



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Associated Schools

UNESCO
Associated
Schools

Berlin Blueprint

Measures to be taken for the
implementation of the
ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action
2004-2009



International Consultation of Experts

A Quality Network for Quality Education in the 21st Century

15–19 June 2004, Berlin, Germany

Berlin Blueprint

Introduction

Some 25 ASPnet stakeholders from all regions of the world (see Annex 1) were invited by UNESCO and the German Commission for UNESCO to take part in an International Consultation in Berlin, 15 – 19 June 2004. The purpose of this consultation was to elaborate practical guidelines and draft a blueprint of measures to be taken to facilitate the implementation of the ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2004-2009 in support of quality education for all. The Strategy and Plan of Action was agreed upon at the ASPnet 50th Anniversary International Congress on Quality Education for the 21st Century held in Auckland, New Zealand in August 2003 and elaborated in line with the ASPnet Global Review evaluation conducted in 2002-2003 by the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.

The Auckland Congress, attended by some 200 decision-makers from some 90 countries, reiterated ASPnet's role in reinforcing the four pillars of learning as outlined by the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century (learning to be, learning to do, learning to know and learning to live together). Participants concurred with the evaluators' assessment that the four pillars were insufficiently known and even misunderstood by many teachers, but the Congress strongly supported the proposal to explain them further so that they serve as a useful framework for quality education.

The Berlin Consultation reconfirmed this position.

The Berlin Consultation focused on four main priority areas for immediate action to enhance ASPnet as a quality network for quality education:

- 1 ASPnet's role in support of Education For All (EFA) and Quality Education
- 2 More effective use of ICTs
- 3 Indicators, monitoring, reporting and assessment
- 4 Strengthening ASPnet at the school, national, sub-regional/regional and international levels.

1 ASPnet's role in support of Education for All (EFA) and Quality Education

Rationale

Together with ensuring access to education for the some 115 million children deprived of an education and the some 800 million adult illiterates, the provision of quality education to meet the needs and aspirations of the 21st Century is high on the agenda of ministers of education.

ASPnet should focus on supporting Education For All (EFA), in line with the Dakar Framework of Action, notably goal number 3 (life skills and competencies) and goal number 6 (quality education), particularly by committing to the following activities:

- improving the relevance of the curriculum, specific aspects of the learning process and the climate of the school;
- promoting participatory methods of learning including the effective use of ICTs;
- redefining the role of the teacher as an 'agent of change';
- encouraging the involvement of parents, the local community and non-ASPnet schools;
- establishing contacts with ASPnet schools in other countries;
- participating in UNESCO international flagship projects, campaigns and events;
- ensuring a clean, safe and aesthetic school environment, free of all forms of prejudice, discrimination and violence.

It was also agreed that although EFA is a UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and the number one priority of UNESCO, many teachers are still not familiar with the Dakar goals and ASPnet should raise awareness about them.

Practical steps

ASPnet schools need to rethink their participation in the network in order to transform their schools into quality schools along the lines indicated above. Forums for dialogue between students and teachers should be set up to discuss the vision of quality education and the role of quality schools for the 21st Century. ASPnet projects should continue to focus on the priority themes of study confirmed by the ASPnet Global Review (including MDGs, EFA, etc.) and reinforce the four main pillars of learning with particular emphasis on learning to live



together. ASPnet schools should adopt a cross-curricular approach to ASPnet projects, using such methods as team teaching. They should see teachers as the facilitators and the learners as the main actors in their own education with emphasis on information gathering, research, analysis, critical thinking, responsible decision making and citizenship from local to global levels. Projects should include a wide range of initiatives including those which link the school with the wider community. UNESCO should provide schools with indicators and instruments to monitor, report and assess the impact of ASPnet projects on students, teachers and the community.

2 Effective use of ICTs

Rationale

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are instrumental in both keeping ASPnet on track and in improving the learning process in support of quality education for the 21st Century. Since ASPnet is a worldwide network involving 175 countries, encompassing a wide range of schools, including those in rural and isolated areas, there is a serious digital divide within the Network. The Global Review indicated that only about 57% of ASPnet schools have access to ICTs. UNESCO initiatives and Flagship Projects depend heavily on easy and rapid communication amongst members. However, schools without access to ICTs find themselves in a vulnerable position and their capacity to participate effectively is vastly diminished. As concerns the learning process, countries and the private sector have invested enormous resources to develop user-friendly interactive software for education. Recent examples in New Zealand include the "Living Memory" CD-ROM and "Creativity" which place emphasis on participatory learning and developing creative skills and talent. ICT connections provide access to vast sources of information and data. These provide a foundation for developing students' research and analytical capacities which in turn lead to critical thinking and sound decision making. National, regional and international networking call for: high performing and reliable communication channels; "clearing house" functions and diffusion of information via websites and portals; and distance learning/training of ASPnet National Co-ordinators, principals and teachers – all of which can be provided through ICTs.

