



championing women's sexual
and reproductive rights

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#SRHR4ALL

*Because Women
and Young People
Deserve
Nothing Less*

arrow

annual report 2017

the asian-pacific resource and
research centre for women
(arrow)



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arrow
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2017

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Reflections from the Executive Director

maternal and child health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, prevention and treatment of tuberculosis, malaria, infectious diseases, neglected tropical diseases, and even to water, sanitation and hygiene programmes.

In response, 'SheDecides' was born in March 2017 as a global movement to re-establish the fundamental rights of girls and women to decide, and choose freely on matters pertaining to their sexual and reproductive lives, including the right to safe abortion services.

2017 also saw #metoo become a rallying cry against sexual assault and harassment. Beginning with a call on social media against the alleged sexual harassment by Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein, the movement gathered global momentum with millions of women calling out the sexual behaviour and abuse of power by men.

In Asia Pacific, countless young girls and women in the region are reeling under the impact of unsafe or denied abortions, are unable to access contraception, die during child birth or pregnancy, have their bodily autonomy controlled by fundamentalists, have their sexual freedoms violated, face sexual and physical abuse and have little recourse to justice.

But SRHR advocates and feminist organisations in our region are fighting back. It is in this context that ARROW's commitment and efforts become very relevant. To step up our advocacy and respond effectively to these new threats, we re-energised our work with a new strategic plan from 2017-2021.

To serve our agenda better, in 2017, we made our mark in human rights advocacy spaces—something we have long desired to do. Our interventions, along with our partners, at the national Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs) and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of

Discrimination of Women (CEDAW) reviews, enabled us to put sexuality, sexual and reproductive rights concretely within the national reports, and enabled us to lobby member states at the global levels.

Our work with young people has also intensified, and there has been great inter-generational learning, knowledge sharing and skills transferring—from generating evidence and counter reports by young people, to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), National Voluntary Review Reports by the government, to advocacy at the regional and international fora, such as the Commission on Population Development (CPD), the UPR, the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), and the Asian Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSHR). Building and enabling the next generation of SRHR advocates, activists, researchers and programme implementers has been aggressively pursued by ARROW to sustain and heighten the SRHR agenda in the region.

ARROW stands firmly in its commitment to protect and uphold SRHR, hold our governments accountable in the region and push back against this onslaught on women's SRHR.

Our building new constituencies work has also positioned ARROW as a leader in looking at intersectionality and working across movements to create solidarity. ARROW's work on religious fundamentalism resulted in rich research and perspectives from the ground, and enabled us to create a solid regional evidence base and strategies on this issue.

Critical work on inter-sectionality resulted in the *ARROW for Change* (AFC) on "Women with Disabilities: Disabled, Sexual, Reproductive," produced with Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA). The issue of

disabilities is critical to the region and many governments have passed legislation recognising the rights of people with disabilities. It is essential to have SRHR for people with disabilities also to be established firmly within these rights.

We worked with Anjali Mental Health Rights Organisation in India to delve into some of the linkages between mental health, gender, and sexuality—an area that receives very little attention. Global statistics denote that more than 300 million people suffer from depression and 260 million suffer from anxiety disorders. Health systems, especially in our region, are not adequately prepared to respond to this, let alone understand the effects on women, young people and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ) people.

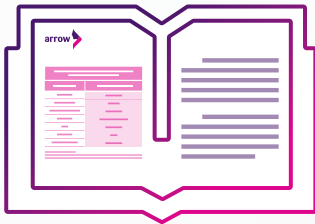
In 2017, we collaborated with 94 partners around the world as we pushed the envelope, challenged policies, and persuaded law makers, politicians, and member states to respect and prioritise SRHR for all. In the next few pages, you will read several compelling and fascinating feats as well as the obstacles faced by our partners and the communities we work in. We recognise we are only a cog in the wheel of their accomplishments. However, we take pride in the robust and dynamic partnership we share with each and every one of them. And we credit them for all the interventions ARROW has been able to make over the years, for the overall improvement of SRHR of women and young people in Asia Pacific and beyond. We believe that our partnerships are the roadmap for a future that is inclusive and equal.

Despite the turbulence caused by political chaos, we have been able to recognise the opportunities these uncertain times bring us. ARROW stands firmly in its commitment to protect and uphold SRHR, hold our governments accountable, and push back against this onslaught because SRHR is indivisible from economic, social, political, and cultural rights, and because women and young people deserve nothing less.

Sivananthi Thanenthiran
Executive Director, ARROW

2017 was a turbulent year for women's rights. The giant strides made by feminists, women's rights organisations and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) advocates in Asia Pacific and globally, were under threat with the election of US President Donald Trump, which was accompanied by the strengthening of right wing and fundamentalist groups globally. On his first day in office, President Trump reinstated the Global Gag Rule and extended restrictions of the Gag Rule to an estimated \$8.8 billion in US global health assistance, affecting support for family planning and reproductive health,

2017 Milestones



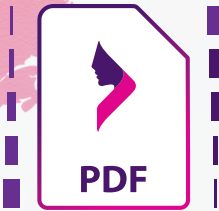
48,891

Knowledge products distributed



28,452

Visitors to arrow.org.my



5,539

Publications downloaded from our website

NETWORKS AND COMMITTEES WE ARE PART OF

- 9th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSHR) International Steering Committee
- ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum 2017 (ACSC/APF) Regional Steering Committee
- Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM)
- AP-RCEM Thematic Working Group on SRHR, Gender and Sexuality
- Asia-Pacific Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP)
- Asia Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security (APWAPS)
- Asia-Pacific Women's Watch (APWW)
- Asian Rural Women's Coalition (ARWC)
- Association for Women in Development (AWID)
- Civil Society Platform to Promote SRHR Beyond 2015
- Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR)
- Feminist Alliance for Rights (formerly the Post-2015 Women's Coalition)
- Global Network on the Right to Food and Nutrition (GNRtFN)
- International Sexual and Reproductive Rights Coalition (ISRRC)
- Observatory on Universality of Rights (OURs)
- Population and Sustainable Development Alliance (PSDA)
- Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)
- Right to Food and Nutrition Watch Editorial Board
- UNFPA Global Civil Society Advisory Panel
- Unzip the Lips
- UN NGO Major Group
- UN Women's Major Group
- Womens Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)
- Women Working Group for Financing for Development
- Youth Leadership Working Group



20,659

Facebook and Twitter followers



USD1.9M

Strategic Investments in SRHR advocacy



188

Countries reached through Infocom



55

International, regional, and national meetings attended by ARROW

IN COLLABORATION WITH

- 76 National Partners
- 10 Regional Partners
- 8 Global Partners
- 94 Partners in total

COUNTRY PARTNERS

BANGLADESH: Adorsho Mohila Sangstha; Annesha Samaj Sheba Shongho; Artha-Shamajik Shikkha Sanskritic Unnayon Sangstha; Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS); Barisal Mohila Kollayan Shongstha; Children and Youth Development Organisation (CYDO); Durbin Foundation; Jago Nari; Khan Foundation; Naripokkho; Nazrul Smriti Sangsad; Patuakhali Development Organisation (PDO); and Sangkalpa Trust **BURMA/MYANMAR:** Akhaya Women **CAMBODIA:** Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC) **CHINA:** Yunnan Health and Development Research Association (YHDRA) **EGYPT:** Ikhtyar for Development, Training, Research and Consultancy **INDIA:** Anjali Mental Health Rights Organisation; Baba Pam Karam Das Gramin Vikas Samiti; Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA); Centre for Rural Prosperity and Research (CRPR); CommonHealth; Gram Vikas Evam Prashikshan Sansthan; Gram Vikas Navvuvak Mandal Laporiya; Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti; Gramya Sansthan; Jatan Sansthan; Navachar; People's Education and Development Organization (PEDO); Pravah; Prayatn; Purvanchal Gramin Sewa Samiti; Rural Women's Social Education Centre (RUWSEC); SAHAYOG; SAMA: Resource Group for Women and Health; Shiskshit Rojgar Kendra Prabandhak Samiti; Srushti Samiti; and the YP Foundation (TYPF) **INDONESIA:** Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia (PKBI); Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan (YJP); and Yayasan Kesehatan Perempuan (YKP, also called Women's Health Foundation) **LAO PDR:** Lao Women's Union; The Faculty of Postgraduate Studies at the University of Health Sciences (UHS) **MALAYSIA:** Federation of Reproductive Health Associations of Malaysia (FRHAM); Penita Initiative; and Sisters in Islam (SIS) **MALDIVES:** Huvadhoo Aid (HAD); and Society for Health Education (SHE) **MEXICO:** Elige Red **MONGOLIA:** MONFEMNET National Network **MOROCCO:** Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF, Morocco Family Planning Association) **NEPAL:** Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC); Child Society Nepal, Morang; LOOM; The Rural Institution for Community Development (RICOD), Lalitpur; Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC); Youth Welfare Society (YWS), Makwanpur; and YUWA **PAKISTAN:** Chanan Development Association (CDA); Khan Foundation; Marvi Welfare Association; Nai Umeed; Pano Akil; Shirkat Gah (SG); Sindh Community Foundation (SCF); United Youth Welfare Organisation (UYWO); and Youth Advocacy Network (YAN) **THE PHILIPPINES:** Galang; Likhaan Centre for Women's Health (Likhaan); and PATH Foundation Inc. (PFPI) **SRI LANKA:** Women and Media Collective (WMC) **THAILAND:** Migrant Assistance Program Foundation (MAP) **VIETNAM:** Centre for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP)

GLOBAL PARTNERS

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID); Association of Progressive Communications (APC); CREA; Due Diligence Project; Feminist Alliance for Rights (formerly the Post-2015 Women's Coalition); International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN); Musawah; and Tactical Tech

REGIONAL PARTNERS

AFRICA: AIDS Accountability International (AAI) **ASIA:** Asia Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security (APWAPS); ASEAN Disability Forum (ADF); CARAM Asia; TARSHI; and Youth LEAD **EUROPE:** Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA); Riksförbundet för sexuell upplysning (RFSU also known as the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education), Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)and Rutgers **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:** Catolicas por el Derecho de Decidir (CDD)-Mexico

About ARROW



ARROW is a regional non-profit women's organisation based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, that has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

How We Work

We believe that together, we must take concerted, collective, and progressive steps to achieve our vision. In line with our new strategic plan, we approach our work through:

Strategic Plan 2017-2021

In 2017, our work was guided by our strategic plan for 2017-2021.

