



ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETIN

Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education:
Learning Beyond Boundaries

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A Message to ASPBAE Members, Partners & Friends,

Twelve years after promises were made by governments and the international community to support adult education and learning, the situation remains critical. The Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report of 2009 and various other EFA mid-term review processes have highlighted the slow progress on all 6 Education for all (EFA) goals and the huge disparities in attention to the different goals.

While enrolment rates in primary education have increased since 1999/2000, school retention and completion remains low, with education quality of poor standard. Several independent studies of civil society organizations including ASPBAE's Education Watch reveal that many children who pass through the system do not gain even rudimentary literacy and numeracy skills. Huge disparities characterize sustained access to free basic education of good quality which are gender, income, language, location (e.g. urban vs. rural), social and culture - based. Girls and women, poor and marginal communities, rural children and adults, indigenous, minority communities are least likely to participate fully in meaningful, free education.

These disparities further characterize access to adult literacy, non-formal and other lifelong learning opportunities for adults. Despite Asia Pacific being the largest growing knowledge economy it remains home to the largest number of adult illiterates – mainly poor - concentrated in the high population countries of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia.

The CONFITEA 6 review confirms that governments are doing shamefully little to secure adults right to learn with most governments allocating less than 1% of their paltry education budgets to adult education. None of the developing country governments in the region allocate at least 6% GNP to education. ODA to basic education which peaked in 2004 has stagnated subsequently at \$4B/year leaving more than 60% of the annual EFA requirement for education aid unmet. This is consistent with a trend in reduced amounts of aid with richer countries' overall foreign aid expenditures declining for the second consecutive year in 2007.

Education is a right of all citizens – and a powerful means to secure and defend other political, civil and development rights. As the world reels under the impact of the financial crisis, the food and energy crisis, natural disasters and climate change, sustained and escalated conflict in many countries and regions - the value and importance of education cannot be emphasized more. Adult and basic education provides a powerful means to enable people – especially the poor – to mitigate against the impacts of crisis and more importantly, to meaningfully and effectively participate in defining the alternative development course that guarantees a just peace, freedom from hunger and degradation for all people.

ASPBAE in 2008 intends to build on its achievements and seeks to address the ongoing challenges it faces in its work as it defines its strategic directions for the next period.

ASPBAE seeks to build:

1. Strong civil society organizations and national coalitions for education advocacy in the region:
2. A dynamic membership-based network promoting transformative adult education and EFA in the region and globally.

With the whole hearted support given by its membership to engage with these challenges described above and to cohere the organizational framework with this mandate the ASPBAE General Assembly of 2008 approved a Constitutional change to amend ASPBAE's name to the *Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education*. The new name has been conceived to encompass ASPBAE's expanded emphasis on the full EFA agenda whilst retaining a focus on adult education in ASPBAE's work.

The year 2009 and the period ahead will also see a changed direction in ASPBAE's capacity building and adult education thematic strategy.

More information about ASPBAE's activities is provided in articles contained in this News Bulletin. We call on our members to engage with the ASPBAE Executive Council and Staff to benefit from the cross country regional advocacy, training and networking processes facilitated by ASPBAE. The Executive Council and Staff of ASPBAE extends its thanks to its members for the whole hearted support to move ahead in a direction that puts ASPBAE on a strong footing to meet emerging challenges while simultaneously maintaining continuity with the past.

Strategising the Last Leg of EFA

Last May 4-7, 2009, UNESCO Bangkok organized the 10th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators. The meeting focused on "strategic planning towards reaching the unreached in education and meeting the EFA goals by 2015." This meeting was crucial because it aimed at ensuring that policy recommendations made during the on-going Asia-Pacific Education for All (EFA) Mid Decade Assessment and Mid-Term Policy Review are converted into action /action plans for countries in the region. The policy recommendations revolve around seven strategic objectives, namely:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

Inclusion of children who are not in school and retention of children at risk of dropping out of school;

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

Achieve gender and social equity and equality at all levels of education, from early childhood to adult education in both formal and non-formal sectors;

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

Attain basic and functional literacy for the unreached and underserved populations, with accessible and supported mother-tongue language instruction for early childhood education and the early years of schooling, and in non-formal literacy programmes;

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:

Achieve quality education for all, including the unreached and underserved populations, with improved quality of teaching-learning process (teachers, learning materials, curriculum, etc.) and learning outcomes;

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:

Institutionalize systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of EFA at the national and sub-national levels, and sub-regional and regional levels with active participation from all key partners (government, INGOs, civil society groups, UN agencies, and donors) in the process;

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6:

Ensure adequate investment in resources to provide accessible education of good quality for all, including targeted support for the unreached and underserved populations, and the efficient and effective utilization of these resources; and

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7:

Promote and institutionalize partnerships, and technical and financial support for EFA, particularly targeting the unreached and underserved populations in the Asia and Pacific region.

The main participants in the workshop were National EFA / EFA MDA Coordinators and other education officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Korea (observer), Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tonga.

Representatives of the Thematic Working Group on EFA, including ASPBAE, ATD Fourth World, Bahay International, Save the Children Sweden, SEAMEO, SIL International, UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank also participated. UNESCO Education officers from the offices in Bangkok Regional Office, Almaty, Apia, Beijing, Dhaka, Kathmandu, New Delhi, Phnom Penh, Tashkent and Tehran also participated as well as from UIS Montreal. UNICEF Education staff from the East Asia and Pacific Office, New Delhi, Phnom Penh and Yangon also attended.

ASPBAE was represented by Raquel Castillo, Asia Advocacy and Campaigns Coordinator. Other EFA partners who are also members of ASPBAE included E-Net Philippines represented by Cecilia Soriano, Bunyad by Shaheen Attiqur-Rahman from Pakistan, and Dhaka Ahsania Mission by Ehsanur Rehman from Bangladesh.

Ms. Castillo was asked to be a panelist in the plenary session that discussed the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009 to give the civil society perspectives on how to overcome the obstacles to achieving EFA goals, especially with regard to the EFA target groups: the out-of-school, illiterates, the disadvantaged and marginalized, by drawing from recommendations of the ASPBAE EdWatch studies. She also gave her views on what policies and strategies governments and EFA Partners should take to overcome deep-rooted inequalities and increase equal opportunities for quality education.

Because of the spirited participation of organizations doing adult education in the region, policy recommendations relating to adult education have been included in the final documents.

Also discussed in the meeting were the concrete results of the UNESCO-SEAMEO-ASEAN workshop last year on 10 collaborative (multi-country) projects, all of which the ASEAN Council subsequently approved. In 6 of them, ASPBAE was signed up as a potential EFA partner and thus there is possibility that ASPBAE members may be involved in these projects.

Mechanisms for collaboration and coordination are still being developed and the fulcrum is at the SEAMEO Secretariat.

The 6 collaborative projects are:

1. Tracking system for students at risk of dropping out – with components on inventory of existing researches, identifying student tracking and profiling system, workshop to develop framework, system development, toolkit development, capacity building
2. Conference to promote awareness of education for girls and women – with components on sharing of best practices in budget-based gender, school supplementary food programmes, gender responsive projects, basic education for girls
3. Tracking mechanism for unreached populations – with components on research, exchange visits, capacity building
4. Multigrade Teaching – with components on capacity building, M&E
5. Development of more community-based learning centres in rural areas in Southeast Asia for Literacy and Livelihood – with components on Inter-ministerial coordination, assessment and work planning, establishment of centres, capacity building, entrepreneurship, M&E
6. Education in emergencies and disaster preparedness – with components on provision of kits and guidelines, teachers and community involvement, refurbishment of structures, advocacy

An additional project that ASPBAE members can sign up for, pending communications with the SEAMEO Secretariat and lead country teams (Indonesia and Philippines) is the project on HIV and AIDS using an integrated approach (providing education, care, treatment and counselling services to learners affected or infected by HIV and AIDS) – with components on data collection, care and treatment, curriculum strengthening, capacity building, M&E.

South Asia EFA delegations are eager to push for a similar initiative in their sub-region. They are lobbying for a SAARC permanent desk for education and would like to make sure that the next meeting in Bangladesh this year will table this.

