



ASIAN-PACIFIC RESOURCE & RESEARCH CENTRE FOR WOMEN (ARROW)

Promoting and defending women's health and rights



annual report 2008



arrow



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Annual Report 2008

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ANNUAL REPORT

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Our mission

A RROW is committed to advocating and protecting women's health needs and rights, particularly in the area of women's sexuality and reproductive health. We believe that good health and wellbeing, and access to comprehensive and affordable gender-sensitive health services are fundamental human rights.

Our long-term objectives

ARROW's work will be done when:

- Health, reproductive health and population policies and programmes are re-oriented to make health services more accessible, affordable and comprehensive, and include a gender and human rights approach;
- The women's movement and civil society become stronger and more effective in holding governments accountable to international commitments, influencing policy agendas on women's health and rights, and gaining sustained representation in decision-making structures; and,
- Women's health outcomes and women's lives improve, particularly in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and violence against women (VAW), and especially for poor and marginalised women and girls.

Our structure

ARROW is a regional non-profit women's NGO co-founded in 1993 by Rita Raj and Rashidah Abdullah. Its office is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- ARROW's operations are handled by the Management Team, led by the Executive Director and supported by an Administration Manager and two Programme Managers.
- ARROW is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of five committed and experienced members and

the Executive Director.

- The Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), composed of a committed set of activists knowledgeable about SRHR issues in the region, provides programme advice and direction-setting.
- ARROW's programmes and activities are implemented by paid staff members with specific contributions from project-based consultants and occasional interns. There were 19 full-time staff positions in 2008.


Our strategy

ARROW believes in the power of effective collaborations and partnerships to make a difference in women's lives, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our partners are seen as integral to our structure, and capacity building initiatives with them are seen as an important mechanism to facilitate their effective participation in achieving our goals.

ARROW's programme strategies are:

- Production and dissemination of innovative materials for policy advocacy and effective SRHR policy and programme implementation;
- Policy advocacy with governments and other key stakeholders backed by research-based monitoring of the implementation of the 1994 *International Conference on Population and Development* and the 1995 *Fourth World Conference on Women*; and,
- Capacity building of women's NGOs towards strengthening the women's movement.

Our critical issues

- Pregnancy- and childbirth-related mortality and morbidity (PCRMM);
- Equity issues in the face of neoliberal globalisation, privatisation and health sector reforms; and,
- The impact of religious and political conservatisms and fundamentalisms on SRHR. 

For ARROW, 2008 was a year of growth. We grew in financial strength, in programmatic clarity, in the establishment and expansion of our partnerships in the region, and in the quality of monitoring and evaluation processes within the organisation. We also celebrated our 15th anniversary and moved into a larger office with ample room for staff to work, as well as common meeting and workshop spaces to share with local NGOs and women's groups.

Meanwhile, within the external environment, we waited with the world to see the results of the US presidential elections, and celebrated Barack Obama's victory. We are elated that by the time of writing this report, in the first few weeks of his presidency, Obama rescinded the Mexico City Policy, releasing many of our partners from the limitations imposed on their work in the area of access to safe abortion.

As we completed the first half of the five-year strategic plan of the organisation which spans the period July 2006 to June 2011, our major programmatic concern was to put in place a strong start to ARROW's ICPD+15 monitoring work. After spending a year evaluating the lessons learned from our ICPD+5 and ICPD+10 monitoring projects, we embarked on our ICPD+15 work in 2008 with an awareness and commitment to improving on what we had done before. The key areas in which we wanted to achieve better results included:

- a. improvement of the quality of support given to partners to ensure rigorous research methodology and reporting on cross-cutting regional indicators on SRHR;
- b. increased linkages between the monitoring work done at the national level and the advocacy objectives, investments in partnership building within the country context, and usage of country-level case studies to better illustrate the various levels at which implementation gaps manifest themselves, as well as concrete recommendations on how to close these gaps;
- c. ensuring that strong regional and international advocacy interventions are built upon a solid foundation of national level monitoring reports.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of partners, staff members and resource persons who supported the two ICPD+15

project planning meetings, by August 2008, we had put in place clear and practical monitoring frameworks involving 12 countries and 21 partners in the Asia-Pacific region, and developed a methodology for weaving in a set of 80 regional comparative indicators across all countries.

Meanwhile, in terms of partnership-building work, ARROW expanded the Women's Health and Rights Advocacy Partnership (WHRAP) modality to China in November 2007. Hence, 2008 was a year of much learning and addressing the challenges of upscaling. We were already very aware that the key to upscaling any initiative is to hold onto core principles while letting the practicalities adjust to the national or local context. However, this is clearly easier said than done. There were also challenges in relation to language and communication. However, by the end of 2008, we were able to find a productive way of supporting a home-grown process, led and informed by our partners in China.

2008 was a relatively quiet year in terms of regional level advocacy for WHRAP South Asia. However, by the end of 2008, with members of the WHRAP Regional Task Force (RTF) stepping in, we were able to open new doors in advocacy with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). We thus harnessed the RTF's power to open up opportunities for engagement with government agencies, and hope to be able to work in 2009 towards establishing systems for greater accountability and identification of gaps in terms of policy and programme implementation.

WHRAP South Asia's mid-term evaluation showed that WHRAP's approach of investing in grassroots capacity building for evidence generation and advocacy continued to be a success story. The evaluation visits included partners in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, and showed how poor and marginalised women were organising in order to generate demand for better health governance within their communities at various levels, and achieving this using a variety of approaches. The evaluation also noted WHRAP's strategic approach in engaging with broader health and other people's movements in order to extend the impact and strengthen WHRAP advocacy around women's health and rights. This capacity to initiate change through advocacy



partnerships continues to be the strength of WHRAP. One concern raised, however, was the importance of investing resources proportional to the impact of grassroots initiatives at the local level.

ARROW's information and communications work continued to grow in 2008 with the addition of new and experienced staff to the team. We also brought on-board a full-time web officer to focus on improving the ARROW website and the use of information technology in expanding the reach of our information products. ARROW staff have been looking beyond the numbers game of how many downloads, and how many visitors have come to our resource

centre, and have been moving more towards positioning our work as a knowledge management centre that invests in both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of using information to create change. As a result of excellent work done in the coordination of *ARROW's For Change*, the organisation reached a record number of translations in 2008 in four regional languages (Cebuano, Mandarin, Tamil and Thai). Two of these were translations of a seminal bulletin issue on sexuality that generated requests for additional 530 print copies for use as a resource material in various regional and international training events, and which became the most frequently downloaded electronic resource in our website.

The role that ARROW played in sharing our information booth and coordinating a joint book launch with five other regional and international organisations and networks at the Association for Women in Development (AWID) international forum in South Africa in November generated much praise from a large number of people, including partners and Board members. This effort is symbolic of ARROW's commitment and aspiration to collaborative ways of working, sharing and achieving change together. This was to the credit of the staff team who infused our interventions with this spirit, and the genuine partnership and solidarity offered in return by all our partners.

The biggest challenge for ARROW in 2008 was a concern that we still have not established a clear advocacy plan for the organisation despite being just a year away from the 15th anniversary of ICPD. Nor have we invested in opening up dialogue with any key international or regional agency for pursuing ARROW's advocacy agenda. Fortunately, in the last quarter of 2008, some significant inroads were made into charting engagements with UNFPA's regional office in Bangkok. We were also invited to the Steering Committee of the Global NGO Forum on ICPD+15, organised by UNFPA and the government of Germany, as well as the International Steering Committee of the Asia Pacific Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APCRSHR). This will be an area for policy advocacy work in 2009.

In terms of internal developments, ARROW identified the critical need to improve the quality and relevance of the monitoring indicators used to chart progress towards our five-year objectives. We embarked on an extensive process of training, discussions, planning and assessment of the most suitable way to measure our work. We were able to re-examine our long-term vision and connect our strategic planning objectives with our specific work areas. The most significant outcome of this process was the mapping of the individual Key Performance Indicators of ARROW staff members into this framework, increasing a sense of connectedness, and understanding amongst staff, of how what we do fits together and contributes towards the organisational vision. However, more work remains to be done. We need to produce an integrated organisational logic

framework, as presently there are only separate logic models for each of ARROW's five objective areas.

ARROW's income grew substantially in 2008, with the renewal of a five-year cooperation agreement with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). Our audit processes continued to improve and achieve greater clarity, with acknowledgement by both auditors and donors. We also managed to develop new methods to incorporate a programme performance audit into the financial audit, in order to meet the guidelines of the Danish International Development Agency (Danida). Another organisational accomplishment for this year was ARROW obtaining tax-exemption status with the Malaysian government after a decade-long process. These milestones were achieved as a result of the dedicated efforts of the staff and board members.

Our thanks and sincere gratitude goes out to all our board members for their wisdom and guidance in ensuring that the organisation keeps apace with our growing role and responsibility in SRHR advocacy and partnerships in the region. We would also like to thank all our Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) members for their commitment, honesty and candid insight into our work, enabling us to remain on the cutting-edge of issues, and thereby relevant in the support we provide to our partners. Our gratitude goes also to all our incredible partners, whose courage remains an inspiration to us, and whose forthright views help us to maintain our unwavering commitment to the betterment of the lives of women in the region. ARROW would like to thank all our donor partners for their support and commitment to our vision; without them our work would not be possible. And finally, my gratitude goes to all my colleagues at ARROW who work hard to live up to the expectations of our partners, board and PAC members, and untiringly contribute towards the improvement of women's health and rights in the region.

Saira Shameem
On behalf of ARROW

A RROW's information and communications work focuses on the creation of information for advocacy; the development and provision of conceptual, practical and cutting-edge information materials and tools; and the formation of information partnerships with activists, researchers, NGOs, governments, the United Nations and other key stakeholders in the women's rights, health, human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and sexuality movements. All these are done with the aim of strengthening these movements and the key players within them, improving their ability to advocate for changes in policies and programmes on critical women's health and rights issues, and fostering positive changes in the lives of poor and marginalised women.

ARROW's Information and Communications Strategy

ARROW has invested in information and communications work as a key strategy since its inception. In 2008, a paper clearly outlining and expanding this strategy was prepared in full for the first time. The paper locates our work within a theoretical perspective and a strategic platform. It also identifies three levels of strategy: an organisational strategy (on the organisation's overall purpose and scope), a differential strategy (on how to successfully find a niche in the current environment), and an operational strategy (on the usage of resources, process and people). Finally, it presents the background, current and future trajectories of the main mechanisms of ARROW's information and communications work.

Gearing up for a bigger, better Information and Documentation Centre (IDC)

The strength of ARROW's IDC lies in its unique collection of information resources pertaining to women's health and rights that has been accumulated since IDC was first begun 16 years ago. In 2008, 425 print materials were acquired for the physical IDC, while 474 electronic

publications were added to the virtual collection. To make the collection even more current and relevant, the IDC team consulted members of the staff, Board of Directors (BOD) and Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) to review the current serials collection and to identify key journals to acquire. We are now in the process of acquiring these journals. Meanwhile, scanning of Malaysian print media continued in 2008, with 184 newspaper cuttings filed on a variety of SRHR topics.

