

ALL WOMEN'S ACTION SOCIETY (AWAM)

MARCH 2018

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



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# AWAM'S VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

**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; and
- 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

## Donation & Sponsorship

AWAM is a non-profit, tax-exempt organisation which welcomes donations and sponsorships to support our work and activities. You can donate by:

- Online transfer or banking directly to: Public Bank Berhad, Account No 320 176 0214.
- Sending a cheque payable to "All Women's Action Society (AWAM)" to us at 85, Jalan 21/1, Sea Park, 46300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.
- Cash payments directly to our office. See address above.

Do email [awame@awam.org.my](mailto:awame@awam.org.my) a copy of the transaction or bank-in slip, along with your full name and contact details after making a donation, so that we may thank you for your kind donation.

# REPORT BY THE HONOURARY SECRETARY

## A summary of AWAM's activities in 2017

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Following our Reflection and **Recalibration (R&R) process**, AWAM reduced its activities in 2017. This was a result of the December 2016 Evaluation and Planning (EnP) meeting decision that AWAM would go into a period of Reflection and Recalibration, with the aim of clarifying and identifying critical issues faced by women in Malaysia, and to understand the human rights ecosystem and identify AWAM's place within this. Based on these discoveries and insights, we hope that AWAM can chart a clearer, more purposeful future in 2018. During the R&R, we had ten Big Group Meetings (BGM) and one members social. In addition, the R&R committees and sub-committees met to discuss and plan the next step in AWAM's work. At the end of this process, we produced a proposal that was made available for discussion at AWAM's 2017 EnP (held on 20th–21st January 2018). Despite the R&R process, much of the work in AWAM continued as usual.

In 2017, AWAM conducted 26 talks and workshops, with a total of 1,258 participants. Participants comprised of mobilised youths, indigenous women and refugee children, employees of corporations who had requested trainings, and members of community organisations and local institutions. Some of these **public education activities** were in response to requests for talks and trainings, whilst some were planned and organised by the various committees of AWAM.

AWAM's **Gender-Based Violence Committee** (GBV) organised one training of trainers with activists, one consent workshop, and responded to six requests for talks. The committee also planned for two patriarchy manuals, of which one has already been completed and published. Topics discussed during organized talks included GBV-related topics such as rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. The committee also continued to deepen our relationship with indigenous women from Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS), and continued to engage with the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) through the yearly partnership meeting and various training workshops.

Continuing our involvement with JOAS, we have had to reassess how we engage with the indigenous community. Reflecting voiced concerns, internal conversations have and must take place regarding ways in which AWAM can maintain an egalitarian and empowering relationship with the indigenous communities whilst being held accountable to our overseas funders. Reconciling these concerns has and will not be easy, but we remain committed to ensuring the best outcomes for indigenous women in Malaysia.

In 2017, the **Politicisation of Ethnicity and Religion** (PER) Committee modified its approach to conducting PERpaduan youth workshops by breaking workshops down to two levels. This was done in response to feedback from past participants who reported that they were overwhelmed by the intensity of the content over one workshop, and as a result they were unable to absorb and reflect on all their insights. The Level 1 workshops covered the core concepts set out in the first section of the PERpaduan manual, while the remaining three sections, featuring case studies and an analysis of the politicisation of ethnicity and religion in Malaysia, were covered in Level 2. In 2017, a total of 5 PERpaduan workshops were held, of which three were Level 1 and two were Level 2.

In 2017, both the GBV and PER Committee carried out its work in the context of strained resources. GBV has a staff transition, and several members from both GBV and PER Committees unfortunately had to step back, due to external commitments.

In terms of our **Advocacy and Networking** efforts, AWAM continued to strengthen its partnerships and engagement with various women's rights groups (e.g. JAG, RRAAM & WLP) through joint projects, meetings and press statements. We also continued to engage with various government bodies in law reform and lobbying work, as well as with human rights bodies (such as IKRAM, GBM & BERSIH) where our resources permitted.

The AWAM **GE-14 Project** continued in 2017 with multiple initiatives to fulfil its four primary objectives, those being i) putting women at the centre of the elections, ii) ensuring informed and women-friendly voters, iii) challenging the divisiveness of politicised ethnicity and religion, and iv) mobilising women to the forefront of democracy.

Our **Services Committee** fielded 211 new legal cases and 116 new counselling cases. Of these, there was an overlap of about 25 cases, bringing the total of new cases to 301 in 2017. A breakdown of our clientele by age indicated that the largest number of clients fell into the 30-40 age group. However, it is important to note that the total number of clients does not include those who did not disclose their age. Our clients were fairly evenly spread over the three major ethnic groups, with Chinese being the most common by a small margin (41% of total). Malays and Indians made up 27% and 30% of clients respectively, while 2% identified as other. Once again, this does not include clients who did not disclose their ethnicity.

Domestic violence was the largest case type by a wide margin, with 67 clients overall. Counsellors have reflected that one of the largest issues clients continue to face is access to divorce, as legal fees are steep and our legal aid clinic's means test is very strict.

This year, the services committee continued to work hard to improve documentation and data entry practices. Feedback from services personnel helped us improve upon our standard operating procedures and develop new procedures for handling difficult cases such as self-harm, suicide, child abuse, and harassment of services personnel. This has increased our capacity to engage with challenging cases on the ground. We also re-started collating of cases for education and training purposes, with some of the case studies we produced in 2017 found their way into GBV, PER, and Services trainings.

All of these strides would not have been possible without services interns, intern counsellors, and chambering students. We are very grateful for their commitment, time and energy. It should also be noted that we reduced the number of chambering pupils in 2017, from 2 a day (overall 10 - 11 new pupils each quarter) to 1 a day (overall 5 pupils each quarter). This allowed the Services coordinator to better supervise and support the legal information clinic.

The **Members Development Committee** organised a successful 3rd Feminist Camp and held one Members Orientation in 2017. The Feminist Camp saw a total of 40 people engage in 25 different topics, driven by participants interests and concerns. A total of 9 people attended the 2017 Members Orientation, with some continuing to apply to become members. However, the committee faced a number of challenges in the year, including a shrinking number of active members and a number of transitions in staff coordinators.



Our **information and communications** efforts were limited this year due to a staff transition mid-August. Since then, the work has been shared between two staff on an ad hoc basis. Throughout the year, we issued 3 newsletters to members and friends of AWAM. With regards to engagement with the media, we continued to field and provide comments in response to queries, and we issued a Letter to the Editor in conjunction with International Women's Day. Our letter covered the issue of moral policing of women's bodies, politicised religion and its impact on women, the violence and discrimination faced by transgender persons, and sexism in society. As part of JAG coalition, AWAM also continued to track and upload JAG statements on our website. In 2017, JAG issued a total of 12 statements/letters to the editor. Both JAG and AWAM tried to broaden engagement by translating statements when and where resources allowed. Our website and social media continue to be a source of information online, where we are able to showcase and publicise our events as well as women's rights issues.

Regarding our **fundraising** efforts, AWAM raised over RM400,000 in 2017 from a range of activities, including funding proposals, donations from individuals and corporations, training fees, and fundraising drives. Furthermore, in conjunction with 16 Days of Activism at the end of the year, AWAM organised a fundraising drive and raised RM2,489 for WAKE KL's WAKE 3 shelter that provides a safe home and services to homeless, HIV+ trans persons.

Our time and energies also went into managing a complaint that was brought to the attention of the Working Collective (WC) by a former member against a senior member of AWAM in July last year. A summary of this is set out in the Annual Report.

Moving forward, AWAM will implement insights and decisions made at the close of the R&R process. This include the following:

- Developing a Facilitating Feminist Conversations programme, and combining existing Patriarchy, GBV, PER, Feminism workshop modules/programmes into a consolidated and harmonised programme,
- Streamlining and merging existing committees to match new programming,
- Developing a communications strategy, which includes AWAM's online presence and as well as engagement with members,
- Developing strategies to better connect with membership,
- Restructuring decision making processes within the Working Collective to make it more accessible.





# Programmes

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# GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

## Committee

**Staff Coordinator:** Choong Yong Yi (resigned 15 June 2017), Louise Tan Min Yue (joined 2 June 2017)

**Member Coordinator:** thency gunasekaran

**Members:**

- Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
- Kuek Yen Sim
- Lee Wei San
- Lochna Menon
- Mayna Patel

## Overview

In 2017, AWAM's Gender-Based Violence Committee organised one training of trainers with activists, one consent workshop, conducted six talks, and have put two patriarchy manuals into the works. The talks were on GBV-related topics such as rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. The audiences consisted mainly of university students and young professionals, as well as some indigenous women and refugee children.

The committee continued to focus on our work with indigenous women, building on the foundation that had been laid in 2016. We were process observers for a workshop organised by the JOAS Women's Wing in Kampung Jemeri, Pahang. The trainers at this workshop were indigenous women who had previously attended a training of trainers organized by AWAM in October 2016, highlighting the continued success of our training programmes. Prior to the workshop, the indigenous women met with trainers from AWAM for a lesson planning consultation. We debriefed with them after the workshop and have plans to conduct a follow-up training of trainers in 2018.

In 2017, the GBV Committee carried out its work in the context of strained resources (some members had to take a step back from GBV work due to other commitments) and a staff transition.

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# Highlights of Activities and Outcomes

## **Advanced Training of Trainers Institute for Organisational Capacity Building and Civil Society Strengthening | 6 – 10 February**

AWAM member, thency and programme officer, Yong Yi, attended the Advanced Training of Trainers Institute for Organisational Capacity Building and Civil Society Strengthening from 6-10 February in Beirut, Lebanon.

The manuals which were used in the training session included Beyond Equality, Claiming Our Rights, Leading to Choices, Leading to Compassion and Leading to a Culture of Democracy.



Each day, the participants were divided into smaller groups to prepare a lesson plan which they would conduct on the next day. The Training Institute, organised by the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP), was also attended by representatives from other WLP partner organisations, including those from Brazil, Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.



## **Talk on Domestic Violence for Buddhist Gem Fellowship | 26 February**

We returned to the Buddhist Gem Fellowship (BGF) for the second year in a row on February 26th, when Yong Yi and Callie (intern counsellor) gave a talk to para-counselling volunteers on domestic violence.

The talk touched on gender and gender-based violence, with a focus on what domestic violence is and how it is a result of the way gender is constructed in our society. Through case study sessions, which Callie facilitated, participants learned about how certain myths surrounding domestic violence are no more than myths; for example, domestic violence does not occur because the victim is soft-hearted and the husband is alcoholic.

## **Talk on Domestic Violence for Buddhist Gem Fellowship | 26 February**

Betty gave a talk on sexual harassment in the workplace on March 22nd for Crowe Horwath KL Tax Tax Sdn Bhd in conjunction with International Women's Day 2017. The talk was attended by approximately 40 participants. Crowe Horwath also extended their supported hosting a donation drive for AWAM.



### **NTOT for Activists | 24 - 27 April**

thency, Betty, and Yong Yi facilitated AWAM's National Training of Trainers for a group of 24 activists.

Participants came from all over Malaysia and from various organisations with many different focuses, from WAO to Institut Wanita Berdaya to Merdeka Center and others. Some participants also came as independents.

The group spent three days learning about leadership, gender and gender-based violence, human rights, and democracy. On the last two days, they learned about advocacy work by planning their own campaigns and learned facilitation skills by trying out facilitation sessions for themselves

*"This training reinforced my commitment to engage with boys and men on issues of gender."*

*"Since the NTOT I did a few trainings on leadership, teamwork, and intimate partner abuse for marginalized communities. The experiences I had at the NTOT improved my facilitation skills, and my fellow facilitators said they could see the improvement."*

*"As a result of this training I have engaged my husband and my friends on social media to expand their recognition of women's rights."*

*"I am more willing to be honest about my feelings. I am not afraid to tell the men around me that I am a feminist."*

*"[Since the session] I try to engage people on social media in both English and Malay."*

*"My experience helped me and my organization in contributing to Dasar Wanita Selangor that was launched recently by the Selangor State. What I've learned from the workshop has also helped me to write grant proposals for programs in order to implement those policies."*

### **Talk on Rape Culture | 26 July**

Betty Yeoh gave a talk to the Asia Pacific University students on 26th July, with the goal to provoke thought on what rape is, and the culture surrounding it in today's society. She began by sharing a video that was jointly produced by the State Assemblyperson of Damansara Utama and AWAM, on the myths and realities surrounding sexual assault and rape. Betty then asked the audience why they think rape occurs, and why some individuals believe they can rape. This led to the main purpose of the talk, to introduce the idea that rape occurs due to three reasons: power, privilege and permission, all of which rapists (predominantly men) hold. The audience remained engaged, asking Betty questions throughout the talk, and meeting with her after.





### **Consent Workshop | 23 September**

Louise organised a consent workshop on 23rd September. She introduced the concept of consent, for example, if someone is drunk and says yes, does that count as consent? Among activities that took place included role play (participants were paired and one had to role play asking consent) and discussions that centered around what consent was, what was the proper way to ask and how does one say no. One of the main takeaways from this workshop was to reflect on one's boundaries and to know what they are truly comfortable with.

### **WLP Transnational Partners Convening | 7-10 October**

The Women's Learning Partnership (WLP), held its annual Transnational Partner Convening (TPC) from 7th - 10th October 2017 in Washington DC.

