

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

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New Board members of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and civil society representatives take their place in GPE Board Committees

[Full article](#)



Newly-elected Board of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) meets to finalise decisions made at 2018 World Assembly

[Full article](#)



Wheels of Change - Realising women's economic empowerment through non-traditional livelihoods and education

Azad-ASPBAE parallel session at the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63)

[Full article](#)



EDUCATION NEWS AND VIEWS

The challenges and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence in education

[Full article](#)

ASPBAE secures SDG 4 policy wins at 6th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

The Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) is the regional preparatory event for the 2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF). ASPBAE organised a delegation composed of representatives from national education coalitions, youth constituency, and ASPBAE members, especially those from countries reporting on their Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) in the forthcoming HLPF in July 2019. - [Read more](#)

ASPBAE convenes youth and coalition meetings in lead-up to Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

ASPBAE organised pre-APFSD meetings to orient participants on the event, agree on key messages, and map out strategies for engagement. - [Read more](#)

Collective Consultation of NGOs in Education 2030 (CCNGO) lays out plans to ensure civil society participation in SDG 4 architecture amidst threats to civil society

The meeting of the Coordination Group (CG) of the Collective Consultation of NGOs in Education 2030 (CCNGO) focused on follow-up actions after the Global Education Meeting (GEM) held in Brussels in December 2018. It also strategised on how to ensure civil society participation in UN processes, and beyond, to advance the SDG-Education 2030 Agenda. - [Read more](#)

A call for action to raise political support for Education 2030

SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee meeting

The 6th SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) focused on preparations for the review of SDG 4 at the 2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019. - [Read more](#)



ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org

Member of the Month

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)

The Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) represents the community media sector to the government, industry, regulatory bodies, and media and development partners. Much of BNNRC's work has a strategic emphasis and it has been involved in policy advocacy on behalf of the community media sector with the government and other strategic bodies regarding community radio and broadcasting policies. BNNRC's outreach extends to local, national, and international forums for communicating Knowledge for Development (KM4D). Click [here](#) to know more about BNNRC.

Photo of the Month



International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated annually on 8 March. The day has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911.

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 Leah Servania, ASPBAE Administrative and Finance Officer (Manila, Philippines).

Leah Servania

ASPBAE Administrative and Finance Officer



ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org

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 artificial intelligence and the teaching and learning solutions that are currently being tested globally.

The challenges and opportunities of Artificial Intelligence in education

March 2019



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is producing new teaching and learning solutions that are currently being tested globally. These solutions require advanced infrastructures and an ecosystem of thriving innovators. How does that affect countries around the world, and especially developing nations? Should AI be a priority to tackle in order to reduce the digital and social divide?

These are some of the questions explored in a [Working Paper entitled 'Artificial Intelligence in Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development'](#) presented by UNESCO and ProFuturo at [Mobile Learning Week 2019](#). It features cases studies on how AI technology is helping education systems use data to improve educational equity and quality.

Concrete examples from countries such as China, Brazil and South Africa are examined on AI's contribution to learning outcomes, access to education and teacher support. Case studies from countries including the United Arab Emirates, Bhutan and Chile are presented on how AI is helping with data analytics in education management.

The Paper also explores the curriculum and standards dimension of AI, with examples from the European Union, Singapore and the Republic of Korea on how learners and teachers are preparing for an AI-saturated world.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org

Beyond the opportunities, the Paper also addresses the challenges and policy implications of introducing AI in education and preparing students for an AI-powered future. The challenges presented revolve around:

- **Developing a comprehensive view of public policy on AI for sustainable development:** The complexity of the technological conditions needed to advance in this field require the alignment of multiple factors and institutions. Public policies have to work in partnership at international and national levels to create an ecosystem of AI that serves sustainable development.
- **Ensuring inclusion and equity for AI in education:** The least developed countries are at risk of suffering new technological, economic and social divides with the development of AI. Some main obstacles such as basic technological infrastructure must be faced to establish the basic conditions for implementing new strategies that take advantage of AI to improve learning.
- **Preparing teachers for an AI-powered education:** Teachers must learn new digital skills to use AI in a pedagogical and meaningful way and AI developers must learn how teachers work and create solutions that are sustainable in real-life environments.
- **Developing quality and inclusive data systems:** If the world is headed towards the datafication of education, the quality of data should be the main chief concern. It's essential to develop state capabilities to improve data collection and systematization. AI developments should be an opportunity to increase the importance of data in educational system management.
- **Enhancing research on AI in education:** While it can be reasonably expected that research on AI in education will increase in the coming years, it is nevertheless worth recalling the difficulties that the education sector has had in taking stock of educational research in a significant way both for practice and policy-making.
- **Dealing with ethics and transparency in data collection, use and dissemination:** AI opens many ethical concerns regarding access to education system, recommendations to individual students, personal data concentration, liability, impact on work, data privacy and ownership of data feeding algorithms. AI regulation will require public discussion on ethics, accountability, transparency and security.

The key discussions taking place at Mobile Learning Week 2019 address these challenges, offering the international educational community, governments and other stakeholders a unique opportunity to explore together the opportunities and threats of AI in all areas of education.

[Download the working paper.](#)

[\[BACK\]](#)

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org

ASPBAE secures SDG 4 policy wins at 6th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

27-29 March 2019, Bangkok, Thailand



The 6th APFSD, convened by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), is the regional preparatory event for the 2019 HLPF. ASPBAE participated in the event with several of its coalitions and members.

