



2021

YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK
SRI LANKA

QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL 2021 – JUNE 2021



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WE HEAR YOU (Phase II)

Following the launch of a disability friendly website on SRHR named ‘We Hear You’ (<https://wehearyou.lk/>) , the project team has developed a Communications Strategy for the promotion of the website. Discussions to expand the website’s content to cater to people living with visual disabilities are also underway. New content will be added to the website on a continuous basis and the content of the website will be reviewed in order to rectify any errors or discrepancies.

Project Coordinator, Shelani Palihawadana has also compiled the Project Report to be submitted to the Donors, British Council.

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ASAP SMALL GRANTS PROJECT



The project continued in publishing stories of women and girls who have faced difficulties in accessing SRHR services during the Covid-19 pandemic induced lockdown in the form of blog articles, animated videos and posts on social media pages of YANSL. The final content to be shared, which is an animated video is to be shared within the month of August.

NEW ASAP SMALL GRANTS RECIPIENTS



**Ganga
and Tharindi**

- Animated Videos and
Webinars on SGBV.



**Mitchel and
Nayanathara**

- E-course on sexual and
reproductive health.



Nisali Perera

- Online Educational workshops on
SRHR for students in rural schools.

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

Nisali re-strategised her project to conducting online awareness and educational workshops to adolescent students in a rural school in Gampola on 5 topics related to SRHR. Although sessions were planned to be conducted in June, the government teachers in Sri Lanka were on strike and therefore the workshops had to be postponed until the strikes cease. The content for the workshops including activities have been finalized. The resourced persons and volunteers have also been identified

Project by Mitchel and Nayanathara – E-course on SRHR

Mitchel and Nayanathara have conducted a baseline survey on already available case studies, video evidence produced by ASAP, YANSL and other organisations to develop the content for the e-course. The duo has also had several meetings with selected web developers about the structure and design of the website running the e-course. The module on Cyber Sexual Violence has been developed to a large extent.

The grant recipients along with their supervisors participated in a review meeting conducted by Nandini Mazumder of ASAP and are engaged in reporting to Nandini on finances and progress of each project.

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

Ganga and Tharindi have conducted case studies on Sexual and Gender Based Violence within the National Institute of Mental Health which will be used to create animated videos. A webinar series will also be conducted with a view to raise awareness and advocate on the identified issue. Questions for discussion in the webinars have been drafted and finalized.

A webinar on Women & Girl's Access to SRHR & SGBV Support Services During Covid-19 in Sri Lanka is planned to be conducted in August joining Dr. Charith Kodithuwakku from the National Institute of Mental Health as the guest speaker. The other webinars will join a female police officer, officer from the Family Planning Association Sri Lanka, Counselling Officer from an NGO, officer from the Family Health Bureau of the Ministry of Health and finally a Director of YANSL itself. All these webinars are planned to be conducted in August.

WFA PROJECT

The project serves as an evidence building exercise on access to SRHR services before and during Covid-19 focusing on marginalized and vulnerable communities such as women and girls, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ community in January 2021 by producing videos. After conducting several focus group discussions in the first quarter of this year, the project has accelerated at a commendable speed during the second quarter of the year with a range of activities. In April, the team was dedicated to recruiting the most suitable video production company and an MoU was signed with Idea Grenade after several discussions with them. In May and June the interviewees were sought and finalized after a number of discussions with them. They represent people living with disabilities, women and girls and the LGBTQ+ community and have undergone negative experiences in accessing SRH services during Covid19. This was done by connecting with grass-root level organizations.

In preparation for the shoot of videos, scripts were developed after several discussions and deliberations and necessary arrangements were made for the shooting of the videos in the month of July including selecting a venue, arranging for sign language interpreters, and gathering interviewees



AUSTRALIA AWARDS ALUMNI GRANTS

The Co-founder of YANSL Sarah Soysa, who is also an Alumni 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.

