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THE CONTEXT OF 2017



In October 2017, the US formally withdrew its membership from UNESCO – having accumulated half a billion dollars in membership arrears that will hinder the organisation's ability to promote its work on universal access to quality education.

The year 2017 was a period of tumult and worrying changes, many heralded by developments of the previous year.

The election in 2016 of Donald Trump as United States (US) President had spawned wider consequences and impacts beyond the US. Tensions between the US and North Korea soared in the period with the on-going crisis continuing to stoke the peril of nuclear war in the Asia Pacific region and indeed, the world. As soon as Trump assumed the presidency, the US declared North Korea one of its main threats. Pyongyang reacted with an escalation of its missile and nuclear technology development, further solidified its authoritarian hold and strengthened its military capabilities. The US' unilateral renegotiation of the Tehran's nuclear deal can also set back global denuclearisation¹ efforts and gains.

Multilateralism came under severe threat with the United States' retreat from intergovernmental arrangements and mechanisms. This was a clear policy shift from previous US dispensations, by a US President who won on an anti-globalisation, anti-immigrant, populist plank. Within just a year in office, the Donald Trump presidency led the US withdrawal from the 2015 Climate Change Accord, massively cut US contributions to the United Nations by \$285 million for 2018-2019 – funds that were to be used for peace-keeping,

humanitarian assistance, health programmes, and reproductive health.² In October 2017, the US formally withdrew its membership from UNESCO – having accumulated half a billion US dollars in membership arrears that has and will stymie the ability of this body to promote its highly important work on universal access to quality education. The Trump presidency's overtly anti-Islamic rhetoric and action continued to fan division, fuel religious tensions around the world, including in the Asia Pacific, which can only consolidate the influence and hold of fundamentalist, extremist forces.

Elsewhere in the world, anti-immigrant sentiment, xenophobia, and Islamophobia galvanised the far-right in Europe in the wake of record migration to this region in 2015 and 2016 owing to the Syrian crisis, and instability in Afghanistan, West Asia, and other parts of the world. Far-right parties recorded significant electoral gains in Europe. From virtually no presence 20 years ago, they have

¹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2018>

² <http://www.unfoundation.org/features/impact-doc-unvalue.pdf>

rapidly become an important force in 20 European countries, notably in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, and Sweden, to name some.³ The appeal demonstrated by these electoral gains have the danger of moving the discourse further rightward as conservative parties seek to recover lost ground by adopting more ultra-nationalist rhetoric and positioning. This can also reinforce the challenge to multilateralism world-wide with adverse impacts as well on peace, development, and development aid.

Critics of the US' slide away from its earlier 'globalist and multilateralist' approach warn about how US leadership and world influence would wane politically – setting the stage for other global players, notably China, to fill in the gap. It remains to be seen how this will play out but there is no doubt about China's aggressive drive for economic clout, globally. Its '*One belt, one road*' project declared in April 2017, representing a massive infrastructural expansion of land as well as maritime routes in Europe and Asia, has obvious economic advantages for China: it would be able to better secure its energy and raw materials supply.⁴ However, it clearly has potential and perhaps design for far more – setting China on a stronger path to greater global political influence and dominance. The sabre-rattling between the US and North Korea have certainly dominated world-wide attention – thus deflecting notice to the continuing South China sea territorial disputes. China continued to increasingly militarise the area to belligerently assert its claims.



The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar resulted in one of the world's most severe humanitarian crisis.

Border tensions between India and China also escalated in the period to its highest levels in 30 years – bringing the two nuclear powers to the brink of direct military confrontation.⁵

The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar resulted in one of the world's most severe humanitarian crisis. According to the UNHCR⁶, since violence erupted in Myanmar's Rakhine state in late August 2017, thousands of men, women, and children have fled the country. By January 2018, around 647,000 have arrived on foot or by boat in Bangladesh – making it the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis. 60% of these refugees are children. The government of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh has demonstrated extraordinary generosity in responding to the crisis, receiving the refugees in a country which is no stranger to extreme poverty itself. However, the government also insists that the Rohingya are guests, and have to return to Myanmar. They thus worry that providing education could be interpreted as a move toward granting refugees permanent residency. Education responses of humanitarian agencies can only therefore be limited – doing little to address the long-standing denial of these children and young people, their education rights⁷. According to the Oxford Burma Alliance, a student-run organisation at Oxford University, more than 60% of Rohingya children between the ages of 5 and 17 have never been to school due to poverty, government restrictions on their movement, and a lack of schools in the Rakhine State.⁸

3 <https://www.thelocal.fr/20171014/how-far-right-parties-are-faring-across-europe>

4 <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/china-one-belt-one-road-initiative-what-we-know-thus-far>

5 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/world/asia/dolam-plateau-china-india-bhutan.html>

6 <http://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2017/12/5a1c313a4/100-days-horror-hope-timeline-rohingya-crisis.html>

7 <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/rohingya-refugee-crisis-education-bangladesh-by-kevin-watkins-2018-01>

8 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/rohingya-500000-receive-schooling-2018-171224065109722.html>

Displacement remained extensive in the region within the period. The Asia Pacific region remained home to 7.7 million people of concern to UNHCR - refugees, returnees, the internally displaced, asylum seekers, stateless people, and others. Of this number, 3.5 million are refugees and 1.9 million are internally displaced people. The majority of refugees originate from Afghanistan and Myanmar. Up to 96% of all Afghan refugees live in the neighbouring Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, which have generously hosted them for over three decades.⁹ The generosity of these relatively poorer countries (Bangladesh and Pakistan, notably) in their treatment of refugees is unfortunately un-matched by the richer countries in the region. Human rights advocates have decried Australia's abusive refugee policy. Since 2013, Australia has sent asylum seekers who try to reach the country by boat to cramped and dirty offshore processing centres in PNG and Nauru. According to Human Rights Watch¹⁰, their investigations and interviews with refugees housed in PNG reveal that Australia and PNG governments have failed to protect the well-being of hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers sent to Manus Island, where many have suffered assaults and robberies and received inadequate health care. Human rights defenders believe that the decision in 2017 to close the regional processing centre on Manus Island, and the transfer or settlement of those living there elsewhere in PNG, will further endanger their safety and health.

Threats to democracy and governance, and conflict and violence were manifest in different parts of the region. In September 2017, the Supreme Court of Cambodia ordered the dissolution of the country's main opposition party – leaving clear the path to the current President's 3-decade rule to continue after the 2018 national elections unopposed. The Philippine Congress extended martial law in Southern Philippines by another year on the request of the Philippine President. Martial law was declared after local militants, backed by the Islamic State, seized the city of Marawi in Mindanao. After months of fighting, the government declared the siege of the city over in October 2017. Yet, it called for another year's extension of martial rule. Human rights groups have criticized President Duterte's request to extend martial law, warning that the authoritarian president was setting the stage for an eventual declaration of military rule across the entire country. Human rights groups



The Asia Pacific region remained home to 7.7 million displaced people such as refugees, returnees, internally displaced people, asylum seekers, and stateless people.

have further decried the continued extrajudicial killings associated with the Philippines President's war on drugs. Human Rights Watch reported that in 2017, the Tajik government continued to block various websites with information critical of the government, subjected human rights groups to harassment, including a law requiring non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to register all sources of funding from foreign sources, restricted media freedoms, and enforced serious restrictions on religious practice.¹¹ Uzbekistan's long-serving authoritarian ruler, Islam Karimov, died in the fall of 2016 following almost 27 years of rule. The succession of former Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev as president, however, failed to herald meaningful improvements in Uzbekistan's abysmal human rights record: thousands continued to be imprisoned on politically motivated charges. Authorities continued to crackdown on civil society activists,

⁹ <http://www.unhcr.org/asia-and-the-pacific.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/25/australia/png-refugees-face-unchecked-violence>

¹¹ <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/tajikistan>

According to UN Women, the Asia Pacific has the worst record of gender-based violence in the world, with 2 in 3 women experiencing violence in their lifetime.

opposition members, and journalists.¹² In India, communal and caste-based violence continued in the period according to Amnesty International.¹³ Uttar Pradesh witnessed the highest number of communal incidents in India in 2017 with 60 incidents and 16 deaths reported from the state, according to data released by the home ministry in parliament¹⁴. Amnesty International's 2016-2017 Report on Pakistan refers to armed groups continuing to carry out targeted attacks against civilians, including government employees, which resulted in hundreds of casualties in the country.¹⁵

According to UN Women, while violence against women is a universal problem, the Asia Pacific has the worst record of gender-based violence in the world with 2 in 3 women experiencing violence in their lifetime¹⁶. One in three women globally are subject to violence, and this figure rises to more than 40% in Southeast Asia - the highest among the global regions.¹⁷

Legislation and policy have not deterred 'honour killings'. Rape, sexual harassment, and violence, even in families, continued to be reported.

The Asia Pacific is the region most affected by natural disasters.¹⁸ Although the deaths and displacement of natural disasters that hit the US in 2017 dominated the news, millions have been affected by the less media-covered storms that have hit India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Philippines, and Vietnam in 2017. Entire villages across Bangladesh, India, and Nepal were submerged under water for weeks since the floods began in mid-August 2017. Authorities have described it as the region's worst flood in 40 years, with a metre of rain falling in some areas in the space of days. An estimated 40 million people have been affected¹⁹, 16 million of these children.²⁰ In South China, over 12 million people were forced to flee their homes in July 2017 as flood waters rose for yet another year.²¹

Poor communities suffer the greatest impact from natural disasters – and there are millions of poor in the Asia Pacific. The 2017 Asia Pacific Thematic Report for the 2017 High-level Political Forum, *'Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing Asia-Pacific'* suggests that more than one in ten people in Asia and the Pacific – some 400 million people – live in extreme income poverty (people living on less than \$1.90 a day at 2011 PPP). These aggregate figures, however, hide disparities among countries, regions, locations, gender, and communities. The report argues further that there are other dimensions of poverty outside of income poverty that need appreciation for more targeted responses. It applies a global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) which also analyses "... *deprivation of basic human capability*".²² *"MPI assessments propose that people who are destitute endure a combination of severe deprivations, for example, a situation in which no one in the household has at least one year of education, two or more children have died, there is severe malnutrition of an adult or child, no access to electricity or to sanitation, access to safe drinking water only at a distance of more than 45 minutes' walk, cooking with biomass fuels and/or where no material assets are possessed."*²³ When considering multidimensional poverty, the numbers of poor increase significantly: at least

12 <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/uzbekistan>

13 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/india/report-india/>

14 <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/up-witnesses-60-communal-incidents-16-deaths-in-2017-highest-in-the-country/300193>

15 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/pakistan/report-pakistan/>

16 <https://unwomen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Eliminating-violence-against-women-in-the-Asia-Pacific1.pdf>

17 http://sdgasiapacific.net/download/AP_SDG_Thematic-Report_2017.pdf

18 <http://www.unescap.org/publications/asia-pacific-disaster-report-2017-leave-no-one-behind>

19 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-08/40-million-forced-to-rebuild-lives-after-south-asia-floods/8886264>

20 https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/media_100719.html

21 <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/24/asia/climate-change-floods-asia/index.html>

22 http://sdgasiapacific.net/download/AP_SDG_Thematic-Report_2017.pdf

23 *Ibid*



The Asia Pacific Thematic Report for the 2017 High-level Political Forum suggests that approximately 400 million people in the region live in extreme income poverty.

931 million people are impoverished across the region. In rural Asia and the Pacific, the rate doubles to two in five people. In South Asia, 86.3% of people living in multidimensional poverty are located in rural areas.

Wealth is shared unequally in the world. According to the World Inequality Report 2018, inequality has risen sharply since 1980, globally. While the poorest half of the global population has seen its income grow significantly, thanks to high growth particularly in China and India, the top 1% richest individuals in the world captured twice as much growth as the bottom 50% individuals since 1980. In 2016, the share of total national income accounted for by the nation's top 10% earners (top 10% income share) was 37% in Europe, 41% in China, 46% in Russia, 47% in US-Canada, and around 55% in sub-Saharan Africa, Brazil, and India. The most unequal region is the Middle East, where the top 10% capture 61% of national income.

The Report further observes that since 1980, countries have become richer but governments poorer. In China and Russia, public wealth declined from 60-70% of national wealth to 20-30%. In the same countries, following their transitions from communist to capitalist-oriented economies, net private wealth quadrupled and tripled respectively in the same period. Authors of this Report argue that research has demonstrated that tax progressivity is an effective tool to combat inequality – and to raise the much-needed public revenue base to set

in place measures that can address inequality systemically i.e. through the expansion of quality public education and opportunities for decent jobs and livelihoods. The Asia Pacific region can do more in this regard. As a whole, it has one of the world's lowest tax-to-GDP levels. In 2015, total tax revenue averaged 16.4% of GDP across the region, compared with a developing country average of 20.2% and a developed country average of 25.1%.²⁴ Tax evasion – as recently illustrated by the Paradise Papers revelations – is further a big obstacle to strong tax systems. The wealth held in tax havens has increased considerably since the 1970s and currently represents more than 10% of global GDP.²⁵ The international community has been discussing ways to reinforce regional cooperation and information sharing on tax matters and in strengthening the role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation on taxes, possibly in creating an inter-governmental tax body at the UN level to protect the rights of developing countries²⁶ especially from illicit capital flight.

