

# Annual Report Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka.

September 2016 - September 2017



## Who are We?



Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka (YANSL) was formed after the First Beijing+20 youth review in Sri Lanka in 2015. YANSL is a network run by young people, working with young people, for young people and women. We believe that creating a strong, transformative connection between grass root level work and policy level is the key to effective, inclusive policy creation and implementation. Equality, Inclusiveness and Participation are our core values. We believe that accountability in all levels is the key to transformative development.

There is a growing need for young champions to take on the role of promoting, protecting and

## Youth Champions

The Youth Champions are the young people who have been trained at the Youth Advocacy Institutes facilitated by the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership at the local and regional level and also by YPEER International with the support of UNFPA. They have been trained by both local and international trainers to work and advocate for SRHR and Gender equality within their communities and countries.

expanding the sexual and reproductive rights of people in Asia, especially among the youth. The most challenging and stigmatized issue among all other issues is the right to access safe and legal abortion services. Youth champions and advocates need to be able to challenge conservative interpretations that allow cultural practices to restrict the rights of young people, especially young girls and women. Understanding the gender and human rights dimensions of this struggle is important in building the capacity of these young champions so that they are able to hold governments accountable for fulfilling the rights of their citizens.

The members of the Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka mainly comprise of trained youth champions who are passionate and have expertise on issues related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Gender inequality and Unsafe abortions. On top of our real life offline advocacy work we also use online and social networking platforms to build alliances to achieve social justice, create a dialogue on tabooed topics and in return hold the state accountable.



# Our Activities

## Youth Advocacy Institute. September 2016

The 1st local Youth Advocacy Institute was held in September 2016 with the financial assistance and mentoring from the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership. 20 young people were trained at this institute. The Institute was a three day training, the major areas discussed were, Patriarchy, Contraception, Safe abortion and Advocacy. Young people were trained on creating content and advocacy campaigns using social media tools. At the end of the training participants were encouraged to write proposals for projects that they wish to implement in their community and 3 of the participants who submitted proposals received small grants to implement a project in their own communities.



## Online Campaigns

The Youth Advocacy Network carries out various online campaigns to advocate for issues related to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights. They also support and contribute to the campaigns initiated by the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership.

## September 28th 2016: #StepIntoOurShoes #Sept28

**“Lives of thousands of women and girls in Sri Lanka are in danger of unsafe & illegal abortions & lack of information”**



#StepIntoOurshoes  
#Sept28 #YANSL #AshUsHotline



**“Studies shows that induced abortions & complications that emerge from unsafe & illegal abortions account for 6% of maternal deaths & 7%-16% of admissions of females in public hospitals in Sri Lanka”**



#StepIntoOurshoes  
#Sept28 #YANSL #AshUsHotline



**“Making abortions illegal doesn't stop abortions. But making it a safe choice for women will save many lives”**



#StepIntoOurshoes  
#Sept28 #YANSL  
#AshUsHotline



## Campaign for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence 2016

**ALTHOUGH A WOMAN WEARS A SHORT SKIRT OR A FULL COVERED BURKA IT DOESN'T MATTER. MEN WILL ALWAYS PASS UNWANTED COMMENTS TO WOMEN WHILE THEY ARE WALKING IN THE STREETS.**



**IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW STRONG A WOMAN IS OR HOW DEDICATING SHE IS IN FRONT OF ALL MEN. YET MEN WILL ALWAYS PROVE WOMEN ARE WEAK.**



**PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR A WOMAN IS WAY HARDER THAN IT SHOULD BE. I DON'T SEE MEN HAVING TO DEAL WITH UNWANTED NUDGES AND TOUCHES AND SEXIST COMMENTS...!!!**



**JUST BECAUSE A WOMAN MOVES THROUGH A PUBLIC SPACE DOES NOT MEAN HER BODY IS A PUBLIC SPACE.**





## Valentine's Day 2017



Sumana is 40 years old and is a mother of four children. She didn't want to get pregnant for the fifth time but recently she got to know she is. Her husband blames that it is her mistake. She knows that they can't afford for another child. She doesn't know what to do and who to contact for help.

