

# The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership

## Annual Report 2014

*Meet the ASAP Team*

STEERING COMMITTEE

Anand Tamang  
Nepal

Ninuk Widyantoro  
Indonesia

Phan Bich Thuy (CHAIR)  
Vietnam

SP Choong  
Malaysia

Sarah Soysa  
Sri Lanka

STAFF:

Suchitra Dalvie  
Coordinator, ASAP

Shilpa Shroff  
Assistant Coordinator, ASAP

Garima Shrivastava  
Programs and Communications  
Officer, ASAP

## ***From the Coordinator's Desk***

### ***The only constant in life is change!***

*We have all heard that so often and when we look back on an entire year, it is easy to see how true it is. 2014 was the year that the issue of safe abortion got more visibility than it ever has in the past.*

*There was a more public, more vocal endorsement of women's right to choose. Feminists of all genders took to the social media in unprecedented numbers to say over and over again that women are human, we have rights and we have the right to control our own body and fertility. Pop culture has had an unexpected feminist wave riding it and these are the voices that the young men and women will hear.*

*However, the opposition has also been active and is also building up, from institutionalized discrimination like the Hobby Lobby case in the US and the Nepali migrant worker arrested in Malaysia, to individual misogynists who respond by trolling and vicious attacks –both online as well as by rape and murder in the community.*

*But 2015 will be the year for us to consolidate our gains, along with all our partners, members, allies, collaborators and supporters!*

*We hope you enjoy reading about all the amazing work our members and staff have accomplished in 2014 and we look forward to connecting with all of you in every possible way in 2015.*

*Regards,*

*Suchitra Dalvie  
Coordinator*

"THE SECRET OF  
CHANGE IS TO FOCUS  
ALL OF YOUR ENERGY,  
NOT ON FIGHTING THE  
OLD, BUT ON BUILDING  
THE NEW."

— SOCRATES



## ASAP Celebrates 6 Years of Advocacy in March 2014

### Background:

Each year, almost one-third of the deaths worldwide from unsafe abortion occur in Asia. 30 percent of unsafe abortions are among women under 25 years of age and 60 percent are in women under 30, the region accounts for 45.7 percent of all unsafe abortions among women aged 15-24 that occur yearly in the developing world.

**Every year over 28 million women and girls in Asia have unwanted pregnancies and 10.8 million of them seek abortions.**

### Who Are We?

The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership was formed in March 2008 and is a regional affiliate of the International Consortium for Medical Abortion (ICMA). ASAP serves as a strategic think-tank in Asia and conducts activities to promote women's rights to safe abortion.

#### Goal:

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

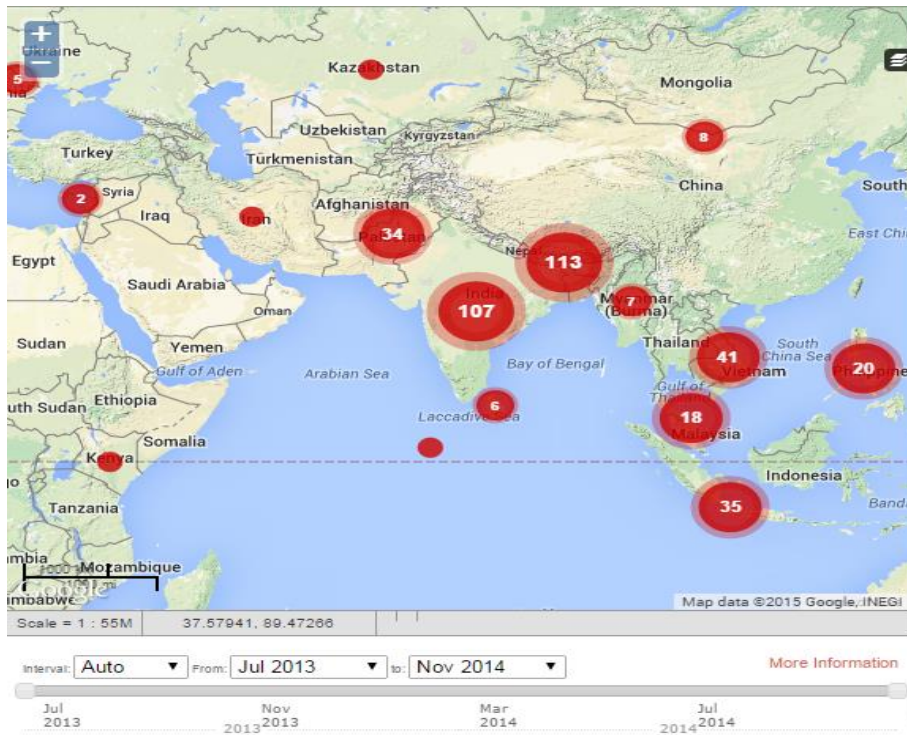
#### Objectives:

- To serve as a forum for information and strategic thinking and planning for a collective vision aimed towards international and national advocacy.
- To support members through capacity building, law, advocacy and policy; research and documentation; and service delivery
- To promote new technologies including medical abortion and manual vacuum aspirations

**ASAP is one the co-founders of the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion.**

**Financial Report:** ASAP has implemented its work on a series of projects/ activities through various donors and collaborations in the Year 2014. These activities were funded by the Packard Foundation, Mama Cash, PMDUP DFID Project, International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) and SAAF.





## KEY ORGANIZATIONAL EVENTS

**7th APCRSR-Examining achievements, good practices and challenges:  
Towards a strategic positioning of SRHR for All  
20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014, Manila, Philippines**



Youth Champions Smriti, Dakshita, Lady, Yu Yang and staff members had presentations and posters accepted by the organizers. Read details here <http://asap-asia.org/blog/asap-at-the-7th-apcrshr/#sthash.LmZQMtU8.dpbs>

## Hotline Meeting On Experience Sharing and Evaluation 15<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 Kathmandu, Nepal



The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership in collaboration with Aware Girls, Women on Web and Waves, had a three-day, rich, intensive, successful experience sharing and evaluation meeting for the Hotline partners from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand who provide information about Misoprostol to women in Asia. It was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from April 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>

The workshop included sessions on gender and rights, technical updates on safe abortion and contraception, values clarification, field visit to a Comprehensive Abortion Care (CAC) Center in Nepal, and we also conducted an evaluation. The evaluation highlighted a positive and a satisfying impact of hotlines.

### **One of the callers of the hotline in Indonesia shares her experience:**

“Samsara hotline is really helpful. I felt safe. I felt no one blamed me or judged me with so many aspects and issues such as religion, culture, and social status. With these conditions, it’s difficult to share unwanted pregnancy even with my best friend. But I found best companion in Samsara hotline. I think it’s necessary for Indonesian women to know about the Samsara hotline that assisted me until I finished my abortion safely.”



**Workshop on  
Preventing Maternal Death from Unwanted Pregnancies  
7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 Kathmandu, Nepal**



A two and half day workshop was organized in collaboration with CREHPA with a total of 15 participants from the PMDUP project countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. We conducted sessions on Understanding the importance of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions as a preventable cause of maternal deaths. We used the WHO Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy guidance as a tool to recognize the need to address unsafe abortion as a public health and human rights issue.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Advocacy Institute – Refresher  
4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> December 2014 Mumbai, India**

Nine youth champions from the 2013 batch who had implemented small grants and showed remarkable progress were invited to participate. These participants were from Bangladesh, China, India, Lebanon, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka.

**Objectives:**

- To strengthen the capacity of the Youth Champions to be peer
- Trainers in understanding access to safe abortion as a gender and sexual and reproductive rights, as well as human rights issue.
- To consolidate the mentoring for utilization of social media by the Youth Champions for online thought leadership and advocacy.
- To support the ongoing engagement of the Youth Champions, within and outside their community to ensure implementation of the above strategies in order to



advocate effectively for improved access to safe abortion services including medical abortion.

