

Annual Report 2018



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Communication and Networking
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Sanika Mungekar
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From the
Desk of the
Coordinator

Greetings from the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership! It gives us great pleasure to be able to share with you a snapshot of all that we did in the last year.

2018 has been a milestone year for all of us at the Partnership since it marks the 10th anniversary of the network as the region's only safe abortion advocacy forum.

In this journey, we have had the privilege of working hand in hand with some amazing partners working towards the transformation of the world as we know it. It is the Power of these Partnerships that has sustained us, helped us grow and evolve, ready to take on more challenges. In the event you weren't able to join us at our celebratory conference, catch all the highlights in our Power of Partnerships section!

A great year, marked by a number of curveballs and challenges, 2018 has also seen the ASAP family expand, achieve new heights, and contribute substantively to the discourse on safe abortion in Asia. Read more about what where we've been and who we've been talking to in the Events and Workshops section of the report.

The year has also seen much change within the ASAP Steering Committee and Secretariat. After many years of steadfast support and inspiration, we bid Dr. S. P. Choong goodbye as he stepped down from his role as member of our Steering Committee. He has been a source of motivation and guidance ever since the founding meeting of ASAP. We also thank Anika Binte Habib, from Bangladesh for her time on our Steering Committee, and welcome Dema Wangchuk, from Bhutan, and Yu Yang from China as they join in.

Shilpa Shroff also stepped down from her position as Assistant Coordinator at the end of 2018. It will be difficult to replace her single-minded dedication towards keeping the wheels of ASAP running smoothly with her meticulous behind-the-scenes contributions! Garima Srivastava has joined in that position, and we welcome her! We would also like to welcome Ayesha Bashir to the ASAP Secretariat, as she takes over the role of Communications and Networking Officer from Swetha Sridhar.

As ever, we thank you for your continued support, and look forward to working with you in the years to come.

Suchitra Dalvie

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Background

The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership believes that women's rights are human rights, and that true gender equality cannot be achieved without ensuring that women's sexual and reproductive rights are fulfilled. Further, we hold that access to safe abortion is central to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and is integral to women being able to exercise bodily autonomy and empower themselves.

We are motivated by the belief that all women should be empowered to obtain equitable access to reproductive services free of coercion, discrimination and violence, within a social justice framework.

Vision

Recognizing how integral safe abortion is to sexual and reproductive health and rights for women across the world, our vision is a world in which Asian women live with dignity and their access to sexual and reproductive rights are guaranteed.

Goals

The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership is committed to promoting, protecting, and advancing women's sexual and reproductive rights and health in Asia, by actively promoting access to comprehensive safe abortion services, and reducing the incidence of unsafe abortion.

In defining our goals, we remain cognizant of the various components of access such as geography, affordability, and the availability of continuing, and sensitive care. Further, we recognize that comprehensive care must necessarily include pre-procedure counseling, a full range of safe and effective methods, adequate pain relief, post-abortion care and access to contraception, as well as emergency referral services.

As part of our goal, the Partnership also articulates the following objectives that inform our work:

1. To increase the capabilities of the network, and its members, to advocate and network for access to safe abortion as a human right.
2. To increase the availability of evidence-based research and scientific information on safe abortion, including medical abortion, and to facilitate its dissemination and use amongst members and stakeholders.
3. To promote technologies and service delivery systems to promote access to safe abortion services.
4. To increase the visibility of a rights-based approach to safe abortion at local, national, and regional fora.

The Power of **Partnerships**



ASAP celebrated
its 10th Anniversary



We started the day with **Key note address by Dr S P Choong**, who reminisced about his contribution at the founding when he had suggested that we should use the word abortion in the name of the network rather than self-censoring using words that hide it like reproductive health/ maternal health! He said, "An important point we need to remember is that safe abortion is not just a health issue, it is a human rights issue. Despite our progress in the area of abortion and contraception in **terms of technology, women have not been able to access it simply**

because of the patriarchal societies that limit women from accessing them.



This was followed with the **key note by Sarah Soysa, co founder of Youth Advocacy Network of Sri Lanka** where she discussed in Sri Lanka, she stated that abortion laws are not liberal there, along with a lack of women's participation in decision making process as an outcome of deeply rooted patriarchal society. She pointed how ASAP has been supporting regional partnerships for advocacy through inter-generational mentorship at local, national and regional level. This support, which allows Youth Champions to take part in global forums, has

helped a lot in youth activism back in their own country and providing them with an opportunity to lead and advocate.

We had a range of sessions focussing on issues of critical importance to our region.

These included a session on the work that our different Country Advocacy Networks have been doing in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Pakistan as well as members in countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Lebanon and the Philippines who continue to speak out despite fundamentalist governments, refugee crisis, humanitarian issues and religious control.

We had some sessions which spoke about using fun and games and ports as strategies to involve young people in advocacy and we had some stalls where participants could do some hand-on practice for Manual Vacuum Aspiration or check out their self- care status.

We had an evening keynote address delivered by **Manisha Gupte**, who has been a core part of the Youth Advocacy Institutes at ASAP. She also had a conversation with Carey Choi from Hong Kong and Tanzila Khan from Pakistan about the issues of intersectionality with other movements and reflected on how abortion and disability are linked and as a movement yet has to address the issue of eugenic abortion being allowed as per law.



