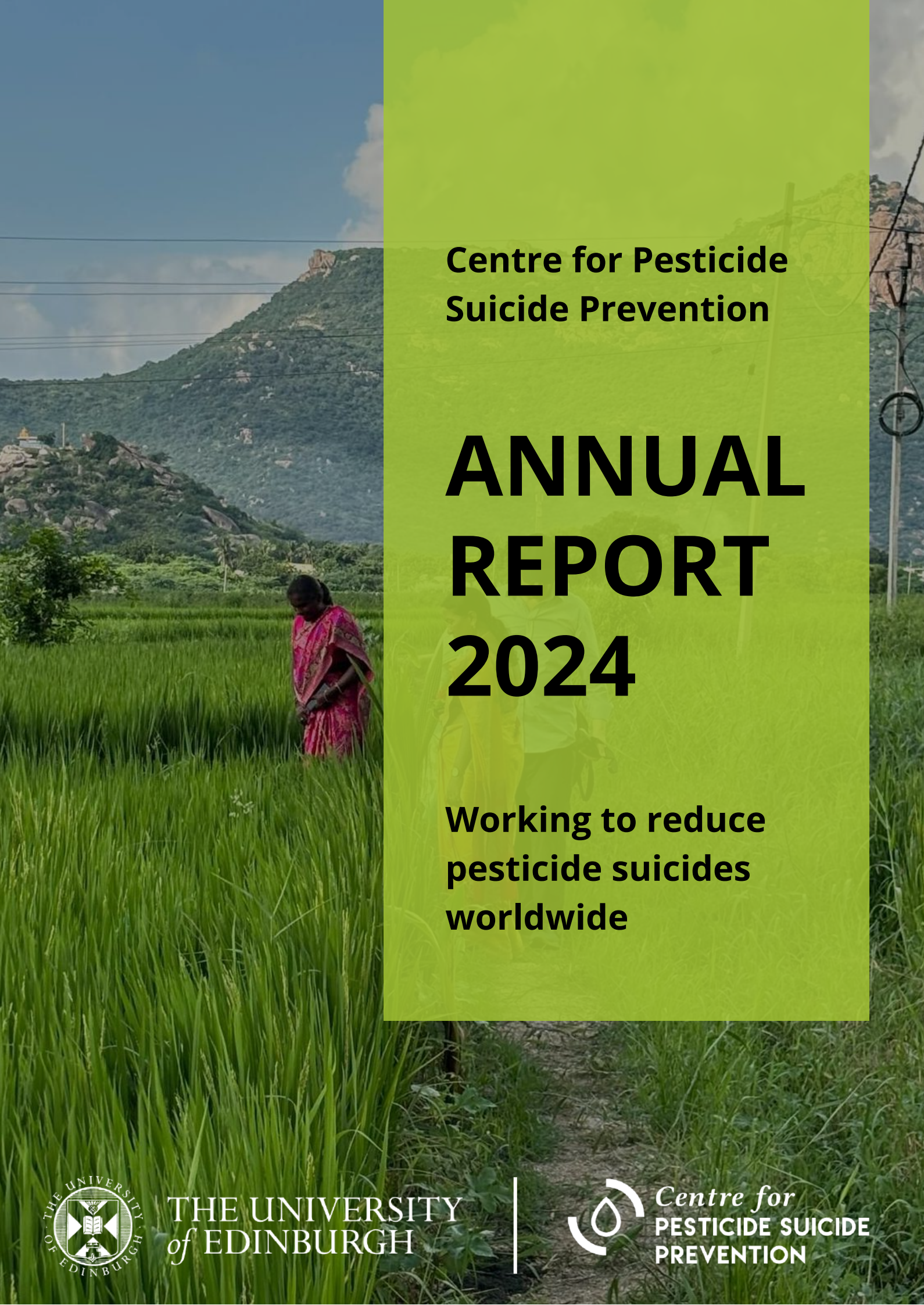




**Centre for Pesticide
Suicide Prevention**

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**Working to reduce
pesticide suicides
worldwide**



**THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH**



Centre for
**PESTICIDE SUICIDE
PREVENTION**



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FOREWORD

It is almost 30 years since I stood in the wards of a Sri Lankan hospital and saw my first pesticide self-poisoning patients. I still remember the despair I felt, trying and failing to save their lives.

