
COMPREHENSIVE FINAL REPORT

**TRANSFORMING
TEACHERS
and TEACHING *for*
ADOLESCENT
HEALTH,
WELL-BEING *and*
GENDER EQUALITY**

A Regional Forum

September 23-25, 2025
Amari Bangkok, Thailand

Co-organised by:



Education International
Asia-Pacific Region
EIAP

In collaboration with:



TRANSFORMING TEACHERS AND TEACHING FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND GENDER EQUALITY: A TECHNICAL BRIEF

2026



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>. Any part of the text of the publication may be photocopied, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, or adapted and translated to meet local needs, for non-commercial and non-profit purposes. However, the copyright for images used remains with respective copyright holders. All forms of copies, reproductions, adaptations, and translations through mechanical, electrical, or electronic means should acknowledge ARROW as the source. A copy of the reproduction, adaptation, and/or translation should be sent to ARROW. In cases of commercial usage, ARROW must be contacted for permission at: arrow.org.my

PUBLISHED BY:

Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

1 & 2 Jalan Scott, Brickfields 50470, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Telephone +603 2273 9913/9914/9915

Fax +603 2273 9916

Email arrow@arrow.org.my

Web arrow.org.my

Bluesky [arrowwomen.bsky.social](https://bsky.social/arrowwomen.bsky.social)

Facebook ARROW.Women

Instagram [arrow_women](https://www.instagram.com/arrow_women)

YouTube ARROWWomen

LinkedIn [arrowwomen](https://www.linkedin.com/company/arrowwomen)



arrow.org.my

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Sai Jyothirmal Recherla

Deputy Executive Director, ARROW

Ranjeeta Silwal

Programme Manager, ARROW

Shiwa Karmacharya

Senior Programme Officer, ARROW

Sajja Singh

Senior Programme Officer, ARROW

REVIEWERS:

Uiyeong Son

Associate Programme Specialist for Gender Equality
In and Through Education, UNESCO

Undarmaa Batsukh

Regional Coordinator, Education International Asia Pacific Region

Sai Jyothirmal Recherla

Deputy Executive Director, ARROW

Ranjeeta Silwal

Programme Manager, ARROW

Shiwa Karmacharya

Senior Programme Officer, ARROW

Sajja Singh

Senior Programme Officer, ARROW

Riju Dhakal

Programme Officer, ARROW

Anuj Bhandari

Programme Officer, ARROW

Young Hwa Choi

Gender Programme Specialist, UNICEF

Sylvia Wong

Technical Adviser, Adolescents and Youth, UNFPA,
United Nations Population Fund Asia and Pacific Regional Office

Jenelle Babb

Regional Advisor, Education for Health and Wellbeing at UNESCO

RAPPORTEUR

Vasin Boonpattanaporn

COPY EDITOR

Stefanie Peters

GRAPHIC DESIGN and LAYOUT

Nicolette Mallari

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK

Anish Bajracharya

COVER PHOTO

CRS PHOTO/Shutterstock.com

This report publication is supported by UNFPA



CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	4
------------------------------------	---

OVERALL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
---------------------------	---

DAY 1 MORNING PLENARY SESSION	7
-------------------------------	---

CAFÉ 1 : Pre-service Teacher Education Innovations	10
--	----

CAFÉ 2 : In-service Teacher Training Innovations	13
--	----

Skills-building Workshop A1:	17
------------------------------	----

Building Teachers' Digital Competencies for ICT-enabled
Health and Well-being Education

Skills-building Workshop A2:	20
------------------------------	----

Embedding Values-Clarification in Teacher Education
and Training for CSE

Skills-building Workshop A3:	23
------------------------------	----

Supporting Teachers' Roles in Mainstreaming
Disability-inclusion in Sexuality Education

DAY 2 MORNING PLENARY SESSION	26
-------------------------------	----

CAFÉ 3 : Whole School and Gender-Transformative Approaches	29
--	----

CAFÉ 4 : Digital Innovations and Flexible, Lifelong Learning	33
--	----

Skills-building Workshop B1:	37
------------------------------	----

Delivering Collaborative Learning Approaches Focused
on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Skills-building Workshop B2:	40
------------------------------	----

Creating Safe, Gender-transformative and Inclusive Classrooms

Skills-building Workshop B3:	43
------------------------------	----

Designing and Assessing Skills-Based Lesson Plans

DAY 3 MORNING PLENARY SESSION	46
-------------------------------	----

CAFÉ 5 : Research and Evidence in Transformative Education	49
--	----

CAFÉ 6 : Measuring CSE Teaching and Learning in Education Systems	53
---	----

CLOSING SESSION	56
-----------------	----

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Convening, Partnership, and Teacher Organisations		National and Implementing Institutions (Country-Specific)	
ACT	Alliance of Concerned Teachers (The Philippines)	BGMS	Bharatiya Gramin Mahila Sangh (India)
ARROW	Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women	CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education (India)
C₃	Centre for Catalyzing Change (India NGO implementing Udaan programme)	CCIH	Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (Vietnam)
CHED	Commission on Higher Education (The Philippines)	CDC	Curriculum Development Centre (Nepal)
CHSI	Research Center for Health Solutions and Innovations Philippines, Inc.	NIMHANS	National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (India)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	PUSKAPA	Pusat Kajian dan Perlindungan Anak (Center on Child Protection and Well-being), University of Indonesia
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)	VNIES	Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences
EI	Education International	YGSI	Yayasan Gemilang Sehat Indonesia
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF)	YUWA	Youth-led organisation (Nepal)
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation	Policy, Education, and Health Frameworks	
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training (India)		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	ARH	Adolescent Reproductive Health (Education)
NTTU	National Teachers' Trade Union of Thailand	BtS	Breaking the Silence (UNFPA implementation approach for inclusive CSE)
NUTP	National Union of Teaching Profession (Malaysia)	CPD	Continuous Professional Development
 PGRI	Indonesian Teachers' Association (Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia)	CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
RHRN₂	Right Here Right Now 2 (Coalition)	CWR	Connect with Respect (UNESCO/UN Women GTE programme)
ROSA	Regional Office South Asia (UNICEF)	ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
STU	Singapore Teachers' Union	EMIS	Education Management Information System (Ministry of Education)
UN	United Nations	EPW	Education for Protection and Well-being (ChildFund Philippines model)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation	GAD	Gender and Development (Principles/Policy)
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	GBV	Gender-Based Violence
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	GPE KIX	Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
UPI	Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia	GTE	Gender-Transformative Education
YPEER AP	YPEER Asia Pacific Center		

Continuation:

Policy, Education, and Health Frameworks

HBI	Home Based Institute (ECCD setting, Bhutan)
HWC	Health and Wellness Coordinators (India's SHWP designation)
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication (Materials)
KIIs	Key Information Interviews (Qualitative research method)
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer (Inclusion category)
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Ally, plus
LSBE	Life Skills-Based Education
LSE	Life Skills Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHH	Menstrual Health and Hygiene
MML	Monitoring, Measuring, and Learning
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam)
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RRRR	Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (Australian GTE resource)
S.A.F.E.	Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit (Quality principles for SEL delivery)
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan (Nepal)
TEI	Teacher Education Institution
TIA	Trauma-Informed Approach\
ToT	Training of Trainers
VCAT	Value Clarification and Attitudes Training
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSA	Whole School Approach

Digital Tools and Resources

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMAZE	Animated video resources (used for CSE delivery)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT-CFT	ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (UNESCO)
IITE	UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education
Oky	Period Tracker App (The Philippines)
PINTAR	National Online Platform (Indonesia Ministry of Religious Affairs)
SERAT	Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (Framework)
SHWP	School Health and Wellness Programme (India)
SIMHA	School Initiative for Mental Health Advocacy (India)
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
U=U	Undetectable equals Untransmittable (HIV awareness campaign)

International Conventions and Agreements

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ITGSE	International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (UN)
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Other Contextual Terms

FDE	Federal Directorate of Education (Pakistan)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
PrEP/PEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis/Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (HIV prevention)
YPF	YP Foundation (Youth-led organisation)

OVERALL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Asia-Pacific region faces an urgent and interconnected crisis in adolescent health, well-being, and gender equality. In response, the ‘Transforming Teachers and Teaching’ regional forum convened key stakeholders—including educators, policymakers, youth leaders, civil society, and academia—from over 20 countries. The forum’s consensus was clear: teachers are the single most critical agents for delivering transformative change, and the strategic priority must shift from if we should teach sensitive content to how we can empower and professionalise educators to do so effectively.

The high-level, multi-stakeholder forum focused on three thematic pillars: (1) Curriculum; (2) Pedagogy; and (3) Monitoring, Measuring and Learning.

The discussions represent the collective synthesis of implementation evidence, research, and practitioner experience of participants from across the region. Some of the key discussions included:

1. TEACHER WELL-BEING IS A PRECONDITION FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING. The most significant barriers to implementing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Gender-Transformative Education (GTE) are not technical, but systemic and internal. Teachers report a profound ‘confidence deficit’, stemming from personal discomfort with sensitive topics (like sexual orientation and GBV), and a fear of social and professional backlash. This is compounded by severe workload barriers, as non-teaching administrative duties consume time needed for student emotional support. The forum concluded that systemic protection for teachers, requiring government ‘Commitment and Cash’, is an ethical and practical prerequisite for success.

2. PEDAGOGY MUST SHIFT FROM ‘WHAT’ TO ‘HOW’.

The forum strongly critiqued traditional, top-down ‘information cascade’ training models as ineffective. Transformative education requires a pedagogical shift to active, skills-based practice. Key frameworks endorsed by participants included:

- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** Adhering to the S.A.F.E. criteria (Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit), using collaborative methods like role-play to build skills in assertiveness and help-seeking.
- **Value Clarification and Attitudes Training (VCAT):** Mandatory, sustained training (e.g., using the Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle) to help teachers manage the conflict between their personal values and their professional, rights-based obligations.
- **Trauma-Informed Approach (TIA):** A non-negotiable ethical standard for teaching sensitive content, utilising content warnings, opt-out options, and hypothetical scenarios to ensure student safety and ‘Do No Harm’.

3. SUSTAINABILITY REQUIRES INSTITUTIONALISATION AND CO-CREATION.

To move beyond donor-funded pilot projects, programmes must be embedded within national systems. This requires youth-led co-creation, blending youth-friendly methodologies into official government Training of Trainers (ToT) to ensure relevance and buy-in. Furthermore, it demands new metrics for teacher appraisal that formally recognise and reward ‘community engagement and public service’ as a core contribution to nation-building, not just academic publications.

Key gaps identified for future work include expanding digital equity (prioritising offline-accessible tools), strengthening inclusion (with a specific focus on learners with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ youth), and adopting robust monitoring frameworks (like SERAT) to prove the long-term value of CSE to policymakers.

The core message of the forum is that the future of transformative education depends on **recognising** the indispensable value of the CSE teacher. This report is a call for a coordinated, multi-stakeholder effort—combining political will, robust financing, and skills-based pedagogical reform—to empower educators for the work ahead.



OPENING SESSION

Date and Time:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025, 09:00–10:30

Venue:

Watergate Ballroom 3, 6th Floor, Amari Bangkok

MC/Moderator:

Riju Dhakal, Programme Officer, ARROW; Ilan Enverga, Youth Representative, SDG 4 Youth and Student Network

Keynote Speakers:

Emeritus Professor Helen Cahill, School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia; Nurain 'Ain' Husnisa binti Saiful Nisam, Founder, Pocket of Pink, Malaysia

SESSION CONTEXT

The regional forum, 'Transforming Teachers and Teaching for Adolescent Health, Well-being and Gender Equality,' commenced its two-and-a-half-day programme in Bangkok, Thailand, convening key stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, youth leaders, civil society, development partners, and academia from over 20 countries across Asia-Pacific. The Opening Session was designed to set the stage by receiving welcoming remarks and practical information, featuring a joint keynote address from two speakers who would illuminate the objectives of the forum and inspire collective efforts for transforming teachers and teaching in essential components of quality, inclusive education. The initial remarks from the co-convening partners established the necessity of investing in high-quality teaching as a central factor in advancing adolescent health, well-being, and gender equality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Opening Session established that investing in high-quality teaching is not merely an educational necessity but an investment in our collective future, given the critical regional crises such as the high rate of mental disorder and suicide among adolescents. The co-conveners underscored that effective education must be gender-transformative and explicitly focused on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to challenge harmful norms and reduce violence, making this approach a non-negotiable requirement.

A central finding, highlighted by youth leader Ain Husnisa, was that transformation hinges on positioning young people as active collaborators and co-creators in curriculum design and policy, rather than treating them as passive stakeholders. Emeritus Professor Helen Cahill stressed that the professional development of teachers must pivot from focusing on the 'who' and 'what' of teaching to concentrating critically on the 'how' (pedagogy) through practical modelling and the provision of guiding resources to build competence and confidence.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The session was structured around greetings from co-convening partners, a joint keynote address, and an administrative overview. Key themes emerged concerning the urgency of the mission, the critical role of teachers, and the imperative for co-creation.

1. **The Ethical Imperative: Teachers as Central Agents of Change.** Representatives from the co-convening organisations underscored the severity of the adolescent health crisis in the region, providing the foundation for the forum's urgent mission. Sivananthi Thanenthiran, Executive Director of the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), emphasised the scale of the investment required, noting that the Asia-Pacific region is home to 60% of the world's youth (aged 10 to 24) and that investments in this demographic are crucial for realising sustainable development. She identified teachers as 'reliable sources of accurate scientific information' who play a crucial role in mentoring students to develop life skills and make informed, healthy decisions.

This urgency was reinforced by Marina Patrier of the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok, who connected teacher support directly to mental health outcomes. She cited the ‘stark statistic’ that nearly half of all mental health conditions begin by age 14, and that suicide is among the leading causes of death for 15- to 19-year-olds in the region. She concluded that supporting teachers as well-being educators is an investment in the ‘collective future’. This pro-teacher stance was echoed by Education International (EI) Asia Pacific, whose representative, Undarmaa Batsukh, affirmed that when teachers succeed, ‘education succeeds’, and when education succeeds, ‘humanity succeeds’.

2. **Challenging Norms: Gender Transformation as a Necessity** Multiple partners, including the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office and UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office, explicitly defined Gender-Transformative Education (GTE) as a necessity, not an optional ‘nice to have’ feature. Shreyasi Jha, Regional Gender and Adolescent Advisor from UNICEF, stated that GTE is a ‘requirement’ because it is what makes schools safer, enhances learning outcomes, reduces violence, and challenges stereotypes, thus ensuring that every adolescent can feel confident and become a leader of their life, body, and future.

Sylvia Wong of UNFPA emphasised that Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is fundamental to realising every young person’s right to knowledge, skills, and the capacity to make informed decisions about their health and body. She highlighted that CSE is more than just information; it is about equipping adolescents with skills for life, fostering respectful relationships, promoting gender equality, and teaching the core principles of consent and bodily autonomy. This requires embedding CSE in national curricula, backed by policy and sustained financing.

3. **Youth-Led Co-Creation and Addressing Injustice:** Youth leader Nurain ‘Ain’ Husnisa binti Saiful Nisam, Founder of Pocket of Pink, provided powerful testimony, grounding the discussion in real-life consequences of inadequate education. Her organisation arose from personal experience after facing a defamation lawsuit and cyberbullying for launching the #makeschoolsaferplace movement in response to a teacher’s inappropriate ‘rape

joke’. This movement achieved 21.4 million views, pushing for anti-sexual harassment policies and safer CSE modules.

Ain Husnisa argued that young people are often silenced in decision-making and should not be viewed as passive stakeholders but as active collaborators in designing the education system. Her organisation implements specific strategies to promote sustainable gender-transformative solutions, including:

- **Co-Designing Curriculum with Teachers:** Utilising consultation calls to identify specific school needs (e.g., addressing cyberbullying or sexual harassment) and integrating age-appropriate, interactive elements like art and cartoons into CSE modules.
- **Teacher-Youth Training Exchanges:** Volunteers co-facilitate training sessions with teachers to create a sustainable framework where a gender-equal culture can flourish.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The session implicitly introduced several key frameworks that would guide the forum’s deliberations:

- **Relationship-Centric Approach and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** It was consistently highlighted that the strongest predictor of positive student outcomes (such as behaviour, learning, and happiness) is a relationship-centric approach. This approach is intrinsically supported by effective SEL programmes. SEL focuses on developing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- **Gender-Transformative Education (GTE):** Defined by UNICEF and ARROW, GTE is an approach that actively equips teachers to challenge pervasive harmful gender norms and stereotypes, which are identified as root causes of poor adolescent outcomes.
- **The ‘How’ of Pedagogy:** Emeritus Professor Helen Cahill’s address, informed by her extensive research and teacher development experience, centred on the urgent need to address the gap in teacher professional development. The approach advocates moving training beyond content knowledge (‘what’) to focusing critically on practical pedagogical skills (‘how’) through practical modelling and collaborative learning.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The session included an interactive moment facilitated by moderators Ilan Enverga and Riju Dhakal.

- **A Call for Action (Feed Forward):** Following the joint keynote address, participants were invited to stand up to physically signify their role as 'active agents of change' and to acknowledge that they were all on a shared journey. Participants were then asked to write a note, termed 'feed forward' (as opposed to feedback), detailing one action they intended to take to be inspired by collective responsibility and thereby shaping a gender-transformative system. This action-oriented request set the tone for collective commitment over the following days.
- **Youth Engagement and Teacher Recognition:** Co-moderator Ilan Enverga, a teacher and school leader, highlighted the forum's adherence to the principle: 'Nothing about us without us' when approaching gender-transformative education. The forum specifically acknowledged the presence of teachers, inviting them to raise their hands and receiving a round of applause, reinforcing the pro-teacher advocacy of Education International.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Gender Transformation** is an indispensable requirement and not an optional component for fostering adolescent health, well-being, gender equality and achieving safer, more inclusive schools.
- **Teachers are the most reliable sources** of life-changing information and are crucial investors in the collective future of young people in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Teacher professional development** must be reformed to emphasise the pedagogical 'how' through practical skills and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), addressing current 'confidence deficits'.
- **Young people must be included** as active co-creators in curriculum design and policy, ensuring the relevance and sustainability of gender-transformative education.
- **The overall educational vision** must be one of 'Education - repairing past and present injustices while transforming'.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS

- How can the forum translate the principle of 'youth as co-creators' into concrete, sustainable institutional changes within national education systems?
- What practical, context-specific pedagogical models (the 'how') can address the lack of teacher confidence identified by the speakers?
- How can the collective 'feed forward' actions be compiled and monitored to ensure accountability for the commitments made during the forum?



Top: Shreyashi Jha, Regional Gender and Adolescent Advisor, UNICEF.
Bottom: Kusmita Tiwari, Treasurer, Institutional School Teachers Union (ISTU).