We closed the day with a session on the main theme of the conference, '**The Power of Partnerships**'. Suchitra Dalvie concluded the session perfectly by noting that the value of a truly successful partnership is that the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts and it is these partnerships that make us grow stronger and work better together.

On the second day, we began with a **keynote address on 'Sexuality, Feminism and Abortion' by Rola Yasmine.**

Rola talked about how she started this work with ASAP 8 years ago and finding similar-minded allies gave her the assurance that we are all in it together. The journey was always a difficult one with patriarchal barriers, with men trying to associate feminine with negativity and forcing women to believe that eventually their bodies are going to face street harassment and that it is completely normal. In conclusion, she said that our strength is in our diversities and bodies do not have labels, we create and put them.

Over the next few sessions we deliberated on the role of various key groups that contribute to our work and the movement such as the intergenerational mentors, healthcare providers and men.

We agreed that although the 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, not enough has been done by them 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.

The Power of Partnerships



We also engaged our donors in a conversation to discuss how they have built relationships with donors and how transformational fundraising can only come from such reciprocal relationships.

We concluded our seminar with the last session which was called, '**I have a dream**' where all participants spoke about how they dream of a world where we go beyond gender binaries and stereotypical narratives and where sex isn't shameful and

where sex education, contraception and abortion are accessible to everyone.





2018 Event Calendar

Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop

21st – 23rd February, 2018 | Bangkok, Thailand



The three-day workshop was convened by the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership in order to facilitate a conversation about Monitoring and Evaluation for both the Partnership, as well as the Country Advocacy Networks (CANs). Facilitated by Barbara Klugman, the workshop encouraged ASAP and the CANs to

- > develop mechanisms to routinely gather and analyse information on the effectiveness of their activities, and
- > generate tools to use this information to reflect and work out how to strengthen their strategies for maximum influence

Building Robust SRHR Policy – A Multi-stakeholder Meeting

28th May, 2018 | New Delhi, India



The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership in collaboration with Haiyya, organised a multi-stakeholder meeting on the 28th of May, which was designed as a forum to bring together different players in the SRHR sector to enable dialogue across stakeholder groups. The meeting was convened with the objective of identifying action gaps between available services and accessible healthcare services, and the goals for the meeting were:

- > To map health systems and service providers, with a view to identifying key issues and gaps in current sectoral work,

> To identify actions to improve access to healthcare services for women.

Ensuring reproductive justice in India: How do we make Safe Abortions more Accessible?

7th June, 2018 | Mumbai, India



GHS in partnership with the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) organised a media roundtable targeted at media professionals in order to raise the discourse on abortion, and highlight abortion as a critical SRH issue in India. Leading Indian national and regional dailies covered the event such as the Hindustan Times, The Hindu and Mumbai Live. Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator, represented the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership at the meeting.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- > To engage journalists in Maharashtra on the need to highlight and raise awareness on key SRH and abortion issues
- > To encourage a culture where key media outlets and editors are open to covering abortion and SRH-related issues
- > To help familiarise journalists to the nuances of abortion reporting
- > To facilitate the inclusion of the voices of technical experts, civil society as well as human-interest stories from the grassroots, in abortion-related media coverage

Uniting the movements for HIV/AIDS and safe abortion care

21st July, 2018 | Amsterdam, Netherlands

On the side-lines of AIDS 2018, a global partnership of safe abortion, HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) organizations hosted Our bodies, Our fight: Uniting the movements for HIV/AIDS and safe abortion care. The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership was one of the core partners of this global alliance. Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator represented ASAP at the event, as part of a collaboration with Global Health Strategies. The half-day event brought together more than 200 prominent global advocates and decision-makers across the HIV and safe abortion spaces to discuss shared strategies and strengthen joint advocacy to address barriers to rights-based health care – with a focus on the champion countries of Brazil, India and South Africa. The objective of the event was to chart a path forward for collective advocacy to promote global policies and programs that uphold dignity and bodily integrity. The event report can be accessed here-

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5aa97f0c45776e5b6d0293ed/t/5ba3e15a9140b7903875bd44/1537466714868/OBOF_AIDS+2018_Event+Report_18+September+2018.pdf

Dr. Dalvie was a member of a panel titled 'Building Bridges to Break Social Barriers to Care' where she touched on a number of topics including the role of healthcare providers in ensuring just healthcare, the challenge of retaining activists and advocates in fund-constrained workspaces, and the need to include young people in fora beyond a tokenistic engagement of "youth" as a category.'

Strengthening Grassroots Advocacy for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion Services from Public Health Care Systems

July – August, 2018 | Maharashtra, India

SAMYAK with the support of Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) planned workshops on 'Gender and Access to Safe Abortion' workshops in five districts from two regions of Maharashtra – Aurangabad, Beed, Satara, Kolhapur, Solapur. These workshops aimed to raise awareness among elected women representatives of Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis, about PC-PNDT act and MTP act, and to encourage them to create awareness about access of safe abortion in their constituency and to advocate for access to safe abortion services in public health care facilities in their respective districts and blocks.

