

**#SRHR4ALL**

*Forging Ahead  
in Uncertain  
Times*

**arrow**

*annual report 2018*

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



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*The 2018 ARROW Annual Report is also available in web and PDF formats. Interested in a resource or an activity reported here? Visit the ARROW website to access interactive links for further reading.*

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*arrow*  
*annual report*  
**2018**

The background of the page is a solid dark purple. Overlaid on this are several large, overlapping geometric shapes in lighter shades of purple and magenta. These shapes include rounded rectangles, triangles, and polygons that create a complex, layered pattern. The shapes are semi-transparent, allowing the darker purple background to show through, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is modern and minimalist.



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## Reflections from the Executive Director

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2018 was a tumultuous year to say the very least with tensions and struggles between the left and the right in both the US and the UK. But 2018 also was the year when citizens made powerful stands against unfettered power.

This is the year that Christine Blasey Ford testified against Brett Kavanaugh, who would then go on to be elected to the Supreme Court of the United States. This would further fuel the #MeToo movement, which started at the end of 2017, and take it across borders to the Indian cinematic industry. It culminated in the stepping down of MJ Akbar, who was the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, after his ex-media colleagues and underlings came forward to accuse him of sexual harassment. This was the year of the Parkland shootings, where 17 students were shot. This ignited the rise of student activism against the NRA, where students organised and participated in protests named as the 'March for Our Lives'—touted as the biggest youth-led protests since the Vietnam War.

Closer to home, in Malaysia, voters turned up in massive numbers to remove the party which was in power for more than 60 years, in a bid to halt corruption in the country. Pakistan elected Imran Khan as Prime Minister. In both countries, young people had pushed for change.

A number of countries in the region were preparing for elections, casting questions on activists and organisations on whether to be pragmatic or to push for progress. A number of elections such as in Bangladesh were marred with violence and conflict.

This was the stage upon which women's rights and SRHR organisations were to implement programmes and strategies which was to take forward the agenda. The year started with ARROW and partners urging in a written petition to United Nations Economic and Social

Commission on Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) to ensure the full participation of CSOs in a robust process around the Asian Pacific Population Conference (APPC) Mid-Term Review and a sound set of indicators to monitor progress towards the APPC. This was signed by 194 NGOs in the region. In preparation for the APPC, ARROW helped mobilise our partners across 13 countries to generate national reports for International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+25), and to dialogue with their governments on their findings.

Creating new spaces for advocacy and dialogue has been a critical endeavour in times of political uncertainty. 2018 saw ARROW again being in the lead of organising the Youth Forum for the Asian Pacific Forum, and this venue being recognised as one of ESCAP's official processes to feed into the Asian Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). We also created a new space at the regional level for amplified action on implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) by working with UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNFPA to bring together 90 government officials, regional and national civil society organisations representatives, and UN agency representatives from 15 countries in the Asia Pacific Region.

ARROW also organised and hosted the first regional She Decides event in Kuala Lumpur to commemorate the first anniversary of the launch of She Decides. ARROW is one of the She Decides champions, and we felt it was imperative to bring the movement and ground it in Asia—as a means of ensuring a consistent platform and voice on sexual and reproductive autonomy and agency. This first event was held in cooperation with the embassies of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands, and brought together activists from 12 different countries and 100 Malaysian participants around stories from the grassroots in both pictorial and spoken formats, and discussions on the local issues of sexual and reproductive rights of girls and women.

ARROW also initiated and launched the Women and Earth (WORTH) Initiative which functions as an innovative

advocacy fund. The fund solicits good ideas from NGOs to advocate the inter-linkages between gender, SRHR, and climate change, and takes them through an innovation process that enables them to refine their ideas. The ideas are then picked through a competitive process and those that win, obtain a grant.

ARROW's two largest projects focus directly on the sexual and reproductive rights of young people and the right to safe abortion in particular. This enables us to build grassroots movements across different countries to mobilise and advocate for these two critical issues.

The right to safe abortion work concentrated on increasing capacities for evidence generation around abortion at the national level with partners across five countries—Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, and the Philippines—as a strong evidence base is necessary to demand accountability from duty-bearers. The partners also called to form a Solidarity Alliance on the Right to Safe Abortion—a Global South alliance.

This is critical work in a world ruled by the fanatical anti-women ideologies that drive policies like the Global Gag Rule. And through this we hope to bring our own to the political tableau that adds to the progressive movement of #Repealthe8th in Ireland and Argentina.

The other is on the sexual rights of young people, which in the Asian region continues to be heavily contested. Stakeholders working towards raising the age of marriage are also considering raising the age of consent so both are kept in tandem, without recognising young people's autonomy. Religious laws in countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia are categorising pre-marital sex as crimes and applying sanctions such as whipping.

Sexual diversity is also criminalised and this implies that the state is imposing heteronormativity upon its citizens. Establishing perspectives on young people's autonomy to make decisions over choice of partner, and timing of marriage; as well as ensuring their rights to do so are protected and fulfilled, is a vital pursuit for activists and organisations in the region.



2018 was a fulfilling year despite the turmoil and the political upheavals. We continued to collaborate with our 94 partners around the world as we “push back against the pushback,” to quote the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. We relentlessly worked together with our partners to make interventions, advocated for the overall improvement of SRHR of women and young people in Asia Pacific and beyond, as we move one year closer to mark the 25th anniversary of the historic ICPD in Nairobi. The best years are those which are very often forged in the fiery furnace, because the work that comes from those years is built and bound with strength, and stands the test of time.

**Sivananthi Thanenthiran**  
Executive Director, ARROW

# 2018 Milestones



**14,970**

Knowledge Products  
Distributed



**25,466**

Visitors to arrow.org.my

**85,561**

Page Views

**25,080**

New Visitors

**36,351**

Sessions

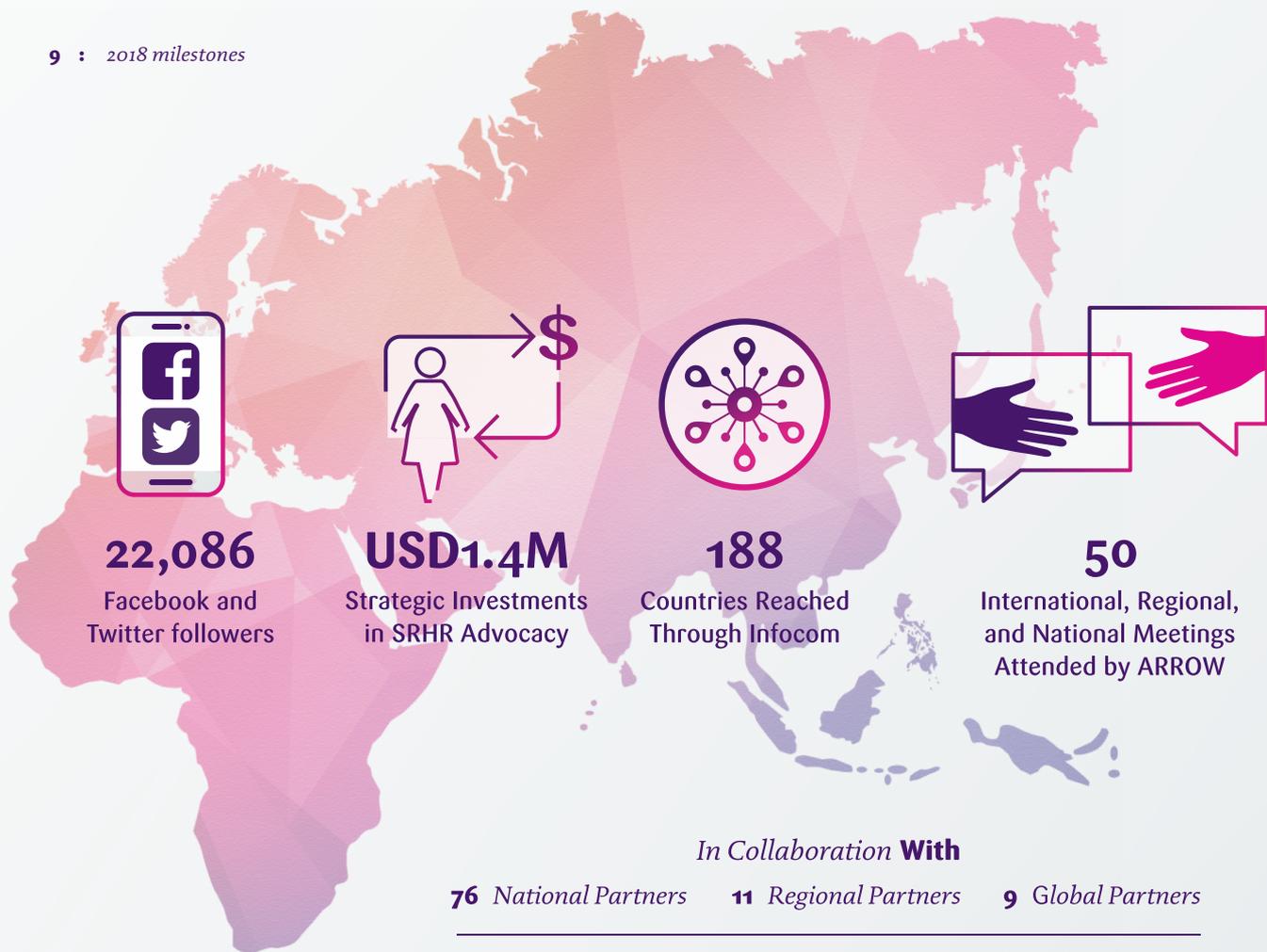


**5,045**

Publications Downloaded  
from our Website

## Networks and Committees We Are Part of

- Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSHR) International Steering Committee
- Alliance of Inclusive Muslims (AIM)
- ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum (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)
- Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)
- Global Nutrition Group
- 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



### In Collaboration With

76 National Partners    11 Regional Partners    9 Global Partners

96 Partners in Total

### Country Partners

**BANGLADESH:** Adorsho Mohila Sangstha; Annesha Samaj Sheba Shongho; Artha-Shamajik Shikkha Sanskritic Unnayan 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; Equal Measures 2030; 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 2018, our work was guided by our strategic plan for 2017-2021.

