

## **From the President of ASOCOPI**

**Jairo Enrique Castañeda-Trujillo**

As current president of ASOCOPI, I extend a cordial greeting to all the authors, evaluators, and readers of our HOW journal. I also hope that you and your families are doing well despite the hardships that the world is going through. I also take this opportunity to thank the entire ASOCOPI assembly for having placed their trust in my colleagues on the board of directors and in me to take charge of the association during this period 2021-2022.

For us, as an association, it has also been a year with many challenges and difficulties. Despite this, we have tried to work as hard as possible so that ASOCOPI can fulfill its missional objectives of promoting English teaching throughout the national territory. To this end, we have continued programming webinars aimed at the professional development of our associates and the ELT community in general, via going through topics oriented to the design of materials, emotional education, autonomous learning, decolonization in ELT, and critical literacy. We ended 2020 with the webinars of academics Alexander Ramírez, Felipe Micán, Ximena Bonilla, Nancy Carvajal, and Yamith Fandiño. So far in 2021, we have fortunately had the participation of Claudia Suescún, Camilo Dominguez, and Juliana Díaz, and we continue to plan other webinars with relevant topics for the entire ELT community. I want to reiterate my gratitude to all the academics who contributed their knowledge, time, and dedication in carrying out this activity. I invite readers who did not have the opportunity to attend these wonderful presentations to see them on our website or official site on YouTube.

This year, we started the Diploma Courses as a strategy to contribute to English teachers' professional development. We initially programmed two courses, one intended to teach English to children and the other to teach English to youngsters. Each Diploma Course was composed of students from many parts of the country, from Nariño to Santander, passing through Tolima, Cundinamarca, Antioquia, and other departments/states. We are delighted and grateful to the participating teachers for having trusted us. We invite all teachers in the country to join this initiative, either by proposing a new diploma course or participating in them. We hope to open our next diploma course soon focusing on academic writing in order to publish articles, which we hope will benefit those professors who have significant research practice and experiences and who have not dared to submit a paper about them for publication.

We continue with our agreements with other institutions to expand and benefit our affiliates. This year we have made agreements with the British Council to participate in the

New Directions Colombia 2021, for which we obtained a 35% discount on registration for our affiliates. Similarly, we participated in ARTESOL (TESOL Argentina), which offered a number of tickets to our affiliates. We continue working with MEXTESOL in a permanent cooperation agreement to join in the events that they organize, and they in ours. As the Board of Directors, we continue to contact publishers and other organizations to achieve even more benefits for those who trust ASOCOPI as the only association that works all year and every year to promote English teaching in Colombia.

Another activity that we believe has been worthwhile was the campaign to donate books and supplies for teachers and students of Providencia Island (Colombia). After being hit by Hurricane Iota in November 2020, the entire community of the island was affected. Many of the Providence Island inhabitants lost their homes and jobs. Schools were destroyed, and teachers and students were left without resources. Therefore, as a way to contribute, ASOCOPI started a campaign with publishers and a number of educational institutions to collect more than 1,200 books. We thank English Language Services and teachers Alicia McAll, Kathie Cuny and Catherine Davidson from Nueva Granada School for their contribution. We want to repeat these aid campaigns for those who have suffered disasters or have not had the possibility of accessing this type of material. We hope for the collaboration of all.

I seize this opportunity to express my condolences to all the teachers and other readers who have suffered losses of their beloved ones, whether due to the global pandemic or other circumstances. For us, it is harrowing every time we send condolence messages on our social networks. In the same vein, I want to take this opportunity to pay a heartfelt tribute to the teachers who have passed away this year. We will always remember their invaluable work and dedication; they will always remain in our memory.

I also want to express appreciation for the work done by the members of our board of directors: Kaithie Ramírez (Vice President), Claudia María Uribe (Treasurer), Adriana Sánchez (Secretary) and Eliana Alarcón (Spokesperson), and our right hand, Míryam Vera (Administrative Manager). Each of these women has contributed enormously to all the activities and projects we do at ASOCOPI and I appreciate their commitment, dedication, and excellent performance. I am sure they will have the same willingness to work for the remainder of the year and for 2022.

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Finally, I want to invite everyone to our 56th Annual ASOCOPI Online Conference and 2nd International Conference: Landscapes of Praxis and the Agency of English Language Teachers, which will take place from October 14 to 16, 2021. We look forward to your participation and support in this and upcoming events.