

# Family Planning 2020 – We are on board!

**Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) is a global partnership that supports the rights of women and girls to decide, freely, and for themselves, whether, when, and how many children they want to have.**

In Sri Lanka, the Family Planning Programme has been integrated into maternal and child health services since the 1960s. A National Family Planning Strategy is being developed to improve family planning programmes and to address newly emerging issues and challenges. A multi-year costed Implementation Plan for family planning will be drafted in 2018/2019. The Government of Sri Lanka commits to including a budget-line for reproductive health in 2019 and to engaging the education sector to address the accessibility of adolescents and youth to family planning services and information. Recognising that the causes of maternal mortality are associated with the unmet need for family planning, Sri Lanka commits to promoting rights-based family planning, increasing service delivery points, capacity building of health workforce, and strengthening postpartum and post abortion care, with a goal to increase modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) from 53.6% to 57.2% by 2025.

In order to do this successfully Sri Lanka will need the involvement of key stakeholders, Government, Donors and Civil Society members. FPA Sri Lanka was appointed as a Civil Society Focal Point from September 2018 onwards.



*Ending unmet need for family planning will empower women to exercise autonomy, choice and participation with regard to their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.*

**FPA Sri Lanka works closely with the Ministry of Health to ensure universal access to family planning for all.**

#### **Here's why:**

- Improving awareness on contraception and family planning enables people to make informed choices on their sexual and reproductive health.
- A woman's ability to choose if and when to become pregnant has a direct impact on her health and well-being.
- Family planning allows spacing of pregnancies and can delay pregnancies in young women at increased risk of health problems and death from early childbearing.
- It prevents unintended pregnancies, including those of older women who face increased risks related to pregnancy.

## **FP2020's 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia Regional Focal Point Workshop**



*This meeting was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from the 1st - 4th of October 2018. From left to right: Dr. Sanjeeva Godakandage (FHB) Ms Sonali Gunasekera (FPASL Director Advocacy), Mr. D E Frangklin (National Youth Services Council Delegate From Badulla) and Ms Sarah Soysa, (National Programme Analyst UNFPA)*

All 12 of the Asia FP2020 Commitment-making countries were present – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. During the workshop, country Focal Points, technical experts, and partners discussed challenges and prioritised actions to accelerate progress at the country and regional level with a special focus on Political Will and Leadership, Reaching Adolescents and Youth and Family Planning Financing.

# The need to advance Comprehensive Sexuality Education

There are more young people in  
the world than ever before.



Many young people receive a range of scientifically incorrect, conflicting and confusing messages about reproductive health, sexuality and gender on a daily basis. This can lead to serious risks for their health, well-being and dignity. Age appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) gives young people the tools they need to have healthy lives and relationships. It helps them navigate life-changing decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. It provides crucial information about their bodies and their rights. CSE teaches them the life skills they need to protect and empower themselves.

## Residential Workshop for Youth



A 2 day residential training programme on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) was held at The Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue (EISD), Colombo 6 on the 27<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2018.

It was organised by FPA Sri Lanka's Youth Advisory Technical Committee and the Advocacy Unit.

Key facts highlighted were that CSE promotes:

- The fundamental principles of a young person's right to education about their bodies, relationships and sexuality.
- Gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls.
- Tolerance/acceptance of marginalised communities. (Lesbian, gay, bisexual,

FPA Sri Lanka, through their Service Delivery Point's carried out CSE programmes at the following locations (Under the Global Gag Rule, Emergency Fund Project)



Vocational Training Centre in Hikkaduwa from the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> of October 2018.



Maha Manthina Pirivena in Matara from the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> of October 2018.

Also at :

Vocational Training Centre, Seethawakapura from the 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2018.

Vocational Training Centre (VTA) Thalalla, Matara from the 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> of October 2018.

Jamiyathul Falah Arabic College, Kattankudy from the 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

Kananke Madya Maha Vidyalaya, Matara from the 27<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2018.

Diviyagala Vidyalaya, Ampara from the 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2018.

SMI Nursing Training School, Avissawella from the 14<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> of November 2018.

Vocational Training Center, Galle from the 28<sup>th</sup>- 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2018.

Ampara Nursing School from the 5<sup>th</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2018.

transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people are especially marginalised, as are many young people who have survived sexual violence and rape. When LGBTIQ issues are taught positively, CSE can challenge the rise in violent homophobia and transphobia globally. Participants were also educated on how sexual exploitation can take place via media and the effects of such violence.

A session was carried out on how to write articles/blogs and news features to bring focus to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights issues for print and online media, a mechanism to inspire a younger generation of advocates working on sexual and reproductive health in Sri Lanka.



## Training the next generation of Medical Professionals

Dr Yakandawala (FPA Sri Lanka's Director Medical) carries out training programmes for Medical Students (once a week) and Undergraduates of the Department of Plant Sciences (on request) attached to the University of Colombo at FPA Sri Lanka Head Office. Some of the topics discussed at these trainings include: classification of contraceptive methods, how it works, possible side effects, what is Reproductive Health (RH), difference between RH for men and women, reproductive systems and essential components of Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

Students also visit our Happy Life Call Centre and Alokaya Counselling Centre to learn about how these Units function, the services and courses on offer and to get insights on how a medical practitioner should be able to “read the signs” on when to refer a client to therapy or to other resources.



## Improving access to Sexual and Reproductive Health services



FPA Sri Lanka' Centre for Family Health provides comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health care. We champion women's sexual health at every life stage and believe it is important for clients to have full access to information about the health issues that may affect them. Two Well-Woman Mobile Clinics were conducted for employees of People's Leasing & Finance, Maharagama (13/10/2018) and the Divisional Secretariat- Negombo.(20/10/2018)

Through our Well-Woman clinics at Head-office and at other locations, a range of primary health care services, family planning, counselling, cancer screening and sexual health services are provided.

collaboration with the World Health Organization(WHO) with the support of The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Overall objective of the workshop was to revisit the country's progress and challenges in further strengthening HIV and TB programmatic response in reaching targets of ending AIDS and TB. Specific objectives of the workshop:

1. To create an understanding about the achievements and challenges in the health system and identify entry points to leverage the health systems to reinforce reaching end TB and AIDS targets.
2. To examine the country's potential of reaching end TB and AIDS targets.
3. To explore strategic options to accelerate the process using cost effective approaches, multisectoral involvement and strong community engagement.