Our Vision

An equal, just, and equitable world that enables all women to be equal citizens in all aspects of their lives, and that protects and advances their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Our Mission

We promote and defend women's rights and their needs, particularly in the areas of health and sexuality, and reaffirm their agency to claim these rights.

Our work makes a contribution to achieving the following outcomes, in the long term:

1 Systems, policies and programmes are reoriented to uphold gender equality and SRHR, and deliver comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and rights-based sexual reproductive health systems that are accessible, just, equitable, and of the highest quality.

2 Strong and effective women's movements and civil society that are vigilant in influencing policy agenda on women's health, sexuality, and rights; demanding for governments and donors to deliver to their international and national commitments; and claiming spaces for their representation and participation within decision-making structures.

3 Improvements in all women's lives and health outcomes, in particular, addressing the SRHR of the poor and the marginalised.

Who We Work with and What We Work on

Ultimately, we want to see significant and sustained improvements in the SRHR of women and young people across Asia and the Pacific, and globally.

We work with non-governmental organisations and social movements, health service providers and associations, governments and their institutions, international agencies, human rights institutions, and the media.

Our aim is to collaborate and influence their approach so they can contribute to our vision for rights-based and gender-sensitive policies and programmes related to health, sexuality, and rights.

With like-minded stakeholders and SRHR champions, we tackle the following topics:

Our Five-pronged Strategy

Mobilising communities



Monitoring and evidence generation



Building new constituencies



Information and communication



Advocacy



Over-arching themes and critical issues

Women's empowerment and gender equality



Affirmative sexuality



Universality of sexual and reproductive rights



Advancing universal access to quality sexual and reproductive health services



Emerging issues impacting gender and sexual and reproductive rights



ARROW Meetings and Events in 2017



• **CREA Feminist Leadership, Movement Building and Rights Institute South Asia**
Nepal

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

- **Global Dialogue on Sexuality, Disability and Rights**
Sri Lanka
- **Programme Advisory Committee Meeting**
Malaysia
- **Climate and Disaster Resilience and Gender Equality Consultation Workshop**
Bangkok



MARCH

- **SheDecides Conference**
Belgium
- **Advocacy Capacity Building Workshop for Partners**
Malaysia
- **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 61**
New York
- **Youth Forum, Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD)**
Bangkok
- **4th APFSD and APFSD CSO Forum**
Bangkok
- **Asia Pacific Conference: Taking Collective Action to Accelerate Transformation of Official Statistics for 2030 Agenda**
Bangkok

APRIL

- **Green Climate Fund (GCF) 16th Board Meeting**
South Korea
- **International Steering Committee Meeting, Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSHR)**
Vietnam
- **Gender and Technology Institute (GTI)-Asia**
Malaysia
- **Interactive Social Lab**
Germany
- **50th Commission on Population and Development (CPD)**
New York



MAY

- **Board of Directors' Meeting Annual General Meeting**
Malaysia
- **South East Asia Regulatory Network's (SEARN) Consultative Meeting with SRHR Researchers**
Malaysia
- **Pleasure, Politics and Pagalpan Conference**
India
- **2nd Annual Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development**
Rwanda
- **Youth, Peace and Security Asia and the Pacific Regional Consultation**
Bangkok



JUNE

- **European Development Days (EDD)**
Belgium
- **UNFPA Regional CSO Core Group Meeting**
Bangkok

DECEMBER

- **WHRAP-SA Final Partners Meeting**
Malaysia
- **2nd Regional Forum, RHRN**
Vietnam



NOVEMBER

- **Conference of Parties 23 (COP 23)**
Germany
- **UNFPA - Regional Dialogue on Human Rights, Gender and Culture**
Malaysia
- **15th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development**
Germany
- **9th APCRSRHR**
Vietnam
- **ASEAN Youth Forum and ASEAN Women's Summit**
Philippines
- **Conversations on advancing Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Body (SOGIEB) rights in Asia Pacific**
Malaysia

OCTOBER

- **SEARN Regional Meeting**
Bangkok
- **Women's Health and Rights Advocacy Partnership-South Asia (WHRAP-SA) Evaluation Meeting**
Nepal
- **UNSCR 1325 (conflict) Anniversary related events and Annual Debate**
New York
- **11th World Congress on Adolescent Health**
India
- **Guttmacher-Lancet Commission Advisory Group Meeting**
Germany

SEPTEMBER

- **Green Climate Fund (GCF) 18th Board Meeting**
Egypt
- **She Decides Champions Meeting**
New York
- **Equal Measures 2030 (UNGA)**
New York
- **International Steering Committee, APCRSRHR**
Vietnam

AUGUST

- **Indicators and Sustainability Workshop**
Malaysia



JULY

- **World Population Day 2017**
Bangkok
- **Workshop on SRHR of Women Migrant Workers**
Malaysia
- **Rethinking Development Aid: Ensuring Rights, Reducing Inequalities**
New York
- **IX International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society (IASSCS) Conference**
Bangkok
- **High Level Political Forum (HLPF)**
New York
- **Expert Group Meeting on ICPD and SDGs**
Bangkok

ARROW Publications launched in 2017

February



March



April



May



July



August



November



December



October



The kingdom of Cambodia has been ravaged by two decades of conflict and civil war, which finally ended in 1989 with the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops.¹ Although peace and stability were re-established in the country with the Paris Peace Accord in 1991, years of instability and conflict has left Cambodia with poor public-sector infrastructure and inadequate access to health services, especially for vulnerable populations. As a result, this has impacted sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls.²

Although the country has witnessed rapid economic growth and modest reductions in poverty, income inequality has increased in Cambodia, thus forcing many young people to migrate for education and employment.³ Their SRHR has been limited, increasing their exposure to health risks, unsafe sexual practices, and gender-based violence. In 2016, the World Health Organisation (WHO) identified violence against women and girls as an important public health issue in Cambodia.⁴ It is in this context that our partner Reproductive Health Association in Cambodia (RHAC) has been working relentlessly to champion the SRHR of women and young people, and to improve the quality of health services for the community.⁵

ARROW has been working closely with RHAC since 2008 to strengthen their capacity in monitoring and evidence generation. RHAC is a leading expert on SRHR issues in Cambodia. This has been achieved by producing quality and evidence-based publications that include up-to-date analysis and data, enabling them to ensure evidence-based policy making and to build a relationship with the government. RHAC's accurate and insightful data and analysis on SRHR issues in Cambodia has resulted in them being invited to sit on government-appointed technical working groups on SRHR to shape effective policy development for the country.

In fact, government officials used analysis from RHAC's country profile, "*On Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Rights: Cambodia*,"⁶ in 2017 to successfully push for private health sector regulation—a significant achievement given the high out-of-pocket health

expenditure due to growing privatisation of the health service in the country.

We believe that for meaningful change on the ground and at the policy level, consistent monitoring and generation of evidence from the ground must reflect the SRHR realities faced by women and young people.

Despite such successes, RHAC still faces significant challenges in ensuring a rights-based approach in addressing SRHR issues in the country. For example, the Ministry of Women (MoW) rejected RHAC's proposal for rights-based indicators for contraception, and its suggestions to remove requirements of parental and spousal consent when women access contraceptive services. The MoW feared this might increase violence against women within the family. This highlights the importance of consistent sensitisation and evidence-based engagement with government officials, over the long-term, to ensure greater awareness, and integration of universal access to SRHR as a key component of realising SRHR in Cambodia.

We believe that for meaningful change on the ground and at the policy level, consistent monitoring and generation of evidence from the ground must reflect the SRHR realities faced by women and young people. Our work with partners in 17 countries, including RHAC, illustrates how monitoring and evidence generation goes a long way in influencing stakeholders to make key policy changes, particularly in holding governments accountable towards its constituencies. Our programme 'Monitoring & Evidence-Generation for Change' has been adding to the evidence base on critical issues in Asia Pacific such as girls' SRHR, the right to contraception and young people's SRHR, particularly in the context of the SDGs, so their realities are truly represented in the wider developmental agenda.

Generating Evidence, Creating Change

Mona Eltahawy, author and journalist

The battles over women's bodies can be won only by a revolution of the mind.

A mother sitting with her child, Sulawesi, Indonesia. Photo credit: Fabio Lamanna / Shutterstock.com

Although governments in the region have signed and ratified several regional and international conventions and treaties on women's health, gender, sexuality and rights, it is paramount to hold them accountable and constantly scrutinise the implementation of these commitments. We have been unfailingly tracking national and regional progress on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and its SDGs.

We are also working on creating an evidence-based monitoring system to mainstream the 'Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health for All' agenda through human rights frameworks such as CEDAW, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Although governments in the region have signed and ratified several regional and international conventions and treaties on women's health, gender, sexuality and rights, it is paramount to hold them accountable and constantly scrutinise the implementation of these commitments.

In 2017, we developed and launched several critical guides to aid evidence generation at the regional level and from the national levels by our partners. Our "An Advocate's Guide: Integrating Human Rights in Universal Access to Contraception"⁷ uses recommendations made to national governments in 2014 by WHO. It provides SRHR advocates 17 checklists in the form of a 'tool box' to assess whether governments use a rights-based approach in providing contraceptive information and services and tracks if contraceptive programmes respect human rights.