A short documentary video is also hoped to be produced featuring challenges faced by women and girls living with intellectual disabilities including their parents and close associates. The term intellectual disabilities is not an umbrella term that refers to people living with down syndrome or ADHD, but refers to limits to a person's ability to learn at an expected level and function in daily life. YANSL requested for a partnership with the MJF Charitable Foundation to develop these videos. Currently the consultant to develop the script for the videos has been selected and the scripts for the videos are being developed.

Y-PEER INNOVATIVE GRANTS

YANSL also applied for the Y Peer Innovative Grants on SRHR, HIV & Humanitarian 3.0 for Youth Organizations. The proposed project was to produce advocacy videos in local languages on SRHR which can be used in trainings conducted by YANSL in Sri Lanka and for general advocacy purposes and such content is glaringly lacking at the moment. It was proposed to collaborate with social media personalities, in particular, popular YouTubers who publish content in local languages to launch these advocacy videos using their channels in order to reach a wider audience. The application has processed to the second stage and YANSL is expecting a result soon.

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

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA

Around the world, the lack of understanding forced to the LGBTQI+ community leads to devastating impacts for its people, who are already among the most marginalized and excluded. To break the silence the Communications team of the YANSL did a campaign of advocacy poster to make a call for our attention to these inequalities across the world to ask to speak against the discrimination, restrictions towards these basic freedoms, and hate that LGBTIQ+ people face in the current context and beyond



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH AND MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

Despite the fact that COVID-19 may have affected us all, not all of us were affected equally. Women's health and overall well-being have been disproportionately affected, particularly in countries with poor public healthcare systems and limited access to vaccinations.

Women's rights, including the rights to life, health, bodily autonomy, equality, and freedom from violence, have been violated by the pandemic, which has revealed and exacerbated long-standing social and gender inequities that express in various ways and operate at different overlapping levels.

Therefore, team comms of YANSL came up with a poster campaign to educate the public about the pressing need to find creative solutions to end violence, and the importance of women's health covering both the menstrual hygiene day and international day of action for women. The content was curated to serve the local audience with facts and figures on the realities faced by women silently.



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Biodiversity loss, food insecurities, poverty, forced relocation, violence, and the disappearance of traditional and cultural knowledge are all exacerbated by environmental degradation and natural resource shortages. In communities, homes, and industries, the ensuing stress and rivalry over finite resources intensify normative, discriminatory, and exploitative gender disparities, leading to an increase in GBV as a control and reinforcement strategy.



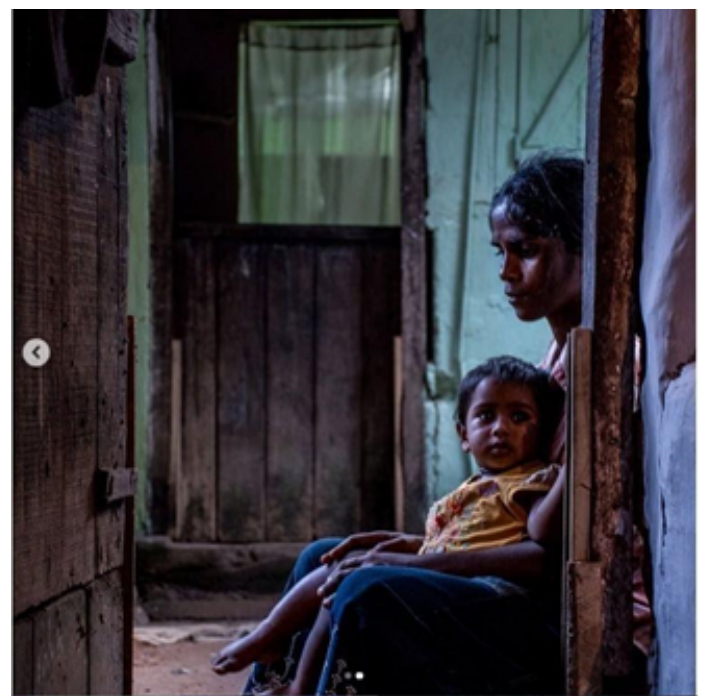
A weakened rule of law adds to the sexual exploitation of women and men in environmental crimes, as observed in illegal logging, mining, and fishing operations as a method of staffing labor forces, for example. Therefore, the Communications team of the YANSL did a campaign of advocacy poster to educate the public.