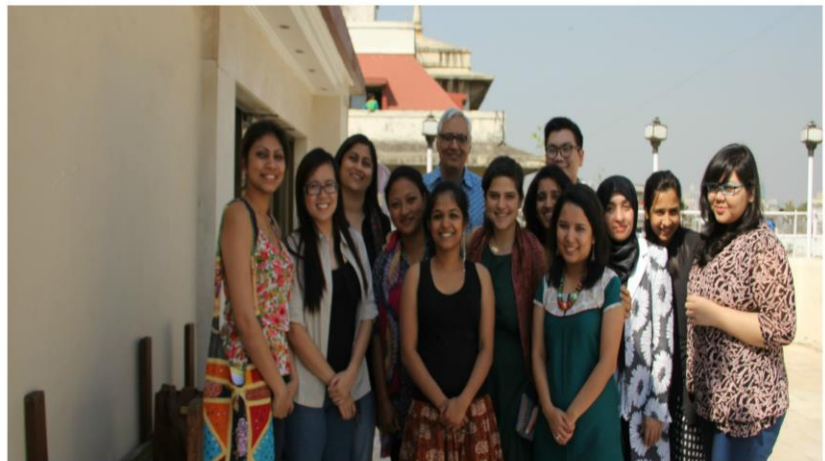


The three day long workshop helped participants in re-visiting **reproduction, contraception, safe abortion** and clarify myths and misconceptions around these issues. The workshop also provided interesting insights into **historical perspectives on feminist movement** and the role that **women as healers** played before the witch hunts paved the way for

a male dominated medical system.

We had sharing from across the region about the **women's rights movement** as well as the **International Campaign on Women's Right to Safe Abortion**. Katayon Sadat from Afghanistan joined the group on day 2 and shared her experiences of working in an restrictive environment. We had a very interesting conversation around **sexuality** and its impact on women's right to safe abortion.

We invited experts who helped us understand more about the **ethical issues** involved in being pro-choice, how to defend the woman's right to access safe abortion in situations of **conscientious objection and sex selection**, the **sustainability discourse** on reproductive rights and also understand the **economic impact of unsafe abortion**, and learning about the **role of International Covenants** in protecting women's rights.





The participants had the opportunity to work alongside the resource persons for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Youth Advocacy Institute over the next week and **build their capacity as peer trainers**. The Refresher Institute presented an opportunity to assess the progress of the youth advocates and provide them with motivation to **assume leadership roles within the youth community**

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Youth Advocacy Institute 8<sup>th</sup>- 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 Mumbai, India

14 participants from China, Indonesia, India, Lebanon, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam participated in the ASAP 3<sup>rd</sup> Youth Advocacy Institute. The Institute was held in Mumbai from 8<sup>th</sup>- 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 2014.







#### Objectives:

1. To create a community of trained and sensitized **Youth Champions** who have an understanding of access to safe abortion as a gender and sexual reproductive and human rights issue.
2. To facilitate the utilization of **social media** and other community level networking and communication by the youth champions through capacity building and ongoing mentoring.
3. To support the **ongoing engagement** of the Youth Champions, within and outside their community to ensure implementation of the above strategies in order to advocate effectively for improved access to safe abortion services, including medical abortion.

Sessions introduced the participants to concepts like **Gender, Patriarchy, Human Rights**, Sexual and Reproductive Rights and helped understand their linkages with safe abortion issues. They were also provided **technical updates** on reproduction, contraception and safe abortion. The session on **laws and policy** helped participants to understand the implications of the law, its impact on services and the barriers created by laws and practices to safe abortion services. Discussions on **prochoice ideologies** and the use of **effective communication** helped them learn how to advocate for safe abortion as a choice and a right for women. They were also provided in depth understanding on interpersonal communication and content creation. Participants wrote original blogposts and made short advocacy videos being shared on our [blog](#) and [youtube http://youtube/WMgHOuhbElQ](http://youtube/WMgHOuhbElQ).

Resource persons included the ASAP staff as well as invited experts Anand Pawar, Inna Hudaya, Shivani Gupta, Dr. Neelesh Bhandari and Peer Trainers from the earlier YAIs -- Rola Yasmine, Yu Yang, Sarah Soysa, Sarah Jane, Smriti Thapa and Preet Manjusha. The proceedings of the Institute were shared on ASAP's [Facebook Page](#), [Twitter page](#) and [blog](#), every day.

