

ALL WOMEN'S ACTION SOCIETY (AWAM)

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



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Vision

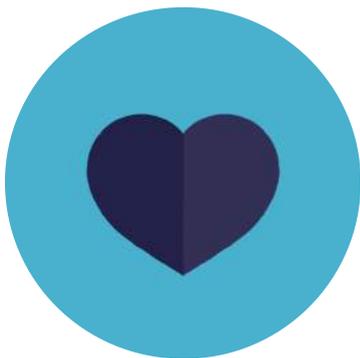
AWAM envisions a just, democratic and equitable society where all persons – women especially – are treated with respect and are free from all forms of violence and discrimination.



Mission

Based on feminist principles, we seek to achieve our vision by building a movement that informs, connects and mobilises society towards:

- Securing women's rights and bringing about gender equality;
- Developing capacities for women's empowerment and social transformation;
- Supporting women in crises.



Values

AWAM operates with the strength of a dynamic and dedicated group of members and staff who shape the direction and policies of the organisation. As a collective, AWAM strongly believes in having an inclusive participatory and empowering organisational culture. We are guided in our work and decision-making by five core values:

- Collectivism
- Compassion and respect
- Courage
- Equality and justice
- Integrity

People of AWAM



Office Bearers

March 2014 to April 2016

President Ho Yock Lin
Deputy President thency gunasekaran
Hon. Secretary Judith Loh Foong Lin
Hon. Treasurer Theresa Lim Chin Chin

Ordinary Council Members Rabiatal Adawiyah Jusoh
Wong Pui Yan
Sofia Lim Siu Ching

April 2016 to April 2018

President thency gunasekaran
Deputy President Theresa Lim Chin Chin
Hon. Secretary Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini
Hon. Treasurer Wong Pui Yan

Ordinary Council Members Rabiatal Adawiyah Yusof
Liza Lew May Lee
Lee Leng Leng
(resigned November 27th)



Working Collective

Ain Naseihah
Choong Yong Yi
(stepped down June 2016)
Deepa Chandra
(stepped down June 2016)
Emily O. Mathius
(resigned August 30th)
Evelynne Gomez
Lee Leng Leng
(resigned November 27th)

Lee Wei San
Lim Chin Chin
Liza Lew May Lee
Lochna Menon
(resigned November 27th)
Pui Yan Wong
Rabiatal Adawiyah Yusoff
Tan beng hui
thency gunasekaran
Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini



Staff

Assistant Manager, Finance & Admin	Emily O. Mathius <i>(resigned August 30th)</i>
Senior Programme Manager	Lee Wei San
Finance & Admin Officer	Camelia Sulaiman <i>(joined August 26th)</i>
Programme Officer	Choong Yong Yi
Assistant Programme Officers	Deepa Chandra Lochna Menon <i>(resigned November 27th)</i> Ain Naseihah
Information Communication Officer	Evelynne Gomez
Consultant: Training Advisor Consultant: Book keeper	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng Loke Siew Fung



Committees

Gender-Based Violence
Politicisation of Ethnicity and Religion
Membership Development
Media
Fundraising
Finance
Human Resources



Report by the Honorary Secretary:

What is in a year?

Is it the months that make up the duration of it, or the history of activities that fill in the spaces within it? Is it the people who are marking time by their eventful doings and becomings?

The All Women's Action Society (AWAM) Annual Report of 2016 as presented in these pages is an account of all three. In a year of constant shifts and challenges, the work that has been carried out over this period of twelve months is a testament to the resilience and drive of all who makes up AWAM; past and present.

From staff to interns, from members to volunteers, from sponsors and funders to participants, I would like to express the deepest gratitude for your support on behalf of AWAM. None of it would've been possible without your genuine belief in the cause and trust in those who are carrying out the work.

SUMMARY OF AWAM'S WORK IN 2016

Gender-Based Violence:

The GBV Committee developed a **new partnership with indigenous women** via the Women's Committee of Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS), following a one and half day training workshop in March. We were invited by the network to conduct a workshop on gender, and as a result of that engagement with the 13 indigenous women leaders and the secretariat of JOAS, we established a two year working relationship focusing on capacity building. We followed up with a National Training of Trainers (NTOT) for the indigenous women leaders in October, adapting and developing content from the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) manual in response to feedback from participants. This has already resulted in a follow up seminar by participants in their community in Gerik, Perak. The March workshop and NTOT were supported by our partner, WLP.

Following a 3 day training workshop in 2015, we were invited by the **Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM)** to return to conduct two workshops for police officers of various ranks, on gender sensitisation and violence against women.

As a follow up to the panel discussion in 2015 on marital rape, we organised a Big Group Meeting (BGM) with members to debate and explore the benefits and challenges of using the term 'marital rape', explored what we would like to achieve by using this term, and proposed ways to move forward. One suggestion from the BGM was to conduct a street survey to gain a better understanding of public perceptions of marital rape. The findings from the survey and our discussions are being incorporated into the development of an organizational stand on Marital Rape by the GBV Committee.

The Committee also began developing new content for training, to link gender-based violence to the larger, oppressive system of patriarchy. AWAM has been conducting public education and training through the lens of violence against women over the past 30 years, and found a need to refocus on patriarchy, to take a step back so that we can develop content and methodologies that will help young people understand the role of patriarchy in causing gender-based violence, as well as help them actively take steps to address these injustices. A draft of part one of the three part manual has been developed, and we are now moving on towards the second part of the manual.

We continued to build on our partnership with WLP this year, through engagement, sharing and learnings at the Transnational Partners Convening (TPC). We also participated as facilitator and attendee at the WLP Global Training of Trainer, held back to back with the TPC.

Politicisation of Ethnicity and Religion:

In 2016, we continued to witness the politicisation of ethnicity and religion and its use to justify violence and discrimination against women, including sexual harassment for eating in public during the fasting month, fines served to Muslim women who were in skinny jeans and shopkeepers who had advertisement posters of women in sexy clothing.

This year, the committee conducted three youth workshops held under our PERpaduan programme for students from two public universities. Our workshops continue to receive positive feedback, with participants sharing that there is a shift in their thinking and they appreciate the spaces in which they can freely speak. We had

participants come back and volunteer with us in our other programmes. On top of that, we held three study sessions where we developed potential questions participants may have to better equip our trainers and completed the translation of the training manual to Bahasa Malaysia. The PER Committee also held a discussion on the Islamic-Secular state debate to come up with an organisational stand and held a session on Political Economy, Islam and Women in Malaysia, where we looked at various events that occurred since Malaysia's independence. The input from the session is currently being simplified into illustrations. We also expanded our relationship-building to not only Wanita IKRAM but also its youth wing.

Advocacy and Networking:

AWAM sees its advocacy and networking work as part of a process of social transformation, beyond policy advocacy. Where possible, our advocacy and networking work has been absorbed by the GBV and PER Committees and reported there. This is to ensure that our advocacy and networking is integrated into AWAM's thematic focus, and that it remains part of a longer term effort towards change. However, where there are cross cutting issues and engagement cuts across committees, or it is an ad hoc engagement, those activities are set out separately.

In 2016, AWAM continued to develop, maintain and strengthen its partnerships with various NGO coalitions. The **Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)** remains the key coalition through which we engage on women's human rights issues, including strategy meetings around mass mobilisation, unilateral conversion of children and safety and security of human rights organisations and defenders. We continued to be at solidarity events, supporting women human rights defenders targeted by State and non-state actors. AWAM was part of the **Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)** management committee to support its institutional building, but had to step out of the management committee towards the end of the year due to lack of human resources, though we remain a member of the coalition.

We have reduced law reform engagement with the Federal government following our decision at the 2015 Evaluation and Planning Meeting, to focus our limited energies where we can make the most impact, but maintained other forms of engagement with the Selangor State government.

Towards the end of 2016, AWAM also started a new project and

committee. The AWAM **GE-14 Project** was initialised in October year as an initiative to mobilise and ensure that women's visibility and issues are part of the public consciousness and consideration when they go to vote in the upcoming general election. The four objectives for the project are; putting women at the centre of the elections, ensuring informed and women-friendly voters, challenging the divisiveness of politicised ethnicity and religion and mobilising women to the forefront of democracy. The members and volunteers here have since developed a survey to understand women's concerns for the next general elections, tested this via the Bersih 5 convoy at Tanjung Malim, organised a mobile "Pentas Wanita" at Bersih 5 and making women's presence and demands visible at the rally, and participated in solidarity actions in support of fellow woman human rights defender and a co-founder of AWAM, Maria Chin Abdullah.

Public education and training:

Public education and training (PET) is our core work here at AWAM. As with advocacy and networking, most of the talks and trainings are conducted under the GBV and PER Committees. However, the majority of our requests for trainings are fielded by our training consultant Betty Yeoh, who is also a co-founder of AWAM.

In 2016, we reached out to **1,400 persons** through various public education talks/trainings that was organised by or responded to, by the GBV, PER and Fundraising committees, as well as the training advisor. Talks and trainings related to GBV and PER issues are reported under the respective sections, while other topics covered were feminism, women's rights, CEDAW and AWAM's work. Notably, in 2016, we worked with UNHCR and conducted 2 sessions with them; a five-day grassroots workshop for the refugee community on Sexual Gender Based Violence and a two-day workshop on CEDAW for UNHCR staff.

AWAM also set up seven exhibition booths at Arts for Grabs, OSCC Symposium and Peace Campaign, among others.

Services - legal information counselling:

In 2016, we had **520 clients** who sought our services, including some clients seeking both legal information and counselling services. We managed 398 legal cases and 204 counselling cases, of which 78 were shared legal-counselling cases. We observed a sharp increase of the total number of cases received, amounting to about 37% more than the average cases received each year for the

past five years. This year, the two most received cases were **domestic violence and civil divorce**.

Women made up an overwhelming 91% of our clientele, of which a majority (31.2%) were women aged 30 to 40 years, followed by women aged 18 to 29 years (16%). Most clients were Malaysian, but 7.3% of them were not. Most of our clients (61.5%) sought help through phone calls, while 25.4% did so through face-to-face sessions in AWAM, and 13.1% through email correspondence.

Through an analysis of our domestic violence cases, which makes the largest percentage of cases received at almost 30%, we found that **masculinity was central to the perpetrators' abusive behavior**. This section of the report provides a 2-page analysis as to what leads to abuse, challenges faced by survivors and the impact of our services work.

We managed five batches of legal aid pupils from the Selangor LAC and Kuala Lumpur LAC, all of whom attend a one day training to gender-sensitise and provide them with feminist lens in managing cases, jointly organised by AWAM, Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) and Sisters in Islam (SIS). This too is part of our public education effort - working with young lawyers to give them first-hand experience of the struggles of women and hopefully, to facilitate a better understanding of impact that patriarchy has on women and violence. We worked with five intern counsellors throughout 2016, to provide free counselling, with the support of a volunteer registered counsellor who is also a member of AWAM.

Information and Communications:

Our information communications work is meant to support and capture AWAM's work. In 2016, we produced six AWAM E-links, developed a programme booklet for the White Ribbon Run and Walk, issued seven press statements, participated in 3 radio interviews and 5 TV/video interviews. We also endorsed statements by JAG and other human rights coalitions.

We had **8941 Facebook** followers, **902 Twitter** followers and **110 Instagram** followers. Our website had **15,801 unique visitors**.

This year, we also executed the **AWAM Oral History Video Project**, AWAM's first attempt to document our individual and collective oral histories through video. We interviewed 10 AWAM members, individually and in pairs, to produce seven oral history videos. These videos are mainly for AWAM's internal use; depending on the interviewees' consent, some videos may also be shared with the

public.

Membership Development:

The Membership Development Committee (MDC) continued to **cultivate and strengthen AWAM's membership base** through organisational and individual capacity building, orienting and supporting new members and creating space for conversations on feminism both internally and externally. In 2016, AWAM had approximately **70 members**, with about half actively taking part in activities and contributing to the growth of the organisation. MDC held three Members' Orientation sessions, six Feminist Friday events, one Feminist Camp, one One-Day Open Space Event, as well as two Group Process Awareness Workshops in 2016. These activities worked towards helping current AWAM members hone their personal and organisational skills as well as created opportunities for members of the public at large as well as AWAM members to explore and understand feminism, both theory and praxis, in the Malaysian context and encounter like-minded people.

Fundraising:

Raising funds is part of the struggle for social transformation.

While fundraising is hard work, it is also a way for us to engage with our community, to tell them what it is we do, why it is important, and why they should therefore, hopefully, part with a bit of their hard earned money, to support the cause. In 2016, the Fundraising Committee continued to shoulder the bulk of raising money for AWAM and focussed its efforts on **one major public awareness and fundraising event, the White Ribbon Campaign**. We also continued to field and pursue collaborative fundraising events with corporates, university students, various organisations and individuals. All other committees also did their bit, whether through proposal writing, programme participation fees, or asking their friends and networks to donate to a particular programme.

