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Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet)

Evaluation Office

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ABSTRACT

The evaluation of UNESCO's Associated Schools Project network (ASPnet) aimed at guiding the strategic direction and an initiated reform process of the ASPnet. It shall help UNESCO more effectively manage and better utilise one of its largest and most powerful global networks which is reaching out to an estimated 10,000 schools in 181 Member and Associated States with the aim to improve the quality of education in practice. Recognized as one important mechanism for UNESCO in facilitating Member States in implementing the holistic and inclusive SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda - such as through developing, testing and applying innovative educational material, as well as pioneering new teaching and learning approaches such as related to Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development, or through adhering to global and regional flagship initiatives on priority topics - the ASPnet is found to be ever more relevant. Suggested reform measures shall help utilising the full potential of the network, and need to be accompanied by adequate resources and close commitment from all stakeholders at the global, regional and national levels. These include measures for strengthening the governance, increasing the networking component, improving monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms, further enhancing the effective use of innovative ICT solutions, and for strengthening the communication, visibility and outreach of the Network. Suggestions are also made for better exploring the Network's cross-sectoral dimension and for linking the likely effects of good practice at the school level to upstream policy developments.

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This report reflects the evaluative perspective of its authors, and does not necessarily represent the views expressed by any of the above stakeholders and members of the reference group.

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List of Abbreviations

ACCU	Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO
ASPnet	Associated Schools Project Network
C/4	UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy
C/5	UNESCO's Approved Programme and Budget
ED	Education Sector
EFA	Education for All
ESD RICE	Regional Initiative for Cooperation for ESD Promotion Through Rice
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
IC	International Coordinator
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
GEFI	Global Education First Initiative
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPS	Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development
IT	Information Technology
KNCU	Korean National Commission for UNESCO
LTLT	Learning How to Live Together
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NC	National Coordinator
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OTA	Online Tool for ASPnet
PP	Participation Programme
XB	Extra-Budgetary resources
RBM	Results-Based Management
RP	Regular Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SISTER	System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and Evaluation of Results
TLC	Teaching, and Learning Content
ToC	Theory of Change
TST	Transatlantic Slave Trade
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WHE	World Heritage Education
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

Background and purpose

1. The UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) is a large and unique global network of schools committed to promote the principles and values of UNESCO through developing innovative educational contents, pioneering new teaching and learning methods and approaches at the school level and linking millions of teachers and students across the world. The ASPnet aims to contribute to improving the quality of education in practice in pursuit of peace and sustainable development and is often promoted by UNESCO as a powerful tool to achieve its goals and to increase the Organization's visibility on the ground equally in all Member States.
2. Launched in 1953 in 33 secondary schools in 15 countries, the ASPnet's coverage has continuously expanded over time and currently estimates more than 10,000 educational institutions as its members - ranging from nursery and pre-schools to primary and secondary schools as well as teacher training institutions - in 181 countries. Despite its expansion, its focus and thematic areas have constantly been revolving around issues related to human rights and peace, intercultural understanding, world concerns and the United Nations system. The focus of the current 2014-21 ASPnet Strategy is on introducing Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education into educational contents and approaches at school level and on reinforcing the sharing and networking among schools.
3. The programme is broadly based on three main working mechanisms - *creating, teaching and learning, and interacting* - that determine how ASPnet shall contribute to improving the quality of education. Through functioning as a laboratory of ideas, ASPnet is developing, testing and disseminating innovative educational material and as well as promoting new teaching and learning approaches related to UNESCO core values and priorities. Through capacity building and applying innovative teaching and participative learning approaches on specific ASPnet thematic areas, ASPnet individual and institutional stakeholders internalize UNESCO values and further act as role models in their community and beyond. Lastly, through interacting, ASPnet provides opportunities for its various stakeholders to connect, exchange experiences, knowledge and good practices among schools, among individuals, within their communities, with policy makers and society as a whole. Effective coordination and targeted communication are preconditions for enabling these three working mechanisms to function.
4. The ASPnet has undergone several phases of restructuring and renewal with the aim of further enhancing its potential outreach and impact. Within the ongoing reform process at UNESCO for better utilizing and revitalizing the Organization's partnerships and networks as valuable assets for formulating and delivering its programmes¹, ASPnet has been identified as a network that has been functioning at a sub-optimal level during the past biennia, and thus not having reached its full potential. Many consider it as a 'dusted jewel'.
5. Recognizing the importance of the programme as a powerful mechanism for improving the quality of education and for implementing the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda in practice in all its Member States, UNESCO commissioned an evaluation of the ASPnet. The evaluation was, therefore, intended to support the ongoing process of revitalization of the ASPnet and to inform UNESCO's Senior Management and Governing Bodies, as well as national level stakeholders on the most appropriate way forward. The evaluation was conducted by a team of external consultants jointly with the IOS Evaluation Office. Findings and conclusions from this Report shall feed into a revision of the 2014-21 Strategy for the ASPnet.

¹ in line with [UNESCO Comprehensive Partnership Strategy](#)

Achievements and Challenges

6. The evaluation identified the following main achievements:
- a. The ASPnet has demonstrated its effectiveness for improving the quality of education in practice by putting innovative teaching and learning approaches into practice at the grass roots level. When intra- or cross-sectoral cooperation successfully occurred, such as in the case of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and in the framework of flagships such as World Heritage Education, Sandwatch, and Transatlantic Slave Trade, the ASPnet effectively fulfilled its potential as a channel for disseminating UNESCO's educational resources and for applying innovative teaching and learning practices, in addition to being a vehicle for international exchange and collaboration.
 - b. The Celebration of International Days, participation in flagship Initiatives and on-line global platforms have also demonstrated their value as drivers for learning and exchange among schools, teachers and students. For example, in numerous instances they triggered long-lasting twinning arrangements among schools and intercultural exchanges that are perceived as having long-term generational effects. The evaluation also highlighted examples where the identification, collection, and sharing of ASPnet good practices led to replication, and improved capacities at different levels.
 - c. Despite a significant decrease in human and financial resources dedicated to international coordination, ASPnet has proven resilience in many countries through the firm commitment of its stakeholders and the continuous engagement for implementation of activities at the national and at the school levels. In particular, when a whole school approach is applied or where individual stakeholders act as 'multipliers', ASPnet initiatives demonstrated sustainability not least through their potential for replication. Furthermore, where partnerships have been established with stakeholders in the local community, such as private enterprises or the civil society, these significantly increased the outreach of the school level activities.
 - d. ASPnet is recognized by Member States as highly relevant and an effective implementation mechanism for increasing the quality of education in practice in the framework of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda, in particular for reaching target 4.7 of the Education 2030 agenda.
 - e. The related three main working mechanisms, that determine how ASPnet is assumed to contribute to increasing the quality of education have been found effective for its implementation. Through functioning as a laboratory of ideas and building capacities on specific thematic areas, and strengthening cooperation and exchange of good practices at various levels, the ASPnet is equally relevant for fulfilling the key functions of the Organization. It also provides visibility of UNESCO on the ground, including in those Member States where the Organization is less present.
 - f. ASPnet can be considered as a cost-efficient programme for UNESCO. Through its decentralised structure and networking function, it mobilises large numbers of various actors to a great extent on a voluntary basis. It triggers numerous initiatives and their replication at a relatively minimal cost. Furthermore, it holds a great potential for attracting extrabudgetary resources.
 - g. The recent introduction of innovative ICT tools and social media, both at the management and implementation level, has been empowering the interactive working mechanism of the ASPnet and consolidating its global identity. In particular, the Unit for ASPnet focused closely on the development and launch of the Online Tool for ASPnet (OTA)² with the aim of (re)connecting all ASPnet members to each other and stimulating exchange across all levels.

² OTA is an on-line platform based on Microsoft SharePoint, which can be used to store, organize, share and access information on several formats (pictures, videos, texts, documents, chats, etc.). It is also a management tool that can reinforce the communication between the different coordination levels. The majority of OTA solutions cover aspects of network management, whereas about one third is dedicated to sharing educational contents.

7. The evaluation also identified the following main challenges:
- a. While the relevance of ASPnet has remained significant over years, its positioning in the Medium-Term Strategy and visibility within UNESCO has more recently been shading out. At the programme level, UNESCO global priorities Gender Equality and Priority Africa have not been found particularly reflected in ASPnet. Furthermore, ASPnet responsibilities at the field level are not well defined and its inter-sectoral potential is not fully capitalised upon.
 - b. ASPnet also faces several challenges in its governance due to the uneven application of the current provisions for membership. The proliferation of a variety of national implementation mechanisms, such as non-homogenous or non-equally respected procedures for selection and membership, resulted in potential reputational risks for the Organization that are currently not sufficiently managed. Established global membership procedures for ASPnet are often not exercised as intended and are insufficiently incorporated into national guidelines, eventually leading to a loss of global identity and decreased manageability.
 - c. The means (human and financial resources) allocated to the International Coordination in the period 2010-2015 decreased, and at the national level the programme is often implemented with minimal resources. Simultaneously, the scale and complexity of the network increased steadily, resulting in uncontrolled growth with uneven level of activity and quality. The programme's potential for establishing partnerships and attracting external resources has remained largely underutilised over the last biennia. The programme is currently under-resourced to ensure effective minimum operations, while with only few more core resources a lot more could be achieved.
 - d. Despite the examples of success, overall a mixed picture emerges in terms of results. The variety of ASPnet's activities have not expanded in a coordinated and systematic manner across the whole network. The current ASPnet focused mainly on ESD and GCE, whereas the cross-sectoral component of the programme has diminished, resulting in often outdated material and phasing out of long-existing flagships. Testing of new educational material has been limited to few schools in selected countries and not further disseminated or rolled out throughout the network.
 - e. A scattered approach also applies to the 'teaching and learning' component (i.e. capacity building for ASPnet). When educational resources and approaches have been developed, they imply also a capacity-building component. However, this has been sub-optimal and consisted mainly in ad-hoc workshops and seminars for a limited number of participants. The networking among ASPnet schools primarily occurred at the national level. Rather than a global network, over the last three biennia, ASPnet has turned into a network of national networks of schools with differing degrees of activity levels and varying quality.
 - f. Sustainability at the national level has been uneven among countries. While as a result of the decrease in human and financial resources, as well as diminishing visibility and recognition at UNESCO, in some countries the national ASPnet collapsed, in many other countries the national level ASPnet was further developed and institutionalised in a more independent way from the global coordination. Evidence also shows that factors to ensure sustainability or for increasing the outreach of the school level activities through local partnerships are not systematically present and capitalized upon.
 - g. Furthermore, the evaluation found limited awareness of policy makers to the system relevance of ASPnet educational contents, as well as of the potential to pilot or replicate methodologies and approaches at the national level through the network. A lack of communication and visibility of the ASPnet was found among the reasons why the ASPnet is often not sufficiently known or understood beyond the network and rarely found influential at the national policy level.

Way Forward

On the basis of its findings and conclusions, the evaluation recommends the following:

- **Recommendation 1 (Strengthen Governance):** Strengthen the network identity and cohesion, by building the network as a community and improving and reinforcing the ASPnet rules and regulations concerning membership, quality assurance, reporting and monitoring as well as providing incentives for complying with the rules and regulations by highlighting and clarifying the mutual benefits.
- **Recommendation 2 (Improve Programming and Planning):** Revise the current ASPnet Strategy and develop a Plan of Action, with the aim to revitalize the ASPnet with realistic intermediate objectives in explicit alignment with the framework of the SDG4 - Education 2030 Agenda and to ensure a sound linkage between the strategic vision of ASPnet goals and their implementation.
- **Recommendation 3 (Increase Means):** Ensure an adequate level of core resources (in terms of HR, regular budget, allocation of Participation Programme funds) that allow the network to be effectively coordinated, managed and animated in pursuit of an increase in overall quality of processes and mechanisms, as well as to strengthen fundraising efforts to ensure additional resources for animating the network.
- **Recommendation 4 (Promote Utilisation):** Promote ASPnet more actively within UNESCO and among Member States, in order to capitalize upon the ASPnet more effectively as test-bed and dissemination channel of UNESCO and national innovative education material and approaches; and to make better use of its inter-sectoral dimension, and cross-linkages with other relevant UNESCO initiatives (in coordination with Programme Sectors, Category I and II Institutes, Field Offices and extrabudgetary projects) as well with other UNESCO networks (UNEVOC centres, Chairs) and partners.
- **Recommendation 5 (Facilitate Utilisation):** Apply a more programmatic, structured and coordinated approach to build momentum for joint initiatives/ exchanges and networking for Associated schools, such as in the form of flagship initiatives linked to priority thematic areas through which the three working mechanisms (creating, teaching and learning and interacting) mutually re-enforce each other.
- **Recommendation 6 (Strengthen Communication):** Develop a communication strategy targeted to different audiences with the aim to enhance visibility and understanding of the key aspects and potential impact of the ASPnet, including through different ways of disseminating good practices beyond the network to stimulate interest, replication and the potential consideration in policy debate, as well as to attract partnerships and funding.

Management Response

Overall Management Response	
<p>Overall, the report provides a clear picture of the ASPnet today and its strong points and shortfalls. The close communication and collaboration between the Unit for ASPnet and IOS over the past 6 months has undoubtedly been fruitful and the main conclusions and recommendations of the report are in line with the Sector's current thinking and planning and with already ongoing reform work.</p>	
Recommendations	Management response
<p>Recommendation 1 - Strengthen Governance: Strengthen the network identity and cohesion, by building ASPnet as a community and improving and reinforcing the rules and regulations concerning membership, quality assurance, reporting and monitoring as well as providing incentives for complying with the rules and regulations by highlighting and clarifying the mutual benefits.</p>	<p>Accepted New guides for National Coordination and for member schools are currently under preparation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 - Improve Programming and Planning: Revise the current ASPnet Strategy and develop a Plan of Action, with the aim to revitalize the ASPnet with realistic intermediate objectives in explicit alignment with the framework of the SDG4 - Education 2030 Agenda and to ensure a sound linkage between the strategic vision of ASPnet goals and their implementation.</p>	<p>Accepted The ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021 will be updated and revised so as to reflect the new SDG context. A Plan of Action for UNESCO to give new impetus to the network can be prepared (partially already reflected in current work plans).</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 - Increase Means: Ensure an adequate level of core resources (in terms of HR, regular budget, allocation of PP funds) that allow the network to be effectively coordinated, managed and animated in pursuit of an increase in overall quality of processes and mechanisms, as well as to strengthen fundraising efforts to ensure additional resources for animating the network.</p>	<p>Partially accepted Within the current regular budget, human resources for international coordination cannot be further increased. Efforts are ongoing to secure JPOs or staff secondments from Member States and will continue.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 - Promote Utilisation: Promote ASPnet more actively within UNESCO and among Member States, in order to capitalize upon the ASPnet more effectively as test-bed and dissemination channel of UNESCO and national innovative education material and approaches; and to make better use of its inter-sectoral dimension, and cross-linkages with other relevant UNESCO initiatives (in coordination with Programme Sectors, Category I and II Institutes, Field Offices and extrabudgetary projects) as well with other UNESCO networks (UNEVOC centres, Chairs) and partners.</p>	<p>Accepted Initiatives to reach out to the other programme sectors and to Field Offices have already been undertaken since January and new joint projects, such as a campaign about refugees with SHS, are planned. Discussions for collaboration were also initiated with the UNESCO Chairs and the teachers section.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 - Facilitate Utilisation: Apply a more programmatic, structured and coordinated approach to build momentum for joint initiatives/exchanges and networking for Associated schools, such as flagship initiatives linked to priority thematic areas through which the three working mechanisms (creating, teaching and learning and interacting) mutually re-enforce each other.</p>	<p>Accepted A first new flagship is currently under preparation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 - Strengthen Communication: Develop a communication strategy targeted to different audiences with the aim to enhance visibility and understanding of the key aspects and potential impact of the ASPnet, including through different ways of disseminating good practices beyond the network to stimulate interest, replication and the potential consideration in policy debate, as well as to attract partnerships and funding.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background and rationale of the evaluation

Description of the Evaluand

1. The UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) is a large and unique global network of schools committed to promote the principles and values of UNESCO through innovative teaching and learning methods at the school level and linking millions of teachers and students across the world.³ The **ASPnet aims to contribute to improving the quality of education in practice in pursuit of peace and sustainable development** and is often promoted by UNESCO as a powerful tool to achieve its goals and to increase the Organization's visibility on the ground.⁴ Its philosophical foundation reiterates the principle declared in the Preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO: *"since wars begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed"*.

2. Launched in 1953 in 33 secondary schools⁵ in 15 countries, the ASPnet's coverage has continuously expanded over time. Currently, it comprises more than 10,000 educational institutions - ranging from nursery and pre-schools to primary and secondary schools as well as teacher training institutions - in 181 countries. Despite its expansion, its focus and thematic areas have constantly been revolving around issues related to human rights and peace, intercultural understanding, world concerns and the United Nations (UN) system. Furthermore, in 1975 the protection of the environment became the fourth theme of ASPnet interventions for innovative classroom teaching and extra-curricular activities.

3. Since its establishment, the programme has undergone several phases of restructuring and renewal with the aim of further enhancing its potential outreach and impact. This has resulted in a steady growth and increasing outreach of the Network, and an increasingly decentralized management structure. The International Coordination, Unit for ASPnet, is situated at the UNESCO Education Sector (ED) and designated ASPnet National Coordinators are appointed by the National Commission for UNESCO in each participating Member State.⁶

4. The UNESCO Regular Programme (RP) activity budget allocated to the international coordination has fluctuated over the last biennia.⁷ However, the programme has regularly benefitted from additional funding coming from different extra-budgetary sources, such as bi- and multi-lateral cooperation, and the private sector.⁸ National level activities are funded and managed

³ The original identity of ASPnet roots in its experimental pedagogical component, with a particular emphasis on human rights education. Its first acronymic ASPRO (Associated Schools Project) -revised during the seventies- conveys the idea that ASP schools are foremost called to work on educational projects associated with the mandate of UNESCO. Solely at its 40th Anniversary, held in Germany in 1993, ASP was further designated as a network.

⁴ ASPnet activities vary greatly. They range from the celebration of UN International Days/Years/Decades, participation in flagship initiatives, networking/ twinning among schools, capacity building for teachers and students, initiatives for school campus management, school governance, community development and solidarity, and developing and/or testing of innovative approaches for teaching and learning. For an overview of concrete ASPnet activities, please see [UNESCO Associated Schools, Third Collection of Good Practices Intercultural Dialogue in Support of Quality Education](#) (2013).

⁵ As of 1965, the network has opened up also to primary schools.

⁶ Several changes of the ED sector structure during 2010-2015 had an impact on the situation of the ASPnet global coordination within the sector. In December 2015, the ASPnet International Coordination became a separate Unit in the Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development. Until then, it was part of the Section for Education for Sustainable Development in the Division of Teaching and Learning Content (TLC) since 2013.

⁷ It sharply decreased from US\$ 100.000 in 2010/11 to US\$ 20.000 in 2012/13, and increased to US\$168.000 in 2014/15.

⁸ For example, in 2010-2011 (indicatively): Bilateral cooperation: JFIT1: 200.000 US\$; USA for TST: 111.687 US\$; Multilateral cooperation: UNEP: 10.000 US\$; ISESCO: 10.000 US\$; Private sector: BASF: 1.371.742 US\$; Swiss Direct Mail: 40.000 US\$ UNESCO Participation Programme: 883.400 US\$ UNESCO regular programme budget: 100.000 US\$.

directly by the national stakeholders and may to some extent be supported by the [UNESCO Participation Programme](#).⁹

Alignment with the mandate of UNESCO

5. In 1974 the General Conference of UNESCO recognized the tremendous potentialities of ASPnet as an implementing mechanism of the '[Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#)'. Over decades, programmatic documents of the Organization have repeatedly confirmed the role of ASPnet as a vital resource to ensure quality education is delivered in practice through the development and implementation of pilot projects and schools campaigns and reinforcement of the linkage between knowledge and action.¹⁰

6. At the ASPnet programme level, the strategic documents have warmly welcomed the incorporation of the priorities of UNESCO, and the UN, into its thematic areas and activities, putting emphasis to all dimensions of quality education, including equity and inclusiveness that are inherent in the mandate of UNESCO.¹¹ In the last two decades, two dedicated ASPnet strategies have in particular supported its further development and strategic direction. The [ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2004-2009](#)¹² "[Putting Quality Education into Practice](#)" resulted from the discussion and proceedings of the 50th ASPnet Anniversary¹³ and clearly aimed at providing the network with a solid structure and a precise division of tasks among stakeholders in order to lead ASPnet towards the specific priority area of UNESCO at that time, namely [Education for All \(EFA\)](#) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).¹⁴ [The ASPnet Strategy for the period 2014-2021](#) was developed in the aftermath of the 60th Anniversary¹⁵ and in line with current priorities of UNESCO, it aims at strengthening its focus on [Global Citizenship Education \(GCE\)](#) and [Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\)](#).¹⁶

Membership and Governance

7. Individual schools are the members of the ASPnet and their school principals, and in particular teachers and students are the central actors for contributing to improving the quality education in practice. The formal provision for a school entering the network establishes a two-stage process, namely (i) the national pre-selection of schools and (ii) upon recommendation of the National Coordinators their formal admission and international certification by UNESCO.

8. At first, the principal of the interested school submits to the ASPnet National Coordinator in the country [the ASPnet application form](#) describing the undertaking of a multidisciplinary project in one of the four ASPnet thematic areas. Few specific criteria shall guide the pre-selection of new members at the national level, namely the geographical balance between rural and urban areas, the quality of the project submitted, and the commitment of the school staff to undertake ASPnet

⁹ The [Participation Programme](#) functions as a vital complement to UNESCO's regular activities by analysing, evaluating and facilitating the implementation of national, sub-regional, inter-regional and regional projects submitted by Member States and NGOs directly related to the activities of the Organization.

¹⁰ Please see latest [UNESCO C/4 Medium-Term Strategies 2008 to 2013, and 2014-21](#), [UNESCO's Programme and Budget 36 C/5 37 C/5, 38 C/5, 39 C/5](#).

¹¹ For further references, see for instance [UNESCO Associated Schools. \(2008\). First Collection of Good Practices for Quality Education](#). Paris: UNESCO.

¹² UNESCO Associated Schools. (2004). [ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2004-2009. Quality Education in Practice](#), p. 4.

¹³ The 50th Anniversary was celebrated in 2003 in New Zealand. It was attended by 91 Member States, five UNESCO Country Offices, Representatives from FAO and APCEIU and the Private Sector (e.g. Daimler Chrysler).

¹⁴ Since the launch of ASPnet, major stakeholders regularly meet every ten years to celebrate its anniversary, review achievements and plan for the future. ASPnet International meetings have been held in France (1963), Canada (1973), Bulgaria (1983), Germany (1993), New Zealand (2003), and Republic of Korea (2013).

¹⁵ The 60th Anniversary was celebrated at the International Forum [UNESCO ASPnet for Global Citizenship: Peace Education and Education for Sustainable Development](#), held in the Republic of Korea in 2013 and attended by 42 Member States.

¹⁶ UNESCO Associated Schools. (2014). [ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021](#) Global Network of Schools addressing Global Challenges: Building Global Citizenship and promoting Sustainable Development. Paris: UNESCO.

activities over the school year. The second stage for joining the network foresees the review of the candidatures, upon recommendation of the National Coordinators, by the UNESCO International Coordinator and, in case of admission, the issuing of the Certificate of Affiliation. Signed by the Director General, it establishes a moral contract between the school and UNESCO. As such, it does not involve any financial implications, but it authorises the use of the customised UNESCO/ASPnet Logo by member schools.¹⁷

9. According to the ASPnet Guide for National Coordinators (2006), principals of schools are recommended to identify their schools as Associated Schools by displaying the Certificate of Affiliation to UNESCO and the Associated Schools logo, meet with teachers at the beginning of each school year to plan an interdisciplinary project which the school will implement, organize an Open Day at the end of the year to present ASPnet results to parents, the community and partners and social media, disseminating UNESCO and United Nations documentation in schools by displaying posters and creating a special 'UNESCO corner' in the library. As such, ASPnet schools greatly enhance the visibility of UNESCO and the ASPnet related themes within local communities worldwide.

10. The implementation of innovative educational projects at the school level does not only determine the entry stage to become member of the network, but absence of the same also establishes the exit criteria. The Guide for National Coordinators (2006) together with the ASPnet Reporting Modules¹⁸ (2006) inform stakeholders on rules and procedures for assuring quality and mechanisms for reporting. The moral contract established between UNESCO and ASPnet schools determines that the membership is conditional to reporting on ASPnet activities on an annual basis. Thus, failure to submit a report for two consecutive years entails the cancellation of the membership to the Network.¹⁹

11. Upon collection of school reports, the NC is expected to submit the [Country Annual Report](#) as well as activity reports of ASPnet schools to the International Coordinator for validation and sharing of information. Such Annual Reports shall additionally inform the Unit for ASPnet on the number of ASPnet schools being (in)active in light of maintaining an updated ASPnet Global Database and of assuring the quality of activities. Furthermore, the [UNESCO Comprehensive Partnership Strategy](#) identifies such country reports as means of verification of overall results reported in [the System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and Evaluation of Results](#) (SISTER).

12. Located in the Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development (ED/IPS), the Unit for ASPnet (ED/IPS/ASPnet) is in charge of the international coordination of the Network. Its tasks and responsibilities are aimed at assuring the quality of the network, the admission process, the training, backstopping and follow-up with National Coordinators and launching initiatives and specific actions at the global level for animating the network. Also, it is the facilitator and nexus between other Programme Sectors at UNESCO and the ASPnet Coordinators at the national level for testing and distributing educational materials and sharing innovative approaches, and responsible for developing partnerships and raising additional financial resources.

13. At the regional level, the presence of UNESCO through its field offices shall guarantee its support in launching ASPnet regional flagships, producing and distributing innovative educational resource materials as well as disseminating examples of good practices, developing capacity building for ASPnet National Coordinators as well as partnerships with other UN Agencies and private sector for raising resources. At the national level, authorities are encouraged to mainstream ASPnet innovations into national education systems, involve national media into ASPnet activities,

¹⁷ The guidelines for the UNESCO ASPnet Logo specify the conditions of its use in accordance with the "Directives concerning the use of the name, acronym, logo and internet domain names of UNESCO" (Resolution 34C/86).

¹⁸ UNESCO ASPnet. (2007). [Annual Report Form for ASPnet National Coordinators](#) ED/BAS/ASP/2007/PI/2.

¹⁹ The ASPnet Reporting Modules, available on the UNESCO/ASPnet website, are designed to gather information on activities, results and impact in terms of changes in behaviour and learning outcomes at the student level. Also, they foresee the provision of visual evidence (e.g. publication, CD-ROM, photos, drawings, etc.) of ASPnet activities undertaken over the school year. Such reporting formats, therefore, fulfil two specific functions, namely (i) to assure the quality of ASPnet activities and monitoring their results, (ii) to allow the Network to effectively function as a laboratory of ideas.

develop partnership with UNESCO Chairs and Clubs and NGOs, translate global orientations into a national ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action, in turn supported by a fund-raising strategy.

Rationale for the evaluation and its use

14. In line with UNESCO's efforts to become 'fit for purpose'²⁰ for the challenges ahead in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the timing for the present evaluation was opportune. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNESCO has been entrusted to lead efforts towards the achievement of the Global Education Agenda (i.e. the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda), which commits the Organization to contribute to "*Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all*" - through the implementation of the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA). ASPnet has been identified as an important mechanism for contributing to improving the quality of education and for supporting UNESCO in contributing to putting the SDG4 - Education 2030 Agenda into practice in its Member States.

15. Furthermore, in the framework of UNESCO's Comprehensive Partnership Strategy and the related ongoing reform process aiming at better utilizing and revitalizing the Organization's partnerships and networks as valuable assets for formulating and delivering its programmes, ASPnet has been identified as a network that has been functioning at a sub-optimal level during the past biennia, and thus as not having reached its full potential. The Education Sector (ED) Senior Management fully recognized the need to revitalize the ASPnet, and shows its commitment for significantly strengthening the programme. First steps have been taken following the recent restructuring of the Education Sector by highlighting the importance of ASPnet as a separate Unit and by reinforcing the human²¹ and financial resources dedicated to the ASPnet International Coordination.

16. The evaluation is intended to support the ongoing process of revitalization of the ASPnet and to inform UNESCO's Senior Management and Governing Bodies, as well as national level stakeholders on the most appropriate way forward. The findings and conclusions from this Report shall feed into a possible revision of the 2014-21 Strategy for the ASPnet, as well as into already initiated reform processes in relation to the ASPnet governance, management and communication. Potentially, such findings and lessons learned will also be relevant for networking activities in other priority areas of the Education and other Programme Sectors of UNESCO.

I.2 Purpose and scope

Main objective of the evaluation

17. With a primarily formative purpose, this evaluation intends to identify what can be learned from past implementation in order to improve subsequent design, delivery as well as overall performance. In particular, it aims at generating findings and conclusions on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the programme, and at drawing lessons learned to inform the current 2014-21 ASPnet Strategy on how to best contribute to reaching the objectives of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda²². Finally, the evaluation is aimed at providing recommendations on how to best manage and operationalise the growing and diversified network at the global, regional and national levels while maintaining and enhancing its quality.

²⁰ The term '**fit-for-purpose**' emphasizes that UNESCO should put programme delivery at the core of the initiative and seek to reconfigure/adjust/improve its operational support services so as to "fit the purpose i.e. achieving the core mandate(s) of the organization".

²¹ In 2016 staff reinforcement consisted in conversion of a part time administrative assistant into a full time administrative assistant dedicated to ASPnet international coordination.

²² in particular target 4.7, namely "by 2030, to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

Key dimensions of the evaluation

18. In conducting the evaluation, two main dimensions were identified: **(i) the activities and working mechanisms** of ASPnet at the different levels; **(ii) the horizontal and vertical coordination/management and networking** components.²³ These dimensions are further analysed in a twofold manner. First, the analysis adopts a retrospective focus to identify results achieved and challenges faced during past implementation. Second, a forward looking component explores to what extent the current Strategy (including recent improvements and innovations) is appropriate for guiding the future direction, and determines what adaptations might be necessary to ensure the potential of the network in contributing to the role of UNESCO in operationalizing the SDG4-2030 Education Agenda. Furthermore, the analysis distinguishes, where appropriate, between the dimensions that concern the ASPnetwork as a whole and those that concern its individual members.

Evaluation criteria and questions

19. For the present purpose, a detailed evaluation matrix was developed to structure the evaluation questions, the related judgement criteria, sub-questions and indications on how questions will be answered. The four evaluation criteria (i.e. relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability), as indicated in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1), have been revised in light of a more specific framework for evaluating networks.²⁴ Hence, the methodology is structured according to four overarching evaluation criteria:

- a. **Network Relevance** concerning the relevance of the ASPnet. This concerns the evaluation criteria 'relevance'. That is the extent to which the objectives of the intervention are consistent with the goals and strategies of the Organization, country needs and global priorities. Within a forward looking perspective, the questions of relevance identify whether the objectives of the intervention continue being appropriate given evolving circumstances.
- b. **Network Connectivity** concerning the network connectivity in terms of the horizontal and vertical ASPnet structure and coordination. This concerns the evaluation criteria efficiency, on how rationally, sensibly and reasonably resources have been used for management and coordination in support of achieving the ASPnet objectives.
- c. **Network Results** concerning the ASPnet achievements and challenges. This concerns the evaluation criteria effectiveness (i.e. the extent to which the objectives of the ASPnet have been achieved or are expected to be achieved as a result of the ASPnet working coordination and networking mechanisms, as well as its unexpected effects).
- d. **Network Health** concerning the evaluation criteria sustainability on how likely the networking relations and effects are continued and maintained as well as the potential for the maintenance and continuation of changes and effects resulting from the ASPnet activities and the likelihood for outreach, scaling up or replication beyond the network.

20. Table I.1 presents the key evaluation questions according to such criteria, whereas Table I.2 covers the evaluation questions guiding the **forward-looking component** of the present exercise.

²³ In particular, in terms of horizontal cooperation, it investigates the functioning of the cross-sectoral component of the programme, as well as cooperation mechanisms among National Coordinators, and to some extent among schools. The assessment of the vertical coordination focuses on the division of tasks between the ASPnet International Coordinator and ASPnet National Coordinators, and as relevant, the responsibilities of stakeholders at the school level, and to some extent of other stakeholders, such as national authorities and UNESCO field offices.

²⁴ [Network Impact and Centre for Evaluation Innovation \(2014\), Framing Paper: The State of Network Evaluation, Part 1 of the Guide to Network Evaluation.](#)

Table I.1: Key Evaluation criteria and questions

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question
Network Relevance	
Relevance for global mandate	To what extent is the ASPnet relevant for contributing to the global mandate of UNESCO and key functions?
Relevance in addressing educational / societal challenges	To what extent are the goals and objectives of ASPnet relevant at the different levels for addressing current educational and societal needs?
	To what extent and how do global initiatives translate into the Network's activities?
Network Connectivity	
Efficiency of the horizontal and vertical management, coordination structure and networking	Is the geographic balance consistent with the objectives of the Network? What are the factors that contribute to particularly active/particularly inactive parts of the network?
	To what extent is the current selection process for membership of Associated schools appropriate for ensuring the right balance between inclusive growth and assurance of quality standards?
	What quality assurance mechanisms for membership have been established? What are the challenges?
	Are the organizational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms at the different levels conducive to effectively support the outreach of the Network and the activities of Associated Schools?
	Do the current reporting, monitoring and accountability mechanisms ensure an optimal level of supervision?
	Are the responsibilities among the different stakeholders clear and optimally distributed?
	What are the incentives for National Coordinators to actively animate the Network at the national level?
	To what extent has the ASPnet made use of innovative ICT solutions and social media for managing the network?
Network Results	
Effectiveness in terms of ASPnet achievements and challenges	Which activities and projects were the most / least effective in contributing to the objectives of ASPnet and why? What are their common quality aspects and challenges ?
	What have been the key achievements and challenges of the Network activities at the different levels over the last six years?
	What progress has ASPnet made towards achieving its overall goals and the specific objectives of its 2014-2021 ASPnet strategy? Have approaches spilled over to other schools/ been scaled up at the national level?
	What factors and incentives have been influencing the achievement of the stated objectives of the Network?
	Which connections have been made between ASPnet and the national educational system? To what extent has the ASPnet programme contributed to improving quality education, and the integration of ESD and GCE especially at the national level?
	Have the communication and dissemination tools of the Network been effective? To what extent have other UNESCO networks or civil society been involved in the school/ national / regional level activities?
	To what extent has ASPnet made use of innovative ICT solutions and social media for implementing its activities?
	Network Health
Sustainability of ASPnet	What mechanisms are in place to ensure that experience from applying principles and experimenting innovative approaches at the national/regional levels feed back into the network activities?
	Have good practices been identified and effectively disseminated among and beyond the network nationally, regionally and globally?

