



## A Landmark Conference Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health in Sri Lanka



Dr. Palitha Mahipala – Secretary, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka, Guest of Honour at ReproSex 2024 and Ms. Aruni Marcelline President – Board of Directors, FPA Sri Lanka

FPA Sri Lanka hosted ReproSex 2024, the International Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), on November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at the BMICH in Colombo. As the first event of its kind in Sri Lanka, ReproSex 2024 served as a pioneering platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and innovation in the field of SRH.

The conference brought together over 400 delegates from around the globe, including leading experts, policymakers, and practitioners, all united by a shared commitment to addressing pressing SRH issues.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation, Sri Lanka Medical Association, National STD/AIDS Control Programme, Centre for Evaluation, Population Society of Sri Lanka, The

Menopause Society, and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura served as technical partners for ReproSex 2024. They provided

valuable guidance for the conference tracks and evaluated abstract submissions, ensuring evidence-based content, high-quality presentations, and the integration of the latest research in reproductive health.

The event featured a keynote speech, five plenary sessions, and 08 parallel sessions and 08 mini-symposia sessions with an impressive 150 abstracts submitted from 20+ countries. Among the many highlights were 50 oral presentations and 50 poster presentations that demonstrated the breadth of global research, innovations, and solutions in SRH. Over 100 speakers with different areas of expertise shared their ideas and views under 12 thematic areas. These discussions underscored the growing significance of SRH in the global health agenda, with a strong focus on advancing rights, health, and equity for all.



Chief Guest: Ms. Manuelle Hurwitz  
Director, Development & Impact Division,  
International Planned Parenthood Federation



Guest of Honour, Dr. Palitha Mahipala, Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka, addressed the conference, emphasizing the critical importance of SRH in the public health landscape. "SRH is the cornerstone of public health and human rights, impacting vital areas such as maternal health, family planning, the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and youth education," said Dr. Mahipala. He added, "The discussions and outcomes from ReproSex 2024 will play a vital role in shaping the future of SRH both in Sri Lanka and globally. Improving SRH outcomes, especially for the younger population, remains a priority. With one in four Sri Lankans aged

between 15-29, it is crucial that we equip young people with the knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about their SRH."

ReproSex 2024 addressed a wide range of key issues affecting SRH, including demographics, protecting the rights of all gender identities, the intersection of youth and SRH, digital innovations in health, subfertility, and the prevention, testing, and treatment of STIs. The conference also delved into critical topics such as SRH in the context of climate change and humanitarian settings, and discussions surrounding the termination of pregnancy in Asia. Additionally,

there were focused sessions on the advancements and challenges in the prevention, screening, and treatment of cervical, breast, and prostate cancer.

The event created an invaluable platform for dialogue, the sharing of best practices, and the forging of new partnerships to tackle the evolving challenges SRH. As the conference concluded, it was clear that the collaboration fostered during ReproSex 2024 would play a pivotal role in shaping SRH policy, practice, and research both in Sri Lanka and internationally.



Welcome Address: Ms. Aruni Marcelline – President, Board of Directors, FPA Sri Lanka



Address by the Conference Chair: Prof. W. Indralal De Silva Emeritus Professor of Demography, University of Colombo.



Address by the Guest of Honour: Dr. Palitha Mahipala  
Secretary, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka.



Address by the Chief Guest: Ms. Manuelle Hurwitz  
Director, Development & Impact Division,  
International Planned Parenthood Federation



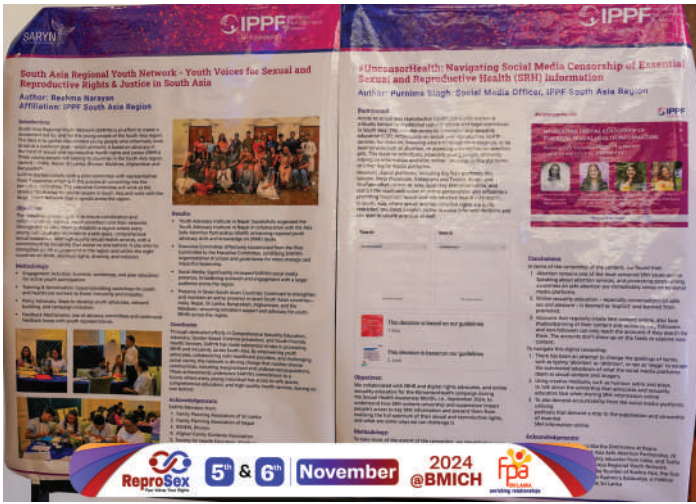
Presentation of the Conference Proceedings



Closing Remarks: Dr. Ruchitha Perera  
Executive Director, FPA Sri Lanka



Keynote Address: Dr. Iqbal Shah  
Research Scientist, Department of Global  
Health and Population, Harvard University



Poster Presentations



Panel Discussions





Presentation of certificates



Tent donated by Planned Parenthood Association (PKBI), designed for providing essential SRH services during emergencies.



Stalls





Closing Address – Mr. Chandima Gunawardena, Immediate Past President, FPA Sri Lanka



Technical Highlights – Mr. Kunle Adeniyi Country Representative, UNFPA Sri Lanka



Vote of Thanks – Mr. M. Suchira Suranga, Director Organizational Learning & Evaluation, FPA Sri Lanka.



## Learning and Sharing – IPPF Delegates Visit FPA Sri Lanka



Delegates from IPPF who attended ReproSex 2024 stayed on in Sri Lanka to participate in the Regional & Youth Forum 2024 of the IPPF South Asia Region. On the invitation of FPA Sri Lanka's Executive Director, Dr. Ruchitha Perera, over 80 delegates from IPPF regional offices and Member Associations visited FPA Sri Lanka's Head Office.

