

ASIA SAFE ABORTION PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT- 1ST JAN-31ST DEC 2010

The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) is a network of activists, doctors, lawyers, researchers, demographers and others, working towards improving access to safe abortion services in the region since its inception in March 2008. The network provides a forum for information and experience sharing, strategic thinking and planning for a collective vision aimed towards regional and international advocacy. ASAP has worked towards supporting its members to advance the partnership goal in their country contexts in the areas of advocacy to improve laws and policies, capacity building, research and documentation as well as service delivery. ASAP ensures that all its members have access to updated information on safe abortion technology and programmes through the website, newsletters and training programmes as and when needed.

Currently there are over 200 members on the listserv and over 80 members from 15 different countries across AsiaPacific, who agree with the goal and objectives of the partnership and are, or intend to be, active in promoting or supporting access to comprehensive safe abortion services, including medical abortion .

Goal: To promote, protect and advance women’s sexual and reproductive rights and health in Asia by reducing unsafe abortion and its complications and where it is legal, by promoting access to comprehensive safe abortion services.

Objectives:

- To serve as a forum for information and experience sharing, strategic thinking and planning for a collective vision aimed towards regional and international advocacy
- To support members to advance the partnership goal in their country contexts through the following areas:
 - law, advocacy and policy
 - capacity building
 - research and documentation
 - service delivery
- To promote new technologies, including manual vacuum aspiration and medical abortion.

OVERVIEW OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE YEAR 2010:

Network Management and implementation:

A **Secretariat** has been set up in Mumbai, India to carry out the activities and is managed by the **Coordinator and the Programme Assistant**. Regarding the governance bodies, the **Steering**

Committee is formed of 6 members, ensuring a gender balance and a regional balance between South and South East Asia. The SC oversees work of the Secretariat and ensures that the objectives and priority activities are implemented and ensure review of, and approving, materials developed for dissemination. The Steering Committee also helps to ensure that funding is obtained to undertake the activities.

ASAP had the first **Steering Committee meeting** of this year in March 2010, in Lisbon along with the ICMA Global Conference “Expanding access to medical abortion.” The second was held in Hanoi, in July along with the Advocacy Workshop. The TOR for SC membership was amended slightly during this meeting.

ASAP SC members meet potential partners during their travel and make discuss possible collaborative efforts.. Dr SP Choong, Chair ASAP met with Mr Chris Turner, Senior Project Support; Ms Claire Maloney, PR and Communications at MSI Melbourne Office in August 2010. Dr Phan Bich Thuy, SC member ASAP, visited Bangladesh to attend a dissemination meeting of Menstrual Regulation with Medicine (MRM) research, a MRM strategy meeting and an MA seminar. She met with Dr. Reena Yasmin, Director Services of Bangladesh Marie Stopes and Hasina Chaklader, Director of MIS, research and M&E of Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC) to talk about ASAP work.

Communication and Networking:

The **ASAP website** home page www.asap-asia.org has a map of Asia with hyperlinks on each member country which lead to the country profile. The website has 11 country profiles (Malaysia, Japan, Vietnam, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Nepal, Mongolia, Indonesia and China) which give an overview of the abortion law, policy and data from those countries. The website has direct links to ICMA, Women on Web, Gynuity and Ipas on its home page. The website also provides technical information on Medical Abortion, kindly shared with us by the ICMA website. The website also provides updates on events, news articles and links.

From **Jan 1, 2010 –31st December, 2010**; the site has had 3955 visitors (absolute unique visitors). In total, 4734 visits came from 99 countries/territories.

ASAP receives **emails** from young women / couples seeking abortion services. Response to these queries is given on time with appropriate referral of service providers or of the organizations working on this issue in their own countries. When abortion is illegal/ restricted in a country, the abortion seeker is asked to contact Women on Web

An **e –discussion forum** (google group) has been functioning since May 2008 and has had over 715 messages/ updates sent out to the members so far, mostly on a daily basis. The list serve has over 200 members on it and is moderated by the Coordinator.

ASAP is working closely with IPPF ESEAOR, AFPPD, Gynuity Health Projects, Ipas, Women on Web and has members of PSI, MSI, ARROW and RRAAM on the network.