CAFÉ 1: Pre-service Teacher Education Innovations

Date and Time:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025, 11:00–12:30

Venue:

Pratunam Room, 7th Floor

Facilitator:

Riju Dhakal, Programme Officer, ARROW

SESSION CONTEXT

This World Café, running in parallel with CAFÉ 2, critically examined innovations in pre-service teacher education, addressing the foundational preparation of future educators to deliver Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), adolescent health, and gender equality education. This session showcased five country-led initiatives aimed at systemic reform through the integration of essential competencies at the pre-service level – mitigating long-term training deficits and ensuring sustainability.

Discussions focused on leveraging policy frameworks, technical expertise and cross-sector collaboration to ensure that new teachers enter the profession equipped with the knowledge, confidence and pedagogical skills to create inclusive, gender-responsive and health-promoting learning environments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAFÉ 1 highlighted that system-level change for CSE is most effective when embedded early in pre-service education.

Several countries are moving beyond pilot projects toward institutionalised reform.

The session reaffirmed the importance of inclusivity, exemplified by Indonesia's university-certified course designed to equip special education teachers to deliver content – including anatomy, puberty, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) – to children with diverse disabilities.

Sustainability and scalability emerged as recurring themes. Vietnam demonstrated a creative financing mechanism where revenue from wealthier schools supports training for teachers from under-resourced institutions, paired with a simplified annual reporting system to ensure accountability without overburdening educators.

The Philippines presented a comprehensive national policy linking Gender and Development (GAD) to teacher education – now reaching over 1,500 Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) – to institutionalise gender equity and GBV prevention competencies across the sector.

The session concluded that durable reform requires systemic integration of CSE and GAD into national teacher education policy, coupled with practical models that are locally adaptable and institutionally sustainable.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The session featured five concurrent stations, each presenting a distinct innovation. These models demonstrated multi-level interventions, cultural adaptation, and rights-based advocacy. A plenary discussion followed to synthesise learnings across stations.

Station 1:

CSE Summer Institute for Teachers In Vietnam – Leadership and Advocacy

Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population,
Vietnam

Presenter: Hoang Tu Anh, Director

This presentation outlined an annual three-day Summer Institute designed to strengthen leadership and advocacy among secondary and high school teachers, addressing persistent gaps in CSE knowledge.

To enhance sustainability, CCIHP employs a cross-subsidisation model, in which wealthier schools pay training fees that finance participation for teachers from less-resourced areas.

Teachers are required to submit a short annual report as part of the follow-up mechanism, ensuring accountability while acknowledging existing workload constraints.

Since its inception, the programme has trained over 250 teachers and 100 students, with the first formal collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) initiated in 2024, resulting in greater institutional engagement.

Station 2:

Teaching for Tomorrow – Inclusive CSE with Future Educators for Persons with Disabilities (Indonesia)

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), Yayasan Gemilang Sehat Indonesia (YGSI), RHRN2

Presenter: Ana Fatimatu Zahra, Lecturer and Researcher

UPI, a leading university specialising in special education, addressed a critical systemic gap: the lack of preparedness among pre-service teachers to deliver CSE to learners with disabilities. Following a 2022 study in three provinces, UPI launched a certified university course in 2023 for final-semester students.

The course combines theoretical and practical components. Students learn CSE fundamentals (anatomy, puberty, GBV), then design and implement adapted programmes in schools before reflecting on their outcomes. To date, 356 students across four cohorts have completed the course.

Sustainability is being strengthened through collaboration with 26 universities and the creation of 12 digital learning modules (currently in Bahasa), designed to extend access and continuity of learning post-graduation.

Station 3:

Teaching for TAPAT AT SAPAT SA LAHAT (True and Adequate for All) – Linking Gender and Development in Teacher Education (Philippines)

Technical Panel for Teacher Education, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), The Philippines

Presenter: Dr. Edizon Fermin, Chair

The Philippines' CHED presented its national framework for integrating Gender and Development (GAD) principles into teacher education.

The updated 2025 policy mandates GAD integration across curriculum, research, and community outreach within 1,533 TEIs (covering 1,977 universities and colleges). This reform ensures that all pre-service teachers acquire competencies in gender equity and GBV prevention.

The IDEAS (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Sustainability) framework provides a holistic model for embedding transformative gender education into teacher preparation.

Station 4:

Strengthening Teacher Capacity for Gender-Transformative Education through Gender-Responsive Pedagogy and CSE (Lao PDR)

Department of Teacher Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR and National University of Laos.

Presenters: Associate Professor Vongdeuan Osay, Director General (Department of Teacher Education) and Dr. Kethsana Kanyason, Deputy Head, Academic Affairs Division (National University of Laos)

This presentation showcased Lao PDR's progress in embedding CSE and gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) in teacher training, in collaboration with UNESCO and UNFPA. After years of advocacy, CSE evolved from being a cross-cutting topic within biology to a standalone subject in teacher education, now implemented across 16 TEIs.

Key challenges include navigating diverse cultural norms among 47 ethnic groups, where taboos often limit women's ability to discuss sexuality.

Innovative strategies such as linking CSE with STEM education and establishing a national WhatsApp group for trainers, are enhancing communication and peer learning.

Station 5:

Using a Whole School Approach to Build Mental Health-friendly Schools (India)

School Initiative for Mental Health Advocacy (SIMHA), Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

Presenter: Ipsita Malaviya, Project Manager

The SIMHA model integrates mental health and well-being within a Whole School Approach, engaging teachers, parents, and the community in shared responsibility for student protection and psychosocial support.

Its three pillars—promotion (awareness/resilience), prevention (multilingual toolkits), and intervention—reflect a trauma-informed, rights-based pedagogy that also prioritises teacher well-being.

Currently implemented in 77 schools in Mumbai through a government MOU, the programme ensures sustainability by co-developing plans with state authorities, addressing specific local issues such as substance use.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

- **Inclusive CSE Model (Indonesia):** Demonstrates how pre-service special education programmes can effectively prepare teachers to address the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of learners with disabilities.
- **Gender and Development Integration (Philippines):** Illustrates large-scale institutional transformation through mandatory GAD integration into national teacher education policy and practice.
- **Sustainability Model (Vietnam):** Offers an innovative funding and accountability mechanism that balances financial viability with teacher workload realities.
- **Structural Reform for CSE (Lao PDR):** Highlights the transition from integration within other subjects to establishing CSE as a standalone discipline, ensuring pedagogical depth and visibility.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The plenary discussions and Q&A clarified several practical and systemic issues:

- **Accountability and Follow-Up (Vietnam):** Teachers' annual reporting is intentionally simplified to sustain engagement and allow effective follow-up by CCIHP.
- **Programme Structure (Vietnam):** The Summer Institute brings together teachers from different schools to encourage peer exchange and regional collaboration.
- **Intersectional and Gender-Transformative Approach (India – SIMHA):** The programme integrates gender and rights perspectives, with plans to collaborate with CSE experts to align frameworks and prevent duplication.
- **Institutionalisation (Philippines):** Participants underscored that sustained success requires not only policy alignment but also enduring institutional commitment and partnerships.



Hoang Tu Anh, Director, Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population, Vietnam.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Pre-service education offers the highest leverage for embedding CSE and GAD competencies in future teacher cohorts, addressing gaps before they enter classrooms.
- National policy mandates, such as CHED's GAD integration, are essential for large-scale and lasting institutional reform.
- Inclusive CSE models like UPI's specialised course demonstrate effective adaptation for learners with disabilities.
- Sustainable implementation depends on creative funding (e.g., Vietnam's cross-subsidy model) and pragmatic accountability mechanisms that respect teacher workload.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- How can the challenge of teacher workload be managed so that accountability systems remain effective yet realistic?
- Can Indonesia's digital Inclusive CSE modules (currently in Bahasa) be adapted and translated to support broader linguistic and disability contexts across Asia?
- How can Teacher Education Institutions worldwide adopt a composite approach combining institutional policy rigour with rights-based, transformative CSE advocacy?

CAFÉ 2: In-service Teacher Training Innovations

Date and Time:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025, 11:00–12:30

Venue:

Phanfa-Lilat Room, 7th Floor

Facilitator:

Ilan Enverga, SDG 4 Youth and Student Network

SESSION CONTEXT

This World Café, running in parallel with CAFÉ 1, focused on in-service teacher training innovations, moving the discussion from the preparation of future teachers (as seen in CAFÉ 1) to supporting existing educators and addressing the practical challenges they face in the classroom.

This session explored five diverse programmes aimed at bridging the gap between policy mandates and effective classroom delivery of adolescent health, well-being and CSE. The innovations ranged from integrating youth-led advocacy and activity-based learning into government syllabi to large-scale national efforts leveraging digital tools and mental health support, often necessitated by external crises such as the pandemic.

A core theme was how to build teacher confidence and create supportive school environments when teaching sensitive content.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The session collectively affirmed that traditional cascade training models are ineffective, necessitating highly focused, two-level training mechanisms and sustained professional development to overcome information dilution.

A critical finding from Nepal and Lao PDR was the success of youth-led co-creation and activity-based pedagogy in building teacher confidence and establishing rapport with students for sensitive topics.

India's national School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP) demonstrated that large-scale success requires dedicated time within the curriculum (e.g., weekly classroom sessions) and institutional monitoring via a micro-site.

Furthermore, the impact of crisis was highlighted by NIMHANS's pandemic response, which utilised online, multilingual modules focused explicitly on teacher well-being as a prerequisite for effectively educating students.

These presentations underscored that effective in-service training must be culturally contextualised and must address the psychological load carried by teachers themselves.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The session featured five distinct country models, illustrating varied strategies for enhancing the competence and support structures for working teachers.

Station 1:

Bridging Models: Aligning Government ToT and Youth-Led CSE Approaches - Innovations from CHOICE and VOICES Modules in In-Service Teacher Training in Nepal

[Right Here Right Now Nepal, YUWA, Nepal](#)

Presenters: Rajendra Maharjan, Country Coordinator and Bipana Shrestha, SRHR Programme Coordinator

This station tackled the persistent implementation gap in Nepal, where CSE is compulsory until Grade 8 but optional (and poorly selected) in Grades 9 and 10.

To bridge the lack of teacher confidence and practical skills despite having a government manual (ToT), the RHRN2 Nepal coalition integrated youth-led methodologies from their Choices and Voices module into the official government Training of Trainers (ToT).

The methodology is heavily based on interactive and participatory tools like role-play, storytelling, and group reflections.

Activities shared included making teachers draw their 'safe space' (Interestingly, none drew the school.) and using physical role-play (where teachers acted as reproductive organs and condoms) to deliver sensitive content like menstruation and pleasure.

This blended approach aims for sustainability by utilising the existing government framework while enhancing its impact with youth-friendly techniques.

A teacher testimonial affirmed the interactive nature of the training.

Station 2:

Champions of Change: Teachers Leading School Health and Wellness Programme in India

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia, India

Presenters: Sarita Jadav, National Programme Officer

This station detailed the phased rollout of the national School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP), which encompasses 11 thematic areas, including Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), mental health, and safe internet practices.

Recognising the impossibility of training 1.5 million schools, the programme focused on the 30,000 schools affiliated with the CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education).

The key structural innovation was the mandated designation of two teachers in every school as Health and Wellness Coordinators (HWCs).

The training strategy moved away from ineffective multi-level cascade models, adopting only a two-level cascade: UNESCO/NCERT experts train 964 Master Trainers (mostly principals), who in turn train 40,000 HWCs over a two-day Continuous Professional Development (CPD) session.

Policy reinforcement is critical: the National Education Policy mandates 50 hours of annual training for every teacher and principal, and the SHWP is integrated into the school timetable via mandatory weekly classroom sessions.

Implementation is monitored through a micro-site where HWCs report activities, methodologies used (e.g., role play, case study), and the number of children reached.

Station 3:

Empowering Bhutan's Early Childhood Care and Development Facilitators through Life Skills and CSE

Health and Wellbeing Division, Department of Education Programmes, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Bhutan

Presenter: Sonam Wangdi, Deputy Chief Programme Officer

This initiative addresses the specific training needs of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) facilitators who cater to children aged three to five.

The presenters highlighted the challenge that most ECCD facilitators are Class XII graduates with only 13 days of basic training.

The goal is to establish a strong foundation for children's healthy attitudes and behaviours by equipping these facilitators with Life Skills-based CSE training.

The core innovation is the development of specific, age-appropriate guidelines that integrate Life Skills and CSE content by aligning them with two mandatory sessions already conducted by facilitators: the Early Learning Development Standard (ELDS) and 17 annual parenting sessions.

The notes highlighted the unique home-based ECCD model, where facilitators travel to homes rather than having children gather at a single centre.

Training content includes media safety, body awareness, and gender equity. Follow-up support is provided through a dedicated public Facebook group.

Station 4:

Teachers' well-being programme in the pandemic: An Indian Experience

National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, India

Presenter: Dr. Jayakumar Christy, Additional Professor

This station presented a direct response to the psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers.

NIMHANS, acting as the federal government's nodal agency for psychological care in emergencies, developed an online capacity building module.

The module comprised 15 interactive sessions (45 minutes to one hour each), covering themes such as stress management, emotional management, mindfulness, and assertiveness.

Key features included:

- **Cultural Contextualisation:** Recognising India's linguistic diversity, the training was delivered in 13 different Indian languages alongside English to ensure effective assimilation of content.
- **Focus on the Educator:** The approach prioritised teacher well-being by addressing their own stress, family pressures and anxieties (including those related to vaccination), recognising that teachers cannot support students if their own mental health is compromised.
- **Systemic Support:** The module was connected to India's national Tele-Manas helpline, creating a referral mechanism that directs teachers in distress to mental health professionals across the country.

Station 5:

Co-Creation of a Comprehensive Sexuality Education Training Module in Lao PDR: A Teacher-Centred Model for Strengthening Confidence and Classroom Delivery

Faculty of Public Health, University of Health Sciences, Lao PDR

Presenter: Dr Sychareun Vanphanom, Dean

This station detailed a pilot project in Luang Namtha province, bordering China, which faces high rates of internal and external migration and associated sexual risk behaviour. The intervention focused on co-creation to adapt international CSE guidance (from UNESCO/UNFPA) to the local context.

The training involved a two-week structure: the first week for teachers to gain familiarity with the international CSE material, followed by a second week dedicated entirely to active learning where teachers, working in small groups, adapted the modules to local life stories, risk behaviours (such as trafficking and early pregnancy), and even physically drawing flip charts.

The lack of teacher confidence was identified as the main obstacle, compounded by a high workload where one teacher may teach five or six subjects.

The intervention negotiated with school principals to secure at least two hours per week for CSE, though these were often late-afternoon sessions.

The mock delivery session was found to be particularly effective in boosting teacher confidence.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The models presented demonstrated an operational reliance on several core pedagogical and structural concepts:

- **Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE):** All models were firmly rooted in LSBE, prioritising the enhancement of core competencies such as decision-making, critical thinking, assertiveness and negotiation as the foundation for dealing with complex health issues.
- **Youth-Led Co-Creation (Bridging Models):** Nepal and Lao PDR explicitly utilised young people and youth-friendly methodologies (such as the Choices and Voices module) to enrich the existing government curriculum. This approach positions youth as co-creators, ensuring that the content is locally relevant and highly engaging for learners.
- **Two-Level Cascade and CPD:** India's SHWP demonstrated the strategic move away from inefficient multi-level cascade models, adopting a simplified Master Trainer to HWC (Health and Wellness Coordinator) system, underpinned by the national policy mandate for Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- **Well-being as Pedagogy:** The NIMHANS model emphasised that teacher well-being must be addressed as a prerequisite for effective delivery of CSE/health content, utilising Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) principles to create online support mechanisms.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The session concluded with a plenary reflection focusing on key strategic recommendations for improving in-service training.

- **Cultural Contextualisation:** A collective reflection from delegates representing Myanmar, Pakistan, and Indonesia emphasised that CSE cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all solution'. Implementation must utilise locally, contextually and religiously relevant approaches that reflect the tradition, culture and religion of the community to gain acceptance and ensure effectiveness.
- **Teacher Co-Creation and Union Buy-in:** Pranita (from India) stressed that it is critical for individual teachers, and importantly, teacher unions, to be part of the co-creation process for any new training programme or module to ensure stronger buy-in.
- **Support Mechanisms:** There was a strong call for creating more supportive environments and peer support mechanisms. These safe spaces are necessary for teachers to raise their fears and dilemmas openly during implementation, ensuring they receive the necessary supportive voice from colleagues and peers.
- **Confidence Gap:** The discussion highlighted that training is essential for teachers who are often given modules and asked to deliver sensitive content without the necessary support or capacity building. The experience of Lao PDR specifically underlined that teachers' lack of confidence is a primary obstacle to effective delivery.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- In-service training must move from information transfer to activity-based, participatory pedagogy to build teacher confidence and create a safe and open classroom environment for sensitive topics.
- Integrating youth-led methodologies (co-creation) into government training frameworks strengthens relevance and sustainability and is crucial for bridging the 'knowledge-practice gap'.
- Large-scale programmes require institutionalised monitoring (e.g., micro-sites) and mandatory time allocation (e.g., weekly dedicated class time) to ensure consistent implementation across schools.
- Teacher well-being must be directly addressed and supported (e.g., through mental health programmes and helplines) to ensure teachers have the capacity to deliver emotionally challenging content effectively.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS

- How can Ministries of Education (MOEs) formally and sustainably integrate youth-led methodologies into national teacher training curricula and resource budgets?
- What policy levers are required to ensure that the necessary resources are allocated for continuous teacher mentoring and support, rather than relying solely on initial training workshops?
- How can peer support mechanisms and communities of practice be institutionalised region-wide to provide teachers with safe spaces to discuss challenges and address personal biases related to CSE?



Rajendra Maharjan, Country Coordinator, Right Here Right Now Nepal, YUWA, Nepal.

SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOP A1: Building Teachers' Digital Competencies for ICT-enabled Health and Well-being Education

Date and Time:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025, 13:30–18:00

Trainer:

Yulia Plakhutina, Unit of ICT in Health Education, UNESCO
Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE)

SESSION CONTEXT

This skills-building workshop addressed the paramount need to strengthen teacher training in digital competencies for the effective delivery of **ICT-enabled health and well-being education**. Held on Day 1, the session directly engaged with the forum's thematic focus on transforming the curriculum to meet 21st-century skills requirements, **including information and communication technology (ICT) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**. The workshop aimed to move beyond basic digital familiarity to critically exploring the ethical, responsible, and inclusive use of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and digital tools in the classroom, thereby strengthening teacher confidence and competence in this rapidly evolving pedagogical landscape.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop highlighted a significant tension between the opportunities presented by AI in adolescent health and the risks teachers feel unprepared to manage, such as sexual exploitation, misinformation and the potential loss of critical thinking skills. Participants were divided on their confidence using AI tools in teaching, yet demonstrated near-unanimous agreement on the immediate necessity of training teachers to discuss **digital well-being** with learners.

