



## **Youth Advocacy Institute 2013 (YAI 2)**



# **Youth Champions**

**4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2013  
Mumbai, India  
An Executive Summary**

In November 2012, ASAP conducted its first Youth Advocacy Institute for Safe Abortion Rights for 13 young SRHR advocates from the countries of **China, Cyprus India, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam**. This year, ASAP conducted its second youth advocacy institute (YAI 2) between Sept 04 and 07, 2013 in Mumbai for 15 youth advocates from the countries of **Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam**. These candidates were selected from a total of 43 applicants across Asia.

The institute brought together these youth activists with experienced activists and experts in the field of SRHR, Feminist movements, and communication. A Refresher Institute held for six of the most successful candidates from the first Youth Advocacy Institute preceded YAI2. These six candidates served as peer trainers during the entire four days of YAI2, and worked along with more experienced resource persons to bring relevant and updated information to the young participants of YAI2.

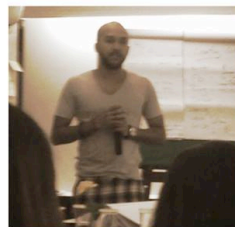
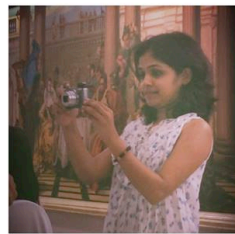
The institute also used innovative training methods and was covered on ASAP's [Facebook Page](#), [Twitter page](#) and [blog](#), giving an opportunity for other organizations and for youth networks to follow the institute's take-away moments.



## 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 and reproductive rights, as well as 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.

## Day 1:



### Gender, Sexuality, Patriarchy, Human rights:

The first day of the institute gave the participants an opportunity to meet a leader in the women's movement in India, and a veteran trainer **Dr. Manisha Gupte** who is also the co-founder of MASUM in Pune.

Her session allowed them to understand the social construct of gender, the institutionalized control on women's bodies and fertility and to place abortion within this context. Youth Champion **Rola Yasmine** acted as a support trainer during this session, and brought to light the gender discrimination and biases that exist in popular media.

Figure 1: 2012 Youth Champions Act As Support Trainers

Manisha Gupte also spoke to them about **human rights, international covenants** and committees like the UN Declaration of Human Rights and CEDAW, and allowed them understand that Sexual and Reproductive Rights must be understood and discussed within the broader umbrella of human rights. Youth Champion **Yu Yang** spoke about these processes and how they affect decisions made for young people during his brief presentation as a support trainer.

### Values clarification:

Her sessions were followed by an energetic and very enthusiastic discussion moderated by **Dr. Suchitra Dalvie**. It helped them articulate their own positions on the issue of abortion and introduced them to arguments posed by the anti-choice groups, and to issues like sex-selection.

The participants watched the 1989 film ***Dirty Dancing*** and were asked to look at it through the gender and patriarchy lens. The entire team headed for a night out at popular Mumbai restaurant, The Village, where they had an opportunity to interact with each other more informally.

### Day 2:

#### Technical updates on Physiology of Reproduction, contraception, safe abortion:

**Rola Yasmine** and **Preet Manjusha** supported **Suchitra Dalvie** in facilitating this session.

#### Law and Policy:

The next session conducted by **Dr. Shilpa Shroff** and supported by youth champions **Nikzad Zanganeh** and **Shreejana Bhajracharya** allowed participants to explore existing laws, their pitfalls and shortcomings, as well as form nuanced opinions on the need to support the formation and implementation of liberal abortion laws and policies.

**“What It Means To Be Prochoice?”** In this session **Suchitra Dalvie**, helped them understand the nuances of the prochoice philosophy. This led to very interesting discussions on the various circumstances under which women might make their choices, and how it was important to protect and preserve these choices.

There were two media sessions on Day 2. One was a discussion on the patriarchy and intersectionality that had been represented in the film ***Dirty Dancing***. The second discussion was based on a short clip from the film ***Cider House Rules***, and was on the topic of conscientious objection.

The day ended with a scene from the Romanian film ***Four Months, Three Weeks, Two Days***, which portrays the duress under which women are forced to negotiate with an illegal abortion provider, when abortion is criminalized and stigmatized.

### Day 3:

The day began with an energetic and enthusiastic session with **Dr. Uma Pocha**, a veteran on **interpersonal communications**, helped by Youth Champion **Dakshitha Wickremarathne**.



The session helped them dissect the components of effective communication, and then practice various techniques through exercises that simulated various tense, embarrassing and delicate situations that an SRHR activist might find themselves in.



**Figure 2: Session On Interpersonal Communication**

The participants analyzed the Romanian Film, and listed issues that they believed they would advocate for. They were then asked to frame messages around these issues with inputs from the three facilitators.

#### **Day 4:**

On Day 4 in the first session **Shweta Krishnan** assisted by **Dakshitha Wickremaratne** helped the participants understand the anatomy of their social networks, create a visual map of their networks and to analyze how well connected they are to key stakeholders in their fields.

The second session allowed them to understand the **basics of Facebook and Twitter**. This was a hands-on session, which allowed them to reframe and tailor the messages they had created on Day 2 to post it using hashtags on Facebook.

**Kinga Jelinska** of Women On Waves and Women on Web conducted the second and third sessions of the day. She introduced the participants to various innovative, revolutionary and thought provoking ways in which to communicate prochoice values. She also showed the participants clips of successful but extremely revolutionary campaigns from the West, ending her presentation with a word on Women on Waves, and [the Ship Campaigns](#).

A session on Content Creation with **ASAP's Communications and Networking Officer, Shweta Krishnan**, with assistance from Youth Champions **Yu Yang** and **Rola Yasmine** ended the third day.

### **Creating original blogs:**

In the post-lunch session, they were given an overview of Wordpress, a blogging platform, following which all the participants posted their own blogs. Some of them can be accessed through this link:



<http://asap-asia.org/blog/youth-advocacy-institute-giving-shape-to-our-thoughts/>

### **Formulating Action Plans:**

In the last session the participants thought through possible advocacy activities they would like to carry out. Participants will submit revised action plans for review by the end of September. These will be reviewed by the ASAP Staff and Steering Committee, after which the best three or four will receive funds through the small grants programme.

