

# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

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**GCE holds first webinar on education budget advocacy and the COVID-19 crisis**

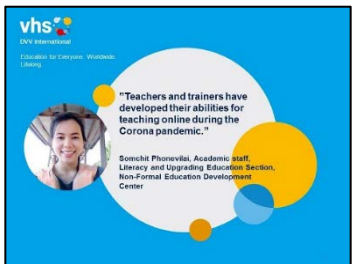
[Full article](#)



**Education crisis will be more severe after reopening of schools**

Interview of Rasheda Choudhury, CAMPE Bangladesh

[Full article](#)



**DVV International starts a series of video podcasts with adult educators**

[Full article](#)



**UN framework for reopening schools**

[Full article](#)



**Education News & Views**

Empowering students with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis

[Full article](#)

**ASPBAE affirms education as key to sustainable development at 7<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) took place online with the theme, 'Accelerating action for and delivery of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific'. - [Read more](#)

**Second Asia Pacific national education coalitions' meeting with ASPBAE provides updates on education issues and actions in a COVID-19 world**

ASPBAE held a virtual meeting of its coalition members to update on the policy context for education in different countries in the Asia Pacific, in light of the continuing COVID-19 crisis. The meeting was also an opportunity update on global and regional education developments. - [Read more](#)

**Coordination Group of CC NGO Education 2030 meets to update on COVID-19 responses and engagements in advocacy spaces**

The Coordination Group of the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 convened in a virtual meeting to, amongst others, update on UNESCO COVID-19 responses and on the SDG-ED2030 Steering Committee (ESC) work, including its engagement with the Futures Commission work. - [Read more](#)

**SDC Education Network webinar focusses on cross-sectoral programming during school closures due to COVID-19**

The SDC Education Network seminar highlighted the key role of education in cross-sectoral interventions, providing guidance on cross-sectoral programming during school closures and for planning the safe reopening of schools, as well as peer exchange and learning from Education Network members' experiences.

[Read more](#)



# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)

## Member of the Month

### Himalayan Health and Environmental Services Solukhumbu (HHESS), Nepal

The core philosophy of the Himalayan Health and Environmental Services Solukhumbu (HHESS), Nepal, is guided by its commitment to help bring about an awareness of reproductive health, nutrition, and basic education. It also works towards improving rural infrastructures in these sectors through capacity building of the rural poor living in remote areas of Nepal.

Providing specialized health services through a pool of public health professionals, nutritionists, and trained clinicians, supporting government mechanisms, UN agencies, and INGOs have been some of the key characteristics of HHESS over the years. Click [here](#) to know more about the organisation.

## Photo of the Month



International Day for Biological Diversity, observed on 22 May, is held to create and enhance understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. This year's theme was 'our solutions are in nature'.

## 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 Aida Batingan, Transition Finance Officer.

### Aida Batingan

Transition Finance Officer





# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

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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 the education needs and barriers for students with disabilities.

### **Empowering students with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis**

4 May 2020



Photo credit: Shutterstock/ AnnGaysorn

**Leave  
no one  
behind**

#### Key facts

- Approximately 15% of the world's population, representing more than 1 billion people, live with disabilities, and 2% to 4% find day-to-day life challenging without assistance.
- Disability is more prevalent in low- and middle-income countries than in high-income countries.
- Disability, gender, nationality, ethnicity, poverty and many other factors affect internet access. An online-based, high-tech approach is not always ideal for creating an inclusive learning environment.
- Currently, because of a lack of disaggregated data and information, it is unclear how many students with disabilities are receiving inadequate educational support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Educational needs for students with disabilities amid COVID-19

Around the globe, the lives of **at least 1.5 billion students** and their families have been significantly affected by the school closures caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Governments have responded by holding classes remotely – largely online – to ensure that students continue to study.

# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



However, this measure does not address educational discontinuity and disruption for all students. The estimate of 1.5 billion affected students does not take into account all of those who are **marginalized, disadvantaged or “invisible”** in educational systems. Online and high-tech-based learning platforms and resources need to be available and all students' needs must be accommodated in order for governments, schools and teachers to ensure that learners are not left behind during school closures as well as after schools reopen, whether this occurs in six months or in a year.

