



# Asia Safe Abortion Partnership

## Small Grant Projects: A Report



### What is Small Grants?

The Small Grant is used to fund short-term projects that improve access to safe abortion and promote safe abortion as a women's right

Through these small grants ASAP has funded projects in China, India, Iran, Lebanon, Philippines and Sri Lanka

ASAP provides support to Small Grant Recipients through its Mentoring Programme.

## ASAP has funded **18** Youth Projects through Its Small Grant Programme in 2012 and 2015

**Introduction:** The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership advocates for women's right to safe abortion across Asia. The partnership currently has active partners and members, including young people, in over 20 countries across the Asia Pacific and the Middle East.

From 2012 ASAP instituted a Small Grant Programme to support activities and projects conducted by its Youth Champions. In 2012 and 2015, the projects have included capacity building workshops, research projects, websites, new and social media projects and misoprostol hotlines. This report provides an overview of the Youth Advocacy Institute, the Small Grants projects and the support provided for the grantees through the mentoring programme.



## Youth Advocacy Institute

In the past three years, ASAP has conducted Youth Advocacy Institutes in order to build capacity for safe abortion advocacy, strengthen prochoice discourses among young people in Asia, and to galvanize the participation of young prochoice advocates in key conferences and conventions on the SDGs and Post- 2015 agenda.

These institutes were held in Mumbai, India. Some of the notable features of these Institutes are stated below:

- Experts in gender rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, research, ethics and advocacy join the ASAP staff to form a resource team.
- The course includes an overview of gender, sexual and reproductive rights, technical aspects of abortion, pro-choice values and advocacy related communication.
- Participants become ASAP's Youth Champions for Safe Abortion Rights, and receive technical support for their future projects.
- Learning methodology is participatory and creative. On the last day all participants set up their own social media accounts and write blogposts to be published on the ASP blog

ASAP has trained 44 Youth Champions from Bangladesh, China, Cyprus, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam in 2012 - 2014.

ASAP conducts a Refresher Institute for its most successful Youth Champions to help them continue with their training in safe abortion advocacy and also build their own capacity as future trainers for young people. Following the training, participants benefit from the following programmes carried out by ASAP:

1. Small Grant Programme
2. Mentoring Programme
3. ASAP's Social Media Programme and Groups.
4. Travel Grants and Scholarships towards participation in key global and regional forum.

All participants of the Youth Advocacy Institute are invited to submit proposals for short-term projects that could be carried out through the ASAP Small Grant Programmes. The ASAP Steering Committee and Staff select the most promising projects for funding. The Grantees are offered constant technical support and feedback from the Secretariat, during the duration of their projects and after its completion. This helps them develop projects that have the potential to shape future advocacy for safe abortion in Asia.

The ASAP Youth Champions also benefit from the Mentoring programme, which provides them with technical support and regular feedback on their Small Grant Projects. In addition to the Small Grant Recipients, other participants also work with a mentor to build their skills for advocacy on social media.



"This was a great learning experience for me. We met other youth champions and learned about SRHR in their countries and we learned a lot from the resource persons"

- Shreejana Bhajracharya, Youth Champion 2012

All the youth champions are also given a chance to contribute to ASAP's Facebook and Blog by sending regular updates and articles about their fieldwork. In addition to this ASAP has created a closed group where the participants can continue to discuss and debate on prochoice values, SRHR, feminism and gender rights.

ASAP has also supported the participation of its youth champions in key global and regional forums for development and SRHR, including Women Deliver and UNESCAP either through its own travel grants or through grants provided by key stakeholders in its network.

ASAP's Youth Champions have participated in key global and regional forums for development and SRHR, including Women Deliver, and UNESCAP



### Some Small Grants

Survey on Safe Abortion and Capacity Building For Peer Education in China.

ASAP Youth Champion: Yu Yang  
(Chinese Youth Network)

Separating Sex Selection from Women's Right To Safe Abortion:

A Rapid Qualitative Study with Private Medical Practitioners in Western Maharashtra, India  
ASAP Youth Champion: Preet Manjusha, (SAMYAK, India)

Assessing Young Undergraduates' Attitudes and Knowledge on Abortion Related Laws and Contraceptive Usage in Sri Lanka

ASAP Youth Champion: Dakshitha Wickremarathne, (FPASL, Sri Lanka)

## 2nd 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.

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## ***Small Grant For SEO Audit:***

*Focal Point: Neelesh Bhandari of Digital MedCom Solutions*

### **Summary Of The Project:**

ASAP has maintained a strong online presence for advocacy and sharing information. This project funds an SEO Audit to analyze the performance and impact of its website, blog and Facebook. The report will be used to strategically plan future online activities.

### **Results:**

#### **Website:**

**Total Visits:** 9173 visitors.

- 66 websites including other organizations advocating for SHRH, blogs in the genre link to the ASAP website.
- The ASAP website is also mentioned on mainstream media sites, most notably the Huffington Post.

#### **Blog:**

**Total Visitors:** 12,245

- 25% return visitors.
- Blog is read in 141 countries (50% traffic from S.Asia, SE Asia, Middle East).

#### **Sources of Traffic:**

- Blog's traffic comes from mostly from Google Search (35%), and Facebook (10%) and Google Groups (5%).
- 15% users read on their mobile phones

#### **Top 5 Asian Countries:**

- India
- Pakistan
- Bangladesh
- Malaysia
- Thailand

**Most Popular search words used in Google that link to ASAP's blog:**

Sexism, Misogyny, Abortion      Stigma, Prochoice

- 64% of the followers are female
- 45% are young women between the ages 18 and 35
- 70% of the total following is from Asia.

#### **Top 5 Countries That Follow ASAP's FB page:**

- India
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Indonesia
- Australia

This audit was conducted in May and June 2012. With this information about the traffic, search words and demographics, ASAP has improved its content and its traffic.

At the end of the year, ASAP had a total of over 16,000 visits on its blog and 550 Facebook followers.

**The SEO Audit showed that ASAP Facebook page ranked No. 1 for audience engagement when compared with other pages in the safe abortion niche.**

# 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=aIfjlyYPxeU>

**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 بس (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>

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