

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

September 2020

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A lifelong learning perspective to bridge gaps in early childhood education, TVET, basic and adult education



UNESCO Regional Consultation on the 2020 Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM) Declaration

[Full article](#)



Working to ensure recovery of social enterprises and the marginalised sectors in the Asia Pacific

Third Social Enterprise Advocacy and Leveraging (SEAL) Asia Conference

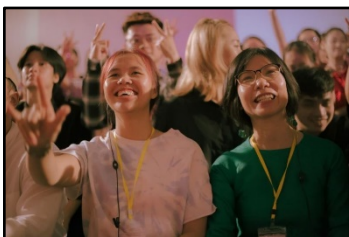
[Full article](#)



Education in emergencies, non-formal education as prime advocacy agendas for CSOs in Nepal

Nepal National Consultation on the occasion of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly

[Full article](#)



Listen by Eyes: A call to action towards sign language in Vietnam

[Full article](#)



Recognising the different dimensions of literacy at PRIA event for International Literacy Day

[Full article](#)

ASPBAE organises virtual discussions on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in the Asia Pacific

This virtual discussion series emphasised policy and programme recommendations, and reforms in SDG architecture embedding Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in the SDGs. The webinars also examined the impact of COVID-19 on ALE advocacy.

[Read more](#)

ASPBAE successfully conducts elections for the Executive Council (2021-2024) and voting on Constitutional amendments as part of its 8th General Assembly

ASPBAE's election results were based on the outcomes of the electronic voting processes of its 8th General Assembly conducted.

[Read more](#)

Calling for a more systematic approach towards adult education to tackle the impact of COVID-19

Afghanistan National Consultation on the occasion of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly

Education for women and girls, access to education for children with special needs, and adult education were highlighted as top priorities for education in Afghanistan. - [Read more](#)

Accelerating the push for quality basic education including non-formal and informal education as an integral part of the education system in Indonesia within a lifelong learning framework

Indonesia National Consultation on the occasion of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly

Budget advocacy, adult education initiatives to tackle gender injustice; and a greater push for non-formal and informal education were some of the recommendations presented to ASPBAE by participants of the Indonesia national consultation. - [Read more](#)

Sustained learning exchanges, especially on SDG 4.7, and supporting advocacy efforts on education ODA in Japan

Japan National Consultation on the occasion of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly

ASPBAE's member in Japan supported ASPBAE's continued engagement in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and expressed preparedness to engage the Japanese government in pushing for more aid to education. - [Read more](#)



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ANNOUNCEMENT

Literacy in COVID-19 and beyond

Interview of Quazi Faruque Ahmed, Chairperson, Initiative for Human Development (IHD), an ASPBAE member in Bangladesh

[Full article](#)

Stalwarts in adult education reflect on the legacy of W.M.K Wijetunga, former ASPBAE Secretary-General

Several prominent personalities in the field of adult education paid tribute to W.M.K. Wijetunga, ASPBAE Secretary-General from 1985-1995, on his passing on 28 July 2020. The virtual condolence meeting was moderated by Rajesh Tandon of PRIA (India) and Maria Khan. - [Read more](#)

EDUCATION NEWS AND VIEWS

Literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond at heart of the International Literacy Day

A new report shows how countries can measure the education progress of the most marginalised populations to ensure no one is left behind. The new Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education provides practical guidance on the calculation and interpretation of indicators designed to target the most disadvantaged groups.

[Read more](#)



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Member of the Month

International Graduate Centre of Education (IGCE), Australia

The International Graduate Centre of Education (IGCE) of Charles Darwin University in Australia explores teaching and learning issues across diverse ages, cultures, and geographic locations.

Their work includes producing research to inform evidence-based decisions; advancement of Indigenous Australians and developing communities in the Asia-Pacific; and contributing to tangible improvements in local, national, and global education systems, policies, and practices.

Click here to visit the [IGCE website](http://www.igce.org.au) to know more.

Photo of the Month



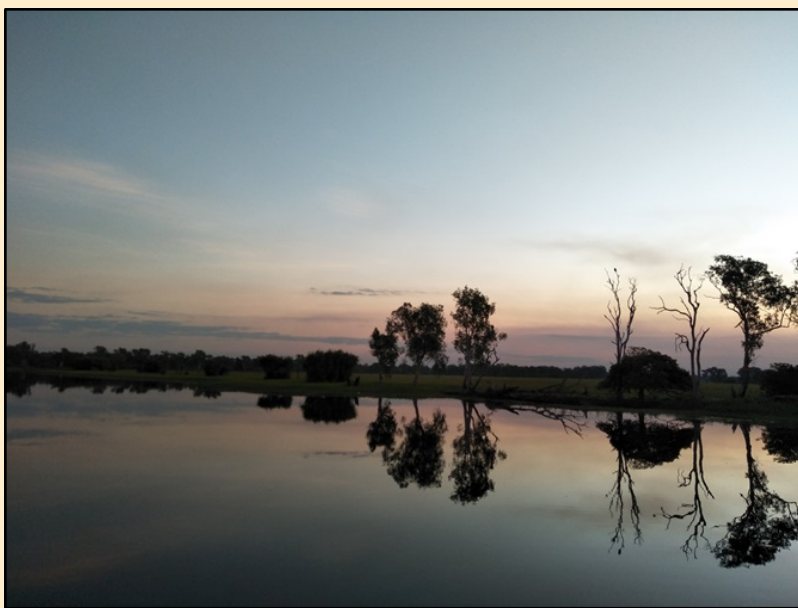
This year's theme for International Literacy Day (8 Sept.) was 'Literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond', with special focus on the role of educators and changing pedagogies.

ASPBAE Lens

ASPBAE dedicates this space in the Bulletin to showcase photos its staff have taken to feature their perception of life around them, the interesting and inspiring moments they observe, and imagery they capture that reflect education and lifelong learning in different ways. In this edition, we feature a photo taken by Peter King, ASPBAE's Capacity Support and Advocacy Adviser.

Peter King

Capacity Support and Advocacy Adviser



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EDUCATION NEWS AND VIEWS

This section of the Bulletin is dedicated to highlighting news and events from the Asia Pacific and from around the world focusing on education and lifelong learning. For this edition, we highlight UNESCO's global webinar held on International Literacy Day (ILD) 2020.

Literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond at the heart of International Literacy Day



"After six months of deep disruption, education stands on fragile ground everywhere. Without remedial measures, this crisis will magnify the educational failures that already existed before it", said UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Stefania Giannini at the opening of the UNESCO global webinar held on International Literacy Day (ILD).

The event brought together more than 500 participants, stakeholders and decision makers from around the world on 8 September 2020. The discussion focused on the theme of ILD 2020, '[Literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond: The role of educators and changing pedagogies](#)'.

