



Dr Ruchitha Perera
The Executive Director

Welcome to the latest 'Bulletin' of The Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka. As we delve into the theme of "Boldly Beyond Boundaries," we embark on a journey of exploration, empowerment, and enlightenment.

In a world where borders, both physical and metaphorical, often dictate our limitations, it is imperative to challenge

these boundaries and venture beyond them. The essence of boldness lies in our ability to transcend limitations, break barriers, and embrace new horizons.

At FPA Sri Lanka, we are committed to promoting reproductive health rights, justice, gender equality, and sexual well-being. Our mission extends far beyond conventional constraints as we strive to empower individuals and communities to make informed choices about their bodies and their futures. Through our comprehensive range of services, advocacy efforts, and educational initiatives, we aim to break down societal taboos and stigmas surrounding reproductive health and empower individuals to take control of their lives.

Boldness manifests itself in many forms - from challenging societal norms to advocating for policy change, from providing accessible healthcare services to fostering inclusive environments where everyone's voice is heard. It is about daring to dream big, pushing boundaries, and creating a world where every individual can thrive.

In this edition and the rest for 2024, you will find inspiring stories of individuals who have boldly pursued their passions, overcome obstacles, and made meaningful contributions to their communities. From groundbreaking research to innovative programmes, we celebrate the courage and resilience of those who are pushing the boundaries of possibility.

As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, let us remember that true progress lies in our collective ability to embrace diversity, foster inclusivity, and champion the rights of all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.

I encourage you to explore this newsletter with an open mind and a bold spirit. May it inspire you to break free from limitations, challenge the status quo, and embark on your own journey of boldness beyond boundaries.

Together, let us continue to strive for a future where every individual has the freedom and opportunity to live their best lives.

"Axe the Period Tax" - FPA Sri Lanka Takes Action Against Period Poverty



FPA hosted a successful policy discussion named "Axe the Period Tax" at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) on March 05, 2024. The event focused on pushing for policy reforms to remove all taxes on sanitary products, thereby making them more accessible and affordable to menstruators in the country.

Period poverty is an issue that affects over half of the country's population but often goes unnoticed in policy discussions.

Sri Lanka's period poverty rate is 50% which translates to 50% of households with women of menstruating age not spending any amount of money on sanitary napkins. Although recent research is lacking, the aftermath of the economic crisis is expected to have exacerbated this issue significantly. Period poverty poses a range of challenges, from physical and mental health issues to school absenteeism, gender-based violence, and social isolation.

Menstruation is not a choice but a biological reality, which makes menstrual hygiene products necessities. Taxation on these essentials makes them unaffordable for many, particularly low-income families. Therefore, access to menstrual hygiene products is an essential human need that must be addressed.

The event commenced with an overview of the existing taxes related to period products in Sri Lanka by the Advocata Institute. It underscored that with the introduction of the new VAT amendment in late 2023, previously

exempted sanitary napkins were no longer exempted, and at present, the tax rate is at 51.07%. This oversight suggests a lack of coordination and understanding among those responsible for drafting the new act on a critical policy contributing to women's well-being which raises concerns about the government's ability to effectively implement and sustain policy changes, and the lack of mechanisms to hold the government accountable for abrupt policy shifts.

In 2021, a packet of sanitary napkins containing 10 pieces was priced at LKR 140.6. Presently, the same product costs LKR 270, marking a staggering increase of 92%. This substantial price increase sheds light on the exacerbation of period poverty.

Following the presentation, a panel discussion was held with three panellists: Member of Parliament Dr. Harsha De Silva, Dr. Ranjith Batuwanthudawe - Director of the Health Promotion Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Sarah Soysa - National Programme Analyst, UNFPA. The discussion was moderated by Iromi Perera, Director - Colombo Urban Lab.

Addressing the event, MP Dr Harsha de Silva underscored the importance of the complete removal of period taxes, as the tax revenue generated from taxes on period products is only 0.0002%. He further emphasized the options the government is exploring to provide free menstrual pads to school girls.

Sarah Soysa mentioned the need to take into consideration the impact period poverty has on the country's labour force to push for the complete removal of period taxes.

