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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT – CAAWS 2010

Date : 9-11th December 2010

Venue : City Bayview Hotel, Georgetown, Penang

Theme : Debating Gender Justice in Asia

The Asian Association of Women's Studies (AAWS), Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) Universiti Sains Malaysia, and the South East Asian Association for Gender Studies Malaysian Branch (SAMA) are jointly organizing the international conference of The 2nd Congress of the Asian Association of Women's Studies (CAAWS 2010).

This forthcoming congress calls for your attention to participate and debate on the issues in the context of re-claiming and re-invigorating gender justice in Asia. The conference has invited a list of highly recognized speakers and researchers to share their insightful research findings. The selected four sub-themes are as follows:

- Feminism (s) in Asia and gender justice
- Gender, culture and religion
- Citizenship, leadership and governance
- Globalisation and alternative development

For enquiries, registration or more information, please visit CAAWS 2010 website at <http://kanita.usm.my/aaws2010.asp>.



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Unveiling Domestic Violence against Women in Malaysia

According to the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (UN 1993, 2), the term 'violence against women' means "...any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (UN General Assembly 1993, p.1). Another resolution to be noted is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and is often described

as an international bill of rights for women. The CEDAW consists of a preamble and 30 articles and it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination (CEDAW 1992, p.1). In Malaysia, the national women's machinery, under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFC), is responsible for overseeing CEDAW's implementation and coordinating the State's obligations.

However, despite the State's obligation towards eliminating violence against women, Malaysia still has "a dearth of comparable data", on the prevalence, nature, causes



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and consequences of violence (WHO 2005, p.3). The most readily available data are those recorded by the Malaysian Police Department and hospitals. The only known 'proper' study done was carried out by the Women's Aid Organization (WAO) in 1995 involving 1221 respondents (WAO 1999, 21). In the last 15 years, no known big study has been done on domestic violence against women. This raises concern because it implies that the State is not serious in combating violence against women, and even if it is committed, it means that interventions were done without complete data. Thus intervention could be symptomatic and not comprehensive.

The absence of data on VAW in Malaysia could be due to various reasons. Generally, as most incidences of domestic violence often go unreported, it is difficult to measure the true extent of the problem. This could be due to the fact that domestic violence has long been considered a personal matter, to be resolved within the family or community and specifically for women, a matter of self-blame or shame. The other reason could be cultural norms and the stigma attached to domestic violence, which could discourage women from speaking up. In addition to that, the lack of political commitment could also be a reason for the gap in data on violence against women. However, more recently, domestic violence is being increasingly recognized as a significant social and public health concern as well as a human rights issue, which call on governments to fulfill their duty to intervene.

Given that there is a serious epidemiological gap in our knowledge of domestic violence in Malaysia, there is a need to collect data which allows for comparable analysis to be done nationally and between regions with high and low prevalence of domestic violence. Hence, KANITA took up the challenge, with the financial support from the Research University grant, to conduct a prevalence study on "Women's well-being and domestic violence against women in Malaysia"; the first of its kind using an international WHO questionnaire. KANITA, as a Centre of Excellence at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) sees this research as an obligation on its part in championing women's and gender issues.

KANITA took the opportunity to engage with the prevalence study, adhering to its objectives, which is to intensify the impact and significance of KANITA as a centre of reference concerning research on women's and gender issues for the academe, state and society in Malaysia and the region. The end result of this research endeavor is to impact relevant policies on domestic violence against women (DVAW) in the country.

The difference between a regular survey and KANITA's DVAW research is that it is a prevalence study. Basically, a prevalence study is an epidemiological study, which examines the number of cases of the condition at a particular point in time. It is an enormous study, involving

3500 respondents around Peninsular Malaysia. Initially, the study was meant to be a country-wide study, covering both West and East Malaysia, but due to several constraints, the research team decided to focus on the Peninsular. At present, data collection is in progress, whereby almost half of the respondents have been interviewed. Preliminary results on the validation phase were presented at the [Domestic Violence in Asia: The Ambiguity of Family as Private-Public Domain](#) Conference, Singapore. A paper would also be presented at the 2nd Congress of the Asian Association of Women's Studies (CAAWS) to be held on the 9th – 11th of December 2010 in Penang.

The advantages of doing a prevalence study are numerous. First and foremost, it reaches all sections of society, irrespective of age, class and race. Secondly, we are able to penetrate and create awareness among Malaysian women on violence against women and its different forms, in particular the less obvious forms such as psychological or emotional violence. Besides creating an understanding on the issue, a prevalence study enables us to reach out to victims of violence, which would not have been captured in any other survey or research. An advantage for women who have been abused is that, the interview does provide space for them to think about and talk about their experiences of violence, which they may have denied and suppressed.

Given the big sample size required in a prevalence study, the challenges of dealing with this research are many but the benefit outweighs it. One of the hidden advantages, which emerged from this prevalence study, is the training of enumerators, which sensitized the team to issues of gender-based violence and built team spirit that lead to action & advocacy. Based on the feedback from enumerators, the training sessions created awareness and widened their spectrum of understanding on the issue of violence among women. The training also builds the research capacity of the enumerators resulting in a pool of trained enumerators for future research. On the other hand, one of the main challenges faced in conducting this study in a multi-ethnic setting is that, the Chinese respondents have been found to be rather unwilling to co-operate and this will affect the prevalence study as the ethnic composition statistically will not be achieved. Also, urbanites were reluctant to open their doors to be interviewed. These scenarios are not distinctive only to this particular research but also to other researches done in Malaysia.

Notwithstanding the challenges, solutions to re-strategise to be able to collect quality and reliable data are underway as the importance of the data on violence against women is fundamental and much needed to be done to combat the epidemic. The data collected at the end of the study will enable us to identify gaps in knowledge and data collection, and give particular attention to highlight successful strategies to combat violence against women. Importantly, the study will include policy recommendations that encompass effective remedies and prevention and rehabilitation measures. It will

also make available the data to health practitioners, researchers, government officials and other relevant groups.

At the end of the three-year study, a report will be submitted to the WHO in Geneva. The importance of having data on DVAW in Malaysia has to be stressed time and again. Without important data as such, we, as a nation will never have a clear picture of the prevalence of DVAW among our women and moreover, necessary solutions and remedies to help these women will never reach them. In addition, the unavailability or inaccessibility to data can detract us from our work in advocating for women and their rights.

