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UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS
Educate and advocate for change

A total of 269,508 air miles travelled. This is like circumnavigating the Earth at the equator 10.8 times. It seems appropriate to calculate the air miles as we all did travel towards the equator to attend the ASPBAE Quality Adult Education Workshop held in Jakarta from 4-7 November 2009.

Why calculate the air miles travelled? I was keen for us to try to see the carbon footprint - the amount of greenhouse gases produced - as part of organising an event such as the Jakarta Regional Workshop. I tried to find out more and I managed to extrapolate that 269,508 air miles is approximately 114,629 lbs of carbon dioxide. And, as expected, the website then offered to ‘offset’ these air miles by paying their company around US $477 in return for a laminated wood framed plaque saying that these miles have been ‘offset.’ How will they do this? Well one way would be to plant a total of 26,450 evergreen trees to absorb all that carbon dioxide produced!

And since the Jakarta Workshop, I and other ASPBAE colleagues have travelled to the CONFINTA VI Conference in Brazil and the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, adding many many more air miles to our record!

I realise that these websites have me trapped in the notion that “I can buy my way out of my contribution to climate change.” Yes, we can ‘offset’ these flights but the hard reality is that the people of Kiribati in the South Pacific and the low lying areas of Bangladesh are faced with the inevitable reality of the rising sea levels impacting their lives. And, it is this stark reality, the growth in carbon trading as a new economy, and the rising sea levels that we, as adult educators, need to add to the growing list of urgent issues we need to continue to address in our region.

Prior to the Jakarta Workshop, I attended the Climate Change Conference of Asian People’s Movement in Bangkok in October 2009 which was organised to coincide with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Working Group Meeting. It was one of the side-events organised by NGOs which included a protest march that called for Climate Justice held outside the UNFCCC meeting venue. Another side-event was the Training of Trainers for Climate Change Education which was attended by Santi Phounsavvan, ASPBAE staff member.

ASPBAE’s participation in the said side-events was our attempt to begin to explore the current networks within the region involved in climate change education. The aim was to identify the gaps in the current efforts and how ASPBAE as a regional network can contribute in the region. We were aware that a number of our members have been in the forefront of climate change education, such as METI in Samoa, CEC in the Philippines, Laya in India and DAM in Bangladesh (just to name a few I am familiar with). But, we were not aware of similar efforts at the regional level.

ASPBAE in the early years, through the Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Program (EEP), used to be active within the region and a significant player in ICAE’s ‘Learning for Environmental Action Programme.’ ICAE had mobilised participation during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Unfortunately, the momentum that was developed during those years could not be maintained within the region. And so, we are trying to re-connect with these networks now, rallying around the issue of climate change, as the ICAE prepares to send a new delegation to the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Two ASPBAE organisations, the Centre for Environmental Concerns, Philippines and Laya from India, who were in Copenhagen agreed to also represent ASPBAE as part of the ICAE delegation.

While we may not have been active as a network in environmental adult education in recent years, I believe, the principles developed from case studies prepared in 1996 provide a valuable starting point for restarting the discussion. The principles state that “environmental adult education is a life-long learning process that involves us, both as learners and educators; is inter-disciplinary; covers awareness, understanding and action; values indigenous and local knowledge; recognises the role of both men and women in environmental protection, while contributing to the empowerment of women; is contextualised to the local and global realities, and explores the use of participatory and creative learning methods that are culturally appropriate.”

I think as a network, we can draw from the depth of experience of our own thematic programmes and our recent involvement with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as one of the UNESCO ACCU Centres of Excellence (COE) to help develop a sharper analysis of the issues around climate change education.

The proposed Framework Convention on Climate Change (15 September version) only briefly mentions in the section on capacity-building “the promotion of education, training and public awareness, with special focus on youth, women and indigenous peoples.”

There does not seem to be anything wrong with such a statement but a sharper analysis will show that the education and public awareness that needs to be promoted must be one that acknowledges the significantly different contributions that each country has made to causing the problem, recognising that the impacts that climate change will have in each country will be different and the differing capabilities of the people in these countries to respond and adapt to these impacts will be even more diverse. In the Asia-Pacific region, we expect that the already vulnerable population will be made more vulnerable by climate change.

So, I want to make it clear - I am not advocating for a separate kind of education called climate change education, but rather, I am advocating that we need to incorporate within our current education programmes a broader contextual analysis of the key drivers of change within the region. Yes, the global financial crisis currently dominates our discussions and I think climate change and its impact may be a close second, but - what next?

What the Benchmarking Quality Adult Education Workshop in Jakarta has re-confirmed for me is that quality adult education and learning needs to be progressively contextualised or needs to be responsive and relevant to both the local, regional and global contexts.

While we need to advocate for quality adult education, there is a more urgent problem - the Asia-Pacific region is home to more than 238,000,000 individuals who are still illiterate, half of them living in South and West Asia! Yes, 258 million individuals in the region, a majority of them being women, still lack the basic literacy skills of reading and writing. They are the same individuals and communities who are already vulnerable, and who will be made more vulnerable by the impact of climate change.

So, the next time someone offers you to ‘offset’ your flights – maybe we can begin to think about planting seeds of learning instead of evergreen seedlings. Or better yet, let us develop adult learning and education programmes that nurture a literacy that is based on developing a different relationship with our Earth, as compared to the relationship that has resulted in climate change.

Let us all make those air miles matter – educate and advocate for change - it is not too late!

Jose Roberto Guevara
ASPBÆEPresident
GCE 1GOAL Campaign Launch

The world is way off-track in the race towards the 6 Education For All (EFA) goals, to be completed by 2015. Scattered progress has been made in financing education, as well as in enrolments, but we still find that not enough has been done to reach our targets. The global financial crisis that struck in late 2008 is another potential obstacle to the progress of education, and the need for united voices and strong constituencies arguing for education are ever more important. As the world family unites in June 2010 in its love of football, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) will be harnessing the collective power of World Cup viewers—and, they’re inviting us all to be a part of the team.

THE FORMING OF THE TEAM: In September 2008, GCE launched the Class of 2015 initiative. Signing up as members of the Class of 2015 were world leaders, international charities, multi-national corporations and international personalities, all of whom pledged their support for Education For All (EFA) and the major policy-asks of GCE including, the financing targets (both for developed and developing countries), increasing quality and access to education, and closing the teacher gap.

Amidst the members of the Class of 2015 is FIFA, the international governing association for football (or soccer for some!). The relationship between GCE and FIFA has been strengthened through this partnership, and together, they officially launched the 1GOAL: Education For All Campaign on the 20th of August 2009, at London’s Wembley Stadium. The 1GOAL Campaign has been designed so as to coincide with the lead-up to the World Cup 2010 and with campaigning events culminating during the World Cup.