The visit was made even more special with the presence of Ms. Manuelle Hurwitz, Director of the Development & Impact Division at the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF); Ms. Tomoko Fukuda, Regional Director of IPPF ESEAOR and SARO; and Ms. Aruni Marcelline, President of FPA Sri Lanka's Board of Directors



Delegates had the opportunity to learn about FPA's work through brief presentations by department heads covering topics such as Social Marketing, Outreach, Advocacy, Medical Services, Monitoring & Evaluation, Social Enterprise and Communications. After the presentations, the

delegates toured the office and interacted with FPA staff involved in various programmes. The visit culminated in a presentation of maternity kits to expectant mothers at the Centre for Family Health, FPA's Head Office clinic.



IPPF Delegates also visited FPA Sri Lanka's Wathupitiwala Service Delivery Point, and had the opportunity to observe the clinic in action and interact with clients, some of whom were staff from nearby Board of Investment factories.



## An Evening of Culture and Networking with IPPF Delegates



The IPPF delegates were hosted by Dr. Ruchitha Perera and the FPA team for a dinner and cultural evening at the Galadari Hotel. During the evening, key speakers including Ms. Tomoko Fukuda (Regional Director, IPPF ESEAOR & SARO), Ms. Aruni Marcelline (President, FPA Board of Directors), and Dr. Ruchitha Perera (Executive Director, FPA) addressed the gathering.

The evening was filled with lively networking and strengthened collaboration among IPPF regional offices and member associations. Cultural performances from the University of Colombo, a song by youth member Thilini, a saree show and fusion dance by Heart to Heart Lanka Organization, and a medley of songs by FPA's youth staff made it a truly memorable celebration. This event further solidified the shared commitment to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) across South Asia and beyond.







## FPA Sessions at the Regional & Youth Forum 2024 IPPF South Asia Region



### Panel Discussion on 'Digital Approaches to CSE – Navigating a New Era'

Dr. Nuzrath Nasoordeen, Director of Medical Services at FPA Sri Lanka, participated as a panellist alongside Ms. Malaha Abdul Rasheed (SHE Maldives) and Dr. Prabin Shakya (FPA Nepal) in a session exploring how digital tools and strategies can enhance Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for young people.



President of the Board of Directors, Ms. Aruni Marcelline, Executive Director Dr. Ruchitha Perera, Assistant Treasurer Of the Board of Directors, Ms. Geilee Skandakumar and Chairperson of the Youth Services Committee, Ms. Kritaanjali Ratnasabapathy, attended the opening event.

The session, facilitated by Ms. Kritanjali Ratnasabapathy, Chairperson of the Youth Services Committee discussed innovative digital approaches to ensure youth have access to relevant, inclusive, and engaging sexuality education.



## Talk Show on Youth Engagement in Structure & Leadership

Ms. Aruni Marcelline (President, FPA Board of Directors) and Ms. Geilee Skandakumar (Chairperson of the Youth Services Committee) led a session on "Building Youth Capacity and Fostering Leadership". The session focused on best practices for engaging youth in SRHR advocacy and leadership, with an emphasis on encouraging collaboration and innovative solutions.



## Panel Discussion on 'Navigating Challenges: MA Experiences in Community-Managed/Led Inclusive Service Provision'

This session focused on inclusive healthcare experiences for LGBTQIA+ communities across India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Dr. Ruchitha Perera, Executive Director of FPA Sri Lanka, spoke on the importance of inclusive healthcare and shared insights on the Community-Led Monitoring (CLM) initiative under the SKPA-2 Programme, which empowers key populations to monitor HIV service facilities and advocate for better healthcare services.



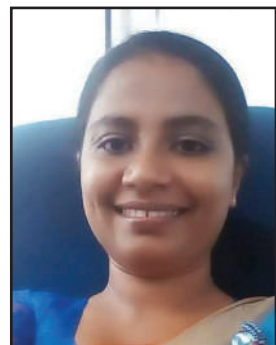
## Session on 'Leveraging Social Enterprises: Enhancing SRHR Impact with Financial Sustainability'

On the final day of the Regional & Youth Forum 2024, FPA Sri Lanka hosted a session on the role of social enterprises (SEs) in enhancing SRHR impact while ensuring financial sustainability. The Social Enterprise Hub (SE Hub) has been instrumental in helping IPPF Member Associations increase financial resilience.

Ms. Manuelle Hurwitz, Director of Development & Impact at IPPF, emphasized the strategic importance of SEs in IPPF's financial sustainability framework. Mr. Rishikeshan Thiyagaraja, Assistant Director of the IPPF Social Enterprise Hub, discussed how MAs can leverage the Hub's resources to enhance their SRHR work and achieve financial sustainability. The session concluded with an interactive Q&A and a team-building activity that highlighted how social enterprises can drive both impact and long-term sustainability.



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# Expanding Reach: 9<sup>th</sup> Service Delivery Point Launches in Moneragala!



In October, we were proud to have launched the Monaragala Suwa Sewa Centre, dedicated to enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for the communities in and around Moneragala.

This initiative followed a comprehensive needs assessment, which highlighted Monaragala as an ideal location due to the existing gaps in healthcare accessibility and the specific needs of its population.

The Centre is strategically positioned to serve a broad catchment area, including several small villages and communities, thereby addressing the healthcare needs of underserved populations. Through this centre, we are committed to providing comprehensive SRH services, ensuring confidentiality, and fostering a supportive environment for all clients.



At the event, adolescent kits filled with essential hygiene items alongside maternity kits tailored to meet the unique needs of expecting mothers were distributed.



including Ms. Aruni Marcelline, President of the Board of Directors; Ms. Kritanjali Ratnasabapathy, Chairperson of the Youth Services Committee; Dr. Ruchitha Perera, Executive Director; Mr. Suhail Junaid, Director of Marketing; Mr. Rajapakse, Head of Outreach; and Ms. Zaroosha Farook, Senior Manager of Finance. They were joined by dedicated project staff from the Outreach Unit and our special invitee, Mr. Sunil Udunuwara from MOMCH, Moneragala.