	To what extent have new approaches been integrated/ formalized/institutionalized at school/national/regional level?
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Table I.2: Forward-looking Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions
In light of the SDG4- Education 2030 Agenda, what should be the programmatic areas/focus areas/themes and priorities for the future strategy of ASPnet, with the aim of increasing its focus and visibility?
What mechanisms will be most appropriate to translate these focus areas into national contexts?
In light of the SDG4-2 Education 2030 Agenda, what management and delivery modalities are the most appropriate? What is the optimal level of engagement at the different levels for managing the growth of the Network while maintaining inclusivity and quality?
What innovative ICT solutions (for database management and networking) can enable the decentralization of the management of the network, all while maintaining a necessary level of oversight?
In light of the SDG4- Education 2030 Agenda, how shall UNESCO best position and utilise the Network to contribute to its implementation, especially by capitalizing on the cross-sectoral dimension ?
What should be the future selection process and criteria, including quality assurance mechanisms, to ensure harmonized quality standards as well as to provide appropriate incentives for schools to actively join the network and promote the values and visibility of UNESCO?
How can UNESCO effectively use innovative ICT solutions for the administration and enhanced networking of the ASPnet, as well as for enhancing the visibility, image (within and outside UNESCO) and outreach of the network?
What mechanisms can be identified for better linking the results at the micro-level to upstream policy developments?
What type of partnerships should the ASPnet engage in (such as with civil society and the private sector) and at what level to ensure that immediate results are permeating into changing mind-sets in the wider society?
What funding / fundraising and other sustainability mechanisms can be built into the programme to increase the financial, institutional, and political commitment at the different levels and the likelihood for follow-up and continuation of the achieved results?

Delimitations and scope

21. This Report focuses specifically on the last three biennia (i.e. 2010/2011, 2012/2013, 2014/2015). Nevertheless, for a great part of the reviewed period, i.e. between 2010-2013, it was found that there is no dedicated ASPnet Strategy. Therefore, data collected during the desk review refer also to previous years. In particular, the provisions of the ASPnet Strategy 2004-2009 acted as leading reference for reconstructing the Theory of Change (ToC). In terms of geographical scope, the evaluation assessed the entire network and considers ASPnet activities at the global, regional, national and school level as well as both the horizontal and vertical linkages among them.

22. For example, horizontally it investigated the cross-sectoral component of the programme, as well as cooperation mechanisms among National Coordinators, and among schools. Whereas vertically it focused on the division of tasks between the different levels of stakeholders involved in coordination and implementation.

23. Furthermore, within the framework and methodology applied, the analysis concentrates primarily on the activities implemented by the primary ASPnet stakeholders and on the functioning of the network in terms of coordination, management, networking and implementation as well as the results thereof. The measure of the longer term impact of the ASPnet on the quality of education - precisely in terms of student learning outcomes or changes in behaviour - and on the network's influence on national curricula in Member States falls out of the present scope. Also, the unit of analysis consists only of those 181 countries, which are currently participating to the network. Future research may also shed light on not ASPnet member countries.

I.3 Evaluation methodology

24. This evaluation was informed by a preliminary evaluability assessment²⁵ and a (re)construction of a Theory of Change (ToC) for ASPnet. The aim of the ToC was to guide the evaluators and UNESCO Staff in mapping the causal relationships between the interventions at the different levels, the ASPnet functioning and delivery mechanisms and the (intended) results. Furthermore, it facilitated the clear identification of key inputs and resources, causal assumptions and risks that are linked to the intended results of ASPnet.

25. The methodology has been designed in respect of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation. An Evaluation Reference Group, composed of representatives from the ED Sector and Unit for ASPnet, other UNESCO Programme Sectors, the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) and the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP), has been established to advise on the Terms of Reference and the composition of the external evaluation team, to provide feedback and quality assurance on draft evaluation reports and assurance on the integrity and rigor of the evaluation process as well as guidance on appropriate actions to be taken in response to evaluation findings.

26. A team of three external evaluation consultants and two evaluators from the IOS Evaluation Office, all with senior evaluation expertise and experience in the field of education, have undertaken the evaluation, which was conducted in a participatory manner to encourage input and facilitate learning by all stakeholders along the way. Its aim was to assess achievements and challenges with a focus on (intended) outcomes by identifying what works and why, where and under what circumstances. Special attention has been paid to issues of geographical and gender balance²⁶, both in the development of the methodology and evaluation questions, criteria and tools, as well as in the approach and conduct of this exercise.

Data collection and methods

27. In answering the evaluation questions, the methodology employed a mixed-method approach, comprising the following data collection tools:

- **An in-depth desk study of all relevant documents and online resources:** Desk research formed an integral part of the evaluation. Annex 2 presents the list of relevant literature and key documentation consulted.
- **Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with relevant ASPnet stakeholders (in person, via skype/telephone):** In order to provide a comprehensive assessment, interviews addressed different groups of stakeholders, such as UNESCO Senior Management and Staff at HQ and field offices, ASPnet International and National Coordinators, Secretary Generals of National Commissions for UNESCO, Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, ASPnet school principals, management and teaching staff, students, national authorities, representatives from other UN agencies, bilateral cooperation, NGOs, Civil Society and the private sector. Annex 3 lists all stakeholders consulted. Also, Annexes 4, 5, and 6 provide the lists of discussion topics for National Commissions, National Coordinators, ASPnet schools (Principal, Teachers, Students, Staff), and other partners and stakeholders (Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, other stakeholders).
- **Country case studies:** The members of the Evaluation Team conducted field missions to six countries, namely Indonesia, Haiti, Oman, Kenya, Romania, Senegal, for observation, interviews, focus group discussions and consultations of ASPnet National Coordinators, schools, and other relevant stakeholders and partners. Also, they aimed at obtaining examples of first-hand experience from the final intended beneficiaries of the programme (i.e. students). Furthermore, field missions helped to identify examples of good practice and to provide illustrative evidence to support the evaluation findings. The selection of countries

²⁵ The evaluability assessment was based on an initial document review as well as several preliminary interviews with key stakeholders.

²⁶ In particular, with respect to the UNESCO Global priorities: gender equality and priority Africa

was based on six specific criteria and was discussed and agreed with the Reference Group (Annex 7).²⁷

- **In-depth interviews:** In addition to field missions, further in-depth interviews were held with National Coordinators from additional countries, including Austria, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Spain, Tunisia, and Uganda. Where feasible with no additional cost, ASPnet schools were visited in some of these countries.
- **Online survey for ASPnet National Coordinators:** The Evaluation Survey provides detailed insights from the perspectives and experiences of all National Coordinators on issues related to the resources, the institutional context for the management and coordination of the ASPnet at the national level, as well as the ASPnet activities, priority areas and best practices implemented at the school level and the related challenges (Annex 8). The survey was launched online in five languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic).²⁸ The overall response rate was 74%.²⁹ Table I.4 reports the distribution of respondents by UNESCO regional classification.

Table I.3: Distribution of respondents to the survey by region (March, 2016)

UNESCO Regions	Number of respondents	Total number of National Coordinators per region	Response rate (%)
<i>Africa</i>	28	42	67%
<i>Arab States</i>	14	18	78%
<i>Europe and North America</i>	44	49	90%
<i>Asia and the Pacific</i>	26	42	62%
<i>Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	23	31	74%
Total	135	182	74 %

*Source: Evaluation survey (n=135)

- **Participation in and observation of UNESCO ASPnet Event:** Two members of the Evaluation Team attended the International Seminar [“Getting climate-ready: ASPnet schools’ response to climate change”](#), held in Paris at the UNESCO Headquarters in December 2015.
- **Workshop with Reference Group to discuss and validate findings (February 2016), Paris:** On the basis of a preliminary analysis of the collected data, the Evaluation Team presented key findings, outcomes, and preliminary conclusions to the Evaluation Reference Group at UNESCO and gathered its feedback to feed into the drafting of the final report.

Evaluation approach

28. The evaluation undertook a two-stage-approach. First, an in-depth desk review of the main documentation of the Programme was conducted with the aim to identify how the network is supposed to work normatively. The results of this desk review provided the basis for the reconstruction of the Theory of Change. As a second stage, the causal relationships and

²⁷ Selection Criteria ensured: (i) balanced coverage of the different UNESCO regions (with priority to Africa); (ii) consideration of different classifications of countries (LDCs, MICs, SIDS, etc.); (iii) participation in at least two ASPnet flagship initiatives; (iv) preference for countries with UNESCO field presence (in addition to National Commission for UNESCO); (v) balanced distribution of gender and seniority of National Coordinators; (vi) countries with previously identified high activity level and potential for identifying best practices. The potential for gaining insights in countries where activity level of the ASPnet were known as low was considered as insufficient to motivate a field mission. The final selection of countries was also influenced by considerations of availability and feasibility of logistics for national stakeholders

²⁸ After a pilot phase, personalised invitations were sent to the list of 182 ASPnet NC provided by the Unit for ASPnet.

²⁹ Out of 182 informants, 135 (74%) participated to the survey. Furthermore, 114 respondents fully completed the survey, whereas 21 respondents completed it partially.

assumptions so established in the Theory of Change were assessed, challenged and empirically validated in order to verify gaps, risks and missing connections between different elements (initiatives, results and objectives) and to what extent the causal logic established in the Theory of Change corresponds to the functioning of the working mechanisms in practice.

29. As a result, the Report provides a reconstruction of the Theory of Change (ToC), which reflects the complex and systemic understanding of change³⁰ in the context of the ASPnet in a logical but to some extent simplified fashion.

Box 1. Theory of Change: A theory of how and why an initiative works. In its early conceptualisation in 1995, Weiss described a ToC as “a theory of how and why an initiative works.”³¹ More fully articulated, this can be understood as a way to describe the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps that lead to a long term goal and the connections between these activities and the outcomes of an intervention or programme.³² ToC has been called a number of other things: “a roadmap, a blueprint, an engine of change, a theory of action and more.”³³ At its simplest, the ToC is a dialogue-based process intended to generate a ‘description of a sequence of events that is expected to lead to a particular desired outcome.’³⁴

30. The ToC can, therefore, be seen as both a product and a process. As a product, it consists of a visual articulation of how objectives, initiatives, and results relate to each other (for instance presented in a schematic form). As a process, it can be a tool for reflective thinking,³⁵ a conceptual instrument to explore the expected versus the actual changes as a result of a set of actions,³⁶ or be seen as an approach supporting the design and evaluation of social programmes.³⁷ The reconstruction of a ToC starts from a baseline analysis of the context and issues. It then maps out the logical sequence of activities and expected changes, including the underlying assumptions and conditions, which are anticipated as being necessary amongst stakeholders to support the desired long-term change within the circumstances in a specific context.

Table I.3: Required elements for a comprehensive ToC approach

Cluster	Elements of ToC	Questions for mapping ToC
Summary Statements, often given as an “If...then...” statements		Sentences describing the expected linkages between the ASPnet interventions, the change processes and the ultimate goals

³⁰ James, Cathy (2011). Theory of Change Review: A report commissioned by Comic Relief. London, p. 4 in Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding ‘Theory of Change’ in international development: a review of existing knowledge, p. 3.

³¹ Weiss, C.H. (1995). Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families. In J. Connell, A. Kubisch, L. Schorr and C. Weiss (Eds.) New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods and Contexts. New York, Aspen Institute (65-92).

³² Anderson, A. (2004). Theory of Change as a Tool for Strategic Planning: A Report on Early Experiences. The Aspen Institute: Roundtable on Community Change, p. 2.

³³ Reisman, Jane, Anne Gienapp, and Sarah Stachowiak (2007). A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy. Organizational Research Services for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Baltimore, Maryland (USA). Cited in Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. (2010). Monitoring & Evaluation of Advocacy Campaigns: Literature Review, p.6. Available at <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/advocacy-capacity/resources/evaluating-advocacy-activities/> [09-03-2016].

³⁴ Rick Davies, April 2012: Blog post on the criteria for assessing the evaluability of a theory of change <http://mandenews.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/criteria-for-assessing-evaluability-of.html> [09-03-2016]

³⁵ James, Cathy (2011). Theory of Change Review: A report commissioned by Comic Relief. London, p. 4. Taken from: Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding ‘Theory of Change’ in international development: a review of existing knowledge, p. 3

³⁶ For examples see Retolaza, I. (2011). Theory of Change: A thinking and action approach to navigate in the complexity of social change processes. Hivos/UNDP/Democratic Dialogue; Mcgee, R., Gaventa, J., Barrett, G., Calland, R., Carlitz, R., & Joshi, A. (2010). Review of Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives: Synthesis Report. Institute of Development Studies, (October).

³⁷ Vogel, I. (2012). Review of the use of “Theory of Change” in international development. DFID, (April), p. 2.

Cluster	Elements of ToC	Questions for mapping ToC
Line of reasoning towards achieving results (mechanism and expected outcomes ³⁸)	Problem Statement	What is the challenge the ASPnet programme seeks to overcome? What are the underlying causes of the challenge?
	Overall Goal ³⁹	What is the objective of the activities under the ASPnet programme? How does the objective relate to the definition of the challenge? How is success of the ASPnet activities measured?
	Change Process ⁴⁰	What is the mechanism of change linking the inputs/resources to short-term output/outcomes and long-term outcomes/goal (How are the ASPnet activities envisaged to lead to the expected results)?
	Change Markers	What are the milestones, indicators or other tools to assess/measure the extent of change?
	Meta-Theory	What is the underpinning theory that justifies the chosen change process? (i.e. networking for social change)
Implementation (planned interventions)	Inputs/activities	What is the input for individual activities under the ASPnet at the different levels? What is the timeline associated, what actions are planned in order to achieve the objectives?
	Actors	What actors are involved in the change process, what is their role and relationship to the ASPnet activities? Differentiate between: End-users/Intended beneficiaries ⁴¹ ; Implementing actors; Points of collaboration with partners/other agencies ⁴²
	Domains of Change	What are the various strands or thematic areas that must be addressed in order to achieve the change, potentially articulated as sub-theories?
Practical implementation(Outcomes and context)	Internal Opportunities/Risks	What are the potential modalities/factors of the ASPnet activities that constitute opportunities or may undermine its success?
	External Opportunities/Risks	What are external opportunities/ risks to the ASPnet activities with the potential to strengthen/undermine its success and what measures can be taken to seize/overcome these?

*Source: Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding 'Theory of Change' in international development: a review of existing knowledge (LSE), adapted for the purpose of this evaluation.

31. The reconstruction of the ToC allowed the identification of those fundamental assumptions to be tested empirically. Through triangulation of findings emerging from different data sources, it permitted to ascertain whether, and to what extent, the working mechanisms (as set out in the programme documentation) correspond to their implementation in practice. In so doing, reference is made to the literature on Realistic evaluation.⁴³

³⁸ Adjusted from Tilley, N. (2000), Realistic Evaluation: An Overview. Presented at the Founding Conference of the Danish Evaluation Society, September 2000.

³⁹ Vogel, I. (2012). Review of the use of "Theory of Change" in international development. DFID, (April), p. 15.

⁴⁰ Anderson, A. (2005). The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change. Washington DC: The Aspen Institute, p. 15; Retolaza, I. (2011). Theory of Change: A thinking and action approach to navigate in the complexity of social change processes. Hivos/UNDP/Democratic Dialogue, p. 4; Vogel, I. (2012). Review of the use of "Theory of Change" in international development. DFID, (April), p. 15.

⁴¹ Rogers, P. J. (2012). Introduction to impact evaluation. Impact Evaluations Notes, March (1), p.3.

⁴² Ellis, J., Parkinson, D., & Wadia, A. (2011). Making Connections: Using a theory of change to develop planning and evaluation. Charities Evaluation Services, p. 4.

⁴³ Pawson, Ray, Tilley, Nick, Realistic Evaluation, 1997

Box 2. Realistic Evaluation: *assessing context-mechanism-outcome configurations.* It asks, instead of 'does this work' or 'what works', as traditional evaluation do, 'what works, for whom, and in what circumstances?'. As a result, such evaluations assess *context-mechanism-outcome configurations*, with the aim to capture the linkages between the context, mechanism and outcome. Specifically, context refers to what conditions are needed for a specific (ASPnet) measure/intervention to trigger mechanisms that produce particular outcome patterns e.g. in the ASPnet schools/in relation to the quality of education in the countries; mechanism investigates what is it about a UNESCO ASPnet measure/intervention which may lead it to have a particular outcome pattern in that given context; outcome sheds light on what are the practical effects and (potential) impacts produced by causal mechanisms being triggered in that given context.

Limitations of the evaluation methodology

32. The evaluation faced some limitations and challenges particularly in relation to the assessment of the longer-term effects or the impact of the ASPnet, such as in terms of improved student learning outcomes, behavioural changes or changes in education debate or policies.

- a. Out of the over 10.000 ASPnet schools that are considered part of the network, at the time of data collection, the ASPnet Global Database contained only contact information (i.e. email addresses) for about 3,000 ASPnet schools. As contact details of individual school were not systematically stored and updated, the initially planned **on-line survey among ASPnet schools was not feasible to be conducted**. Gathering information at the level of the schools depended on the visits of schools during country missions, the data collected through the online survey of ASPnet National Coordinators and some anecdotal evidence provided. However, the evaluation also provided the opportunity to highlight this issue to National Coordinators, motivating them to provide updated information into OTA. (the Online tool for ASPnet) which was launched during the period of the evaluation.
- b. Attribution issue: Furthermore, as specified in the ToRs, the methodology for evaluating networks suggests that given the complexity of multiple layers of stakeholders involved, identifying the attribution of a given intervention in reaching expected results could lead to misjudgement of the actual long term effectiveness of the programme. Hence, the evaluation rather provides information on the contribution of the coordination and delivery mechanisms in enabling the achievement of its set goals.
- c. The lack of a clear previously defined ASPnet intervention logic (theory of change) and the absence of previously established baseline indicators made it challenging to measure the achievement of results at the different levels. At the same time, this provided the opportunity to use the evaluation exercise for joint reflection, testing and assessing the presumed and actual causal linkages and the underlying assumptions responsible for the success/or non-success of UNESCO ASPnet. The evaluation raised awareness of the usefulness of this tool throughout the evaluation process, which can feed into the development of a renewed Theory of Change as a basis for the ASPnet future strategy.
- d. The resources dedicated to this evaluation allowed for only a limited number of on-site field visits. Therefore, the findings from the field work are not fully representative of all the ASPnet activities and initiatives taking place worldwide. However, the case studies were used to identify what works (or not), where, and why in certain specific national circumstances, as well as to identify illustrative examples strengthening the evidence for evaluation findings as well as examples of good practices. There are many other relevant examples of good practices of ASPnet in many countries, which have not been visited and which therefore feature less explicitly in this evaluation report.
- e. Information contained in most official monitoring (EX/4) and project documents is mostly activity- and output- rather than results-oriented, making assessing longer-term outcomes and results furthermore challenging. The evaluation tried to compensate for such shortcoming by collecting data on results information through interviews and field missions.
- f. UNESCO's monitoring systems also did not fully capture information on the mainstreaming of gender equality aspects into ASPnet actions and projects, which limited the analysis of this aspect to information from programme documents and interviews.

II. ASPnet THEORY OF CHANGE

KEY MESSAGES:

- ✓ The (reconstructed) Theory of Change allows a deeper understanding of how ASPnet is designed and assumed to deliver its intended results. It provides insight to what extent the numerous actions and approaches pursued through the ASPnet have the potential to contribute to its objective, that is, enhancing the quality of education through concrete actions.
- ✓ As a result, a denominating line of reasoning has been identified. That is, ASPnet as whole contributes to improving the quality of education in practice by enabling its member institutions (schools), and individual stakeholders to act as agents of change by creating, teaching and learning, and interacting at the global, regional, national, and local level.
- ✓ When deconstructing this line of reasoning, four main elements emerge: 'enabling' as one important precondition for success, and 'creating, teaching & learning, and interacting' as the three broad ASPnet working mechanisms. The evaluation confirmed that these three working mechanisms are appropriate for achieving the ASPnet objectives.
- ✓ Through functioning as a laboratory of ideas, innovative educational material and teaching and learning approaches on UNESCO core values and priorities are created, tested, implemented and disseminated.
- ✓ Through capacity building on specific ASPnet thematic areas, different ASPnet stakeholders can fully embrace and institutionalize/ internalize those positive values through teaching and learning and further act as role models in their community and beyond.
- ✓ Through networking, ASPnet provides opportunities for its individual and institutional stakeholders to connect, exchange experience, knowledge and best practices not only with other stakeholders in their country or abroad, but also with their communities, policy makers and society, as a whole.
- ✓ As an enabling precondition for the three working mechanism to function accordingly, an efficient and effective coordination mechanism for the ASPnet as a whole must be in place. Thus, coordination allows the three working mechanisms to mutually reinforce each other and to result in a vibrant network.
- ✓ Effective communication beyond the network is crucial for enhancing the visibility of ASPnet activities and approaches and for enhancing the potential for replication and scaling up at the policy level.

II.1 Mission and objectives of ASPnet

33. Since its creation in 1953, ASPnet has been envisaged to contribute to the development of knowledge, values and skills in the area of peace and human rights, and other key UNESCO and UN priorities. According to its [mission](#), ASPnet is a network of committed schools engaged in fostering and delivering quality education in practice in pursuit of peace, liberty, justice and human development in order to meet the pressing educational needs of children and young people throughout the world. ASPnet schools shall be *navigators for peace* and *agents for positive change* in their respective communities.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ UNESCO (2004), ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2004-2009. Quality Education in Practice, p. 3.

34. Its mission and objective are based on the definition of quality education as provided in the Dakar Framework for Action for Education For All (EFA).⁴⁵ This framework underlines a broad vision of quality education, which includes the following elements: (i) consideration of what the learner brings to the learning experience; (ii) safe and psycho-socially enabling learning environment; (iii) supportive policy and effective school-based management; (iv) relevant curricular content; (v) committed and professionally competent teachers; (vi) active learning processes; (vii) participatory governance and school-based management; (viii) adequate facilities and resources; (ix) appropriate monitoring and evaluation of all aspects.

35. Contributing to improving the quality of education in practice has also embraced the four pillars of education for the 21st century as identified in the Delors Report, “Learning: The Treasure Within”,⁴⁶ i.e. learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. As a fifth dimension ESD supports ‘learning to transform oneself and society’ which is closely reflected in the objective of ASPnet. Worldwide, ASPnet students and teachers live and interact on a daily basis in a school environment where education goes beyond transmitting literacy, numeracy and basic life skills to empower young generations to foster their social competences and personal development, and to contribute to social cohesion as conscious and active citizens.

36. As such, ASPnet reaches out to this wide range of related quality elements in education, which in the ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021 is further re-affirmed by the focus on applying a ‘whole-school’ approach. A whole-school approach implies that ASPnet should not only contribute to specific quality elements (or only focus on extra-curricular activities), but should improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment as a whole, by combining all of these quality elements. Linked to the EFA goals, ASPnet should contribute to both quality learning at the student and school level.

37. At the individual level, ASPnet students should acquire essential life skills, which include teamwork, solidarity, intercultural learning and respect for differences; capacity to conduct research, think critically, analyse results and draw conclusions; adaptability, flexibility, credibility, creativity and lifelong learning; language learning, development and use of their own talents and imagination; and effective use of information and communication technologies.⁴⁷ At the school level, ASPnet staff, and teachers in particular, should contribute to sustained innovations in team teaching, interdisciplinary approaches, more relevant content, production and testing of new educational resource materials and the enhancement of the learning process. ASPnet teachers are encouraged to be facilitators in empowering students to become the real actors in the learning process.⁴⁸

II.2 Line of reasoning towards the ASPnet objective

38. A Theory of Change does not merely explore the objectives, but also indicate how and by which means such objectives shall be achieved. The overall objective of ASPnet to translate quality education into practice can be pursued through many different types of interventions. The numerous actions and approaches that are pursued through the ASPnet, all have the potential to contribute to this overall objective at various level. Nevertheless, one denominating principal line of reasoning can be identified, as follows:

“ASPnet as a whole contributes to improving the quality of education in practice by enabling its member institutions (schools) and individual stakeholders to act as agents of change by creating, teaching & learning, and interacting at the global, regional, national, and school level.”

⁴⁵ UNESCO (2000), Dakar Framework of Action Education for All (EFA): Meeting our Collective Commitments.

⁴⁶ [Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century “Learning: The Treasure Within](#)

⁴⁷ EFA goal 3 (equitable access to life skills programmes); ASPnet brief general conference 2007.

⁴⁸ EFA goal 6 (quality education); ASPnet brief general conference 2007.

39. When deconstructing such line of reasoning, four main elements emerge: ‘enabling’ as one important precondition for success, and ‘creating, teaching & learning, and interacting’ as the three broad ASPnet working mechanisms.

40. Enabling brings together the essential preconditions for the successful vibrancy of the network. In order for ASPnet to contribute to increasing the quality of education in practice, it relies on the coordination of the network at the global and national level. As such, coordination lays in the facilitating role for the inter and intra generational transmission of positive values at the various level. Coordination should, therefore, enable the strengthening of a shared identity among members through consistent quality assurance, solid network structures, and sufficient resources and support for implementing activities. It also involves monitoring the compliance with the values, priorities and regulations of UNESCO and contributes to raising awareness of relevant activities among stakeholders. Through animating the network and facilitating activities/projects on which ASPnet schools can jointly work), ASPnet can contribute to a shared sense of belonging to a global network and a community of practice. Only through adequate ‘enabling’ mechanisms at the various network levels, ASPnet will be sufficiently equipped to achieve its ambitious objective.

41. Whereas ‘enabling’ is a precondition necessary for the functioning of the network, it is not in itself a sufficient condition for its existence and survival. Ultimately, the improvement of the quality of education in practice stands on demand for action to be satisfied through specific and concrete activities. The ASPnet working mechanisms, namely ‘creating’, ‘teaching and learning’, and ‘interacting’, fuel such activities with meaningful contents, approaches and initiatives. In so doing, they position ASPnet schools, students, teachers, and principals as agents for positive change and promote the values transmitted through quality education in their respective communities, as follows:

- **Creating:** ASPnet contributes to improving the quality of education in practice by providing a test-bed/laboratory of innovative pedagogy, pedagogical material and approaches. Through ASPnet as a laboratory of ideas, innovative educational material and approaches in relation to the core values and priority themes of UNESCO and the UN are developed, tested, disseminated and applied.
- **Teaching & Learning:** ASPnet contributes to improving the quality of education in practice by developing the capacities of different stakeholders involved. Through training of ASPnet principal stakeholders, such as National Coordinators, ASPnet school principals, focal points, and teachers, the capacities of individuals and consequently of ASPnet schools are developed, innovative pedagogical and learning approaches are adopted and institutionalized and schools can act as role models for quality education in their community and beyond. Through innovative teaching methods, student centred and participative approaches students themselves become the responsible actors for implementing ASPnet activities, they learn and internalize the positive values that are transmitted and become agents of change within their schools and communities.
- **Interacting:** ASPnet contributes to improving the quality of education in practice by providing opportunities for ASPnet schools and individuals to connect, exchange experience, knowledge and best practices and to interact with other ASPnet schools in their own and/or in a foreign country on UNESCO core values, principles and priority thematic areas. Through active networking, innovative pedagogy, material and approaches are shared and examples of good practice are replicated.

42. Each working mechanism can be further elaborated to indicate its specific contribution towards the achievement of the broader objective. Table II.1 describes how the various lines of action set out in the two ASPnet Strategies are designed to reach the ASPnet objective by the precondition and each working mechanism.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The two ASPnet Strategies differ considerably in form and purpose. The Strategy 2004-2009 provides a more detailed guidance for implementation, whereas the current Strategy 2014-2021 only provides a general framework and vision for the network, but not a Plan of Action.

Table II.1: ASPnet line of reasoning reflected in the Strategies 2004-2009 and 2014-2021

Precondition/ Working mechanism	Function	Strategy 2004-2009	Strategy 2014-2021
Precondition Enabling	Coordination	<i>Goal 1:</i> Reorient and reinforce ASPnet International Co-ordination at UNESCO Headquarters and ensure close co-ordination with UNESCO Field Offices	3.2: Improving networking, management and communication through ICT and personal exchanges
Working mechanism: Creating	1. ASPnet as laboratory of ideas	<i>Goal 3:</i> Produce/provide ASPnet schools with appropriate and useful UNESCO resource materials	1.2: Providing ASPnet schools with UNESCO resource materials on GCE and ESD 2.1: Initiating new flagship projects in selected ASPnet schools for innovative approaches on GCE and ESD (ASPnet activity component)
		<i>Goal 4:</i> Identify, distribute and exchange ASPnet "good quality education practices"; produce impact studies and research	No equivalent
		<i>Goal 6:</i> Strengthen the capacity of ASPnet to serve as laboratory for experimentation/validation of new UNESCO / UN education resource material	2.2: Innovating existing flagship projects (ASPnet activity component)
Working mechanism: Teaching & Learning	2. Capacity development ASPnet	<i>Goal 5:</i> Provide training/capacity building for leadership for ASPnet National Coordinators, principals, teachers and students.	1.1: Organizing trainings and Forums for ASPnet school principals, teachers and students.
		<i>Goal 7:</i> Develop Partnerships and Co-sponsorships <i>Goal 4:</i> Identify, distribute and exchange ASPnet "good quality education practices"; produce impact studies and research	No equivalent
Working mechanism: Interacting	3. Acting in a network, setting up activities	<i>Goal 2:</i> Pursue and develop ASPnet Flagship Projects and Campaigns	2.1: Initiating new flagship projects in selected ASPnet schools for innovative approaches on GCE and ESD (networking component) 2.2: Innovating existing flagship projects (networking component)
		<i>Goal 7:</i> Develop Partnerships and Co-sponsorships	3.1: Establishing online collaborative platform(s) for learning and exchanging on GCE and ESD

*Source: Authors

II.3 Working mechanisms and types of activities

43. The working mechanisms through which ASPnet envisages achieving its objective are operationalized in terms of concrete activities and interventions.

ASPnet as laboratory of innovative pedagogical material and approaches: Creating

44. Quality education in pursuit of peace and sustainable development foremost requires content. ASPnet, as a laboratory of ideas, seeks to develop and further build on content developed by UNESCO. This can be in the form of pedagogical teaching and learning material, school governance models, thematic teaching content, pedagogical approaches (in the classroom, outside

the classroom), extracurricular activities, or initiatives for community outreach. Such content is developed in different ways.

45. Programme Sectors at UNESCO develop a wealth of educational resources that can be adapted or directly disseminated as teaching and learning material or accompanying teaching of UNESCO related thematic areas throughout the network. Another central element emphasized in the strategic documents is the 'laboratory function' of ASPnet schools.⁵⁰ While the two ASPnet Strategies attach a different weight to such function, both confirm the potential of ASPnet as a channel for piloting and testing educational resources. ASPnet schools indeed can serve as a valuable testing net for materials and pedagogical approaches developed both by UNESCO and/or national authorities. Not least, ASPnet schools are admitted to the network on the condition that an innovative multidisciplinary educational project is proposed, sustained and approved. Schools themselves are, therefore, creators of innovative knowledge, approaches and initiatives that improve the quality of education.

Capacity development of ASPnet stakeholders: Teaching and Learning

46. Both ASPnet Strategies suggest different approaches (i.e. training, seminars, workshops, discussion fora) that seek to improve the capacity of ASPnet schools and knowledge and skills of individual ASPnet stakeholders. While the primary focus of ASPnet is to develop the knowledge, capacities and behaviour of ASPnet students through innovative teaching and learning approaches with the help of the pedagogic material and approaches created through the first working mechanism, the implicit logic is that contents related to the values and principles of UNESCO shall be taught, learnt, disseminated and integrated at all levels.

47. **Teachers take a particularly important role in transmitting such knowledge to students and to facilitating their learning.** Therefore, for ASPnet students to be able to learn and interiorize universal positive values and act as agents of change, specific initiatives are needed to train especially ASPnet teachers, but also school principals and staff on UNESCO related contents, which are not necessarily included in their regular professional development. As such, ASPnet actors require constant interaction for transmission of specific knowledge and skills at all levels.

48. The Strategy 2004-2009 specifically targets capacity building initiatives to ASPnet National Coordinators. Also, it devotes a crucial role to the development of fund-raising skills both at the national and school level. On the opposite, the 2014-2021 Strategy does not include a similar focus. Rather, it highlights the crucial role of teachers by concentrating on the provision of specific training to ASPnet teachers, as well as school principals and students.⁵¹ The current Strategy does not further prescribe the contents of these trainings, and requires that these are tailored to the local needs. It may consist of training sessions or a strengthening of links with relevant knowledge partners, such as Teacher Training Institutions, Universities, Educational Research Centres, or UNESCO Chairs. The role of such trainings is to improve the capacities of ASPnet stakeholders and partners to effectively act as agents for change and navigators for peace.