References

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United Nations (UN). 1993. *General Assembly*. United Nations, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm> (accessed September 30, 2010).

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(The article is prepared by Gaayathri Prabakaran and Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib.)

HIGHLIGHT

Associate Prof. Intan Osman's Reflections on her Canadian & US Trip in May-June 2010

I was fortunate to be able to spend 2 months research leave in Canada and USA between May- and early July 2010. The scholarly visit to University of Lethbridge, Alberta commenced from 8th May to 24 June where I spent research leave conducting meetings and engaging in discussions with directors of Women's Studies of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, International Management and First Nations Programmes, Cooperative Education/External Relations programme of the Faculty of Management, on possible collaborations in women's studies with KANITA. We explored potential collaborative areas including the Work Study Program under Cooperative/External Relations which will be, if materialized, the first of its kind that will bring prospective students of undergraduate standing from the Faculty of Management to experience 6-12months work in Malaysia. Thus far, the work study program finances the students to travel provincially or abroad in selected countries. We also considered the possibility of extending Penang in the work study programme which has been a yearly programme for the undergraduates majoring in International Management, to undertake work in institutions or organizations in Kuala Lumpur for 6 weeks. Commences in early May, the programme also invites industry/business leaders and social philanthropists to talk on corporate/business and social responsibilities. It is planned that the stint in Penang

would be a weekend retreat as well as part of appreciating and experiencing Malaysian culture and business.

At the end of the work study, students are required to write a reflective report and received academic credits towards the fulfillment of a degree in Management with major in International Management Program. With KANITA possibly hosting the Malaysia work program in the near future, there is a greater transparency in terms of providing the students and prospective employers gender equality indicators in work structures and practices. Although, currently, Malaysia work programme does not have enough students to be placed in Penang as another work study site, there were discussions on the possibilities of KANITA providing lectures as well as hosting the students on a weekend retreat to Penang.

I also held discussions with **Dr Glenda Bonifacio, Associate Professor in Women's Studies, and later with the Chair of Women's Studies, Prof Dayna Daniels** in June around issues of how both WMS and KANITA could co-teach existing courses offered by WMS, organize seminars for both academicians and research students from both institutions via video conferencing (on-line) or internet facilities, enabling KANITA to provide gender perspectives of Asian context in the

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WMS's curriculum. Collaborative researches in gender studies, potentially in areas that will advance research thrusts of KANITA and Women's Studies and the University of Lethbridge were also explored besides possibilities of exchange programme for both faculties and students.

Whilst visiting the university, I was also invited by the Faculty of Management to teach a summer course on Cross Cultural Management Practices (MGT 3640 A). This course provides an overview of managing people of different cultures which form the basis of and the need to understand attitudes, values, and behaviors of those in business relationships. An increased number of managers nowadays, are expected to interact and work effectively across cultural borders. Thus, awareness, training and education in cross cultural management are essential and critical to avoid failure in any business relationships involving cross cultural players. The course discusses broadly culture and management, culture and organizations and such issues as cross-cultural communication and cultural sensitivity. Students were made to understand the concept of culture, its dimensions in the business context including dilemmas in decision making; the influence of culture on organization structures, processes such as leadership and the process of communication at intra, inter and cross cultural levels. As part of learning and experiencing research in Cross Cultural Management Practices, the 29 international and local students comprising Caucasians, White Canadians, Saudi Arabian, Mexican, Chinese as well as Canadian Native students conducted a survey on Women as Managers using Women Managers' Scales and a semi-in-depth interviews on how women and men in management /supervisory position perceive their roles and practices including in leadership, work-life balancing, success, and general and specific gender issues at work. The analysis will be used to develop collaborative papers with co-authors from University of Lethbridge and a local training and intercultural company, Malaysia. We used a range of textbooks and a manual in this programme.

As the International Management Program, Faculty of Management services First Nation Studies, I was fortunate to have the incoming exchange and First Nation coordinator, Rhonda Crow who is a Blood Tribe of the First Nation as a friend and exchange faculty coordinator. Rhonda took me and my two Malaysian friends to visit and get acquainted with the Hutterites at their colony on the

Northside of Lethbridge. Their ancestors were from the Protestant Reformation and the Hutterian practices and bases his/her priorities on the denominational foundation for the last six centuries. Hutterian tribes (Brethren) are found in the prairie provinces of Canada and the Northern Plains of Montana, the Dakotas, Minnesota, Washington, and Oregon. Each colony may house as few as 50 or as many as 150. The communal way of life is based on Biblical scripture and the teachings of Jesus Christ. "Everything is in common and everything's together. There is nothing mine nor thine. All belongs to the colony and the colony belongs to all." (Head Minister of the Surprise Creek Colony, Stanford, Montana). Another Minister professed, "Hutterites live together for their religious beliefs. They came together under Jacob Hutter 560 years ago in the old country (Moravia). We try to follow the Lord's footsteps as He taught us in the New Testament. We live together equally and share everything in common, as He would have us do. The colony gives you anything and everything you need. I have no money. All the money goes in one pot and everything is distributed equally."



With Young Hutterite Girls who gave us a facility tour. See their living quarters at the back.



Hosting University of Lethbridge's Exchange Coordinators Malaysian Meals at the Rented Residence, West Lethbridge. From Right, Rhonda Crow, Intan, Khairiah, Dr Linda (Associate Dean-invisible) and Stella Kedoin.

The colony we visited arranged few young girls of 14-15 years old to give us a facility tour and briefing. We toured the dining, the kitchen, the school, cobbling, machinery, dairy and slaughtering areas as well as individual homes. With the same living structures and facilities, the Hutterites live a real organized, simple, secured, structured and definitely a very disciplined life. A colony's living quarters are always separated from the barns and garage. The colony women and young girls manage the living quarters but generally the barns and fields are the responsibilities of the guys. The church is designed in a manner that allows all colony members to sit together and yet have an extra room for a large wedding and funeral. However, in some cases such as in older established colonies, the church stands alone. Since all the colony members meet at the kitchen daily for meals, the communal kitchen is the largest building in a colony's living quarters in order to cook, seat and feed a large group of communes at one time. However, men and women seat on separate side all according to age, whereas, the children from 5-15 years old, under close supervision by the German school teacher and his wife eat in the children's dining room separated from the adults and they clean the room, wash their own dishes and set the tables.

