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Working towards education for sustainable development in the Mekong Region

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Bringing the United Nations closer to young people

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Following up on Timor Leste's commitment to increase the country's education budget

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Strengthening coalition activities in Afghanistan

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Forging ties and enabling cross learning amongst national education coalitions in the South Pacific

[Full article](#)



Samoa Education Network (SEN) looking to build its constituency

[Full article](#)

ASPBAE convenes regional workshop on civil society Spotlight Reports for High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019

The Bangkok regional workshop aimed to deepen the understanding of SDG and SDG 4/Education 2030 processes, particularly the engagement of civil society in the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). - [Read more](#)

Agreeing on an action plan for the Coordination Group of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO/ED 2030)

The CCNGO/ED 2030 meet to update on the SDG 4 follow-up work steered by UNESCO; share plans of the members of the Coordination Group; and agree the action plan of the group.

[Read more](#)

Strong civil society participation in June 2018 GPE Board meeting

Civil society participation in the GPE Board meeting was well prepared and strong. Some of the issues discussed included funds alignment, partnership review, and transaction costs. - [Read more](#)

Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) organises pioneering conference on financing education in the Arab region

The Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) organised a regional conference on financing education with the aim to strengthen the role of civil society and boost the regional momentum towards increased accountability towards education.

[Read more](#)

Accountability towards advocating for adult education to wider networks

Training of Master Trainers (ToMT) follow-up workshop, Lao PDR

A follow-up ToMT workshop was held in Vientiane to provide an opportunity for graduate Master Trainers to come back together to share their experiences and to gain additional skills and techniques. – [Read more](#)

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NNER holds national seminar on education privatisation and the role of teacher's unions in Myanmar's education reforms

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Exploring how community education can contribute to global citizenship

ACE Aotearoa National Conference 2018

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EDUCATION NEWS AND VIEWS

Taking SDG 4.2 from Policy to Action: Nepal to host 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

[Full article](#)

Deepening understanding of lifelong learning at the National University of Laos

The National University of Laos (NUOL) invited RMIT University (Australia) and ASPBAE to offer a training to deepen the understanding of lifelong learning for students, teachers, and staff of the Faculty. - [Read more](#)

DVV International Laos wins Grundtvig Award for professionalisation of non-formal adult education providers

The DVV International Regional Office for Southeast Asia was a winner of the EAEA Grundtvig Award for training non-formal adult education trainers in Laos. The theme of the Awards this year was 'Cooperation and Partnerships'. – [Read more](#)

ANNOUNCEMENT

[The Culture of Testing: Sociocultural Impacts on Learning in Asia and the Pacific](#) (a study by UNESCO Bangkok) – [Read more](#)

Farewell, Prakash

ASPBAE mourns the passing of Prakash Singh, founder of the Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD), an ASPBAE member in Nepal. – [Read more](#)

VOICES – From ASPBAE's Membership

We introduce a new section in this edition where we hear from our members.

Bunyad Foundation, Pakistan, secures education policy in Punjab Province - [Read more](#)



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Member of the Month

People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), Sri Lanka

PAFFREL was established in 1987 by representatives of several national civil society organisations. One of the main aims of setting up PAFFREL was to promote a people's effort to prevent violence and malpractices before, during, and after elections. Since its formation, PAFFREL has monitored all elections held Sri Lanka in collaboration with a large number of civil society organisations. It has conducted advocacy and awareness programmes in areas such as voters' rights, democracy, human rights, and good governance in different parts of the country. Visit PAFFREL's [website](#) to know more.

Photo of the Month



5 June is marked by the United Nations as World Environment Day, a day set aside since 1974 to promote "worldwide awareness and action for the protection of our environment." This year's theme was 'beat plastic pollution'.

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's Administrative and Finance Officer based in the Philippines.

Leah Servania

ASPBAE's Administrative and Finance Officer



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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 focus on 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to be hosted in Nepal in June 2018.

Taking SDG 4.2 from Policy to Action: Nepal to host 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

5 June 2018



On the very first day of school, a child could already face serious, even insurmountable, challenges to access quality education. As the 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and 2018 Asia-Pacific Regional Early Childhood Development (ECD) Conference opens in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 5 June 2018, there is a growing understanding that a multi-sectoral approach is essential to level the playing field for children, even prior to their enrolment in primary school.

The concept of 'school readiness' is a critical element of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 4.2 – '*By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.*' When children are not ready for school by the primary entry age, the long-term negative impacts on developmental outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable children, are well-documented.

There are well-established theories and research evidence highlighting the critical importance of early childhood development, yet 250 million children younger than 5 years of age in low and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their potential due to stunting, poverty and disadvantage. That potential encompasses cognitive, emotional, social and physical welfare. This calls for urgent action to increase coverage of multi-sectoral quality ECCE programmes that incorporate health, nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregiving and early learning.

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Under the framework of SDG 4.2, each country's Ministry of Education (MOE) is required to play a pivotal role in a multi-sectoral approach implementing and monitoring quality ECCE programmes by reaching out to other ministries and agencies responsible for ECD and coordinating their efforts. This holistic, multi-sectoral approach to ECCE is actually a fundamental interest of each Ministry of Education responsible for educational outcomes of children enrolled in the school system, because ECCE participation is significantly linked to cognitive development and school readiness from birth to the age of 8.

As the host of the ECCE policy forum and ECD conference, Nepal is well-prepared to adopt this holistic approach to early development and education. Prime Minister of Nepal, K.P. Sharma Oli, has emphasised that early childhood development is enshrined in the country's constitution and essential to achieve the country's ambitious sustainable development plans.

In the absence of these MOE-led, multi-sectoral ECCE programmes, children's learning outcomes suffer, but so too do school systems themselves as they pay the price if children are not well cared for with focused efforts on their development before they reach primary school.

In addition, there is also an increasing recognition of the importance of systematic monitoring of ECCE efforts, not only to track progress relative to the SDG4.2 indicators – but also because the entire ECCE programme must be seen as a continuum of development.

Since 2013, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, UNICEF, and the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), with other key partners, have been organising the Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on ECCE to provide a platform for high-level policymakers of Asia-Pacific countries to share knowledge and discuss strategies to expand access to, and improve the quality of, comprehensive, integrated and holistic ECCE. The forum will result the Regional Strategy to improve the equity and quality of ECCE.

The 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education is led by UNESCO. The Regional ECD Conference is organised by [ARNEC](#), including its core partners, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific ([EAPRO](#)), and Regional Office for South Asia ([ROSA](#)); and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ([UNESCO](#)); [Plan International](#); [Open Society Foundations](#); [Save the Children](#); and [ChildFund International](#).

The three-day event, being hosted by Nepal Government's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, includes the participation of about 700 high-level government officials, development professionals, researchers, and representatives from organisations working in early childhood development, care, and education from 40 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

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VOICES - From ASPBAE's Membership

ASPBAE introduces a new section to the Bulletin, 'VOICES - from ASPBAE's Membership'. This is a space for ASPBAE's members to highlight an important initiative, achievement, learning, or challenge; share their experiences and stories; talk about how they are making a difference; and reach out to the larger ASPBAE membership across the Asia Pacific. We inaugurate this section with a contribution from **Bunyad Foundation (Lahore, Pakistan)**.

Bunyad Foundation, Pakistan, successfully advocates for non-formal education policy in Punjab Province



Shaheen Attiq-ur-Rahman, Chairperson, Bunyad Foundation (centre) and former ASPBAE Executive Council member, played a significant role in the formulation and approval of the non-formal education policy in Punjab province.

Education in Punjab was established in September 2017. One of the aims of the Department was to formulate a comprehensive literacy policy for Punjab in close collaboration and coordination with several stakeholders from public and private sectors and with prominent educators.

Bunyad Foundation, an ASPBAE member based in Lahore, was closely involved in the formulation of the education policy in the province and carried out several initiatives throughout the year to lobby for its formulation. The hard work paid off and the education policy was recently approved by the Chairman of Planning and Development. Shaheen Attiq-ur-Rahman, Chairperson, Bunyad Foundation and former ASPBAE Executive Council member, played a significant part in the formulation and approval of the policy in the province. Saima Fayyaz, Coordinator, Education and Literacy, Bunyad, was actively involved in several consultative meetings while drafting the policy. Her participation in regional workshops and advocacy capacity building initiatives organised by ASPBAE and the skills she gained aided her in effectively liaising with government and provincial representatives and contributing to the formulation of the draft policy.

