



# KANITA MATTERS

PUSAT PENYELIDIKAN PEMBANGUNAN WANITA (KANITA)

ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2011

## LATEST EVENT – INTERNATIONAL JOINT SEMINAR

**Theme : Towards Good Governance & Leadership: Decent Livelihood for Women**

**Date : 28th July 2011 (Thursday)**

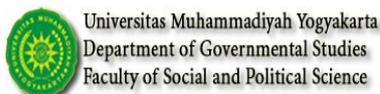
**Venue : Dewan Persidangan Universiti (DPU), Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang**

Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), USM in collaboration with Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), Indonesia jointly organised the international joint seminar with a focus on good governance, leadership and decent livelihood.

This international joint seminar was aimed at facilitating discourses that examine the contexts of governance and leadership in Malaysia and Indonesia in their relation to the issue of achieving decent livelihood for women. The seminar was the second in a series of international joint seminars between USM and UMY. The first was launched in Yogyakarta last year hosted by UMY. The selected four sub-themes were as follows:

- Panel 1: Discourse setting on women, governance and leadership
- Panel 2: Women's participation in livelihood activities: Critical analyses
- Panel 3: Rethinking good governance and leadership for women
- Panel 4: Governing the bottom half billion: Gender and sustainable livelihood

More than 90 participants comprising of academicians, researchers and graduate students attended the seminar. An edited proceeding is expected to be published by the end of 2011.



### Inside this issue:

FEATURE ARTICLE	1
GLOSSARY	4
HIGHLIGHTS	5
KANITA IN-HOUSE ACTIVITIES	10
IN PERSON WITH DR. CECILIA NG	12

## The Potentials of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

Government budgets and economic management policies are important instruments for the achievement of government priorities. Policies and budgets reflect the seriousness of governments to respond to persisting development challenges such as poverty, exclusion, and social and economic injustices as they continually pursue the positive goals of good governance.

The desirability of ensuring gender concerns are given due attention in planning, implementing and evaluating budgets is increasingly and rather dramatically being recognised across the world. In 1995, only a few countries and agencies were involved in gender budgeting. Today, some form of

gender budget work has been implemented in over 90 countries worldwide, including some 25 in the Asia-Pacific region.

### *GRB and the Beijing Platform for Action*

In the report of the Secretary General "Measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly", recommendations were presented for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women for enhancing implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the Conference in 2000.

(Continued from page 1)

These recommendations encouraged United Nations entities, within their mandates, to take the following actions:

- Increase attention to gender perspectives in medium-term plans and programme budgets and ensure sufficient attention to gender equality perspectives in planning and allocation of financial resources;
- Ensure systematic attention to gender perspectives in critical areas, such as macroeconomics, international trade and investment, transport, taxation and finance.

This has set the scene for the increasing adoption of GRB as a major way of meeting these recommendations. Not only can gender-responsive budgets (GRBs) help governments to uphold their commitments to gender equality, such as those in the CEDAW, but GRB also greatly increases the capacity of governments to tackle wider economic and social priorities such as economic growth and poverty reduction. In addition, GRB enhances governance by encouraging, among other things, accountability, participation, equity, efficiency and transparency.

### ***GRB in Malaysia***

The Government of Malaysia has for many years stressed the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into its development planning and allocation of resources. For example, *The National Policy on Women 1989* notes the need for information on target clientele to be 'gender categorised' to enable 'appropriate assessment'.

More recently, there have been some efforts to make this commitment a reality. On 27 November 2002, the Malaysian Cabinet approved the idea of taking gender budget work forward in Malaysia and on 22 April 2003, the Economic Planning Unit approved the project document for a gender budget pilot project in Malaysia, to be spearheaded by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP provided financial and technical assistance to the project. The Gender Budget Analysis Project focused on how to make the Malaysian budget process gender-sensitive, and did this by piloting GRB initiatives across five

Ministries, namely Education, Higher Education, Health, Rural and Regional Development, and Human Resources.

As a result of the pilot project, the Ministry of Finance issued three Treasury Call Circulars which basically stated that all pilot ministries implement gender-responsive budgeting for selected programmes for the year 2006–2007 and encouraged other ministries and agencies to incorporate gender issues into their planning for programmes and activities. In order to achieve this, each ministry/agency was expected to formulate a gender strategic plan on a short, medium, and long-term basis.

The Malaysian government's standard budget formats already contain many of the basic elements for gender budget work. This is because Malaysia already has a results-oriented budget format that provides for most of the components required in a gender budget, such as description of the objective, needs analysis, clients, outputs specifications, impact and evaluation. This means that the formats can easily be adapted for gender budget work by elaborating on these elements.

With the ultimate objective of promoting gender mainstreaming within government, the pilot project focused on training budget officers in the pilot ministries in gender budget analysis skills and developing gender-sensitive budget statements that were carried out on an annual basis by the *Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara* (INTAN). To this end, the MWFCD in partnership with UNDP produced a Manual on Gender Budgeting in Malaysia ([http://www.undp.org.my/uploads/Gender\\_Budget\\_Advocacy.pdf](http://www.undp.org.my/uploads/Gender_Budget_Advocacy.pdf)) containing basic information and practical guidance on implementing GRB, targeted specifically at practitioners, both of which were launched in August 2004.

The trainings should be seen as complementary to other gender mainstreaming efforts in Malaysia. The Cabinet Committee on Gender Equality in its meeting on 6 December 2004 agreed that officers of grade 54 and above be appointed as a gender focal point (GFP) for each ministry and relevant government agencies. Subsequently, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) has asked that all relevant ministries and government agencies nominate their

(Continued from page 2)

respective officers as GFP. This has happened, meaning that there are 'gender focal officials' in each department who, in theory, ensure that gender issues and gender responsiveness are made integral to the activities of their respective departments. With budget trainings, recommendations of GFP would be supported by the necessary allocations, again, in theory.

