



South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)
SAARC Apex Body
“In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC”

Increased Accountability of ASEAN and SAARC to the Realisation of Children’s Right to Protection

Regional Children’s Consultation

On

The SAARC Regional Strategy on Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation
(Including Online Safety)

12th-14th December, 2016

Sri Lanka, Colombo



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 SAIEVAC MECHANISM

Child participation is an integral part of South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) from its inception. SAIEVAC strongly believes that all children's input and involvement are valuable to making any campaign against Violence Against Children successful and actively encourages children participation in every area and at every level. The engagement and participation of children in SAIEVAC is an essential precondition to ensure children's perspectives on violence are taken into consideration by policy decision makers in systems and institutions that could affect their development.

The overall objective of SAIEVAC is "Protection of children from all forms of violence, in all settings, is increased through children's regular participation, engagement and monitoring in processes that prevent, protect, address and end all forms of violence against children at local, national and regional levels in the countries in South Asia.

SAIEVAC's efforts are unique through its role as a regional initiative led by the governments of South Asia in partnership with children themselves, civil society organizations, INGOs and UN agencies. Through use of participatory, inclusive approaches that enable partners to strengthen both child protection activities and networks (including capacity development and exchange of best practices and lessons learned) and in support of a systems building approach based upon awareness creation, prevention and response. Recognized globally, it has been cited as "an example of best practices and partnerships and demonstrates a consolidated effort of various stakeholders – including governments – to work together and find solution to end violence against children in South Asia."

1.2 THE CSO PROJECT

Given the central role that CSO actors play in advocating for children's rights, Plan ARO has been cooperating closely with national level child rights based CSO coalitions in order to support joint advocacy efforts, particularly around monitoring and periodic alternative reporting under the UNCRC framework. To this end, Plan ARO organised a number of capacity building trainings as part of a four-year regional programme that aimed to strengthen civil society engagement in monitoring children's rights implementation in Asia.

In 2015, the focus of this regional initiative was shifted towards advocacy by regional CSO coalitions towards ASEAN and SAARC for increased accountability to the realization of children's right to protection. The Project is implemented with the financial support received from NORAD, SIDA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Framework Agreement of Finland. The Project transpires at the regional level and is jointly implemented by Plan ARO, Child Right Coalition Asia (CRC Asia) and National Action and Coordination Groups against Violence against Children (NACGs), two regional civil society coalitions operating respectively in ASEAN and SAARC sub regions.

In order to further increase the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts, CSO partners to the Project, namely CRC Asia and NACGs have identified the need for developing their existing capacities and skills related to advocacy for child rights, with a specific focus on CSA/CSEC and child participation. GD Pakistan on behalf of NACG Pakistan has been entrusted with the regional implementation of this CSO project at SAARC level. Given the central role that CSO actors play in advocating for children's rights, Plan ARO has been cooperating closely with national level child rights based CSO coalitions in order to support joint advocacy efforts, particularly around monitoring and periodic alternative reporting under the UNCRC framework. To this end, Plan ARO organised a number of capacity building trainings as part of a four year regional programme that aimed to strengthen civil society engagement in monitoring children's rights implementation in Asia.

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In order to further increase the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts, CSO partners to the Project, namely CRC Asia and NACGs, have identified the need for developing their existing capacities and skills related to advocacy with a specific focus on countering CSA/CSEC, one of SAIEVAC five priority areas. Group Development Pakistan, on behalf of NACG Pakistan and as the focal point for all NACGs under this project, has been entrusted with the project implementation at SAARC level.

1.3 SAIEVAC AND CSO PROJECT COLLABORATION:

A memorandum of understanding was signed between SRS and all NACGs in July 2015 and in December 2015, a workshop was conducted to design a joint advocacy and lobbying strategy to counter CSA CSEC. After further discussions with SRS and following the 4th SAIEVAC Ministerial Meeting recommendations, it was decided that the strategy developed by NACG would be mainstreamed/integrated into overall SAIEVAC advocacy efforts through developing a participatory, joint strategic document to counter Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse including in its online manifestations.

Among the different areas covered under the CSO Project, the NACGs in December 2015 identified the need to have a training programme on safe, meaningful and inclusive child participation that would also provide better understanding and impetus to the continuing efforts to establish SAIEVAC Child Participation Forums.

Taking this into account, a training on child participation for the NACG Representation of all the SAARC Member States took place on 8-10th December 2016 and the SRS was also represented.

As a result of/ to complement the training mentioned above, Group Development Pakistan (GD Pakistan), on behalf of National Action Coordination Group (NACG) Pakistan and SAIEVAC organised a children 's consultation on SAARC regional strategy on child sexual abuse and exploitation including online safety, from **12th-14th December 2016 in Colombo, Sri Lanka**. The consultation brought together 17 child participants from the SAARC countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri-Lanka. Those child participants were selected by their peers largely of by various governments/NGOs and were genuine representatives of their respective countries. These children were joined by the adult NACG/ASEAN members from the previous workshop, who served as facilitators during the sessions.

This consultation combined activity 1.2 (Develop an advocacy strategy and action plan) and activity 2.3 (Capacity development activities) of the NACG section of the LFA2 for the intervention titled: **"Increased accountability of ASEAN and SAARC to children's rights to protection"**. Those two activities are part of a synergic effort between NACGs to **strengthen the functionality and structure of NACGs for effective regional advocacy relating to child protection** (specific objective 2) so that **NACGs can enhance their capacity** to advocate with SAIEVAC to counteract CSA/CSEC in SAARC (result 2). Additionally, the emphasis was to empower the children to have meaningful and holistic participation in the process and be the ones not only designing but implementing the deliverables at the end of the workshop.

