



**YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK
SRI LANKA**

QUARTERLY REPORT

JULY 2021 – SEPTEMBER 2021



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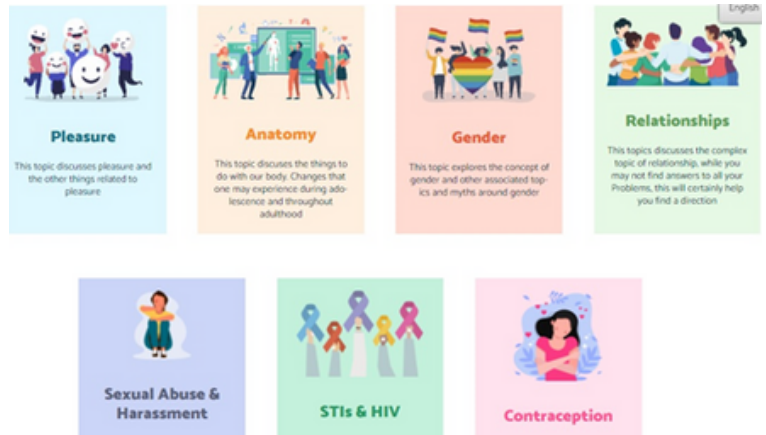
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GRANTS AND PROJECTS

WE HEAR YOU (Phase II)

The disability friendly website on SRHR named 'We Hear You' (<https://wehearyou.lk/>) has been up and running during the Third Quarter. Project We Hear You is a joint effort of Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka and the British Council. Its main objective is to improve access to SRHR services to people living with disabilities. Project We Hear You commenced in 2014 and YANSL has been working continuously with people living with hearing disabilities. The website is expected to increase the reach and provide more accurate information on SRHR to people living with disabilities across the world. Apart from informative and advocacy videos, the website features Q&A on several SRHR topics such as Pleasure, Anatomy, Gender, Relationships, Sexual Abuse and Harassment, STIs and HIV, and Contraception.



The Communications Strategy to promote the website was implemented during the third quarter. The website was promoted at the Ministry of Health's Family Health Bureau Adolescent and Youth Technical Advisory Committee. Project Coordinator, Shelani Palihawadana had the prestigious opportunity to speak about YANSL and the project on National Television which was a great platform to increase the reach of the website.

It was decided that the website will feature content soon to be completed through other projects funded by ASAP, Women's Fund Asia and other grants. YANSL also secured the Y-Peer Innovative Grants on SRHR, HIV & Humanitarian 3.0 to translate into Sinhala language an SRHR Training Manual for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Young People put together by UNFPA Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Robert Carr Fund, Youth-Lead, Working Group on Disabilities and 2030 Agenda (Disabilities 2030), Y-Peer National Networks in the Asia Pacific Region and Outrage Magazine. YANSL is hoping to conduct a capacity building training in SRHR Sinhala vocabulary and Sinhala translation and complete the project by the end of the year.

ASAP SMALL GRANTS PROJECT

Desaree Soysa and Tharindi Devadurendra, the Small Grants Recipients from Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) continued the second phase of their project, which is to collect stories of women and girls who have faced difficulties in accessing SRHR services during the Covid-19 pandemic induced lockdown and share them in the form of blog articles, animated videos and posts on social media pages of YANSL.

The final content which was an animated video on the theme of Access to Safe Abortion Services was published on YANSL's social media pages targeting the International Safe Abortion Day 2021.



NEW ASAP SMALL GRANTS RECIPIENTS

Project by Nisali Perera – Online Educational workshops on SRHR for students in rural schools.

The government teachers strike in Sri Lanka continued throughout the 3rd quarter of the year making it increasingly difficult to sustain the project. With the permission and under advisement of ASAP, the remaining funds of the project are proposed to be reallocated for the below two projects.

