

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

FOR THE AGM (YEAR ENDED 2011)

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AWARE Sub-Committee Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)	
Name	Sub-Committee on CEDAW
Leader	Braema Mathi
Members	Clementine Yap, Halijah Mohamad, Sarah Chalmers, Soh Kwan Mei, Raqvind Kaur, Azmeen Moiz, Mathia Lee
Volunteer support	Chandreyi Chakravarty, Nor Hayati, Kellynn Wee, Amritta Datta, Caris Lim, Dahliah Shamsuddin, Geraldine Ang, Joo Hwey Kwek, Karen Goh, Ketki Madane, Khushboo Shahdadhuri, Ng Pei Shan, Penelope Shone, Stephanie Loh, Sunita Menon, Taryn Mook, Lee Yen Yen, Yvonne Edwin, Sabrina Lee, Cheryl Kwok, Patricia Siek, Megha Singh, Eva Verbeek, Tan Yan An
Intern support	Otilda Colon, Silpa Ilan
Staff support	Nadzirah Samsudin
Main activities in 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on CEDAW Shadow Report – first quarter • Consultation with partners – 5 April • Submission of the AWARE CEDAW Shadow Report 2011 to the UN CEDAW Committee in May • A four-member team participated in the 49th Session of CEDAW at the United Nations, New York (14 – 24 July): Braema Mathi (Chair of AWARE’s CEDAW Sub-Committee), Halijah Mohamad (CEDAW Sub-Committee Member), Dana Lam (Board member) and Nadzirah Samsudin (Research & Advocacy Executive). • Organised training programme on CEDAW 101 on 16 August • Organised a CEDAW Forum on 10 September • A Muslim interest group was set up to address reservations on Articles 2 and Article 16. This has evolved into a partnership between LeftWrite Centre and AWARE, led by Halijah Mohd, Suriani Suratman, Braema Mathi of AWARE and Mohamed Imran bin Mohamed Taib of LeftWrite Centre. • Organised a closed-door consultation with Members of Parliament on 24 October to discuss key issues in relation to CEDAW and the Concluding Observations • Started work on a CEDAW booklet and micro-site • Conducted a workshop with volunteers to identify CEDAW priorities on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violence Against Women (General Recommendation 19) - Anti-Discrimination (Article 11) - Protection of foreign women in Singapore (Article 6, Article 11, GR 19)
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See attached page for details.
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training modules on CEDAW • Distribution of CEDAW booklet • Launch of the CEDAW micro-site • Starting work on <i>CEDAW Made Real</i> to explore women’s empowered lives through narratives and photographs • Organising a closed-door discussion on violence against women with Society Against Family Violence (SAFV) and the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)

Submitted by: Braema Mathi
Date submitted: 2 May 2012

AWARE CEDAW Sub-Committee: Summary of Events in 2011

No.	Date	Event	People
1	8 Feb	CEDAW – a closed-door sharing for members/partners	37
2	5 Apr	CEDAW Consultation	14
3	29 Apr	CEDAW: A Visual Project	3
4	24 Jun	CEDAW: Make it Real	14
5	8 Jul	CEDAW: Make it Real – 2 nd Discussion	6
6	24 Jul	AWARE team at the 49 th Session of CEDAW at the UN (New York)	4 ¹
7	16 Aug	CEDAW 101 Workshop	18
8	10 Sep	CEDAW Forum	33
9	18 Oct	Be part of AWARE CEDAW Committee	13
10	24 Oct	Closed-door consultation with Member of Parliament on CEDAW	6 ²
11	15 Nov	Follow-up to “Be part of AWARE CEDAW Committee”, organised by the CEDAW Sub-Committee and AWARE Training Institute	2
12	7 Dec	Braema Mathi and Halijah Mohamad were invited by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (<i>Majlis Ugama Islam Singapore – MUIS</i>) to speak on CEDAW at their Advanced Asatizah Executive Development Programme (AAEDP). Braema conducted the three-hour discussion.	20
13	20 Dec	Exploratory discussion with SAFV about organising a closed-door discussion on violence against women	4

Elaboration

Forums were held to garner feedback from AWARE members about our CEDAW Shadow Report. After changes were made to the Shadow report, consultation was held with partners. Then it was planning for the advocacy work in New York at the United Nations. After participating in the 49th Session of CEDAW at the United Nations in New York, public forums were held to increase awareness and to discuss priority areas following the Concluding Observations.