In addition, we produced a report titled, "SDG Alternative Report: Girls and the Sustainable Development Goals in Selected Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region – A Review of Goals 1,2,3,5 and 17,"⁸ to provide an overview of girls' well-being in 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific. Besides reviewing the specified goals, it highlighted SRHR issues and intersections missed while realising the SDGs. Supported by the Equal Measures 2030 (EM2030)—an initiative to improve evidence generation on the SDGs—the report was launched at the HLPF in New York in July.

Through our support, our partners are able to encourage transparency and stimulate dialogue on the state of SRHR in Africa. The critical publication, AIDS Accountability International (AAI) Scorecard for Women and Girls SRHR in Africa: A Call for Accountability in the Context of the SDGs⁹ was produced in partnership with AAI. The scorecard provides a comparison of SRHR indicators in Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. It focuses on key elements including strategic reproductive health indicators, abortion, violence against women, early and forced child marriage, youth access to SRHR, HIV and AIDS and budgeting. It was launched at the 19th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) in December.

In 2018, we will take our work further by publishing 17 SDG Briefs that will present a situational analysis of young people, the issues they continue to face and the infringement of their rights including SRHR in the context of the SDGs. We will also be producing a manual, "101 Guide on Gender, Feminism and SRHR," that will be utilised as a one-stop resource for gender and SRHR. Additionally, we will be embarking on a new focus area around reproductive rights—increasing access for safe abortion, to inform accountability processes in selected countries in the region.



Thavy, 27
Kampot Youth Activist, Cambodia

Holding her one-year-old baby boy, Thavy tries to concentrate on a training module on modern contraception, while her older daughter plays outside the RHAC office in Chhouk district in Cambodia's Kampot province.

Thavy, 27 years old and the mother of two children, married when she was 18 years old and just before graduating from high school. She married a man with whom she had barely spoken to, after her parents arranged an introduction. But she said, "He is a nice man and he is always supportive." Thavy soon became a mother at the age of 19. However, she wanted to go beyond her role as a mother and housewife. In 2013, she decided to go back to school to get her high school diploma.

"I can do more things if I at least have a high school diploma," said Thavy, currently a RHAC youth activist. One day, she heard that her village needed a volunteer for agricultural work. Although she knew very little about agriculture, she was confident she could do it. This was Thavy's turning point and she has never looked back since. She worked in this area for three years and also mobilised villagers so they could learn more about agriculture, including new crops and non-traditional farming. Although the job paid her only US\$25 a month, and at times she would get her salary just once in three months, it made her very rich in experience.

She was then selected as a community volunteer for an agricultural organisation where she saw herself as a trainer. She went on to earn US\$135 per month, which she said helped her a lot. However, her passion was to work on women's health-related issues. Thavy went on to join RHAC to become a youth activist for sexual and reproductive health in her community. "People might hear about taking pills, using IUD for contraception, but they have a little knowledge on how it might work. So, I want to learn more about that," said Thavy. She hopes that women in her community would be healthy mothers. "I want women to be able to negotiate with their partners whether or not they want to have children, and men should respect their decision."

Strengthening Community Participation, Empowering People

Maya Zaman, transgender activist and fashion designer

*I am a young transgender woman claiming my space
in mainstream society for equal rights and dignity.*

*A group of Karen children learning the Thai language, Mae Hong Song Province, Thailand.
Photo Credit: Paksongpob Kasempisaisin / Shutterstock.com*

Transgender persons, or *hijra* as they are known in South Asia, have faced decades of discrimination, stigma, intolerance, and even violence in Pakistan. The atrocities have intensified in recent years with about 45 transgender persons reportedly killed in the Pakistan's north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province between 2014 and 2016.¹⁰ In many of these cases, the survivors were shunned by hospitals and police authorities because of their gender identity.

It is in this backdrop of prejudice and violence that activists like Maya Zaman, 29, have been championing for transgender rights. A self-styled fashion designer, she has been through her share of personal battles. "I have come a long journey, fighting against deep rooted stigma and discrimination. It would not have been possible without the unconditional love and support extended by my family, friends and colleagues," said the 29-year-old activist.

"The Forum for Dignity Initiatives (FDI) gave me the platform to access the world on equal terms. FDI is a research and advocacy forum working for the human rights of sexual and gender minorities in Pakistan, I was elected president of the FDI board of directors for two years – from 2016-2018, and through FDI, I was introduced to ARROW."

*Criminalisation is one of the issues
that my country Pakistan has
inherited through the colonial law
under its penal code section 377 and
we want to challenge this.*

Under pressure to guarantee equal rights, Pakistan took a landmark step by issuing the first transgender passport in 2017, giving the community the much need legal identity and recognition. Nevertheless, the struggle for social acceptance and recognition still remains.



Maya Zaman showing off the attire she designed herself. Photo credit: Emma Richards.

"Criminalisation is one of the issues that my country Pakistan has inherited through the colonial law under its penal code section 377, and we want to challenge this. I am one of the focal persons for the Right Here Right Now (RHRN) Pakistan platform, and have experienced great opportunities for active and meaningful participation at various national, regional and international forums. I truly commend the meaningful support of ARROW to ensure the visibility of transgender youth at various forums," said Maya.

RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW: RHRN is a global strategic partnership,¹¹ which envisions a world where all young people are able to access quality and youth-friendly health services, and are not afraid to openly express who they are and who they love. It is a five-year programme in ten countries and the Caribbean sub-region, and the focus is on young people's SRHR without stigma, discrimination and violence, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE),

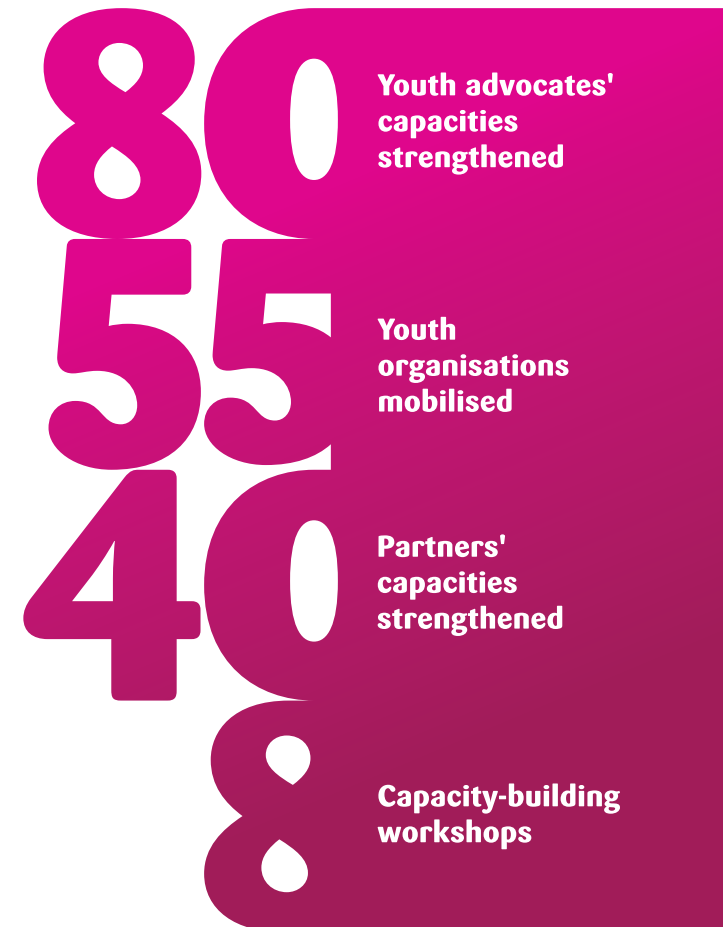
Our Impact

youth friendly services and safe abortion services. The programme is supported by a consortium of eight global partners and ARROW is the regional coordinator for Asia. Implemented in four Asian countries, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, and Pakistan, we, along with the consortium, have been helping build the advocacy capacities of young people and youth organisations to advocate for the advancement of young people's SRHR at the national, regional and international levels. Our work has also ensured that youth advocates and platform members have a better understanding of SRHR and their intersectionalities, as well as the importance of international advocacy and accountability mechanisms to advance Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) rights.

Our RHRN partners have had notable successes in their own countries. For example, their relentless advocacy in Indonesia led to their constitutional court narrowly rejecting a petition to criminalise same-sex and extramarital sex in December 2017. Similarly, partners in the Sindh province of Pakistan successfully lobbied their relevant ministry and line departments to integrate CSE in the school curricula.

These examples are testimony to the fact that civil society participation is key to Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRR) accountability in any society. But this participation can happen only if our women and young people are empowered to press for accountability from their governments and other stakeholders at the local and national levels.

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION: Our work is also grounded in the belief that by impacting and influencing community structures and empowering the youth, accountability can begin from the grassroots level. As part of our ongoing project—"Building the Next Generation Movement Leaders and Organisations for Young People's SRHR," four advocacy briefs on CSE were developed by our partners from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Data on contraceptive prevalence, adolescent birth rates, population growth, total fertility rates, and maternal and infant mortality rates in each of



these countries was highlighted. They also discussed the need for youth-friendly health services, marriage equality and inclusion of sexual and gender minority-friendly health services training, and made specific recommendations to governments to equip the education system in addressing issues on SRHR and CSE.

Our efforts, along with our partners, in mobilising and empowering communities on the ground has had immense impact with the marked improvement in health infrastructures, and delivery of quality healthcare in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. The 14-year-old regional initiative, Women's Health and Rights Advocacy Partnership-South Asia (WHRAP-SA), has contributed effectively in improving the SRHR of women in these countries from 2003 to 2017.

Young people from eight partner organisations interned at ARROW for two weeks in April, as part of our second internship programme on SRHR accountability through the lens of young people. They drafted alternative youth focused voluntary national reports on Bangladesh, India, and Nepal that were presented at the High Level Political Forum in New York in July.



