

Gaining Second Wind towards EFA 2015: Real World Strategies (RWS) Plans for 2007 in the Asia Pacific

By July 7, 2007 (777), the international community would have reached the mid-point to the deadline for governments around the world to deliver on the Dakar 2000 promise. Countries are currently in the midst of a mid-term review of how far we have progressed on EFA goals.

From 2000, the Global Campaign for Education, ASPBAE and GCE partners and coalition members in the Asia Pacific have successfully mobilized civil society organisations, teachers' unions and child rights advocates in the North and South to articulate clear demands to governments and international institutions to make good on their commitment to achieve Education for All (EFA) by 2015. While GCE members in the North press their governments hard to ensure that the promised resources are used to deliver coordinated and flexible support to basic education, in the South, national education coalitions have pressured their governments to develop and implement ambitious but sound plans for meeting the Education for All goals and strategies and demanding that donors play their part in funding such plans. The annual GCE Global Action Week - an coordinated, public awareness raising and mobilising event for EFA - has mobilised millions of children, adults, heads of state, politicians, agencies and drew world attention to critical issues on education quality, equity, financing and access. The 2006 Global Action Week alone, mobilised 6 million people and involved 25 heads of state who made concrete commitments on the call for quality teachers.

Some governments have responded favourably to the call for education reforms by CSO campaign coalitions and networks.

- In India, the government has banned the employment of children as domestic servants or servants in roadside eateries, restaurants, hotels, motels, teashops, resorts, spas or in other recreational centers from October 2006, following incessant efforts of the Global March Against Child Labour and its partner, the Bachpan Bachao Andolan. A massive "work to school" campaign followed this announcement to ensure public awareness about the law and to accelerate the efforts to eliminate child labour in favour of universal education of good quality.
- Government policies in Bangladesh, guaranteeing stipends for poor students especially poor girls, free school meals have been cited by poor communities as contributory to their perceived improvements in primary education services¹.
- After intensive lobbying for 5 years, the government and civil society groups officially launched the joint committee on Education for All (EFA) in the Philippines - a multi-agency body that will formulate policies, design programs and monitor the implementation of projects designed to meet the EFA target. The committee is co-chaired by the Civil Society Network for Education Reforms (E-Net Philippines), the Philippine national education coalition. The formalization of the committee took place earlier this year after years of lobbying efforts to press government to act on its EFA commitments. Among the priorities of the committee is to mobilize a broad-based EFA constituency that will promote active community and citizens participation in education concerns.

¹ Millennium Development Goals A People's Progress Report Bangladesh, Overview,

- The UK government's announcement of \$1.5 billion a year in aid to education to 2015 hence \$15 billion until 2015, represents a doubling of UK aid to basic education and also poses a challenge to other G8 countries to follow the lead, particularly the US, Japan, Germany and Italy to fulfill the Gleneagles promise.

In spite of these favourable developments, civil society advocates for EFA cannot however afford to merely saunter the rest of the second half to 2015.

According to the latest figures of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, in spite of an increase in enrollments progress in achieving UPE is slow with 77 million children still not in school. The global estimate understates the problem: too few pupils complete primary school. Data from household surveys show that many children enrolled in school do not attend regularly. The children most likely to be out of school and to drop out live in rural areas and come from the poorest households. Gross enrollment ratios to secondary education still remain low (30% in Sub-Saharan Africa, 51% in South and West Asia and 66% in the Arab States). There are not enough qualified and motivated teachers to reach the EFA goals. Also, the recruitment of women teachers is far below the requirement to attract girls to school and retain them. 781 million adults lack minimum literacy skills; 2/3rds are women. The youngest children have been neglected: almost 1/2 the world's countries have no formal programmes for children under 3 years. The private sector is prominent in ECCE delivery leading to large disparities within countries. Children from rural and poorer households have less access to ECCE than children from urban and richer households. Governments accord relatively less priority to ECCE in their spending. ECCE is not a priority for most donor countries.

Domestic spending on education as a share of GNP decreased between 1999 and 2004 in 41 of the 106 countries with data. While total aid to basic education in low income countries has doubled between 2000 and 2004, but as a share of total aid to education these countries it has remained constant. Five (5) donors alone give 72% of all bilateral aid to education. Several donors give high priority to education but not to basic education. 11 billion dollars are required each year to meet the aid gap in education financing. Public education needs to focus on key requirements to achieve EFA: teachers, adult literacy, ECCE and inclusive policies at all levels.

In the face of these, civil society education advocates and campaigners need renewed strengths and new energies to sustain and even heighten efforts – a second wind towards EFA 2015.

Real World Strategies 2006: Getting us in shape for the tasks ahead

The Real World Strategies Programme, now on its second phase in the period 2006-10 was organised with the over-all aim to contribute to achieving specific policy changes at global, regional and national levels to escalate EFA progress over the next 5 years.

