

## Introduction to the UNESCO Associated Schools Network and guidelines for Estonian Members<sup>1</sup>

Approved by the Secretary-General of the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO on 10 May 2018 with  
Decree No. 1-7/7

### Contents

1. The guiding principles of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network
2. The structure and coordination of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network
3. The UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Estonia
4. Joining the UNESCO Associated Schools Network
5. Membership criteria of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network
6. Termination of membership in the UNESCO Associated Schools Network

### 1. The guiding principles of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network

The UNESCO Associated Schools Network, or ASPnet, is an international network established in 1953 to support international understanding and world peace. UNESCO Associated Schools uphold the central values and tenets of the constitutions of UNESCO and the UN<sup>2</sup>. In 2018, the network had over 11.000 members from over 181 countries. ASPnet members contribute to creating a better, more sustainable world, implement innovative pilot projects, and emphasize the importance of the four pillars of education: learning to know, do, be, and live together<sup>3</sup>. ASPnet focuses on education for sustainable development and global citizenship education.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The original document in Estonian: “UNESCO ühendkoolide võrgustiku tutvustus ja juhised Eesti ühendkoolidele”

<sup>2</sup> The constitutions of the UN and UNESCO in *Riigi Teataja*: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/555597> and <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/13080790>

<sup>3</sup> Learning: the treasure within; report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (1999). Translated into Estonian by Külliki Saksa, edited by Meeli Kalman. Tallinn: Estonian National Commission for UNESCO.

<sup>4</sup> Information on education for sustainable development and global citizenship education on the website of the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO: <http://www.unesco.ee/saastva-arengu-haridus-3/> and <http://www.unesco.ee/maailmakodaniku-haridus-2/>

## 2. The structure and coordination of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network

The governance structure of UNESCO Associated Schools Network consists of three parties: the International Coordinator, the National Coordinators and the members. To enable effective cooperation and communication between the three parties, an online platform named OTA was created for ASPnet: <https://aspnet.unesco.org>.

**The international coordinator** at UNESCO Headquarters is responsible for the global coordination and management of the network. (S)he facilitates collaboration between countries and regions, maintains communication with National Coordinators, and reports to the governing bodies of UNESCO about the activities of ASPnet. The international coordinator has the authority to certify membership of ASPnet.

**The national coordinator** is responsible for the operation, management, and quality assurance of ASPnet at the country level. (S)he encourages and supports the activities of ASPnet in the country, shares relevant information with members and people who are interested in the activities of the network and reports to the International Coordination about the activities of ASPnet at the country level.

**The members of ASPnet** are schools. Every school has a designated contact person or working group, which collaborates and communicates with the national coordinator and other members and partners of the network. The members are the main actors of the network and the initiators and implementers of new and innovative projects.

## 3. The UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Estonia

The work of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Estonia is coordinated by NGO Mondo in cooperation with Tartu Environmental Education Centre foundation<sup>5</sup>. The Estonian National Commission for UNESCO counsels the national coordination of ASPnet and facilitates cooperation with state institutions, other networks, and international organisations.

In 2018, the UNESCO ASPnet in Estonia consisted of 45 schools, including schools participating in the Baltic Sea Project. Participation in the UNESCO ASPnet supports schools in providing quality education, offers opportunities for national and international cooperation, introducing and promoting their activities, and making new contacts. Members of the Estonian network receive acknowledgment, they are offered free trainings and workshops, study materials, support in implementing projects relating to the work of ASPnet, as well as opportunities to participate in national and international events.

The activities of ASPnet are closely connected to the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN in 2015<sup>6</sup>, contribute to the development of the eight general competencies described in the Estonian national curricula for comprehensive and secondary schools<sup>7</sup>, and the provision of human rights education, education

---

<sup>5</sup> The Tartu Environmental Education Foundation coordinates the activities of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network Baltic Sea Project (BSP) in Estonia: <http://www.tartuloodusmaja.ee/ET/projektid/laanemere-projekt/>

<sup>6</sup> The Sustainable Development Agenda on the UN website: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

<sup>7</sup> The national curricula for comprehensive and secondary schools in Riigi Teataja: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/114022018008> and <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/114022018009>

for sustainable development, and global education in Estonian schools<sup>8</sup>. The mission of the members of ASPnet is to foster the growth of open-minded and socially active citizens, who care about the environment and humanity. The activities support the sustainable development goals and the development of responsible global citizens.

#### 4. Joining the UNESCO Associated Schools Network

Membership in the UNESCO Associated Schools Network is open to any educational institutions, which are registered in the Estonian Education Information System<sup>9</sup> (except universities). In order to join ASPnet, the school has to contact the national coordinator for Estonia. The coordinator will distribute information and send the school a form where they are asked to describe their planned activities relating to ASPnet for the year. If the activity plan submitted by the school is approved, the national coordinator will send a letter of approval to the principal of the school to be signed. With the letter of approval, the school board confirms their wish to join ASPnet. The school will return the signed letter of approval, submit an application to join the UNESCO ASPnet through OTA<sup>10</sup>, and is then added to the list of membership candidates in Estonia. Membership candidates can participate in the activities of the Estonian network.

After one year of active participation in the network, the national coordinator for Estonia will approve the membership application of the candidate in OTA and the UNESCO international coordinator will certify the membership of the school in the UNESCO ASPnet. UNESCO will send an electronic confirmation of the membership to the school, as well as the log-in details and guidelines for the OTA platform. Additionally, the national coordinator will forward an electronic logo confirming membership in the network, as well as a paper certificate and a sign to be displayed in the school.