Reported by Raquel Castillo, ASPBAE's Asia Advocacy & Campaigns Coordinator, with inputs from Cecilia Soriano of E-net Philippines.

Education Challenge to ASEAN

In 2000 at the turn of the Millennium, 164 countries including all the members of the ASEAN, promised that by 2015, every child, youth, woman and man, will be able to claim their right to quality education and learning. Midway to 2015, some countries are starting to lose steam and a growing number of countries like Vietnam, Philippine and Indonesia, are now seeing reversals. Behest by low capacities and a lag between policy and actual implementation, countries like Cambodia and Laos remain far from reaching the 2015 goals.

The Education Challenge was one of the concurrent workshops in the ASEAN Peoples' Forum held on February 21, 2009 at the Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. The APF provided a popular space for many attending organizations to strongly put across various agenda in the ASEAN Summit.

The Workshop was organized by various civil society organisations in Asia namely: Action Aid International, Action Aid Thailand, Thailand Education Watch Network, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)

The workshop brought together a total of 70 participants representing national coalitions and education advocates in South East Asia namely: Civil Society Network for Education Reforms (E-Net Philippines), Education Network for Justice Indonesia, NGO Education Partnership (NEP Cambodia), National Health and Education Committee, Burma, Thailand Education Watch Network.

It was an opportune moment to place the Education For All agenda squarely in the ASEAN's policy discussions, and link it strongly to the expectedly more attractive issues of financial turmoil, price crises, global warming, and trade and general economic downturn.

The Workshop was steered by: Jan Boontinand, ActionAid Thailand and Cecilia V. Soriano, E-Net Philippines.

Topics of discussion included:

- Policy Challenges to ASEAN/SEAMEO on the Right to Education for All
- Accessibility of the Right to Education of Disadvantaged Children in Thai Society
- Education Situation in Burma
- The Right of Migrant Workers to Lifelong Learning
- Ensuring the Rights of the Poor in Public Education: Banning Informal School Fees
- Influencing the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint: Policy Asks for the ASEAN



Education challenge workshop in the ASEAN Peoples Forum

-Bangkok, Thailand

Key issues emerging from the discussions:

Six years to EFA 2015, many countries in ASEAN will most likely not meet their EFA targets. Quality basic education is still not accessible to all children and youth and the ASEAN region also has a large population of adult illiterates. At the same time, governments do not invest in education that will reach out to marginalized sectors such as communities in armed conflict areas, girls/women, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, child labourers, children of migrant workers and other vulnerable sectors.

Governments and donor countries have yet to invest in all the six goals of EFA. In fact, in most countries in ASEAN, governments invest on the average only 3% of their GNP to basic education, similarly, in most ASEAN countries, per pupil spending has declined since 2000. Donor countries also need to increase their official development assistance to basic education, focusing on other quality inputs aside from infrastructure.

The Dakar declaration of EFA states that civil society participation is crucial in making EFA work. However, in most countries in ASEAN, there are few or no institutionalized venues and processes for civil society to influence decisions related to education targets, policies and programs.

Key Policy Recommendations:

- ASCC blue print calls for advocacy, promotion and technical assistance for education. It also focuses on scholarships and exchanges to improve secondary and tertiary education. All ASEAN countries have committed to work for the Dakar declaration on Education for All and governments need to ensure that all six goals of EFA are met. Similarly, there should be national to regional coherence in ensuring education. There should also be agreements between countries on addressing education of peoples common in the region, 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 services should consist of both formal education and alternative/non-formal education for youth and adults, the latter being found to be very effective in meeting education needs of marginalized sectors.
- Work for education policies in the region that will respect cultural diversity and implement 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.

- Secure funding for EFA amidst the financial crisis. We should lobby even stronger for 6% of GNP for education, 20% of national budgets going to basic education with 3% of which going to adult education. Donor countries should be put to task in ensuring that they deliver the needed assistance for education which is 0.7% of their GNI. ASEAN should work for multilateral and/or bilateral aid, not only for trade, but equally important for basic education.
- Institute policies and institutionalize venues within countries and the region (through the SEAMEO) that will recognize the imperative for civil society participation in education.

For further details about the Workshop write to Jan Boontinand, ActionAid Thailand, Jan.Boontinand@actionaid.org and Cecilia V. Soriano, E-Net Philippines, cecilia_soriano@e-netphil.org

As reported by Claudine Claridad, ASPBAE's Capacity Building & Advocacy Support Officer

People's Week of Action on ADB

In Asia, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), with poverty reduction as its avowed core mandate, has put education as one of its five key operational areas in its Strategy 2020 framework document. However, given the poor performance of countries in Asia in meeting EFA and MDG goals, civil society is questioning whether the education programmes the ADB supports effectively target the disadvantaged and shows strong links to its anti-poverty aims. Moreover, ADB has been playing co-financing roles in support of deregulation and privatization of education as promoted by the World Bank. This needs to be challenged for their negative implications to families and communities.

The ADB's 42nd Annual Governors Meeting in Bali, Indonesia in 1st week of May '09 was held with its main agenda being to chart out the ADB's direction in an economically integrated Asia by the year 2020, through a market-led and private sector-driven process supported by the governments. This Asian regionalism will impact 3.7 million lives in Asia and the world as a whole. Hence, it is imperative that discussions among civil society take place on what all these mean to the fulfillment of EFA goals and strong lobbying needs to be taken to bring a policy agenda to the ADB.

A collaborative effort between E-Net for Justice Indonesia, E-Net Philippines, ASPBAE and INFID paved the way to a fruitful discussion on education financing in a workshop held during the Regional Forum on Global Economic and Financial Crisis on 4 May 2009, Bali, Indonesia.

The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

1. To share the EFA Deficit across Asia-Pacific Region and the need to address these in the midst of the global financial and economic crisis
2. To share the Education for All financing needs in Asia, and agree what constitutes effective aid for EFA
3. To bring the Dakar Framework for Action more strongly within the ADB and to develop 3 key demands on the occasion of the ADB Annual Governors' Meeting in Bali, Indonesia on May 2-5, 2009
4. To sharpen education advocacy directed at the ASEAN+3

The following organizations and coalitions were present in the workshop:

1. Front Mahasiswa Nasional (FMN) – a national youth organization in Indonesia
2. Bali Bhineka Santi – Parents-Community Association
3. Bali Sruti – Women's Organization
4. Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (PGRI) – Teachers' Association of the Republic of Indonesia
5. Aliansi Rakyat Miskin (Poor People Alliance)
6. Udayana University (UNUD)
7. Universitas Maha Saraswati Denpasar (UNMAS)
8. E-Net for Justice Indonesia
9. E-Net Philippines
10. Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)

The Highlights of the Workshop

- A placards parade participated by students, teachers, parents, members of peoples organizations formally opened the workshop on education. Six participants held up the EFA goals and deficits while joining with the rest of the participants in the march [from the workshop venue (4th floor of hotel) down to the plenary hall (2nd floor) then back to the venue again].
- Sign up sheets and flyers were distributed prior to the workshop in order to ensure a broader participation.
- EFA placards which highlighted the goals and deficits drew the attention of the participants to explore and understand more the issues on education crisis.
- Presentations made by E-Net for Justice and E-Net Philippines explained comprehensively the impact of education aid to poor countries, and how it declined dramatically through years.

- It was clearly underscored that the state of education in Asia is in crisis, further exacerbated by the looming economic and financial crisis.
- To respond to the education crisis, international financial institutions such as ADB, WB, and IMF should provide quality ODA to poor countries, dropping out conditionalities to aid. Japan and US as the biggest power and share holders of ADB and apparently the least spenders on ODA, should be urged to honor the internationally agreed benchmark of 0.7% of GNI to ODA.

