

# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

July/August 2019

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**Vietnam education coalition, VAEFA, co-organises education sector planning conference and capacity building workshop**

[Full article](#)



**Committing to gender responsive advocacy and budgeting with a human rights approach in Nepal**

[Full article](#)



**Promoting citizenship engagement in government budgeting processes in Sri Lanka**

[Full article](#)



**Inaugural training of Community Learning Centre managers held in Cambodia**

[Full article](#)



**A world beyond bars: How prison libraries contribute to lifelong learning**

UNESCO publication

[Full article](#)



**UNESCO ICT in Education Prize: call for nominations open to projects leveraging AI.**

**Deadline: 31 October 2019**

[Full article](#)

## ASPBAE calls for equity and attention to the full SDG 4 agenda at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019

This is a big year for the education constituency as SDG 4, among several other goals, was reviewed at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019. ASPBAE, in collaboration with education coalitions in the region, presented 16 Spotlight Reports from the Asia Pacific.

[Read more](#)

## ASPBAE brings together members and partners in regional consultation of education advocates

The Asia Pacific Regional Consultation of Education Advocates was hosted by ASPBAE in collaboration with the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA) in Da Nang, Vietnam. The consultation provided ASPBAE members and education coalitions an opportunity to engage in diverse and distinct conversations around education. outcomes

[Read more](#)

## ASPBAE participates in UNESCO meetings on SDG 4 indicator system

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), in partnership with the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Education and Science, organised the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4-Education 2030 (TCG6). The meeting brought together key stakeholders in the field of education statistics to continue the development and implementation of the SDG 4 Monitoring Framework. - [Read more](#)

## Informing the Strategic Plan of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has officially launched its strategy development process with the aim of a final Strategic Plan and Funding Framework approved by the GPE Board in June 2020. Views were invited from GPE's stakeholders globally, including from ASPBAE, through a survey on GPE's role and approach during the next strategic period. - [Read more](#)

## Education News and Views

**Bridging education systems for migrant children in Thailand and Myanmar**

Migrant children are among the most vulnerable members of communities, whose futures depend on the educational opportunities available in their countries. Thailand, as a major migrant destination country in Southeast Asia, stands out for its commitment to all students in the country. - [Read more](#)



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### Member of the Month

#### **Farmer's Life Improvement and Future Light Youth Organization (FLIFLY), Cambodia**

Farmer's Life Improvement and Future Light Youth Organization (FLIFLY), founded in 2005 by farmers' children in Cambodia, facilitates and supports credit unions, sustainable agricultural communities, and vocational training centres for the socio-economic development of farmers in Cambodia. FLIFLY works in partnership with universities, companies, and international and local NGOs. Some of their trainings include beekeeping training, financial education, making solar lanterns, and creating bio-gas and drip irrigation systems.

### Photo of the Month



International Youth Day 2019 (12 August) examined how governments, young people, and youth organisations are transforming education and these are contributing to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### 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 Susmita Choudhury, Capacity Support and Advocacy Adviser.

#### **Susmita Choudhury**

Capacity Support and Advocacy Adviser





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## EDUCATION NEWS AND VIEWS

This section of the Bulletin is dedicated to highlighting news and events from the Asia Pacific and from around the world focusing on education and lifelong learning. For this edition, we highlight collaboration and action plans to support transitions and access to quality, accredited education for migrant children in Myanmar and Thailand.

### **Bridging education systems for migrant children in Thailand and Myanmar**

*20 August 2019*



Migrant children are among the most vulnerable members of our communities, whose futures invariably depend on the educational opportunities available in their host countries. Thailand, as a major migrant destination country in South East Asia, stands out for its commitment to all students in the country, beginning with the landmark 2005 Cabinet Resolution stating that free education would be available for all children regardless of nationality. The enormity of the challenge, however, means there is much more work to be done.

Based on the recognition that quality education for migrant children depends on cooperation, the 1<sup>st</sup> Joint High-Level Education Working Group Meeting on Migrant Children and Education held in Bangkok on 6-8 August 2019 built on previous multilateral efforts. The meeting sought to establish an official Joint High-Level Working Group and initiate dialogue between the Ministries of Education in Myanmar and Thailand on potential collaboration and action plans to support transitions and access to quality, accredited education for migrant children in both Myanmar and Thailand.

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*"The Thai government will continue to support all children in Thailand including those who are non-Thais to go to school," said Duriya Amatavivat, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education Thailand. "This meeting is an important step for both governments to take collective action to promote access to education and enhance quality of life for all children. This platform will strongly contribute to Thailand's commitments towards SDG4 and other SDGs."*

With representatives from UNESCO Bangkok, UNESCO Yangon, UNICEF Thailand, UNICEF Myanmar, UNICEF EAPRO, IOM Thailand, Save the Children Thailand and Migrant Education Integration Initiative (MEII), the meeting built upon the two consultative meetings, *"The 1<sup>st</sup> Consultation Meeting between Thailand and Myanmar" in November 2014* and *"The 2nd Consultation Meeting on Education for Myanmar and Thailand Children" on 2-3 December 2015*, both of which were held in Bangkok.

*"Today, migrant children still constitute the largest group of children out of school in Thailand, with some estimates indicating that half of all migrant children are not receiving any form of education," said Dana Graber Ladek, Chief of Mission of IOM Thailand, on behalf of the UN Country Team at the opening session. "Numbering at about 200,000, this figure is of significant concern. On the part of the United Nations, we will continue to provide both countries technical support as and when needed."*

The bilateral meeting between the two governments on 6 August was held to report on the current situation and challenges in accessing education for migrant children, including those who study in Thailand and return to Myanmar. Representatives from the Embassy of Myanmar in Thailand, the Ministry of Interior and Office of the National Security Council, Thailand, and the European Union also attended the meeting.



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To address the needs of education for migrant children, the two governments agreed to cooperate on three key priority areas: (1) reduce language barriers for migrant children and provide assistance to teachers in school, (2) support educational transitions in Myanmar and Thailand, and (3) strengthen data management mechanisms.

On 7 August, the two Governments and other stakeholders met to exchange information and discuss potential collaboration with other stakeholders whose work is related to migrant education. A total of 65 participants including UN agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations and universities participated.

*“There is still a big gap in education for out-of-school children and migrant children,”* said Cynan Houghton, Country Director of Save the Children Thailand. *“We need to promote access and quality education for migrant children through the support of all partners towards accredited education. There are needs to improve data monitoring system, consider participation of migrant parents in the process and support on migration related policies.”*

During the discussion, key issues related to on-the-ground experiences at migrant learning centres (MLCs) in Thailand were raised, such as support for teachers, including recognition of their status and capacity development, regularizing MLCs for sustainability, establishing migrant education coordination centres in Thailand in addition to Tak province, support teaching and learning materials, safe migration, and equivalency and transitions for children returning to Myanmar.

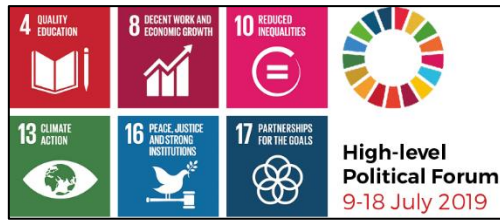
Click [here](#) to access presentations and photos from the meeting.

*This write-up is based on information appearing on the [UNESCO website](#). [BACK]*

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## ASPBAE calls for equity and attention to the full SDG 4 agenda at the High-level Political Forum 2019

9-18 July 2019, New York, USA

2019 is a big year for the education constituency worldwide as SDG 4 (the education goal in the Sustainable Development Goals, [SDGs](#)) was reviewed at the [High-level Political Forum \(HLPF\) 2019](#), amongst several other goals.



For the first time, SDG 4 was reviewed at the HLPF 2019, amongst several other goals.

The global event, which is organised annually to discuss the follow-up and review of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and included a 3-day ministerial meeting where Voluntary National Reviews ([VNRs](#)) were conducted. The HLPF 2019 was held under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](#)) and was themed on 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'.

Apart from [SDG 4](#) on quality education, [SDG 8](#) (decent work and economic growth), [SDG 10](#) (reduced inequalities), [SDG 13](#) (climate action) and [SDG 16](#) (peace, justice and strong institutions), were reviewed, in addition to [SDG 17](#) (partnerships for the Goals) which is reviewed each year. Click for more information on the [Thematic SDG Reviews](#).

For the Asia Pacific, ASPBAE presented 16 civil society Spotlight Reports of its member organisations on SDG 4. In 2019, 47 countries volunteered to present their VNRs to the HLPF 2019. Of these, 15 were from the Asia Pacific with Indonesia and the Philippines conducting VNRs for the second time.

UN Member States agreed that the HLPF will carry out regular voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda which will include developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders. The reviews are state-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants, and provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of [major groups and other relevant stakeholders](#).

The reporting to the HLPF is a practice that has gained traction, as dozens of governments are volunteering each year to participate and contribute their VNRs. VNRs are the reporting procedure and review process that stakeholders use to ensure governments create policies and practices that leave no one behind. In 2019, 47 countries (7 for the second time) volunteered to present their VNRs to the High-level Political Forum. Of these, 15 were from the Asia Pacific with [Indonesia](#) and the [Philippines](#) conducting VNRs for the second time.



The VNRs are state-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants, and provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, civil society coalitions at national and international levels prepared their own shadow or Spotlight Reports to follow-up on their governments efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. These Spotlight Reports provide the most comprehensive independent assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. For the Asia Pacific, [ASPBAE](#) presented [16 civil society Spotlight Reports](#) of its member organisations on SDG 4.

### Official session on the HLPF 2019 review of SDG4

The official session on the HLPF 2019 review of SDG 4 was held on 9 July 2019. This marked the first assessment of the education goal since its adoption in 2015. Speakers characterised the problem as a "global learning crisis."



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The official session on the HLPF 2019 review of SDG 4 marked the first assessment of the education goal since its adoption in 2015.

During the three-hour review session, some 25 countries took the floor to highlight the centrality of education for achieving the 2030 Agenda and outlined policy reforms adopted to tackle inequalities, improve teaching and learning, and support teachers. Major stakeholder groups representing youth, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, LGBT, and the science and technology community also took the floor urging action to make education inclusive, relevant, and respectful of diversity.