Unfortunately, GRB has not yet expanded to cover all Ministries and agencies. Neither have state and local governments undertaken actions to implement GRB in their context. A full evaluation of the GRB pilot would be useful for sustaining GRB work in the country.

### ***Why we need Gender Responsive Budgeting***

The desirability of introducing GRB follows the understanding that there are significant differences in situations, roles, contributions, and needs between women and men, girls and boys and there is a need to 'respond' accordingly and in a deliberate manner. Policies need to be supported by budgetary allocations if they are to be implemented with a modicum of success.

Among other things, a gender-responsive budget is seen to:

- support gender mainstreaming, currently the main international approach to promoting equality between men and women;
- improve the allocation of resources to those who need them most;
- improve the comprehensiveness of data collection;
- strengthen the linkages between economic and social policy outcomes;
- track public expenditure against gender and development policy commitments;
- encourage civil society participation in economic policy making;
- help the government to comply with national and international gender equality commitments (such as national gender policies and CEDAW); and
- contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

GRB also contributes to good governance. Good governance is often described as having seven components, as follows: participation, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness, accountability, equity and inclusiveness, and the rule of law.

As we move ever further towards a society in which everyone is valued and their contribution respected and supported, GRB helps us to understand the current situation with regard to policy and budget impacts, and to open up possibilities for change. GRB stands squarely in ensuring that all men and all women are indeed valued.

*(Prepared by Marina Durano\*, Post-Doctoral Fellow, KANITA based on The Report of the Gender Responsive Budgeting Workshop compiled and written by James Lochhead for 3Gs and KANITA)*

\*Marina Durano has a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Manchester in the UK. Marina has been working on gender issues in financing for development for several years, including examining gender issues in international trade policies. She is also the coordinator for DAWN's (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) research theme on the political economy of globalisation. She is a member of KANITA's GRB team working with Penang local authorities on the institutionalisation of gender responsive budgeting.

## Glossary

- **\*Gender-responsive budgeting:** Gender-responsive budget analysis simply refers to the analysis of actual government expenditure and revenue on women and girls as compared to men and boys. Gender budgets are not separate budgets for women and they don't aim to solely increase spending on women-specific programmes. Gender budget analysis helps governments decide how policies need to be adjusted, and where resources need to be reallocated. Gender budget analysis provides women with an indicator of government commitment to address women's specific needs and rights to health care, education and employment. (Source: *UN Women* [http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=112](http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=112), accessed May 16, 2011)
- **What are gender-sensitive budgets?**

  - ⇒ The budget is *the most important policy tool of government* because, without money, government cannot implement any other policy successfully.
  - ⇒ A gender-sensitive budget ensures that the needs and interests of *individuals from different social groups* are addressed.
  - ⇒ Gender-sensitive budgets are *not separate budgets* for women or men. Instead, they bring gender awareness into the policies and budgets of all agencies.
  - ⇒ Gender-sensitive budgets are not about 50% male: 50% female.
  - ⇒ Gender budget work combines *technical knowledge* for equitable policymaking with *advocacy and organising* to engage with powerful interests and institutions.
  - ⇒ Gender-sensitive budgets recognise the ways in which (mainly) women contribute to the society and economy with their unpaid labour in bearing, rearing and caring for the people in the country.

(Source: *UNDP Gender Budgeting Manual: Manual for Trainers (2005)* [http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com\\_joomdoc&task=cat\\_view&gid=178&Itemid=189](http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=cat_view&gid=178&Itemid=189), accessed May 16 2011)
- **Gender Impact Assessment:** Examining policy proposals to see whether they will affect women and men differently, with a view to adapting these proposals to make sure that any discriminatory effects are neutralised and that gender equality is promoted. (Source: <http://www.undp.org.tr/publicationsDocuments/gm%20toolkit%20part%201.pdf>, accessed May 16 2011)
- **Gender Equality (Equality between women and men):** Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development. (Source: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>, accessed May 16 2011)
- **Sex Disaggregated Data:** For a gender analysis, all data should be separated by sex in order to allow differential impacts on men and women to be measured. Sex disaggregated data is quantitative statistical information on differences and inequalities between women and men. Sex disaggregated data might reveal, for example, quantitative differences between women and men in morbidity and mortality; differences between girls and boys in school attendance, retention and achievement; differences between men and women in access to and repayment of credit; or differences between men and women in voter registration, participation in elections and election to office. (Source: *Gender and Development Concepts and Definitions*, Reeves, H. and Baden, S., 2000 [http://www.siyanda.org/docs\\_gem/index\\_implementation/genderman.htm](http://www.siyanda.org/docs_gem/index_implementation/genderman.htm), accessed May 16 2011)

(Prepared by Siti Waringin Oon, Research Officer, KANITA)

## Highlights

### Workshop on Gender Responsive Budgeting in Penang

Dates : 21- 23 February 2011

Venue : Paradise Sandy Beach Resort, Penang

The workshop was organised by Good Governance and Gender Equality Society, Penang (3Gs) and KANITA, USM. The overall goal of the workshop was to integrate and institutionalise GRB in the various institutions and agencies in Penang as part of the gender mainstreaming efforts of the state in the context of its broader development agenda.