In 2010, for the first time ever, the World Cup is being hosted by an African nation and both GCE and FIFA agreed that the lasting legacy of the event must be Education For All. From its side of the partnership, FIFA has focused its campaigning on ensuring education for all children in Africa. The member organisations of GCE are encouraged, however, to take up the rest of the EFA agenda and ensure that the legacy of 1GOAL is truly, Education For All.

TEAM WARM-UPS: With the official, international launch of the campaign completed (and successful!), attention then turned to multi-country launches that helped solidify support from other Class of 2015 members. So, the ASPBAE office in Canberra, along with the support of the GCE Global Secretariat, ActionAid Australia, and enthusiasm from the Australian Aid Agency for International Development (AusAID), set about to host a launch event.

The event took place at the Parramatta Waritahs’ field outside of Sydney on the 6th of October 2009. The event had an impressive line-up of speakers, including Executive Director of ASPBAE Australia, Bernie Lovegrove; CEO of ActionAid Australia, Archie Law; Federal MP The Honourable Kate Ellis; Minister for Youth and Sport, Local MP Julie Owens who is also on the Parliamentary Friends of the MDG committee; CEO of Football Federation Australia (FFA), Ben Buckley; Sarah Walsh of the Matildas; and Vince Grella of the Socceroos (the women’s and men’s national soccer clubs). The Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, was an original member of the Class of 2015 and the 6th of October 2009 multi-country event was the perfect opportunity for him to demonstrate his commitment!

After each member of the panel voiced his or her support for 1GOAL, the group took turns to sign up. The final group task was to officially kick-off the campaign in Australia. After the kick-off, the media were given time to speak with the individuals; Sarah and Vince spent time with the boys and girls of the Waritahs.

TEAM PRACTICE: Following the launch event, ASPBAE Australia and ActionAid Australia convened two separate meetings of interested organisations to discuss forming an education advocacy coalition in Australia. The education advocacy coalition would focus on issues of overseas education aid, as well as drive the 1GOAL Campaign forward.

The domestic 1GOAL Campaign is shaping up to feature a number of events through the first half of 2010, including during the GCE’s Global Action Week, just as Australia sends the Socceroos off to South Africa. The final campaign event will take place after the World Cup and will harness the momentum of earlier events, prior to sending Australian officials off to the UN Summit in September 2010.

TEAM TRY-OUTS: That’s the beauty of 1GOAL, THERE IS NO TRY OUT—WE WANT YOU ON OUR TEAM!

The Campaign is in itself not a fundraising drive but instead is seeking names - 30 million names or 1% of the projected 300 million viewers who will tune in to the World Cup in June 2010. This list of supporters will be used to put pressure on governments to stick to their aid commitments or increase them to meet their fair share, allocating 20% of national budgets to education and to ensure quality education to all learners, at all levels.

Today, 75 million children are out of school and 774 million adults lack basic literacy skills. It’s time to get involved!

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED: Sign your name in support of 1GOAL for those who can’t.

- Check out the campaign website: www.join1GOAL.org
- Plan an activity for your organisation or coalition during the Global Action Week, the next national soccer match, or sometime during the World Cup.
- Sign your name and get your friends to do the same.
- Follow the campaign on all the social networking sites to hear more about what’s going on around the world in support of EFA.

There’s no shortage of ways to be a part of the 1GOAL Team.
Participation in the International Civil Society Forum (FISC)

On the 28th of November 2009, ASPBAE joined ICAE, Acao Educativa, CLADE, CEAA and the African Platform in convening the International Civil Society Forum (FISC, its Portuguese acronym). The international event on Youth and Adult Education, designed to act as a plural space for reflection and formulation of proposals, took place between the 28th and the 30th of November in Belem, Brazil and was organised to coincide with CONFINTEA VI.

FISC was structured as a space for joint reflection on the policy and practice of youth and adult education, and as a mechanism to facilitate a co-ordinated CSO input into the official deliberations of CONFINTEA VI which mobilised over a 1000 educational activists, researchers, NGOs and adult education advocates from more than 80 countries all over the world.

ASPBAE led a 20-strong delegation from Asia and the South Pacific comprising of representatives from various ASPBAE member organisations, the Executive Council and staff. During the opening plenary, ASPBAE President, J. Roberto Guevara; Immediate Past President, Sandra Morisson; and EC member, Timote Yaisele, put across the Asia Pacific issues and perspectives on adult education in a highly creative yet powerful manner, drawing much applause and appreciation from the attendees.

The ASPBAE Secretary General, Maria Khan, chaired the session that sought to orient the FISC debates towards the key policy issues advanced by the different regions. Almost all ASPBAE delegates were mobilised as resource personnel and facilitators in the various workshops organised in FISC, ensuring that the perspectives of civil society from the Asia Pacific region strongly informed the discussions. In particular:

Interculturality in Adult learning — Sandy Morrison
Rural Education — Shaheen Attiqur Rehman
Literacy — Kazi Rafiqul Alam, Salani Singh
Popular Education — Raquel Castillo
Financing Policies for Adult Education — Rene Raya
Development models and changes in the world of work — Malini Ghose
Environment Education — Lisa Itu
Meaning of Youth and Adult Education — Cecilia Soriano
Migration in Youth and Adult Education — Mayann Villalba

ASPBAE played a key role in drafting ‘From Rhetoric To Cohherent Action’, the key CSO advocacy document arising from the FISC discussions. This document forged consensus from among the key campaign networks active in the CONFINTEA VI CSO caucus i.e. ICAE and its regional networks, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), CLADE and the ActionAid International network, just to name a few. Its role was pivotal in the advocacy efforts within the official CONFINTEA VI processes, as it served as the main reference document for lobbying.

Outcomes of CONFINTEA VI: International Conference on Adult Education

The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI), hosted by the Government of Brazil in Belém from 1 to 4 December 2009, provided an important platform for policy dialogue and advocacy on adult learning and non-formal education at the global level.

The conference brought together UNESCO Member States, United Nations agencies, multi- and bi-lateral cooperation agencies, organisations from civil society, the private sector and learners from all the world’s regions.

The event was marked by an unprecedented unity among the CSOs from different regions and networks — exhibiting a relentless persistence to influence the policy debates to secure concrete commitments ensuring the right to learn for all citizens.

The ASPBAE delegation, which was highly organized and exerted an authoritative presence in all the possible spaces open for civil society participation, deliberately organized its involvement in the CONFINTEA VI processes to enable its effective lobbying and influence of the conference policy outcomes.

