

Dear ASPnet Community,
Dear National Coordinators,
Dear teachers, students and parents,

As we all enter the "new normal", I want to send a message of solidarity and "CONNECTed-ness". We are in times of great change for education, with challenges that must be addressed both from before, and as a result of, the evolving global pandemic.



This need to rethink education challenges, old and new, gives me and the International Coordination team a reason to stop and reflect on how we want to adapt our support to you, the ASPnet community. We want to take stock of our planned activities in our 'usual' thematic areas, including GCED and ESD, as well as our support to

you in the face of unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19.

In this issue, we present some of the elements of our strategic thinking, including the overall global frameworks, the United Nations Policy Brief on "Education during COVID-19 and Beyond" launched in August, as well as the "Framework for the Reopening of Schools issued jointly by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Bank. UNESCO was substantially involved in both those collaborative initiatives with the partners of the Global Coalition for Education. In addition, we include references and links to relevant UNESCO webinars and other resources.

We will also share our thoughts on how we want to adapt our activities to this context and integrate them holistically, in order to enable you in your schools to continue the great work in our thematic areas rather than adding to the many new tasks you already face.

As all the things we expected from the future regarding learning suddenly look far from certain, we can find comfort and inspiration in old ways and remember cultural traditions of community learning. I want to share with you an example of this from my own home country, Japan (see video message below), hoping to inspire all of you to think of and remember traditional modes of learning while the 'in school' learning we are used to is disrupted, and distance and blended learning approaches are being developed.

Of course, none of this reflection and change can be brought about without you. We want to hear from you, your thoughts, experiences, ideas on the "new normal" and how we can best shape and rethink education for the future on a global and local scale. We will do this through a survey to gather and channel your voices into our work, which is described in this issue.

Let's put our minds together to "build back better", to use the current challenges as an opportunity to improve education for all in line with the SDGs, to blend our own unique resources of experience and rich cultural tradition and our imaginations to shape the "futures of education" collectively and in "CONNECTed-ness"!

Stay safe. Stay CONNECTed!
[Julie Saito](#), ASPnet International Coordinator

Special message from Julie Saito, International ASPnet Coordinator Rethinking the “New Normal” for Education at ASPnet



“We have a unique opportunity to bring together ideas on how to find strength in our cultural and community practices”

[See the video message](#) and [biography](#) [here](#)

Reflecting on a new and improved “normal”

“Education during COVID-19 and beyond” - UN Policy Brief just launched

“We already faced a learning crisis before the pandemic ... Now we face a generational catastrophe that could waste untold human potential, undermine decades of progress, and exacerbate entrenched inequalities”

On 4 August, António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General issued the *Education during COVID-19 and beyond Policy Brief* warning that **the pandemic has created the most severe disruption in the world’s education systems** in history and is threatening a loss of learning that may stretch beyond one generation of students. UNESCO led the drafting of the Secretary-General’s Policy Brief which contains inputs from 15 sister organizations. You can find the full policy brief [here](#), as well as his [video message](#) on launch. His remarks are so

“We are at a defining moment for the world’s children and young people”

poignant and relevant to our topic of the “new normal” that we want to share some quotes with you, which you can find in the boxes throughout this newsletter.



Let’s celebrate our ASPnet teachers!

World Teachers’ Day 2020

“Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future”

5 October

[More info](#)

Continuity of planned activities in the ‘new normal’

As a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic, we have made adjustments to different ongoing activities to ensure maximum support and accessibility for our members and to enable them to continue their work in relation to ASPnet’s three thematic action areas. Our main initiatives are:

Global citizenship and a culture of peace and non-violence

Most of the project activities planned as face-to-face meetings will now take place online over the course of 2020 and 2021. The project will proceed with a newly conceptualised [Change Initiative](#) for ASPnet Teacher Education and Training Institutions (TEIs). [Read more](#)

In addition, we are working on developing [Online Trainings on GCED for ASPnet teachers in Anglo- and Francophone Africa](#), as well as a [new initiative to take action for people and the planet](#) focused on building an online community of ASPnet students with the support of UNESCO youth leaders. We have also developed a [mapping of research](#) of ASPnet practices related to GCED and an intermediate draft can be consulted [here](#).

Sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles

Under the umbrella of the new [ESD for 2030 framework](#), we invited all National Coordinators to respond to a [survey](#) to better understand how ASPnet good practices are successfully integrated into government policy and scaled up to reach more ASPnet and non-ASPnet schools. 37 National Coordinators provided responses and initial results can be consulted [here](#), while discussions with National Coordinators continue.