Connecting and Communicating through the ASPnet: Interacting

49. While supporting the creation of contents and approaches and developing the capacities of ASPnet stakeholders represents the traditional component of ASPnet, its most recent distinguishing trait lays in its designation as a *network*. Starting in 1993, the contribution to improving the quality of education in practice also occurs through the interaction and exchange of good practices among schools.⁵² To support networking, ASPnet International and National Coordinators take up a crucial facilitating role through a number of concrete activities, such as

⁵⁰ UNESCO (2004), ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2004-2009. Quality Education in Practice, p. 7. Although the laboratory function is not made explicit in Strategy 2014-2021, compare the suggested line of action: "providing Open Educational Resource Material (OER) on GCE and ESD and relevant educational resource material produced by the Education Sector, other Sectors and FOs for experimentation" (p. 3).

⁵¹ UNESCO (2014), ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021. Global Network of Schools addressing Global Challenges: Building Global Citizenship and promoting Sustainable Development, p. 3.

⁵² UNESCO (2004), ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2004-2009. Quality Education in Practice; ASPnet International Congress "Navigators for Peace" in support of Quality Education meeting in Auckland, New Zealand (3-8 August 2003).

initiating and promoting global Flagship projects, joint seminars and conferences, or moderating online collaborative platforms that allow ASPnet schools, teachers and students to connect on a specific subject for exchanging experiences, sharing approaches and good practices and discussing common issues and challenges.

50. Once knowledge and skills are interiorized, ASPnet stakeholders play themselves a role model in society. ASPnet has indeed been defined as pace-setter. The [ASPnet multiplier effect](#) can only be fully endorsed “through assuming leadership roles within their schools, their societies, in their nations and in the international community in pursuit of the attainment of UNESCO ideals”.⁵³ As such, the improved awareness and knowledge about UNESCO values and priorities helping to improve the quality of education in pursuit of peace and sustainable development should not only benefit ASPnet schools and students, but should also be transmitted beyond it through interaction.⁵⁴ The transmission of positive values and their realization through concrete actions and choices contributes to the spreading of UNESCO ideals within ASPnet schools, and through their examples, also within the local communities and across a larger (non-ASP) public.

Cross fertilization among the three ASPnet working mechanisms

51. Taken individually, the identification of each working mechanism streamlines the multitude of ASPnet activities into specific categories. Taking together, the three ASPnet working mechanisms have also the potential to fuel the overall mechanism of ASPnet, as a global network. Indeed, ASPnet working mechanisms are conceptualized as mutually reinforcing each other rather than individual streams of actions. For instance, the creation of innovative pedagogical material and approaches feeds the capacity building function, which in turn nourishes a fruitful interaction on substantive topics. The exchange of ideas and practices in the field of ASPnet thematic areas among institutional and individual stakeholders further becomes itself a creative source for future ASPnet practices and activities.

External Communication and Dissemination

52. If the above assumptions hold true (i.e. the precondition and the three working mechanisms function properly), the long-term effect of ASPnet does not merely regard the change in awareness or behaviour of individual teachers or students learning outcomes but may extend to the communities, and different actors of civil society. The outreach and communication beyond the ASPnet members to their partners and networks is thus an important aspect that needs to be consolidated through establishing and maintaining partnerships and by investing in external communication. Also, with its potential outreach of channelling best practices to the policy level the ASPnet can provide sound evidence on the effectiveness of innovative pedagogical materials and methods, for instance through the publication of ASPnet good practices or testing teaching and learning materials through the network. By enhancing the potential for replication and scaling up at the policy level the network has a meaningful role to play for contributing to the national education policy debate and reforms.

⁵³ UNESCO (2004), ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2004-2009, and Strategy 2014-2021 Quality Education in Practice.

⁵⁴ To expand the scope of UNESCO values and reach a multiplier effect, ASPnet all stakeholders are expected to act as “navigator-for-peace”, which requires active leadership roles in their local communities. Such roles can include spreading good practices on the implementation of approaches, practices and teaching methods, within and beyond the network.

III. NETWORK RELEVANCE

KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ ASPnet remains undoubtedly relevant for UNESCO's global mandate. All stakeholders demonstrate a renewed commitment to the programme, in particular as it is recognised as an important mechanism for supporting Member States in the implementation of the universal and holistic SDG 4-Education 2030 Agenda at the national level, in particular target 4.7, with its strength lying at the grassroots level.
- ✓ Through functioning as a laboratory of ideas and building capacities on specific thematic areas, the ASPnet is equally relevant for fulfilling the key functions of the Organization. It also provides visibility of UNESCO on the ground, especially in those Member States where the Organization is less present.
- ✓ As the only global network of schools that is connecting educational institutions in 181 countries, it provides an opportunity for students and teachers to creatively translate global concepts into concrete teaching and learning activities, making them relevant to their local context and to connect and interact with their counterparts at other likeminded schools. The ASPnet global identity and perspective have been identified as the distinguishing factor and comparative advantage of ASPnet at the school level.
- ✓ Despite its recognised potential, the programme is perceived by many as a 'dusted jewel'. While its relevance has remained significant over years, its positioning in the Medium-Term Strategy and visibility within UNESCO has more recently been shading out. At the programme level, UNESCO global priorities Gender Equality and Priority Africa have not been particularly reflected in ASPnet. Furthermore, ASPnet responsibilities at the field level are not well defined and its inter-sectoral potential is not fully capitalised upon.
- ✓ The ASPnet's potential for policy relevance at national level is not yet fully recognised i.e. utilising ASPnet for testing new approaches or inspiring curriculum reform at national level is so far only very sporadic.
- ✓ While relevance should not be seen as an objective in itself, it represents an important condition for the sustainability and vibrancy of a network that is to a great extent depending on the commitment and support of the respective institutional and individual stakeholders involved. The ASPnet's ability of conveying a common identity, attracting new members and additional resources, incentivizing associated schools to remain active, requires formal provisions that recognize and facilitate its contribution to UNESCO's mission.

III.1 Relevance of ASPnet for UNESCO global mandate and key functions

53. This Chapter investigates to what extent the mission, objective and working mechanisms of ASPnet are relevant to the mandate of UNESCO as well as to addressing the current societal and educational challenges (at the global, regional, national and school level).

54. The objective of ASPnet to contribute to improving the quality of education in practice in pursuit of peace and sustainable development directly links to the global mandate of UNESCO. Indeed, the network was established to convert values and principles of the Organization into concrete action through effective innovative educational practices and approaches worldwide.⁵⁵ This 'raison d'être' is still valid for ASPnet today. Through innovative responses to contemporary challenges, ASPnet is an important implementation mechanism for UNESCO to promote values, principles, attitudes and behaviours that support sustainable development and responsible global citizenship. The current ASPnet Strategy specifically reflects the attention for GCE and ESD in the UNESCO's

⁵⁵ UNESCO, Division for Basic Education (2007), UNESCO Associated Schools as Pace-setters for putting Policy into Practice in support of quality Education for All (EFA) Position brief UNESCO General Conference 34th session, Paris 2007, p. 2.

Medium-Term Strategy (C/4),⁵⁶ and as such directly contributes to these broader UNESCO objectives.

55. The core relevance of ASPnet lies in its contribution to UNESCO's Education Sector Strategic Objectives, identified in the C/4, which were translated into four Main Lines of Actions (MLAs) in UNESCO's biennial programmes (C/5) for Education for 2010/11 and 2012/13 and three Main Lines of Actions (MLAs) in 2014-17. All the biennial/quadrennial⁵⁷ C5 implementation programmes during the reference period of the evaluation explicitly make reference to the relevance of ASPnet.⁵⁸ A number of MLAs defined in these programmatic documents contain an explicit role for ASPnet to contribute to the global objectives of UNESCO. ASPnet is relevant at the global level, if its strategies and activity plans reflect this role. The table below explores the role of ASPnet in the respective Main Lines of Action (MLAs) in the field of Education that were developed in the previous biennial and now quadrennial programmes. Subsequently, this is linked to ASPnet's main working mechanisms, as identified in the previous Chapter.

Table III.1: Contribution of ASPnet to UNESCO Main Lines of Action

Possible ASPnet contribution to UNESCO Strategic Objectives (2010/11, 2012/13, 2014/17)	Link to ASPnet working mechanisms as identified in the reconstructed ToC
Main Line of Actions relating to Progressing towards Education for All:	
– Supporting the achievement of EFA (2010-2011, MLA 1): Through ASPnet, UNESCO will identify and promote examples of good practice , including in the area of education for sustainable development, and enhance the visibility of UNESCO in the area of education.	“ Interacting ” (cooperation) and ‘(External) Communication ’
– Accelerating Progress towards EFA (2012-2013, MLA 1): UNESCO will draw on ASPnet to raise awareness of the education priorities , in particular with regard to teachers and skills development for the world of work. Using the established outreach and multiplier effect of ASPnet institutions, UNESCO will reinforce partnerships to promote access, quality and inclusion in education for greater impact.	“ Teaching and Learning ” (improving capacities to be able to act as agents for positive change) ‘(External) Communication ’
Main lines of action relating to Building effective education systems (in terms of quality and inclusiveness):	
– (2010-2011) UNESCO will promote action-oriented research on issues related to the access to, and quality and governance of basic education around the world. In this regard, the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) will function as a useful laboratory for the development of good practices. At all times, UNESCO will promote the acquisition of generic competencies such as problem-solving skills, creativity and interpersonal aptitudes as well as values such as peace, tolerance and responsibility. In this regard, the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) will help in identifying examples of good practice and promoting them.	“ Creating ” (laboratory of innovative pedagogical material and approaches)
– (2012-2013): UNESCO will use ASPnet member institutions to identify, experiment, evaluate and report on innovative educational content and practices, and to take to scale good practices and disseminate them broadly.	“ Creating ” (laboratory of innovative pedagogical material and approaches) ‘(External) Communication ’
Main lines of action relating to Supporting education system responses to contemporary challenges:	
<u>Helping governments to plan and manage the education sector</u> (2010-2011): UNESCO will work on the development of global policy frameworks and guidelines for curriculum and programme development in areas of concern for ESD such as education on global sustainability challenges (climate change, food, natural resources) or citizenship education. Through	“ Creating ” (laboratory of innovative pedagogical material and approaches)

⁵⁶ UNESCO ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021, Global Network of Schools addressing Global Challenges: Building Global Citizenship and promoting Sustainable Development, ED/TLC/ESD/ASP/2014/PI/1.

⁵⁷ Since the 37 C/4 and 37 C/5 the Programme and Budget Cycle changed from four to eight years for the Medium Term Strategy and from two to four years for the Programme and Budget cycle.

⁵⁸ See UNESCO 35C/5 Approved Programme and Budget 2010-2011, UNESCO 36C/5 Approved Programme and Budget 2012-2013, UNESCO 37C/5 Approved Programme and Budget 2014-2017.

Possible ASPnet contribution to UNESCO Strategic Objectives (2010/11, 2012/13, 2014/17)	Link to ASPnet working mechanisms as identified in the reconstructed ToC
the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), ESD pilot projects and school campaigns will continue to be developed and implemented worldwide.	
Helping education systems respond to contemporary challenges (2012-2013): UNESCO will encourage ASPnet member institutions to implement school-based activities on education for values, citizenship, human rights, tolerance and dialogue for reconciliation and peace , as well as education for sustainable development (ESD) including climate change education and HIV/AIDS and education (especially through the celebration of international days, weeks, years and decades). ASPnet will identify good practices and promote knowledge sharing in educational responses to contemporary challenges. It will also be used as a catalyst for international cooperation by encouraging school twinning and regional and international partnerships.	“ Interacting ” (cooperation and communication)
MLA 2 2014-2017: UNESCO will continue to support the development of the knowledge, values and skills in the area of peace and human rights , and their key UNESCO and UN priorities, through ASPnet. It will encourage the link between knowledge and action throughout the network to promote global citizenship. It will implement the new strategy and plan of action developed for the 60th Anniversary of the Network in 2013.	“ Teaching and Learning ” (improving capacities to be able to act as agents for positive change)
Main lines of action relating to Reinforcing leadership of UNESCO education agenda / EFA:	
2010-2011: Using established networks such as the UNESCO Chairs and ASPnet to identify, develop and facilitate the exchange of good practices in ESD , it will reinforce partnerships so that stakeholders work together in promoting ESD for maximum impact.	“ Interacting ” (cooperation) and External Communication)
2012-2013: ASPnet will increase UNESCO’s visibility and strengthen advocacy in favour of the EFA goals , for example through yearly celebrations of EFA Global Action Week and activities to promote girls’ education. UNESCO will also take advantage of ASPnet’s privileged outreach to educators and learners to identify emerging needs in education. ASPnet will reinforce support to its network in Africa to assist in consolidating its educational responses to relevant issues and to promote its field experiences at the international level. It will further continue its cross-sectoral work and contribute to the expected results of other Major Programmes and the cross-sectoral Platforms of a culture of peace and non-violence, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and climate change.	“ Teaching and Learning ” (improving capacities to be able to act as agents for positive change) “ External Communication and Dissemination ”

*Source: Authors

56. The analysis shows that UNESCO’s strategic documents define a clear role for ASPnet in relation to the Organisation’s global mandate and key functions. ASPnet plays an important role for each of the MLAs identified. Further, Table III.1 shows that each of ASPnet’s functions and roles for the global mandate are reflected in one of the ASPnet working mechanism identified in Chapter II, thus demonstrating a high level of relevance.

57. Currently, the Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2021)⁵⁹ does not mention explicitly ASPnet as an implementation mechanism. Nevertheless, its Approved Programme and Budget assigns to the programme the role of contributing to the achievement of the Strategic Objective 2, namely “Empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens”.⁶⁰ However, this narrower focus does not exclude that ASPnet can also be relevant for MLAs that do no longer explicitly refer to ASPnet. As overall result, the Unit for ASPnet is expected to sustain Member States to integrate

⁵⁹ UNESCO 37C/4 2014-2021, Medium-term Strategy. Paris: UNESCO.

⁶⁰ UNESCO 37C/4, 2014-2021, Medium-Term Strategy, as approved by the General Conference at its 37th session (General Conference resolution 37 C/Res.1) and validated by the Executive Board at its 194th session (194 EX/Decision 18).

peace and human rights education components in their education policies and practises through supporting the delivery of quality programmes and projects on peace and human rights and other UNESCO and UN priorities.

58. Despite the decreased visibility of ASPnet in the current C/4, the ASPnet clearly fits with the key functions and objectives of the Organization.⁶¹ Thus, ASPnet acts as a laboratory of innovative ideas to strengthen the quality of education, reinforces the global agenda by putting UNESCO's values and principles into practice teaches and facilitates learning of current and future generations through a normative humanistic culture based on ethics, strengthens cooperation at various levels through networking activities, and provides and communicates evidence on good practices for further policy development.

59. The 37C/5 also mandates ASPnet with a special role in supporting the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) in strengthening national capacities to develop and implement technology policies in education. Launched in 2012, the project Learning for the Future (LFF) in particular aims at (i) enabling teachers and students to better understand the transformation of societies due to the impact of ICT and future trends to be expected in this field; (ii) ensuring an integrated and increasingly effective use of ICT in strengthening the 'four pillars' of learning for the 21st Century, within the overall school environment; (iii) developing new educational approaches and new learning materials that make effective use of ICT to support a sustainable future and a concept of 'new humanism'.

60. Within UNESCO, ASPnet is furthermore relevant given its potential to relate to the activities of all UNESCO Programme Sectors. It constitutes a vehicle for cross-sectoral cooperation, as most Sectors work together with schools, for instance in the development of educational toolkits and resources. By means of ASPnet, UNESCO is able to easily reach and in some cases mobilize schools directly for testing and creating educational material and approaches (creating), capacity developing (teaching and learning), and relating within and beyond the network (interacting). As such, ASPnet greatly promotes the visibility of UNESCO's work at the local level.

61. Although a variety of different topics have been addressed within the ASPnet, the evaluation found that there is a relatively small amount of activities that are focusing on gender equality aspects. For instance, throughout the last decades, there has not been an ASPnet flagship initiative with a specific focus on gender equality, despite such cross-cutting issue has been a global priority of the Organizations since 2008.

III.2 Relevance of ASPnet in addressing educational and societal needs

Global level: Relevance of ASPnet in addressing educational and societal needs

62. Throughout the Decade of Sustainable Development (2005-2014), the ASPnet Strategy 2004-2009 has guided the activities of the network. An important element of the relevance of ASPnet in addressing educational and societal needs has been its ability to translate global initiatives into concrete activities at the local level. Through their commitment to UNESCO's objectives, Associated schools were expected to primarily promote quality education as outlined in the Education for All goals (particularly Goal 3 and Goal 6) as well as the MDGs.

63. These global objectives were firmly anchored in ASPnet objectives and formed the core of its network activities. More recently, the ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021 explicitly links the objectives of the network to two of UNESCO main initiatives, that are Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The current ASPnet Strategy aims at integrating GCE and ESD into the teaching and learning processes of ASPnet schools, at experimenting

⁶¹ See 37 C/4; page 14 : UNESCO's five key functions: a) Serving as a laboratory of ideas and generating innovative proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence; (b) Developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking; (c) Setting norms and standards in its fields of competence, and supporting and monitoring their implementation; (d) Strengthening international and regional cooperation in its fields of competence, and fostering alliances, intellectual cooperation, knowledge-sharing and operational partnerships; (e) Providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities.

innovative approaches on GCE as well as ESD, and at strengthening the sharing of information, experience, and good practices among Associated schools.

64. While the relevance of ASPnet for global educational and societal needs is uncontested, this has not always been reflected in the priority that HQ allocated to the network between 2010-2015, in terms of resources (both financial and HR) (see Chapter IV). However, the recent adoption of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda further increases the relevance of ASPnet, particularly in view of UNESCO's role as key actor in leading and coordinating efforts towards the achievement of SDG4, as defined in the Incheon Declaration.⁶²

65. Specifically, the SDG target 4.7, which envisions that “*all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development*”, provides a solid ground for UNESCO to support Member States in translating the SDG agenda into practice by inspiring and guiding action on the ground (i.e. at the school level) and disseminating good practice.⁶³ Although this may go beyond the traditional function of UNESCO, which focuses its interventions more on the ‘upstream’ policy level, stakeholders confirm the need for reaching out to the grassroots level for developing and testing innovative approaches for the practical implementation of the holistic SDG agenda. ASPnet proves its potential to take up this highly relevant bridge function by translating high level policy messages into practical solutions on the ground. In this regard, it appears particularly relevant that the thematic focus of ASPnet in its current Strategy already aligns closely with the global Agenda.

Regional level: Relevance of ASPnet in addressing educational and societal needs

66. At the regional level, the relevance of ASPnet in addressing educational and societal needs lies in its contribution to create networking mechanisms around shared identities and specific issues of common regional interest. For instance, the [Sandwatch](#) flagship initiative in the Caribbean region educates young children on the coastal erosion provoked by climate change. In the Mediterranean countries, ASPnet activities reinforce the understanding of the linkages between cultural heritage and agriculture activities around olives (The Olive Route), and in Southeast Asian students learn about the sustainability challenges for growing rice ([ESD Rice](#)).

67. As regional ASPnet Flagships usually result from cross-sectoral cooperation at HQ (see Chapter V), these interventions are designed to be in line with the overall UNESCO objectives. A more decentralised approach to other types of activities, however, also contributes substantially to the relevance of ASPnet in a region. This allows local actors to develop activities under an ASPnet banner that address the educational and societal needs in a local/regional context. For instance, at the regional level, ASPnet offers a platform for schools to broaden their contacts and increase understanding among schools in neighbouring countries, and as such become aware of innovative - but mostly relevant and useful - practices. The textbox below illustrates good practices of ASPnet activities at the regional level, considered as relevant in addressing educational and societal needs.

Box 3: Regional Initiative for Cooperation for ESD Promotion Through Rice (ESD RICE project 2013-2015). The important role of education in sustainable development has long been recognized, but challenges remain to achieve the goal of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), particularly engaging youth into a process of sustainable development, reorient curricula, teacher education programmes and evaluating outcomes of ESD learning. In order to address these challenges, UNESCO initiated a programme in partnership with the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU): the Regional Initiative for Cooperation for ESD Promotion through Rice (ESD Rice). The overall goal of the project is to promote school and community based ESD practices in Asia and the Pacific by building and international collaborative learning network. The objective is to nurture, promote and link school and community based ESD and interactions and exchanges among schools. The project does

⁶² World Education Forum 2015, Incheon Declaration, ED/WEF2015/MD/3, available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002331/233137E.pdf> [09-03-2016].

⁶³ UN (2015), Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> [09-03-2016].

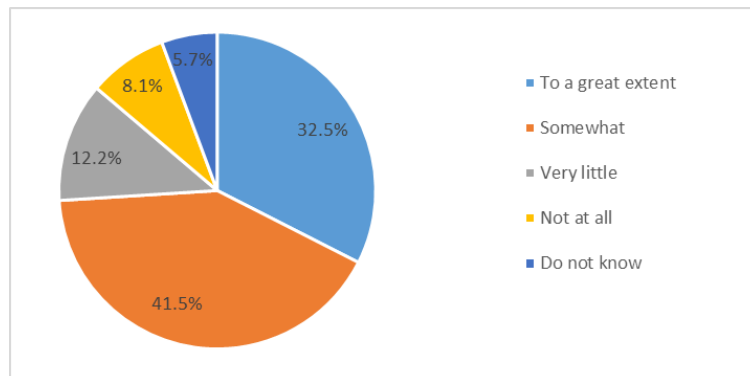
not aim to promote a study on rice, but to nurture ‘agents of change’ for creating a sustainable society, through learning about rice and sustainability.⁶⁴ Rice was chosen as a topic as it connects all countries participating in the project. In addition, cultivation of rice is affected by globalization of the economy, climate change and loss of biodiversity. The ESD Rice Pilot Project was launched in 2011 and the ESD Rice Project Phase I has been implemented in 19 schools in six countries (India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines and Thailand) starting in October 2013. The project resulted in teacher and student exchange and a publication containing good practices and a guide for education practitioners.⁶⁵

68. In their support to Member States, the UNESCO Regional offices, and Regional Bureaux for Education play an important role in ensuring that regional ASPnet activities are in line with the regional educational and societal needs, as well as to identify the synergies and complementarity with the UNESCO intervention at the regional level. Furthermore, they can actively promote regional cooperation among National Commissions as well as national authorities. The evaluation, however, found that the role of UNESCO Regional entities is currently not well defined neither operationalised.

National level: Relevance of ASPnet in addressing educational and societal needs

69. At the national level, National Commissions for UNESCO and ASPnet National Coordinators enjoy substantial room for tailoring ASPnet to the educational and societal needs of their respective country. The analysis highlights that the ASPnet topics are closely connected, and adapted, to the specific needs and contexts in each country (e.g. interreligious dialogue in Indonesia, or disaster risk reduction in Haiti). Survey data also confirm this finding. As Figure III.1 illustrates, the great majority of ASPnet National Coordinators who responded to the survey consider ASPnet relevant for addressing the educational and societal needs in their respective country. Only a small minority (9%) did not recognize that value of ASPnet in addressing the current educational and societal needs in their country.

Figure III.1: Relevance of ASPnet to national educational and societal needs



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=123)

70. Field visits showed variation in the extent to which ASPnet activities are perceived to address national challenges and educational needs. In some countries, ASPnet objectives and concepts have been introduced in national education curricula or are aligned with national education reforms. In Indonesia for instance, soft skills, such as self-development and respect for diversity, were introduced into the new curriculum, thus linking it to broader UNESCO values. As UNESCO promotes the same education priorities with Member States and with ASPnet a causal relationship between ASPnet activities and broader UNESCO objectives and national curriculum reforms would be difficult to establish, and it is equally difficult to measure the level of inspiration or influence of ASPnet experiences for the national policies. However, the national curricula reforms embrace many themes that are also prioritised by UNESCO, and for which ASPnet can serve as meaningful channel and testing ground for implementation. The innovation, creativity and inspiration from

⁶⁴ UNESCO ACCU (2015), ESD RICE project, p. 13.

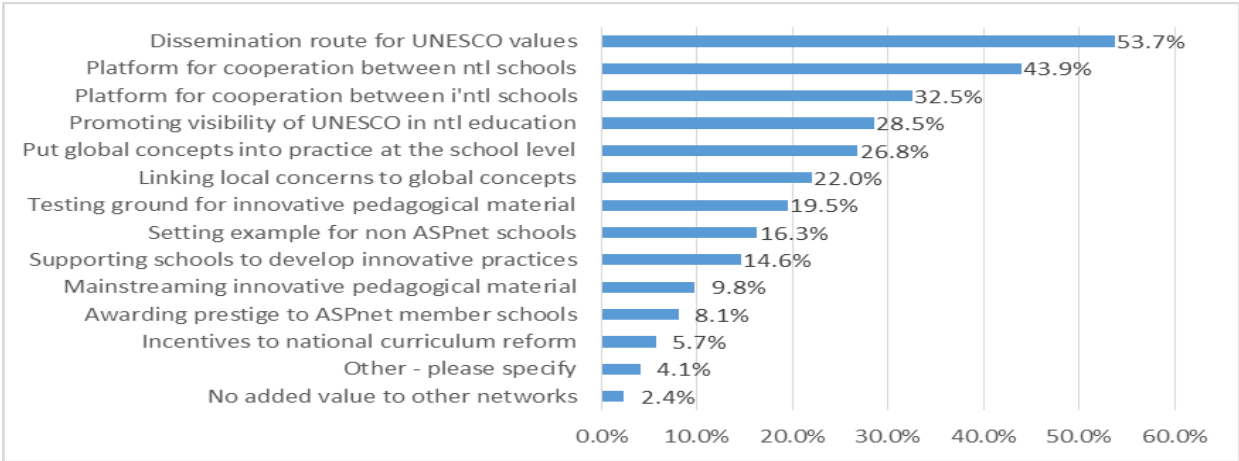
⁶⁵ UNESCO ACCU (2015), ESD RICE project.

ASPnet often resides in how given curriculum subjects are approached, how new thematic areas are taught and how students are mobilised and engaged.

71. In Senegal, recent national education reforms introduced the establishment of school governments, which provide an excellent environment for students to take up the roles of different authorities and experience democratic principles as well as their responsibilities as conscious global citizens, thus providing a fertile ground for scaling up ASPnet activities. Other than the aforementioned cases, in Romania the evaluation found that ASPnet matches the societal needs to open up to ideas and topics that were not openly discussed before the democratisation process in Eastern Europe. While in some contexts the broader global objectives can be directly translated and used, in other countries, these objectives need to be made more specific in order to meaningfully contribute to the national educational and societal needs.

72. Figure III.2 shows that the great majority of National Coordinators (54%) considers the main comparative advantages, or niche of ASPnet, its dissemination routing for UNESCO values. Also, the programme is perceived as offering to ASPnet schools concrete possibilities of meeting and interacting with other likeminded schools located foremost within their respective country (44%), but also abroad (33%). Other elements, such as the laboratory function or capacity building elements of ASPnet were less often associated as comparative advantages of ASPnet. National coordinators reiterated such results with regard to the most important functions of ASPnet for improving the quality of education in the future.

Figure III.2: Comparative advantage of ASPnet at school level



*Source: Evaluation survey (n=123)

School level: Relevance of ASPnet in addressing educational and societal needs

73. For ASPnet schools to act as agents for positive change, ASPnet objectives and activities need to be relevant and connected to the local level. In this regard, some findings from the country case studies are encouraging. For instance, in Haiti ASPnet activities were mostly aligned with wider UNESCO objectives, while also considered simultaneously relevant by the schools. However, despite the relevance observed at the school level, in Kenya and Oman it was relatively unclear for teachers and students how some of the broad, global objectives can be linked to national objectives or can be translated into practice at the school level. For instance, while the activities for improving the school environment are highly pertinent to the global concepts of sustainable development, this relationship was not made evident or explicit and thus students and teachers were not able to see the relevance of global concepts to what they implement locally.

74. Simultaneously, country visits showed that many activities presented under the banner of ASPnet were not necessarily differing from those of non-ASPnet schools. Further investigation in this regard indicates that the particular interventions for which ASPnet clearly makes a difference are indeed mainly related to flagships with a regional focus (e.g. the Slave Trade Route, Baltic Sea project, Blue Danube, etc.) and/or those that refer directly to UN topics (e.g. a series of model-UN debates in Spain, or Oman emulating a UN Assembly meeting, celebration of International Days).

75. Despite in some instances ASPnet intervention are not necessarily very distinct from activities in non-ASPnet (e.g. charity, greening schools), the evaluation found that ASPnet schools often affiliate themselves with UNESCO values, and share proudness in belonging to the wider UNESCO family. Overall, ASPnet identity strongly depends on such feeling of belonging to a global network linked to the UN family. This global perspective has in many cases been identified as a distinguishing factor and comparative advantage of ASPnet.

76. Compared to other school networks, such as the Eco-school network⁶⁶, engaging 49,000 schools in 62 countries; or the e-Twinning⁶⁷ providing opportunities for joint work to more than 160,000 schools in 36 European countries, the association with UNESCO, as indicated by many interviewees, provides the schools with a sense of belonging to a global initiative working on a broad range of topics of world concern, simultaneously with other likeminded schools around the world.

⁶⁶ <http://www.ecoschools.global/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm>

IV. NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

KEY MESSAGES:

- ✓ Overall, ASPnet can be considered as a cost-efficient programme for UNESCO. Through its decentralised structure and networking function, it mobilises various actors to a great extent on a voluntary basis and triggers numerous initiatives and resources at a relatively minimal cost for input from the Organization. Furthermore, it demonstrates a great potential for attracting extrabudgetary resources.
- ✓ In the last two decades, however, the ASPnet International Coordination has increasingly suffered from a significant constraint in human and financial resources (both RP and XB). Minimum operating conditions have not always been guaranteed.
- ✓ Furthermore, loosening international coordination, high turnover of ASPnet stakeholders and limited capacity building led to uneven application of the current provisions for membership and uncontrolled growth in numbers. The proliferation of a variety of national mechanisms, such as non-homogenous or non-equally respected membership procedures resulted in a diminishing global identity of the ASPnet, as well as potential reputational risks for the Organization that are not sufficiently managed.
- ✓ Due to the lack of systematic reporting, monitoring and quality assurance the information about the ASPnet achievements at national and school level are scattered, not allowing systematically aggregating, consolidating and analysing information to ensure accountability and sharing of good practises.
- ✓ As a result of the challenging governance issues, only a segment of the Network (both at the level of NCs and schools) is currently connected, as demonstrated by the uneven institutionalisation, and differing levels of activity and quality at the national level. Only one third of the network is fully connected and entirely operational.
- ✓ Significant challenges also arise from lack of or weak communication between the school, national and international level, unawareness or not-endorsement of rules and guidelines, as well as inadequate incentives for National Coordinators to regularly report on membership adherence, exit and activity levels of schools. In fact, the evaluation revealed that the numbers of Associated Schools contained in the Global Database do not fully correspond to the actual picture in many ASPnet member countries.
- ✓ To overcome some of these challenges and to enable a more systematic framework for improved coordination and communication, the current ASPnet Strategy explicitly proposes ICT solutions. Recently, the Unit for ASPnet focused closely on the development and launch of the Online Tool for ASPnet (OTA)⁶⁸, an interactive platform for management, coordination and networking with the aim to overcome some of the ASPnet's main challenges. However, it needs to be considered that connectivity at the National Coordination, and in particular, at the school level is a precondition, that is not fully in place in several countries.

⁶⁸ OTA is an on-line platform based on Microsoft SharePoint, which can be used to store, organize, share and access information on several formats (pictures, videos, texts, documents, chats, etc.). It is also a management tool that can reinforce the communication between the different coordination levels, and so address some of the connectivity problems highlighted in this chapter. The majority of OTA solutions cover aspects of network management, whereas about one third is dedicated to sharing educational contents.

IV.1 Coverage, selection procedures and membership

77. According to the ASPnet Global Database, in September 2015 the network precisely recorded 10,423 Associated schools located 181 countries (Table IV.1).⁶⁹ The geographical distribution shows a rather balanced picture in terms of numbers of schools per region, thus reflecting the historic development of countries' membership over time. Despite any type of school from preschool, to primary, secondary, technical or vocational education, and teacher training, both public or private, urban or rural, can apply to join the network, the great majority of ASPnet schools are recorded to be primary schools (3,707 or 36 %) and secondary schools (4,283 or 41%), with a majority located in urban areas.

Table IV.1: Distribution of internationally certified ASPnet Schools by type and UNESCO region

UNESCO region	Nursery & Pre-Schools	Primary	ASP 1/2	Secondary	Technical ED	Teacher Training	Total	Number of ASPnet Member States
Africa	51	1100	201	628	63	45	2088 (20%)	42 (23%)
Arab States	36	344	201	449	19	11	1060 (10%)	18 (10%)
Asia Pacific	38	808	212	1218	46	48	2370 (23%)	42 (23%)
Europe and North America	86	565	449	1492	222	70	2884 (28%)	49 (27%)
Latin America and the Caribbean	117	890	386	496	64	68	2021 (19%)	31 (17%)
Total	328	3707	1449	4283	414	242	10423 (100%)	

*Source: ASPnet Global Database (September, 2015)

78. Field visits and data collected through the evaluation survey revealed that the numbers contained in the Global Database do not fully correspond to the actual picture in many ASPnet member countries. The analysis indeed highlighted that the network currently comprises two main categories of schools, namely **(i) active internationally certified ASPnet schools, (ii) inactive internationally certified ASPnet schools**. Furthermore, the evaluation found a significant number of schools participating in ASPnet activities at national level that are not internationally certified, i.e. not formally members but considered as active in the national network.⁷⁰

79. The current landscape of ASPnet membership is therefore characterized by a mismatch between the coverage emerging from the ASPnet Global Database and the actual size of the

⁶⁹ The number of ASPnet Member and Associated States is 181 and the number of National Coordinators is currently 182, as Belgium hosts two National Commissions for UNESCO. Further, ASPnet is not present in the following countries: Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Brunei Daressalam, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Maldives, Monaco, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Somalia, South Sudan, Suriname, Timor Leste, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Faroes, Macao (China), Montserrat, Saint Maarten.

