

Potential

Annual Report 2014



Allowing women
to exercise their

RIGHTS

Reaping the
Demographic
Dividend

Driving
Social Change

Policy through
a new lens

UNFPA in
365 days



Expanding Possibilities



Enabling Populations



Fulfilling Potential



Advancing Policies



United Nations Population Fund Sri Lanka

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Consultant Forensic Pathologist



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Empowering Youth : Maximizing Dividends

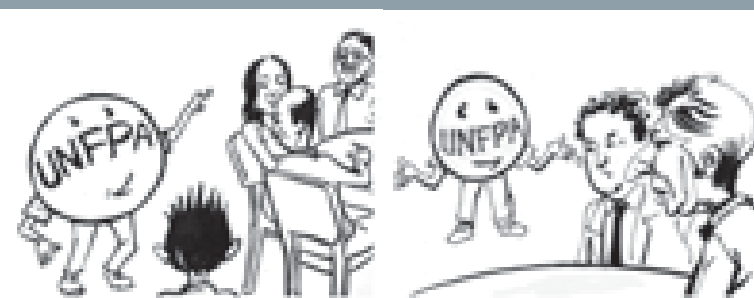
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Dr. Harsha De Silva
Deputy Minister Policy
Planning & Economic
Development.

Otara Gunewardene
Founder of ODEL & Embark



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United Nations Population Fund Sri Lanka

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.

20 Voices in 2014



Confident to get all of my colleagues to their fullest potential and on-board for a rewarding journey of personal and organizational transformation.

Alain Sibenaler - UNFPA Representative



UNFPA guidelines does not permit extensions beyond the age of retirement. Unless it is absolutely difficult to find a suitable candidate. However, an extension was worked out for the programme Secretary beyond the age of retirement.

Tilaka Dissanayake - Personal Assistant to Representative



We have been striving to be effective and innovate in communicating about the issues that are at the heart of our work, from meeting the sexual reproductive health needs and rights of women and young people, reaping the benefits of a demographic bonus and in bringing a new policy lens towards population issues. In 2015 we hope to be more-cutting edge in how we communicate and address these issues .

Lankani Sikurajapathy - Communication Analyst



We were able to launch the National Needs Assessment on Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care and support the finalization of national medico-legal guidelines on sexual abuse. I am looking forward to integrate further UNFPA's vision on women and adolescent health in the Ministry of Health in the coming year.

Jayan Abeywickrama - Programme Analyst – EMONC



In 2014 we completed capacity building training of frontline officers of the Ministry of Women's Affairs dealing with grass roots level issues of gender-based violence and violence against women. In 2015, I look forward to develop policy monitoring mechanisms of the Ministry of Women's Affairs through data processing and reporting.

Niroscha Welgama - Programme Analyst – Gender



In 2014 I was promoted to the position of senior driver. Therefore, I look forward to continue my work effectively and efficiently in the upcoming year.

David Raju - Senior Driver



Year 2014, was both challenging and rewarding for the operations team, achieving excellence in HR, Finance, ICT and General Administration functions at the country office.

I am a strong supporter of UNFPA's "Going-Green" initiative and dedicate to develop innovative ideas which can be done individually and collectively.

Priyan Perera - Operations Manager



When I joined in December 2014, I was planning on doing just one great project. However, I have been inspired to work on AbleApp, Idiriya, Adahas and sustainable business projects, thus my work is focusing on creating positive impacts in Sri Lanka by empowering communities, providing ease of access to vital information and creating better advocacy.

Anoka Abeyrathne - Social Change Entrepreneur



2014 saw me working to coordinate a series of successful projects for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence by the National Forum Against GBV. In 2015 I will work with the Arts and New Media to launch novel channels, namely the inter-generational Art for Advocacy collective by creating strategic partnerships with the private sector.

Munira Mutaher - Social Change Entrepreneur



I was able to effectively manage the structural changes of the country office that took place during 2014. I look forward to contribute my fullest towards the procurement and administrative work in 2015.

Chandramogan Nadesan - Finance and Admin Associate



UNFPA Sri Lanka started its transition in 2014 from service delivery to policy advocacy. This was an immense transition which we were able to successfully convince our stakeholders towards a smooth conversion enabling effective adaptation to the modality of policy advocacy. Therefore, I am indeed looking forward to successfully complete this transition in 2015. **Gamini Wanasekara** - Assistant Representative



I have been developing a population portal as well as creating a model on social enterprise to achieve sustainable livelihood of women in the eastern province of Sri Lanka. I hope to achieve successful completion of these projects in 2015. **Manahari Panditharatne** - Social Change Entrepreneur



We were successful in establishing a secretariat to implement the national youth policy in the Ministry of Youth. We also were a main sponsor of the World Youth Conference held in Sri Lanka 2014. I am now looking forward to take the concept of youth forums to the sub-national level and involve these youth in policy making processes. **Nishantha Warnasooriya** - Programme Analyst



I had a successful year at UNFPA in 2014 and I look forward to deliver my fullest in 2015
K.P. Gamini - Driver



I designed UNFPA's 100 Voices – Leading for Change campaign to educate youth about sexual reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence. I look forward to complete my journey as a social change entrepreneur, continuing the 100 Voices campaign, and delivering my final project "Women in Plantations" a research compilation on violence against women in Sri Lankan tea plantations. **Onalie De Silva Ariyabandhu** - Social Change Entrepreneur



In 2014, I initiated an advocacy process to bring policy level change to eradicate sexual harassment in public places; a nationwide research on this will be conducted in 2015. I am also working on gender inequality in Disaster Risk Reduction practices and processors of Sri Lanka as well as to engage youth at the provincial level in decision making processes. **Naushalya Rajapakse** - Social Change Entrepreneur



In 2014, I received a special appreciation note from UNFPA Myanmar Country Office for my human resource support. I look forward to further learning and development in 2015. **Geetha Fernando** - Programme and Admin Associate



In 2014 I was able to successfully adapt to the structural changes in the office. I am happy to say I passed the UNFPA procurement level 1 exam and I hope to complete the procurement level 2 exam in 2015. **Rohan Dias** - Finance and Admin Assistant



I have been working with Ministry of Health to explore ways of improving access to free healthcare for women in Sri Lanka through awareness and quality services. I expect to see the launch of best practices in 2015. **Achini Wijesinghe** - Social Change Entrepreneur



I am happy to have contributed to the joint publication by UNFPA and the Dept. of Census and Statistics on the key findings of the 2012 Population and Housing Census. I am currently working hard towards producing a publication providing a comprehensive analysis and policy focus on the entire population of Sri Lanka. **H. R. Gunasekera** - Consultant



Expanding Possibilities

Allowing women to
exercise their rights

Expanding Possibilities

Allowing women to exercise their rights

UNFPA
in Action

Enhancing the support examination, reporting and management of sexually abused survivors



UNFPA played a leading role in developing Sri Lanka's first medico-legal guidelines for examining and caring for survivors of sexual abuse and reporting the abuse to law enforcement authorities, along with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and College of Forensic Pathology.

In the past, procedures for addressing sexual abuse often neglected survivors' health. Now, while punishment of offenders will continue to be pursued, priority will be given to ensuring survivors' health, dignity and psychological well-being. The new guidelines set standards for examining survivors in a uniform manner, providing quality forensic and health services, and improving health care workers' knowledge and skills of through teaching and training.

The human rights-based guidelines were adapted from the Guidelines on Clinical Management of Rape Survivors developed by WHO in partnership with UNFPA. They were published after years of preparation including numerous consultations with medical and judicial experts.

Want to learn more about these guidelines. Check them out here: <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/srilanka/?publications=9882>

Bringing behavioural change communication in Reproductive Health

While Sri Lanka has much to boost in its reproductive health outcomes, with a maternal death rate of 37.6 per 100,000 live births being the lowest in South-East Asia, many reproductive health challenges continue to remain. For instance, reproductive health information and services available for young people need communication strategies that go beyond education and would allow for behaviour changes in clients and service providers resulting in improved reproductive health outcomes.