During the official plenary sessions, the ASPBAE President, J Roberto Guevara called on governments to develop comprehensive costing policies, well-targeted plans and legislation for addressing adult literacy and lifelong learning by 2012; and for the development of comprehensive and multi-agency monitoring mechanisms with clear benchmarks to track the commitments made during CONFINTEA VI. The Vice Chair of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and ASPBAE Secretary General, Maria Khan spoke in the Opening Plenary session, summarizing the key advocacy positions of the CSOs agreed upon by the Civil Society Caucus. Also, Cecilia Soriano, National Coordinator of ENet Philippines represented her organization and ASPBAE in the panel critiquing the findings of the Global Report on Adult Learning (GRALE).

ASPBAE, through Mohammed Muntasim Tanvir, ASPBAE CONFINTEA VI Campaign Coordinator co-organised two thematic workshops with ICAE and the African Platform: one on ‘Accountability Mechanisms in Adult Literacy Provisions’ and another on ‘Forging partnerships towards a renewed vision of adult education’. Members of the ASPBAE delegation were also mobilized as resource persons in various workshops organized by UNESCO and other ASPBAE partner organizations. Some of the materials released by ASPBAE during the conference included the Asia Pacific CSO Statement for CONFINTEA VI: the Adult Literacy ratings of countries according to benchmarks; policy briefs on women and literacy, and The cost of achieving the Adult Literacy goal of Education For All; Synthesis of Education Watch; and the Education for Indigenous Peoples case studies.

The organised presence of ASPBAE and its members was most felt in harnessing support from the heads of government delegations to the CSO positions. The lobbying efforts of Asia Pacific CSOs delivered very good results, receiving strong endorsement from several national delegations of CSO full advocacy positions, namely Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Fiji and Tonga. The endorsement of key lobbying points, especially regarding adult education financing targets, received additional support from the heads of delegations from Pakistan, Philippines, and the small island states of the South Pacific who called for attention to their unique Adult Education needs. The coordinated formal support of at least 36 heads of government delegations to the CSO advocacies strengthened the lobbying spaces of the CSO representatives in the official Drafting Committee. David Archer of Action Aid International, and ASPBAE SG & ICAE representative, Maria Khan, played a crucial role during the entire drafting proceedings.
Although deeply disappointed by the flaws in the process adopted by UNESCO in finalising the Belem Framework of Action, the CSOs successfully secured approximately 40-50% of their core lobbying positions through the coordinated lobbying work of CSOs from across the globe; with ASPBAE and its members playing a pivotal role in the entire process.

The unfinished agenda of CONFINTA VI, however, indicates the need for attention regarding certain critical issues which could provide a strong framework for achieving real progress in adult education, such as:

- The urgent need for governments to commit to a 6% target as an equitable share of the domestic education budget to be earmarked for the education of adults and young people.
- The need for northern governments to also commit 6% of their education aid budgets for the education of adults and young people.
- The need for stronger recognition of the role of adult education in ensuring gender justice and a clear recognition of gender as an integral and cross-cutting issue.
- The need for action in addressing macro-economic policies which currently block countries from investing adequately in education; particularly in the context of the financial crisis, which has discredited past prescriptions from the IMF.
- The need for greater recognition of the enormous scale of the violation of the fundamental right to education of adults and young people; a need to move from recognising that basic adult education is a justifiable human right, to a point where governments pass legislation to make all adult education legally enforceable.

Following CONFINTA VI, ASPBAE and its members were quick to advance these important concerns in the subsequent policy platforms it attended.

Gender Discrimination & Core CSO Positions

The issue of gender discrimination featured prominently in discussions regarding education development, including the discussions held at the FISC & CONFINTA VI events. The Core Positions of CSOs arising from FISC incorporated the CSO Women’s Caucus lobbying points which proposed amendments on the draft CONFINTA 6 Outcomes document to specifically advance women’s empowerment and gender justice.

The Women’s Caucus agreed to lobby that all surveys, research and data collection or reporting should be disaggregated by gender and other bases of potential discrimination (e.g. race, ethnicity, class, caste, sexual orientation, gender identity, generation, disability, geographical location, citizenship status, imprisonment etc).

It was also decided to lobby for governments to develop comprehensive costing policies, well-targeted plans and legislation for addressing adult literacy and lifelong learning by 2012; and that these plans should recognize the role of education in transforming values and attitudes and in challenging all kinds of discriminatory practices, including those based on gender.

Post CONFINTA VI Civil Society Reaction

Having received tremendous support from a number of governments, the CONFINTA VI discussions were extremely successful in triggering civil society action. Significant gains realized from this initiative include:

- Renewed commitment to adult education
- Acknowledgement of the urgent need for action on adult literacy
- Recognition of the need to move beyond past simplistic understandings of literacy to recognise a continuum of learning
- Commitment to produce comprehensive costing and well-targeted plans backed up by legislation with active participation from civil society, educators and learners
- Recognition of different forms of discrimination that undermine access to education
- Reinforcement of the commitment to monitor progress on adult education with clear timelines
- Commitment to develop educational responses to the increasing challenges of migration
- Commitment to ensure that the major global financing mechanism for Education For All (called the Education Fast Track Initiative) explicitly supports adult literacy
- All in all, around 40-50% of CSO demands reflected in the outcome document
E-9 Seminar on Literacy and Adult Learning in Rural Areas

On October 26-29, 2009, ASPBAE representatives Raquel Castillo and Mohammed Muntasim Tanvir participated in UNESCO organised E-9 Seminar on ‘Literacy and Adult Learning in Rural Areas’ in Beijing, China.

The seminar brought together government representatives from the E-9 countries, representatives from UN agencies involved in literacy work, and other UNESCO officials.

Steered by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the seminar was organised as a part of the Literacy for Empowerment (LIFE) programme with an intent to:

- Get an overview of the progress made and challenges faced in the areas of literacy, adult education and LIFE, through the analysis of country reports;
- Develop a common understanding of key concepts, challenges and issues related to literacy and adult learning; with a particular focus on empowering rural populations;
- Draw conclusions and learn from the innovative practices used to promote adult literacy and learning in rural areas, through sharing of experiences;
- Identify effective strategies for improving and scaling up adult literacy and learning programmes in rural areas;
- Gain first-hand experience on literacy and adult learning in the Chinese rural context, through field-visits;
- Agree on a future strategy for ‘E-9 for LIFE’, with the aim to consolidate a mechanism of South-South co-operation, so as to achieve the EFA goals.

ASPBAE’s participation in the four-day seminar was aimed specifically at maximising the space to generate concrete recommendations, which could strengthen the CONFINTEA VI outcomes, especially in the case of identifying post-CONFINTEA mechanisms on adult literacy for action and follow-up.

The experience was useful for strengthening links with government representatives working on adult literacy, and in gaining access to national adult literacy reports and as a preparatory process for the Eight E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting in Abuja, Nigeria from 21-24 June, 2010.

