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INTERNAL  
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Evaluation Office

# Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)

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# Abstract and Acknowledgements

## Abstract

ASPnet is a unique network that promotes sustainable development, cultural heritage and global citizenship, and connections between educational institutions. The Network involves national coordinators, education members and the UNESCO Education Sector leads and oversees the network at the global level. The evaluation confirms the ASPnet's value and potential to enhance UNESCO's work, but also identifies some challenges. ASPnet currently faces serious gaps in its strategic coordination, communication with members (including the availability of a platform to facilitate communication among members), resources management, and monitoring mechanisms. Moreover, the network does not have a clear and singular vision that defines the roles and responsibilities of the network actors and members. This means that the Organization does not have an accurate picture of the network, when and how members joined, or their status and alignment with the Education Sector, which poses a reputational risk for UNESCO.

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# Abbreviations

<b>ASPnet</b>	UNESCO Associated Schools Network
<b>ADG/ED</b>	Assistant Director-General for Education
<b>BSP</b>	Baltic Sea Project
<b>COP</b>	Communities of Practice(s)
<b>ECNU</b>	East China Normal University
<b>ESD</b>	Education for Sustainable Development
<b>GCED</b>	Global Citizenship Education
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>ICUA</b>	International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IOS</b>	Division of Internal Oversight Services (of UNESCO)
<b>NatComs</b>	National Commissions for UNESCO
<b>NCs</b>	National Coordinators
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
<b>OECD/DAC</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNITWIN</b>	University Twinning and Networking Programme
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>WSA</b>	Whole-School Approach

# Executive Summary

1. During the 217<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board (Decision 9.8), UNESCO Member States requested the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) to conduct an Evaluation of UNESCO's Associated Schools Network (ASPnet). The evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be presented at the 220<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board.

## Purpose of the evaluation

2. UNESCO's Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), created in 1953, is the largest global network of educational institutions and includes public and private schools; preschool, secondary and vocational educational establishments, as well as teacher-training institutions. The Network covers all regions and currently includes 182 countries.
3. The overall objective of the evaluation is to generate findings and recommendations about the efficiency and effectiveness of ASPnet. The analysis covered the role and activities of ASPnet from 2017 to March 2024. It included a review on how recommendations from the previous IOS evaluation (2016) were implemented and whether this influenced its performance. The evaluation therefore does not reflect the launch of the new ASPnet online platform (end March 2024) or the new leadership of the International Coordination Unit (June 2024).

## Methodology

4. The evaluation is in line with the UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029. It followed the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, UNEG Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, UNEG Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. This evaluation also analysed specific

actions of ASPnet mainstreaming UNESCO's two Global Priorities (Africa and Gender Equality).

5. The evaluation methodology used a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods that included i) the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC) to understand the intervention logic and expected results, ii) an intensive desk research of documents iii) 44 in-person and remote interviews conducted with the members of ASPnet International Coordination Unit (11), other UNESCO staff in the Education Sector and Field Offices (13), National Coordinators and Permanent Delegations (17) and other stakeholders (3), iv) Case studies through 3 field visits in Lithuania, China and Zimbabwe, and v) 1,030 respondents to a global survey disseminated to members (912), national coordinators (95) and National Commissions of UNESCO (23). The Evaluation Reference Group supported the quality assurance process by providing comments and feedback on the evaluation deliverables. A limited IOS audit review in June 2024 fed into the final report and looked at elements of the control environment including the budget, contracts, and procurement.

## Key findings

### Coherence and Relevance

6. ASPnet is a unique network in the global education landscape, with more than 70 years of history, wide coverage and a great potential to connect education institutions worldwide. Its focus on sustainable development, cultural heritage, global citizenship, and the possibility to network between schools is highly valued. ASPnet's principle of promoting UNESCO's values and thematic areas is considered highly relevant by its members. ASPnet activities are strongly aligned with national education priorities in many UNESCO Member States, and with global education priorities.

7. ASPnet supported national and school priorities in different contexts. There is a consensus that the Network can address the needs of its members, especially in the areas of education for sustainable development, global citizenship, and cultural heritage. Initiatives by ASPnet members address some of the most pressing global issues, such as climate change, through different initiatives. The evaluation identified potential synergies between ASPnet and other UNESCO programmes, mainly in the Education Sector and Field Offices, but these opportunities have not been fully explored.

## Efficiency

8. During the period of the evaluation, particularly from 2022 to early 2024 the ASPnet team was not stable, notably due to the absence of two core team members in 2023; covered with temporary (P3 and P2) and consultant contracts.
9. From 2016 to 2025, ASPnet ICU received around 2 million USD from different sources, averaging around 200,000 USD per year. While the evaluation identified notable examples of achievements that are contributing towards the expected outcomes under each of the four pillars<sup>1</sup> of the ASPnet work, the audit analysis also concluded that there was limited overview of the impact generated through these resources. Since 2021 ASPnet has not had a formal strategy but has been operating under a strategic framework with four outcomes. This had an effect on defining the role of the ICU and its expected outcomes. Activities were more opportunistic in their approach than strategically planned and members received different levels of support.
10. For the ASPnet to realize its vision as a global network there is a need for strong ownership from Member States. The evaluation found that National Coordinators play an important role in the performance of national networks, and to do so, they must be actively supported in their functions by governments, including National Commissions. This support includes regularly monitoring ASPnet schools to ensure that they continue acting in accordance with ASPnet criteria and extends to ensuring that national ASPnets are adequately resourced. Ultimately, the success of ASPnet also hinges on Member State's support, ownership and involvement.

11. The evaluation found different levels of engagement between National Coordinators (NCs) and the ASPnet ICU. While some national coordinators reported an absence of support, or a decrease in communication and engagement in the recent past, other National Coordinators described receiving responses quickly including feedback on the status of member applications. The evaluation also identified cases in which the challenges faced by the ICU in communicating and engaging with NCs stemmed from National Commissions not promptly designating NCs.
12. At the national level, National Coordinators, who are appointed and supported by their National Commission, play an important role in the performance of national networks. NCs are the link between the educational institutions in their country, their National Commission, other national authorities, and the ICU. In 2024, there were 183 NCs<sup>2</sup>, some of whom are in this capacity as volunteers and do not receive remuneration for this task. At the membership level, many of them operate with little to no funding for operations and activities. Many member schools perceive these insufficient budgets as the main hindering factor to fully participating and engaging with the Network.
13. The absence of an online directory of national networks and members, during part of the period assessed by the evaluation, limited the capacity to manage the international dimension of the Network. It made it more challenging for member schools to connect with each other and in between regions. Until January 2021, an Online Tool for ASPnet (OTA) was in place to facilitate exchanges and communication between the ICU and NCs, information sharing between the members (guides, news), and to facilitate the application process. When the OTA was shut down by DBS for security reasons, member schools' ability to connect was curtailed. This also led to the slowing down of the membership application process awaiting a new system to be put in place. Efforts are currently underway to build a new online system.

## Effectiveness

14. While the ASPnet is embedded in the C/5 monitoring framework, it would benefit from developing a dedicated monitoring system, to get a complete picture of how the Network performs in various countries and pillars, or the extent to which

<sup>1</sup> The Strategic Framework for Action 2022-2030 includes four outcomes; these were renamed « pillars » in the Theory of Change workshop.

<sup>2</sup> ASPnet has 183 NCs in 182 countries, as Belgium hosts two National Commissions for UNESCO.



members are engaged, when and how schools are admitted, their status and their alignment with the programme. For example, for the period of 2017-2023 the evaluation team received only nine annual country-level reports. The absence of an online platform, both to communicate and include members' data, contributed to gaps in monitoring and increased disparities in members' involvement. Up to late March 2024 when the evaluation finished data collection, the ICU did not have a clear, up to date picture of the full membership and their status. This gap, as mentioned above, is currently being addressed with the development of the ASPnet Online Directory and platform to be upgraded in September 2024.

15. The evaluation identified notable examples of achievements that are contributing towards the outcomes expected under each of the four pillars of the ASPnet strategic framework. Active schools in the Network clearly take part in or organise relevant activities, and survey responses pointed towards these activities potentially improving educational goals in schools. Although these activities were noteworthy there are differences between countries and within countries (e.g urban versus rural areas).
16. The effectiveness of a national Network is strongly supported by the individual (pro)activeness of the NCs. The ICU has a constant and fluid communication channel with a group of NCs, however there is still work ahead both for the ICU and Member States to ensure a similar level of interaction across all NCs. An ASPnet platform that allows for identifying all network members, and interacting between network members will greatly help in this regard.

## Conclusions

17. After 70 years of existence there is a clear consensus among stakeholders that ASPnet remains relevant within the global education landscape, particularly as a potential tool for schools and other actors to jointly address and teach about issues of concern at the local, national, regional, and global level, notably education for sustainable development, global citizenship education and cultural heritage and intercultural dialogue. However, in the evaluation period ASPnet suffered from gaps in its management, strategic planning, coordination, communication with members, and monitoring mechanisms, as well as Member States ownership and

engagement in the programme, which hindered the Network from maximizing its full potential.

## Recommendations

18. The evaluation issued four recommendations.
 

The evaluation recommends the Education Senior Management to strengthen the strategic positioning of ASPnet in the Education Sector to ensure that its mandate is conducted effectively and efficiently. This must include a formal strategic framework that clearly reflects its expected contribution, results, and outcomes, as well as cooperation with other units, divisions and Sectors (Recommendation 1). To realize its full potential and work as a coordinated system ASPnet must improve its outreach to re-engage stakeholders with major roles in the network (Recommendation 2).
19. ASPnet is a global network whose contribution is undervalued because of insufficient information of who the members are and what their activities and results are. The evaluation recommends reinforcing a more systematic approach to ASPnet membership management and monitoring of the Network (Recommendation 3). Essential contact information to communicate with ASPnet NCs and educational institutions must be provided to the UNESCO ICU by countries and the overall list should be closely monitored by the ICU for better knowledge of the network and to facilitate the application process of interested candidates.
20. Since the OTA shutdown in early 2021, ASPnet has operated without an online platform, which has hindered exchange between members and limited applications for membership. Therefore, this platform, currently under construction, must be finalized to improve communication and exchange efforts, and strengthen ASPnet's international collaboration (Recommendation 4).

# Management Response

## Overall management response

The Education Sector has over the last year taken a series of measures to strengthen the ASPnet Programme; putting in place a new leadership of the ASPnet Coordination Unit in June 2024; releasing a new online platform for the Programme (March 2024) and increasing Regular Programme Funds for the Programme. Plans have also been established to formalize the strategic framework in line with the new 43 C/5, strengthen the monitoring framework and update the guidelines for National Coordinators and Member Institutions. These updates will help to define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholder groups, including UNESCO in its capacity as coordinator of the network and Member States in their capacity as the ultimate owners and drivers of the programme. The Sector therefore welcomes the IOS evaluation and recommendations, which it sees as an additional tool to continue to support the on-going efforts to revitalize the ASPnet programme.

As the world's largest global school network, ASPnet serves as a laboratory of ideas and a platform for implementing Major Programme I - Education. It is uniquely positioned to pilot, localize and identify good educational practices that support the transformation of education and the achievement of SDG Target 4.7 in particular. The Education sector is firmly committed to maximizing and expanding ASPnet's potential.

## Recommendations

## Management response

**Recommendation 1:** Strengthen the strategic positioning of ASPnet in the Education Sector to ensure that its mandate is conducted effectively and efficiently.

Addressed to: Education Senior Management (in collaboration with ASPnet International Coordination Unit).

Time frame: January 2025

### Accepted

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the Education Sector will review and adjust as needed the draft strategic framework of the ASPnet Programme. It will also ensure the strategic positioning of the Programme in the emerging 43 C/5 Programme and Budget (2026-2029) and actively strive to mobilize voluntary contributions to fill budgetary gaps

**Recommendation 2:** Enhance ASPnet's outreach to re-engage stakeholders who play significant roles in the network.

Addressed to: Education Sector Senior Management in collaboration with ASPnet International Coordination Unit.

Time frame: June 2025

### Accepted

The guidelines for membership as well as the operational guides for National Coordinators and Member Institutions will be updated in line with the recommendations of the evaluation and tenets of the draft Strategic Framework – following its revision. UNESCO will reinforce the monitoring of annual country-reports-on-progress received by National Coordinators, and share knowledge on good practices thereon.

<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> Reinforce ASPnet membership management and monitoring of the Network</p> <p>Addressed to: Education Sector with support from ADM/DBS (for the platform)</p> <p>Time frame: January 2025</p>	<p><b>Accepted, but also depends on voluntary contributions</b></p> <p>Following an information meeting held in March 2024 announcing the launch of the new online platform and next steps in the timeline for development, progress has been ongoing to expand the coverage of the system, from 43 active national networks migrated to nearly 90 by September 2024.</p> <p>ADM/DBS is upgrading the ASPnet online platform in collaboration with the ICU, focusing on the application process and communications between National Coordinators, and between national networks and the ICU. These are prerequisites to improve the management and monitoring of ASPnet, notably the application process and communications. With the digitalization of the application process, the Education Sector will be able to keep National Coordinators informed in real time of the advancement of their requests. With additional funding, the platform would be upgraded again in 2025 to allow member institutions to interact with each other and exchange information, thereby creating a genuine community of practice.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Improve communication and exchange efforts to strengthen ASPnet's international collaboration</p> <p>Addressed to: ASPnet International Coordination Unit with support from ADM/DBS</p> <p>Time frame: January 2025</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>UNESCO is as mentioned above upgrading the online platform which will allow improved communications between national coordinators, national networks and the ICU. UNESCO is currently revamping the ICU's communication tools and communication plan, in order to provide the network with timely and regular information for engagement and collaboration.</p>

## I. The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)

### 1.1 Design and Objectives of ASPnet

1. The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), created in 1953<sup>3</sup> is the largest global school network. It acts as a laboratory of ideas and a platform for the implementation of projects at the national, regional, and international levels, and includes public and private schools; preschool, secondary and vocational educational establishments, as well as teacher-training institutions. In 2023, the Network had around 12,000<sup>4</sup> educational institutions in 182 countries.<sup>5</sup> Through this network, UNESCO **aims to improve the quality of education** based on the idea that schools can work together to promote peace, intercultural dialogue and understanding, and sustainable development<sup>6</sup>.
2. ASPnet is a driver for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 target 4.7 - Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship<sup>7</sup>. These values include fundamental rights and human dignity, gender equality, social progress, freedom, justice and democracy, respect for diversity and international solidarity<sup>8</sup>.
3. The last Strategy (2014-2021) was developed to enhance Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within teaching and learning processes at ASPnet schools. A draft Strategy (Strategic Framework for Action) prepared in 2022-2023 mentions that the network aims to promote peace, human rights, and sustainable development through GCED, ESD and Intercultural and Heritage Learning as key thematic areas<sup>9</sup>.

3 In accordance with resolution 1.341 of the seventh session of the UNESCO General Conference (1952)

4 As part of this evaluation a database of 12,000 members was provided, however there were duplications and missing contact information (Annex J) so it is not possible to provide a precise figure for how many schools are currently active.

5 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network: development prospects. 216 EX/46. [Link](#) By March 2024, the network indicated a presence in 184 countries.

6 UNESCO (March 2024): What you need to know about UNESCO Associated Schools Network. [Link](#).

7 SDG 4.7: By 2030, ensure all learners acquire 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.

8 Delors, Jacques (1996). Learning: the treasure within; report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (highlights). Available [here](#)

9 UNESCO ASPnet webpage: [here](#).

10 During the Theory of Change workshop, ASPnet activities were grouped under four "pillars" of action.

### 1.2 Network Activities & Initiatives 2017-2023

4. The Network's activities are grouped under four pillars of action<sup>10</sup>:
  - » **Pillar 1: Drive innovation and transformation (schools as laboratories of ideas)**. This pillar involves partnerships between schools, identification of good practices elaborated by schools, participation in ASPnet global and flagship events, and active use of education resources shared by the International Coordination Unit. The goal is to encourage schools to develop and share innovative pilots and projects within the network and drive innovation on GCED, ESD and cultural heritage.
  - » **Pillar 2: Capacity mobilisation** focuses on partnership and exchanges to enhance the capacities, knowledge, and tools used by teachers. This includes participation in ASPnet trainings and workshops and use of resources. The goal is to create competent and confident teachers who can test new approaches and drive innovation in teaching.
  - » **Pillar 3: Global networking and collaboration**. This pillar regards the Network as a platform for collaboration and exchange between education institutions worldwide. The creation of an online platform and school directory functions as a foundation for both exchange and collaboration, as well as membership applications. The goal is to share knowledge and partnership opportunities among schools, and between schools and their communities.
  - » **Pillar 4: Communication and advocacy**. This pillar focuses on the role of ASPnet in promoting education strategies, initiatives, visions, and opportunities, targeting both ASPnet members as well as the wider education community. The goal is for policymakers and broader stakeholder groups to embrace the values and vision of ASPnet and to ensure that ESD, GCED and cultural heritage are integrated in curricula and teaching practices worldwide.

5. Table 1 presents the activities organised under each of the four pillars and establishes an initial typology according to the type of activity proposed.

**Table 1. ASPnet activities based on its pillars of action**

ACTIVITY (FROM IL)	Pillar 1: Drive innovation and transformation	Pillar 2: Capacity mobilisation	Pillar 3: Global networking and collaboration	Pillar 4: Communication and advocacy
Media and Information Literacy (2017) in collaboration with the CI sector	x			
Pilot Project: Centering indigenous languages for sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and peace education (publication, event) – 2022. Canadian Commission/UNESCO	x	x		
Research with ASPnet students, teachers and National Coordinators on climate change education to explore development of pedagogical materials – 2023-2024 - NHK, ED/ESD & Greening Education Partnership	x	x		
Week of Sound: global competition (Cannes event) Since 2021 – Week of the Sound – ED/CI Sector	x		x	x
Pilot Project: Fostering Global Citizens through the Memory of the World (2022-2023) CI Sector/Documentary Heritage Unit	x	x		
Global pilot project on the whole-school approach to climate change with ED/ESD/Ros/Fos	x	x	x	
Global Initiative “Teacher Training in Support of Transformative Education”, including the Change Initiative for Teacher Education Institutions - online training tool on GCED for African ASPnet teachers and a global student Forum (2021) ED/ESD/GCED/ICUA/IITE/APCEIU	x	x	x	
Global Consultation on the Futures of Education, which informed UNESCO’s flagship report Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education 2020-2021	x	x	x	
Joint research with IITE on technology 2020-2021	x	x		
Trash Hack Teachers Guide & Global School Campaign (2020-2021) ED/ESD	x	x		
Pilot Project: Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage: A resource kit for teachers (2020-2021)- CLT/IDL	x	x		
Newsletters and communication tools			x	x
Management of the Online Tool for ASPnet			x	x
Campaign: COVID-19 <i>LearningNeverStops</i> Campaign			x	
70 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASPnet (2023)			x	x
Coordination to plan Communication activities to promote strategic initiatives, projects, funding opportunities.				x
Promoting ASPnet in education events				x
Develop follow up materials (reports)				x

Source: Evaluation team’s elaboration based on the ASPnet Intervention Logic.