Since then, I have been driven by the desire to stop these unnecessary deaths. Initially, my aim had been to find better ways to treat patients. However, after years of research, it became clear to me that this was not the solution. Other public health approaches were needed.

It was in the early 2000's, working with Sri Lanka's pesticide regulator, that I began to understand the extraordinary effect of pesticide bans. However, I realised that to truly make a difference, global action was required.

In response, the Centre for Pesticide Suicide Prevention (CPSP) was founded in 2017. Seven years on, we remain the only global organisation dedicated to preventing suicides from pesticide poisoning.

We have reached what I feel is a defining moment, with growing calls for international action on highly hazardous pesticides. I am confident that CPSP's unique position enables us to significantly support ongoing work in this area.

Over the past three years, our efforts are estimated to have saved between 15,000 and 30,000 lives. I am delighted that we have secured renewed funding to support us over the next two years. This will not only allow us to continue our existing work, but also extend our initiatives to new regions and countries.

I look forward to working closely with colleagues, and international collaborators, to bring about the change we need to save lives.



Prof. Michael Eddleston

DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR PESTICIDE
SUICIDE PREVENTION (CPSP)



Over the past
three years,
our efforts are
estimated to
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between
15,000 and
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THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Pesticide self-poisoning is a major global health problem and one of the most common methods of suicide worldwide. The primary cause is easy access to highly toxic pesticides, particularly in low and middle-income countries.



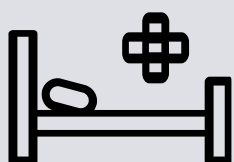
20% global suicides
are a result of pesticide self-poisoning.



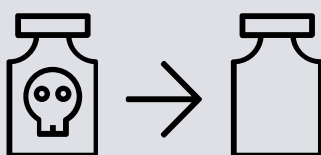
14 million deaths
since the Green Revolution in the 1960s.



Rural communities
in low and middle-income countries are most at risk.



Low intent to die
It is often an act of self-harm, with low intent to die. Most survivors do not reattempt.



Safer alternatives
are available and deadly pesticides can be removed with no adverse impact on agriculture.



Pesticide bans
have been highly effective in preventing deaths (e.g. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Korea).

HOW WE DRIVE CHANGE

PESTICIDE DEATHS



We work in countries where pesticide suicide is a recognised problem

WHICH PESTICIDE?



We conduct research to identify the pesticides responsible for deaths

PESTICIDE REGULATORS



We support the work of national pesticide regulators

REGULATION (BANS)



We support regulatory action to ban or phase out lethal pesticides

EFFECT ON HEALTH & AGRICULTURE



We measure the impact of bans on suicide rates and crop production

2024 AT A GLANCE



15,000 - 30,000
estimated lives saved
over the last three years



Funding secured to
support CPSP over
the next two years



Working in **12**
countries worldwide



11 publications in
peer-reviewed
academic journals



14 film screenings of 'Her Name Was Sita', held
across six countries worldwide



Exploring natural farming practices in India for new
CPSP documentary film



Bringing our international team together in Scotland
for a focused three-day retreat



Supporting the delivery of a regional workshop in
West Africa to expand our work in the region



Sharing our work at the International Plant
Protection Symposium in Kathmandu, Nepal



Engaging with policymakers and farming
communities in Andhra Pradesh, India

CPSP TEAM



Elaine Acosta
Consultant
(Latin America)



Mounika Bhukya
Project & Policy Officer



Shweta Dabholkar
Project & Policy Officer



Mark Davis
Director of Agriculture &
Regulatory Outreach



Prof Michael Eddleston
Director



Dr Rakesh Ghimire
Consultant (Nepal)



Beatrice Grenier
Consultant
(Western Africa)



Milan Ivic
Technical Specialist



Bhawesh Jha
Project & Policy Officer



Karen Main
Centre Manager
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Dr Francesca Mancini
Consultant (Asia)



Dr Gamini Manuweera
Consultant
(Regulatory Outreach)