The cooking area is spacious with large equipment (similar to that of a restaurant) including a broasting pan, oven, deep fryer and large steam kettles for soap. The ladies take weekly turn in the colony's bakery as well as preparing all the meals. The menu of the week is decided by the head of the kitchen committee. Hutterite women are also given the responsibilities to decide and provide their inputs on what facilities would be suitable to their living quarters or kitchen areas and of course in planning the wedding and the arrival of a baby in the colony. In short the women are responsible for all the reproductive roles.

We spoke to an older Hutterite woman to find out her roles within her family and the colony. In the colony, the older one gets, the better would be his/her position in the colony. For a woman in the colony, the responsibility will be more of domestic, care giving, ensuring family is taken care off as well as tending to commune domestic and family needs. As for the younger girls, they see lives as potential wives and mothers as a big commitment on top of serving God and the colony. Thus, many would rather postpone their baptism until they are ready and adult enough to make a personal profession of faith. The postponement allows, especially the young ladies who are not as free as the boys, to have some space in not honouring "colony abiding rules" including access to TV or newspapers or hand phones. Once baptized, they need to lead a Christian way of life with total devotion to God, the colony and member Hutterites. Any forms of deviance amongst member Hutterites will be made known to the Minister of the church who is also the appointed leader of the colony.

My second community visit was to the Blood Tribe Reserve where the Canadian Indians or the Natives reside and practice their aboriginal rights and culture. Rhonda who is a Blood Tribe herself took us for a tour of the Reserve, showing us the administration centre that houses the Reserve's clinic, counseling, accounting and finance, the bank and the council building that showcases the artifacts of all the previous chiefs and significant others including women aboriginals who fought for the rights of their own tribe. On the way back, we visited Rhonda's mother, Mrs Nora Eagle Bear at her home in Cardston, East of Lethbridge, close to the Blood Tribe Reserve we visited earlier. Nora is a primary school teacher teaching the aboriginal children at the Reserve. Her home, immaculate, finely furnished with colors symbolizing aboriginal pride and values, is set in a large farm overlooking the never ending farm lands belonging to the reserve which seems to end at the Rocky Mountains. She collects royal dolls including the late Princess Diana, Prince Charles, the Queen, and the Rock Divas, Elvis, the Beatles and other famous actors and actresses. We shared lunch featuring our Malaysian nasi goreng and her potato salad and met her other son and daughter. One of her grandsons entertained us with an aboriginal ring dance, an art of using 18 hula hoops and connecting them one by one while dancing. He is only 12 years old but has mastered the art of dancing using the rings; the dance that truly expresses the way the aboriginals value their identity and ownership.

My next international trip was to attend and present a paper titled *Understanding Motivation, Empowerment and Sustainability Outcomes of Women Home-stay Entrepreneurs in West Malaysia. A Preliminary Analysis* at the International Council for Small Business (ICSB), Entrepreneurship: Bridging Global Boundaries June 24-27, 2010. Hilton, Cincinnati, Netherland Plaza, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. About 390 papers and workshops of 12 tracks including Women and Minority Entrepreneurship which hosts our paper were presented. The feedback to my paper that I received was encouraging, allowing me and my co-authors to think through the measures of sustainability that would equitably reflect the nature of rural women's entrepreneurship. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that our paper was listed as one of the best paper award finalists in two categories:

- Best paper finalist among nine other papers for the award in women's entrepreneurship sponsored by the International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship (IJGE) and the National Women's Business Council (NWBC)
- Best paper finalist among seven other papers for the award in the Asia-Pacific Small Business Management sponsored by the Korea Association of Small Business Society (KASBS).

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My last stop and visit was to the University of Victoria 29 June till 1st July 2010, visiting and meeting with senior researchers from various faculties including from the Faculty of Business whom I have collaborated with in conducting Human Resources and Firm Effectiveness research, Women's Studies and the Centre for Cooperative & Community Based Economy amongst others and we discussed potential research areas that we could possibly work together in the near future. I also had the opportunity to present the findings to a group of scholars in business, social sciences and women's studies on Women's Entrepreneurship in the Homestay Industry. The 3-night stay on campus was refreshing, peaceful and delightful with rabbits and bunnies on the university ground, besides appreciating and witnessing the 1st July Canada Day celebrations downtown and the Inner Harbour.

Reference:

Lisa Marie Stahl (2003). *My Hutterite Life*. Montana, USA: Farcountry Press. ISBN 10: 1-56037-264-8; ISBN 13: 978-1-56037-264-6



With Dr Carmen Galang, my collaborator and an Associate Prof in Marketing and Human Resources, University of Victoria.

GLOSSARY

Battered women: Women who are physically and mentally abused over an extended period, usually by a husband or other dominant male figure. Characteristics of the battered woman syndrome are helplessness, constant fear, and a perceived inability to escape. Battered women may also seek help from various services unrelated to the justice system. The most popular of these has been shelters, which provide temporary housing, food, counseling, and support services. However, shelter practices have been found to be inconsistent and infantilizing, wherein traditional notions of individualism, self-sufficiency, and financial independence are emphasized, without an appreciation for the benefits of social support.

(Source: Angela M. Moe. "Violence against Women", *Seeking Silenced Voices and Structured Survival: Battered Women's Help*. No.7, 2007. <<http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/13/7/676>> accessed September 15, 2010)

Health consequences: Domestic violence against women leads to far-reaching physical and psychological consequences, some with fatal outcomes.

(Source: "Domestic violence against women and girls", *United Nations Children Funds, Innocenti Research Centre, Florence Italy*. No.6, 2006. <<http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest6e.pdf>. -accessed September 15, 2010)

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): The term "intimate partner violence" describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy. IPV can vary in frequency and severity. It occurs on a continuum, ranging from one hit that may or may not impact the victim to chronic, severe battering.

There are four main types of intimate partner violence (Saltzman et al. 2002):

- **Physical violence** is the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury, or harm. Physical violence includes, but is not limited to, scratching; pushing; shoving; throwing; grabbing; biting; choking; shaking; slapping; punching; burning; use of a weapon; and use of restraints or one's body, size, or strength against another person.
- **Sexual violence** is divided into three categories: 1) use of physical force to compel a person to engage in a sexual act against his or her will, whether or not the act is completed; 2) attempted or completed sex act involving a person who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act, to decline participation, or to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act, e.g., because of illness, disability, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or because of intimidation or pressure; and 3) abusive sexual contact.
- **Threats of physical or sexual violence** use words, gestures, or weapons to communicate the intent to cause death, disability, injury, or physical harm.

