



**MALAYSIA**

# THE BLUE TRIANGLE

Newsletter of the Young Women's Christian Association of Malaysia

(For circulation to members & friends only.)

January 2007

Volume 1 / 4

## Praying together to change lives and communities

### CONTENTS

- Faith through justice
- More than fashion
- Women are finding solutions
- Stop AIDS: Keep the promise
- Movers & Shakers
- My hope for the 'Y'



*Ooi:  
testimony  
through  
songs*

Each year YMCAs and YWCAs around the world come together for the Week of Prayer. In Malaysia, the YMCA Kuala Lumpur in collaboration with YWCA Petaling Jaya and YWCA Kuala Lumpur commemorated the Week of Prayer on 18 November 2006 at the YMCA, Kuala Lumpur with meaningful worship services. There was a testimony on physical healing by YWCA Petaling Jaya, an emotional healing by YWCA Kuala Lumpur and a testimony through songs by Anne Lahra, Godfrey Ooi and Tay Keng Seng on being healed by God's love and grace.

We change lives and communities by 'giving ourselves to each other without restrictions, just as we are, caring for the practical and spiritual lives of those around us, and accepting their care for us', says Monica Zetzsche, President of World YWCA and Caesar Molebatsi, President of World Alliance of YMCAs in their joint message for the Week of Prayer 2006 with the theme of, "*Changing Lives: Changing Communities*" that highlights the plight of the marginalized and encourages members to work towards being truly inclusive communities.

According to Lizzie Ponnampalan, the organizing chairperson, there were community prayers and the participating groups were invited to pray for justice, mercy and the power to act for justice in the world, awareness of human's needs to reflect Jesus Christ in our lives. The YMCA Sing-a-long group also offered an item and the event ended with light refreshments. Participants left feeling the strong assurance that Jesus, the God of All Possibilities goes with them.



*In solidarity: towards inclusive communities through prayer.*

## Faith through Justice

'I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly' (John 10:10). How do we as members of the YWCA concretely respond to God's call to engender justice and mercy in our communities as women of faith?

To enable ourselves and our brothers and sisters to have life more abundantly, is in part, to be aware of not only civil and political rights (i.e. the right to vote) but also economic, social and cultural rights, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These rights include:

- Right to economic equality – women are 70% of the world's poor and own only one percent of the world's wealth
- Right to accessible, affordable and quality healthcare – gender-based violence affects women disproportionately and differently
- Right to education – women make up two thirds of all illiterate people
- Right to food – more girls and women are hungry and malnourished
- Right to housing – women are more vulnerable to housing poverty
- Right to water – women are primary collectors and managers of domestic water but inadequately recognized as decision makers
- Right to work – women's work is undervalued and they are vulnerable to sexual harassment
- Cultural rights and women's rights – cultural practices such as son preference discriminate girls and women

Info taken from Amnesty International at [www.amnestyusa.org/women](http://www.amnestyusa.org/women)

*"But let us understand poverty as the sum of all its hungers, the conscious and the unconscious ones of its victims. Our responsibility is all-encompassing, this and every year."*

*- Nadine Gordimer,  
(Nobel Laureate & novelist)*

## More than Fashion

It was a proud day for many at the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Vocational and Opportunity Training Centre. A first-ever Fashion Show was held by 15 trainees of the Sewing and Tailoring Course on 18 November 2006.

Said tutor Mrs Siva Mahesan of her seventh batch of trainees from the YWCA, "The standard was exceptionally high and the girls were very keen to show off their talents, I had to encourage them. They are tailors in their own right!"

Yummy refreshments were all made by trainees from the Culinary and Baking Course conducted by R. Usha. She said, "Vocational training gives the underprivileged young women a chance to be financially independent."

## LOCAL INSIDE STORY

Success stories abound, including one from Thanam, a street kid turned assistant sewing teacher and matron at the hostel.

The VTOC is open to young women from disadvantaged backgrounds. Other courses are the Computer, Secretarial & Basic Accounting and Kindergarten Teacher Training.



*Towards financial independence: bridal range by VTOC trainees*

## LOCAL INSIDE STORY

## Women are Finding Solutions

On World AIDS Day, 1 December 2006, 'Women are 2... Finding Solutions', a new documentary on women and AIDS, was officially launched at a reception at the YWCA Central Club in London.

The 52-minute documentary produced by World YWCA and Mondofragilis brings together women leaders from various backgrounds and walks of life such as South Africa's Vice President, Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, who is heading up the AIDS response in her country,

Mary Robinson, former Irish President, Kathleen Cravero (UNDP), Purnima Mane (UNAIDS) and Marina Mahathir, Malaysian AIDS Activist. World YWCA General Secretary, Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro asks them pertinent questions that push for innovative and urgent responses to the AIDS pandemic, and the women offer their solutions.

