

ASPBAE THIS MONTH

September 2019

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Envisioning a world with access to inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all

74th session of the UN General Assembly

[Full article](#)



Building capacities on education sector planning and defining the strategic plan of education coalition CSEP in Timor-Leste

[Full article](#)



Cementing priorities in Papua New Guinea for Education Out Loud

[Full article](#)



Multilingualism in focus at UNESCO International Literacy Day conference

[Full article](#)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reviewing progress on gender equality in the Asia Pacific, 25 years after Beijing - [Full article](#)

The Promise of Large-Scale Learning Assessments - [Full article](#)

Adult Education in Global Times: An International Research Conference - [Full article](#)



Equity and inclusion, quality teaching and learning, and education financing emerge big issues at regional education meeting

5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education (APMED 5)

The 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education (APMED 5) saw the strong and very vocal participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Asia Pacific, many of them ASPBAE members.

[Read more](#)

Civil society makes key policy recommendations on SDG 4.1 and SDG 4.6 in lead-up to Asia Pacific education meeting

CSO preparatory meeting for APMED 5

Civil society organisations (CSOs), including fourteen national education coalitions from the Asia Pacific, met at a preparatory meeting in Bangkok to agree on key policy recommendations for SDG 4.1 (primary and secondary education) and 4.6 (youth and adult literacy and numeracy) in the lead-up to the 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education (APMED 5). - [Read more](#)

Advocating for Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Asia and the Pacific

ASPBAE, in collaboration with DVV International, organised a capacity building workshop on ALE advocacy in Bangkok. The workshop aimed to strengthen knowledge and skills of civil society education coalitions and adult education providers to enable the scaling-up of ALE advocacy in their countries and other transnational policy spaces. - [Read more](#)

Mapping the way forward with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and preparing for new working modalities

An inter-regional meeting with Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) Regional Secretariats, including Regional Communication Focal Points, was held to engage in key issues related to the closure of the third phase of the CSEF programme, transition to the Advocacy for Social Accountability (ASA) programme, the delivery of GCE's 2019-2022 strategy, and a communications strategy to support GCE's strategic plan. - [Read more](#)

Education News and Views

UNESCO warns that, without urgent action, 12 million children will never spend a day at school.

[Read more](#)

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Member of the Month

Wan Smolbag Theatre, Vanuatu

Wan Smolbag Theatre (WSB), established in 1989, is a non-government organisation based in Vanuatu, but operating all over the South Pacific.

WSB is primarily a development theatre group aiming to create awareness and engagement with issues surrounding education, health, governance, the environment, youth, and gender.

The use of development theatre led WSB into other areas such as reproductive health clinic, youth centres, and a rural-based conservation network.

Photo of the Month



International Literacy Day is observed on 8 September to promote the development of literacy and skills, universal access to quality education, and learning opportunities throughout people's lives.

ASPBAE Lens

ASPBAE would like to dedicate a space in the Bulletin to showcase photos its staff have taken. We want to feature their perception of life around them, the interesting things they see, inspiring moments they observe, and beautiful imagery they capture that reflect education and lifelong learning in a myriad different ways and forms. In this edition of the Bulletin, we feature a photo taken by Bernie Lovegrove, CSEF Programme Regional Coordinator.

Bernie Lovegrove

CSEF Programme Regional Coordinator



EDUCATION NEWS AND VIEWS

This section of the Bulletin is dedicated to highlighting news and events from the Asia Pacific and from around the world focusing on education and lifelong learning. For this edition, we highlight new data published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) on the world's out-of-school children.

UNESCO warns that, without urgent action, 12 million children will never spend a day at school



New data published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) on the world's out-of-school children reveals little or no progress over more than a decade. Roughly 258 million children, adolescents, and youth were out of school in 2018; around one sixth of the global population of school-age children (6 to 17 years old). Even more worrying is the fact that unless urgent measures are taken, 12 million primary school-age children will never set foot in a school. In view of such figures, it will be difficult to ensure inclusive quality education for all, one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the international community for 2030.

The new data on out-of-school children confirms recent UNESCO projections showing that, at the present rate, one in every six children will still be out of primary and secondary school in 2030, and that only six out of ten young people will complete secondary education. The data also highlights the gap between the world's richest and poorest countries. According to UIS data, 19% of primary-age children (roughly 6 to 11 years old) are not in school in low-income countries, compared to just 2% in high-income countries. The gap grows wider still for older children and youth. About 61% of all youth between the ages of 15 and 17 are out of school in low-income countries, compared to 8% in high-income countries.

"Girls continue to face the greatest barriers," says Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO. "According to our projections, 9 million girls of primary school age will never start school or set foot in a classroom, compared to about 3 million boys. Four of those 9 million girls, live in sub-Saharan Africa, where the situation gives cause for even greater concern. We must therefore continue to centre our actions on girls' and women's education as an utmost priority."

While the number of out-of-school children appears to have dropped from 262 million in 2017, the fall is largely due to a methodological change in the way the indicators are calculated. As shown in a new paper, whereas primary school age children enrolled in pre-school, were previously included in the total, they are no longer counted as being out of school. However, this does not change the overall rates of children out of school.

The new data was released by UIS – the custodian of SDG 4 data – a week before the United Nations General Assembly met to examine progress towards the SDGs and to discuss the funding needed to achieve them. The data demonstrates the pressing need for more action to achieve quality education for all. This goal can still be reached, provided we renew our efforts while collecting more complete and reliable data to monitor progress on education access, completion and quality.

Until recently, all children of primary age (roughly 6 to 11 years) who were not enrolled in primary or secondary school were counted as being out of school. This included primary-age children who were still enrolled in pre-primary education. By removing this relatively small group of children (most of them in high-income countries), the total number of out-of-school children of primary age has been reduced by about 4.6 million. [\[BACK\]](#)

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The 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education (APMED) saw the active participation of 18 national education coalitions amongst ASPBAE's membership and another 3 adult education organisations, with representation from the youth and persons with disabilities.

Equity and inclusion, quality teaching and learning, and education financing emerge big issues at regional education meeting

**5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education (APMED 5)
1-3 October 2019, Bangkok, Thailand**

The 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education (APMED) saw the strong and very vocal participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Asia Pacific, many of them ASPBAE members. Amidst a group of over 250 participants including government representatives, UN officials, NGOs, and academics, CSOs called for strong financial commitments to ensure universal access to 12 years of free, publicly-funded quality primary and secondary education. They called for governments to end years of neglect of adult literacy and accelerate efforts to set in place legislative frameworks and policies ensuring publicly-funded youth and adult literacy programmes to be run in collaboration with other stakeholders and local communities, ensuring quality provisioning and leaving no one behind. There was also a call for holistic and inclusive education and stronger measures to end all forms of discrimination, including those based on gender.

Amongst ASPBAE's membership, there was active participation of 18 national education coalitions and another 3 adult education organisations, with representation from the youth and persons with disabilities.

APMED 5, with the theme – *Delivering Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education in the Era of Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Development* – focused on SDG 4.1 (primary and secondary education) and SDG 4.6 (youth and adult literacy and numeracy) and included several plenary and parallel sessions.

In his opening address, Shigeru Aoyagi, Director, UNESCO Bangkok, highlighted the challenges related to access to education of children, youth and adults, “*Many children in lower secondary education are not proficient in reading and in mathematics. In the Asia Pacific, there are 258 million out-of-school children at primary and lower secondary levels and 20 million out-of-school children at the primary level. Of the 773 million youth and adults world-wide who cannot read and write, 446 million are in the Asia Pacific.*” He warned that, “*We are not on track. If we continue, we will never see results. We have to come up with concrete recommendations on how we can address the issue of out-of-school children, youth, and adults, especially those from marginalised communities*”. The UNESCO-Bangkok Director concluded his address by stressing that the education sector has been slow in catching up with global trends. He encouraged APMED 5 participants to look at ways which lend to accelerated efforts to remove values that hinder equity, inclusion, and equality in education. He called for recommendations that lead to diversifying learning outcomes in formal and non-formal education systems to eradicate illiteracy, tailored to learning needs and linked to skills development for decent work.



In his opening address, Shigeru Aoyagi, Director, UNESCO Bangkok, highlighted the challenges related to access to education of children, youth and adults

Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific (UNICEF EAPRO), Karen Hulshof, offered three strategies to tackle the learning crisis – (1) Strengthen and invest more in education systems; government

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Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific (UNICEF EAPRO), Karen Hulshof, stressed that education should be adaptive and flexible and embrace innovative ideas for multiple learning pathways.

budgets need to prioritise education by committing at least 4-5% of the GDP or 15-20% of national expenditure to education; (2) Ensure availability of reliable data and evidence as they are at the heart of efforts to tackle inequalities and develop relevant policies for those not in school or those not learning. Data is needed to determine who is being left behind, where, and why; (3) Promote new way to accelerate learning. Education should be adaptive and flexible and embrace innovative ideas for multiple learning pathways.