*Is this fair for a mother of four?!?!*



Sheela is in grade II. She has dreams of becoming an accountant. She has a boyfriend who she loves so much. She got pregnant and she is worried about her future. She is scared that she might have to stop going to school. She is helpless and scared to share her story even with her closest friends.

*Doesn't she deserve a second chance?!?!*



Namali is 20 years old. She was raped and she's pregnant. She wants to have an abortion. She loves little children but she isn't ready now. If the child is out she will never be able to accept it as her own. She wants to study and wants to make a better life for herself. But Sri Lankan law says she has to carry the pregnancy.

*She makes a decision because she loves herself!  
Let's Respect it!!!*



## September 28th 2017

**Ensure young people, specially young women and girls are involved in all policy decisions that affect them.**

Madhani

**#LeaveNoOneBehind**



**Access to health services is a human right. Make contraceptives available for young people**

Kosala

**#LeaveNoOneBehind**



**SDG 3 ensures universal access to reproductive health; unsafe abortions are reproductive issue. It's time to provide safe abortion services**

Keshagini

**#LeaveNoOneBehind**



## Partnership For Know It Own It Cricket Tournament

The Youth Advocacy Network Partnered with the Family Planning Association at the HIV/AIDS Day Cricket tournament and Quiz Competition organized under the theme Know It Own It. The event was held on the 3rd of December 2016 at the Bloomfield Cricket ground from 9.00 am onwards. The special guest at the event was former Captain of the Sri Lankan Cricket team, Mr. Thilakaratna Dilshan. Mrs. Yehali Sangakara and former cricketer Roshan Mahanama were also present to endorse the event.



## Mentorship project

From January 2017 we initiated a mentorship project to mentor the trained Youth Champions for a period of 6 months and to monitor and support them in writing reports, conducting research, creating content and resource mobilisation for various projects. The selected Youth Champions were assigned mentors who have been working on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and who are experts in various forms of advocacy like research, blogging, theatre and research. The major reason why YANSL initiated this project was to build the capacity and skills of youth champions.

## Ask Us Hotline

A Hotline which provides information and counselling on Contraception and unwanted pregnancies was started in the year 2015 with the financial support and guidance of the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership. but due to unavoidable reasons the project was discontinued. Even though the Hotline is not active at the moment campaigns are carried out by our page ASK US where our volunteers generate discussion and provide information for people who contact us.



## Youth Advocacy Refreshers Institute September 2017

A Youth Advocacy Refreshers Institute was held from the 15th - 17th of September 2017 for the previously trained youth champions. The South Asia Women's fund financially supported this training while the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership provided technical support. 15 participants were at this training institute. The topics discussed here were; Sexual violence and militarization, SDGs and International Financial System, Sexuality and Abortion. At the end of the YAR the participants created various contents like videos, blogs and posters, which were used for the 28th of September on the YANSL Facebook page.



### Small Grants

3 Members received small grants from the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership to implement 3 projects. The grant recipients and their respective projects are as follows

#### **Madhusa Pannigalagamage:**

Understand the SRHR related problems among vulnerable women in Moratuwa Division, Sri Lanka and what are the responses of members of the community for such problems in the community.

#### **Chanthuru Thiveegan:**

Community meetings with young people and adolescents to discuss about SRHR and Unsafe abortion related issues.

Capacity Building and training for young people on Sexual and Reproductive Health and rights and safe abortion.

Consultation Meeting with Members of the National Youth Parliament and Members of the National Youth Services Council.

#### **Mehala Mahilraja:**

A study to understand the level of awareness among youth on issues related to safe abortion and their perception on the adverse effects of unsafe abortion on women's lives and indirectly on the health situation and highlight that unsafe abortion is the second highest cause of maternal mortality in Sri Lanka. Since there are advocacy efforts taking place to change the laws on abortion, understanding the perception of youth is important to effectively deal with abortion myths for the betterment of youth.

## Funding

We receive funding from regional networks that work on Women's rights and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Asia Safe Abortion Partnership is one of our funders who have funded the local Youth Advocacy Institute and Small Grants Projects and Hotline Project. The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership also provides technical support and mentoring to members of the Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka. SAWF (South Asia Women's Fund) has supported out Mentorship project and the local Youth Advocacy Refreshers Institute.

#### **Directors of YANSL**

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[Ask Us](#)