Each kit is packed with crucial hygiene and sanitary products, ensuring that both adolescents and mothers have the resources they need for their health and well-being.



We were honoured to have a distinguished group of guests gracing this special occasion,



Sexual and reproductive health mobile clinics implemented by FPA Sri Lanka play a pivotal role in expanding access to essential healthcare services, particularly in underserved and remote areas. These mobile clinics bring a comprehensive range of services directly to communities, ensuring that individuals have access to reproductive health education, family planning methods, maternal care, STI screenings, and counselling. The FPA's mobile clinics are a critical component in the organization's outreach strategy, ensuring that all service delivery points; whether in rural areas or at the Export Processing Zones are equipped to provide high-quality care, address health disparities, and empower individuals to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

**Empowering factory employees with vital knowledge!**

With many EPZ staff living away from their families, access to information on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and recognizing and addressing gender-based violence (GBV) is crucial.

SRH sessions equip workers with the tools they need to protect their health, make informed choices, and create safer environments in their workplaces and communities.



At MAS Unichela – Koggala EPZ



*Breast Cancer Awareness Workshop for pre-school teachers in Karuwelagaswewa. This initiative aimed to equip educators with vital knowledge about early detection, fostering a culture of health education in the community.*

**Driving SRH Awareness and Inclusion**

In Puttalam, our Service Delivery Point team conducted a Demand Generation Programme in the Manalkundu Area Public to raise awareness about SRH services on offer by the clinic, ensuring that local communities are informed and empowered to access care.

Additionally, a programme was held for leaders of disability groups in the Puttalam District, focusing on equipping them to advocate for the SRH needs of persons with disabilities.

Another significant activity was the Awareness Programme for Adolescents on SRH in Emergencies at Bandaranayakapura M.V, part of the SPRINT IV Project, where they provided young people with the knowledge and tools to navigate SRH challenges during crises.



At Napagoda, Nittambuwa

**Empowering Factory Nurses and Counsellors!**

The Seethawaka Service Delivery Point recently conducted a two-day peer educator training under the UNFPA Project for Export Processing Zones, equipping health professionals with the tools to support well-being of EPZ employees.



Over two days, peer educators from 10 factories in the Koggala EPZ received training on sexual and reproductive health, family planning, gender-based violence, and mental health. Peer education helps create a ripple effect, as trained individuals can effectively promote healthier behaviors, break stigma, and increase access to vital health information across the community.



A CSE Programme was conducted by the Monaragala SDP, supported by MOH Monaragala.

A sensitization programme for Human Resource Management and administrative staff from factories in the Koggala EPZ was held as part of the new UNFPA EPZ project. Mr. R.V.P. Rajapakse, Unit Head of Outreach at FPA Sri Lanka, introduced FPA's services and the EPZ project, which aims to address gender inequalities, particularly in the apparel sector across key EPZs in Sri Lanka.



Discussions focused on critical Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) issues faced by factory workers. The conversation also covered project implementation, shared responsibilities, and new proposals from HR personnel to support workers.

Participants included 14 HR officers from various factories in Koggala EPZ and a representative from the BOI.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) offered by FPA Sri Lanka provides essential knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Through its structured programs, FPA covers a wide range of topics, including human rights, gender equality, reproductive health, contraception, sexual orientation, consent, and healthy relationships. Students and youth are also educated on puberty, sexual abuse prevention, HIV/AIDS, STIs, and the importance of self-esteem and communication in relationships. Delivered through schools, community workshops, and youth centers, FPA's CSE programmes aim to equip the next generation with the tools to navigate their sexual health responsibly, reduce stigma, and foster a culture of respect and equality.

## Strengthening Crisis Response: MISP Training for Navy Officers at the Naval Base in Trincomalee



One of the five MISP trainings under the SPRINT project was successfully conducted by the Outreach Unit, targeting government-level first responders.

The session, which involved Lieutenant Commanders, Lieutenants, Sub Lieutenants, Warrant Officers, Senior Sailors and Junior Sailors from the Naval Base in Trincomalee, equipped them with essential skills to address sexual and reproductive

health needs in crisis situations.

This training strengthened their capacity to deliver timely and effective care, enhancing response efforts during emergencies and ultimately contributing to improved health outcomes in disaster scenarios.

Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) is an internationally accepted minimum standard of care for reproductive health, pioneered and rolled out by IPPF.



The Batticaloa Service Delivery Point recently held an awareness session on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) in Emergencies at BT/BC/Eravur Al Azhar Girls' High School. This session focused on educating adolescents about the vital importance of maintaining sexual and reproductive health during emergencies, when access to healthcare services is often limited. By providing key information on ASRH, the session aimed to empower young people to make informed decisions and take care of their health even in challenging situations.



We're thrilled to announce the establishment of a Youth Club at the Puttalam Service Delivery Point!

This initiative provides young people with the opportunity to learn about sexual and reproductive health, life skills, and leadership through interactive sessions.

With this knowledge, they will be trained to become peer educators, ready to guide and support their communities.

## Inclusive SRH Services for Persons with Disabilities



Marking International Day of Persons with Disabilities, FPA Sri Lanka's Puttalam Service Delivery Point conducted a special static clinic and awareness session on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for Persons with Disabilities.

This initiative highlighted the importance of overcoming barriers such as stigma, inaccessibility, and lack of education, ensuring this vulnerable group can make informed decisions about their health.

By addressing unique challenges, we aim to promote autonomy, prevent health disparities, and foster dignity and equality for all.



