

# WCC & THE NEW NORMAL

Empowering Women & Children through Turbulent Times



On 18 March 2020, the Malaysian movement control order (MCO) was suddenly implemented and overnight, WCC staff were redeployed to work from home for nearly two months. Adjusting to the new normal, including restrictions on travel, face-to-face counselling and outreach activities as well as safety measures like social distancing, has forced WCC to do things differently. We are proud to share the journey of our past six months' work with you.



*Happy 35th Birthday*  
*WCC!*  
1 July 2020

WCC celebrates its 35th Anniversary this year.

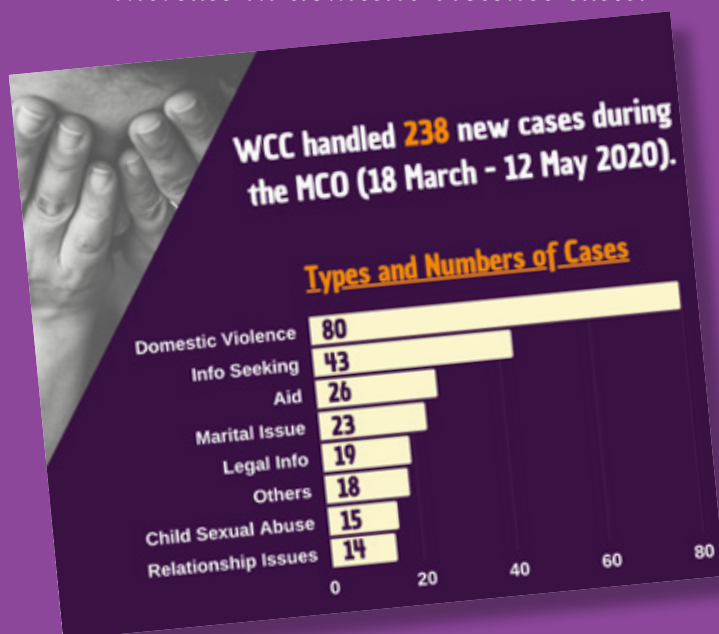
# Our Service During Covid-19

From 18 March 2020, WCC immediately responded to the MCO by extending our working hours and hotlines to women and children in crisis, from Monday to Saturday, 9.00 am to 9.00 pm. We anticipated more family crisis cases during MCO.

## During MCO



*During the MCO we saw an alarming increase in domestic violence cases.*



## Post-MCO

Post-MCO, we continue our counselling support with Covid-19 health and safety SOPs in place, encouraging clients to use our telephone and online counselling services.



# ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING MCO

Ayu\* was married and had three young children. Shortly after her marriage, she discovered that her husband had a bad drug addiction. Ayu's husband would hit and verbally abuse her. It got worse when he was in the midst of a drug binge. He would fly completely out of control. Ayu realised that her home was no longer a safe place for her and her children.

One night during the MCO, Ayu's husband beat her up badly. She decided to leave with the children. Ayu contacted her sister in the Klang Valley for help as she had no other relatives in Penang. Ayu searched online for assistance and contacted a women's organisation. She was urgently referred to WCC. Meanwhile her husband had gone out of the house. A WCC staff called her and guided her through what she needed to do.

*Due to the MCO, there was no public transportation. Ayu had no vehicle of her own. She only had RM20 with her as her husband had taken all her money. Through tears, she told WCC that she needed the cash to buy food for her children. Ayu and her children then walked in the scorching heat for almost two hours to the closest police station.*

After Ayu lodged a police report, she was taken to hospital for a medical check-up. The police kindly provided lunch for Ayu and her children. WCC's social worker also followed up closely with Ayu and the Investigating Officer (IO) over the phone. Ayu and her children were then given special permission to travel interstate to her sister's home. Ayu immediately contacted her sister, who made arrangements for Ayu's brother-in-law to drive to Penang to pick them. WCC's social worker gave Ayu the IO's handphone number in case she faced any difficulties with police roadblocks.

Hours later, Ayu's brother-in-law arrived. He picked Ayu and the children up at the police station, but encountered a roadblock shortly after on their way back to their home state. Luckily, they managed to resolve the issue and finally arrived at Ayu's sister's home at midnight. WCC's social worker followed up closely with Ayu by phone and WhatsApp throughout the entire harrowing ordeal.

Ayu expresses her deep gratitude to WCC and all other agencies who rendered urgent support to her.



\*Not their real names.



# Pre-MCO Activity Highlights

From January to March 2020 - pre-MCO, our staff and dedicated volunteers conducted the following talks and workshops.

## Enhancing Capacity of Service Providers



Educated 20 trainee doctors from Penang Medical College on gender-based violence, 24 February 2020.



Increased skills in handling victims of domestic violence for 40 One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC) nurses at Penang government hospitals, 18 February and 3 March 2020.

## Reaching Out to Youth



Trained 50 counselling teachers in Seberang Perai on conducting WCC's Cybersafety programme, 26 February 2020



Raised awareness for 300 youths on the importance of preventing gender violence at Vivekkam's Youth Empowerment Symposium, 22 February 2020

## Online Talks and Webinars

WCC has adapted to the new normal by reaching out to different target groups on a range of issues like child sexual abuse and domestic violence through online talks in Bahasa Malaysia, English, Chinese and Tamil.

