Canada, England, Germany, and Malaysia. They chose WAO to learn and gain in-depth experience regarding domestic violence, its impact on women and children and advocacy for women's human rights.

They were an integral part of our WAO team and handled everything from phones calls, organizing children's and women programmes, researching and writing, drafting of the WAO newsletters, accompanying the women to courts, police stations and hospitals, and volunteering at our public education booths.

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

The intern's contribution to WAO's work is invaluable and our work culture and environment became more dynamic with their presence. We thank the following:

1) Diya Ghosh	University of Pennsylvania, USA	18 Jan– 12 Mar
2) Janice Lim	University of Warwick, UK	6 Feb – 17 Mar
3) Laura DeVillbis	University of Oregon, USA	10 Mar – 31 May
4) Chong Lee Keat	University Utara Malaysia	8 May – 8 Aug
5) Satya Rekha	University Malaya	17 May – 9 June
6) Wong Woan Foong	Oberlin College, USA	5 June - 30 July
7) Aubrey Pacheco	York University, Canada	5 June – 30 July
8) Lee Hai Li	Inns of Court, School of Law UK	5 June – 30 July
9) Denise McKay	University of Oregon, USA	24 July–30 Sept
10) Christine DeSantis	University of Toronto, Canada	25 July–30Sept
11) Breanna Charles	University of California, USA	10July– 22 Dec

12.0 VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS

At WAO we make a distinction between volunteers and members. Not all volunteers are members. Members are eligible to attend and vote at AGMs to form the EXCO.

12.1 Volunteer Development

We conducted 9 volunteer orientations on an average of one every two months. The majority of volunteers comprised college students due to the numerous public education talks held in various colleges. New volunteers became aware of WAO through the media, website and by word of mouth were among the other ways.

The number of volunteers increased from 95 to 120. At the CCC, volunteers gave tuition to the children on a regular basis. For 3 months a group of 5 volunteers went to the CCC on Fridays to conduct games, music sessions as well as arts and crafts sessions.

The buddy system was introduced in October 2006 as a follow up from the evaluation conducted by Angela Kuga Thas. Staff and volunteers were paired up according to areas of interest. Staffs were required to keep contact as well as update their 'buddy' on WAO's events. This was to boost the spirit and to build a good relationship between WAO and the volunteers. Depending on the area of work, each staff was designated with either one, two or three volunteers. This has had varying success, either the volunteer herself did not respond to calls or the "buddies", i.e. the staff simply did not have time to nurture and keep in touch with the volunteer.

The idea of renewing the buddy system came out of the regular volunteer meetings held every 3rd Saturday. Initiated by the Executive Director these regular meetings for the members and volunteers is to create an opportunity to get together on a consistent basis to discuss issues, update volunteers, plan for upcoming events as well as to develop an independent group of volunteers. We also wanted to make sure that any volunteer or member can feel assured that they can meet with WAO people every 3rd Saturday.

The meetings are held at the WAO Centre and are attended by existing volunteers and new volunteers. In particular, one of our faithful volunteers Sam has been taking the minutes and leading this group. A member of the Staff, usually Annie Varghese will also be in attendance.

During the launch of Domestic Violence Posters for the Police, the volunteers turned up in full force to support and lend a hand in the public education event. A total 9 energetic volunteers were seen handing out brochures, selling t-shirts and badges to those who attended the launch.

WAO would like to record its thanks to the volunteers who have consistently contributed their time and energy at the CCC for many years.

12.2 Training Programme for Volunteer-Counsellors

There were two training programmes for volunteers who were interested in helping with the telephone counselling.

Objectives of this training:

- To develop a group of counselling volunteers to assist social workers in telephone counselling;
- To develop a sustainable system for volunteer counsellors.

The duration of the training module is 24 hours. The module consists of:

- Basic Counselling Theory and Practice (8hrs)
- On the Job Training (12hrs)
- Supervision & Case Discussion (4hrs)

Volunteers were expected to:

- Attend at least 90% of the training
- Be able to use the skills to help clients through the phone
- Have an openness and ability to detach themselves from the client's problems after the volunteering time
- Able to finish their home work
- Be responsible and be committed to the work

It was required that the volunteers complete 15 calls before an evaluation takes place. There were four (4) people who attended the first training, 8 people attended the second training. In the end, only eight (8) of them completed the entire training but some of them have yet to finish their minimum requirement of having attended to 15 calls as there were not many calls on that day at the Refuge when they were in attendance.

We are still trying to formulate a proper system for our volunteer-counsellors. They normally come in pairs for half a day on a Saturday. However, sometimes there are not that many calls for them to attend to, so we began coming on weekdays to complete the minimum requirement.

This demand on their time was hard for some of them to commit to and which led to many pulling out. The other difficulty is that the Refuge Social Workers were too busy to give proper supervision. This led to the volunteers feeling that they did not have enough support and guidance.

Currently we have 4 active volunteer counsellors from the pool.

13.0 ADVOCACY

2006 marked WAO's active role the *Article 11 coalition*, in organising public forums on "Federal Constitution Protection for all" that led to "advice" from the Prime Minister to stop the forums in the light of threats from other forces.

The other significant event was the culmination of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Shadow Report process whereby WAO actively participated in the CEDAW Session when Malaysia reported to the CEDAW Committee in New York.

Our advocacy work is in essence upholding the human rights of women by using the CEDAW framework and in particular WAO focuses on the implementation of CEDAW, reform of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA), rights of women in the family, women in migration issues including rights of refugee women in Malaysia.

Documentation and bringing real life experiences of women into our lobby efforts to bring about a law and policy change is an effective strategy.

At WAO we document the experiences of women who have been battered, do not have protection from interim protection orders, been abused and exploited by an employer, betrayed by a husband who converted their children without her consent or sexually harassed by police on the pretext of checking a woman's migrant status. These and more are the stories that are compel WAO to strengthen our advocacy work.

Within WAO to keep track of our advocacy and to strategise we meet on a fortnightly basis at Staff meetings. We also have an internal advocacy group made up of programme officers, social workers, the ED and President of WAO. We had two meetings on 2006, one in March and the other in August. .

13.1 Advocacy by Joint Action Group Action Group on Gender Equality (JAG)

Another strategy for advocacy is to have united and vociferous voices and WAO works closely with the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) coalition to lobby on laws pertaining to rape, sexual harassment, Islamic family law, workers' rights and laws that discriminate against women.

For the second time JAG – VAW met over a two - day period on 25 and 26 February in Penang to evaluate its work. Once again we updated each other in our respective work, and evaluated our joint work. The emphasis this time was the need to reach out to women's groups with large memberships, like women's wings of political parties to share with them our goals and objectives in our advocacy work for gender equality.

Also, we confirmed that we will have a name change from ***Joint Action Group Against Violence Against Women*** to ***JAG on Gender Equality*** as increasingly our work is beyond VAW.

13.1.1 Final lobbying with the Parliamentary Select Committee for Amendments to the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, May 2006

The Parliamentary Select Committee for Amendments to the Penal Code (PC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) issued their much awaited report and proposed amendments to the legislations in May 2006. The Select Committee's Report was the product of nearly two years of research and dialogue with various parties including JAG, the Attorney General, police, Bar Council, Federal Court registry, prison authorities and members of the public. JAG itself met with the Select Committee twice in 2005, and twice again in 2006.

The Committee's final proposed amendments included, among others, changes to the definition of rape, and criminalising the act of threatening a woman with violence in order to have sex with her. However, the exception that excludes husbands from convicted of rape was not removed.

Furthermore although JAG had proposed changes to the Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code in relation to the DVA, these were not included in the committee's proposals. JAG's suggestions for implementing laws on stalking were not included in the proposed amendments too.

JAG responded by producing a leaflet on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on these proposed changes, and had used this to explain to the media and the public the effect of the proposed changes to the legislations.

JAG then launched an active lobbying strategy in the corridors of parliament and observed the debates. The FAQs were disseminated widely to MPs. A press conference was held at Parliament House to express JAG's opinions of the proposed changes, and to alert the media and the public of JAG's intent to lobby MPs.

JAG expressed its disappointment with the Committee's recommendations as it appeared that the reforms to the PC and the CPC were taken in a piecemeal fashion.

The very visible lobbying efforts by JAG in Parliament paid off to some extent as MPs including male MPS stood up to ask for explanations as to why marital rape was not included by the Select Committee's recommendations.

13.2 Implementation of CEDAW

By end 2005, the NGO Shadow Report was complete and it was in the hands of the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) to publish it. In 2006, NCWO did another round of editing and added on more information to some of the chapters.