Specifically, the objectives of RWS are:

- 1) To strengthen and deepen the work of existing education civil society coalitions such that they are able to mobilize public demand and concern for free quality Education For All
- 2) To help build national education coalitions in countries where none exist
- 3) To gain recognition for national education coalitions as key partners for national policy dialogue
- 4) To enhance consistency and complementation between global-local advocacy work
- 5) Build broad-based movements with other interest groups, linking education interests with others working on public sector service delivery, aid, debt and children's issues

2006 being the first year of the second phase of RWS, the Steering Committee decided to focus efforts towards setting in place a strong base for accelerated campaign and advocacy work at national, subregional, regional and global especially in preparation for the EFA mid term review in 2007.

Within the broad RWS over-all strategies, RWS work in the Asia Pacific for 2006 thus centred on the following activities:

REAFFIRMING THE "REAL WORLD" APPROACH IN NATIONAL LEVEL CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR SCALED-UP AND EXPANDED CAMPAIGN ACTION FOR POLICY CHANGE

- ***Deepening capacities of the education coalitions particularly on policy work*** linked to advocacy and campaigns.

The fulcrum of this effort was the piloting of an **Asia Pacific Education Watch** covering 8 countries: India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The Asia Pacific Education Watch is organized as an independent, alternative, citizen-based assessment of the status of basic education, designed to strengthen local and community-based capacities for claim-making on education, and intended to bolster national education coalitions' capacities to sharply define, pursue and achieve their policy change objectives, armed by credible alternative, grassroots-based data and information. The theme collectively identified by the participating coalitions is "Tracking the education deficit" or monitoring the situation of disadvantaged groups in terms of the EFA goals. Sub-themes were further identified:

- **South Asia → Education Budget Tracking**
Consistent with its plans to focus on education financing for coordinated action, the monitoring initiative in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan focuses on the analysis of the financing situation for basic education and how it impacts on the poor and disadvantaged groups. It will analyze budget and expenditure processes; spending levels as a proportion of GDP and the national budget; external financing; allocation and distribution across geographical areas; spending patterns and utilization. The initiative aims to strengthen the advocacy to address education deprivation in South Asia through effective intervention at the level of policy, budget and resource utilization.
- **Southeast Asia → Education Access and Outcome**
In Indonesia and the Philippines, the watching initiative focuses on education access, literacy and outcomes particularly among poor and disadvantaged groups. It aims to establish the magnitude of education deprivation, identify factors that account for such deprivation and recommend measures to address the critical gaps in education.
- **South Pacific → Literacy Mapping**
The monitoring initiative in PNG and Solomon Islands focuses on education experience and literacy especially among the out-of-school youth and adults. It aims to generate an updated and alternative assessment of the literacy situation and propose measures to improve literacy particularly in marginalized areas and population groups.

(Annexure 1 has the detailed Update on Education Watch.)

Four (4) **policy briefs/discussion papers** are currently being developed to assist coalitions especially on identified coordinated campaign priority issues: education financing in South Asia; education privatization in South East Asia; aid for education in the South Pacific; and Engendering the Real World Strategies programme. These will be presented and discussed with the education coalitions in the RWS Strategic Planning Workshop in early December, then finalized and circulated more widely.

Planning for the Asia Pacific School Report Card commenced early in 2006 through discussions with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and ANCEFA. While Asia had planned for a 2006 release, it was agreed with the GCE however that the next Southern School Reports – Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America- be launched along with the Northern School Report to coincide with the EFA mid-term review campaign, hence in 2007. Efforts in 2006 were thus dedicated to exploring the common themes and indicators for these coordinated School Reports.

- ***Expanded and coordinated regional and sub-regional trainings, capacity-building, mentoring support*** based on identified needs of the education coalitions were pursued.
- **Education Watch support**: ASPBAE through its Secretariat and the Policy Team, provided technical and capacity-building support on Education Watch to the national coalitions. A **Regional Asia Pacific Education Watch Planning Workshop** was convened in Jakarta, Indonesia on March 28-30, 2006. Organised with ENet for Justice, Indonesia and CAMPE, Bangladesh, this meeting provided the first opportunity for joint planning and discussion on piloting an Asia Pacific Education Watch initiative. The joint framework, roll out plan and work programme were collectively defined at the end of this meeting. Two sub-regional consultations and trainings were organised to follow up on the specific Edwatch plans of the coalitions: the **South Asia Education Watch Researchers Meeting** in Colombo, Sri Lanka on July 10-11 and the **South Pacific Education Watch Training** on July 21-23 in Port Moresby, PNG. **National trainings** on Education Watch were subsequently organized in seven (7) of the participating countries, with the technical support of ASPBAE staff and other resource persons mobilized by ASPBAE. Another **Regional Education Watch meeting** is planned for December 7-8, 2006 in Chiangmai, Thailand.