Henrietta Fore, the session moderator, identified three needs for a learning revolution, namely – (1) the need for more investment, but also more equitable investments; (2) the need to innovate to reach the unreachable that increases access to quality learning; and (3) the need to measure our progress at all levels, including education in emergencies.



At the SDG 4 review session, 25 countries took the floor to highlight the centrality of education for achieving the 2030 Agenda and outlined policy reforms adopted to tackle inequalities, improve teaching and learning, and support teachers.

Stefania Giannini from [UNESCO](#) identified a need for a paradigm shift in education through transformation and innovation in order to make education future ready. Furthermore, she added that education needs to be more inclusive and to be able to give students the knowledge and capacity to become critical thinkers, with respect. Finally, she argued for the need for more teachers who are better equipped. She concluded by saying that “*business as usual is the worst thing we can do.*”

Professor Kaz Yoshida, co-chair of the [SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee](#), pointed out that effective learning must encompass the socio-emotional and behavioural dimensions, in addition to the cognitive. He noted the importance of national assessment systems, more efficient and effective spending, and support to teachers.

Representing more than 32 million teachers and education support personnel, Susan Hopgood from [Education International](#) (EI) identified five obstacles to the achievement of SDG 4. First, that teaching remains an unattractive profession – low salaries, lack for personal development, high workload, bad working conditions, to name a few issues. Second, in some countries, the rights of educators are being repressed – including freedom of expression. Third, she argued that public education remains unfunded, threatening the goal for free primary education. Fourth, that an inequitable education system continues to persist, especially for marginalised groups like indigenous communities. And fifth, that progress is too slow. Education systems are not catching up with the rapidly changing context, such as climate change. She called for SDG4 acceleration, and working with the educators and unions to achieve the world we want.



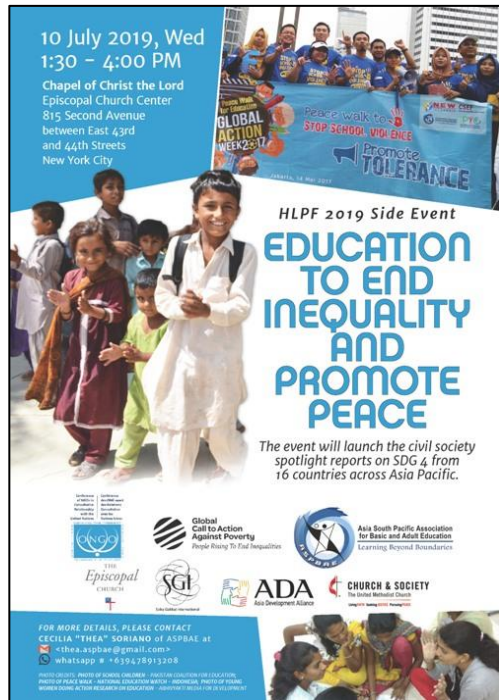
Concern over privatisation was echoed by Madeleine Zuniga, GCE Vice President and representative of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, who insisted that education has to be transformative to have justice and achieve transformation towards the world we want.

Concern over privatisation was echoed by Madeleine Zuniga, Vice President of the [Global Campaign for Education](#) and representative of the [Major Groups and Other Stakeholders](#) (MGOS), who insisted that education has to be transformative to have justice and achieve transformation towards the world we want. She said the persistence of inequalities is deeply rooted in discrimination and marginalisation which are the cause of conflicts and crisis all over the world. Transformative education is needed to transform lives to transform the world, the ultimate goal of Education 2030. Any kind of revolution in education will be unsuccessful without well prepared teachers, trained within the framework of

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human rights, aware about the indivisibility of all rights, with education as the great catalyst to achieve all SDGs. She stressed that increasing investment in public education is a must and that it is important to push back on the intervention of private enterprises that have found in education a great profitable business, undermining not only to the right to free education, but also deepening inequalities and damaging social cohesion in societies.

Concluding the session, UNESCO's Stefania Giannini called for making *"inclusion the redline of every policy in education"* and emphasised some essential principles to guide action, from empowering girls and women, mobilising finances, and building alliances. *"This is not a 'to do' list but a 'to be' list – to be stronger and wider together, through stronger political will, stronger commitment, and stronger leadership to translate principles into action."*

The session was informed by projections produced by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report ([Meeting Commitments: Are countries on track to achieve SDG4?](#)) and a complementary publication by the Global Education Monitoring Report ([Beyond Commitments: How countries implement SDG4](#)).

## HLPF 2019 side-events

Inequality and challenges to peace in the Asia Pacific region and the transformative role of education in the empowerment of people were at the centre of the discussions during the ***'Education to End Inequality and Promote Peace'*** side-event held on 10 July 2019. The event was co-organised by ASPBAE along with the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO), Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), Soka Gakka International, Asia Alliance for Development (ADA), General Board of Church and Society (The United Methodist Church), and the Episcopal Church Centre.

The side-event aimed to inspire participants to lobby for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. It also envisaged that SDG 4 will be broadened into one that is transformative, challenging inequality, and promoting peace. Because SDG 4 was reviewed during HLPF 2019 for the first time ever since the 2030 Agenda was adopted, the year 2019 is considered a momentous one for the education constituency worldwide, especially for ASPBAE that, *"believes that civil society must play an active role in the SDG process since we all have a stake in ensuring that all SDG 4 targets are realised by 2030,"* said ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano in her remarks at the side event.

The side-event was divided into three activities – a panel discussion with resource persons, launch of civil society Spotlight Reports, and a group discussion on the role of education for peace building. Jordan Naidoo of UNESCO spoke at the event. He highlighted the role of SDG4 towards equality and peace and presented data and information on the issue.

The programme began with an opening address by First Vice President of the [Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN](#) (CoNGO), Cyril Ritchie, on the forum's contribution to the HLPF 2019, followed by a plenary

ASPBAE co-organised an event, called ***'Education to End Inequality and Promote Peace'***, to inspire participants to lobby for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, Meenu Vadera, and Cecilia (Thea) Soriano actively participated in the ASPBAE side-event.



The ASPBAE side-event envisaged that SDG 4 will be broadened into one that is transformative, challenging inequality, and promoting peace.





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ASPBAE President Nani Zulminarni (L), and ASPBAE EC Member, Meenu Vadera (R), launched a Regional Report and Civil Society Spotlight Reports on SDG4 prepared by ASPBAE and national education coalitions in 16 countries in the Asia Pacific.

The Spotlight Reports highlighted the power of education as a critical agent for social change that contributes towards transforming our world to one that is just, inclusive, peaceful, and resilient.

session on inequality and education that was chaired by ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni. It featured talks by Beckie Malay of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) on the 'Faces of Inequality', Jordan Naidoo of UNESCO on 'SDG4 towards Equality and Peace', and ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano on 'Civil Society Monitoring of Inequalities in Education'.

The side-event also offered a platform for Nani and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, Meenu Vadera, to launch a [Regional Report](#) and [Civil Society Spotlight Reports](#) on SDG4 prepared by ASPBAE and national education coalitions in 16 countries in the Asia Pacific. The reports represented ASPBAE's contribution in presenting civil society analysis and perspectives in SDG/SDG4 progress, placing particular focus on the concerns and aspirations of the most marginalised and excluded groups.

Nani declared these spotlight reports as "borne out of a one-year process of consultations with grassroots communities, education sector stakeholders, marginalised youth, and NGOs." In closing, she acknowledged the diligent work done by ASPBAE's members and coalitions, noting the importance of the key messages in the reports that highlight education's "pivotal role in achieving all the SDGs towards transforming our world to one that is peaceful, just and resilient, and where prosperity is shared and enjoyed by all."

The Spotlight Reports highlighted the power of education as a critical agent for social change that contributes towards transforming our world to one that is just, inclusive, peaceful, and resilient. The reports also noted that inequity in education remains a serious challenge and has actually widened in a significant number of countries. Many governments tend to overlook the magnitude of inequity and gloss over the impact of such disadvantages on access and quality of learning.

Click to read Spotlight Reports from – [Australia](#), [Bangladesh](#), [Cambodia](#), [India](#), [Indonesia](#), [Japan](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Mongolia](#), [Nepal](#), [Pakistan](#), [Papua New Guinea](#), [Philippines](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Timor-Leste](#), [Vanuatu](#), [Vietnam](#).

[DVV International](#) and ASPBAE co-organised a panel discussion on 9 July 2019 along with the International Council for Adult Education ([ICAE](#)) and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning ([UIL](#)), with support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development ([BMZ](#)). The panel discussion, entitled, '[The Invisible Friend - Adult Education and Sustainable Development Goals](#)', highlighted the relatively invisible and underestimated potential of non-formal [youth and adult education](#) for sustainable development.

Christoph Jost, Director of DVV International, explained the municipal anchoring of adult education in Germany in the form of adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*), as well as the worldwide fostering of adult education structures by DVV International and BMZ.

Peace Regis Mutuuzo, Ugandan Secretary of State for Gender, Labour and Social Development, and Philany Phissamay, Deputy Director General for Non-formal Education in Lao PDR, reported on experiences from practice and challenges in implementing adult education programmes in their countries.



The Spotlight Reports represented ASPBAE's contribution in presenting CSO analysis and perspectives in SDG/SDG4 progress, placing particular focus on the concerns and aspirations of the most marginalised and excluded groups.

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ASPBAE's Thea Soriano participating in a panel discussion organised by DVVI, ASPBAE, and other partners highlighting the relatively invisible and underestimated potential of non-formal youth and adult education for sustainable development.

In the ensuing panel discussion, representatives of governmental, scientific, and civil society actors from Africa, Asia, and Europe addressed the audience. The discussion was moderated by Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, Professor at RMIT University, Australia, and former ASPBAE President.

Aaron Benavot, Professor of Global Education Policy at Albany University, USA, tackled the challenge that data on non-formal adult education is often insufficiently comparable and leads to a lack of visibility. Werner Mauch, Senior Programme Specialist at UIL, reported on the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education ([GRALE](#)), which regularly evaluates systematic information on adult education.

Nani Zulminarni, ASPBAE President, spoke about the links between economic development and gender in Asia. She also spoke about the positive impact of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in enabling the full economic empowerment of women. She stressed that gender-just skills aim to equip women with the necessary tools to negotiate within their families, deal with the social-cultural norms that impede their access, and offer a supportive ecosystem that facilitates their continued participation in learning.