THE PEOPLE OF AWAM

New Council:

At the Annual General Meeting on 23rd April, the membership welcomed Council Members for the 2016 – 2018 term, most of whom were younger activists in their 20s and 30s and much newer to AWAM. A founding member continues to be part of the Council

membership to provide institutional memory and guidance, as a bridge between the past and where we have been, and where we want to take AWAM towards. Our heartfelt thanks to the outgoing Council members who continue to support AWAM in other capacities.

Committees:

It has been a challenging year for many of our committees. Almost all had insufficient hands for the mass amount of work that was done. Two key persons, namely the Staff and Member Coordinators, resigned from the Services Committee; there were unexpected changes in staffing in mid-year; the Fundraising Committee lost its full time staff in October and struggled with fewer volunteers in general. However, we all still managed to accomplish very substantive work, and in many cases, most of what each committee set out to do.

Staffing:

We welcome Camelia Sulaiman, who takes over the Finance and Admin portfolio from Emily Mathius. Emily left us in August to pursue her passion in counselling. Lochna Menon, programme officer for fundraising, resigned in October, but remained on a part time basis between October – November to support the White Ribbon Campaign Run and Walk in November.

Interns and Volunteers:

AWAM's work would not have been possible without the support of our wonderful interns and volunteers. Their names and reflection are set out in the body of this report.

WHAT NEXT?

2016 has borne witness to many regressions on the human rights' front, not just at the local level but at a global scale; manifestations of anxieties turned into hatred and bigotry. When human rights language no longer holds its power to persuade and inflict change for the better, when "women's empowerment" can be used as both lock and key to the gates of freedom, how should a women's movement organise its assembly?

AWAM is undertaking a “reflection and recalibration process” (R&R) in 2017 as a response to this inquiry. We have scaled back our activities and ongoing work to provide time and space for genuine introspection and auditing of where the organisation is in the larger ecosystems of which it inhabits. We seek to sharpen our tools and analysis, so as to not replicate the very thing we’re trying to dismantle.

My hope is that we'll have your support in this journey. A metamorphosis requires all stages, all of equal importance. Past, present, the in-between. An evolution born out of necessity; AWAM is changing as the world changes.

What is in a year? We shall soon find out.



*Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini
Honorary Secretary*

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)



Staff coordinator

Member coordinator

Members

Choong Yong Yi

thency gunasekaran

Betty Yeoh Siew Peng

Kuek Yen Sim

Lee Wei San

Mayna Patel (*joined 25 April 2016*)



Why GBV?

In Malaysia, the issue of gender-based violence remains relevant as women and gender non-conforming persons continue to lag behind when it comes to their participation in economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. This human rights violation, which includes violence against women, continues to impair women's access to and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.



Overview of 2016

2016 has been a quieter year for the GBV Committee. Nonetheless, we did facilitate a training workshop for the Women's Committee of Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS) earlier in the year. We then followed up on this with a second workshop, a National Training of Trainers for the indigenous women leaders.

In addition, we began to develop a new series of training manuals that seeks to link gender-based violence to the larger, oppressive system of patriarchy. We also conducted an online and street survey as part of the process of drafting an organisational stand on the issue of marital rape.

Public Education and Training

1 **Grassroots Workshop with JOAS**

AWAM was invited to Day One of the Women's Committee meeting (18 March 2016) to conduct a workshop on gender. In our workshop, we facilitated discussions on gender and gender discrimination and helped the participants understand these concepts better. We also worked towards empowering the women leaders and building their confidence when it comes to speaking about issues they are concerned about, such as gender discrimination.

Our 13 participants were indigenous women leaders from JOAS, who came from Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia. Through the workshop, they gained better understandings of their friends and their lives, learned how to approach other participants, and learned how to run a workshop on gender, including what methods and activities to carry out.

On the other side of the equation, AWAM came away from the workshop with a better understanding of the experiences and perceptions of indigenous women, as well as the issues they face in their lives. As a result, we were able to establish a two-year working relationship with the JOAS women leaders, part of which involves organising a three-day National Training of Trainers for the indigenous women leaders.

2 **National Training of Trainers (NTOT) for JOAS**

As a follow-up from the grassroots workshop held in March, we organised a three-day NTOT from 28 to 30 October 2016. We had 13 women from Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia, more than half of whom were second-time participants. Based on feedback from participants, we tailored the NTOT to include topics such as: confidence and self-esteem, leadership skills and communications, and skills and techniques related to workshop facilitation. In essence, this workshop was aimed at equipping participants with greater self-confidence and better preparing them for becoming facilitators themselves.

It was evident from the pre- and post-training workshop evaluations that even a short period of time can significantly change the mindsets of participants on issues such as confidence, self-esteem, gender, leadership, and communication and facilitation skills. Our evaluations also showed that over the course of the workshop, participants became more capable of communicating and sharing information with others. Therefore, should we continue to run such workshops, trainees would very likely grow more confident and more willing and ready to become facilitators.

The GBV committee would like to record our appreciation towards the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) for funding the Grassroots Workshop and the NTOT. We would also like to note our appreciation towards JOAS for the opportunity to collaborate with the indigenous community.

3 Gender-Sensitisation Workshop for the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) - D11 Modern Policing Pilot

Through our 3-day training workshop with PDRM-D11 in 2015, we were able to build a relationship with the police force; we thus went back to conduct this gender-sensitisation workshop in 2016.

We held two half-day workshops for police officers from Brickfields and Taman Tun Dr Ismail Police Stations. In total, the two sessions were attended by 42 police officers of various ranks. The aim of the workshop was to create an awareness of violence against women that is informed by a sensitive understanding of gender, as well as to help the police force better manage cases in line with legislation and human rights principles.

The topics covered included gender sensitisation and violence against women – causes and impact, gender-sensitised service, and managing cases with a gender-sensitive approach. The training methodology included lectures, experiential activities and role play.

From the pre- and post-evaluation of workshop, we know that there was a change in the ways the participants thought about gender. Some commented about being more aware of survivors' feelings and of issues related to gender and violence against women; for example, one participant felt that the training had prepared him to understand domestic violence survivors better. Some participants also expressed support for more of these workshops, and found the workshop to be impactful in equipping them with the skills they need to provide effective, high-quality service and communication.

4

Big Group Meeting (BGM) - Discussion Session and Survey on Marital Rape

In 2015, we organised a panel discussion and invited three panel speakers to present their views on marital rape from various perspectives. As a follow-up, we organised a discussion session in 2016 for members and conducted a survey to further our understanding of the issue.

15 AWAM members attended the discussion session on 26 January 2016. Participants discussed the benefits and challenges of using the term 'marital rape', explored what we would like to achieve by using this term, and proposed ways to move forward. One of the ways in which we wanted to move forward was to hold such conversations with people outside our membership. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of public perceptions of marital rape, we conducted a survey on the issue after the BGM, both online and on the streets

The GBV committee is currently drafting our organisational stand. We are incorporating feedback from committee members and observers, as well as research that legal aid pupils assisted with.

Publications

1 Developing Manuals – Linking Gender-Based Violence and Patriarchy

In recent years, the GBV committee observed that patriarchal norms had worsened; at the same time, there was a growing acceptance of such norms. Hence, one of our main activities in 2016 was to develop manuals that will help young people understand the role of patriarchy in causing gender-based violence, as well as help them actively take steps to address these injustices.

From January to April 2016, an intern, Emma Costa, was assigned to doing preliminary research and readings for the manuals. The committee members also provided their input and ideas to conceptualise the framework and content of the manual, led by thency, our member coordinator, and they were all kept updated during committee meetings.

In addition, we organised a Focus Group Discussion on 26 March 2016 to get a better sense of what baseline understanding youths in Malaysia have about issues related to patriarchy.

‘Creating a More Equal Malaysia’ was the theme we posed to the diverse group of youths who attended the Focus Group Discussion. We made use of open space technology, in which participants were completely free to decide on the twelve topics they wanted to discuss. Recruited through AWAM’s networks participants were greatly diverse in their interests, experiences, and level of exposure to gender issues and ethnicity. Some of these participants were already connected to AWAM, while others were completely new to us.

This created a day of rich conversations, fuelled by the interest and passion of participants and covering a wide range of issues. These included gender stereotyping, the intersection of gender and religion, LGBTQ rights, discrimination against men, and feminism, just to name a few. As a result, we were more aware of what young adults already know or don’t know about the topic, the discussion has made us more capable of creating a good patriarchal training manual targeted at 18–25 year olds.

The draft of the first manual was presented in July to the committee to collate further feedback. We are now working on the draft of the second manual and are expecting to finalise the manual in 2017.

GBV - Advocacy and Networking

1 **WLP - Transnational Partners Convening (TPC)**

The Transnational Partners Convening (TPC) is a platform for conducting strategic discussions on WLP's programme, the challenges and accomplishments of each country partner, the progress of WLP's collective work during the past year, and the programme design for the year to come. Betty and thency attended the TPC hosted in Maryland, US from 1 to 4 October 2016. Not only did we actively contribute to WLP's trainings by providing new methodologies, other Global WLP Trainers also replicated our sessions and methodologies in their countries. As a result, we strengthened our partnership with WLP and will continue to carry out the activities we had committed to as part of our partnership agreement.

2 **WLP - Global Training of Trainers (GTOT)**

After the TPC, WLP hosted a GTOT on 5 October 2016. Betty participated as a Senior Facilitator for WLP, and thency participated in both her capacities as the President of AWAM and a leading facilitator. At this training, we participated more directly in WLP's global family law reform campaign and their development of a new curriculum to empower refugee women. We had more in-depth sessions on WLP's "learning partnership" model, which included a review of WLP's participatory leadership and training methodology and an evaluation of WLP's latest manuals on human rights, peace-building, and democratic transitions.

3 **Conference Presentation at the First Asian Summit for the Prevention & Treatment of Gender-Based Violence**

As part of the GBV committee's work and of AWAM's networking efforts, Yong Yi attended the First Asian Summit for the Prevention & Treatment of Gender-Based Violence. The conference was held on 26 and 27 October 2016 in Taipei, Taiwan and also attended by representatives from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, and Taiwan. Its objectives were to discuss global trends and each country or region's GBV prevention characteristics, development, and

strategies, and to facilitate a collaborative communication platform on GBV prevention among Asian countries and regions.

At the conference, AWAM shared about the critical issues that Malaysia is currently facing, including issues related to legislation and policy, gender roles and stereotyping, participation in political and public life, employment, health, and equality in marriage and family. We also highlighted AWAM's work and JAG's contribution in advancing women's human rights in Malaysia.

Impact of AWAM's GBV Work

Because AWAM recognises that long-term commitment is required in order to produce meaningful work, we are intent on identifying constituents that we would like to work with.

This year, we focussed our efforts on networking and establishing rapport with indigenous people. We noticed that there has been progress since our first workshop with the Women's Section of JOAS in March – the community has been carrying out similar trainings for themselves.

A month after the NTOT (i.e. in November 2016), six participants from the training organised a women's seminar for their community in Kampung Sungai Papan, Gerik, Perak. 21 participants from the Temiar tribe participated in this half-day seminar. With a particular focus on women, its objectives were to provide education on and exposure to human rights issues, as well as to provide a platform for the women to share their information and experiences. Their discussion topics included women and the environment, health and hygiene, and rights to identity and citizenship.

In carrying out this event, the trainers adapted the knowledge and skills they had learned from our NTOT to the contexts and lived realities of their community. Our understanding is that participants felt that the seminar opened their minds to new knowledge and helped them become more equipped for giving presentations. The committee will continue to track the outcomes of the NTOT to evaluate its impact on the community.

Conclusion and Future Planning for 2017

It has been a challenging year for the GBV committee as we had insufficient resources for meeting all the plans we had for the year. Despite this, the committee was more structured and had more frequent and consistent meetings. We also strengthened our documentation of meetings and activities, which is important in creating institutional knowledge for AWAM's work. Furthermore, our work with the indigenous women leaders has helped us work with a new target group, opening up an opportunity for collaborating with the indigenous community (via JOAS).

Moving forward, the GBV committee will continue its work in addressing gender-based violence, as guided by the 2014 Strategic Plan and the 2016 Evaluation and Planning session. Recognising that patriarchy as one of the root causes of gender-based violence, in 2017 we will focus our work on developing the patriarchy training manuals. We are also planning to hold an NTOT for young activists next year, as youths are one of our target groups.

We are also committed to strengthening our partnership with JOAS; as part of our efforts, we will be organising a follow-up workshop for the indigenous women leaders. Last but not least, we will continue organising and responding to external requests for trainings, as we believe that trainings are an important and essential tool for changing public mindsets.

18 MARCH



JOAS
GRASSROOTS
WORKSHOP

28-30 OCTOBER



JOAS
NTOT

7 JUNE



PDRM

1-4 OCTOBER



WLP -
TRANSNATIONAL
PARTNERS
CONVENING

5 OCTOBER



WLP -
GLOBAL TRAINING
OF TRAINERS

26-27 OCTOBER



FIRST ASIAN
SUMMIT

Advocacy and Networking



Who?

The work is carried out mostly by staff and our training consultant, with support of interns and volunteer members from other committees.