Like poverty, inequality is multidimensional. Inequalities in opportunity, inequalities based on gender, identity, caste, language, ethnicity, among other dimensions, interact and reinforce further marginalisation and exclusion. Marginalisation also promotes least desirable economic opportunities as manifest in vulnerable employment – even forced labour.

ILO's World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2017 reports that the number of workers in vulnerable forms of employment is projected to grow globally

²⁴ <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Taxing%20for%20shared%20prosperity%20in%20Asia-Pacific.pdf>

²⁵ <http://wir2018.wid.world/files/download/wir2018-full-report-english.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Taxing%20for%20shared%20prosperity%20in%20Asia-Pacific.pdf>

by 11 million per year. The two regions most affected by vulnerable employment are Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa²⁷. A Report released by the ILO and the International Organisation for Migration in 2017 indicates that in 2016, 24.9 million people were in forced labour in the world. This includes people being forced to work under threat or coercion as domestic workers, on construction sites, in clandestine factories, on farms and fishing boats, in other sectors, and in the sex industry. The prevalence of forced labour is highest in Asia and the Pacific, where four out of every 1,000 people were victims.²⁸ In the region, forced labour is imposed by private actors; forced sexual exploitation; and State-imposed forced labour. Majority (55%) of forced labour imposed by private actors is on account of debt bondage, predominantly in the agricultural sector. Women and young girls accounted for over two-thirds of those in forced labour in the region.²⁹

ILO figures indicate that globally, 70.9 million young people are estimated to be unemployed in 2017. The ILO Report on Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017 finds that globally, three out of four employed young women and men are in informal employment, compared to three in five for adults. In developing countries, this ratio is as high as 19 out of 20 for young women and men.³⁰ When young women and men do find employment, quality remains a concern. In emerging and developing countries, 16.7% of young workers live on income below the extreme poverty threshold of US\$1.90 a day.

The same report also explores the impact of technological change on jobs for young people. It observes that previous technological revolutions generally automated only routine and repetitive



Ensuring more and better jobs for young people, and considering implications of technological change, will be a critical policy concern in the coming period.

tasks. The latest technologies are now taking on non-routine and complex manual and cognitive tasks that previously could be done only by humans since they require flexibility, judgement, and common sense: artificial intelligence, robotics, 3-D printing, Internet, to name a few. Ensuring more and better jobs for young people, and in doing so, considering the implications of technological change, will therefore be a critical policy concern in the coming period. With better standards of education, young women and men, growing up as “digital natives”, will be in a strategic position to adapt to new jobs and to continuous changes in the requirements of jobs, old and new. This will require revisiting current assumptions and modes of education, skills development systems, as well as approaches to lifelong learning.³¹

Through the many set-backs in the fight for empowerment, equity and climate justice, civil society and rights advocates persisted in their efforts. Perhaps, the most prominent of these was the challenge waged by women. Long standing discrimination in pay and opportunities, gender-based inequality, harassment, and violence were met with strong resistance by women. Women came out in hundreds of thousands to challenge growing and blatant misogyny, massive cutbacks in public spending for programmes benefitting women, e.g. on reproductive health, repression of women activists and rights advocates, sexual harassment and violence in homes and the workplace. Once again – and with greater prominence – the movement for change and defiance rested on the women’s movement in 2017.

27 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/dgreports/dcomm/publ/documents/publication/wcms_540899.pdf

28 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575540.pdf

29 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@ipec/documents/publication/wcms_597873.pdf

30 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/dgreports/dcomm/publ/documents/publication/wcms_598669.pdf

31 Ibid

EDUCATION



The CONFINTEA VI MTR civil society statement affirmed that adult learning and education (ALE), including youth and older adults, is a human right and an integral part of SDG 4, crucial to meeting all the Sustainable Development Goals.

ASPBAE has always maintained that education is a powerful tool to enable people to cope with the challenges they confront in their contexts and to transform and better their position and situation. Education is a right and a means to the exercise of other rights. This belief is also fundamental to the new global consensus on education and development. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is an integral part of the wider SDG agenda – and it is well appreciated that the SDGs would not be achieved without education and lifelong learning.

In November 2017, the Global Education Monitoring Report 2017-2018, *'Accountability in Education: Meeting our Commitments'* was launched. As one of the important instruments to track progress on the SDG 4 targets and commitments, the report updated on the current position with respect to the SDG 4 targets based on available data. Its main messages in this respect are as follows:

TARGET 4.1: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

- In 2015, there were 264 million primary and secondary age children and youth out of school.
- Completion rates were 83% for primary, 69% for lower secondary, and 45% for upper secondary education [2010-2015].
- About 387 million children of primary school age, or 56%, did not reach the minimum proficiency level in reading.
- Less than one in five countries guarantee 12 years of free and compulsory education.

TARGET 4.2: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- In 2015, 69% of children participated in organised learning at the pre-primary or primary level one year before official primary entry age.
- In 2010-2015, across 52 low and middle-income countries, the richest 3 to 4-year-olds were five times as likely to attend organised learning as the poorest.
- Just 17% of countries legally stipulate at least one year of free and compulsory early childhood education.

TARGET 4.3: TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL, TERTIARY, AND ADULT EDUCATION

- More women than men graduate from tertiary education, but fewer women than men obtain science, technology, engineering, and mathematics degrees.
- There are vast disparities in tertiary education opportunities in low and middle-income countries between richer and poorer students. In El Salvador, 51% of the richest fifth but less than 2% of the poorest fifth attended any form of post-secondary education.
- Very few adults who have not completed primary education go back to school.

TARGET 4.5: EQUITY

- There is gender parity in participation at all education levels except tertiary. However, global averages mask gaps: only 66% of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education, 45% in lower secondary, and 25% in upper secondary.
- There tend to be more female than male teachers, but far fewer women than men become school leaders. Only 6% of lower secondary head teachers are female in Japan.
- Inequality is underestimated, as survey design may exclude up to 250 million vulnerable people worldwide, while a further 100 million, such as slum dwellers, may be under-represented.
- In 42 of 86 countries, there is explicit reference to inclusive education in constitutions, laws, and policies, although interpretations of the term differ.

TARGET 4.7: ESD AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

- In 2009-2012, only 7% of teacher education programmes covered education for sustainable development.
- A 48-country review found that almost 80% had supportive policies for sexuality education but they are not always implemented.
- Almost 30% of 15-year-olds performed below the minimum proficiency level in science in the content areas of earth and space systems.

TARGET 4.4: SKILLS FOR WORK

- Most adults in low and middle-income countries do not have even basic computer skills. In 2014-2016, only 4% of adults in Sudan and Zimbabwe could copy and paste files.
- There are wide gender gaps in ICT skills. About 75 women for every 100 men could use basic arithmetic formulas in a spreadsheet in Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands.
- Establishing regulations and accreditation processes for skills training providers, public and private, is important for accountability but requires resources and expertise many countries lack.

TARGET 4.6: LITERACY AND NUMERACY

- The adult literacy rate increased from 81.5% to 86% worldwide between 2000 and 2015. It is below 60% in low income countries.
- The number of youth with no literacy skills has fallen by 27% since 2000, although more than 100 million young people still cannot read.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 69% of adults with five years of education in systems that privileged local languages could read a sentence, compared with 41% of adults educated in part or wholly in colonial languages.
- There is some evidence that literacy and numeracy levels may be declining in high income countries, including in Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden.

TARGET 4A: EDUCATION FACILITIES AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- In sub-Saharan Africa, only 22% of primary schools have electricity.
- In half of 148 countries, less than three-quarters of primary schools had access to drinking water.
- In 2015, about 40% of secondary school principals in Indonesia and Jordan and 25% to 30% in Israel and Italy reported that infrastructure problems significantly hampered instruction.
- There has been a sharp increase in attacks on schools since 2004, disproportionately affecting Southern Asia, Northern Africa, and Western Asia.

TARGET 4B: SCHOLARSHIPS

- Aid spending on scholarships decreased by 4% to US\$1.15 billion from 2010 to 2015, on par with the overall decrease in aid to education.
- Scholarship spending is underestimated, as many countries, including Brazil, China, and India, do not include it in their aid programmes.

TARGET 4C: TEACHERS

- Globally, 86% of teachers are trained at the primary school level.
- There is a need to agree on a common definition of what it means for a teacher to be trained.
- Information on teacher salaries is scarce. In OECD countries, primary school teachers earn 81% of what other full-time working professionals with tertiary education earn.



All estimates of the funding requirements and shortfall to meet key targets of SDG 4 point to the need for scaled-up domestic resource allocations to education.

The Education 2030 Framework for Action set a benchmark for education financing for governments: at least 4-6% of the GDP and 18-20% of national budgets to education. According to the GEMR, in 2015, median global public education expenditure was 4.7% of GDP (within the proposed range). Regional expenditure varied from 2.8% in Caucasus and Central Asia to 5.1% in Europe and Northern America.

Public education expenditure was 14.1% of total public expenditure in 2015 (below the proposed range). The share varied from 11.8% in Europe and Northern America to 16.9% in sub-Saharan Africa. Overall, 71 countries with data allocated less than 15% of public expenditure to education, including 8 of 25 low income and 13 of 29 lower middle-income countries.

Corruption in education systems further erodes the resource base to finance greater quality and access – and is in itself

objectionable, representing an abuse of public entrusted power for private gain.³² Ghost teachers in payrolls, ghost schools, rigging entrance examinations or accepting bribes to admit students, and opaque tendering systems for procurement are only some examples of corrupt practices prevalent in many education systems of the world. The GEMR argues that clear rules and regulations that do not create perverse incentives, codes of ethics for public officials and academic staff, and a commitment to transparency can play important roles in preventing fraud and emphasising integrity. Legal norms and structures must be accompanied by stronger information and control systems; adequate monitoring mechanisms, strong and independent audit institutions; and a facilitating environment for media oversight and civil society involvement.³³

All estimates of the funding requirements and shortfall to meet key targets of SDG 4 point to the need for scaled-up domestic resource allocations to education. Domestic budgets of low and middle-income countries are estimated to constitute the lion's share of funding – 97% of the total financing needed to meet key SDG 4 targets. To meet

³² <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002593/259338e.pdf>

³³ *Ibid*

this, low-income countries will need to spend 6.56% of GDP on education, which will still leave a funding shortfall of US\$39 billion per year. Education aid will therefore also need to expand. While education aid has been increasing since 2014-2015, it is however still below 2010 levels and has not risen to the proportion that overall ODA has increased since 2010 i.e. 24%. Further, education aid is not going primarily to basic education and to countries most in need. In 2015, least developed countries received 27% of total aid to education and 32% of aid to basic education, down from 29% and 37% in 2014, respectively.

There have been several international efforts through 2016-2017 to mobilise additional resources for education. In 2017, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) launched its replenishment campaign, aiming to raise US\$3.1 billion for 2018-2020 to implement its Financing and Funding Framework, adopted in early 2017 – which will involve funding to up to 89 countries with the highest education poverty, and operating at the recommended scale of US\$2 billion a year by 2020.³⁴ The last replenishment in 2014 raised 60% of its targeted amount.³⁵

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (or the Education Commission) has proposed establishing an International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) – resembling the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, which offered US\$100 billion in debt relief to 38 of the world's poorest countries in the early 2000s, and the International Finance Facility for Immunisation initiative, which mobilised more than US\$5 billion. Where GPE prioritises low income countries for its aid allocations, it is proposed that



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IFFEd will offer, in effect, concessional aid on education for lower middle-income countries, for which the interest on loans from development banks (3.5%) and capital markets (8%) is considered to be too high.³⁶ The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) raised concerns about the offer of 'loans' as an alternative to 'grants' to fill the funding gap for education. Many countries currently struggle to meet even just their current debt servicing obligations. Allocations to debt servicing also already weaken the ability of governments to allocate the desired 20% of their budgets to education. Finally, while these loans are targeted as financing options mainly for lower middle-income countries, it needs to be recognised that 80% of the world's poor live in these areas.

The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund was established after the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 to transform the delivery of education in emergencies. It aims to raise US\$3.85 billion by 2020. As of April 2017, it had raised US\$113 million of its first-year target of US\$153 million.³⁷

During the UNESCO-convened International Mid-Term Review of CONFINTEA 6 in October 2017, ASPBAE and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) drew attention to the fact that the SDG 4 targets related to youth and adult non-formal education – most meaningful to attend to the learning needs of marginalised groups and communities – are in the far fringes of consideration by these existing financing facilities. This, coupled with very low national budgetary allocations to youth and adult education only indicates that this sector of education remains marginal

³⁴ <http://replenishment.globalpartnership.org/chapter/gpe-replenishment/>

³⁵ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002593/2593338e.pdf>

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

and the weakest link in the lifelong learning chain.

