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# SAFE STEPS KIDS SAFETY PROGRAMME – CYBER-SAFETY

IFRC in Asia Pacific

## CASE STUDY

Photo description: Image of cartoon developed by the Cartoon Network for cyber safety project  
Photo credit: Safe Steps Kids Health project

ifrc.org

# HERE'S HOW TO SURF SAFE ONLINE!

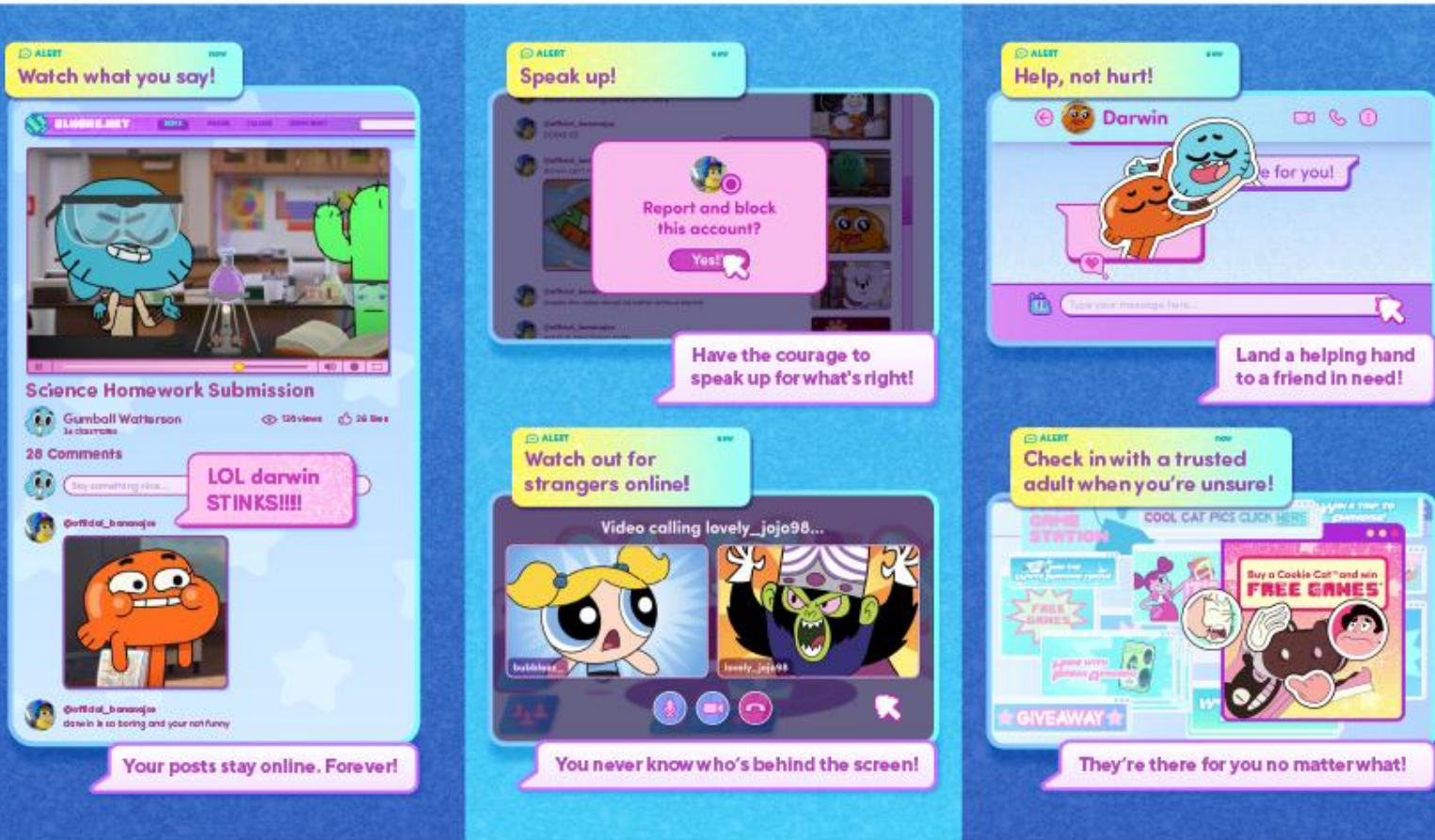


Photo description: Image of cartoon developed by the Cartoon Network for cyber safety project  
 Photo credit: Safe Steps Kids Health project

## Background

The Safe Steps Kids programme is an initiative by the [Prudence Foundation](#) developed in partnership with the International Federation Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) and the [Cartoon Network](#). The programme aims to educate children about life-threatening situations and provide them with practical, easy-to-understand tips. It uses multiple platforms such as cartoon videos, infographics and informative website to reach millions of children across Asia. The programme also includes a series of public service announcement (PSA) educational videos that are approved by IFRC.

