Focusing on Community Learning Centres in national development
Central Asia Adult Education Forum
Full article

Putting the spotlight on education at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly
The UN General Assembly (UNGA) put the spotlight on education – particularly on the financing of quality, inclusive, equitable, and free education. ASPBAE’s Cecilia Soriano and Helen Dabu were in New York to participate in the UNGA events. - Read more

Global meeting on education privatisation highlights threats to human rights principles
The global meeting on ‘Privatisation in Education and Human Rights’ defined strategies, roles, and interventions of civil society organisations for challenging the increasing trend of privatisation in education. - Read more

ASPBAE convenes regional consultation on education financing, privatisation, and regulation
ASPBAE organised a Regional Consultation on Education Privatisation. One of the aims of the meeting was to agree on a joint strategy and develop national and regional action plans to address key challenges. - Read more

International Literacy Day: Literacy in a digital world
The international global conference on the occasion of International Literacy Day aimed to deepen understanding of what kind of literacy skills people need to navigate in a digital world and what this means for literacy teaching and learning. - Read more

ASPBAE welcomes Nasiba Mirpochoeva to its Executive council
ASPBAE’s Executive Council unanimously agreed to appoint Nasiba Mirpochoeva, Board member of the Adult Education Association for Tajikistan (AEAT), as a co-opted member of the Executive Council from Central Asia. - Read more

Sub-Regional News and Views
International Conference on Global Citizenship Education held in Seoul - Read more
The International Graduate Centre of Education is invested in the transformation necessary to revitalise schools and workplaces as connected places for learning in large cities and small communities. IGCE works alongside candidates and colleagues from around the world and from diverse professions. Their theoretical and policy contributions provide a rich foundation for research that builds upon the long standing tradition of influential education research undertaken by researchers within the School of Education at Charles Darwin University.

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International Literacy Day (8 Sept.) was celebrated with the theme ‘Literacy in a digital world’. It highlighted challenges and opportunities in promoting literacy in a digital world where 750 million adults and 264 million out-of-school children still lack basic literacy skills.
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 International Conference on Global Citizenship Education.

**International Conference on Global Citizenship Education held in Seoul**

*13-14 September 2017, Seoul, Korea*

With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development coming into force in 2016, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) made its first appearance in the global education agenda. The Asia Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), cognizant of challenges, tensions, and opportunities revolving around GCED, reached out to education stakeholders around the world for the promotion of GCED. The International Conference on GCED: Platform on Pedagogy and Practice was initiated as a place of exchange, interaction, and dialogue.

The second International Conference on Global Citizenship Education (GCED): Platform on Pedagogy and Practice was co-organised by APCEIU and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea, in partnership with UNESCO Headquarters.

The conference, held annually in September, provides an opportunity for participants to deeply immerse themselves in GCED for two days. A wide range of views and perspectives are shared, and a variety of practical, hands-on experiences are offered in an atmosphere of mutual support and respect. With various formats to cater to a diverse audience, the conference aims to inspire each participant to learn from others and act on their own initiative to implement GCED at the local level.

Some of the topics covered in the conference were - How can we pursue GCED in a challenging environment?; What challenges are we facing in practising GCED?; Exploring practices on GCED and their impact (primary and secondary education, higher education, civil society organisations – challenges and achievements); GCED in Action (performance by the Philippine Educational Theatre Association-PETA); Experiencing teaching strategies & pedagogical approaches to GCED; and Ensuring supportive conditions to scale-up GCED (education policies, curricula, teacher education – challenges and achievements).
Some of the speakers at the conference included Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Republic of Korea, Kim Sang-kon; Director, Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), Chung Utak; Minister of Education, Bhutan, Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk; Superintendent, Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, Republic of Korea, Cho Heeyeon; Head, Executive Office, UNESCO Bangkok - Regional Bureau of Education for Asia and the Pacific, Jun Morohashi; and Associate Professor of International Development, RMIT University, Australia, and ASPBAE Past President, Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara. Robbie facilitated the session on ‘What challenges are we facing in practicing GCED?’ and conducted an interactive plenary conversation that asked the participants to identify the challenges for implementing GCED in their own contexts. Robbie also met with staff of APCEIU’s External Relations Department to discuss possible future collaboration to advance GCED as part of ASPBAE’s commitment to contribute to achieving SDG Target 4.7.

The conference brought together 400 education professionals from around the world who are at the forefront of GCED. Under the overarching theme of ‘In pursuit of GCED in a challenging environment’, the conference addressed the difficulties faced globally, nationally and locally that call for renewed attention to GCED.

This write-up includes excerpts of an article appearing on the UNESCO website. [BACK]

Putting the spotlight on education at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly
12-25 September 2017, New York, U.S.A

Education has been the focus of many high-level UN events, but this year’s UN General Assembly (UNGA) truly put the spotlight on education – and particularly on the financing of quality, inclusive, equitable, and free education.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and its members have long fought to deliver financing at national and international levels, and this year’s shift by the UN to explicitly focus on financing to strengthen public education systems was welcome – and long overdue.

