



## Panel Discussion on Safer in Schools

**Date: 14th December 2023**

### **A Brief Report**

Members of the Asia hub of the [Coalition for Good Schools](#) hosted a panel discussion to commemorate this year's International Literacy Day. Here is a brief report capturing some key takeaways from the discussion and a list of resources shared by our panellists.

#### **List of panellists:**

- Borany Chea, Lead of Communities Section, [This Life, Cambodia](#)
- Marrium Amjad, Program Manager in [Awaz Foundation Pakistan](#)
- Catherine Flagothier, Programme Specialist, [Safe to Learn](#)
- Pranita Achyut, Director Research and Program, [International Center for Research on Women, India](#) *as the moderator.*
- Urvashi Gandhi, CEO, [Samya Development Resources Private Limited](#) *as the host of the session*

#### **Points of discussion:**

- What do we mean when we say "Safer Schools"? What are the key elements for creating safer schools?
- What are some of the key challenges/ tripwires in promoting/creating safer schools and how to navigate them?
- Share an example of on-boarding a critical stakeholder for creating safer schools from your context/perspective

#### **Key takeaways:**

- The meeting focused on the creation of safer schools for children, the importance of their rights to a safe environment. Panellists discussed the importance of ensuring safe schools globally, the need for legal protection, effective violence prevention strategies, and a shift in social norms towards child protection. They highlighted the role of education in ending violence

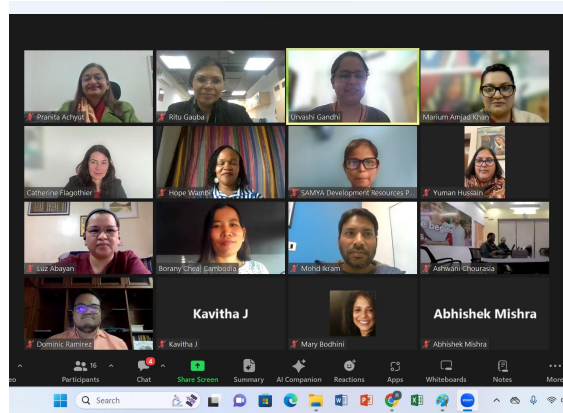
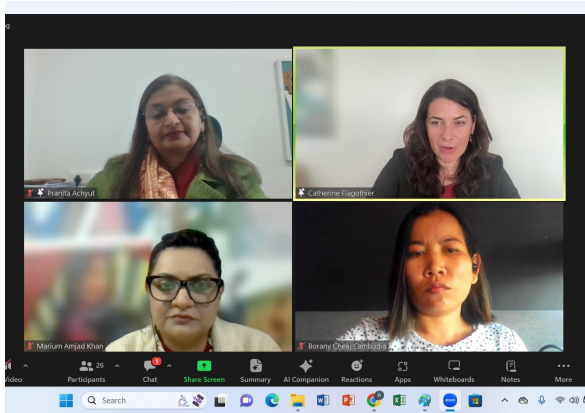
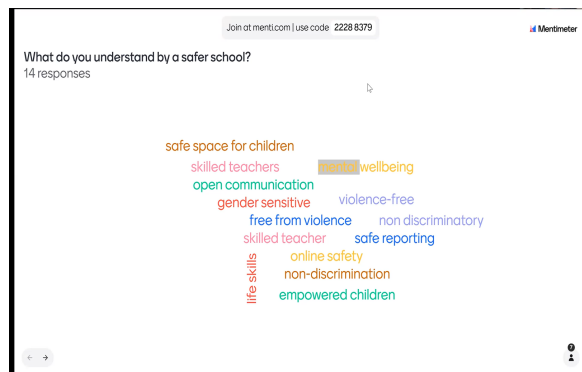
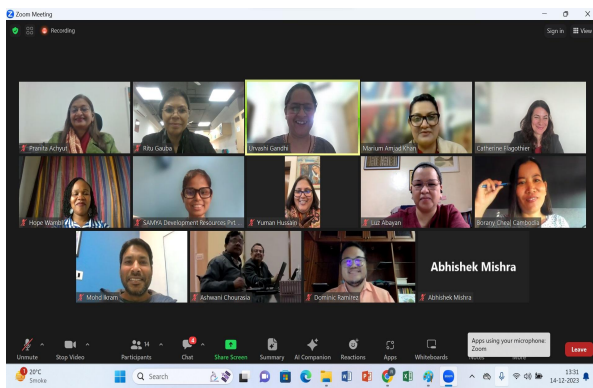
and its impact on children's overall wellbeing and society's economy. Panellists stressed on the importance of life skills education in creating a safe school environment, as it empowers children with skills such as self-awareness, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence.