• **Psychological/emotional violence** involves trauma to the victim caused by acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics. Psychological/emotional abuse can include, but is not limited to, humiliating the victim, controlling what the victim can and cannot do, withholding information from the victim, deliberately doing something to make the victim feel diminished or embarrassed, isolating the victim from friends and family, and denying the victim access to money or other basic resources. It is considered psychological/emotional violence when there has been prior physical or sexual violence or prior threat of physical or sexual violence. In addition, stalking is often included among the types of IPV. Stalking generally refers to "harassing or threatening behaviour that an individual engages in repeatedly, such as following a person, appearing at a person's home or place of business, making harassing phone calls, leaving written messages or objects, or vandalizing a person's property" (Tjaden & Thoennes 1998).

(Sources: Saltzman LE, Fanslow JL, McMahon PM, Shelley GA. Intimate partner violence surveillance: uniform definitions and recommended data elements, version 1.0. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; 2002. Available from: http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pubres/ipv_surveillance/intimate.htm accessed October 27, 2010)

Tjaden P, Thoennes N. Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Washington (DC): Department of Justice (US); 1998. Publication No. NCJ 169592. Available from: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/169592.pdf> [PDF 186 KB] accessed October 27, 2010)

Violence against women: Violence against women is the threat or use of force that results in or may result in injury or death. (*See also Gender-based violence*)

Gender-based violence, or "violence against women," includes many kinds of harmful physical, emotional, and sexual behaviors against women and girls that are most often carried out by family members, but also at times by strangers. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women includes a widely accepted definition of violence against women as:

... any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. (United Nations General Assembly, 1993)

(Source: Violence against Women: The Health Sector Responds, Washington, DC: PAHO.2003. <<http://www.paho.org/English/DPM/GPP/GH/VAWHealthSector.htm>>-accessed September 15, 2010)

(The glossary of terms is prepared by Nur Saffiah Hussin)

KANITA IN-HOUSE ACTIVITIES

KANITA Seminar Series

Brain and Gender: Research Implications

Date : 8 July 2010

Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA

Presenter : Associate Professor Zainal Ariffin Ahmad, Graduate School of Business



From left: Dr. Zainal Ariffin Ahmad & Dr. Intan Osman

Dr Zainal Ariffin Ahmad in presenting his contemporary research on gender and the brain in regards to neuroimaging using fMRI and EEG, revealed the relationship of the male and female brains when mapped to decision making, leadership, intelligences, crime, pain, and perception. Accordingly, the findings attribute the proportion of the brain structure of men versus women to the ways men and women behave in child rearing. The brain structure also affects gender learning mode as women tend to excel in language proficiency whilst men at Math and Science subjects. In addition, women, as they use both sides of their brain to communicate are more inclined to multitask, to give explanation in their communication and are more sensitive to others' feelings and expectations. On the other hand, men usually use only one side of the brain to communicate and tend to give direct instruction when communicating with others. Dr Zainal advises seminar audiences to exercise alert reading, writing and working with their brains so as to be mentally alert. He was heard quoting, "To make your brain alive, you must always make your brain connected." He ended the seminar by urging the audiences to actively explore the manner in which they can apply brain research and incorporate neurosciences into their research.

(The report is prepared by Ooi Pei Wen.)

Semen Anxiety: Hermeneutical Phenomenology and the Myth of Transgenderism



Date : 26 July 2010

Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA

Presenter : Associate Professor Latif Kamaluddin, School of Social Sciences

What is transgenderism in the light of Hermeneutical Phenomenology and the Buddhist Doctrine of Dependent Origination? Dr. Latif's presentation attempted to deconstruct and reconstruct transgenderism within the context of the two approaches above. Whilst still adhering to Heidegger and Ricoeur, Dr. Latif 'transubstantiated' transgenderism by reformulating its context and content in a manner that transcended symbolic interpretationism, whilst descending into the realm of Buddhist 'no mind' causality. The presentation appeared to be a purposeful 'mystification' of the term 'transgenderism'.

Associate Professor Latif
Kamaluddin

(The report is prepared by Asso. Prof. Latif Kamaluddin.)

Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) for Action: Towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights Based Society for People with Disabilities – What have been achieved in Malaysia

Date : 19 August 2010

Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA

Presenter : Associate Professor Tiun Ling Ta, School of Social Sciences



Dr. Tiun Ling Ta giving his talk.

Dr. Tiun is an advocate for PwDs (People with Disabilities) and President of The Association of Physically Disabled, Malaysia. In the seminar, he presented a different dimension of awareness about issues faced by PwDs. One of the resolutions adopted by the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) is to promote an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for PwDs in the Asian and Pacific region by 2012. However, according to Dr. Tiun, the issues of disabilities were not taken seriously by the policy makers. Despite the fact that Malaysian government has regulated the Disability Act, however, there is a lack of enforcement to ensure adherence to the Act. Dr. Tiun highlighted how PwDs continue to be excluded from many activities in society, emphasizing that change needs to occur both at the institutional and personal levels in order to create a barrier-free society. Some areas of concerns include early detection, intervention and education, training and employment as well as access to built environment.

(The report is prepared by Teo Sue Ann.)

GRADUATE SEMINAR SERIES

A study on the level of equitable gender norms among Malaysian men using the translated, adapted and validated Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale

Date : 16 August 2010
Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA

Vasumathy Sukumaran (KANITA's Graduate Student) presented her Master's proposal which will be focusing on the prevailing gender norms among Malaysian men and will measure the level of equitable gender norms and in-equitable gender norms by using a validated Malay GEM scale among the participants in a gender intervention programme. The main objective of this quantitative study is to have a better understanding on masculinity and gender norms in the context of Malaysian men. However before the scale could be applied, it has to be translated into Bahasa Malaysia, adapted and validated. Following that the scale will be applied in an intervention programme on gender norms to see whether gender equitable changes have taken place post intervention. This scale could also be used in the future as an evaluation instrument to measure the degree of changes among male participants who have undergone intervention programmes related to gender norms. This will be the first study in Malaysia to use a validated GEM scale meant for the Malaysian context.

(The report is prepared by Vasumathy Sukumaran.)