This is where UNFPA has stepped in. Partnering with the Health Education Bureau and Family Health Bureau of the Ministry of Health, five trilingual behavioural change communication strategies covering maternal and newborn health, family planning, gender-based violence, adolescent and young people's sexual reproductive health and well woman clinics are being developed. When implemented and integrated in health programmes these strategies will go a long way in meeting the reproductive health needs and ensuring the reproductive rights, particularly of women and young people.

Watch out for the launch of these strategies!!

Reproductive health care for women beyond 49 years of age

The number of women over 50 years of age was 2.6 million in 2012. This is expected to rise to 4.4 million by 2036, an increase of 69%. At the same time women are living longer and outnumber men by 51.5% (598,921). This is mainly due to the free reproductive health care package provided to women during their reproductive years. This means that Sri Lankan women will live 30 years beyond their fertile age, for which appropriate reproductive health care is required. To ensure the wellbeing of women beyond 49 years, interventions should begin as women reach 35 years of age.

A concept was introduced in 1996 to provide services for patients who have cancers in reproductive organs

(reproductive organ malignancies) as a part of the reproductive health concept promoted by the International Conference on Population and Development. This has been operationalised in Sri Lanka through the Well Women's Clinics programme, supported by UNFPA, to detect breast and cervical cancers of women reaching 35 years of age.

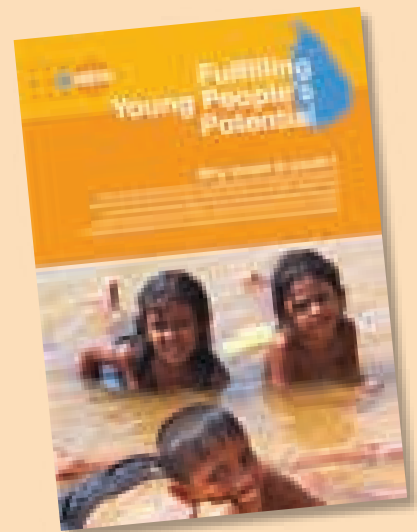
With more women in the population, who are living longer, the following interventions are needed to ensure their wellbeing:

- Recognising the health needs of women beyond 49 years age as an emerging public health issue
- Providing a reproductive health package to address the unique needs of women beyond 49 years
- Expanding the coverage of Well Women's Clinics so that every woman beyond 35 years receive regular screening for the detection of reproductive organ malignancies

To learn more about women's health, women's rights, youth potential and demographic dynamics in Sri Lanka

check out UNFPA's comprehensive set of fact sheets here:

<http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/srilanka/?publications>



Expanding Possibilities

Allowing women to exercise their rights

Sexual Violence... It's time to talk about it

Interview with
Dr. Anuruddhi Edirisinghe

Consultant Forensic Pathologist

First ever medico-legal guidelines for the examination, reporting and management of sexually abused survivors in Sri Lanka.

Research suggests that 1 out of 4 women in Sri Lanka are sexually abused by the time they reach age 18. With such high prevalence of sexual violence, the medico-legal system of the country holds great responsibility in bringing justice to the survivors, legally, socially as well as medically; ensuring lifelong medical, psychological and social wellbeing.

Find out how this guidelines will help to improve this situation.



“Research suggests that 1 out of 4 women in Sri Lanka are sexually abused by the time they reach age 18 years”

1. What is the difference between a medical examination and a medico-legal examination ?

A medical examination is conducted by a doctor to determine reasons for illness with the aim of curing the illness. A medico-legal examination is conducted on the request of the criminal justice system (police/ court) with the consent of the examinee to assist the judiciary to give justice. In earlier situation, the patient seeks the doctor's advice voluntarily.

2. What motivated you to have these guidelines , what was missing ?

The main motive was to improve the quality of the medico-legal services delivered, i.e. from medico-legal examination, report writing to the medical care of the individual. The examinations were mainly from a judicial centered perspective. Due to lack of facilities as well as training, the services delivered varied from person to person and institution to institution. Thus, Sri Lanka needed a guide where all the stake-holders are compelled to give a uniformed service to all survivors of sexual violence minimizing personal, technical and institutional differences in the medical and legal procedures while providing the services.

3. What are the challenges you face when investigating a case of sexual violence ?

The primary challenge is how to heal this individual and bring back to normality within the health and social care system of Sri Lanka. The second is to bring justice in the context of an adversarial system of Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan society lacks awareness about the 24 hour facilities provided by the government for individuals subjected to sexual violence. This lack of awareness has led to issues in gathering scientific evidence to prove allegations of sexual violence against the perpetrators. People delay to report abuse sometimes taking weeks to months, making medical examinations a tedious task.

4. How have these guidelines filled this vacuum ?

These guidelines set a standard that is feasible in Sri Lanka. Setting standards is the first step of improving the quality of the system. Next, is raising awareness among medico-legal professionals on the guidelines. There are only 45 forensic specialists for 20 million people in this country. Therefore, it is very important that the next generation of doctors are made aware and educated about these guidelines through undergraduate and postgraduate education. Third is implementation. Implementation should go hand in hand with improving resources. We have to conduct resource assessments and audits on what we have done and then bring changes where necessary.

Therefore, I would say it has only filled a part of the vacuum; there is lot more to do.

5. What difference do these guidelines make in a life of a JMO ?

The main difference I see is that it makes life easy for a JMO, because there is a uniformed format presented and he just has to follow it. Earlier we have to think each detail and see whether it is there or not. For me, the best of the guide is its comprehensive details on the evidence collection in early presentations.

6. Often the perpetrators of sexual violence do not get punished, which could be due to lack of credible evidence. How do these guidelines help to address this ?

Well, as I said earlier the best of this document is the comprehensive guide to evidence collection. Guide will not solve this issue alone. We have to do teaching and training as well as supply necessary kits for collection. They have to reach the labs and finally the reports to courts. It is a process. We have to strengthen each step.

7. On the other hand, these guidelines can be a weapon against a JMO in a court of law. Despite this, why did the College decide to produce these guidelines ?

Yes this can be used by the defense lawyers against a JMO especially pointing fingers at deficiencies. We took up this challenge and addressed it in the Guide. We have given three grades of recommended practices depending on the facilities available. First of all we have to understand the health care facilities in all hospitals in Sri Lanka are not similar, with the limited budgetary allocations improvements are slow to come. That is a main reason we incorporated clauses which enables a doctor to deviate, but basics have to do. I think a doctor who goes to courts has enough training to explain such situation, because at the end of the day what we do is the best for the individual to the best of that each one's ability.



Expanding Possibilities

Allowing women to exercise their rights

UNFPA
in Action

Re-defining the Forum Against Gender-based Violence

Established and chaired by the UNFPA, the Forum Against Gender-based Violence was set up in 2005 as a unique national level platform to share information and experiences, improve coordinated multi-sectoral responses to gender-based violence and to advocate for gender-based violence related policy changes in the country. Since its inception, the Forum membership has been broad-based with UN agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs, and community based organizations, government agencies and individual experts working on gender-based violence.



16 days against violence campaign and policy dialogues. The Forum's Strategic Agenda for 2015-2018 was developed as an outcome of the re-defining process.

With the new strategic agenda the Forum will do away with its passive nature and become more active in its interventions in three key areas of focus:

- Strengthening law and policy on gender-based violence
- Enhancing institutional response to gender-based violence
- Creating new knowledge and bringing about attitudinal change

Soon the forum will move away from its Colombo centric nature and expand its membership to agencies representing all regions of the country by forming regional fora.