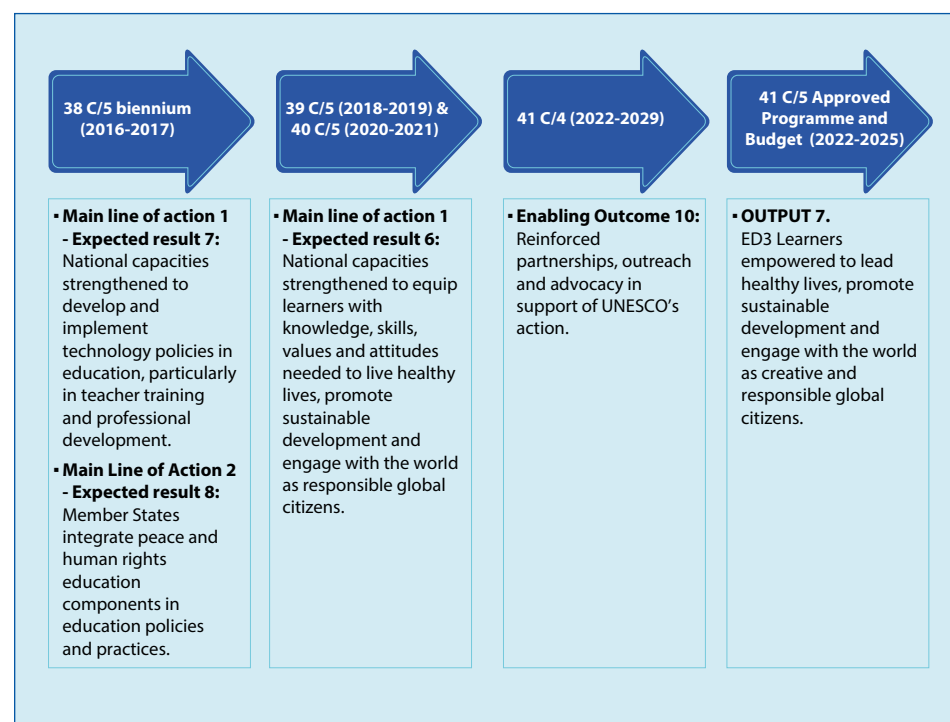
## 1.3 Network Actors

6. The Network is organised around three actor groups that work in coordination to develop ASPnet activities:
  - **The International Coordination Unit (ICU):** A team in the UNESCO Education Sector responsible for global coordination and network management, including the process for member accreditation, the recording of the ASPnet members, the management of the digital global infrastructure (online platform), the initiation and coordination of international flagship projects, the identification, formalisation and dissemination of good practices, and the general communication with the member schools.
  - **National Coordinators (NCs)<sup>11</sup>:** The National Commissions for UNESCO appoint and support the work of a National Coordinator, inform them about UNESCO's priorities, programmes and publications, and facilitate the National Coordinator's contact with government authorities and other UNESCO networks in the country<sup>12</sup>. NCs are the link between the members in their country, their National Commission, other national authorities, and the International Coordination Unit at UNESCO. In 2024, there were 183 NCs (in 182 countries)<sup>13</sup>, some of whom are in this capacity as volunteers and do not receive remuneration for this task.
  - **Members:** Educational institutions that develop and implement initiatives and share their experiences with the national coordinator and other network institutions.
7. Educational institutions join the network on a voluntary basis. Any public schools, private schools, and teacher training institutions recognised by national authorities and providing formal or non-formal education at pre-school, primary or secondary levels, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions are eligible. Detailed requirements for ASPnet members are included in several documents<sup>14</sup> that also outline the roles and responsibilities of the different actors. These documents were published in 2019.

## 1.4 ASPnet in the UNESCO Education Sector

8. ASPnet is aligned with the strategic objectives of UNESCO's Education Sector C/5 Programme and Budget documents. As shown in Figure 1 below, the Unit moved from the Division of Peace and Sustainable Development to the Division of Education 2030 in May 2023. The aim was to better link with youth work in collaboration with the Section for SDG 4 Leadership (ED/E2030/SDG).

**Figure 1. ASPnet expected contribution in UNESCO's Programme and Budget C/5 Documents changed over the last biennial cycles**



Source: Evaluation Team

<sup>11</sup> National Coordinators are not UNESCO staff.

<sup>12</sup> 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network: development prospects. 216 EX/46. [Link](#)

<sup>13</sup> ASPnet has 183 NCs in 182 countries, as Belgium hosts two National Commissions for UNESCO.

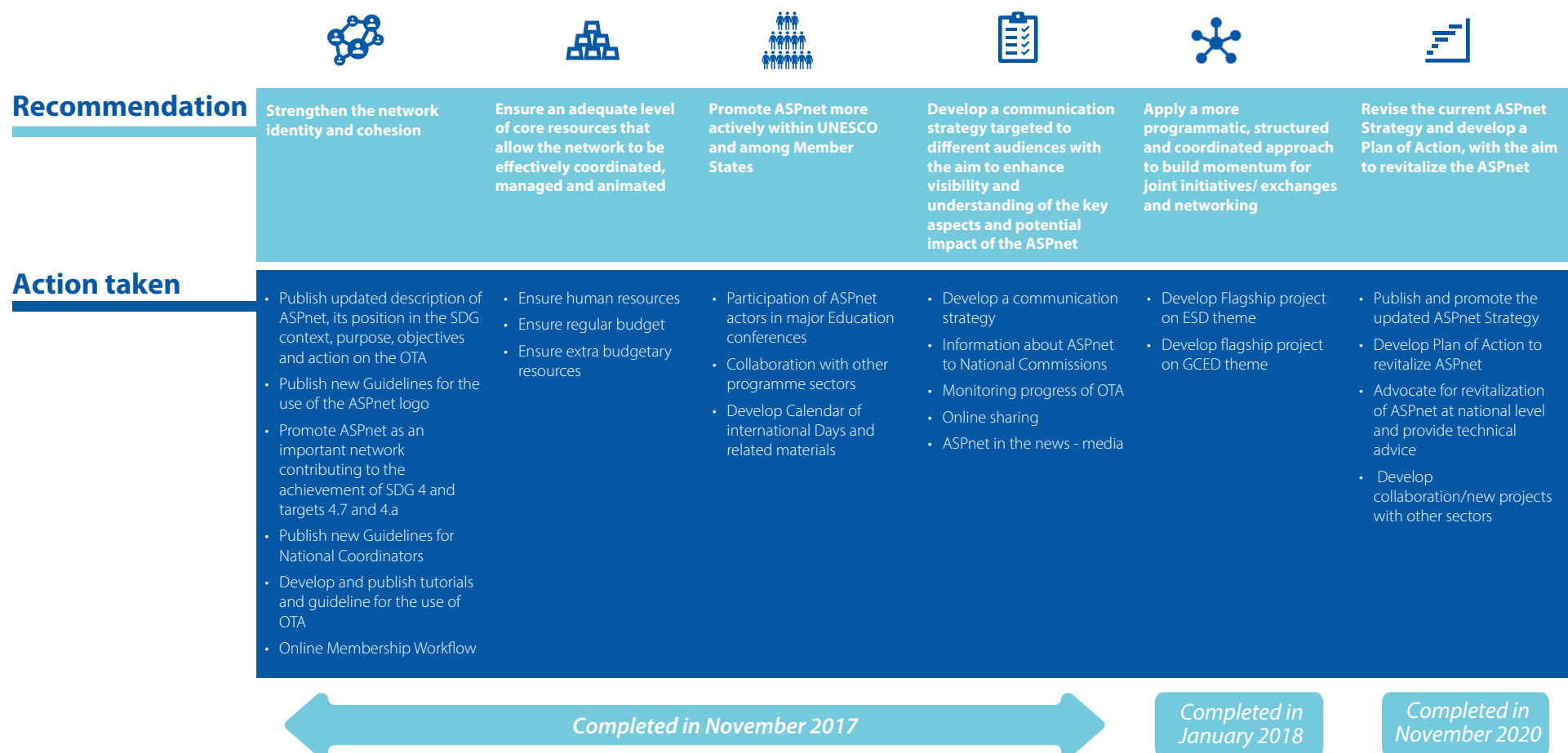
<sup>14</sup> UNESCO (2019). UNESCO Associated Schools Network: Guide for Members. Available [here](#); UNESCO (2018). UNESCO Associated Schools Network: Guide for national coordinators. Available [here](#).

## 1.5 Follow-up on the recommendations of the 2016 Evaluation of ASPnet

9. The IOS Evaluation Office conducted an evaluation of ASPnet in **2016**<sup>15</sup>. The evaluation highlighted the role of the network in contributing to UNESCO's mandate, despite uneven levels of resources and visibility since its creation. The 2016 evaluation concluded:
- **Relevance:** The mission of ASPnet is and will remain relevant within the framework of the SDG4 – Education 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the broader global UNESCO mandate.
  - **Structure and coordination of ICU:** The decreasing human and financial resources allocated to the International Coordination Unit and dedicated implementation at the national level resulted in diminishing guidance. In addition, the increasing scale and complexity of the network contributed to an uncontrolled growth with uneven levels of activity and quality, weak global visibility, an ineffective monitoring and reporting system and fragile leadership.
  - **ASPnet Results:**
    - » When cross-sectoral cooperation effectively occurred, the network fulfilled its potential as a channel for developing and disseminating UNESCO's educational resources.
    - » Some segments of the network were very active in initiating projects, developing innovative methods, and sharing good practices, but this did not systematically take place throughout all members.
    - » ASPnet's approaches were not systematically implemented throughout the network and consequently did not allow all schools to fully benefit from its laboratory of ideas, which is a function of the network. ASPnet had only weakly demonstrated its efforts to build the capacities of key stakeholders.
    - » 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.
10. The evaluation proposed 6 recommendations (figure 2) that were reported as implemented by the International Coordination Unit in November 2020. As will be highlighted in this evaluation report, some of the 2016 recommendations are still pertinent.

15 UNESCO (2016). Evaluation of UNESCO Associated Schools Network. Available [here](#).

**Figure 2. Overview of the implementation of the IOS 2016 ASPnet evaluation recommendations**



Source: Evaluation Team from the data from the Action Plan of the Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network 2016 (ASPnet).



## II. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives, Use, Scope and Methodological approach

### 2.1 Purpose, Objectives and Use of the Evaluation

11. The UNESCO Executive Board requested this evaluation during its 217th session in October 2023<sup>16</sup> to provide accountability and generate insight and learning to support decision makers.
12. The overall objective of the evaluation is to generate findings and recommendations about the efficiency and effectiveness of ASPnet. The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:
  - Assess the overall relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of ASPnet to encourage innovation and transformation in and through education at local, national, and global level, including the identification of enabling and constraining factors that affect its performance.
  - Examine how ASPnet has added value to UNESCO's efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 4.7, pertaining to ESD and GCED, as well as UNESCO's global priorities: Gender Equality and Priority Africa.
  - Generate lessons learned and provide strategic recommendations to inform UNESCO's Education Sector in programme planning and improve ASPnet's performance.
13. The evaluation's findings will be presented at the 220th session of the Executive Board in October 2024, supporting the progress of ASPnet and the implementation of the ASPnet Young Ambassadors initiative<sup>17</sup>.
14. The evaluation's primary intended users are UNESCO Member States, ASPnet members, UNESCO Senior Management, the Education Sector, and the ICU. Secondary users are the ICUA (a Category II Centre), National Commissions for UNESCO and National Coordinators.

### 2.2 Evaluation Scope

15. The analysis covered the role and activities of ASPnet from 2017 to early 2024, including how recommendations from the previous evaluation were implemented and whether this influenced the programme's performance. For the budget analysis, the financial information was presented by biennium and includes data for 2024/2025.
16. The evaluation followed standard evaluation criteria<sup>18</sup>, with a focus on efficiency and effectiveness as requested by the Executive Board. The team also added the criteria of relevance and coherence to guide and frame the analysis:
  - **Relevance** assesses how closely the Network's mission aligns with UNESCO's priorities and goals pertaining to education, and its consistency with the organization's strategic framework for education, that is whether the Network continues to meet national and global educational needs.
  - **Coherence** focuses on the Network's coordination within UNESCO and the extent to which its activities are unique within the organisation.
  - **Effectiveness** examines the extent to which ASPnet achieved its intended outputs, outcomes, and objectives, and which factors contributed or hindered their implementation.
  - **Efficiency** explores the extent to which the intervention delivered results in an economically transparent and timely way to achieve the Network's objectives and how management and coordination contributed to the implementation of the Network's activities.
17. The evaluation focused on key processes of the ASPnet network and its main agents and actors, including the International Coordination Unit, Education Sector Senior Management staff, National Coordinators and members, as well as the UNESCO Category II International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA)<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> UNESCO Executive Board - 217th. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 217th session.

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO Executive Board – 217<sup>th</sup> Session (Paris, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023). 217 EX/9 - Item 9 of the provisional agenda.

<sup>18</sup> UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029

<sup>19</sup> The International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA) was established to cooperate with the ASPnet Unit and enhance the network on activities in the development of an online ASPnet platform, capacity development activities for ASPnet teachers and school administrators, student exchanges, the annual International ASPnet Forum and collaborative research on ASPnet-relevant topics. UNESCO 204 EX/14, 2018.

## 2.3 Methodological Approach

18. The evaluation adopted a consultative and transparent approach, keeping stakeholders informed throughout the process.
19. The data collection and analysis used a mixed-methods approach. The evidence and information collected was triangulated from multiple data sources to support its validity and reliability. This evaluation included a summative and a formative dimension. The analysis retrospectively assessed the achievements of the network and considered enabling factors and conditions of the outcome while also highlighting the goals and objectives expected but missed. The evaluation benefitted from the support of Internal Audit which contributed to the review of the efficiency section.
20. This evaluation also analysed specific actions of ASPnet that mainstream UNESCO's two Global Priorities (Africa and Gender Equality).
21. During the evaluation process, special attention was given to include all interested relevant actors in a participatory and respectful manner, including an online survey to the member schools' that are listed in the ASPnet database.
22. In line with UNESCO's Evaluation Policy (2022-2029), the evaluation complied with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, UNEG Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, UNEG Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.
23. The evaluation followed the following five stages:

### Stage 1: Desk review

24. During the Inception Phase, the evaluation collected internal and public information, including complementary information requested to verify certain findings. The final list of the documents consulted is in Annex B.

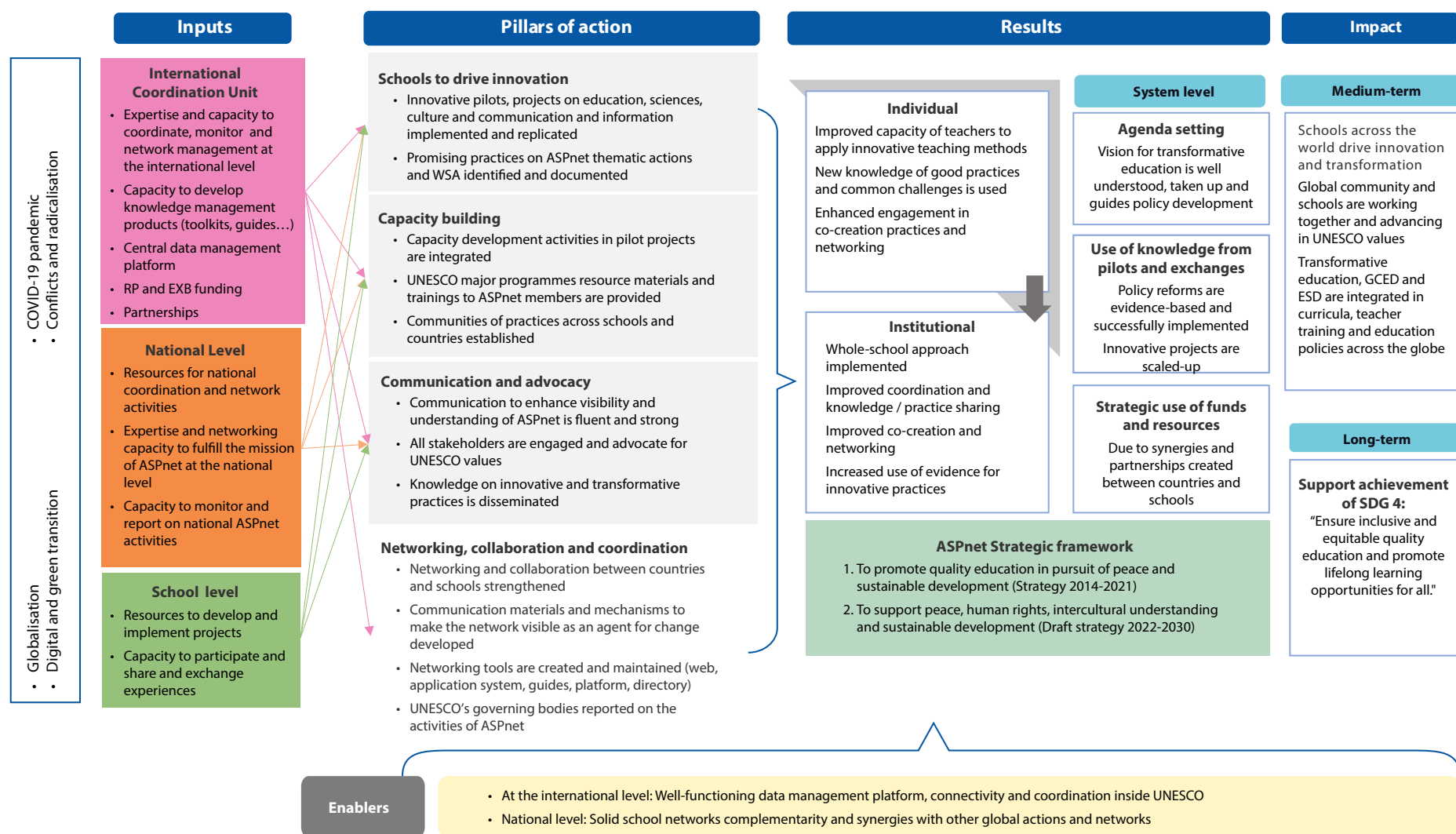
25. The complementary documents requested were:

- Information internal to ASPnet International Coordination, including monitoring data, minutes of meetings, best practices, case studies, newsletters, campaigns, and related products, financial and human resources information, and an updated database of ASPnet members and national coordinators.
- Public information about UNESCO and global education priorities: This information was used to independently compare ASPnet interventions with UNESCO's global strategies and priorities, as well as ASPnet with national and global needs and trends in education.

### Stage 2: Reconstruction of the Theory of Change

26. The evaluation includes a Theory of Change (TOC) agreed on the retrospective objectives and outcomes of ASPnet during the period 2017- 2023. This period includes two phases: from 2014 to 2021 with a Strategic Framework and 2021 to present without a Strategy Framework. The TOC helped the evaluation team understand the intervention logic of foreseen outputs, how they should contribute to the expected outcomes, and how those outcomes are expected to create an impact.
27. Figure 3 presents the reconstructed Theory of Change for ASPnet and its four pillars, as well as the responsibilities assigned to different actors within the Network.

Figure 3. Reconstructed Theory of Change for the Evaluation of ASPnet



Source: TOC elaborated by the evaluation team

### Stage 3: Development of the evaluation matrix

28. The evaluation adapted the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness (Figure 4),<sup>20</sup> to develop the evaluation matrix, which can be found in Annex E.

**Figure 4. Evaluation criteria and questions for ASPnet Evaluation**

Relevance and coherence	Efficiency	Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent is ASPnet relevant?</li> <li>To what extent does ASPnet align with UNESCO's global priorities and add value at global level?</li> <li>To what extent is ASPnet well-coordinated?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did ASPnet's operation and coordination contribute to its efficiency?</li> <li>How efficiently has ASPnet used its budget to achieve their outcomes?</li> <li>How efficient was the monitoring and reporting system of ASPnet?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has ASPnet contributed to the work of UNESCO?</li> <li>What results can be seen at different levels and for different pillars?</li> <li>What factors have affected achievements?</li> </ul>

Source: Evaluation Team

### Stage 4: Data collection

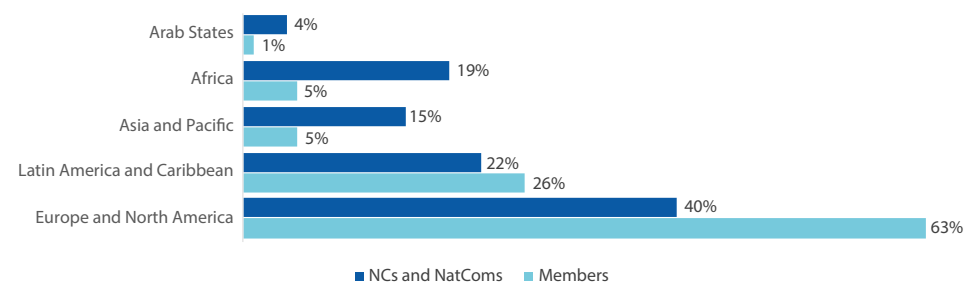
29. This stage involved interviews, a global survey, and three case studies.
30. The **interviewees** (44) were selected from different sources. Initially, a list of informants was created based on information provided by Evaluation Reference group (ERG) members. This list was then expanded to include individuals with extensive knowledge of ASPnet, who could effectively describe both the challenges and best practices of the Network.
31. Snowball sampling was also used when one interviewee referred the team to additional relevant interviewees or when information was incomplete. The complete list of interviewees is presented in Annex C.

<sup>20</sup> Please see [here](#) for the criteria definition

<sup>21</sup> There are 153 NCs in 152 countries and 194 National Commissions.