For the past three years, ASPBAE has been participating in the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) and the civil society meeting that precedes the official forum. This year, at the 6th APFSD held in Bangkok, ASPBAE organised a larger delegation composed of representatives from national education coalitions, the youth constituency, and ASPBAE members, especially those from countries reporting on their respective Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) in the forthcoming High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019.

The 6th APFSD, convened by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), is the regional preparatory event for the 2019 HLPF, which brought together more than 850 participants, including representatives of governments, intergovernmental organisations, United Nations bodies, international organisations, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders.

This year's HLPF theme of '*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*' provides a good opportunity for governments and stakeholders to conduct an in-depth review of the goals that are most critical to people's empowerment and development: SDG 4 (inclusive, equitable, and quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (partnerships).

This year marks a high point in ASPBAE's advocacy engagement on the SDGs, highlighted by the first ever review of SDG 4 during the 2019 HLPF. Moreover, from 24-25 September 2019, the second segment of the HLPF will be convened by the UN General Assembly to follow up and comprehensively review the progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs. The event is the first UN summit on the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015.



The ASPBAE delegation, led by ASPBAE EC member from the South Pacific and youth leader, Peter Clinton Isaac Foase, along with ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano, Rene Raya, and Anita Borkar, included representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and New Zealand.

The ASPBAE delegation, led by ASPBAE EC member from the South Pacific and youth leader, Peter Clinton Isaac Foase, along with ASPBAE staff, Cecilia (Thea) Soriano, Rene Raya, and Anita Borkar, included representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and New Zealand.

It was noted that among the SDGs, the push for SDG 4 is not strong, mainly due to the perception that SDG 4 is not threatened as a goal. The reality, however, is that SDG 4 is not on track globally and regionally. Moreover, inequity, discrimination, and segregation in education have actually worsened in most countries across the region. It is for these reasons that ASPBAE sees the urgency of giving prominence to SDG 4 as a foundational goal that impacts heavily on all other SDGs, and to push for critical reforms and increased financing to accelerate efforts to meet all targets. This was the mission that guided the ASPBAE delegation in its participation in the APFSD and the People's Forum (APFSD).

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



ASPBAE participated in the roundtable session on SDG 4. ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano (2nd from left) spoke in the panel, taking off from ASPBAE's key messages and building on the statement agreed upon during the People's Forum.

ASPBAE actively participated in the roundtable session on SDG 4 that was chaired by UNESCO and that saw the participation of member states, UN agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs), and other stakeholders. The roundtables were designed to jointly agree on the analysis regarding progress on meeting the given SDG and its targets and to jointly develop policy recommendations.

ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano spoke in the panel, taking off from ASPBAE's key messages and building on the statement agreed upon during the People's Forum (read more about the People's Forum in the next article). She stressed the need to take decisive policy measures to overcome systemic barriers and accelerate efforts to get back on track.



ASPBAE, UNESCO Bangkok, and the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Education 2030 co-organised a side event on 'Multi-Stakeholder partnerships for SDG 4 and Launch of the GEMR 2019 Youth Report'.

A lively discussion followed with ASPBAE delegates offering critical inputs to the draft recommendations for adoption – which as envisaged to inform the official submission of the region to the 2019 HLPF. It was encouraging to note that most of the interventions from the ASPBAE delegation were taken on board and integrated in the final recommendations reported in the full plenary.

Some of the recommendations were – (1) Accelerate efforts to remove systemic and non-systemic barriers that hinder equity, inclusion and quality; (2) Concrete and effective policy interventions to remove any forms of barrier (direct and indirect) to education; (3) Increase and ensure the supply of motivated, qualified, adequately resourced, and empowered teachers supported by an enabling environment; (4) Reaffirm the global commitment to allocate at least 4-6% of the GDP and/or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure to education, and ensure an efficient, transparent, and equitable resource allocation and accountability in expenditures.

On the third day of the forum, ASPBAE, UNESCO Bangkok, and the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Education 2030 co-organised a side event on 'Multi-Stakeholder partnerships for SDG 4 and Launch of the GEMR 2019 Youth Report.' Fidelis Leite Magalhaes, Minister of Legislative and Parliamentary Reform of Timor-Leste, who was earlier elected Chair of the APFSD, gave the keynote address, stressing the critical role of education in human development and in meeting all the SDGs. Ahmed Shamim Al Razi, Joint Secretary for Secondary and Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh, presented the progress and challenges in implementing SDG 4, citing the important role of civil society organisations (CSO) in SDG processes.



ASPBAE's Rene Raya presented the highlights of the CSO country and regional spotlight reports.

ASPBAE's Rene Raya presented the highlights of the CSO country and regional spotlight reports, discussing both the achievements made and challenges faced by governments in SDG 4 implementation, and the key recommendations to meet all targets on time. He noted that while most governments have rolled out the SDGs, including SDG 4, there is lack of clear financing commitments and weak engagement mechanisms for stakeholder participation in SDG processes, while critical gaps remain in data and monitoring, making it difficult to track particularly the excluded and those left behind.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



At the launch of the GEMR 2019 Youth Report, ASPBAE EC member, Peter Clinton Isaac Foese, emphasised that the realities of young people and their environment should be integrated in education systems.

The panel was followed by the launch of the GEMR 2019 Youth Report, with UNESCO presenting the outline and key messages, and two youth representatives from ASPBAE and ARROW sharing their reflections.