With the failure of the public education system to fully resource universal access to quality education, the burden of financing has fallen on the poorest. The GEMR Report analysis affirms earlier observations that the share of education expenditure borne by households increases as country income level decreases. Based on available data reviewed, findings show that the share borne by households increased from 18% in high income countries to 25% in middle income, and 33% in low income countries. The share of households in total education expenditure was at least one-third in one-third of low and middle-income countries. In Cambodia, the share was 69% in 2011.³⁸

This is supported by a recent Action Aid International 4-country study (Pakistan, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda) released in 2017, *'Tax, privatisation and the right to education: Influencing education financing and tax policy to transform children's lives'*. The study revealed that, *"families have to pay a high percentage (ranging from 6.9% in Pakistan to 33.7% in Uganda for public schools, and 25% to 173% respectively for private schools) of their income in terms of schools-related costs, even when public schools are supposed to be free at primary level in these four countries."* It further observes that, *"because of the lack of adequate financing, partly due to governments giving away excessive tax incentives and not curbing tax evasion, the perceived declining quality of public education in these four countries is pushing families to make hard choices to find other alternatives. Private schools are growing as a result of this demand and the lack of effective regulation, creating and entrenching social inequalities and leading to the stigmatisation of public education."*³⁹

Civil society organisations have expressed strong concern over the expansion of low fee private school chains in the poorest countries of the world, including the Asia Pacific - luring the poor with promises of better quality education than what public schools can offer at a very low cost.⁴⁰ CSOs have also questioned increased public funding of such initiatives - especially when evidence does not support these claims. In support of civil society positions, a UK Parliament's International Development Committee Report raised serious questions about the UK government's continued funding of a low fee school chain, Bridge International Academies, *"due to concerns regarding the 'poor' quality of teaching, relationships with governments, 'alleged lack of compliance*

*with government regulations', and the 'higher cost of fees'."*⁴¹ Continued public funding of what the GEMR calls the "global education industry" will remain a focus of civil society interrogation in the coming period.

The GEMR 2017-2018, themed on 'Accountability in education', underscores that while accountability does not rest on single actors and that reaching SDG 4 will require collective involvement of all education stakeholders, it starts with governments as duty bearers to deliver on the right to education. Participatory processes in policy making, transparent information systems, independent checks and balances of the public system, and legislative and regulatory routes will reinforce greater accountability. It asserts that there exists *"little evidence that performance-based accountability, when focused on outcomes over inputs and based on narrow criteria, improves education systems"*. It offered strong scepticism of how greater competition and 'market-based' approaches enhance accountability - offering ostensibly better choice. On the contrary, they create competitive pressure that marginalise poorer parents and schools; promote segregation, privileging 'better performers' - usually, the more economically and socially advantaged; and increased economic burdens through higher fees. Finally, it also argued that peoples' voices are critical to hold governments to account. Efforts to institutionalise people's participation in formal processes of governance and policy will serve stronger accountability in education towards meeting shared commitments and aspirations.

38 Ibid

39 http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/tax_privatisation_report_online.pdf

40 <https://capx.co/how-low-cost-private-schools-could-transform-education/>

41 <http://www.right-to-education.org/news/new-uk-parliamentary-report-raises-serious-questions-over-uk-s-funding-bridge-international>

ASPBAE IN 2017



ASPBAE's membership recognised that the consensus built by the international community on the SDGs, and SDG 4 in particular, offers immense opportunities to advance the right to education and lifelong learning for all.

The 6th General Assembly of ASPBAE in 2016 elected a new Executive Council and deliberated on the organisation's strategic directions for the next period, 2017-2020. The membership reaffirmed ASPBAE's Overall Mission that guided its work and its strategic priorities in the last period as of continued relevance, while recognising that these will however have to be set within the realities and demands of the more current context.

The membership recognised that the consensus built by the international community on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sustainable Development Goal 4, in particular, offers remarkable opportunities to advance the right to education and lifelong learning for all. However, the solid promises that the SDGs, and indeed what other global policy commitments hold for quality basic, youth, and adult education, will only be truly met if these are translated into concrete, credible, costed plans and

programmes that are implemented well, especially at the country level. CSOs therefore need to:

- Persevere so the Education 2030 agenda is concretised, adequately resourced, and well implemented, especially at the country level – faithful to the full spirit and aspirations of SDG 4 and contextualised within the current development realities of the region and respective countries;
- Play import roles in education provisioning, especially for non-formal youth and adult education; filling a major gap in providing learning opportunities, especially for marginalised groups and communities, in the failure of the public education system to do so in many parts of the Asia Pacific region – whilst advocating for greater state support for the sector and scaled-up public provisioning;
- Persist - through coordinated national, regional, and global advocacy actions - in ensuring that the international community meets its commitments in mobilising the necessary political capacity and funding support required to meet the full SDG 4 agenda and the education-related targets in the other SDGs.

With this understanding, and informed by the extensive and rich reflections and recommendations of the 7th General Assembly, the Executive Council crafted ASPBAE's strategic plan for 2017-2020 along the following Mission, Objectives, and Core Strategies:



A major focus of the training support offered by ASPBAE was around the youth-led action research (YAR) approach for its member organisations and partners.

ASPBAE'S OVERALL MISSION:

To work towards securing the right of all people to basic, youth and adult education of good quality, contributing to poverty eradication, social justice, gender equality, sustainable development, and a lasting peace.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES 2017-2020:

Enhanced capacities of ASPBAE as a regional, membership-based organisation, equipped to optimise the national, regional, and global spaces offered by the SDGs and SDG 4 policy processes to advance the right to quality basic, youth and adult education within a lifelong learning framework. This will manifest specifically in:

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Increased abilities to press governments, donors, inter-governmental bodies, and financing institutions to strengthen public education systems that deliver better in securing the right of all to quality basic, youth and adult education within a lifelong learning frame, prioritising marginalised and vulnerable groups, through reinforced civil society engagement in education policy at all levels, leading to greater institutionalised spaces for civil society participation in public policy and decision-making processes;
- 2) Stronger fronts for coordinated civil society education advocacy actions; along with enhanced capacities of NGOs promoting quality youth and adult education provisioning, especially to vulnerable and marginalised youth and adults in youth and adult education practice, informing public policy;

- 3) Wider linkages with other civil society networks and organisations fighting poverty, advancing social justice, gender equality, sustainable development, and peace, and thereby securing stronger recognition of the critical role of education and learning in meeting all the SDGs;
- 4) An institutionally robust ASPBAE, able to offer a platform for exchange and learning of its members and CSOs working to advance the right to education and lifelong learning; as an advocate for the right to basic, youth and adult education and lifelong learning; and as a partner in leadership and capacity development of its members.

As mandated by its members in the 7th General Assembly, ASPBAE intends to meet these objectives through the pursuit of four (4) **Core Strategies**, aligned with these specific objectives:

1. Policy Advocacy
2. Leadership and Capacity Building
3. Building Strategic Partnerships
4. Institutional Strengthening

It is along these overall intentions and defined plans for the period 2017-2020 that this report for 2017 is crafted.



Some of ASPBAE's specific objectives included having wider linkages with other civil society networks and organisations, and ensuring an institutionally robust ASPBAE, able to offer a platform for exchange and learning of its members and CSOs.

POLICY ADVOCACY



ASPBAE supported its members in Australia in their co-organising events in Melbourne in August 2017 to highlight the financing and implementation challenges in meeting the SDG targets and the education-related targets of SDG 5 on gender and SDG 8 on decent work.

Work in the period was defined along the main objectives of ASPBAE's advocacy work:

- 1) To preserve the gains of the earlier period and ensure that the full SDG 4 agenda is pursued and implemented. Attempts to water down the agreed global consensus should be effectively challenged.
- 2) To sustain advocacy for increased and better financing for the new education agenda, ensuring stronger public education systems, and check the unregulated drive for the privatisation and commercialisation of education.
- 3) To press for institutionalised civil society participation in national, regional/sub-regional, and global education policy spaces; with broad-based, multi-stakeholder, participatory character of SDG and SDG 4 mechanisms and platforms promoted at national, regional, and global levels.

The following describes the activities undertaken in this regard in 2017:

Sustained national, regional, and global engagement by ASPBAE and its members in the SDG-SDG 4 follow-up processes

At the second year of implementation of the SDG-SDG 4 agenda, ASPBAE and its members sustained their coordinated efforts to follow up its contextualisation and concretisation, especially at the country level.

With ASPBAE support, national education coalition members continued work in broadening awareness of the SDGs and SDG 4 in their countries and in securing spaces for participation in the processes developing country level SDG-SDG 4 plans and initiatives.

- The Vietnam Association on EFA (VAEFA) was asked by their Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), together with UNESCO-Vietnam, to gather and consolidate CSO inputs (from both local and international NGOs in the country) for the drafting and finalisation of Vietnam's SDG 4 Plan of Action.
- All for Education (AFE) Mongolia participated in the government's high-level forum on the implementation of SDG 4 which noted legislative actions needed to be pursued in the country to ensure the implementation of key education targets.

- Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Bangladesh continued to play its role in the Prime Minister's high-level committee on the SDG-SDG 4 implementation in Bangladesh.
- Coalitions also created their own spaces to engage the SDG roll out and follow-up processes. National Coalition for Education (NCE) India participated in the coordinated CSO effort in India to develop a CSO report as part of the 2017 Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes of the High level Political Forum (HLPF).
- National Coalition for Education (NCE) Nepal, CAMPE Bangladesh, Network for Education Watch (NEW) Indonesia, and the fledgling coalition, Civil Alliance for Social Transformation through Education in Korea (CIATE), also engaged in the VNR process in their respective countries.
- And even where spaces for CSOs were severely restricted, such as in Myanmar, the National Network for Education Reform (NNER) persisted in facilitating broad-based civil society consultations on the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) of Myanmar, to bring pressure to bear on the official processes, calling for the NESP's attention to the SDG 4 commitments and targets.
- ASPBAE supported its members in Australia, RMIT University Melbourne, Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE), and Adult Learning Australia (ALA) in their co-organising of a series of events in Melbourne in from 9-10 August 2017. The events brought together members and partners of the Australia Coalition for Education and Development (ACED) to highlight the financing and implementation challenges in meeting the SDG targets and the education-related targets of SDG 5 on gender and SDG 8 on decent work. These events were organised on the occasion of Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) CEO Alice Albright's visit to Australia. In their discussions, some ACED members remarked on the need for GPE to consider also prioritising out-of-school education, training, and lifelong learning.

ASPBAE was also invited as a resource person/speaker in a Workshop on 'Communities of Practice on Indigenous Peoples Communities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)', 13-15 June in Manila; and in an International Conference on



The National Network for Education Reform (NNER) facilitated broad-based civil society consultations on the National Education Sector Plan of Myanmar.

'Inclusive Quality Education: Towards Sustainable Development Goal 4' from 17-18 June 2017 in New Delhi, India.

ASPBAE continued its participation in the regional and global SDG 4 processes, advancing its advocacy for the implementation of the full SDG 4 agenda. It continued its involvement in the **SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (ESC)** and also continued its role in the Bureau of the Steering Committee as Vice Chair, representing civil society. In this role, ASPBAE participated in the Committee's annual face-to-face meeting from 29-30 June in New York.

To facilitate greater interaction between



ASPBAE participated in the 3rd Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED) in July in Bangkok where it was able to facilitate the participation of 12 national education campaign coalitions.

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the Steering Committee and the UN New York-based platforms coordinating SDG actions, the 2017 Steering Committee meeting was organised alongside a **UN High level Action Event on Education** on 28 June at the UN office in New York which all ESC members attended. The High-level event was convened by the (then) President of the UN General Assembly, Peter Thompson, in partnership with key SDG 4 stakeholders to drive a new push for the education and lifelong learning agenda.

ASPBAE also sustained its involvement in the **Asia Pacific regional Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Education 2030+** in the period and in this capacity, participated in the **3rd Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED)** from 4-7 July in Bangkok, themed on **‘Mainstreaming SDG 4’**. ASPBAE was also able to facilitate the participation of 12 national education campaign coalitions in the meeting, 7 of whom were also accredited as part of their government’s official delegations.

A number of issues have become evident in these processes – which informed

ASPBAE’s advocacies and positions in its engagements:

The broad-based, democratic, participatory character of the 2015 agenda-setting processes stand challenged in the dynamic of the SDG-SDG 4 follow up. The current processes have become more restrictive of civil society participation.

- The SDG 4 narrative is being reshaped and a much narrower agenda of SDG 4 is being pursued in its implementation. Significant barriers exist – in some, existing legislative frameworks, persistent school fees - towards ensuring all children have access to 12 years of free quality primary and secondary education, 9 of which are compulsory, and at least 1 year of free and compulsory pre-primary education; whilst youth and adult education suffered the least attention and remains the weakest link in the lifelong learning chain. While ODA to education as a whole suffers, evidently, the targets related to youth and adult education (SDGs 4.3, 4.4, and 4.6) are receiving scant attention in development and funding. APMED 3 discussions on SDG 4.7 were solely focused on education for sustainable development (ESD) in the formal system – ignoring the reality that issues of sustainability and responses to the climate crisis need to be attended to by communities and people in their various arenas of engagement and living. It fell on CSOs to make the case for the value of community-based ESD which was only grudgingly accommodated.
- A narrow ‘learning agenda’ – a focus on measurable



The SDG 4 narrative is being reshaped and a much narrower agenda of SDG 4 is being pursued - a focus on measurable learning outcomes as the main index for education quality is once again being emphasised.

learning outcomes as the main index for education quality – is once again being emphasised. This is indicative in the push – on the instance of the Education Commission – for a Global Lead Indicator which privileges proficiency in reading and math. CSOs argued that the task at the moment is to assist national governments in contextualising the 29 global and thematic indicators agreed for reporting, so far – not add yet another layer of global indicators. They also cautioned that a focus on ‘lead’ and therefore ‘priority’ indicators could result in the narrowing of the SDG 4 agenda.

The ‘learning agenda’ is also the main theme and assertion of the World Bank’s 2018 World Development Report (WDR), *‘Learning to Realise Education’s Promise’*. While welcoming the first ever WDR on education, the GCE reminded that SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Agenda go far beyond a focus on learning and assessments and hoped the WDR had also covered issues of education inclusion, equity, non-discrimination, human rights education, and education for sustainable development, within the context of lifelong learning.