## Barriers to education through remote-learning practices

Students with disabilities experience a variety of barriers to education. For example:

- In health crises such as COVID-19, persons with disabilities are often provided with less help and inadequately trained teachers.
- More time and resources are required for students with disabilities to actively participate in learning.<sup>5</sup> This includes equipment, internet access and specially designed materials and support. This makes **learning more costly** for students and their families.
- Students with disabilities are negatively affected by the classroom shutdown in additional ways. They lose access to **school meals** and to **play with their friends**, which are equally important for development and learning.
- Another barrier is that many teachers lack ICT skills and knowledge. Forty percent of teachers in OECD countries, on average, lack professional ICT skills. They are unprepared to teach online and cannot ensure student engagement, specifically for students with disabilities. Currently, there is no available data on **special-education teachers' digital skills** in developing or least-developed countries.

## Addressing barriers to education and relevant resources

Governments can improve learning processes and outcomes of students with disabilities during a crisis such as COVID-19 by:

# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



## 1. Assessing accommodations

Educators, parents and individual students assess each student's situation and discuss adjustments needed for remote learning. Some examples include using alternatives to print, such as audio or other formats in instruction, as well as pictures, flexible scheduling and deadlines, and assistive technology.

### Resources

- [Designing for Accessibility with Perceivable, Operable, Understandable and Robust \(POUR\)](#)
- [School, interrupted: 4 options for distance education to continue teaching during COVID-19](#)

## 2. Modifying curricula and instructions

Learning in a remote setting may differ from mainstream, classroom-based environments. This includes expectations for students and course methodology. Curricula must often be adjusted. For example, homework can be simplified, allowing students to dictate rather than type, and audio materials can be provided for reading assignments.

### Resources

- [Key Questions to Consider When Planning Lessons](#)
- [Example of the Government of Alberta - Student learning during COVID-19](#)

## 3. Utilizing universal design for learning (UDL)

UDL aims to help teachers reach a wide variety of students, focusing on how students learn and demonstrate knowledge.

### Resources

- [Remote learning resources by CAST](#)
- [UDL guidelines by CAST](#)

## 4. Implementing project-based learning

Studies show that students with disabilities learn more by using research and analysis to complete a project. Project-based learning also improves self-esteem and promotes positive engagement. Both special and general-education teachers are vital for this type of learning. They need to design and introduce assignments and make sure that everyone understands how to complete them.

### Resources

- [Project Based Learning for Special Education and Inclusion](#)
- [Understanding Project-Based Learning in the Online Classroom](#)
- [Project-Based Learning In eLearning: What eLearning Professionals Should Know](#)

## 5. Ensuring individualized education programme (IEP)

IEP requires that educators, students, parents and families work together to decide on the effectiveness of a remote-learning setting and how to best proceed with each student's education.

### Resource

- [Tips for Parents with Special Needs Children and IEPs During The COVID-19 Crisis](#)



# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



## 6. Supporting teachers

As schools transition to online learning during COVID-19, it is important to provide teachers with guidance and relevant, evidence-based resources on delivering lessons in remote and online settings in special education.

### Resources

- [EducatingAllLearner.org](http://EducatingAllLearner.org)
- [Distance Learning & Special Education for Special Educators by The Arizona Department of Education](#)
- [Best Practices for Educating Online by the Council for Exceptional Children and eLuma](#)

## 7. Providing family and caregiver support

Systemic approaches are needed to help parents/caregivers with domestic responsibilities and students' education.

### Resources

- [The Government of the United Kingdom: Guidance – Help children with SEND continue their education during coronavirus](#)
- [Chicago Public Schools' REMOTE LEARNING Guidance for Parents](#)

### Collective responsibility – more work needs to be done

The abovementioned suggestions are just the tip of the iceberg. It is the collective responsibility of governments, teachers, parents and caregivers to help reduce educational inequality for students with disabilities, especially during a time of crisis like the COVID-19 virus. In order to ensure that systematic, long-term solutions are provided, all factors that affect access to education, including policy, legislation, financing, human resources and data, must be explored. [\[BACK\]](#)

# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



**DECADE  
OF  
ACTION**

2020 ushers in the start of the Decade of Action for SDG implementation.