Participants included key stakeholders, government officials, key population groups, NGO's and development partners and officials engaged in healthcare delivery.

## GF Country Team Visit

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Country Team visited FPA Sri Lanka and relevant Government stakeholders in October with regards to the current grant on HIV prevention .



## National Consultative Workshop on ending Tuberculosis and AIDS

The National Consultative Workshop on ending Tuberculosis and AIDS took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of October

2018 at the Galle Face Hotel and was organised by the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, in



Ms Nadika Fernandopulle (Project Manager - GFATM HIV Prevention Project and Deputy Director - HIV) and Mr Suchira Suranga (Senior Technical Advisor , Organizational Learning and Evaluation - IPPF-SARO) represented FPA Sri Lanka at this event.

***In conversation with FPA Sri Lanka's Director Advocacy, Ms. Sonali Gunasekera***



***You joined FPA Sri Lanka in January this year. What drew you to this new role?***

I was interested in working on issues of sexual reproductive health since I completed my degree in psychology long years ago. I began my career in family planning working for Planned Parenthood in the US in 1988 and I later worked for the Feminist Women's Health Centre assisting and counselling women on abortion. In Sri Lanka my career took a different turn and I worked on issues of gender rights and child protection. However I was very happy when I heard there was an opening at FPASL and I could get back to working on issues of SRHR. I am particularly interested in working on sexual rights because I strongly feel that a woman has a right to decide what happens to her body.

***What are the policy matters you are currently working on?***

Sri Lanka has been approved as an FP2020 country since August 2018. Sri Lanka joins the FP 2020 family and this means there is a lot of cross learning opportunities and resources that will help us to reach the

commitment made by the Sri Lanka Government.

Female Genital Mutilation is a new issue that has recently been exposed as an SRHR issue. FGM has been practiced in Sri Lanka for many years however there is very little information as to how serious the problem is in the country. FPASL has commissioned a study on the medical aspects of FGM and this would be the first study in Sri Lanka on this subject.

The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA) allows a child as young as 12 years to be married with the consent of the Quazi courts. FPASL is working with a group of feminist organisations to advocate for the changes to this law.

***What current policy issue especially motivates you to be an advocate?***

At the moment I am working on an advocacy initiative to change the abortion law in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has archaic abortion laws that date back to the British period. There has been many attempts to change this law but due to religious and cultural beliefs this has been an uphill task. Sri Lanka and Afghanistan in the South Asian region has some of the most punitive laws with regards to abortion. Nepal recently changed their abortion law and women in Nepal can choose to have an abortion up to 12 weeks with no questions asked. All the other Asian countries have some conditions attached to them but most women have access to safe and legal abortion. We are presently going to launch a publication with case studies and a literature review on abortion. We have organized a group of NGO's interested in safe abortion and formed a 'coalition for safe abortion in Sri Lanka'. We have begun a social

media campaign on safe abortion and next year we hope to work with the GBV Forum to promote this campaign to reach communities and the public that are difficult to reach.

***Has there been a policy win in your tenure so far?***

FP 2020 has been a policy change that has happened since I began work at FPASL.

***Who is your social justice hero?***

Martin Luther King

***What inspired you to work in this field and what keeps you motivated to remain committed to these issues?***

When I was working at an abortion clinic as a counsellor I met many young brave women who told me their stories. I learned that no woman makes the decision to have an abortion easily. I was also exposed to many 'right to life' people who stood outside the clinic to stop the women from having abortions. To me their arguments seem lame in comparison to the women's decision to have an abortion. I was very convinced that I wanted to work in this field and help women around the world to have safe and legal abortions without being intimidated and held to ransom by men. I felt strongly about a woman's right to choose and i feel that advocating for women's rights is advocating for human rights.

***What is your advice to a young aspiring advocate?***

Never give up even if you feel you are not moving forward because each step you take will be the building block for someone else to take the journey forward and finally win the battle.



# மாதவிடாய் முன் அழுத்தம்

(Premenstrual Syndrome - PMS)



பெண்களுக்கு மாதவிடாய் வருவதற்கு அண்ணளவாக ஒரு கிழமைக்கு முன், உடலின் ஹோமோன்களின் தாக்கம் காரணமாக ஏற்படும் உடல் ரீதியான மற்றும் மன ரீதியான மாற்றங்கள் மாதவிடாய் முன் அழுத்தம் (PMS) என அழைக்கப்படும். ஒவ்வொரு 4 மாதவிடாய் ஏற்படும் பெண்களில் 3 பேருக்கு மாதவிடாய் முன்னழுத்தம் ஏற்படுவதாக அமெரிக்க மையோ கிளினிக் கூறுகிறது.

PMSஇன் எல்லா அறிகுறிகளும் எல்லாப் பெண்களையும் பாதிப்பதில்லை. மேலும் மாதவிடாய் தொடங்கியதும் இவ்வறிகுறிகள் தானாகவே குறைந்து விடும். தசை வலி, மூட்டு வலி, தலைவலி, உடற்களைப்பு, வயிறு உப்புதல், உடல் எடை அதிகரிப்பு, மாற்பகம் வலித்தல், முகப்பரு தோன்றுதல் போன்ற PMS இன் உடல் ரீதியான அறிகுறிகள் பெண்கள் அறிந்ததே.

