

YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK SRI LANKA



QUARTERLY REPORT JANUARY – APRIL 2021



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AGM 2020

One of the milestones of the first quarter of the year 2021 for YANSL was the Annual General Meeting for the year 2020 held on the 21st of February 2021 from 9.30 am to 1.30 pm at Enclave, Colombo. The AGM brought together members of YANSL from its inception and was followed by a fellowship session. The AGM was opened by remarks of Co-Founder/ Director Dakshitha Wickremarathne and welcome address by Co-Founder/ Director Sarah Soysa. The Annual Report for the year 2020 was presented mainly by Communications Manager Henry Mitchel and other Project Coordinators – on projects We Hear You (Phase II), APSEVE 2020, SRHR Booklet, Amplify Change (Phase II), Small Grants Project funded by the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership conducted by Desaree Soysa and Tharindi Devasurendra , 10th Asia Pacific Conference on SRHR, SexEd101, Catalyst and upcoming projects for the year 2021 as a network organization of SYAN (South East Asian Youth Advocacy Network) and Video Series on access to SRHR during the Pandemic by women and girls living with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ community funded by Women's Fund Asia.

Apart from the presentation of the Annual Report, another key event was the change of the Board of Directors. Three positions were filled after shortlisting of applicants but the position for the Director, Partnership, Resource Mobilization and Finance an election was held to select one out of two shortlisted candidates. The newly appointed Board of Directors are as follows:

- Director, Organizational Development and Administration – Priskila Arulpragasam
- Director, Programmes – Shelani Palihawadana
- Director, Partnerships, Resource Mobilization and Finance – Desaree Soysa
- Director, Communications and Advocacy – Henry Mitchel

The event was made more interactive by conducting three team building activities were done joining the members present. The Audit Reports for 2018 and 2019 were also presented and the Auditors were approved for the next couple of years.





GRANTS AND PROJECTS



WE HEAR YOU (Phase II)



The 2nd Phase of We Hear You (WHY) reached its culmination in the first quarter of 2021. Several video documentaries capturing the SRHR needs of people living with hearing disabilities and the developing of a sign language glossary on SRHR by featuring interviews with stakeholders who were engaged in this initiative from the beginning and documentary content of conducting educational and awareness-raising sessions with the Rathmalana School for the Deaf with the

support of the Sri Lanka Central Federation for the Deaf (SLCFD). They are hoped to be used for advocacy purposing specially focusing on the advocacy of the sexual and reproductive health rights and rights to sexuality education and related communication by people living with hearing disabilities. Project Coordinator Shelani Palihawadana supervised by Sarah Soysa and assisted by Desaree Soysa and Henry Mitchel worked tirelessly to have the videos produced is also in the process of generating evidence for advocacy purposes by producing a short video documentary capturing the learning from the project and interviewing stakeholders who were engaged in this initiative.

The project reached its pinnacle with the launch of a disability friendly website on SRHR named 'We Hear You' featuring information extracted from the SRHR Booklet of FAQs also put together by YANSL, and also videos with sign language interpretations. The launch took place on the 3rd of April 2021 at the Hilton Residencies from 4 pm onwards where distinguished guests from the British Council (being the funders of the project), Ministry of Health, WHO Country Office, FPA Sri Lanka and SLCFD and many other governmental and non-governmental organisations attended.



AMPLIFY CHANGE (Phase II)

Due to constraints posed by Covid 19 and limitations of physical accessibility, the 2nd phase of Amplify Change Project was re-strategized to conducting a small research targeting law students and legal practitioners named ‘Suggestions for Changes in Laws Related to SRHR’. During the first quarter of 2021, the research was conducted through online surveys and telephone calls and the research report was drafted with the assistance of Shelani Palihawadane. Sarah Soysa is currently reviewing the research report, which will be edited and put to print. A policy brief is also being formulated.

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. During the 1st quarter of 2021, the duo have been working on producing an animated video featuring such a story/ case study which is hoped to be completed within the month of May.

I was 17 years old when I got pregnant from my boyfriend. My father is a businessman and my mother is a house-wife. I have two older siblings and they both are studying at a state university. My boyfriend stopped talking to me when I told him about my pregnancy. My next and only resort was my parents. They were devastated by the news. First they tried to access a place that pregnancies can be terminated but access was impossible due to the curfew that was imposed island wide. Therefore my parents took me to the nearest government hospital. The staff at the government hospital directed me to a safe house that many other pregnant girls are being rehabilitated. I feel miserable and helpless. My dreams and my future are shattered into pieces.



