

COLLABORATION AND BETTER COMMUNICATION TOWARDS A HEALTHIER NATION

In 2014, the Scaling Up Nutrition People's Forum/ Civil Society Alliance (SUN PF/CSA) Sri Lanka was established. It is an independent organization with a governing Board of Directors, an Executive Council, and member organizations at the national level. At the subnational level, it has a district network consisting of 300 civil society organizations (CSOs) and a youth network composed of active youth leaders.

Through the years, the SUN PF/CSA Sri Lanka worked with the government, UN agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs), private sector, and civil service network towards eradicating all forms of malnutrition in the country.

In 2020, famous celebrities in Sri Lanka from different fields joined in communicating messages about nutrition to help influence lifestyle changes among the population.



Celebrity Niranjini Shanmugaraja shared key nutrition messages to the public

Four video clips were produced in three languages, which talked about the importance of a balanced and healthy diet; doing physical activities; consuming food with less sugar, salt, and fat; and eating more fruits and vegetables.

Together with the Nutrition Division of the Ministry of Health, the project was launched with the theme "Nutrition and Life, the time has come."

To promote nutrition-sensitive home gardening

and increase food security at the household level, a television commercial and a booklet were created. And the Nutrition Division also launched the project with the theme, "Our nutrition from our own garden."



Home gardening booklet

Leaflets to educate the public about proper nutrition during pregnancy and importance of breastfeeding were distributed.



Poster for World Breastfeeding Week

In partnership with the Nutrition Division, SUN PF/

CSA developed a desk calendar containing specific messages on health and nutrition for all months of the year. A body mass index (BMI) calculator was also designed for easy use in the community. SUN PF/CSA supported the Family Health Bureau of the Ministry of Health when a booklet discussing the guidelines for complementary feeding was developed for mothers.



Booklet developed on Complementary Feeding

Moreover, a high-level advocacy campaign regarding the importance of nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic was initiated in various online platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and the SUN CSA official website. Videos and posters related to the World Health Day, World No Tobacco Day, World Heart Day, World AIDS Day, World Diabetes Day and World Breastfeeding Week were shared to promote community awareness.

The leaflet is titled "Beat COVID 19 with a Nutritious Platter". It features a central illustration of a person in a mask and a platter of food. The text is organized into several sections:

- Control the risk of Non Communicable Diseases:**
 - Eat:** Healthy fats in moderation (Avocado, Fish, Peanut, Cashew nut, Sesame oil, Sunflower oil, Olive oil); At least 2 vegetables, 1 dark green leafy vegetable and 2 fruits per day; Parboiled/ Whole grain cereals and whole grain flour (Atta) instead of refined cereals and flour.
 - Reduce:** Saturated fat - Red meat (Beef, Pork), Full cream dairy products, Butter, Coconut oil, Palm oil; Sugar intake to less than 6 tsp/day (including Sugar-Sweetened Beverages (SSB) & Sweets); Salt intake to less than 1 tsp/day (5g per day).
 - Avoid:** Drinking alcohol and Smoking; Highly processed food and trans fat (Fried food, Pizza, Buns, Biscuits/cookies).
- Food Safety:** Handwashing with soap & water before and after food preparation; Clean raw food with running water; Wash fish & meat thoroughly before cooking; Clean utensils and surrounding area with soap/detergents.
- Eat at home:** Avoid "Ready to eat" food; Virus can remain on display surfaces for long periods.
- Maintain a healthy and active lifestyle:** An adult at least 7 hours of sleep; Engage in physical exercise; Even if you are suspected or confirmed of having COVID-19, breast feeding can be continued with adherence to safety measures.

Remember...

- Drinking Alcohol is not protective against COVID 19
- Long term alcohol consumption lowers immunity
- Smoking causes increased risk of SEVERE COVID 19, AND DEATH

Practice (DREAM):

- D** - Distancing
- RE** - Respiratory Etiquette
- A** - Aseptic techniques (Hand washing)
- M** - Mask

Contact information for SUN PF/CSA is provided at the bottom.

COVID-19 leaflet developed in English

The poster is for World Diabetes Day on 14th November. It states: "About 422 million people worldwide have diabetes and 1.6 million deaths are directly attributed to diabetes each year". It lists key messages:

- Change your life style towards healthy way
- Nutrition therapy is important in prevention and controlling type 2 diabetes mellitus
- Limit the consumption of sugar and sweets
- Reduce the amount of starchy food in your plate while increasing vegetables and protein rich food
- Limit the consumption of refined flour and refined flour products
- Avoid the consumption of saturated fat and fatty food
- When you feel thirsty, avoid having soft drinks or other sugary drinks and drink plenty of water throughout the day
- Choose healthy snacks such as fruits, yogurt, chick peas etc. instead of unhealthy fast food and junk food
- Maintain your body weight
- Exercise at least 30 minutes per day
- Avoid alcohol and smoking
- Always try to be happy and relaxed without stress

Information SUN CSA Sri Lanka shared for World Diabetes Day

The SUN PF/CSA has grown from 74 civil society organizations (CSOs) in 2014 to 308 in 2020. It has already reached 22 out of the 25 districts in Sri Lanka. In 2020, it spearheaded a training program on nutrition for its district-level CSO members, facilitated a workshop about report writing and research development, and conducted a youth nutrition capacity building event titled, "Young Leaders for Nutrition." The youth learned physical activities and how to cook healthy food. Youth leaders from five districts were identified as change agents to promote nutrition.



Participants of Young Leaders for Nutrition

Despite the challenges in conducting programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the absence of a contact person at the National Nutrition Secretariat, SUN PF/CSA has proven that collaborations can make the work easier. With that, maintaining strong relationships with partners definitely helped SUN PF/CSA raise community awareness towards proper nutrition.