In the course of country-level implementation of this initiative, the policy team provided sustained mentoring and support to the national coalitions. Specific policy analysts/specialists were assigned to oversee and support the activities of the coalitions in the three sub-regions (South Asia, Southeast Asia and South Pacific). They have been regularly in touch with the country research teams, giving advice and supporting the training and research activities of the coalitions specifically in terms of: developing the research design; organizing and facilitating national, sub-national capacity-building events; development of research instruments, guidelines and manuals; working out the appropriate sampling design; and planning and organizing the field research.

The ASPBAE Secretariat and policy team also served as anchor to facilitate sharing among the coalitions, ensuring that the participating groups are informed about the progress of the education watch project, the problems confronted and the options taken in pursuing the initiative.

- **Regional Training on Popular Communications for Education Advocacy and Campaigns**: Organised by ASPBAE in October 14-18, 2006 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in collaboration with the South East Asia Popular Communications Programme (SEAPCP) and the People's

Communication Centre (Pusat Komus), this training was designed to equip national education coalitions and education NGOs with a range of popular communication and multi-media (e.g. print, photo, video-based) techniques and approaches to strengthen their respective organisation's in-house competencies in: 1) developing creative advocacy/campaign tools such as 'user guides', 'training modules', 'campaign packs' and others; 2) in popularizing and creatively presenting their issues to donors, the media, governments, the general public and other education stakeholders; 3) in creatively facilitating processes, meetings, consultations that build consensus among diverse groups, deepen joint understanding of policy concerns; and 4) in creatively documenting their own experiences for broader learning, monitoring and capacity-building. The feedback from the coalitions after the training indicate that these skills-based trainings should be sustained and have immediate user-value for the coalitions.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL COALITIONS

The partnership between ASPBAE and the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) formalized in 2006, facilitated efforts towards coordinated support and institutional capacity-building for education coalitions particularly in South Asia. ASPBAE worked with CEF offices in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan to coordinate support to education coalitions in these countries. Consultations and trainings organized by CEF in the region with ASPBAE participation and support, provided additional opportunities for education coalitions to meet and plan together.

ASPBAE continued to pursue with some success, supplementary funds to augment Education Watch and other campaign work in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in 2007-2008. Programme funds, enabling these coalitions to sustain regular meeting, organize joint events and sustain a transparent governance and accountability process are critical to sustaining a critical mass of education advocates in country, capable of engaging governments and donors in education policy reforms.

EXPANDED COUNTRY COVERAGE

Start-up efforts in expanding RWS country work were initiated in 2006. These were pursued mainly through consultations and the participation of coalitions or education networks from RWS expansion countries, notably Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Vanuatu in RWS regional and sub-regional activities. More specifically, in:

- Sri Lanka: ASPBAE organized the South Asia Education Watch Researchers Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka (July 10-11) with the **Coalition for Education Development (CED)**, the newly formed national education coalition in Sri Lanka as a means to better involve them in RWS work. ASPBAE also provided mentoring support in the development of CED's Education Watch plans, including negotiating with the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) Sri Lanka office to financially support their Edwatch pilot. ASPBAE has also been asked by CEF to assist in supporting the strategic planning effort of CED for its education advocacy and institutional strengthening.
- Cambodia: ASPBAE supported a **National Reflection meeting** of the Global Action week coalition of CSOs in Cambodia on September 5-6 and likewise participated in this meeting. In this activity, ASPBAE introduced RWS work and had the opportunity to meet with different education campaign networks operating in Cambodia. Subsequently, the **NGO Education Partnership (NEP)** has been invited to participate in different RWS regional trainings and events, as a possible partner for RWS in the country.

- Vanuatu: representatives from the Vanuatu education coalition and other education CSOs participated in the South Pacific Education Watch workshop and trainings organized in Port Moresby, PNG (July 21-23 and October 13-15) with a view to piloting Vanuatu Education Watch in 2007. ASPBAE has also successfully raised additional start-up funds to enable this in 2007-8.

STRENGTHENING INTER-REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR CAMPAIGNS

RWS activities initiated in 2006 especially strengthened inter-regional, South-South cooperation in education advocacy work.

The Education Watch team of CAMPE, Bangladesh serves as a resource group for the Asia Pacific Education Watch project. CAMPE provided valuable input during the regional and sub-regional workshops, sharing their experiences particularly on the monitoring framework, research methodology and sampling design, research instruments, data analysis, building the research organization, information dissemination and policy advocacy. ASPBAE also mobilized the assistance of Social Watch Philippines and PRATHAM of India to provide input and technical support to the coalitions. The country Education Watch teams have also mobilized research and policy institutes and NGOs in-country to assist their Edwatch effort, paving the way for a stronger, credible policy research network of support for the coalitions, in the longer-run.