⁷⁰ In several countries this phenomenon is the result of the national pre-selection process, which foresees that schools are implementing ASPnet activities during their candidature status before their membership is proposed for international certification, as is the case in Canada; in other countries there is a dual membership status, i.e. a distinction between interested, cooperating and internationally associated schools, such as in Germany, or a distinction between nationally recognised ASPnet schools and internationally certified ASPnet members, such as in Korea, while in some other countries this is simply due to a lack of awareness of membership rules and procedures.

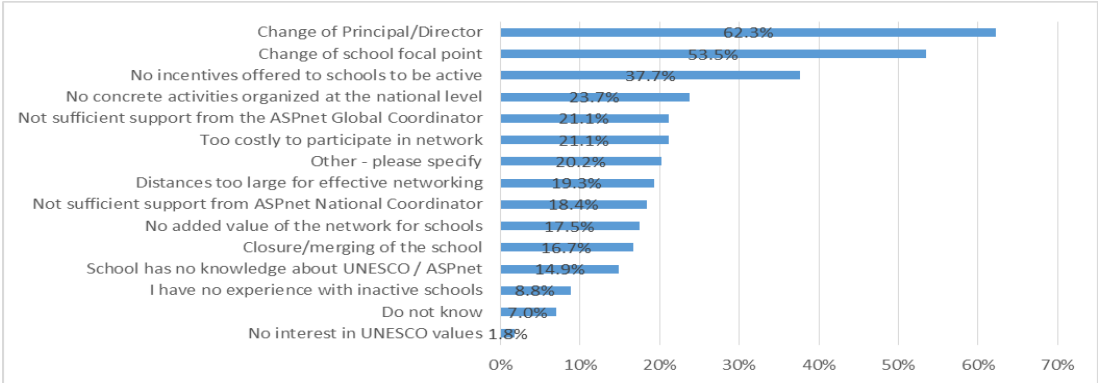
Network in the countries, resulting not least from the absence of accurate recording of the changes in membership and activity levels. For instance, only 79 out of 135 ASPnet National Coordinators who replied to the survey were in the position to provide the exact number of internationally certified ASPnet schools in their respective countries. For example, the evaluation survey data (February, 2016) for these countries recorded 5,495 internationally certified schools, the great majority of which were found to be public schools predominantly located in urban areas, slightly contrasts with the 5,877 ASPnet schools recorded in the Global Database for the same countries.⁷¹

80. Furthermore, ten of the National Coordinators who replied to the survey reported the inexistence of a formal ASPnet network at the national level despite its presence being registered in the Global Database. Among the reasons behind this mismatch are - in many countries- the currently non-existing or not reliable electronically updated databases, and in several countries only recently appointed National Coordinators who have limited historic knowledge about the developments in the membership of the ASP network in their countries.

81. An important element that is not easily evident from the numbers and information provided by the Global ASPnet Database regards the activity status of schools.⁷² The evaluation has gathered sound evidence on very differing degrees of activity. In particular, 78 out of 120 NCs indicated that more than 40% of schools are active, of those only 29 confirmed that between 80-100% of ASPnet schools are perceived as active, while the remaining 42 National Coordinators reported that less than 40% of schools in their countries are active or that they were not in a position to provide such information.

82. Among other, inactivity levels of schools can be explained in light of the high rate of turnover of staff dedicated to the ASPnet at the school level, coupled with the lack of awareness what is expected, a limited institutionalisation of the ASPnet, and/or the absence of a whole-school-approach at the schools. For instance, NCs consider the change of the school principal/director or ASPnet focal point as the main reason for the decrease in activity or disengagement of the school from the network. Other reasons include, the lack of incentives offered to schools and limited activities organised at the national level (Figure IV.1). Overall, underlying reasons for disengagement hint at two important aspects, namely the personal commitment of staff as well as the need for feeding the network with incentives as well as content-related input.

Figure IV.1: Reasons explaining why some ASPnet schools are no longer active



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=114)

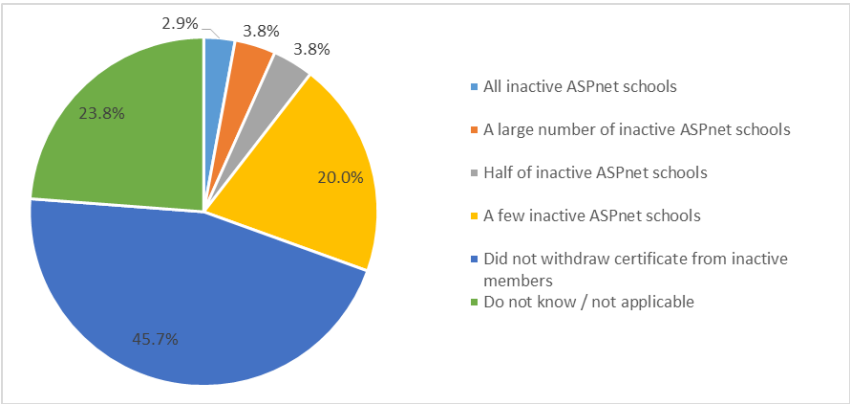
83. According to the general provisions, the ASPnet Certificate of Affiliation to UNESCO as well as the use of UNESCO ASPnet logo is conditional to the evidence-based implementation and reporting of ASPnet activities. Figure IV.2 shows that only in few cases the National Coordinators (approximately 30% of NCs who responded to the survey) have withdrawn the ASPnet certificate from inactive schools. Furthermore, informal sanctions turned into non-consideration of inactive schools for specific national, regional or global level activities, thus perpetuating the vicious circle

⁷¹ Within these overall figures, it could however not be verified whether those schools counted at the national level do correspond to those registered in the global database. This information is currently verified and validated by the National Coordinators in OTA.

⁷² Currently the ASPnet Global Database does not provide statistics on the rate of drop out of schools.

of inactivity. There are also few examples of more rigorous approaches, where the National Coordinator disregarded the past and fully relaunched the network, either with only newly affiliated members (e.g. Kenya), or with only few active schools (e.g. Netherlands).

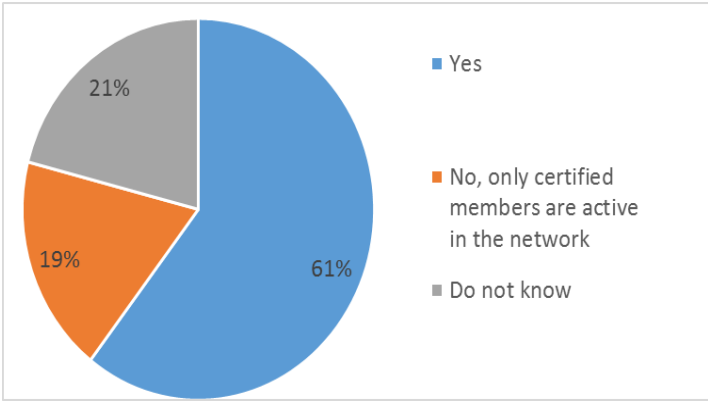
Figure IV.2: Withdrawal of ASPnet Certificate among inactive member



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=105)

84. In various countries, the evaluation found that there are significant numbers of not-internationally certified schools that are actively participating in ASPnet activities, and being identified or identifying themselves as ASPnet schools. In particular, a substantial majority (61%) of National Coordinators claimed the existence of active schools in the ASP network even without their formal international certification, whereas a smaller percentage (21%) does not know to what extent this is the case in their respective country. In contrast, only a minority of NCs who responded to the survey (19%) stated that the network comprises only the internationally certified schools. When further investigating the magnitude of such phenomenon, the data collected in the survey recorded 1,574 not internationally certified schools in 53 countries that are considered active in the ASPnet. Responses range from 1-2 schools (e.g. Estonia) to 350 schools (e.g. Mexico).⁷³

Figure IV.3: Not-internationally certified schools active in network



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=119)

85. Reasons for the existence of schools being considered part of the network while not internationally certified, range from schools having a candidate status at the national level or awaiting approval from the International Coordinator (e.g. Estonia, Croatia, Belarus, Netherlands, Costa Rica, Iceland) to being on a national waiting list (e.g. Czech Republic), or not being fully

⁷³ In Mexico some schools are organised as consortia of up to 50 schools, with only the main institution being an internationally certified ASPnet school that is counted as such in the global Database, while all schools that are part of the consortium are considered part of the network at the national level.

aware that international certification is a precondition for affiliation (e.g. Italy).⁷⁴ In some other circumstances, the association with ASPnet is overlapping with membership to UNESCO Clubs (e.g. Bulgaria, Kenya). Furthermore, in Israel, not internationally certified schools conduct twinning projects with formal ASPnet schools. The former group is therefore active, but not interested or not made aware of pursuing the process of certification. Also, observation during field visits greatly validated such survey findings. In Haiti, for instance, only 40% of ASPnet schools have actually undertaken the certification process. On the contrary, in Kenya some ASPnet schools that are formally certified according to the Global Database, are not aware of their entitlement to such certification, or even of their membership status.

86. Another example is the Republic of Korea where a dual membership system is followed. Most ASPnet schools are affiliated to the ASPnet at the national level and monitored for two to three years without necessarily being internationally certified. Korea currently counts over 400 ASPnet schools in its domestic network, while only 54 schools are internationally certified and some additional 50 are suggested for international certification. The strategy at national level aims at further expansion of the domestic network up to a maximum of 500 (i.e. 5% of schools in Korea). Depending on their performance and level of activity the number of internationally certified schools is subject to increase. Schools are provided with technical, administrative and financial support by the MoE and with the help of a network of 17 regional associations. In Japan, on the other hand, the national strategy to utilise ASPnet as a channel to fostering ESD in the framework of the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development led to a significant increase of internationally certified schools, to over 900.

87. This also raises the question to what extent activities of active schools that are not internationally certified should be recorded, given that this is reflecting the multiplier effect of the ASPnet at the national level, or to what extent a more rigorous quality assurance mechanisms or criteria need to be applied even at the national level. While on the one hand there is a positive and welcome effect in reaching out to schools and communities beyond the network of internationally certified ASPnet schools, there are also issues linked to reputational risks and quality assurance that need to be considered, and appropriately balanced.

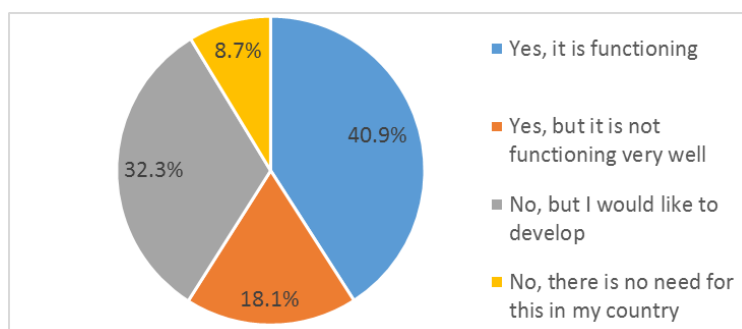
Procedures for selection

88. Evidence gathered throughout the evaluation identifies a plethora of procedures for (pre)selecting new schools. At the country level, common practices allow interested schools to participate into the Network's activities without requesting them to simultaneously become official members. For instance, in the Netherlands schools first become aspirant members.⁷⁵ In Romania, during a probation period of two years the school has to demonstrate interest through activities, reporting and communication with the NC. Similar, in Canada, the standardized application process foresees a two-year candidate status during which the school has to implement and report on relevant activities before the application for international membership may be launched. In Germany ASPnet membership is implemented in three stages, i.e. interested schools, cooperating schools recognised at national level and internationally certified ASPnet schools, with the status of interested or cooperating schools not being time bound and not necessarily leading to international certification. Furthermore, according to survey data 41% of National Coordinators have confirmed that procedures are in place at national level for preparing aspirant schools to membership (Figure IV.4).

⁷⁴ Due to changes in appointment within the Unit for ASPnet as well as in view of the imminent launch of OTA, International Certifications were not issued in the period from June 2015 until March 2016.

⁷⁵ See: <http://www.unescoscholen.nl/over-unesco-scholen/> [09-03-2016].

Figure IV.4: Procedures in place at national level for preparing aspirant schools to membership



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=127)

89. In some contexts, membership depends on the proximity of the aspirant school to the capital city. For instance, in Haiti there are logistic constraints in reaching out and informing schools outside Port-au-Prince and its surroundings. In Kenya, education officers at the sub-regional level were asked to select a public primary and secondary school for ASPnet membership without further instructions neither specific criteria.

Box 4: Example of membership and exit rules in Indonesia. In Indonesia, schools are considered member if they actively participate in ASPnet activities (and if they have established a personal contact with the NC). There is no official enlisting of schools. The Adiwiyata schools ('green schools'⁷⁶) that received an award⁷⁷ from the Ministry are all compliant with this criterion. In addition, there must be proven commitment at the level of the head master and teachers to link their work to the broader, international UNESCO perspective. Specific rules for exit or sunset clauses do not exist, but are applied in practice if a school is not active and not committed anymore. Nonetheless there are examples of schools that were not active for a longer period without being removed from the membership list. An example is the Bandung senior secondary school SMA3, they are member since 2008, but the new school leader was not aware of it and also the focal point was not able to indicate any recent activities in the framework of ASPnet (on the other hand, the school showed a commitment to key values such as respect, cultural diversity, international orientation etc.)

90. In other countries, the selection of schools is conducted in a more top-down manner. In Kenya for example, the selection of new ASPnet school to relaunch the network is concluded by requesting all 47 county education directors to select one primary and one secondary school to become member of the ASPnet. The extent to which schools are involved in this decision is left to the Director. In Haiti, the network is assumed to be open to any interested school. However, in practice there is a limitation when it comes to the network main's activity, the *Rallye Jeunesse*, which requires a 400 USD grant for each participant, the yearly cost of one year of education in a typical private school in the West department. In those cases, participation is limited to 2-3 students and one instructor from each school.

⁷⁶ The main focus of the 'Adiwiyata' ASPnet schools is sustainable development (related to the national programme of Adiwiyata ('Green school'), initiated by the Ministry of Environment to stimulate schools to focus on environmental issues. UNESCO received Indonesian Fund-In-Trust to further develop the green school within the framework of the Adiwiyata-Green Schools Indonesia (AGSI). The Green school initiative was previously supported by KOICA (Korean International Cooperation Agency). See ESD team, UNESCO Office Jakarta: www.unesco.org/jakarta)

⁷⁷ Adiwiyata consist of different levels of complying with the criteria. Each level has an own award. The higher levels for instance demand that the school closely relates with local schools and have them participate in initiatives.

IV.2 Roles and responsibilities for coordination

91. The coordination of ASPnet specifically occurs principally at two operational levels, namely international and national.

International Coordination

92. Located in the Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development (ED/IPS), the Unit for ASPnet (ED/IPS/ASPnet) is in charge of the international coordination of the Network. It consists of two full-time professional staff positions, assisted since 2016 by a full-time administrative staff.⁷⁸ Its tasks and responsibilities are aimed at assuring the quality of the network, the certification process, the training, backstopping and follow-up with National Coordinators and launching initiatives and specific actions at the global level for animating the network. Also, it is the facilitator and nexus between other Programme Sectors at UNESCO and the ASPnet Coordinators at the national level for testing and distributing educational materials, and responsible for developing partnerships and raising additional financial resources.

93. The International Coordinator also plays a role in coordinating with UNESCO Field Offices, which in principle have a mandate within their thematic portfolios in regard to ASPnet. However, the country studies and interviews conducted have shown that the role played by the UNESCO Field Offices within the network is only vaguely described and at best based on an informal or personal working relationship between the Office staff and the National Coordinator. As a result, in some cases, there is no connection between the offices and the national ASP networks. In Indonesia, for instance, there is no formal or structural basis for coordination between the ASPnet National Coordinator and the UNESCO country office. In Haiti, both parties are currently considering working more closely and seeing complementarity in some issues like the political participation of the youth, but no specific joint actions have been identified so far. In Kenya, it was observed that the Field Office was more aware of ASPnet and its challenges than the recently appointed National Coordinator, while in Senegal there have been several initiatives in the past where the Office supported ASPnet activities or was represented in the national level celebrations or regional initiatives, mostly initiated and motivated by the professional network of the National Coordinator.

National Coordination

94. At the country level, the Secretary General of the National Commission for UNESCO is in charge of appointing the **ASPnet National Coordinator (NC)** whose function and responsibilities are suggested in the Guide for ASPnet National Coordinators (2006). Accordingly, overall tasks can be categorized into four main headings: (i) *network management at the country level* (e.g. keeping an up-to-date database of active schools and activities, helping school to plan, implement and evaluate), (ii) *ASPnet Development and Strategy* (e.g. defining a National Strategy and Plan of Action, developing partnerships, arranging contacts with social media, disseminating good practices), (iii) *International cooperation* (e.g. facilitating schools exchange and twinning, maintaining regular contact with UNESCO field offices, arranging participation of schools to international conferences and events) and (iv) *Communication within ASPnet* (e.g. informing school on ASPnet priorities, providing content to News Info, informing the International Coordinator and National Commission on ASPnet activities taking place in the country). Further suggestions point out to holding an ASPnet annual meeting, organize teachers' trainings as well as encounters for young people, finding modalities for granting recognition and rewarding achievements.

95. According to the List of ASPnet National Coordinators Worldwide (September, 2015), the great majority of ASPnet National Coordinators are indeed located within the National Commission for UNESCO in their respective countries. Such finding is confirmed also through the data collected through the survey. Thus, over two thirds of all National Coordinators (77%) are institutionally part of the National Commissions for UNESCO. This ensures a clear link between the activities of

⁷⁸ The ASP Unit currently consist of one P4 International Coordinator, one P2 assistant programme specialist and one administrative assistant, while in previous years in particular before 2010, there have been ASPnet teams of up to 10 FTE's including those financed by extrabudgetary resources.

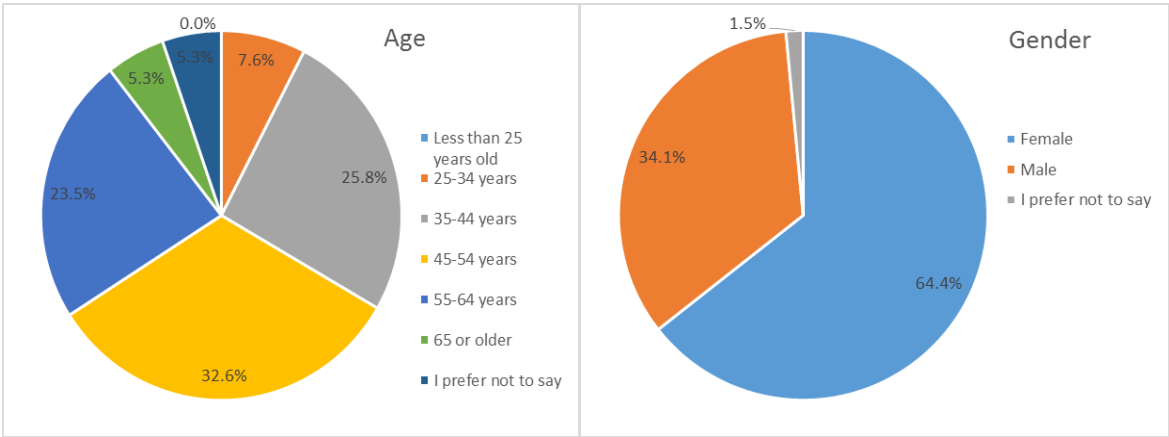
UNESCO, national authorities and ASPnet. In a small number of cases, ASPnet coordination is institutionally based at the National Ministry of Education, at other UN/UNESCO representations, at an ASPnet school, or NGOs.

ASPnet National Coordinator	Africa	Arab States	Asia & Pacific	Europe & North America	Latin America and the Caribbean	Total
outside NatCom and Ministry	1	0	4	15	4	24
in Ministry not NatCom	0	0	6	11	1	18
in NatCom	41	18	32	23	26	140
of which outside Ministry	20	10	12	15	12	69
of which in Min	21	8	20	8	14	71
Total	42	18	42	49	31	182

*Source: List of ASPnet National Coordinators Worldwide (September, 2015)

96. Individual characteristics of NCs emerging from the Evaluation Survey show that the majority of ASPnet NCs is currently between 45-65 years old (56%), and predominantly female (64%) (Figure IV.5). Further, a considerable number of NCs (45%) gained professional experience with ASPnet in a previous function, such as previously being staff of the National Commission, an ASPnet regional (sub-national) coordinator, or through working in an ASPnet school.

Figure IV.5: Background characteristics of NCs



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=132)

97. Data collected pointed out to a relatively high rate of turnover of National Coordinators. Half of the National Coordinators currently in function started only in or after 2012, while 25% of ASPnet National Coordinators indicate to have only started their function in 2015. As a consequence, a substantial number of National Coordinators is still orienting themselves on the tasks and requirements for coordinating the network. Hence, there is a substantial need for regular guidance as well as updates and training both on the strategic direction of ASPnet and management.

98. Although the ASPnet Strategy 2004-2009 recommends the ASPnet NC position to be full-time, only 12 of the responding National Coordinators reported devoting 100% of their time to ASPnet. Indeed, National Coordinators hold various other responsibilities. Survey data indicated that half of the National Coordinators spend 40% or less of their professional time per week on ASPnet, while only 25% of all Coordinators spends more than 65% of their time on the coordination of the network.

99. Coordinators mentioned a large variety of other functions related to their duties. For instance, Coordinators based in National Commissions are often responsible for a programmatic area, most often in the area of Education (40%), but also sometimes across other UNESCO's networks. For

instance, 36% of National Coordinators is also responsible for other UNESCO networks, such as UNESCO Chairs, and UNESCO Clubs. Another 12% of National Coordinators is acting as (Deputy) Secretary-General of the National Commission in their country. Other Coordinators have various functions in their host institution. In few countries, the Secretary Generals of the National Commission are themselves holding the position.

100. The amount of time spent on the ASPnet coordination in a given country is not necessarily proportional to the size of the country or the number of ASPnet schools per country, but mostly depending on the resources and volume of the portfolio of the National Commission. For example, in Oman there are 1,5 full time staff dedicated to the ASPnet of 26 Member schools, with some additional human resources for administration and communication, while in other countries, such as in Japan, the National Coordinator spends only 30% of his time on ASPnet supported by two additional staff and administrative support serving close to 1,000 schools. However, some additional support mechanisms and some functions, such as website management and dissemination activities, are being outsourced on a contractual basis.

101. The level of coordination and direct contact between the National Coordinator and individual schools is therefore greatly uneven and depending on country specific circumstances. In some countries, such as in Canada (70 schools in seven provinces) or in Senegal (123 schools in 12 regions) the National Coordinator is supported by a decentralised system of regional focal points. In Canada the regional ASPnet coordination per county is funded and based on a formal structure, while in Senegal this is established on an informal basis and depending on volunteers supporting the National Coordinator in serving the schools at the decentralised level. In Japan (Box 9), ASPnet is also supported by a consortium of higher education institutions, the ASPUnivNet, to support ASPnet schools on a volunteer basis.

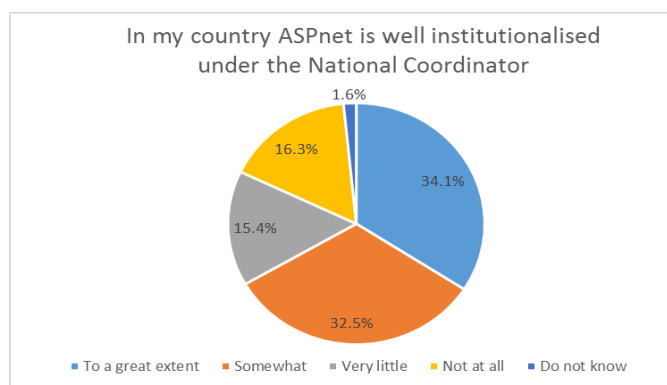
102. In Indonesia, there is one permanent staff dedicated full time to the ASPnet and the National Coordinator can request support from other staff members of the National Commission- Education Sector. The staff costs are fully covered by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Indonesian Ministry of Education provides approximately 40,000 USD annually for organising workshops and cover travel costs. In exceptional cases, if duly justified for specific activities the Ministry provides additional funds. The Indonesian ASPnet also makes use of the Participatory Programme for specific national events, such as the celebration of the International Day of Peace whereby local schools and the communities are invited to participate. Furthermore, the National Coordinator has found ways to expand and support the activities of the network with support from NGOs.

The 'enabling' role of National Coordinators

103. According to the current structure of ASPnet, the role of the ASPnet National Coordinator is pivotal in enabling schools to contribute to the broader institutional objective of the network. They function as the primary point of contact for the International Coordination team for disseminating educational material and information promoting UNESCO's values. At the opposite side of the spectrum, ASPnet schools perceive the NC as representing UNESCO in their country.

104. According to the ASPnet Strategy 2004-2009, the ASPnet NC is responsible for selecting schools from their country, elaborating a national Strategy and Plan of Action, supporting and monitoring activities, and implementing specific joint activities. Field visits have confirmed that the activity and functioning of the network at the national level strongly depends on how the National Coordinators interpret their role. When asked to indicate the extent of institutionalization (in terms of regular activity planning or guidance by a broader strategy) of the ASPnet in their countries, over a third of National Coordinators (34%) indicated that ASPnet is institutionalized to a great extent, while one third of National Coordinators (33%) indicated that this is 'at least somewhat' the case in their country. While a positive finding in itself, the remaining one third (33%) of informants reported a lack of institutionalized approach or structure of ASPnet at the national level.

Figure IV.8: Institutionalisation of ASPnet in the country

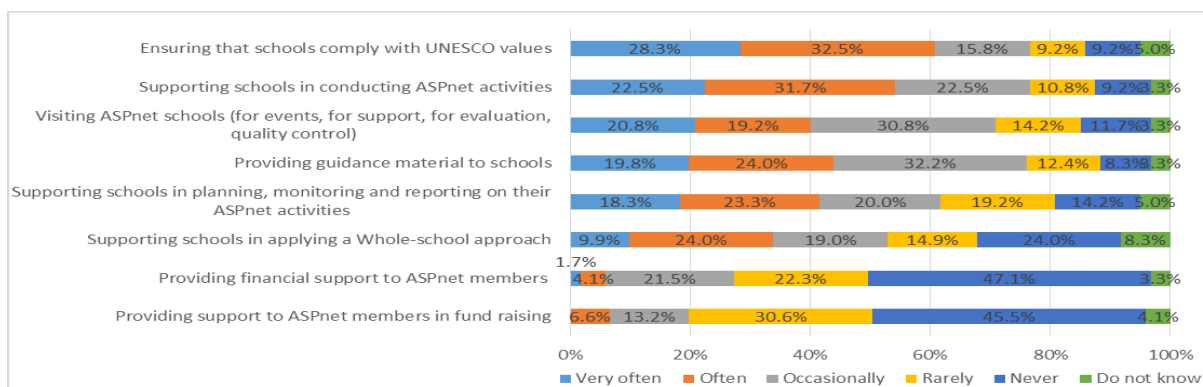


*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=123)

105. Where institutional structures are not in place, the active role and personal engagement of the National Coordinator is even more important. In many cases, it was observed to make the difference in terms of activity level of schools. The survey also explored what type of supportive actions are most frequently undertaken to incentivise schools to become or remain active. Figure IV.9 shows that the majority of NCs (61%) frequently take action to ensure that the schools comply with the UNESCO values; likewise, they regularly support schools in conducting ASPnet activities (54%). National Coordinators clearly identify these among their most important activities.

106. A smaller albeit significant percentage of NCs (40%) indicated ‘providing guidance’, ‘supporting schools in planning, monitoring and reporting’ as well as ‘visiting schools’ among their most frequent activities. Figure IV.9 below also shows that the provision of financial support to ASPnet schools, or providing support to ASPnet schools’ fund raising activities are considered among the least frequent activities conducted by National Coordinators.

Figure IV.9: Type of support NCs are providing to ASPnet schools

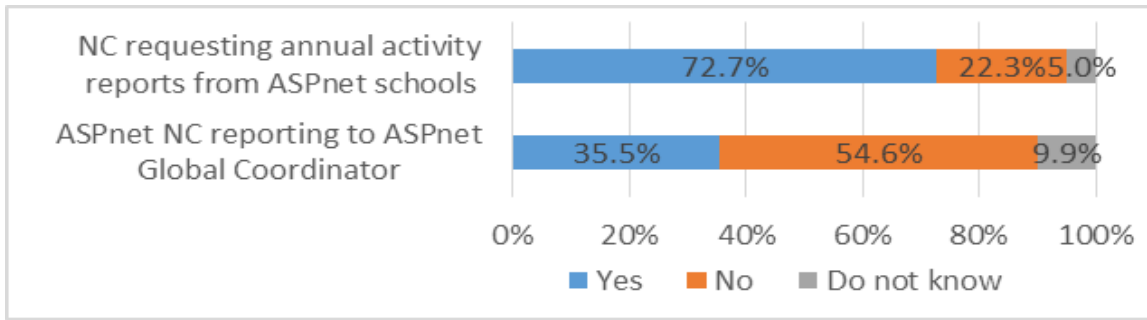


*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=121)

IV.3 Quality Assurance and Reporting

107. Evidence collected throughout the evaluation have consistently confirmed major issues regarding the compliance to the rules, requirements and regulations for Reporting and Quality Assurance of ASPnet activities in most ASPnet countries. In some instances, the reporting was found to be inexistent (e.g. Kenya), or in many other cases confirmed as performed *ad personam* and not regular or systematic (e.g. Romania, Senegal, Haiti, Oman and Indonesia). Survey data further exacerbated such findings.

Figure IV.10: Reporting to National Coordinators and International Coordinator



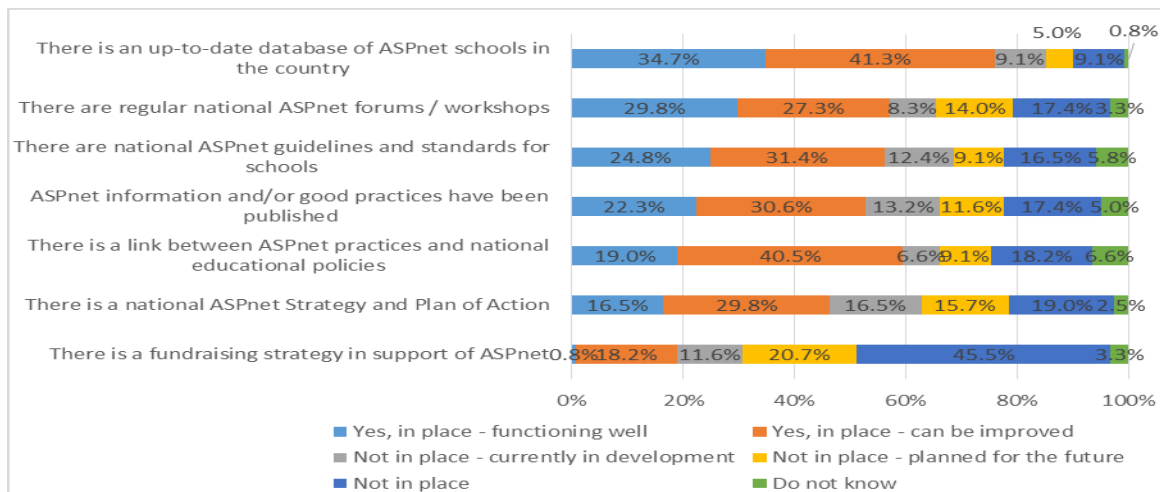
*Source:

Evaluation Survey (n=121)

108. Figure IV.10 shows that close to 73% percent of NCs declared they regularly request annual reports from the ASPnet schools. Nevertheless, survey data also indicates that in nearly half of the responding countries (45%) no more than 36% of ASPnet schools actually do submit an annual report to the NC, and in some countries very few or even none of the schools do so. Indeed, a quarter of National Coordinators receives annual reports from a very small number (only up to 9%) of schools. However, there are also examples of properly functioning monitoring systems in place at the country level. For instance, Spain and Brazil provide examples of good practices in this regard. In both countries, sub-national coordinators assist the National Coordinator to ensure ongoing communication with Associated Schools in their region. Among several tasks, sub-national coordinators collect school reports, which are in turn consolidated into a national report assessing the implementation of a yearly Plan of Action. Such documents are further discussed and validated during the annual ASPnet National Assembly.

109. Besides irregularity and lack of quality observed in annual reports from Associated Schools, the evaluation also found that there are several issues regarding quality assurance, that are recognized and require further attention. In cases where quality assurance mechanisms are in place, the NCs confirmed that there is need for further improvement, whereas when not already in place, in several countries they are currently under development or planned for the future. According to the survey data, only one third of National Coordinators indicated that there is a well-functioning up-to-date database for ASPnet schools at the country level. Merely one quarter pointed to the existence of ASPnet national guidelines and standards for schools, while an even smaller number of NCs (22%) indicated that ASPnet information and/or good practices have been published and disseminated.

Figure IV.11: Quality assurance elements in place



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=121)

110. In terms of quality assurance approaches, the Netherlands had developed a quality framework that shows an example of good practice (Box 5).

Box 5: Quality framework for UNESCO schools in the Netherlands (December 2011)⁷⁹ With the network of UNESCO schools growing, each school was found to develop the UNESCO programme in their own way, in line with the school vision and needs of the school population. As schools can join on-going international UNESCO activities and projects, and also develop their own new projects and materials, a system of quality assurance was found necessary to strengthen and assure the added value of the UNESCO programme in the school and to make clear how being a UNESCO school contributes to improving the quality of education in practice.