- The private sector, through business networks and foundations, are getting a stronger presence in education policy – and in the emerging SDG-SDG 4 architecture. With the mounting evidence of how privatisation can impact negatively on education equity and quality, this trend is a cause for concern.
- Finally, SDG 4 – education is not enjoying the full prominence it deserves within the SDGs and its follow-up processes. The Outcomes Document of the 2017 High-level Political Forum offered very scant mention of education – despite substantial interventions of education groups to engage in the process at national, regional, and global levels.

It is precisely in recognition of the need to advocate for greater attention to education and SDG 4 in the SDG processes that ASPBAE has continued to expand its involvements in the wider SDG platforms.

ASPBAE participated in the **Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum for Sustainable Development (APCSFSD)** in Bangkok (26-28 March 2017) convened by the **Asia Pacific Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (APRCM)**, in collaboration with UNESCAP and the United Nations Environment Programme



ASPBAE participated in the Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum for Sustainable Development (APCSFSD) in Bangkok in March 2017. The Forum was a preparatory meeting of civil society organisations for the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD).

(UNEP). The Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum was a preparatory meeting of civil society organisations for the **Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)**, which was held from 29-31 March 2017, also in Bangkok.

ASPBAE organised a side event at the CSO Forum highlighting the inter-linkages of education with the other SDGs, notably economic growth and employment (SDG 8), gender (SDG 5), economic equality (SDG 10), health (SDG 3), peaceful societies (SDG 16), and means of implementation (SDG 17). ASPBAE also took this occasion to lobby for a distinct Education and Academia Constituency Group within APRCEM to offer a stronger voice for education within this mechanism. ASPBAE was able to secure endorsement of this from fourteen organisations belonging to 7 constituencies (women, youth, farmers, NGO, elders, trade union, enterprise development) – where only endorsement of five organisations is needed to consider



ASPBAE participated in the 2017 High level Political Forum in July in New York. It spoke on the need for scaled-up financing for SDG 4 during a panel in a side event convened by ICAE and GCE.

the addition of a new constituency. Negotiations are ongoing regarding this.

With the support of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), ASPBAE was invited to participate in the UNDP organised **‘Regional Knowledge Exchange’ Conference on “Supporting Policy Coherence for Accelerating Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda”** (1-4 October in Manila, Philippines). ASPBAE’s participation in this event hopefully paves the way for ASPBAE engagement in SDG regional processes steered by UNDP.

ASPBAE joined the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group in its participation in the **2017 High level Political Forum** (10-20 July, New York) organised with the theme *“Eradicating Poverty in All its Forms and Dimension through Promoting Sustainable Development, Expanding Opportunities and Addressing Related Challenges”*. ASPBAE spoke on the need for scaled-up financing for SDG 4 during a panel in a side event, *‘Making SDG 4’s*

Commitment to Universal, Free Education Vital’, convened by the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), under the umbrella of the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG). The EASG, including ASPBAE, lobbied strongly during the HLPF events and notably during the Ministerial Forum of the HLPF where the outcomes of the Volunteer National Reviews (VNRs) were presented by the 44 participating governments. ASPBAE and other education stakeholders expressed dismay on the extremely weak reference to education in the final Ministerial Declaration, even as education was highlighted strongly during the opening of the Ministerial level meeting. Other civil society networks criticised the Voluntary National Reviews, referring to them as sugar-coated reports because they talk only of achievements, no matter how inconsequential, and glossed over the gaps and the failures of governments to address key development issues.

ASPBAE joined the global effort to put the spotlight on education during the **UN General Assembly** from 12-25 September 2017 in New York. Along with GCE and other civil society representatives, ASPBAE participated in the High-level event, *‘Financing the Future: Education 2030’*, organised by GPE, the Education Commission, UNICEF, and UNESCO along with the governments of Norway, France, Malawi, and Senegal. The Replenishment Campaign of GPE was launched in this event. ASPBAE also participated in the GCE and Education International organised high-level event on the side of the UN GA. The Forum, *‘Sustainably financing education’*, focused on tax justice to achieve sustainable financing for education at the domestic level and had Irina Bukova, Director General of UNESCO, Alice Albright, CEO of GPE, Jeffrey Sachs, and the heads of GCE and Education International as some of its speakers.

ASPBAE’s scaled-up engagements in the UN New York-led SDG processes in 2017 offered many lessons for consideration in its future efforts:

- Strong cooperation and solidarity with civil society networks and other organisations outside the education sector is critical. Gaining their support for education issues and concerns is crucial for effective engagements within the UN system.
- It is likewise important to develop links with official

government delegations and representatives of permanent missions who can support and articulate CSO advocacies which coincide with their own in official UN SDG processes.

- ASPBAE should be poised to actively contribute to civil society official submissions, statements, and position papers to ensure that key issues on education are included and carried in these interventions.
- Organising ASPBAE's own events and presenting new ideas and research - in cooperation with other education stakeholders and with support from high-level UN and government representatives (especially UN missions) - is a good strategy to mainstream ASPBAE's positions and to profile the organisation.

These are useful to note as ASPBAE prepares for its participation, especially in the High-Level Political Forum for 2019, which will be attended by Heads of State and Governments and where SDG 4 will be one of the goals to be highlighted for review.

Wider engagements on education financing focused on domestic resource mobilisation, regulatory frameworks for the private sector, and support for the GPE Replenishment Campaign

As again, ASPBAE worked closely with member national education coalitions in coordinated advocacy efforts on education financing, focused especially on domestic resource

mobilisation and education privatisation.

Work around domestic resource mobilisation focused on campaigns for **increased budgets to education and on budget analysis/budget tracking work:**

- E-Net Philippines formulated alternative budgets for education with a greater focus on equity and assisted the Department of Education in preparing their agency's budgets as it sought to expand its Alternative Learning Systems programme.
- All for Education (AFE) Mongolia and Education Coalition for Kyrgyzstan (ECK) also pursued budget tracking work following ASPBAE's capacity support. AFE Mongolia started studying possible domestic resource mobilisation options such as tax levies on extractive industries to generate resources for education.
- Network for Education Watch (NEW) Indonesia collected data from the District Education offices and analysed the adequacy of their budget to meet the needs of school aged children and youth.
- NGO Education Partnership (NEP) Cambodia successfully lobbied for and contributed to a government decision to increase the national education budget. NEP Cambodia utilised the Global Action Week for Education 2017 to present its education budget analysis and to raise public awareness and generate support for the campaign. The coalition also lobbied and secured the agreement of the Education Minister to increase teacher salaries in two stages in 2017.
- Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Bangladesh organised



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NGO Education Partnership (NEP) Cambodia successfully lobbied for and contributed to a government decision to increase the national education budget. The coalition also lobbied and secured the agreement of the Education Minister to increase teacher salaries in 2017.

a series of sub-national level consultations on the education budget calling for increased allocation for education that addresses the realities on the ground. CAMPE also used the mass media (TV) to create public debates on the education budget which encouraged millions of people to air out their views and express solidarity on the education demands. From the consultations, a set of recommendations (contained in a Memorandum) were submitted to the Finance and the Education Ministers.

- The Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) sustained their budget tracking work, tracing whether schools receive their full budgetary allocations.
- NCE-Nepal challenged the decrease in the national budget in education and presented evidences and its own budget analysis to government to argue for continued investment in quality education. It achieved gains in its advocacy with Parliament and the

Ministry of Education regarding budgetary allocations for scholarships for marginalised sectors.

ASPBAE and its partner coalitions followed up on earlier efforts challenging **education privatisation through UN human rights mechanisms**: In 2016, ASPBAE and national education coalitions in Pakistan, Nepal, Philippines, Mongolia, and India prepared and submitted parallel reports to the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the UN Human Rights Council. Favourable results were obtained from these human rights treaty bodies contained in their concluding observations – citing the adverse impacts of privatisation on the right to education. In 2017, with ASPBAE support, the coalitions tracked and advocated for compliance of their governments to the recommendations of the Treaty bodies.

- Drawing on the observations and recommendations of the CRC in Pakistan which cited privatisation, low financing of education, and the lack of regulation as factors that infringe on the right to education in the country, the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) lobbied with diplomatic missions of Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, and Denmark to urge mission representatives to raise questions on financing and privatisation of education during the working group review related to the Universal Period Review (UPR) of Pakistan in 2017.
- AFE Mongolia conducted dialogues with legislators and key officials of the Ministry of Education on the observations of the CRC. As a result, a key Member of Parliament publicly called for stricter monitoring of private providers, especially on tuition fees, and directed the Minister of Education to draft a regulatory document. The Ministry of education also agreed to stricter monitoring of private schools and kindergartens receiving public subsidies, and the Ministry will undertake more accurate data collection on student enrolment, number of teachers, and the status of education facilities.
- National Campaign for Education (NCE) Nepal widely disseminated the concluding observations of the CRC which underscored the need to increase budgets for education and to address the unregulated commercialisation of education which lead to discrimination and segregation. The news

coverage of a public dialogue on this subject with legislators featured the support of a prominent parliamentarian to the coalition's position on regulating private schools.

- E-Net Philippines also shared the highlights of the parallel report and the concluding observations during public forums and meetings organised with various human rights organisations in the period. They also drew attention to these and sought necessary action from government during meetings/dialogues they convened with ministry and state planning officials and legislators.

ASPBAE also worked with six national coalitions in Pakistan, Nepal, India, Philippines, Mongolia, and Korea to deepen their policy analysis on **regulatory frameworks for private sector engagement in education through policy researches**. Alongside this, ASPBAE run a scan of existing legislations and regulations on private sector engagement in education provisioning, financing, and management in the Asia Pacific region. NCE India also ran a follow-up study focused on enforcement issues and what can be done to improve monitoring and compliance of private schools to the Indian Right to Education (RTE) Act. The problem of enforcement is a common concern in many countries around the region. Countries may have well developed regulatory policies, but these are poorly implemented due to lack of personnel, inadequate funding, corruption, and lack of political will on the part of the government and the responsible agencies to enforce regulations.

ASPBAE continued to work with the Open Society Foundations (OSF) in these efforts and in its initiative to draw up '*Human Rights Guiding Principles on Private Actors in the Provision of Education*' as part of a broader global effort to regulate private engagement in education. This effort is co-organised with the Right to Education Initiative (RTEI) and the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR). ASPBAE continued to solicit comments, contributions, and suggestions from its members and other human rights specialists in the region on successive drafts of these Guidelines.

ASPBAE and its members also supported the **GPE Replenishment Campaign** launched in September 2017. Within the coordinated effort of the Global Campaign for Education, national coalitions – through public-facing and media events – called on their governments to pledge greater allocations



With ASPBAE support, coalitions in Pakistan, Nepal, Philippines, Mongolia, and India tracked and advocated for compliance of their governments to the recommendations of Treaty bodies such as the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the UN Human Rights Council.

to education in their national budgets. They also engaged with Local Education Groups (LEGs) to mobilise support from LEG members in pressuring the government to commit to higher domestic resources for education and called on donor countries to deliver on their aid commitments and to substantially increase their support for education. The Regional Coalitions' meeting, organised by ASPBAE in October in Hanoi, provided an opportunity for education coalitions in the Asia Pacific to share their plans for the GPE replenishment.

The Australian coalition, Australia Coalition for Education and Development (ACED), with ASPBAE support and involving ASPBAE members in the country, lobbied the Australian government for the GPE replenishment. This involved helping to organise public meetings and forums involving GPE's CEO Alice Albright, meetings with senior officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (DFAT), and a coordinated combined CSO letter to the Minister. The Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE) also lobbied their government to commit to an

increased contribution by Japan at the GPE Replenishment Conference, and through GPE, to prioritise attention to basic education in low income and fragile countries.

Expanded advocacy efforts on Youth and Adult Education within Lifelong Learning

Fidelity to the full SDG 4 agenda and attention to the neglected targets on youth and adult education within SDG 4 was part of ASPBAE's core advocacy as it participated in the various SDG-SDG 4 policy arenas in 2017.

A key moment, however, for its advocacy on youth and adult education was **the International Mid-Term Review (MTR) of CONFINTEA VI** organised by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the government of Korea from 25-27 October in Suwon, Korea. Being from the host region, ASPBAE supported ICAE in organising a **Civil Society Forum** at the front-end of the MTR Conference as a space for civil society to jointly agree its key advocacies and lobbying work in the official process. The CSO Forum Statement, presented in the MTR Conference, outlined the main positions of civil society and its key advocacies, notably:



Fidelity to the full SDG 4 agenda and attention to the neglected targets on youth and adult education within SDG 4 was part of ASPBAE's core advocacy.

- The affirmation that adult learning and education (ALE) is a human right and an integral part of SDG 4, crucial to meeting all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This essential role of ALE, which includes youth and older adults, should be amplified and supported recognising that ALE is the least supported link in the lifelong learning chain.
- Asserting that the challenges in the current context requires ALE to:
 - be organised in an integrated and holistic manner, taking into account formal, non-formal, and informal spaces of learning.
 - incorporate and connect basic education, training of skills, and capacities for effective and decent work, and developing capacities for life and social and personal development.
 - recognise a diversity of ways of learning and knowing, including indigenous knowledge.
 - encompass the full range of capacities that are needed for/in the world of work, in society and everyday life. It should include Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED).
 - have a learner-centred orientation, involve professionalisation of educators, and promotion of different pathways to learning to cater to diverse learning needs and contexts.