Asia-African collaboration on the education watch initiative was reinforced through the participation of ANCEFA's Coordinator, Gorgui Sow, in the Asia Pacific Education Watch Planning Workshop held in Jakarta in March; and in the participation of Rene Raya of ASPBAE's Policy Team and Dr. Mustaque of BRAC and CAMPE Bangladesh in the **Africa Education Watch Planning Meeting** on August 9-11 in Dakar, Senegal. Asia-African collaboration on the education watch initiative has been continuing through regular exchanges and support given by ASPBAE on the African implementation process and in assisting address issues encountered along the way. The Asian coalitions, likewise, benefited from the extensive experiences of African coalitions who were involved specifically on budget tracking.

ActionAid International also played a proactive role in coordinating its education policy work with ASPBAE and RWS by inviting ASPBAE's participation in its regional Asia Education Policy Group's planning workshop on May 15 in Bangkok, Thailand.

EXPANDED REGIONAL / SUB-REGIONAL COORDINATED CAMPAIGNS; AND STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES AND EXPANDING CONSTITUENCIES:

Sustained collaboration with other campaign networks on regional campaigns was promoted in 2006. ASPBAE, in cooperation with ENet Philippines and ENet for Justice, Indonesia organized two workshops during the **International People's Forum**, September 15-17 in Batam, Indonesia, coinciding with the IMF World Bank Annual Meeting in Singapore. The Forum was spearheaded by GCAP South East Asia, Social Watch, Freedom from Debt Coalition and several of other anti-poverty, debt campaign groups. ASPBAE, ENet Phil and ENet J organized a workshop on **'Debt and Privatisation of Education in Indonesia'** with INFID; and another workshop on **'Financing the Right to Quality Education'** was convened during the Forum. ASPBAE's participation provided the necessary focus on the strategic linkages between debt and poverty with education in the Asian region. ASPBAE is in discussion with ENet Philippines and ENet for

Justice Indonesia on the possibility of organizing another event on education issues to coincide with the ASEAN Summit on December 14-16 in Cebu, Philippines.

As part of ASPBAE's work on HIV/AIDS Education, it spearheaded the creation of the Positive Learning Working Group (PLWG) bringing together education and HIV/AIDS campaign networks for joint capacity-building and advocacy on HIV/AIDS education². As its first major joint initiative since its formation, the PLWG organized a **Regional Training Workshop on 'HIV and AIDS: The Role of Education in Addressing Stigma and Discrimination'** on September 26-30 in Chiangmai, Thailand. The workshop was aimed at increasing understanding on how HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination play out in different settings including education. It explored how stigma can be addressed by the education sector and how to build on existing experiences from both the sectors and collectively plan for the future. National education coalitions from the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal and India participated in this training workshop. This provided an opportunity to deepen the coalitions understanding of HIV/AIDS education issues, paving the way forward to advancing this campaign in their respective countries. Three (3) representatives from Education International (EI) and its teachers unions members involved in the SALIN programme on Teachers training for HIV/AIDS education also participated in this training workshop.

ENHANCED INTERNAL AND COORDINATION CAPACITIES

RWS work and its potential for scaled up action in the years ahead has been enhanced by the hiring and on-the-job training of additional RWS staff. Three (3) new RWS staff were hired in 2006: an Asia Advocacy and Campaigns Coordinator, a Senior Policy Analyst and a South Asia Policy Analyst. The full staff complement supporting RWS however involves a larger pool of personnel: a South Pacific Advocacy and Campaigns Coordinator, a South East Asia Policy Analyst (part-time), a South Pacific Policy Analyst (part-time) and two National Education Campaign Officers in PNG and the Solomon Islands. The full staff complement of RWS is supported through a combination of SALIN-RWS, CEF and ASPBAE core funds. (*Annexure 2 contains the job description of these positions.*)

The possibility for joint planning among the RWS Steering Committee members and RWS coalition partners greatly facilitates the ability for coherent local-global advocacy efforts. The RWS Steering Committee met on March 30, 2006 in Jakarta during the Education Watch Planning meeting to agree on the thrusts for the year. The Committee further decided to convene a **Strategic Planning Workshop for RWS 2010** as the space for collective assessment and planning for 2007 onwards. This is scheduled for December 4-6 in Chiangmai, Thailand.

Representatives from 11 coalitions in the Asia Pacific will be represented in the RWS Strategic Planning Workshop. All RWS Steering Committee members and RWS staff have also confirmed their participation. The RWS Strategic Planning Meeting (Dec. 4-6) will be organised around the following objectives: 1) To agree on priority education issues that will be carried in common campaigns in the region/sub-regions in the period 2007-2010; 2) To jointly deliberate on policy issues and if possible, agree on common positions and messages as basis for more detailed advocacy and campaign planning in the course of the year; 3) To come up with an action plan

² The PLWG is comprised of the following networks and organisations: ASPBAE, AIDS Education Program (AEP) Chiangmai University, AIDS Network Development Foundation (AIDSNet), Asia-Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (APN+), Asian Harm Reduction Network (AHRN), Constellation for AIDS Competence, E-Net Philippines, EMPOWER, Health & Development Network (HDN), Help Age International, Migrants Forum in Asia (MFA), Remedios AIDS Foundation, UNESCO Institute for Life Long Learning (UIL).

that would translate our policy advocacy strategy into creative campaigns/activities having much impact; 4) To map out the capacity-building needs of the RWS partners in the next 3-4 years, relevant to the tasks that shape up in this planning conference; 5) To agree on broad budget parameters enabling the national coalitions to plan concretely for the next two-three years.