Civil society has been consistent in the message – now widely acknowledged – that education is a foundational right, and SDG4 underpins the full sustainable development agenda: failing to deliver this goal risks failing the agenda as a whole. Two years into the Education 2030 period, now is the time to act: education must be funded.
France and Senegal will co-host the February 2018 financing conference of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), with Presidents Emmanuel Macron and Macky Sall personally announcing this during the high-level event ‘Financing the Future: Education 2030’.

The landmark event, hosted by the governments of Norway and Malawi, as well as France and Senegal, saw UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Malala Yousafzai, Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway, and President Peter Mutharika of Malawi among many others take the stage and make commitments to support both the increase of financing for education, and to mobilise others to do the same.

**Welcome boost for education in emergencies**

A number of new financial pledges were made during the event focused on education in emergencies:

- The European Union: 8% of its humanitarian budget will go to education in emergencies in 2018 – this is far above the global average of 3.6% and follows its earlier pledge to increase to 6% in 2017; it also pledged a further US$13.2 million to the Education Cannot Wait fund.
- Dubai Cares committed US$500,000 to the Education Cannot Wait fund.

In addition, President Macky Sall reiterated Senegal’s commitment to allocating 25% of its domestic budget for education.

**Sustainably financing education: supporting domestic resource mobilisation**

GCE also co-convened a major event during the UNGA, which focused the spotlight on tax justice to achieve sustainable financing for education at the domestic level, as a balance to the donor focus at several of the other education-related events during UNGA.

Hosted by GCE, Education International, and the Global Alliance for Tax Justice, and in alliance with ActionAid, RESULTS, Light for the World, the Open Society Foundations (OSF), the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and Oxfam, ‘Sustainably Financing Education’ highlighted the fact that the vast majority of financing – 97% – must come from domestic budgets. Yet without radical action to increase overall domestic resources, a pledge to spend 20% of national budget on education, in line with commitments made in the Education 2030 Framework For Action, will not deliver the full agenda, because many domestic budgets are woefully insufficient to start with.

Speakers all underlined the criticality of an overall push to find new resources to finance education.

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UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova and GPE Chief Executive Alice Albright pointed out, civil society must continue to hold governments to account to ensure that the resources are not only found, but also allocated and spent in a way that delivers the full vision of equitable, inclusive, and free quality education and lifelong learning for all.

Education International (EI) stressed the importance of sustainable education funding. EI President, Susan Hopgood, in her opening address to participants from civil society and government pointed out that 10% of global GDP is hidden in off-shore havens and that quality public education requires predictable and sustainable long term investment.

"We see how essential our schools are to the public good. To our towns, cities, and countries, they are the source of our collective values. They are the engines of our democratic principles," said Hopgood. “Now is the time that we must double down, reinvest both our efforts and our financial resources into making public education the first and strongest option for our children and for our societies.”

Both Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor on the SDGs to the UN Secretary-General, and the Chair of the Global Alliance for Tax Justice, Dereje Alemayehu, specified that this financing already exists: it is money being denied to governments by tax avoidance, tax havens, and unfair tax rules.

Shermaine Barrett, ICAE Vice President for the Caribbean, reminded participants that SDG4 concerns more than education in schools; adult literacy is consistently overlooked in global education debates – an oversight which becomes all the more acute when it comes to financing.

All speakers made the case for concerted and unrelenting pressure to ensure quality education for all.

**Mainstreaming education in other UNGA side events**

ASPBAE staff, Helen Dabu and Thea Soriano, participated not only in key education financing events but also in other side events during the UNGA week.

Helen Dabu participated in a high level youth-led event on 18 September 2017 which focused on comprehensive sexuality education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender equality.

Helen emphasised the need to ensure access to and right to education by youth (from basic to higher education) which makes it important to ensure that Sustainable Development Goal 4 is achieved as all the other SDGs are discussed. She also highlighted the need to ensure that marginalised youth are provided a space in the SDG processes.

Thea Soriano participated in discussions on ‘Can we leapfrog? The role of innovation in reaching the Education Commission's goals' held on 20 September 2017. The side event presented the Brookings (CUE) global scan of innovations in education.
As ASPBAE prepares to continuously engage global platforms, it is important for the network not only to critically participate, but equally bring its own narratives into those policy spaces.

At a side event presenting the Brookings global scan of innovations in education, ASPBAE’s Thea Soriano raised the need finance non-formal and informal education so that education innovations can reach out to more marginalised communities.

To maintain pressure on governments, there is a need to ensure a working relationship between champion governments, education actors such as GPE, national civil society education coalitions, teachers’ unions, academics, individual education activists, and international NGOs.

The report states that 65% of innovations come from NGOs, many in the marginalised sector. ASPBAE raised the need to leapfrog education systems, financing non-formal and informal education along with formal education, so that education innovations can reach out to more marginalised communities.

What happens next?