The Challenges in Creating Sustainable Livelihood for the Poor through Islamic Microfinance Product

Date : 26 August 2010
Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA

Nor Salwana Yusoff (KANITA's Graduate Student) presented her PhD thesis proposal that examines the roles of the Islamic Microfinance Products as financial tools for the poor enabling them (the poor) to create a sustainable livelihood which could serve as measures of successful achievement. The study will use in-depth interviews on a total of 300 respondents as well as keeping 'financial diaries' to gather data. A conceptual framework adopted from CARE's Livelihood Model will anchor the study. Salwana believes that her research will help to empower the poor and create sustainable livelihood for them. She also hopes the findings will contribute to the corpus of knowledge in the field.

(The report is prepared by Nor Salwana Yusoff.)

Journal Club Presentation

Thomas J. & Klinth, R. (2008). Caring fathers the ideology of gender equality and masculine positions. *Men and Masculinities* 11 (1), 42-62.

Date : 18 August 2010.
Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA

Vasumathy Sukumaran presented an article entitled, "Caring fathers: The ideology of Gender Equality and Masculine Positions" at KANITA's journal club presentation. This article explores Swedish men's relations to fatherhood in general and the new ideal of the caring, and present father in particular. Four different groups of Swedish men- Christian men, psychotherapists, a male network and immigrant men were chosen as respondents for this study to discuss issues concerning new gender ideals, the modern father and father as important caretakers. These issues were explored through focus group interviews. The result shows that various factors including age, social background and religion influence men's caretaking role. In addition, the ideology of gender equality has a strong general influence on men's ways of relating to and phrasing these issues.

This study is part of a larger research project that explores how gender-equal and caring man is constructed. The paper is very interesting and well written. The findings and conclusions are well organized and rationally stated. However, the research methodology is weak. First, the data gathering methods and the sample selection strategies are not discussed. The study sample is also very small.

(The report is prepared by Vasumathy Sukumaran.)

(Continued from page 9)

Miyuki Kazui. (1997). The influence of cultural expectations on mother-child relationships in Japan. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 18, 485-496.

Date : 13 October 2010
Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room, KANITA

Pei Wen began her presentation by summarizing the research findings of the paper. One of the highlights of the study was the impact of deep-rooted Japanese's culture and belief on reinforcing mothers' role. Women are often blamed for concerns relating to children's physical and behavioral problems. Also, based on Japanese culture, the mother is seen as occupying the lowest rank in a family. On the contrary, fathers are not responsible for nurturing of children. The general perception of Japanese parenting style is also shared amongst educators and clinicians. Pei Wen pointed out that the writer did not state clearly the rationale of the selected methodology and the process on how the research was conducted, particularly on the selection of respondents.

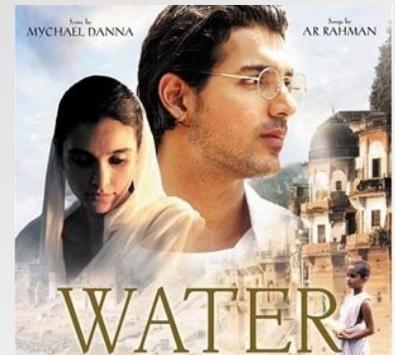
(The report is prepared by Ooi Pei Wen.)

KANITA Film Series

WATER

Date : 13th August 2010
Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room

The film illustrates the scenarios of discrimination against widows prior to the independence of India. It portrays how widows were poorly treated and locked in ashrams. It shows that widows had no access to public service. They were not allowed to re-marry even if they become widow at a very young age. They had to live in poverty, shaving heads, living in isolation and ignored by the society. The patriarchal ideology placed all social powers in a man while a woman is being manipulated through faith. Religion was used to subjugate women by prohibiting and discouraging them to remarry. The film advocates that widowhood has to be seen as an issue of public interests, and society should stop from perpetuating the traditional marginalization of widows as this is a clear violation of rights.



PEREMPUAN BERKALUNG SORBAN

Date : 20th August 2010
Venue : Rafidah Aziz Conference Room

This film tells a story of a girl named Annisa, who grows up in a family steeped in conservative Islamic tradition. Her father runs a *pesantren* – an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. The *pesantren* teaching is mainly an Islamic study. But taking a conservative interpretation, girls are also taught to be women who must submit to men. Annisa who has always been rebellious of the restrictive life has always been critical of the prevailing gender biases in the *pesantren* teaching, particularly, she challenges what she sees as the teaching of Islam which favours men not women. The film clearly demonstrates the various discriminations against girls within the family, (e.g. prohibition of horse riding, joining university, mobility, choice of marriage partner, etc). It also shows gender inequalities within marriage, including violence against women.



(The film reports are prepared by Siti Shahrizatil Husna.)

Conferences/ Workshops/ Forum

International Conference of Humanities and Social Sciences (ICHSS 2010)

Date : 28 June – 30 June 2010

Venue : Paris, France

The International Conference of Humanities and Social Sciences (ICHSS 2010) was organized by the World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology (WASET). The World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology is a scholarly open access, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, quarterly and fully refereed journal focusing on theories, methods and applications in Science, Engineering and Technology. The journal is indexed in Google Scholar, EBSCO, INTUTE, Engineering Index (EI), and Electronic Journals Library.

The conference brought together academics, scientists, researchers and postgraduate students to exchange and share their experiences and research results about all aspects of science, technology management and social sciences, and discuss the practical challenges encountered and the solutions adopted.

The 3-day conference was attended by almost 200 participants from the educational institutions. Ms. Siti Waringin Onn, the Research Officer of KANITA presented a paper entitled: “Knowledge and Attitude among Women and Men in Decision Making on Pap Smear Screening in Kelantan, Malaysia”. The paper is published in refereed conference proceedings of WASET (Issue 66, June 2010, ISSN 2070-3724, Article number 349, Page: 2529-2551).

(The report is prepared by Siti Waringin Onn.)



Seminar on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sports

Date: 12-13 July 2010

Venue: National Sport Institute of Malaysia, Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur

The seminar was organised by the National Sports Institute (ISN), Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia. Datuk Paduka Dr. Mumtaz Begum Abdul Jaafar, the Executive Chairperson of the National Athletes Welfare Foundations (Yakeb), in her opening speech, urged all parties to pay more attention to sexual harassment and abuse in sports. She further emphasized that as sexual harassment is not recognised as a crime, it tends to be perceived as not serious, and victims themselves tend not to report such incidents.