A framework of quality standards was considered as useful and necessary to make the distinctive character of UNESCO schools more manifest and to guide further development of UNESCO activities in the school. With the aim to support schools in achieving better quality, the Dutch National Commission for UNESCO asked the European Platform and the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) to design a quality framework for the UNESCO school profile. This framework is intended to fulfil a number of functions:

- Quality assurance: to offer a guideline for (self)-evaluation of the way in which the UNESCO vision is implemented in the school.
- Curriculum development: to make visible the core elements of the UNESCO programme and how these can be embedded in the school curriculum and -policy.
- Monitoring: to use self-evaluation to monitor progress of the development process.
- Peer exchange: to offer a shared frame of reference for exchanging experiences, practices and materials with other UNESCO schools in the UNESCO schools network.

111. Poor reporting and quality control does not concern merely the national segment (i.e. schools' annual reports submitted to the National Coordinators). Likewise, only 36% of NCs confirmed they are regularly providing an annual national report to the International Coordinator, and with few exceptions these are rather narrative and hardly contain any analytical information (Figure IV.10). Among those who stated to report to the International Coordinator (30 National Coordinators in total), 19 confirmed to utilise the official UNESCO reporting template, whereas 11 National Coordinators were not aware of its existence. On the contrary, among the reasons mentioned behind the absence of reporting from the national to the international level, NCs confirmed that there is nothing to report on (32%), that it is not clear to what extent reporting to the International Coordinator actually serves a purpose (27%), or that they were not aware of the provision of reporting requirements (19%).⁸⁰ Consequently, at the UNESCO level reporting and supervision, as well as analytical aggregation relies to a great extent on other means, such as personal contacts, informal and formal meetings, and email exchanges.

112. Overall, the absence of the possibility of systematically aggregating, consolidating and analyzing information on the ASP network both on the national and international level presents a missed opportunity. Incomplete information and lack of quality reporting on activities and results achieved consequently does not allow for a comprehensive picture and overview of ASPnet achievements, which is in turn required for ensuring accountability towards UNESCO Governing Bodies and potential donors. Furthermore, the lack of feedback on experiences and information from the ground makes it more difficult to learn from the past and feed lessons into future strategies and planning. In particular, it prevents from identifying the challenges and obstacles experienced in those countries where the network is less active, and on the other hand loses track of valuable experiences and good practices.⁸¹

⁷⁹ SLO, Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (2011), Quality framework for UNESCO schools, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Not presented in graph, but collected by the survey among the 73 ASPnet National Coordinators that indicated not to report to the Global Coordinator.

⁸¹ It is interesting to note that whereas the Comprehensive Partnership Strategy (192 EX/5) (2013) identifies countries annual report as only means of verification of results reported in SISTER, the Biennial Report on the Comprehensive Strategy (199 EX/11) states: during the last biennium, UNESCO received information and

IV.4 Financial resources

113. The moral contract between UNESCO and Associated schools does not entail any financial commitment among stakeholders. Financial resources are allocated through the Regular Programme Budget of UNESCO for the International Coordination, additional extra-budgetary resources are raised both at the international and national level and local contributions support initiatives at the school level. Also, National Commissions for UNESCO or other national authorities are free to allocating resources for the ASPnet at national level and entitled to apply for funds from the Participation Programme especially for national or regional level capacity building initiatives related to ASPnet. Table IV.3 provides an overview of financial resources allocated to the ASPnet through the Regular Budget (RB), extra-budgetary funds and the Participation Programme during the reference period of the evaluation.⁸² As shown, financial resources have been significantly reduced between 2010 and 2015. The 38 C/5 Budget distribution plan for 2016/17 indicates USD 269,500 Regular Programme resources allocated to ASPnet for the biennium, showing a significant increase compared to previous biennia.

	<i>Regular Budget</i>	<i>Extra Budgetary</i>	<i>Participation Programme</i>	Total
2014/2015	168 000	50 000	343 070	561 070
2012/2013	20 000	285 000	524 045	829 045
2010/2011	100 000	1 743 429	857 400	2 700 829
Total	288 000	2 078 429	1 724 515	4 090 944

*Source: ASPnet International Coordination

114. At the national level, the evaluation survey found that in the majority of cases (60%), in addition to the dedicated Human Resources, there is no financial contribution to ASPnet from the budget of the institution where the National Coordinator is based. For those countries who reported to dedicate additional resources to ASPnet, only 20% of countries confirmed a financial contribution of up to 10% of the total budget of the institution, while in 20% of cases such contribution is reported as more than 10%.⁸³ These figures confirm the findings from country visits, during which it was observed that ASPnet is currently run with a minimal allocation of financial resources.

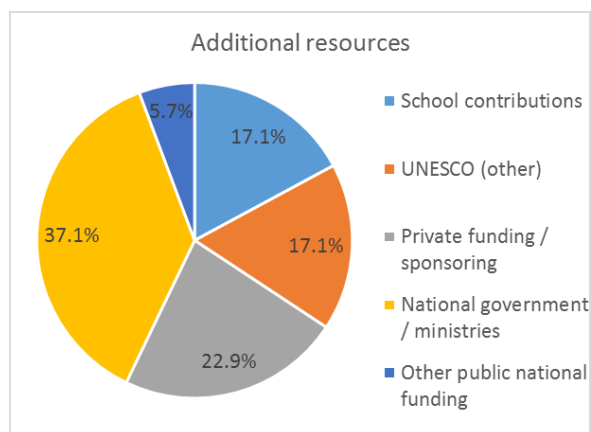
115. Beside the disbursement of funds from the institutional budget, 23% of National Coordinators reported to have benefitted from the Participation Programme, whereas 46% have not searched for additional resources. Only 31% of National Coordinators raised additional resources from other sources for the implementation of ASPnet activities. In particular, Figure IV.12 provides an overview of such funding sources for additional financial resources. As result, National Authorities supports ASPnet (37%), followed by private funding (23%), school contribution (17%) and other UNESCO funding (17%)

materials from ASPnet members on their programmes and activities through multiple channels, including formal country reports, letters and emails, media articles, social media announcements and face-to-face meetings.

⁸² Data on financial resources allocated to the ASPnet at the national level are not available. Some evidence in this regard has been collected through the Evaluation Survey and presented in the following paragraphs.

⁸³ See Details from the survey that are not presented in the figures below.

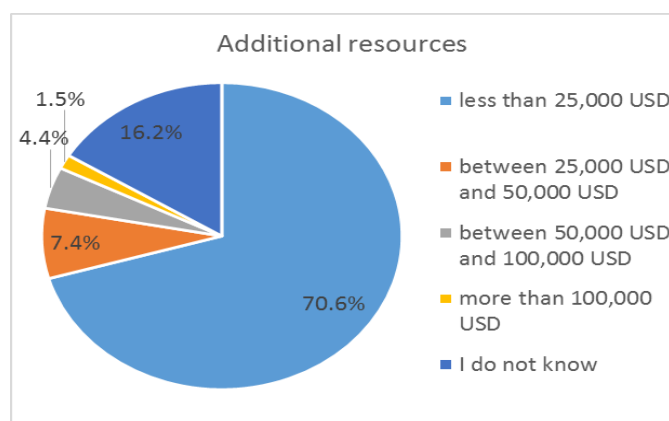
Figure IV.12: Additional financial resources/ origin of additional resources raised



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=39)

116. Figure IV.13 provides an indication of the magnitude of additional funds raised. The great majority (71%) has indicated to raise less than 25,000 USD on average per year, whereas only close to 6% indicated an amount of more than 50,000 USD on average by year.

Figure IV.13: Magnitude of additional financial resources



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=68)

117. It emerges that most of the incentives for NCs to animate the network, as well as for school principals and teachers to implement ASPnet activities, rely on non-monetary factors, such as visibility, professional interest, a sense of belonging to a global initiative, outreach to other ASPnet schools and a collaborative spirit. From the interview with the Senior Management of Eco-schools, a similar non-monetary motivation mechanism was found to be the main driver for promoting education for sustainable development, with the Eco-school network using the award of a 'green flag' as an incentive for schools to join the network and implement its programs.

118. In view of the limited resources for ASPnet, at the national level it is remarkable how some countries have managed to put in place and maintain an institutionalized ASP network often with the commitment and financial resources from third parties. (see the example of Haiti below in Box 6). In Haiti, support was guaranteed by banks and international donors, and the National Coordinator is considering allocating dedicated human resources for fundraising activities. On the other hand, the allocation of financial resources to ASPnet activities by means of the Participation Programme must not be underestimated. In Haiti, for instance, the funds from the Participation Programme have played a key role in maintaining a common programme of activities at the national level, despite of the difficulties faced by the country in the last years.

Box 6: Haiti best practice: the Youth Rally. The ASPnet in Haiti frames a major part of its activities in a biennial event called *Rally Jeunesse*, which is based on the principle of ensuring a multiplier effect. It takes place once every 2 years and addresses two or three UNESCO key topics. In the past, these have included heritage, citizenship, environment and disaster risk reduction and preparedness, and water. The Rally lasts 4-5 days, day and night, and involves all ASPnet schools (50), and some other schools (around 10) invited as participants. The format includes site visits, manual work, workshops, conferences, and micro projects (e.g. tree plantation). It leads to a final report delivered by each participant to its school, and framed under a national contest, usually leading to an award of international trips for an ASPnet or other related events. (e.g. a conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Bahamas organized by a regional organization).

Each school sends 2-3 students to the rally plus one teacher. The students commit to bringing back to their schools the lessons learned at the rally, and to replicate at least partially some of the activities. For example, after a rally on water, each school created their own water committee made up of students.

- Activities at the school level consist of a replication of the activities during the rally in an extra-curricular framework, as well as any activity inspired by the rally and led by the students or the teachers. According to the teachers, they use these experiences to better address related contents in curricular activities, such as civics lessons.
- The activities are to a large extent covered by the UNESCO Participation Programme, but also receive financial resources from private entities, and the Ministry of Education. The MoE also provides logistics and communication support. The rally is usually transmitted via national audio-visual media, and in its latest edition, its visibility was reinforced by the attendance of the Minister of Education.

V. NETWORK RESULTS

KEY MESSAGES:⁸⁴

- ✓ Despite the significant decrease in human and financial resources at the international level, ASPnet has proven resilience through the continuous implementation of activities at the national and at the school levels.
- ✓ The evaluation found that when intra- or cross-sectoral cooperation effectively occurred, such as in the case of ESD, World Heritage Education and Sandwatch, the network has effectively fulfilled its potential as a channel for UNESCO's educational resources and as a vehicle for international exchange and cooperation. Another example is the educational material developed as a result of the successful joint inter-agency collaboration between UNESCO ASPnet and UNEP.
- ✓ The Celebration of International Days, participation in flagship Initiatives and on-line global platforms have accomplished their value as drivers for learning and exchange among schools and students. For example, they triggered long-lasting twinning arrangements. The evaluation also identified examples where the identification, collection, and sharing of ASPnet good practices led to replication, and improved capacities at different levels.
- ✓ Furthermore, the ASPnet International Coordination has successfully introduced the use of ICT and social media both at the management and implementation level, thus empowering the interactive working mechanism of the ASPnet and strengthening its global identity.
- ✓ Such positive change is welcome as the networking among ASPnet schools so far primarily occurred at the national level, and rather than a global network ASPnet has turned into a network of national networks of schools.
- ✓ However, overall a mixed picture emerges in terms of results. The variety of ASPnet's activities have not expanded in a coordinated and systematic manner. The ASPnet International Coordination have specifically focused on ESD and GCE, whereas the cross-sectoral component of the programme has suffered, resulting in often outdated material and phasing out of long-existing flagships.
- ✓ Testing of new educational material has been limited to few schools in selected countries and not further disseminated or rolled out throughout the network.
- ✓ A scattered approach also applies to the '*teaching and learning*' component (i.e. capacity building for ASPnet). When educational resources and approaches have been developed, the related capacity-building component has been developed sub-optimally and consisted mainly in ad-hoc workshops and seminars.
- ✓ Modalities of implementation (curricula/extracurricular) and activity levels are also greatly uneven among schools at the national level. Less active and less connected ASPnet schools are often those not targeted to participate in all national and international level activities, and consequently results achieved at the national level are based on the activities of those more active schools.

⁸⁴ Given the lack of systematic collection and monitoring of information on the ASPnet initiatives at the country and school level, the evaluation was not able to provide and assess a comprehensive picture of the achievements of ASPnet around the globe. The analysis in this chapter is therefore based on information provided in Statutory reports (in SISTER) and other available documentation, as well as the data collected during field missions, interviews and the survey among National Coordinators. It is to be assumed that there are many other activities and results at the national and school level that have not been captured in this analysis.

- ✓ Overall, the analysis highlights the often missing linkage between the strategic vision of ASPnet goals and the implementation on the ground.
- ✓ Furthermore, the evaluation found limited awareness of policy makers to the system relevance of ASPnet educational contents, as well as of the potential to pilot or replicate methodologies and approaches at the national level through the network. A lack of communication and visibility of the ASPnet was found among the reasons why the ASPnet is often not sufficiently understood and rarely found influential at the national policy level.

V.1 Contributing to improving the quality of education in practice through ‘creating’

119. ASPnet as a laboratory of ideas enjoys a dual characterization, namely (i) bottom-up and (ii) top-down. When joining the network, a school takes ownership of the proposed educational project that it commits to implement over the year. As such, the precondition for becoming a member of the Network lays in the ability and commitment of the school to innovate its methods and/or approaches. At the same time, it requires creativity in taking into account the specific needs of the local context (e.g. preservation of local cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue, etc.) in which the ASPnet school operates. This bottom-up approach assures that the governance of creative ideas inspired by universally recognized values is democratic throughout the network. Given the inconsistency in the reporting system as highlighted in the previous Chapter on Network Connectivity, a complete overview of such projects at the school level is not available through the ASPnet Global Database.

120. In a bottom-up way, ideally ASPnet schools implement a whole-school approach to avoid ASPnet related activities to be limited to a small number of teachers and students and/or to only specific extra-curricular activities. Accordingly, to increase the coverage of teachers and students involved, regular curricular and extracurricular activities, in-classroom and out of the classroom initiatives are the mechanisms for implementing ASPnet educational projects. These include participatory school governance and school campus management models, introducing innovative student centred teaching and learning approaches and material, ways for preparation and celebrating international days as well as initiatives that engage partners and reach out to their communities.

121. Data reported in Table V.1 show the estimated percentage of ASPnet schools in relation to the type of implementing mechanisms of educational projects. The highest percentage of National Coordinators (31%) stated that most ASPnet schools organize ASPnet projects as extra-curricular activities, whereas only in 10% of cases NCs indicated that ASPnet schools in their country implement ASPnet only through regular curricular activities. Furthermore, 24% of NCs estimated that in most schools ASPnet is implemented through a combination of extra and curricular activities. While 9% of NCs estimated that all schools in their country apply a whole school approach, another 21% confirmed the application of the whole school approach applies for most of the ASPnet school in their country.

Table V.1: Estimated percentage of ASPnet schools implementing activities according to different delivery modalities (%)

	All ASPnet schools (100%)	Most ASPnet schools (75%)	Half of ASPnet schools (50%)	Some ASPnet schools (25%)	No ASPnet schools (0%)	Do not know
Organized extra-curricular ASPnet activities	16	31	15	17	11	10
Implemented ASPnet into regular curricular activities	10	21	19	25	13	12

Introduced ASPnet through a combination of curricular and extra-curricular activities	14	24	17	19	13	13
Adopted a whole-school approach to ASPnet membership	9	21	12	21	20	17

*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=116)

122. From a more **top-down perspective**, the ASPnet International Coordination enables ASPnet to function as a laboratory of ideas through several mechanisms: These include targeting the network with innovative educational material, teaching and learning approaches for relevant thematic areas that are developed by the Education Sector itself, feeding the network with new education toolkits/flagships developed through inter-sectoral cooperation (including testing, and further disseminating, of UNESCO educational material and publications in relevant ASPnet thematic areas throughout the network), creating material and pedagogical approaches developed through inter-agency cooperation. At the national level, the ASPnet National Coordinator supports schools and facilitates them in their role as laboratories of ideas by raising their awareness about current UNESCO thematic areas, international days, and by sharing good practices on the use of innovative educational material and approaches, adapting material to national contexts and/or developing national ASPnet material, or establishing partnerships with local stakeholders.

123. The evaluation identified several achievements related to ASPnet as a laboratory of ideas, most notably the creation, testing, piloting and use of educational material through [ASPnet Flagship initiatives](#) resulting from inter-sectoral cooperation (such as on Cultural Heritage or Water education) as well as material developed on different thematic areas within the Education sector (e.g. Global Citizenship Education). During the reference period of the evaluation, since 2010, a list of ten flagship projects appears on the ASPnet website. Such major experimental projects at the international, regional and interregional level are: [World Heritage Education \(WHE\)](#), [Baltic Sea Project](#), [Western Mediterranean Sea](#), [Sandwatch Project](#), [Great Volga River Route](#), [Mondialogo School Contest](#), [Water Education in the Arab States](#), [Blue Danube River](#), [GigaPan Dialogue](#) and [Breaking the Silence: Transatlantic Slave Trade \(TST\)](#). Also, in 2013 and 2014 the International Coordination successfully launched two online collaborative ASPnet in Action Platforms, respectively *Learning and exchanging about Biodiversity* and [Global Citizens connected for Sustainable Development](#).⁸⁵

124. Figure V.I shows that WHE is the flagship project implemented in the greatest majority of countries, followed by the two ASPnet online collaborative platforms. According to results reported in SISTER, more than 1120 participants from 104 countries took part in the ASPnet in Action online collaborative platform “*ASPnet in Action: Global Citizens connected for Sustainable Development*”, whereas more than 450 participants from 83 countries contributed to “*Learning and exchanging about biodiversity*”. According to survey data, TST and Sandwatch are delivered respectively in 20% and 12% of countries given their regional characterization. Among other flagships, there are other regional initiatives, such as the RICE project in Asia and the Pacific.

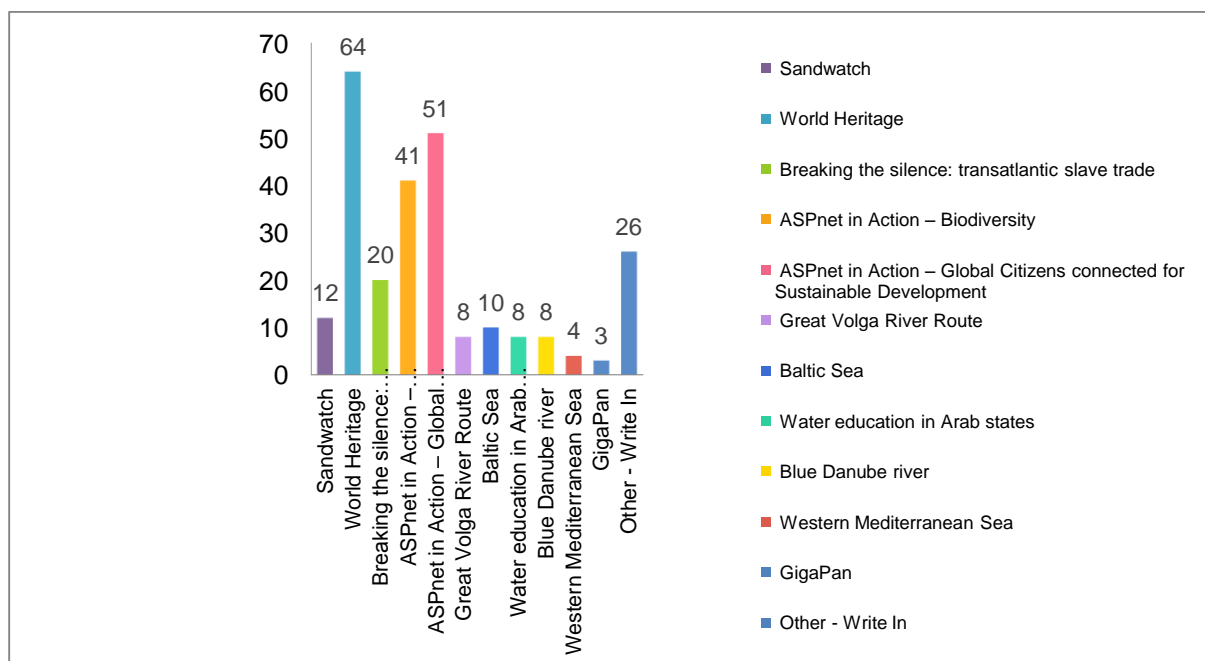
125. At the school level, as Table V.2 shows, ASPnet National Coordinators reported that only in 10% of countries all schools participated in flagships, whereas in the majority of countries (33%), only a small portion of ASPnet schools (25%) in a given country is involved in such thematic initiatives. Interviews at UNESCO as well as field missions highlighted that although formally still operational, a number of flagships are indeed no longer active in practice, such as Mondialogo and Water Education in the Arab States, whereas others are only partly active, such as in the case of the GigaPan Dialogue initiative in Indonesia.

126. On the other hand, some flagships projects continued being successful in providing schools with innovative approaches and updated material. For instance, in 2013 the World Heritage Programme in coordination with ASPnet and in close cooperation with National Commissions for UNESCO and other partnerships launched the interactive educational kit [World Heritage in Young Hands](#), which includes the World Heritage Convention text, a brief description of World Heritage, a

⁸⁵ It was launched in 2014 in French and English thanks to the support of the Japan Funds-in-Trust.

World Heritage map, Photo and video gallery, [the World Heritage Adventures cartoon series 'Patrimonio'](#), as well as other documents. Further, in 2010 the publication (open access) [Sandwatch: adapting to climate change and educating for sustainable development](#) was updated and expanded through inter-sectoral cooperation between the sectors of Education and Natural Sciences. In terms of specific output of the ASPnet International Coordination, in 2014 a three-book Compendium on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) "[Stay Safe and Be Prepared](#)" launched in English, Japanese and Spanish, provided ASPnet students, parents, and teachers with concepts, exercises and good practices on disaster preparedness and resilience-building.

Figure V.1: Percentage of countries participating in ASPnet Flagships



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=114)

127. Box 7 also illustrate through anecdotal evidence how Flagships provide a mechanism for creativity and for further developing material and approaches through (trans)national cooperation among schools.

Box 7: Example of Regional Flagships. Launched in 1993 The "Blue Danube" River Project⁸⁶ connects ten European bordering countries from the Danube's source in the Black Forest to the Black Sea via the Danube Delta, by offering a special opportunity for the UNESCO Associated Schools to engage in intercultural cooperation on topics related to historical and cultural understanding, the way different nations deal with their different cultural heritage. It focuses in particular on aspects of sustainability for the environment and nature, such as the effects of climate change on the natural habitat of humans, animals and plants along the Danube River. It is coordinated by rotation every 5 years among all 10 Danube countries (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Ukraine). In 2015, international coordination of the Program was held by Romania. Each year it culminates in an international meeting in the Danube Delta with the participation of teachers and students from countries participating in the Program, but not limited to it (in 2015 for example a Japanese school from Okayama-ASPnet meeting joined), together with representatives of UNESCO Paris, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, consular officials and ambassadors, representatives of NGOs in the field, with the support and collaboration on the organizational level of Veolia Environment. Activities throughout the year are documented and rigorously disseminated through reports, memoranda of cooperation, activities for environmental protection and conservation (e.g.

⁸⁶ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/networks/global-networks/aspnet/flagship-projects/blue-danube-river/> [09-03-2016].

restocking the Danube with sturgeon (along with the WWF), studying the traditions and customs of various local communities, celebrations, etc.) and publishing of officially launched material within international meetings such as the *Dictionary of species of fish from the Danube* but also from other European rivers (including materials collected by each participating country team).. In 2013, the book *Bridge over Water / Arch over time* "which includes descriptions of current architectural data and legends and myths about the bridges over the Danube, one for each country, considered representative" was published and disseminated among the network. In 2014 the book *Shades of Blue - European lakes* was published with the support and contribution of participating European schools and financial support of Veolia Environment/Apa Nova Bucuresti. In 2015 a specific publication was dedicated to nature reserves and reserves biosphere, in Europe and even globally, entitled *Nature - The best teacher* - focused on *Biosphere Reserves / Reservations of the Danube countries*. In Romania, students and teachers are involved in meetings and summer camps held within the Danube River Project. Also, drawings and pictures by students were used for the published books "Danube Fish Species Dictionary", "Bridge over Water, Arch over Time", "Nature, the best teacher. Natural reserves and reservations along the Danube".

The Sandwatch flagship project⁸⁷ aims at making people aware of climate change and attract people to science. Launched in 1999 after a seminar in the Caribbean on ESD by the Coast and Small Islands program, it was conceived as an educational tool. The approach is to make students (primary and secondary schools) aware of the things they don't realize when going to the beach on a holiday but are indeed going on a larger scale (climate change, environmental degradation). The activities promoted include students' initiatives in taking real measurement; cleaning beaches, interviewing the inhabitants, hotels, etc.; collecting other information; make drawings to reinforce memories; etc. As a result, they analyse the information collected and identify problems, make recommendations and address them to the local authorities. The ASPnet was an efficient mechanism to launch the initiative among a large number of schools. Initially a pilot project, it is currently still operative and the ASPnet schools, as the most active make up 60% of all participating schools.

128. Overall, the evaluation found that the development and testing of new educational approaches and material through cross-sectoral cooperation has not been systematic and structured during the last three biennia. In comparison to the past, the NCs indicated through the survey that with regard the activity rate of schools in relation to the test-bed function of ASPnet, the internationally certified schools became generally less active (17%) or remained more or less the same (30%). Further, it was found that on average the testing of new UNESCO educational kits involves only a limited number of countries and in such countries only a limited number of schools. Several interviewees at UNESCO also pointed out that also in cases where the educational material has been tested through ASPnet, the final output is not systematically disseminated and used throughout the network.

129. Another important ASPnet laboratory of ideas intervention at the school level is the celebration of UN International Days, Years, Decades and Campaigns. Survey data pointed out for instance that 61% of countries, all ASPnet schools or the majority of schools in a given country are developing and implementing specific activities related to the preparation and celebration of a day or year on a specific theme (Table V.2). Also, two characteristics of such celebrations demonstrate valuable outcomes. First, the celebration of International Days/years usually involves the school as a whole and it is not restricted to a limited number of classes, teachers or students. Second, such activities guide teachers and students to a deeper understanding of a specific theme through a clear linkage between their local context and the respective global concepts. During the last biennia, the International Coordination has in particular supported events in relation to the celebration of International Days, such as the International Women's day on 8 March or the Remembrance of Victims of the Slave Trade occurring on 26 March. Also, ASPnet worldwide participated actively in the Global Action Week (4-10 May 2014) campaign "*Education and Disability*" under the slogan "*Equal Right, Equal Opportunity*". Associated schools also actively contributed to the World Teachers' Day with the slogan "Invest in the future, invest in teachers!" (5

⁸⁷ <http://www.sandwatch.ca/> [09-03-2016].

October 2014) and to the International Literacy Day with the theme “Literacy and Sustainable Development” (8 September 2014) (see Box 8 for an example of the celebration of the international day in Senegal).

Box 8: An Example of the Commemoration of an International Day in Senegal: In partnership between the National Commission, BREDA and the Embassy of Israel ASPnet schools in Senegal commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust and the Victims of Slavery on 27 January. The partnership has been established in 2012 and focuses on the yearly preparation and organisation of an event for the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust on 27 January. The partnership supports increased media visibility and the involvement of a significant number of schools (1000 students, teachers, parents and school principals as well as regional focal points) as well as other Embassies (Austria, Germany, Ruanda), and National authorities (representatives from the MoE) NGOS, and private partners. Every year a specific theme is proposed which is elaborated in the classroom and discussed in depth and involves capacity building, and preparation of teachers. Activities include theatre representations, illustrations, and exhibitions at each participating school with the aim to increase awareness and sensibility of students and teachers in understanding the relevance of this commemoration in relation to current societal issues. The high appreciation of the event ensured its continuation and motivated the Embassies of Ruanda and Cote d'Ivoire to replicate the event adapting it to their specific contexts. ASPnet schools have found to provide the ideal context as a network of schools that are based on and proliferate principles of tolerance, culture of peace and intercultural understanding. As a follow up, the pedagogical material (teacher and student's handbooks) that have been developed and used for the event could be further refined and presented in the form of teaching material for other ASPnet schools and eventually beyond the network. The National Coordinator is currently seeking additional partners and support to ensure the necessary funding in the future

130. ASPnet has established itself also as an important mechanism for UN inter-agency cooperation. For instance, the OzonAction Education Pack, resulted from a close working relationship between the Team of ASPnet and UNEP. In particular, the ASPnet Team was in charge of reviewing the contents of the developed educational kits, especially from a pedagogical perspective and of selecting the most active countries in the network in order to disseminate the educational material. Another example is the Draw disabilities campaign for which ASPnet has provided valuable technical assistance to the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI).

V.2 Contributing to improving the quality of education in practice through *‘teaching and learning’*

131. The evaluation identified a number of different activities in relation to ‘teaching and learning’ that take place at different levels. It distinguishes broadly between capacity building of the different key ASPnet stakeholders, such as training of NCs, teachers and school principals, and capacity development activities that serve to directly improve the quality of education at ASP schools, i.e. Through teachers as one of the most important actors transmitting educational contents and putting new and innovative teaching approaches into practice, while students as the key beneficiaries are likewise made responsible as key actors in their own learning process and agents of change.

132. In particular, it was found that capacity building activities in terms of training for key ASPnet stakeholders differ in intensity and according to the type of stakeholders and level of operation. At the international level, the ASPnet international coordination is expected to facilitate capacity development activities, for instance, by initiating or supporting relevant training initiatives in particular for ASPnet National Coordinators, but also school principals and teachers. Furthermore, the international coordination is responsible for encouraging partnerships and collecting and analysing inspiring practices from leading ASPnet schools. The evaluation has highlighted that in the period 2010-2015 there has been only limited investment in setting up systematic and stable mechanisms for training newly appointed ASPnet National Coordinators, to ensure streamlining uniform procedures for coordination, or updating as well as on specific ASPnet contents. For instance, Guidelines for ASPnet National Coordinators (2006) were not systematically updated,

revised or actively disseminated. Targeted capacity building initiatives have been rather sporadic and scattered.

133. The Report on the Comprehensive Partnership Strategy (199 EX/11) for the last biennium reports on two specific capacity building ASPnet initiatives. First, in the framework of the World Conference on ESD held in Japan in November 2014, around 1000 ASPnet teachers and students (out of which 800 were Japanese) from 32 countries participated in a series of International ASPnet ESD events resulting in the adoption of a declaration in which ASPnet students highlighted how they can contribute to ESD. Second, 55 ASPnet schools from 11 countries attended the **ASPnet International Seminar** “Getting Climate-Change ready: ASPnet schools’ response to climate change”, which took place in December 2015 at the UNESCO Headquarters in the context of the Paris Climate Conference COP21.⁸⁸ Survey data confirm that only a limited number of countries are actually involved in capacity-building initiatives. Thus, 41% of ASPnet National Coordinators reported that none of the ASPnet schools in their countries had attended international training/conference/workshops helping to improve the quality of education. Also, overall only representatives of a limited number of ASPnet Member States, i.e. 23 % (equal to 42 countries) participated in the 60th Anniversary celebration at the International Forum ‘UNESCO ASPnet for Global Citizenship: Peace Education and Education for Sustainable Development’ which was held in the Republic of Korea in 2013.

134. At the **regional level**, some activities were identified such as the Third Statutory Meeting of West African UNESCO ASPnet (RéSEAO), a capacity-building workshop on “Global Citizenship Education, a new vision for Sustainable Development”, held in Dakar in December 2014 and organized by the Senegalese National Commission for UNESCO. Another example is the Capacity Building workshop organised in the framework of the RICE project (see Box 3). Also, the International Coordination has provided technical assistance to initiatives taking place in the framework of flagships, such as Danube Delta Workshop “Save the Planet for your Family” held in Romania in June 2014 and organized by Veolia Environment and Apa Nova Bucuresti, under the patronage of the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO.

135. At the national level, the NC is expected to enable the actual implementation of activities that seek to develop the capacity of schools to act as navigators for peace. This can include, for instance, organizing trainings or workshops of ASPnet school teachers and principals, or the development or further elaboration, adaptation or translation of relevant educational material.⁸⁹ The evaluation found that in a majority of countries (58%) the National Coordinator organizes an ASPnet Forum, Seminar or Workshop annually for the purpose of presenting and exchanging work programmes, exchanging experience and best practices, as well as discussing relevant national issues and strengthening capacities on specific topics, such as Education for Global Citizenship. Survey data show that only 16% of ASPnet coordinators estimate that all ASPnet schools participated in national training/ conference/ workshops to improve quality education, whereas 28% of NCs report that the percentage of schools involved in such activities reaches 75%. The Strategy 2004-2009 also explicitly mentions the role of developing skills in fundraising at the school level. However, the evaluation shows that only a limited number of National Coordinators (3%) support all ASPnet schools in raising financial resources or building relevant skills.

136. Another important component are the capacity development activities that serve to directly improve the quality of teaching and learning at ASP schools, and to help them give meaning to the principle of ‘navigators for peace’. Teachers and students are the key actors in this process. However, at the school level it means not only receiving support from the international or national ASPnet coordination, but the 2004-2009 Strategy explicitly also requires that school management actively enables its teaching staff and students to support activities, and provide means and conditions to carry out their work related to ASPnet. School management should also develop ways to train its teaching staff to elaborate school plans in support of quality education in practice. The

⁸⁸ See: UNESCO (2016), Biennial report on the comprehensive partnership strategy 199 EX/11. Amongst others, 11 National Coordinators, 55 teachers and 9 students from Brazil, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, Namibia, Senegal (see: UNESCO (2015), UNESCO International Seminar “Getting climate-ready: ASPnet schools’ response to climate change” 7-8 December 2015, Room IV, UNESCO, Paris Provisional programme (as of 26 November 2015)

⁸⁹ In most instances where PP budget was requested it was for the purpose of capacity building activities.

ASPnet schools teaching and learning methods should be designed in an interactive, participatory way so that critical thinking, attitudinal changes and competences of students are developed. Participatory approaches, e.g. making students responsible at school level as actors and agents of change, have been identified as an important feature, in particular in relation to GCE and ESD.