In conclusion, Katarina Popovic, General Secretary of ICAE, used the title of the event to say, *"If we want to transform adult education from an invisible friend into a best friend, it must be better communicated and more present on a global scale."*

Approximately 80 participants from all over the world took part in the discussion. The [final declaration](#) of the last [international conference](#) of DVV International in Weimar, which contains core messages on the potential of adult education in the context of the 2030 Agenda, was distributed.



ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni (centre), speaking at the DVV-ASPBAE side event where she addressed the positive impact of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in enabling the full economic empowerment of women.

The [Global Campaign for Education](#) (GCE) organised an **Education Caucus** on 13 July 2019 that ASPBAE President Nani Zulminarni and ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano participated in. At the caucus, Nani stressed the need for stronger articulation of the links between education (SDG4) and decent work (SDG8). For the next year, Thea proposed producing a collaborative spotlight report focused on urgent education issues, such as inequality in education – a theme that the [Education and Academia Stakeholder Group](#) (EASG) emphasised and wants to hold governments to account.

The side event on '**Unifying the Playing Field: Local and Global Movements to Advance the Right to Education**', organised by GCE, Light for the World, Global Campaign for Education-United States, and Results International on 12 July 2019, included a session focussed on civil society alternative reports on the right to education in countries undertaking the VNR process. Thea spoke about the rich experience of civil society's engagement in the VNR processes in the Asia Pacific. Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, Vice President (Asia Pacific), ICAE, and former ASPBAE President, facilitated an inter-regional sharing of civil society engagement in the VNR processes and civil society reports on the right to education in VNR countries.



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ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni (R), participating in GCE's Education Caucus. ASPBAE's Thea Soriano also participated.

Nani stressed the need for stronger articulation of the links between education (SDG4) and decent work (SDG8) and Thea proposed producing a collaborative Spotlight Report focused on urgent education issues.



## Policy and financing options for skills for work of marginalised women

**Background:** The rapid changes across the world have had a huge impact on the future of work and of learning. In the current scenario where there is a wide gap between people to be skilled and the opportunities available, it is vital to ask which people have access to skill building initiatives and who are left behind. Within the education and lifelong learning agenda however, the issue of skills for work for marginalised women in the informal sector has been neglected. Since 2015, the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), through its member organisations, has carried out two scoping papers, two country research studies on skills development for marginalised women (with Azad Foundation in India and PEKKA in Indonesia), and an overarching synthesis report.

These explored the following question:

What are the policy, governance and financing options required to include and/or provide skill development and adult education for decent work and economic and social well-being to the marginalised women in the Asia Pacific women – given the perspectives of 'no one left behind' and social justice?

This explainer compiles information from these sources to provide insights into the interlinked issues, which are important to understand the world of women and work from an empowerment framework.

This is also prepared on the occasion of the High Level Political Forum 2019 which under the theme, 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality' will specifically review SDG 4 (education) and SDG 8 (decent work) – the core areas of ASPBAE's study, along with gender and women's empowerment, the focus of SDG 5 (gender equality). It hopes to contribute to civil society organisations' efforts to hold governments and other decision-makers to account, in making equity and education for all, a reality in the important space of the SDG follow up.

Azad Foundation, an ASPBAE member in India, co-organised a side event on 'Tapping the Potential of Non-Traditional Livelihoods to Empower Women and Girls'. ASPBAE drew from the outcomes of its study on 'Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women' focused on the experience in India and Indonesia.

[Azad Foundation](#), an ASPBAE member in India, co-organised a side event on 15 July 2019 along with the American Jewish World Service on '**Tapping the Potential of Non-Traditional Livelihoods to Empower Women and Girls**'. Thea spoke at the event and ASPBAE drew from the outcomes of its study on 'Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women' focused on the experience in [India](#) and [Indonesia](#). Meenu Vadera, CEO of Azad Foundation and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, observed that, "Encouraging women to participate in non-traditional livelihoods (NTL) trainings is one of the only ways to pave the way for jobs that pay well and offer room for growth especially for marginalised women." She reminded of the call of civil society for governments to "Implement education and skills development on NTL that help women and adolescent girls break stereotypes related to gender, caste, class, religion, sexual orientation, disability and other forms of marginalisation and oppression."

## An ASPBAE perspective

Significant discourse and commitment at the HLPF 2019 focussed on youth and youth participation in sustainable development and inclusion for persons with disabilities. Strong concern was expressed for climate issues and sustainability of livelihoods. There were also many useful suggestions for improvement, including making better use of regional institutions and fora; focusing on interlinkages between goals; and ministerial declarations that capture the discussions of the annual Forum and identify follow-up action.

Like many of the NGOs that participated, in the end, ASPBAE was concerned that the 2019 HLPF did not have a negotiated outcome which focused in-depth on the specific SDGs under review: SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, and 17. A Political Declaration focused on the next 10 years of SDG implementation was instead discussed for adoption in the September SDGs Summit. This took away from the more exhaustive consideration given to specific SDGs that was possible in earlier HLPFs and thus blunted attention to SDG4 and the other SDGs of the HLPF 2019 review process for example on decent work, inequality, climate action, and peace.

This is why ASPBAE was in full support of the effort taken by the CSO contingent in the HLPF 2019 under the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGOS) in releasing its own [Outcomes Document](#) of the HLPF 2019.

On SDG4 in particular, the MGOS Outcomes Document decried the persistent barriers to the right to education through the life course. Noting that education is a fundamental human right and a public good, its centrality to achieving all other SDGs, and its role as a catalytic tool for social justice and democracy, the MGOS called upon governments to adopt a whole-sector and life-long learning approach to SDG4, including early childhood, adult, non-formal, and technical and vocational education and training. They called for government to ensure safe and gender-sensitive learning environments, well-supported and qualified teachers, a curriculum devoted to the full development of the human-being, including education for sustainable development and climate justice, human rights and equality, and peace, also within the context of the digital revolution. Finally, they demanded of governments to invest the maximum of resources available in

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**ASPBAE was intensely engaged in asserting its positions at various platforms at the HLPF 2019. ASPBAE staff worked tirelessly, advocating for youth and adult education and lifelong learning, and championed quality education in a significant global platform!**

quality public inclusive education, ending austerity, abolishing direct and indirect costs of education, delivering on tax justice and aid commitments, refraining from unsustainable borrowing, while stopping privatization and commercialization of education.

ASPBAE was intensely engaged in asserting its positions at these various platforms at the HLPF 2019. Kudos to ASPBAE staff for working around the clock in the lead-up to and during the event, for tirelessly advocating for youth and adult education and lifelong learning, and for being champions for quality education in a significant global platform!

Click [here](#) to read a series of ASPBAE blogs during the HLPF 2019. You can also follow ASPBAE on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to read social media postings during the event.

*This article draws from blogs released during the HLPF 2019, including by ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, and Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, Vice President (Asia Pacific), International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and former ASPBAE President. Some information was also drawn from the [DVV International](#) and [UNESCO](#) websites. [\[BACK\]](#)*

## ASPBAE brings together members and partners for regional consultation of education advocates

20-23 August 2019, Da Nang, Vietnam



**ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, welcoming participants to the Asia Pacific Regional Consultation of Education Advocates, hosted in collaboration with the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA).**

The Asia Pacific Regional Consultation of Education Advocates was hosted by ASPBAE in collaboration with the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA) in Da Nang. The four-day consultation provided ASPBAE members and education coalitions an opportunity to engage in diverse and distinct conversations around education.

The Regional Consultation was attended by 18 national education coalitions and representatives from regional and global partner organisations, such as the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), Arab Campaign for Education (ACEA), Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). Representatives from CLADE, ActionAid International, and Oxfam Ibis also participated virtually, giving their inputs via Skype. The plenary sessions and the consequent discussions were based on the following objectives:

- Sustain the space for learning and experience-sharing and strengthen capacities of Asia Pacific advocates to advance the right to quality basic, youth and adult education
- Provide a platform for ASPBAE, its members and partners within the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) to update on advocacy plans and jointly strategise for coordinated action
- Discuss CSEF end-of-phase III reporting, stock-taking, and planning for the new funding mechanism, Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA)

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Eighteen national education coalitions and representatives from regional and global partner organisations took part in the regional consultation.

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In his opening address, Tran Xuan Nhi, President of the Board of VAEFA, offered an overview of the education context in Vietnam.

VAEFA advocated with the government on inclusive education, stating that people with autism should be entitled to the support scheme and benefits for people with disability

The event commenced after a brief introduction by Maria Khan, ASPBAE Secretary-General, who welcomed Tran Xuan Nhi, President of the Board of VAEFA. Mr. Nhi welcomed the participants to Da Nang and offered an overview of the education context in the country. He stated that the literacy rate of Vietnam is 97.4% and highlighted that accessibility of education is now on the rise as there are increased facilities in rural areas, satellite classes, schools in remote areas, and boarding schools that are available in areas with ethnic minorities. Mr. Nhi also addressed the challenges faced by VAEFA. These include the difficulty to ensure equity and inclusion for people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and migrants. School related gender-based violence still remains a crucial issue in many areas. Education also lacks attention and investment from the government.

Followed by Mr. Nhi's introduction, Nguyen Kim Anh, National Coordinator of VAEFA, introduced the work of the coalition and highlighted its policy wins, maintaining that national, regional and global connections and cooperation are essential for policy advocacy. VAEFA's continued advocacy with the government has led to several policy wins. The coalition advocated with the government on inclusive education, stating that people with autism should be entitled to the support scheme and benefits for people with disability. They also advocated for the addition of sign language in the Revised Education Law. As a result of this advocacy, the government recognised autism as a type of disability and included sign language and braille in Article 11 of the Revised Education Law.

Several thematic topics were discussed at the Regional Consultation, including responding to education challenges in emergencies, strengthening civil society analysis to respond to challenges in education financing, such as the private sector involvement in education. A session was dedicated for the CSO representatives in the Board of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to update the CSO2 constituency from the Asia Pacific on salient issues within GPE and consult on ongoing concerns. The consultation also featured a capacity building session on gender in and through education. ASPBAE representatives shared the success generated from participation in regional and global events such as the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019 and discussed actions taken during the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM). Along with this, the efforts of the coalitions were also highlighted including, the civil society spotlight reports on SDG4 and the best practices of the coalitions. Discussions also revolved around planning for proposals for the new funding mechanism i.e. Education Out Loud.