A key moment for ASPBAE's advocacy on youth and adult education was the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of CONFINTEA VI held in Suwon, Korea, in October 2017. ASPBAE supported ICAE in organising a Civil Society Forum to jointly agree its key advocacies and lobbying work in the official process.

- Asserting that ALE should address the needs of known and less known (e.g. returning soldiers, refugees, prisoners) marginalised and vulnerable communities and groups is particularly crucial, as is the role of the State in identifying those at risk.
- Urging the Global Partnership for Education and the Education Financing Commission to act on its mandate to secure development of the full SDG agenda and in particular the development of lifelong learning, including ALE.
- Governments should prioritise and fund ALE. Recognising that although diversifying sources of funding and financial partnerships is necessary for ALE, there is a danger of massive privatisation, commercialisation, and the dominance of for-profit interest in ALE which can undermine the right to education and learning of many adults worldwide. This should be challenged.
- Monitoring should rely on relevant data about who participates in ALE and who is absent in order to identify under-represented groups and strategies to address their needs. Developing capacities together and analyse data is of key importance for governments and civil society.
- The commitment to universal adult literacy must be reaffirmed within the global agenda.

Participants of the MTR Conference recognised progress made and on-going challenges. Some positive developments noted include an increase in the number of countries adopting ALE policies, new partnerships forged at various levels, and useful instruments to improve quality have been set in place. However, of the many challenges, some worth citing include: funding in the sector remains woefully inadequate (less than 1% of education budgets on average); very low participation, especially of marginalised groups, including women; and the lack of training and support for AE personnel and trainers.

The Outcomes document of the CONFITEA VI MTR Conference took on board CSO assertions. Further, it called for accelerated implementation of the Belem Framework for Action (BFA) and the 2015 UNESCO Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (RALE); the preparation of CONFITEA VI in 2021; UNESCO to popularise and articulate RALE and BFA with the SDG 4 implementation processes and architecture such as the Global Education Meeting, SDG-Education 2030

Steering Committee, and regional SDG 4 coordination mechanisms, as well as within the wider United Nations structures.

ASPBAE representatives played strong roles in the official processes – as plenary speakers, facilitators, and as a member of the Conference Drafting Committee. Earlier on (in 2016), ASPBAE strongly supported the process of developing the regional Asia Pacific Mid Term Report for CONFITEA VI, a key resource for the deliberations of the MTR.

At the back-end of the CONFITEA MTR Conference, ASPBAE participated in a DVVI-organised **Workshop on ‘Branding Adult Education (AE)’** on 28 October 2017. It was designed to offer a space for an initial reflection on an ‘adult education brand’ - to dialogue about ‘profile sharpening’ and the possible improvement of the AE concept and the brand to better facilitate advocacy.

Towards widening involvement of its members in the CONFITEA VI MTR processes, ASPBAE organised **five (5) country-level consultations** of its members and CSOs around the agenda of the MTR Conference, notably, a review of progress on the implementation of the Belem Framework for Action



Towards widening involvement of its members in the CONFITEA VI MTR processes, ASPBAE organised 5 national consultations around the agenda of the MTR Conference.

(BFA), introducing the 2015 UNESCO Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (RALE), and on deliberations on how to reinforce the CONFINTEA VI commitments and ALE within the SDG and SDG 4 processes which enjoy more attention from decision makers. The consultations in the Philippines (30 July, Kidapawan, Mindanao) and Vietnam (22 August, Hanoi) were organised before the CONFINTEA VI MTR Conference – its recommendations, feeding into ASPBAE’s preparatory work. Three (3) consultations were organised after the CONFINTEA VI MTR Conference: in India (14-15 December, Nashik), Indonesia (15 December, Jakarta) and Nepal (29 December, Kathmandu). In these consultations, discussions focused on sharing the outcomes of the MTR Conference and strategising on ways to scale up CSO advocacy for ALE in national-level education platforms, and in the SDG-SDG 4 spaces, notably the High Level Political Forum of 2019 which will focus (among others) on SDG 4.

In the India consultation, for example, the participants started planning the development of an India CSO Spotlight Report focused on SDG 4. The strong recommendation was that this CSO Report focus on equity and inclusion and on the strong interconnection between SDG 4 – including ALE – with other SDGs under review in the HLPF 2019, notably SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 10 (inequality), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions).

The Indonesia members’ consultation had an added agenda of strategising for the CSO participation and input in the **Government of Indonesia’s Policy Forum on Adult Learning and Education**,

18-20 December in Bandung. With the theme of *‘Promises, Problems and Possibilities of Quality Distance Learning’*, the Forum offered a space to discuss the CONFINTEA VI MTR outcomes and good practice and policy options to strengthen distance education for adults. NEW Indonesia took advantage of these events being organised to also convene a capacity building workshop on lifelong learning for its members from 12-13 December in Jakarta. This workshop was supported by ASPBAE.

These country consultations brought together member organisations involved in youth and adult education provisioning and on education advocacy. These consultations are envisaged to be an on-going feature of ASPBAE’s work, offering spaces for interactions between adult education practitioners and education campaigners within ASPBAE’s membership for joint learning and as a core strategy in evolving a stronger policy reform agenda on youth and adult education, derived from the rich practice of ASPBAE’s members in the region.

In the year, ASPBAE also collaborated with DVV International in two (2) policy forums oriented to Community Learning Centres (CLCs). It partnered with the DVVI Regional Office in Central Asia in its convening, with the UNESCO Office in Almaty, of the **Central Asian Adult Education Forum** on *‘Community Learning Centres: international Trends and best Practices’*, 6-9 September 2017 in Issyk-Kul Lake, Kyrgyzstan. ASPBAE also participated in the **DVVI Adult Education Conference** on *‘Adult Education Centers as Key*



ASPBAE partnered with the DVVI Regional Office in Central Asia in its convening, along with UNESCO Almaty, the Central Asian Adult Education Forum on *‘Community Learning Centres: international Trends and best Practice’* in September in Kyrgyzstan.

to Development – Responsibilities, Structures, and Benefits, 11-12 October 2017 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The outcomes of these forums informed a submission of DVVI to the CONFINTEA VI MTR Conference calling for stronger government/state support to Community Learning Centres or Adult Education Centres as important ALE institutional mechanisms and structures for delivery and provisioning. CLCs lend to ALE provisioning that is flexible, relevant, better contextualized, and thus better able to respond to the learning needs of youth and adults, especially from marginalised communities.

To deepen ASPBAE's policy analysis on gender, skills, and work, ASPBAE started its **Study on Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women**. A multi-country research, this intends to review the existing policy, programmes, and financing options for skill development of marginalised women in given countries. The study reviews the existing policies and practices, of both government and NGOs, from a gendered lens, appraising these initiatives in terms of their contributions to the economic and overall empowerment of marginalised women. The study also hopes to draw lessons on good practice in gender-just approaches to education and skill building for marginalised women and the financing implications of these.

The study was initiated in two countries in 2017: ASPBAE partnered with its members Azad Foundation for the study in India and PEKKA for the study in Indonesia. As part of the research, ASPBAE also commission a regional scoping paper

to supplement the country studies. Based on secondary data and internet-based research, the scoping paper is envisaged to enumerate key international commitments and covenants that guarantee the right to decent work for all, the right to livelihoods and economic empowerment of women, and the right to education of women; a description of how regional and global multilateral bodies, notably ILO, UNESCO, UN WOMEN, ESCAP address the right to education for decent work of marginalised women – what initiatives are in place to advance this; aid policies of ADB and donor countries in the region, notably Australia and Japan, on education related to skills building of marginalised women; trends in government spending for this area of work in the Asia Pacific region.

The studies are targeted for completion in March 2018 and the findings will be disseminated and shared thereafter. It is also envisaged that the outcomes inform ASPBAE's advocacies on education and its linkages with SDGs 5 and 8.

Other platforms of ASPBAE policy engagement on youth and adult education in 2017 included:

- **Global Alliance on Literacy (GAL)** where ASPBAE is a member of the Core Group and a Vice Chair in the



ASPBAE started its Study on Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women. It partnered with its members Azad Foundation for the study in India and PEKKA for the study in Indonesia.



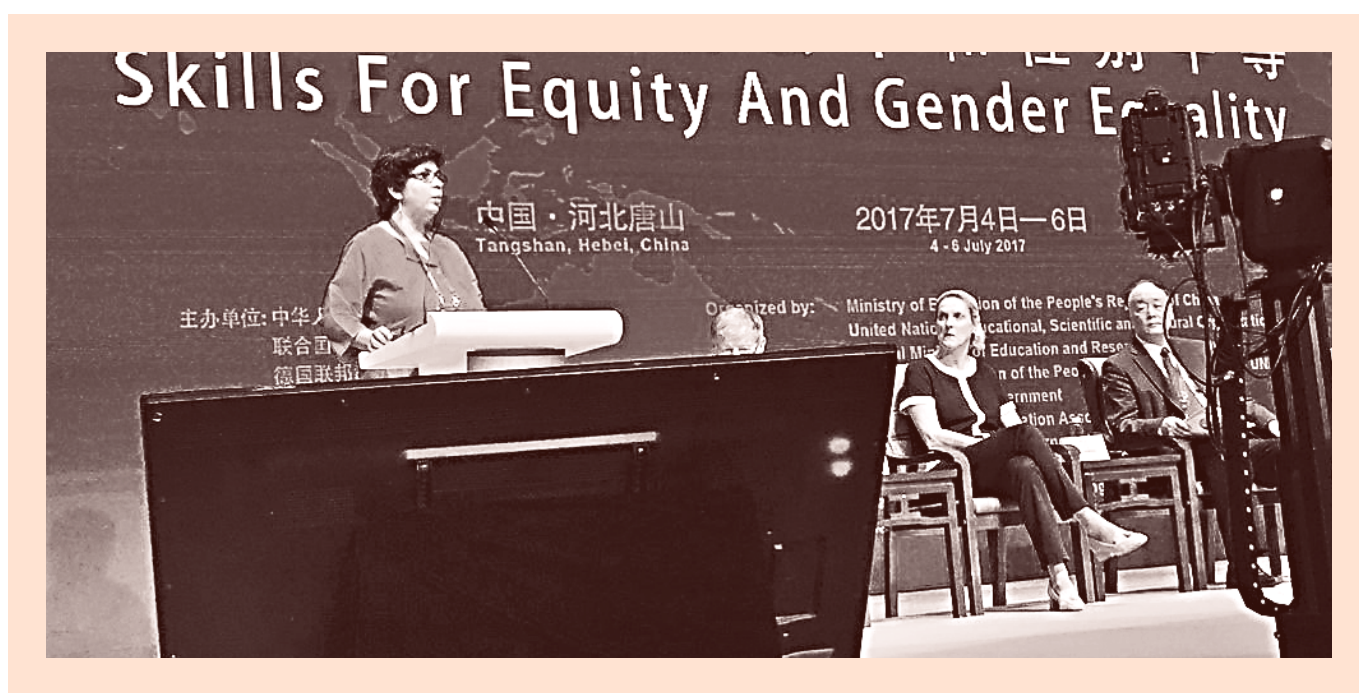
ASPBAE participated in the Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL) Core Group and Bureau Meetings in September in Paris. The meetings focused on concretising GAL's work on advocacy, information and knowledge sharing, and capacity support.

Bureau: ASPBAE participated in the GAL Core Group and Bureau Meetings organised from 7-8 September 2017 in Paris. These meetings focused on concretising GAL's programme of work on advocacy, information and knowledge-sharing, and national level capacity support. ASPBAE also participated in the year's International Literacy Day commemoration in UNESCO Paris, where it organised a forum on digital literacy.

- **Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**, 4-6 July, Tangshan, China. The Conference aimed to deliberate on ways by which TVET can contribute to the implementation of the SDGs and SDG 4. ASPBAE was a plenary speaker in the Conference in the Session, on *'Skills for equity and gender equality'*. Reflecting on the event, ASPBAE's representative recommended

that ASPBAE creatively use more progressive global commitments on education, work, and gender to inform and raise the discourse on adult education-TVET-skilling which remains "uni-dimensional".

- **South East Asia Ministers of Education Centre for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELL):** ASPBAE participated in an Experts Meeting on National Action Plans organised by SEAMEO CELL from 5-6 October 2017 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. This was part of an ongoing effort supported by UIL involving the development of a compendium documenting promising policies and practices in lifelong learning from 11 SEAMEO countries. The Experts meeting was organised to plan the in-country forums to share the outcomes of the research, as a means to widen appreciation of LLL in countries, and strengthen the capacities of governments to develop LLL policies and programmes, especially attentive to adult learning and education (ALE). The compendium is a valuable resource and has since been used by ASPBAE for its capacity building work on ALE and LLL advocacy.



ASPBAE was a plenary speaker in the Tangshan Conference in the session on *'Skills for equity and gender equality'*. The Conference aimed to deliberate on ways by which TVET can contribute to the implementation of the SDGs and SDG 4,



ASPBAE continued to function as the CSEF Regional Secretariat for the Asia Pacific, offering demand-driven capacity support to national education coalitions.

