

2020 ANNUAL REVIEW





VISION

WCC envisions an inclusive society free from gender violence and discrimination, and where women can actualise their full potential.

MISSION

WCC is committed to:

- Eliminating violence against women and children
- Empowering women and children
- Promoting gender equality and social justice.

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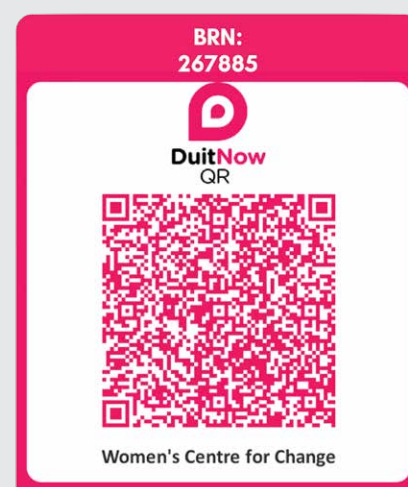
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DONATION

WCC is a non-profit, tax-exempt organisation and is totally dependent on donations and sponsorship in support of our work.

Name: Pusat Kesedaran Wanita

CIMB 8601023057



**Any donation of RM50 and above will be issued a tax exempt receipt.*

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PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

By Susan Siew

“In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity”

~ Albert Einstein

In 2020, the Covid-19 global pandemic wrought havoc on the Malaysian economy and the lives of ordinary people. With the movement control order (MCO) imposed many families suffered immeasurably due to the economic setbacks, including loss of livelihoods, leading to a rise in family crises as the pandemic continued. This unprecedented situation led to WCC having to cancel our plans to celebrate our 35th anniversary fundraising dinner.



2 0 2 0 H I G H L I G H T S

Responding to Covid-19 Pandemic

Every crisis or challenge presents us with an opportunity for change. WCC certainly rose to the occasion!

The WCC service team immediately responded by extending our service hotlines from Mondays to Saturdays, 9am to 9pm, while working from home. During the MCO period of 18 March to 12 May alone, WCC handled 238 new cases of domestic violence. Through the media, we called for improved protections for victims of domestic violence during this vulnerable period.

The Penang state government, under its new social development portfolio, responded to the spike in domestic violence during the pandemic by launching its Safe Family Policy in July 2020. The aim was to build a network of first support points (FSPs) to support domestic violence

victims on the ground. WCC was selected as a strategic partner and conducted three training workshops for 125 FSPs to equip them with knowledge and skills in supporting these victims. WCC also produced a *Safer Families* handbook in four languages (English, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil) to serve as a guide for FSPs.

WCC adapted to the “new normal” by innovating our work into the virtual world. Leveraging on the power of social media, WCC developed and reinvented our activities and programmes online. These shifts have enabled us to transcend geographical boundaries beyond Penang, where our physical activities are usually held. Using social media platforms, we were able to reach out to a huge number of people nationwide and build new networks and partners, beyond our expectations.



New Online Resources: Books & Posters

One of our greatest achievements was the production of two children's online storybooks, *Lisa and Her Secret* and *Yusri and His Secret*, on sexual abuse awareness. Produced in four languages, English, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, and Tamil, this new venture of online publications and promoting them via WCC's social media and website proved to be an astounding success. *Lisa and Her Secret* garnered an amazing reach of 1.8 million users on Facebook and Twitter, with over 12,000 shares on Twitter! *Yusri and His Secret*, launched in December 2020, rapidly achieved a reach of nearly 300,000 users on social media within one month. This clearly indicated the need of parents and educators for user-friendly children's educational materials.

WCC also went on to produce over 100 e-posters in four languages (English, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil) to raise awareness on gender-based violence. These creative and relatable posters garnered an amazing reach of 80,000 people on Facebook and 40,000 people on Twitter resulting in a threefold increase to over 12,000 in our Facebook followers.

Ongoing Core Work



Service: With the pandemic crisis, demand for our services was relentless. WCC handled nearly 1,200 new calls, an increase of 60% in hotline calls with one third coming from other states. Our social workers from both offices handled a total of nearly 500 new face-to-face counselling clients, a 12% drop compared to 2019 as both offices were closed for two months due to the MCO. Social workers readapted and provided video counselling due to travel restrictions. Domestic and sexual violence cases remain the bulk of our work, comprising 52% of the total number of cases.



Outreach: WCC's outreach work successfully migrated online with a total of 28 webinars held on a range of issues affecting women and children, including topics such as rising online violence against women and the role of men in addressing domestic violence. We reached an incredible total of 70,000 people nationwide and 32,000 views in multiple languages.



Advocacy: The advocacy team was kept busy handling 72 cases of sexual and domestic violence. WCC was given special permission by the Penang Court Director to accompany victims in court during the recovery MCO period. A short video entitled *The Shower* was produced highlighting the issue of victim blaming in sexual assault, which successfully reached 55,000 people. WCC is in the midst of producing a research report, *Standing with Sexual Crime Victims: WCC Support Services* which documents our victim support services in the last 10 years.



WCC Value Shop: Surviving the Pandemic

Both WCC Value Shops (VS) managed to operate and brought in net proceeds for WCC despite Covid-19 challenges and uncertainties. Although both VS @ Tanjung Tokong and VS @ Bayan Baru were closed for four and eight months respectively due to MCO and CMCO restrictions, we managed to achieve this due to several critical success factors including our dedicated supervisors and volunteers, loyal customers, and a constant, generous supply of pre-loved donations to the point where we ran out of proper storage space! We plan to include the implementation of an e-wallet payment system in 2021.