Why Advocacy and Networking?

AWAM sees its advocacy and networking work as part of a process of social transformation, beyond policy advocacy. Where possible, our advocacy and networking work has been absorbed by the GBV and PER Committees and reported there. This is to ensure that our advocacy and networking is integrated into AWAM's thematic focus, and that it remains part of a longer term effort towards change. However, where there are cross cutting issues, where the engagement with an entity cuts across committees, or it is an ad hoc engagement, those activities are set out here.



Overview of 2016

Engagement with NGOs

In 2016, AWAM continued to develop, maintain and strengthen its partnerships with various NGO coalitions. We were part of a few strategy meetings as part of JAG, discussing ways to mobilise support for JAG's advocacy demands and how we can more effectively raise women's awareness and ownership over women human rights issues, as well as discussions around the safety and security of human rights organisations and defenders. The year also saw us at solidarity events, supporting women human rights defenders targeted by State and non-state actors. AWAM was part of the RRAAM management committee to support its institutional building. However, as work intensified and human and financial resources became more scarce, we stepped out of the management committee towards the end of the year, though we remain a member of the coalition.

Engagement with government

We have reduced law reform engagement with the Federal government following our decision at the 2015 Evaluation and Planning Meeting, to focus our limited energies where we can make the most impact, but maintained other forms of engagement with the Selangor State government. Policy advocacy is important as part of a multi-dimensional strategy towards social change, however, we recognise that there is sufficient expertise within JAG, for our sister organisations to carry forward the legal reform engagement without the need for AWAM's presence. AWAM's interventions has thusly, been focussed on internal strategies discussion within JAG, to support its lobbying efforts.

AWAM's new 'GE-14 Project'

Towards the end of 2016, AWAM also started a new project and committee. The AWAM GE-14 Project was initialised late last year as an initiative to mobilise and ensure that women's visibility and issues are part of the public consciousness and consideration when they go to vote in the upcoming general election. The four objectives for the project are; putting women at the centre of the elections, ensuring informed and women-friendly voters, challenging the divisiveness of politicised ethnicity and religion and mobilising women to the forefront of democracy.

Highlights of activities in 2016

1 Engagement with NGOs

1.1 *Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)*

The main thrust of AWAM's advocacy and networking work has continued to be with the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG).

- a. **JAG's membership:** In 2016, JAG added another member to its coalition, Justice for Sisters (JFS), making it a 12 member coalition. Justice for Sisters is a grassroots collective of transgender women and men as well as cis-gender women, who raise public awareness about issues surrounding violence and persecution against the Mak Nyah community in Malaysia.
- b. **Aiyoh Wat Lah Project:** This is the 5th year that JAG has organised its annual Aiyoh Wat Lah Project, organising an annual spoof awards which aims to call out the sexist, misogynistic, homophobic and transphobic comments or actions by public figures or institutions, and to hold them accountable to higher standards of behaviour. AWAM is a key member of the organising committee of the project. In 2016, we changed the way we organised the project, and for the first time, worked with five private higher education institutions from the Gender Equality Initiative (GEI) – a project involving university students from law schools, initiated by a JAG member, the Association of Women Lawyers (AWL). We wanted to extend the reach of JAG's work beyond its usual constituents and build the capacity of young women and men to identify sexist, misogynistic and homophobic comments.

Activities include:

- *Aiyoh Wat Lah Workshop #1 (26th April)*
The workshop with approximately 20 university students and young women from JAG, covered issues of gender, sexuality and the politicisation of Islam. Sessions were run by thency and Norhayati Kaprawi.
- *Aiyoh Wat Lah Workshop #2 (2nd June)*
The second workshop built upon the first and covered critical thinking and writing skills. As an output of the workshop, participants created the first draft of the Aiyoh Wat Lah Nominee booklet, that would later be released to the public to accompany the call for votes. The session was run by Surin Kaur.

- *Aiyoh Voting Opens (21st July)*
The nominations for the seven categories was open to the public for voting. As before, seven awards were up for grabs. Six of them were for the worst statements or actions possible in relation to gender and sexuality, while one ('Right on Track'), was to acknowledge the positive steps taken to combat gender discrimination.
- *Aiyoh Wat Lah Awards (28th August)*
Attended by over 100 people, the awards ceremony was held at VSO @ PJ City Centre, and hosted by Shanthini Venugopal and Shelah! For more information on the awards and a list of this year's "winners", check out https://aiyohwatlah.wordpress.com/voting_results/.
- *Taking stock: Five years of winners and losers*
In conjunction with the fifth anniversary of the Aiyoh Wat Lah awards, JAG also took stock of how far we have come since introducing this event in 2012. A review of winners over the last five years paints a bleak and regressive picture. Women continue to be objectified by politicians, ministers and other public figures; and continue to be undermined in politics; women face increasing violence, with rape and death threats against women who speak out against injustice; homophobic and transphobic statements and actions continue with disturbing regularity; moral policing of women's dressing was pervasive throughout the five years of the awards; and there was a persistent and on-going discrediting of feminism and the women's movement. This state of affairs may be a reflection of the broader socio-political malaise in Malaysia, where many acts of injustice go unnoticed or occur with impunity. Until our national, local or community leaders see that there are repercussions for being sexist, misogynistic, homophobic or transphobic, it is likely that little will change. We need to keep holding them accountable and measure them up to a higher standards, especially with the fourteenth General Election around the corner. For the full analysis: <https://aiyohwallah.wordpress.com/voting-results/>.

For more information about the project:
<https://aiyohwatlah.wordpress.com>

- c. Other meetings and workshops:** Throughout the year, the coalition meets to discuss and strategise over various issues, as well as organise briefings to build the capacity of organisations within the coalition.

Highlights of activities we participated in:

- JAG Evaluation and Planning Meeting (E&P) (19th -21st January)
Evie, Lochna, Wei San and Yong Yi represented AWAM at the annual JAG E&P. Throughout the three days, AWAM and our sister organisations shared our work for the year, conducted a SWOT-PEST analysis, assessed our joint projects for 2015 and made plans for 2016/2017. One important decision made, was to set up a secretariat, and fundraise around this, to overcome the coalition's weakness in follow through, as projects and work within the coalition is taken up by a few members organisations, who may not always be able to manage, especially if they are struggling with limited resources. We discussed the need to address women's rights outside of GBV, especially in areas of contemporary social issues, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). One way of doing this is to expand our reach to other organisations and mobilise in a more impactful way. We also recognized the need to connect more closely with our sisters in Sabah and Sarawak.
- Briefing on SOGIE issues for JAG by Justice for Sisters (6th January)
Justice for Sisters conducted a workshop for approximately 20 JAG members on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity / Expression issues, providing conceptual clarity, addressing misconceptions, and providing an overview of challenges faced by the transgender community in Malaysia and elsewhere in the world.

List of activities we participated in:

- Strategy Meetings to discuss Mass Mobilization (1st June and 28th September)
- Strategy Meetings to discuss Conversion Cases (20th January and 3rd August)
- Strategy Meeting to discuss Law Reform (2nd March)
- Training on CEDAW for JAG by Shanthi Dairiam (27th June)
- Briefing for JAG on Security Measures (9th September)
- Gender Equality Workshop (21st - 22nd November)

1.2 *Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)*

AWAM is a member of the RRAAM coalition, and hosts its funds as RRAAM has not yet been registered. AWAM continued to attend quarterly meetings of the coalition in 2016.

In addition to the quarterly members meetings, we also participated in the following activities:

- RRAAM Movie Screening and Discussion on Abortion (15th January)
- High Level Roundtable on the Legal and Policy Environment of Safe Abortion in Malaysia, attended by, amongst others, Ministry of Health and Attorney General Chambers (21st March)
- RRAAM Strategic Planning Meeting (23rd - 24th July)
- Meeting with RRAAM's funder, Safe Abortion Action Fund (SAAF), to respond to the funder's queries about the financial accountability process between AWAM and RRAAM (15th and 16th August)

1.3 *Other engagements with NGOs*

We also engaged with the following organisations in 2016, through meetings, consultations and solidarity events:

- Amnesty International
- Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM)
- Jaringan Ibu Tunggal
- Suaram
- Bersih
- Malaysia Tourist Centre (MaTic)
- SEED Foundation (Pertubuhan Kebajikan dan Persekitaran Positif Malaysia)

2 **Engagement with Federal and Selangor State Governments**

2.1 *Selangor State*

We engaged with the Selangor State at the following events:

- Betty represented AWAM at a meeting with the Selangor State ExCo for Health, Welfare, Women and Family Development to evaluate capacity building for its Pusat Wanita Berdaya (PWB) as well as to plan further workshops (14th January)
- AWAM gave a speech at the Selangor State Government's #HeForShe Campaign launch (2nd February)
- Selangor State Treasury - Round Table on 2017 Budget (16th August)
- AWAM held a meeting with the Selangor State government to discuss Women's Safety at Work (19th April)

2.2 *Federal*

We engaged with the Federal government at the following events:

- AWAM attended a briefing by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development on proposed amendments to the Child Act, including on a proposed sex offender registry (23rd February)
- AWAM was part of the joint JAG/NCWO team that met with YB Nancy Shukri, and representatives of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and Attorney General Chambers, to discuss priority areas of law reform on issues surrounding women's human rights (25th February)

At this meeting, the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) together with the National Council of Women's Organisation (NCWO), met with representatives from 3 government departments to discuss law's pertaining to women's rights. The meeting was chaired by YB Puan Hajah Nancy binti Haji Shukri, a Minister in the Prime Minister's department, and with representatives from the Attorney General Chambers (AGC) and Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development in attendance. Issues raised by JAG and NCWO included issues surrounding: the impact of conversion a spouse on women and children, the definition of rape, marital rape, domestic violence, Islamic Family Law Reform, sexual harassment, and the Child Act. Representatives from the 3 ministries shared updates on the progress of law reform in some of these areas. At the end of the meeting, we agreed to hold more regular meetings for JAG and NCWO to provide more in depth briefings on some of the issues we touched upon, as well as regular updates on the progress of laws, and how we can strategise together to push forward law reform on these issues. We

also handed over the Hentikan Rogol petition calling for a widening of the definition of rape (amongst other) to YB Puan Hajah Nancy binti Haji Shukri, a minister in the Prime Minister's Department, and Datuk Engku Nor Faizal, Deputy SG at the Attorney General Chambers.

3 GE14

The AWAM GE-14 Project was conceived at the tail end of 2016 as an initiative to mobilise and ensure that women's visibility and issues are part of the public consciousness and consideration when they go to vote in the upcoming Malaysia's general election.

The four objectives for the project are; putting women at the centre of the elections, ensuring informed and women-friendly voters, challenging the divisiveness of politicised ethnicity and religion and mobilising women to the forefront of democracy.

- a. **AWAM GE-14 Project first meeting (13th October):** The first meeting was attended by 12 members and volunteers. It was an introduction to the AWAM GE-14 Project, and provided a space for new volunteers to get to know each other and AWAM. The group planned several possible activities, which leveraged on existing AWAM and other NGO activities.
- b. **BERSIH 5 convoy (12th November):** A small team of 4 members and volunteers from the AWAM GE-14 Project joined the BERSIH 5 convoy at Tanjung Malim, Perak. In addition to showing support and solidarity with BERSIH 5's efforts, the team managed to conduct a survey with a local Hulu Langat woman who runs a small grocery shop (gerai). It was a pilot test for the voting survey and we were able to tweak the survey further before the BERSIH 5 rally.
- c. **Voting Survey for Women:** The voting survey was created as part of the AWAM GE-14 Project's effort to better understand the issues facing women in Malaysia today, which would then better inform the activities and the work that we do. The first version of the survey is available in English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil - however, these are currently being further edited. At BERSIH 5 rally, we managed to collect 12 completed surveys with a good sampling across age and income. 'Corruption' and 'Cost of Living' were main issues of concern for women. 'GST', 'Violence Against Women' / 'Safety and Security' and 'Ethnic and Religious Tensions' were also mentioned.

- d. **BERSIH 5 Prep meeting (18th November):** We met to prepare for BERSIH 5. Around 12 members, staff and volunteers attended and helped out with making signs and creating the "Pentas Wanita".
- e. **Pentas Wanita @BERSIH5 (19th November):** We organised "Pentas Wanita", a mobile pop-up station where women attending the BERSIH 5 rally shared their hopes and dreams for Malaysia and put them up on the station. We managed to collect more than 40 of these messages and some were shared through our social media effort for the rally, #WanitaMengundi, via our twitter account @wanitamengundi. This is part of the larger objective of ensuring women's visibility at these rally/ events. Some of our signs from the rally were also featured in an article on says.com. About 16 members, volunteers and staff helped out with our initiatives during BERSIH 5 rally itself (primarily consisted of AWAM members/ GE-14 project volunteers and their friends).
- f. **#WanitaMengundi / @WanitaMengundi @BERSIH5:** We created a twitter account, @wanitamengundi and tagline #WanitaMengundi to better promote the visibility of women and their political participation (both through voting, protests and others). Our tweets have since been picked up by both local and international online publications. At the Bersih rally on 19th November, we gathered 382 retweets, 267 likes and over 4000 engagements.