The ECPAT International supported the participation of the Director General, SRS including the finalisation of the Report.

The program was designed with the following objectives, outcomes, and outputs in mind:

2. OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED OUTCOMES, EXPECTED OUTPUTS

2.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

Develop a Regional Strategy to Counter Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in SAARC countries

2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Promote child participation in advocating against CSEA in SAARC countries
2. Improve capacities of NACGs on child participation
3. Promote cross learning between SAARC and ASEAN countries with regard to child participation in advocating against CSEA

2.3 EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

1. 17 children from SAARC countries are able to influence SAIEVAC strategy with regard to CSEA and online violence
2. A model of child participation on advocating against CSEA is available for capitalization
3. NACG members practice and reinforce acquired skills on child participation and gender equality

2.4 EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

1. Regional strategy against CSEA is developed by Children from SAARC
2. A model of child participation on advocating against CSEA is documented

3. AGENDA

CHILD CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPING A SAIEVAC STRATEGY TO COUNTER CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION COLOMBO 12-14TH DECEMBER 2016 CONSULTATION AGENDA			
Purpose of the consultation	Overall objective: Develop a Regional Strategy to Counter Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in SAARC countries Specific objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote child participation in advocating against CSEA in SAARC countries - Improve capacities of NACGs on child participation - Promote cross learning between SAARC and ASEAN countries with regard to child participation in advocating against CSEA Expected outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 children from SAARC countries are able to influence SAIEVAC strategy with regard to CSEA - A model of child participation on advocating against CSEA is available for capitalization - NACG members practice and reinforce acquired skills on child participation and gender equality Expected outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional strategy against CSEA is developed by Children from SAARC - A model of child participation on advocating against CSEA is documented 		
DAY 1: 12th December 2016			
Objectives and duration	Details of activity	Facilitator	Material
9.30 am Registration of adults participants to reconnect after prior WS		Val Khan	Attendance sheet
9.45 am Recap and introduction of the link between this WS and the training on child participation that took place in	Group work, questions, answers	Val Khan	Board, markers, sheets of

the previous week			paper
10 am-12 Presentation of the agenda and distribution of roles among NACG trainees, role play to rehearse facilitation and finalisation of material and space prior to finalization. Identification of energizers.	Plenary session with group feedback and autoscapy	Val khan	Camera, screen
12 to 1pm: introduction of the whole group	Children. Chaperones, facilitators and organisers get to know each other through interactive presentation session, one facilitator notes down what is special about everyone.		Board, markers, sheets of paper
1 pm to 2 pm: lunch			
<i>2 pm to 6 pm: With the children and the chaperons: leisure visit</i>	To be specified later on	Hamza Hayyauddin, Roshan	To be specified later on
2 pm to 4 pm with NACG participants: reflective session for NACG facilitators to reinforce child sensitivity prior to WS. When I was a child and when I had to speak in front of others, when I had to perform, what were my fears?	Interactive session to also develop mitigation strategies.	Val Khan	Board, markers, sheets of paper
4 pm to 4.30 Closure, feedback			
SPECIAL DINNER			
DAY 2: 13th December 2016			
9.30 am Registration/		NACG	Board, markers, sheets of paper
10-10.30 am Inaugural Session (include NCPA)	3 children: one master of ceremony. 1 Child gives welcome speech		
	Rasa Sekulovic , PLAN ARO, presents the CSO project		
	Champa, Chairperson NACG Sri Lanka presents the consultation objectives		
	Dr Rinchen Chopel,		

	welcoming speech and presenting the process leading to this consultation and its mainstreaming with SAIEVAC		
	Key note address: Honourable Secretary to the Ministry of Women and child affairs, Sri Lanka. (Child participation and CSEA as priorities agenda for SL as a pathfinder)		
End of inaugural session	1 child gives the vote of thanks		
10.30 -10.45 am high tea			
10.45 - 11 am Logistics and safety arrangements	Interactive session	Hotel staff, IH	
11.00 – 11.30 am Ground rules and recap			
11.30-12.30 am reminding us of CSEA - What is it? - Where can it happen? - By whom? - To whom?	Group work and gallery walk and presentation	NACG	Board, markers, sheets of paper
12.30 to 1.pm Which laws are present to stop CSEA in your country?	Group work, presentation	NACG	Board, markers, sheets of paper
1 pm to 2.15 pm lunch			
2pm to 2.30 pm: SAARC regional policy to stop CSEA - What is SAARC? - Why is a regional policy needed?	Interactive session	NACG	
2.15 pm to 3.15 pm - What is SAIEVAC?	Interactive session, role play	Dr Rinchen Chopel	
3.15 pm to 4.15 pm tea break			
3.30 to 4.30 pm what have you done so far as a child activist to stop CSEA?	Group work, presentation, gallery walk and video		
4.30 to 5 pm feedback & closure			
DAY 3: 13th December 2016			
9.30 am registration and Recap of day 2	Interactive session	children	

9.30- 10 am Let us dream! SAARC safe planet! Presenting the context to start developing the regional policy Introducing objectives of today's session: make your voice heard, propose solutions!		Val Khan	
10 am to 11 am Safe SAARC planet/versus SAARC dangerous planet: what are our challenges, what are our strengths?	Group work, gallery walk, presentation	NACG	
11.am to 11.15 am tea break			
11.15 to 12.30 pm - Why can we make a difference? - Who do we work with?	Group work		
12.30 1.45 pm lunch			
1.45 pm to 2.45 pm - what do we want? - what do we do for that?	Group work		
2.45 pm to 3.30? - work plan?			
3.30 pm to 3.45 pm tea break			
3.45 pm to 4.45 pm Elections for best child SAARC president! Child delegates present their program to stop CSEA, they vote based upon the best program	Role play		
4.45 to 5 pm feedback, closure, thanks!			