Gratitude and Appreciation

We are immensely grateful to our funders, sponsors, donors, and patrons, both corporations and individuals, who have given so generously and enabled us to carry out our work. WCC is fully aware of how blessed we are to have received such overwhelming support in this challenging time. In particular, we record our deepest appreciation to the following:

- Penang state government, under the executive council for social development for the continuous support of our WCC Seberang/Pusat Perkhidmatan Wanita (PPW) office in Penang mainland;
- Dell Technologies, under their Progress Made Real grant, for our work on women's economic empowerment and financial literacy, as well as our OK Tak OK and Cybersafety programmes;
- Hasanah Special Grant for supporting our counselling of domestic violence and child sexual abuse victims, and the production of our online resources and webinars; and
- Federal Foreign Office of Germany for funding our video, *The Shower*, and our research report, *Standing with Sexual Crime Victims: WCC Support Services*.

Last but certainly not least, we acknowledge the indispensable contributions of our dedicated members and volunteers, especially our General Committee and WCC Value Shop volunteers, as well as our Executive Director and staff, whose time, energy and talents have allowed us to resiliently weather the storm and reach where we are today.

Thank you all, from the bottom of our hearts. Let's hope for a safe and meaningful year in 2021!



Service Team: S. Mangleswary, Ooi Say Tee, Lau Swee Li, Yeap Yen Ying, Asmar Bakhari, Salma Farhanah A. Rasid, Nisham Kour & Yeoh Sim Ming

The year 2020 pushed boundaries for the WCC Service team. With the Covid-19 movement control order (MCO) from 18 March to 8 May 2020, both WCC Island and WCC Seberang/PPW offices were closed and all staff worked from home. WCC responded by setting up hotlines with extended working hours, and introduced video counselling as an alternative to face-to-face counselling.

Working together with the Outreach team, Service staff also became speakers for many WCC-organised webinars on various gender-based violence topics, greatly increasing our visibility on online platforms. This resulted in the Island office seeing an increase of 92% in hotline calls.

COUNSELLING SERVICE PROVISION

Domestic and sexual violence cases continued to form the bulk of the service work for both offices. However, in 2020, the Island office also saw the emergence of online or digital gender-based violence cases. For the Seberang/PPW office, the One Stop Crisis Centres (OSSCs) of the three major hospitals in Seberang Perai continued to be the main source of referrals of domestic violence and sexual assault clients, leading to an increased number of Indian and Malay clients.

Face-to-Face Counselling

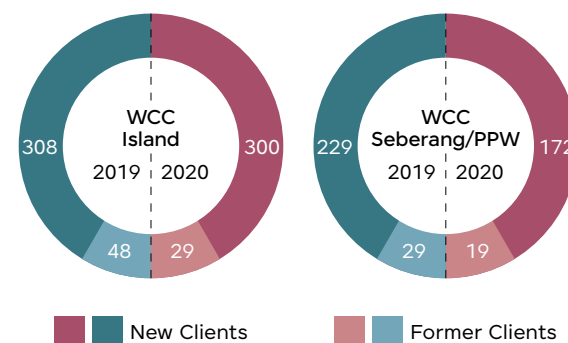


Figure 1: Number of Face-to-Face Clients

In 2020, both offices handled a total of 520 face-to-face counselling clients, out of which 472 were new clients. This was a 12% drop given that both offices were closed for two months due to the MCO. In June, we started to provide video counselling via Zoom and WhatsApp to support clients with transport issues and from other states. A total of 67 video counselling sessions were conducted in 2020, forming 14% of the total new cases handled.

Overall, the Island office saw a slight drop (3%) in the number of new face-to-face clients whereas the Seberang/PPW office saw a significant drop of 25%. A major contributing factor was that due to the pandemic, the Seberang office social workers were unable to visit clients in the OSSC at the hospitals.

Types of Cases Handled

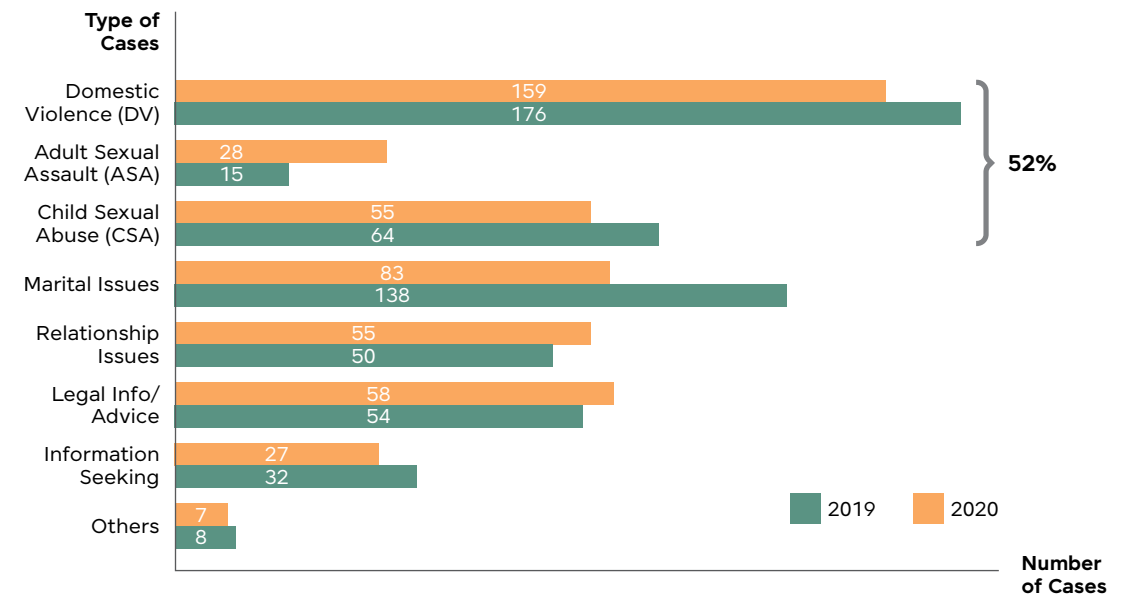


Figure 2: Types of Cases Handled by WCC

Based on Figure 2, domestic violence and sexual assault formed 52% of the cases we handled in 2020, an increase of 4% from 2019. As before, most of the sexual assault cases were from OSSC referrals. Although child sexual abuse still accounted for the majority of these cases, the number of adult victims doubled in number compared to 2019. Around half of the adult sexual assault cases were of sexual harassment, and a significant number involved online or digital violence. There was a drop of 8% in the number of clients for marital issues, compared to 2019.



