

Quarterly Report

January-March 2020



Asia Safe
Abortion
Partnership

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top half shows a blurred view of a meeting room with people seated at long tables. The bottom half shows a group of diverse young people, some wearing face masks, smiling and holding certificates. A dark teal triangle is in the bottom right corner.

Greetings from the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership!

The beginning of 2020 has been extremely challenging for our planet. Starting with forest fires in Australia where over a billion animals perished to the current global coronavirus pandemic, we have been grappling with what it means to be a part of a globalized world and what role can we play in it.

The coronavirus pandemic has revealed huge gaps in the public health sector and the capacities of governments to handle such crisis situations. It has magnified the unequal distribution of wealth, rights and opportunities. It has made access to safe abortion and other sexual and reproductive health services even more inaccessible for many.

Despite these serious challenges and cancellation of many planned activities due to the lockdown and travel restriction, ASAP has been working actively with our members and partners in the region to support vulnerable and marginalized groups in accessing services and information. It gives us immense pleasure to share with you everything that ASAP and the Country Advocacy Networks managed to achieve in the last quarter despite all the limitations faced.

In order to offer some support to persons who are more vulnerable during such times to emotional, physical and sexual abuse, to lack of access to health care services for managing an unwanted pregnancy and lack of freedom to get themselves to safety, we put together, with support from the Country Advocacy Networks, a list of helplines that could be accessed from these countries. Shared below are some examples. You can access all helplines on our [social media](#).



Organization
Nepal Women Commission
NWC

Services
Helpline for Gender Based Violence

Hotline
1145 (24 hour service)

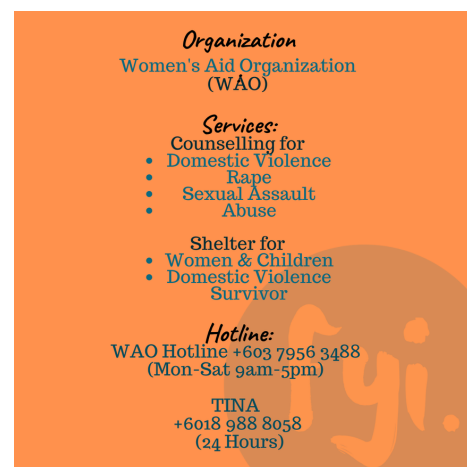


Organization
Marie Stopes Vietnam
(MSI)

Services
Providing SRHR services
(including safe abortion)

Hotline
+84 1900 558 882

Website
<http://mariestopes.org.vn/>



Organization
Women's Aid Organization
(WAO)

Services:
Counselling for
• Domestic Violence
• Rape
• Sexual Assault
• Abuse

Shelter for
• Women & Children
• Domestic Violence
Survivor

Hotline:
WAO Hotline +603 7956 3488
(Mon-Sat 9am-5pm)

TINA
+6018 988 8058
(24 Hours)

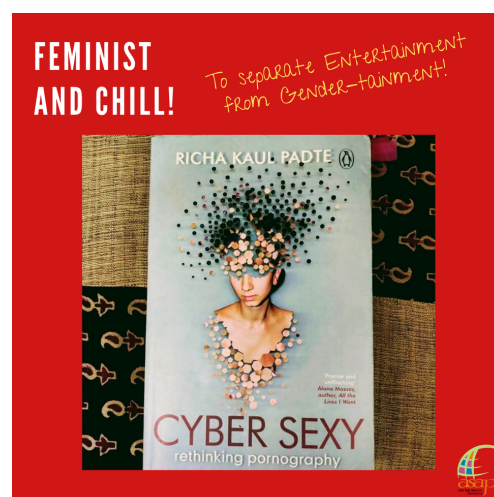
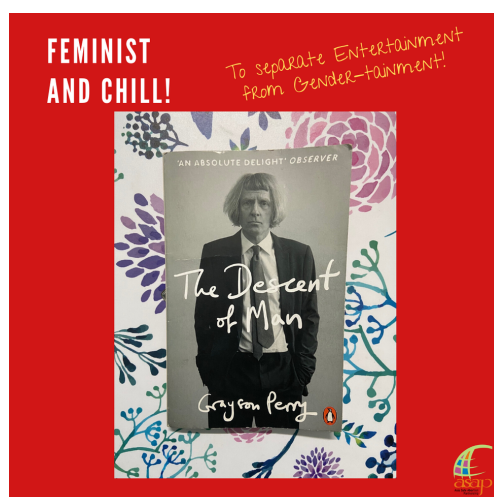
From left to right: [Nepal](#), [Vietnam](#) and [Malaysia](#)