### Our Vision

An equal, just and equitable world, where every woman and young person enjoys their full sexual and reproductive 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 2018



- **Face to Face Right Here Right Now (RHRN) Meeting**, Netherlands
- **WORTH Conceptualisation and Planning Meeting**, Kuala Lumpur

## JANUARY



## DECEMBER

- **24th Conference of the Parties (COP 24)** Copenhagen
- **Working on SRHR in Times of Opposition** Kuala Lumpur

## FEBRUARY

- **9th World Urban Forum**, Malaysia
- **Programme Advisory Committee Meeting** Malaysia
- **Adoption of Pakistan's UPR Outcome Report, 37th Session of Human Rights Council (HRC)** Geneva
- **Green Climate Fund (GCF) 19th Meeting**



- **EuroNGOs Meeting** Belgium
- **ASEAN People's Forum** Singapore
- **Global Forum on Gender Statistics** Tokyo
- **Asia Regional Dialogue** Bangkok
- **APPC Mid-term Review and CSO Forum** Bangkok
- **International Conference of Family Planning** Rwanda
- **People's Health Assembly** Bangladesh
- **Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicator and Data Disaggregate Meeting** Sweden
- **Expert Group Meeting on Surrogacy and Human Rights** Bangkok

## NOVEMBER

- **SheDecides Day** Malaysia
- **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 62** New York
- **Global Nutrition Planning Meeting** Rome
- **Youth Forum, Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) Bangkok**
- **5th APFSD and APFSD CSO Forum** Bangkok
- **Asia Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development** Bangkok
- **Round Table by Community of Practitioners on Accountability and Social Action in Health (COPASH)** India

## MARCH

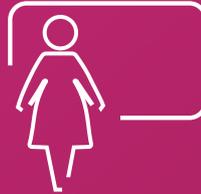
## OCTOBER

- **Equal Measures 2030 and SAHAJ** New Delhi
- **IWRAW G2L Training and CEDAW 71st Session - Review of Nepal** Geneva
- **SEAHRN Conference** Philippines
- **16th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development** Geneva



**APRIL**

- **Briefing for Reviewing Member States on ARROW's Joint Youth-led Shadow Report for Bangladesh UPR**  
Geneva
- **51st Commission on Population Development (CPD)**  
New York
- **Inter-disciplinary and Intersectional Dialogue on Un-policing Identity, Morality, Sexuality, and Bodily Autonomy**  
New York



- **Meeting with Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA)**  
Malaysia

**JUNE**

- **Girls Not Brides 2nd Global Meeting**  
Malaysia
- **Africa Regional Dialogue**  
Kenya



**MAY**

- **High Level Political Forum (HLPF)**  
New York
- **Green Climate Fund Board Meeting**  
Korea
- **Adolescent Pregnancy Research**  
Fiji
- **International Steering Committee, Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights**  
Cambodia
- **Reproductive Equity, Rights and Justice**  
Morocco
- **She Decides Strategy Retreat**  
Amsterdam
- **Equal Measures 2030 (EM2030) and HLPF**  
New York
- **Mid-Term Review of Ministerial Declaration and CSO Preparatory Meeting**  
Bangkok



- **EmPower: Empowering Women to Secure Climate Resilient Society**  
Bangkok
- **Guttmacher-Lancet Commission on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**  
Bangkok
- **39th Session of Human Rights Council**  
Geneva
- **Equal Measures 2030 Launch Event**  
New York

**AUGUST**

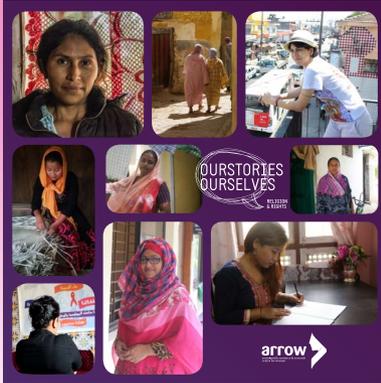
- **International Forum on Developing an Advocacy Agenda for Abortion**  
Portugal
- **Bangkok Climate Change Conference**  
Bangkok
- **RHRN Regional Forum**  
Bangkok
- **Regional Multi Stakeholder Dialogue on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)**  
Bangkok

**SEPTEMBER**

**JULY**

# ARROW Publications launched in 2018

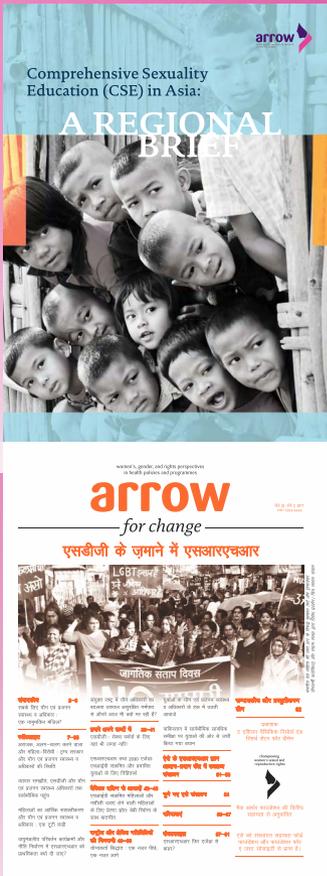
January



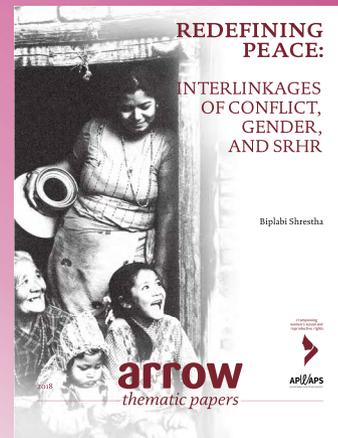
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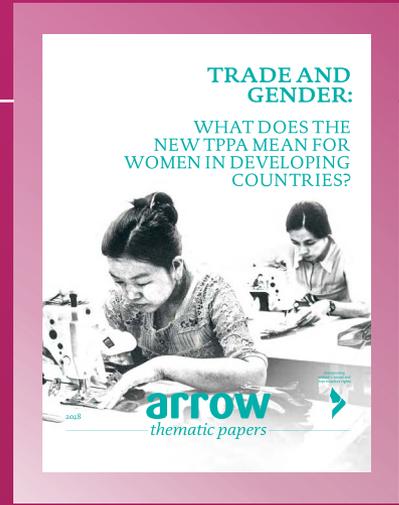
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June



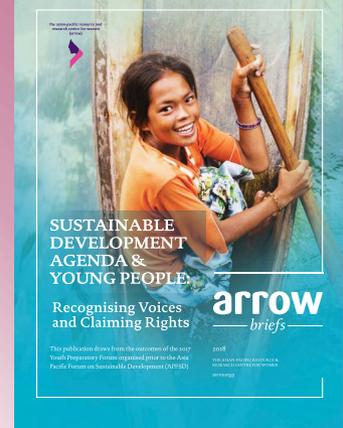
December

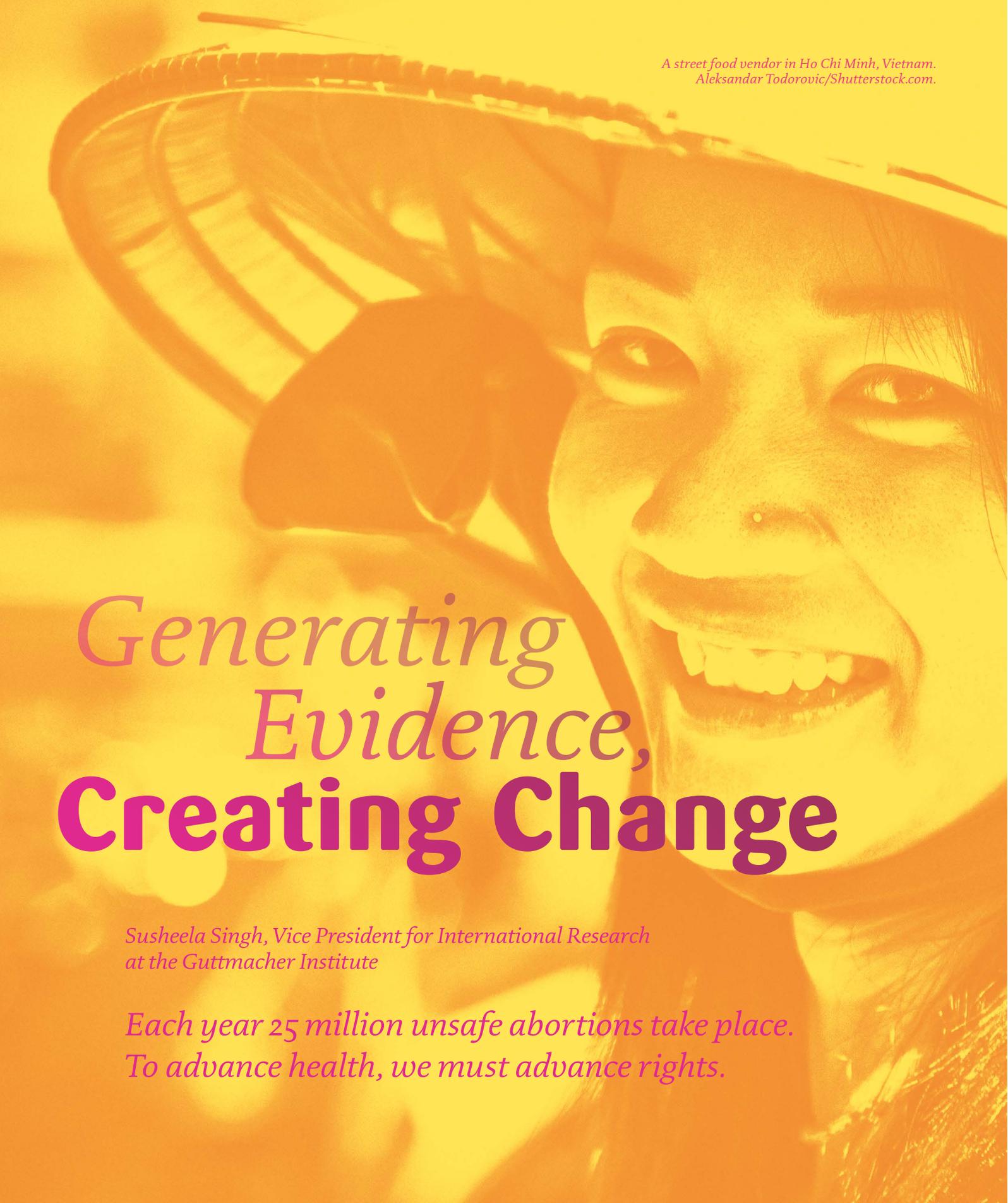


September



August





*A street food vendor in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam.  
Aleksandar Todorovic/Shutterstock.com.*

*Generating  
Evidence,  
Creating Change*

*Susheela Singh, Vice President for International Research  
at the Guttmacher Institute*

*Each year 25 million unsafe abortions take place.  
To advance health, we must advance rights.*

**P**rogress towards achieving the right to safe abortion was mixed in the Global South in 2018. It was a historic year for feminists and abortion rights advocates because of its landmark wins and heart breaking losses. Although the year witnessed an extraordinary victory for Irish women and girls, as their country voted in a referendum to repeal the decades-old, near total ban on abortion with an overwhelming 66.4% ‘Yes’,<sup>1</sup> other countries regressed in decisions that could ensure access to safe abortion.

The home of Pope Francis—Argentina, on the other hand, rejected a bill to legalise abortion in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy after a 15-hour intense debate by lawmakers in the Senate. Despite a groundswell of green—the symbolic colour chosen by the pro-choice movement to signify the right to free, legal, and safe abortion—the anti-abortion position and the influence of the Catholic Church in politics and society obstructed a progressive decision, and the result was a missed opportunity for reproductive rights in Argentina.<sup>2</sup>

Globally, restrictive laws are one among the many reasons that force women to turn to risky procedures to end unwanted pregnancies. Closer to home, Asia saw around 4.6 million women of reproductive age treated for complications from unsafe abortion in 2012. A staggering six per cent or 5,400 of all maternal deaths in 2014 were from unsafe abortion.<sup>3</sup>

Since the historic ICPD PoA in Cairo in 1994, Asia Pacific has witnessed a few progressive legislations, in varying degrees, enabling some access to abortion services<sup>4</sup> in countries like Cambodia, India, Nepal, and Vietnam. But in countries like Indonesia, Lao PDR, Pakistan, and the Philippines, legal barriers continue to curb women and girls’ ability to get a safe abortion.<sup>5</sup>

These narrow rulings, multiple barriers including ability to get information, services, the stigma attached, the inability to make decisions regarding their own bodies and the shocking number of maternal deaths in the region led to the inception of our project—“Claiming the right to safe abortion.” The project began in 2018 with six partners in five Asian countries—Bangladesh, Cambodia,

*The Alliance prioritises the right to safe abortion as a human rights issue, positioning it as Global South challenge, thereby bringing to the fore women’s lived realities and the impact of unsafe abortion on women’s reproductive rights.*

India, Nepal and the Philippines. Supported by the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), our five-year project will strengthen the evidence base, build perspectives on barriers in accessing rights, information and services, and call for accountability to improve women and girls’ rights to safe abortion.