They were three objectives:

- To increase the understanding of participants on GRB;
- To familiarise participants with the tools and methodologies to implement GRB in Penang;
- To increase participants' capacity to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of allocating resources in their respective institutions

This three-day intensive workshop was attended by stakeholders from various sectors in society, including government officials, Members of Parliament, councillors, academicians and members of civil society. An international expert on GRB, Ms. Kristina Birkem, and Dr. Marina Durano, who were supported by a group of local resource persons, as well as officers from the state and local government, shared their expertise and experience. The workshop addressed the conceptual and methodological framework of GRB and case studies. Three case studies in the context of Penang were presented, for instances, Gender Issues on Health and Safety, Women's Participation in Decision-making, and Cash Transfer Programmes: Access by and Benefits to Women.

The workshop made several recommendations including possible initiatives to be taken as immediate, short-term as well as the more medium and long-term follow-up. Firstly, it was recommended that a data collection template and system be developed. Secondly, it was recommended that pilot projects to demonstrate GRB in action be undertaken. Thirdly, it was recommended that the stakeholders are given awareness in "gender-lens" particular issues which are the responsibility of the local councils. Fourthly, it was recommended that a Gender Mainstreaming Unit/Committee be set up at the local council level. It was also recommended, as linked to this, a medium term series of trainings be conducted to increase capacity amongst all stakeholders on the various aspects of GRB. A Reference Handbook will be produced out of this workshop, targeted at all those involved in policy and budget planning and implementation as well as in advocating the acceptance of GRB as integral to those processes.

A Task Force was appointed at the Workshop to strategise on how to follow up with the above recommendations.

*(Prepared by Dr. Cecilia Ng, former Visiting Professor of KANITA, Vice President of 3Gs and present Honorary Consultant of KANITA)*



Showing the certificate of appreciation



The participants during the workshop

Group photograph of the workshop



## Advanced Gender Budgeting Workshop

Dates : 6-7 June 2011

Venue : Pasiban Agung, School of Arts, USM, Penang

The Advanced Gender Responsive Budgeting Workshop (AGRB) was organised by the Good Governance and Gender Equality Society, Penang (3Gs) and Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). The workshop saw the launching of the "Gender Mainstreaming – Justice of All" book by YB Lydia Ong Kok Fook, Penang State Exco for Women, Family and Community Development, Youth and Sports during the opening ceremony. This particular workshop was one of the planned activities following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between KANITA and 3Gs on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

The overall goal of the workshop was to integrate and institutionalise gender-responsive budgeting in the various institutions and agencies of the State of Penang in order to ensure that gender mainstreaming strategy becomes part of the broader development agenda. Objectives of the AGRB workshop were as follows:

- To enhance the capacity of participants to implement the 5-Step Approach to GRB
- To equip participants with additional tools and methodologies that are appropriate to Penang's budget processes
- To strengthen the community of GRB practitioners in Penang



The book launching



Running of the workshop



Group photo of the workshop

Participants included those who were selected from the first GRB workshop (22-23 February 2011), elected representatives from the municipal councils (Seberang Perai and Penang), state government officers, civil society activists and academicians. Many interactive discussions took place during this workshop as the participants shared and discussed their work experiences and budget practices.

The lead trainer was Professor Rhonda Sharp of the University of South Australia. She has vast consultative experiences through her work with governments and NGOs in various countries. It is interesting to note that her work on gender, government policies and budget had begun in the mid 1980s in Australia. Two invited speakers were Ms. Tan Pek leng who is currently an independent researcher and Mr. Mohd. Hairay bin Mohd Yusof, the Finance Director of the Municipal Council of Seberang Perai (MPSP).

During this workshop, participants were introduced to the Debbie Budlender's 5-step approach which has been widely used for assessing policies and their impact on women and men, as well as boys and girls. In addition, amongst other activities, a budget game was designed to develop participants' understanding of budgeting and to hone their gender analysis and budget decision making skills.

Overall, the 2-day workshop was a success as it had enabled the participants to understand and appreciate the innovative combination of budget and gender perspectives. More importantly, it also enabled them to recognise the importance of critically examining the gender needs that different programmes target, in each stage of budget planning process, including the monitoring of the impact or outcome of actual spending.

*(Prepared by Lai Wan Teng, Lecturer, KANITA)*

## Training Programme for Senior Management Staff of the Women's Development Business - Micro Finance (WDB-MF) Institution of South Africa

Duration: 14 February – 12 March 2011

Trainer : Professor Sukor Kasim

KANITA is honoured to host a month long training programme to nine senior management staff and a Board Member of the Women's Development Business Microfinance (WDB-MF) Institution of South Africa. By January 2011, WDB-MF emerged as the second biggest poverty-focused microfinance institution with a network of 31 branches in 5 regional offices. Together, they have a total staff of over 200 serving more than 70,000 mostly poor rural women in the 4 provinces of Eastern Cape, Kwazulunatal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. The request for training is basically to prepare WDB-MF towards becoming a formal financial institution by 2014. The choice of KANITA is due to the professional association of Professor Sukor Kasim with WDB-MF since 1999.



Unlike other training programmes, this programme has two main thrusts: firstly, it strives to ensure that participants are given the opportunity to reflect upon the challenges confronting their respective portfolios prior to arrival at USM for the month long training period; secondly, it aims to expose the participants to the readings, discussions, field visits with practical and simulation training sessions in order to enable them to prepare an action-plan to be implemented in their respective portfolios upon their return to South Africa. The training programme gives emphasis to Finance, Credit Operations, Training, Management Information

System, Internal Audit, Delinquency Management, Research and Development with practical input from experienced professionals in banking, accounts, Management Information System, research and gender dimensions.