Duriya Amatavivat, Deputy Permanent Secretary General of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO, Ministry of Education (Thailand), spoke about the major components of education in the Thai context - raising the awareness of young people of SDG 4 and the global goals; government and CSOs working together towards ensuring quality education; and forging strong partnerships for SDG 4.1 and 4.6 in line with the 20-year national strategy of Thailand.

Also in the opening plenary, ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano presented the civil society Spotlight Reports on SDG 4 where she elaborated on the ways CSO participated in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes, the collaboration between ASPBAE and national civil society education coalitions in preparing Spotlight Reports on SDG 4, the main features of the reports and the SDG/SDG 4 roll-out process in the Asia Pacific, including the role of CSOs. Regarding the status of SDG 4 in the region, Thea stressed that while many governments integrated SDG 4 in the education sector plans, there was a lack of financing framework and strategies to achieve the SDG 4 targets. Instead of increasing the funds for education, she cited the regional summary report on the decreased spending of education in 15 countries in Asia Pacific based on the UIS data from 2016-2018. At the same time, out of the 16 countries, only 7 have institutionalised SDG 4 mechanisms for CSO participation. Some of the issues she highlighted were low education financing and the growing trend of education privatisation; widening disparities, discrimination, and segregation; poor learning environments, facilities, and infrastructure; shortage of teachers, poor training, and low salaries; low priority for non-formal education, adult education, and literacy; lack of disaggregated data; and inadequate TVET/skills training for decent work, including for youth employment.

In offering a way forward, Thea emphasised that Asia Pacific CSOs call for – (1) A clear financing commitment and strategy; (2) A strong public education system within a lifelong framework; (3) Priority to women and the furthest behind for equity; (4) Teacher capacity, participation, and wellbeing; (5) Political will for good governance in education at national and sub-national levels; (6) Institutionalised civil society participation representing diverse voices.

ASPBAE members and civil society organisations played an active role in several of the parallel sessions and sub-regional discussions during the event.

Ehsanur Rahman, of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, spoke in a plenary discussion on the global and regional overview on SDG 4.6 on youth and adult literacy and numeracy. He addressed NGO contributions to SDG 4.6 and links to other SDGs. He highlighted the advantages that CSOs benefit from such as the ability to reach



ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano presented the civil society Spotlight Reports on SDG 4, the collaboration between ASPBAE and national civil society education coalitions in preparing Spotlight Reports, the main features of the reports and the SDG/SDG 4 roll-out process in the Asia Pacific, including the role of CSOs.

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the unreached, innovative and flexible programming, experiential expertise, cost effective outreach, and community involvement in interventions. He also identified the role of regional and global organisations such as ASPBAE and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in advocacy and capacity building for adult learning and education and emphasised the combined role of governments, CSOs, and development partners in realising SDG 4 and its targets. He linked the importance of SDG 4.6 with other goals such as Equal rights to economic resources (SDG 1.4), Resilient agricultural practices (SDG 2.4), Access to health care services (SDG 3.7), and Women’s participation and leadership (SDG 5.5), amongst others. In conclusion, Ehsan called for shared responsibility of all actors towards Education for Sustainable Development (GCE) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) for cultural and environmental integrity and an inclusive and secure world.



Responding to some of the challenges related to literacy in the South Pacific, Kilala Devette-Chee, ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific, highlighted that the Pacific has the highest youth illiteracy rates in the world.

Ehsan also addressed a parallel session on measuring the functional literacy skills of youth and adults in Bangladesh. He presented the adult literacy context in the country including literacy analysis, measurement, methodologies, and assessments, as well as mapping of non-formal education (vocational education) and linkages with literacy, skills, and lifelong learning.

Responding to some of the challenges related to literacy in the South Pacific, Kilala Devette-Chee, ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific, highlighted that the Pacific has the highest youth illiteracy rates in the world. She spoke emphatically about the lack of basic reading and literacy skills in schools and lack of data. *“The youth are not literate despite going to school. There is no data collection to identify youth, including those with disabilities. We do not know how many of them are literate, and how many are women and girls. There is no funding from governments towards the youth. Governments need to allocate much more funding towards these issues.”*



Vichelle Yumuya, of SPEAK, E-Net Philippines, and a youth representative, along with Nguyen Tuan Linh of the Vietnam Association for the Deaf, took part in a panel discussion on ‘Ensuring the learning continuum as a right - linking SDG 4 Targets 4.1 and 4.6’.

In another parallel session, Ram Gaire of NCE Nepal (an ASPBAE member) presented a civil society perspective on the right to education. In the session, which highlighted the importance of sufficient investment to fulfil the fundamental human right of the “Right to Education”, Ram emphasised a rights-based approach to education financing, including encompassing an approach that is non-discriminatory, accountable, transparent, and participatory. He elaborated on the 4 S’s in appraising education financing, namely – Size (amount relative to the size of the economy; % to GNP or GDP); Share (% share of the total budget); Sensitivity (is the allocation equitable, inclusive, and gender-just?); and Scrutiny (is it transparent and participatory?).

Ram presented recommendations which included a clear, strong financing commitment and strategy (progressive increase in public investment for education, increased domestic revenues; progressive tax reforms - ending tax exemptions, addressing tax evasion and avoidance); no commercialisation of education; regulation of the private sector in education; and a vibrant civil society on SDG 4.

CSOs actively participated in several other sessions at APMED 5. Vichelle Yumuya, of SPEAK, E-Net Philippines, and a youth representative, along with

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Ram Gaire, of NCE Nepal, emphasised a rights-based approach to education financing, including an approach that is non-discriminatory, accountable, transparent, and participatory.

Nguyen Tuan Linh of the Vietnam Association for the Deaf, took part in a panel discussion on *'Ensuring the learning continuum as a right - linking SDG 4 Targets 4.1 and 4.6'* where they explored the linkages between SDG 4.1 and 4.6 in terms of how they contribute to lifelong learning for all and the realisation of a learning continuum at the country level. Shaheen Attiq-ur-Rahman of Bunyad Foundation (an ASPBAE member in Pakistan) addressed a session on *'Effective Promotion of Literacy through ICT and Creation of a Literate Environment for All'* where she provided a country perspective of literacy and elaborated on the creation of a digital hub, or E-learning, for rural communities to share information, spread awareness, and bring communities closer together through communication and technologies. She specifically explained the use of mobile rickshaws, mobile phones, and computers to tackle illiteracy, especially amongst marginalised women and girls.

A session on *'Preventing and reducing marginalisation through youth and adult literacy programmes'*, moderated by ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano, saw valuable inputs and presentations by ASPBAE's members in India and Afghanistan. Archana Dwivedi of Nirantar (India) gave a gendered perspective of youth and adult literacy programmes, focussing on the role of and outreach to women, and Jan Mohammad Ahmadian of the Afghanistan National Education Coalition (ANEC) spoke about youth and adults affected by conflict and the impact on literacy and learning. Both Archana and Jan spoke in the context of generating policy and programme recommendations that will be useful for the implementation of SDG 4.6, providing evidences and key messages that will push governments and international partners to invest in youth and adult literacy, and promoting education reforms that ensure the implementation of literacy programmes within a lifelong learning system. Their inputs also focused on preventing and reducing marginalisation through youth and adult literacy, and effective financing policies and strategies for literacy, including data collection, implementation, and monitoring of SDG 4.6.



Archana Dwivedi of Nirantar (India) gave a gendered perspective of youth and adult literacy programmes, focussing on the role of and outreach to women.

DVV International's Johann Heilmann moderated a session on *'Innovative Pedagogies for Disadvantaged Youth and Adults'*, a session that focussed on strategies to meet the education needs of ethnic minorities, factory workers, and migrants in the contexts of Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand.

ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing Southeast Asia, Nguyen Thi Kim Anh, represented civil society at the closing ceremony of APMED 5 where she called for the need to have indicators to address marginalisation. She stressed that international partners need to allocate funds for the education of marginalised groups, such as for girls and women's literacy and education, for inclusive education, and social protection for marginalised learners. Click [here](#) to watch her closing remarks.



Shaheen Attiq-ur-Rahman of Bunyad Foundation, Pakistan, addressed a session on 'Effective Promotion of Literacy through ICT and Creation of a Literate Environment for All' where she provided a country perspective of literacy.

APMED 5 concluded with the presentation of a set of draft recommendations (currently being finalised) to remind all stakeholders of the urgency in addressing the remaining gaps and issues, and accelerating national efforts in achieving SDG 4-Education 2030 in the region. The draft recommendations can be summarised into 3 categories – Equity and Inclusion; Quality of Teaching and Learning; and Financing.

