ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, and former Executive Council member, Kazi Rafiqul Alam, inducted into IACE Hall of Fame, Class of 2017

Reviewing achievements and challenges in implementing the CONFINTEA VI commitments
Representatives from 144 UNESCO member States gathered in Korea to review progress of the achievements and challenges since the 6th International Conference on Adult Education - CONFINTEA VI - Read more

Civil society forum held for coordinated advocacy in lead-up to CONFINTEA Mid-Term Review
To ensure that civil society has a meaningful role and coordinated advocacy in the CONFINTEA Mid-Term Review, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) organised a pre-meeting forum for civil society to agree on key positions regarding youth and adult learning and education. - Read more

Strengthening capacities of Asia Pacific coalitions in advocacy for SDG4/Education 2030
ASPBAE’s members and partners met in Hanoi for an Asia Pacific education coalitions’ consultation meeting to, amongst other things, strengthen capacities in advocacy work towards SDG4/Education 2030 implementation. – Read more

Adult Education Centres – a key to development
The 5th Adult Education and Development Conferences (AECD) with the theme, ‘Adult Education Centres as a Key to Development – Responsibilities, Structures and Benefits’, addressed the set-up, management, and benefits of Adult Education Centres as key structures to development. – Read more

UNGEI releases policy paper on girls’ education in conflict-affected contexts
A policy note by the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) - Addressing Threats to Girls Education in Conflict-affected Contexts – highlights approaches and policy directions for girls’ education in conflict-affected contexts. - Read more

Farewell and thank you, B.C. Rokadiya
1934 – 2017
Read more
**Member of the Month**

**Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD), Nepal**

The Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD) is a professional service provider in formal and non-formal education in Nepal. It specialises in organising trainings, developing information and communication materials, and providing technical support in different areas of formal and non-formal education. Some of its programme capacity includes peace education, education in emergencies, climate change, and HIV/AIDS education. Visit the [IFCD Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/ifcdevnepal) to know more.

---

**Photo of the Month**

*International Day of Rural Women – 15 October 2017*

---

**ASPBAE Lens**

ASPBAE would like to dedicate a space in the Bulletin to showcase photos its staff have taken. We want to feature their perception of life around them, the interesting things they see, inspiring moments they observe, and beautiful imagery they capture that reflect education and lifelong learning in a myriad different ways and forms, all left to be interpreted in our own unique ways. In this edition of the Bulletin, we feature a photo taken by Helen Dabu, ASPBAE’s Deputy Regional Coordinator, Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF).

**Helen Dabu**  
Deputy Regional Coordinator, CSEF
This section of the Bulletin is dedicated to highlighting news and events from each of ASPBAE’s sub-regions: South and Central Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific. A different sub-region will be featured in each issue. For this edition, we highlight the setting up of the Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights in the Asia Pacific (Colombo, Sri Lanka).

Urgent Action Fund Women’s Human Rights sets up home in the Asia Pacific

24 October 2017, Colombo, Sri Lanka

For over twenty years, Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights (UAF) has supported women and non-binary human rights defenders around the world through unforeseen crises and unexpected moments of opportunity as they advance gender equality and social justice. Since its inception in 1997, UAF has innovated a groundbreaking model of Rapid Response Grant-making (RRG) that has contributed to building and supporting resilient feminist movements, enabling hope in the face of backlash, delivering support to the frontlines.

UAF Asia and Pacific (UAF-AP) was launched in Colombo, bringing to the region the first rapid response grant making mechanism specifically for Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and non-binary human rights defenders.

Establishing an Urgent Action Fund in Asia and Pacific is critical, particularly when space for civil society continues to shrink, politically and financially, given the growing authoritarian regimes in the region, and the global push back on human rights.

Attacks against women human rights defenders, including LBTIQ defenders, have intensified and remain unabated, particularly with the growing backlash against women human rights worldwide, and the intensification of religious fundamentalism in both regions and globally. For example, the persecution of LBTIQ communities and their defenders in Indonesia signifies an alarming trend of widespread religious fundamentalism and extremism, and the normalisation of ultra-conservative views among the public. [BACK]
Reviewing achievements and challenges in implementing the CONFINTEA VI commitments

25-27 October 2017, Suwon City, South Korea

The global community of adult education practitioners, policy advocates, civil society, academicians, researchers, and national government representatives from 144 member States of UNESCO gathered in Suwon City to review the progress of the achievements and challenges, since the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education - CONFINTEA VI - held in Belem, Brazil, in 2009.

The CONFINTEA Mid-Term Review (MTR) – entitled, The Power of Adult Learning: Vision 2030 - was organised by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Education (UIL) in cooperation with the Korean Ministry of Education, the Korean National Commission of UNESCO, and the National Institute for Lifelong Learning (NILE), and co-hosted by the Municipalities of Suwon and Osan cities.

The main objectives of the CONFINTEA MTR were to –

- Take stock of the progress made in implementing the Belém Framework for Action (BFA) and the regional action plans put into place following regional CONFINTEA VI follow-up meetings.

- Present ideas, good practices, success stories, and research findings on adult learning and education, its inter-sectoral benefits, and how it can fit into broader policy reforms.

- Identify powerful new arguments to raise awareness of and advocate for adult learning and education (ALE) and support the case of greater investments in this subsector of education.

- Establish strategies and measures to enhance full implementation and sound monitoring of the BFA and the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) towards CONFINTEA VII in 2021.

- Examine the implications of the 2030 Agenda (Education 2030 and SDG4 in particular) on ALE to ascertain how it can contribute to the achievement of SDG4 and the other SDGs.

- Explore ways to reinforce existing partnerships and create new ones at global, regional, national, and local levels to develop joint actions on ALE up to CONFINTEA VII and beyond.

Deliberations at the CONFINTEA VI MTR were guided by the 5 areas of the Belem Framework for Action (BFA) –

1. Policy
2. Governance
3. Financing
4. Participation, inclusion, and equity
5. Quality
Discussions also focussed on the domains of learning and skills as defined in the Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (RALE); continuing education and vocational skills; community education and active citizenship skills, and; the importance of adult learning and education for achieving the SDGs, and SDG4 in particular.

The other reference documents for the CONFINTEA VI MTR were GRALE III (Global Report on Adult Learning and Education), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Education 2030: Framework for Action.

The three plenary sessions on the first day of the CONFINTEA VI MTR focussed on the key achievements made in implementing the BFA recommendations since 2009 and the RALE since 2015; the presentation of the status of ALE through the five regional reports and, the insights and the lessons learnt from implementing effective and innovative practices at the country level.

Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, Past President of ASPBAE, was a panellist in the plenary on RALE, and Nani Zulminarni, ASPBAE President, moderated the plenary on ‘Improving Action’.