## ASPBAE affirms education as key to sustainable development at 7<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

20 May 2020, Virtual

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating social and economic impacts, the 7<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) took place online with the theme, ‘*Accelerating action for and delivery of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific.*’ The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened UN officials, Member States, representatives of regional and sub-regional organisations, civil society organisations (CSOs), and relevant stakeholders to take stock of the regional progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and consolidate and share best practices and lessons learned in preparation for the 2020 High-level Political Forum (HLPF).

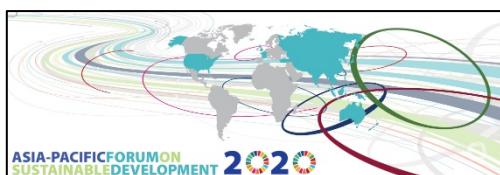
The year 2020 not only marks the five-year review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but also ushers in the start of the Decade of Action for SDG implementation. Speaking at the opening, the UNESCAP Executive Secretary, Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, noted with concern that, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asia-Pacific region was not on track to meet any of the SDGs by 2030. As the current crisis continues, the considerable gains in the SDGs, particularly in SDG 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong opportunities for all, are at risk of being jeopardized unless swift, collective, and well-targeted actions are made to reach the scale needed to overcome the significant challenges posed by the pandemic.

In her remarks, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed asserted that the world is off-track in ending poverty, providing opportunities for all, achieving gender equality, and winning the race against climate change. She went on to say that, “*implementation gaps in health, education, social protection, and environmental sustainability have left our world so vulnerable to the COVID-19 crisis.*” Youth are particularly affected by the disruption that the pandemic has caused. Deki Yangzom, Peer Educator of Y-PEER in Bhutan, underscored the ever-widening inequality and existing systemic barriers that impede the achievement of the SDGs. She called upon governments and the UN to acknowledge civil society voices as a part of the policy discussion.

ASPBAE, once again, participated in the APFSD, this time with Executive Council Members Ehsanur Rahman and Nasiba Mirpochoeva with ASPBAE’s Operations and Programmes Coordinator, Cecilia “Thea” Soriano leading a delegation comprised of representatives from ASPBAE member organisations, notably, the Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC), Alliance of CSOs in Tajikistan for Education, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) in Bangladesh, National Campaign for Education - Nepal (NCE-Nepal) and Global Action in Nepal (GAN), National Coalition for Education - India (NCE-India), Civil Society Network for Education Reforms (E-Net Philippines), Coalition for Education (COESI) in the Solomon Islands, PNG Education Advocacy Network (PEAN), and Civil Society Education Partnership (CSEP) in Timor-Leste.



UNESCAP Executive Secretary, Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, noted with concern that, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asia-Pacific region was not on track to meet any of the SDGs by 2030.





# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



The current situation will further widen the digital divide, exacerbate inequities in education, and even hasten the corporate capture of education technologies.

As the representative of the Education Group of the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCSEM), ASPBAE provided inputs to the draft Chair's Statement to affirm the importance of education and learning continuity amidst the current health emergency. It noted that while governments and schools are shifting to online and distance learning solutions, a majority of learners from poor and disadvantaged households lack access to technological devices and an internet connection. The current situation will further widen the digital divide, exacerbate inequities in education, and even hasten the corporate capture of education technologies. ASPBAE urged governments, development partners and the global community to ensure free and open access to appropriate technologies and tools that facilitate distance learning and community-based learning programs. However, these details were not captured in the final Chair's Statement, although there was a reference to the importance of education in strengthening human capacities and well-being.

Education is recognized as one of the keys that will allow many other SDGs to be achieved. However, the responses to COVID-19 have overlooked its critical importance in these times of crisis. The additional budgets that will be funneled into the recovery phase may drain the limited resource base, especially for low-income developing countries. Unfortunately, the budget cuts and realignments may have severe consequences on the already insufficient public financing for education. ASPBAE thus calls on governments to shore up and safeguard the budget of the social sector, and strengthen health, education, and social protection systems. ASPBAE further calls on development partners and the global community to support developing countries in strengthening public institutions and services to respond to the health emergency, and ensure equitable and inclusive education in the aftermath of the crisis.