ASPBAE's youth representative, Peter Clinton Isaac Foese, emphatically pointed out that, *"not only should we be looking at the statistics, numerical codes and numbers, but also how they are connected to the stories and experiences of the young people, ensuring that these are connected to the stories of their land... and that the stories of people in other lands are learned and integrated in our educational systems."*

Overall, the ASPBAE delegation was satisfied with the outcome of the APFSD and the related events held prior to the forum, and noted that important breakthroughs were achieved which adequately prepares ASPBAE for its engagement in the forthcoming HLPF in July and the UN General Assembly in September 2019. [\[BACK\]](#)

ASPBAE convenes youth and coalition meetings in lead-up to Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

22-23 March 2019, Bangkok, Thailand



The Asia Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) was held to consolidate civil society positions and recommendations for a regional sustainable development agenda.

Preparatory meetings were organised by ASPBAE in the lead-up to the [6th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development \(APFSD\)](#). The meetings were held to orient participants on the APFSD, agree on key messages, and map out strategies for engagement. The meetings served as an excellent opportunity for exchanging views and sharing experiences between and among the youth constituencies, the national coalitions, and education practitioners.

The youth meeting was organised on the first day with youth representatives sharing the results of the consultations that were held in their respective countries to discuss the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), particularly [SDG 4](#) (Goal 4 on education), from the perspective of young people. The meeting agreed on a joint statement that outlines the youth agenda on the SDGs.

The second day of the preparatory meeting was more intense with participants coming from 12 countries and representing national coalitions, youth organisations, and NGOs. They were joined by ASPBAE staff Cecilia Soriano, Anita Borkar and Rene Raya, and ASPBAE EC member Peter Clinton Isaac Foese.

The coalition representatives presented highlights of the spotlight reports that they have prepared in time for the APFSD and the forthcoming [High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) to be held in New York in July 2019. The spotlight reports offer an alternative analysis that highlight the perspective of civil society and marginalise groups on the SDG progress and implementation process. At the end of the second day pre-meeting, participants consolidated the reports and came up with a joint position paper that serves as guide for the delegation's participation and intervention to both the APFSD and the civil society-organised People's Forum.

The youth meeting was organised with youth representatives sharing the results of the consultations that were held in their respective countries to discuss the SDGs, particularly SDG 4, from the perspective of young people.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



At the People's Forum, Asia-Pacific civil society organisations explored common ground and actions, developed common messages, and coordinated strategies for more effective participation in intergovernmental processes on sustainable development.

ASPBAE delegation advocates for the SDGs in solidarity with movements beyond education

Asia-Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development (APPFSD)

24-26 March 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

As in previous years, civil society organisations from across the region came together and convened the [Asia-Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (APPFSD).

The People's Forum was organised by APRCEM, the [Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism](#) (APRCEM), to consolidate civil society positions and recommendations for a regional sustainable development agenda. Asia-Pacific civil society organisations (CSOs) from different sectors and countries explored common ground and actions, developed common messages, and coordinated strategies for more effective participation in national, regional, and global intergovernmental processes on sustainable development.



The ASPBAE delegation participated in the People's Forum, organised side events related to SDG 4, and facilitated discussions among education stakeholders.

The People's Forum aimed to -

1. Foster sharing and learning from a variety of experiences of organisations and constituencies and to enhance capacity of civil society participants on sustainable development at the national, regional, and global levels, and on the opportunities and modalities for engaging these processes, including identifying and dealing with key systemic issues/barriers to the achievement of sustainable development;
2. Help build an understanding of sustainable development as a comprehensive whole with strong inter-linkages across its various dimensions and components; therefore, to also link the work of various other CSO campaigns, peoples' movements, grassroots constituencies, scientific and academic communities across national borders;
3. Dialogue on the structure and content of the APFSD with its theme '*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in Asia and the Pacific*', formulate joint positions, as well as strategise interventions at the [6th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (APFSD), the [High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF), and other processes; and
4. Agree on joint actions and follow-up to civil society positions adopted to strengthen and support each other's ideas, plans, and actions across national borders.



The People's Forum aimed to, amongst other things, 1. Foster sharing and learning from a variety of experiences of organisations and constituencies and to enhance capacity of civil society participants on sustainable development.

The ASPBAE delegation, which included ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano and Rene Raya, ASPBAE Executive Council member representing the South Pacific, Peter Clinton Isaac Foese, and coalition representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea, participated in the three-day Forum, organised side events related to SDG 4, and facilitated discussions among education stakeholders.

The different constituency groups convened on the first day of the Forum to discuss the key messages that were to be carried forward to the APFSD.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



ASPBAE organised workshops during the People's Forum on accountability on SDG 4, transformative education for people's empowerment, and harnessing the power of people's movements.

Conversation starters were provided by coalition representatives from CAMPE Bangladesh; E-Net Philippines; and NCE India to provide a glimpse of SDG processes in different country contexts.

Aside from ASPBAE delegates, youth representatives from the [Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women](#) (ARROW), [Soroptimist](#), and academic institutions participated in the education cluster meeting.

Members of the ASPBAE delegation divided themselves across different constituency groups, specifically on indigenous peoples, youth and children, and NGOs. This helped ASPBAE members to familiarise themselves with the diversity of civil society participants within APRCEM and the agenda of various sectors and constituency groups.