The partnership comprises 20 independent partner organisations in the Global South, particularly in Muslim-majority societies, and works together to empower women to transform their families, communities, and societies. It is anchored by a secretariat based in Bethesda, Maryland, USA.

At this year's TPC, the partners convened to discuss:

- The state of the partnership,
- The state of women's rights in the countries we work in,
- WLP's initiative on family law reform and preliminary findings of its research so far,
- Updates from WLP's refugee project, including the programmes and services being implemented by selected partners,
- To give feedback to WLP's new website,
- How WLP's external evaluation will be conducted and the ways in which the partnership will be involved,
- Future planning.

AWAM is a partner of WLP, contributing to the development of training materials and conducting trainings using WLP materials. Wei San attended the TPC.



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### **Follow up Women's Workshop (Bengkel Wanita) with JOAS | 14-15 October**

Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS) conducted a workshop on women's rights for the Jakun community in Kampung Jemeri, Pahang. The trainers for this workshop were orang asli women. Some of the trainers had previously attended a training of trainers (ToT) workshop organised by AWAM in October 2016 for JOAS. The purpose of the workshop was to engage orang asli women from different communities on their rights, and to share knowledge and strategies for addressing issues faced by their communities. AWAM staff (Louise) and member (Mayna) went with the organisers from JOAS to support the trainers. Louise also facilitated a session at the workshop.



### **DVA Multi-Tasking Stakeholder Roundtable|26 October**

AWAM attended the multi-stakeholder roundtable organised by the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) in conjunction with the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development (MWFC) to discuss the recent amendments to the Domestic Violence Act (DVA), which parliament passed in April 2017.

The meeting was attended by various government agencies that deal with domestic violence, such as the police, hospital OSCC staff, social workers from the Welfare Department, and women's NGOs. The roundtable discussed the realities of implementing the amendments, and what a more cohesive cooperation structure between stakeholders could look like. AWAM staff, Louise attended the meeting.



## Calendar of Activities

DATE	TITLE
24/1	Skype Meeting with Women's Learning Partnership (WLP)
6-10/2	AWAM staff and members participated in the WLP Training of Trainers (TOT) for Organisational Capacity Building and Civil Society Strengthening in Lebanon
26/2	AWAM gave a talk on Domestic Violence for Buddhist Gem Fellowship
11/3	GBV Committee Meeting
22/3	Talk on Sexual Harassment for Crowe Horwath Sdn Bhd employees
3/4	NTOT Facilitators' Planning Meeting
11/4	Skype meeting with Women's Learning Partnership (WLP)
22/4	NTOT Facilitators' Meeting
24- 27/4	AWAM/ WLP NTOT for Activists
11/5	GBV Committee Meeting
24/5	GBV Committee Meeting
16/6	Talk on Women's Empowerment for Dignity for Children Foundation students
21/6	Talk on Sexual Harassment for lawyers, organised by KL Bar
17- 19/7	AWAM TOT on Gender, Leadership and Women's Human Rights for PWDC
22/7	Talk on Female Empowerment for Cempaka Cheras School students
26/7	Talk on the issue of Rape for Asia Pacific University students
31/7	GBV Committee Meeting
23/9	AWAM organised a Consent Workshop
2/10	Networking meeting with JOAS
6- 12/10	WLP Transnational Partners Convening
14-15/10	AWAM attended and supported a Follow up Women's Workshop by JOAS
24/10	GBV Committee Meeting
26/10	AWAM attended the DVA Multi- Stakeholder Meeting by WAO/ KPWK
10/11	Meeting with JOAS & COAC

## GBV: Future Planning for 2018

One patriarchy manual has been completed, and pilot testings are planned for 2018. We look forward to completing and publishing both manuals in the year ahead.

Continuing our involvement with JOAS, we have had to reassess how we engage with the indigenous community. Reflecting voiced concerns, internal conversations have and must take place regarding ways in which AWAM can maintain an egalitarian and empowering relationship with the indigenous communities whilst being held accountable to our overseas funders. Reconciling these concerns has not been easy, but we remain committed to ensuring the best outcomes for indigenous women in Malaysia.



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# POLITICISATION OF ETHNICITY AND RELIGION (PER)

## Committee

**Staff Coordinator:** Deepa Chandra

**Member Coordinator:** Lim Chin Chin & tan beng hui (took a leave of absence in July 2017)

**Members:**

- Adila Aziz (took a leave of absence w.e.f April 2017)
- Cecilia Ng
- Evelynne Gomez (stepped down from committee in January 2017)
- Lee Wei San
- Wong Pui Yan (took a leave of absence w.e.f April 2017)
- Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini

## Overview

In 2017, we modified our approach to conducting PERpaduan workshops, breaking it down to two levels. This was done in response to feedback from past participants who reported that they were overwhelmed by the intensity of the content over one workshop and were not able to absorb and reflect on all their insights.

The Level 1 workshops covered the core concepts of the PERpaduan manual, while the remaining three sections that features case studies and an analysis of politicisation of ethnicity and religion in Malaysia, was covered in Level 2. This year, a total of 5 PERpaduan workshops were held, of which three were Level 1 and two were Level 2.

The PERpaduan workshops have been carried out for three years now, since the first pilot testing in August 2014. Participants continue to share positive feedback, among them, their appreciation of a safe space to discuss 'sensitive' and 'taboo' issues which they are unable to speak about to the people close to them. We have also received consistently positive feedback regarding our method of experiential and interactive activities. In fact, two of our past participants subsequently mobilised their networks and friends for our workshops.

We also continued our engagement with Wanita IKRAM by attending their Hari Raya Open House and attended talks and forums organized by partners and other organisations.

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## Highlights of Activities and Outcomes



### **PER Youth Workshop Part 1 with UNAM | 15-16 April**

AWAM's first PER Youth workshop of the year was held with 15 youth leaders from the United Nations Association of Malaysia (UNAM) / Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative on 15th-16th April. This formed Part 1 of the 2-part PER Workshop, and covered core concepts around diversity, stereotypes, prejudice & discrimination, gender, power and privilege. The workshop was held at OAK Residences, Ara Damansara with thency and Wei San as trainers. It was divided into two parts to ensure sufficient time for discussions and reflections. The remaining sections were covered in a follow-up workshop in June 2017.

One of the participants found the workshop very meaningful and helped mobilise another group of participants for the workshop. A participant said, "I really enjoyed this workshop and opportunity to discuss important issues often considered taboo or sensitive. I learnt a lot and hope to use what I learnt in real life by carrying out actions that reflect my beliefs."

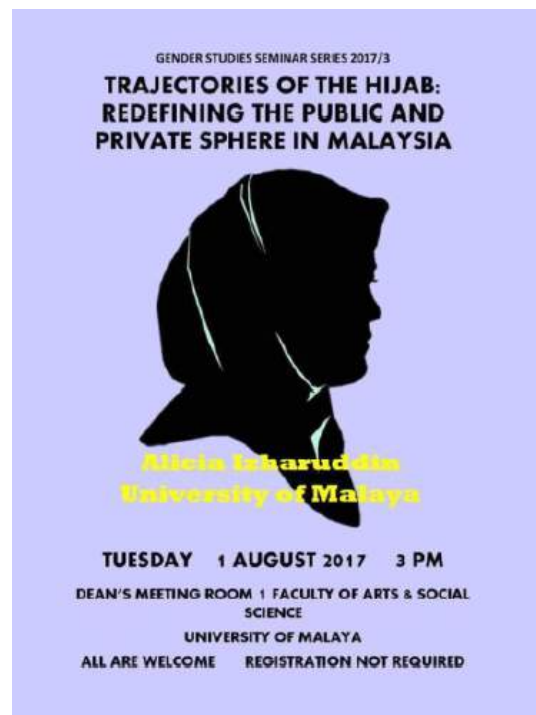


### **PER Youth Workshop Part 2 with UNAM | 3 June**

On 3 June, the PER Committee held Part 2 of the workshop with the UNAM Youths (Part 1 was held in April). The workshop was conducted with the same eight participants from Part 1 and was facilitated by Wei San and thency. The participants who attended were highly engaged and were able to make linkages between the sessions and Malaysia's current reality. The workshop was successful in generating thoughts about addressing the politicisation of ethnicity and religion within Malaysian society. A participant remarked, "I liked the very specific dig into how these issues affects our local scene (and) makes the problems relatable."

### **Trajectories of the Hijab, Dr. Alicia Izharuddin | 1 August**

On the 1st August, Idial (AWAM Intern) attended a Gender Studies Seminar Series on the Trajectories of the Hijab: Redefining the Public and Private Sphere in Malaysia at University Malaya. The talk discussed veiling as a practice of self- performance of pious identity that has a sense of agency. In addition, it touched on cultural and political enforcement of the hijab within the Malaysian and Iranian society. The purpose of wearing Hijab has evolved and its global view is often politicised. Idial organised a sharing with staff and interns, and we had a good discussion about the significance and issues around the hijab for women within Malaysia.



### **PER Youth Workshop Part 1 (open call) | 9-10 September**

AWAM organized a two- day workshop for youths (via an open call) on the 9th and 10th of September to educate youths on the reality of PER in Malaysia. The workshop activities touched on themes of diversity, stereotypes, pride/ prejudice and power/ privilege, to show participants that politicisation of ethnicity and religion does not only occur at governmental levels but at grassroots levels as well. The discussions were intense - some participants left the space feeling uncomfortable due to the content and the varying levels of participants' awareness, some felt the space was needed, with a participant noting, "I need safe space like this more". thency and Syar facilitated the workshop.







### **PER Youth Workshop Part 1 with UPM Students | 4-5 November**

We ran a Part 1 PER Workshop for 21 university students from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) from 4-5 November. It was held at Oak Residences in Ara Damansara. thency and Syar facilitated the workshop. A former participant from UPM mobilised this group via her university networks and friends.

A participant noted, “Sangat bagus dan bengkel seperti ini perlu diteruskan untuk membuka minda dalam menanam kesedaran tentang kesaksamaan jantina dalam kalangan masyarakat” [Very good and this type of workshops need to be continued to open minds in creating awareness about gender equality in society].

*Photo of event above.*

### **PER Youth Workshop Part 2 (open call group)| 9 December**

Part 2 of the PER Workshop was held at the AWAM office for 6 participants consisting of university students and young working adults. We held Part 1 for this group from 9th-10th September 2017. The discussions were facilitated by thency. Some of the participants continued their engagement with AWAM by attending our other events and workshops. A participant shared, “This was a very informational [sic] workshop that helped me to learn more about PER issues and how to tackle them”.

*Photo of event below.*



## Calendar of Activities

DATE	TITLE
31/1	PER Committee Meeting #1
21/3	PER Committee Meeting #2
15- 16/4	PER Youth Workshop Part 1 for UNAM youths
1/5	AWAM attended Khazanah's Tea Talk – "Telling Stories: The making of history, society and territory of Malaysia"
26/5	PER Youth Workshop- Facilitators Planning Meeting
3/6	PER Youth Workshop Part 2 for UNAM Youths
1/8	AWAM interns attended a talk on "Trajectories of the Hijab" by Dr Alicia Izharuddin
9&10/9	PER Youth Workshop Part 1 for a mixed group of students and young working professionals
20/9	AWAM attended the Bar Council's Public Forum on the "Bin Abdullah" Decision of the Court of Appeal — The Impact of Fatwas under the Federal Constitution
27/9	AWAM attended a Closed Forum on Extremism, Women's Rights and Marital Rape
9/10	AWAM attended a closed door study session on the experiences of LGBT Muslims
5/10	PER Committee Meeting
4- 5/11	PER Youth Workshop Part 1 for UPM students
10/11	Closed Door Meeting on Women and Violent Extremism
9/12	PER Youth Workshop- Part 2 for a mixed group of students and young working professionals

### PER: Future Planning for 2018

In 2018, we plan to continue to carry out Level 1 and Level 2 PERpaduan workshops, working with youths to deconstruct their understanding of ethnic and religious relations in the country, and to reconstruct this understanding in a manner that takes into account their lived realities. We have found that this new format works better for our goal to increase awareness and change mindsets, as participants are not too overwhelmed with information. We will also continue to increase our resources and case studies, and find new ways to share our content with the general public.

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# PUBLIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING (PET)

**Staff in Charge:** Choong Yong Yi (resigned 15 June 2017). Subsequently, jointly managed by Deepa Chandra, Camelia Sulaiman, and Lee Wei San. A list of trainers is set out further below.

## Overview

In 2017, we conducted 26 talks and workshops with 1,258 participants. The participants were made up of employees of corporations that requested for trainings, university students and young working adults who attended AWAM's workshops and events, as well as members of organisations such as the KL Bar and Buddhist Gem Fellowship.

The topics of our talks and trainings include Sexual Harassment, Women in Work, Female Empowerment, Domestic Violence, Rape, Women & Media, Gender Equality, Gender Sensitisation, Managing Cases through Gender Lens, WHRs, and Coalition Building. More than half of the talks were taken up by Betty, while the rest was by thency, Wei San, Louise and Yong Yi.

AWAM organised two exhibition booths, one at Gerakbudaya's IWD event themed "Women's Work", and the other at a Annual Legal Conference 2017 by Wong & Partners.

A total of 11 student interviews took place covering various topics such as Rape, Marital Rape, Identity Politics, Counselling, and AWAM's work.