The second day’s plenary focussed on the effective practices that were successful in addressing challenges in the three fields of learning as defined in the RALE and those that exemplified the links between ALE and the SDGs. The first plenary highlighted the inter-sectoral character of ALE and its crucial role for realisation of the international frameworks and development agendas, including the BFA, RALE, Education 2030, and the SDGs.

This plenary was followed by two five parallel group sessions. The first parallel group session focussed on the specific theme of the inter-sectoral dimension of ALE - basic skills; vocational skills; active citizenship skills; ALE for health and environmental sustainability; and ALE in conflict and post-conflict situations. The second parallel group session focussed on the implications of the SDG4 in the view of the five areas of action of the BFA and; identify ways in which the new education agenda impacts on the implementation of the BFA at the country level with recommendations for follow up action.

Side events organised on the second day included the one on Community Learning Centres (CLC) as key structures for lifelong learning which was organised by DVV International. Cecilia Soriano, as a panellist in this discussion, presented ‘Lessons in transforming CLCs in Asia Pacific Contexts’. She presented the contexts by which CLCs are crucial structures for education and learning in many countries in the region. She also shared that the youth-led action research, done with marginalised young women in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, stressed the need for CLCs that can have spaces for the youth to learn, interact, and discover one’s creative potentials. The presentation also gave the key lessons on the role of CLCs in transforming the education and training system into a lifelong learning system.

The MTR was organised by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Education (UIL) in cooperation with the Korean Ministry of Education, the Korean National Commission of UNESCO, and the National Institute for Lifelong Learning (NILE).

Photo credit: UIL

Participants debated on the RALE fields of learning and other cross-cutting areas for adult learning and education (ALE) - basic skills; vocational skills; active citizenship skills; ALE for health and environmental sustainability; and ALE in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, ASPBAE Past President, was a panellist in the plenary on Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (RALE), and Nani Zulminarni, ASPBAE President, moderated the plenary on ‘Improving Action’.
The plenary session on the third day focussed on the tools and instruments available for measuring and monitoring ALE, especially adult literacy as a key component of ALE, at the national and global level.

The focus of another plenary session was to generate recommendations, emerging from the deliberations in the CONFINTEA VI MTR, to emphasise and promote the five areas of action of the BFA at the country level.

In the final session of the Conference, participants endorsed a draft outcomes document, the ‘Suwon-Osan CONFINTEA VI Mid-term Review Statement, The Power of adult learning and education – a Vision towards 2030’. The statement -

- Affirmed the structural, enabling, and pivotal role of adult education and learning in promoting the implementation of the entire 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and SDG4.

- Acknowledged other policy platforms and frameworks since Belem (2009) which reinforce adult education and learning, notably the revised Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) adopted by UNESCO’s General Conference in 2015; the creation of the Global Alliance for Literacy in the Framework of Lifelong Learning (GAL) to advance the literacy agenda (SDG4.6) and ALE in a lifelong learning perspective; and the UNESCO Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation, and Accreditation (RVA) of non-formal and informal learning.

- Recognised the progress made and ongoing challenges. Some positive developments noted include an increase in the number of countries adopting ALE policies, new partnerships forged at various levels and useful instruments to improve quality have been set in place. However, of the many challenges, some worth citing include: funding in the sector remains woefully inadequate (less than 1% of education budgets on average; very low participation especially of marginalised groups including women; and the lack of training and support for AE personnel and trainers.

- Offered several recommendations to address the ongoing challenges and respond to the changed context and opportunities for ALE. These were identified along the core elements of the Belem Framework for Action, the UNESCO RALE and other cross-cutting areas for ALE deemed essential: Policy, Governance, Participation, Financing, Quality, Literacy and Basic Skills, ALE and Vocational Skills, Active Citizenship through Community, Popular and Liberal Education, Health, Well-being and environmental sustainability and ALE in conflict, post conflict and disaster situations.

- Called for a greater articulation of ALE within the SDGs and in SDG4 – recognising it remains the weakest link in the lifelong learning chain.

Bulletin continued on next page…
The participants called for a number of actions to include the following:

- Member states to urgently implement the Belem Framework for Action and RALE
- Prepare for CONFINTEA VII in 2021
- Member States to work intersectorally and increase policy dialogue that includes all stakeholders, including civil society and learners to create lifelong learning systems and societies.
- Member States to reinforce UNESCO and its institutes, particularly the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning so that appropriate monitoring of organized learning activities in relation to the targets of SDG 4.
- Member States to work intersectorally and increase policy dialogue that includes all stakeholders, including civil society and learners to create lifelong learning systems and societies.
- Adult literacy should be reinstated in the Human Development Index.
- Education Commission, the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait, and other development partners as well as national and sub-national governments to restore attention to and provide adequate funding to adult literacy.
- UNESCO to popularise and articulate RALE and BFA with the SDG4 implementation processes and architecture such as the Global Education Meeting, SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, and regional SDG4 coordination mechanisms, as well as within the wider United Nations structures. It must be used as a reference for National Voluntary Review and High Level Political Forums yearly meetings as well as guiding the work of the Global Alliance on Literacy.

ASPBAE Secretary General, Maria Khan, was a member of the Drafting Committee for the outcomes document of the Conference, representing civil society.
Civil society forum held for coordinated advocacy in lead up to CONFINTEA Mid-Term Review

24 October 2017, Suwon, South Korea

The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) played a major role in mobilising civil society organisations (CSOs) for the CONFINTEA 6 Mid-Term Review (MTR) held in South Korea. To ensure that civil society has a meaningful role and coordinated advocacy in the CONFINTEA MTR, ICAE organised a pre-meeting forum for CSOs to agree on key positions regarding youth and adult learning and education (YALE). The meeting also strategised how to advocate these positions strongly to governments and other decision makers.

The civil society forum was held with the theme ‘Education 2030: From Commitment to Action’ with the sub-theme, ‘Civil society’s contribution to securing the right to education and lifelong learning for youth and adults’. Almost a hundred participants from different regions in the world gathered to share the imperatives for pushing governments to give their full attention to realising quality youth and adult learning and education in each country.

The participants of the forum, led by ICAE, believed that the mobilisation of CSOs and social movements is necessary to support adult learners worldwide. Ensuring that the contributions and roles of CSOs are recognised in CONFINTEA MTR, the civil society forum was organised to:

1. Review progress on the Belém Framework for Action to inform the CONFINTEA 6 Mid-Term Review Conference
2. Deliberate on the main challenges and opportunities for the right to youth and adult education and lifelong learning in the current policy and development context
3. Strategise on its advocacy within the MTR processes and other related education and development policy arenas
4. Celebrate civil society’s achievements, learn from its rich and diverse experiences, forge solidarity, and collectively define coordinated ways forward
5. Strengthen the global movement to secure the right to the education of youth and adults

ASPBAE took the lead in the deliberations of the Asia Pacific group. ASPBAE’s Maria Khan (Secretary-General) and Anita Borkar facilitated the discussions on how youth and adult education can benefit adults in diverse country contexts. Many participants agreed that youth and adult learning and education (YALE) is pivotal not only for employment, but especially for transforming people’s lives and societies.