A regional Education watch meeting which will follow the Strategic Planning Workshop will focus on updating on progress so far and planning for the next phase of the piloting process. The Subregional consultations will focus on more detailed planning for 2007 planned coordinated campaign action. These will be organised within Dec. 7-8.

At the end of 2006:

- Eight (8) coalitions would have run national, state and district level consultations to agree on the Education Watch research within a broad advocacy/campaign framework, and the methodology on *education financing and education budget tracking especially for marginalized groups (India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan); education access, literacy and outcomes particularly among poor and disadvantaged groups (Indonesia, Philippines); literacy achievements especially among the out-of-school youth and adults (PNG, Solomon Islands)*; developed relevant instruments for their researches; run national, state/provincial trainings on the use of agreed instruments; completed field researches and surveys by January 2007 at the latest.
- At least two (2) representatives from nine (9) coalitions participated in two (2) sub-regional and two (2) regional Education watch related trainings, consultations and planning workshops and meetings.
- One to two representatives each from eleven (11)³ coalitions and ten (10) other education NGOs participated in a Regional Training on Popular Communications for Education Campaigns and Advocacy, (October 14-18 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia).
- Four (4) education coalitions, 3 teachers union representatives participate in a joint training on HIV/AIDS Education with other HIV/AIDS campaign networks in the region
- Participation in G-CAP campaign activities in the year
- RWS expansion plans and identified partners in Vanuatu, Sri Lanka and Cambodia
- Four (4) policy briefs drafted, and circulated for discussion and comment by all RWS coalitions
- Plans for the release of the Asia Pacific School Report Card in 2007 defined
- RWS Steering Committee meets twice in 2006
- A strategic plan for RWS jointly developed and agreed upon by the RWS Steering Committee, RWS participating coalitions and staff
- Three (3) new RWS staff would have been hired and trained on the job, along with 5 other incumbent RWS-ASPBAE advocacy staff

Real World Strategies 2007 in the Asia Pacific: Gaining second wind

With the EFA mid-term review scheduled in the year, 2007 will present important opportunities for civil society groups to draw attention to education reform and their policy change demands.

³ National Coalition for Education, India, GCE-Nepal, Pakistan Coalition for Education, CAMPE Bangladesh, ENet for Justice Indonesia, ENet Philippines, PNG Education Advocacy Network, Coalition for Education Solomon Islands, Coalition for Educational Development Sri Lanka, Japan Network of NGOs for Education, NGO Education Partnership, Cambodia (not yet a full-blown education coalition)

Governments in the North and South, international agencies and civil society groups will be assessing the mid-term performance on the EFA goals and targets during the year. Amidst these, the anti-poverty campaign - of which GCE ASPAE and the national coalitions in the Asia Pacific are part of - are poised to sustain campaigns drawing attention to the half-way mark on all the 2015 MDG targets on poverty, education, HIV/AIDS and women's empowerment.

Civil society coalitions should be poised to assert, through vigorous campaigning in 2007, the critical gaps in EFA performance of governments and donors. Education quality remains an ongoing concern. Incentives introduced such as subsidies, free meals and the abolition of school fees should be matched by rapid expansion in primary and secondary systems of good quality or gains in enrolment will be negated by increased drop-out rates on account of poor quality education. Qualified, justly compensated teachers should be recruited and trained competently; more women teachers should be recruited. Moves towards the privatization and commercialization of education as a means to expand provisioning of primary and secondary education should be opposed; likewise, measures instituting a parallel system of poor quality education for the poor should be resisted. The right of all to free basic education of good quality should be asserted as fundamental to CSO EFA campaigns. Continued neglect of secondary education expansion should be addressed urgently especially as the impact on HIV/AIDS prevention, women's health, reduced child mortality increase significantly with the completion of secondary education particularly for adolescent girls.