The workshops were covered extensively by vernacular media, both print and video.

Let's Talk SRHR! Youth Engagement For Sexual And Reproductive Health And Rights

12th August, 2018 | New Delhi, India



The workshop was organised as a collaboration between the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, Haiyya, and Pravah. Building on a conversation initiated at the Multi-Stakeholder Meeting held on the 28th of May by ASAP and Haiyya, the three organisations decided that it would be valuable to host a Youth Adda focussed on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The purpose of the Youth Adda was to sensitise young people to their bodily rights and open up a space for conversation various issues that are of importance to young people.

Youth Advocacy Institutes

Recognising the growing need for youth to take on the role of promoting, protecting and expanding the sexual and reproductive rights of women, men and youth in Asia, the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership launched their flagship event, the Youth Advocacy Institute (YAI). Held annually, these workshops are designed to encourage leadership skills and strategic planning to enable young people to challenge conservative cultural practices that restrict the rights of young people, especially young girls and women, especially the right to access safe abortion services. This year, the 7th Regional Youth Advocacy Institute was held between the 11th and the 14th of December, 2018 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and saw 25 participants from 10 countries.

Participants spent a fruitful four days understanding the gender and human rights dimensions of the demand for safe abortion and building the capacity to hold governments accountable for fulfilling the rights of their citizens. In addition, they learnt to network and develop alliances with communities and key stakeholders through the use of social networking platforms as well as offline activities.

One of the impacts that were delighted to have at the country level is seeing our Country Advocacy Networks (CANs) replicate the successful Youth Advocacy Institutes at the national level. This year alone, we've seen a number of our CAN's host their first YAIs, setting the foundations for a strong cohort of Youth Champions and SRHR defenders across the Asian subcontinent.

Bangladesh

Youth Advocacy Institute

22nd – 24th October, 2018 | Dhaka Bangladesh

The Youth Advocacy Institute for Development (YouthAID), ASAP's CAN in Bangladesh organised its first Youth Advocacy Institute in Dhaka, Bangladesh this year! 18 youth participants from different NGOs working on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues participated the workshop. The three days' workshop was organised to clarify the concepts around unsafe abortion, gender, sex and sexuality and enhance the understanding of different effective communication channels in affecting change in behavior and attitude towards sensitive topics in SRHR.

Bhutan

Youth Advocacy Institute

17th -19th June, 2018 | Timphu, Bhutan

The first Youth Advocacy Institute in Bhutan, the workshop was convened with the intention of laying the foundation for a community of trained and sensitized Youth Champions, and inculcating an understanding of access to safe abortion as sexual and reproductive rights, as well as human rights issue. The workshop discussed patriarchy in healthcare, gender norms in everyday life, the role of feminism in contemporary society, and much more!



India

Youth Advocacy Institute

10th – 12th May, 2018 | Mumbai India

Our Youth Champions from India Safe Abortion Youth Advocates conducted a 3 day workshop aimed at discussing the roots of patriarchy and how it affects access to safe abortion. The workshop was attended by 13 participants who despite varying backgrounds such as medicine, mass media, law, and commerce share an interest in talking about gender and patriarchy and advocating a pro-choice stance. At the workshop we were told that boys aren't encouraged to cut cakes as a way of celebrating their birthdays, so we simply had to order and cut a few cakes to smash the patriarchy. Talk about having our cake and eating it too!



Youth Advocacy Institute

15-16th October, 2018 | Mumbai, India

The YAI was organized for two days at the Bombay Veterinary College, and was the first workshop organized exclusively for veterinary students. Participants were coached on gender sensitivity and the need for advocating a prochoice stance.



Indonesia

Youth Advocacy Institute

28th September – 1st October, 2018 | Jakarta, Indonesia

The YAI was conducted with 7 SRHR activists from across Indonesia. The participants discussed patriarchy, gender and sexuality and how these concepts influence access to safe abortion services. The workshop also provided technical demonstrations of the MVA via the papaya demonstration. Participants developed and designed infographics and visual media to advance the message of safe abortion as a human right.



Vietnam

Youth Advocacy Institute

23rd – 25th November, 2018 | Hanoi, Vietnam

The Vietnam Youth Action for Choice conducted their second Youth Advocacy Institute with 25 participants from across the country. The objective of the YAI was to create a community of trained and sensitized youth champions who have an understanding of access to safe abortion as a gender and sexual and reproductive rights, as well as human rights issue. Further, the workshop hoped to facilitate the utilization of social media and other community level networking tools for advocacy and sustained youth engagement. We trust that participants from the YAI will emerge as a community with a strong voice on the safe abortion discourse at local, national and regional levels.

Networking and Advocacy Highlights

SheDecides Strategic Stakeholders Meeting

19th January, 2018 | New Delhi, India

SheDecides, the global movement to promote, provide, protect and enhance the fundamental rights of every girl and woman, held a meeting with regional stakeholders in Delhi. The purpose of the meeting was to

- > explore how SheDecides, and its mission, aligns with the goals of different existing stakeholders in the field, and
- > to generate ideas and an action plan for the India launch of SheDecides in March, 2018.