Certain populations, such as children, girls and women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, Dalits, adult learners, and other disadvantaged groups, remain vulnerable to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The urban poor, including informal, migrant workers, are also among those who will be hit the hardest by the crisis. They have limited capacity to cope with the pandemic's consequent impacts due to income losses, poor living conditions and basic sanitation, informal and unstable work arrangements, and limited access to health care and education. This is the gist of the inputs of Ehsanur Rahman, who was earlier designated by civil society participants to represent the Urban Poor Constituency of APRCEM and also represented Dhaka Ahsania Mission. However, Ehsan was called in the meeting but was not able to speak because of a technical problem in the platform.



ASPBAE calls on governments to shore up and safeguard the budget of the social sector, and strengthen health, education, and social protection systems.

Although the 7<sup>th</sup> APFSD saw the participation of numerous CSOs across the region, the restriction of space for civil society and the limited time given have been raised as obstacles to meaningful civil society engagement and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships. The representative of the APRCEM reiterated his disappointment that, *"regardless of which platform is being used, virtual or physical, CSO's voice or perspectives are being pushed towards the end of the line."* The voices of CSOs and the marginalised and vulnerable groups can be an instrument of change, driving transformative actions and fast-tracking the achievement of the SDGs. [\[BACK\]](#)



# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



**Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA) joined the Education Sector Working Group to offer CSO analysis and information from the grassroots to inform discussions on school reopening led by the government.**

## Second Asia Pacific national education coalitions' meeting with ASPBAE provides updates on education issues and actions in a COVID-19 world

28 May 2020, Virtual

A second 'all-in' national coalitions' Zoom meeting was held to update on the policy context for education in different countries in the Asia Pacific, in the light of the continuing COVID-19 crisis. The meeting was also an opportunity for ASPBAE staff to provide an update on global and regional education developments and for partners in the Education Out Loud (EOL) programme, an opportunity to also catch up on programme-related developments. Participants from 18 coalitions joined the call - Vietnam, India, Vanuatu, Kyrgyzstan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Samoa, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste, along with ASPBAE coalition capacity support staff.

One coalition from each of the different sub-regions was asked to offer a brief presentation in the online meeting:

### Vietnam

The Coordinator of the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA), Kim Anh Nguyen, updated that schools which had been closed for 3 months were gradually reopened on 23 April. Secondary schools opened first, and a week later primary schools were reopened.

The most affected are the marginalized groups. VAAEFA carried out a general survey on the school closure to understand the situation, and implemented activities to support member organizations, especially the deaf community.

Earlier, in February, VAEFA sent recommendation letters to the Government to push for the implementation of education in television in addition to online learning, to expand the learning coverage, especially in remote areas where people have more access to television than the internet. VAEFA collaborated with organisations and colleges in this effort. In March, the government implemented the program. They sent instructions to provincial television stations to support the continuing learning plans of government.

VAEFA joined the Education Sector Working Group to offer CSO analysis and information from the grassroots to inform discussions on school reopening led by the government. Measures were put in place to ensure safety, when school reopened. Due to the risk of contagion the maximum number of learners in a classroom was 20 to ensure and practice social distancing. Air conditioners were not used, which made the classrooms very hot. It took much effort to anticipate and address the many obstacles in ensuring school safety.

VAEFA also provided input to the Government to ensure that its continuing learning programmes are inclusive, especially for ethnic minorities, learners belonging to minority and indigenous language groups and students with disabilities. They also advocated for putting in place systems for monitoring



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# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



**In India, there has been a halt in textbook distribution, and the syllabus has been revised and shortened. Students have found it hard to adjust to the system without books.**

Coordinator for the National Coalition for Education (NCE) India, Noopur, informed that COVID-19 infection cases and deaths (including of teachers) are escalating, while testing remained limited in the country.



**There may be permanent closures of government schools in urban areas in India because of the huge decrease in the number of children on the one hand, and rural school systems may be ill equipped to absorb new large numbers of students.**

participation and the quality of delivery in these on-line, distance modes of learning.

## India

The Coordinator for the National Coalition for Education (NCE) India, Noopur, updated that COVID-19 infection cases and deaths (including of teachers) were escalating, while testing remained limited. Most major cities and towns remained in lockdown given fears of a surge of infection further in the coming couple of months. Schools were initially to remain closed only until June but this has been extended in many areas. Some have been converted into quarantine centres to deal with the crisis.

Teachers were mobilised in the relief effort to deal with the pandemic. In New Delhi, they were engaged in distributing ration cards. Some were assigned to staff quarantine centres and also in food distribution areas. The lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) has led to the infection of many teachers on duty.

