

The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership

*Expanding access to safe abortions
for all women in the Asia-Pacific region*



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

FROM THE DESK OF THE COORDINATOR

2015 has been a year of remarkable progress in many ways, consolidating the work of the past while continuing to face current challenges.

The WHO released two important documents—one on [task shifting](#) and one on the [role of health workers in providing safe abortion services](#).

Our own studies were published in respected peer reviewed journals, adding to the increasing and valuable pool of evidence and data that is needed for all of us as vital tools for advocacy.

We also hosted the first ever [Healthcare Providers' Networks Regional Think Tank](#), bringing together groups that work on humanitarian issues and healthcare in crisis situations to discuss the need to include safe abortion as a key agenda. We discussed the critical role that doctors and nurses can play in bearing witness as well as moving policy and implementation to improve women's rights and health.

But, most definitively, this has been a year when young people have proved their worth and returned our investments in capacity building with some amazing and brave efforts of their own. Young people everywhere are showing up, speaking up and standing up for their rights. From [small advocacy efforts](#) to consolidating [Country Advocacy Networks](#), our Youth Champions have been showing the way!

As this year draws to a close, we can look back on it with satisfaction and look forward to 2016 with high expectations and renewed energy to continue our work with our amazing members, partners, supporters and collaborators.

ASAP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Phan Bich Thuy CHAIR
Vietnam

Anand Tamang
Nepal

Katayon Sadat
Afghanistan

Ninuk Widyanoro
Indonesia

S P Choong
Malaysia

Sarah Soysa
Sri Lanka

STAFF

Suchitra Dalvie
Coordinator

Shilpa Desai Shroff
Assistant Coordinator

Lakshmi Anantnarayan
Programme and
Communications Officer

Sunita Mungekar
Accounts Officer

ABOUT US

The Problem

55% of the world's unsafe abortions happen in Asia.

Unsafe abortion: the preventable pandemic. The Lancet Sexual and Reproductive Health Series, October 2006.

"Unsafe abortion accounts for 12 percent of all maternal, or pregnancy-related deaths in the region and claims the lives of 38,000 women each year."

Fifth Asian and Pacific Population Conference: Selected Papers, United Nations. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2003

Who we are

Formed in March 2008, The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) is the only safe abortion advocacy network in the region. ASAP is one of the co-founders of the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion.

Working towards the solution

Build Capacity and support members in Advocacy, Research, & Service delivery

Serve as a Regional Forum for Information sharing and Strategic Thinking

Promote New Technologies like Medical Abortion and Manual Vacuum Aspiration

Acknowledgements:

Our work in 2015 was made possible by support from:
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
International Women's Health Coalition
The Safe Abortion Action Fund (SAAF)
Preventing Maternal Deaths from Unwanted Pregnancy (PMDUP) Project
Mama Cash
Samsara

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING 2015

This is our 8th year, and we held our second Strategic Planning meeting in January in Bangkok, to review and re-work our Theory of Change, Vision, Goal, Objectives and articulate our underlying values.

The meeting began with facilitator Barbara Klugman, sharing findings of a survey of ASAP's organizational & individual partners' perspectives and needs. Through the 2-days the Steering Committee and some key General Members explored ways to strengthen ASAP's position as a network and build on our role in national, regional, & global advocacy towards expanding safe abortion rights and services in Asia.

Goal

To promote, protect and advance women's sexual and reproductive rights and health in Asia by promoting universal access to comprehensive safe abortion services and by reducing unsafe abortion and its complications.



COUNTRY-LEVEL ADVOCACY NETWORKS

In a major milestone, Youth Champions in two countries -Nepal and Sri Lanka, formalized country-level advocacy networks with support from ASAP. The [Youth Champions Advocacy Network Nepal](#) (YouthCANN) and [Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka](#) (YANSL).



YouthCANN was formalized in Nepal in January 2015 to ensure young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights by promoting access to safe abortion as a right.



YANSL was formed in January 2015 to work on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of young people and Gender Equality in Sri Lanka. In September 2015 YANSL initiated the National Youth champions Think Tank on unsafe abortion and network building meeting.



ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Website



www.asap-asia.org received 19,800 page views in 2015. The website had 8121 users, 76% were new visitors.

Facebook, Twitter & Youtube



In 2015 ASAP's Likes on Facebook grew **177%** from 1207 to 3350



Followers on Twitter grew by **37%** from 1008 to 1380



ASAP's YouTube channel has **48** subscribers and got **13,251** views in 2015



ASAP's animation film *[From Unwanted Pregnancies to Safe Abortions](#)* is now available with subtitles in Arabic, Hindi, Nepali, Sinhalese and Vietnamese.