The LEVI's Foundation team, Ms. Fatima Angeles, Ms. Kim Almeida, and Ms. Hannah Yi, visited the Static Clinic operated by the Service Delivery Point in Wathupitiwala, where they observed the services provided and had meaningful conversations with clients about their experiences.

Later, the team toured the MAS factory at the BOI in Wathupitiwala, engaging with staff and workers to better understand their sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs.

This visit underscored LEVI's and FPA's commitment to community well-being through initiatives such as static clinics, mobile clinics, mobile service sessions, demand generation programs, and tele-counseling services, all aimed at fostering healthier and more informed communities.



A three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) was held at the Katunayake Export Processing Zone (EPZ) under the UNFPA EPZ project, bringing together over 40 participants from 23 factories, including some of the largest investors in Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector, such as MAS, Brandix, Crystal Martin, ATG, and others. The training equipped peer educators with vital knowledge on sexual and reproductive health (SRH), HIV/STI prevention, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and psychosocial support services. This initiative strengthens workplace wellness by fostering informed peer leaders capable of driving awareness and support within their communities.

## MEIMS Training for Outreach Staff



A workshop on effectively using the Monitoring and Evaluation Information Management System (MEIMS) for programme decision-making was organized by the Outreach Unit and facilitated by the M&E Unit of FPA Sri Lanka.

The workshop aimed to strengthen the capacity of outreach staff in utilizing MEIMS to track and analyze data, which is essential for informed decision-making and improving the impact of activities and programmes. By equipping staff with these skills, the workshop ensured that programmes are more efficient, data-driven, and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

## SPRINT Annual Planning & Review Meeting



The SPRINT Annual Planning and Review Meeting held in Bangkok focused on evaluating the current phase and preparing for the next. As SPRINT IV concludes in December 2024, new outcomes and indicators were introduced, with the humanitarian and development nexus at the core of the next phase. This approach integrates humanitarian efforts into development activities, ensuring life - saving services are provided even during non-crisis times.

Representing FPA Sri Lanka at the meeting were Executive Director Dr. Ruchitha Perera, Ms. Achini Pahalawatte, Project Coordinator (Humanitarian) and Mr. Sandun Adikari, Senior Manager, Outreach Unit.

The SPRINT Initiative continues to build the capacity of humanitarian workers to deliver essential sexual and reproductive health services in both crisis and non-crisis situations, ensuring ongoing support for vulnerable populations.



## Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Training Workshop



The workshop, which brought together focal points from Member Associations across the region, including India, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand was jointly organized by IPPF ESEAR, IPPF South Asia Region, and UNFPA Asia and the Pacific. The key focus of the workshop was to drive accountability, empower communities to shape decisions that directly impact their lives, and ensure that no one is left behind in humanitarian responses.

The 4-day interactive workshop focused on:

- \* Understanding AAP's core principles.
- \* Implementing AAP approaches effectively.
- \* Scenario-based exercises for real-world challenges.
- \* Exchanging good practices and lessons across the region.
- \* Developing frameworks to operationalise AAP in participating countries.

Representing FPA was Ms. Achini Pahalawatte, Project Coordinator (Humanitarian). Reflecting on her experience, she shared, "The training programme gave me valuable insights on how we can engage communities more effectively and address their SRH and GBV needs through humanitarian programmes."

## FPA Sri Lanka Supported Upgrading of Children's Ward at Imaduwa District Hospital

On World Children's Day, FPA Sri Lanka's senior leadership and staff joined the Galle District Secretariat at the official opening of the newly modernized Children's Ward at Imaduwa District Hospital. This project, which focused on improving the physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of young patients, ensures a nurturing environment for their recovery and development.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ruchitha Perera, Executive Director, FPA contributed essential furniture, fittings, and bed mattresses to support this upgrade, reaffirming its commitment to the well-being of children across the nation.



## Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2024



The DRR conference took place in Manila from October 14-18, bringing together leaders, policymakers, and experts from across the region to enhance collaboration, share strategies, and strengthen disaster resilience.

Dr. Ruchitha Perera, Executive Director of FPA Sri Lanka, attended the conference and highlighted the need for intensified action on resilience amid rising disaster and climate risks. He emphasized the importance of integrating Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in these efforts.



On October 16th, FPA Sri Lanka distributed 500 sanitary pads to women of reproductive age who were affected by the recent floods. The distribution was supervised by Radhika Ravinthiren, Roshela Wijesundara, and Lakmini Abeysekara from the Executive Director's office, in the following areas: the Regional Director of Health Services Office in Colombo, Gampaha, and Kalutara Districts.

## FPA at the Sex Work Consortium Initial Meeting in Manila, Philippines



The Sex Worker Policy Consortium is a global coalition of organizations advocating for the rights of sex workers. This alliance includes sex worker groups, community organizations, and IPPF Member Associations, with active members from countries including Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Colombia, and Sri Lanka. FPA Sri Lanka played a leading role in driving the country's efforts within the consortium, aiming to increase its global influence on advocating for sex workers' rights.

The meeting focused on building trust among partners, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and ensuring alignment on shared objectives. Key topics of discussion included the consortium's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, the processes for securing grants, and the requirements for reporting. Each participating country team presented their work, progress, and future funding plans.

The consortium's efforts addressed critical issues facing sex workers, particularly structural, systemic, and social violence. Three key areas of focus emerged:

- Advocating for legal and policy reforms that would improve protections for sex workers and ensure better access to justice, which included capacity-building initiatives for key stakeholders such as law enforcement and the judiciary.
- Combating stigma and promoting representation of sex workers in the community through educational and awareness campaigns.
- Fostering economic empowerment and leadership within sex worker communities, thereby strengthening their organizations and ensuring accountability.

During the meeting, participants also had the opportunity to visit a sex worker site hosted by the Family Planning Association of the Philippines, where they were able to witness firsthand the challenges faced by sex workers and the efforts being made to support their rights and well-being.