The COVID-19 crisis revealed the unpreparedness of education systems, infrastructure, educators and learners for distance learning, and the fragility of adult literacy programmes. It hit hardest those who were already marginalized, including [773 million non-literate adults and young people – two-thirds of whom are women](#) and 617 million children and adolescents who were failing to acquire basic reading and numeracy skills even before the crisis.

Adult literacy educators are central for meaningful literacy teaching and learning

One of the key messages was that it is essential to promote the professionalization of literacy teachers, and guarantee the rights, status and decent working conditions of literacy teachers, while providing continuous professional development opportunities, support and guidance.

A global landscape on literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond

During the first session moderated by Mari Yasunaga, Programme Specialist, Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development at UNESCO, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on youth and adult literacy was reflected from global, regional and country perspectives.

Mr. Borhene Chakroun, Director of the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO Education Sector, provided a global picture, emphasizing the lack of policy attention to youth and adult literacy, calling for its integration into national lifelong learning policies, aid policies and the COVID-19 response and recovery plans. A UNESCO impact survey of the COVID-19 crisis on literacy programmes conducted in August revealed that more than 90% of 49 adult literacy programmes were either fully or partially suspended during lockdown.

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“The goal today is to focus not only on schools but also on other learning programmes”, said Mr. Chakroun and presented some key findings from the [background paper on youth and adult literacy in the times of COVID-19](#). He also highlighted the need to further monitor the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on youth and adult literacy for strategic responses, saying that, “While there is data on school closures, we know much less about literacy programmes.”

Mohammad Yasin Samin, Senior Technical and Policy Advisor for Literacy at the Ministry of Education, Afghanistan, presented how

Afghanistan is sustaining youth and adult literacy provision during the COVID-19 crisis, stressing the importance of political support. Before the crisis, the Afghan government started the implementation of a plan called ‘National mobilization for literacy’ under the leadership of the President and enhanced governance for adult literacy and non-formal education by establishing committees at the national, provincial, district village levels.

After the outbreak of the pandemic, the government developed a comprehensive education response plan to ensure the learning continuity. He said that some measures deployed for distance learning had proven to be successful, including open space programmes which covered more than 40,000 adults. Since the provision of online lessons were difficult due to a lack of the necessary ICT infrastructure and capacities of educators and staff, Education radio and TV were used for distance learning. In order to reach people in rural areas, Mr. Samin said that the government prepared specific guidelines for learners and officials at provincial and district levels to maintain adult literacy and family literacy courses. In addition to radio and television, WhatsApp groups were created to follow up on learners.

Inclusive literacy teaching and learning

On inclusive literacy teaching and learning, Anita Dighe, an expert in literacy and education from India, said that the civil society groups would have an important role to play in making literacy teaching inclusive for youth and adults in poor

communities. Since literacy is part of a larger struggle for social, economic and political change, there was a need to link literacy learning with a broader vision of social transformation.

Literacy learning could be a leverage to empower communities by the process being dialogical, as they could encourage processes of critical self-reflection, thinking, questioning, exploring, interacting, creating, connecting and discovering. She emphasized that such processes are directly linked to the notion of empowerment in which an individual learns to create, share knowledge, and new tools and techniques in order to change and improve the quality of his/her life.

Inclusive learning requires collaboration, sensitivity to cultures and languages, and the relevance to learners’ realities, circumstances and contexts. She stressed the need for targeted policies to address changes for specific groups and to design programmes to ensure holistic learning, and to respond to women’s specific needs by establishing separate literacy learning groups for them.



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Literacy teaching for empowerment and freedom

As an architect of the REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques), David Archer of ActionAid reflected on achievements of REFLECT approaches. Noting literacy as 'a political process' connected to contexts, he stressed that the learning should be relevant to learners' lives, and literacy development is part of broader processes towards liberation and transformation. Mr. Archer also alerted to financial challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis which will restrain education budgets, in which adult education would be the first sacrificed.

"We need to see education as lifelong learning, and we must work closely with debt campaigners. We need strategic action on debt, debt justice, tax justice, pushback on IMF economic models that are holding down public sector workers. Increasing equity through education should be a major priority. Fundamental aspects are recognizing the transforming potential of education, so to increase equality in education we need to have equality in the budget planning. If one is serious about equity through education, adult learning must logically be prioritized," said Mr. Archer.



Concluding with a call for investing in literacy teaching and learning in a lifelong perspective

The meeting was closed by Mr. Chakroun emphasizing three takeaways: that COVID-19 is a magnifier of pre-existing challenges for literacy learning throughout life, which include: the lack of quality of teaching; too few resources invested in adult literacy teaching and learning; and the lack of qualifications for literacy trainers to make them resilient in situations such as the COVID-19.

There is a need to leverage new knowledge and evidence to support and improve literacy teaching and learning throughout life, and the lack of financial resources in economies will further aggravate the existing lack of resources in literacy if countries do not give special attention to the investment in adult literacy programmes.

The second part of the webinar celebrated the five [2020 edition of International Literacy Prize winners from Nepal, United Kingdom, Ghana, Mexico and Yemen](#).

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

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Participants of the webinar held in September on the regional report on the VNR analysis from an adult learning and education lens.

ASPBAE organises virtual discussions on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in the Asia Pacific

30 September, 1 October, 5 October 2020, Virtual

In late September and early October 2020, ASPBAE ran a three-part series of events titled '*Virtual Discussions on Adult Learning and Education (ALE)*' as a rejoinder to the 2020 Global Week to Act4SDGs on September 18-26 and as a means of continuing momentum generated after the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), held virtually in July 2020.

This virtual discussion event series set out to emphasise policy and programme recommendations, as well as reforms in SDG architecture embedding ALE in the SDGs. The webinars of course also examined the impact of the current pandemic on ALE and ALE advocacy, observing that this moment in time provides both challenges and opportunities. Participants also had the chance to learn and strategise about potential avenues for future advocacy.



Johann Heilmann, Regional Director of DVVI, spoke about the role and potential of ALE to reach the SDGs.

The first webinar, conducted on the 30 September 2020, was titled '*Regional Report on VNR Analysis from an Adult Learning and Education (ALE) Lens*'. This webinar consisted of two panels - the first being 'ALE and the SDGs'. Johann Heilmann, Regional Director of DVVI, spoke first about the role and potential of ALE to reach the SDGs. The centrepiece of the webinar was the launch the [Regional report of the review of the VNRs from the ALE lens](#). Anita Dighe, who was the consultant for the report and conducted analysis of 8 countries' VNRs, presented an overview. She stressed that this report clearly indicates that ALE should be seen as essential as a cross-cutting tool for the achievement of the SDGs, echoing Heilmann's presentation.

Next, speakers from four national education coalitions shared their involvement in examining their own countries' VNRs through an ALE lens. Noopur spoke on behalf of Nirantar Trust and NCE India, Ram Gaire shared the experiences of NCEN in Nepal, Kim Anh presented for VAEFA Vietnam, and May Cinco outlined the work of E-Net Philippines. Key ideas from the presentations included: the ongoing need for adequate resourcing and finance for ALE; the quest to reach the most marginalised in communities; the importance of ALE advocacy at the regional level; and strategising on inter-agency, inter-governmental and inter-sectoral collaboration around ALE in order to meet all SDGs.