The field exposure provided the participants with the realities of mission drift in microfinance on the ground and a practical session with Dr. David Gibbons of CASHPOR India\* who reflected on the Indian Microfinance Crisis as NGO-driven Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) ventured into attracting investments to become microfinance corporations. Dr. Gibbons also gave participants the opportunity to reflect on the future of their operations in view of the pending transformation of their institution into a formal financial one.

KANITA took the opportunity to brief senior management staff of WDB-MF with the latest poverty-focused research projects conducted by fellows at the centre. These research projects aim to deepen outreach to the poorest households mainly to benefit them with sustainable livelihood, the two major challenges confronting many poverty-focused microfinance institutions all over the world.

By mid April 2011, WDB-MF requested Professor Sukor Kasim and Mr. Mohamad Nazri Musir to undertake a thorough audit of their operations and to conduct transformation workshops for the staff and their clientele.

\* *CASHPOR Micro Credit is a poverty focused, not for profit Company that provides microfinance exclusively to Below Poverty Line women in eastern U.P. and Bihar. For more information, please visit <http://www.cashpor.in/index.html>*

*(Prepared by Professor Sukor Kasim, Lecturer, KANITA)*

## Inception of Re-visiting Gender in Development: Complex Inequalities in a Changing Asia

Dates : 26-29 May 2011

Venue : Asia Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway provides funding for projects that aim to critically examine the concept of gender in a rapidly changing Asia and for addressing various kinds of emerging development issues. Countries selected in these projects include Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, China, Bangladesh, India and the Philippines. One of these projects which is coordinated by Ragnhild Lund (NTNU), Babette Resurrection (Gender and Development Studies (GDS), Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)) and Philippe Doney (Gender and Development Studies (GDS), AIT) aims to re-visit past projects that have already been completed. This collaborative project which involves 14 researchers is important as it intends to ascertain whether gender as a social analytic concept has remained true to its earlier feminist promise for emancipatory and empowering outcomes for women and men, or whether it has instead dampen this possibility over time (Lund, 2011).

Among the objectives of these projects are; (i) to examine gender equity measures in the context of globalisation; (ii) to understand tensions between institutions of control and frameworks of gender justice and rights; (iii) to analyse the impact of global restructuring and gendered participation to understand how gender intersects with other factors and attributes such as ethnicity, religion, class, citizenship and sexuality.

Three researchers from KANITA have been selected to become partners in this collaborative research, namely Professor Rashidah Shuib, Dr. Noraida Endut and Ms. Zaireeni Azmi. They had participated in an inaugural workshop at AIT which was aimed to discuss and present all partners' research plans. Four major thematic groups have emerged and in different ways they make an attempt to contextualise the issues of equality, rights and development. The four groups are Environment and Resources, Governance and Gender Mainstreaming, Justice and Human Rights as well as Gender and Changing Subjectivities. At the end of the workshop, the groups agreed to challenge the usefulness of gender in development, both in terms of its theoretical framework and development practices. These insights which serve as cross-cutting and guiding themes help to connect the following sub-projects: continuity and change of gender, the static and essentialised use of the concept of gender, power, intersectionality and reflexivity. The meeting ended with the understanding that there will be a midterm workshop in July, 2012 at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen with the aim of sharing initial findings and to present chapter drafts.

*(Prepared by Zaireeni Azmi, Lecturer, KANITA)*



On stage the moderator and speakers from different races and backgrounds

### International Women's Day 2011

#### 'Humanising Women's Work in the New Economic Model: Reflecting on Decades of Women and Work in Malaysia'

Date: 17 March 2011

Venue: Lecture Hall A, USM

Each year, International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on 8 March around the world. The Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), Universiti Sains Malaysia, together with the World Alliance for Breastfeeding (WABA), celebrated IWD on the 17th of March 2011 at Lecture Hall A. The United Nations (UN) theme for this year was "*Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women*".

KANITA and WABA chose "*Humanising Women's Work in the New Economic Model: Reflecting on Decades of Women and Work in Malaysia*" as the theme for the event. The theme was an excellent choice as it captured the UN theme and USM's vision of transformation to humanise the University. Besides, KANITA strongly

(Continued from page 8)

believes that the approach of humanising women's work and recognising women's needs is worth celebrating. The celebration started at 8.45am with the arrival of the guest of honour, Puan Sri Datin Masrah Hj. Abidin, wife of the Vice-Chancellor of USM. Soon after the arrival of the VIPs and guests, USM's and KANITA's corporate video were shown. Puan Sri Datin Masrah Hj. Abidin officiated the launching of the IWD on behalf of Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, the Vice-Chancellor of USM. Her speech captured the essence of the celebration and also brought up thought provoking questions.

One of the many highlights of the event was the informal discussion with women from different walks of life. The unique space for discussion included: Actress Mariani Ismail, Puan Che Puteh Ismail (a Penangite- one of the very few female taxi drivers in Malaysia), Ms. A. Karunapikai (who was involved in the campaign to fight for 90 days of maternity leave), Puan Norjinah Moin (the pioneer who started the first breastfeeding support group in the country), and Mrs. Teow Siew Cheng (the unsung heroine who worked in a variety of jobs to raise her children). These women had one thing in common - 'they had overcome all odds in their life thus far'. The discussion was informal and lively. More importantly, the participants learnt something from these remarkable women on that day. After the discussion, towards the end of the event, a video entitled 'Voices of Hope' was shown. All in all, the event was a success! USM can look to the year's event which will be bigger and better to inspire women and celebrate achievements. Each one of us can make a difference and do our bit to ensure that the future for women and girls is bright, equal, safe and rewarding.