In its first year, national partners initiated five baseline studies, and the evidence was used to develop the ‘Theory of Change’ at the national level and inform the advocacy planning for each country. We also initiated the Solidarity Alliance for the Right to Safe Abortion—an alliance of six core group of partner organisations including ARROW, to improve evidence on unsafe abortion. The Alliance prioritises the right to safe abortion as a human rights issue, positioning it as Global South challenge, thereby bringing to the fore women’s lived realities and the impact of unsafe abortion on women’s reproductive rights. The alliance put out three statements in solidarity with key incidents in the region on abortion.

We also made text additions on abortion in Cambodia’s civil society submission at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) with our partner, the Reproductive Health Association in Cambodia. It positioned abortion as a human rights issue and highlighted barriers that prevent access to safe abortion, despite legalisation under certain conditions in Cambodia. The text also called for raising awareness particularly among marginalised groups, enhancing services, providing adequate information, stronger referral systems, and ensuring the right to contraception information and services for all, including young women.



*ARROW women wearing green in solidarity with the Argentinian pro-choice and abortion activists #AbortoLegalYa.”*

Our programme, ‘Monitoring and Evidence-Generation for Change,’ aims to ensure all women and girls are able to realise their sexual and reproductive rights, by recognising and addressing barriers to these rights. We do this by monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, ICPD and Beijing Platform for Action, and developing rights-based indicators that review progress on SRHR to support more effective advocacy.

Monitoring international commitment to women’s SRHR is a powerful political strategy that we, at ARROW, use to press for accountability from national governments in the region towards their commitments to women’s health. These efforts strengthen the conceptual basis on which advocates can integrate SRHR into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), presenting a strong evidence-base to lobby for continued progress alongside the ICPD PoA and advocate for the right to safe abortion in Asia.

The ICPD PoA came into being in 1994—a year after the birth of ARROW. Since then, we have consistently

audited the ICPD+5, ICPD+10, ICPD+15 and ICPD+20 implementation in the Asia Pacific and the Global South. And now through the ICPD+25 partnership initiative, we have successfully tracked 25 years of its implementation in 13 Asian countries.

With our partners from Asia Pacific, we produced 13 national level ICPD+25 monitoring reports—to keep the agenda alive, given that women and young people continue to face violations to sexual and reproductive rights. The reports analysed key gender and sexuality issues discussed within the PoA, and provided an overview of the progress, gaps and challenges in the implementation of Agenda 2030. Additionally, a regional draft report was developed, based on the country data, to bolster the evidence around SRHR needs in the region.

From these draft national reports, we, along with our ICPD+25 partners, developed the national and regional advocacy messaging and strategies for the Review of the 6th Asian and Pacific Declaration on Population and Development in Bangkok. We also used the evidence from the reports to call on the 13 governments to set

up a monitoring framework on SRHR in their countries. The final reports will be published in early 2019 and our partners will continue to use the evidence generated to hold governments accountable, through policy dialogues, and press for ICPD implementation and realisation of universal access to SRHR.

In 2018, we launched and developed several publications. Our *“Sustainable Development Agenda & Young People: Recognising Voices and Claiming Rights”*<sup>6</sup> demonstrated how youth issues are an integral part of each of the 17 SDGs and emphasised the need for them to be addressed for realising the SDGs. Young people can use this publication to monitor, demand accountability and advocate for their wellbeing across the SDGs.

The second paper, *“Trade and Gender: What does the new TPPA mean for women in developing countries?”*<sup>7</sup> is very timely for our region because of its analysis of how the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) impacts women in developing countries part of the agreement. It offers a holistic perspective on intersecting issues around economy, food security, labour, policy space, intellectual property and environment through a gender prism. The paper can be used by CSOs and stakeholders in different countries to assess how trade agreements such as the CPTPP impact their economy, labour, food security, access to justice, intellectual property and their environment.

In 2019, we will publish the *Advocate’s Guide on Universal Access to SRHR in the Era of the SDGs* to monitor the progress towards SDG+5 from 2015-2020. We will also produce a user-friendly resource, the *101 Guide on Gender, Feminism, and SRHR*. Additionally, work on an ambitious Gender Data Institute will commence as a mechanism to transfer content on gender equality and SRHR. This is to strengthen capacities of ARROW, our partners and beyond to encourage more effective use of evidence for advocacy. This will also add value to the *101 Guide on Gender, Feminism, and SRHR*.

As part of our ICPD+25 initiative, our partners will collaborate with national level NGOs, working with

women, health and human rights, as well as the government and the private sector to move the ICPD agenda forward, and advocate for national goals.

These reports at the national and regional levels will also build into the Beijing+25 review process scheduled in 2019. Building momentum around SDG+5 will be a priority so SRHR is adequately reflected in the 2030 Agenda. Integrating ICPD work into the SDG agenda, through internal, external scoping and mapping, evidence generation, innovative data presentations, engagement with partners and advocacy for SDG+5 monitoring, will ensure effective use of evidence to inform policy.

Besides these, our national baseline reports, produced as part of the Safe Abortion Project, will be finalised and used to advocate through human rights mechanisms such as the UPR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and for recommendations and resolutions at the national levels. The Solidarity Alliance for the Right to Safe Abortion will hold its first Global South meeting in 2019 to grow its membership and enable the right for safe abortion for women in the region through targeted actions including advocacy.

*Dissemination of findings on Tamil Nadu from the baseline study on abortion in Chennai to civil society members and networks working on health issues by CommonHealth, India.*



## Safe Abortion: Evidence from the Ground

### BANGALDESH

নারীপক্ষ

- Abortion not legal unless woman's life is in danger. But a policy on menstrual regulation (MR) provides some access through regulation of menstrual cycle.
- In 2010, about 653,000 women obtained MR where NGOs and private sector provided 27% and 9% of MR respectively.
- 1.2 million induced abortions took place in 2014, most provided in unsafe conditions by untrained providers.<sup>8</sup>
- Poor accessibility and quality of menstrual regulation through medication (MRM) services provided by government, NGOs, and pharmacies. Constraints include opening times, inadequate staffing, limited training or service providers, lack of counselling, and limited supply of drugs.
- Sex workers' knowledge on MRM more than other women sampled. But most sex workers unaware of the medication provided due to information gaps in service delivery.

### CAMBODIA



- Liberal abortion grounds but younger and unmarried women unable to access services due to stigma and refusal of care for moral and/or religious reasons.
- Only 2.7% of women know all aspects of abortion legality. Awareness higher among younger women, urban, educated, and married women.
- Many women able to identify at least one safe abortion provider.

### INDIA



- Liberal grounds but law doesn't guarantee access to safe abortion services.
- Differences in availability and affordability of services in states of Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Bihar has poor public health infrastructure and few trained personnel to provide safe abortions. Tamil Nadu has good public health infrastructure but abortion is only provided in secondary health facilities, if at all.
- Both states grossly under-reported abortion numbers, 0.2% and 4.5% respectively.
- Tamil Nadu has a history of female infanticide in certain districts and NGO involvement against sex-selective abortion has grown and supported by the states' women's movement.

### NEPAL



- Progressive legalisation but more than 50% abortions are clandestine.
- Negative attitudes towards abortion and women who have abortions, especially those pregnant outside of marriage.
- Abortion viewed as wrong, morally unacceptable, and as killing of a human being.

### PHILIPPINES



- Estimated 1,000 maternal deaths each year—roughly three deaths per day—caused by unsafe abortions.<sup>9</sup>
- Abortion criminalised and many women hospitalised for complications from unsafe services—due to the influence of the Catholic Church.
- Medical, nursing, and midwifery students have some level of theoretical knowledge on abortion but mostly inadequate and limited.
- Lack of awareness on social and political aspects of abortion, limited knowledge around SRHR.
- Many influenced by religion but recognise medical necessity of therapeutic abortion and support humane, compassionate, and non-judgemental post-abortion care.



ARROW and partners hold a panel discussion and workshop on the right to safe abortion, People's Health Assembly, in Savar, Bangladesh.

*The Fourth People's Health Assembly (PHA)— an initiative by the People's Health Movement in Bangladesh from 16-19 November 2018, was a watershed movement for ARROW. The event presented us an opportunity to visibilise and mainstream SRH services, particularly safe abortion services, as an integral component of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The assembly brought together civil society organisations, social movements, academics and other stakeholders from around the world to share experiences for mutual learning.*

*With our ongoing project, "Claiming the right to safe abortion" in five Asian countries, the PHA helped galvanise support and plan for change at the national and regional levels. We strategically positioned safe abortion into the larger health discourse including as a rights issues at PHA. With our partners from India, Nepal and Philippines, we organised a workshop, "The Right to Safe Abortion: Recognising its importance, building solidarity and mobilising for change."*

*We presented findings from the national baseline survey and regional evidence and connected it to the larger SRHR context, which included conflict and climate change. The PHA was an enriching experience and had considerable impact on our partners as well.*

*"In India, maternal benefit schemes are available but do not cover abortion services, nor is it covered under private insurance schemes, said Dr P. Balasubramanian from Rural Women's Social Education Centre (RUWSEC), representing CommonHealth, India. "It really showed how the Solidarity Alliance for the Right to Safe Abortion can be used as an important platform to bring people together."*

*"People shared how abortion is illegal in Philippines, countries in South America and Africa, and this prevention of the right to safe abortion puts women's lives at risk," said Aliza Singh, our partner from Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC) Nepal. "Abortion stigma at the community, service provider and policy level was also a key issue in many countries, which prevents many, especially unmarried women, from accessing safe abortion services. The lack of disaggregated data worldwide and at the national level present further barriers."*

*Chrtistelyn Sebugon (Teta), from the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) Philippines, said: "It was evident that the effects of abortion can be felt across regions, and that there is a strong voice from Latin America and the African regions. We should focus on how to work with other women's rights movements, and consider what they are doing. This was also an opportunity to introduce the issue to others from other countries."*

*A local woman gathering potatoes in Thakurgong, Bangladesh.  
Jahangir Alam Onuchcha /Shutterstock.com*

# *Strengthening Community Participation, **Empowering People***

*Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author and feminist*

*For progress to be made, I think it's necessary to  
reach out to people who don't necessarily agree.*



Indonesian partners from the RHRN platform gathered for a meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

**F**ourteen-year-old Sabina lives in a rural area of the Rangamati district of Bangladesh. Previously when she had her period she would use a piece of rag, as she did not want to buy sanitary pads from her local medicine shop for fear of being teased or verbally harassed by the salesman. She used whatever cloth her mother gave during menstruation.

One day, Sabina's abdomen began swelling up and she was in a lot of pain. Her family suspected she was pregnant, and no one would talk to her. She then fell ill, and her family took her to an unqualified doctor, who gave her medicines that made her worse. Her family was afraid to consult a male doctor.

The teenager's health condition deteriorated and was finally admitted to a hospital. The doctor diagnosed her with urinary infection caused by unhygienic and dirty pieces of cloth that hadn't been dried in the sun to kill the bacteria. Fortunately Sabina survived but, her family had to pay an exorbitant amount for the treatment.

Menstruation is shrouded in stigma, taboo and shame. While there is a school curriculum on CSE that covers a range of SRH issues in Bangladesh, the content remains stigmatising, and fails to address the actual SRH needs of adolescents and young people. Chapters on menstruation and puberty, for example, equates them with purity, and perpetuates the concept of menstrual blood being dirty and something that women and girls should be ashamed of.

