

**Transforming Learning: Meeting the Skills Demand to Achieve the SDGs in the Asia Pacific**  
**UNESCO's 4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030)**  
**Elaine Butler**

APMED 4 – *Transforming Learning: Meeting the Skills Demand to Achieve the SDGs in the Asia Pacific* was held in Bangkok, 12-14<sup>th</sup> July 2018, preceded by 2 days of pre APMED4 meetings by civil society organisations (CSOs) that was coordinated by ASPBAE (10-11<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

UNESCO was charged with the responsibility for oversight of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4<sup>1</sup> that aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” SDG4 has 10 targets covering different aspects of education: 7 targets (4.1- 4.7) that are expected outcomes and three targets (4.5.a, 4.b, 4.c) that suggest means of implementation for achievement.

UNESCO Bangkok's 2030 Team coordinates APMED - multi-stakeholder annual meetings with governments & key stakeholders in the Asia Pacific region to facilitate both cross national & regional information exchange and national government actions in implementing SDG4. This, along with work of a Network of National SDG4 Coordinators and a Technical Working Group (TWG) of which ASPBAE is a member contributes input to the Global Education Monitoring (GEM)<sup>2</sup> Reports and to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)<sup>3</sup> established by the UN for follow up and review of global progress by member states towards achieving the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

APMED 1 & 2 focused on setting up mechanisms, and issues on quality & inclusivity, while the focus of APMED 3<sup>4</sup> (2017) was mainstreaming SDG 4.7<sup>5</sup>. The focus of APMED 2018<sup>6</sup> was SDGs 4.3 & 4.4, both of which centre TVET, viz:

Target 4.3: *By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university*

Target 4.4: *By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship*

4<sup>th</sup> APMED2030 focused on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4 within the Asia-Pacific context under the overarching theme of *Meeting the skills demand to achieve the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific*. The meeting that brought together over 200 invited participants discussed how to plan, implement and monitor targets 4.3 and 4.4 while considering regional and sub-regional priorities challenges and opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> For more detail about SDG4 see: <https://sdg4education2030.org/the-goal> &/or <https://en.unesco.org/education2030-sdg4/targets>

<sup>2</sup> For information about GEM see: <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

<sup>3</sup> For information about HLPF see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

<sup>4</sup> APMED 3: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/3rd-asia-pacific-meeting-education-2030-mainstreaming-sdg-47> Further information re APMED 4 is available at: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/index.php/content/targeting-better-world-apmed2030-puts-region-path-achieving-sdg-47>

<sup>5</sup> SDG 4.7: Target 4.7: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

<sup>6</sup> Further information re APMED 4 is available at: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/transforming-learning-4th-apmed2030-opens-clear-view-regional-education-challenges>

The main outcome document will be a set of agreed Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG targets 4.3 & 4.4 for the Asia Pacific.



Group Photo: close of APMED4

It was preceded by a two day meeting (*From reality to policy: recommendations from civil society- SDGs 4.3 and SDG 4.4*) organised by ASPBAE of 31 CSO representatives from 18 Asia-Pacific countries to share information and agree on a series of recommendations for the formal UNESCO meeting. The recommendations collected points under 9 categories: A framework of lifelong learning & holistic education; Indicators & means of implementation; Government responsibility for implementing SDGs 4.3, 4.4; Financing of 4.3, 4.4; Data; ICT; Review, monitoring, reporting & transparency for SDGs 4.3, 4.4; Equity & Inclusion; Quality. They will also be used for advocacy and lobbying by representatives in their respective countries. Elaine's presentation "Gender equality and social inclusion in education and training" included a brief overview of VET and gender in Australia.



Pre APMED CSO meeting

At the formal 4<sup>th</sup> APMED2030 meeting participants discussed how to plan, implement and monitor targets 4.3 and 4.4 within the context of regional and sub-regional and national priorities, challenges and opportunities. The meeting was organised around five thematic

issues cognisant of overarching concern of skills development for youth and adults, through formal, non-formal and informal education: (i) ensuring inclusion and equity in learning in the second decade; (ii) digital skills; (iii) school-to-work transition; (iv) strengthening qualification frameworks to promote mobility and employability; and (v) mainstreaming Education for Sustainable Development as a key enabler for all 17 Sustainable development Goals. Monitoring of SDGs 4.3 & 4.4 is also under active scrutiny.

It is anticipated that the main outcome document of the UNESCO meeting will be a set of agreed Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG targets 4.3 & 4.4 for the Asia Pacific. This work will provide useful information for the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) that will include scrutiny of national & global efforts for implementation of SDG4 as will that of the pre APMED4 CSO/ASPBAE meeting.