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ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove participating in APMED 5.

Equity and Inclusion - Remove barriers for inclusion at all levels. Countries need to enact/enforce policies that address inclusion and equity, in all of its diverse aspects that allow and promote opportunities for all learners, from children to adults. **Quality of teaching and learning** - improve classroom-learning strategies, achieve learning outcomes beyond simple, narrow competencies of literacy and numeracy, and embrace the multi-dimensional and holistic aspects of learning and literacy outcomes for lifelong learning. **Financing** - Establish sustainable and innovative financing mechanisms to address the significant funding gaps in education expenditure, to progressively realise universal free 12 years of education and youth and adult literacy.

The draft recommendations ended by stressing that ultimately, governments, as the main duty bearers to uphold the right to education, must lead the efforts to improve the quality of education and ensure we progress towards SDG 4. Efforts need to be rooted with a rights-based approach in order to leave no one behind.

Finally, in the SDG 4 National Coordinators' Meeting, which followed the SDG 4 technical and capacity building meeting, ASPBAE presented the follow-up efforts of its members post APMED 4. Thea presented the efforts of the national education coalitions in engaging governments in the implementation of the Regional Recommendations for Action for SDG 4 Targets 4.3 and 4.4 which were agreed upon in APMED 4.

ASPBAE undertook active social media work throughout APMED 5. You can click on the following links for the various blogs and videos –

[Promoting adult learning and education within a lifelong learning framework at APMED 5](#)

[Civil society makes key policy recommendations on SDG 4.1 and SDG 4.6 in lead-up to Asia Pacific education meeting](#)

[WATCH: ASPBAE and DVV International talk about progress in SDG 4 and what changes they expect to happen](#)

[Afghanistan coalition \(ANEC\) calls for increased financial resources to education and a standardised non-formal education curriculum to tackle illiteracy](#)

[Adult education must be officially recognised to promote literacy and lifelong learning – AED Kyrgyzstan](#)

[NCE Nepal calls for strong financial commitments to ensure the right to education Educate, Empower, and Engage young people to participate in education processes](#)

[Adult learning and education – A shared responsibility! \(Ehsanur Rahman, ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia\)](#)

[ALL means ALL – AFE Mongolia](#)

[Nirantar \(India\) calls for focus on marginalised women and girls for holistic, inclusive education](#)

[Vietnam Association for the Deaf calls for increased access to education tailored for people with disabilities](#)

[WATCH: ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing Southeast Asia, Member Nguyen Thi Kim Anh, speaks at APMED 5 closing ceremony. \[BACK\]](#)

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The ASPBAE-organised civil society preparatory meeting for APMED 5 was held to agree on key policy recommendations for SDG 4.1 (primary and secondary education) and 4.6 (youth and adult literacy and numeracy).

Civil society makes key policy recommendations on SDG 4.1 and SDG 4.6 in lead-up to Asia Pacific education meeting

CSO preparatory meeting for APMED 5
30 September 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

Civil society organisations, including fourteen national education coalitions from the Asia Pacific, met at a civil society preparatory meeting in Bangkok. This meeting, organised by ASPBAE and facilitated by Cecilia (Thea) Soriano and Bernie Lovegrove, was held in the lead-up to the 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (AMED 5), for civil society organisations (CSOs) to agree on [key policy recommendations](#) for SDG 4.1 (primary and secondary education) and 4.6 (youth and adult literacy and numeracy).

The meeting started off with sharing achievements and follow-up activities from the 2018 APMED 4, which focused on SDG 4.3 (equitable access to TVET and tertiary education) and SDG 4.4 (relevant skills for work).



Jan Mohammad Ahmadian of ANEC, Afghanistan, participating in the CSO APMED 5 pre-meeting in Bangkok.

The reports indicated a very active and vibrant civil society engagement in education policy in general, and in the SDG and SDG4 processes, in particular. A major achievement for ASPBAE and the national education coalitions was the development of CSO Spotlight Reports on SDG4, many of them highlighting issues related to youth, entrepreneurship skills, increased budgets for programmes, inclusion of women and girls and other vulnerable sectors, and more investments for TVET, skills development, and training. These informed ASPBAE's and its members' engagement in the 2019 regional and global High-level Political Forum (HLPF) processes.



Shirley Abraham of KoBLE, national education coalition in Vanuatu, sharing achievements and follow-up activities from the 2018 APMED 4.

At the country level, several reported on efforts to actively influence policies on TVET and non-formal education: NCE Nepal was invited to be part of the Board of a high-level advisory commission on TVET. NEW Indonesia was actively involved in establishing an inter-agency network on TVET in the country. Bunyad in Pakistan, played an active role in the development of an explicit policy on non-formal education for out-of-school children, youth, and adolescents in Punjab. The legislation was passed in 2018 after tireless advocacy efforts over a period of 15 years. The government took on board some recommendations from the coalition in Mongolia (AFE Mongolia) directed at making education sector indicators more sensitive to equity considerations, recognising the need for more disaggregated data. KoBLE, the coalition in Vanuatu began to dialogue with their government on the importance of non-formal education for youth and adults. Azad Foundation had been engaging with the Indian government on skills training for marginalised women focused on livelihood options that break gender stereotypes. In the Philippines, civil society organisations mobilised almost USD 1 million for education for people with disabilities. The funds will be used for learning materials for TVET and skills development of people with disabilities in senior high schools.

This was followed by a session on key recommendations to ensure the learning continuum from SDG 4.1 to 4.6 from an equity and inclusion lens and youth perspective – a core area for discussion in APMED 5. Nguyen Linh, President,

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Kilala Devette-Chee of PEAN (PNG), and ASPBAE EC Member representing the South Pacific, sharing the context of SDG 4.3 and 4.4. in the sub-region.

Mobilisation Board of the Vietnam Association of the Deaf, and Vichelle Yumuya, of the Student Party for Equality and Advancement of Knowledge (SPEAK), E-Net Philippines, spoke in the session.

Nguyen Linh highlighted issues of exclusion faced by students and learners with disabilities such as no free access to primary education for deaf people, outdated curricula, the absence of support mechanisms for different disabilities, lack of sign language in schools, and limited opportunities for people with disabilities to access an appropriate education in remote areas.

He recommended that there be, amongst others, – (1) minimum standards for inclusive education; (2) protection and safeguarding of children, especially those with disabilities (bullying, harassment); (3) inclusive education for all genders, not just boys and girls or women and men; (4) greater awareness of disabilities; (5) employment of teachers with disabilities; (6) dedicated budgets for education for persons with disabilities (PWD); (7) teachers who teach in sign language and teachers qualified to teach PWD; (8) better data on PWD.



Nguyen Thi Kim Anh of the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA), and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing Southeast Asia, participating in APMED 5.

Representing the youth, Vichelle Yumuya stressed that education should not be market oriented and that there should be a platform for students to exercise their civic engagement, both in formal and alternative learning systems (ALS). She further stated that youth should be encouraged to participate in education policy and implementation and that the government should provide opportunities to equip young people with the competencies and skills to engage meaningfully in policy formulation.

Talking about higher education, Vichelle pointed out that only 12% of economically weaker sections of society are able to go to university in the Philippines. Though education is free, access is highly limited with competitive examinations for admission in universities highly skewed in favour of more economically well-off students

Mitzi Chan, of E-Net Philippines, presented policy recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) that emerged from the regional ASPBAE-DVV International capacity building workshop on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) advocacy held in June 2019 in Bangkok. These were envisaged to inform the advocacy positions of CSOs on SDG 4.6 on Adult Literacy within the framework of adult and lifelong learning.



Nguyen Linh, President, Mobilisation Board of the Vietnam Association of the Deaf, highlighted issues of exclusion faced by students and learners with disabilities.

Ram Gaire of NCE Nepal led the discussions on policy recommendations regarding financing equity in SDG 4.1 and 4.6. He highlighted the need for a rights-based approach to budgeting (non-discriminatory, accountable, transparent, participatory).

Some recommendations included programme and funding priority for women and the furthest behind (children with disabilities, marginalised youth); scale-up, sustain, and improve programmes that effectively address equity; increase in public investment for education and an increase in domestic revenues through tax reforms and ending harmful tax incentives; non-commercialised education

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Noopur of NCE India sharing the India context of education and literacy.

and regulation of the private sector in education. He underscored the need to sustain a vibrant civil society voice on SDG 4 for equity, social justice, and peace.

The meeting concluded with a session on social media for APMED 5. The session, facilitated by ASPBAE's Medha Soni, focused on effective ways of using Facebook and Twitter, especially hashtags and Twitter handles, and briefed on the blogs to go live during APMED.