Speakers from four national education coalitions shared their involvement in examining their own countries' VNRs through an ALE lens.

The second panel was titled 'Systems approach to ALE within the SDGs and responses to the pandemic'. Katinka Weinberger of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) made a presentation titled 'ALE's role in accelerated action and transformative pathways in delivery of the SDGs: Next steps after the HLPF.' She emphasised that UNESCAP seeks to find and promote synergies across transformative areas and to keep up communication that the SDGs need to be achieved in holistic ways.

The second speaker was Mohd Rashahidi from the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, whose presentation was titled 'ALE strategies within the SDGs: Lifelong Learning within the SDG architecture – Malaysia experience.' He spoke of the

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Eric Mendoza, Department of Education, Philippines, highlighted the success of several strategies, including the creation of the Indigenous Peoples Education Office and strengthening non-formal education through the Alternative Learning System.

strong level of engagement in LLL implementation across various ministries, highlighting the importance and efficacy of inter-governmental collaboration on ALE.

The third speaker was Eric Mendoza, Head of the Literacy Coordination Council, Department of Education, Government of the Philippines. This presentation was titled 'ALE strategies within the SDGS: Investing in ALE in SDG4 as a strategy in realising the SDGs: Philippines experience.' Mendoza highlighted the success of several strategies employed by the Philippines, including the creation of the Indigenous Peoples Education Office and the strengthening of NFE through the Alternative Learning System.

The key learnings of the webinar were drawn together in a stirring synthesis provided by Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, President of ICAE and former ASPBAE President, who wove these ideas and experiences into the theme of resilience. He reminded participants that, despite the challenges, the pandemic also provides opportunities that were not there before. To this end, Robbie posed two reflection questions: How do we capture this moment? How do we nurture what we find in this moment to be able to continue our valuable work? The webinar was then closed by Maria Khan, ASPBAE Secretary-General, with a call for civil society organisations to continue to push back against the narrowing of the education agenda globally, to the exclusion of youth and adult learning and education.



Nguyen Thi Kim Anh of VAEFA Vietnam, and ASPBAE Executive Council member, took part in a session where CSOs shared experiences on ALE responses.

The second webinar, conducted on the 1 October 2020, was titled '*ALE Responses to COVID-19, Role of CLCs and NFE in Building Responsive and Resilient Education Systems*'. This webinar heard from a variety of CSOs and governments from across the region, outlining efforts in the ALE sector to respond to COVID-19.

The first session was devoted to sharing experiences on ALE response to the pandemic by civil society organisations (CSOs). This included presentations from Nirantar, India (Nishi Khandelwal); VAEFA in collaboration with Central Deaf Services, Vietnam (Nguyen Thi Kim Anh and Thuy Nga); and E-Net Philippines and EDUCO, Philippines (May Cinco and Prudencia Sanoy). These presentations demonstrated very tangibly the important ways in which ALE provision, both before and during the pandemic, has offered support for emergency responses and has given voice to those most marginalised at this moment in time. Endeavours discussed were wide-ranging and also clearly demonstrated the vital role that ALE has played in pandemic responses.



Presentations, such as the one by Nishi Khandelwal of Nirantar (India), demonstrated the important ways in which ALE has offered support for COVID-19 emergency responses and given a voice to those most marginalised.

The following open forum led to discussions around connecting to and working with governments to improve ALE provision, as well as disseminating learning at all levels to advocate for further change. ASPBAE's Helen Dabu provided a synthesis, strongly reminding participants that even though CSOs are responding to gaps in ALE, it is vital to continue to demand that governments offer the necessary policy and financial support for ALE.

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Khau Huu Phuoc of SEAMEO CELLL presented on the Vietnam governments' efforts in mobilising Community Learning Centres and the non-formal education sector to provide ALE during COVID-19.

The next section was devoted to understanding governments' efforts in mobilising Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and the non-formal education (NFE) sector to provide ALE during COVID-19. Presentations were made by Khau Huu Phuoc from SEAMEO CELLL and by Somchit Punramol of the Office for Non-formal and Informal Education (ONIE), Thailand. Both presentations demonstrated the need for a strong, resilient system of ALE, and also noted ways in which the pandemic has brought to the fore the importance of informal and non-formal ways of learning.

The subsequent discussion and plenary, facilitated by ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove, guided participants with the prompt question: What are the components for inclusion of CLCs and NFE delivery systems that can be recommended for building back resilient educational systems? A variety of recommendations were proposed in response.



Katarina Popović, ICAE Secretary General, shared key points around effective member engagement and outlined the work of ICAE across a several regional and global platforms.

The final webinar, conducted on the 5 October, was titled '*ICAE-ASPBAE Workshop on Strategizing and Capacity-building for ALE Advocacy*'. The webinar began with sessions for ICAE and ASPBAE to present their strategic priorities and advocacy agendas/plans. Key points for ICAE, shared by Robbie Guevara (President) and Katarina Popović (Secretary General), were around effective member engagement and also outlining the work of ICAE across a variety of regional and global platforms. Maria Khan shared ASPBAE's advocacy and capacity-building work on ALE at local, national, regional and global levels, including its engagement in a variety of global policy spaces and platforms.

Participants then heard from Werner Mauch, Senior Programme Specialist from the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL), who presented an update on the GRALE 5 survey and CONFINTEA VII processes. Werner not only outlined the steps taken at UIL to prepare GRALE 5 and how they engage with countries in the reporting process, but he provided some clear suggestions for the ways in which civil society can become further involved in both.



ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, shared ASPBAE's advocacy and capacity-building work on ALE at local, national, regional and global levels.

The next session provided experiences from two different countries, Sweden and Japan, to demonstrate good examples of CSO engagement with the GRALE survey process. Cecilia Palm from the Executive Committee of ICAE shared the way pursuing additional knowledge about GRALE and CONFINTEA in Sweden led to stronger relationships with the government actors in the GRALE process, which can be put to good use for future advocacy. Takafumi Miyake, of the Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE), shared the Japanese CSO experience in giving feedback on Japan's GRALE 5 survey, led by ASPBAE members in the country notably the Development Education Association and Resource Centre (DEAR). Despite a short window in which to provide feedback, there were several advocacy wins in the process. However, Taka emphasised his belief that stakeholders should be part of the process of creating the report, rather than simply reacting to the already compiled draft.