The Prudence Foundation together with IFRC has developed several educational learning series focusing on [Disaster Preparedness, First Aid, Road Safety, Climate Change and Health](#). The programme aims to raise awareness among children on issues that concern them and to highlight simple precautionary actions they can take. Popular cartoon characters such as *We Bare Bears* and *Gumball* help to deliver these messages in an engaging and child-friendly manner.

The one-minute video address different key issues and are targeted at children aged 7-12. The goal is to help young viewers to understand simple educational messages that encourage safer behaviour and greater resilient.

## Who was Supported and How

In the Health series, the focus areas of awareness include hygiene, mental health and wellbeing, healthy eating and cyber-safety. The IFRC's Protection Gender Inclusion unit contributed to the development of awareness content on [cyber-safety](#).

The programme is designed to equip children with the tools and actions they can take to prevent, manage and mitigate cyber-sexual abuse and exploitation situation, in a simple, easy to understand manner that is appropriate for their age level. The content is developed to deliver key messages from a child's perspective.

The programme provides practical tips to help children recognise risk and protect themselves to the extent possible especially as children spend significant time online and adults may not always be able to supervise their activities or the content they access. The tips emphasize key elements of sexual harassment prevention such as not sharing personal photos online and not communicating with strangers on the internet. However, it also highlights that perpetrators of child sexual abuse are not always strangers and are often individuals known to the child.

For this awareness-raising effort, parents, guardians or caretakers and teachers (educators) are identified as trusted adults whom children can approach for help and support.

## Successes

The cyber-safety video has reached 34,561,753 households (as of June 2025) across the Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia and Taiwan through Cartoon Network, Cartoonito (Southeast Asia) and Boomerang (Thailand).

## Challenges and Difficulties

One key difficulty was translating complex and sensitive topics such as cyber-sexual abuse and online exploitation into age-appropriate, child-friendly messages. This was addressed by simplifying the language, using relatable scenarios and presenting the content through short, animated videos featuring familiar cartoon characters to ensure understanding without causing fear or distress.

Another challenge was balancing child protection messaging with cultural sensitivities across different countries in Asia. This was overcome through close collaboration with IFRC technical advisory support to ensure the messages were contextually appropriate, accurate, and aligned with child protection standards.

Limited adult supervision of children's online activities also posed a challenge. To address this, the programme emphasized practical self-protection tips for children while clearly identifying parents, guardians, and teachers as trusted adults whom children can approach for support.

Finally, reaching a large and diverse audience required effective distribution channels. This was successfully achieved through partnerships with Cartoon Network, Cartoonito, and Boomerang, enabling the content to reach millions of households across multiple countries.

## Lessons Learned

1. The programme demonstrated that **child-friendly, animated content delivered through trusted and widely accessed platforms can be highly effective** in reaching large numbers of children with important safety messages. The strong partnerships with Prudential Foundation and established broadcasters such as Cartoon Network enabled the programme to achieve significant reach and credibility. Using familiar cartoon characters helped simplify complex protection topics and increased engagement among children aged 7–12.
2. It is important to **develop age-appropriate messaging** when addressing sensitive issues such as cyber-safety and sexual exploitation. Simplified language, short video formats, and practical tips were effective in supporting children’s understanding without causing fear.
3. Children’s online risks are not limited to interactions with strangers, reinforcing the need for messages that address risks from known individuals and emphasize trusted adults as sources of help. This learning strengthened the programme’s focus on parental, caregiver, and teacher involvement.
4. **Recognizing and reflecting cultural sensitivity** and adaptability across different country contexts is essential. Close technical review and collaboration were essential to ensure consistency with child protection standards while remaining locally appropriate.
5. Mass media campaigns are most effective when complemented by follow-up activities, guidance for adults, and opportunities for discussion offline. Future iterations could benefit from stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, as well as integrated resources for parents, educators, and communities to reinforce key messages beyond the screen.