



# 2019

## »» activity report

Learning beyond boundaries



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





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# activity report



learning  
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boundaries

ASIA SOUTH PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR BASIC AND ADULT EDUCATION



# *development* **context**



It was, as again, a year of challenges and opportunities for those committed to advancing the right to education and development.

Gender imbalances are stark in some South Asian countries. In Afghanistan, 25% of boys aged 7–15 are multidimensionally poor and out of school, compared with 44% of girls.



**The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019, launched during the July 2019 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), painted a mixed picture of global progress on ending extreme poverty, measured as the proportion of people living below the \$1.90 a day international poverty line.** Trends indicate a decline: in 2018, an estimated 8.6% of the world's population was living in extreme poverty, down from about 28% in 2000 and 16% in 2010. However, the pace of progress has notably slowed in recent years.<sup>1</sup>

Despite advancements, the numbers of extremely poor people remain staggering. The World Bank estimates the number of people in the world living in extreme poverty at more than 700 million. These numbers almost double if one considers multi-dimensional poverty. UNDP estimates these numbers to go as high as 1.3 billion plus<sup>3</sup> by 2018 estimates. Half of the world's extremely poor live in 5 countries alone – two of which are in the Asia Pacific – India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia.

# p o v e r t y

The Asia Pacific has contributed much to the decline in the numbers of extreme poverty on account of rapid progress, especially in China and India.<sup>2</sup> Growing and ongoing trade tensions between China and the US have pushed East Asia's growth projections to lower levels. With economic growth also expected to start slowing down (or slowing down further) in some of the advanced economies in Europe and North America, external demand for goods and services produced in Asia and the Pacific will be reduced, adversely impacting economic activity in the region. In an increasingly challenging economic environment, sustaining the gains in poverty eradication could be problematic. India faces the same challenge with a deceleration in its economic growth beginning in 2018.

**HALF OF THE WORLD'S EXTREMELY POOR LIVE IN 5 COUNTRIES ALONE – TWO OF WHICH ARE IN THE ASIA PACIFIC – INDIA, BANGLADESH, NIGERIA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, AND ETHIOPIA.** - UN Development Programme (UNDP)

Rural populations are typically most affected by poverty: in Bangladesh and Pakistan, over 35% of the rural population lives in poverty, measured against their respective national poverty lines, as compared to around 20% for their urban populations. Gender imbalances are also stark in some South Asian countries. In Afghanistan, 25% of boys aged 7–15 are multidimensionally poor and out of school, compared with 44% of girls. Years of conflict have exacerbated poverty in Afghanistan, where in 2016, 54.5% lived below the national poverty line. The violence and instability in the Kashmir region, and the increasing tensions between India and Pakistan, could also worsen poverty, especially in the border regions of these countries.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-october-2019-briefing-no-131/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/12/20/year-in-review-2019-in-charts>

<sup>3</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-MPI>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-october-2019-briefing-no-131/>

# work & employment

According to a new International Labour Organization (ILO) report, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020* (WESO), even when people have a job, there remain significant deficiencies in work quality. Decent work<sup>5</sup> deficits are especially pronounced in the informal economy, which registers the highest rates of in-work poverty and high shares of people who lack adequate protection. According to the WESO 2020, around 2 billion workers worldwide are informally employed, accounting for 61% of the global workforce. Poor working conditions also manifest themselves in low incomes. In 2019, more than 630 million workers worldwide – that is, almost one in five, or 19%, of all those employed – did not earn enough to lift themselves and their families out of extreme or moderate poverty. Despite the region’s rapid economic progress over the past decades, 79.1 million workers in Asia and the Pacific, or 4.2%, remained in extreme poverty in 2019, and 277 million workers, or 14.6%, were still living in moderate poverty. While working poverty continues to decline, those who have escaped poverty remain highly vulnerable to adverse economic shocks and therefore face a significant risk of becoming poor again.

**IN 2019, MORE THAN 630 MILLION WORKERS WORLDWIDE – THAT IS, ALMOST ONE IN FIVE, OR 19%, OF ALL THOSE EMPLOYED – DID NOT EARN ENOUGH TO LIFT THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES OUT OF EXTREME OR MODERATE POVERTY.**

*- International Labour Organisation (ILO)*



Gender stereotypes that emphasize the role of women as the main caregivers and that of men as the main breadwinners remain deeply ingrained in some regions.