In 2014, the members of the Forum with the support of UNFPA embarked on a process of re-defining the Forum, as the Forum was then perceived as a low key entity known mainly for its annual

Watch out for policy dialogues, advocacy campaigns and 16 days of activism against gender-based violence from the Forum in the coming months

A sustainable exit

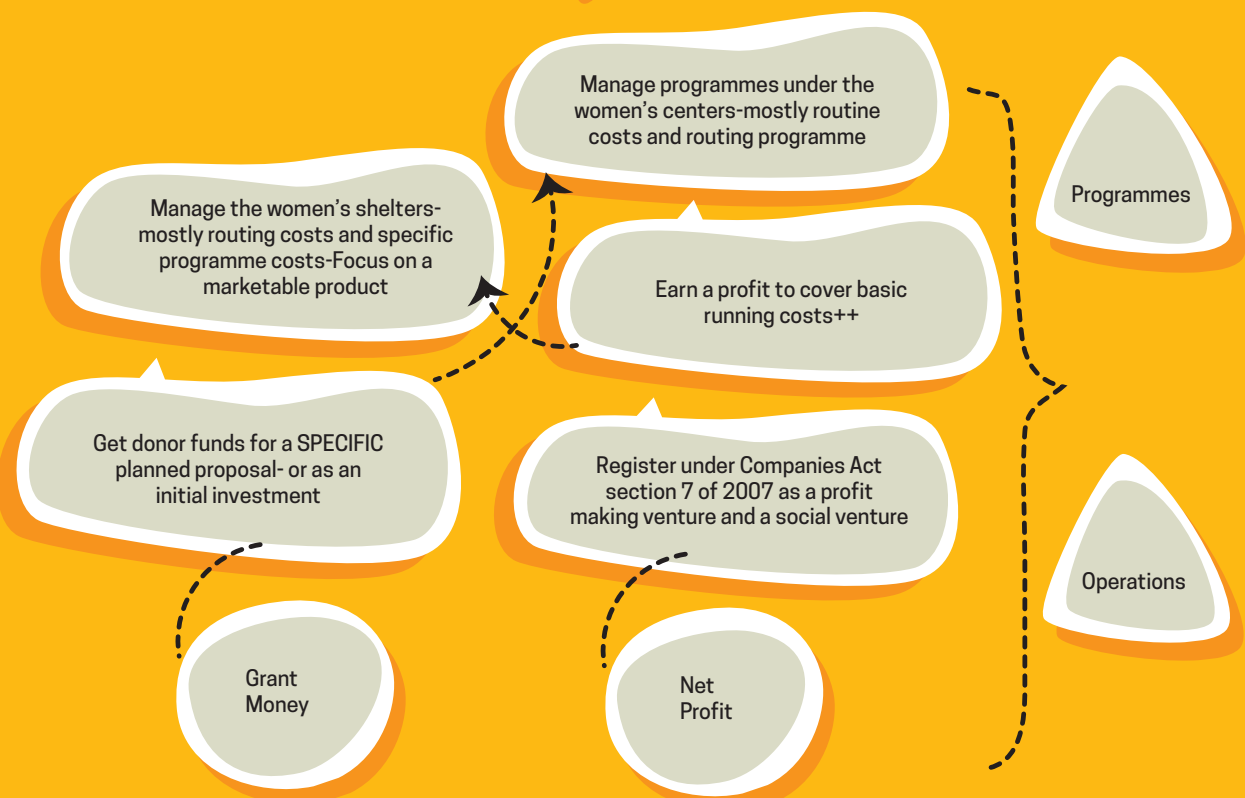
In response to the increasing incidents of violence against women and girls following the tsunami, UNFPA supported a network of support services for women and girls through the establishment of women's centres at the village level to provide safe spaces and support services for women subjected to, or at risk from, gender-based violence.

Ten years on, these women centres have transformed to routine service delivery centres in the community. With UNFPA's shift in focus in Sri Lanka from service delivery to policy advocacy, it has

embarked on deriving a sustainable exit from supporting these women centres.

With the innovation and strategic thinking of UNFPA's social change entrepreneurs the exit strategy has focused on building the policy advocacy role of the women's centres and ensuring sustainable funding mechanisms that would create economic empowerment by developing marketable products.

Check out the financial methodology developed to sustain these women centres:



Expanding Possibilities

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Capturing Impact



Embracing motherhood before adolescence

A 14 year old mother struggles as a victim of incest to balance raising her newborn baby and experiencing her own childhood. She plays with her hair accessories, braiding her hair in different styles, until it's time for her to feed her baby. This teen mother fights a constant battle to accept she is no longer just a child; she's the mother of her own father's child.

Victims of incest are most often unable to distinguish between expressions of affection and abuse, resulting in them not taking preventive measures. Victims themselves often refuse to believe they've been sexually abused until they become teen mothers.



Victimized by one, isolated by all

Raped at the age of 17, a teenage mother is forced into isolation after being shunned by her community and disowned by her family. She was the youngest daughter in a family of five; she thought at least her siblings would support her and take care of her after she was victimized by their neighbor. She was wrong. They all disowned her and chased her out from home, calling her a disgrace, a dishonor and a burden to their family.

In Sri Lanka it is estimated that 6.5% of girls are pregnant or have given birth before their 19th birthday.

Expanding Possibilities

Allowing women to exercise
their rights

Capturing Impact



Struggle between two worlds

They dream of running back to school every single day; to sit in class and listen to their favourite lessons, to chat with their friends over lunch and to sing and dance during free time. They wish they could go back to their normal childhood where their biggest worry was the year end exams at school. But then, they realise their uniforms are too tight around their bellies, their swollen feet too big and painful to fit in to their school shoes.

Teen mothers often drop out from school during their pregnancy due to physical difficulties, difficulties in concentration and social stigmatisation.



Finding her safe haven

13 year old girl struggles to overcome her memories of violence at home. She often gets flashback of her father beating her mother, her brother bleeding with injuries and herself tied to a chair next to the stove. Her attempts to run away from her past, brings her nowhere close to her present or future. Her desperation and isolation not only signifies her frustration but also her attempt to find her safe haven.

Domestic Violence affects both mother and child both physically and psychologically.



Enabling Populations

Reaping the
Demographic Dividend

Enabling Populations

Reaping the Demographic Dividend

UNFPA
in Action



Helping to place Census findings in development planning

As the population data agency, UNFPA has been a key partner in the entire census process from data collection to data dissemination and most recently in collaborating with the Department of Census to launch the key findings of the 2012 Population and Housing Census. This publication is unique as it not only illustrates data but what the data actually means. With this analysis of data, policy-makers and planners are better able to include population dynamics into investment strategies and development plans of the country.

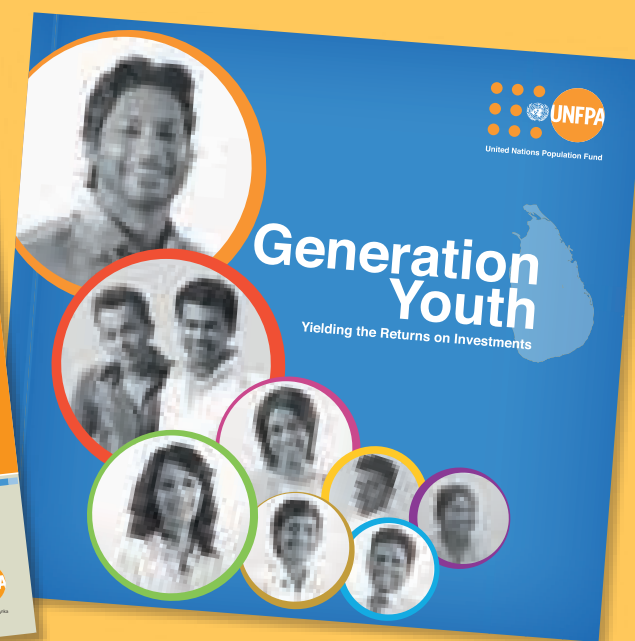
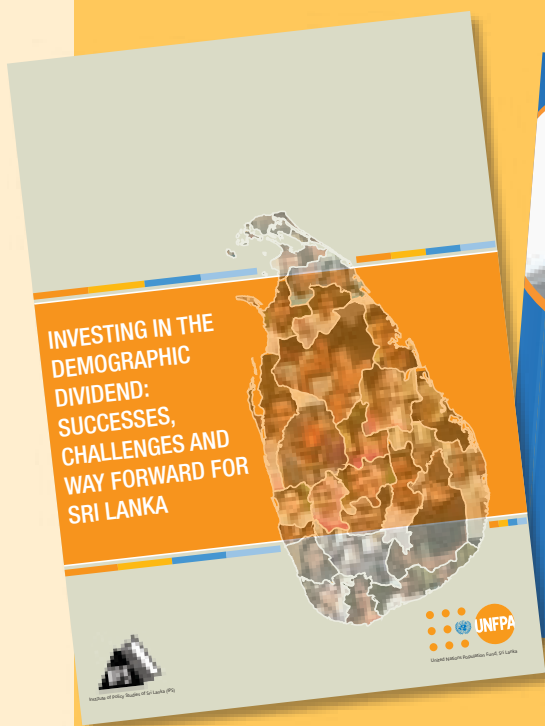
The Power of 1.8 Billion: Getting them to the table