ASPBAE organised its first side event on '*Transformative education for people's empowerment and social justice: unpacking SDG 4.*' ASPBAE provided an overview of SDG 4, followed by presentations by the [Afghan National Education Coalition](#) (ANEC) on its advocacy on literacy-education and peace building, while [Azad Foundation](#) (India) shared its gender-just framework on skills development for decent work.

Group discussions on policy recommendations on SDG 4 were held and consolidated in a plenary session which served as contribution to the overall statement of the People's Forum.

ASPBAE organised its second workshop on '*Accountability on SDG 4 - CSO space and engagement*' which focused on reviewing the participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in SDG 4 policy decision making. Civil society representatives from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Philippines, Timor Leste, Myanmar, and Thailand participated in this side event.

Brief conversation starters were provided by coalition representatives from [CAMPE](#) (Campaign for Popular Education), Bangladesh; [E-Net Philippines](#); and the National Coalition for Education, India ([NCE India](#)), to provide a glimpse of SDG processes in different country contexts.

Other participants also shared their country contexts and discussed options for meaningful engagement in SDG processes. Among the recommendations proposed were the need to engage the media, create narratives that connects directly to the masses, lobby with opposition parliamentarians, and strengthen solidarity with other movements.

The People's Forum provided a meaningful venue for civil society coming from different sectors and countries to explore common grounds, develop common messages, and coordinate strategies for effective participation in regional and global SDG processes.

For the ASPBAE delegation, the People's Forum was an occasion to meet other sectors and movements, appreciate their issues and advocacies, understand different perspectives in education, and deepen the analysis on the barriers that impact education. [\[BACK\]](#)



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ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



ASPBAE's Thea Soriano and CAMPE's Rasheda Choudhury represented the Asia Pacific in the Coordination Group meeting.

Collective Consultation of NGOs in Education 2030 (CCNGO) lays out plans to ensure civil society participation in SDG 4 architecture amidst threats to civil society

7-8 March 2019, Paris, France

The Coordination Group (CG) of the [Collective Consultation of NGOs in Education 2030](#) (CCNGO) met at the UNESCO Paris headquarters. ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano, together with Rasheda Choudhury of [CAMPE](#) (Campaign for Popular Education, Bangladesh), represented the Asia Pacific in the Coordination Group meeting.

The meeting focused on follow-up actions after the [Global Education Meeting \(GEM\)](#) held in Brussels in December 2018. It also reviewed the [SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee's](#) paper submission on [Sustainable Development Goal 4](#) (SDG 4) to the [High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) 2019. Importantly, the meeting strategised on how to ensure civil society participation in UN processes, and beyond, to advance the [SDG-Education 2030 Agenda](#).

Jordan Naidoo, Director of the UNESCO Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, informed the CG on the celebrations related to the first [International Day of Education](#) observed globally on 24 January 2019. Mr. Naidoo added that the [Group of Friends for Education and Lifelong Learning](#) - a gathering of Embassy officials and other groups based in New York - was also launched on the occasion. The aim of the group is to strengthen synergies in advancing SDG 4 with the UN in New York and with other groups, such as [G7](#) and [G20](#).

Mr. Naidoo expressed concerns about the possible fragmentation of the global architecture and coherence issues with the multiplication of disparate initiatives on education. He appealed to civil society to play a role in countering this trend, which can negatively affect outcomes for the most marginalised.

In the reports on the efforts following the GEM in Brussels, ASPBAE reported that it has undertaken country Spotlight Reports with 14 national education coalitions in the Asia Pacific. It also pointed out that coalitions in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia, Pakistan, Mongolia, and Vanuatu, as well as its members in New Zealand, are engaging the [Voluntary National Review](#) (VNR) processes in their respective countries, as well as at the regional level.

CAMPE reported that it has created an [SDG Network Platform](#) in Bangladesh in collaboration with 7 organisations. CAMPE is also working with the National Commission for UNESCO and with the government of Bangladesh to develop an SDG 4 Action Plan.

Other regional representatives in the meeting, notably from Latin America and the Arab region, had strong plans to engage the HLPF 2019 and VNR processes. In Latin America, [CLADE](#) (Latin America Campaign for the Right to Education) plans to mobilise a delegation to the HLPF and, for this, to come out with a publication and a campaign on transformative education. Camilla Croso, CLADE Coordinator, highlighted CLADE's efforts to improve quality of education through



In the reports on the efforts following the GEM in Brussels, ASPBAE reported that it has undertaken country Spotlight Reports with 14 national education coalitions in the Asia Pacific.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), represented by DVVI (Germany), noted the importance of continuing advocacy on adult education, non-formal education, and TVET, and implementing a lifelong learning perspective in achieving the SDGs.

There is concern about continually ensuring the voices of civil society in the SDG 4 processes amidst the trend towards authoritarian governance.



The Coordination Group agreed concrete steps to pursue in 2019 and its continuing work in ensuring meaningful participation of civil society organisations to ensure the transformative agenda of SDG 4 and education within the SDGs.

integrating gender equality into the curriculum, teacher training in Argentina, Brazil, and Peru, and greater collaboration with youth and student organisations. The [Arab Campaign for Education for All](#) (ACEA) informed the Coordination Group of their engagement in the VNR processes in Iraq and Tunisia. They also shared their plans on the Regional Initiative for Adult Education that takes a rights-based approach and its campaign around accountability named, 'Ask Your Government; Protect Your Right'.