4. PROCEEDINGS

Day One:

The morning session began with a registration and presentation of NACGs and ASEAN adult and child participants to recap the previous workshop on child participation and connect the findings from that session to the current one i.e. establish the link between this workshop and the training on child participation, ensuring that the NACG adults engage children in a manner prescribed in the deliverables from the prior sessions. This was followed by a presentation of the workshop agenda and distribution of roles among the NACG members, divided in active and planning groups – one to interact directly with the children and one to handle logistics and policy. The Sri Lankan delegation had sent eight children with only two chaperones, so Roshan (SRS), Hamza (NACG Pakistan), and Yubaraj (NACG Nepal) volunteered as chaperones. A Child Protection Committee was established with Roshan and Valerie (NACG Pakistan) as coordinators (Valerie also volunteering to provide psychosocial support whenever needed), Aditi (NACG EVAC India) and Muray (NACG Maldives) as focal points for liaising, Gayathri (NACG Sri Lanka) as the local expert, and Beda (NACG Bhutan) as the medical expert.

A suggestion box was made and placed at the back of the meeting room. All participants were invited to share their thoughts, feedbacks, reflections, challenges, etc. The contents shared in the suggestion box were only accessible by the Child Protection Committee. The Committee was to open the box every evening after the meeting.

The agenda for the morning session included a contact phase with a group welcome and icebreaker to introduce the chaperones, NACG representatives, child protection committee, and children.

The facilitator of the session (Yubaraj) opened the session by asking the child participants if they knew why they were here today. Children listed the following as they understood why they were gathered.

“We are here to discuss how to stop:

- Sexual abuse,
- Domestic violence,
- Child trafficking,
- Child labor,
- Early and child marriage
- Corporal punishment”.

A child also pointed out that they were meeting to discuss about how lack of education led to these problems.

In the conclusion of the session, it was affirmed that the objectives of the meeting were:

- To understand and hear children’s voices on the issues noted above
- To bring success for children
- To look for ways to stop violence against children

It was also shared that even though three days were not long enough to find solutions to all problems, it was confirmed that participants would be discussing the challenges which would then lead to looking for possible solutions. It was surprising to see how cognizant and accurate the children were with regard to CSAE.



The participants were then split into two groups consisting of adults and children and briefed separately.

Dina (Indonesia, CRC Asia) and Aditi facilitated the children’s session in which they created a human statue to symbolize a child centered organization, writing down the characteristics of such an idea. After presenting the statute and characteristics, the children collaborated to discuss and establish a set of house rules.



The remaining NACG members facilitated the chaperone orientation, providing the following guidelines:

- What are the roles of a chaperon during this meeting?
- how to address medical and other emergencies (taking note of the emergency contacts)
- supporting children by having travel details
- being physically present with children at all times
- being aware of the emotional safety of the children (do not personalize when addressing difficult topics such as experience of being abused, never laugh, never judge, etc) and reach out to the child protection committee when needing assistance.
- keeping the integrity of the content when translating.
- taking pictures during the meeting is in session is not permitted for child safety reasons. There is a designated camera person who is taking photos throughout the sessions for recording purposes. Photos taken will be used in a way to protect the privacy of the children.
- Signing of the code of conduct. All chaperons are required to read, sign and submit the code of conduct.
 - o Overall, the role of the chaperons are to minimize potential risks by being their “bodyguard and role model.”
 - o Sense of accountability is important. It is not permitted for chaperons to display unhealthy behaviors such as smoking and drinking in front of the child participants.
 - o It was agreed that at 10 pm, all participants must return to their rooms and go to bed.
 - o If child participants want to congregate in eachothers’ rooms, chaperons must also be present and the door of the room must be kept open.
 - o In case of emergency, the meeting point outside of the hotel is the parking lot on the side of the hotel building.
 - o It was confirmed that the use of TV is permitted.

- The issue of the use of smartphones was discussed. It was agreed that the subject must be approached with caution as it is also an effective tool for keeping in touch with their family.

Media Guidelines

1. The **only** persons who can take photos are Sahil and Hamza (from GD Pakistan), who will be taking them for documentation purposes.
2. Any photos that are taken will only be uploaded if they have been edited to maintain children’s anonymity/prevent them from being identified unless children and parents have agreed or requested to disseminate their photos and provided it does not affect the child’s well-being, safety and dignity.

Following lunch, the children were taking on a field trip to a local Buddhist temple while the remaining NACG members held a reflective session to reinforce child sensitivity and prepare the roles distribution of day 2. The children largely enjoyed the trip but some of the Muslim children and chaperones expressed discomfort at entering a Buddhist house of worship, suggesting that further sensitisation sessions be held to determine the propriety of various field trip venues. We had considered the location as a cultural landmark and neglected the religious aspect in our selection. The Sri Lankan children particularly enjoyed acting as local guides, explaining the history of the monuments and the significance of various artwork. As a surprise “welcome to Sri Lanka” treat, the chaperones procured fresh coconuts for the children to drink on the bus ride back. It was particularly difficult to enforce the media guidelines/no photographs rule as the children and chaperones were taking selfies at every opportunity, which suggests that the traditional wisdom on the matter be reviewed.