Following this, breakout rooms were used to strategise for ALE advocacy in a variety of global platforms. Groups formed to discuss CONFINTEA, the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), other platforms (such as the Global Partnership for Education, GPE), and communities of practice/capacity building. There were

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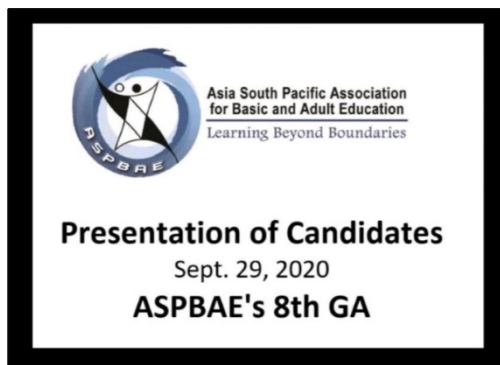


Presenters recounted stories demonstrating the resilience of the ALE community in the face of the pandemic. One of the key learnings of the webinars was that building relationships within and between all actors in ALE is vital.

many thoughtful suggestions provided in the reporting-back session, often emphasising the need to engage at local and regional levels as preparation to strongly advocate on the global stage.

Throughout all three events, presenters recounted stories demonstrating the resilience of the ALE community in the face of the pandemic. Such resilience needs to be harnessed to ensure that we are not just building back after this crisis, but building back better. Another key learning was that building relationships within and between all actors in ALE is vital. The joining of voices for advocacy is further strengthened by a good understanding of the various platforms and mechanisms for such advocacy work.

Finally, it was the success of learners that came through in many presentations to remind all of the very real and personal impact that ALE can have. Such examples also demonstrate the potential of ALE to meet all SDGs, not just SDG4. This is the work that lies ahead, and it is hoped that this series of virtual events will be of use to all who attended in their quest to advance ALE across the Asia-Pacific region. [\[BACK\]](#)



ASPBAE successfully conducts elections for the Executive Council (2021-2024) and voting on Constitutional amendments as part of its 8th General Assembly

A critical part of the 8th General Assembly of ASPBAE were its governance-related processes, in particular, the elections for the Executive Council (2021-2024) and voting on proposed Constitutional amendments.

As with earlier General Assemblies, voting within the 8th General Assembly was conducted electronically and administered by ASPBAE's Election and Returning Officer, Dorothy Lucardie, on 12-26 October 2020.



Meenu Vadera of Azad Foundation (India) was elected South Asia Female Representative in the ASPBAE Executive Council (2021-2024).

Following an open nomination processes, only one position in the ASPBAE Executive Council was contested: the position of Female Representative for South Asia.

Dorothy Lucardie facilitated the virtual presentation of candidates held on 29 September 2020 to offer ASPBAE's members a platform to interact with the candidates for the contested positions.

A total of 19 constitutional amendments were proposed by the ASPBAE Executive Council for adoption. These were proposed to: (1) Update and better cohere the language of the ASPBAE Constitution to the more current thinking, aspirations and work of the organisation, in the field of basic, adult learning and education (ALE) and lifelong learning recognising that the last time the document amended was in 2008; (2) Sharpen and clarify certain provisions by deleting redundancies and clearing up ambiguities; and (3) Provide the governance mechanisms to enable ASPBAE to comply with the laws and regulations in the Organisation's country of registration.

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Dorothy Lucardie was Election and Returning Officer for the electronic voting process of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly.

The constitutional amendments were discussed during the national and cluster/sub-regional consultations convened by ASPBAE with members through June-August 2020.

The results of the Elections and Voting process was announced to all members by the Secretary General in Communique N0. 6 of the 8th General Assembly on 2 November 2020 and summarised here as follows –

- A total of 38 voting representatives cast their vote from a total of 52 Voting representatives. The requisite quorum (a simple majority of Voting Representatives) was met with 73% having voted.
- Meenu Vadera was elected as the South Asia female member of the ASPBAE Executive Council, having received 84% of the votes cast.
- Having met the requisite quorum, the uncontested nominees for ASPBAE Executive Council (2021-2024) were deemed elected as of the end of the Voting Period on 26 October 2020. They were -

ASPBAE President	Nani Zulminarni
Member from South Asia (male)	Ehsanur Rahman (Bangladesh)
Member from East Asia (female)	Eri Yamamoto (Japan)
Member from East Asia (male)	Amartuvshin Dorjsuren (Mongolia)
Member from Southeast Asia (female)	Nguyen Thi Kim Anh (Vietnam)
Member from Southeast Asia (male)	Thein Lwin (Myanmar)
Member from South Pacific (female)	Kilala Devette-Chee (Papua New Guinea)
Member from South Pacific (male)	Peter Clinton Foaese (New Zealand)
Member from Central Asia (female)	Nasiba Mirpochoeva (Tajikistan)
Member from Central Asia (male)	Tilebaldy uulu Eliizar (Kyrgyzstan)

ASPBAE congratulates the incoming Executive Council as they begin their term in the midst of unprecedented challenges and opportunities. With their leadership and ASPBAE's strong membership, ASPBAE will continue to strive towards achieving its vision and ambition.



Nani Zulminarni, of PEKKA Indonesia, will continue to serve as ASPBAE President for the next 4-year period.

All proposed constitutional amendments were approved having received the support of 26 out of the 38 valid votes cast and where at least a 2/3 vote was needed to pass Constitutional amendments.

ASPBAE acknowledged the excellent work done by the Election and Returning Officer, Dorothy Lucardie in conducting the virtual election in an efficient, impartial and transparent manner. Special thanks were also offered the ASPBAE staff colleagues, Anita Borkar and Subrat Nayak, who ably supported the process.

ASPBAE congratulates the incoming ASPBAE Executive Council. They begin their term at an interesting period of unprecedented challenges and opportunities. With ASPBAE's strong membership, and the Executive Council's wisdom and experience, ASPBAE's vision and ambitions will prevail. [[BACK](#)]

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The long internal conflict, coupled with religious extremism, has resulted in low female literacy in Afghanistan.



Addressing the lack of female teachers, insufficient funding to the education sector, and providing better salaries and incentives to female teachers travelling from urban to rural areas are all urgent demands to the government



Access to education for children with special needs and adult education were priority areas for education advocacy in Afghanistan.

Calling for a more systematic approach towards adult education to tackle the impact of COVID-19 and protracted conflict

Afghanistan National Consultation on the occasion of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly

23 & 29 July 2020

National consultations form an integral part of ASPBAE's General assembly (GA) process which provides opportunities to members to engage in discussions around ASPBAE's strategic plan for the forthcoming period. Six members of the Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC) organised national consultations for ASPBAE's 8th General assembly where discussions mainly focussed on contemporary development issues that education should address, referring to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and further discussing the context of *"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"* in the country.

Education for women and girls was highlighted as top priority. The long internal conflict, coupled with religious extremism, has resulted in low female literacy in Afghanistan. Addressing the lack of female teachers, insufficient funding to the education sector, and providing better salaries and incentives to female teachers travelling from urban to rural areas are all urgent demands to the government. The COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 kept girls and women away from schools and other educational institutions, with a strong correlation to an increase in cases of domestic violence observed. Furthermore, the success of peace talks currently underway are deemed crucial for offering the enabling conditions for quality, inclusive, equitable and free education for all, especially girls.