Two CEDAW events were held: a CEDAW 101 workshop and a Public CEDAW Forum. CEDAW 101 was a three-hour workshop led by Braema Mathi that fully explained CEDAW and how it can be used as a tool for advocacy. The Public CEDAW Forum shared AWARE’s experiences at the UN, and brainstormed on how to move forward with CEDAW. Sayoni, HOME and TWC2 were also invited to this event. At the Forum, participants formed groups to discuss four issues – public education, outreach, top 3 CEDAW issues, and coalition.

A meeting place was created in AWARE to discuss Muslim matters as a way to look at reservations on CEDAW articles. This has evolved into a partnership between LeftWrite Centre and AWARE. As many issues relating to marriage and divorce lay in the Women’s Charter, two lawyers were asked to review the Charter for possible amendments to align with CEDAW. Trafficking was copiously mentioned in the Concluding Observations and a Trafficking Sub-Committee has been formed.

Research on women in poverty led to various ongoing projects, e.g. a survey on women and the economy (partnering Ngee Ann Polytechnic and the commercial sector), and older women

¹ AWARE team at the UN: Chair of AWARE’s CEDAW Sub-Committee, CEDAW Sub-Comm Member, Board Member, and the Research and Advocacy Executive

² One was a Member of Parliament.

who are still working. The analysis of stereotypical portrayals of women has led to an ongoing review of advertising guidelines as well as discussions about media images.

As a follow-up to the Public CEDAW Forum, we made an open call to all AWARE members to be part of the CEDAW Sub-committee. Current participants of the Sub-Comm were also invited. At this meeting, participants were divided into three groups – ATI (focusing on training modules on CEDAW), lobbying efforts and the Internet. Thus far, we have only had follow-up meetings with the ATI group.

CEDAW: Make it Real focuses on the challenge of bringing CEDAW to the ground. Ideas such as the “Not OK” campaign on sexual assault did not take off. New volunteers are needed for a new proposed project “Visual Representations for CEDAW” – a collection of photos and videos of different women to represent different CEDAW articles.

Main thrust of CEDAW

At the Public CEDAW Forum, participants identified these three issues as embodying CEDAW’s main thrust:

- **Definition of equality and non-discrimination:** To be shared via CEDAW training
- **Temporary special measures:** To increase women’s political participation and to address discriminatory policies against foreign women
- **Violence against women (related to CEDAW GR 19):** Long-standing systemic issues, e.g. violence against foreign domestic workers, the need to criminalise domestic violence and marital rape, collection of statistics on domestic abuse, mandatory training for law enforcers, awareness-raising, improved access for women seeking help, protection or support.

Work on CEDAW in 2011

- **CEDAW Booklet**
With RazorShark Design providing pro bono assistance, the project was scheduled for completion by the end of 2011. The High Commission of Canada kindly agreed to sponsor the printing cost.
- **CEDAW Micro-site**
With LibComm Labs engaged for web design, a specialised AWARE CEDAW micro-site is being developed with its own symbol and an introductory video on CEDAW. Matchbox Productions is assisting with the production of two videos on two CEDAW issues.
- **Advocacy**
In October 2011, an invitation was sent out to all Members of Parliament (MP) to a closed-door consultation to discuss CEDAW and the Concluding Observations of the UN CEDAW Committee. Only MP Foo Mee Har attended. She is open to receiving questions and comments from AWARE. We also sent her Article 11 of CEDAW on Employment, as this is her area of interest. A separate consultation was also held with the Worker’s Party. This was led by Lee Sze Yong, an associate member of AWARE and member of MARUAH, who had previously met with members from the Worker’s Party about the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and CEDAW.

AWARE Sub-Committee Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)	
Name	Sub-Committee on Foreign Wives
Leader	Poonam Mirchandani
Members	Sarah Chalmers, Azmeen Moiz, Braema Mathi, Nhu Pham ³
Main activities in 2011	<p>Foreign wives, especially those married to men with lower incomes, face many difficulties concerning residency status, access to legal advice and representation, affordable health care, housing, etc. They have limited access to security and support systems in Singapore. Their lack of Permanent Residence puts them at risk of deportation should the marriage fail.</p> <p>This Sub-Committee has been working on a paper to identify the areas where changes are needed and to make recommendations in the formulation of laws, rules and regulations. The main focus of the recommendations is the need for foreign wives to have a clear path for gaining Permanent Residence and citizenship, access to legal advice and legal representation, as well as measures to ensure that they are properly integrated into Singapore society.</p> <p>The Sub-Committee is also making recommendations on the urgent need for governance of match-making agencies, which are currently under-regulated. This Sub-Committee's work addresses CEDAW Articles 1-5, 9 and 11 and came about as a result of the UN CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations in 2007.</p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised a discussion with other NGOs on the issue of foreign wives. Seventeen people attended, with eight from organisations such as Star Shelter, ACMI, New Hope, Beyond Social Services and three interns from Mark Goh's law firm. The other six were AWARE members. • Started the research work, including compilation of data, writing and editing of the report. The Research & Advocacy intern Otilda Colon also contributed to the paper.
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of paper to policy-makers • Identifying opportune moments for advocacy • Advocate for a review of the laws and policies that impact foreign wives, in the following ways : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To seek the assistance of Members of Parliament to have this issue tabled and debated in Parliament - To organise a press conference to present AWARE's findings and call for amendments to the relevant laws and social structures - To run a campaign to raise awareness