எனினும் உணர்ச்சி மற்றும் நடத்தை சம்பந்தமான அறிகுறிகளான மன உழைச்சல், மனப்பதற்றம், தனிமையாக உணர்வது, காரணமில்லாமல் அழுகை, அதிக கோபம், வாக்குவாதங்களில் ஈடுபடுதல், அதிக பசி அல்லது பசிபின்மை, தூக்கமின்மை, கவனக்

குறைவு, உடலுறவுக்கான விருப்பம் கூடக் குறைதல் (Changes in libido) போன்றவற்றை பெரும்பாலானோர் அறிந்திருப்பதில்லை. இன்னும் கூறினால் சிறுபான்மைப் பெண்களுக்கு மேற்கூறிய அறிகுறிகள் தங்கள் நாளாந்த வாழ்க்கைக்குப் பாதிப்பு விளைவிக்கும் அளவுக்கு மாதாமாதம் ஏற்படலாம். இந்நிலை Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) என அழைக்கப்படுகிறது.

நேர்மறையான வாழ்வியல் முறை மாற்றங்களை (positive lifestyle changes) கடைப்பிடிப்பதன் மூலம் கூடியளவு அறிகுறிகளுக்கு தீர்வு காணலாம். வயிறு நிரம்பும் அளவுக்கு உண்பதைத் தவிர்த்து, அடிக்கடி சிறிதளவு உணவு உட்கொள்ளல், உப்பு, எண்ணெய், கோப்பி போன்றவற்றைக் குறைப்பதன் மூலம் வயிறு உப்புதல், முகப்பரு, உடல் வீக்கம் போன்றவற்றைக் கட்டுப்படுத்தலாம். பொருத்தமான உடற்பயிற்சி, போதியளவு உறக்கம், சுவாசப் பயிற்சிகள், யோகா போன்றவை மனரீதியான அறிகுறிகளைக் குறைக்க உதவும். இவ்வாறான மாற்றங்களின் பின்னும் நாளாந்த வாழ்க்கைக்கு இடையூறு விளைவிக்கும் அளவிலான அறிகுறிகள் உள்ள பெண்கள் தயவு செய்து மகளிர் மருத்துவரை நாடுங்கள்.

சான்றாதாரம்  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/premenstrual-syndrome/symptoms-causes>  
<https://www.webmd.com/womn/guide/what-is-pms>

Dr. Zaneefar Careem Drahaman  
(MBBS, DCH)  
General Practitioner

**Nay, Sex Education -  
It is Reproductive  
Health Education**  
Lal Hewapathirana

Most media channels, especially the print medium is either scared or lethargic or backward to discuss one of the most important topics in today's context, viz, Sex Education, primarily due to the presence of the word SEX. As a result, unfortunately, an invariably valuable and essential part of a Comprehensive Life

Education to anybody - particularly to school-goers, and in general to the entire populace of young men and women is denied. As an alternative and more appropriately, why not we call such form of education Comprehensive Reproductive Health Education (CRHE), instead of Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE).

Health educators correctly point out that areas like conception and contraception, sexually transmitted infections, consent, sexual diversity (LGBT community), to name only a few, though there are many more, go missing with just Sex Education. But Reproductive Health Education (RHE) covers a gamut of other related information and knowledge as well, while emphasizing on Sexual Health. The World Health Organization says "Reproductive Health (RH) is a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality. Knowledge on RH helps to develop a positive and respectful approach to sexual relationships free of coercion, violence and discrimination."

Another factor, which comes to light, but should not be ignored, is shyness of the educators to use the word SEX. It has been pointed out that even at class room level, teachers skip the word sex by saying 'this' and 'that'. With the word 'Reproductive' in the vocabulary of teachers, they will be very happy to use it even several times in explaining issues. For example, instead of using the term male sexual organ, they could easily use the term male reproductive organ. Most of us believe that our culture is the taboo in this regard. It is, however, unfortunate that culture is thrown into the dustbin at other times. As an example, when using public transport, when waiting in a queue, or when leaving a young girl or even an infant at home with a friend or an old man, we see no respect for our culture at most times. Cultural values practised in our own Parliament or Provincial Councils or Pradeshiya Sabhas, are not exempted.

When we are talking about human sexuality, sexual health, sexual behavior, sexual relationships etc., we are in a much more amiable perspective to use the word 'reproductive' than the word SEX per se. Access to comprehensive and scientifically accurate RHE is a human right. Reproduction is a natural phenomenon in life, which occurs with or without any education on sex related behavior. But RHE helps people gain information, knowledge and skills in guiding them through proper processes in an important segment of life.

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is the world's renowned and best organised body promoting RHE in nearly 200 countries including Sri Lanka, where the Family Planning Association (FPA) is its local Chapter. As a matter of fact, though it is, sadly, much buried in the history of the country, the FPA is the pioneering organisation which disseminated messages on RH commencing from the year 1953. Its founder members and the subsequent generations carried information on RH from mother to mother, house to house and village to village, ceaselessly motivating people to make healthy decisions on Reproductive Health issues and behaviour.

Providing young people with information, knowledge and skills on RH has become the No.1 need in today's context in our country. Well equipped with those powers, young people will make healthy decisions about their RH behavior and relationships. Such decisions can impact their health and well being for the rest of their life. In the present day community setting, especially in the cities where hotels, restaurants, guest houses and rooms are plentifully awaiting to gulp them, empowering them with such needs will help to navigate their relationships properly and manage their own sexual health.



## MEASURE Evaluation Workshop

Mr. Amal Bandara, FPA Sri Lanka's M & E Assistant Director, participated at the MEASURE Evaluation workshop on "Impact Evaluation of Population, Health and Nutrition Programs" held from October 1<sup>st</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> in Bangkok, Thailand.

The workshop was sponsored by the Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR) at Mahidol University and MEASURE Evaluation, in collaboration with the Global Evaluation and Monitoring Network for Health (GEMNet-Health). Over 18 countries were represented at this event.