Dr. Ranjith highlighted the need for more ministries other than the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to get involved in the discussions pertaining to menstruation and period poverty. He further emphasized the need for more data to use for policy changes and the need for more involvement from civil society.

Following the successful completion of the event, FPA is committed to continuing to raise awareness about period poverty and working to ensure that everyone has access to the menstrual hygiene products and education they need.

[Click to view the discussion](#)

[Click to read the policy brief](#)

['Axe the Period Tax' garnered significant media coverage \(Click to view TV & Press\)](#)



Thathsarani Siriwardana, Research Analyst at the Advocata Institute



CAAPP Project Team

Saying 'No' to Period Poverty begins with saying 'Yes' to Education.



The programme was conducted by Dr. Asanthi Balapitiya and Dr. Ganga Tennakoon, Head of the Health Communications Unit at the Health Promotion Bureau (HPB) of the Ministry of Health. Dr. Rashmira Balasuriya, the CAAPP Project's Technical Advisor, shared information on all available menstrual hygiene products.

The CAAPP project is implemented by the French Embassy in partnership with FPA Sri Lanka and works towards promoting the inclusion and empowerment of menstruators in Sri Lanka.

As part of the Collective Action Against Period Poverty (CAAPP) project, the team organized a Training of Trainers programme (TOT) for public healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, and midwives) from the Central and North Western Provinces who will conduct sessions for the chosen 13 NGOs under the CAAPP project, to be implemented within the local communities.

This two-year project aims to make a significant difference in the lives of all menstruating people by improving menstrual health and hygiene, ending menstrual stigma and discrimination, realizing human rights to water and sanitation, addressing the lack of adequate WASH facilities in schools, and changing societal perceptions of menstruation and womanhood.



Monitoring and Evaluation is an integral part of monitoring project activities at FPA to assess project implementation, performance and impact. FPA's M&E team visited partner NGOs and schools receiving menstrual health education via The CAAPP Project in the Northern Province.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education : Knowledge that can protect your life!

FPA Sri Lanka's Youth Services Committee organized its first-ever Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) programme for schools, which took place at Somadevi Balika Vidyalaya in Kotikawaththa in March.

In this insightful session, 250 students (ages 12 to 17) and staff members participated. Delving into crucial subjects such as menstruation and menstrual hygiene, pregnancy, gender dynamics, gender-based violence, online gender-based violence, and support networks, the session garnered substantial interest and engagement.



IPPF SE Hub Annual Meeting and Strategy Revisit 2024



The Social Enterprise Acceleration Programme (SEAP) has been managed and overseen by the IPPF Secretariat and the Social Enterprise Hub at FPA Sri Lanka for the past six years.

The delegation who attended the annual conference included the Social Enterprise Hub team, the IPPF DLT (Director's Leadership Team) sponsor, Secretariat personnel, representatives from three IPPF Associations (Kenya, Palestine, and Trinidad and Tobago), and a consultant team that is helping to facilitate the formation of the new SE strategy.

The Federation's latest strategy 2023 - 2028, 'Come Together,' encourages the Associations to create financially viable social enterprises. This year, the delegation who attended will work as a 'working group' to drive and promote this among all IPPF regions.

The three-day conference was a crucial component of the social enterprise programme since it provided the participants with a chance to brainstorm and decide on future activities, assess challenges across different regions and explore potential solutions and thereby identify key

performance indicators (KPIs), create a road map, and make sure a system is in place for tracking performance and impact in the coming years.

The sessions on days 1 and 2 enabled open and candid discussions on gaps and challenges, the Hub's role and how it can be further strengthened, and the Secretariat's expectations, which will inform and support the strategy formulation process.

In line with last year's workplan and approach, this year too, the Hub will collaborate with nine Member Associations (MAs) that have demonstrated a strong dedication and the potential to growing their social enterprises.

The MA representation at the meeting provided an opportunity to build a closer rapport with the teams, clarify concerns and understand further opportunities to collaborate. The new strategy that would be implemented is expected to integrate the importance of social entrepreneurship into the IPPF DNA, allowing interested MAs to gradually transition their sources of revenue creation into sustainable social enterprises.