## Networking and Advocacy Highlights:

ASAP Staff, Steering Committee Members and Youth Champions participated in:

1. 7th APCRSRHR-Examining achievements, good practices and challenges: Towards a strategic positioning of SRHR for all, 20<sup>th</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014, Manila, Philippines
2. Cambodia Regional Workshop on integrating PAC, Cambodia, February 2014
3. Mama Cash: Pre-APFF grantee partner meeting and resources mobilization training 28th and 29th May 2014, Chiang Mai Thailand
4. The 57th UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, USA
5. APAC Feminist Forum- 2nd Asia Pacific Feminist Forum : Creating Waves, Fostering Movements May 30 – June 1, 2014, Chiang Mai Thailand
6. The International Summit on Reproductive Choice 2014, Lisbon, Portugal
7. 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference CLACAI 21st 22nd August, 2014 Lima, Peru
8. WHO Regional Orientation meeting on “Clinical Practice Handbook on Safe Abortion” 27-28 August 2014, New Delhi, India
9. Expanding Linkages & Opportunities Meeting, Pratigya- Campaign; 12 September 2014, New Delhi, India
10. Saving maternal lives: Calling for support for A Rights-Based Continuum of Quality Care (CQC) Approach, 14-15 Sept 2014, Kula Lumpur, Malaysia
11. Spitfire Ipas Workshop 27th-28th October 2014, New Delhi, India
12. Advocacy in Practice Training- IWHC & DAWN- 12th-14th November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand
13. Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum on Beijing+ 20 (CSO Forum on Beijing+20) on 14 – 16 November, 2014, Bangkok, Thailand
14. Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review, 17 – 20 November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand



### **4<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference CLACAI 21st 22nd August, 2014 Lima, Peru**

[CLACAI](#) is a regional network based in Latin America which is a sister affiliate of ASAP. ASAP was invited to their 4th regional Conference and Coordinator shared the situation of safe abortion access in Asia and spoke about the need for activists to be clear among themselves before negotiating with the outside world to defend women’s right to choose.



**UN ESCAP Asia and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's  
Empowerment Beijing +20 review  
17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014  
Bangkok, Thailand**

[IWHC](#) supported the participation of two youth champions Sarah Soysa (Sri Lanka), Smriti Thapa (Nepal) and ASAP Programs and Communications Officer Garima Shrivastava to join in the Advocacy in Practice Workshop 12th- 14th Nov 2014 held in Bangkok, as well as the Asia Pacific Civil Society (CSO) Forum on Beijing +20 Regional Review held from 14th- 16th November and the UN ESCAP Asia and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Beijing +20 review.

ASAP Programs and Communications officer, Ms. Garima Shrivastava presented the key messages and draft statement on abortion rights at the CSO forum. Read detailed update here: <http://asap-asia.org/blog/asia-pacific-civil-society-forum-on-beijing-20-regional-review-bangkok-14th-16th-november-2014>



[It's Her Right](#), a video prepared by Sarah Soysa, ASAP Youth Champion from Sri Lanka team was shown in the video festival and received compliments from Sri Lankan viewers as well as from various countries. In the Intergovernmental meeting she also got an exciting opportunity to speak in the opening ceremony for the ministerial meeting with three other amazing young women to tell their stories reminding the governments what they promised and that they still have the responsibility to keep their word.

## Social Media Updates:

The ASAP Listserve  
has over 300  
members from  
over 20 countries

ASAP Twitter  
has 1008  
followers

ASAP Facebook  
page has 1207  
likes

Starting in June 2012 ASAP has had a robust online presence through its website, listserve, Facebook, Twitter and Blog. In addition, the organization also has had a YouTube page with original videos, and an e-newsletter to share information with its wide audience.

## The ASAP Website:

The ASAP will be launching its re-designed website [www.asap-asia.org](http://www.asap-asia.org) in January 2015

The website homepage has:

1. A map of Asia that links to country profiles, which give an overview of the abortion law, policy and data in member countries.
2. A pregnancy calculator
3. Information on safe abortion which can be translated using Google translator into 9 Asian languages
4. Videos
5. Links to hotlines for safe abortion
6. Website has active facebook and twitter feeds and is also linked to our blog
7. The website is also smart phone downloadable