The workshop made the following recommendations:

- Refuse Debts: Push for more grants not loans
- Accurate data produced by civil society → alternative to government's data
- Expanding network:
 1. Build the network with school committees for education monitoring purposes
 2. Set up education centers in local area and recruit volunteers for each center to advocate education in the respective communities
 3. PGRI and students involved in the network to monitor free education
- Demand government to facilitate (give more resources to) alternative education
- Demand government to fulfill its promises on providing public services (education, health)
- Conduct public awareness raising and critical education on Education and Debt
- Community organizing and public rally/campaign



Rally at the Peoples Week of Action on ADB - Bali, Indonesia

Ms. Claudine Claridad, ASPBAE, Mr. M. Firdaus, E-Net for Justice Indonesia, Ms. Luz Anigan, E-Net Philippines, TBA, NEP Cambodia, Ms. Siti Nikmah, for E-Net for Justice Indonesia and INFID, Ms. S. E. Iswarini, E-Net for Justice Indonesia, Ms. Iva Hasanah, E-Net for Justice Indonesia, Eny Setyaningsih, E-Net for Justice Indonesia among others made a strong presence at the event.

A final draft on CSO position on ADB's aid to education will be prepared.

Reported by Claudine Claridad, ASPBAE's Capacity Building & Advocacy Support Officer

Going Counter-cyclical on Girls' Education

Every year, the World Day Against Child Labour is celebrated on June 12. The World Day this year marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the landmark International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 182, calling for action to tackle the worst forms of child labour.

This year, the theme was: **'Give girls a chance: End child labour'**. This recognizes the fact that although there have been strides in eliminating child labour, there remain continuing challenges and a need to address the exploitation of girls in particular. Approximately 218 million children are still languishing in child labour; 12 million sold in bonded labour.

ASPBAE adds its voice to all those campaigning on the World Day Against Child Labour in asking for:

- Greater attention to the education and skills training needs of adolescent girls - a key action point in tackling child labour and providing a pathway for girls to gain decent work as adults
- Policy responses to address the causes of child labour, paying particular attention to the situation of girls
- Urgent action to tackle the worst forms of child labour

Globally, there are still some 75 million children not enrolled in primary school. The majority of out-of-school children in the world are girls and two-thirds of the 860 illiterate adults around the world are women.

One of the foremost advocates on this front, the Global March against Child Labour, points out that the situation of the girl child labourer only 'mirrors the low social and economic status of women. In many cultures, girls are viewed as members of their birth family for only a few short years and as economic liabilities. This is nowhere more evident than in the case of education. Parents are reluctant to invest in the future training or education of their girls.' Girls may often be the last to be enrolled and the first to be withdrawn from schools if a family has to make a choice between sending a boy or girl to school.

In the face of the current global financial and economic crisis, there will be a marked increase in the number of families facing such choices. ASPBAE believes an aggressive stance should be taken to defend the rights of girls to education and to give them the right chances. Girls who drop out of school have a high chance of dropping into the jaws of child labour. Girls who are already into child labour will find it extremely difficult, if not totally impossible, to have a chance at formal education and learning.

Prescriptions are being made for governments to tackle the crisis head on by taking counter-cyclical measures of spending instead of scrimping, so that demand may bring the economies back to life. It would do well to apply the same measures to girls' education at this point when it is threatened most.

The ILO contends that child labour is a precursor to the youth employment problem – preventing children from obtaining necessary education and skills to obtain decent employment opportunities later in life as well as potentially exposing children to various hazards. But apart from this, increases in child labour potentially exacerbate both the supply and demand side of the youth employment problem. Child labour is cheap labour and this often hampers youth employment prospects.

In a study of the ILO that tries to analyse the global crisis and the impact on certain segments of the population, it noted that the incidence of Youth unemployment is already high in some countries in Asia - 25.1 percent in Indonesia, an estimated 25 percent in Sri Lanka, and 14.9 percent in the Philippines in 2007 - and the numbers are expected to rise.

But the more compelling reason why we should take girls away from child labour and bring them back to school is that girls' work are usually linked to human trafficking, prostitution, and bonded labour -- illicit and immoral in nature -- according to the Global March. They are invisible because most of their work is in the informal economy. Girls are sold or contracted as bonded labour and trafficked as prostitutes or domestic servants where they may repay their families' debt with the performance of abusive and intolerable work, which they are not free to leave. Because it is illegal, unpaid or, in the case of domestic work, it is often not even considered work, the burdensome labour of girls is rarely counted in official figures. Around 90% of all child domestic workers are girls.

As for the sex trade, the United Nations estimates that one million children are brought into it every year worldwide. The ILO puts the figure as closer to 1.8 million.

Of 61 countries that supplied information disaggregated by gender and age, it was found that 66 percent of victims were female. Twenty percent of all trafficking victims across the world are children, and in some parts of Africa and the Mekong region, children are the majority. Of total human-trafficking victims in 61 countries, 13 percent were girls and 9 percent were boys.

East Asian victims were detected in more than 20 countries, including Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. Central Asian victims end up in other part of Europe and the Middle East. Southeast Asian victims also end up in the Middle East.

It does not take much imagination to see that in a world reeling from interlocking crises, the gains of past efforts to eliminate this ignominy can be easily swept away and the ranks of trafficked children, particularly girls, doing child labour again swell up the ranks -- unless vigorous interventions are put in place -- unless we take a chance on girls and girls' education.

There are many initiatives like stipends for schoolgirls, direct cash transfers to poor families, mid-day meals, separate toilets for girls, safer schools, etc., that may snatch girls away from child labour and bring them back to schools. But only education and learning of quality and relevance which is sensitive to their particular needs, learning outcomes that prepare them for life's other choices, and more than middling probability of decent work later, will keep them in there. And only lifelong learning will give them a sense of power to change themselves and their communities as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

Reported by Raquel Castillo, ASPBAE's Asia Advocacy & Campaigns Coordinator, with inputs from Cecilia Soriano of E-net Philippines.

From BIG READ to CONFITEA 6

We have successfully completed Global Action Week on Education convened by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). This year's Global Action Week holds special significance for us, as it focused on the crucial but neglected issue of youth and adult education and learning. Over the last few years, the mobilization during this week has increased exponentially, so this has been a very important occasion to demonstrate support for this huge concern in a united manner all over the world.

As a part of this unifying and unified event, education coalitions around the world organized 'Big Read' and other innovative events to celebrate the power of lifelong learning. In the Asia Pacific, ASPBAE members and education campaign coalition partners participated through several events:

Cambodia

More than 700 people joined the Big Read Launching Event on 25 April at the National Institute of Education in Phnom Penh organized by GCE Cambodia, with support from NEP (National Education Partnership). Local Big Reads also took place in eight selected provinces in Cambodia. The key message for the event was on lobbying for more resources to education.

Philippines (E-Net)

Simultaneous Big Reads were held in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao where more than 1000 people were mobilized on 22 April to call for the youth's right to quality and free education. In Quezon City, members of the coalition shared an eight-point agenda for policy advocacy on education before an audience of children, out of school youth and students. Local celebrities and members of local government officials and the Department of Education joined in the Big Read. A candle-lighting ceremony wrapped up the day, expressing solidarity to all the Big Readers in the Philippines.

Indonesia (E-Net for Justice)

Reading sessions and campaigns were run in different areas in Indonesia starting from 20 April to 2 May. A big mobilization was organised during the week-long campaign in Surabaya or Jakarta.

Thailand (Thai Education Watch Network)

An Education Mobile van travelled to different parts of Thailand from 23-30 April to dramatize the need to reach out to different sectors of society, especially the unreached and marginalized. Activities engaging the indigenous communities in Chang Rai and Chiang Mai and labour migrant groups in Bangkok and suburbs highlighted the week-long campaign.

Pakistan (Pakistan Coalition for Education)

Local Big Reads in 30 districts in Pakistan were organised from 20 to 29 of April. Seminars and shopping bag campaigns benefit walks, and media campaigns for education characterised the Global Action Week activities in Pakistan. ASPBAE members Education Watch Pakistan and Bunyad participated in this campaign.

Nepal (GCE Nepal)

The Big Read on 25 April brought together different politically affiliated youth groups, the Youth Minister, the Department of Education to tackle issues on youth and adult literacy.

India (National Education Coalition)

Local Big Read Books were produced and distributed to 14 states in India. A reading event led by more than 300 children, youth and adults and a big concert was held on 28 April in New Delhi. Local artists and celebrities took part in the Big Read through their music and messages of solidarity.