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to discussing the nature of the launch, and brainstorming ideas. Participants volunteered to be a part of various committees to support the launch. The Stakeholders meeting was followed by a series of virtual and in-person meetings, culminating in the launch event on March 5th. The Partnership was a part of these meetings and the launch, both at the venue and online.

Swetha Sridhar, Communications Officer, represented the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership at the meeting.

Family Planning Helplines Workshop

2nd & 3rd February, 2018 | Dubai, UAE



The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership was invited by Dr Haris Ahmed of the Aman Health Foundation and Sukh Initiative to conduct a workshop for the hotlines network they are supporting in Sind Province, Pakistan. The objective of the workshop was to provide the participants with an overview of the global landscape for hotlines, understand data, M&E processes and utilization, and also provide technical updates on contraception and post abortion care (PAC).

The Partnership was represented by Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator,

and Dr. Shilpa Desai-Shroff, Assistant Coordinator.

Importance of Integrating an Understanding of Gender and Rights within Medical College Teaching for Providing Respectful Maternity Care

12th April, 2018 | Guwahati, India



Organised by the Directorate of Medical Education, Government of Assam and the UNICEF, Assam, the meeting was convened to explore the importance of integrating a comprehensive understanding of gender and rights within medical college teaching. The key presentations of the meeting examined the links between gender and health systems and the morality of healthcare provision. The meeting discussed the role of healthcare providers and institutions, and mapped pathways for future actions.

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator, and Dr Amar Jesani represented the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership at the meeting.

'Hum Gunahgaar Aurtein (We Sinful Women)': Celebrating Women's Voices

24th April, 2018 | New Delhi, India

Amnesty International India has launched a campaign to call attention to how online spaces are quickly becoming hostile environments for women to work in, and hosted a panel discussion on the issue. Panellists Rana Ayyub, Award-winning author and journalist; Neha Dixit, Award-winning Independent Journalist; Kiruba Munusamy, Advocate, Supreme Court of India and Dalit rights activist; and Kavita Krishnan, a feminist activist, member of the Politburo, CPI (ML) and Secretary of the AIPWA discussed dealing with online harassment and the how various redressal systems responded to their complaints.

The event was attended by Swetha Sridhar, Communications and Networking Officer, on behalf of the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership.

Roundtable on Prenatal Testing, Disability and Abortion

14th June, 2018 | New Delhi, India

The meeting sought to bring together people working across diverse areas of reproductive rights, disability rights, bioethics and reproductive technologies, to create a space where activists representing different political positions could have a conversation. The meeting was convened against the backdrop of the rapid proliferation of genetic testing technology, absence of regulation in its use and the amorphous nature of counselling, which necessitates revisiting the pragmatic choices by women's rights groups and others campaigning to address sex selection two and half decades ago. Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator, ASAP attended the meeting as the representative of the Partnership.

Abortion and Reproductive Justice Conference (ARJC): The Unfinished Revolution -2018

14th June, 2018 | Grahamstown, SA

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie and Dr. Shilpa Shroff, represented the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership at the conference held in Grahamstown, South Africa. Souvik Pyne, one of ASAP's Youth Champions was also present at the conference, representing the YP Foundation.

As part of the conference, Shilpa attended the 'Youth and Abortion Advocacy' Workshop, on 8th July, 2018, conducted by the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Just.CHOICE and the Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition (SRJC). The workshop saw an intense discussion about the idea of abortion being stigmatised and considered a "sin", the social taboos that inhibit access to abortion and around the medical process of having an abortion. As a follow up to this discussion, Shilpa was asked to conduct a session on technical updates on safe abortion methods for the participants.

The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership team presented five papers at the conference:

> **When sex selection and safe abortion are in conflict: universal lessons from the Indian experience: Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator, ASAP**

The paper addressed the conflation of concerns around abortion and sex-selection at the level of interpretation and implementation of laws. Specifically, it called attention to how this convergence in the discourse has its roots in social, cultural and political processes that precede the policies related to safe abortion. The presentation concluded by arguing that as more stakeholders join campaigns against sex selection, synergy between activists who campaign against gender-biased sex-determination and those who work on abortion rights is essential to ensure gender justice, and safeguard the right to safe abortion from further attack.



Networking and Advocacy Highlights

> **Reaching out to medical students to create sensitized doctors for the future: Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator, ASAP**

In the context of the fact that modern systems of medication, teaching environments and curricula, and the medical fraternity is deeply influenced by patriarchy, the speaker called attention to ASAP's work with young people across 20 countries in Asia. Given the nature of medicine as a discipline, the presentation argued that while amending syllabi and textbooks is a longer-term advocacy agenda, working directly with medical students and interested faculty members could help change the nature of teaching and learning with a focus to gender-sensitivity.

> **Creating youth champions through youth advocacy institutes: Dr. Shilpa Shroff, Assistant Coordinator, ASAP**

Given the need for youth leadership in Asia to protect and advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights movement in Asia, especially safe abortion rights, ASAP has demonstrated how successful youth engagement can be leveraged for advocacy, by presenting how it has been working to create a cadre of Youth Champions and mentoring them to lead Country Advocacy Networks. We now have over 230 Youth Champions across 20 countries in Asia, with CANs emerging in 8 countries. These Youth Champions and the CANs are engaged in multi-pronged community advocacy, which includes working with medical students on attitudinal change, enabling discussions with policymakers, publishing articles on the issue, and using social media for shifting the discourse on the issue.



