Promoting transformative action for peace and sustainability through education

By Shigeru Aoyagi, Director, UNESCO Bangkok

In the rural villages of Maharashtra state in western India where Manisha Gangode lives, girls' movements are restricted. They are not allowed to roam around or speak to boys. Many young girls are forced, long before they are adults, to marry a boy of her parents' choosing. However, as part of a project supported by ASPBAE and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), a group of young marginalised girls in villages just like Manisha's have come to realise that they have the agency to learn, question, and change their worlds. They have become Shodhini.

"Shodhini" is a Sanskrit word meaning female researcher, a title proudly adopted by the young women participating in the Youth-led Action Research (YAR) on girls' education. In this research process, the young women learnt to do many things they had never done before. They conducted a census of the girls in their respective villages and analysed the results, calculating the percentages of out-of-school girls and child marriages.

The YAR project also triggered action based on the data compiled by the young women. Manisha and her friends presented their reflections and analyses on girls' education and livelihoods before the village council, lobbying for

ESD for 2030 emphasizes that community is where transformative action for sustainability takes place.

the construction of a library in the village. They now participate in village council meetings and organise women's meetings, advocating and providing support for other young marginalised women.

This process of reflection, analysis, and action that the Shodhini go through is the very heart of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED), both of which are expressed in Target 7 of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Often referred to as SDG 4.7, the target states that we must *"by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development"*. ESD and GCED empower us to engage with and transform our society as citizens of our community, our country, and the world. As a crucial part of the SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning and an enabler of all SDGs, transformative education, like ESD and GCED, is a key instrument in shaping a sustainable future.

The aspiration of transformative education is highlighted in the upcoming international framework for ESD entitled

Contents

UNESCO Bangkok works towards enhancing capacities of community and non-formal educators to guide learners through the process of taking action for sustainability.

'Education for Sustainable Development: Towards Achieving the SDGs *(ESD for 2030)*'.* This framework builds upon the lessons learnt and experiences of UNESCO's many years as the lead UN agency in ESD promotion. After the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) and the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD (2015-2019), UNESCO will be moving forward with this new framework, which has been endorsed by UNESCO's Executive Board and will be discussed at UNESCO's General Conference and the United Nations General Assembly later this year.

ESD for 2030 emphasizes, as the YAR project illustrates, that community is where transformative action for sustainability takes place. In this framework, community is seen as a platform for all sustainability actions and the nodal priority area of action for ESD. In this regard, ESD can be utilised to identify shared values and issues that collectively concern the community.

From this perspective, UNESCO Bangkok has initiated the project *'Promoting Community-based Education for Sustainable Development'* with the generous support of the Government of Japan. The aim of this project is to enhance

capacities of community and non-formal educators to guide learners through the process of taking action for sustainability. With the expertise of many partner organisations, including ASPBAE, preliminary learning modules were developed to help navigate this reflection to action process. The modules are currently being piloted in five countries: India, Japan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and the Philippines.

In one of these pilot projects, marginalised farmers and educators in the communities of Karnataka in southern India are looking to change their unsustainable harvesting practices. By drawing on examples from their familiar forest environment and from locally sourced learning materials in their own language, they are able to apply the transformative learning process in contexts that are relevant to them. They can then easily guide others through the same process in order to change their livelihoods for the sustainability of their own communities.

UNESCO Bangkok and ASPBAE have been leading the way in bringing these main tenets of ESD - the importance of transformative action and community - to the forefront. Projects such as YAR and the community-based ESD project are particularly pertinent as they are grounded in transformative action at the community level in the context of people's real lives.

Moving forward, we must continue to work together for the sustainable development of our communities and our world. The Shodhini do not only learn about their own communities, but they also reach out to girls in other villages so that they too can feel empowered to take life into their own hands. Similarly, we must all continue on in our efforts, but of course, we cannot do it alone. Bringing about change is no easy feat, but it is all the more attainable if we, like the Shodhini, come together to take collective action to build a peaceful and sustainable future.

Projects such as YAR and community-based ESD projects are pertinent as they are grounded in transformative action at the community level in the context of people's real lives.

* The draft framework "Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (ESD for 2030)" can be accessed at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366797.

