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Educational, Scientific and  
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Schools

# CONNECT

ASPnet Newsletter "The Future of Education" - Issue 11, August 17, 2020

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



Summer greetings from the International Coordination team. In this issue of our newsletter, we want to present to you a new activity that has partially resulted from your great contributions during our first global ASPnet webinar in May "*COVID-19: Reflections by the ASPnet community*". The overarching question we would like to address with you is: How should we re-imagine education, learning and knowledge in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and fragility?

We have been working together with UNESCO's "Futures of Education" Initiative team to set out a special initiative for you, that will run until the end of 2020.

We will invite all the ASPnet National Coordinators to organize national focus group discussions with you – ASPnet students, teachers, school principals and parents – to debate, rethink education, and contribute to shaping the future. Following national deliberations, we will hold three regional webinars (one in English, French and Spanish) for all the participants from the national focus groups to share their reflections and ideas with each other and to engage with UNESCO staff and experts, as well as representatives from UNESCO's High-Level International Commission on the Futures of Education.

The insights, ideas and good practice examples that you will bring to the table through these different discussion fora, will inform the global debate led by the International Commission and will contribute to shaping the UNESCO flagship report on the Futures of Education (to be published in 2021). ASPnet's mission and work to foster global citizens for sustainable development will be central elements of the/our discussion and we would be happy to hear your opinions, thoughts and ideas on this subject. Your participation is important as it allows school communities' voices to be heard, and it influences and contributes to shaping the global debate!

We hope that you will join us to take part in this new initiative with us. We strongly hope it will be an opportunity for us to engage in a process of reflection as a community, to re-imagine on the futures of education, and to strengthen our collective work, as well as an opportunity to bring about more just, peaceful and sustainable societies that foster global citizens for sustainable development.

As usual, we also share information on what else is going on at UNESCO, and, of course, some of the testimonies from the members of our ASPnet community.

Stay safe. Stay CONNECTed!

[Julie Saito](#), ASPnet International Coordinator

## Special message from Elisa Guerra

International Commission, Futures of Education Initiative



There are many challenges in the world, but there are also some amazing opportunities. In addition, as disruptive as it has been, COVID-19 has shown us all just how important education is in individual lives and for societies. We need to think about present realities, but we also need to think about the future to come – and not just what will happen, but what we together can make happen.

We are asking you to give reflect on the importance of global citizenship and sustainable development. What role should they play in education? What are examples of good practices? What do we need to improve on? What can we re-imagine?

[Watch](#) the video message and read her biography [here](#).

## Reflecting on the Future of Education

### Joint ASPnet and Futures of Education National Focus Group Consultation

ASPnet, jointly with UNESCO's Futures of Education Section is preparing a series of National Focus Group Consultations through the global ASPnet community.

These consultations aim to give voice to ASPnet member schools, and to gather ideas and reflections on how they imagine the future of education. The thematic focus will be placed on two of ASPnet's thematic action areas – Global citizenship (GCED) and Sustainable development (ESD) – and will be discussed in the context of the current situation of education during a global pandemic.

Both GCED and ESD respond to the world we live in, and the focus groups endeavour is to reflect and filter the thoughts and ideas of the ASPnet community in addressing the current looming global challenges affecting us, such as conflicts, terrorism, radicalization, climate change, environmental degradation and equitable management of natural resources. The consultations also aim to address the common urgent need to build peaceful and sustainable societies and their goal is to trigger the necessary fundamental changes in how we coexist with each other and our planet.

***We will listen to the voices of the whole world to  
redefine what education must be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century***  
Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General

## What is the Futures of Education Initiative?

In September 2019, UNESCO launched the Futures of Education initiative, an ambitious undertaking to reimagine how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet. The initiative aims to generate an agenda for global debate and action on the futures of education, learning and knowledge in a



world that is increasingly complex, uncertain and precarious. An independent International Commission convened by UNESCO's Director-General oversees the initiative. The members of the commission are thought-leaders from the worlds of politics, academia, the arts, science, business, and education.

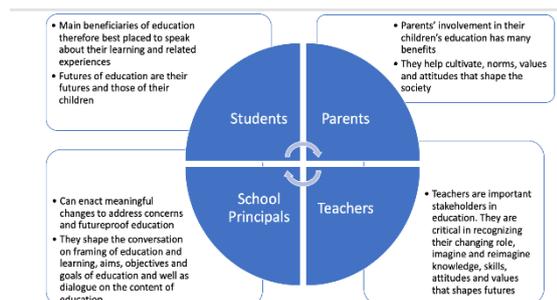
The commission will carefully consider inputs from the different consultation processes, and reflect them in the global report and other knowledge products connected with the initiative. Our focus groups with the ASPnet community form part of this consultation process.

