



**SINGAPORE COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS**

**Term Report**

**14<sup>th</sup> SCWO Board**

<b>President</b>	<b>Wee Wan Joo</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</b>	<b>Ann Tan</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President</b>	<b>Arfat Selvam (resigned in January 2007 )</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President</b>	<b>Woo Choon Mei</b>
<b>Honorary Treasurer</b>	<b>Chan Jer Luang</b>
<b>Assistant Honorary Treasurer</b>	<b>Irene Boey</b>
<b>Honorary General Secretary</b>	<b>Junie Foo</b>
<b>Assistant Honorary General Secretary</b>	<b>Tan Joo Hymn</b>
<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Mariam Alias</b>
	<b>Premala Gopalakrishnakone</b>
	<b>Kueh Fah Lee</b>
	<b>Rosemary Khoo</b>
	<b>Ann Phua</b>
	<b>Elsie Teo</b>
	<b>Jennie Yeo</b>
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	<b>Tisa Ng</b>

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

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It gives me great pleasure to report on the work of the 14<sup>th</sup> Board of the SCWO in the past year, from June 2006 to June 2007. For its first term, the newly elected 14<sup>th</sup> Board focussed on continuity and strengthening our relations with our member organisations.

#### **1. Services**

##### **1.1 Star Shelter**

The Star Shelter is a crisis shelter for women who are victims of domestic violence. The Shelter provides temporary accommodation as well as other in-house services to help these women tide over their initial crisis. The mission of the Shelter is to be a place of refuge and solace to women in crisis while they work through their problems becoming more resourceful and independent.

A total of 206 women and children stayed in the Shelter from the period of June 2006 to May 2007 with an average of 17 residents per month. 82% are Singaporeans and 7% are permanent residents while the remaining 11% are from neighbouring countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, India, China and The Philippines. Of these residents, 49% are Chinese, 27% Indians, 20% Malays and 4% other races. The two main reasons for their stay here are family violence and homelessness.

During their time here, a host of in-house services are provided for them. Counselling and casework management is provided for all of them. At this crisis stage, the residents require a lot of emotional support. They are often accompanied by the matron and the counselor to the family court, hospitals, police, law firms, Immigration and Checkpoint Authority and Housing and Development Board. Networking and liaison with other community partners like the family service centres, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports are regularly carried out.

Vocational services like job-matching, house-hunting, computer learning are also provided for the residents. During their stay here, their meals are provided for and the Rebuild programme provides further financial assistance for transportation and home start-up. From June 2006 to May 2007, under the Rebuild Programme, a total of \$870 have been given out for transport assistance to two residents and home start-up loan to one resident.

Ad-hoc programmes include a therapeutic empowerment support group for the adult residents, tuition for three Primary school children, inspirational talk and workshop and social activities like movies and carnivals. Corporate partnership and volunteers are an essential part of the Shelter. Community partners like The Body Shop, Pret-A-Manger, Food from the Heart give out of their generosity as well as their hearts. The Body Shop ran public awareness against domestic violence, raised funds and organized social events for the residents while Pret-A-Manger and Food from the Heart donated sandwiches and pastries three to four times a week!

Starting from February 2006, the Shelter commenced a fee charging policy, in line with other shelters, where residents pay a nominal fee should they stay beyond 3 months. This is done in the spirit of encouraging self-reliance, responsibility and dignity. However, they are charged on a sliding scale or granted waivers. An average of \$750 is received every month.

## **1.2 The Women's Initiative for Ageing Successfully (WINGS)**

WINGS is an initiative set up by the SCWO and Tsao Foundation. This project has created a drop-in education, referral and counselling centre especially for women aged 40 years and beyond.

WINGS is unique. There is no other one-stop education, referral and counselling centre for the older women in Singapore. WINGS' goal is to empower older women to take personal responsibility for their Health, Finances, and Happiness, and remain independent, active and connected to the community.

This centre aims to educate older women on:

- **HEALTH:** Preventive health management and techniques, and health literacy
- **WEALTH:** Planning for their financial future and income generating activities
- **HAPPINESS:** Better management of family and interpersonal relationships and self love

WINGS targets women specifically because:

- Women outlive and outnumber men as they age
- Older women have lower educational levels and income
- Older women experience more disease and disability as compared to men
- Women are care givers and this role has knock-on effects on the rest of society
- Health/Ageing programmes must recognise gender differences to be effective

The WINGS project is led by Dr Kanwaljit Soin. Dr Soin is a practising hand and orthopaedic surgeon in private practice. She was also a former Nominated Member of Parliament and a Past Board Member of SCWO.

