



# Martin Luther Christian University

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1. Title of the Programme:	Child Safety Week, 2023		
2. Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To participate in the Child Safety Week, 2023 organized by Faith Foundation Shillong.</li> </ul>		
3. Date (DD/MM/YYYY):	16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> November, 2023	Venue:	1. Don Bosco Square 2. Nongmynsong
4. Names of Resource persons/Speakers/Presenters/any other:			
5. Total number of participants:	Students	41	
	Faculty	2	
	Externals	7	
	Any Other		

## Introduction:

Faith Foundation, a child rights organization has been working for 10 years now in the prevention of child sexual abuse through its comprehensive work on conducting Personal Safety Education Program (PSEP) in schools and numerous sensitization programmes with communities and collaborative efforts with State agencies to work for the cause or preventing CSA and strengthening mechanisms for protection and child safeguarding. Meghalaya has also seen a gradual increase in POCSO cases over the years. Child Safety Week is a campaign that was conceptualized by Arpan, an organization widely known for its tremendous work on the prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and working to heal those affected by it. At Apran, it is believed that every child matters and has the right to be safe and protected from sexual abuse and heal from its ill effects. CHILD SAFETY WEEK with the theme “It’s OK to Say No” was organized by Faith Foundation in collaboration with Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong. Child Safety Week was observed from 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to highlight the importance of the issue through various discussions and events.

## Session 1:

The BSW 3<sup>rd</sup> Semester students of the School of Social Work, Martin Luther Christian University collaborated with Faith Foundation to create awareness on CHILD SAFETY WEEK with the theme “It’s OK to Say No” through various programmes like street play, flash mob, distribution of pamphlet etc. The programme was organized on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in two areas around Shillong namely, Nongmynsong and Laitumkrah (Don Bosco Square). A street play was performed showcasing the importance of educating the children on the theme i.e., it’s okay to say no. Children are always taught to listen to elders but it is also important to make them understand the downside of this and the vulnerabilities they get exposed to. We live in a world where saying ‘Yes’ is the

cultural norm and saying 'No' is equated to being disrespectful, disobedient, rude and selfish. This prevailing culture makes it difficult for many of us to say 'No', teach our children to say 'No' and accept a 'No' from others. Our children are conditioned to obey everyone, especially adults, unquestionably even if they are uncomfortable and unsafe. We must say 'Yes' to children's well-being and safety by accepting that 'It is okay to say 'No'.

**Conclusion:**

A weeklong celebration was observed on the occasion of Child Safety Week with various programmes being organized all across the state at various levels to make society a better and a safer place for our children. The main objective is to ensure a society where our children are free and safe.

## Annexure I



Students performing street play in Don Bosco Square, Laitumkrah, Shillong



Students performing street play in Nongmensong, Shillong



Students performing Flash Mob in Don Bosco Square, Laitumkrah, Shillong



## **CHILD SAFETY WEEK**

### **Theme: It is Okay to Say NO**

Faith Foundation, a child rights organization has been working for 10 years now in the prevention of child sexual abuse through its comprehensive work on conducting Personal Safety Education Program (PSEP) in schools and numerous sensitization programmes with communities and collaborative efforts with State agencies to work for the cause or preventing CSA and strengthening mechanisms for protection and child safeguarding. Meghalaya has also seen a gradual increase in POCSO cases over the years. According to the NCRB for 2021, Meghalaya has the third highest rate of sexual offences against Children with 27.8 percent of the crimes committed against children falling in this category. The reported cases are just the tip of the iceberg; it is without a doubt that there are numerous unreported cases in the region.

With our experience, we have witnessed in some cases that there is a deterrence to report the cases especially if the perpetrator is a family member and such cases are ends up compromised among the two parties. This negates the whole concept of safeguarding of a child, where the child is left to live with the trauma their whole life. As an organization, sensitizing people on CSA and the need of reporting has been crucial and we are running several campaigns of which Child Safety week is one. Faith Foundation has partnered with Arpan in observing the Child Safety Week in Meghalaya since 2021.

#### **Background:**

Child Safety Week is a campaign that was conceptualized by Arpan, an organization widely known for its tremendous work on the prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and working to heal those affected by it. At Arpan, it is believed that every child matters and has the right to be safe and protected from sexual abuse and heal from its ill effects. For this, they have been reimagining ways to achieve cultural and systemic transformation to create a world free of CSA and empower stakeholders to work towards the cause. With this vision, Arpan initiated the 'Child Safety Week' campaign in 2019 as a collaborative movement to raise awareness and encourage collective action on the issue of CSA. A week in November, 14th -20th November 2023 is dedicated to highlighting the importance of child safety through conversations and events.

This year the objective of Child Safety Week is to help adults understand that 'It's Okay To Say No' and to challenge the cultural norm of saying 'Yes', thus ensuring the safety of children.

#### **THEME: 'IT'S OKAY TO SAY NO'**

We live in a world where saying 'Yes' is the cultural norm and saying 'No' is equated to being disrespectful, disobedient, rude and selfish. This prevailing culture makes it difficult for many of us to say 'No', teach our children to say 'No' and accept a 'No' from others. Our children are conditioned to obey everyone, especially adults, unquestionably even if they are uncomfortable

and unsafe. It is imperative that we say 'Yes' to children's well-being and safety by accepting that 'It is okay to say 'No'.

This year's campaign will be observed by Faith Foundation by organizing the following programmes to increase sensitization on CSA and highlight the importance of children's protection and safety.

### **1. Studio shift at Police Bazaar in collaboration with Red FM Radio, Shillong on 14<sup>th</sup> Nov.2023**

The Child Safety Week will open with an event with the Red FM Radio through their existing program called the Studio Shift. This particular mode of activity will include interviews of pedestrians and crowds at Police Bazaar to get an insight on the perspective of the common person on the issue of child sexual abuse.

### **2. Mural Painting in Mawpat and Jaiaw on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov.2023 & 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023**

The second day of the campaign will be raising awareness through Mural Painting at Mawpat locality. Class 10 students from two schools located in Mawpat i.e. Mawpat Presbyterian School and St. Peters School will be invited to participate in bringing the mural painting to life with their creativity emphasizing on the message of Child Safety and Protection. Graphics play a vital part in awareness raising and remains embedded in a person's mind more than words can.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of November,2023, we will end our campaign with a mural painting at Jaiaw in collaboration with class 10 students of Sein jaintia Sec school.

### **3. Street Play at Iew Nongmensong and Don Bosco Square, Laitumkrah on 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Nov.2023**

The third day of the campaign will be observed by organizing a Street Play on CSA emphasizing on the theme 'It is okay to Say No'. Faith Foundation will be working in collaboration with the Department of Social Work, Martin Luther Christian University to raise mass awareness on CSA and to send the message across that teaching children to 'Say No' is important especially in situations that can be harmful to them. The Campaign will be held at Don Bosco Square and Iew Nongmensong. The street play will be organized with an aim to reach out to more people to encourage them to not be by standers to abuse and exploitation of children

### **4. Bicycle Rally on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov.2023**

The organization will also conduct a Bike Rally in collaboration with a group called the Shalyntem from Shillong.The bike rally is also aimed at raising mass awareness on the issue of

child sexual abuse and spreading the message of teaching children that it is okay to Say No.

The route for the Bicycle Rally will be from Anton Hall-Malki Point-Seven Set school-Crinoline-Civil Hospital-IGP Point-Police Bazaar-IGP-Malki point- Fire brigade -Nazareth Hospital-Anton Hall.