



South Asia Initiative To End Violence Against Children [SAIEVAC]

“In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC”



SAIEVAC and SAACH makes headway to Work Together



SAIEVAC - SAACH (South Asian Association of Child Helplines) Consultation

25 - 27 May, 2014
Kathmandu, Nepal



SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare - Government of Nepal, and The Missing Child Alert Project Supported by Plan ARO organized a three day consultation in Kathmandu from 25th – 27th May, 2014.

Based on the 3rd Regional Consultation of the National Action and Coordinating Group Against Violence Against Children (NACG) held in Colombo in December 2013, it was recommended to coordinate with existing mechanism at regional level to create a collaborative and consolidated effort in addressing the issue of VaC, particularly, Missing Child in the SAARC Region.

As per the SAIEVAC's mandate and as recommended by the 4th Governing Board Meeting held in Bhutan in 2013 under 10.2 which states 'the SRS take whatever steps essential to facilitate the Child Helpline it was decided to hold a regional consultation with South Asian Association of Child Helplines (SAACH). In order to help SAACH realize its goal, SAIEVAC organized the consultation meeting to establish partnership between SAACH and SAIEVAC and further strengthen coordinated and collaborative effort to create a more robust system in addressing the issue of VAC, particularly, Missing Children in the SAARC Region as well as generate appropriate data and information for more effective service delivery.

The overall objective of SAACH is, "SAARC Region will have fully institutionalized Uniform Toll Free Helplines and fully operational inter and intra country coordination and cooperation promoting effective interventions in the rescue/ rehabilitation of victims, apprehend perpetrators of trafficking, and deter inter and intra country trafficking of women and children in South Asia".

The consultation focused on adopting an effective process to institutionalize and strengthen SAACH through understanding the initiatives and interventions undertaken by SAACH. South Asia Association for Child Helpline (SAACH) representatives from all SAARC countries along with relevant national and regional state and non-state actors working in the area of child protection issues participated in this consultation.

The inauguration started with welcome remarks from Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee, SAIEVAC Coordinator Nepal (on behalf of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Govt. of Nepal) followed by Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General SAIEVAC who introduced the purpose of the SAIEVAC- SAACH consultation meeting. Ms. Shrinkhala Thapa, MCA Project Manager - Plan Nepal, delivered the welcome remark.

The Guest of Honor and Special Invitee Mr. Kareti Sreenivasulu, SAIEVAC Governing Board Member India on his keynote remark applauded SAIEVAC for providing the platform to Child Helplines for sharing their insights and experience and thereby learning from each other. He also emphasized that Child Helpline in the region play a crucial role and is necessary in protecting the vulnerable children, as they are the first link between children and state machinery.

Ms. Tahmina Begum, Chairperson, SAIEVAC Governing Board also addressed the forum emphasizing on the clandestine nature of trafficking in South Asia and the importance of Child Helplines in tackling the problem. Mr. Madhav Pradhan, coordinator ended the inauguration with vote of thanks.

During the business sessions, SAACH country representatives shared comprehensive presentation on the status of implementation of Child Helplines. It was discussed that the Helplines were taking innovative and proactive measures to increase access to services along with ensuring the protection of their rights. It was also stated that there is a need for dialogue and convergence between Helplines and the Government in order to make sure that the government provides infrastructure, services and policy related support to protect the best interest of the child.

It was decided that SAACH will review its current framework and proposed governance structure to establish its institutional mechanism to become a full - fledged regional entity with legal status whereas, SAIEVAC will provide interim secretariat support including coordination for SAACH.

There was also an agreement that SAIEVAC and SAACH will continue to engage together for follow up consultations and joint activities to fulfill complementary activities and in pursuing priority areas for intervention. Some areas of cooperation include: participation and contribution to the Missing Children and Trafficking project activities under the larger umbrella of child rights, collaborating in sourcing and analyzing data and information from the Helplines and SAACH, SAIEVAC, SAARC Development Fund (SDF) and in establishing human resource development framework for capacity building of the relevant actors.

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