The objectives of the seminar were to increase awareness and understanding of issues pertaining to sexual harassment and abuse in sports, and to discuss viable approaches to resolve these issues.

Nine experts participated in a four-panel discussions entitled “Definition of Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport”, ‘The Case Studies and Current Issues’, ‘Law Implications and Reporting Mechanisms, and ‘Managing the cases of Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sports’. The discussions highlighted the importance of debunking the myth of ‘sexy dressing’ as the cause of sexual harassment. Rather, the focus should be on the issue of power as the primary cause. The workshop recommended for more research in this area and more consciousness-raising workshops for athletes as most of them are not aware of their rights dealing with sexual harassment.

A total of 180 participants made up of athletes, coaches, students, staff of national sports associations, ISN staff, and academic staff members from Higher Learning Institutions took part in the seminar. Lai Wan Teng, an academic member represented KANITA, as she is also one of the researchers for the University Research Grant project on “Sexual Harassment in Higher Education: A Case Study of Universiti Sains Malaysia”.

(The report is prepared by Lai Wan Teng.)

Women's Potential and Capacity Optimization in the NEM

Date : 24 July 2010

Venue : Sime Darby Convention Centre, Bukit Kiara

The seminar, which raised interesting discussions was organised by the National Council of Women's Organisation and the Department of Women's Development, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development as a follow-up to the announcement of the New Economic Model (NEM) by the Prime Minister. Those who wholeheartedly supported it claimed that this would be the model to leapfrog Malaysia's economy into the high income bracket, positioning Malaysia in the "developed country" category together with Korea which previously was like Malaysia, the middle income nation. On the contrary, there were groups, including women's NGOs and academics, who raised certain concerns that the rush to push Malaysia into the developed nation status and the adoption of an even more aggressive neo-liberal economic stance, might leave women out of the development process unless practical and strategic interventions are in place to meet the needs of the women. Although, NEM strongly embedded the principle of inclusiveness, it is not clear how women would benefit from it. There seems to be more clarity on how NAM would benefit the 40% poor but nothing is specifically mentioned on how women as a group would benefit or even be considered as a "special" vulnerable group. With these concerns, the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development organized a one-day seminar on the NEM focusing on the understanding of the model and the need to optimize women's capability and potentials in the NEM. The seminar cum workshop produced several resolutions. Four resolutions which were considered important are listed below. The resolutions were presented to the Minister of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Dato' Seri Shahrizat Jalil.

- To ensure that there are KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) related to gender responsiveness in each industrial sector,
- To strengthen NGOs which are involved with the development of women entrepreneurs by ensuring that they receive financial allocation and that their capacity to do monitoring on gender mainstreaming is developed.
- To request for gender responsive budget to be included in the national budget.
- To embed gender sensitization in the school's curricula.

Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib, Director of KANITA was invited to participate in the workshop.

(The report is prepared by Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib.)



Persidangan Antarabangsa Artdo yang ke-37

Tarikh: 27-29 Julai 2010

Tempat: Palace of the Golden Horses Hotel, Selangor, Malaysia

Tema: Leadership Focus – People Development for Peak Performance

Kursus kali ini diadakan secara usahasama antara *Institute of Training and Development* (ITD) dan *Malaysian Institute of Training and Development* (MITD). Persidangan ini dianjurkan setiap tahun dan dianjurkan secara bergilir mengikut Pengerusi yang dilantik. Untuk tahun 2010, Pengerusi yang dilantik adalah dari Malaysia iaitu Dato' Dr. Toh Kin Woon.

Objektif utama persidangan ini ialah untuk meningkatkan keupayaan pengurusan sumber manusia dan tanggungjawab dalam pengurusan menerusi keupayaan bekerja melalui latihan dan pembangunan secara total di seluruh Negara di rantau Asia Pasifik dan dunia amnya. Persidangan selama tiga hari ini banyak memberi fokus kepada teknik-teknik membentuk individu menjadi seorang pemimpin yang lebih berwibawa dan berkeyakinan di samping memberi peluang kepada para peserta mengadakan hubungan atau jaringan yang baru. Tiga wakil KANITA ialah Prof. Madya Intan Osman, Dr. Noraida Endut dan Puan Hasniza Mohd. Hassan. Persidangan ini dihadiri oleh pelbagai bangsa dari pelbagai negara termasuk kakitangan kerajaan dan swasta.

(Laporan ini disediakan oleh Hasniza Mohd. Hassan.)

3G's (Good Governance and Gender Equality Society) Conference: Gender Mainstreaming: Justice for All

Date : 31 July-1 August

Venue : Tanjung Bungah, Penang

KANITA's staff and students participated in the 3G's conference being the first of its type in Malaysia. The main organizer, the Good Governance and Gender Equality Society, Penang (3Gs), held the conference so as to forward the recommendations on advancing gender mainstreaming policies to the Penang state government.

More than two hundred men and women comprising NGOs, academicians and students activists, members of political parties from Northern as well as Central Malaysia and Singapore amongst others attended the event. Conference speakers, including Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant Secretary General for Peace Building Support for the United Nations; Dato' Latifah Merican Cheong, Advisor to the Office of the Chairman of Securities Commission Malaysia; and Dr. Khoo Hoon Eng, Associate Professor, National University of Singapore, are Penangites who exemplify capable women in leadership positions. Professor Datin Dr. Rashidah Shuib of KANITA, YB Puan Lydia Ong Kok Foo and YB Puan Chong Eng are also distinguished and inspiring speakers at the conference. They are actively working on gender issues within their respective portfolios and at the state level. Dr. Lesley Clark, a former member of Australia's parliament and currently the Director of Equity and Diversity at James Cook University, spoke from her Australian context and personal experience on gender mainstreaming.

Three sub-themes shaped the agenda: engendering the economy, women's leadership and good governance, and gender sensitive social policies. After listening to speakers who introduced and spoke on the assigned topics, participants attended a pre-chosen concurrent workshop comprising a reasonably sized group to discuss the sub-theme they indicated as their choice. As participants in each workshop shared issues and concerns, they as a group, generated priority lists as part of the final recommendation document. The specifics and details generated by the participants were incorporated into a strategic and action oriented recommendations served as a community-informed resolution hand-delivered to YB Tuan Lim Guan Eng, Penang's Chief Minister.