After this strong demonstration of support for financing education, it is down to civil society to maintain the pressure on our governments to transform words into action. This must mean a working partnership between supportive and champion governments, education actors such as GPE, national civil society education coalitions, teachers’ unions, academics, individual education activists and international NGOs – with each using its strengths to make the most of the opportunities before us in the coming months.

Citizens of the countries represented at September’s UN events must follow up with their Heads of State and senior ministers – it must be made clear that taking the stage is not enough.

At the same time, the World Bank Annual Meetings are shortly to take place in Washington DC, and civil society must use the twin opportunities of the support shown during UNGA, and the Bank’s first-ever World Development Report exclusively focused on education, to ensure education financing is firmly on the agenda of finance ministers.

In advance of the replenishment conference itself, members of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) must all work to ensure that Heads of State make concrete and credible commitments to financing education, whether this be in donor pledges to GPE’s global fund, or pledges made by developing country partners to their citizens to increase the share of the domestic budget for education.

Any pledge must be made following thorough work behind the scenes, and include a commitment to find significant new financing for education. Realistically, ambitious and bold pledges made by developing countries can only be realistically met through domestic revenue mobilisation, which, GCE believes, must be supplemented by action on tax justice.

However, the GPE financing conference cannot be regarded in a vacuum. Rather, it must be seen as a critical starting point for governments to increase their commitments to financing for education within ongoing advocacy work on both donor and domestic finance.

A recent UIS fact sheet, which presents the first findings against the SDG4 target on learning in schools, found some shocking results. 133 million children of primary- and lower-secondary-age are either not in school, or are likely to drop out before completing school – and this figure stands alongside the 142 million children of upper-secondary age out of school.

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Civil society will need to keep the pressure on governments to increase financing to education, and on donor countries to include GPE as part of the commitment.

However, even these combined figures do not come close to the 484 million children in school and not receiving quality education. In total, that's three quarters of a billion children who are not receiving quality – or any – education. Another recent UIS fact sheet identified that 750 million adults (of which 102 million are aged 15-24) are unable to read or write.

Much of this comes down to money: to build education infrastructure for all levels and ages, to train and pay for teachers, and to provide learning materials and resources. It has been two full years into the SDG4 and Education 2030 agendas, and these figures alone must act as a call to action.

Civil society will maintain pressure on governments to increase financing to education overall, and on donor countries to include GPE as part of the overall commitment, but civil society must all work together to ensure that the loud noises made by governments during the UN General Assembly are transformed into louder actions. Civil society must be committed to seizing this moment to secure greater financial commitments, for every adult and child to access their right to education.

This write-up contains information appearing on the GCE website and Education International website. [BACK]

Global meeting on education privatisation highlights threats to the right to education
7-10 September 2017, Kathmandu, Nepal

By Ram Gaire, National Campaign for Education (NCE) Nepal

NCE Nepal and ASPBAE co-hosted the Global Meeting of the Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consortium (PEHRC) in Kathmandu. The Consortium is a global network of civil society organisations (CSOs) working together on issues around privatisation and the right to education. The Kathmandu meeting was the fourth in a series of global events organised by the Consortium. The previous meetings were held in September 2016 in Nairobi, October 2015 in London, and June 2014 in Geneva.

The events in Kathmandu took place amidst the rising privatisation and commercialisation of education around the world which prompted civil society to coordinate actions to counter the privatisation drive.

The meeting in Kathmandu culminated in a visit to communities to reflect on how privatisation impacts on the education of poor children and youth. Following the global meeting, ASPBAE organised a regional consultation of education coalitions in the Asia Pacific region held from 11-13 September 2017 (see article on regional consultation).
The meeting aimed to review progress of the various initiatives and the collective work undertaken, determine key strategies for joint action, and agree on mechanisms for effective coordination.

The global meeting recognised breakthroughs achieved in exposing the negative impact of privatisation on education access and quality, and in obtaining favourable resolutions from human rights bodies, governments, and international forums.

The participants discussed a range of issues and key global developments related to privatisation of education. They noted with particular concern the global growth of commercial school chains, such as Bridge International Academies, the expansion of public private partnerships (PPPs) in many countries with inadequate regulation, the outsourcing of the public education system in Liberia, and the continuing support provided by financial institutions and development agencies to private actors in education.

At the same time, the meeting also recognised the breakthroughs achieved in exposing the negative impact of privatisation on access and quality, and in obtaining favourable resolutions from Human Rights bodies, governments, and international forums.

The meeting served as a learning event with resource persons and experts sharing the outcome of their studies on privatisation trends globally and in specific countries. Participants from the different global regions, likewise, shared the challenges and impact of privatisation in their respective areas.

As mentioned, the global meeting included field visits to public schools, trust schools, and low-fee private schools to witness first-hand the impact of privatisation on the public education system in Nepal. The field visit provided a platform for participants to identify the challenges related to low government spending on education, the poor quality of public education, and the closure of public schools giving way for private actors to come in. They also were able to observe, through their interactions with students, teachers, and school management committees, how private schools are able to charge high fees which include admission fees, laboratory fees, monthly dues, and other fees which poor families can hardly afford.
In its concluding sessions, the participants defined strategies and roles, and agreed on common positions on the key issues identified. The global meeting adopted a two-year strategy to guide its research agenda and priority actions for 2018 and 2019.