In January 2006, IWRAW Asia Pacific alerted women's groups in Malaysia that aside from sending the Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee we need to submit **a list of critical issues** for the Committee's pre-session in January 2006 (34th CEDAW Session)

Tashia Peterson quickly wrote up a list and JAG members gave their input into the list of critical or prioritised issues based on concerns raised in the Malaysian NGO Shadow Report and recent developments in the country. The issues were on:

- Constitution, legislation and national machinery for the advancement of women
- Reservations
- Stereotypes and discriminatory customs and practices
- Trafficking of women
- Participation in public life and decision-making
- Citizenship
- Employment
- Legal System
- Marriage and family relations
- Violence against women

13.2 .1 Launch of the Malaysian NGO CEDAW Shadow Report

The NGO CEDAW Shadow Report on the Government of Malaysia's Initial and Second periodic Report on CEDAW is the work of a coalition of individuals and women's groups under a project initiated by the NCWO in 2003.

This Report was officially launched on 5th May 2006 at the *Maktab Kerjasama Malaysia* in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

Copies of the Shadow Report were distributed to all those who attended the event which included the press and has since been distributed to various NGOs and interested individuals.

At the launch of the Shadow Report the CEDAW, the NGO team that was going to the 35th CEDAW Session in New York was introduced. The team was made up of Ivy Josiah, Meera Samanther, Vizla Kumareson, Dr. Hamidah Karim from NCWO, Zaitun Kasim from SIS and Zarizana Abdul Aziz from WCC, Penang. The launch was co-organised by WAO and NCWO.

Ivy and Dr. Hamidah Karim were the first team that went to New York to participate in the Global-to-Local training programme organised by IWRAW-AP. The programme provided them training on how to write the NGO statement to the CEDAW Committee and on how to lobby the members of the Committee. The rest of the team who arrived later were then briefed by the two.

The team lobbied various members of the Committee to raise specific issues with the Government when they reported to the Committee. Some of the issues lobbied for were amendments to the Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) (IFL), rights of migrant domestic workers, the need for a gender equality bill and for gender sensitisation of the judiciary.

During the NGO presentation to the Committee, Zaitun Kassim and Hamidah Karim read a 5 page statement to highlight once again urgent matters that needed to be addressed when Malaysia reported. This was followed by questions from the Committee.

On the day Malaysia reported to the Committee, the NGO team were in attendance. The lunch hour was used by the team to highlight and clarify further issues that were raised by the Government, especially on the misinformation on the Islamic Family Law and marital rape. The team in fact wrote down the points, printed and distributed to members of the Committee. These issues were addressed when the dialogue with the Malaysian Government continued after lunch.

Refer to **Appendix A** for the NGO statement.

13.2.2 Follow Up to the CEDAW Reporting Session

As a follow up to the Reporting session and upon receiving the Concluding Comments

for Malaysia, the NGO team decided to come up with a memorandum that highlighted the Concluding Comments and the Government's obligations to fully implement CEDAW.

NCWO and WAO organised a one-day workshop for women NGOs in September.

The workshop entitled "Towards Full Implementation of CEDAW" achieved the following:

- I. Shared the NGO teams' experience in New York
- II. Began the work of outlining specific actions for each concluding comment
- III. Formed a group to start working on a memorandum

WAO coordinated the writing of the Memorandum on the Concluding Comments.

13.3 Annual Dialogue with the MWFC

WAO was invited to participate in the annual dialogue with the MWFC which was held in August 2006. In June WAO had first sent to the MWFC a memorandum that contained the issues that we wanted to raise. These issues were reform to the DVA, amending citizenship laws to allow foreign husbands of local women to obtain citizenship and information on Rumah Nur. The Ministry had announced that it will open counselling centres cum shelters for women called Rumah Nur. WAO proposed that our social workers would be able to provide training to the staff of Rumah Nur.

At the dialogue, WAO again raised the issues from the memorandum. We were informed that the reform to the DVA was ongoing, and that we would be informed of further meetings.

The Memorandum also asked for more allocations of funds for NGO - run shelter homes which, surprisingly we received in 2006. The Ministry's Welfare Department did give WAO RM 81, 000 in 2006 compared to the RM 21, 000 we have been receiving for several years.

13.4 Reform of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994

In 2006 WAO's continued efforts with JAG to bring the reform to the DVA through the Parliamentary Select Committee process and subsequently a WAO Memorandum to the MWFC for their Annual Dialogue were not a success.

However we continued lobbying the Ministry to urge them to take action on the long over due promises to act on the several letters, proposals and memorandums over the past 5 years

The ministry responded usually by saying that they were understaffed but finally the legal officer did call for another meeting in November 2006 with the AG chambers and various NGOs including WAO to discuss the Ministry's proposals.

Finally, in August 2006 En. Razif, the legal officer from the MWFC called for a meeting to discuss the proposed amendments to the Domestic Violence Act (DVA). The meeting was held to reveal some of the proposed changes to the DVA, and to

get some feedback on the changes. WAO attended the meeting, and again pointed out that the Penal Code (PC), Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) and regulations and protocols had to be amended for DVA to be more effective. En. Razif said that the other legislations would be amended as a consequence of the DVA, and will happen only after the DVA is amended.

After the meeting WAO held an internal meeting to discuss the proposed changes. Other JAG members had also given their opinions on the proposed changes. All feedback was incorporated into a memorandum and was sent to the MWFCD. The memorandum also outlined all amendments that were needed in other legislations, regulations and protocols.

As part of WAO's reform to the domestic violence act in both law and policy, we began working with the police in 2005. In 2005, after the meeting with the IGP, the police agreed to put up posters on Domestic Violence in every police station.

In 2006 WAO worked with designers from Arc World Wide to come up with suitable designs of the poster. These designs were taken to the D9 unit at Bukit Aman, and their feedback was incorporated to get the final design.

The posters were launched on November 25th 2006, International Day Against Violence Against Women. Refer to **17. 3.1 Launch of WAO Police Poster on 25 November 2006** of this report.

13.5 Migration Working Group

In March 2006, Alice Nah, a volunteer at the Human Rights Society of Malaysia (HAKAM) and an academic approached WAO to request our organisation to act as a secretariat to bring together several groups and individuals working on migration issues.

This idea was actually mooted during the UNHCR annual roundtable discussion held in January 2006. At the annual roundtable discussion while looking at issues related to refugees, WAO raised a point that NGOs may need to form a coalition to defend the rights of migrant workers including domestic workers, trafficked women and refugees.

Furthermore, there were no comprehensive proposals or joint memorandums to reform the Immigration Act or the migration policy in Malaysia. So Alice Nah together with WAO initiated several meetings with NGOs and eventually formed the Migration Working Group.

13.5.1 About the Migration Working Group (MWG)

The Migration Working Group (MWG) is a network of Malaysian NGOs and individuals (researchers, lawyers, writers and volunteers) who work on migration issues and with migrants in Malaysia and was initiated by Alice Nah and WAO in early 2006.

The following NGOs are linked within the MWG Network:

1. Women's Aid Organisation
2. The National Human Rights Society (HAKAM)
3. Labour Resource Centre (LRC)
4. Tenaganita
5. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)

6. Amnesty International Malaysia (AIM)
7. Penang Office for Human Development (POHD)
8. A Call to Serve (ACTS)
9. All Women's Action Society (AWAM)
10. Malaysian Care
11. Shelter
12. KOMAS
13. ALIRAN
14. Legal Aid Centre (Kuala Lumpur)
15. Malaysian Bar Council

We are continuing to recruit NGOs and individuals, and have already invited the following organizations to join us: Migrant Care, National Office for Human Development and Harvest Centre.

We have strong affiliations with Migrant Forum in Asia, Forum Asia, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Medecins Sans Frontieres, and CARAM-Asia.

13.5.2 The purposes of the MWG are to:

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

We envisage that these joint lobbying and advocacy strategies:

- a) Will be led and owned by Malaysian civil society
- b) Will be based on a holistic view of migration, with specific attention paid to particularly vulnerable groups (e.g. asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, trafficked persons, domestic workers, undocumented workers, exploited documented workers)

13.5.3 MWG Activities

The MWG first met on the 27th of March 2006. We are in the process of developing processes for our network, and have embarked on the following:

i) MWG Baseline Report on the Problems Facing Migrants in Malaysia

The first activity of the MWG was to produce a first draft of a MWG Baseline Report on the Problems Facing Migrants in Malaysia. This will be our joint working document that details:

A summary of problems/issues related to the area, with facts and contributing factors identified
 Case examples to illustrate the problem
 A summary of existing remedies already used by NGOs and organizations to address this problem
 Recommendations

This *Baseline Report* helps us to develop a common and comprehensive understanding of the problems faced by migrants in Malaysia, and helps us to anchor our joint objectives and action plans over the long term.

ii) Training & Planning Advocacy Workshop

The MWG organized an Advocacy Workshop from 27-29 July 2006, and we plan to continue holding one every year. The workshop will have training, sharing of skills, ideas and planning for advocacy.