Country and Sub-regional Coalition Campaigns on EFA

During the latter half of 2009, ASPBAE coordinated with a several national education campaign coalitions to pursue a range of campaign activities to accelerate progress towards the EFA targets.

ASEAN People’s Forum II

ASPBAE - through ENet Philippines - participated in the ASEAN People’s Forum (APF) II or the ASEAN Civil Society Conference held at Cha-Am, Petchaburi, Thailand between 18-20 October 2009. As in the case of its participation in APF I in February 2009, ASPBAE and ENet Philippines were keen to secure continued attention to education issues in this civil society forum, and to influencing the ASEAN processes on its education related discussions and agreements.

In particular, it was important to influence a key policy document of the ASEAN, the ASEAN Socio Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint codifying agreements among member states on education policy and programmatic priorities within the ASEAN framework. In APF II, ASPBAE and ENet Philippines lobbied around the key recommendations of CSOs on the draft ASCC blueprint:

1. While the ASCC blue print calls for advocacy, promotion and technical assistance for education and focuses on scholarships and exchanges to improve secondary and tertiary education, all ASEAN countries need to ensure that all six goals of EFA are met as all have committed to the Dakar Declaration and Framework of Action on Education for All. Similarly, there should be national to regional coherence in ensuring education for all.

There should also be agreements between countries to ensure that all citizens enjoy their right to education: for example, an agreement between Thailand and Burma on the education of refugees or between Malaysia and Indonesia on the education of migrant workers.

Education policies in the region should respect cultural diversity and promote the use of mother tongue in ASEAN which is home to rich and diverse languages. While English is important for communication among countries, education should ensure that languages and identities are allowed to flourish.

2. Secure funding for EFA amidst the financial crisis. At least 6% of GNP should be allocated to education, 20% of national budgets going to basic education with 3% of which should be allocated to adult education. Donor countries should be put to task in ensuring that they deliver the needed assistance to meet the EFA financing gap. They should meet their commitment to allocate 0.7% of their GNI to aid.

ASEAN should work for multilateral and/or bilateral aid, not only for trade, but equally important for basic education.

3. Institute policies and institutionalize venues within countries and the region (through the SEAMEO) that will recognize the imperative for civil society participation in education.
South Asia Education Ministers Meeting

On the 11th & 12th of December 2009, ASPBAE and the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Bangladesh jointly convened the South Asia Civil Society Consultation in preparation for the South Asia Education Ministers Meeting which was held on the 13th & 14th of December 2009 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. During this consultation, representatives from education coalitions and other CSO groups across 6 nations: namely Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, agreed on a Charter of Demands - a set of recommendations to Education Ministers, highlighting the need for greater resourcing for basic education.

The Charter of Demands was formally presented in the Education Ministers Meeting. This meeting was also attended by civil society representatives, who were given the right to speak and fully participate in the meeting’s discussions, following the sustained lobbying of CAMPE.

In a progressive move from the earlier declaration, this one called for 6% of GDP allocation to education (from an earlier call of 4% of GDP) or at least 20% of the national budget. Despite resistance from some governments, the document on strategies referred to the need for governments to 'strive to' allocate 6% of education budgets to adult education, with a specific reference to meeting the CONFINTEA VI commitments. The Charter of Demands also included calls for the full inclusion and access to free, quality basic education; civil society partnerships in the decentralisation process; and the setting up of multi-agency monitoring mechanisms including a South Asia Taskforce for Education composed of a balanced number of government and civil society representatives.

Two (2) documents were drafted as outcomes of the Conference: the Declaration and ‘Strategies for Reaching the Unreached and Regional Collaboration’ annexed to the main declaration. Both documents recognized education as a right that belonged to all and strongly supported the critical role CSOs played in forming education policy.

ASPBAE was ably represented in these events by CSEF Regional Coordinator, Bernie Lovegrove; South Asia Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, Mohammed Muntasim Tanvir; and Sub-regional Capacity Development and Advocacy Support Officer, Hassan Farooque. The next South Asia Ministers Education Meeting will be convened in 2011, in India.

Workshop on Privatisation Issues in Education in ASIA

On October the 19th 2009, various representatives from coalitions and teachers unions across the Philippines, Indonesia, India and Vietnam, along with a representative from the GCE Global Secretariat, gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia for a 2-day consultation workshop which focussed on the ‘Privatisation Issues in Education in Asia’.

Hosted by ENet Justice, Indonesia, the principle theme of the workshop was “Strategising a CSO Advocacy Action Plan on Privatisation Issues in Education in Asia” and the primary objectives were:

I. To initiate the formation of an Asia CSO Core Group on Privatisation Issues in Education
II. To provide an update on the latest trends and different forms of privatisation in education through shared learning
III. To draw up a practical advocacy action plan which builds on earlier efforts made in this direction, and strengthens the collaboration between NGOs and teachers’ unions

During the workshop, the participants discussed the various forms of privatisation and the recent trends in privatisation noticed in selected Asian countries. An agreement was reached on some common priority advocacy messages including a brief action plan for 2010. For a detailed report of the deliberations of the workshop, please write to us or to ENet For Justice, Indonesia, contact person Eny Setyaningsih, National Co-ordinator at enetindonesia@gmail.com.
Evidence Based Advocacy for Gender Equity & Equality in Education: South Asia & South East Asia

As part of the UNICEF regional support for evidence-based policy, planning and advocacy in education, their offices in South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific organised a series of workshops in 2009. ASPBAE participated in UNICEF’s South Asia Evidence-Based Advocacy for Gender Equity and Equality in Education held in Kathmandu, Nepal between August 10-14, 2009; and UNICEF’s South East Asia Evidence-Based Advocacy for Gender Equity and Equality organised in Bangkok, Thailand between September 8-11, 2009.

Initiated with a purpose to provide support to the continued development of skills and experiences in utilising gender and education data for advocacy, the workshops aimed:

- To strengthen understanding of basic education indicators available to report on gender in education
- To enhance skills in the analysis and presentation of gender in education data and in crafting evidence-based advocacy messages
- To introduce EFAInfo as a tool for dissemination, analysis and presentation of gender in education data for advocacy
- To familiarise participants with multiple sources and methods (qualitative and quantitative) of data collection and analysis in gender advocacy initiatives
- To consider national strategies and plans of action to better link gender-related data to educational decision making processes

The workshops gave participating members a deeper understanding of the importance of synchronising the Global United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) advocacy, with linkages to their respective local efforts. Members gave overview presentations and provided case studies with regards to their various efforts of promoting gender equity and equality in education within their regions.

Rene Raya and Swati Narayan represented ASPBAE in the South Asia workshop and shared ASPBAE’s policy research initiatives for education advocacy. Rene described the tools developed and processes involved in the regional Education Watch and ASPBAE’s EFAInfo. Swati also shared the research framework and key indicators being developed by ASPBAE as part of the South Asia Gender Equality Report - a joint initiative between ASPBAE and the UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) South Asia office.