Representing FPA Sri Lanka were Dr. Ruchitha Perera, Executive Director; Ms. Sonali Gunasekara, Director of the Advocacy Unit; Mr. Suchira Suranga, Director of Organizational Learning and Evaluation; and Ms. Zaroosha Farook, Senior Manager of Finance. Also in attendance were Mr. H.A. Lakshman, Executive Director of the Community Strength Development Foundation, and Ms. Ira Sandana.

This meeting set the stage for stronger collaboration among global partners to advocate for the rights of sex workers, and strengthened FPA Sri Lanka's position as a key player in this important global movement.





## "Sri Lankan Narratives on Menstruation": A Powerful Photo & Art Exhibition Challenging Stigma



The Embassy of France in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, in collaboration with The Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka (FPA Sri Lanka), hosted the "Sri Lankan Narratives on Menstruation" photo and art exhibition from November 29<sup>th</sup> to December 1<sup>st</sup> at the Alliance Française Colombo. This impactful exhibition featured over 40 paintings and photographs created by school and university students, local artists, and community members across Sri Lanka. Each piece shared diverse stories and perspectives on menstruation, aiming to challenge the myths, taboos, and stigma surrounding the topic in Sri Lankan society.

Mrs. Marie-Noëlle Duris, Acting Ambassador of the Embassy of France in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and Ms. Aruni Marcelline, President of the FPA Sri Lanka Board of Directors, were the distinguished chief guests at the event.

The esteemed panel of judges comprised Ms. Nelun Harasgama (Artist), Mr. Prageeth Rathnayake (Artist and former Art Director of Rupavahini Corporation), Ms. Olivia Bellemere (Cultural and Cooperation Counsellor, Embassy of France in Sri Lanka and the



Maldives), Ms. Cecile Hoorelbeke (Director, Alliance Française Colombo), and Ms. Aadhitya Jayaseelan (Founder and Director, Studio Kayamai), evaluated the submissions and selected the winning entries.

The Collective Action Against Period Poverty (CAAPP) Project, in partnership with 13 grassroots NGOs, tackles period poverty by providing education on menstrual health and hygiene, empowering communities, and promoting open discussions to eliminate the stigma and discrimination associated with menstruation. The project has already supported over 38,000 beneficiaries, particularly in the Northern and Central provinces of Sri Lanka.



We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the winners. In the Art Category, 1<sup>st</sup> Place was awarded to Ms. Nona Sara Jumadin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place to Ms. Manishi Warthika Wijewantha Rubasinghe, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place to Miss. Tara Samarasinghe, and a Special Prize to Mr. Dhanushka Ariyaratne. In the Photography Category, the winners were: 1<sup>st</sup> Place to Ms. Ashinsani Chamodya, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place to Ms. Pamodi Galagoda, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place to Dr. Vinod Liyanage.

We thank all the participants and supporters for making this event a significant step in raising awareness and reshaping the conversation around menstruation.





## Celebrating Mental Health Month in October



In alignment with this year's World Mental Health Day theme, "Mental Health at Work," the Alokaya Counselling Centre hosted a session with Consultant Psychiatrist Dr. Neil Fernando. He discussed the critical role employers play in supporting mental health, emphasizing the importance of mental health policies, fostering a supportive workplace culture, and offering flexible work arrangements. With 1 in 6 working-age individuals facing mental health challenges, Dr. Fernando's insights underscored the importance of creating a work environment where mental well-being is prioritized.



health. Participants engaged in a stress assessment activity and received personalized guidance on managing stress. The session proved to be a valuable opportunity for self-reflection and offered practical tools for navigating mental health challenges in everyday life.

of movement and laughter. Staff members not only released stress but also learned about the vital connection between physical activity and mental well-being.

We also held a special Q&A session titled "Mental Health Matters" with Clinical Psychologist Mr. Susil Premarathne. The session provided an interactive space for staff to reflect on their mental

The series culminated with two high-energy stress-relief sessions led by Aerobic Instructor Mr. Manoj Madusanka. Filled with music, dance, and plenty of fun, the sessions were a perfect blend

Through these activities, we aimed to foster a positive and supportive work environment, ensuring that mental health remains a priority at FPA Sri Lanka. We are committed to continuing to support our team's well-being and to building a workplace that promotes mental health



The Alokaya Counselling Centre, in collaboration with the Divisional Secretariat Office, Keshbawa, conducted a session for their Development Officers and Grama Sewa officers on Sexual and Reproductive Health. The focus was on raising awareness about the risks of teenage pregnancy, protecting vulnerable groups, and promoting accurate sexual health information.

The session was led by Dr. Gayani Tissera, Senior Registrar in Reproductive Medicine, and Mrs. Hema Ranawake, Assistant Director at Alokaya Counselling Centre.

## FPA Sri Lanka participates in the UN Sri Lanka Walk for 16 Days of Activism Against GBV



Violence against women is one of the most widespread and pervasive violations of human rights globally. According to a report by UNFPA, 90% of women and girls in Sri Lanka have faced sexual harassment on public buses and trains, while 1 in 4 women report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 (Department of Census & Statistics, 2019). Efforts to end violence against women are often hindered by legal gaps, social stigma, and a lack of resources.

The Government of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, the Forum Against Gender-Based Violence, and the United Nations have united in their advocacy for safer public spaces across the country.

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based

Violence campaign officially began with an awareness walk in Colombo. The event was attended by over 500 participants, including Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya, Minister of Women and Child Affairs Saroja Paulraj, UN Resident Coordinator Marc-André Franche, and representatives from the development sector, UN agencies, the private sector, civil society

organizations, and the public.

FPA Sri Lanka proudly participated in the walk, which began at Independence Square and concluded at the Colombo Municipal Council. The iconic landmark building was illuminated in orange to symbolize a future free from violence against women and girls.