YOUTH ADVOCACY INSTITUTE, BVC | 9TH – 11TH JANUARY | MUMBAI, INDIA



[ISAY](#) members from the Bombay Veterinary College organized a YAI with students from their college. The workshop have = been proven to be successful in initiating a dialogue for reproductive rights with the college authorities and are recognized officially for attendance. Peer trainers Simran Garg and Priyansh Nathani conducted sessions on politics of internet and how can we best communicate our message.

Some of the alumni have started informal discussion groups where they deliberate on relevant topics of gender and feminism and discrimination. They have also recently started a book club and written book reviews for the new ASAP blog series 'Feminist and Chill!', which you can read by clicking on pictures below.



YOUTH ADVOCACY INSTITUTE, HAIYYA FOUNDATION | 17TH-19TH JANUARY | DELHI, INDIA

ASAP in collaboration with a grassroots campaigning organization, Haiyya, organized our first Youth Advocacy Institute in Delhi. This YAI saw participation from prominent organizations working on SRHR in the city such as The YP Foundation, Feminism In India and also individuals doing great work through their art, journalism or legal background.

Swetha Poduval from ISAY shared details of the work they do. We also had a special guest from our CAN in Sri Lanka—Priskila Arulaprgasam from YANSL

Some of the highlights of the YAI were sessions on patriarchy by Manisha Gupte, value clarification exercise as well as the group exercise where the participants actively engaged and challenged each other. Abhishek from Haiyya took the session on gender and mass media, focusing on the kind of stereotypes that impose generalization, even if done in a positive manner. Biggest highlight was our panel discussion on cross movement solidarity with Nazariya: A Queer Feminist Resource Group, All India Network of Sex Workers, and Love Matters India.

The YAI paved the way for many possible future collaborations and networks. on our social media.



NATIONAL ADVOCACY CONSULTATION ON SAFE ABORTION WITH MASUM | PUNE, INDIA | 22ND JANUARY

MASUM, in collaboration with ASAP conducted a study on safe abortion access in 7 states in India; Assam, Delhi, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. The MASUM team partnered with local NGOs who co-led the study and helped reach out to around 200 women and service providers. The communities of women ranged from indigenous women, sex workers, women living with HIV, and general communities, interviewing women who needed abortion services. Sample of service providers included, grassroots workers such as ASHAs, Sathin in Rajasthan, ANMs, nurses, doctors and non-medical staff. The sites were a mixture of urban/peri-urban, rural/semi-rural and indigenous-remote areas. Key findings showed that women continue to face serious barriers when seeking access to safe abortion services.

D-YISA SENSITIZATION PROGRAM FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ON ABORTION LAWS IN THE COUNTRY [NGAWANG DRAMTEY VILLAGE, BHUTAN | 25TH JANUARY]

Samtse is one of the 20 districts in Bhutan and is situated in the southern foothills of the country. D-YISA identified an indigenous village of the district called Ngawang Dramtey which has more than 160 girls and women. Ugyen Dema organized and arranged a program with them, to raise awareness on the abortion rights they have in Bhutan. At the beginning of the session, they believed abortion is wrong and illegal, but after detailed discussion and busting myths around reproductive health, some did agree that abortion is a choice of the woman and she should have rights over her body.



YOSHAN MEETING WITH BRICK FACTORY OWNERS FOR SRHR SESSIONS [BHAKTAPUR, NEPAL | 2ND FEBRUARY]

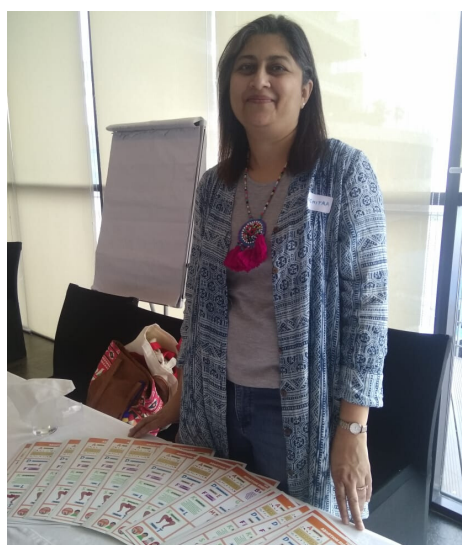
YoSHAN organized a coordination meeting with proprietors of seven different brick factories in Bhaktapur. The aim of the meeting was to get their support to conduct session on sexual and reproductive health right sessions especially on contraception and safe abortion to the women working in the factories. Since this meeting, Youth Champions of YoSHAN have conducted four sessions with the women factory workers on sexual and reproductive health rights with particular focus on safe abortion service and rights

