

# FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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[WWW.FISD.LK](http://WWW.FISD.LK)

**Foundation for Innovative Social Development (FISD) is a national nongovernmental 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).**

## **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.

# THE FISD NEWSLETTER

"The FISD Newsletter attempts to summarize the campaigns, activities and programs specifically focused on each quarter by our organization.

Through this easily accessible newsletter, the public can conveniently scroll through its pages and be updated of the work done by FISD towards social development in the realms of child rights protection & promotion, gender & development - prevention of sexual & gender based violence as well as alcohol, drugs & development"

-FISD Comms Team-

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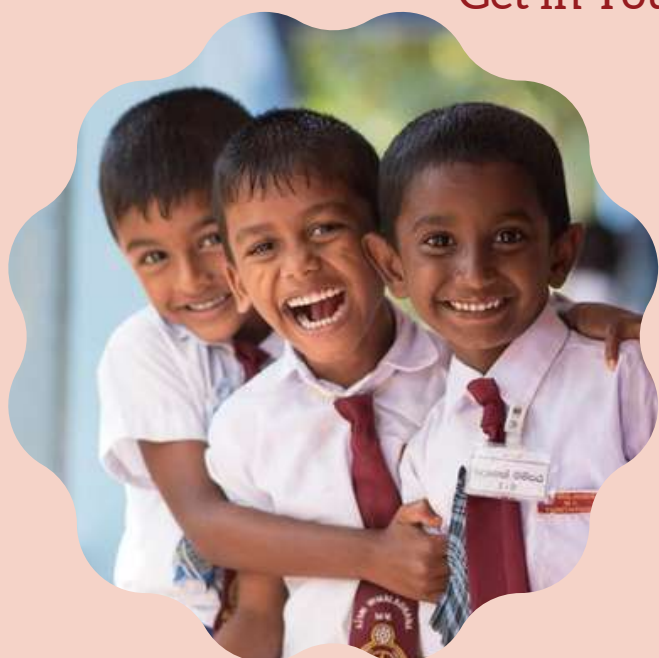
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# OUR PROGRAMS



## Alcohol, Drugs & Development

The Alcohol, Drugs, and Development (ADD) program aims to empower local groups to combat alcohol, tobacco, and drug harm. It facilitates lobbying, advocacy, and activism to influence government policies. The program aims to change positive alcohol expectancies and question user privileges, ultimately improving state and civil society performance in managing drug supply and demand.



## Gender & Development - Prevention of Sexual & Gender Based Violence

Gender and Development is a crucial focus area, focusing on power dynamics between men and women in society. Our program aims to empower women and girls to address disparities and improve their quality of life. It also aims to engage men and boys in ending sexual, physical, and psychological abuse, promoting gender equity and understanding.



## Child Rights Protection & Promotion

Child Rights Protection and Promotion (CRPP) program is based on the ideology that the protection of child rights cannot be taken in isolation, but that while protecting child rights, it is necessary to promote them as well. Our program integrates these two concepts taking into account other contributory factors such as Gender sensitivity, Alcohol and drug prevention, and the economic empowerment of the family, to build a holistic approach to the problem of child rights violations.



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD)

## CAMPAIGN

FISD launched its International Women's Day Campaign in line with the global campaign's focus, "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality", highlighting the digital divide, emphasizing women's equal participation in technology design, development, and deployment. FISD aligned its campaign to the global campaign by focusing on, "Let's Get Smart," promoting digital empowerment for women, addressing gender discrimination, and promoting innovation and technology for gender equality.

### **Objectives:**

FISD campaigned to combat gender discrimination in digital spaces by:

- Addressing Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) through cyberspace, discourage victim-blaming culture, and educate women and girls on digital technology for daily activities.
- Encouraging women and girls to use the digital technology safely through capacity building.
- Raising awareness and promoting the use of digital technology as a human right and rights of women, and encouraging girls not to be confined to gender stereotypes.

# IWD CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

- National Level Interventions

FISD, in partnership with The British Council, launched the social media campaign #LetsGetSmart with #AFutureWithoutViolence to create an online inclusive space for all women, girls and marginalized communities and bring awareness on cyber security in the digital world.

Techno 2023, organized in partnership with the University of Kelaniya's Gender Studies Center, with students and targeting women's collective groups, focusing on knowledge and skills development in the digital world.

- District Level Interventions - Street drama - (Let's scare-away the digital scaremonger)

A Street drama produced and performed in Anuradhapura, Monaragala, and Hambanthota districts to raise awareness about the role technology play in easing daily activities, fact-checking misinformation, and entrepreneurship. The drama was performed in locations where women engage in routine activities.

- Community Level Interventions - 'Ape Ammath Smart' (My Mother is Smart) . Youth Driven Initiative

A youth lead initiative to share knowledge of basic phone and digital space usage by youth to elderly women in needy communities was facilitated. Two youth communities in Monaragala & Hambantota, executed the activity, analyzing data and selecting training sessions based on community necessities and skill capacity of women in these villages.