Dr Melissa Pearson
Research Fellow



Ellie Roger
Communication &
Development Officer



Dhannya V Sasi
Project & Policy Officer



Dr Lisa Schölin
Research Fellow



Dr Dilli Ram Sharma
Consultant (Nepal)



Heshani Sothiraj
Eddleston
Filmmaker



Odett Toth
Research Coordinator



Dr Leah Utyasheva
Policy Director



Gemma Watson
Centre Manager

Collaborators



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University of Bristol



Griffins Ochieng
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CEJAD



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University of Cape Town



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Saravanakumar
University of West Indies



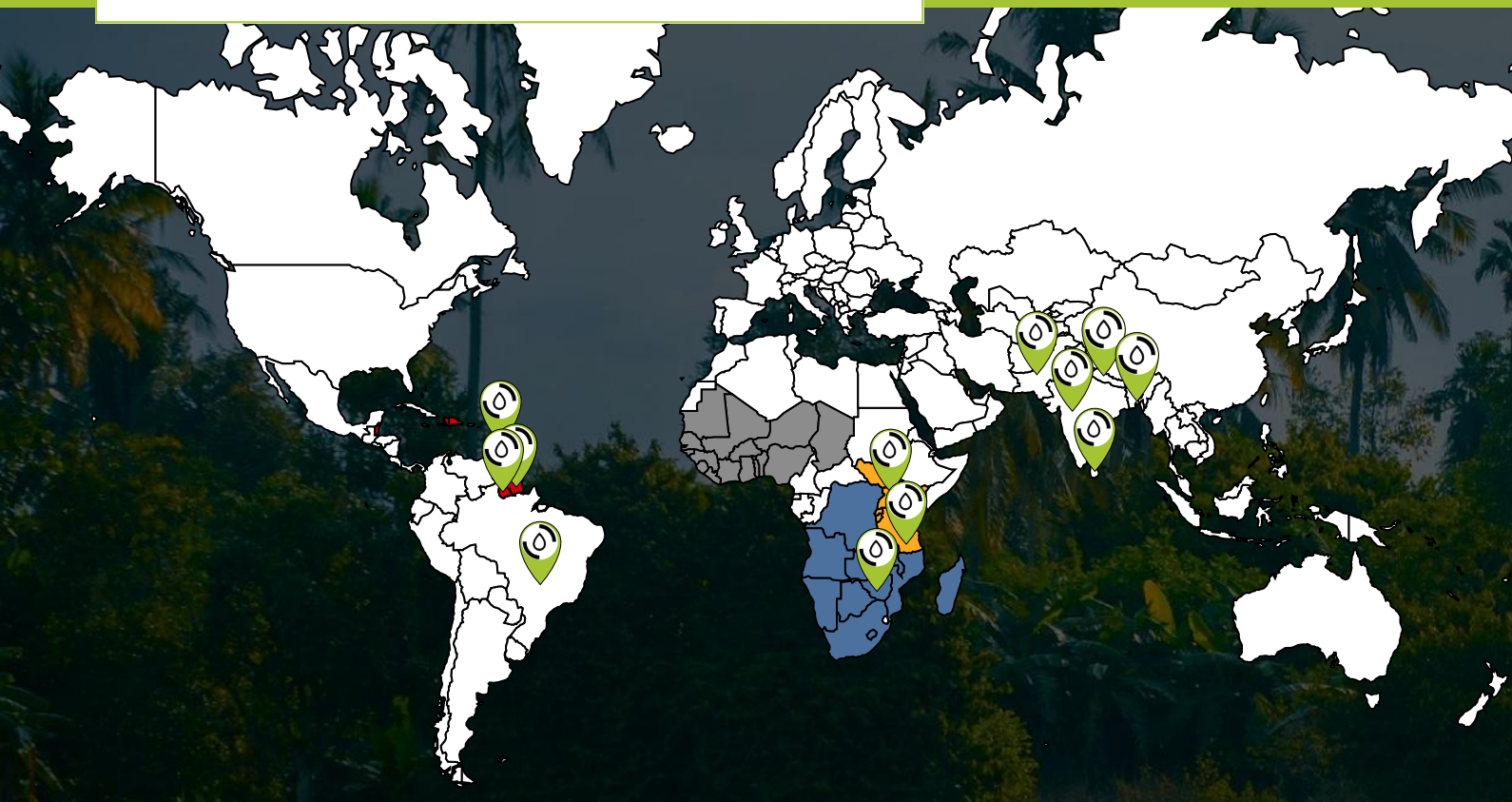
Dr Charles Ssemugabo
Makerere University
School of Public Health