Participants from the South Pacific noted the importance of YALE in sustainable development as well as cultural cohesion. For the South Asians, YALE is deemed important for equipping the youth with decent work and ensuring their participation in community affairs. For Southeast Asians, YALE provides opportunities for out-of-school youth and illiterate adults to continue learning outside of the school system.
The Asia Pacific group assessed the implementation of the CONFINTEA Belem Framework for Action in the region with a conversation starter from Rangachar Govinda from India, who also wrote the *Asia Pacific Report of the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*. A key concern discussed was on financing of adult learning and education across countries. Govinda mentioned the decreasing support for ALE and the need to “integrate ALE in the mainstream budget”. In the regional report and his discussion, Govinda stressed the need for “integrating ALE into financial strategies across government departments and creating an integrated ALE strategy”, as committed under Belem Framework for Action.

After the regional discussions, the participants, together with a panel of experts, shared their views on three thematic areas of YALE – (1) literacy and basic skills (2) professional development and vocational skills, and (3) liberal/popular/community education and active citizenship skills.

ICAE Vice President for the Asia Pacific and ASPBAE Past President, Robbie Guevara, led a session synthesizing the regional and thematic debates that surfaced the key recommendations of the CSO Forum for inclusion in the planned outcomes document of the Forum.

ASPBAE Secretary General, Maria Khan, facilitated a session at the CSO Forum on planning and strategising for the Mid-term Review Conference.

At the end of the Forum, CSOs agreed on a civil society statement which was disseminated and debated during the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review discussions.

ICAE holds Executive Committee meeting in lead-up to CONFINTEA 6 Mid-Term Review
21-23 October 2017, Suwon City, Korea

ICAE Executive Committee conducted its annual meeting prior to the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review (MTR).

The meeting discussed the 2018 Plan of Action for ICAE and its member’s response to the challenges and opportunities linked to the active role of the global civil society network in the achievement of the SDGs, in particular, SDG4.

Intensive preparations resulted in the high profile presence and engagement of the different members of the ICAE Executive Committee and its members during the CONFINTEA MTR Conference. [BACK]
Don’t just blame the teacher when the system is at fault, says UNESCO

Global launch of the Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/2018
24 October 2017, Maputo, Mozambique

UNESCO’s 2017/2018 Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR), launched in Maputo, highlights the responsibility of governments to provide universal quality education and stresses that accountability is indispensable in achieving this goal (click here to read highlights of the GEMR). The Report warns that disproportionate blame on any one actor for systemic educational problems can have serious negative side effects, widening inequality, and damaging learning.

“Education is a shared responsibility between us all – governments, schools, teachers, parents and private actors,” said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. “Accountability for these responsibilities defines the way teachers teach, students learn, and governments act. It must be designed with care and with the principles of equity, inclusion and quality in mind.”

‘Accountability in education: meeting our commitments’, the second in the GEM Report series, which monitors progress towards the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goal for Education (SDG4), looks at the different ways people and institutions can be held accountable for reaching that goal, including regulations, testing, monitoring, audits, media scrutiny, and grassroots movements.

The Report demonstrates that blaming teachers for poor test scores and absenteeism is often both unjust and unconstructive. It shows, for example, that nearly half of teacher absenteeism in Indonesia in 2013/14 was due to excused time for study for which replacements should have been provided. Similarly, in Senegal, only 12 of the 80 missed school days in 2014 were due to teachers avoiding their responsibilities. People cannot be held accountable for outcomes that depend on the actions of others.

“Using student test scores to sanction teachers and schools makes it more likely they will adjust their behaviour to protect themselves, which may mean leaving the weakest learners behind,” explains Manos Antoninis, Director of the GEM Report. “Accountability must start with governments. If a government is too quick to apportion blame to others, it is deflecting attention away from its own responsibility for creating a strong, supportive education system.”

Whereas transparency would help identify problems, only one in six governments publish annual education monitoring reports. Strong independent bodies such as ombudsmen, parliaments, and audit institutions are also needed to hold governments to account for education. Lack of accountability opens the door to corruption. In the European Union in 2009-2014, 38% of education and training tenders only had one bidder, compared to 16% of tenders in the construction sector, indicating that the risk of corruption is higher in education than in the building industry.
Setting and enforcing regulations, ranging from contract tendering to teacher qualifications, are also crucial, argues the Report. Fewer than half of low and middle-income countries had standards for early childhood education and just a handful had mechanisms to monitor compliance. There are no regulations on class sizes in almost half of countries.

Government regulations are often too slow to keep up with the fast growth of private schools and universities. In Lagos, Nigeria, only 26% of private schools in 2010/2011 had been approved by the State Ministry of Education. In countries with weak accreditation processes, thousands of students graduate with unrecognized degrees. In Kenya and Uganda, private schools were operating without qualified teachers and with inadequate infrastructure before regulations were put in place and courts shut them down.

Where formal mechanisms fail, citizens play a vital role in holding governments to account for meeting their right to education. In Colombia, a citizens’ campaign successfully challenged the government in court leading to the establishment of free education. In the United States, parents and media successfully lobbied for the removal of climate change denial from textbooks, and students in South Africa were able to halt university tuition hikes.

The Report emphasizes the importance of accountability in addressing gaps and inequalities. Globally, less than 20% of countries legally guarantee 12 years of free and compulsory education. There are 264 million children and youth out of school and 100 million young people currently unable to read.

The Report cites an accountability vacuum with donors not delivering on their aid commitments for those in need. The share of aid to education has fallen for six years in a row. At the same time, donors increasingly demand that in exchange for aid, countries achieve results that sometimes divert energy away from systemic improvements in the education system.

No approach to accountability will be successful without a strong enabling environment that provides actors with adequate resources, capacity, motivation and information to fulfil their responsibilities. The Report calls on governments to:

1. Design accountability for schools and teachers that is supportive and avoid punitive mechanisms, especially those based on narrow performance measures.
2. Allow for democratic participation, respect media freedom to scrutinize education and set up independent institutions to handle complaints.
3. Develop credible and efficient regulations with associated sanctions for all education providers, public and private, that ensure non-discrimination and the quality of education.
4. Make the right to education justiciable, which is not the case in 45% of countries.

This write-up is a reproduction of the GEMR press release.
ActionAid’s David Archer reflects on the Global Education Monitoring Report 2017
5-7 June, Ottawa, Canada

The new Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) is ground-breaking in placing accountability at the centre of its attention. As the report notes, the concept of accountability was shockingly absent from the framing of the Sustainable Development Goals – making it relatively easy for Heads of State to sign up to them, as they could be confident that there were few consequences if they failed to deliver.