Dr Cecilia Ng, Chairperson of 3Gs and Visiting Professor at KANITA, reiterated that the initial conference recommendations were a declaration of gender mainstreaming using broad strokes within three sub-themes. Following this conference, the 3Gs plans to travel throughout the state to gather feedback on gender mainstreaming from a broader base. Through this process, the broad strokes would be developed into specific and measurable recommendations that would allow the government to enact and the 3Gs and other gender advocates to monitor.

For current information and conference notes, visit <http://3gspenang.wordpress.com/3gs-conference-2010/>

(The report is prepared by Crystal Corman)

6th Annual International Leadership Training Programme: A Global Intergenerational Forum

Date: 5-15 August 2010

Venue: Storrs, USA.

The 6th Annual International Leadership Training Programme: A Global Intergenerational Forum was held in Storrs, USA, on 5-15 August 2010. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Chair and the Institute of Comparative Human Rights sponsored about 90 young people (age 18-30) from over seventy countries to attend the Forum. Ms. Lai Wan Teng, KANITA's academic staff, was chosen along with another 90 participants, out of 800 applicants representing more than 104 countries and 6 continents.

The Forum places premium on nurturing and developing young people for local and global leadership. It also facilitates in building bridges and a network of solidarity to promote the sharing of experiences and understanding of human rights issues. Overall, it provides an impetus to empower young leaders to play a crucial and constructive role in the development of human rights in their communities and the world at large.

Different lectures and workshops were conducted pertaining to grassroots organizing and coalition building; women's rights as human rights; understanding the effects of war and gender-based violence; and conflict resolution and peace building. The discussion topics addressed principle outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Millennium

(Continued from page 13)

Development Goals.

The Forum emphasized that women are largely ignored and under represented at peace negotiations and formal transitional justice mechanisms despite them playing a major role in the cessation of hostilities. To enable women as agents of change, it is crucial to strengthen the capacities of women to access their own strengths, assets, agency to work from grassroots to policy-making. It is also of a great importance to examine how historical and contemporary social, cultural structures and institutional frameworks and practices inhibit gender equality.

(The report is prepared by Lai Wan Teng.)

WCC's (Women's Centre for Change), 25th Anniversary Celebration

Date : 2 October 2010

Venue : G Hotel, Penang



Over 600 people attended the event to support WCC, which was set up in 1985 to help women and children facing crisis, irrespective of race, religion, or social background. The dinner successfully raised RM388, 000 which will contribute toward WCC's building fund. As usual KANITA showed its solidarity with and support for WCC through its participation in the event.

WCC offers free and confidential counseling, and legal advice, both face-to-face and through the telephone and temporary shelter for women and children. WCC also conducts talks and workshops in schools, colleges, universities, and community organizations on child sexual abuse, violence against women, women's rights, and issues relating to teenage relationships. For more information about WCC, please visit the website at www.wccpenang.org

(The report is prepared by Shariza Kamarudin.)

Gender Rights Towards Health

Date: 22 July 2010

Venue: Kuala Lumpur

This Seminar was jointly organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Gender Theme Group (UNGTG). The key objective of this seminar was to provide an avenue to disseminate findings from the two recent studies "A Country Profile for Malaysia on Gender Equity and Human Rights Issues in Health" by Professor Datin Rashidah Shuib, and "Gender and Rights Analysis for Action" by Visiting Professor Dr Cecilia Ng, as well as to seek the way forward for relevant follow-up action based on the recommendations from these studies.

Professor Rashidah was the first presenter and she gave a comprehensive overview of the situation of the gender equity and rights issues in health in Malaysia. This was followed by Dr. Cecilia Ng, who with Ng Tze Yeng, assessed the concluding comments of the CEDAW* Committee in 2006 in relation to the progress made or not made by the Malaysian Government since then. After lunch, a session entitled "CEDAW: as a Tool for Gender Equality" which included CEDAW principles, the status of the country's plans on CEDAW implementation, and the action plans on lifting the remaining reservation was presented by Ms. Ivy Josiah, Executive Director of the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO).

The two reports will be produced as KANITA's Technical Reports Series.

Note: CEDAW is acronym for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which the Malaysian Government acceded to in 1995. Once a country ratifies the Convention, a report has to be submitted to the CEDAW Committee once every four years after which the Committee makes concluding comments and recommendations for the respective governments to move forward.

(The report is prepared by Prof. Cecilia Ng.)

THE SHARING CORNER

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AS AN ANCIENT PRACTICE

Clara Ohenewa Benneh (KANITA: PhD candidate)

Female Genital Mutilation is a term used to represent a wide range of procedures used traditionally to alter the female genitals (Shell-Duncan,2001).The World Health Organization(2000) classified the various procedures into four major types. Type I-clitoridectomy-refers to partial or total removal of the clitoris. Type II – excision- entails partial or complete removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without removal of the labia majora. Type III- infibulations- the most extensive forms involves the complete removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with partial or total removal of the labia majora. With infibulations, the cut edges are stitched together, with a small opening for the passage of urine and menstrual blood. Often this opening is enlarged short before marriage and during childbirth. Type IV consists of other miscellaneous forms of manipulations of the female genitals.

Female Genital Mutilation is a very ancient practice which was performed in primeval times in Egypt, Arab countries, Rome and in Europe. The practice also pre-dates Christianity and Islam. A Greek papyrus dated 163 before the birth of Christ, portrayed girls who were brought up in the temple of Memphis in Egypt undergoing circumcision. This has led to speculations that FGM originated around Egypt and the Nile valley during the time of the Pharaohs. Evidence from Egyptian Mummies has lent some support to this claim (Dingwall, 1935; Skaine, 2005).

Knudsen (1994) recorded an early Roman technique of slipping a ring through the labia majora, as a type of FGM, during the Roman civilization. The World Health Organization,(1982) considered the 'chastity belt', which is a locking item of clothing designed to prevent sexual intercourse, introduced in Europe during the twelve century, as a type of FGM . Dingwall (1935) made references to the writing of the Greek stenographer, Strabo in Geographica Berolini (1844-1852), who witnessed excisions during his travels in Arabia, centuries before the Prophet Mohammad.

Practicing communities profess to use FGM as a means to control female sexual urge before and during marriage. It can be performed at birth,infancy,as part of puberty and marriage rites,during childbirth or even at death.(Althaus,1994;Winter,2006; Newland,2006; Aberese Ako and Akweongo,2009).

