

# A CHILD-LED CONFERENCE: MEANINGFUL CHILD PARTICIPATION TO TACKLE MENTAL HEALTH

Children advocating, mobilizing, raising awareness, informing and communicating.

Asia and the Pacific: Nepal

“The Global Campus International Conference on Mental Health: Children’s Perspectives on the Challenges and Ways Forward” is an initiative that aims at maximizing meaningful child participation, promoting intergenerational dialogue and stimulating research on children’s rights with a specific focus on mental health. For two days the Global Campus of Human Rights and the Kathmandu School of Law, together with supporting partners organized the first child-led Global Campus International Conference: led by children, targeting other children, decision makers, and stakeholders everywhere.

In September 2021, 10 national consultations and 5 international consultations took place, with a participation of 111 children in total from 9 countries. 17 children were chosen to present the findings of their discussions and talk about needed actions at the conference. The main discussions at the conference revolved around:

- The lack of educational mechanisms for mental health.
- The impact of violence against children on mental health.
- Unhealthy competition in schools and other places and its detrimental effects on mental health.

Based on their discussions, the children identified different actions to implement, such as:

- Stop treating mental health as a taboo issue and include it in the school curricula.
- Fund programs for awareness raising on mental health.
- Develop laws to prevent and combat violence.
- Empower children and take their views into account.

Along with the 17 children and the regional facilitators from the Global Campus that have accompanied the children during all the consultations, many experts from around the globe joined the conference representing national organizations, UN agencies and different influencing institutions.

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