The [European Association for the Education of Adults](#) (EAEA), represented by [DVVI](#) (Germany), noted the importance of continuing advocacy on adult education, non-formal education, and TVET (technical vocational education and training), and implementing a lifelong learning perspective in the achievement of the SDGs. The Arab Network on Literacy and Adult Education (ANLAE) also shared their initiatives in advancing adult literacy policy and practice in the Arab region.

The reports of the different members of the Coordination group confirmed that there are many country and regional efforts to advance SDG 4 by education movements and civil society organisations. However, there is a huge concern about continually ensuring the voices of civil society in the SDG 4 processes amidst the trend towards authoritarian governance. To counter the scenario of shrinking spaces, the Coordination Group agreed on the following next steps -

- Map out priority areas of CCNGO members and identify opportunities for joint activities, such as in advocacy and capacity building.
- Encourage CCNGO members to participate in the HLPF and use key messages of the [Brussels Declaration](#) related to SDG 4 and education as enablers of the SDGs. Apart from the HLPF, the plan is to integrate these messages in the Political Declaration of the [SDG Summit](#) in September 2019.
- Produce a policy brief on civil society participation in SDG architecture at international, regional, and national levels; draft Terms of Reference proposed by CLADE and ASPBAE.
- Carry out an analytical review with CCNGO constituencies on what governments are doing around curriculum/SDG 4, in particular [SDG 4.5](#) (eliminating gender disparities; equal access to all levels of education and vocational training), and [SDG 4.7](#) (promoting sustainable development, including Education for Sustainable Development, ESD).
- Information sharing and communications highlighting the work of NGOs, new publications on education policy, and other resources. It was also suggested that the Coordination Group organise Skype calls every 2 months to share updates.

The Coordination Group agreed to work towards organising the Global CCNGO meeting in Tunis (Tunisia) in December 2019 (TBC) on the theme of curriculum alignment to SDG 4, particularly SDG 4.5 and 4.7. ACEA offered to host the meeting. The Coordination Group meeting ended on an optimistic note, having agreed concrete steps to pursue in 2019 and its continuing work in ensuring meaningful participation of civil society organisations to ensure the transformative agenda of SDG 4 and education within the SDGs. [\[BACK\]](#)

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org

A call for action to raise political support for Education 2030

SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee meeting

11-12 March 2019, Paris, France

The 6th SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) meeting took place at the [UNESCO](#) Headquarters in Paris. The meeting focused on preparations for the review of [SDG 4](#) at the [2019 High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) in July 2019 under the theme, 'Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equity', as well as the UN General Assembly four-year review of all SDGs in September 2019.

The meeting was structured around the following themes –

1. Follow-up to the [Global Education Meeting 2018](#).
2. Implementation of SDG 4 at global, regional, and national levels.
3. Steering Committee Submission to HLPF 2019.
4. Special publication on SDG 4 on the occasion of the HLPF 2019.
5. Strategic planning for the SC.

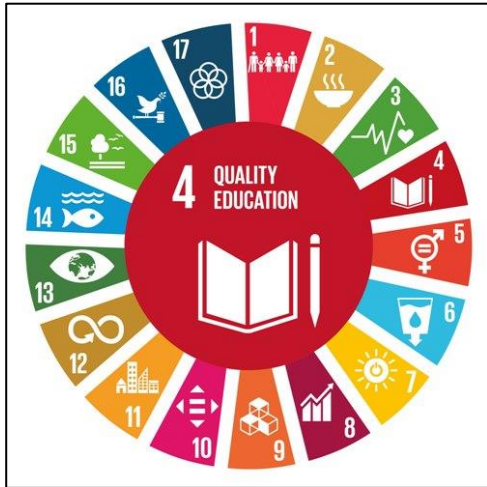
Keep hammering the evidence that education equals progress across the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), urged UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, Stefania Giannini, an appeal echoed by top UN officials at the meeting.

"The Steering Committee is a global think tank for education. It has a political, technical, and advocacy responsibility to raise up education as a basic human right and key driver for sustainable development," she said. "It is only through determination, cooperation, and engagement that we will succeed in moving forwards, leveraging the knowledge, capacities, and networks that each of you represents."

Counting 32 Members, the Committee, co-chaired by UNESCO, is a unique consultation and coordination mechanism for education in the [2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#). It brings together representatives from Member States, multilateral institutions, regional organisations, civil society networks, teacher organisations, foundations, private sector, and youth. ASPBAE attended as an Observer being an alternate to the [Arab Campaign for Education for All](#) (ACEA). Cecilia (Thea) Soriano attended on ASPBAE's behalf.

The 6th Committee meeting, organised by UNESCO and co-chaired by Japan, took place at a crucial crossroads, ahead of the UN High-level Political Forum in July, which will review SDG 4, and the [SDG Summit](#) in September.

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohamed, stressed in a video message, *"the importance of the Committee for guiding the implementation of SDG 4 and all its connections to the other 16 goals. This involves prioritising, collaborating, and advocating around a shared vision."*



The Steering Committee meeting focused on preparations for the review of SDG 4 at the 2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019.



ASPBAE attended the Steering Committee meeting as an Observer being an alternate to the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA). Cecilia (Thea) Soriano attended on ASPBAE's behalf.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



Speakers referred to the Brussels Declaration a means to rally and strengthen the education movement, and commended its emphasis on teachers, as well as on the inclusion of refugees, in education systems.