The objectives of the first workshop were:

- a. Get all the NGOs and individuals working on migrant issues and with migrants to come together,
- b. Discuss our experiences of working with migrants and law enforcement agencies,
- c. Review the lobbying and advocacy mechanisms available to us at national, regional, and international levels (with deadlines and deliverables),
- d. Plan joint lobbying and advocacy strategies (with deadlines, methods, working mechanisms and campaign themes)

Several international and regional organizations were present as resource person/experts, namely: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Migrant Forum in Asia, Forum Asia, Medecins Sans Frontieres, and Caram-Asia.

This Workshop became the event that consolidated the MWG.

iii) MWG Email List

Members of the MWG are linked to one another by a closed, private email list. The purpose of this list is to:

- a) Foster confidential information sharing amongst MWG members
- b) Act as a private platform for discussion and joint-planning

There are currently 53 members on the MWG Email list, representing 18 organisations.

iv) Co-coordinators and Secretariat of the MWG

The co-coordinators of the MWG Network are:

Alice Nah, Academic
Ivy Josiah, WAO
K. Shan, Activist

The Secretariat for the MWG is Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), a founding member of the MWG.

13.6 *Article 11* Coalition ²

The year 2006 was an eventful and fruitful one for the *Article 11* coalition, during which WAO contributed actively in its role as the group's co-secretariat.

Article 11 was formed in mid-2004 in response to cases, such as Shamala's, that highlighted the problems faced by some Malaysians, involving the interpretation of certain provisions of the Federal Constitution. The coalition is named after Article 11 of the Federal Constitution, which guarantees every person the right to profess and practise his or her religion. Its members are drawn from a spectrum of diverse organisations including religious, women's rights and human rights groups as well as the Bar Council.

S. Shamala is a Hindu mother whose husband converted to Islam. He converted their two infant children to Islam without her knowledge or consent. The civil High Court did not recognise Shamala's equal rights as a parent of the child, and ordered her to raise her children as Muslims and not expose them to her own Hindu faith. It said that since the children are now Muslims, the Syariah Court is the only qualified forum to determine their religious status, even though the judge acknowledged that the Syariah Court has no jurisdiction to hear Shamala's case since she is not a Muslim. As a result, Shamala did not have any avenue to seek relief.

Shamala's lawyers had approached the women's groups and requested they provide counselling to Shamala and assist her during her court case. Shamala's case brought home the point that the constitutional role of the civil High Court as the protector of the ordinary citizen's rights was fast becoming illusory. The implications of this case became the rallying force that drew together a small number of concerned organisations, and *Article 11* was born.

13. 6.1 Mission

Article 11's early concerns centred on freedom of religion - hence its name - including the right of non-Muslim parents like Shamala to have equal say regarding the religious upbringing of their children when their spouses embraced Islam.

As cases such as Shamala's, Lina Joy's and Moorthy's unfolded, it became evident that other significant issues were also at stake, such as the areas of conflict between civil law and state Islamic law enactments, protection of fundamental liberties and access to justice. Furthermore, these cases, along with various concurrent events, exposed how the status of the Federal Constitution as the supreme law of the land was being gradually undermined.

Article 11 consequently evolved and expanded the scope of its work to encompass these issues. Its current mission is to ensure a Malaysia that (i) upholds the supremacy of the Federal Constitution; (ii) protects every person equally, regardless of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender; and (iii) is firmly established in, and upholds, the rule of law.

² Article 11(1) of the Federal Constitution states: "Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and, subject to Clause (4), to propagate it."

13.6.2 Open Letter

In March 2006 the coalition embarked on a campaign to collect signatures for its open letter to the Prime Minister, entitled “Reaffirming the supremacy of the Federal Constitution” (<http://www.petitiononline.com/constsup/petition.html>). The open letter called upon the government/judiciary to uphold the Federal Constitution as the supreme law of the nation and to ensure governance in accordance with it, to reaffirm that Malaysia shall not become a theocratic state, and to recognise the judiciary as an independent and equal arm of Government.

The initiative garnered broad public support and was successful in raising public awareness of these matters and of the coalition’s goals. In June 2006 *Article 11* handed over the open letter to the Prime Minister’s office along with approximately 20,000 signatures.

13.6.3 Public forums

Article 11 spearheaded a road show of public forums entitled “Federal Constitution: Protection for All” as its principal public education activity in 2006. The forums were staged in four different cities -- Petaling Jaya, Malacca, Penang and Johor Bahru) -- and featured activists, academics, lawyers and politicians as speakers.

WAO played a principal role in organising the forums. In addition, WAO’s Executive Director, Ivy Josiah, spoke at the first forum, and WAO’s President Meera Samanther at the second and fourth forums.

The discussion focussed primarily on the rights that the Federal Constitution, as the supreme law of Malaysia, guarantees to all persons living in Malaysia. The forums also drew attention to the dilemmas of various individuals who claim their constitutional rights have been infringed but are unable to have access to justice.

Although the first two forums proceeded smoothly, the remaining two forums were severely disrupted by aggressive protests organised by BADAI (Badan Anti IFC - the Anti-Interfaith Commission). BADAI incorrectly accused *Article 11* of attempting to revive the Interfaith Commission (IFC), encouraging apostasy and insulting Syariah law and Islam.

A few days after the Johor Bahru forum, the Prime Minister called for a halt to all interfaith discussions and the *Article 11* forums in particular, stating that these would cause tension in Malaysia’s multi-religious society. The media was also warned not to stir up unrest and create friction among the public with reports on religious issues, which was interpreted by most newspapers to be a gag order on reports relating to the coalition. Consequently, the coalition discontinued its road show and is constrained in its public education activities.

13.6.4 Court and media advocacy

Article 11 members represented persons, such as Subashini and S, who required assistance to pursue legal remedies in cases involving constitutional rights. In addition, *Article 11* members held watching briefs in, for example, Lina Joy’s, Shamala’s and Moorthy’s cases.

WAO’s President, Meera Samanther, is the watching brief lawyer appointed by women’s groups in Lina Joy’s, Subashini’s and S’s cases. Like Shamala, Subashini

and S are women who are fighting for their rights as a result of the legal dilemmas caused by their spouses' conversion to Islam.

As part of *Article 11's* media advocacy work, WAO issued press statements and letters to press editors on a range of issues such as Shamala and Subashini's cases, the government's call to halt interfaith forums, the death threat against a Malaysian human rights lawyer and the burial dispute over A. Rayappan's body. WAO also granted interviews to the print and radio media, both local and foreign.

13.6.5 Public education

Article 11 conducted briefings for groups and individuals, including policy makers, who want to know more about their rights under the Constitution and/or about the coalition and its work.

13.6.6 Future Plans

Article 11 firmly believes that it is crucial to discuss and explore different viewpoints to facilitate the search for peaceful solutions to the issues that jeopardise our national unity. There has been an increased amount of debate over the Federal Constitution's role and provisions, likely due, at least in part, to the coalition's efforts. The coalition is exploring alternative avenues of information dissemination, public education and dialogue, including the launch of a video series on the Internet in early 2007.

Article 11 will persist in its efforts to meet decision makers, and also hopes to meet the Prime Minister, to discuss issues of concern.

Article 11 comprises:

- All Women's Action Society (AWAM)
- Bar Council Malaysia
- Catholic Lawyers Society
- Malaysian Civil Liberties Society, Protem Committee (MCLS)
- Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism & Sikhism (MCCBCHS)
- National Human Rights Society (HAKAM)
- Sisters In Islam (SIS)
- Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)
- Vivekananda Youth Movement, Seremban
- Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)
- Women's Development Collective (WDC)

Article 11's website is www.article11.org

13.7 The All PJ ProAction Committee (APPAC)

In May 2006, several Residents Associations, Rukun Tetangga and Non-Governmental Organisations held a consultation to discuss "Good Governance" in view of the increasing misdeeds and abuse of some Municipal Councils. The objective of this group was to hold the Government accountable and to foster a more transparent administration.

The present system of appointment of Councillors to local governments has resulted in many instances of abuse.

The All PJ ProAction Committee (APPAC) was formed as a result of the Consultation. Members of the APPAC Coalition strongly believed that local democracy should be reintroduced into the Malaysian political system as the local government provides the closest link between the government and Malaysian citizens. WAO, AWAM and WDC were part of the APPAC Committee and Meera Samanther represented WAO. Women's Development Committee (WDC) was the Secretariat to APPAC.

APPAC drew up a Charter on Local Democracy and Governance, setting out 8 guiding principles and standards on good practice for a strong and accountable local government.