In the early twentieth and late nineteenth centuries different forms of FGM have been performed medically as a cure for 'hysteria, nymphomania, lesbianism, excessive masturbation, epilepsy, insanity, and a disease known as 'pruritus' in diverse regions and cultures, including indigenous North America, Asia and even among 'middle-class white Americans in the USA and in London, Europe. (Dingwall, 1935; Assad, 1979; Knudsen, 1994; Tietjens, 2000)

FGM as a medical practice has died out but its traditional tenet has been sustained among many ethnic groups across ages to-date. The belief that FGM is a religious requirement has been disputed on the grounds that it is not stated in any of the Holy Scriptures of the world's major religions (Althaus, 1994).The fact is that FGM is purely a cultural and traditional practice.

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A Graduate's Reflection by Teo Sue Ann (Graduated August 2010)

KANITA's graduate student and research project officer, Teo Sue Ann received her Master of Social Sciences (Gender Studies) scroll during the latest convocation ceremony in August 2010. KM is grateful to have her to share her learning journey and growing experience as one of the graduates at KANITA. Her thesis topic is "An Exploratory Study of the Experiences of Young Women and Men as Members of Political Parties in Malaysia: A Case Study in Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Selangor", under the supervision of Prof. Rashidah Shuib and the co-supervisor Dr. Noraida Endut. KM congratulates Sue Ann for her successful graduation and all *warga* KANITA are truly proud of her endeavor for making her dreams come true!

"Prof. Rashidah once described working on a research is like you think you finally see the lights at the end of the tunnel, but beware, it might be just another oncoming train. Those words struck me, because they spelled out, literally, my experience while working on the research for my Master study. I am sure many would agree that it was not easy for me to obtain my Master degree. Nonetheless, I dare say that not many could really understand the path that I had gone through. On countless occasions, I wanted so badly to give up. Fighting against that urge was really a challenge that even my magic words – "If you can get through this, you can get through anything" – could barely do the tricks to motivate me. Heck, before I saw the hardcover of the thesis, I still refused to believe that I have finally come to the end of the tunnel! Therefore, believe me when I say that I could not get to where I am now without the help from the following people.

To both of my supervisors, Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib and Dr. Noraida Endut: I don't think I can ever say thank you enough for both of your patience, guidance and time. I would also like to say that I am sorry for all the pain of reviewing my thesis, headaches and sleepless nights that I had caused you for the past three years. Without both of you to constantly pushing me and challenging my limits, I don't think I can be who I am today.

To my dearest friends (you know who you are), thank you for being the anchor of my sanity for the past three years. The fact that you all were there to support and motivate me, yet enduring all my nonsensical behaviors, endless whining and still willing to offer me help, hugs and your shoulder to cry on, means so much to me that no words can ever describe. Please also forgive me for any hard feeling that I had caused you (and will still cause you).

For my friends, who are still struggling on the path: "**trust me, you will get there.**"



Sue Ann and her main supervisor, Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib

KANITA FAMILY NEWS

KANITA welcomes two post-doctoral fellowship scholars and a non-graduating student who will be joining us for a year. KANITA looks forward to their presence and contributions to KANITA.



Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile is an Ethiopian Gender Activist. She received her PhD from Wageningen University and Research Centre, The Netherlands, in January 2010. Her PhD dissertation is entitled “Targeting married women in microfinance programmes: transforming or reinforcing gender inequalities? Evidence from Ethiopia”. Hirut has a B.A. degree in Management and Public Administration, and an M.A. degree in Regional and Local Development Studies, from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

Her key areas of expertise include gender and development-related research, training, impact assessment, policy and guideline development, gender auditing, advocacy and networking on violence against women, and participatory development approaches. She has been active in conducting gender analysis research, training and integrating gender concerns into policy and programmes and has substantial experience of advisory work with government organisations, local and international NGOs and the UN/ECA in Ethiopia.

At KANITA, Dr. Hirut will be working on microcredit and women’s empowerment research project.

Dr. Marina Durano will also be joining KANITA as a Post-Doctoral Fellow. She 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 a fellow of the Gender and Macroeconomics-International Working Group’s Gender and Macroeconomics Summer School in Salt Lake City in 2002. She was a fellow of the Ronald Coase Summer Workshop on Institutional Analysis in Budapest of the same year, and was a visiting researcher at the Institute for Developing Economies in Tokyo in 1996. Marina is the coordinator for DAWN’s research theme on the political economy of globalization. DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) is a network of feminist scholars, researchers and activists from the economic South working for economic and gender justice and sustainable and democratic development.

Marina will be revisiting Malaysia’s fiscal stimulus package implemented in response to the global economic crisis, from a gender perspective. Marina will also be working with the Penang state government on gender-responsive budgeting, including the training of stakeholders.



Crystal Corman, an American graduate student, is affiliated with KANITA for a year to conduct field research for her thesis. She is pursuing a dual-degree in Washington, DC, attending both American University and Wesley Theological Seminary. She is a candidate for a Master of Arts in international peace and conflict resolution as well as a Master of Theological Studies. Using this cross-disciplinary approach, she is interested in the role of religion and religious leaders in peace building initiatives.

In 2009, Crystal interned at AWAM for two months through the American University’s summer abroad program. Her brief stay in Malaysia inspired her to further her research in the area of religion and gender. Her fellowship to conduct field research is sponsored by the Institute of International Education.

Her research will explore Muslim women’s interpretation of Islamic holy texts and their access to decision-making or leadership roles within Islam in Malaysia.

Newly Registered Post-graduate Students (2010)

No.	Name	Academic Programmes	Supervisor/Co-Supervisor	Nationality
1.	Clara Ohenewa Benneh	PhD Candidate	Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib	Ghana
2.	Montawadee Krutmechai	PhD Candidate	Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib	Thailand
3.	Reihaneh Attaran	PhD Candidate	Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib	Iran
4.	Amadi Esther Adanda	Master Student	Prof. Datin Rashidah Shuib	Nigeria
5.	Aishah Abu Bakar	Master Student	Prof. Sukor Kasim	Malaysia

New Baby on-board



We congratulate Zaireeni Azmi, the academic staff of KANITA, and her husband Farzad Bin Ismail on the arrival of their newborn girl, **Nurul Sofea Farzad**.



Also, our heartfelt congratulations goes to Ahmad Ariffin Mohamad Kassim, KANITA's Administrative Assistant, and his wife, Hafizah Binti Mavi on the birth of their son,

Azfar Bin Ahmad Ariffin.

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 utilizing 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.

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