*(Prepared by Gaayathri Prabakaran, Research Officer, KANITA)*



Students visited the Research Exhibition Counter

### KANITA's Open Day

Date : 30 March 2011  
 Venue : KANITA Building (C02)  
 Time : 8.30 am – 5.00 pm

Over a hundred visitors from all walks of life flocked KANITA on this day for KANITA's Open Day event. The open day programme was jam packed with great film shows, quiz, lucky draws, and jumble sales while visitors were treated to fantastic food and heaps of entertainment.

The event began at 8:30am with a briefing on the mission, thrust areas & Graduate Programmes of KANITA. Prospective masters, research and undergraduate students had the opportunity to inquire about the Centre's programmes, view facilities, meet faculty members and chat with KANITA's graduate students. Subsequently, guests visited the Research Exhibition Counter and were briefed on KANITA's past and on-going research projects.

Research projects on display included the Micro-Pinj Universiti Sains Malaysia, *A Country Level Study of Women's Well-Being, Domestic Violence Against Women (DVAW), Women's Participation in Employment in Penang, A Study of Enforcement & Justice Agencies Within the Legal Framework of Domestic Violence in Malaysia (DVLAW), Sexual Harassment in Higher Education: A Case Study of Universiti Sains Malaysia and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) projects*. Each Project was introduced to the guests by the Project Leader and Research Assistants.

The Open Day event came to an end at 5:00pm. It was indeed a fun-filled educational experience.

Vital questions on KANITA's activities, projects and courses were also addressed during this event. If you missed out on the Open Day and would like to know more about KANITA please write to us at [kanita@usm.my](mailto:kanita@usm.my) or call (604)-6533436.

*(Prepared by Esther Amadi, Master Student, KANITA)*

## KANITA In-House Activities

### KANITA Seminar Series

#### **Gender-Equitable Public Policy: Challenges to Policy Design Amidst Contestations in a Multi-Polar World**

Date : 10 March 2011  
 Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA  
 Presenter : Dr. Marina Durano (KANITA's Post- Doctoral Fellow)



Dr. Marina Durano

Dr. Marina Durano's paper consisted of four sections: (1) the interaction between market relations; (2) policy space in a multi-polar world; (3) gender equitable public policies; and (4) roles of institutions for development. She emphasised that to make gender-equitable public policy possible in the context of a multi-polar world, one must also examine the capacity of the national state. The next step would be to look at the global players, especially the G20 nations, which hold the power to dominate in policy interventions in the women's constituency. Before she ended her presentation, she raised the question of the desirability of gender-equitable public policies and concluded that the legitimisation for this lies in the voice of women themselves being clearly heard.

*(Prepared by Ooi Pei Wen, Master Student, KANITA)*

#### **Targeting Married Women in Microfinance Programmes: Transforming or Reinforcing Gender Inequalities? Evidence from Ethiopia**

Date : 14 April 2011  
 Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA  
 Presenter : Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile (KANITA's Post-doctoral Fellow)



Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile

The study focused on married women borrowers of two microfinance institutions working in two contrasting regions in Ethiopia. The finding shows that the nature and the extent of microfinance impact on empowerment may vary depending on the socio-cultural and the economic contexts, as well as the strategies of the microfinance institutions. On the one hand, married women's access to microfinance services may increase women's decision-making over loans and incomes, enhance their income contributions to the household, improve their ownership over assets, expand their social networks, and reduce marital conflicts. On the other hand, programmes may also reinforce gender inequalities by increasing women's workload and perpetuating the gender segregation in economic activities. The study allows for the formulation of various recommendations for policy and further research such as the importance of microfinance institution to design locally specific loan products, design strategies to ensure women's control over loans, promote women's access to market, and regularly monitor the impact of microfinance strategies on gender relations.

*(Prepared by Nor Salwana Yusoff, PhD Candidate, KANITA)*

#### **Missing Women? Challenging The Low Female Labour Force Participation Rates in Malaysia**

Date : 25 April 2011  
 Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA  
 Presenter : Ms. Anja K. Franck

Based upon interviews conducted with women working in the informal economy in the state of Penang during 2009 and 2010, this study relooked at the low female labour force participation rate in Malaysia. According to the 2008 Malaysian Labour Force Survey, 4.7 million women remain 'outside the labour force'. Hence, despite the rapid increase in female waged labour in the past, female labour force participation rates in Malaysia have never reached above 50 percent. While these figures are cause for concern, Anja argued that official labour force data provides inadequate coverage of women's remunerative work, particularly informal, casual, home-based and contributing family work. She further argued that if women's informal and home-based work were properly accounted for and reported as work in official data, female labour force participation rates would increase significantly.

*(Prepared by Reihaneh Attaran, PhD Candidate, KANITA)*

## **The Rise of Womanhood: Rethink Power and Empowerment from Within: An Expressive Body Approach**

Date : 27 May 2011  
 Venue : Anjung Kamarsila, KANITA  
 Presenter : Ms. Aida Redza

Creative work such as painting, acting or dancing is not only a world for artists to express but is also a world that has power to change. Aida shared her personal experiences as a female dancer, and her personal life journey, that has influenced her throughout the years. She emphasized on the positive changes that can be made in society through creative work. During her presentation, Aida invited all the participants to practice a number of dancing movements in a group of two to three persons. The main purpose of this activity is to get the participants to appreciate the power of one's bodies and to recognise that body is also an instrument in terms of communication such as expressing and conveying messages. Aida, who is actively involved in various advocacy activities in the community on environment, humanity and empowerment issues, has been consistently using creative work as a method to create awareness and to advocate for relevant societal causes. The presentation ended with a sharing of thoughts and feelings from the participants.