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# Highlights of Activities and Outcomes

## **Talk on Women At Work | 8 March**

In conjunction with International Women's Day 2017, Betty carried out a talk for the employees of Double Tree Hilton at Intermark on March 8th. The talk covered the current trends of women at work, the causes and effects of gender and work as in how gender affects women's position and women's knowledge, skills and attitude at work, and what is the future and the way forward. It was attended by approximately 60 employees, mainly women holding various positions at the hotel.



## **Planet 50-50 by 2030 | 12 March**

On the 12th March, Yong Yi was on a panel discussion, held at University Malaya as part of the university's Empowerment Week, along with Janarthani Arumugam (Jana) from EMPOWER. Moderated by Dr. Rusalina, the panel discussed the history of Malaysia, including the grassroots movements and women's movements during the formation of Malaysia. They also touched on how the preponderance of male MPs in the country results in a gender bias in the legislative process, as well as how violence against women takes place in cyberspace. They looked at the case study of the backlash to the Women's March the day before, where women were the targets of gendered attacks on Twitter, and concluded with the sentiment that women should continue questioning, challenging, and reclaiming their rights.

## **Talk on Girl's Empowerment at Dignity for Children | 16 June**

AWAM conducted a two-hour gender and empowerment session on 16 June at Dignity for Children Foundation. Aged between 13th-15th, these children range from underprivileged/stateless Malaysians to asylum seekers/refugees from Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Sri Lanka. Wei San, program manager ran the session with the help of Louise (program officer) and Emily (intern). They unpacked gender stereotypes, discussed the concept of gender as a social construct and participated in an activity on self-esteem. The session was very engaging and participants raised insightful, reflective and even painful questions. These included discussions of stereotypical roles girls and women are taught to conform to and the role of boys and men play in empowerment programs and why, often, families prefer sons to daughters.





## Trainers and Talks Conducted:

A full list of workshops, talks, panels organised by AWAM (by all AWAM Committees), or where AWAM was invited as a resource person, is set out below, along with the trainers/ facilitators / speakers.

Month	Date	Description of Talks/Workshop/Panels	Name of Trainer / Facilitator / Speaker
January	13 - 15	<i>Feminist Buatan Malaysia: Menuntut Kembali Naratif Kita (Malaysian made Feminist: Reclaiming our Narratives)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Space Technology Workshop</li> <li>public - about 80% are young women below 30 years of age/40 PAX</li> </ul>	Susanna George and thency gunasekaran
February	26	<i>Domestic Violence is not a Private Matter</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>Counsellors/25 PAX</li> </ul>	Callie Chia Hsia Chen and Choong Yong Yi
March	8	<i>Women and Media: A Reflection</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forum</li> <li>Students/50 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
	8	<i>Women and Workplace</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>female employees at Doubletree Hilton/ 60 PAX</li> </ul>	
	11	<i>Women and Workplace</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>single mothers from HOPE/ 20 PAX</li> </ul>	
	12	<i>Planet 50-50 By 2030: Step It Up For Gender Equality</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel</li> <li>UM Students/ 40 PAX</li> </ul>	Choong Yong Yi
	15	<i>Women and Work</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>employees at AIG, majority female/40 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
	22	<i>Sexual Harassment in the Workplace</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>employees at Crowe Horwath/40 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
April	15 - 16	<i>PERpaduan Youth Workshop (PER)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop</li> <li>UNAM Youth/15 PAX</li> </ul>	thency gunasekaran, Lee Wei San
	24 - 27	<i>National Training of Trainers for activists (GBV)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop</li> <li>NGOs staff/members/24 PAX</li> </ul>	thency gunasekaran Betty Yeoh Siew
May	15	<i>Talk on Coalition Building</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>Monash Students / 30 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
June	3	<i>PERpaduan Youth Workshop (PER)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop</li> <li>UNAM Youth / 8 PAX</li> </ul>	Thency Gunasekaran Lee Wei San
	16	<i>Girl's Empowerment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>Lower Secondary Students/60 PAX</li> </ul>	Lee Wei San, assisted by Louise Tan and Emily Heimsoth
	21	<i>Sexual Harassment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>Lawyers / 100 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng

Table continued on following page

	21	<i>Sexual Harassment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>Lawyers / 100 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
July	17 - 19	<i>Gender, Leadership and Women's Human Rights</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training of Trainers</li> <li>PWDC staff and partners, university students, existing trainers/24 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
	22	<i>Girl's Empowerment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>High School Students/ 400</li> </ul>	Louise Tan
	26	<i>Sexual Harassment in the Workplace</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>Digi Employees/50 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
	26	<i>Sexual Assault and Rape</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>Students and Lecturers/50 PAX</li> </ul>	
September	9 - 10	<i>PERpaduan Youth workshop</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop</li> <li>Students/12</li> </ul>	Thency Gunasekaran Syar S. Alia
	12	<i>Managing cases through a Gender Lens</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel speaker</li> <li>OSCC staff (medical officers and paramedics)/40 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
	23	<i>Consent Workshop</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop</li> <li>Members and friends of AWAM/16 PAX</li> </ul>	Louise Tan
November	2	<i>Gender Sensitisation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk</li> <li>OSCC staff/45 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
	4 - 5	<i>PERpaduan Youth workshop</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop</li> <li>Students/22</li> </ul>	Thency Gunasekaran Syar S. Alia
December	9	<i>PERpaduan Youth Workshop (PER)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop</li> <li>Youth/6 PAX</li> </ul>	thency Gunasekaran
	10	<i>Who is harassing me? Patriarchy and Legal Limitations On Sexual Harassment Seminar with a focus on CEDAW</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seminar</li> <li>Public/40 PAX</li> </ul>	Betty Yeoh Siew Peng

### Other Events (Interviews, Exhibition Booths and Visits)

DATE	TITLE
22/02	Interview with Claire McFarlane of ProjectBRA about her project to raise awareness on the issue of sexual violence and how to localise the campaign in Malaysia
11/03	IWD Event: Women's Work (AWAM was a co-organizer and set up an Exhibition Booth on the GE14 Project)
23/03	Research Interview with UM students on counselling
28/03	Study Visit from Rawang Women Association
10/04	Research Interview with students on marital rape
28/04	Research Interview with student on Identity Politics in Malaysia
4/05	AWAM Exhibition Booth at Wong & Partners Annual Legal Conference (ALC)
11/07	Study Visit by KL Legal Aid Centre (LAC) Interns to AWAM & Study Visit by AWAM's Interns to KL LAC on the same day
2/08	Research Interview for student about AWAM
15/08	KL Legal Aid Centre (LAC) Interns had a Study Visit to AWAM
14/11	Research Interview with students from UKM about AWAM's work
27/12	Interview: Research on Social Enterprise by Juelie Koh

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# ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

**Staff in Charge:** Jointly managed by Deepa Chandra and Lee Wei San

**Active Members:** Betty Yeoh Siew Peng, Subatra Jayaraj, Yuhanz Sazlin

**Volunteers for GE14 Project:** Alexy Louisa Fernando, Chang Yi Ning, Fiona Wong, Izzah, Jade See, Jun Elle, Mardheanna, Nadia, Quek Yu Lyn, Sasi Rekha, Sharmala Narasingam, Subatra Jayaraj, Syar Alia, tan beng hui, Tara Thiagarajan, Ying Hui.

## Overview

Nearing the end of 2016, AWAM created the GE-14 Project as an organising initiative for women to come together to come up with ways of bringing visibility to women and their issues in public conversations and consideration during the upcoming Malaysia's 14th General Election.

Following the work carried out in 2016, the AWAM GE-14 Project continued in 2017 with multiple initiatives in order to fulfill its four primary objectives :

- 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.

On other advocacy and networking efforts, AWAM continued to strengthen its partnerships and engagement with various women's rights groups (e.g. JAG, RRAAM & WLP), through activities such as joint projects and press statements. We also continued to engage with various government bodies in law reform and lobbying work, as well as with human rights bodies (such as IKRAM, GBM & BERSIH) where our resources permitted.

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# Highlights of Activities and Outcomes

## GE14 Project

### AWAM GE-14 Project Meeting | 17 February

The first meeting of 2017 re-affirmed the objectives of the project and provided the space for old and newcomers to plan and get acquainted.

Based on the discussions and understanding of the limited resources the team has, it was decided that the project would focus on creating original digital messaging (online) with active engagements on online platforms that are linked with on-the-ground (offline) activities in order to leverage the technologies and digital spaces available as a way to maximise the project's reach in mainstreaming the idea of women as a voting bloc.

In order to plan, manage and carry out the activities lined up by this strategy throughout the year, three sub-teams were formed at the meeting : i) research team, ii) media team, and iii) events and outreach.

#WanitaMengundi continued to be the unifying tagline and "face" of these initiatives/ activities.



### AWAM GE-14 Project Meeting #2 & Preparation Work for IWD Event | 5 March

With the formation of the sub-teams and the addition of multiple new faces (22 team members overall), the GE-14 Project held its second team meeting to re-brief its members on the project's strategy and updates on upcoming events.

The meeting was attended by 12 team members, who made preparation work for the International Women's Day event to be held the following week that the GE-14 Project would be participating in. This included T-Shirt and Tote bags printing reflecting the project's effort to be self-sustainable and self-funded.

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### **IWD Event at GerakBudaya | 11 March**

The AWAM GE-14 Project participated at the IWD event at Gerakbudaya. The research team used the event to conduct survey and collect information about which issues are the most pressing for women in order to better inform the GE-14 Project as we create our future messaging.

The events and outreach team held a booth where women and others could share their hopes and dreams for Malaysia, take #WanitaMengundi photos or play 'Smash the Patriarchy' game. The team were also selling 'Feminis Buatan Malaysia' and 'Wanita Mengundi' tote bags, along with other AWAM items, for fundraising purposes at the booth.

The media team shared all messages and photos taken at the booth on Twitter and tweeted about the multiple panels that were happening at the event. They also expressed solidarity and retweeted about the Women's March KL that was happening at the same time. The team gathered over 52 likes and 66 retweets and over 1500 engagements.

Overall, 11 members of the GE-14 Project helped out to make our presence at the event a success.



### **Solidarity Twitter Event for Women Marchers | 12 March**

Following the IWD and Women's March KL, multiple young women were harassed online due to their participation in those events. A twitter event to express solidarity and support for those young women were held and the AWAM GE-14 Project research and media team came up with multiple graphics to illustrate the many discrimination and inequality that women face in Malaysia -- from gender wage gap to parliamentary seats occupied by women.

Our tweets garnered over 69 likes and 160 retweets, with engagements of over 1000.

### **Media & Outreach Team Meeting | 25 March**

The media and outreach team held their team meetings in order to plan and divide up work for the GE-14 Project in the following months. The media team discussed which online platforms AWAM should focus on and they strategised the tone and content they wanted to share in each. The outreach team discussed ways to engage audiences with upcoming events that would be relevant for the project's presence. The meetings were attended by 7 team members and volunteers.



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### **Research Team Meeting | 29 March**

The research team had a Skype meeting in order to discuss the format of their survey for women, the target for the survey and timeline. The team also discussed translating the surveys to Tamil and Mandarin. Five team members participated in the meeting.

### **Networking meeting with YB Haniza | 27 April**

Two research team members had a meeting with YB Puan Haniza, ADUN of Taman Medan, in order to get her input on possible ways to reach specific sections of her constituents, in particular working class and lower income women. YB Puan Haniza shared about her office's upcoming events that the GE-14 Project could attend, as well as giving her input on the survey that was created. She suggested to include questions on women candidates.

### **Banner Painting activity | 29 April**

The events and outreach team held their first on-the-ground activity to kick off the first messaging of the GE-14 Project : "Isu Wanita, Isu Negara. Isu Negara, Isu Wanita". The message was selected to illustrate that women's issues are national issues and that national issues also concern women. The message was painted on a banner that was subsequently displayed at the side of AWAM's office building.

### **Workers' Day March | 1 May**

The GE-14 Project took part at the Workers' Day March, whilst conducting surveys. The present members shared photos and messages from the working-class women attending the march to increase visibility around women's political participation that is often ignored or unseen.

The teams gathered over 20 surveys and their tweets for the event garnered 115 likes and 116 retweets, with over 1600 engagements.

### **Peduli Sihat Event | 8 May**

Members from the research, events, and outreach teams attended the Peduli Sihat event organised by the ADUN of Taman Medan's office. The event was held at one of the low-income flats in the area and the team conducted surveys with the residents there.

Unfortunately, the GE-14 Project halted its initiatives from June onwards as one of the member volunteer who helped coordinate the project had to step away due to family issues.

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## Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)



### **JAG Evaluation and Planning 2017**

Members of the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) met from 12th – 14th May 2017 at Taiping Perak for its annual evaluation and planning meeting, where we reviewed the work of the coalition in 2016 and discussed strategies and plans for 2017/ 2018.

The discussion included the development of the Gender Equality Bill, next steps for the Aiyoh Wat Lah Awards, our engagement with the CEDAW reporting process, our discussions around mass mobilisation and the need to communicate and create support for JAG advocacy demands. We also talked about our demands for the upcoming general elections, the need to build the capacity of service providers, in addition to our law reform work around the sexual offences against children act, amendments to the domestic violence act, unilateral conversion and RUU355.



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## Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)

### Special Report on RRAAM Activities in 2017

by Shoba Aiyar, RRAAM Coordinator

AWAM is a member of the Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM), and acts as its interim organisational base for the receipt of its donor funding. This section includes a report from RRAAM for 2017.