## Advancing the right to quality basic, youth and adult education within the spaces provided by the SDGs and SDG 4 policy processes

ASPBAE's Thea Soriano highlighted the wins, challenges, and lessons in advocacy for SDG 4 at the HLPF 2019 - which is the main UN platform on sustainable development. The overall theme of HLPF was '*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*'. This was an important forum to attend in 2019 since SDG 4 - Quality Education was under review along with other SDGs including SDG 8 – decent work and inclusive economy, SDG 10 – reduced inequalities, SDG 13 – climate action, SDG 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 17 – partnerships. One of the main issues that came forward



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Several issues, including responding to education challenges in emergencies and strengthening CSO analysis to respond to challenges in education financing, were discussed at the consultation.



Several young people participated in the regional consultation in Da Nang.



ASPBAE's Rene Raya highlighted the CSO Spotlight Reports which were launched at the HLPF 2019.



Sixteen national education coalitions, that are a part of ASPBAE's membership, present their Spotlight Reports.

during the HLPF was the disconnect between global and regional architecture. It was increasingly recognised that regional agreements and discussions should be accorded more weight in the global processes and agreements. The outcomes from regional dialogues should be tackled in the global processes, and country Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) should be discussed at the regional level as well. It was noted that CSOs need to be a part of these processes as critical stakeholders in the achievement of the SDGs. Another aspect of the presentation highlighted the key messages on SDG4 in the Asia Pacific Forum of Sustainable Development (APFSD) which stated the need to accelerate efforts to remove systemic barriers, advocate for financing equity, increase investment in data, track inequalities in education and ensure stakeholder participation in all phases of SDG4 implementation.

ASPBAE's Rene Raya highlighted the CSO Spotlight Reports which were launched at the HLPF 2019. These reports serve as standalone or alternatives to the official Government reports on SDG 4 or the Volunteer National Reviews (VNRs). In 2019, national education coalitions and ASPBAE members prepared sixteen country Spotlight reports and two regional reports - a synthesis of the individual country Spotlight Report findings and an Explainer on Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women. By 2019, 34 countries from the Asia Pacific have submitted their VNRs, with the Philippines and Indonesia submitting them for the second time. The Spotlight Reports serve a great purpose as ASPBAE and the coalitions have used them in national and international advocacy engagements including in national forums and dialogues on VNRs and SDGs.

The 16 Spotlight Reports highlighted that the SDG 4 rollout processes in the Asia Pacific countries have been underway but in varying stages in different countries. All the countries have SDG committees but only five (5) out of the 16 reviewed are engaging the government bodies at the highest level. Most of the countries have an SDG Policy Framework and Implementation Plan in place and they are aligning the SDGs with the Education Sector Plans. 14 of the 16 countries have also developed indicator framework indicators and in seven (7) countries, the Education Ministries are playing a larger role in the process with focal persons identified.

While addressing the shortcomings in the rollout process, it was identified that few countries have legislation in place and fewer are engaged with the parliamentary committees on SDG 4. In many instances, the critical indicators of the SDGs were not included in the discussions and CSOs noted that the governments are still working out the numerical targets. Raya emphasised on the fact that there is a need to institutionalize the coordination mechanisms between governments and CSOs as only five (5) countries have such mechanisms. The CSOs also identified financing as the most critical shortfall in the SDG rollout. It was noted that the current resources are not enough, there is no estimate of the financial requirements for SDG 4. It was also observed that there is no firm commitment from the government to increase budget for SDGs and no clear financing strategy as to how this will be achieved. The CSOs played a significant role in the rollout of the SDGs and engaged with the government but it was noted



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**Giovanna Mode, Policy Analyst, CLADE, speaking about the HLPF 2019 and future actions for SDG advocates**

that the government consultations were not held on a regular basis and were merely held for validation of the government.

Giovanna Mode, Policy Analyst, CLADE, highlighted what the SDG advocates need to do in the future and identified some of the issues they should be attentive to. Focusing on the opportunities that the HLPF 2019 presented, Giovanna stressed that 2030 Agenda and the SDGs have captured the attention of member states, civil society, UN system and local governments. In this context, it is important to spread the message that without SDG 4 there is no 2030 Agenda. HLPF also provides an opportunity to connect local, national and global processes which can be strengthened by engaging other sectors, maintaining the connection between SDGs with human rights bodies. She stated that advocates can look at when their countries will be under review and consider being present in order to strategise advocacy actions around that forum. She concluded that even with limitations, SDGs and HLPF are crucial tools to advance not only SDG4, but human rights, democracy, and peace as well.



**CSOs identified financing as the most critical shortfall in the SDG rollout.**

## Responding to education challenges in emergencies and crisis

The regional consultation also featured a session on education challenges in emergencies and crisis. The shifting political situations and the rise of crisis in different countries have had an adverse impact on education in many of these cases, which were reflected by the members of the plenary session.

Elise Madisone of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) emphasised steps the organisation is taking to ensure the right to education in all contexts of emergencies and crises. INEE has 15,000 individual members and operates in 190 countries. Madisone shared the context on education in emergencies stating that 61% of refugee children attend primary school compared to global average of 92%. At the secondary level, this figure drops to 23% compared to 84% globally and only 1% of refugees attend university compared 37% students globally. Despite this great discrepancy in numbers, there are a few promising steps that have been taken in the right direction. This includes the alignment of the education clusters strategies with the national education plans. 1.3 million children were reached through the Education Cannot Wait Fund (2016) and development-oriented donors have significantly increased their work in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. The EU has also committed to increase education funding up to 10% of their humanitarian budget while the 2018 G7 Charlevoix Declaration focused on closing the gender gap and humanitarian-development nexus.

To better concretise INEE work and advocacies are the country level, Madisone also described the steps that INEE is taking in collaboration with the government in Myanmar to address the issue of Education in Emergencies (EiE).

INEE is also taking targeted actions which includes the motivating, supporting and paying teachers, improving gender equality, providing Psycho-Social Support (PSS) and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and providing greater protection for education.



**Elise Madisone of INEE (with microphone) emphasised steps the organisation is taking to ensure the right to education in all contexts of emergencies and crises.**

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**INEE has made recommendations to crisis-affected and host governments to recruit qualified teachers with decent pay and reasonable working conditions, and to include refugee and displaced teachers in camps or host nation's teacher workforce to motivate, support, and pay teachers.**

Under these targeted actions, INEE has made recommendations to crisis-affected and host governments to recruit qualified teachers with decent pay and reasonable working conditions, and to include refugee and displaced teachers in camps or host nation's teacher workforce to motivate, support, and pay teachers. On improving gender equality, INEE proposed that government should adopt gender-responsive policies and programmes to address school-related Gender Based Violence, to promote multisectoral collaboration to improve access to and quality of education for girls. With reference to providing PSS and SEL, INEE recommended to the government to define education outcomes for children and youth and to incorporate PSS and SEL into teachers' professional development programmes. Referring to providing greater protection for education, INEE recommended that governments need to sign and implement the Safe Schools Declaration and incorporate the guidelines for the protection of schools and universities from military use into legislation and military doctrine. The government should also systematically investigate attacks on education and prosecute perpetrators and respond to attacks on education.



**Regarding education in emergencies, donors need to systematically underline the need to adhere to existing international laws that protect education and strengthen international norms and standards, especially in their recipient countries.**

Recommendations were also made to the donors under these targeted actions to provide multi-year funding to establish guidelines for teachers' recruitment management and professional development. For improving gender equality, they should take steps to strengthen collaboration to promote action that addresses gender equality in EiE. Knowledge management systems should also be developed to facilitate wider dissemination of proven interventions that address support gender responsive programming. With reference to PSS and SEL, donors need to fund and monitor programmes that define education outcomes and develop evidence-based programming to achieve these outcomes. Regarding protection of education, donors need to systematically underline the need to adhere to existing international laws that protect education and strengthen international norms and standards, especially in their recipient countries.

For each of these targeted actions, INEE has developed detailed resources with strategies. These resources assist in identifying the problems and proposed solutions which fall under these targeted actions.



**The Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC) also discussed the establishment of the Education in Emergency Working Group (EiEWG) which is actively working towards improving education services in emergencies.**

Nani Zulminarni, President of ASPBAE and Director of PEKKA addressed the issue of gender-responsive education in contexts of emergencies and crisis. In her presentation, she stated that need based education should be introduced as women, girls, men and boys are different in many ways. There should be inclusive processes, equal opportunities and access to resources. Barriers and discrimination against particular gender in leaderships roles should be dismantled.

The Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC) also discussed the establishment of the Education in Emergency Working Group (EiEWG) which is actively working towards improving education services in emergencies. The EiEWG conducts meetings that are chaired by the Ministry of Education (MoE), and co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children. The EiEWG has established community-based schools (CBSs) and temporary classrooms (TCs) with WASH facilities, provided learning kits for students, teaching kits for teachers and



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**To address the challenges brought forth by conflict and to cater to education, Refat Sabbah stated that the Arab education coalition builds capacities of its members on SDG 4 and how they can utilise available mechanisms to monitor the goal.**



**Ashina Mtsumi of GI-ESCR gave an overview of the Abidjan Principles, stating that they are necessary to move beyond rhetoric on the right to education.**



**David Archer of ActionAid International joined the consultation via Skype and commented on the trends in private sector involvement on education.**

classroom kits. They focus on the concept of safe schools and provide temporary classrooms and rehabilitation of the damaged schools. In Afghanistan, the attacks on schools tripled between 2017 and 2018 and the security situation left more than 1,000 schools closed by the end of 2018, denying half a million children their right to education.

Refat Sabbah, General Secretary of the Arab Coalition for Education for All (ACEA), stated that there are over 47 million people across the Arab region affected by conflict and crises according to UNESCO. This is not only an ongoing humanitarian crisis, it is a development one, affecting every part of society, especially the young generations. In order to address the challenges brought forth by conflict and to cater to education, ACEA builds the capacity of its members on SDG 4 and how they can utilise the available mechanisms to monitor the achievement. In addition, ACEA gives guidance as to how to participate in the implementation and follow up processes of SDG 4. In 2017, ACEA included an intensive capacity building program for member coalitions on topics relevant to SDG4 with more focus on financing education. They also succeeded to mobilise all community actors and promoted networking among civil society organisations, and sharing experiences at the local, regional and international levels.