32. For the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, the evaluation team sent an invitation to those who requested the floor during the 219<sup>th</sup> Executive Board as a proxy for their interest on the future of the network.
33. The evaluation also includes an **online survey** distributed to members of ASPnet, National Coordinators and NatComs. The evaluation team designed the survey to maximise outreach and was therefore sent to all contacts available to the evaluation team.
34. Among the 1030 respondents to the survey, 912 were school staff, 95 were NCs<sup>21</sup>, and 23 represented a UNESCO National Commission. Based on estimated network members, the response rate was: 8% for schools, 62% for the NCs and 12% for the NatComs. More detailed information on the survey is in technical annexes H and I.

**Figure 5. Survey Respondents were more active In the Global North**



Source: Survey conducted by the evaluation team

35. The evaluation team conducted **field visits** to three countries<sup>22</sup>:
- Harare, Zimbabwe where the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa is based.
  - Beijing and Sanya Province in the People's Republic of China, where the International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA, Category II centre) was established in 2018.
  - Lithuania which hosts 15 ASPnet schools within the "Baltic Sea Project" (BSP) as part of the regional initiatives of ASPnet.
36. The results of the field visits (Annex G) fed directly into the main report, as examples of findings.

### Stage 5: Analysis and reporting

37. The evaluation and the analysis of the data collected followed the Intervention Logic and evaluation matrix.
- **Qualitative data** was collected from desk research, interviews, and case studies. Interviews and collective discussions were summarised in writing and anonymised and their data was coded using a data collection and coding template in Word. This template was prepared according to the evaluation matrix.
  - **Quantitative data** was collected from the survey.<sup>23</sup>
38. The evaluation team presented the findings to the ERG members, the UNESCO ASPnet staff, and other relevant ED sector staff. The goal of the validation **workshop** was to discuss and validate the findings, conclusions, and recommendations and have an interactive discussion among ASPnet International Coordination Unit and the Senior Management of the Education Sector on the Network's future, potential improvements, and challenges.

## 2.4 Limitations

39. The evaluation faced the following limitations throughout the process, which were addressed to the extent possible:
- **Incomplete directory of members and NCs:** The databases of ASPnet members and National Coordinators received by the evaluation team were incomplete and not up to date. This contributed to a low survey response rate from members and possibly added bias to the data as the respondents of the survey may represent those that are more active in the Network.
  - **The dissemination of the survey was a lengthy process.** The survey was first shared by the ASPnet International Coordination Unit with the 43 countries that had previously updated their contact information. To avoid exclusions, the survey was then sent to all contacts in the unclear database, but many emails were undeliverable. The evaluation team also identified National Coordinators who were not on the formal list and gradually included them in the survey.
  - **Inconsistent documentation and progress reporting on the Network's activities:** There is minimal monitoring data on the performance of ASPnet, as far as targets, indicators, annual reports from the NCs, reliable databases, and financial data. This limited the capacity to triangulate the analysis with desk review. The team therefore relied heavily on primary data collected and based triangulation by looking at different sources (surveys, interviews and focus groups, UNESCO's internal databases), and the validation workshop.
  - **Short timeframe to reach a wider breadth of the Network.** The evaluation conducted field visits in three countries, Lithuania, China, and Zimbabwe, just 3 of the 182 countries with reported ASPnet activities. These three countries cannot be used to draw conclusions on ASPnet effectiveness overall but rather to illustrate and/or reinforce findings.

<sup>22</sup> The study cases were chosen to reflect national experiences in 3 different regions. The Zimbabwe case is used to demonstrate the importance of the interaction between a Field Office and national coordination, whereas the Chinese case focuses on the function and contribution of the Category II centre to ASPnet activities. Finally, the Lithuania case was chosen to analyse a regional effort and the evolution of members' participation over the last years.

<sup>23</sup> This data was analysed using excel.

# III. Findings

## 3.1 Relevance and Coherence

**Finding 1: ASPnet is a unique network. Its vision adds value to the members, particularly through its focus on environment, cultural heritage, and on networking between schools. However, limitations in its effectiveness and efficiency hinder the Network in facilitating opportunities that are deemed most relevant by its members.**

40. The Network distinguishes itself from other educational networks by its focus on GCED, ESD and intercultural learning, rather than exclusively on academic and/or competitive achievements<sup>24</sup>. This thematic focus varies by country, with some members prioritising ESD and GCED and others emphasising cultural heritage, which is a more distinctive aspect. This latter theme has also been integrated into UNESCO's strategic programming since 2019 as well as in ASPnet draft Strategic Framework for 2022-2030.
41. Most National Coordinators (78%) and member schools (75%) surveyed see ASPnet as a unique network with characteristics that no other school network has in their country<sup>25</sup>.

**// ASPnet offers a lot of activities in one basket, and you can choose what is most relevant for you. //**

ASPnet school in Zimbabwe (field visit results).

**// The network's emphasis on cultural understanding, peace, and sustainable development resonates deeply with our educational philosophy. //**

ASPnet school in the Netherlands (survey results).

**// ASPnet provides a platform to promote holistic learning that goes beyond traditional academic subjects. Activities and projects focusing on themes such as sustainable development, global citizenship and human rights provide students with a global perspective and help them develop skills crucial to their future lives. //**

ASPnet school in Tunisia (survey results).

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO (2019). UNESCO Associated Schools Network: Guide for Members; Interview with Permanent Delegation.

<sup>25</sup> Survey launched by the evaluation team, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about ASPnet? - ASPnet is unique – there are no similar networks in my country" addressed to schools N=912, NCs and NatComs N=118. Results of the survey are included in Annex I (for National Coordinators and National Commissions) and Annex H (members)

42. The potential to *facilitate international cooperation* was highlighted by Permanent Delegations, members and NCs as a distinctive strength of the network. They emphasized its wide coverage within countries and its capacity for building international and regional partnerships compared to other networks, for example in the Baltic Sea region<sup>26</sup>. ASPnet members were able to propose and participate in regional activities (e.g. school camps in Finland) as well as in professional development activities for teachers (e.g. conferences, webinars).
43. There were different views among the interviewees about whether the Network's membership range was too wide or needed to include more schools. In interviews and surveys, most of them said that there was not enough support from the ICU in HQ (65% of those interviewed at the country level) in, for example, sharing resources, helping in the communication between members and between members and NCs, and generally in creating incentives for active involvement with the Network<sup>27</sup>.

**Finding 2: ASPnet has strong potential to address global and national needs. Its purpose and overall objectives go beyond national interests; promote action to address global challenges; and are aligned with the international agenda and priorities (e.g. action on climate change).**

44. Almost 90% of NCs and NatComs who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree that ASPnet is a relevant initiative to address *global education challenges*<sup>28</sup>. The Network is relevant to help push the policy agenda forward on key topics of a national and international scale (e.g. antisemitism, racism, climate justice, global heritage). In addition, being part of the UNESCO network helps the members to improve their image or reputation, as they are associated with UNESCO's values.

45. Several ASPnet initiatives within and across schools aim to address relevant global issues such as climate change through educational tools. In addition, the Network's thematic focuses are aligned with the UN agenda priorities and calls to action for society to step up efforts to achieve a greener and more resilient future<sup>29</sup>. In that sense, ASPnet has a strong potential to address global issues from the ground up such as through ESD and education on intercultural heritage and provide platforms for dialogue and collaboration and global challenges. The Zimbabwe case study highlighted ongoing actions within the Green Education Partnership<sup>30</sup> to pilot actions against climate crisis in schools, and projects for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage among ASPnet countries<sup>31</sup>. In addition, school members who participated in the "*Futures of Education Initiative*"<sup>32</sup> demonstrated the Network's ability to act as a knowledge broker on key topics for the UN's agenda (e.g.: environmental sustainability, diversity and equality, human rights and belonging).
46. ASPnet also showed sufficient flexibility to address *national and school priorities* in different contexts. There is a consensus that the Network can address the needs of its members (Figure 6), especially in the areas of ESD, GCED and intercultural heritage. Interviews also indicated that ASPnet's thematic focus on global citizenship was relevant for countries with culturally and ethnically diverse populations<sup>33</sup>.

26 Interview with NCs.

27 See sections Effectiveness and Efficiency.

28 Survey conducted by the evaluation team (N=118). "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about ASPnet? ASPnet is a relevant initiative to fight global educational challenges" Addressed to NCs and NatComs.

29 UNESCO agenda on climate change: <https://www.unesco.org/en/climate-change> WHO agenda on climate change: <https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/call-for-climate-action>

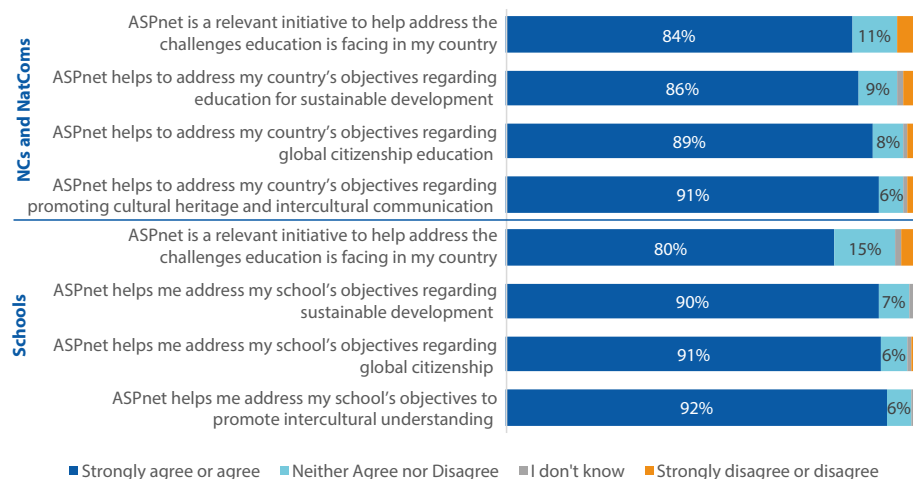
30 More information on Green Education Partnership available [here](#).

31 More information available [here](#).

32 UNESCO (2022). The futures of education: perspectives and insights from the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet).

33 Interviews with stakeholders.



**Figure 6. ASPnet Responds to National Needs & Priorities**

Source: Survey conducted by the evaluation (Schools N=912; NCs and NatCom = 118): "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about ASPnet?"

47. The evaluation observed examples of strong alignment between Network goals and country needs and priorities. Based on observation and interviews, in China, there is a close interconnectedness between ASPnet's values, China's education strategies under China's Education Modernisation 2025 Plan, and the UN's 2030 Agenda<sup>34</sup>. In Zimbabwe, the information shared through ASPnet helped address national challenges through implementing the country's new Competence-Based Education curriculum framework that emphasises themes such as ESD and support for heritage<sup>35</sup>. As well-versed practitioners on these topics in Zimbabwe, ASPnet schools (e.g.: ASPnet Eco-Schools) were perceived as model schools who can help fill the gap between theory and practice in this process.

48. Concerned stakeholders (members, NC and Permanent Delegations) indicated they would welcome that the International Coordination Unit steps up its consultations about the kind of support they need as well as to actively communicate with, and involve, NCs and members on different initiatives<sup>36</sup>. This includes constant communication and exchanges with National Coordinators. Open answers to the NC survey emphasised their expectations of more steady interactions and guidance from the International Coordination Unit to deal with the national challenges<sup>37</sup>.
49. Furthermore, interviews and visits to ASPnet schools in China, Zimbabwe and Lithuania revealed that partners believe that the Network needs to reflect on its thematic guidance in response to rising (global) trends and challenges such as peace education, artificial intelligence, racism, sustainability, and disaster risk reduction.

**Finding 3: Coordination between the Network and UNESCO entities and Field Offices is highly variable, with success depending on the specific actors involved. When taking place, coordination enhanced the Network's ability to address global and national needs.**

50. The role of *UNESCO Field Offices* is to coordinate UNESCO's regional and national activities by developing strategies, programmes, and activities in close consultation with NatComs, other UN agencies, and partners<sup>38</sup>. ASPnet's strategic programming frameworks do not delegate any important Network responsibilities and functions to Field Offices, which, leaves the responsibility for developing ASPnet initiatives to schools and NCs. The limited coordination between the International Coordination Unit and UNESCO Field Offices leads to missed opportunities for identifying common thematic interests and sharing financial and human resources within the countries.

<sup>34</sup> Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2017): International Conference UNESCO Associated School Network: [Link](#).

<sup>35</sup> Interviews with stakeholders

<sup>36</sup> For example: Arts for Transformative Education Survey (2022): 39 countries; Futures of Education Initiative (2020): 26 countries. Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage Pilot Survey on the UNESCO ASPnet Schools in the European Union (2021). Acting for Peace (2023) : 68 countries. For the Berlin UNESCO ASPnet Conference, there were people from 51 countries, but not all were NCs.

<sup>37</sup> For example, NCs mentioned during the interviews that it will be very helpful to have basic and updated information about ASPnet, objectives, principles values as well as membership requirements to facilitate their work with national stakeholders (in several languages).

<sup>38</sup> UNESCO webpage. Our Field Offices. [Link](#)



51. Interviews underlined that Regional Offices in the field have strong networks and shared needs and therefore, the Network could benefit from stronger coordination, as exemplified by the Beijing and Bangkok UNESCO Offices with their track records of school-level interventions<sup>39</sup>. There is a clear interest from Regional Offices in increasing these synergies and playing a stronger role for ASPnet in the future.
52. Successful cooperation between ASPnet schools and Field Offices was observed in Zimbabwe with UNESCO's "Greening Education Partnership"<sup>40</sup>, where the ASPnet schools were involved in this Whole School Approach (WSA) to support countries to tackle climate change through education. Since 2023, and after the Transformative Education Summit, Zimbabwe and other countries in the Southern Africa region have been piloting this initiative in ASPnet schools with the support of UNESCO Harare Office. However, coordination activities between the school members, the UNESCO Harare Office and the International Coordination Unit have decreased, primarily due to a lack of a clear strategic vision, resources, and communication gaps<sup>41</sup>.

**Finding 4: The combined efforts of ICU and ICUA were not sufficient to strengthen the global dimension of the network. Since the establishment of ICUA, some activities have taken place but without a joint plan, collaboration remains uncertain. Both ICU and ICUA are currently working on the development of a new digital global platform for ASPnet members which is potentially a duplication of efforts.**

53. In 2018, UNESCO approved ICUA as Category II Centre<sup>42</sup> to strengthen the global dimension of ASPnet. The stated objective of ICUA is to "contribute to UNESCO's work on SDG4-Education 2030 through knowledge production, capacity development, technical support and information sharing, with a particular focus on Asia and the Pacific."<sup>43</sup>

54. Since ICUA started its operations, the communication with UNESCO Headquarters has been irregular. While some activities were organized, for example the Virtual Global Conference of ASPnet National Coordinators, and activities with IEP, there was minimal follow-up. The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected activities in the region. The low coordination between ICUA and ICU was exacerbated by frequent changes in ICUA's senior management and led to an unclear division of tasks and responsibilities and limited visibility of ICUA's operations.
55. There have been missed opportunities for developing synergies and sharing resources and information on planned activities. For example, the development by ICUA of a global platform for ASPnet members was presented to the evaluation team during the mission. Such a platform would be potentially duplicative and confusing to member schools.

**Finding 5: In the period of the evaluation, the ASPnet's coordination and collaboration with other UNESCO sectors, institutes units, networks, and entities has been limited.**

56. There is limited evidence regarding coordination or exchange between the ASPnet and *UNESCO Category I Institutes*, despite the acknowledgement that such institutes develop resources that could be useful for ASPnet and its member schools.
57. Collaboration between ASPnet members and the *Section for Teacher Development* within the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems on the Social Emotional Learning project is a promising example of inter-divisional coordination within UNESCO. Their shared focus on teacher education facilitated a collaboration between ASPnet Members and the section for Teacher Development to demonstrate intersectional opportunities within the Education sector.

39 Interview with UNESCO staff and Permanent Delegations.

40 UNESCO Webpage. Greening Education Partnership. [Link](#)

41 Interviews conducted with UNESCO members and Permanent Delegation.

42 Feasibility Study: The International Centre for the UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA), Sanya, Hainan Province, People's Republic of China, Oct 2017 and 204 EX/Decisions: Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its 204th session. The feasibility study mentioned: "The Centre could make a significant contribution to ASPnet, as no other institution focuses specifically on this important UNESCO network. This includes strengthening the global dimension of the network, widening the outreach of ASPnet activities and their coverage and enhancing UNESCO's visibility in the field through the further dissemination of publications and training materials. In addition, the proposed scope of activities at the sub-regional, regional and global level is coherent with the existing realities and needs of the network. Evidence has been found on the ability of the proposed Centre to undertake the proposed activities" <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000262851> and <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261373>

43 Establishment in China of an International Centre for UNESCO ASPNET (ICUA), 204 EX/14, 6 March 2018

58. Overall, ASPnet is not well-integrated across *UNESCO*. Dedicated programme areas in, for example, the Natural Sciences (SC) and the Communication and Information (CI) sectors, are developing materials on topics of relevance for ASPnet (e.g. renewable energy, STEM, biodiversity, water sciences, Media and Information Literacy) but there was limited evidence of interchange between ASPnet and other Sectors and sections of UNESCO.
59. A UNESCO Network that could offer useful insights, despite its differences in its targeted members and membership numbers is UNITWIN<sup>44</sup>. Both Networks share a similar purpose of promoting cooperation between educational institutions at a global level and facilitating UNESCO's access to national education systems and beneficiaries (i.e. students)<sup>45</sup>. Recent organisational changes enabled UNITWIN to put in place a monitoring and communication system which could provide ASPnet useful lessons.<sup>46</sup> UNITWIN is evaluating university initiatives that propose collaboration with ASPnet schools, to instill entrepreneurship in students and encourage more ethical and sustainable practices and thinking<sup>47</sup>.

## 3.2 Efficiency

### 3.2.1 Financial and human resources

#### **Finding 6: During the period under review, there was limited budget overview by the ASPnet team.**

60. According to the IOS evaluation in 2016, a decrease in regular funding from 2010-2015 exposed the Network to numerous reputational and implementation risks, and resulted in limited monitoring, and lack of quality assurance. Additionally, the previous evaluation highlighted that the UNESCO Regular Programme activity budget allocated to ASPnet's International Coordination Unit had fluctuated over the last biennium<sup>48</sup>.

61. From 2016 to date, ASPnet received around USD 2 million<sup>49</sup> (Table 2) from various sources. The tracking of the use of Voluntary Contribution funds from different donors remains unclear. Documents and interviews with ICU and the ED sector failed to confirm the specific activities these funds supported, except for the budget codes showing funds were used to pay for temporary appointments and service contracts, although there is a dedicated cost line for ASPnet.

**Table 2. Overview of the Budget for the ICU (USD)**

Type of funds	2016/2017	2018/2019	2020/2021	2022/2023	2024/2025	Total budget
Regular Programme	172,882	150,000*	174,888	236,754	318,168	1,052,692
Voluntary Contributions	155,976	178,556	580,608	104,070	14,300	1,033,510
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>328,858</b>	<b>328,556</b>	<b>755,496</b>	<b>340,824</b>	<b>332,468</b>	<b>2,086,202</b>

(\*) in 2018/2019 ASPnet budget was embedded under ESD Expected Result

Source: Internal Audit Office based on SAP budgets for ASPnet RP funds and ASPnet WBS from the ED special account

44 The 30 years old UNITWIN UNESCO Chairs network has more than 1,000 universities developing research, teaching, and training activities. Membership is for four years and is renewable.

45 Interview with UNESCO staff.

46 Interview with UNESCO staff and Permanent Delegations.

47 Interview with UNESCO staff.

48 UNESCO Internal Oversight Office (July 2016). Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). Available [here](#).

49 Regular Programme and Extrabudgetary.

**Finding 7: The ability of ASPnet members to raise additional funds varied and more than half of surveyed schools never attempted to do so. ASPnet members in the Global North and private institutions were more capable of exploring funding activities.**

62. ASPnet membership does not entail financial support to members, who depend on their own resources and/or on partnerships to carry out activities. This is particularly problematic, given that many of them commonly perceive insufficient budgets as a hindering factor<sup>50</sup>.
63. At national level, ASPnet members often operate with little to no funding for operations, depending on whether local resources were made available in-country. The Guide for ASPnet NCs mentions that they can apply for funding or co-funding of ASPnet activities through UNESCO's Participation Programme<sup>51</sup>, but limited evidence was provided on concrete examples of this resource allocation, and its use and impact.
64. ASPnet membership and its association with UNESCO enabled certain public schools in poorer districts to obtain public funds for extra-curricular activities (such as gardening)<sup>52</sup>. Survey results indicate that approximately 74% of NCs and NatComs believe that insufficient resources remain one of the most significant barriers to organizing activities in the country, and 56% believe that schools members lack the means to undertake ASPnet activities<sup>53</sup>.