### Spreading Awareness, Shaping Futures!



FPA Sri Lanka's SRH Institute partnered with MAS Active Nugegoda to bring vital education on Sexual and Reproductive Health, STIs/HIV, and personal hygiene to 250 students at B/P Vidyarthi Vidyalaya, Kosgama. Together, they equipped the next generation with the tools to make informed decisions and lead healthier lives



The World AIDS Day walk, organized by the National STD and AIDS Control Programme (NSACP) under the Ministry of Health, took place on December 1st, with the theme "Take the Rights Path." The event aimed to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and promote prevention measures, with participation from government officials, healthcare organizations, and the public.

The walk began at Galle Face Grounds and concluded at the NSACP Headquarters in Colombo

10. The event was graced by the presence of Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasuriya and Minister of Health Dr. Nalinda Jayatissa, who both underscored the importance of continued efforts in combating HIV/AIDS.

Organized in collaboration with FPA Sri Lanka and UNFPA Sri Lanka, the event saw the participation of FPA staff, who also contributed to the cause by offering testing clinics at various service delivery points and other public areas in Colombo and suburbs. This

initiative highlighted the significance of early detection and prevention in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The walk served as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility to continue raising awareness, reducing stigma, and ensuring access to essential health services for those affected by HIV/AIDS. The collaboration between government, healthcare institutions, and the public marks a significant step forward in addressing this ongoing health challenge.





Testing Clinic at Galle Face



Joint Walk with the Batticaloa RHDS Office and FPA's Batticaloa Service Delivery Point Team



Awareness Session and Testing Clinic for Navy Officers at the Thambapanni Naval Base



Testing clinic at the Peliyagoda Fish Market

## Empowering Informed Choices!



FPA Sri Lanka's Social Marketing Programme (SMP) boasts a nationwide distribution network, including pharmacies, medical clinics, hospitals, groceries, and more.

Dealer meetings play a crucial role in equipping partners with up-to-date knowledge on products, their benefits, and their impact on community health.

This quarter, meetings were successfully held in Kegalle, Ruwanwella, Anuradhapura, Embilipitiya, Colombo, Hambantota, Jaffna, Kalutara, Ratnapura, and Kurunegala, ensuring that SMP's network remains effective in promoting reproductive health.

## Improving Humanitarian Efforts: FPA Sri Lanka Participates in IPPF Supply Chain Training

FPA Sri Lanka participated in the Asia Regional Supply Chain Management Training organized by IPPF from November 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> in Bangkok, Thailand. The training focused on enhancing humanitarian supply chain management, specifically on the procurement, storage, and distribution of reproductive health supplies in humanitarian settings.

Mr. Amila Gunasekara, Deputy Director Brands and Ms. Achini Pahalawatte, Project Coordinator (Humanitarian), attended as participants alongside colleagues from various International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Member Associations.

Key learnings included improving supply chain operations in both regular and humanitarian contexts, developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and ensuring quality assurance in the management of SRH supplies.

Moving forward, FPA Sri Lanka plans to implement the strategies and guidelines discussed during the training, ensuring that Service Delivery Points (SDPs) and the Head Office follow the recommended strategies and guidelines to strengthen supply chain management and improve humanitarian response efforts.



## Consultative Workshop for Reviewing the Implementation of FPA Sri Lanka's Strategic Plan



FPA Sri Lanka's strategic plan, "Boldly Beyond Boundaries" (2023–2028), is now in its second year of implementation. Staff members from Outreach, Medical, Advocacy, Social Marketing, Monitoring & Evaluation, Human Resources, Resource Mobilization, Finance, and Communications came together to review progress across all areas.

The team assessed achievements, identified areas for improvement, and discussed innovative approaches to ensure we meet our strategic objectives.

The workshop featured group discussions and presentations, with feedback from all participants to be reviewed further by the Executive Director, Senior Management Team, and the Board of Directors.

The collective input from this workshop will ensure we remain on course to fulfil our mission.



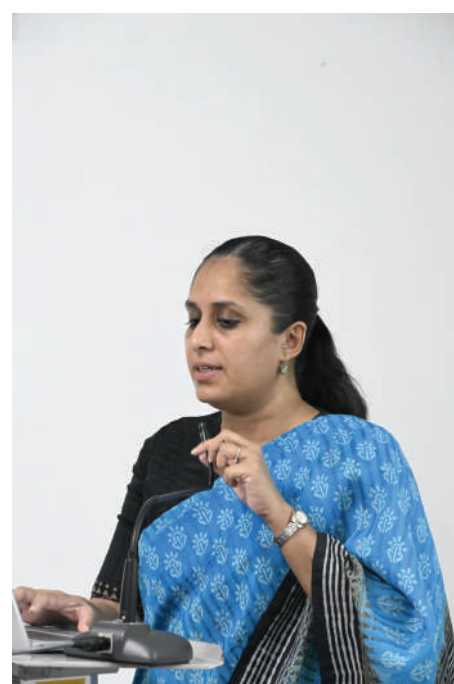
## Advancing SRH education in Sri Lanka



A stakeholder meeting, held in collaboration with UNFPA Sri Lanka, brought together key representatives from organizations like SLCOG, Family Health Bureau, Health Promotion Bureau, Women and Media Collective, National Institute of Education (NIE), Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka Medical Association, NSACP, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka College of Sexual Health and HIV Medicine, and more.

Together, we discussed the current development and progress of the website for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Education, Knowledge, and Life Skills which aims to promote health, human rights, and gender equality while empowering youth to lead safe and productive lives.

Presentations on progress, feedback sessions, and collaborative discussions made this a significant step toward creating a stronger, impactful initiative. The website is set to be launched in 2025.





