



**Asia South Pacific Association  
for Basic and Adult Education**  
Learning Beyond Boundaries

24 November 2020

Dear ASPBAE members, partners and friends,

We have been referring to our impending leadership changes in ASPBAE for some time, so this should not come as a surprise.

By the end of this year, Maria Khan, by her express choice, will step down from her role as ASPBAE Secretary General, after 25 years of dedicated, exemplary service. As ASPBAE's Secretary General, Maria competently and capably steered ASPBAE from a relatively small regional education NGO to become one of the most respected, credible regional Civil Society Organisations for education in the global arena: an exceptional achievement by any measure. ASPBAE, under Maria's leadership, has grown to be truly representative of the rich and deep tradition of civil society in the Asia Pacific, advancing the right to education and lifelong learning through advocacy and practice, at the grassroots, national and international levels.

As part of her legacy, ASPBAE has honed a deep bench of highly capable leaders, more than able to build on the strong organizational foundations established during Maria's term as ASPBAE's Secretary-General. Anticipating the significant changes that leadership shifts of this kind can unleash, the ASPBAE Executive Council (EC) has been working with Maria to set in place the processes needed to ensure a meaningful and smooth turn-over of leadership.

At the end of a comprehensive executive search and selection process that included well-publicized advertisements, detailed applicant interviews, consultations and EC deliberations and assessment, the Executive Council in July 2020 appointed Helen Dabu as ASPBAE's Secretary General effective January 1, 2021.

Helen comes with a solid track record in advocacy, capacity-building, institutional building and networking in the region. She has dedicated her professional life to championing human rights: as a practicing lawyer, defending migrant workers' rights through strategic litigation and parliamentary engagements, and in her work with ASPBAE, staunchly advocating for education as basic human right. She trail-blazed ASPBAE's efforts to facilitate the formation of national education coalitions in countries where they didn't as yet exist and where ASPBAE membership and linkages were then thin: East Timor, Vietnam, Myanmar, Mongolia; and co-managed ASPBAE's extensive capacity-building for advocacy programme. One of the emerging global CSO leaders, Helen Dabu currently represents civil society in the Board of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Even as we prepare for an ASPBAE under a new highly capable stewardship, we will not deny nor play down the profound impact this leadership shift will bring. However, we are confident in the choices we have collectively made as an organisation, and stand assured together with our new Secretary General, our newly elected Executive Council and our abundantly able, professional and dedicated ASPBAE staff complement. We are in good hands; we will prevail.

Nani  
Zulminami Hidjazi Arsyad  
President

Maria Lourdes A. Khan  
Secretary General

**Executive Council**

Meenu Vadera

Ehsanur Rahman

Eri Yamamoto

Batjargal Batkhuyag

Nguyen Thi Kim Anh

Thein Lwin

Kilala Devette-Chee

Peter  
Clinton Isaac Foese

Nasiba Mirpochoeva

Agnes H. Maranan  
Corporate Secretary &  
Legal Counsel

**A S P B A E**

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But in this moment, join me, the Executive Council, and all of ASPBAE's staff in thanking Maria for her unparalleled leadership and dedication; for the strength, focus, vision, and foresight that has guided ASPBAE into becoming the dynamic and influential civil society network that it is today.

We owe her a huge debt of gratitude difficult to repay as she leaves us and hands over an ASPBAE we are all immeasurably proud to be part of.

As ASPBAE President, I look forward to another term working with you all to solidify the strong tradition of the very able work ASPBAE has built to promote transformative education for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nani Zulminarni', written over a horizontal line.

Nani Zulminarni  
President-ASPBAE