Day Two

The second day began with a formal ceremonial event, opening with the lighting of a candle as per Sri Lankan official protocols.

Mrs Champa Pradeepa from NACG-Sri Lanka delivered a welcome speech, thanking the special guests for their tireless effort for children. This was followed by remarks from the guests themselves:

Mr. Rasa Sekulovic - Plan International ARO

He introduced the project titled: **“Increased accountability of ASEAN and SAARC to children’s rights to protection”** and discussed the importance of having the regional consultations not only in SAARC countries but also in connection with the similar efforts in ASEAN that have been ongoing in the past two years. He also pointed out the emerging dangers for children in the cyber space. He emphasized the importance of listening to the girls and boys about their thoughts on the issues affecting them, such as sexual abuse and exploitation of children, including online. He expressed the hope to be able to work with children and young people in finding solutions for them.



Mr. Chandila — Vice-chair of NACG of Sri Lanka

“Children have a huge voice and their voice count”. He acknowledged the role of NACGs in advocating and helping children to exercise their rights. He stated that it was also important to share learnings not only within SAARC but also with other regions and around the world.



Dr. Rinchen Chopel - Director General, SAIEVAC

He started his remarks by acknowledging those who are a part of the NACGs and other bodies related to SAIEVAC and representatives from ASEAN. He thanked the chaperons, special guests from the government of Sri Lanka and the child participants. He noted that this is the first meeting of SAARC children after the regional meeting in Bhutan in 2013. He then noted the different mechanisms of SAIEVAC and said that one of the most important parts of SAIEVAC since 2013 is the child participation mechanism, along with governments and NACGs. He pointed out that after the drafting process of the SAIEVAC regional strategies on online sexual exploitation and abuse, this presents the occasion for SAIEVAC to consult with children. Children’s voices and inspiration must be included in the strategies.



The concluding remarks came from the representative from the secretary of the Ministry of Woman and Children Affairs of Sri Lanka.

She started her remarks by welcoming all to Sri Lanka. She welcome Dr Rinchen Chopel, DG SAIEVAC. She declared that children should be a main part of addressing challenges relating to child protection at both local and national levels. Sri Lanka has a long history of establishing organizations for children mainly at grassroots level. She highlighted that the educational platform also helped in children’s engagement. INGOs and CSOs have helped actualizing child participation. She explained that her department had assisted and developed the capacity and the resourcing of over 3000 organizations that are registered under the child welfare department. She went on to discuss about the child participation mechanisms at various levels in Sri Lanka, which includes the producing of a CRC report to the UN. She concluded her remarks by wishing a successful consultation to the children.



Chanukah Malith, a child participant from Sri Lanka expressed his thanks to SAIEVAC for organizing the consultation for children and for all the special guests. He also expressed his hopes that the opportunity they had here would be highly beneficial for their personal experience.

The consultative session began with a recap of the previous day's discussion on house rules followed with a video about "Ashwini", which depicted a schoolgirl's struggle with sexual abuse.



Following the video, participants reflected on and answered the following questions:

Where does it take place?

School, India

Who were the characters?

Ashwini, mother, father, teachers, students, counselor,

What was happening?

Cousin sexually abused the girl. She has been depressed. She feels that her parents do not care about her. She does not want to tell about what is happening to her. She is very unhappy. Her behavior changed.

How does she change? She does not want to talk. She is afraid of people who comes near her. She doesn't want to talk to anyone and doesn't want to share with parents. She has nightmares. She is unwell.

At the end what happened?

The girl doesn't know how to speak about it because she was not trained. But the teacher who is trained on this handles the situation over to the police. Ashwini becomes a teacher to other children and can protect them.



The children were then divided into three groups and given the following questions:

Group 1: What is CSEA? What are the types of CSEA?

Group 2: What is CSEA? When and where does it happen?

Group 3: What is CSEA? By whom and to whom does it happen?



The children's responses are logged in the following table:

1. What is CSA/CSEC – what types do you know?
 - a. What is it?
 - i. An undesirable action that makes a child uncomfortable whether verbal, physical, or psychological
 - b. What types do you know?
 - i. Bad touch (inappropriate), unnecessary scolding, undesirable verbal communication (eve-teasing), showcasing parental advisory explicit content in networks (tv, social media, internet), rape, child marriage, trafficking, prostitution (forced or unforced), sexual harassment, child labour, cyber-bullying.
 - ii. Busy parents typically make it easier for the child to be abused as they are unsupervised.
2. What is CSA/CSEC – where does it occur and when?