One of the activities that APPAC had, been to hand over a Memorandum to MPPJ, protesting on the 10% increase of assessment rates and giving of concessions to only

1 (one) company to erect bill boards in Petaling Jaya .This led to the Sultan of Selangor requesting for an investigation on the billboards and MPPJ decided not to increase the assessment rates .

In view of the limited time and resources, WAO pulled out of the Committee. At a meeting in October 2006, the Committee members of APPAC wanted a blanket mandate without any time limit to do anything that the Committee members deemed fit and proper. WAO and other members disagreed with this suggestion as the mandate was too general and did not have a time limit. Problems also arose with the leadership of APPAC as the process of consultation was random and some members only knew of decisions at the last minute or knew of only selective decisions. WAO did write to the protem Chair requesting that the members be involved in all discussions that take place whether through the e- mail or otherwise but it was not adhered to.

In March 2007, WAO officially wrote to the protem Chair, informing them that WAO decided not to remain as a member of APPAC Coalition but would continue to work with APPAC on a project by project basis.

14.0 Workshops, Seminars, Conferences and Trainings

Throughout the year several WAO staff and volunteers had the opportunity to participate in various workshops, seminars, conferences and trainings both in Malaysia and abroad.

Conferences and Seminars Attended in 2006

No.	Title Of Conference / Seminar	Organised By	Attended By	Presentation by
1	Isu Pelacuran & Perdagangan Wanita	PERTIWI	Puspawati Ismail	nil
2	Women's Day Seminar	MWFCD	Nazlina Abd Ghani Shakira	nil
3	Public Seminar on Refugee, Humanitarian and Human Rights issues	UNHCR	Nazlina	nil

4	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia (SUHAKAM)	Meera Samanther Vizla Kumaresan	nil
5	Gender Equality Seminar	Swedish Embassy, MWFC & JAG	Vizla Kumaresan Ivy Josiah Meera Samanther	nil
6	International Conference on Islamic Model Family Law	Sisters in Islam & Women Living Under Muslim Laws	Vizla Kumaresan Ivy Josiah	nil
7	Seminar on the 9 th Malaysian Plan	ASLI	Meera Samanther Chin Oy Sim Vizla Kumaresan	nil
8	International Conference on Human Security	The International Committee of the Red Cross, Institute of Tun Mahathir Mohammad's Thoughts (IPDM) of Universiti Utara Malaysia	Ivy Josiah	Ivy Josiah
9	LawAsia Conference on " Mobility of labour in the LAWASIA Region- the legal and social problems of migrant labour"	LawAsia & Bar Council Malaysia	Ivy Josiah	Ivy Josiah
10	Gender Equality Conference	WCC Penang	Ivy Josiah Chin Oy Sim Meera Samanther	nil
11	Conference on Culture and Human Rights	SUHAKAM	Ivy Josiah Vizla Kumaresan Chin Oy Sim	nil
12	Meeting with the Taskforce on Trafficking of the South, Bangkok	AFESIP Thailand	Wong Suzanne	nil
13	Conference on Trafficking	Tenaganita	Nazlina Abd Ghani Shoba Aiyar	nil
14	Counselling Seminar with Experts from Japan	Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita	Saralah Mahendran	nil
15	Seminar on Matrimonial Property (Harta Sepencarian)	MWFC	Nazlina Abd Ghani Chin Oy Sim	nil
16	Workshop on Domestic Violence.Kuching, Sarawak	Sarawak Women for Women Society	Shoba Aiyar	Shoba Aiyar

Trainings conducted by WAO and attended by WAO in 2006

No.	Title of Training	Organised By	Attended By	Trainer(s)
1	Effective Writing Workshop - How to Write to the Editor Effectively to Ensure Publication of Article?	AWAM	Vizla Kumaresan Shoba Aiyar Musfiza	From AWAM
2	Training of Trainers	Malaysian Association of Social Workers	Shoba Aiyar	From Malaysian Association of Social Workers
3	National Integrity	UNDP	Vizla Kumaresan	From UNDP
4	Half day Media Training	WAO	Staff	Ivy Josiah (WAO)
5	Training for Trainers at UNHCR	WAO	UNHCR trainers	Shoba Aiyar (WAO) Wong Su Zane (WAO)
6	Training on Human Rights Mechanisms, Indonesia	Swedish International Development Cooperation	Meera Samanther	Nil
7	Capacity building in Leadership	Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita	Sharmini Kanesamoorthy Shoba Aiyar	From Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita
8	How to Handle Conversion Cases	Bar Council	Chin Oy Sim	From Bar Council
9	LAC Training	AWAM	Jessie Ang	From LAC
10	Training on Education for Non-Discrimination	KOMAS	Thillai Mohanadas	From KOMAS
11	Introductory training to Psychotherapy	WAO	Social Workers	Dr Urmila (WAO volunteer)
12	Practical Guide to Criminal Investigation and Trial Procedures	PS the Children	Nazlina Abd Ghani Daljeen Jassal Saralah Mahendran	From PS the Children
13	Training on Counselling Clients	Medicens Sans Frontiers (MSF)	Social Workers	MSF
14	Lecture on Human Rights and Domestic Violence	Maktab Polis Di Raja Malaysia	Women police officers	Nazlina Abd Ghani & Ivy Josiah

15.0 WAO WEBSITE (www.wao.org.my)

This is the 7th year of WAO's website in operation. Types of information uploaded into the website includes press statements, memorandums, letters to the editor, republishing of WAO Talking Points column, featuring news and editorials where WAO is quoted, public education campaigns and activities, and fundraising events. The website has been a useful resource for students, funders, journalists, new volunteers and researchers and the general public who want to know more about WAO's work and services, the status of women in the country and current issues related to women's rights.

It is updated on average, once a month, with previous articles put under the archive web page.

Hosting Details

Web hosting company : Integricity.com
Domain Hosting company : MYINC Sdn Bhd

Integricity.com is still hosting WAO's website at no cost, as of June 2005, in support of our work.

Sections within the website

1. Home/Index (Mainpage): Summaries of articles updates, headers and small 100 x 100 pixel graphics.
2. About Us: Basic information of WAO (History, Mission & Vision, Objectives)
3. Research & Advocacy: Findings on WAO's research & advocacy work in issues of the Domestic Violence Act, the abuse of Foreign Domestic Workers and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women)
4. Violence Against Women: Information on Violence Against Women: Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Rape, Child Sexual Abuse; in both Malay and English
5. Services: Information on the services that WAO provides (Counselling, Shelter, Child Care Centre, Sexual Assault Helpline)
6. News: New articles, announcements, press statements etc.
7. Links: Links to other organisations, websites and online communities on women's issues.
8. Support us: How WAO is funded, who are our funders, how users can help support WAO
9. Archive: Archive of all published articles on the website

Updates

There were approximately 35 updates in 2006, with updates occurring once every two months on average. This is at a lower frequency than 2005, which was on average, updated once a month. Reasons include work related to the development of WAO's website revamp, and adaptation period to update process between office staff (Thillai & Annie) and website manager (Jac Kee). Nonetheless, this did not affect the traffic to WAO's site, which continues to show a steady increase in visitors and hits (see below).

Articles Posted

Articles posted on the website in 2006

POSTED 2006	ITEM
16-Nov-2006	Press Statement: Support for PM's Vision-57th UMNO General Assembly
15-Nov-2006	Event: Charity Bazaar
31-Oct-2006	Letter: Takaful Notice Offends All
31-Oct-2006	Event: Launch of Domestic Violence Poster
31-Oct-2006	Event: Bon Ton Fundraising Program
30-Sept-2006	Letter: Uphold A Mother's Rights and Her Access to Justice
30-Sept-2006	Letter: WAO Heartened by Outrage Against Human Rights Lawyer
10-Aug-2006	JAG Memorandum to the Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development
10-Aug-2006	Joint Press Statement: Article 11 Unrelated to the Inter-Faith Council (IFC)
10-Aug-2006	Joint Press Statement: A Mother's Right
10-July-2006	Joint Press Statement - Rights for All Under the Federal Constitution
10-July-2006	FAQs: Preamble
10-July-2006	FAQs: Domestic Violence
10-July-2006	FAQs: Rape
10-July-2006	FAQs: "Terrorism"
10-July-2006	Joint Press Statement - Malaysian bar Council on the issue of "Aggravated Rape"
10-July-2006	Joint Press Statement - International Refugee Day
19-June-2006	Event - Domino's Millenium Gold Card Fundraising Programme
28-May-2006	Statement: NGO Statement to the CEDAW Committee on Malaysia's Initial and Second Periodic Report
28-May-2006	Joint Press Statement: Malaysia to be Reviewed by CEDAW Committee
20-May-2006	Joint Press Statement: 9th Malaysian Plan
20-May-2006	Event: Fundraising Events - July & August 2006
20-May-2006	Letter: Rape - Badruddin Should Retract His Statement
20-May-2006	Talking Points: What Happens After the Rape?
20-May-2006	Petition: Reaffirming the Supremacy of the Federal Constitution
03-Mar-2006	Event: International Women's Day 2006
03-Mar-2006	Letter: Is There Access to Justice for Migrant Domestic Workers?
03-Mar-2006	Joint Press Statement: Stop Discrimination Against Non-Muslims in Cases of Conversion
03-Mar-2006	Talking Points: Gender Danger
20-Jan-2006	Petition to the Malaysian Government: Islamic Family Laws - Stop Discrimination Against Women!
03-Jan-2006	Press Statement: Suspend the Islamic Family Law (Amendment) Bill, 2005
03-Jan-2006	Muslim Men Object to the Passing of the Islamic Family Law Bill
03-Jan-2006	Letters to the Editor: WAO Members on the IFL Legislative Process
03-Jan-2006	Talking Points: What's in the Occasions?