> **History of the policy environment around abortion in India: pre-colonial times to present: Souvik Pyne, Youth Champion, ASAP, representing YP Foundation**

Souvik's presentation focussed on India's Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act. In his talk he touched on questions of how the MTP law came into existence in India, what it includes, and its amendments. He also briefly spoke about the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PCPNDT Act) and how the implementation of the MTP Act has been adversely impacted by erroneous conflation with India's anti-sex-determination law, creating public misconception about the legal status of abortion in India.

> **Making safe abortion a public health priority: Souvik Pyne, Youth Champion, ASAP, representing YP Foundation**

In this presentation, Souvik called attention to the fact that India's public health syllabus lacks a mention of safe abortion, although it is a priority concern. The bulk of the presentation was devoted to an intervention he had organised, facilitated by ASAP's Small Grants programme. The intervention was designed as a seminar for medical doctors, academicians and students from medical, public health and nursing disciplines and included sessions that considered abortion from a public health perspective, a technical perspective, and a legal and human rights perspective, as well as a panel discussions followed by a screening of videos on abortion. The value of such targeted interventions in making abortion a public health priority was demonstrated by the fact that Safe Abortion Advocacy was included in the next module of the public health syllabus. A full report on the event can be accessed on our website.

Love Matters Pleasure Workshop

29th -30th August, 2018 | New, Delhi India

Love Matters India conducted a workshop on Sexual Pleasure: The Forgotten Link in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, a two-day workshop for young professionals in Delhi who working on questions of SRHR, gender and sexuality, with a focus to integrating an understanding of pleasure in such work. Swetha Sridhar, Communications Officer, represented ASAP at the workshop.

Youth Insight: Informing Policies on Health, Gender and Well-being

29th- 30th August, 2018 | New Delhi, India

The YP Foundation held a 2-day national conclave in New Delhi with 170 young people from 17 states to engage with policymakers and other relevant stakeholders on issues of adolescent health, gender and well-being. Suyash Khubchandani and Sumit Pawar, both ASAP Youth Champions from the India Safe Abortion Youth Advocates (ISAY) represented ASAP at the event.

Youth ki Awaaz Summit: Soft Launch of the #MyBodyMyChoice Campaign

1st – 2nd September, 2018 | New Delhi, India

The Youth Ki Awaaz Summit is an annual forum that brings together thought leaders across India, to discuss critical issues that are shaping social change.

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie represented ASAP on a panel titled #MyBodyMyChoice presented by GHS India, along with Anubha Bhonsle, Insia Dariwala, and Anubha Rastogi. She used the opportunity to call attention to the role of health care providers in combatting stigma, and the need to have open, comfortable and informed conversations about sexual and reproductive health, including in the media and popular culture, especially when it comes to safe abortion.

As part of the Summit this year, in collaboration with Global Health Services India, the Partnership launched the #MyBodyMyChoice campaign. The campaign sought to call attention to the demand for women to have the right to exercise control over their own bodies, with specific reference to the right to safe abortion.

MASUM-ASAP Safe Abortion

7th September | Pune, India

MASUM held a one-day Safe Abortion training for their rural staff members and field investigators. Dr. Shilpa Shroff, Assistant Coordinator, ASAP was present as a resource person for a training on abortion rights at this meeting. The purpose of this training was to improve health workers' understanding and knowledge around safe abortion from a technical and research point of view. A total of 21 people from Purandar and Daund blocks attended the training, and comprised members of MASUM's rural staff including their health team and field investigators.

International Safe Abortion Forum

5th -8th September | Lisbon, Portugal

Dr Phan Bich Thuy, Chair ASAP Steering Committee and Dr Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator ASAP represented the Partnership at this conference.

Disability Rights and Selective Abortion

28th – 30th October, 2018 | Nairobi, Kenya

The meeting was convened to call attention to the intersections between the disability rights movement, and the sexual and reproductive rights movement. Dr Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator ASAP represented the Partnership at this conference, where she spoke on the issue of sex-determination and selective abortions in the Asian context. She also offered technical information on the medical abortion, and updates on safety and efficacy.

International Conference on Family Planning

12th – 15th November, 2018 | Kigali, Rwanda

Dr Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator ASAP represented the Partnership at the international forum where she sat in on a number of meetings and panels. She was part of the Metrics for Management meeting on 'Measuring Quality in Abortion Care' and gave some inputs into the utility of the indicators to be reviewed from the perspective of the future action plans that would be needed. She was part of an FB Live panel organized by Alison Hoover on behalf of World Vasectomy Day. The discussion was around population, human rights and sustainability. She also curated a short discussion with the Youth Champions present on the politics of family planning vs contraception, the lack of visibility for safe abortion within family planning dialogues, and the role of young people in this movement.



Country Advocacy **Networks:** Snapshot of Activities

Our Youth Champions have had a busy year as well, pushing the agenda for safe abortion at the country level. We have now expanded to eight working Country Advocacy Networks and look forward to growing further!