Clients' Demographics

Clients' Ethnicity

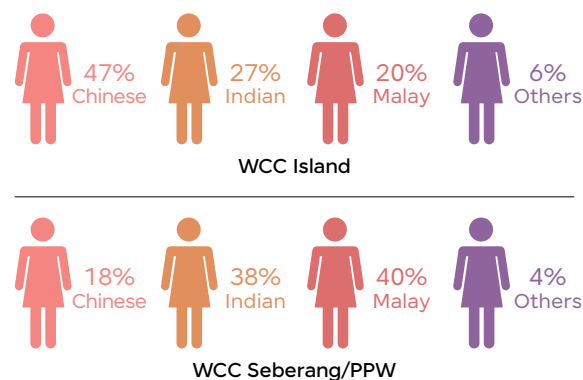


Figure 3: Clients' Ethnicity

Adult Clients' Education Level

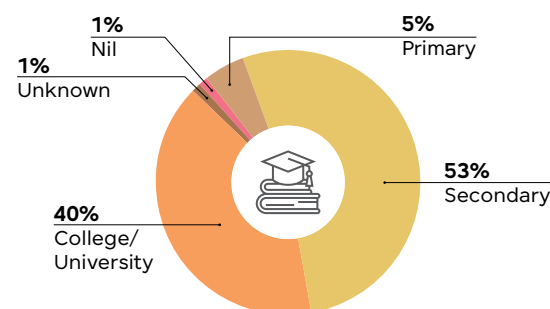


Figure 4: Adult Clients' Education Level

Adult Clients' Income Level

INCOME LEVEL	2019	2020
> RM3,000	25%	22%
RM2,001 - RM3,000	12%	16%
RM1,001 - RM2,000	24%	25%
< RM1,000	11%	8%
No income	28%	29%

Figure 5 : Adult Clients' Income Level

Overall, even though the Chinese clients remain the highest, there were increases in Indian and Malay clients. This is seen in the Seberang/PPW office where, compared to 2019, there was an increase of 11% for Indian and 7% for Malay clients, and a corresponding decrease in Chinese clients. This could be due to the turnover of Chinese-speaking social workers in the Seberang/PPW office for the past two years.

In 2020, 71 (15%) out of WCC's 472 new clients were children, and most of them were still schooling, with some in preschool. Of the remaining 401 adult clients, 58% were educated up to secondary school level, while 40% had received tertiary education in college or university.

As in previous years, WCC continues to serve clients from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Compared to 2019, in 2020, the figures remain relatively unchanged. Of WCC's 401 adult clients in 2020, nearly 30% had no income, and nearly 50% were earning RM3,000 and below. Only 22% earned over RM3,000. It is noted that there were over twice as many adult clients earning over RM3,000 in our island office compared to our mainland office, reflecting the income disparity within Penang state.

Telephone Counselling

In response to the MCO, WCC extended our counselling hotline hours to Monday to Saturday, from 9am to 9pm. We received a total of 2,053 phone calls, representing an overall increase of nearly 60% in new calls compared to 2019. New calls to our island office nearly doubled in number. The Seberang/PPW office also saw an increase of 22% in new calls, mainly to clients referred by OSCC. A third of our new calls to our island office were from different states. Significantly, over 40% of these new callers were of Indian ethnicity. The increase in calls from Indian callers outside Penang state was likely due to WCC's Tamil language webinars and networking with groups like Ringaringaroses and Thaimaiulagam.