# MCO Activity Highlights



WCC's Tamil language webinar series on Online Violence Against Women was especially popular. Through this series, we have successfully reached out to over 30,000 viewers on social media, followed by a Bernama TV interview on the issue featuring our Service Manager Mangleswary Subramaniam.



## Online Posters

During the MCO period, the WCC communications team created over 60 online posters to raise awareness on various issues in English, Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese. Working closely with the service team, messages for the posters were also developed to help children, parents and families cope better with stress during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Our online poster addressing victim blaming, which depicts the causes of rape, reached a record 78,000 views on Twitter and 30,000 views on Facebook by June 2020.

# Intern To Create Change

Despite the disruption to my internship due to the MCO, I am grateful that I was able to assist at the WCC Value Shop @ Bayan Baru, and participate in a domestic violence talk and gender equality workshop prior to the MCO. As a public relations (PR) student, it was illuminating to discover the important role PR plays in creating awareness about gender-based violence for the public. I was delighted when I was able to put my skills to good use when I was tasked with managing a project to design flyers promoting the Bayan Baru shop. Working alongside WCC staff and volunteers, I gained important insights on implementing publicity strategies for NGOs, better equipping me for my future in the PR industry. I would like to thank everyone at WCC for making this internship so memorable.

*Lim Sim, Diploma in Public Relations, Tunku Abdul Rahman University College, Penang.*

During my internship, I helped to film and edit a video series featuring consultant pediatrician and child rights activist, Dr. Amar-Singh HSS, speaking about child sexual abuse (CSA). It was informative listening to a professional imparting advice on how to prevent CSA. Another notable project was filming and editing short videos on a student workshop about gender equality with young participants from a local college. All in, I edited ten videos for WCC which I hope will contribute meaningfully to public awareness on CSA and gender equality. Unfortunately, I had to cut short my internship in Penang and return to France due to Covid-19. I was still able to work remotely with WCC, and helped to create ten e-posters on sexual assault awareness to post on WCC's social media channels. Social media plays a very important role in raising awareness and support during the lockdown period. Interning with WCC has helped me to understand the realities of the struggles faced by women and child victims of violence. Led and made up of inspiring, motivated, and committed women, WCC showed me the importance of defending women everywhere.

*Morgane Gonord, Bachelor of Political Sciences, Institute of Political Sciences of Toulouse, France.*

When I first started at WCC, I had mixed feelings. As a social work undergraduate with zero practical experience, I felt so honoured when WCC accepted me. The WCC social workers are incredibly passionate about their work. They advocate for their clients and handle cases professionally and ethically. I accompanied them to court twice and to Penang General Hospital to support their clients. I also received wonderful exposure working with the communications team to create social media posters, and helping the outreach team run OK Tak OK and Cybersafety training programmes. When I attended WCC's gender equality talk for Penang Medical College, I learnt that no matter what happens, there is never any excuse for abuse or violence against women. I found it so hard to say goodbye to this place that has given me so much. Thank you, WCC. Keep on inspiring and helping others.

*Norsalmaya Binti Mohd Noor, Bachelor of Social Work, Universiti Sains Malaysia.*





# WCC IN THE MEDIA

WCC was featured in the media on the issue of domestic violence, the impact of MCO on such violence, as well as other issues like sexual harassment. In particular, WCC pushed for the recognition of domestic violence support as an essential service during the MCO.



Guang Ming Daily (17/4/20)



New Straits Times (4/4/20)



# STAYING HOME, I WON'T BE SAFE

Stay home, stay safe, they say,  
But when I stay home, I am not safe,  
I may be safe from you, coronavirus,  
the unseen enemy,  
But not from the enemy I know,  
called my husband.

Before you came and made the world  
cower in fear,  
My life was already in shambles,  
Dealing with his violence, day in and out,  
Even so, there was some respite,  
When the children went to school,  
and I went to work,  
And when he was out of the house,  
for one reason or another,  
We were able to forget our miseries  
at least for those few hours.

But now there is no escape,  
No running away from his unstoppable rage,  
The MCO is on, we have to be home all the time,  
So too, he, with no work and no money,  
And more reasons to vent his anger at us.

There is no escape from his hands and legs,  
Which know not 'social distancing',  
As they swing freely at me, and,  
occasionally, at the children,  
Not to shield us from you,  
the unseen enemy, but to inflict pain.

In desperation,  
I have tried everything possible to appease him,  
Including, foolishly,  
my best imitation of Doraemon's voice,  
Which only earned me two tight slaps,  
I know now it is neither what I do,  
Nor any shortcoming on my part,  
that triggers his violence,  
It is just his sheer need to reassert his power  
over me.

So, go away Covid-19, go away quickly,  
My body is weary and needs time to recover,  
Before the next round of blows land on it,  
My children, too,  
need their solace in school and friends,  
They are tired of constantly retreating  
to a corner,  
Watching their mother beaten blue-black,  
Wondering with fear in their hearts  
if they will be next.

*Lalitha Menon*

Online Edition  
**newslink**  
CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

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The Women's Centre for Change, Penang is a non-profit, tax exempt organisation, dedicated to the elimination of violence against women and children. WCC welcomes donations in support of our work.

Cheque made payable to: Women's Centre for Change

CIMB Bank: 8601023057

Tax exempt receipt will be issued for donation of RM50 and above.