As part of our ongoing project – “Building the Next Generation Movement Leaders and Organisations for Young People's SRHR,” four advocacy briefs on CSE were developed by our partners from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

UN PROCESSES: Besides collaborating with our partners, we also engaged with several UN mechanisms through:

- Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights on how religious fundamentalism impacted women and girls' cultural rights and hindered access to SRHR.
- Robust engagement in the UPR processes. ARROW and our RHRN partners in Pakistan developed the first youth-led CSO report and subsequently, the UPR advocacy briefs, urging Pakistan to enact laws against early and child marriages in four provinces, and called on the state to value the SRH of young girls and women. As a result, at the UPR, member states urged

Pakistan to take these steps, and asked them to address these issues—a significant accomplishment for ARROW.

- A 'writeshop' with our youth platform members in RHRN Bangladesh to develop the UPR CSO report. The report focused on young Bangladeshis' SRHR, CSE and youth-friendly health services—issues that have remained invisible in last two cycles of Bangladesh's UPR.
- Submissions to the Women's Major Group for the Expert Group Meeting on the bottlenecks in implementing SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages) and its link with other SDGs.
- Submissions to the UN Security General's Independent Accountability Panel (IAP) for its 2017 report by compiling inputs from consortium members, on behalf of RHRN's International Advocacy Working Groups. This was an overview of the health accountability systems and instruments with best practices and examples from RHRN countries and an overview of challenges and gaps on accountability mechanisms around adolescent health at national and sub-national levels with specific recommendations. The submission was included by the IAP for its second report in 2017.

Forging New Alliances

Arundhati Roy, novelist and activist

*There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless.'
There are only the deliberately silenced,
or preferably unheard.*

Unidentified Khmer woman selling vegetables at a traditional marketplace, Siam Reap, Cambodia. Photo Credit: Perfect Lazybones /Shutterstock



Mylene Rovera with one of her daughters. Photo credit: Jeremy Hu.

There are days when they have no money to buy food so they fill their stomachs with just rice. Mylene accompanies her husband to gather nipa, leaving her youngest baby to their neighbours. On some days, her 16-year-old daughter stays at home to look after her younger siblings.

Mylene, who is from one of the communities our partner PATH Foundation works with, hopes her children will finish school but with the financial burden on the family, it may not be possible for them to even complete tertiary education. Mylene and her family's ordeals are not unfamiliar. Climate change is known to impact the health of women disproportionately and among the poor, women are identified as being one of the most vulnerable populations to extreme climate events.

Besides climate change, a range of issues including poverty, migration, food security, sovereignty, religious fundamentalism and disability affect women and young people's SRHR. Cognizant of these interlinkages, our primary focus last year was on climate change, the rise in religious fundamentalism and conservatism, poverty, conflict, migration, and disabilities. Below is an overview of the work we did in each of these areas.

In a thatched house, three children—all under the age of five—run around a lanky woman crying, “*Nanay! Nanay!*” (mother, mother,) while she rocks a one-year-old boy in her arms. When she turns to see them, they run away and giggle. But not all of Mylene Rovera's eight children are so young. Her oldest is 16 years old. She met her husband when she was working as a house help in Batangas city in the Philippines. She got pregnant at 17 so they moved to her husband's hometown. They never got officially married because it was expensive. Her husband fishes and gathers nipa palm every day.

Climate change has had a big impact on their finances. There is lesser fish to catch, and gathering nipa does little to meet the large family's needs. With a daily income of 150 Pesos (USD 7), most of it goes towards their meals.

CLIMATE CHANGE: At a time when some world leaders are in denial about climate change, it is imperative to generate evidence to establish how women's sexual health and rights are impacted by climate change. Our project, “Building New Constituencies for Women's SRHR: Working with Rights-based Climate Change/ Environmental Groups to Build Momentum for SRHR in the Lead-up to the New Development Framework,” campaigned for SRHR to be included in national governments' climate change strategies, policies and programmes. Eight partners from Southeast and South Asian countries were part of this initiative. We developed three thematic regional briefs last year—“*Women's Health and Climate Change*,”¹² “*Sex, Rights, Gender in the Age of Climate Change*,”¹³ and “*Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: Key to Building Disaster Resilience*.”¹⁴



ARROW and UNFPA convened a regional dialogue, Human Rights, Gender Culture and Development in Kuala Lumpur in November. SRHR advocates from ten countries in the Asia Pacific came together to discuss the implementation of SDGs. The meeting led to a Call to Action: 'Realising the SDGs Agenda: From Promises to Action,' urging governments, UN agencies and other stakeholders to uphold their commitments to fully implement the SDGs, especially Goals 3 and 5 on health and gender equality.

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM: Increasingly, countries in Asia Pacific are moving towards regressive and narrow interpretations of religion that have a direct impact on women's sexual and reproductive rights. From hampering access to contraception, restricting or denying abortion, to cracking down on SOGIE rights to regressive health policies, several examples of ethno-religious groups controlling women's SRHR can be found around us. To counter these influences, we worked with partners and faith-based organisations both nationally and regionally to build new constituencies for women's SRHR. Last year, we collaborated with partners from ten countries from South Asia, South East Asia and the

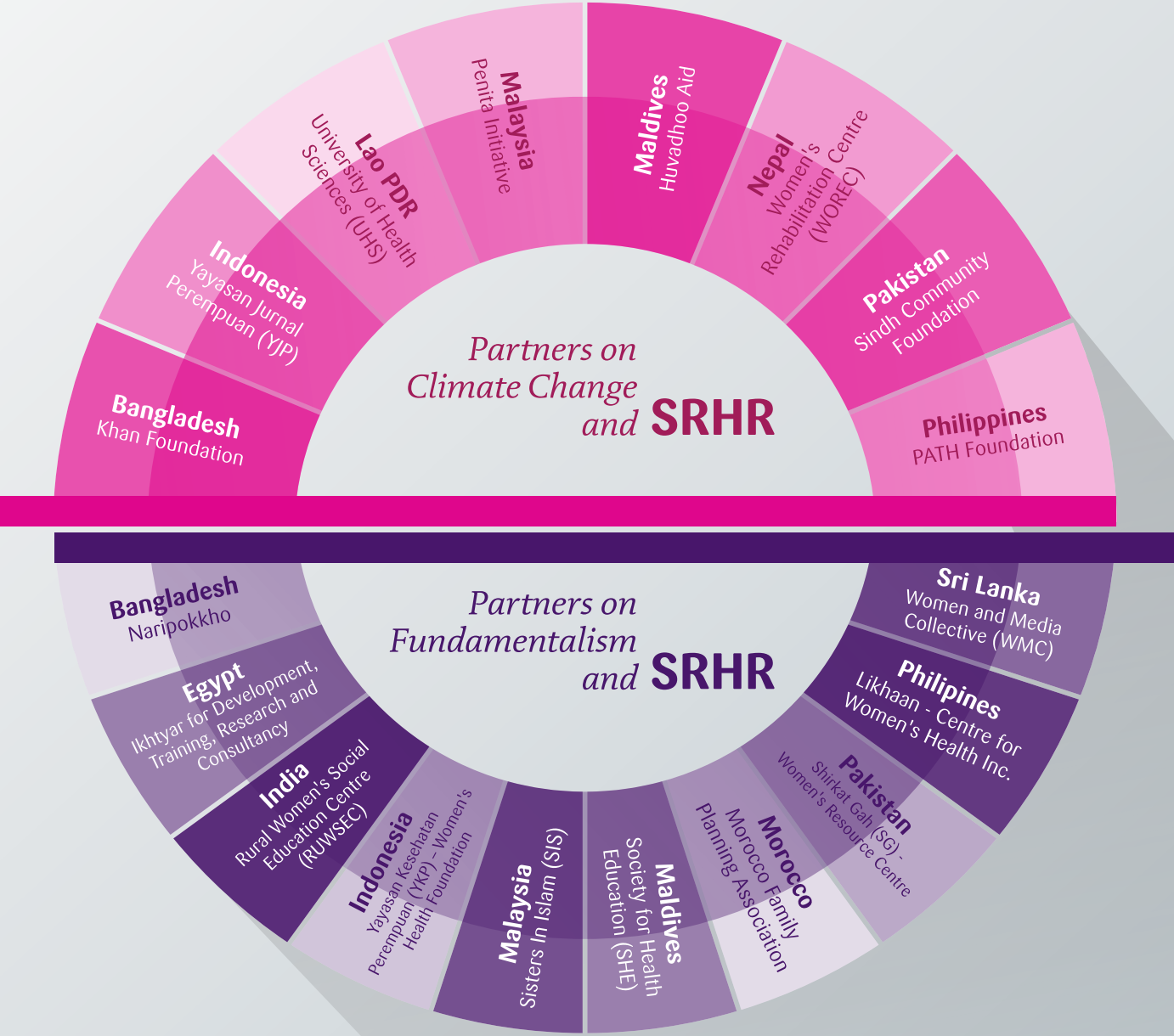
From hampering access to contraception, restricting or denying abortion, to cracking down on SOGIE rights to regressive health policies, several examples of ethno-religious groups controlling women's SRHR can be found around us.

Arab regions to publish national research exploring the links and impact of fundamentalism and extremism on SRHR. Together with our partner in Pakistan, Shirkat Gah, we developed an advocacy strategy for the Asia Pacific on religion and SRHR, 'Challenging Religious Fundamentalisms and Extremism to Ensure SRHR, and published five thematic papers on: early marriage, the use of social media to perpetrate hate messaging, the influence of RF on laws and policies, contraception and CSE.

Later in the year, we took part in a conference—Alliance of Inclusive Muslims—by Muslims for Progressive Values in Tunisia in October. We were invited to be a member of the alliance because of our work in intersections on religious fundamentalisms, conservatism and SRHR.

POVERTY, FOOD AND NUTRITION: It is not possible to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health services unless we tackle the root causes of poverty and hunger, and recurring economic and food crises. A key milestone last year was ARROW being elected as a coordination committee member of the

Our Intersectional Collaborations





ARROW and partners at the European Development Days in June in Brussels.

Global Network for Right to Food Nutrition (GNRTFN). This provided us with a mandate to influence the network's agenda and we were tasked with leading a sub group on Women's Rights.