Most of the states have adopted a mode of on-line and distance teaching. However, less than 10% of children can participate and respond to messages as they do not have access to smart phones. Even before the pandemic it was a challenge to get poorer children to classes. Many were engaged in child labor and dropped out of school in periods when cash crops were being harvested. The pandemic just worsened the situation. Teachers had trouble getting children to online classes, especially girls.

Teachers have cautioned NCE on the huge push by the private sector to state governments to adopt their teaching and learning apps. Many governments are taking these on without consultation with teachers who are the primary users of these.

There has been a halt in textbook distribution, and the syllabus has been revised and shortened. Students have found it hard to adjust to the system without books.

NCE India is also monitoring the impact of reverse migration of workers from cities to their home villages in terms of access of children to schools. There may be permanent closures of government schools in urban areas because of the huge decrease in the number of children on the one hand, and rural school systems may be ill equipped to absorb new large numbers of students.

## Vanuatu

Shirley Abraham, Coordinator of Kolisen Blong Leftemap Edukesen (KOBLE), updated that there are no cases of infection in Vanuatu. However, there has been a strict border and travel restriction from 14 April to May, and the schools were closed. Home-school packages were distributed, however there were many difficulties for parents trying to support their children with their lessons.

On 16 May, the schools reopened. The Government has plans of repatriating citizens that were stranded overseas, and if this leads to infections, then the schools could be closed again.



# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



**KOBLE consulted with communities, parents, and learners and drew up recommendations to the government on how to improve the school package to support disadvantaged groups.**

Vanuatu faced two disasters in this same period. Tropical Cyclone Harold hit Vanuatu on 2-3 April damaging 17,000 homes and leaving 87,000 people without shelter. Schools were also damaged. While the government provided stimulus packages for businesses, there was little by way of social safety nets for many off from work.

KOBLE is part of the national education cluster, which provides advisory support to the government's disaster response effort. KOBLE consulted with communities, parents, and learners and drew up recommendations to the government based on these on how to improve the school package to support disadvantaged groups. One major concern it highlighted was the lack of internet access: it is expensive and the coverage is limited only to the capital, Port Vila, and its peripheral areas.

KOBLE continued its engagement with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) on its longer-term education strategy and plan. It continued its involvement with the education cluster and Local Education Group (LEG) in the country.

## Kyrgyzstan

Masuma Bashirova, Coordinator of the Association for Education Development (AED) Kyrgyzstan, updated that in her country COVID-19 infections and deaths are increasing.

With the quarantine starting on 25 March, distance learning was introduced on 8 April where two television channels started to broadcast videos with lessons for all levels of school education. However, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) decided to conduct the final Year 12 assessments online. Students are required to pass the test to get into college or university. This was planned for 19 June.

AED conducted a questionnaire which showed the problems facing teachers. One concern is the lack of information technology skills for teachers in remote areas. AED intends to present it to MoES and share recommendations on improving online and distance learning.

## ASPBAE updates at the all-in meeting

ASPBAE's Secretary General, Maria Khan, provided an update on the GPE Strategic Planning process. This was followed by an update from ASPBAE's Thea Soriano regarding civil society inputs into the Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) process, and working through the mechanism of the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM). announced that 12 delegates from ASPBAE and the coalitions were able to participate in the APFSD online meeting.

ASPBAE's Rene Raya also updated all on the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process and the progress in the work of seven Asia Pacific national coalitions in producing CSO Spotlight Reports to engage their respective countries' VNR



**ASPBAE's Secretary General, Maria Khan, provided an update on the GPE Strategic Planning process. Updates were also provided on APFSD and Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes.**

# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



ASPBAE also presented changes and adjustments required by all partner coalitions in the GPE-funded Education Out Loud (EOL) programme.

processes: Bangladesh, India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Solomon Islands.

The coalitions' 'all-in' Zoom call was rounded out with an update by ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove and Helen Dabu regarding the changes and adjustments required by all partner coalitions in the GPE-funded Education Out Loud (EOL) programme.

ASPBAE mentioned its on-going capacity support role in EOL and the continuing importance of solidarity and collaboration in the tri-level movement of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) in which regional organisations such as ASPBAE, and all the national coalitions, are members.