WAO Website Revamp Developments

Several planning meetings were conducted with WAO staff to build a new version of WAO's existing website. A significant development is the use of a Content Management System (CMS) called Joomla that enables different staff members as well as volunteers, interns and potentially WAO members to directly add content into the website without needing HTML skills, or FTP access.

The revamped website is anticipated to go live by 2007.

Currently, the following outputs have been developed:

Information Architecture (developed through input from staff, EXCO and volunteers; finalised after 3 revisions from face to face meetings)

Site Architecture (same process as above)

CMS installed in WAO server for testing and fine-tuning

WAO received pro bono support from civicbuilder.net and kedairuncit.org, for technical and design assistance.

Website Traffic

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

The total number of unique visitors to website in 2006 is 91,341. Tracking of unique visitors indicates the number of people who visit the website more than once within a specific period of time, i.e. users that return to the website. WAO's website received more than 1 million hits in 2006 alone. Please refer to the table below for breakdown of the traffic.

Hits indicate the number of times an item is viewed from a website. Visits from robots or spiders such as Googlebot are not included in the statistics. As such, the numbers here is a fairly accurate representation of the actual number of people who have visited the website.

The average number of unique visitors increased by 1,155 each month; from 6,457 visitors/month in 2006, to 7,612 visitors/month in 2007. The number of hits have also increased from an average of almost 70 thousand hits/month in 2004, to more than 80 thousand hits/ month in 2005, to 90 thousand hits/month in 2006. This demonstrates a steady increase in new and existing visits to the website as a reliable source of information.

Number of Visitors, Visit and Hits

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Hits
Jan 2006	7377	9887	88406
Feb 2006	7767	10510	93737
Mar 2006	9274	12571	124249
Apr 2006	7303	9290	88578
May 2006	6788	8728	81542
Jun 2006	6375	8268	75154
Jul 2006	7003	9434	90190
Aug 2006	7859	11045	99453

Sep 2006	7840	11197	95383
Oct 2006	8076	10804	86242
Nov 2006	8446	10898	85562
Dec 2006	7233	9145	69146
Total	91341	121777	1077642
Total in 2005	77478	106900	982057

Geographical Location of Visitors

The majority of visitors to the website, similar to 2005, are from the United States, Australia and Malaysia. This is tracked through the IP address of the visitors who come to the site. IP address is the address that is assigned to each computer that is on a network, such as the internet. This is how the geographical location of the visitors can be tracked. It is noteworthy that Malaysians rank amongst the top three users who find WAO's website useful.

The top ten visitors to the WAO site are as below:

	Countries	Hits
	United States	447726
	Australia	317893
	Malaysia	147435
	European Union	15777
	China	16229
	Great Britain	13857
	Singapore	15325
	Sweden	3877
	Canada	11072
	Netherlands	5029
	Indonesia	9596

Reviewers & Referrers

44% of visitors to the website either type in the address directly, or have the website bookmarked. 39.3% of visitors are directed from search engines such as Google, Yahoo, MSN and Alta Vista, while around 16.4% of visitors visit WAO's website through links from other/external websites. Currently, there are 2,080 different webpages or URLs that link to WAO's website, including local NGOs, newspapers, UNIFEM, blogs and wikipedia.

16.0 PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public Education takes on many forms at WAO, through talks, press interviews, radio shows, magazine articles, post cards, posters and booths at ground events.

WAO was on radio 25 times, on television 22 times and at the same time gave talks and presentations to specific audiences (33). We were widely featured in four (4) magazines and in the newspapers both local and international.

While WAO planned the radio series and some of the trainings most public education events were on an invitation basis.

16.1 Talks and Training Sessions

From a talk for the Telugu Women's Association, to the training sessions for the Refugee community, to a panel presentation on 'Ending violence against women: The role and responsibility of various sectors in effective prevention and response' at the launch of **Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Women** at the UN, we reached out to a variety of people.

In total we gave 33 talks and most of the social workers, programme officers and the ED were involved in this aspect of our work. Please refer to details under **14.0 Workshops, Seminars, Conferences and Trainings**

16.2 Television, Radio, Press

In 2006, we were featured on Chinese and Malay Radio more than usual and with ASTRO Vaanavil 's new talk show in Tamil, had a different audience.

16.2.1 Red 104.9 fm, 2nd March – 9th March, 11th March - ground event at The Curve

Red FM approached AWAM and WAO to be involved in their International Women's Day celebrations as NGO participators. Two components of activities were on - air interviews and a booth at a closing event at The Curve.

From 2nd to 9th March, Red Morning Affair's hosts, Tim and Shareena did interviews with representatives from AWAM (2 slots) and WAO (4 slots). The Red Morning Affair is Red FM's breakfast show; therefore, the listeners are mostly those that are driving to work. The schedule and topics were:

- 2nd March - Women's Rights in Malaysia, Ivy Josiah
- 3rd March - Violence Against Women, Judith Koh
- 6th March - Sexual Harassment, Nazlina Abdul Ghani
- 7th March - Date Rape, Jac Kee
- 8th March - International Women's Day & Domestic Violence, Nabila Nasir & Vizla Kumaresan
- 9th March - What is CEDAW by Tan beng hui

The on – air activities then culminated with a whole day on – ground event held at The Curve on 11th March. Hosted by Red FM deejays, Sheela and Nisha, there were performances by favourite local artistes Juwita Suwito, Liang, and Zamil (Malaysian Idol), sketch by AWAM, fitness demo and of course, prize presentation to winners. The public had the chance to drop-by AWAM and WAO kiosks to check out information and services provided. Public education materials were circulated throughout the event.

16. 2. 2 Astro Vaanavil – TV Talk Show “Pengal Pesinaal”

Astro Vaanavil approached WAO with the intention of holding a 13 series talk show in Tamil titled “Pengal Pesinaal” (When Women Speak) to raise awareness on domestic violence and other related women’s issues. WAO was identified by them as one of the panellists to contribute to the talk show on certain topics.

WAO staff was kept busy with the various recordings of the show and some of the topics discussed were domestic violence, teen sexuality and unwanted pregnancies, sexual harassment and gender discrimination.

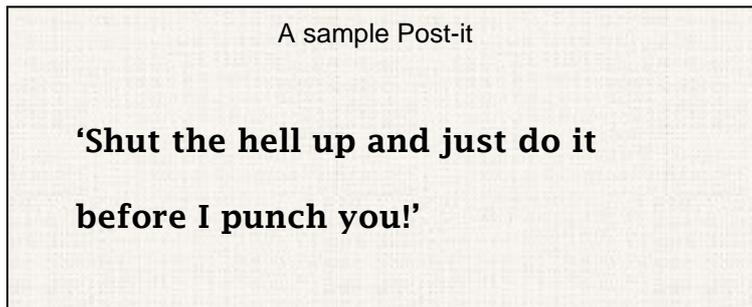
16. 3 Hand and Face Postcards by 180 degrees

WAO was privileged to work with **180 degrees** a local production company who came up with an innovative above the line postcard. The photo of a woman wearing sunglasses, or an expensive bracelet revealed bruises. The postcard carried phone number of women’s groups. The postcards were distributed to various restaurants and food outlets and proved to be a great success.

16. 4 ‘Post-its’ by Arc Worldwide

Kien Eng and his creative team are long standing partners of WAO since 1999, and in 2006, Kien Eng’s new advertising agency Arc Worldwide came up with another innovative idea to complement our advocacy.

Huge posters of women had post-its of “hurting” words. The interactive element was to encourage public to peel of the “hurting” words, write their names on the flip side of the post-its, as the flip side has a petition. We collected over 500 of these post-its, to be sent to the MWFC as part of our lobby for reform to the DVA.



Front Side

Speak up against violence. Silence the abuser by signing this petition.