Women constitute a considerable number of migrants—either moving with their families or alone. Unfortunately, the SRHR of women migrants are regulated by both the countries of origin and destination.

CONFLICT: Conflicts can cause havoc in people's lives. Besides the psychological toll, it also leads to a breakdown of law and order, interruptions in government functions and services, neglect of sexual and reproductive health, and violations of sexual and reproductive rights like lack of access to safe delivery services and safe abortion services. It also increases the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Therefore, sexual and

reproductive health needs to be systematically integrated into any responses to conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding processes. Given that Asia Pacific isn't immune to conflicts or violations to SRHR, we began our work on building new constituencies in this area last year. Some of our accomplishments were:

- **Became** an affiliate member of the Asia-Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security (APWAPS) to discuss conflict resolution and peace building processes at the regional and international arenas.
- **Contributed** to the partnership exchange on Youth Peace and Security organised by UNFPA to discuss the UN Security Council Resolution 2250.
- **Participated** at the annual debate by the UNSCR1325 on Women, Peace and Security to commemorate the 17th anniversary of the adoption of the resolution.

MIGRATION: Increasingly, more people in our region and globally are leaving their homes and countries either due to conflicts, climate change disasters, poverty or simply in search of better opportunities. Women constitute a considerable number of migrants—either moving with their families or alone. Unfortunately, the SRHR of women migrants are regulated by both the countries of origin and destination. To make our focus on these intersections relevant we highlighted the plight of female migrants' health and challenges in accessing services at a panel by the Southeast Asia (SEA) Junction—a cultural centre in Bangkok to foster better understanding of the region's issues.

DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH: Sexuality of disabled persons is an often overlooked issue with little recognition that persons with psychosocial disabilities are sexual beings with rights and citizenship. There needs to be a mindset change in viewing the sexuality of people with mental health issues and the conversation should shift to include the right to pleasure and intersections of mental health with sexuality and SRHR. Some of our accomplishments were:

- **Convened** a two-day conference with the Anjali Mental Health Rights Organisation titled, 'Pleasure,

Politics, and *Pagalpan*: National Conference on Sexuality, Rights, and Psychosocial Disability.'

- **Produced** a thematic paper, *Sexual Rights of Women with Psychosocial Disabilities: Insights from India*,¹⁵ authored by Ketki Ranade and Anjali - Mental Health Rights Organisation.

Sexuality of disabled persons is an often overlooked issue with little recognition that persons with psychosocial disabilities are sexual beings with rights and citizenship.



ARROW team at a donor meet during HLPF in New York in July.



ARROW's satellite session on 'SRHR at the Intersections of Poverty, Climate Change, Fundamentalisms and Migration' at the 9th APCRSR in Vietnam.

Opening Minds and Shaping Views

Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations

*Knowledge is power.
Information is liberating.
Education is the premise of progress,
in every society, in every family.*

*Unidentified women rally together to end violence against women,
Kathmandu, Nepal. Photo Credit: De Visu / Shutterstock.com*

Talking about sex or sexuality is no easy feat in the schools of Bangladesh—the eighth most populous country in the world. The topic is shrouded in a culture of silence, religious sensitivity and socio-cultural taboo—be it among educators, students or parents. Teachers are embarrassed to openly discuss reproductive-related issues, especially in a co-ed classroom. Female teachers in the class get laughed at by male students, causing them discomfort, while male teachers worry their authority would be undermined if they speak about sex or sexuality.

In this conservative setting Naripokkho, our partner and a membership-based women’s activist organisation, has been advocating for sexual and reproductive rights of women and building women’s resistance against violence, discrimination and injustice in Bangladesh for over two decades. The Dhaka-based organisation has been actively pushing the government to include CSE and information on SRHR in school textbooks.

“The ministry of education and high-level policy makers have constantly played down the necessity and importance of the subject in schools, saying that students can just read about it at home or in self-study periods in class at their leisure, only if they want to, as it will not be part of their examinations,” said Kamrun Nahar, Project Director at Naripokkho

“In Bangladeshi culture, whenever we want to discuss children’s issues, it will always be with the mother. However, there is a gap—all the information is going to the mother, but the one making the decision is the father. And the mother is not empowered enough to convince the father,” said Nahar.

In Bangladeshi culture, whenever we want to discuss children’s issues, it will always be with the mother. However, there is a gap—all the information is going to the mother, but the one making the decision is the father. And the mother is not empowered enough to convince the father.

Female students in a classroom in Dhaka, learning about changes in adolescent bodies, sexual health and the concept of a ‘safe space.’ Photo credit: Jeremy Hu.

These obstacles to CSE mean that the largest reproductive segment – aged 15 to 24, who constitute 19% of Bangladesh’s population, enter their adolescence and youth being extremely vulnerable to unwanted pregnancies, HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

ARROW and our partners strongly believe that CSE goes a long way in ensuring sexual and reproductive rights of young people, and preventing child marriage in



Indicators and Sustainability workshop with our project partners in Kuala Lumpur.

Bangladesh – one of the highest in the world with 22% of girls married by the age of 15, and 59% of the girls married before the age of 18, according to UNICEF.

But, such alarming numbers of child marriage cannot be reduced in the absence of information. Hence, we work on building new and critical perspectives around gender, feminism, sexual and reproductive rights and their intersectionalities, using a three-pronged approach – publications, knowledge management and sharing, and new media and online communications.

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PUBLICATIONS: This is at the heart of our work to advance the SRHR agenda from a global South and feminist perspective. Publications are also key for us to forge alliances and build links with existing movements such as the technology for change, rights to food and nutrition, bodily rights, mental health and psychosocial disability rights, across different countries and regions.

Our publications—from our peer-reviewed ARROW for Change (AFC) bulletins, thematic papers, ARROW briefs and translations of our work—provide a critical pathway into these linkages and highlight the issues we and our partners work on. They explore the current and emerging issues related to SRHR and analyse how it connects with other development issues.

In 2017, we published three AFCs. The first, “*Intersections: The Politicisation of Religion and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*,”¹⁶ looked at the impact of politicisation of religion on SRHR in Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Morocco, Myanmar, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Tonga, as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. The second AFC on “*SRHR in the Era of the SDGs*”¹⁷ examined the impact of US President Donald Trump’s policies like the Global



ARROW partners at the advocacy capacity building workshop.

Gag Rule, patents in the healthcare industry and links between SRHR, economic empowerment and climate change.

Meanwhile, the AFC on “*Women with Disabilities: Disabled, Sexual, Reproductive*”¹⁷ focused on the rarely discussed and least prioritised subject—sexuality of disabled people. It also delved into the control exerted by the state and the courts in some countries on reproductive and parenting rights of disabled girls and women.

We have also been robustly engaging on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter during key international events, conferences, international days, promoting our publications, and engaging with SRHR advocates, UN agencies and partner organisations. Our social media presence increased considerably in 2017 with 19,849 followers together on Facebook and Twitter.

An Asian Partnership for SRHR

WHAT:
Strengthening the networking, knowledge management and advocacy capacities of an Asian network for SRHR

WHEN: 2013-2017

WHO:
15 national organisations

WHERE:
Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam

WHY:

1. Increase lobbying and advocacy capacities in 15 countries on SRHR
2. Ensure universal access to SRH services in Asia-Pacific and ensure national and international decision-makers are improving SRHR policies
3. Extend advocacy of ARROW and partners to flag dangers of religious fundamentalism to SRHR

HOW: Funded by the European Union

OUTCOMES:

1. Improved skills of partners in advocacy, stakeholder analysis, political mapping, and use of social media
2. Generated evidence on impact of religion on SRHR in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka
3. Produced thematic papers, country profiles, national reports, bulletins & regional briefs
4. Ensured universal access to SRHR in Asia Pacific remained high on the development agenda, through advocacy activities around the Post-2015 processes both regionally and globally. These efforts were replicated at country levels to influence national policy and decision-makers to improve SRHR policies.



Social Media Snapshot

3,131

Women followers on



8,801

Women followers on



25-34 years

Age profile of our followers



Most Popular Publications of 2017

1



Intersections: The Politicisation of Religion and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Launched: European Development Days, Brussels, June; Distributed: 5,770 copies

2



SRHR in the Era of the SDGs

Launched: August
Distributed: 4,975 copies

3



Women with Disabilities: Disabled, Sexual, Reproductive

Launched: APCRSRHR, Vietnam, November
Distributed: 5,975 copies

Social Media Impact

56,997

Twitter reach during 9th Asian Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health, 27-30 November

30,600

Twitter reach during Pre-APFSD Youth Forum, 23-25 March



arrow



Reaching Out

Publications and knowledge products distributed physically and online

48,891

Stakeholders who received our publications

8,393

e- resources in ARROW's SRHR digital Knowledge oSharing Centre (ASK-us)

951



Profile of ARROW Website Visitors

27,976

Asia

5,234

Americas

4,090

Europe

1,319

Africa

1,248

Oceania

Noor Imran, 27 SRHR Champion, Pakistan

It has only been three years since I started working in the development sector. I did not know what to expect. I was like a fish out of water, with a finance background, when I landed in a youth development organisation. It came with its challenges but, I do not regret the decision I made. This decision opened up a world of possibilities for me. One of which was RHRN. Almost two years ago, I became a part of RHRN. It was all a bit surreal at first. For me, it started with Malaysia's platform meeting where the network was born and I became an advocate for youth SRHR. It took me a while to understand SRHR but I did not take long to understand that SRHR is basic and fundamental for every human being.

Through RHRN, I have been exposed to different types of people who are championing the struggle for SRHR day in and day out. I say 'struggle' because I do believe there is a long way to go globally.

RHRN opened the doors to many different platforms for me. I attended the Pre-APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok and worked closely with the ARROW team to draft youth recommendations for APFSD to make sure that SRHR was not ignored. I was one of the members of the drafting team for the first ever youth-centric UPR recommendations for Pakistan's state review in 2017. I gave an oral statement at the UN office in Geneva, on behalf of ARROW, because I was encouraged and facilitated to do so by the RHRN network.