For Nepali organisations and participants, the global meeting created a momentum for a stronger anti-education privatisation movement in the country, highlighting issues of segregation, discrimination, and disparity in society, and the threat to right to education.

ASPBAE convenes regional consultation on education financing, privatisation, and regulation
11-13 September 2017, Kathmandu, Nepal

ASPBAE, in cooperation with National Coalition for Education Nepal (NCE Nepal), organised a three-day regional consultation in Kathmandu following the Global Meeting of the Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consorium. The event, Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on Challenges in Education Financing, Privatisation and Regulation, was attended by 30 participants composed of national coalition representatives, ASPBAE staff, and resource persons from the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), and from partner organisations in the United States, United Kingdom, and Kenya.

The regional consultation was convened to share studies and country experiences on privatisation and regulation of private actors in education, and to discuss strategies to address the privatisation drive and ensure equity, inclusion, and the right to education for all, consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Education 2030. The consultation aimed to draw feedback and comments on the latest draft of civil society initiated document on the Human Rights Guiding Principles on non-state actors in education. It concluded with proposed strategies and actions at national and regional levels to address issues related to financing, privatisation, and regulation in the education sector.

A panel of resource persons, speaking in the session on Privatisation and Regulation Challenges, shared privatisation issues and trends in Latin America, the US, and Kenya. Laura Giannecchini, Institutional Development Officer of CLADE, noted that less resources are going to the public systems, including education, and that Latin America and the Caribbean is the most privatised region compared to all other global regions. She cited Chile, where large-scale privatisation of education, starting in 1980, resulted from structural reform when the state transformed from provider to mere regulator, financier, and evaluator of the education system. Another trend noted was "education privatisation through disaster responses" which occurred in countries such as Haiti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, where low free private schools have proliferated as alternatives to schools damaged by disasters.

Linda Odour-Noah, Project Lead of the East African Centre for Human Rights, particularly mentioned the Bridge Academies as the biggest commercial school in Kenya and in other African countries such as Uganda, Nigeria, and Liberia.
Former ASPBAE Executive Council Member, Takafumi Miyaki of the Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE), shared that while the Japanese government is for strengthening public education, it provides funding and promotes public private partnerships (PPP) in its aid programme for education. He noted that Japan has an important role in the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) as board member and president respectively. Millie Lecheiter of RESULTS Educational Fund (USA) highlighted the recommendations of her organisation for increased investments in public schooling over private schooling, and for the World Bank to highlight its position favoring free basic education and to align its investments towards fee-free basic education.

Delphine Dorsi, of the Right to Education Project, exposed the increasing funding of UK’s DFID in financing and promoting private schooling in such countries as Pakistan, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, India, and Myanmar. She also shared the positive impact of civil society campaigns in opposing the UK government’s policy of supporting fee-paying private schools in poor developing countries. For his part, Sylvain Aubry of the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) emphasised provisions of international human rights law that mandate the right to free compulsory primary education for all, and by implication, requiring states to refrain from funding private schools and to facilitate registration and regulation of private schools.

National education coalition participants from India, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines presented the preliminary findings of their studies on privatisation and regulation of the private sector involved in education. They shared similar stories – increasing privatisation of education that results in discrimination, inequity, and segregation, and declining public investment in education. Regulations and accountability measures covering private actors in education are generally weak in these countries, and where they exist, monitoring and enforcement are generally weak and neglected.

In conclusion, the regional participants agreed to pursue studies to come up with clear evidence and a stronger narrative on privatisation and commercialisation of education, and to develop alternatives and propose solutions to strengthen public education systems for inclusive and equitable quality education for all.
Replication and adaptation of the CLC model has been seen as a potential approach to ensure access to learning and education for different groups of population regardless of age.
ASPBAE EC Member, Ehsanur Rahman, recommended that issues arising from the Forum could guide ASPBAE in reaching out to CLCs and fostering diversity in the delivery of adult education programmes.

Participants pointed to the varying role of CLCs in addressing the diverse learning needs in communities – with the learning environment and context changing vastly amongst countries of Central Asia.

Policy and decision makers, experts, and practitioners from government and non-governmental sectors in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan participated in the Forum. Experts on adult education and Community Learning Centres (CLC) from other countries in the Asia Pacific and Europe, along with UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL), joined the Forum as resource persons.

The Forum was organised by DVV International, UNESCO Almaty (Cluster Office for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), with active contribution of UNESCO Bangkok and in partnership of ASPBAE. The Forum was sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

This write-up is based on a report by ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, Ehsanur Rahman.