Representatives from 5 coalitions in the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam along with ASPBAE representatives, Raquel Castillo and Rene Raya, participated in the South East Asia Gender Workshop organised alongside similar lines as the previous South Asia workshop. The UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) showed keen interest to collaborate with ASPBAE to build on the South Asia Gender Equality Report Card and develop a similar study for East Asia, South-East Asia and the South Pacific in 2010.

DVVI: Asia Partners Meeting

The ‘DVV International Partners Training and Planning Workshop’ was held between the 10th and 14th of October, 2009 in Bali, Indonesia, hosted by PPSW. The main aim of the workshop was for all DVVI partners in the region to discuss the various aspects and activities related to:

- Project Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation
- Annual Planning for 2010

Organised by DVVI International, the workshop was well attended by representatives of:

- The Center for Women’s Resources Development (PPSW)
- South East Asia Popular Communication Programme (SEAPCP)
- Perkumpulan Sada Almo, Sidikalang (PESADA)
- Dana Nitra Maluku Foundation (DMM)
- Flores Institute for Resources Development, Indonesia (FIRD)
- Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)
- Centre for Collective Learning and Action (SAHAYI)
- Organisation for Development Education (UNNATI)
- A Centre for Women and Education, India (NIRANTAR)
- Center for Environmental Concerns (CEC)
- Center for Women’s Resources (CWR)
- Community Awareness and Services for Ecological Concern (CASEC)
- People’s Initiative for Learning and Community Development, Philippines (PILCD)

ASPBAE was represented at the workshop by Senior Manager, Suprabha Agarwal.

The participants discussed in detail the different approaches that could be taken with regards to planning, monitoring and evaluation of key activities. The various aspects of ‘Impact Monitoring Log Frame’ and the different tools that could be used for project planning were also talked about in great depth. Key in-roads were made with regards to the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation System based on the DVV Log Frame and Project Planning Matrix.

The workshop proved to be extremely useful and was much appreciated by the participants, who were encouraged to interact and share about their organisations’ profile, history, activities and projects. It provided a platform for DVV partners to learn from each other and help each other by way of open dialogue and strategic networking.

Recent DVVI Updates

A new Director of DVVI was appointed in late 2009: Dr. Roland Schwartz replaced Dr. Heribert Hinzen who now heads the new DVVI office based in Laos. Dr. Schwartz has had a longstanding experience of development work in Germany and offices of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in several countries.

Two new Coordinators have been appointed to lead the Asia desk: Mr. Matthias Klingenberg formerly Regional Director of DVVI’s office in Uzbekistan; and Levan.

ASPBAE continues to collaborate with DVVI and looks forward to visits and discussions with the new staff members, to further strengthen the various joint efforts regarding the development of adult education in our region.
Conference on Sustaining the Education & Economic Momentum in Africa Amidst the Current Global Financial Crisis

Faced with a unique set of economic and education challenges, like the dramatically changed circumstances created by the global economic slowdown, July 2009 saw the gathering of senior policy makers from both the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education and the representatives of various development agencies in the ‘Conference for African Ministers of Finance and Education’ held in Tunis, Tunisia.

Held between the 15th and the 17th of July, the primary aim of the conference was to engage African ministers in a dialogue amongst themselves and with key external partners in order to explore the nature of the new challenges and their implications with a view of ‘Sustaining education gains amidst the global economic crisis’.

The conference was attended by 16 Finance Ministers and 25 Education Ministers from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), along with other important representatives from the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Former ASPBAE Executive Council member, Kazi Rafiqul Alam of the Dhaka Alhsania Mission was the only Asia Pacific civil society representative to attend the conference.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Ms. Obiageli Ezekwesili, the African Region Vice-President of the World Bank. This was followed by the keynote address on “Human Capital for Africa’s Long-Term Development: Sustaining Progress in Challenging Times” given by Mr. Donald Kaberuka, President of African Development Bank. The meeting included addresses and goodwill remarks by the African Union, Tunisian Government, the European Commission, the FTI-Secretariat (Ms. Linda English), UNESCO and UNICEF.

On July 16th 2009, Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, the Singapore Minister of Finance led the session on “Political leadership for better alignment between education development and economic growth”. In his note, “Investing in a Knowledge-Based Society: East Asia’s Experience”, Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam highlighted the various achievements and progress made with regards to education in Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong. His assertion that political leadership is key towards fostering dynamic alignment between the education sector and national goals for social-economic progress brought an interesting debate to the table. The roles and aims of both Education Ministers and Financial Ministers were analysed, highlighting the mutual dependency between education and economic growth, and the institutional capacity required in both ministries to handle this dependency.

During the meeting of Civil Society representatives organised by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and attended by the Deputy Head of the FTI-Secretariat, Ms. Linda English along with other African dignitaries, Kazi Alam offered suggestions on areas for partnership between Asian and African countries, namely in Capacity Development, Curriculum Development and Teachers Training.

ASPBAE’s Basic Leadership Development Course

Conceived as a platform to increase capacities and enhance perspectives on Adult Education, ASPBAE’s flagship training programme the ‘Basic Leadership Development Course – 2009’ was conducted between the 5th and 10th of October at Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Designed to act as a platform that fosters interaction and sustains meaningful exchanges, last year’s six-day long residential Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC) gave participants the opportunity to deepen their understanding of adult and life-long education from a regional perspective. The learning process was further enriched through the active engagement of the participant groups, each sharing their own organisational experiences.

Robby Guevara (ASPBAE President) and Sandy Morrison (Immediate Past President of ASPBAE) anchored and nurtured the learning process as the Course Directors of BLDC-2009.

Myo Min, ASPBAE Executive Council (EC) member representing the South-east Asia sub-region and Director of the Chiang Mai based Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), hosted the event. John Shanth Kumar and Anita Borkar, the ASPBAE Mumbai office staff provided the requisite staff support, along with Lulu from HREIB. Dominic D’Souza, from Laya, India, and ASPBAE EC member from South Asia was invited as a participant-observer at the BLDC.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The constituted Selection Committee received around 44 nominations out of which 26 participants were selected based on the stated selection criteria. The average age of the participants was 33 years and they represented member organisations from 13 countries, spread over all the sub-regions of ASPBAE. 14 participating women also meant that a fair gender balance was maintained within the course.

The participants were closely engaged in issues of sustainable development, adult literacy, climate change, early childhood care & education and environmental education, amongst others.
Regional Facilitators Training: The “NEXT” Programme (ASPBAE TIES)

The Core Faculty of ASPBAE’s Training Institute for Empowerment & Solidarity met for three days in Kuala Lumpur between the 29th and the 31st of August 2009 to take forward ASPBAE’s long-term, multi-level strategy of building and expanding the “Training Corps” in the Asia Pacific region.