EDITORIAL

Addressing citizenship education and Education for Sustainable Development in Central Asia

By Nasiba Mirpochoeva, Co-opted Executive Council member of ASPBAE representing Central Asia

Nasiba Mirpochoeva, Co-opted Executive Council member of ASPBAE representing Central Asia

Central Asia remains a strategic region in socio-economic and political arena in the world. It ranks number 5 in Asia among sub-regions ranked by population. 39.1% of the population in Central Asia is urban. The majority lives in rural areas.

The five Central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan - are diverse by their history, languages, socio-economic development, and number of inhabitants. Being rich in cultural and linguistic diversity, the region is a source of creativity, growth, and human development, but it may give rise to overwhelming social tensions, exclusion, and discrimination of human rights due to existing political regimes. For instance, Turkmenistan remains a close country with strict restrictions of CSOs in the country.

As the world progresses to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, the progress of Central Asian countries in promoting education and sustainable development is quite vibrant. However, terrorism and violent extremism nowadays are becoming a common threat to any country in the world. There were some cases of violent extremism in Central Asian countries in the last decades. Nowadays, the leaders of these countries take measures to prevent violent extremism outbursts. In light of these issues, the Central Asian region remains vulnerable to discrimination and violent extremism.

Globally, the role of citizenship education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are becoming crucial in our age. As stated in SDG 4, Target 4.7 - *"By 2030, to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality,* *promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development."*

Based on Target 4.7, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and ESD are recognised as mutually reinforcing approaches and they aim to equip young people with knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors to constructively and creatively address present and future global challenges. In addition, these approaches help learners to create more sustainable and resilient societies and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive and secure world.

Lifelong learning, including adult and community education, appropriate technical and vocational education, higher education, and teacher education are all vital components of capacity building for a sustainable future. The purpose of education is help learners of all ages to become responsible, productive, and active citizens. Today, cognitive skills are not enough to thrive and even survive in our world. Learners need to acquire non-cognitive (or soft) skills. Youth in particular can expect to change jobs, professions, and deal with personal challenges throughout life. To do so confidently, learners need to know how to learn independently, to communicate, and to prevent and solve conflicts[1].

Particularly, Central Asian countries are facing lots of challenges. In 2010 in south of Kyrgyzstan, there were several ethnic conflicts between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz population with clashes and violence that led Uzbeks fleeing Kyrgyzstan. After the collapse of the USSR, tensions and clashes in trans-border areas between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan occur from time to time and are mainly linked with demarcation and delimitation issues between these countries and water distribution in border areas.

In this regard, Central Asian countries, with the help of development partners, are implementing various initiatives and programmes to engage education experts, representatives of ministries, universities, and teacher training institutions to increase the professional level of pedagogical staff for the implementation of education for sustainable development through the training of teachers. However, many project and programmes on ESD and global citizenship are conducted through non-formal education systems. For example, UNDP in Tajikistan, with the help of civil society organisations (CSOs), are carrying out youth programmes to foster friendly and peaceful relationship among people in trans-border areas of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

In this context and the framework of the 2030 Education Agenda, it is critical to explore how the education system (formal and non-formal) can support addressing challenges through ESD and GCED in Central Asian region. Since the concepts under target 4.7 refer to a wide range of issues, they need to be prioritised and reinforced for Central Asian countries to be able to design programmatic responses and subsequent evaluation and monitoring capacities to address them.

Many ESD and global citizenship projects and programmes are conducted through non-formal education systems in Central Asia.

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1 http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Nairobi/esdgceden.pdf

Promoting SDG 4.7 to the next level in Japan

By Eno Nakamura, Secretary-General, DEAR (Japan)

ESD has been promoted and implemented by schools and local communities in Japan. It has also been included in the educational policy.

Development Education Association and Resource Center (DEAR), a civic organisation working on development education in Japan and an ASPBAE member, has formulated a mid-term plan (2019-2021) focusing on transforming the core values of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into teaching and learning and advocating to make the process of formulating the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy more transparent and democratic.

Although ESD and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) are at the core of SDG 4.7, ESD has been promoted and implemented by schools and local communities in Japan. ESD has also been included in the educational policy - for example, fostering leadership in sustainable societies has been included in the National Curriculum Standard which will be implemented from 2020. Furthermore, the number of UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet - a global network of over 8,500 educational institutions in 180 countries) increased to 1149 in Japan, the largest in the world.

However, mainstreaming SDG 4.7 at all levels of education still seems far from being achieved. The following are three fundamental questions to promote SDG 4.7 to the next level in Japan -

Why do we promote ESD?