The civil society participants to APMED 5 will work towards ensuring that messages emerging from the key policy recommendations formulated at the preparatory meeting be disseminated and that linkages are forged with government representatives and other key decision makers in education. [[BACK](#)]

Advocating for Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Asia and the Pacific

4-6 September 2019, Bangkok, Thailand



ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan (centre), and Thea Soriano (R) with Ichiro Miyazawa (L) of UNESCO Bangkok at the ALE workshop in Bangkok.

"Once you stop learning, you start dying" – This quote by Albert Einstein lends well to the fact that Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is an integral part of the right to education and lifelong learning. It comprises all forms of education that aim to ensure adults participate in society and to the world of work. ALE dates back to the ancient cultures of China and Rome. During the glorious time of adult education in the 20th century, several countries, including the Soviet Union, Turkey, Cuba, and China, amongst others, were able to eliminate illiteracy through campaigns and social movements and educate those oppressed to reflect on their situation and demand their rights.

However, ALE took a backseat in the 21st century when the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) focussed mainly on primary education. ALE became a sub-sector of the education system with governments devoting less than 1% of their education budget to it. In 2015, with the adoption of the Agenda 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals, ALE emerged as an essential part of the lifelong learning framework, which is the guiding principle of the education agenda. Nevertheless, the financial and human resources for ALE are still scarce. Effective advocacy and lobbying are critical to ensuring a stronger voice for policy and programmes focussed on ALE.

With this background, ASPBAE, in collaboration with DVV International's Regional Office in South East Asia, organised a capacity building workshop on ALE advocacy in Bangkok. The workshop aimed to strengthen knowledge and skills of civil society education coalitions and adult education providers to enable the scaling-up of ALE advocacy in their countries and other transnational policy spaces. It also focussed on providing a space for exchange, for building a shared understanding of ALE concepts and the critical regional and global policy debates around it. Regionally coordinated and country-specific action plans were developed to campaign for ALE policy development and financing as well as government collaboration with civil society organisations (CSOs), especially those working with marginalised communities.

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Resource persons and participants deliberated on the context of ALE globally and regionally and the global policy frameworks that inform ALE practice.

Highlighting the role of ALE in addressing inequality, Maria Khan, ASPBAE Secretary-General, and Johann Heilmann, Regional Director, DVV International, South East Asia, welcomed the participants while highlighting the challenges in calling attention to ALE in the regional and global education agenda.

Invited resource persons and the participants deliberated on the context of ALE globally and regionally and the global policy frameworks that inform ALE practice, notably the SDGs-SDG4, the Belem Framework for Action (BFA) and the UNESCO Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (RALE). Spaces for CSO engagement on ALE policies in UNESCO and other inter-governmental bodies were described.

Ichiro Miyazawa of UNESCO Bangkok spoke about the different perspectives connecting ALE with life and work.

Participants described ALE programmes in the Asia Pacific region as being complex and diverse. It also goes by many names: continuing education, community education, non-formal education, to name some. In different countries in the region, ALE covers basic literacy programmes, accreditation and equivalency programmes, bridging education/second chance learning programmes, training for work, and skills trainings for livelihood. There are also programmes for Digital Literacy and Language Literacy. In many countries, what often dominates are programmes on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

There are multiple actors and agencies involved in the provision of ALE. A main provider of ALE is the state, usually through the Ministry of Education (MoE) and other bodies such as the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT). Local government authorities are also ALE providers along with non-state actors, such as NGOs, community-based groups, and private for-profit providers including corporations.

Participants emphasised that adult learning and education benefits learners by imparting the necessary skills and knowledge for active citizenship by addressing specific learning needs, inspiring positive changes in attitudes and behaviours, fostering critical thinking and awareness for empowerment benefitting especially marginalised adults, and contributing to the improvement of overall quality of life. It is also critical for helping adult learners fight for and enjoy their rights. Various examples were offered by the participants on how adult education resulted in women's empowerment, efficiency in work, active citizenship and greater awareness and knowledge on environmental issues.

While ALE has a wide range of psychological, economic, social, cultural, and political benefits, these have been overlooked by policymakers, education development partners, and even civil society for far too long.

Various other challenges plague ALE in the region. There is a general lack of general understanding and awareness of ALE offering a major obstacle towards increased funding and priority for this sector in public provisioning. The insufficiency of integrated and reliable data prevents the shaping of more robust

Participants emphasised that adult learning and education benefits learners by imparting the necessary skills and knowledge for active citizenship.



Participants discussed and described spaces for CSO engagement on ALE policies in UNESCO and other inter-governmental bodies.

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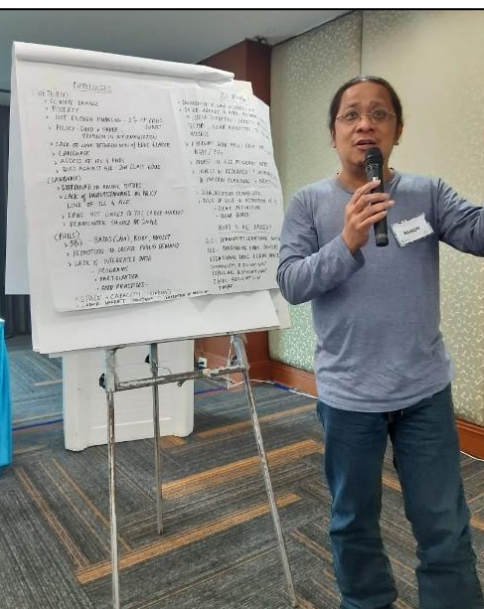
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ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan (L), with Johann Heilmann, Regional Director, DVV International, South East Asia (centre), and Hitomi Rankine of UNESCO.

Werner Mauch, of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), reminded that the 2030 Agenda reflects the priorities identified in the UNESCO Recommendation on ALE, and recognises the formal, informal and non-formal forms of ALE and that ALE is a full and recognised component of lifelong learning.



Ramon Mapa of E-Net Philippines elaborated on the policy frameworks, financing systems, programmes on ALE within government-led lifelong learning systems of their respective countries.

action, policies, and plans on ALE. Many countries do not have a defined legal framework for ALE. There are hardly any mechanisms for inter-agency coordination and whereas different stakeholders and ALE providers are involved, synergies are not being created. There are also issues of quality concerning different dimensions of ALE, in particular, the curriculum, teachers, and teaching materials, needs assessments, producing and monitoring results and evidence. Documenting good practices, tracking outcomes of participation, and finding other ways to generate evidence on the benefits of ALE can be useful to galvanise more political and citizen attention to ALE.

Hitomi Rankine of UNESCAP spoke about ALE in SDG/SDG 4 processes. She highlighted gender gaps and the exclusion of marginalised communities as some of the major challenges in the implementation of the SDGs. She also observed that although SDG 4 is seen to be one of the goals which is registering better results, there is uneven performance with respect to the different targets on SDG4 and adult learning and education related targets lag behind.

Werner Mauch, of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), reminded that governments signed up to commitments to promoting ALE as outlined in the Belem Framework for Action and UNESCO's RALE along the areas of ALE Policy; Governance; Financing; Participation; and Inclusion, Equity, and Quality. He also elaborated on the linkages between these frameworks and the SDGs-SDG4. He pointed out that although there is no specific target on adult education, ALE is anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which explicitly identifies adults as learners and addresses ALE in specific targets, specifically targets 4.3, 4.4 on vocational skills, 4.6 on literacy and basic skills, and 4.7 on active and global citizenship skills. The 2030 Agenda also reflects the priorities identified in the UNESCO Recommendation on ALE, and recognises the formal, informal and non-formal forms of ALE. In principle, ALE is a full and recognised component of lifelong learning.

Werner also advised that the 4th Global Report on Lifelong Learning (GRALE) themed on Participation in ALE will be launched in November 2020. He also advised that the 7th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA 7) will be convened by UNESCO in 2022.

Ethel Agnes Valenzuela of SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministries of Education Organization) elaborated on SEAMEOs strategic education agenda and ALE programme experiences.

Concrete experiences and good practice in ALE within the public education systems were shared. Parichart Yenjai of the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education, Ministry of Education, Thailand, and Ramon Mapa of E-Net Philippines elaborated on the policy frameworks, financing systems, programmes on ALE within government-led lifelong learning systems of their respective countries.

ASPBAE's Cecilia (Thea) Soriano outlined the regional and global policy spaces to pursue ALE. A session was also organised to share plans on an ASPBAE initiative to review the SDG Volunteer National Reviews (VNRs) from the

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Participants included partners of the DVV International Regional Office and ASPBAE members from India, Nepal, Philippines, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

perspective of ALE in 10-14 countries. The review will seek to analyse how ALE is treated/attended to in the SDG country plans, programmes and M&E process to inform ASPBAE and its members' advocacy positions and strategies on ALE. Anita Dighe, and ASPBAE consultant commissioned to lead this process, was the key resource person in this session.