Fourteen bibliographies were either created or updated in 2008, surpassing the target of six per year and the eight done in 2007. Developed particularly to facilitate work of the national partners and thematic researchers of the ICPD+15 research project and the development of the *ARROWs For Change* bulletin, the bibliographies focused on topics such as conflicts and SRHR, disasters and SRHR, ICPD indicators and frameworks, organisational skills, reproductive medical technologies and research methodologies.

We processed 211 information requests in 2008, an increase of 115% compared to the 98 received in 2007. Information was requested on various topics: ARROW profile; adolescent SRHR; advocacy; childbirth and maternal health services; civil society movement-building; contraception, emergency contraception and family planning; health services; HIV/AIDS; mental health; migration; natural disasters; and SRHR. We only had 39 IDC visitors in 2008, compared to 63 in 2007. While most of these were from Malaysia, we also had visitors from as far as Zimbabwe, indicating our global reach.

In 2008, ARROW set up exhibition/IDC booths in five key national, regional and international events (see marketing section). IDC also organised a study visit to the Family Planning Association in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia in July 2008, where we learned about each other's work and exchanged information resources on contraception and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights.

IDC moved to bigger premises in late 2008, expanding the space available to house the resource collection and to comfortably accommodate users. We also acquired two new computers to improve services. This signals a fresh start for an even more effective IDC in 2009. Some key areas

of work in 2009 include upgrading the IDC bibliographic database and making it available online, streamlining and documenting all IDC activities, reconceptualising the focal point system, and reconceptualising the IDC from a traditional information centre to a dynamic knowledge management centre.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT ARROW'S IDC RESOURCES AND SERVICES:

Comprehensive collection of amazing resources, warm and helpful staff, a much enjoyed visit. (Zimbabwean Medical Student)

I would like to record my appreciation of the hard work of [ARROW staff in] digging out literature. They are all relevant. (Ranjani K. Murthy, ICPD+15 thematic study researcher and ARROW PAC Member)

Thanks for your excellent work of compiling the bibliography on sexuality. Many of the resources listed in it will be helpful in my research. (Neha Sood, ICPD+15 thematic study researcher and ARROW PAC Member)

The ARROW website re-launched!

ARROW's website (www.arrow.org.my) was re-launched in March 2008 with a more aesthetically-pleasing and user-friendly design. The new look seems to be popular with users: website hits grew by 409%, from an average of 1,377 hits per month in 2007 to 7,008 in 2008. With the creation of a full-time Website Officer post, we are also now fully managing the content of the website internally. This has enabled faster website updates, including the uploading of new ARROW publications, clean-up and addition of web pages, and putting a hits counter to track website usage. This shift was greatly aided by our decision in 2007 to 'migrate the back-end' of our IT system to Joomla, an easy-to-use free and open source software (FOSS) content management system. Besides being a simpler software programme that can be managed internally, the move to Joomla is in keeping with ARROW's support of FOSS initiatives that give users

the freedom to run, modify and redistribute programmes without copyright infringement.

The ICPD+15 Monitoring Discussion Board (www.monitoringicpd15.wordpress.com) was created in 2008, as an exploratory step towards utilising more interactive information and communications technologies to support our work. The discussion board aims to facilitate discussions among ARROW, the consultants, and the 21 project partners regarding monitoring indicators and other project-related issues. It also serves as a repository of project documents, key readings and thematic bibliographies. Launched in August, it has registered 1,341 hits by end of the year, and has attracted the interest of other groups not involved in the project as well.

In 2008, 90 electronic mailings were sent as part of ARROW's proactive information service to a targeted international network of 350 NGOs, activists, researchers, government agencies, donors, students and interested others. This year, new approaches to popularising these mail-outs were explored. We sent out thematic emails and included information materials in formats such as blog links, downloadable publications and online videos.

Plans for the website in 2009 include new strategies for further popularising it, content development on new perspectives on SRHR issues, and the creation of several new features such as a web link to the proactive information

WHAT PARTNERS SAY ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BOARD:

Thanks a lot for the information provided. I looked at the information and it seems very useful to us. Thanks. (Balasubramaniam P., Executive Director, Rural Women's Social Education Center, India)

Your blog is interesting. Keep up the good work! (Alex M.)

ABOUT ARROW'S PROACTIVE INFORMATION SERVICE:

Thank you for sending us this report. We have set up a website for ICPD@15 and would like to make a link to the report. (Marianne Haslegrave, Director, Commonwealth Medical Trust or Commat, on the ICPD+15 Planning Meeting Proceedings Report)

services, e-flyer and announcements, a blog space for networking, and a database of SRHR indicators. We will also be migrating the website to a newer version of Joomla to further enhance the website's technical capabilities.

Setting the SRHR agenda: *ARROWS For Change*

ARROWS For Change (AFC) is our action-oriented, peer-reviewed bulletin that aims to provide gender and rights-based perspectives on cutting-edge SRHR issues that concern women in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2008, we worked towards improving the periodicity and quality of this flagship publication. We produced and distributed the following three AFC volumes in 2008:

- AFC Vol. 11 bumper issue on “Reframing Gender-based Violence as a Reproductive Health Issue,” which underscores the need to look at gender-based violence as a reproductive health and sexual rights issue, and suggests examining linkages between violence and pregnancy and childbirth-related mortality and morbidity (PCRMM) as a way to achieve this;
- AFC Vol. 13 No. 1 on “Rural Women’s SRHR: Knowing the Complexities for Strengthening Strategies,” which argues that strategies to address rural women’s SRHR issues must consider various complexities—of SRHR concepts, of the diversity of what is rural, and of women’s lived realities; and
- AFC Vol. 13 No. 2 on “Why Affirm Sexuality?” which explores an emerging affirmative framework on sexuality.

In addition, significant production work was done on two more issues during the year: Vol. 13 No. 3 on “Conflict and SRHR” and Vol. 14 Nos. 1 and 2 on “Religious Fundamentalisms and SRHR.” Dissemination of these issues is scheduled in early 2009.

To make the bulletin more accessible to non-English speaking readers, we also translate *ARROWS For Change* into strategic Asia-Pacific languages. In 2008, we collaborated with partners to produce four issues instead of the targeted two per year to meet partners’ and readers’ interest and requests. Following were the four produced this year:

- Tamil edition of AFC Vol. 13 No. 1 (“Rural Women’s SRHR: Knowing the Complexities for Strengthening

WHAT SOME OF OUR READERS SAY ABOUT AFC:

My appreciation for ARROWS For Change—Our members... always look forward for the next edition of AFC. We use it for new ideas in advocacy strategies or as reference for writing articles in newspapers or journals, as well as to get informed about upcoming training workshops. (Atashendartini Habsjah, Yayasan Kesehatan Perempuan, Indonesia)

ARROWS For Change has been among the most handy but radical resources on gender and sexuality. It articulates Southern perspectives on personal empowerment and political transformation within the very contexts that have created multiple burdens on women’s bodies and have hindered the honest expressions of desires—the affirmation of humanity. (Cai Yiping, Executive Director, Isis International-Manila)

Thank you very much for sending me your ARROW bulletin. I really enjoyed reading it, and I appreciate very much that you put the information on our training programme in it (LGBT and Human Rights). (Karin Lenke, the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education or rfsu, Sweden)

A lot of women in our community are forced to resort to unsafe abortion. I feel women need their choice to be respected with corresponding safe and acceptable medical services. The newsletter affirmed that this need is not isolated. (Jessica Pejo, Visayas Primary Health Care, Cebu City, Philippines on Cebuano edition of AFC Vol. 12 No.3)

This publication is very important to get information about lessons learned, experiences of other projects, countries and regions...[It] can be used as an international alumni newspaper for all people who were trained on gender, sexuality and reproductive health...[or as] a scientific resource document. (Phal Sano, MD, MPH, Chief of STI/RTI Case Management Unit, National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology & STIs or NCHADS, Cambodia)

Strategies”) in collaboration with the Rural Women’s Social Education Centre (RUWSEC), India;

- Mandarin edition of AFC Vol. 13 No. 2 (“Why Affirm Sexuality?”) in collaboration with the Institute of Sexuality and Gender, Renmin University, China;

- Thai edition of AFC Vol. 13 No. 2 (“Why Affirm Sexuality?”) in collaboration with the Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health; and,
- Cebuano edition of AFC Vol. 12 No. 3 (“Young and Vulnerable: The Reality of Unsafe Abortion among Adolescent and Young Women”) in collaboration with the Sociology and Anthropology Research (SOAR) Group of the University of San Carlos, Philippines.

As a reflection of the bulletin’s quality, relevance and usefulness, we received requests for partners for multiple copies of some issues. Extra 530 copies of the volume on sexuality were distributed in training workshops, courses and networks by the Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex, Brighton, UK), the Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health, and the South and Southeast Asia Resource Centre on Sexuality. AFC volumes were also used as references in the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR) Sexuality Institute.

ARROW’s 2009 plans include bringing AFC production up-to-speed, instituting better systems for capturing and evaluating the impact of AFC and utilising this information to improve the bulletin further, and pursuing our commitment to widen the publication’s reach through marketing and translation.

Marketing our products and services

ARROW’s Marketing Strategy. The marketing strategy paper, which was presented to the BOD in December 2008, serves as ARROW’s guidepost in marketing ARROW and its issues, events, products and services. The paper proposes a pro-woman, pro-poor definition of marketing, describes ARROW’s main marketing mechanisms and discusses future trajectories. It also maps out our information partners and sets out a plan to update ARROW’s database of contacts, particularly in the 13 countries that we prioritise in our work.

AFC distribution. We remain committed to producing AFC in print copy to reach many of our readers who are unable to afford or do not have regular access to the internet

or who for different reasons prefer to read AFC in print form. Six thousand copies of AFC per issue were printed in 2008. We posted each issue to 4,598 print subscribers, 64.7% of which are from Asia, 11.8% from the Pacific, and 23.5% from other regions.

We also made AFC available electronically to ensure that the publication is disseminated even wider and more cost-efficiently and swiftly among its target audience of Asian-Pacific decision-makers and programme managers in health and women’s organisations. AFC issues are available for download as digital files in the ARROW website, and in the websites of at least five partners and networks.¹ In 2008, the ARROW website registered 1,071 downloads of various copies of AFC. We disseminated electronic copies of AFC through our proactive information service and to various lists and e-groups. We also strategically marketed the sexuality AFC to international and regional trainings on the same theme, disseminated the AFC on rural women’s SRHR at the *First Asian Rural Women’s Conference*, and collaborated with partners to distribute translated editions through their own networks and dissemination systems. AFC was also featured in the Association for Women’s Rights in

¹ AFC Vol. 13 No. 1 – Tamil edition is available for download at the Asian Rural Women’s Conference website (www.asianruralwomen.net/html/news_000006.htm). AFC Vol. 13 No. 2 is available at the websites of the South and Southeast Asia Resource Centre on Sexuality (www.tarshi.net/asiasrc/onln_resources/newsletters.asp) and of the Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health (www.seaconsortium.net). AFC Vol. 13 No. 2 - Thai edition is available at the Consortium website. AFC Vol. 13 No. 2 – Mandarin edition is available at the Institute of Sexuality and Gender website (www.sexstudy.org). AFC Vol. 12 No. 3 Cebuano edition is available at the SOAR Group website (http://cas.usc.edu/ph/sociology_and_anthropology/research.jsp).