Key innovations **prototyped** were focused on creating support structures—from AI-powered peer learning platforms for teachers like the **“Teacher Salad’ Peer Learning Platform” (Fruit Salad Team)** to mental health assessment apps like the **‘Gamified Mental Health App’ (Watermelon**

Team)—all of which emphasised the need for cultural sensitivity, guaranteed anonymity for sensitive feedback and alignment with UNESCO's **Human-centred mindset** and **Ethics of AI** frameworks.[1] Ultimately, the session concluded that integrating digital pedagogy must be accompanied by explicit policy to manage digital risks and ensure teacher well-being (e.g., reducing workload), rather than contributing to **digital fatigue**.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The deep exploration of digital tools and AI applications revealed systemic challenges and innovative solutions across several key themes:

1. **The Digital Confidence Gap and Unmanaged Risks.**
Through the ‘Digital Footprints’ Continuum Line activity participants self-assessed their preparedness and concerns regarding technology. The results showed a uniform spread in teacher confidence regarding the use of AI tools in teaching, with reasons for disagreement including a lack of clarity on ethical use and the existence of biases in AI. However, a strong consensus emerged on two points: the majority felt their students were more digitally adept than they were, and an overwhelming majority agreed that using digital tools exposes learners to risks that teachers are not yet ready to manage. Identified risks included sexual exploitation and the potential erosion of creativity and critical thinking skills in learners.
2. **Systemic Barriers and the Challenge of Misinformation.**
Participants from Indonesia, the Philippines, and the Maldives identified significant structural challenges that impede effective digital integration. These barriers included substantial **connectivity and infrastructure gaps**, particularly in rural areas, and the high financial cost and sustainability of ongoing platform subscriptions. The Maldives delegation reported high levels of **digital fatigue** resulting from an overload of online meetings. A particularly acute concern, highlighted by the Philippines, was the use of digital tools to disseminate **fake news** and push anti-rights agendas, often through the generation of fake pictures and news designed to incite public outrage. The challenge for teachers is how to equip students to identify fact from misinformation. The Lao example further demonstrated this, noting that while the government produces quality content, civil

society organisations (CSOs) often produce low-quality content that achieves a larger reach and more views, suggesting a critical gap in simplifying correct, scientifically-backed information.

3. Prototyping Solutions for Teacher Support and Student Well-being.

The ‘Rapid Prototyping: Designing an AI well-being tool’ activity generated five distinct solutions, revealing common concerns about safeguarding.

- **Teacher Support:** The “‘Teacher Administrative Support App’ (Strawberry Team)”, also referred to as the ‘RFR App’, was pitched to manage teachers’ administrative tasks, aiming to free up 60–70% of their time for innovation. The “‘Teacher Salad’ Peer Learning Platform’ (Fruit Salad Team)” pitched an AI-powered peer learning platform for CSE resources, designed to ensure credibility and address the gap left by generic social media groups.
- **Student Well-being and Safety:** The “‘Emotion Wall’ for Learners’ (Grapes Team)” was proposed as a safe space for students to share feelings and report violence or bullying, with data channelled confidentially to a trained, non-classroom-linked focal person. The ‘Gamified Mental Health App’ (Watermelon Team) was designed to assess mental status via gameplay, providing referrals and support, but raised concerns about the AI potentially ‘hallucinating’ or incorrectly assessing severe mental health issues.



Ana Fatimatuzzahra, Lecturer and Researcher, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), Yayasan Gemilang Sehat Indonesia (YGSI), RHRN2.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The workshop provided two core frameworks from UNESCO to guide the ethical and professional integration of digital tools:

- **ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT v3):** This framework is structured across three progressive levels of teacher development: **Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Deepening, and Knowledge Creation.** It addresses six aspects of professional practice:
 - > **Understanding ICT in Education/Policy:** Aligning ICT use with policy and regulatory frameworks.
 - > **Curriculum and Assessment:** Designing assessments that integrate ICT, such as using digital simulations to evaluate decision-making skills.
 - > **Pedagogy:** Employing ICT-informed teaching methods, like digital storytelling instead of lectures.
 - > **Application of Digital Skills:** Practical skills, such as knowing how to use an AI writing tool responsibly and teaching students to fact-check outputs.
 - > **Organisation and Administration:** Managing school logistics, resources, and infrastructure, such as using a Learning Management System (LMS) to send personalised well-being resources.
 - > **Teacher Professional Learning:** Continuous learning and development in digital pedagogies, such as joining an online community of practice for sexuality educators.
- **UNESCO AI Competency Frameworks for Teachers and Students:** These frameworks promote a shift towards ethical and human-centred AI use. They emphasise the need for:
 - > **Responsible Use and Ethics:** Understand AI’s capabilities and limits, focusing on equity, fairness, transparency, and avoiding harm. The progression levels include moving from understanding Ethical principles to actively Co-creating ethical rules.
 - > **Boundaries in Health:** Teachers must be aware they are educators, not health professionals, and AI tools used in class must not drift into diagnosis or medical advice. The training stresses providing general definitions of common health terms while avoiding personalised recommendations.
 - > **Sensitive Content and Trust:** Handling topics like gender, sexuality and mental health requires special care to mitigate risks of bias or censorship. Safeguarding student anonymity and psychological safety is paramount.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The session utilised multiple interactive formats, underscoring the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice.

- **The Continuum Line Activity:** This icebreaker measured participant comfort levels, noting that confidence in using AI tools for teaching was divided, while confidence in supporting learners' safe use was low. The unanimous agreement that teachers require training to discuss digital well-being was a key collective output.
- **Micro-Simulation Group Work (Group Work 2):** Participants applied tool concepts to diverse scenarios (e.g., refugee classrooms, low-tech rural schools). The discussion revealed the necessity of **Value Clarification Training (VCAT)** for teachers, especially when facilitating anonymous platforms on sexuality, to ensure personal values do not conflict with the scientifically accurate information provided by the AI. Furthermore, groups focused on adaptation for low-tech environments, suggesting paper-based alternatives or low-bandwidth solutions. A key discussion centred on a simulated **Chatbot for Teacher Performance Feedback**, which highlighted ensuring **true anonymity** as the biggest challenge, especially for minority students (e.g. LGBTQ+) whose feedback could be easily inferred from aggregated data. The need for clear ground rules, a 'no retaliation' policy, and collective, rather than individual, reports was stressed.
- **Digital Literacy Group Synthesis (Group Work 3):** This section synthesised the necessary competencies for teachers and learners:
 - > For Teachers: Key challenges included workload, infrastructure, and fear/confidence. Practical ways to strengthen literacy included guidelines, incentives, and strong leadership.
 - > For Students: Key literacies identified were Digital Citizenship, Digital Rights Education, and Critical Research Competencies (e.g., accuracy and validity checking).
- **Mock Panel Discussion (Group Work 4):** Panellists raised critical questions regarding the pitched AI tools:
 - > **Trauma-Informed Approach: The 'Gender-Based Violence Education Platform' (Passion Fruit Team)** was questioned on how their GBV education platform handles the fact that content exposure might be traumatic for victim-survivors.

- > **Misuse and Ethics: Concerns were raised over the 'Student Wellness & Activity Tracker' (Mango Team)'s** use of tracking data, asking whether monitoring co-curricular activities could, paradoxically, increase depression among students. The **'Gamified Mental Health App' (Watermelon Team)** raised the specific risk of AI 'hallucinating' a diagnosis.
- > **Inclusion:** Panellists asked about the accessibility of apps like the **'Student Wellness & Activity Tracker' (Mango Team)** for illiterate parents, requiring broader safeguarding approaches.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Transforming teaching requires urgent investment in digital literacy that moves beyond basic ICT skills to integrate ethical **AI principles, human-centred design, and safeguarding knowledge**.
- The overwhelming consensus supports mandatory training for teachers on **digital well-being** to proactively manage risks such as sexual exploitation and misinformation.
- The effectiveness of AI tools in sensitive areas (like mental health and CSE) is conditional upon establishing **guaranteed anonymity, anti-retaliation policies**, and the integration of **Value Clarification Training** for teacher facilitators.
- Systemic barriers—including **digital fatigue, excessive teacher workload, and poor connectivity**—must be addressed by policymakers before digital tools can be successfully scaled and utilised sustainably.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS

- How can national **Ministries of Education** secure dedicated financing and infrastructure improvements to bridge the connectivity gap and ensure digital equity, particularly in rural and low-resource settings?
- What guidelines and institutional standards must be developed to prevent AI tools from drifting into the realm of diagnosis or medical advice in the classroom setting?
- How can teacher training programmes effectively build the **critical research competencies** necessary for teachers and students to distinguish accurate health information from the low-quality content and fake news proliferating online?

SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOP A2: Embedding Values-Clarification in Teacher Education and Training for CSE

Date and Time:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025, 13:30–18:00

Trainer:

Arushi Singh, Education Section, UNESCO HQS

SESSION CONTEXT

This intensive skills-building workshop addressed the critical challenge of **Value Clarification and Attitudes Training (VCAT)** within teacher professional development for **Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)**. The context was established by recognising that a teacher's personal values, derived from family, culture, and upbringing, frequently clash with the evidence-based, rights-based values necessary for effective CSE delivery. The session, drawn from a UNESCO in-service teacher training manual, aimed to equip educators and trainers with the practical tools required to reflect on, analyse, and manage their personal biases. The ultimate objective was to transition teachers from being potentially 'dangerous in the classroom' due to bias, to becoming highly self-aware, professional facilitators of core CSE values such as consent, equality, and access to medically accurate information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The session's core finding was that achieving transformative education requires teachers to engage in continuous **reflexive practice** to manage the conflict between their personal beliefs and professional CSE standards. The anonymous 'crumpled paper' exercise identified topics like sexual orientation, abortion, and access to family planning for unmarried adolescents as the most uncomfortable to teach, revealing a critical need for structured VCAT.

Participants explicitly requested practical tools, including '**A format for VCAT trainings**' and '**an interactive activity I can use**'. Solutions presented emphasised policy advocacy to scrutinise curriculum setters whose personal values create systemic policy blockages (Sri Lanka example). Conceptually, the adoption of the **Gibbs' Reflective Cycle** was endorsed as a practical method for post-incident management, while understanding the **Wheel of Power and Privilege** was deemed essential for deep reflexive self-examination necessary for **Gender-Transformative Education (GTE)**.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The workshop generated critical insights through interactive exercises and thematic discussions, focusing on defining core concepts, identifying policy barriers, and establishing professional boundaries.

1. **Defining Values, Conflicts, and Professional Boundaries.** Participants defined values as a 'belief system that guides you to... make decisions' and 'the thing in your heart,' but crucially agreed they are 'socially constructed' and therefore mutable. The session used the anonymous 'crumpled paper' exercise to expose the reality of teacher discomfort, confirming that the most challenging topics were those concerning sexual orientation, abortion and services for unmarried adolescents. This conflict was addressed by establishing the **Core CSE Values** (e.g., the right to medically accurate information, the right to affordable, non-judgemental services and the absolute requirement for consent and non-coercion) as the professional standard teachers must uphold. During discussions, a critical boundary was established: teachers should discourage the sharing of personal stories (by both the teacher and the learner) to protect professional boundaries and ensure a safe classroom environment, instead referring to agreed-upon class rules.
2. **Addressing Systemic Policy and Linguistic Barriers.** The discussion moved beyond individual bias to target systemic obstacles stemming from the values of institutional leaders. Experience from Sri Lanka demonstrated that a single curriculum setter's values regarding contraception created a '**policy blockage**' lasting 'two or three decades', preventing content inclusion. This policy vulnerability was reinforced by a participant from the Philippines, who warned that

‘national values’ can be manipulated by anti-rights groups to contest CSE curricula, resulting in a shift to non-rights-based ‘reproductive health’ language that works ‘against actually... universally good’.

The importance of linguistic clarity and contextualisation was also highlighted. A Filipino participant distinguished between *pagpapahalaga* (values—vital, indispensable) and *paniniwala* (belief—which can change overnight), underscoring the necessity of using precise language in VCAT. The broader regional consensus was that Ministries of Education (MOEs) must use locally relevant, culturally sensitive language (e.g., using ‘adolescent reproductive health’ instead of the technical term CSE in specific contexts like Indonesia) to secure community buy-in and sustainability.

3. **Promoting Continuous Professional Development and Male Engagement.** Participants bringing experience from teacher training emphasised that VCAT is not a one-off event but requires continuous up-skilling and re-skilling, backed by sufficient budgeting and logistics, to prevent the information from being diluted. The need for broader advocacy was acknowledged, including gaining buy-in from older teachers to participate in VCAT and engaging Heads of **Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs)**. Furthermore, a representative from Timor-Leste stressed the need for **male engagement**—establishing male teacher groups and ‘male pioneers’—to counter the perception that gender issues are solely ‘women’s problems’.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The session centred on the imperative of moving from simple reflection to deep self-examination, underpinned by two key frameworks:

- **Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle (Post-Incident Management):** This six-stage model was presented as a structured tool for managing difficult incidents post-hoc: **Description** (What happened?), **Feelings** (What was I thinking and feeling?), **Evaluation** (What was good and bad?), **Analysis** (Making sense of the experience), **Conclusion** (What needs improvement?), and **Action Plan** (How to improve?). The cycle was confirmed as effective by a mental health professional who uses it in counselling internships to help interns analyse and improve their practice after dealing with challenging cases.
- **Reflexive Practice and Power:** This concept was introduced as the shift from external reflection to inward self-examination, asking: **‘Why do I think the way I do?’**. This is mandatory because evidence shows that CSE that explicitly challenges gender and power dynamics is five times more effective. The **Wheel of Power and Privilege** was endorsed as a ‘powerful framework’ to help facilitators and teachers understand the intersectionality of their own social status, gender, and power, ensuring they do not inadvertently impose biases rooted in privilege.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The workshop employed several interactive exercises designed to extract and clarify participant experiences and practical solutions.

- **Bring-in/Take-away Exercise (Qualitative Data):** The initial session utilised Post-it notes for participants to list what they ‘bring’ and what they hoped to ‘take away’. The ‘takeaways’ demonstrated a high functional need for tools, including:
 - > ‘How to implement CSE in culturally appropriate methods’.
 - > ‘A format for VCAT training’.
 - > ‘An interactive activity I can use when taking VCAT Sessions’.
 The ‘bring-ins’ showcased rich regional expertise:
 - > **Advocacy:** Experience from the Philippines on CSE mainstreaming advocacy and knowledge of working with teachers on mental health support.
 - > **Innovation:** Ideas on bridging gender equality using sport as a medium in an urban setting and experience on teacher education policy and curriculum development.
- **Core Values Group Work (Thematic Scenarios):** Groups discussed how to impart Core CSE Values to teachers:
 - > **Accurate Information:** Required Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to ensure the information is ‘medically accurate and up-to-date’, preventing dilution through the training cascade.
 - > **Consent:** Groups agreed that teaching consent must start from simple concepts like permission to touch body parts, before escalating to sexual activity. The consensus was that this requires clearer definitions ‘depending on the context’.

- **Classroom Scenarios (Reflexive Practice):** Participants analysed three scenarios to formulate professional, rights-based responses:
 - > **Parent Complaining about Puberty Lessons:** The consensus was to pre-emptively manage backlash through parent orientations or melas to gain community buy-in. The Philippines experience of using survey data (showing parents trust trained teachers and health professionals over themselves) was shared as an effective tool to quieten the debate.
 - > **Learner Asks How Females Masturbate:** The agreed professional response was the necessity of providing medically accurate information (including an accurate drawing of the clitoris) while maintaining an open-minded approach. If unsure, the teacher should take a brief 'time out' to return with a neutral, fact-based response.
 - > **Learners Kissing Passionately:** Groups emphasised the principle of 'Do No Harm'. The teacher must engage in private communication with the individuals involved first, followed by a whole-group discussion, guided by clear, pre-agreed positive discipline protocols.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Self-Awareness is Professionalism:** Teachers must continuously examine their personal values in relation to the evidence-based values of CSE, recognising that this reflective and reflexive practice is necessary to manage internal conflict and potential bias.
- **Rights-Based Foundation:** Effective CSE must be grounded in non-negotiable professional values: the right to medically accurate information, the right to affordable, non-judgemental services, and the absolute requirement for consent and non-coercion.
- **Advocacy for Systemic Change:** Advocacy efforts must target curriculum setters and policymakers whose personal values create systemic blockages, requiring greater scrutiny and rights-based counter-frameworks.
- **Tools for Practice:** Frameworks like the **Gibbs' Reflective Cycle** are essential for structured reflection post-incident, while tools like the **Wheel of Power and Privilege** aid in necessary reflexive self-examination regarding one's own biases and positionality.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS

- How can teacher unions and MOEs collaborate to institutionalise VCAT and reflexive practice as mandatory, continuous elements of teacher professional development, rather than relying on external projects?
- What policy levers are required to ensure transparency and accountability in the curriculum setting process to prevent a single individual's values from blocking the inclusion of evidence-based, life-saving content?
- How can male engagement (e.g., establishing male teacher pioneers) be strategically integrated into GTE and VCAT initiatives to ensure the work is correctly positioned as a cross-cutting issue, rather than solely a 'women's problem'?



Top: Arushi Singh, Education Section, UNESCO HQS.

Bottom: Ipsita Malaviya, Project Manager, School Initiative for Mental Health Advocacy (SIMHA), Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India.

SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOP A3: Supporting Teachers' Roles in Mainstreaming Disability-inclusion in Sexuality Education

Date and Time:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025, 13:30–18:00

Trainers:

Ramya Anand, TARSHI, India; Shalini Singh, CREA, India;
and Maria Bakaroudis, Comprehensive Sexuality Education
Specialist, UNFPA HQS

SESSION CONTEXT

This skills-building workshop was dedicated to advancing **disability-inclusive Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)** by focusing on the systemic support and specific competencies required by educators. The context acknowledged the stark reality that the one billion **persons with disabilities (PWD)** globally face significantly higher rates of exclusion from education and health services, alongside two to 10 times greater risk of violence and abuse. The session aimed to facilitate a critical shift in perspective, moving participants away from models rooted in charity, pity, and protection towards a robust **rights-based model** that affirms the autonomy, agency, and equal participation of PWDs. The outcome sought was to provide practical guidance on how to implement accessible CSE resources in a professional and trauma-informed manner.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop established that effective disability-inclusive CSE must be fundamentally grounded in a **rights-based approach** that explicitly promotes agency and the **right to pleasure**, rather than merely focusing on protection or prevention of abuse. Participants identified that the persistent challenge lies in the enduring dominance of **charity and medical models** which perpetuate dependency and, in some cases, lead to the denial of rights, such as forced sterilisation.