The GEMR is refreshing in moving way beyond the recent tendency for rights-based language to be reduced to ‘preambulisation’ in international documents (where rights are referred to at the start and then routinely ignored in the substance of reports). Here the report is unequivocal that ‘Accountability in education starts with governments, which bear the primary duty to ensure the right to education’. It notes that although every country has ‘ratified at least one international treaty illustrating its commitment to the right to education’, in practice, the right to education is only justiciable in 55% of countries. In the absence of the capacity of citizens to take legal action on the failure of governments to deliver, the right to education risks being reduced to empty rhetoric. As Chair of the Right to Education Initiative, I could not be happier with the central call of this report, that: ‘Civil society organisations and the international community should lobby for the right to education, including for making the right justiciable in national legal frameworks’.

This GEMR has a healthy dose of common sense which is absent in far too many global education documents. It argues that accountability starts with having a good education sector plan which sets clear targets and is linked to the allocation of resources through transparent budgets. A credible plan depends on a good process – and should emerge from broad and meaningful consultation. Governments should then monitor and report on the delivery of such plans and allow for independent auditing of progress. Yes, yes, yes. Lamentably this does not happen in enough countries. As the report notes, 60% of teachers in 50 countries had no meaningful involvement in policy processes and only one in six countries produce annual progress reports. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) should be part of the solution – so long as more efforts are made to ensure that ‘Local Education Groups’ are truly inclusive and fully consulted in the development and monitoring of education plans.

One area where the GEMR could have done more is regarding financing. Of course it asserts that adequate resources are essential, but it focuses on the lower end of the commitments articulated in the Incheon Framework for Action – calling for governments to spend at least 4% of GDP (rather than 4-6%) and 15% of total expenditure (rather than 15-20%). One in four countries presently miss the lower benchmark - but many more need to reach or exceed the upper benchmark. There is also little attention paid to critical issues of how to measure the 15-20% - whether debt servicing is excluded (as the GPE do) or included (as it should be) in total government spending. Nor does this report elaborate...
The GEMR makes the powerful assertion that ‘There is little evidence that performance-based accountability, which focuses on outcomes over inputs and uses narrow incentives, improves education systems’.

To sufficiently expand the domestic tax base to finance education, governments can adopt market-based reforms, which often undermine accountability. The GEMR states that ‘There is little evidence that performance-based accountability, which focuses on outcomes over inputs and uses narrow incentives, improves education systems’. Indeed, competitive pressures ‘marginalise disadvantaged parents and schools’. It should be self-evident that there will always be unevenness in parents’ access to good, reliable information and their capacity to interpret or use information – and this is acute in a world where at least 750 million adults cannot read or write and double that number cannot do so to a functional level.

The GEMR is strong in challenging donors. It observes that developing country Ministers should use their own financing commitments to education as means to leverage greater commitments from donors. The report is stronger in challenging donors, observing that “only 6 of 28 OECD-DAC countries met their commitment to allocate 0.7% of national income to aid”, that aid to education is declining, aid targeting to the poorest countries is inadequate, aid predictability is deteriorating, and aid conditionality (e.g. the use of results-based mechanisms) is increasingly problematic. There is a pleasant inversion of the traditional power dynamics in the call for developing countries to do more to ‘participate actively and monitor the work of international organisations’ where there is too often ‘an accountability vacuum’. The forthcoming replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education in Senegal in February 2018 could be an exciting opportunity to move in this direction – the first event of its type ever held in Africa. Developing country Ministers should use their own financing commitments to education as means to leverage greater commitments from donors (something being actively promoted by the Global Campaign for Education with a new compact on domestic financing being released on 31st October).

One of the most refreshing dimensions of the GEMR is the observation that market-based reforms often undermine, rather than enhance, accountability. The rhetoric of school choice is not backed up by evidence and ‘has undermined efforts towards inclusive, equitable, high-quality education’. Indeed, competitive pressures ‘marginalise disadvantaged parents and schools’. It should be self-evident that there will always be unevenness in parents’ access to good, reliable information and their capacity to interpret or use information – and this is acute in a world where at least 750 million adults cannot read or write and double that number cannot do so to a functional level.

There are also challenges to other narratives that are presently dominant in the donor discourse on education. This includes a challenge to the reductive focus on learning outcomes, with the powerful assertion that, ‘There is little evidence that performance-based accountability, which focuses on outcomes over inputs and uses narrow incentives, improves education systems’. Indeed, using blame-focused approaches to accountability is often ‘associated with undesirable consequences, such as greater segregation in systems’. Equally rewards-based systems, such as performance-related teacher pay, are questioned owing to their unintended detrimental effects: ‘peer collaboration deteriorates, the curriculum is narrowed, teaching to the test is emphasized’.

This is important material from the GEMR showing that it continues to have a critical role in global education circles – willing to use evidence to challenge increasingly hegemonic norms and discourses.

David Archer’s blog can be found on the Right to Education website.
Strengthening capacities of Asia Pacific coalitions in advocacy for SDG4/Education 2030
Asia Pacific Education Coalitions’ Consultation Meeting
9-11 October 2017, Hanoi, Vietnam

ASPBAE’s members and partners met in Hanoi for an Asia Pacific education coalitions’ consultation meeting. The meeting, organised by ASPBAE and hosted by the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA), was held to – (1) Strengthen capacities of Asia Pacific coalitions in advocacy work towards SDG4/Education 2030 implementation and monitoring, within the wider SDG processes; (2) Share key updates and advocacy plans of Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and regional partners towards greater complementation and collaboration of advocacy work at global, regional, and national levels; (3) Strengthen coalition engagement with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), especially on improving local education groups, engaging with civil society representatives on the GPE Board to inform GPE agenda and processes, and involvement in GPE replenishment campaign; and (4) discuss Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) reporting, learning exchange processes, and future plans.

President of the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA), Tran Xuan Nhi, welcomed the participants to the meeting and reflected on the formation of VAEFA in 2009. He highlighted the support and important role of CSEF in its inception and informed that the coalition had since grown to include 50 members working in the areas of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), education for the deaf, advocacy for better access to education of disadvantaged groups, and adult education by strengthening Community Learning Centres (CLCs).

In a panel discussion chaired by ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, entitled - Implementing SDG4: A snapshot of global, regional, and national education trends and challenges that inform our advocacy work – several speakers, including Laura Giannecchini, CLADE (Latin American education campaign network), Refaat Sabah, Arab Campaign for Education (ACEA), Wolfgang Leumer, GCE, and ASPBAE’s Cecilia (Thea) Soriano, spoke about key regional education issues and trends. Some of the concerns raised focussed on the fact that there seem to be two types of education for different people, one for the poor and one for the wealthy, where very often the poor are unable to get access to higher education, a privilege reserved for the wealthy. Brazil was cited as a good example in mobilising local resources for education, however much is to be learnt from the Brazil experience where the resources never made their way towards improving education in the country.