In this report, the ILO projects unemployment to increase by around 2.5 million in 2020, with global unemployment currently standing at 188 million. In addition to this, 165 million people don't have enough paid work and 120 million have either given up actively searching for work or otherwise lack access to the labour market. In total, more than 470 million people worldwide are affected. Asia fares relatively favourably though with unemployment rates remaining broadly stable in 2019, registering 4.4%, which is only marginally higher than that of 2018. South Asia had the highest unemployment rate (5.4%), followed by East Asia (4.1%) and Southeast Asia and the Pacific (3.1%).

While working poverty continues to decline in the Asia Pacific, those who have escaped poverty remain highly vulnerable to adverse economic shocks and therefore face a significant risk of becoming poor again.

*<sup>5</sup> Decent work concerns the adequacy of wages or self-employment earnings, the right to job security and a safe and healthy workplace, access to social protection, the opportunity to voice one's views and concerns through a trade union, employers' organization or other representative body, and other fundamental rights such as non-discrimination.*



The share of youth in the Asia Pacific who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) reached 24.3% in 2019 (higher than the global average). The high rate is driven by South Asia, where opportunities for young women to go to university or work remain limited.

# inequality, labour access & income

**OXFAM'S REPORT ON GLOBAL INEQUALITY, 'TIME TO CARE', ASSERTS THAT WOMEN AND GIRLS PUT IN 12.5 BILLION HOURS OF UNPAID WORK EVERY DAY, ACCORDING TO THE ILO.**

The WESO 2020 characterises the inequalities that currently exist in labour markets. Labour markets continue to be characterized by gender inequality. In 2019, the female labour force participation rate was just 47% against 74% for men. Gender stereotypes that emphasize the role of women as the main caregivers and that of men as the main breadwinners remain deeply ingrained in some regions. Apart from access to employment, there are also persisting gender disparities in relation to job quality.

Oxfam's report on global inequality, *'Time to Care'*, asserts that women and girls put in 12.5 billion hours of unpaid work every day, according to the



ILO. From fetching firewood and water, so they can clean and cook for the male breadwinner, to looking after children and the elderly, women often bear the burden of essential unpaid work. Women's unpaid care work has a monetary value of \$10.8 trillion a year or three times the size of the world's tech industry. All this unpaid care work leaves women and girls over 15, time-poor and "unable to meet their basic needs or to participate in social and political activities". Further, globally, 42% of women of working age are unable to hold down a job because of their unpaid care responsibilities, compared to 6% of men.<sup>6</sup>

Age constitutes another feature of labour market inequalities. As many as 267 million young people aged 15 to 24 worldwide (or 22% of that age group) are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Moreover, many of the young people who are in paid jobs face barriers to decent work. In Africa, for example, informal work arrangements affect 95% of young workers. Young workers face considerable labour market challenges in Europe and Central Asia as well: the quality of the jobs available to young workers has been impaired by the growing incidence of temporary employment in the region. The share of youth in the Asia Pacific who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) reached 24.3% in 2019 (higher than the global average), compared with 23.9% in 2018. The high rate – it is among the highest worldwide – is driven by South Asia, where opportunities for young women to go to university or work remain limited: in that sub region, more than 81 million young women, or 48.8%, have NEET status. In the region as a whole, nearly 161 million young men and women are in a NEET situation. This is significant to track for policy makers, especially given the large number of young people in the Asia Pacific. According to the UN, the Asia Pacific region (including Western and Central Asia) is home to nearly 60% of the world's youth

**AS MANY AS 267 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15 - 24 WORLDWIDE (OR 22% OF THAT AGE GROUP) ARE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET). MOREOVER, MANY OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE IN PAID JOBS FACE BARRIERS TO DECENT WORK.**

- UN Economic and Social Commission (UN ECOSOC)



A person's geographical location strongly determines his or her likelihood of finding paid work that is of good quality.

population (58%), with 700 million youth aged 15 to 24 years. It is projected that in 2020, India will have the highest youth population globally, at 248 million (representing 18% of the country's total population). Afghanistan, Micronesia, and Timor-Leste have the highest percentage of the population who are youth in the region (22%), followed by Nepal and Tonga (21%).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/5-shocking-facts-about-inequality-according-to-oxfam-s-latest-report/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org/ecosoc/files/files/en/2019doc/yf2019-asia-and-pacific.pdf>

Distribution of global labour income is highly unequal. In 2017, a worker belonging to the upper decile of the global labour income distribution earned on average US\$7,400 per month, whereas a worker in the bottom decile earned just US\$22 per month (both figures in purchasing power parity terms). While labour income inequality at the global level has declined over the past 15 years – as a result of economic convergence driven by countries such as India and China, which have enjoyed a rise in average labour income – inequality within countries has stagnated over the same period.<sup>8</sup>