CAPACITY BUILDING

ASPBAE's capacity building work in the period was undertaken in pursuit of the programme's three main objectives:

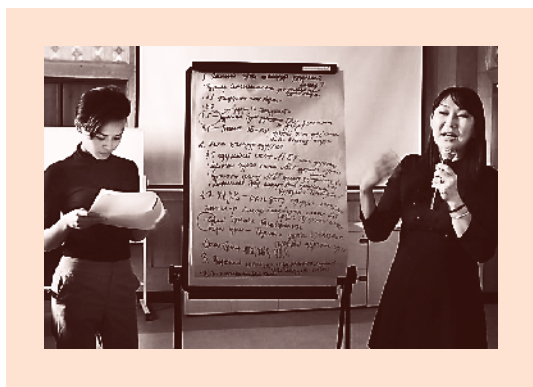
1. Enhanced capacities of national education campaign coalitions in the Asia Pacific to advance the full SDG 4 -Education 2030 agenda within the wider SDGs, concretised within the specific realities and conditions of countries within the Asia Pacific region, advocating powerfully for more and better education financing and institutionalised spaces of CSO participation in education policy.
2. Deepened capacities of practitioners of youth and adult education to actively promote transformative youth and adult education work, thus contributing to the development, in their countries, of strong lifelong learning systems, especially attentive to the learning needs of marginalised children, youth, and adults.
3. A stronger voice and agency of young people in ASPBAE's work and advocacies, as key stakeholders in education and lifelong learning.

The following describes the activities undertaken in this regard in 2017:

Capacity building for policy advocacy work

The major planks for ASPBAE's capacity building work were the **Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF)** initiative and the ASPBAE programme on '**Addressing Financing and Privatisation Challenges in the Post-2015 Education and Development Agenda**', supported by the Open Society Foundations (OSF). In its third phase, the CSEF programme, funded by GPE, continued to allow sustained support to national education campaign coalitions or emerging advocacy networks in 19 countries of the Asia Pacific region. The ASPBAE-OSF partnership allowed focused capacity support for advocacy on education financing, notably on education privatisation.

ASPBAE continued to function as the **CSEF Regional Secretariat for the Asia Pacific** – offering demand-driven capacity support to national education coalitions



Throughout the year, ASPBAE offered technical support in coalition strategising workshops and held trainings, especially on coalition efforts to engage the SDG-SDG 4 processes and in education financing advocacies.

within the overall intentions of CSEF i.e. to support effective CSO engagement in education policy dialogue, in active public outreach, in undertaking research and building evidence to promote quality, equity, financing, and education system reform, and to participate effectively in global and regional education policy processes relating especially to the SDGs and to GPE.

Throughout the year, ASPBAE offered technical support in coalition strategising workshops, organised trainings, especially on coalition efforts to engage the SDG-SDG 4 processes in education financing advocacies, and on deepening their understanding of lifelong learning with youth and adult education as inherent features. ASPBAE also accompanied coalitions in their policy events, in dialogues, public-facing initiatives, including press meetings/briefings and mobilisations.

Aside from capacity support at the country level, ASPBAE also organised regional and other cross-country capacity building workshops and events to offer spaces for cross-country learning and exchange:

ASPBAE organised a **CSO Strategising**

Meeting on 3 July 2017 at the front-end of the **3rd Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030** in Bangkok. Participating CSOs deliberated on the agenda of APMED 3, reviewed the core documents for discussions, and agreed their main lobby and advocacy points in the meeting. This strategising meeting was particularly helpful to the CSO participants since many of them were only beginning to understand the policy issues around education for sustainable development (ESD) as part of SDG 4.7. It was also a space for the CSOs to organise their lobbying within APMED 3 – identifying which governments and other participants to convince on CSO positions, how to advance CSO points in the different sessions, especially since CSOs were not offered a speaking role in any of the official sessions. The CSOs also strategised how to lobby for plenary space for CSOs – and won some concession from UNESCO where a CSO representative (ASPBAE) was offered speaking time in the closing session of the meeting. ASPBAE also led regular CSO briefings and planning sessions on the side of APMED to coordinate lobbying actions.

From 11-13 September 2017, ASPBAE, in cooperation with the National Campaign for Education (NCE) Nepal, organised a three-day Regional Consultation in Kathmandu. The event, **Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on Challenges in Education Financing, Privatisation, and Regulation**, was organised to offer a space for participants – mainly national education coalitions – to share the outcomes of their studies and country experiences on privatisation and the regulation of private actors in education, and to discuss strategies to address the privatisation drive and ensure equity, inclusion,



ASPBAE, in cooperation with NCE Nepal, and with OSF as a co-organisier, organised a Regional Consultation in Kathmandu in September 2017 to offer a space for national education coalitions to share the outcomes of their studies and country experiences on privatisation and the regulation of private actors in education.

and the right to education for all, consistent with SDG 4 and Education 2030. Within the Consultation, ASPBAE and OSF organised the 2nd Regional Consultation on HR Guiding Principles to draw feedback and comments on the latest draft of civil society-initiated document, *'Human Rights Guiding Principles on Private Actors in the Provision of Education'*. The Regional Consultation concluded with proposed strategies and actions at national and regional levels to address issues related to financing, privatisation, and regulation in the education sector.

ASPBAE convened the **Asia Pacific Education Coalitions' Consultation Meeting** from 9-11 October 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam, hosted by the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA). The consultation was organised as a space for capacity building on SDG-SDG 4 advocacy and on engagement with the Local Education Groups (LEGs); joint strategising for coordinated regional and global actions on the SDGs-SDG 4, and on the on-going education financing campaign of GCE, especially around the GPE Replenishment. This also offered a forum for the two (2) CSO Developing Country representatives in the GPE Board to interact with national coalitions - updating them on the GPE Board work and soliciting coalition comments and recommendations to guide their Board engagements. Representatives from regional and national coalitions from the Arab region and from Latin America also participated as resource persons, offering a very fruitful opportunity for inter-regional dialogue and learning.

ASPBAE sustained **support for the CSO representatives on the GPE Board** in the year. Working with GCE, ASPBAE

facilitated consultations with the Asia Pacific CSOs on the agenda items of the GPE Board meetings and the Board Committee meetings the CSO representatives were part of, to inform their positioning especially on contentious areas. ASPBAE facilitated discussions in the region on the new funding windows for civil society in the GPE: Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) and Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX). It facilitated coalition feedback and input to the GPE country grant proposals, notably for Myanmar and Cambodia. ASPBAE also participated in the CSO preparatory meetings from 3-4 December, organised at the front-end of the GPE Board Meeting from 5-7 December 2017 in Paris. ASPBAE also attended the GPE Board meeting as an observer.

From 28-30 November 2017, ASPBAE organised a **Pacific Sub-Regional Training for National CSO Education Coalitions** in Lautoka, Fiji. The training was primarily to build the capacities of the four (4) coalitions in the South Pacific in relation to programme and organisational management and policy advocacy. Two (2) of the coalitions are newly formed – the Samoan Education Network (SEN) and the Kolisen Blong Edukeson, Vanuatu (KOBLE). While the coalitions from PNG and the Solomon Islands – PNG Education Advocacy Network (PEAN) and the Coalition for Education Solomon Islands (COESI) – have been long-standing CSEF partner coalitions, they have been through a significant organisational restructuring process in 2017, hence have newly-elected Boards and new staff members



ASPBAE convened the Asia Pacific Education Coalitions' Consultation Meeting in October 2017 in Hanoi, hosted by the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA).



ASPBAE organised a study exchange programme to New Delhi for the Afghanistan National Coalition for Education (ANEC) in June 2017. ASPBAE's members in India were mobilised to be resource persons on issues such as SDG-SDG 4 advocacy, budget analysis and aid effectiveness, gender and education, and youth and adult education.

who benefitted from a training focused on organisational strengthening.

Several **Study exchanges** were also facilitated by ASPBAE in the period.

- For the **Afghanistan National Coalition for Education (ANEC)**: ASPBAE organised a 6-day study exchange programme with NCE India in New Delhi, India, from 11-16 June. ASPBAE member organisations, notably NCE India, NCE Nepal, Azad Foundation, Nirantar, and the Indian Association for Adult Education (IAEA), were mobilised for the learning exchange and to offer resource person support in the areas of advocacy on SDGs-SDG 4, budget analysis and aid effectiveness, gender and education, youth and adult education, and coalition strengthening, especially in information and communications and policy research work.
- For **All for Education Mongolia (AFE)**: ASPBAE organised, with Azad Foundation, from 18-23 December in New Delhi, a study exchange focused on youth and adult education. AFE Mongolia was keen to understand the

experience of ASPBAE members in India on advocacy on youth and adult education. The ASPBAE members that participated in this exchange included Azad Foundation, NCE India, Nirantar, the Indian Association for Adult Education (IAEA), and the Centre for Social Equality and Inclusion (CSEI).

ASPBAE also organised a **Regional Study Exchange on Youth and Adult Learning and Education: Realising lifelong**



ASPBAE organised a Regional Study Exchange on 'Youth and Adult Learning and Education: Realising lifelong learning in the public education systems' in November 2017 in Bangkok. The exchange was hosted and co-organised by the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education (ONIE), Ministry of Education, Thailand.

learning in the public education systems from 27-30 November 2017 Bangkok, Thailand. The exchange was hosted and co-organised by the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education (ONIE), Ministry of Education, Thailand. The study exchange brought together some 30+ participants from ASPBAE member organisations involved in both education advocacy work and youth and adult education practice. A number of government representatives, keen to scale up their understanding of lifelong learning systems, were also invited and supported by DWI. The exchange was oriented to better understand how the public education system can be expanded to become a lifelong learning system, catering as well to the learning needs and interests of youth and adults, especially from marginalised communities, and drawing from the rich practice of NGOs who have been at the forefront of innovations on education provision for youth and adults, especially those in hard-to-reach communities and difficult circumstances.

The government of Thailand has one of the most well-developed legislation, public policy, and institutional infrastructure for

non-formal youth and adult education within lifelong learning systems in the region – hence, they were suitably positioned to host the study exchange. The study exchange exposed the participants to Thailand’s policy and lifelong learning systems, their work on Community Learning Centres, and their system of accreditation and validation of prior learning. A representative of SEAMEO CELLL also shared the findings of their study of good policies and practice on LLL in 11 SEAMEO countries. In the end, participants drew up action plans they are prepared to undertake after the study exchange on advocacy for LLL or in improving youth and adult learning and education (e.g. through CLCs) in their countries.

It should be noted that ASPBAE also assists the national education coalitions in their **institutional strengthening** efforts – to remain broad-based, accountable, and democratically functioning organisations. ASPBAE has been assisting two other nascent coalition formations in their efforts to be fully functioning entities: the Civil Society Education Partnership Timor-Leste (CEPTIL) and the Alliance of CSOs for Education in Tajikistan (ACET). With OSF support, ASPBAE has also supported the formation of a new education campaign coalition in Korea, the Civil Alliance for Social Transformation through Education (CIATE), which focuses on domestic education policy reform issues, especially global citizenship education (GCED) and education privatisation.

ASPBAE assisted the CSEF Global Secretariat and the Asia Pacific CSEF Regional Finance Management Agency (RFMA) in organising a **Financial Management Training Workshop** for national education coalitions from 13-14 February 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The workshop aimed at promoting awareness among national coalitions on the financial systems and processes within the CSEF programme and introduced a new online financial tool designed to enable a more efficient and globally consistent financial reporting system. The training also included the internal audit framework and the accountability mechanism within CSEF.

ASPBAE also participated in the GCE-organised training on the CSEF **on-line monitoring and evaluation systems**, 25-29 May in Johannesburg, South Africa. It was designed to develop greater understanding and capacities around the online Monitoring Evaluation Learning (MEL) system and thus enable ASPBAE to better support the CSEF coalitions in their participation in the MEL processes. The event also offered



ASPBAE organised a Financial Management Training Workshop for national education coalitions in Kuala Lumpur in February 2017. The workshop aimed at promoting awareness on the financial systems and processes within the CSEF programme.

an opportunity to discuss with the CSEF Global Secretariat and other Regional Secretariats the planned capacity strengthening and learning strategies for CSEF, CSEF phase IV processes, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) replenishment updates, and planned input and support for GCE’s upcoming campaigns.

As part of its CSEF Regional Secretariat function, ASPBAE organised the **Asia Pacific Regional Funding Committee Meeting** from 13-14 October 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam, to discuss and approve the CSEF coalition proposals and budgets for the year 2018.

Capacity building for youth and adult education practice: Training for Transformation programme

The Training for Transformation (TfT) programme activities in 2017 were designed to enhance the practice of youth and adult education in the region and in so doing, 1) inspire and enable practitioners of youth and adult education



ASPBAE organised its Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC) in November 2017 in Ulaanbaatar, with the AFE Mongolia and the Mongolia Education Alliance (MEA) as hosts.

to synthesise the lessons arising from their practice to help shape ASPBAE's advocacies on youth, adult education, and lifelong learning; and 2) foster greater engagement between practitioners of youth and adult education and education advocates for joint learning.

