



**FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATIVE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (FISD)
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
(OCT - DEC 2025)**

NEWSLETTER

What is FISD?

FISD is a national non-governmental organization in Sri Lanka, committed to social development through the prevention of drugs and alcohol, the protection and promotion of child rights, and women and development (with particular focus on the prevention of gender based violence).



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Vision

Empower communities to enjoy rights, justice and equity in a dynamic Sri Lanka

Mission

To empower stakeholders by providing innovation solutions and utilizing effective methodologies to achieve sustainable development with justice and equity.



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EMPOWERING CBOS THROUGH THE HANDBOOK



A programme was designed for community-based organizations (CBOs) to roll out a handbook titled "Community-Based Organization Handbook for Strengthening Families and Communities and Preventing Alcohol and Drug Use" across three districts: Anuradhapura, Monaragala, and Hambantota. The handbook aimed to challenge harmful social norms, provide basic knowledge on alcohol and drug prevention, identify relevant support sectors, plan brief intervention activities, and clarify that prevention cannot rely solely on the legal system. A total of 99 members participated: 27 women from eight CBOs in Anuradhapura, 46 members from six CBOs in Monaragala, and 26 members from seven CBOs in Hambantota.



Participants developed action plans using the handbook, and within the same quarter, FISD collaborated with them to implement these plans. Notable outcomes include a drug prevention programme across three divisions, a youth awareness campaign, and a poster campaign in Hambantota, as well as an awareness programme through a medical clinic in Anuradhapura.

YOUTH TRAINING ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG PREVENTION IN MONARAGALA



A two-day training programme for a youth group was conducted in the Monaragala District to strengthen alcohol and drug prevention efforts. The main objectives were to change positive expectations associated with alcohol and drugs, help participants understand the root causes of substance use, increase awareness of industry strategies, and provide knowledge on relevant laws, including the NATA Act. The programme was organized with the support of the Monaragala District Secretariat and the Medical Officer of Health office, and engaged 32 young men and women from across the district.



By the end of the training, participants showed significant positive shifts in attitudes and social norms, along with a clearer understanding of industry tactics and existing alcohol and drug laws in Sri Lanka. FISD will continue to empower this group as a trained youth team for long-term prevention work in Monaragala, with several follow-up programmes already planned.

“OUR WORLD FULL OF HAPPINESS” – CHILDREN IN ACTION



Using the children's workbook *"Our World Full of Happiness,"* attitudes of children aged 12-16 regarding alcohol and drugs have been positively influenced. Currently, nearly 150 children from three villages participate in weekly activities based on the workbook. In addition, two poster campaigns on alcohol and drug prevention were organized in two villages across Anuradhapura and Hambantota districts, with a total of 43 children taking part. The campaigns helped children express their understanding creatively while spreading awareness within their communities.



Many parents and local leaders appreciated the children's efforts and acknowledged the importance of early prevention education. Building on this momentum, FISD plans to expand the workbook activities to additional villages in the coming months. These initiatives reflect FISD's ongoing commitment to engaging young people as active agents of change in their communities.

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES



In partnership with the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, a national-level symposium was organized featuring a panel discussion titled *"Transforming Masculinities for Prevention: Community and School-Based Approaches to Reducing Alcohol and Drug Harm in Sri Lanka."* The panel brought together community leaders and a schoolteacher from the Monaragala district, exploring how community leaders can contribute to prevention, how harmful masculinities can be transformed at the school level through FISD's journal programme, and how the "Caring Fathers" initiative supports alcohol and drug prevention.



The discussion received positive feedback and appreciation from the audience, and the event was successfully conducted.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S COUNCIL (NCC) PROGRAMME 2025



Child participation continued to be a core focus of CRPP implementation in 2025, empowering children to actively engage in decision-making. During the year, 124 new children joined child clubs, and members from nine clubs were linked to Child Councils, strengthening connections between community-level engagement and formal child governance structures. Over 130 children contributed to District and Divisional Child Councils through leadership trainings, participatory discussions, and rights-based dialogues, enhancing their confidence and advocacy skills. A key highlight was the CRPP team's involvement in the three-day National Children's Council (NCC) Programme at Embilipitiya, organized by the Department of Probation and Child Care Services in collaboration with FISD. Children from across the country developed the NCC Action Plan for the upcoming year and participated in a transparent, child-friendly election for the new NCC Committee. FISD remains committed to supporting child councils at all levels in implementing the new action plan.

MENTAL HEALTH AND HEALING PROGRAMME FOR DISTRICT CHILD CLUB LEADERS



In line with World Children's Day 2025, a Mental Health and Healing (MHH) training programme was conducted for district child club leaders from the Hambantota and Monaragala districts. The programme engaged 120 children and was designed to provide a safe, supportive, and healing space for participants. Through carefully planned activities and child-friendly tools, the sessions supported children to identify and understand their feelings, release stress, and develop healthy coping mechanisms. Beyond individual well-being, the programme also encouraged children to challenge harmful social norms, build empathy, and strengthen peer support. The training was highly participatory and impactful, contributing to improved emotional awareness and resilience among child leaders. This initiative strongly aligns with FISD's commitment to promoting children's mental well-being as an essential component of child rights and holistic development.

EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS THROUGH REFLECTION AND RIGHTS AWARENESS



A child empowerment programme in Anuradhapura focused on self-awareness, positive behaviour, and social responsibility. Through creative activities and open discussions, children reflected on harmful attitudes and rebuilt their self-identity with confidence. The sessions challenged rigid gender norms and other deep-rooted beliefs, helping participants explore healthier alternatives. Practical, child-friendly scenarios also introduced child rights protection processes, empowering children to understand their rights and respond safely to challenging situations. The programme saw active participation and honest reflection, reinforcing the importance of supportive environments where children grow into confident, aware, and responsible individuals - a commitment that guides FISD's child-centred work.

