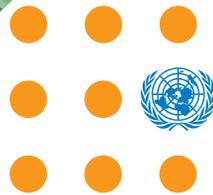


2015  
ANNUAL REPORT



 **UNFPA**  
SRI LANKA

# POTENTIAL

POSSIBILITIES | POPULATION | POLICIES







# ANNUAL REPORT 2015

SRI LANKA

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## WHO ARE WE?

We are a diverse, dynamic and talented work-force accompanying Sri Lanka in its socio-economic development as its reference partner of choice. Our overall commitment is to advance equity, accountability and quality in all spheres of decision-making, affecting the lives and potential of the Sri Lankan population, with women and youth as our main actors and beneficiaries of our interventions.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT STANDING:** Priyan Perera, Ushanthy Gowthaman, Nirasha Perera, Abirami Jeyachandran, Alain Sibenaler, Munira Mutaher, Tharindhu Jayawardhana, Nadesan Chandramogan, Nirekha de Silva, Nishantha Warnasooriya, Clytie Somanader, Tashiya De Mel

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT SITTING:** Jayan Abeywickrema, Onalie Ariyabandhu, Jenneth Sonntag, Megara Tegal, Bridgette Kennedy, Arun Jentrick  
**ABSENT:** Rohan Dias, Geetha Fernando, Ajith Liyanage

# A Look Back On 2015

Last year was one of the most satisfying years for UNFPA Sri Lanka in terms of output and achieving goals. Keeping pace with digital trends to stay relevant and to ensure that our reach remains as far and wide as possible, we launched the first ever trilingual mobile application on sexual rights and reproductive health in Sri Lanka; the app was specially designed for the visually impaired. We've ensured that each generation is involved in policy recommendations, and we made a decisive shift to collect and work with evidence-based data.

*“We’ve extended our mandate to include data driven change to the core of every project.”*

Country Representative, Alain Sibenaler elaborates, “In 2015, UNFPA in Sri Lanka made several strides on various fronts, from establishing dedicated women and children’s units at every Divisional Secretariat in the country to creating a space for discourse and dialogue on youth with our Generation to Generation Dialogue. From reaping the rewards of a demographic dividend to launching a trilingual mobile application on sexual and reproductive health for those with disabilities; from policies on paper to practical action, some of the works of UNFPA are easily identifiable when they appear in the form of comprehensive guides, community awareness programs and events.”



*Alain Sibenaler, Country Representative UNFPA*

He further adds, “At UNFPA in Sri Lanka, we wanted to be data-wise; to rely on data just as much as we do on evidence. To decipher it, analyze it and interpret it in ways that makes our concepts and policies realistic, meaningful and sustainable. Take for instance our work on Gender-based Violence (GBV). In 2015, UNFPA adapted its programs and activities to suit a new reality. It was much harder to work upstream but it had to be done. We knew there was a high prevalence of GBV but we did not have baseline data and evidence. We wanted to know exactly ‘how’ and ‘why’, and data answered those questions for us.”

Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, Professor Lakshman Dissanayake believes it's highly commendable that UNFPA Sri Lanka plans to use evidence-based data. He added that "data should not just be discussed in classrooms" and as demographers it was necessary to analyze evidence-based data and find ways to use it in practice. "We need to look at how to use the data for population dynamics."

Alain explains how we've been using evidence-based data, "We've extended our mandate to include data driven change to the core of every project. As our work unfolds, we must also continue to address new challenges related to population demographics, rapid urbanization and migration. To create a sustainable future, where everyone can fulfill their potential, requires that we promote health, cultivate human capacities, and commit to individual dignity and human rights for every person, everywhere."



*Professor Lakshman Dissanayake,  
Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo*

One of the most vulnerable groups that face the worst forms of GBV are women who head their households. Executive Director of Viluthu Centre for Human Resource Development, Aaranya Rajasingham, who has been working closely with women head of households in war affected areas says the UNFPA's working in chipping away at the boulder that is GBV is invaluable.

"UNFPA has been instrumental and invaluable in countering GBV. The organisation functions as an enabler of change and a communicator to drive the crucial issues forward. UNFPA being the chair of the Gender Theme Group is effectively strengthening the role of female headed households."

***"UNFPA  
has been  
instrumental and  
invaluable in  
countering GBV."***



*Aaranya Rajasingham,  
Executive Director of Viluthu Centre for  
Human Resource Development*

# ADVANCING POLICIES

“ UNFPA's Inter-generational dialogues are aimed at creating an inclusive platform for both young and old to contribute towards maximizing the demographic dividend in support of Sri Lanka's middle income status.

”

## CONNECTING GENERATIONS THROUGH DIALOGUE (G2G)

Sri Lanka has heard the voice of the experienced; the older generation. We have learnt from their wisdom. Sri Lanka recognizes the energy of young people; the energy for innovation and social change. Generations have been appreciated and recognized for their unique strengths. But has Sri Lanka been able to harness the collective potential of its entire population, capturing all generations together?

UNFPA's Inter-generational dialogues are the answer. The dialogues are aimed at creating an inclusive platform for both young and old to contribute towards maximizing the demographic dividend in support of Sri Lanka's middle income status.

## THE FIRST OF MANY TO COME

UNFPA launched its first inter-generational dialogue on shifting population dimensions in December of 2015. The dialogue which was open to public saw a huge participation of both young and elderly.

The focus of the discussion was: "Youth as a driving force in determining and maintaining Sri Lanka's middle income status", taking into consideration the demographic bonus, increased dependency and an ageing population.

It is envisaged that UNFPA will use these collective strengths from both word and will to build a body of evidence that documents shifting population dimensions and identifies needs that policymakers need to fulfill.

LACK OF SEXUAL EDUCATION!

Lack of Computer Literacy!

LACK OF ENGLISH LITERACY!

Unemployment

## TALKING POINTS

### NEED FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Youth participation in politics is becoming increasingly important for Sri Lanka due to its large youth population. A greater participation of young people will reflect in youth sensitive policy formulation in the country which will enable social and economic growth. It was found that lack of female participation was due to marginalization and discrimination at a local and national level.

### INCREASE IN SRI LANKA'S AGING LABOUR FORCE

An increase in the aging population can be considered both a boost and a curb to Sri Lanka's economic growth. An increase in the number of elderly citizens in the country means that the dependency ratio would increase, thereby increasing the burden on Sri Lanka's young.

Increasing the age of retirement is looked at as a viable solution in balancing this dependency ratio. In hindsight, this also means that older people will remain longer in the workforce, promoting a backlog of young people unable to enter the working class until the old retire.

### YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Data from the Labour Force Survey 2014 by the Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka reveals that there is 20.3% of youth unemployment in the country among young people between the ages of 15-24 years, and a further 8.3% unemployment among youth between the ages of 25-29 years. The issue of youth unemployment was discussed as a hindrance in determining Sri Lanka's middle income status.





### GOING BEYOND DATA

Inter-generational dialogues such as these form the cornerstone of UNFPA's policy engagement framework to advance policies on women and youth, rights and health.