## Education financing

Education financing has been an important theme which has been discussed in detail in regional consultations for the last few years, as new insights on this technical matter keep emerging. This year, the aim was to strengthen CSO analysis and positions to respond to challenges in education financing especially on rising private sector involvement in education. Ashina Mtsumi, Policy and Legal Officer at GI-ESCR, gave an overview of the Abidjan Principles – a document which outlines the obligations of states to provide public education and to regulate private sector involvement in education. In her presentation, Ashina emphasised on the guiding principles of the Abidjan Principles and stated that they are necessary to move beyond rhetoric on the right to education. They are also necessary to respond to the ideology of criticism, to develop a robust narrative and build a common position on these principles. These principles reflect on implementing existing human rights law and giving a coherent understanding of principles in education necessary for just and dignified societies. Participants found it interesting that the Abidjan principles have been adopted by 55 experts so far, of which over 60% are from the Global South, and over 60% women. The Abidjan Principles are also open to endorsement and have been adopted and recognised by the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

David Archer, Head of Participation and Public Services at ActionAid International, contributed to the discussion on education financing via Skype. While commenting on the trends in private sector involvement on education, he stated that when looking at financing, it is important to look at the bigger picture first and address the issue of chronic underfunding of education. This continues to be a crucial problem which needs to be addressed as governments, especially in Asia, continue to fall short on their commitment to education.

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The regional consultation had the active participation of youth leaders from the different coalitions.

Assessing the trends in private sector involvement, there are three crucial factors that need to be considered - the first being the domestic tax base. It has been observed that the domestic tax base in many low-income countries is skewed. Ideally, the tax to GDP ratio should be a minimum of 20% but many governments are falling short on this. To counter this, there is a need to work with activists in other sectors to explore the case of expanding the tax base of the country as tax needs to be collected in a progressive and gender responsive way. Another critical issue that David discussed was the rising debt crisis especially debt that is illegitimate or accrued in non-transparent ways. This is an issue that the governments are facing as they have to service foreign debt first before spending on public services. The debt crisis is rapidly getting worse which drastically affects the education services. The third critical issue mentioned was the “wage bill containment,” a policy that the International Monetary Fund is imposing on countries where governments cannot spend above a certain amount on services which primarily affects the education and health workers.



Tanvir Muntasim, Civil Society and Mutual Accountability Education Specialist at GPE, shared the GPE Secretariat updates including the GPE Strategic Planning process and the Effective Partnership Roll-out (EPR) programme.

David also stated that a number of organisations are using education as a means of building profit by funding primarily for-profit organisations. The best measure that can be taken against this is to strengthen the public sector. Archer stated that the GPE is a very useful platform which can be utilised to generate policy discussions that are in favour of education as a public service. There has been a debate in the GPE board meetings on pushing back the private sector involvement in provision of services. With representatives of the governments and CSO representatives present in the GPE forums, there is a possibility of navigating policy spaces to ensure that education does not become a commodity that few can afford.

## Consultation on the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

The Regional Consultation also hosted a session aimed at sustaining a strong engagement with GPE especially through CSO representation at the GPE Board and Committees. Tanvir Muntasim, Civil Society and Mutual Accountability Education Specialist at GPE, shared the GPE Secretariat updates including the GPE Strategic Planning process and the Effective Partnership Roll-out (EPR) programme. Tanvir stated that the EPR was a suite of recommendations and decisions which aimed to achieve significant improvements in the GPE country level model, including strengthened mutual accountability and government ownership, major rebalancing and strengthening of the partnership.



Participants discussed funding mechanisms of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and implications for coalitions.

In his presentation, Tanvir discussed the key questions about the Effective Partnership Rollout effort. These questions pertained to what are the problems EPR is seeking to address? How does EPR solve these problems and what are the EPR implications for the Strategic Plan. Tanvir also discussed the guiding principles of EPR, which were determined by the GPE Board in 2018. These principles state that the EPR aims to increase decentralized mutual accountability, rebalance the country-level model, drive national government ownership and strengthen its capacity and reduce GPE processes and transaction costs. Tanvir also highlighted the decisions of the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) which fall into three categories of - (i) strengthening country level partnership and government ownership (ii)



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**ASPBAE's Helen Dabu sharing her insights on the EPR process from her participation in the Effective Partnership Review processes of the GPE Grants and Performance Committee (GPC).**

strengthening the use of GPE funding while reducing transaction costs, and (iii) clarifying and strengthening roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, risk ownership and resourcing. ASPBAE's Helen Dabu shared her insights on the EPR process from her participation in the Effective Partnership Review processes of the GPE Grants and Performance Committee (GPC).

In another part of the presentation, the GPE Strategic Plan was highlighted responding to the question of how GPE can best leverage their model and resources to get every child in school and learning. The theory of change was discussed along with GPE strategy development process with its timelines.

A closed session with the CSO constituency was also held where the GPE CSO 2 Board Representatives, Camilla Croso (Coordinator-General, CLADE) and Maria Khan (ASPBAE Secretary-General) shared updates and reflections on key GPE agenda including decisions and discussions arising from the GPE Board Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden. The Board Representatives also shared the updates going into the GPE Board meeting in December 2019 to further sustain this engagement. The closed sessions featured a discussion among the CSO constituency to prepare inputs for the GPE strategic planning process.

## Capacity building training on gender in and through education



**A session on gender in education, led by ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, and ASPBAE EC Member, Meenu Vadera, aimed to build on understanding of issues such as gender and education, gender and youth, and gender-responsive budgeting.**

Using the expertise of ASPBAE's President, Nani Zulminarni, and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, Meenu Vadera, a capacity building session was conducted to orient the participants on ways of "engendering" their work. The session aimed to build on the existing understanding of organisations on issues such as gender and education, gender and youth, gender-response budgeting and gender-based strategic planning among other themes. This capacity building session also discussed the tools which can be used for socio-economic gender analysis, barriers that women and girls face in education and how organisations can assess if gender needs to be integrated in their advocacy work. The training also discussed the spotlight reports and proposals that the coalitions submitted from a gender perspective, analyzing the trends that were seen in both the documents. The training also included an element of developing a theory of change from the perspective of gender – an exercise which the coalitions benefitted from as they shared that they previously had limited knowledge of gender and will be incorporating these concepts in their future advocacy efforts.

## Wrapping up CSEF and preparing for 'Education out Loud'



**Wolfgang Leumer, CSEF Global Coordinator on the end of Civil Society Education Fund finance reporting, management, and stock-taking.**

The consultation also had an in-depth discussion on the end of Civil Society Education Fund reporting and stock-taking conducted by Edward Chikonyora, Grants and Finance Manager, GCE, and Wolfgang Leumer, CSEF Global Coordinator. The presentations focused on finance reporting and management, and plans related to the documentation of the CSEF experience including the end of project evaluation.

Muntasim Tanvir of GPE and Antonio Cabral from Oxfam Ibis led a discussion introducing the funding modalities of Operations Component 1 (OC1) of the new

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**ASPBAE committed to continuing to lobby governments to deliver on the full SDG 4 agenda at APMED 5 and ensure CSO participation in the VNR review process.**



**Participants took part in open space discussions around topics such as fake news, gender and sexuality, and SDG 4.7.**



**Participants of the regional consultation.**

funding facility for civil society advocacy, Education Out Loud (EOL). They oriented the coalitions on the newly released guidelines for grant application under Education Out Loud, discussing the timelines, approval procedures and preparations that the coalitions will have to undertake in accessing the grant. Antonio also advised that the Oxfam Ibis Grant Agent office for the Asia Pacific will be located in Kathmandu, Nepal, and will be operational from September 2019.

## Sharing advocacy plans for future action

Advocacy plans for the upcoming year were also discussed in depth by both the regional and global organisations. ASPBAE representatives shared that they will continue to pressure governments to fulfill the obligation to realise free quality public education for all and full agenda of SDG 4. ASPBAE will continue to lobby governments to deliver on the full SDG 4 agenda as they aim to participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 and ensure CSO participation in the VNR review process for HLPF 2020. The representative from CLADE shared their plans as they aim to have permanent dialogue with different regional stakeholders including CSOs, education ministries, parliamentarians, students, teachers, academics with a combination of national, regional and international as the starting point of all actions. ACEA stated that they aim to contribute to the UNESCO roadmap, framework of action, and the revision of the implementation progress of SDG 4 at regional level by giving more consideration to the emergency context. They also aim to use the VNR and spotlight reports as essential tools to monitor education in each country. Besides this, they aim to build the forthcoming strategy on social accountability by focusing on key actors especially in the absence of government in many countries under emergency in order to influence educational policies in the respective areas.

Participants also took part in open space discussions around multiple topics identified by the participants on fake news, gender, sexuality, and the right to education, embedding SDG 4.7 framework in government policies to counter various forms of extremism and discrimination, mobilising domestic resources for education, and disability inclusion in education. [\[BACK\]](#)

## ASPBAE participates in UNESCO meetings on the SDG 4 indicator system

### 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4-Education 2030 (TCG)

29-30 August 2019, Yerevan, Armenia

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), in partnership with the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Education and Science, organised the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4-Education 2030 (TCG6). The meeting brought together key stakeholders in the field of education statistics to continue the development and implementation of the SDG 4 Monitoring Framework. ASPBAE's Rene Raya participated in the meeting, filling in for the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) who is





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**Panellists at a panel discussion at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4-Education 2030 (TCG6).**

Discussions at TCG6 meeting focused on additional indicators; indicator development, reporting and benchmarking processes; and challenges and obstacles countries face in producing and reporting on SDG 4 indicators. ASPBAE's Rene Raya participated in the meeting in Armenia.



**Enamul Hoque of CAMPE Bangladesh with ASPBAE's Rene Raya and SEAMEO Director, Ethel Valenzuela.**

the full CSO member of the committee representing the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO/ED 2030). Also, in attendance from the Asia Pacific region were representatives from Bangladesh, Indonesia, People's Republic of China, the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO).

Silvia Montoya, Director of UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), formally opened the Sixth TCG meeting with an update on the global progress of SDG 4. The meeting comes at a crucial time when the SDG indicator system is in the process of a comprehensive review that will culminate in the adoption of an updated SDG global indicator framework by the UN Statistical Commission during its 51st session in March 2020.