WINGS has grown from strength to strength.

From 30 programs that engaged 388 women in July 2006 to 78 programs engaging 1,080 women in May 2007.

As at the end of May 2007, we have recruited a total of 3,424 members, which has surpassed our target for the year of 1000 members.

### **Services offered:**

#### **a. Counseling:**

- *Emotional*
- *Legal*
- *Financial*
- *Health*

#### **b. Support Groups:**

- *Menopause*
- *Endometriosis*
- *Mothers*
- *Seniors*
- *Homemakers*

#### **c. Skills Training:**

- *Basic Computer,*
- *Cashiering*

#### **d. Job Referrals**

**e. Interest Groups:**

- *Handicraft*
- *Read & Chat*
- *Train your Brain with Bridge*

**f. Exercise Classes:**

- *Chair Yoga, Shapexercise, Tai Chi & Qi Gong, Pilates, Hatha Yoga Bollywood Dancercise, Belly Dancing etc....*

**g. Talks & Workshops:**

- *Managing Your Money, Menopause, TCM in Women's Health, Healthy Eating, Motivational Etc....*

**1.3 Women's Register**

Women's Register (WR) is a secure on-line database of women who would like to be appointed in leadership positions in the public, private and non-profit sectors.

WR will serve as (1) An avenue through which women can register their interest in and availability to take up leadership appointments, and (2) Be a place where public, private, non-profit and community organisations can gain access to a professional and confidential service that will help them find the right woman for the job.

On 24 May 2007, WR committees went through a value proposition session with Ian Ewing of Ewing Communications. This session was meant to help WR to clarify its positioning (benefits & features). The session with Ian Ewing was engaging and resulted in the group having a more focused direction and objective and marketing plan for WR.

The current membership:

- Total Individual membership up-to-date is 261.
- Total Corporate membership up-to-date is 18.
- Total revenue up-to-date from membership is \$9,020.00

WR has recently received a grant from NVPC New Initiative Grant. The grant and support will be effective from 1 July 2007. WR is to submit a quarterly report to NVPC on its progress. There are certain deliveries that WR must monitor and report to NVPC.

There have been several postings on WR website for voluntary opportunity. On top of that, WR has actively helping its members expanding their network and knowledge through networking events and courses.

**2. Programmes**

**2.1 IT Hub**

IT Hub has moved from strength to strength with chairperson Esther Pung and a dedicated team of volunteers. The Hub has fine-tuned its programmes, and launched its 2 full day Basic and Intermediary Website designing courses in 2006. This received encouraging response especially from SCWO members. With their newly acquired web designing skills, some of the IT Hub members have set up their own e-business. The IT hub sees an average of 150 students per month. The IT Hub is looking to upgrade its hardware and software this year through donations.

We would like to thank the IT Hub Committee made up of volunteers volunteer who beliefs that one should share ones IT skill to someone who has missed the opportunities of formal IT skill training. They have been the source for sustaining a full and friendly programme of training and empowerment in IT capabilities.

## **2.2 Keyboard**

The Midi Music Studio was set up jointly with Honeycomb Music Centre in Jan 06 to introduce keyboard playing as a wellness program for the seniors to pick up a musical skill or renew the passion for music. Each class is limited to maximum 6 students and at \$200 (day class for members) per semester of 10 sessions. We have since conducted classes for about 20 students for 2 semesters. We are starting the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester in July 3.

## **3. Facilities**

### **3.1 Function Rooms**

Six meeting rooms and IT Hub were available for rental from the period of June 06 to June 07. The rental revenue amounted to a total of \$65,966. There were 438 events organised during this period and the average rental is \$150.31 per event.

### **3.2 Mary's Kafe**

We were sad to lose Hani who has given up the café business. She was central to setting the welcoming ambience and delicious food which attracted visitors to the Centre who might not otherwise know about the SCWO.

However, Mary Gomez has taken over the café and renamed it Mary's Kafe, serving delicious Eurasian cuisine.

### **3.3 New2U**

New2U continues to be an effective way of engaging members of the public and drawing people of different walks of life to SCWO whilst generating much appreciated revenue which goes towards supporting the Star Shelter.

It has become a thriving business dealing in second-hand good donated by well-wishers.

New2U has had a successful year, seeing some faithful volunteers leave but those places filled by a number of new volunteer helpers. We have maintained our roster well with sufficient numbers of ladies, but have been unable to recommence opening on Saturdays. We remain open Monday to Friday, 10:30am – 2:30pm. Over June, July and part August, we are open only on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

We have 22 volunteers currently. They are kept informed by a fortnightly email and other communication as necessary. They are encouraged to participate in shop organisation by creative ideas and suggestions, which have helped in many areas.