I had never interacted at a personal level with a transgender woman or a man prior to my involvement with RHRN but, now I am really good friends with a transgender woman and I am better for it. My friends ask me all the time about my work now because this part is new to them too. So, it's safe to say my advocacy efforts are not just confined to work. It continues even when I am home with my family or out with friends. I feel odd referring to myself a champion of SRHR. I do not think I am there quite yet but yes, I understand the need and I am here to play my part.

Advocating for Change, One Year at a Time

Malala Yousafzai, activist for girls' education and Nobel Prize laureate

*When the whole world is silent,
even one voice becomes powerful.*

*A Likkhaan healthcare provider is providing contraceptives to women at the clinic.
Photo Credit - Jeremy Hu*

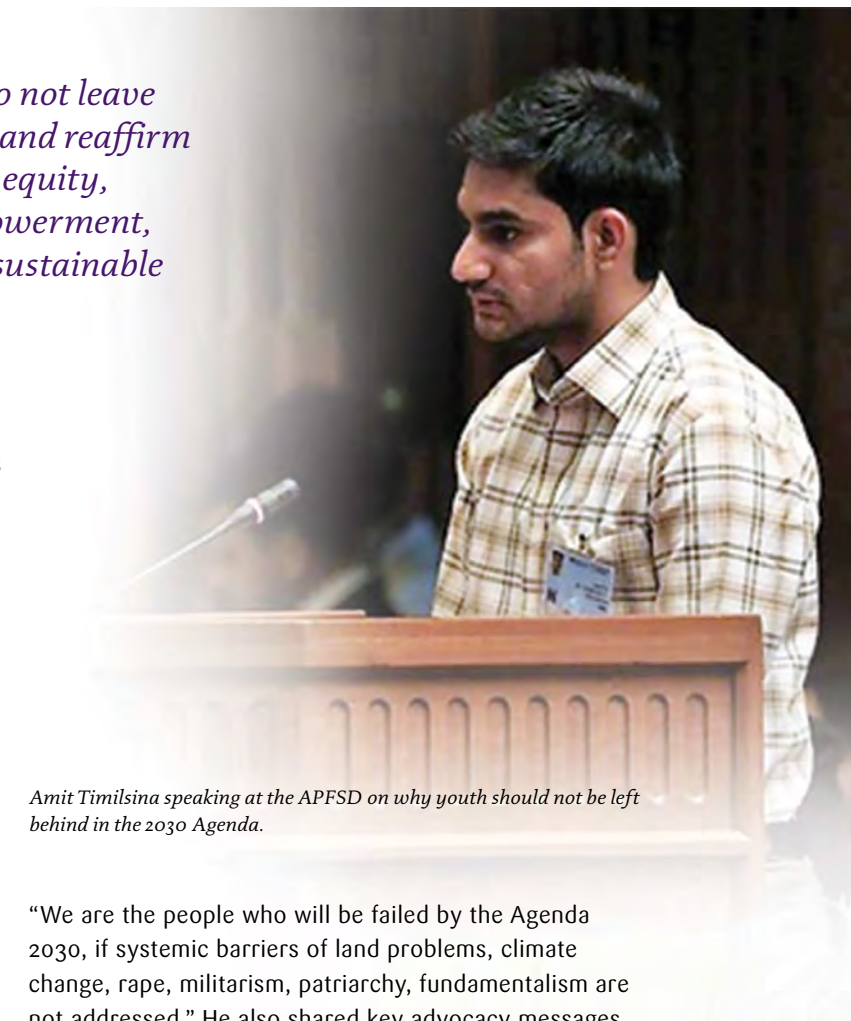
We urge you do not fail the youth, do not leave us behind. We urge you to recognise and reaffirm that human rights, gender equality, equity, social inclusion, justice, youth empowerment, and youth leadership are central to sustainable development.

Nepal—home to the Mount Everest—is synonymous with beauty and culture. But years of political instability and numerous natural calamities have taken a toll on the Himalayan nation. According to UN statistics, one in four people live on less than USD1.25 a day¹⁹ and this became worse with the 2015 earthquake, which pushed even more people into poverty, homelessness, hunger, depriving them of basic sanitation and health facilities. With 40% of the population considered as youth,²⁰ the condition is most stark among young people who have been most impacted by these challenges.

Widespread food insecurity, low education completion rate, high unemployment, hurdles in implementation of SRHR laws, deeply entrenched gender inequality, child marriages and Chaupadhi—the practice of isolating menstruating girls and women in sheds—are hampering the progress of young people.

These sentiments were echoed by our Nepalese RHRN youth platform member, Amit Timilsina, at the fourth APFSD in Bangkok in March last year. APFSD is the annual ministerial gathering of Asian Pacific member states, held prior to the HLPF, to review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Making a passionate appeal at the APFSD, Timilsina, president of YUWA, our partner organisation in Nepal, said: “We urge you do not fail the youth, do not leave us behind. We urge you to recognise and reaffirm that human rights, gender equality, equity, social inclusion, justice, youth empowerment and youth leadership are central to sustainable development.”



Amit Timilsina speaking at the APFSD on why youth should not be left behind in the 2030 Agenda.

“We are the people who will be failed by the Agenda 2030, if systemic barriers of land problems, climate change, rape, militarism, patriarchy, fundamentalism are not addressed.” He also shared key advocacy messages from the Youth ‘Call to Action’²¹ generated at the first pre-APFSD Youth Forum, organised by ARROW in collaboration with the Youth Constituency of Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM).

Timilsina’s moving speech – enabled by ARROW and the APRCEM Youth Constituency at this pivotal regional arena – was one of our many advocacy interventions we undertook last year to realise our key objectives of demanding accountability to human rights standards at the national, regional and international levels, and ensuring universal access to SRHR remained high on the agenda of government.

REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY: Our advocacy is a deliberate process based on evidence to directly and indirectly influence decision makers and stakeholders for the fulfilment of the rights of women and young people and marginalised groups. We use a gendered, feminist and human rights approach to achieve this.

At the regional level, advocacy at APFSD took priority because it is the regional follow-up and review mechanism of the UN HLPF—a critical platform, which has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level. It is an inclusive inter-governmental forum that engages with the member states in the region. In addition to this, the APFSD focuses on the review and implementation of the SDGs around poverty, hunger, gender equality, health and wellbeing—directly related to ours and our partners’ work on universal access to SRHR. ARROW enabled a space for young voices to be heard by organising the Pre-APFSD Youth Forum. The forum brought together 65 youth activists from across the region and they came up with a call to action, that was shared at the intergovernmental APFSD meeting through various interventions.

In July, we participated at the Expert Group Meeting to identify synergies between the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific Region. In this event held by UNESCAP and UNFPA, we discussed all the aspects of progress of implementation of ICPD in the region, as well as the numerous challenges along the way.

ARROW also engages with the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) on a regular basis. The CPD plays a primary role in the follow up of the ICPD PoA. Last year, we submitted written and oral statements including a no-resolution statement, and ensured young people further engaged with this commission by mentoring and strengthening their capacity.

Additionally, ARROW engaged with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) - the global intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. We delivered an oral statement with our partners, the Khan Foundation and Shirkat Gah, highlighting the importance of SRHR to achieve economic empowerment. At a parallel session by the Observatory of the Universality of Rights

ARROW and partners pose after a successful youth forum prior to APFSD in March in Bangkok.



ARROW and partners with other participants at the COP23 joint side-event. Photo Credit Italian Climate Network.

(OURs), we illustrated how religion impacts SRHR with examples from Hindu and Buddhist contexts, based on ARROW’s and our partners’ work at the national levels.

Besides this, we launched the national research of seven countries—Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, and a thematic paper on inclusive families—all of which are part of our ongoing project on religion and SRHR.

We were also a part of the Malaysia CEDAW Shadow Report process and co-wrote the health chapter (Article 12) that highlighted the lack of gender disaggregated data, access to healthcare services, contraceptive prevalence, MMR, abortion, CSE, violations of women’s rights in government hospitals, mandatory HIV testing for Muslim couples, health promotion for sex workers, mandatory female circumcision for Muslim women, differing levels of access to health care for vulnerable women, among other issues.

INTERLINKING ISSUES: As part of our advocacy, we raised awareness on issues that impact SRHR like climate change, religious fundamentalism, food security, disability, conflict and migration. For climate change, we actively engaged at the 23rd Conference of the Parties (COP23) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn, Germany. We enabled the participation of our partners, PATH Foundation from the Philippines and Huvadhoo Aid from Maldives, as national delegates and helped them lobby the ministries of their respective countries.

At a side event in COP23, “Protecting Human Rights, Health and Gender Equality from Climate Change,” we presented findings from our scoping studies on the interlinkages between climate change and SRHR. We also illustrated the need for SRHR to be included in national climate change policies, strategies, National Adaptation Plans as well as in its budgeting at the event.

At a parallel session by the Observatory of the Universality of Rights (OURs), we illustrated how religion impacts SRHR with examples from Hindu and Buddhist contexts, based on ARROW’s and our partners’ work at the national levels.

The Kuala Lumpur meeting in November sparked discussions and formulated practical ways to advance the rights of LGBTIQ persons in Asia Pacific, given the recent wave of intolerance in the region.

One of our key accomplishments last year was organising a regional strategising meeting—‘Conversations on advancing Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Body(SOGIEB) rights in Asia Pacific,’ to decide how to lobby for better protections and a holistic and inclusive advocacy agenda in the region. Held in partnership with the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus and the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTAN), the Kuala Lumpur meeting in November sparked discussions and formulated practical ways to advance the rights of LGBTIQ persons in Asia Pacific, given the recent wave of intolerance in the region.