*(Prepared by Shariza Kamarudin, Master Student, KANITA)*

### **Graduate Seminar Series**

#### **Gender and Islam in Malaysia: Women's Participation in Religious Discourse**

Date : 4 May 2011  
 Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA  
 Presenter : Ms. Crystal Corman

Crystal presented the preliminary findings of her study on women's participation in Malaysia's Islamic discourse. Currently more females than males are enrolling in Islamic studies, *Syariah* Law and other related fields at universities in Malaysia. Women were interviewed to understand their experiences, perspectives and prospects for increased participation of religiously educated women in Islam's institutes and decision-making bodies. The study employed a mixed-method approach including participant observation, semi-structured interviews and online survey. The interviews with respondents encompassed topics such as challenges for Muslim women in Malaysia to become leaders, gender, education and Islamic values, as well as qualities needed to be a leader. The online survey was designed to measure the career aspirations of university students in Islamic studies or *Syariah* Law faculties. Its results show that a majority of students hope to become teachers or lecturers; the respondents also felt that the profession of university professor or lecturer had the largest impact on Muslim society in Malaysia.

*(Prepared by Montawadee Krutmechai, PhD Candidate, KANITA)*

### **KANITA's Family Day**

Dates : 13 – 15 May 2011  
 Venue : Colmar Tropicale Resort, Bukit Tinggi, Pahang

KANITA understands the importance of work-life balance and, as such, it organised a trip for its academic and administrative staff members, and project officers. The main aim of the trip was to enable KANITA's personnel to spend some quality time with their own family members and colleagues, as well as to appreciate members for their contribution and commitment towards KANITA throughout the year.



Upon arrival, all KANITA members were gathered for an ice breaking session and to listen to a short speech delivered by Dr. Noraída Endut, the Acting Director of KANITA. A list of activities was also prepared for

(Continued from page 11)

KANITA members so that they could have an enjoyable and memorable time with their family members and colleagues. The activities included paying a visit to the Rabbit Park, horse riding, bowling and so on. On the second day, two separate sessions were held, one for administrative staff members and the other for the academic staff members. As regards the former, the session involved a discussion regarding important issues related to administrative matters. The latter was a brainstorming session organized for KANITA's academic staff members. It was during this session that new joint programme initiatives and collaborative projects for KANITA were discussed.

The Family Day ended with a wrap-up session amongst KANITA members, followed by a visit to the Japanese Garden. The event was a huge success as it enabled everyone to participate in the activities that were organised. Needless to say, members had loads of fun and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.



Ice breaking session by Dr. Noraidia Endut



Waiting to visit Rabbit Park, bowling and horse riding



At the horse riding



Fun filled day at the Bowling Alley

(Prepared by Siti Shahrizatil Husna, IT Officer, KANITA)

### In Person with Dr. Cecilia Ng



#### DR. CECILIA NG

*Dr. Cecilia Ng is a former Visiting Professor of KANITA and Vice President of Good Governance and Gender Equality Society (3Gs), a newly registered NGO set up in December 2009 and based in Penang. She has conducted research and published widely on gender and development, gender and work, democracy and the women's movement. She is active in women's groups in Malaysia and has been involved in research, training and advocacy on gender issues in Malaysia since the early 1980s. She is currently the Honorary Consultant of KANITA.*

**KM: You are one of the pioneers fighting for women's rights/ human rights, gender issues. Nowadays, what are your main concerns about these issues?**

**CN:** When we talk about women's issues my first take always is that women are not homogenous, right? There are different groups of women with

multiple and intersecting identities. In that context, I think we have not gone far beyond looking at women as a category. We need to look at the interconnections of gender, ethnicity, class, culture, religion, sexual orientation for example. I think there is a gap in terms of understanding what intersectionality means. We assume that women are entities by and in themselves, which they are not. We still have not been able to develop a kind of analytical understanding of 'framing' Malaysian women in all their complexities, including contextualising these dynamics within a rapidly changing global context.

Another important aspect is that we are still not able to bridge the gap between the so called theory and practice of women's studies; of connecting the academe with the women on the ground, with the women's movement. Only a few have tried to bridge the gap. I believe KANITA has been trying to locate itself in that terrain, that of being a scholar activist - a public intellectual so to speak. I am pleased to say that many of KANITA staffs are also involved with women's groups such as the Women's Centre for Change, Sisters in Islam or the Gender Equality and Good Governance Society, Penang (3Gs).

(Continued from page 12)

**KM: What do you think are the possible ways to bridge the gap between theory and practice?**

**CN:** Well, you have to go to the ground rather than just doing research for the sake of research, doing more participatory type of research, doing more action type of research for policy development. For example GRB (Gender Responsive Budgeting) could be one way of trying to link up the academia, the women's NGOs and the state. We can also try to link up, bring out the voices of women on the ground, in the communities, trying to theorise these experiences as well as trying to get the buy in from the policy makers. It's about a sense of ownership from all parties. For example, now we (KANITA and the 3Gs) are working with the municipal councils (in Penang), in terms of developing a gender responsive budget, so that the budget becomes a participatory process which is able to be truly responsive to the needs of the community, to both women and men, especially the marginalised and vulnerable groups. But when we work with different parties and different players then you have to deal with this differently...(previously) we talked about women academicians and the movement, but we don't deal with the state, so now we are trying to use an innovative method (engaging with the state).

The other issue is still the unending question of empowerment. There is still a lot more to be done in terms of social, economic and political empowerment, and their links with each other. For example even though people always say women comprise 65% of the total student population in the public universities, this doesn't mean that they are automatically able to be in decision making positions. What are the ideological and structural barriers encountered and what are the opportunities available? So the overall question of empowerment, question of identity, question of solidarity of/among women in the context of shifting identities is not just an academic study of women but it needs to be linked up with their lived realities in a more meaningful, transformative and powerful manner.