The **Breaking the Silence (BtS)** approach, developed by UNFPA, was introduced as an evidence-based implementation methodology that successfully translates international guidance into practical, adapted classroom methods using **universal design** and **reasonable accommodation**. Successful mainstreaming necessitates equipping teachers to actively challenge pervasive myths of asexuality and hypersexuality by emphasising boundaries, social skills, and the broad definition of sexuality that includes intimacy and self-pleasure.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The workshop was structured into three sub-sessions, progressing from conceptual grounding to practical implementation tools, generating key discussion points:

1. **Confronting Power and Shifting Paradigms.** The session utilised the framework of disability models to prompt critical self-reflection among participants. Four dominant perspectives—**charity** (pity, handouts), **medical** (cure, abnormality), **social** (societal barriers), and **religious/moral** (punishment)—were contrasted with the **rights-based model**. Participants confirmed that in practice, all five models co-exist. Experiences shared underscored the persistence of the medical model, which, for instance in Nepal, drives parental decisions such as institutionalising children, thereby stripping young people of their agency. A participant noted that in the Philippines, only visible impairments are often recognised for benefits (like the PWD card), neglecting those with invisible disabilities such as mental health conditions. The rights-based model was recognised as the most difficult but necessary to implement because it directly challenges existing power relations and requires duty bearers (governments and society) to ensure equal participation.
2. **Addressing Harmful Myths and the Agency Gap.** The discussion moved to the specific myths and misconceptions teachers face, often resulting in silence, fear, and misinformation for young people with disabilities. Trainers challenged the harmful extremes of labelling persons with disabilities as either **asexual or hypersexual**. It was explained that these labels often arise because boundaries and social skills are not taught, and behaviours may be misinterpreted (e.g., inappropriate social distance by those with autism). Furthermore, the

narrow, heteronormative view of sexuality as exclusively penetration was strongly refuted. The training insisted that CSE must expand its scope to validate sexuality and pleasure in all its forms, including self-pleasure, and must focus explicitly on building agency and autonomy, not just preventing abuse.

3. Implementing Inclusive CSE: The Breaking the Silence

(BtS) Approach. The final component introduced UNFPA's **Breaking the Silence (BtS)** approach, which functions as an evidence-based implementation approach rather than a new curriculum. BtS provides the practical 'how' to make the UN Technical Guidance on CSE accessible to learners with disabilities. Key operational elements of BtS include:

- Combining social learning, participatory methods, and trauma-informed practice.
- Applying the concepts of universal design and reasonable accommodation.
- Providing 15 scripted lesson plans covering the eight core learning concepts of the UN Technical Guidance, ensuring step-by-step instructions and key messages. The implementation research associated with BtS confirmed that the approach not only **'broke the silence but some views and beliefs'**. It also revealed that the lack of teacher confidence stems from a lack of practical training on universal design and the complexity of supporting students with diverse needs.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The workshop provided both theoretical models for understanding disability and practical frameworks for implementation:

- **Models of Disability:** Participants learned to distinguish between the limited **Charity/Medical Models** (which focus on the individual's deficit) and the **Rights-Based Model**. The rights-based model is mandated by international human rights instruments, framing the state and society as having a duty to ensure the rights and autonomy of PWDs are met.
- **Breaking the Silence (BtS):** This approach is an evidence-based model for implementation which integrates **trauma-informed practice, universal design** (designing materials for the widest possible range of users), and **reasonable accommodation** (making specific modifications for individual needs). The resources include a Comprehensive Guide (Theory) and the 15 Lesson Plans (Practice).
- **Feasibility Study Framework:** The BtS methodology uses an adapted model based on the theory of planned behaviour to measure feasibility, including attitudes, norms, and self-efficacy, recognising that environmental constraints influence behaviour.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The participatory elements focused on the sharing of both operational challenges and local innovations:

- **Practical Tools and Local Adaptation:** Participants exchanged successful strategies for inclusive CSE, underscoring the necessity of using affordable local materials. Examples included:
 - > Using menstruation bracelets with beads in India for cycle tracking.
 - > Employing body mapping and adapted materials in Nepal.
 - > Utilising role-play, social drama, and subtitled AMAZE videos* (adapted into Nepali language and dress) in Nepal.
 - > Using card games to teach about GBV and harassment in Bhutan.
- **Advocacy and Political Framing:** Discussions explored strategies for overcoming political resistance to rights-based language. A participant from India noted that CSE creates individuals who can demand for services, a perspective that highlights the **economic necessity (demand/supply lens)** of sexuality education for governments. This reflects a valuable shift from focusing solely on stigma. Conversely, a participant from the Philippines noted that because 'human rights' is politicised and stigmatised in their context, a short-term approach might involve reframing disability as 'blessed' (moral framing) to gain local acceptance before embedding the rights agenda.
- **Actionable Commitments (Photo Analysis and Synthesis):** The session closed with concrete action steps and reflections. Participants emphasised that teaching CSE should be a choice (ideally), demanding the right skills, openness, and approachability from educators. Action steps included plans to:
 - > Conduct more practical research to understand local obstacles and use findings to inform stakeholder communication.
 - > Mobilise resources for long-term research and documentation.

- > Contextualise CSE for LGBTIQ+ persons with disabilities and other overlooked groups.
- > Apply the BtS approach and rights-based model.
- > Reinforce the principle that stakeholder voices should shape both curriculum and policy.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Rights and Autonomy:** Disability-inclusive CSE must pivot from a focus on protection and pity (Charity/Medical Models) to a **rights-based model** that builds agency and autonomy for persons with disabilities.
- **Challenging Misconceptions:** Teachers must be trained and supported to challenge myths of asexuality and hypersexuality by teaching social boundaries and affirming that sexuality includes diverse forms of intimacy and pleasure.
- **The 'How' of Implementation:** The **BtS** approach provides a practical, evidence-based methodology, integrating universal design and reasonable accommodation to make CSE accessible and participatory.
- **Advocacy for Demand:** Framing sexuality education as a means to create demand for SRHR services (**supply-demand lens**) can be an effective strategy for policy advocacy and securing government buy-in.
- **Pre-service Investment:** Pre-service teacher training is crucial, not just for preparing teachers, but also for shaping community leaders and role models.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS

- How can the politicisation of human rights language be navigated using culturally sensitive reframing strategies without diluting the core principle of rights-based inclusion?
- There is a clear need for more resources and long-term practical research to understand local obstacles and to contextualise CSE for highly marginalised groups, such as LGBTIQ+ persons with disabilities.
- How can **Ministries of Education (MOEs)** recruit and retain teachers who view delivering CSE as an empowering choice and career path, rather than an unwanted obligation?

NOTES & REFERENCES

AMAZE videos are short, animated, age-appropriate educational tools developed by AMAZE International under Advocates for Youth. Accompanied by lesson plans, Amaze videos provide young people the answers they actually want to know about puberty, sex, their bodies, and healthy relationships. Darcy Weaver, Associate Director of AMAZE International, led a skills-building workshop session on 'Designing and Assessing Skills-Based Lesson Plans.' The videos are designed for accessibility and local adaptation, including versions in the Nepali language and dress, to better engage younger learners in Nepal.



Top: Jenelle Babb, Regional Advisor, Education for Health and Well-being, UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok.



VALUES, RIGHTS, CULTURE, SEXUALITY AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF COUNTRY CURRICULA

Date and Time:

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 09:00–10:30

Moderator:

Jenelle Babb, Regional Advisor, Education for Health and Well-being, Education Section, UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok

MCs:

Young Hwa Choi, Gender Programme Specialist, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO); Sajja Singh, Senior Programme Officer, ARROW

Panel Speakers:

Kosasih Ali Abu Bakar, Dr. Sana Ali, Dr. Aparajita Gogoi, John Arnold Siena, Dr. Edizon Fermin, and Sandini Rajapaksha

SESSION CONTEXT

The Day 2 Plenary centred on pedagogy and the crucial intersection of values, rights, culture, and sexuality within national curricula. The core aim was to explore the perceived and practical tensions inherent in balancing global normative guidance—specifically referencing the **UN International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education**, which promotes ‘**Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality**’ as one of its eight key concepts—with the sovereign right of countries to develop school curricula that are locally responsive and owned. Discussions highlighted the strategies countries are employing to navigate these sensitivities effectively, ensuring that essential health and well-being education reaches learners effectively. This discussion sought to enhance policy and programme innovations by concentrating on the

preparation and support necessary for educators tasked with classroom delivery.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The panel unanimously affirmed that country ownership over curricula is an acceptable and necessary expression of national identity. However, the session concluded that the profound risks of not teaching sensitive topics (such as poor health outcomes, poverty cycles, and severe mental health issues) must be strategically weighed against the challenge of teacher backlash. Effective implementation necessitates overcoming the three crucial deficits identified in teacher preparation—the ‘**knowledge-practice gap**,’ ‘**curriculum variability**,’ and ‘**confidence deficits**’—by providing practical skills, immersive experiences, and explicit training on legal requirements.

A central conclusion was that **protecting teachers from potential social backlash is an absolute, shared ethical responsibility**, resting upon government, policy-makers, **Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**, and administrative decision-makers. Dr Edizon Fermin showcased the strategy of achieving ‘**more with less**’ by reducing the overall number of required professional competencies, thereby allowing for the integration of **GTE** content across all subjects rather than treating them as separate subjects.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The panel discussions focused on navigating the tension between global standards and local contexts, addressing endemic teacher preparedness deficits, and defining the collective responsibility for teacher protection.

1. **Balancing National Sovereignty with Ethical Responsibility.** The discussion acknowledged the reality of national curricula sovereignty but asserted the non-negotiable ethical obligation to ensure young people receive life-saving, evidence-based information. Dr Jenelle Babb noted that effective CSE includes addressing values, rights, culture, and sexuality while ensuring a rights-based approach and framing sexuality in a positive and healthy way.
 - **Strategic Contextualisation:** Kosasih Ali Abu Bakar provided the Indonesian context, where the strategy involves promoting ‘transversal character building’ to incorporate evidence-based content while respecting local cultural values. This includes implementing the ‘seven habits’ within the curriculum.

- **Non-Formal Alignment:** Dr Sana Ali emphasised that while complementing school curricula with informal or non-formal learning approaches can be a valuable opportunity, this approach is only acceptable if the formal education system ultimately maintains the responsibility to ensure every young person has equal access to accurate, age-appropriate, life-saving information.
- Sandini Rajapaksha further stressed that the profound risk of avoiding sensitive topics (such as poor health outcomes and mental health crises) must be weighed carefully against the fear of social backlash.

2. Identifying and Systemically Addressing Teacher

Deficits. Dr Edizon Fermin detailed structural weaknesses in teacher training, particularly within pre-service education, that require systemic reframing.

- **The Three Crucial Problems:** He identified the ‘**knowledge-practice gap**’ (training being too theoretical and lacking methods for handling sensitive conversations); ‘**curriculum variability**’ (where a one-size-fits-all approach fails diverse communities and expectations); and resulting ‘**confidence deficits**’ (where new and seasoned teachers feel unprepared and uncomfortable teaching SRH and CSE topics due to insufficient exposure and lack of ongoing support).
- **The Solution – Integration and Immersive Practice:** The response involves prioritising five key priorities. Firstly, integrating SRH and GTE throughout all subjects (e.g., gender equity in science, diverse families in social studies) is necessary to prevent a ‘fully loaded curriculum’. Secondly, there is a requirement for real classroom practice and extended immersive periods, moving away from short, theoretical courses. This strategy relies on achieving ‘more with less’ by dramatically reducing the overall number of required professional competencies.

3. The Ethical Mandate for Teacher Protection.

A major point of consensus, reinforced by the moderator’s explicit question, was the shared ethical responsibility to support and protect teachers.

- **A Collective Duty:** The audience reflected that the ethical responsibility to protect teachers lies with ‘all of us,’ demanding clear policy, capacity building, and collaborative, proactive trust-building with communities. John Arnold Siena (SEAMEO) affirmed that, ultimately, conveners and partners ‘have to

come together and provide this sort of protection and support to the teachers so that they can do their work’.

- **Psychosocial Needs:** Dr Aparajita Gogoi (C3) highlighted the lack of psychosocial support for teachers delivering emotionally challenging curricula, reinforcing the need for systemic support beyond just content training.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The session presented or referenced several critical intellectual and structural frameworks necessary for the systemic reform of teacher education:

- **Teacher Personas for Strategic Allocation:** Dr Aparajita Gogoi introduced a research-based model for categorising teachers into three personas based on their attitudes, comfort, and beliefs towards sensitive content. This allows policymakers to strategically allocate limited resources: **Persona A** (high bias/low comfort) requires significant intervention; **Persona B** (moderate bias/trainable) are candidates for mentorship; and **Persona C** (low bias/high comfort) are ideal content deliverers and trainers.
- **Reflective Practice and Values Clarification:** Dr Edizon Fermin emphasised the need for pre-service teachers to foster self-awareness of biases and cultural background, explicitly linking this to the process of **Values Clarification** introduced in a previous workshop. This self-reflection is deemed a universal competency necessary for developing inclusive teaching practices.
- **Southeast Asia Teacher Competency Framework:** Dr. Fermin proposed utilising this regional framework as a foundation for translating SRH and Gender-Transformative competencies across different learning areas, turning this integration challenge into a structural project for collaboration with SEAMEO.
- **Inculcating the Value of Diversity:** Dr. Fermin positioned the appreciation of diversity as a value that must be inculcated across several learning areas, underpinned by an intersectional approach that allows teachers to appreciate how different aspects of a person’s identity combine to create unique experiences.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The audience engagement segment focused primarily on clarifying Dr Fermin's proposed reforms and addressing teacher workload.

- **Diversity and Inclusive Teaching:** An attendee from the Netherlands queried how teacher training prepares educators for the high degree of diversity in schools, given varying school autonomy. Dr Fermin responded that the goal is to inculcate the value of diversity by fostering self-awareness of biases and adopting an intersectional approach. He stressed that this is achieved not through 'one course for that,' but by exposing teachers to diverse materials and strategies across several learning areas, leading to inclusive teaching practices where expectations are negotiated.
- **Avoiding the 'Extra Tax' of CSE Integration:** A participant asked how the Philippines balances integrating CSE into all subjects without diluting the focus on core skills like literacy and numeracy, or creating an extra 'tax' (workload burden) for teachers. Dr Fermin explained that the strategy relies on achieving 'more with less' by dramatically reducing the overall number of required professional competencies. This simplification frees up time and resources to prioritise essential immersive experiences and integrate themes without increasing workload.
- **Audience Reflections on Support and Follow-up:**
 - > **Sustainability:** Harshitha Perera (Sri Lanka) described a current education reform involving collaboration among three institutions (including the Ministry of Health) to develop and deliver extra reading materials and training.
 - > **Need for Follow-up:** Urvashi (Coalition of Good Schools) reflected that transformation within teachers requires a follow-up mechanism as '**one-off training is not capacity building**'. She noted that teachers prioritise mandated work and that expecting 'something extra' for which they are not paid will not work.



Tithi Rani Sarkar, Manager, Advocacy and Capacity Strengthening, and Tasnima Iqbal, Project Coordinator, BRAC Bangladesh.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Transforming teaching requires moving the policy debate from ***should we teach*** sensitive content to ***how to deliver it effectively***, focusing on pedagogy, quality, and scalability.
- **Protecting teachers from social backlash** is an absolute, ethical, and shared responsibility of governments, CSOs, and administrative decision-makers, necessitating a systemic ecosystem of support.
- Systemic reform requires integrating **GTE and SRH competencies** across all subjects (e.g., gender in science) to avoid curriculum overload, supported by mandatory real classroom practice to address the confidence deficit.
- Continuous professional development must utilise models like **teacher persona analysis** to strategically allocate training resources and ensure the highest possible impact.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- How can the proposed integration of SRH and GTE be translated into specific, measurable competencies using existing frameworks, such as the **South East Asia Teacher Competency Framework**?
- What policy mechanisms are required to sustainably fund and deliver the psychosocial support and continuous professional mentoring necessary to address the workload burden and potential backlash faced by teachers?
- What research methods are necessary to validate and replicate the teacher persona model across diverse country contexts to refine the allocation of training resources?

CAFÉ 3: Whole School and Gender-Transformative Approaches

Date and Time:

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 11:00–12:30

Venue:

Pratunam Room, 7th Floor

Facilitator:

Sajja Singh, Senior Programme Officer, ARROW

SESSION CONTEXT

This World Café, running in parallel with CAFÉ 4, explored Whole School and Gender-Transformative Approaches (GTA) that systematically connect curriculum delivery with a **safe, supportive learning environment** and essential well-being services.

Held on Day 2, the session showcased **comprehensive, high-impact models** addressing systemic issues such as violence, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and marginalisation by engaging all education actors—teachers, students, caregivers, and community partners.

The featured models demonstrated strategic shifts: from **correcting misinformation** in national curricula to implementing **multi-level regional initiatives** that advance gender equality and empower girls.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAFÉ 3 demonstrated that achieving **gender-transformative outcomes** requires an explicit and sustained shift to a **Whole School Approach (WSA)**—moving beyond isolated teacher trainings toward holistic, systemic change.

Bangladesh presented a model that achieved sustainability through government **Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)**, linking schools to health services, and activating parent and community engagement.

Evidence showed tangible change in school culture: teachers became more open to gender equality, school management committees more active, and girls more confident in reporting GBV.

Nepal's Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) exemplified **policy responsiveness**, revising the Grade 7 Health and Physical Education textbook after consultations with LGBTIQ+ groups to correct misinformation on sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

In the Philippines, the **Education for Protection and Well-being (EPW)** model illustrated how embedding **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** for both students and teachers and involving caregivers through positive parenting builds safer learning environments and supports teacher confidence.

A regional model from UNICEF and partners highlighted how **GTE** can be scaled through policy reform, regional collaboration, and targeted interventions in multiple Southeast Asian countries.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The session featured five concurrent stations, each showcasing practical models for systemic reform, multi-level collaboration, and rights-based education.

Station 1:

Making Schools Safe and Inclusive—Whole School Approach to CSE and SRHR in Bangladesh

BRAC Bangladesh

Presenters: Tithi Rani Sarkar, Manager – Advocacy and Capacity Strengthening, and Tasnima Iqbal, Project Coordinator

This presentation addressed key challenges in Bangladesh—high rates of child marriage, GBV, inadequate menstrual hygiene facilities, and limited SRHR knowledge caused by taboos and low teacher confidence.

The **Whole School Approach (WSA)** was structured around five action areas:

1. Gaining support from school management committees.
2. Linking schools with health service providers.
3. Creating safe and healthy environments (including WASH facilities).

4. Engaging parents and caregivers in school activities.
5. Training teachers through national master trainers.

The initiative secured a government MoU to pilot the programme in 66 schools across 22 districts, training 198 teachers and nearly 200 health staff.

Positive outcomes included improved teacher openness to gender equality, stronger school committees, and enhanced student confidence in reporting GBV.

BRAC also mapped joint services across the Ministries of Education and Health, ensuring coordinated SRHR support.

Despite reductions in national CSE content, the programme adapted within policy constraints and complemented learning with menstrual kits, handmade pad workshops, and self-defence training for girls.

Station 2:

Inclusion of a Lesson on Sexuality, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity in the Grade 7 Textbook—Nepal
Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Ministry of Education, Nepal

Presenter: Kamal Mishra, Curriculum Specialist

This station highlighted how the CDC responded to LGBTIQ+ advocacy by revising misinformation in the Grade 7 Health and Physical Education textbook.

CSE is compulsory from Grades 4–8, and the correction process involved focused consultations with LGBTIQ+ representatives, academics, and UN agencies.

The speaker emphasised that discussions must be handled **‘from a human rights angle’**, balancing respect for cultural and religious values.