About 27 participants from 12 countries in South and Southeast Asia working on SOGIESC issues and with the capacity to articulate the advocacy needs of the LGBTIQ community came to the meeting. It helped to understand the challenges faced by activists in their countries and gain a better understanding of discrimination within the LGBTIQ movements. We also discussed advocacy strategies and opportunities using the existing frameworks on SOGIE. The discussions over three days were framed within four thematic areas of language, law, religion and culture and invisibility and will be followed up in 2018.

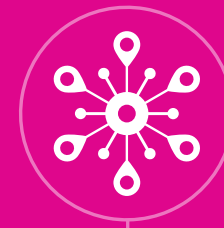
We further carried the LGBTIQ rights discussions into the biennial APCRSR—a major convening space for SRHR practitioners, activists, experts and researchers in the region to deliberate, share information and good practices in advancing the SRHR agenda. At the conference in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, we convened a satellite session, ‘Advocating for LGBTIQ Rights in Asia Pacific: Universality vs Regionality,’ and activists from Bangladesh, Fiji and Indonesia shared their perspectives, challenges and aspirations to further LGBTIQ rights in the region.



ARROW's ED, Sivananthi Thanenthiran, and youth advocates at our satellite session in APCRSR, ‘Advocacy for Young People’s SRHR and Diversity.’

PLENARY SPEECHES: ARROW's ED delivered two speeches, one during the Youth Conference and the other during the main conference titled, ‘Towards a just economic order for sexual and reproductive health.’ We also organised parallel sessions at the APCRSR and were part of the International Steering Committee (ISC) that formulated the themes and developed the programmatic content.

We further carried the LGBTIQ rights discussions into the biennial APCRSR—a major convening space for SRHR practitioners, activists, experts and researchers in the region to deliberate, share information and good practices in advancing the SRHR agenda.



Impact and Interventions

APCRSR, Ha Long Bay
Reach: About 1,000 people

APFSD, Bangkok
Reach: About 700 people

CSW, New York
Reach: About 600 people

EDD, Brussels
Reach: About 100 people

Pre-APFSD Youth Forum, Bangkok
Reach: About 80 people

Asia-Pacific Conference, Taking Collective Action, Bangkok
Reach: 41 people



Our Top Blogs in 2017

Climate Change Exacerbates Gender Inequality, Putting Womens Health at Risk, Open Global Rights and Human Rights Watch

Let's Shift the Attention - From Blaming the Victim to Calling out Patriarchy, ARROW

The Rohingyas: Caught Between Two Countries, Watched by the Rest of the World, ARROW



ARROW's Regional and International Advocacy in 2017

CSW - Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work
New York

Asia-Pacific Conference, Taking Collective Action to Accelerate Transformation of Official Statistics for 2030 Agenda
Bangkok

APFSD
Bangkok

CPD - Changing Population Age Structures and Sustainable Development
New York

EDD
Brussels

HLPF
New York

11th World Congress on Adolescent Health
New Delhi

ASEAN Youth Forum (AYF), 5-6 November, and first Southeast Asian Women's Summit
Manila

9th APCRSR
Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

Submission to Independent Panel Accountability

Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights

Governance and Financial Management

Moliere, late French playwright, actor, and poet

*It is not only what we do, but also what
we do not do, for which we are accountable.*

Arrow team doing team building exercises at the staff retreat in Dusun, Malaysia.

At ARROW, we value non-programmatic aspects of operations. These include risk management, efficient practices in programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, accountable and transparent decision-making and governance mechanisms, effective financial and administrative procedures and good Human Resources (HR) management policies. A strong organisational foundation is critical to achieving our aims and assume leadership and supportive roles.

PLANNING AND REVIEW MEETINGS: We had three planning meetings last year. In January, we consolidated the annual work plan of the organisation and discussed the intersections and work cohesion across programmes, as well as identified key platforms for effective interventions. In July, we reviewed the organisation's work based on achievements, challenges and lessons learnt from the first half year and in October, we reviewed the activities completed during the year and discussed the operational budget and workplan for 2018.

STRENGTHENING ADMINISTRATIVE AND HR MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEMS: There were several changes within the new structure in line with the new Strategic Plan. We planned on having a total of 25 staff including the ED, a Programme Director, an Operations Director, five Programme Managers, nine programme staff and eight operations staff. The inclusion of two Directors within the new structure was to ensure oversight and supervision of the organisation's programmatic and operational areas. It was also to further strengthen support for the ED to envision, strategise, oversee and ensure a high quality of programme, financial and HR management.

We also introduced a 360-Degree Performance Evaluation System. The appraisal system relies on feedback from other staff members to measure performance on major key performance indicators. A systematic compensation and benefits review for ARROW was concluded in August by Philip Wong, an organisational development expert in Malaysia. This review was co-financed by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), a global

network advocating for breastfeeding, which did a similar review for its own organisation.

A Board of Directors -Staff Retreat took place in the Dusun, Negeri Sembilan, from 31 November -1 December. The retreat's aim was to expose the staff to use theatre, poetry and performance, speech and drama to build confidence, improve public speaking, communication and creative self-expression. The two-day retreat involved presentation of case scenarios, role play, drawing, games, drama and acting.

STRENGTHENING TIES WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA: The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development visited our office in August. We received guests from three departments from the ministry—Women's Development, International Relations Division, and Strategic Collaboration Division. The delegates were led by Chua Choon Hwa, Undersecretary of the Policy and Strategic Planning Division. The purpose was to get to know our work and our staff, and learn about the organisation's vision and mission. The delegates also discussed potential collaborations between the ministry and ARROW. We offered to provide technical expertise to the ministry on research, report writing or any other support within our ability.

STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING, TRAINING, AND HEALTHY LIVING: We invested significant amount of resources and time on staff capacity building. A number of internal coffee chats were organised to share knowledge among staff. One of the coffee chats saw our interns present the alternative Voluntary National Reports they had worked on during their two-week internship. In another chat, staff shared learnings from the Gender and Tech Institute (GTI) workshop they attended.

There was also a coffee chat on human rights accountability, where a staff member shared the paper on ARROW's strategy on rights accountability, focusing on the UPR process. We organised a workshop, People's Performance Management for NGOs, and sponsored other Malaysian NGOs - Musawah, Women's Aid Organisation and the International Women's Rights Action

Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW-AP) to participate in the training. Additionally, as part of our commitment to staff’s well-being and health, a weekly exercise programme was introduced to ensure staff’s health and fitness.

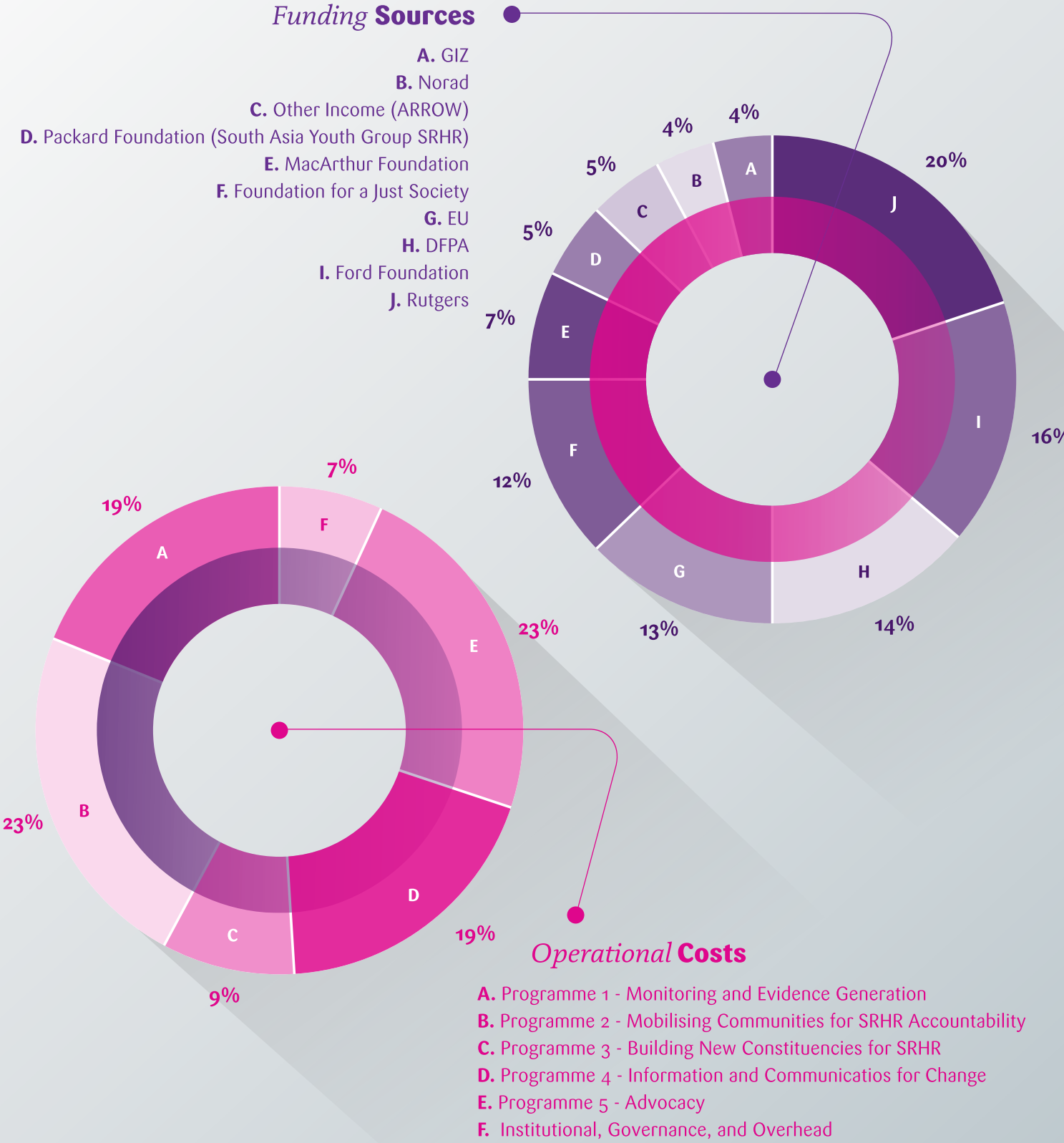
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PROGRAMME ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC): Our board convened two meetings last year—in May and November. In May, they approved the organisation’s new SP, reviewed operations and financials of the organisation. The meeting was held back-to-back with the Annual General Meeting and addressed the possibility of upgrading the Navision—an accounting software, which will be implemented in 2018. The second was to approve the operational budget along with the work plan of 2018 and to discuss the overall organisational development. Meanwhile, the PAC members convened their annual meeting on 7 and 8 February in Kuala Lumpur to review and provide feedback on the programme deliverables of 2017.