ASPBAE organised its flagship training, the **Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC)**, from 11-16 November 2017 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, with AFE Mongolia and the Mongolia Education Alliance (MEA) as hosts. The Course brought together 32 participants from 17 countries in the Asia Pacific - 72% women and 19 young people (15-35 years old). Adult education practitioners, education advocates, and representatives of youth and women's organisations participated in the Course. BLDC 2017 designed to build capacities of emerging leadership from ASPBAE's member organisations and national education coalitions in the Asia Pacific to advance the new education and development agenda, as articulated in the SDGs and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, to inform public policy and provisioning on inclusive, equitable, and quality education and lifelong learning. Participatory and

experiential methodology was employed in the BLDC to enhance and enrich the learning process. Interactions with local CSOs in Ulaanbaatar, working on issues of education for democracy, women's education, education for livelihood, and life skills for people with disabilities, were organised to learn from the local context of Mongolia and understand its links with regional and global issues. A film festival of short and documentary films was also a significant part of the learning process to build awareness on education issues and innovative strategies to address them. Workshops on enhancement of negotiation and leadership skills for lobbying and advocacy were also included in this BLDC. Inputs and interactions were facilitated on ESD and GCED to appreciate varied experiences of the participants on these topics. The BLDC thus aimed to strengthen civil society in the Asia Pacific in addressing the challenges to democracy, human rights, gender justice, global citizenship, sustainable development, and a just peace.

ASPBAE offered **on-demand training support to members and partners**, as required/requested.

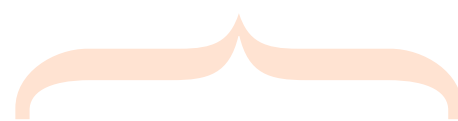
A major focus of the training support offered in the period was around the youth-led action research (YAR) approach for ASPBAE member organisations and partners keen to pursue this as part of their own work supplementing and complementing ASPBAE's own efforts:

- From 27-30 June 2017, ASPBAE facilitated training on YAR with AFE Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar. Youth representatives from its member and partner organisations, notably Wind of Change NGO and Good Neighbours Mongolia, participated in the training. The participants were keen to understand how this approach could assist them in expanding their reach and constituency to young people from marginalised communities.
- Similarly, NEW Indonesia was keen to learn the YAR approach to support their member organisations involved in youth organising work. ASPBAE conducted a YAR training with them from 22-23 July 2017 in Bogor, Indonesia. Participants saw YAR as an important tool to increase awareness and create a movement among young people to learn not only about their right to education, but also their rights as citizens.
- ASPBAE and E-Net Philippines jointly organised a training of YAR for faculty and students of the University of Southern

Mindanao (USM) from 28-29 July 2017 in Kidapawan, North Cotabato in the Philippines. Participants indicated that with the new knowledge and skills learned, they were more confident to facilitate action research especially in USM's community extension work.

- From 2-4 September 2017, ASPBAE organised a YAR training for NCE Nepal. The coalition believed that with the transition of Nepal into a federal system, it needs to empower the youth and people at the community level to investigate issues related to education, articulate their recommendations at the federal level, and inform national education policies. NGO community organisers, trainers, and campaigners from NCE Nepal's membership participated in the training conducted by ASPBAE.

In 2017, ASPBAE sustained support to the DVVI office in Laos on a project **Preparing Master Trainers for NFE**, in collaboration with the Lao Department of Non-formal Education and RMIT Australia. This effort, which started in 2016, was an attempt to customise, in the Lao context, the DVVI-developed Global Curriculum for Adult Learning and Education (GlobALE). Two workshops were undertaken in the year in this programme: One from 28 January-3 February 2017 in Vang Vien, Laos, and the second from 26-31 May 2017 in Vientiane. The first workshop focused on offering an arena for the trainers to reflect on their experience of running the trainings over the past 6 months, using the methods and skills learned in the



A major focus of training support offered in 2017 was around the youth-led action research (YAR) approach.



earlier workshops. The second workshop was the final in the series and focused on discussing the current and future roles of the participants as Master Trainers, asking them to consider their positions within their own work contexts as well as in the wider contexts of Laos, the region, and global adult education. ASPBAE offered training and mentoring support in this programme and assisted especially in customising the module on gender and adult education.

On the invitation of UNESCO Bangkok and UIL, ASPBAE participated in an **Experts Meeting on 'Promoting Community-Based Education for Sustainable Development'** organised from 22-23 August 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was part of an on-going project of UIL and UNESCO Bangkok to develop a learning module to support Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and community organisations in the Asia Pacific in translating their education for sustainable development (ESD) commitments into action. Where the earlier experts meeting in 2016 focused on articulating the objectives of the project and defining the



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focus and the scope of the module to be developed, this second Experts Meeting reviewed the modalities, structure, and approach of the proposed module, elaborating the elements of the different



The lynchpin of ASPBAE's youth work in 2017 was its on-going Youth-led Action Research (YAR) project pursued in partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), and with select members in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

components of the module. At the end of this meeting, participants sharpened the focus and scope of the module: *“Develop a learning module for community and non-formal educators aimed at enhancing their capacities to support communities in embedding learning in their pursuit of sustainable development by bringing the whole community together to reflect on and address their issues and concerns from perspectives of sustainable development.”* The expert group also agreed on the four core competencies to be covered in this training module – (1) Understanding ESD; (2) Adapt and apply the understanding of ESD; (3) Advance the understanding of ESD as an on-going practice; and (4) Educate others to recognise the understanding of ESD. Discussions are underway in piloting the module, possibly in Japan, India, and the Philippines. DWI, ASPBAE, and ASPBAE member in Australia, RMIT, have been part of this experts group.

Growing the youth constituency in ASPBAE

The lynchpin of ASPBAE's youth work in 2017 was its on-going **Youth-led Action Research (YAR)** project pursued in partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Abhivyakti Media for Development (AMD) in India, Association For Women In Small Business Assistance (ASPPUK) and NEW Indonesia in Indonesia, and E-Net Philippines and SPPI (Centre for Local Economy Development) in the Philippines.

This youth-led research involves the training of young women from marginalised communities with participatory action research tools to help them analyse the factors preventing their greater access to and participation in literacy, education, and basic skills programmes and services in their communities; to define community actions that can be undertaken to address these; and to dialogue/engage with policy makers, adult education providers, and other stakeholders in their communities on ways to improve education and skills opportunities that address their identified learning needs and aspirations.

Where possible, the research outcomes could offer powerful narratives/case studies of the experience and perspectives of marginalised young women to inform wider policy research efforts to reinforce national level advocacies on education for marginalised youth and adults.

The past months in 2017 witnessed the increased confidence of the young women researchers in **sharing the findings and recommendations of their research to the community and local government**. Despite the challenges in collecting data, convincing the youth themselves and the community on the importance of the research as well as the questioning from the local government, the young women persevered in their collection and analysis of data on education, skills development and empowerment of marginalised young women (and young men also in the case of the Philippines).

In all three countries – India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, - the research findings and recommendations were validated at the community level and presented to local government bodies. The methods used to validate the research findings were **youth camps, community dialogues, and meetings with elected and traditional village leaders**.

Within the period, a number of **local actions** have been initiated

borne out of the research. In Nasik, India, the modest space started as a space for the young women researchers has now become a community library with books and other resources donated by Abhivyakti and some of their friends and partners. In Capul, Philippines, a group of youth volunteers have joined hands with the researchers to raise funds for a youth hub that is envisioned to be a learning and gathering space for young people in the community. In Indonesia, ASPPUK has started integrating the young women leadership development in their monthly community meetings.

From 18-21 August 2017, ASPBAE organised a **Regional Meeting of Partners in the Youth-led Action Research** in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The meeting was organised to - 1) discuss the findings and recommendations from the youth-led action-oriented research from the three countries and draw up an Asia Pacific agenda; 2) share reflections of young researches on the success and challenges in implementing a youth-led action-oriented research; 3) deliberate on the documentation of the YAR process for wider learning and application. Representatives from the partner organisations and women researchers attended the meeting.

The participants shared their experience in running the research to surface lessons for the future. Reflecting on the outcomes and main findings of the action research across the different experience, participants pointed to the following common key concerns:

- Insufficient education budgets and weak education policies supportive of adolescent girls from marginalise communities.
- Lack of adequate, strong guidelines for promoting and implementing non-formal learning systems, especially at the community levels.
- Lack of facilities overall that encourage girls' participation in education: long distances of centres of learning/schools from home of marginalised girls; lack of safe learning and recreation spaces e.g. libraries; lack of adequate health facilities i.e. toilets.
- Girls face gender-based violence and discrimination.
- Socially-defined gender roles restrict adolescent girls' mobility, burden them with domestic responsibilities, and pressure them into early marriages.
- Formal education does not guarantee jobs or decent work.

Agreed recommendations included:

- Expand/create safe spaces for girls to learn and converge: establish learning centres, technical institutes etc. accessible to homes of adolescent girls/young women from marginalised communities.
- Make schools, formal educational institutes more friendly/inclusive to girls: toilets for girls, access to free sanitary products.
- Provide access to education on reproductive health and rights; also access to health facilities and services e.g. free health check-ups periodically.
- Establish women's desks and violence against women committees in local



ASPBAE organised a Regional Meeting of Partners in the Youth-led Action Research in Chiang Mai in August 2017. The meeting was to, amongst other things, draw up an Asia Pacific agenda on youth-led action-oriented research.



Some of the recommendations emerging from the Regional YAR meeting included creating safe spaces for girls to learn and converge and making formal educational institutes more friendly and inclusive for girls.

- government offices; offer gender sensitisation trainings to police officers; recruit more women in the police force.
 - Incorporate gender sensitisation modules in the school curricula.
 - Develop stronger policies on non-formal youth and adult education programmes; increase budgetary allocations to these programmes; set in place a system of accreditation and recognition of prior learning.
 - Expand the participation of adolescent girls and women in policy-making forums and boards at all levels (local, municipal, and provincial, national).
- At the final phase of this effort, ASPBAE is steering on the development of -
- 1) a compendium of resources for running a youth-led action research;
 - 2) an e-guide/manual on YAR;
 - 3) an advocacy paper arising from the outcomes of the research to be used in ASPBAE's participation in the 2018 Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 20130 (July 2018, Bangkok) as this meeting will focus on SDGs 4.3 and 4.4; and
 - 4) a regional report to document the process and findings. ASPBAE partners in this effort are also poised to sustain involvement of the young women researchers in their on-going work on advocacy and community actions promoting education for adolescent girls and women. The experience of this action research will also be shared in a session during SEAMEO Innotech's 15th International Conference on Inclusive Education, 'Thriving in the Margins' in March 2018 in Manila, Philippines, where ASPBAE is a co-organiser.
- Funds allowing, ASPBAE hopes to expand this action research to three (3) more countries in the region in the coming year. ASPBAE also hopes to be able to work with more of its members in the region to facilitate meaningful participation of youth and students in informing the agenda and processes of the SDG 4 country plans and initiatives and other strategic policy that attend to the learning needs of youth and students, especially from marginalised communities.



ASPBAE participated in GCE Board meetings in May and November 2017 and in the ICAE Executive Committee meeting held in Korea in October 2017.

BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

ASPBAE continued its strong involvement with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CC NGO/ED 2030), where it played leadership roles.

ASPBAE helped organise the **8th Global Meeting of the UNESCO CC NGO/ED 2030** in Siem Reap, Cambodia, held from 8-9 May 2017. As the regional host for the meeting, ASPBAE was closely involved in the meeting preparations in support of NEP Cambodia, the country CSO host organisation. The meeting was organised to offer a platform for CC NGO members to - 1) exchange information and take stock of approaches and action taken so far in the implementation of SDG 4-Education 2030 at global, regional, and national levels; 2) agree on the role of civil society in the implementation of SDG 4 Education 2030 and the education-related targets in the other SDGs – and jointly plan, in this regard; 3) agree on the ways forward and key areas of action 2017-2019. The meeting adopted a

new set of Working Procedures to align the CC NGO mechanisms with the new SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda. As part of this, the mechanism is now referred to as the Collective Consultation of NGOs for Education 2030 or CC NGO/ED 2030 (formerly CC NGO/EFA). The meeting also agreed on a Global Meeting Declaration - summarising the main points of the discussions and recommendations arising from the meeting. ASPBAE was re-elected as regional focal point for the Asia Pacific in the Coordination Group of the CC NGO/ED 2030. It is this Coordination Group which decides the CSO representation in the Education 2030 Steering Committee.

ASPBAE participated in the two (2)

GCE Board meetings in the year: 10-12 May 2017 in Siem Reap, and 14-16 November 2017 in Johannesburg. In the period, ASPBAE worked closely with the GCE Board and staff in the negotiations with GPE on the new funding facility for civil society of GPE and in 2 external evaluations of CSEF launched in the year.

ASPBAE likewise participated in the **Executive Committee meeting of ICAE** organised from 21-23 October 2017 in Suwon, Korea. ASPBAE also assisted ICAE in preparations for the CSO Forum of the CONFINTEA VI Mid-term review Conference and in other ICAE governance-related processes.

ASPBAE sustained its involvement with the Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consortium (PEHRC). ASPBAE and NCE Nepal jointly hosted and co-organised the **Consortium's Global Meeting** from 7-10 September 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The global meeting convened diverse stakeholders from 21 countries in Asia, Africa, the Arab Region, Latin America, Europe, and North America, including representatives of national education coalitions, INGOs, human rights organisations, academic institutions, youth groups, and other

education advocates. Parliamentarians, former Ministers, representatives of the Human Rights Commission, and journalists participated in the inaugural session of the global meeting. The Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister of Nepal, Gopal Man Shrestha, was the Chief Guest in the Inaugural session. He spoke of the need to strengthen public education. The global meeting included field visits to public schools, trust schools, and low-fee private schools to witness first-hand the impact of privatisation on the public education system in Nepal. ASPBAE joined the newly-constituted Facilitation Group of the Consortium in this meeting.



ASPBAE sustained its strong and long-standing partnership with DVV International. It continued to be represented in the Editorial Board of the DVVI journal, Adult Education and Development (AED).