Dr Manjula
Weerasinghe
Rajarata University



OUR GLOBAL REACH



COUNTRY WORK



- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Brazil
- Guyana
- India
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka
- Suriname
- Uganda
- Tanzania
- Zimbabwe

REGIONAL WORK

GROUPINGS OF REGULATORS

-  East African Community (EAC)
-  West African Pesticides Registration Committee (WAPRC)
-  Southern African Pesticide Regulators Forum (SAPReF)
-  Coordinating Group of Pesticide Control Boards of the Caribbean (CGPC)

OTHER REGIONAL COLLABORATORS

- Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD) - work in southern and east Africa regions
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
- South Asian Clinical Toxicology Research Collaboration (SACTRC)
- The University of the West Indies (UWI) - work in the Caribbean region
- University of Cape Town (UCT) - evaluating surveillance systems & supporting regulation across Africa

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATORS

- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN-UK)
- University of Bristol - global health and epidemiological research
- National Taiwan University - statistical analysis



COUNTRY WORK - ASIA

BANGLADESH

CPSP facilitated a key partnership between the National Poison Centre, Bangladesh (NPCB), and FAO Bangladesh, securing essential funding from FAO to support the centre's sustainability. This funding allows NPCB to deliver core activities, including advancing the management of poisoning cases, providing training for healthcare workers, and implementing community awareness programmes.



INDIA

Our India-based team of Project and Policy Officers has been primarily focused on developing new state-level initiatives to improve data collection and identify the pesticides involved in poisoning cases. Simultaneously, the team continues to foster collaborations aimed at strengthening policy engagement at the national level.



Tamil Nadu - data collection

We are developing a new collaboration with the Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore Medical Institute, which will enable us start collecting data from hospitals in Tamil Nadu. Starting next year, this project will focus on gathering data on all poisoning cases.

Image: Project & Policy Officer Mounika Bhukya alongside the previous director of CMC Vellore, Prof J.V Peter

Chhattisgarh - data collection

Last year, we established a collaboration with the Government of Chhattisgarh, enabling us to initiate data collection within the state. This year, we received our first set of forensic data, which we hope will provide crucial insights into the specific pesticides involved in poisoning cases and trends over time.

Andhra Pradesh - policy engagement

Through our filmmaking initiatives (see page 16), we have established strong connections with the Andhra Pradesh state government, particularly with key policymakers and officials driving the government-led natural farming program.

COUNTRY WORK - ASIA

NEPAL

Supporting new regulation

The Government of Nepal has announced new bans on two highly hazardous pesticides. Key findings from CPSP's recent studies were presented to the Pesticide Board ahead of their latest decision.

Monitoring and data collection

We continue to monitor the effects of Nepal's 2019 pesticide bans, assessing their impact on health outcomes. Our second Nepal project, focused on evaluating the bans on aluminium phosphide 3-gram tablets and dichlorvos, recently concluded. Findings revealed a significant reduction in fatalities related to dichlorvos. However, outcomes for aluminium phosphide were less clear, highlighting the need for further assessment of how the ban was implemented.

Our third project in Nepal is now underway. This will continue the monitoring of pesticide poisoning cases, with a more focused analysis of the ongoing impact of aluminium phosphide. Additionally, we have partnered with Pesticide Action Network (PAN) UK to support the implementation of data collection through their innovative T-MAPP mobile app.

International Plant Protection Symposium



In April, CPSP supported a two-day international symposium in Kathmandu, organised by the Plant Protection Society and the Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Centre. The event brought together over 200 participants and featured three presentations focused on pesticide self-poisoning, in addition to a CPSP film screening.