The meeting closed with discussing protocols for enhancing communication between the national, regional and global levels, and with the Grant Agent of the EOL programme. [\[BACK\]](#)



The Coordination Group of the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 convened to update on the COVID-19 responses of UNESCO and update on SDG-ED2030 Steering Committee work, amongst others.

## Coordination Group of CC NGO Education 2030 meets to update on COVID-19 responses and engagements in advocacy spaces

12 May 2020, Virtual

The Coordination Group of the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 convened in a virtual meeting to – (1) Update on the COVID-19 responses of UNESCO and the different members of the Coordination Group; (2) Update on the SDG-ED2030 Steering Committee (ESC) work, including its engagement with the Futures Commission work, the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) on SDG-SDG4 indicators, and other upcoming global meetings; and (3) Agree representation of the CC NGO in the Education 2030 Steering Committee and other spaces.

UNESCO shared updates on the UNESCO responses to the COVID-19 crisis, notably its convening of the Global Coalition on Education in March 2020 to – (1) help countries in mobilizing resources and implementing innovative and context-appropriate solutions to provide education remotely, leveraging hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech approaches; (2) seek equitable solutions and universal access; (3) ensure coordinated responses and avoid overlapping efforts; (4) facilitate the return of students to school when they reopen to avoid an upsurge in dropout rate. The Coalition includes United Nations agencies, international organizations, private sector, civil society representatives engaged in advancing COVID-19 Education Response from around the world at global, regional and countries levels. They also shared about the emergency Virtual Meeting of the Education 2030 Steering Committee on the education responses to COVID-19.

Mercedes Lasalle of OMEP (World Organisation for Early Childhood Education) and Refat Sabbah of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) briefed the Coordination Group on the contribution of the Education 2030 Steering Committee (ESC) to the International Commission on the Futures of Education. An ad hoc committee was set up by the ESC to craft its analytical contribution to

Amongst its updates, UNESCO shared about its convening of the Global Coalition on Education to help countries in mobilizing resources and implementing innovative and context-appropriate solutions to provide education remotely, leveraging hi-tech, low-tech and no-tech approaches.



# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

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In the discussions on the education responses to COVID-19, the importance of collecting stories from organisations within the CC NGO network to inform and understand the impact of the crisis and prepare for potential future crisis was highlighted.

the work of the Futures Commission from the vantage point of the ESC as the mandated “custodian” of the current education agenda of the United Nations or SDG4. The Coordination Group was invited to be part of this Ad hoc group. The final version of this contribution is [here](#).

Giovanna Mode, of the Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education (CLADE), briefed the participants on the work of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) where she represents the CC NGO, particularly its last Virtual meeting in 21 April 2020. The meeting focused on discussions on the – (1) latest developments and agreements achieved during the 6<sup>th</sup> TCG meeting on the implementation of the SDG 4 Thematic Indicator Framework; (2) Share updates from the latest IAEG-SDG 2020 Comprehensive Revision Framework, including the latest changes to the official list of SDG 4 global indicators; (3) Learn about the main national challenges to monitor SDG 4 on different levels (national, regional, thematic, global) to inform and improve the work of the UIS and the TCG addressing and working with countries in the current COVID-19 pandemic; and (4) Support the coordinating role of the regional country representatives to the TCG. She mentioned that UIS has also announced the development of a Task Force on COVID-19 impact.

The Coordination Group agreed on the following CSO representatives to the Education 2030 Steering Committee: Refat Sabbah of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and Rasheda Choudhury of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), Bangladesh, alternating with Cecilia Gomez of the Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education (CLADE).

In the discussions on the education responses to COVID-19, the importance of collecting stories from organisations within the CC NGO network to inform and understand the impact of the crisis and prepare for potential future crisis was highlighted. In this context, it was agreed that the Coordination Group organize a webinar to connect the constituency and members of the CC NGO Ed2030. It could be organized as a forum to profile what were the range of CSO responses to the crisis in addressing the many challenges to education: addressing quality, equity and inclusion issues in the continuity learning programmes put in place in the light of school closures; the threats to education financing given the massive contraction of economies and the huge demands on emergency responses; the dilemmas in school reopening on account of ongoing health and safety concerns; the massive demands on teachers and other education personnel. A Sub-group of the Coordination Group was constituted to plan the webinar.