The discussions at TCG6 meeting focused on additional indicators; indicator development, reporting and benchmarking processes; and challenges and obstacles countries face in producing and reporting on SDG 4 indicators. The aim of the meeting was to review and endorse the methodological developments including on potential new indicators; review and finalise the list of indicators to be published in 2020; discuss and update, if necessary, the SDG data validation process; agree on the process to develop benchmarking for at least three selected indicators; and identify areas for improvement in data production and funding. It was noted, however, that additional indicators will be considered only in a few selected cases, particularly when there is a need to cover a critical aspect of the target that is not adequately captured by other indicators.

ASPBAE's Rene Raya raised the absence of a specific indicator to measure a critical target under SDG Target 4.1 on free and compulsory basic education, noting that poverty, exclusion and the rising cost of education are the main reasons for dropping out or being pushed out of school. This was acknowledged, although coming up with an additional indicator for SDG 4.1 may be difficult at this late stage of the review process. Manos Antoninis of the Global Education Monitoring Report mentioned that this may be captured by the indicators under Target 4.5, particularly on parity indices and on extend to which explicit formula-based policies reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations.

The TCG was formed in early 2016 to lead the development and implementation of the global and thematic indicator frameworks to monitor the education targets in SDG 4. It is currently composed of 27 Member States and 8 organisations including representatives of all regions as well as from civil society and international organisations, such as CCNGO/ED 2030, Education International, OECD, UNICEF, the World Bank, and UNESCO itself.

## **6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML)**

*27-28 August 2019, Yerevan, Armenia*

An earlier meeting that focused on learning outcomes was also organised by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in Yerevan. This meeting was attended by additional participants including representatives from other countries such as Afghanistan and other CSOs. ASPBAE member, Campaign for Popular

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**CAMPE's Enamul Hoque highlighted that developing countries such as Bangladesh are struggling to provide ICT systems and facilities in schools given limited resources and persistent low investment in education.**

Education (CAMPE), also attended the meeting and was represented by its Deputy Director, K.M. Enamul Hoque.

The meeting looked specifically on the methodology and progress for the following indicators:

Indicator 4.1.1 – on minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics

Indicator 4.4.2 – on minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills

Indicator 4.6.1 – on level of proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy skills

Indicator 4.7.4 – on understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability

On the methodology for measuring learning outcomes, Rene raised the question whether the learning assessment modules that have been developed were also applicable to out-of-school learners taking up alternative learning courses, and to persons with disabilities. Rene noted that the assessment modules were focused only on the learning achievements of students in a formal school setting. The panelist from UIS and USAID, among others, responded that the assessment modules also considered learners outside the school system and that the same modules can be applied.

**ASPBAE's Rene Raya posed the question of whether the learning assessment modules developed were also applicable to out-of-school learners taking up alternative learning courses, and to persons with disabilities.**

On proficiency in digital skills, CAMPE's Enamul Hoque raised the issue that developing countries such as Bangladesh are struggling to provide ICT systems and facilities given limited resources and the persisting low investment in education. Enamul stressed the need to strengthen global partnership to address the widening digital divide and ensure that all equally benefit from innovations and advances in digital technology.



**L-R – Enamul Hoque of CAMPE Bangladesh, ASPBAE's Rene Raya, and Silvia Montoya, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).**

The meeting was a good learning event for the participants. The UIS, development agencies and regional organisations shared learning assessment frameworks, modules, data generation systems, evidenced-based policy making and capacity development initiatives. It is significant to note the progress made in developing the framework and methodologies for assessing literacy and numeracy. It is also worth mentioning that a number of assessment tools are now looking at the broader concept of learning that includes global citizenship, sustainability, and social relations in an increasingly diverse world. In the Asian region, for example, the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) was jointly developed by SEAMEO, the UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO) and countries from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The assessment metrics measures student performance on four domains: reading, writing, mathematics, and global citizenship.

The UIS is also proposing a new indicator on "Breadth of skills" which will assess the extent to which national education policies and education sector plans recognize a breadth of skills that needs to be enhanced in national education systems. [\[BACK\]](#)



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## Informing the Strategic Plan of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

July 2019



Views were invited from GPE's stakeholders globally, including from ASPBAE, through a survey on GPE's role and approach during the next strategic period.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has officially launched its strategy development process with the aim of a final Strategic Plan and Funding Framework approved by the GPE Board in June 2020. Views were invited from GPE's stakeholders globally, including from ASPBAE, through a survey on GPE's role and approach during the next strategic period. The survey, developed in consultation with GPE's Strategy and Impact Committee, enabled the stakeholders to respond to key questions to be addressed in the next Strategy. Responses will be analysed and shared with the GPE Board and with the Board committees for discussion during their October meetings.

ASPBAE Civil Society Developing Country (or CSO2) representatives in the GPE Board launched a set of email and phone-based consultations with the CSO2 constituency to mobilise the strong participation and input of civil society in this process. The CSO 2 constituents identified the following key inputs and messages to the process:

The CSO 2 constituency stressed that the new GPE Strategic Plan should be more fully aligned to the SDG 4 and Education 2030 agenda - including a more explicit reference to 12 years of free education, and dealing upfront with adult literacy and education.

- Ensure that the new Strategic Plan is more fully aligned to the SDG 4 and Education 2030 agenda - embracing it as a whole. This includes a more explicit reference to 12 years of free education, dealing upfront with adult literacy and education and an intergenerational perspective, more emphasis in dimensions on equality (beyond equity) and quality with a broader perspective (as envisioned in target 4.7, for example) as well as civil society participation in policy debate and decision-making.
- GPE must prioritise its essential characteristic of PARTNERSHIP. More than an emphasis on leadership, GPE should value partnership, in coherence with its core constitutive characteristic. In its new plan, GPE should highlight, acknowledge and envisage the strengthening of all partners and their mandates. Overlaps or possible areas of conflicting mandates should be avoided.
- More attention must be given to domestic financing and tax justice. The latter should be a core element of the new plan. Furthermore, GPE should revisit how it calculates the 20% of GDP, which currently excludes debt servicing. This alters significantly the results of the indicator. The manner that UIS and other research institutes calculate should be used, which in fact is the manner used in the text agreed by SDG4/E2030. The effects of the Multiplier Fund in fostering indebtedness and loans with the banks should also be analysed.
- The Strategic Plan should give more attention to how civil society and education actors are being treated by the governments, including having a clearer indicator related to civil society participation at all levels as well as the overcoming the rising trends of criminalization of education actors.



The CSO 2 constituency called for more attention to partnerships, domestic financing and tax justice, civil society participation in education processes.

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**On teachers, the CSO 2 constituency called for more attention to be given to fostering their autonomy and academic freedom, currently under attack in many countries.**

- On teachers, more attention needs to be given to fostering their autonomy and academic freedom, currently under attack in many countries.

The last Asia Pacific Regional Consultation of Education Advocates offered an opportunity for a more in-depth discussion with 18 national education coalitions on ASPBAE's and the coalitions submissions on the GPE strategic plan process. Reinforcing the common messages so far defined within the wider CSO2 constituency, ASPBAE and member coalitions reiterated the following:

- GPE's ability to convene a broad set of education partners and stakeholders that have the potential to provide significant support (through political will and financing) in delivering the full SDG 4 agenda and strengthening public education systems should expand its scope to cover education support for children as well as youth and adults, in order to fully realise its vision and mission. The latter has so far been neglected in GPE priority.

The 3 strategic areas ASPBAE recommend GPE to focus on additionally were (1) Youth and Adult Learning and Education including adult literacy, (2) Gender and disability inclusion, and (3) Skills development as targeted in SDG 4.7 such as life skill and foundational skills, further stressing that GPE should commit to the full ambition of SDG4/Education 2030 agenda, that is, 'leaving no one behind' and which affirms a lifelong learning framework of education. Hence, in its strategic objectives and financing support to developing country partners, GPE should support education access and learning for not only children, but youth and adults as well. Further, marginalised and vulnerable groups should be given voice and space in sector planning processes and decision-making.

**The 3 strategic areas ASPBAE recommend GPE to focus on additionally were (1) Youth and adult learning and education, including adult literacy, (2) Gender and disability inclusion, and (3) Skills development as targeted in SDG 4.7.**



**ASPBAE and member coalitions underscore that GPE needs to optimise its power to challenge actions that undermine public education systems and lead to further inequality in education.**

- GPE needs to optimise its convening power even more to challenge mechanisms and actions that undermine public education systems and lead to further inequality in education, such as the current drive towards making education financing more beneficial for private investors and commercial banks, and driving low and lower-middle income countries to expand their debt exposure as a means to access education grants and investments. GPE should ensure that it will only support costed and credible education sector plans that will strengthen the public education systems. It should require full transparency when governments are engaging with partners in financing the sector plans, including in the terms and negotiations regarding loans, which tend to be shrouded in secrecy, with education stakeholders kept in the dark. GPE needs to ensure that the private sector is indeed contributing to the Partnership at the global level and should demonstrate concretely how it is supporting the strengthening of the public education systems at the national level.
- GPE can do/support more affirmative action and advocacy in countries/contexts where civic participation and civil society inclusion in policy processes are threatened or restricted. SDG4 cannot fully progress without democratic guarantees that allow the public and civil society to hold their governments to account on their SDG4 commitments. The European



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ASPBAE suggested that GPE should require from its grant applications stronger and more accountable monitoring systems that set regular sector review processes and includes participation of education stakeholders, including CSOs.

ASPBAE highlighted that GPE can optimise the use of its resources to drive evidence-based education results/outcomes by working with and supporting the efforts already being made by its member, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).



ASPBAE underscored that there should be stronger sharing and learning from the rich experiences within GPE, especially from developing country partners, CSOs, Teachers Unions, UNESCO, UNICEF, and donors who have experiences in education at national levels.

Union, for example, has already laid out [specific modalities to address the growing restrictions in democratic spaces](#) in many countries and contexts.