RRAAM's mission is to safeguard and support women's right to improved termination of unwanted pregnancy, comprehensive contraception services, and to inform, educate and advocate on these reproductive rights issues. In addition, RRAAM wishes to increase awareness of and increase access to the abortion rights among all women in Malaysia, health providers, NGOs, policy makers, the media and the public through the strategies of information, education, and evidence based advocacy.

RRAAM believes that women have the right to access legal, safe, and affordable contraceptive and abortion services, stemming from a women's right of agency over ones own body as a subset of broader universal rights that include access to healthcare. RRAAM acknowledge that women's well-being, health and empowerment improves when these rights are accessed. The Alliance is guided by values of gender equality, the promotion of women centered services, respect, accountability, inclusiveness, and evidence based best practices.

RRAAM celebrated its 10th year anniversary in 2017. It's been a fruitful journey with many 'first' in its activities. Some of RRAAM's achievements in 2017 are;

- 1) Being declared a partner with the Family Health Division of the Ministry of Health in the reproductive rights field during a meeting with them in November 2016.
- 2) RRAAM had her first one day Doctors' Seminar in April 2017 with 20 medical practitioners on the various issues like the law, new technologies, MOH's TOP guidelines and shared our research findings. The doctors have asked for an annual dialogue to keep them updated.
- 3) RRAAM has come up with a consensus statement, endorsed by doctors present at the Seminar and RRAAMs 14 Alliance members. The statement highlights that it is a basic right of women to have access to comprehensive contraceptive and abortion treatment, as a critical women's issue.
- 4) RRAAM has finalised a list of medical providers who conduct termination of unwanted pregnancy. Doctors have been identified in every state in Malaysia, the biggest number being in the Klang valley.
- 5) The hotline service has become very active over the years. Last year, we received an average of 80-90 calls per month. The caller is given broad advice on their issues and they decide what choices goes well with their situation. A feedback form is sent to them after two weeks to gauge their feelings about the services.
- 6) A 7 minute video clip was produced by SPRuang- Filem Pendek Kehamilan Tidak Terancang
- 7) RRAAM has been registered officially on 16th October 2017 under the Register of Societies. A bank account was opened soon after that.

## RRAAM's Future Challenges

The real challenge for RRAAM is to fund raise to keep her financially independent and in turn to carry out programmes with resource persons in the area of Reproductive Health. RRAAM seeks partners in these ventures.

RRAAM thanks AWAM immensely for their partnership, support and services rendered.

## Calendar of Activities

DATE	TITLE
18/1	Solidarity event with Masjaliza Hamzah at Bukit Aman PDRM (for her interview regarding Bersih's work)
6/2	Networking Meeting with UNHCR SGBV Unit
11/2	AWAM hosted a Feminist Reading Group, organised by Alicia Izharuddin
16/2	Internal Meeting between JAG and Gerak Budaya to plan for an International Women's Day (IWD) event
17/2	GE14 Project: AWAM meeting to plan for activities around women's participation in the GE14
5/3	GE14 Project: Meeting and Banner Painting
11/3	GE14 Project at IWD Event: Women's Work
12/3	GE14 Project: Solidarity Twitter event for Women's March
16/3	Solidarity event with Lena Hendry SUHAKAM (persecution for screening of the film "No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields of Sri Lanka")
25/3	GE14 project: Media and Outreach Team meeting
29/3	GE14 project: Research team meeting
9/4	AWAM attended the 10 years celebration of Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance of Malaysia (RRAAM), of which we are a member
27/4	GE14 Project: Networking meeting with YB Haniza
29/4	GE14 Project: Banner Printing activity
1/5	GE14 Project: Worker's Day March - survey
7/5	RRAAM Quarterly Meeting
8/5	GE14 Project: Peduli Sihat Event - survey
12- 14/5	AWAM participated the JAG Evaluation & Planning Meeting
26/5	AWAM hosted an SRHR workshop, organized by RRAAM
31/5	Meeting with Kementerian Sukan dan Belia regarding patriarchy project
6/6	AWAM attended SUARAM Human Rights Report 2017 Launch
12/7	AWAM attended the IKRAM Hari Raya Open House
25/7	AWAM participated in a discussion on the rights of Women and Children with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Delegation (organised by the British High Commission)
26/7	AWAM attended the National Consultation on "The Rights of Vulnerable Witnesses"
9/8	JAG Strategy Meeting on a Sexual Harassment Bill
16/8	Solidarity for Ho Yock Lin and Ivy Josiah at IPD Dang Wangi (over the "Bebas Maria" Women's Walk)
21-25/8	AWAM attended the UNESCO East Asian Youth Dialogue in Beijing
25/8	AWAM attended SAWO's 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
10/9	AWAM participated in the Women Against Toxic Politics March #wanitabantahpolitiktoksik
18-20/9	AWAM attended the Building Collective Strategies: Expanding SAWF's mandate to Southeast and East Asia Convergence in Bangkok
4/10	AWAM attended the Majlis Pelancaran Institut Wanita Berdaya dan Dasar Wanita Selangor

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5/10	Interview with IlmuSeks on producing a video on rape awareness
7/10	AWAM attended the Bersih Evaluation and Planning Meeting
11/10	AWAM attended a JAG Briefing on DVA Amendments organised by WAO
28/10	AWAM attended the WAO Conversation / Office Warming Event
20/11	Visit from representatives of the Commonwealth Foundation
21/11	Visit from young leaders from the UK, organised by the British High Commission
23/11	AWAM attended Bersih's NGO Briefing and Press Conference
7/12	AWAM attended SUARAM's Human Rights Report Overview Launch

### Future Planning for 2018

In 2018, we plan to continue our engagement with women's rights groups such as JAG, RRAAM and WLP. We will also continue to engage with human rights coalitions such as GBM, BERSIH and IKRAM, as well as the government actors (such as the Selangor State's women's section) and donors/supporters, to the best of our capacities. As RRAAM has successfully registered with the Registrar of Societies, AWAM will no longer be hosting their funds, but we will continue to contribute to the partnership in other ways.

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# SERVICES

## Committee

**Staff Coordinator:** Choong Yong Yi (resigned 15 June 2017), Louise Tan Min Yue (joined 2 June 2017)

**Member Coordinator:** None

**Members:**

- Ain Nasiebah binti Amiruddin
- Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
- Sushma Reddy (took a leave of absence in September 2017)
- Lee Wei San (joined June 2017)

**Chambering Pupils and Intern Counsellors:** See “Appreciation and Gratitude – Interns, Legal Aid Pupils and Volunteers.”

## Overview

This year, the services committee continued to work hard to improve documentation and data entry practices. One challenge we faced was to balance the digitisation of key documents whilst maintaining the highest levels of confidentiality. This meant that digitising information was slow going, and could only be carried out when the staff coordinator had time, or we were able to engage a full time services intern.

Feedback from services personnel helped us improve our existing standard operating procedures, and develop new procedures for handling difficult cases, such as self-harm, suicide, child abuse, and harassment of services personnel. This has increased our capacity to engage with challenging cases on the ground.

We also re-started collation of cases for use in trainings and workshops. Some of the case studies we produced in 2017 found their way into GBV, PER, and Services trainings. With new staff at the helm, we are also slowly picking up on documentation and presentation of statistics.

All of these strides would not have been possible without services interns, intern counsellors, and chambering students. We are very grateful for their time and energy. We strove to support our personnel emotionally while also discharging the best possible duty of care towards clients.

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## Managing the Legal Aid Clinic

SIS, WAO, and AWAM ran 4 joint NGO-Legal Aid Center training session over the year, for new batches of chambering pupils joining the three NGOs every quarter. These sessions focus on assisting the pupils in developing a gendered perspective in regards to legal issues, and preparing them to communicate with and support their clients more effectively. The training sessions are attended by pupils from the Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Legal Aid centers. This is followed by mid-term reviews to manage legal aid cases and discuss best practices.

Following this, AWAM holds an internal briefing for the chambering pupils. This covers AWAM's background, values, services and work. The pupils are also briefed on the 'Legal Aid Clinic' standard operating procedures, and provided information and guidelines for logistics, documentation, and client etiquette.

We would like to acknowledge the support provided by Selangor LAC and Kuala Lumpur LAC, and for the chambering pupils assigned to AWAM.

## Public Education and Training

Although our core work is in providing services, we are occasionally involved in public education and training.

- Gender Sensitization Trainings for One-Stop Crisis Center Staff (OSCC): Twice this year we were invited to conduct trainings for OSCC staff, once for Hospital Putrajaya on 12 September, and another for Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah on 2 November. Both trainings were conducted by Betty Yeoh.

- External Trainings: On 26th February, Callie and Yong Yi conducted a talk for the Buddhist Gem Fellowship on "Domestic Violence: Not A Private Matter".

## Managing the Counselling Centre

AWAM works with intern counsellors pursuing their Masters in Counselling, to provide free counselling to our clients. Applicants for the intern counsellor position are interviewed throughout the year on a rolling basis, and they stay with us for 3-9 months to complete their internship.

AWAM practises person-centered and feminist counselling approaches in managing our clients, including education and distribution of information regarding rights. 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, particularly women's rights.

We would like to note our appreciation of our intern counsellors, Carmeni, Yip Yoke Chew, Ash Yusoff, Anne Jamaluddin, Edward Liew, and Hannah Toh as well as our volunteer counsellors, Siew, Betty, Tracey and Shirley, for providing their services to our clients in 2017.



## Services Cases and Statistics

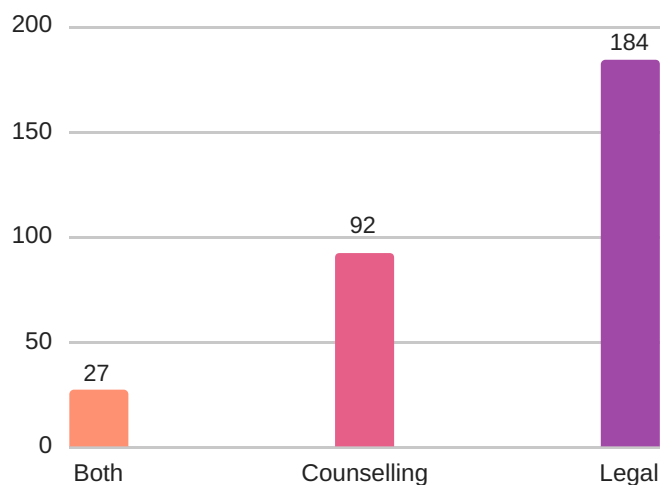


Chart 1: Breakdown by type of service of service in 2017

### Overview

We had a total of 304 clients in 2017. There were 184 standalone legal cases, 92 counselling cases, and 27 cases that involved both legal information and counselling. (See: Chart 1)

Women still made up a majority of our clients, but this year there was a small increase in the percentage of male clients seeking help. (Chart 2) Of the women, most of them were in the 30-40 age group (31%), and the 18-30 age group (26%). A small number of clients did not disclose their age. (Chart 3)

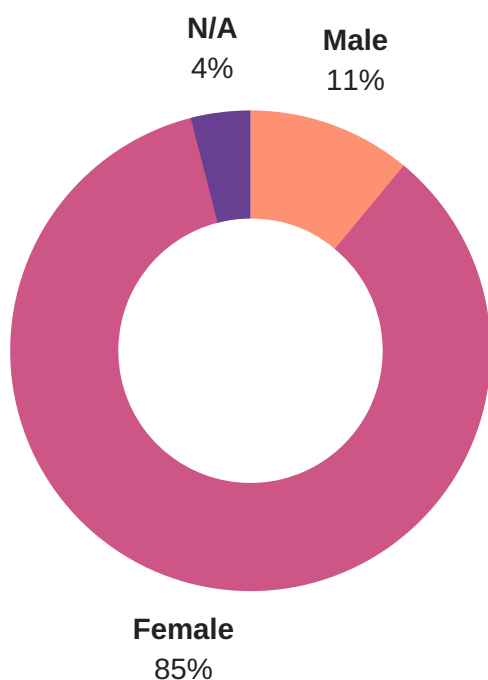


Chart 2: Breakdown of clients by gender in 2017

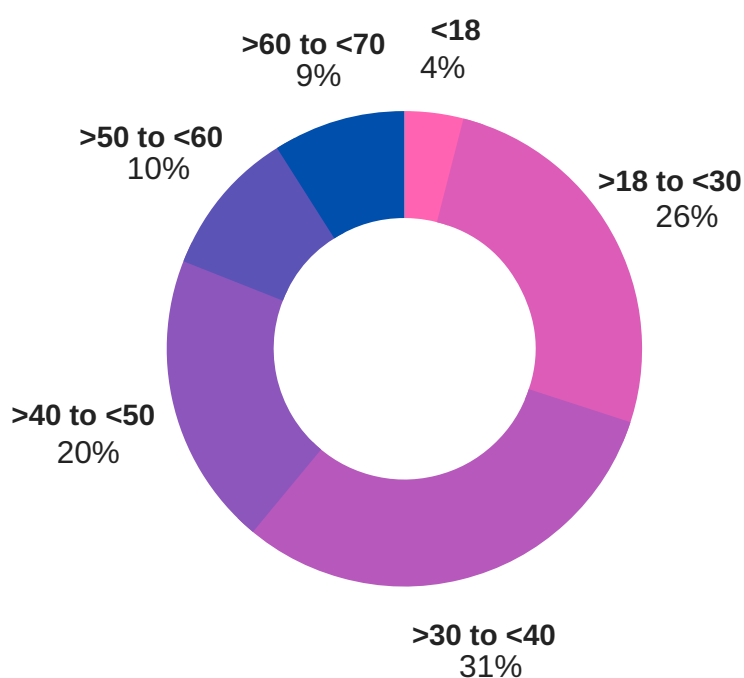


Chart 3: Breakdown of clients by age in 2017

Nationality and Ethnicity

Our clients were fairly evenly spread over the three major ethnic groups, with Chinese being the most common by a small margin (36%). Malays and Indians made up 18% and 24% of clients respectively, while 3% identified as other. 19% of clients chose not to disclose their ethnic identity. (Chart 4)