## Awareness Through Drama!



The 'Street Drama' initiative, launched under the UNFPA EPZ project and supported by the People of Japan, has brought an innovative and engaging approach to raising awareness about Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) among employees of Export Processing Zones.

The script for this initiative was written by renowned tele-drama scriptwriter Buddika Semasinghe, and the performances were brought to life by popular actors. This creative method of communication successfully reached workers in their own environment, encouraging open discussions and equipping them with essential knowledge to foster safer, healthier workplaces.

By using drama as a tool, the project has managed to break down barriers and inspire change in a way that is both accessible and impactful. The drama performances have already been staged at various Export Processing Zones, including Katunayake, Koggala, Seethawaka, and Wathupitiwala.

Launched in December, the initiative will continue through January, with performances scheduled at the Biyagama and Mirigama zones. In total, 26 shows will be held, creating a lasting impact and helping to build awareness among workers across these regions.

This initiative proves that when it comes to spreading vital messages, creativity and entertainment can be powerful catalysts for change.

## Awareness Programme at Orit Apparels

The Seethawaka Service Delivery Point, under the UNFPA Sri Lanka EPZ Project, recently conducted a Male-Participation Awareness Programme at Orit Apparels, Seethawaka EPZ. This initiative aimed to challenge harmful social norms and practices while fostering understanding of social responsibilities in preventing gender-based violence (GBV).

The programme empowered participants to reflect on their role in creating safer, more equitable workplaces and communities, emphasizing the critical need for male involvement in addressing and preventing GBV.



## Celebrating Milestones Together: FPA Sri Lanka at FPA India's Diamond Jubilee!



A proud moment for FPA Sri Lanka as our team joined the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of FPA India on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December.

The delegation, led by Ms. Aruni Marcelline, President of FPA Sri Lanka's Board of Directors, included Executive Director Dr. Ruchitha Perera, Director of Marketing Mr. Suhail Junaid, Director of Organizational Learning & Evaluation Mr. Suchira Suranga, Deputy Director – HIV and GFATM Project Manager Ms. Nadika Fernandopulle, and Senior Manager – Advocacy Dr. Mihitha Basnayake.

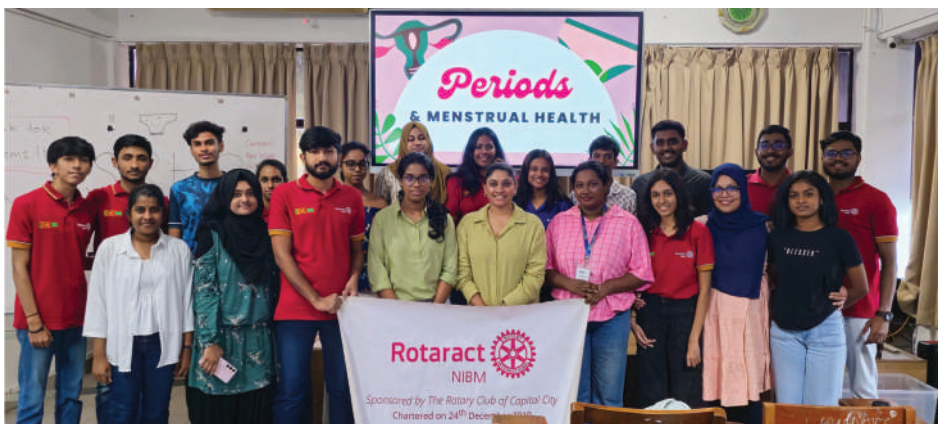


Dr. Ruchitha Perera also contributed as a panel member in the insightful discussion titled "What's Next is Now," focusing on the future of sexual and reproductive health.

We congratulate FPA India on this incredible milestone and look forward to continuing our shared journey towards better health, equality, and empowerment.



## Workshop at NIBM



The Youth Team of FPA Sri Lanka held a full-day Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) session for the students of NIBM University.

The interactive sessions covered a variety of important topics, including Anatomy, Virginity, Menstruation, and Contraceptives, presented by Dr. Sathyani Welivita; Gender, Sexuality, and Gender-Based Violence, led by

Ms. Uda Deshapriya; Online Gender-Based Violence, discussed by Ms. Desaree Soysa (FPA Project Consultant – RFSU); and Laws Regarding Gender-Based Violence, explained by Ms. Saymini Perera.

It was a day filled with learning, awareness, and meaningful conversations that inspired everyone to work towards building a safer and more inclusive future.



## United for Impact!

The National STD Control Programme in collaboration with FPA Sri Lanka, proudly hosted the first conference of Grant Cycle 7 (GC7) under the theme 'The Innovations & Practices', on December 19th at the Courtyard by Marriott.

The event marked the grant closure and the launch of a new series of activities focused on funding innovations and practices aimed at social impact.



## Innovations & Best Practices | Fellowship with a Mission

The National STD/AIDS control programme in collaboration with FPA Sri Lanka, celebrated the outstanding efforts of 40 STD clinics and 25 partner organizations driving the National HIV Prevention Programme during a felicitation ceremony at the Courtyard by Marriott.





## IBP Awards 2022-2024

A competition was held to select the best government STD clinics for their innovations and best practices in reaching communities. Matale clinched 1st place, Hambantota secured 2nd place, and Anuradhapura earned 3<sup>rd</sup> place for their outstanding efforts!

The national HIV prevention programme for key populations is carried out by the National STD/AIDS Control Programme in partnership with FPA Sri Lanka and other district-level NGOs and CBOs.



In conversation with  
**Palaniyandi Sivakumar**  
 Assistant Director  
 Head of the Nuwara Eliya SDP



**Can you share your career journey and how it led to your role as Manager of the Nuwara Eliya SDP? What are your key responsibilities?**

My journey began as a Programme Assistant on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, and has continued to this day, with my current role as Assistant Director. My primary objective has always been to take the programme to the masses and provide reproductive health services to them. I focus on delivering lectures and training sessions to mobilize reproductive health services in plantation areas, ensuring the proper implementation of FPA Sri Lanka's programmes in the region. Additionally, as a counsellor, I have the opportunity to serve society by addressing various issues related to reproductive health.