Getting the poor and marginalized (indigenous communities, victims of conflict, displaced populations, minorities, child laborers, disabled, to name a few) to schools and keeping them in schools of good quality should remain a focus of CSO EFA policy and advocacy work. Evidence shows that parents' education, mother's literacy, parents' perceptions of education quality, household income are major factors affecting poor and marginalized boys and girls participating in schools. Full abolition of school fees should thus be sustained and expanded, as should provisions for grants, subsidies to poor families and scholarships especially for poor girls to participate in good quality schools. Demands for system reforms to eliminate corruption and inefficiencies which adversely impact on the use of scarce resources should be heightened. Pro-poor policies by government and donors cannot ignore expanded attention and financial allocations to adult and women's literacy, second chance learning opportunities for out of school youth and ECCE, as these have immediate positive impacts on the ability of the poor to keep their children in schools, aside from the long term social benefits these offer in increased income opportunities, democratic participation and enhanced family health and well-being. Government and donors should attend to ALL the EFA goals or none of the 2015 targets will be substantially met.

The Real World Strategies programme in 2007 will seek to optimize the policy spaces and campaign opportunities in the year towards highlighting the outstanding EFA concerns towards achieving concrete policy changes through the following strategies and activities⁴:

REAFFIRMING THE "REAL WORLD" APPROACH IN NATIONAL LEVEL CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR SCALED-UP AND EXPANDED CAMPAIGN ACTION FOR POLICY CHANGE

- *Capacity-building for Education Watch campaigning*

⁴ These are provisional plans for 2007 which will be modified following the RWS Asia Pacific Strategic Planning Workshop (December 4-6, 2006) and Edwatch and Subregional consultations (December 7-8) in Chiangmai, Thailand.

The Education Watch process and other policy work undertaken in 2006 were envisaged to assist the coalitions develop and run more effective campaigns at various levels. Sustained mentoring and technical support will thus be offered the coalitions in 1) completing their Education Watch researches and monitoring processes and; 2) in translating the outcomes of their Education Watch researches to sharper, effective campaign work especially maximizing the national-level policy opportunities presented by the EFA mid-term review, and/or other more locally strategic policy processes at different levels (provincial, district even village levels).

All the 8 participating national coalitions in the Asia Pacific Education Watch initiative will be assisted in completing the final phase of their education watch piloting activities involving, in the main: data encoding and data analysis; finalization of case studies for some; drafting of country reports; discussion and validation among coalition partners and other stakeholders; campaign planning around findings and recommendations; report publication; and national launches, lobbying and coordinated regional campaigning.

The Education Watch Advisory Group⁵, earlier constituted (Jakarta Meeting March 2006) will be mobilized to assist the coalitions and the RWS policy team especially for data analysis, and in developing the key messages for coordinated campaigning.

Using the outcomes and processes of the Education Watch exercise towards developing and/or enhancing existing campaigns of the coalitions so these become sharply focused towards achievable, policy change targets and objectives, will form a significant part of the mentoring and capacity-building support that RWS staff and other resource persons will offer in 2007. Given the themes of the Edwatch initiatives, the campaigns may be in the areas of education financing, education and literacy access and outcomes of marginalized groups and adult literacy.

Support may be needed in campaign strategizing and planning. Assistance may also be needed in enhancing the delivery of identified campaign action e.g. in effective lobbying techniques; in building consensus with different players and at varied levels of the coalition's work or in popularising campaign messages for different audiences. Especially for the younger coalitions, institution-building in support of effective education advocacy and campaign work may be needed. RWS will seek to respond to these different capacity-building and training needs; and where common across different coalitions, joint trainings, learning exchanges or workshops will be contemplated.

To complete the full cycle of the piloting exercise, this first attempt for an Asia Pacific Education Watch will be evaluated and documented – as a critical step to replication and sustainability. It is envisaged that the national research teams, along with key personnel mobilized for the local surveys and case studies, will convene to assess the monitoring experience, review the methodology and improve the research instruments for future application. A Regional Workshop will be convened for the purposes of sharing the country assessments of the Education Watch experience, towards working out the institutionalization and replication of Edwatch. An Education Watch Manual will be prepared, incorporating the procedures and instruments used in the monitoring exercise - literacy mapping, local education survey and budget tracking. These are envisaged to have wide user value as coalitions decide on new Education Watch exercises to accelerate and enhance their campaign and policy work. Separate, additional funds may have to

⁵ Members include Madhav Chavan of Pratham, India; Mushtaque Choudhury of BRAC and CAMPE Bangladesh, Gorgui Sow of ANCEFA, Rasheda Choudhury and Maria Khan of the RWS Steering Committee. Others will be identified by the coalitions based on need.

be sourced to enable country assessments, organization of Regional Workshop, and development of Manual.

- ***Enhanced Policy Analysis supporting Coordinated Advocacy and Campaign Action***

Education Financing remains a critical issue in the whole EFA advocacy campaign. Governments are still not investing enough for basic education and the limited resources made available are not effectively utilized to address the gaps in access, equity and quality. Donors are falling short on their commitments for more and better aid to education. The ODA process lacks transparency and participation of stakeholders to ensure better planning and identification of priority needs. International financial institutions implement conflicting policies that undermines education access and quality, affecting particularly the poor and disadvantaged groups.