The revised curriculum now accurately represents gender diversity and inclusivity, studied by all students, including the **small Muslim population (approx 5%)**.

Current advocacy efforts are pushing for CSE to remain **compulsory through Grade 12**, aligning national standards with global commitments to inclusivity and rights-based education.

Station 3:

Education for Protection and Well-being (EPW)—A Whole School Approach to Enhance Child Protection and Education

ChildFund Philippines

Presenter: Marlene Floresca, Senior Program Specialist for Education and Child Protection

Developed in response to high levels of school violence and bullying—with one in three children reporting being bullied—the EPW model integrates:

1. **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** for both students and teachers;
2. **Positive parenting for caregivers;** and
3. **Cognitive-behavioural skills training** for teachers to enhance empathy and classroom management.

The programme employs baseline and endline assessments to measure SEL progress in empathy, perseverance, and conflict resolution. Culturally adapted materials (including comics and activities in English, Filipino, and local languages) teach self-protection in child-friendly ways.

While caregiver mobilisation remained a key challenge, the model’s adaptability has supported expansion to five other countries, with plans to co-develop culturally contextual frameworks and strengthen academic partnerships for the next implementation phase.

Station 4:

Playful Pathways – Bridging Curriculum, Learning Spaces, and Services (Pakistan)

Aahung, Pakistan

Presenter: Dr. Sana Ali, Programme Manager – Life Skills Education Component

Operating in a conservative social context, Aahung’s initiative embeds gender-transformative content through play-based pedagogy and a Whole School Approach.

The model engages **teachers, students, school committees, and community influencers** to foster inclusive, child-safe learning spaces.

A **12-day modular training cycle** for teachers focuses on values, knowledge, and safeguarding while equipping them to handle backlash and community resistance.

Play-based methods have proven effective in breaking gender barriers and promoting inclusivity, especially for **children with disabilities**.

Sustainability is reinforced through **mentoring and refresher sessions**, which teachers themselves frequently request—an indicator of strong local ownership.

Station 5:

Empowered and Equal Futures for Girls through Education in Southeast Asia

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office

Presenter: Laura Devos, Gender Transformative Education Consultant

This DFAT-funded regional programme integrates gender equality, CSE, and child protection across three levels:

1. **School and community engagement** (teacher training, community dialogue).
2. **National systems strengthening** (policy, curriculum, and pedagogy reform).
3. **Regional exchange and advocacy** (knowledge sharing with SEAMEO and UNESCO).

Key achievements included:

- In **Cambodia**, teacher training combining online and in-person modules on classroom management and violence prevention.
- In **Vietnam**, over **400,000 students** engaged in STEM and inclusivity activities. The programme is currently developing a **monitoring and evaluation framework** on social and behavioural change, with follow-up data expected in 2026.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The models were unified by systemic approaches that integrate curriculum, policy, community, and well-being services:

- **Whole School Approach (WSA):** A multi-level mechanism ensuring that education reform is holistic—linking curriculum delivery, environmental safety, health services, and community engagement. Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines demonstrated the WSA as the foundation for sustainable gender-transformative change.

- **Gender-Transformative Education (GTE):** GTE aims to **challenge and reshape gender norms and stereotypes** through curriculum reform (Nepal), pedagogy (Pakistan), and system strengthening (UNICEF's regional programme).
- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** The Philippines' EPW model illustrated SEL as a key competency for teachers and students, cultivating **empathy, resilience, and conflict resolution**—skills essential for child protection and gender equality.
- **Child Rights and Trauma-Informed Perspective:** All models were grounded in **rights-based** and **trauma-informed practices**, recognising that safe, inclusive environments are prerequisites for effective learning, especially in contexts of violence or marginalisation.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The plenary discussions highlighted both **psychological and structural tensions** inherent in transformative education.

- **Emotional Roller Coaster:** Participants noted that gender-transformative work often triggers personal reflection among teachers, many of whom must confront their own experiences with patriarchy. This underlined the **psychological strain** educators face and the importance of structured emotional support.
- **Sustainability Challenge:** A participant from Nepal cautioned that CSE and GTE programmes risk collapse after donor funding ends unless integrated into **national budgets and systems**.
- **Centring the Learner:** Participants emphasised that students should be **co-creators of educational programmes**, actively shaping learning from Grades 1–10.
- **Policy Dialogue:** The Bangladesh model spurred dialogue on **cross-ministerial coordination**, with BRAC facilitating collaboration between the Ministries of Education and Health to strengthen SRHR support systems.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The **Whole School Approach** is essential for translating CSE and GTE from policy into practice by linking **curriculum, services, and community support**.
- **Policy responsiveness:** As seen in Nepal's curriculum reform—is critical to ensuring accuracy, inclusivity, and rights-based education.
- Effective implementation depends on **teacher confidence and well-being**, supported by **activity-based pedagogy** (e.g., play-based learning in Pakistan) and SEL integration.
- **Caregiver engagement** is vital yet challenging; strengthening positive parenting skills is a core element of lasting child protection.
- The **psychological well-being** of teachers and advocates must be addressed through supportive systems that recognise emotional labour as part of transformative education work.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS

- How can governments and donors co-design **funding models** that transition successful WSA and GTE pilot programmes into sustainable, nationally budgeted systems?
- What additional research is needed to **measure the long-term impact** of integrating SEL and GTE on teacher retention, professional well-being, and the reduction of school-related violence?
- How can policymakers integrate the **emotional realities of educators and advocates** into planning, ensuring adequate psychosocial and structural support for those driving change?



Top right: Sajja Singh, Senior Programme Officer, ARROW.

Middle right: Sana Ali, Program Manager, Life Skills Education (LSE), AAHUNG.

Bottom right: Aparajita Gogoi, Executive Director, Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3).

CAFÉ 4: Digital Innovations and Flexible, Lifelong Learning

Date and Time:

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 11:00–12:30

Venue:

Phanfa-Lilat Room, 7th Floor

Facilitator:

Young Hwa Choi, Gender Programme Specialist, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)

SESSION CONTEXT

This World Café, running in parallel with CAFÉ 3, focused on leveraging digital innovations to deliver flexible, accessible, and high-quality adolescent health and well-being content, particularly CSE, to teachers and learners.

The session recognised the need to move beyond traditional in-person training models to reach diverse, often remote, populations (such as those in conflict areas or geographically isolated locations) and to counter the widespread issue of misinformation and digital risks. The models presented ranged from large-scale national Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to youth-focused period tracking apps and AI-enabled chatbots, all emphasising co-creation and the integration of referral services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAFÉ 4 strongly established that digital tools are essential for achieving scale, sustainability, and equity in CSE and SRH delivery, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

The innovations consistently emphasised the need for offline accessibility (e.g., Oky app and Saya Foundation) to reach populations with limited internet access.

Co-creation with youth and religious leaders proved vital for localising content and ensuring cultural acceptance, as demonstrated by the Philippines' Oky app integrating Hadith references and Indonesia's MOOC adapting language to 'healthy and responsible relationship'.

India's national *Umang* programme showcased the transformative potential of combining education with services, utilising a non-judgmental, AI-enabled chatbot ('Just Ask') linked to personalised counselling via Umang clinics.

These strategies collectively highlighted the necessity of institutional buy-in, continuous professional development (CPD), and robust safeguarding mechanisms to provide accurate, trustworthy information.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The session featured five distinct digital innovations, demonstrating strategic approaches to content delivery, localisation, and systemic support.

Station 1:

Empowering Teachers' Digital CSE and Gamification – MOOC and PINTAR Integration in Indonesia

Yayasan Gemilang Sehat Indonesia (YGSI), Indonesia

Presenters: Hastin Atas Asih, National Coordinator, Right Here Right Now and Ely Sawitri, Director, Yayasan Gemilang Sehat Indonesia (YGSI)

This initiative focused on systemic change by developing a MOOC embedded within the Ministry of Religious Affairs' national online platform, PINTAR.

Contextualisation and Co-Creation: The project successfully negotiated with ministry officials to contextualise the CSE module for the Islamic context, securing their review and approval. This process involved finding new language, such as using 'adolescent reproductive health' instead of the term 'sexuality,' and adapting concepts like 'dating' to 'healthy and responsible relationship'.

Scale and Sustainability: The MOOC launch was highly successful, attracting over 40,000 teachers within three days of registration, demonstrating high demand for certified training. The programme's sustainability plan involves securing certified course recognition from the Ministry, allowing the training to count as credit points for teacher career advancement and thus reducing the financial burden. Furthermore, the MOOC's success was estimated by the Ministry to save USD 445.5 million in education budget costs by moving training online.

Learning Model: Teachers and students can monitor progress, with a topic quiz requiring an 80% score to unlock the next topic, ensuring mastery. The content is designed for junior high school teachers (Grade 7–9).

Station 2:

Oky Philippines Period Tracker App – Empowering Teachers & Learners through Digital Innovation

Oky Period Tracker App, Philippines

Presenter: Ven Janelle Ang, Programme Coordinator

Oky is a mobile app co-created with adolescent girls that provides period tracking and evidence-based information on Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) and SRHR.

Addressing the Gap: The app responds to data showing that one out of eight girls in the Philippines miss school monthly due to MHH issues and that knowledge is often filled with myths and misconceptions.

Inclusion and Accessibility: The app’s design is highly inclusive, featuring an offline tracker to support users in geographically isolated or low-connectivity areas. It includes accessibility features like a voice-over, text-to-speech, and haptic touch for users with disabilities.

Cultural Context: The content is dual-track, offering both generic and specialised Islamic content, which includes Hadith references co-developed with Muslim religious leaders to ensure buy-in in the Bangsamoro region.

Service Integration: It features a ‘Help Centre’ with referral mechanisms (phone numbers for police, child protection desks, and health services) that are localised to the user’s vicinity, fulfilling the need to link information with tangible support.

Station 3:

Bringing Clear Blue Sky to Teachers (Clear Blue Sky: The State of Well-being, Clarity and Calmness)

Saya Foundation, Myanmar

Presenter: Tin Ma Ma Htet, Founder and Executive Director

Saya Foundation works to address the extreme trauma experienced by teachers and students in conflict-affected areas of Myanmar, focusing on creating ‘Clear Blue Sky’—a state of clarity and well-being.

Holistic, Contextualised Support: The foundation provides retreat-style training near nature centres, recognising that teachers must first feel rested and supported (‘You are also struggling at some points’) before they can help students. The programme is deliberately flexible and non-formal, allowing teachers to integrate the content (e.g., healthy relationships, diversity) into existing activities like Sunday schools or 30-minute daily well-being sessions.

Digital and Offline Integration: The resources, including the *Clear Blue Sky* and *Colorful Children* workbooks (levels 1 to 5), are delivered via digital platforms that are accessible offline (applications and Telegram chatbot), catering to areas lacking internet or electricity. The chatbot provides personalised, bite-sized, pre-prepared content based on user preferences.

Emotional Support: The organisation provides holistic support, including financial, resource, technical, and crucial emotional support, maintaining a dedicated team member who is always ‘on the line’ to listen to teachers’ challenges and stories.

Station 4:

Digital CSE Tools: AMAZE Asia Adaptation for Lao Teachers: Engaging Animation + Scripted Lessons to Strengthen CSE Pedagogy in Lao PDR

Lao Child and Youth Development Association (LaoCYDA), Lao PDR

Presenter: Vilasai Thammavong, Founder and Director

This presentation focused on adapting high-quality international digital resources, specifically the AMAZE video series, for the Lao PDR context.

Addressing Sensitivity: The short, accurate, and engaging AMAZE videos (each approximately two minutes long) were selected because they are highly effective for introducing sensitive topics like LGBTIQ+ identity, cyber bullying, and SRH—areas where teachers often lack the confidence to start a conversation.

Leveraging Existing Infrastructure: The project utilised the fact that major telecommunication companies in Lao PDR offer cheap monthly data packages that allow free access to YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok. As AMAZE videos are hosted on YouTube, this minimises the financial barrier for teachers and students.

Ecosystem Approach: This initiative is part of a broader systemic effort in Lao PDR to formally integrate CSE content into secondary school Biology and Population Studies subjects. The strategy involves a co-monitoring approach, where youth peer educators (who teach in parallel with teachers) help monitor teacher utilisation of the materials, ensuring accountability.

The Noi Yak Hou App: In parallel, the UNFPA-supported ‘Noi Yak Hou’ (Lao girls want to know) app was highlighted, offering CSE content, voice-over for students with disabilities, Q&A functions, and hotlines linked to professional health/counselling services and the Lao Women’s Union for violence referrals.

Station 5:

Umang – Empowering Adolescents, Transforming Lives in Madhya Pradesh, India: Leveraging Life Skills and AI to Improve Access to SRH and Mental Health Services

Bharatiya Gramin Mahila Sangh (BGMS), India

Presenter: Anjali Agarwal, Director

This station detailed the comprehensive, large-scale Umang programme in Madhya Pradesh, which has expanded from a small pilot with 4,200 girls to reach 1.6 million adolescents.

Integration of Services: The programme uses a participatory Life Skills curriculum (integrated into weekly school sessions) combined with two critical service components: the Umang Kishore Helpline (tele-counseling) and Umang Clinics (personalised counselling and referral services in every district).

Digital Service Bridge (AI Chatbot): The core digital innovation is the WhatsApp-based AI chatbot, ‘Just Ask, Khel Khel Mein’. The chatbot is designed to be non-judgmental, confidential, and to provide accurate information, explicitly avoiding advice or counselling. This tool has reached over half a million users and is critical for students to access sensitive information in their own safe spaces.

Teacher Role and Buy-in: Teachers, trained in a five-day residential programme and designated as Health and Wellness Ambassadors, now conduct mandatory weekly sessions integrated into the academic calendar. This institutionalisation, coupled with student ‘messengers’ (peer leaders), ensures the programme is sustained and supported through government ownership.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The session emphasised three frameworks crucial for implementing and sustaining digital innovation:

- **Service Integration Model:** The *Umang* programme’s success hinges on integrating education (CSE/Life Skills curriculum) with tangible support services (helplines, clinics, and the chatbot). This comprehensive approach ensures that students who disclose issues (e.g., violence or mental health concerns) have an immediate, professional referral pathway.
- **Youth-Led Co-Creation:** Models like *Okya* and the Lao PDR AMAZE adaptation demonstrated that the co-creation of materials with youth, religious leaders, and teachers is critical for cultural and religious buy-in, ensuring the resources are relevant and trustworthy to the target audience.
- **Digital Inclusion and Offline Priority:** Recognising the stark digital divide in the Asia-Pacific, several projects (*Okya*, *Saya Foundation*, Lao PDR) prioritised offline accessibility and low-bandwidth solutions. This ensures that the promise of digital learning does not exclude the most marginalised learners in geographically isolated or low-tech environments.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The interactive exchanges focused heavily on monitoring, content virality, and teacher response to the new digital tools.

- **Teacher Response to Online vs. Offline:** A question was raised regarding what teachers prefer about online training versus in-person training. Indonesia's YGSI acknowledged that while teachers are 'happy to have the offline classes' for direct communication, the online MOOC is necessary to reach teachers in 'remote areas' where the cost and logistics of travel are prohibitively high.
- **Measuring Digital Success:** A common challenge noted across all stations was the difficulty of monitoring and measuring the success of content delivered via free digital platforms (like YouTube). The Lao PDR presenter noted that this is why the government's approach is cautious, starting with a pilot phase in two provinces to allow time for the development of robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems.
- **Content Virality and Information Quality:** A participant asked how to make 'good content become viral' when 'bad things are easy to viral'. This reflected the concern about misinformation. The Oky presenter emphasised that the focus must be on providing vetted, accurate, trustworthy information that is aligned with the school curriculum, positioning the app as a reliable counter-narrative to dangerous misinformation.
- **Data Privacy and Sensitive Monitoring:** The Oky team clarified that while they are anchored in the government system, they only track minimal data: age, location, and utilisation (to ensure they are reaching isolated areas). They specifically do not collect cycle data on the backend to protect individual privacy.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Digital Tools for Scale:** Digital innovations (MOOCs, apps, chatbots) are highly effective mechanisms for expanding teacher access to CSE training, reducing costs, and achieving massive scale across national education systems.
- **Integration of Support Services:** Digital education must be coupled with robust, professional referral mechanisms and counselling services (e.g., Umang Clinics, hotlines) to ensure safety and respond effectively to disclosures of violence or mental health issues.
- **Confidence Through Co-Creation:** To overcome cultural and religious resistance, digital content must be co-created with youth and religious leaders, utilising culturally appropriate language and references.
- **Prioritising Digital Inclusion:** Resources must be designed with offline accessibility (low-MB size, offline trackers, voice-over) to guarantee that the digital divide does not further marginalise learners in low-resource environments.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- How can MOEs and development partners develop and institutionalise M&E systems to accurately measure the impact and utilisation of free, third-party digital content (such as YouTube videos) that is not hosted on official government platforms?
- How can teacher associations advocate for official recognition of certified digital training (MOOCs) as mandatory credit points for career progression to ensure the continuous professional development of educators?
- What further support is needed to translate successful local language digital tools (e.g., *Colorful Children* or *AMAZE* adaptations) into other ethnic languages within diverse countries to ensure full accessibility and cultural relevance?

SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOP B1: Delivering Collaborative Learning Approaches Focused on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Date and Time:

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 13:30–18:00

Trainer:

Emeritus Professor Helen Cahill, School of Education,
University of Melbourne, Australia

SESSION CONTEXT

This skills-building workshop addressed the pedagogical ‘how’ of effective teaching by focusing on **Delivering collaborative learning approaches** as integral to **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**. The session was grounded in robust research showing that SEL is crucial for adolescent mental and social well-being, reduced risk-taking, and improved academic attainment. Recognising that traditional teaching methods are inadequate for skills-based learning, the workshop provided educators and practitioners with direct experience in collaborative strategies, such as using scenarios, role-plays, and games. The activities sampled methodologies from **GTE** programmes, specifically **Connect with Respect (CWR)**, demonstrating how these methods are essential for advancing positive social norms and preventing **GBV**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Compelling meta-analytic evidence establishes that SEL programmes have lasting positive effects on student well-being, confirming global recommendations from UNESCO and WHO for its mainstreaming. Crucially, effectiveness is guaranteed only when SEL adheres to the **S.A.F.E. principles: Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit**.

The workshop sampled practical, activity-based pedagogy, including collaborative games (**Mirror Game, Robot and Controller Game**) that introduce core concepts of consent and power dynamics in non-threatening ways. Scenario-

based activities, such as analysing the emotional responses of Mirasol and Isagani, were used to illuminate the hidden emotions that act as barriers to help-seeking. The session concluded that skills like **help-seeking and assertiveness** must be professionalised and developed through practical role-play and practice, emphasising that describing a skill is not equivalent to practising ways to do it.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The workshop was structured into three sub-sessions, progressing from conceptual grounding to practical implementation tools, generating key discussion points:

The intensive, practical session covered the evidence base for SEL, followed by active sampling of three core pedagogical tools: visual mapping, collaborative games, and role-play.