Laura Giannecchini of CLADE highlighted some of the key issues and challenges in Latin America including the weakening of democracy and rise of authoritarian governance; poor public education systems; shrinking spaces for civil society participation in policy debates on education; increased privatisation of education, religious fundamentalism, and censorship in education; and a decrease in diversity, inclusivity, and democracy in public education. Highlighting that 100
million people remain illiterate in the Arab Region, ACEA’s Refaat Sabah spoke of challenges in the Arab education system including low teacher salaries, infrastructure that is unsuitable for children with disabilities, low academic achievement, and conflict in the region. Highlighting that 20% of urban Africa does not have access to early childhood care and education opportunities and that 30 million children remain out of school, Wolfgang Leumer of GCE spoke of obstacles in the education system in Africa. Some of them include challenging political environments, capacity depletion in coalitions, inadequate funding and accountability in public education systems, and insufficient networking and information sharing.

ASPBAE’s Thea Soriano detailed out important elements of education in the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressed education challenges in the Asia Pacific. Some of the statistics pointed to a disheartening reality of education in the region - over 51% of the global out-of-school children and youth live in the Asia Pacific (136 million); 11 out of the 32 countries in the world with the lowest number of trained teachers are in the Asia Pacific, including in Cambodia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines. With over half of the world’s population living in the region (almost 50% residing in urban areas), the Asia Pacific remains one of the most underdeveloped in terms of its education systems. As Thea stressed in her presentation, several key issues contributing to this are poverty, undernourishment, gender discrimination, vulnerable employment (54%), climate change and environmental hazards, and inadequate education financing. Some of the steps she proposed were policy coherence in SDG implementation and identification of indicators, and capacity building for governments in terms of knowledge exchange, technical assistance, and overcoming political agendas.

In a panel discussion on Challenges and opportunities in advocating for equitable and inclusive education, the Hanoi Association of the Deaf (HAD) and VAEFA presented a summary of Vietnam’s education context and the coalition’s experience in advocating for the right to education of deaf people in the country. With only a very small percentage of the education budget allocated for adult education (2.8%), no specific teacher training for non-formal education, and with only 5% of community learning centres functioning adequately, clearly, youth and adult non-formal public education in the country suffers marginalisation. With a lack of education policies for ethnic minorities and education challenges for the differently abled (90% of children with disabilities are out of school according to UNICEF), VAEFA’s advocacy work primarily focuses on equity and inclusion in education. Programme priorities include a push for the right to education for the deaf and for children with autism, advocacy for a sign language course on national television and sign interpretation on the daily news, and expansion of sign language class in continuing education centres for deaf adults and their families. Some of the achievements for VAEFA include the initiation of the first college course in sign language, and the piloting of a primary course through sign language at the National College of Education with deaf teachers running the course. VAEFA National Coordinator and ASPBAE Executive Council Member for South East Asia, Nguyen Thi Kim Anh chaired the session and shared as well, the lessons from VAEFA’s advocacy efforts on inclusive education.
Representatives of the Middle East and Arab Region (Hebah Khouli) and of the Afghanistan National Education Coalition, ANEC (Naseer Ahmad Bayat), spoke of education advocacy in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Speakers from NNER Myanmar (Hawng Tsai) and CAMPE Bangladesh (Enamul Hoque) shared their reflections on pursuing cross-national advocacy in solidarity with the Rohingya and responding to their humanitarian crisis. Some of the suggestions emerging from the presentations included strengthening engagement with concerned government agencies regarding SDG4, and the need to ensure education remains a priority in emergency responses, in comprehensive approaches to displacement on account of conflict and how education can play an important role in preventing conflict, building social cohesion and promoting respect for diversity and tolerance.

In her presentation, ASPBAE’s Thea Soriano addressed the neglected education agenda of non-formal youth and adult learning and education. She underscored the importance of youth and adult education to meet the access and equity objectives of the SDGs: universal primary and secondary education will not be achieved if public education systems continue to ignore the learning needs of those pushed out of the system and focus only on the performance of those within the (formal) system of education. She also emphasised the value of adult non-formal education in the achievement of other SDGs – health and dignity, poverty eradication, decent work, sustainable development and peace.

Thea highlighted ASPBAE’s collaboration with the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL) on the youth-led action research on education for girls and women conducted in India, the Philippines, and Indonesia. The action research aims to empower young women by enabling them to explore and gather facts to understand the education needs and change existing situations in their communities, develop communication skills, initiate community actions, and advocate for learning opportunities with local and national governments.

In the session on Challenges and opportunities in financing SDG4/Education 2030, ASPBAE’s Rene Raya highlighted the trends and threats in education financing. Stressing the need for a dramatic increase in aid, Rene underscored that there needs to be a 500% increase in aid to education in order to reach the new education targets in developing countries by 2030. The fall in education aid over the years has paved the way for an increase in the push for education privatisation and a growth in private school enrolments, especially in countries that are not spending enough on education (Nepal-27%, Philippines-20%, Indonesia-41%, India-30%, Pakistan-34.1%). With this, there has also been a rise in low-fee private schools, expansion of public private partnerships, emergence of corporate chain schools, and increasing segregation in schools based on socio-economic status, location, gender, and student performance.

According to studies done by ASPBAE and its coalitions, by other advocates and academics, and findings of UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, private sector participation in education has had a very patchy, even poor, record in fulfilling the right to education with their encouragement of school fees, segregation in education, promoting competition – all with adverse impact on equity, inclusion and free education. Rene stressed the need to define solutions based on country
GPE will invite Developing Country Partner (DCP) governments to officially announce their country pledges at the GPE Financing Conference to be held in Dakar, Senegal, in February 2018.

Stressing the importance of domestic resource mobilisation to meet education financing targets, Henry Malumo of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) highlighted the “4 S” approach to financing Education 2030 - increasing the SHARE of the budget spent on education; increasing the SIZE of the budget; increasing the SENSITIVITY of the budget (equity); and increasing the SCRUTINY of the budget. He stressed that real commitment will come from governments at the country level and made the case for digital advocacy and on-line activism. He concluded by saying, “Education financing has become low priority due to the lack of political will and not the lack of resources. World leaders have said great things about the transformative role of education and its positive impact on the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, sadly this acknowledgement has not been matched by the desired investment.”
While brainstorming on the GPE Replenishment Campaign in their sub-regional groups, participants reflected on and shared potential GPE replenishment action points. They committed to researching and analysing country-specific gaps between pledges and actual expenditures; engaging with Developing Country Partner focal points, parliamentary committees on education, GPE CSO2 (developing country) representatives, and local education groups (LEGs); showcasing success stories of GPE fund implementation and influencing donors through the success stories; having meetings with representatives of Ministries of Education; organising education consultations/forums for donors and partners; building capacities on education financing; engaging with sub-regional platforms such as ASEAN; carrying out social media advocacy campaigns; and working with the print and broadcast media. While it emerged during the discussions that some countries have already committed 20% of the national budget to education, participants recognised the need for monitoring systems to track how the resources are being disbursed and spent and whether they are actually going towards educational opportunities for communities and marginalised sectors.

