



2024

Annual REPORT

Foundation for Innovative Social Development (FISD)

 www.fisd.lk

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Acronyms

FISD:	Foundation for Innovative Social Development
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
CBO:	Community-Based Organization
SGBV:	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
GBV:	Gender-Based Violence
BUD:	Blue Umbrella Day
NATA:	National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol
NACG:	National Action Coordinating Group
EVAC:	End Violence Against Children
SRHR:	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
CAAPP:	Collective Action Against Period Poverty
NCPA:	National Child Protection Authority
CLAG:	Community Local Action Group
FPASL:	Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNW:	United Nations Women
JSAC:	Jaffna Social Action Centre

Message from the General Secretary

Prof. MTM. Mahees



As we navigate 2024, I am filled with immense pride and confidence, reflecting on our journey from planning to action. Last year, we laid a strong foundation with our new five-year strategic plan, developed through a deeply participatory process. In 2024, we have witnessed our achievements with remarkable energy.

Our primary achievement has been the successful integration of Mental Health and Well-being as a core thematic area. This strategic expansion, anticipated in our 2024 planning, has proven to be both timely and critical. It has allowed us to address the interconnected challenges within our communities more holistically, strengthening our mission's cornerstone pillars of Gender Equality, Child Rights, and Drug and Alcohol Prevention.

The confidence in our operational excellence has translated into tangible growth and strengthened partnerships. We have successfully reached new donors and secured significant projects, a direct testament to the trust we have built through our consistent, accountable, and high-impact work. This expanded support base is not just a validation of our past performance but a crucial capacity for our ambitious strategic goals.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering commitment of our hardworking team at FSD, our dedicated grassroots partners, and the communities themselves. Their resilience and solidarity are the driving force behind our shared progress. Witnessing our collective efforts generate concrete outcomes, from influencing policy to empowering individuals and families, is the true measure of our success. Looking ahead, the strategic path we achieved brings more positive results, and we remain steady in our commitment to seek innovative solutions, overcome emerging challenges, and relentlessly pursue our mission for a more just, equitable, and healthy Sri Lanka.

Message from the Programme Director

Samitha Sugathimala



As we reflect on the year 2024, I am proud to share that FISD has expanded its scope of work, deepened its accountability, and strengthened its role as a key actor in driving social transformation. This year has been one of growth and consolidation, where we not only widened our reach but also sharpened our focus to ensure our actions bring lasting change to the lives of the people we serve.

Our four thematic areas, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Child Rights and Child Development, Alcohol and Drug Prevention, and Mental Health and Well-being, remain the cornerstone of our mission. Through these, we have continued to empower communities, mobilize grassroots leadership, and challenge harmful norms, enabling individuals and families to imagine and create safer, more equitable futures.

We have worked closely with stakeholders at every level, from local communities and grassroots leaders to policymakers and international partners. This multi-level engagement has helped us generate concrete outcomes in communities while contributing meaningfully to policy and advocacy efforts at national, regional, and global platforms. Our strengthened partnerships and collective action have not only amplified the voices of marginalized groups but also influenced policy directions that shape a more just and equitable society.

The progress we have made this year demonstrates the power of resilience, solidarity, and shared responsibility. At FISD, we remain committed to safeguarding the rights of women, children, and communities, while advancing accountability, justice, and equity for all. I extend my gratitude to our dedicated staff, partners, and communities for journeying with us, and I look forward to continuing this important work together in the years to come.

Who We Are

Established in 2011, the Foundation for Innovative Social Development (FISD) is a national NGO and a CSO dedicated to fostering a just, peaceful, and equitable Sri Lanka. This past year, our work has been increasingly guided by a single, powerful principle: building resilient communities from within.

We continue our foundational mission to protect child rights, advance gender equality, prevent SGBV, and promote healthy, drug-free lifestyles. However, our approach has evolved to place even greater emphasis on community ownership. We move beyond simply delivering services to actively co-creating solutions with the people we serve. By empowering children, youth, women, men, and families with knowledge, skills, and resources, we help them become the primary architects of their own development.

Our role as a catalyst and partner is fulfilled by developing evidence-based models and providing intensive capacity building, through which we equip community-based organizations, local leaders, and public and private sector partners with the tools to replicate and adapt successful initiatives. We have learned that sustainable change is not delivered to a community, but built with them. This partnership is the true testament to the power of collective action. By uniting voices and resources, we are creating a cohesive, holistic movement towards a safer, healthier, and more prosperous Sri Lanka for all.

Vision

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

Mission

To provide innovative solutions for enhancing the capacity of community, government, and private stakeholders to work toward justice for all, by ensuring equal rights and equitable opportunities are made available, leading to the creation of empowered communities and a dynamic civil society.

What We Do Best

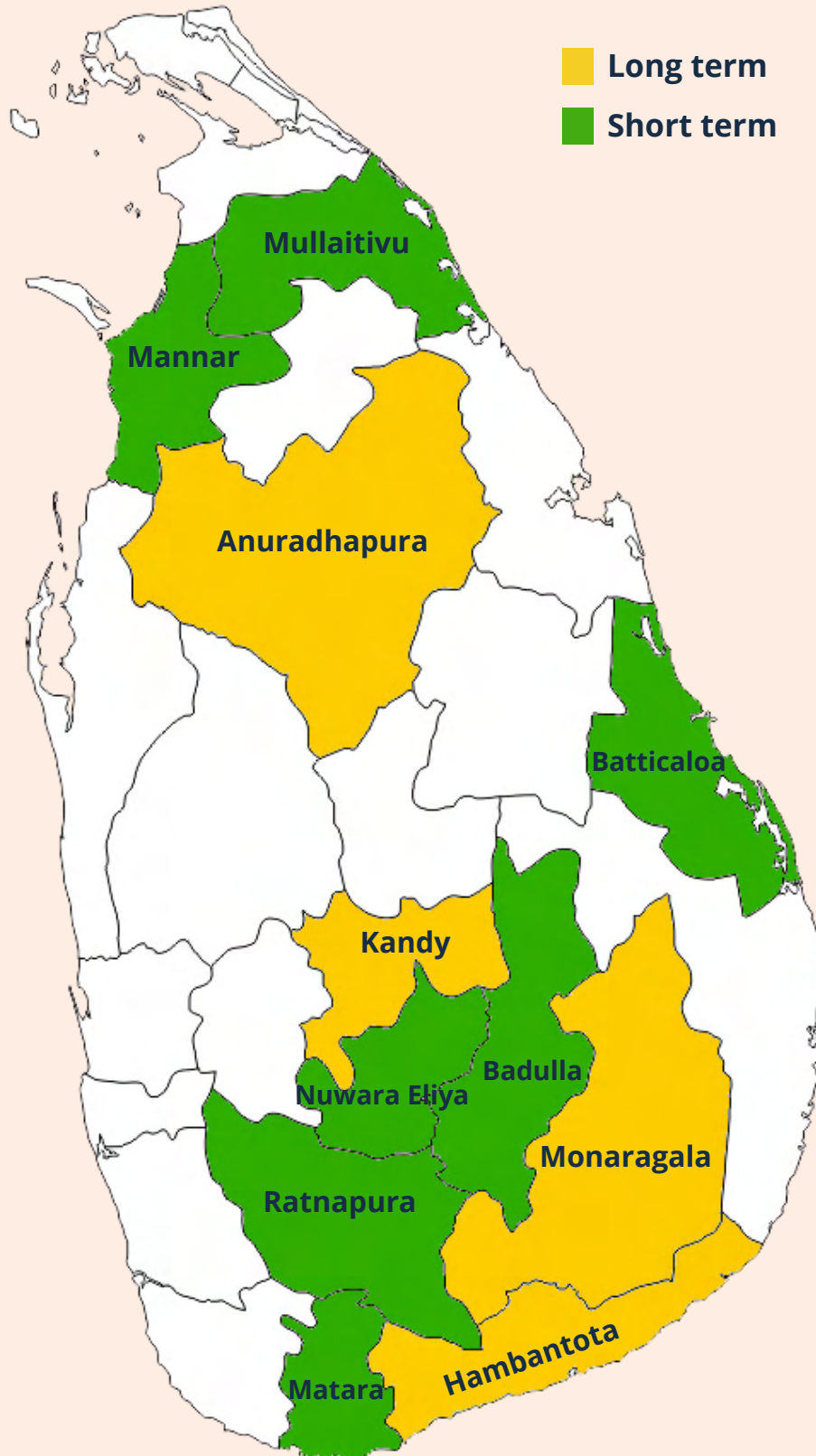
At FISD, we aim to transform this 'concept' into 'action' and convert 'action' into tangible and intangible results in Sri Lanka. Our programmes tackle prevalent and emerging social issues that negatively impact local communities, with a long-term goal of fostering population-level adaptations and disrupting entrenched policy niches.