After Meeting Activities

To gain more information about the Association's major initiatives, including the Social Marketing Programme that promotes SRH products, the Medical and Outreach Unit that manages community clinics, FPA's advocacy efforts with the government and the monitoring and Evaluation activities, members of the delegation met with the Executive Director, Senior Management team, and Unit representatives.

Peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing are encouraged by IPPF in order to enhance Member Associations' capacities. FPA is grateful for the chance to contribute knowledge and perspective to this endeavour.



FPA at Medicare 2024 - National Healthcare Exhibition' Organized Under the Patronage of the Ministry of Health Sri Lanka



Whilst increasing the visibility of the products and services offered by FPA Sri Lanka to the community, the stall managed by the Sales and Marketing Programme (SMP) served as an awareness platform through which those who visited the stall had the opportunity to obtain information on contraceptives, lubricants and Sexual and Reproductive Health.

Having a positive state of sexual well-being generally means you will benefit from improved overall well-being and happiness, both mentally and physically. Sexual well-being is a factor in how we feel within ourselves day-to-day, as well as how connected we feel to our partner(s).

You can't take good care of yourself if you don't take care of your sexual and reproductive health. This means getting to know your body and getting regular check-ups, as well as addressing any other issues that might pop up.

An engaging and informative session on 'Sexual well-being' was led by Dr. Lasantha Malawige, Specialist in Sexual Medicine, Dr Sathya U. Sendanayaka, Registrar Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Castle Street Hospital for women and Dr. Amal Harsha at 'Medicare'.



In conversation with
Dr. Ruchitha Perera
 Executive Director

What made you consider taking the opportunity to enter the reproductive health field, which is a first for you?

I have always had a passion for public health. This role gives me an opportunity to work in reproductive health, rights and justice. It also drives my deep-seated passion for public health and desire to make a tangible difference to the health and well-being of individuals and communities. I have been a silent advocate of gender equality, and reproductive health intersects closely with equality, gender and women’s rights and empowerment.

I also believe that I have this drive to desire to address global challenges that arise as a result of reproductive health, which I believe is a critical component of global development and addressing key challenges, such as maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS prevention, population growth, and that’s a reason what led me to enter the reproductive health field.

It also affords the opportunity for innovation, research, technology, and service delivery. All of which are close to my heart. It also allows me to practice some of these trends and concepts. Also, commitment to reproductive rights is a fundamental human right, and it gives me great pleasure and motivation to be in this space and be a strong advocate for promoting and protecting these rights.

What have been some inspiring moments in your career so far?

I believe that making a positive impact through implementing projects, mentoring colleagues, and helping clients achieve their goals has helped

and driven me to achieve client goals and create a tangible and positive impact.

I also had the opportunity and privilege of empowering others through the work I do. Seeing others thrive because of the support, guidance and mentorship I have provided can be profoundly inspiring. These moments underscore the importance of leadership, mentoring and creating opportunities for others to grow and excel. Also, creating meaningful connections and building relationships with clients, colleagues, volunteers, donors, and collaborators have been sources of inspiration. These connections foster a sense of belonging, purpose, and community, enriching both my professional and personal life.

You have decades of experience in corporate management, education, business consulting and training. How can this knowledge inform your role in driving FPA forward?

Whatever I have done in the past, corporate management, consulting, and training will help me drive the strategic plans/planning. I can contribute to developing strategic plans that align with FPA's mission and objectives, drawing on my experience.

This experience has also equipped me with certain leadership skills to inspire and motivate teams and foster a culture of innovation. I have a good understanding of financial management, which provides insights into financial planning, budgeting, and resource planning. It also helps ensure that FPA operates efficiently and sustainably while maximising the impact of our programmes and initiatives.

I can drive partnerships and partnership development, drawing upon my experience in business consulting. I can help forge strategic partnerships and

collaborations with other organizations and government stakeholders and amplify FPA’s reach.