The vast majority of AWAM’s clients were Malaysians. There was a small but significant number of clients that were not Malaysian (3%). (Chart 5)

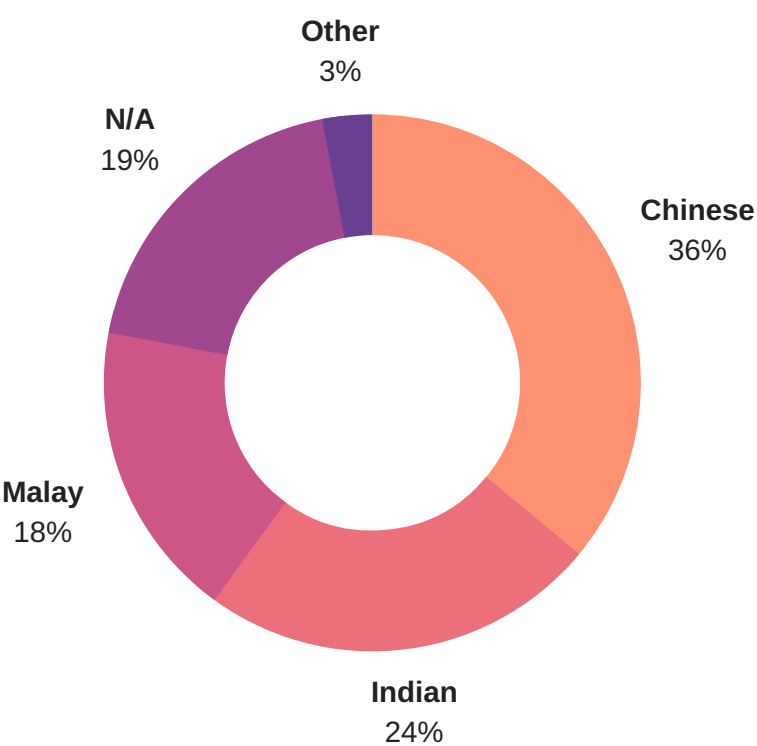


Chart 4: Breakdown of clients by ethnicity 2017

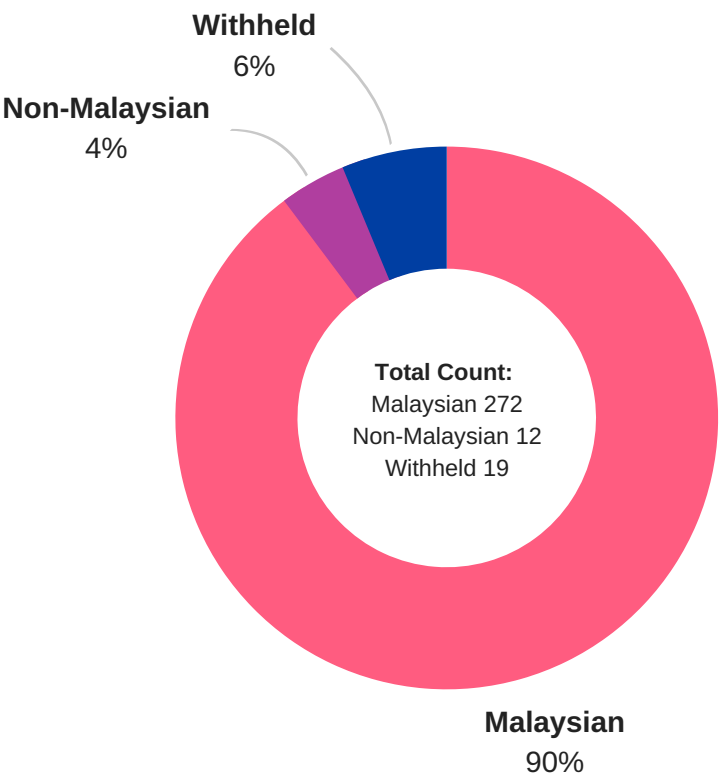


Chart 5: Breakdown of clients by citizenship



## Highlights by Case Type

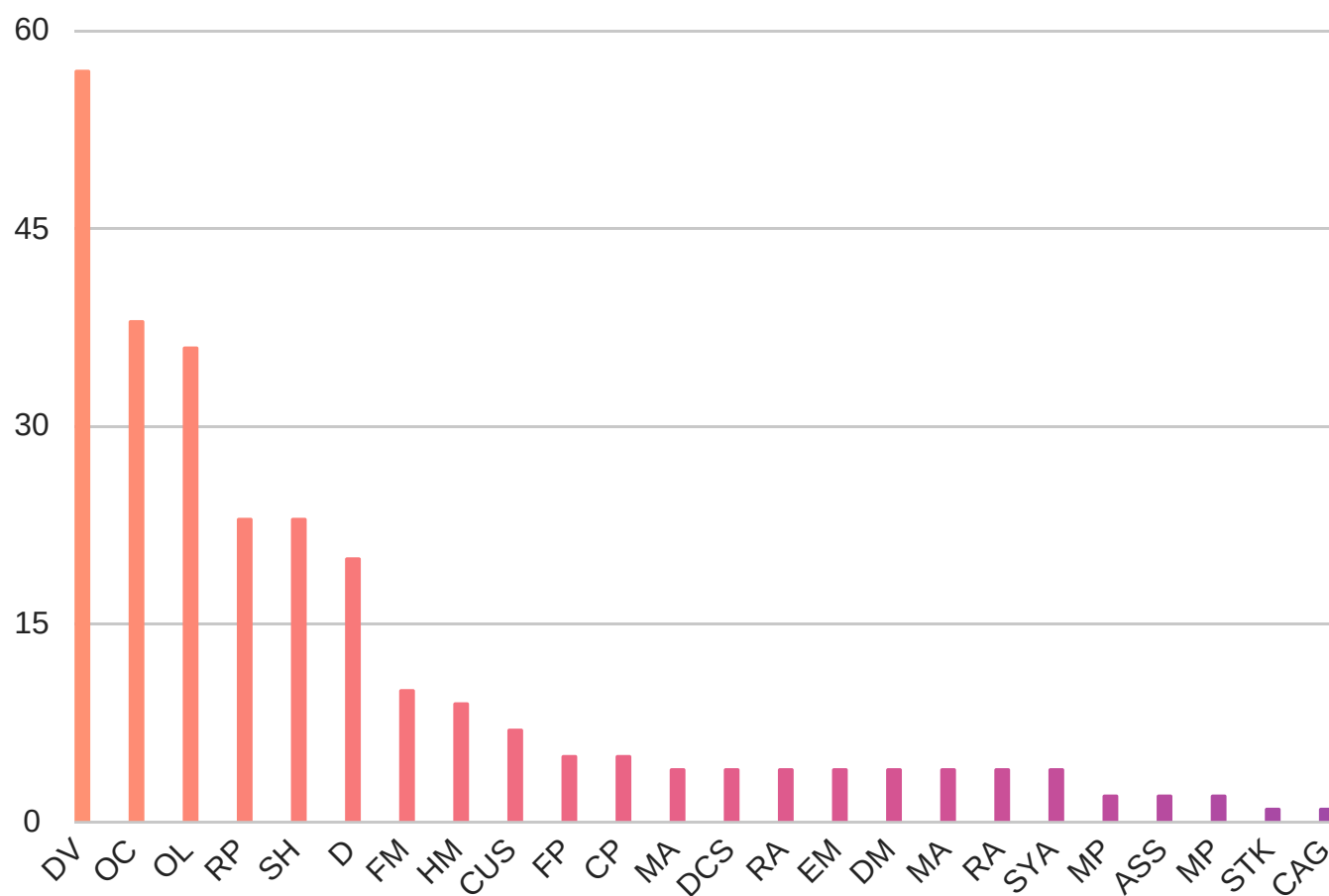


Chart 6: Breakdown of clients by case type  
(both counselling and legal)

### Legend

ASS	Assault	MP	Matrimonial Property
CAG	Child Adoption/Guardian	OC	Other (Counselling)
CP	Child Protection	OL	Other (Legal)
CUS	Custody	PCM	Parent-child Matters
D	Divorce Civil	PRO	Probate / LOA
DV	Domestic Violence	RA	Rape
EM	Employment/Career	ROM	Registration of Marriage
FM	Family Matters	RP	Relationship Problem
FP	Financial Problem	SH	Sexual Harassment
HM	Harassment	SRHR	Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights
IN	Incest	SLY	Sexuality
JS	Judicial Separation	SM	Single Mother
DM	Maintenance	STK	Stalking
MA	Marital Affair	SYA	Syariah
		UM	Unwed Mother

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## **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence cases continue to be the most common case type AWAM receives, making up almost 20% (18.75) of all our cases for 2017.

## **The Links Between Counselling, Domestic Violence, Divorce, and Relationship Problems**

Other Counselling (OC) and Relationship Problems (RP) require some elaboration. After domestic violence, they are the second most common type of case we receive.

Our counsellors have noted that a lot of clients approach us presenting mental health-related issues such as depression and anxiety. Further sessions with the client usually reveal some form of psychological abuse and emotional injury in their marriage or relationships.

These clients are usually either reluctant or unable to leave their situations. Pressure from the family or community is an oft-cited reason, with more than a few clients saying that they want to remain together for the sake of the children, or to not let their family down. It is clear that despite how far the conversation on gender-based violence has advanced, women still feel that they have to conform to certain roles: namely that of the good wife and perfect mother.

The other reason women stay in relationships is because the cost of divorce. Many clients are financially dependent on their families, especially their husbands. Hiring a lawyer is an expensive affair; the legal aid clinic has a very strict means test, which means that many working-middle class women will not qualify for free legal services.

This also means that domestic violence and divorce cases may be underrepresented in our official client statistics. In the coming year, we hope to make changes to our documentation processes to better represent issues as they arise in the process of counselling.

At the same time, AWAM may need to consider lobbying for better access to legal services for women seeking to leave their marriages.

## **Frontline staff as a deterrence from seeking help**

We also noted a significant number of cases in which a client decided not to make a report or withdrew a report previously made, because of the poor service they received when they approached the police or hospital staff.

In one notable case, a client went to a one-stop crisis centre at a major public hospital to report her sexual assault, but was told to go to another station to make her report. The client was not attended to until 9PM that evening, at which point she decided to withdraw her report due to stress.

Similarly, when another client went to lodge a report over an sexual assault that happened in her home, the police woman who took her statement remarked that it was not assault as she had invited the perpetrator (a friend of the client's) into her home.

The frontline staff of both police and hospitals require frequent training on gender sensitivity. It may be within our interest to look into conducting more of these trainings when we have the capacity.

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## 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 in exploring all available 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 though 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 has provided them with a better understanding of the impact that patriarchy has on women and violence. This is the most measurable part of services work, as can be seen through feedback excerpted from the chambering pupils' legal aid reports and exit evaluation forms.

*"The programme taught me a lot on dealing with clients and being more compassionate in doing work in the legal profession. It also taught me a lot about the work that AWAM does for the society." Debra, Batch 54.*

*"I get to see or handle real case or situations from first hand experience instead of just reading case study." Sabri, Batch 54*

*"I had an enjoyable learning experience with the staff and interns of AWAM. Throughout my period of duty in AWAM, I have learned a lot by interacting and speaking with clients of AWAM." Eugene, Batch 55*

*"Volunteering with AWAM has not only widen my legal knowledge but honed my communication skills with clients of diversified backgrounds each coming to us with different legal problems of their own. Specifically, being able to work alongside with the intern counsellors has been beneficial to improving the quality of our communication and advice rendered to the clients." Yi Leong, Batch 55*

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## Calendar of Activities

DATE	TITLE
16/1	The British High Commission Consular Section visited AWAM for a discussion about the services we provide
20/1	LAC Mid Term Review (Batch 90 & 52)
10/3	NGO-LAC Training #1 (Batch 91 & 53)
13/3	Internal Briefing for Legal Aid Pupils (LAC)
21/4	LAC Mid-term review for Batch 91 & 53
24/5	Case Management session
27/5	Case Management meeting
31/5	NGO-LAC Training #2 (Batch 92 & 54)
6/6	Services Committee Meeting
6/6	Internal Briefing for Legal Aid Pupils (LAC) Batch 92 & 54
10/7	LAC Mid Term Review
15/8	KL Legal Aid Clinic (LAC) Interns visit to AWAM
15/9	NGO-LAC Training #3 (Batch 93 & 55)
28/9	Services Committee Meeting
4/10	AWAM Meeting with KL LAC regarding Legal Aid Clinic
23/10	Meeting with Monash University regarding Counseling Internships
24/10	Services Committee Meeting
8/11	KL Legal Aid Clinic (LAC) Mid Term Review
8/12	NGO-LAC Training #4 (Batch 94 & 56)
13/12	AWAM Internal Briefing (Batch 94 & 56)
15/12	Meeting with NGO partners to discuss NGO LAC Training programme

### Future Planning for 2018

While the feedback from the legal aid program has been overwhelmingly positive, we believe there is room for improvement. The legal knowledge that the chambering pupils bring to the job is invaluable, and we would like to make sure they get more out of their legal duty at AWAM besides fulfilling their compulsory hours.