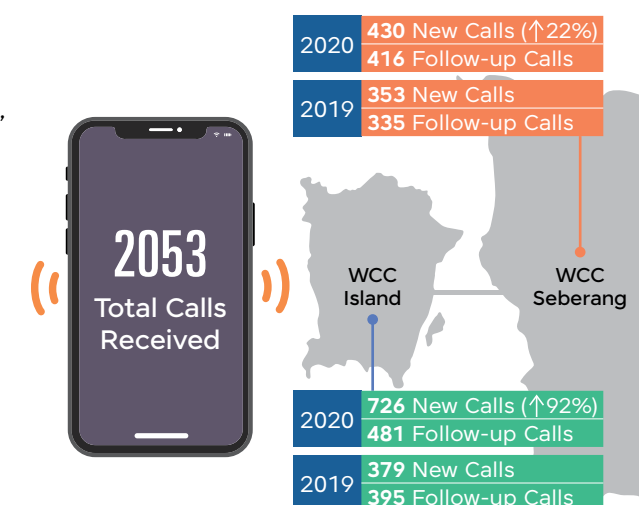


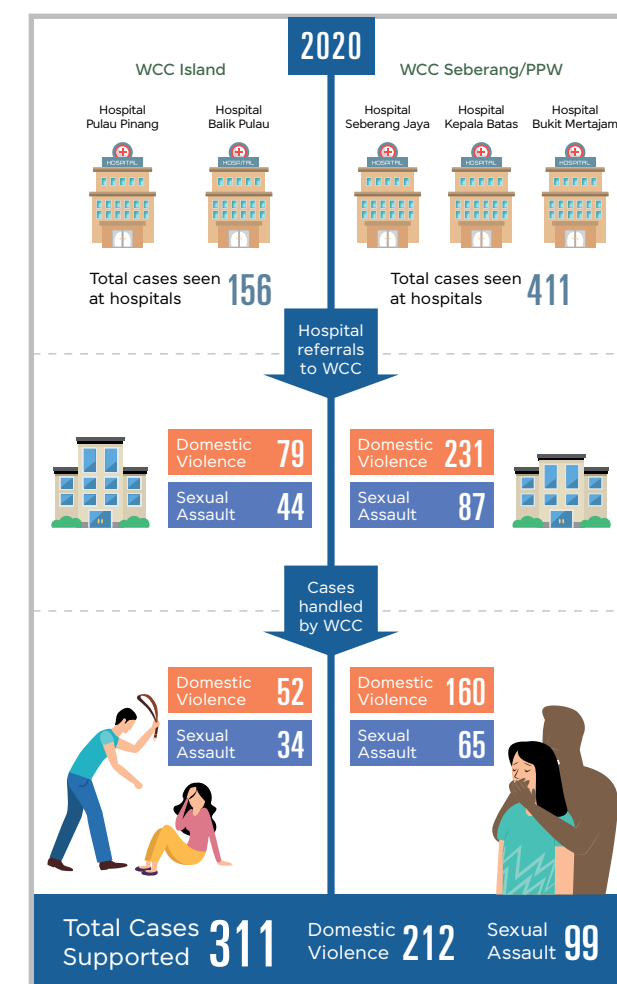
Figure 6: Telephone Counselling Numbers

HOSPITAL SUPPORT

To support victims of domestic and sexual violence, WCC has been working in partnership with five out of six One Stop Crisis Centres (OSCCs) at the Emergency Department of government hospitals in Penang state, namely Hospital Pulau Pinang (HPP), Hospital Balik Pulau (HBP), Hospital Seberang Jaya (HSJ), Hospital Kepala Batas (HKB) and Hospital Bukit Mertajam (HBM). The use of WhatsApp has facilitated communications between the hospitals and WCC. Video and telephone counseling served as alternatives, as social workers were not able to visit clients at the hospitals due to the pandemic.







Compared to 2019, in 2020, both WCC offices saw an increase in clients referred and handled from OSCC. The island office had an increase of 19%, and the mainland office an increase of 32%.

WCC continues to face challenges in terms of the reduced number of cases handled by us compared to the number seen at the hospitals and referrals from OSCC. The reasons behind this apparent dropout in numbers include glitches in communication at the hospital level when referring cases to us, the reluctance of adult sexual assault victims to seek counselling support from WCC, and also uncontactable clients from those who provide wrong telephone numbers.



SERVICE ADVOCACY

Service advocacy intervention for our domestic violence and sexual assault clients included providing legal information, contacting the police investigating officer for case updates, and accompanying clients in court for domestic and sexual violence cases. In 2020, WCC provided a range of 312 interventions in total. The majority of cases going for trial were of child sexual abuse where emotional support for adult family members such as parents and guardians was crucial.

	Legal info/advice	
	WCC Island	100
	WCC Seberang/PPW	62
	Total	162
	Follow-up with agencies	
	WCC Island	28
	WCC Seberang/PPW	73
	Total	101
	Accompany client for pre-trial briefing	
	WCC Island	1
	Total	1
	Accompany client in court	
	WCC Island	19
	WCC Seberang/PPW	23
	Total	42
	Attend court on behalf of client	
	WCC Seberang/PPW	2
	Total	2
	Others	
	WCC Island	3
	WCC Seberang/PPW	1
	Total	4

OTHER SERVICES



Email and Facebook Enquiries: Our increased visibility in social media has also led to a rise in the number of enquiries via Facebook Messenger (39 enquiries in 2020, compared to 21 enquiries in 2019). However, enquiries via e-mails have reduced.



Shelter: To overcome challenging Covid-19 restrictions on shelter clients, the WCC service team worked closely with the Social Welfare Department by referring clients directly to welfare officers during MCO, as well as temporarily accommodating them in budget hotels while awaiting their Covid-19 test results during the CMCO period. In 2020, WCC provided shelter to only three domestic violence clients and their eight children. Two of these clients left their abusive husbands and moved on with their lives, while another chose to return to her husband. WCC provided marital counselling to the couple as part of our follow-up interventions.



Play Therapy: In 2020, a child who was having suicidal thoughts after being abused was sent for play therapy to support their healing. The child went through six sessions of play therapy to help her recover from the trauma.

TRAINING & COMMUNITY TALKS

Safe Family Policy Training

In July 2020, the Penang state government launched its Safe Family Policy to tackle rising domestic violence during the pandemic. A key strategy under the policy is the setting up of First Support Points (comprising representatives from ADUN service centres, government agencies, NGOs and so on) to support victims on the ground. WCC became its strategic partner and was engaged to train these First Support Points to equip them with basic knowledge and skills in dealing with domestic violence victims.



Three training workshops (in Bahasa Malaysia) were conducted for 125 participants comprising representatives from both City Councils in Penang, all five District Offices in Penang, State Assembly (ADUN) and Member of Parliament service centres, Women and Family Development Committees (JPWKs), and various local NGOs.

The training was conducted using interactive and participatory methods which included lectures, role play, videos and group work. Topics covered were *Understanding Power Dynamics in the Family*, *Understanding Domestic Violence* and *How To Support Victims*. All the trainings were sponsored by the Penang state executive council for social development.

To equip First Support Points fully, WCC also produced a handbook entitled *Safer Families* to give them a basic understanding on domestic violence, myths and facts, how to talk to suspected victims, roles of each agency in handling domestic violence and useful contact lists. The handbook, written in English, was translated to Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil.



Community Talks

Although Covid-19 restricted many of WCC's regular training and talks, we were still able to carry out the following:

- **Talks for Medical Personnel:** With SOPs in place, WCC delivered several talks on handling domestic violence and sexual assault victims to medical personnel and medical students in Hospital Kepala Batas, District Health Departments of Seberang Perai Selatan and Barat Daya, and Penang Medical College. In total, around 116 medical personnel and students benefitted from these talks.
- **Community Talks:** WCC delivered several talks on domestic violence, child sexual abuse and women's leadership to a total of 86 people, organised by community organisations like SNEHAM and Compass Light Association.

Moving forward, in 2021, the service team intends to improve communication processes with OSCCs in hospitals in order to improve the rate of referrals and cases handled for victims of domestic and sexual violence. We also intend to work closely with the Penang state government to provide further training under the Safe Family Policy in order to enhance the level of support for victims of domestic violence on the ground.