Bangladesh (Campaign for Popular Education)

A week-long campaign from 20 to 26 April was implemented in several areas in Bangladesh. A huge mobilization which culminated in a reading event served as a highlight of the campaign. Likewise, an education Fair scheduled on 24-25 April provided platforms to various stakeholders on education such as civil society organizations, international NGOs, and the Ministry of Education. TV Talk shows were organized on major channels. National consultations were organized with policy makers and Teachers' Unions.

CONFINTEA 6 on December 1-4 in Belem, Brazil

UNESCO has announced the new dates of the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA 6): the Conference will be convened on December 1-4 in Belem, Para, Brazil.

CONFINTEA 6 was postponed from its original dates in May on account of the Influenza A (H1N1) or the swine flu pandemic.

The circular released by UNESCO in announcing the new dates indicated that invitations sent earlier will remain valid. This means that slots to civil society organizations for the event will remain secure in spite of the change in dates.

The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) has also announced the new dates of the International Civil Society Forum (FISC) on November 28-30. As planned, this will provide the space for civil society organizations attending CONFINTEA 6 to coordinate plans in pursuit of their advocacy and lobbying strategies and targets.

ICAE and ASPBAE will soon be announcing its upcoming activities building up to the Belem Conference, aimed to better ensure stronger policy commitments and credible outcomes from this important policy process for adult education.

International Conference On Financing Adult Education For Development, Bonn, 23 – 24 June 2009

On June 23-24, 2009, DVV International organized the "Conference on Financing Adult Education for Development" in Bonn, Germany with the support of ASPBAE, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA).

The conference brought together key representatives, decision makers and practitioners in adult education and lifelong learning with representatives of donor agencies, ministries and foundations.

The objectives for the event were:

- To reflect on the impact of recent development policies and financing mechanisms to strengthen youth and adult learning in the South
- To discuss the challenges development policy is facing and to identify the role and needs of adult and lifelong learning in this context
- To share best adult learning practices and experiences in development action and programmes
- To create a possibility for networking between actors in adult education and major donor agencies.

Asia Pacific representation in the Conference was strong: The ASPBAE delegation was led by ASPBAE President, J Roberto Guevara with Dominique D'Souza and Maria Khan from the ASPBAE EC. ASPBAE staff Bernie Lovegrove, Raquel del Castillo, Rene Raya and Tanvir Muntasim Mohammad also participated. Three other ASPBAE members who are DVV partners also attended: Malini Ghose of Nirantar (India); Rajesh Tandon of PRIA (India) and Bashir Khaliqi of the Afghan National Assoc. for AE (ANAFEA). Gigi Francisco of DAWN (based in the Phil.) represented the Gender and Education Office of ICAE.

The Asia participants to the Conference provided strong inputs in the debates and deliberations, playing key resource person and plenary speaking roles. The presentations from ASPBAE will form part of the Conference proceedings which DVV hopes to publish on time for CONFINTEA 6.

The Deputy Ministers of Education from Afghanistan and Laos also participated in this event. The Conference provided a space for dialogue between these Ministers and the representative of the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Secretariat on the spaces within the FTI to secure resources for adult literacy and adult education priorities of these governments in their education sector plans funded through the FTI.

The Conference participants agreed on a Bonn Declaration on Financing Adult Education for Development which highlights key advocacies on adult education financing debated within the Conference.

This Conference was also an occasion to commemorate and celebrate 40 years of cooperation between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *dvv international* and its partners in Asia, Africa and Latin America in promoting adult education globally.

Reported by Maria Khan, ASPBAE Secretary General

Launch of the Gender Equality Watch for Education in South Asia

As part of its partnership with UNGEI (United Nations Girls Initiative) ASPBAE has been commissioned by the UNICEF to develop a Gender Equality in Education Report Card for South Asia as part of the UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI).

The main purpose of the Gender Equality in Education Watch Report Card is to try and integrate a gender perspective across the different EFA goals and beyond. The current EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) and other monitoring frameworks assess gender only under goal 3 of the MDG rather than as a cross-cutting theme.

A second purpose is to try and link more closely to the advocacy of the women's movement around MDG 3 and address the problems of using only gender parity in basic education as an indicator of gender equality.

ASPBAE commissioned Swati Narayan as author and lead researcher for this study. Based on a number of virtual meetings and teleconferences, ASPBAE developed the methodological framework with a draft set of quantitative indicators and qualitative case studies.

Nitya Rao, ASPBAE's representative to the UNGEI Global Advisory Committee presented the conceptual framework at the UNGEI GAC meeting that was held on in June 27-28, in New York.

The Report Card would seek to build on existing indices and also throw up new indicators, in order to take note of South Asian context-specificity on the one hand, and for monitoring performance from a gender equality perspective on the other. The written text accompanying the scoring could highlight the major areas of strength and of weakness within state policies as far as attaining gender equality is concerned.

The Report Card would rely on existing datasets around the indicators in different countries. In addition, ASPBAE would also rely on UNGEI partners to provide inputs on quantitative data and qualitative case studies to illustrate the differences on the ground of particular policies and processes and to deepen qualitative analysis in areas where cross-country comparable quantitative data is sparse.

Building on the 2008 Asia Pacific School Report Card developed by ASPBAE in collaboration with the GCE (Global Campaign for Education), the Gender Equality in Education Report Card will draw on the foundation of analysis around: achievement of universal basic education, political will, growth in enrolments, quality inputs for teaching and learning, equal opportunities, transparency and accountability.

The Report Card is targeted for completion in September/October 2009.

ASPBAE is currently collaborating with UNGEI to finalise the proposed indicators and case studies, and to agree on the support that UNGEI and ASPBAE partners in the region may provide in filling data gaps in the research and in developing the case studies.

Reported by Swati Narayan, Independent Researcher

Review of Commonwealth Education Commitments – 16 CCEM and CPF 2007

“With a disarming smile, 11 year old Pappu who lives on the streets of New Delhi knocks on the window screens of luxury cars to sell ‘self-help’ books. But he cannot read a single word of these books himself. While every Monday morning, most children across the countries of the Commonwealth attend school, millions like Pappu with special education needs continue to remain excluded”. (Quote from the abstract of the review)

In the year 2000, there was a global commitment to not only to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but also Education for All (EFA). This momentum was reiterated at the 15th Commonwealth Consultation of Education Ministers (CCEM) in Edinburgh in 2003 and the 16th CCEM in South Africa in 2006, where education ministers from across the Commonwealth identified key areas of action.

ASPBAE has been commissioned by the Commonwealth Foundation to review progress on the education commitments made during the 2007 Commonwealth Peoples Forum (CPF) and 16th CCEM, gauging the achievements, challenges and learnings. This review is envisaged to ascertain whether (and how) the commitments have been useful in promoting education in the Commonwealth and to contribute to deepening accountability post the Ministerial processes.

Ms. Swati Narayan an independent education researcher was appointed to undertake the review and prepare the report on behalf of ASPBAE.

The researcher has prepared a well written report with three components with strong analysis detailing each region’s achievements, challenges and lessons in meeting educational commitments as stipulated by 2007 CPF and 16 CCEM:

- education challenges in E-9 countries of the Commonwealth Asia and Africa: the four most populous Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nigeria (i.e. the E4) which have one-third of the world’s out of school children and half of the adult illiterates.
- education challenges in the Pacific countries which have emerged from civil conflict with weakened education systems.
- education challenges in the island nations in the Caribbean, most of whom have already achieved universal primary enrolments, who face different educational challenges.

The review has been assisted by partners in the Caribbean and Pacific (identified with the help of the Commonwealth Foundation) who were invited to comment on the findings of the review, within the context of their respective regions – assess the level of progress, challenges and lessons learnt. The researcher has also drawn upon resources such as the Economist Intelligence reports or the UNDP Human Development country reports for quantitative and qualitative information gaps post 1996.

Excerpts from the abstract of the review:

“In all the E-4 countries there has been a visible decline in the absolute numbers of out-of-school children since 2000. Even earlier, in the decade of the nineties, Bangladesh had already increased girls’ enrolment in primary education from 66 to almost 100 per cent”.