Bhutan

Building Strong Movements

15th April, 2018 | Timphu, Bhutan

The Druk-Youth Initiative of Sexual Advocacy (D-YISA), our Country Advocacy Network in Bhutan, conducted a workshop on how to strengthen networks amongst youth, build and effectively use strong teams, and channel that for SRHR advocacy. The workshop addressed conceptual issues of feminism, medical patriarchy, and social stigma, and organizational tactics such as building an effective theory of change and so forth. The group of participants consisted predominantly of medical students from the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences (KGUMS).

Understanding Safe Abortion, Feminism and all the things that matter

28 September, 2018 | Thimpu, Bhutan

To mark the International Day of Safe Abortion, the Druk Youth Initiative for Sexual Advocacy (Druk-YISA) conducted a talk for the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Studies. 300 students from the Nursing and Health Assistant departments and some lecturers attended. The talk did not address the technical aspects of abortion as a health care service as all the attendees were well versed with the medical aspect of the issue. Rather, it sought to create awareness on the social stance of significance of safe abortion, and the implications that legalizing abortions can have for women's rights and public health.

India

CME Lecture on Safe Abortion

8th August | Mumbai, India

As part of a medical conference, Auxesis 2018, at Grant Medical College & Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals, Mumbai, Dr. Suchitra Dalvie was invited by the Academic and Research Council to deliver a Continued Medical Education (CME) lecture on Safe Abortion. During the course of the lecture she delineated the differences between human reproductive habits and animal habits, introducing the concepts of pleasure, sexuality and rights. This opened up a discussion on the need for an open and safe conversation on safe abortion, that focussed on women's right to choice. She then conducted a mini-values clarification session for audience members.

6th and 7th Sensitization Workshop

17-18th, 24th -25th August 2018 | Mumbai, India

18 medical and non-medical students from various colleges across Mumbai participated, and were sensitized on issues relating to gender, sexuality, and access to legal and safe abortion services. The sensitisation workshop touched on issues around gender, sexuality, and safe abortion. It brought together critical perspectives on everyday interactions, the media we consume, and the social norms. It also provided technical updates on contraception and safe abortion, and included a papaya workshop to demonstrate manual aspiration.

Indonesia

Strategic Planning Meeting

27th September, 2018 | Jakarta, Indonesia

The Strategic Planning Meeting was held to work out the Theory Change and organisational details to support establishing a country advocacy network in Indonesia. As part of this, current Youth Champions in the country drafted a Theory of Change for the proposed CAN, and also conducted a SWOT analysis for the organisation. Potential challenges and solutions were also discussed.

Vietnam

'Debating Right from Wrong: What are Medical Morals?'

A Vietnamese Translation

To mark September 28, the Vietnamese Country Advocacy Network translated a blog article by our Indian Youth Champion, Shreya Mashelkar, titled "Debating Right from Wrong: What are Medical Morals?"

Publications and Media

Part of the Partnership's mandate is to actively contribute to discourse and further the cause of safe abortion advocacy through writing and knowledge dissemination. This year, as amongst others, we've made significant contributions to the conversation on safe abortion.

Authored Commentaries

In The Name of the Mother

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie | In Plainspeak

In this article, the author explores why people swear, but more crucially, why the vast majority of all swear words are somehow related to sex (as in the act), or sexuality. It is important to keep reminding ourselves that feminism is not a movement against men. It is a movement against patriarchy. Patriarchy is a system which hurts men too. When a man is called a 'cunt' or a 'pussy' or 'pussy whipped' or told to 'grow a pair', it may sound as though he is being insulted. But the insult comes less from the words themselves and more from the implication that he is behaving in a 'feminine' way – these words and phrases are used to incite men to 'prove their manliness'. This is how gay men, transgender people, cross-dressing men, and 'effeminate' men are shamed for not being 'man' enough.

"But many of the other swear words that are considered to be really offensive are somehow directed at shaming women and, by association, their sexuality and even their bodily functions and body parts as we will see."

Gender perspectives in medical education

Riti Sanghvi | International Journal of Medical Education

In this article Youth Champion Riti Sanghvi explains how medical students have to go through an incredibly vast number of voluminous textbooks in their undergraduate years, but they learn next to nothing about the intricacies of the social determinants of health and the larger socio-political-cultural spaces we will have to negotiate. The objective of this article is to analyse the current level of gender sensitivity in the textbooks being used for undergraduate medical training, and the potential impact that this has on developing attitudes towards a gender and rights-based approach.

"Without any exposure to the larger patriarchal, economic and historical systems, which are bound to collide with our textbook learning, we will be highly unprepared to locate our own biomedical skills within the larger context."

'A Wolf in Sheeps Clothing: Restricting Abortion Access in the Name of Women's Rights

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie | Conscience Magazine

In this article, Dr. Dalvie looks at how choice is weaponised as an inherently bad idea, calling attention to how discourse, politics, debates and publicity usually focus only on the abortion that selects out the female fetus. By portraying one of the "choices" as inherently immoral, cruel, unfair or discriminatory, they hope to tar all abortions with the same brush. It is this unbalanced approach that has led to the continued failure of various "rescue" programs and to the increasing use of sex selection as ammunition by antichoice groups.