We say young people should be part of the decision-making process on issues that affect their lives, but how often do we get them to the table? UNFPA put this into action, at the launch of its annual flagship report – State of World Population that centered on reaping a demographic dividend through

the power of the worlds' 1.8 billion young people, entitled 'the Power of 1.8 billion – Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future'. Six eminent youth leaders in their own right were asked to question and debate on the challenges and opportunities they face in participation for decision-making, using new technologies and ensuring the youth voice in the new global development agenda. As much as bringing out eye opening issues, for example on how social media would invade our access to information, it brought out a lot of food for thought for policy-makers, planners, donors and the older generation that were part of the audience. Thus, what resulted was a stage for creating inter-generational dialogues on youth issues that UNFPA would spearhead in the coming year.



Await UNFPA's inter-generational forums!



Investing in youth pays dividends: Showcasing the evidence

UNFPA Sri Lanka took on the task of unwrapping Sri Lanka's story of investing in its demographic dividend, to see what the ingredients were, what has gone right and what challenges lie ahead. What unraveled was a story of success which showed that by investing in young people through free education, free health care and by creating opportunities, Sri Lanka has yielded healthy, literate, creative and productive young people as showcased in a research study co-authored with the Institute of Policy Studies, entitled "Investing in the Demographic Dividend: Successes, Challenges and Way Forward for Sri Lanka."

UNFPA also took the evidence from the study further by putting a face to it. 'Generation Youth: Yielding the Returns on Investments', showcases the returns on investments in young people through the stories of nine outstanding young leaders. For instance, the story of Thilini shows how a young female entrepreneur took the ancient industry of farming into the digital age through the development of a virtual marketplace. One of Sri Lanka's music revolutionaries featured in the book, Bathiya states, "we knew that if our music could rally youth, our music had a chance. This is exactly what happened". Now our music enterprise and the businesses we own are all run by young people".

[Check them out on our website!!](#)

Enabling Populations

Reaping the Demographic Dividend

Get the Facts...

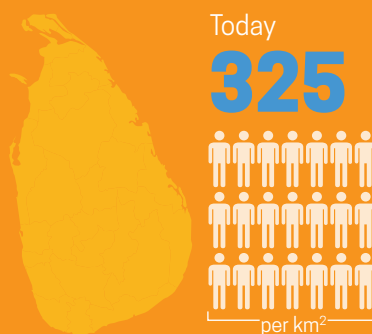
Population and Housing Census 2012

In December 2014, Sri Lanka reached a momentous milestone in releasing the final results of the 2012 population and housing census that captured the entire island after almost three decades.

With a history of being the first South Asian country to conduct a Population Census in 1871, Sri Lanka has continued to conduct censuses for 143 years to identify the evolving demographic dynamics of the island. Despite the 31 year long civil unrest in the Northern and the Eastern provinces of the country, the Department of Census and Statistics continued to conduct the censuses in 18 out of 25 districts until 2012.

Check out the key facts from the 2012 Population and Housing Census.

Population size, growth and distribution



Level of Urbanization

18.2%

Age - Sex structure



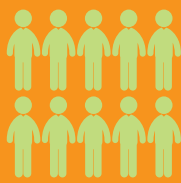
646,000

more females than males in Sri Lanka.



49

Elderly persons

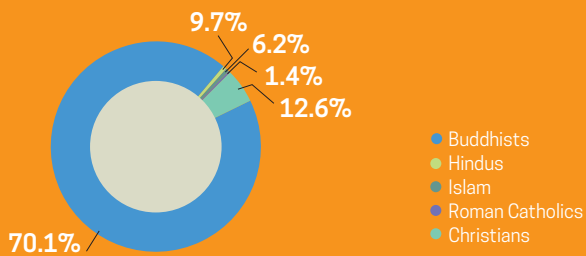
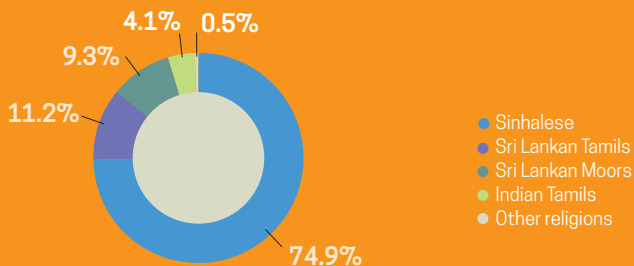


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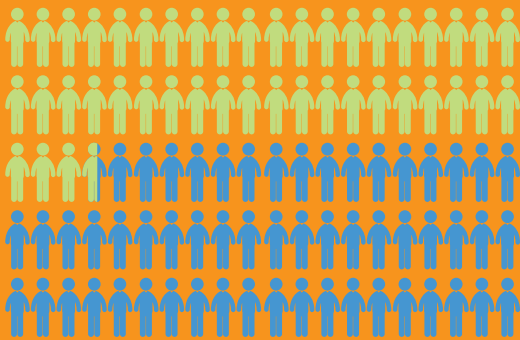
Children under age 15

It is projected to increase (by more than three times) to 163 by 2041.

Ethnic and religious composition



Literacy

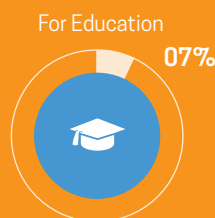
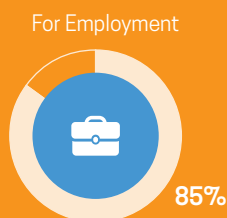


43.7 out of 100 young people between ages 15-24 years are English literate in Sri Lanka.

Migration



Approximately **67%** of the total Sri Lankans temporarily living abroad have migrated to Middle Eastern countries.



Housing

Water sealed toilets are the safest sanitary facility available in the country.



Marital status

The mean age of marriage stands

23.4 years



27.2 years

Fertility

Total Fertility Rate value is estimated at



2.4 live births

per woman in 2012

Education

Percentage of population aged 25 years and above who passed

Grade 1-5	18.4%
Grade 6-10	39.6%
GCE O/L or equivalent	19.1%
GCE A/L equivalent and degree or above	3.9%

Majority of the population completed education level up to grade 6-10

Functional difficulties

Nearly 29% of the population with functional difficulties (such as difficulties in vision, audibility, mobility, cognition, day-to-day self-care and communication), **aged 15 years and above, mentioned they are economically active, and 71% declared they are economically inactive as they are unable to work due to old age.**



78.9% of households in Sri Lanka have mobile phones in their houses as a communication facility.

Enabling Populations

Reaping the Demographic
Dividend

Empowering Youth: Maximizing Dividends



Dr. Harsha De Silva

**Deputy Minister Policy Planning and
Economic Development.**

“Policies are for the future, it is neither for today nor yesterday”

The recent elections showed the power of young people to bring about social change. What is your assessment of this ?

Young people in this country felt they were marginalised for a long time. They didn't have much of a role to play in determining who should be in a position to determine young people's future. After the 1979-1981 era where youth revolted and learnt a fatal lesson, they felt they shouldn't be part of the decision making process. They felt unimportant.

This became quite evident in the voting numbers. In 2009 elections, I did an analysis in my electorate; Kotte, on the youth voter turnout. We found only 40% of young people between the age 18-25 casted their vote. This was far less than the national average.

However, with the recent presidential election, a huge change happened with social media and Facebook playing an important role. It created a huge surge in the interest of young people to decide who their decision maker should be.