THE ASAP BLOG

The ASAP Blog

Prochoice Discussions From Asia



Advancing Women's Sexual And Reproductive Rights In Asia

Home About Archives Events Monthly Columns Youth Corner

← Day 3 Hotline Refreshers and Training

I HAVE A DREAM – Youth Champion Smriti Thapa →

59th CSW through a young feminist's eye

Posted on 14 April, 2015 by Sarah Soysa



With the support of [International Women's Health Coalition](#) and Asia Safe Abortion Partnership I received a small grant to conduct the first ever Beijing+20 youth review on Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and Gender equality in Sri Lanka. It was super exciting to participate at the 59th Commission on the status of women (CSW), especially after meeting the government delegates to the 59th CSW from Sri

In 2015 ASAP's blog published 59 articles. We received contributions from writers in several Asian countries including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. The ASAP Blog got 15,274 page hits in 2015.

← CELEBRATING MAY28 "A champion is one who gets up even when they think they can't" → Sex selection vs safe abortion rights: how did we get here and where do we go now ?

"Papaya Workshops"- A reflection from a medical student participant at the Children by Choice Conference 2015

Posted on 16 June, 2015 by Guest Blogger

– By Tessa Moody, 6th year medical student, Adelaide University



It was an insightful and empowering experience to be involved in the "Papaya Workshop" – a hands-on activity designed to educate medical students and practitioners about manual vacuum aspiration and D&C as safe termination techniques.

The session was led by Dr Ea Mulligan – director of the Pregnancy Advisory Centre in South Australia. Dr Mulligan began with a short presentation on the procedures, to give some context to the practical session; indications, precautions, and the techniques were explained.

CAPACITY-BUILDING OF YOUTH

ASAP's first Regional Youth Think Tank (YTT)

January 2015, Bangkok, Thailand



In order to **build wider alliances** and move the safe abortion agenda beyond the usual cohort, we brought together young people from allied sexual and reproductive health networks, to encourage them to include safe abortion as an advocacy agenda.



The meeting included young people representing a wide range of issues and constituencies including **women living with disabilities, peer education, sex workers' rights, medical students for choice** etc.



Following an introductory session where Youth Champions shared their current work, the participants were guided to examine 3 main challenges facing them in the work they do, these were: Lack of Access to Services, Lack of Information and Stigma. Participants further strategized ways to address these 3 challenges.

4th Youth Advocacy Institute (YAI)

September 2015, Colombo, Sri Lanka



We held our 4th Youth Advocacy Institute (YAI), which brought together participants from Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

The sessions ranged from understanding the **social construct of gender**, to **patriarchy and power** and helped the participants think through the legitimacy that the **rights-based framework** & language lend to achieving gender equality. Contraception was explored through a fun role-play game and safe abortion techniques were learnt in a hands-on papaya exercise that demonstrated MVA, demystifying medical procedures for a lay audience.

The Institute also delved into **laws and policies** around abortion and the most important question—**what does it mean to be pro-choice??!**



Youth Advocacy Refresher (YAR)

The Youth Advocacy Institute was followed by a Refresher Institute for Youth Champions who had attended previous YAI's. The Refresher Institute aimed to delve more deeply into safe abortion rights advocacy, and strengthen specific skills of participants like communications.



Nadine Moawad of the **Association for Progressive Communications**, led participants through sessions on communications for a feminist movement building, how to use social media effectively, and creating compelling content using infographics, lists, etc. An important topic of concern was **internet security** especially for participants from countries with stringent legal restrictions.