And in cases where the syllabus does have chapters on SRHR, teachers tend to avoid teaching that chapter in the classroom in most countries as they are seen as 'optional' topics. This is problematic for obvious reasons, but mainly, and as in the case of Sabina, discourages girls from learning and asking questions about menstrual hygiene, and from even buying sanitary pads.

To ensure youth friendly services for young people like Sabina, ARROW, along with Dance4Life and Rutgers, worked with the Right Here Right Now (RHRN)<sup>10</sup>



Bangladesh platform to develop the first youth-led CSO report, also known as a shadow report, for Bangladesh's 3rd UPR. The report urged Bangladesh to act on unmarried people's access to health services, non-implementation of CSE in schools, reform laws and policies to address sexual and gender-based violence, and address harmful cultural practices and discrimination of persons belonging to diverse sexual orientation and gender identities.

ARROW is the regional coordinator of RHRN, a global strategic partnership, 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 in Asia, it is being implemented in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, and Pakistan.

RHRN is one of the initiatives within ARROW's programme, 'Mobilising Communities for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRR) Accountability.' It focusses on women, young people and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) communities so SRR can be realised without stigma, discrimination, and violence.

2018 was a year of integrated programme management –we moved from reviewing programme components to managing budgets, and furthering our regional and global advocacy with our RHRN partners in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, and Pakistan. Carrying forward our work on regional linking and learning interventions, we organised the 3rd Regional Fora on CSE in September 2018 in Bangkok with our RHRN platforms. The event provided the space to discuss the challenges and opportunities for CSE advocacy in the four RHRN Asian countries and learn the best practices from other countries in the region.

To improve CSE planning and implementation in the four RHRN countries, we: oriented and strengthened capacity of participants with the new CSE technical guidelines (ITGSE) issued by UNESCO, examined how ITGSE can



Top: Painting done by RHRN Bangladesh youth SRHR advocates at PHA. Bottom: ARROW team with our partners at a briefing for reviewing member states prior to Bangladesh's 3rd UPR in Geneva.

bolster evidence for advocacy, enhanced understanding of international advocacy and accountability mechanisms on CSE and improved knowledge of regional and international norms and standards. Besides these, we also built capacities of RHRN members on using the media for advocacy, digital safety and security, outcome harvesting and advocating for SRHR in these difficult times of rising fundamentalism and conservatism.

We believe it is paramount for communities to be empowered to advocate and demand accountability from governments and relevant stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels. We are facilitating this empowerment through mobilisation, capacity building, forging national level partnerships for advocacy, and through linking and learning mechanisms. We are confident that a strong youth movement gearing towards the SDG implementation with meaningful youth, adult and inclusive partnership is in the making in the region.

**UN and GLOBAL PROCESSES:** We engaged with several UN & international mechanisms through:

- Submission of the youth-led CSO response on Bangladesh’s UPR Outcome Report adoption at the 39th session of the HRC’: ARROW also made an oral statement at the main UPR session. As a result, Bangladesh received the highest number of recommendations, for the first time ever, on young people’s SRHR—a significant accomplishment for ARROW and RHRN Bangladesh.
- Engagement with CEDAW implementation in Nepal for its 5th cycle of review: we developed and submitted a country brief on SRHR to the CEDAW Committee, participated in the ‘global to local’ training by the International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia-Pacific and the NGO coordination meeting, and were part of a lunch briefing with the Committee and an NGO informal meeting with CEDAW members.
- Technical support to the Pakistan platform to include UPR recommendations in advocacy briefs used at country-level.

## Our Impact

### Capacity Strengthening

- ▶ Youth advocates' capacities strengthened and their advocacy actions for SDGs supported
- ▶ National level capacity-building workshops
- ▶ Regional level capacity-strengthening workshops
- ▶ Topics related to skills building
- ▶ Learning meeting on a regional level

### Young People’s SRHR Advocacy

- ▶ Youth-led and serving organisations reached in mobilising and partnerships

### Monitoring Visits

- ▶ Country monitoring visits, national planning meetings and partner visits completed
- ▶ Countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, and Pakistan



## Lobbying for Sexuality Education

Md. Asaduzzaman Abir

RHRN Youth Advocate, Bangladesh

*I received a two-day training in Rangapur on SRHR in September 2018, as part of the BRAC education programme under the RHRN Bangladesh platform. Since then, I have been raising awareness on SRHR and advocating for it to be taught in secondary schools. There are separate chapters on SRHR in textbooks, but it is not being taught properly because teachers are shy and think these subjects are social taboo. This could mean that Bangladesh will fail to achieve the SDGs and the goals of the National Education Policy 2010. We strongly feel this situation needs to change.*

*We routinely have meetings and awareness sessions with secondary school teachers, students and adolescent club members. We even organised debates and cultural activities for '16 days of Activism on SRHR' at the Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, on 10th December. More than 300 students participated from different schools, colleges and universities.*

*It was attended with great enthusiasm by several youth advocates from Rangpur, NGOs and academics from the Women and Gender Studies programmes. The District Commissioner (DC) of Rangpur, who also attended the event, said in his speech that all the secondary school teachers should teach existing SRHR content as per Bangladesh's National Curriculum and Textbook Board. His office, after our follow up, issued a circular to all schools under his jurisdiction directing them to immediately start teaching SRHR topics.*

*The DC requested us to work in a specific upazila (sub district) on raising awareness about SRHR so he could declare that upazila as a model for others to follow. Currently, we are in communication with BRAC-Education and Right Here Right Now Platform to accelerate this process and bring positive change in our communities.*

*Asaduzzaman Abir, a youth advocate, speaking at an event in Rangpur, Bangladesh. Photo credit: RHRN Bangladesh Platform.*

## Young People Claiming Their Space

Medha Sharma

RHRN Youth Advocate, Nepal

*Earlier, I had only heard about the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) but, did not know any details about it. Honestly, I never believed these forums could be for young people, because I have always seen adults and so called 'big people' representing Nepal.*

*RHRN made us, young people, believe we can also be the change agents, even in international platforms. RHRN had an intensive training dedicated to understanding these processes, including mock sessions for all the platform members. There was capacity strengthening through skype and emails, and actual presence and support from the consortium partners.*

*ARROW's support made our participation meaningful at CEDAW at all steps including helping us finalise briefs before Nepal's review, designing the position paper and advocacy briefs, linking us to the 'Global to Local' training to understand the CEDAW process and by supporting us through an ARROW focal person during the process.*

*Among all the international processes, CEDAW provides the largest space for civil society presence. Because of our intervention, Nepal had its first meaningful and inclusive youth participation in CEDAW. For the first time, young people themselves were able to advocate, alongside adults, to deliver oral statements on their issues.*



Medha Sharma, Right Here Right Now youth advocate.  
Photo credit: Visible Impact.

*Mother selling candles in a church yard in the Philippines.  
Rey Borlaza/Shutterstock.com*

# *Forging New* **Alliances**

*Kimberle Crenshaw*

*If we aren't intersectional, some of us, the most  
vulnerable, are going to fall through the cracks.*

**F**ishing is the primary source of food and livelihood in Pulantubig, in the town of Baco in the Philippines. Like most coastal towns in the country, fish catch in this village has also declined dramatically over the years due to environmental degradation from human activities and natural calamities. As one of the main flood-prone areas in the country and due to climate change, the village suffers from damaged property and infrastructure, food insecurity, health problems and even deaths, during the rainy season. The local government and families struggle to ensure food and income security, and people's well-being.

But challenges like these have paved the path for young leaders such as 18-year-old Melgrace Orbe. With the support of PATH Foundation Philippines, Inc, she acquired the knowledge and skills to be a dynamic community leader. As a peer educator, she facilitates discussions on adolescent sexual and reproductive health, particularly on pre-marital sex. She encourages young people to finish school, like she did, to find employment and provide for their families. She joins health extension workers to discuss the links between population, health, and conservation. Additionally, she leads conservation activities such as mangrove planting, coastal clean-up, and proper waste disposal, as a youth representative in the Marine Protected Area Management Committee.

Young women like Melgrace's involvement in finding solutions for her community is part of the gendered solution that we, at ARROW, strongly promote and advocate for, even as climate change takes a larger toll on women and girls' health – especially their SRHR. Given the nexus between SRHR and gender with climate change, food (in)security and conflict, we continued to build links on these issues through our work in 2018.

Additionally, we expanded our intersectionality work to include young people and their CSE, and reached out to youngsters from diverse backgrounds, viz geographical location, gender, economic and education, through trainings, using an intersectionality module we developed. Our youth-led partners in Nepal, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan implemented intersectionality-focused programmes at the national and local levels.



*18-year old Melgrace Orbe is a community leader and peer educator. Photo credit: Sarah V. Harlan.*

Through our advocacy on intersectional issues, we are now recognised as 'Gender and SRHR champions' at regional and global CSO spaces, as well as by networks on climate change, food security and conflict. Below is an overview of our work within the 'Building New Constituencies for SRHR' programme in 2018:

**CLIMATE CHANGE:** We collaborated with our long-term partner, the Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA), and launched an innovative advocacy programme—Women and Earth (WORTH)<sup>11</sup>—on SRHR and environmental sustainability/climate change, at COP24 in December.<sup>12</sup> WORTH, which will run from 2018-2021, will create a platform and provide seed funding for environmental and climate change organisations to creatively develop solutions for gender equality, SRHR, climate resilience and adaptation challenges.

WORTH will also provide a lab for capacity strengthening and the participants will be selected from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, and the Philippines. The pilot lab took place in October and was attended by six climate change partners of ARROW and DFPA from Asia and Africa.



*ARROW's Programme Manager Biplabi Shreshta at the launch of the Women and Earth Initiative at COP24 in Katowice, Poland.*

Our other accomplishments included:

- Representing the Women and Gender Constituency at the APA Co-chair's dialogue to highlight the absence of human rights language in the Rulebook.
- Organising the 'Women's Health in the Age of Climate Change – Stories from Malaysia and the Philippines' session during Gender Day at COP24.
- Advocating for human rights-based 'Gender Equality and Social Inclusion' policy at the Green Climate Fund and including "health and well-being" into the text to serve as an entry point for SRHR in the future.
- Submission to the CEDAW Committee on the Draft General Recommendation on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction in December. ARROW's suggestions (related to SRH) for the section on the 'Right To Health' were included in the final document.
- Submission on gender-responsive climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women to the United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Publishing "*Raising the Bar on Asian Women's SRHR in the Age of Climate Change*"<sup>13</sup> in June in the lead up to the HLPF, reviewing the SGD goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17.

**FOOD (IN)SECURITY AND NUTRITION:** In 2018, we continued our work in this area by focusing on advocacy and were part of critical global meetings including nutrition planning meetings in Rome, organised by the Society for International Development. At a half-day dialogue with 20 member states, we highlighted the gender dimensions in access to food and nutrition with examples of lived realities of women and girls in Asia, and their impact on SRHR.

We also represented civil society for the Committee on Food Security and Global Nutrition group at the global event on 'Accelerating the End of Hunger and Malnutrition' in Bangkok in November.

**CONFLICT AND PEACE BUILDING:** The impact of conflict on women and girls' SRHR is largely unexplored despite the fact they are disproportionately affected due to existing gender narratives and roles. Considering the increasing conflict in our region, it is crucial to study and work on the intersections between conflict and SRHR.