“Our imperative is clear: to mobilise the political will, policies, capacity, and financing that will make progress possible,” she said. “Each member of this Committee has a voice and a role. I urge you to keep the pressure on political leaders to show, in all the upcoming forums, that they are serious about meeting this challenge.”

Stephania Giannini stressed that the [Brussels Declaration](#), adopted at the [Global Education Meeting](#) (GEM) in Brussels in December 2018, provides the shared vision and direction to speak with one voice in this decisive year for education. She urged the education community to act in coordinated and concerted ways, warning that *“fragmentation can and never will be the solution.”*

A panel on follow-up to the Brussels meeting noted the positive ways in which the Brussels Declaration is informing policy, including at the EU level. Speakers referred to it as a *“practical tool and reference,”* a means to rally and strengthen the education movement, and commended its emphasis on teachers, as well as on the inclusion of refugees, in education systems. Presentations by Belgium, the Philippines, [UNHCR](#), [Education International](#) (EI), the [Arab Campaign for Education for All](#) (ACEA), and the Youth Representative detailed a rich picture of the follow-up actions in the first few months after the GEM 2018, while identifying opportunities and some challenges.

The panellists and SC members acknowledged the impetus provided by the Brussels Declaration for immediate action both within countries and communities, and at a regional level. It was also highlighted as one of the first global commitments on education that explicitly includes minority groups such as asylum seekers, refugees, and marginalized youth.

In a session on implementing SDG 4 at global, regional, and national levels, it was highlighted that the annual cost of investment in data to monitor SDG4 is \$280m, \$148m is considered spent, leaving a \$132m gap; of which \$60m is needed per year in low/middle income countries for learning assessments (75%) and household surveys (25%). Countries need both technical and financial assistance to report on the SDGs while donors tend to prioritise innovation and data for investment. To address this, the UN Statistical Commission, in March 2019, endorsed the UIS as broker between data demand and funding supply. The Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) is the one-stop technical reference for Member States and representatives from all regions (IAEG-SDGs) and international partners. The TCG develops SDG 4 indicator methodologies, standards, and guidelines as well as tools to implement and report.

In a series of presentations, regional organisations and Member States explained how they are aligning policies and priorities with the SDG 4 agenda. Colombia’s Minister of National Education of Colombia, Maria Victoria Angulo Gonzalez, stated that the SDG agenda is pivotal for planning the education sector. She described her government’s comprehensive approach to equity and inclusion, encompassing legal reforms, intersectoral strategies and programmes at all levels. These include the promotion of early childhood care and education, rural education, school nutrition, and attention to global citizenship in curricula.



Countries need both technical and financial assistance to report on the SDGs while donors tend to prioritise innovation and data for investment.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org

National presentations highlighted the complexity of translating the broad scope of SDG 4 into policy and difficulties in meeting the demand for more and better data to monitor SDG 4 targets.

Many national presentations highlighted the challenges of literacy, teacher training, curriculum innovation, skills training, migration, and financing. They noted the complexity of translating the broad scope of SDG 4 into policy and difficulties in meeting the demand for more and better data to monitor SDG 4 targets.

The SC discussed its joint submission to the HLPF, and key areas for engagement, joint work and advocacy, with a view to reinforcing coordination around SDG 4 at national, regional, and global levels.

This article draws on a Steering Committee Meeting report as well as on information appearing on the [UNESCO website](http://unesco.org). [BACK]

New Board members of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and civil society representatives take their place in GPE Board Committees

March 2019



ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, was elected to represent the civil society constituency from the global South, along with Camilla Croso, Regional Coordinator of the Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education (CLADE).

Within January to April 2019, the [Global Campaign for Education](http://gpe.org) (GCE) facilitated the selection process for civil society representatives to the Board of the [Global Partnership for education](http://gpe.org) (GPE). In February 2019, the civil society organisation (CSO) representatives to the GPE Board were elected by their respective constituencies. ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, was elected to represent the civil society constituency from the global South, along with Camilla Croso, Regional Coordinator of the [Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education](http://clade.org) (CLADE). Following the election of Board members, the constituency representatives in the GPE Board pursued a selection process for their representatives to the different Board Committees.

The following are the selected civil society representatives to the GPE Board Committees –

1. Finance and Risk Committee: (1) CSO 1 - Kira Boe, Senior Education Advocacy Advisor, Oxfam Ibis, Denmark; and (2) CSO 2 (Developing Country) - Zehra Arshad, National Coordinator, Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE).

This committee oversees risk management practices, financial management and audit arrangements of GPE and its resources; provides advice to the Board to ensure that GPE resources are being managed efficiently, and consistently with its mission, objectives and policies.

2. Grants and Performance Committee: (1) CSO 1 – Tony Baker, Associate Director, Global Education, RESULTS Educational Fund. (2) Cheikh Mbow as Alternate from the COSYDEP, the national coalition of Senegal.

This committee recommends grant proposals to reflect GPE strategic priorities and make decision on proposed revisions; tracks progress on the portfolio of grants awarded from GPE resources and oversees the education sector plan quality assurance process.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) facilitated the selection process for civil society representatives to the Board of the Global Partnership for education (GPE). Following the election of Board members, the constituency representatives in the GPE Board pursued a selection process for their representatives to different Board Committees

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



GPE Board Committees include - Finance and Risk Committee; Grants and Performance Committee; Governance and Ethics Committee; and 4. Strategy and Impact Committee.