YOSHAN GUFF4YOUTH EPISODE 5 | KATHMANDU, NEPAL | 7TH FEBRUARY

Guff4Youth's 5th episode, "Looking at gender beyond two and sexuality beyond opposite" was conducted by YoSHAN where Rukshana Kapali, a young queer activist facilitated the session on sex, gender, sexuality beyond heteronormative framework. The session was helpful for the participants to understand various terminologies and for the inclusive advocacy in the future. YoSHAN's Guff for Youth is a platform created by them to discuss issues and question norms that the society enforces on us but does little to explain. In just a short amount of time they, have not only gained acceptability for talking about taboo topics (abortion, rape culture, sexuality etc), but are changing the way reproductive health or gender rights are viewed in the country '



INROADS GLOBAL GATHERING AND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING | 10TH-15TH FEBRUARY | MOMBASA, KENYA



Coordinator ASAP is a part of the Inroads Steering Committee for the Asia Pacific Seat. The global gathering included 120 persons from across the globe with a large proportion coming from the continent of Africa. Dakshitha Wickramratne from YANSL and Pushpa Joshi from YoSHAN were also present. Many interesting discussions took place on issues of stigma, access and advocacy strategies. ASAP posters, MA factsheets and comic books were highly appreciated and all the copies meant for distribution were taken by participants

YOSHAN GENDER SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP WITH MIDWIFERY INSTRUCTORS AND EDUCATORS | KATHMANDU | 15TH FEBRUARY

Realizing the fact that the curriculum followed by the midwifery institutions only consists technical aspect on Safe abortion, Menstruation, Family Planning and child birth.,YoSHAN organized this workshop with the aim to sensitize the Midwifery educators and instructors who can mould the next generation of providers towards delivering holistic quality care based on human rights principles.

GENDER CONTESTATIONS IN ACCESS TO HEALTH BY INTERNATIONAL AIDS VACCINATION INITIATIVE (IAVI) | DELHI, INDIA | 20TH FEBRUARY

ASAP was represented by Assistant Coordinator Nandini Mazumder. IAVI is a not for profit scientific research organization working towards affordable, globally accessible public health solutions for urgent, unmet global health challenges including HIV and tuberculosis. The purpose of the consultation was to bring together a range of stakeholders including developmental organisations, community media groups and design thinking groups, working on health and gender to better understand the challenges with regards to access



ARJC PLANNING MEETING | BANGKOK, THAILAND | 27TH-28TH FEBRUARY

We organized a Steering Committee meeting including planning for the proposed Abortion Reproductive Justice Conference, planned to be held in Bangkok in November 2020. As of now this has been postponed to 2021.

VISIT TO TRANSGENDER CLINIC | BANGKOK, THAILAND | 28TH FEBRUARY

A voluntary visit to a transgender clinic called the Tangerine Clinic was arranged by Dr. Subatra Jayraj. Dr. Subatra Jayraj, Dr. Suchitra Dalvie and Nandini Mazumder visited the clinic on 28th February and interacted with the staff. The clinic is currently hosted in the Chulalongkorn University Campus but it is in a transitional phase and will be moving to another complex soon. The clinic currently is a part of a general health clinic which has worked in favour by not adding to the stigma against it for dealing with trans* issues. Overall, it was a very fruitful visit and encouraged us to think of ways to be inclusive and sensitive to trans* issues in our work.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CONSULTATION ON SAFE ABORTION WITH MASUM | DELHI, INDIA | 2ND-3RD MARCH

Masum, in collaboration with ASAP organized a national meeting to share and discuss the findings of the study on safe abortion access in 7 states in India; Assam, Delhi, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh. The meeting was attended by many key stakeholders from civil society and government including NHSRC, UNFPA, WHO. It was a very successful meeting as it brought together many key stakeholders from other movements which have not worked on or engaged with safe abortion advocacy work so far. Such as the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, National Network of Sex Workers, to name a few.