My background in education and training enables me to design and deliver capacity-building programmes for FPA staff, volunteers, and partners, equipping them with knowledge, skills, and tools for the effective implementation of reproductive health programmes.

FPA has a vibrant social marketing programme (SMP). Given your background in marketing, what are your professional observances of the programme and ideas you would like to initiate?

Overall, social marketing programmes play a vital role in advancing family planning goals, are very progressive, and also increase access to contraceptives, promoting informed decision-making and empowering individuals to take charge of their reproductive health.



We have one of the most unique, fascinating, and exciting social enterprise programmes that have increased access to various contraceptive products and services. We have also reached underserved and hard-to-reach communities by leveraging existing commercial distribution channels and networks. The social marketing initiatives have helped us to expand availability, which is a great thing.

Furthermore, it has also helped with the affordability factor for our clients. Social marketing programmes have often subsidised the cost of contraceptives, making them more affordable for low-income individuals and families who face financial barriers to accessing family planning services. This affordability will significantly increase the uptake and usage of contraceptives.

It also has driven the choice and variety. Our SMP has a wide range of contraceptive options, allowing individuals to choose methods based on their needs, preferences, and lifestyle. Our SMP is also driving education and awareness as well. It also drives/influences behaviour change by promoting the adoption of healthy and responsible reproductive

behaviours, and the sustainability impact. It helps us as a member association to be sustainable instead of always being reliant on donor funding. This is a great advantage of this programme.

What are the key priorities for FPA in 2024?

Expanding access to reproductive health services, is one. FPA will prioritise efforts to ensure that comprehensive reproductive health services, including contraception, maternal healthcare, STI prevention and treatment, are accessible to all individuals, especially marginalised communities.

FPA can focus on advocating policies that support reproductive rights, gender equality, and access to family planning services.

Promoting Comprehensive Sexuality Education is something that I am really keen to explore. Strengthening health systems and addressing gender-based violence (GBV) given the intersection between reproductive health and GBV. FPA will prioritize initiatives aimed at preventing and responding to GBV, including providing support services to survivors.

I would also like to promote equity and inclusion, prioritise efforts to address disparities in access to reproductive health services based on factors such as income, geography, ethnicity, and disability, and ensure everyone has the opportunity to realise reproductive rights.

What words of encouragement or inspiration can you share with the staff and membership of FPA Sri Lanka?

As members of the FPA family, each of you plays a vital role in our shared mission to promote reproductive health, family planning, and gender equality. The dedicated passion and unwavering commitment to our cause are what drive us forward. It is during the toughest of times that our collective spirits shine the brightest and draw inspiration from the incredible work we do every day. Let's embrace each challenge as an opportunity for growth, innovation, and impact.

I would like to thank all the staff for their tireless efforts, boundless enthusiasm, and unwavering belief in our mission. Together, we will continue to make a difference and create a brighter, healthier future for all.

Sexual health is not a taboo, it's a priority!

Anantara Kalutara Resort is leading the way in enhancing sexual health education among staff. FPA's SRH Institute carried out a workshop aimed at raising awareness of STIs and contraception.

Early detection and prevention play a huge role in overall health. Health and safety are important because it protects employees and visitors to the place of business,





Outreach Unit Activities

Beating Cervical Cancer is a Team Effort



Parents play an essential role in teaching their kids, and mothers educating daughters about cervical cancer prevention are no different. The Seethawaka Service Delivery Point conducted an informative session at Ukwatta Maternal and Child Clinic. It's all about empowering moms to become health teachers.

Mobile Clinics at Garment Factories



At Amsafe Bridport (Pvt) Ltd & Brandix located at the Wathupitiwala Export Processing Zone.

Such clinics held at the place of work enable easy and convenient access to health and counselling services.



Quality Healthcare Starts with Qualified Healthcare Providers
At FPA, we take this responsibility seriously. That's why a comprehensive 3-day training programme for healthcare workers working at our service delivery points was carried out at the start of the year. The goal? To give our community the excellent healthcare services it deserves. This event took place at the Chinthana Training Centre in Nainamadama.

Equipped with updated knowledge and techniques, our staff stands ready to provide exceptional care for our community.