Outreach Team: Nadila Daud, Yeap Yen Ying, Salma Farhanah A. Rasid, S. Mangleswary, Ooi Say Tee & Nisham Kour

Embracing the “new normal” of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, WCC pivoted our outreach focus to using online platforms and social media. We widened our scope of gender-based violence topics, expanded our audience from largely Penang-based to nationwide, and collaborated with new partners from public, private and civil society sectors. All this helped to exponentially increase our visibility in the virtual world.

Since the movement control order (MCO) in March, WCC successfully conducted and participated in 28 online talks and webinars in multiple languages on a range of issues affecting women and children. We developed two online cartoon storybooks which reached over 2 million users and created over 100 e-posters to raise awareness on gender-based violence.

Online Talks and Webinars on Violence Against Women & Children

WCC's Outreach team began to shift our programmes online during the MCO, between March to May 2020. We started by exploring online platforms such as Skype, Zoom and Streamyard. During this period, we conducted seven talks for closed groups, on the topic of child sexual abuse, in Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil languages, reaching a total of 100 participants.



Having gained confidence in using these online platforms, we went public on social media. Collaborating with various partners, WCC began live streaming our webinars through our Facebook page, reaching thousands of viewers in the process. We successfully organised 11 webinars in various languages supported by Hasanah Special Grant (HSG), attracting nearly 21,000 online views and reaching nearly 60,000 social media users.

R A I S I N G P U B L I C A W A R E N E S S

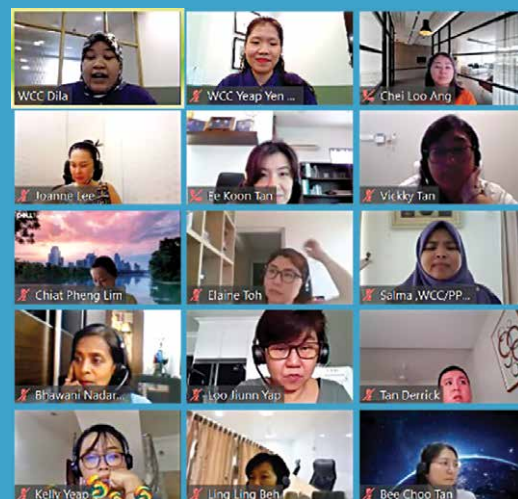
WCC Webinars, Partners & Online Views

Understanding Domestic Violence (English) 9 May Jawatankuasa Pembangunan Wanita dan Keluarga (JPWK) Pulau Tikus 2,900 views 1,200 reach	Online Violence Against Women (Tamil) 13 June Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) & Researcher 2,500 views 8,100 reach	Surviving Online Violence Against Women: How to Seek Help & Support (Tamil) 27 June Royal Malaysia Police, Malaysian Communications & Multimedia Commission (MCMC) & Education and Welfare Research Foundation (ERF) 5,600 views 18,200 reach	Understanding Domestic Violence (Chinese) 28 June JPWK Sungai Pinang 156 views 1,100 reach
Keluarga Harmoni Tanggungjawab Bersama (Bahasa Malaysia) 7 July JPWK Seri Delima 447 views 1,500 reach	Fighting Online Violence Against Women Through Laws & Campaigns (Tamil) 11 July DPP & Researcher 2,700 views 6,700 reach	Gangguan Seksual Ke Atas Wanita: Apa Wanita Perlu Tahu (Bahasa Malaysia) 22 July JPWK Pantai Jerejak 700 views 440 reach	Men's Role in Ending Domestic Violence (Chinese) 26 September Akasha Learning Companionship Association 1,700 views 7,000 reach
Why Women Stay On in Violent Relationships (Mandarin) 11 December JPWK Berapit 115 views 690 reach	Lindungi Anak-Anak Anda Dari Penderaan Seksual (Bahasa Malaysia) 19 December 11 JPWKs in Penang 3,200 views 10,900 reach	Protect Your Children From Sexual Abuse (Chinese) 20 December 11 JPWKs in Penang 980 views 3,800 reach	Total views 20,998 Total reach 59,630

In addition to the above, WCC was also invited as a guest speaker for various webinars on topics related to violence against women and children (VAWC) organised by different JPWKs, Penang Women's Development Corporation (PWDC), Malaysian Bar Council, UCSI University, UiTM and others. We also collaborated with local and international organisations such as Brahma Kumaris, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and AWARE in Singapore, to speak or moderate for their webinars on topics such as online safety, VAWC, the #MeToo movement, and democracy and women's rights in Malaysia. These webinars achieved an international reach.

All in, our online talks and webinars achieved an outstanding reach of 70,000 on Facebook, with 32,000 views. The power of digital technology and social media has enabled WCC to expand our reach, beyond Penang and Malaysia.

CHILD AND TEENAGE SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION



OK Tak OK and Cybersafety Online Training for Facilitators

WCC was able to adapt our children and teenagers' sexual abuse prevention programmes online. Two online trainings of facilitators for our *OK Tak OK* and *Cybersafety* programmes were conducted for a total of 46 volunteers from Dell Technologies. The trainings were carried out in two parts. The first part focused on educating the facilitators on child sexual abuse and the modus operandi of perpetrators, and the second on how to run the *OK Tak OK* and *Cybersafety* programmes for children and teenagers respectively. These trained facilitators will carry out the programmes online for children and teenagers in 2021.

Working with Teachers

Prior to the MCO in March, dedicated teachers whom WCC had trained conducted the *OK Tak OK* and *Cybersafety* programmes for students in primary and secondary schools. A total of 187 primary school students and 400 secondary school students benefitted respectively. In February, WCC conducted a *Cybersafety* training for 49 secondary school counseling teachers from Seberang Perai Tengah (SPT) district with the support of the Hewlett Packard Foundation. WCC also invited representatives from the MCMC and Penang State Education Department to speak about the roles these agencies play in handling cyber violence cases. Unfortunately, the teachers we trained were subsequently unable to run the *Cybersafety* programme in their schools due to disruptions from the pandemic, including school closures.