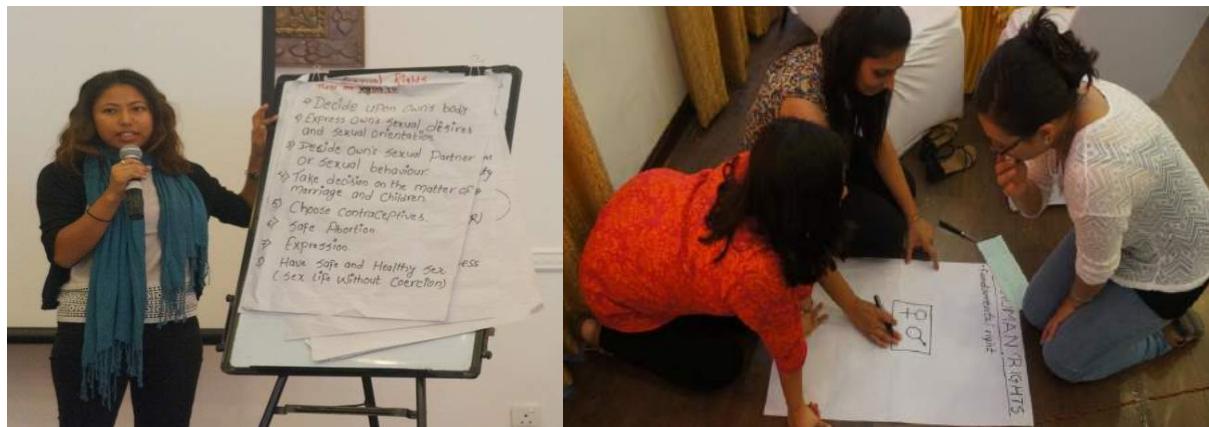
Youth Advocacy Institute (YAI), Nepal

September 2015, Kathmandu, Nepal



YouthCANN, the newly formed country advocacy network in Nepal was supported by ASAP to organize it's first major event, the 5th YAI in Nepal in October 2015.

The Institute was ASAP's first country-level YAI, which created a platform for 13 men and women from different spheres including, activism, law, engineering, medicine (doctors and nurses), and social work, to discuss issues surrounding safe and legal abortion in Nepal and Asia.



SMALL GRANTS

Youth Champions are encouraged to plan and implement short-term advocacy projects at country or organizational level and are supported through Small Grants Fellowships. 13 such Fellowships were awarded in 2015. The grants may be small but the impact is big!

INDIA

Research on impact of sex selection ban on abortion access – published in **Reproductive Health Matters**

ASAP-CREA meeting on sex selection & safe abortion in India attended by **47** activists.

Abortion rights training of **72** public health students

CHINA

12 Youth trained to create feminist forum on safe abortion

BANGLADESH

50 Community women trained in menstrual hygiene and contraception

NEPAL

32 doctors, nurses and mid-wives trained in gender

15 peers trained in SRHR

12 journalists trained in women's right to abortion

25 people trained for video contest on abortion rights



INDONESIA

15 Youth trained in SRHR & communications to create a blog & website

PHILIPPINES

68 members trained in post-abortion care

VIETNAM

60 youth trained in interactive drama
9 drama skits created
193 participants in social media campaign

SRI LANKA

15 Youth trained in SRHR & communications to create a blog & website

Small Grants in Action



Bangladesh Assembly of Youth Advocates' **one day training for community women on "Menstrual Regulation for All"**



In Indonesia, the project aimed to mainstream SRHR issues targeting young people through a website. 15 young people passionate about gender and sexuality were trained in communications and a website **AYO NGOBROL** (meaning Let's Talk) was set up.



Nepal, **sensitization program for journalists** on Safe abortion and women's rights.



In the Philippines, Youth Champions set up a **"Women's Rights Collective"** a Post Abortion Care (PAC) advocacy forum to raise awareness on abortion rights among Filipino women, a **safe abortion blog** and **Facebook page**.



In Vietnam, Youth Champions organized a successful **social media/communications campaign called 3S-Valentine**. It aimed to raise awareness of young people about Sexual Rights and Safe Sex, with the intention of empowering them through improving their knowledge and practice regarding Sexual and Reproductive health.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO SAFE ABORTION SERVICES

Health Care Providers' Regional Think Tank

September 2015, Colombo, Sri Lanka

We are proud to share that for the first time ever, a meeting of representatives from networks of healthcare professionals in the Asia-Pacific region was held.



"Over the twenty years that I have been advocating for women's right to safe abortions, laws seem to be becoming more restrictive."

Ninuk Vidyantoro

Medical and nursing professionals have always been at the **forefront of providing care in difficult and dangerous situations** and have stepped up on behalf of the vulnerable and

marginalized during natural disasters, wars or internal displacement. However, although the medical profession has made progress in recognizing and protecting the human rights of women, not enough has been done by medical professionals to prevent and manage unwanted pregnancies by **advocating for and providing access to safe abortion and post-abortion contraception** using available platforms, social and professional networks and technology.

ASAP coordinated a meeting of representatives of networks of healthcare professionals in the Asia-Pacific region to **explore the potential for collaboration and discuss the willingness and possibilities for a greater inclusion of programs for managing unwanted pregnancies within their existing strategies and activities.**



"The medical fraternity has not allowed technical revolutions in reproductive health to progress because they privately profit from restrictions to access."