**Finding 8: The ASPnet International Coordination Unit's human resources and management were not organized in an efficient way to accomplish networking tasks nor to provide guidance, monitoring of member schools and dissemination of results.**

65. UNESCO allocated human resources to coordinate ASPnet at the international level. The International Coordination Unit was composed of a core team including a Chief of Unit (P4), a Programme Specialist (P3)<sup>54</sup> and a Senior Programme Assistant. They were supported by consultants, trainees and volunteers funded by governments (who later became consultants). As shown in Table 3, below, in the period of the evaluation, the team working on ASPnet (in different contractual capacities) has not been stable. The absence of two core team members in 2023 was covered with temporary and consultant contracts.
66. In interviews with UNESCO staff, ERG and permanent delegations, the small size of the ICU was remarked. Indeed, the core team is modest. Throughout the evaluation period, this team was bolstered by temporary positions (P2, P3) and consultants. In the last two years, the ICU worked with an average team of 5 people.
67. Overall, a consistent concern voiced by National Coordinators and Permanent Delegations was the insufficient support from the ICU to animate the Network and communicate on activities in a regular and timely manner. For example, the guides for ASPnet members and NCs include responsibilities and processes that are no longer valid, and no formal update was sent to provide further advice. Also, some NCs and Permanent Delegations mention that the information to participate in contests and activities were shared at the last minute. Language is also raised as a concern for non-native English speaker countries as a barrier to communicate and participate in the network activities<sup>55</sup>.

50 Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=1030, "Have any of the following elements acted as a barrier to the achievement of these results: "Insufficient budget for ASPnet activities"? addressed to schools, NatCom, and national coordinators. Responses respectively = 47% of schools, 75% of NCs and 70% of NatCom respondents identified insufficient budget as barrier. Interviews with Permanent Delegations.

51 Guide for National Coordinators. P.15. During 2020- 2023 around USD 400,000 of funds were allocated by the PP.

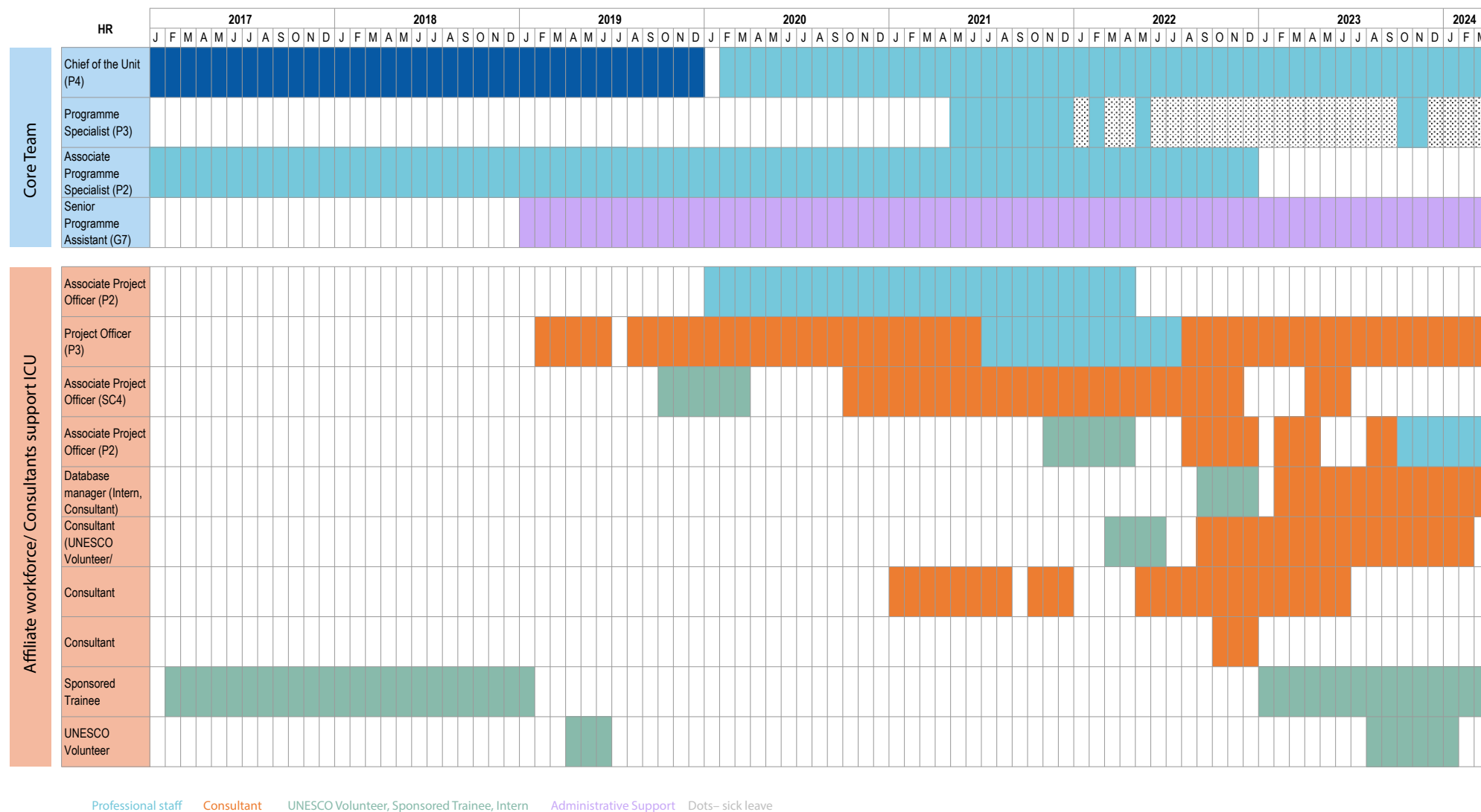
52 Interview with stakeholder.

53 Survey results and Interviews with UNESCO staff, NCs and Permanent Delegations.

54 The P3 position was on prolonged sick leave during 2022-2023.

55 Interviews with stakeholders.

**Table 3. International Coordination Unit’s staff over the Evaluation time period**



Source: Data compiled and prepared by the evaluation team.

### 3.2.2 Management and coordination

**Finding 9: Since 2021 ASPnet has not had a formal strategy, but rather, has been operating under a strategic framework with four outcomes which had an impact on defining the role of the ICU and its expected outcomes.**

68. Since 2022, the ICU began developing a strategic document for ASPnet. However, by the end of the data collection of the evaluation, this document has not yet been formally endorsed or validated and remained a draft<sup>56</sup>. The ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021 was reviewed during the 2016 IOS evaluation. At the time the evaluation recommended improving programming and planning, through the development of a Plan of Action 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<sup>57</sup>. There were differing perspectives among interviewees, who were aware of the existence of the draft document, on the reason for its continued draft status. While some alluded to a limited consultation process, others explained that senior management, including ASPnet supervisors, decided not to formalize it as a strategy.
69. During the evaluation period, the ICU of ASPnet moved from the Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development (Peace and Sustainable Development) to the Division for Education 2030. The ICU was affected by the number of changes in supervisory responsibilities, with 5 different supervisors, including Directors and interims from 2017 to 2024. A new Director supervising ASPnet was appointed in early 2024.

**Finding 10: Many National Coordinators reported they received guidance from the ASPnet International Coordination Unit; however, this support is considered inconsistent.**

70. As stated in 216 EX 46, “an important aspect of the development of cooperation among UNESCO ASPnet members is the establishment of an ongoing dialogue between National Coordinators. The ASPnet International Coordination Unit play a key role in ensuring such interaction and organizing the exchange of experience at the regional and international levels.” Based on interviews and the survey, NCs and NatComs noted differences in the frequency of contact with the ICU<sup>58</sup>, as well as on the extent of guidance and materials they received. In the survey, 37% of respondents noted that they have received guidance and tools to help the management of the network from ICU “regularly (at least once a year)”. Another 24% reported they received guidance “sometimes” but linked with a specific event. A full 39% of respondents said they had never had any support to manage their national network or only once. (Figure 7). In interviews with National Coordinators, 82% of the National Coordinators/Permanent Delegations in three different regions confirmed they encountered barriers to communicating regularly with the ICU.
71. Permanent Delegations also reported inconsistent frequencies of contact over the last years with the International Coordination Unit<sup>59</sup> or the perception of differential frequency and quality of engagement with different countries. In interviews they expressed that certain opportunities were shared exclusively only after sending a complaint for example to solve specific cases in the application process or funding. A positive experience was observed in Germany where, following the “Change Initiative”, the International Coordination Unit enabled the Network in Germany to increase its collaborations with teacher education institutions<sup>60</sup>.

56 UNESCO (2022). Strategic Framework for Action 2022-2030 “Building peaceful and sustainable futures through transformative education”

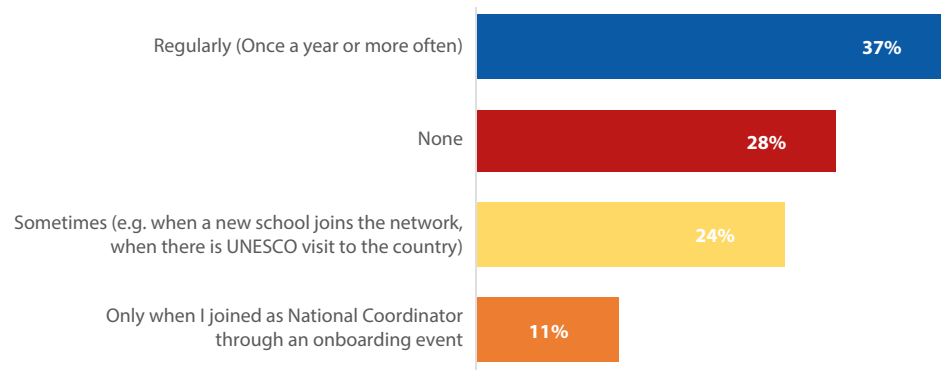
57 UNESCO Internal Oversight Office (July 2016). Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet).

58 Interviews with NCs; Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=912, “How frequently have you been contacted by the ASPnet International Coordination Unit?” addressed to schools.

59 Interview with Permanent Delegations.

60 German TEIs are still not internationally certified as members of ASPnet. – They are waiting to start their application procedure in September 2024. They are part of nearly 30 pending schools who are ready to apply since the shutdown of OTA.

**Figure 7. Differences In Perceptions of National Coordinators on guidance by the ASPnet ICU**



Source: Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=95, addressed to National Coordinators. "Has the ASPnet international coordination unit provided you with guidance and/or tools to help you manage the network of ASPnet member schools in your country?"

72. Most of the communication materials shared by the International Coordination Unit are accessible and/or sent only in the English language, which hinders their adoption or circulation at national level<sup>61</sup>. The ASPnet Newsletter CONNECT, established in 2020 provided up to date news on ASPnet. It was produced in English, Spanish and French, but it was discontinued in early 2023. Certain countries in ASPnet have developed their own national ASPnet platform collating schools' initiatives and disseminating resource materials in the local language (e.g.: ASPnet in Russia).<sup>62</sup>

73. According to views from interviewees in schools and with National Coordinators or Permanent Delegations, the Network stagnated in the past three years when measured on the assiduity of communication and the number of global activities<sup>63</sup>. Several NatComs and Permanent Delegations expressed dissatisfaction with the communication from UNESCO HQ and the absence of clear solutions for identified challenges in the Network (e.g. the discontinuation of its digital platform, lack of a strategy, waiting list for schools' admissions, lack of visibility on the data migration process to a new digital platform, events and opportunities shared too late)<sup>64</sup>. Interviewees argued that effective communication with national network members, in multiple languages and involving Permanent Delegations and NatComs in this process is essential. Such renewed communication efforts would also allow schools to better allocate the necessary budgetary resources ahead of ASPnet activities<sup>65</sup>.

**Finding 11: The absence of an online platform limits the international governance of the Network, including the capacity of member schools to connect with each other.**

74. Until early 2021, an Online Tool for ASPnet (OTA) was in place to facilitate exchanges and communication between the ICU and NCs, share information between the members (guides, news), and to facilitate the application process. This platform was shut down by UNESCO's Digital Business Solutions (DBS) department for security reasons and the information was not recovered by the International Coordination Unit. According to DBS it is possible to recover this data with their assistance<sup>66</sup>.
75. In the period after 2021, the International Coordination Unit tried to update the database of members and develop a new platform. Up until early 2024, this was still in its development phase. In March 2024, there was a clean listing for 43 countries (58% from Europe and North America) and their data was integrated into an online directory. However, in March 2024, the evaluation team still found information gaps (such as inactive emails and national addresses) within this directory of 43 countries.

61 Interviews with NatComs and NCs.

62 [aspnet-unesco.ru](http://aspnet-unesco.ru); Interviews with stakeholders.

63 Interviews with schools and NCs.

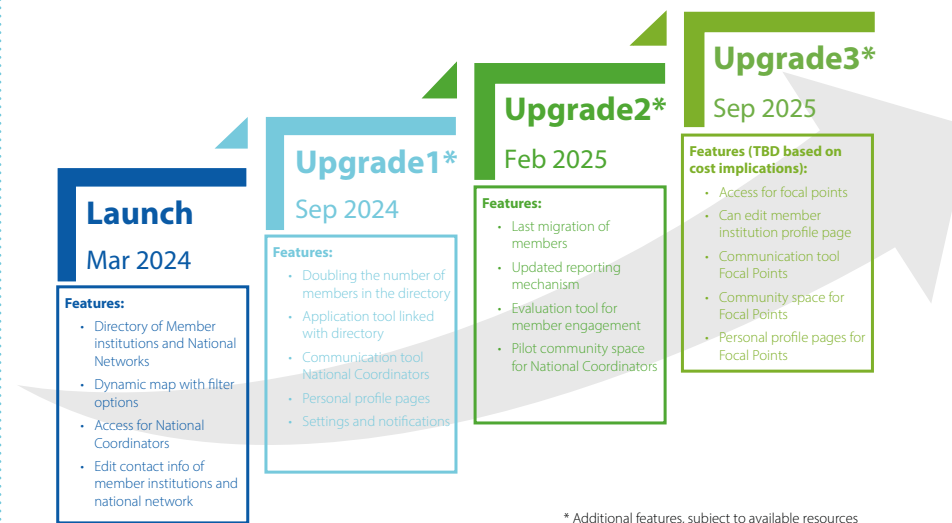
64 Interviews with NatComs and Permanent Delegations.

65 Interviews with PDs, NatComs, NCs.

66 Interviews with UNESCO staff.

76. At the time of the evaluation, the UNESCO ASPnet ICU is working on an integrated platform which will include both a clean listing of all schools as well as functionalities to communicate with UNESCO and amongst schools. This platform is set to be finalized in 2025. As observed during the evaluation mission and in interviews with stakeholders at ICUA, in parallel a digital platform for ASPnet is also being developed by ICUA<sup>67</sup> which is also set to be finalized in early 2025<sup>68</sup>. This ICUA initiative is apparently being conducted without the knowledge or involvement of UNESCO Digital Business Services (DBS-central services), which is important to ensure any portal follows UNESCO IT regulations including on data privacy aspects. According to interviews, there has been no formal exchange between UNESCO ASPnet ICU and ICUA on the platforms, pointing to a potential duplication of efforts and missed opportunities for collaboration.
77. On the membership process, currently, many schools are awaiting acceptance to the Network. For NCs and NatComs interviewed, the application process without a platform is unclear. In the absence of a functioning platform, some national networks such as France and Russia have developed their own national platforms for managing school applications, receiving annual plans and disseminating materials<sup>69</sup>. However, most countries do not have the resources to set up their own national platforms potentially leading to variations in ability to access membership status. For instance, there is no clear solution on member applications and it is unclear whether the renewal of the ASPnet Online Platform will include an exchange platform in the short term. A “pilot community space for National Coordinators” is expected to be launched by February 2025 subject to availability of resources (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Timetable for the Updated Reporting Mechanism (Online Platform)**



Source: ASPnet ICU - Information Session 22/03/2024

<sup>67</sup> In 216 EX/46 it mentions that: “the Centre will develop an online resource platform, including a multilingual website, with online courses, synchronous classes, teacher interaction and learning assessments.”

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with UNESCO staff, platform launch meetings by the International Coordination Unit, PPT by ICUA on the ICUA platform launch.

<sup>69</sup> Interviews with stakeholders.



### **Finding 12: National Coordinators and Field Offices play an important role in the performance of national networks**

78. Most of the schools surveyed were satisfied with their National Coordinator (82%) and 57% provided regular feedback to them on activities of ASPnet. Almost half of the schools (46%) mentioned “*support provided by the National Coordinator*” as an enabler to implement ASPnet activities<sup>70</sup>. Those who were dissatisfied noted no or slow communication, short notice for events, and no introductions for new schools, as obstacles<sup>71</sup>.
79. The case study of Zimbabwe illustrated the importance of a dedicated National Coordinator for ASPnet to keep the dynamism of the network. Indeed, as the previous Coordinator left and has not yet been replaced, activities have decreased<sup>72</sup>. Similarly, the case of Lithuania also demonstrated how the appointment of a new national ASPnet Coordinator could lead to renewed activity in the country.
80. Good practices were found in China, Zimbabwe, and Indonesia in terms of the role of the **UNESCO Regional Offices**. In China, UNESCO Beijing has organised annual meetings with NCs in the region since 2018, which is seen as crucial in ensuring the engagement of country National Coordinators. In Zimbabwe, the Regional Office involved ASPnet in some of its regional activities<sup>73</sup>. In the latter, a “*Steering Committee*” for ASPnet, including the UNESCO office, the NatCom, and the Ministry for Primary and Secondary Education, was perceived as a plausible solution to revive the Network (particularly in the absence of a NC)<sup>74</sup>.
81. The UNESCO Regional Office in Jakarta, Indonesia helped promote ocean literacy within the Network by disseminating thematic guidance and facilitating ASPnet schools’ visits UNESCO accredited biosphere parks in Indonesia. The Regional Office’s coordination and communication efforts with ASPnet schools were considered particularly valuable in the context of Indonesia’s decentralised education system<sup>75</sup>.

82. National Coordinators in Japan, South Korea, and Mongolia were reported as actively engaged with ASPnet in the East Asia region. This was made through: clear communication channels set up between the ASPnet NCs and UNESCO Beijing Regional Office, who facilitated information sharing and opportunities for collaboration; and the interaction with UNESCO Chairs in the East Asia region (e.g.: Yokohama National University in Japan), who acted as ‘bridge builders’ between the Network and schools, and helped establish contact with teachers, disseminate resource manuals, and setup regional teacher training programs. Interviewed NCs and Permanent Delegations outside of the East Asia region also reported that they would like to see these types of collaborations between ASPnet and UNESCO Chairs.

### **Finding 13: ASPnet members generally understand the Network’s requirements, but their capacity to organize activities depends on the availability of resources as well as the engagement of their focal points to conduct and organize ASPnet activities.**

83. Schools have responsibilities by virtue of being an ASPnet school. Being a member requires them to submit reports (to their National Coordinator), celebrate UN days, and organise activities. The level of engagement of the member schools depends largely on the school itself, its resources, committed school administration and staff. According to 70% of surveyed NatComs and NCs, schools in their country have increased their level of activity in ASPnet national activities in recent years.
84. Over the past four years, approximately half of the schools complied with ASPnet requirements<sup>76</sup>. Indeed, most National Coordinators indicated that between 60% - 100% of schools in their country complied with ASPnet required activities (i.e. submission of the workplan, annual report, celebration of UN days, display of ASPnet membership). ASPnet members most often reported that they engaged in the celebration of UN days, and least often reported that they hosted other schools for events<sup>77</sup>.

70 Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=912, “*Are you overall satisfied with the coordination and management of ASPnet in your country?*” and “*Have any of the following elements acted as enablers to the achievement of these results: Support provided by the National Coordinator?*” addressed to schools.

71 Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=912, “*Please comment what the reasons for dissatisfaction are*” addressed to schools. It should be noted however, that NCs were involved in helping disseminate the evaluation survey (in the absence of clean and complete lists), therefore less active National Coordinators likely did not forward the survey.