The ARROWs For Change translated editions

Development (AWID)'s *Resource Net Announcements*, Isis International Manila's *Women in Action Magazine* No. 1 2008, and Sexuality Policy Watch Newsletter No. 3 2008.

Distribution of other publications. ARROW's older publications, like recent ones, continued to be distributed to partners and stakeholders through ARROW exhibition booths, activities and projects, and staff attendance to events.

In 2008, we set up exhibition booths, which also served as an IDC outreach activity and a publication dissemination mechanism, at these key national and international events:

- *Planning Meeting for the State of the Region Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: ICPD+15 Regional Planning Meeting* (22–25 April 2008, Port Dickson, Malaysia), which was organised by ARROW and attended by 25 partners from 12 countries across the region;


- *Monash University NGO Fair* (29–30 July 2008, Selangor, Malaysia), which aimed at raising awareness of students on young people's and women's SRHR, and to introduce the possibility of a career in the development field;

- *Public Forum and Exhibition on Issues of Single Motherhood in Malaysia* (16 October 2008, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), which was organised by the International Islamic University Malaya and the International Institute for Muslim Unity and attracted key persons and NGOs working on single women's issues, and university students;

- *FFPAM-RRAAM Consultation on Increasing Access to the Reproductive Right to Contraceptive Information and Services in Malaysia: Progress at ICPD+15* (21 October 2008, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia), which was attended by 35 participants from NGOs, relevant government ministries, universities, UNFPA and medical and specialist associations; and,

- *AWID International Forum on Women's Rights and Development* (14–17 November 2008, Cape Town, South Africa), which was attended by 1,500 women's rights activists. Here, in the spirit and practice of movement building, we shared our exhibition space with at least eight other organisations and networks. These groups included the Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organisations (APCASO), the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR), the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, Naripokkho, SANGRAM, Sexuality Policy Watch, Strategies from the South and Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR)-New Ways.

Information and communications in 2009

2008 was a very productive year for the section: we created our section log frame, drafted the strategies for Information and Communications and Marketing, and formed the Information and Communications Task Force. With all these in place, we expect 2009 to be a full and interesting year. Aside from plans for each product, we will be conducting a needs assessment and convening a Task Force meeting to ensure that ARROW remains responsive to the information and communication needs of its partners and other constituencies. 



At the joint exhibition booth at the AWID Forum, with friends from APCASO and CSBR

ARROW charts national and regional progress on international commitments on women's health and rights, particularly those made at the *International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)* held in Cairo in 1993. We see this as a critical means of holding governments accountable for policies and programmes that fulfil their commitments to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Analysing ARROW's monitoring work

The "Initiative for Better Research-based and Evidence-based Advocacy and Information and Documentation Practices to Advance Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Asia-Pacific" was a short-term project (January 2007–June 2008) which focused on examining the research-based and evidence-based advocacy methods and practices used in previous monitoring projects coordinated by ARROW.

The key product from this Oxfam-Novib funded project is an evaluative report culling lessons learned from past monitoring projects, which has enabled ARROW and partners to incorporate these lessons into the design and implementation of the ICPD+15 monitoring project. These lessons included the following:

- Monitoring research and advocacy need to be planned simultaneously and with equal importance in order to effectively hold governments accountable. Funding in the ICPD+15 project has thus been divided for both components equally.
- ARROW's role in the project goes beyond providing a common regional platform, but also covers capacity building and leadership in pioneering new ideas.
- If partners' needs are identified before the start of the project, it is less likely that major problems will arise as project implementation progresses. The Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool, which was developed through this project, has enabled ARROW to understand and anticipate partners' capacity building needs and provide the appropriate technical and informational support. This tool has been field-tested by Shirkat Gah in Pakistan and is available to partners upon request.

- It is critical to advocacy work that the ICPD+15 project identifies and includes research on cutting-edge and emerging themes, such as sexuality as a cornerstone in defining SRHR, and the impact of privatisation on SRHR. Such research supports and strengthens partners in their national level advocacy initiatives.
- Narrowing the list of indicators to monitor sharpens the focus of advocacy campaigns. Partners have focused on specific issues to enable better advocacy at the national level.

Monitoring ICPD 15 years on

The 1994 ICPD Programme of Action called for the achievement by 2015 of universal access to reproductive health services and for specific measures to foster human development, with particular attention to women. ARROW has consistently monitored the five years (1999), and 10 years (2004) of ICPD implementation in the Asia-Pacific region. These studies have proven to be important resources and evidence for advocating for women's SRHR at the national, regional and international levels.

Currently, through the "The State of the Region Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: ICPD+15" project, we remain the only regional organisation across the globe that is systematically monitoring the 15 years of ICPD implementation with the aim of holding governments accountable to their commitments to women's SRHR. With funding support from the Ford Foundation, Oxfam Novib and Sida, this two-year project (April 2008-April 2010) is being carried out in collaboration with 21 women's rights NGOs, as well as three individual researchers and activists, in 12 Asia-Pacific countries.

Setting up of national partnerships. To ensure that the ICPD+15 project is more representative of ground realities, time was spent to identify new partners who could further invigorate and provide new perspective to the monitoring research. For example, in order to select additional partners in Vietnam, the ICPD staff conducted a desk research of various NGOs working in the field of SRHR and sexuality in Vietnam, consulted a Ford Foundation programme officer, and did a two-day visit to NGOs in the country. We also

consulted PAC members to identify potential partners in countries where ARROW is just beginning its work, such as in Laos.

Regional Planning Meeting. This four-day meeting in April 2008 in Port Dickson, Malaysia brought ARROW, partners and technical consultants together in order to discuss and agree on the project's methodology, schedule and timeline. In the meeting, national partners gave country presentations on the SRHR issue chosen for their research and advocacy, including the rationale and potential advocacy impact of the study. Thematic presentations on disasters, sexuality, and impact of privatisation on healthcare were also given by three independent researchers. (See Table 1.)

Intensive preparations prior to the meeting, such as provision of guidance notes and in-country discussions, led to a successful meeting. Technical inputs provided by resource persons T.K. Sundari Ravindran and Kausar Khan, as well as cross-country partner inputs through a peer-assist system, further sharpened the research focus and methodology of each presentation.

Conduct of country monitoring studies and multi-country studies and ongoing support from ARROW. The ICPD+15 project includes three thematic multi-country studies and 21 national studies across 12 countries. Data gathering and analysis was done by partners from May to December 2008. Ongoing technical support to the partners was provided by ARROW throughout the year via internet and through face-to-face meetings. Information support was also provided by the IDC and ICPD teams, including provision of bibliographies and other key resources. We also played a facilitating role in connecting the thematic researchers with the national partners for the multi-country studies.

By end of December, draft reports from Lao PDR, Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam are on hand, while the rest will be available on or before May 2009. Three technical reviewers are going over the first drafts of the country reports to further sharpen the analysis and recommendations. Interactions among the reviewers, ARROW and partners are another opportunity to further refine these outputs as well as partners' capacities. The review process is expected to be finished in June 2009, and the final country reports done by September 2009.

Regional cross-country indicators. Aside from the country and multi-country studies, a major component of the ICPD+15 monitoring work is done through the development and compilation of regional cross-country indicators. The list was developed by ARROW, with inputs from the consultants, the research partners and the Programme Advisory Committee. Discussion on these indicators was facilitated by an online ICPD+15 Monitoring Discussion Board which had been set up for this purpose. The ICPD+15 team also held weekly discussions to discuss the relevance of each indicator, availability of data and other key discussions to make the final

The screenshot shows the ICPD+15 Weblog website. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Home, Country Report Format, REGIONAL CROSS-COUNTRY INDICATORS, and About Us - The People. Below the tabs is a header banner with the text "ICPD+15 WEBLOG" and a search box. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column is titled "Recent Comments" and lists several comments with links to the full text. The middle column is titled "Chapter 3: Section 1" and contains a list of bullet points under the heading "Population and Development & Economic- Social-Cultural-Political Context." The right column is titled "Authors" and features a profile for "icpd15" with a small image and a "YourPod" widget.

Table 1. ICPD+15 project research partners and topics

Country	Research Partner	Research Topic
Bangladesh	Naripokkho	Pathways of Survival or Death: Looking into Eclampsia in Women's Lives
Cambodia	Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC)	Understanding the Barriers to Family Planning Commodities among Married Couples
China	Beijing Women's Law Studies and Legal Aid Centre	A Quantitative Study on Migrant Women Workers' Reproductive Health Care Needs and Services
	Heilongjiang Women's Federation	A Quantitative Study on Migrant Women Workers' Reproductive Health Care Needs and Services
	Shanghai Women's Health Care Institute	Health Care Utilisation of Migrant Women in Shanghai
India	Academy of Nursing Studies and Women's Empowerment (ANSWERS); Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA), and Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ)	Nutritional Anaemia: A Neglected Agenda
Indonesia	Women's Health Foundation (WHF)	1. Unsafe Abortion: Policies and Practices 2. Contraception in the Decentralisation Era
Lao PDR	National University of Laos	Cultural Beliefs and Traditional Rituals About Child Birth Practices in Lao PDR
Malaysia	Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM), and Federation of Reproductive Health Associations-Malaysia (FRHAM)	1. Increasing Access to the Reproductive Right to Contraceptive Information and Services 2. Implementing the Sex Education Curriculum as Part of the Malaysian Education System
Nepal	Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC)	Prevalence of Utero-Vaginal Prolapse in Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital and Its Socio-Cultural Determinants
Pakistan	Shirkat Gah	The Impact of Recent Progressive Family Planning Policies (Contraception and Abortion) at the Community Level
Philippines	Likhaan	Removing Barriers to Critical Reproductive Health Services that Avert Maternal Death and Disability
	Reprocen	Contraceptive Behaviour of Filipino Youth in Metro Manila Communities: The Philippine Case
Thailand	The Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality, and Health	1. Sexual Harassment in Workplaces and Educational Institutes 2. Sexuality Education for Adolescents
Vietnam	Family Health, Research and Development Center (FHRD); Research Centre for Gender, Family and Development (CGFED); and Institute for Reproductive and Family Health (RHAF)	A Review of Abortion Policy and Practice in Vietnam
Thematic	Neha Sood	Examining How Laws in 12 Asian-Pacific Countries Violate or Affirm Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Transgendered People
	Ranjani Krishnamurthy	Monitoring Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Context of Disasters in Asia
	Rural Women's Social Education Centre (RUWSEC) (India) and Dr. T. K. Sundari Ravindran	Privatisation in the Health Sector and Its Implications for Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Care Services: A Proposal for a Study of South and South-East Asian Countries

list SMART (i.e., specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound).