**KM: For the last four and half years since you have been in KANITA, do you think KANITA has made some impact on society in terms of whether the issues pursued by KANITA are significant or embraced by the society?**

**CN:** Well, this is difficult to say. I have been here only for the past four and a half years. To be sure KANITA has been engaging in gender (issues) at the sub national, national and international level for a very long time. Recently I think we have made an impact at the sub national or the level of the state and local government. In Penang we are working with the 3Gs Penang and we sit on the state EXCO committee on Women, Family and Community Development. Together with 3Gs, we have provided trainings for state and local government personnel as well for a range of communities in Penang. I suppose, in that sense, I became that bridge in bringing together various actors, trying to do research and advocacy concurrently. Now we are in the midst of working on a Gender Responsive Budgeting project proposal which will 'kick off' next year.

At the national level I think KANITA has been doing that all this time. Prof. Rashidah Shuib and Dr. Noraida Endut for example have been collaborating with the Ministry of Health, with the NAM-Institute for the Empowerment of Women (NIEW) for example. We also have connections with UNDP and other international agencies. In that sense, the networking has been on going before I joined KANITA. But a break-through is KANITA organising The 2nd Congress of The Asian Association of Women's Studies (CAAWS 2010) which put KANITA on the international map in women's development and research. We had hundreds of requests to participate in the conference.

I would say KANITA has grown, but it runs the danger of chewing more than it can swallow as KANITA is limited in terms of human and financial resources.

**KM: How do you perceive your role in KANITA?**

**CN:** Well, I believe I was brought in for certain reasons. When Prof Rashidah approached me initially, it was to contribute to the capacity building of KANITA's students, staff and board members. So I did that in the first and second year with seminars and classes on various issues. Later it was about profiling KANITA staff and board members in terms of publishing their research and projects. So for example, I contributed towards the editing (with Dr. Noraida and Prof. Rashidah) of the book, "Our Lived Realities: Reading Gender in Malaysia" which

(Continued from page 13)

was recently published. Besides that we documented gender/women's studies in Malaysia and published the findings, including a report on situating gender equality in Malaysia. There have also been joint reports with the 3Gs on the two gender responsive budgeting workshops we co-organised, with a hands-on manual coming out in this year. Recently a team of us, led by Dr. Intan Osman, concluded a research on women and decision making in Penang and papers from this research have been presented and will be published in various forms.

Publishing is important, because as a research centre you have to show your publications, your reports - if not people are not aware what kind of research as well as programmes you are involved in.

I was also expected to assist in networking, linking up KANITA at the national and global levels. I have tried to do that as well.

**KM: How do you think KANITA should position itself within the next 4-5 years as a research centre in the academic world and as an organisation in addressing social justice issues?**

**CN:** My dream is for KANITA to fulfill its mission and vision. We had a two-day strategic meeting in 2010 and we came out with an excellent vision and mission of realising gender equality and social justice. We have to map out where we will be able to contribute in terms of the academe, in terms of the community, in terms of the bottom billion or million, in terms of the state. It's to realise and to work on that in a steadfast manner.

**KM: What do you think are the main challenges or barriers for KANITA to achieve this mission and vision?**

**CN:** People have to read and think a bit more, to think creatively, to reflect how to realise this rather than just do for the sake of doing. You are both a scholar and activist but to be able to find the combination as a thinker, scholar, activist and doer is not easy to do, because you must have that body of knowledge in gender studies, theoretically and practically.

One needs to have the commitment, (com)passion and be involved in the issues. You need to read what people say, what the latest things are before you can

actually try to see what is really going on. Reading alone is not enough because it is by relating to others, by going out to international conferences or meetings or trainings, by being involved that the ideas will come to you. People learn from you also because when you are in the field, you talk about what KANITA is doing and so people learn and will ask you questions. One needs to be exposed, but then you need to be exposed from the position of knowledge, experience and wisdom. If you just go and don't say anything people will question your attendance. You have to know, to relate and be able to contribute.

It is important for you to develop your expertise so that people will know you because of your knowledge and experience in that field. For example what is KANITA known as? What is its strength? Can you tell me? Research? But research in what? If I want to work on gender and conflict management/studies, I know where to go. If I want to develop my understanding on gender, ethnicity and class where is the place? Or if I want to look at culture and religion, or on democracy, the global economic crisis, sexuality or VAW issues, I should be able to recommend that this is the place and this is the person. The 'experts' would be visible because they are publishing, sharing their experiences and they can be located.

**KM: What is your advice for the young researchers?**

**CN:** Think more, read more, discipline yourself, work hard, go to the ground. You have to have the passion, the compassion, don't be so stressed out (with KPIs), don't be too hard on other people, you know (laugh). Be aware of your own limitations, talk to people, be open, don't be shy and always try your best. I mean, all of us started young in that sense – fumbling and bumbling along - so it's being open to learning, being mentored by other people, and later you can mentor others.

*(Prepared by Zaireeni Azmi, Lecturer, KANITA)*

## Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

### The Visit of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), Indonesia to Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), USM, Penang

On March 24 2011, KANITA received a visit from Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), Indonesia, an outcome of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between KANITA and UMY in October 2010.



The meeting between KANITA and UMY

The delegation from UMY consisted of seven members, led by Dr. Achmad Nurmandi, Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (ISIPOL). KANITA, which served as the host, was led by the Acting Director, Dr. Noraida Endut. At the meeting, all KANITA's academic and administrative staff were in attendance.