The easy access to social media via mobile phones helped young people to be engaged in expressing their opinions and accessing information. Use of reload cards in small denominations, made access to the internet cheaper via mobile phones. If you see the use of internet by device, the vast majority use their mobile phones to access the internet, therefore technology played an important role among youth to bring about change during the last presidential election.

One may say that today's generation of youth are ever so dynamic that their views and ideas are forever changing. What is your plan to transcend the energy and dynamism of the youth population ?

Youth by definition are not conforming. This is because; youth today are able to access the internet and technology to form their own opinions at a younger age. Especially, with television and the ICT revolution spreading the message across the world that you're not too young to form an opinion, young people today form dynamic views and ideas.

This energy of youth can be harnessed positively only if policy makers can make youth feel they're an important part in policy making. But if youth continue to feel they're marginalised and feel old people are making decisions for the young people, then I think it can become a very strong negative force that the governments may find very difficult to deal with. Therefore, youth should be made to feel important to determine their own futures.



“The energy of youth can be harnessed positively only if policy makers can make youth feel they're an important part in policy-making”

As a policy maker what is the role that you expect young people to play if the country is to reap their full potential ?

Take me for example; I am helping the prime minister to develop this country's policies. Policies are for the future, it is neither for today nor yesterday, therefore I have put together a group of professionally respected young people to think about issues in the national policies. They are not at the top of their careers yet, but they are in the top of their own fields. They are all young, and that's the consideration. I have got them to bring out the youth perspective of Sri Lanka's policies such as health care, education, elderly and national debt. I sit with them once a week to discuss their opinions about national issues. Therefore, many policy changes we propose to make within the next 5 years will have a strong influence of these young people.

What is the one thing that Sri Lanka should do in terms of investing on its large population of young people in taking the country to its next level of development ?

They must be given the opportunity.

Enabling Populations

Reaping the Demographic Dividend

As a young person do you really feel the drive of this large population of youth?

Yes I definitely do. And as a Sri Lankan youth I not only feel it, but face it every day. In Sri Lanka one quarter of the total population are youth. And if you take the 'big picture', there are 1.8 Billion young people around the world. So these 'big numbers' not only broadcast 'big challenges' but also 'big possibilities' for youth. And today it is indeed really tough to spot a mortal young being who does not claim to play a lead role in this 'big drive' of youth towards social change, constructing the future they want.

Do you feel the force of youth has been recognized?

Undoubtedly. Especially if you take Sri Lanka's role in recognizing youth as agents of social change via mechanisms like youth federation clubs, youth parliament, youth provincial councils and other youth networks, which are leading and feeding to the nation-shaping-strategies. Moreover by being the first country in the entire south Asia to have hosted the World Conference on Youth 2014 we have not only attracted global attention but respect towards the keen commitment on mainstreaming youth in the post-2015 development agenda.

At a small age you have achieved big things, what has been your experience?

Having studied at Musaeus College, I joined University of London to do my Bachelor of Law along with a Professional Qualification in Human Resource Management. And my biggest challenge was definitely 'time management'. Because studies were certainly not the only thing I wanted to do. From day one, I wanted to do something for the society. Therefore, I actively undertook numerous social activities, along with my studies. I completed my undergraduate studies at



Naushalya Rajapaksha

Social Change Entrepreneur



Currently I'm pursuing my Attorney's and intend to Master in Human Rights and International Legal Studies.

However, nothing I've done can be compared to what I am about to do. Currently I'm advocating for a legislative amendment to the Penal Code of Sri Lanka to unambiguously recognise the offence of sexual harassment in public transport and developing the first-ever provincial sensitive youth policies in the Island while imploring mechanisms to ensure gender equality in disaster risk reduction practices of Sri Lanka as-a-bring-back-home from the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai, Japan 2015.

As a young person what motivated to be a social change entrepreneur to drive social change

It is the simple realisation that in Sri Lanka, we have so much unfulfilled youth potential due to gaps either in the level of policy making or implementation. Therefore, as a social change entrepreneur at UNFPA, I believe I have now been given a key to unlock the youth potential of this country.

the age of 19 and didn't realize that I'm one of the youngest Bachelor of Law holders in Sri Lanka until my overall performance was recognized by the campus. Soon through a strenuous selection process, I was selected by the Government of Sri Lanka, as the youngest to be among the top 20 global leaders to organize the World Conference on Youth 2014.

“It is the simple realization that in Sri Lanka, we have so much unfilled youth potential due to gaps either in the level of policy making or implementation”

That responsibility itself as a social change agent keeps me on my toes every day to ensure that I do my best to bring a more collaborative effort of social change in the country by youth, for youth.

What is the one thing that Sri Lanka should do in terms of investing on its large population of young people in taking the country to its next level of development ?

I believe that Sri Lanka should definitely set up a more comprehensive mechanism to recognise the amount of work that has been undertaken by various youth networks and provide them with adequate knowledge on sustainability and most importantly on 'advocacy'. Because, due to the lack of financial constrictions and the inadequate awareness and dissemination of international practices, majority of the youth are confined to community level activism. Most therefore function under the misconception that advocacy and policy level activities are 'none of their business'. While in reality it is a must, that youth are aware of the policy level decisions and changes on every single policy that affects youth. Therefore they should be empowered to be equal partners of policy level changes as a mechanism to bridge the massive generational gap by recognising and investing in youth as accountable volunteers in the process of the implementation and monitoring of national policies and practices.



Otara Gunewardene

Founder of ODEL & Embark

“Youth are usually the leaders in trends and style which then others follow”

As an entrepreneur, who catered largely to young people through fashion did you really feel the power of this bonus of young people ?

The youth are usually the leaders in trends and style which then others follow. It is also the youth who often influence how their parents shop and spend as a result it was a very important segment for me to cater to. I continue to value the contribution of the youth with Embark who are the main customers for my brand Embark and also the work we do with the homeless dogs.

How did you capitalise on the aspirations of the post-modern Sri Lankan youth ?

There has been a change in the impact the youth can have on a business and how we live over the last decade. Social media, easy access to information has changed their aspirations and demands over the years. Some are beneficial giving them the opportunity to develop and grow also making them a good target customer. On a negative side the aspirations, influenced by the easily accessible information, can grow to levels that create high demands on themselves, resulting in stress and often a life where expenses are higher than actual needs.



Alain Sibenaler

UNFPA Representative

Why is the demographic dividend so critical for a country ?

The demographic transition, resulting in a dividend of a large young population is a phenomenon that happens in every country, it's a natural part of a country's history. Whether this time frame with a large young population becomes a demographic opportunity or not depends on the choices a country makes. It is crucial for a middle income country like Sri Lanka which is exactly in the middle of its demographic dividend not only to maximise the benefits from its first phase, but also to reflect on the lessons that were learnt and how best to transition into the second phase.

“It is important to work towards standing on your own and this should start in your youth”

If you have another opportunity how would you do it differently to meet the aspirations of young people ?

With Embark which is the opportunity I have now , the objective is to engage the youth to live the life style of being fashionable but also not forgetting the importance of making a positive impact by giving, to benefit the community and the world we live in.

You started your journey of success as a young person, how would you explain your experience, not as a woman or an entrepreneur but from a youth perspective ?

It is important to work towards standing on your own and this should start in your youth. Your life is not determined by what people do for you and not by what you get from others around you. It depends

on you, and what you do. The experience you gain in your youth is invaluable for your future. Patience, determination and hard work will be needed to achieve your goals

What is the one thing that Sri Lanka should do in terms of investing on its large population of young people in taking the country to its next level of development ?

Introduce a strong education findings that not only illustrate data to teach our youth the importance of safeguarding our environment and improving animal welfare. With the current speed of development in the country it is essential that the leaders of tomorrow understand the importance of preserving a country rich in animal and plant life before it is destroyed, so they lead the change that needs to be made to help preserve it.



“We need to make the right investments and the right mix of policies towards young people to make them an asset for a country”

Some say that a large population, particularly of youth can be an asset or a burden to a country. What is your advice to turn this to an asset ?