Future dialogues will continue to highlight areas such as women, fertility and migration, supporting national decision making that goes beyond data.

*Be on the lookout  
for the next G2G  
session, your voice  
is equally important!*



UNFPA has been shifting gears in its focus in Sri Lanka from capacity building and service delivery to policy dialogue, policy advice and policy advocacy. As such, our work in the country will entirely focus on advancing equity, accountability and quality in all spheres of decision making affecting the lives and potential of Sri Lanka's population.

In coming years we will take a lead role in convening decision makers, actors and beneficiaries through evidence-based data and policy related advocacy around population and development dynamics. By way of a policy engagement framework, we will facilitate inter-generational policy dialogues using data analysis on number of socio-economic dimension of Sri Lanka's development; youth, rights, women's issue, ageing, fertility, migration and urbanization.

*UNFPA has been shifting gears in its focus in Sri Lanka from capacity building and service delivery to policy dialogue, policy advice and policy advocacy.*

*As such our work in the country will entirely focus on advancing equity, accountability and quality in all spheres of decision making affecting the lives and potential of Sri Lanka's population.*



# POLICY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

## CONNECTING GENERATIONS AND BRIDGING THE GAP FROM DATA TO POLICIES

In 2014 UNFPA introduced a new global Strategic Plan for the years 2014-2017; designed to sharpen the programmatic focus of UNFPA offices across the world. Sri Lanka being a newly emerged middle-income country with good health and socio-economic indicators, it has now been classified as a country with low need and high ability to finance its own programmes. Thus, we have been shifting gears in its focus in Sri Lanka from capacity building and service delivery to policy dialogue, policy advice and policy advocacy.

As such our work in Sri Lanka will entirely focus on advancing equity, accountability and quality in all spheres of decision-making affecting the lives and the potential of the Sri Lankan population. In the coming years we will take a lead role in convening decision makers, actors and beneficiaries through evidence based data and policy related advocacy around

population and development dynamics. By way of a policy engagement framework, we will facilitate intergenerational policy dialogues using data analysis on a number of socio-economic dimensions of Sri Lanka's

development: youth rights, women's issues, ageing, fertility, migration, and urbanization. This Policy Engagement Framework aims to strengthen national policy and development planning, budgeting and monitoring.



<b>Publication</b>	Population of Sri Lanka	Monograph 1: Youth	Monograph 2: Women	Monograph 3: Ageing	Monograph 4: Fertility	Monograph 5: Migration	
<b>Analysis</b>		Policy brief	Policy brief	Policy brief	Policy brief	Policy brief	
<b>Fora</b>	Forum on Demographic trends	G 2 G Advocacy Forum on Youth Rights	Advocacy Forum	Advocacy Forum	Advocacy Forum	Advocacy Forum	
<b>Ideas</b>		Intergenerational Voices on Youth	Intergenerational Voices on Women	Intergenerational Voices on Ageing	Intergenerational Voices on Fertility	Intergenerational Voices on Migration	
<b>Population Portal</b>							





## POLICY WORKSHOP NEGOMBO

In July of 2015 as part of a capacity development course, an Upstream Policy Engagement workshop was held in Sri Lanka. Staff members from UNFPA Maldives, India and New York also participated and supported the workshop. The four day residential workshop helped to prepare the Country Office for better policy dialogue and engagement in their work in Sri Lanka and learn from the best practices of other Country Offices regionally and globally.

### SOME OF THE MAIN TOPICS DISCUSSED AT THE WORKSHOP WERE:

- Public Policy and the Policy Cycle
- Policy Realization: Challenges in Sri Lanka
- Ambiguities in fertility rate in Sri Lanka and its policy implications
- How and where to advocate for returns on investment in women and youth through a macroeconomic perspective
- Quality, equity and accountability in reproductive health

Guest speakers at the workshop included:

- Executive Director of the Centre of Poverty Analysis, Udan Fernando
- Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, Professor Lakshman Dissanayake
- Executive Director Verité Research, Nishan de Mel

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## BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY GUIDES FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

இனப்பெருக்க சுகாதாரத்திற்கான நடத்தை

மாற்றத்திற்கான தொடர்புடைய தந்திரப்பாய்வு



## BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION

The Ministry of Health in its National Strategic Plan Maternal and Newborn Health (2012-2016) identified Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) as a critical area in improving reproductive health services.

“The traditional Health Education model should be replaced by a strong BCC model which suits the social and cultural norms of the country. UNFPA has been instrumental in supporting the Health Education Bureau and the Family Health Bureau at the Ministry of Health to develop BCC strategy guides focusing on family planning, well women clinics, maternal and neo natal health, GBV and adolescent sexual and reproductive health” Dr RDFC Kanthi, Deputy Director, Health Education Bureau and Head of the Behaviour Change Communication Unit.



His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka recognized UNFPA for its work in Reproductive Health Communication in Sri Lanka at the BCC Strategy Launch on 22nd of May, 2015.

“Reproductive health is key for progress,” remarked His Excellency, the President of Sri Lanka.

“Although Sri Lanka has achieved very good health indicators, to take the country to the next level of health status we need effective communication which is culturally appropriate. We need to learn from the developed countries in applying a professional approach on communication on reproductive health. We commend UNFPA in bringing this to Sri Lanka and adopting it to the local context,” said the President.

UNFPA has been working globally towards aligning communication and advocacy initiatives on reproductive health in order to support the reproductive health goals worldwide. The launch of the BCC Strategy guides in Sri Lanka is a result of the initiative taken by UNFPA Sri Lanka Country Office in strengthening these efforts.

“UNFPA is proud to be part of this achievement. An essential part of our work in Sri Lanka has been to enhance national capacities to strengthen the quality of reproductive healthcare in the country. We have done this through support towards a full sexual and reproductive health package with system strengthening, knowledge management, technical assistance and sharing of good practices with and from other countries in the region,” said UNFPA Representative, Alain Sibener.

# FULFILLING POTENTIALS

## THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY IN ACTION



In Sri Lanka, youth between the age of 15 and 29 years make up 26% of the total population, comprising a significant percentage of the total population. According to statistics, out of 20 million individuals, 5.6 million are youth. This age group is critical for economic, social and cultural development of the country's knowledge and skills development, including soft skills and positive attitudes. It is with this in mind that the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development formulated a National Youth Policy.

The National Youth Policy is the guiding principal for stakeholders concerned in planning and implementing programs and activities according to the needs and aspirations of Sri Lankan youth.

Under the National Youth Policy, one of the main objectives is "to promote health and wellbeing of health."

Therefore the Ministry with the assistance of UNFPA and technical assistance from the Ministry of Health initiated a project in order to increase accessibility for young people to quality services and information on Sexual Reproductive Health.

## ASSESSMENT SURVEY

UNFPA supported the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission together with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Ministry of Health to conduct Need Assessment Survey on SRH knowledge for youth in the Vocational Training Sector in Sri Lanka. The Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET) Sector today produce qualified skilled personnel. Generally, school leavers who do not have the chance to enter into local universities enter to the TVET sector.