As part of the process for the strengthening of the network, both internally and as a potential relevant actor in the region, the network presence in some of the activities developed in the region are prioritized as follows:

1. Coordinator ASAP and 2 SC Members attended the first International Conference “IWAC” on Women’s Health and Unsafe Abortion was held at the Imperial Queen’s Hotel, in Bangkok from 20th to 22nd Jan 2010. The Women’s Health and Reproductive Rights Foundation of Thailand (WHRRF) organized it and Prof Kamheang Chaturachinda and Dr Nongluk Boonthai were the key organizers. ASAP presentations at the IWAC were:

Claire AP Luczon: **Advocating for Advocates**

Suchitra Dalvie: **An Overview of Abortion in Asia (at WGNRR)**

What do Lawyers know about abortion? (At IWAC)

Challenges to expand access to MA in India (as part of the Gynuity panel)

2. The ICMA Global Conference "**Expanding Access to Medical Abortion: Building on Two Decades of Experience**", was held in Lisbon in March 2010 and had 25 members of ASAP participating in it. ICMA sponsored total of 6 ASAP members (4 SC and 2 from the Secretariat) for the conference. At the conference, the **Regional Caucus Asia** was facilitated by Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator ASAP at the ICMA conference. The aim of the discussion was **to develop the work plan based on the sharing of the members of each country**. This would be then discussed further to develop the collaboration between the regional networks and ICMA to link the global and the regional advocacy work.

3. ASAP Coordinator participated in the **Global Maternal Health Conference, New Delhi, India** on 30th August-1st Sept 2010 through the ICMA- Ipas panel.

Research and documentation:

ASAP has undertaken the following research and documentation activities this year:

1. A **qualitative research study on the knowledge, attitudes and understanding of legal professionals with regard to safe abortion as a women’s right** was initiated in July 2008.. The reports have also been uploaded on ASAP and ICMA websites as well as in the quarterly ICMA Newsletter.

The Indonesian partners for this study had local dissemination and the findings of the study are being used by country level advocates with their own Government and other relevant organizations.

2. **“Suhailie”: Hotline on Misoprostol in Pakistan : Asia Safe Abortion Partnership** in collaboration with **Women on Waves** and **Women on Web** have launched a hotline in Pakistan in June 2010, that gives information about how women can use the medication misoprostol to have a safe abortion, or to prevent dangerous haemorrhaging after giving birth..



Women needing information in Pakistan/ hotline numbers: *Flyer for the safe abortion hotline in Pakistan*

0307 - 494 07 07 - (Urdu, Punjabi)

0315 - 917 04 08 - (Urdu, Pashto)

0315 - 947 33 99 - (Urdu, Sindhi)



The launch was carried out by the coalition of Pakistani Organization who support women’s rights – Aware Girls from Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa, Peace Foundation from Sindh and Wake Up Call International from Lahore with the support of Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, Women on Waves and Women on Web. This initiative has been financial supported by Mama Cash. This is the **only hotline of its kind in Asia**, following the launching of successful hotlines in Latin

America. This hotline will put life-saving information directly into the hands of the women who need it.



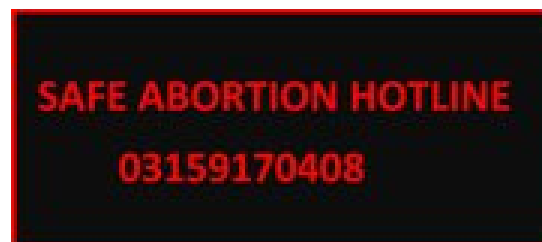
[Banner and Participants of Training Workshop]

The local groups have used various dissemination strategies to publicize the Hotlines, holding meeting, distributing stickers and flyers, Press conference and press releases , Short text messages on cell phone, Press advertisement of cell number:

One of the groups did “e-campaigning” and spread the number of Hotline among organizations and people

through e-groups and Face book.

An assessment visit was conducted in December in Karachi along with a meeting with Stakeholders to disseminate the Hotline campaign further in Karachi.