1. **The Evidence-Informed Imperative of SEL and Collaborative Practice.** The workshop opened with an overview of the research, establishing that SEL contributes significantly to social and psychological well-being and improves academic attainment. A meta-analysis of 82 research trials found that positive effects persisted one to three years post-intervention, regardless of the students’ background. This strong evidence base has led major international bodies, including UNESCO, WHO, and OECD, to recommend the mainstreaming of SEL programmes across all education systems. The core structure of effective intervention was defined by the **S.A.F.E. acronym**. The ‘A’ in S.A.F.E. requires that effective SEL programmes must be **Active**, meaning they utilise collaborative learning where students engage in peer-to-peer conversations and co-operate to complete tasks. This active methodology prevents the dilution of content knowledge and ensures the development of relational skills, aligning the session with the broader forum objective of fostering GTE.

2. Utilising Scenarios and Visual Mapping for Empathy.

To maintain personal privacy while enabling protective distance when discussing sensitive topics, the session demonstrated the use of age- and context-relevant scenarios. Utilising the UNESCO resource **CWR**, participants engaged in the ‘waterline’ metaphor activity to map emotions. Participants analysed two scenarios:

- **Scenario A (Mirasol):** A girl worried about being teased and followed by boys, scared to tell her mother in case she got blamed.
- **Scenario B (Isagani):** A 15-year-old boy teased for being feminine because most of his friends are girls.

The visual mapping exercise required participants to identify which emotions might ‘show’ (above the waterline) (e.g., anger, surface fear) and which might be hidden (below the waterline) (e.g., deeper fear, shame). The subsequent discussion focused on how these hidden emotions act as a barrier to help-seeking.

3. Collaborative Games to Teach Power and Consent.

The session introduced low-stakes, high-impact games to facilitate conversations about sensitive topics, specifically focusing on respect, human rights, and affirmative consent.

- **Mirror Game:** Participants moved in tandem, reflecting each other’s movements. The resulting discussion prompted reflection on what makes people co-operate so well together, drawing parallels to respectful relationships.
- **Robot and Controller Game:** Person A (Controller) guided Person B (Robot) by having the Robot’s nose follow the Controller’s hand. This game was immediately followed by a discussion on power dynamics: ‘What is it like to be the Robot? The Controller?’. The key message was that people with power over others have a responsibility to use that power in a way that is respectful of the human rights of others.
- **Linked In Game:** Participants balanced a chopstick or pen between their index fingers and moved around the room. This task explicitly led to questions about what the game teaches regarding consent and what constitutes a good relationship, where co-operation is voluntary.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The workshop provided both the foundational research model and the practical programmes for classroom utilisation:

- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** SEL is defined as the curriculum area that improves adolescent mental health, social well-being and learning attainment. The session drew from the WHO model, which includes SEL programmes on its Menu of cost-effective interventions for mental health.
- **The S.A.F.E. Framework:** This framework provides the mandatory quality standards for SEL programmes, ensuring they are **S**equenced (connected activities), **A**ctive (collaborative learning), **F**ocused (multiple components), and **E**xplicit (target specific skills).
- **Connect with Respect (CWR) and Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR):** These complementary, evidence-based teaching programmes were used throughout the session. **CWR** is a classroom programme for early secondary students (ages 11–14) focused on preventing GBV. It contains topics on gender equality, GBV awareness, and developing communication and help-seeking skills. The **RRRR** resources, accessed from Australia’s Victoria Department of Education, provide foundational activities, such as creating a class agreement with positive rules.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The workshop was highly participatory, relying on several activities to drive discussion and practical application.

- **Icebreakers and Rule Co-creation:** The ‘Let’s Connect’ paired sharing icebreaker maximised participation by requiring participants to find non-obvious similarities and differences, building key social skills like listening and sharing. This led to a discussion on drafting positive classroom rules, exemplified by replacing a negative rule (e.g., ‘Stay off your phone’) with a positive one (‘Pay attention’).
- **Coping Strategies and Help-Seeking Practice:** Participants engaged in an ‘Mime your Coping Strategy’ activity to raise self-awareness of personal emotional regulation mechanisms. This transitioned into the critical assertion that **help-seeking is a skill**—something people ‘do’—that must be improved through practice. The trainer specifically noted that role-play is essential because talking about how to seek help is not the same as practising ways to do it.

- **Assertiveness and Role-Play:** The session included practical training on assertiveness. Using the **Freeze-frames method**, participants practised illustrating three distinct behaviours: **Aggressive** ('This is what I want. What you want is not important!'), **Submissive** ('What you want is important; but I am not so don't worry about me'), and **Assertive** ('I respect myself and I respect you too'). The role-play concluded by explicitly linking assertive communication skills to conversations about consent.
- **Designing Scenarios:** In a final group task, participants learned the essential elements for designing effective scenarios, focusing on the context of **Who, When, Where, and What** (the problem/challenge). The emphasis was placed on crafting questions that presume multiple people, including those who witness the situation, can take positive social action, thereby moving away from a singular focus on the victim or the perpetrator.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **SEL is Non-Negotiable:** The strong, lasting evidence base mandates that SEL programmes be mainstreamed into education systems globally to address adolescent mental health and well-being crises.
- **Active Pedagogy is Essential:** Effective SEL requires **Active collaborative learning** and cannot be delivered effectively through passive, knowledge-transfer methods; it must adhere to the **S.A.F.E. quality criteria**.
- **Consent and Power Dynamics:** Collaborative games (Mirror/Robot) provide safe, practical tools for introducing complex topics such as consent, human rights, and the ethical use of power to younger learners.
- **Skills Require Practice:** Essential life skills, particularly **help-seeking and assertiveness**, must be developed and strengthened through practical role-play and practice to overcome cultural barriers and address the confidence deficit in educators.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- Participants explicitly requested follow-up actions from UNESCO, suggesting a need to continue this form of practical professional development (CPD).
- There is a continuous need for additional tools and strategies to help educators advocate for the wider uptake of SEL and collaborative learning within their institutions, moving from isolated workshops to systemic curricular integration.
- Further development and dissemination of culturally appropriate scenarios are required to support teachers in designing relevant role-play and discussion activities that address local forms of GBV and social pressure.



Top: Vilasai Thammavong, Founder and Director, Lao Child and Youth Development Association (LaoCYDA), Lao PDR. **Bottom:** Shreyashi Jha, Regional Gender and Adolescent Advisor, UNICEF.

SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOP B2: Creating Safe, Gender-transformative and Inclusive Classrooms

Date and Time:

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 13:30–18:00

Trainer:

Sally Beadle, Independent Consultant

SESSION CONTEXT

This skills-building workshop addressed the operational aspects of transforming educational environments by focusing on the pedagogical and environmental strategies required for GTE. The context was established by reviewing compelling data from the Asia-Pacific region which demonstrated that critical health, safety, and educational outcomes such as school exclusion and GBV are severely influenced by restrictive, harmful gender expectations. The workshop aimed to equip educators with practical, explicit tools to challenge these norms through classroom delivery, materials, and inclusive language, while prioritising student and teacher safety through the adoption of a Trauma-Informed Approach (TIA). The session underscored that GTE is necessary because harmful gender norms are learned and policed by peers from as early as age two.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The session established that effective GTE must explicitly disrupt harmful gender norms rather than merely being gender-sensitive. A major rationale for this approach was revealed through data showing the deep-seated nature of gender-inequitable attitudes in the region (e.g., 71.8% of respondents in one survey believe men are better political leaders) and surprising trends, such as the higher drop-out rate for boys in upper secondary education in some contexts (e.g., Indonesia and Thailand). Crucially, the workshop centred on embedding a TIA, defined by the principles of safety, connection, and calm, utilising strategies such as content warnings and opt-out options to ensure that teaching sensitive topics (like GBV) does no harm. Participants

concluded that systemic support is mandatory: teachers require mandatory self-reflection training on personal biases, professional well-being programmes, and clear institutional policies to fully integrate and sustain GTE efforts.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The workshop proceeded through a rationale for GTE supported by data immersion, an analysis of gender norms, and the introduction of a TIA.

1. **Rationale and Deconstructing Gendered Patterns.** The session began with a data immersion activity, requiring a content warning due to the inclusion of statistics on violence against women and children. This activity revealed that outcomes across education, health, and safety consistently show gendered patterns linked to ingrained expectations. Participants reflected on the origins of bias and the role of educators in disrupting it.
 - **The Problem of Bias:** Participants discussed how stereotypes are reinforced, citing a university professor who actively seeks to disrupt the ‘dead white men’ literary canon by focusing on women and LGBTIQ+ writers of colour as a decolonisation effort. This experience demonstrated the need for educators to critically reflect on the existing curriculum and its inherent biases.
 - **Unpacking Stereotypes:** The need to move beyond simple equal representation was stressed. Teachers should encourage students to explicitly unpack stereotypes—for example, prompting children to question why the mother is always shown washing dishes while the father is a pilot or doctor in a textbook. This approach ensures students identify and challenge the underlying gender norms reflected in the materials.
2. **Practical Strategies for Norm Disruption in the Classroom.** The workshop provided concrete, actionable steps for teachers across various aspects of classroom management and delivery.
 - **Teaching Materials and Critical Reflection:** A cardinal rule emphasised was the need to avoid stereotypes in teaching and learning materials. When prescribed materials inherently present bias, teachers must guide students to critically reflect on the material’s impact and consider more inclusive alternatives.

- **Language and Modelling:** Language must be gender-neutral to avoid reinforcing stereotypes. Participants noted that this goes beyond verbal language to include the visual communication from materials. Teachers must consistently act as role models who promote inclusive behaviour and language.
 - **Integration and Assessment:** GTE work should be integrated across all subjects (e.g., Social Studies, Language Arts, Science, Maths). A key need identified by participants was training in classroom assessment to verify if GTE methods are correctly integrating key concepts and whether those methods are making a tangible difference to student knowledge and attitudes.
- 3. Trauma-Informed Practice (TIA) and Support Needs.** The session heavily focused on ensuring teacher and student well-being through a TIA.
- **TIA Principles:** TIA was defined by three core, non-negotiable principles: safety, connection, and calm. Practical strategies for teachers include providing content warnings (or ‘trigger warnings’) before sensitive topics, offering opt-out options for students, and the crucial practice of discouraging personal stories or disclosures in favour of hypothetical scenarios.
 - **Signposting and Debriefing:** Teachers must proactively signpost to support services (e.g., helplines) and must implement structured debriefing and check-in protocols after discussing sensitive content.
 - **Systemic Support:** Teachers cannot perform this work in isolation. They require institutionalisation of gender equality policies, dedicated teacher wellness programmes (emotional and physical), and access to GBV counselling. Advocacy efforts must ensure timely funding and resources.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

Two principal frameworks guided the practical and ethical elements of this workshop:

- 1. Gender-Transformative Education (GTE):** The primary approach requires actively challenging and changing harmful gender norms and power dynamics. GTE is defined as an educational approach that challenges the root causes of gender inequality, empowering students and teachers to question and change harmful norms, moving beyond simply improving access to education. The GTE methodology is multi-faceted, requiring simultaneous transformation in curriculum content, pedagogy, school environment, and teacher behaviour.
- 2. Trauma-Informed Approach (TIA):** TIA is the mandatory ethical lens for delivering sensitive CSE content. It is explicitly defined by the principles of safety, connection, and calm. Its practical tools such as content warnings, opt-out options, and grounding exercises are non-negotiable for mitigating the risk of re-traumatisation and promoting professional self-care.
- 3. Quality Resources:** The session sampled activities from **Connect with Respect (CWR)**, a classroom programme developed for students in early secondary school (ages 11–14) specifically aimed at preventing GBV in schools. Other resources mentioned included **The Good School Toolkit** and the **Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) Training Manual**.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The workshop relied on immersive activities and group reflections, which yielded concrete policy and pedagogical requests.

1. **Data and Rules Activity:** Following the data immersion, the 'Gender Rules' activity prompted reflection on societal expectations. Participants noted that even when rules were ostensibly gender-neutral, girls still ended up with 'so many rules' and reduced opportunities, confirming the policing role of gender norms. The utility of external data sources (MICS surveys, demographic health surveys) was discussed, alongside the challenge of insufficient or targeted data collection in some regional contexts.
2. **Activity Sampling and Effectiveness:** The session sampled learning activities from Connect with Respect. Survey data presented showed that sampling the learning activities was rated by teachers as 'extremely effective' (60.5%) in comparison to simply receiving advice from facilitators (45.3%), reinforcing the forum's core message that practical pedagogy builds confidence.
3. **Request for Assessment Tools:** A significant request emerged from the group discussion: the urgent need to train educators on classroom assessment for GTE. Teachers need help to verify if their GTE methods are correctly integrating key concepts and messages, a component which is typically under-prioritised in developed materials.
4. **Commitments and Advocacy:** The final reflection exercise utilised sentence starters, focusing on commitments to action. Commitments included: advocating for policy and curriculum integration of gender equality (from an Indonesian policy representative); prioritising teacher wellness and the need to 'heal our inner child' to pass on positive energy (acknowledging the emotional labour of educators); and advocating for timely funding and resources for this essential work (from a consultant working with UNICEF and UNFPA).

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **GTE Mandate:** GTE must be transformative, requiring explicit strategies to disrupt harmful gender norms and challenge deeply entrenched societal attitudes, including the need to question stereotypical representations in teaching materials.
- **TIA for Safety:** The TIA, anchored in safety, connection, and calm, is mandatory when teaching sensitive topics, requiring the consistent use of content warnings and hypothetical scenarios.
- **Teacher Wellness and Support:** Effective GTE is impossible without comprehensive structural support, including teacher wellness programmes, access to GBV counselling, and professional learning communities to support teacher self-reflection and resilience.
- **Policy and Integration:** GTE work must be integrated across all subjects and sustained through institutionalisation of gender equality policies to prevent it from remaining a marginal, underfunded initiative.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- How can Ministries of Education (MOEs) and development partners develop and deliver specific training for educators on classroom assessment to accurately verify the integration and effectiveness of GTE methods and concepts?
- What policy levers are required to ensure that the necessary timely funding and resources are allocated to support teachers in implementing GTE, addressing the systemic workload challenge and need for continuous professional development?
- How can the systemic need for teacher wellness programmes and GBV counselling be integrated into national education budgets, recognising the emotional toll of delivering trauma-informed content?

SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOP B3: Designing and Assessing Skills-based Lesson Plans

Date and Time:

Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 13:30–18:00

Trainer:

Darcy Weaver, Associate Director, AMAZE International,
Advocates for Youth

SESSION CONTEXT

This skills-building workshop was designed to provide educators and curriculum developers with the practical, technical expertise required to translate the principles of CSE into actionable, skills-based classroom pedagogy. Moving beyond the ‘what’ (content) and the ‘why’ (rationale), the session focused explicitly on the ‘how’ of lesson planning and assessment. Recognising that transformative education demands active learning and measurable skill acquisition, the workshop aimed to demystify the creation of effective, sequenced lesson plans and introduce techniques for formative assessment, utilising real-world, scripted materials aligned with international standards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The session established that an effective lesson plan is a cornerstone of quality CSE delivery, essential for clarifying learning objectives, ensuring alignment with curriculum, and building teacher confidence. The crucial difference between successful and ineffective programmes is rigorous assessment, particularly the application of formative evaluation techniques (e.g., observation of group co-operation, sticky note reflections, peer assessment) that check understanding during the lesson rather than only at the end. The use of high-quality, scripted lesson plans such as those developed by AMAZE on topics like LGBTQIA+ Allyship and HIV, was demonstrated as a necessary strategy to guarantee consistency and ensure that content aligns with the UN International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. Ultimately, the workshop concluded that mastery of learning outcomes requires follow-up lessons and reinforcement, as

a single lesson is often insufficient to achieve genuine skills development across knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The workshop covered the philosophy of lesson planning, its core characteristics, the challenges of implementation and the essential role of assessment.

- 1. The Necessity and Power of Lesson Planning.** Lesson plans serve as the primary tool for teachers, offering clarity, confidence, and consistency in content delivery. Participants noted that lesson plans are vital because they:
 - **Ensure Structure and Sequence:** They convert abstract concepts into a clear, step-by-step methodology for the classroom, helping teachers structure the learning progression.
 - **Address Challenges:** They act as a management tool to handle common barriers, such as time constraints, lack of confidence, and the pressure of a heavily loaded curriculum.
 - **Facilitate Peer Learning:** Sharing effective lesson plans and teaching notes, such as those that detail learner-centred activities, allows for peer learning and improvement across the educator workforce.
- 2. Characteristics of a Good, Skills-Based Lesson Plan.** The workshop emphasised that effective CSE lesson plans must align with the S.A.F.E. principles (Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit, referencing prior forum learning). A good lesson plan must contain specific, detailed elements, often missing in traditional, knowledge-focused plans:
 - **Clear Guidance:** Must specify learning objectives, key messages (such as ‘Sexuality is diverse. Everyone deserves respect’), and a variety of options for activities.
 - **Active and Learner-Centred:** Activities must be participatory (e.g., role-play, group work) and allow learners to develop and practice skills in three domains: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes. The example of the UNESCO Connect with Respect materials confirmed the strength of learner interaction and learner-centred activities.
 - **Materials and Timing:** Must clearly list all necessary materials (including digital links, e.g., AMAZE videos) and assign realistic time frames to activities, noting that this is often a gap in many samples.

3. The Crucial Role of Formative Assessment. A major focus was placed on assessment techniques that verify skill acquisition and attitude change, moving beyond rote knowledge testing. The workshop identified and illustrated specific formative evaluation techniques, where assessment feeds back into the learning process immediately:

- **Observation:** Trainers should observe group participation and the respect demonstrated in discussions.
- **Reflection:** Checking student reflections (e.g., from sticky notes) for evidence of understanding.
- **Peer and Self-Assessment:** Utilising structured tables (as exemplified in the lesson plan template) where students assign a level (Basic, Better, or Best) to their own and their peers' presentations and work, ensuring they reflect on skills delivery.

4. Tools and Technology for Scaffolding Sensitive Content. The workshop showcased how high-quality, pre-developed materials can act as a crucial scaffold, particularly when teaching sensitive topics.

- **AMAZE Scripted Lesson Plans:** These plans, available for Southeast Asia, are explicitly designed to support in-school or out-of-school CSE delivery. They utilise engaging animated videos (AMAZE) to introduce topics like LGBTQIA+ Allyship (Key Concepts 1 and 5 of the UN Guidance) and HIV.
- **The U=U Campaign:** The lesson plan on HIV incorporated current public health messaging, such as the 'Undetectable equals Untransmittable' (U=U) campaign, ensuring the content is scientifically accurate and up-to-date.
- **The Use of Prompt Cards:** The HIV lesson plan utilised prompt cards for group work. This structured activity guides students to research and present information on key topics, such as the difference between HIV and AIDS, symptoms, and preventative measures (PrEP/PEP).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

- 1. Skills-Based Learning Domains:** The guiding principle, explicitly stated in the supplementary materials, is that CSE should provide learners with opportunities to develop, apply, and practice learning in the domains of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- 2. UN International Technical Guidance Alignment:** The session utilised resources (AMAZE) explicitly aligned with the UN Guidance, ensuring that localisation does not compromise the evidence-based core of the content.
- 3. Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** The use of visual media (AMAZE videos) and flexible, activity-based pedagogy (role-play, group discussion) aligns with UDL principles, making content accessible to a broader range of learners.
- 4. Formative Assessment and Feedback:** The deliberate integration of self- and peer-assessment techniques moves the pedagogical focus towards continuous improvement and real-time adjustment of teaching practice.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

Group work involved participants reviewing and critiquing sample lesson plans, especially the UNESCO Connect with Respect materials.