The survey covered 1000 trainees and 200 trainers' SRH knowledge in Sri Lanka. The survey found that a significant number of trainees lack satisfactory knowledge on SRH. Therefore it was recommended to conduct awareness sessions at public sector training centers with the objective of improving trainees knowledge as well as skills in decision making, assertiveness and critical thinking in SRH.

## YOUTH SENSITIVE POLICES AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL

UNFPA also worked closely with provincial councils to strengthen youth participation at the subnational level policy making process and to produce youth sensitive policies at a provincial level. Focusing on two provinces as a pilot initiative, UNFPA worked with the Provincial Ministry of Youth Affairs to create provincial youth forums that bring together different youth networks to engage in discussions about youth needs and policy priority.

## STARTING FROM THE SOUTH

UNFPA worked with the Southern Province to produce the first provincial youth policy of the country along with an action plan for implementation through a series of stakeholder consultations thus strengthening youth policy structures at the subnational level.

Currently the Provincial Council is reviewing this policy guideline and hopes to adopt and implement its policy suggestions in 2016.

## SCHOOL COMPREHENSIVE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

In 2015, UNFPA also developed an action plan for school Comprehensive Reproductive Health Education (CRHE) for the next two years with the support of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. The main aim

of this program is to enhance national capacity to design and implement community and school based CRHE programs that promotes human rights and gender equality.

# DRIVING SOCIAL CHANGE

One major thrust of UNFPA's work worldwide and in Sri Lanka is to empower young people and to ensure that every young person's potential is fulfilled. The Sri Lanka Country Office embraces this as an opportunity to promote youth leadership and empowerment and to work differently with and

for young people. On an experimental basis, the Country Office recruited six young social change entrepreneurs in 2014 who would showcase a new model of youth leadership to develop a project of their choice that would aim to create lasting social change.

## ART FOR ADVOCACY

Under this context, social change entrepreneur, Munira Mutaher conceptualized 'Art for Advocacy', a platform to advocate for gender equality using artistic initiatives. The Art for Advocacy Collective will be an umbrella for visual, fine, performing and creative artists who devise performances/ workshops using individual approaches to convey a powerful social message.

It will function as an inter-generational platform where upcoming creatives will develop their work together with experienced advisors. By teaming

up with NGO's, INGO's, private sector and interested entities, Art for Advocacy will bridge the gaps in artistic initiatives towards social change.

There is a strong, yet largely untapped correlation that exists between creative artists and their ability to cause social change through behavioral and attitudinal changes. The artists who do work towards on themes of gender and women's rights do so in isolated pockets resulting in limited impact.

The Art for Advocacy project aims to bridge this gap by

bringing together creative artists and creating linkages with other private sector and NGO entities who share a parallel vision with UNFPA of working towards equality, with a focus on GBV prevention and SRH and Rights. Using artistic forms, it is a fluid and flexible way of ensuring that a strong message and vital information is conveyed in an entertaining, interactive and impactful manner. The project is working towards being combined with other UNFPA initiatives such as the Corporate Collective, GBV Forum, 100 Voices and OTW.





## ON THE WAY

Social change entrepreneur, Naushalya Rajapaksha, initiated a project to observe the impact of sexual harassment in public transport.

Project 'OTW' or 'On The Way', conducted the first nation-wide survey on youth aged between 18 – 35 years to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment, specifically in public transport (buses and trains) and its consequences on youth and ultimately their potential.

Subsequently, based on our analysis of the survey, we seek to propose a set of recommendations which delves into the territory of a legislative amendment through extensive high-level stakeholder advocacy with the intent of providing a wider legal ambit in redefining and regulating sexual harassment in addition to creating a society that is completely intolerant of sexual harassment in public transport.

*OTW has officially reached 3500 young people to help bring awareness on sexual harassment in Sri Lanka through Social Dialogues and the National Quantitative Survey.*



# 100 VOICES LEADING FOR CHANGE

This youth-led social change campaign developed by Onalie Ariyabandhu encourages youth to advocate on youth rights, SRH and prevention of GBV, by steering youth driven networks right around the country.

The campaign aims at creating a platform for each youth advocate to empower 100 of his/her peers through community based activities and social media engagement and thus hopes to create a ripple effect among youth in fostering greater interest and vigilance.

Looking at the Sri Lankan context, we have a large youth population of 16 young people for every 100 persons. Yet, engaging youth to achieve greater heights is something that has been overlooked by many. Ascending up the ladder, Sri Lanka has seen escalating rates of literacy and computer literacy among the youth, starting from social media networks to exposure to the global picture.

Onalie pin points that, "it is evidently inevitable that youth today are more progressive and driven towards achieving greater social change than

before."

On these grounds, 100 voices make ripples in a river of youth to raise their voices to bridge the gap between the lack of comprehensive knowledge and, sexual violence and teenage pregnancies taking a toll on the society.

Currently, UNFPA has partnered with the Interact District 3220, Sri Lanka Model United Nations, Rotaract District 3220, Sri Lanka Unites, Academy of Design, Sri Lanka Girl Guides Association, and Young Women's Christian Association, some interactive and enthusiastic hubs of the youth in the country. The handbook which was designed to be distributed among 2000 young leaders between the ages 15- 25 years is an easy read tool which will empower youth to distribute evidence based knowledge in schools and communities.

“  
It is evidently inevitable  
that youth today are  
more progressive and  
driven towards achieving  
greater social change  
than before

”



## CATCHING UP WITH TWO OF OUR YOUNG NATIONAL UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEER'S ON THEIR EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH YOUTH



### THARINDU JAYAWARDHANE

*24 years old, Psychology and International Relations graduate.*

I have always wanted to contribute to the development process of the country and shape the policies that affect our lives rather than being a passive recipient. I believed that the United Nations Volunteer (UNV) programme will provide me an excellent platform to be an active participant in the social development discourse. It has been a good stepping stone to the United Nations System and I have grown both professionally and personally over the course of my assignment.

As a Youth Policy Analyst at UNFPA, I've been working on the Provincial Youth Policy Project which was initiated by UNFPA in 2015. This project aimed at strengthening youth sensitive policy frameworks at sub-national level and to increase meaningful youth participation in provincial policy making processes.

As a pilot initiative, working with the Southern Provincial Council (SPC) to lay the foundation to formulate a provincial youth policy

was a key milestone during the course of the assignment. At present this tailor-made policy framework is being reviewed by the SPC prior to adoption and implementation. Youth consultations that were carried out in Southern province, bringing both policy makers and provincial youth networks together was another major step towards achieving the project outcome of strengthening the youth participation in provincial policy making.

Sri Lanka is emerging after a devastating war and young people of this island have a key role to play in the development and reconciliation process of this nation. National and subnational policies should be sensitive to the youth needs as they shape the very lives of young people who will eventually inherit the reigns of the country. I believe that young people should be key stakeholders of the national policy discourse; and this inclusivity will ensure that their voices are heard and their rights are protected.