The second priority area was access to education for children with special needs. There has been an increase in children with special needs due to the ongoing conflict and suicide attacks. It is critical for the government to design programmes attentive to their special needs and to allocate the financing required thereof.

Adult education was another priority area for education advocacy. Advocacy efforts by the Literacy Initiatives for Empowerment – LIFE Forum have resulted in some gains in adult education, such as the development of the strategic plan on adult education among stakeholders in the country. However, a more systematic approach is needed from the government on adult education which will also help in addressing the pandemic in the country. Further, investments in distance learning can yield better learning outcomes.

Participants of the national consultation agreed that integration of lifelong learning opportunities in education sector plans will benefit every child, youth and adult to access quality education. They recommended actions around regional campaigns and awareness raising, capacity building, and sharing of best practices on girl's education and children with disability.

Members agreed to the ASPBAE constitutional amendments and selected their country voting representatives. [\[BACK\]](#)

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Some of the challenges identified by participants of the Indonesia national consultation included limited training and capacity building activities for women and community groups, and an increase in the push for privatisation of education.

Accelerating the push for quality basic education including non-formal and informal education as an integral part of the education system in Indonesia within a lifelong learning framework

Indonesia National Consultation on the occasion of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly

22 July 2020, Virtual

Addressing the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on education and development in Indonesia, ASPBAE's members at the national consultation, hosted by PEKKA Indonesia, said that the Indonesian government has been ill equipped to effectively handle the situation, especially when it involved creating a curriculum to adapt to the realities of the pandemic, and the teaching methods used. There is a decrease in access and quality of education during the pandemic and there is a growing digital divide amongst people and communities.

Other challenges that emerged in the discussions included limited training and capacity building activities for women and community groups, an increase in the push for privatisation of education, risks of distance learning being used as an entry point for conservatism and radicalism, exclusion of lifelong learning in the education system, and the increased responsibilities on women to ensure children's education continues in the pandemic situation.

Some of the recommendations to ASPBAE included budget advocacy for the government; inclusion of critical awareness in adult education initiatives to tackle gender injustice; a greater push for non-formal and informal education; advocating in the national policy for strengthening school committees.

Members in Indonesia suggested the following recommendations to ASPBAE - budget advocacy for the government; inclusion of critical awareness in adult education initiatives to tackle gender injustice; a greater push for non-formal and informal education; advocating in the national policy for strengthening school committees so that they play a larger role in children's education while they are unable to attend school; develop learning modules/curriculum that are adaptive to children with special needs and people with disabilities; focus on youth education and learning; and undertake more effective advocacy for lifelong learning opportunities.

Members also selected the Voting Representatives for Indonesia. [\[BACK\]](#)



The Japan national consultation was hosted by Shanti Volunteer Association

Sustained learning exchanges, especially on SDG 4.7, and supporting advocacy efforts on education ODA in Japan

Japan National Consultation on the occasion of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly

30 July 2020, Virtual

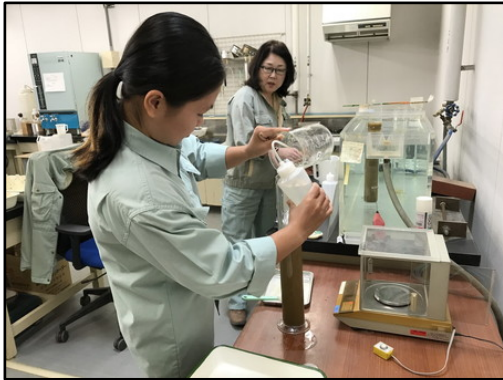
The Japan national consultation of ASPBAE members was convened by Eri Yamamoto, ASPBAE Executive Council member for East Asia and Secretary-General of Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA).

Members recommended that ASPBAE continue to facilitate discussions, share information and raise critical issues in education such as the need to promote inclusion amidst the pandemic; the need to increase spending in education; transform education towards social education, promote human rights, education

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JNNE is pushing for the development of a Private Sector Engagement Strategy to cover Japan's aid to education to prevent any support for for-profit sector or commercialisation of education.



SVA is a member of Nepal's Local Education Group and has been engaging in the government's response to COVID. A challenge for Japan CSOs has been a resource crunch due to COVID-19.



There was interest among ASPBAE members in Japan to participate in ASPBAE's online discussions, especially on ALE and SDG 4.7, on education financing and aid to education.

for sustainable development (ESD), inclusive education, gender, responsible consumption.

These issues are particularly important to members, especially since, in their assessment, the Japanese government currently pays little attention to human rights and environmental issues. Japan also has the lowest spending on education among OECD countries.

The pressures on education brought about by the pandemic is being felt by the different education stakeholders in Japan where teachers and students (even in higher education) do not have full access to online and distance learning modalities. Students from economically-challenged families in Japan do not have computers and some can only rely on their mobile phones which severely limits learning; the digital divide is strongly felt at all levels of education in Japan.

ASPBAE members, especially JNNE, support ASPBAE's advocacy for more aid for education and appreciate ASPBAE's efforts to prevent education aid to fund any for-profit provisioning of education. They are keen for ASPBAE to continue its engagement in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and are prepared to engage the Japanese government in pushing for more aid to education, for example in contributing to GPE's COVID Response Fund.

In JNNE's analysis of Japan's education policy reform, the government is veering towards commercialisation and militarisation of aid (including for education) which is a very worrying trend. JNNE is pushing for the development of a Private Sector Engagement Strategy (PSES), or guidelines, to cover Japan's aid to education to prevent any support for for-profit sector or commercialisation of education.

SVA is a member of Nepal's Local Education group (LEG) and has been engaging in the government's response to COVID. This is another area where our members can establish strong cooperation with ASPBAE. It was noted that a significant number of Japanese civil society organisations (CSOs) have been affected by a resource crunch or funding limitations due to COVID-19.

There was strong interest among ASPBAE members in Japan to participate in ASPBAE's online discussions, especially on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) and SDG 4.7, on education financing and aid to education. They commented that the shift to online mode presents a good opportunity for more members to join ASPBAE's discussions. They also want to learn from other members' experiences on social education initiatives.

Regarding ASPBAE's information and communication tools, there was a suggestion to limit the number of pages of the monthly Bulletin to make it easy and more manageable to read. A suggestion was also made to update the ASPBAE website more regularly.

Members also selected the Voting Representatives for Japan in the meeting.

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Participants highlighted awareness of health and hygiene, safe and secure environment for children and girls, mental health of youth and children, and unemployment as some issues education should address.



Participants highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on education, including inequalities due to the digital divide, and closure of community learning centres impacting adult learning and education.



Some recommendations for ASPBAE included preparing guidelines for advocacy and capacity building, stronger push for adult learning and non-formal education, and enabling platforms for learning and sharing amongst members.