See the media coverage of our tweets here:

<http://says.com/my/news/bersih-5-what-the-rakyat-wants-in-signs-and-placards> and
<http://mashable.com/2016/11/22/polite-sign-bersih-malaysia-rally/>

- g. **Vigil for Maria & Wanita Bergerak for Maria (November):** AWAM staff, members and volunteers for AWAM GE-14 Project attended the nightly vigils for Maria at Dataran Merdeka on a rotating basis. Some were also involved and helped out in the 'Wanita Bergerak for Maria' rally and the passing of memorandum for her release to Parliament.rally and the passing of memorandum for her release to Parliament.

4 Others

We also attended meetings / events by UNICEF, UNHCR, IKRAM, and WLP in 2016.

26 APRIL



2 JUNE

**AIYOH
WATLAH
WORKSHOPS**

28 AUGUST



**AIYOH WATLAH
AWARDS
EVENT**

6 JANUARY



JAG SOGIE

19-21 JANUARY



JAG EnP

13 OCTOBER



**GE14
FIRST
MEETING**

12 NOVEMBER



**BERSIH
CONVOY**

NOVEMBER



**VIGILS FOR
MARIA**

Public Education and Training (PET)



Training advisor Trainers

Betty Yeoh

thency, Lee Wei San, Yuhaniz Sazlin, Susanna George, Choong Yong Yi, Ho Yock Lin, Ain Nasiehad, Siew Yin Heng, Syar S. Alia, Kuek Yen Sim, Judith Loh, Rabiatal Adawiyah (Ruby).



Why PET?

Public education and training (PET) is our core work here at AWAM. In 2016, we carried out our PET work by responding to external training requests for corporates, as we work to raise awareness and fundraise at the same time.

A total of 1,400 people were reached in 2016 through various public education talks/trainings that was organised or responded by the GBV, PER and Fundraising committees, as well as the training advisor. Talks and trainings related to GBV and PER issues are reported under the respective sections, while other topics covered were feminism, women's rights, CEDAW and AWAM's work.

AWAM also set up seven exhibition booths at Arts for Grabs, OSCC Symposium and Peace Campaign, among others.



Overview of 2016

Talks / Trainings / Workshops

The year 2016 saw a total of 39 trainings/talks and 7 public education booths. Overall, the number of persons trained in 2016 was 1,400.

Interviews at AWAM

In 2016, there were a total of 25 interviews held at AWAM. 23 of these interviews were students from universities both in Malaysia and abroad.

	Topic	Participants	Trainers
11 MAR	<i>Women Roles To Cope During Tough Times</i>	40 PETRONITA club members	Siew
15 MAR	<i>Sexual Harassment</i> (organised by the KL Bar Committee, as part of the Professional Development Committee and Association of Women Lawyers Activist Series)	22 pupils and lawyers	Wei San
17 MAR	<i>Violence Against Women</i> (organised by Methodist College of Kuala Lumpur)	50 Secondary School Students	Yong Yi
18 MAR	<i>Gender session (BM)</i> (organised by JOAS)	15 indigenous women (Sabah, Sarawak & Peninsular)	thency
19 MAR	<i>Violence Against Women</i> (organised by students of UM)	40 University Malaya students	Yong Yi
25 MAR	<i>AWAM's work and Women's Human Right</i> (organised by UM Law Faculty lecturer as part of their Human Rights dialogue with NGOs)	70 University Malaya students	Betty
1-3 APR	<i>PERpaduan Youth workshop</i> (organised by PER Committee)	9 UM Gender Studies Programme students and AWAM staff/intern	thency, Syar
4 APR	<i>AWAM's work and Sexual Harassment for SEGI University, Kota Damansara</i>	18 SEGI University students	Betty
26 APR	<i>Women & Employment Laws in Malaysia at USIM</i>	19 USIM Syariah Faculty Students and Personnel	Betty

	Topic	Participants	Trainers
3 MAY	<i>Advocacy and JAG's work, at Monash University</i>	60 Monash University Students	Wei San
4 MAY	<i>Combating Sexual Harassment at University Malaya</i>	30 UM Law students and personnel	Betty
6 JUN	<i>NGO-LAC Training</i>	20 KL and Selangor Bar Pupils	Betty, Meera and NGO coordinators
16 JUL	<i>Political Economy, Islam and Women in Malaysia (organised by PER Committee)</i>	17 AWAM members	beng hui
29 JUL	<i>Culture Diversity, Gender Diversity and Sexual Harassment at Workplace</i>	Staff at IDC Market Research Sdn Bhd	Betty
7 AUG	<i>Forum Pendemokrasian Politik</i>	40 KeADILan women party members	Betty
8 AUG	<i>Culture and Gender Diversity at Workplace</i>	30 Quintic company personnel	Betty
28 AUG	<i>Hak Wanita dan Undang-Undang</i>	12 Pusat Wanita Berdaya (PWB) Kuang community women and women leaders	Betty
6 SEP	<i>NGO-LAC Training</i>	20 KL and Selangor Bar Pupils	Betty, Meera and NGO coordinators
16 SEP	<i>Hak Wanita dan Undang-Undang</i>	50 PWB Paya Jaras community women and women leaders	Betty

	Topic	Participants	Trainers
20 SEP	<i>Cultural and gender diversity at workplace - towards a better workplace</i>	26 Nielsen Company Personnel	Betty
24-28 SEP	<i>Sexual Gender Based Violence Training of trainer (organised by UNHCR Malaysia)</i>	16 Chin community leaders	Betty, Yen Sim
13 OCT	<i>Domestic Violence and Gender sensitization (organised by Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah (HTAR))</i>	70 Medical personnel from hospitals around Selangor	Betty
21-23 OCT	<i>PERpaduan Youth workshop (organised by AWAM's PER Committee)</i>	15 UM Gender Studies Programme students	Sazlin, Syar
28-30 OCT	<i>Gender and Leadership skills (jointly organised by AWAM and JOAS)</i>	14 JOAS women's leaders (Perak, Pahang, Selangor, Sabah and Sarawak)	Betty, thency
5 NOV	<i>Hak Wanita dan undang-undang</i>	60 PWB Dun Sg Pinang community women	Betty
7 NOV	<i>Network Collaboration (NGO and MOH-OSSC collaboration at OSSC Symposium)</i>	104 Medical personnel, police officers	Betty
10 NOV	<i>Gender equality and the White Ribbon Campaign (jointly organised by AWAM Fundraising Committee and International School @ ParkCity)</i>	40 ISP parents	Betty, Judith Loh
11 NOV	<i>GBV (jointly organised by AWAM Fundraising Committee and International School @ ParkCity)</i>	70 ISP students	thency

	Topic	Participants	Trainers
24 NOV	<i>Women Organisation Interaction Dinner cum Seminar</i>	The Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia Women Section members	Yock Lin
26 NOV	<i>Helping Skills</i>	15 Eximius Medical Administration Solutions staff	Betty
29-30 NOV	<i>UNHCR CEDAW SGBV Training</i>	40 UNHCR staff	Betty
2-4 DEC	<i>PERpaduan Youth workshop (organised by AWAM PER Committee)</i>	10 UPM Nutritional and Community Health students and AWAM interns	thency, Ruby
3 DEC	<i>Women's right from a civil perspective</i>	60 Wanita DAP N9 members	Betty
7 DEC	<i>NGO-LAC Training</i>	20 KL and Selangor Bar Pupils	Betty, Meera and NGO coordinators
10 DEC	<i>Sex, gender and equality</i>	45 students and young working adults	Yock Lin



Overview of 2016 (cont.)

UNHCR Training

This year, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) engaged AWAM to conduct a five-day grassroots workshop for the refugee community from September 24-28th. Betty Yeoh (Training Consultant) and Yen Sim (AWAM member) facilitated this workshop. The objectives of this training were to enhance the community's participation in SGBV prevention and response, to increase the community's capacity to strengthen the prevention and response mechanisms that have been established, and to identify incidences and prevalence of SGBV in the community.

Participants responded unanimously that the workshop overall was extremely beneficial and meaningful. One of the participants shared in his feedback that he learned not only to recognise and manage domestic abuse, but also to be a better and more effective leader. Another participant shared her excitement about the workshop; though it was a tiring 5 days, she was happy to participate in the training, and she gained a lot of confidence in herself and learned to trust her teammates.

The participants planned to educate their respective communities in recognising, addressing, and preventing SGBV after the workshop.

Services



Staff Coordinator

Emily O. Mathius (*left on 17 August 2016*)
Choong Yong Yi (*commenced on 18 August 2016*)

Member Coordinator Siew Yin Heng (*left on 17 August 2016*)

Members

Ain Nasiehad binti Amiruddin
Ameirunaisyah Ismail (*left on 22 February 2016*)
Sushma Reddy (*joined 31 March 2016*)
Betty Yeoh Siew Peng



Overview of 2016

The Services Committee was re-established in August 2015 to focus specifically on managing AWAM's services work. It has been a transitional year for the committee as two key persons, namely the Staff and Member Coordinators, resigned in 2016. With the support of our volunteers, particularly our legal aid pupils and intern counsellors, we continued providing free legal information and counselling services to the public.

In our services work, we collaborated with the Selangor Legal Aid Centre (LAC) and Kuala Lumpur Legal Aid Centre. Both centres supported us by sending their legal aid pupils to AWAM to manage our legal aid services. As one of the partner NGOs, AWAM co-coordinated the NGO-LAC Training for the legal aid pupils together with the LACs and our sister organisations, i.e., Sisters in Islam (SIS) and Women's Aid Organisation (WAO).

We had 398 legal cases and 204 counselling cases in 2016. Among these, 78 were shared legal-counselling cases. We observed a sharp increase of the total number of cases received, amounting to about 37% more than the average cases received each year for the past five years. This year, the two most received cases were domestic violence and civil divorce.

¹ While Services work has existed for some time, it was subsumed under the GBV committee. It is now back to being a stand-alone committee.

Services Committee's Work

1 **Managing Legal Aid Clinic**

In 2016, we had five batches of legal aid pupils each from the Selangor LAC and Kuala Lumpur LAC. For each batch, there was a one-day training organised for the pupils in order to gender-sensitise them and provide them with feminist lens in managing cases. The content of the training includes gender, violence against women, feminist perspectives of the law, basic helping skills, and case management.

Based on the feedback from our legal aid pupils, their legal aid experience in AWAM provided them with the opportunity to experience first-hand the struggles of women, particularly the challenges faced by survivors of domestic violence. Working with clients with diverse experiences and from various walks of life also developed their client-management and communication skills. Moreover, pupils shared that their time here made them more aware of women's human rights, as they realised how important it was to empower women by informing them about their rights. They also acknowledged that domestic violence is an issue that exists across different ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. Overall, their legal aid experience helped them develop a better understanding of feminism.

2 **Managing Counselling Centre**

AWAM practises person-centered and feminist counselling approaches, including rights-based information, in managing our clients. We believe strongly that the client is a unique person and is capable of resolving their crises. This belief empowers clients to eventually make informed decisions about their lives.

Past intern counsellors have told us that their internships in AWAM were good learning curves, particularly when it came to learning about compassion. Their experiences also increased their understanding of human rights and women's human rights.

3 Public Education and Training

Although our core work is in providing services, we are occasionally involved in public education and training. In collaboration with the Malaysian Mental Health Association (MMHA), we organised an internal workshop to raise awareness about mental health and mental disorders among members. In addition, we provided two external talks on communication skills and stress management.

- 1. Internal Workshop on Mental Health:** We invited speakers from MMHA to run a two-day intensive programme on understanding mental health on 9 and 10 January 2016. We had 17 attendees, including AWAM staff and members. Participants bettered their understanding of mental illness and of how treatment and psychosocial support play important roles in the recovery from mental illness. One outcome of the workshop was the Services Committee's introduction of a safety protocol for managing clients and crisis situations in the office.
- 2. External Trainings:** On 6 March 2016, we conducted a talk for the Buddhist Gem Fellowship on "Para-Counselling" for 20 participants. We also conducted a talk for Petronita on "Women Roles to Cope During Difficult Economic Situation" on 11 March 2016 with 40 participants present.