### BRIDGETTE KENNEDY

*26 years old, Social Sciences graduate.*

I was recruited as the second UNV youth policy analyst by UNFPA for the Provincial Youth Policy Project that UNFPA had embarked on in 2015. This involves supporting the formulation of provincial youth centric policies and using them to create enabling environments for young people.

I was instrumental in conducting a Sabaragamuwa Provincial Stakeholder consultation to identify the needs and gaps of the youth of Sabaragamuwa and obtained recommendations from a community level. This is in the process of being fed into the Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council decision making process with regard to youth and young people.

I believe it's not about having a dozen of policies that capture the work that needs to be done for the young people of Sri Lanka, but more of whether at least one of these policies will translate into a tangible impact in the lives of these young people. The policy is simply an output and an important output; however it becomes an outcome when the impact of it is felt by every young girl and boy in Sri Lanka. This is exactly why UNFPA is working at subnational levels to reach these young people and have a bottom up approach to empower youth from different localities of the country.



## SIGN LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

UNFPA also facilitated the development of a sign language glossary which translates technical terms on Sexual and Reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information into sign language. This was a project initiated by the Y-PEER Network and the Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare. The glossary with 250 new terms is extremely important for two reasons: health care providers now have a single nationally accepted reference document on

signs of SRH terms and secondly, individuals with hearing difficulties are able to get an accurate and comprehensive understanding of these technical terms. The glossary was launched on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd, 2015.



## COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

UNFPA together with the Family Planning Association Sri Lanka and Y-PEER Network developed and launched a comprehensive glossary on Sexual and Reproductive Health terms. This initiative has been youth-led and the terminology guidelines is a product by youth for youth.

Sri Lanka has a population of 4.8 million youths but not many have access to accurate information on their bodies, choices and identities which restrict their ability to make informed decisions regarding their health, life and future. It is envisaged that this glossary and guidelines will help young people in gaining access to better information on SRHR.



# EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES

## THE NATIONAL FORUM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Established and chaired by UNFPA, the Forum was set up in 2005 as a unique national level platform to share information and experiences, improve coordinated multi-sectoral responses to GBV and to advocate for GBV related policy changes. According to the Forum's strategic agenda developed in 2014 it focuses on three areas:

- Strengthening Law and Policy on GBV
- Enhancing Institutional Response to GBV
- Creating knowledge and bringing about attitudinal changes.

The strategic agenda also has recommended to improve the sustainability and development of the Forum itself

by necessitating the moving away from the Colombo-centric nature of the Forum and expanding its membership.

Since its inception, the Forum membership was broad-based and included UN agencies, International NGOs, Local NGOs, Community Based Organizations, government agencies and individual experts working on GBV. Currently, it has a membership of 53 agencies. The Forum has decided to extend its membership to selected bi-lateral and donor agencies who have demonstrated an interest in contributing to the improvement of the GBV situation in Sri Lanka.

### Some of the achievements of the Forum in 2015 include:

- Increasing membership from 35 to 51 members. In April 2015, the Forum set up three sub-committees as proposed in its strategic plan for 2015- 2018 to focus on the three mandates of the Forum
- The fundamental purpose of the Forum is to facilitate the sharing and exchange of information. To this end a website was set up providing members the opportunity to share updates, publications and ideas.
- The Forum carried out a successful 16 Days of Activism against GBV. It was launched on November 25 with a press conference held at a national level to spread the year's message "Make Education Safe for all – Eliminate Gender Based Violence"
- The Forum also reached out to the district level. It began discussions with field coordinators of the Resident Coordinator's office based in the North and East to organize initial meetings at district fora.

“

It is an advocacy forum to influence policy and ensure that it's implemented. We are sitting here together to hold the state accountable (on some level) in whatever way we can.

- Kumudini Samuel from Women and Media Collective

”





# MAINSTREAMING GENDER ACROSS THE UN

## THE UNITED NATIONS GENDER THEME GROUP (GTG)

The GTG is comprised of gender focal points from all UN agencies based in Sri Lanka and is chaired by the Country Representative of UNFPA, Mr. Alain Sibenaler. The objective of the GTG is to advocate for addressing and mainstreaming gender equality within the UN.

### CENWOR REPORT LAUNCH

The Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR) was commissioned by the UN GTG to undertake a review on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in Sri Lanka. The report examined the

progress made and challenges encountered as well as measures to address the remaining gaps and provided a comprehensive situational analysis on women in Sri Lanka, taking stock of the achievements attained and

advocating for stronger measures where attention has dwindled.

The Sri Lanka Beijing+20 Review Report was launched on March 27th 2015.

### MIGRANT WORKERS STUDY LAUNCH

In 2015, the GTG commissioned research on "An examination of Sri Lankan policies which apply to migrant workers, who fall under the domestic domain, and their impact on the rights of workers to

freely access employment". In light of the range of Government policies, action plans and circulars which are in place to ensure the protection and welfare of migrant workers and their families, the study provides a

better understanding of how these instruments affect the rights of workers, how effectively they are implemented and what challenges workers face in accessing their right to employment.

### FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

At present, close to one quarter of all households in Sri Lanka (23%) are female headed. The majority of these households are situated in the North and East of the country.

Providing a platform to discuss this important issue, the GTG of the United Nations in Sri Lanka

organized a round table discussion, followed by a panel discussion, at the BMICH. During the event, a report titled 'Mapping of Socio-Economic Support Services to Female Headed Households in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka' was presented highlighting the

challenges faced by Female-Headed Households, the nature of current interventions and gaps in implementation. This report provides a number of recommendations to be adopted by the Government of Sri Lanka to empower Female Headed Households in Sri Lanka.

## HEALTH SECTOR RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

UNFPA continues to support the Ministry of Health to initiate the Health Sector Response to GBV. “This plan of action which was conceived with the assistance of Manoj Fernando and Lakshman Senanayake of UNFPA is a defining tool in how the health sector responds to GBV,” Dr. Nethajalie Mapitigama, Consultant Community physician in charge of gender and women’s health at the Family Health Bureau (FHB) of the Ministry of Health said.

Dr. Mapitigama mentioned that the FHB was able to develop a comprehensive action plan with activities and sub-activities. The document was categorized into three; prevention of GBV, prevention plus response to GBV and response to GBV survivors. UNFPA also supported the Ministry of Health and the expert committee on women’s health under the Sri Lanka Medical Association to develop a guideline on investigating the incidents of GBV in the health sector

“This was not something new, it was already in the medical curriculum, but the theory was haphazard and we didn’t know how to implement this,” she said. “When UNFPA helped develop a manual, the trainers finally had a guide book which they could use in training medical students. That itself is a major shift.”



## FROM TRAINING MANUALS TO JUDICIAL MEDICAL OFFICERS

In 2015, UNFPA also supported the College of Forensic Pathologists of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Health to introduce new guidelines to judicial medical officers in three provinces of the country.

This guidebook, Dr. Ajith Tennakoon the Colombo Chief Judicial Medical Officer says has had a significant, tangible and remarkable effect on how medico-legal officers go about their duty. “We’ve received feedback from the Attorney General’s department and even the judiciary that our reports have improved vastly. The guidebook has improved the medico-legal services and the reports are a reflection of the survivors and victims’ deserve.”