FISD aims to provide innovative solutions that enhance the capacity of community, government, and private stakeholders to work towards justice for all, ensuring equal rights and equitable opportunities, thereby creating empowered communities and a dynamic civil society. FISD's strategic objectives focus on ensuring women and girls enjoy the right to be free from SGBV, protecting children from all forms of violence, freeing communities from the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs, and providing individuals with non-stigmatized access to mental health and well-being services. These objectives would be achieved by FISD through the strategies of building agency (both individual and collective) to mobilize women, children, and youth to challenge harmful social norms and unequal power relations and transform social norms to manifest appropriate policies, laws, and practices that are effectively implemented.

FISD enhances community capacity through educational initiatives, skill-building, and support to civil society networks, empowering local communities to advocate for their rights and well-being. By promoting social justice through the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities and addressing systemic inequalities, FISD complements increasing civil society's capacity to organize around issues of democracy, human rights, rule of law, gender equality, and anti-corruption.

FISD's commitment to diversity and inclusion ensures minority groups and those historically left behind are represented in all institutions, strengthening space for an independent and pluralistic civil society. By promoting inclusivity and representation of diverse groups within societal structures, FISD contributes to a more just and equitable society. Thus, FISD's emphasis on sustainable development, guided by social justice principles, addresses the root causes of gender inequality, violence, and substance abuse, aiming for long-term positive impacts.

Where We Work - Sri Lanka



The year 2024 marked a pivotal moment for the FISD, as we embarked on a transformative five-year programme cycle (2024–2028) with FORUT Norway, our principal donor. Guided by a shared Results Framework, this ambitious journey is strategically focused on four core thematic areas: Gender and Development (GAD), Child Rights Protection and Promotion (CRPP), Alcohol and Drug Prevention (ADD), and Mental Health and Well-being (MH). This integrated approach allows us to address both individual and community-level needs. Complementing this long-term strategy, we also implemented targeted short-term projects that directly contributed to our overarching goals. This report highlights the key achievements and milestones across all our initiatives, showcasing a year of significant progress and strengthened foundations for the future.

Empowering Communities and Advancing Gender Equality



The Gender and Development Programme (GAD) of FISD has been committed to creating a just world and a conducive environment where women and girls can live free from violence and reach their full potential. With that aim, FISD has been facilitating a transformative journey of individuals and communities to ensure that girls, women, and vulnerable persons are protected from SGBV, harmful patriarchal gender norms, and participate in democratic structures, holding duty bearers accountable. In 2024, the GAD programme expanded its wings to multiple thematic areas, including addressing mental health and well-being, menstrual discrimination, and strengthening local community-based organizations to own community empowerment models.

Community Mapping and Consultations

The programme's 2024 activities in the 18 project communities across Anuradhapura, Monaragala, Hambantota, and Kandy commenced with a comprehensive community mapping process. This foundational exercise documented the socio-cultural dynamics, existing community mechanisms, and local leadership structures to inform our approach. Building on these insights, we facilitated community consultations to assess the current understanding of SGBV. Through a social norm mapping storytelling tool, participants collectively identified critical gaps and co-created recommendations for future interventions. In a dedicated effort to include all voices, separate consultations were held for children, ensuring their perspectives are integral to building a safer society for everyone.

Community Mobilization Events

A series of community mobilization events across the 18 consulted communities was successfully launched. Utilizing an “edutainment” approach, these events introduced the programme's core objectives and fostered crucial dialogues on topics essential to addressing SGBV. The activities promoted the importance of caring families, positive fatherhood, and moving beyond restrictive gender stereotypes to empower all individuals to reach their full potential, irrespective of gender, age, or socio-cultural status. Through these efforts, the GAD programme successfully engaged over 3,500 community members, ensuring the inclusive participation of men, women, boys, and girls.

A diverse range of strategies was employed to maximize engagement and impact. These included edutainment events that deconstructed songs with positive messages for family well-being; Child and Adolescent Camps designed to build leadership qualities and foster safe spaces; a Youth Fun Kitchen event that encouraged participants to challenge gender-stereotyped roles; and 15 Happy Family events that strengthened intra-family relationships through shared, fun activities.

These mobilization events effectively disseminated key messages on shared decision-making, open communication, equitable care work, and the promotion of care within households. As a direct result, 83 men, 110 boys, 305 women, and 103 girls gained a foundational understanding of gender-discriminatory social norms at the household level. Demonstrating their commitment, these same individuals have pledged to deepen their involvement through the newly formed Women's Collectives and child and youth clubs, ensuring their sustained engagement with the project's ongoing activities.



Building Capacities and Strengthening CBOs

A total of 59 CBOs, including those established by FISD, were mobilized to address harmful gender norms and unequal power relations across 12 communities. Capacity-building initiatives equipped 120 CBO leaders with the skills to analyse local social issues, identify organizational strengths and weaknesses, and collaboratively design action plans to address these challenges. These leaders played a key role in co-developing community empowerment models, implementing action plans, and taking affirmative measures to prevent SGBV at individual, interpersonal, and community levels. In the coming years, FISD will continue to strengthen the capacities of these leaders to act as change agents, enabling them to challenge harmful social norms and create ripple effects for sustained positive change.