- I urge the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development to bring together the police, welfare and courts to ensure that they:
 - Recognise emotional violence as a form of domestic violence and as an offence
 - Prioritise safety for women who for women who report domestic violence
 - Investigate and charge the perpetrators of domestic violence
 - Increase resources in combating domestic violence
 - Train and sensitise officers to respond to domestic violence reports

First name: _____

Last name: _____

NRIC: _____

Email: _____

- Please update me on future campaigns and events organized by WAO

Reverse side

17.0 SPECIAL EVENTS

17.1 International Women's Day, March

Women's Aid Organisation was involved in several significant projects to mark International Women's Day, 8th March, throughout the whole month.

17.1.1 Tamarind Restaurants, 8th March – 31st March

Tamarind Restaurants initiated a public education based program to be held at their outlets, Tamarind Hill and Tamarind Springs. For the whole month of March, every woman who dines at either restaurant was given a chance at a simple quiz. Each correct answer was worth RM10 and all accumulated right answers were translated into complimentary dining vouchers. Guests were encouraged to move around and seek information on topics of violence/abuse, rape, HIV/AIDS, discrimination and safety precaution, as well as useful phone numbers based on the Body Shop VAW brochures displayed around the restaurants. All diners were also given WAO's organization brochure and our postcard campaign.

17.1.2 Hilton Top Key Club, 25th March 2006

Hilton Top Key is a privilege club for regular clients at Hilton hotels, and 97% of the cardholders in Klang Valley are women. Therefore, PJ Hilton decided to dedicate their first Top Key Club (TKC) event of the year to be in conjunction with International Women's Day. The main itinerary was a three-hour Aikido workshop followed by a luncheon. Nabila Nasir opened the event with a poetry recitation and Vizla Kumaresan spoke on Violence Against Women & WAO prior to the workshop. Public education materials were disseminated at this event.

17.1.3 3R – UNICEF All Women Futsal Playoffs, 19th March, Sunway Sports Planet (Preliminaries), 2nd April, Berjaya Times Square (Grand Finals)

For the third consecutive year, 3R organized an all women futsal playoffs in celebration of International Women's Day. WAO was part of the organizing

committee, acting as media liaison. UNICEF – to highlight their “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS” campaign – sponsored the event.

A preliminary round was held at Sunway Sports Planet on 19th March, seeing the total registration of 72 teams, making it the biggest all women futsal event in the country. The tournament resulted in 10 teams from the Open Category and 6 teams from the School category securing a place to qualify for the grand finals. JAG registered two teams by the names JAG & AWAS but the teams did not get through to the grand finals event.

On 2nd April, organizers erected a futsal pitch in the concourse area of the mega shopping mall Berjaya Times Square for the grand finals event. WAO and two other JAG members, AWAM and SIS, along with two more NGOs, Amnesty International and Malaysian AIDS Council joined in the event as on-site booth participators. The Grand Finals of 3R – UNICEF All Women Futsal Playoffs also marked the end of IWD celebrations for 2006.

17.2 The Body Shop – Stop Violence In The Home Campaign, August

For the past 10 years the Body Shop collaborated with WAO to commemorate Hari Wanita which falls on August 25 in Malaysia.

The “Stop Violence Against Women” broad sheet sponsored by The Body Shop carries information on different forms of Violence against Women including advice on what to do is immensely popular and is distributed throughout the year for public education events.

However in 2006, we did not produce a broad sheet but instead a pamphlet on “Children and Domestic Violence – The facts and what you can do to help” was published as part of Body Shops ‘s collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). This pamphlet was then distributed throughout The Body Shop outlets.

This tie up with UNICEF, was part of International Body Shop “Stop Violence in The Home Campaign” and WAO was brought in to highlight the impact of DV on children.

The launch at Aquaria KL was officiated by Dato’ Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Minister of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, who during her speech made a surprise announcement of contributing RM 25,000 to WAO.

The Body Shop raised funds for WAO through their Daisy Soap worth RM8.50 or a one of its kind Stop Violence in The Home Lip Care Stick worth RM17.90. WAO was the beneficiary for the proceeds of the sales from these two items which amounted to RM 55,211.00 in total.

17.3 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence 25 November – 10 December

Each year, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is organized all over the world from November 25, **International Day Against Violence Against Women** to December 10, **International Human Rights Day** to raise people’s awareness on all forms of violence against women.

In Malaysia, WAO began to organize public education campaigns throughout the 16 days, since 1998. In 2006, WAO lead 16 days of activism, starting with the launch of

posters on the domestic violence for all police stations, and for the following 15 days WAO in collaboration with the Malaysian Aids Council (MAC), Sisters In Islam (SIS) and Amnesty International (AI) worked with Radio and TV stations to raise awareness on VAW- 25 shows in all.

17.3.1 Launch of WAO Police Poster on 25 November

The Royal Commission to Enhance the Operation and Management of The Royal Malaysian Police produced a report in May 2005 outlining 10 Strategic Thrusts and 125 recommendations.

One of the strategic thrusts was *“Raising awareness on women’s and children’s rights in the Royal Malaysian Police”*. With this in mind, WAO joined hands with The Royal Malaysian Police to produce a poster. The aim of the poster was to inform women of the rights they have under the Domestic Violence Act. It outlines how the police can help survivors of domestic violence and also provides contact numbers of women’s groups that can further assist the survivors.

The project was made possible by a grant from the US Embassy. The event was held in Maju Junction Mall and it kicked off with a dikir barat performance by students from the National Arts and Heritage Academy (ASWARA). The “tok dalang” or master puppeteer from ASWARA was Pak Nasir is renowned for his talents and expertise as a master puppeteer.

The event was officiated by YB Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun, Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development who handed over the poster to Datuk Christopher Wan Soo Kee, Director of Criminal Investigations Department.

The posters will be placed in every police station in Malaysia. In addition, every investigating officer (IO) and Assistant IO will be given copies of the WAO handbook *“Kehidupan Bebas dari Keganasan” (A Life Free from Violence)*. This handbook provides useful information for police officers, especially if they need to contact an NGO or the welfare department in cases where the women need counselling or shelter.

17.3.2 16 days on Radio and TV

2006 saw a difference from previous campaigns as we decided to reach mass audience via media. WAO had tie-ins with Traxx fm, Red fm, Selangor fm, Minnal fm, Ai fm as well as TV1, TV2 & NTV7.

The topics discussed were:

- What is 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence?
- Domestic Violence – myths
- Is violence against women a problem in Malaysia?
- Domestic Violence (Global & Malaysia perspective) & how to protect yourself
- Safety on the streets?
- Is the home a safe place?
- Sexual harassment – is it not just flirting?
- Men’s Role in stopping violence against women
- Why are women vulnerable to AIDS?
- How women’s rights are protected by the law?
- What about men’s rights?
- Why men rape? The effects on the community

- Housework, whose responsibility?
- What to do if you are raped?
- What is meant by emotional and mental torture?

18.0 Fundraising

From raising RM 80,000 per year in 1982, WAO now has the challenge of raising RM 1,000,000 per year as we now operate 3 centres and have a larger public education and advocacy programme.

Every year we are approached by the business community, corporations, social groups, event organisers and individuals to run an event for WAO. We took in 57 meetings last year to meet with potential funders.

WAO guidelines for fundraising have been formulated over the years, whereby we do not want an event to cost more than the moneys raised, also we encourage big companies to pledge a minimum amount of RM 10, 000 to RM 20, 000 as guaranteed funds upon completion of an event.

18.1 Donors in cash and kind

During 2006, WAO received donations, both in cash and in kind, from various organisations, corporations and individuals.

In 2006, WAO received an increase in the annual grant from the Welfare Department. Our attempt to get donors to pledge for 3 years did not succeed but we will persist in raising funds from the public for operational costs.

In 2006, however we did raise more funds through specific legal reform, health and public education projects notably from Asia Foundation and the Embassy of Finland.

18.2 Taylor's College – Project W: A Foundation for Women, February

The Semester 6 students of Taylor's College Diploma in Communication faculty organized a fundraising project as part of their course. WAO was privileged to be the receiving beneficiary of the project.

The students started their campaign on Valentines Day February 14; to sell flowers and home made cookies. Not wanting to stop there, they ventured further to raise awareness to the public on violence against women. The 19 students took to the task of breaking up into groups of 3 and walking the streets of Section 14, PJ to distribute WAO brochures to the public while imparting their knowledge on violence against women.

The students decided to culminate their campaign by holding a dinner at Mango Tree in Bangsar which once again was a success. A total of RM5,320.00 was raised by the students for WAO.

18.3 Ms. Read Fundraising dinner - “An intimate dinner with Adibah Noor”

It was a night of fun, food and entertainment for guests when “*Delicious*” by Ms Read launched its new menu at its flagship outlet in 1 Utama shopping centre. Hosted by Sharizan a local celebrity and emcee, the event organised under Ms. Read's Privilege to Care (PTC) programme that was set up to encourage individuals to give back to the community was a fundraiser to benefit WAO.