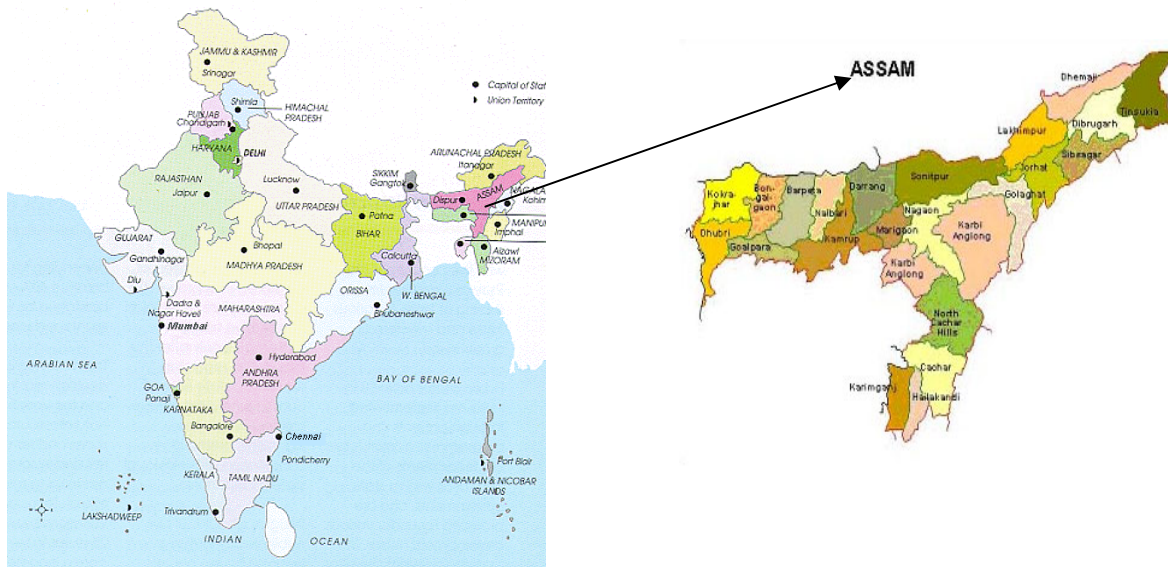


The helpline has received 841 calls (including follow up calls) till the end of December. This is the first time data is being collected on such a campaign. The data is being analysed and the reports will be printed for further dissemination. ASAP plans to use the findings of this study as an advocate tool to decentralize Medical Abortion in Asian Context.

3. **KAP of providers who manage HIV positive women** :ASAP is conducting a study on the KAP of providers who manage HIV positive women with regard to medical abortion. The study is being implemented by Centre for Operations Research and Training (CORT) in India and by Group of Technical Assistance (GTA) in Nepal. It is being conducted in 3 states in India and a 4 districts in Nepal. The information from this study will help to improve the programmes and services for PLHIV, specially to improve access to safe abortion for women living with HIV.

Capacity building activities

1. A workshop on “Safe Abortion : A Comprehensive Update” was conducted by ASAP on 17-18 June , in Guwahati, Assam, India in collaboration with Common Health, Federation of Gynaecologist and Obstetrician of India and the State Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It was attended by 43 participants, Superintendents and Medical Officers (Gynaecologists) from 26 districts of Assam.



The workshop concentrated on the issue of improving the scope of comprehensive safe abortion services including post abortion family planning services which are vital to improve the maternal health. Newer methods for providing safe abortion services like MVA and MMA were also discussed. ASAP adopted a Rights based and gender sensitive approach while imparting this training.

The Ministry supplied all district hospitals with MVA syringes for the first time, as a result of this workshop and hands on training. ASAP has also suggested ways in which they could make medical abortion available in their public health systems. Dr Milind Shah, a Steering Committee member ASAP was the lead resource person for this.



FOGSI personnel assessed the use of MVA and MA in 4 districts of Assam in December 2010 and it was found that the trainees of MVA are using this method in their daily practice, but a refresher course is recommended.

Capacity Building for members:

1.Program Assistant, ASAP attended the Health and Human Rights Course conducted by CEHAT (Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes) in Mumbai, India in January 2010. ASAP also funded an eligible scholar from Vietnam for this.

2 . ASAP supported the participation of all its 6 SC members and the Program officer for the ICMA Global conference "**Expanding Access to Medical Abortion: Building on Two Decades of Experience**".