3. Governance and Ethics Committee: (1) CSO 3 (Teaching Profession) - Jefferson Berriel-Pessi, Coordinator, Education International, Belgium; and (2) CSO 2 (Development Country) – Fotouh Mahmoud Younes, Executive Director, Arab Network for Civic Education (ANHRE), Jordan. (3) Rasheda Choudhury as Alternate, from CAMPE, the national coalition in Bangladesh.

This committee oversees global governance arrangements and ethical standards as well as recommends policies, practices, and/or procedures to the Board to ensure that GPE is structured, governed and functioning effectively and ethically at the global level.

4. Strategy and Impact Committee: (1) Chair: David Archer, Head of Participation and Public Services, ActionAid, United Kingdom; (2) CSO/Private Sector Foundation – Antonia Wulff, Coordinator, Education International (CSO 3 – Teaching Profession).

This committee oversees the development of strategies and policies that promote best practices and foster innovation in education; monitors the implementation of GPE's strategic plan, provides recommendations for the annual results report, and oversees independent evaluations of GPE.

A new set of Developing Country Partners (DCPs) were also selected to represent in the GPE Board. From the Asia Pacific, the governments representing the Asia Pacific in the GPE Board are Nepal and Bangladesh. Asia Pacific government representatives in the GPE Board Committees are as follows –

1. Finance and Risk Committee: Farooq Ahmadi, GPE Programme Coordinator, Ministry of Education, Afghanistan.
2. Grants and Performance Committee: Baikuntha Prasad Aryal, Joint Secretary, Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Nepal.
3. Governance and Ethics Committee: Firdavs Kutliev, Chief Specialist of the Sector for introducing new initiatives of the Ministry of Public Education of Uzbekistan.
4. Strategy and Impact Committee: Tulashi Thapaliya, Administrative Chief, Teacher Service Commission, Nepal. [\[BACK\]](#)

From the Asia Pacific, the governments representing the Asia Pacific in the GPE Board are Nepal and Bangladesh. Afghanistan, Nepal, and Uzbekistan are a part of the different Board Committees.



The newly-elected Board of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) met for the first time in Johannesburg.

Newly-elected GCE Board meets to finalise decisions made at 2018 World Assembly

17-20 March 2019, Johannesburg, South Africa

By Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, Board member of the Global Campaign for Education representing the Asia Pacific, and former ASPBAE President

The newly-elected Board of the [Global Campaign for Education](#) (GCE) met for the first time in Johannesburg - the location of the GCE Secretariat.

Being the first meeting of the Board, with a significant number of new members, a whole day was spent inducting the Board on GCE history; GCE constitution and by-laws, and how they have been operationalised, and a review of key representational roles.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



The main meeting focused on finalising decisions taken during the GCE World Assembly held in Kathmandu, Nepal, in November 2018, such as the Strategic Plan, and the Youth Engagement Strategy.

The main meeting focused on finalising decisions taken during the [GCE World Assembly](#) held in Kathmandu, Nepal, in November 2018, such as the Strategic Plan, the Youth Engagement Strategy, the Resource Mobilisation Strategy, and the confirmation of the Ex-officio roles of the Immediate Past President and Chair. In addition, decisions were taken with regards to [the 2019 Global Action Week for Education](#) (GAWE) with the theme 'Making the right to an inclusive, equitable, quality, free public education a reality', and the proposed GCE events to be organised for the [UN High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) in July 2019, where [SDG 4](#) is being reviewed.

During the meeting, the Board welcomed Romeo Matsas, who was elected as the second member from the INGO constituency after the World Assembly. Romeo is a Senior Policy Advisor at [Plan International](#), Belgium, in charge of advocacy on the right to education.

After the meeting, Chris Weavers was confirmed as the second member of the Europe/North America constituency. Chris works for the [NASUWT](#), the teachers' union where he leads the union's political engagement as well as maintaining relationships with a wide range of external organisations, domestically and internationally. Chris has chaired [Send my Friend to School](#), the UK coalition of the Global Campaign for Education for almost 10 years. [\[BACK\]](#)

Wheels of Change - Realising women's economic empowerment through non-traditional livelihoods and education

Azad-ASPBAE parallel session at the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63)

19 March 2019, New York, USA

By Amrita Gupta, Azad Foundation, India



Azad Foundation, in collaboration with ASPBAE, organised an NGO parallel event at the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63). The parallel event was titled, 'Wheels of Change - Realizing Women's economic empowerment through Non-Traditional Livelihoods'.

[Azad Foundation](#), in collaboration with [ASPBAE](#), organised an NGO parallel event at the [63rd Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW63) in New York. The theme for CSW63 was - *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services, and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls* - an area that is integral not only to achieving the implementation of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) (1995), but also the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (2015).

Despite global declarations which aim to "reach the last first", in reality, gender inequality still persists, especially when it comes to women's participation in the economy and their ability to earn remunerative income in livelihoods with dignity.

Global commitments to SDG 4 that talk of quality and equitable education access, and SDG 8 that talk of decent work and economic growth, have brought some gains in women's economic empowerment and girls' education and skilling. However, women still remain at a great disadvantage in the labour force. In fact, the trend toward gender parity in education has not translated into gender equality in the labour market. Labour market outcomes for women are still discouraging -

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



The Azad-ASPBAE parallel event focused on the need for non-traditional livelihoods in a global paradigm, and the need for building supportive ecosystems to enable women to enter and sustain their work participation.

with women overrepresented in low-skilled, informal work, persistent gender pay gap and fettered by unpaid care and reproductive work. Restrictive socio-cultural norms, gendered job roles, and limited access to technical education and training for women and girls are some of the contributing factors.