In the UN Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, it is clearly mentioned that *"ESD is transformative education in that it aims at reorienting societies toward sustainable development"*. However, the GAP statement made by the government of Japan lacks the most important part – defining the aim of ESD. The word "transformation" is missing. This poses a risk of ESD being used for different aims.

For example, in the development agenda of the G20 (Group of 20 - an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union), ESD is explained as quality education for achieving sustainable growth. This implies that ESD is merely a tool to promote economic growth, and not a means to achieve a just and sustainable society. In a meeting of the G20 held in Osaka in 2019, DEAR emphatically emphasised that aim of ESD includes working towards just and sustainable societies.

How can we ensure citizen's participation in formulating ESD policy?

In Japan, several civil society organisations working on human rights issues, the environment, and development have compiled their knowledge and experience in ESD research and practice. However, this knowledge and

In a meeting of the G20 held in Osaka in 2019, DEAR emphatically emphasised that aim of ESD includes working towards just and sustainable societies.

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Dialogue between the government and civil society on ESD and the Sustainable Development Goals is limited in Japan.

experience did not find mention in government policy. Although a round table meeting on ESD is held every year, a dialogue between the government and civil society on ESD and the Sustainable Development Goals is limited.

DEAR submitted a 'Proposal for Citizens' Participation in ESD Policy making" to the government of Japan at the UNESCO ESD Conference held in Nagoya in 2014. It now engages in ESD and SDG civil society advocacy through the Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE, also an ASPBAE member) and SDGs Japan nationally, as well as ASPBAE and Bridge 47 regionally and globally. However, more needs to be done to ensure that ESD policy formulation is more transparent and democratic.

Who is left behind in basic and quality education?

Although most children go to primary and lower secondary school in Japan, there are still many children left behind in basic and quality education. For example, many foreign students are unable to get an education because several schools do not accept foreign students who do not speak, read, and write Japanese. According to the government, the number of children and youth with foreign roots in public and lower secondary school who need Japanese language training was 44,000 in 2016[1]. Among those, only 76% were eligible to receive an education.

Furthermore, the number of cases of bullying in schools and absentees was the highest in 2017[2]. 414,378 cases of bullying at public and private primary and lower secondary schools were reported in the year. The number of absentee children in primary and lower secondary schools was 144,031 in 2017. It is safe to say that the right to education for all children is not guaranteed and that schools are very often not safe and secure learning spaces. As a member of SDGs Japan, DEAR has suggested that these issues be the top priority of the SDGs Action Plan of the government of Japan.

Although there are many good ESD practices applied in education policy, school curriculums, and the policy of local communities, in many cases, ESD is still treated as a subject or thematic topic in Japan. To promote SDG4.7 into mainstream education, it is imperative that these three fundamental questions are addressed with the government and all stakeholders.

To deepen the discourse and offer a new proposal to the government, DEAR is engaged in collecting data related to the SDGS and ESD challenges and practices from its member organisations, and will work towards this with other organisations as well, including with ASPBAE.

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1   Ministry of Education, 2016, Text in Japanese is available at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/29/06/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2017/06/21/1386753.pdf

2   Ministry of Education, 2018, Text in Japanese is available at http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2019/01/10/1412082-2901.pdf

Schools in Fukushima build back communities better

By Shibao Tomoko, Senior Adviser, Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

For communities in Futaba County, consisting of 6 towns and 2 villages of coastal Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, what happened after the 11 March 2011 earthquake and Tsunami, and the following accidents of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, was no more than an "unprecedented disaster". Right after the nuclear accident in Fukushima, all residents and the local government were forced to move out of the area. The 5 high schools were forced to make shift operations at 8 so called "satellite" campuses in and outside of the Fukushima Prefecture.

Towns and villages in Futaba County, together with the Prefecture, discussed its education rehabilitation plan and decided in 2013 on a plan to open a new high school with a new vision of education, while it deemed very difficult to re-establish the 5 existing high schools.

Thus, Futaba Future High School came into existence and welcomed the first batch of students on 8 April 2015 – four years after the disaster. In March 2018, at the first graduation ceremony, the school flags of the 5 high schools were highlighted as a symbol of continuing tradition and unity of the community.

The communities had been suffering before the earthquake, Tsunami, and the nuclear plant accident from persisting issues including depopulation and lack of vital industries. The incidents made the phenomenon suddenly harsher, with the community no longer the same physically and socio-economically. The Futaba Future High School was established to respond to the needs of the community, with the conviction that working with the community will provide the students with quality education.