#### 5. Membership criteria of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network

**The main membership criterion** is the voluntary commitment made by the school leadership and community to promote UNESCO's values, ideals, and work through:

- using innovative and participatory methodologies and approaches;
- providing safe, sustainable, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all their students;
- communication and collaboration with other schools.

All members of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network are expected to meet the **minimum standards**:

- the associated school designates a **contact person** or **working group** who collaborates and communicates with the National Coordinator, ASPnet members, and partners and supports engagement in the topics of sustainable development and responsible global citizenship at the school;

---

<sup>8</sup> See the study 'Human rights and human rights' values in Estonian school and in education policy': [https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/uuringud/io\\_lopparuanne.pdf](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/uuringud/io_lopparuanne.pdf) the Activity Plan for Environmental Education and Awareness 2019-2022: <http://www.envir.ee/et/keskkonnahariduse-ja-teadlikkuse-tegevuskava-2019-2022>

<sup>9</sup> Estonian Education Information System: <http://www.ehis.ee>

<sup>10</sup> Application through OTA: <https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/Pages/Request-to-be-a-member.aspx>

- the associated school must submit an **annual report** of the past school year and **an annual plan** for the new schoolyear on a pre-prepared form to the national coordinator by the **15<sup>th</sup> of September**<sup>11</sup>;
- the associated school must participate in at least one international UNESCO project, programme, campaign, or in a related national activity proposed by the national coordinator every year;
- the associated school must celebrate at least two **UN International Days**, which are marked in the OTA calendar, involving the entire school community<sup>12</sup>;
- the associated school must update their data activities **on OTA** at least twice a year;
- the associated school must use the **logo of UNESCO Associated School Network Members**, visibly display the **membership certificate** and **raise awareness among the local community** that the school is a member of the UNESCO ASPnet.

Additionally, **UNESCO Associated Schools Network members in Estonia** are expected to

- include the themes of sustainable development and responsible global citizenship throughout their **development plan**;
- prioritise a balanced worldview, humane and societal values in their written and unwritten **rules**. The school notices, acknowledges, and considers the peculiarities and potential of its students;
- support sustainable development and fostering the development of responsible global citizens **with their educational work**. To that end, the school will:
  - add the respective principles and activities to the school's **curriculum, general work plan, subject lesson plans, and extracurricular events plan**;
  - support **interdisciplinary integration, collaboration between teachers and purposeful use of ICT equipment**;
  - implement **teaching methods which foster creativity**;
  - direct the students to conduct thematic **creative and research works**;
  - **make contacts** with schools from other cultures;
  - offer the elective course 'The Globalizing World' in secondary school, if possible;
  - organise themed **hobby groups**, if possible (courses/workshops).
- be transparent in their **management**. The school is democratic, supportive, and inclusive. Teachers, students, and parents and their initiatives are respected and recognised, agreements are adhered to, feedback is requested regularly. Internal audits consider subjects relating to sustainable development and responsible global citizenship;

---

<sup>11</sup> Members who are mostly involved in the Baltic Sea Project will submit their annual report to the coordinator of the Baltic Sea Project: <http://www.b-s-p.org/home/schools/3210-estonia.html>.

<sup>12</sup> The UN International Days calendar on OTA: <https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/international-days>  
Ideas for celebrating International Days on the Maailmakool website: <http://maailmakool.ee/tahtpaevad/>

- **support the teachers** in obtaining knowledge and skills relating to sustainable development and fostering responsible global citizenship. Teachers are encouraged to tackle subjects, which may be controversial. New members of the UNESCO ASPnet are offered support in integrating subjects relating to sustainable development in the activities of the school;
- offer **the community** the opportunity to participate in courses, events, and other activities related to sustainable development and responsible global citizenship;
- be guided by the principles of sustainable development and values **in everyday life**, for example caring for one's peers and being considerate to their peculiarities, sustainable use of paper, saving electricity and water, reducing and sorting waste, recycling, composting, avoiding wasting food, using locally sourced, organic ingredients as much as possible to prepare food, moving on foot or by bicycle. If possible, the school should offer local or fair trade products in their cafeteria.

## 6. Termination of membership in the UNESCO Associated Schools Network

Every year, the national coordinator or the coordinator of the Baltic Sea Project assesses whether the school meets the membership criteria, based on the annual report. If the school fails to meet the membership criteria for two consecutive years, the coordinator may propose to terminate the school's membership in the network. The school may terminate their membership in the UNESCO ASPnet on their own accord by submitting a free form application, which is signed by the principal, to the national coordinator for Estonia.

### Contacts

Estonian National Commission for UNESCO: [unesco@unesco.ee](mailto:unesco@unesco.ee), [www.unesco.ee](http://www.unesco.ee)

The UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Estonia:

[unescoschools@mondo.org.ee](mailto:unescoschools@mondo.org.ee), [www.unesco.ee/uhendkoolide-vorgustik](http://www.unesco.ee/uhendkoolide-vorgustik) and [www.maailmakool.ee](http://www.maailmakool.ee)

The Estonian UNESCO Baltic Sea Project network: [info@teec.ee](mailto:info@teec.ee), [bsp.teec.ee](http://bsp.teec.ee)



Logo: The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation /

National Coordinator Estonia / UNESCO Associated Schools

Logo: The Baltic Sea Project