Photo credits: DVV International, Central Asia. [BACK]

Building capacities of mentors for youth-led action research
July-September 2017, Philippines and Nepal

The youth-led action research initiative being implemented by ASPBAE with its members in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines has been showing significant success in empowering marginalised young women to voice out their demands in education and enabling them to conduct research that initiate actions in the community.

Inspired by these experiences, several organisations requested ASPBAE to conduct capacity building for advocates, trainers, and community mobilisers who want to conduct youth-led action research in their own communities. After the training, the participants will act as mentors who will develop the capacities, and guide and coach their respective youth constituency during the entire process of action research.

The UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL), ASPBAE’s partner in this initiative, noted the increasing number of organisations interested in youth-led action research. Indeed, the endeavor has a multiplier effect not only amongst ASPBAE’s members, but equally important at the community level as more and more youth are inspired to involve themselves in the research and actions at the community level. ASPBAE’s next step is to convince governments to use youth-led action research in their youth strategy.

Here are brief insights in to youth-led action research capacity building initiatives in the Philippines and Nepal.
Facilitating empowering action research in the Philippines
28-29 July 2017, Kidapawan City, Mindanao, Philippines

Workers and students at the University of Southern Mindanao (USM) are engaged with issues such as education in communities affected by armed conflict. Having heard about ASPBAE-UIL’s youth-led action research from the conference of the Literacy Coordinating Council, Professor Alimen Sencil (Board member of E-Net Philippines), wanted to explore a strategy for the youth, peace building, and community development. It is in this context that ASPBAE, together with E-Net Philippines, conducted a training for 19 participants at the USM campus.

The training demonstrated, through learning exercises, the framework, methods, and tools in doing action research. The young participants, who work closely with farmers, recommended that adults also engage in their own action research, customizing the tools appropriate and relevant for the research subject.

During the training, several doctorate students who are also teachers in the Department of Education, volunteered to conduct action research in their respective schools. With the new knowledge and skills, they expressed that they were more confident to facilitate a truly empowering action research with their students and co-faculty members. The USM community extension plans to embed action research in its work with the community.

Youth-led action research to enhance coalition advocacies in Nepal
2-4 September 2017, Kathmandu, Nepal

NCE Nepal requires competent youth leaders able to display optimism, enthusiasm, and confidence in research for advocacy. The coalition believes that with the transition of Nepal into a federal system, it needs to empower the youth and people in the community to investigate issues related to education, articulate their recommendations at the federal level, and inform national education policies.

With this in mind, ASPBAE and NCE-Nepal designed a training for youth from organisations from all over the country. The participants (mainly advocates, trainers, and NGO community mobilisers) explored how youth-led action research can be used for their own work and in the overall advocacy of NCE-Nepal.

NCE-Nepal's aim of the workshop was to have -

- A trained youth team for the youth-oriented action research.
- A research framework and action plan developed by the participants to implement the research in their communities.
- Enhanced institutional capacities for conducting the action research so as to strengthen and enrich the organisations and the communities the participants belong to.

NCE-Nepal formed teams of mentors for the youth action research in the districts of Dhading, Chitwon, and Kathmandu to work with marginalized youth from these
An important element of the action research is the collective investigation of problems with active participation and leadership of the youth in the entire process.

Facilitated by ASPBAE’s Cecilia Soriano and NCE Nepal’s Shubhendra Man Shrestha, the workshop contributed to developing a research framework along with research tools, including specific parameters and indicators for the action research.

The youth action research training in Nepal aimed to enable young people to develop a better understanding of various problems faced by youth in their communities.

At the workshop, the young participants identified common issues such as youth migration, dropout rates and irregularity in schools, unskilled human resources, geographical difficulties in accessing education and other services, low priority given to education by parents and families, gender biases at home and schools, child marriage, lack of toilets, and lack of information.

Facilitated by ASPBAE’s Cecilia Soriano and NCE Nepal’s Shubhendra Man Shrestha, the workshop contributed to developing a research framework along with research tools, including specific parameters and indicators for the action research. The participants developed an action plan along with a well-defined time frame, and identified their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the plan. [BACK]

Formulating an advocacy strategy for youth and adult literacy
3rd meeting of the Global Alliance for Literacy
7 September 2017, Paris, France

The Core Group of the GAL met to propose plans and actions including for youth and adult literacy.
The third meeting of the Core Group brought together 49 members representing UNESCO Member States, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector.

Panel discussions were organised around shared examples of proposed activities under the GAL Work Plan 2017–2018 and the importance of a strengthened national capacity for literacy policy formulation and implementation was highlighted. 