“Teacher absenteeism from classrooms is another chronic problem in the E4. This truancy costs India US \$2 billion per year. Often teachers are demotivated about working in under-equipped, under-funded, under-staffed and overcrowded schools. In Nigeria, many teachers do not even have a desk to sit on in the classroom. High student dropout rates of 20 - 35 percent across the E4 are a natural outcome. Brain drain from English-speaking countries is also a serious problem especially in the Caribbean”.

“The Female Secondary Stipend Programme in the mid-1990s in Bangladesh played an undeniably important role in expanding girls’ enrolments. Universal school meals provided in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu which especially serve as an incentive for poor students have not only improved nutrition but also reduced dropouts”.

“Education in formal classrooms offers the potential to be ‘the single most effective preventive weapon against HIV/AIDS’ especially in the Caribbean where girls and young women are at three or six times greater risk. Infrastructural support to make all schools inclusive for children with disabilities is also the need of the hour”.

Priority areas for action and improvement towards and beyond the Education MDGs:

The key recommendations to governments in the Commonwealth based on a holistic perspective of universal basic education (pre-primary, primary, secondary and adult literacy levels), are:

1. Implement legal guarantees to provide free and compulsory universal basic education;
2. Strengthen the implementation of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol and make it legally binding;
3. Fill 40 million teacher vacancies and improve the availability of good quality education infrastructure;
4. Allocate 20 percent of annual government expenditure to basic services especially education, with 10-20 percent devoted to non-salary recurrent expenditure;
5. Ensure that overseas development assistance of donors is co-ordinated, predictable and long-term and 20 per cent is utilised for basic services especially education;

6. Eliminate social and gender inequality in education with special strategies for the retention of children from marginalised communities and special needs;
7. Invest in education for effective HIV/AIDS prevention.

The main findings of the review were presented at a Stakeholders' Forum Plenary held in Malaysia, in June 2009. The Stakeholders Forum Plenary will also mandate the findings and recommendations of the review for use in policy interventions.

Reported by Swati Narayan, Independent Researcher

Toolkit for Budget Tracking in South Asia

National education coalitions from South Asia, South East Asia and South Pacific have participated in an effort to review education scenario in their respective countries using sound research methodologies. This process of Regional Education Watch has been facilitated by ASPBAE in Asia and the South Pacific. Each sub-region had a specific thematic focus and South Asia focused on education financing and budget tracking.

The research in five countries (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal) revealed many striking issues which are being used in the ongoing advocacy efforts of civil society. A significant learning from the exercise was that budget tracking is still considered "too technical a field" and civil society organizations need sustained capacity building tools to understand, analyse and track budgets for meaningful and continuous engagement with policy makers. In the Education Watch Evaluation Process, the national coalitions felt that Toolkits addressing essential aspects of budget work can be immensely useful to utilize the full potential of education budget advocacy. In follow up to this, ASPBAE has initiated a process to facilitate the development of Budget Tracking Toolkits.

The scope and content of the toolkit is shaped by a continuous reflection process among the coalitions. The Toolkit is conceptualized as a consolidation of the different approaches to the budgetary process practiced in different countries, offering users a wide range of tools to choose from to suit their particular context. The process of distilling out the different approaches to develop user friendly tools consolidated into a toolkit will rely on capacities within the coalitions, rather than drawing from research institutions.

To deliberate on the key content areas of the Toolkit, to distribute the work and agree on a completion plan, a South Asia Workshop on Budget Tracking Toolkit was organized in Islamabad, Pakistan in February 26-28 2009. Representatives from education coalitions of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal participated in the workshop. The Workshop was hosted by the Pakistan Education Coalition. ASPBAE representatives Raquel Castillo and Tanvir Muntasim facilitated the workshop.

The 3 day workshop discussed issues in the global, regional and national context relevant for education advocates and then situated the budget toolkit initiative within these. The content areas of the toolkit were discussed in detail and the coalitions offered to write various parts of the toolkit. All in all, a highly participatory and collaborative process led to the operational plan for the toolkit. The toolkit is expected to be finalized within October 2009, after which it will be shared widely.

Reported by Tanvir Muntasim, South Asia Policy Advocacy and Campaigns Co-ordinator



National Coalitions meet in Islamabad to discuss the development of the budget tracking toolkit for South Asia

-Islamabad, Pakistan

UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development: Reflections through an ASPBAE lens

“Nothing new!” was how one of the participants described the how he felt at the end of the UNESCO World Conference of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) held from 31 March to 2 April in Bonn, Germany. The UNESCO World Conference was organised with the aim of taking stock of the achievements of the first half of the UNESCO Decade of ESD (DESD) and identify challenges that need to be addressed as we prepare for the second half of the DESD.

“That is not a fair assessment,” was the response of another participant. She explained that for individuals who have been involved with the key global environmental education conferences from Tbilisi (1977) to Stockholm (1980) to Rio (1992) and most recently in Johannesburg (2002), the key principles may not be new. I agreed, saying that for me (and possibly a significant number of ASPBAE members) who have for year been involved in adult and community education that has been holistic, participatory, contextual and transformative, the ESD principles are not new. However, there were for me a number of significant differences, achievements and challenges of ESD that the World Conference identified.

A key difference I would argue that that the global context has dramatically changed since the last major gathering in Johannesburg. One example that was often mentioned is the global financial crisis – with a discussion in one of the workshops I attended about whether this crisis was a threat or an opportunity in advancing the goals of ESD. I argued that for most of our members in the Asia-Pacific region this is not a new crisis – most of the communities we work with have and continue to live in poverty and this ‘new’ financial crisis will merely make things worse. However, the crisis is an excellent opportunity to learn more about why the current economic models have not worked and this provides a platform to apply the holistic perspective of ESD based on the interrelationships between the three pillars - economic, social and environmental dimensions. Note that in some countries politics is a fourth pillar and in some culture is added as an underlying dimension that impacts on all pillars.

The other key difference that I would also consider as an achievement is that ESD has moved, even though very slowly in little steps, to being acknowledged as a key element required if we are to achieve long-term and equitable development for all. A key indicator that was often mentioned at the conference was the number of countries that sent official delegations to the conference. The UNESCO ESD website

(http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/fileadmin/download/News/Report_on_World_Conference.pdf)

reported that “900 participants from 147 countries with 123 (with 3 Associate members) UNESCO member states were represented. Those who have been involved in previous ESD-related global conferences identify this as a significant change.

I would add that aside from the usual suspects from the environmental education practitioners, there were individuals and groups that came from a wide variety of interests. This was highlighted by one of the workshops that I attended together with Heribert Hinzen from DVV that looked at the shared goals of ESD and Education for All (EFA). Central to the discussions at this workshop were the important role that adult literacy has in achieving the goals of both ESD and EFA and the shared commitment to quality education that needs to be available, accessible and affordable. I think this is an achievement, which is consistent with the principles of ESD about the need to involve a variety of stakeholders and education practitioners in the creation of what I have often called simply ‘good’ education that acknowledges a shared vision of a sustainable future.

I would like to emphasise that I strongly believe that for us in ASPBAE, this is not about all of us becoming ESD educators, in fact I would argue that maybe unconsciously we have all led the way into shaping ESD – whether we were conducting literacy classes, gender-sensitivity trainings, HIV/AIDS awareness-raising seminars, indigenous people’s rights workshops, or our own ASPBAE Basic Leadership Development Course. We in ASPBAE have always been committed to an adult learning that has been contextual, participatory and transformative – which is how ESD would describe as quality education.

The challenges identified for the next five years of the Decade are overwhelming – climate change will continue to be a major global problem in search of new ways of learning and acting and the financial crisis will continue to put pressure in funding formal and non-formal education, to just name two. The Bonn Declaration (also accessible in the website above) forwards a number of key calls. One key call to action that is relevant to us in ASPBAE is the need to continue to develop stronger links between EFA and ESD. In the Asia- South Pacific region, we are best placed to work with our membership in developing the capacities of individuals and institutions to see that achieving EFA goes hand in hand with the achievement of quality education informed by the principles of ESD.

I believe that as an organisation that has been responsive to the changes in the global context in the last 40 years, we as a network of committed practitioners and our global partners will continue to respond and lead the way in developing not just of quality education but in advocating for quality education as a basic human right – a clear integration of the EFA and ESD agenda.