It is also important to recognise the role and contribution of Dr. Ismat Tahira, Secretary, Department of Provincial Literacy and Non-Formal Education, Punjab. She passionately advocated for the need for an effective education policy in the province and took the lead in its formulation and in the process for its approval.

The overall literacy rate in Pakistan amongst population aged 10 and above is 58%, according to the latest Pakistan Economic Survey (2016-17). Male literacy is at 70% while female literacy is below 50%. Even though there are 39 million illiterate people and 7.5 million out-of-school children in Pakistan, the Province of Punjab is the only province in the country that has a separate department for non-formal education and literacy. However, its functioning has been hampered due to lack of vision and purpose – no defined long-term goals, lack of coordinated efforts with other government departments, local organisations, and the community. The need of the hour in the province is for a proper education policy to create synergy between government departments and to establish non-formal education as a specialised component of larger education initiatives.

The Department of Provincial Literacy and Non-Formal

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Following are some highlights of the process in which Bunyad was actively involved leading up to achieving the literacy policy, the advocacy efforts that were involved, the activities that were undertaken, the gains achieved, and how this will influence communities –

Goal

Create an enabling environment and equitable opportunities for all children, adolescents, and adults to improve lifelong and life-wide education, literacy, lifesaving and livelihood skills, with special focus on adolescent girls and women; to eradicate illiteracy from Punjab and to contribute in building a socially and economically prosperous province by 2030; and to strengthen the capacity of the Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department through creating structures to ensure policy implementation by 2020.



One of the goals of the project were to create an enabling environment and equitable opportunities for all children, adolescents, and adults to improve lifelong and life-wide education, literacy, livelihood skills, with special focus on adolescent girls and women. Dr. Ismat Tahira, Secretary, Department of Provincial Literacy and Non-Formal Education, passionately advocated for the need for an effective education policy in Punjab.

Overarching priorities

- Widening access to education for every out-of-school child and adolescent, and adults.
- Improving the quality of non-formal education, particularly in its dimension of being compliant to the school curriculum for out-of-school children and adolescents and relevant to the needs of society.
- Improving governance, particularly ensuring proper placement of structures to effectively implement the policy

Key Highlights

- **Recourse mobilisation:** channelise resources, including public private partnerships; promote community services (such as community learning centres); encourage non-monetary incentives and volunteerism; involve academia.
- **Enhance quality and access:** enhance access to education, with a special focus programmes such as Alternative Learning Systems; improve the quality of non-formal education.
- **Governance:** ensure availability of data; establish a proper structure of relevant government departments; involve NGO, community-based organisations, and community members in the formulation and implementation of the policy.

Process

- **Planning the policy:** Meetings with the Department of Literacy and Non-Formal Education; reviewing documents, including national and provincial policies; drafting an outline of the policy.
- **Situation Analysis:** SWOT analysis; meetings with Department officials, stakeholders, and experts; field visits.
- **Developing the policy:** Workshops and meeting with children, parents, teachers, community representatives, NGOs, community based organisations, academicians, and Department representatives; discussions on policy options in consultation with various committees crated for development of the policy.
- **Refining the policy:** Round of consultations on the policy draft, especially with the Coordination Committee and with government departments. [\[BACK\]](#)

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The ASPBAE-organised regional workshop on civil society spotlight reports aimed to deepen the understanding on the SDG and SDG 4/Education 2030 processes, particularly the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

ASPBAE convenes regional workshop on civil society Spotlight Reports for High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019

6-7 May 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

ASPBAE organised a regional workshop in Bangkok to deepen the understanding of the participants on the SDG and SDG 4/Education 2030 processes, particularly the engagement of civil society in the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). The workshop, attended by ASPBAE Executive Council members and staff, and representatives of ten national education coalitions in the Asia Pacific region, also aimed to agree on the objectives, content, and timeline of the regional and country civil society spotlight reports that ASPBAE and its members intend to prepare for the HLPF in 2019 as alternative to the official reports of the governments.

A spotlight report is a civil society analytical paper on the SDG implementation status. HLPF 2019 is an important moment in the SDG 4/Education 2030 timeline as education will be reviewed, along with some other SDGs, particularly SDG 10 on Reducing Inequality. Moreover, 2019 will be a summit year where HLPF will be organised during the UN General Assembly and where Heads of States are expected to attend. Previous HLPFs were convened at the Ministerial level. A significant number of countries are expected to volunteer to present their respective reports on SDG implementation.

Batjargal Batkhuyag, ASPBAE Executive Council member representing East Asia and Board member of *All for Education (AFE)* - the education coalition in Mongolia - formally opened the workshop with a note on the importance of asserting civil society engagement in SDG processes. ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano presented the objectives and programme for the two-day workshop. The workshop started with inputs from Aurélie Acoca, Programme Specialist of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), who discussed the monitoring frameworks for SDG 4 and presented the current data availability and readiness of Asia Pacific countries in monitoring SDG 4 indicators. She ended her presentation with UNESCO plans on enhancing capacities of governments, particularly the education ministries and national statistical offices, on SDG 4 monitoring. A lively discussion followed the input from Ms. Acoca.

Several countries in the Asia Pacific have already reported on their respective VNRs during the HLPF in 2016 and 2017. Among them were Bangladesh, Nepal, and India. The education coalitions in these countries shared their experiences in engaging in the VNR process at the national level and cited possible gains and lessons from the engagements. Enamul Hoque, of CAMPE Bangladesh, reported on the formation of the Citizen's Platform for the SDGs which aims to track the delivery of all the SDGs and enhance accountability in its implementation process. He also shared the CSO spotlight report which highlighted regional disparities and inequalities, and on strengthening democratic institutions as key for achieving the SDGs. Noopur of NCE-India and Shradha Koirala of NCE-Nepal also shared the contribution of their coalitions in preparing the spotlight reports, although their governments were not as receptive in organising consultations with



Bangladesh, Nepal, and India have already reported on their VNRs during the HLPF in 2016 and 2017. Education coalitions in these countries shared their experiences in engaging in the VNR process.

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Vietnam, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Singapore, and Australia are set to report on their VNRs during the 2018 HLPF. Kim Anh, ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing Southeast Asia, and Chandana Bandara of CED Sri Lanka, reported on their engagement with their governments in preparation of the VNRs.

Participants noted that civil society organisations have little space to engage in the VNR process at national and global levels. They stressed the need to pursue engagement at all levels and assert the important role of civil society in the SDG implementation process.



Some of the common priority areas identified by the participants to be highlighted in the spotlight reports included equity and inclusion, education financing and privatisation, governance, and quality teachers.

civil society organisations (CSOs) in the preparations of the VNRs. These sharings provided valuable insights for preparing the spotlight reports and for the engagement of coalitions whose countries will be reporting on their VNRs in 2018 and 2019.

Several countries in the region (Vietnam, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Singapore, and Australia) are set to report on their VNRs during the 2018 HLPF. Kim Anh, National Coordinator of VAEFA (the education coalition in Vietnam) and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing Southeast Asia, and Chandana Bandara, Board Chair of CED Sri Lanka, reported on their engagement with their respective governments in preparation of the VNRs. The Sri Lankan government is more accommodating with CSOs which have been very active in the SDG and VNR processes at the national level. In Vietnam, CSO involvement in the preparation of the VNR has been relatively limited.

After the sharing from coalition participants, ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano and Rene Raya provided updates on the SDG/Education 2030 implementation processes at the regional and global levels, including the forthcoming 4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED 4) and HLPF, both of which will take place in July 2018. They also steered the discussions on the proposed country and regional spotlight reports that are planned for dissemination during SDG-related regional and global events which will culminate during HLPF 2019 where SDG 4 on education will be one of the goals that is up for review.

In the discussion that followed, it was noted that CSOs have only little space to engage in the VNR process at national and global levels. Nonetheless, participants stressed the need to pursue engagement at all levels and assert the important role of civil society in the SDG implementation process. Participants further agreed to actively engage in the entire VNR process, including the preparation and the follow-up on the commitments made by governments in implementing the SDGs.