The 80 indicators, which were finalised in August, were categorised into the following:

1. Country context
2. Women's status in the country
3. Reproductive health and rights (which includes reproductive health services, contraception, maternal health and abortion)
4. Sexual health and rights (which includes sexual health services, STI, HIV/AIDS and Sexual Rights)
5. Young people's SRHR

To close a gap that had been identified in previous monitoring work by ARROW, this final list and categorisation made sure to give sufficient emphasis to sexuality and sexual rights, and includes 20 indicators focusing on sexual health and sexual rights. This shift has enabled us to do a more holistic monitoring of SRHR.

Using a gender-sensitive and rights-based lens, ARROW collated these indicators from all countries included in this project from August to December 2008. These will be sent to the country partners for inputs by January 2009.

Monitoring ICPD in 2009

Being the 15th year anniversary of ICPD, 2009 is expected to be an extremely busy year for the team. Year 2 project activities will focus on finalising the country studies and multi-country thematic studies, publishing and disseminating the ICPD+15 report, national level advocacy through policy dialogues in 12 countries, and regional and international advocacy interventions related to ICPD. Identified venues for dissemination include two issues of *ARROW's For Change* focused on disasters and on ICPD+15, as well as the *19th International Conference on Disaster Management* in June 2009 in Toronto, where the ICPD+15 Disasters study has been selected for presentation. Abstracts based on the ICPD+15 sexual health study and a symposium on sexualities in transitional societies have been accepted at the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society (IASSCS) conference in April 2009 in



Photos by Madlyn Ando



Partners and consultants at ARROW's ICPD + 15 Regional Planning Meeting.

Hanoi, Vietnam, which is a leading global event on sexuality research and discourse. Other advocacy interventions are planned at the Commission on Population and Development meeting in New York in March 2009, and at the Global NGO Forum on ICPD+15 in Berlin in September 2009. 

The Women’s Health and Rights Advocacy Partnership (WHRAP) project is part of the vision shared by ARROW and our partners to move forward the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) agenda in the Asia-Pacific region. It supports joint strategic planning among partners, and synergistically uses evidence-based advocacy at local, national and regional levels, as a means to achieve real and relevant changes in SRHR-related policies and programmes and ultimately, in marginalised women’s lives.

Creating positive changes: WHRAP South Asia

WHRAP South Asia is a partnership project supported by Danida between ARROW, six national partner NGOs,

community-based organisations (CBOs) and local implementing partners, and the Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA) (See Table 2). Implemented in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, WHRAP South Asia aims to strengthen civil society capacity to effectively advocate for SRHR at various levels (local, national and regional), especially on the issues of safe motherhood and young people’s SRHR. The project is now in its second phase.

Local and national level activities. In 2008, WHRAP South Asia’s NGO and CBO partners had several achievements and continued to bring about positive changes in the communities they work in. These include the following:

- *Bangladesh:* The Bangladesh Women’s Health Coalition (BWHC) completed 10 case studies on women and decision-making around fertility and pregnancy, and which

Table 2. Current WHRAP partners

Country	National Partners	CBOs and Local Implementing Partners
Bangladesh	Bangladesh Women’s Health Coalition (BWHC); Naripokkho	Adorsho Kajer Shondhaney (AKAS); Adorsho Mohila Sangstha; Annesha Samaj Sheba Shongho; Bangladesh Mohila Parishad (Tangail branch); Barisal Mohila Kollayan Shongstha; BLAST; CDMS; Children and Youth Development Organisation (SYDO); Chinnomul Shomity; Community-Based Development Project (CBDP); CWFD; FPAB; Girls College; Gorpara Ekota Jubo Shomobay Shomity Ltd; Hatkhola Girls College; HJKS; Integrated Social Welfare Association (ISWA); Jago Nari; Jaika; Jenious; Jhora Borsha High School; Jobaida High School; Khane Pur High School; Nazrul Shriti Shongshod (NSS); NUS; Palash Mohila Unnayan Shomity; Palash Pilot High School; Palash Shilpanchal College; Patuakhali Development Organisation (PDO); Polly Shomonnoy Shikkha Kollyan Parishad; Porag Nari Kollayan Shongstha; Prottoy Shamajik Shongothon; Rashdo; Shaghata B.M College; Shamaj Unnayan Shongstha (SUS); Shangkalpa Trust; Shaplaful Social Development Organisation (SSDO); Shuktara Mohila Shongstha; USS; USS-B; WDP
India	Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA); SAHAYOG	Achal Gramin Vikas Samajik Sansthan; Asha Ashram; Astitva Samajik Sansthan; Assisi Health Centre; Baba RamKaran Das Gramin Vikas Samiti; CHETNASabarkantha; Ebtada Sansthan; Gramya Sansthan; Hadoti Hast Shilpa Sansthan; Jatan Sansthan; Gram Vikas, Navyuvak Mandal; Gramin Punar Nirman Sansthan; Mahila Swasthya Adhikar Manch (MSAM); P.G.S.S; PEDO Mada, Dungarpur; SARTHI; “Savitri Bai Phoolle” Dalit Mahila
Nepal	Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC)	Asmita Nepal; HimRights; Nari Sip Srijana Kendra; Youth Welfare Society
Pakistan	Shirkat Gah	Al-Shahbaz Social Welfare Association; Pirbhat Women’s Development Society; SAATH Development Society; Swani Sanj; Umeed Trust
International	Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA)	

can be powerful tools for advocacy. They have also organised quarterly meetings with the media in three districts, involving over 190 media personnel, in order to engage the media in advocating for safe motherhood and young people's SRHR. BWHC has built partnerships with the Bangladesh Women Journalist Centre at the national level, as well as with media professionals at the local district level and sub-district press clubs. As a part of national-level advocacy networks, BWHC is also involved in promoting the implementation of the national adolescent reproductive health strategy paper.

Meanwhile, Naripokkho, in partnership with the community-based organisation Shangkalpa Trust, expanded its monitoring of various healthcare facilities, including a medical college, four district hospitals, three Mother and Child Care Centres, 12 sub-district health complexes, and 144 Union Health and Family Welfare Centres. These monitoring activities, and subsequent advocacy activities using evidence gathered, have resulted in improved quality of services in many of the health facilities in the project areas. There has also been a reduction of illegal monetary transactions during hospital working hours, a decrease in visits by pharmaceutical company representatives during doctors' working hours, a slight improvement in the enforcement of visiting hours and in regulating the number of visitors, and increase in the number of women patients attending government health facilities.

- *India:* CHETNA expanded its partnership for maternal health documentation to the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan through four leading health networks: SUMA-Rajasthan White Ribbon Alliance, CHETNA's Regional Resource Centre, *Dai* Association and the People's Health Movement in Gujarat. Capacity building interventions with women's self-help groups and elected representatives of the *Panchayat* (village council) in Rajasthan proved to be a good strategy in upscaling the work of WHRAP. Through diligent advocacy efforts, CHETNA also successfully lobbied for the release and launch of the State youth policy in Rajasthan.

Meanwhile, SAHAYOG, our other WHRAP partner in India, facilitated the continued involvement of community-based women in WHRAP advocacy at local and national levels. Its new but growing network of rural community

women, Mahila Swasthya Adhikar Manch (MSAM), did a social audit on government-run programmes and shared the results with various relevant related stakeholders at the district and state levels, including the Health Minister. As a result, the minister started monitoring maternal health schemes, giving statements related to improvement of maternal health issues in the media. The media itself have started monitoring cases of maternal mortality and negligence. As such, there are now concrete government efforts to improve maternal health situation in Uttar Pradesh. In addition, an MSAM petition action has resulted in two primary health centres now becoming functional, and offering childbirth services.

- *Nepal:* In Makwanpur, BBC's work with CBOs has led to the district hospital management committee deciding to give incentives to community health volunteers for referring women to Comprehensive Abortion Care centres to avail of safe abortion services. The committee has also agreed to treat the women free of cost if complications occur after the abortion. The CBOs from Bardiya and Makwanpur conducted interaction programmes with local and district level stakeholders to change attitudes and behaviour of the service providers in relation to SRHR. This has resulted in the two communities generating a clear demand for safe abortion and safe delivery services in the hospitals. This action was initiated by local women cooperatives for the poor and marginalised women, and has promoted more positive perspectives on abortion amongst local people.

- *Pakistan:* Shirkat Gah's capacity building and advocacy activities at the local level has resulted in community people in five project sites in Punjab and Sindh pledging to put pressure against early marriages and violence against women, as well as to advocate for girl's rights. These activities have been conducted creatively, through interactive theatre performances followed by an interactive discussion, resulting in an increased number of people being drawn towards the WHRAP modality. The project also played a significant role in women getting national identity cards (NICs) in the communities it works with. Shirkat Gah-WHRAP believes that SRHR is not only a health issue, but linked to women's status in society and

their identity as citizens. The campaign resulted in 50 women from the project field sites obtaining their NICs, another 105 filing the request forms for NICs, and 100 people filing applications for getting birth certificates. Having these identity documents will facilitate women's access to health services and other basic government health welfare schemes.

Regional level engagements. As a means of expanding the reach of WHRAP and engaging in movement building with grassroots women from different development sectors, WHRAP South Asia partners chose to participate in the *First Asian Rural Women's Conference* held from 6-8 March 2008 in Tamil Nadu, India. ARROW, BWHC and Naripokkho, as well as two of their CBO partners attended this conference which was attended by more than 700 rural and indigenous women from 21 countries. We organised two workshops, enabling us to share WHRAP's approaches and strategies on working with maternal health in rural communities in Bangladesh, and to raise discussion on the impact of religious, cultural and traditional beliefs and practices on women's SRHR. About 100 rural women attended the workshops. Beyond the workshops, ARROW and WHRAP South Asia contributed to the content of the conference declaration and helped ensure that SRHR was prominent in the agenda of the conference, an event of significance in the Asian rural women's movement.

The second engagement during the year was at the *AWID International Forum* from 14-17 November 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa. In this conference which focused on movement building, WHRAP—through ARROW, Naripokkho, its CBO partner Shangkalpa Trust, and a local government official—showcased the opportunities and challenges of an advocacy strategy that builds bridges between grassroots activism and policy-level advocacy. At the forum, WHRAP also launched its new publication on the status reports of maternal health and young people's SRHR in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Aside from being a platform to increase WHRAP's profile, the AWID forum was also an opportunity to learn about cutting-edge issues and best practices from across the world, and to create international linkages.

Regional level advocacy activities. WHRAP finally filled the post of regional advocacy coordinator in February 2008, and the team was able to embark on planning for coordinated South Asian-level advocacy. At the WHRAP Advocacy Brainstorming Meeting held in Port Dickson, Malaysia on 24 April 2008, participants identified the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as the critical advocacy venue of the partnership project. As such, during the People's SAARC Forum held from 18-20 July 2008, WHRAP organised a panel titled "Towards Health for All: A South Asian Dilemma." The panel highlighted various obstacles faced and strategies to overcoming the challenges of public health provisioning amidst pressures for market-oriented health sector reforms. While WHRAP was not able to engage directly with the heads of government at SAARC, the document arising from the *People's SAARC Forum* was forwarded to the governmental process.