By J. Roberto Guevara, ASPBAE President



ASPBAE President J. Roberto Guevara together with Ms. Tomoko Shibao from ACCU in front of the Botanic Garden in Bonn, Germany last April 2009 when they attended the UNESCO World Conference of Education for Sustainable Development.

ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) in Practice

Our work with the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre of UNESCO (ACCU) as one of the five Centres of Excellence (COE) for ESD since 2006 is one arena where the integration of EFA and ESD is being operationalised.

Since October 2006 Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) has been part of the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) Centre of Excellence (COE) Program for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ASPBAE is one of five COEs in the Asia-Pacific Region, and aims to promote ESD in the UN Decade for ESD (2005-2014). For the duration of the Program ASPBAE's main objectives as a COE will be to promote ESD to its members, partners and networks, build capacities of national education coalitions in research and advocacy and linking national to regional education advocacy efforts, promote indigenous peoples issues and act as a model COE.

Over the past two years ASPBAE as a COE has undertaken new steps in promoting and linking ESD concepts directly to ASPBAE's regional programs, strengthening its networks and partnerships, continued capacity-building of national education coalitions such as Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network (PEAN), strategizing to develop ASPBAE training modules to integrate ESD components, and expanding the preparation and writing of status papers on Indigenous Perspectives on National Education.

Prior to the World Conference in Bonn, Robbie met with Ms. Tomoko Shibao from ACCU and Prof. Yoshi Nagata from Sacred Heart University in Tokyo to discuss the monitoring and evaluation outcomes of the ten Innovation Projects that were conducted as part of the ACCU-UNESCO ESD Program.

ASPBAE as an ESD COE participated in the monitoring and evaluation of the Innovation Projects. Santi Phongsavan, ASPBAE Program Officer in Canberra was part of the monitoring team that went to Malaysia in late 2008. Robbie who was a member of the ACCU-UNESCO ESD Experts Panel since 2005 (prior to becoming ASPBAE President in 2009) was part of the team that went to Bhutan and Thailand also in 2008.

By Santi Phongsavan and J. Roberto Guevara

Deepening Civil Society Capacities for Education Advocacy

From late 2003, ASPBAE has been implementing the Asia–South Pacific component of the Real World Strategies (RWS) Program.

The Real World Strategies programme is a unique demand-driven, context based capacity development programme which aims to strengthen the competencies of civil society organisations to develop and run targeted, time-bound campaigns and advocacy action with clear policy change objectives. It is built around the 'real world' capacity development needs of participating education campaign coalition partners in 10 countries all over the Asia Pacific.

To date, the RWS programme coordinated by ASPBAE has made modest policy gains. Looking at a few snapshots in South Asia:

- **In Sri Lanka**, the Coalition for Education development (CED) has objected effectively to the closure of the schools ordered by government on basis of commercial viability.
- **In India** the National Coalition for Education (NCE) has emerged as a strong network raising various issues on the right to education as a result of which education has become one of the fundamental rights in India enshrined in the Constitution. Though the introduction of a model bill in 2006 was a setback (as it proposes to defer the role of central government and make states contribute more), NCE has worked towards circulating a critical manual on the Model Right to Education Bill 2006 and conducting campaigns all over India through CSOs and teachers' unions which led to the turning down of the Bill by the governments in several states.
- **In Pakistan**, Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) has consolidated its position and credibility by engaging the newly elected government on the Education Policy Document on educational reforms. The series of consultations on the draft education policy has brought the policy debates out of the ministries and into the public domain for wider discussions and validation. The recommendations have been shared with the ministry for inclusion in the policy.

Further, policy analysis and research undertaken by ASPBAE and its partners contributed to enhanced analytical competencies, sharper articulation of alternative policy approaches and positions and a deeper understanding of policy processes. Coalitions' representatives don't rush unprepared into policy conferences anymore. They strategize jointly, based on intensive policy analysis and are equipped with feasible policy recommendations while appearing at key policy moments, as evinced in 2008 in EFA MDA and CONFINTEA processes.

CSO positions and representatives informed by alternative research and policy analysis initiatives like the Education Watch are increasingly finding spaces on government, inter-governmental and donor committees and in policy bodies, for example in the MDA and other technical reports in education in the Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia.

Education advocacy positions are gaining increased prominence in the alternative discourses of the broader CSO development community. Southern CSO advocacy positions are increasingly informing the international CSO debates and positions such as in the worldwide campaign against poverty marking the 2005 G8 Summit, the MDG Summit and the WTO Meeting. In the recent ASEAN Peoples Forum (February 2009, Bangkok) in preparation for the ASEAN Summit, participating coalitions along with international partners notably ActionAid, lobbied hard on issues of education quality, issues of exclusion particularly on securing the education rights of migrants and refugees, and on education financing. For perhaps the first time, these issues made their way to the joint CSO statement for submission to the ASEAN Summit.

Organisational capacities of CSO education campaign networks and bodies at national levels have grown even under highly challenging conditions of conflict and political instability.

Owing to all these, a stronger Southern voice in the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) processes has emerged.

Despite these gains as well as economic growth the Asia Pacific Region remains home to the largest number of poor people with the highest concentration of adult illiterates being in South Asia. It is home to the largest number in the Asia Pacific of out of school children – mainly poor; majority, women and girls.

This calls for increased and continued support to strengthen the work on education policy in the region.

A. ASPBAE-OSI Partnership for South Asia

In 2008, the partnership between ASPBAE and Open Societies Institute (OSI) began. The first phase has been completed in March, 2009. The partnership will continue until 2010.

The overall objective is to build the capacity of the national coalitions to translate the policy agenda into action at national and local levels by creating an effective frontline of EFA campaigners.

The key issues to be pursued in the period will include:

- 1) education financing including education budgets and ODA
- 2) capacity building on better decentralization and governance of basic education linked to SWAPs,

- 3) attention to the neglected goals of EFA especially Goals 3 and 4
- 4) protection of quality education provision in the face of climate change, food and oil crises, and the global financial crisis.

Three sets of activities will be pursued:

(1) Country-level capacity building workshops on education ODA aimed at broadening awareness and understanding of education aid issues within the key constituencies of the partner coalitions in South Asia are targeted in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. These would also provide arenas to share the outcomes of the earlier country studies in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, nationally. These workshops are also envisaged to provide opportunities to bring in other campaigners and advocates on ODA to facilitate joint analysis and explore coordinated action.

(2) Three (3) case studies on SWAP in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan are targeted – building on the earlier education aid studies. The studies will not be academic researches into SWAP technicalities, but rather organised as endeavours to identify policy entry points for the coalitions to engage with the governments and donors in meaningful dialogues, reflecting on a vital role in design, implementation and monitoring of the SWAPs.

(3) A Working Group Meeting on Sector Wide Approaches in Education will be convened to discuss the outcomes of the country studies and to jointly strategize the appropriate advocacy approaches and capacity-building efforts needed to strengthen work further in this area.

In addition ASPBAE is keen to offer dedicated support to PCE Pakistan and GCE Nepal in their over-all capacity development efforts more broadly, and specifically through OSI support, in developing their core competencies around education ODA and tracking education budgets enabling their effective engagement on issues of education financing in their respective countries.

B. The Civil Society Education Fund

Governments have the fundamental responsibility to guarantee education rights for all their citizens, but that does not mean that governments can do it all alone. Governments can only prioritise education in a sustained way if there is public support for them to do so and if there is wider national consensus on the importance of investing in education. This is one area where civil society can play a crucial role, particularly where different voices are brought together under common platforms to make the case for education and to monitor the current policies and practice at the local level.

Over the past decade there has been a remarkable emergence of such coalitions or campaigns, linking parents, teachers, women's rights advocates, faith based groups, social movements, child labour activists, the media, community based organization and NGOs. These broad-based alliances can also play a crucial role in building genuine national ownership of education plans, as well as in monitoring their progress in practice, tracking budgets and ensuring transparency and accountability in government spending on education.

Predictable, sustained funding support is critical to enable strong civil society institutions to accelerate and carry through efforts to contribute meaningfully in policy development and hold governments accountable to ensure the right of all citizens to education of good quality.