Mercedes Lasalle of OMEP and Refat Sabbah of the GCE briefed the Coordination Group on the contribution of the Education 2030 Steering Committee to the International Commission on the Futures of Education.

The Coordination Group concluded with the agreement to set in place an email-based discussion to agree the two new representatives of the CC NGO in the Education 2030 Steering Committee. In these discussions soon after the Virtual Meet, the Coordination Group agreed on the following CSO representatives: Refat Sabbah of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and Rasheda Choudhury of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), Bangladesh alternating with Cecilia Gomez of the Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education (CLADE). The selection was guided by the following consideration: 1) an attempt to ensure continuity but also address considerations for widening representation; 2) build in a mechanism for shared learning, mutual support and capacity-strengthening; 3) ensure both a global and regional perspectives in the representation. In the system of alternates, CAMPE will be the lead in the first year with CLADE as alternate; and the arrangement is reversed in the second year. [\[BACK\]](#)

# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

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**The SDC Education Network webinar focused on the key role of education in cross-sectoral interventions, guiding on cross-sectoral programming during school closures and for planning the safe reopening of schools**

## SDC Education Network webinar focusses on cross-sectoral programming during school closures due to COVID-19

18 May 2020, Virtual

The SDC Education Network organised the second webinar of its COVID-19 and Education Webinar series.

The English and French sessions focused on the key role of education in cross-sectoral interventions, providing guidance on cross-sectoral programming during school closures and for planning the safe reopening of schools as well as peer exchange and learning from Education Network members' experiences.

Valeria Kunz, Head of Education at Save the Children Switzerland, presented good practices and learning from Save the Children's cross-sectoral education response to COVID-19, with examples from programmes in Albania and Bangladesh. Prof. Dr. Urs Gröbriel and Dr. Christoph Pimmer, ICT & Distance-Learning experts at the Swiss Educational Innovation Network SNBI, provided examples on social and emotional support through distance education.

The main points addressed were -

- Impact of school closures on other sectors' interventions.
- Importance of cross-sectoral action to respond to all needs of children and youth affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Coordinate across sectors during school closures, within your own organisation, with local actors, and with existing coordination mechanisms.
- Start planning for the safe reopening of schools from the onset of the crisis in collaboration with other sectors.
- COVID-19 impact of mental health and well-being of children and youth, teachers and parents and the affects distance learning.
- Socio-emotional learning and psycho-social support are essential to support distance learning and can be provided remotely through available channels in high, low and no-tech environments.

Participants from SDC headquarters, SDC country offices, and partner organisations from 23 countries and different sectors engaged with each other by discussing concerns, sharing examples, and asking questions. Among the experiences shared, many provided examples on how to integrate MHPSS into distance learning in low and no-tech contexts. They also highlighted the importance of providing support to teachers and parents to engage children and youth in distance learning, and the importance of building local capacity to deliver cross-sectoral education responses.

*This write-up draws from information provided by the SDC Education Network.*

[\[BACK\]](#)



**Participants of the webinar highlighted the importance of providing support to teachers and parents to engage children and youth in distance learning, and the importance of building local capacities to deliver cross-sectoral education responses.**



# ASPBAE THIS MONTH

May 2020

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**GCE's first webinar looked at the challenges and opportunities the current health crisis poses to adequate financing of education and education budget advocacy.**

## GCE holds first webinar on education budget advocacy and the COVID-19 crisis

12 May 2020, Virtual

The first webinar organised by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) addressed the issue of education budget advocacy during the COVID-19 crisis. The webinar looked at the challenges and opportunities the current health crisis poses to adequate financing of education and education budget advocacy - whether it supports or hinders progress towards SDG4 in terms of financing. It also reviewed the 4Ss – SHARE of the budget; SIZE of overall government revenues; SENSITIVITY of allocations; SCRUTINY of spending in practice - the issue of debt, the role of just taxation, and addressed perspectives for the future.

Refat Sabbah, GCE President, delivered the introductory address, highlighting the various impacts COVID-19 is having on education systems, and why the issue of financing is important in this context.

ASPBAE's Rene Raya spoke on '[Education as priority for the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Stimulus Package](#)', focussing on the trend of threatened education budgets due to shrinking fiscal spaces, how education is being missed out in the different stimulus packages, and the way forward to protect education budgets and ensure its inclusion in recovery packages.