After inputs from ASPBAE and an open forum, participants gathered in sub-regional work groups to identify common priority issues, key messages, requirements, and proposed timeline that must be highlighted in the spotlight reports. The groups presented their outputs and agreed on the main points –

- Priority issues: Equity and inclusion; education financing and privatisation; governance; and quality teachers.
- Data sources: Except for a few countries, data are generally available from government agencies and from alternative sources, including academic institutions, research organisations, and NGOs. A number of coalitions agreed to explore the possibility of conducting empirical studies, time and resources permitting.
- Timeline: Coalitions agreed to complete the research and write-up by November 2018 in time for the Global Education Meeting in Brussels in the first week of December 2018. The finalisation and printing can be done by March 2019 in time for the annual Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) organised by UNESCAP, which is part of the official preparation for HLPF 2019.

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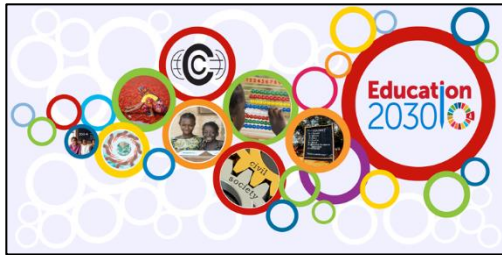
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ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano and Rene Raya steered discussions on the proposed country and regional spotlight reports.

Apart from the country spotlight reports, two regional thematic spotlight reports were agreed upon - on education financing and on youth, gender and skills.

The workshop was formally closed with a word of thanks and closing remarks from ASPBAE Executive Council members, Kim Anh (representing Southeast Asia) and Kilala Devette-Chee (representing the South Pacific). [\[BACK\]](#)



The meeting of the CCNGO/ED 2030 was held to update on the SDG 4 follow-up work; share plans of the members of the Coordination Group; and agree the action plan of the CCNGO/ED 2030.

Agreeing on an action plan for the Coordination Group of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO/ED 2030)

7 May 2018, Beirut, Lebanon

The meeting of the Coordination Group of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO/ED 2030) was organised to – (1) update on the SDG 4 follow-up work steered by UNESCO through the Steering Committee; (2) share plans of the members of the Coordination Group in this regard; and (3) agree the action plan of the CCNGO/ED 2030. This was the first face-to-face meeting of the Coordination Group after they were elected in the CCNGO/ED 2030 Global Meeting in May 2017 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, and Rasheda Choudhury, of CAMPE Bangladesh, participated as Coordination Group members in the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) regional conference on financing education that was held coinciding with the CCNGO/ED 2030 meeting.

The meeting was organised to coincide with the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) regional conference on financing education and hosted jointly by ACEA and the UNESCO regional office in Beirut. ASPBAE, represented by Maria Khan, ASPBAE Secretary-General, and CAMPE, represented by Rasheda Choudhury, participated as members of the Coordination Group.

The Coordination Group agreed that its action plan for 2018-2019 will focus on the following:

1. Participation and input of the CCNGO in the upcoming Steering Committee meeting (12-13 September in Paris) -
 - The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), with ASPBAE as alternate, will be the civil society representatives at the meeting.
 - The agenda will be circulated when available for comment and input by the Coordination Group.
 - Greater engagement is planned with the Sub-Committee on Financing of Education - to put the spotlight more on tax justice as recent discussions have been skewed towards Innovative Financing approaches - loans, stocks, bonds, greater participation of the private sector.
2. Participation and input in the Global Education Meeting (GEM), 3-5 December 2018, Brussels -
 - UNESCO agreed that all members of the Coordination Group will be invited to the GEM.
 - The Coordination Group will organise a thematic workshop within the GEM to focus on civil society assessments regarding the implementation of SDG 4 (and other education targets within other SDGs). Based on the reports of the different regions, all, including GCE, are poised to organise civil society organisation (CSO)



The Coordination Group agreed that its 2018-2019 action plan will focus on, amongst other things, participation of the CCNGO in the Steering Committee meeting (September, Paris), and in the Global Education Meeting (December, Brussels).

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The CCNGO/ED 2030 is UNESCO's key mechanism for dialogue, reflection, and partnerships with NGOs for the implementation of the SDG 4–ED 2030.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), with ASPBAE as alternate, will be the civil society representatives at the CCNGO Steering Committee Meeting in Paris in September.

Spotlight Reports for the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019. The outcomes of these reports, available at this point, will be shared in this workshop.

- The Coordination Group will organise a survey and paper to profile the work of the CCNGO in the SDG 4 implementation.
 - Aim to organise a Coordination Group meeting before or after the GEM.
3. Liaise with the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group and with the UNESCO office in New York in organising coordinated civil society actions during the 2019 High level Political Forum (HLPF) which will focus of SDG 4.
 4. The Coordination Group to work with UNESCO to improve the CCNGO site in the UNESCO website and the updating of the email list serve of the CCNGO Education 2030
 - UNESCO will send the list to all Coordination group members to seek assistance in updating.

Members of the Coordination Group will also seek to introduce the CCNGO Education 2030 mechanism to the new UNESCO Director General and the new Assistant Director General for Education on the side of the Education 2030 Steering Committee Meeting.

The CCNGO/ED 2030 is UNESCO's key mechanism for dialogue, reflection, and partnerships with NGOs for the implementation of the SDG 4–ED 2030. It recognises NGOs as key partners in SDG 4-ED 2030 and as a source for innovation and knowledge, especially in reaching the marginalised. [\[BACK\]](#)

Working towards education for sustainable development in the Mekong Region

8-9 May 2018, Hanoi, Vietnam



The international workshop in Hanoi brought together several countries in the Mekong region.

UNESCO, in cooperation with the International Center for Education for Sustainable Development of Uppsala University (SWEDES), organised an international workshop on 'Advancing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Policy in Mekong Region'. The workshop brought together representatives from several countries in the Mekong region including Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Over 100 participants took part in the workshop, including leaders from Ministries of Education and Training, development partners, embassies, civil society, and the private sector in Vietnam. In addition, representatives from UNESCO's offices in Germany, the National Commission for UNESCO in Germany, and representatives of initiatives promoting education for sustainable development also participated. Vu Huong Giang, Admin Officer and Programme Assistant, Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA) - an ASPBAE member - participated in the workshop.

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The workshop provided a platform for sharing national policy experiences on education for sustainable development and exchanging innovative ideas for their implementation.

The workshop provided a platform for sharing national policy experiences on education for sustainable development and exchanging innovative ideas for their implementation. Giang of VAEFA, while advocating for the right to education, expressed concern about how education for sustainable development can effectively benefit disadvantaged communities in Laos. She also stressed that the role of parents should be highlighted in school programmes as parents play a crucial role in the education of children from an early age.

Ai Chuman, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in Vietnam, emphasised the important role of an education policy for sustainable development in the context of the rapidly developing Mekong economies. At the same time, she affirmed her desire to promote further cooperation between the Government of Japan and other countries in the region to promote education towards sustainable development. In other speeches, Toshiyuki Matsumoto, representative of the UNESCO Office in Hanoi, and Eva Friman, Director of the Uppsala International Education Center, affirmed the role of an education policy for achieving sustainable development through formal and non-formal training and lifelong learning opportunities.

Participants agreed to promote an education policy for sustainable development and forge multi-stakeholder collaboration amongst countries in the Mekong Region.

Participants of the Hanoi workshop agreed to promote an education policy for sustainable development and forge multi-stakeholder collaboration amongst countries in the Mekong Region.

This article was put together by Vu Huong Giang, Admin Officer and Programme Assistant, VAEFA, and draws from a write-up appearing on the [UNESCO website](http://unesco.org). [\[BACK\]](#)

Bringing the United Nations closer to young people

30 May 2018, New York, U.S.A.



A Youth Dialogue, hosted by the President of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, sought to listen to the ideas, needs, and concerns of young people on bridging education and skills training with employment in the 21st century, and on the prevention of radicalisation.

As part of his commitment to bring the United Nations closer to young people, the President of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, hosted a Youth Dialogue at the UN Headquarters in New York. This one-day event sought to listen to the ideas, needs, and concerns of young people on bridging education and skills training with employment in the 21st century, as well as on the prevention of radicalisation. The event further aimed to galvanise the efforts of many global alliances and initiatives that are empowering young people.

In his speech addressing the audience, Mr. Lajčák said, “We want this Youth Dialogue to be different from any other meetings that are taking place in the United Nations. We don’t want this to be an event when we talk about young people; we don’t even want this to be an event when we talk to young people. We want this to be an event when we take a step back, and we listen to young people, talking to each other. And we want to get inspired – and to follow your lead and your advice.”

The dialogue tackled three important issues to all youth in the world. The first one was access to and quality of education. The second issue was employment. The third issue was radicalisation and the risk of extremism.