It was clear from that experience that both WHRAP and ARROW need to prioritise engaging with SAARC official processes to effectively influence policies or programmes at the South Asia level. Recognising this, Bina Pradhan, a WHRAP Regional Task Force member for Nepal, began planning and coordinating a series of official engagements between the SAARC Secretariat and WHRAP in December. The culmination of her successful efforts, together with those of WHRAP's Regional Task Force, to engage with SAARC on identified SRHR advocacy agendas will be reported in 2009.

Regional level coordination, monitoring and evaluation. In 2008, the focus of project coordination and monitoring was finalising the WHRAP log frame and its related monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tool, a process that began during the planning meeting for Phase II of the project. Field visits to BBC in Nepal, and CHETNA and SAHAYOG in India, as well as face-to-face meetings with BWHC and Naripokkho, were also conducted in March. These visits were invaluable in orienting the programme staff about WHRAP implementation in each organisational context (including successes and challenges), and in establishing a positive working relationship between the new programme officer and partners. It also enabled

getting partners' feedback on the M&E system and tools, a review of partners' activity plans and budget for 2008, and brainstorming on the mid-term review and capacity building exercise. New communication systems—such as bi-monthly phone calls between ARROW and national partners, monthly Skype calls between ARROW and DFPA, and a “Learning Circle” via Skype conference calls—were also put in place to ensure smooth running of the project and improve communications.

Unquestionably though, the highlight of the year was the month-long combined mid-term review and capacity building (MTRCB) processes held in September 2008. Through a combination of desk review and field visits to three partners (Naripokkho, SAHAYOG and Shirkat Gah) in three countries, the MTR examined the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. The MTR field visits were combined with the capacity building exercise, enabling each of the six national partners to visit two other WHRAP partners, learn about their projects and contexts, build their capacity on conducting an M&E exercise, and contribute to the review itself. This merging of two activities,

though logistically challenging and physically tiring, provided a different dimension to the whole review process.

A comprehensive report containing key findings, lessons learnt and recommendations was the main output of this exercise. Following are some of the highlights of the report's findings and recommendations:

- National partners use diverse but strong evidence-based advocacy mechanisms and modalities of data gathering and processing, and of monitoring of health services provision.
- Evidence-based advocacy at the local and district levels is resulting in a growing sense of entitlement to women's health rights and an awareness of the accountability of public duty bearers, among the CBOs and communities working under the WHRAP South Asia project.
- A clear indication of the growing commitment to the processes and principles of WHRAP South Asia is the participation of non-funded CBO partners in the work of WHRAP South Asia.
- The basic approach of WHRAP South Asia (i.e., working synergistically among local, national and regional

levels for evidence-based advocacy) is well appreciated and to some extent integrated into the implementation of WHRAP South Asia on the ground. However, the systematic utilisation of evidence in the form of health facility and health services provision data and case studies from the local level for state/district or national level advocacy is working more effectively for some partners than with others.

- While national level advocacy is growing more effective, the link between national level data gathering and advocacy and regional level advocacy is currently weak and needs urgent attention.

WHRAP South Asia in 2009.
Working towards the realisation of the regional components of this advocacy

Photograph by Roadbyn Marre



ARROW and national and community partners at the WHRAP capacity building workshop on M&E in Pakistan.

partnership will be one of ARROW's priority output areas in 2009. This includes engaging with SAARC on our various policy agenda, and holding the Regional Task Force meeting. Ensuring that project implementation remains unaffected by staff turnover is also a priority in 2009.

Upscaling WHRAP in China

Originally envisioned to extend to 13 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, WHRAP finally expanded to include China in 2008. The WHRAP China partnership and capacity building project is a two-year (2008-2010) project between ARROW, Oxfam Novib, the Ford Foundation and three Chinese partner women's organisations: the Beijing Women's Law Studies and Legal Aid Centre, the Heilongjiang Women's Federation and the Shanghai Women's Health Care Institute. It intends to build strategic alliances and strengthen the capacity of Chinese organisations for enhanced women's SRHR advocacy, with the ultimate goal of responding to women's SRHR needs in China. To achieve these objectives, the project is using interlinked strategies of partnership building, capacity building, research for policy advocacy, information sharing and policy advocacy.

Regional level activities. ARROW's work in 2008 initially focused on project start-up activities, including the development of key project implementation guidelines and documents and conducting the *WHRAP China First Project Meeting*. Held in Beijing on 12-14 March 2008, the meeting enabled clarity and common understanding on the project log frame and budget, as well as planning the national and regional implementation of the project. The meeting was rated very highly by the partners who appreciated the methodology of the meeting and the efforts to be inclusive and fully participatory. It was co-hosted by the Beijing Women's Law Studies and Legal Aid Centre, indicating a high sense of ownership of the project and shared commitment among the partners.

In April, WHRAP China partners also participated in the wider Asia-Pacific *Regional ICPD+15 Planning Meeting*, organised by ARROW in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was the first time ARROW included the China partners within a regional process, and we realised how little information flows between China and other countries in the region, contributing

towards a gap in knowledge and understanding about the SRHR context in China. This gap and the language barrier remain challenges for the WHRAP China team, and are areas in which we are endeavouring to develop creative solutions.

In terms of project coordination and communications, ARROW's role has been primarily the sharing of information from outside China with Chinese partners. This is done through translation of selected information from ARROW's email-based proactive listserv, as well as through the WHRAP China blogsite.

In addition to these efforts, ARROW also compiled a directory of 143 Chinese and China-based SRHR agencies and organisations to further enhance collaboration and networking within the country, as well as between China and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. Another output is the "WHRAP China SRHR Reference Materials List," a resource tool for partners as well as other organisations that work on or are interested in gender and SRHR issues in China.

National level activities. Research for policy advocacy is one of the key components of the WHRAP China project and this dovetailed with the ICPD+15 monitoring research projects discussed earlier. Partners prioritised and selected their research topics based on their own expertise and local contexts. As they are located in major population centres, Beijing and Heilongjiang found that migrant women's SRHR was a critical issue, while our Shanghai partner decided to focus on adolescent sexuality education. The research studies will conclude and be presented at the ICPD+15 Advocacy Workshop in March 2009. The key findings from these studies will be the foundation for the National Advocacy Plan, another critical project output for 2009.

Aside from these, partners also conducted capacity building activities. Heilongjiang Women's Federation organised a three-day training programme in June for 150 women leaders, including 45 local community chairpersons, to increase SRHR knowledge and build women leaders' capacities. The training was reported by the local and national media.

Meanwhile, the Shanghai Women's Health Care Institute organised a three-and-a-half day training course in June to improve professional knowledge and skills of 76 maternal and child health (MCH) staff. The Institute is responsible for

WHAT PARTNERS SAID ABOUT THE HEILOINGJIANG TRAINING:

I realised that working in the women's health care field not only requires passion and hard work, but also needs professional knowledge and concepts. I would like to share what I have learnt with all the sisters in my community, so I suggest that the women's federation organise more training on women's issues to increase women's awareness of SRHR knowledge. (Li Chunmei, Jianguo Park Community)

I have worked for local women's communities since September 1976. I am very inspired after this training. I was very negative about sexual and reproductive words. I rarely had a gynaecological check-up until I found that I had cervical cancer. Today, I truly understand reproductive health and sexuality. I hope I can influence more women to know how to take care of themselves. (Zhao Chunhui, Haping Street Community)

ensuring the quality of care for Shanghai's 84 public maternity hospitals and/or departments within general hospitals, as well as the three private sector service providers.


In light of the oil crisis and resultant rise in prices, the Beijing Women's Law Studies and Legal Aid Centre decided to redirect monies available in their capacity building budget towards research costs.

WHRAP China in 2009.

With a Programme Officer finally in place by December 2008, we look forward to going beyond information sharing of information and facilitating linkages between China and the rest of the region, to being able to fully provide technical and translation support to partners in China. Since all the Chinese partners are, in general, ahead of the planned project schedule, we will be shifting the work emphasis to policy advocacy

and jointly identify one or two national and international interventions as targets for our collaboration.

Plans for 2009

The challenge for 2009, aside from those identified for each project, will be to fully realise the strategic planning objective of upscaling WHRAP to all 13 priority countries of ARROW. As a result of the very real challenges of upscaling, we will need to reassess the milestones to be achieved. The first priority will be to capture the essence of WHRAP so that its upscale is relevant to each local country context. The second would be to fully realise the regional and international component of WHRAP advocacy, even as the national and local level work continues to grow from strength to strength. We will also need a plan for setting up WHRAP where it has yet to be established (in Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam). All these questions will be the critical priorities for 2009. We believe that addressing these will be both inspiring and educational, not just for ARROW, but for all our partners who will be involved in the process. 



ARROW and partners at the WHRAP China first project meeting.

ARROW Photobank

Capacity building and strategic policy advocacy are integral components of ARROW's two main projects: WHRAP and the ICPD+15 monitoring, research and advocacy project. Aside from these, however, ARROW also had various engagements and initiatives in 2008 on our three critical issues: 1) religious conservatism and fundamentalisms and its impact on women's SRHR; 2) equity issues related to SRHR access, including health sector reforms; and, 3) pregnancy- and childbirth-related mortality and morbidity (PCRMM). The year also saw us continue with our gender assessment project with the Cambodian health ministry. New advocacy spaces and networks also became available for us in 2008.

Engagements and initiatives on our critical issues

Pregnancy- and childbirth-related mortality and morbidity. Despite advances in science and decades of feminist advocacy, every year hundreds of thousands of women still die unnecessarily or suffer chronic and/or life-threatening conditions due to unsafe abortion, pregnancy and childbirth. PCRMM thus remains one of ARROW's critical issues, and is one of the two issue foci of the WHRAP South Asia project.

Beyond evidence-generation and advocacy on the issue itself though, ARROW staff and PAC members in the 2008 PAC meeting affirmed the need to question the assumptions that mainstream approaches to maternal health and safe motherhood programmes make about women and maternity, and which result in issues such as abortion and youth SRHR being relegated to ghetto status within the public health system. This will contribute towards re-orienting policies and programmes to be more feminist and rights-based.

Additionally, through *ARROWs For Change* bulletin (Vol. 11 Bumper Issue on "Reframing Gender-based Violence as a Reproductive Health Issue"), we examined the linkages between gender-based violence and PCRMM. In its editorial, ARROW posits that this framing would help expand intervention and reporting mechanisms, enabling women suffering from violence to be absorbed into a cycle of care

and counselling earlier, as well as increase advocacy spaces for both issues.

Religious conservatism and fundamentalisms and its impact on women's SRHR. Religious fundamentalist movements continue to gain political ground and threaten women's empowerment, sexuality, and SRHR across religions and across the region and globally. In the region, examples of this can be seen in the increasing regression in Pakistan's governance systems, wherein contraceptives are being denounced as un-Islamic and health workers are being murdered, in the delays in passing a comprehensive reproductive health bill in the Philippines, in the banning of the Adolescent Education Programme in 2007 in India, and in the lack of awareness of abortion's legality in Malaysia even among health service providers and health ministry officials.