As a Non-Government organisation which conducts several programmes using local, international donor funds and internally generated funds, it is essential that FPA Sri Lanka be accountable and transparent in all its activities and objectives. Therefore, maintaining and developing a strong M & E culture is of vital importance.



## Workshop on Gender Transformative SRH Programming IPPF South Asia Region



### Objectives of the workshop:

- Build a common understanding on Gender Equality and Gender Transformative Programming in the context of IPPF and Member Associations(MA)
- Discuss and identify best practices for gender transformative programming in the region
- Develop MA specific Action Plan for Gender Transformative programming
- Introduce Gender Assessment Toolkit and plans for MA wide implementation

Mr Thushara Manoj ( Senior Manager Youth and CSE) conducted a presentation on the status of the LGBTIQ community in Sri Lanka and how FPASL plans to advocate for their rights.

Ms Avanti Arseculeratne's ( Advocacy Campaign Manager) presentation was on FPASL's #16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign titled 'Eliminating unsafe abortion' and strategies for 2019.

This meeting took place from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand.



# Civil Society Organizations Forum Meeting in Bangkok

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Asia-Pacific Regional Office, scheduled the Mid-term Review (MTR) of the 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development from November 26<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018. As a precursor to this meeting, a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Forum was organised in Bangkok, Thailand on November 24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> 2018, to chart the way forward and identify key priority areas to accelerate progress.

Through various panels and sessions spread over two days, the CSO Forum focused on the status of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Asia Pacific and its link with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while discussing the progress, best practices, policies, gaps and challenges. It identified and prioritised focus areas for analysis

and the recommendations it has for the MTR. The CSO steering committee will also ensure that Asia Pacific SRHR priorities are taken forward to the global level through ICPD@25 and High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019 to influence the government delegation and ensure greater participation of CSO's.

**Ms Sonali Gunasekera**

*(Director Advocacy) and*

**Ms Desiree Soysa**

*(Youth Technical Advisory Chairperson)*

*represented FPA Sri Lanka at this strategic event.*



## ARO Social Enterprise Workshop



The African Regional Office (ARO) conducted a workshop at The Monarch Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of November to work with select Anglophone and Francophone African Member Associations (MA's) to develop a social enterprise business model for laboratory, diagnostic and medical imaging services.

The workshop focused on business and financial tools for developing a suitable model for specialised services that would be financially and operationally sustainable. Rishikeshan Thiyagaraja, Manager - IPPF Social Enterprise Hub from FPA Sri Lanka was one of the non-regional invitees for the workshop and attended in the capacity of Central Office Social Enterprise Advisor and presented on IPPF's social enterprise plans for the future, drawing a parallel between the global and regional activities. The forum also provided an opportunity to network with senior members of the region's MA's and to provide clarity on the questions posed on global initiatives.

the ensuing year. FPA Sri Lanka's APB theme for 2019 is "The Quest to Serve", which reiterates our mission and commitment to serve the Sri Lankan people in the sphere of Sexual and Reproductive Health especially targeting the under-served, marginalised and stigmatised by society.



## The Regional Meeting on Annual Planning and Budgeting (APB)



Organised by the IPPF South Asia Regional Office, the above meeting took place from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. Member Association representatives from 8 countries were present.

### **The objectives were to:**

- Discuss and finalise the Annual Programme and Budget (APB) of

participating Member Associations (MAs) and Collaborative Partners (CP) of the South Asia Region

- Identify specific areas of technical support for MAs and CP for follow up action for final approval of plans and budgets
- Facilitate cross sharing and learning amongst MAs and CP

Director Finance, Ms Sureka Perera, Director Advocacy, Ms. Sonali Gunasekera and Head of Outreach, Mr. Rajapakse Vithanage attended this meeting.

The APB describes in detail the comprehensive work programme for

# “Learning Visit” to Bangkok

A 29 Member Team from the National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) and FPA Sri Lanka (Partners working under the Global Fund HIV Prevention Project in Sri Lanka) engaged in a “Learning Visit” to Bangkok from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of December.



The team attended sessions regarding PrEP trials in Thailand and Laos by Stephen Mills from FHI 360 (an organisation that implements HIV and AIDS prevention, care and treatment interventions and provides technical assistance to the Government of Thailand) and “HIV case management - Its role in antiretroviral therapy (ART) commencement and adherence” by the Red Cross.

Field visits to HIV clinics proved a vital source of information on innovative approaches utilised in the sphere of HIV care and service delivery in Bangkok. They were coordinated by the HIV Foundation Asia who work with key populations who are vulnerable to HIV. The Foundation prioritises working with sex workers and their clients, people who use drugs and their partners, men who have sex with men and transgender people across Asia and the Pacific.

**Visit to PULSE, a private testing clinic for HIV and PrEP**



**Visit to SWING, a community sex worker clinic for HIV testing and PrEP**



**Visit to the Red Cross HIV clinic.**



**Visit to the Government Public Health Clinic - ‘Family and Friends’. It provides free integrated services for children, youth and adults under one roof (TB, HIV, STI’s and all other health screening facilities)**



“ This was a very good learning experience as the team got to see best practices in the government, non-government, private and community organisation sector. The way community organisation’s like SWING work are remarkable. They are so empowered friendly, trustworthy, creative and innovative in service provision towards sex workers of all genders and cultures who are highly marginalised in the community. The visit was conducted by Mr. Scott Berry. Scott Berry & Associates and the HIV Foundation in Bangkok coordinated all the training sessions and 10 field visits. We thank Mr Berry and his staff, Mr. Nokorn Chimkong and the HIV Foundation staff and especially Global Fund for giving us this amazing opportunity to learn about innovative best practices which we can use in our Key Population led HIV programmes.

**Nadika Fernandopulle**

Project Manager

GFATM HIV Prevention Project and

Deputy Director - HIV





## World Mental Health Day 2018

World Mental Health Day is observed on 10<sup>th</sup> October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilising efforts in support of mental health. The theme for 2018 was “Young people and mental health in a changing world”.