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The Youth Dialogue aimed to galvanise the efforts of global alliances and initiatives that are empowering young people.

Her Highness Sheikha Hind Bint Hamad Al Thani, Vice Chairperson and CEO of the Qatar Foundation, spoke about the importance of innovative and qualitative education to all youth in the world. Some of the other speakers included Pita Taufatofua, a Tongan taekwondo practitioner and skier, Mari Malek, actress from South Sudan, Emmanuel Kelly, Iraqi-Australian singer, and Jayathama Wickramanayake, the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Chat sessions, open mic and media sessions followed. People from around the world had the chance to attend the live-streaming, ask questions, give comments, and share their best practices and experiences.

The dialogue was a successful initiative to empower youth to lead the change they want to see in their world. Mr. Lajčák promised to keep improving this initiative to meet the expectations of the youth. [\[BACK\]](#)

Strong civil society participation in June 2018 GPE Board meeting

13-14 June 2018, Brussels, Belgium



Civil society representatives at the GPE Board meeting in Brussels.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) held its latest Board meeting in Brussels. As has been the practice for the last couple of years, just prior to GPE Board Meetings

, civil society education representatives from global, regional, and national levels held their own meeting in Brussels from 9-10 June to prepare for their contributions to discussions at the GPE Board meeting.

Civil society is represented on the GPE Board through three constituencies – Civil Society Organisation (CSO) 1 for 'northern' CSOs; CSO2 for 'southern' CSOs; and CSO3 for teacher organisations. Representatives for each of these constituencies disseminate GPE-related information to the broader global CSO networks, seek network views, and meet to ensure strong civil society voices are aired in GPE Board discussions. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE), ASPBAE and its regional counterparts, CLADE (Latin America) and ANCEFA (Africa), were involved in the Brussels meetings along with CSOs from Europe and Education International at the Board meeting itself.

The CSO pre-Board meeting

The CSO pre-Board meeting was organised by the Global Campaign for Education and consisted of representatives from each of CSO1 and CSO2, including the GPE Board members from CSO2, Laura Giannecchini from CLADE and Zehra Arshad, Coordinator of PCE Pakistan, and for CSO1 Tony Baker (Results Educational Fund) and Kira Boe (Oxfam Ibis). ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove and Helen Dabu also participated as Asia Pacific regional focal points.

The CSO pre-Board group received and discussed updates on various GPE Committees such as the Strategy and Impact Committee (SIC), the Finance and Risk Committee (FRC), the Governance and Ethics Committee (GEC), and the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC). The group also discussed latest Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) developments and next steps. Representatives

A CSO pre-Board meeting was organised by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) to prepare for CSO contributions to discussions at the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Board meeting. Participants discussed updates on various GPE Committees and the latest Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) developments and next steps.

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GPE Board members from CSO2, Laura Giannecchini from CLADE (L), and Zehra Arshad Coordinator of PCE Pakistan (R), at the GPE Board meeting.

from the GPE Secretariat were invited to some of the CSO sessions to update and discuss issues such as the GPE Private Sector Engagement Strategy, work on the Developing Country Partner (DCP) pledge tracking after the GPE replenishment, the design of the GPE Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) mechanism, and GPE's institutional arrangements. The group agreed on key common points in a joint position paper which helped inform the CSO representative's inputs during the Board meeting.

A meeting of GPE Developing Country Partners (DCPs) constituency of government officials was held on 11 June, with some CSO representatives participating as observers.

The GPE Board meeting

CSO participation in the GPE Board meeting was well prepared and strong. The following is a summary of some of the key decisions and issues from a very crowded Board meeting agenda. A broader summary (which this article draws on) written by the CSO Board representatives is available from GCE, while further information is available on the [GPE website](http://www.gpe.org).

Funds alignment: The Board recognised the need to address a range of challenges relating to the alignment of GPE funds and co-financing.

Transaction costs: There was a common desire to reduce transaction costs and improve the efficiency of the Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG) Approval Processes. Due to the successful Replenishment, about 70 grants are expected to be approved in the 2018-2020 period. This in turn will lead to an increase in transaction costs related to grant application and approval processes. The Board also delegated authority to the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) to approve new ESPIGs and costed restructurings of up to US\$10 million.

Effective partnership review: The Board noted the Review's finding that the GPE operational model did not require any major overhaul, though it could be reinforced with the development of clearer roles and responsibilities for the GPE Operational Model at the country level, including the Local Education Group (LEG), the GPE Secretariat, and the Grant Agent. CSOs raised questions related to governance and mutual accountability, particularly regarding the World Bank being the grant agent in 70% of the countries, and increased diversity was recommended. CSO representatives also emphasised the need for more vibrant and inclusive LEGs with civil society, teachers, and students being incorporated into the operational structure.

Financial forecast: The Board approved the Euro as a second holding currency of the GPE Fund (along with the US\$) and the revision of maximum country allocations. It was also stated that only around 7.5% of pledged money was paid up to March, noting that pledges should be paid sooner rather than later to avoid currency volatility. On the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) and Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) programmes, the Board confirmed the initial allocation of \$60 million for both over 2018-2021 and authorised consideration of an increase of \$20 million for KIX and \$10 million for ASA, based on the recommendation from the SIC by June 2019.

CSOs representatives agreed on key common points in a joint position paper which helped inform their inputs during the Board meeting.



At the GPE Board meeting, CSOs emphasised the need for more vibrant and inclusive Local Education Groups (LEGs) with civil society, teachers, and students being incorporated into the GPE operational structure.

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Regarding domestic resources, CSOs raised the risk of not looking at the size of education budgets in countries, not just the increasing share of national budgets.

There was concern by CSOs and other constituencies regarding the possibility of agreeing to a separate private sector seat on the GPE Board prematurely, without first identifying the policy implications and governance, and that proper Board procedures needed to be followed.



Elections will be held for new GPE Board and committee representatives at the end of the year. The next GPE Board meeting will be in Dublin in December 2018.

Multiplier Fund: The Board approved the extension of countries eligible to access the Multiplier Fund during the 2018-2020 period, and the adoption of risk mitigation measures to improve its operation. CSO2 representatives raised concerns regarding the risk of the Multiplier Fund in fostering the indebtedness of countries.

GPE institutional arrangements: GPE is deciding whether to retain its current institutional arrangements within the World Bank or to create a separate legal entity. An external firm will be recruited to develop the 'leave' option (addressing legal requirements, processes, and implications). For decision during the next GPE Board meeting.

Risk Management report: The Board endorsed changes to the Risk Matrix. Regarding domestic resources, CSOs raised the risk of not looking at the size of education budgets in countries, not just the increasing share of the national budget. CSOs also requested an update on the use of Indicator 10 in the Risk Matrix. This indicator calculates the percentage of budget that goes to education, excluding the debt service of the national budget. CSOs are concerned about the risk of complementarity and alignment of GPE funding regarding the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd), noting that this is critical and needs attention.

Private sector seat on the GPE Board: There was concern by CSOs and other constituencies regarding the possibility of agreeing to a separate private sector seat prematurely, without first identifying the policy implications and governance, and that proper Board procedures needed to be followed. The GPE Board agreed to ask the Governance and Ethics Committee (GEC) to develop policy implications for this new seat for the Board decision in December. GPE will also look at expectations of private sector representatives, including elements such as financial or in-kind contributions to GPE, and criteria of eligibility of inclusion in the constituency. A consultation on the private sector engagement objectives, goals, and principles would be held to get inputs from all constituencies.

Term of the Chair of the Board: The Board approved the possibility of the Chair of the Board having a third term of up to three years. Julia Gillard was elected to a further extension of the Chair, from 1 March 2019 to 28 February 2021.

Board and Committee Elections: Elections will be held for new GPE Board and committee representatives at the end of this year.

The next GPE Board meeting will take place in Dublin, Ireland, from 6-7 December, 2018. [\[BACK\]](#)

Bulletin continued on next page...

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The Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) organised a regional conference on financing education – ‘*Financing Education 2030: Revisiting the role of civil society in the Middle East and East Europe*’ – one of the significant initiatives in recent years to focus on this theme.

Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) organises pioneering conference on financing education in the Arab region

1-3 May 2018, Beirut, Lebanon

The Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) organised a regional conference on financing education with the title – ‘*Financing Education 2030: Revisiting the role of civil society in the Middle East and East Europe*’ – one of the significant initiatives in recent years to focus on this theme. The conference coincided with ACEA’s extended commemoration of Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) focusing on accountability to Education 2030. The ACEA conference brought together national and regional civil society coalitions, main stakeholders, and key players of the education sector in the region.