Specific discussions were also pursued to strategise participation and define [key messages of civil society](#) for the upcoming 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED 5) which will focus on SDG 4.6 on adult literacy and SDG 4.1 on primary and secondary education.

The workshop concluded with participants preparing country-specific plans of action for ALE advocacy including key messages, policy spaces, and opportunities.

Participants included partners of the DVV International Regional Office and ASPBAE members from India, Nepal, Philippines, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

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GCE President, Refat Sabbah (centre), addressing the inter-regional meeting of Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) Regional Secretariats in Johannesburg.

Mapping the way forward with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and preparing for new working modalities

16-18 September 2019, Johannesburg, South Africa

An inter-regional meeting with Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) Regional Secretariats was held to engage in key issues related to the closure of the third phase of the CSEF programme, transition to the [Advocacy for Social Accountability](#) (ASA) programme, since renamed "Education Out Loud" (EOL), and the delivery of the Global Campaign for Education's (GCE) 2019-2022 strategy. A meeting of regional communication focal points was also held to develop a communications strategy to support GCE's strategic plan. ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove and Medha Soni participated in the meetings.

Ten years post the launch and management of the CSEF programme by GCE, in close collaboration with regional implementing partners, 2019 marks a year of gearing-up and preparing to wrap up this highly successful and meaningful initiative for the GCE movement.

Following the approval of a one year costed extension by GPE in early 2019, this year also provides an important opportunity for GCE and CSEF partners to ensure a smooth transition to EOL, the new GPE fund to support the work of civil society in advocating for education, which commences at the beginning of 2020 with Oxfam IBIS as the Grant Agent.

It is also important to note that 2019 marks the first year of GCE's mandate to deliver the new GCE strategy (2019-2022), which was adopted during the 6th World Assembly in November 2018. To achieve the ambitious goals set in the strategy, GCE intends to work on reforming its collaborative approaches with the full membership.



GCE's Wolfgang Leumer addressing the inter-regional meeting.

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Camilla Croso of the Latin American education network, CLADE, emphasised the importance of focusing on transformative public education and non-discrimination, especially related to women and girls, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic discrimination, and discrimination against migrants.

Regarding preparing for EOL, it was agreed that the main roles of GCE in Component 1 (OC1 - National Education Coalitions) were to facilitate inter-regional learning and exchange and to promote stories of impact and lessons learned. It also became clear that GCE's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system would be modified and directed to sharing learning around coalitions and regions, and to promoting the movement and its work.

There was discussion regarding GCE's four strategic areas – Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination; Transformative Education; Education in Emergencies (EIE); and Education Financing.

Sharing the current education focus and priorities in different regions, Camilla Croso of the Latin American education network, CLADE, emphasised the importance of focusing on transformative public education, or “emancipatory education”, and non-discrimination, especially related to women and girls, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic discrimination, and discrimination against migrants. She shared that education financing is a priority issue for CLADE where the network advocates for tax justice and monitoring key financing indicators. Camilla also emphasised work around strengthening democracy by calling for robust civil society participation and debates in policy making, and working against the criminalisation of students, teachers, and activist movements. She suggested collaboration with other social movements from other sectors and creating an inter-sectoral approach, along with strengthening education networks for more effective and impactful advocacy initiatives.



Several participants of GCE's inter-regional meeting in Johannesburg.

Refat Sabah of the Arab Coalition for Education for All (ACEA) and GCE President, spoke about the network's focus on education in emergencies (EIE), with specific initiatives directed towards displaced persons and refugees, and the efforts to mainstream EIE and education financing across the networks focus areas.



ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove highlighted ASPBAE's strong focus on education financing, challenging education privatisation, and supporting coalitions on budget advocacy and innovative domestic resource mobilisation for education.

ASPBAE's Bernie Lovegrove highlighted Asia Pacific civil society initiatives, including securing a strong public education system within a lifelong learning framework (encompassing children's, youth and adult education), empowering marginalised girls and women, working on issues related to skills and employment, strengthening a youth constituency in the education movement in the region especially ensuring the voice of marginalised youth. He also mentioned the network's strong focus on education financing, challenging education privatisation and supporting coalitions on budget advocacy and innovative domestic resource mobilisation for education.

Teopista Birungi Mayanja of the Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA) shared the network's priority to quality inclusive and relevant education, including for youth and learners with special learning needs. She mentioned efforts related to improving the quality of teachers, advocating for sustainable financing for education, and pushing back on the privatisation of education. She stressed the importance of transparency and accountability, focusing on increased civil society participation in education policy processes and budget monitoring and tracking.

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While brainstorming on common threads and ways of working together, issues related to inclusion and education financing were identified as strategic areas for inter-regional cooperation, sharing, and learning.

While brainstorming on common threads and ways of working together, issues related to inclusion - especially regarding women, girls, and youth - and education financing were identified as strategic areas for inter-regional cooperation, sharing, and learning. On the discourse around youth, suggestions focussed on – (1) identifying youth organisations and defining who they are; (2) engaging young people in the larger education movement, in education constituencies, and bringing youth in to organised spaces such as Executive Boards of organisations and networks to ensure they are part of the dialogue while strategising on youth work; (3) ensuring that voices of marginalised youth are heard in regional and global advocacy platforms; and (4) having a clear and comprehensive policy on youth work – including young people in formal school systems, out-of-school youth and those in non-formal education, disadvantaged youth - and an effective strategy on how to effectively engage with such a diverse spectrum of young people.



Regional communications focal points met to collectively develop a communications strategy outline and agree on mechanisms to improve and enhance GCE's external and internal communications.

On education financing, suggestions included raising the issue of tax justice and tracking the trends (public transfer of money to profit making, indebtedness), understanding corruption in relation to how funds are allocated, analysing how education budgets are distributed, identifying where to campaign for education financing and where to undertake further research, advocating for an agenda that allows public education systems to be financed, and ensuring proactive and propositional financing strategies, offering alternatives to make tax systems more progressive.

The parallel meeting of regional communications focal points was held to collectively develop a communications strategy outline and to agree on mechanisms to improve and enhance GCE's external and internal communications. The premise of this meeting was that effective communications is a key to strengthening the education movement and enhancing its visibility and credibility, to building a common narrative, and to reaching out to members, partners, and a wider external audience.



Participants of the GCE meeting which was an effective platform to identify and address working challenges and brainstorm effective engagements and learning processes.

While talking about communication challenges across regions, participants agreed that one of the biggest challenges was a lack of a common voice and narrative where it is increasingly difficult to be heard, especially in this era of fake news, other threats to human rights, and attacks on civil society.

Charting a way forward, participants of the communications meeting agreed that sharing, collaborating, and capacity building should remain key focus areas for improving GCE's communications capacity as a movement. Some agreed actions included having a communications protocol to streamline processes within the movement; having tools to improve communications by using common platforms; learning from each other's best practices; and identifying common actions to maximise impact.

Both meetings were an effective platform to identify and address current working challenges and brainstorm effective engagements and learning processes.

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The theme for the UN General Assembly was – *Make the coming decade one of action and delivery* – a theme that linked all the summits and events organised during the UNGA.

Envisioning a world with access to inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all

74th session of the UN General Assembly
17-30 September 2019, New York. USA

Make the coming decade one of action and delivery - this theme linked all the summits and events organised during the high-level week of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly. In the [Political declaration](#) of the SDG summit, Heads of State and Government - “resolve to realise our vision of a world with access to inclusive and equitable quality education” and to “promote and support quality education and lifelong learning to ensure that all children, youth and adults are empowered with the relevant knowledge and skills to shape more resilient inclusive and sustainable societies that are able to adapt to rapid technological change.” The Declaration also places emphasis on investing in data and statistics for the SDGs, mobilising adequate and well-directed financing, and enhancing national implementation and global partnership.

In his opening statement, the President of the 74th session of the General Assembly, Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, affirmed that, “we must ensure Member States can partner on teacher training, ensure access to free and primary and secondary education, and devise means to attend to the educational needs of all.” He recalled that quality education is one of the priorities of his tenure, together with eradicating poverty and zero hunger.

Highlights on the education front, in which the Assistant Director-General for Education was involved, include – (1) [Launch of UNESCO’s Education Futures initiative](#) to reimagine how knowledge and learning can contribute to the common good of humanity during a high level event at UNGA on 25 September. (2) [Education for Sustainable Development: Learning for climate action](#) brought together young leaders. The event, supported by the Government of Japan, showcased UNESCO’s work to make education a visible part of the international response to climate change, including through the development of teaching and learning materials, sharing of best practices and whole school approaches in 25 countries.