Adolescence and the early years of adulthood are a time of life when many changes occur, for example changing schools, leaving home, and starting university or a new job. For many, these are exciting times. They can also be times of stress and apprehension however. In some cases, if not recognized and managed, these feelings can lead to mental illness. The expanding use of online technologies, while undoubtedly bringing many benefits, can also bring additional pressures, as connectivity to virtual networks at any time of the day and night grows *World Health Organization.*

FPA Sri Lanka believes that promoting and protecting adolescent health brings benefits not just to adolescents’ health, both in the short- and the long-term, but also to economies and society, with healthy young adults being able to make greater contributions to the

workforce, their families and communities and society as a whole.

Ms Hema Ranawake (Senior Manager, Alokaya Counselling Centre) was invited to speak at an event organized by Rathnawalie Balika Vidyalaya, Gampaha for their grade 9 and 10 students to mark World Mental Health Day. Subsequently she was also invited to speak on the topic of “Why Good Mental Health and Well-being is Essential for a Successful Life” for the grade 10 students of Yashodara Vidyalaya Colombo on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2018.



## International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

The 16 Days of Activism against GBV is a global campaign that runs from November 25<sup>th</sup> (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10<sup>th</sup> December (Human Rights Day). FPA Sri Lanka spearheaded an online campaign under the theme “Eliminating Unsafe Abortion” together with the support of local NGO’s that formed the Coalition for Safe Abortion which comprised Dabindu, Praja Diriya Padanama, The Grassrooted Trust, YANSL, The Feminist Catholic

## World Contraception Day/ National Family Planning Day (Sri Lanka)



Executive Director, Ms Thushara Agus attended the National Family Planning Day event which was organized by the Ministry of Health on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2018 at the Waters Edge Hotel. Deputy Minister of Health, Hon. Faizal Cassim, read and unveiled the FP2020 strategy of Sri Lanka at this event.

In her statement, in honour of the day she said

*“ We are pleased that the declaration of our country for FP 2020, the global initiative on family planning was read and unveiled today by the Deputy Minister of Health in Sri Lanka. The Family Planning Association celebrates this year’s National Family Planning day as a momentous occasion, on which the future of our country and development can be shaped by.”*

Network, Foundation for Innovative Social Development, Sri Lanka Development Journalists Forum, Voice of Humans, Women’s Education and Research Centre and Chrysalis.

The key objectives of this campaign were to:

- \* Increase community awareness on the negative impacts on the health and well-being of women and girls due to the violation of their bodily autonomy.

- \* Advocate for progressive policy and legal framework to ensure that all women and girls have access to comprehensive information and services on Sexual and Reproductive Health including post abortion care.
- \* Advocate to provide at a minimum: Legal abortion services for incidences of fetal deformities and pregnancies resulting from rape and incest.

Activities:

- \* Youth Workshop on the 25th of November, at which the medical, legal and socio-cultural aspects of abortion in the country were



discussed.

- \* Advocacy for SRHR—Updates, Challenges and Strategy Workshop on Human Rights Day (10th December)

Objectives were to:

1. Provide updates on current controversial and challenging issues facing Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights advocates.
2. Reach a shared understanding of priorities and strategies for FPASL and Sri Lanka.
3. To develop action plans for the future.

Sessions were carried out by Dr. Kapila Jayaratne ( Family Health Bureau, Ministry of Health - Programme Manager in charge of Maternal and Child Health ) and Dr Suchitra Dalvie ( Coordinator Asia Safe Abortion Partnership).

Participants included representatives from civil society and youth organisations, and medical academia. The full day workshop concluded with a strategy planning session on how to work towards decriminalizing the abortion law in Sri Lanka.



# International Aids Day 2018



It's estimated that over 3600 people in Sri Lanka are infected with HIV while, only around 1355 are under care by the end of 2017. HIV incidence is gradually increasing with the highest recorded in 2017.

This year, the National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) and partners (FPA Sri Lanka included) dedicated World AIDS Day to promote testing in order to End AIDS by 2025 with special emphasis on protecting youth.

Sri Lanka has fast tracked its goal to eliminate AIDS by 2025. As such, the NSACP is taking innovative measures to empower individuals of key populations and the general public to evaluate self-risk and negotiate stigma and discrimination, including self-stigma to access available HIV

and STI testing, treatment and care services.

A Media Conference was organised at the Health Promotion Bureau on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November to launch the campaign.

FPA Sri Lanka's Executive Director and National HIV Prevention Project (Funded by GFATM) Director Ms. Thushara Agus was one of the guest speakers at this event and spoke on FPASL's role in the National HIV Prevention Project. In her presentation, she explained who the identified key populations were, the Civil Society Partners, description of the service package offered which comprises awareness on HIV/STI's, distribution of educational materials, condom demonstrations and mobilising voluntary counselling and testing.



FPASL partnered with NSACP in a comprehensive online media campaign to promote awareness and encourage self- testing throughout the month of November.



Free HIV Testing Clinic at the Maradana Railway Station  
26<sup>th</sup> November 2018





The World Aids Day walk was organised by the Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka and saw the participation of over 3000 persons. It commenced at the Colombo Municipal Council premises and concluded at the BMICH in Colombo.



Ms Nadika Fernandopulle (GFATM Project Manager), Mr Scott Berry, (Consultant, GFATM New HIV Prevention Pilot Project) and

*FPA Sri Lanka's HIV focus began at the same time when Sri Lankan government decided to address HIV among vulnerable populations in the late 1980s and has gained significant experience working in extensive HIV focused projects supported by the World Bank, European Union and currently through the Global Fund.*

*The key populations (KPs), identified by the National HIV/STI Strategic Plan 2018-2022, are men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender (TG) persons, female sex workers (FSW), people who use drugs (PWUD) /people who inject drugs (PWID), beach boys (BBs) and prisoners.*

*We work closely with the National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) to deliver this as a sexual-health package in several districts using Peer Education as the tool.*

*The programme is conducted in 13 Districts where the highest numbers of "most at risk populations" are reported.*

Mr Junaid (Director Marketing FPASL)



FPASL Youth Technical Advisory Committee Members at the walk.