Overview of Cases Received by AWAM

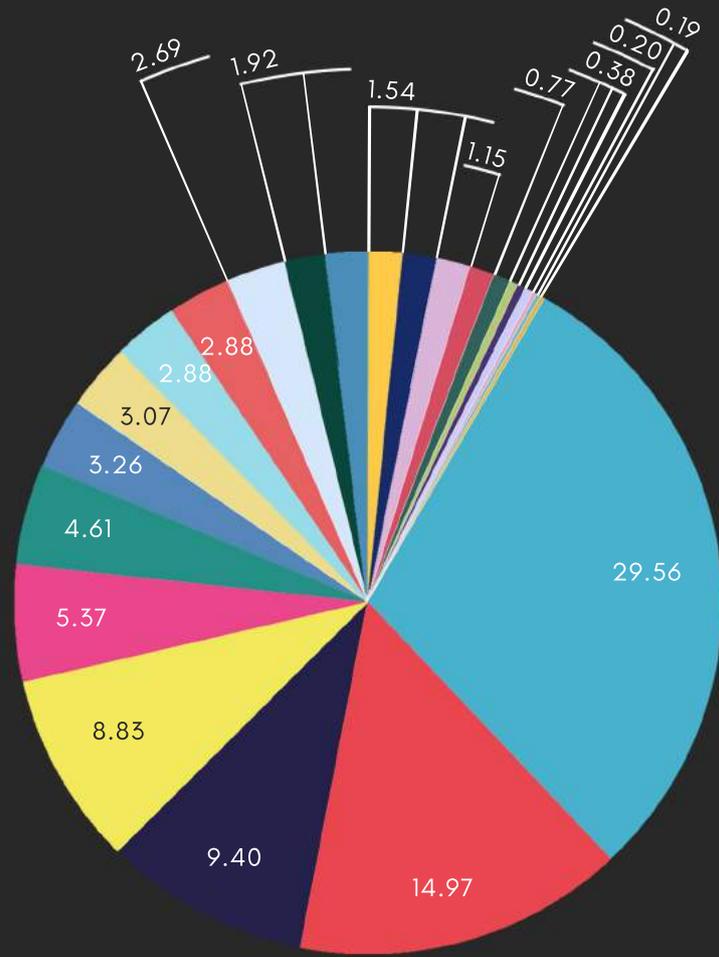
In total, we had 520 clients who sought our services, including some clients seeking both legal information and counselling services.

Women made up an overwhelming 91% of our clientele, of which a majority (31.2%) were women aged 30 to 40 years, followed by women aged 18 to 29 years (16%). Most clients were Malaysian, but 7.3% of them were not. Most of our clients (61.5%) sought help through phone calls, while 25.4% did so through face-to-face sessions in AWAM, and 13.1% through email correspondence.

The following is a breakdown of the types of cases we received:

(Note: Miscellaneous includes employment or career-related issues, financial problems, and probate matters.)

CHART 1



- Domestic Violence (29.56%)
- Divorce Civil (14.97%)
- Others Legal (9.40%)
- Others Counselling (8.83%)
- Relationship Problem (5.37%)
- Sexual Harassment (4.61%)
- Family Matters (3.26%)
- Child Protection (3.07%)
- Syariah (2.88%)
- Harassment (2.88%)
- Custody (2.69%)
- Assault (1.92%)
- Rape (1.92%)
- Employment/ Career (1.54%)
- Financial Problem (1.54%)
- Marital Affair (1.54%)
- Adoption/Guardianship/ Registration of Birth (1.15%)
- Maintenance (0.77%)
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (0.38%)
- Judicial Separation (0.38%)
- Parent-Child Matters (0.38%)
- Registration of Marriage (0.20%)
- Stalking (0.19%)
- Probate/LOA (0.19%)

Chart 1 illustrates an overview on the type of cases received in year 2016. Out of the 520 cases received, the most major are those on domestic violence, civil divorce, other legal matters, and other counselling matters, They collectively sum up to about 63% of the cases.

Domestic violence has been one of AWAM's core areas of work since the time of its establishment. Our large number of such cases in 2016 suggests that women still face violence and discrimination in their daily lives, the perpetrators of which are mostly their husbands. However, it also implies that women today have more access to information, and that they are more aware of the channels they can seek help from in managing their struggles. Yet another explanation could be that clients feel that NGOs are effective because they cut an authoritative figure in the eyes of government agencies. For example, they may feel that they are more likely to gain access to justice if they are accompanied to lodge a police report, as compared to if they go alone.

There was a rise in enquiries on civil divorce which was one of our most dealt-with case types in 2016. It is possible that this reflects a change in societal perceptions of marriage. Marriage is traditionally thought of as something absolutely binding and as an obligation to stay joined to another person forever; as cultural norms evolve, however, people may instead start to think of marriage as a less rigid arrangement with a partner who best fulfils their needs and wants in a relationship. Increasing Internet access and changing media portrayals of marriage and relationships might have been contributing factors to these changes in mind-set, as they are two common mediums through which social change takes place. Indirectly, the rise in our civil divorce cases implies a positive change in our society, whereby women are no longer as held back by cultural dictates on how they should behave, and are instead readier to address their individual needs and wants.

Types of Gender-Based Violence Cases

Women's human rights should be upheld so that women can be free from discrimination and violence. However, as indicated in the tables below, gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape is still prevalent in our society.

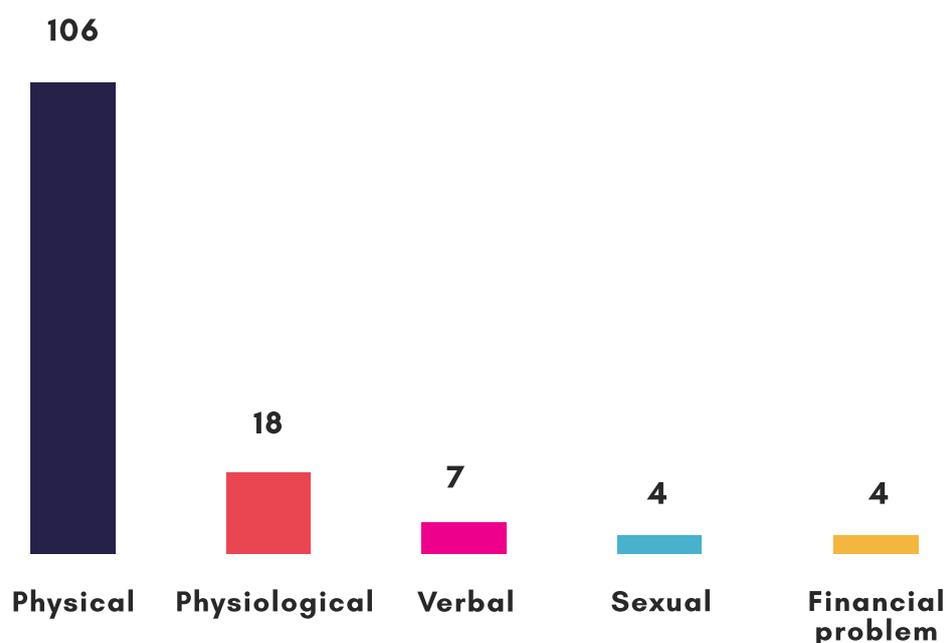
CHART 2

Chart 2 shows the breakdown of the domestic violence cases recorded. At 106 out of 139, domestic violence in physical form makes up an overwhelming majority of the cases, followed by 18 cases of psychological or emotional domestic violence, 7 cases of verbal domestic violence, and 4 cases each of sexual domestic violence and financial domestic violence.

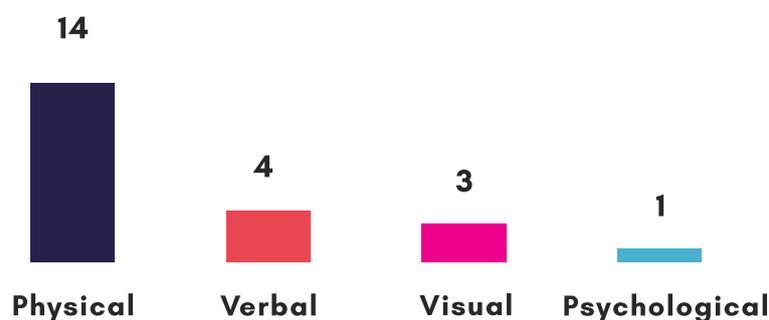
CHART 3

Chart 3 shows the breakdown of the types of sexual harassment cases we received. Most were physical sexual harassment, followed by verbal sexual harassment, visual sexual harassment, and psychological or emotional sexual harassment.

In total, we received nine cases related to rape. Seven out of nine perpetrators were people the survivors knew, including friends, colleagues, employers, and schoolmates.

AWAM should continue to see a rise in their work². We estimate with an error of margin of 3% that we will reach about 221 counselling cases and 335 legal cases in 2017, which will sum up to approximately 556 cases. Out of these, 67 to 100 are expected to be shared legal-counselling cases.

² The numbers of cases in 2013, 2014 and 2015 were 431, 488 and 430 respectively.

Highlights from AWAM's Domestic Violence Statistics

Because domestic violence was still the most common case type we received, we would like to highlight some important conclusions from our case analysis revolving around what led to the abuse, what challenges clients faced in leaving the relationship, and how the cycle of violence continued.

What led to the abuse?

We found that masculinity was central to the perpetrators' abusive behaviour. Psychological and emotional problems plague many perpetrators, but masculinity is crucial in understanding why these problems translate into anger and a desire for control and, in turn, why anger and the desire for control lead to violent behaviour.

That the perpetrators face psychological and emotional problems can be seen through their troubled behaviour: substance abuse, gambling, and otherwise escapist activities are common in our cases. These patterns reflect that perpetrators struggle with a dissatisfaction with life and, in some cases, possibly psychiatric disorders, for which they need help and attention. This forms the basis of abusive behaviour.

We then observed that perpetrators respond to these troubles by becoming angry and seeking control elsewhere in life – often in their relationships. They become verbally, physically, and emotionally abusive: they need to win arguments, restrict their partners' freedom of movement, gratify their (violent and dominating) sexual fantasies, and so on. Here, the concept of masculinity becomes important. Many people face personal problems, but not everyone takes it out by being violent and abusive. Because society teaches men to not show weakness through emotions like fear and sadness, they cope with their dissatisfaction by being angry. Moreover, because society teaches men to be dominant and women to be submissive, perpetrators who are dissatisfied with their lives seek to restore control by being aggressive towards their wives or partners and restricting them.

Therefore, rather than being 'weak', i.e. communicating their emotions well and seeking help, the men in these case studies project 'strength', i.e. violent and abusive behaviour, because that is what society teaches as acceptable and normal for men.

Challenges faced by survivors

To say the least, clients often found it difficult to leave their abusive relationships. We found that social and cultural norms alongside problems of

dependence lay at the root of this problem, while structural barriers and family members who enabled the abuse were other contributing factors.

Social and cultural perceptions of a woman's desirability made it difficult for the majority of our clients to walk away from a relationship that they had had for a long time. Although this is a very personal, emotional issue that likely applies to anyone in a relationship, it is one that disproportionately affects women. This is because survivors shared their worries about their value 'depreciating' over time, a concern that women often have because society treats women as though they have an expiry date - that is, the older a woman is, the less desirable she becomes. Hence, the thought of leaving a secure relationship, even an abusive one, is especially daunting because of women survivors' uncertainty over whether they would be able to start a new one.

Societal perceptions of family were also a reason why many of our clients did not find leaving to be a very feasible solution. Many survivors feel that they would bring shame to their families if they cut ties with their partners and/or disclosed their experience of domestic violence, especially if they had children in the picture. Once again, this burden of the family falls disproportionately on women. Our society tells women that they have to value their husbands and children above all else, often above their careers and personal lives; faced with a choice between keeping the family superficially intact and being responsible for breaking apart the family, it is likely that survivors will choose the former and treat the abuse as a personal issue they have to cope with privately. In doing so, they are only fulfilling what society tells them is their responsibility.

Furthermore, dependence too lies at the heart of the problem. Because survivors are often financially dependent on the perpetrator when it comes to things like income, maintenance of children, and shared property, it is simply easier to live with the status quo. Financial dependence moreover means that they are unable to hire a legal representative for divorce or other procedures.

To move on to factors that contributed to the challenges our clients faced, we found that they often feared that harm would be escalated if they left the perpetrators. Duration of marriage was also a circumstantial barrier, as it was harder to succeed in filing divorce if the couple had not yet been married for two years. Structural barriers, too, hindered women from accessing justice where the means existed: women survivors did not often have knowledge about filing a police report and what happens after, and they sometimes lived far away from police stations, NGOs, or other sources of assistance. Finally, in some cases the parents of the survivors or perpetrators enabled the abuse by condoning it even when they knew it happened. All these were reasons why clients did not find it easy to leave an abusive relationship, even if they could overcome the challenges posed by social/cultural norms and their financial dependence.

Cycle of violence

As a final note, it is possible that survivors learn that aggressive, intense displays of emotion are acceptable or genuine expressions of love. When this is the case, there is the danger that the perpetrator's abusive behaviour will be reinforced, thus perpetuating the cycle of violence.

Impact of AWAM's Services Work

Through the services we provide, we help our clients understand their rights better and thus empower them to make informed choices. Increased access to legal information makes them more aware of the rights they possess under the law, which in turn helps them become more capable of exploring additional options and thus taking action to overcome violence and discrimination in their lives.

Our services also support women's access to justice by assisting women with police reports, as well as by providing psychosocial support in bringing clients to the hospital or to government welfare departments for various services.