The agenda for the meeting was the international joint seminar to be organized in collaboration between KANITA and UMY this year. The theme chosen was 'Towards Good Governance and Leadership: Decent Livelihood for Women'. The seminar will be held on July 28, 2011 at Lecture Hall A, Universiti Sains Malaysia. A publication in the form of an abstracts and proceedings book will be the outcome of the seminar. An earlier joint seminar under the theme 'Women in Local Governance and its Contribution to Good Governance: Challenges and Models to Global Governance' had been successfully organised by UMY KANITA on 15 October 2010 in Jogjakarta hosted by the Universitas Muhammadiyah.

The visit symbolises the effort to strengthen international cooperation networks between KANITA with Indonesia in general and UMY in particular.

*(Prepared by Hasniza Mohd Hassan, Executive Officer, KANITA)*



From left, Dr. Cecilia, Dr. Noraida, Prof. Susie, YB Chong Eng and Puan Aida

### Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Signing Ceremony between Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and The Good Governance and Gender Equality Society, Penang (3Gs)

Date : 9 May 2011

Time : 2.30 pm - 4.00 pm

Venue : Briefing Room, Public Relations Office, Chancellery Building, USM

The MoU Signing Ceremony between KANITA and 3Gs, Penang has forged another level of collaborative ties between Universiti Sains Malaysia and civil society represented by 3Gs which also directly involved the State Government of Penang. Currently KANITA and 3Gs are working together on gender responsive budgeting for the Penang State Government. The signing was represented by members of both organizations. Dr. Noraida Endut, Deputy Director of KANITA, witnessed the signing while the signatory was completed by Professor Susie See Ching May, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Industrial and Community Network) of USM. The 3Gs was represented by its President, YB Chong Eng who signed the MoU while the Vice President, Puan Aida Yusof Rawa signed as a witness. Both the academic and support staff of KANITA and members of 3Gs staff were present. Prior to the signing, the Deputy Director of KANITA gave a welcoming address and Professor Susie See Ching May addressed the officiating MoU on behalf of Vice Chancellor of USM. The MoU has identified a number of KANITA and 3Gs activities up for collaboration such as, research collaboration, publications conferences, workshops, symposiums, staff exchanges and the like. At the ceremony, a book entitled 'Gender and Rights: Analysis for Action (2011)' was launched. The book was authored by Dr. Cecilia Ng, the former Visiting Professor of KANITA as well as the former Vice President of 3Gs and currently the Honorary Consultant of KANITA.

*(Prepared by Siti Waringin Oon, Research Officer, KANITA)*

## Retirement Ceremony of Prof. Rashidah Shuib and Puan Norizan Shahiran

Date : 15 June 2011

Venue : Anjung Kamarsila, KANITA

KANITA organised a retirement ceremony for Prof. Rashidah, the Director, who was scheduled to retire on 21 June 2011, and Puan Norizan, the Administrative Assistant, who officially retired on 30 May 2011. KANITA welcomed the news that Prof. Rashidah would be continuing her contract with KANITA, as its Director, until December 2012. The event started off with a welcoming speech by Dr. Noraida Endut, the Deputy Director, followed by a speech from Prof. Rashidah, who gave her personal thoughts on the working abilities and creativity of Puan Norizan as a KANITA staff. She then spoke on her own meaningful experiences in the course of her own working life. Called upon to speak, Puan Norizan expressed her heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Rashidah and colleagues. A number of board members and all KANITA members joined the ceremony. The event came to an end with a cake cutting ceremony, which was also to mark the birthday of Prof. Rashidah. This was followed by a lunch reception.



From left, Puan Norizan and Prof. Rashidah

*(Prepared by Vasumathy Sukumaran, Master Student, KANITA)*

### KANITA

#### VISION

Transforming society towards gender equality and social justice

#### MISSION

As a Centre of Excellence, KANITA is committed to research, advocacy and community engagement utilising and promoting a gender and social equality framework. It strives to impact the academe, the state, women and the society at large and in particular, the bottom half billion.

#### Contact :

Website: <http://kanita.usm.my/>

Email: [kanita@usm.my](mailto:kanita@usm.my) Phone: 60-4-653 3436 OR

60-4-653 3445

Fax: 60-4-656 6379

Address: **Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA)**  
**Universiti Sains Malaysia 11800 USM, Penang, Malaysia**

### UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

#### VISION

Transforming Higher Education for a Sustainable Tomorrow

#### MISSION

USM is a pioneering, transdisciplinary research intensive university that empowers future talent and enables the bottom billions to transform their socio-economic well-being.

### EDITORIAL TEAM

#### Advisor

Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib

#### Editors

Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib

Assoc. Prof. Intan Osman

Assoc. Prof. Khor Yoke Lim

Assoc. Prof. Shakila Abdul Manan

Dr. Diana Wong

Lai Wan Teng

#### Coordinator

Lai Wan Teng

#### Layout

Siti Shahrizatil Husna Shahrudin

#### Contributors

Dr. Marina Durano

Dr. Cecilia Ng

Esther Amadi

Gaayathri Prabakaran

Hasniza Mohd Hassan

Lai Wan Teng

Marina Abdullah

Montawadee Krutmechai

Nor Salwana Yusoff

Ooi Pei Wen

Prof. Sukor Kasim

Reihaneh Attaran

Shariza Kamarudin

Siti Shahrizatil Husna Shahrudin

Siti Waringin Onn

Vasumathy Sukumaran

Zaireeni Azmi

#### Photographer

Abdul Ghaffur Abdul Aziz

*KANITA would like to wish Happy Ramadhan Al-Mubarak!*

*May you have a blissful one!*