72 Interviews with schools and stakeholders in Zimbabwe.

73 Interviews with UNESCO staff and stakeholders.

74 Interviews with stakeholders.

75 Interviews with stakeholders.

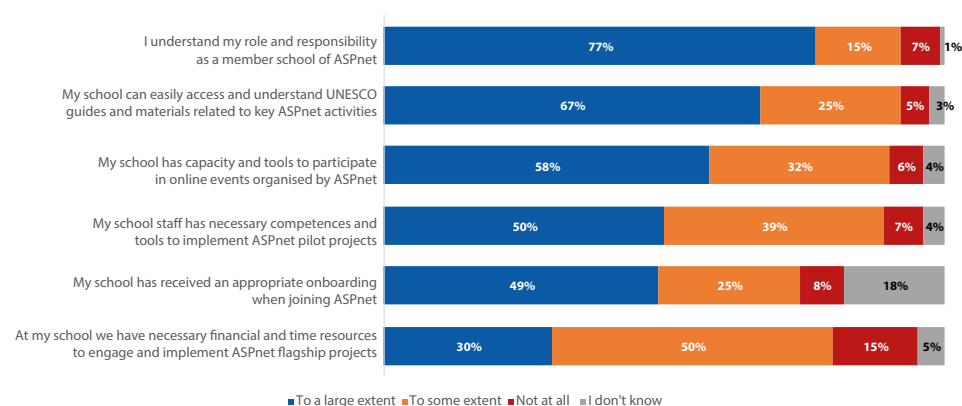
76 Submitting an annual workplan, submitting an annual report, updating contact information twice a year, celebrating at least two UN days, informing the school community about ASPnet.

77 Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=912, “*To what extent have you carried out the following activities in the past four years? Please tick the box if you are sure that you have implemented this activity*” addressed to schools for the years 2023, 2022, 2021 and 2020.



85. The surveyed schools reported insufficient time and resources for activity implementation. (Figure 9). To ensure that insufficient time does not pose a barrier to teachers' capacity to implement ASPnet related initiatives, certain schools in France allocate weekly one extra paid hour for teachers to prepare these ASPnet activities (e.g.: a week on human rights activities)<sup>78</sup>.
86. Moreover, the Zimbabwe case study showed that in schools where ASPnet responsibilities were divided among teachers and school staff, the Network activities were implemented on a broader scale as more people are involved based on their area of expertise (ESD, culture, history, etc.). Schools who had become inactive had only one focal point for the ASPnet and treated ASPnet as a "club" rather than a whole-school-initiative. As the focal point departed, there was no institutional knowledge or capacity to continue<sup>79</sup>.

**Figure 9. Members Reported High Capacity but Low Resources For ASPnet Activities.**



Source: Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=912, addressed to schools. "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?"

### 3.2.3 Monitoring of ASPnet

**Finding 14: The absence of a monitoring system does not allow for a comprehensive view on how the Network is faring in different countries and in its different pillars, nor the extent of involvement of members.**

87. The 41 C/5 Programme and Budget includes one performance indicator and expected results for ASPnet.<sup>80</sup> This is: "Number of countries supported by UNESCO to integrate innovative elements as a result of pilot testing in ASP schools", the target for 2023 was 90 (Africa 20, SIDS 11). Without monitoring data, including the identification of initiatives at the school or national level, it is difficult to track the extent to which ASPnet is contributing to this performance indicator.
88. ASPnet does not possess its own **monitoring and evaluation system** with indicators and targets. As such, no systematic data was collected against preset indicators and no annual reports or similar reporting data was prepared. The International Coordination Unit's monitoring responsibilities include receiving and compiling annual national reports sent to it by NCs (who receive them from schools), updating the schools database, and reviewing and approving applications. They also receive ad hoc requests from Coordinators or NatComs for support/clarifications<sup>81</sup>.
89. The evaluation team received only nine annual country-level reports from the ASPnet Coordination Unit for the period of 2017-2023.<sup>82</sup> Various NCs indicated they had sent annual reports to the International Coordination Unit but had not received a response or feedback to the submitted documents. Therefore, several of them had discontinued the preparation of reports, while others did not send them to the ICU but still prepared them and used them to monitor the members at the national level.<sup>83</sup>

78 Interview with stakeholders.

79 Case study of Zimbabwe.

80 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2022-2025: first biennium 2022-2023.

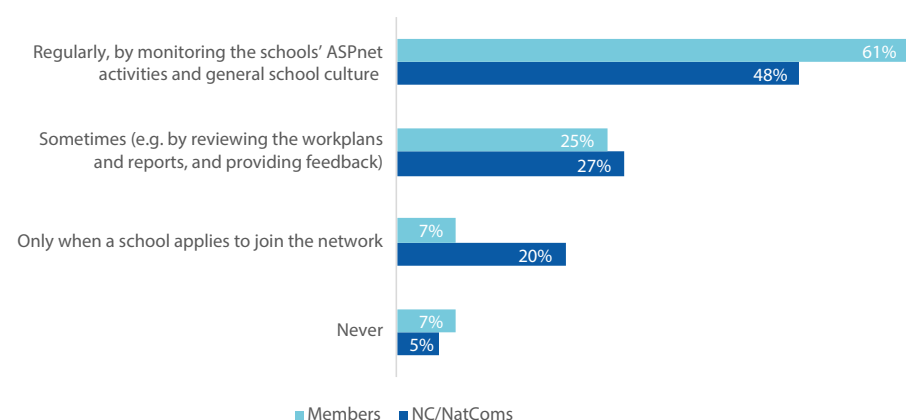
81 Interview with stakeholders.

82 Laos 2019, Slovenia 2020, Poland 2020-2021, Czechia 2021, Slovenia 2021, Czechia 2022, Spain 2022, Norway 2023, Venezuela 2023.

83 Interviews with National Coordinators.

90. Strong monitoring and reporting practices were observed in Germany, where federal coordinators screen applications before submission to the NC and later the International Coordination Unit<sup>84</sup>. Similarly, in France, schools receive support from the NC throughout their application process for ASPnet membership<sup>85</sup>.
91. According to the ASPnet guidelines, schools are required to update their contact information at least twice a year to ensure that the global schools database is up to date. The last evaluation of ASPnet (2016) noted that many schools were not certified and that inactive members were not delisted. This problem was also highlighted during this evaluation and remains a source of concern, including as a reputational risk for UNESCO on account of the potential use of the logo by inactive schools<sup>86</sup>. The review of the global database of schools (totaling over 12,000) revealed duplications and missing information (11,891 schools after removal of duplications, of which 4,406 schools did not have email contacts).
92. The monitoring of member schools takes place during the application process and once they are granted membership. First the activities and values of applicant schools are assessed as part of their application to ensure the school meets ASPnet requirements. Second, once schools become part of the Network, they are expected to be monitored to ensure that they continue acting in accordance with ASPnet criteria. Slightly less than 50% of the surveyed coordinators and NatComs indicated that they regularly monitor schools, and a quarter of respondents monitor schools sometimes. Some NCs mention that the criteria that the members must follow for active participation are not clear, and the procedures to maintain membership<sup>87</sup> within ASPnet have not been updated in the current guidelines for members (2019).

**Figure 10. Frequency of school monitoring by NCs and NatComs**



Source: Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=118, addressed to coordinators and NatComs. "Do you monitor the compliance of schools with the requirements and criteria for ASPnet membership?" and Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=912, addressed to schools: "Has your National Coordinator monitored your involvement with ASPnet?"

93. Members in Africa, Europe and North America, and Arab states reported more frequent national monitoring (64-69%) than schools in Latin America (51%) and Asia and Pacific (31%). Monitoring commitments were also observed in France, Germany and in the Baltic region, where ASPnet and the NC indicated that they regularly review schools' workplans, providing feedback and their own user-friendly work plan templates<sup>88</sup>. Similarly, certain NCs even have an exit interview with ASPnet schools deciding to leave the Network<sup>89</sup>. Concerned stakeholders underlined that membership rules (such as on mid-term planning schedules, logo size and use) should be more structured<sup>90</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with stakeholders.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with stakeholders.

<sup>86</sup> The use (or lack of use) of the logo is not monitored so whether an institution with the UNESCO logo actually follows UNESCO principles is unknown. The results of the survey indicates that 66% of the members displays the ASPnet logo on a plaque, sticker, banner posted on their building with difference on the regions (35% in Africa and 26% in the Asia Pacific).

<sup>87</sup> Membership has a fixed duration, which ranges from three to five years and is determined by the National Coordinator. UNESCO Associated Schools Network: guide for members (2019).

<sup>88</sup> Lithuania case study; Interviews with NCs.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with stakeholders.

<sup>90</sup> Interviews with Permanent Delegations.

### 3.3 Effectiveness

#### **Finding 15: ASPnet shows important achievements at the national level, but these depend on the level of engagement of individual Member States.**

94. The Network's reported achievements (for 2018-2021) and implementation plan (for 2022-2024)<sup>91</sup> suggest that at HQ level, the International Coordination Unit has implemented numerous activities and provided support to national networks, but their outcomes remain unclear and there is a lack of evidence to support reported progress. In particular, the absence of national reports is hindering the analysis for those results.
95. As a global network, the effective functioning of the ASPnet depends largely on the participation of all the member schools of the Network, effective coordination by the ICU at the global level, and the engagement of NC's who coordinate and communicate activities at the national level. The Unit has no direct access to Member Schools which was seen by some interviewees as an unsuitable governance arrangement, particularly in cases where the NCs are not active, or where the position lies vacant for long periods waiting for the National Commission to appoint someone.
96. While ASPnet did not have a formal strategy document during most of the evaluation period, the evaluation noted very important achievements at the national level. Interviews and surveys show that ASPnet remains unique and helps to address education challenges faced by countries (84% of NC and NatComs at the global level, 95% in Africa and 89% in Latin America).

#### **Finding 16: ASPnet values align ad hoc with UNESCO's Global Priorities Gender Equality and Africa, but there was limited evidence to demonstrate the actual contribution of the Network to the advancement of either Global Priority.**

97. A recent initiative in Zimbabwe and Namibia, supported by UNESCO's Regional Office for Southern Africa (UNESCO Harare) for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, demonstrates ASPnet's potential for alignment with UNESCO's Global Priority Africa<sup>92</sup>. Nevertheless, the evaluation team did not find any concrete approach or strategy by ICU specifically on Global Priority Africa. There is still much to be done in supporting African member schools in the network for example, an update of African members in the database or promoting the participation of African schools in activities or competitions, and for Africa Member States to further be informed and engaged in the network.
98. The team did not obtain any document on ASPnet contribution to the Gender Equality Action Plans in UNESCO's 39 C/5 and 40 C/5 Programme & Budget<sup>93</sup>, or mainstreaming gender into the Network's work. Certain gender mainstreaming practices were observed in Zimbabwe, where environmental education projects like at Sihlengeni Primary School integrated gender-sensitive practices in the activities through an emphasis on both schoolboys and girls' involvement. Survey findings indicate that ASPnet is relevant to address needs related to gender equality through education.<sup>94</sup>

91 UNESCO ASPnet Strategy Implementation Plan 2022-2024.

92 UNESCO Webpage. Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in basic education in Namibia and Zimbabwe. Available [here](#).

93 UNESCO. 40 C/5 RP Workplan number 9077: Contribution of the UNESCO ASPnet to Target 4.7 of the 2030 Education Agenda.

94 Survey launched by the evaluation team, N=118, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about ASPnet? ASPnet is a relevant initiative to address challenges related to gender equality in education" Responses respectively = 81% (NCs); 21% (NatComs). More than 80% of the NCs and NatComs agree or strongly agree with its relevance.

**Finding 17: The evaluation found various examples of achievements towards the outcomes expected under each of the four pillars, but such results are standalone and differ strongly between countries (Global North vs Global South) and within countries (usually urban vs rural).**

99. In the survey, schools reported using UNESCO resources and the evaluation found examples of innovative pilots and practices. However, there was limited evidence about the impact of ASPnet to empower schools to drive innovation (Pillar 1). At national level, numerous partnerships and pilot initiatives were successfully implemented. The “Getting Climate-Ready” initiative underlines the Network’s capacity at HQ level to leverage partnerships to implement pilot projects, and documents promising practises on WSA<sup>95</sup>. From 2016 to 2018, the ASPnet ICU partnered with ASPnet schools and NCs worldwide to identify and collate innovative good practises for adopting WSA on climate action into school operations. (e.g. dedicated climate action teams; integrative curricula; action-based learning). Through a partnership with the National Commission for China and East China Normal University (ECNU), ICUA used the “Futures of Education” initiative to assess students and teachers at Chinese ASPnet schools on how GCED, ESD and intangible heritage teaching can be implemented in China<sup>96</sup>.
100. There is limited documentation of recent (in the past 5 years) innovative pilots, projects and/or practices on WSA identified, analysed, and disseminated or supported by the ICU. Forty-seven per cent of surveyed NCs and NatComs noted that innovative projects were to some extent scaled up and mainstreamed in the country, while 20% did not see such scale up at all. Interviewed stakeholders pointed out that in contrast to top-down initiatives (developed at ICU), it is challenging for innovative ideas piloted at the school level to be scaled up or replicated on a wider scale without adequate resources and support<sup>97</sup>.

101. The evaluation found ad hoc examples and good practices of increased institutional and human capacities for education (Pillar 2), also through self-reporting by surveyed schools. At global level, the International Coordination Unit launched several activities aimed at building teacher and school capacities. For example, UNESCO’s project on *Media and Information Literacy (2022-2023)* was piloted with teacher educators in Kenya through ASPnet<sup>98</sup>. Also, ASPnet launched a *global Joint Invitation to Transform Teacher Education* with Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Such global efforts are noteworthy, but it is difficult to ascertain if there were any effects on the overall capacities of teachers in these schools as there was limited follow-up.
102. Surveyed member schools reported that being a member of ASPnet helps improve their capacities for education through, for example, the development of teaching methods, implementing new or innovative teaching methods, and/or increasing collaboration or co-creation by teachers. (Annex H).
103. Communication with members was affected by the OTA shutdown (Pillar 3). A large proportion of schools reported that they regularly check ASPnet communication channels<sup>99</sup>, but this communication was not updated and the digital platform to communicate and exchange between members ceased to exist in 2021. This has limited the capacity to learn about good examples on how ASPnet members initiatives can contribute to the education agenda. The survey results suggest that an advocacy process is taking place in countries in which member schools are being guided by the principles of transformative education, ESD, and GCE (Figure 11).

95 “Getting Climate-Ready: A Whole-School Approach to Climate Change” project.

96 UNESCO (2020): The Futures of Education: Report on the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in China. [Here](#).

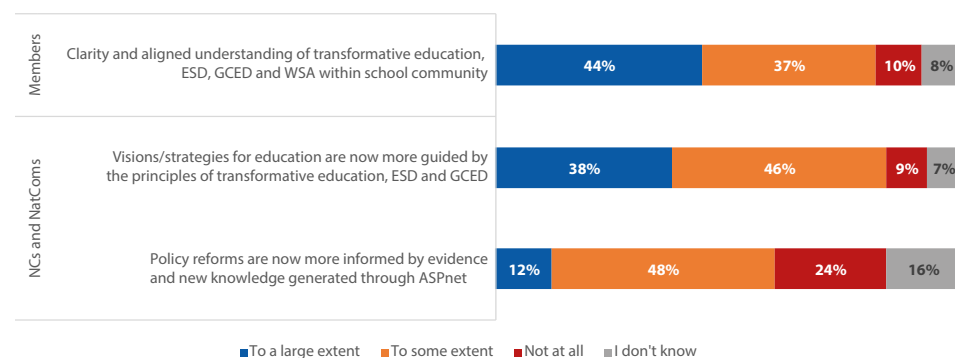
97 Interview with UNESCO staff.

98 <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/kenyan-teachers-trained-media-and-information-literacy-through-unesco-aspnet>

99 Source: Survey conducted by the evaluation team. “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: I regularly check ASPnet communication channels (website, platform, newsletter) and follow ASPnet news?” Addressed to schools (N=912). Responses: “To some extent” = 35% ; “To a large extent” = 56%.

104. One promising example of the network's potential for advocacy for transformative education was observed in France with the Eco-délégué (Student Environmental Delegates) initiative. The initiative, which promotes environmental education through a whole-school approach, was initially piloted by French ASPnet schools, and is today a nation-wide program backed by the French government with 250,000 Eco-délégué students nationally.

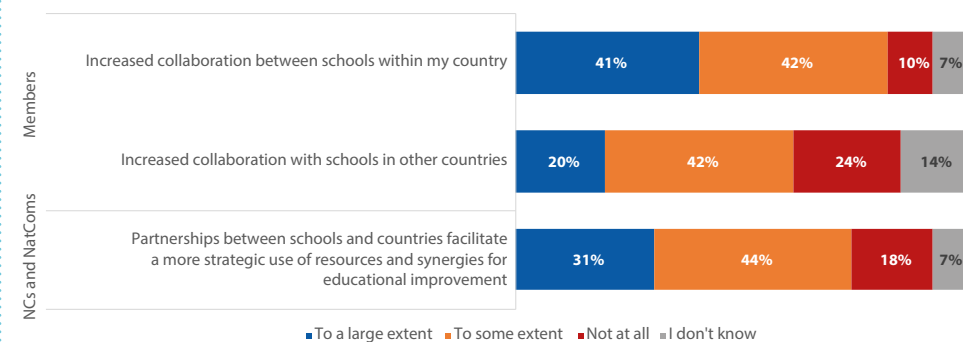
**Figure 11. Results of advocacy and communication efforts**



Source: Survey conducted by the evaluation team. "To what extent have you noticed the following changes or improvements in your country, as a result of ASPnet, between 2017-2023?" Addressed to National Coordinators, UNESCO National Commissions (N=118), schools (N=912).

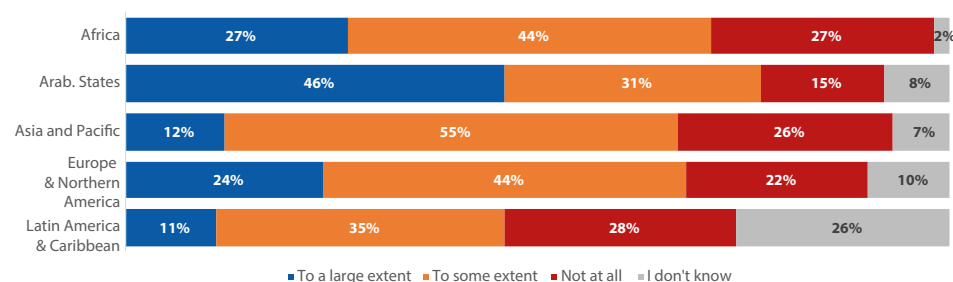
105. **There was limited progress towards strengthened networking and collaboration, and the level of involvement differed between regions (Pillar 4).** Over the past four years, more than 80% of school respondents said that ASPnet membership resulted in increased collaboration between member schools in the same country. This perception, however, was lower in terms of ASPnet supporting collaboration between schools from different countries. In interviews during the field visits (China, Lithuania and Zimbabwe) stakeholders raised the importance of the Network as a vehicle to exchange with other ASPnet schools in other countries and regions. Many interviewees highlighted that the role of the ICU in facilitating these exchanges is crucial but problematic without a working platform, and a database of members and updated list of NCs.

**Figure 12. Reported Improvements in Global networking & collaboration**



Source: Survey conducted by the evaluation team. "To what extent have you noticed the following changes or improvements in your country, as a result of ASPnet, between 2017-2023?" Addressed to National Coordinators, UNESCO National Commissions (N=118), schools (N=912).

106. There are regional differences in how schools perceive the collaboration with schools in other countries. In three regions (Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa), one quarter or more of school respondents reported that there has been no increased collaboration with schools outside of their country (Figure 13). In contrast, schools in Europe and Arab States reported more collaboration of this nature.

**Figure 13. Reported increased collaboration with schools in other countries – by region**

Source: Survey conducted by the evaluation team. "To what extent have you noticed the following changes or improvements in your country, as a result of ASPnet, between 2017-2023 - Increased collaboration?" Addressed to schools (N=912).