The main objective of the conference was to strengthen the role of civil society and boost the regional momentum towards increased accountability towards education. The event also aimed to offer a space for Arab and Eastern Europe civil society actors in education to define a coherent strategy for securing adequate education financing for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education (SDG 4). Some of the specific objectives included –

1. Revisit the current role of civil society in responding to the increasing challenges of education financing with more focus on countries in emergencies.
2. Identify the challenges and obstacles faced by civil society working in the field of education in countries and in the region and identify feasible strategies to enhance their role and effectiveness.
3. Consolidate a common response strategy to increase domestic financing and financing towards education in emergencies.

The regional conference focussed on three main thematic areas – (1) Domestic Financing for Education: domestic spending on education, gaps in financing, taxation as a source of financing and tax reform, and good governance; (2) Education in Emergencies: education under attack and the impact of conflict and emergencies on education in the region, role of civil society in protection of education facilities, students, and staff, funding mechanisms for education in emergencies, and available opportunities for civil society; (3) Social Accountability: role of civil society, mainly national coalitions, towards better advocacy and policy change aimed at increasing domestic and donor funding to education.

The conference drew from the rich experience of global and regional civil society organisations. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and regional implementing partners in Latin America, Africa, and the Asia Pacific, including ASPBAE, showcased their advocacy work in education financing. ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, Executive Council Member representing Southeast Asia, Thein Lwin, and ASPBAE’s Helen Dabu participated in the conference in Beirut. Maria moderated a session on ‘*Advocacy Efforts in Financing Education During Emergencies*’. In this panel, different organisations expounded on their efforts to make education accessible to refugees and

The main aim of the ACEA conference was to strengthen the role of civil society and boost the regional momentum towards increased accountability towards education. It focused on domestic financing for education, education in emergencies, and social accountability, including the role of civil society towards better advocacy and policy change.



ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan (L), moderated a session on ‘*Advocacy Efforts in Financing Education During Emergencies*’. ASPBAE Executive Council member representing Southeast Asia, Thein Lwin (not in picture), also participated in the conference.

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ASPBAE's Helen Dabu, who was at the conference in Beirut, presented on lessons learnt on education budget advocacy.

displaced children and youth during emergencies. Experiences of the Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan International, the Inter Agency Network in Education in Emergencies and the Ministry of Education in Jordan were shared in this panel. Helen presented on lessons learnt on education budget advocacy, drawing from the experience in the Asia Pacific.

Education coalitions from Yemen, Somalia, Lebanon, and Iraq presented reports on their work on the principles of conflict-sensitive education and lessons learnt. The Palestinian education coalition highlighted its work to advocate for better-financed and inclusive education for disabled children. The Sudanese coalition elaborated on the case of education programming and the need for more financing. Furthermore, education coalitions from Albania, Georgia, and Moldova presented good practices on advocacy for inclusive education.

The conference included open exhibitions where organisations showcased their work. It also featured panel discussions aimed at sharing experiences, lessons, challenges, and wins of local, regional, and international actors in education. Click [here](#) to know more about the event.

This write-up draws from information on the [ACEA website](#) and the [Global Partnership for Education \(GPE\) website](#). [BACK]

Strengthening coalition activities in Afghanistan

21-26 May 2018, New Delhi, India



The Capacity Support and Advocacy Workshop for the Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC) aimed to reflect on the coalition's programme activities in the past one year and enhance capacities to deepen engagements with the SDG-SDG 4 policy spaces.

ASPBAE organised a Capacity Support and Advocacy Workshop in New Delhi for the Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC). The workshop was organised to - (1) reflect on the coalition's programme activities in the past one year and strengthen the institutional processes and formalisation of the coalition; (2) enhance capacities to deepen engagements with the SDG-SDG 4 policy spaces at national, regional, and global levels. ASPBAE mobilised resource persons and experts from within its membership in India and their affiliated networks.

An interactive session, led by ASPBAE's Anita Borkar, assisted ANEC in sharing their accomplishments and challenges. It was well noted that ANEC's efforts in building rapport within the national government and engaging national level policy processes has resulted in its recognition as a credible platform that brings together all organisations working for education. ANEC also built the experience and skills to deal with issues such as frequent turn-over of Ministry officials and personnel, and lack of clear coordination channels between government and civil society.

Capacity building sessions were organised to update and strategise engagements on the policy spaces related to the SDGs and SDG 4 in particular. A session to deepen understanding on the links between SDG 4 with other goals, such as decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), gender (SDG 5), and reducing inequality (SDG 10) was led by Azad Foundation, India. ASPBAE also shared its plan for participation in the High-level Political Forums for 2018 and

ANEC's efforts in building rapport within the national government and engaging national-level policy processes has resulted in its recognition as a credible platform that brings together all organisations working for education.

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Capacity building sessions were organised to update and strategise engagements on the policy spaces related to the SDGs and SDG 4 in particular.

2019, especially since the HLPF 2019 will focus on SDG 4. ASPBAE shared its plans for coordinated action around developing Civil society organisations (CSO) Spotlight Reports focused on SDG 4 for HLPF 2019.

The session on inclusive education was led by the Centre for Social Inclusion and Equity (CSEI) in New Delhi where the participants explored the different aspects that trigger exclusion and bias. Explaining the value of inclusive education, the facilitators guided the participants' work on strategies to advance inclusive education. A session was also organised on Education for Sustainable Development led by an NGO, Pairvi.

In the session on Education for Sustainable Development, Ajay Jha from Pairvi oriented the participants on environmental and climate education, providing evidences of climate change, increased disasters, and changes in biodiversity. Explaining about Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Ajay also highlighted the gaps in ESD – especially of recognising the crisis only when it threatens the existence.

The session on gender in education was facilitated by Amrita Gupta of Azad Foundation, an ASPBAE member based in New Delhi. Linking SDG 4 with other goals, such as decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), gender (SDG 5), and reducing inequality (SDG 10), Amrita explained the inter-sectionality that create discrimination and marginalisation.

In his session on institutionalisation and formalisation of a coalition, Tejinder Bhogal, an independent consultant, explained the different structures of a coalition and strategies to work efficiently and bring effective social change.

The final day of the programmatic part of the meeting was dedicated to strategising civil society engagement in national education policy processes and in developing an advocacy plan. ASPBAE's Helen Dabu oriented the participants on the strategies and mechanisms of engaging in the National Education Strategic Plan process, membership in Local Education Groups (LEG), and ANEC's role in the LEG. ASPBAE's Susmita Choudhury led a session where participants identified and prioritised issues related to education in their country context, chalked out the goal and targets in addressing the issues, developed strategies, and identified networks/alliances to partner in advocating the issues. The participants also developed key messages based on the prioritised issues.

In the last two days of the meeting, participants were trained on the finance reporting tool by Ever Chokunonga from the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) Global Secretariat which is hosting the Asia Pacific Regional Fund Management Agency. The objective of the training was to ensure that standard processes and procedures for financial transactions and format for financial transaction processing, reporting, and submitting supporting documents are in place; identify and/or develop centres of excellence across coalitions to promote regional support and knowledge sharing; and ensure coalitions comply with CSEF requirements, partnership agreements, national statutory and legal requirements for accounts, audit, annual reports, and annual returns. [\[BACK\]](#)

Sessions on inclusive education, Education for Sustainable Development, gender in education and institutionalisation and formalisation of a coalition were held during the workshop. ASPBAE mobilised resource persons and experts from within its membership in India and their affiliated networks.



ASPBAE's Susmita Choudhury led a session where participants identified and prioritised issues related to education in their country context. ASPBAE's Helen Dabu oriented participants on the strategies and mechanisms of engaging in the National Education Strategic Plan process, membership in Local Education Groups (LEG), and ANEC's role in the LEG.

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David Kumie, PEAN coordinator, with eggs for sale in Honiara, an income generating activity of Bethesda students. The Bethesda school is a member of the Solomon Islands education coalition and its programmes are designed for children with disabilities.

Forging ties and enabling cross learning amongst national education coalitions in the South Pacific

7-11 May, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Representatives of the Papua New Guinea (PNG) national education coalition, PEAN, spent a week with representatives of the Solomon Island coalition and their members, sharing experiences on budget analysis, SDG 4 analysis, and inclusion policies and strategies employed in PNG and Solomon Islands. ASPBAE's Peter King joined the coalitions for this interaction.