ASAP SMALL GRANTS PROJECT

Project by Ganga and Tharindi - Animated Videos and Webinars on SGBV

Progressing efficiently and impactfully with the project, 4 webinars were conducted during the Third Quarter out of 6 planned webinars. They were on the following topics:

1. The Effect of GBV on Mental Health – by Dr. Chaith Kodithuwakku (Senior Registrar in Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health)
2. Issues and Services on SRHR and GBV – by Thushara Manoj (Senior Manager Advocacy and Youth at the FPA, Sri Lanka)
3. Legal Framework around SGBV in the Context of Pandemic by Shelani Paliyawadana (Director, Programmes of YANSL and Law Graduate, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo)
4. Women's Health, Benefits, and Services during Covid 19 – by Dr. Dinusha Perera (Consultant Community Physician (Acting), Gender and Women Health Unit, Family Health Bureau)

YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK SRI LANKA PRESENTS

WEBINAR SERIES ON SGBV DURING COVID - 19

EPISODE 01

THE EFFECT OF GBV ON MENTAL HEALTH

GUEST SPEAKER

DR. CHAITH KODITUWAKKU
Senior Registrar in Psychiatry
National Institute of Mental Health - Angoda

Moderated by
Ganga Rathnayake
Volunteer Member - YANSL
Undergraduate,
National Institute of Social Development

7TH AUGUST 5.00PM ONWARDS

Logos: ASAP, YANSL, Zoom, Facebook Live

YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK SRI LANKA PRESENTS

WEBINAR SERIES ON SGBV During Covid - 19

WOMEN'S HEALTH, BENEFITS AND SERVICES DURING COVID19.

GUEST SPEAKER

DR DINUSHA PERERA
CONSULTANT COMMUNITY PHYSICIAN (ACTING)
GENDER AND WOMEN'S HEALTH UNIT
FAMILY HEALTH BUREAU

Moderated by
Ms. Desaree Soysa
Director of Partnerships, Resource
Mobilization and Finance
Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka

08TH SEPTEMBER 5.00PM ONWARDS

Logos: YANSL, ASAP, Rotaract, Zoom, Facebook Live

YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK SRI LANKA PRESENTS

WEBINAR SERIES ON SGBV During Covid - 19

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AROUND SGBV IN THE CONTEXT OF PANDEMIC

GUEST SPEAKER

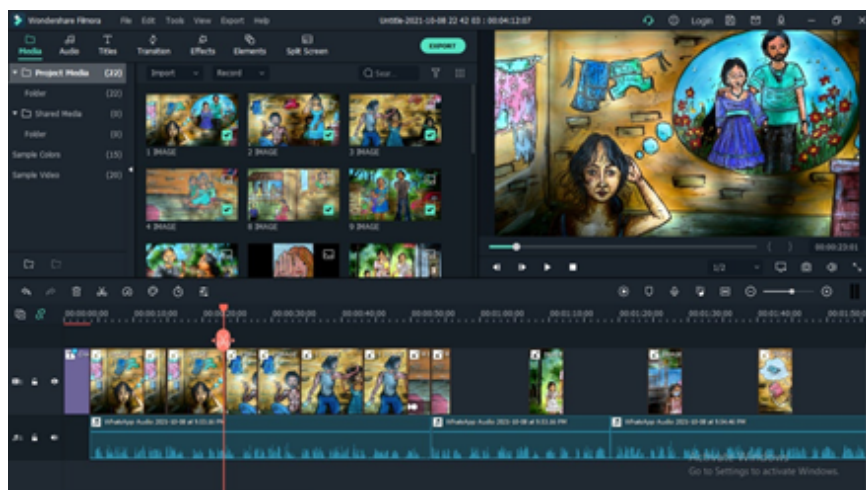
Ms. Shelani Paliyawadana
Director of Programmes in
Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka,
Law Graduate, Faculty of Law,
University of Colombo

Moderated by
Nayanathara Jayatilake
Volunteer Member - YANSL,
Freelance Journalist,
Undergraduate,
National Institute of Social Development

29TH AUGUST 5.00PM ONWARDS

Logos: YANSL, ASAP, Rotaract, Zoom, Facebook Live

Currently, a cartoon video based on an SGBV case study is being created. Blog Articles based on the content of the webinars will also be written and published within the final quarter of the year.



ASAP SMALL GRANTS PROJECT

Project by Mitchel and Nayanathara – E-course on SRHR

Mitchel and Nayanathara have progressed a great deal in the development of the E-Course. Web-developers have been recruited and course modules have also been developed and reviewed. They intend to translate the course modules in local languages, complete the course modules and add elements and restructure the site UIs within the final quarter before the launch of the website.