Ms. Read (M) Sdn Bhd managing director Ms. Helen Read presented a cheque for RM12, 0000 to WAO being proceeds from the sales of the tickets for the night.

Apart from a delectable meal, guests were treated to a showcase of Ms. Read's autumn 2006 collection. Guests were also entertained by the famous vocal powerhouse Adibah Noor who rendered songs from her successful debut album.

18. 4 Quota Club International Kuala Lumpur (QCIKL)

Quota Club International is a community social service club which is one of the 380 sister clubs worldwide with their headquarters in Washington DC. Their main objective is to provide aid to disadvantaged women and children.

Quota Club had initiated a number of activities in 2006 with WAO under the *Empowerment Development Program for Disadvantaged Women* project. Among the activities conducted by them were:

18.4.1 “A Musical Splendor” – by PJ Youth Chamber Orchestra

Quota Club International Kuala Lumpur collaborated with the PJ Youth Chamber Orchestra to organize a musical called “A Musical Splendor”. Part proceeds from the sales of the tickets were donated to WAO. Quota Club managed to raise RM9,600.00 from the performance.

18.5 Geomidas - Dominos Pizza Millennium Gold Card Incentive

WAO collaborated with Geomidas who brought us the Dominos Pizza Millennium Gold Card. The cards were a special offer from Dominos whereby at every purchase of a pizza, the purchaser will get another pizza free. This offer was valid for one year.

Each card costs RM20.00 and part proceeds of the sale of the card were donated to WAO. WAO would like to thank the volunteers and members who helped sell these cards. The project ended in December 2006. We had received a total of RM4, 168.00.

18.6 Pirates of the Caribbean – Charity Movie Premier

2006 also saw WAO working together with Servcorp International on a charity movie preview for “*Pirates of the Caribbean 2*” at TGV KLCC. We were joined by local celebrities VE, Azah of 3R, Shannon Shah and Zamil Idris of Malaysian Idol.

WAO had also a booth set up to distribute brochures to the public. We had also worked with 8TV as well as Red fm to promote this charity movie premier. Red fm ran a series of contests which encouraged the public to call in to win tickets to the movie.

It was a successful event and Servcorp has agreed to work with us again for this year. A total of RM13,392.40 was raised from this fundraising event.

18.7 Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany sponsorship WAO Child Care Centre Study Room

In March 2006, WAO wrote an appeal to the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany requesting for funding to build a study room for the children at the Child Care Centre. After meeting with the ambassador H.E. Dr. Herbert Hess of the

Embassy to discuss our needs, we were granted RM23, 008.00 to build the required room.

Work began in October after obtaining the necessary approval from the local authorities. The study room was officiated by Mr. Jergen Bieber, Third Secretary of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany.

18.8 Merdeka Millennium Endurance Race (MMER)

The MMER was held in August 2006 at Sepang International Circuit. Among the teams competing was G-1 Symphony who had pledged to raise funds for WAO as their receiving charity.

Individuals and companies were approached to make donations to WAO. The G-1 Symphony team unveiled their Honda Integra DC5 Type R and a Nissan Skyline R34 GT-R Nurburgring Spec II that were to be used during the race. The G-1 Symphony team donated RM15, 500.00 as proceeds from this race.

18. 9 The Alice Smith School Association

Every year the Alice Smith School in Jalan Bellamy holds a charity fundraising event in aid of charities that they have identified. The charity events held in the school grounds are led by the students from year 2 – year 4 aged 7-10 years. Students get creative and come up with various games for the day. WAO was privileged to be among the receiving beneficiaries. We received RM9, 000 in total from their efforts.

18. 10 UBS Securities Matching Grant Programme

Under the UBS Community Affairs program, UBS Securities employees nominated WAO as their beneficiary for a matching grant programme. This simply means that when employees donate to WAO and submit a copy of their receipt to UBS, the company will match that amount to be donated to WAO. We received RM 2, 500 from this project.

APPENDIX A

NGO STATEMENT TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON THE INITIAL AND SECOND PERIODIC REPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA 22ND MAY 2006

Thank you Madam Chair for giving us the opportunity to address the committee.

I am Dr. Hamidah Karim from the National Council of Women's Organisations which coordinated the process of producing The Shadow Report involving 28 NGOs, institutions and agencies. We will be highlighting 5 issues. While I will speak on the first 2 issues my colleague Ms Zaitun Kasim will speak to you about the last 3.

In our presentation, we shall highlight the issues but not the recommendations which are contained in this statement.

1. The need for substantive equality framework and domestic laws to deal with gender discrimination

Following its ratification to CEDAW, the government amended the Federal Constitution³ to include gender as a prohibited ground for discrimination. However the definition of discrimination against women⁴ was not made explicit and was left to the interpretation of the government⁵ and the courts. This absence of definition of discrimination has led to the grave misinterpretation of the concept of equality that has permeated into the whole system. Many policies and programmes utilised the concept of formal equality and not substantive equality as recommended by CEDAW.

Further, the constitutional amendment itself exempts discrimination already allowed under the Federal Constitution⁶. It is also noteworthy that under Malaysian law, international conventions and norms are not automatically incorporated as part of the domestic law. Thus the standards provided in CEDAW need not necessarily be adopted by the Court.

At the same time, the Malaysian courts⁷ interpret the constitutional provisions on equality and discrimination: (a) as prohibiting discrimination by state and public authorities only and not by non-State (private) actors; and (b) as guaranteeing equality only to those falling within the same class (group) of persons.

This highlights the need for gender equality laws to protect all women in Malaysia against discrimination irrespective of whether they are by public, private, federal or state authorities and to define the meaning of discrimination.

We recommend

The definition of discrimination against women in line with Article 1 of the Convention must be clearly provided. This must be followed by campaigns to raise awareness about the Convention and the meaning and scope of discrimination against women aimed at the general public and especially to the parliamentarians, the policy makers, the judiciary and the legal profession.

³ Government of Malaysia, 2004. Combined initial and second periodic reports of State parties, Malaysia, CEDAW/C/MYS/1-2, para 63

⁴ United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Its Optional Protocol. Women 2000 and beyond.

⁵ Government of Malaysia, 2004. Combined initial and second periodic reports of State parties, Malaysia, CEDAW/C/MYS/1-2, para 65

⁶ This includes discriminatory constitutional provisions in Articles 8(5), 12(1), 12(4), and 14. See NGO Shadow Report Group, 2005, Malaysian Non Governmental Organisations Shadow Report. Reviewing the Government's Implementation of the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), para 1.2, pg 10-11

⁷ Ibid , para 1.3, pg 11-13

The remaining discriminatory provisions within the Federal Constitution should be thoroughly reviewed and amended to ensure harmonisation with article 8(2) of the Federal Constitution.

The enactment of gender equality laws to define and enforce substantive equality due to the courts' upholding the duality between domestic laws and international treaties ratified by the executive and non-extension of constitutional protection against acts by non-State actors.

Use of a substantive equality framework in policy formulation to abolish discrimination against women.

There should be a systematic and thorough review of all laws in the country that continues to discriminate against women. It is recommended that the review and amendments of laws as identified in the JAG-VAW⁸ Memorandum on Gender Equality submitted on 25th May 2004 should be made a priority.

2. Temporary Special Measures and Special Measures

The Government policy to increase the participation of women in decision-making in the public sector to at least 30 per cent⁹ and various mechanisms¹⁰ to promote gender equality have failed to show significant results¹¹. The government itself acknowledges that due to widespread stereotyping of women¹², pursuing a gender blind policy is not the best way¹³. Yet it does not practise quota or preferential rules to achieve equality in results. The government therefore needs to have temporary special measures to bring about results in real terms and to accelerate this process. Such process may start by the election commission providing incentives to encourage political parties to nominate at least 30% women candidates.

Within the environment of widespread stereotyping; the government acknowledges that a working woman is faced with the difficult situation of having to perform and cope with multiple roles as a wife, mother and worker. To overcome some of these barriers¹⁴ the government should allow women temporarily to opt out of the workforce and re-enter without loss of benefits or seniority.

The government's policy to allow women working in the public sector, subject to approval, to take six months breast feeding unpaid leave after their two-month maternity leave is a positive move. Unfortunately this leave is only accessible to women who are socio-economically better off and those who have better negotiating powers with their superiors.