STRATEGY MEETING TO DISCUSS MTP AMENDMENTS 2020 ORGANIZED BY MASUM AND PRATIGYA CAMPAIGN | DELHI, INDIA | 13TH MARCH

On 2nd March the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament) in India passed the amendment Bill to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Ac. While in many ways progressive, there are some clauses which are a cause for concern and hence MASUM took the initiative with support from ASAP and collaborated with Pratigya Campaign to organize this meeting. The participants deliberated on the amendments and prepared a list of recommendations and also discussed strategies to influence the decision makers, before it is passed by the upper house and becomes a law.

VYAC GIRL TALK/BOY TALK | KOTO TRAINING, HANOI | MARCH 14TH – 15TH MARCH

Vietnam Youth Action for Choice was invited to have a talk with young people who live on the street and are susceptible to drug use or are victims of domestic violence. VYAC had been invited to share information about their rights, sexual and reproductive health, abortion access or myths around STDs. VYAC held two separate talks for 31 boys and 33 girls so that participants could feel mentally and physically safe to discuss openly during the sharing. Youth Champion Thuy Mai was in charge of the girl talk and Cong Quach was in charge of the boy talk. It was an interesting session where in the beginning many people thought that abortion is important but can be criticized depending on situations, however by the end they agreed that abortion is in fact a right and choice, therefore we all need to create an enabling environment where people have that freedom



Online Activites



SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER |INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 8TH MARCH

This International Women's Day as women across the world showed up to march in huge numbers and protest-- in the US against gender based violence or organizing a run to celebrate women in sports, to women protesting against the citizenship bill amendment in India, it was their demand to be heard that we wanted to amplify.

ASAP's 2020 International Women's Day was thus about 'Speaking Truth To Power'. This power could be anything/anyone who limits your ability to truly be yourself and stand up for your rights and rights of other marginalized groups.

FEMINIST AND CHILL

We launched this campaign with the aim to criticize and question existing content in mass media/entertainment Industry from a gendered lens and also to share recommendations of politically correct feminist work. It's an ongoing campaign in collaboration with the Country Advocacy Networks.



ASAP CONVERSATIONS 2ND EPISODE FEMALE BODY IN MEDICINE AND THEATER

On World Theater Day , Dr Suchitra Dalvie spoke with Applied Theater Practitioner Ayesha Susan Thomas about the power of theater and creative arts in reaching all communities, while opening up conversations about topics that usually makes people uncomfortable. She also spoke about her work in progress—'Flabby Breasted Virgins and Other Sordid Tales', a play based on Dr. Suchitra Dalvie's article written for Agents of Ishq and an updated version for Feminism in India and Haiyya. We released this on YouTube and as an audio podcast on Soundcloud.



VYAC RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT ABORTION FACEBOOK

In order to share insights into the feelings and experiences of young women and girls who have had an abortion, VYAC translated four out of 39 abortion stories from Teen Vogue website. The four stories translated by them covered four main topics: barriers to abortion access, fetus with a deformity, pregnant and not ready, and pregnancy from rape.

Publications

DR SUCHITRA DALVIE'S BLOG 'LOVE IN TIME OF CORONA'

'As of now many countries are imposing stay-at-home and social distancing protocols and some are more or less in a state of lockdown and many more will soon follow. For those who have a home, have savings that can allow stocking of food and essentials and have healthy able bodied family members, the lockdown is more of an inconvenience than a real calamity. But there are 150 million homeless people globally and 1.6 billion who lack adequate housing. We have close to one billion people living with some form of disability or chronic illness needing carers.'

The blog was also translated in Vietnamese by VYAC Team member Hoai Nam and published in Vietnamese Women newspaper on 6th April



DR SUCHITRA DALVIE'S BLOG 'SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW, SKIES ARE BLUE'

'And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true. It is 2020 and most people on this planet now associate the rainbow with the LGBTQIA symbol rather than the old Judy Garland song from the Wizard of Oz, which is great! But as Valentine's Day comes around and in a frenzy of 'celebrating' love as the media starts filling up with everything in shades of red, it is interesting to reflect on the origins of it all. All our cultures have been celebrating and analysing a whole spectrum of love over the ages but in recent centuries has been narrowed down to the celebration of mainly (or only) romantic/sexual love being projected as the ultimate goal in life. Finding one's soulmate, married till death do us part and all that jazz.'