The modules are on the following areas:

1. What is CSE
2. Puberty and Adolescence
3. HIV/AIDS & STDs
4. Contraceptive Methods
5. Online Safety
6. Unsafe Abortions
7. SRHR and Mental Health
8. Sex and Gender



The grant recipients along with their supervisors participated in an interim review meeting conducted by Nandini Mazumder of ASAP on the 14th of October in order to review the activities so far.

WFA PROJECT

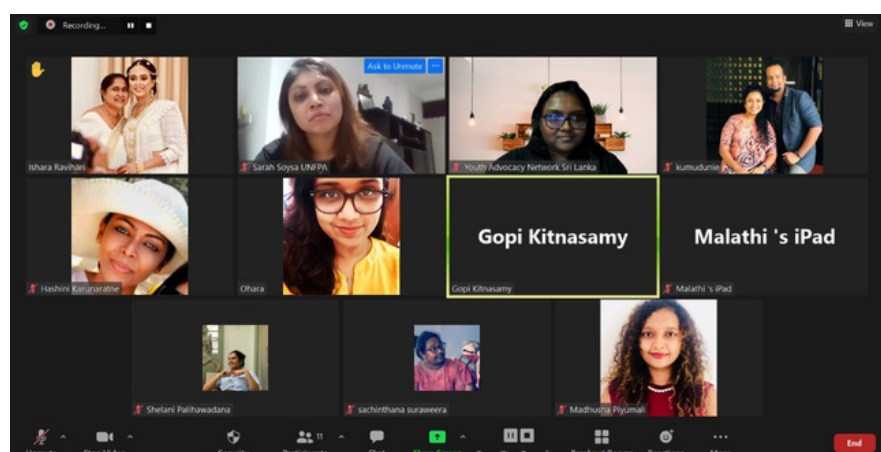
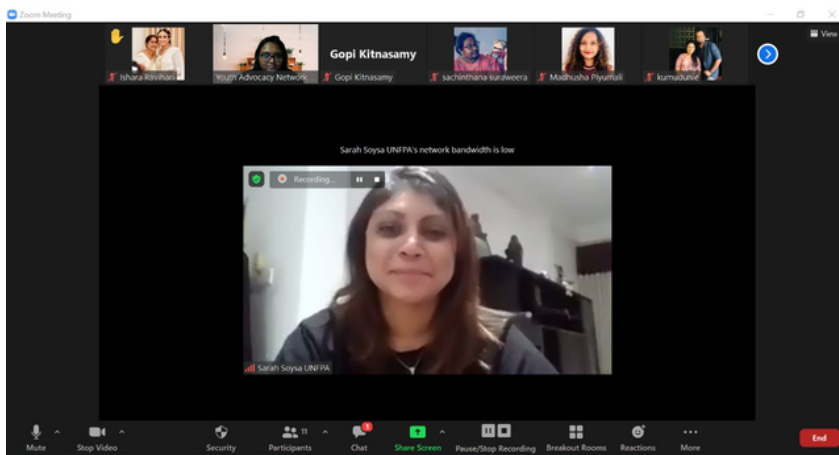
The project serves as an evidence building exercise on access to SRHR services before and during Covid-19 focusing on women and girls in marginalized communities (ex. people living with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ communities) and the LGBTQ+ community in January 2021 by producing videos. During the third quarter of the year, on the 17th and 25th of July, all respondents selected were brought to a location and their videos were recorded. Moderators of all languages were from YANSL itself whereas support was obtained from the Sri Lanka Central Federation for the Deaf to facilitate interviews with people living with hearing disabilities and to shoot interpretation videos. All videos were shot and completed and the videos are currently being reviewed, edited and their translations being added in subtitles. The videos are intended to be published within the final quarter of the year.