We also believe it may be beneficial to consider narrowing the focus of Telenita to handling sexual harassment and rape. This would mean referring more cases to other service providers in order to focus on sexual assault cases. The services committee will work on developing a responsible referral system for those clients.

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# MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## Committee

**Staff Coordinator:** Ain Nasiehad (resigned 20th January 2017), Evelynne Gomez took over between January – 15th August 2017), Deepa Chandra (took over 15th August 2017)

**Member Coordinator:** Susanna George

**Members:**

- Lee Wei San
- tan beng hui
- Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini

## Overview

In 2017, the Members Development Committee organised a successful 3rd Feminist Camp and held one Members Orientation. The Feminist Camp saw a total of 40 people engage in 25 topics. A total of 9 people attended the Members Orientation, and some applied to be members. Activities in AWAM were reduced significantly due the Reflection and Recalibration process, which took place throughout the year. The committee faced a number of challenges in the year, including a shrinking number of active members and a number of transitions in staff coordinators.

## Highlight of Activities

### Feminist Camp | 13 - 15 January 2017

AWAM's 3rd Feminist Camp was held over 3 days, from 13 – 15 January 2017 at the Regent International School, Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan. There were 40 participants, including the organising committee. We used Open Space Technology (OST), a meeting methodology which enables the main topics of the conversations in the event to be selected and led entirely by participants. The topics include climate change, sexual health and reproductive rights, women and governance, as well as feminism. We had a mix of former and new participants, who continued to communicate and work together even after the camp, through a social media platform.



The 3rd Feminist Camp has resulted in the beginning of some very strong bonds of friendship and collaborations, as well as on-going strengthening of existing bonds. We believe this will ultimately create a more networked, solidarity-based and resourceful community of feminist and social activists in Malaysia.



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## Calendar of Activities

DATE	TITLE
13-15/1	AWAM'S Feminist Camp
2/2	Membership Development Committee (MDC) Meeting
2/3	Feminist Camp Organizing Committee (FCOC) Post Mortem Meeting
24/5	Membership Development Committee Meeting
17/6	AWAM Member's Orientation #1
2/8	Membership Development Committee Meeting
24/10	MDC Committee Meeting

### Future Planning for 2018

In the coming year, the Membership Development Committee plans to conduct two Members' Orientation Sessions whilst staying flexible with our activities as we work towards merging this committee's work with PER and GBV, following the decision at the 2017 AWAM Evaluation and Planning meeting. We also plan to work on increasing members involvement in AWAM and AWAM events, as well as work on our communication strategies so all members are able to be involved with in AWAM's work and activities.

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# INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

**Staff in Charge:** Evelynne Gomez (resigned 15 August 2017). Jointly handled by Louise Tan Min Yue (joined 2 June 2017) and Lee Wei San

## Highlight of Activities

### Members Newsletter: E-links

We issued 3 newsletters to members and friends of AWAM in 2017:

- January – June Newsletter
- July – September Newsletter
- October – December Newsletter

### Engagement with the Media

In 2017, AWAM continued to field and provide comments in response to queries from the media. We also issued a Letter to the Editor in conjunction with International Women's Day, which was subsequently translated to Malay and Chinese. Our letter covered the issue of moral policing of women's bodies, politicised religion and its impact on women, the violence and discrimination faced by transgender persons, and sexism. We ended the letter with the following words:

"...[T]he Malaysia we want to live in.....is a place where women speak and move about without restriction, and where the minds and ambitions of intelligent, dedicated, and brave young women are respected without reserve. The Malaysia we want to live in is simple, but getting there is not. To get there, we must stand together even as religion is politicised to divide us. We must keep fighting for change in our streets, our courts, and our everyday lives. Change will take its time, but we must not take ours. Happy International Women's Day, Malaysia."

The letter can be accessed on AWAM's website at: <https://www.awam.org.my/web/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/AWAMs-International-Womens-Day-Letter-To-The-Editor.pdf>.

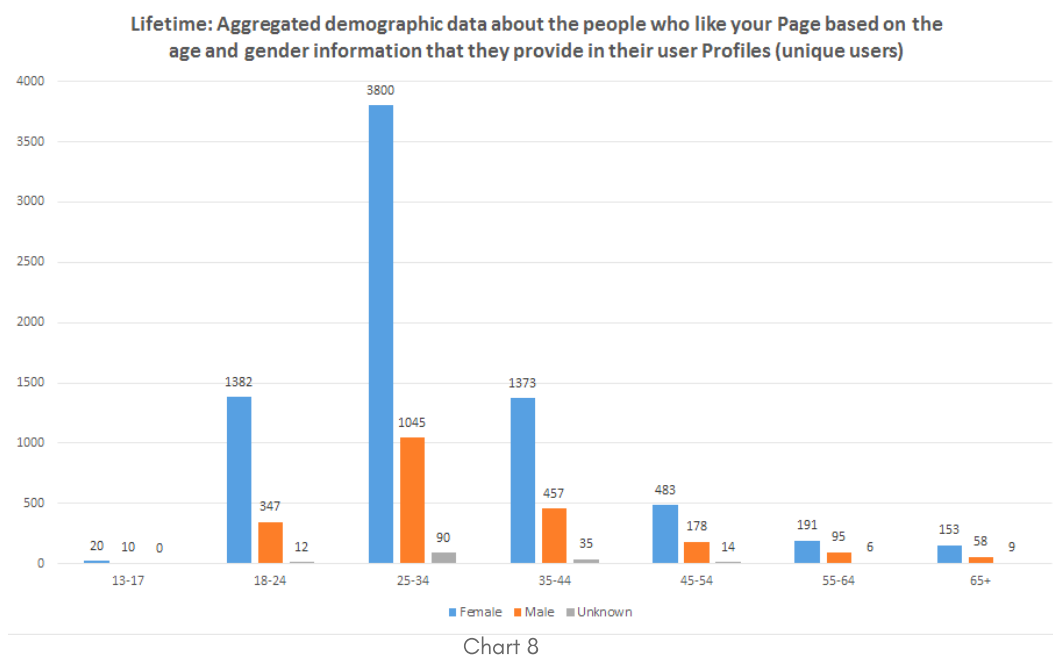
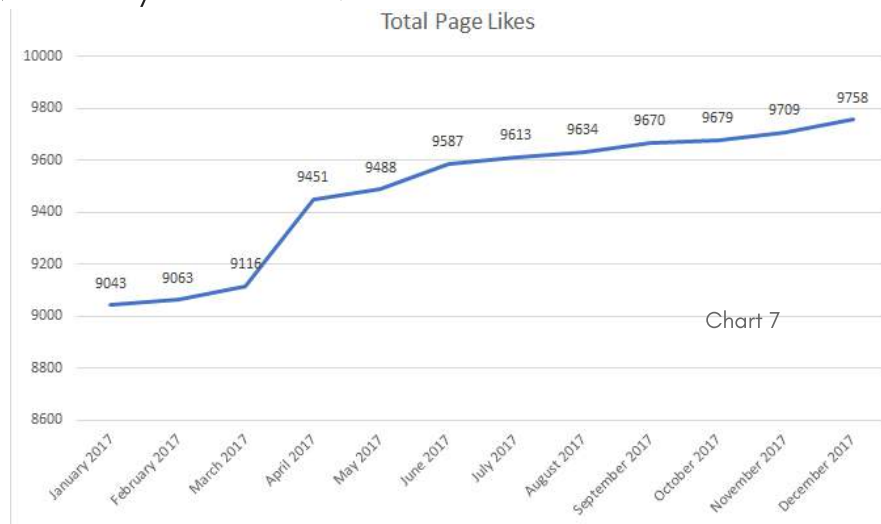
As part of JAG coalition, AWAM also tracks and uploads JAG statements on our website. In 2017, JAG issued a total of 12 statements/letters to the editor (some of which were translated to other languages):

- *Protect Domestic Violence Survivors. Uphold Protection Orders* [Eng, BM, Chinese] | 8 March
- *JAG Condemns Online Attack and Stands in Solidarity with #WomensMarchKL* [Eng, BM, Tamil, Chinese] | 14 March
- *Stop Mitigating Rape* [Eng, BM, Chinese] | 17 March
- *Changes to domestic violence law good; now step-up enforcement* [Eng, BM] | 4 April
- *Stop using female employees as commodities* [Eng] 6 April
- *Table the Unilateral Conversion Bill Now* [Eng] | 6 April
- *JAG condemns use of rape to silence women who advocate rights* [Eng] | 27 April
- *Stop Intimidating Human Rights Lawyers* [Eng, BM, Chinese] | 13 July
- *Domestic violence law improved. Now what?* [Eng, BM] | 26 July]
- *UN Committee Questions Malaysia About Gender Equality Law And Protections For All And Diverse Women* [Eng, BM, Chinese and Tamil] | 18 August
- *JAG condemns the recent sexist and racist harassment directed at Dato' Ambiga Sreenevasan* [Eng] | 3 November
- *Stop Discriminatory Policy Against Women* [Eng, BM] | 16 November

## Social Media

### Facebook

Over the last year (January– December 2017), AWAM increased the number of page ‘likes’ by 7.9% overall, with the largest increase occurring between March and April. This may be due to increased interest surrounding International Women’s Day and the 2017 March.



Our audience demographic remains largely female, with the largest section existing within the 25–34 age group. Whilst data is currently unavailable, continued monitoring of demographics in the future will show changes in demographic and may reflect the successes of campaigns, particularly those aimed at educating men or those outside our mainstream audience.

In 2017, AWAM’s most engaging post (measured by likes/shares and excluding those about company employment) was an infographic titled ‘Four ways men can address sexual harassment at work’. All infographics did relatively well in this period, reflecting the importance of content that is engaging ‘at a glance’ in best practices for online visibility.

## Twitter

Twitter engagement remained steady in 2017, although AWAM did not experience spikes in engagement as with previous years. Outlook appears strong with posts in 2018 doing far better than those in previous years.

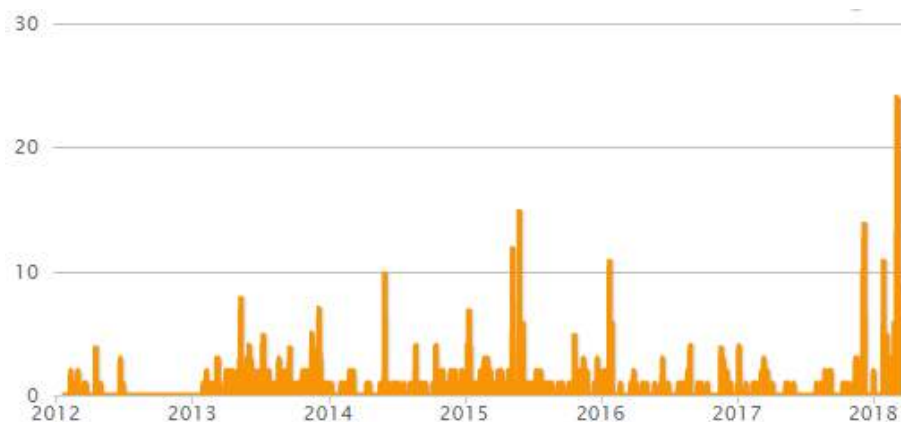


Chart 9: AWAM's retweeted tweets

Figure 1 and figure 2 (below) show the users most responded to and most mentioned in our tweets. They highlight our continuing effort to maintain strong connections with fellow rights agencies both online and on the ground.



Figure 1: users most responded to



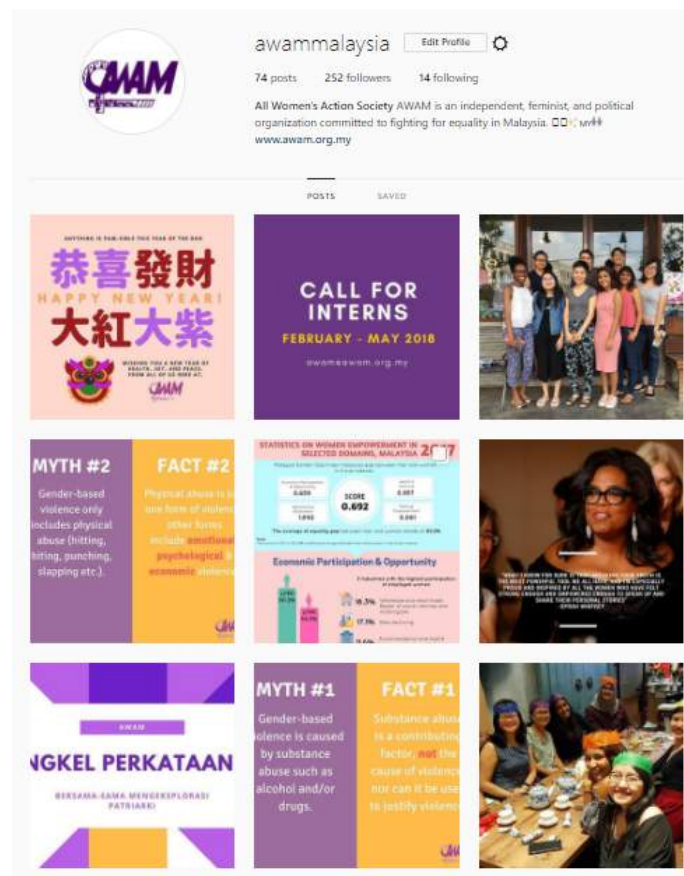
Figure 2: users most mentioned

## Instagram

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

## Website

AWAM continues to update its website with our events (see Calendar of Events) and press statements issued by AWAM or endorsed by AWAM. Statistics for the website are not available this year, but will be made available next year.