Awareness on Substance Abuse, GBV, and Mental Health

A series of awareness programmes focusing on alcohol and drug prevention, GBV, and mental health were conducted in the Hambantota and Monaragala Districts, aiming to educate both students and parents on these pressing social issues. These initiatives sought to reinforce child protection, promote safer environments, and encourage proactive engagement in addressing these challenges. A total of 120 students participated in interactive sessions that highlighted the harmful effects of substance abuse, the impact of GBV on individuals and communities, and the importance of making informed, responsible choices. Meanwhile, parents attended a dedicated programme that emphasized their role in child protection, raising awareness of children's rights, and fostering open communication to prevent issues such as substance abuse and domestic violence. In Monaragala, a mental health development programme engaged 80 students, revealing serious concerns, including struggles with mental health and reports of suicidal attempts.



These findings underscore the urgent need for strengthened mental health support and intervention within schools and communities. FISD developed extensive versions of Self-care videos for women and men for the estate communities, which include self-care for menstruators and self-care for men in the Tamil language. These videos include the components of mental well-being and suggestions for yoga exercises that can be used for comfortable menstruation. By addressing these critical issues through education and awareness, these programmes play a vital role in empowering students, parents, and communities to work towards a safer and healthier future for children in Sri Lanka.

Campaign for 16 Days of Activism: #SafeSpaceForAll

FISD actively participated in the global "16 Days of Activism" campaign in 2024, championing the theme: Towards a GBV-Free Sri Lanka: Safe Public Spaces for All. This initiative tackled the critical issue of harassment and violence against women and girls in public spaces, emphasizing the urgency of creating secure environments for everyone. Under the powerful hashtag #SafeSpaceForAll, FISD launched a compelling social media campaign aimed at sparking crucial conversations, challenging deep-seated societal norms,



and advocating for systemic change. FISD's campaign leveraged multiple digital formats to maximize outreach and engagement, including four engaging reels, multiple social media posts, and two powerful podcasts. The Sinhala Podcast garnered 40,000 views, sparking discussions and reflections on deeply rooted social norms contributing to gender-based violence, while the Tamil Podcast achieved even greater reach, with 53,000 views, reinforcing the campaign's inclusivity and relevance across communities. The short videos and posts received an overwhelming response through likes, comments, and shares, amplifying the message and creating widespread awareness. FISD remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering a safer, GBV-free Sri Lanka by continuing to challenge harmful norms, advocate for systemic reforms, and empower individuals to create secure public spaces. Together, we can build a society where #SafeSpaceForAll is a reality.

Strengthening of Women Federations

FISD successfully built partnerships with government-led women's empowerment mechanisms, known as Women Federations, in three divisions: Monaragala and Buttala (Monaragala District) and Nachchaduwa (Anuradhapura District). A total of 150 women leaders representing all Grama Niladhari divisions in each divisional secretariat, including areas where FISD projects are implemented, actively participated in these initiatives.

These Women Federations play a crucial role in advancing women's empowerment and raising community-level concerns on SGBV at divisional forums. FISD supported Women Development Officers in these divisions to develop action plans aimed at strengthening the capacities of the Federations, in collaboration with divisional stakeholders. To further enhance their knowledge and leadership, six training programmes were conducted for Federation members, focusing on understanding gender stereotypes, addressing gender-based violence, and strengthening the role of Women Federations in contributing effectively to SGBV forums. These initiatives underscored the importance of collaboration between Women Federations and government officials in tackling pressing social issues.



Strengthening Skills for Digital Literacy, Leadership, and GBV Response

A series of capacity-building programmes was conducted in the Monaragala and Anuradhapura districts to strengthen knowledge and skills on mobile phone usage, cybersecurity, GBV, and leadership in politics. These programmes targeted both women leaders and government officers, enabling them to address key community challenges more effectively. In Monaragala, two dedicated sessions on mobile phone usage and cybersecurity benefited 60 government officers and 60 women leaders. Additionally, 55 district Women Federation leaders received specialized training on forming Alert Groups and managing GBV-related cases, enhancing their capacity for proactive intervention and community response.



Menstruation Matters

In 2024, under the CAAPP project, FISD made significant strides in strengthening community resilience and awareness through a dynamic blend of rights-based awareness and skill development trainings. We conducted 10 transformative training sessions focusing on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Menstrual Health Management (MHM), and the Right to Information (RTI), laying the groundwork for informed, empowered individuals. Over 18 skill development programs equipped participants with tools to create safe spaces, use theatre for advocacy, embrace yoga for mental well-being, and foster male allyship, nurturing inclusive and empathetic communities. Our commitment to safe

spaces extended into the public sphere through community mobilization events, street dramas like “Enge Aval”, and a dedicated training for civil society organization members on advocacy and networking. Additionally, we brought together government service providers for a unique orientation program to bridge service gaps and deepen collaboration. These collective efforts have helped ignite dialogue, challenge norms, and inspire a movement of change-makers across communities.



Empowering Women Entrepreneurs and Promoting Gender Equality

In 2024, the “Social Norms and Behaviour Change Intervention to Promote Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment” project, implemented under the “Pathways to Peace” initiative with support from UN Women Sri Lanka, made significant progress across the districts of Anuradhapura, Mannar, Mullaitivu, and Batticaloa. Foundational activities, including district and divisional orientations, baseline surveys, and development of context-specific training materials and monitoring tools,



were successfully completed. The project engaged diverse stakeholders, including women entrepreneurs, men, community leaders, and local government officials, fostering dialogue on gender norms, promoting women’s empowerment, and challenging harmful social expectations. These efforts provided a strong platform for rolling out targeted training and community interventions, strengthening capacities, and laying the groundwork for sustainable transformation toward gender equality and inclusive economic participation.

Engaging Men and Boys as Allies to Prevent GBV

Building on the successful foundation of its 2023 pilot (Phase 1), the FISD continued its critical initiative, “Engaging Men and Boys as Accountable Allies in the Prevention of Gender-based Violence,” in 2024, supported by JSAC with funding from UNFPA. This Phase 2 project expanded its reach to the districts of Ratnapura, Badulla, Nuwara Eliya, Matara, and Batticaloa, conducting targeted training sessions for CSOs, youth, government officers, Members of the MenEngage Alliance, and faith-based leaders.

