

Strengthening capacities of Asia Pacific education coalitions in SDG4 advocacy

22-23 November, 2016, Bangkok, Thailand



The CSEF Consultation aimed to strengthen capacities of Asia Pacific coalitions in advocacy work towards SDG4 implementation.

ASPBAE, as the Regional Secretariat of Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF), organised the annual Asia Pacific Education Coalitions Consultation meeting in Bangkok. Approximately 70 participants, mainly from the education campaign coalitions supported by CSEF in the region, representatives from the CSEF Global Secretariat (Global Campaign for Education), and other international partners of ASPBAE took part in the consultation.

The meeting aimed to strengthen the capacities of Asia Pacific coalitions in advocacy work towards SDG4 implementation, particularly around monitoring indicators and education financing. Deliberations at the consultation included sharing key updates and advocacy plans of the

Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and ASPBAE towards greater collaboration in advocacy work at all levels (global, regional, and national), strengthening coalition engagement with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), especially on policy processes at the national level, actively engaging with civil society representatives on the GPE Board, involvement in the GPE replenishment campaign by the end of 2017, and updating on CSEF processes and requirements.



Deliberations included sharing GCE and ASPBAE advocacy plans towards greater collaboration, and strengthening coalition engagement with GPE.

The opening session started with a brief welcome by Thein Lwin, Thinking Classroom Foundation, Myanmar, and ASPBAE Executive Council Member, who called for fruitful collaboration among participants for the successful implementation of SDG4. This was followed by opening remarks by Jose Roberto Guevara, ASPBAE President. He stressed the importance of the three Cs – (1)

Celebration of the goal of lifelong learning in line with the SDGs (2) **Collaboration** with key stakeholders and organisations to achieve one common goal and continue to move forward; and (3)



Wolfgang Leumer, Global CSEF Manager, shared an overview of CSEF which supports civil society engagement in education sector policy, planning, budgeting, and monitoring. He also provided updates on CSEF achievements.

Commitment and the importance of transforming commitment into action, and to do action involving learning. The final opening message was delivered by Bernie Lovegrove, ASPBAE Regional Coordinator of the CSEF Regional Secretariat, who emphasized that the meeting was an important moment to reflect on what the coalitions have done and the next steps to be made.

Wolfgang Leumer, the GCE Global CSEF Manager, shared an overview of CSEF which supports civil society engagement in education sector policy, planning, budgeting, and monitoring. He also provided updates on CSEF achievements at the global level, including increased funding, increased membership, and increased engagements of coalitions in the different regions. He emphasised the importance of inclusion, quality and

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learning, and education financing in the advocacy agenda of coalitions supported by CSEF. ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove provided key regional updates, which included ASPBAE staff visits to coalitions in various countries, participation in sub-regional and regional advocacy meetings and events, and preparations for and organising the Regional Funding Committee Meeting for 2016.

In the discussion around strengthening coalition engagement with the GPE, especially on policy processes at the national level, Executive Director of NGO Education Partnership (NEP), Cambodia, Chin Chanveasna, shared good practices on policy engagement at different levels, including their representation in the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) which is the equivalent of the local education group in their country. He also



Chin Chanveasna, NEP Cambodia, shared good practices on policy, especially in the Education Sector Working Group, and other ongoing relevant national policy dialogues and processes.

shared the Education NGO Programme Intervention Mapping Survey to link NGOs with ongoing relevant national policy dialogues and processes, and evidence-based advocacy by conducting research studies and providing technical and financial support to grassroots research projects that will inform and strengthen NEP's advocacy agenda.

A presentation on the salient points of the GPE 5-Year Strategy (2016-2020) and processes at the national level was made by ASPBAE's Helen Dabu. She concluded by sharing the challenges of civil society organisations (CSOs) in engaging with these processes which include, amongst others, concerns around the mandate and composition of the local education group (LEG), duplication with other bodies and insufficient LEG inclusiveness, such as limited role of CSOs and teacher unions, inadequate communication and information sharing, contribution of CSOs to the education sector, difficulties integrating views of civil society, LEG capacity building, and LEG support not sufficiently adapted to fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

A panel presentation on how CSOs can strengthen its representation to the GPE Board was led by the Southern CSOs (CSO 2) GPE Board representative, Zehra Arshad, who is also the National Coordinator of the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE). Zehrashared the GPE Board composition and the processes and spaces for CSOs. She explained the GPE Board constituency categories, Board meetings, governance structure, and decision making in the Board meetings. She also presented an overview of key responsibilities and priorities for the 4



ASPBAE's Helen Dabu gave a presentation on the GPE 5-Year Strategy and processes at the national level. She shared the challenges of CSOs in engaging with these processes.



ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove provided updates on the GPE Replenishment Campaign and shared the Replenishment's objectives, targets, and current pledges by donors and country partners.

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GPE standing committees, namely, the Country Grants and Performance Committee, Governance, Ethics, Risk & Finance Committee, Strategy and Policy Committee, and the Coordinating Committee.

Bernie Lovegrove provided updates on the GPE Replenishment Campaign, including the need to situate the GPE Replenishment within a broader education financing need and campaign agenda. He shared GPE's Replenishment objectives, its targets, and current pledges by donors and country partners, and overview of milestones reached. Ideas on CSO financing campaign and the next steps were also discussed.

The panel discussion on strengthening capacities of coalitions in advocacy work towards SDG4 implementation, particularly around monitoring indicators and education financing, featured presentations by Tanvir Muntasim of ActionAid International, Rene Raya and Cecilia Soriano of ASPBAE, and Anjela Taneja of the GCE. Tanvir Muntasim presented the Toolkit on Domestic Financing for Education and presented the Community of Practice on Financing as a flexible and continuously evolving platform for GCE members for problem solving, mapping knowledge, and identifying gaps in education financing.



ASPBAE's Rene Raya presented ASPBAE's experience in training and advocacy in Education Budget Tracking, training workshops in various countries, and budget advocacy for all coalitions.



ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano made a presentation on regional spaces for policy advocacy. She gave an overview of the Education 2030 Thematic Working Group, the Regional Meeting of SDG4 Coordinators, and the Asia Pacific Framework for SDG4.

Rene Raya presented ASPBAE's experience in training and advocacy in Education Budget Tracking, including ASPBAE's work through EdWatch, training workshops in various countries, and budget advocacy for all coalitions. He shared how coalitions used the Toolkit on Domestic Financing for Education with examples from the Philippines, Nepal, Brazil, Mongolia, and Pakistan.

Anjela Taneja discussed the global monitoring and implementation processes, including the indicators (global indicators for all SDGs and thematic indicators for SDG4) and processes for 2017. She emphasised that the focus was moving to the national and that the following actions are needed – (1) Awareness raising about SDGs and Education 2030 Agenda (2) Working closely with Education Ministers for effective implementation (3) Synergy with national SDG implementation mechanisms (4) Development of national indicators and monitoring system (5) Accountability, follow-up, and review of the SDG and Education 2030 Agenda (6) Social accountability (7) Elections – considering education as a political issue and leverage change, and (8) Regional and global engagement with various organisations.

ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano made a presentation on the regional spaces for policy advocacy by first explaining the role of the Asia Pacific Regional Coordinating Mechanism (APRCM). She then gave an

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overview of the Education 2030 Thematic Working Group, the Regional Meeting of SDG4 coordinators, and the Asia Pacific Framework for SDG4.

Wolfgang Leumer of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) provided updates starting with GCE strategic focus areas, namely, financing for public education, strengthening public education systems, quality education, equity, non-discrimination and inclusion in education, transparency, accountability, the role of civil society in the education sector, and education in conflict and disaster. He then shared the strategic plan by and for the movement which involves extensive consultation with the GCE membership. He also discussed support for the movement through various measures such as networking, communication and learning, supporting national campaigns and advocacy, technical capacity and knowledge, and securing and managing funds.



Rasheda Choudhury, CAMPE Bangladesh and GCE Vice President, shared discussions coming out of the Johannesburg GCE Board meeting held in October 2016. Some key areas of priority for GCE work include building the youth movement, and finding ways to deal with shrinking democratic spaces and criminalisation of civil society.

Rasheda Choudhury, of CAMPE Bangladesh and GCE Vice President, shared the discussions coming out of the Johannesburg GCE Board meeting held in October 2016. Some key areas of priority for GCE work in the coming period include: building the youth movement and facilitating this process, finding ways to deal with the shrinking democratic space and criminalization of civil society, challenging privatisation and commercialisation of education, strengthening education governance and challenging the malpractice in the public education sector, sustained participation and engagement in international advocacy spaces especially related to SDG4 and the SDGs more broadly.

ASPBAE Secretary-General and GCE Board Member, Maria Khan, added important points to the discussions which focused on planning for the GCE General Assembly and the election of the GCE Board in 2018. It is of additional importance to the GCE members in the Asia Pacific as it will be hosted in this region.

A technical training was held on the online narrative reporting tool conducted by Wolfgang Leumer and the GCE CSEF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Manager, Louise Knight.

The meeting concluded with a presentation by Bernie Lovegrove on the next steps for regional capacity building plans in the Asia Pacific and key advocacy meetings and events that coalitions need to consider as they plan for their work in 2017.

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