Azad Foundation, in their work on 'Non-Traditional Livelihoods' (NTL), aims to disrupt this norm and enable women to access and sustain work in livelihoods that are predominantly male dominated like professional driving, masonry, carpentry, etc. The parallel event took forward the advocacies discussed and agreed during the International Conference organised by Azad Foundation in January 2019. In particular, it focused on the need for NTL in a global paradigm, the necessity of further developing and advancing a pedagogic model '*Gender Just Skill Education Framework*', and the need for building supportive ecosystems to enable women to enter and sustain their work participation thereby impacting Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

The parallel event was titled '*Wheels of Change - Realizing Women's economic empowerment through Non-Traditional Livelihoods*'. An international panel with different sectoral expertise - private sector, civil society, and donors - contributed to the event that was moderated by Sarah Green, Senior Policy Advisor, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, [American Jewish World Service](#). The panelists who spoke at the event were - Marissa Wesely, CEO, [Win-Win Strategies](#); Amrita Gupta, Programme Director, Azad Foundation; Nani Zulminarni, ASPBAE President and Director of [PEKKA](#) (an ASPBAE member in Indonesia); and Alexa Hassink, Director of Communications, [Promundo](#).

The panel began with an introduction to non-traditional livelihoods (commercial driving, electrician, masonry, carpentry) where Amrita Gupta explained how NTL is about putting resources in women's hands and giving them expanded options for livelihoods that are dignified and remunerative as well as challenge the social constructions of gender and gender role allocations. She shared examples of how women at Azad-[Sakha](#), who have been trained using a 'Gender Just Skills Education' (GJSE) framework - a rights based transformational pedagogy, assisted with livelihood opportunities - have become economically empowered decision-makers and have raised their voices against violence and early and child marriage, with many restarting their education. Amrita also shared about the initiative to create an NTL network that has been seeded by Azad for collective advocacy around NTL and the need for transformational training, going beyond just technical aspects, to focus on building a rights-based perspective for marginalised women.

Nani Zulminarni (ASPBAE/PEKKA) elaborated on the GJSE framework principles: underscoring the transformational character of this approach - changing perspectives and power relations. The GJSE framework, which adopts a lifelong learning perspective, stresses the importance of the availability and accessibility of trainings for grassroots women from marginalised communities. The focus on livelihoods and transformative skills for marginalised women, however, is missing from traditional governmental programmes and even from donor-funded livelihood schemes – a key highlight of the study on '*Financing*

Nani Zulminarni (ASPBAE/PEKKA) elaborated on the 'Gender Just Skills Education' framework principles, underscoring the transformational character of this approach - changing perspectives and power relations.



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ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org



Amrita Gupta of Azad Foundation explained how non-traditional livelihoods is about putting resources in women's hands and giving them expanded options for livelihoods that are dignified and remunerative, as well as challenge the social constructions of gender and gender role allocations.

Options for Skills for Marginalized Women' (undertaken jointly by PEKKA, Azad, and ASPBAE).

Marissa Wesely (Win-Win Strategies) shared the need for an ecosystem facilitating NTL, the GJSE pedagogic model, and more importantly, the need to discuss defining 'work', not just unpaid, paid, or care work, but how women and marginalised sections are not being able to participate in productive work. She added that an enabling ecosystem not only requires a rights-based perspective, including a discourse around women's control over resources, but also their rights to access basic necessities like sexual and reproductive health, which also play critical roles in productive economic activity. Therefore, a women-centric design is important which looks at social protections and infrastructure, childcare that will help women sustain their work participation, and also re-skilling opportunities.

The need for different levels of ecosystem creation and other structural support was further elaborated by the panelists. Nani spoke about the need to liaise with religious actors and make them aware of women's perspectives. Marissa elaborated the role of the corporate sector in making connections with local women's groups for more contextual understanding of local livelihood initiatives.

Amrita shared about enabling, quality public structures that provide healthcare, education, day care services. She highlighted the need for the state to help provide infrastructural support, homes for women, safe roads, and governance around sharing of care and domestic work. She also spoke about how non-provision of water, electricity, and basic necessities puts extra burden on women, impacting their ability to participate in 'work' that is remunerative.

Alexa from Promundo, which initiated the "men care" campaign, shared that globally women are taking on 3 times more unpaid care work than men, and that changing norms is essential so that men play an active role, especially in parental care work. She shared an international men and gender equality survey showing that 1 in 5 men fear losing their job if they take paternal leave. She said that norms are not only reinforced through gender stereotyping at home but in workplaces for men too, and hence the need to introduce ideas such as a family leave policy.

The session concluded with a summary of the potential of non-traditional livelihoods, need for Gender Just Skills Education, and the importance of a supportive social infrastructure which includes infrastructural support, safe spaces, governance, and behaviour change on care work as a critical missing link to women's decent livelihoods and their economic and social empowerment.

In the spirit of creating supportive ecosystems, the panel concluded with a video prepared by Azad Foundation and Breakthrough on the need for safe and hygienic washrooms featuring women drivers from Azad-Sakha. [\[BACK\]](#)



An enabling ecosystem includes a women-centric design that looks at social protections and infrastructure, childcare that will help women sustain their work participation, and re-skilling opportunities.

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

March 2018

www.aspbae.org

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