The large population of youth can be turned into an asset when you guarantee investments in, and manage the rights of young people, such as the right to education, health and especially, the reproductive health of young women. In other words the right to have opportunities for. We need to make the right investments and the right mix of policies towards young people to make them an asset for a country.

If that does not happen, we may end up with a large cohort of frustrated young people, which are disconnected from the fast paced development in their country: lack of English literacy, lack of computer literacy, no rights for health and education. Hence and no rights to fulfill their potential and hence manifestations of these frustrations which can take various forms.

As someone looking at Sri Lanka from the outside how do you see Sri Lanka having reaped the benefits of this demographic dividend ?

I see a great success so far. You can see the current generation of 20-29 year olds being highly educated, healthy and relatively wealthy – at least wealthier than their parents were at their age. I see a lot of talent and potential . However,



I also feel that parts of the population has gotten into a mode of passive comfort and sufficiency. Not enough efforts are made generally to empower the large youth population in Sri Lanka to become more entrepreneur savvy, to be more demanding of their own rights and to be a bit more assertive for their own future. In summary, I don't see that the peace dividend has been maximized when women constitute only 35 % of the labour force and when young people voice their frustrations over the lack of their participation over social media. This is in contrast to the tremendous potential that Sri Lanka has.

What is the one thing that Sri Lanka should do in terms of investing on its large population of young people in taking the country to its next level of development ?

I can summarise it in one sentence: Hear what young people and especially young women have to say - listen to them and give them the space so that they can express and experiment their ideas.



Fulfilling Potential

Driving social change

Fulfilling Potential

Driving social change



A new model of youth leadership

Fulfilling the potential of young people – that is what we all strive to do daily at UNFPA. How about doing it differently and actually bringing young people into the organisation?

This is exactly what we did. In 2014 we experimented a new model of youth leadership by recruiting eight young people between the ages of 19 to 29 years (Sri Lanka's classification of youth) as social change entrepreneurs to work with us in-house with the aim of giving them an enabling space and thinking environment to work on a project that would promote social change, helping to improve the lives of women and young people.

Under the overall guidance of the representative, each of the entrepreneurs works directly with a national programme officer who serves as their supervisory mentor. The entrepreneur and the national UNFPA officer form a collegial and mutually benefiting tandem working concretely on or through a thematic and programmatic area under the UNFPA Country Programme, UNFPA's global Strategic Plan or under the Sri Lanka UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Together, and within a specific job description, under a Special Service Agreement they have established a workplan /roadmap with specific deliverables to be attained during an initial time period not exceeding 11 months.

Hear what some of the Social Change Entrepreneurs have to say about their experience so far:

“Being a Social Change Entrepreneur means I get to create my job around my life’s purpose. Ever since my mother passed away due to a late diagnosed cancer, I have wanted to change the way women in Sri Lanka viewed reproductive health. Many women are hesitant to attend health screenings because female reproductive illness is taboo and there’s little awareness and family support. As an SCE, I am now working with the Ministry of Health to explore ways of improving access to free healthcare for women in Sri Lanka through awareness and quality services”.

Achini Wijesinghe

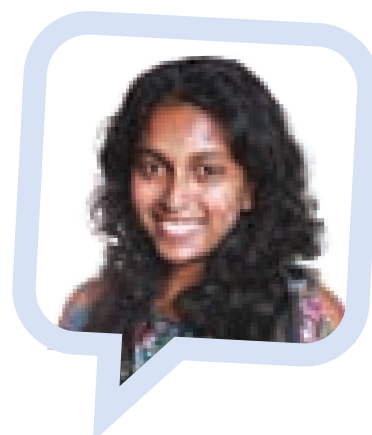


“The SCE project is teaching me a lot about working in the development sector. It comes at a crucial point when I am planning a career in development. It has also helped me explore what I am really passionate about”.

Manahari Panditharatne

“Being a Social Change Entrepreneur has given me the opportunity to make social change a reality by mobilising youth potentials. The 100 Voices – Leading for Change campaign is my novelty as a social change entrepreneur, which I believe would prove the power of young people in preventing gender-based violence and enabling them to help each other in acquiring the right knowledge about sexual reproductive health and rights. This whole experience has added much meaning to my passion for education and empowerment of youth”.

Onalie Ariyabandhu

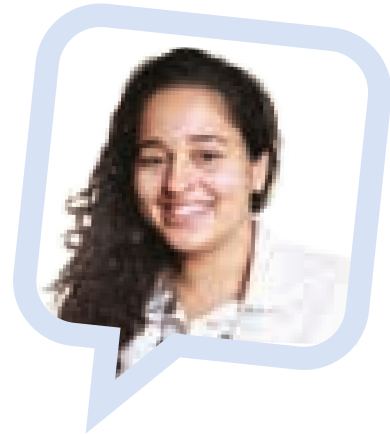


Fulfilling Potential

Driving social change

“As a recent graduate, wanting to pursue my passion in social entrepreneurship was a daunting task. Working as a Social Change Entrepreneur has equipped me with the necessary tools to step out and independently take on my passion: UNFPA has given me deeper insight and knowledge of the scope in this sector to make bolder decisions, the guidance to prepare for bigger challenges and an enabling environment to experiment an intersection of my interest for women empowerment and the creative arts. The Art for Advocacy Project, which aims to establish a collective of creative artists to work towards gender equality, is one such learning process where I have been able to work on an idea and see it evolve right from the design through to the implementation phase”.

Munira Mutaher



“The Social Change Entrepreneur programme has not only given me wings to venture into uncharted territories to fulfill the potential of Sri Lankan youth but also sheer guidance and unwavering motivation to stamp a sustainable social change through a process of policy advocacy with creativity and inventiveness to cater to the needs of youth”.

Naushalya Rajapakse

“Social Change Entrepreneurs offers exceptional support, excellent creative space and great mentorship, which led me to maximize my potential greatly”.

Anoka Abeyrathne



Fulfilling Potential

Driving social change

UNFPA
in Action

With much hard work, innovation and guidance from UNFPA mentors, the social change entrepreneurs have come up with campaigns and signature products that would drive social change and support the delivery of UNFPA's mandate in improving the lives of women and young people. Watch out for these products in the coming year:



AbleApp – A disability access information application to provide visually impaired adolescents in Sri Lanka and beyond with the ability to access vital and sensitive sexual reproductive health and rights information easily, independently and discreetly.



Idiri – A self-sustaining enterprise to provide IT skills and empower more than 60 abused adolescent girls and youth in protective care centres in Kandy and Jaffna.



100 Voices – A campaign designed to mobilise youth networks to educate 100 of their peers on sexual reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence prevalent among young people in Sri Lanka.



On the Way – Evidence-based advocacy through quantitative and qualitative research to bring a legal amendment to the Penal Code of Sri Lanka on Gender Based Sexual Harassment in Public Transport.



Art for Advocacy –

Building a collection of creative artists who would use their different artistic mediums to communicate about the prevalence of gender-based violence and promote gender equality.

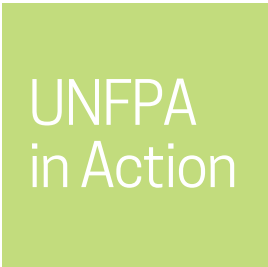


Advancing Policies

Policy through a new lens

Advancing Policies

Policy through a new lens



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. With 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 their own programmes.