Photo credit: UNESCO

The meeting was held aiming at the following outcomes -

- A concept note for a GAL knowledge-sharing platform and implementation modalities
- An advocacy strategy for youth and adult literacy at global, regional and national levels
- A GAL policy brief and recommendations on requirements and key steps to ensure the integration of Target 4.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals – ‘By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy’ – into education sector policies and plans from a sector-wide perspective
- A plan for promoting digital resources for youth and adult literacy and numeracy, including open educational resources (OERs)
- GAL recommendations on developing an inter-sectoral approach to youth and adult literacy

Panel discussions were organised around shared examples of proposed activities under the GAL Work Plan 2017–2018; they included collection, mapping and dissemination of literacy/numeracy initiatives undertaken by GAL stakeholders via a knowledge-sharing website platform and supported by quality selection criteria, and strengthening advocacy through regional and national networks with an inter-sectoral approach to literacy. In this context, GAL should promote literacy as vital to SDG 4 as well as to the other Sustainable Development Goals and as part of lifelong learning. The importance of a strengthened national capacity for literacy policy formulation and implementation was also noted. Achieving enhanced knowledge creation and knowledge sharing was underscored with attention given to the promotion and creation of digital resources for youth and adult literacy and numeracy, including Open Educational Resources (OER).
Participants suggested three possible components to a GAL advocacy strategy - identifying opportunities for advocacy efforts; country-level advocacy action; and use of digital resources to create demand for literacy solutions.

For example, Jeannette Sanchez, Manager of the Skills Knowledge Sharing Platform at the International Labour Organization (ILO), presented ILO’s initiative supporting GAL’s knowledge-sharing and web-platform objectives. Her presentation, ‘The global skills for employment knowledge sharing platform: Bridging education and training to the world of work’, included background information on the development of ILO’s knowledge-sharing platform (KSP) since 2010 and its important connection to the Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG-TVET).

HRH Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, UNESCO Special Envoy on Literacy for Development, Honorary Member of the GAL Core Group and Special Advisor to the GAL Bureau, presented ways to advance GAL’s literacy advocacy initiatives in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Lisa Krolak, Head of Library at UIL, briefly addressed how literacy is at the core of any library activity, whether they are small mobile libraries serving marginalised groups or large institutions such as national libraries. Ms. Krolak’s presentation introduced Mostafa El Feki, Director of the Library of Alexandria, Egypt, who presented ‘Tools and mechanisms for sharing literacy resources: The role of libraries’ who stressed that Bibliotheca Alexandrina’s (BA) aim to be centres for excellence in the production and dissemination of knowledge and a place of dialogue, learning and understanding between cultures and peoples.

Jordan Naidoo, Director of the UNESCO Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, gave a presentation titled ‘SDG 4-Education 2030 Target 4.6 – Requirements and actions’, which emphasised the advancements that have taken place at regional and national levels in relation to the integration of SDG 4.6 in educational policy and planning.

GAL Core Group Members were invited to sign up to participate in five groups to discuss and propose concrete outputs related to GAL’s four strategic lines of action. Each group had a facilitator and a rapporteur. These discussions resulted in recommendations and actions on how to advance the four GAL Work Plan 2017–2018 strategic lines of action.

Participants stressed that GAL should be promoting literacy as vital to SDG4 as well as to the other Sustainable Development Goals and as part of lifelong learning.

Participants proposed the development of a policy brief on integrating SDG 4.6 into national education sector-wide plans and policies.

Recommendations and actions on how to develop or strengthen global, regional, and national advocacy strategies for youth and adult literacy

Participants suggested three possible components to a GAL advocacy strategy. One component would involve identifying opportunities for advocacy efforts where there is multilateral relevance (as well as regional nuances in process and mechanism) and where literacy does not enjoy much prominence. In this regard, it is important to identify high-level meetings where SDG 4.6 can be underscored in the discussions, e.g., at the United Nations’ High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee; the CONFINTEA VI Mid-term Review and the World Education Forum.

Another component could be country-level advocacy action: identifying initially five countries where successes in policy reform favouring adult literacy may achieve a regional ‘ripple effect’.
A third component could involve the use of digital resources to create demand for literacy solutions, and for supporting platforms for shared discussion, ‘arguments’ and sharing evidence. Engaging youth movements in advocacy efforts was also recommended.

Recommendations and actions on how to ensure that SDG 4.6 is an integral part of education sector plans and policies

Participants proposed the development of a policy brief on integrating SDG 4.6 into national education sector-wide plans and policies. The policy brief could address the following topics: definition and conceptual understanding of literacy (i.e., literacy as a continuum, literacy within a lifelong learning perspective, functional literacy, multiple literacies); literacy and cross-sectoral linkages (i.e., health, TVET, agriculture, citizenship, environment); contextualisation of literacy, including issues of cultural and linguistic diversity; and implementation strategies, including literacy in the workplace and the importance of collaboration and partnerships. The policy brief could also examine capacity building needs of policy-makers; aspects of measurement and monitoring, development of benchmarks; planning, including projections; and financial implications and funding.

Recommendations and actions on how to mobilise and promote digital resources for youth and adult literacy and numeracy, including Open Educational Resources (OER)

Participants discussed a number of recommendations and next steps for actions pertaining to the creation, dissemination, and use of digital resources (e.g., via a repository) with focus given to teachers, including teacher-training and teaching practices; content creation; and quality assurance. This calls for identifying initiatives that support the creation of core teacher-training materials for flexible and digital-supported youth and adult literacy learning, and which are open content (OER). The group underscored how teachers should be actively engaged in content creation, review and validation of such resources.