Let's Learn SRHR (Australia Awards Grant)

The Co-founder of YANSL Sarah Soysa, who is also an alumnus of the Australia Awards Scholarship secured the Australia Awards Alumni Grant to work on a project that aims to provide sexual and reproductive health related information for young people with intellectual disabilities. She has partnered with YANSL to carry out this project. The proposed project is to create a series of videos focusing young women with intellectual disabilities helping them learn about specific things like personal hygiene, good touch bad touch, and menstrual hygiene on all local languages. During the 3rd Quarter, YANSL has entered into an MOU with Ms. Malathi Kandaliyage who has a lot of experience working with people living with intellectual disabilities, who will develop the scripts for the videos. The initial plan to do a documentary on women and girls with intellectual disabilities in relation to their first period, and menstrual health management during the pandemic period will be reprogrammed as the pandemic prevents gatherings.

Two successful consultations were held so far with focus groups which included the parents of children living with intellectual disabilities. A recurring theme that emerged was the need to conduct sessions with parents to guide them in assisting the SRHR education of their children. The funds originally allocated to the video documentary was decided to be allocated to developing a toolkit/ guide to support parents. At least two videos are hoped to be completed and launched within the final quarter of the year.



CREA Project – Phase II on Decriminalising Adolescent Sexuality

A handbook is being compiled by CREA on decriminalization/criminalization of adolescent and youth sexuality and YANSL has been reached out to contribute with local examples and research. YANSL decided to conduct our own research publication on the same topic with more focus on the local context than South Asia. A group of YANSL's directors, staff and members including Priskila Arulpragasam, Shelani Palihawadana, Hasini Ruapsinghe, Nishadi Gunathilake and Sajini Wickramasinghe have volunteered to conduct the research and compile the research report.

WEBINARS & ONLINE CAMPAIGNS

The Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka has carried out several targeted online campaigns to advocate for issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality.

Catalyst Episodes

Three Catalyst Episodes were conducted during the Third Quarter of the year.

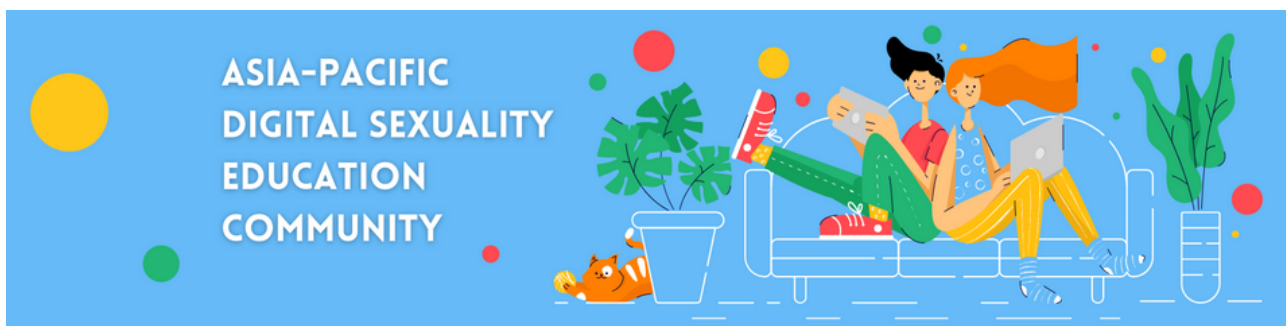
1. Mental Health and its Impact on Sexual and Reproductive Health by Tashya de Silva (Counsellor at Shanthi Margam) moderated by Dulmani Atapattu
2. Teenage Pregnancies in the Estate Sector: Root Causes and Learnings by Kisho Kumar (Social Researcher, Activist and Non-Profit Consultant) moderated by Priskila Arulpragasam
3. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Practices and Challenges during the Pandemic conducted by Dr. Indika Gunawardana (Technical Advisor of World Vision Lanka) moderated by Harini Fernando.



Asia Pacific Digital Sexuality Education Community

UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNESCO at the Asia-Pacific Regional level have been building and providing support to a community of digital sexuality education (DSE) app developers, content creators, vloggers, and online sex educators in response to the rapid increase in the use of digital technology and internet access by young people across Asia-Pacific (referred to as DSE community members). Henry Mitchel represents YANSL in the DSE community, where he collaborates and plans digital events and projects that will be carried out near future.

