



MALAYSIA

THE BLUE TRIANGLE

Newsletter of the Young Women's Christian Association of Malaysia

(For circulation to members & friends only.)

October 2006

Volume 2 / 2

Quo Vadis? Changing Lives, Changing Communities

CONTENTS

- Why CEDAW matters
- Bringing CEDAW Home
- Women at the Top
- Signs of the Times
- Sustaining development through women
- Movers & Shakers
- Joy to the Y

'You have really changed lives as well as communities and proved that YWCA [of Malaysia] is an association to count on in sadness and joy', says Monica Zetsche and Musimbi Kanyoro, President and General Secretary of the World YWCA to the delegates of the 25th Biennial Delegates Conference (BDC) held 26-28 May, hosted by YWCA Kuala Lumpur.

The YWCA of Malaysia has changed lives and communities through reaching out to indigenous peoples (YWCA Air Keroh) and mentally challenged (YWCA Klang & Port Klang) and empowering single mothers (YWCA Melaka).

The YWCA of Malaysia is inspired by a 'spiritual power to do good and to keep faith in the future' says Datuk Paddy Bowie, keynote speaker. As a faith-based women's NGO, delegates learned good practices in project management presented by Mirella Soyer and Brian Lariche and



Women changing lives, changing communities

professionalism in building an empowering organisational culture, by Margaret Vendargon, YWCA Kuantan. The need to reach out to young professional women through identifying their needs was presented by Sharon A Bong of YWCA Petaling Jaya.

A highlight of the BDC was the Young Women's Parallel Programme where seven youths participated in the Feeding Programme to the Homeless in Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur and 'witnessed the miracles of God'.

Newly Elected

The following persons were elected at the 25th Biennial Delegates Conference:

National President **Mrs Josephine Chua**
 1st Vice President **Dr Sharon A Bong**
 2nd Vice President **Dr Margaret Vendargon**
 Hon. Treasurer **Ms Maryanne Ong**

Elected Committee Members **Mrs F R Bhupalan**
Mrs Sandra Simon
Mrs Sheila Ramayah
 World Council Delegates **Ms Eunice Leuk**
 (elected in 2004)
Ms Grace Lim
Miss Pek Ee Siew
Dr Marina David

GLOBAL WATCH

Why CEDAW Matters

Did you know that **CEDAW** stands for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women? It is a treaty on women's human rights that is accepted and signed (**ratified**) by nations all over the world. Today, the Convention is ratified by 184 nations, among them Malaysia, in 1995.

Every government (or **State Party** to the Convention) needs to submit a report on the status of women in its country to the **CEDAW Committee**. The Committee comprises representatives from different regions in the world that review State reports: an initial report a year after ratification of the Convention and every five years thereafter.

You may ask what a **Shadow Report** is? This is written by NGOs to complement the State or official report. When the Committee has heard both (sometimes contradictory) versions of the status of women in the country, it offers recommendations for improvement to better implement the principles of the Convention.

Source:
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw

The Malaysian NGO Shadow Report is also available at YWCA of Malaysia's national office.

"I've learned that people will forget what you've said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

- Maya Angelou,
American poet

LOCAL INSIDE STORY

Bringing CEDAW Home

Women's voices matter! In May, six women representatives from Malaysian NGOs made their way to the UN in New York with one mission – to influence the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Comments on the status of implementation of the Convention in Malaysia.

In an 8-minute oral presentation, the Malaysian NGO Shadow Report Group called for the removal of reservations by the Malaysian government in working towards fuller implementation of the

Convention. They also highlighted critical issues summed up as 'the diminishing rights of women in Malaysia'.

The 35th CEDAW Committee first heard from the Malaysian government on the status of women in Malaysia. The government delegation headed by Datuk Faizah Mohd Tahir, Secretary General of the Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development presented from a combined initial and second periodic report. Malaysia ratified the Convention in 1995.

LOCAL INSIDE STORY

Women at the Top

Are women ready for key positions? Do we take up choices and challenges or shy away from them? Participants of the Women's Summit heard from women who courageously took these on.

Making work places more women and family-friendly – increased maternity leave, flexi hours are challenges that face working women, particularly mothers, as

highlighted by the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development.

Other role models were Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM, who spoke on her role to promote women's empowerment and gender equality; Dato' Dr Ng Yen Yen, Deputy Minister of Finance who shared on her personal experience in balancing work with family and Diana Rose, an indigenous woman from Sarawak, who lived out her dreams that raised her communities' standard of living.

