

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



Kuala Lumpur, March 10th, 2015 - In almost every society, women face expectations as to how they should behave, talk, and even think. What happens when we do not fit in expected labels?

**Bossy! * Selfish! * Loose!
Pushy! * Emotional! * Prude!**

Often, we do not have control over how others label or treat us. The reality is, women come in all shapes and sizes. There is diversity in how women think, talk and act.

To celebrate this diversity, this year in conjunction with International Women's Day, The All Women's Action Society (AWAM) held a event themed **#DefineYourself** to encourage women to reclaim their own personal narratives and create new definitions of womanhood for themselves.

Over eighty people attended the celebration, taking part in a whole range of interactive games and activities, including a carnival like game where guests were able to "Smash the Patriarchy" in the form of knock-them-down pins. The pins each represented a form of discrimination and oppression women faced, including issues such as rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, body terrorism, lack of reproductive rights, and moral policing. There were also booths which offered a reflective space for guests to define who they wanted to be, and what they would do to make it happen for themselves.

AWAM's Assistant Programme Officer, Ameirunaisyah Ismail explained, "The interactive booths are meant to engage the participants to think about issues affecting them. It was created by the team to create a space where

the public will be able to appreciate who they are and what they want to be.”

This year’s event was led by a team of young members and volunteers.

“I got involved with AWAM because I wanted to find a community which believes in feminism and the issues I am concerned with. So I’m really glad to be here and to be part of the team!” said 29-year-old Yuhaniz Sazlin, one of the young volunteers on the AWAM organising team for the event.

Following the interactive segment, participants were treated to a wide range of performances. From artists, poets, thespians to dancers, women were given the space to express their creativity — celebrating their art with an engaged audience.

While this event was about celebrating women’s achievements and journey, we are also cognizant of the fact that many women continue to live without access to reproductive health services, to earn less than their male counterparts, to face violence and fear at home and on the streets, and face various forms of discrimination on the basis of their intersectional identities.

“We remember that Penan women and girls continue to face sexual violence in attempting to access education and other services. Everyday, women continue to face sexual harassment on the streets. 2013 saw the highest number of report domestic violence. The fact is, after twenty years, Malaysia still has a long way to go to fulfill its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and to meet its commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action.” Said Ho Yock Lin, AWAM’s President.

This year’s global IWD theme is *#MakeItHappen*, which is about encouraging effective action for advancing and recognising women. Each year IWD is celebrated on March 8 to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women.

AWAM chose its theme *#DefineYourself* to encourage women to take action to make their aspirations a reality. Together, we hope to create a community and support system for women who continue to face violence or discrimination.

Notes to the editor

Event details

Name of event: AWAM’s International Women’s Day: *#DefineYourself*

Date: 7 March 2015

Time: 4pm – 7:30pm

Venue: Wariseni, Jalan Ampang, KL.

Registration fees: Free

Programme

15:30 – 16:00 | Registration

16:00 – 17:20 | Interactive Games and Booths

1. Hashtag Wall
2. Smash the Patriarchy
3. River of Time
4. Dream Tree
5. Make It Happen

17:20 – 17:30 | Opening Speech

17:30 – 19:00 | Performances

1. Syar Alia (Spoken Words)
2. Ho Yock Lin (Monologue)
3. Medhini (Semi-Classical Dance)
4. Fariza (Poetry)
5. Sharan (Dance)
6. Marina Tan (Monologue)
7. Ying Hui & Ying Sin (Song)
8. Sarah (Poetry)
9. Preya & Harshini (Bollywood Dance)
10. Jude & The AWAMmies (Dance)
11. Leow Mei Chern (Song)
12. Manpreet (Dance)

19:30 | Ends

About the All Women's Action Society (AWAM)

The All Women's Action Society (AWAM) is an independent feminist organisation based in Petaling Jaya. AWAM envisions a just, democratic, and equitable society where all persons, in particular women, are treated with respect and are free from all forms of violence and discrimination. To meet this vision, AWAM conducts lobbying and networking activities to bring about positive changes in the law for women, public education and training activities to raise awareness about women's rights, provide services such as counseling and legal information clinic for women in crisis, and issues publications and press statements in relation to issues surrounding gender based violence and the politicisation of ethnicity and religion and its impact on women.