Multilateral coordination

UNESCO convened the second meeting of Multilateral Education Partners, with agreement to support the creation of a Global Coalition for Education Data proposed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. This will encourage a coordinated approach to improve the SDG4 data challenge, by aligning investments in priority areas and taking action to improve education measurements on access, completion, and the coverage of learning outcome data in low-income countries, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

Financing

Education Cannot Wait: US\$205 million in [pledges were made to Education Cannot Wait](#) (ECW), the global fund for education in emergencies. Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the private sector (LEGO Foundation and ProFuturo) announced

Highlights on the education front at the UNGA included launch of launch of UNESCO’s Education Futures initiative the ‘*Education for Sustainable Development: Learning for climate action*’ event that showcased UNESCO’s work to make education a visible part of the international response to climate change



The Political declaration of the SDG summit places emphasis on investing in data and statistics for the SDGs, mobilising adequate and well-directed financing, and enhancing national implementation and global partnership.

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UNESCO convened the 2nd meeting of Multilateral Education Partners, with agreement to support the creation of a Global Coalition for Education Data proposed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

contributions. Since its inception in 2016, Education Cannot Wait, which invests across the humanitarian-development nexus, has invested in 32 countries, reaching more than 1.5 million children and youth – half of them girls. UNESCO runs several projects supported by ECW on Education Management Information Systems, crisis sensitive educational planning, and psycho-social support programmes.

International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd): US\$600 million were pledged for this new Facility, which is expected to mobilise an additional \$2 billion in financing for education through the multilateral development banks. The UK and Netherlands were the first contributors. Read [more](#).

Global Education Forum

Bringing together development partners (Canada, Germany, EU, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UAE, UK, USA) and multilaterals (GPE, World Bank, UNHCR), the first Global Education Forum convened with the aim of mobilising additional finance to meet the scale and scope of the SDG 4 agenda.

Assistant Director-General, Stefania Giannini, stressed the need for stronger global and national advocacy to increase pressure on governments, showcase solutions, and mobilise financing. She affirmed that the success of the initiative rides on working together, building on existing ground, stressing the role of the Steering Committee.

Several participants underlined the importance of prioritisation and cautioned that the Forum should not be a new mechanism. This echoes concerns raised by the Coordination Group of the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CC NGO Ed2030), which expressed fears at how this formation can compete with the mandate of the Education 2030 Steering Committee – as outlined in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, endorsed by 184 UNESCO Member states. It is unclear who gets invited and with which criteria, or how CSOs can participate. Wrapping up, co-Chair, Tharman Shanmugatnam, said the Forum should apply strategic pressure where it can count most. Immediate work could focus on pooled funding research, better information exchange on effective policies and practices, and helping countries to better mobilise resources. The second meeting will likely be scheduled in the margins of the Spring meetings of the World Bank.

The Forum is co-chaired by UNESCO, Tharman Shanmugatnam (Senior Minister, former Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore), Graça Machel (former minister of Education of Mozambique), and Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown.

Steering Committee member, Education Above All (EAA), brought together partners to discuss innovative financing to address 'intractable' SDG 4 problems. The event highlighted EAA's use of innovative and blended financing, a joint partnership with Djibouti and the World Bank, and the priority placed on leaving no one behind by the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development and the Qatar Fund for Development. ADG Stefania Giannini underscored the importance of



The first Global Education Forum convened with the aim of mobilising additional finance to meet the scale and scope of the SDG 4 agenda.

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Some concerns were raised on the formation of the Global Education Forum, as it may duplicate or compete with the mandate of the Education 2030 Steering Committee.

UNESCO launched its 'Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants' and the Education Commission launched a report on 'Transforming the Education Workforce' on the side-lines of UNGA.



The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) participated in the UNGA events and expressed concern on the direction the global discourses on education financing is taking, particularly about the consequences on the reliance on loans to finance public education.

designing new models for public investment that can help governments make the case for education, the importance of accurate and regular data, accountability mechanisms, and partnerships across sectors.

Learning Poverty

Ending Learning Poverty: Steering Committee member, Jaime Saavedra of the World Bank, summarised the concept of learning poverty with a headline figure - more than half of all children in low-and middle-income countries cannot read and understand a short story by age 10. This high rate of learning poverty is an early warning that all the SDG 4 education targets are in jeopardy. UNESCO participated in this event alongside UNICEF to highlight the importance of investing in teachers, in data, and in environments that are violence-free and conducive to learning.

Higher Education: Recognition of Qualifications

Providing a pathway to education and jobs, UNESCO launched its [Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants](#) at an event hosted by the International Institute for Education on the sidelines of UN General Assembly. The Passport, which is modeled on the tested methodology of the European Qualifications Passport, is being piloted in Zambia, a country that has provided safe haven to 82,000 refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Angola; Rwanda and Somalia. The project is supported by Norway, in partnership with UNHCR. Aksel Jakobsen, State Secretary for International Development of Norway, participated in the event, together with representatives from UNHCR, the World Bank, Education Cannot Wait, and Dubai Cares.

Teachers and Teaching

"It takes a team to educate a Child" - this is one of the headline messages of the Education Commission's report on [Transforming the Education Workforce](#) launched on the side-lines of UNGA. Teachers need leadership and support to be effective and to reach the most vulnerable. This report envisions learning teams that tap the potential of the broader education workforce – school and district leaders, specialists, learning assistants, community experts, entrepreneurs, health and welfare professionals, parents, volunteers, and many others – to work together to help all children succeed.

Voices of Civil Society

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE), participating in the UN General Assembly events, expressed their concerns on the trajectory the global discourses on education financing are taking. In a statement '[Debt instead of Aid?](#)', released to coincide with the launch of the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd), GCE raised concerns about the consequences on the reliance on loans to finance public education. *"Even low interest multilateral debt can contribute to debt crisis as a result of exchange rate shocks – because debts are owed in foreign currencies, so when exchange rates depreciate, the relative size of the debt increases."* They further observed that there is *"a rising debt crisis"*

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GCE called for a greater emphasis on sustainable domestic resource mobilisation – on the need to step up efforts to support countries in expanding their tax bases in a progressive way, increase the share of budgets going to education, and for the international community to fight tax evasion.

David Archer, of ActionAid International and former GCE Board member, argued that with over 64 million children still not enrolled at primary level, many countries need to consider access to education and not just quality.



ActionAid's David Archer argued that rather than scaling down the globally agreed education goals, the World Bank should scale up investments in public education systems, supporting links with global and national tax reforms, and removing financial constraints that block countries from achieving the full SDG 4 agenda.

which represents one of the major threats to domestic financing for education; for example, last year, Ghana spent 42% of its budget in debt-servicing."

GCE also asserted that banks should not be driving education policy reform and are concerned about how IFFEd could further empower the World Bank and other Multilateral Development Banks in their championing "education marketisation and public-private partnerships, despite the evidence that these often undermine equity and inclusion." GCE called for a greater emphasis on sustainable domestic resource mobilisation – on the need to step up efforts to support countries in expanding their tax bases in a progressive way, increase the share of budgets going to education and for the international community to fight capital flight and tax evasion. "Predictable financing for public education systems will come from governments committing their own resources and being held accountable by their own citizens."

David Archer, Head of Participation and Public Services, ActionAid International, and former member of the Board of the GCE, challenged the World Bank in analysing its assertions in its new publication on Ending Learning Poverty. The World Bank claims that, "...the Sustainable Development Goal on education is too ambitious, involving a set of unachievable targets which are distracting developing countries from focusing on this crucial issue: the percentage of 10-year-olds who cannot read and understand a simple story."

Archer contends, "There were good reasons for agreeing to a broad global goal to ensure inclusive education of equitable quality and lifelong learning opportunities for all. With over **64 million children** still not enrolled at primary level, many countries still need to consider access and not just quality."

Further, he argued that, "There are many potential unintended consequences in focusing on **"halving learning poverty by 2030"** and prioritising investment in measurement. To achieve this narrow goal, countries may focus on the children who are easier to reach — from better-off backgrounds — thus further exacerbating inequality. Countries may also focus so much on measuring learning that they fail to invest in some of the obvious steps such as investing in more trained teachers, which would actually improve learning."

Archer argued that, "Rather than scaling down the globally agreed education goals, the World Bank should get serious about scaling up investments in public education systems, supporting links with global and national **tax reforms**, and removing the financial constraints that block countries from achieving the full SDG 4 agenda."

This write-up is based on an article appearing in the SDG 4-ED 2030 COORDINATION NEWS newsletter; on the GCE statement, [Debt instead of Aid?](#), and David Archer's article, [The World Bank Shouldn't be Setting Global Goals for Education](#) in Devex, 25 October 2019. [[BACK](#)]

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Building capacities on education sector planning and defining the strategic plan of education coalition CSEP in Timor-Leste

16-18 September 2019, Dili, Timor-Leste

The Civil Society Education Partnership (CSEP Timor-Leste) held two important events which helped build the capacity of CSEP members on the education sector planning (ESP) process and defined the strategic plan of the coalition for the next three years.