MAY 28: 'THE SPARK' CREATIVE MEDIA COMPETITION

International Women's Health Day or the International Day of Action for Women's Health is commemorated annually on May 28 by women and health organizations throughout the world to raise awareness about women's health issues.

This day aims to promote awareness of issues connected to women's health and well-being, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic (SRHR). Therefore, the team YANSL has organized a creative media competition named "The Spark" along with the Women's Global Network for reproductive rights (WGNRR) among Sri Lankan Youth in the theme of "Women's Health Matters".

51 youth participated across all categories and representing all local languages. 4 winners were chosen and felicitated with cash prizes. The cash prizes were sponsored by WGNRR. There were four categories as Art, Photography, Videography, and Infographic. The winners were officially announced on 11th of July 2021 and successfully completed.



"ආර්ථවය යනු කාන්තාවක් විඳවිය යුතු දඬුවමක් නොවේ. එය මිහිමත ජීවය පවත්වාගනු පිණිස සොබාදහමෙන් ලබාදෙන සොඳුරු දායාදයකි."

Twitter Space - Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Sri Lanka

A rising amount of data suggests that young people are increasingly turning to the internet realm to find out about sexual health and sexuality. A deeper understanding of digital sexuality media interventions is needed to investigate novel, complementary methods to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in Asia, as well as to affect sexual reproductive health knowledge and practices.

Therefore, Team Comms of YANSL has conducted the first-ever twitter space in Sri Lanka advocating comprehensive sexuality education in Sri Lanka. The Space was facilitated by the YANSL's Director of Programmes: Shelani Paliawadana, Freelance Journalist and social worker: Nayanathara Jayathilake, Director of Communications: Henry Mitchel, Director of Partnership: Desaree Soysa and Communications Manager of YANSL: Limtiya Izzath,

During the space the discussion highlighted the need of young people's access to high-quality sexuality education and reproductive health information.

Pride Beyond June

It's official: June is Pride Month for the LGBTQ+ community, and it's been that way for almost 20 years now. It wasn't until the Stonewall riots of 1969, however, that the Gay Pride March was held. LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies have always held June in high regard since that time.

As the month was coming to a close, the YANSL team believed we should not cease honoring and appreciating members of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as their experiences. Thus, we continued to post, guaranteeing that #PrideBeyondJune is inclusive and necessary. The team Comms of YANSL has created a short video and published it on the network's social media accounts.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS

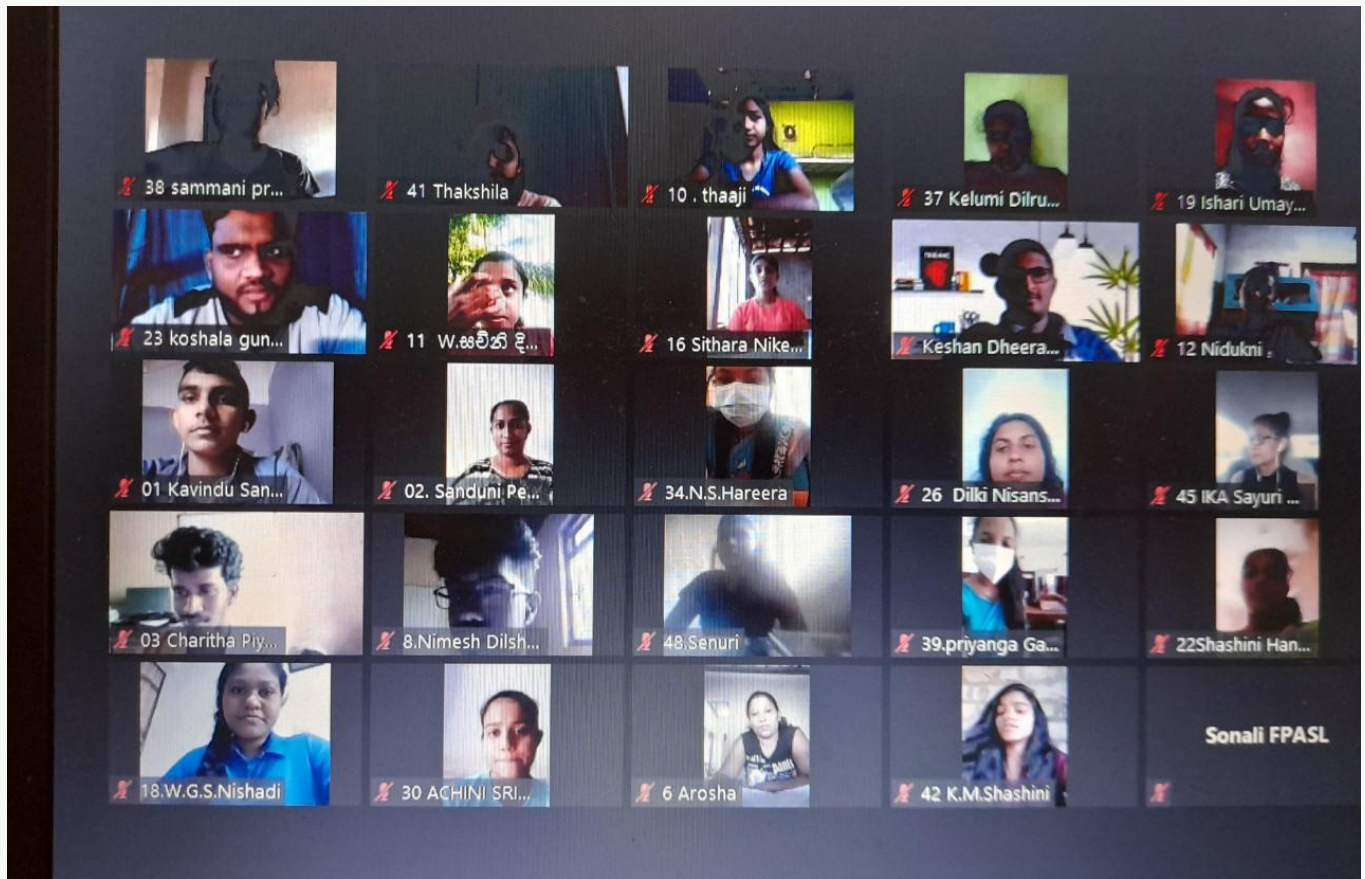
South East Asia Youth Advocacy Network (SYAN),

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 knowledgeable advocacy resources based on a module already developed through an online course. A Covid19 impact assessment was successfully completed during the second quarter of the year. YANSL was able to obtain representations from the trans community and visually impaired community as well. After analysing the impact assessment, SYAN team of Sri Lanka plans to hold capacity building sessions and create country level knowledge resources. A grant proposal has been submitted to conduct a 4-month campaign on preventing Covid-behaviour, and YANSL is waiting on the selection.

SYAN members also attended a regional consultation conducted by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) where Shelani Palihawadana represented YANSL. YANSL member Hafsa Muheed attended a consultation held as a focus group discussion to understand the impact of Covid-19.