- a. What is it?
 - i. Action against children mentally, physically, socially, economically and it harms physical growth – even small actions can be sexual abuse
 - ii. Negative actions to harm children’s future
 - iii. Forced
 - iv. Linked to child labour
 - v. It generates isolation and depression
 - vi. Early marriage, bride selling, trafficking, smuggling, forced marriage, drug abuse
 - b. Where does it occur?
 - i. Schools, offices, tuitions, street, hotel, restaurants, vehicles, farms, villages, tourist places, police stations, workplaces, music/dance classes, by the river.
 - ii. **Over the phone/technology** – This is an excellent point and one that the majority of adults failed to recognise, further highlighting the importance of engaging children directly!
 - c. When?
 - i. Hospitals – medical treatment, during sports, playing in the park, tutoring sessions, kidnapping/forcibly, home alone, when travelling, when children are expecting help, online photography/pornography can expose children to blackmail situations.
 - ii. When children are unsupervised/vulnerable
3. What is CSA/CSEC – who does it and to whom?
- a. What is it?
 - i. Violence done by others to children, in an appropriate manner, when a child is touched in a non-safe way.
 - b. Who does it?
 - i. Family members, strangers, friends, parents, teachers, acquaintances, drivers, servants, known-persons, tourists, guardians, family friends, children, doctors, officers, neighbours.
 - c. To whom?
 - i. Unsupervised children, students, travellers, children with special needs, patients, friends, family members/siblings, foreigners, orphans, employed children, refugees, children with addictions, adopted children, homeless children, children in relationships
 - ii. It happens to girls **and** boys – the fact that the children were sensitive to this fact was refreshing as typically it must be explained to adults given the social stigma associated with male victimhood in SAARC countries.



It was especially interesting to see how the responses to various forms and locations of abuse reflected the cultural and practical realities of each country, and how they varied across the region. The children were then broken up into two groups and asked the difference between abuse and exploitation. Their answers highlighted the difficulty people can have with the conceptual nuance:

Group 1: Abuse – something that stays with the victim and scars them for life. Exploitation – something that is more forgettable.

Group 2: Abuse – action which harms a person physically. Exploitation – harms a person emotionally, socially, mentally.

The facilitator then explained how abuse is a form of violence, regardless of the level of harm, whereas exploitation is an abuse in which the abuser or another party gains money or other consideration in kind.

The afternoon session began with asking children to identify the laws in place in their home country in regards to CSA/CSEC. Each child presented the legal landscape of their particular country and created the following list:

- Nepal | Article 39, child rights laws, guidelines in school
- Maldives | Special provision that deals with child abuse
- Afghanistan | Islamic law outlaws violence against women but there is no specific law for children
- Sri Lanka | Constitution, mandatory education, sexual abuse/rape are crimes, and can't marry before 18.
- Bangladesh | Ratified CRC, children's act, pornography act, mobile laws.
- Pakistan | Crim Law Amendment Bill (CSA/CSEC, trafficking, child labour), child marriage bill in Sindh.
- Bhutan | CPA 2011, UN CRC, Marriage Act 2009 (18 for girls, 21 for boys).
- India | Juvenile Justice Act, UN CRC, Protection of Children against Sexual Offences, Child Marriage restraint act, child labour act, children act



The children were then asked what they themselves had done to stop children from being victims of abuse and exploitation.

- Sri Lanka | Forming child clubs and performing awareness programmes to avoid sexual abuse and exploitation. Poster campaigns. Street dramas. Workshops, consultations, participation, creating village child rights monitoring committees. National walk against child abuse. Conducting research. Child parliament consisting of children, and a child council. Awareness programmes for parents. Publishing articles through social media. Forming volunteer groups. Conducting activity based awareness programmes for children.
- Pakistan | Advocated for the criminal law amendment bill to criminalise child sexual abuse and exploitation, awareness raising on child protection through human rights children and youth task force, research on child trafficking and CSA, community service to focus on children with special needs, child labour day presentation, forming a child protection committee in school
- Bangladesh | As a CCU (child communication unit) member, I raise awareness of children, parents, and villagers on child marriage through theatre. I participate and teach Dance Movement Therapy for abused/exploited children. I participate in workshops, discussions, and consultations with parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in the village. She conveys the training she's given to classmates, friends, and peers.
- Bhutan | Youth Group Association of Bhutan – Y-YIA, HYV, Y-PEER, DAISAN, CBS, asking parliamentarians for sex education to be integrated in school curriculum, designing informative programs on teen pregnancy and sexual abuse.
- India | Editor of Peace gong – student run newspaper, has editions in audio and braille for accessibility. Suggested to the government that the next 5 year plan should be on children, as they need to be a focus for the government. Music band - singing and composing songs on abuse and violence to raise awareness, working with disabled children as they are most vulnerable to sexual abuse and writing a book on the subject, recording a song on sexual abuse, and advocating to the Indian government to make children a priority.
- Afghanistan | Appearing on TV and teaching. Raising awareness of poor children's plight. Participating in local government meetings. Painting pictures of poor children with themes of education, guidance, protection, and participation.
- Nepal | programmes on child rights, engaging community child participation mechanisms, trainings on how to protect children from abuse, suggesting policy and laws on child rights, and volunteering at the child helpline.
- Maldives | participated in a workshop to build awareness about CSA/CSEC and sharing knowledge with other children in schools.



For the final session, the children were asked to shout out, round robin style why regional policies existed and particularly why there was a need for a policy and regional strategy at the regional level. The answers included:

- SAIEVAC's theme is coexistence, so it's natural to have a policy that reflects this.
- Involving multiple countries' inputs gives greater diversity of ideas – multilateralism
- To find solutions together
- The problem is a *regional* one so it needs a regional policy – common problems need common solutions.
- Similarities within the SAARC countries so solutions can lateral over to other cultures
- It can apply to future generations

Following the workshop, the facilitators held a debriefing session to discuss the challenges and positive takeaways from the day. There were numerous challenges, but the predominant one was that the opening ceremony was a bit too long for children. Beyond that, the following challenges were identified:

- Logistics (sounds, space was noisy)
- Translation (when providing translation the room becomes noisy)
- Attentiveness (when children were speaking, adults were making noises, talking to themselves)
- Some adult facilitators are not patient enough and try to intervene rather than encouraging children to speak. Not giving them enough time to express themselves or write.
- Overall time management
- The inaugural session speeches were difficult to understand (there should have been a way to help children understand)
 - Orient the children about who is coming, who is speaking, etc.
- Children are being shy even in small groups.
- Expecting more from the NACGs members to participate in co-facilitating
- Need to be aware that some children prefer to speak in their own language
- Children are not getting the full translations (translation provided only when they are speaking)

- Need more energizers (timing of the energizers)
- Need more interactions among children
- We should not influence children with our own opinions
- Problem with lunch (some people did not like the menu selection)

There were however some very positive aspects of the session as well, and they included:

- At the end of the day, children were more articulate about why they are here. They have deeper understanding of the purpose of the meeting.
- There were already 4-5 champions emerging. We can strengthen their leadership by giving them time.
- Even during breaks, children were sharing about their cultures.
- Children have rich experience about child protection
- Children have a lot to share
- Rich mixture of different background (socio economic, physical, etc)
- Facilitators team working better as a team
- The outcomes children came up with were very impressive

Day Three

The day began with a recap of the house rules, the predominant ones being to listen when others speak, no littering, 10 p.m. curfew, respecting others, and raising your hand to speak. Following this, Muray (NACG Maldives) led the refresher and verification session on distinguishing between abuse and exploitation. The children were able to correctly identify the importance of remuneration/gain (an exchange of money or kind) and answered all the hypothetical scenarios differentiating between abuse and exploitation correctly.

One thing discussed in the previous day's debriefing was that the NACG members gave feedback after every session but the children had not been consulted on their experiences since they did not use the suggestion box. It was found empty after the first day. As such, the following session was a reflection exercise in order to gauge feedback from the most important stakeholders – the children. Hamza (NACG Pakistan) threw a ball around to various children and had them share a word or feeling they had experienced over the last two days. Most shared words such as happy, wonderful, and useful. Others mentioned their developments such as learning how to feel comfortable sharing their opinion, understanding their responsibilities, sharing new ideas. Some were concerned about the rising incidences of abuse, but felt motivated to stop it. There was an appreciation for the fact that they were exposed to different cultures and on how to respect those differences. Others enjoyed the fact that they better understood CSA/CSEC from an awareness and protection standpoint. The children were almost unanimously appreciative to learn the difference between abuse and exploitation.

The final event for the day was to run a mock presidential election for SAARC and present an electoral program to counter child sexual abuse and online exploitation. In preparation for this, the children were broken up into three groups and asked the following questions (their answers are included under each question)

1. What makes SAARC safe/unsafe
 - a. Safe
 - i. Good guidance and leadership
 - ii. Similar culture enabling the implementation of common laws/policies
 - iii. Legal frameworks in collaboration with governments
 - iv. Seeks inspirations and ideas from youth/children
 - v. Child centered approach
 - vi. Presence of parents/guardians i.e. parental support
 - vii. Obtains responses from family and friends
 - viii. Many organisations to battle against CSA/CSEC i.e. NGO support
 - ix. Spiritual/religious considerations
 - x. Education centers
 - b. Unsafe
 - i. Different views of leaders lead to difficulty in coming to conclusions
 - ii. Absence of parents
 - iii. Variety of unknown places
 - iv. Laws not implemented in some parts
 - v. New technology
 - vi. Not enough support from public
 - vii. Not enough media support
 - viii. Lack of awareness/ignorance on the family/community/society's part

- ix. Difference in cultural and political backgrounds
- 2. What will be your role, and why you?
 - a. Why Children?
 - i. Energetic
 - ii. Motivated
 - iii. Educated
 - iv. Creative
 - v. Imaginative
 - vi. Future of SAARC/future policy makers
 - vii. Have a particular interest in their own wellbeing
 - viii. Nothing about us without us
 - ix. Convincing and sensitive
 - b. What role?
 - i. Form peer groups that are not afraid to speak their minds
 - ii. Have a wider social circle
 - iii. Activism – we can use creative avenues to promote awareness (ARTIVISM)
 - 1. Poster campaigns, street drama, musicals, dance events
 - iv. Form media groups as they are savvy with social media
 - 1. Newspaper, radio, television, internet
 - v. Can convince the government to form child parliaments
 - vi. Intern at organisations to increase skills
 - 1. Research and survey
 - vii. Arrange school competitions and exhibits to increase awareness
 - viii. Write articles in local and school newspapers
- 3. Who will you be working with to stop child abuse/exploitation?
 - a. NGOs
 - b. Education Centers
 - c. Child clubs
 - d. Policy Makers
 - e. Government officers
 - f. Regional bodies
 - g. Health workers
 - h. **Everyone** is a stakeholder!
- 4. What will be the role of the other people you're working with?
 - a. Support us in our work
 - b. Spread awareness
 - c. Implement laws
 - d. Provide care for victims
 - e. Organise outreach programmes
 - f. Create safe spaces for children to meet and collaborate
 - g. Establish a child helpline



The children also highlighted during general final comments that they should be involved in decision making processes at a higher level and that attending some events or consultations time to time was not satisfactory. They stated “ministers and presidents decide what is going to happen to us without asking us what we want or if it adequate. We should be talking to ministers and presidents, because we know better”. Children were then asked why they wanted to attend those expert level meeting and policy meetings. Three main answers/comments were formulated: “we are abused by adults so we know how it feels and we should teach adults not to abuse children”, “we are children of the present, of now, our reality is different from the adult’s childhood, so before making decisions, adults must listen to us to understand what is the problem now and what is required to stop CSAE”, “we need a platform, a forum at SAARC level so that decision makers can hear our voice”. To this effect, DG SAIEVAC suggested that two representatives from SAARC could attend the sessions aiming to develop the SAARC regional strategy on CSAE including online violence. Hence, elections were organised so that a fair and transparent appointment process was ensured for the two SAIEVAC representatives. Children were to vote for their representatives.