- On the issue of what GPE could do to better support effective education policy and programme implementation, ASPBAE suggested that GPE should require from its grant applications stronger and more accountable monitoring systems that set regular sector review processes and includes participation of education stakeholders, including civil society organisations (CSOs), from the local to national levels. GPE should also set-up a robust mechanism to capture lessons from the ground in various contexts on why sector plans are not fully implemented. Further, governments need to be held accountable and build a strong sense of ownership of their education sector plans to ensure that they can muster the political and financial will to drive well the sector plan implementation.
- To ensure that education policies and programs are systematically based on good evidence, ASPBAE highlighted that GPE can optimise the use of its resources to drive evidence-based education results/outcomes by working with and supporting the efforts already being made by its member, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). This way, GPE is fully strengthening its role as a Partnership that leverages and builds on the strengths of its members to support the full education agenda. GPE can also utilise the evidence, data, and studies undertaken/collected by its civil society and teachers' union constituencies to cross-analyse education information, especially in areas of education equity and quality which are narrowly measured or missed by official government reports.
- On new efforts GPE should make to support capacity development of national education systems, ASPBAE underscored that there should be stronger sharing and learning from the rich experiences within the Partnership, especially from the developing country partners, CSOs, Teachers Unions, UNESCO, UNICEF, and donors which have experiences in education at the national levels. GPE should also complement the efforts of UNESCO and other existing intergovernmental sub-regional bodies (for example, the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, SEAMEO) in building the capacities of governments in strengthening public education systems through the development of credible education management information systems that inform policy reforms and implementation strategies from the local to the national levels.
- On the question of whether GPE should differentiate how it operates according to the capabilities and needs of partner country systems, ASPBAE responded that there should be minimum requirements agreed within the partnership that will apply to all country grants. These should reinforce and be aligned with the SDG 4 commitments and agenda. Any departure from these minimum requirements should still be consistent with the internationally agreed benchmarks and commitments made to education especially on human rights, the SDGs and SDG 4.
- GPE should continue the efforts to seek ways to prevent fragmentation of the education aid architecture to minimise transaction costs and the burden on

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ASPBAE highlighted that there should be minimum requirements agreed within GPE that will apply to all country grants. These should reinforce and be aligned with the SDG 4 commitments and agenda.

country-level partners. It should continue to pursue hosting of Education Cannot Wait, especially noting that 32 GPE partner developing countries are fragile or affected by conflict, representing 47% of all country partners; and a large share of GPE implementation grants were allocated to partner countries affected by fragility and conflict i.e. 60% in 2016. It should remain an active participant in the current global discussions on the emerging education aid architecture convened by UNESCO.

- Other points raised by ASPBAE included supporting consultative mechanisms at that local and national levels that are inclusive and with participation of diverse education stakeholders, including CSOs and teachers' organisations, which facilitate broad support for the delivery and monitoring of education sector plans aligned with SDG4. GPE should strengthen its facilitative role as a Partnership that leverages and builds on and acknowledges the strengths of its members. It should complement and build on the strengths of its members prevent duplication of work, and overlap of mandates with its members, and drive well-coordinated delivery of SDG 4.

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## VAEFA co-organises education sector planning conference and capacity building workshop

4-6 July 2019, Hanoi, Vietnam



Over 150 delegates took part in the International Conference on Strategic Planning in Education Development held in Hanoi and co-organised by ASPBAE member in Vietnam, VAEFA.

In another milestone for the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA), it successfully co-organised two major events in Hanoi with the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) through the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES), and the Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO (NatCom).

These events were aimed at providing a forum to exchange and share experiences related to the development of education sector plans and to build capacities on education sector analysis and planning for government officials who formulate central and provincial education development strategies and plans.

The first major event on 4 July, the International Conference on Strategic Planning in Education Development, saw the active participation of the Vietnam Deputy Minister of Education and Training, Nguyen Van Phuc; South Sudan Minister of Education, Deng Yai; Bhutan Education Minister, Jar Bir Rai; Representative of UNESCO Vietnam, Michael Croft; Deputy Director of Department of Cultural Affairs and UNESCO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tran Quoc Khanh; President of VAEFA, Tran Xuan Nhi; Head of Education for UNICEF Vietnam, Simone Vis; Director of the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences, Tran Cong Phong; and more than 150 delegates. These included leaders, policy and planning experts, representatives of units of the Ministry of Education and Training, research institutes, departments of education and training, universities, local and international civil society organisations (CSOs), and representatives of news agencies and newspapers.

The events in Vietnam aimed at providing a forum to exchange and share experiences related to the development of education sector plans and to building capacities of government officials on education sector analysis and planning.



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**President of VAEFA, Tran Xuan Nhi, also delivered an opening address and highlighted the need to respond to the education needs of the most marginalised, especially ethnic communities, migrants, women, people with disabilities, and children under three years of age.**

The Vietnam Deputy Minister of Education and Training, Nguyen Van Phuc, gave the opening speech where he emphasised the major education achievements of the country and acknowledged the remaining education challenges, especially around lifelong opportunities for citizens. He also spoke about making education responsive to the diverse needs of learners, and encouraged international speakers to share their expertise to address these education challenges.

President of VAEFA, Tran Xuan Nhi, also delivered an opening address and provided the CSO perspective on the achievements and gaps in education in the country. In particular, he highlighted the need to respond to the education needs of the most marginalised, especially ethnic communities, migrants, women, people with disabilities, and children under three years of age. He also expressed support for the government's efforts towards strengthening the education sector planning process and emphasised the need to ensure that the education strategic plan will deliver equitable, inclusive, and quality education towards sustainable development in Vietnam.

By virtue of VAEFA's recommendation to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), ASPBAE's Helen Dabu was invited as an international expert to share her inputs and experiences on the education sector planning process.

**ASPBAE's Helen Dabu provided an overview of education sector planning, outlined how to make the process more inclusive, emphasised the need to have a joint sector review, and the importance of the inclusion of civil society and marginalised sectors in consultations to help develop and monitor the implementation of the education sector plan.**

In her presentation, Helen provided an overview of education sector planning, outlined how to make the process more inclusive, emphasised the need to have a joint sector review, especially by encouraging the involvement of partners within the local education group in Vietnam (referred to as the Education Sector Group – ESG), and the importance of the inclusion of civil society and marginalised sectors in consultations and dialogues to help develop and monitor the implementation of the education sector plan.

The second event, from 5-6 July, was designed to be a capacity building workshop on the education sector planning process for government officials who formulate central and provincial education development strategies and plans, and with the participation of local CSOs who are VAEFA members.



**ASPBAE's Helen Dabu emphasised the need to deliver the 4S in education financing – size, share, sensitivity, and scrutiny - to ensure that the education sector plan will be resourced and implemented successfully.**

Serving as lecturers and resource speakers for this workshop were Professor Aaron Benavot (University of Albany, USA; Director of the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2014 – 2017; member of the Third Global Experts Group on Education and Learning for Adults, GRALE III, 2014 - 2016) and ASPBAE's Helen Dabu who both provided technical and process level input to enable participants to deepen their framework on education sector planning, particularly in aligning this to SDG 4, lifelong learning, and strengthening areas which were usually weak in education sector plans, especially on adult learning and education, equity, and education financing.

In the last session of the workshop, Helen emphasised the need to deliver the 4S in education financing to ensure that the education sector plan will be resourced and implemented successfully which essentially calls for improving and increasing the size, share, sensitivity, and scrutiny of the education budget in Vietnam.

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VAEFA, led by its National Coordinator, Nguyen Thi Kim Anh, demonstrated strong coordination with the Ministry of Education and Training and UNESCO for the events.

VAEFA's team, lead by its National Coordinator, Nguyen Thi Kim Anh, has demonstrated strong coordination with MOET, the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES), and UNESCO throughout these events which led to positive outcomes and feedback received from participants and co-organisers.

Articles on these two events also appeared on the official website of MOET's VNIES – [International Conference "Strategic and Planning for Education Development"](#) (4 Jul 2019); [Training workshop "Strategic development and education development planning"](#). [[BACK](#)]

## Committing to gender responsive advocacy and budgeting with a human rights approach in Nepal

13-14 August, Lalitpur, Nepal

By Shradha Koirala, Senior Programme Coordinator, NCE Nepal



A workshop on 'Equity and Gender Responsive Budgeting and Advocacy', organised by NCE Nepal and ASPBAE, helped deepen the understanding of CSOs and local government representatives on budgeting processes and analysis.

A workshop on 'Equity and Gender Responsive Budgeting and Advocacy', organised by NCE Nepal and ASPBAE, helped deepen the understanding of civil society organisations (CSOs) and local government representatives on budgeting processes and analysis through an equity and gender lens. Several CSO representatives participated in the workshop including journalists, teachers, women, and youth. The Mayor of Lalitpur, Deputy Mayor, and heads of municipalities and rural municipalities also took part in the workshop.

The workshop was facilitated ASPBAE's Rene Raya and Cecilia (Thea) Soriano. A presentation was made on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ways of localising and contextualising the SDGs at the national level. Rene stressed the important role of CSOs in local budgeting processes.



Ram Gaire of NCE Nepal, addressing participants of the budget training workshop that was facilitated by ASPBAE's Rene Raya and Cecilia (Thea) Soriano.

A panel discussion on revenue flow and revenue generation, led by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, raised awareness of the budgeting process at the local level, identified ways that CSOs could engage in preparing education budgets, and offered insights in to the interventions CSO can make for determining needs-based financing. NCE Nepal's Ram Gaire spoke about SDG4 goals and targets and NCE Nepal's work on budgetary research and analysis. Human rights approaches and budget advocacy were presented based on the principles of non-discrimination, accountability, transparency, and participation.

Discussions were held about gender and equity-based education financing, especially recognizing the decreasing trend in Nepal in this regard. Participants identified the poor, *dalits*, marginalised communities, minorities, people with disabilities, women, and children as major groups to be considered for education budget planning in Nepal. A presentation was also made on gender responsive budgeting and tools where participants learnt about alternate budget proposals to influence the processes of preparing education budgets.

The workshop was a good opportunity to bring together CSOs and local government representatives to discuss the budget formulation process and identify areas where CSOs could contribute, such as in community meetings and



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The workshop brought together CSOs and government representatives to discuss budget formulation and identify areas where CSOs could contribute.

during programme designing. It was also recognised that CSO participation in planning processes was not institutionalised due to resistance from local governments. However, CSOs and local government representatives at the workshop discussed effective ways of engaging with one another and working together for devising and implementing better public education programmes in their localities. [\[BACK\]](#)



CED Sri Lanka, with ASPBAE's support, organised a budget advocacy training workshop to build capacities of education coalitions, other members, and the youth constituency to undertake effective budget advocacy to call for concrete budget recommendations.