ASPBAE sustained its strong and long-standing partnership with **DVV International** – coordinating closely on several programmatic activities in the year on youth and adult education advocacy and capacity building. Both jointly worked on the proposal for the new phase of the ASPBAE-DVVI partnership in 2018-2020 for submission to BMZ. ASPBAE continued to be represented in the Editorial Board of the DVVI journal, Adult Education and Development (AED). The external evaluation of DVVI's Asia Programme, conducted in 2017, offered very favourable observations on the ASPBAE-DVVI partnership, noting:

- ASPBAE and DVVI were peers at the international stage in promoting adult education.
- DVVI's core funding to ASPBAE has been critical to ASPBAE's on-going impact, especially in policy advocacy.



ASPBAE and NCE Nepal jointly hosted and co-organised the 'Privatisation in Education and Human Rights' Consortium Global Meeting in September 2017 in Kathmandu.

- ASPBAE's capacity building efforts are state-of-the-art and led to strengthening leadership and work in the region.
- ASPBAE can do more in terms of engagements with sub-regional bodies.

ASPBAE sustained its partnership with the **Open Society Foundations (OSF)** in work around education privatisation and the right to education. In these efforts, ASPBAE also worked closely with members of PEHRC, particularly with the Right to Education Initiative (RTEI), the Global Initiative on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR), Action Aid International, and RESULTS USA, among others. ASPBAE participated in the Meeting of the Right to Education Index (RTEI) Partners for 2016 from 20-23 March 2017 in Jakarta organised by RESULTS. The RTEI is a tracking mechanism designed to monitor compliance of countries to international conventions on the right to education based on a set of indicators derived from the international right to education framework.

ASPBAE sustained its cooperation with **UNESCO** and its various offices, notably UIL, UNESCO Bangkok, and the Education 2030 Coordination Unit in UNESCO Paris. It also maintained its membership in the **UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI)** Global Advisory Committee.

ASPBAE's partnership with the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** continued through 2017 – and will expand in the coming period. ASPBAE has been chosen as one of the strategic partners of SDC under its new Education Strategy. ASPBAE was in close discussion with SDC in the

ASPBAE continued its strong involvement with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CC NGO/ED 2030), where it played leadership roles.

year on the features of its strategic partnership for 2018-2020.

ASPBAE nurtured the new partnerships it developed with civil society formations closely involved in the SDG follow-up processes, notably **APRCM** and the **Education and Academia Stakeholder Group**. ASPBAE also coordinated closely with Together 2030 in the lobbying and advocacy work during the HLPF 2017 in New York. **Together 2030** is a global network tracking progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This formation grew from the CSO advocacy efforts in 2015 defining the SDGs. ASPBAE also sustained its linkages with the **Global Call to Action Against Poverty (G-CAP)**, **Bridge 4.7**, and the **Asia Development Alliance (ADA)** in the SDG follow-up work.

ASPBAE participated in the launch of the **Regional Committee in Asia Pacific (RCAP)** of the **Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO)** in Bangkok, Thailand, from 12-13 May 2017. The formation of the RCAP CoNGO will



ASPBAE participated in the Meeting of the Right to Education Index (RTEI) Partners for 2016 from 20-23 March 2017 in Jakarta organised by RESULTS. The RTEI is a tracking mechanism designed to monitor compliance of countries to international conventions on the right to education based on a set of indicators derived from the international right to education framework.



ASPBAE participated in the launch of the Regional Committee in Asia Pacific (RCAP) of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO) in Bangkok in May 2017.

respect the existing regional mechanisms and, at the same time, endeavour to broaden and deepen the democratic discourses on the SDGs and widen the democratic spaces in the Asia Pacific. The participants also agreed on CoNGO's role in fostering and facilitating competent and responsible inputs from NGOs/CSOs in the UN deliberations; and where this role should be expanded and supported by the UN. ASPBAE is a full member of CoNGO and shared its experiences on engaging the UNESCO processes in SDG 4 during the meeting. ASPBAE has been invited to and is now a member of the RCAP Continuation Committee (Steering Committee) and will play a more active

role in the CoNGO as they seek to strengthen their regional outreach.

ASPBAE is also expanding its engagements with sub-regional policy formations, notably in South East Asia. ASPBAE participated in the **SEAMEO International Congress on Education for the 21st Century (ICE2017)**, hosted by the Ministry of Education, Thailand, from 3-4 May 2017. The event brought together approximately 600 diverse education actors and stakeholders representing governments of SEAMEO Member Countries as well as public and private education institutions and agencies. ASPBAE spoke in a panel on 'Strengthening Citizen Engagement in Education and Community Development'. The session highlighted the need for increasing the level of participation and engagement of citizens in delivering learning and developing a more resilient educational system.

ASPBAE also worked closely with SEAMEO affiliated centres in the year, notably the **SEAMEO Centre for Lifelong Learning (CELLL)** and the **SEAMEO Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (Innotech)**.



The newly-elected ASPBAE Executive Council convened in the first meeting of its term in March 2017 in Chiang Mai. A substantial part of the meeting was devoted to defining the organisation's Strategic Plan for 2017-2020.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

The newly-elected **Executive Council (EC)** of **ASPBAE** convened in the first meeting of its term from 5-8 March 2017 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. A substantial part of the meeting was devoted to discussing the outcomes of the strategic planning process of the General Assembly, towards defining the organisation's **Strategic Plan for 2017-2020**, with specific reference as well to its annual plans for 2017. The Executive also defined its ways of functioning, its protocols, and formed its internal committees and task forces to facilitate its work. The Executive also approved ASPBAE's 2017 Budgets in this meeting.

One of the Executive Council's major decisions was to harmonise its organisational structure with its official registration, and for this purpose, it designated its office in Manila, Philippines, where ASPBAE is formally registered, as the ASPBAE Secretariat. ASPBAE however maintained a project office in Mumbai through its member organisation, Abhivyakti Media for Development. The Executive Council

also constituted a Task Force Succession to deliberate on and recommend to the EC, the framework and processes for leadership succession in ASPBAE.

Realising that the deliberations of the Executive will benefit much from the input of an Executive Council member coming from Central Asia, given its specific and peculiar context, the Executive decided to co-opt a member from this area. After a process of consultation with members, the Executive appointed Nasiba Mirpochoeva in September 2017.

With the resignation of the Female Executive Council Member from the South Pacific in May 2017, the Executive set in place the processes to fill the vacancy. Kilala Devette-Chee of the PNG



As on 31 December 2017, the ASPBAE membership stood at 132 member organisations and 99 individual members.

of PNG and Solomon Islands, are expected to reinforce ASPBAE work in the South Pacific and its expansion efforts especially in Polynesia. The election of a more progressive government in New Zealand in 2017 opens interesting possibilities for enhanced development cooperation in support of CSO work in the South Pacific that ASPBAE will hope to harness. The co-option of a representative from Central Asia in the ASPBAE Executive Council is expected to also facilitate ASPBAE's deepened involvement in the area, enabling the setting up of a distinct sub-region for Central Asia within ASPBAE's structure and governance processes by the next General Assembly in 2020.

ASPBAE pursued dedicated network building efforts in China in the year, optimising the opportunities offered by the BLDC 2017 in Ulaanbaatar. ASPBAE tapped into the strong ties Mongolian CSOs have with NGOs in China, particularly in youth work and education – to develop new contacts in the country. A participant from China was invited to the BLDC to facilitate this process. The

ASPBAE's Information and Communications work endeavoured to keep ASPBAE members and partners informed about ASPBAE work and to facilitate ASPBAE's dissemination of very useful information derived from its participation and involvement in various regional and global policy bodies and civil society networks. ASPBAE continued to release its monthly **Bulletin** and tri-annual newsletter, **Ed-lines**, in 2017 towards these ends. ASPBAE also continued its use of **social media**, notably Facebook and Twitter, for its communications work.

ASPBAE set out to develop two new sub-sites in the **ASPBAE website**: one dedicated to its work on capacity building for the practice of youth and adult education; and another on policy advocacy. The sub-sites are envisaged to offer more interactive platforms for communication with ASPBAE members. The review of the **ASPBAE logo** was initiated in the year.

ASPBAE **resource mobilisation** efforts in the year predominantly centred on sustaining its current partnerships, especially as the future arrangements of several of these were negotiated in the period, notably DVVI and through GCE, the CSEF programme. A major success for 2017 was the cultivating and securing of a significant commitment of increased funding from SDC for a minimum period of 2018-2020, and a strong prospect of funding beyond that period. After a review of their partnerships in light of SDC's new strategic plan, ASPBAE was chosen as the only remaining CSO partner of SDC. This has provided ASPBAE with an enormous boost to its resource base and increased its flexibility, enabling some

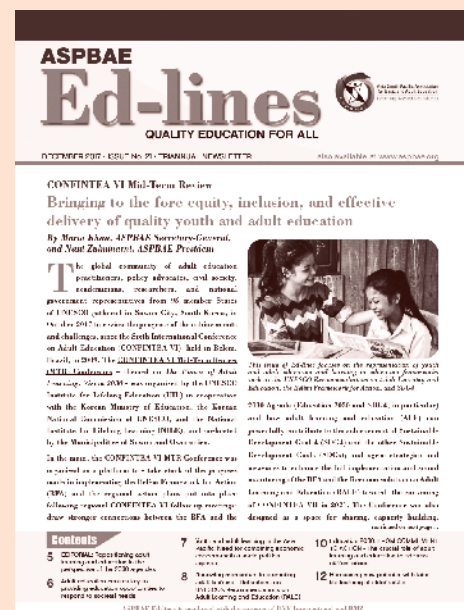
expansion of some staffing and programmes.

ASPBAE maintained its **staff complement** and welcomed 2 new staff persons in 2017: Peter King joined in April as CSEF Capacity Support Adviser for PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, and Sonali Rabade as ASPBAE Australia's Finance Officer. Four (4) all-in staff meetings were organised in the year for more assessment, monitoring, planning, and strategising, along with several face-to-face and skype-based team meetings for coordination.

As again, it was a full year for ASPBAE – as the organisation set the foundations for the new engagements and terrains of work mandated by the 6th General Assembly of ASPBAE as codified in its strategic plan 2017-2030. With this, ASPBAE approaches the new period with optimism and renewed fervour to advance equitable, inclusive, quality education, and lifelong learning for all.



ASPBAE staff 2017



ASPBAE continued to release its monthly Bulletin and tri-annual newsletter, *Ed-lines*, in 2017.

PROVISIONAL BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31.12.2017

	(Amount in US \$)	
	Provisional ¹	Audited ²
	31.12.2017	31.12.2016
SOURCES OF FUNDS		
Capital Fund	5,90,313.60	5,87,476.04
Add: Surplus carried from		
Income & Expenditure A/c	8,308.04	2,837.56
Total	5,98,621.64	5,90,313.60
APPLICATION OF FUNDS		
Fixed assets	213.10	266.12
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash & Bank Balances	6,74,995.43	8,38,733.61
Loans & Advances	1,43,340.98	82,823.00
	8,18,336.41	921,556.61
LESS: CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Sundry Creditors	1,04,786.66	11,910.00
Expenses Payable	-	6,004.46
Balance Grants	1,15,141.21	3,13,594.67
	2,19,927.87	3,31,509.13
Net Current Assets	5,98,408.54	5,90,047.48
Total	5,98,621.64	5,90,313.60

Notes :

1. Provisional Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Statements for 2017 were prepared on the basis of financial statements submitted as on 31st Jan., 2018 by the staff, partners and coalitions pertaining to the year 2017 and advances on the basis of funds transfers to the concern party and liabilities on the basis of statements provided by the participants of the workshop and/or Individual staff / members to the Secretary General
2. 2016 Accounts are being audited by M/s. Krishaan & Co., Mumbai, India.
The Audited Report dated 30th August, 2017

PROVISIONAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.12.2017

(Amount in US \$)

Provisional 31.12.2017	Audited 31.12.2016
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INCOME

Grants received	1,081,977.85	1,435,817.50
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Other Incomes

Bank Interest	3,760.12	3,460.85
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Exchange Rate Gain / (Loss)	9,012.23	(14,823.14)
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Sundry Balance W / off	-	(13,718.48)
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Coordination & Registration Fees	7,185.00	-
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Membership Fees	7,835.00	8,600.00
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27,792.35	8,600.00
<u>1,109,770.20</u>	<u>1,419,336.73</u>

EXPENDITURE

Education/training, Research, Advocacy, & Evaluation	1,147,886.33	900,756.11
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Partners Infrastructure, admin. & running costs	96,505.79	94,937.82
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Production of Publication and Media	28,353.35	23,727.63
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Partners Personnel/Salaries	20,840.15	19,381.83
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Audit fees & expenses	7,080.00	5,750.00
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<u>1,300,665.62</u>	<u>1,044,553.39</u>
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Surplus carried forward to		
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Balance Sheet	8,308.04	2,837.56
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Surplus/(Deficit) C/F to Balance		
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Grants account for 2017	<u>(199,203.46)</u>	<u>371,945.78</u>
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ASPBAE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS 2017-2020

PRESIDENT

Nani Zulminarni

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ASPBAE WISHES TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR CONTINUING SUPPORT

DVV International, Germany

Global Campaign for Education (GCE) for the Civil Society
Education Fund (CSEF), South Africa

Foundation Open Society Institute (OSI), Switzerland

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC),
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UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg

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