Submitted by: Poonam Mirchandani
Date submitted: 3 May 2012

³ Nhu Pham left the Sub-Committee in July 2011

AWARE Sub-Committee Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)	
Name	It's My Life (Food Is Not The Enemy) Sub-Committee
Leader	Kwan Jin Yao
Members	Clarence Lim
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a website on eating disorders and body image • Develop and conduct workshops on body image and eating disorders
Main activities in 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-structuring of campaign (re-naming of the group, as well as the addition of new members to the team) • Compilation of resources for collation and processing • Allocation of writing roles and responsibilities for the website • Review of the Beauty Redefined presentation • Brief list of plans and proposals for the group
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To be launched in 2012 ○ Completion of writing assignments, with drafts and revisions taken into consideration ○ Quotations for the website design • Sponsorship requests and submissions • Follow-up with the Beauty Redefined presentation on body image and media • Brainstorming for other activities and relevant initiatives

Submitted by: Kwan Jin Yao
Date submitted: 18 April 2012

AWARE Sub-Committee Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)	
Name	Sub-Committee on Singles
Leader	Chew I-Jin & Ailin Mao
Members	Research Assistants: Raudah Abdul Rashid, Tessa Lim
Main activities in 2011	<p>This Sub-Committee conducts research on “Singles in Singapore – Choice for Space”. Singles constitute a growing proportion of Singapore’s population who are nevertheless ignored and discriminated against because they do not follow the imposed norm of marriage-based families. We aim to uncover what it is like to be single in Singapore and the impact of bias in policies and social attitudes on the lives and choices of singles at various stages. This Sub-Committee’s work addresses CEDAW Articles 1-3, 5 and 13.</p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring and training two Research Assistants: The training was conducted by Ramdas Kamalini and Braema Mathi, with the latter conducting another session on interviewing skills. • Qualitative interviews, together with interview transcripts and narratives, were conducted and completed in April 2012.
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sub-Committee is currently conducting a literature review, drafting findings and clarifying focal areas for advocacy to be effected by the end of 2012. • An advocacy plan will be developed, based on the completed paper, which will include raising public awareness and lobbying relevant Ministries.

Submitted by: Chew I-Jin
Date submitted: 2 May 2012

AWARE Sub-Committee Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)	
Name	Trafficking Sub-Committee
Leader	Braema Mathi
Members	Alice Clark, Azmeen Moiz, Silpa Ilan, Shamila Nathan, Devi Sharada, Raqvind Kaur, Singapore Management University (SMU) Pro Bono Law Club, Kathryn Baer ⁴ Preeti Bhagnani ⁵
Main activities in 2011	<p>Article 6 of CEDAW is dedicated to trafficking. More research must be done to move this agenda in Singapore. Work started in October 2011 to focus on the UN CEDAW Committee' Concluding Observations, which state that the State needs to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol). Although the government has recently announced a National Plan of Action to combat Trafficking in Persons and is moving towards ratifying the Palermo Protocol, there is an information gap and the lack of a comprehensive legal framework to combat trafficking and to provide protection for the victims.</p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Sub-Committee was formed in October 2011 and is working on analysing Singapore laws relevant to trafficking and the protection of vulnerable groups such as women, children, and migrant workers. • The Sub-Committee is also working with the SMU Pro Bono Law Club on reviewing relevant laws and statutes.
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission and completion of paper to policy-makers • Advocate for a review of laws and policies that impact trafficked victims

Submitted by: Braema Mathi
 Dates submitted: 2 May 2012

⁴ Kathryn Baer left the Sub-Committee in March 2012 to work with another NGO.

⁵ Preeti Bhagnani left the Sub-Committee in December 2011.