Building Capacity of Health Workers!



A Public Health Midwife - PHM is the key healthcare provider at the domiciliary level in the Sri Lankan healthcare system. These dedicated women are not just midwives; they're the key healthcare providers at a household level, ensuring the well-being of women and children.

FPA's Service Delivery Points conducted multiple capacity-building workshops for PHMs in and out of Colombo this quarter. Some of the key topics addressed were:

- * Family planning and current trends
- * Sexual and reproductive health issues and sexual behaviour
- * Pregnancy Danger Signals
- * Gender Based violence, prevention, referrals and management
- * Mental Health and Psychosocial support

Capacity building and information sharing on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for community health workers is a cornerstone of the required comprehensive, client-centred, quality approach.

An informed healthcare provider makes all the difference



Stepping up their skills and knowledge in sexual hygiene/infection control, gender-based violence prevention, referrals, management and mental health and psychosocial support, healthcare providers at Valaichenai's Base Hospital completed a day of capacity-building training conducted by the Batticaloa Service Delivery Point.

An informed woman is an empowered woman!

At the heart of female empowerment lies sexual and reproductive health awareness, something we strive to spread across every community. Our recent effort led us to conduct a crucial awareness session for the MOH office's female staff in Koralaipattu, thanks to our Batticaloa Service Delivery Point.

Education fuels transformation in healthcare!

Nurses need to gain the knowledge and hone the skills required to deliver evidence-based counselling and services to those who come to receive care.

Collectively, nurses can use their unique combination of knowledge and skills to make a positive impact on sexual and reproductive outcomes. Nurses have the capacity and opportunity to disseminate information about sexual and reproductive health to those in communities, schools, public health clinics, and other care settings.



Workshop at Sujatha Nursing School

North meets South in Kilinochchi 'Ignite' - Youth Festival!

Coinciding with the visit of UNFPA Regional Director, Mr Pio Smith, an exciting youth Festival was organized on the 28th of February to bring together youth from the North and South. Partnering with UNFPA Sri Lanka in this unique event were FPA Sri Lanka and the Alliance Development Trust (ADT).

The aim of 'Ignite' was to foster social cohesion and encourage dialogue among diverse young people while creating awareness of myths and misconceptions around sexual and reproductive health and gender norms.

The lineup of events for the day included a puppet show addressing taboos surrounding menarche, a movie screening, interactive games, lively, thought-provoking discussions and much more. [Click to view IGNITE highlights.](#)



FPA facilitated the distribution of Maternity and Dignity kits in Jaffna later in the day.



Dignity Kits distribution at Pedro Estate – Nuwara Eliya.

Maternity and Dignity Kits: A beacon of hope in challenging times.

Dignity Kits and Maternity Kits were distributed via all our Service Delivery Points.



At the Koggala Export Processing Zone

We believe in ensuring the basic hygiene needs of all women and girls.

The maternity kits contain essential hygiene and sanitary items for pregnant mothers, tailored to their specific needs. With these kits, we aim to support women in their pregnancy journey, ensuring they are comfortable and their physical and psychological health is taken care of.

Dignity kits contain items explicitly tailored towards the local needs of women and girls of reproductive age.

A leaflet with contact information for obtaining sexual and reproductive healthcare and information on how to get in touch with FPA Service Delivery Points for assistance in cases of gender-based violence is included with the kits.

Youth Camps - Education, health and well-being go hand in hand!

The power of youth can transform communities!

FPA youth camps are designed with the goal of ensuring young people have access to age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education through dialogue and interactions while facilitating their leadership skills to ensure that every young person's potential is fulfilled.

With the support of UNFPA Sri Lanka, FPA conduct youth camps through all our Service Delivery Points.

These camps are designed to engage young people in skills training on Sexual and Reproductive Health, bodily autonomy, gender-based violence and related information and services while dispelling SRH myths and misconceptions.

An interactive approach through group activities, dramas and games create an environment where youth can freely engage in conversations surrounding sexual and reproductive health and feel comfortable seeking essential SRH services when needed.