Project Manager - GFATM HIV Prevention Project and Deputy Director - HIV Ms. Nadika Fernandopulle addressed the large gathering at the BMICH.



The Social Marketing Programme stall provided free contraceptive samples and served as an awareness platform.

***FPA Sri Lanka through the support of the Global Fund is committed to continue efforts in supporting the Government of Sri Lanka in ensuring the right measures are taken to achieve an AIDS-free Sri Lanka.***

**Ongoing Activities include:**

- Sponsoring of numerous free HIV testing clinics islandwide.
- Community mobilisation: Forming and maintaining partnerships with most at risk populations such as female sex workers, men who have sex with men, drug users and beach boys and providing knowledge on HIV, sexually transmitted infections and the necessity of condom use.
- Community based HIV testing: Communities are encouraged to get tested for HIV and other STDs and to modify their behavior to reduce risk of acquiring HIV or STD's.

Some of the Service Delivery Points also conducted HIV/AIDS Awareness Programmes and provided HIV testing facilities.

They were at the Mangalagama Police Station, Ampara for Police and STF Officers organised by the Ampara SDP, at the Seethawaka Service Delivery Point for over 200 three wheel drivers with the participation of the area Police and BOI staff and at the Regi Hall, Kiran for 125 young people, organised by the Batticaloa Service Delivery Point.



→ Providing Treatment, Care and Support: The persons identified with HIV and STDs are trained to follow sound health and nutritional guidelines and are provided with incentives to maintain medication provided through the state health sector.

→ Comprehensive Sexuality Education programmes conducted addresses the stigma surrounding HIV and increases awareness of the fact that people living with HIV can live a normal and healthy life through early-diagnosis and treatment.

→ We have ensured wider reach and accessibility of condoms through a comprehensive distribution network of retail outlets, HIV/STD clinics and family planning clinics held throughout the year.



# උපදේශනය කරා යොමුවීමට සමාජය දැනුවත් කරමු

අප සියල්ලන්ගේම පෞද්ගලික හෝ වෘත්තීය ජීවිතය තුළ වරින් වර පැන නගින ගැටලු විවිධාකාර වේ. මේ ගැටලු හමුවේ පරාජය වීමක්, අභිමිච්ඡාවක්, හෝ එක තැන සිරවීමක් වැනි හැඟීමක් දැනෙන අවස්ථාවන්හි දී බොහෝදෙනෙකු ඒ සඳහා අවවාද, උපදෙස් සොයති. එහෙත් නිසියාකාර විසඳුම් නොලැබුණහොත් එම ගැටලු තවත් සංකීර්ණත්වයට පෙරළේ. ගැටලුවක් තුළ සිරවූ පුද්ගලයෙකුගේ චිත්තවේග කළමනාකරණය කරමින් ගැටලුව හඳුනාගැනීමටත් එයට නිවැරදි විසඳුම් සෙවීමට හා තීරණ ගැනීමටත්, පෞරුෂ වර්ධනයට මෙන්ම ආකල්ප වර්ධනය කරගනිමින් ජීවිතය සාර්ථකත්වය කරා මෙහෙයවීමටත් එලදැයි උපදේශන ක්‍රියාදාමයක් අවශ්‍යවේ. ලතින් භාෂාවේ “කන්සිලියම්” යන පදයෙන් ඉංග්‍රීසි භාෂාවේ “Counselling” යන පදය නිර්මාණය වී තිබේ. “මැදිහත්වීම, සාකච්ඡා කිරීම, සහයෝගය දීම, තොරතුරු සැපයීම, විසඳීම” යන අර්ථ සියල්ලම එහි ගැබ්වී ඇත.

උපදේශනය යනු උපදෙස්දීම යයි බොහෝදෙනෙකු සිතති. එහෙත් එය එසේ නොවේ. උපදෙස් යනු බොහෝ විට අණ දීමකි. එය පිලිගත යුතුය. පිලිපැදිය යුතුය. තවද උපදෙස් දෙනු ලබන්නාගේ දැනුම, අත්දැකීම් හා ආකල්ප මත එය රඳා පවතින බැවින් උපදෙස් පුද්ගලබද්ධ වේ.

උපදේශනයේදී මෙම තත්වය වෙනස් වේ. උපදේශන කියාවලිය පිලිගත් වෘත්තීය සුදුසුකම්ලත් උපදේශකවරයෙකුගේ මැදිහත්වීමෙන් සිදුකරනු ලබයි. පර්යේෂණාත්මකව හා විද්‍යාත්මකව ගොඩනගන ලද උපදේශන න්‍යායන් උපයෝගී කර ගනිමින් සේවාවලාභියාගේ ගැටලුව හඳුනා ගන්නා බැවින් පුද්ගලබද්ධතාවයෙන් තොරවේ. එම න්‍යායන්ට අදාළ ක්‍රමලේඛ භාවිතා කරමින් දැනට පවතින තත්වය හා යථාර්ථය පැහැදිලි කිරීම සමගින් විකල්ප පෙන්වාදීම සිදුකෙරේ. එනම් යම් ගැටලුවකට මුහුණ දුන් පුද්ගලයෙකු හට ඉන් මිදී තම ජීවිතය නැවත සාර්ථක කරගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය ශක්තිය තමා තුළින්ම ඇති කරගැනීමට සහයෝගය ලබා දීමට මැදිහත්වීමේ විද්‍යාත්මක ක්‍රියාදාමය උපදේශනයයි.

## තමාට උපදේශනය අවශ්‍ය බව පුද්ගලයෙකු දැනගන්නේ කෙසේද?

පහත සඳහන් තත්ත්වයන්ට කිසිවෙක් මුහුණපා ඇත්නම් උපදේශනය අවශ්‍ය කාලය එළඹ ඇත.