The workshop in Colombo, facilitated by ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano and Rene Raya, aimed to raise awareness on analysis of the national education budget, and identify gaps using an equity and gender lens and frameworks and tools on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and equity-based budgeting.



The different standards in education quality and uneven provision of facilities in schools in Sri Lanka can be attributed to political to geographical factors.

## Promoting citizenship engagement in government budgeting processes in Sri Lanka

3-4 August 2019, Colombo, Sri Lanka

By Shantha Kulathunge, National Coordinator, CED Sri Lanka

The decision of the government of Sri Lanka to provide free education to all was a pivotal point in social transformation in Sri Lanka. It made education the vehicle of social mobility, social security, and social empowerment. The encouragement given by successive governments explains the phenomenal strides made by Sri Lanka in the field of education relative to other countries in Asia.

However, there are significant differences in the education sector. The different standards in education quality and uneven provision of facilities in schools can be attributed to political, geographical, and other factors and also due to some measures adopted by the government itself. The delays in implementing necessary reforms in the education sector to meet current labor market demands lead to a mismatch of education, qualifications, and skills for employability. At the same time, the government prioritizes actions to increase its own popularity and gain political advantage rather than addressing the actual needs of the education sector.

In this context, to be able to lobby the government to implement the necessary reform and implement actions to promote quality education, people need to have access to knowledge on financing and the budgetary allocation processes. To promote citizen engagement in government budgeting processes, the Coalition for Educational Development, Sri Lanka (CED Sri Lanka), with ASPBAE's support, conducted a budget advocacy training workshop for its member organisations. The workshop aimed to build capacities of education coalitions, other members, and the youth constituency to undertake effective budget advocacy to call for concrete budget recommendations. In particular, the workshop aimed raise the awareness on analysis of the national education budget, and identify gaps using an equity and gender lens and frameworks and tools on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and equity-based budgeting.

With the acquired knowledge and skills on budget advocacy, CED Sri Lanka proposed to work closely with the participants to effectively engage in national and provincial budget processes, ensuring that the government commits to budgets provide inclusive and equitable quality education.

ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano and Rene Raya facilitated the two-day workshop. In addition to familiarising participants with the local budget process

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The discourse at the workshop highlighted the fact that the social, economic, and education status of Sri Lankan women is higher than that of the women in other countries in the region.



Participants from 15 districts of Sri Lanka identified marginalised groups in education and developed budget proposals focusing on achieving SDG 4 with a gender lens.

and steps that have already been taken for gender responsive budgeting in Sri Lanka, Samanthi N. Meethalawa, Director in the Ministry of Finance, Sri Lanka, also shared her experiences on the budget process.

Twenty-eight participants from 15 districts participated the workshop. They identified marginalised groups in education and developed budget proposals focusing on achieving SDG 4 with a gender lens.

The discourse at the workshop highlighted the fact that the social, economic, and education status of Sri Lankan women is higher than that of the women in other countries in the region. At the same time, various health and socio-economic indicators are at par with developed countries. This progress was achieved through free education and health policies implemented after the independence of the country. At the same time, a misunderstanding and lack of knowledge on gender dimensions of budgeting are some of the main challenges in working towards gender responsive budgeting in Sri Lanka. These include – (a) a belief that gender equality has already been achieved, often based on misguided notions of what gender equality is; (b) a belief that budget measures that do not specifically target men or women are therefore 'neutral'; (c) a belief that gender-responsive budgeting has been achieved if the government reports that funding is allocated to women-specific programmes; (d) lack of understanding of how to obtain relevant data and construct relevant gender indicators; (e) lack of familiarity with how to apply a gendered analysis of the quantitative taxes and expenditures.

The participants shared that the workshop helped them to review the national budget in a different perspective and that there were better equipped to analyse the budget with and equity and gender lens. [\[BACK\]](#)

## Inaugural training of Community Learning Centre managers held in Cambodia

6-9 August, Takeo Province, Cambodia

By Vanna Peou, Country Director, DVV office Cambodia



Participants of the DVV International, ASPBAE, and RMIT training for managers and members of Community Learning Centres (CLC) on effective management of the CLCs.

DVV International, in collaboration with ASPBAE and RMIT University (Melbourne, Australia), organised a management training for managers and members of Community Learning Centres (CLC) in Cambodia to address their learning needs on effective management of the CLCs. The training was conceived as a two-year course from 2019-2020, with a total of 6 modules, spread over two years. Each module is for a 4-day duration.

The first module, on 'Basic Concepts on Adult Learning and Education', was facilitated by ASPBAE's Anita Borkar. The training was conducted using a participatory approach, which included experiential activities and learning and active involvement of the participants.



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Some of the topics covered focused on understanding the differences between the principles of non-formal and formal education (NFE), NFE community development and CLC standards.

Some of the topics covered in this module focused on understanding the differences between the approach and principles of non-formal and formal education (NFE), NFE and skills development, NFE and community development, CLC and CLC standards, principles of adult learning, lifelong learning as a framework within the SDGs, role of facilitators in participatory learning approaches, communicating with different target groups, and working effectively in teams. Due to scarcity of resources, the participants recommended that a training handbook on NFE and participatory training approaches be produced in the local language.

The training brought together 39 CLC managers from different provinces of Cambodia. They shared that the information and practical hands-on training enhanced their knowledge and confidence, and that they were able to take this experience to people and institutions in their communities. [\[BACK\]](#)

## A world beyond bars: How prison libraries contribute to lifelong learning

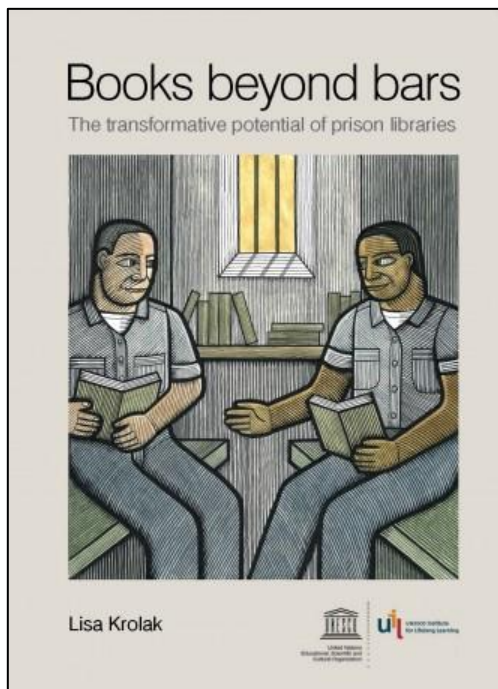
The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) published the first UNESCO publication on prison libraries, highlighting their contribution to the personal development and education of incarcerated adults and young people.

[\*Books beyond bars: The transformative potential of prison libraries\*](#), written by Lisa Krolak, UIL's Chief Librarian, will be officially launched at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) 2019, in Athens, Greece, from 24-30 August 2019.

The publication examines the critical role prison libraries play in supporting the mandate of prison authorities around the world to rehabilitate and reintegrate inmates into society. Providing inmates with access to reading materials and information is particularly important as the majority of those who find themselves in detention facilities come from challenging socio-economic backgrounds and have limited education and low literacy skills. By offering a variety of reading and learning materials, from easy to expert levels, in various languages, prison libraries provide lifelong learning opportunities, thereby improving inmates' chances of successful reintegration on release.

Using a prison library can be a transformative and powerful experience with far-reaching and lasting effects. *Books beyond bars* highlights examples from selected prison library systems from around the world, demonstrating challenges and best practice, and thus revealing their potential as sources of information, education, culture and recreation.


This write-up draws from information on the [UNESCO website](#). [\[BACK\]](#)



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**UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa  
Prize for the use of ICT in Education**

**Call for nominations**

**Deadline: 31 October 2019**

2019 theme: The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to innovate education, teaching and learning

Funded by the Kingdom of Bahrain and established in 2005, the Prize awards annually US\$ 25,000 each to two innovative projects leveraging new technologies to expand educational opportunities.

Education 2030

## UNESCO ICT in Education Prize: Call for nominations open to projects leveraging AI

**Deadline:** 31 October 2019

The UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the use of ICT in education is now accepting candidatures. The theme of the 2019 edition is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to innovate education, teaching and learning.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advancements in neuroscience have the potential to enhance teaching methodologies, support lifelong learning and personalize learning through various ways, as well as propel and accelerate the discovery of new delivering modes of education. Keeping in with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, UNESCO, with its partners, is aiming to explore the effective and ethical use of AI applications to reduce barriers to access education and optimize learning processes with a view to improve learning outcomes.

In 2019, the Prize will award AI-powered solutions as well as applications of neuroscience in AI aiming to improve learning outcomes, to empower teachers and to enhance the delivery of education services, while advocating for inclusive and equitable use of these technologies in education. Two winners will be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO based on the recommendations of an international Jury, and each winner will receive a reward of US\$ 25,000 and a diploma during a ceremony in Paris.

### Who can apply?

Any individual, institution, or non-governmental organization (NGO) with an established ongoing project relevant to the specific theme of the year i.e. that uses AI-powered solutions to enhance education, improve learning outcomes or empower teachers. More information on [selection criteria and eligibility](#).

### How to apply?

The applicants should first create [an account](#) and then fill in an online form via the [online platform](#). See [detailed user guide and instructions](#).

For the application to be considered, it should be nominated by either the National Commission of the UNESCO Member State or an NGO in official partnership with UNESCO. All applicants are encouraged to get in touch with the NGO or National Commission ahead of the application process. Self-nominations will not be accepted. Governments of UNESCO Member States as well as NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO are invited to elicit and nominate up to three projects, which are in line with the 2019 theme and meet the selection criteria.


**The deadline for nominations is 31 October 2019** (midnight, Paris time).

For more information contact: [ictprize@unesco.org](mailto:ictprize@unesco.org)

*This write-up draws from information on the [UNESCO website](#). [BACK]*



**Keeping in with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, UNESCO, with its partners, is aiming to explore the effective and ethical use of AI applications to reduce barriers to access education and optimize learning.**



**UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa  
Prize for the Use of ICT in Education**

**Call for nominations**

Education 2030





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