Recognising the need to create a more nuanced understanding of religious fundamentalisms and the impacts on women's rights, particularly on women's SRHR in the Asia-Pacific region, and to document effective counter-strategies around the region, ARROW produced *Surfacing: Selected Papers on Religious Fundamentalisms and Their Impact on Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*. This publication compiles papers from the symposium ARROW held at the 2007 4th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights. The papers by Elizabeth Aguiling-Pangalangan (the Philippines), Jashodhara Dasgupta (India), Kalpana Kannabiran (South Asia) and Zaitun Mohammad Kasim (Islamic countries) problematise and articulate the varied impact of Catholic, Hindu and Islamic fundamentalisms on SRHR, and broach the discussion on the many strategies being used to mitigate them. Michael Tan draws out the convergences around the various types and forms of religious fundamentalisms across the region in his synthesis. Rashidah Abdullah concludes with ways to move forward toward meeting the challenges of religious fundamentalisms, while ensuring that advocacies are contextualised in the spiritual lives of women in the region.

The importance of the theme and the quality of the publication itself is evident in the fact that the papers in this publication have been used in different contexts. For example, Rashidah Manjoo of the University of Webster, St. Louis,

Missouri, USA has used Jashodara Dasgupta's article in her course on "Women, Justice and Human Rights" for the session on women, religion and human rights. There has been very positive response to this publication, with several recipients of the proactive information listserv requesting print copies, and the ARROW website registering 365 downloads between November and December 2008 alone. Despite a limited mail-out and distribution in exhibition booths, only 261 out of 1,000 copies remain at the end of 2008.

Equity issues related to SRHR access, including privatisation and health sector reforms. Even as we celebrated the 34th year of the Alma Ata Declaration (wherein governments made a commitment to attaining health for all) in 2008, we see a series of health sector reforms initiatives hit Asia-Pacific countries, seriously impinging the

WHAT READERS SAID ABOUT SURFACING:

[W]e both really loved the publication. The content, design, cover, size etc. [are] all very appealing and also so reader friendly :) We also thought it's very good that the volume is concise and compact, despite the richness of information it contains. It is possible to have a cross-cutting analysis going through the chapters, which is very useful. Especially having the chance to get some ideas on fundamentalisms and how they play out in contexts we are not so familiar with is very valuable. It is also good that it can appeal to a broad audience, with its easy to understand language. Perhaps this is evident, but the idea itself of taking this session further and turning it into a resource is great... We've of course already shared Surfacing with CSBR and also featured it in the CSBR E-news. We also think it will make very good and pertinent reading material for the CSBR Sexuality Institute... Congrats to all for the hard work! (Liz Ercevik Amado & Karin Ronge, Women for Women's Human Rights-New Ways)

Excellent!! Congrats to entire team of ARROW, not only it was most impactful session in APCSRH conference but definitely one that needs to be followed [up]. Please send us 30 copies ...and do let us know if we can acquire more copies, thanks. (Dr. Yasmeen Sabeeh Qazi, Senior Country Advisor, Population Program, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Pakistan and WHRAP Regional Task Force member)

rights of the poor generally and of women particularly and the achievement of ICPD goals. Specifically, the impact of privatisation of health care on women's SRHR needs to be examined.

The ICPD+15 monitoring research and advocacy project had a significant parallel research component, which we refer to as the Thematic Papers, devoted to privatisation and health sector reforms. This research, being conducted by T. K. Sundari Ravindran and RUWSEC, involves six country profiles, including Lao PDR, Pakistan and Thailand, which examines the pathways to privatisation of the health sector in these countries and the documented consequences of privatisation for women's universal access to comprehensive SRHR services. The thematic paper aims to explore the implications of the privatisation of the health sector to universal access to SRH services and the consequences for women from poor and marginalised sections of society. More details on the results will be available in 2009.

Gender mainstreaming the Cambodian health sector

This short-term consultancy project (December 2009-June 2008) with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Cambodia enabled ARROW to assist the Gender Mainstreaming Action Group (GMAG) of the Ministry of Health of Cambodia in mainstreaming gender into the health system. With consultants Rashidah Abdullah, Rashidah Shuib and T.K Sundari Ravindran, we conducted a gender analysis of the health sector, held gender-sensitisation meetings with Cambodian health ministry officials and personnel, and developed and produced two health and gender training manuals for health managers and general health workers. In addition, ARROW invited our partner, the Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC), to join the training for general health workers, to enable potential collaboration between Cambodian reproductive health NGOs, GMAG and public health system workers.

The initiative raised many opportunities, and was both beneficial and productive. However, it also led to a reflection on the real challenges faced in implementing

gender mainstreaming at the national level. These include the loss of the fundamental political project behind the concept (i.e., addressing gender inequality) in the course of implementation. There is also a need to invest more in building local ownership, as it would be necessary for any full-scale, long-term follow-up or continuity of the investments made.

FEEDBACK ON THE PROJECT FROM A NATIONAL PARTNER:

I was not able to participate in the first part (the training of high-level officials), but I and a colleague was able to join the training for the health service implementers as observers through ARROW. For me, I was very satisfied with the project... Previously in Cambodia, the government does not want to speak about gender. Now, our new Minister of Health and other high-level officials speak about the importance of gender in healthcare as well as of development or poverty reduction. This is already a very big success after the ARROW training on gender mainstreaming in Cambodia. ARROW should continue this engagement. (Ouk Vhong Vathiny, RHAC, Cambodia)

National, regional and international networking

ARROW believes in the power of joint action for social change, and as such, got involved in the following key networks in 2008:

- **Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW)** is a network dedicated to advocating and monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the outcome document from the UN General Assembly on Women held in 2000 (Beijing+5). ARROW attended the annual meeting on 21-22 June 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand and was selected as one of the members of the Steering Committee (SC). It is hoped that ARROW's membership at APWW would mean opportunities for ARROW to synergise its advocacy plans in relation to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) and BPfA monitoring with that of APWW.

- **Asian Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP)**, the Asian chapter of the International Consortium of Medical Abortion (ICMA), was formed in an ICMA-organised meeting held on 18-19 March in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ASAP aims to serve as a regional platform for advancing safe abortion rights in the region. ARROW is a member of ASAP and has committed to supporting its work, particularly its advocacy, research and information and communications initiatives.

- **The Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)** was set up in 2007 as an alliance of individuals and NGOs committed to promoting women's access to reproductive rights and services through information, education and evidence-based advocacy in Malaysia, particularly on abortion and contraception issues. ARROW regards this group as critical and relevant and has been a member since its inception. In the brief time since, RRAAM's awareness-raising activities with NGOs, health professionals, and more progressive individuals in government agencies have resulted in an increased interest in SRHR issues among NGOs, clarification regarding the legal status of abortion in Malaysia, as well as requests for more information sessions with health professionals in Pahang, Sabah and Sarawak. As a regional NGO, ARROW's role in RRAAM has been mainly to provide information support. As part of our principle of supporting new organisations and thus strengthening the women's rights and SRHR movements, we also provide critical organisational support to RRAAM.

- **Strategies from the South** is a group of 34 major international and regional networks from Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, with work in a wide diversity of areas, such as HIV/AIDS, SRHR, human rights and especially women's rights, people living with HIV and AIDS, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, youth, sex workers, drug users, migrants and rural populations. ARROW has been a member since 2006, as it views this network as important for solidarity building across movements and in ensuring that women's rights and SRHR are on the agendas of HIV/AIDS and other movements. ARROW attended a meeting at the AWID Conference in Cape Town, South Africa where it was decided that ICPD+15 follow-up will be a major focus of the network in 2009.

Specific engagements with various movements

Reproductive Health Matters (RHM) Meeting, London, UK, 18-19 June 2008. RHM is one of the most established and respected international journals focusing on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues. In June 2008, Saira Shameem, representing ARROW, was invited as a guest to attend an RHM Editorial Board meeting. This was preceded by a discussion involving guest participants, which critically examined recent international conferences and their substantive contribution to the global SRHR agenda, and discussed the status of the SRHR advocacy globally and the catalysts that have shaped the current status of the movement. The following thematic areas were identified as priority issues that needed to be analysed: a) Mapping the geo-political and macro-economic contexts; b) Perpetuating power; c) Confronting fragmentation/Building coalitions; d) Human rights; e) Public health education/Knowledge construction and dissemination; f) Bio power/bio-medicalisation; and g) Donors and their influence.

The participants agreed to write discussion papers on these issues and then seek a variety of ways to disseminate them, not just within the field but also outside it, nationally,



The RHM Board Meeting

regionally and globally, including to the media. A larger dissemination conference was envisioned, to be hosted by ARROW in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in early February 2010.

ARROW was subsequently invited onto the editorial board of the bulletin, which is an honour for the organisation. ARROW, through Rashidah Abdullah, used to be a part of the editorial body during ARROW's initial years.

Sexuality Policy Watch (SPW) Preparatory Meeting for the Asia Regional Dialogue. SPW, a global initiative on sexuality politics, will convene three regional dialogues between 2008-2009 on the theme of sexuality and geopolitics examining in-depth the sub-themes of sexuality and the state, sexuality and economic development and sexuality and religion.

SPW invited ARROW to be a member of the organising team for the Asia Regional Dialogues. The Asia Regional Dialogue will be issue-oriented, and is tentatively planned over three days to focus on HIV and multiple sexualities, sex work and political/economic processes, and religion and spirituality in relation to sexuality. It is planned to be held from 10-12 April 2009, just prior to the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Society and Culture (IASSCS) conference in April 2009 in Hanoi, Vietnam. In order to prepare for the Asia Regional Dialogue in April of 2009, a regional Task Force was formed to identify key themes for the dialogue and key individuals in the region who can carry this dialogue forward. The first meeting of the group was held in Bangkok on 9-10 August 2008.

FIGO Regional Workshop on Preventing Unsafe Abortion, Mumbai, India, 21-22 August 2008. The International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) Regional Initiative on Abortion was initiated by Anibal Faundes, previously the chairperson of the FIGO Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Committee, which collaborated with ARROW in organising the ARROW-FIGO Parallel Forums in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2007. The regional initiative, which works through national obstetrics and gynaecology associations affiliated to FIGO, aims to contribute to the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity associated with unsafe abortion through reducing unintended or unwanted

pregnancies and induced abortions, improving access to safe abortions and improving post-abortion care. ARROW attended the regional meeting, which involved the sharing and discussion of country situational analysis and plans of action. This information will be shared in country-level dissemination workshops, leading to a regional workshop which would review overall progress to date. To facilitate their process, ARROW put the FIGO teams in touch with our ICPD+15 partners. Follow up will be conducted in relation to advocacy initiatives around ARROW's ICPD+15 project, which we intend to synchronise wherever possible with FIGO's efforts.