ASPBAE’s Rene Raya, in a session on, Platforms and opportunities to advocate for SDG4/Education 2030 implementation and monitoring, updated on development related to the SDG and SDG4 follow-up mechanisms at global and regional levels. He highlighted the need for CSO education advocates to strengthen their presence in the SDG follow up processes such as the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) especially in the 2019 HLPF which will focus its review on (among others,) SDG4. He highlighted the need to also engage the Voluntary National Reports processes and informed the participants that the 48 countries volunteered to report for 2018, including Australia, Bhutan, Lao PDR, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam from the Asia Pacific region. Rene underscored the need to continue to monitor discussions within the UN Financing for Development (FFD) processes and identified key lobbying opportunities to make a case for increased public investments in public education and increased ODA. Rene advised that CSOs should prepare for the review process of the SDG Indicator Framework with the UN Statistical Commission agreeing to review the SDG Indicators in 2020: the review process and consultations in this regard are likely to be set in place in 2018-2020. Rene also reminded on the need for national education coalitions to plan engagements in the annual Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED) and to join the Asia Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (APRCEM) to have a deeper involvement with the SDG follow up processes at the regional and global levels.

While brainstorming on the GPE Replenishment Campaign in their sub-regional groups, participants reflected on and shared potential GPE replenishment action points. They committed to researching and analysing country-specific gaps between pledges and actual expenditures; engaging with Developing Country Partner focal points, parliamentary committees on education, GPE CSO2 (developing country) representatives, and local education groups (LEGs); showcasing success stories of GPE fund implementation and influencing donors through the success stories; having meetings with representatives of Ministries of Education; organising education consultations/forums for donors and partners; building capacities on education financing; engaging with sub-regional platforms such as ASEAN; carrying out social media advocacy campaigns; and working with the print and broadcast media. While it emerged during the discussions that some countries have already committed 20% of the national budget to education, participants recognised the need for monitoring systems to track how the resources are being disbursed and spent and whether they are actually going towards educational opportunities for communities and marginalised sectors.

ASPBAE’s Rene Raya, in a session on, Platforms and opportunities to advocate for SDG4/Education 2030 implementation and monitoring, updated on development related to the SDG and SDG4 follow-up mechanisms at global and regional levels. He highlighted the need for CSO education advocates to strengthen their presence in the SDG follow up processes such as the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) especially in the 2019 HLPF which will focus its review on (among others,) SDG4. He highlighted the need to also engage the Voluntary National Reports processes and informed the participants that the 48 countries volunteered to report for 2018, including Australia, Bhutan, Lao PDR, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam from the Asia Pacific region. Rene underscored the need to continue to monitor discussions within the UN Financing for Development (FFD) processes and identified key lobbying opportunities to make a case for increased public investments in public education and increased ODA. Rene advised that CSOs should prepare for the review process of the SDG Indicator Framework with the UN Statistical Commission agreeing to review the SDG Indicators in 2020: the review process and consultations in this regard are likely to be set in place in 2018-2020. Rene also reminded on the need for national education coalitions to plan engagements in the annual Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED) and to join the Asia Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (APRCEM) to have a deeper involvement with the SDG follow up processes at the regional and global levels.

While sharing GCE’s overall advocacy plans for 2018-2019, GCE’s Henry Malumo stressed the importance of making education financing, more specifically, domestic financing, a priority advocacy issue with the UN and World Bank. He urged that coalitions share their best practices and success stories with Ministries of Education and link those experiences and best practices to regional and global platforms.

Bulletin continued on next page…
Thea Soriano of ASPBAE, Laura Gianneccini of CLADE (Latin America), and Refaat Sabah of ACEA (Arab region) shared regional advocacy plans and platforms to engage in 2018-2019. Some of ASPBAE’s plans included coordinating advocacy efforts to roll out Education 2030/SDG4, especially on financing, equity, quality, youth and adult education and lifelong learning systems; securing increased financing for the new education agenda, ensuring stronger public education and lifelong learning systems; addressing commercialisation and unregulated education privatisation; securing civil society policy spaces in regional and international SDG4 platforms; and forging links with the other SDGs.

Participants from NCE Nepal (Shradha Koirala), NNER Myanmar (Hawng Tsai), Foro Dakar Honduras (Jose Javier Acebedo), and the Sudanese Education Coalition (Ensaf Abdallah Ebrahim Ahmed) shared successes and challenges on coalition engagements in education sector planning, implementation, and monitoring, and participation in local education groups (LEG), or its equivalent, mechanisms. Some of the recommendations emerging from the presentations included capacity building of civil society organisations in the LEG engagement processes, raising awareness amongst governments on the importance of civil society participation in the LEG processes, and GPE advocacy to governments to effectively engage local civil society organisations in the LEGs.

GPE’s Muntasim Tanvir provided updates on ongoing consultations on funding mechanisms being developed under GPE’s Financing and Funding Framework (FFF).

Laura Gianneccini (CLADE, Latin America) and Zehra Arshad (PCE Pakistan), both CSO2 Representatives to the GPE Board, provided a summary of CSO2 mechanisms and opportunities for coalitions to engage, and CSO feedback and consultation processes on GPE’s Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) and Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) funding mechanisms.

Wolfgang Leumer Global Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) Manager, and ASPBAE’s Bernie Lovegrove provided updates on CSEF reporting processes and deliverables by end-2018. Grant Kasowanjete of GCE gave updates and a refresher session on the CSEF on-line financial reporting tool.

Close to 80 participants from 27 countries participated in the regional meeting.
Asia Pacific Regional Funding Committee meets to review proposals and budgets for national education coalitions in the region

13-14 October, 2017, Hanoi, Vietnam

The Asia Pacific Regional Funding Committee (RFC) of the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) met in Hanoi to discuss and approve the proposals and budgets for the year 2018.

RFC members critically reviewed proposals of 19 national education coalitions in the region as well as their activities, achievements, and challenges. While most proposals were approved, others required additional time for submissions owing to challenges in compiling and reporting on activities.

A brief global and regional update of the education sector, along with an overview of the CSEF regional consultation, was shared with RFC members. The meeting ended with a discussion and agreement of the proposed indicative grant amounts for 2018 for each coalition.