Edinburgh training to enhance pesticide detection

In early 2024, CPSP facilitated a seven-week placement at the University of Edinburgh for Chief Inspector Sudan Kumar Bista from the Nepal Police Forensic Science Laboratory.

Since 2018, CPSP has partnered with the police laboratory to identify problematic pesticides that are used for self-poisoning in Nepal.

The police laboratory had previously used Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) to analyse samples. However, in recent years, it had encountered difficulties detecting certain pesticides. It therefore planned to enhance its capabilities by introducing more advanced technologies, reaching out to CPSP to see if training could be provided.

The placement, hosted by the University's Clinical Research Facility Mass Spectrometry Core, provided training on Liquid Chromatography Tandem Mass Spectrometry. This advanced technology detects poisons and drugs in biological samples that are less easily detected by GC-MS technology.

It is hoped that this training will improve the identification of lethal pesticides used for self-poisoning in the country, ultimately enabling future bans on dangerous pesticides.

COUNTRY WORK - ASIA

PAKISTAN

CPSP is working closely with CABI Pakistan to support and strengthen government efforts to regulate dangerous pesticides, focusing on implementing bans on pesticides classified as WHO Hazard Class I, initially proposed by the government in 2019.

This has included several meetings with the Director General (DG) of the Plant Protection Department to raise awareness around pesticide self-poisoning.

Together, CPSP and CABI are providing critical support by sharing information on existing bans and promoting low-risk alternatives, including training on integrated pest management (IPM) practices. We are also assisting in revising training for pesticide vendors, shifting the emphasis from safe pesticide use to phasing out highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs). A new training manual reflecting this updated focus is currently in development.



Meeting with DG Plant Protection Department, November 2024. Photo courtesy of CABI.

Alongside our collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, we are working with WHO Pakistan and the Ministry of Health to enhance strategies for pesticide suicide prevention. Additionally, in partnership with the University of Multan, we conducted a survey of 2,000 farmers last year. The data has provided important evidence to support the need to ban WHO Hazard Class I pesticides.



Image credit: Heshani Sothiraj Eddleston

SRI LANKA

We support several projects in Sri Lanka, aimed at improving surveillance systems for pesticide poisoning. In May, CPSP reactivated a suicide death surveillance system, originally developed for a past research project, which systematically identifies suicides reported across six districts, using data from hospitals, police stations, and coroners. We are also supporting a community-based initiative to study unintentional acute pesticide poisoning among pesticide sprayers, with data collected using PAN UK's T-MAPP mobile app.

FUTURE PLANS

We are currently developing project proposals for new work in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

COUNTRY WORK - AFRICA

Our initiatives in Southern and Eastern Africa are strengthened through collaborations with the Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD), which is leading our projects in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, and Makerere University in Uganda.

TANZANIA

We are working with the Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticide Authority to conduct a review of pesticide poisoning cases. This is a retrospective study (2017 - 2024) of the causes, outcomes, and hospital treatment methods for all cases. Data collection began in August and was completed in October. A meeting of the Technical Working Group was convened in December to discuss initial findings and next steps for the project.



Meeting of the Tanzania Technical Working Group



Photo by Random Institute on Pexels

UGANDA

CPSP continues to collaborate with Makerere University School of Public Health to identify pesticides used for self-poisoning. The analysis is now complete, revealing that 13 pesticides — 8 of which are classified as HHPs — are responsible for the majority of poisoning incidents and deaths. The team is currently finalizing the project's outputs, including a comprehensive report, policy brief, and plans for a dissemination workshop.

ZIMBABWE

In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, we have completed a study on pesticide poisoning cases across the country. Following the training of research assistants, the study collected retrospective data on all reported poisoning cases, examining causes, outcomes, and treatment methods used in hospitals. In September, the project's Technical Working Group convened to review the findings and begin drafting the final report. A national stakeholders workshop has been planned for January 2025.



Meeting of the Zimbabwe Technical Working Group

FUTURE PLANS

We are currently developing project proposals for new work in Ethiopia and Morocco. Through our regional work (see page 12), we are also exploring potential future collaborations with countries in Southern, East, and West Africa.