The ½ price sale days on last Thursday and Friday of the month continue to be very popular, and we use these days to move older stock by even lower prices. The customer base has remained strong, with many regulars coming in daily or weekly, and students from the surrounding polytechnics visiting often also.

Extra stock for donating to SPCA, clothes for migrant workers in Singapore, fabric for a charity at Yishun, prescription glasses and sandals for India, a collection for an African country and winter clothes for cold countries.

We would like to place on record our appreciation to all the volunteers who have made this possible, and especially coordinators, Penny De Jongh and Melissa Anderson, who has left for Australia.

### **3.4 Library**

This year we have completely revamped the library with the help of an intern from Temasek Polytechnic. With advice from an expert from the National Library, the materials were reviewed, catalogue and labelled.

## **4. Activities**

### **4.1 Red Cross Bazaar**

On 10 September 2006, SCWO volunteers and staff helped raise funds for Red Cross by taking part in its bi-annual bazaar, which, this year was titled "Many Hands, One World". For SCWO, it was indeed the many hands of both volunteers and SCWO staff that put together a stall to sell second hand items from the New2U stall and also to create awareness of SCWO. Intermittent rain did not dampen the spirit of all present and the SCWO stall saw a good number of visitors passing through – even people signing up to be volunteers- but the highlight was definitely when President Nathan and Mrs. Nathan stopped by. Everyone had a great time being part of the bazaar which had over 100 food, handicraft and game stalls prepared by embassies, the international community as well as civic organizations.

### **4.2 Dialogue with Women Members of Parliament**

On 19 October 2006, SCWO held a dialogue session with Women MP. The session saw a total of 32 participants from SCWO members and People's Association. Women MPs Mrs Lim Hwee Hwa and Mrs Josephine Yeo were present for the dialogue whilst Dr Jennifer Lee acted as moderator.

Several issues were raised at this lively discussion which lasted for 2 hours with the MPs assuring that they would bring the issues up for discussion.

### **4.3 Women's Guide to Successful Negotiation**

A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiating was organized jointly by SCWO and PRIMETIME Business and Professional Women Association on 22 November 2006; It is another effort by SCWO to engage member organisations in joint projects/talks. The talk was successful with 98 participants. The speaker was Lee Miller who is the author of the book of the same title.

SCWO looks forward to increasing its engagement of its member organisations.

### **4.4 International Women's Day 2007- Revitalize\* A Moment in Time**

This year SCWO commemorated International Women's Day on March 10<sup>th</sup> in a nostalgic full-day carnival of heritage, culture and tradition for the modern IT savvy women.

Waterloo Street was set alive in a festive mood amidst red and white balloons released by our gracious Senior Patron of SCWO Mrs SR Nathan and Minister of State Mrs Yu-Foo during the opening of SCWO IWD2007 and the launch of Women's Register, an online database portal of women leaders to meet the growing demand in this fast changing global digital economy. Themed Revitalize\* A Moment in Time, the full-day carnival on March 10<sup>th</sup> emoted an equivocal flavour of revitalised forgotten traditions and the IT savvy modern woman as the two meet at a moment in time on International Women's Day 2007 that fuses the past and the present promises to revitalise the modern woman with traditional wisdom as she takes a breather from the multiple roles she shoulders in society, birth from the progress she has made in education, economics and politics.

Over 1000 visitors took part in a diversity of activities and talks addressing pertinent issues such as aging, self-care and health management with wisdom from Western and Traditional Chinese Medicine. These visitors also had a chance to indulge in stalls selling an array of delicious snacks as well as pampering themselves with foot massage. The response to the free activities such as Chair Yoga, Bhangrarobics and Salsa classes were overwhelming.

In conjunction with IWD07, we also had a Photo Contest with the subject of Traditions to capture in photo the beauty of any grandmother, mother, sister, aunt, female friend or colleague engaged in Traditions. The day saw winners of the Revitalize\* A Moment in Time Photo Contest awarded with cash prizes and mobile phones sponsored by Nokia. Visitors who dressed in their best ethnic costume was also awarded a prize.

To mark the occasion, SCWO published a free handy guide, consisting of information on the Revitalise\* A Moment in Time Carnival as well as practical tips that can be applied in everyday life. The useful guidebook was available from the SCWO centre, its member organisations' premises and at selected food and retail stores including Giordano, Café Cartel and Amore Fitness.

The event was publicized through various media and marketing channels, and a very special effort was made to engage younger people in road shows at the Universities.