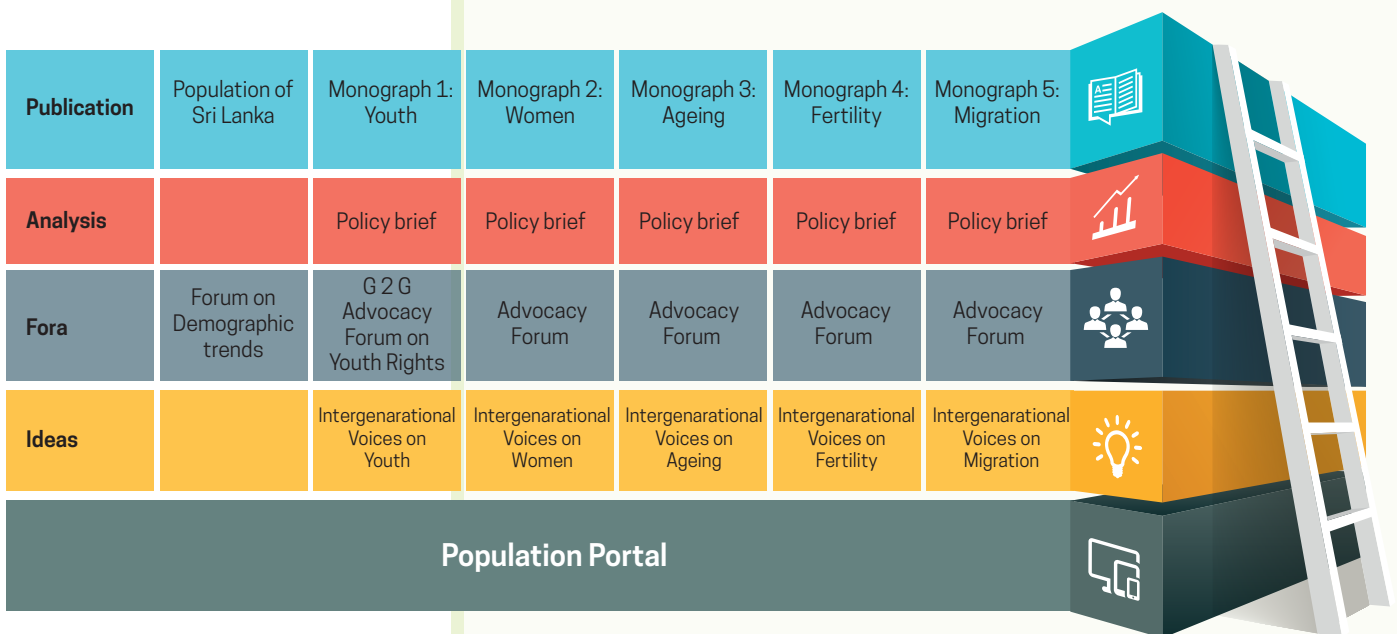
Thus, we have been shifting gears in its focus in Sri Lanka from capacity building and service delivery to policy dialogue, policy advice and policy advocacy.

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 inter-generational 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.

Checkout our Policy Engagement Framework



A National Policy on Youth

For the first time in Sri Lanka a relatively comprehensive National Youth Policy was launched in 2014, with a vision to develop the full potential of young people and to enable their active participation in national development. It discusses key strategies for policy interventions for priority target groups such as:

- Unemployed youth
- Youth from war affected communities
- Excluded, exploited and discriminated youth groups
- Young women

UNFPA has been a key partner to the Ministry of Youth in developing the Action Plan and supporting the setting up of a secretariat for the implementation of the National Youth Policy.

Keep up to date with us as the implementation of the policy progresses

Not only a Youth Policy but a Policy on youth health too!

After years of preparations the draft National Policy and Strategy on the Health of Young Persons was finalized and sent for cabinet approval in 2014.

UNFPA has been a key contributor to its development providing technical assistance for the drafting of the policy, stakeholder consultations and its finalization.



The overall goal of the policy is to mainstream the health needs of young people and thereby improve their health safety and wellbeing. This is covered in nine comprehensive strategies.

In particular, the policy addresses the issue of preventing unwanted pregnancies through the provision of information and contraceptive, including the need to provide targeted information and counseling on contraceptive usage and other reproductive health services to young people.

The adoption and implementation of the National Policy and Strategy on the Health of Young Persons is also identified in the National Youth Policy as a key policy intervention in improving the health and wellbeing of Sri Lankan youth.

Await the launch of the National Policy and Strategy on the Health of Young Persons!



A new Outcome Document on Youth

Over 1,500 young people from 163 countries and ministers from nearly 30 countries gathered in Sri Lanka from 6-10 May to discuss, negotiate and place young people at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda at the World Conference on Youth.

UNFPA as a key partner working with and for young people provided expert speakers from the Asia-Pacific region and advocated for investing in young people, placing their reproductive health needs and rights and inclusion of a stand-alone goal on youth in the post 2015 development agenda..

The Conference culminated with the adoption of the Colombo Declaration on Youth, a shared commitment to work constructively towards an outcome that can transform the lives of young people.

It called for a stand-alone youth goal aimed at increasing public and private-sector investment in the global-aid architecture and youth empowerment, and for strengthening global, regional, national and local partnerships for and with youth in the development,

implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Declaration emphasised the importance of providing comprehensive sexuality education offering full and accurate information for all adolescents and youth. It also advocated universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, with the involvement of youth, regardless of marital status, and focusing on women, persons living with disabilities and marginalised groups.

There was also a strong call to fully engage men and boys, in promoting gender equality and eradicating violence against women and girls, and for ending the culture of silence surrounding gender-based violence.

Advancing Policies

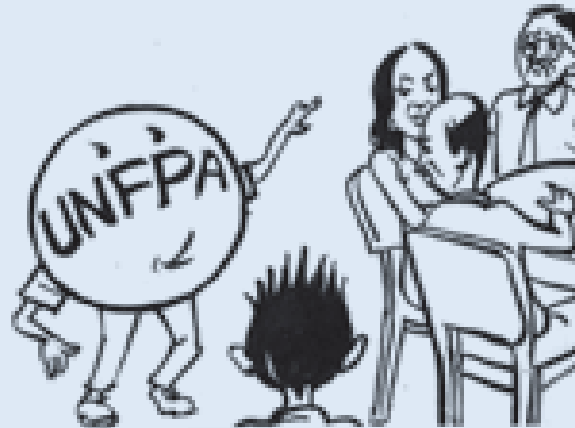
Policy through a new lens

Policies... Let's think outside the box

**Sri Lankan Youth
in 2020**



What do you know about youth? Do you know what they do? Where they live? Who they are?



Oh, you mean data?



Of course we have data- what do you think the population census is, huh?

But isn't that about the entire population?

That's why we have the Youth Monograph - it has an in-depth analysis, including projections and connections between issues related to youth.



Sounds like a document that makes a directory feel light



Relax! There's a short version of key facts and figures from the monograph, called a policy brief. We knew reading isn't something most people enjoy now.

Guys - this is all great, but don't you think youth should be deciding youth policy? Just saying...



Policymaking! How can kids be involved in policymaking?



Wait people – policy making requires both young people and the once-young people – it's called 'Intergenerational Dialogue'.



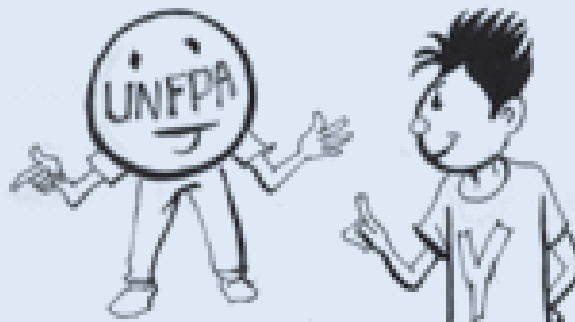
Wow, do you need a time machine for that?
Intergeneration dialogue simply means different people from different generations discuss issues together. You'd be surprised at the number of new ideas, policy direction and investment strategy it inspires.



Interesting. We definitely need policy direction, and systems, monitoring mechanisms in place, to ensure quality, accountability and equity.



So it's a process, then?



It's more than that. It's what we call a 'policy engagement framework'. It improves the lives of young people and women through a number of facets - including the planning, monitoring and budgeting of national policy and policy development.

Ok – that does sound pretty cool.



I think it's appropriate.