In September 2008, the Global Campaign for Education made an initial presentation on the concept of setting up a Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF), a mechanism envisaged to enable continued support for CSO education advocacy at the national level, to the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) Committee of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and requested permission to submit the CSEF proposal in December in Oslo, directly to the EPDF Committee.

At the EPDF meeting in Oslo the Committee agreed to fund the first year of the proposal. The Committee also agreed to prioritise two further years of funding for this work beyond this initial grant.

This project proposal to EPDF is designed to ensure that civil society organisations can fully assume the roles that they are expected to play according to the Dakar Framework for Action and specifically in respect to FTI country level processes. Its main objective is to provide support to the core work of national education coalitions in FTI and FTI eligible countries over a three year period so that they can more fully engage in the development of education sector programs with government and donors and track the progress of national governments and local donor groups in working towards the EFA goals.

The Global Campaign for Education will act as the executing agency for this project, recruiting a small secretariat to have overall oversight of three regional secretariats as well as funding committees which will award grants to national civil society coalitions.

For the first three years, Regional **Civil Society Education Funds** will be established in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These regional funds will support a competitive process whereby national civil society coalitions proposals enabling them to; (i) assume an active role in FTI and other education policy processes; and (ii) create National Civil Society Education funds to sustain this work in the longer term.

Three regional coalitions (ANCEFA in Africa, ASPBAE in Asia and CLADE in Latin America) will act as **host agencies**, employing small **secretariats** to promote the regional funds, prepare papers for funding committees, follow up national coalitions to ensure punctual reporting / accounting, promote experience sharing and offer capacity building support as needed.

Three regional funding committees / boards will be established (in Africa, Asia and Latin America) each made of credible individuals from across the region. These will be the decision making bodies for the allocation of funds but they will not manage the funds.

Three financial management agencies have been identified (Oxfam in Africa, Education International Asia Pacific in Asia, ActionAid in Latin America) to ensure sound financial management. They will manage the funds and will be responsible for distributing the resources to the national coalitions in line with the decision of the three regional funding committees provided that they are satisfied with the level of financial reporting from the country.

This proposal has been developed by GCE in close coordination with ANCEFA in Africa, ASPBAE in Asia and CLADE in Latin America and provides details of the key agencies and individuals who will be involved (see Appendix for full details).

The following are members of the **Asia Pacific Regional Funding Committee**:

- **Aloysius Mathews** is Education International's Chief Asia /South Pacific Region Coordinator.
- **Lalita Ramdas** is the international Chair of the Board of Greenpeace International, a renowned international environmental campaign organization.
- **Edicio Dela Torre** is a Board member of the Global Campaign for Education and President of E-net Philippines.
- **Dilli Chaudhary** is the founder of the Backward Society Education Organization (BASE), a nonprofit agency dedicated to advocating on behalf of Nepal's 200,000 bonded labourers.
- **Priyanka** looks after the Policy Advocacy work of the Global March Against Child Labour.
- **Farah Kabir** is the Country Director of Bangladesh Programme of ActionAid International
- **Lilian (Lan) Mercado** is the Country Director for Oxfam Great Britain in the Philippines.
- **Usa Duongsaa** is a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Chiangmai University. An HIV/AIDS education activists and campaigner,
- **Nani Zulminarni**: National Director of PEKKA, Indonesia and Ashoka Awardee for her work on empowering livelihood opportunities for poor women.
- **Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan**: GCE Vice Chair, ASPBAE Secretary General.

The Guidelines for Application to the Asia Pacific CSEF will be available at the ASPBAE website.

Announcing the Basic Leadership Development Course - 2009

The Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC) is the one of the core learning events hosted by ASPBAE. It is primarily conceived to be an induction to ASPBAE and to Adult Education work in the Asia Pacific region. The BLDC is also one of ASPBAE's flagship training programmes for building capacities and perspective on Adult Education. The BLDC acts as a space to foster interaction and sustain exchanges amongst the participants representing the ASPBAE membership.

The BLDC -2009 is scheduled to be held from 4th to 11th October at Chiang Mai, Thailand. Jose Roberto Guevara (Robbie, for short) the current President of the ASPBAE Executive Council and Sandy Morrison, ASPBAE's Immediate Past President are the Course Directors for the BLDC-2009. The BLDC this year will be hosted by the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), an ASPBAE member organisation.

The specific training objectives of this course are:

- To develop a holistic perspective on transformative adult education;
- Enhance skills and attitudes on processes that support transformative adult education
- Provide opportunities for the sharing of adult learning experiences;
- Facilitate structured reflection towards developing a basic understanding of adult learning principles and practised that are transformative, gender sensitive, rights-based and contribute to sustainable development;
- Gain a better understanding of, and develop a commitment to ASPBAE;
- Develop a critical understanding of the contexts in Asia Pacific that impact on adult learning;
- Contribute to developing a "talent bank" for the leadership in ASPBAE, the membership and the AE movement in Asia Pacific.

This year's BLDC would include modules such as: principles of adult learning; frameworks of and for transformative adult learning; contexts of adult learning in practise; leadership in adult learning practise; networking and policy advocacy; ASPBAE's thematic platforms and policy platforms and formulation of individual action plans. A new module on the theme "sustainable development" is being introduced this year.

Letters of invitation along with the brochure and the nomination form have been sent to all ASPBAE members. The brochure & the nomination form are also available on the ASPBAE website. The last date for sending in nominations was 19 June, 2009.

A Selection Committee from amongst the Executive Council (EC) of ASPBAE has been constituted to finalise the selection of participants for the BLDC.

Representatives from the EC are also being invited to participate in the BLDC this year, to deepen their appreciation of ASPBAE's over-all capacity-development efforts and thus help strengthen EC leadership and guidance roles.

Inception of the ASPBAE TIES – A Training Institute for Empowerment and Solidarity

To strengthen ASPBAE's ability to provide ongoing and sustained high quality training and facilitation in its various areas of work, ASPBAE has organized the ASPBAE Training Institute for Empowerment and Solidarity (ASPBAE TIES). ASPBAE TIES is a programme that brings together highly experienced trainers and facilitators with a strong historical relationship with ASPBAE work, and drawn from ASPBAE's membership and partner organizations.

The primary objective of ASPBAE TIES (Training Institute for Empowerment and Solidarity) is to build and support a committed and competent cadre, of regional trainer-facilitators in the field of Adult Education and Life-long Learning.

ASPBAE has been endowed with a dedicated group of trainers with a range of expertise on themes relevant to Basic & Adult Education, embedded in the regional as well as global perspective. With the changing contexts and increasing demands, the need to harness and make available the existing talent within the ASPBAE membership, for enhancing and making effective the work of Life-long Learning with a strong regional perspective cannot be over-emphasised.

A Core Faculty (Robbie Guevara, Sandy Morisson, Myo Min, Jerald Joseph, Jo Hann Tan, Nani Zulminarni, Bobby Garcia, Eric Amaldas, Deben Sharma, Bernie Lovegrove) has been constituted to anchor the ASPBAE-TIES and a Reference Group within the Executive Council (Saloni Singh, Timote Violeti & Taka Miyake) will advise and steer ASPBAE-TIES.

The ASPBAE Executive Council has mandated the initiation of the following ASPBAE TIES activities:

1. An ASPBAE Regional Facilitators Training to provide skills-based training on facilitation, popular communications and participatory approaches in training and other teaching-learning processes. Participants will be drawn from ASPBAE members and partners.
2. The Regional Facilitation Training would be followed by an 18-month mentoring programme for a selected group from amongst these participants. Face to face and internet-based mentoring will be provided by ASPBAE TIES faculty and trainers as part of this mentoring programme. The arenas for on-the-job training and mentoring may be ASPBAE-related activities or events organized by the ASPBAE member organizations these individuals belong to. Towards the end of the 18 month cycle the trainees will be convened in a regional process for evaluation and feedback.

15-20 second-line trainers and facilitators are targeted to come out of this process, and be available for involvement in ASPBAE work nationally, regionally and globally.

The Core Faculty and the Reference Group is scheduled to meet in August, 2009 to operationalise the ASPBAE-TIES activities.