**In 2023, you were named one of the Top 10 Champions of Diversity at the Women in Management Awards. What initiatives contributed to this recognition?**

I consider myself fortunate to have received this recognition. During my tenure, I have developed and delivered gender-related programmes and services specifically for the LGBTIQ+ community, acting as a bridge to bring these services to plantation areas through FPA. I have also provided training at various levels of society, focusing on issues such as STIs and domestic violence prevalent in plantation communities. I view this award as a recognition of my service to the community.

**What are the main services FPA Sri Lanka provides to estate sector communities, particularly in health and support, and how do they address their unique needs?**

The primary services we offer are reproductive health services, including family planning methods and care for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). We also provide psychological support, maternal and child health services, as well as opportunities for screening and education related to cervical and breast cancer. These services are especially valuable to plantation workers, who often lack access to education and development opportunities in various fields. Providing these services is a significant step in improving their overall well-being.

**What challenges do you face in delivering services to estate sector communities, and how do cultural, economic, or geographical factors affect service delivery?**

A major challenge we face is overcoming misconceptions about reproductive health within the community, as well as the practical difficulties in accessing these services. Our focus is on serving 13 medical officer areas, which are geographically spread out and face many obstacles. Travel time is often lengthy, and the district is diverse, with people of various ethnic backgrounds

living together. This diversity requires us to provide services without language discrimination, which means we have a significant responsibility to offer services in both Tamil and Sinhala.

**What role do FPA community health workers play in supporting estate workers and their families, and how does FPA engage with them for ongoing support?**

Community health workers serve as intermediaries, and they visit people's homes to provide information related to reproductive health services. To support them, our SDP offers necessary training, advice, and guidelines, ensuring they provide accurate information based on the community's needs. This opportunity is made possible through our network of volunteers.

**How do you raise awareness about sexual and reproductive health rights in estate communities, especially where these topics are sensitive?**

Reproductive health is a taboo topic in our society, and access to information in schools or through publications is limited. In the hilly regions, the influence of South Indian culture and traditional patriarchal values further complicates discussions on reproductive health. Despite these challenges, we strive to provide simple, clear information in the languages that people understand. We have seen first-hand how this effort has made a significant difference in society, helping raise awareness and encourage open discussions.

**How does the SDP collaborate with other organizations, government bodies, or community groups to improve care for estate sector workers? Can you share an example of a successful partnership?**

The Nuwara Eliya Centre collaborates with both government and non-government organizations, and our partnerships are strong.

The SDP plays a key role in the SGBV Prevention Forum at the District Secretariat, providing valuable services to the community. We also work with various social and charitable organizations, community groups, religious organizations, development and cultural groups, as well as children's and youth organizations, all contributing to society in different ways. I can confirm that the District Secretary has personally acknowledged the contributions of our SDP. Since 2015, our centre has been a major

partner in the Nuwara Eliya District Violence Prevention Team. We are also a key partner in Mithuru Piyasa, providing Tamil-language outreach services for victims of SGBV.

**Looking ahead, what are your priorities for improving care for estate sector communities, and what initiatives or goals do you have for the future?**

We are focused on implementing new strategies to improve

plantation reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention. We have received support from many quarters and are working on long-term initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for plantation workers. Our mission is to ensure that plantation communities can access non-discriminatory services in a safe and dignified manner, contributing to sustainable social change.

## Certificate Award Ceremony for 2024 Courses at FPA Sri Lanka's SRH Institute



On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024, a certificate awarding ceremony was held at the FPA Head Office to honour the successful completion of courses conducted by Dr. Neil Fernando, Consultant Psychiatrist and Lecturer at KDU University, for the SRH Institute. A total of 100 students enrolled in the Psychopathology and Counselling, Sex Therapy, Psychology of Marriage, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy courses, all organized by the SRH Institute. After completing written exams, viva tests, and assessments, 70 students were eligible to receive their certificates.

In the Psychopathology and Counselling course, Thushari Anurudhika, P. S. Kuragama, Chamila Weerasinghe, and Arathi Jayawardane were awarded distinctions.

For the Sex Therapy course, Dr. Senevirathna Isuru Asiri, H. F. Nihal Silva, Ashanthi Fonseka, Dr. Nimeera C. Weeraratna, Dr. D. P. B. Kumara, Dr. M. A. Dassanayake, K. C. K. Thilakatathna, Malintha Galanga, Malsha M. Siriwardena, and L. L. Sadakshi Sulakshana received distinctions.

In the Psychology of Marriage course, Sumedha Navarathna, C. S. Thampapillai Reymend, and Yohani De Silva were awarded

distinctions.

For the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy course, Dr. Nimeera Weeraratna, Darshika Dilani Bulathsinghala, and L. D. J. Aravinda Nanayakkara received distinctions.

The ceremony was a celebration of the student's dedication and achievements, and we congratulate all the awardees for their hard work and success.



## Annual Staff Trip: Memories Made, Bonds Strengthened



The annual staff get-together, held at the Sheraton Kosgoda, was a truly memorable occasion that highlighted the strength of teamwork and the power of collaboration. It was a day filled with laughter, shared moments, and unforgettable memories, all of which underscored the remarkable spirit, dedication, and commitment of our team.

As we reflect on the event, we are reminded of the collective effort that drives our organization's success. This gathering was a testament to the incredible individuals who bring passion, energy, and innovation to everything they do. Together, we continue to build a culture of excellence, mutual support, and camaraderie that sets us apart.

The memories made will continue to fuel our work in the upcoming year, inspiring us to achieve even greater success as a unified team.