International Steering Committee (ISC) Meeting, Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSHR), Taicang, China, 28-29 August 2008. The biennial APCRSR is a key platform for bringing together various stakeholders to share experiences and to take stock of progress on SRHR in the Asia-Pacific, and ARROW's intervention in the ISC remains critical. The main discussions of the steering committee meeting focused on the objectives of the conference as well as the conference outline, structure, programme and resource mobilisation. The conference theme in 2009 is "Working for Universal Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights: Building on the ICPD PoA and the MDGs." It will be an important opportunity for ARROW to showcase both the results of our ICPD+15 project and promote the prominent participation of WHRAP China within the 5th APCRSR, which will be held in Beijing, China from 18-20 October 2009.

11th International Forum on Women's Rights and Development 2008: The Power of Movements, Cape Town, South Africa, 14-17 November 2008. Reputed to be the largest recurring event of its kind, the AWID forum brought together more than 2,000 women's rights leaders and activists from across the globe. Global Fund for Women funded our participation and enabled us to organise a series of activities, including the session with WHRAP South Asia and exhibit booth discussed earlier. We also coordinated and



The joint book launch at AWID. One of the authors, Elizabeth Pangalangan, presented *Surfacing*, while WHRAP partner Shireen Huq presented *Advocating Accountability*.

hosted a joint book launch on 14 November 2008 where we launched the following two publications:

- *Advocating Accountability: Status Report on Maternal Health and Young People's SRHR in South Asia*, which presents national status reports on maternal health and young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and India. The reports in this compilation were prepared by the six national partners of WHRAP South Asia.

- *Surfacing: Selected Papers on Religious Fundamentalisms and Their Impact on Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*, which offers cutting-edge analytical papers articulating the impact of Roman Catholic, Hindu and Islamic fundamentalisms on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Asia-Pacific, and strategies to move forward.

The book launch was a veritable celebration of the power of movements, which was AWID's theme for the international forum this year. We held it in collaboration

ON OUR AWID INTERVENTIONS:

I'd like to take this opportunity to commend your team for the good work they did at the recent AWID and the solidarity they showed in movement building. I hope we will have other opportunities to work together. (Goh Soon Siew, Interim Executive Officer, Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations or APCASO)

with WHRAP South Asia and five other organisations and networks from the Global South—Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organisations (APCASO), Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR), International Women’s Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific, Sexuality Policy Watch and Women for Women’s Human Rights (WWHR)-New Ways. Each organisation or network launched its own publication at this event. The varied issues which each organisation’s publication/s brought to the book launch enabled sharing of skills and expertise across movements and provided the opportunities for discussions on future collaborations. The collaboration also enabled a sharing of human, financial and creative resources, as well as friends and network partners who came to the event. The joint book launch was attended by 60 people, including representatives from the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Isis International Manila, and the UNESCAP.

Meeting on Youth Internship Programme, ARROW office, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 27 March 2008. ARROW was approached by Supriya Pillai, Programme Officer at the International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC), on developing a joint regional youth internship programme

between AWID, IWHC and ARROW. The discussions included Sanushka Mudaliar (AWID), Tengku Aira Tengku Razif (UNFPA Malaysia) and ARROW. While IWHC did not have funds in 2008 for this, they were keen on considering a proposal for such action in 2009. Some elements of the idea include an internship programme with placements for young leaders within prominent partner organisations in the region, the research and writing of analytical papers on lessons learnt from previous efforts to support youth empowerment, and organisational support to be provided to the young leaders who participate so that there is a sustainable support base for any follow up activities they may want to be involved in. ARROW will reconnect with IWHC in 2009 to follow up on this possible collaboration.

Advocacy in 2009


In 2009, we will be working on a strategic advocacy plan for each of our three critical issues. This hopefully would enable us to invest more systematically and consistently on these important issues, resulting in more sustainable outcomes. 

Table 3. Other engagements and technical inputs in 2008

Event	Date and Venue	Organisers
<i>First Asian Rural Women’s Conference</i>	6-8 March, Pallavoy, Tamil Nadu, India	Steering Committee (including ARROW)
<i>Malaysia National Library Meeting</i>	11 March, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	National Library
<i>Kanita Panel Advisory Committee Meeting</i>	11 April, Penang, Malaysia	KANITA, USM
<i>From Abortion Rights to Social Justice: Building the Movement for Reproductive Freedom</i>	April, USA	Hampshire College
<i>Pre-summit Workshop on Fighting Stereotypes</i>	2-28 May, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	AIBD/UNIFEM/UNESCO
<i>Panel with Malaysian Activists: Sexual Rights and Politics in Malaysia</i>	20 August, Cyberjaya, Malaysia	The Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR) and Sisters in Islam (SIS)
<i>Planning Consultation: Renewing and Enhancing Collaboration with NGOs Towards a Shared Agenda</i>	22-23 September, Geneva, Switzerland	World Health Organization (WHO)
<i>Meeting on Funding Possibilities for Research, especially on Preventing Unsafe Abortion</i>	1 December, Subang Jaya, Malaysia	Federation of Reproductive Health Associations of Malaysia (FRHAM)

ARROW's organisational development section is aimed towards improving organisational effectiveness and sustainability, as well as documenting good organisational practices to enhance leadership within the women's health and rights movement.

Planning, monitoring and evaluating our work

In 2009, between July and August, we worked on developing clear indicators for measuring progress towards achieving our strategic plan objectives. After a short training session for ARROW staff members on results-based management, we held a series of sessions aimed at developing section and organisational log frames that made more logical linkages between programme objectives and activities. Finally, we tried to extend this logic model to individual key performance indicators (KPIs), so that outputs at the individual level are linked to the work programme and budget objectives.

As part of the organisational monitoring and evaluation process, we had our Annual Retreat in December at the office. The critical review of the highlights for the year was a fruitful process, as was the sharing on everyone's personal reflections. The annual review was structured in a way that encouraged thorough and thoughtful staff presentations, followed by engaged discussions by all staff members of key questions posed by the different teams to the whole ARROW team. As a result of this high quality review, we were able to develop the framework of the organisational work plan for 2009, which will be finalised in January 2009.

Documenting our good practices

This project led by the Board of Directors (BOD) aims to generate a handbook of good organisational practices for the region. This resource will include tools, case studies and lessons learned on areas such as governance and leadership, strategic planning and management. In its next few meetings, the BOD will allocate a half-day for in-depth discussions and workshops on the handbook. Meanwhile, funding opportunities are being pursued with various donors in order

to enable a small meeting to occur, so that contributions from partners could also be incorporated into the handbook. This publication will serve as an important resource on feminist management of civil society organisations, and will be useful to coming generations of activists, as well as to current leaders pursuing feminist management models in civil society organisations the region.

Governing ARROW

We continued to benefit from the commitment, experience and expertise of our Board of Directors in improving governance and accountability structures within ARROW. These are the highlights of their contributions in 2008:

- further clarification of the Code of Ethics Policy for implementation;
- monitoring of the implementation and review of the new appraisal system, and the development of an effective staff development plan within ARROW;
- development and approval of the criteria for determining entry-level salaries within the ARROW salary scale;
- approval of a time-bound cost of living allowance (COLA) for staff on the assistant programme officer scale;
- continued oversight on matters related to financial accountability and organisational sustainability;
- institution of a BOD self-appraisal process; and
- active involvement in documenting our experience in organisational development, and in negotiations to bring our management challenges in line with our feminist ideals.

BOD members were likewise involved in ARROW activities and events in various ways. Some have served as consultants in various projects including the *ARROW's For Change* bulletin, the Cambodia gender mainstreaming project, the KIC project and the WHRAP Mid-Term Review process. They have also participated at ARROW's Regional ICPD+15 Planning Meeting, the Programme Advisory Committee meeting and the annual Board-Staff retreat. BOD members also represented the organisation at a number of events throughout 2008, including the *WHO Planning*

Consultation on Renewing and Enhancing Collaboration with NGOs Towards a Shared Agenda (Geneva, September 2008), *From Abortion Rights to Social Justice: Building the Movement for Reproductive Freedom* conference (Hampshire College, USA, April 2008), and the AWID Forum (South Africa, November 2008).

Junice Melgar, ARROW's newest board member, was warmly welcomed to the ARROW board in May 2008. Junice was invited to Board in order to fill the vacancy created when Rashidah Shuib completed her maximum two terms as board member. Junice was previously on our Programme Advisory Committee, and Likhaan, the organisation that she heads, has been an ARROW partner for many years.

Guiding our programmes and projects

In 2008, our Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) made critical and timely contributions, which helped to keep ARROW both relevant and integral to its mission. Amongst others, these included providing input to the development of *ARROWs For Change* concept notes and serving as expert readers of AFC articles; providing feedback on project proposals and re-orienting them to better fit the needs of the region; serving as a consultant to the KIC project; and conducting thematic studies for our ICPD+15 project.

The annual meeting of the PAC was held from 25-26 April in Port Dickson, Malaysia. PAC members reviewed the organisation's progress in 2008 towards meeting the work programme and budget objectives, commented on ARROW's draft advocacy and information and communications strategies, and gave feedback on our proposed analytical position on pregnancy and childbirth-related mortality and morbidity.

We have the pleasure of welcoming two new members on the PAC team in 2008: Neha Sood (India) and Ouk Vong Vathiny (Cambodia). We said a fond farewell to two PAC members in 2008 whose terms have ended: Aruna Uprety (Nepal) and Rajjeli Nicole (Fiji). We were also sad to lose one of our PAC members, Zaitun Mohammad Kasim, who passed away in June 2008.



Photo courtesy of Sister In Islam

IN MEMORIAM

The staff, board and PAC deeply mourns the loss of PAC member Zaitun Mohamad Kasim, who passed away on 4 June 2008 after a short spate of illness. Her passing deeply affected many people who had had the opportunity to know and to work closely with her. Toni, as she is fondly known, contributed towards ARROW substantively during the brief time she was with PAC, both in improving our internal knowledge and understanding of sexuality issues, as well as the impact of religious fundamentalisms on SRHR. Her deep love for people, and her tireless efforts and courage to take up their causes, will continue to be an inspiration to all of us.

Growing and changing

In February, Kamayani Bali Mahabal joined us as WHRAP South Asia Advocacy Coordinator, while in March, Suloshini Jahanath was recruited on a short-term project contract for website development work. Cici Li Xin assisted the WHRAP China project from March to December while Mei Li was recruited as the Programme Officer in December. Ambika Varma took over the post of Programme Officer for IDC in June, which was left vacant in March by Michelle Rogers. Suzana Abu Samah joined ARROW in July 2008 as the second Assistant Administration Officer, providing much-needed support to the administrative and finance team. Meanwhile, Khatijah Mohammad Baki retired as Finance Officer in June 2008. Phan Thi Uyen was also recruited as the second Programme Officer for the ICPD+15 project in August 2008. Jenny Acton resigned as the WHRAP South Asia Programme Officer in October 2009 to join her partner in Canada, and Rodelyn Marte resigned as Programme Manager for Advocacy and Capacity Building effective January 2009 to do regional work on HIV/AIDS issues. ARROW thanks all the staff who left this year for their contributions to the growth of the organisation, and welcomes those who have joined us this year.

Four interns were with ARROW in 2008: Aaron Klaassen and Amy Yeung provided continuing IT support and programme support respectively until March, while Chiam May Yen and Sha-Lene Pung volunteered to be short-term output-based marketing interns in November and December. We also thank them for their efforts.