Education Sector Planning Workshop

On 16 September, a day prior to the coalition's strategic planning, ASPBAE's Helen Dabu conducted a workshop on the Education Sector Planning (ESP) Process to strengthen the understanding of CSEP members on the value of influencing the government's revised National Education Sector Plan (NESP 2020-2024) and how it should be embedded in CSEP's policy-influencing objectives.

The workshop involved both group work and inputs to explain to CSEP members, in a more context-responsive method, the education sector analysis and ESP development, implementation, and monitoring processes. It also explained the ESP review and coordination process through a multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism such as the local education group (LEG) in the country which is known as Aço Conjunta Para a Educação Timor-Leste (ACETL), convened by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MEYS) together with UNICEF Timor-Leste and the World Bank.

Linked to this, Helen explained in detail the partnership and constituency within the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and updated CSEP members on the processes of GPE in appraising and deciding on the proposal of Timor-Leste government to access GPE funding.

The ESP process is an important moment for the coalition to engage to ensure that the NESP 2020-2024 of the government will be aligned with SDG 4. CSEP's voice and recommendations are also critical in this document since they can enrich the equity, financing, and accountability dimensions of the country's education sector plan.

Both the ongoing NESP development and the grant application of the Timor-Leste government to GPE were identified as opportunities for advocacy and influencing and have been affirmed by CSEP members to be included in advocacy priorities of the coalition.

CSEP Strategic Planning for next three years (2020-2022)

Fourteen out of 15 CSEP members who also participated in the ESP Workshop actively got involved in the coalition's strategic planning and collectively agreed on the objectives and priorities of the coalition for the next three years (2020-2022).

CSEP (Timor-Leste) held two events which helped build capacities of CSEP members on the education sector planning (ESP) process and defined the strategic plan of the coalition for the next three years.



ASPBAE's Helen Dabu conducted a workshop on the Education Sector Planning (ESP) Process to strengthen the understanding of CSEP members on the value of influencing the government's revised National Education Sector Plan (NESP) and how it should be embedded in CSEP's policy-influencing objectives.



The education sector planning process is important for the coalition to engage to ensure that the government's national education plan is aligned with SDG 4.

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CSEP's strategic planning process included marginalised youth representatives from seven municipalities of Timor-Leste who have been involved in CSEP and ASPBAE-supported Youth-led Action Research (YAR).

The members that attended this planning process represented various constituencies, mostly from marginalised sectors, such as people with disabilities, youth organisations, women's organisation, grassroots organisations, and teacher's union.

Further, CSEP's strategic planning process included marginalised youth representatives from seven municipalities of Timor-Leste who have been involved in CSEP and ASPBAE-supported Youth-led Action Research (YAR) to gather their perspectives and recommendations on what CSEP should prioritise in its advocacy for education of the youth in Timor-Leste, especially those in marginalised and rural areas.

A stakeholder analysis was also conducted as an integrated part of the coalition's strategic planning.

From this strategic planning process, CSEP formulated their theory of change and agreed on their objectives and strategies that will define their advocacy work in 2020-2022.



The coalition's strategic plan focused on ensuring that the policy and consultative spaces that CSEP occupies are fully optimised by further developing the coalition's capacity to analyse and advocate for education policies, programmes, and budgets.

The members agreed that CSEP's objectives and expected outcomes need to sustain an inclusive, gender-responsive, and institutionally-robust advocacy coalition.

The coalition's expected outcomes in their strategic plan also build on CSEP's advocacy achievements, strengths and momentum as it is already an active member of existing consultative mechanisms and policy platforms at various levels, especially in the spaces offered by NESP 2020-2024 and SDG4 development and implementation.

Lastly, the coalition's strategic plan focused on ensuring that the policy and consultative spaces that CSEP currently occupy are fully optimised by further developing the coalition's capacity to analyse and advocate for education policies, programmes, and budget that ensure full implementation of NESP 2020-2024 and SDG4 and guarantee the right to education of all Timorese. [[BACK](#)]



ASPBAE's Peter King visited PEAN to work with them in their consultations with officials, CSOs, and in holding a workshop to cement priorities for Education Out Loud.

Cementing priorities in Papua New Guinea for Education Out Loud

2-6 September, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

ASPBAE's Peter King visited the Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network (PEAN) in Port Moresby. The purpose of the visit was to work with the Board and Coordinator and members of the organisation, helping them in their consultations with officials, civil society representatives, and in holding a consultation workshop to cement priorities for the Education Out Loud (EOL) programme.

A major concern that quickly emerged during consultations was that the Department of Community Development was overwhelmed by its responsibilities

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PEAN will advocate for education that includes a high level of appropriate Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills for sustainable livelihoods.

PEAN will advocate for the government to develop a strategy for those with disabilities to ensure focused programmes, alternative pathways, or complementary opportunities to continue schooling at higher levels.



In line with SDG 4.6, PEAN will argue for the government to properly fund its own literacy review, and design and fund initiatives aimed at adult literacy.

for adult education, literacy, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), disability, and gender, and had a limited budget.

There was consensus at PEAN's consultation workshop on directions for the organisation, which were clearly aligned with SDG 4 targets. Participants at the workshop agreed to continue the campaign for ECCE to be transferred to the Department of Education, and for there to be the development of an ECCE framework and adequate resourcing.

In PNG, as in much of the South Pacific, there is a high proportion of the population living in rural areas in a subsistence way. PEAN will advocate for education that includes a high level of appropriate Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills for sustainable livelihoods. Literacy in the adult population is very low, and performance in schools indicates that only 25% of the school population is learning as expected. Clearly, PNG faces a crisis, but the government's own data is limited, especially with regard to literacy in the wider community, outside of the formal education system. In line with SDG 4.6, PEAN will argue for the government to properly fund its own literacy review, and design and fund initiatives aimed at adult literacy.

PEAN has recently completed research into inclusive education in Papua New Guinea, and has just presented its findings in September 2019 at the National Education Conference in Goroka. Some findings from the research were presented, and the meeting also heard from Cheshire disAbility Services about their pilot inclusive facilities design which has shown how mainstream classrooms can be designed to be inclusive for the same price or even lower than PNG standard classroom designs.

PEAN will also advocate for the government to develop a strategy for those with disabilities to ensure focused programmes, alternative pathways, or complementary opportunities to continue schooling at higher levels instead of the system pushing them out at the main transition point, especially at the end of Grade 8 and Grade 10.

It was agreed that the strategy in this project would be for the NGOs Callan and Cheshire to take the lead, advocating PEAN's recommendations. The coalition will argue for -

- The National Special Education Policy and Plan needs a collaborative and consultative review with civil society and community input.
- The gathering of accurate data on the extent of disability in schools and communities, using appropriate forms and training teachers in assessment.
- The teacher's union, PNGTA, to lead on the in- and pre-service training of teachers in the identification and inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.
- Disability Focal Points in each province who can help mainstream disability issues across sectors including health, early child education; and community development. This would support earlier identification and assessment of children with disabilities, as well as earlier intervention and support. [\[BACK\]](#)

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Multilingualism in focus at UNESCO International Literacy Day conference

9 September 2019, Paris, France



Under the theme of ‘*literacy and multilingualism*’, participants of UNESCO’s ILD conference in Paris discussed key issues and ways to improve literacy policies and practices in multilingual contexts in a globalised, digital world.

“*Literacy is the starting point for any form of quality inclusive education and we need to support and scale up the many initiatives across the globe seeking to make literacy a reality for all,*” said UNESCO Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, in her message for [International Literacy Day](#).

UNESCO held its International Literacy Day conference in Paris, bringing together stakeholders and decision-makers from all over the world. Under the theme of ‘*literacy and multilingualism*’, participants discussed key issues and ways to improve literacy policies and practices in multilingual contexts in an increasingly globalised, digital world. This was also an opportunity to express solidarity with the celebrations of the 2019 [International Year of Indigenous Languages](#) and the 25th anniversary of the World Conference on Special Needs Education, at which the [Salamanca Statement](#) on Inclusive Education was adopted.

At the opening session of the conference, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Stefania Giannini said, “*The relationship between globalisation, digitalisation, and languages is paradoxical. On the one hand, with human mobility on the rise, people are increasingly exposed to multiple languages and use more than one language in life, work, and learning. The reality today is that about two in three children grow up in multilingual contexts. But globalisation is also threatening diversity, acting as a powerful force towards uniformity. It is this trend that we must counter for multilingualism to flourish, through concrete policies – within and beyond the education sector.*”

Koumbou Boly Barry, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), stressed in her opening speech the importance of rights-based approaches to unleash the transformative potential of literacy. She referred to the need for benchmarking the use of mother language and policies that underpin a holistic vision that encompasses quality formal and non-formal education.