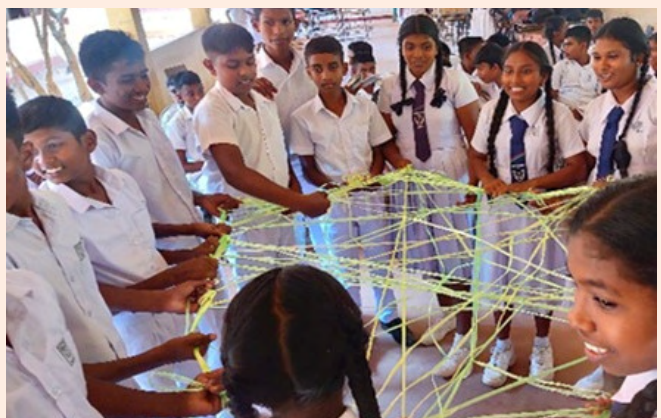


Through interactive workshops on transformative masculinities, power and privilege, and gender norms, the project equipped around 300 participants with the knowledge and skills to challenge harmful patriarchal structures. These sessions fostered critical self-reflection, built empathy, and empowered attendees to become proactive agents of change within their communities, ensuring the sustainability and growth of this vital movement against gender-based violence. By equipping individuals with the tools to become proactive agents of change, the project has built a powerful, multi-sectoral network committed to fostering lasting gender equality and preventing GBV in their communities.

Strengthening Male and Youth Engagement and Allyship to Prevent SGBV



In 2024, FISD successfully implemented the project “Strengthening the Engagement of Men and Boys to Prevent and Intervene SGBV Issues - Ensuring Justice for Victim-Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sri Lanka.” This comprehensive initiative was supported by UNDP Sri Lanka, was executed across the districts of Monaragala, Hambantota, Anuradhapura, and Nuwara Eliya. Key achievements included the development of a robust analytical framework and training materials to deconstruct patriarchal masculinities, the production of animated videos to foster allyship and self-reflection among young boys, and a series of capacity development programmes that equipped over 168 CSO and NGO members with the skills to engage men and boys in SGBV prevention. Furthermore, the project directly engaged 480 students through interactive mentorship programmes in eight schools, empowering them with reflective journal writing practices to challenge harmful gender norms from an early age. These multifaceted efforts have collectively built a strong foundation of knowledgeable advocates and young champions, driving a transformative shift towards gender equality and creating safer, more inclusive communities across the project districts.



Ensuring Safe, Nurturing, and Empowering Environments for Every Child

In 2024, FISD initiated a new five-year programme cycle (2024–2028), targeting 42 newly identified communities across seven Divisional Secretariats. As part of this broader intervention framework, the Child Rights Protection and Promotion (CRPP) Programme was launched in 18 selected communities. The programme aims to ensure a life free from violence for children through a multi-tiered, inclusive, and sustainable approach that prioritizes child protection, empowerment, and community participation.

Orientation, Community Mapping, and Consultation

To align with the National Policy on Child Protection and promote collective ownership of the programme, FISD conducted a series of orientation sessions targeting key stakeholders at national, district, and divisional levels. These sessions engaged 150 government officials and introduced them to the programme's objectives, operational strategies, and avenues for collaboration to collectively uphold and protect children's rights. Community mapping was conducted across all selected communities. This process helped gather vital demographic information, identify existing community resources, and map out key stakeholders, including religious leaders, CSOs, CBOs, and political influencers. Additionally, mapping highlighted safe spaces for children and documented prevalent child rights violations, offering a foundational understanding of each community's unique context. Using a storytelling approach, FISD facilitated interactive consultations with around 600 participants (300 children and 300 adults). These consultations offered a platform for uncovering harmful social norms, community attitudes, and structural barriers that hinder child rights. The involvement of local officials and community leaders ensured a participatory and inclusive dialogue, creating the groundwork for community-based solutions.



Transformative Community Mobilization

Through the CRPP Programme, FISD mobilized 3,730 individuals from 13 communities using a series of dynamic and inclusive engagement activities. These included: Children's and youth camps, Song analysis sessions, group discussions, and storytelling events. These events served as platforms to openly discuss and address issues such as corporal punishment, gender-based discrimination, and domestic violence. Simultaneously, they promoted key values like positive parenting, shared family responsibilities, and empathy.



Capacitating CBO Leaders

To deepen impact and strengthen grassroots leadership, FISD conducted capacity-building sessions for 508 CBO leaders across targeted communities. Using participatory methodologies such as the problem tree analysis, the training encouraged participants to critically examine the root causes of harmful social and gender norms that perpetuate inequality and violence. Through guided discussions and collaborative



exercises, CBO leaders identified underlying drivers of patriarchal attitudes, explored their effects on families and communities, and developed context-specific strategies to promote gender equality and social justice. The sessions also emphasized inclusive leadership, collective decision-making, and community mobilization, equipping leaders with practical tools to advocate for positive behavioural and structural change.

Establishing and Strengthening Child Participation Mechanisms through Children's Clubs

As a cornerstone of the CRPP Programme's sustainability strategy, FISD supported the formation of 15 children's clubs across all four districts (Anuradhapura, Hambantota, Monaragala, and Kandy). These clubs now serve as platforms for child-led action, providing children with the opportunity to voice their concerns, share ideas, and collaborate to protect and realize their rights. 656 children have registered and actively participated in these clubs, demonstrating increased ownership and engagement in community development processes. To further empower these children's clubs, FISD conducted six divisional leadership training programmes in Monaragala, Hambantota, and Anuradhapura districts. These trainings reached 360 child leaders representing 36 clubs and focused on: Leadership development, Teamwork and collaboration, Time management, and Inclusive practices. The sessions equipped young leaders with the confidence and skills necessary to take active roles in community governance, laying the groundwork for a sustainable model of child participation and local leadership.



Children's Day 2024: Celebrating Creativity and Connection with Nature

As part of the 2024 Children's Day celebrations, FISD organized a short story competition under the theme "Children and Nature." The initiative received nearly 120 submissions from across four districts, providing a creative platform for children to enhance their writing skills and reflect deeply on their relationship with nature and the environment. In addition, two interactive programmes were conducted in the Anuradhapura and Monaragala districts, engaging 570 children. These events reinforced the importance of child participation and unity, celebrating children's rights, creativity, and coexistence.



Strengthening Child Protection and Inclusive Education through Capacity Building

Under the CRPP Programme, FISD prioritized capacity building among key stakeholders to strengthen child protection and promote inclusive education. In 2024, 50 school principals in the Monaragala District were trained on positive discipline, emphasizing the importance of guiding children with empathy, love, and respect. The sessions enhanced their understanding of child rights, child participation, and child-friendly school environments, while deepening knowledge of the CRPP framework, child protection laws, and field-level implementation strategies.

In addition, 72 Child Development Officers participated in training sessions designed to improve their ability to deliver effective child rights services. These interactive sessions focused on identifying service delivery gaps, fostering self-reflection, and exploring practical approaches to strengthen child protection support within communities. Recognizing the significance of inclusive early childhood education, FISD also trained 50 pre-school teachers with a special focus on working with children with disabilities. The sessions provided practical strategies for inclusive teaching, classroom adaptations, and early intervention techniques, enabling teachers to create nurturing and accessible learning environments for all children. Through these initiatives, FISD strengthened the collective capacity of educators and child protection officers to build safer, more inclusive, and child-centered communities.