UNFPA in 365 days

National Consultation on the SAARC Youth Charter

The National Consultation on the SAARC Youth Charter witnessed an adept representation of Sri Lanka's youth. The consultation was enriched with input from a cross section of youth-led organisations, Youth Parliament, the Y-PEER Network and university students

World Conference on Youth

Over 1,500 young people from 163 countries and ministers from nearly 30 countries gathered in Sri Lanka from 6-10 May to discuss, negotiate and place young people at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda

UNFPA as a key partner provided expert speakers from the region and its Asia Pacific Regional Director speaking at the closing plenary of the Conference called for a stand-alone goal on youth in the post-2015 development agenda

World Population Day

Keeping in line with the theme of "Investing in Young People," UNFPA Sri Lanka commemorated World Population Day with the launch of its publication "Generation Youth: Yielding the Returns on Investments". The stories of nine outstanding young leaders in the publication showcase the returns on investments in young people

#showyourselfie - in PINK

The UNFPA team in Sri Lanka joined the #showyourselfie campaign in pink to reflect its categorization as a pink country working at the policy level in line with UNFPA's new Global Strategic Plan

OrangeUrHood campaign

The UNFPA team stood up for violence against women in ORANGE to support the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign. Under the theme "Orange YOUR Neighbourhood", with colour orange used to symbolize a brighter future without violence

January

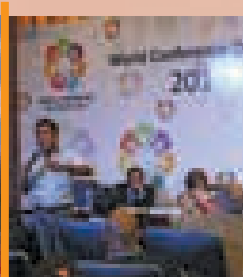
February

March

April

May

June



January

February

March

April

May

June

Launching of the report 'Investing in the Demographic Dividend: Successes, Challenges and Way Forward for Sri Lanka'

In a special side event on the final day of the World Conference on Youth 2014, UNFPA presented a report, titled 'Investing in the Demographic Dividend: Successes, Challenges and Way Forward for Sri Lanka' to take a look at Sri Lanka's investment in reaping the demographic dividend, and the results of it in terms of harnessing the potential of youth in the country

Launch of the National medico-legal guidelines

The first ever medico-legal guidelines for examining and caring for survivors of sexual abuse and reporting the abuse to law enforcement authorities were launched together with the College of Forensic Pathologists and Ministry of Health

Needs assessment survey on Sexual Reproductive Health for the Vocational Education and Training Sector

To find out the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people in the vocational education sector, UNFPA facilitated a needs assessment, which would lead to an updated curriculum that would allow young people to make more informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health

Sexual and reproductive health and rights sessions for scouts at the Centenary Scouts Jamboree

UNFPA together with its youth peer education network, Y-PEER, conducted a series of interactive sessions on sexual reproductive health and rights for over 500 scouts at their centenary Jamboree

Capacity building workshop women NGOs

UNFPA facilitated a series of workshops with women NGOs that it supports for an in-depth overview on the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing +20 campaign

July

Multi-stakeholder meeting to finalize the first ever National Policy & Strategy on the Health of Young Persons

To ensure the policy goal of mainstreaming concerns of the health of young people, the meeting drew together important stakeholder, including youth representatives. Through the course of the meeting, the draft policy was reviewed and comments and inputs for improvement were provided

August

Strategic Positioning Dialogue on women and youth

With a shift in UNFPA's mode of engagement in Sri Lanka for capacity building to policy dialogue and advocacy, a series of consultations were held to seek advice from a wide range of stakeholders on what UNFPA should do in supporting the health and rights of women and young people in Sri Lanka

October

State of the World Population report launch 2014

UNFPA Sri Lanka launched its global annual flagship report SWOP 2014 – The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth, and the transformation of the Future. The launch was followed by a talk show featuring eminent young leaders who deliberated on issues of youth participation, youth and new technologies and the post-2015 sustainable development agenda

November

YPEER training of trainers workshop on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health

UNFPA's peer educator group held a training of trainers workshop to create a team of well-trained peer educators on adolescent sexual reproductive health throughout the country

September

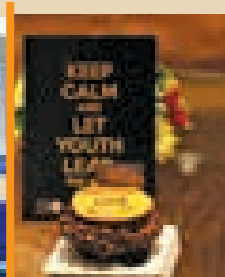
December



July



August



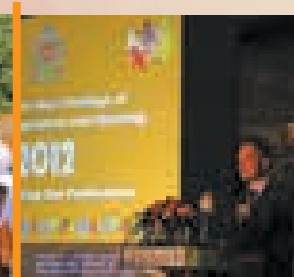
September



October



November



December

Media Seminar on International Youth Day with the Health Education Bureau

The dire need for the media to highlight mental health issues of young people was addressed by UNFPA together with the Health Education Bureau, by hosted a media seminar on the topic and emphasized its importance to media personnel

Nepal and Sri Lanka, South-South learning on addressing gender-based violence in the health sector

Officials from the Government of Nepal and UNFPA Nepal Country Office representatives toured in Sri Lanka to observe the exemplary health sector response to gender-based violence in Sri Lanka

Shaping the bottom-line Is population the destiny?

To get the country's business community thinking and to showcase how a demographic bonus affects the bottom line of businesses and how it will ultimately shape economic growth, UNFPA partnered with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce to put this forward to the business community at a breakfast meeting

2012 Census Launch

The Final results of the 2012 Population and Housing Census were released in December with a seminar on its findings. UNFPA was a key partner in this and co-published a report entitled "Key Finding of the 2012 Population and Housing Census"

Census Awareness Walk

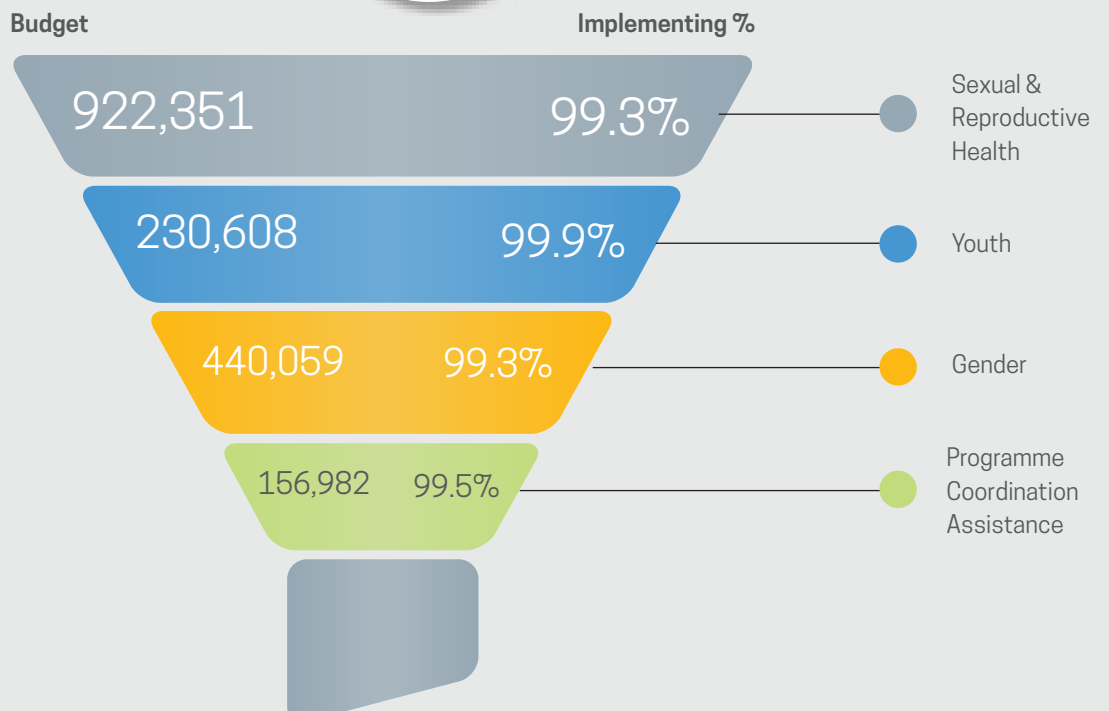
In support to the dissemination of the 2012 Census results, UNFPA supported an awareness walk from Borella to the new building of Dept. of Census and Statistics in Battaramulla

Forum against Gender-Based violence; policy dialogue

As Chair of the Forum Against Gender-based Violence, UNFPA supported policy dialogues to assess progress on commitments in the National Human Rights Action Plan 2011-2016 to reduce gender-based violence

Highlights of
our work in
2014

Our
Results



GET
SOCIAL!



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