137. However, anecdotal evidence gathered during school visits in the country field missions points to a lack of opportunities for teachers and students to gain sufficient knowledge and exchange on experience about different aspects of ASPnet related teaching and learning methods and approaches to implement ASPnet activities. Despite numerous positive examples observed such as participatory initiatives for greening schools, or participatory school governance models and - except in those cases where a whole school approach was applied - the awareness and transmission of contents and application of innovative teaching and learning approaches is often limited to a small number of teachers and students. The knowledge of teachers and students showed in many cases gaps even in relation to basic information on UNESCO and its priority thematic areas.

138. Another relevant strategic area for capacity building initiatives constitutes the establishment of partnerships with other relevant partners, such as UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO Clubs, Civil Society or the private sector. The evaluation identified a multitude of such capacity building initiatives, which appeared to be among the key added values of ASPnet in the national context. However, continuous professional development on specific UNESCO-related thematic areas is available for teachers at the country level only to a very limited extent, while interviews during field visits clearly point to a strong need for supporting teachers in building their capacities in teaching specific ASPnet related subjects at the different age group and levels of schooling (see Box 9 for an example).

Box 9: Interuniversity Network Supporting: The UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPUnivNet). Officially launched in 2008, ASPUnivNet is a network of 17 universities in Japan that -on a voluntary basis- supports ESD and activities at the schools participating in ASPnet as partners. There are four types of activities designed to assist local schools in joining ASPnet and to promote ESD at schools. First, ASPUnivNet checks applications and provides guidance to interested schools not only on the application process but also on the frame of mind a school applying to join the ASPnet school should develop, including building the curriculum upon ESD principles and applying a Whole-School Approach in working on ESD, cooperating with local communities, other schools, government committees, social education institutions and universities. Second, ASPUnivNet holds trainings of teachers for higher-level ESD practices. Third, it encourages regional cooperation among ASPnet schools and social education institutions, NGOs and other organizations. Fourth, it provides networking support to ASPnet schools.

Box 10: Learning to Live Together (LTLT). The manual *Learning to Live Together, An Intercultural and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education*, which has been developed by Arigatou International in close collaboration with UNESCO and UNICEF, aims at training educators in ethics education for children. Thanks to the close collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO in Romania, the manual has been translated into the national language by ASPnet teachers, and it is widely disseminated through the network. Furthermore, the LTLT training is officially recognized by national authorities as part of the Life Learning Skills Development. In particular, teachers attending this module receive professional credit (11 credits out of 90 credits requested every two years). During the field mission, evidence was collected on the effectiveness of the tool in strengthening social ties through mutual understanding.

139. The identification and collection of ASPnet good practice is another way of strengthening capacities and takes place at different levels. ASPnet Good Practices compendia have been

published in 2008,⁹⁰ 2009,⁹¹ and 2013.⁹² As the reporting mechanism has been limited in the past biennia, the identification of such good practices results from ad-hoc surveys and individual exchange among ASPnet National Coordinators rather than an analysis from country reports. A recent example for such individual exchange was the UNESCO International Seminar 'Getting climate-ready - where a selected number of ASPnet National Coordinators and school representatives jointly discussed with experts and representatives from national authorities and exchanged schools' responses to climate change⁹³. Also, at the regional level, ASPnet Good Practices were gathered and disseminated by means of publication. For instance, in the Asia-Pacific region the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) compiled a compendium of good practices.⁹⁴

140. At the national level, knowledge sharing and dissemination of good practices takes place in many forms, such as dedicated ASPnet web-sites, newsletter and meetings. For instance, in the case of the Netherlands, Belgium (Flanders), Austria, Denmark, France, Czech Republic, Germany, Brazil, Indonesia⁹⁵, ASPnet websites differ in contents, structure and lay-out and in many cases they do not refer to 'ASPnet' but rather to UNESCO schools. Despite specific criteria for the identification of good practices these are not uniformly shared, the process itself of gathering, validating and publishing them supports the network in developing its identity. Also, it implies a system in place through which good practices can easily emerge.

V.3 Contributing to the quality of education in practice through 'interacting'

141. In order to animate the network and promote an active role of network actors, the International Coordination has a role in facilitating the different network actors to connect, communicate and exchange experience among each other and reaching out beyond the ASPnet to their partners, civil society and local communities. Innovative IT tools have an important role to play for both internal and external communication. The evaluation highlights a number of initiatives that facilitate such connection, cooperation and communication. A recent development is the design, development and (pilot) implementation of the Online Tool for ASPnet (OTA) as a tool for internal communication. Preparatory work was conducted to set up an online tool for ASPnet (based on Microsoft SharePoint). In December 2015 the platform was launched and a pilot phase was initiated. Also, the collaborative platform "ASPnet in Action: Global Citizens connected for Sustainable Development",⁹⁶ provides innovative ground for information, communication and knowledge exchange among ASPnet schools on the life-skills and knowledge dimensions of Global Citizenship.

142. At the national level, there are indications that participatory school networks are built, for instance in the highly fragmented school system in Haiti. Most interviewees in Haiti indicated the need to enlarge the network and increase the outreach of its activities, instead of asking for benefits for themselves or their schools. This demonstrates the priority given to connecting to likeminded schools and the leading role assumed by its members. Survey data show that ASPnet schools are

⁹⁰ UNESCO, (2008), UNESCO Associated Schools First Collection of Good Practices for Quality Education.

⁹¹ UNESCO, (2009), UNESCO Associated Schools Second Collection of Good Practices Education for Sustainable Development.

⁹² UNESCO, (2013), UNESCO Associated Schools Third Collection of Good Practices Intercultural Dialogue in Support of Quality Education.

⁹³ The seminar 'Getting climate-ready: ASPnet schools' response to climate change' was organized as a flagship contribution to the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) with a focus on UNESCO's Global Action Programme on ESD, the follow up to the UN Decade of ESD and took place in December 2015 at UNESCO HQ

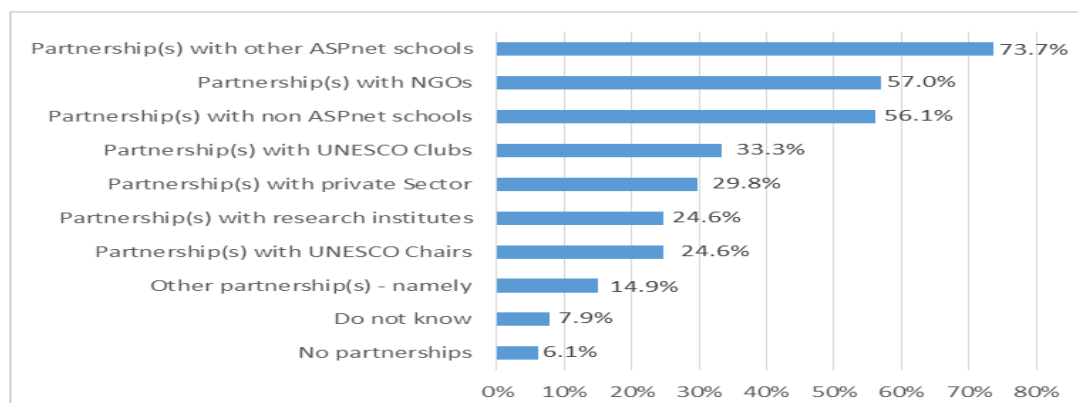
⁹⁴ Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU), (2009), Regional Collection of Good Practices in Achieving MDGs through ESD in Asia and the Pacific Region.

⁹⁵ Netherlands: <http://www.unescoscholen.nl/over-unesco-scholen/> Belgium (Flanders): <http://www.unescoscholen.be/> Austria: <http://www.unesco-schulen.at/> Denmark: <http://www.unesco-asp.dk/da/> France: <http://www.ecoles-unesco.fr/> Czech Republic: <http://www.skoly-unesco.cz/> Germany: <http://www.ups-schulen.de/> Brazil: <http://www.peaunesco.com.br/> Indonesia: <http://aspnetind.org/public/> [09-03-2016].

⁹⁶ <http://en.unesco.org/aspnet/globalcitizens/> [09-03-2016]. Launched in June 2014 in English and French.

developing partnerships with different organisations. They mostly cooperate with other ASPnet schools (indicated by 74% of the NCs), with NGOs (57%) and non-ASPnet schools are often mentioned by the NCs (56%) as additional partners.

Figure V.2: Types of partnerships developed by ASPnet schools



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=114)⁹⁷

143. ASPnet also resulted effective in linking up with other organisations and NGOs in order to provide schools with relevant activities and projects. In Romania, for instance, the civil society is highly involved through private partnership with Veolia, NGO Sol Mentis and Arigatou. In addition, cultural institutions in the country are key partners of the ASPnet. Also, in Indonesia the ASPnet NC has established a close working relationship with a number of NGOs active in Indonesia on the ASPnet areas of interest. ASPnet performs a bridging function between the schools and the NGOs, introducing the schools and teachers to the interesting possibilities offered by the NGOs, such as 'Face to Faith' Tony Blair Foundation,⁹⁸ iEARN (International Education and Research Network),⁹⁹ Arigatou International,¹⁰⁰ National Commission for Human Rights¹⁰¹ and Peace and Human Rights, in cooperation with the NGO Peace Generation.¹⁰²

144. In Haiti, the ASPnet initiative Rallye Jeunesse (Youth Rally) was broadcasted on national TV and generated a lot of media and public attention (see Box 11: Example of ASPnet initiative for local community building and development in Senegal).

Box 11: Senegal/Fatick region: Education for Sustainable Development. A project developed by a local Youth Association in partnership with local ASPnet schools for community development and integration. This is an initiative from the Youth Association ASC JAMM – BUGUM de Niakhar (originally focusing on sports and cultural activities for students after school programmes) who widened its scope by involving ASPnet school students and the local community into capacity building and income generating activities. The aim was to involve students and teachers in promoting the local production and consumption, and to stimulate the local agriculture and economy. This joint initiative is involving farmers, students, teachers in capacity building in transformation and commercialisation of local agricultural products. The project got wide media attention and visibility by local authorities. It was presented at the 'Salon de l'Agriculture' in Paris in 2005 and aims to scale up and become a model for replication by other Youth Associations.

⁹⁷ Other partnerships concern universities, museums, governmental organizations, local communities, and special interest groups.

⁹⁸ <https://www.facetofaithonline.org/> [09-03-2016].

⁹⁹ iEARN is a non-profit organization made up of over 30,000 schools and youth organizations in more than 140 countries. iEARN empowers teachers and youth people to collaborate on projects using internet: <http://www.iearn.org/> [09-03-2016].

¹⁰⁰ <https://arigatouinternational.org/en/> [09-03-2016].

¹⁰¹ National Commission for Human Rights: <http://www.komnasham.go.id/profil/landasan-hukum> [09-03-2016].

¹⁰² <http://www.peace-generation.org/> [09-03-2016].

Box 12 illustrates an example on how Flagships provide a mechanism of (trans)national cooperation among schools.

Box 12: Example of transnational cooperation among schools. The flagship projects in which Haitian schools are involved concern Breaking the Silence, linked to the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) initiative¹⁰³, and World Heritage in Young Hands¹⁰⁴. Although these projects were not specifically targeted at schools in Haiti during 2010-15, they were included in broader discussions and presentations during the Youth Rally's and led to active exchange among the participating schools. In previous years, Haiti participated also in specific international exchanges, like those related to Breaking the Silence in Trinidad and Tobago and in Senegal.

Connecting Cultures: Launched in 2004 within the United Nations Decades of Education for Cultural Diversity and Education for Sustainable Development, Connecting Cultures is an innovative educational initiative that aims at promoting intercultural dialogue among the youth from Arab and European dialogues through face-to-face short journeys into the desert of Oman. The project, which results from a close partnership with the Oman National Commission for UNESCO, the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre, and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, is targeted to youth in the age group 18-25 years who show the potential to be future leaders in the society. During the five days spent together in the desert without distractions and modern means of communication, young people identify shared values and common understanding through dialogue.

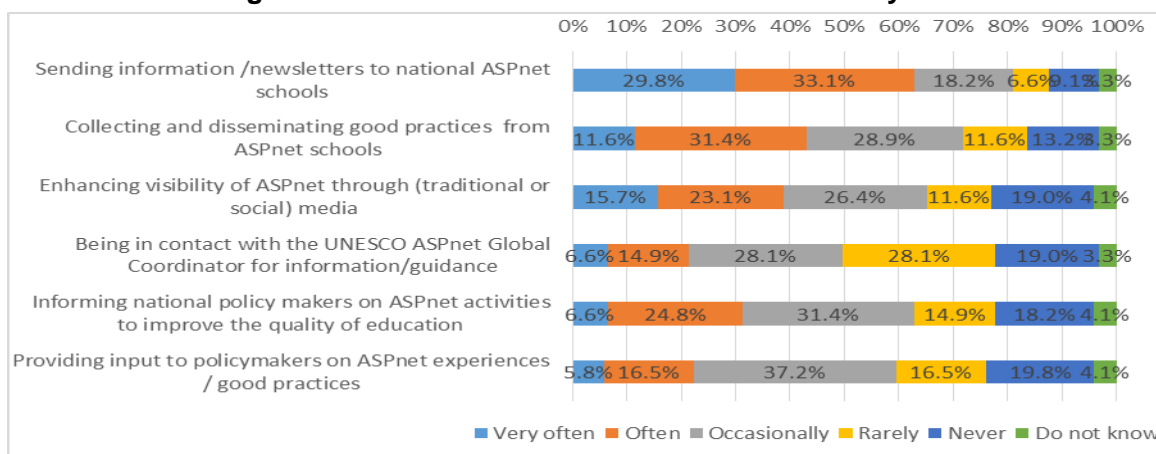
145. At the school level, schools establish connections with other schools but also make attempts to involve the civil society and local communities. Evidence can be found in Indonesia or Senegal where ASPnet schools organise international days involving other schools and the representatives from civil society and the community. On the other hand, in Kenya it is indicated that there are currently no active institutionalised links between the ASPnet schools and civil society organisations.

146. Concerning the use of communication and dissemination tools of the network, a mixed picture emerges. Half of NCs report to have been rarely, or never, in contact with the International Coordinator in the last three biennia. With regard to the communication between the NC and the schools, in the more active countries, a more positive picture emerges. For instance, in Romania and the Netherlands, the national communication strategy is well developed and effective in reaching out the schools and the communities in which they operate. In other countries, it remains fragile as it depends on ad-hoc need to share specific information. Results from the Evaluation Survey illustrate the use of communication and dissemination tools and channels (Figure V.4). For instance, more than 60% of responding NCs (very) often send information/newsletters to the schools. Also, collecting and disseminating good practices is (very) often conducted by 43% of National Coordinators. Informing national policy makers and providing input to policy makers is, however, less often practiced (only by 16% of respondents).

¹⁰³ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/networks/global-networks/aspnet/flagship-projects/transatlantic-slave-trade/> [09-03-2016].

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/networks/global-networks/aspnet/flagship-projects/world-heritage-education/> [09-03-2016].

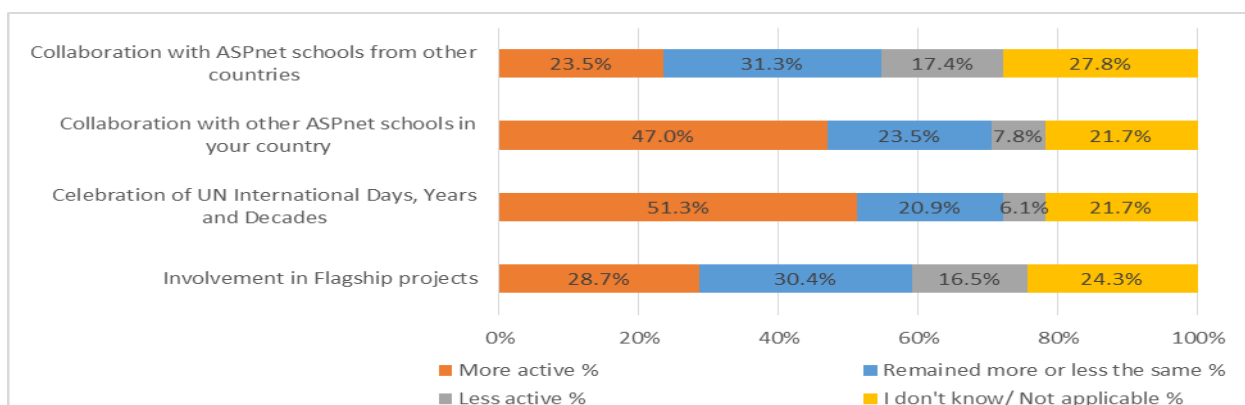
Figure V.3: Communication activities conducted by NC



*Source: Evaluation survey (n=121)

147. In addition to the communication channels, the NCs play an important role in enabling ASPnet schools to communicate and cooperate with other schools. More than 40% of the NCs that responded to the survey indicated that they (very) often facilitate school twinning.¹⁰⁵ Also, the NC indicate that the ASPnet schools in their country became more active in connecting to other schools in the period 2010-2015 compared to the earlier period. This applies mainly to the collaboration with other ASPnet schools in the country and the participation in celebration of international Days, Years and Decades.

Figure V.4: Assessment of whether internationally certified ASPnet schools in 2010-2015 have become more / less active in collaboration

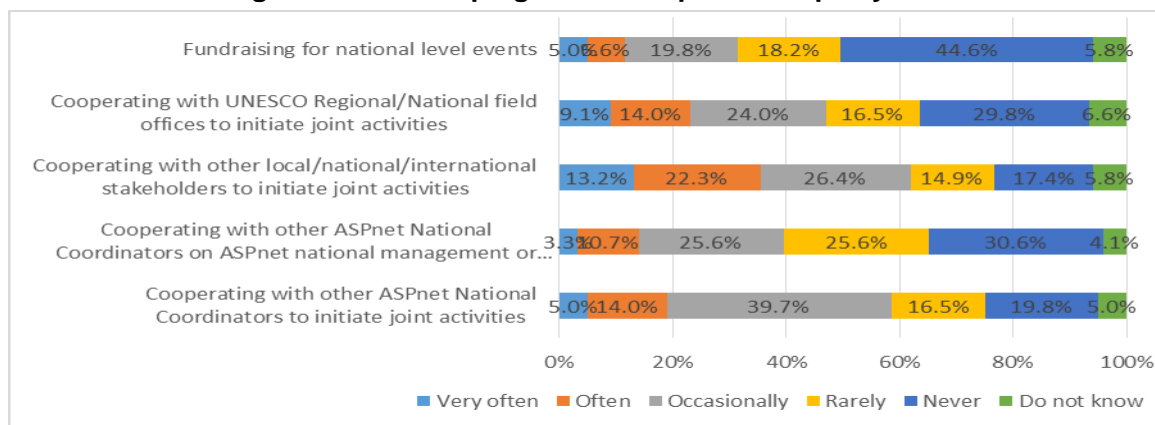


*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=115)

148. The NCs report (Figure V.5) on 'cooperation with other local/national/international stakeholders to initiate joint activities' as something they are (very) often involved in. Cooperation with other ASPnet NCs (on management/governance and joint activities) is reported to take place only occasionally, rarely or never. The same is true for cooperation with UNESCO Regional/National offices and fundraising for national level events (see Box 13 for an example of cooperation among ASPnet National Coordinators at regional level).

¹⁰⁵ Question 21: How often do you conduct each of the following activities to support ASPnet schools? N=120.

Figure V.5: Developing additional partnerships by NCs



*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=121)

Box 13. RéSEAO: Network of ASP networks in West Africa. ASPnet National Coordinators in West Africa are very active in cooperating at the sub regional level, the ASPnet in West Africa, called 'RéSEAO'. It connects several national ASPnets and their National coordinators from countries including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo for the development of a joint sub regional workplan, consolidation of activities and providing future direction for the network in the sub region. The Secretariat of the sub-regional network was held by Senegal from 2013 to 2015 and taken on by Mali for 2015 to 2017. RESEAO held regular meetings, and developed some joint initiatives such as on Arts Education and Intercultural Dialogue, which received particular attention from the Senegalese and other Ministries of Education.

During a seminar of Associated Schools in West Africa held in Dakar in December 2014, participants¹⁰⁶ jointly developed an action plan for RéSEAO, established guidelines for better visibility of ASPnet, for the dissemination of documentation on UNESCO and the United Nations at school level as well as for the implementation of concrete actions of ASPnet objectives at the school level. Participants re-confirmed the crucial role of ASPnet schools for promoting ESD, GCE and Peace Education and the importance of further consolidating efforts and harness synergies of ASPnet schools in West Africa. A number of suggestions for improvement were developed and resulted in recommendations for the different groups of stakeholders.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Including several Secretary Generals from the National Commissions of West African countries, representatives from the Senegalese MoE, focal points from 40 Senegalese ASPnet schools, the global coordinator from UNESCO HQ, as well as a representative from the UNESCO (then) Regional Bureau for Education in Dakar (BREDA).

¹⁰⁷ Recommendations are summarised in the report from the third statutory regional seminar of ASPnet Schools in West Africa (RéSEAO) and include for RESEAO to develop joint regional initiatives, diversify partnerships for implementation and financing; and improve communication, for National Commissions/ National Coordinators to raise better awareness and responsibility at school management, to seek synergies between different UNESCO networks including other ASPnet school, clubs and chairs, and civil society and seek additional funding from other partners, more actively involve and inform MoEs and other line ministries concerned with ESD and GCE, seek more exchange among NCs, to solicit school focal points and principals to submit regular activity reports, to establish a directory of ASPnet schools in the region and organise events such as open days for better visibility of ASPnet schools at the national level, for ASPnet schools to create a 'UNESCO corner' at the school premises, to increase efforts for networking at national, regional and international level, to reach out to other partners and relevant networks, to submit regular activity reports to NCs, to Member States to promote and support capacity building for National coordinators, teachers and school principals in all relevant areas of UNESCO's mandate, to integrate the thematic areas contained in the ECOWAS Reference Manual into national curricula, and to provide funding for ASPnet activities, and to UNESCO to advocate for increased financing at MS level, to increasingly provide teaching and learning material (pedagogic and didactic material) to ASPnet schools, to increase coherence and synergies, to ensure the international ASPnet coordinator better supports the RESEAO activities,

149. The ASPnet Strategy 2004-2009 foresaw also a more explicit role for UNESCO Field Offices in collecting and disseminating regional ASPnet Good Practices. Also, the responsibility of the National Coordinator is to encourage ASPnet schools to take up their role as community leaders, and share experiences learned through ASPnet beyond the network. The identification and diffusion of good practices as well as positive results at the student level, for instance through national media and close contacts with the Ministry of Education, not only serves the purpose of multiplying the effects of ASPnet among non-ASPnet schools. Also, it is expected to sensitise the national political context to mainstream ASPnet practices, knowledge or activities across a wider audience. NCs recognise that there is a potential for more learning and exchange within countries as 69% of the NCs that responded indicate that ASPnet develop activities or approaches at school level that could function as a good practice for non-ASPnet schools.¹⁰⁸

Table V.2: Estimated percentage of ASPnet Schools who is involved in type of activity

ASPnet related activity	All (100%)	Most (75%)	Half (50%)	Some (25%)	None (0%)
Translating quality education into practice through <i>creating</i>					
Testing educational material from UNESCO	7	23	16	27	27
Testing / developing educational material with other knowledge partners (MoE)	10	21	17	26	26
Involvement in Flagship projects	9	15	18	33	25
Celebration of UN International Days, Years and Decades	28	33	13	15	12
Participating in curricula adaptation and/or piloting of national reform initiatives	7	22	14	29	28
Translating quality education into practice through <i>teaching and learning</i>					
Fundraising	3	10	16	34	37
Participate in national training/conference/workshops to improve quality of education	16	28	22	15	18
Good practice identification and dissemination	10	28	20	22	19
Participate in international training/conference/workshops to improve quality of education	7	12	15	41	24
Translating quality education into practice through <i>interacting</i>					
Twinning	3	19	14	38	27

and to ensure a better support from UNESCO field offices for ASPnet activities at the national level and sub-regional level.

¹⁰⁸ Question 11: Please indicate to what extent the following statements reflect the situation of ASPnet in your country: In my country the activities in ASPnet schools provide examples of good practice for non-ASPnet schools (N=123).

Collaboration with other ASPnet schools in your country	15	28	16	24	16
Collaborating with ASPnet schools from other countries	3	10	15	45	28
Engage in partnerships with (local) stakeholders	14	20	28	19	20
Disseminating/mainstreaming of innovative educational approaches outside ASPnet	5	22	23	27	22

*Source: Evaluation Survey (n=116)

VI. NETWORK HEALTH

KEY MESSAGES:

- ✓ Network Health refers to both, aspects of institutional and financial sustainability at the different levels of the ASPnet decentralised structure, as well as to the sustainability of its results in terms of the increase of quality in education contents and approaches and the potential for triggering a multiplier effect or for replication.
- ✓ Despite an observed decline of the programme during the assessment period, sustainability of the ASPnet at the global and national level is renewed and guaranteed through the strong commitment by UNESCO Education Sector Management and Member States with the intention to revitalise and better utilise the programme as important implementation mechanism for the SDG4-2030 Education Agenda. Furthermore, efforts are made to better capitalize on the potential for obtaining extrabudgetary resources for the programme in the future, both globally as well as at the national level.
- ✓ The evaluation found that at the national level sustainability has been uneven among countries. While as a result of the decrease at global level human and financial resources, as well as diminishing visibility and recognition at UNESCO HQ, in some countries the national ASPnet collapsed, in many other countries the national level ASPnet has demonstrated strong resilience and was further developed and institutionalised in a more independent way from the global coordination.
- ✓ The linkage between the ASPnet approaches and practices at the schools and the national policy levels is currently sub-optimal and efforts will be required to increase the attention of policy makers to the system relevance of ASPnet teaching and learning contents as well as the potential to pilot methodologies and approaches through the network.
- ✓ Evidence points to factors that ensure sustainability at the level of schools, such as the application of the 'whole school approach' or 'multiplier effect of individual stakeholders'. Furthermore, there are examples where partnerships have been established with stakeholders in the local community, such as private enterprises or the civil society, that increase the outreach of the school level activities. However, these are not systematically present in the ASPnet and require to be reinforced. For example, it was found that in many countries the 'whole school approach' is applied only in a rather limited number of schools, that staff turnover is among the main obstacles for sustainability at school level, and that the potential for local partnerships and fundraising is not systematically capitalized upon.

VI.1 Sustainability at the global and national level

150. ASPnet underwent a period of decline over the last biennia. However, with the adoption of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda, this trend seems to be reversed and sustainability of the ASPnet at the global and national level increasingly guaranteed through the high relevance acknowledged by all stakeholders, and Member States in particular, who consider the programme as an important implementation mechanism for the SDG4-2030 Education agenda. Major risks identified in the evaluation, such as the phasing out of flagship initiatives, or lack of educational material produced to provide the ASPnet with contents and innovative dynamics are the result of the decreasing resources dedicated to the programme over the last few years. However, more recently clear signs have been given from the Education sector senior management by demonstrating the willingness and desire to revitalise the programme and invest in additional human and financial resources, as well as in significant ICT developments (such as OTA). Furthermore, provided the ASPnet global coordination is secured with a minimum operating budget from regular resources, the evaluation found that there is a high potential for raising extrabudgetary resources for the programme, both globally as well as at the national level.

151. At the global as well as national level, the identification and dissemination of good practices also play a central role for sustaining results on the medium and longer term, by underpinning the sharing and transmission of specific experience and knowledge, and thus increase the potential for replication. Through information-sharing members of ASPnet can be instructed and inspired to

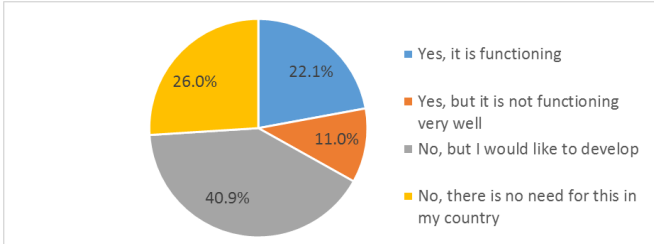
tailor practices to their particular needs. More than 50% of National Coordinators confirmed that ASPnet Information and/or Good Practices have been published in their respective countries. Indeed, the publication of ASPnet good practices is among the mechanisms in place to ensure that experience from applying principles and experimenting innovative approaches at the national/regional levels feed back into the Network activities.

152. Other mechanisms supporting sustainability, such as linking the results at the micro level to upstream policy developments have been identified on an anecdotal basis. Although in-depth interviews with ASPnet National Coordinators and National Commission Secretary Generals point to the crucial importance of raising awareness of innovative approaches and educational contents and involving the Ministry of Education in ASPnet activities and events at the national level, in practice this is not always the case. Some Ministries support the network through ministerial note on ASPnet and by securing financial resources. Survey data confirms that in 59% of countries for which data was collected, a link between ASPnet practices and national educational policies is to some extent in place, or at least institutionally arranged. Such linkage is stronger when the National Commission for UNESCO is institutionalized within the Ministry itself.

153. However, during the field missions, it became evident that the positioning and visibility of ASPnet among the national authorities is in many countries rather limited and restricted to receiving information on ASPnet events and practices or representatives of the ministry participating in an event. The potential of considering ASPnet good practices in the revision of the national curricula, of utilising ASPnet schools as pilot schools eventually utilising the ASPnet in the country for testing or piloting new educational approaches or material that has been developed at the national level, or a channel for connecting with other line ministries in view of the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 is not yet sufficiently recognised as an added value of the network.

154. In terms of the sustainability of the national level coordination structure, the analysis showed that depending on the size of the country or the complexity of the governance of the network a decentralised approach at national level is sought. Almost a quarter of all responding National Coordinators indicate to have a functioning decentralised coordination structure in place (22%). A substantial number of 41% of all respondents indicates that such a structure is currently not in place, but that they would be interested to set it up to improve the national level coordination measures. Naturally, this is not relevant for all countries, and roughly a quarter (26%) of National Coordinators indicates that this would not be necessary.

Figure IV.1: Is there a system of decentralized support to national ASPnet coordination (e.g. decentralized focal points)?



Source: Survey among ASPnet National Coordinators (n=127)

155. As examples of decentralised approach, in Spain and Brazil, given the size of the countries, regional structures have been put in place with regional coordinators, who report to the National Coordinator. The Regional Coordinators meet annually in the National Assembly. In Spain, the National Assembly is already in its 30th edition, in Brazil the 11th edition of the national ASP meeting took place in 2015.

VI.2 Sustainability at the school level

156. To guarantee sustainability at the school level, evidence gathered throughout the evaluation at the school level confirmed that ASPnet activities in order to obtain sustainable results cannot merely depend on the commitment and voluntary work of individuals within an institution. The majority of National Coordinators identified the change of the Principal/ASPnet Focal Point as the main reason for the decreasing in activity or inactivity of ASPnet schools. The appropriate

implementation of the suggested whole-school approach has the potential to overcome such challenge. A whole school approach suggests to not only introduce specific learning components such as linked to ESD into the curriculum, or as a topic of extracurricular activities, but also encourages the school management and the entire teaching staff to engage and generate a fertile environment for UNESCO values and principles to be implemented and sustained at the entire school.

157. As such, the implementation of ASPnet activities is no longer conditional on the personal characteristics of an individual, but rather an integral part of the learning and teaching environment at the school. Furthermore, the application of the whole-school approach entails that the mobility or turnover of ASPnet teachers or school principals turn into a multiplier effect rather than an obstacle. Consequently, over time ASPnet teachers or focal points can act as provider of ASPnet knowledge and experience also through their appointment in another non-ASPnet school. The results from the survey, however, pointed out that currently the whole school approach is implemented solely in a small number of schools, i.e. only 30% of respondents reported that the whole-school approach is applied in a significant number of ASPnet schools in their countries. See Table V.

Box 14: Example of application of the whole school approach in Senegal. The Cours Sainte Marie de Hann, in Dakar, Senegal is ASPnet member since 1980, and provides an exemplary model on how a whole school approach may look like in practice. This private school is covering the entire educational cycle from kindergarten to university level. The Cours Sainte Marie de Hann was awarded with the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 1991 which manifests its genuine approach for learning to live together of over 72 nationalities, and different religions, offering a diversified learning path (i.e. French, international, Senegalese) and enhancing a socially inclusive approach (such as an income-based school fee system, and full integration children with special needs).

The school is adopting innovative teaching and learning practices and focuses on projects such as on tolerance, sustainable development, sustainable sciences and education of traditions, arts and sports. The students are closely involved in the development and implementation of activities that are focused on UNESCO values and principles, seeking to enhancing their responsibility, creativity, solidarity and pro-activeness in putting UNESCO values and principles into practice, among other by applying the school government model. The UNESCO values and principles are enshrined in the school mission and are shared and made visible both within the classroom through teaching methodologies, contents and approaches as well as in the school premises where written signs of values and principles as well as symbols and monuments representing peace and intercultural understanding are exposed, visible and accessible to all students and teachers. Furthermore, the school proudly exposes the ASPnet sign and logo as well as the UNESCO Prize for Peace education awarded in 1991. The school celebrates International days such as the Anniversary of the UN, the Anniversary of the declaration of the human rights, or the commemorations representing the fight against discrimination, involving among other also representatives from other ASPnet schools, Civil society, parents and the wider community.

Furthermore, it invites experts and UNESCO programme specialists for presentations and discussions on relevant current topics, and participated in international concourse e.g. related to sustainable development. In 2002 and 2003 it participated in the UN model organized by UNESCO BRED. The school also established partnership with other ASPnet schools in Senegal, i.e. through mutual participation in events and joint initiatives, such as theatre representations, excursions, cultural festivals and literacy prizes. It organizes cultural and sports competitions and open days. The school selects each year a key thematic area to deepen the discussion and understanding by students on certain aspects of peace education. There are several focal points at teacher and student level, who have the responsibility to involve other staff and students, parents and other representatives of the community as relevant in specific activities.