Empowering District and Divisional Children's Councils

To strengthen formal child governance mechanisms, FISD supported the empowerment of District and Divisional Children's Councils. A total of 515 children from six councils in the Monaragala and Anuradhapura districts were trained in leadership development, child governance structures, and rights-based advocacy. These initiatives ensure that children are not only beneficiaries but also active participants in shaping the decisions that impact their lives. Through this comprehensive and child-centered approach, FISD's CRPP programme is building a



strong foundation for a Life Free from Violence for Children. By fostering inclusive structures, promoting leadership, and engaging communities, FISD continues to champion the rights, voices, and well-being of Sri Lanka's children.

BUD Campaign 2024

As part of the BUD Campaign 2024 supported by Family for Every Child, FISD enhanced youth and civil society engagement in addressing sexual violence against male children. Through a series of capacity-building trainings, 116 youth were equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to take proactive action at both divisional and district levels. These trainings catalyzed youth-led awareness campaigns across Anuradhapura, Monaragala, and Hambantota districts, fostering open dialogue and shared responsibility for child protection. The mobilized youth groups have since evolved into peer support networks, providing guidance and solidarity within their communities. In parallel, 140 CSO members from Anuradhapura, Monaragala, Kandy, and Hambantota districts received capacity-building support to strengthen their ability to prevent and respond to sexual violence against male children. Building on this momentum, three CSO-led social action projects were implemented with FISD's technical support, promoting community-driven and sustainable solutions to safeguard boys from sexual violence.



Student Ambassador National Programme on Child Protection Launched in Monaragala

The inaugural induction of the Student Ambassador National Programme on Child Protection took place in the Monaragala District, marking a significant step toward strengthening child safety in schools. Organized by the NCPA in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the FISD Monaragala district team, this initiative aims to equip senior school prefects with essential knowledge, skills, and leadership qualities to advocate for child protection. The programme focuses on raising awareness of the National Policy on Child Protection, involving prefects in preventing child abuse, fostering their participation in decision-making processes related to child safety, and building a proactive community committed to safeguarding children. A total of 80 senior prefects from 10 schools participated in the first induction session, which set the foundation for a sustained effort to create a child-friendly environment within schools and beyond. By empowering student ambassadors to take an active role in ensuring child welfare, the programme seeks to nurture a responsible generation of young leaders dedicated to upholding the rights and well-being of children.



Strengthening Child Rights Advocacy: UN CRC Shadow Report

The CRPP programme played a pivotal role in the UN CRC Shadow Report under the SIDA project, supported by Save the Children (SCI). The report underscored FISD's unwavering commitment to ensuring accountability and amplifying the voices of children, especially those from marginalized communities. Key activities during this period included capacity-building workshops for over 30 CSO representatives, equipping them with the tools to monitor, report, and advocate effectively for children's rights. This inclusive representation encompassed disability communities, LGBTQ+ groups, mental health activists, and other vulnerable populations, ensuring diverse voices contributed to the process. Partner meetings facilitated collective input into the shadow report, while consultative sessions with 150 children gathered critical insights directly from those affected by rights violations. Advocacy tools, such as the Child Participation Ladder and the Nine Basic Requirements for Meaningful Participation, were introduced to child-led organizations.

The outcomes of these efforts were significant. Local CSOs demonstrated improved capacity to address children's rights violations and contribute evidence-based recommendations to national child rights discourse. Children actively engaged in discussions, with their perspectives helping to shape key findings in the shadow report. These achievements highlight the power of collaborative advocacy in advancing children's rights. As FISD looks ahead, we are committed to sustaining these efforts and expanding opportunities for meaningful child participation.



Kirana-Kadiroli: The Fighting Ray of Light Against Child Trafficking

In the fight against child trafficking, the Kirana-Kadiroli project is lighting the way toward a safer future. With the support of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime's Resilience Fund, this project is actively working to prevent child trafficking in Sri Lanka. Through a series of workshops conducted in Anuradhapura, Hambantota, and Kandy, the initiative focuses on empowering youth aged 15 to 18, aligning with the CRPP programme. These workshops were designed based on extensive research on global and local child trafficking trends, aiming to strengthen communities against vulnerabilities that could lead to exploitation. Beyond awareness-building, the initiative has significantly enhanced community outreach, assisting individuals in navigating official processes related to child protection, domestic violence, and drug addiction. Notably, the sessions focused on institutional support and critical thinking have encouraged communities to seek help when needed, fostering a more proactive approach to protection and resilience. As Kirana-Kadiroli continues its mission, it stands as a fighting ray of light, empowering Sri Lanka's youth and communities to stay vigilant, informed, and protected against the dangers of child trafficking. Together, we can build a safer future for Sri Lanka's children.



Transforming Communities, Ending Alcohol and Drug Harm

In 2024, notable shifts in community perceptions and social norms were achieved, particularly concerning issues such as substance abuse and alcoholism. Programmes were carried out at the village, district, and national levels, engaging CSOs, children's societies, and leadership groups across different age and gender groups. Drug prevention committees were strengthened and integrated into local governance structures, while collaborative initiatives with provincial correctional officials, prison authorities, and youth organizations enhanced community awareness, promoted proactive prevention measures, and fostered sustainable local mechanisms to address substance abuse and related challenges.

Community Consultation Programme

Community consultation programmes were conducted in the districts of Monaragala, Anuradhapura, and Hambantota, involving government leaders, community representatives, women, men, and children. The programmes were designed to introduce the organization and its projects to the communities, while also assessing local attitudes and observing prevailing social ideologies. As part of these consultations, the ADD programme component was also introduced, allowing participants to engage with strategies aimed at addressing alcohol and drug abuse and promoting community well-being. The consultations were successfully carried out in all three districts, with participation from a diverse range of community groups, including officials from funeral societies, Samurdhi societies, farmers' societies, and welfare societies. Overall, the programmes provided a platform for inclusive dialogue and facilitated a deeper understanding of community perspectives, laying the groundwork for future interventions.



School-based Alcohol and Drug Prevention Programmes

School-based alcohol and drug prevention programmes were implemented in the districts of Monaragala, Anuradhapura, and Hambantota, with the primary objective of reducing positive perceptions of drug use and substance abuse among school children. The programmes conducted in Monaragala were particularly effective, with 11 school-based drug prevention committees established within the district. Through these committees, existing positive expectations regarding drugs among students were identified, and children were empowered to make informed and responsible decisions. Active student participation was observed throughout the programmes, and positive feedback was received from the participants. Building on this success, the second phase of the programme is planned for 2025, aiming to further strengthen school-level prevention initiatives.