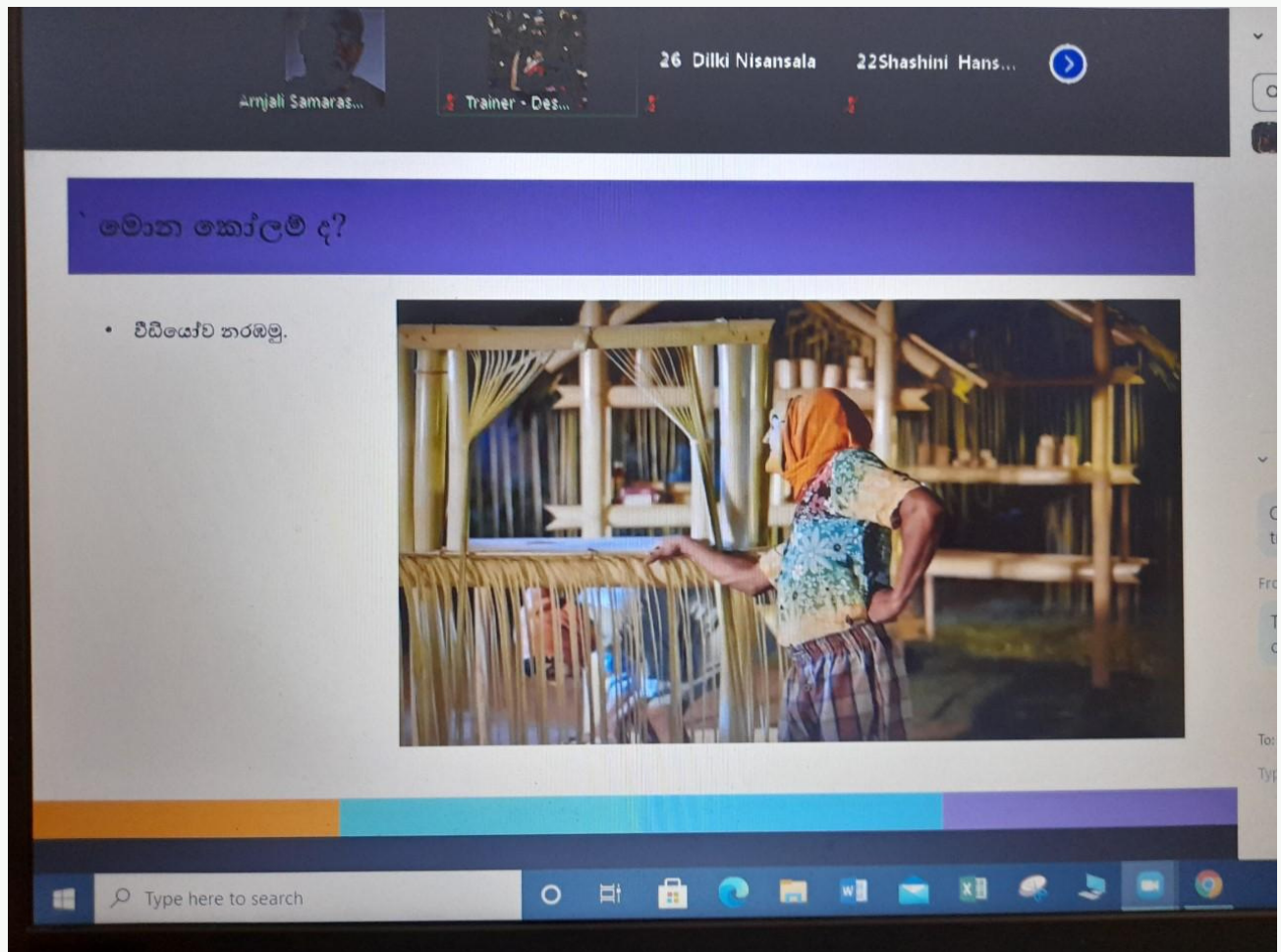
Youth Camps by Family Planning Association, Sri Lanka



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. The module was created by including games and activities that are both engaging and are suitable for the online space.

Youth Camps by Family Planning Association, Sri Lanka



The module was initially created in the local language: Sinhala and was later converted to Tamil: another local language. The module was used to conduct two training sessions in partnership with Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka.

Youth trainers of YANSL including Priskila Arulpragasm, Shelani Palihawadana, Nishadi Gunathilake, Tharindi Devasurendra, Desaree Soysa, Sanduni Hettigoda, Sandhini Yashodha and Nilupuli Nayanathara conducted two sessions for young individuals from Hambantota District and Jaffna District in Sri Lanka. Fifty participants participated from each district. Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka is aiming to conduct few more sessions at different districts in the future

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