For the next few years, ASPBAE through RWS work will continue to take up education financing issues and press governments, donors and financial institutions to deliver on their promises to provide more and better funding for basic education. Specifically, ASPBAE will call for bigger, better and transparent external assistance to basic education; higher education budgets, better utilization and more participatory budgeting process at the national and local level; and for a halt to WB-IMF policies that undermine education for all, particularly those that discriminate against the marginalized and excluded and those that support privatization, commercialization and user fees.

RWS will conduct policy studies and workshops to support these advocacy initiatives. Building on the earlier policy briefs and discussion papers ASPBAE will initiate the following support activities in 2007:

Policy Studies:

- Integrated regional paper on education financing in Asia-Pacific: issues and policy implications (the integrated research paper will include specific issues related to the Fast Track Initiative in Asia; analysis of AusAid in the Pacific; and comparative study of Japanese aid for education in select Asian countries)
- Preliminary case studies of WB-IMF policies and funded projects in select developing countries in Asia Pacific
- Preliminary report of best practices and assessments of local education financing initiatives

To complement and deepen analysis of the Southern and Northern School Reports, RWS will seek to undertake monitoring and review of ODA performance in the Asia Pacific including loans extended by financial institutions such as (but not limited to) the Asian Development Bank. Trends in public financing of basic education in developing countries of Asia and the Pacific will also be tracked and reviewed – building and supporting the budget tracking exercises run by coalitions at different levels.

Analytical support to coalitions to shore up their capacities to attend to the full range of EFA goals will continue and be further advanced in 2007. These may include the development of policy briefs, ‘fast fact’ sheets, or primers on such areas as adult literacy, HIV/AIDS education, ECCE, the impact of conflict on EFA, alternative learning systems, second-chance learning, and education for marginalized communities such as indigenous people, minorities, refugees, migrants, to name some. RWS will also mobilise ASPBAE members and networks active in these areas of work to assist and/or be part of national coalitions.

Asia-Pacific Policy Working Group Meetings will be organized in 2007 to plan and oversee work and analysis on these areas; it is envisaged that findings of these studies actively inform regional, sub-regional and national campaign strategizing and planning work. Regional Workshops organized by RWS in 2007 will provide ready platforms to debate the findings of these studies.

EXPANDED REGIONAL / SUB-REGIONAL COORDINATED CAMPAIGNS

The **Regional Education Watch Synthesis Report** prepared on the basis of the country Education Watch reports will be centerpiece of lobbying and campaign messages regionally for the EFA mid-term review. It is envisaged that the Regional Education Watch Report will provide an alternative, civil society critique on EFA and MDG performance midway through the 2015 deadline. The coalitions are yet to decide on details of the campaign on this but the agreed coordinated schedule for the Education Watch Reports are as follows:

Week 1 May 2007 - submission of Country Edwatch reports (drafts)

Week 1 July 2007 - Country Edwatch Reports printed; ready for coordinated launch

Week 1-2 July 2007 - Coordinated launch of National Reports

Week of 08 Sept 2007 - Regional launch of Regional Education Watch Synthesis Report

ASPBAE will coordinate with GCE, ANCEFA and CEAAL in planning the campaign around Education Watch. Campaign plans of other global movements on the MDG will also inform the planning.

The **Asia School Report Card** will also be developed in the period in cooperation with the national coalitions, GCE, ANCEFA and CEAAL. One idea being pursued as a common theme is reviewing government and donor attention to ALL the EFA goals. ASPBAE will be in discussion with the national coalitions on how best to organize the Report so it has campaign and lobbying value regionally and serves the local campaign as well. Some coalitions are contemplating developing national and sub-national School Reports, based on alternative data to substantiate/nuance the regional Report (which relies largely on official statistics) and thus more sharply demonstrate actual government performance. The actual launch and campaign around the the regional School Report Card will have to be discussed with the coalitions, GCE, ANCEFA and CEAAL.

Regional and sub-regional spaces for lobbying and advocacy will be pursued in 2007, taking advantage of the EFA mid-term review process. ASPBAE and the RWS coalitions will seek representation in UNESCO EFA review meetings in the region, and will strategise on how to influence and intervene in education and finance meetings of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO). Education coalitions will also jointly plan and strategise how to effectively lobby with Australian Aid (AusAid), New Zealand Aid (NZAid) and Japanese ODA.

EXPANDED COUNTRY COVERAGE

It is anticipated that RWS work will fully expand to Sri Lanka and Vanuatu, through the Coalition for Education Development (CED), Sri Lanka and Vanuatu Education Advocacy Network (VEAN), respectively in 2007. Education Watch piloting in these countries will be the

main vehicle for their inclusion in RWS work. ASPBAE is in discussion with the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) and CED Sri Lanka on the viability of CED's participation in the coordinated Education Watch exercise along the timelines of the original 8 coalitions. The Vanuatu Education Watch pilot is expected to follow after completion of the PNG and Solomon Islands exercises to best benefit from the full experience. Separate funds have been sourced for in country Education Watch work in these two countries. The RWS policy team is however expected to provide close guidance and capacity-building support to these coalitions.

