

Newsletter

Asia Pacific Regional Management Unit

Issue 1
April 2020



Education Out Loud (EOL)

Education Out Loud (EOL) is Global Partnership for Education's fund for advocacy and social accountability, that supports civil society to be active and influential in shaping education policy to better meet the needs of communities, especially of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

EOL aims to enhance civil society capacities to engage in education sector planning, policy dialogue and monitoring and to promote transparency and accountability of national education sector policy. It also seeks to create a stronger global and regional enabling environment

for civil society advocacy and transparency efforts in education.

Education Out Loud is resourced by Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and overseen by GPE's Board of Directors. Oxfam IBIS manages the fund on behalf of GPE through a global management unit (GMU) based in Copenhagen, Denmark and four regional management units (RMU) in Africa (Ghana and Uganda), Asia Pacific (Nepal) and Latin America (Mexico). The Asia Pacific Regional office is located within OXFAM GB premises in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Education Out Loud offers three different funding windows or operational components (OC) to support civil society organizations. OC 1 aims to 'strengthen national civil society engagement in education planning, policy dialogue and monitoring'. OC 2 provides support to 'strengthen civil society roles in promoting transparency and accountability of national education sector policy and implementation.' OC 3 'creates a stronger global and transnational enabling environment for national civil society advocacy and transparency efforts.'

Mechanism for an independent review on the funding decisions has been provisioned at regional and global levels. Regional independent selection panels (RISPs) have been convened to review proposals, ensuring a fair and transparent review process. A global independent selection panel (GISP) consisting of chairs of regional independent selection panels has also been formed to review proposals for OC 2 and 3.

So far contracting with OC 1 grantee is complete. Review of the concept notes for the first round of OC3 has been concluded and communications are being made to the applicants.

Open Call for OC 2

Please visit <https://oxfamibis.dk/en/education-out-loud/no-w-open-open-call-concept-notes-component-2/>

An open call for concept notes for OC2 has been launched on 17 April 2020 with the application deadline for 19 June 2020. Check box for link.

Education Out Loud is innovatively providing some grantees up to one year of preparation time to

analyse their context and build skills, and to develop strategies for monitoring, evaluation and learning before starting implementation. To strengthen grantees' capabilities, Education Out Loud emphasizes grantees' learning and capacity building during the grant period by supporting them to prioritize their learning agenda and connecting them with learning partners to provide mentoring and training.

Education Out Loud also links with the other initiatives by GPE such as Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) by feeding into and drawing from learning networks at global, regional and country levels.

EOL is based on adaptive management and considering the present global coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic, restricting mobility and gatherings, the existing approved program may need some adaptation. Hence, in these trying times, the RMU is proactively organizing online meetings with grantees, partners and regional association Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) to explore practical ways of working to safeguard the life of the marginalized community and further the education agenda amidst shifting focus. Adapting the development program by taking into consideration the humanitarian context brought into focus with the Covid -19 pandemic poses key challenges with pre-agreed timeline and deliverables. This exercise can turn into a win-win situation with proper reflection, rescheduling and sequencing of interventions with ongoing engagement translated into collaborative action.

ASPBAE Sustains Support to Coalition

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) is a regional network of more than 200 civil society organisations and individuals operating in 30 countries of the Asia-Pacific. ASPBAE works towards promoting the right to quality education and transformative and liberating lifelong adult education and learning for all. ASPBAE lobbies with governments to uphold education as an empowering tool to combat poverty and all forms of exclusion and discrimination, enable active and meaningful participation in governance, and build a culture of peace and international understanding.

ASPBAE has been engaged with EOL funded coalitions in the Asia Pacific region right from developing their proposals, revising them based on the feedback from Regional Independent Selection Panel (RISP) and in responding to further requests for documentation from Regional Management Unit (RMU) such as baseline survey, results framework and learning plan.

ASPBAE's EOL capacity support staff team met the Asia Pacific RMU team in February 2020. The two teams shared updates on work, exchanged EOL programme issues, and discussed delineation of respective roles and communications protocols. This meeting further strengthened commitment by both teams to collaborate in the shared objective of supporting coalitions to implement their EOL supported plans. The meeting was followed by a Forum on Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and Regional and Global Forums on SDGs and SDG4 organised by one of the coalitions NCE Nepal in conjunction with ASPBAE, at which two RMU members participated.

ASPBAE had been assisting coalitions to prepare to travel to Tanzania for a Global Meeting of Education Coalitions due in mid-March and had also been facilitating their involvement in the annual Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) in Bangkok due in late March 2020.

However, these and other events were cancelled or postponed due to the rapid onset of COVID-19.

As the seriousness and impact of COVID-19 became more apparent ASPBAE, along with coalitions and most other organisations needed to rapidly reassess their work plans. It became clear that in the clamour by governments to reallocate resources to deal with COVID-19 crisis, education needed advocates to ensure its funding would be protected. Enhancing education's strategic importance in this crisis would need to be strongly asserted. To organise in this changed world, ASPBAE resorted to online meetings, and are designing virtual consultations, workshops and training to carry forward the work in place of face-to-face meetings.