ONLINE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Online Cartoon Story Books

WCC migrated and produced two story books online, *Lisa and Her Secret* and *Yusri and His Secret* in four different languages: English, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil. These cartoon story books teach children to be aware of sexual abuse and to speak up when it happens. Released on social media, both books received an overwhelming public response, indicating a clear need for such educational resources.



E-Posters on Violence Against Women and Children

Amazingly, WCC produced over 100 e-posters in four languages (English, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil), to raise awareness on violence against women and children and to promote our services via social media. Nearly half were sponsored by HSG. We also updated our existing poster on child sexual abuse. These eye-catching and thought-provoking posters garnered an amazing reach of 80,000 people on Facebook and 40,000 people on Twitter. Through these efforts, among others, we boosted our Facebook followers by a nearly threefold increase to over 12,000 people.



Despite the uncertainty with the Covid-19 situation, we look forward to developing creative new ways of taking our work further to prevent violence in women's and children's lives.



Advocacy Team: Karen Lai, Loh Cheng Kooi & S. Hastiny

Despite the movement restrictions due to Covid-19 for much of the year, the Advocacy team continued our important work of supporting domestic and sexual violence victims in court, and produced resources advocating for the rights of victims.

Case Support & Interventions

In 2020, we supported a total of 72 cases in the criminal justice process. It was concerning to note that despite Covid-19 movement restrictions being imposed, there was an increase of 7 cases compared to the previous year. Out of these 72 cases, 33 were new cases while 39 were existing cases.

ADVOCATING FOR VICTIMS' ACCESS TO JUSTICE

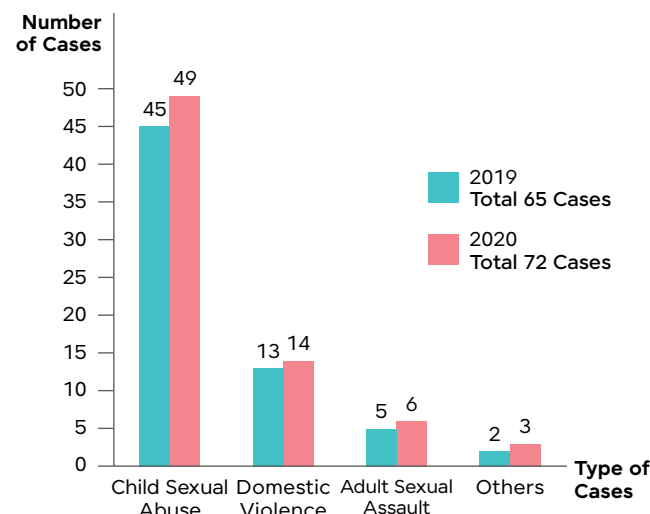


Figure 1: Types & Numbers of Cases Supported

Figure 1 shows the types and numbers of cases supported in 2019 and 2020. Sadly, in 2020 child sexual abuse cases (49) remain the highest at 68%, underscoring the importance of continued awareness raising on the issue. Child sexual abuse is highly underreported and children are particularly vulnerable during pandemic lockdowns.



Figure 2: Age & Numbers of Child Sexual Abuse Victims

Figure 2 shows the age breakdown of child sexual abuse victims supported by WCC. On the whole, the majority of victims were aged between 13 to 17 years old (59%). However, of concern is the fact that in 2020, the highest number of victims (18) were younger children between the ages of 7 to 12 (37%).

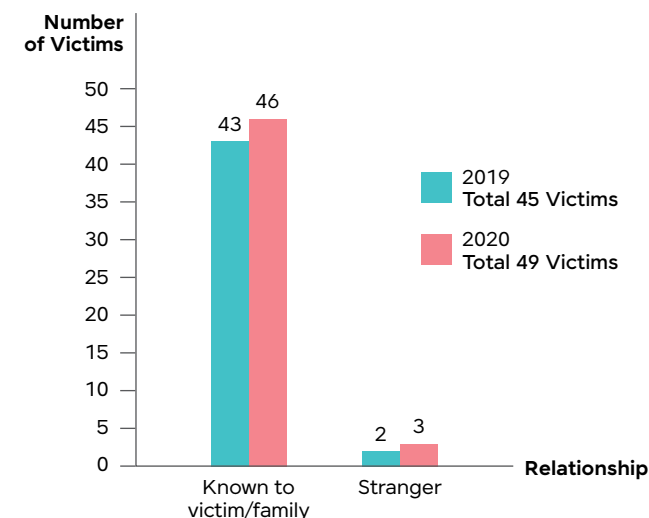


Figure 3: Perpetrator's Relationship to Child Victims

Nearly all child sexual abuse perpetrators are known to victims and their families.

For both 2020 and 2019, over 90% of the perpetrators in WCC's child sexual abuse cases were known to victims and their family members. This is consistent with national statistics, and points to the need to debunk the general misconception that most perpetrators are strangers.

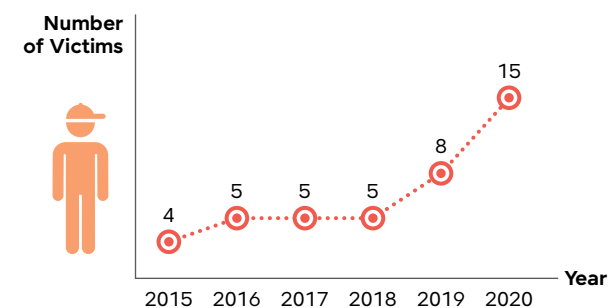


Figure 4: Number of Male Child Sexual Abuse Victims Supported

Of concern is that in 2020, the number of male child victims of sexual abuse we supported had nearly doubled compared to 2019.

Raising awareness on the issue and destigmatising male victims are critical, as boys may face greater challenges in disclosing sexual abuse, including societal pressure.