Recommendations and actions on how to develop inter-sectoral approaches to youth and adult literacy

Participants discussed and proposed recommendations for next steps, including the development of a set of questions that will contribute to identifying connections across sectors and stakeholders. These questions could determine whether stakeholders have a similar conception of literacy and establish the main actors operating in various literacy fields. These questions may also help identify how much spending is done on literacy, the costs of not engaging in literacy (e.g., the effect on health and well-being), and the benefits of promoting literacy programmes.

ASPBAE Secretary General, Maria Khan, participated in the meeting as a representative of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and ASPBAE. She serves as one of the civil society Vice Chairs in the Bureau of GAL.

This write-up contains excerpts from the GAL meeting report.
International Literacy Day: Literacy in a digital world  
8 September 2017, Paris, France

International Literacy Day is celebrated worldwide, and brings together governments, multi and bilateral organisations, NGOs, private sectors, communities, teachers, learners, and experts in the field.

This year, the international global conference on the occasion of International Literacy Day was titled, 'Literacy in a Digital World'. The global celebration took place at UNESCO Headquarters. The highlight of the event was the awarding of the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes.

The objectives of the International Conference were to - deepen understandings of what kind of literacy skills people need to navigate in a digital world and what this means for literacy teaching and learning; share and analyse promising practices with regard to policies, programmes, monitoring and evaluation as well as financing that advance literacy in a digital world; explore how digital technologies can support progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially Target 4.6 on youth and adult literacy.

President of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), Camilla Croso, participated in the conference where she stressed that literacy must remain centre stage of the digital world and drive policy making. She further reiterated the importance of recognising adults as right bearers to education and warned against the current political trend of de-prioritising adult education in national policies. She also highlighted the importance of recognising adult literacy and education within its own identity and ensuring institutional systems that value adult learners, recognise their context, and contribute towards overcoming stigma that define them as “have nots” instead of “haves”. Stressing that education policies should focus on forming educators and learners instead of on technology, Camilla said, “The aim should be to promote increased dialogue, participation and connectivity with diversity. The intention must be to address concrete educational issues – such as the democratisation of knowledge, improved learning, the promotion of critical thinking and of solidarity, and not surrender to technological fetishes”. In conclusion, she asserted that new technologies and digital cultures should never be seen as a replacement of teachers, human interaction, or of face-to-face teaching and learning. “There is widespread consensus that autonomous, creative, empowered, and valued teachers are at the heart of quality education for all. For as great as they can be, technologies cannot replace the dynamics of dialogue, debate, confrontation of ideas and opinions”, said Camilla.

Warning against the dangers of overestimating the power of digital technology, Secretary General of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Katarina Popovic, who also participated in the global conference, stressed that digital technology should not be seen as a magical solution, especially in a world where the most pressing concerns remain unaddressed.
importance of preparing educators and teachers for new technologies while at the same time continuing the debate and search for better definitions, concepts, and understanding of literacy.

UNESCO awarded its annual Confucius Prize for Literacy to The Citizens Foundation, a Pakistani literacy programme with an online platform for women and out-of-school girls. In 2016, the programme enrolled 14,020 girls and women, of whom nearly 80% completed the curricula. Local communities run nearly all of the Foundation’s 1,440 school units in the poorest slums and villages in the country. The other winners this year were from Canada, Colombia, Jordan, and South Africa.

International Literacy Day is a major annual event for literacy advocacy held on the 8 September since 1946. UNESCO organizes a global event with an International Literacy Prizes award ceremony, and celebrations are held around the world by Field Offices, Institutes, NGOs, teachers, learners and partners.

Getting started with the SDGs in universities
A guide for universities, higher education institutions, and the academic sector

The guide from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Australia/Pacific highlights the important role universities in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific have in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and provides practical guidance on how they can accelerate their contributions.

The key contributions universities can make include:
- Providing the knowledge, innovations, and solutions to underpin SDG implementation
- Creating current and future SDG implementers
- Ensuring the SDGs are embodied within universities’ own extensive operations
- Providing cross-sectoral leadership in local, national, and global implementation
- Furthermore, engaging with the SDGs can greatly benefit universities by helping them to demonstrate university impact, capture demand for SDG-related education, build new partnerships, access new funding streams, and define a university that is responsible and globally aware.

Many universities are actively looking to play a greater part in addressing the SDGs. These include the nine universities in the South Pacific that have committed at their highest levels to address the SDGs by signing the University Commitment to the SDGs. However, until now there have been few resources on SDG implementation that provided practical guidance to address the unique needs and opportunities of universities.