This was followed up with having the children identify qualities that their child representatives should possess:

- Afghanistan – Courage, ability, and talent.
- Nepal – Confident, friendly, cooperative.
- Maldives – Patient, cooperative, confident
- Sri Lanka – Good presentation skills, experience in the field, knowledge, equalitarian, talkative, fearless, good decision-making, aware of regional child issues, creative, rational, able to consider various perspectives, proactive, respectful, generous and capable of empathy.
- Bangladesh – confidence, child-friendly, good communicator
- Bhutan – Responsible, dedicated, active, well-equipped with life skills
- Pakistan – Convincing, be informed, readily available, motivated and passionate.
- India – Leadership qualities, good listening skills, and communication skills.

Interestingly, as with the CSA/CSEC identifying activity on Day 2, the qualities each child looked for was also a reflection of their cultural values and expectations placed on local and national governments.

As the day's main event, Yubaraj (Nepal) hosted a skit in which he was the anchor of "SAARC TV" and invited all the children to come up and participate in a talent show.



The final activity before the election was to ask the children for three changes they wished to see in order to protect children from CSAE including online violence and how to go about accomplishing those changes.

Group 1:

1. Making protection of children part of the academic curriculum
2. A mechanism to hear and address children's voices/grievances
3. Cooperation between the SAARC countries

Group 2

1. Children and their voices taken seriously at the regional level
2. More severe punishments and penalties for perpetrators
3. Increased awareness among children at regional level in regard to CSA/CSEC

To this end, the proposed solutions were as follows:

- Advocating through mass and social media
- Children taking part in the decision and policy-making
- Collaborating with government/NGOs
- Including sexual education in the curriculum
- Conferences and group discussion
- Shows and programs facilitated by the children
- Create website



Having concluded the days' events, the participants could focus completely on the election itself. Dr. Rinchen added to the criteria that the boy and the girl selected during this process, should be available to the Director General of SAIEVAC whenever called upon by the DG to come to meetings and have advocacy role in decision making. Nominees were elected from among the group by popular vote, and they were asked to develop a platform on which to run for election – in this case, three action points they would implement if elected. The nominees presented their programs as follows:

Zahra (Pakistan)

1. Advocate to make protection from CSAE a part of academic curriculum
2. Cooperation between SAARC and activism through art: ARTIVISM
3. Advocate for a separate child parliament at a regional level.

Kanupriya (India)

1. Advocate for a children's parliament where kids could participate and air grievances/give ideas.
2. Connecting through art and making it
3. Creating a website built and run by children where children have a forum

Kinga (Bhutan)

1. Advocate for sexual education in schools
2. Raise awareness among peers
3. Advocate with politicians for legal improvement on child protection in SAARC

Trisha (Bangladesh)

1. Raise awareness on CSAE through theater and dance programs
2. Train peer son dance therapy
3. Demand better laws at SAARC level to protect children

Malith (Sri Lanka)

1. Advocate for Child Protection for all children at regional level
2. Conference to review regional framework on child protection

Simyan (Maldives)

1. Make a common legal framework for child protection at SAARC level
2. Reduce instances of abuse by educating children
3. Provide free education on CSA/CSEC

Mirwaiz (Afghanistan)

1. Conduct awareness sessions
2. Improve education for all children
3. Talk to politicians to improve legal framework for child protection

Dipak (Nepal)

1. Conduct awareness session
2. Organise concerts
3. Train children on CSEA dangers and prevention



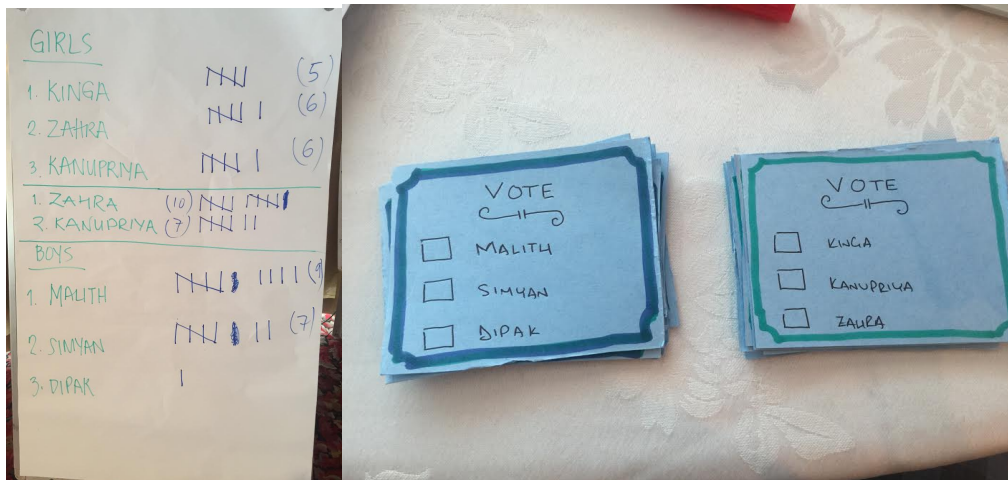
Voting was done in a traditional ballot format.



