

NUR ALERT FOR ALL MISSING CHILDREN, 12 JAN 2011

The Women's Centre for Change, Penang (WCC) welcomes the efforts taken by various parties to ensure the implementation of an early alert system for missing children, NUR(National Urgent Response) Alert. While valuing this effort, WCC is concerned that the intended NUR Alert would only be focusing on missing children aged 12 and below. We are unclear as to how this decision was arrived at.

Based on 2008 police statistics, 86% (6 out of 7) of missing children below 12 years of age were found, whereas only 56% (655 out of 1174) of missing children below 18 years were found. Similarly the numbers in 2009 showed a recovery rate of 90% (45 out of 50) for missing children below 12 years but only 47% (497 out of 1048) of missing children below 18 years were found.

The statistics indicate three things i) the number of older children (between 12-18 years) who go missing is much higher than younger children (less than 12 years) ii) the recovery rate for older children is much less than for younger children iii) on average, about half of the older missing children i.e., the teenagers, remain missing.

It is extremely worrying to know that in Malaysia, several hundred children remain missing yearly. For the parents and family of a missing child, the situation is extremely distressing. Their lives change at that instant of knowing their child is missing. One can only imagine the pain and anguish of the families who never recover their missing child. It does not matter whether the child is below 12 or not. Such a loss can never be rectified.

While WCC understands the difficulty and effort it takes to find missing children, especially the older ones, we call upon the authorities involved in the planning and implementation of NUR Alert to consider that a wider service be made applicable to all missing children, and not just to those below the age of 12 years.

Keeping our children safe is a commitment which requires community effort and cooperation. Finding our children when they go missing, irrespective of their age or circumstance, is equally important.

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