"If we are to recognize safe abortion as a right for women to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, then we cannot judge whether the reason it is unwanted is acceptable to us or not."

It Is Time We Value The Right To Safe Abortion

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie | The Outlook

While family planning and contraception have been promoted by the government, abortion continues to be an issue that is rarely discussed. It is time women in India speak for themselves.

“Providing affordable, quality, and accessible sexual and reproductive health care, including safe abortion, as well as information, will go a long way to reduce morbidity and mortality among women. It will also ensure that women are able to fully participate in the social, economic and political activities and lead productive lives – crucial to their empowerment. They will also be also empowered only when they are recognized as equals with the right to control their bodies and fertility. Young girls must receive comprehensive sexuality education, have the right to education, and women must be able to access contraceptives and safe abortion. In the absence of such bodily autonomy, the cycle of sexual abuse, marital rape, unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions will persist.”

Media Mentions

Law permits abortions, but appeals flood courts | The Hindu

In the past one-and-a-half years, the Supreme Court has witnessed 21 cases where petitioners have sought the court's permission to terminate pregnancy, while the High Courts have seen 53 cases despite the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act allowing it. The piling up of such cases is a cause for concern, especially since the courts have also not asked petitioners why they have approached them.

Abortion-related deaths in India due to poor knowledge of law: Doctor, Experts |

Hindustan Times

There is a rise in abortion-related mortalities in India due to poor awareness about the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act. It is because of this poor knowledge of law that women continue to choose unsafe abortions methods.

You Should Know That Abortion Laws Still Deny Women Right Over Their Bodies | Vice India

Everyone is talking of Beti Bachao. Why shouldn't it include young girls who die due to unsafe abortions?

Campaigns

SheDecides!

2nd – 5th March, 2018



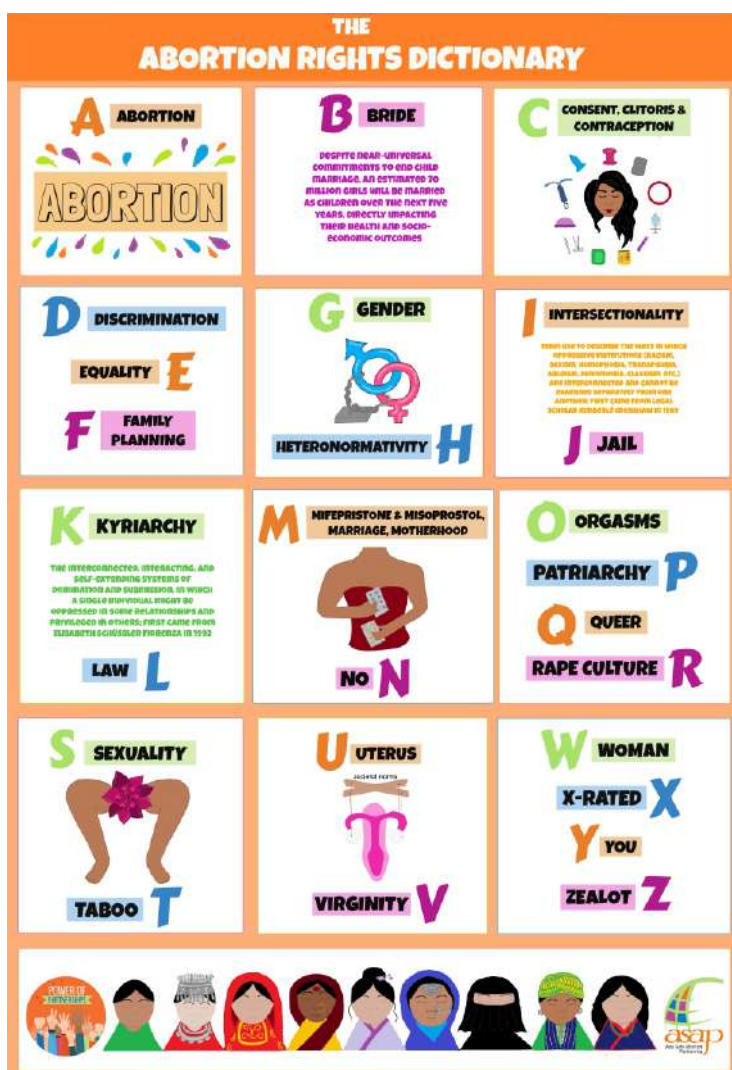
International Women's Day

8th March, 2018



The Partnership marked International Women's Day as it does annually through a digital campaign on all our social media platforms. The theme for this year's campaign was #PressforProgress, bolstered by international movements such as #TimesUp. The partnership generated and posted original content, as well as participated in digital fora that were facilitating conversations on relevant issues. In addition, the Partnership used the Day to launch The Abortion Dictionary, a project that is an attempt to expand and reclaim the lexicon around women's reproductive sexual health and rights.

In support of the SheDecides launch campaign, the Partnership participated in the online campaign to generate visibility for the platform. In addition to posting and boosting content that supported the message, the Partnership also participated in online tweetchats.