Hotlines

Hotlines providing information to help women seeking abortions are now operational in: India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. In 2015 we supported our country partners to set up and run Hotlines on Misoprostol, in India, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. On an average the Hotlines receive anywhere between 10 to 60 phone calls every month depending on their location.

HOTLINE NUMBERS

BANGLADESH – NARI BANDOPH - 880 1853892424

INDONESIA – SAMSARA - +62813 27171188 (Simpatico),
+62857 29001188 (IM3), +62878 39770033 (XL), +62896
74677433 (Three)

INDIA – MARZEE - +91 9075 764 763

MALAYSIA - Betty +6018 390 5198 (9am to 5pm), Dr S P Choong
012-477-2551 (after office hours)

PAKISTAN - 0307 - 494 07 07 – (Urdu and Punjabi), 0315 - 917
04 08 – (Urdu and Pashto), 03159473366 (Urdu), 03159473399
(Saraiki).

PHILIPPINES – ASK MADS - (+63) 927-3016907, (+63) 939-
5277721

SRI LANKA – ASK US - +94(0)71590341 / +94(0)715903417

THAILAND – TAMTANG – 08399442128, 0890063948,
0844634647, 08651705446,



In partnership with Samsara, Women on Waves, and Women on Web, ASAP organized a three-day workshop for Hotline counselors and managers, who provide information on Misoprostol in April 2015. The purpose was capacity building, evaluation of current services, experience sharing and brainstorming to improve services.

ADVOCACY & NETWORKING

ASAP staff participated as spokespeople, trainers and attendees in several international conferences including:

The 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women/Beijing +20, New York, March 2015

FIGO Regional Workshop on Young People Contraception and Safe Abortion (YPCA), (17-18 March 2015) & FIGO Initiative for the Prevention of Unsafe Abortion –Regional Workshop, (19-20, March 2015), Colombo, Sri Lanka



Gynuity Health Project on Innovations in Medical Abortion: Improving Access in Restricted Settings held in Bangkok, Thailand, March 2015.

Association for Progressive Communication, Imagine a Feminist Internet, Malaysia, July, 2015

Catholics for Choice meeting on Conscience and Autonomy, New York, December 2015

COUNTRY ADVOCACY

In 2015 ASAP supported advocacy efforts to examine and strengthen laws, polices & practice in 6 countries.

Afghanistan:

Dr. Katayon Sadat organised a two-day training on safe abortion techniques for 15 participants from the Obstetrics and Gynecology (OBGYN) department of Malalai Maternal Hospital and Rabia Balkhi Hospital.



Indonesia: Ignatia Alfa Gloria, Ninuk Windyantoro and SAMSARA organized a national-level working group for safe abortion advocacy by looking into implementation of Regulation 61, which permits abortion up to 40 days, in cases of rape or to save the woman's life.

Pakistan: Tanzila Khan from the National Forum for Women with Disabilities (NFWWD) organized a meeting of 10 women with disabilities to explore how they can be involved in abortion rights and SRHR advocacy.



Philippines:
Sarah Jane Biton set up a “Women’s Rights Collective” a Post Abortion Care (PAC) advocacy forum to raise awareness on abortion rights among Filipino women.



Vietnam: Hoang Minh Son and Thao Vi from the Centre for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population worked to build discussions on the regulation related to safe abortion in the draft Population Law.

Sex selection and safe abortion rights: Past trajectories, current impact and future strategies

A meeting organized by ASAP & CREA, June 2015, New Delhi, India

For several years now the issue of sex selection has gotten entangled with safe abortion access and the understanding of women's right to safe abortion in India. This conflation has occurred at many levels—policy, programmes, language and implementation. In order to unpack the issues involved, ASAP & CREA jointly organized a 2-day meeting in Delhi, bringing together researchers, advocates, and activists to examine the context, share findings of field research studies, and legal cases that highlight attacks on abortion access due to sex selection and implementation of the PCPNDT Act.



Among the speakers were Shweta Krishnan who presented ASAP's study about the origins of the sex selection campaign and the history of the status of girl children in pre and post-colonial India. Anand Pawar and Pritam



Potdar of Samyak shared the findings of their field research from Maharashtra which found that medical doctors are increasingly turning away women seeking second trimester abortions due to fear of being accused of sex selection under the PCPNDT.