DSE is a topic that this community debates and shares best practices on with the goal of improving access to comprehensive, high-quality DSE for young people. By the year 2020, there will be 62 members from all around the region who have joined the community and are actively participating in things like virtual community calls and joint newsletters.



World Sexual Health Day

September 4th is World Sexual Health Day. "Physical, mental and social well-being in connection to sexuality" are the terms used by the WHO to describe sexual health. While avoiding sexually transmitted illnesses is an important element of maintaining good sexual health, it's not the only consideration. A crucial part of sexual wellness is understanding issues like consent and abuse.

Sex and sexual education are taboo subjects in many cultures around the world including Sri Lanka. To commemorate World Sexual Health Day, YANSL created a small poster campaign that aims to educate people about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The campaign was a success.

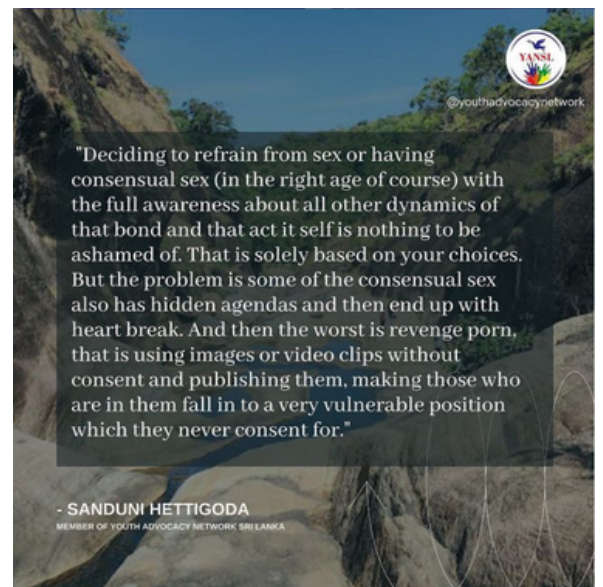
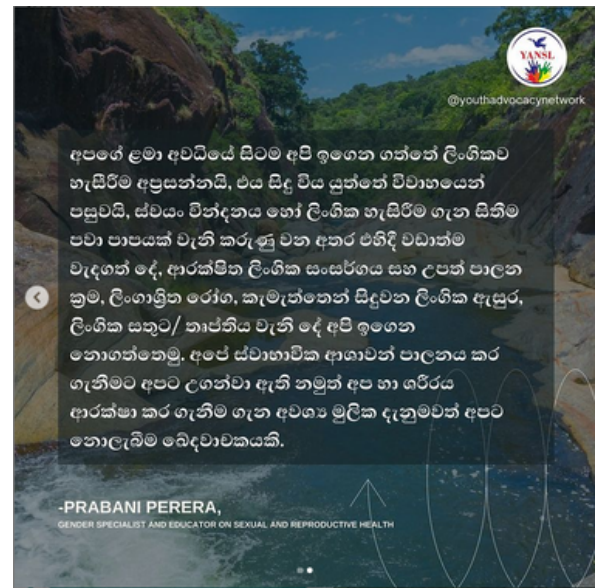


"Pahanthudawa Incident" and the poster campaign

Beautiful Pahanthudawa waterfall is located in Belihuloya, Ratnapura and is called for a clay oil light that once stood there. Even if it happened in secret, the small fall has gained exceptional fame as a result of the iconic pornographic film, which is sure to cause discussion in Sri Lanka. The Criminal Inquiry Department (CID) initiated an investigation to apprehend those responsible for the video's production and publication on a commercial pornography website. When it came to finding the people who had posted and circulated the files, CID's Cyber Crimes Division was there to help. Through their combined efforts, the police managed to apprehend and release the suspect couple within three days after their first detention.

The Pahanthudawa event has given us a unique opportunity to delve deeper into issues around sex and sexuality in Sri Lanka. Despite the fact that some believe there are more pressing issues facing the country, it is important to remember that sex and sexuality are integral parts of both public and private life.

Some have even argued that a society's stance on sex is a good barometer of civility and maturity as a whole. Without engaging a survivor of sexual violence, an incident of this magnitude that exposes our society's attitudes on sex and sexuality will be rare for a long time. Some related news also shows that the media in Sri Lanka cannot be relied upon to provide accurate reporting or analysis. Social media sites' roles, community norms, and where they locate individuals who can stumble into sexual or 'sensitive' information are all raised as a result.