To bolster our efforts, we:

- Obtained membership to the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), and now have access to: over 100-member organisations in 40 countries, opportunities to forge partnerships with WPS experts.
- Made a submission to the High Commissioner on Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) to the HRC, highlighting the lack of data for a full picture of CEFM in humanitarian settings.
- Published a thematic paper, *“Redefining Peace: Interlinkages of Conflict, Gender and SRHR,”*<sup>14</sup> with the Asia-Pacific Alliance of Women’s Alliance for Peace and Security. It was launched on 19 June to mark the International Day of Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict and presented at various regional and global spaces such as ASEAN People’s Forum, SEAHRN, ICFP.

In 2019, we will continue our work on climate change and its impact on gender, health and SRHR; and will organise more workshops on CSE and intersectionality based on our manual. As part of our innovation project with DFPA, we will implement more labs and raise funds, and further hone in on climate change and CSE with intersectionality.

*InterSEXionality workshop in Nepal. Photo credit: YUWA.*



## Comprehensive Sexuality Education

**WHAT:** Building Next Generation Movement Leaders, Phase 2

**WHEN:** 2017-2019

**WHO:** Young people in South Asia

**WHERE:** Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan

**WHY:** Bring together intersecting issues of young people, sexuality, and CSE

### ARROW AND PARTNER OUTCOMES:

- Developed the *InterSEXionality Manual: A Facilitator’s Guide*.<sup>15</sup>
- Conducted a three-day intersectionality workshop with a diverse group of young people from Nepal and Bangladesh.
- Youth Action Network met with a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan to speak about the importance of life skills-based education in Pakistan.
- YUWA Nepal briefed the director at the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development, in the Ministry of Education, on CSE and its incorporation in the existing curricula. YUWA was also approached by a radio station in Kathmandu to develop SRHR content for a radio programme on the importance of CSE for young people.
- The YP Foundation organised a national level conclave, 'YOUTH INsight: Informing policies on Health, Gender, and Well-Being.'
- Durbin Foundation in Bangladesh met with their Ministry of Education to discuss life skills education and intersectionality.

## Our Impact

56

Youth advocates' capacities strengthened

8

Organisations mobilised

4

Countries

3

Workshops



## Know Your Body, Know Your Rights (KYBK YR)

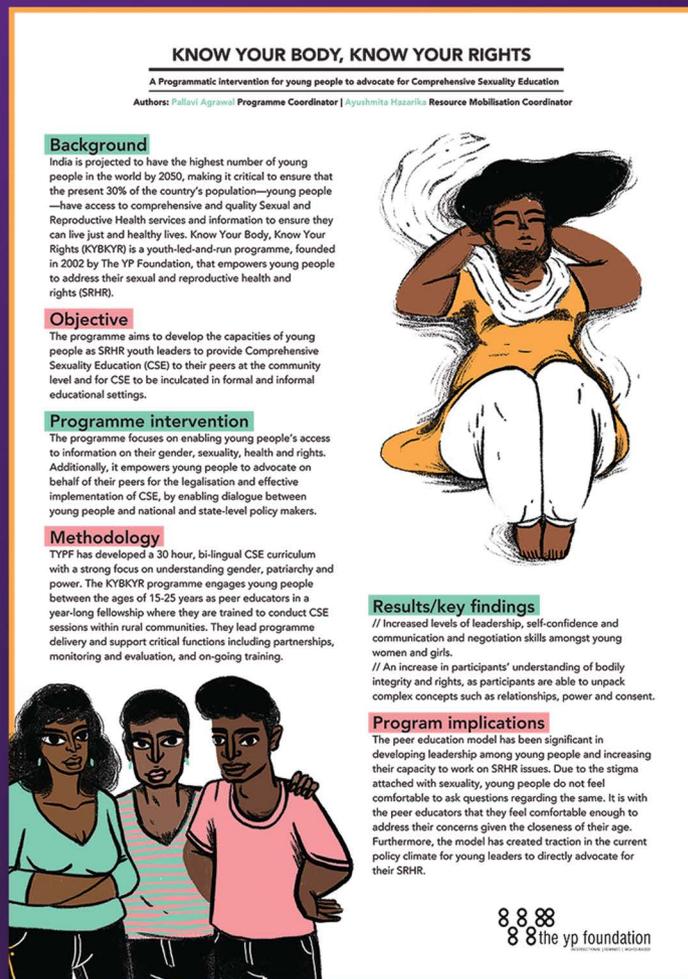
*At the International Conference of Family Planning (ICFP) in Rwanda in November, Ayushmita Hazarika, supported by ARROW, and Pallavi Agarwal from The YP Foundation, presented a poster on their flagship programme, ‘Know Your Body, Know Your Rights.’*

*Aligned with ARROW’s objectives, the programme aims to create a demand for CSE inside and outside of formal educational spaces, and increase young people’s access to information on their gender, sexuality, health and rights. It also empowers young people to advocate, on behalf of their peers, for legalisation and effective implementation of CSE, by facilitating a dialogue between young people and national and state-level policy makers.*

*KYBK YR reaches out to participants from in-school and out-of-school settings which include young people and children in institutional care homes and from marginalised communities including Dalit, Tribal, and Muslim youth.*

*KYBK YR has also registered significant success in its work with out of school audiences, especially in the area of breaking the stigma and silence around the need and demand for SRH services and rights at the community level.*

Top: YP Foundation’s poster, ‘Know Your Body, Know Your Rights.’  
Bottom (Left-Right): Ayushmita Hazarika, supported by ARROW, and Pallavi Agarwal from The YP Foundation pose with their poster.





## Music for Harmony

Saad Alam Khan, Pravah

To advocate for youth action for social change, our partner, Delhi-based NGO Pravah, organised the 'Music for Harmony' festival in February 2018 to celebrate gender, sexuality, and religious diversities through performances and youth dialogues. It is an annual volunteer-led youth festival which began in 2003, on the 10th anniversary of the Indian mosque Babri Masjid's demolition, to create interfaith dialogue and sing songs of peace, love, and harmony. This year's theme was chosen to share the experiences of working on SRH and CSE, and create a youth advocacy space for gender-based inclusion.

Saad Alam Khan, a young volunteer with Pravah as part of the My Life Mere Faisle (My Life, My Decisions) programme on youth agency building and decision making on SRHR, was involved in the volunteer team organising the festival.

"As a queer Muslim in India, I finally found a space that understood and accepted me as I am, and I felt inspired to continue working hard to build a more equal world," said Saad on his experience.

Music for Harmony featured diverse performances—street theatre and dance on LGBTQI+ inclusion, poetry on SRHR, abortion, and citizenship, and music and dance on peace and religious inclusion.

For Saad, a street play performance about LGBTQI+ youth was deeply personal and moving. He has just begun his SMILE Fellowship journey with Pravah, supported by ARROW, in March 2019 and will work on creating safe spaces for students at his college to freely express their identities and talk openly about gender, sexuality, religion and mental health struggles as young people.

Top: Saad Alam Khan emceeding for Music for Harmony.  
Middle: Street play on acceptance of the LGBTQI+ community.  
Bottom: Dance performance on the life of a trans person.  
Photo credit: Pravah.



## The Making of a Youth Leader

*Reshal Dahiya, 21*

*Reshal Dahiya, 21, is a young girl from Delhi University, India. She has always wanted to run a social action project to raise awareness on sanitation, hygiene, and on gender inclusive communities.*

*She was chosen as a Students Mobilisation Initiative for Learning through Exposure (SMILE) fellow—an eight-month learning and leadership journey for young people, run by Delhi-based NGO Pravah and supported by ARROW. Fellows design and implement social action projects on gender equality, SRHR and CSE.*

*Reshal's project was instrumental in breaking gender stereotypes and de-stigmatising menstruation and menstrual health. She has spent the last six months working with young girls in low income communities in New Delhi to build a holistic understanding of SRH needs and services, and an awareness on sanitation and hygiene. As her fellowship journey ends, there has been a huge shift in her own capacities as a young leader.*

*She has directly worked with 45 adolescents and 15 young people in one of Delhi's resettlement colonies, which houses displaced slum dwellers.*

*"I now feel confident engaging with these girls on topics like objectification of women, gender stereotypes, gender roles, and the stigma around menstruation, which makes SRHR and CSE a taboo in such communities on the margins," said Reshal.*

*They have also been able to reach out to boys through their sessions and partnered with other Delhi-based organisations, like Nazariya, to run a session on understanding Gender and Sexual diversities in the community. As a young leader, she recently also represented Pravah and India at the 6th APFSD Youth Forum 2019 in Bangkok, organised by ARROW, YPEER, APRCEM's Youth Constituency, and Youth LEAD.*



*Reshal Dahiya, SMILE Fellow, has been helping destigmatise menstruation and menstrual health in New Delhi. Photo credit: Pravah.*

*Young girl students surfing the net on a laptop at campus.  
CRS Photo/Shutterstock.com*

# *Opening Minds and Shaping Views*

*Loujain al-Hathloul, political prisoner and activist,  
Saudi Arabia*

*I will win. Not immediately, but definitely.*

**Kannan and Sasi** are a newly-wed couple living in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu. Like many young couples, they had very little information on contraception, sexuality and reproduction when they got married. They decided to attend a sexual relationship training session for married people in their neighbourhood by the Rural Women's Social Education Centre (RUWSEC), ARROW partner and an NGO working on SRHR in the state.

"This was all very new to us," said Sasi. "The training was really important as we gained new information about the reproductive system and related issues. Part of the session involved identifying and explaining parts of the male and female reproductive system, clearing up our misconceptions along the way."

RUWSEC's programmes target youth, married couples, pregnant women, middle-aged men and women, and post-menopause women, and educate them on different aspects of SRHR. The programmes—better known in India as life skills education—are run in RUWSEC's premises in Karumarapakkam village at the heart of the rural communities and have four components.

"The first is personality development, the second covers the knowledge and function of their reproductive system and reproductive rights to make better informed decisions on marriage, and available contraceptive methods," said Dr. P. Balasubramanian, ED of RUWSEC.

"The third component is on gender-based violence, the status of women and the violence against them in communities. And the fourth is on social awareness on caste, class and gender-based inequalities," he said.

RUWSEC also reaches out to students and teachers in schools, where there is a lot of reluctance to speak on sensitive topics like sexuality, reproductive health and gender roles. The trainers give the students their mobile numbers and after class, they usually receive a lot of calls and messages from both boys and girls, asking about love, sex, pregnancy, and conception—topics they are uncomfortable discussing openly.



*Kannan and Sasi attended the sexual relationship training session for married people by RUWSEC. Photo Credit: Jeremy Hu*

*"If I didn't attend this training, I would've gotten married at an early age, and the rest of my life would have gone in a very different direction."*

These sessions are paying off in many ways. From small and subtle shifts where young boys have started helping their mothers with chores like fetching water or cleaning the house, which were tasks traditionally assigned to girls, to more life changing outcomes such as the story of Sangeetha, who attended the youth leadership programme.

"If I didn't attend this training, I would've gotten married at an early age, and the rest of my life would have gone in a very different direction. But because I underwent this training, I convinced my parents I wanted to study

further. I just completed my college degree, and hope to get a government job. I learnt that women have freedom, empowerment and rights that should be protected.”

RUWSEC also conducted a base-line survey of women's health status before they started the life skills education programme, and again after five and ten years after the training. The study showed a tremendous increase in overall health-seeking behaviour and awareness on sexual and reproductive healthcare. The age of marriage has increased over the years, and there are instances of suicide prevention amongst young people as a result of their various interventions. There is also a stronger understanding between men and women on gender issues. However, it will take time for it to translate into real change as patriarchy still plays a dominant role in shaping people's mindsets.

ARROW's InfoCom work is grounded in influencing these mindsets, building new and critical perspectives around gender, feminism, sexual and reproductive rights and their intersections through publications, knowledge management and sharing, new media and online communications. In an effort to build wider public support for SRHR, we also began engaging robustly with the local, regional and international media.