COUNTRY WORK - AMERICAS

We continue to work closely with the PAN American Health Organization (PAHO), WHO and FAO to support pesticide suicide prevention efforts across the Americas. Our work has now expanded beyond the Caribbean, with a new consultant joining the team to advance initiatives in Latin American countries. This had led to consultations with ten new countries, paving the way for potential future projects.

BARBADOS

In partnership with the national pesticide regulator, CPSP has contributed to developing a roadmap to address HHPs in Barbados. The initial phase, involving a screening of the registered pesticide list to identify HHPs, is currently underway. Upon completion, this will be presented to government ministers to guide subsequent actions and policy decisions.



Photo by Justin Gibbs on Unsplash

BRAZIL

We are collaborating closely with ANVISA – the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency. In August, we co-hosted a webinar to advance this partnership, followed by a meeting in October to define key project activities. These initiatives include enhancing the database to correlate poisoning incidents with specific pesticides, as well as assessing the impact of recent bans and restrictions on pesticide poisoning cases and suicide.



Photo by Jefferson Lucena on Pexels

GUYANA

CPSP is supporting the work of both pesticide regulators and health officials to address pesticide-related suicides. In March, a field visit was conducted to the main agriculture research institutes to assess the feasibility of removing paraquat. Additionally, we are working with the Ministry of Health to enhance reporting on pesticide suicide, including the specific pesticides involved in poisoning cases.



CPSP consultant (far right) on a site visit to Guyana

SURINAME

CPSP is collaborating with the Pesticide Control Board to address pesticide safety concerns. Following research by PAHO/WHO that identified paraquat as a high-risk pesticide in the country, CPSP is supporting the Board in assessing available alternatives to enable regulatory action. Additionally, CPSP has provided training for officials on screening registered pesticide lists to identify highly hazardous pesticides.



Meeting with the Pesticide Control Board of Suriname



REGIONAL WORK

Participating in a workshop for West African pesticide regulators

REGIONAL GROUPINGS OF PESTICIDE REGULATORS

We are continuing to develop our work with regional groupings of pesticide regulators in Africa, and the Caribbean. Our work in Southern and East Africa is supported by our delivery partner, the Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD).



Southern African Pesticide Regulators' Forum (SAPReF)

CEJAD have taken a lead role in Southern Africa, supporting SAPReF to prepare a regional HHP strategy. In July, the strategy was adopted by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Plant Protection Technical Committee during their annual meeting. The next stage is the official adoption and approval of the strategy by the relevant SADC Sectoral Council of Ministers.



East African Commission (EAC)

CEJAD has been supporting EAC to develop a regional strategy on HHPs. In August, they participated in a workshop to finalize the strategy and provide training on the FAO Pesticides Registration Toolkit. Following the meeting, partner states began a process of national validation for the strategy, to enable its adoption by the EAC Council of Ministers in 2025.



West African Pesticides Registration Committee (WAPRC)

Building on our existing collaboration with WAPRC, in June we supported a regional workshop on compliance and enforcement of pesticide regulation in West Africa. Held in Cape Verde, the event brought together representatives from 16 West African countries, with CPSP delivering a number of sessions. Follow-up meetings have since been conducted with individual countries, including Ghana and Cape Verde, to discuss potential future collaborations.



Coordinating Group for the Pesticide Control Boards of the Caribbean (CGPC)

We continue to collaborate with CGPC while expanding our partnerships with individual countries (see p11). Our regional efforts are further bolstered by our strong collaborations with PAHO and with the University of the West Indies, which has recently completed a situational analysis of pesticide poisoning in Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and Barbados.

SPECIAL INTEREST PROJECTS

IDENTIFYING ALTERNATIVES



CPSP is helping to identify alternatives to acutely toxic pesticides. We are supporting PAN UK to research and publish data to demonstrate the viability of replacing key pesticides.

A review of alternatives to metal phosphide rodenticides was published in June, highlighting a range of effective methods for managing rodent pests in urban and domestic settings. This publication follows last year's study on alternatives to paraquat. A further paper on organophosphorus insecticides is expected in 2025.