NEW ASAP SMALL GRANTS RECIPIENTS

A few Youth Champions of the Youth Advocacy Institute 2019 managed to receive small grants from ASAP for three project proposals which include;

- Conducting sessions on SRHR in areas identified as having the highest number of teenage pregnancies such as Puttlam District using creative means of education such as puppetry or forum theatre.
- Producing three videos by conducting interviews with officers of government and non-government organisations and sharing stories of victim-survivors identified through the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) regarding Sexual and Gender Based Violence
- Designing an e-course on SRHR in general in all 3 languages

Dr. Dalvie, Founder and Coordinator of ASAP has rendered her strenuous support over the 1st quarter of 2021 in particular to articulate these project proposals better and secure grants for applicants.

WFA PROJECT

Having secured the grant ‘Claiming our Voices: Beijing+25 Follow Up and Review’ by Women’s Fund Asia, a project was launched as an evidence building project on access to SRHR services before and during Covid-19 focusing on women and girls in marginalized communities (ex. disability community) and the LGBTQ+ community in January 2021. In partnership with Care Consortium, a concept note for the entire project setting out its objectives was finalized during the month of February and discussions of how to create the videos including the terms of reference for videographers were finalized by the beginning of March. Focus Group discussions were held online towards the end of March with the participation of about 10 participants and their input has been taken for the conceptualization of the video scripts and finding respondents. Currently, the project team headed by Harini Fernando is finalizing the video producers for the project and identifying

individuals as Respondents to be featured in the videos.



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. We have also supported and contributed to international campaigns initiated by the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership and other national, regional and global campaigns. Continuing some interesting conversations held in 2020 online, further webinars and panel discussions were held online mostly in partnership with other youth organizations. Some noticeable campaigns and webinars carried out within the first quarter of 2021 are shared below.

Gynopedia

YANSL worked with Stories to Action (STA) and ASAP in updating the Sri Lanka page on ‘Gynopedia’ during the 1st quarter of 2021. As a method of collecting information to update the page and make SRHR information more accessible, members of YANSL participated in a Tweetathon through YANSL’s Twitter page.

Global Safe Abortion Dialogues 2021

ASAP, led by Dr. Dalvie proposed a panel to hold a discussion at the Global Safe Abortion Dialogues 2021 virtually on the 23rd of April with the goal of highlighting the strength of youth leadership in movement building for safe abortion rights advocacy. Priskila Arulpragasam, Director, Organisational Development and Admin of YANSL represented YANSL in this panel.

Online Activism on Discrimination against DIG Bimshani

YANSL joined several other civil society organisations in standing up against the Fundamental Rights Petition filed by 32 Senior Superintendents of Police against the Promotion of Deputy Inspector General of Police as the DIG Police Welfare *inter alia* on the ground that it was made violating the alleged standard promotion procedure. The petition claimed that no female officer can be appointed as DIG of Police as the word ‘women’ is not mentioned in the regulations pertaining to promotions. YANSL conducted continued online activism against the blatant discrimination sought to be purported through the petition,

**#SayNoToGenderDiscrimination
#WeStandWithDIGBimshani**



YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK SRI LANKA

Collective Statement: Civil Society Organizations call for action to eradicate Gender Discrimination in Police Service

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ஒன்றிணைந்த அறிக்கை: பொலிஸ் சேவையில் பால்நிலை சார் பாகுபாட்டினை இல்லாதொழிக்க கோரும் சிவில் சமூக அமைப்புகள்.



GENERATION
පරපුර
தலைமுறை



The Grassrooted Trust



දේශපාලනයේ කාන්තා හඬ
சிறப்பில் பெண்களின் குரல்
WOMEN'S VOICE IN POLITICS

every story



International Day of Education

YANSL posted several posts and stories over different Social Media Forums on the importance of Sexuality Education targeting the International Day of Education. A conversation was also held on Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Sri Lanka featuring Paba Deshapriya, Director of The Grassrooted Trust Sri Lanka and moderated by Dakshitha Wickremarathne as the 5th Episode of the Catalyst Programme (an online series of educational sessions conducted by YANSL on various topics related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and broadly on Gender and Gender Equality).

24TH JANUARY

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION

Today is the International Day of Education. Therefore, we should understand the importance of Sex education. It's been proven time and time again. We know students who receive formal sex education in schools are shown to first have sexual intercourse later than students who have not had sex education. Sex education does not encourage teenagers to have sex, it does quite the opposite.



Me' to 'We'

In collaboration with the Rotaract Club of the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, an online campaign and series of webinars on raising awareness on the rights of the LGBTQ+ Community named 'Me' to 'We' was conducted by YANSL where resourced persons from within the organization like Desaree Soysa and Tharindi Devasurendra spoke of same sex relationships, contraceptives, and law reforms that are required to uphold rights of LGBTQ+ community.