**PUBLICATIONS** continue to be one of our most powerful evidence-based advocacy mediums through which we, with the support of our partners, advance the SRHR agenda with governments, policymakers and other stakeholders. Besides highlighting the issues that we and our partners work on, they explore current and emerging issues related to SRHR and analyse how it connects with other development issues.

Our publications are also key for us to forge alliances and ally with existing movements such as the technology for change, rights to food and nutrition, bodily rights, and climate change, across different countries and regions.

As in previous years, we published our peer-reviewed ARROW for Change (AFC), thematic papers, briefs and translated our work in several languages, so we could

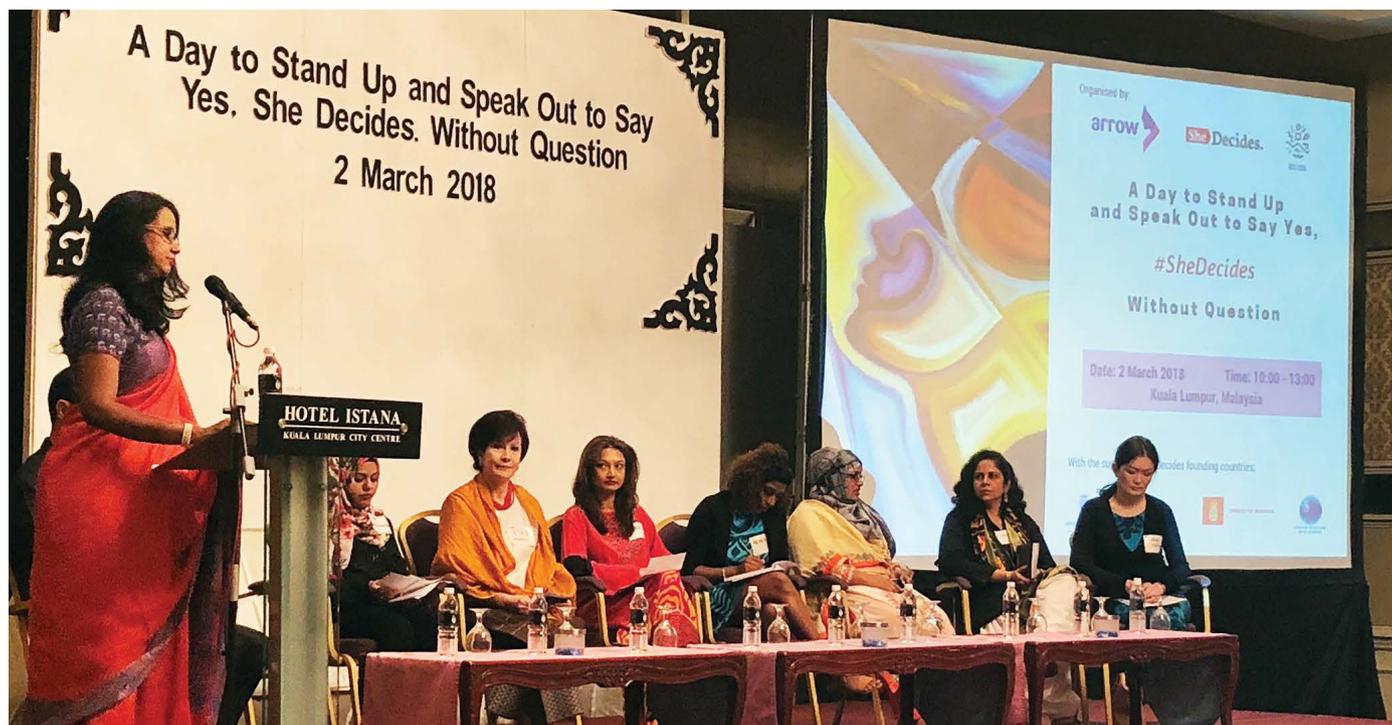
Our booklet, *“Our Stories Ourselves (OSO) – Women Speak Out About Religion and Rights,”* is a compilation of 10 stories of women from our partner countries, and is a poignant narrative on how religion and power are misused to discriminate and control women's rights.

share our knowledge and information with communities on the ground who are most impacted by violations of their SRHR.

Our AFC, *“The Right to Choose,”*<sup>16</sup> focused on diverse perspectives on the right to safe abortion. It analysed the discourse on abortion as an issue of rights and bodily autonomy of women, and looked at the neo-legal, non-legal and contextual barriers prevalent in the region. The AFC included voices of women from the ground speaking out for abortion rights from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Poland and Ireland.

We also published the national report titled *“Malaysia - Child Marriage: Its Relationship with Religion, Culture and Patriarchy”*<sup>17</sup> in collaboration with our Malaysian partner, Sisters In Islam, which looked at sexual impropriety and shame as the main drivers for child marriage in Malaysia.

Our booklet, *“Our Stories Ourselves (OSO) – Women Speak Out About Religion and Rights,”*<sup>18</sup> is a compilation of 10 stories of women from our partner countries in Asia, Middle East and North Africa and Latin America, and is a poignant narrative on how religion and power are misused to discriminate and control women's rights. The stories are also captured in a podcast series and on a microsite.<sup>19</sup>



ARROW's ED, Sivananthi Thanenthiran speaking at the She Decides event in Kuala Lumpur to commemorate the first anniversary of the global movement.

We boosted our advocacy through Facebook and Twitter and reached out to our 22,000 followers through live updates, photos, social media tiles, and videos from key international events, conferences, publication launches, and events with SRHR advocates, UN agencies, and partner organisations.

**MEDIA ENGAGEMENT:** To garner public support for SRHR, we actively reached out to traditional and digital media organisations, for the first time, to spotlight attention on critical issues we work on such as FGM, child marriage, the SheDecides movement, climate change, safe abortion and LGBTIQ rights. We strategically positioned opinion pieces, issued press releases and created interview opportunities in local and regional newspapers, online news portals and radio stations, during key international days, meetings and responded to global events that impacted women and girls' SRHR.

For instance, our timely editorials called out governments in the region for policing sexuality, and during CEDAW reviews for failing to protect the fundamental rights of

women and girls. We were also able to highlight the launch of our WORTH Initiative with DFPA in the local and regional media. Journalists in the region also joined us for our APFSD youth forum and for the Guttmacher Lancet Commission's SRHR report launch, which added further visibility to our work as well as raised awareness on these issues among journalists. Additionally, we honed our media strategy and created a media list to guide our future news engagement. In 2019, we plan to launch a media fellowship in the region.

*We strategically positioned opinion pieces, issued press releases, and created interview opportunities during key international days, meetings, and responded to global events that impacted women and girls' SRHR.*



## Social Media Snapshot

3,917

Women followers on  
(Total: 5,597)



11,542

Women followers on  
(Total: 16,489)

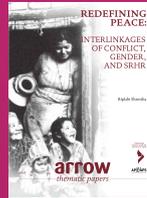


25-34 years

Age profile of our followers

## Most Popular Publications of 2018

1



### **Redefining Peace: Interlinkages of Conflict, Gender, and SRHR**

Launched: June 19, International Day of Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict  
Downloads: 283

2



### **National Report: Malaysia – Child Marriage: Its Relationship with Religion, Culture and Patriarchy**

Launched: March 9, 2018  
Downloads: 208

3



### **ARROW for Change – The Right to Choose**

Launched: September 28, International Safe Abortion Day  
Downloads: 195



## Reaching Out

### **Digital Library, ASK-US**

Total collection: 44,586  
Total visitors: 2,342

### **ARROW Newsletter**

Total issues: 19  
Total subscribers: 2,937

## Top Media Stories

### **21 News Articles**

ARROW and SIS joint National Report on Child Marriage in Malaysia

### **4 News Articles**

Pakistan's transgender candidates during the national assembly elections

### **4 News Articles**

APFSD Youth Forum



## Profile of ARROW Website Visitors

25,645 4,772  
Asia Americas

3,851 1,060 1,138  
Europe Africa Oceania



ARROW Programme Director Sai Jyothirmai Racherla with RHRN Bangladesh delegates at PHA.

## From Dhaka to Geneva: Bangladesh's UPR RHRN Bangladesh

The RHRN partnership offered a unique opportunity for young advocates to amplify their voice through their youth-led shadow report at the 3rd cycle of Bangladesh's UPR in Geneva. With support from the global consortium partners, including ARROW, RHRN Bangladesh developed its first youth-led UPR shadow report, highlighting young people's SRHR.

They first attended the UPR pre-sessions in Geneva, lobbied nine member states and recommended enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Law, abolishment of existing discriminatory laws in the penal code, protection of rights of sexual minorities and the importance of CSE in the school curriculum. The platform also held bilateral meetings, and met with embassy representatives from Bangladesh, Canada, Norway, Uruguay, and the UK.

Additionally, they delivered a joint statement during Bangladesh's UPR outcome report adoption, calling out Bangladesh for rejecting recommendations on SRH of women and girls, and criminalisation of homosexuality on dubious grounds such as "cultural codes" and "national values." They urged the government to renew its political commitments

and investment in upholding SRHR for all, to truly fulfil its international human rights commitments.

Recommendations from member states also urged the state to combat all types of violence against women and girls (including early, forced, and child marriage) and adolescents, eradicate discriminatory practices and measures, guarantee the full exercise of their rights, including those related to SRHR. The government was also asked to take measures to fight violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons.

Moving forward, an advocacy strategy has been drawn up, and RHRN Bangladesh is working to incorporate sexual and reproductive concerns of young people in the national plan of action around UPR. Engagement with the UPR process was a milestone for the platform and the consortium as there are very few champions of SRHR issues in the HRC. Bangladesh will be reviewed again at the UPR in May 2023, which means the visibility of young people's SRHR and the implementation of these young people's SRHR recommendations on the ground in Bangladesh, will play a prominent role in the years leading up to the next session.

Girls taking a selfie in Malaysia.  
DecemberDah/Shutterstock.com

# *Advocating for Change, One Year at a Time*

*Arundathi Roy, novelist and activist*

*Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.*

**Sajja Singh, 24**, from our youth-led partner organisation in Nepal, YUWA, has been working in the field of SRHR for the past three years. Sajja began her journey by volunteering in YUWA in their Youth Activists Leadership Council, where she worked on adolescents' SRHR for a year.

“Later, I started working for young people’s SRHR, focusing on Comprehensive Sexuality Education by reaching out to young people. Now as the vice president of YUWA, I am advocating for young people’s SRHR with the Nepal government and at the regional level.”

In November 2018, she participated in the Mid-Term Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, the Asia Pacific regional mechanism for implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, with the support of ARROW.

“Being part of such a crucial advocacy space was an experience unlike I have ever experienced. Starting from the preparatory Youth Forum, which brought in young people from Asia-Pacific so youth voices are captured, developing a call to action, presenting it at the CSO forum to finally delivering the Youth Statement at the main intergovernmental event, has made me learn and grow into a person who has become vocal about the need for ensuring young people’s SRHR,” she said.

Sajja added: “I have realised that the experiences young people face in terms of their SRHR are similar across Asia-Pacific, and working on the national and local level with our own government is crucial if we wish to bring change.”

Sajja said her engagement at the APPC was meaningful because of ARROW’s support. “I am really grateful to the ARROW team for the continuous support to a young person like me, and making sure that I am well informed about the process and the mechanisms that I was engaging in. And also by providing me with the resources and technical inputs to enhance my knowledge on the process and making sure that I, as a young person, feel safe and not intimidated on such a huge platform.”