තමා මුහුණදී ඇති ගැටලුව නිසා,

- නින්දට, ආහාර පුරුදුවලට, අවධානය රඳවා ගැනීමට, අධ්‍යාපන කටයුතුවලට, පුද්ගල සබඳතාවලට අනවශ්‍ය ලෙස බලපෑම් ඇතිවීම

- ජීවිතයේ බලාපොරොත්තු වර්ගිත බවක් හෝ අසරණ බවක් දැනීම
- ඉක්මනින් කෝපයට පත් වීම හා නොරිස්සුම් සහගත වීම
- දෛනික වැඩ කටයුතු කිරීමට අලස බවක් ඇතිවීම හෝ උද්‍යෝගය අඩුවීම
- ජීවිතය පිලිබඳ පාලනය ගිලිහී ගිය බවක් හැඟීම හා තීරණ ගැනීමේ අපහසුතා ඇතිවීම
- නිරන්තර ශෝකයෙන් පසුවීම
- සියදිවි හානි කර ගැනීමේ සිතිවිලි පහළවීම

උපදේශනයට යොමු නොවූහොත් කුමක් සිදුවේද?

**“මැරියෙන් තැනූ බඳුනක් ඉර අවිවේ කොතෙක් වේලා තැබුවත් එය උඳුනක ලා පුළුස්සන තුරු පාවිච්චියට ගත හැකි නොවේ.”**

*Mildred Wite Stouven*

එලෙසම ගැටලුවක් ඇති පුද්ගලයා උපදේශනයට යොමු නොවූහොත් ඔහු ජීවිතය පීඩාවෙන් ගත කරන තවත් දහසක් දෙනා අතරින් එක් අයෙක් පමණක් වේ. ගැටලුවකින් දිගටම පීඩා විඳීමෙන් ක්ලමටය (Stress), කාංසාව (Anxiety), විෂාදය (Depression) වැනි මානසික රෝග හටගැනීමේ සම්භාවිතාවක් තිබේ. එවිට ඖෂධ ප්‍රතිකාර වලට පවා යොමුවීමට සිදුවේ. දිගුකාලීනව විඳවන චිත්තවේග නිසා කිසිවෙකු මිය නොයන මුත් බොහෝ දෙනෙකු දුක්ඛිත ජීවිත ගත කරති. මෙහිදී කණගාටුදායක තත්ත්වය නම් උපදේශනය නිබියදින් පුද්ගලයා ඒ සඳහා යොමු නොවීමයි. උපදේශනය පිලිබඳ දැනුවත් නොවීම හෝ වැරදි ආකල්ප මෙයට හේතු විය හැක. එබැවින් උපදේශනයට යොමුවීම සඳහා සමාජය දැනුවත් කළ යුතුය.

**හේමා රණවක**  
ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ කළමනාකාරිණී  
ආලෝකය උපදේශන මධ්‍යස්ථානය



## Development of a communication Strategy to rebrand Family Planning Services in Sri Lanka



The slogan/caption “Family Planning” at most times causes a negative reaction in Sri Lanka and creates lack of acceptance for those providing SRHR services and education in the country.

Therefore, the Family Health Bureau has undertaken the task of developing a communication strategy to reach the public in a more effective and attractive manner. A stakeholder meeting with a diverse group including religious leaders, politicians, youth, healthcare workers and civil society members was held at ‘The Mirage’ Wellawatta on the 10th of December 2018 in this regard. FPASL Executive Director Ms. Thushara Agus attended the meeting.



**Tharindu Nayanajith**  
Accounts Assistant

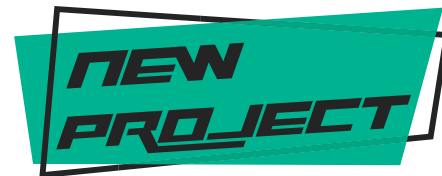
## National Training Course in Integrating Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in Times of Crises

The training course under the SPRINT III Project for 25 doctors from the Sri Lanka Army and Ministry of Health was held from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 at the Renuka City Hotel.

Key topics discussed were: Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Interventions in Crises, Coordination Mechanisms of SRH in Crises, Introduction to SGBV, IASC Guidelines on GBV Prevention in Humanitarian Settings, Medical Services for Rape Survivors, Referral Mechanisms for Rape Survivors, Handling Survivors of Sexual Violence, Maternal and Newborn Health in Crisis and Post-Crisis Situations, Family Planning in Crises, Clean Delivery and Immediate Newborn Care, Preventing HIV/STI's in Crises, Inclusion of LGBTIQ and Persons with Disabilities during Emergencies, Integrating MISP in Disaster Preparedness and Ministry of Health Activities to Address SRH in Emergencies.



Resource Persons were: Dr. Harischandra Yakandawala (Director Medical FPA Sri Lanka), Dr. Neththanjali Mapitigama (Director MCH), Dr. Asela Mendis (Department of Forensic Medicine - University of Colombo), Dr. Novil Wijesekara (CCP Disaster Preparedness and Response Unit- Ministry of Health), Dr. Hemantha Herath - (Director Disaster Preparedness and Response Unit - Ministry of Health) and Dr. Sapumal Dhanapala.