# DEDICATED WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S UNITS

When the government of Sri Lanka adopted the National Action Plan for the Protection of Human Rights from 2011-2016, it envisaged a series of action plans for the protection and promotion of children and women's rights. Among them was the setting up of dedicated women's and children units with a multidisciplinary team. When the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MWCA) made a policy decision to establish these units at both district and divisional levels, UNFPA redoubled their efforts to see this project through.

"I was once a divisional secretary based in Anuradhapura, but we didn't have a dedicated team neither did we have clearly defined roles, so the establishment of these units is a paradigm shift,"

Ashoka Alawatta, Additional Secretary (Development) of MWCA said, "With the help of UNFPA I am proud to say that we have 314

dedicated units at Divisional Secretariats with a team of 5 devoted and competent individuals."

UNFPA provided technical support to the MWCA to develop Standard Operating Procedures for these units. UNFPA also gave technical support to the MWCA to streamline the data gathering system of the Ministry of Health in order for policy formulation, monitoring and review.

Accordingly, each unit has five field officers, two of them address women's issues, they are Women affairs Development Officers and a counseling assistant. The other three individuals see to the wellbeing of the child, one of them is a Child care development specialist, child rights promotion officer and a psychosocial support officer.

Mrs.

“ I was once a divisional secretary based in Anuradhapura, but we didn't have a dedicated team neither did we have clearly define roles, so the establishment of these units is a paradigm shift.

- Ashoka Alawatta,  
Additional Secretary  
(Development) of Ministry of  
Women' and Child Affairs

”

Alawatta explained

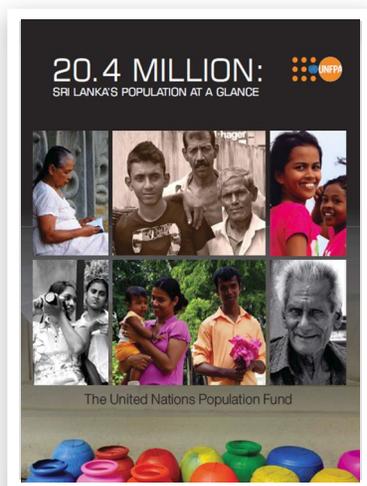
that the Ministry with the help of UNFPA has been able to take this a step further and implemented a coordinated approach to promote a multi-sectoral response to GBV.

"The response that battered young women get at the police station is futile, we realized how frustrating this process was, so we put competent officers at the respective stations, assigned individuals at the Government Agent's office and at the respective hospital." UNFPA

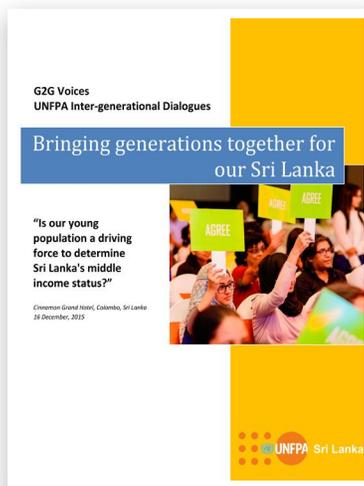
together with the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) also developed a training manual on gender and women's rights for the officers of the HRCSL. This manual was handed to officers as a reference guide in 2016 year. UNFPA continues to support Women In Need, Women Development Centre and the Muslim Research Action Forum for the prevention and response activities on GBV at a district level.



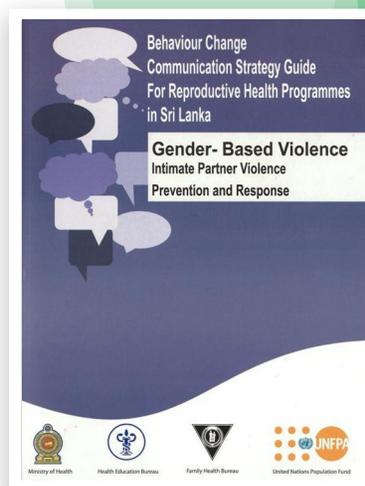
# UNFPA PUBLICATIONS IN 2015



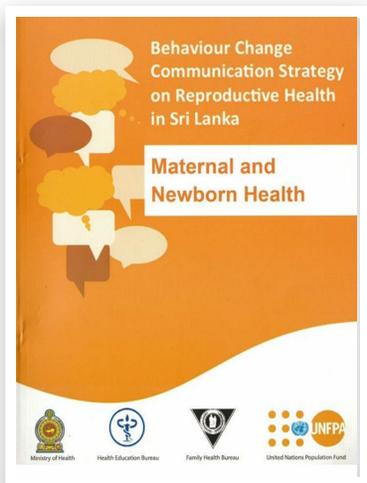
20.4 Million: Sri Lanka's Population at a Glance



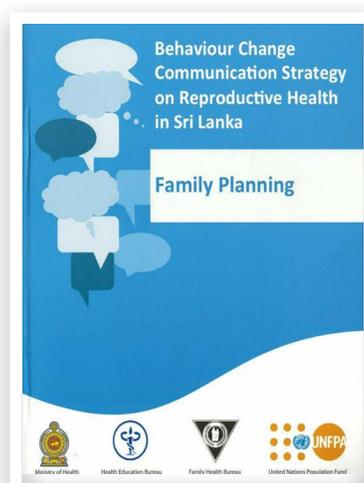
G2G Voices: Youth



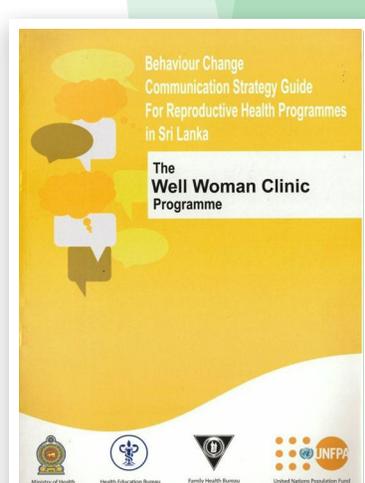
Behaviour Change Communication Strategy Guide: Gender-based Violence



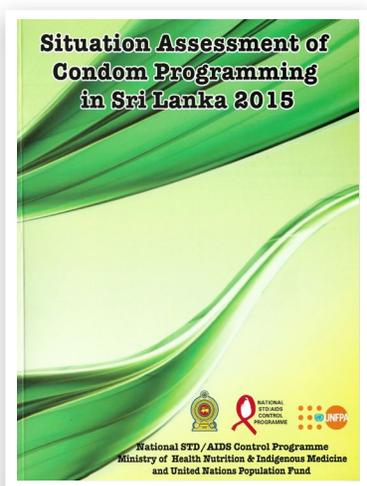
Behaviour Change Communication Strategy: Maternal and Neo-natal Health