*Sajja Singh from YUWA Nepal speaking at an event. Photo credit: Nhujala Maharjan.*

Enabling young women like Sajja to articulately demand for her rights is one of the advocacy strategies that we use to realise our key objectives of demanding accountability to human rights standards at the national, regional, and international levels. By engaging with young people, we ensure the process is inclusive and make sure that universal access to SRHR remains high on the agenda of governments.

**REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY:** We advocate with decision-makers, stakeholders and policy-makers, with compelling evidence and data from the ground, so they can revise programmes and policies, attitudes, power and social relations, and institutional functions, to address imbalances, inequities, and barriers to fulfil the rights of women and young people. We use a gendered, feminist, and human rights based approach to achieve this.



Top: ARROW ED Sivananthi Thanenthiran at the Mid-Term review.

Our biggest advocacy accomplishment of 2018, at the regional level, was our first Regional Multi Stakeholder Dialogue on CSE that we co-organised with UNESCO, UNFPA, RHRN, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. The three-day meeting brought together 90 government representatives, regional and national youth-led CSOs, and UN agency representatives from 15 countries in Asia—Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The objective was to collaborate with the education ministries of these countries on national and regional level actions to strengthen the implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of CSE. We sensitised decision makers on CSE, existing laws and policies, and developed an understanding of the evidence-based and updated UNESCO guide, the ITGSE. Additionally, we discussed an action agenda to implement CSE at the national level in primary and secondary schools.

Besides this, 2018 saw the 5th APFSD—an annual intergovernmental meeting of Asian Pacific member states, UN agencies, and other organisations—take precedence regionally. Convened by UNESCAP, the APFSD

serves as the regional preparation for the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. It usually decides the set of SDGs to be reviewed in-depth at the HLPF, which has a central role in the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2018, the SDGs: 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and 15 (Life on Land) were reviewed.

A youth advocate from RHRN Nepal delivered a joint oral statement at the APFSD, on behalf of ARROW and the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism's youth constitution. The statement included recommendations from the second Pre-APFSD Youth Forum, to review the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda. The Pre-APFSD Youth Forum, co-organised by ARROW, Youth Lead, and YPEER, brought together over 60 activists, advocates, UN agencies and representatives from youth-led, youth-serving and youth-allied organisations from a diverse range of social movements. They developed a call to action<sup>20</sup> demanding a sustainable, resilient and inclusive Asia Pacific, and captured young people's needs with respect to the SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17, which was shared at the APFSD.

*The three-day meeting brought together 90 government representatives, regional and national youth-led CSOs, and UN agency representatives from 15 countries in Asia.*

Similarly, in the run up to the Mid-Term Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration, we co-organised three separate advocacy events – the Preparatory Youth Forum, a CSO Forum, and a multi-stakeholder Asia Regional Dialogue on ICPD. The Youth Forum, convened with the support of RHRN partnership and the Building Next Generation of Movement Leaders and Organisations

in South Asia initiative, focused on strengthening the capacity of young people to advocate for their SRHR. More than 40 youth-led and youth-serving organisations were part of it.

The Asia Regional Dialogue, supported by GIZ, put out a call-to-action<sup>21</sup> that urged governments in the region to uphold their commitments to implement the priority actions of the Ministerial Declaration, which included effective implementation of the ICPD PoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The issues discussed at the Regional Dialogue<sup>22</sup> contributed to their advocacy to include key SRHR issues not just in the national statements but also the overall chair's text for the 6th APCC Mid-Term Review, including the call for a monitoring framework for the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, and focus on access to SRHR for all.

Our ED, Sivananthi Thanenthiran, spoke at the Review's High-level Panel, 'Progress towards the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population

and Development in the era of sustainable development,' moderated by UNFPA Asia and the Pacific's Regional Director, Björn Andersson. Recommendations from our Youth Forum were also presented at the Mid-Term Review through oral interventions. The Mid-Term Review's outcome document<sup>23</sup> from Asia Pacific will be presented at CPD52 in 2019, which will review the implementation of the ICPD PoA at 25 years.

At the 39th Session of the Human Rights Council, we collaborated with the Sexual Rights Initiative to co-sponsor their side-event on abortion and Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC), a platform member of RHRN Nepal, shared perspectives on legal landscapes around access to safe abortion in Asia. The side-event was attended by at least 12 member states, including states from Global South such as Nepal and South Africa. We shared an advocacy brief, which we prepared with BBC. We also shared regional perspectives on the access barriers for young people during a panel discussion with CRR and IWHC. The events were important lobbying opportunities and increased visibility of our advocacy messages at the HRC.

*Participants at the Asia Regional Dialogue that ARROW organised in the run up to the Mid-Term Review of the Asia and Pacific Ministerial Declaration.*





ARROW Senior Programme Officer Samreen Shahbaz (left) with Reshma Thapa of Restless Development, a member of RHRN Nepal, at a panel hosted by UNFPA in Thailand during APFSD 2018.

**SHE DECIDES:** 2018 also saw us mark the first anniversary of the SheDecides movement on 2nd March, with a regional event in Malaysia, ‘A Day to Stand Up and Speak Out to Say Yes, #SheDecides Without Question,’ with the founding countries of the initiative – Belgium, Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands. The political global movement was sparked in response to US President Donald Trump’s reintroduction of the Mexico City policy—or “global gag rule” as it’s commonly known—banning overseas NGOs from receiving US federal funding if they provided any abortion services.

Our Malaysia event brought together 120 participants including regional women’s rights advocates, who shared inspiring stories, their struggles and aspirations for an equal and just world where women and girls could make decisions about their bodies, their lives and have control over their sexual and reproductive rights.

Besides adding our regional voices to the global SheDecides call, we mainstreamed issues related to SRHR, trade, gender, and conflict within the ASEAN at the regional steering committee for the 2018 ASEAN People’s Forum. Emphasising the need for a feminist lens in trade negotiations, our intervention showed how the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership would affect women in developing countries across six sectors: economy, food security, labour, intellectual property, policy space, and the environment.

2018 also saw us mark the first anniversary of the SheDecides movement on 2nd March, with a regional event in Malaysia, ‘A Day to Stand Up and Speak Out to Say Yes, #SheDecides Without Question,’ with the founding countries of the initiative – Belgium, Denmark, Finland, and the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, internationally the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62)—the global intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women—and the 51st CPD continued to be our priority spaces. With our partners Sahayog, YUWA Nepal, Beyond Beijing Committee, YKP Indonesia, SERAC Bangladesh, and the Global Network for Right to Food and Nutrition, we delivered three impactful oral statements at CSW62, calling for the elimination of gender barriers, discriminatory laws, and negative social norms that hamper the rights of rural girls and women.

We also demanded that women producers have access, control, management, and ownership of all natural and productive resources. The agreed conclusion was adopted with consensus.

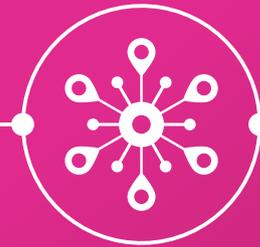
In spite of the gaps in the use of progressive language on SRHR and strong pushback from the US, the agreed language in ICPD was retained.

We also met with unprecedented success at the 51st CPD, when 125 diverse CSOs from the region endorsed our oral statement—read out in the presence of member states—on the need to include young people’s SRHR in aspects of migration and sustainable cities. We co-convened the International Sexual and Reproductive Rights Caucus—a group of SRHR and gender advocates who work towards progressive CPD resolutions, and to ensure advocacy spaces promote progressive language on women and young people’s SRHR.

Additionally, we made a joint Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (VAW) to Nepal, prior to her visit, by submitting a report with our partner BBC and members of RHRN Nepal platform on the (i) manifestations of obstetric violence within hospitals and health centres, (ii) forced abortions at the family and community levels, and (iii) on the linkages between structural violence and its impact on women and girls’ SRHR in Nepal. Our joint submissions highlighted policy gaps and offered recommendations.

In 2019, we will continue to build on our advocacy accomplishments and focus on: the CPD for the ICPD+25 in 2019, the APFSD and HLPF for the follow up on SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reducing Inequality), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)—all relevant to ARROW’s work.

We will also look at the APPC monitoring framework and its implementation at the national level and the Human Rights council where our emphasis will be on the resolutions on: youth and human rights, violence against women, right to health, climate change and women’s rights, protection of the family, and child, early and forced marriages. We aim to replicate the success of our multi stakeholder dialogue on CSE to further push for sexuality education.



## *ARROW’s Regional and International Advocacy Events in 2018*

*APFSD, Bangkok*

*ASEAN People's Forum, Singapore*

*Mid-Term review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial  
Declaration on Population and Development, Bangkok*

*CSW62, New York*

*51st CPD, New York*

*HLPF, New York*

*37th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva*

*CEDAW Nepal Review, Geneva*

*ICFP, Rwanda*

*Fifth International Conference on Human Rights and  
Peace and Conflict in South East Asia (SEAHRN), Manila*

*Joint Submissions to the Special Rapporteur on Violence  
Against Women, Nepal*

*A Briefing for Reviewing Member States on Youth-led*

*Shadow Report for Bangladesh UPR, Geneva*

## *ARROW-Organised Advocacy Events in 2018*

*Regional Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on CSE, Bangkok*

*SheDecides Event, Kuala Lumpur*

*Launch of Solidarity Alliance on Safe Abortion,  
Kuala Lumpur*

*Youth Forum, CSO Forum, Asia Regional Dialogue,  
Bangkok*

*Pre-APFSD Youth Forum, Bangkok*

*People's Health Assembly, Bangladesh*

*Asia Regional Dialogue, Bangkok*

*Young Nepali Sherpa woman at the Everest Base Camp Trek.  
Matt Hahnewald/Shutterstock.com*

# *Governance and Financial Management*

*Zainab Salbi, founder of Women for Women International, author, executive producer, and host.*

*Like life, peace begins with women. We are the first to forge lines of alliance and collaboration across conflict divides.*

**I**n 2018, we continued to focus on the non-programmatic aspects of operations and enhanced our organisational development through a survey, and an emphasis on continuous learning and upskilling of talent. This was in addition to reviewing the practices on programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, accountable and transparent decision-making, and governance mechanisms.

**PLANNING AND REVIEW MEETINGS:** We had two meetings last year – the first in January to agree on key components of the Implementation Plan for the year and finalise the annual work plan related to advocacy interventions such as CSW62, She Decides, 51st CPD, COP24, and ICFP. The second meeting was in June to reflect on the accomplishments from January to May and look at how the activities, interventions, and development of products could have achieved better results.

**TALENT MANAGEMENT:** We did a deep dive into talent management in line with ARROW’s SP, and carried it out with the Operations Director, HR and Admin Officer. The talent management strategic priorities were supported by the senior management and approved at the November board meeting.

**STRENGTHENING ADMINISTRATIVE AND HR MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEMS:** The Management and Administrative Policies and Procedures was revised by HR along with the staff and board members. Several new policies, such as the sexual harassment policy for staff and external stakeholders, were developed.

On 29 September, we sponsored and coordinated an event for EM.POWER UM—a national conference hosted by the Tamil Language Society of University Malaya to uphold SDG 5: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. We also conducted workshops for participants and our Programme Director, Sai Jyothirmai Racherla, was the panel speaker.

Our staff retreat took place on 30 October in Ipoh at the Haven, a few hours from Kuala Lumpur. The Programme Director and Programme Managers facilitated discussions to assess key achievements and accomplishments for the year across programmes and operations. The sessions also helped understand challenges including timelines and resources, and incorporate key lessons in the 2019 planning. An invigorating team building session was conducted by external team builders at the retreat.