ESTABLISHING SGBV FORUM

An SGBV (Sexual and Gender-Based Violence) Forum was established in the Anuradhapura district with the participation of divisional-level officers. The forum aimed to build a shared understanding of gender concepts and raise awareness on the forms and impacts of Gender-Based Violence within communities.

Officers were guided on their roles and responsibilities when responding to SGBV incidents, including providing initial support, referring survivors to appropriate services, and coordinating with relevant institutions. Discussions were also held on the structure and functioning of the Forum Committee to ensure regular coordination and collective action.



This initiative strengthens institutional collaboration at the divisional level, enabling officers to respond more effectively to SGBV cases and contribute to safer communities.



YOGA TRAINING FOR WOMEN'S COLLECTIVES

A yoga training session was conducted for women's collectives in Anuradhapura as part of promoting self-care and well-being. The session introduced yoga as a holistic approach to improving physical, mental, and emotional health. Women were guided through basic yoga techniques and breathing exercises, learning how yoga can reduce stress, improve mental clarity, and support emotional healing. By introducing this simple and accessible self-care practice, the programme encouraged women to prioritize their own well-being while strengthening their ability to lead healthy and balanced lives.



DRAMA PERFORMANCE FOR THE SIXTEEN DAYS OF ACTIVISM

As part of the Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign, members of the Women's Federation in Nachchaduwa, Anuradhapura district, organized a drama performance to raise awareness on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV). Held at the Nachchaduwa Divisional Secretariat with the participation of divisional officers and supported by Women Development Officers,



the creative performance highlighted forms of online harassment and digital violence faced by women and girls, along with their emotional and social impacts. Following the performance, participants learned practical steps to stay safe online and where to seek help. The activity fostered collective responsibility in ensuring safer digital spaces for women and girls.

HAPPY FAMILY CAMPS

Over 100 families came together in Ambalantota, Hambantota district, for the Happy Family Camps, a space designed to celebrate family life and strengthen relationships.

Through fun activities, games, and storytelling, parents and children explored sharing, caring, and supporting each other beyond traditional gender roles, learning

that small acts like listening, helping with chores, or making joint decisions create stronger bonds. Participants engaged in discussions about respect, empathy, and equality, recognizing that both men and women have an equal role in building a happy household. Many families shared that the experience helped them appreciate each other's contributions and inspired them to practice equality in everyday life.



FRIENDLY CRICKET MATCHES



Children from Debokkawa and Guruwala in Hambantota district enjoyed a fun-filled day of friendly cricket matches, designed to teach the importance of equal opportunities for girls and boys through sports. Boys and girls played side by side, cheering each other on and respecting each other's skills, while coaches encouraged teamwork, fair play, and shared decision-making.

The laughter and friendly competition created an inclusive atmosphere where lessons about equality came naturally through play. Many children expressed excitement about participating equally and realized that supporting one another makes both the game and everyday life more enjoyable - an outcome that aligns with FISD's commitment to promoting gender equality through creative, child-friendly approaches.

EXPLORING GENDER ROLES THROUGH MUSIC

Divisional officers in Agunakolapelessa, Hambantota district, came together for a Musical Appreciation Program that explored themes of masculinity, gender equality, and the everyday role of women in families and communities. Using music as a creative medium, the session encouraged reflection on how rigid gender roles can limit women's opportunities.



Through songs, performances, and interactive discussions, officers explored ways to challenge stereotypes, promote equality, and support women at home, work, and in the community. Participants shared that the music made the lessons memorable and relatable, helping them understand how small changes in attitudes can lead to more respectful and supportive relationships.

LAUNCHING STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME



The Student Ambassador Programme was launched across 10 selected schools in the Monaragala Divisional Secretariat area to nurture young leaders who can promote gender equality within their school communities. Through interactive sessions and activities, students explored topics such as respect, equality, and fairness, while learning to recognize and challenge harmful gender norms that limit opportunities for both girls and boys.

As Student Ambassadors, these young participants are expected to act as positive role models, encouraging inclusive attitudes and equal participation among their peers. This initiative aims to create long-term change, empowering students to build school cultures where equality, respect, and opportunity are shared by all.

INTRODUCING SELF-CARE FOR WOMEN

A selfcare session was conducted with women in Udaarawa, Monaragala district, to highlight the importance of prioritizing personal wellbeing. Many women carry multiple responsibilities, often placing others' needs before their own. The session created a safe space to reflect on selfcare as a vital part of health, confidence, and overall wellbeing - covering physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and intellectual aspects.



Participants explored small, intentional practices like resting, enjoying activities, and seeking support, and were encouraged to create personal selfcare plans. Through open conversations, the programme emphasized that when women care for themselves, they are better able to make decisions, participate actively in their communities, and maintain healthy relationships.

CELEBRATING CHILDREN'S DAY



Children, parents, and community members gathered in Gaminipura, Monaragala district for a Children's Day celebration focused on children's rights, safety, and well-being. The session, facilitated by the Community Police District Coordinator, helped children understand their rights to protection, participation, and education, while discussing respect and equality between girls and boys.

Parents and caregivers were guided on creating child-friendly, safe environments at home and in schools where children feel valued and heard. The celebration not only marked Children's Day with joy and learning but also strengthened the collective commitment of families and communities to nurture safe, inclusive, and empowering spaces for every child - reflecting FISD's dedication to advancing children's rights at the community level.

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