We recommend that the government;

urgently and effectively implement temporary special measures in accordance with Article 4, of the Convention, and with the Committee's General Recommendations No. 25, in order to accelerate the realization of women's de facto equality with men in all areas;

include a provision for temporary special measures, in particular with regards to women's participation in decision-making and access to economic opportunities, within the gender equality law that has been recommended above;

⁸ The Joint Action Group against Violence Against Women (JAG-VAW) submitted a Memorandum on Equality for Malaysian Women identifying remaining laws and policies that discriminate against women. This memorandum is attached as ANNEX 2 in the NGO Shadow Report 2005.

⁹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 27 March 2006. Responses to the list of issues and questions for consideration of the combined initial and second periodic report. Malaysia. CEDAW/C/MYS/Q/2/Add.1; pg 13

¹⁰ Government of Malaysia, 2004. Combined initial and second periodic reports of State parties, Malaysia, CEDAW/C/MYS/1-2, para 82,83

¹¹ Ibid, para 119, 122, 123e, 125, 191

¹² Ibid, para 89, 90, 96

¹³ Ibid, para 127

¹⁴ Ibid, para 89, 90, 96

incorporate clear targets and time-frame as well as an evaluating mechanism for the temporary measures, to monitor the effectiveness of such measures;

implement and adopt further measures to allow for reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities, including the provision of affordable childcare, flexible working arrangements like job sharing and the promotion of equal sharing of domestic and family tasks between women and men. The accessibility and effectiveness of such measures should be monitored so that adjustments can be made whenever necessary due to changing socio-cultural environment;

ensure that all women can benefit equally from special measures that are formulated to protect maternity.

3. The Impact of codified Islamic laws based on narrow interpretations

There is a trend towards adopting norms, rules, laws and policies that are discriminatory towards women in the name of religion (in particular Islam). It is important to note that these changes, which are premised on narrow interpretations of religious texts, have permeated the various social spheres as well as decision-making levels in the country.

One example that aptly highlights this is the recent pronouncement by one of the Muftis that it is against Islamic law for a husband to be a house husband (homemaker). Even more worrying was the suggestion by the Deputy Prime Minister that the ruling on this issue was to be left to the National Fatwa Council as it was deemed a syariah-related matter.

These narrow interpretations manifest themselves in several ways that affect both Muslim and women of other faiths.

Particularly, the amendments to the Islamic Family Laws over the last two decades that have systematically diminished the rights of women through the creation of unfair conditions regarding polygamy, divorce, maintenance and child custody. Cases of divorce pronounced outside of court (including by text messages through mobile phones), non payment of maintenance and cross-border polygamous marriages are just a few examples of injustices against women. The penalties to protect women from these injustices are usually ineffective.

The attempt to use gender neutral language in the last amendments in the context of an unequal framework only exacerbated discrimination against women. This highlights the fact that patchwork amendments are not able to deliver justice. There is an acute need for a comprehensive and uniform set of laws based on progressive interpretations.

In addition to the family laws above, Muslims are also governed by the Syariah Criminal Offence Enactments which increasingly infringe upon the privacy of citizens under the guise of 'morality' and 'public decency'. Records of arrests and prosecution show that these laws are used disproportionately against women and the young, in particular with regards to policing their attire, sexuality and how and with whom they socialise in their leisure time.

The separation of jurisdiction and application of different laws for Muslims and people of other faiths, have also had extensive implications especially in cases where one of two non-Muslim spouses; particularly when the husband decides to convert to Islam resulting in the rights gained by non-Muslim women under the Civil laws being severely challenged.

We recommend

- a) The setting up an interagency committee inclusive of women's groups to review both the Syariah laws and the Law Reform Marriage and Divorce Act 1975 (a civil law statute) in order to
- b) Put in place a uniform and comprehensive set of Muslim family laws premised on the principles of gender equality and justice.

- c) Clarify procedures and issues of jurisdiction in matters involving the conversion of a spouse to Islam so that ancillary matters of maintenance, custody and guardianship can be settled efficiently in one court.
- d) Review existing procedures to ensure that the Court system is rendered friendlier and more accessible to women and children.
- e) That the Syariah Criminal Offences Enactment be reviewed by a committee, which includes women's groups and human rights groups, in accordance with Islamic legal theory and practice and fundamental liberties as provided under the Federal Constitution and the Convention.
- f) That the Malaysian Government's reservations to Article 16(a), (c), (f), (g), and (2) on the grounds that they are in conflict with the provisions of Islamic Syariah law and the Federal Constitution be withdrawn as it indicates the government's reluctance to extend full equality to women in family life.

4. Women particularly vulnerable to discrimination

There is an urgent need to pay special attention to marginalised groups of women who are vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, violence and inhumane treatment.

These groups include migrant domestic workers, trafficked women, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless women and sexual minorities.

Without good data collection, addressing the needs of these women is rendered difficult if not impossible.

Furthermore, there is no clear policy in respect of women with disabilities and stateless women as well as women who are trafficked, refugees and asylum seekers.

In respect of migrant domestic workers, vulnerability to abuse is exacerbated by isolation and inability to change employers and work during investigation and legal process.

Non-recognition of sexual diversity results in sexual minorities being marginalised, isolated and vulnerable to violence.

(a) Migrant domestic workers

We recommend

- Guidelines for employers and standardised contracts and provision of easy access for workers to report any abuse;
- Allowing workers to change employers and work during investigation and court proceedings, if any;
- Removing any requirement for payment (presently USD26 per month)¹⁵ pending court redress and expediting the legal process.

(b) Trafficked women, refugees and asylum seekers

(c) Stateless women

Under the Immigration Act 1959 (Act 155) persons can be detained without judicial scrutiny. There is no screening mechanism to identify trafficked victims and asylum seekers and these women including their children may be held in detention centres

Poverty and ignorance prevent many women of Indigenous (orang asli and orang asal) as well as of ethnic Indian origin whose forefathers lived in plantations (in Peninsular Malaysia) from registering the birth of their children. Women often depend on their husbands to register

¹⁵ The Immigration Department does grant exemption from time to time.

the birth of their children and when this is not done, people live out their entire lives without official documentation nor recognition of their basic rights to education, health care and employment

We recommend

- Research into extent of trafficking in the country;
- Enactment of specific and comprehensive anti-trafficking laws;
- Establishment of more effective support mechanism;
- Setting up of a clear transparent process to ascertain and recognise the status of stateless persons and providing interim facilities for their basic needs e.g. education and health.

(d) Women with disabilities

In spite of legislation that attempts to promote inclusive education and employment opportunities, facilities in general – ranging from barrier-free environments, to facilities and human resource allocation –discriminate against women with disabilities in various spheres

We recommend

- A paradigm shift to frame issues of disability within a human rights framework rather than token welfare approaches;
- Enforcing legislation that improves accessibility and mobility;
- Conducting awareness raising to promote the rights of people with disabilities and actively ensuring that disability issues feature in all initiatives of gender mainstreaming.

(e) Sexual minorities

Non-recognition of sexual diversity results not only in social isolation, marginalisation of and violence against sexual minorities, but also renders every day dealings with bureaucracies an uphill, if not near impossible, task; ranging from difficulties with the immigration and road transport departments, insurance companies, banking procedures, having a family of their choice, funeral procedures, to name a few

Transgendered persons, in particular transwomen, are often subjected to frequent and humiliating raids by both the police and the religious departments for ‘offences’ ranging from wearing women’s clothes, to charges of soliciting, drug-related offences, loitering and for taking part in beauty contests.

We recommend

- To collect data in order to assess the needs of sexual minorities

5. Violence Against Women

While criminal laws exist to address violence against women, the effectiveness of these laws is not being monitored by the government. There is also no systematic data collection. Police statistics merely give the total number of reported cases.

There is a need to define rape and aggravated rape as well as address the specificity of domestic violence apart from handling all survivors with sensitivity.

We recommend

Reform of the criminal laws pertaining to rape and domestic violence

Enactment of legislation on sexual harassment,

Policy reform related to VAW to accelerate investigation and access counselling and protection;

The collection of statistics on age groups, location of incidents, conviction rates etc, with a proper analysis of data, to monitor trends be put in place;

Continued and sustained training for public officials, especially law enforcement health care providers as well as the judiciary so that they are fully sensitised to all forms of VAW and can adequately respond to it.

Glossary of Abbreviations

AWAM	All Women's Action Society
CCC	Child Care Centre
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DV	domestic violence
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
EXCO	WAO's Executive Committee
IWD	International Women's Day
IWRAW	International Women's Rights Action Watch
JAG	Joint Action Group for Gender Equality
JAG-VAW	Joint Action Group against Violence Against Women
HAKAM	National Human Rights Society
LAC	Legal Aid Centre
MCCBCHST	Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism & Taoism
MDW	migrant domestic worker
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
NCWO	National Council of Women's Organisations
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SIS	Sisters In Islam
SUHAKAM	Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VAW	violence against women
WCC	Women's Centre for Change, Penang
WDC	Women's Development Collective