107. Collaboration at global and national levels, for example on the Global Student Forum and the Change Initiative, were affected by the ability of schools to participate in exchanges or global events. Interviews indicated that this disparity in schools' access to collaboration opportunities was noticeable between public and private schools, such as in France and the Philippines<sup>100</sup>. In Germany, strong coordination efforts between the ASPnet National Coordination as part of the German Commission for UNESCO and the ASPnet Coordinators of the different federal states and their 16 Ministries of Education of the Länder and the International Coordination Unit, enabled German ASPnet schools to regularly participate in seminars, youth camps, teachers' conferences, and international exchange programs with other schools. With financial support from the Federal Foreign Office of Germany it was possible to organize nationwide conferences for ASPnet principals in 2017, 2019, and 2022 to support the implementation of WSA in Germany and to strengthen international collaboration.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with stakeholders.

# Conclusions

108. The relevance of the Network, its (potential) added value in the global education landscape, and the continued and growing interest of schools to participate in the Network is definite. There is a clear rationale for ASPnet to continue its existence to support international collaboration in schools across the globe. However, the evidence shows that up until March 2024, the Network was suffering from challenges in its strategic coordination, communication, financial and human resources management, and monitoring mechanisms, which hinder the Network from exploiting its full potential. Challenges related to Member State ownership and engagement in the programme are also among the factors that have hindered ASPnet from reaching its full potential.

## 4.1 Relevance and coherence

109. After 70 years of existence there is a clear consensus among stakeholders that the Network remains relevant, particularly as a tool for schools and other actors to jointly address and teach about issues of concern at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Climate change and sustainability, as well as cultural heritage, are the main topics that schools find highly relevant and important to include in their teaching and overall school practices, and which align with the priorities of national education actors. Furthermore, the opportunity for exchange with other schools globally is a unique value presented by the Network that member schools much appreciate.

110. For the ASPnet to realize its vision as a global network there is a need for strong ownership from Member States. The evaluation found that National Coordinators play an important role in the performance of national networks, and to do so, they must be actively supported in their functions by governments, including National Commissions. This support includes regularly monitoring ASPnet schools to ensure that they continue acting in accordance with ASPnet criteria and extends to ensuring that national ASPnets are adequately resourced. Ultimately, the success of ASPnet also hinges on Member State's support, ownership, and involvement.

111. The engagement of UNESCO Field Offices is another area that can be strengthened. UNESCO Regional and National Offices formally have no defined role in the ASPnet, which limits opportunities at national and regional level for joint activities (and cost-sharing) and advocacy. The case studies have shown positive results when ROs have taken the initiative to organize regional NC meetings or organize joint events with ASPnet and other projects.

112. Finally, over the evaluation period, the ASPnet did not benefit from an agreed communication plan with stakeholders, which impacted the ability to both use and support the Network across its Education Sector thematic sections at HQ, entities namely Category I Institutes and Category II Centers and Field Offices. As a result, opportunities for the Network to rely on UNESCO's internal expertise, engage in joint activities with other units or institutions on topics of common interest, and disseminate relevant materials prepared by UNESCO's entities, remain limited.

## 4.2 Efficiency

113. An analysis on the efficiency of ASPnet was difficult. The evaluation team did not initially receive clear budget amounts and spending patterns. The team requested support from the IOS internal audit office to review the Regular Programme funds, education special account and other Voluntary Contributions. Based on this analysis it was established that in the period from (2016 –2025), ASPnet ICU received around 2 million USD from the different sources, or an average of around 200,000 USD per year (Regular Programme and Extrabudgetary combined). A more systematic control of funds would reinforce accountability.

114. At the school-level, the absence of resources is a clear and crucial hindering factor (particularly considering school exchanges), and richer schools clearly have a greater ability to organize ASPnet activities compared to disadvantaged schools..
115. The evaluation found shortcomings in the management, monitoring, and supervision of ASPnet at various levels. One challenge for the ICU was the repeated change in direct supervisors during the evaluation period, affecting systematic follow-up, direction, and supervision.
116. National Coordinators reported different experiences in communication and support received from the International Coordination Unit. A majority of National Coordinators in the survey reported guidance from ICU on a “regular” or “sometimes” basis, but interviews revealed that communication was irregular and differentiated (not the same for all NCs). Some countries resorted to NCs establishing their own platforms, translations, or initiatives. The use of Regional Offices of UNESCO was found to be a good practice in terms of coordination and monitoring, by bringing NCs from the region together, engaging schools in regional projects, and brainstorming ideas for a common agenda.
117. Gaps in monitoring are evidenced most prominently by the outdated database for school members and NCs, and the lack of the online platform to support both efficiency (monitoring) and effectiveness (schools’ exchange). There were few monitoring reports from National Coordinators in the evaluation period.
120. There have been limited efforts to ensure that all NCs are indeed active and monitoring their schools, even though the evaluation found that the effectiveness of the Network is supported strongly by the individual (pro)activeness of NCs. An ASPnet platform for identifying all network members, and for sending applications and interacting between network members, will help in this regard.
121. To follow the contribution of the network to SDG 4 it is important to have a clear picture of the network, when and how schools were admitted, and their current status and alignment with the programme.

### 4.3 ASPnet effectiveness

118. At present, ASPnet is working as a set of national networks rather than a network that can steer expected results at the global level.
119. The evaluation found various examples of achievements towards the outcomes expected under each of the four pillars. Active schools in the Network clearly take part in or organise some ASPnet activities, and the survey shows that there may be results stemming from these ASPnet activities towards improved education. The observed activities were noteworthy, but there are differences between countries and within countries (usually urban vs rural). The evaluation also noted that some countries are interested in being part of the network, but in the absence of a National Coordinator, they would need support from the International Coordination Unit.



# Recommendations

## **Recommendation 1: Strengthen the strategic positioning of ASPnet in the Education Sector to ensure that its mandate is conducted effectively and efficiently.**

The Executive Board requested this evaluation to help strengthen UNESCO ASPnet. This Network commemorated its 70th anniversary in 2023, and as of today, it remains unique and relevant working with education institutions throughout the world to promote UNESCO's values. However, to ensure its long-term contribution within the Education Sector, ASPnet must have a strategic framework that clearly reflects its expected contribution, results, and outcomes, as well as cooperation with other Units, Divisions, and Sectors.

### **Suggested actions:**

- 1.1. Validate and approve ASPnet's Strategic Framework and regularly monitor ASPnet's contribution to the sector's strategy, including UNESCO Global Priorities (Africa and Gender Equality).
- 1.2. Allocate or mobilize resources to cover the basic tasks of the International Coordination Unit in ASPnet as well as catalytic actions needed for resource mobilisation.
- 1.3. Enhance oversight on the annual progress, achievements, and delivery of the ASPnet Strategic Framework to ensure efficiency on allocated resources.
- 1.4. Explore opportunities for ASPnet to join or support projects by other UNESCO Sectors and share costs accordingly.
- 1.5. Strengthen the role of UNESCO Field Offices to support ASPnet initiatives at the country and regional levels and to capitalise on potential synergies and nominate an ASPnet focal point in each of the Regional Offices (ASPnet Evaluation 2016). The Regional and National Offices should be included in the coordination framework to enhance the quality and frequency of monitoring and support to NCs.

### **Implementation of the recommendation:**

- Addressed to: Education Sector Senior Management in collaboration with ASPnet International Coordination Unit.
- Timeline: January 2025.

## **Recommendation 2: Enhance ASPnet to re-engage stakeholders who play significant roles in the network.**

ASPnet operates as a system: education institutions, National Coordinators, and the International Coordination Unit must work together to coordinate, organize, and share information to all network members. In addition, other stakeholders such as National Commissions or Field Offices can also have a positive impact on ASPnet performance.

The expectations, roles, and responsibilities of different stakeholders are unclear, which has an impact on the ASPnet's work at the national and global levels. To realize its full potential, ASPnet requires increased participation, communication, and monitoring of the NCs so that they, in turn, can better support members.

### **Suggested actions:**

- 2.1 Update the ASPnet guidelines from 2019 (for members and NCs) and communicate on a regular basis on the rules, functions, and responsibilities assigned to manage the network at the national and global level.
- 2.2 Reinstate the annual monitoring progress reports of the network sent by the NCs and identify challenges and good practices that can be highlighted.
- 2.3 Clarify roles and responsibilities of the International Coordination Unit to strengthen ASPnet and allocate the resources needed to assure this function.

### **Implementation of the recommendation:**

- Addressed to: Education Sector Senior Management in collaboration with ASPnet International Coordination Unit.
- Timeline: June 2025

### **Recommendation 3: Reinforce ASPnet membership management and monitoring of the Network**

Essential contact information to communicate with ASPnet NCs and educational institutions is missing. The databases of NCs and members include outdated or duplicate contacts and up until April 2024, only 43 national networks are considered active.. There is inadequate information on the current list of NCs and which members are still part of network, or need to be removed.

This challenge was recognized in the 2016 IOS ASPnet evaluation.

#### **Suggested actions:**

- 3.1. Develop an online platform for ASPnet to ensure that communication, application of membership, country reports, and knowledge exchange can be performed by the ASPnet ICU.
- 3.2. Ensure that the membership application platform is available in at least three languages (Spanish, English and French) and includes short, clear questions and requests for members to comply with that are relevant for the search function of the platform.
- 3.3. Streamline the application and certification process, drawing on the UNITWIN experience for membership management.
- 3.4. Establish a unique channel (online system) for membership application and management (e.g., submission of reports) and follow up on a current basis.
- 3.5. Introduce and apply sunset clauses and a renewal procedure for members: for example, conditions for membership renewal (ASPnet Evaluation 2016).
- 3.6. Monitor network achievements in the field and provide feedback and support as needed to strengthen the network.
- 3.7. Ensure an updated list of NCs and members in collaboration with Member States' National Commissions (this includes ensuring each country has only one person responsible and listed in the database, is indeed active, and has the correct contact details provided)
- 3.8. Develop a collective strategy to update ASPnet members' database by working closely with NCs of each country to update the list of recorded member institutions and verify that minimum data requirements (name, focal point, address, and email) are met.

#### **Implementation of the recommendation:**

- » Addressed to: Education Sector with support from ADM/DBS (for the platform)
- » Timeline: By January 2025

### **Recommendation 4: Improve communication and exchange efforts to strengthen ASPnet's international collaboration**

Since the OTA shutdown in early 2021, ASPnet has operated without an online platform, which has hindered exchange between members and applications for membership. Members noted that they must rely on NCs or NatComs to facilitate communication and knowledge exchange inside the network.

As a result, the exchanges and communication functions of the network were compromised, reducing the potential of the ASPnet to work closely with their members. An online platform is being developed by UNESCO HQ. It should include the functionality of exchange between members.

#### **Suggested actions:**

- 4.1 Develop and implement a communication plan to advocate for ASPnet's work. Ensure materials are disseminated to the NCs and ASPnet members in at least in three languages (English, French and Spanish); and include the Permanent Delegations in copy of events and initiatives when the ICU disseminates new opportunities, so they may support communication with National Commissions.
- 4.2 Enhance opportunities for exchange and interaction between education institutions, using a dedicated online platform for members only. This should include search facilities and interactive tools for members to connect through the platform, to exchange best practices by members.

#### **Implementation of the recommendation:**

- » Addressed to: ASPnet International Coordination Unit with support from ADM/DBS
- » Timeline: January 2025



## Annexes

**Annex A.** Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)

**Annex B.** Literature

**Annex C.** Persons Interviewed

**Annex D.** Bio data of the external evaluation team



**Technical Annexes: Available upon request at [ios@unesco.org](mailto:ios@unesco.org)**

**Annex E.** Evaluation matrix

**Annex F.** Intervention logic and impact pathways

**Annex G.** Case studies reports

**Annex H.** Survey results of ASPnet members, by region

**Annex I.** Survey results of National Coordinators and National Commissions, by region

**Annex J.** Review of ASPnet members databases



# Annex A. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)

## Introduction

UNESCO's Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) seeks to promote transformative education and empower learners for peace and sustainability. In 2023 it celebrated its seventieth anniversary. Over the years, ASPnet has involved around 3.5 million individuals (students, teachers, principals and school communities) in over 12,000 schools in 182 countries. The Network operates at international and national levels with three clear thematic areas of focus: education for sustainable development, global citizenship education and intercultural and heritage learning<sup>1</sup>. The present evaluation was requested during the 217<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board and its results will be presented during the 220<sup>th</sup> session<sup>2</sup>.

## 1. Background

1. The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) was created in 1953 as an experimental initiative<sup>3</sup> to coordinate activities in schools of member states to *“encourage the development of education in the aims and activities of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies and in the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”*<sup>4</sup>. ASPnet principles are grounded in the four pillars of learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together<sup>5</sup>.

2. The network acts as a *“laboratory of ideas”* to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 target 4.7 - Education for sustainable development and global citizenship<sup>6</sup> - by pursuing four main goals<sup>7</sup>:
  - Empowering schools across the world to drive innovation and transformation and to act as living laboratories for global citizenship, intercultural understanding and sustainability (**Schools as laboratories of ideas**).
  - Strengthening international cooperation and collaboration, knowledge sharing and partnerships between countries and schools (**Global networking and collaboration**).
  - Developing institutional and human capacities for innovative teaching and participatory learning, particularly through the whole-school approach (**Capacity-development**).
  - Promoting transformative education and the whole-school approach for quality improvement and increasing uptake within and beyond ASPnet, with the wider public and policy-makers (**Communication and advocacy**).

1 ASPnet webpage: <https://www.unesco.org/en/aspnet>

2 Executive Board – 217th Session (Paris, 4 – 18 October 2023). Decision 9<sup>o</sup>... Requests the Director-General to conduct an evaluation of the efficiency of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)'s performance, and to report to the Executive Board thereon at its 220th session, while implementing a functional digital platform for the registration of new ASPnet members<sup>2</sup>.

3 Project “Co-ordinated Experimental Activities in Education for Living in a World Community”, with the participation of 33 secondary schools in 16 Member States.

4 UNESCO Associated School Project Network (ASPnet): Historical Review 1953 – 2003. ED.2003/WS/33. 2003.

5 Delors, Jacques, 1996. Learning: the treasure within; report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (highlights). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000109590>

6 SDG 4.7 - by 2030 ensure all learners acquire 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.

7 ASPnet webpage: <https://www.unesco.org/en/aspnet/need-know>

3. In the last approved ASPnet Strategy 2014 – 2021, the goal of ASPnet was to “*promote quality education in pursuit of peace and sustainable development*”<sup>8</sup>. The draft of the Strategic Framework 2022-2030 of ASPnet (approved by ASPnet National Coordinators during a global online and in-person meetings in 2022 and 2023; however the final approval by ADG/ED is in discussion) seeks to support peace, human rights, intercultural understanding and sustainable development, in particular in 3 thematic action areas: i) Global Citizenship Education (GCED) that includes a promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence; ii) Education for sustainable development (ESD), with a focus on climate change; and iii) Intercultural learning and the appreciation of cultural diversity and heritage.
4. During 2016, an evaluation of the ASPnet was carried out to guide the strategic direction and the reform process of the network. This evaluation will focus on the results obtained since then and will follow the implementation of the accepted recommendations. The scope of this evaluation is presented in Section 3 of this document.

**ASPnet: within the UNESCO Education Sector's Programme and Budget (38, 39, 40, 41 C/5)**

5. In UNESCO's Programmes and Budgets for 2016-2017 (38C/5), 2018-2019 (39 C/5) and 2020-2021 (40 C/5), ASPnet contributed to the Education Sector's Expected Results and Main Lines of Action (MLA), although it should be noted that these were not wholly specified for ASPnet, but also for result areas such as GCED, ESD, Health Education, which read as follows:

**38 C/5: Approved programme and budget, 2016-2017: second biennium of the 2014-2017 quadrennium**

**Main line of action 1- Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high-quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all:**

**Expected result 7:** National capacities strengthened to develop and implement technology policies in education, particularly in teacher *training* and professional development.

**Main line of action 2 - Empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens:**

**Expected result 8:** Member States integrate peace and human rights education components in education policies and practices<sup>9</sup>

**39 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2018-2019: first biennium of the 2018-2021 quadrennium and 40 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2020-2021: second biennium of the 2018-2021 quadrennium**

**Main line of action 1: Support Member States in the implementation of SDG 4<sup>10</sup>:**

**Expected result 6:** National capacities strengthened to equip learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to live healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as responsible global citizens.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021 Global Network of Schools addressing Global Challenges: Building Global Citizenship and promoting Sustainable Development.

<sup>9</sup> 38 C/5 Programme and Budget. Pag. 24

<sup>10</sup> 40 C/5 Programme and Budget

<sup>11</sup> 39 C/5 Programme and Budget

6. For the 2022-2023 biennia (41 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2022-2025: first biennium 2022-2023)<sup>12</sup>, ASPnet must contribute to output 7: ED 3 “Learners empowered to lead healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as creative and responsible global citizens” and strategic objective 1, “Strategic Objective 1: Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital era”.
7. During 2023, as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the creation of ASPnet, the member states held in-person, hybrid and virtual discussions around the importance of the network but also the need to modernize its infrastructure, increase strategic participation and communications, and analyse the feasibility of strengthening synergies with UNESCO institutes, centers, field offices as well as other UNESCO Networks. Following two resolutions that were discussed at the 217th Executive Board, some countries raised the issue of evaluating the general activities of ASPnet as a precondition to further discussing the Youth Ambassador Initiative. During the 217<sup>th</sup> Executive Board, a request was made to the Director General to assess the effectiveness of ASPnet performance<sup>13</sup>.

### Governance and Membership

8. ASPnet is composed of three main actors that need to coordinate and work together for the network to function<sup>14</sup>:
  - a) An **International Coordination Unit** (ASPnet Unit) at the Education Sector in UNESCO Headquarters, is responsible for the global coordination and the network management. It provides guidance to the National Coordinators, certifies ASPnet members and leads the planning of UNESCO global projects and promotes synergies with UNESCO programme sectors, field offices, institutes and networks. The international coordination’s role includes communication with the National Coordinators, promoting collaboration between countries, developing tools to increase the visibility of the ASPnet and reporting to UNESCO governing bodies on the progress of the

network activities. ASPnet was under the Division of Peace and Sustainable Development until May 2023 when it was moved to join in the Division of Education 2030 to better link with youth work in collaboration with the Section for SDG 4 Leadership (ED/E2030/SDG). ASPnet was supervised by different responsibilities (including Directors and interims) from August 2022 to February 2024.

- b) The **National coordination**, designated by the country’s National Commission for UNESCO<sup>15</sup>, is responsible for overseeing the operation and management, the implementation of activities in the country and the quality assurance of ASPnet at the country level. The task also involves communication with the international coordination to provide information about the ASPnet activities, contribute to knowledge exchange management and represent members at national, regional and international levels.
  - c) **The member schools**, who are the main actors of ASPnet, are responsible for the development and implementation of their own projects and initiatives, sharing their experiences with their national coordinators and other schools of ASPnet and for promoting collective learning.
9. It is expected that with the support from the ASPnet Unit (UNESCO Headquarters), National Coordinators and member schools develop global projects, initiatives, and campaigns designed to empower students to act locally and globally for peace and sustainability. Since 2017, ASPnet has piloted numerous projects, such as a global consultation on the futures of education (2020-21), a global campaign to trash hack and act for sustainable development (2020-21), a global project to promote global citizenship and sustainable development in teacher education (2020-2021), a regional project on intercultural and heritage learning (2020-2021), etc.

<sup>12</sup> 41 C/5 Programme and Budget.

<sup>13</sup> Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 217th session, point 9.

<sup>14</sup> ASPnet - Guide for National Coordinators (2018).

<sup>15</sup> In some cases, the National coordinator is a member of the National Commission Team.

10. ASPnet membership is open to any public or private schools and teacher training institutions, recognized by national authorities, that provide formal and non-formal education at the pre-primary, primary, secondary levels as well as technical and vocational education and training institutions. The main criterion for membership is the voluntary commitment made by the school leadership and the school community (teachers, students and their parents/caregivers) to promote the values, ideals and work of UNESCO through<sup>16</sup>:
  - the use of innovative and participatory methodologies and approaches,
  - provide safe, sustainable, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all their students,
  - interact with other institutions in their own country and other countries.
11. To become a member of ASPnet, the establishment (school or institution) must submit an expression of interest which is reviewed by the national coordinator: if accepted, the candidate must complete an application form that serves to recommend the establishment for adherence; the final decision is taken by the International Coordinator. The membership has a fixed duration (3 to 5 years) and can be renewed or terminated when the member fails to meet the requirements or doesn't submit an annual report for 2 consecutive years.
12. Membership of the ASPnet constitutes a moral contract between the school and UNESCO. However, the members are also committed to carrying out several tasks to ensure quality in the operation and management of ASPnet as well as to ensure that members contribute to the network (Table 1).