*ARROW Women at the Staff Retreat in Ipoh at the Haven.*





RHRN pilot meeting in the Netherlands.



Innovation workshop at ARROW.

#### **STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING:**

We organised several coffee chats in 2018 including one on safety and security of human rights defenders, a fire prevention talk, feedback on using the ARROW website, and also discussed the proposed sexual harassment policy.

Two ARROW staff facilitated a coffee chat session on Outcome Harvesting in August, sharing key learnings on planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning, and on the Outcome Harvesting workshops they attended in Nepal. The session focused on differentiating outcomes from outputs, writing outcome statements, as well as mapping “baby outcomes.”

Besides these, two training and capacity workshops were also held in June for our managers: Enhancing Managers to Manage Great Teams and Enhancing Talent to Build High Performance Teams.

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PROGRAMME ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC):**

Our board held three meetings in May and November including the 25th Annual General Meeting. In November, Virisila Buadromo was elected as a new member of the board, replacing Naeemah Khan from the Pacific. The board endorsed three policies on sexual harassment, foreign currency exchange, and

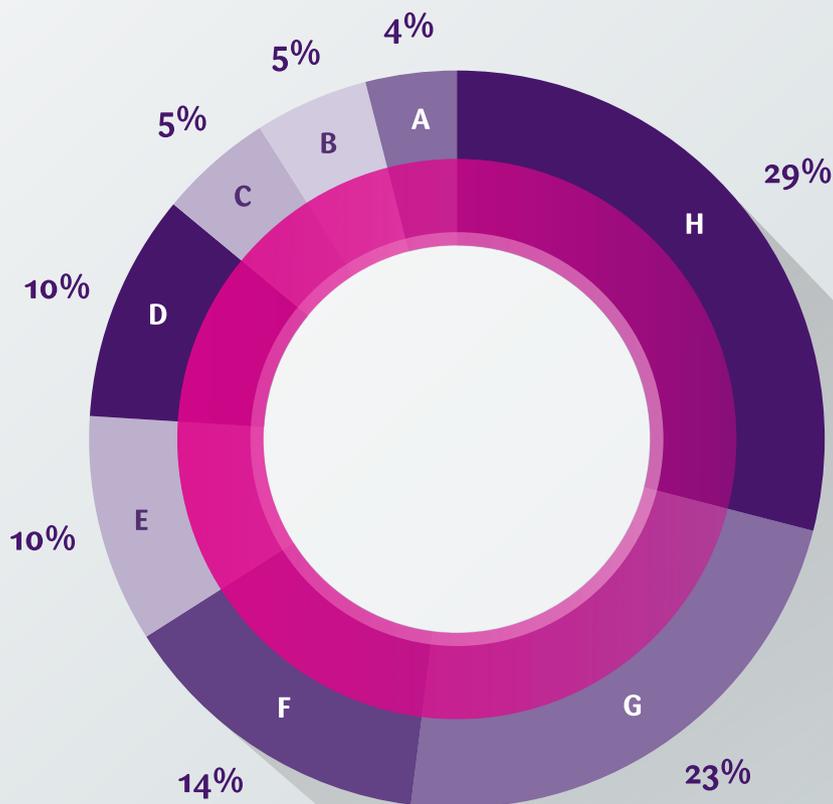
procurement guidelines. We also established our procedures and support on domestic violence as advised by the board. Our PAC meeting was held in February in Kuala Lumpur and PAC members reviewed and provided feedback on the programme deliverables of 2018.

**OPERATIONAL COSTS:** In 2018, our total operational cost amounted to USD 1,476,690 compared to USD 1,962,750 in 2017. It was allocated to the five programmes of our SP, organisational development, governance and overhead costs. We received several new grants over the year.

*In 2018, we continued to focus on the non-programmatic aspects of operations and enhanced our organisational development through a survey, and an emphasis on continuous learning and upskilling of talent.*

### Funding Sources

- A. Ford Foundation
- B. Other Income (ARROW)
- C. DFPA
- D. GIZ
- E. Packard Foundation
- F. Foundation for a Just Society
- G. RFSU
- H. Rutgers



### Operational Costs

PARTICULARS	ACTUAL COST (USD)	% TOTAL COST	ALLOCATION	
			ARROW	PARTNERS
<b>PROGRAMMATIC COSTS</b>				
Programme 1: Monitoring and Evidence-Generation	319,405.78	22%	163,155.78	156,250.00
Programme 2: Mobilising Communities	445,352.12	14%	209,827.84	—
Programme 3: Building New Constituencies	203,811.20	14%	203,811.20	—
Programme 4: Information and Communications	169,468.21	11%	169,468.21	—
Programme 5: Advocacy	428,635.26	29%	370,913.47	—
Institutional, Governance, and Overhead	145,542.02	10%	145,542.02	57,721.79
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL COST</b>	<b>1,476,690.31</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,262,718.52</b>	<b>213,971.79</b>
<b>@RM4 : USD1.00</b>			<b>86%</b>	<b>14%</b>

Source: ARROW Audit 2018

# The **ARROW** Community

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Bishakha Datta**  
Executive Director, Point of View, India
- **Naeemah Khan**  
Gender and Humanitarian Analyst, UN Women Fiji  
(till October 2018)
- **Pramada Menon**  
Consultant India
- **Rachel Arinii Judhistari**  
Programme Manager, East Asia and ASEAN , 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 (till May 2018)
- **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**  
Freelance, research, and consulting, Germany
- **Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki**  
Director of Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC),  
Tonga
- **Otgoonbaatar Tsendendemberel**  
Partner, 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**  
Finance Officer

- **Azra Abdul Cader**  
Programme Manager
- **Biplabi Shrestha**  
Programme Manager
- **Dhivya Kanagasingam**  
Programme Officer
- **Hema Annadorai**  
Operations and Human Resource Officer
- **Hwei Mian Lim**  
Senior Programme Officer
- **Lee Mei Poh**  
Admin and Finance Manager
- **Mangala Namasivayam**  
Programme Manager
- **Mary Barton**  
Operations Director - Consultant
- **Naz Nawmi Chowdhury**  
Senior Programme Manager
- **Nisha Santhar**  
Programme Officer
- **Paremela Naidu**  
Operations Officer
- **Preeti Kannan**  
Senior Programme Officer
- **Rosnani Hitam**  
Executive Officer
- **Sai Jyothirmai Racherla**  
Programme Director
- **Samreen Shahbaz**  
Senior Programme Officer
- **Shamala P Chandrasekaran**  
Senior Programme Officer
- **Sharifah Keshia Binti Syed Mahmood**  
Programme Officer
- **Shazlin Azmira Rehan**  
Operations Officer
- **Sivananthi KV Thanenthiran**  
Executive Director
- **Teong Seow Kin**  
Senior Programme Officer

## TEMPORARY STAFF

- **Ho Sau Fong**  
Senior Finance Officer

## CONTRACTUAL

- **Mallika Karuppaiah**  
Housekeeping

## Donors

- **DANIDA** through the DFPA
- **David and Lucile Packard Foundation**
- **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH**
- **Ford Foundation**
- **Foundatrion for a Just Society (FJS)**
- **Swedish Association for Sexuality Education**
- **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 Bhd and 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
- **Diners World Travel (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.**  
Travel services
- **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
- **Nation Board Sdn. Bhd.**  
Web hosting services
- **Nicolette de Lange Mallari**  
Publication and information design
- **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
- **Tun Muhammad Ali Jinnah Basir**  
Promotional materials development and publications design
- **Wong Kum Fatt, Ng Ah Meng Sdn Bhd.**  
Landlord



# Endnotes

1. See <https://arrow.org.my/arrow-statement-solidarity-with-irish-women-demanding-right-safe-abortion-ensuring-srhr4all/>.
2. See <https://arrow.org.my/argentinassenate-legalising-abortion-improving-reproductive-rights/>.
3. Guttmacher Institute, Abortion in Asia: Factsheet (New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2018), [https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/factsheet/ib\\_aws-asia.pdf](https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/factsheet/ib_aws-asia.pdf).
4. See [https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/AFC\\_24\\_1\\_2018-WEB-19-OCT.pdf](https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/AFC_24_1_2018-WEB-19-OCT.pdf).
5. See <https://arrow.org.my/work/safe-abortion/>.
6. See <https://arrow.org.my/publication/sustainable-development-agenda-young-people-recognising-voices-and-claiming-rights/>.
7. See <https://arrow.org.my/publication/trade-and-gender-what-does-the-new-tpa-mean-for-women-in-developing-countries/>.
8. Access to and Quality of Menstrual Regulation Services and Postabortion Care in Bangladesh: Evidence from Surveys of Health Facilities, 2014," by Altaf Hossain, Isaac Maddow-Zimet, Meghan Ingerick, Hadayat Ullah Bhuiyan, Michael Vlassoff and Susheela Singh. And "The Incidence of Menstrual Regulation Procedures and Abortion in Bangladesh, 2014," by Susheela Singh, Altaf Hossain, Isaac Maddow-Zimet, Michael Vlassoff, Hadayat Ullah Bhuiyan and Meghan Ingerick, published in *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*.
9. Guttmacher Institute. *Unintended Pregnancy and Unsafe Abortion in the Philippines*. Fact Sheet. Guttmacher Institute, July 2013. <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/unintended-pregnancy-and-unsafe-abortion-philippines>.
10. Known as the global consortium, RHRN 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. RHRN's focus is on young people's SRHR without stigma, discrimination and violence, CSE, youth friendly services and safe abortion services.
11. [worthinitiative.org](http://worthinitiative.org)
12. Worth press release: <https://arrow.org.my/launch-of-the-women-and-earth-initiative-worth-a-cso-led-innovation-fund-initiative-to-tackle-climate-change-impact-womens-lives-in-asia-pacific/>. News Article: <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2018/12/tackling-the-consequences-of-climate-change-on-a-human-level/>.
13. See [https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/AB\\_HPLF\\_Final.pdf](https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/AB_HPLF_Final.pdf).
14. See <https://arrow.org.my/publication/redefining-peace-interlinkages-of-conflict-gender-and-srhr/>.
15. See <https://arrow.org.my/publication/intersexuality-a-facilitators-guide/>.
16. See [https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/AFC\\_24\\_1\\_2018-WEB-19-OCT.pdf](https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/AFC_24_1_2018-WEB-19-OCT.pdf).
17. See <https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/National-Report-Child-Marriage.pdf>.
18. See <https://arrow.org.my/publication/our-stories-ourselves-oso/>
19. See <https://arrow.org.my/oso-booklet/>
20. See <http://arrow.org.my/publication/pre-apfsd-2018-youth-statement/>
21. See [https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Asia-Regional-Dialogue\\_MTR-APPC-Recommendations\\_Nov-2018.pdf](https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Asia-Regional-Dialogue_MTR-APPC-Recommendations_Nov-2018.pdf)
22. High level participants included Dr. Juan Antonio Perez III, executive director of the Commission on Population in Manila and the chair of the APPC Mid Term Review, and national delegations included Satyawanti Mashudi, executive director of the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association, Jakarta, and part of the Indonesian delegation, Shanta Laxmi Shrestha from Beyond Beijing Committee and who was part of the Nepal delegation, Dr. Marilen Danguilan, Chief of External Affairs at the Salubris Medical Center, Manila and part of the national delegation of the Philippines
23. It is a non-negotiable document and contains strong references to SRHR including young people and adolescents' SRHR, access to abortion and post abortion care and family planning services for everyone including unmarried and young people, while ensuring privacy and confidentiality.



*A supporter of the LGBTQI+ community takes part in a pride parade in Guwahati.  
David Talukdar/Shutterstock.com*



## championing women's sexual and reproductive rights

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