## Future Planning for 2018

The work of the infocom programme this year has been shared between 2 programme staff - which meant that work could only be carried forward on an ad hoc basis. At the end of the AWAM R&R process, members proposed that we focussed on strengthening AWAM's online presence in 2018, which would mean, among others, raising resources to hire a programme staff.





# Organisational Development

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# REFLECTIONS AND RECALIBRATION (R&R)

## Committee

- Wong Pui Yan
- Deepa Chandra
- Lee Wei San
- thency gunasekaran (stepped down due to other commitments)
- Yuhaziz Sazlin binti Aini (stepped down due to other commitments)
- Kuek Yen Sim (stepped down due to other commitments)

While the R&R Committee helmed the process, there were also 3 sub-committees that developed different areas within the R&R process:

### **Subcommittee 1 : Vision Mission Strategy**

Susanna  
Sazlin  
Wei San,  
Judith,  
Ruby  
YiNing

### **Subcommittee 2 Structure & Processes**

Melanie  
beng hui  
Adila  
Yong Yi  
Deepa

### **Subcommittee 3 Resources**

Pui Yan,  
Chin Chin  
Evie  
Lochna,  
Camelia  
thency

## Overview

In Dec 2016, the membership decided at the 2016 Evaluation and Planning (EnP), that AWAM would go into a period of Reflection and Recalibration (R&R). We sought to identify and clarify the critical issues faced by women in Malaysia, and to understand the women's human rights ecosystem, including where AWAM is located in this system, and to chart a path for AWAM's future, based on our discoveries and insights.

During the R&R, we had 10 Big Group Meetings (BGM) and 1 members social. The R&R Committee and Sub-Committees also met to plan and work. At the end of the process, we produced a proposal that we brought to the 2017 AWAM EnP (which was held from 20 - 21 January 2018) for discussion.

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## Highlights of Activities and Outcomes

BGM 1 [12 Feb]:	Set parameters of R&R Process [Concept Note & Budget]
BGM 2 [19Feb]:	Set up 3 Sub-groups [Vision, Strategy & Values; Structure & Processes; Resources]
BGM 3 [25 Feb]:	Sub-groups Present & Construct Timeline
BGM 4 [8 Apr]:	Checkpoint, burning Qs, Mock debate [Enough Talkin' Get Workin']
BGM 5 [6 May]:	Visioning & Journaling
AWAM Social [10 Jun]	Buka Puasa
BGM 6 [7 Sept]:	Reflecting on AWAM Priorities [GBV, PER, Feminism/ Patriarchy and Services]
BGM 7 [14 Sept]:	Reflecting on GBV & Services
BGM 8 [28 Sept]:	Reflecting on PER
BGM 9 [12 Oct]:	Reflecting on Feminism/Patriarchy
BGM 10 [11 Nov]:	Reflecting on AWAM's vision and role in women's movement; Next steps – proposal is to focus on a stronger online presence and engagement, and facilitating feminist conversations. However, these were contingent on buy in from all committees to balance these new areas with existing commitments and work.

As an outcome of the process we also developed an insights and proposals document, which was circulated to members via email.



### Future Planning for 2018

The R&R process was brought to a close when the insights and proposals made were brought to the AWAM EnP 2017 (held on 20th-21st January 2018).

At the 2017 EnP, we made the following decisions:

- To sharpen AWAM's vision – we need to focus on specific issues and programmes,
- Develop a Facilitating Feminist Conversations programme, and combining existing Patriarchy, GBV, PER, Feminism workshop modules/programmes into a consolidated and harmonised programme,
- Streamline existing committees to match new programming,
- Develop a communications strategy, which includes AWAM's online presence and as well as engagement with members,
- Develop strategies to better connect with membership,
- Restructure decision making within the Working Collective to make it more accessible,
- Sharpen the focus of our Services work, perhaps focusing Legal Aid only on sexual assault and sexual harassment,
- Increase the number of AWAM trainers/facilitators through Training of Trainers.

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# FUNDRAISING

## Committee

**Staff in Charge:** Jointly managed by Deepa Chandra and Lee Wei San.

## Highlights of Activities and Outcomes

IAWAM raised over RM 400,000 in 2017 from a range of activities, including funding proposals, donations from individuals and corporations, training fees, and fundraising activities.

We received a grant of approximately RM240,000 from South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF) for a grant period of June 2017 – November 2018. The funding will cover the development of a Patriarchy Manual, 2 pilot testing workshops for the Manual, and 6 PER Workshops (4 level one and 2 level two). We also received approximately RM68,000 through our partnership with the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP), to cover national training of trainers, follow-up workshops/activities, and travel expenses for the Transnational Partners Convening and other events.

We raised approximately RM20,000 through our Feminist Camp. These included participant fees, individual donations from private individuals, as well as the offices of YB Yeo Bee Hin and YB Eli Wong, and a grant by the British High Commission.

We also worked with Shiseido, Wong & Partners, Bison Stores Sdn Bhd, and a group of expatriate women photographers in Malaysia, and the Thiam Lai Yean Foundation in fundraising drives and other activities to raise approximately RM80,000 for AWAM. We also had training and resource income of approximately RM40,000, as well as income from members' fees and merchandise sales.

In conjunction with 16 Days of Activism at the end of the year, AWAM organised a fundraising drive and raised RM2,489 for WAKE KL's WAKE 3 shelter that provides a safe home and services to homeless, HIV+ trans persons.

The challenge for AWAM was the lack of capacity (staff and members) to host a big scale fundraising activity, but we made a strategic decision to focus on the R&R process.





### Future Planning for 2018

In 2018, we plan to invite members to be part of the fundraising committee. This will enable us to plan a fundraising activity/event and plan for our 30th Anniversary in 2018. We will continue to field requests for fundraising collaborations whilst applying for funding as needed.

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# OTHER GOVERNANCE BODIES

**Working Collective:** Evelynne Gomez (resigned 15 August 2017), Lee Wei San, Louise Tan Min Yue (joined WC 9 November 2017), Theresa Lim Chin Chin, Wong Pui Yan, Rabiatal Adawiyah Yusoff, Subatra Jayaraj (joined 11 May 2017), tan beng hui (leave of absence as of July 2017), thency gunasekaran (resigned 31 October 2017), Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini.

The Working Collective (WC) monitors the implementation of AWAM's direction, as set by members at the Annual Evaluation and Planning Meeting, and Annual General Meeting. It makes decisions on matters that affects AWAM direction, introduces and reviews policies, monitors programmes, budgets and resource mobilisation efforts, and troubleshoots issues raised by Committees, staff, and members. In 2017, the WC met approximately 18 times. This includes meetings by a sub-committee within the WC, which was tasked with managing a complaint brought by a former member against a senior member.

Communications by this body is via a listserv, as well as a WC whatsapp group, with ad hoc whatsapp groups to discuss specific matters.

**Human Resource Committee:** Lim Chin Chin and Lee Wei San (staff in charge).

The Human Resource Committee (HRC) manages hiring/firing, appraisals, promotions, management of staff and intern grievances as well as development. In 2017, the HRC met 9 times, most of which was via Skype or telephone conference.

Communications by this body is mainly over emails, calls or direct messages.

**Finance Committee:** Wong Pui Yan, Lim Chin Chin, Loke Siew Fong, Camelia Sulaiman (staff in charge).

The Finance Committee monitors AWAM funds, cashflow and expenditures, coordinates AWAM's annual budgets, prepares AWAM's annual financial reports, and ensures that the Financial Guidelines are adhered to. The Finance Committee met twice in 2017. Most of its communications were held over the finance whatsapp group and over emails.

**Policy Panel:** Subatra Jayaraj (AWAM Exco), Yu Ren Chung (Women's Aid Organisation) and Saira Shameem (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)).

In July 2017, a complaint was brought to the attention of the Working Collective (WC) by a former member against a senior member of AWAM. The WC decided not to conduct a domestic inquiry, for the following reasons:

- there was a lack of clarity in naming the alleged inappropriate behaviour,
- the matter was not within AWAM's jurisdiction as per existing policies.

However, because the parties involved were connected to AWAM, and because an NGO like AWAM serves the public good, we decided that there is a need for an organisational action in facilitating a deeper understanding of and capacity to respond to the matter at hand. It is with this intent and spirit that we formed a Policy Panel. The policy panel was formed to look into this matter as an anonymised case study, to provide recommendations to address such conduct in the future. The report of the panel will be ready in the first quarter of 2018, and will be shared with members.



# Appreciation and Gratitude

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# DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

## Donors

- Astrid Hoge, Harriet van Eldik-ten Hoopen and friends (expatriate women photographers)
- Anne Molly Mathews
- Big Boy Venture Sdn Bhd
- Bison Stores Sdn Bhd
- British High Commission in Malaysia
- Fong Siew Pin
- Hanim Hassan
- Hew Zhong Ying
- Hoe Kah Chong
- Kuek Yen Sim
- Ocean Flair Sdn Bhd
- Petaling Jaya Utara Member of Parliament's Office
- Pejabat Pegawai Daerah Petaling/Bukit Lanjan: YB Elizabeth Wong
- Pusat Khidmat Adun Damansara Utama: YB Yeo Bee Hin
- Salbiah Ahmad
- Shiseido
- South Asian Women's Fund (SAWF)
- TMF Trustees Malaysia Bhd/Thiam Lai Yuen Foundation
- WHO Global Services
- Women's Learning Partnership (WLP)
- Wong & Partners

## Partners & Supporters

### NGOs, Institutions and Coalitions

Bersih 2.0 Coalition  
Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM)  
Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia  
Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG)  
Association of Women Lawyers Malaysia (AWL)  
Justice For Sisters  
Perak Women for Women (PWW)  
Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (Empower)  
Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor (PSWS)  
Sabah Women's Action-Resource Group (SAWO)  
Sarawak Women for Women Society (SWWS)  
Sisters in Islam (SIS)  
Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)  
Women's Centre for Change (WCC)  
Tenaganita  
Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS)  
Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance of Malaysia (RRAAM)  
South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF)  
Women's Learning Partnership (WLP)  
Kuala Lumpur Legal Aid Centre  
Selangor Legal Aid Centre

### Individuals who have supported our work

Fara Rom  
Farhana Zain  
Juana Jaafar  
Syar S. Alia  
and many more who, while not named, without your support, we would not be able to carry out our mission to improve women's lives in Malaysia.

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# INTERNS, LEGAL AID PUPILS AND VOLUNTEERS

## Programme Interns

### 2017

1. Jasmine Gomez 1 Dec 2016 – 9 Feb 2017
2. Cora Low 19 Dec 2016 – 9 Feb 2017
3. Liow Jun Wei 2 Jan – 31 Mar 2017
4. Chang Yi Ning 10 Feb – 31 May 2017
5. Emily Heimsoth 15 May – 21 July 2017
6. Somila Khanna 20 June – 8 Sept 2017
7. Idial Masri 20 June – 22 Sept 2017
8. Hajira Kamran 5 July – 7 Sept 2017
9. Liew Hui Qui 11 Sept – 30 Nov 2017
10. Fatin Bamadhaj 4 Sept – 24 Nov 2017
11. Syarafana Abdul Samat 4 Sept – 30 Nov 2017

### 2018

12. Amani Onyango 27 Nov 2017 – 15 Feb 2018
13. Tam Xueh Wei 27 Nov 2017 – 15 Feb 2018
14. Melinda Anne Sharlini Damodaram 27 Nov 2017 – 9 Feb 2018

## General Volunteers

1. Jerrine Gan 27 March – 29 March 2017

*Legal Aid Pupils on following page.*

## Intern Counsellors

1. Yip Yoke Chew 10 June 2016 – 31 Mar 2017
2. Chia Hsia Chen (Callie) 22 Aug 2016 – 12 May 2017
3. Chan Ee Lin 5 Jan 2017 – 31 Mar 2017
4. Carmen Serine 3 April 2017 – 29 Dec 2017
5. Ashraff Ahmad 21 June 2017 – Sept 2017
6. Anne Noor Sri Juwaneeta Jamaludin 6 July 2017 – 30 Sept 2017
7. Edward Liew 30 Oct 2017 – 31 Mar 2018
8. Hannah Toh Li-Sha 31 Oct 2017 – 31 Mar 2018

