

Dear National Coordinators,
Dear Teachers and Students,



In most of our countries amid lockdowns schools have been closed with teachers, students and their parents coping with online and distance learning for quite some time now – long enough for much anticipation along with some anxiety in view of planning and preparations for schools to reopen. It is a topic being reported and discussed in the media around the world, with

countries preparing as best as possible for the gradual lifting of restrictions.

We want to connect with you, our dear members, on this important issue and share information about current events, guidance and messages around the complexities of how and when to reopen schools.

UNESCO held a webinar very recently on this very topic and in this issue of our newsletter we want to share experts' and countries' presentations. As our community is an important channel for voices from the ground, voices of teachers and students on how they are experiencing the current situation, ASPnet will organize its very own webinar to offer a platform for your voices. The announcement and further details are also in this issue.

I am also very happy that the International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet in China which we collaborate with closely gives us a message of encouragement and hope featuring here.

Staying CONNECT-ed also means keeping up with what UNESCO is doing, so we are keeping you up to date with further information on what else UNESCO is doing, with regards to the reopening of schools, as well as other initiatives.

It is great to see the level of solidarity among our ASPnet community, also demonstrated in the many messages of solidarity learners and teachers continue to send, and many new and very inspiring ones are again in this new issue.

Stay safe. Stay CONNECTed!

Julie Saito, ASPnet International Coordinator

"Connect students, make your home a common classroom"

Message from Dr Xiaoxia Zhou, Director of the International Center for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA)



"It is time for us to come together in global solidarity not only to ensure that learning doesn't stop, but to invest in the transformational power that education carries for individuals, communities and societies"

[read the full message here](#)

[Video](#)

[Biography](#)

Voices from the ASPnet community

Mongolia "My students are in the 12th grade, so they are extremely worried about taking the General Entrance Exam. I miss my students a lot and my students have also expressed their desire to return to school." *Ankhtuya, teacher*

Iraq "Our school has been closed, but our teacher created a channel on the Telegram app to send our homework and explain the lessons to us. It's a good alternative, but I really miss going to school, our teachers and my friends." *Teeba, 14, student*

Report from UNESCO Webinar:

“Back to school: Preparing and managing the reopening of schools”

As part of an ongoing series of webinars in the context of its COVID-19 Education Response, a **webinar “Back to school: Preparing and managing the reopening of schools”** took place on 24 April 2020. Moderated by Mr. Chang, Guang-Chol, Chief of the Section of Education Policy, the webinar offered contributions including guidance for school reopenings from a global perspective, education planning as well as country contributions from Denmark, South Korea, Mexico and Sierra Leone. [Read the summary here](#)

A **new Framework for Reopening Schools**, issued jointly by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Bank, was presented at the webinar by Mr Robert

Jenkins, Chief of Education at UNICEF. The framework, just signed, provides guidance on why, when and how to reopen learning establishments. [More info](#) [Framework](#)

The **closing remarks** were made by **Ms Vibeke Jensen**, the Director of the Division for Peace and Sustainable Development at UNESCO, of which ASPnet is part.



“It is important to take small, careful and gradual steps, evaluating safety and effectiveness before moving to the next”

[Read the full text here](#)

[Biography](#)

A number of documents are available relevant to the **UNESCO webinar “Back to school: Preparing and managing reopening of schools”** [webinar site](#) [Presentations](#) [Report](#)

The UNESCO Education Sector issued the Official Note: **UNESCO COVID-19 Education Response, Education Sector Issue Note 7.1**, April 2020 on School reopening [Find the document here](#)

The UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning has a series of COVID-19 briefs, including this one on the reopening of schools: **IIEP-UNESCO’s COVID-19 response brief: Prepare for School Reopening** [Find the document here](#)

Other initiatives

Join the [UNESCO Online Masterclass series on countering Racism and Discrimination](#) (in French) aiming to provide tools to students to become youth champions in their schools and communities

Launch of Earth School – Call for action: A coalition of over fifty environmental and education experts launched The Earth School: 30 adventures for learners of all ages to discover, celebrate, and connect to nature, under the guidance of TED-Ed and UNEP to

provide lessons for students at all levels. [Earth School web page](#) [Media tool kit](#)

“**My Hero is you, Storybook for Children on COVID-19**” is a storybook for children developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC MHPSS RG) and is available already in over 25 languages.

[Further information](#)

[Read the book here](#)

Around ASPnet

UNESCO’s International Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) in cooperation with ASPnet in the Russian Federation and in partnership with the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO organized the webinar “**School education during the pandemic outbreak: digital technology potentials**”, aimed to present best practices of the use of advanced technologies’ potential for supporting school education during the COVID-19 outbreak. [more info](#)

UPCOMING EVENT:

ASPnet Global webinar on “COVID-19 - Reflections by the ASP community”

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a series of challenges that make us rethink the teaching and learning during and after this crisis. In this regard, UNESCO ASPnet International Coordination Team will organise the first global webinar on **12 May 2020 at 2pm** Paris time, to hear the voices of Teachers, Students and Parents in collaboration with the Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE). You are all invited to participate, to raise questions and make interventions. The main language spoken during the webinar will be English, but you can share questions and comments via chat in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

[See more info here](#) [Register](#)

Messages of Solidarity

We would like to share some messages of solidarity from students, teachers and national coordinators during this pandemic. Please click on the link below to watch and read inspiring messages of solidarity!

France - [Jean-Marc, Secondary School Teacher](#)
(in French)

Mexico – [Giselle and Gustavo, adult learners](#)

Nigeria – [Aisa, student](#)

India – [Arnav, student, age 5](#)

China - the experimental High School attached to Beijing Normal University with two videos:
[“One day of my learning life during the epidemic”](#), Duo Xu, student

[“The Diary of Class”](#), Si Gao, teacher

View these and many more testimonies on [#LearningNeverStops](#)

Meet ASPnet team member Helene Darne



[Watch her video message here](#)

[Message text](#)

[Biography](#)

We encourage you to send us your messages of solidarity in words, pictures, videos and art works. Your experiences and innovative ways to learn, out of schools and within your families, can contribute to build and strengthen our network.

Please send to aspnetinaction@unesco.org and attach the [consent form](#).

The ASPnet Team

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Get connected: <https://aspnet.unesco.org>

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