

From the President of ASOCOPI

Dr. Carlo Granados-Beltrán

"We cannot choose our external circumstances, but we can always choose how we respond to them."
Epictetus

I started this short text by the quote because it is evident these have been times for us all. COVID-19 has posed many challenges in all spheres of our lives; however, I think this situation has offered a chance for us to think about what is truly important such as the connection we establish with others and gratitude for all the opportunities life offers to us and that the daily grind makes us take for granted. Many associations and institutions have faced difficult situations and have been forced to cancel their events, at ASOCOPI we see this current situation as a challenge, yet as an opportunity to grow.

The work ASOCOPI has been doing during this time aims at the consolidation of an ELT community by networking with local schoolteachers and international scholars. For the upcoming October conference, we join efforts with Grazzia Mendoza and Ulrich Schrader as leaders of the Caribbean and Central America TESOL group to bring representatives from different Latin American countries to share the experiences in teaching and learning English in their contexts. In this way, we will be able to offer the first international ASOCOPI conference. Moreover, COVID-19 has also provided a learning opportunity for the team at ASOCOPI to organize our first online conference, with the support of Diana Margarita Araque and her team from Universidad Santo Tomás. Based on the results we have this year, we will be able to offer the Conference in a blended format, which will allow us to reach more teachers in distant places in Colombia and internationally.

We have also worked towards strengthening the connection with Colombian schoolteachers by opening a special call for them and inviting two of them to make part of the pool of plenary speakers with full support from the Board of Directors. We want to acknowledge our treasurer Dr. José Aldemar Álvarez Valencia for the support and effective execution of this proposal and his constant contact with schoolteachers countrywide. In this same direction, thanks to Prof. Clara Inés Lozano Espejo, leader of Bilingualism from IED La Felicidad, we have been able to promote the Association and the Annual Conference during the schoolteachers' colloquia from Fontibón in Bogotá.

We have consolidated our communication mechanisms by setting up a series of webinars on different topics (technology, gamification, growth mindset, material design, multimodal pedagogies, skills, teaching pre-k, assessment, and socioemotional skills, among many others. We want to thank Colombian scholars Diana Margarita Araque, Raúl Alberto Mora, Isabel Tejada Sánchez, Martha Ramírez, Juan Carlos Torres, Adriana Sánchez, Carolina Rodríguez-Buitrago, Mónica Rodríguez-Bonces, Astrid Núñez-Pardo, Claudia Uribe, and international scholars Elsa Fernanda González and Mónica Rodríguez-Salvo for their joyful disposition to support us in these webinars. I also thank in advance those who will offer more webinars after this publication. Besides, we have re-started the publication of only monthly newsletters.

In terms of benefits for our affiliates, we have signed an agreement with Bridge Education Group, a Denver-based company, to offer a variety of teacher education courses with discount for ASOCOPI members. These courses range from micro-credentials to certifications in specific topics such as teaching English online, teaching teenagers and teaching young learners. We signed another agreement with International Language Testing Organization so that our affiliates could take the Test of English Communication Skills (TECS) with 20% discount. We continue searching for alliances to offer new services to our affiliates.

I would like to acknowledge the work of all the members of the ASOCOPI Board of Directors: our vice-president, Jair Ayala Zárate; our treasurer, José Aldemar Álvarez; our secretary, Kaithie Ramírez Correa; and our spokesperson, Jairo Castañeda-Trujillo, and, of course, Miryan Cristina Vera, our manager. To close, I invite you to participate in our annual Conference, whose topic this year is *Building Communities in English Language Teaching: Sharing classroom experiences* and will be held online this coming October 8th to 10th. See you there!