- **Critiques of Sample Plans:** Key gaps identified included the challenge of determining appropriate grading levels for complex content and the perceived necessity for more time. A participant noted that the 'time frame [is] too short for many activities,' reinforcing the need for more dedicated time for skills practice.
- **Commitments to Action:** The session concluded with participants confirming actionable plans, many of which focused on implementing the tools presented: applying the Breaking the Silence (BtS) methodology and rights-based model; sharing AMAZE Videos and resources; and implementing Role-play methods. A participant from the Philippines committed to exploring the need for contextualised CSE for specific, often overlooked communities, such as LGBTQIA+ persons with disabilities. The final reflection reiterated the vital observation that teaching CSE should be a choice and that it creates individuals who 'will demand services,' making it an economic imperative.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Design for Skills Mastery:** Lesson plans must be purposefully sequenced and active to ensure learners develop, apply, and practice skills across the knowledge, attitudes, and skills domains, as mastery is rarely achieved in a single session.
- **Formative Assessment:** Quality CSE requires implementing formative assessment (e.g., peer assessment tables, observation, reflection) to continuously verify understanding of complex concepts and skills, such as allyship and consent.
- **Leveraging Resources:** The use of high-quality, international, scripted lesson plans (like AMAZE) and integrated public health messaging (U=U) provides essential scaffolding and scientific accuracy for teachers tackling sensitive issues.
- **Sustainability and Follow-up:** The effectiveness of any single lesson plan is limited; educators must schedule and deliver follow-up lessons to reinforce intended learning outcomes.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- Further work is needed to develop mechanisms for the contextualisation and modification of international scripted lesson plans to fit diverse local cultural and educational programmes.
- Participants committed to conducting similar research studies in other countries to understand local obstacles to inclusive CSE.
- There is a persistent need for more resources and training focused on specific, overlooked groups, such as LGBTIQ+ persons with disabilities.



Top: Hastin Atas Asih, National Coordinator, Right Here Right Now, Yayasan Gemilang Sehat Indonesia (YGSI), Indonesia.

Bottom: Dr. Sana Ali, Programme Manager, Life Skills Education Component, Aahung, Pakistan.



EVOLVING THE PROFESSIONALISATION PATHWAYS FOR THE CSE TEACHER: A MULTI-GENERATIONAL TEACHER DIALOGUE

Date and Time:

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 09:00–10:30

Venue:

Watergate Ballroom 3, 6th Floor, Amari Bangkok

Moderators:

Undarmaa Batsukh, Regional Coordinator, Education International Asia Pacific (EIAP); and Sai Jyothirmal Racherla, Deputy Executive Director, ARROW

MCs:

Sylvia Wong, Technical Advisor, Adolescents and Youth, UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office; Palden Wangchuk Dorji, YPEER Asia-Pacific Center

Panel Speakers:

Fransiska Wahyu Ari Susilowati (PGRI, Indonesia); Wan Aeinisya Bt Wan Ahmed (NUTP, Malaysia); Prof. Maria Francezka; Theresa C. Kwe (ACT, Philippines); Mike Thiruman (STU, Singapore); Kusmita Tiwari (ISTU, Nepal); Parichart Chaiwong (NTTU, Thailand)

SESSION CONTEXT

The final day of the forum commenced with a pivotal plenary session designed to elevate the teaching profession and centre the voices of educators across varied experience levels (ranging from three years to 30 years in service). The discussions focused critically on systemic barriers such as high workloads, lack of institutional backing, and unclear career progression that undermine the delivery of CSE and gender equality education. This dialogue served as a crucial

call to invest in the future, ensuring teachers are empowered as leaders and advocates in their communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The panel dialogue concluded that transforming the education system relies fundamentally on recognising that teacher well-being is student well-being. Success is conditional upon governments making mandatory, sustained financial investment ('Cash' and 'Commitment') to address crises such as teacher shortages (Nepal) and high emigration rates due to low salaries (Philippines). Participants asserted that CSE success is profoundly relational, resting on the teacher-student relationship, necessitating that every teacher is seen as a CSE educator. To support their professionalisation, teachers demanded the removal of all non-teaching and non-caring duties (Thailand). Crucially, the Philippines delegation proposed adopting community engagement and public service as essential, new metrics for teacher appraisal, recognising teachers' immense contributions to nation-building and advocacy outside the classroom. This requires Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to pivot towards practical, long-term models, such as interprofessional education and mentorship.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The panel dialogue coalesced around the institutional and personal transformation required to professionalise CSE teaching, focusing on three major themes: political commitment, sustainable CPD models, and defining the true value of a teacher.

1. **Systemic Financial Investment and the Protection of Professional Time.** The panellists, especially those from the Global South, provided stark evidence that teachers are financially vulnerable, impacting the capacity of the entire system. Francesca Kwe (Philippines) reported that starting public school teachers in the Philippines earn approximately USD 400 per month, contributing to the export of human capital. Kusmita Tiwari (Nepal) cited a shortage of 60,000 teachers and noted that private school teachers often work 10–12 hours daily for low pay. To address this systemic failure, the following actions were demanded of governments:
 - **The Four C's:** Mike Thiruman (Singapore) advocated that governments must provide **Commitment** (political support), **Cash** (financial investment), place teachers

on the political leaders' **Calendar** daily, and foster **Conversations** to ensure the profession is respected.

- **Removing Non-Teaching Duties:** Parichart Chaiwong (Thailand) emphasised the urgent need to remove all non-teaching and non-caring work (such as administration, procurement, or acting as security guards) to free up teachers to provide necessary emotional support to students.
- **Protection and Well-being:** Protection of teachers' mental health and freedom from institutional harassment (such as 'red tagging') was identified as a non-negotiable precondition. Fransiska Wahyu Ari Susilowati (Indonesia) stressed that policymakers often assume teachers are healthy and well, neglecting the fact that teacher well-being is essential before they can support students.

2. Institutionalising Continuous Professional

Development (CPD) and Co-Creation. Discussions on CPD moved beyond one-off training to sustained, institutional models that build competence and confidence while addressing internal biases ('cognitive dissonance').

- **Leveraging Teacher Associations:** Fransiska (Indonesia) explained how their large association (PGRI, with over three million members, mostly female) was leveraged. They formed a special department for women teachers, duplicating the organisational structure nationally and regionally to provide systematic mentorship and professional development. They utilise technology for frequent meetings (every two months) to strengthen the capacity of women leaders at the grassroots level.
- **Interprofessional Education:** Professor Kwe (Philippines) highlighted the effectiveness of interprofessional education, where teachers are teamed with professionals such as nurses and youth advocates to understand complex issues, such as the struggles of non-binary youth. This model recognises that teachers need to learn from different professions involved in community and public health.
- **Addressing the Policy Gap:** Sai Racherla concluded from the initial teacher input that, despite policy frameworks, CSE implementation struggles due to a lack of community support and insufficient training for educators. Wan Aeinisya (Malaysia) noted that her experience had not yet been integrated into pre-service or in-service curricula, highlighting a continuing gap between classroom reality and formal training.

3. Defining the Teacher's Value: Relationship and

Community Impact. The panel addressed what truly defines the value of an effective teacher, concluding that it is fundamentally relational and community-focused.

- **Relational Pedagogy:** Mike Thiruman asserted that the fundamental aspect of teaching is the teacher-student relationship; this bond is the reason teachers continue their endeavour. He argued that CSE is about building community and relationships, 'not about content' alone.
- **New Metrics for Nation-Building:** Professor Kwe challenged the current 'arbitrary' appraisal metric based on publications (designed only to raise university rankings for budget justification). She proposed that a new metric must recognise 'community engagement and public service' as an 'important, incredible work of teachers' and a core contribution to nation-building.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

1. **Teacher Professionalisation:** The underpinning concept, defining teaching as a respected profession with emphasis on knowledge, skills, and ethical conduct, requiring a commitment to lifelong learning and systemic support.
2. **The Four C's Framework:** Mike Thiruman's framework providing a structural approach for governments to elevate the profession: Commitment, Cash, Calendar, and Conversations.
3. **Relational Learning:** The assertion that the effectiveness of CSE is predicated on the teacher-student relationship and the building of trust and community, necessitating that every teacher is a relationship builder.
4. **Interprofessional Education:** The CPD model proposed by the Philippines, advocating for cross-sectoral collaboration to address complex adolescent issues by partnering teachers with public health experts and youth advocates.



Sivananthi Thanenthiran, Executive Director, ARROW.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The Q&A segment primarily focused on accountability, metrics, and the ethical justification for the emotionally challenging work of GTE advocates.

1. **Question on Professional Expertise:** An attendee, Kavi, questioned what actions were most urgent to ensure CSE teaching is recognised as professional expertise rather than an 'additional responsibility'. The subsequent panel responses synthesised the need for dedicated time (removing non-teaching work) and institutional support (new metrics).
2. **Justification for New Metrics:** Professor Kwe passionately argued that the new metric must be community engagement and public service, defending teachers' work in advocacy as contributions to nation-building.
3. **The Ethical Justification:** Professor Kwe addressed the perceived futility of teaching CSE against a politically hostile framework, asserting, 'Hell yeah. It's worth it,' arguing that teachers must empower youth to claim the future they rightfully deserve, rather than become 'meek, docile, perfect victims of a system that has the monopoly of violence'.
4. **The Final Synthesis:** Mike Thiruman summarised the entire forum's message, stating that 'it's not about content, it's about relationship building,' and that the principle of 'Teacher well-being is student well-being' must be recognised by policymakers and parents.
5. **The Closing Allegory:** Jenelle Babb closed the session by reflecting on the forum's journey—moving attendees 'upstairs,' 'downstairs,' and 'round and round'—as an allegory for the work ahead, emphasising that achieving results requires 'many small steps often and many people alongside you'.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Financial Investment is Mandatory:** Sustained political and financial commitment (Cash) is essential to solve endemic issues of low salaries, teacher shortages, and burnout that undermine CSE delivery.
- **Remove Non-Teaching Work:** The removal of all administrative and non-caring duties is a mandatory precondition to allow teachers to focus on student well-being and emotional support.
- **Relational Basis of CSE:** The success of CSE relies fundamentally on the teacher-student relationship and building community, making relational skills paramount.
- **New Professional Metrics:** Teacher appraisal must evolve to formally recognise community engagement and public service alongside academic achievements as vital contributions to nation-building.
- **Effective CPD Models:** Continuous professional development must adopt long-term, sustained models, such as PGRI's regional learning circles and interprofessional education with youth advocates and health professionals.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- How can teacher unions advocate for the formal recognition and budgeting of teacher wellness programmes and psychosocial support within national education budgets?
- What policy mechanisms are required to integrate community engagement and public service as official, assessed metrics in teacher professionalisation pathways?
- How can UNESCO and partners successfully advocate for the formal designation of the teacher-student relationship as an intangible cultural heritage, reinforcing the relational nature of quality education?
- The work must continue through establishing a regular mechanism (such as a biennial conference) to share regional experience and expand CSE coverage beyond adolescents to include adults and the elderly, where sexuality remains taboo.

CAFÉ 5: Research and Evidence in Transformative Education

Date and Time:

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 11:00–12:30

Venue:

Pratunam Room, 7th Floor

Facilitator:

Sylvia Wong, UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Office

SESSION CONTEXT

This World Café, running in parallel with CAFÉ 6, shifted focus from showcasing successful pedagogical innovations (CAFÉ 1, 2, 4) and comprehensive models (CAFÉ 3) to an **analytical examination of the systemic and institutional factors** that impede the effective delivery of CSE, life skills, and violence prevention programmes.

This session brought together five distinct case studies that critically assessed implementation challenges, policy gaps, and the often-overlooked psychosocial burdens placed on educators, caregivers, and administrative structures.

Discussions centred on leveraging rigorous assessment and **evidence-based research**, rather than relying solely on anecdotal evidence, to identify and dismantle structural barriers that hinder adolescent health, well-being, and gender equality objectives in the Asia-Pacific region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAFÉ 5 demonstrated a critical need for rigorous institutional self-assessment and a deeper understanding of teacher capacity and personal biases, which often serve as primary roadblocks to effective CSE implementation.

Key findings highlighted significant structural impediments, including **deep-seated gender biases among teachers** in India, necessitating the use of the **‘teacher persona’ model** (A, B, C) for targeted support.

Presentations on Vietnam and Cambodia illustrated the complexity of embedding gender equality by reforming national curricula and shifting social norms.

Crucially, the session reinforced that sustainability requires involving the entire educational ecosystem, including parents and communities, to foster an **‘enabling environment’** that actively supports gender-equitable outcomes.

Finally, detailed assessments from Indonesia revealed policy-to-practice gaps in mandatory **violence prevention systems** and identified fundamental weaknesses in the national curriculum’s reflection of **Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) education**, notably the disappearance of sexuality topics at the junior high level.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The session featured five stations that collectively outlined institutional and implementation challenges across the region, synthesising issues ranging from individual educator readiness to national policy efficacy.

Station 1:

Factors inhibiting teachers in delivering CSE/life skills Framework

Centre for Catalyzing Change, India

Presenter: Dr. Aparajita. Gogoi

This session addressed the significant barrier posed by teacher inhibitors in delivering CSE/life skills in India. Due to cultural and political resistance, with about 20 states officially banning CSE following backlash from a parliamentary commission around 2010, the programme was framed as ‘life skills’.

The core research focussed on developing and validating a psychometric tool (57 questions) to understand teacher attitudes, convictions, personal biases, and comfort levels regarding sensitive topics, as conventional predictors (like age or gender) were insufficient.

The tool identified three teacher ‘personas’:

- **Persona A:** High degree of stereotypes/biases, lacking confidence, uncomfortable, and unhappy about the training.
- **Persona B:** ‘On the edge’ teachers who experienced cognitive dissonance, believing the topics were important but feeling embarrassed or fearing backlash. They were considered coachable with proper mentoring and nudging.
- **Persona C:** Teachers demonstrating a high degree of belief, comfort, and confidence, representing the optimal investment for training resources.

The research revealed deep-seated gender biases, even in educated households (e.g., expecting daughters, not sons, to fetch water for guests).

Recommendations included using the tool to select teachers for maximum return on investment and pairing Persona C teachers with Persona A or B teachers.

Station 2: Embedding Gender Equality in Education in Vietnam and Cambodia

UNICEF EAPRO and Coram International

Presenter: Shreyasi Jha, Regional Gender and Adolescent Advisor

This station detailed a large, multi-year programme aimed at curriculum reform for children aged 10 to 15 (middle school/Grades 5–7) to explicitly address gender norms and perceptions of violence.

A **robust mixed-methods measurement system** was implemented concurrently to track shifts in attitudes across five domains, including gender equality in schools, communities, and gender-based violence.

Findings demonstrated that girls generally held more positive attitudes regarding gender roles and showed a higher rejection of gender-based violence compared to boys.

Notably, boys tended to perceive gender equality as a ‘**girls’ issue**’.

A significant gap was observed: both genders agreed more with gender equality norms in the school setting but less so in the community or household setting due to pervasive traditional norms.

Contextual differences were striking, with Vietnam showing a far more inclusive approach and positive outcomes (70 per cent positive understanding) compared to Cambodia.

Station 3: Creating Gender-inclusive and Equitable Education System Breakthrough India

Presenter: Arundhuti Pauline Gomes, Deputy Director – Strategic Partnerships and Scale-up

Breakthrough India’s work focussed on adolescents and young people (ages 12 to 25) using an ecological model that targeted not only students and teachers but also parents, community members, and frontline health workers to foster an ‘enabling environment’.

The approach utilised humour, such as short films about taboos and myths, to deliver content and encourage behaviour change.

The programme successfully worked to incorporate selected chapters on gender and health into state government curricula in **Odisha and Punjab**.

A randomised controlled technique study in Haryana demonstrated that boys began recognising restrictive norms and girls gained skills to negotiate their aspirations. This intervention also correlated with a reduction in the marriage age (e.g., from 13 years to 17 or 18 years).

A key strategy involved training **School Management Committees (SMCs)** to actively monitor school infrastructure (e.g., washroom hygiene, locked doors) as these systemic issues directly correlate with risks like school drop-out and early marriage.

Station 4: Empowering Schools as Frontliners: Enhancing the Implementation of Violence Prevention and Management Policy in Indonesian Schools

PUSKAPA, Indonesia

Presenter: Widi Laras Sari, Head of Research

This session detailed an action research project supporting Indonesia’s Ministerial Regulation on preventing and managing violence in schools (2023).

The research was conducted in three geographically and culturally distinct sites—conservative Aceh, urban Banten, and remote, post-conflict Maluku.

The initial assessment identified two major implementation challenges: first, school personnel expressed **confusion** regarding the definition of violence and when intervention was appropriate (e.g., whether mocking peers constitutes violence); second, teachers applied different disciplinary methods based on gender roles, with **harsher physical punishment for boys** and **shaming/humiliation for girls**.

The capacity building response included training on **basic gender concepts, peace education frameworks**, and the policy text itself.

To address teacher workload, ongoing support was provided through **asynchronous videos** that answered teachers' specific questions and case scenarios.

Station 5:

Assessment of Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) Education in Indonesia

UNFPA Indonesia

Presenter: Margaretha Sitanggang

UNFPA Indonesia presented a systematic assessment comparing how Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) education is reflected in the national curriculum and government-uploaded textbooks against the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE).

The content review, utilising a three-category scoring system (fully covered, somewhat covered, not at all covered), revealed a critical gap: ARH content was relatively complete at the primary level (Grades 1–6) but **'disappeared' at the junior high school level (Grades 7–9)**, the crucial period of puberty.

The curriculum wording was often too general, requiring MoE-published textbooks for more detail.

Teachers (trained in Biology, Sports/Health, and Citizenship) cited challenges in integration due to insufficient time and a lack of detailed implementation guidelines.

The findings necessitate discussion with the MoE to minimise these content gaps and contextualise ITGSE topics



Dr. Maria Francezka Carasig Kwe, All U.P. Academic Employees Union [Member of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) Union].

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

The session articulated several essential frameworks for addressing institutional deficits.