158. Sustainability of the results of such activities, as well as the maintenance of the whole school approach, also requires ASPnet activities be funded with adequate financial resources. The ASPnet budgets of National Coordination are usually not dedicated to school level activities, and thus require schools to be creative in ensuring funding to cover related costs. For instance, in Oman an ASPnet Focal Point has established a partnership with a local recycling enterprise, which had furnished the school with baskets through which students collect waste paper. Upon collection of such baskets on a monthly basis, such waste is remunerated at a fixed price at kilogramme and resources so generated are available for nourishing further ASPnet activities. Despite some good practices have been identified, they are so far rather anecdotal. Survey data clearly identified fundraising as a weak component of the programme. For instance, only one National Coordinator out of 121 stated that a fundraising strategy in support of ASPnet is in place, and the majority of NCs reported that fundraising is among the least frequent activities. Moreover, results previously reported under the working mechanism of learning highlighted that capacity building activities seldom focus on building strengthening fundraising skills.

VII CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

VII.1 Conclusions

159. Despite uneven levels of resources and visibility granted to the programme during its existence since over 60 years, the ASPnet continues playing an important role for contributing to the mandate of the Organization. Its potential to channel positive values directly into Associated Schools through the dissemination of innovative educational material and approaches that are related to UNESCO thematic areas is recognised as being of continued value. Also, ASPnet is unique as it is estimated as the largest global school network within the United Nations System, that aims at building a common global identity among young generations worldwide. Entitled to use the UNESCO Associated Schools Logo the network also promotes the values and principles of the Organization on the ground, in particular in those Member States where UNESCO is less present. ASPnet positions itself as a strategic tool for intra and cross-sectoral cooperation at UNESCO and intra-agencies collaboration within the UN. Furthermore, its worldwide coverage and distinctive features are a potential for attracting additional resources.

160. During the last three biennia, the programme has faced significant challenges, among other as a result of constraints in terms of human and financial resources both at the international and national level. Although the strong commitment of stakeholders to the ASPnet mission ensured sound resilience at all levels, lack of awareness or non-respecting of rules and procedures for membership and uneven levels of activity led to uncontrolled growth coupled with limited quality control, with networking happening rather at the national or regional level.

161. The ASPnet International Coordination has devoted its efforts to strengthening the networking component and cohesion of the programme through the increased introduction of ICT both for the management, coordination and implementation of activities. Such innovation is welcome as the need for strengthening the global identity of the programme has become evident. To date, ASPnet can rather be characterized as a network of national networks with different degrees of activity and quality. In order to proceed with the initiated reform of ASPnet, especially in light of its recognised role for the implementation of the SDG4- Education 2030 Agenda, the strong commitment of stakeholders at all levels is critical for its revitalization. On the basis of the evidence provided in this Report, the evaluation draws the following specific conclusions.

Conclusions concerning the relevance of ASPnet

The mission of ASPnet is and will remain relevant in particular within the framework of the SDG 4 – Education 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the broader global UNESCO mandate.

162. The mission of ASPnet as a global network of committed schools engaged in fostering and delivering quality education in practice in pursuit of peace, liberty, justice and human development to meet the pressing educational needs of children and young people throughout the world was confirmed as highly relevant in the period 2010-2015. It becomes even more relevant in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development given UNESCO's lead role as a key actor in contributing to the implementation of the SDG4. ASPnet has been confirmed as an important implementation mechanism for making progress towards SDG 4 target 4.7, which aims at "*all learners acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development*". ASPnet member schools shall act as navigators *for peace* and *agents for positive change* in their respective communities. ASPnet has the unique potential to provide a direct linkage between the Organization and the Associated schools. It ensures such highly relevant bridging function for conveying UNESCO principles and values and for translating global issues into practice at the school level. It is a particular asset that the thematic focus of ASPnet in its 2014-2021 Strategy, (i.e. GCE and ESD) aligns closely with the SDG 4 - Education 2030 Agenda.

The ASPnet working mechanisms (and the underlying Theory of Change), i.e. how the ASPnet as a whole intends to contribute to improving the quality of education in practice (".....by enabling its member institutions (ASPnet schools) and individual stakeholders to act as agents of change by

creating, teaching and learning, and interacting at the global, regional, national, and school level”) continue to be highly relevant.

Effective external communication beyond the network is crucial for enhancing the visibility of ASPnet activities and approaches and for strengthening the potential for replication and scaling up at the policy level, as well as for exploring partnership and fundraising opportunities.

163. In a simplified model, the line of reasoning, or the modalities through which ASPnet is meant to achieve its objective of contributing to improving the quality of education in practice, relates to one enabling factor (international and national coordination), and, three main ASPnet working mechanisms. Effective coordination, i.e. animating the network and facilitating activities/projects on which ASPnet schools can jointly work, and effective communication are preconditions for enabling these three working mechanisms to function.

Creating: ASPnet contributes to improving the quality of education in practice by providing a test-bed/ laboratory of innovative pedagogical material and teaching and learning approaches (ASPnet as laboratory of ideas). Through this, innovative educational material and approaches related to UNESCO and UN values and core topics can be developed, tested, implemented and disseminated.

Teaching and Learning: ASPnet contributes to improving the quality of education in practice by developing the capacities of the different relevant stakeholders involved (ASPnet as capacity building mechanism) and by applying innovative teaching and participative learning approaches on specific ASPnet thematic areas. Through improving capacities on the ground, ASPnet Schools, National coordinators, school principals, teachers and students, can position themselves as agents of change and role models for contributing to the quality of education related to UNESCO and UN principles and core values.

Interacting: ASPnet further contributes to improving the quality of education in practice by providing possibilities for ASPnet schools and individual stakeholders to connect, exchange experiences, cooperate and communicate with other likeminded schools and individual stakeholders in their own and in other countries on their activities, approaches and good practices that are related to UNESCO and UN themes and core values .Through active networking, ASPnet can contribute to a shared sense of belonging to a global network and community of practice. Also, as concrete promoter of UNESCO ideas and principles to external stakeholders, ASPnet can provide examples of good practice and sound evidence to the policy level on good innovative practices.

164. This line of reasoning is confirmed to remain relevant in the framework of the SDG 4 - Education 2030 Agenda as it enables schools and individuals to actively play their role as agents for positive change by developing, testing and exchanging innovative material and approaches, facilitating the building of capacities, and by interacting with other schools and organisations.

Conclusions concerning the structure and coordination of ASPnet (Enabling)

The decreasing means (human and financial resources) allocated to the International Coordination in the period 2010-2015 and minimal resources dedicated to the implementation at the national level resulted in decreasing guidance, which, together with an increasing scale and complexity of the network, resulted in uncontrolled growth with uneven level of activity and quality, weak global visibility, ineffective monitoring and reporting system and fragile leadership.

165. In the period 2010-2015 the International Coordination of ASPnet has experienced a steady decrease in available regular funding and human resources despite the growing number of Associated Schools. As a result, the programme has suffered from inconsistent international coordination, limited monitoring, lack of quality assurance and follow-up on reporting and in many cases from a breakdown of commitment towards the International Coordination at the level of National Coordinators and Schools. In addition, within UNESCO Headquarters, the ASPnet was not systematically positioned to function as a test-bed and dissemination channel for newly

developed material. Hence, also within the Organization, the network, until recently, has received less policy attention and diminishing support in comparison to the past. This affected as well the possibilities to raise extra-budgetary funds. Preconditions for maintaining a global network of such scale, i.e. sound coordination, consistent monitoring and constant innovation and animation were under pressure in recent years.

166. Furthermore, the ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021 did not so far provide sufficient practical guidance to revitalise the network and to fully clarify the roles and responsibilities, rules and regulations and identify key actions for the coming years in the light of the SDG 4 - Education 2030 Agenda.

Established global membership procedures for ASPnet are not exercised as intended and are insufficiently incorporated into national guidelines, eventually leading to a loss of global identity.

167. Although intended as a global network, in recent years the ASPnet turned into a network of national networks with each ASPnet Member exercising its own version/interpretation of the ASPnet. Overall, the ASPnet National Coordinators play a key role in the management and coordination of the network in their countries. However, the high rate of turn-over of such crucial stakeholders accompanied by the lack of appropriate training on their roles has resulted in a deficit of knowledge of rules and procedures for membership established at the international level. That is, rules and procedures concerning selection, membership, delisting of schools and reporting are not -or not systematically- being implemented or not even being known to some National Coordinators. In some countries, this led to the collapse of the network, in other cases to an uncontrolled expansion and diversified development of the network. The ASPnet hence developed into multiple (national) identities instead of strengthening one global identity. This was also observed in the inconsistent use of the name 'ASPnet' and its logo; as in many countries reference is made to 'UNESCO schools' instead.

Conclusions concerning the results of the ASPnet (in terms of creating, teaching and learning, and interacting)

When cross-sectoral cooperation effectively occurred, the network has fulfilled its potential in developing, and as a channel for disseminating UNESCO's educational resources, which continue being used in the ASPnet schools in many countries.

Some segments of the network are very active in initiating projects, in developing and applying innovative methods and approaches and in sharing good practices. However, this does not systematically take place throughout all members of the network.

ASPnet's approaches for applying the test-bed working mechanism are not systematically implemented throughout the network and consequently do not allow all ASPnet schools to fully benefit from the laboratory of ideas function of ASPnet.

168. One of the main recognisable features of the ASPnet is the involvement of schools around the world, or in a region, in the development and testing and adoption of innovative educational material. This can take the form of participating into a flagship initiative or through being involved in developing, testing (piloting), or utilising educational material and approaches that are developed by Programme Sectors at UNESCO (or the national government) and the dissemination of such resources. In the period 2010-2015, a mixed picture emerges in terms of results. On the one hand, successful initiatives, such as World Heritage Education and Sandwatch, were revitalized through cross-sectoral cooperation with ASPnet. Also, the International Coordination for the first time launched two on-line interactives platforms focused on ESD and GCE. More than half of Member States accessed and took part to such initiatives. On the other hand, only a limited number of flagships remained active, due also to a decreased interaction with other Programme Sectors. The evaluation found that within UNESCO the ASPnet is not systematically used to test and disseminate new education material or that the testing is only involving a small number of often the same select schools. Furthermore, such tested materials, when disseminated, was only distributed among a segment of the network rather than rolling them out to the ASPnet, as a whole.

169. At the national level, ASPnet National Coordinators are expected to tailor activities to the societal needs of their countries and to launch ASPnet related projects. The evaluation found that a particular segment of the network is very active in initiating projects and developing and sharing good practices. However, it does not systematically take place throughout its members. Also, when information sharing on ASPnet activities takes place at the national level, not all Associated Schools are fully involved, thus perpetuating the vicious circle of inactivity of some ASPnet schools.

ASPnet has only weakly demonstrated to build the capacities of key stakeholders throughout the network for effectively contributing to improving the quality of education in practice on a full scale.

170. There are some positive findings on achievements at the school or national level, such as in few countries where ASPnet provides a platform for the professional development of teachers. However, in general ASPnet has not been sufficiently effective in systematically building capacities of the key stakeholders involved in order to contribute to translating quality of education into practice. There is very limited evidence that shows capacities are being built in a continuous and systematic way. This concerns first and foremost the required induction and training of the key stakeholders of the network: in the first place, the National Coordinators, as well as school focal points, principals and teachers. This significantly hampers the effectiveness of the ASPnet, as a whole. If stakeholders are not well prepared, provided with the necessary tools, regularly updated and fully aware of their function and responsibilities, parts of the network risk not being thoroughly animated and served to enable their functioning as agents for positive change.

The Networking component was found to be the weakest mechanism, and rather than a global network, the ASPnet has turned into a network of national networks. Through the recent developments in launching ICT tools, such as an online interactive ASPnet platforms and OTA, for the first time ASPnet has provided to Associated Schools worldwide the opportunity to effectively connect, network, cooperate and communicate. The ASPnet's potential for contributing to improving the quality of education in practice through exchange and by example of good practice can, however, be further explored and strengthened.

171. For the first time, the ASPnet has provided Associated Schools with the possibility to cooperate and network with other members of the network, both in a horizontal way (among ASPnet schools) and vertically (transgressing operational levels, such as schools, country, region, global). Such networking opportunity, especially on a global scale, is among the comparative advantages of the ASPnet. Further, it comes at a time when the global identity of the network had already been weakened.

172. Despite such recent positive development, not full attention has been paid to the less advantaged segment of the network. The opportunity for interacting globally comes alongside with the access to ICT technology, which is not always present in all national contexts throughout the network.

173. UNESCO has dedicated resources to the publication of three compendia devoted to ASPnet Good Practices. Nevertheless, there is not a systematic way in which such good practices and innovative approaches are gathered and disseminated. That is, given the poor reporting, the identification of such practices emerges from ad-hoc surveys rather than through a set of indicators pointing out successful initiatives among the pool of ASPnet activities taking place worldwide.

Conclusions concerning the way forward

As a result of the above, and considering the recognised potential and high level of relevance, the full potential of the ASPnet is currently not fully capitalized upon, in particular on the following three dimensions: Fundraising, Capacity-building, Creation and Utilisation of innovative educational material and approaches.

174. Despite the limited resources, the required conditions for well-functioning international coordination not fully in place, and some ASPnet working mechanisms functioning at a suboptimal level, the network demonstrated resilience by being able to sustain itself and even flourish in some

countries. This provides an indication that there is a potential within the ASPnet that is currently not capitalized upon. This concerns in particular the following aspects:

- **Resources:** Although there is agreement among stakeholders on the substantial potential to attract significant extra budgetary funding from public and private partners (as also demonstrated in the past), opportunities for fundraising at the international, but also at the national level, have insufficiently been explored over the last biennia. Given the unique profile and outreach of ASPnet as a global network of more than 10.000 schools, with a better visibility and positioning of the ASPnet within UNESCO and with more resources devoted to fundraising, new and larger scale initiatives funded by extrabudgetary sources could be launched.
- **Capacity-building:** Despite examples of successful initiatives and knowledge-sharing among ASPnet stakeholders, this component is underdeveloped at all levels. In particular, the Association with UNESCO entails the need for a uniform application of rules and procedures to be disseminated through ad-hoc capacity-building initiatives. The same applies to the specificity of ASPnet related thematic areas, which also calls for appropriate trainings at all levels.

Creation and dissemination, and use of innovative educational material and approaches: Despite the value of ASPnet as a channel to test and disseminate innovative educational material and approaches (from UNESCO and Governments), this is not systematically used and/or reported on throughout the network.

VII.2 Lessons learned and conditions for the effective functioning of the ASPnet

175. Based on the above conclusions and in regard to the challenges that prevent an optimal functioning of the ASPnet, several lessons can be learned. Furthermore, several conditions have been identified as essential to develop the ASPnet as a whole in a way that it enables its stakeholders to effectively create, teach and learn, and interact. These relate to the level of governance and ownership, the ASPnet identity, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, the content of programmatic work, ICT solutions, as well as the initiatives for community building, and external communication.

Clarity on Membership (Who is a Member?) and on Membership Criteria

176. A valid list of endorsed Members must be updated on a regular basis and fully in line with the established Membership criteria for ensuring the quality and reliability of the network. To enhance the efficiency of the communication flow as well as management of the network, all stakeholders must ensure due diligence in communicating changes in memberships at all levels and in particular to UNESCO.

Common identity and sense of belonging of schools

177. The direct connection between schools and UNESCO (at the international and field level) level provides an intrinsic motivation, based on the sense of belonging to a global Organization with a humanistic mandate. While diversification of the ASPnet at the national level is justified and necessary, a minimum of common rules and procedures must be respected for the cohesion of the network.

Creating momentum for thematic and programmatic work

178. Maintaining a global network of such scale requires sound coordination, and constant innovation and animation. The programmatic Strategy must be supported by a detailed operational workplan aimed at providing momentum and synchronous opportunities for cooperation and exchange (e.g. focus activities of the network on specific themes within a specified timeframe of activities, such as international days/years/decades).

Reliable and functioning monitoring, quality assurance and reporting system

179. In order to manage and maintain such a large network of many and diversified stakeholders, clear rules and procedures for monitoring membership and activities must be in place, shared and applied throughout ASPnet. Simultaneously, sufficient flexibility to fit the different national needs and contexts shall be granted with due respect to the privileging quality rather than quantity. Also, a systematic monitoring mechanism must be in place based on direct contact between the key partners, identification of incentives and acknowledgement through feedback mechanisms. Where reliable Quality assurance and Reporting systems are established at the national level, establishing policy linkages, such as feeding ASPnet good practices into policy debate and national reform is more likely.

Innovative and Quality ICT tools

180. To support various functions of the network (e.g. administrative, knowledge sharing, contact, monitoring and reporting), such tools provide the opportunity for strengthening the global identity of the network as well as for its efficient management.

Community building initiatives

181. Whereas the scale of the network challenges the simultaneous gathering of all its members, initiatives, such as regular meetings, (both virtual and face-to-face, through online consultation and debates) of key actors and stakeholders also at a regional level, and the involvement of schools on a rotational basis in national/regional/international events, are key for community building.

Effective External Communication

182. The level of visibility of the programme, clear understanding of its mechanism and the full awareness of external stakeholders of the potential of the ASPnet are key for the engagement of external stakeholders, including local communities, potential donors and partners for cooperation, as well as policy level stakeholders in view of the potential for replication and scaling up of good practices that have been developed and experienced by the ASPnet.

VIII RECOMMENDATIONS

183. Given the ASPnet has been operating at a suboptimal level in recent years as well as the firm commitment of all stakeholders to its revitalisation, the evaluation provides the following recommendations to build an effectively functioning ASPnet and to overcome the challenges identified. By acknowledging already initiated and ongoing reform measures, for each specific recommendation, possible actions are formulated principally for the ASPnet International Coordination at UNESCO Headquarters. Where relevant, however, suggestions for other ASPnet stakeholders are provided.

184. The recommendations are geared towards improvements in regard to the issues that were identified in the following areas. That are,

- ✓ Governance;
- ✓ Programming and Planning;
- ✓ Means;
- ✓ Utilization of the ASPnet.
- ✓ Communication.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen Governance

Strengthen the network identity and cohesion, by building the network as a community and improving and reinforcing the ASPnet rules and regulations concerning membership, quality assurance, reporting and monitoring as well as providing incentives for complying with the rules and regulations by highlighting and clarifying the mutual benefits.

185. Given that the network coordination and management has been under pressure in the assessed period 2010-2015 and essential data required by the International Coordinator for effective management and coordination of the network has been found as greatly lacking, there is a need to reinforce several aspects of the network by revising and systematically applying ASPnet guidelines and rules. This concerns for instance the fact that currently many schools are not certified, or that in-active schools are not de-listed. It is recommended to develop an incentive based system that rewards adherence to the rules and creates the benefits for all stakeholders concerned. This may include the following actions:

- Revise the certification process, such as by introducing different levels of membership, or a mechanism of rotation to provide incentives for quality and for higher activity rates among schools
- Introduce sunset clauses and a renewal procedure for schools: for example, so that schools have to renew their membership every five years.
- At the national level, establish a maximum for a manageable number of formally internationally certified ASPnet schools in consideration of the human and financial resources available
- Develop an introductory toolkit or introduction package for ASPnet school principals, teachers and students providing basic information on UNESCO and global concepts related to ASPnet priority areas, as well as outlining what are required contributions and potential benefits for the different actors of a certified ASPnet school, including a short version in form of an ASPnet flyer for schools
- Build commitment between the schools and UNESCO, by re-establishing a direct linkage through OTA between the International Coordination and the individual Associated Schools (this shall aim at strengthening the identity of schools as a member of a global UNESCO network rather than a national network of UNESCO Associated Schools). This can also be motivated by different community-building activities and with the help of NCs (e.g. thematic seminars, events, conferences, on-line discussions, consultation and involvement in decision making processes, providing input and animation from the global level such as alerts in occasion of relevant events or international days and information on thematic priorities).

- Develop and implement feedback mechanisms to schools via the NCs so that what is reported on is aggregated, analysed and used to monitor, manage and animate the network (for instance used for good practice dissemination of linking of schools)
- Develop and provide clear guidance, instruction and training of the various ASPnet stakeholders to enhance the management, coordination and animation of the network at all levels
- In addition to further rolling out OTA, invest in developing ICT solutions and quality control mechanisms to facilitate management, coordination and networking
- Explore opportunities with the help of other Programme sectors (such as CI), the National Commissions and field offices - especially in those countries where a technology gap is an obstacle for fully benefitting from ICT facilities within the network - how other UNESCO resources in a country (such as Community Learning Centres, Community Radio, UNESCO Chairs, Clubs) can act as an interface for ASPnet schools and strengthen their connectivity.

Recommendation 2: Improve Programming and Planning in close alignment with the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda

Revise the current ASPnet Strategy and develop a Plan of Action, with the aim to revitalize the ASPnet with realistic intermediate objectives in explicit alignment with the framework of the SDG4 - Education 2030 Agenda and by considering UNESCO global priorities and the cross-sectoral dimensions to ensure a sound linkage between the strategic vision of ASPnet goals and their implementation.

186. As the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda provides a clear direction and task for the ASPnet, the ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021 needs to be closely aligned with the objectives stated in the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda (especially SDG 4.7). The revised strategy should be built upon the outcomes of this evaluation, upon consultation with National Coordinators (and to the extent possible schools as the principal beneficiaries), be in line with the UNESCO Global Partnership Strategy, and reflect the comparative advantages of a UNESCO-owned school network, such as its global perspective and the universal values and principles, thus clearly distinguishing it from other school networks, and other UNESCO initiatives addressed to quality education.¹⁰⁹

187. The revised strategy should state clear, ambitious but realistic objectives on what the network will achieve by 2030 and develop a Theory of Change or intervention logic (using the identified working mechanisms (create, teach and learn, interact) and indicating how ASPnet will reach broader impact and achieve the objectives set. This should include also a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of the key partners involved. Because not all required actions to revitalise the network can be taken at once, the following staged approach is suggested:

- *Stage 1:* Focus on revising the **Strategy 2014-2021** and develop a **Plan of Action** including initiatives for 1) revising/clarifying rules and regulations on network coordination and management and membership (timeline for the management of memberships and certification, time bound membership, structured workplan of activities for cross-sectoral cooperation), and for 2) programmatic work (e.g. innovative **time bound** flagships, good practices, events/meetings/conferences). Such stage shall prioritize the use of OTA for multiple objectives (e.g. management, reporting, networking and communication). Also, consider a change in branding (name and logo of the network) to make clearer what the network stands for and provide a universal **network identity**.
- *Stage 2:* Focus on **implementing** revised rules and regulations (e.g. guidance and training on membership and certification, and on implementing programmatic work for National Coordinators, possibly also at a regional level).
- *Stage 3:* Focus on **monitoring and evaluation**: develop a Monitoring and Evaluation framework stemming from the Theory of Change for ASPnet with a clear baseline and indicators for reporting on strategic results of the ASPnet (also to conduct a baseline survey

¹⁰⁹ UNESCO (2013), Comprehensive Partnership Strategy 192 EX/5.INF.

for ASPnet schools), and internalize such M&E Framework into OTA so that ASPnet National Coordinators directly and systematically report on indicators identified.

- *Stage 4:* Focus on strengthening the **network community building** (e.g. organise in line with available resources initiatives, events and meetings at a regional and national level, consider revising the timeline of the Anniversary every five years instead of ten years), involvement in decision making (e.g. consultations)
- *Stage 5:* Focus on improving **communication flow** between the International Coordinator, the National Coordinator and ASPnet schools (e.g. ASPnet newsletter) and increase the visibility of the network within and outside UNESCO also in light of attracting additional resources.
- *Stage 6:* Plan and conduct a **mid-term Review of the Strategy** to identify what lessons can be learned for the further development of the network and implementation of the Strategy.

Recommendation 3: Increase Means for improving the coordination and structure of the ASPnet

Ensure an adequate level of core resources (in terms of HR, regular budget, allocation of PP funds) that allows the network to be effectively coordinated, managed and animated in pursuit of an increase of overall quality of processes and mechanisms as well as strengthen fundraising efforts to ensure resources for animating the network.

188. At all operational levels the resources available for coordination and management of the network have been found as insufficient to deliver high quality. This affects the level of quality and consistency in monitoring and reporting, incentives for compliance with rules and regulations and sanctions for non-compliance, ensuring the global identity of the network and the incentivizing commitment of the stakeholders and schools to the network. Even more, it was found that the limited core resources hamper the network to capitalize on its potential (especially in terms of fundraising, capacity building and innovation). The following actions could be taken:

- Ensure an adequate level of the Regular Programme Budget for the ASPnet International Coordination by further increasing the activity budget as well as human resources by at least one mid-level staff. This will allow the International Coordination to share tasks and ensure adequate planning and monitoring, regular contact and backstopping for National Coordinators (e.g. following up on requests, providing training and guidance, attending national and regional meetings); mobilising and coordinating with other ED Sections and other Programme Sectors within UNESCO HQ for testing and disseminating educational material;) launching and backstopping ASPnet Flagship initiatives and investing in fundraising, so that additional human resources can be guaranteed from Extrabudgetary resources.
- Consider putting additional thresholds or criteria on the use of the Participation Programme funds for ASPnet, for instance a condition that one out of three requests needs to be devoted to ASPnet activities.
- Mobilise all National Commissions for UNESCO to review the allocation of funding ASPnet activities at the national level and seek to ensure sufficient funding for coordination, management and animation in pursuit of an increase of overall quality.
- National Coordinators are encouraged - with the support of the International Coordinator - to conduct more national, and encourage school level, fundraising activities.
- Encourage and facilitate exchange (also through OTA) among ASPnet National Coordinators of good practice for coordination and management, such as through twinning arrangements and North-South-South cooperation.

Recommendation 4: Promote Utilisation

Promote ASPnet more actively within UNESCO and among Member States, in order to capitalize upon the ASPnet more effectively as test-bed and dissemination channel of UNESCO and national innovative education material and approaches; and to make better use of its inter-sectoral dimension, and cross-linkages with other relevant UNESCO initiatives (in coordination with Programme Sectors, Category I and II Institutes, Field Offices and extrabudgetary projects) as well with other UNESCO networks (UNEVOC centres, Chairs and other partners).

189. One of the added values of the ASPnet is its function as a channel for promoting UNESCO values and for translating innovative topics and approaches (e.g. via educational material) directly into practice at the school level. While there is agreement among all stakeholders that this function is becoming even more relevant for UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of the SDG4 - Education 2030 Agenda, the evaluation shows that this function has not been systematically applied in the period 2010-2015. The establishment of an annual/biannual planning and calendar is a precondition for a coordinated approach. It is therefore suggested to develop a structured workplan with a timeline to:

- more closely cooperate and coordinate with other UNESCO initiatives, networks and partners
- increase the visibility of ASPnet within UNESCO and ensure an up-to-date and useable database of the NCs and the schools to be able to address requests in a consistent manner and better use the entire potential of the network as test-bed
- to sensitize Programme Sectors at Headquarters about the possibilities for collaborating with the ASPnet. Such opportunity should be anticipated through the dissemination of upcoming events where a link can be made to the work of ASPnet
- to map out how UNESCO institutes, offices and other networks can link up with ASPnet and establish an annual/biannual plan of ASPnet joint initiatives
- to strengthen the role of UNESCO Offices in the field to support ASPnet initiatives in the countries and to capitalise on potential synergies nominate an ASPnet focal point in each of the regional bureaux for education, and the multi-sectoral regional offices in the African region, as possible in cluster/national offices

National Commissions for UNESCO and ASPnet National Coordinators are encouraged to:

- more actively involve and inform MoEs and other line Ministries concerned with ESD and GCE
- strengthen linkages between the National Commission, National Authorities and Social Media and the ASPnet at the national level

Recommendation 5: Facilitate Utilisation

Apply a more programmatic, structured and coordinated approach to joint initiatives/ exchanges and networking for Associated schools, such as in the form of flagship initiatives linked to priority thematic areas through which the three working mechanisms (creating, teaching and learning and interacting) mutually re-enforce each other.

190. The animation of the network can - supported by a revised Strategy and Plan of Action – be more systematic, structured and coordinated. Ideally, the animation is organised through projects that establish momentum within the network to work jointly on a topic during a specific period of time. A calendar of time-bound animation can be organised around UNESCO priorities, UN international days, years and decades and other upcoming events in relation to a specific topic. Such initiatives should include a capacity building component, a creative/test-bed component and an interaction component. Interactive collaborative platforms, such as OTA, could provide the ICT tools to support the exchange around such initiatives. In order to design, develop and implement a more programmatic, structured and coordinated approach to collaboration and strengthening the networking and exchange among schools, the following action points are suggested:

- Initiate and moderate new time bound Flagship initiatives by creating momentum for the schools to work on key thematic areas including those linked to UNESCO global priorities, such as Gender Equality and Priority Africa (e.g. link to UN International Days, international conferences and events on related topics, launching of related publications)
- Initiate and facilitate online discussion fora on specific topics
- Incentivize twinning arrangements on a global scale among individual Associated schools
- Develop and promote the collection of good practices on a specific thematic area or approach
- Consider launching of international competitions at the global level in relation to specific thematic areas
- strengthen the ASPnet as a dissemination channel for UNESCO publications, for example consider a minimum quota of publications in each sector dedicated to ASPnet. That is, for publications relevant to the ASPnet's mission, consider adding a criteria related to ASPnet into the UNESCO Publication Policy so as to ensure that the network is fed with appropriate educational material and simultaneously relevant UNESCO publications are disseminated throughout the network.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen Communication

Develop a communication strategy targeted to different audiences at the global, national and school level with the aim to enhance visibility and understanding of the key activities and potential impact the of the ASPnet, including through different ways of disseminating good practices beyond the network to stimulate interest, replication and the potential consideration in policy debate, as well as to attract partnerships and funding.

191. The communication strategy shall aim at identifying the most appropriate type and timing of communication for each category of external stakeholders at the different levels. Relevant initiatives could include:

- Develop and disseminate a one-page flyer, or digital resource (such as a YouTube video) about ASPnet and its benefits targeted to external stakeholders and non ASPnet schools
- Develop regular newsletters, in particular on best practices and flagship initiatives, both at national as well as international level and disseminate them to different groups of stakeholders, including other UNESCO networks, non-ASPnet schools, policy level stakeholders and other potential partners
- Improve results based reporting and focus communication to Member States on policy relevant issues
- Inform and involve local/national authorities, non-ASPnet schools as well as potential partners and donors in events such as open days, celebration of international days
- Consider launching of competitions that require the involvement of partners outside the network (including local communities, civil society, UNESCO Clubs, UNESCO Chairs, the private sector)
- Flag news issues on the UNESCO website and within the UN networks
- Link ASPnet experience and good practice to findings from latest research on educational practices and approaches
- Provide targeted limited access to OTA for different groups of external stakeholders
- Explore the potential use of social media as a channel for external communication
- Focus on ensuring local, national and international press and media coverage for different ASPnet related events
- Explore possibilities for engaging in partnerships with research and academic community, to support among other capacity building initiatives

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the “ASPnet (Associated Schools Project Network)”

29 September 2015

I. Background Information

The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) has become one of the largest global networks of schools. The **ASPnet aims to promote quality education in pursuit of peace and sustainable development** and is often promoted by UNESCO as a powerful tool to achieve UNESCO’s goals and to increase the Organization’s visibility. Created in 1953 with the participation of 33 schools in 15 Member States, the ASPnet today involves close to 10 000 educational institutions in 181 countries. ASPnet Member institutions include pre-schools, primary, secondary and vocational schools as well as teacher training institutions, both in rural and urban settings and comprise both public and private institutions. The ASPnet schools consider themselves to be pulse takers, being sensitive to what is happening around the world and as pace-setters, introducing new topics in the classroom in support of current global issues such as international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and quality education. Intended as an innovative UNESCO tool, the ASPnet aims at:

- translating UNESCO priorities into practice at the school level;
- serving as an international pathway in promoting and raising awareness about global issues;
- identifying, experimenting, evaluating and reporting on innovative educational content and practices;
- scaling up the identified good practices and disseminating them among the Network and beyond;
- acting as a catalyst for international cooperation by encouraging joint activities, projects and campaigns among ASPnet members and with members of civil society;
- building sustainable partnerships on topics that relate to UNESCO and UN priorities; and,
- making concrete contributions to International Days, Weeks, Years, and Decades.

Activities focus on delivering and promoting aspects of quality education and include networking, reinforcing, disseminating and mainstreaming good practices, as well as experimenting with pedagogical materials and harnessing the potential of ICTs. To this aim, the Network is active on four operational levels – in schools and at the national, regional, and international levels. It benefits from the support of National Commissions for UNESCO, Ministries of Education and UNESCO Field Offices. Each National Commission for UNESCO appoints an ASPnet National Coordinator whose role is to provide guidance and support to schools; assist in assessing ASPnet initiatives and facilitating a multiplier effect; ensure communication between schools, such as through ASPnet news bulletins, and web sites; facilitate joint projects, twinning between schools, participation in regional and international ASPnet projects, workshops, campaigns and other initiatives; and, to report annually to UNESCO Headquarters on progress and results achieved.

The regular programme activity budget allocated to the global programme coordination has fluctuated over the last biennia. It sharply decreased from US\$ 100.000 in 2010/11 to only US\$ 20,000 in 2012/13, and increased again to US\$ 168.000 in 2014/15. However, the programme has regularly benefitted from additional funding coming from different extra-

budgetary sources such as bi- and multi-lateral cooperation, and the private sector¹¹⁰. National level activities are funded and managed directly by the national stakeholders and may to some extent be supported by the UNESCO Participation Programme¹¹¹.

Since its establishment over 60 years ago, the programme has undergone several phases of restructuring and renewal with the aim of further enhancing the potential outreach and impact of the Network in applying UNESCO's messages on the ground. This has resulted in a steady growth and increasing outreach of the Network. An increasingly decentralized management structure, however, also poses challenges such as in terms of quality assurance and coherence of the Network, the increased need for innovative ICT solutions for managing the programme and for networking, as well as in finding ways to roll out results at the micro level while enhancing their potential to influence upstream policy. The increasing cross-sectoral dimension of the programme is seen as a main asset, but, at the same time, constitutes a major challenge.

