

# AWAM E-LINK



**JAN-JUNE  
2016  
EDITION**

## What's Coming Up?

**6 - 7 JULY**

Hari Raya Puasa

**15 JULY**

Feminist Friday #5; Beauty Standards and Body Image

**16 JULY**

Political Economy, Islam, Women in Malaysia Talk

**21 JULY**

White Ribbon Campaign Press Conference #1

**23 - 24 JULY**

RRAAM Quaterly & Strategic Planning

**6 AUG**

PER Big Group Meeting Part 2

**17 AUG**

PER Study Session #2

**20 AUG**

Post Feminist Camp OST Activity=



**All Women's Action Society (AWAM)**

85, Jalan 21/1, Sea Park, 46300 Petaling Jaya,  
Selangor, Malaysia

**Telenita Helpline (counselling/legal info):**

03-78770224

**Office Phone (programmes/admin):**

03-78774221

[awam@awam.org.my](mailto:awam@awam.org.my) | [www.awam.org.my](http://www.awam.org.my)



The past six months had a number of new people joining us at AWAM!



Mayna  
Intern



Emma  
Intern



Milaine  
Intern



Amanda  
Intern



Enbah  
Intern

This E-Link reports on activities from January to June and highlights upcoming activities from July 2016.

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# Politicisation of Ethnicity & Religion (PER)

## PER Trainers Meet

A meeting with the current pool of PER trainers was held on 16 March at AWAM. The trainers discussed new updates in the training manual, the current and upcoming trainings this year and ways to improve follow-up with participants. The trainers also discussed study sessions to improve their knowledge on PER-related issues.

## PER BGM

On June 4th, AWAM held a Big Group Meeting on the topic, "Critical Reflections On The 'Islamic'-'Secular' State Debate (Part One)". The session aimed to do three things: 1) Help clarify what the concept of the 'Islamic' State means — how different is it to the 'secular' state? 2) Provide insights on the challenges of having the debate framed in this way (i.e. 'Islamic' versus 'Secular') 3) Suggest strategies we can adopt the next time this issue is politicised so that we can move forward together. The session was led by Saari Sungib from Parti Amanah Nasional.

## PER Study Session

On May 18th, AWAM organised a study session for its trainers and potential trainers on transgender issues in Malaysia, led by Syar and Wei San. The first aim of the session was to get a better grasp and understanding of the basic terminologies and context of transgender issues and history, specific to our country and region. The session allowed participants to deepen their understanding on how the perception towards transgender persons have changed over time (if they have changed at all). The second aim was for the participants to help each other develop responses to difficult questions that may arise in workshops around the issue, and to develop strategies to counter discriminatory opinions and ignorance about trans issues in productive and measured ways.



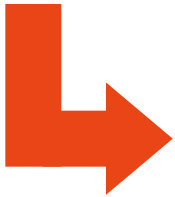
# Politicisation of Ethnicity & Religion (PER)

## Universiti Malaya PERpaduan Workshop



The first workshop for the year was held with the UM Gender Studies Department students on April 1st to 3rd. There were 9 participants who attended the workshop.

The trainers were thency and Syar, while Liza and Tashia rapporteured and Sazlin and Wei San observed.



**The PER Committee held a BGM on Vernacular Education last year! AWAM came up with their stand on the issue. Read it below:**

"We support people's right to learn in the language of their own preference.

In an ideal situation, every community (e.g. within a geographical location) should be able to decide on what language their children are taught in. For instance, if there are 200 children who want to learn in Tamil, then this should be possible.

The vernacular education issue is a red herring. It distracts us from a more critical issue at hand, that of the poor quality of education which Malaysian children receive as a whole. The situation is compounded because education is politicised."

The most important aspect about education in Malaysia today is ensuring access for all children to quality education, one where they are able to learn how to think critically and build knowledge."



# Gender-Based Violence (GBV)



## Internal Discussion on Marital Rape

On January 26th, AWAM held an internal session for members to have a deeper discussion on the issue of marital rape. The term 'marital rape' suggests a possibility of leaving some forms of sexual violence out, which would lead inability to seek help by some women. We need to look at the issue of violence in a larger context. There is much violence committed towards women to humiliate, oppress and inflict pain on them. It is important for us to understand the perceptions on the topic of the public.

## Talk on Feminism and Gender (Nottingham)

AWAM was part of a panel discussion on Feminism and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights at the University of Nottingham, on 5 February. AWAM's Senior Programme Manager, Wei San represented the organisation in her session of the different feminisms as well as myths surrounding feminism. Wei San was joined by Yasmin Masidi from EMPOWER who spoke on her experience as an activist and the idea of feminist leadership, and Dr. Subatra Jayaraj from RRAAM who spoke about Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), in particular, access to contraception and abortion in Malaysia.