The Coalition for Education Solomon Islands, COESI, has forged a strong relationship and good insider links with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD). This enabled both coalitions to join in fruitful meetings within the Ministry with members of the Strategic Support Unit, and the inclusion unit. There was much discussion on possible future collaboration in research and promises of close relationships and information sharing. Members of both coalitions visited a public school in Honiara that is trialing the inclusion of children with disabilities, as well as a member of the coalition, Bethesda school, whose programmes are specifically designed for children with disabilities.

Similar to Vanuatu, the Solomon Island government plans to fund one year of free early childhood education. In Vanuatu, Parliament just approved a supplementary budget (June 2018) that would provide grants for early childhood education providers to deliver on free early childhood education for this year.

In Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, governments continue to struggle with lack of funds and ideas to develop the education sector, and to improve quality. In the Solomon Islands, attempts to contract out school inspections are regarded as a failure. Fee-free education (FFE) initiatives have also had mixed success - increasing class size, adding to teacher work, and in many cases, schools still charge fees but label them differently. In all three countries, Ministries are looking to decentralise and put the emphasis back on the community to be involved in the management of schools.

In all three, the percentage of funds going to their scholarship programmes remains a contentious issue. In the Solomon Islands, for example, in 2017, 14% of recurrent expenditure in primary education was spent on scholarship programmes; 14% in secondary education, and a huge 63% in tertiary education.

Nevertheless, there are positive changes in the education sector in the Solomon Islands, with MEHRD developing a new junior and senior secondary curriculum with a push to introduce more skills-building into the curriculum in senior secondary. There is a new Education bill, which, if passed, will replace the 1975 Education Act. Of note in the bill is that more power will be devolved to the province level; the recognition of technical vocational education and training (TVET) and tertiary education as a sector; and the establishment of the Solomon Islands Tertiary Education Commission which will review and take decisions on the controversial scholarship programme. [\[BACK\]](#)

The Solomon Island government plans to fund one year of free early childhood education. In Vanuatu, Parliament just approved a supplementary budget (June 2018) that would provide grants for early childhood education providers to deliver on free early childhood education for this year.



Representatives of the education coalitions in Papua New Guinea (PEAN) and Solomon Islands (COESI) visited Florence Young school in Honiara.

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ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove (forefront) visited the Samoa Education Network (SEN) to discuss programme and network-building developments. He participated in a SEN Board meeting and held discussions with ASPBAE member, METI, the Samoa Umbrella for NGOs, and the Samoa National Teachers Association.

Samoa Education Network (SEN) looking to build its constituency

25-31 May 2018, Apia, Samoa

The Samoa Education Network (SEN) has been working to build its constituency. For a country with only 185,000 people, there are not many active national civil society organisations. However, SEN has undergone another round of discussions with potential new members, allies, and supporters.

One such new member organisation is the Loto Taumafai Society for People with Disabilities. Apart from advocacy on education, the organisation also runs a school for people with disabilities, and provides programmes for youth, including woodwork and craft-making products for sale at local markets.

ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove visited SEN to discuss programme and network-building developments. He participated in a SEN Board meeting and held discussions with ASPBAE member, METI (other key SEN members), the Samoa Umbrella for NGOs (SUNGO), and the Samoa National Teachers Association (Society of Faioga Samoa).

Along with the Coordinator of SEN, Ioane Ryan, Bernie visited the Loto Taumafai Society, the Robert Louis Stevenson Primary and Secondary School, and individuals with strong knowledge of the Samoa Education network who would be willing to provide mentoring and support for SEN. They also met with Gail Townsend, Education Specialist for UNESCO Office for the Pacific States, based in Apia, to discuss UNESCO support for SDG 4 implementation in the Pacific.

SEN will be part of the Samoa delegation to the APMED 4 meeting in Bangkok and is sending a delegation to the Pacific sub-regional workshop to be held in Suva, Fiji, in July. [\[BACK\]](#)

Exploring how community education can contribute to global citizenship

ACE Aotearoa National Conference 2018

12-14 June 2018, Wellington, New Zealand



The ACE National Conference aimed to explore how community education can help contribute to global citizenship.

Adult and Community Education (ACE), Aotearoa, an ASPBAE member in New Zealand, held its National Conference in Wellington. The conference aimed to explore how community education can help contribute to global citizenship. Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) Vice-President for the Asia Pacific and Past President of ASPBAE, and Nelida Cespedes, ICAE Executive Council Member and Honorary President of CEAAL (Latin America), participated in the conference.

Robbie conducted a workshop on 'Weaving Youth Voices in Lifelong Learning through Global Citizenship' together with Peter Foese, ASPBAE Executive Council member from the South Pacific, and facilitated a closing activity for the conference based on Lifelong Learning Beads to highlight the challenges faced by adult and community educators in advancing the concept of lifelong learning.

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Robbie Guevara, ICAE VP for the Asia Pacific and Past President of ASPBAE, conducted a workshop on 'Weaving Youth Voices in Lifelong Learning through Global Citizenship' with Peter Foese, ASPBAE EC member (South Pacific).

The LLL beads were based on a concept developed by educators from Germany, and recycled paper beads produced by the Lao Disabled Women's Association through the assistance of the DVV International Office for South East Asia.

Nelida contributed to the conference by sharing her experiences on the role of popular education in advancing global citizenship. She spoke passionately about how Paulo Freire influenced work in popular education that recognised how people's struggles are a powerful site for lifelong learning in becoming better global citizens.

After the conference, both Robbie and Nelida met with the Secretary-General of the New Zealand UNESCO National Commission, Vicki Soanes. During the meeting, Nelida shared a copy of the CONFINTEA VI Regional Report from Latin America, while Robbie shared a copy of the stories from the Youth Action Research project that ASPBAE conducted in India with its member, Abhivyakti - *'Shodhini - A quest towards empowerment'*, together with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), to empower marginalised girls to advocate for their right to quality education. [\[BACK\]](#)



CEPTIL is advocating with the government to ensure that it commits to increasing the country's national education budget.

Following up on Timor Leste's commitment to increase the country's education budget

29 May 2018, Dili, Timor Leste

The newly-established education campaign coalition, CSO Education Partnership in Timor Leste (CEPTIL), held a meeting with key officials of their Ministry of Education (MoE) in Dili to discuss how the government will ensure implementation of its commitment to increase the country's education budget.

The Timor Leste government participated in the Replenishment Conference of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in Dakar, Senegal, on 2 February 2018, and committed to increase its education budget from 13.3% in 2017 to 15% of the national budget in 2019 and 2020. In the post-GPE Replenishment follow-up meeting with the MoE, initiated by CEPTIL and ASPBAE, updates and challenges were discussed which will bear on whether this commitment will be translated into concrete action. The National Adviser of MoE, Rui Hanjam, and the MoE Director-General of Policy, Planning and Cooperation (PPC), Antoninho Pires, acknowledged the need to ensure the commitment is delivered.



Timor Leste participated in the GPE Replenishment Conference in Dakar in February 2018 and committed to increasing its education budget from 13.3% in 2017 to 15% of the national budget in 2019 and 2020.

However, with the result of the recent national election necessitating a change in government and Ministerial appointments, the MoE representatives could not provide definitive actions on how their domestic financing commitment will be pursued. Nevertheless, they both confirmed that the current MoE leadership has prepared a report to the new government leadership outlining MoE's priorities and commitments, including the need for domestic budget increase for education as outlined in Dakar. CEPTIL and ASPBAE expressed that they will continue to monitor the progress of on-going government transition and will proactively engage the newly-installed government to ensure that the domestic financing commitments made in Dakar will be implemented in Timor Leste. [\[BACK\]](#)

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NNER's national seminar focussed on the draft findings of coalition and the University Teachers Association research on University Charters, shared experiences in advocating for teachers' democratic rights from Mongolia and the Philippines, role of teachers' unions in contributing to democratic education reforms, and education privatisation.

NNER holds national seminar on education privatisation and the role of teacher's unions in Myanmar's education reforms

22-23 June 2018, Yangon, Myanmar

The education campaign coalition in Myanmar, National Network for Education Reform (NNER), held its bi-annual national seminar in the country's capital in Yangon. The seminar was attended by over 280 participants, including member representatives of NNER from all states and divisions of Myanmar, members of the public, coalition representatives from Mongolia and the Philippines, and ASPBAE staff.