Greater interaction of health and education, stronger abilities in responses to education in emergencies, and asserting non-formal education and adult learning as prime advocacy agendas for CSOs in Nepal

Nepal National Consultation on the occasion of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly

24 July 2020, Virtual

ASPBAE's members in Nepal met for a national consultation, hosted by NCE Nepal, as a part of ASPBAE's 8th General Assembly taking place this year. The members met to reflect on ASPBAE's work and offer suggestions on its future directions as part of its strategic review and planning process. Participants of the national consultation also proposed amendments to ASPBAE's constitution and select Country Voting Representatives.

Taking stock of contemporary development issues in Nepal and the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 on them, participants highlighted awareness of health and hygiene, a safe and secure environment for children and girls, mental health of youth and children, unemployment, decent work and living conditions, equal opportunities and pay for men and women, and development budgets as major issues that education should address.

They also highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on education, including deepening inequalities due to the digital divide; increased number of school dropouts, child marriage, sexual crimes, and domestic violence; closure of community learning centres, impacting adult learning and education; and return of youth and labour migrants who have found themselves unemployed since returning.

To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in Nepal, the government has implemented 'Alternative Schooling Programme Guidelines, 2020' to ensure learning in the current pandemic situation. The government has also developed virtual learning portals via radio, television, and public service announcements (PSAs). Civil society organisations (CSOs) have also contributed to these strategies. However, local governments have not been oriented and were not prepared for implementing the guidelines and faced an even bigger challenge with limited resources.

Several recommendations for ASPBAE emerging from the Nepal consultation included – (1) Preparation of guidelines for local advocacy and capacity building of members in emergency strategies; (2) Lobbying at regional and global forums for including content and knowledge that address psychology of children, ethics, and humanity, and strategies for members to engage at local levels on this; (3) A stronger push for adult learning and non-formal education and more guidance for members on this; (4) Enable a platform for coordination, learning, and sharing amongst members at the country level; (5) More support in capacity building of members based on different thematic areas and sharing of new and innovative lobbying and advocacy mechanisms; (6) Provide more learning and sharing platforms for great exchange and interaction among members in the region.

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Participants stressed that coalitions should lobby for proper management of education systems, push back against shrinking spaces for civil society, and create platforms to amplify CSO voices.

Addressing lessons learnt from CSO responses to the ongoing COVID pandemic that should inform ASPBAE's work in the future, Nepal members stressed that there is a need to also attend to informal education, involving parents, teachers, and the community, and that non-formal education and adult learning should be a prime advocacy agenda for CSOs in the context of Nepal. Coalitions should lobby for the proper management of the education system and they should push back against the shrinking spaces for civil society organisations and create their own platforms to make their voices heard.

Regarding NCE Nepal's contribution to ASPBAE work, members highlighted that they could contribute with innovative ideas to collect data and evidence, and create an environment for regular coordination, communication, and information sharing between ASPBAE's members in the country.

The national consultation provided a platform for diverse members in Nepal to come together and discuss development and education issues. Clarifications regarding ASPBAE's work on SDG 4.7 and provisions of the proposed constitutional amendments were clarified by ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano.

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The regional consultation enabled member states and CSOs to gather regional inputs on the draft outcome document for the upcoming extraordinary session of the 2020 GEM.

A lifelong learning perspective to bridge gaps in early childhood education, TVET, basic and adult education

UNESCO Regional Consultation on the 2020 Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM) Declaration

23 September 2020, Virtual

The Asia Pacific region faces unprecedented challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic on governments to ensure learning continuity and on learners, parents, teachers, and caregivers. While the pandemic continues to unfold, it is increasingly evident that education itself will be defined by a new schism – the policies and practices before COVID-19, and those that will come to define the next generation of learning.



Maki Hayashikawa of UNESCO said that the extraordinary session aimed to secure commitment from political leaders by positioning education in the centre of national and international efforts to recover from COVID.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Thematic Working Group on Education 2030+ (AP-RTWG Education 2030+) Secretariat at UNESCO Bangkok hosted a [regional consultation](#) on 'The 2020 Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM) Declaration' that enabled member states and civil society organizations (CSO) to discuss and collect regional inputs on the draft outcome document '2030 GEM Declaration' for the upcoming [extraordinary session of the 2020 GEM](#) scheduled on 20 and 22 October.

Maki Hayashikawa, Director of the Division of Education 2030 Support and Coordination at UNESCO, said, "The extraordinary session aims to secure a commitment from political leaders by positioning education in the centre of national and international efforts to recover inclusively and sustainably from the COVID-19 pandemic."

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ASPBAE and 16 of its members participated in the regional consultation, including Ram Gaire of NCE Nepal who is also a member of the Board of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE).



Archana Dwivedi of Nirantar (India) participating in the regional consultation.

ASPBAE and 16 of its members participated in the regional consultation: ANEC Afghanistan, CED Sri Lanka, NCE India, NCE Nepal, Nirantar in India, CAMPE Bangladesh, PCE Pakistan, COESI Solomon Islands, KOBLE Vanuatu, VAEFA Vietnam, NEP Cambodia, E-Net Philippines, EDUCO in the Phil., ACT Tajikistan, SVA and JNNE Japan.

ASPBAE and its members consulted in advance of the event to be poised to advance their collective advocacies especially on the Draft Outcomes document. Strong arguments were made by the ASPBAE members on the following areas -

- The affirmation of the full SDG 4 agenda, a right-based and lifelong learning framework as agreed in the SDG4 Framework for Action
- Attention to ALE and a focus especially to children and youth not in schools
- Priority focus on equity and inclusion
- The need to safeguard education budgets: increase or maintain the share of public expenditure on education aligned to the SDG 4 financing benchmark, 4-6% of GDP, 15-20% of national budgets
- Harmonization of ODA, targeted towards leaving no one behind
- Regulation of private sector providers of online education
- Participatory processes and mobilization of CSOs and other front liners in education
- Affirming UNESCO's leadership in global coordination for education

According to UNESCO, the multifaceted engagement and collaboration across member states and CSOs will be key for the 2020 GEM Declaration to cover the urgent educational themes in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery and as the global community embarks on the decade of action of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, with the responsibility to leave absolutely no one behind.

This write-up draws from an article on the [UNESCO website](http://unesco.org) and based on ASPBAE's participation. [\[BACK\]](#)

Working to ensure recovery of social enterprises and the marginalised sectors in the Asia Pacific

Third Social Enterprise Advocacy and Leveraging (SEAL) Asia Conference
16-17 September 2020, Virtual



The Third Social Enterprise Advocacy and Leveraging (SEAL Asia) conference, co-organised by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) and ASPBAE, amongst others, was a regional initiative harnessing social entrepreneurship and social innovation as a pathway to ensure the recovery of the social enterprise sector in Asia as partners in leaving no one behind towards building back better.

The theme for conference was 'Social Entrepreneurship and Cross-Sectoral Collaboration: Towards Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals'.

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The SEAL conference was a regional initiative harnessing social entrepreneurship and social innovation as a pathway to ensure the recovery of the social enterprise sector in Asia.