**Table 1. Requirements for ASPnet members**

- Submission of an annual work plan that describes expected achievements to the national coordinator.
- Submission of an annual report to the national coordinator, following the template provided by the National Coordinator.
- Participation, every school year, in at least one global or regional project, contest, or campaign proposed by UNESCO, or in a related national activity proposed by the National Coordinator.
- Celebration of at least two United Nations days, involving the entire school community.
- External display of a sign of ASPnet membership at the school, in accordance with the rules and regulations of UNESCO.
- Informing their school community about the ASPnet membership (through staff, parent and student meetings; posters; school website, etc.).
- Updating their information at least twice every year (contact data, school statistics and activities).

<sup>16</sup> ASPnet - Guide for National Coordinators (2018).



### ASPnet's resources

13. The ASPnet Unit is part of the Division for Education 2030 under UNESCO's Education Sector and coordinates the Network at the international level. In terms of human resources, the 39 C/5 Approved programme and budget (2018-2019) states that the unit was integrated by two Professionals and one general service post. In the 40 C/5 Approved programme and budget (2020-2021) considered two Professionals, but the unit was also supported by one general services. In addition, one Project Appointment supported the team for 26 months (from February 2020 until April 2022) and 1 Temporary Appointment supported the team for 13 months (from August 2021 until July 2022). The 41 C/5 (2022-2023) biennium stated that the ASPnet Unit was officially integrated by 3 professionals<sup>17</sup> and 1 general services staff. Additionally, a Temporary Appointment supports the team for 6 months since October 2023, and the unit is supported by external consultants for specific tasks. Since December 2022, a sponsored trainee is supporting the team.
14. Until January 2021, ASPnet relied on the "Online tools for ASPnet – OTA" platform to exchange information among members, monitor registered schools, and facilitate administrative and project management. In 2021, the platform was closed by UNESCO's system area for upgrading and cyber security improvement due to a security issue without any notice and has been unavailable for 182 National Coordinators, school members, National Commissions and Permanent Delegations as well as for public users. The information was never recovered. The shutdown has severely affected UNESCO's largest network ASPnet, online submissions of membership requests, information and knowledge sharing as well as collaboration among the members. Applications are now sent through a temporary solution (SharePoint) and follow up must be done manually on an individual basis. The network's activities are monitored by the ASPnet international coordination (at UNESCO Headquarters) through specific consultations with national coordinators. The newly developed tool will only support the membership management, including the application process and the public membership directory, but not the specific activities of the network.
15. The re-establishment of the digital infrastructure has been a crucial issue for ASPnet since the shutdown because it affected the management of the network's data and applications as well as the community platform. The ASPnet Unit has invited 182 National Coordinators to update their information in preparation for migration into the new system developed in cooperation with the Bureau of Digital Business Solutions (DBS) in 2023. So far, 63 countries (that represents around 6,000 members institutions) responded which was also highlighted during the Executive Board by the Assistant Director General for Education. The restoration of the community platform remains an area of work with other areas of UNESCO including DBS.
16. The financial resources allocated to the ASPnet have not been stable since the last evaluation of ASPnet in 2016. During the 2016/2017, 2018/2019, and 2020/2021 biennia, the regular budget was 100,000 USD, and extrabudgetary funds amounting to 1 M, were used until the end of 2020. In the biennium 2020/2021, the regular budget remained stable, and Extrabudgetary Funds of 40,000 USD were received. In the biennium 2022/2023, the regular budget decreased to 80,000 USD, but different sources of extrabudgetary funds were received (Table 2).

<sup>17</sup> Due to an extended leave and less than full-time availability of one of the professional staff members, the unit has not been staffed with 2 full-time professionals continuously since 2022.



**Table 2. Financial Resources allocated to ASPnet (USD)**

Biennium	2016/ 2017	2018/2019	2020/2021	2022/2023	2024/2025
<b>Regular Budget (RB)</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>80,000</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Extrabudgetary funds</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>452,106</b>	<b>30,000</b>
People's Republic of China to support GCED in Africa on activities for the Teacher Education Institutions (TEI) <sup>18</sup>	1,000,000				
Teacher section			20,000		
UNESCO IITE for teacher surveys for digital knowledge			20,000		
The Foundation for Environmental Education for Young Reporters for the Environment competition				60,000 <sup>19</sup>	30,000
Canada for the indigenous Arts Publication				37,106 <sup>20</sup>	
CI for Media Literacy				15,000	
Section of "Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education" for conducting a needs assessment survey with ASPnet teachers in Ukraine's neighboring countries				35,000	
Netherlands for the "Memory of the World" project				32,000	
Fostering global citizens through the memory of the world				20,000	
NHK for climate change education				15,000	
France for the 70th anniversary of ASPnet				100,000	
Section for Teacher Development for the dissemination of a training course on Digital Pedagogies to ASPnet teachers in Ukraine				78,000	
Executive Office for rebuilding the digital infrastructure				60,000	

Source: ASPnet Unit

<sup>18</sup> This fund was put into the special account, and therefore no time limit was allocated.

<sup>19</sup> Two transfers of USD30,000 were done, in 2022 and 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Equivalent to CAD 50,000.

### ASPnet Key Initiatives

17. In the last five years, ASPnet has promoted initiatives such as<sup>21</sup>:

- **ASPnet brought school community voices to the global debate on the Futures of Education:** ASPnet students, teachers and parents contributed to UNESCO's Futures of Education initiative which aims to rethink education and help shape the future. From September 2020 until February 2021, ASPnet mobilized over 2500 school leaders, teachers, students and their parents from across the globe to reflect on: *How can education promote sustainable development and global citizenship, not only today but also tomorrow? How should what, how and where we learn evolve in the future?* Their insights were brought together in one [global report](#) and informed UNESCO's International Commission on the Futures of Education and the global flagship report [Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education](#), published in November 2021.
- **ASPnet initiated the global Trash Hack campaign for sustainable development:** In September 2020, on World Cleanup Day, UNESCO, with kind support from the Government of Japan, launched the global campaign Trash Hack encouraging young people worldwide to take action to promote sustainable development, reflect on their actions, and share their learnings. To support school communities and teachers, UNESCO ASPnet and the Section of ESD developed a practical guide [Trash Hack: Action Learning for Sustainable Development](#) published by UNESCO in English, French and Spanish. Students and teachers used the guide to trash hack their classrooms, schools and communities, and created videos and images to submit to UNESCO and the Young Reporters for the Environment Competition showing their work.
- **ASPnet has been driving innovation of teacher education through communities of practice:** From 2019-2021, ASPnet Teacher Education Institutions formed a global community of practice to reorient teacher education and training towards transformative education for global citizenship and sustainable development. Through online meetings, ASPnet deans, teacher educators, student teachers as well as National Coordinators from 18 countries together with UNESCO and experts exchanged promising practices on how

to transform teaching and learning for global citizenship and sustainable development and to initiate change through collaborative projects. For example, teacher educators and student teachers from Argentina, Belgium, Finland, Japan, Kenya, the Philippines and Senegal set up an e-twinning mechanism to experience and practice intercultural collaboration and to jointly develop innovative and transformative learning activities for GCED-ESD. The global community of practice issued [a dynamic, shared vision for initial teacher education and invites for global collaborative action](#).

- **ASPnet has been supporting inter-cultural learning and cultural diversity:** From 2019-2021, ASPnet schools in the European Union were involved in an [innovative pilot project on teaching and learning with living heritage](#) as part of the UNESCO/EU project [«Engaging youth for an inclusive and sustainable Europe»](#). Two major outputs produced are a [resource kit for teachers](#) and [10 pilot projects in ASPnet schools](#).
- **ASPnet has been promoting a whole-school approach to climate change:** From 2016 to 2018, ASPnet implemented the [Getting Climate-Ready: A Whole-School Approach to Climate Change](#) project which included more than 250 schools in 25 countries. The pilot explored the possibility of a WSA to climate change at a global scale, with students in diverse economic, geographic, social, and cultural contexts, as well as from different age groups. The WSA approach means that students, teachers, principals, school staff, parents, local citizens, community organizations and the private sector work together to embed sustainability in four domains: School Governance, Teaching and Learning, Community Partnerships, and Facilities and Operations. ASPnet is now seeking partners to scale it up and invite thousands of learners and schools worldwide to prioritise climate action and show the way for other schools.
- Since the second quarter of 2020, the ASPnet Newsletter "CONNECT" connects the members and informs them about recent developments, projects and achievements. It started as a weekly newsletter and is currently published on average on a quarterly basis.

21 ASPnet webpage: <https://www.unesco.org/en/aspnet/need-know>

- Since 2020, ASPnet organized numerous webinars for students to connect with member schools directly. Some examples are the ASPnet Global Forum in May 2020 and May 2021, the Global Student Forum with Youth Leaders in December 2021, and the Global Student Forum in February 2024.
  - In 2021, ASPnet conducted teachers' surveys with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE). Through 6-week workshops with Primary school Teachers in Africa, approximately 100 teachers were trained from 12 African countries (to compensate the physical meeting planned in Nairobi).
18. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the activities on the ground because most countries closed primary and secondary schools for months. As a result, virtual channels became increasingly important to communicate and connect the school network, but this happened at the same time, ASPnet lost its virtual platform (OTA). The information was never recovered.
  19. In the last executive meeting, a feasibility study on the creation of the status of Young Ambassador of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) was done and a proposal for its implementation will be presented in the 220<sup>th</sup> session. The proposal is that Young Ambassadors could serve as catalysts for the network, *"promoting UNESCO ASPnet values through their representative function, strengthening the interaction and solidarity among ASPnet schools at the national, regional, and international levels, as well as [to] increas[ing] awareness of UNESCO and ASPnet"*<sup>22</sup>

## 2. Purpose and Use

20. The present evaluation was requested by Member States during the 217<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board and the UNESCO Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Evaluation Office is conducting this evaluation of the ASPnet as part of its corporate biannual evaluation plan.
21. The main purpose of the evaluation is to generate findings and recommendations on the effectiveness and the efficiency of ASPnet in supporting the core values and mission of UNESCO by fostering cooperation, promotion of knowledge sharing and partnerships among like-minded schools around the world. The evaluation will provide accountability for what has been done. It will generate

information to support decision-makers and offer insights about best practices. Additionally, it will identify lessons to consider for UNESCO's future work.

22. This evaluation will include both, a summative and a formative dimension. With a retrospective analysis, it will review and assess what has been achieved since the last evaluation, covering activities up to 2016. The analysis will examine what has been working, under what conditions or environments, and identify the main challenges faced by the network. These elements will allow the identification of lessons learned as well as areas for improvement to increase the efficiency and potential impact of ASPnet.
23. This evaluation will also analyse the actions of ASPnet to mainstream UNESCO's two global priorities (Africa and gender equality). During the evaluation process, special attention will be given to including all interested actors in a participatory and respectful manner, promoting gender equality.
24. The primary users of the evaluation will be UNESCO Member States, UNESCO Senior Management, specifically the Education Sector and the ASPnet Unit. Secondary users will be other UNESCO initiatives that coordinate with ASPnet as well as other members of the network.
25. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the UNESCO Education Sector and the results will be presented to the 220<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board in autumn of 2024 to feed the discussion about ASPnet modernization as well as the implementation of the ASPnet Young Ambassadors initiative.

## 3. Objectives and Scope

26. The main objectives of the evaluation are:
  - Assess the overall effectiveness and contribution of ASPnet to encourage innovation and transformation of education at local, national and global levels, including the identification of enabling and constraining factors that affected its performance.
  - Examine how ASPnet has added value to UNESCO's efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship.
  - Generate lessons learned and provide strategic recommendations to inform UNESCO's Education Sector and the member states about ASPnet performance.

<sup>22</sup> Executive Board – 217<sup>th</sup> Session (Paris, 4 – 18 October 2023). 217 EX/9 – Item 9 of the provisional agenda.

27. To achieve these objectives, the evaluation will use the OECD DAC criteria as an approach to organize evaluation questions coming from the documentary review and preliminary interviews.<sup>23</sup> The final evaluation questions will be revisited and refined during the inception phase of the evaluation:

**a) Relevance and Coherence:**

- » Is the work of ASPnet relevant and coherent with UNESCO's strategic and programming frameworks (C4 and C5), strategic objectives and outcomes, to relevant crosscutting priorities and with the national needs of the member states?
- » What is ASPnet's positioning, niche and comparative strengths - both functionally and thematically - within the broader landscape of education?
- » Is ASPnet complementing, synergizing and coordinating with other UNESCO entities (institutes, centers, field offices, networks)? Are there lessons learned from the collaboration with other UNESCO entities?
- » Are UNESCO global priorities Gender Equality and Priority Africa reflected in the ASPnet at various levels (strategy, programming, funding, implementation)?
- » How can ASPnet be positioned to strengthen its identity through its work interventions?

**b) Effectiveness:**

- » What have been the contributions and results of ASPnet to UNESCO Education Sector priorities?
- » Are there differentiated results between school members, countries or regions?
- » What have been the enabling and hindering factors affecting the performance of the ASPnet?
- » How effective is the ASPnet Unit's infrastructure in supporting National Coordinators and Members?

- » How effective has ASPnet been in internally engaging and communicating with the diverse groups of stakeholders in the network (International Coordinator, National Coordinators, Members)?
- » What can we learn from the ASPnet performance to promote inclusive transformative education?
- » How is gender equality effectively applied and mainstreamed across the objectives and implementation of the ASPnet interventions in line with UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality Framework and gender markers?

**c) Efficiency:**

- » How efficient is the operation and coordination of the ASPnet at the international, national and school level?
- » How efficient were the management (at the different levels) and the governance structure of the ASPnet?
- » How efficiently has ASPnet used its resources to achieve its outcomes?
- » How efficient is the monitoring and reporting system of the ASPnet?
- » How efficient is ASPnet's resource mobilization strategy in supporting its initiatives?

28. In 2016 an evaluation of ASPnet<sup>24</sup> was conducted to guide the strategic direction and the reform process of the network. The analysis provided six recommendations (Table 3) that were accepted by management. The current evaluation will focus on the role and activities of ASPnet between 2017 to 2023, including how recommendations from the previous evaluation were implemented and whether this influenced performance.

<sup>23</sup> Relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.

<sup>24</sup> Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) 2016. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245418>

**Table 3. Recommendations of the 2016 Evaluation of ASPnet**

- **Recommendation 1 (Strengthen Governance) - Accepted:**

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) - Accepted:**

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) – Partially accepted:**

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) - Accepted:**

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) - Accepted:**

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) - Accepted:**

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.

## 4. Approach and Methodology

29. In line with UNESCO's Evaluation Policy 2022-2029, the evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluations Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluations<sup>25</sup> and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations<sup>26</sup>. The evaluation team must also ensure that ethical, human rights, environmental, inclusion and gender equality principles are duly integrated into all stages of the evaluation process. The sampling strategy must ensure adequate gender representation and participation of youth and, where applicable, representatives of vulnerable, marginalized, or underrepresented groups, as well as adequate regional representation<sup>27</sup>.
30. The evaluation will adopt a consultative and transparent approach, keeping stakeholders informed throughout the evaluation process. The evidence and information collected during the evaluation will be triangulated from multiple data sources to support its validity and make analysis more reliable.
31. The information will be collected using a mixed-methods approach to incorporate qualitative and quantitative data. The data collection methods may include, but should not be limited to:
  - **Desk Study and document review** of UNESCO's policies, in particular those related with the education sector; ASPnet documents and products (for example, newsletters), including school members and national coordinators databases, reports of ASPnet campaigns, and other relevant documents and online resources.
  - **Revision and or refining of a Theory of Change** for the ASPnet and its related activities: based on the proposal included in the Draft ASPnet Strategic Framework for Action 2022-2030 which can be discussed in an online ToC workshop (during the inception phase)
  - **Semi-structured interviews with ASPnet stakeholders:** virtual or face to face meetings will be conducted with internal and external stakeholders that participate in different ASPnet initiatives or are involved in the implementation of ASPnet actions. Protocols and selection choice for stakeholders' interviews will be developed by the evaluation team prior to the data collection phase and in consultation with the evaluation reference group.

- **Survey:** An online survey will be conducted to collect information from the ASPnet member schools and national coordinators. Currently, ASPnet includes around 12,000 schools in 182 countries. The sample strategy (size, characteristic and selection criteria) will be defined with the evaluation team and will consider the availability of data from ASPnet members. The inception report should discuss the sampling strategy's limitations in terms of ability to generalize results.
  - **Direct Observation:** Fieldwork will be conducted in the countries with a significant number of members or interesting initiatives. The final number of study cases (2 or 3) will be defined during the inception phase, in consultation with the evaluation reference group.
  - **Other methods and evaluation approaches** that the evaluator(s) may propose.
32. The final decisions about the specific design and methodology for this evaluation should emerge from consultations between the project team, the evaluation team and the evaluation reference group (ERG) on what is appropriate and feasible to meet the purpose and objectives of the evaluation.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

33. The evaluation will be managed by UNESCO IOS Evaluation Office and will be conducted with the support and lead of one external consultant. A Senior evaluator from the IOS Evaluation Office and an IOS consultant will also be part of the evaluation team. The external evaluator will be expected to develop a detailed evaluation methodology including an evaluation matrix and data collection approach and tools, and to prepare the draft and final reports in English. The external evaluator should have expertise in education along with knowledge and expertise of the substantive field of networking, transformative education and/or partnership. The final evaluation report will also be assessed against the UNESCO Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports.<sup>28</sup>
34. IOS Evaluation Office will be responsible for the quality assurance of the evaluation process and all deliverables, and is the owner of the reports, the data collection tools and the raw data.

25 <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

26 <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

27 The five UNESCO regions are: Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean.

28 UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: <https://uneval.org/document/detail/607>

35. An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established to guide the evaluation process as well as to provide advice and quality review of the evaluation products. The ERG also supports the follow-up of the evaluation by facilitating the implementation of key recommendations. The group will be composed of the Evaluation Manager from the IOS Evaluation Office, a member of the ASPnet Unit, a member of the Education Sector Executive Office, three representatives from different sections from the Education Sector, a representative from outside of the Education Sector, and one National Coordinator as a representative of a National Commission for UNESCO. The reference group shall exchange and meet periodically and be consulted in the different stages of the evaluation, as appropriate.
36. The external evaluation consultant will be responsible for their own logistics: office space, administrative and secretarial support, telecommunications, printing, travels, etc. Suitable office space will be provided when the consultants are working in UNESCO premises. The evaluation consultant will be responsible for administering and disseminating all research instruments, e.g., surveys and interviews, with the support of the IOS Evaluation Office. Headquarters and Field Offices will provide access to relevant documentation and contact details of relevant stakeholders and distribution lists. IOS will also facilitate access to UNESCO staff at both Headquarters and Field Offices and provide contacts of representatives of external stakeholders and partners.

## 6. Required qualifications for the external consultant.

37. The consultant should possess the following **mandatory** qualifications and experience:

### **Mandatory :**

- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience acquired at the international level conducting evaluations of programme or policies related to education.
  - At least 5 experiences in designing, conducting and leading evaluations and an evaluation team; with knowledge of data collection and applying qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods and Results Based Management (RBM) principles.
- Advanced university degree in education, social sciences, political sciences, economics, or related field; specialized training in planning, monitoring and/or evaluation of social programme or policies will be an asset.
  - Excellent analytical and demonstrated drafting skills in English: ability to collect and analyse information, to synthesize ideas and feedback and prepare reports in a clear and concise manner (demonstrated by at least three work examples).
  - Understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality
  - No previous involvement in the implementation of the activities under review (ASPnet).
- Desirable skills:**
- Extensive knowledge of evaluation of multi-stakeholder partnerships and/or networks.
  - At least three examples of work demonstrating an understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality.
  - At least two examples of work experience with multi-lateral institutions in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals – 2030 Agenda Working knowledge of other UN languages namely French, Spanish and Arabic is desirable.
  - Within the framework of the UN Sustainability Management Strategy (2020-2030), UNESCO has committed to promote and apply sustainable considerations in all its operations, including those related to the procurement of goods, works and services. Therefore, Bidders are strongly encouraged to comply with the following Sustainability Criteria (Environmental/ Social/ Economic) and provide proof of evidence on their commitment and capacity to respond positively to the below set of criteria:
    - » Prevention of Pollution: Bidders are encouraged to demonstrate a corporate environmental policy or an environmental management system (ISO 14001 or equivalent).
    - » Climate change mitigation and adaptation: Bidders are encouraged to demonstrate commitment to CSR criteria for digital sobriety.



