



## South Asia Initiative To End Violence Against Children

**“In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC”**

### **SAIEVAC ANNOUNCES THE REGIONAL ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION PLANNING WORKSHOP- 2014**

South Asia Initiative To End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) will organize and hold the Regional Advocacy and Communication Planning Workshop in Islamabad, Pakistan from 25-28 March 2014.

With funding from the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) and hosted by the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights, Government of Pakistan, the workshop will see a gathering of communication practitioners working in some of the leading child rights related partner agencies of SAIEVAC to provide technical support, on behalf of SAIEVAC.

SAIEVAC, as an Apex Body of SAARC for children desires to end violence against children throughout the SAARC region. This has been articulated in The Charter of SAIEVAC and translated in the SAIEVAC Work Plan (2010-2015), duly approved by its 3rd Governing Board Meeting held in Colombo in May 2013.

In January 2013, SAIEVAC organized a Regional Workshop on Advocacy & Communication and Documentation of Best Practices in Malé, Maldives to advance its mission related to the theme-based interventions. While the workshop made efforts to draft/develop the Regional Advocacy and Communications strategy addressing both the internal communication challenges of SAIEVAC as well as the challenges centered on the 5 thematic priorities, the need for specific country-based advocacy and communication plans is felt to be a necessity.

This draft Advocacy and Communication Strategy was further fine tuned to fulfill the need of an overall regional guideline establishing regional goals and objectives focusing on the 5 thematic priority intervention areas, while at the same time broad objectives were formulated that will guide national mechanisms to draw up communication plans at the respective country level.

One of the premises it has adopted is that while law reforms as a means to end violence against children is promising, using such legislative measures in conjunction with a strategic Advocacy and Communications plan by the respective SAARC member states will ensure an even more promising pre-requisite for sustained success and impacts.

Moreover, SAIEVAC and Member States continue to encounter difficulties in creating public awareness on child protection issues and on ending violence against children in particular. With lack of awareness, low literacy, low capacity of implementers etc., coupled with the prevalence of many harmful practices emanating from social, cultural and religious factors, advocacy and communications challenges for the 5 specific thematic priorities and issues remains to be formidable and needs attention in both the regional and national level Implementation plans. With the SAIEVAC Regional Advocacy and Communications Strategy framework in place, it is expected to translate the intentions into unified issue-focused actions at the country level.

It is therefore absolutely important for the National Mechanisms, NACGs and partners to come together in a regional workshop to prepare the Advocacy and Communication strategy/Plans centered around thematic issues/problems, established as priorities by the concerned member states.

The aims of this Regional Advocacy and Communication Workshop is to provide SAIEVAC and its partners a roadmap to advocate and communicate with the SAARC Governments, collaborating partners and National Mechanisms so as to build a collective concern to help advocate for policy changes, through sharing of key information and messages related to child protection for ending violence against children.

The objective is to adopt a unified Advocacy and Communication Strategy by all partners, in particular to the NACGs and national mechanisms to address the key priority VaC issues/problems that require strategic advocacy and communications interventions.

Specifically, the workshop is intended to bring together key and responsible people from partner agencies (National Mechanisms, NACGs/CSOs, government agencies with information/communication functions dealing with social communication and public information/outreach) in the SAARC member states to:

- Share and disseminate knowledge and information on the advocacy and communication approaches with special reference to the 5 thematic priorities of SAIEVAC, meant to end violence against children in the SAARC region;
- Identify and prioritise specific issue-focused country level VaC problems/issues and develop advocacy and communications strategy/plans to implement;
- To develop consultancy inputs at the national level to undertake formative studies to understand the behavioral gaps (knowledge, attitude, behavior and practices-opportunities, abilities and motivations) etc. of key target participants to establish baselines and further improve the focus of advocacy and communication at the country level.

For this, SAIEVAC provided a prior written guidance note to the respective National Mechanism/NACGs on how to prepare a brief situational analysis of problems and issues using existing secondary sources of data/information (3-4 pages), per priority theme identified. The presentations of the respective analysis from the respective member states will be used as the

starting point of the workshop for undertaking a deeper analysis by using an appropriate cause-effect analysis tool during the actual conduct of the workshop.

The meeting will be attended by key and relevant officials from the SAIEVAC National Mechanisms, including SAIEVAC Coordinators, representatives from the NACGs (NGOs/CSOs), representatives from government agencies with information/communication functions, dealing with social communication and public information/outreach in the SAARC member states.

It cannot be overemphasized here that the success of the workshop will depend upon participation by the SAIEVAC Coordinators with full programmatic knowledge and experience, along with relevant individuals from government agencies with information/communication functions dealing with social communication and public information/outreach) holding full contextual knowledge about the respective national media, development communication scenario and wider social, cultural and political contexts, including media access and preferences.

For nominations, the SAIEVAC National Mechanisms should be responsible to make their own nomination as well as co-ordinate nomination of a suitable participant from the Government information/communication agency dealing with social communication and public information/outreach. The NACGs should be responsible to facilitate the process of nominating one suitable participant, making efforts that the participant will contribute to the development of the country specific Advocacy and Communication Plan. A total of about 30-35 participants are expected to be present in the workshop.



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