Person-centred and feminist counselling recognises each woman as a person with unique individual experiences, even as she shares common experiences with other women. We also acknowledge each woman as an agent of change. Through this approach, we have equipped our clients with the capacity to recognise the oppressive structures and cultural influences in society that contribute to their struggles. We have therefore helped women to not submit to patriarchy, but to initiate change and take ownership of their lives.

At the same time, the training we provided to young new lawyers have provided them with a better understanding of the impact that patriarchy has on women and violence.

Conclusion and Future Planning

This year has been a fairly busy one for us because of the sharp increase in our number of cases. Despite the departure of our Staff and Member Coordinators, we were able to maintain the day-to-day operations of the legal aid clinic and counselling services with the support of our legal aid pupils and intern counsellors.

For 2017, we will continue providing legal aid and counselling services to the public. We also hope to be more inclusive with regards to our intern counsellors and legal aid pupils - by providing them opportunities to give talks to the public, we hope to develop them as feminist advocates.

We strongly believe that the enjoyment of human rights should be universal for all persons, including women. Therefore, we will continue to work towards removing the barriers that impede women's rights to life, justice, and security, so that women can be free from violence

Politicisation of Ethnicity and Religion (PER)



Staff Coordinator

Deepa Chandra

Member Coordinators

Lim Chin Chin
Tan beng hui

Members

Adila Aziz
Cecilia Ng
Evelynne Gomez
Lee Wei San
Wong Pui Yan
Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini
Hew Li-Sha (*resigned, w.e.f January 2016*)



Introduction

The year 2016 saw PER being used to violate and discriminate women, especially by people in power, who continue to use ethnicity and religion as a means to control women. It is through this manipulation in “God’s name” so to speak, that women’s mobility, behaviour and actions have been clamped down and restricted. Eternal damnation threats were constantly repeated to justify the absurdities that have taken place to exert control and limit women’s movements and voices. The authorities also continued their obsession with moral policing by imposing new rules to govern women’s bodies and violating civil liberties.

The level of respect rendered to women have reduced in the recent year, so much so that having a meal during the fasting month is deemed reason enough to sexually assault someone. Harassments were also seen when fines were served to Muslim women who were in skinny jeans and shopkeepers who had advertisement posters of women in sexy clothing. On the political front, the Hadi bill proposed amendments to the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act that would see the

implementation of unjust laws.

In 2016, the committee conducted three youth workshops held under our PERpaduan programme for students from two public universities. Our workshops continue to receive positive feedback, with participants sharing that there is a shift in their thinking and they appreciate the spaces in which they can freely speak. We had participants come back and volunteer with us in our other programmes. On top of that, we held three study sessions where we developed potential questions participants may have to better equip our trainers and completed the translation of the training manual to Bahasa Malaysia.

The PER Committee also held a discussion on the Islamic–Secular state debate to come up with an organisational stand and held a session on Political Economy, Islam and Women in Malaysia, where we looked at various events that occurred since Malaysia’s independence. The input from the session is currently being simplified into illustrations. We also expanded our relationship–building to not only Wanita IKRAM but also its youth wing.

PER’s Work in 2016

1 Trainings

The PER Committee ran three workshops for two public universities in 2016, using the PERpaduan training manual. The first and second workshops were conducted for University Malaya Gender Studies Programme students on 1–3 April and 21–23 October respectively, while the third workshop was conducted for Universiti Putra Malaysia Nutritional Health students on 2–4 December.

Each workshop exposed the youth participants to core concepts such as diversity, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, in addition to an input on gender. Participants also learnt about the connections between politics, ethnicity and religion in Malaysia, and

saw how this phenomenon also played out in the region, in addition to discovering how women are impacted differently to men. The array of new insights led participants to clearer understanding of messages they have received about ethnicity and religion, and allowed them to start questioning some of their own beliefs and practices. They also shared on how they would use these insights to unlearn ingrained stereotypes and prejudice, as well as to address situations where friends or family members express such biases or discrimination.

Special thanks to the PERpaduan trainers thency, Lin and Syar for running the workshops; our process observers Wei San, Chin Chin and beng hui, as well as our documenting and organising team comprising of Tashia, Liza, Pavithrah, Patricia and Deepa. Our appreciation also goes out to Ruhana and Fara who have made these workshops possible.

2 Publications and Promotional Materials

In 2016, the PER Committee completed the translation of the training manual into Bahasa Malaysia. The translation has allowed us to cater to a wider audience, especially since English is not the first language of the majority of our target groups. We found an increase in participation, especially in conversations and discussions, when facilitators used Bahasa Malaysia. We have also been working on improving on our existing case studies that we have in the manual, as well as producing a new case study that will be added to the manual. We also continued updating our database on Evernote with materials on PER-related news and articles that we have been collating since 2012.

The Committee is also working on a simplified guide that illustrates how women in Malaysia have been affected over the years, by the intersections of politics, economics and Islam. This idea grew out of a session that was held during the PER Concepts and Trainers' Training that was held in September 2015, where it became clear that such a publication could help more people understand what is going on today with regards to politicised ethnicity, religion, and women, by better understanding our past. We also organised a half-day session so that we could share this perspective with members and friends of AWAM.

3

The Big Group Meeting (BGM)

The PER Committee organised a big group meeting on the Islamic-Secular state debate for AWAM members to help AWAM formulate its stand. The two-part meeting was held in light of the forthcoming GE14 and in anticipation of this issue being politicised again. The first part on 4th June was an input session that was open to the public, while part two on 6th August was for members only. The aim of the BGM series is for members to have a chance to discuss together issues that AWAM does not have an organisational stand on.

In part one, our resource person Saari Sungib (former head of Jemaah Islah Malaysia, currently Parti Amanah state assemblyman for Hulu Kelang) shared with us the history and background of Islam and the concept of the Islamic state. Among the questions raised in the Q&A session were the position of non-Muslims when questioning Syariah laws. In response, the resource person shared his view that it is necessary that everyone is able to question these laws, as well as further inquiries about the Quran and its many interpretations. In part two, members came together and discussed about our concerns on the possibility of an Islamic state, hudud law and the implications of unilateral conversion, especially for women. They brainstormed on points for an organisational stand on the debate, as well as for the upcoming general election. We agreed that what we want to support is any state that promises democracy and human rights no matter what it is called, the reality on the ground is what matters.

In essence, this will underline the importance of focusing on the real issues at hand, rather than to be distracted by a 'red-herring' debate.

4

Strengthening Networks

We continued build on our alliance with Wanita IKRAM by getting to know them better on a personal and organisational level. We extended solidarity by attending their events and endorsing some of their press statements. In 2016, we also expanded our relationship to the youth wing and other branches of this faith-based organisation. Members of IKRAM have reciprocated by attending various events organised by AWAM.

Impact of AWAM's PER Work

Since the inception of the PER programme, the goal has always been about changing mindsets by providing alternative understanding and narratives about gender, ethnicity and religion in Malaysia. This is the first step in a longer term quest to change practices that lead to discrimination and violations, at an individual and systemic level. It is not possible to quantify our work, as we cannot put a value on learning and unlearning.

However, testimonials show that there's an increase in awareness and understanding of PER. This can be seen through our evaluation and conversations; when we are told that minds have been opened and challenged. Some of the responses include "bengkel ini telah banyak membantu kami untuk membuka minda kami dengan lebih luas dalam melihat dunia ini lebih harmoni dan teratur jika kita semua mempunyai minda yang lebih terbuka dalam kehidupan berbilang kaum" and "Important and very necessary workshop. Brings people of seemingly different backgrounds together.

These are strong validations in terms of progress and recognition of the programme, and for us, it is a reminder of how important this programme is to achieve our vision of a just, equitable and democratic world where people, especially women, are free from violence and discrimination.

On the whole, 2016 has showed us that our work is essential in the development of the organisation and society. Despite the challenges that were thrown in the political, economic and activism front, the committee persevered to ensure that PER programmes were carried out and awareness was raised.

Future Planning for 2017

In 2017, we plan to continue changing mindsets and increase awareness on the politicisation of ethnicity and religion through our work. We plan to change the format of our workshops by having them in two levels to allow more time for participants to understand the concepts and decide themselves if they would like to continue to the next level. The first level will cover the Core Concepts and level two will cover the rest of the modules in the training manual.

While we take a step back and review our impact, we will also work on completing our case studies, and illustration guide.

1-3 APRIL



PER
TRAINING

21-23 OCTOBER



PER
TRAINING

4 JUNE, 6 AUGUST



BGM

Information and Communications



Staff Coordinator

Evelynne Gomez

Media Team Members

Lee Wei San
thency gunasekaran



Overview of 2016

This section contains a summary of AWAM's work in the following areas:

1. AWAM's publications, which are: e-links and event booklets.
2. AWAM engagement with the media, which includes AWAM's and JAG's press statements, TV and radio interviews, and radio and video community messages.
3. Social media, which include Facebook and Twitter.
4. Website.

Infocom in 2016

1

Publications

a.

E-links

The E-link is a bi-monthly newsletter sent to AWAM members and friends of AWAM. It is used to update news and activities that have been carried out over the previous two months as well as highlight upcoming events. In 2016, six AWAM E-links were published on the first week of every other month.

b. Event Booklets

Each year, AWAM publishes a booklet for each of its main events. This year, a booklet was made for our White Ribbon Run and Walk 2016.

2 Engagement with the Media

a. AWAM Press Statements, Quotes, Mentions in the Media

AWAM responds to queries from the press, either by request, or by publishing statements/media comments through our own volition. This is an effective way in which we are able to make our voice heard to the larger public as well as showcase the issues that AWAM is working on. In 2016, AWAM came out with 7 press statements in addition to comments in response to media inquiries.

- 8 MAR** AWAM's Letter To The Editor On International Women's Day
- 30 MAY** Press Statement on Vivian Lee
- 28 JUN** Joint Press Statement with Pusat Khidmat ADUN Damansara Utama on Anti-Rogol Website
- 24 JUL** Press Statement on AWAM's 4th White Ribbon Campaign
- 1 OCT** AWAM's White Ribbon Run Flash Mob
- 1 NOV** Press Statement on AWAM's White Ribbon Press Conference
- 28 NOV** Press Statement on AWAM's White Ribbon Run Event Day

AWAM's press statements are drafted and/or vetted via its Media Team. AWAM's quotes and/or features can be found here:

www.awam.org.my/communications/press-statements/

b. JAG Issued Press Statements in 2016

The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG), a coalition of 12 non-governmental organisations of which AWAM is a part of, issued 14 statements/letters to the editor in 2016.

- 19 FEB** JAG Statement on the Breach of Noorfadilla's Constitutional Rights
- 6 APR** Abuse of Authority By JAWI Must End
- 5 MAY** JAG Statement on PDRM
- 16 MAY** Consultation before Amendments - Keep the Internet Free
- 31 MAY** Domestic Violence - Suffer The Children
- 31 MAY** Increasing powers of Syariah Courts may lead to violation of human rights in Malaysia
- 29 JUL** Letter to Cabinet Committee on Unilateral Conversion
- 3 AUG** The Law Must Ensure Justice for Rape Survivors: Banning Child Marriage
- 9 AUG** The Law Must Ensure Justice for Rape Survivors
- 24 AUG** Wang IMDB Diseleweng, Hak Rakyat Makin Ditindas
- 22 SEP** Death Threats Against Human Rights Defenders Must Be Addressed
- 18 OCT** Prosecute Those who Make Death Threats against Human Rights Defenders and Their Families
- 17 NOV** Act 355 Memo
- 20 NOV** Stop the Intimidation - Release the Bersih Leaders

JAG press statements can be found [here](http://www.awam.org.my/communications/press-statements/):

c. **Media Interviews**

AWAM takes part in media interviews with print, radio and television stations to talk about the issues we work on, to promote our campaigns as well as fundraising events, and to share AWAM's work.

AWAM participated in 3 radio interviews and 5 TV/video interviews in 2016.