"Be the change maker! Self-

The Futaba Future High School was established to respond to the needs of the community, with the conviction that working with the community will provide the students with quality education.

reliance, Collaboration, and Creation are the basis for transformation of oneself and society" - this has been a message of the Futaba Future High School. The curriculum places a strong focus on project-based learning based on community needs. Students are grouped into different fields of research such as nuclear disaster risk reduction, renewable energy, media, and agriculture, and learn from their community experience and from each other. The other dimension is to cultivate personality through theatric workshops and philosophical dialogue.

The existence of the school itself gives hope to the local community. When such schools decide that students should keep learning from the community, a new avenue of sustainability begins to take shape.

The curriculum at the Futaba Future High Schools places a strong focus on project-based learning based on community needs.

Strengthening women-headed family leadership for rehabilitation and reconstruction post disasters

By Nani Zulminarni, Director, PEKKA Indonesia, and President, ASPBAE

PEKKA Indonesia offers a comprehensive and integrated disaster response programme which is community-led and where education is a core component.

The global sustainable development agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, underscores the importance of education in mitigating disaster and conflict, as well as in protecting people in vulnerable situations. The Education 2030 Framework for Action stresses that, *"countries must institute measures to develop inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in crisis contexts"*. SDG 4.7 calls on governments to ensure that strategic responses to build peaceful and sustainable societies are embedded in the education systems – promoting safety, resilience, social cohesions to reduce the risks of conflict and natural disasters. Alongside these systemic responses, education systems – both formal and non-formal - also need to be equipped to offer life-saving tools – knowledge and skills and psychosocial support to those immediately affected by crisis.

In PEKKA's experience in Indonesia, the post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction process is generally focused on the construction of physical infrastructure, while attention to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of socio-economic life remains limited.

Capitalizing on the long experience of organising by Serikat Pekka in various regions in Indonesia, including in post-disaster and conflict areas such as in Aceh, West Kalimantan, and North Maluku, PEKKA has developed a programme called, '*Strengthening of Women Headed Family's Leadership for Transformative and Inclusive Community-Based Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Post Disaster*' which offers a comprehensive and integrated disaster response which is community-led and where education is a core component. Serikat Pekka are women-headed family associations with independent grassroots community-based membership developed from the PEKKA organising process efforts.

Sudden life changes occurring post disasters have forced communities to adjust their lives dramatically. Some of them have to live in refugee camps which bring with it a whole set of challenges, including lack of clean water, sanitation, and access to livelihoods. Furthermore, they are forced to share crowded spaces with other families without any clear separation of spaces between men, women, and children, creating insecurity and fears of sexual harassment, especially for women and children, and a sense of uneasiness in an environment of very limited privacy. They need new livelihoods and social skills to respond to the situation. Therefore, psycho-social support must be integrated into the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction and this must take into account vulnerabilities of certain groups, including women, children, and the elderly.

There are several strategies PEKKA has developed for transformative and inclusive community-based education for rehabilitation and reconstruction post disaster. They include -

Data collection and monitoring

PEKKA trains PEKKA leaders at the grassroots level to carry out data collection in the field and facilitate the process of discussion and analysis

Prior to a disaster, education initiatives must include strengthening community-based protection mechanisms through preparedness and planning.

of data collection results. The data collected are on economic aspects, leadership, social cultural conditions, results of reconstruction and rehabilitation work and their impact on community members, and existing assets and other social capital. This data and analysis is used to monitor ongoing reconstruction and rehabilitation. Learning materials for capacity building of community leaders and to develop an advocacy agenda on appropriate relief and rehabilitation responses have been developed.

Capacity building and strengthening of Serikat Pekka as community-based organisations

PEKKA develops special materials and modules to improve the knowledge of Serikat Pekka members in disaster management and community organising post disasters. These modules and materials are used as training and information kits to build awareness and build capacities in the disaster situations.

Advocacy for comprehensive, transformative and inclusive community-based social economic rehabilitation and reconstruction activities

PEKKA facilitates Serikat Pekka to organise advocacy forums with local governments and disaster management agencies at the local and national levels. The advocacy agenda covers three important issues including – (1) the role of female-head family leadership; (2) community-based and self-reliant economic development; and (3) diversity in Indonesian families as the basis for pluralism.