- » Inclusion of persons with disabilities: Bidders are encouraged to demonstrate to be disability-inclusive.
- » Promoting sustainability throughout the supply chain: Bidders are encouraged to demonstrate to source responsible suppliers, specify more sustainable production and process methods, conduct background-check of potential suppliers for their record of social and environmental responsibility.
- » Provided proof of evidence will be considered as an asset.
- » In addition, bidders are encouraged to adhere to United Nations "Global Compact" programme - <https://www.unglobalcompact.org> »

| The consultant must sign the UNEG Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation<sup>29</sup>.

| Verification of these qualifications will be based on the provided curriculum vitae and provided references (at least 3). Candidates are also encouraged to submit other references such as research papers or articles that demonstrate their familiarity with the field of education. Attention will be paid to establishing an evaluation team that is gender - and geographically balanced.

| The evaluation will require two to three country visits for the case studies (to be determined during the Inception Phase: at least one in Europe, one in Africa and the other region to be defined with the ERG). Each visit to UNESCO HQ as well as to the countries will require around three to five working days.

## 7. Deliverables and Timeline

38. The evaluation will take place between February and June 2024 and will take around 35 professional working days. The consultant(s) will conduct data collection, data analysis and prepare a draft report with initial findings by May 2024 (in English). The final report, including feedback of the ERG will be due in June 2024. The consultant(s) might be required to present preliminary findings to UNESCO Senior Management.

39. The consultant(s) will deliver (all documents must be written and edited in English):

- An **inception report** containing the adjusted/revised evaluation matrix and further precisions on the methodology and the strategy for the data collection, including the sampling for the interviews and study cases (based on a preliminary stakeholder analysis, desk review and preliminary interviews).
- A **presentation of preliminary findings** that will be presented in a virtual workshop to discuss the preliminary evaluation results with the main stakeholders and the ERG.
- A **draft evaluation report** with a maximum extension of 35 pages that should follow the IOS Evaluation Office template and the guidelines for quality assurance which will be provided at the onset of the evaluation. The draft report will be shared for comments with the Evaluation Reference Group and to relevant stakeholders in the Education Sector for their input and to clarify inaccuracies.
- A **final evaluation report** that incorporates comments provided by the Evaluation Reference Group without exceeding 30 pages (excluding Annexes). The final report must comply with the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards<sup>30</sup> and will be assessed against the UNESCO IOS Evaluation Checklist for Evaluation Reports by an external reviewer. The evaluation will refer to the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation<sup>31</sup>. The final report will then be formatted by UNESCO to match the IOS Evaluation Office layout and branding for UNESCO corporate evaluation reports.
- A **two-page summary** of key findings, lessons, recommendations and messages from the evaluation report that can be disseminated to the wider public for general information on ASPnet results and performance to date.

40. The time frame for the evaluation is limited and it is mandatory that the Final Evaluation Report be ready by mid of July 2024. The indicative timetable of key activities and deliverables is presented in Table 4.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/3683>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>



**Table 4:** Evaluation schedule

Activity / Deliverable	Date	Responsible
Finalization of Terms of Reference	Mid-January 2024	IOS
Call for Proposals and Selection of Expert	February 2024	IOS
Desk review and preparation	February 2024	IOS and external consultant
Scoping interviews	February 2024	IOS and external consultant (ASPnet Unit will suggest some participants)
Theory of change workshop with the ERG and other stakeholders – In Paris	March 2024	ASPnet Unit, ERG, IOS and external consultant
Inception Report	March 2024	IOS and external consultant
Data Collection & 3 field visits (TBD)	March/ April 2024	IOS and external consultant
Data analysis and write up of the draft report	May 2024	IOS and external consultant
Stakeholder validation workshop (review of the draft report) - In Paris	May 2024	ASPnet Unit, ERG, IOS and external consultant
Feedback from the ERG on draft report	June 2024	ERG
Revision of the report (including review editing in English)	June 2024	IOS and external consultant
Final report and evaluation brief in Paris	July 2024	IOS and external consultant
Presentation of Evaluation to the 220th session of the Executive Board	Autumn 2024 Date to be confirmed	IOS

## 8. Key Resources

41. Relevant Evaluation Resources:
- UNEG (2020). UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. New York City: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>
  - UNEG (2010). UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: <http://uneval.org/document/detail/607>
  - UNEG (2014). Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2107>
  - UNEG (2017). Norms and Standards for Evaluation: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/27>
  - UNESCO (2016). 38 C/5: Approved programme and budget, 2016 – 2017: second biennium of the 2014 – 2017 quadrennium. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244305>
  - UNESCO (2018). 39 C/5: Approved programme and budget, 2018 – 2019: first biennium of the 2018 – 2021 quadrennium. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261648>
  - UNESCO (2020). 40 C/5: Approved programme and budget, 2020 – 2021: second biennium of the 2018 – 2021 quadrennium. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373473>
  - UNESCO (2022). 41 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2022-2025: first biennium 2022-2023. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380868>
  - UNESCO (2022) UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4): <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378083>
  - UNESCO (2023). UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022 - 2029: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381664>
  - UNESCO (2023). UNESCO Evaluation Manual: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383948>

## 42. Relevant ASPnet Resources

- ASPnet webpage:  
<https://www.unesco.org/en/aspnet>
- UNESCO (2003). UNESCO Associated School Project Network (ASPnet): historical review 1953-2003.  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000130509>
- UNESCO (2016). Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet):  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245418>
- UNESCO (2016). Getting climate-ready: a guide for schools on climate action:  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246740>
- UNESCO (2016). Schools in action, global citizens for sustainable development: a guide for students.  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246352>
- UNESCO (2016). Schools in action, global citizens for sustainable development: a guide for teachers.  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246888>
- UNESCO (2018). UNESCO Associated Schools Network: guide for national coordinators:  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261994>
- UNESCO (2019). UNESCO Associated Schools Network: guide for members:  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368992>
- UNESCO (2021). Trash Hack: Action learning for sustainable development – A Teacher’s Guide: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375408>
- UNESCO (2021). The Futures of Education: Perspectives and insights from the UNESCO Associated Schools Network:  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378054>
- UNESCO (2021). Teaching and learning with living heritage: a resource kit for teachers; based on the lessons learnt from a joint UNESCO-EU pilot project:  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381477>
- UNESCO (2023). Feasibility study on the creation of the status of Young Ambassador of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet). 217 EX/9:  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386773>
- UNESCO (2023). UNESCO Associated Schools Network: 70 years of promoting education for international understanding and cooperation:  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385305>

# Annex B. Literature

## 1. UNESCO Evaluation Guidelines:

- UNESCO (2022). UNESCO 2022-29 Revised Evaluation Policy. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2022). UNESCO 2023 UNESCO Evaluation Manual. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNEG (2020). UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. New York City: United Nations
- UNEG (2010). UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group
- UNEG (2014). Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group.
- UNEG (2017). Norms and Standards for Evaluation. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group.

## 2. UNESCO Programme and Budget and Strategic Documents:

- UNESCO Internal Oversight Services (July 2016). Evaluation of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet). Available [here](#).
- UNESCO (2014) ASPnet Strategy 2014-2021. Global Network of Schools Addressing Global Challenges: Building Global Citizenship and promoting Sustainable Development.
- UNESCO (2022). Strategic Framework for Action 2022-2030 “Building peaceful and sustainable futures through transformative education”.
- UNESCO (2014; 2022) Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2014-2021; 2022-2029. Available [here](#) and [here](#). Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2014). Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021. Available [here](#). Paris: UNESCO.

- Delors, Jacques (1996). Learning: the treasure within; report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (highlights). Available [here](#).
- UNESCO. 38 C/5 Approved Programme and Budget, 2016-2017: second biennium of the 2014-2017 quadrennium.
- UNESCO. 39 C/5 Approved Programme and Budget 2018-2019 first biennium of the 2018-2021 quadrennium. Available [here](#).
- UNESCO. 40 C/5 Approved Programme and Budget 2020-2021: second biennium of the 2018-2021 quadrennium. Available [here](#).
- UNESCO. 41 C/5 Approved Programme and Budget 2022-2025 first biennium 2022-2023. Available [here](#).
- UNESCO. 40 C/5 Regular Programme Workplan number 9077: Contribution of the UNESCO ASPnet to Target 4.7 of the 2030 Education Agenda.
- UNESCO. 40 C5 Results Framework ASPnet Performance Indicators.
- UNESCO. 41 C5 Output 7 ED.3.
- UNESCO ASPnet Strategy Implementation Plan 2022-2024.

## 3. UNESCO Executive Board documents:

- UNESCO Executive Board – 204th Session (Paris, 6th March 2018). 204 EX/14 - Item 14 of the provisional agenda.
- UNESCO Executive Board – 217th Session (Paris, 8th September 2023). 217 EX/9 - Item 9 of the provisional agenda.
- UNESCO Executive Board – 219<sup>th</sup> Session (Paris, 31st January 2024). 219 EX/9 - Item 5 of the provisional agenda.

#### 4. Programming and activities documentation:

- UNESCO (2019). UNESCO Associated Schools Network: Guide for Members. Available [here](#).
- UNESCO (2018). UNESCO Associated Schools Network: Guide for National Coordinators. Available [here](#).
- UNESCO (14th December 2023). Transforming education: ASPnet key initiatives. Available [here](#).
- UNESCO (2021). Trash hack action learning for sustainable development: a teacher's guide. Available [here](#).
- ASPnet Newsletter 'Trash Hack your life' – Issue 15, February 2021.
- ASPnet CONNECT Newsletter "Social and Emotional Learning online and offline" – Issue 2, 2021.
- UNESCO (2016). Getting Climate-Ready: a guide for schools on climate action. Available [here](#).
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# Annex C. Persons Interviewed

## UNESCO HQ

NAME	FUNCTION	SECTOR
Ms. Stefania Giannini	Assistant Director General	Education Sector
Ms. Min Jeong Kim	Director	Education, Division for Education 2030
Mr. Sobhi Tawil	Director	Education, Future of Learning and Innovation Division
Mr. Carlos Vargas	Chief of Section	Education, Section for Teacher Development
Ms. Mariana Kitsiona	Programme Specialist	Education, Executive Office Unit for Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Institute and Field Coordination
Ms. Julie Saito	Chief of Section – until May 2024	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Ms. H�el�ene Darne	Senior Programme Assistant	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Ms. M�elanie Seto	Programme Specialist	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Ms. Annika Roes	Consultant - until March 2024	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Ms. Katja Anger	Consultant - until April 2024	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Mr. Rembert Jonckheere	Consultant	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Ms. Pengjia Zhong	Sponsored trainee	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Ms. Marijana Bogojevic	Associate Project Officer until April 2024 – ASPnet	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Ms. Apolonia Torres	Consultant until June 2023	Education, Unit for ASPnet
Mr. Erik Eschweiler	Junior Professional Officer (ASPnet in the past)	Culture, World Heritage Centre, Policy and Statutory Meetings Unit
Mr. Simon Wanda	Project Officer (ASPnet in the past)	Education, Section for Education for Sustainable Development
Mr. Sergei Novikov	Project Manager	Bureau of Digital Business Solutions (DBS)
Ms. Martina Rathner	Principal Evaluation specialist	Division of Internal Oversight Services, Evaluation Office
Ms. Katja Konkola	Chief Human Resources Officer	Education, Executive Office, Unit for Human Resources
Ms. Anh Minh Tran	Senior Administrative Assistant	Education, Executive Office, Unit for Financial Management and Administrative Support
Ms. Maya Prince	Programme Specialist	Education, Future of Learning and Innovation Division
Mr. Shashank Shekhar	Finance and Administrative Officer	Education, Executive Office, Unit for Financial Management and Administrative Support

## UNESCO Field Office and Category 2 Centre

NAME	FUNCTION	SECTOR
Mr. Francisco Gomez Duran	UNESCO Harare	Head of Culture Section
Mr. Shahbaz Khan	UNESCO Beijing	Director of Office & UNESCO Representative
Mr. Robert Parua	UNESCO Beijing	Education Programme Specialist
Ms. ZHANG Wei	Executive Director	International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA)
Mr. Mark Bray	UNESCO Chair Professor of Comparative Education	University of Hong Kong

## Stakeholders

### PARTNERS

NAME	FUNCTION	SECTOR
Ms. Maria Ivanova	NGO Mondo	National Co-Coordinator Baltic Sea Project Estonia
Mr. Makoto Kobayashi	Professor	Tamagawa University
Ms. Honar Abdollahi	National Coordinator until March 2024	Denmark National Commission for UNESCO

### MEMBER STATES

NAME	FUNCTION	SECTOR
Mr. Klaus Schilling	National Coordinator	Germany National Commission for UNESCO
Ms. Dalia Stabrauskaite	National Coordinator	Lithuania National Commission for UNESCO
Mr. Qin Changwei,	Secretary-General	China National Commission for UNESCO
Mr. LI Gerui		China National Commission for UNESCO
Ms. CHENG Kang		China National Commission for UNESCO
Mr. WU Meng		Hainan Provincial Department of Education
Mr. LI Hu		Hainan Provincial Department of Education
Mr. CUI Ying		Hainan Provincial Department of Education
Mr. ZHOU Hongbo		Sanya Municipal Committee of the CPCP
Mr. HE Shigang		Sanya Municipal People's Government
Ms. Margaret Chirapa	Secretary General	Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO
Mr. Blessing Chabikwa		Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

### Permanent Delegations to UNESCO which participate to the evaluation

1. China	2. Philippines
3. Zimbabwe	4. Iceland
5. Austria	6. Mexico
7. Russia	8. France
9. Dominican Republic	10. Grenada
11. Azerbaijan	12. Indonesia
13. Lithuania	14. Italy
15. Germany	16. Japan
17. Chile	

### Interviewees from Permanent Delegations/ ASPnet National Coordinators:

1. Ms Dalia Strabauskaitė
2. Ms Gudrun Thorsteinsdottir
3. Ms Kristin Halla Kristinsdottir Gröndal
4. Mr Nisa Husna
5. Mr. Ananto K. Seta
6. Ms Xinyu Yang
7. Ms. Abigail Shonhiwa
8. Ms. Chafica Haddade
9. Ms. Cristina Porzio
10. Ms. Daphine Mukaronda
11. Ms. Kit Degaños
12. Ms. Naoko Hirayama
13. Mr. Shin Saito
13. Ms. Rhina Durán
14. Ms. Stephanie Godec
15. Ms. Susana Garduño
16. Ms. Ariane Lebot
17. Ms. YU Xiaoping
18. Mr Jhon Ocampo
19. Mr Nikita Shalygin
20. Mr. Andres Nicolas Moscoso Collado
21. Mr. Axel Kuechle
22. Mr. Jose Tomas Serrano Leon
23. Mr. Orkhan Abbasov
24. Mr. Teymir Shirinov

### Schools visited:

1. Experimental High School attached to Beijing Normal University
2. High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China
3. Admiral Tait Primary School, Zimbabwe
4. Mabelreign Girls High School, Zimbabwe
5. Roosevelt High School, Zimbabwe
6. Alytus Dainava Progymnasium
7. Vilnius Waldorf Green School
8. Vilnius Zemyna Gymnasium

### First ToC Workshop participants (Paris, March 29)

ONLINE PARTICIPANTS	IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS
Mariana Kitsiona (UNESCO)	Julie Saito (UNESCO)
Maya Prince (UNESCO)	Helene Darne (UNESCO)
Klaus Schilling (UNESCO)	Lydia Ruprecht (UNESCO)
Rembert Jonckheere (UNESCO)	Min Jeong Kim (UNESCO)
Marijana Bogojevic (UNESCO)	Ina Salas (UNESCO IOS)
Loes Van der Graaf (PPMI – External evaluator)	Maxwell Tawanda Mutukwa (UNESCO IOS)
Brenda Frydman (PPMI– External Evaluator)	Claudia Ibarguen (UNESCO IOS)
	Hanna Siarova (PPMI – External Evaluator)



## Annex D. Bio data of the external evaluation team

Team member	Qualifications and experience
<p><b>LOES VAN DER GRAAF</b> Project Manager Team Leader</p>	<p>Loes van der Graaf is a Research Manager at PPMI since 2017, focusing predominantly on projects for UN clients, such as ILO, IOM, the World Bank, UNICEF Uzbekistan, UNICEF ECARO, UNDP Kazakhstan, and UNESCO. Projects of Loes mainly involve non-EU countries and education in the development context. In 2023 alone, she conducted field work in Uzbekistan, Djibouti, Kenya, Moldova, Cambodia, Pakistan, and Cote D'Ivoire.</p> <p>Loes has worked for UNESCO on 6 occasions, namely four evaluations and two global surveys (the same as in Hanna's bio). Besides that, she was the PM for nine evaluations of ILO projects and two evaluations of IOM projects. She has also worked on various studies related to education and children's wellbeing for UNICEF, UNDP and the European Union.</p> <p>In all UN projects, where she was a project manager, gender equality and gender-sensitive evaluation techniques were part of her responsibilities. As a result, she recently supported PPMI's gender team to develop a framework for mainstreaming gender and environmental principles in evaluation design.</p>
<p><b>HANNA SIAROVA</b> Senior Consultant</p>	<p>Hanna Siarova has more than ten years of experience in leading policy studies in areas of education, inclusion and social justice across Europe and beyond. Hanna works as a Research Director at PPMI Group (Vilnius) and specialises in evaluating and analysing public policies, particularly focusing on inclusive education (ECEC, school, non-formal learning), teacher education and professionalisation, good governance and effectiveness of educational reforms, education for sustainable development and global citizenship. Hanna has led and contributed to research projects commissioned by European Commission, European Parliament, Eurofound, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, ETF, EIGE and other organisations. A number of these studies involved complex evaluation methodologies (covering both quantitative and qualitative methods) and participatory research and evaluation techniques. She is deputy coordinator of the Network on the social dimension in education and training (NESET) and the European Experts Network for Economics of Education.</p> <p>Recently, Hanna worked with Loes and Laura on studies for possibilities of alternative childhood education and care services in Ukraine and Moldova (for ILO), also on the evaluations for UNESCO: "Strengthening Teacher Education Programmes in Cambodia (STEPCam)" involving GPE funding, "Girls' Right to Education Programme (GREP) and "Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)-supports to national capacity building to realize Girls' Right to Education in Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan" and "Strengthening multi-partner cooperation to support teacher policy and improve learning". Besides those evaluations, she was involved in the two global surveys conducted for UNESCO, namely "Global survey of teachers attitudes to teaching Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education" and "Multi-country study on the role of teachers in ensuring safe and non-violent learning environments".</p>

Team member	Qualifications and experience
<p><b>JOSEFINE REIMER LYNGGAARD</b> Junior Expert</p>	<p>Josefine Reimer Lynggaard is a Researcher at PPMI, where she is currently involved in the evaluation of the UNESCO's Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) program together with Loes. She has a professional background in policy analysis and evaluations, having worked over the last 4 years at UNEP in Switzerland, as well as in field-based roles in the Central African Republic with IMPACT Initiatives (INGO). Josefine is experienced at managing multi-lingual programs through the full evaluation cycle, often under cross-cutting themes covering climate-change adaptation, development cooperation, food security, livelihood, and territorial planning.</p> <p>Josefine received her MA in Politics with Quantitative Methods at the University of Edinburgh, as well as a dual MPA in Public Policy from the University of Geneva and Tsinghua University. Josefine is fluent in French, English, Danish and a working level in Mandarin (B2).</p>
<p><b>BRENDA FRYDMAN</b> Junior Expert</p>	<p>Brenda Frydman is a researcher at PPMI. Prior to joining the PPMI team, she worked primarily in the public sector, specializing in education policy and the study of education and social inequality. She gained experience employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, including survey design, secondary-data statistical analysis, interview development, and focus group facilitation. Her analytical skills have been developed to advise on policy formulation, evaluation and monitoring, and policy-making processes at various government levels. Brenda completed a fully funded Erasmus Mundus MA in Education Policies (Autonomous University of Barcelona, University of Bremen and University of Cyprus) and holds an MA in Statistical Data Generation and Analysis for Social Sciences (National University of Tres de Febrero, Buenos Aires) and a Bachelor's degree in Sociology (University of Buenos Aires).</p>



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