RFC members who participated in the meeting were Takafumi Miyake (Shanti Volunteer Association), Nargis Sultana (Open Society Foundations), and Wolfgang Leumer and Grant Kasowanjete (Global Campaign for Education, GCE).

Adult Education Centres – a key to development

5th International Adult Education and Development Conference

11-12 October 2017, Tbilisi, Georgia

The Adult Education and Development Conferences (AECD), organised by DVV International with support of its partners, address topics of global relevance and strategic importance for further promoting the education of adults. The 5th conference, with the theme, ‘Adult Education Centres as a Key to Development – Responsibilities, Structures and Benefits’, addressed the set-up, management, and benefits of Adult Education Centres as key structures to development.

Over 120 international stakeholders and experts from 36 countries shared their approaches and challenges encountered and spoke of how Adult Education Centres can effectively counter social challenges and ensure access to education for disadvantaged target groups in particular.

The meeting provided a platform to present and discuss experiences from Georgia and other countries from the global network of DVV International. Practitioners, researchers, and other key stakeholders shared concepts and insights as to the potential of Adult Education Centres for development. Discussions also focussed on responsibilities, structures, benefits, and the wider impact of adult education centres.

Special attention was given to the question of public responsibility for Adult Education Centres. Participants were unanimous in their criticism of the very low level of public funding for adult education and Adult Education Centres at
Discussions at the conference led to the development of several key messages orientated towards the 3 blocks of - 'Public responsibility in adult education', 'Adult Education Centres as key structures', and 'Impact and wider benefits of Adult Education Centres'. The key messages were used at the CONFINTÉA Mid-Term Review to underline the importance of Adult Education Centres and lobby for more funding and political support. At the closing of the conference, Christoph Jost, Director of DVV International, stressed, “We would like thus to push forward our vision of a learning society with sustainable adult education structures.”

ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, participated in the conference where she was one of the speakers in the final integrating plenary session which focused on arriving at the Conference’s key messages in Promoting adult education centres in future on the main areas of: Public Responsibility, Important Structures and Benefits and Wider Impacts. Nani, who has managed over 40 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) all over Indonesia, gave her insights on the importance of having proper structures to ensure the smooth functioning of the centres.

Participants of the conference had the opportunity of visiting a CLC in Tbilisi supported by DVV International, the Koda Community Education Center. The CLC offered a range of adult learning and education opportunities, including vocational training, computer training, cultural activities, and served as a meeting ground for members of the community.

DVV International aims to continue to strengthen the debate through its regional offices and its network, and create opportunities to deepen the understanding of the diversity of Adult Education Centres and Community Learning Centres. Particular attention will be paid to the potential of expanded learning environments as a valuable approach to increase the outreach to young and adult learners.

This write-up is based on information appearing on the DVV website and by a report prepared by ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni.
ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni & former Executive Council Member, Kazi Rafiqul Alam, inducted into International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame, Class of 2017

26 October 2017, Suwon City, South Korea

ASPBAE colleagues and friends joined ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, and Kazi Rafiqul Alam of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) in their induction to the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame (IACE HOF) Class of 2017 at the Ajou University, Suwon City. These induction ceremonies were the first organised in the Asia region.

Nani Zulminarni has led and developed several initiatives on women’s education for empowerment, but her outstanding contributions have been in her leadership of an NGO in Indonesia. In 2001, Nani founded PEKKA (Women Headed Family Empowerment), an internationally renowned organisation that empowers female heads of family, the poorest of the poor in Indonesia. PEKKA has accompanied more than 100,000 women-headed families in more than 1,000 self-help groups spread across 20 provinces in Indonesia, fighting for their rights in education, economics, law, society, and politics. By establishing PEKKA, Nani highlighted the status and role of women heads of households as a key issue in efforts to eradicate poverty in a country like Indonesia.

Nani made women heads of households visible through statistics so the targeting system of poverty-reduction programmes in the country could be more sensitised and effective. Second, she developed and promoted an affirmative action programme to protect and fulfill the rights of women heads of family. And third, she ran programmes that unleashed the collective power of these women so they could become important pillars for development and social change in their communities.

As an experienced trainer and organiser, Zulminarni has shaped PEKKA’s programmes by applying a combination of feminist popular education and community organising processes to the building of cooperative forms of saving and microfinance. Emerging from this process are countless women able to make a difference in their villages and their own lives, both economically and politically. PEKKA created and built more than 60 community learning centres in different parts of Indonesia, providing a place for education and training for grassroots women, running programs on adult literacy, vocational training, and early childhood education.

Kazi Rafiqul Alam was awarded for having dedicated his life to promoting quality adult and continuing education through enhancing facilitators, teachers, and learners’ capabilities. Under Kazi’s visionary leadership, the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) has grown to be a multi-dimensional initiative, running 104 projects and institutions. The Mission has been recognised for its services to society and has won many national and international prizes and awards.
Through Kazi's leadership, DAM launched an innovative model for Community Resource Centres (Ganokendras) which have not only created a platform for the planning and delivery of adult and continuing education, but has also proved an effective space for networking within the community to better harness other development services. Kazi’s extensive experience and practice (through DAM) in adult and continuing education have been channelled to support the strengthening of public policy and public adult education provisioning in Bangladesh. DAM has developed 743 continuing-education materials, literacy curricula, and primers that remain relevant and are still currently used.

Kazi Rafiqul Alam was also an Executive Council member of ASPBAE from 2000 to 2008. He is currently Chairperson of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), an alliance of 1,300 NGOs working in the fields of literacy and education, and serves as President of the Bangladesh Literacy Association, affiliated with International Literacy Association.

Based in the University of Oklahoma, IACE HOF was founded in 1996 "to honour leaders in the fields of continuing education and adult learning and to serve as a record and inspiration for the next generation of continuing education leaders". Annually, adult and continuing education leaders from around the world are selected for induction into the Hall of Fame.

Three other Asians were inducted in the Hall of Fame, Class of 2017:

Ji Woong Cheong from Korea was recognised for his work in participatory practice research in rural society and literacy education for rural adults as a lifelong educational approach to rural community development and quality of life. As the director and operator of the Institute of Saemaul Undong Studies at Seoul National University, he played a key role in proving the importance of education in community development and national development, focusing on examples of Saemaul Movement and Saemaul Education in Korea. Ji Woon Cheong was an active member of ASPBAE in the 70’s and early 80’s.

Young Do Park, also from Korea, has worked as teacher and administrator of night schools and institutes providing teaching and counselling to young adults, women, and senior citizens with learning deprivation to develop their social growth and quality of the life through education. Park has greatly contributed to policies for adult literacy education in South Korea and settling school accreditation programs.