Jointly organised by NNER and its member, the University Teachers Association (UTA), this public-facing event discussed the draft findings of NNER and UTA research on University Charters, shared experiences in advocating for teachers' democratic rights from Mongolia and the Philippines, the vital role of teachers' unions in contributing to democratic education reforms, and education privatisation.

On the first day of the event, NNER members shared their activities and accomplishments in the last six months as a way to update all coalition members on the local education advocacy and capacity building work of NNER members according to their geographic (all states and divisions of Myanmar) and thematic (marginalised sectors) work groupings. This serves as a reflection and monitoring session of the coalition to inform their direction in the next six months. The afternoon was dedicated to discussing education privatisation and the need for greater public awareness and engagements on this issue.

ASPBAE's Helen Dabu provided a brief background and input on education privatisation, the privatisation trend in the Asia Pacific region, how education privatisation negatively impacts the right to education and the teaching profession, the rights-based framework in analysing education privatisation, and how to critically look at current perception and arguments on education privatisation. Particularly on its impact on teachers, she highlighted the studies of Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI studies) wherein there was strong evidence of a significant wage difference between public and private teachers and a high prevalence of under-qualified teachers in private schools.

Chairperson of NNER and ASPBAE Executive Council member representing Southeast Asia, Thein Lwin, provided an overview of private and commercial schools in Myanmar and shared his comments and initial analysis on Myanmar's current draft law on private education. He highlighted the need to analyse the draft law against the state responsibility to fulfil the right to education, and that the rights of marginalised sectors should be protected amidst the trend in education privatisation. His discussion has also emphasised the need for greater public engagement and discussion around this issue considering the varying levels of understanding of education privatisation and its impact on Myanmar's public education system.

Chairperson of NNER and ASPBAE Executive Council member representing Southeast Asia, Thein Lwin, provided an overview of private and commercial schools in Myanmar and shared his analysis on Myanmar's current draft law on private education.



The seminar was attended by over 280 participants, including member representatives of NNER, the public, coalition representatives from Mongolia and the Philippines, and ASPBAE.

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The national seminar featured a panel discussion on the experiences of member representatives of education coalitions from Mongolia and the Philippines. Tungalag Dondogdulam and Batjargal Batkhuyag (ASPBAE EC member) from AFE Mongolia, and Flora Arellano, Vice President of E-Net Philippines, participated in the panel discussion.

The last day of the seminar covered a range of discussions around democratic rights and welfare of teachers based on the draft findings of the researches conducted by NNER and UTA on a number of University Charters in Myanmar. It also featured a panel discussion on the experiences of member representatives of education coalitions from Mongolia and the Philippines in the development and formation of teacher's unions in these countries and how they advanced and fought for the rights and welfare of teachers.

Flora Arellano, Vice President of the Civil Society Network for Education Reform (E-Net Philippines), shared decades of experience involved in developing their teacher's union and fighting for their collective bargaining rights, particularly during the martial law years and post-dictatorship period in the Philippines.

Tungalag Dondogdulam and Batjargal Batkhuyag (ASPBAE Executive Council member representing East Asia), from "All for Education" National Civil Society Coalition of Mongolia (AFE Mongolia), shared their stories of struggle and victories in developing the Mongolian teacher's union and in building the capacities of Mongolian teachers to critically engage in advancing their democratic rights and welfare, especially during the time when Mongolia was under a socialist rule until it transitioned to a democracy.

The stories and lessons learned shared by the coalition representatives from Mongolia and Philippines aimed to inspire the participants to continue engaging in the democratic reforms in the country, especially in informing education policy reforms, despite the political and other contextual challenges they are facing and will still face in the future. [\[BACK\]](#)

Accountability towards advocating for adult education to wider networks

Training of Master Trainers (ToMT) follow-up workshop

24-25 April 2018, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

By Freyja Dixon, Education Support Officer, Australian Volunteer Programme

To make an education development programme sustainable, or any development programme sustainable, there should never really be an 'end date'. Rather, it should be acknowledged and supported that development is ongoing and takes place over many years. This has been the approach of the Training of Master Trainers (ToMT), an education programme spanning almost three years, eight 4-5-day training workshops, and multiple follow-up activities where 40 trainers from the non-formal education sector in Lao PDR have increased their adult education and facilitation skills.

Recently, a follow-up workshop was held in Vientiane to provide an opportunity for graduate Master Trainers to come back together to share their experiences and to gain additional skills and techniques. The ToMT, a joint initiative between DVV International and the Non-formal Educational Development Centre (NFEDC) of the Department of Non-formal Education, has been developed and implemented by a range of local, regional, and international partner



A follow-up workshop was held in Vientiane to provide an opportunity for graduate Master Trainers to come back together to share their experiences and to gain additional skills and techniques.

Robbie Guevara (RMIT) and Anita Borkar (ASPBAE) anchored the preparatory work towards the planning and facilitation of the ToMT workshop.

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Through committing to annual follow-up activities, partner organisations and key trainers who have nurtured the ToMT over the years can continue to provide support to the group, ensuring a sustainable and lasting impact.

organisations, including ASPBAE, RMIT University (Melbourne, Australia), UNESCO Bangkok, and the Australian Volunteer Programme. Robbie Guevara (RMIT) and Anita Borkar (ASPBAE) anchored the preparatory work towards the planning and facilitation of this workshop. Along with resource persons from NFEDC and DVV, they also provided the mentoring support to the local trainers. Some of the sessions, such as Context Setting and Building a Community of Practice, were led by Robbie and Anita, respectively.

Over the course of the follow-up workshop, Master Trainers shared their stories of most significant change from the ToMT, participated in sessions on method selection technique, note-taking as a facilitator, and how to explain lifelong learning to different target groups. Stories the trainers shared spoke of how their approach towards educating others had shifted and the opportunities that had been opened up to them through the programme. One story was that of Northern Master Trainers, Khongmany and Sor, of running an adult education training for health trainers for the Swiss Red Cross. At first, they had been concerned that, given they have no expertise in health, they would have little to offer. However, after running the training, they soon realised the importance having strong trainers who understood the principles of adult education working in every sector.

This growing understanding towards the role that adult and non-formal education plays in multiple sectors in Laos is not only reflected in the incoming project requests, but also in the overall attitude of the Master Trainers themselves. An accountability has developed that surpasses that of simply being a good trainer to advocating for adult education to wider national network. Indeed, the concept of accountability was a central theme of the workshop with many people reflecting on it on the final day. The discussions and stories shared throughout the training showed a remarkable shift in the way the Master Trainers see themselves and their place in the wider community.

With larger projects now coming in, such as a major training collaboration with the Basic Education Quality and Access in Laos (BEQUAL), this accountability and expertise will only continue to grow. Through committing to annual follow-up activities, partner organisations and key trainers who have nurtured the ToMT over the years can continue to provide support to the group, ensuring a sustainable and lasting impact. [\[BACK\]](#)

The ToMT, a joint initiative between DVV International and the Non-formal Educational Development Centre of the Department of Non-formal Education (Lao PDR), has been developed and implemented by a range of local, regional, and international partner organisations, including ASPBAE, RMIT University (Australia), UNESCO Bangkok, and the Australian Volunteer Programme.



Deepening understanding of lifelong learning at the National University of Laos

1 June 2018, Vientiane, Lao PDR

The successful completion of the Training of Master Trainers (ToMT) in Lao PDR, anchored through the sustained partnership of the Non-Formal Education Development Centre (NFEDC), Vientiane; the DVV Regional Office in Vientiane; RMIT University, Australia; ASPBAE; UNESCO-Bangkok; and supported by the Department for Non-Formal Education, Lao PDR, paved the opening for new partnerships to develop at the national level.

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The Faculty of Education of the National University of Laos (NUOL) invited ASPBAE and RMIT Australia to offer a training to deepen the understanding of lifelong learning for students, teachers, and staff of their Faculty.

Two ToMT participants had approached the Faculty of Education of the National University of Laos (NUOL). Their conversation resulted in the recognition that effective delivery of non-formal education required the cooperation and assistance of the formal education system, especially in the Lao context. This further led to the identification of 16 hours within the pre-service teacher education curriculum to offer lessons on lifelong learning (LLL) as a way for future teachers to appreciate non-formal education and, consequently, development of a module on LLL as part of their teacher training curriculum, with support from the ToMT project team and RMIT University (Australia).