PEKKA recognises the crucial role of education in disaster relief, post-conflict, and peacebuilding efforts. Prior to a disaster, education initiatives must include strengthening community-based protection mechanisms through preparedness and planning, conflict education mitigation, and peacebuilding. Education is vital in building sustainable peace and development.

Enabling education and lifelong learning in Suwon, Korea

By Taehee Kim, Lifelong Learning Specialist, Suwon, Korea

Recently, the world has been facing global challenges, including rapid globalisation and climate change, deepening polarisation, disputes and conflicts, and an increase in extreme violence. Thus, the goal of sustainable development was established in accordance with human aspirations for a more peaceful and sustainable future, and the city of Suwon also established evaluation indexes and implementation tasks for sustainable development.

Among them, SDG 4.7 can be said to be the goal of all learners by 2030 to ensure the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development through education based on sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, peace and non-violence, global citizenship, cultural diversity and cultural contribution to sustainable development.

To share the administrative value of sustainable development efficiency, the Suwon city government introduced sustainable development policies by supplementing integrated management measures that focus on corrective

In Suwon, ESD is implemented to benefit the youth through adoption out-of-school youth support, multi-child support for public education, and lifelong learning.

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Suwon City established a programme where citizens gather without instructors to select topics of interest such as human rights, politics, gender equality, and social participation for discussion and analysis.

goals and convergence. In order to implement this plan, the framework ordinance on sustainable development in Suwon was enacted in November 2017 to set the basic strategy (10 years) and implementation plan (4 years). The legal basis was prepared to promote sustainability assessment and evaluation index monitoring and to form and operate relevant committees. In November 2018, the private-public sector agreed on the assessment indexes for sustainable development (152) and the implementation plan.

In particular, ESD-level implementation tasks are actively implemented to benefit the youth the through adoption out-of-school youth support, multi-child support for public education practice, lifelong learning to strengthen democratic civic capabilities, and the establishment of a lifelong learning information platform. Among other things, the Commission strives to diversify democratic civic education to meet the concepts of global civil education and sustainable development education as emphasised in SDG 4.7. In order to foster democratic citizens' qualities through participation and communication from a lifelong learning perspective, the government actively operates various programmes such as those based on knowledge, functions, values, and attitudes.

As part of its lifelong learning approach, Suwon City has established specific programmes, such as applying and strengthening education methodologies and operating a self-study space where people can organise lectures, courses, workshops, and related learning clubs. This year's most popular programmes included YouTu-gong and Young Study Circle. YouTu-gong is a classroom where citizens gather without instructors to select topics of interest such as human rights, politics, gender equality, and social participation for discussion and analysis.

Another programme, the Youth Study Circle, is a participatory workshop where young people in their 20s and 30s gather once a week to practice rational communication, address conflicts, and creatively solve problems facing the youth.

In the future, there will be a series of courses on basic civil rights and a leadership process for fostering youth leaders, as well as understanding the democratic system with human rights groups within the government. In addition, the Space X and the Go-go dance in Suwon Lifelong Learning Center are open for participation in lifelong learning activities such as exchanges, exhibitions, performances, and network gatherings. Recognising the huge role and meaning of lifelong education in global citizenship education, Suwon city plans to continue developing and implementing programmes through more civic engagement and communication to promote education and learning.

Implementing SDG Target 4.7: the contribution of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)

By Sabine Detzel, International ASPnet Coordinator, UNESCO

ASPnet pioneers innovative and creative teaching and learning approaches to translate global concepts into practice at the school level

The 2030 Agenda and SDG 4 have undoubtedly given a new impetus to UNESCO's largest global network: the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), The key areas for education listed in SDG target 4.7, where the content of education is addressed for the very first time in a global agenda of this nature, have been at the core of ASPnet's work since many decades: *"…education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development"*.

Today, there are over 11,700 ASPnet members in 184 countries, including some 2800 educational institutions in the Asia Pacific region. They all voluntarily committed to place UNESCO's values and objectives prominently in their school's organisation, lessons, projects, and policies. They emphasize the four pillars of education, as defined in the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission of Education for the Twenty-first Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within*[1] - learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and, above all, learning to live together.

ASPnet also contributes to UNESCO's key function of laboratory of ideas, by pioneering innovative and creative teaching and learning approaches and pedagogies to translate global concepts into practice at the school level and to advance the transformation of education systems and policies.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and sustainable lifestyles is one of ASPnet's current three thematic action areas. When the UN General Assembly declared the ESD Decade for the years 2005-2014, thousands of ASPnet schools in all regions were already prepared and mobilised to contribute at local and global levels. A 2009 UNESCO publication[2] features examples of ASPnet projects in ESD, including schools from China, The Cook Islands, Japan, Thailand, and Uzbekistan.