## Initiative for Empowered Action among Disabled Communities against Gender Based Violence

The pilot project is funded by the Women's Refugee Commission. In 2016, the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group established a Task Team to develop IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

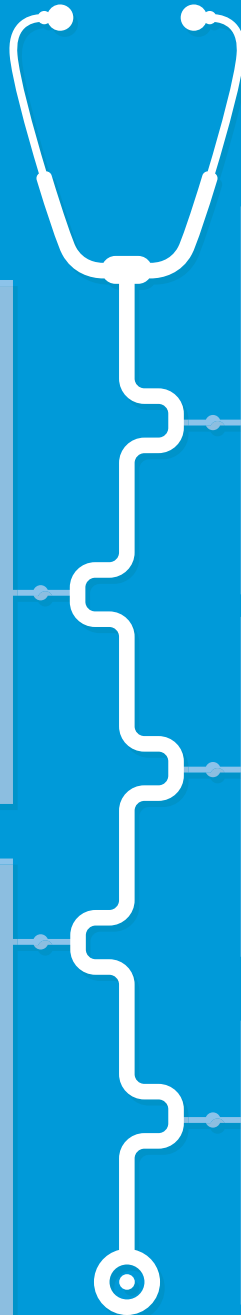
The development of IASC Disability Guidelines marked a significant step in advancing accountability for the inclusion of persons with disabilities within the inter-agency coordination mechanism.

Sri Lanka was selected as one country to pilot these guidelines on disability and FPA Sri Lanka took this opportunity to initiate a disability-inclusive humanitarian action together with providing an efficient sexual and reproductive health response during a humanitarian crisis. A training and action plan workshop was held from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of November with the participation of teams from the Disability Organisations Joint Front and FPA Sri Lanka.

Ms. Emma Pearce, Gender and Inclusion Consultant from WRC facilitated the workshop.



# Health Myths Busted



## **Myth: Every sperm is healthy and viable**

**Fact:** Most sperms never make it to the egg for a number of reasons. To be considered fertile, not even 100 percent of sperm need to be moving - as long as 40 percent are motile, you're fertile!

And of that 40 percent, not all make it to the egg. The shape has a lot of say in success. Having multiple heads, weirdly shaped tails, or missing parts can make sperm simply unfit for the journey through the female reproductive tract.

And even healthy sperm don't always make it through the competition. Sperm can pass right through the oviduct and end up in a woman's interstitial fluid surrounding the internal organs. That's right, sperm may literally float around in the body, never to fertilise.

## **MYTH: Getting an STI test is painful and embarrassing**

**Fact:** For both men and women, tests for many STIs are as quick and easy as giving a urine sample. Some tests might also involve having blood taken, a visual examination to look for signs of infection, or using a swab (like a smaller, soft and rounded cotton bud) on the genital area.

As for the embarrassment, remember that health professionals carry out sexual health check-ups every day – and they don't look at a STI test as a reflection on your behaviour, but as a responsible health choice.

## **Myth: It's easy to tell the symptoms of HIV**

**Fact:** The symptoms of HIV can differ from person-to-person and some people may not get any symptoms at all. Without treatment, the virus will get worse over time and damage your immune system. You also cannot tell by looking at someone if they have HIV. Many people don't show signs of any symptoms. And, for people living with HIV who are on effective treatment, they are just as likely to be as healthy as everyone else.

## **Myth: Pre-cum can't get you pregnant**

**Fact:** False! Mostly. Biologically speaking, pre-cum shouldn't contain sperm – but sperm left over in the urethra, the tube through which both urine and semen are ejected, can get mixed in. So even if you're using the pull-out method, there's a small chance that some sperm can get loose and cause a pregnancy.

## **MYTH: I can't get an STI from oral sex**

**Fact:** Although the risk of getting an STI through oral sex is generally less than from vaginal or anal sex, there is still a risk. The infections most commonly passed on through oral sex are herpes simplex, gonorrhoea and syphilis.

## National Law Students' Conference 2018

The National Law Students' Conference 2018 took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> of September at the Sri Lanka Law College and the Waters Edge Hotel, Battaramulla. NLSC 2018, a signature two day conference provided the opportunity to unite students enrolled at institutes providing tertiary legal education from across the country. Sessions and Panel discussions were based on pressing socio - economic and political issues that are interlinked with legality.



Ms Sonali Gunasekera, FPA Sri Lanka Director Advocacy, was invited to be a panelist for the session "The Modern Family : Exploring the effectivity of current adoption and abortion laws in Sri Lanka".

## Media Training



A Media training was organised by the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission and Mr Thushara Manoj, FPA Sri Lanka's Senior Manager - CSE and Youth delivered a session on Media Ethics, where reporting with an unbiased perspective with regards to LGBTIQ persons was discussed. Ethical, non-judgmental journalism helps eradicate stigma and discrimination faced by this community.





# FPA Sri Lanka Staff and Family Day Out

**TEAMWORK**  
*Makes The*  
**DREAM WORK!**  
**FPA Sri Lanka**  
**Staff & Family**  
**Day Out 2018**

*“Team Work makes the Dream Work” was the theme of the FPA get-together held at Villa Ocean View in Wadduwa on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2018.*

The objective of this event was to celebrate a year of notable successes and achievement, to encourage group interaction and promote team spirit. As our dynamic Executive Director, Ms. Thushara Agus Ranasinghe aptly stated in her opening remarks “A happy family and home enables a productive employee”. It was also a day to recognise the support rendered by the family of each member of staff.





We want to hear your views and suggestions!  
Please write to:

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## Message from the Executive Director Thushara Ranasinghe Agus



It is with great satisfaction that I reflect on 2018. It will stand out in my working life as one that was productive and satisfying. FPA Sri Lanka further strengthened its position during the year by taking leadership for community in family planning through the global FP 2020 initiative. The Family Health Bureau, the lead agency for family planning appointed FPA Sri Lanka to take the role of the Focal Point for community in the month of August this year.

FPA Sri Lanka also affirmed its position as the Principal Recipient for community interventions in the National HIV Prevention Project funded by The Global Fund for 2019 - 2021. All these came as a result of us proving ourselves worthy of holding leadership in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the country.  
**Kudos to the teams!**

We look forward to the year ahead during which we will consolidate our strengths and resources to achieve all priority objectives of our country in relation to SRHR. I also congratulate the Communication Team who produced this quarterly Newsletter on time, conveying important messages to all our stakeholders.

*I extend compliments of the season and best wishes for the New Year to all!*