The Board wishes to acknowledge appreciation for all the support received from member organisations, sponsors and volunteers; and the organising committee chaired by Ms Ann Phua.

#### **4.5 Charity Film Screening of Pink Paddlers**

In Celebration of International Women's Day, SCWO partnered Breast Cancer Foundation and UNIFEM Singapore to present the charity premier of documentary feature, Pink Paddlers

The one hour documentary tells story of breast cancer survivors, sisters in their fights against breast cancer and their upstream battle to win the dragon boat race. Proceeds of the screening were in support of Breast Cancer Foundation, Star Shelter and UNIFEM Singapore.

#### **4.6 SCWO/MCYS CEDAW Report Closed Door Session**

In April 2007, a closed-door discussion on the government's report to CEDAW was organised at the request of and in conjunction with the Women's Desk of MYCS.

#### **4.7 Singhealth Talks**

On 25 March, SCWO participated in the Singhealth 'Fabulous from 40' forum. The forum was targeted at women 35 and beyond and covers top women health concerns, in-depth information of these concerns, latest research studies and cutting edge treatments. Singhealth provided exhibition booths for SCWO, which was shared with WINGS and WR to create higher awareness and reach out to the participants.

#### **4.8 PA 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (in conjunction with IWD07)**

In celebration of the People's Association Women's Executive Committee's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, SCWO was invited to participate in a carnival suited at the Jurong East Sports and Cultural Centre on 4 March. About 2000 participants attended the carnival and had a chance to find out about SCWO and our activities. Many interested participants also signed up for Women's Register.

The highlight of the carnival was the launch of the WEC 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Book by Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong.

#### **4.9 Presidents' Lunch**

To foster friendly relationships and provide a platform for networking, and to update member organisations on activities and services, SCWO regularly hosts Presidents' Lunches. As a resource for gathering and disseminating information, the Presidents' lunches have been an effective way of engaging leaders of SCWO member organisations. A total of two gatherings were organised in the period under review.

### **5. Visits**

#### **5.1 Korean Visit**

Two groups of Korean delegations from Municipal Assembly of Bupyeong-gu, Republic of Korea and Gyeonggi Provincial Government, Republic of Korea came to SCWO Centre for a visit on 26 October 2006. 10 Members from Gyeonggi Provincial Government, Republic of Korea wanted to understand Singapore's policies on women such as gender equality strategies and policies to promote women's right. 13 Members from Municipal Assembly of Bupyeong-gu, Republic of Korea to learn the advanced legal and administrative systems in NGOs .

## **5.2 RGS Study Visit**

About 100 local and foreign students and teachers from Raffles Secondary School toured SCWO Centre to understand our history, programmes and services. They were also involved in a dialogue session with Board Members to discuss and understand women issues on 22 November 2007. 20 students signed up volunteers to help out in International Women's Day 2007.

## **5.3 TIAW**

The International Alliance for Women (TIAW) serves as the global umbrella organization that unites, supports and promotes professional women and their networks to work together, share resources and leverage ideas. Two delegates from TIAW visited SCWO and met up with the President and Board Members to learn more about our organisation.

## **5.4 YWCA Exchange HK**

On 31 March, SCWO hosted a group of delegation from YWCA HK. The 20 volunteers visited SCWO Centre to learn about the different types of social services programme offered to women in the community, and to promote exchange between volunteers and staff members of two countries. We had a good exchange of our different programmes and effectiveness.

## **6. External Partners**

### **6.1 MCYS Women's Desk**

During the past year we had quarterly meetings with MCYS to facilitate communication on policy issues, local and regional matters, as well as provide updates and share information on women-related programmes and activities organised. SCWO collaborated in, and supported many of MCYS' projects and initiatives, including participation in closed-door discussion on CEDAW recommendations and advice on the Women's Register. We would like to express our thanks to MCYS Women's Desk for their support, and funding of various SCWO's activities and programmes.

We had also collaborated with MCYS Women's Desk in the closed door CEDAW session as described in section 4.6.

### **6.2 NCSS**

SCWO has been supporting NCSS efforts to build an active civil society. We provided NCSS with feedback on good governance whilst adhering closely to NCSS guides on good fundraising practices and basic governance responsibilities of VWOs. The NCSS has provided support for the SCWO, in particular in funding support for WINGS.

### **6.3 Singapore Sports Council WSG**

The SCWO is represented on, and actively participates in the Women Sports Group of the SSC. SSC was one of SCWO's sponsors for SCWO's International Women's Day 2007.

### **6.4 Health Promotion Board (HPB)**

HPB was also one of the sponsors for International Women's Day (refer to section 4.4), in the healthy lifestyle programme.