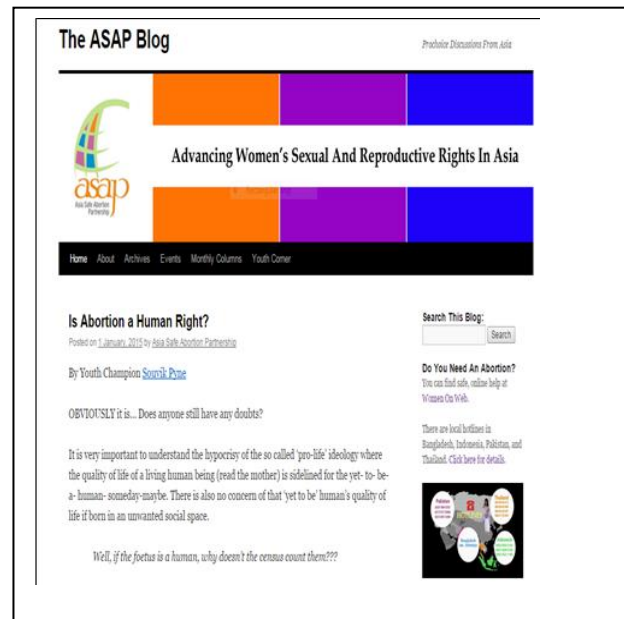
**The website had 29,864 page views in 2014**



## The ASAP Blog

The ASAP launched its blog [www.asapasia.org/blog](http://www.asapasia.org/blog) in June 2012. We cover a range of topics including sex selection, gender, women's rights, Involving men, stigma and sexuality

As part of the Men Engage Global Symposium we conducted interview with Anand Pawar - <http://asapasia.org/blog/masculinities-and-the-struggle-for-womens-rights>



**The blog has had over 15,000 visits**

## Twitter Updates:



Join over 1009 followers at [www.twitter.com/asapasia](http://www.twitter.com/asapasia)

### Highlights:

- Shared information on where to get abortion, information about medical abortion, laws on safe abortion across Asia, hotline numbers.
- Other posts include news stories on abortion, editorials and blogs.
- Networking through Twitter with International Campaign partners

### Events Held On Twitter:

- Global Tweetathon for Sept. 28, the International Day of Action for Safe and Legal Abortion.

## Facebook Updates:



Join over 1200  
followers at  
[www.facebook.com/asiasafeabortionpartnership](http://www.facebook.com/asiasafeabortionpartnership)



### Top 5 Asian Countries To View Page:

Bangladesh  
India  
Pakistan  
Indonesia  
Sri Lanka

### WEEKLY INSIGHTS

12 New Likes  
50 Talking About This  
1,625 Weekly Total Reach

## YouTube:

### Videos Uploaded:

It's Her Right - To Mr. President  
By Youth Champion Sarah Soysa- Sri Lanka  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJfjlyYPxeU>

TaMa Ba? Is It Justified? (#TMB)  
By Youth Champion Sarah Biton Jane- Philippines  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juPFcSROXXY>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2jIOC\\_wz3s&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2jIOC_wz3s&feature=youtu.be)

From Unwanted Pregnancy to Safe Abortion  
ASAP film  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1IypVT>



**ASAP YouTube Channel has 17,166 views**

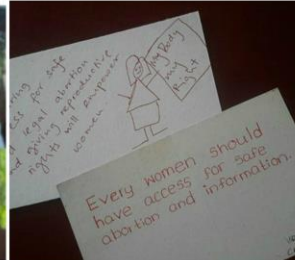


# Contribution to September 28

## The Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion



ASAP activists



Marking Sept 28<sup>th</sup> theme 'Abortion Stigma' we conducted an interview with Leila Hessini appreciated. Read it here <http://asap-asia.org/blog/interview-with-leila-hessini>

### Contribution by Our Partners

#### Indonesia:

Local partner Samsara joined the Tweetathon, conducted a successful Flashmob in Jogjakarta and showcased art related to abortion and women's rights.

#### Pakistan:

Peace foundation our partner in Pakistan conducted an information dissemination meeting with young people on safe medical abortion and stigma while Shirkat Gah held a panel discussion on "Addressing Unsafe Abortion in Pakistan".



our Youth Information Forum, Nepal



Bhaktapur Youth Information Forum, Nepal



Bhaktapur Youth Information Forum, Nepal



Bhaktapur Youth Information Forum, Nepal



# Small Grants

ASAP provided small grants to the Youth Champions of 2013. Their projects carried out in 2013 and 2014 helped promote safe abortion in six countries across Asia.