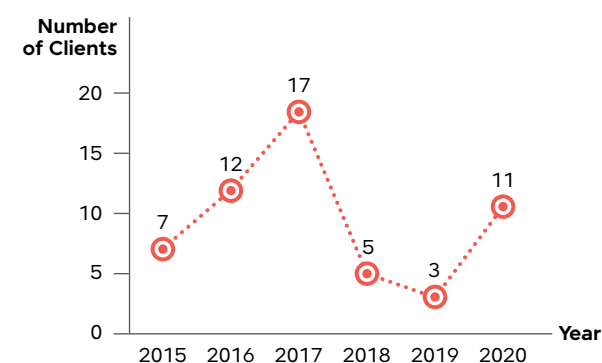


Figure 5: Number of Indian Clients Supported

After a sharp decline to only 3 clients in 2019, in 2020 the number of WCC's Indian clients increased rapidly to 11 clients.

Contributing factors include WCC's increased online visibility from our Tamil webinars and enhanced networking with district police which led to higher case referrals. Most of the cases were of domestic violence.

STATUS OF CASES HANDLED IN 2020

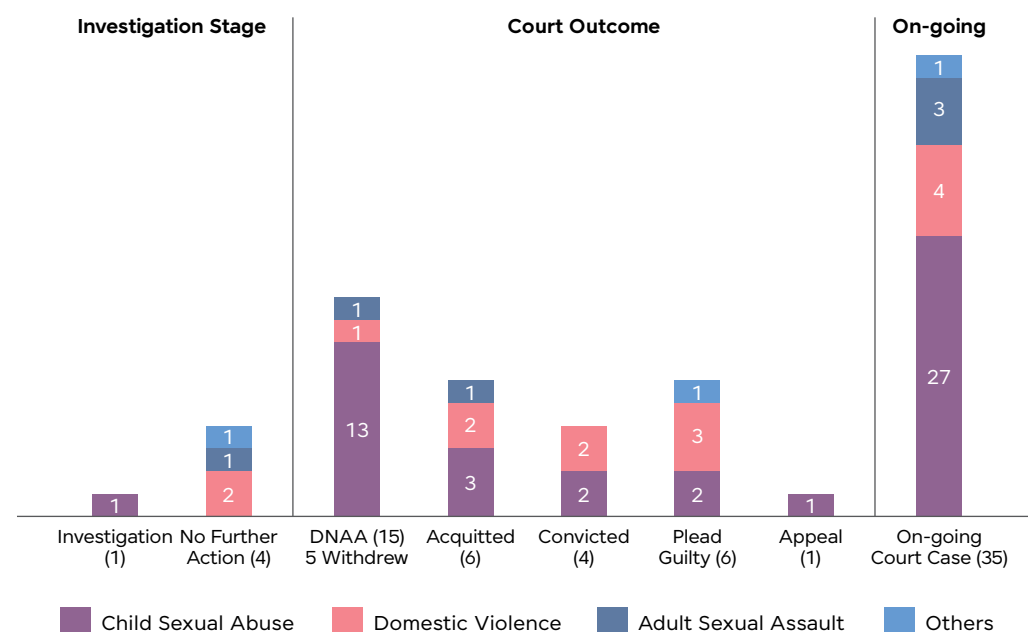


Figure 6: Status of 72 cases handled in 2020

Figure 6 above shows the status of the 72 cases handled in 2020, out of which 67 went to court. Due to Covid-19 movement restrictions, the courts were closed for certain periods. Once they resumed operations, WCC sought and obtained the Penang Court Director's permission to support our clients in court. This was necessary due to strict SOPs in place.

In 2020, we were concerned to note that:

- As at the end of 2020, over half of the cases (52%) were still ongoing as many trials were postponed due to the high number of Covid-19 cases in the Penang prisons.
- There was an increase in acquittals, from two in 2019 (due to clients withdrawing from the case), to six acquittals in 2020.
- There were 15 cases with a Discharge Not Amounting to Acquittal (DNAA) outcome, where five victims withdrew. Of these five cases, four involved child sexual abuse, in which three involved incest by family members.

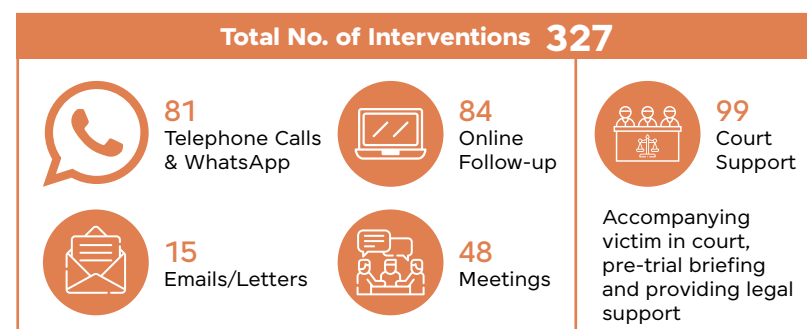


Figure 7: Types and Number of Interventions

For the 72 cases we supported in 2020, WCC's advocacy officer carried out a total of 327 interventions as shown in Figure 7, engaging with the police, Deputy Public Prosecutors, court personnel, and victims and their families in order to ensure access to justice from the investigation stage until the end of the court process.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Short Video: *The Shower*

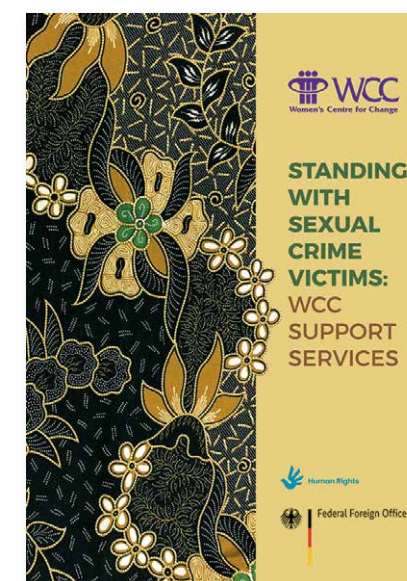
Victim blaming attitudes in society are part of the reason why sexual assault victims fear speaking up to report the assault. With the support of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, WCC produced a short video entitled *The Shower*, featuring a teenage girl who was molested by a family member and



who faced disbelief and blame when she spoke up. With her best friend's support and reassurance that it was not her fault, she finds the strength to seek help. The video was produced in Bahasa Malaysia with English, Chinese and Tamil subtitles. It was shared on WCC's social media in conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November 2020. By the end of December 2020, it had reached over 55,000 people online.