In Japan, the government decided in 2008 to promote and disseminate its national ESD policy with a strong focus on ASPnet. Membership was massively expanded to over 1000 schools, supported through training, educational materials, and a special university network (ASPUnivNet) providing guidance and assistance to principals and teachers of UNESCO Associated Schools.

What is new then in the SDG context?

First of all, the SDGs themselves are an excellent tool to adopt a holistic, interdisciplinary approach

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1   *Learning: The Treasure Within: Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, UNESCO 1996*

2   *UNESCO Associated Schools - Second collection of good practices: education for sustainable development, UNESCO 2009*

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for Basic and Adult Education
Learning Beyond Boundaries

Many ASPnet schools have adopted the SDGs as a helpful framework to effectively reinforce their teaching and learning about all subjects of target 4.7, and how they are interlinked.

to education for sustainable development which has long been encouraged throughout the ASPnet, but which schools often found difficult to apply. The seventeen SDGs and the wide range of themes they cover make it easier to embed ESD throughout the curriculum, rather than treat it as a separate subject. Many ASPnet schools have therefore adopted the SDGs as a helpful framework to effectively reinforce their teaching and learning about all subjects of target 4.7, and how they are interlinked.

Secondly, SDG 4, and target 4.7 in particular, brought to the forefront the common vision of ESD and of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) - the empowerment of learners of all ages to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. It comes with a need, both inside and outside classrooms, for interactive,

participatory approaches and pedagogies that foster critical thinking and bring about changes in attitudes and behaviour.

Thirdly, from 2016-2018, UNESCO carried out a unique ASPnet pilot project, funded by the Government of Japan, within the framework of the project *'Today for Tomorrow'* for the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development: 258 member schools in 25 countries around the world participated in *'Implementing a Whole-School Approach (WSA) to Climate Change'*. A whole-school (or whole-institution) approach means that the whole campus is used as a learning environment. The school includes action for sustainable development and addressing climate change in every aspect of school life - governance, teaching content and methodology, campus and facilities management as well as partnerships.

This transformative approach mobilises all school stakeholders and empowers children and young people to play an active role in their schools, families, and communities. In the Asia Pacific region, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, and Nepal participated in the global experimentation of this new approach.

In addition to concrete learning outcomes on climate change and sustainable development, the whole-school approach brought about in many places a new vision of what a school can be and do for those that study, teach, or work in it – and for surrounding communities.

UNESCO's support included international and national school facilitators training, the Guide "Getting Climate-ready"[3] and other materials, as well as the organisation of over 30 video-conferences for interregional exchange and learning among the participating schools. These video-conferences had a particularly strong effect on students and teachers alike, as they created a tangible and real sense of belonging to a global community, of unity around the same objectives. Furthermore, schools drew inspiration from the diverse projects presented by their peers. Teachers smiled as they explained: *"We had hoped to slow down the intense pace of activities during the pilot phase but we couldn't stop the students who, quite to the contrary, had so many new ideas and wanted to do more!"*

Building partnerships to connect schools and their surroundings, including with NGOs or associations, was key to the process of implementing

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3   *Getting Climate-ready: a guide for schools on climate action*

a whole-school approach to climate change as it provided students with learning experiences outside of the classroom, supported project sustainability, and increased overall impact. Partnerships also proved beneficial to external partners by providing them with opportunities to review and improve their work and commitment with regard to education and to the SDGs.

As a result of the outcomes of the UNESCO pilot project[4], several countries decided to expand the whole-institution approach, such as Lao PDR which scales up not only to all its ASPnet schools but also to other educational institutions at all levels throughout the country. Among the significant changes found in the pilot schools were that students and staff have a greater sense of belonging in school; students learn more meaningful life skills from hands-on experience; and teachers have new professional learning opportunities.

UNESCO will soon invite ASPnet members around the world to adopt the whole-institution approach and develop, with and for their students, local school plans towards sustainable development and lifestyles. This successful and innovative approach can inform and inspire decision makers which seek ways and means to achieve target 4.7 and to transform education systems.

4   Documentary on the UNESCO Associated Schools Network Pilot Project "Implementing the whole-school approach to climate change"