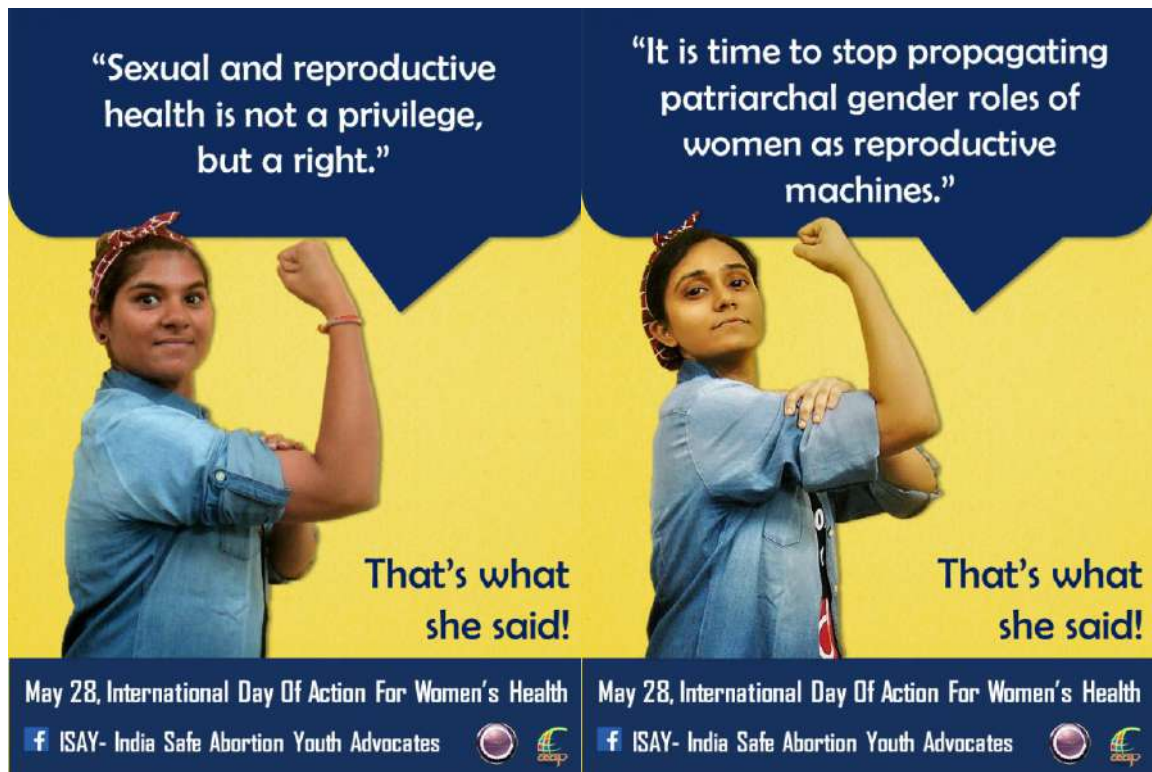




As we do every year, the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership marked International Day of Action for Women's Health 2018. The theme for the Partnership's campaign this year was #ThatsWhatSheSaid, a play on the commonly used colloquial joke phrase.

The phrase 'That's What She Said' is often used as a punch line to jokes as a way of making the preceding statement sexual innuendo. The format of the joke sees women as devoid of having any sexual agency and a subject-body. Through our campaign, we reclaimed the phrase, #ThatsWhatSheSaid, to center women in the demand for their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Our campaign tied into the global theme that sought to highlight the imperative to create safe spaces for women to talk about their health needs without stigma and judgement. We went a step further to argue that these safe spaces are useful only if they mainstream women's voices in the demand for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our campaign this year was conceptualized and developed by our cohort of Youth Champions at the India Safe Abortion Youth Advocates (I-SAY). She Decides, IWHC and some of the Country Networks and members collaborated to disseminate the message widely.



International Safe Abortion Day

28th September 2018



Online Campaigns

My Body My Choice



This year we tied up with an alliance of organisations under the banner of #MyBodyMyChoice. The alliance comprised of a number of organisations that work at both the regional and global levels to amplify the demand for the right to safe abortion. The 'My Body, My Choice' campaign sought to break the silence around abortion by bringing key audiences together and promoting conversation around SRHR and safe abortion. The campaign aimed to create awareness among women and young girls – about their abortion rights and how they can realise them – while also cultivating new-age champions for the cause.



Normalise Abortion



The global campaign was motivated by the fact that the one thing that all countries have in common regardless of their laws and policies on abortion is abortion stigma. The global campaign seeks to break this cycle of stigma by being frank and vocal about abortion and how safe and legal access to this service will reduce future deaths and health complications, as well as help realizing rights, instilling greater bodily autonomy and empowerment especially to women.

Offline Campaign

Safe Abortion Wikipedia Edit-a-thon

28th September
New Delhi, India



Feminism in India, and the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership conducted a Safe Abortion Wiki-Editathon as an attempt to rectify the imbalance in pro-choice content available on the internet, but also to address the systemic challenges of who creates and populates information online. All the information researched and added to Wikipedia on the day pertained to the right to safe abortion.





The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership
asap-asia.org



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