## Sesi Gender for JOAS

13 indigenous women leaders of JOAS from Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia participated in a 2 day programme organised by JOAS on March 18th. AWAM was invited to Day 1 of the programme to run a workshop to facilitate discussions and understanding of gender and gender discrimination, and to empower / build the confidence of the women leaders to speak on issues of concern to them, including on gender discrimination. thency ran the training.

## UM VAW Talk



On March 19, AWAM conducted a talk for 40 University Malaya students on gender and violence against women, in conjunction with UM Women Empowerment Week. During the talk, we illustrated that gender is a social construct and spans across a continuum. We shared with the students on the definition of VAW, forms of VAW and the settings in which VAW could happen. We also shared about the resources and support systems that survivors can access when they face occurrences of violence, including AWAM Telenita hotline. The talk was run by Yong Yi.

# Gender-Based Violence (GBV)



## Talk on VAW at Methodist College KL

On the March 17th, Yong Yi gave a one hour talk on violence against women at the Methodist College of Kuala Lumpur (MCKL). The objective of the talk was to illustrate that gender is a social construct which can lead to the use of violence, particularly against women, when persons are seen to deviate from their expected gender roles. The definition of violence against women was also explained during the talk as well as ways to both prevent and respond to occurrences of violence against women.

## Meeting with Selangor State

The Chair of the Selangor State Jawatankuasa Tetap Kesihatan, Kebajikan, Pembangunan Wanita dan Keluarga called for a meeting to seek feedback and input from NGOs on issues surrounding women at the workplace on April 19th, which will be used to inform their woman-friendly policy for workplaces in Selangor. We discussed the need for infrastructure to create safer and more women-friendly spaces such as parking designated for women, including pregnant women, child care and breastfeeding facilities, and sufficient lighting; the need for a sexual harassment policy, mechanism to address complaints and awareness raising of this issue; flexible, maternity and paternity leave. Betty and Wei San attended.



## Forum at UM on SH

The forum was part of UM's Campaign, 'Dome of Silence: Combating Sexual Harassment on Campus', organised by the UM Law Faculty Students. AWAM took part by opening an exhibition booth on 3rd-4th May as well as running a workshop on 4th May and a forum on 5th May. AWAM covered the topic of sexual harassment at work and also what can be done in event of sexual harassment.

## Training for PDRM



AWAM held several meetings with PDRM. On 11th May AWAM had a meeting with PDRM's Training & Policy Division, ACP Chin in which we presented the concern of case management by police front-liners. We proposed to do gender-sensitizing training with the PDRM front-liners. After a discussion on the nature of AWAM's training, it was agreed to have a trial of two-half day sessions for 60 pax from the Brickfields and Taman Tun Police stations. This workshop was carried out on June 7th and came about pursuant to AWAM's training with PDRM-D11 last year.



# Special Report: AWAM's Second Feminist Camp



After the resounding success of the first Feminist Camp last year, AWAM hosted its second Feminist Camp from January 29th - 31st.

Returning to Port Dickson, this year brought 47 participants together, compared to last year's 38. Once again using the highly participatory methodology known as Open Space Technology, the participants discussed issues related to achieving equality and changing the lives of the marginalised and delved into how gender intersects with issues of sexuality, class, ethnicity and religion.



The participants enjoyed three days of discussion and camaraderie, and there was much feedback that stated that the Camp had provided an open and safe space for topics of discussion that people may not commonly have been comfortable talking about in other spaces.

Huge thanks to our organising team - **Yong Yi, thency, Susanna, Evie, adrienne, beng hui, and Sazlin** - for putting this all together!



# Other News and Events

## JAG Briefing on SOGIE Issues

On January 6th, AWAM staff and interns attended a briefing at the SIS Office regarding SOGIE issues. The briefing was led by Thilaga and Vee, members of Justice for Sisters (JFS), whom addressed the common misconceptions of sex and gender, and the implications of this both within and outside the transgender community. They also touched on the main issues faced by the transgender community in Malaysia, along with comparisons of this situation with other countries.



Contact Yong Yi at:

gbv.programs.awam@gmail.com if  
you would like to be involved.

## MMHA Workshop on Mental Health

On January 9-10th, AWAM organised a talk for committee members on understanding mental illness. This came about because we wanted to build our capacity to understand issues surrounding mental illness, as well as how we can recognise and handle situations should they arise in activities that our committees carry out.