The objectives of the conference were to – (1) Provide a venue for developing and articulating an agenda for the effective recovery of social enterprises and the marginalized sectors they serve in Asia towards leaving no one behind in building back better; (2) Provide a venue for developing and articulating platforms where social entrepreneurship and cross sectoral collaboration can serve as key strategies towards leaving no one behind in building back better; (3) Provide a venue for dialogue between the social enterprise sector, civil society, government, the corporate sector, and multilateral agencies on opportunities for collaboration to assist the recovery of social enterprises and the marginalised sectors they serve towards leaving no one behind in building back better and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The SEAL conference aimed to directly contribute to the deliberations of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2021 and the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2021 and to the 9 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) linked to the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, namely - No Poverty (Goal 1), Zero Hunger (Goal 2), Good Health and Well-Being (Goal 3), Decent Work and Economic Growth (Goal 8), Reduced Inequality (Goal 10), Responsible Consumption and Production (Goal 12), Climate Action (Goal 13), Peace and Justice Strong Institutions (Goal 16), and Partnerships to achieve the Goal (Goal 17).

This platform would enable Social Enterprises (SE) working in sustainable value chains to seek help as well as to provide help to other Social Enterprises in building back better their respective enterprises during and after this pandemic. A lot of emphasis has been given to building sustainable value chains with COVID exposing the gaps in our current value chains. This platform would enable us to bridge those gaps while furthering our mission to provide decent work for all in sustainable value chains.

While deliberations on this platform will be directed to the above-mentioned 9 SDGs, it has a mission to accelerate 3 particular Goals –

- SDG 5 - Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Girls and Women. This Goal will be led by ASPBAE.
- SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth. This Goal will be led by The World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) Asia through all the activities of the platform.
- SDG 13 - Responsible Production and Consumption. This Goal will be led jointly by WFTO Asia members that have shown innovation in SDG 13 and have a diverse and multitude of experience in upcycling waste materials, engineering eco-materials and creating design processes through the supply chain to produce sustainably.

ASPBAE anchored a parallel workshop on Decent Work for All in Sustainable Value Chains held on 16 September 2020 where Meenu Vadera, ASPBAE Executive Council Member from South Asia, made a presentation on cutting-edge practices on decent work and sustainable value chains. Meenu Vadera spoke of the work of Azad Foundation and its Sakha Cab initiative, the first all-women-driven taxi fleet in India that creates livelihoods with dignity for resource poor women. Through Sakha Cabs, Azad has provided employment to over 1000



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Meenu Vadera, ASPBAE EC member, spoke of the work of Azad Foundation and its Sakha Cab initiative, the first all-women-driven taxi fleet in India that creates livelihoods with dignity for resource poor women.

women and more than 1.5 million safe rides. The women taxi drivers are also trained in self-defence, English speaking skills, and in understanding women's rights through an empowering pedagogy. The Sakha initiative also focuses on bringing change in communities through women's empowerment and trainings with a Gender Just Skills Education (GJSE) approach where women need are equipped with the knowledge to interpret their context while learning new skills and taking control of their lives. Meenu also linked Sakha Cab initiative to SDG Goal 4 (Quality Education), through its GJSE approach; Goal 5 (Gender Equality), by challenging gender norms, redistributing unpaid care work, and raising voices against violence; Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), through remunerative non-traditional livelihoods; Goal 10 (Reduced Inequality); and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), through supportive infrastructure such as public transport and a safe ecosystem to promote women in employment. ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano was one of the co-conveners of the session where she also presented the short-term actionable next steps.



A Declaration was adopted at the end of the conference which was the participation of over 200 social entrepreneurs and leaders of social enterprise resource institutions.

ASPBAE made a case for the essential role of education in promoting social enterprises whereby through investing in education and strengthening people's capacities, social enterprises can exemplify what it means to bridge digital and social divides.

The Third SEAL Conference was led by over 200 social entrepreneurs and leaders of social enterprise resource institutions, as well as social entrepreneurs from government, business and academe, who have been engaged in various efforts impacting on sustainable development and have an interest in cross sectoral collaboration to assist the recovery of social enterprises towards leaving no one behind in building back better and achieving the SDGs. [\[BACK\]](#)

Listen by Eyes: A call to action towards sign language for all

25 September 2020, Hanoi, Vietnam

By Nguyen Thi Kim Anh, National Coordinator, Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA); and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing Southeast Asia



The public event, organised by VAEFA Vietnam, aimed at promoting the right to quality inclusive education for all, including learners with disabilities and special needs, such as the deaf.

On the evening of 25 September 2020 in Hanoi, Vietnam, a public event, entitled 'Listen by Eyes 3 – Sign Language for All', was organized by the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA), in collaboration with the Mobilization Board for the Vietnam Association of Deaf, Action for Community Development Institute, and Listen by Eyes film production group.

The event aimed at promoting the right to quality inclusive education for all, including learners with disabilities and special needs, such as the deaf. The event is also part of the global campaign of the World Federation of Deaf on the occasion of International Week on Sign Language from 21-27 September 2020.

An endearing performance in sign language entitled, 'I was born as a deaf person' by primary students of C5, a non-formal education centre established by deaf teachers and parents of deaf, and a hand-mime performance, under the

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VAEFA has been supporting and cooperating with Listen by Eyes since 2016 to produce art products that promote the right to education of people with disabilities in general and the deaf in particular.

background music of, 'You raise me up' by deaf students from the National College of Education powerfully, opened the evening.

One of the main highlights of the evening was the premier of a short movie 'Where I belong', a film in sign language made by Listen by Eyes, a crew of 8 deaf persons and one sign language interpreter, who are passionate and committed about producing movies and art performances to serve the deaf community and to help the hearing community understand the situation of deaf better.

VAEFA has been supporting and cooperating with Listen by Eyes since 2016 to produce art products that promote the right to education of people with disabilities in general and the deaf in particular.

"You see in the movie the great aspiration of the deaf for studying and so many obstacles in their learning pathways," said Simone Vis, Head of Education, UNICEF Vietnam.



Integrated in the various activities during the event were messages that called for policy makers, school leaders, teachers, and parents to ensure quality education through sign language for deaf students and learners.

The movie touched the hearts of many deaf and parents of deaf in the auditorium. Statements such as "I see myself in the movie", or, "It is the story of my family," were shared by them after seeing the film.

Another highlight of the event was the graduation ceremony of the first-ever college course for deaf students in Northern Vietnam. The graduation is the successful outcome of the advocacy cooperation between VAEFA and the National College of Education since 2017 under the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) initiative.

Integrated in the various activities during the event were messages that called for policy makers, school leaders, teachers, and parents to ensure quality education through sign language for deaf students and learners.

Specifically, VAEFA articulated the need to sensitise the public and policy makers on the importance of recognising that sign language is as important as a speaking language in education and ensure that learning in sign language can and should be available for all.