On 19 September, UNESCO launched the [Global Trash Hack Campaign](#), aiming to transform young people’s thinking about sustainability by encouraging them to take action on waste, reflect on their actions and share their learnings. As part of the Campaign, we will launch a [Global ASPnet Trash Hack Action Week](#) in November including useful resources for schools to engage with the Campaign.

Inter-cultural learning and the appreciation of cultural diversity and heritage

UNESCO is launching an important inter-sectoral project entitled [Education and Culture together in action to advance the SDGs](#). The aim is to promote cultural diversity, arts education and heritage education and we are designing a related activity for ASPnet members.

UNESCO Associated Schools and the Futures of Education Initiative

We are collaborating with the UNESCO initiative “[Futures of Education](#)”, to engage the ASPnet community in joint reflections and to co-construct ideas and perspectives on the futures of education. National Coordinator Briefing Sessions were recently held, and we were impressed with the participation and contribution by 142 participants from 71 countries. We hope to reach engagement with 90 countries in this global dialogue. Further information can be found [here](#). LINK NOT WORKING

“The latest evidence on the reopening of schools” - UNESCO's webinar series on reopening schools

The webinar shared the latest evidence emerging from the process of reopening of schools around the world. The discussion addressed how governments are dealing with the learning loss resulting from school closures and how they are ensuring inclusive reopening also for the most marginalized learners. You can find more information on the webinar [here](#). The webinar is part of a [series](#) of UNESCO webinars on reopening schools jointly organized with UNICEF and the World Bank.

Upcoming UNESCO ASPnet activities

“Conversations with the Little Prince” is a writing contest to create one’s own conversation with the Little Prince of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s novel about the planet today where the pandemic threatens children, schools and families. It is an initiative jointly led



by #LearningPlanet in partnership with UNESCO, the Antoine

de Saint-Exupéry Youth Foundation (FASEJ) and the Stories Labo, inspired by the most translated work of French literature in the world. On the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the birth of its author, The

Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay has asked for all students to participate, specifically mentioning those of ASPnet in her [video message](#). See the full letter of the call for participation to ASPnet [here](#).

“As the world faces unsustainable levels of inequality, we need education – the great equalizer – more than ever”

BBC My World – another [call for ASPnet](#) by BBC My World, a global programme for young people which is looking for students to tell their stories about starting university and the impact of COVID-19. A couple of ASPnet students have already contributed to their programme.

Join the campaign: Girls back to School #LearningNeverStops Campaign

11 million girls might not return to school this year due to COVID-19’s unprecedented education disruption. This alarming number not only threatens decades of progress made towards gender equality, but also puts girls worldwide at risk of adolescent pregnancy, forced marriage, and violence. Help us make their voices heard.

We need your support to speak out for the 130 million girls who were already out of school before the pandemic, and safeguard their right to education.

A [social media pack](#) with animations and visuals is available in **English, Spanish and French** and will be updated in multiple languages over the coming weeks. You can also find other new products on our [campaign website](#) including our [campaign signature video](#).

We want to hear from you about the newsletter!

We started this newsletter in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a means to accompany and support all our member schools through the many unprecedented changes in school and education taking place around the world and have been publishing it for almost 6 months now. The objective was and is to stay connected and share experiences, challenges and good practices.

At this moment, in September 2020, as schools in many countries reopen for the first time and in view of the new challenges they face we would like to take a moment to think about the future and how we can best support member schools during this second phase.

“Consultation with parents, carers, teachers and young people is fundamental”

In order to do this, we need to hear from you about your current challenges and what topics you think are the most relevant and helpful to address in our next newsletters. Please take a moment to complete our online survey [here](#).

Messages of Solidarity

And, as always, we want to signoff with your encouraging and inspiring messages, this time about “the next normal” and imagining the future...

Arsam, *student/refugee/futurist*

Sheika, *student, United Arab Emirates*

UNESCO: *The next normal*

We encourage you to send us your messages of solidarity and other contributions, in words, pictures, videos and art works in order to build and strengthen our network, encourage and take care of each other.

We would also like to hear from you about your experiences and innovative ways to learn, out of school and within your families.

Please send your contributions to aspnetinaction@unesco.org. Please attach the [consent form](#).

The ASPnet Team

Julie Saito, Melanie Seto, Fouzia Belhami, Katja Anger, Simon Wanda, Helene Darne, Kangni Chen, Erik Eschweiler
Get connected: <https://aspnet.unesco.org>

Contact us: aspnetinaction@unesco.org