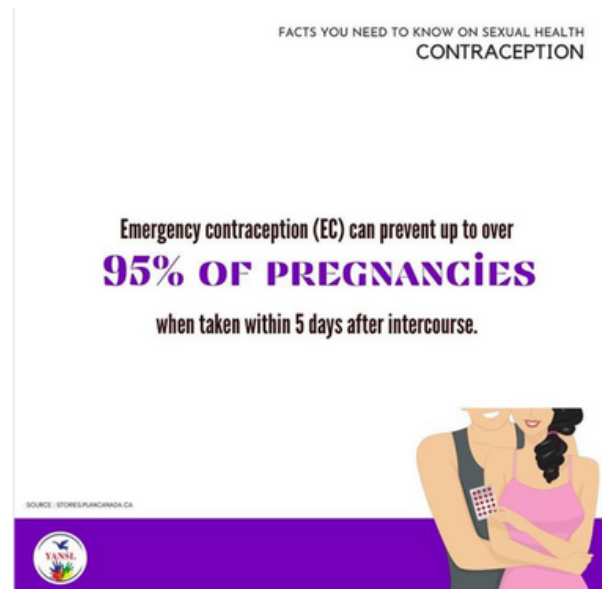


Putting aside the video's poor sensationalization, these talks regarding the management of sexual expression in institutions and society should occur whenever the opportunity arises. To the general public, make them aware YANSL did a poster campaign make the public to learn about the legal backdrop of sexual and reproductive rights and to be aware of how much of our present notions of decency are based on colonial prejudices about 'morality.'. and the campaign went viral on Social Media. Besides the campaign was a success.

The campaign's goal is to get people to reexamine the sexuality and "culture" ideas they've long accepted without doubt.

World Contraception Day

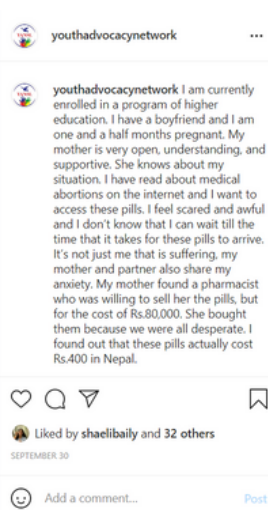
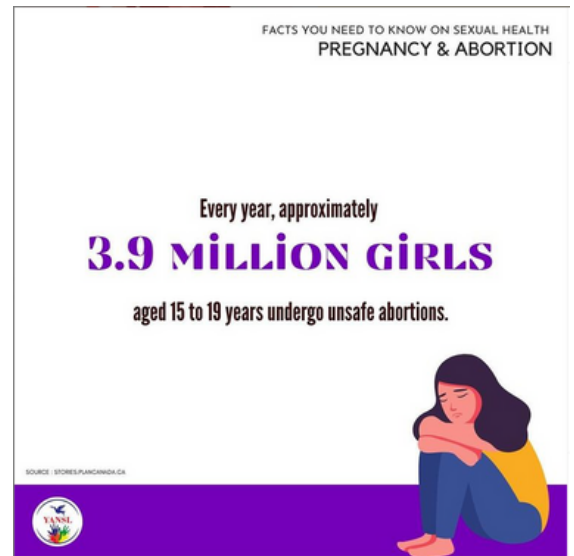
The 26th of September is designated as World Contraception Day. The goal is to increase awareness of all contraceptive options available to young people and to empower them to make educated decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and well-being. The result was an informational poster campaign about contraception facts, as well as a Clubhouse session, to raise awareness about the benefits of contraception among young people.



International Safe Abortion Day

Abortion is a fundamental right that is inherent in the right to have control over one's own body, and it should be protected as such. In order to achieve gender equality, it must be possible to exercise this right in conditions of safety, respect, and dignity that are satisfactory to the person exercising it. Because of the failure to respect this right, some women are forced to resort to so-called illegal abortions, which are performed in dangerous situations. According to some international reports, these abortions account for more than ten percent of all maternal deaths in some parts of the world.