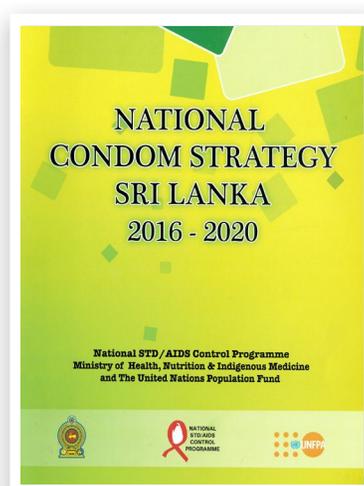
Behaviour Change Communication Strategy Guide: Family Planning



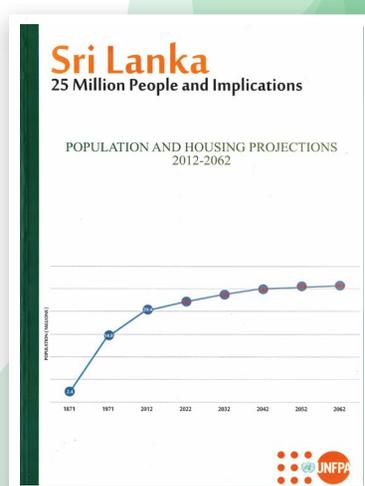
Behaviour Change Communication Strategy Guide - The Well Woman Clinic Programme



Situation Assessment of Condom Programming in Sri Lanka 2015



National Condom Strategy Sri Lanka 2016-2020



Population and Housing Projections 2012 - 2062

# What Love Is Not

**Amalini De Sayrah, 24.**  
Going places, capturing moments, telling stories.



For Valentine's Day, the Country Office encouraged individuals to take a closer look at intimate partner violence; can someone who really loves you, abuse you physically or verbally? 'What Love is Not' was a month long competition that called for submissions of essays, poems and illustrations to create awareness about intimate partner violence.

The number of entries we received was overwhelming and selecting the winners among all the impressive and moving entries was no easy task. Included here are top three submissions in each language category and the best illustration.

## **FIVE.**

It starts with a pinch on her arm as they waited for their parents after art class. Her skin burns and tears sting her eyes as he continues to laugh and point at her. She runs to her mother, distraught. Ammi said 'He must like you baba, that's why he bothers you.'

## **TEN.**

It happened again at that aunty's dinner party, where he stamped on her foot when they were playing a game. Her new shoes soiled, she sidled over to her mother with a pout on her face. Ammi then said 'Just fooling around no, he must think you look very pretty.'

## **THIRTEEN.**

The boy in the back seat of the school van pulls her hair and she grits her teeth, not wanting to cry in front of him. Her braid ruined and her face downcast, she greets her teacher. Miss said 'Boys having fun, that's just how they are.'

## **EIGHTEEN.**

They're at a party together; she waves at a friend, he waves back. She feels his fingers tighten around her arm, fire in his eyes that tells her that she crossed a line with that wave – how dare you. Massaging the spot, she sits down with her classmates in school the next day. Her friend says 'Aw, he was jealous! That's sweet. He must really really like you.'

## **TWENTY THREE.**

Bodies are rushing in a fight outside the club they've just been to, she tries to pull him away. He shoves her backwards, this unexpected reaction causing her to slam into the wall a few feet behind.

Edging dangerously close, he snarls more than speaks when he asks her to back out of his business.

Visibly shaken, she lingers close to the other women she knew who'd seen it all happen.

Her colleague says 'What an idiot, pushing you like that. Drunk out of his mind, obviously.'

## **TWENTY SEVEN.**

She didn't even realise what she'd done wrong but as his fists rained down on her, she didn't fight back, convinced that she'd committed some terrible sin that he was right to punish her for.

Curling up tighter as she slept, the cool of her wedding ring pressed against her cheek, she remembered what she'd always been told.

She told herself 'He must have been worried for me, that's why.'

## **THIRTY ONE.**

The bruises on her body stand out more when her daughter holds her by the arm, inquiringly looking at the tears in ammi's eyes.

She wants to know why thatthi shouted last night, why he was mean to ammi.

She knows by now that's how he is when he's angry. When he's drunk. When he can't blame himself, everything is her fault.

But she doesn't tell her daughter that.

## **THIRTY THREE.**

Her daughter runs through the gate in tears; the neighbour's little boy pushed her when they were playing games outside.

She trembles as her mother washes the scrapes on her knees, waiting for an explanation.

Ammi tells her 'Don't let boys, don't let anyone, push you around like that.'





The first inter-generational dialogue, launched under the heading “Bringing Generations together for our Sri Lanka” was held on Wednesday (16 December 2015) in Colombo at the Cinnamon Grand, and looked into addressing how Sri Lanka’s youth could be utilised as a driving force to determine the country’s middle income status.

This photo was taken at the first of a series of dialogues initiated by UNFPA, which aim to bring generations together to collectively voice and hear opinions that will help shape Sri Lanka’s socio-economic development.

# POLICY ON PAPER TO PRACTICAL ACTION UNFPA AT WORK IN 2015

“We need to learn from the developed countries in applying a professional approach on communication on reproductive health. We commend UNFPA in bringing this to Sri Lanka and adopting it to the local context” - His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka at the launch of Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) strategy guide.



UNFPA Sri Lanka together with FPA Sri Lanka and Y-PEER Sri Lanka, launched a comprehensive National Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Terminology Guide; “Say It Right”.

This trilingual guide designed by young people will go a long way in improving access to accurate information on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for Sri Lanka’s large youth population and will be a useful guide for those involved in the delivery of SRHR in Sri Lanka.

Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health remains a challenge for youth, especially for those living with a disability. UNFPA's AbleApp, a trilingual mobile application on Sexual and Reproductive Health, available in Android and iOS for persons with vision and hearing impairments, will give access to all!



UNFPA Sri Lanka support greater investment in integrated HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health services. We stand here for zero Discrimination. Zero Infections. Zero AIDS related deaths.



Celebrating World Statistics Day 2015 with a national seminar for over 400 attendees!

Participants of the joint community project on Youth Empowerment, Sexual Reproductive Health, and Social Etiquettes in Mannar! Over 200 young students (boys and girls) from Pariharikandal Government School and Murunkan College aged 13 - 19 gathered in Mannar to participate in a youth-led community awareness project developed by thirteen inspiring young leaders of the interact clubs of St. Bridget's Convent and Visaka Vidyalaya.



Raising their hands to the sky, staff from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) office in Colombo, painted their hands a bright orange, to highlight the 2016 slogan of the United Nations Secretary General's UNiTE campaign "Orange the world: end violence against women and girls."

"In Sri Lanka, available evidence-based data show that the prevalence of GBV varies within the country and the most common forms of GBV are often associated with cultural prejudices and traditional attitudes within tight knit communities. It is estimated that one out of four females have suffered sexual abuse by the time they reach 18 years of age," said Alain Sibenaler, UNFPA Representative to Sri Lanka.

# ENABLING POPULATIONS

**UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund's works to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.**

Last year, UNFPA strengthened the national capacity of the Ministry of Health to establish a quality assurance system for reproductive health with new protocols and guidelines. In this regard, the National Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal care assessment (EmONC) made several policy recommendations to develop obstetric care and maternal health. To galvanize their efforts UNFPA partnered with the Sri Lanka College of Obstetrician

and Gynecologist and Family Health Bureau.