Research Report on WCC's Victim Support Services

WCC is producing a research report entitled *Standing with Sexual Crime Victims: WCC Support Services* as a comprehensive documentation of our victim support services over the last 10 years, focusing on data where WCC provided support in court in from 2015 to 2019 (five years). This new data is then compared with our 2009 research publication, *Seeking Justice for Victims of Sexual Crimes*, which studied 439 cases of sexual crime heard in the Penang courts between 2000-2004. Despite research limitations, the key findings are promising, showing an increase in conviction rate and decrease in DNAA rate for cases where victims were supported by WCC. The report is expected to be published by April 2021, and will be used to further our advocacy on victim support at the national level.



RAISING AWARENESS IN THE MEDIA

In 2020, WCC issued nine media statements on various issues including women's representation, gender-based violence, child sexual assault and sexual harassment. We endorsed 23 media statements by the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) on women and children's rights, as well as seven statements by other civil society organisations on social, environmental and human rights issues. WCC was also regularly interviewed by the English and Chinese language media, including newspaper, radio (BFM) and video (Astro) interviews. The Advocacy team also participated as key speakers in a range of webinars on laws, rights and issues, reaching over 5,000 people online.

Moving forward, in 2021, the Advocacy team aims to continue supporting victims of gender-based violence at the local level and to further our advocacy on victim support nationwide.

Client's Story: Surviving Violence During MCO



Fatin was a full-time homemaker. She and her husband had been married for 5 years and had a 4 year old daughter. Fatin was 7 months pregnant with their second child. Fatin's husband was a violent man. He would hit, strangle and even step on her head! He constantly humiliated her with words like *celaka*, *bodoh*, *sial* and *pergi mampus*, calling her stupid and worthless and telling her to go to hell.

In April 2020 during the Covid-19 movement control order (MCO) period, Fatin returned home from buying dinner for the family. Her husband accused her of going out to meet another man. In a fit of jealous rage, he kicked and stomped on Fatin's belly repeatedly, claiming that the child she was carrying was not his, and causing severe pain and injury to her.

The next day, Fatin sought treatment at a nearby government clinic. The examining doctor asked her what happened. At first, Fatin was reluctant to disclose the abuse out of fear. After much persuasion, Fatin told the doctor about her husband's violence. The doctor immediately called WCC for help.

WCC's social worker contacted Fatin, counselled her and explored her options. Fatin was determined to file a divorce and return to her hometown in the East Coast. However, due to the MCO, there were inter-state travel restrictions. The social worker explained that Fatin would need to apply for a police permit to travel.

Fatin decided to go home first to collect her belongings before going to the police station, and called the social worker to inform her. During the call, Fatin's voice suddenly started shaking in extreme fear. The social worker heard Fatin's husband shouting and abusing her in the background. Fatin screamed out in pain and the line was cut. The social worker tried calling Fatin back repeatedly but could not reach her. After 30 minutes, the social worker received a WhatsApp message from Fatin which said, *Suami saya pukul saya. Tolong.* (My husband hit me. Help.).

WCC's social worker immediately alerted a senior police officer from the D11 unit handling sexual and domestic violence cases. The police rushed to Fatin's home and brought Fatin and her husband to the police station. There, Fatin made a police report against him. After that, the police sent Fatin to the hospital for further examination. They remanded her husband for further investigation.

Meanwhile, WCC's social worker communicated with the clinic doctor to get a supporting letter for Fatin's application for a police permit to travel inter-state. With that, Fatin was able to obtain the permit. WCC then purchased a bus ticket online for Fatin and her daughter. It was not easy as seats were limited due to the MCO restrictions. Finally, Fatin and her daughter were able to return to her hometown safely. Meanwhile, Fatin's husband was charged with assaulting her. In October 2020, he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

Fatin has since delivered a healthy second child back in her hometown. She and her two children are moving on well with their lives. Fatin is very grateful to WCC for enabling her to escape the vicious cycle of violence in her marriage.

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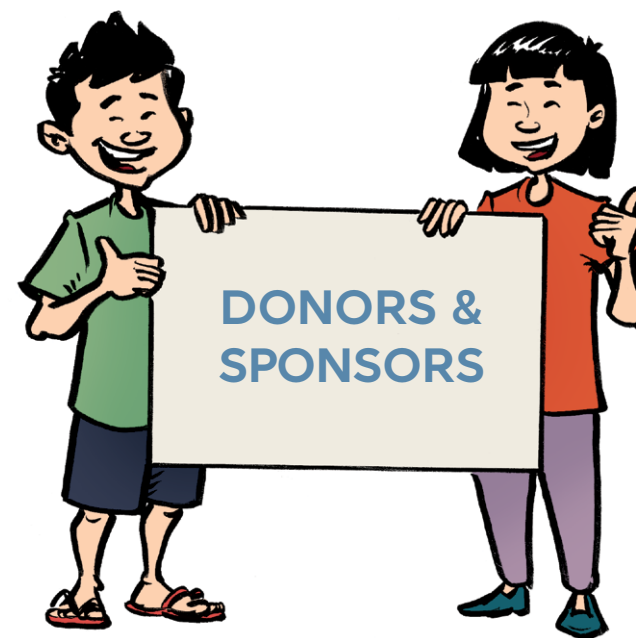
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www.wccpenang.org

The Women's Centre for Change, Penang (WCC) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organisation dedicated to the elimination of violence against women and children, and the promotion of gender equality and social justice.

Established in 1985, we provide services in counselling, court support, and temporary shelter, conduct outreach programmes in schools and communities, and advocate for legal and policy reforms affecting women and children.

WCC is a member of the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) which actively campaigns for policy and legal reforms.

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