RESEARCHER WELL-BEING



We have supported a study to explore the impacts of prolonged exposure to suicide and self-harm on research staff. This stems from long-term projects in Sri Lanka, which have been driven by data collectors, exposing them to this sensitive subject matter over an extended period of time.

The study aimed to understand the psychological and emotional impact on researchers, identifying interventions to support their well-being. The results are expected in early 2025 and should have relevance for suicide researchers globally.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON HHPS



We are continuing to support international efforts to address highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs), including implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals and the establishment of a Global Alliance on HHPs.

We work closely with our international collaborators, including United Nations agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), and UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

SPECIAL INTEREST PROJECTS

HUMAN RIGHTS

In May, we published our paper on human rights, *“Stop blaming the farmer: Dispelling the myths of ‘misuse’ and ‘safe’ use of pesticides to protect health and human rights”*.

Published in the Journal of Human Rights, the paper sets out why governments and industry must stop blaming farmers for ‘misuse’ of pesticides and adopt a human rights-based approach to pesticide management.

Instances of pesticide poisoning – whether accidental or intentional – are often blamed on the user. The pesticide industry claims that their products are ‘safe’, if used correctly. If someone is poisoned, it is therefore attributed to incorrect use.

However, there are many factors that make it difficult for people living in low and middle-income countries (LMIC) to protect themselves from the harms of pesticides. This includes cultural and social norms, lack of other employment opportunities, inequalities in workplaces, and gender inequality. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is not always available, affordable, or practical in hot and humid conditions. Labels on pesticide bottles cannot always be understood by the user.

The paper argues that human rights, including the rights to life, health, clean water and food, safe working conditions, and a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, are violated by access and exposure to harmful pesticides.

We are actively working to integrate this human rights-based approach across all our projects. Additionally, we are developing a follow-up paper that explores pesticide management legislation and regulations and how they can be more effectively tailored to the needs and challenges of LMIC.



What is a human rights-based approach?

We advocate a human rights-based approach to empower farm workers and rural communities and hold governments and industry to account.

This includes:

- 1 A phase-out of the concept of **pesticide ‘misuse’** in policy, research, and legislation.
- 2 Recognition that some pesticides are **too toxic** to be used by small-holder farmers in LMIC.
- 3 Measures to prevent **self-poisoning and suicide**, recognising that deaths are due to the availability of highly toxic pesticides.
- 4 **Pesticide manufacturers** taking responsibility for the impact of their products on health and the environment.
- 5 **Mainstreaming human rights** into pesticide policies and regulations, including the FAO / WHO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management.



EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

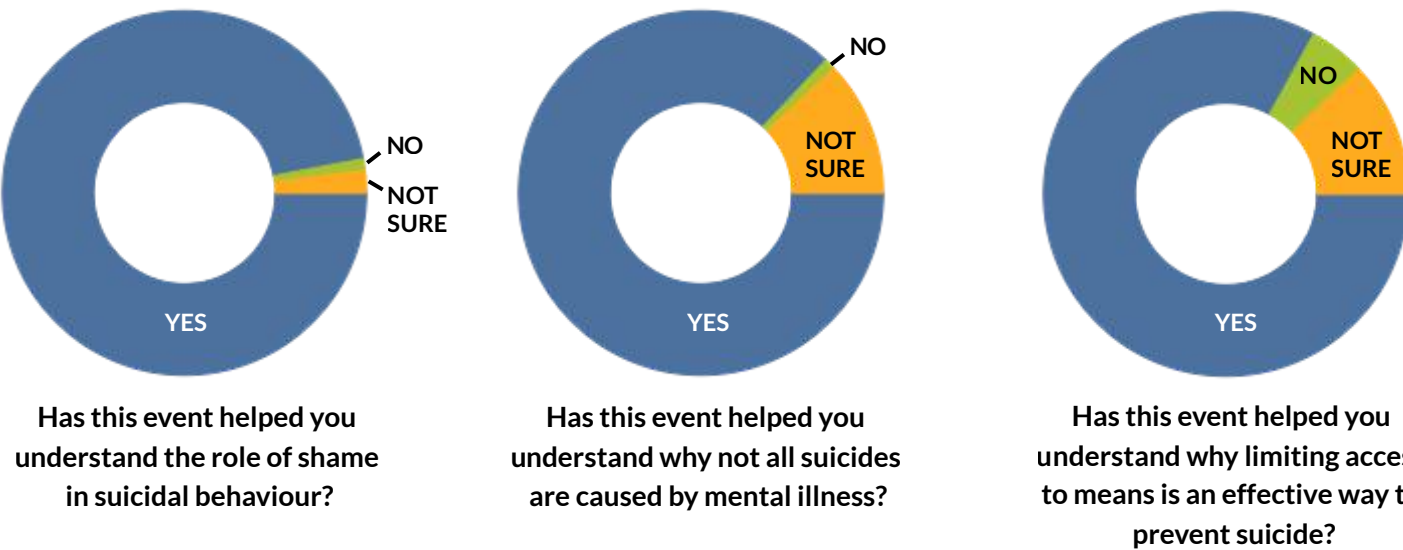
FILM SCREENINGS

Our 2023 film, *Her Name Was Sita*, has been shared through international public screenings, exploring the concept of a 'virtuous woman' and how shame and honour can lead to self-harm and suicide in Nepal.

The film explores why, in low and middle-income countries particularly, suicide is not always a mental health problem. Instead, it is a layered issue that can overlap with mental distress caused by stressful situations, conflict, and grief.



Feedback from the screenings has been overwhelmingly positive, with many audience members expressing that the film deepened their understanding of why means restriction is an effective strategy for suicide prevention.



EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

FILMMAKING

This year, our filmmaking efforts have centred on India, focusing on initiatives to promote more sustainable farming practices and reduce reliance on chemical pesticides.

In January, our filmmaker embarked on a pre-production trip, meeting with farmers, researchers, and government officials in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to learn about a government-led natural farming initiative. Filming for the documentary then took place in October.

The documentary will explore natural farming, examining its feasibility on large-scale farms and the challenges faced by farmers and communities transitioning from chemical farming to natural methods. It will seek to highlight and share the perspectives of local communities.

The final film is set for release next year.



An introduction to the 9 principles of natural farming



Our filmmaker conducting an on-camera interview

NEW FILM RELEASES



What is Chemical Free Farming?

This short animation offers an overview of chemical free farming in India, highlighting its benefits, the steps involved, and how farmers can successfully make the transition to more sustainable practices. It is designed to support farmers in India and is available in both English and Telugu.

The animation is available on our YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/@pesticidesuicideprevention

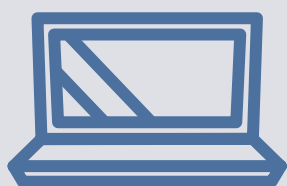
EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNICATIONS

CPSP's work is regularly promoted and shared across multiple communication channels, expanding our reach and amplifying our impact.

1.6k

Monthly page
views on the
CPSP website



21%

Increase in
followers across
all social media
platforms



9.2k

Video views on
YouTube, 126%
more than 2023



9

Blogs & articles
published on CPSP
& external sites



SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS



>20

international
events attended



*Presenting at the World Conference on Injury
Prevention and Safety Promotion*

PUBLICATIONS



Research Papers

11 peer-reviewed publications

Hawton, K, Knipe, D, Pirkis, J. Restriction of access to means used for suicide. *The Lancet Public Health*. 2024; 9 (10), e796-801. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(24\)00157-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(24)00157-9)

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Verma VR, Lamb T, Sattar MA, Ghose A, Eddleston M. Lessons from the field: compound-specific management in acute pesticide poisoning. *Transactions of The Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*. 2024; 118 (6), 347-349, <https://doi.org/10.1093/trstmh/trae003>

Stuart AM, Jacob J, Awoniyi AM, Costa F, Bosma L, Meheretu Y, Htwe NM, Williamson S, Eddleston M, Delecky A, Willis S. Alternative domestic rodent pest management approaches to address the hazardous use of metal phosphides in low- and middle-income countries. *Journal of Pest Science*. 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10340-024-01825-7>

All our latest publications can be found on the CPSP website www.centrepssp.org/category/publications.

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