## Volunteer Counsellors

1. Siew Yin Heng
2. Betty Yeoh Siew Peng
3. Tracy Lim Saw Tuan
4. Shirley Lai Xue Ning



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## Legal Aid Pupils

### **Batch 90 & 52: 7 December 2016 to 10 March 2017**

1. Divyarranjhini Arumugam
2. Yu Yi Lin
3. Nabilah Jasmine Binti Zainal Ariff
4. Deborah Judith Dawson
5. Lalitakumari a/p Thillaidasan
6. Cyrill Clade bin Agus
7. Ng Jing Hao @ Howard
8. Nurul Farhana Atira binti Kamarul Ariffin
9. Kamsiah binti Adnan @ Kim
10. Leong Chyi Yan

### **Batch 91 & 53: 10 March 2017 to 16 June 2017**

1. Justin Lau Gek Liong
1. Michelle Lim Wan Chen
2. Nur Ashiqah binti Mhd Ariff
3. Lim Jing Xian
4. Kristie Chew Pei Yen

### **Batch 92 & 54: 14 June 2017 to 25 September 2017**

1. Raspreet Kaur Sidhu
2. Kong Lee Ann
3. Ong Zhi Ling
4. Debra Allison Beaty
5. Mohd Sabri Muhamaad

### **Batch 93 & 55: 18 September 2017 to December**

1. Lau Yi Leong
2. Nurul Aishah Amira binti Mohd Rosli
3. Low Jia Wey Eugene
4. Sarah Low Wan Qi
5. Hui Chun San

### **Batch 94 & 56: 13 December 2017 to March 2018**

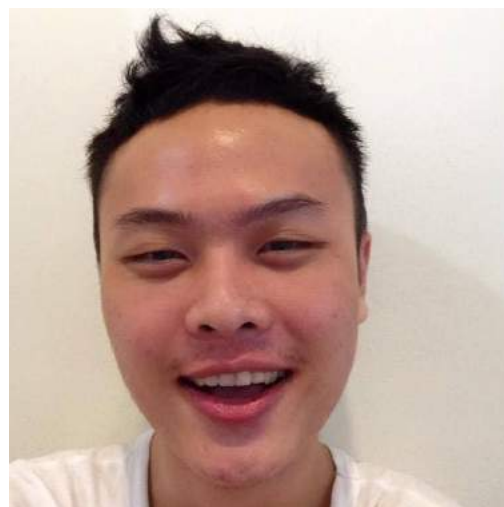
1. Siew Shyh Shen
2. Nadhratun Naiem binti Zainan
3. Wan Ahmad Izzat bin Wan Kamil
4. Nur Afza Qistina Mohd. Fazil
5. Lee Heng Siang

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## Reflections from our Interns

### **Cora Low (19 December 2016 – 9 February 2017)**

"During my short two months working here at AWAM, I got a chance to experience the works behind the scene at a women's rights organization, and it was truly eye-opening. Who knew that so much work, effort, thought and planning went into every successful events and programs. I had the opportunity to work on a PER research project, help out and participate in the FemCamp, send out thank you letters for the White Ribbon Campaign, sit in on meetings and discussions, and attend various events. Every day was a battle uphill where we have to fight against the rigid social norms and expectation in a patriarchal society, but every victory gave us renewed hope that what we fight for is improving the lives of women everywhere. All these women's rights fighters really deserves endless admiration and applause for the work they do, as they forge ahead without any promise of rewarding results and despite risking being shunned by the society for challenging the status quo. The one thing I kept hearing in AWAM is how hard the work is. Despite that, I never saw any sign of people giving up. What we often see on the surface are the glamorous campaigns and events, but this experience has introduced me to the other side of NGO work – the laborious, busy, fast paced, somewhat chaotic and stressful behind the scene work that is the backbone of every successful event. It made me realized that not every hero/ine wears a cape, some of them wear t-shirt and jeans."



### **Liow Jun Wei ( 3 January 2017 – 31 March 2017)**

"It has finally come to the end of my term in AWAM. Thanks to the trust from Wei San and Yong Yi, I was blessed enough to be allowed to work in the Services department and to assist in providing emotional support to the Chinese speaking clients. The most memorable moment I had was when a client shared how touched she felt to have us journeying her through the abusive relationship when no one else was. I was moved. It reminded me of the days when we were joking in class about us being psychologist will never get rich. But deep down, we know there is something more fulfilling than what material possession could offer. To be trusted by clients to listen at their stories, to empower them, and one day, to have someone turn around and says, "because of you, I didn't give up." That is the most rewarding moment I can ever ask for. Lastly, I would like to remind those who are working in the field of social justice to not hate, but to love. Because everyone of us; regardless of the victim or the perpetrator, we long for love and belonging. The only difference is some of us cope more effectively, while some cope less effectively. Only when we are ready to see love through our eyes would we see the room for growth in everyone. Quoting Martin Luther King, "Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that."

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**Chang Yi Ning (10 February 2017 – 31 May 2017)**

"One year on, I'm still looking back to those four warm, supportive months I spent at AWAM and drawing on them for new learnings that I didn't quite process at the time. Among these, the one that has stuck with me the most has to do with the word 'mindfulness': As activists, how do we hold in our head all the thoughts we have about building a better world? How do we, as feminists, as women, as organisations hold our conversations; how do we hold ourselves? The ways in which we construct a space matters, whether it's about framing workshop questions as a facilitator, setting up a meeting room as an intern, or 'just' being present when the person next to you is talking. For me, this was AWAM – a thinking place, consciously constructed by women who ask questions and believe in growing the nation through growing its people. That's why workshops were my favourite part of my experience. I learned so much from rapporteuring for the workshops, both in terms of issues to do with gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, and politics, and in terms of how to get a group of strangers to think together and learn from one another. I had come to AWAM believing that change can and does take place from the ground up, but I came away with a better idea of how to make it happen. As a young feminist, I'm full of energy and hope. Many of the older women I've met are always trying to renew their energy and their hope, and I respect that as much as I am inspired by it. I'm thankful for AWAM for giving me those four months to think and grow and do, and most of all for being a group of strong, hopeful women who will always ask questions."

**Emily Heimsoth (15 May 2017 – 21 July 2017)**

"I came to Malaysia having spent the previous months studying global gender policy and working at an NGO, reading and writing about what's happening "on the ground" with feminist civil society organizations around the world. My internship at AWAM provided new insights and perspectives that I simply could not have gotten back home in the United States.

The staff was always gracious in answering my barrage of questions about the Malaysian feminist movement, politics, and local culture. I appreciated their willingness to send me to lectures and workshops outside of the office, as these events were highly educational. And of course, I am eternally grateful for their assistance in gastronomic exploration-- every pound I gained was totally worth it.

I feel very fortunate to have spent 10 weeks contributing to such a great organization. My time at AWAM was a truly invaluable experience, and I'm excited to apply what I've learned here to my graduate classes and job back in Washington D.C."

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**Hajira Kamran ( 19 June 2017 – 30 August 2017)**

"The only consistency in my life goals is that I want to be able to help people. Living abroad my whole life meant I had the privilege to view many cultures through rose-tinted glasses, as well as my own in Pakistan; this also meant that I had to see the inequalities other women faced in a country they didn't have the option to just leave. With the determination to try and fight for the rights of those who couldn't themselves, I knew I wanted to spend my summer doing it in a way I could make the most genuine impact I could — and that's how I found AWAM.

The atmosphere at AWAM is better than I could have ever imagined. The office is diverse, friendly, open, and funny, whilst still being hard-working, determined, and filled with intelligent women and men who are not afraid to talk about the real issues. The conversations I have had, when turning away from research, or reports, taught me the most. I was able to so seamlessly find connections between the discussions carried out with my colleagues, the work I was doing independently for AWAM, and what is on news today. I learnt how to be more of a diligent and resourceful worker, especially when policies or authority may not be on your side (a sad fact of women's rights), and I learnt how to find even more joy in the work I did at AWAM, and work I hope to continue doing to advocate for equality in the future.

Though working at a non-profit can be, often times, an overworked atmosphere, the people at AWAM give the experience so much more hope. It is inspiring to see people, both those in the office and those I have met in gatherings, so determined to make a change, and being part of something so much bigger. Whilst grassroots level work requires a lot of effort to impact society as a whole, I genuinely feel like AWAM does an amazing job at impacting individual's lives — including mine. I'd like to thank everyone I got to work with for allowing me to become so much more sure on what I want to do when I'm older, but also who I want to be; a person with integrity, passion, and respect (only some of AWAM's core values, ha ha). p.s. if all of that didn't make AWAM worth it, the food does 100%, no regrets."





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**Idial Masri ( 20 June 2017 – 22 September 2017)**

"As I first applying for internship with AWAM, I doubt myself. After 3 months of my internship, I had the experiences I will never gain elsewhere. AWAM has changed my perspective in looking the world. In fact, I am proud to tell everyone that I am a feminist.

AWAM has given me the opportunities to develop myself to be a better person. Through the translation tasks, I am not only able to help sending the messages from AWAM to the society, but also reflecting myself in terms of what I belief and how I live my life.

Thanks to all AWAM staffs and members, for letting me to have such a memorable experience. These 3 months of great memories has made me realised that there are so much more to be done to achieve a just society where everyone is treated equally and are free from all forms of violence and discrimination. I will always support AWAM fight, be it directly or indirectly."

**Somila Khanna (20 June 2017 – 8 September 2017)**

"As an intern, in the services room, you learn more than you think. I feel as though that taking calls and speaking to clients, one-on-one, has brought me closer to not only the work that AWAM's services department does, but also to societal issues as a whole: Gender Based Violence, Taboo, Rape etc. I was given the opportunity to learn about Malaysian Laws and the restrictions they can put our clients through - in terms of fighting for justice or seeking aid. Working in the Services Room didn't only mean taking calls, updating calendars and spreadsheets, it also meant researching laws, procedures and updating others on the developments - which I thoroughly enjoyed.

I gained a lot of skills, the most prominent one being the ability to balance following procedure whilst expressing empathy. Being gentle and patient with our clients not only on a daily basis, but also in situations where we have had to let clients go because they have used all our resources and haven't been able to reach a state where they are content with AWAM's work.

I have also learned the skill of "leaving cases at work", by this I mean the ability to detach myself from cases, so that when I leave the Services Room, and AWAM at the end of the day, my mind isn't fixed on "what if's". I must conclude by saying that I really admire the work that AWAM does, and am very thankful for being given the chance to be a part of" it.



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**Liew Hui Qi (11 September 2017 – 30 November 2017 )**

"When I applied for AWAM's internship, I was confused and unsure of what my future plans are. While I want to do something which can contribute and give back to society, I was also looking for positions which can expose me to more mental health-related issues as preparation for my Masters studies. AWAM fit the temporary plan I had in mind and I really like the idea of being able to act on my own beliefs.

Over the past 9 weeks, I have gained valuable experiences which are unable to be replicated by going for classes alone. Even though there were quite some obstacles, and at times I would really like to have a long break from work, it was overall a very fulfilling experience and I'm really glad to have been here."

**Jasmine Gomez (1 Dec 2016 – 9 Feb 2017)**

"This internship gave me a glimpse of the realities of women in Malaysia and allowed me to truly understand the complexities behind the work that went into the debunking of patriarchal norms propagated at home and by the government.

At the start of my internship, I had set out several learning objectives and I have managed to achieve I had hoped to achieve during my time at AWAM. These included understanding the place of a women's non-governmental organisation (NGO) in a society that rejected any form of resistance from the patriarchy, exposing myself to a more contextualised feminism through the lived experiences and narratives of women in Malaysia, as well as understanding the impact of my contributions as an intern to AWAM and the women's movement as a whole. Through the tasks I've undertaken, the observations I've made and the interactions I had, I was able to achieve my objectives.

Overall, the internship was a positive learning experience and it reaffirmed my dreams of making activism my career. The ways in which I will go about my role as Women's Officer in Monash will indefinitely be shaped by the lessons learned throughout my internship. As a young woman who has seen and experienced the unjust ways women are being treated, I leave AWAM angrier, more empowered and even more ready to make a change."



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# PEOPLE OF AWAM

## Office Bearers [April 2016 – April 2018]

President: *thency gunasekaran (resigned 31 October 2017)*

Deputy President: *Theresa Lim Chin Chin*

Hon. Secretary: *Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini*

Hon. Treasurer: *Wong Pui Yan*

Ordinary Council Members:

*Liza Lew May Lee (resigned on 4 August 2017)*

*Rabiatul Adawiyah Yusof*

*Subatra Jayaraj (joined 11 May 2017)*

## Staff

Senior Programme Manager: *Lee Wei San*

Finance & Admin Officer: *Camelia Sulaiman*

Programme Officers:

*Ain Nasiebah (resigned 20 January 2017)*

*Choong Yong Yi (resigned 15 June 2017)*

*Deepa Chandra*

*Evelynne Gomez (resigned 15 August 2017)*

*Louise Tan Min Yue (joined 2 June 2017)*

## Consultants:

Training Consultant: *Betty Yeoh Siew Peng (contract completed 30 June 2017)*

Book keeper: *Loke Siew Fung*

## Working Collective

*Evelynne Gomez (resigned 15 August 2017)*

*Lee Wei San*

*Louise Tan Min Yue (joined WC 9 November 2017)*

*Theresa Lim Chin Chin*

*Wong Pui Yan*

*Rabiatul Adawiyah Yusoff*

*Subatra Jayaraj (joined 11 May 2017)*

*tan beng hui (leave of absence as of July 2017)*

*thency gunasekaran (resigned 31 October 2017)*

*Yuhaniz Sazlin Mohd Aini*

Committee members, Interns, and Volunteers: Refer to relevant sections in the annual report.