Teambuilding

ARROW took advantage of low-cost airlines and budget accommodations to hold its teambuilding event in Bali, Indonesia from 9 to 11 July 2008. A networking visit to the Bali Family Planning Association and its attached clinic, a trip to the beautiful temple Tanah Lot, and group teambuilding activities in peaceful settings were merged to

make a busy, but fruitful teambuilding exercise. We not only had great fun but also grew closer together.


Building our capacities

In 2008, ARROW reaffirmed its commitment to staff capacity building and development, and ensured a more systematic approach to the implementation of the Talent and Leadership Course, the plan for internal capacity development for all ARROW staff members. Staff development opportunities availed in 2008 by various staff members were as follows:

- *Human Resource Training Workshop*, 21-22 January, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- *Supervisory Training Workshop*, 30-31 January, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- *Joomla Website Training Workshop*, 14 March, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- *The Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Society Sexuality Institute 2008*, 16-23 August, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- *Workshop on Analysis on Qualitative Data–Grounded Theory in Practice*, 29 August-5 September, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- *7th Leadership Course on Gender, Sexuality and Health in Southeast Asia and China*, 25 August-29 September, Vientiane, Laos
- *Fast Track to Web Design Workshop*, 14-15 October, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- *Regional Training on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and Advocacy*, 24-27 October, Bangkok, Thailand
- *UNITAR Toulouse Doctoral Research Seminar, Module 4*, 20-24 October, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- *MS Excel 2003: Basic/Intermediate Training*, 10 December, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- *MS Excel 2003: Advance Training*, 16 December, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Celebrating our birthday and our new home, commemorating ARROW women

2008 was also a year of celebration, as ARROW marked our 15th anniversary and moved into a brand new office. The new office, located near the previous one, has ample spaces for all staff members to enable us to work comfortably, as well as meeting spaces which can be used by local NGOs and groups based in Malaysia. The 15th Anniversary and

Housewarming celebrations were held in ARROW's new office on 5 December 2008 with about 60 guests comprising friends of ARROW, BOD members as well as ARROW staff family members. During the event, we also commemorated the lives and contributions to women's movements of ARROW's co-founder, Rita Raj and PAC member, Zaitun Mohamed Kasim. A special ceremony was also held as part of the commemoration to dedicate one of the common spaces, named the Women's Space, to Rita Raj. 

ARROW PhotoBank



Left: Sections of ARROW's new space; Top right: Celebrating at ARROW's 15th Anniversary Party; Bottom right: Representatives from partners, BOD, PAC and staff cut ARROW's 15th birthday cake

Income for 2008

2008 was financially a good year for ARROW. We received a total of RM4,270,070 (US\$1,220,020) in grants in 2008, 95.32% higher than the RM2,186,153 (US\$624,615) received in 2007. The 2008 grants represents 97.8% of ARROW's total income of RM4,367,990 (US\$1,247,997). The breakdown of these grants follows:

- Oxfam Novib funding, which began in November 2006, continued to support activities in women's health and rights advocacy and overall institutional costs. From November 2007, for a period of two years, Oxfam Novib's increased its support to expand the Women's Health and Rights Advocacy Partnership (WHRAP) to China. In 2008, Oxfam Novib's contributions amounted to RM1,175,500 (US\$338,844), of which RM460,000 (US\$135,523) was for WHRAP China. Oxfam Novib support constituted 27% of ARROW's total income during the year.

- Sida's previous cycle of support to ARROW ended in December 2007. In April 2008, a new programme and institutional funding agreement for the period of January 2008 to December 2012 was signed with a total support grant amounting to RM4,900,000 (US\$1,400,000 or SEK8,500,000), a 325% increase from the total agreement for the earlier cycle. In 2008, Sida support constituted 30% of the total annual income.

- The Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA), in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, continued funding the second phase of the WHRAP project. These funds, which also support the activities of six partner NGOs in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, contributed 24% of ARROW's total budget.

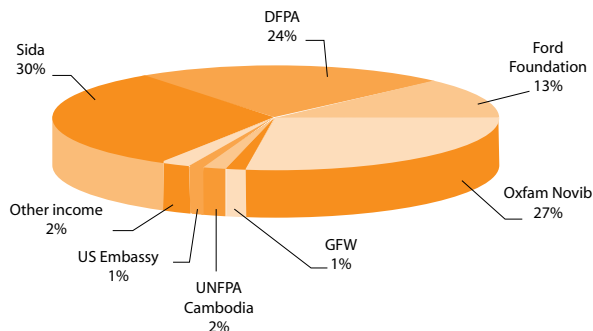
- In the first quarter of 2008, the Ford Foundation approved a total grant of RM1,190,000 (US\$340,000) for ARROW's monitoring and advocacy work around ICPD+15, involving 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The grant period is from April 2008 to March 2010. In 2008, the Ford Foundation's support constituted 13% of the total income.

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Cambodia provided RM77,080 (US\$23,400) for a project with the Gender Mainstreaming Action Group (GMAG) of

the Ministry of Health of Cambodia. The project ran from October 2007 until May 2008.

- RM61,050 (US\$18,000) was awarded to ARROW from the Global Fund for Women (GFW) presidential discretionary grant for attending and running events at the Association for Women in Development (AWID) Forum in November 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Figure 1. Sources of ARROW's income in 2008



Source: ARROW's Audited Accounts 2008

- RM52,500 (US\$15,000) was raised from the US Embassy Small Grants Program for the project entitled, "Building the Capacities of and Strengthening the Malaysian Women's Human Rights Movement: Creating a Women's Space and Organising a 'Conversations on Women's Rights in Malaysia' Series." The remaining 2.2% of the total income received in 2008 (RM97,920 or US\$27,977) came from ARROW's own income from interest on fixed deposits (involving monies from ARROW's organisational savings and project funds that have prior approval for accruing interest) and from information services.

In addition to the grants and other income received in 2008 discussed above, funds were available for expenditure in 2008 from balances carried forward from funds received in 2007. The total income available for 2008 was RM6,103,057 (US\$1,743,730).

ARROW also received RM64,875 (US\$20,000) on behalf of the Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM), an independent group committed to improving information, access and awareness on unsafe abortion in Malaysia. RRAAM activities are funded by Ipas, USA.

Expenditure for 2008

In 2008, ARROW's total expenditure amounted to RM3,347,085 (US\$956,310), compared to RM2,390,216 (US\$713,497) in 2007. The direct programme costs of the organisation—comprised of project expenditure at the regional level for research and meeting costs (18%); publications (4%); and the IDC (1%)—contributed to 23% of the total expenditure. An additional 29% of the direct programme costs went towards expenditure for activities carried out at the national level by ARROW's national partners. As such, national and regional level activities combined made up a total of 52% of the organisation's annual expenditure. The cost of staff time which contributes to this work is not included in the above expenses, but categorised under human resources.


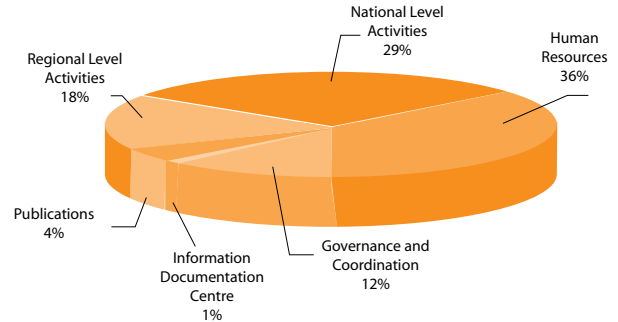
The remaining 48% of expenditures is divided into human resources (36%) and governance and coordination-related costs (12%). Governance costs include the holding of ARROW's Board of Directors meetings, Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings, and the costs related to organisational development and sharing of best practices with partners in the region. 

Figure 2. ARROW's expenditure in 2008



Source: ARROW's Audited Accounts 2008

ARROW thanks everyone who supported our work and shared a commitment to enhancing the health and rights of women in the Asia-Pacific region.

Our country partners in 2008

- **Bangladesh:** Adorsho Kajer Shondhaney (AKAS); Adorsho Mohila Sangstha; Annesha Samaj Sheba Shongho; Bangladesh Mohila Parishad (Tangail branch); Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC); Barisal Mohila Kollayan Shongstha; BLAST; CDMS; Children and Youth Development Organisation (SYDO); Chinnomul Shomity; Community-Based Development Project (CBDP); CWFD; FPAB; Girls College; Gorpara Ekota Jubo Shomobay Shomity Ltd; Hatkhola Girls College; HJKS; Integrated Social Welfare Association (ISWA); Jago Nari; Jaika; Jenious; Jhora Borsha High School; Jobaida High School; Khane Pur High School; Naripokkho; Nazrul Shriti Shongshod (NSS); NUS; Palash Mohila Unnayan Shomity; Palash Pilot High School; Palash Shilpanchal College; Patuakhali Development Organisation (PDO); Polly Shomonnoy Shikkha Kollyan Parishad; Porag Nari Kollayan Shongstha; Prottoy Shamajik Shongothon; Rashdo; Shaghata B.M College; Shamaj Unnayan Shongsthatu (SUS); Shangkhalpa Trust; Shaplaful Social Development Organisation (SSDO); Shuktara Mohila Shongstha; USS; USS-B; WDP

- **Cambodia:** Ministry of Health Gender Mainstreaming Action Group (GMAG); Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC)

- **China:** Beijing Women's Law Studies and Legal Aid Centre; Heilongjiang Women's Federation; Hong Kong Federation of Women Centres; Institute of Sexuality and Gender, Renmin University; Shanghai Women's Health Care Institute

- **Denmark:** Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA)

- **India:** Academy for Nursing Studies and Women's Empowerment Research Studies (ANS-WERS); Achal Gramin Vikas Samajik Sansthan; Asha Ashram; Assisi Health Centre; Astitva Samajik Sansthan; Baba RamKaran Das Gramin Vikas Samiti; Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA); CHETNA-Sabarkantha; Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ); Ebtada Sansthan;

Gramin Punar Nirman Sansthan; Gramya Sansthan; Gram Vikas Navyuvak Mandal; Hadoti Hast Shilpa Sansthan; Initiatives: Women in Development (IWID); Jatan Sansthan; Mahila Swasthya Adhikar Manch (MSAM); PEDO Mada, Dungarpur; P.G.S.S; Rural Women's Social Education Centre (RUWSEC); SAHAYOG; SARTHI; "Savitri Bai Phoole" Dalit Mahila Sangharsh Morcha; Seva Mandir; Shikhar Prashikshan Sansthan; Tarun Vikas Sansthan

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- Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organisations (APCASO)
- Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW)
- Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSHR) International Steering Committee
- Asian Rural Women's Conference (ARWC) Steering Committee
- Asian Solidarity for Peoples' Advocacy (SAPA)
- Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP)
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- *Reproductive Health Matters* Editorial Board

- Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)
- Sexuality Policy Watch Asia Regional Dialogue Organising Team
- Strategies from the South Initiative
- UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office
- Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR)-New Ways
- Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)

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ARROW BOD members during the May 2008 meeting

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