- **Teacher Persona Modelling (CCC, India):** This approach introduced a sophisticated segmentation of educators based on qualitative research, distinguishing teachers by their internal beliefs, comfort level, and capacity to deliver CSE. By classifying teachers into 'personas' (A, B, C), this model allows Continuous Professional Development (CPD) efforts to be tailored to address underlying psychological and normative biases, moving beyond simple knowledge training.
- **Whole-Ecosystem Enablement (Breakthrough, India):** This framework asserts that sustained gender-transformative change requires engaging the entire external context. Breakthrough's model systematically involves **caregivers and community members** alongside teachers and students, using tools like the **School Management Committee (SMC)** checklist to monitor infrastructure and safety, ensuring classroom messages are reinforced externally.
- **Policy Implementation Strength Assessment (PUSKAPA, Indonesia) and Policy Auditing (UNFPA, Indonesia):** These two approaches highlight the necessity of formal assessment. The PUSKAPA action research provides a methodology for auditing the effectiveness of policy deployment at the grassroots level by identifying where systemic breakdowns occur due to lack of resources, training, or consistent capacity to execute ministerial mandates like violence prevention. The UNFPA assessment provides a methodology for **systematic review of curricula against international standards (ITGSE)** to identify fundamental gaps, such as the absence of ARH content at critical developmental stages.



Sai Jyothirmai Racherla, Deputy Executive Director, ARROW.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

Participants engaged in a discussion centred on the necessity of moving beyond pilot projects to truly institutionalise the required systemic changes.

- **Funding and Sustainability:** A core tension noted was the persistent difficulty in securing sustained, non-project-based government funding for teacher training and ARH delivery once external donor funding concludes.
- **Need for Curriculum Audits:** There was consensus that the Indonesian ARH assessment (Station V) highlighted a widespread issue: national curricula must undergo regular, rights-based audits to ensure they meet the minimum essential requirements for adolescent health and well-being.
- **Teacher Protection and Support:** Implementing partners stressed the critical importance of ensuring that violence prevention mandates (Station IV) include mechanisms for teacher protection and psychological support, recognising the emotional toll involved in dealing with sensitive disclosures and student trauma.
- **Closing Reflections:** In closing reflections, a participant from Pakistan described leveraging a 'hidden curriculum' to promote gender change, confirming the 'tango dance' between resistance and progress. Another reflection highlighted the hope for generating 'different kinds of data' to address programmatic gaps, and the session concluded with the unifying thought that 'hopes lie in young people'.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Addressing systemic inhibitors necessitates research that identifies and targets **teacher's underlying gender biases and personas**, rather than just filling content knowledge gaps.
- Effective policy implementation, such as violence prevention, requires **mandatory, integrated training and robust resource allocation** that recognises the educator as the 'frontliner'.
- The creation of an **enabling environment** demands intentional engagement with the entire community, including caregivers, to reinforce gender-equitable outcomes beyond the school walls.
- National curricula must be subjected to **systematic, independent policy assessments** (e.g., against ITGSE) to reveal and rectify gaps in the provision of comprehensive adolescent health content, particularly ARH.
- Progress in transformative education can be achieved by utilising methods like the '**hidden curriculum**' to promote gender change despite contextual resistance.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- How can Ministries of Education (MoE) transition successful pilot projects into **sustainable, budget-line funded national programmes** that are fully institutionalised?
- What are the most effective, scalable strategies for translating national violence prevention policies into **practical, consistent teacher actions** supported by adequate professional development?
- How can **meaningful metrics** be developed to assess the impact of ARH education on actual adolescent health outcomes, beyond simple knowledge recall?
- What further support is needed for generating **different kinds of data** to address known gaps in programming?

CAFÉ 6: Measuring CSE Teaching and Learning in Education Systems

Date and Time:

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 11:00–12:30

Venue:

Phanfa-Lilat Room, 7th Floor

Facilitator:

Palden Wangchuk Dorji, YPEER Asia-Pacific Center

SESSION CONTEXT

This capstone technical World Café, running in parallel with CAFÉ 5, addressed the imperative for Monitoring, Measuring, and Learning (MML) within CSE and Gender Equality programmes.

The session directly responded to the growing need for **robust, credible evidence** that validates the effectiveness of CSE to governments and key stakeholders.

Discussions focussed on advancing beyond basic output indicators to capture **complex and meaningful outcomes**—including learner attitudes, well-being, relationship health, and the acquisition of essential life skills such as help-seeking.

The session reinforced the importance of linking these measurements to policy and institutional frameworks to ensure sustainability and government ownership.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conclusive session underscored that the **sustained success of CSE programmes** depends on the production of strong, credible evidence that demonstrates their value and efficacy, thereby countering political and cultural resistance.

The **SERAT (Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool) framework** was presented as a validated, evidence-based methodology for measuring nuanced CSE outcomes—particularly in assessing learner relationships (peer, parent, and teacher-student) and help-seeking behaviour.

Findings from SERAT studies revealed significant positive attitude shifts among learners: **91.4% agreed that girls should be treated with respect**, and **88.7% felt prepared to talk to teachers**.

However, despite promising results, challenges in institutionalisation remain significant. A UNFPA assessment revealed that in Nepal, **only 12% of SERAT indicators had been adopted by the MoE**, underscoring weak implementation and limited government uptake.

Plenary reflections emphasised the **fragility of donor-funded programmes** and the urgent need for governments to **institutionalise measurement systems** within national education frameworks to ensure long-term sustainability.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The session featured five stations, each illustrating national and global efforts to institutionalise monitoring and evaluation frameworks for CSE and Gender Equality education.

Station 1:

Possible Opportunities for Institutionalising the Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (SERAT)

Framework

Right Here Right Now Nepal Coalition

Presenter: Rajendra Maharjan, Country Coordinator

This presentation detailed the methodology and findings of a UNESCO-supported study utilising the SERAT framework, adapted for Nepal to monitor progress in school-based CSE.

SERAT encompasses four key domains: **Policy context, Curriculum content, Classroom integration, and Teacher training evaluation**.

The tool has been linked to the MoE's **Education Management Information System (EMIS)** and school improvement plans, marking an important step toward systemic integration.

Despite strong positive learner outcomes (91.4% respecting girls, 88.7% able to talk to teachers), a **UNFPA review found only 12% of CSE indicators** were formally adopted at the national level, signalling the need for stronger institutional commitment.

Station 2:**Life Skills Education in Bangladesh – A Review of the National Curriculum in Secondary Education**

UNFPA Bangladesh

Presenter: Dr. Muhammad Munir Hussain, Programme Analyst – Adolescent and Youth

This review examined the 2022 national curriculum revisions that integrated Life Skills Education (LSE) across multiple subjects in the secondary education system.

A 2021 qualitative review found **32% of CSE content explicitly included** and 73% partially integrated.

Reported outcomes included decreased bullying, improved teacher confidence, and the prevention of early marriages.

However, findings also revealed **insufficient teacher training**, both in scale and quality.

To prevent backlash in the conservative Muslim-majority context, advocacy efforts were framed strategically to highlight CSE as a health and life skills intervention.

Station 3:**Learning about Healthy Relationships – Effects of School-Based Sexuality Education in Lao PDR**

UNESCO HQs

Presenter: Arushi Singh, Senior Programme Specialist

This station presented Lao PDR as a strong case study from the UNESCO analysis, demonstrating the impact of well-integrated and teacher-led CSE.

Consistent delivery across four curriculum subjects, combined with a **supportive school culture**, led to measurable improvements in **peer and teacher relationships**.

Learners with disabilities also reported more inclusive treatment.

Identified gaps included weak conflict resolution skills between learners and parents, limited discussion of **cyberbullying**, and the need for more in-depth education on **consent and personal boundaries**.

Station 4:**Learning New, Learning Now, Learning Next – CSE Awareness Orientation for Teachers: Session Guide**

Centre for Health Solutions and Innovations Philippines, Inc. (CHSI Philippines)

Presenter: Cris Anthony Collano Gonzales, Creative Pedagogy Specialist

This initiative addressed the Philippines' high rates of teenage pregnancy and HIV through a 16-part participatory orientation guide employing creative pedagogy (including theatre, dance, and art).

The programme successfully **increased teacher confidence**, including among male teachers teaching sensitive topics like menstruation, and **institutionalised quarterly parent meetings** to strengthen home-school communication.

The collaboration with the Department of Education (DepEd) also produced a classroom observation tool to monitor teacher progress in delivering CSE content effectively.

Station 5:**Situation Analysis of Gender Equality Education and CSE in Teachers' Pre- and In-Service Training, Vietnam**

Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), Vietnam

Presenter: Bui Thanh Xuan, Deputy Director, Research Center for Human Resource Development, Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES)

This nationwide survey (August–December 2024) reached 46,643 respondents across 63 provinces.

Findings revealed strong parental support for school-based CSE, as many parents felt unable to teach sensitive topics such as **LGBTIQ+ issues** at home.

Only **40% of teachers** had received some level of CSE or Gender Equality training, and many reported low confidence in teaching **values- and rights-based content**, indicating an urgent need for capacity-building and institutional reform.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES SESSION OUTCOMES

- **SERAT Framework (Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool):** A validated tool for measuring complex outcomes such as shifts in **attitudes, relationships, and well-being**, moving beyond knowledge-based indicators. **SERAT embodies a rights-based approach**, assessing respect for girls, inclusion of learners with disabilities, and relational well-being as indicators of CSE effectiveness.
- **Rights-Based Measurement:** By grounding measurement in respect, inclusion, and empowerment, SERAT promotes accountability to human rights principles in education, ensuring that CSE contributes to social transformation, not just information transfer.
- **Advocacy through Evidence:** Across all stations, research findings were used strategically to **inform policy dialogues, secure funding, and counteract political resistance**, affirming that evidence is a key advocacy instrument for institutionalising CSE.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The plenary reflection highlighted both the psychological and structural challenges faced by practitioners in advancing CSE measurement and sustainability.

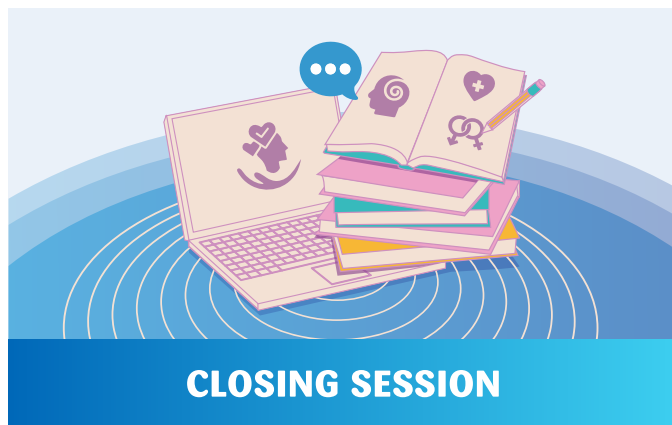
- **The Sustainability Crisis:** Participants voiced concern that CSE programmes often collapse when donor funding ends. One participant emphasised that **‘more evidence is needed for stakeholders to truly see the value of CSE, gender equality, e-health, and well-being.’**
- **The Emotional Toll:** A female participant described the forum as an **‘emotional roller coaster,’** balancing the excitement of innovation with the frustration caused by political resistance and funding cuts.
- **Demand for Adaptable Tools:** A participant from Nepal described CAFÉ 6 as **‘very insightful,’** appreciating exposure to adaptable frameworks and monitoring tools that could be localised to their own context.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Evidence for Institutionalisation:** Rigorous, rights-based evidence is the cornerstone of sustainable CSE implementation, necessary for convincing government stakeholders to allocate resources and embed CSE into policy.
- **Measurement of Relationships:** Effective measurement frameworks must capture relational outcomes — trust, respect, help-seeking, and peer empathy — as validated through the SERAT approach.
- **Policy Audit and Curriculum Review:** Systematic curriculum analyses (e.g., Bangladesh, Vietnam) are crucial for identifying gaps, ensuring content relevance, and linking CSE to broader public health and well-being outcomes.
- **Addressing the Emotional Context:** Sustained advocacy requires psychosocial support for educators and advocates to maintain resilience amid resistance and funding instability.
- **Adaptable Frameworks:** Tools such as SERAT should be **contextualised and institutionalised** within MoEs to enable long-term, scalable monitoring.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS

- How can donor funding and MoEs collaborate to transition evidence-based pilot programmes into **institutionalised, budgeted national initiatives**?
- What additional monitoring tools and research methods are needed to **track the long-term systemic impact of CSE** on reducing violence, improving well-being, and promoting inclusion?
- How can frameworks like SERAT be **adapted and localised** for use in diverse cultural and geographical contexts, particularly those involving ethnic minorities or remote populations?

**Date and Time:**

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 12:30–13:00

Venue:

Watergate Ballroom 3, 6th Floor, Amari Bangkok

Moderators:

Jenelle Babb, Regional Advisor, Education for Health and Well-being, Education Section, UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok; Sai Jyothirmai Racherla, Deputy Executive Director, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

SESSION CONTEXT

The Closing Session marked the culmination of the two-and-a-half-day Regional Forum. Held after the final World Café sessions, this session was designed to synthesise the critical findings, capture participant reflections, and establish a foundation for sustained collaboration and advocacy. The session aimed to reinforce the collective purpose of the work, emphasising the necessity of maintaining momentum against growing political and social opposition to CSE and SRHR in the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The closing dialogue, delivered on behalf of all co-convening partners, emphasised that the forum was deliberately curated to deliver three core outcomes: learning, inspiration, and solidarity. Jenelle Babb utilised the physical journey through the conference rooms as an allegory for the work ahead, characterising transformation as consisting of ‘many small steps often and many people alongside you’. A unique achievement noted by Sai Racherla was the unprecedented collaboration among co-organisers (ARROW, UNESCO,

UNICEF, UNFPA, Education International, and youth networks) who collectively pooled financial resources to convene over 130 participants from over 20 countries, establishing a key example for collaboration when resources are scarce. Participants urged the continuing of this momentum by establishing a regular mechanism (e.g., a biennial conference) and explicitly requested the expansion of CSE coverage to include adults and the elderly, acknowledging the heightened taboo surrounding sexuality in older populations.

CONTENT SYNTHESIS

The closing remarks and subsequent interactive exchanges focused on structural support, the ethical mandate of the work, and the strategic path forward.

1. **The Three Pillars of the Forum’s Design.** Jenelle Babb articulated the intentional design philosophy behind the event, which moved beyond a simple review of the agenda. The forum was curated to provide three essential experiences:
 - **Learning:** This encompassed formal (skills-building workshops), non-formal (World Cafés), and informal exposure (networking conversations) to tools, approaches, and evidence.
 - **Inspiration:** The forum served as a space ‘to be able to see what is being done and what it is possible to do even when there are challenges’.
 - **Solidarity:** The creation of a space for honest discussions, acknowledging the work being done, and remembering ‘you are not alone’ in executing this difficult work.
2. **Collaboration and the Anti-Rights Climate.** Sai Racherla stressed the urgency of the dialogue in the context of rising political hostility: ‘taking the momentum forward is important, especially on sexual and reproductive health and rights in this climate of anti-gender, anti-rights work that is happening on the ground’. She highlighted the unique financial and logistical collaboration amongst the co-convening partners who managed to successfully pool their resources, a unique example for ‘moving forward when resources are bleak’.

3. **The Allegory of the Journey and the Way Forward.** Jenelle Babb utilised the analogy of the forum's physical setting—moving attendees 'upstairs,' 'downstairs,' and 'round and round in circles' — as a metaphor for the enduring work required to achieve transformative results. The message was one of relentless, collective effort: 'It's many small steps often and many people along you alongside you on this journey to achieving the result that we want to achieve, which is together'.
4. **Commitment to Follow-up and Institutionalisation.** The facilitators concluded with clear commitments for post-forum action. Sai Racherla committed to sending a follow-up email sharing the comprehensive meeting report and urged participants 'not let us not keep this as a one-off connection' but to leverage the connections made to ensure the continuation of conversations and collaborative work.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS/KEY APPROACHES

1. **Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (Bi-annual Mechanism):** The forum itself was an example of this approach, building on previous regional dialogues held bi-annually since 2018. Participants recommended formalising this into a permanent 'regular mechanism'.
2. **Resource Pooling:** The co-organisers demonstrated a unique strategy for navigating resource constraints by pooling financial and technical resources to ensure the high-level attendance and logistical success of the forum.
3. **The Allegory of Small Steps and Solidarity:** This motivational framework provided a psychological tool for practitioners, shifting the focus from overwhelming, large-scale political obstacles to manageable, continuous, and collective action supported by peer networks.

INTERACTIVE EXCHANGES

The brief audience reflection period yielded specific policy recommendations and highlighted critical gaps.

- **Inclusion and Diversity Gaps:** Manir Shrestha, representing the Blind Association, Nepal, strongly emphasised the need to address the 'cross-cutting agenda of inclusion, diversity, and equity,' noting that there was 'very little' evidence shared regarding young people with disabilities and gender-diverse people.

- **Need for Regular Convening and Age Expansion:** A participant advocated for a 'more regular sharing' mechanism, such as a biennial conference, and recommended expanding CSE coverage beyond adolescents to include 'adult and even elderly people,' arguing that sexuality is 'even more taboo' for older populations.
- **Commitment to National Reform:** A representative from the Sri Lankan MoE thanked UNESCO and committed to incorporating the lessons learned from the forum into Sri Lanka's new education reforms scheduled for 2026.

SESSION OUTCOMES

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The forum successfully curated a space for learning, inspiration, and solidarity, reinforcing the resilience of the CSE community.
- Maintaining momentum is critical in the current climate of 'anti-gender, anti-rights work' across the region.
- The co-conveners set a unique example of multi-stakeholder collaboration by pooling financial resources, a strategy recommended for continuing work when resources are 'bleak'.
- The work ahead is a journey of 'many small steps often and many people alongside you'.

EMERGENT QUESTIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- **Institutionalise Collaboration:** Establish a regular mechanism, such as a biennial conference, to continue the regional sharing of experience and maintain technical momentum.
- **Expand Age Coverage:** Advocate for and develop CSE programmes that extend beyond adolescents to include adults and the elderly, addressing the taboos and issues faced by older populations.
- **Address Inclusion Gaps:** Increase research, evidence, and advocacy focused on the inclusion, diversity, and equity concerns of young people with disabilities and gender-diverse people.
- **Sustain Country Connections:** Participants were urged to connect with their respective country groups (government, civil society, academia) to continue conversations and leverage their expertise.
- **Follow-up Deliverables:** The co-organisers committed to distributing the final report and other meeting materials via follow-up emails.

ARROW is a regional non-profit women's NGO based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Since it was established in 1993, it has been working to advance women's health, affirmative sexuality and rights, and to empower women through information and knowledge, engagement, advocacy, and mobilisation. ARROW envisions an equal, just and equitable world, where every woman enjoys her full sexual and reproductive rights. ARROW promotes and defends women's rights and needs, particularly in the areas of health and sexuality, and to reaffirm their agency to claim these rights.

Contact us at: arrow@arrow.org.my



Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

1 & 2 Jalan Scott, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 50470

Telephone	00 603 2273 9913/9914
Fax	00 603 2273 9916
E-mail	arrow@arrow.org.my
Web	arrow.org.my
Bluesky	arrowwomen.bsky.social
Facebook	ARROW.Women
Instagram	arrow_women
Youtube	ARROWomen
LinkedIn	arrowwomen