SAMYAK's work to expand access to second trimester abortions in Maharashtra



Under ASAP's Small Grants program, Pritam Potdar, ASAP Youth Champion, undertook research to study the impact sex selection and the PCPNDT Act was having in curtailing access to second trimester abortions in Maharashtra. This research study led to a larger grant to Samyak from the Safe Abortion Action Fund, to expand research and advocacy related to this specific issue. As part of this project Samyak has organized trainings for medical doctors in 6 districts in

Maharashtra. ASAP continues to support this work integrally in training, research methodology and data analysis.

The A Project, Lebanon

Rola Yasmine, is a nurse and works with the feminist collective Nasawiya. Being one of the small grant awardees, Rola set up the A Project & launched its website <http://www.theaproject.org/> in 2014. The project builds agency, alternatives and autonomy in sexuality, sexual health, and gender. In 2015 the A project engaged in activities like- Sexuality Hotline, Support Groups, Outreach and Training, Multimedia and Research.

A screenshot of the website for 'THE A PROJECT'. The header features a large black 'A' logo with a small figure inside it, followed by the text 'THE A PROJECT' and 'AGENCY AUTONOMY ALTERNATIVES'. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'HOME', 'ABOUT', 'THE SEXUALITY HOTLINE', 'UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES', 'RESOURCES & LINKS', and 'THE BLOG'. The main content area has a large orange banner on the left containing the text 'frequently asked questions' and a large teal question mark icon on the right. To the right of the banner is a sidebar with the heading 'From the Blog' and an article titled 'What I learned from the YAI 3' by Lama Al Mawla. At the bottom of the sidebar is a section titled 'Got Questions?' with a call to action for contacting the Sexuality Hotline.

AMPLIFYING GLOBAL EFFORTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

The International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion



May 28th International Day of Action on Women's Health

In support of the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion, ASAP ran a social media campaign for May 28th International Day of Action on Women's Health. Additionally, ASAP Youth Champions in Nepal organized sensitization sessions in 3 medical colleges and distributed Dignity kits to women. In Sri Lanka champions organized an online campaign on Facebook inviting youth from across Asia to share their picture with a slogan in support of women's right to sexual and reproductive health. ASAP also participated in a tweetathon to mark the day.



September 28th, International Day of Women's Access to Safe Abortion - Myth Buster Super Heroes

The theme for the International Day of Women's Access to Safe Abortion 2015 was "Busting the Myths." ASAP Youth Champion Sarah Jane conducted a photo shoot of Myth Buster Super Heros, a series of photo-posters that challenge myths about abortion. In total over 45 posters were created and circulated widely on facebook and twitter on September 28th for International Day of Women's Access to Safe Abortion.



Tweetathon

On behalf of the International campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion, ASAP Communications Officer along with Youth Champion Sarah Soysa from Sri Lanka led a global Tweetathon for September 28th. In total the ASAP Twitter account received 230 retweets, gained over 30 followers, 78 favorites and 180 mentions.

INFORMATION & KNOWLEDGE CREATION

ASAP'S publications in 2015

[From unwanted pregnancy to safe abortion: Sharing information about abortion in Asia through animation,](#)

[Shweta Krishnan,
Suchitra Dalvie,
Reproductive Health
Matters, May 2015,
Vol 23, Issue 45](#)



VISUAL MEDIA

From unwanted pregnancy to safe abortion: Sharing information about abortion in Asia through animation

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Correspondence: kriznan.shweta@gmail.com

^b Coordinator, Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, Mumbai, India



FEATURE

"If a woman has even one daughter, I refuse to perform the abortion": Sex determination and safe abortion in India

Pritam Potdar,^a Alka Barua,^b Suchitra Dalvie,^c Anand Pawar^d

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^d Executive Director, SAMYAK, Pune, India

*[Safe Abortion as a Women's Right:
Perceptions of Law Enforcement Professionals,](#)*

Suchitra Dalvie, Alka Barua, Hemant Apte,
Economic and Political Weekly,
August 15, 2015,
Vol-L, No. 33.

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Safe Abortion as a Women's Right

Perceptions of Law Enforcement Professionals

SUCHITRA DALVIE, ALKA BARUA, HEMANT APTE

A study conducted among law enforcement officials in seven countries across Asia by the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership to measure the level of knowledge, attitude and awareness of women's rights as well as safe and

sexual and reproductive health and rights for the women of India sometimes appears to be a distant vision. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA), the Millennium Development Goals, the Beijing Declaration, the Medical Termination

The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership

Because restrictions on women's access to safe abortions violates their fundamental rights to health & life



www.asap-asia.org