Youth camp highlights: [Click to view.](#)
Testimonials: [Click to view.](#)



At Rajarata University



In Nuwara Eliya.



Mass Communication undergraduates of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences - University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Parental knowledge and communication with their adolescents on SRH is a must!



The attitude of parents and teachers towards adolescents learning about sexual and reproductive health matters.

With this in mind, an awareness session was held at Nawagaththegama Maha Vidyalaya in the Puttalam district for teachers and parents highlighting the value of sexual and reproductive health knowledge for the health and well-being of children.

Disability-inclusive dignity kit meets the hygiene needs of women and girls living with disabilities

Dignity Kits provide women and girls with a range of essential hygiene and sanitation items, including clothing, sanitary pads and soap to ensure that they maintain their dignity.

FPA Sri Lanka, with the support of UNFPA and DFAT, is committed to advocating and working towards ensuring that persons with disabilities everywhere have knowledge and understanding and are able to exercise their rights to access sexual and reproductive health information, education and services and to live free of violence and discrimination.

Dignity kits for disabled persons belonging to the Rathgama and Madampagama Divisional Secretariat areas (Galle District) were distributed. An SRH awareness programme was also conducted.



High-risk pregnancy: Know what to expect



For mothers-to-be, a little awareness can make a world of difference. Women with high-risk pregnancies are among the most vulnerable groups that need accurate information and access to healthcare.

Sometimes a high-risk pregnancy is the result of a medical condition present before pregnancy. In other cases, a medical condition that develops during pregnancy for either you or your baby causes a pregnancy to become high risk.

Women's awareness of obstetric danger signs and early seeking of medical care is the first intervention in the reduction of maternal deaths.

An awareness programme for a pregnant mothers was held at the Ranpokunugama Community Hall by the Wathupitiwala Service Delivery Point.

SPRINT IV, steering our way to safer futures!

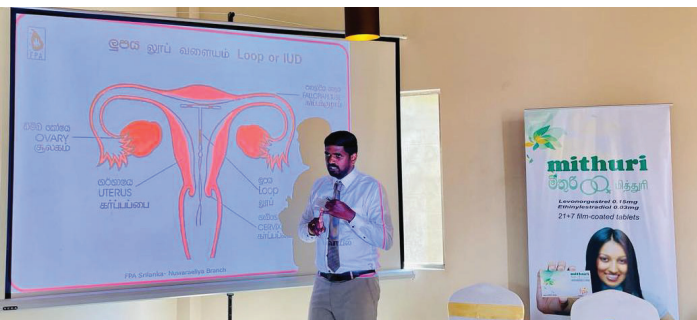


The inaugural Steering Committee meeting took place in February with the meeting of key stakeholders, all geared towards mitigating disaster impacts and fostering safety.

These dedicated agents hailed from both governmental and non-governmental organizations invested in disaster response, the MoH, Disaster Management Centre, National Disaster Relief Services Centre, the Family Health Bureau and The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to name a few.

The SPRINT Project provides one of the most important aspects of humanitarian assistance that is often forgotten when disaster and conflicts strike: access to essential life-saving sexual and reproductive health services.

Staying ahead of the curve in SRH!



Thanks to a highly informative meeting on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and contraceptives, pharmacy owners across Jaffna have updated their understanding of these critical topics. With special appreciation to P. Sivakumar, Head of FPA's Nuwara Eliya Service Delivery Point, for conducting the training programme. Trained pharmacy owners are part of the community that cares for your health.

Shifting into high gear with our technical skills training!



Through the comprehensive Automobile Training Programme held at the FPA Head Office, we are ensuring that our driving staff and team members are always in top gear. Boosting their technical prowess, this programme will help ensure safety and improve competence on the road. The training was conducted by Manjula Perera, Branch Manager at Auto Miraj

ELEVATE | Career Guidance and University Expo at the BMICH!



Under the SRH and HIV Integration project funded by IPPF, the National STD/AIDs Control Programme and FPA Sri Lanka partnered with the Career Guidance and University Expo Event "ELEVATE" which took place in January. It showcased renowned speakers, experts and educational institutes and was organized by the Old Boys Association of S. Thomas' College.