AWARE Sub-Committee Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)	
Name	Sub-committee on Workplace Sexual Harassment
Leader	Corinna Lim
Members	Charmaine Ng, Goh Li Sian, Anh Sumin, Halijah Mohamad, Subhadra Raj, Claire Chen, Moana Jagasia, Irina Lysenko, Jannelle Lau, Shivani Retnam, Leigh Pasqual, ⁶ Mitalee Kurdekar, Shalina Latiff, Tan Yan An ⁷
Main activities in 2011	<p>There is minimal and limited recourse for victims of workplace sexual harassment (WSH) in Singapore. This contravenes CEDAW Article 11. The UN CEDAW Committee has urged the State to address this issue. Previous research done by AWARE (2008) on this issue has been used in AWARE's CEDAW Shadow Report 2011 to ask for changes.</p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of WSH cases that were reported to AWARE, to track the experience that the complainants had with various authorities • Legal review of WSH laws in India, United Kingdom, Malaysia, South Korea, USA, Australia, Hong Kong and New Zealand • Raised the issue of WSH to Member of Parliament Indranee Rajah, who asked for more information • Drafted a new research paper focusing on the inadequacies of current laws and mechanisms
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the government's Cyber Bullying Act to be expanded into a Harassment Act, or for the Employment Act to include protection against sexual harassment • Seek the assistance of Members of Parliament to have the issue tabled and debated in Parliament

Submitted by: Corinna Lim
Date submitted: 2 May 2012

⁶ Leigh Pasqual formerly led an AWARE Sub-Committee on workplace sexual harassment, which closed in 2008. This Sub-Committee was revived in 2011.

⁷ Mitalee Kudekar left the Sub-Committee in July 2011, Shalina Latiff in August 2011. Tan Yan An was an AWARE intern who contributed to this project. Her internship ended in August 2011.

AWARE Sub-Committee Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)	
Name	WTF! Zine Sub-Committee
Leader	Gillian Seetoh
Members	Rachel Lim, Samuel Koh, Claire Chen, Natalie Tai, Daryl Yam, Kesavan Thanagopal, Janice Tham, Stella Rizalina Sasha, Luca Lum, Vanessa Tai, Grace Lin Advisors: Robin Rheaume and Corinna Lim
Objectives	<p>Young Singaporeans generally have a poor understanding of safe sex and are generally not practicing safe sex.</p> <p>The WTF! Zine is conceptualised as a catchy and hip one-off magazine, entitled “WTF!”⁸, that will accurately answer some of the burning questions that youths have about sex. It will also provide practical advice on issues that are usually not covered in sex education classes.</p> <p>The target audience of WTF! is aged 17 – 23. It will be written by youths from the same age group and will have a strong youths-for-youths element.</p> <p>The WTF! team currently consists of about 11 young men and women, all with a strong interest in sex education. This team is guided by AWARE’s sex education trainers and Executive Director.</p>
Main activities in 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey to gather responses on youths’ perception of sex education in Singapore and what they would like to see in this magazine • Writing articles for the magazine (3 drafts) • Editing of articles • Finalising mock-up articles to be presented to schools and sponsors
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce the magazine • Secure distribution in universities and other relevant venues

Submitted by: Gillian Seetoh
Date submitted: 16 April 2012

⁸ Officially, WTF! is an acronym for “With the Flow”, although youths may interpret it in another way.

IT Consultant's Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)	
Name	Robin Rheume (IT Consultant)
Main activities in 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and upgrade centre's hardware and software • Handle backend of AWARE website (i.e. programming, Wordpress upgrades and amendments, etc) • Launch new Helpline Scheduling System • Leverage use of technology, wherever possible • Assist staff with IT problems • Troubleshoot errors, including web-hosting issues
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See attached page for details.
Future plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computing needs are largely met for the next 12 months • We should look into moving the centre's internet service to fiber optic when this becomes available to Dover, as there have been ongoing problems with Internet service we have been unable to resolve. • Find back-up for IT consultant

Submitted by: Robin Rheume
Date submitted: 9 May 2012

IT Consultant's Report for the AGM (Year Ended 2011)

Centre IT:

- **Software:** Most machines now run open source software, with the exception of the Microsoft office packages. Software is regularly updated and we have no virus/malware issues.

Website:

- The web server has been relatively stable this year, a significant improvement compared to last year. There continue to be small outages, but these rarely last more than 10 minutes at a time or occur more than once a month.

Online Systems:

- The member database and events management system continue to work effectively. There have been no major upgrades to either system this year.
- The Helpline Scheduling system built by a volunteer (Robin) was launched in January 2011 to replace the old system.
- AWARE continues to rely heavily on online systems, including Delicious, Dropbox, Evernote, Flickr, Google Apps, Google Docs, Google Intranet, Google Mail, iContact, Survey Gizmo, Paypal, and Wordpress.