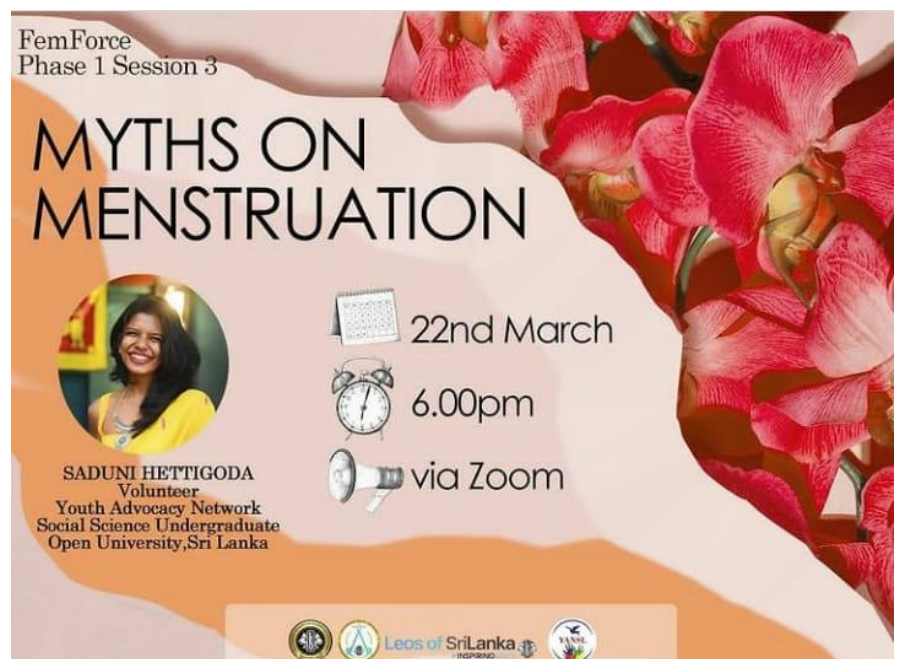


SexEd 101

Continuing the initiative conducted in partnership with the Rotaract Club of Panadura, another webinar of SexEd101 was conducted on the topic of 'Myths surrounding Virginity' by Nishadhi Gunathilake, yet another Youth Champion. The presentation called good engagement and meaningful discussion among the participants.

FemForce

A couple more webinars were conducted on Sexual and Reproductive Health related topics in partnership with the Leo Club of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo. YANSL member Sanduni Hettigoda conducted a session in Sinhala language attracting a wide group of participants on the topic of 'Myths on



Menstruation' and another member of YANSL Nishadhi Gunathilake spoke on laws and regulations surrounding LGBTQ+ community in Sri Lanka.

Facts and Myths about Menstruation and Menstrual cycle

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සත්‍ය සහ මිත්‍යා

Resource Person: Sanduni Hettigoda of Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka



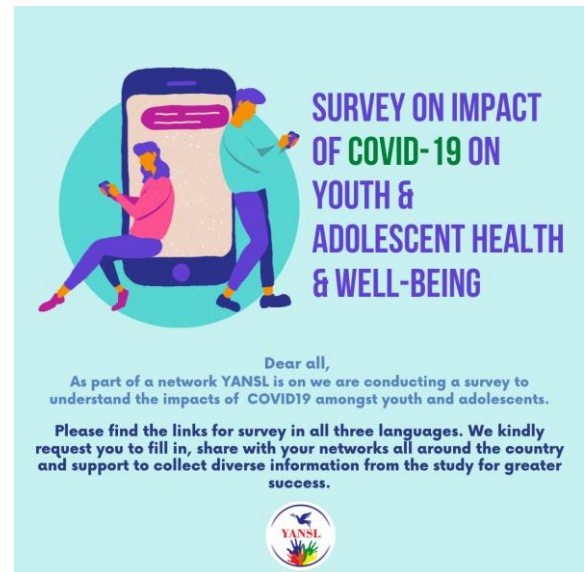


EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS

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.

Alongside building our identity as an organisation for adolescents and youth in the region, we also need to conduct an advocacy project on adolescent health using the resources we create and based on our own community's particular needs. The project is locally coordinated and funded by the WHO Country Office. Having participated in a few regional meetings held by SYAN, Focal Point from YANSL Hafsa Muheed (Youth Champion) conducted a Covid Impact Needs Assessment in the form of a google survey and a couple of focus group discussions as preliminary steps prior to embarking on the larger advocacy project.



Generation Equality Forum

Sanjana Ravi and Harini Fernando have participated in the Generation Equality Forum from 29th of 31st of March representing YANSL.



Youth Camps by FPA, Sri Lanka

Dakshitha Wickremarathne and Priskila Arulpragasam rendered their services as resourced persons by developing a training modules and training manual to conduct trainings for Youth Camps organized by the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka in the three official languages – English, Sinhala and Tamil. Dakshtiha and Nishadhi conducted the pilot training in the Youth Camp held in Galle and Nishadhi again conducted a second training held in Galle.



YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK SRI LANKA
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[@YANSriLank](https://twitter.com/YANSriLank)



[Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka](https://www.youtube.com/YouthAdvocacyNetworkSriLanka)