Women and family-friendly workplaces a reality someday



Signs of the Times

How do we as Christian women respond to Jesus' exhortation of knowing 'how to interpret this present time' (Luke 12: 54-56)? Women came together to pray, discern and act at the annual retreat of YWCA Petaling Jaya, led by Angeline Bones-Fernandez.

Bones-Fernandez showed how miracles performed by Jesus reflect his service to humankind, his participation in faith communities and reveal God's universal plan for us. She stressed that we in imitation of Christ, are thus called to change lives, promote service and God's reign on earth.

Participants shared their responses to troubling signs of the times such as natural

disasters and global wars, religious conflict due to exclusivism, terrorism and fundamentalism, degradation of the environment, human trafficking in women and children and migrant workers and their livelihood.

They pledged to make a change by going out to meet and know and build relationships, as Jesus taught us, 'Come and you will see' (John 1: 39). It is time to make a change, to take action by working for the poor and marginalised as is fitting with the YWCA motto, 'By Love Serve One Another'. We strive for self-improvement and a free and meaningful life for ourselves and the other.



Bones-Fernandez, to pray, to discern and to act

GLOBAL WATCH

Sustaining Development through Women

Poverty eradication seeks to balance the three goals of environmental protection, healthy economic growth and social equity. Why is the role of women critical?

Women and girls comprise:

- 70% of the world's estimated 1.3 billion people living in poverty
- two thirds of the one billion illiterate adults

- two thirds of the 130 million children who are not in school.

Yet they are also:

- the primary food producers, e.g. in sub-Saharan Africa women grow 80% of the food, yet earn only 10% of the income and own 1% of the assets.

Source: www.worldywca.org

Give us your stories!

Send them in by 15 December 2006

Movers & Shakers: how to become a woman with vision

CHANGE!

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| ♀ Think big | ♀ Adopt a positive outlook and attitude | ♀ Learn from setbacks |
| ♀ Recognise opportunities | ♀ Communicate with confidence | ♀ Jump outside your comfort zones |
| ♀ Network | | |



Carlassare, a woman with vision

Source:

Elizabeth Carlassare, author of *Dotcom Divas* shared her observation of 7 common traits that visionary women have in common at the Women's Summit held in August 2006.

ABOUT US

YWCA of Malaysia

33 Jalan Changgai
Section 6
46000 Petaling Jaya
Selangor D.E.

Phone/Fax: +6-03-79563959
E-mail: ywcamsia@streamyx.com
URL: www.ywcamalaysia.org

Motto: "By Love Serve One Another"
Changing Lives, Changing Communities



YWCA of Malaysia
is affiliated to World YWCA,
a network of 25 million women
in 122 countries.

The YWCA of Malaysia unites Local Associations as an active volunteer membership movement for women and girls.

Inspired by the Christian faith, the YWCA of Malaysia works with women and girls irrespective of race, religion, culture, language and socio-economic circumstances towards developing their self-worth and dignity, self-determination and leadership qualities.

Local Associations	
	<i>Founded in:</i>
Penang	1909
Kuala Lumpur	1913
Melaka	1921
Ipoh	1930
Negeri Sembilan	1950
Klang & Port Klang	1964
Petaling Jaya	1964
Air Keroh	1983
Kuantan	1987

Who knows?

When was World YWCA established?

When was the YWCA of Malaysia formed?



Joy leading the Y in changing lives and communities

FROM ME TO YOU

Joy to the 'Y'

My journey in the Y started in 1984 when I needed friends and the love, dedication and service rendered to the marginalized were experiences that changed my whole concept of life. I learned the meaning of 'Love and Serve' with a future where service to others is done with commitment and loving care.

My first term as President taught me leadership qualities made possible by the continuous mentoring of learned senior members. As I stumbled, they were there to nurture me.

Our vision continues to be one of service and care towards those in need. Let us help others to 'light a candle in their lives and do not curse the dark'.

Blessed Christmas and a rewarding 2007 to you.

Josephine Chua
President

Don't Forget!

YWCA Week Without Violence 15-21 October 2006

YWCA/YMCA Week of Prayer & World Fellowship 12-18 November 2006



1 December 2006
visit www.worldaidsday.org

World Human Rights Day 10 December 2006