Hosted by Pusat Komas, the meeting was in continuation of the two meetings of the Core Faculty held specifically to design the 18-month-long learning process – the NEXT, envisaged to build a cadre of regional trainer-facilitators.

As envisaged substantive part of this learning process is the Regional Facilitation Course followed by a mentoring programme at the national and sub-regional level with opportunities for internship and apprenticeship in regional events and processes. Intermittent workshops to harvest, share and consolidate learning are also planned as part of this learning process.

During the meeting, ASPBAE-TIES Core Faculty also discussed the criteria for selection of the participants for the NEXT and accordingly short-listed nominations from those who had been proposed by the ASPBAE staff and the EC members based on the individual’s association and experience in the training arenas of the various thematic programmes of ASPBAE.

The Core Faculty also detailed out the learning objectives and learning domains of the Regional Facilitation Course, with regards to session outlines and the facilitation team. This Course would be of 10-days duration, with inputs in knowledge building, skills enhancement and attitude shaping to enable the emergent talent to develop as a resourceful pool of regional trainer-facilitators in adult education and thematic concerns in the Asia Pacific region. The mentoring programme was also given a concrete shape with the essential modalities stated. It is planned that the concluding phase of the 18 month learning process will coincide with the Right to Learn Festival, giving a relevant opportunity to the participants for application of their learning in a regional context.

The Regional Facilitation Course, which was hosted by PEKKA, was held from 17 to 26 February, 2010 in Bogor, Indonesia. The Course Directors were Myo Min - ASPBAE EC member (Thailand); and Dominic D’Souza - ASPBAE EC member (India). Other resource persons included ASPBAE President, Robbie Guevara; and Immediate Past President, Sandy Morrison. Anita Borkar, ASPBAE’s Co-ordinator for Training & Transformation, anchored the Course. A detailed write-up about the Course will be presented in the next issue of the E-Bulletin.

The learning process included inputs on the rights-based frameworks of Human Rights, Gender Justice and Sustainable Development, which are the three pillars of Adult Education. A greater understanding of these frameworks was further substantiated and validated through reflection and analysis of the local experiences of the participants and their organisations’ work in adult education.

Skill enhancement was facilitated through different learning processes to design advocacy campaigns on issues of concern identified by the participant groups.

Innovative approaches to learning, like the ‘Our Own Film Festival’, ‘Exposure Tour’ and interactions with the local activists were creatively used to enhance knowledge at the BLDC.

‘Learning Groups’ was another key methodology effectively used to foster group learning in an inter-cultural setting, since it provided ample opportunities for its members to appreciate the similarities and differences in the context, regional issues and organisational strategies.

Day-long site visits to four organisations based in Chiang Mai were organised for the participants at the BLDC. The groups visited were ‘Migrants Assistance Programme’, ‘IMPACT Hill-Tribes Association’, ‘Empower – the organisation by, for and of the sex workers to assert their rights as workers and rightful citizens’ and ‘M Plus’ – the organisation promoting the rights of the LGBTs.

Other learning material, including reading notes, relevant extracts from publications, reference and resource lists along with relevant audio-visual material were provided to all participants as part of their learning kit.

Witnessing the robust and engaging discussions and debates on topics like ‘Climate Change’ and other relevant issues among the young and progressive participants at the BLDC-2009, President of ASPBAE Robbie Guevara observed that “ASPBAE’s future is in bright and secure hands.”
Regional Consultation Quality Adult Education

Between the 5th and 7th of November 2009, ASPBAE along with PEKKA organised a Regional Workshop on "Building a Shared Understanding of Quality Adult Education" in Jakarta, Indonesia. The primary aims of the workshop were:

I. To learn from the rich experiences of its members through their accomplishments in the field of adult education in the region, and its own experiences of rolling out various thematic programmes in the areas of adult literacy, women’s education, peace education, HIV/AIDS education, migrants’ education and citizenship education.

II. To clarify ‘quality’ adult learning in the myriad forms and expressions that adult education takes in the context of the Asia Pacific region.

This Workshop was designed to bring together ASPBAE members, especially those who have been active in the thematic programmes to deliberate on what constitutes ‘quality adult education’ in the Asia Pacific region - drawing from their very rich experience and likewise harvesting from ASPBAE’s work in the thematic programmes in adult literacy, women’s education, peace education, HIV/AIDS education, migrants education and citizenship education.

Fifty seven (57) participants were mobilized in the Workshop from 15 countries in the region. The diverse experiences and perspectives of the participants made for a very in depth set of discussions, broadening understanding of ‘quality adult education’ and proposing a wide range of possible research, learning exchanges, and advocacy strategies that may be pursued by ASPBAE to advance quality adult education.

The first session of the workshop facilitated by Robbie Guevera, helped set the context of the workshop by developing a framework of understanding quality adult education based on the member organisations and the participant’s work in the region. The framework explored and attempted to enhance the understanding of ‘quality adult education’ and proposing a wide range of possible research, learning exchanges, and advocacy strategies that may be pursued by ASPBAE to advance quality adult education.

The Presentations by Tanvir Muntasim, ASPBAE, on his experiences in “Benchmarking Adult Literacy”; “Standards of Quality Adult Education in Korea” by Hoe-Young Lee, NILE; and “The current dilemmas in addressing quality issues in education within the EFA perspective” by Raquel Castillo, ASPBAE; led to a stimulating discussion on measurement of quality adult education, which was further refined through participants and ASPBAE’s own thematic and issue-based work locally as well as regionally. This dialogue, anchored by Dominic D’Souza, contributed to better clarity, and helped build a shared agreement on the ‘quality’ constituents of adult education, specifically in the Asia & South Pacific context.

Cecilia Soriano anchored the session to identify gaps in current policies such as adult education governance and financing, existing theoretical frameworks and knowledge bases, as well as adult education practice. Participants deliberated and identified these gaps in policy, practice and research and proposed relevant steps to advance quality in the three-fold strategies of ASPBAE, viz. policy advocacy, practice and knowledge building in adult education. Discussions on these topics were facilitated in small groups by Raquel Castillo & Tanvir Muntasim (Policy Advocacy), Ali Naqvi & Yanti Muchtar (Research), and Ramon Mapa & Shashi Kiran (AE Practice).

Following intensive discussions, the group collectively arrived at a framework for analyzing “quality adult education” – centered in a right’s based, gender-just and empowerment core principles - envisaged to guide the proposed benchmarking process.

The participants were also updated on the developments related to CONFINTHEA 6 and a session in the Workshop was dedicated to seeking comments and feedback on the draft Outcomes document, especially on the sections on ‘AE quality’ to further guide ASPBAE’s inputs and lobbying in Belem.