Children as Agents of Change: Empowering Villages through Children's Camp

A series of Children's Camps was organized to lay the foundation for establishing child clubs, fostering creativity, nurturing leadership skills, and providing opportunities for children to showcase their talents. As part of this initiative, 12 child camps were held across the three districts of Monaragala, Anuradhapura, and Hambantota, engaging 810 children. For many participants, this was a unique and enriching experience. Key achievements include the formation of child clubs in all 12 villages, the successful registration of these clubs with Divisional Secretariats through Child Rights Promotion Officers (CRPOs), and the enhancement of children's leadership skills and creative abilities. Participation exceeded expectations, with clubs now operating independently through regular meetings. This initiative has strengthened children's representation, enabling their active participation in divisional children's councils and community-level decision-making processes.



Partnership with the Sri Lanka Prison Department

In collaboration with the Sri Lanka Prison Department, rehabilitation-focused programmes were initiated at the Weerawila Open Work Camp in Hambantota, beginning in 2024. These programmes aimed to promote a drug-free lifestyle, healthy living practices, and improved mental health and well-being among young inmates recovering from heroin and other substance addictions. The interventions were designed to transform attitudes and behaviours through participatory and empathetic approaches. Special emphasis was placed on enhancing self-esteem, rebuilding trust and confidence, and equipping participants with the motivation and skills needed to sustain recovery and prevent relapse. This initiative marked an important step toward supporting rehabilitation and social reintegration through compassion and behavioural transformation.



Happy Family Camps

Toward the end of 2024, a series of eight Happy Family Camps was conducted across selected villages in the Anuradhapura and Monaragala districts, engaging over 150 families. These camps proved to be an effective approach for community mobilization, fostering family bonding, communication, and mutual understanding. The programmes brought together couples, parents, and children to participate in interactive and joyful activities designed to strengthen family relationships and promote emotional well-being. The camps also created a safe, friendly, and supportive space for families to share their experiences and reflect on the importance of unity, care, and happiness within the household.



Mobilizing Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

FISD placed a strong emphasis on mobilizing CBOs to strengthen alcohol and drug prevention initiatives at the grassroots level. Through divisional and community-level consultations, participatory tools such as SWOT analysis were utilized to assess each organization's strengths, weaknesses, and potential for long-term engagement. These discussions also served as a platform to build collective awareness on the social impact of substance abuse and to identify localized strategies for prevention. As a result, a strong network of active and empowered CBOs was established across 12 villages in the Anuradhapura, Hambantota, and Monaragala districts. These organizations now lead community-driven prevention initiatives, conduct awareness sessions, and collaborate closely with local authorities and social institutions. This approach not only enhanced coordination and accountability at the local level but also fostered a sense of shared responsibility and ownership within communities, ensuring the sustainability of alcohol and drug prevention efforts.



Youth Training Programmes

Recognizing the vital role of young people in driving social change, FISD prioritized youth engagement in alcohol and drug prevention initiatives. Two district-level training programmes were conducted in collaboration with PAFFREL Sri Lanka, reaching 85 youth participants from the Hambantota and Monaragala districts. These sessions focused on empowering participants to challenge positive social norms and misconceptions surrounding alcohol and drug use, while strengthening their leadership and collective action skills. The training also encouraged youth to take proactive roles in community-based prevention efforts, fostering a new generation of advocates committed to promoting healthy, drug-free lifestyles within their communities.



Establishing Community Local Action Groups

Community Local Action Groups (CLAGs) serve as FISD's primary boundary partners at the grassroots level, bringing together a diverse range of community leaders and stakeholders. Each group comprises child leaders, men's leaders, women's leaders, youth representatives, community-based organization leaders, and government officers working at the local level. These groups play a pivotal role in planning and implementing alcohol and drug prevention initiatives within their respective communities. Throughout 2024, FISD prioritized the establishment and strengthening of CLAGs to ensure inclusive community leadership and ownership of prevention efforts. By the end of the year, 12 strong and active Community Local Action Groups had been established across the working villages in the Monaragala, Hambantota, and Anuradhapura districts. These groups now function as community-driven platforms that foster collaboration, promote accountability, and sustain alcohol and drug prevention efforts at the local level.



Building Community Resilience and Disaster Preparedness in Monaragala

In 2024, the FISD successfully concluded a comprehensive humanitarian emergency response project in the Monaragala District, specifically targeting the villages of Kalugahawadiya, Anapallama, Kurugama, and Kendawinna. The initiative focused on strengthening local capacity for disaster preparedness and response through a community-centric approach. Key achievements included the establishment of four functional Village Disaster Management Committees and the delivery of essential First Aid training to over 100 women and children, equipping them with critical skills for emergencies. The project also addressed psychosocial needs by conducting sessions on promoting resilience, healthy coping mechanisms, and self-care, while specialized programs on indigenous knowledge and food security empowered women to better withstand climate-induced disasters. Furthermore, FISD developed a tailored capacity-building toolkit and formulated an internal humanitarian policy, enhancing both community and organizational readiness. This multi-faceted intervention, which was funded by Save the Children International (SCI), has significantly bolstered the resilience of vulnerable communities, ensuring they are better prepared to manage and respond to future disasters effectively.

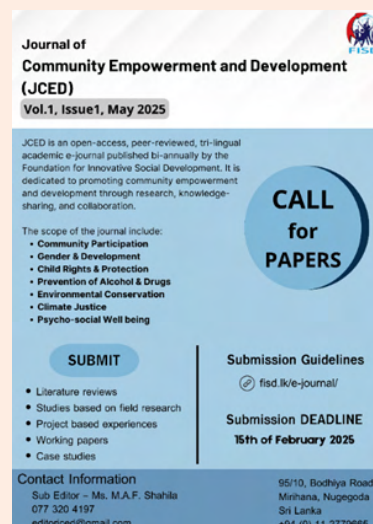


Introducing Our Knowledge Dissemination Hub: The Research and Training Unit (RTU)

We are excited to announce the launch of the Research and Training Unit (RTU) at the FISD! This new initiative will serve as a dynamic hub for sharing the knowledge of 14 years we have gathered through our community engagement efforts and serve as a platform for knowledge sharing through a variety of initiatives. The RTU will offer: Advanced Certificate Short Courses tailored for community-based workers involved in grassroots-level community engagement, the Journal of Community Empowerment and Development (JCED), a bi-annual, peer-reviewed, and tri-lingual journal, and International Conferences to promote dialogue and collaboration across the social development sector.

Journal of Community Empowerment and Development (JCED)

The launch of the JCED marks a significant step toward building capacity, advancing knowledge, and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue to support meaningful social change. The journal aims to encourage collaboration across disciplines, disseminate policy-relevant research, and facilitate critical analysis that contributes to evidence-based decision-making and inclusive development. The first volume of JCED will be launched in May 2025.



Advanced Certificate Short Courses

Advanced Certificate courses are specifically designed for community-based workers engaged at the grassroots. These courses cover crucial themes including, Prevention of Alcohol and Drugs, Child Rights and Protection, Community Empowerment and Development, Gender and Climate Justice, and Gender Transformative Approaches to Empowerment. These courses are taught by experienced university academics and field officers, offering practical, hands-on knowledge to enhance professional skills and drive change in communities. We are thrilled to embark on this new chapter at FISD and look forward to the learning, growth, and collaboration.