ARROW-UNITED STATES: ARROW U.S received a tax exemption status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in September 2017. The IRS determined that ARROW-US would be a tax exempt public charity under section 501 (c) (3) of the IRS code and the tax exemption was effective retroactive from the date of its incorporation on 11 April 2016. Therefore, ARROW-U.S is qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers, and gifts. It was incorporated to support the achievement of SRHR for all in the Asia Pacific region and elsewhere, and also to support the programmes and work of ARROW Malaysia. The ARROW-U.S BOD convened it first board meeting on 29 December via Skype.

In 2017, ARROW’s total operational costs amounted to USD 1,962,750 compared to USD 2,159,510 in 2016. This amount was allocated to the five programmes of ARROW’s SP, for organisational development, institutional, governance, and overhead costs. The total operational fund was USD 862,408 received during the year. USD 971,646 was brought forward from 2016 and USD 128,696 is receivable in 2018. The 2017 operational fund was about 10% lower than 2016 (USD 2,159,510 - mainly due to the appreciation of the USD against MYR in 2017, however this is for the purpose of reporting in USD only).

PARTICULARS	ACTUAL COST (USD)	% TOTAL COST	ALLOCATION	
			ARROW	PARTNERS
PROGRAMMATIC COSTS				
Programme 1: Monitoring and Evidence-Generation	370,071.17	19%	164,244.53	205,826.64
Programme 2: Mobilising Communities	445,352.12	23%	240,730.80	204,621.32
Programme 3: Building New Constituencies	174,664.14	9%	172,664.14	2,000.00
Programme 4: Information and Communications	380,363.10	19%	378,812.69	1,550.41
Programme 5: Advocacy	442,063.96	23%	406,126.87	—
Institutional, Governance, and Overhead	150,235.40	7%	150,235.40	35,937.09
TOTAL OPERATIONAL COST	1,962,749.89	100%	1,512,814.43	449,935.45
@RM4.30 : USD1.00			77%	23%

Source: ARROW Audit 2017



The ARROW Community

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Bishakha Datta**
Executive Director, Point of View, India
- **Naeemah Khan**
Gender and Humanitarian Analyst, UN Women Fiji
- **Pramada Menon**
Consultant India
- **Rachel Arinii Judhistari**
Programme Director, Ruang Guru, Indonesia
- **Rashidah Shuib**
Academic-activist and Professor, School of Health Sciences (PPSK), Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
- **Rozana Mohd Isa**
Executive Director, Sisters in Islam, Malaysia
- **Tu Anh Hoang**
Director-Founder, Centre for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCHIP), Vietnam

PROGRAMME ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- **Babu Ram Pant**
Consultant, Nepal
- **Marwa Sharafeldin**
Board Member, Musawah Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family, Egypt
- **Mary Gyknell**
Advocacy Officer, GALANG Philippines
- **Maya Indira Ganesh**
Director of Applied Research, Tactical Technology Collective, Germany
- **Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki**
Director of Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC), Tonga
- **Otgoonbaatar Tsendendemberel**
Board Member, Monfemnet, Mongolia
- **Renu Khanna**
Founder/ Trustee, SAHAJ, India
- **Sundari Ravindran**
Professor, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, India

- **Suri Kempe**
Programme Manager, Musawah, Malaysia
- **Titi Soentoro**
Policy Advisor of Aksi! For Gender, Social, and Ecological Justice, Indonesia

FULL-TIME STAFF

- **Azmilia Mohd Kamil**
Officer, Operations and Finance
- **Azra Abdul Cader**
Programme Manager, Monitoring and Evidence-Generation for Change
- **Biplabi Shrestha**
Programme Manager, Building New Constituencies for SRHR
- **Dhivya Kanagasingam**
Programme Officer, Monitoring and Evidence-Generation for Change
- **Hema Annadorai**
Officer, Operations and Human Resource
- **Hwei Mian Lim**
Senior Programme Officer, Building New Constituencies for SRHR
- **Lee Mei Poh**
Manager, Operations and Finance
- **Mangala Namasivayam**
Programme Manager, Information and Communication for Change
- **Maria Melinda Flores Ando**
Senior Programme Officer, Publications, Communications, and Advocacy (till October 2017)
- **Nisha Santhar**
Programme Officer, Mobilising Communities for SRR Accountability
- **Nor Azura Zakaria**
Officer, Operations (till August 2017)
- **Norlela Shahrani**
Senior Executive, Admin and Human Resource (till October 2017)



- **Paremela Naidu**
Officer, Operations
- **Pooja Badarinath**
Programme Manager, Advocacy
- **Rosnani Hitam**
Executive Officer
- **Sai Jyothirmai Racherla**
Programme Director
- **Samreen Shahbaz**
Senior Programme Officer, Mobilising Communities for SRR Accountability
- **Shazlin Azmira Rehan**
Officer, Operations
- **Sivananthi KV Thanenthiran**
Executive Director
- **Teong Seow Kin**
Senior Programme Officer, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
- **Uma Thiruvengadam**
Assistant Programme Officer, ASKus and Marketing (till August 2017)

TEMPORARY STAFF AND INTERNS

- **Ho Sau Fong**
Senior Finance Officer
- **Pearl Wong Lynn Qin**
- **Preeti Kannan**
Programme Officer

CONTRACTUAL

- **Mallika Karuppaiah**
Housekeeping

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTOR

- **Bagus Sosroseno**

Donors

- DANIDA through the DFPA
- David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- EU
- FJS
- Ford Foundation
- FP2020
- GIZ
- MacArthur Foundation
- NORAD
- Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)
- WPF Rutgers Netherlands
- UNFPA

Vendors and Contractors

- **Al-Zam Sdn. Bhd.**
Company secretary
- **Anand Ponnudurai, Bodipalar, Ponnudurai, DeSilva**
Legal advice services
- **ASCIITech Sales and Service**
IT Support
- **Brothers Base Centre**
Toner supplier
- **Coway (M) Sdn Bhdand Sterling Pure Sdn Bhd.**
Drinking water
- **ComNet Telecom (M) Sdn Bhd.**
Telephone
- **CYF Contracts and Marketing**
Printing services
- **Fazli Fadzil**
Office maintenance contractor
- **Good Point Enterprise**
Air conditioner contractor
- **Grand Lotus Travel Agencies**
Travel services
- **Heritage Marketing Services**
Photocopy services
- **Heway, DHL, and Poslaju**
Mailing services
- **Jason Tan Z Kiat**
IT technical support
- **K.A Fazal Enterprises Sdn Bhd.**
Stationery supplier
- **LINs Advertising and Marketing Sdn Bhd. and Job Street**
Recruitment agencies
- **M.M. Ally’s Sdn. Bhd.**
Money changer
- **Maybank KL Sentral**
Banking services
- **Micom Sdn Bhd.**
Printing services
- **Nand Digital Corporation Sdn. Bhd.**
DVD design and animation
- **Nicolette de Lange Mallari**
Publication and information design
- **Nation Board Sdn. Bhd.**
Web hosting services
- **Patricia Kong and ERA Agencies**
Insurance services
- **RapidKill**
Pest Control
- **S. Syed Ibrahim**
Newspaper delivery services
- **Sj Grant Thornton**
Chartered accountants/external auditors
- **Synic Consulting Sdn Bhd**
Accounting software company
- **Wong Kum Fatt, Ng Ah Meng Sdn Bhd.**
Landlord



Notes

1. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13006828>.
2. See http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Call-for-Action-to-Integrate-SRHR-to-Post-2015_Cambodia.pdf.
3. Ibid.
4. See <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2016/01/women-in-cambodia-continue-to-face-violence>.
5. See <http://rhac.org.kh/en/about-us-2/>.
6. See http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Call-for-Action-to-Integrate-SRHR-to-Post-2015_Cambodia.pdf.
7. See http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/AdvocateGuide_2016_webready.pdf
8. See <http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/ALT-SDGs-AP-WEB.pdf>.
9. See <http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/AIDS-Accountability-International-Scorecard-for-Women-and-Girls-on-SRHR-in-Africa-Report.pdf>.
10. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-36606560/pakistan-s-transgender-people-live-in-fear>.
11. Known as the Global consortium, it includes the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rutgers Netherlands, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality (CHOICE), dance4life, HIVOS, the International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Region (IPPFAR)-regional coordinator for Africa, and Latin American and Caribbean Women’s Health Network (LACWHN) – regional coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean.
12. <http://arrow.org.my/publication/womens-health-climate-change/>
13. See <http://arrow.org.my/publication/sex-rights-gender-age-climate-change/>.
14. See <http://arrow.org.my/publication/srhr-disaster/>.
15. See <http://arrow.org.my/publication/sexual-rights-women-psychosocial-disabilities-india/>
16. See <http://arrow.org.my/publication/afc-religion-srhr/>.
17. See <http://arrow.org.my/publication/afc-srhr-sdgs/>.
18. See <http://arrow.org.my/publication/afc-disability-srhr/>.
19. See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/population-living-below-125-ppp-day>.
20. See <http://nepal.unfpa.org/en/publications/nepali-youth-figures>.
21. See <http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/APY-CTA-Web-Version.pdf>.



Woman working in the rice fields in Gurkha, Nepal. Photo credit: Quick Shot / Shutterstock.com