**Yu Yang, China:** Yu Yang shared with us news about the project undertaken by Tang Tan. The objective of that was to provide more accurate information on safe abortion, contraception and sexual health issues to help young migrant workers and students. They used the existing university hotlines to include information unwanted pregnancies and also established Renren and Weibo as official social medium for advocating and sharing contraception and abortion information. Renren: [www.renren.com/585708176/profile](http://www.renren.com/585708176/profile), Weibo: [www.weibo.com/u/3064994567](http://www.weibo.com/u/3064994567)



**Rola Yasmine, Lebanon:** Rola is a nurse and works with the feminist collective Nasawiya. Being one of the small grant awardees Rola has set up the A Project and has recently launched its website - <http://www.theaproject.org/> the purpose is to seek agency, alternatives and autonomy in sexuality, sexual health, and gender. In its early phase the A project commits to the some activities like- Sexuality Hotline, Support Groups, Outreach and Training, Multimedia and Research.

**Sarah Jane Biton, Philippines:** Sarah has utilized the grant to come up with some excellent films on the situation with unsafe abortions in her country and the attitude of the healthcare providers which leads to more stigma and ill health. Seven interviews were completed and total five video blogs were completed during the project duration along with the write-ups to support the videos. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juPFcSR0> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2ji0C\\_wz3s&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2ji0C_wz3s&feature=youtu.be)





**Smriti Thapa, Nepal:** Smriti is a nurse and working actively on the safe abortion advocacy. She made an inspiring presentation on her journey as a Youth Champion; Smriti did not receive a financial grant but through her efforts she has continuously strived to advocate for safe abortion with limited resources through organizing workshops with young nurses and engaging in grass root level advocacy, including for 28<sup>th</sup> Sept and the International Campaign for Women's Rights. Smriti was also selected to attend the UNESCAP Beijing +20 Asia Pacific Review held in Bangkok

**Shweta Krishnan, India** She is working on two projects- an animated film for training and advocacy- "From unwanted pregnancy to safe abortion"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6woulaen2J8> (put a screen shot of the film title or something from it here). She has also undertaken a research project -**"Political Mapping: Safe Abortion and Sex Selection"** to trace the origin and evolution of the campaign against sex-selection and understand the underpinnings of the anti-abortion sentiment echoed in the campaign's messaging.



**Sarah Natali Soysa, Sri Lanka:** Currently pursuing her masters in Melbourne, Sarah is advocating for safe abortion rights of migrant students in Melbourne <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4awnqQSIHFA> . Sarah is also a small grant awardee and has produced a documentary that talks about the issue of safe abortion in Sri Lanka and the lack of information and stigma around it. The film was recently screened at the Beijing +20 film festival in Bangkok and was highly appreciated <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJfilyYPxeU>

**Preet Manjusha, India:** Preet's study- "Stopping Sex Selection by Stopping Safe Abortions?" Documents case stories of 12 women in Western Maharashtra to see what health implications they had to face due to the denial of safe abortion services to them.



## ASAP Social Media Mentoring For Youth Champions:

ASAP has provided one on one mentoring for its Youth Champions from the institutes held since 2012, allowing them to develop their social media skills and share accurate and important abortion-related information with their youth networks and with young people across their countries.



**Youth Champion Shreejana Bajracharya started a blog on the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of young people in Nepal**  
<http://ceezana10.wordpress.com/>

Youth Champion Rola Yasmine has started a website which aims to work on sexuality, while looking at but not limiting the discussion to disease-prevention and violence, but also through an affirmative and sex-positive framework.

<http://www.theaproject.org/>

Nikzad launched her website **خشونت به س** (means no violence) in May 2014. This website has various sections which focus on different types of violence against women



**We started the year with original blog posts from Youth Champion Souvik Pyne. Read it here-**

<http://asap-asia.org/blog/is-abortion-a-human-right>

## Misoprostol Hotlines

ASAP partners in Bangladesh and Pakistan have set up Hotlines which give women information on Misoprostol. As part of the advocacy strategy for ensuring wider and easier access for women seeking safe abortion services, ASAP has worked in collaboration with [Women on Web](#) to provide technical support to them. These hotlines receive about 60- 70 calls /month from women seeking information on managing unwanted pregnancies. We also use our social media and networks to promote the Hotline launched by Women on Web in Thailand. This year a hotline was launched in Malaysia in partnership with [RRAAM](#).





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Or

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Website: <http://asap-asia.org/>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)

Blog: <http://asap-asia.org/blog/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/asapasia>