Dr Amila Chandrasiri, Consultant Community Physician, delivered a session titled ' Make Friends, Feel Love and Be Safe in this AI World'.

FPA's Happy Life Contact Centre had a stall to provide information, counselling and health services to the many youth that attended the event.



Turning dreams into achievable goals at Child Action Lanka - That's the Alokaya way!



Setting goals is an essential aspect of every student's journey because as the world becomes more competitive, having a clear vision and a well-defined path becomes crucial for students to succeed in their academic and personal lives.

Setting goals helps students focus on their priorities, motivates them to work harder, and provides a roadmap for their success by boosting their self-confidence, and self-motivation, and promoting learner autonomy. By prioritizing goals and managing time effectively, students can strike a balance between academics, extracurriculars, and personal life, leading to overall well-being.

The Alokaya Counselling Centre made the students aware of the importance of setting SMART goals, the process of setting goals, how to work on achieving them, and useful tips and tricks to follow up.

Well-woman Clinic at the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation conducted by FPA's Centre of Family Health



Well-woman visits are a critical touchpoint where we can focus specifically on health and wellness. These are an important opportunity to address health needs or concerns with your doctor, including pelvic pain, irregular periods, contraceptive needs, sexual health concerns and many other factors that contribute to your overall health.

It is recommended that every woman attends a well-woman clinic every year. The screenings and services provided can help you get the answers needed to improve health and well-being and identify problems early.

FPA provides technical input at the NSACP Annual Conference to improve community health workers' capacity

The National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) plays a pivotal role in STD/HIV prevention among key populations in the country, with the support of NGOs and CBOs. Reaching target populations and improving client base is no easy task for outreach workers and they need innovative mechanisms to do so.

Online outreach and engagement are becoming an increasingly necessary tool for healthcare organizations to reach the communities they serve.

FPA Sri Lanka's Deputy Director of Brands, Amila Gunasekara, was invited to share knowledge and insight on the development and adaptation of innovative strategies for online community engagement, facilitating access to information, outreach, education, and connection to care and prevention resources.

FPA Sri Lanka has a strong online presence and uses social media and other innovative mechanisms to promote contraceptive products and raise awareness of the benefits of their use.

The knowledge shared will further strengthen NSACP's activities towards strengthening Key Population interventions.



Empowering Communities for Change!

The Community - Led Monitoring Workshop, convened by Dr. Ajith Karawita, National Consultant, and Delusha Perera, Coordinator of the SKPA 2 Community - Led Monitoring Programme, heralded a new era of grassroots engagement. Focused on scaling up efforts in the Western, Southern & Sabaragamuwa provinces, FPA welcomed Community - Based Organizations and Civil Society members to delve into the intricacies of Community - Led Monitoring.

Key objectives explored during the workshop:

- * Understanding CLM (Community-Led Monitoring)
- * Delving into findings from the pilot CLM project
- * Identifying priorities for HIV service improvement
- * Discussing the pivotal roles of CSOs and government healthcare clinics in enhancing HIV services.

Community-led monitoring is an ongoing process in which service users or local communities gather, analyze, and use information to support quality improvement of HIV services and advocacy efforts to increase uptake of and retention in HIV and related health services and, ultimately, to improve health outcomes for key populations.

Together, we aim to catalyze meaningful change and foster community-driven accountability.



Capacity-building workshops on 'Harm Reduction for Amphetamine-type Stimulants (ATS) Users'



The workshops conducted by Mainline Foundation - Netherlands and co-presented by National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) and Health Equity Matters were designed to provide information, insight, support, and resources for the doctors of the NSACP and outreach staff of the National HIV Prevention Programme to address and reduce the harm associated with ATS use.

During this workshop, participants had the opportunity to engage in open discussions and gained valuable insights from the regional trainers.

Capacity-building workshops on PrEP, HIV Self Testing and Virtual Interventions



The workshops on PrEP, HIVST and Virtual Interventions were designed with clear objectives, aimed at empowering the doctors of the National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) and outreach staff of the National HIV Prevention Programme with the most current knowledge and practices.