- The conversation highlighted the need for involvement/ engagement with multiple stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and education related stakeholders. It is important to develop policy and procedure guidelines to protect students and address different dimensions of child protection such as violence prevention and response, safe food, safe water, hygiene, and control of food selling in schools. The discussion reflected on the need for resources to back these efforts, as well as the importance of focusing on marginalised and vulnerable groups to ensure they are not overlooked in a universal approach.
- Media plays a significant role in potentially shaping public attitudes and providing strategies for discussing sensitive issues with children. On the other hand it is observed that parents were seen as vital in instilling confidence and empowerment in their children.
- Some challenges which were observed while promoting safer schools include cultural and religious obstacles, social and gender norms, lack of resources and discrimination faced by children from marginalised communities. Another challenge discussed was weak policy implementation. Speakers acknowledged the need for solutions and shared their experiences on the matter.
- Collaboration was critical to address the cross-cutting nature of violence in schools. So the emphasis needs to be on the education sector, including the Ministries of Education, which has a crucial role to play in ending violence in, around and through schools . It's important to include violence prevention in education sector plans and other national education sector wide planning documents. Additionally, it is also critical to look at financial support, particularly from domestic sources that can help address violence in schools through services and effective mechanisms.
- Speakers shared their experience of work with various stakeholders, including the School Management Committee, local authorities, and student councils, to implement education policies and reinforce cross-sectoral collaboration.
  - In a recent 16-days campaign against family violence, working with local authorities to run offline campaigns in both urban and remote areas.
  - Safe to Learn, a global initiative established in response to the #ENDviolence Youth Manifesto. She also pointed out the endorsement of the Call to Action by 16 countries, including the recent (November 2022) endorsement by the Minister of Education and Human Development of Mozambique, which involved support and active engagement by a variety of stakeholders, including also from civil society organisations.

Moderator concluded by sharing that the coalition for good schools' literature review had found a whole school approach to be an effective method for preventing violence in schools.

The meeting concluded with a focus on the principle of "do no harm" in child safeguarding policies and practices, stressing the need for community-driven dialogue, education, and guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of children. The discussion ended with a call for continued collaboration and conversation to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

### **Moments from the Webinar**



### **Important Resources for Reference:**

Name of the Organisation	Document and Description	Access Link
<a href="#">Coalition for Good Schools</a>	Evidence Review: Prevention of violence against children in and through schools in the Global South	<a href="#">Global Coalition Evidence Review</a>

	Document review by the Asia hub of the Coalition across 10 Asian countries	<a href="#">Preventing School Based Violence Against Children in Southern Asia</a>
<a href="#">Safe to Learn</a>	Documents supporting safe learning environment from different countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Programmatic Framework and Benchmarking Tool</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Safe to Learn Diagnostic Tool</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Synthesis of the Diagnostic exercise in Nepal, Uganda, Pakistan and South Sudan and its summary.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Safe to Learn Country Engagement Approach</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lessons Learned from the South Sudan and Uganda Diagnostic</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">STL Regional Roundtable in East Asia and Pacific</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ensuring all children are safe to learn in EAP: an imperative for the back to school and learning recovery agenda.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Report of the STL Diagnostic Study in Nepal</a></li> </ul>

We thank our audience for attending the panel discussion.

Thank you

Team Samya