The Way Forward

Deepening and building on the framework developed on Quality Adult Education, the ASPBAE Executive Council agreed to pursue a process of Benchmarking Quality Adult Education, quantifying and further measuring ‘quality’ in adult education through a set of benchmarks to guide good practice and policy. A process of developing benchmarks is envisaged along the priority thematic areas of ASPBAE.

The benchmarking process will also be accompanied by efforts to review mainstream quality standards for adult education and learning, including national qualifications frameworks. ASPBAE intends to engage various institutions, including Universities, Vocational Institutes, NFE Centres, Community Adult Learning Centres to understand and dialogue on their certification and assessment systems. ASPBAE will also link up with DVV and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) on their own review and lobbying on the European Union’s quality adult education framework. This is particularly strategic as the ASEAN is considering modelling its own framework from the EU’s.

NOTE: Over the coming years, you can look forward to presentations on the debates pertaining to QAE as the ‘ASPBAE initiative on QAE’ unfolds.
Responding to the Issue of Climate Change

The effects of climate change have been catastrophic to many communities in several parts of the Asia Pacific region. Several areas of the Pacific small island states are in clear danger of sinking; whole livelihoods and settlements threatened with extinction. The people of Carteret Island off the west coast of Papua New Guinea (PNG) are the world’s first people to be officially evacuated (to Bougainville) because of climate change. The unprecedented torrential rains in South India and many parts of South East Asia (Laos, Vietnam, the Philippines for example) in 2009 have caused the displacement of tens of thousands of people and hundreds of deaths. Many of ASPBAE members located in these areas have been directed affected and have had to prioritize provision of emergency relief in the wake of these emergencies. Very close to home, the ASPBAE office in Manila was flooded out and it was only the grit and strong presence of mind of the ASPBAE staff located there that saved them from grave injury.

ASPBAE has begun to develop a strategy to appropriately deal with the crisis. Its partnership with the Asia Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), as a Centre of Excellence for advancing the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), and participation in significant events organised in the region and internationally provided very useful opportunities to engage with the issue, understand the dimensions and develop a strategic response.

- During September 29 and October 01, ASPBAE participated in a workshop entitled ‘Training of Asian Grassroots Trainers on Climate Change’, organized by the Centre for Environment Concerns, Philippines (CEC), an ASPBAE member. The workshop was held in Bangkok. ASPBAE Programmes Officer, Santi Phongsavan, represented ASPBAE in the workshop and a separate article on this workshop is included in this bulletin.
- The 2009 UN Climate Change Conference, which included the 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15) in the region and globally, also facilitated ASPBAE’s interaction with networks and civil society organizations working on the issue of sustainable development and climate change from an education perspective. Frances Quimpo (Director of CEC) and Dominic D’Souza (ASPBAE EC Member) represented ASPBAE in this event and in the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) steered events in Copenhagen, particularly in the ICAE workshop on Lifelong Learning For Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility at the KLIMAFOURM09 held on December 11th.
- The ASPBAE-ACCU Centre of Excellence partnership enabled ASPBAE to further deepen its understanding of educational responses to climate change within the framework of ESD, particularly in partnership with E-Net Philippines. Owing to the unprecedented succession of typhoons in 2009, which left many dead and thousands homeless in the Philippines, E-Net Philippines recognized that the disasters had resulted in a long-term impact on the overall well-being of the communities in this region — adversely affecting their ability to access quality education. As part of the ASPBAE-ACCU COE initiative, E-Net Philippines organized community mapping and assessment workshops in selected urban and under-privileged rural communities in the Philippines which had been marginalized by economic activities and calamities.

As a follow-up to the mapping, members from the participating communities and representatives of other members of E-Net such as public school teachers and community educators participated in a training workshop on disaster risk reduction and ESD which was held between 27-29 December 2009, with the aim of deepening their knowledge and increasing their capacity to advocate for ESD. The major topics covered during the workshop included disaster risk assessment, disaster preparedness, psycho-social support, ESD and EFA frameworks. Training modules were piloted and are currently being adapted for future use.

One key outcome of the workshop was a recommendation for E-Net Philippines to advocate for the development of disaster risk reduction plans that included ensuring implementation of ESD strategies at the community and school levels and prioritising community learning centres as key institutions that would help in initiating education and action on disaster risk reduction, aimed at mobilizing the parents, children, local government officials, women and other community members. These are envisaged as key points for advocacy with the National Congress and Senate, Department of Education, various disaster co-ordinating councils and local government units, in the coming years.

- Led by ASPBAE EC member Dominic D’Souza, ASPBAE also responded to the call of the UN Conference of NGOs (COngo) to contribute to its discussion paper on climate change. This discussion paper evolved into a CoNGO document, ‘Climate Change Summary and Recommendations to Governments’, which was circulated widely and faxed to all the UN Ambassadors. ASPBAE’s inputs resulted in text changes that recognized differentiated responsibilities among developed and developing nations in emission targets, and in holding corporations in the oil and gas, mining, or any other industries that pollute accountable.

- In early 2009, ASPBAE participated in the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Bonn, Germany. ASPBAE was represented by the ASPBAE President, J. Roberto Guevara. The Conference agreed on the Bonn Declaration which included a call to continue developing stronger links between EFA and ESD. This is particularly relevant for ASPBAE, considering its ongoing campaign and capacity-building work. ASPBAE is in a vantage position to work with its membership and partners to ensure that the steps taken towards achieving EFA goes hand in hand with the achievement of quality education informed by the principles of ESD.

In its last meeting the ASPBAE Executive Council agreed on further measures to address the issue of climate change within the over-all framework of advancing education for sustainable development. The Executive Council:

- Asserted that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an integrative, cross cutting perspective that should be more strongly mainstreamed within ASPBAE’s work; Responses to the issue of climate change will be strategically located within this framework;
- Agreed that the ACCU-COE Project remains an important space to promote ESD and its linkages with EFA;
- Constituted a Working Group to deliberate and plan on mainstreaming ESD within ASPBAE;
- Agreed to seek ECOSOC NGO accreditation in the climate change policy processes to facilitate information access and linkages with CSO networks involved in addressing the issue;
- Agreed to engage more strongly with members working on the issues of climate change and ESD e.g. CEC Philippines, Laya and CEE in India
Training of Asian Grassroots Trainers on Climate Change

In the wake of various environmental concerns such as climate change and global warming, and the inter-related impacts that it has on the lives and livelihoods of under-privileged people, the Center for Environment Concerns - Philippines (CEC-Phil) with support from the Sustainable Development Foundation (Thailand), 350.org (global movement) and DIV Institute (Germany) organized a workshop at the Bangkok Student Christian Center, Bangkok.