## Member's Orientation

On January 16th, 9 participants attended AWAM's first orientation of the year. The session was facilitated by thency, Sazlin and Wei San. The session started with an introduction so that the participants are able to examine their own personal values. We experimented with clean questions and clean language. We also shared about AWAM's background and it provided an idea to the participants on why we do the work we do. We had a session on feminism and gender whereby participants gathered in groups to discuss further about their insights and thoughts on feminism.





# Other News and Events

## Feminist Fridays @ AWAM

Over the course of the past few months, AWAM has held four Feminist Fridays on varying topics. If you would like to attend a Feminist Friday session keep an eye out for our upcoming events!



On Feb 26th, Sazlin and Effie ran the first FF of the year on the topic of "The Emotional Women: Myth, Reality, or Pathology?" The session looked at what assumptions exist about women and their emotions, what are the differences in these assumptions between men and women, and what are the impacts of these assumptions?



On April 22nd, Milaine and Emma ran the second FF of the year on the topic, "Mirror Mirror On The Wall, Who Is The Most Feminist Of Them All?" The discussion centered on the portrayal of female Disney villains and the feminist debate concerning the representation of women in Disney films. The session included debate-like activities as well as open discussions between the participants.



On May 20th, thency and Hazri ran the third FF of the year on the topic, "#FreeKesha : Supporting Sexual Assault Survivors". The discussion centered on how we can all work together in supporting individuals who have encountered sexual assault as well as how we can, as a society, start taking bigger steps towards creating better support systems for survivors.



On June 17th, Wei San and Dr Subatra ran the fourth FF of the year on the topic, "Let's Talk about Sex, Contraception and Abortion in Malaysia". The facilitators asked participants to reflect on their earliest encounters with contraception and abortion. This provided a space for each individual to think deeply about the key messages they received growing up around these issues which continue to affect them today.

## JAG Evaluation and Planning Meeting

AWAM representatives, Wei San, Yong Yi, Evie and Lochna attended the JAG EnP held in Malacca from 19 to 21 February 2016. The JAG EnP is an annual evaluation and planning meeting attended by members from each of the organisations within the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality to discuss the work each organisation has done over the year and how we can work together in the upcoming year.



# Other News and Events

## Photography Book Launch



A group of women from Europe produced a visual photography book on Malaysia through the lens of expatriate women and were generous enough to donate the proceeds to AWAM. Betty, Liza, and Evie attended the launch of the photography book on March 18th and Betty gave a short talk on AWAM and what we do for the crowd present.

## Politiko: Klash of the Titans



On April 2nd, as the opening event for Arts for Grabs, an art bazaar and event-filled weekend promoting social justice causes, well-known advocates for social justice battled for political supremacy in a game of Politiko. AWAM fully supported Nurul Izzah, who generously nominated AWAM as her NGO beneficiary in the match, encouraging the audience to donate to AWAM.

## AWAM AGM



AWAM held its Annual General Meeting on April 23rd. The AGM is for AWAM members, exco, and staff to come together and go over the events of 2015, the financial report of 2015, and the proposed programme and budget for 2016.

President: thency gunasekaran

Vice President: Lim Chin Chin

Honorary Secretary: Yuhaziz Sazlin Mohd Aini

Honorary Treasurer: Wong Pui Yan

Executive Committee Members:

- Rabiatal Adawiyah binti Yusoff

- Liza Lew May Lee

- Lee Leng Leng

At our AGM this year, we elected a new Executive Council for the next two years.  
Take a look at the new lineup!



## Other News and Events



### Aiyoh Wat Lah Workshop #1

In conjunction with this year's Aiyoh Wat Lah awards, the Aiyoh Committee organised two workshops for youth. The first was held on April 26th and covered the issues of Gender and Sexuality as well as the Politicisation of Islam. The sessions were run by thency and Norhayati Kaprawi.

### Strategic Communication Workshop

On May 24-25th, Ain attended a training workshop on Strategic Communication. The aim was to provide NGOs with usable skills and knowledge that will help effective advocacy campaigning towards public authorities for legal reform in Malaysia and primarily focused on pressing for reforms towards the adoption of key international human rights obligations.

### Net Merdeka Workshop

On June 4th, Evie and Sazlin attended the Net Merdeka Workshop on Internet Freedoms organised by EMPOWER. Participants discussed key principles and developments related to Internet freedom as well as how to conduct similar sessions and provide input into a proposed People's Charter for Internet Freedoms

### Aiyoh Wat Lah Workshop #2



The second Aiyoh Wat Lah Workshop was held on June 2nd and covered the topics of Critical Thinking Skills and Writing Skills. The session was run by Surin Kaur. Through this workshop, the participants were able to create a draft of the Aiyoh Wat Lah Nominee Booklet that will later go out to the public.