David Archer, ActionAid International, spoke on 'Debt relief, an opportunity or a challenge?' and addressed the recent call for immediate cancellation of debt payments through to end of 2021 and the need for renegotiation of long term debt servicing, noting that debt cancellation should also be linking to a lifting of policies around public sector wage bill containment.

Andressa Pellanda, National Campaign for the Right to Education (Brazil), spoke on the 'COVID-19 crisis: a threat to public education systems?' in Latin America and Brazil. The session looked at the role of private actors in the COVID-19 crisis and the issue of equity and education as a human right.

Margaret Louise Irving, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), highlighted the issue of '[International aid and public education systems: lessons learned from previous crises](#)'.

Grant Kasowanjete, GCE Global Coordinator, concluded and summarise the main points of the discussion.

Click [here](#) to listen to the recording of the webinar. [\[BACK\]](#)



**David Archer of ActionAid addressed the recent call for immediate cancellation of debt payments through to end of 2021 and the need for renegotiation of long-term debt servicing.**



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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Education crisis will be more severe after reopening of schools

Rasheda K Choudhury, Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and former adviser to a caretaker government of Bangladesh, Spoke to The Daily Star (Bangladesh) about the impacts of prolonged school closure and what needs to be done to better manage the present situation. Click [here](#) to read the interview. [[BACK](#)]

### DVV International starts a series of video podcasts with adult educators

The COVID-19 pandemic is shaping our lives in many ways. This includes our private situation as well as our engagement as adult educators around the globe.

In this situation, there is a growing need for communication and exchange. Recognizing this, DVV International started a series of Video Podcasts with adult educators from various regions and sectors. The first podcast covers a conversation with Refat Sabbah, President of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and the Arab House of Adult Education and Development from Palestine. You can find the video [online](#). Other podcasts include from [India](#) (PRIA); [Laos](#) (Non-Formal Education Development Center); [Kyrgyzstan](#) (Youth of Osh).

Please visit DVV's website or YouTube channel for more conversations. DVV will upload new clips at least weekly.

You can contact Barbara Hust ([hust@dvv-international.de](mailto:hust@dvv-international.de)) to share further thoughts. [[BACK](#)]

## UN framework for reopening schools

7 May 2020

Global school closures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic present an unprecedented risk to children's education, protection and wellbeing. The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, recently called on governments and donors to prioritize education for all children, including the most marginalised, and the Global Education Coalition was established to support governments in strengthening distance learning and facilitating the reopening of schools.

Across countries leaders are grappling with difficult and uncertain trade-offs as they consider easing lockdowns.

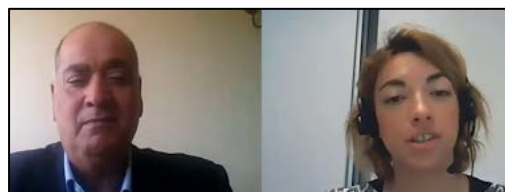
Taking this situation into consideration, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme, and the World Bank propose this [Framework for reopening schools](#) to support the national processes of decision making and to facilitate guidance to help national and local authorities to decide the reasons and when and how to reopen the educational centres.

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

**The Daily Star**  
**Education crisis will be more severe after reopening of schools**  
Rasheda K Choudhury, Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and former adviser to a caretaker government, talks to Nazmin Tithi of The Daily Star about the impacts of prolonged school closure and what needs to be done to better manage the present situation.

The government has decided to keep all educational institutions closed until June 15. Further, the prime minister has said that schools will not be reopened until the situation is under control. If schools are reopened, the situation will be more severe. Rasheda K Choudhury, Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and former adviser to a caretaker government, talks to Nazmin Tithi of The Daily Star about the impacts of prolonged school closure and what needs to be done to better manage the present situation.

What measures should be taken to ensure that students do not drop out of school because of the lockdown? The government should take steps to ensure that students do not drop out of school because of the lockdown. The government should take steps to ensure that students do not drop out of school because of the lockdown.



DVV Podcast







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**Publishing ASPBAE's write-ups:** Please contact ASPBAE's Information and Communications Coordinator, Medha Soni, at [medha.aspbae@gmail.com](mailto:medha.aspbae@gmail.com) if you wish you re-produce any material published in this Bulletin.

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