After the event, VAEFA has been receiving positive and encouraging feedback from the government and development partner representatives which can open up further areas of engagements and cooperation in the future.



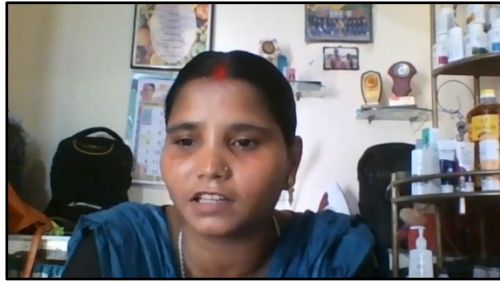
VAEFA articulated the need to sensitise the public and policy makers on the importance of recognising that sign language is as important as a speaking language in education and ensure that learning in sign language can and should be available for all.

Participants at the meeting included representatives of the Steering Committee on Education for Children with Disabilities (Ministry of Education and Training, the Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences, National Centre for Special Education); USAID, UNICEF, UNESCO, CBM, Aide et Action, Codv, ACDC, Blue Dragon and other CSOs and VAEFA members; students, parents, teachers, schools managers; Vietnam television, online media and newspapers; and ASPBAE's Helen Dabu (joining through Zoom). [\[BACK\]](#)

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Sarita, a young domestic worker, is associated with the Martha Farrell Foundation and, at the PRIA event, spoke about what literacy means to her.

Recognising the different dimensions of literacy at PRIA event for International Literacy Day

8 September 2020, Virtual

By Nikita Rakhyani, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India

For International Literacy Day on September 8, PRIA invited members of various grassroots organisations to talk about what literacy means to them, and to broaden the understanding of literacy to include learning which takes place in everyday life, one which is applicable to one and all.

Among them was Sarita, a young domestic worker. Her understanding of literacy was being aware of her rights and entitlement. She shared the hardships she had to face during her initial working days, both while commuting to and inside her workplace. After being associated with the Martha Farrell Foundation, she understood what her rights are and how to confidently deal with situations.



Kiran, from Azad Foundation, an ASPBAE member in India, shared her experience of working as a driver, while pursuing her Bachelor's degree along with her daughter.

It is rare to hear stories of how learning literacy in local contexts has empowered hitherto 'invisible' women and men. Biswapriya is an adolescent associated with the [Kadam Badhate Chalo programme](#), a youth-led programme implemented by Pro Sport Development, in partnership with Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) and the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA). He said literacy was not restricted to only schoolwork. It was something which enabled one to become a better person, question the norms of the society, and ask why there is differential treatment between boys and girls.

Adarsh, a Youth-n-Democracy fellow at PRIA, also added to the discussion. His work is to build curiosity and interest in children of his neighborhood, who due to financial constraints and lack of access to education, had to drop out of school. He shared how for him, taking this as a project seemed natural as he believed even if it is one small step, each one had a responsibility towards their community.

Kiran, from Azad Foundation, an ASPBAE member in India, shared her experience of working as a driver, while pursuing her Bachelor's degree along with her daughter. Having only completed education till Class 7 previously, Kiran has now become a zealous adult learner and began encouraging those around her to continue their education as well.

Founder-President of PRIA, Rajesh Tandon, spoke about evolving ideas of 'literacy'. During the pandemic, the functional use of literacy skills was inadequate without digital literacy. Elderly professors and senior officials found themselves 'illiterate' in the face of the lockdown due to the coronavirus. At the same time, youth became instructors of 'digital' literacy in their families, communities, and organisations.

While many speeches and policy visions are delivered on International Literacy Day, experiences of local communities, adolescents, youth, women and men are rarely shared. Through each one of these stories, a different aspect and meaning of literacy shone through. [\[BACK\]](#)



Adarsh, a Youth-n-Democracy fellow at PRIA, works with children in his neighbourhood to build curiosity and interest about literacy and education.

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ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, and several prominent personalities in the field of adult education paid tribute to W.M.K. Wijetunga, ASPBAE Secretary-General from 1985-1995, on his passing on 28 July 2020.

Stalwarts in adult education reflect on the legacy of W.M.K Wijetunga, former ASPBAE Secretary-General

10 September 2020, Virtual

"The ASPBAE he built was an ASPBAE that could provide a safe space for academics and activists, for civil society organisations and government representatives, radicals and reformers, men, women, young and old, as long as they believed they could forge a common ground to promote what was true, just, and fair. It is in this spirit that he steered the advancement of adult education and lifelong learning," – Maria Khan, ASPBAE Secretary-General

ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, and several prominent personalities in the field of adult education paid tribute to W.M.K. Wijetunga, ASPBAE Secretary-General from 1985-1995, on his passing on 28 July 2020. The virtual condolence meeting was moderated by Rajesh Tandon of PRIA (India) and Maria Khan.



Rajesh Tandon of PRIA (India) paying tribute to Wijetunga at the virtual condolence meeting.

A.T. Ariyaratne, Founder, Sarvodaya Movement, Sri Lanka, and former Chairperson, ASPBAE (1980-85) spoke at the meeting. Other speakers, such as Heribert Hinzen, Former Director, DVV International; Kim Shinil, ASPBAE Executive Council Member (1993-1996); K.C. Choudhary, President, Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA); and Budd Hall, Secretary-General, International Council for Adult Education, ICAE (1979-1991) reflected on Wijetunga's contribution to adult education in the 1980s. *"A quiet man, but very driven. Wije believed in the power of learning and the right of all adults to learn. He brought knowledge of the adult education movement"*, said Budd Hall at the condolence meeting.

Speaking of Wije's work in the 1990s, Lawrence Tsui, ASPBAE Executive Council Member (1997-2000); Lalita Ramdas, ICAE President (1994-1999); and Saloni Singh, ASPBAE Executive Council Member (2009-2016) reflected on Wije's rich experience in the adult education movement during that time.



Sandy Morrison (R), former ASPBAE President, and Timote Vaoleti, former ASPBAE EC member, participated in the condolence meeting.

Sandy Morrison, ASPBAE President (2005-2008); Jose Roberto (Robbie) Guevara, Incumbent President, ICAE, and ASPBAE President (2009-2016); and Nani Zulminarni, ASPBAE President (2017-2020) all paid tribute to Wije and spoke of his passion and dedication to adult learning that adapted to the different contexts of a changing world.

Members of the family of Dr. Wijetunga including his wife, Pushpa, participated in the condolence meeting and offered thanks at the close of the event to all who spoke so warmly about Wije.

A brief video to remember Wije's life and his engagement with ASPBAE was presented during the Condolence meeting. [[BACK](#)]

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Literacy in COVID-19 and beyond

Quazi Faruque Ahmed, Chairperson, Initiative for human Development (I.H.D), an ASPBAE member, & former Member, National Education Policy 2010 Committee, Bangladesh, reflects on 'Literacy in COVID-19 and beyond'.

Click [here](#) to read the full article that appeared the Financial Express newspaper in Bangladesh. [\[BACK\]](#)

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

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