The guide fills this gap by providing information on:
- The case for university engagement with the SDGs; How universities can contribute to the SDGs through

GCE’s Camilla Croso urged that literacy must remain centre stage of the digital world and drive policymaking. She said adults must be recognised as right bearers to education and warned against de-prioritising adult education in policies.
Some of the contribution universities can make to the SDGs are provide knowledge, innovation, and solutions to underpin SDG implementation and creating SDG implementers.

teaching, research, operations and external leadership: A step-by-step guide to developing a cross-university framework for SDG implementation; Practical guidance and tools to assist the process, including SDG mapping, reporting, stakeholder engagement, and managing interlinkages between the SDGs; Case studies and examples to inspire action.

This write-up is a reproduction of an article on the Analysis and Policy Observatory website. [BACK]

Recognising the role of universities in achieving the SDGs

International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals: Actors and Implementation
18-19 September 2017, Barcelona, Spain

Balancing the global with the local, universities play a key role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Universities are called to become a trigger of change, standing at the centre of the debate and moving actors towards action. Only through the effective collaboration between governments and public agencies, universities and research centres, enterprises and NGOs, the implementation of the SDGs will be a reality.

The International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals: Actors and Implementation, aims to be a leading international meeting for the analysis and debate between all national and international actors involved with the SDGs, especially universities, governments, cities, and public agencies. It offers a space to work as a permanent observatory, which will be held every 2 years for reflecting upon the implementation and achievement of the SDGs. With a pragmatic and multidisciplinary approach, the International Conference gathers experts and high level practitioners from around the world and representing different stakeholders.

The international conference is one of the activities organised by the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi) as part of the International Summer School on Higher Education and Research Leadership activities. It aims to provide intellectual guidance and scientific evidences to the challenges of the SDGs with a humanist approach, critical thinking, and promoting research and education to build a fair global community and more sustainable societies.

This year conference gathered experts and high level practitioners from around the world to exchange knowledge, ideas, experiences, and expectations around the challenges involved with the SDGs. Through a combination of keynote presentations by renowned experts, round tables and parallel sessions, the conference aimed to open a debate among the different stakeholders on solutions for sustainable development to transform society at the local and global level.

Rajesh Tandon (R), UNESCO Co-Chair, and President of Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), outlined the importance of re-orienting the higher education mission in ways that facilitate the achievement of the SDGs, including revising the existing curriculum, and employing innovative, pedagogical tools.

Rajesh Tandon, UNESCO Co-Chair, and President of Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and UNESCO Co-Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, attended the event and spoke on ‘Higher Education & SDGs: Making the Commitment’. Mr. Tandon reflected on the role of higher education vis-à-vis the SDGs in the broad context of its social responsibilities. He outlined the importance of re-orienting the higher education
This year’s international conference aimed to open a debate among different stakeholders on solutions for sustainable development to transform society at the local and global level.

Mission in ways that facilitate the achievement of the SDGs. He further stated that, “teaching should be viewed as catalyzing the learning process; research should be approached as a process of knowledge generation and mobilization; and service should be a tool for mutual empowerment”. This involved revising the existing curriculum, employing innovative, pedagogical tools, framing locally usable research, building knowledge in partnership, and promoting service-learning. Click here to access the full paper by Mr. Tandon titled, ‘Making the Commitment: Contribution of Higher Education to SDGs’.

This write-up is based on information disseminated by PRIA and on information available on the GUNi website.

ASPBAE welcomes Nasiba Mirpochoeva to its Executive Council
September 2017

In the current governance structure of ASPBAE, Central Asia is covered under ASPBAE’s Sub-region 1, or South and Central Asia. On the strong advice of the representatives in the Executive Council from SR1 - both of whom are from South Asia - the Executive Council decided to co-opt a member from Central Asia to ensure that the EC’s deliberations are better informed by the perspectives and voice of ASPBAE members in this area.

The ASPBAE Executive Council thus launched an open process of nominations with members in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and deliberating on what was received, unanimously agreed to appoint Nasiba Mirpochoeva, a Board member of the Adult Education Association for Tajikistan (AEAT) and a core group member of the emerging national coalition in the country, the Alliance of CSOs for Education in Tajikistan, as a co-opted member of the Executive Council from Central Asia.

Prior to her appointment as an ASPBAE EC member, Nasiba was Project Coordinator at NGO ASTI (Association of Scientific & Technical Intelligentsia) in Tajikistan. She has been a member of the Association of Adult Education of Tajikistan (AEAT) since 2016 and currently serves in its Board. Both ASTI and AEAT are ASPBAE member organisations. Nasiba is certified from the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Programme (FLTA) from Indiana University, Bloomington, USA. She has been closely associated further with ASPBAE with her participation in ASPBAE’s initiatives such as the Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC) in 2010 and the NeXT Regional Training on Adult Education Advocacy that took place in 2011. She co-facilitated an ASPBAE-led training in Central Asia on Adult Education Advocacy in Kyrgyzstan in 2012.

We are confident that given Nasiba’s strong ties with ASPBAE, having been involved through the years in many ASPBAE undertakings, and with her extensive experience in civil society, youth, and adult education and development work in Tajikistan and in the wider Central Asia, her insights and analysis will richly inform ASPBAE’s EC deliberations and its leadership role.
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.

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