Vanmany Vannasy, Head of the Academic Affairs Division of the Faculty of Education, NUOL, invited RMIT and ASPBAE to offer a training to deepen the understanding of LLL for students, teachers, and staff of their Faculty of Education. Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, of RMIT University, Australia, and Immediate Past President of ASPBAE, along with ASPBAE's Anita Borkar led this training with a batch of 60 students and teachers and 30 staff members of the Faculty of Education.

The interaction with the faculty group highlighted the importance of participatory methodologies in facilitating teaching in formal as well as non-formal settings.

The interactive training, employing participatory and experiential activities, helped build a shared understanding of the concept of LLL through different phases of life. The importance of non-formal education for learning in all age groups was highlighted through the shared experiences and interactions by the participants. The training resulted in an appreciation of their insights on LLL, having a bearing for them as individuals in their own learning journeys, and also for their future learning journeys of the students.



Robbie Guevara of RMIT University, Australia, and Immediate Past President of ASPBAE, along with ASPBAE's Anita Borkar, led the training with a batch of 60 students and teachers and 30 staff members of the Faculty of Education.

The interaction with the faculty group highlighted the importance of participatory methodologies in facilitating teaching in formal as well as non-formal settings. Through small group discussions, an attempt was made to recognise their own experience in conducting effective and engaging teaching and learning. Further, the Experiential Learning Cycle was introduced with an emphasis on the importance of sharing and processing experiences for effective learning. The interaction with the faculty concluded with identifying possible ways in which they could use different participatory techniques in their own learning settings.

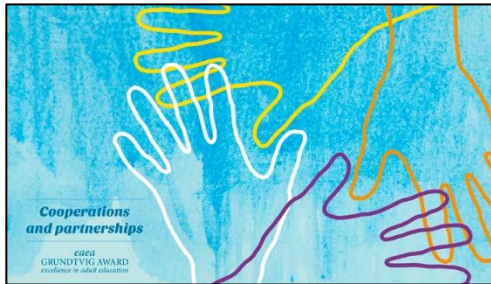
Uwe Gartenschaleger and Khanthong Inthachack from the DVV Regional Office in Vientiane, and Vanna Peou from the DVV country office in Cambodia, also participated in the training session. [\[BACK\]](#)

Bulletin continued on next page...

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The winning project of DVV International focused on how partnerships and international cooperation were harnessed to strengthen the professionalisation of adult education staff as there is a lack of qualified teachers and trainers in all areas of non-formal education in the country.



Souphap Khounvixay (centre) from Non-Formal Education Development Centre in Laos receiving the Grundtvig Award from the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA).

DVV International Laos wins Grundtvig Award for professionalisation of non-formal adult education providers

27 June 2018, Tallinn, Estonia

The DVV International Regional Office for Southeast Asia was a winner of the [EAEA Grundtvig Award](#) for training non-formal adult education trainers in Laos. The theme of the Awards this year was 'Cooperation and Partnerships'. Built around international cooperation and partnership, DVV International initiated the project with the Department of Non-Formal Education of the Ministry for Education and Sports, Lao PDR, ASPBAE, RMIT Australia, and UNESCO. This enabled the project to secure a wide range of expertise and offer high quality trainings, coaching, and mentoring to participants.

The project of DVV International in Laos focused on professionalisation of adult education staff as there is a lack of qualified teachers and trainers in all areas of non-formal education in the country. Now, graduates of the training are considered to be the first expert trainers in teaching and learning of youth and adults in their organisations. More specially, DVV International trained a group of trainers in youth and adult education in Laos, where no pre- or in-service training is normally available for the sector. The main aim of the one-and-a-half-year initiative was to train a group of 30-35 Master trainers in youth and adult education in the country and provide capacity building for non-formal adult education personnel in the country. Souphap Khounvixay from Non-Formal Education Development Centre in Laos, stressed that, *"It is important to educate trainers and form networks to have a bigger picture of adult education. A lot still needs to be done to fully encompass adult education in learning systems in Laos."*

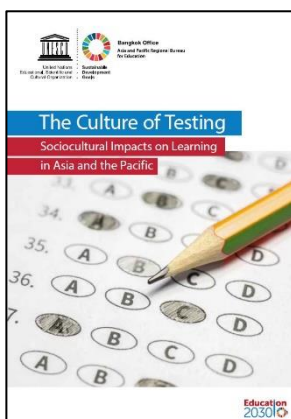
Each year, EAEA celebrates innovation and excellence in adult education. The Grundtvig Award highlights projects that produce new ideas, new partnerships, new methodologies, and a new understanding of how to work in adult learning. The main aim of this year's award was to raise awareness, at the European level, of successful cooperation and partnerships to further adult learning.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Culture of Testing: Socio-cultural Impacts on Learning in Asia and the Pacific

A UNESCO Bangkok study



In many countries in Asia and the Pacific, high-stakes examinations are the means for controlling access to better schools, higher education, and greater life opportunities. Students are being educated in a world that is highly competitive, stressful, and test-focused and the pressure to obtain high scores in tests and exams can come at the expense of other relevant skills needed to navigate an increasingly complex world.

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Students are being educated in a world that is highly competitive, stressful, and test-focused and the pressure to obtain high scores in tests and exams can come at the expense of other relevant skills needed to navigate an increasingly complex world.

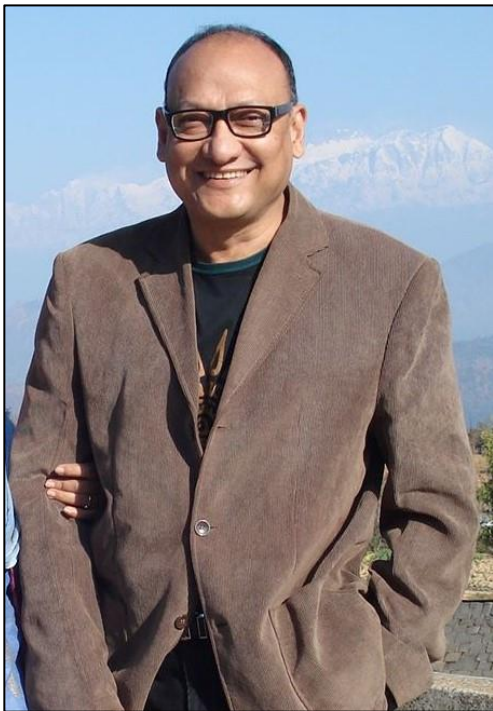
Whether academic achievement is of more value than other competencies and learner well-being depends on how different societies interpret the value of education.

This [study](#), following on from UNESCO's 2015 Rethinking Education, and within the SDG 4-Education 2030 backdrop, examines the social and cultural values of the quality of education. By examining the relationship between society, culture, and the values that are placed on examinations and academic success, the report illuminates what drives societies to rely on tests as a measure of success. [[BACK](#)]

Farewell, Prakash

Message from ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, to Saloni Singh of Didibahini (Nepal) and former ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, on the passing away of her husband, Prakash Singh.

Prakash was founder of the Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD), an ASPBAE member in Nepal.



Prakash Singh, founder of the Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD), an ASPBAE member in Nepal.

It is with deep sadness that we received the news of Prakash's passing. We cannot begin to imagine the depths of your grief and the void left by this loss. But just as you have been a source of great comfort to many of us in our own time of bereavement, know that we are with you now.

I have known Prakash for almost as long as I have been in ASPBAE. He has been one of the active leaders of the adult education movement from South Asia - ever committed to this network. I recall his active engagement in many ASPBAE meetings - analytical, questioning, critical, but above all, supportive. The ASPBAE member organisation that he helped nurture, Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD), was one of the NGOs that pioneered and promoted the value of community-based lifelong learning for empowering approaches to education in all spheres - formal, non-formal, informal. Prakash and IFCD were staunch advocates of quality education truly for all - irrespective of age or circumstance. His passing will leave a void in ASPBAE and the education movement as well.

But as it also is in this ASPBAE family, we have been privileged to see many other sides to Prakash, too. We will remember his sense of humour, his warm hospitality, and his devotion to you, Saloni, and to Pranjali and Surabhi. It was a joy to watch him revelling in the adoration of the three confident, highly intelligent and beautiful women of his life; how he lived his politics in his personal life as a feminist husband and father.

I am sure your beautiful garden will never be the same without him, Saloni. But there are many wonderful memories, ideas, causes that have been planted in his lifetime that will live on. May this thought comfort you and your family in this most difficult time.

Our deepest sympathies. [[BACK](#)]



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Learning Beyond Boundaries

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