You can find out more about the initiative on their [website](#). Watch the Futures of Education [video](#)

## ASPnet community's mobilization scheme

As part of this global consultation process the ASPnet community is a unique asset and the focus groups provide an important opportunity to hear the voices of some of the most important people in education: students, teachers and parents.

## Key components: how the focus groups will work



The focus group consultations will start in September 2020 and will be organized by the ASPnet National Coordinators in collaboration and with support from the ASPnet International Coordination team. Each focus group session is comprised of two rounds of reflection: the first a general reflection of what we do and do not want to see in our world by 2050, the second round will focus on how education can

contribute to countering the identified challenges and towards building more just, peaceful and sustainable societies.

The period of focus group discussions will culminate in a series of **regional webinars**, which will be organized to share the deliberations from the focus group discussions with ASPnet members from other countries and engage with experts and commission members from the Futures of Education Initiative.



## The ASPnet Global Webinar: planting the seeds for reflection

***"With 13 million children out of school in Nigeria before the pandemic we should not go back to normal"***

*Aisha Bunu, Student, age 14, Nigeria*



ASPnet held a very successful Global Webinar, entitled "COVID-19 – Reflections by the ASPnet community" in May. We were glad to hear your voices and exchange experiences, reflections and good practices in the context of the current pandemic and global school closures. We heard many very enriching, interesting and inspiring contributions from students, teachers and parents. Organised in collaboration with UNESCO's "Futures of Education" section, the webinar also addressed the question of how the ASPnet community envisions the future of education, and how education can and needs to change for the better, based on our current experiences.

The conversation from the webinar laid the foundation for this new initiative.

Read about the global webinar in our newsletter [here](#), and this [article](#).

***"I believe this crisis is an opportunity to think big, to be brave and to really make some bold decisions, when it comes to how we organize our education and learning"***

Anne-Fleur Lurvink  
English Teacher  
the Netherlands



***"This crisis has truly shown me that the nature of learning is first and foremost rooted in social interaction and processes. That is why I believe social and emotional learning should be given a bigger emphasis in education"***

Si Gao, Chinese  
Literature Teacher  
China



***"For many countries that were already in conflict, this pandemic has just made a bad situation worse. We need to think about the society that we need to be and what kind of education that we should give our children to create that society"***

*Ms Aseel Jasim, Parent of four, Iraq*



### **UNESCO News Flash**

UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched the ***Education in the time of 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. The [Policy Brief](#) builds on UNESCO's data and features recommendations on ways to avert the looming catastrophe. [Watch](#) the UN Secretary General's message. [Read more here](#).

***'#SaveOurFuture' campaign*** - To highlight the need to protect and reimagine education in a post-COVID-19 world, a coalition of global and local organizations is joining forces. The campaign will amplify the voices of children and young people and urge governments worldwide to recognize investment in education as critical to COVID-19 recovery.

## What else is UNESCO doing – Related resources

See below a list of related resources and a reminder of some we have already featured that still remain as important and relevant for the ongoing challenges:

**Survey:** “Take one minute to offer your ideas on the Futures of Education” is a [survey](#) that is part of the overall global “Futures of Education” initiative and is open to everyone

**Publication:** [“Education in a post-COVID world: Nine ideas for public action”](#) is a recent publication by the same team, highly relevant to the focus group consultation.

**Video:** the official Futures of Education [presentation video](#), which gives an overview of the initiative

**Talking across Generations on Reimagining Education:** a youth-driven intergenerational dialogue on education that provides a non-hierarchical platform for the youth to interact, discuss and debate with policymakers about critical issues that concern the future, [Join the dialogue](#)

**#LearningNeverStops:** UNESCO’s COVID-19 Education Response supported by the Global Education Coalition, providing comprehensive information on resources, including messages, many from ASPnet members!

**The little Prince** – on the occasion of the 120<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Antoine de Saint-Exupery, UNESCO’s Director-General, partner of the writing competition “Conversation with the Little Prince”, has highlighted the power of literature and imagination “to face the unknown, to learn to read the world and discover it with new eyes”. See here her [invitation to participate](#)

**Global Lesson in Social and Emotional Learning:** UNESCO MGIEP and Life University (USA) are inviting the world’s youth (18 – 34 years old) to join in the launch of a lesson on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). [Register](#) to participate.

## Messages of Solidarity

**Malawi** - [Lakshita, student](#)

**Lebanon** - [Mona and Sereen, teachers](#)

**Namibia** – [Anna, parent](#)

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 schools and within your families.

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

The ASPnet Team

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