Practical Steps

There is a need to draft, in collaboration with ICT experts, a major proposal to fully equip ASPnet schools with ICTs, provide adequate training for ASPnet National Coordinators, principals and teachers and engage the services of a webmaster. Such a request could be submitted for financing to both public donors (e.g. Japanese funds-in-trust) and the private sector (e.g. Siemens, IBM, Microsoft from which UNESCO Santiago Office has received support). Two versions of the proposal could be prepared: one calling for a new connection of all 7,600 ASPnet schools and 175 Coordinators and the other to connect some 3,000 schools and 20 ASPnet Coordinators who are still not online (in 2004). A special section on the importance and effective use of ICTs for learning and networking could be included in the new kit to be prepared for ASPnet members. Training of ASPnet National Coordinators is essential and a new voluntary online training course with accreditation could be envisaged (similar to the UN online security training).

3 Indicators, monitoring, reporting and assessment

Rationale

The recent Global Review evaluation of ASPnet emphasized the necessity of improved monitoring and assessment of ASPnet in the future. Partners, potential funders and the academic world increasingly want evidence-based practice, therefore accurate feedback and data are required. Both simple and short or longer-term impact assessments should reflect the living experience and impact of ASPnet's work in schools, including systematic research programmes on ASPnet in collaboration with universities and research institutions. The ASPnet Global Review pointed out that ASPnet is a unique source of international data.

Practical steps

- Schools should not only submit annual reports of their activities but also evaluate their achievements on a regular basis, in cooperation with their ASPnet National Co-ordinator.
- ASPnet could take a leading role in establishing a working group to develop guidelines on identifying appropriate alternative indicators for the more difficult areas of assessment, such as social-emotional development, values and attitudes, school non-violence, self-esteem, etc.
- ASPnet teachers and students should be involved from the outset in defining indicators and identifying baselines and monitoring and evaluation, together with outside evaluators. ASPnet teachers have a crucial role to play as researchers, providing regular feedback, positive and negative, and should be recognised as such.
- Schools could engage in peer evaluation (school-to-school) in order to carry out observations of practice, interviews, etc. in the spirit of acting as "critical friends" to each other.
- Research should be conducted on the impact of ASPnet on students (e.g. a survey on former ASPnet students).



4 Strengthening ASPnet at the school, national, sub-regional/regional and international levels

Rationale

ASPnet has arrived at a crucial point in its history due to the large membership numbers and the significant planned expansion in the use of ICTs for the network. New measures will be taken to improve ASPnet worldwide as an effective network of committed schools carrying out quality work. Quality education implies improving teaching methods and educational content, facilitating professional development of teachers, opening the school to the community, encouraging international and intercultural school exchange and identifying and diffusing good practices on all levels.

The ASPnet Global Review offers recommendations that have considerable resource implications, hence the need to focus on practical, achievable objectives at all levels.

Practical steps

School level

- An ASPnet school coordinator should be appointed by the school authorities and a programming committee should be set up to elaborate and monitor a yearly ASPnet school programme, on the one hand, and to motivate and sustain participation of the entire school, on the other.
- ASPnet schools should contribute to the development of innovative teaching and learning methods through ASPnet activities and assist teachers in integrating the UNESCO themes in all subjects.
- ASPnet schools should cooperate with other schools and consolidate the involvement of the community in implementing ASPnet projects and activities.
- ASPnet schools must submit annual reports of their activities to the ASPnet National coordinator, and evaluate their achievements on a regular basis.

National level

- To enhance participation in ASPnet, all countries should produce a national ASPnet charter, in order to ensure that the entire school is involved in conducting pilot projects in support of quality education. The national ASPnet charter elaborated by France is an initiative to be encouraged in other countries.
- Motivate and empower teachers, ensure the impact of ASPnet at the policy level and maximise the use of limited resources. ASPnet national coordinators, school principals and teachers should undergo systematic training.
- Ensure the organisation of annual training workshops of ASPnet teachers to foster synergy amongst them, review the network's performance, plan for the future and provide due recognition and motivation for teachers.
- Strengthen partnerships with other institutions (e.g. universities, teacher training institutions, UN agencies) and with professional teachers' associations.
- Initiate and encourage twinning and cooperation between schools at national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.
- ASPnet schools should share experience and best practice with other ASPnet schools at the national, regional and international level.
- Keep national authorities informed on a regular basis of the achievements and developments of ASPnet in support of quality education, encourage them to mainstream ASPnet innovations in their education systems and to include them in national policy debates on innovations for quality education.
- Recognise achievements in ASPnet schools (not necessarily only the most outstanding schools or individuals); acknowledge their contribution by presenting a certificate.

Regional and International levels

- The UNESCO International ASPnet Coordination Unit should be strengthened with human resources (including the senior management post of ASPnet International Coordinator) and its role should remain the overall coordination, management, guidance and conception of ASPnet – while keeping close contact with regional focal points.
- A small international ASPnet focal group composed of major stakeholders for overall planning and monitoring should be established.
- A short-term master plan should be developed by this focal group for the immediate future, based on the proposals put forward during the Berlin Consultation
- More functions should be decentralised to the regional level after having secured focal points and budgets in the regions
- The regional level needs to focus on adaptation, monitoring and implementation of ASPnet activities, with efforts to allocate 25% to 50% of a designated staff member's time (in each regional or cluster office) to these tasks. Relevant financial resources should be allocated to these UNESCO Offices for ASPnet in support of quality education.
- Produce and diffuse a capacity building training kit for ASPnet national coordinators, principals and teachers.
- Fundraising: examine the relationships between potential funding agencies and UNESCO; identify common interests between UNESCO and potential partners and agree on clear guidelines and expectations for both parties.