The image is a promotional graphic for Advanced Certificate Courses. It features a central image of hands joined together. Overlaid on this are several colored boxes representing different course topics: 'PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL & DRUGS' (blue), 'CHILD RIGHTS & CHILD PROTECTION' (orange), 'INTRODUCTION TO GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES TO EMPOWERMENT' (red), 'CLIMATE & GENDER JUSTICE' (green), and 'COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT & DEVELOPMENT' (yellow). A red banner at the top left says 'ADVANCED CERTIFICATE COURSES (SLQF Level 2) with Field exposure'. A yellow 'Register NOW' button is in the center, with a deadline of '10.01.2025'. Below the course topics, there is a section titled 'Expand your horizons WITH OUR HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE!!!' which lists details: Medium (Sinhala/Tamil), Duration (3 months starting from January), Minimum entry requirements (Sitting for O/L & 2 years experience in community work), Course Fee (Rs.20,000/-), Mode of Lectures (Online), and To whom (Undergraduates, young upcoming activists, youth leaders, policy makers & volunteers). At the bottom, there is contact information: phone number 077 320 4197, email shahila.asmiyas@fisd.lk, and website www.fisd.lk.

Donors, Partners, Networks, and Collaborative Linkages

FISD is dedicated to strengthening and collaborating with civil society actors both locally and globally. We extend special gratitude to our donors, partners, networks, and collaborators who have supported us in our various initiatives and helped advance our mission.

Highlights of our Various Partnerships:

FORUT Norway: As a non-profit and non-government development organization, FORUT focuses on the issue of alcohol and drugs as a central development and poverty problem. FISD has been supported by FORUT for all three thematic areas under its Campaign for Development and Solidarity. Norad, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, is FORUT's back donor, and all project plans are subjected to their approval and funding.

Save the Children International (SCI): Save the Children is an international, non-governmental organization that helps improve the lives of children worldwide. FISD has been supported by SCI with the overall goal of contributing to a strong civil society that demands and supports the fulfillment of children's rights-holding states to account for mobilizing and empowering children and their communities.

Embassy of France to Sri Lanka and the Maldives: The Embassy actively supports initiatives aimed at promoting dignified menstruation in Sri Lanka through the Collective Action Against Period Poverty (CAAPP) project, in partnership with the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka (FPASL). FPASL has provided technical assistance to thirteen local implementing partner organizations, including FISD, to ensure the successful and effective implementation of the CAAPP project.

UN Women Sri Lanka: UNW Sri Lanka is the UN entity promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. It partners with government and community organizations to strengthen women's leadership, protect rights, and address GBV. FISD was supported by UNW Sri Lanka in implementing the "Social Norms and Behaviour Change Intervention to Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" initiative under the "Pathways to Peace" project. The project aimed to address gender inequalities and empower women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sri Lanka: UNDP Sri Lanka is the UN's global development network, supporting in achievement of sustainable development, reducing inequalities, and strengthening resilience. FISD is funded by UNDP for "Strengthening the Engagement of Men and Boys to Prevent and Intervene SGBV Issues – Ensuring Justice for Victim-Survivors of SGBV in Sri Lanka." The project aimed to engage men and boys in preventing SGBV while promoting justice and support for victim-survivors across the country.

Jaffna Social Action Centre (JSAC): JSAC is a community-based organization dedicated to promoting social justice, human rights, and community development. FISD implemented the project “Engaging Men and Boys as Accountable Allies in the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence”, supported by JSAC with funding from UNFPA Sri Lanka. The project aims to engage men and boys as active partners in preventing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality in communities across Sri Lanka.

Highlights of our Various Networks:

MenEngage Alliance: A global network that creates space for members to come together in solidarity with those most targeted by gender injustices and patriarchal systems to collectively dismantle structural barriers to women’s rights and gender equality. FISD officially took over as the national secretariat for Men Engage Alliance Sri Lanka (MEASL) from 2016 to 2023. In 2020, FISD became the regional secretariat for MenEngage Alliance South Asia (MEASA) and contributed towards engaging 5 member countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) towards regional advocacy on gender justice until 2023. The program director of FISD has been appointed as the Global Co-Chair of the Men Engage Alliance since January 2023 to date.

NACG EVAC Sri Lanka: A National Action and Coordinating Group against Violence against Children (NACG) is established in each South Asian Country. The purpose is to strengthen inter-agency work, including work with governments and children’s groups to end violence against children. SAIEVAC, which is an apex body of SAARC, works closely with the civil society/local bodies in each country. When feasible, SAIEVAC provides support for the effectiveness of NACG. SAIEVAC works closely with NACG to mobilize local coordination, especially the civil society, for its programme purposes. National Action Coordinating Group to End Violence Against Children in Sri Lanka- FISD has held the Chair position of the network from 2014 to 2023, being elected consecutively every two years.

Family for Every Child: A Global alliance of locally grown civil society organizations, working with children and families of communities for the betterment of children and protecting their rights. FISD is a member of the working group of the Prevention of Sexual Violence.

Commonwealth 8.7 Network: A Civil Society Network of the Commonwealth Countries working to end Modern Slavery and restore Human Rights. Child Labour has been a special focus of its activities. FISD is a member of the Communication and capacity-building working group.

Girls Not Brides: A Global Network to End Child Marriage. FISD is a member of the Network, contributing as well as learning good practices about ending child marriage.

Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia): A regional network of child rights and human rights organizations working to uphold, promote, and mainstream child rights. FSD is a member of this Network.

Child Rights Core Group: A Network of CSOs working towards upholding the rights of Children in terms of preventing the impact on children of Alcohol consumption by parents. FSD is an active member of the network.

National Authority of Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA): The NATA is the pioneer government institution that was established by the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol Act, No. 27 of 2006, in Sri Lanka. The purpose of establishing NATA is to enact the legal aspects of alcohol and tobacco prevention in the country. FSD is a member of the NATA to implement the NATA Act.

