



ASPBAE celebrates its 50th birthday in the Philippines!

30 January 2014

ASPBAE turned 50 years on 30 January 2014.

ASPBAE was founded on 30 January 1964 in Sydney, Australia. Arnold Hely from New Zealand was elected as the first Secretary-General and Shiva Dutta of India as the first President.

50 years on, ASPBAE celebrated this important day in Manila at the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) Theatre. The event was attended by approximately 60 educators and education policy advocates from South East Asia, South Asia, Pacific, Europe, Latin America and many from the ASPBAE membership in the Philippines. There was strong representation from ASPBAE partner organisations, notably, DVV International, the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), the Latin American Adult Education Association (CEAAL), the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and the UNESCO Institute for Life Long Learning (UIL).

The event was planned in collaboration with PETA Theatre to make the event both celebratory and reflective. A number of mixed media performances were mounted during the sessions.

ASPBAE's former President Sandy Morrison (2005-2008) led the session describing the three main epochs in ASPBAE's history. She offered the highlights of the different epochs in ASPBAE's life, set against the backdrop of important developments in the world and in the region in those times. ASPBAE's "50 years in 50 slides" slide show presentation was also presented, depicting relevant moments and people in ASPBAE's history.

Following this, participants were divided in different groups based on the time period of their identified "most significant ASPBAE activity". Participants described their association with ASPBAE, the aspects of ASPBAE's work that they found most meaningful and the prominent themes of ASPBAE's work they related to. The PETA dance artists then depicted the identified themes in dance tableaus through an interactive exercise with the participants.

Another highlight of the event was a Panel Discussion reflecting on the changing landscape of adult learning policy and practice. The panelists included Carol Anonuevo (Deputy Director, UIL) who spoke on the Current Trends in Adult and Lifelong Learning Policy and Practice and presented the findings of the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE); Dominic D'Souza (ASPBAE Executive Council Member from South Asia) spoke on the Challenges Ahead on Education for Sustainable Development in a Climate-Changed World; Carol Doyanan (representing youth from the indigenous Ayta community in the Philippines through the organisation LAKAS) who spoke on Youth and Life Skills; and Uwe Gartenschlaeger, (Deputy Director, DVV International) who spoke on Adult Education in Europe. The panel discussion was moderated by ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan. A lively discussion with the participants followed the very rich presentations of the panelists.

Post the panel discussion, participants were asked to gather in small groups and reflect on what shape ASPBAE's work should take in the future. They reflected on the emerging issues that ASPBAE should prioritise in the coming years and what forms of engagements ASPBAE should



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take to continue to be responsive, relevant, and innovative, and a leading civil society organisation in education advocacy in the Asia Pacific. Another interactive exercise led by the PETA dance artists culminated this session.

In the end, all the participants sang a song wishing ASPBAE a happy birthday. Cheers and toasts were given to ASPBAE at a celebratory dinner. A large banner was prepared and displayed highlighting birthday messages from many of ASPBAE members and friends from the Asia Pacific and from across the world. Some of those present at the celebratory dinner also wrote their birthday messages on the banner.

The 50th birthday celebrations on January 30 were a memorable occasion which offered a very good start to the year-long 50th anniversary commemorative events planned through 2014.

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