One of the goals of UNFPA which is achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health (including family planning), promoting reproductive rights, reducing maternal mortality and accelerating progress on the International Conference and Population agenda and Millennium Development Goals - are inextricably linked.

The maternal mortality ratio is 32.5 per 100,000 live births in 2013 (Family Health Bureau 2016b) and it is the lowest in South Asia.

Analysis of the maternal mortality ratio by district reveals that Polonnaruwa district had the highest ratio of 92.5 per 100,000 live births in 2013 followed by Nuwara Eliya (61.1), Kegalle (50.9) and Mannar (50.7). These districts were identified as those needing more attention to minimize high maternal mortality.

## WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Nearly 40% of all maternal deaths were attributed to four main concerns; unstoppable bleeding following a delivery (post partum hemorrhage), abortions, heart disease and hypertensive disorders.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

All of this is preventable. That's why the skill set of public health midwives play a crucial role in early detection of high risk pregnancies and referral care. Last year through the EmONC, UNFPA set into motion, a set of recommendations to standardize training of health care workers which will also be the country's training policy. The EmOC training will be provided by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (UK).





## Marital status

The mean age of marriage stands

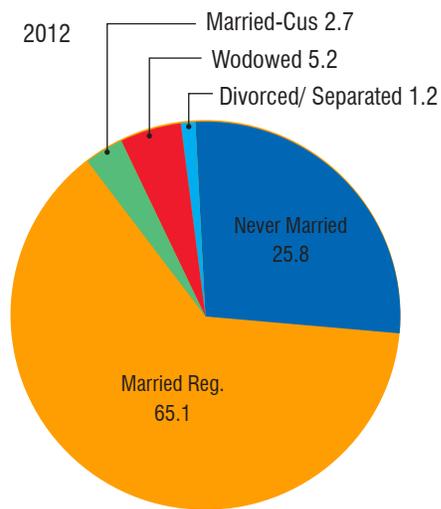
♀ 23.4 years

## Fertility

Total Fertility Rate value is estimated at

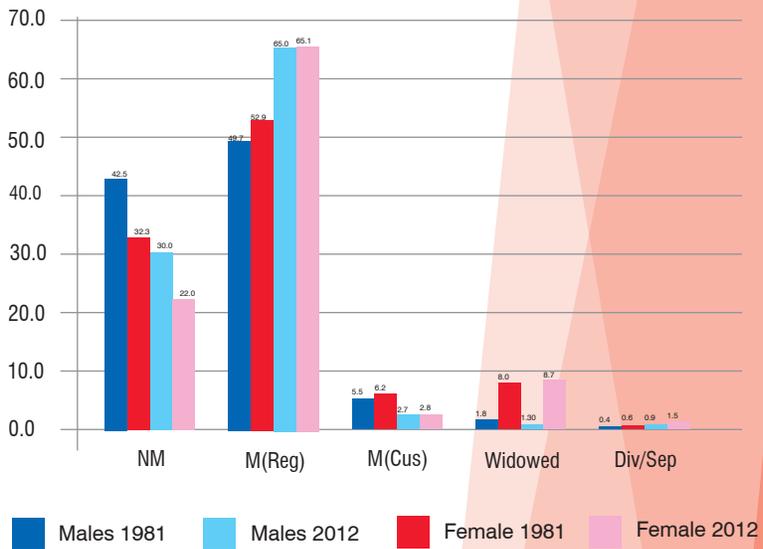
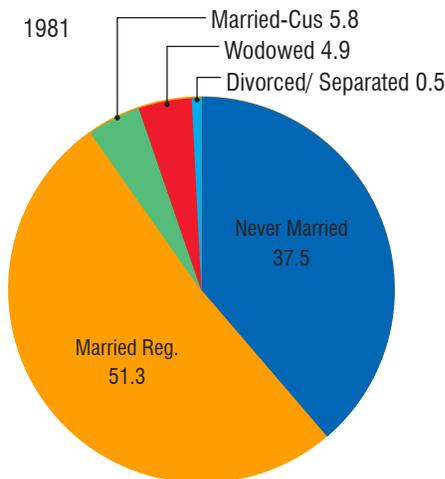
♀ 27.2 years per woman in 2012

### Marital Status Composition of the Population 15 years and above 2012



Nearly 65% of both males and females above 15 years of age are legally married and around 2.7% are married customarily in 2012.

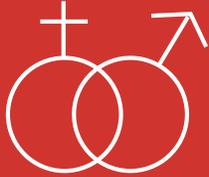
### Marital composition of the population 15 years and above by sex – 1981,2012



### Description of marital status categories

Category	Description
Never Married	a person who has never been married
Married (Registered)	a person whose current marriage has been registered according to the law
Married (Customary)	a person whose current marriage has not been registered but claims to be married according to custom or repute
Widowed	a person whose spouse is dead and who is not current married to another
Divorced	a person who had married but has obtained a divorce in a court of law and is not current married
Legally separated	a person who has married but has obtained a judicial or legal separation in a court of law
Separated (not legally)	a person who had married but voluntarily separated without a court order

**AGE - SEX  
STURCTURE**



**646,000**

more females than male in Sri Lanka

**DIFFERENTLY  
ABLED PERSONS**

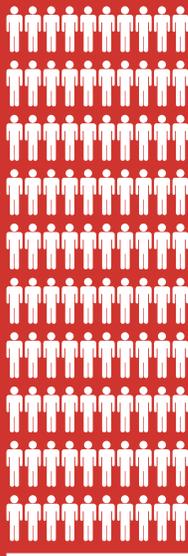


The differently abled persons, who were aged 15 years and above, only were employed

**29%**

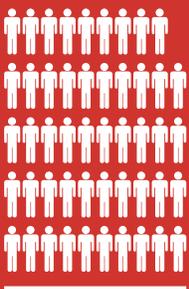
Children under age 15

**100**



Elderly Persons

**49**

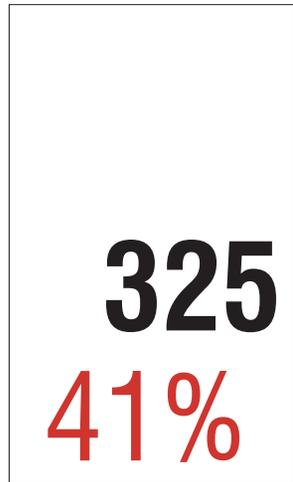


**POPULATION SIZE  
GROWTH  
AND DISTRIBUTION**



Sri Lanka's population as recorded in 2012 is **20,359,439**

Today



Per Km<sup>2</sup>

increase since 1981

Sri Lanka will have to address three major concern in **education, jobs and health** if it is to adequately serve the needs of its youth population and enjoy the maximum benefit of having a large youth cohort entering the workforce.

*Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census*

Level of Urbanization

**18.2%**





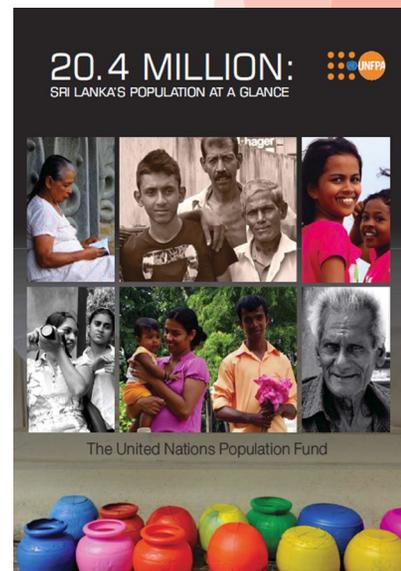
## LAUNCH OF PUBLICATION - 20.4 MILLION: SRI LANKA'S POPULATION AT A GLANCE

With the rapidly shifting population dimensions of Sri Lanka, there is a need for continuous research and evidence to formulate short, medium and long term development strategies which take into account basic demographic shifts. Evidence-based data which captures changes in population dynamics will directly affect some of the elements of Sri Lanka's socio economic development such as employment, health and education. At UNFPA, we believe in the importance of open and accessible data,

which is why we worked with the Department of Census and Statistics and other experts to develop a comprehensive analysis of the current population trends.

The objective of this publication is to provide a comprehensive, yet simple overview of Sri Lanka's population dynamics. The analysis is based on the latest available information from the

Population and Housing Census 2012, various surveys, research studies and administrative records.



But as we go beyond numbers, we thought that it was important, to show how the data continued in this report is bringing emerging issues to the forefront of the nation's development agenda. We hope that the evidence-based policy directions outlined in this publication will serve as a reference guide for policy makers and planners for many years to come.



# NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CONDOM PROGRAM

Sri Lanka remains as a low prevalence country, with an estimated HIV prevalence among adults (15- 49 years) less than 0.1%.

Individuals considered at higher risk of HIV infection also remain below 1%. The main mode of transmission of HIV is unprotected sex between men and women (78%), with men who have sex with men accounting for 16 % of the transmission.

Contraceptive prevalence among married women in the age group of 15-49 is 68% in 2006/2007, and prevalence of modern methods of contraceptives was 52.5%.

Condom use among married women in the age group of 15-49 as a contraceptive method, increased from 1.9 to 6 percent during the 20-year period since 1987. While the prevalence of modern methods of contraceptives among eligible couples was 55.4% and condom usage was 7.7% in 2013.

The regional study on Sex workers and Violence: Understanding the factors for safety and Violence (2014) and IDDS survey which was completed in 2013 had recommended that a

national strategy be developed for Condom Programming.

Absence of policy or strategy for distributing and promoting condoms for dual protection was seen as a factor that would ultimately hinder efforts to contain the STI and HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka.

Furthermore it had become a major barrier to vulnerable and marginalized people for accessing reproductive health services and rights. In this context the Ministry of Health developed a national strategy for condom program by developing a 10-step strategic approach. In 2015 UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health to develop the national condom strategy 2016-2020 for Sri Lanka.

“  
The prevalence of modern methods of contraceptives among eligible couples was 55.4% while condom usage was 7.7% in 2013.  
”





## WORLD STATISTICS DAY

20.10.2015

**BETTER DATA.  
BETTER LIVES.**

*UNFPA Sri Lanka in partnership with the Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka marked World Statistics Day 2015 with a National Seminar for over 400 professionals to create statistical awareness. The occasion was graced by Hon. Niroshan Perera, State Minister of National Policy and Economic Affairs, Dr. A. J. Satharasinghe, Director General of Department of Census and Statistics and other distinguished guests.*

## WORLD POPULATION DAY

Nearly 60 million individuals have fled conflict or disaster by the end of 2014, with women and adolescents girls being the most vulnerable. This is why the theme of World Population Day in 2015 was – “Vulnerable Populations in Emergencies”, Which aimed to highlight the special needs of women and adolescent girls during conflicts and humanitarian disasters.

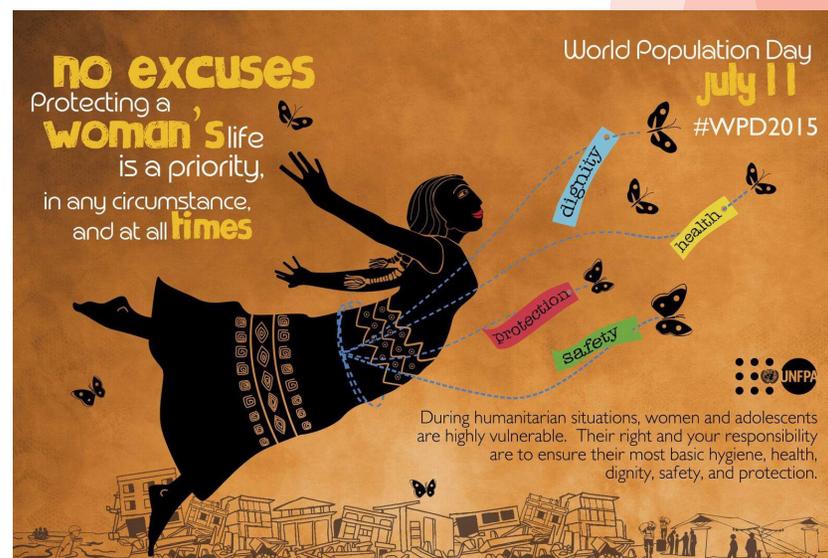
Even under normal conditions, reproductive health complications are a leading cause of death and illness among women of childbearing age. In humanitarian situations, an estimated one in five women and adolescent girls are likely to be pregnant. As skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care often become unavailable, pregnant women’s and girls’ vulnerability to death and injury is further exacerbated.

In Sri Lanka too, UNFPA responds immediately during emergencies to meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of women and adolescent girls and is currently working to ensure

that a set of guidelines addressing the special needs of women and girls are included in Sri Lanka’s Action Plan for Disaster Preparedness.

At the same time, as stated by UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, “we must enable women, adolescent girls and young people to play their full role in peace talks, peace building and recovery, and to ensure that governments comply with international law and bring perpetrators of sexual violence to justice. By prioritizing health, rights and the full participation of women, adolescent girls and young people in public life, we increase our prospects for a more just, stable and peaceful world”.

In marking the United Nations 70th anniversary and 60th year of presence in Sri Lanka, as stated by the United Nations Secretary General, Ban-Ki-Moon, “let us take strength from our founding mission to give hope and support to the most vulnerable”.



# OUR RESULTS

## 2015

	PROJECT BUDGET (USD)	PROJECT BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION RATE (%)
POLICIES	190,048	99.0%
PROGRAMME COORDINATION & ASSISTANCE	115,309	95.7%
HEALTH	406,500	98.9%
GENDER	277,700	98.3%
YOUTH	280,443	97.8%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1,270,000</b>	<b>98.2%</b>





United Nations Population Fund Sri Lanka