



Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)

Briefing Note on ASPBAE's Climate Change-Related Work

How the organisation has been involved in climate-change related work.

In its long history, ASPBAE (established in 1964) has been active in advocacy and capacity building efforts around environmental education and education for sustainable development (ESD). It has therefore engaged in the policy processes around these areas, notably the Earth Summits, ESD and SDGs-SDG4 platforms especially at regional and global levels.

In particular, it has articulated ESD, SDG 4.7 and global citizenship education (GCED) in transnational policy platforms by highlighting education's contribution in the fulfilment of human rights, peace, responsible citizenship, gender equality, sustainable development and health and advancing the integration of transformative approaches to the whole education system. It emphasised that ESD, SDG4.7 and GCED are not just 'subjects' in curricula, nor should they be pursued only in the mainstream of the formal systems of education – rather through non-formal and informal systems as well. It has asserted that non-formal youth and adult education are critical in equipping communities with the necessary tools – knowledge, skills, attitudes - to cope with the impacts of climate change and more vicious natural disasters brought on by global warming.

Specific activities the organisation has been involved in relation to climate action.

As mentioned above, much of ASPBAE's work on education for climate action has been pursued within the framework of and the regional and global processes related to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and in SDG 4.7. This includes engagements during the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) and ASPBAE's partnership with the Asia Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) in a Centre for Excellence (COE) Programme on ESD (2006-2013) which aimed to build capacities of national organisations to more strongly integrate ESD frameworks in their country and grassroots level education and education advocacy work; to provide transnational platforms for learning and sharing on ESD; and to strengthen CSO capacities for advocacy on ESD. Lessons from these engagements informed ASPBAE regional capacity building efforts on ESD and climate change education.

ASPBAE's work on ESD was further harnessed in its advocacy efforts in the SDG-SDG4 follow processes especially with respect to SDG 4.7.

ASPBAE organised a Regional Workshop on Capacity Building for SDG4.7 in 2019 designed to strengthen the advocacy efforts of member organisations on SDG4.7, especially around Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Global Citizenship Education (GCED) with a clear focus on developing a policy reform agenda which effectively mainstreams SDG4.7 in public education and lifelong learning systems of government – in basic, adult, formal and non-formal education delivery systems. The workshop also addressed attention to education in emergencies (EiE), drawing the linkages between EiE and SDG4.7 i.e. how SDG4.7 offers the strategic responses to addressing the



root causes of emergencies include climate-change driven emergencies i.e. mainstreaming SDG4.7 to embed peace building, climate change education and sustainability in the education systems.

Case studies on various creative attempts by different CSOs in the region, e.g. in India, Japan and Korea to mainstream SDG4.7 in schools and in community learning centres, offered very concrete, practical and effective tools and approaches that education advocates can build on in defining their policy reform agenda attentive to concretising and meeting the SDG4.7 targets in public education systems.

While ASPBAE has not directly engaged in the main global policy processes on climate change notably within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), several of its members have been engaged such as Laya and the Centre for Environmental Education in India, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and the Centre for Environmental Concerns in the Philippines, and IMPAECT in New Zealand, to name some. CEE India in particular, has been very engaged in efforts related to Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) – the education-focused efforts within the UNFCCC. CEE India has steered consultations around the ACE Dialogues in India and in South Asia and has been engaged in India-level, government-led consultations on India's National Action Plan for Climate Change especially in the area of Knowledge Strengthening.

There is a strong body of work and network connections that ASPBAE can draw on to deepen its work specifically in climate change education capacity-building and advocacy.

In articulating and advancing the ESD, GCED and SDG4.7 agenda in its transnational advocacy, ASPBAE has also engaged meaningfully in country, regional and global SDGs follow up processes such as the Volunteer National Reviews, the regional preparatory meetings for the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) through the Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) and its CSO preparatory processes, the Asia Pacific Peoples Forum (APPF), and the global High Level Political Forum (HLPF) itself. Together with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), ASPBAE also represents the CSO constituency in the SDG4 High Level Steering Committee (HLSC) as part of the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO Ed2030) Coordination Group which is the CSO engagement mechanism of UNESCO for SDG4/Education 2030. In these transnational representations and engagements, climate change education, within the overall sustainable development and right to education frames, is being advanced by GCE and its regional coalition members which include ASPBAE.

Impact of ASPBAE's work around climate action and who have benefited from its advocacy and campaigning around climate change.

Earlier efforts of ASPBAE members within the region who were pursuing education work on sustainable livelihoods especially among marginalised communities contributed in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and management approaches in schools, and in promoting the rights of communities over natural resources including indigenous people to ancestral domain, as examples. Through these efforts at the country level, environmental education in schools and education systems were also promoted.



National education coalitions from the Philippines, Nepal and Sri Lanka were engaged in the ESD and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policy processes. The coalition from Timor Leste had also underscored the need to focus on the preparedness of education systems to the impact of climate change and other emergencies during their participation in Local Education Group (LEG) discussions. The national coalition in Nepal has been working with local governments to introduce climate change literacy in school curricula and with teachers' unions on teacher training and wider capacity-building on climate change education. They have also been working with communities to deepen understanding on issues related to climate change and community-based responses. Teacher federation members of the national education coalition in the Philippines have been engaged in efforts to integrate climate change education in curricula at the tertiary level. They have also been supporting local governments in the development of their climate action plans.