# **IWD CAMPAIGN LEARNINGS**

## **National Level & Community Level Interventions**

Women have limited phone use to simply receiving and taking calls, due to reluctance to learn technology, and the belief that only boys need to be tech-savvy. Lack of knowledge in social media and digital safety also contributes to their restrictions. Thus the national and community level interventions led to the emergence of a need to break the customs of women viewing the digital world as a predator, and instead to help women utilise digital talents for their rights and community needs.

### **District Level Intervention**

#### **The Street Drama**

Women were often distracted by other responsibilities, while men engaged with the drama team and shared ideas on digital safety. Men were more willing to scan QR codes and access study packs, while women were less engaged.

In addition, women did not own smartphones, making it challenging to share knowledge and they also pushed their children to learn digital use, as they were more knowledgeable about phones. Therefore, this emerged a need to conduct more dialogues in order to help tackle the fear women have regarding the digital world.

# MEMORY CAPSULE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH CAMPAIGN

## FISD joins British Council to launch social media campaign for Women's Day

Foundation for Innovative Social Development (FISD), in partnership with British Council Sri Lanka, launched a Social Media campaign #LetsGetSmart with #AFutureWithoutViolence to coincide with International Women's Day (IWD2023).

The main aim of this initiative is firstly to effectively confront Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) actively in cyberspace, discourage victim blaming and hate speech culture in wider society and seek support from service providers to educate women and girls on Digital Technology and Services available to ease day to day activities.

The program also hopes to encourage women and girls to use digital technology safely through capacity building.

It also aims to raise awareness and promote the use of digital technology as a human right and rights of women and to encourage girls not to be confined to gender stereotypes (to



British Council Sri Lanka Country Director Orlando Edwards with FISD Program Director Samitha Sugathimala.

eradicate 'prim and proper' culture for women in social media and prevent the conception of digital technology as a 'scare-monger' for women and girls).

Foundation for Innovative Social Development Program Director Samitha Sugathimala said: "The ways in which technological giants have developed

and used information and communication are irreversibly shaped by the weight of patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism."

"As an organization based on feminist principles, we wish to amplify inclusive and intersectional approaches to address systemic discriminations and violations of rights against

all women and girls through technology and in all digital spaces.

"We call for a liberating and more feminist technology where we encourage collaborative digital approaches for continuous resistance and transformation."

British Council Sri Lanka Country Director Orlando Edwards said, "I believe this year's theme, 'Digit ALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality' is timely and relevant."

"We must stand in solidarity with them in claiming that space. We must accept and honour the importance of digital investment for women and girls to help them accomplish social, economic, cultural, and political growth. Let us be accountable allies in exploring the impact of the digital gender gap on widening economic inequalities and creating a safer space for women to access and benefit from

the digital world." While launching the social media campaign, the event aims to provide a networking opportunity for diverse groups of civil society activists, academics, researchers and media and those working in the development sector to come together to raise their voices in reducing the Digital Gender Gap.

Foundation for Innovative Social Development (FISD) has been functioning since 2011 as a social development organization in three thematic areas: Child Rights Protection and Promotion, Gender and Development, Prevention of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and Alcohol and Drug prevention.

Under the Gender and Development: Prevention of SGBV program, FISD works in four project locations: Monaragala, Anuradhapura, Kandy and Hambantota and its commitments are designed to contribute to the National Plan

of Action to address SGBV (2016-2020) within its prevention and empowerment plan through the establishment of community empowerment model communities to effectively prevent root-causes of SGBV.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, FISD continued its activism by shifting online and utilizing teleconferencing platforms to reach communities, where it was observed that the prolonged digital-gender gap among women was a major challenge that hindered this empowerment process.

FISD has been in a long-term partnership with the British Council Sri Lanka since 2016.

Media coverage by Daily News for the launch of the IWD2203 social media campaign with British Council.



FISD team at the launch of the social media campaign with British Council.



Performing the Street drama created and produced by FISD for IWD2023 at Anuradhapura.





FISD Team at the launch of the IWD2023 social media campaign.



Training sessions with students from the University of Kelaniya for Techno Day 2023



Performing Street Drama at the University of Kelaniya for Techno Day 2023



Reflective moments at the IWD2023 social media launch at the British Council.

# BLUE UMBRELLA DAY (BUD)

## CAMPAIGN

FISD launched the Blue Umbrella Day Campaign, in partnership with Family for Every Child, with the objective of creating an awareness on the need to identify the negative social norms leading to sexual abuse of boys and advocate for better protection of boys from sexual abuse.