Over the last 15 years, through their commitment towards UNESCO's objectives, Associated Schools were expected to primarily promote quality education as stated in [Education for All \(EFA\) goals](#)¹¹² (especially goals 3 and 6) and the [Millennium Development Goals \(MDGs\)](#)¹¹³. With the approval of the new sustainable development agenda and its evolving focus from 'quality education' to 'quality learning, skills development, and global citizenship' the ASP Network objectives need to embrace these new challenges and to effectively promote and support the implementation of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. In preparation of the ASPnet's 60th Anniversary celebration at the International Congress in the Republic of Korea in September 2013, an internal assessment of ASPnet activities and projects (2003-2012) was conducted and contributed to the formulation of the new [ASPnet Strategy for 2014-21](#).

In accordance with the Strategic Objective 2¹¹⁴ of UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy 2014-2021 and in harnessing the potential of the ASPnet for global school networking and for the mainstreaming educational innovations, the new 2014-2021 ASPnet Strategy explicitly links the Network's objectives to two of UNESCO's flagship initiatives of the Education sector, i.e. Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable development (ESD). The Strategy therefore aims at integrating GCE and ESD into the teaching and learning processes of Associated Schools, at experimenting innovative approaches on GCE and ESD through the ASPnet and at strengthening the sharing of information, experiences and good practices among Associated Schools. The ASPnet global coordination has become part of the Section for Education for Sustainable Development in the Division of Teaching and Learning Content (TLC).

¹¹⁰ For example in 2010-2011 (indicatively): Bilateral cooperation: JFIT1: 200.000 US\$; USA for TST: 111.687 US\$; Multilateral cooperation: UNEP: 10.000 US\$; ISESCO: 10.000 US\$; Private sector: BASF: 1.371.742 US\$; Swiss Direct Mail: 40.000 US\$ UNESCO Participation Programme: 883.400 US\$ UNESCO regular programme budget: 100.000 US\$.

¹¹¹ The [Participation Programme](#) functions as a vital complement to UNESCO's regular activities by analysing, evaluating and facilitating the implementation of national, sub-regional, inter-regional and regional projects submitted by Member States and NGOs directly related to the activities of the Organization.

¹¹² [Six internationally agreed education goals](#) that aim to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015.

¹¹³ See the eight [Millennium Development Goals \(MDGs\)](#)

¹¹⁴ UNESCO C4 Medium Term Strategy 2014-21: Strategic Objective 2: Empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens.

II. Purpose and Use of the Evaluation

In line with UNESCO's efforts to become 'fit for purpose'¹¹⁵ for the challenges ahead in light of the post-2015 global development agenda, the timing for the present evaluation is opportune. The specific purpose of the evaluation is to assess:

1. the relevance, effectiveness, and the sustainability of the Network and the results of its activities,
2. the efficiency of the functioning and management of the Network at the global, regional and national levels,
3. to what extent the current Strategy, as well as recent improvements and innovations are appropriate for providing the future direction, and to determine what adaptations might be necessary to ensure the potential of the Network in contributing to UNESCO's role in operationalizing the post-2015 education and sustainable development agenda is optimised.

The evaluation will therefore adopt both a retrospective and forward-looking perspective. More specifically the evaluation is expected to:

- identify the achievements and challenges of the Network
- extract lessons learned from past implementation with a view to enhancing the networking activity, especially in relation to quality assurance, the effective use of innovative ICT solutions for administration and networking, and with regard to enhancing the visibility and outreach of the Network;
- identify mechanisms for linking the likely effects at the micro level to upstream policy developments;
- provide recommendations for UNESCO and respective national/regional stakeholders on
 - how to best utilise the potential of the Network to contribute to the implementation of the post-2015 agenda, i.e. especially with a view to the Network's cross-sectoral dimension;
 - how to best manage and operationalize the growth and diversity of the Network, while maintaining and enhancing its quality at global, regional and national levels;
 - what are the most appropriate delivery modalities, and the optimal distribution of responsibilities and accountabilities; and,
 - the future strategic direction on themes and priorities of the Network with the aim to further increasing its focus and outreach.

The evaluation shall inform UNESCO's senior management and governing bodies, as well as national level stakeholders on the most appropriate way forward to harness the Network's potential for contributing to achieving the core mandate of the Organization. The findings and conclusions from this evaluation shall feed into a possible revision of the Strategy for the ASPnet for the post-2015 period. Potentially, the findings and lessons learned from the evaluation will also be relevant for networking activities in other priority areas of the education and other programme sectors of UNESCO.

III. Scope of the Evaluation

Based upon an initial assessment of the ASPnet work, the evaluation will consider the overall relevance and effectiveness of ASPnet's objectives and strategies, the efficiency in its coordination and implementation, as well as the sustainability of the Network and the achieved results. It will cover the period since 2010 (i.e. focus on the last 3 biennia). It will assess a representative sample of the activities at the global and regional levels, as well as networking activities and implementation undertaken by a selected number of Associated Schools at the national level. A particular focus will be put on assessing a number of flagship projects and activities.

¹¹⁵ 'fit-for-purpose' should put programme delivery at the core of the initiative and seeks to reconfigure/adjust/improve its operational support services so as to "fit the purpose i.e. achieving the core mandate(s) of the organization".

The evaluation will be guided by the indicative questions presented below and generate corresponding findings and recommendations aiming at innovation and improvement of the current Strategy 2014-2021. It should assess the programme in the light of upcoming challenges for UNESCO's role and contribution to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and provide recommendations on how to best manage and operationalize the growing and diversified network at the global, regional and national levels, all while maintaining and enhancing its quality.

The following indicative evaluation questions will be further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation.

1. Relevance

- ✓ To what extent is the ASPnetwork relevant for contributing to UNESCO's global mandate and key functions (such as capacity building, normative role, laboratory of ideas, strengthening cooperation and alliances, developing the global agenda)?
- ✓ To what extent are the ASPnet's goals and objectives relevant at the different levels (school/national/regional/global) for addressing current educational and societal needs?
- ✓ Is the geographic balance (North/South, South/South, regional, rural and urban) of ASPnet consistent with the objectives of the Network? What are the factors that contribute to particularly active /particularity inactive parts of the network in countries/regions?
- ✓ To what extent do ASPnet activities consider the needs and interests of disadvantaged groups, especially girls and women?
- ✓ To what extent and how do global initiatives such as the UN Decade for Sustainable Development translate into the Network's activities?

Forward looking aspects:

- ✓ In light of post-2015, what should be the programmatic areas/focus areas/themes and priorities for the future strategy of the ASPnet work, with the aim of increasing its focus and visibility?
- ✓ What mechanisms will be most appropriate to translate these focus areas in to national contexts?

2. Efficiency

- ✓ Are the ASPnet organisational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms at the different levels conducive to effectively support the Networks' outreach and the activities of Associated Schools?
- ✓ Do the current reporting, monitoring and accountability mechanisms ensure an optimal level of supervision?
- ✓ Are the responsibilities among the different stakeholders (such as UNESCO HQ and field offices, National Coordinators, National Commission, Associated Schools) clear and optimally distributed?
- ✓ To what extent has the ASPnet made use of innovative ICT solutions and social media for both, managing the Network as well as for implementing its activities?
- ✓ What are the incentives for National Coordinators to actively animate the Network at national level?

Forward looking aspects:

- ✓ In light of post-2015, what management and delivery modalities are the most appropriate? What is the optimal level of engagement at the different levels for managing the Network's growth while maintaining inclusivity and quality?

- ✓ What innovative ICT solutions (for database management and networking) can enable the decentralisation of the management of the network, all while maintaining a necessary level of oversight?

3. Effectiveness / Impact¹¹⁶ (to the extent possible)

- ✓ Which activities and projects were the most/least effective in contributing to the Network's objectives and why? What are their common quality aspects and challenges?
- ✓ What have been the key achievements and challenges of the Network activities at the different levels (global, regional, national, school) over the last 6 years?
- ✓ What progress has ASPnet made towards achieving the overall goal (i.e. to promote quality education in pursuit of peace and sustainable development) and the specific objectives of its 2014-2021 ASPnet strategy at the various levels?
- ✓ What factors and incentives (internal and external) have been influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the stated objectives of the Network?
- ✓ To what extent has the ASPnet programme contributed to improving quality education, and to the integration of ESD, GCE especially at the national level (see footnote 7 below)
- ✓ To what extent is the current selection process for membership of Associated Schools appropriate for ensuring the right balance between inclusive growth and assurance of quality standards? (this includes the selection criteria, sunset clauses, monitoring and reporting and quality assurance mechanisms)
- ✓ What quality assurance mechanisms for membership have been established? What are the challenges?
- ✓ Have the communication and dissemination tools of the Network been effective? To what extent have other UNESCO networks or civil society been involved in the school/national/regional level activities?
- ✓ How does research feed into Network activities at the different levels?
- ✓ How far has ASPnet contributed to strengthening networking at the different levels school/national/regional/global?

Forward looking aspects:

- ✓ In light of post-2015, how shall UNESCO best position and utilise the Network to contribute to the implementation of the post-2015 agenda, especially by capitalising on the Network's cross sectoral dimension. (i.e. through partnerships with ESD, the World Heritage Centre)?
- ✓ What should be the future selection process and criteria including quality assurance mechanisms, to best ensure harmonised quality standards as well as to provide appropriate incentives for schools to join the Network and promote UNESCO's values and visibility?
- ✓ How can UNESCO effectively use innovative ICT solutions for the administration and enhanced networking of the ASPnet, as well as for enhancing the visibility, image (within and outside UNESCO) and outreach of the Network?

4. Sustainability

¹¹⁶ According to [OECD DAC](#), impact is understood as the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors. When evaluating the impact of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions: What has happened as a result of the programme or project? What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries? How many people have been affected? Given the limited resources for the evaluation a full impact assessment is not foreseen as part of the methodology, however, the evaluation will seek to measure the effects or changes resulting from the programme to the extent possible with the help of [contribution analysis](#).

- ✓ What mechanisms are in place to ensure that experience from applying principles and experimenting innovative approaches at the national/regional levels feed back into the Network activities?
- ✓ Have good practices been identified and effectively disseminated among and beyond the Network nationally, regionally and globally?
- ✓ To what extent have new approaches been integrated/formalised/institutionalised at school/ national /regional level;
Forward looking aspects:
- ✓ What mechanisms can be identified for better linking the results at the micro level to upstream policy developments?
- ✓ What type of partnerships should the ASPnet engage in (such as with civil society and the private sector) to ensure that immediate results are permeating into changing mind-sets in the wider society?
- ✓ What funding/fundraising and other sustainability mechanisms can be built into the programme to increase the financial, institutional and political commitment at the different levels and the likelihood for follow up and continuation of the achieved results?

IV. Methodology

These Terms of Reference have been informed by document review and preliminary interviews with primary stakeholders with the aim to identify key issues, to define the scope of the evaluation and to identify key stakeholders that need to be consulted during the evaluation process. The suggested evaluation methodology will include the following:

- An in-depth desk study of all relevant documents and online resources;
- Reconstruction/refining of a Theory of Change for the ASPnet and its related activities;
- Multi-site data collection with purposive sampling of cases (with preference for flagship initiatives and successful practices), including fieldwork (5-6 countries);
- Questionnaires/online surveys among different groups of stakeholders at the different levels;
- Semi-structured interviews and focus groups (in person, via Skype and telephone) with relevant key stakeholders; and
- Participatory workshops to steer the evaluation and to discuss findings and recommendations.

An initial list of reference documents, websites and relevant stakeholders can be found hereunder. Further documents will be added to this list in consultation with the stakeholders as the evaluation progresses.

V.4 Evaluation Team and Responsibilities

The evaluation will be managed by the UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS), and will be conducted by a team of external evaluator(s) that are expected to contribute with specific expertise and knowledge about the global development landscape in the field of education, as well as with experience in evaluating networks and partnerships. The external evaluator(s) will be responsible for the development of the Theory of Change, the development of data collection tools, data collection and analysis including part of the fieldwork, as well as for drafting and finalising the evaluation report in English. Regular input, participating in fieldwork, quality assurance and validation will be ensured by IOS.

Qualifications for the external consultant(s):

The consultant(s) should possess the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Extensive knowledge of the global development arena in the field of education, with a minimum of 7 years of relevant work experience;
- Extensive knowledge of evaluation of multi-stakeholder partnerships and/or networks;

- Experience in applying qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, with a minimum of 10 years of professional experience in programme and policy evaluation demonstrating a strong record in designing and conducting/leading evaluations, including in the area of education.
- An advanced university degree(s) in specialized fields of education, public policy or related fields;
- Excellent language skills in English (oral communication and report writing), French and Spanish (oral communication and reading); and,
- No previous involvement in the implementation of activities under review.

Moreover, it is desirable that the external consultant(s) possess the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Knowledge of the role of the UN and its programming;
- Understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality;
- Experience with assignments for the UN;
- Experience with assignments focusing on networking, institutional development and organizational strengthening; and,
- Other language skills (Arabic, Portuguese, Russian, and Chinese) will be considered an advantage.

Verification of these qualifications will be based on the provided curriculum vitae. Moreover, references, web links or electronic copies of two or three examples of recently completed evaluation reports shall be provided together with the technical proposal. Candidates are also encouraged to submit other references such as research papers or articles that demonstrate their familiarity with the subject under review. Attention will be paid to establishing an evaluation team that is gender -and geographically balanced (as applicable).

Evaluation Reference Group

A reference group will be set up to accompany the evaluation process and provide feedback on the draft Terms of Reference, the Inception Report and the Draft Evaluation Report. The group will include members from IOS, the UNESCO Education Sector Executive Office, and representatives from different sections from the Education Sector, the Bureau of Strategic Planning, and possibly a member from another Programme sector with relevant experience in managing large networks.

V.5 Budget

The evaluation is budgeted with an average of 50 - 60 consultant person days. The external evaluation team is expected to visit 2 to 3 countries. Additional fieldwork will be conducted by IOS. Additionally, the external team members are expected to travel to Paris at least twice to participate in a kick-off meeting during the inception phase, to conduct interviews during the data collection phase, and to hold a stakeholder workshop for discussing and validating findings and recommendations.

V.6 Timeframe

The evaluation is expected to start late October 2015 with an initial inception phase followed by intensive data collection (desk review, interviews, and surveys), analysis and report writing. A workshop for presentation and discussion of preliminary findings should be conducted in December 2015, and the final revised evaluation report should be delivered by end 2015.

V.7 Deliverables and Schedule

The indicative timeframe and deliverables for the evaluation are as follows. Written deliverables are marked with an asterisk * in the text.

Activity / Deliverable*	Timing
Inception Report* (including the refined Theory of change or intervention logic model, the evaluation methodology and detailed workplan)	15 November 2015
Draft Evaluation Report*	10 December 2015
Final Evaluation Report*	24 December 2015

The Draft and Final evaluation reports shall be written in English, and be of no more than 50 pages excluding annexes and should be structured as follows:

- Executive summary
- Programme description
- Evaluation purpose
- Evaluation methodology
- Findings
- Lessons learned
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- Annexes (including interview list, data collection instruments, key documents consulted, Terms of Reference).

The annexes should provide an adequate level of documentation to sustain the findings and recommendations.

V.8 Reference Documents

- 1) ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2014-2021
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002310/231049E.pdf>)
- 2) ASPnet Strategy and Plan of Action 2004-2009
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001503/150352eo.pdf>)
- 3) Guide for ASPnet National Coordinators
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001503/150354eb.pdf>)
- 4) ASPnet website (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/Networks/global-Networks/aspnet>)
- 5) Main elements of the Report of the Global Review of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network 2003 (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001331/133126e.pdf>)
- 6) UNESCO Associated Schools
 - First Collection of Good Practices for Quality Education 2008
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001627/162766e.pdf>)
 - Second Collection of Good Practices: Education for Sustainable Development 2009
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001812/181270e.pdf>)
 - Third Collection of Good Practices: Intercultural Dialogue in Support of Quality Education
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002228/222890E.pdf>)
 - Three ASPnet booklets help students, parents and community members prepare for disaster situations
 - Student's guide
 - Teacher's guide
 - Parent's guide
- 7) ASPnet Historical Review 1953-2003
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001305/130509e.pdf>)
- 8) [List of National Coordinators worldwide](#).

ANNEX 2: KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

List of Main Documents consulted

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EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015

Report from the third statutory regional seminar of ASPnet Schools in West Africa (RéSEAO)

Report from the regional launch of the 2013/14 EFA Global Monitoring Report

UNESCO Country Programming Document, UCPD 2013 Senegal

EFA National Review for Senegal 2015

ECOWAS Reference Manual for Education for a Culture of Peace, Human Rights, Citizenship, Democracy and Regional Integration for the use by trainer of trainers xxx

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ANNEX 3: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

UNESCO Staff - Headquarters

Name	Title	Division/ Office
Salvatore ARICO	Senior Programme Specialist Natural Sciences	Section on Science Policy and Partnerships
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Stefan KRAWIELICKI	Deputy Permanent Delegate	Permanent Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany
Arnaldo MINUTI	Deputy Permanent Delegate	Permanent Delegation of Italy
Ghada Fakhry Ahmed OMAR	Deputy Permanent Delegate	Permanent Delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Hasan RAMADANSYAH	Counsellor	Permanent Delegation of the Republic Of Indonesia
Soelaiman FAUZI	Ambassador/Alternate Permanent Delegate	Permanent Delegation of the Republic Of Indonesia
Maria SALADICH GARRIGA	Counsellor	Permanent Delegation of Spain
Stein VAN OOSTEREN	Attaché	Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Masha WISMANS	Attaché	Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

National Authorities (National Commissions for UNESCO, Ministry of Education, etc.)

Name	Title	Office/Country
Rosie AGOI	ASPnet National Coordinator	Uganda National Commission for UNESCO
Amna Salim AL.BALUSHI	Assistant Secretary-General and ASPnet National Coordinator	Oman National Commission for UNESCO
Mohammed Saleem AL.YAQOUBI	Secretary General	Oman National Commission for UNESCO
Lucretia BALUTA	ASPnet National Coordinator	Romania National Commission for UNESCO
Mebratu BERHAN BERHE	Secretary General	Ethiopia National Commission for UNESCO
Marieke BRUGMAN	ASPnet National Coordinator	Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO
Jean COULANGES	Secretary General	Haiti National Commission for UNESCO
Dieufort DESLORGES	ASPnet National Coordinator	Haiti National Commission for UNESCO
Varvara DILARI	ASPnet National Coordinator	Ministry of Education Greece
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Ani MATEI	Secretary General	Romania National Commission for UNESCO
Vincent MELODY	Communications Director	Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training, Haiti
Fatou Dramé SECK NIANG	ASPnet National Coordinator	Senegal National Commission for UNESCO
Akihiko NODA	Assistant Director General for International Affairs	Japan National Commission for UNESCO

Evangelina W, NJOKA	Secretary General	Kenya National Commission for UNESCO
Luban Khalifa SELAIBEEKH	Secretary General	Bahrain National Commission for UNESCO
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Myriam TRICATE	ASPnet National Coordinator	Colegio Magno Brazil
M. Aliou Ly	Secretary General of the National Commission	Senegalese National Commission to UNESCO
M. Djibril Ndiaye Diouf	Directeur de la Planification et de la réforme de l'éducation	Ministère de L'éducation nationale-Sénégal
M. Mansour FALL M. Mbengue	In charge of environmental issues	Ministère de l'Education Nationale du Sénégal [MEN] : DIRECTION EQUIPEMENT SCOLAIRE
Hyunsook SEO	Director Division of Education, Bureau of Policy and Programmes	Korean National Commission for UNESCO
Bogang HONG	Principal Programme Officer Division of Education	Korean National Commission for UNESCO

External Experts and Partners

Name	Title	Office
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Louis BAHAKOUKA MABIDI	Executive Director	Action Jeunesse Pour le développement, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo
Daniela CALUGARU	General Coordinator of Ecological Education and Environmental Protection, Health and Hygiene Activities	Romanian Ministry of Education and Culture
Lynn DAVIES	Emeritus Professor of International Education	University of Birmingham
Bouso DIACK	President	FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists - partner, Dakar, Senegal

M. Cheikh Sadibou DIOP	Director	Centre Régional de Formation des Personnels de l'Éducation [CRFPE] (Teacher Training Institution), Dakar Sénégal
Makoto KOBAYASHI	Professor Clinical Psychology	Tamagawa University, Japan
Anne-Maria FENNER	Information Manager	United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP
Laura MOLNAR	LTLT International Coordinator-Romania	Arigatou International
Osama MAKKAWI KHOGALI	UNICEF Country Representative in Oman	UNICEF, Oman United Nations Children's Fund
Megdonia PETRESCU	General Coordinator of Extracurricular Activities for Pre-University Learning	Romanian Ministry of Education and Culture
Viorica PREDA	General Coordinator of Learning Activities for Pre-schools	Romanian Ministry of Education and Culture
Daniel SCHAFFER	Chief Executive Officer	Network of ECO Schools, Foundation for Environmental Education
Mame Birame Sene	President	Association Sportive et Culturelle [A.S.C.] "JAMM BUGGUM" de NIAKHAR, Senegal
Jordi TORRENT	Project Manager	United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
Sebastien Samba Faye	Cultural and Training Officer	AMBASSADE D'ISRAEL, Dakar
Andrew CATFORD and Rene GOMIS	National Director and Officer in charge of education and training	WORLDVISION (NGO), Dakar Senegal

ASPnet Schools (Principal, ASPnet Focal Points, Teachers, Students)

Country	Name of the School
Sultanate of Oman	The Sultan's School
Sultanate of Oman	Jabir bin Zaid Post Basic Education School
Sultanate of Oman	Balaarab bin Sultan Post Basic Education School for Boys

Sultanate of Oman	Al Amal Post Basic Education School for Girls
Sultanate of Oman	Imam Nasser bin Murshid Post Basic Education School for Boys
Sultanate of Oman	Shatti AlQurm Post Basic Education School for Girls
Sultanate of Oman	Dohat AlAdab Post Basic Education Schools for Girls
Romania	G. Toparceanu
Romania	A. Popescu
Romania	Nr. 195
Romania	V. Mircea
Romania	Prikindel
Romania	C. Davila
Romania	International "Olga Gudynn" School-Pipera
Romania	OGIS Kindergarten
Romania	Silvic Highschool "C. Lalescu"
Romania	Teacher's Core House
Romania	Ilfov County
Indonesia	Garuda Cendekia SMA Jakarta
Indonesia	Garuda Cendekia SMP Jakarta
Indonesia	SMA 3 Bandung
Indonesia	SMP 7 Bandung
Indonesia	International Green School Sumedang
Indonesia	Amalina Islamic school
Indonesia	Yayasan Pembina Universitas Negeri Jakarta Labschool (SMP/SMA)
Indonesia	SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Bandung
Indonesia	SDN Bendungan Hilir 12 Jakarta
Indonesia	SMKN 27 Jakarta
Indonesia	SMP Islam Al Azhar 9
Indonesia	SD Islam Al Azhar 1
Indonesia	SMP Labschool Kabayoran
Indonesia	SMA Diponegoro 1
Indonesia	SMP Al-Izhar
Indonesia	SMAN 10 Malang
Indonesia	SMK Wikrama
Kenya	Buru Buru High school for Girls
Kenya	Thika High school for boys
Haiti	Collège de Côte-Plage de Carrefour
Haiti	Collège Le Normalien de Port-au-Prince
Haiti	Collège Mixte Lamartinière de Port-au-Prince

Haiti	Collège Secondaire de Carrefour
Haiti	Ecole mixte J'apprends, Pétion-Ville
Haiti	Ecole mixte "Le Bon Samaritain", Delmas
Haiti	Ecole nationale Thomas Madiou, Port-au-Prince
Haiti	Lycée Alexandre Pétion, Port-au-Prince
Haiti	Lycée national de Cité Soleil
Haiti	Institution Ste Rose de Lima, Por-au-Prince
Senegal	Collège public d'Enseignement Moyen [CEM] ABBE FRIDOIL ex KLEBER
Senegal	LYCEE LAMINE GUEYE
Senegal	CEM MARTIN LUTHER KING
Senegal	COURS SAINTE MARIE DE HANN établissement privé : pré-scolaire, élémentaire, secondaire, supérieur
Senegal	COURS PRIVES HALWAR établissement privé : élémentaire, Secondaire
Senegal	Collège d'Enseignement Moyen [CEM] OUSMANE NGOM, région de Thiès
Senegal	ECOLE Elémentaire d'APPLICATION de la Région de FATICK
Senegal	COLLEGE BILINGUE de Dakar
The Netherlands	Christelijk Gymnasium Utrecht

ANNEX 4: DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR NATIONAL COMMISSION/ASPNET COORDINATOR

1. Organizational structure and functioning of the network, such as:
 - ASPnet coordination and structure at the national level
 - ASPnet schools in the country, overview, selection process and actively levels
 - Interaction with the UNESCO global coordinator, Field offices, ASPnet schools
 - Interaction with other National ASPnet coordinators in the region/from other regions
 - Capacity building at the different levels
 - Reporting and monitoring mechanisms
 - Funding structure and sources
2. Relevance and visibility of ASPnet in the national context, such as:
 - ASPnet in the context of National Education policy
 - Incentives/motivating factors for schools to join the network
 - Needs and interests of disadvantaged groups (e.g. from rural areas)
 - Dissemination tools and mechanisms (events, publications, sharing of best practices)
3. Achievements and Challenges for ASPnet activities in the country over the last 5-6 years, such as:
 - Main achievements of ASPnet in the country since 2010
 - ASPnet's contribution to changes at the school/national policy level
 - Limitations and challenges for success, and how have these been addressed
 - Quality assurance mechanisms at national level
4. Networking and Partnerships at national level, such as:
 - Relevance of flagship initiatives
 - Involvement of other partners and civil society in the ASPnet activities
 - Networking tools and mechanisms (use of ICT and Social media)
5. Future perspectives and expectations, such as:
 - Future thematic areas and priorities for ASPnet in the country in view of the SDG agenda
 - Suggestions for changes and improvements for ASPnet at global /regional/national level (coordination/management/networking/delivery modalities/quality assurance and reporting)
 - Your expectations towards UNESCO global coordination

ANNEX 5: DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR ASPNET SCHOOLS

Discussion topics for school principals, ASPnet school focal point, teachers and students

- 1) Motivation and incentives for ASPnet membership
 - What does it mean to be an ASPnet School
 - What are the expectations

- 2) ASPnet initiatives and activities over the last 5-6 years (overview)
 - Range of activities (pilot projects, use of teaching material and tools)
 - Use of Resource material
 - Partnerships (exchange and twinning)
 - Funding sources
 - Reporting and monitoring mechanisms
 - Dissemination tools and mechanisms (events, publications, sharing of best practices, use of ICT)

- 3) Main Achievements and Challenges of ASPnet related activities at school level
 - ASPnet's most successful initiatives
 - Limitations and challenges for success, and how have these been addressed
 - Visibility and Quality assurance mechanisms

- 4) Networking and Partnerships at school level, such as
 - Participation in flagship initiatives and twinning
 - Involvement of other partners in the ASPnet activities
 - Networking tools and mechanisms

- 5) Future perspectives and expectations, such as
 - Future thematic areas and priorities for ASPnet in view of the SDG agenda
 - Suggestions for changes and improvements for ASPnet at global /regional/national level (coordination/management/networking/delivery modalities/quality assurance and reporting)
 - Expectations towards UNESCO global /national coordination

ANNEX 6: DISCUSSION TOPICS – OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Permanent Delegation to UNESCO

1. Where do you see - from a MS perspective - the advantages/benefits for UNESCO of a global network of Associated Schools?
2. What is the relevance and visibility of the ASPnet in your country?
3. Are you aware of some of the achievements of the ASP network (at national/regional/global level)?
4. Where do you see the major challenges (regarding to quantity vs quality aspects, incentives, selection process, monitoring and reporting)?
5. What are your expectations towards the global coordination and management?
6. What changes/improvements would you suggest for better utilizing the potential of this network to contribute to the Education 2030 Agenda/ to inter-sectoral cooperation?
7. What mechanisms would you think need to be strengthened for better linking the results at the micro-level to upstream policy developments?
8. What should, according to you, be the focus areas / delivery mechanisms for the future strategy of the ASP Network

Partners and other stakeholders: (NGOs, Bilateral and multilateral organizations)

Motivation and incentives for cooperating with ASPnet Schools/initiatives

- What do ASPnet School represent for you
- What are the expectations, benefits from the cooperation

Involvement in ASPnet initiatives and activities over the last 5-6 years (overview)

- Type of activities (pilot projects, use of teaching material and tools)
- Partnerships
- Funding sources
- Dissemination tools and mechanisms (events, publications, sharing of best practices, use of ICT)

Main Achievements and Challenges of ASPnet initiatives

- Most successful achievements of the initiatives
- Limitations and challenges for success, and how have these been addressed
- Visibility and Quality assurance mechanisms

Future perspectives and expectations, such as

- Future thematic areas and priorities for ASPnet in view of the SDG agenda
- Suggestions for changes and improvements for ASPnet at global /regional/national level (coordination/management/networking/delivery modalities/quality assurance and reporting)
- Expectations towards UNESCO global /national coordination

ANNEX 7: SELECTION OF CASE STUDIES

Distribution of case studies according to criteria (October, 2015)						
C1 UNESCO region	C2 Type of country (least- developed country (LDC), small island developing state (SIDS), middle- income country (MIC))	C3 Relevance for at least one flagship project in addition to World Heritage Education programme (1994 – ongoing)	C4 UNESCO field presence (in addition to National Commission for UNESCO)	C5 Gender and seniority of National Coordinators	C6 Activity level-Best practice	First Choice (1) Reserve (2)
AFRICA						
Senegal	Lower middle income LDC	Breaking the silence: Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) (1999-ongoing) ASPnet in action (2014- ongoing)	BREDA (Bureau régional de l'Education en Afrique)	Female 5 years	High	1
Comoros	SIDS-LDC	no	no	Male 5 years	Low	3
Kenya	Lower middle Income	Sandwatch Project (1999- ongoing) Breaking the silence: Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) (1999-ongoing) ASPnet in action (2014- ongoing)	UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa	Female 3 years	High	2
South Africa	Upper middle income	GigaPan Dialogue (2007- completed)	no	Male Since 2015	High	2
ARAB STATES						
Oman	High Income (non OECD)	ASPnet in action (2014- ongoing)	no	Female 5 years	High	1
Egypt	Lower middle income	ASPnet in action (2014- ongoing) Water education in Arab States (2006-ongoing)	UNESCO Office in Cairo	Female 2 years	High	2
Tunisia	Upper middle income	Western Mediterranean Sea Project (1994- completed) Sandwatch Project (1999- ongoing) ASPnet in action (2014- ongoing)	no	Female 5 years	Active Coordinator but not best practice	2
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC						
Japan	High income (OECD)	principal donor of ASPnet in action	no	Male 1 month	High	1
Bhutan	Lower middle income LDC	ASPnet in action (2014- ongoing)	no	Female 5 years	High	2

	Landlocked country					
Indonesia	Lower middle income	ASPnet in action, 2014-ongoing, Sandwatch Project (1999-ongoing) ASPnet in action (2014-ongoing)	Science Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and Cluster Office Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines	Female 5 years	High	2
EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA						
Romania	Upper middle income	Blue Danube River Project (1991-ongoing) ASPnet in action (2014-ongoing)	no	Female 15 years	High	1
France	High income (OECD)	Sandwatch Project (1999-ongoing) Breaking the silence: Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) (1999-ongoing) Western Mediterranean Sea Project (1994-completed) ASPnet in action (2014-ongoing)	Headquarters	Female 10 years	High	2
Norway	High income (OECD)	Breaking the silence: Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) (1999-ongoing) ASPnet in action (2014-ongoing)	no	n.a.	High	2
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN						
Haiti	Low income LDC, SIDS, PCPD	Breaking the silence: Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) (1999-ongoing)	UNESCO Office to Haiti	Male 4 years	High	1
Mexico	Upper middle income	ASPnet in action-number of schools involved in the flagship Sandwatch Project (1999-ongoing)	National Office to Mexico	Female 5 years	High	2
Brazil	Upper middle income	ASPnet in action (2014-ongoing) Sandwatch Project (1999-ongoing) Breaking the silence: Transatlantic Slave Trade (TST) (1999-ongoing)	National Office to Brazil	Female 7 years	High	2

ANNEX 8: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ONLINE SURVEY

The on-line survey for the ASPnet National Coordinators was launched in February 2016. It was administered in five languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian) and aimed at gathering information on the overall management and structure of ASPnet at the country level as well as on the perspectives of stakeholders involved at the country level. The overall response rate was 74%. Out of the 182 National Coordinators who were invited to participate, 135 replied to the survey. Of those, 114 respondents fully completed the survey, whereas 21 respondents completed it partially.

In particular, the on-line questionnaire consisted of 50 questions structured in different parts.

- The *Background Information Section* aimed at gathering information on the respondent in terms of his/her role and institutional memory in the network.
- The section on *Coordination of ASPnet in the country* looked into the institutional structure for coordination and the human and financial resources available.
- The module on the *Situation of ASPnet* investigated the perception of the National Coordinator in regard to what extent ASPnet addresses the current educational and societal needs in the country and regarding the advantages of being a member of ASPnet in comparison to other networks. The survey also focused on identifying the achievements and challenges of ASPnet coordination and measured the extent to which established norms and procedures for membership have been applied.
- The Section on Quantitative Data on ASPnet gathered information on the actual numbers of internationally certified schools, their current activity levels, general characteristics (e.g. private or public, urban or rural areas, gender distribution, type of activities), thematic areas of their ASPnet interventions, and measured which procedures are applied to deal with inactive schools, and what initiatives are taken to motivate and reactivate schools.
- The survey concluded with collecting the perspectives and expectations of the ASPnet National Coordinators on the future direction of the network.