The documentary can be viewed online at: [http://www.mondofragilis.net/site/index.php/en/portfolios/video\\_portfolio/mfn\\_productions/women\\_are\\_2\\_finding\\_solutions](http://www.mondofragilis.net/site/index.php/en/portfolios/video_portfolio/mfn_productions/women_are_2_finding_solutions)

**Give us  
your stories  
and  
pictures!**

Send them  
in by 15  
March  
2007.

## GLOBAL WATCH

## Stop AIDS: Keep the promise

World AIDS Day was observed on 1 December 2006 with the slogan, "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise". The World AIDS Campaign and its partners called on all governmental leaders:

- To be accountable for the promises they have made
- To set the targets necessary to reach universal access to care, treatment and support and
- To make all the necessary resources available in order to overcome the AIDS pandemic.

Calls for accountability have consistently risen in civil society campaigning in 2006 through the:

- United Nations review of the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS
- Political Declaration accepted by the UN General Assembly on 2 June 2006 (see [www.ungasshiv.org](http://www.ungasshiv.org)), and
- Commitments first made by the G8 leaders in 2005 to universal access to treatment by 2010.

Info taken from: [http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/index.php/en/wac/keep\\_the\\_promise/world\\_aids\\_day\\_2006](http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/index.php/en/wac/keep_the_promise/world_aids_day_2006)

## Movers & Shakers: How to say no to HIV/AIDS discrimination

## CHANGE!

♀ **Listen to persons living with HIV/ AIDS (PLWAs) who have dealt with stigma:** to learn from their first hand experiences regarding how stigma has changed their lives.

♀ **Find out more about HIV/ AIDS:** to be able to correct people's myths and misconceptions and our own which are the root cause of stigma.

♀ **Support PLWAs:** to create a society in which people are not afraid to get tested and feel that they can be supported and loved irrespective of their HIV status.

♀ **Watch your language:** to avoid perpetuating stigma by not using terms such as 'victims', 'AIDS sufferers', 'AIDS patients'.

♀ **React to stigmatizing material in the media:** to inform and educate the media so that they do not continue to make the same mistakes.

♀ **Be aware of Self-Stigma:** to avoid acting and treating yourself like a victim, if you are HIV positive by choosing to create the life you have always wanted.

Source from: *If I kept it to myself – young women intervene in a world with AIDS*, by the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS and World YWCA (2006)



*Humanistic  
response : not  
keeping it to  
ourselves*

## 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**



World YWCA

**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' Membership |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
|                                | As at<br>31 March 2006 |
| Penang                         | 200                    |
| Kuala Lumpur                   | 476                    |
| Melaka                         | 51                     |
| Ipoh                           | 92                     |
| Negeri Sembilan                | 128                    |
| Klang & Port Klang             | 89                     |
| Petaling Jaya                  | 149                    |
| Air Keroh                      | 62                     |
| Kuantan                        | 51                     |

### Who knows?

Which was the first Local Association in Malaya?

Who was the first National President?

Sophia Cooke  
Singapore  
**Answers:**

### FROM ME TO YOU

## My hope for the 'Y'



*Leaving footprints: a life that continues to matter*

My biography, *Footprints on the Sands of Time. Rasammah Bhupalan: A Life of Purpose*, records how richly blessed I have been by our Lord God Almighty. It is my privilege that I have had so many opportunities to be part of NGOs that have brought about some urgent and critical changes in our country.

My longest service has been and continues to be in the YWCA. I take pride that my association as a young girl through my mother has enabled me to serve the YWCAs that have pioneered significant changes that empower women.

What is my hope for the YWCA? It is that in the many years ahead it will continue to offer itself for the unity of our nation. Our motto: 'By Love Serve One Another' demands committed action and the reinforcement of the strong bonds of love, understanding, concern, care and respect for all our multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural nation. There is an urgent need for us to work towards the inclusiveness of all persons at both national and international levels that will contribute to Malaysia's Vision 2020. Love overrides all problems and seeks to bring about greater happiness.

Mrs F R Bhupalan

### Don't Forget!

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Chinese New Year                           | 18 February 2007 |
| International Women's Day                  | 8 March 2007     |
| Earth Day                                  | 21 March 2007    |
| Easter Sunday                              | 8 April 2007     |
| World YWCA Day & Round-the World Breakfast | 24 April 2007    |
| Mothers' Day                               | 13 May 2007      |
| YWCA Concert: A Tribute to Mothers         | 26 May 2007      |
| World Environment Day                      | 5 June 2007      |
| Fathers' Day                               | 10 June 2007     |

Join a global movement of women leading change around the world



World YWCA Council,  
July 1-11, 2007

**Changing Lives,**  
**Changing Communities**