Background for this year’s theme

The world is linguistically rich with around 7,000 languages spoken, each linked to distinct identities, cultures, and knowledge systems. Due to globalisation, digitalisation, and increasing mobility, today, multilingualism has expanded even further, with many people using more than one language in their everyday lives.

Evidence, however, shows that only some of these languages are promoted: a mere 5% of the world’s languages are present on the Internet, 2680 spoken languages are in danger of disappearing, and 40% of the world’s population lack access to education in the language they speak or understand, affecting the quality of education and learning throughout life. These challenges put at risk the quality of people’s lives as well as linguistic and cultural diversity.



On the occasion of ILD 2019, UNESCO encouraged the international community to invest in inclusive literacy policies and practices that reflect the needs and environments of learners, to foster more linguistic diversity and inclusivity in education.

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UNESCO called for rethinking literacy in multilingual contexts as an essential element in addressing the global literacy challenges.

On the occasion of ILD 2019, UNESCO called for rethinking literacy in multilingual contexts as an essential element in addressing the global literacy challenges and encouraged the international community to invest in inclusive literacy policies and practices that reflect the needs and environments of learners, to foster more linguistic diversity and inclusivity in education.

The conference culminated in a Prize Award Ceremony, recognising this year's winning projects from Algeria, Colombia, Indonesia, Italy, and Senegal, through five 2019 UNESCO International Literacy Prizes. Expressing her deepest gratitude to each of the five winners for their firm commitment, inspiring innovation, and bold action, Stefania Giannini of UNESCO said, *"I hope that your programmes and initiatives we reward today will create a positive chain of action to make our world more literate and inclusive, blessed by diversity."*

How much does it cost to achieve universal literacy?

New cost estimates have been produced by UNESCO showing that US\$14 billion will be needed if the 20 countries with the lowest literacy rates, which are members of the Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL), and the E-9 countries with the largest population in the developing world are to achieve universal functional literacy and numeracy skills by 2030.

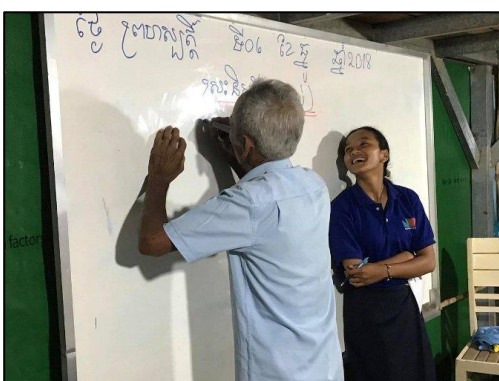
The costs are presented in a new study authored by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the UNESCO Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), in collaboration with the GEM Report team. They were based on an extension of the [costing model](#) developed by the Report for the 2015 policy paper '[Pricing the right to education: The cost of reaching new targets by 2030](#)'.

As shown in [the 2019 GEM Report](#), despite stagnation in sub-Saharan Africa, progress in youth literacy has been rapid enough in recent years to lead to an absolute decline in the overall number of illiterate youth aged 15 to 24, largely driven by Asia. But the number of illiterate elderly aged 65 and above continues to grow; there are now almost 40% more illiterate elderly than illiterate youth.

And as a recent joint report of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report Team, [Meeting commitments: Are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?](#), showed, the literacy rate is expected to continue to grow steadily in countries in all income groups between now and the SDG 4 deadline in 2030. At the global level, the youth literacy rate is expected to reach 94% and the adult literacy rate 90% by 2030. But in low-income countries, less than 70% of adults and slightly more than 80% of youth are projected to have basic literacy skills by 2030.

The new costing exercise estimated the funding gap for improving these rates so as to achieve SDG Target 4.6 on literacy. The new figures will help facilitate a discussion on the importance of investing in literacy as the foundation of lifelong learning.

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GEM Report calculations show that, while countries in the Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL) and E-9 countries receive over one-third of aid to education (37%), they only receive 0.5% of donor aid to adult literacy programmes. Effective financing would need to reflect this imbalance.

The US\$14 billion funding gap for universal literacy cannot be covered by countries alone, especially the 20 countries with the lowest literacy rates. UNESCO has long recommended that 3% of governments' education budgets be allocated to literacy. Yet, even if 5% of GDP were allocated to education as recommended, and the 3% to literacy was also respected, it would not fill the gap for the poorest countries in the group.

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How were the calculations made?

These estimates assume that 200-250 hours of instruction are needed to master the basics, rising to 500 hours for those that require additional skills training, with groups of no more than 20 people. Teachers' salaries were estimated on a part time basis, and relative to GDP per capita.

UNESCO has recommended that 3% of government education budgets be allocated to literacy. Yet, even if 5% of GDP were allocated to education as recommended, and the 3% to literacy was also respected, it would not fill the gap for the poorest countries.

But Target 4.6 is not very precise. It states that 'all youth' and 'a substantial portion of adults' achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030. But the US\$14 billion funding gap estimate refers to achieving 100% literacy for both youth and adults. This means that the funding gap for achieving Target 4.6 is not that large. A relatively small amount of external support could make a massive difference. What a great opportunity for donors to get involved.

This write-up is based on an article appearing on the [UNESCO website](http://www.unesco.org) and on a [World Education Blog](#). [\[BACK\]](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reviewing progress on gender equality in the Asia Pacific, 25 years after Beijing



In 2020, the global community will mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform of Action (BPFA). The SDGs will also reach its five-year milestone, marking it a crucial year for the realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

In 2020, the global community will mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the [Beijing Platform of Action](#) (BPFA). The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) will also reach its five-year milestone, marking it a crucial year for the accelerated realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The convergence of these two events will provide an opportunity to take stock of the progress made, identify actions required to address barriers to gender equality, provide an opportunity for feminist movements to analyse the political, economic, and social economies of the moment, and serve as a moment to influence the critical review of the first five years of the implementation of the Agenda 2030, the SDGs, other critical gender-related global and regional commitments, and implementation of the SDGs by 2030.

UNESCAP will lead the Asia Pacific Regional review of Beijing+25 in collaboration with the UNWOMEN regional office of the Asia and Pacific from 24-29 November 2019 comprising of a civil society forum and a Ministerial Conference. The review will adopt a three-track approach:

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The convergence of Beijing +25 and the 5th year of the SDGs provides an opportunity to take stock of the progress made, identify actions required to address barriers to gender equality, and provide an opportunity for feminist movements to analyse the political, economic, and social economies of the moment.



The Asia Pacific Beijing +25 Civil Society steering committee will organise a CSO forum in November 2019 to, amongst other things, create a space to celebrate achievements and identify concerns on regressions on women's empowerment.

- Analytical process to include a regional synthesis of national reviews of progress made and challenges faced in implementation of the BPPA. This will be conducted by national governments.
- Consultative process by civil society organisations.
- An inter-governmental process will engage governments in the regional review to identify priority actions and to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the region,

The Asia Pacific Beijing +25 Civil Society steering committee will organise the civil society forum from 24-26 November 2019 with the aim to create a space to celebrate achievements and identify concerns on regressions on women's empowerment; facilitate an intergenerational dialogue and solidarity between the diverse constituencies; provide a platform to consolidate civil society inputs to the regional and global review processes, which can be carried through at the national and local levels in follow-up to the 64th Commission for Status of Women (CSW) in 2020. Parallel workshops will be organised to build knowledge and understanding of women's rights and issues that are not well-understood outside of the local, national, or regional contexts. The workshops will include spaces for conversations on common experiences and invite participants to identify recommendations to make and support at the intergovernmental meetings.

The Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+25 Review will be held from 27-29 November 2019 which will bring together Ministers and senior officials, civil society, and other key stakeholders from the region. The Ministerial Conference will identify key strategic areas and actions required to overcome barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of women; provide a platform to highlight innovative solutions and exchange good practices and lessons learned on strategies for change; stimulate the momentum to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. [\[BACK\]](#)

UNESCO publication: The Promise of Large-Scale Learning Assessments: Acknowledging Limits to Unlock Opportunities

This UNESCO publication looks at the impact Large-Scale Learning Assessments (LSLAs) have on policy, both at the local and international levels. The authors point to the fact that while LSLAs serve a growing number of purposes, they also raise concerns about a range of unintended, and sometimes, adverse effects. Click [here](#) to read more.

Adult Education in Global Times: An International Research Conference

4-7 June 2020, Vancouver, Canada

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC Canada, is organising a four-day 'International Research Conference on Adult Education in Global Times'. The primary host organisation is Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Visit the [Conference website](#) to know more.

The Indian Society for Community Education (ISCE), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), would like to form a group of Indian delegates for this conference. Please visit the [ISCE website](#) or contact ISCE on email - iscehouse@gmail.com - for more information.



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