How ASPBAE has influenced policy interventions in relation to climate change.

At the transnational level, ASPBAE and its members have started engaging in the SDG 13 related processes on Climate Action through their participation in the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) for SDGs, preparing for the regional and global HLPF processes. This contributes in the ongoing efforts of education advocates to assert education in the SDGs processes, strengthening its importance in achieving the overall sustainable agenda for the people and the planet.

GCE and ASPBAE, as CCNGO Ed2030 representatives, in the SDG4 HLSC and in the 2022 Transforming Education Summit (TES) Advisory Committee, made various interventions in the agenda of these meeting to ensure follow-up actions on SDG4 and TES commitments which should be anchored on human rights and within the spirit of multilateralism as called upon by the UN Secretary-General in his Our Common Agenda report. In particular, GCE and ASPBAE highlighted in these policy platforms the critical and cross-cutting education issues that reflect diverse contextual realities especially on the implications of climate crisis, emergencies/crisis situations and persistent inequalities on account of gender, age, rural location, disability, socio-economic situation, linguistic and cultural identities.

List of the key stakeholders, including government bodies and UN organisations, which ASPBAE has been collaborating with in its advocacy work around climate change.

ASPBAE's presence in strategic education and development spaces at multiple levels reflect the breadth and depth of its partnerships and engagements with key stakeholders which include, amongst others:

- Through its active membership and leadership in major CSO formations to advance the right to education and SDG4 notably, 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).
- Through its CSO representation in various inter-governmental and multilateral mechanisms following up the SDG4 commitments, notably the Education 2030 High Level Steering Committee (HLSC) at the global level, and the Learning and Education 2030+ Networking Group (LE2030+) at the regional level. It has also continued its active engagements in CSO mechanisms engaging in the SDG follow up mechanisms. This includes maintaining

membership in the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM)– the formal mechanism for CSO participation in the SDG processes in the Asia Pacific and working closely with the UN Economic and Social Commission of Asia Pacific (ESCAP), the main mechanism for facilitating CSO participation in the official SDG follow up processes in the Asia Pacific region, notably the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) and its regional preparatory process: the Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD).

- At the national level, ASPBAE has partnerships with national education campaign coalitions (NECs) and education advocacy networks in **22 countries** in the Asia Pacific - India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Timor Leste, Mongolia, Japan, Korea, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Samoa. ASPBAE counts in its membership, national adult education networks in India, Singapore, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.
- For its key advocacy engagements, ASPBAE also continued its partnerships and participation in intergovernmental and inter agency regional mechanisms and institutions like UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), UNESCO Paris, UNESCO Bangkok, UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), UNICEF, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Education Cannot Wait (ECW), Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL), SDG 8.7 Alliance, Global Citizenship Education Network, SEAMEO, SEAMEO CELL, ASEAN, SAARC, and the Pacific Island Forum.

Should additional resources be mobilised for the period, here are key activities that ASPBAE is planning to undertake to fight against climate change in the region in the period 2023-2027:

ASPBAE, together with our members in the region, will continue to champion the transformative character of education and assert that education systems must recognize the urgency of addressing climate change and work towards sustainable solutions to protect the planet. It will continue to assert that education should work towards advancing social and ecological justice where those least responsible for causing the strains on the planet do not continue to disproportionately pay the price for them.

ASPBAE will aim to develop the capacities of and support a critical mass of advocates in key thematic priority areas including Global Citizenship Education (GCED); Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Climate Change Education; and Education in Emergencies (EiE).

Further, ASPBAE will seek to orient its members especially the national education coalitions and those members active in the earlier UN Decade of Education on Sustainable Development (DESD) processes on the spaces within the SDG 13 and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) platform to advocate on climate change education. It will also aim to orient its members to the efforts of UNESCO and the UNFCCC Secretariat to align SDG 4.7 work with the UNFCCC's Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) programme .

Following these efforts, it is envisaged that ASPBAE and its members could better strategize possible advocacy efforts on climate change education which draws on the very rich experience in the Asia



Pacific of CSOs supporting efforts to mainstream ESD and environmental education in curricula, in teachers trainings in community learning centres (CLCs) and in overall education and lifelong learning systems.

If further resources are available, ASPBAE aims to be more engaged in the main climate change-related policy processes around the UNFCCC architecture and processes to lobby for a stronger focus on education in these processes and the policy commitments arrived at. Education rights advocates such as GCE and ASPBAE for example can be more active in the UNFCCC Action for Empowerment (ACE) processes which, among others, aims to incorporate climate change across all aspects of formal and informal education is the starting point for effective climate action. CSOs can also exert pressure on governments to scale up and make more effective efforts to mainstream climate change/climate change justice in education systems through the processes around the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the National Communications – submitted by governments to indicate their efforts and commitments to address climate change through mitigation provisions and also pledges on adaptation, finance, technology transfer, capacity building and transparency.

ASPBAE also aims to expand its linkages with the strong climate justice movements in the region and globally, to contribute to the wider CSO effort advancing climate justice and to draw wider attention as well to the critical role education plays in advancing climate justice so these form a strong part of CSO advocacies. ASPBAE will specifically seek to explore linkages and possible joint action especially with student movements in the region active in climate justice advocacy and campaigning.