Reported by Anita Borkar, ASPBAE Co-ordinator, Training for Transformation

Thematic Consultation Workshop and the Right to Learn Festival

One aspect of ASPBAE work which has been most appreciated by its members through the years, has been its ability to promote 'Communities of Practice' on adult education – across the diverse contexts, experiences and perspectives of the sector in the Asia Pacific region. These arenas for interaction and joint work have been pursued through issue-based or 'thematic' programmes namely: Adult Literacy, Women's Education, Education for Citizenship and Good Governance, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention, HIV/AIDS Education; Indigenous Peoples Education. This approach was eminently successful as the practice and understanding of 'adult education' was enriched by the work of a highly dynamic civil society sector and various movements of change in the region. It enabled the ASPBAE network to expand its membership, drawing from pro-poor, human-rights oriented, gender-just communities of action. It solidified ASPBAE's positioning in the cutting-edge development discourses of civil society regionally and globally on a range of issues.

Increasingly, however, the greater effectiveness of these arenas has come to question: As the programmes continued through years, the demand for more follow-through activities at various levels; and more sustained and frequent activities became greater. The demand for more issues and more thematic areas for ASPBAE to cover also expanded. All these, exerted great pressure to grow ASPBAE's financial allocations to the thematic programmes through time. Alongside this however, donor funding has increasingly been less available to support what are perceived as a disparate set of 'workshops for workshops sake'. While it is undisputed that 'learning' does occur in these arenas, and no doubt, the participants would have found these useful – these are considered unconvincing for funding priority as greater demands/expectations are set for demonstrating 'impacts', 'tangible outcomes'. As a result, the limited resources of ASPBAE, divided across a wide range of thematic programmes began to severely constrain the conduct of more meaningful and substantive activities in each of the thematic programmes – ASPBAE was increasingly spreading itself thin.

It is therefore proposed that ASPBAE continue to organize spaces for practitioners and advocates of adult education to come together in regional/cross-country spaces for interaction, exchange and learning along themes which better lend to accommodating a wider spectrum of adult education interests and issues. However, these should also be designed in a manner where follow-through or outcomes useful to ASPBAE are more readily evident.

The proposal is to build consensus around defining a vision for all the thematic programmes of ASPBAE, specifically by defining Benchmarks for Quality Adult Learning. The idea is to draw from the rich practice in each of the thematic programme to quantify & qualify what adult learning means in the respective thematic.

This initiative, it is hoped would fill in a serious gap in adult education work: in clarifying 'quality' adult learning in the myriad forms and expressions adult education takes in the context of the Asia Pacific region. The outcomes of this initiative will be very useful to advocates, policy makers, practitioners and scholars in adult education. For advocates, these can inform the thinking on alternative policies – especially on governance and financing - away from a minimalist/residual approach to adult learning. For practitioners, these will help set guidelines or yardsticks from which to assess their own work – in trainings, curricula, facilitation etc. It will certainly contribute to building a more robust knowledge base on adult education, drawn from the very rich experience of NGOs and community educators in the Asia South Pacific. This approach also strengthens a more organic link between the thematic and advocacy work – building on the efforts in the last years.

A Thematic Consultation Workshop would be organized, followed by Right to Learn Festival. The Right to Learn Festival is envisaged as a means to:

- 1) provide a common platform and space for adult education providers, especially from civil society, to come together to promote their work and learn from each other's practice;
- 2) through media work and mobilizations, draw broad public attention to this field of work and generate citizens/public interest in participating in adult learning activities and programs;
- 3) provide a sustained space to call attention of governments and decision-makers to the outstanding policy issues of adult education – hence a space for advocacy, policy engagement and dialogue.

A Working Group has been constituted to conceptualise the Thematic Workshop and the Right to Learn Festival in greater detail; deliberate on its form and content, and define its roll-out strategy.

Both the Thematic Consultation Workshop and the Right to Learn Festival are targeted to be held towards the end of this year/early next year.

Reported by Anita Barkar, ASPBAE Co-ordinator, Training for Transformation

NEW PUBLICATIONS

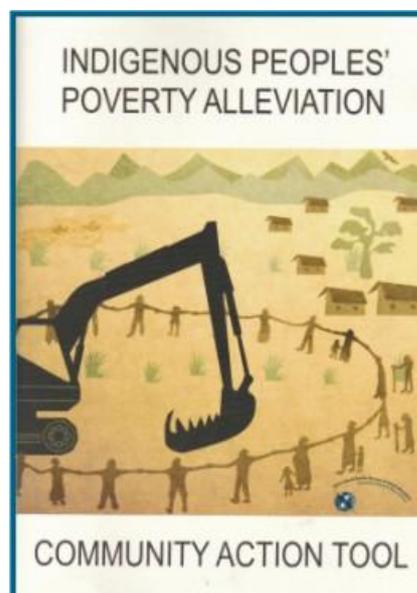
ASPBAE announces the publication of the Indigenous Peoples' Poverty Alleviation Community Action Tool

The CAT Tool is both a framework and a tool designed to assist indigenous communities and community organizers to investigate ways to alleviate poverty and combat various forms of discrimination which dominate the lives of indigenous people. CAT is developed from the view point of indigenous people, and is therefore, not "value-neutral." CAT respects the wisdom of indigenous communities and builds on their diverse contexts. It indicates the critical factors to be taken into consideration while working on indigenous peoples' development, and a respect for diversity makes CAT facilitative rather than prescriptive.

Historically, most indigenous peoples' have been endowed with an abundance of livelihood resources alongwith rich culture and knowledge. However they have been subject to systematic marginalization because of the constant inroads made into their space and resources by outsiders. The plunder of resources has had a negative impact on the cultural and spiritual life of the indigenous peoples. This is the main issue and agenda for community mobilization and struggle.

The understandings of the poverty of these indigenous peoples', its causes and the means to fight it need to be grounded in this historical reality. A rights-based approach to poverty alleviation, with specific relevance to indigenous people, underpins this CAT tool. The last section provides a sample list of tools that together with the framework may assist practitioners and communities in drawing out learning and encouraging reflection towards a process of action for transformation.

The mobilization of indigenous communities is fundamental for the application of CAT itself – as the framework is intended to empower those who are marginalized for sustained action. Approaches to facilitate this process are described here.



Indigenous People's
Education Toolkit

ASPBAE has just emerged from its Fifth General Assembly signaling another important phase of organizational renewal and consolidation. The Assembly was a culmination of a 2-year process of collective, broad-based reflection and consensus-building on the dynamic work of ASPBAE and the vast potential of its future work in promoting the right to education, and the power of transformative adult learning in achieving sustainable development poverty eradication and an end to violence and conflict.

The General Assembly elected the following persons on the Executive Council:

President: Jose Roberto Guevara, Australia

Immediate Past President: Sandy Morrison

Sub Region 1: Saloni Singh, Nepal and Dominic D' Souza, India

Sub Region 2: Yu Jun, China and Takafumi Miyake, Japan

Sub Region 3: Dina Lumbantobing, Indonesia and Aung Myo Min, Burma

Sub Region 4: Mua Vermeulen, Samoa and Timote Violeti, New Zealand

The first meeting of the Executive Council was held from 17-20th February in Manila.

The General Assembly approved the creation of the post of Immediate Past President. The Immediate Past President will play an ongoing role in guiding and supporting the ASPBAE EC in the transition phase and along areas where the IPP's assistance is sought.

The GA also agreed to adopt the ASPBAE name change proposal. The EC directed the Secretary-General to file the amendment to articles of incorporation with the Philippines Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to change ASPBAE name and update ASPBAE registration with names of new ASPBAE Executive Council members.

With the name change, the ASPBAE logo will be amended. Letters of intimation will also be sent to all representational forums that ASPBAE is part of.

The EC also agreed to liaise more closely with the work of education campaign coalition members providing oversight/guidance role to education campaign coalitions through the RWS and CSEF programmes.

ASPBAE Australia, has been registered with the specific purpose of facilitating access to Australian ODA for the South Pacific.

The ASPBAE Secretariat will continue to function from Mumbai, India. The EFA Advocacy and Campaigns office is based in Manila, Philippines and a team will continue to work from Canberra, Australia.