Archanya Ratana-Ubol of Thailand is a leader in the promotion of adult education to peers and students, an innovator for the organisation of an annual international conference on lifelong learning, and her expansive knowledge has contributed greatly to the field that she has made her life’s work. Included in Ratana-Ubol’s achievements is a focus on introducing the value of lifelong learning in elder years by promoting research in factors of aging and intergenerational communications.

Part of this write-up have been derived from the HOF 2017 booklet. [BACK]
World Development Report falls short of supporting full Education 2030 Agenda
Global Campaign for Education (GCE) responds to World Bank report

September 2017


The following is the response of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) to the Report –

GCE applauds the highlights on public, universal, quality education; however, it expresses strong concerns about key aspects missing from the report, and urges the World Bank to advocate more boldly for increased global education funding.

‘The World Development Report 2018 (WDR) - LEARNING to Realize Education’s Promise’ emphasises the need for equity in learning outcomes, to make schools work for learners, and to better align actors so that systems work for learning. GCE welcomes the first ever WDR to focus on education and applauds policymakers’ increasing attention to education; however, GCE is concerned that this WDR does not go far enough in supporting all aspects of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 or the full Education 2030 Agenda. Similarly, despite recognising the centrality of teachers to quality education, there is a lack of consistency on support for trained, professional teachers. Further, major areas which need much more attention include access to education for all students at all levels, adult literacy, inclusive education, gender equality and – crucially – funding for public education systems.

The Education 2030 Agenda points to clear financing benchmarks: countries must allocate at least 4-6% of GDP and at least 15-20% of public expenditure to education, while the international community must reverse the decline in aid to education.

“If we want the right to education for all to be a reality, including 12 years of free, quality education, we need urgent action to realise increased and sustainable domestic budgets. Tax justice, at both national and international levels, is fundamental to this. The World Bank’s silence on financing is a missed opportunity and risks being interpreted as a disincentive to increase national education budgets and international cooperation,” states Camilla Croso, GCE President.

David Archer, GCE Board Member and ActionAid’s Head of Participation and Public Services, found that the report “should be a cause for celebration, but despite some useful observations, the focus is too narrow to be of real value in helping us accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4. The WDR focuses on improving equity in learning outcomes – and particularly the assessment of those outcomes – but does surprisingly little to break new ground on these issues.” A more in-depth reaction from David Archer can be found here.
Jennifer Rigg, GCE Board Member and GCE-US Executive Director, stated, “As advocates for quality, universal education, we praise the World Bank and World Development Report authors for highlighting the importance of quality public schools for all, and for emphasising concerns about public funds going to for-profit, private education providers. We are concerned, however, that this report simply does not go far enough in recommending increased funding for education. We urge the World Bank to remedy this problem immediately and request that Finance Ministers and policymakers strengthen grant funding for quality, inclusive, public education.”

GCE acknowledges the importance of the first ever WDR on education. Notwithstanding, while the report makes a strong call for a learning agenda, GCE underlines that SDG4 and the Education 2030 Agenda go far beyond a focus on learning and assessments, to embrace inclusion, equity, non-discrimination, human rights education, and education for sustainable development, within the context of lifelong learning.

We urge the World Bank to continue to embrace this common cause, and to fully support teachers, students, parents, and schools, while taking a stronger role in urging Finance Ministers and policymakers to increase sustainable, public funding for quality, inclusive, and free public education systems. This is particularly vital in the lead up to the February 2018 replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). We also call on advocates and campaigners to urge World Bank governmental representatives to take stronger stances and place higher priority on funding quality, public education.

The GCE response to the WDR 2018 can also be downloaded here.

UN Girls’ Education Initiative releases policy paper on girls’ education in conflict-affected contexts

11 October 2017

A policy note by the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) - *Addressing Threats to Girls Education in Conflict-affected Contexts* – highlights promising approaches and policy directions for girls’ education in conflict-affected contexts.

Drawing from findings in a forthcoming evidence review conducted by Overseas Development Initiative as well as other cited publications, this policy note calls for greater investment in promising approaches, research, and multi-sectoral collaboration in girls’ education to ensure that all of the world’s girls are achieving and learning.

The policy note outlines key recommendations for donors, governments, and education stakeholders:

- **Focus** investment on interventions that promote multi-sectoral collaboration to improve access and quality of education for girls
alongside efforts to tackle discriminatory cultural and social attitudes and practices.

- **Build on proven interventions** to upscale combinations of promising strategies working explicitly and intentionally at the intersection between gender, education and conflict.
- **Invest in research, monitoring and evaluation of education programmes** in conflict-affected contexts with a gender lens.
- **Strengthen knowledge management systems** to facilitate wide dissemination of proven interventions on girls’ education in conflict-affected contexts.
- **Strengthen collaboration across gender, education and conflict actors globally** to promote coordinated, collective advocacy and action to address girls’ education in conflict-affected contexts.

Click [here](#) to read a blog by Emilie Rees-Smith, Gender, Education and Conflict Specialist at UNGEI. The blog highlights the launch of the UNGEI’s policy note on the occasion of [International Day of the Girl Child 2017](#).

*This write-up is based on information provided by UNGEI.* [BACK]

**Farewell and thank you, B.C. Rokadiya**

1934 – 2017

ASPBAE is very sad to announce the passing away of ASPBAE life member, B.C. Rokadiya, in India on 22 September 2017. He was 83 years old.

B.C. Rokadiya joined ASPBAE after a life of dedicated service to education within the Government of India (GOI) and the UN. He was Joint Director, Directorate of Adult Education (GOI). Prior to this, he worked at the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). He joined ASPBAE after retiring as Chief Technical Adviser and Team Manager of the UNESCO office in Bangladesh.

Mr. Rokadiya played an important role in the development of the course structure of ASPBAE’s flagship programme, the Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC), as the first training module on adult education was developed from his contributions in the 1995 BLDC in New Delhi, India. He was the lead consultant for ASPBAE in the mid-1990s when ASPBAE offered capacity support to the Department of Non-Formal Education of the Ministry of Education in Vietnam as the country was reshaping its non-formal education strategies in the wake of its economic liberalisation. He remained an ardent supporter of ASPBAE’s work through the many years of his membership - offering encouragement, volunteer time, and assistance.

It was only fitting, therefore, that Mr. Rokadiya and his contributions were remembered and honoured by ASPBAE and its members during the Asia Pacific Education Coalition’s Consultation Meeting in October 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam - where his long-term association with ASPBAE began.

The ASPBAE family will miss you Mr. Rokadiya. May your soul rest in peace. [BACK]
Publishing ASPBAE's write-ups: Please contact ASPBAE's Information and Communications Coordinator, Medha Soni, at medha.aspbae@gmail.com if you wish you re-produce any material published in this Bulletin.

Photo credits: Some photos used in this Bulletin have been sourced from the internet and belong to international NGOs, networks, and individual photographers.