Central to the workshop's mission was to ensure they gained knowledge of the latest national guidelines concerning HIV Self Testing - HIVST and PrEP, enabling them to optimize service accessibility for their clients. The facilitating technical leads also discussed a communication and social media strategy to enhance PrEP and HIVST outreach to key populations, ensuring effective messaging to promote them.



Social Media Campaigns

January - Cervical Cancer Awareness month

Ignorance is NOT bliss when it comes to cervical cancer!

Awareness, regular check-ups and a healthy lifestyle can help prevent cervical cancer and save countless lives. During the month of January, informative posters and videos were shared to encourage vaccination and screening.

[Click to View](#)



February - Relationships, Consent & Contraception

In every relationship, it's important to consider how we treat one another. When relationships are healthy, they promote emotional and social wellness. In the month of February we shared noteworthy tips on how to maintain a healthy relationship and the importance of seeking help through relationship counselling when needed.



March - International Women's Day

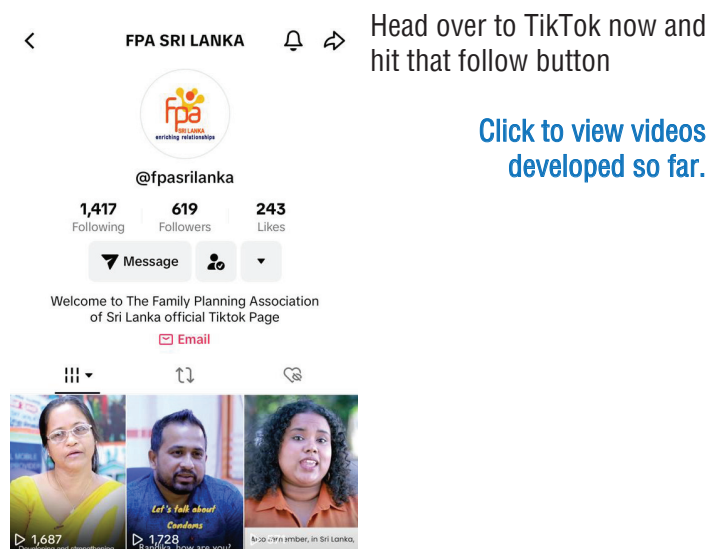
#InspireInclusion was the theme, and we emphasized the importance of ensuring women's and girls' rights across all aspects of life, through a poster series featuring FPA staff.

The main focus was on highlighting the need for enabling access to reproductive health, ending period poverty and promoting inclusion and inclusivity in service provision.

International Women's Day | Let's Inspire Inclusion



The trends have spoken; FPA is now on TikTok!



[Click to view videos developed so far.](#)



Volunteer Members Fellowship Day and High Tea!



The secret to FPA's success? Our dedicated volunteers. Volunteers are the backbone of FPA and we couldn't do what we do without their fierce commitment, unwavering service and dedication to our cause.

Our volunteer membership, led by a dynamic Board of Directors, continues to contribute their skills and time to make our mission a reality - ensuring Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for everyone in the country. On the 16th of March, at the Mövenpick Colombo, volunteers gathered to recognize and celebrate 70 years of FPA, network with fellow volunteers, meet and greet the Executive Director and the Senior Management Team and hear from volunteers who have grown with the Association and now hold significant roles in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

The Treasurer of FPA's Board of Directors, Lakshan Seneviratne shared his inspirational journey from volunteer to Board Member and Executive Director Dr. Ruchitha Perera shared an overview of FPA Sri Lanka's operations at the event.



Ashawari Gunawardana
Medical Officer



Thamara Thebulandage
Senior Nurse



Chalani Dayarathne
Accounts Assistant



Sachintha Welipitiya
Manager
Resource Mobilization
& Donar Relations



We want to hear your views and suggestions! Please write to: FPA Sri Lanka, 37/27, Bullers Lane, Colombo - 07, Sri Lanka.
E-mail : fpa@fpasilanka.org Web : www.fpasrilanka.org Tel : +94 112 555 455 Fax : +94112 55 66 11