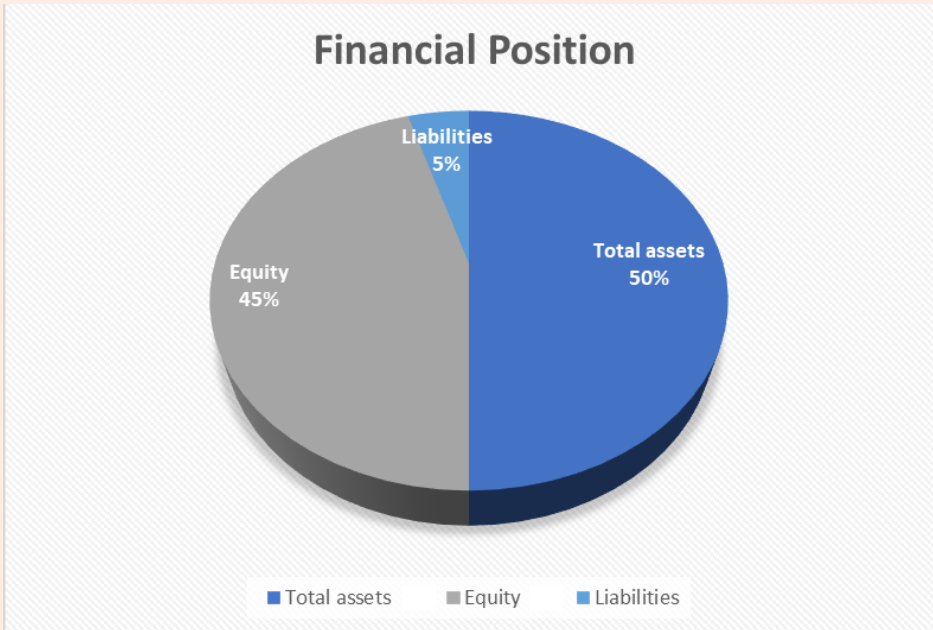
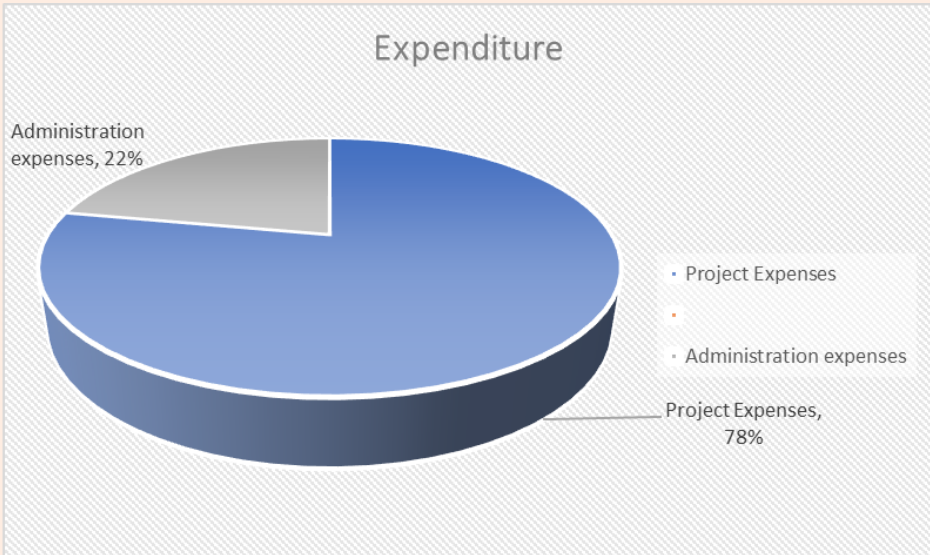
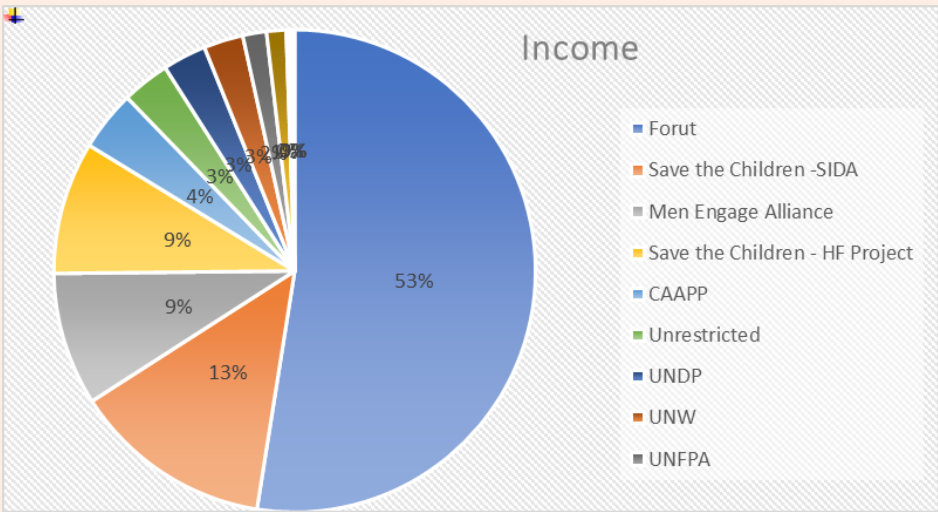
Movendi International: The largest independent global movement for development through alcohol prevention. They unite, strengthen, and empower civil society to address alcohol as a serious obstacle to development on personal, community, societal, and global levels. FSD is a member of Movendi International.

National Forum against Gender-based Violence in Sri Lanka: Since 2005, FSD, being a part of the National Forum, has been using a bottom-up and top-down approach to strengthening empowerment, prevention, and response against SGBV and a sustainable community empowerment model. The forum facilitates greater coordination, sharing of information/resources, and strengthening multi-sectoral responses to GBV in Sri Lanka.

Gender and Election Committee in Sri Lanka: This is an active network led by the Election Commission of Sri Lanka and the International Federation for Electoral Systems, consisting of activists, CSOs, and government entities to address structural barriers and promote women's political participation in Sri Lanka. FSD is a member of this committee.

Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation: FSD joined this coalition in 2023, following a grant received under the CAAPP project. This coalition brings together activists working to dismantle institutional, structural, interpersonal, and socially oppressive systems in place affecting menstruation, individuals who menstruate, and their ability to access basic inalienable human rights, resources to lead happy and healthy lives, and obtain dignity.

Financial Overview - 2024



Looking Ahead – 2025

Building on the strong momentum of 2024, FISD enters the new year with a strategic focus on deepening our impact and expanding our reach across all thematic areas. In 2025, we will intensify our efforts to strengthen and scale our core programmes - Gender and Development (GAD), Child Rights Protection and Promotion (CRPP), and Alcohol and Drug Prevention (ADD) - while ensuring their integration with our newer initiatives in mental health and well-being (MH).

Under the GAD programme, we will expand our work on engaging men and boys as allies in preventing SGBV, scaling these initiatives to new districts while strengthening existing networks. The CRPP programme will focus on institutionalizing children's participation mechanisms and expanding child protection programmes to new regions. ADD programme will intensify community-based prevention efforts and strengthen partnerships with rehabilitation centers to support substance abuse recovery.

The Research and Training Unit (RTU), launched in 2024, will become fully operational, offering its inaugural Advanced Certificate short courses and publishing the first volume of the Journal of Community Empowerment and Development (JCED). This will establish FISD as a leading knowledge hub in the development sector, facilitating critical dialogue and capacity building among grassroots workers and development practitioners across all our programme areas.

Through strategic advocacy and strengthened partnerships, we will leverage our positions in national and global networks to influence policy changes that protect children's rights, prevent SGBV, and promote community well-being. By fostering innovative collaborations and maintaining our community-centered approach, FISD remains dedicated to creating lasting social change and building a more just, healthy, and equitable Sri Lanka for all.

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