As part of the campaign, YANSL organized a massive digital campaign that included a clubhouse session with outstanding speakers, a short informative video, abortion stories from Sri Lanka, and Unsafe Abortion facts. This campaign reaffirms the organization's commitment to the rights of women and girls, which is at the heart of its feminist diplomacy. The goal of the campaign was to increase access to safe abortions in Sri Lanka while also assisting the authorities in identifying the risk of unsafe abortions around the country.



SRHR Advocacy on Social Media by Aisha Nazim

Former Communications Manager of YANSL, Ms. Aisha Nasim conducted a session on SRHR Advocacy on Social Media on the 17th of August for the YANSL members discussing Social Media etiquette, confidentiality and sensitization. The meeting was recorded and will be used as an educational tool for YANSL members in future.



EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS

SYAN

YANSL became a partner organization in the South East Asia Youth Advocacy Network (SYAN), which is a network which aims to bring youth focused, adolescent focused groups together and create a network in the region and create knowledge advocacy resources based on a module already developed through an online course.

Based on the Covid19 impact assessment was successfully completed during the 2nd quarter of the year, each country organization has been requested to create two tools for advocacy work targeting adolescents. The two tools that have been proposed on behalf of YANSL are an adolescent friendly CSE module specifically catering to SRHR needs of adolescents and an archival research on SRHR researches done with the target sample being adolescents.

Hafsah Muheed, the project focal point representing YANSL has also got YANSL involved with the Covid19 Action Plan Fund. The proposed work will be conducted in 4 phases.

- Phase 1 – select 4 videos from the WHO Science in Five videos and add subtitles to them in local languages, as well as sign language interpretations.
- Phase 2 – Video documenting 5 topics interviewing medical professionals on Covid health related topics to bust myths surrounding Covid
- Phase 3 – Social Media Posts and conducting online quizzes based on WHO's Covid Information available on WHO's health-line
- Phase 4 – Creating 2 animated videos suitable for adolescents with Covid 19 information and preventive measures.



Youth Camps by FPA, Sri Lanka

The Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka (FPA Sri Lanka) requested YANSL to create a module suitable for the online space. Desaree Soysa of YANSL accepted the request on behalf of YANSL. The module was comprised of topics such as basics of sexual and reproductive health and rights, male reproductive system, female reproductive system, menstruation, contraceptive methods, pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, sex, gender and sexual orientation. The above stated topics are to be taught over the course of three days. Each day a session would be conducted for three hours.

During the Third Quarter, several trainings were conducted for the youth in Hambanthota, Jaffna, Matale and Nuwara Eliya Districts in local languages which thereafter contributed towards increased membership of YANSL.

Youth Camps by FPA, Sri Lanka

Tharindi Devasurendra and Henry Mitchel participated in a media training programme conducted by the FPA Sri Lanka through which they were awarded Media Fellowship Grants. Tharindi is conducting an online campaign shedding positive light on the LGBTQ+ community creating content such as a comic series. She intends to obtain the service providers from the LGBTQ+ community as well.

A podcast series on allyship and the LGBTQ+ community, as well as the creation of animated animations on the same topic, have been proposed by Henry Mitchel.

Family Health Bureau, Ministry of Justice

Shelani Palihawadana and Hasini Rupasinghe reviewed the Ministry of Justice's Family Health Bureau's Strategy on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing and made noteworthy suggestions for its improvement. Few members from YANSL participated in the a youth consultation where Shelani, Sandini Yashodha Rajapakshe and Sanduni Hettigoda presented on behalf of YANSL to the youth participants.

MenEngage Alliance Partnership

YANSL had the opportunity to rekindle its relationship with MenEngage Alliance Sri Lanka. Henry Mitchel and Rebecca Ranasekara were appointed as representatives of YANSL at MenEngage activities. They both participated in the MenEngageSL's Annual General Meeting. Several of YANSL's members including Nilupuli Nayanathara, Henry Mitchel, Desaree Soysa, Sandani Yashodha Rajapakse and Sanduni Hettigoda participated in local language trainings conducted by MenEngageSL.

Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka



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