Entitled “Training of Asian Grassroots Trainers on Climate Change”, the workshop coincided with the People’s Action on Climate Change (PACC) event which was held between 29 September and 3 October 2009 in Bangkok. The 3-day workshop was attended by 21 participants from China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Program Officer, Santisouk Phongsavan, represented ASPBAE at the event.

The workshop aimed at enhancing grassroots trainers with adequate knowledge and skills on the science and issues of global warming, with the intention that, by the end of the training, participants would be able to:

- Identify gaps, needs, and problems encountered in terms of knowledge and training skills on grassroots-oriented advocacy on the issue of climate change
- Critically analyze the strengths and weakness of responses being implemented to combat the threat of climate change in their respective countries
- Understand the root causes and major impacts of climate change
- Identify areas for future regional cooperative efforts and collaboration
- Demonstrate improved training skills

Some of the topics covered included shared experiences in education and advocacy on climate change; gaps in knowledge of the science, issues and policies regarding climate change; and training and capacity skills. During the workshop, Mr. Santisouk Phongsavan shared personal experiences from Australia and also personal experiences from travels in the Pacific which brought a new dimension to the discussions; notably the issue of small island states and the impact of climate change on their daily lives.

Some of the Key Topics presented at the workshop included:

- A major global movement on climate change is the 350 campaign (350.org): It refers to 350 parts per million (PPM) Co2 in the air and is the scientific target on climate change. The current level is measured to be around 387 ppm indicating that we are now above the safe Co2 levels.
- Understanding clear indicators of climate change like; melting glaciers, coral bleaching in the oceans, increase in sea water levels, changing weather patterns, flooding and deforestation.
- The impact of climate change on the health and agricultural cycles of the population living in small island states.
- A general movement towards various alternatives that supposedly side in the fight against climate change but, in reality, only lead to more financial gain for private corporations. These include geo-engineering i.e. trying to manipulate the earth’s climate to counter global warming; and Clean Development Mechanism or carbon traders; paying for plantations etc.

The participants shared information on a range of topics, including the various projects implemented within their own respective countries in an effort to fight climate change and it was evident from the exchange that there were common issues and challenges emerging within the broader context of climate change. Other key issues discussed were with regards to the shortage of funding available and the need to raise public awareness, especially in the developed countries, with respect to the impact of climate change on communities at the grassroots level in the developing world.

Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) Update

The Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) is an initiative aimed at providing support to national education coalitions in FTI eligible countries involved in the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI). The CSEF, which is steered regionally through three coalition partners of the Global Campaign for Education (ANCEFA - Africa, ASPBAE - Asia and CLADE - Latin America), intends to lay a foundation for the creation of National Civil Society Education Funds to increase the sustainability of overall education advocacy efforts within the first three years. The CSEF initiative also strives to enhance government and donor engagement in the development of education sector programmes, tracking the progress of national governments and local donor groups in their efforts towards achieving EFA goals.

The Education Programme Development Fund (EPDF) of the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) has already committed $17.6M towards this initiative until June 2011 with additional funds provided by AusAid (until August 2010) through ASPBAE Australia to supplement the CSEF effort in the South Pacific.

For a good part of 2009 the ASPBAE advocacy staff worked closely with 8 coalitions within FTI eligible countries in the Asia Pacific region in order to develop viable proposals for submission to the CSEF Regional Funding Board. ASPBAE, being the Asia Pacific Regional Secretariat, also played a key role in developing the broader CSEF national coalition guidelines and application forms.

On August 17-18, 2009, the CSEF Funding Committee in its second meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, approved the applications of these 8 coalitions, securing substantial institutional and programme funding to qualitatively advance coalition advocacy capacities. The 8 Asia Pacific region coalitions which received CSEF funding are the National Coalition for Education (India), the Pakistan Coalition for Education, CED (Sri Lanka), CAMPE (Bangladesh), NCEN (Nepal), NEP (Cambodia), COESI (Solomon Islands), and PEAN (PNG).

During September-December 2009, the newly assigned CSEF Regional Secretariat staff visited six of the eight CSEF-funded coalitions. Staff visits to the remaining two coalitions funded under CSEF are planned for early 2010. Exploratory meetings were also held with organisations in expansion countries such as Vietnam (30 Sept – 3 Oct), Vanuatu (23-27 Nov), Mongolia (January 9-14, 2010), and East Timor (January 20-26, 2010). Staff members stationed in Pakistan and Bangladesh worked on an ongoing basis with the PCE and CAMPE respectively.

Only two campaign coalition partners of ASPBAE did not access CSEF funding. ENet Philippines was ineligible, as the Philippines is not an FTI country; and ENet for Justice (ENet J) Indonesia did not send an application since their Constitution barred them from accessing funds from agencies supporting education privatisation, such as the World Bank (WB). Since the WB was the holder of the multi-donor EPDF fund, ENet J considered it inappropriate to apply for CSEF funding. CSEF advocacy staffs are in dialogue with organizations in Indonesia, and with ENet J, to discuss possible options of CSEF work in the country.
The Executive Council Meets in Kathmandu, Nepal from 11th to 13th February 2010

The ASPBAE Executive Council convened in 11th to 13th February 2010 in Kathmandu, Nepal for their annual business meeting to review the achievements of the previous year and approve of plans and budgets for the forthcoming year. The meeting was hosted by ASPBAE member, Didibahini.

The discussions of the Executive were wide ranging and extensive. In particular, they affirmed the following:

- A continuing commitment to post CONFINTEA follow-up work which will include coordinated country debriefings by CSO delegates; preparation of kits and a meeting template for wider use; sustained policy research especially on AE financing and initiating policy analysis on VET and life skills especially for young adults; mentoring and training of adult education advocates in 10 countries.
- A focus on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as an integrative, cross-cutting perspective that will be mainstreamed within ASPBAE’s work and as a response to the climate change issue.
- ASPBAE NEXT will be the core initiative of ASPBAE for the development of a wider pool of regional trainers-facilitators through a sustained process involving trainings and on-the-job mentoring support.
- A realignment of ASPBAE’s thematic programmes in a common platform advancing quality adult education through an exercise to develop benchmarks for quality adult education.

he Executive also had a very fruitful interaction with ASPBAE members from Nepal and other CSO invitees in a session on "Reflecting on the current Global and Regional context and their impact on Adult Learning". The discussions with Nepal members covered the following topics: 1) Nepal education & development context; 2) outcomes of CONFINTEA VI and its follow up; 3) global financial crisis and impact on education; 4) climate change, outcomes of COP15 and education; 5) quality adult education; and 3) aid to education.

The dinner hosted by Didibahini provided rich opportunities for networking and for informal lobbying with government and donor agency representatives.

The Executive extended their thanks to Didibahini the host organisation for its warm hospitality during their stay in Kathmandu.