The Cambodia CSO situation is more complex since there are several education networks and at least two (2) education campaign coalitions already in existence. One is more reactive to Global Action Week activities, and the other while more strategic in vision and approach needs to broaden far more especially with regards to teachers union which is a very active campaigner on wider education issues in the country. RWS will deepen its exploratory work in Cambodia towards defining a more cogent strategy for developing RWS work and partnerships in the country.

RWS will also work closely with the Japan education coalition, the Japan Network of NGOs for Education (JNNE) especially for coordinated North-South advocacy work particularly on Japanese ODA to basic education and Japan's influence on the Asian Development Bank's lending for basic education in the region.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL COALITIONS

As previously underscored, while RWS as a programme is unable to provide core funding, its attempt will be to assist coalitions to run selected, strategic advocacy and campaign action to best demonstrate credibility, competence and the huge potential to make a difference in policy change if their work is sustained. This demonstration of effectiveness is envisaged to increase the coalitions' leverage to secure core support on longer-term financial stability.

The piloting of the Asia Pacific Education Watch initiative was pursued precisely on this premise. It is envisaged that the usefulness and impact of the Education Watch effort in the Asia Pacific will provide positive evidence to attract funding for sustained 'watch' activities. Resource mobilisation efforts will be pursued specifically in 2007 and 2008 in this regard.

Discussions will be pursued with the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) and education coalitions it supports institutionally (Pakistan and Sri Lanka) on ways to assist the coalitions survive the withdrawal of CEF funding in 2008.

STRENGTHENING INTER-REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR CAMPAIGNS

As discussed in 2006, the next **Southern and Northern School Reports** will be launched in 2007 with a common theme and a common set of indices. Asia and Africa interaction and mutual support is expected to continue through the **Education Watch** processes in the year.

RWS will seek to mobilize up-to-date, field/country-based input from the coalitions to inform GCE participation and lobbying in the FTI Steering Committee, World Bank Annual Meetings, the EFA High Level Group, Working Group, and the UN Girls Education Initiative, to name some policy forums where GCE has representation.

An **Inter-regional RWS Planning Meeting** will be organized in the first quarter of 2007 involving the Regional RWS Coordinators and key staff of RWS in Asia, Africa and Latin America for more detailed planning on coordinated work, especially for the EFA mid-term review, Global Action Week and preparations for the GCE World Assembly targeted for December 2007. This meeting will coincide with the appointment and orientation of the new RWS Global Coordinator, Geoffrey Odaga. The new GCE Global Coordinator, Owain James and other GCE Programme staff are expected to participate. This is envisaged to facilitate a better coherence with local and global advocacy and capacity-building efforts within GCE.

National education coalitions and other GCE constituents in the Asia Pacific will be convened in a **Regional Asia Pacific GCE Consultation** as a preparatory process to the GCE World Assembly. As in the earlier period, this Consultation will be organized as a space to bring the different members of GCE in the region together to collectively assess the work of GCE as it impacts in the region and to draw up concrete recommendations for the GCE World Assembly to consider. These recommendations may be related to governance issues on the agenda of the Assembly, or more related to the over-all strategy and approach of GCE. This will also be an opportunity for different GCE affiliated organisations and networks working for EFA advocacy to share information and forge partnerships.

It is also envisaged that national coalition members of GCE from the Asia Pacific participate in the **GCE World Assembly**.

ENHANCED INTERNAL AND COORDINATION CAPACITIES

The staff complement of RWS in 2006 will continue for 2007. Staff meetings will be periodically organized in the year. The RWS Steering Committee will meet at least once in 2007 to monitor progress on RWS.

By the end of 2007:

- 8 national coalitions would have launched Education Watch Reports; planned and implemented time-bound, campaign plans supported and enhanced by the Edwatch findings
- A Regional Education Watch Report would have been launched as an alternative CSO critique of EFA mid term performance
- 2 national coalitions would have began their Education Watch pilot
- RWS would have expanded to Vanuatu, Sri Lanka; identified a coalition partner in Cambodia with clear plans for RWS entry in 2008; and worked with the Japan education coalition on North-South policy work
- At least two subregional/regionally coordinated campaigns are organized in the year
- The Asia School Report Card would have been completed with the participation of at least 10 coalitions
- Policy researches undertaken inform national, regional and global lobbying and campaigning
- At least 8 national coalitions are in dialogue with government on EFA
- Inter-regional planning with Africa and Latin America
- RWS Steering Committee meets in 2007
- GCE members participate in preparatory processes to the GCE World Assembly and in the Assembly itself