### **Objectives:**

- Challenging harmful social norms that encourage and normalize sexual violence against boys.
- Run a social media campaign to raise awareness among youth on the problem, key norms affecting the problem and possibly graft recommendation to generate social readiness to address the problem.
- Collect, collate, and create awareness on available legal/ policy provisions to create a conducive environment for a better coordinated response to sexual abuse on boys.
- Gauge readiness among parents, youth, CSOs to problematize sexual violence against boys and mobilize for coordinated response.

## NOTABLE BUD CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

- Successful social media campaign was conducted from 16th to 29th April where online youth communities and youth groups involved with FISD effectively engaged
- The consultations carried out with CSO representatives from the 3 districts revealed that CSOs were eager to take part, as it was a first for them on this subject. Detail discussions made them realize how vulnerable men are, especially for the male representatives.
- FISD funded a Desk Review to produce a Policy Brief on the available legal and policy provisions.

Youth groups, between the ages of 19-29 years, were selected from Hambanthota, Monaragala and Anuradhapura as follows:

- FISD consulted with a group of female students from ocean university in Hambanthota
- Vocational training centre in Monaragala district was conducted by FISD
- Discussions were held with 21 youths of Anuradhapura national youth service council and 25 youths of Anuradhapura district youth society board.
- Programs were organized by FISD in Madagama Illukkumbura area with the participation of 10 boys on the occasion of sexual abuse of boys

## **BUD CAMPAIGN FINDINGS**

**In relation to the programs conducted in the 3 districts the following recommendations were identified:**

Take action to change the social norms and wrong attitudes in the society to establish gender equality

For laws and policies to be revised the desk review that generated a Policy Brief on the available legal and policy provisions will be utilised to advocate for a better response mechanism.

Comprehensive Sex education should be included in current school curriculum

Gov, NGO's and CSO's that work to prevent sexual abuse of boys should be identified and strengthened

Stakeholders should implement awareness programs to greater public on sexual abuse of boys using different strategies

Counselling services and psychosocial/psychiatric treatment should be provided for children who face abuse in the society

Reporting on sexual abuse is important, therefore media should be regulated to report these issues sensitively and environments should be established to discuss openly

Measures to prevent sexual abuse in workplaces, training institutes, hostels, boarding schools, and prisons should be established

# MEMORY CAPSULE OF BLUE UMBRELLA DAY CAMPAIGN



Youth Group Consultations at Hambantota



Youth Group Consultations at Anuradhapura



Consultations carried out with representatives of Civil Society Originations at Hambantota.



Consultations carried out with representatives of Civil Society Originations at Monaragala.

# FISD Alliances & Partnerships

Our FISD mission is further solidified by our teamwork with alliances and partners. Therefore, we owe a special acknowledgement to our partners in the campaign initiatives we have carried out in the first two quarters for 2023.



FISD is one of the 46 members of the global Family for Every Child alliance which is spread across 38 countries. 2023 is the second year that FISD launched the Blue Umbrella Day campaign, supported by Family for Every Child Network, to spread knowledge to wider society on caring for boys and to protect them from sexual abuse.

FISD 2023 BUD campaign strategy was designed in two folds. Firstly, to change harmful norms that encourages and normalizes sexual abuse against boys and secondly to create social readiness for prevention and intervention (challenging harmful norms and coordinating and strengthening services) through a social media campaign. This became an opportunity to collect, collate, and create awareness on available legal /policy provisions to create a conducive environment for a better coordinated response to sexual abuse on boys.

The **Commonwealth 8.7 Network** is a global network of local organizations working to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking. Currently FIRD is a General Member and a Member of Communication & capacity building working group.

FIRD joined with the network in promoting their social media campaigns to help highlight the importance in eradicating contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking throughout the first two quarters of 2023.



FIRD has been in a long-term partnership with British Council Sri Lanka since 2016. In 2018, FIRD became the lead partner in a consortium project with the British Council's 'Active Citizens Model', a social leadership programme which promoted leadership skills, trust and understanding, that focused on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAGW) in the selected communities in Moneragala, Hambanthota, Batticaloa and Jaffna to empower communities to unite in addressing the VAWG.

This year, for IWD2023, FIRD, in partnership with British Council, successfully launched the Social Media campaign #LetsGetSmart with #AFutureWithoutViolence, to amplify inclusive and intersectional approaches to address systemic discriminations and violations of rights against all women and girls through technology and in all digital spaces.

FIRD thanks Mr. Orlando Edwards, Country Director, British Council Sri Lanka and his team for the support and participation in this campaign and look forward to the continuation of this partnership to reduce the gap of gender inequality.



# Meet the Team



Social innovation is gaining popularity globally, with civil society organizations initiating it in local communities. FISD aims to turn the concept into action in Sri Lanka, recruiting passionate activists from Anuradhapura, Colombo, Monaragala, and Hambantota.

## FISD Team at Districts

FISD Teams at Monaragala, Hambantota and Anuradhapura



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