3. The Coordinator and the Programme Assistant, attended the Capacity Building workshop on Organizational Development, conducted by ICMA in the first week of July, in Morges, Switzerland. The workshop focused on three main topics: strategic planning and linking plans to proposals, basic fundraising skills, and network governance.

4 . ASAP conducted a 5 day workshop "Abortion Advocacy and HerWAI (Human Rights for Women **Assessment Instrument Training**) " in Hanoi, Vietnam from 25th -29th July 2010 in collaboration with **Centre for Reproductive Rights (CRR)** and **Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)** . ASAP funded its 5 SC members, 2 members of secretariat and nine scholars. WGNRR supported 7 participants, while 2 where self funded. The resource persons were Amy, Corinne, Nondo, Kathy, Marlene from WGNRR, Melissa, Payal from CRR, Suchitra from ASAP and Marge from ICMA.



The aim of this workshop was to **unpack the relationship between human rights, women’s rights and abortion advocacy.**

Advocacy programmes:

1. Media sensitization workshops: ASAP conducted 3 media sensitization workshops in Nepal, Vietnam and Malaysia to orient journalists on the gender and rights dimensions of safe abortion issues.

In Nepal the workshop was attended by 17 health reporters (7 women journalists)- 11 from print, 3 from radio and 3 from television media. In **Vietnam** 10 journalists - from seven newspapers in Hanoi and Ha nam and one national TV channel, attended the workshop and in **Malaysia** about 20 participants from NGOs, but only 3 press reporters and 2 feature writers attended the workshop.



Sessions included clarification myths and misconceptions, law related to safe abortion in their country , SRHR,MDGs, Human rights, unsafe abortion, adolescents’ abortion, Medical abortion etc.

A field visit was arranged to see the clinic facilities in Vietnam . They also participated in a youth club activity. Articles were printed in the local newspapers as a follow up to the workshop.



Post the Vietnam workshop, ASAP SC Member Phan Bich Thuy was persuaded by the journalist to start her own blog for discussing SRHR and adolescent issues. Two of them helped her to set her blog which is in Vietnamese. Today there are over 10000 visitors on this blog who have raised various issues. This blog had an article on abortion issues in young women and there have been 935 comments on it. Similarly, she has received over 1000 comments on her article on gender and rights. Because of her successful blog she been invited to be a part of a television series in the coming months giving information on adolescent reproductive health and abortion.

2.. ASAP collaborated with WGNRR for a youth meeting to be held in Manila in January 2011 and supported the participation of a young person from Hanoi, Vietnam for this meeting.

Development of project proposals

- I. ASAP had submitted 2 proposals to WHO in response to the Call for proposals for research on expanding access to medical abortion in developing countries.
- **Operational Research for MA:** Along with Women on Web, ASAP plans to set up a hotline for information on Misoprostol in Indonesia , India and Nepal and assess the impact of the intervention.
- **An Intervention study for MA with FPA Pakistan: “Before and After KAP Study on Medical Abortion”**

2. ASAP is a signed- on partner to DFID – MSI Ipas project proposal.

Finances:

ASAP has implemented its work on a series of projects/ activities through various donors and collaborations in the Year 2010. These activities were funded by the Packard Foundation (reallocated funds of 2009), Anonymous Donor, Dutch Ministry and Mama Cash.

In addition to this ASAP has worked in collaboration with CRR and WGNRR for conducting a workshop in Vietnam. ASAP has also worked with the local organization in three countries to conduct the Media workshops.

Funds for the entire year 2010	Euros
Mama Cash (through WoW)	37400
Anonymous Donor (through ICMA)	10000
Dutch Ministry (through ICMA)	50075
Packard Foundation (Reallocation from 2009)	17553
ICMA (Lisbon Conference)	2457
Total	117485
Contributions towards ASAP programs (Fund not given directly into ASAP account but program expenses)	
WGNRR (Supported participation of 9 people and 5 Resource persons for Hanoi workshop)	Euros 7000
CRR (Technical support for Hanoi)	
Ministry of health and Family Welfare Assam State, India supported participation of 43 providers for the Safe Abortion Workshop India	Euros 1700
ICMA supported participation of Coordinator at GMHC in Delhi, India	