To this end, ASPBAE organised a successful and well-attended Zoom meeting with coalitions on 6 April to share solidarity and ascertain what was happening in each country; how government restrictions and measures to curtail the COVID-19 threat had impacted on education and on the ability of coalitions to implement their advocacy work. Coalitions have been encouraged to send in situation updates. A google drive folder has been set up to be a repository of these summaries and other coalition updates.

ASPBAE added key documents and statements emerging from major organisations such as UNESCO and GPE, including their analysis,

strategies and actions. ASPBAE drew on the concerns and experiences of the coalitions from the ground in developing and publishing its own ASPBAE Statement. See box for link.

ASPBAE STATEMENT : Protect Education and Strengthen Solidarity in the Global Effort to Combat the Covid-19 Pandemic
<http://www.aspbae.org/>.

As countries ordered lockdowns, leading to massive loss of jobs, especially impacting on the poorest, key education concerns emerged such as the closure of schools and community learning centres which disrupted and even halted learning in many countries, the loss of the daily school meal so vital to many poor children, and increased domestic

responsibilities on women and girls, limiting their chances for ongoing learning.

While valuable distance learning solutions using appropriate technology and flexible learning approaches have been hastily organised, ASPBAE and the coalitions are concerned that most learners from poor and disadvantaged households have no internet connectivity and lack the resources to access and acquire technology. Teachers need job security and training to use online technologies and programmes. There is also concern about the possibility of corporate capture of education technologies, and that education budgets might be taken to pay for other emergency measures. ASPBAE is urging that these concerns be raised and addressed, and advocacy for education under the changed context must continue!

Education Advocacy Amid COVID-19 – Sharing E-Net Experience from The Philippines

By May Rendon Cinco

The Philippines is in a State of Calamity and Luzon, its biggest island where Manila is located, has been placed under “Enhanced Community Quarantine” (lockdown) due to COVID-19 outbreak. Classes are closed, affecting about 27 million students in public and private basic education.

The Department of Education has launched “DepEd Commons,” an online platform for public school teachers and learners that contains modules arranged by grade level and subject. However, skills and readiness of teachers, parents, and students to online learning, absence of gadgets, access to internet, and inefficient connection remain the challenges from using this, especially among poor teachers and students in remote areas. A teacher from Bulacan noted that out of her

35 students, only 15 (43%) with gadgets are accessing this.



Photo: E-Net

The issue of access to quality equitable education is more challenging now and even after the lockdown that may bring a “new normal” lifestyle. How could marginalized learners adapt into this high technology learning? How would they practice handwashing if there’s water shortage in schools and houses? How would the practice of social distancing be observed when a class is composed of 60 students due to inadequate classrooms? Would these learning modes lessen or increase their workload of teachers? E-Net is pushing for a responsive national and local education and health system, appropriate financing for disasters of this type and magnitude, comprehensive school safety and safe learning community.

Learners with disabilities are the most vulnerable in this pandemic. E-Net participated in an online meeting on Social Watch Philippines’ (SWP) Alternative Budget Initiative that plans on utilizing PhP150 million (US\$3 million) restored government funds for instructional/ learning materials for learners with disabilities. The Philippine Coalition on the UNCRPD put forward recommendations to the government for a disability-inclusive response to COVID-19 which SWP and E-Net supported. These include an accessible and understandable information and communication channel that utilizes available data on people with disability PWD to include all of them and their households in the provision of cash assistance and relief goods, sanitary and hygiene kits, undertaking of measures to safeguard and protect children and adults with disabilities, and setting up of effective redress mechanism.

A video on “Education is a Human Right” with Filipino sign language is being developed. IEC

materials on COVID-19 from government agencies and partners have been reprinted and posted on E-Net Facebook page.

E-Net participates in online meetings like ASPBAE on ALE and SDG 4.7, PEHRC on privatization of education, UNESCO UIL, PH OGP on National Action Plan on Education, Save the Children on Child Protection, LEG with DepEd, and LCC on literacy programs to push its education advocacy amid COVID-19.



Photo: E-NET

While this pandemic has disrupted society’s normal functions, and is disproportionately affecting marginalized sectors and learners, it is high time to look for creative, alternative solutions to learning, and advocate for reforms in the education sector. This crisis has exposed the limitations of the current system and must be a springboard to a better, more progressive, and more inclusive education and health system.

The quarterly newsletter is produced by EOL - Asia Pacific Regional Management Unit based in Kathmandu, Nepal <https://oxfamibis.dk/en/education-out-loud/> Special issue under coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic will be published monthly starting April, 2020. Please contact Ms. Pratiba Chhetri for information at pch@oxfamibis.dk