### **6.5 PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION (PA)**

At the invitation of Mayor Amy Khor, in March 2007, SCWO participated in PA's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Carnival. Women's Register set up a booth to promote and publicise the register.

### **6.6 NVPC**

NVPC has recently approved a grant for Women's Register subject to stringent conditions. MCYS Women's Desk was instrumental in linking us to NVPC for the funding of the Women's Register.

## **7. INTERNATIONAL LIAISON**

### **7.1 APEC WLN**

A delegation of 3 from SCWO attended APEC WLN in Hanoi in August 2006. At the request of MCYS, Wan Joo took on the role of Head Delegate. The other 2 Board members were Irene Boey and Ann Phua. MCYS Director Tan Hwee Seh joined the delegation later. The theme for the 2006 conference was "Towards a Dynamic Community – Enhancing the Competitiveness of Women Business for Sustainable Development and Prosperity". The networking amongst the participants who were from Asia Pacific were brisk and fruitful.

### **7.2 First China-ASEAN Women's Forum 2006**

SCWO Treasurer, Ms Chan Jer Luang attended the Conference for SCWO which was held in Nanning, China from 31 October – 1 November 2006.

There were 2 delegates from Singapore: Ms. Jennifer Joseph, representative for MCYS and SCWO Treasurer, Ms Chan Jer Luang. At the Forum, MCYS finalised the *DECLARATION OF CHINA-ASEAN WOMEN'S FORUM*. The Theme for the Forum was "Enhancing cooperation among women, promoting common development". There were Ministers from Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam who presented their country reports Singapore's Report was presented by Jer Luang. She reported on the innovative projects of SCWO – IT Hub, WINGS, and Women's Register and the participants were excited by the developments in Singapore. The 2 speeches were made in Mandarin and English.

### **7.3 ASEAN Confederation of Women Organisations (ACWO)**

In November 2006, SCWO attended the ACWO12<sup>th</sup> ACWO General Assembly. The theme was "ICT Empowerment, e-Commerce and e-Government - Bringing a Higher Quality of Life in ASEAN".

The representatives were Wee Wan Joo (President), Tisa Ng (IPP), Premala Gopalakrishnakone (Board Member), Mariam Alias (Board Member) and Debbie Han (from SBPWA). Ms Debbie Han presented a talk on IT literacy which was very well received by the audience.

### **7.4 ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW)**

SCWO hosted the opening dinner for the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of ASEAN Committee on Women's Opening Dinner. A total of 54 ACW delegates including S'pore delegates attended the dinner. Mrs Wee Wan Joo, President gave the guests a warm welcome and briefed them on SCWO programmes and activities. This was then followed with a tour around the Centre. Guests were impressed by the facilities within the Centre and there were many questions on the IT Hub services offered as well as the Star Shelter.

The guests were treated to a buffet dinner and they gave good reviews of the food served. Entertainment was kindly provided by Bahai members. There were 2 performances, a pianist who played a wonderful repertoire of songs and an experienced visiting opera singer who performed various classical favourites.

SCWO board members, Wee Wan Joo (President), Woo Choon Mei (3<sup>rd</sup> VP), Irene Boey (Ass Treasurer), Ann Phua (Board Member and Manager), Michelle attended the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of ASEAN Committee conference and workshops

### **7.5 International Council of Women (ICW)**

In September 2006, SCWO 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Ms Woo Choon Mei attended the General Assembly of the ICW in Kiev, Ukraine. There were 39 National Council with 160 delegates who attended the GA.. Dr Anamah Tan was re-elected as President for another term 2006-2009.

## **8. MEMBERSHIP**

In the term under review, we received notice of withdrawal from Quota International, Federation of Business and Professional Women (FBPW) as the group has been disbanded. As a result of this, SCWO's 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President who was elected on the Quota's ticket has to resign from the Board. She continues to chair the Women's Register. Endometriosis Association (Singapore) has disbanded as a formal club and is acting as a support group. They have since joined as a Friend of SCWO. With the withdrawal of these two organisations membership now stands at 52.

## **9. IN THE COMING YEAR**

### **9.1 Upcoming Activities**

The months ahead promise to be as busy as ever:

- Beauty in Asia: Conversation with Inspirational Women of our Time on 22 June.
- Conversations with Uncommon Women on 28 June.
- CEDAW Meeting in New York on 1 – 3 Aug.

### **9.2 New Initiatives**

Work has already commenced on the following:

Screening of documentary film 'Pink Paddlers'

HPB 'Active Women'

Singhealth Dialogue Sessions

Work Life Harmony Workshop