	Show/ Programme	Topic/ Issue	Presenters
13 JAN	Astro V'Buzz	AWAM's Feminist Camp	Yong Yi
8 MAR	Bernamea TV	International Women's Day	Wei San, Lochna
8 MAR	NTV7	International Women's Day	Wei San
8 MAR	Radio Astro	International Women's Day	Evie
23 AUG	Astro Vinmeen	White Ribbon Campaign	Lochna, Daryl (legal aid pupil)
25 OCT	Astro Ria	Domestic Violence	Betty
25 OCT	Lite FM	White Ribbon Campaign	Jude

3 **Social Media**

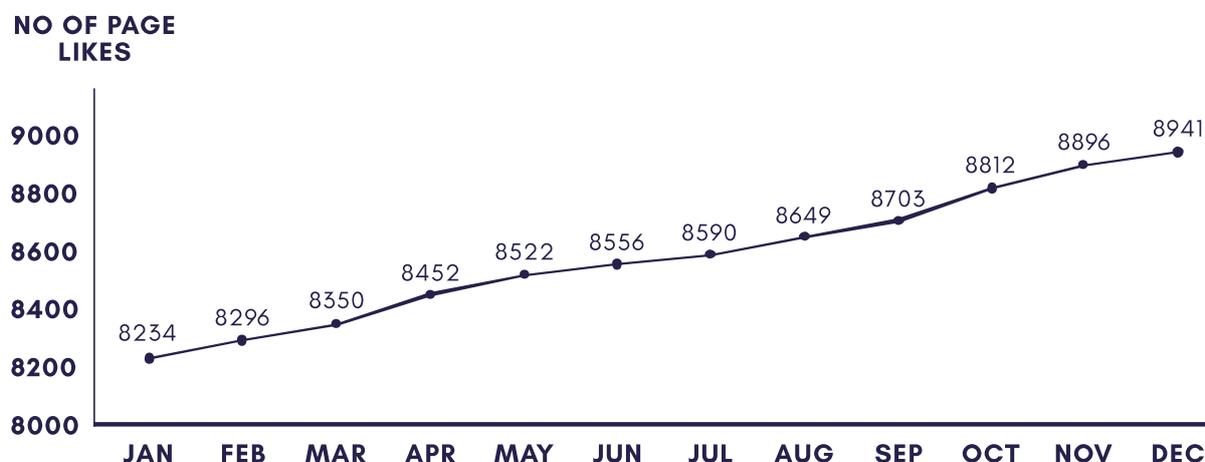
a. **Facebook**

We share photos, videos, news articles, opinion pieces, posters, announcements, and event information through our Facebook page. These posts keep our followers informed on upcoming activities and events, as well as the latest news happening in Malaysia and around the world.

Our Facebook page also receives private messages from individuals seeking legal and/or counselling information, as well as requests regarding membership, volunteer, and intern opportunities, which are then streamed to the relevant staff coordinators.

CHART 4

FACEBOOK PAGE TRAFFIC



b. Twitter

AWAM's Twitter account @AWAMMalaysia, was created in 2012. Over the past year, it has become more active as we have held live tweet events to publicise some of our events.

By the end of 2016, our Twitter page had a total of 902 followers, an increase from the end of 2015, which had 700 followers.

c. Instagram

AWAM's Instagram account @AWAMMalaysia, was created in 2015 and showcases our events as well as helps to publicise our upcoming events.

d. Website

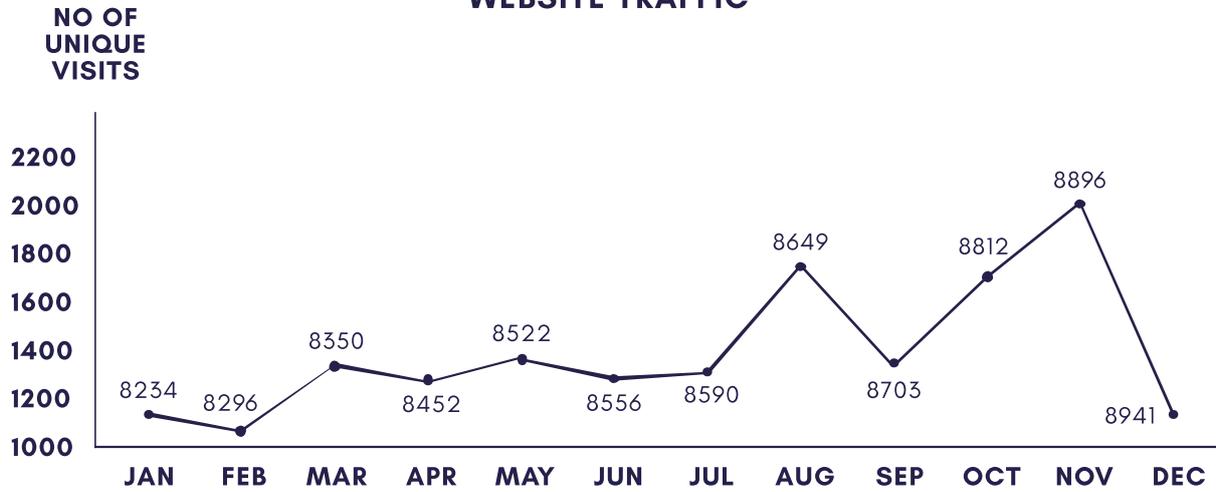
AWAM's website, created in late 2012, is located at www.awam.org.my

Apart from our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages, our website is the main source of information on the internet for people to find out about the organisation, who we are, what we stand for, what we do, and how we can be reached.

Our website is updated frequently with news of our latest events, our latest press releases/statements, new programmes and activities, statistics, and amendments to the laws.

CHART 5

WEBSITE TRAFFIC



HELPLINE NEWSROOM EVENTS CALENDAR CONTACT US FOLLOW US @ f t v r Search



ABOUT ADVOCACY COMMUNICATIONS TRAININGS SERVICES JOIN BLOG DONATE

WE ARE ALL WOMEN'S ACTION SOCIETY
AN INDEPENDENT FEMINIST ORGANISATION COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF WOMEN IN MALAYSIA

HELP

JOIN

GIVE

LEARN ORGANISE ENGAGE WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO? >

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Overview
Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence that happen because of gender inequalities. It covers a wide range of human rights violations, [...]

[Read More](#)

POLITICISATION OF ETHNICITY AND RELIGION

Context and rationale
Ethnicity and religion are two important identity markers in Malaysia. This is one of the outcomes of the [...]

[Read More](#)

8 MARCH



**MEDIA
INTERVIEW**

23 AUGUST



**MEDIA
INTERVIEW**

25 OCTOBER



**MEDIA
INTERVIEW**

Membership Development



Staff Coordinator

Choong Yong Yi (*January 2015 - August 2016*)

Ain Naseihah (*commenced August 2016*)

Member Coordinator

Susanna George

Members

Evelynne Gomez

Lee Wei San

Tan beng hui

Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini



Overview of 2016

The Membership Development Committee (MDC) was formed in 2014 to help cultivate and strengthen AWAM's membership base through organisational and individual capacity building, orienting and supporting new members and creating space for conversations on feminism both internally and externally. AWAM currently has around 70 members, with about half actively taking part in activities and contributing to the growth of the organisation. These activities work to collectively strengthen AWAM by creating better understanding among members about what the organisation stands for, as well as creating greater clarity for us to work together towards our goals as a team.

Towards this goal, the MDC held three Members' Orientation sessions, six Feminist Friday events, one Feminist Camp, one One-Day Open Space Event, as well as two Group Process Awareness Workshops in 2016. These activities worked towards helping current AWAM members hone their personal and organisational skills as well as created opportunities for members of the public at large as well as AWAM members to explore and understand feminism, both theory and praxis, in the Malaysian context and encounter like-minded people.

Activities in 2016

1 Members' Orientation

The MDC held three Members' Orientation sessions this year - on January 16th, May 7th, and August 27th. We have continued over the past two years to hone and improve the design of these Orientation sessions with assessments of and feedback from each previous session. As such, our new Orientation process, is made up of interactive sessions that cover feminism and gender, the history of AWAM, AWAM's vision, mission, and core values, as well as an overview of AWAM's programmes. Potential members also have the opportunity to ask questions about AWAM's programmes, areas of work, and Committees and sign up for different areas of work depending on their interests.

Over 2016, the MDC has successfully oriented and inducted 10 new members.

2 Feminist Friday

Feminist Friday events are member-driven discussion groups that were designed to fill an identified need for more spaces for conversations about feminism. In 2016, we held six Feminist Fridays on the following topics: *The Emotional Woman: Myth, Reality, or Pathology?* - *Disney's Diva's of Darkness: Who Is The Most Feminist Of Them All?* - *#FreeKesha: Supporting Sexual Assault Survivors* - *Let's Talk About Sex, Contraception, and Abortion in Malaysia* - *Beauty Standards, Body Image, and Colourism* - *Internalized Sexism*.

Feminist Fridays offer a unique space for individuals to come together and discuss topics and issues that they may have not necessarily had the place to do so beforehand. It also provides a space for networking and encountering others who are also interested in conversations about feminism in the Malaysian context.

During Feminist Fridays, two facilitators come up with the plan and co-facilitate each session. At the end of the session, the next topic for discussion is voted on and two new people are chosen to co-facilitate it. In 2016, the Feminist Fridays saw a large surge in the numbers of participants, with one session consisting of approximately 30 people in attendance. Participants are a healthy mix of current AWAM members as well as individuals who are completely new to AWAM, though 2016 saw many more new faces than usual participating in the sessions.

3

2nd AWAM Feminist Camp

After the resounding success of the first Feminist Camp, AWAM hosted its second Feminist Camp in 2016 from January 29th-31st. Using a similar theme as the year before, *Katak Dibawah Tempurung No More: Further Explorations of Feminism in Malaysia*, this year brought together 47 participants compared to last year's 38. The event was designed to create the highest possible participation using a methodology known as Open Space Technology (OST). This meeting design presupposes that participants have the best possible learning when they are able to decide upon, lead and engage in their own conversation topics. This year, a total of 30 topics were put up and convened by participants ranging from serious political and economic issues such as climate change, corruption and capitalism to longstanding feminist concerns such as reproductive rights, pornography, sex work, violence against women, labour rights, media and religion to more contemporary issues such as fandom and men and feminism. Participants engaged in these discussions based on their interests and passions and were encouraged to delve deeply in these topics, how they affected the live of the most marginalized and how gender intersects with issues of sexuality, class, ethnicity, and religion.

The participants enjoyed two and a half days of intense interactions and camaraderie including conversations on the beach after the formal sessions were over. The feedback received from participants confirmed that the Camp provided an open and safe space for topics of discussion that people may not commonly have been comfortable talking about in other spaces.

4

One-Day Open Space Event

On August 20th, the Membership Development Committee held a One Day Open Space Event on the theme of "The Malaysia That Women Dream Of". The event was held at the PJ Community Library from 9am - 5:30pm and created a space for participants to imagine their ideal Malaysia.

Facilitated by Membership Development member coordinator, Susanna George, and AWAM member, thency, approximately 30 people took part in the full day, highly participatory discussions about their feminist vision of a just and truly democratic society. We would like to give a note of thanks to People Potential for supporting this event!

5

Group Process Awareness Workshops

Facilitated by the Membership Development member coordinator, Susanna George, the MD Committee held two Group Process Awareness Workshops - on January 22nd-23rd and June 11th-12th.

During this workshop, 12 AWAM members were given the opportunity to explore in greater depth the nature of groups and group processes, and in particular meeting processes and some core principles of facilitating groups such as meetings. Some of the ideas discussed was the notion of promoting liberatory and choice-filled engagement, basic rules of thumb when designing meeting processes, consensus decision-making processes and simple facilitation techniques that can be used in different meeting settings to produce more effective results. Participants were also given the opportunity to draw upon their own rich base of experiences and explore the possible applications of both the facilitation and process design principles in a fun and relaxed way.

6

Katak-berudu System

Social connections and friendships can go a long way towards solidifying the kinship between members in AWAM, and the MDC recognizes the importance of this. Therefore, starting in 2015, we started the Katak-Berudu System: a buddy system where each new member ("Berudu") is assigned to an older AWAM member ("Katak") in the committee.

Following this theme, on April 8th, the MDC held a Katak-Berudu Social in which 18 AWAM members, interns, and staff came together for a night of fun, games, and activities to get to know each other better.

Conclusion and Future Planning

The MDC has had a full and rich year. We stayed strong as a team despite some unexpected changes in staffing in mid-year, and were able to accomplish most of what we set out to do in a mutually supportive and joy-filled way. In the coming year, we plan to scale back on our activities for the first half of the year in order to participate fully in the planned organizational reflection and recalibration sessions. We are committed to conducting two Members' Orientation Sessions and planning the next Feminist Camp, but are staying flexible and open to possibilities as to what might come out of the process of reflection.

29-31 JANUARY



FEMINIST
CAMP

29-31 JANUARY



FEMINIST
CAMP

26 FEBRUARY



FEMINIST
FRIDAY

11-12 JUNE



**GROUP
PROCESS
AWARENESS**

20 AUGUST



**ONE-DAY
OPEN SPACE**

27 AUGUST



ORIENTATION

Fundraising



Staff Coordinator

Lochna Menon (*resigned from full time position 15th October. Part time from 16th October - 27th November*)

Member Coordinators

Judith Loh Foong Lin (*from mid 2016*), Liza Lew (*stepped down mid-year due to work commitments*)

Members

Betty Yeoh, Ho Wai Ling, Ho Yock Lin, Jennifer Hendry (intern), Lee Wei San, Liza Lew, Lochna Menon, Madelynn Tan, Mayna R Patel (intern and later, as member), Pavithrah Jaya Kumar (intern and later, as member), Phan Siew Yin (volunteer), Patricia Chong (intern), Yasmin A Ariffin.



Overview of 2016

Raising funds is part of the struggle for social transformation. While fundraising is hard work, it is also a way for us to engage with our community, to tell them what it is we do, why it is important, and why they should therefore, hopefully, part with a bit of their hard earned money, to support the cause.