# Other News and Events

## TOYF Workshop



On June 5-6th, AWAM staff and members took part in the Think On Your Feet Workshop run by People's Potential. The programme aims to equip participants with skills for answering questions - with Clarity, Brevity and Impact, a skill useful for meetings, conference calls, post-presentation Q&A as well as interviews, among other scenarios where one is required to think and answer 'on-the-spot'. Many thanks to our trainer, Ibrahim!

## Group Process Awareness



AWAM staff and members took part in the Group Process Awareness Workshop organised by the MD Committee on June 11-12th. This session aimed to expand on group process awareness, but this time including both awareness and skills linked to facilitation in group settings. The two day workshop was run by Susanna.

## CEDAW Training

Deepa, Evie, and Yong Yi attended a training on CEDAW on June 27th, run by Shanthi Dairiam. The talk centered on an introduction to CEDAW as well as how it enables us to advocate for stronger protections against violence and discrimination against women.



## Launch of Anti-Rogol Website

Yeo Bee Yin, of Pusat Khidmat ADUN Damansara Utama, in conjunction with AWAM, kicked off their second collaboration centered on anti-rape awareness on June 21st. The launch of the new website, [antirogol.com](http://antirogol.com), aims to educate and provide survivors and the general public with basic information and resources on rape and sexual violence such as what constitutes rape, information on the laws pertaining to rape in Malaysia and possible steps that survivors could take if rape takes place and other avenues where survivors can seek help.



# AWAM IN THE MEDIA



On January 1st, **Betty** was on NTV7 to talk about the issue of sexual harassment. She covered the definition of sexual harassment as well as the different forms, and what people can do if they are faced with the problem.



On January 13th, **Yong Yi** was on Astro V'Buzz to talk about AWAM's second Feminist Camp. She touched on what would be in store for participants, the details of the camp, and what being a feminist means.

On February 16th, **Wei San** and **Lochna** were on Bernama TV to talk about the issue of "Pledge for Parity" in conjunction with International Women's Day. Wei San spoke about the concepts of feminism and equality whilst Lochna spoke about AWAM and how people can join and support us.

On March 7th, NTV7 came to AWAM to film the staff in the office environment and create a small clip on the day-to-day work that we do. This was in conjunction with International Women's Day.



# AWAM IN THE MEDIA

## Press Statements

AWAM responds to statements in the press, either by request, or through our own initiative in order to make clear our stance on certain issues. We have found that it is a great way to showcase how much the work at AWAM is needed by responding to current affairs with a feminist perspective. From Jan to June, AWAM published two press statements, was part of six JAG statements, and endorsed three statements from various other organisations.

**CLICK HERE TO READ ALL THE STATEMENTS!**

### AWAM Press Statements

8th March: AWAM's Letter to the Editor on International Women's Day

30th May: Vivian Lee Press Statement

### JAG Press Statements Endorsed By AWAM

19th February: JAG Statement on the Breach of Noorfadilla's Constitutional Rights

6th April 2016: Abuse of Authority By JAWI Must End

5th May: JAG Statement on PDRM

16th May: Consultation before Amendments – Keep the Internet Free

31st May: Suffer The Children

31st May: Increasing powers of Syariah Courts may lead to violation of human rights in Malaysia

### Other Press Statements Endorsed By AWAM


21st Jan: Endorsement of Petition to Malaysian authorities to stop judicial harassment against Jannie Lasimbang

17th May: Maria's Travel Ban highlights Malaysia's plight and Najib's fear (GBM)

21st June: The NGOs call for the Establishment of the Royal Commission on ESSCOM and Hostage Crisis Management



Have an interesting video you want to share? Send it in to Evie at: [infocom.awam@gmail.com](mailto:infocom.awam@gmail.com)!



**KES ROGOL  
SETIAP TAHUN**

Latest reports indicate on average 3000 cases every year.

According to latest statistics, one woman gets raped in Malaysia every 35 minutes. Please watch and share Popek Popek 's new video.

[Click here to watch](#)



# MUST WATCH VIDEOS

Check out this PSA on Domestic Violence.



[Click here to watch](#)

## Like what you see?

We welcome any comments and feedback to Evie at: [infocom.awam@gmail.com](mailto:infocom.awam@gmail.com).

AWAM's bi-monthly e-link highlights the previous months activities. All staff members contributed to their respected areas. **Evie** coordinated the production of the E-Link with editing support from **Wei San**.