Malith from Sri Lanka won the boys' nomination by two votes: Malith obtained 9 votes, Symian 7 votes, Dipak 1 vote.

Kanupriya from India and Zahra from Pakistan tied with six votes each on the 1st round whilst Kinga obtained 5 votes. A second round of voting was held for the girls in which Zahra edged Kanupriya by 3 votes to secure the girls' nomination: Zahra obtained 10 votes and Kanupriya 7 votes.

It was heartening to see that all children were very supportive of each other all were congratulated and encouraged. Kanupriya was informed that she would stand as the deputy representatives and so was Symian.



As part of the closing ceremony, Dr. Rinchen thanked the government representatives of Sri Lanka and NACG of Sri Lanka. He thanked the facilitators, Valerie Khan, Hamza, Irfan and Roshan, all the SAIEVAC national mechanisms and NACGs and chaperons for their work to make this consultation successful and possible. He also thanked all participants. He expressed his joy that **two SAIEVAC child ambassadors on CSAE including online violence** were selected as a result of this consultation and committed to ensuring that children would be a part of the consultation process on child sexual abuse and exploitation. He also gave a special mention to Dina and Hazel, from CRC Asia, the colleagues from ASEAN. He concluded by saying that he would leave Sri Lanka with renewed energy and commitment. As it was Roshan’s birthday, the event was capped off with a cake and a small child friendly party in which all the participants took part – finding contemporary child-friendly music was definitely a struggle, however!





5 FEEDBACK

The final debriefing session was held by NACG members after and the salient points have been bulleted below:

- Learnt a lot from children (one of the emerging issues learned today: mothers going overseas for better income, leaving their children behind)
 - Children's views on different things differ greatly from adults and are especially valuable
- Successfully held a fair and transparent election process with very little planning time
- Children were more comfortable today and more participatory
- Children had a lot of experiences in addressing the CSAE issues. Very resourceful.
- NACG colleagues participated more in the facilitation
- Better teamwork within the facilitators team
- Translation is still a challenge
- Important to hold ourselves accountable with follow up actions and honour the commitments we made
- Need to make sure that children came to this consultation will be involved in further activities in their country, involving other children
- Challenge also is how to protect children who are being abused now. Children often do not realize that they are being sexually abused (do not know if it is a good touch or bad touch)
- NACG reps were not sure about their roles coming into the meeting.
- Amazed by children's activism and creativity.
- Chaperones needed to do more
- It was good that the facilitators didn't know everything so they can find their space..

- It was an extraordinary achievement to be able to have two child ambassadors within the intergovernmental organization

Lesson learned for next time included:

- Allot more time for the consultation
- NACGs to liaise with government to implement the guidelines
- Important to be eye level with children.
- Need to accommodate children’s needs by making the meeting longer and have a cultural evening for them to represent their countries.
- More thorough session and SOPs/TORs shared with chaperones beforehand by local NACGs representatives.



6 CONCLUSION

The objectives of this workshop and capacity building exercise were achieved as follows:

Specific objectives:

4. Promote child participation in advocating against CSEA in SAARC countries
5. Improve capacities of NACGs on child participation
6. Promote cross learning between SAARC and ASEAN countries with regard to child participation in advocating against CSEA

Children directly interacted with one another and shaped policy over the course of the workshop, and by learning how to facilitate these discussions, NACG members also expanded their capacity for child participation during the same time. There was strong collaboration between the ASEAN representatives and NACG members, so much so that the ASEAN representatives even facilitated several sessions over the course of the week.

Expected outcomes:

5. 17 children from SAARC countries were able to influence SAIEVAC strategy with regard to CSEA
6. A model of child participation on advocating against CSEA is available for capitalization (ref this report and the elections of two SAIEVAC child ambassadors).
7. NACG members practice and reinforce acquired skills on child participation and gender equality (several NACGs will replicate the training and hold a child consultation)

Expected outputs:

8. Regional strategy against CSEA is developed by Children from SAARC
9. A model of child participation on advocating against CSEA is documented through this report

Beyond simply establishing deliverables as outlined in the photos of the charts attached, the workshop managed to yield two legitimate child representatives to SAIEVAC and hence the SAARC environment – a feat which was believed to be beyond the scope of the workshop at the outset. NACG members witnessed how to hold a fair and transparent election with minimal preparation time, while improvising over the course of the workshop to ensure that all sessions were being held in the most child-friendly manner. Energizers were designed spontaneously and implemented as needed. It was a thoroughly successful workshop from an objective and subjective standpoint.

As a usual caveat, it is important to mention that although a specific agenda was designed, the progress of the workshop was adjusted to the needs of the participants so that maximum positive participation and effectiveness of the training components would be ensured. Critical values such as mutual respect and tolerance were present all over the workshop and positive energy was ensured through vibrant energizers that contributed to the group bonding. When other group members than the facilitator were available, they were invited to join and take the lead in the activity. This also provided space for strong and multiple engagement of the group members and SAARC solidarity. But one of the quotes that probably moved us all and anchored our dedication and commitment to work for the children of SAARC was the following: *“I am really happy to see those children, their knowledge, how they can raise their voice and I realise that had I been made aware of such dangers as they are, I would have realised I was sexually abused by my teacher, seeing this really motivates me to go on: thank you”.*

In solidarity with the children of SAARC...