As a collective, our fundraising work is shared across staff, members and committees. Though the Fundraising Committee shoulders the bulk of raising money for AWAM, all other committees also do their bit, whether it is proposal writing, programme participation fees, or asking their friends and networks to donate to a particular programme.

In 2016, the Fundraising Committee focussed its efforts on one major public awareness and fundraising event, the White Ribbon Campaign. We also continued to field and pursue collaborative fundraising events with corporates, university students, various organisations and individuals. It has been a hard year for us, as we struggled with fewer volunteers and staff. However, as a team we persevered and had the support of wonderful interns.

Together, we were able to organise a successful White Ribbon Campaign and Run in 2016, reaching out to individuals from various segments of society and for the first time, grounding our event with a community.

Activities in 2016

1 AWAM's White Ribbon Campaign (WRC)

1.1 WRC Press Conference (21st July, AWAM Centre)

We held a press conference to launch the White Ribbon Campaign 2017 and announce our collaboration with the High Commission of Canada. The High Commission of Canada Malaysia was represented by Timothy Mackey, Counsellor (Political and Public Affairs).

1.2 WRC Public Forum (3rd September, Three Two Square)

We organised a public forum, which saw a group of men joining the fight on violence against women. The High Commissioner of Canada, H. E. Judith St George, expressed her delight and enthusiasm to support the White Ribbon Campaign and to join AWAM in raising awareness about violence against women.

1.3 WRC Press Conference (1st November, Desa ParkCity)

AWAM held a press conference at Three Little Birds, Desa ParkCity. Desa ParkCity, as a community, came on board to assist us in spreading awareness of the White Ribbon Run.

The press conference featured speakers such as the Second Political Secretary of the Canadian High Commission, Elanor Belshaw-Haufm, the Head of Secondary School from the International School @ ParkCity, Nicola Lambros, the White Ribbon Chairperson, Judith Loh, as well as White Ribbon Ambassadors.

Students from the International School @ ParkCity also blew everyone away with their spirit and cheer performance, followed by a flash mob performance with AWAM members and volunteers, to dazzle onlookers.

Thank you!

Our heartfelt gratitude to all the wonderful sponsors, supporters, volunteers and participants who came on board to make the event a success.

Collaborating Partner: High Commission of Canada in Malaysia

Venue Sponsor: Desa ParkCity

Lucky Draw and Goodie Bag Sponsors: Choong Hing Trading Sdn. Bhd, Chuan Sin Sdn Bhd (Spritzer), Crystal Time (M) Sdn Bhd, Curves Malaysia, Delfi Marketing Sdn Bhd, Gardenia Bakeries (KL) Sdn Bhd, Genting Hong Kong, Jasmine Food Corporation, Mandara Spa, Melia Hotel, MunchWorld Marketing Sdn. Bhd., Nestle Malaysia, Nomad Adventure, Optique eyeworld, ParkCity Medical Centre, Pestle & Mortar Clothing, Pullman Hotel, Southern Lion Sdn. Bhd., Star Cruises, Staydilly, Sunway Lagoon, Super Food Marketing Sdn. Bhd., Tan Boon Ming Sdn Bhd, The Body Shop, Zuellig Pharma Sdn Bhd.

Other Sponsors, Donors and Supporters: Action Auto Agency (M) Sdn Bhd, Adele Wee and children (Kaylyn, Leo, Rae and Kara), Alex Thong, ALSA Malaysia, Andrew Dalton, Anne Lim, CA Design, Chee Hoy Lin, Chia Chee Peng, Chia Lui Meng, Chong Soo Shen, Chuah Siew Moi, Daniel Anthony, Dato' Haji Thasleem Mohamed bin Ibrahim al Haj, Deepa Chandra, Desmond Looh, Dr Lai Suat Yan, Dr Mary Cardosa, Francis Loh, Gaela Dennison-Leonard, Hew Zhong Ying, Ho Yock Lin, Innolatex Sdn Bhd,

Other Sponsors, Donors and Supporters (cont.):

International School @ParkCity, Joanne Heng, Joanne Seaton & Arun Augustine, June Leong, Kong Eu, Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad, Lai Khiok Moi, Lee Kok Chew, Lee Shui Yun and the Muarians, Lee Thiam Lai, Leong Siau Lian, Lim Cheng Jeen, Lim Yoke Cheng, Ling Ai Huat, Maninderjit Singh, Nate Wong, Nicola & Richard Lambros, Ong Chong Lim, Perunding Trafik Klasik, Phan Siew Yin and family, Publika Shopping Gallery, Pun Kai Loon & Khor Song Chew, Sahajidah Hai-O Marketing Sdn Bhd, Sam Leong, Sandra Theraviam, Saw I-Rene, Soo Weng Heng, SriCool Engineering Sdn Bhd, Standard Chartered Berhad, Stanley Yong Yew Wei, Supahands, Susie Cheng, Tan Kwong Ngee, Tay Ling Sun, Telekom Malaysia, Teoh Yee Chern, Three Little Birds Coffee, Tropicana City Mall, Victoria De Silva Taylor, Wu Hou Jo, YB Lau Weng San, YB Tiew Way Ken, and other anonymous donors and sponsors.

Volunteers: AWAM Legal Aid Pupil chambering pupils, Members of ALSA Malaysia, Students from University Malaya and UNITEN, and various dedicated individuals who took time out to volunteer for the event.

Our sincere apologies to those we may have inadvertently left out.

1.4 *WRC Walk and Run (27th November, Desa ParkCity)*

This year, the All Women's Action Society (AWAM) collaborated with the High Commission of Canada in Malaysia to bring back the White Ribbon Run for our 4th year.

On Sunday morning, over 1000 people ran to support gender equality and ending violence against women. Mr Mark Strasser, the Acting High Commissioner for Canada to Malaysia, Andrew Dalton, Executive Principal and Director of Education at International School @ParkCity and Mr. Stanley Sungmin Kim, Chief Operating Officer (West Malaysia) launched the event by flagging off our participants of the 7KM run and 3KM walk. This year, Desa ParkCity came on board as the venue sponsor, and despite the rain, participants were able to enjoy the beautiful landscaped gardens and lake along their route.

We had various activities throughout the morning including a planking competition with prizes donated by the Canadian High Commission, a One Billion Rising interpretive dance by Nate Wong, a White Ribbon Campaign quiz by AWAM member Betty Yeoh, a flashmob, pledge making exercise as well a lucky draw with 30 prizes.

The White Ribbon Run is AWAM's biggest annual fundraising and public education campaign to call for men's support to end violence against women. Our annual run is held in conjunction with the global movement, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence.

1.5 *Other WRC Events*

Other events organised as part of the campaign included:

-  We organised a workshop for boys and men to raise awareness of violence against women and patriarchy.
-  A flash mob at Publika to raise awareness for our upcoming White Ribbon Run.
-  Coffee session at International School ParkCity, where AWAM gave a talk on Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the White Ribbon Campaign for the parents of the students from International School @ ParkCity.

11
NOV

Dialogue session with students at International School ParkCity on gender and violence against women.

11
NOV

WRC Booth at Sunway University to highlight the campaign and mobilise runners.

2

Other Fundraising Efforts

Throughout the year, AWAM raises funds through various avenues. This includes: donations at exhibition booths, fundraising collaborations with various individuals, corporations and organisations, resource income from talks and trainings for corporates as well as government agencies, donation from individual donors and membership fees. Some donation drives fielded by the Fundraising Committee include (non-exhaustive):

- A group of expatriate women photographers donated the proceeds of sale from their photobook, 'Malaysia - Through The Lens Of Expat Women'. Betty, Liza and Evie attended the launch of the photography book on March 18th where Betty provided an overview of AWAM and its work.
- AWAM was at Arts for Grabs on 2nd April, for "Politiko: Klash of the Titans", as one of the beneficiaries of the event.
- AWAM collaborated with Shiseido to develop a campaign #todefend, asking "what do you love so passionately, that you feel it must be protected at all costs?" For every pledge made with the tagline, Shiseido donated RM1 to AWAM. The campaign ran in the months of September and October 2016, with an info panel at Mid Valley Megamall from 12 - 18 September. Pledges include #todefend women's rights, against domestic violence, family, right to have a career, and health.

Our warmest thanks to all those who have supported our fundraising efforts in 2016!



27 NOVEMBER



WRC
EVENT DAY

27 NOVEMBER



WRC
EVENT DAY

27 NOVEMBER



WRC
EVENT DAY

Volunteers and Interns in 2016



Interns

Mayna Ramesh Patel	<i>(15 Jan - 15 April)</i>
Emma Costa	<i>(15 Feb - 13 May)</i>
Milaine Thia Puay Yi	<i>(1 April - 30 June)</i>
Amanda Ng Yann Chwen	<i>(30 May - 29 July)</i>
Enbah Nilah Sugurmar	<i>(27 June - 2 Sept)</i>
Pavithrah Jaya Kumar	<i>(11 July - 28 Oct)</i>
Patricia Chong Su Yin	<i>(5 Sept - 16 Dec)</i>
Jennifer Hendry	<i>(1 Nov - 30 Dec)</i>



Volunteers

Gaela Dennison	<i>(21 Nov - 10 Dec)</i>
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Legal Aid Pupils

We would like to acknowledge the support provided by Selangor LAC and Kuala Lumpur LAC. In addition, we would like to note our appreciation to Batch 48 to 52 from the Selangor LAC and Batch 86 to 90 from the Kuala Lumpur LAC for supporting our legal aid clinic in 2016.

Intern Counsellors

We would like to note our appreciation to our intern counsellors, Callie, Lily, Sharon, Suraya and Yoke Chew as well as volunteer counsellor, Siew for providing their services to our clients in 2016.

Intern Experience at AWAM



Emma Costa

From the moment I arrived as an excited, slightly shy, but enthusiastic feminist, AWAM staff, interns, and members made every effort to welcome me into what I would really describe as the AWAM family. 13 learning, friendship, spontaneous singing and mixed rice filled weeks forward, I can say my time at AWAM has been full with some of my most favourite memories.

Interning at AWAM has allowed me to follow and greatly strengthen my passion in striving towards gender equality. It also presented me many opportunities to learn and I am so grateful to leave with wider eyes and experiences that will help me to achieve my dream of working in the area of women's rights.

The Disney/existential/empowerment or otherwise related conversations in the office and the passionately driven, intelligent, and hard-working women I shared them with, made for the most interesting and inspiring environment to work in. I am incredibly grateful to now be able to call these wonderful women my close friends.

Thank you so much to the people of AWAM for challenging me, supporting me, and encouraging me. Thank you for offering me your friendship, and inspiring me to use/equipping me with knowledge to support all persons in securing their fundamental rights. It has been so special to be part of an organisation that is really making a difference and I am so excited to see AWAM's many achievements to come.



Enbah Nilah

Interning in AWAM has been enlightening, at the very least. I learnt a number of skills like rapporteuring, writing case studies, and handling exhibitions. I look forward to applying them in my future work. I also learnt a lot about the ways human rights' are upheld or violated in the context of Malaysia. I have always claimed to be a feminist, but interning in AWAM taught me to walk the talk. There were many discourses surrounding feminism that I had the privilege of participating in. I have had my thoughts and assumptions challenged and my world view changed. I am now more informed and empathetic as a person as a result of all the interactions I have had here.

Among other things, I appreciate the organizational culture. It was an environment that nurtured and encouraged the interns to bring forth their own creative ideas and passions with the intent of sharing them with colleagues. The staffs were genuinely caring and invested in our progress. In terms of personal well-being, I discovered the concept of self-care while working in AWAM. This has personally helped me through many difficult circumstances. All in all, being a part of AWAM has made me a better person.



Patricia Chong Su Yin

Before I took my gap year, I was thinking of the possibilities I had: Travel? Stay at home and become a potato? Work? Intern? After a few weeks of thinking, I decided to intern at AWAM, almost immediately after my second year finals ended.

I first heard of AWAM through my work with the Gender Equality Initiative organized by the Association of Women Lawyers (AWL) and the Bar Council, in collaboration with several private law universities in Malaysia. It piqued my interest; I liked the idea of working in human rights and/or family law, but I didn't think I had enough knowledge about the nitty gritty issues. AWAM proved to be an amazing platform for me to share my thoughts and ideas, while at the same time learning from and alongside everyone else.

I was lucky to have had many other experiences like rapporteuring for the UNHCR TOT and JOAS NTOT, which allowed me to immerse myself in the trainings and learn from the facilitators and trainers. It also allowed me to develop my listening and writing skills in order to be able to capture what was going on -to be honest, most of the time I'm deep in my own thoughts and this allowed me to hone my concentration.

I used to think of internship as "work", and while it technically still is, AWAM has changed my perspective, allowing me to also think of it as an enriching life experience where I was able to grow mentally (and definitely also physically - that darned AWAM curse!). It will definitely be an experience I will never be able to forget. Thank you, AWAM!

Thank you!

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our sponsors, volunteers, and members, as well as everyone who has supported us and participated in our events over the year. Your contributions have helped us keep working towards a gender-equal, violence-free Malaysia!