**PART OF THE CHALLENGE SURROUNDING AI IS AN INCOMPLETE UNDERSTANDING ON ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES AND, IN PARTICULAR, WHICH HUMAN SKILLS NEED TO BE DEVELOPED TO ENSURE THAT HUMANS BENEFIT OPTIMALLY FROM AI-POWERED MACHINES.**

*-Professor Klaus Schwab*

# labour distribution & technology

A person's geographical location strongly determines his or her likelihood of finding paid work that is of good quality. At the global level, the employment rate of the working-age population living in rural areas is greater at 59% than that in urban areas at 56%. On the other hand, time-related underemployment in rural areas which stands at 6% is higher than in urban areas at 4%. These divisions are most pronounced in low-income countries. Rural-urban disparities may be exacerbated in the future by the transformations accompanying technological change. In Asia and the Pacific, for example, technological progress and policies designed to foster innovation seem to be creating jobs and incomes at a disproportionately higher level in urban areas.<sup>9</sup>

Technological progress is shaping the future of work, not least in Asia and the Pacific. New technologies related to Industry<sup>10</sup> and digitalization are being embraced by many governments as key pillars of their countries' future economic development. Governments in Asia and the Pacific are thus increasingly focusing their policies and programmes on skills development, the modernization of vocational education and training programmes, and the establishment of reskilling and upskilling mechanisms. These policies and programmes are however directed mainly at workers in high-skilled or at least medium-skilled occupations, and at workers employed in manufacturing or related services sectors. The vast majority of these workers are located in urban areas. In view of the rural-urban income disparities, the workers who benefit the most are thus predominantly those who are already better off.<sup>11</sup>



Governments in Asia and the Pacific are increasingly focusing their policies and programmes on skills development, the modernization of vocational education and training programmes, and the establishment of reskilling and upskilling mechanisms.

The Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019, in appraising the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI), observes that recent progress in automation and AI has contributed to a rising fear of technology driven unemployment. The Report says that the overall impact of digital technologies on employment remains uncertain, but recent estimates point to a high probability of considerable labour market disruption. For example, estimates of future job losses due to automation and AI range from a low of 5-10% to almost half of all existing jobs.

Research also differs on the expected impacts on different groups, such as women and men. In developing countries, two thirds of all jobs might

be at risk of automation and according to some surveys, the resulting rise in unemployment rates could reach more than a quarter of the labour force by 2050. However, new technologies should also lead to the creation of new jobs, which was the pattern of previous technological revolutions. For example, AI could create new demands for skills that take advantage of cheaper prediction as an input for decisions that still require human judgement. It is difficult to determine in which sectors employment will be created, and the complementary skills that will be required.

So far, many displaced workers have often found jobs outside their traditional occupation, but often at lower wages. New digital technologies also carry potential to improve provision of services at a higher quality and with decent work standards. This could prove particularly important for care activities, which are often female-dominated, and where there is significant unmet demand. Part of the challenge surrounding AI is an incomplete understanding on its implications for education systems and practices and, in particular, which human skills need to be developed to ensure that humans benefit optimally from AI-powered machines. This is particularly pressing in developing countries where young people often lack job-ready skills and AI platforms, tools, and applications are scarce.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_734454/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_734454/lang-en/index.htm)<sup>6</sup><https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/5-shocking-facts-about-inequality-according-to-oxfam-s-latest-report/>

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *Fourth Industrial Revolution. Professor Klaus Schwab, Founder of the World Economic Forum describes it characterized by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human.* <https://www.weforum.org/pages/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-by-klaus-schwab>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*



According to the UN DESA, of the world's estimated 258 million international migrants, an estimated 40 million live in the Asia and Pacific region. UNHCR estimates that some 37,000 each day are forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution

# m i g r a t i o n

Migration is another feature of the region's context and demographic affecting overall development and what education systems need to prepare and account for. According to the UN DESA, of the world's estimated 258 million international migrants, an estimated 40 million live in the Asia and Pacific region. Seventeen of the world's 31 'mega-cities' are located in the region, with mobility contributing to rapid urbanization.<sup>13</sup> Temporary, circular and irregular migration is widespread in the Asia Pacific, with almost half of the migrants being women. Migrants are predominantly semi and low-skilled workers in informal sectors looking for work. The UN International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates that 62% of people living in situations of modern slavery are in the region, working in sectors including the sex industry, agriculture, construction, fishing and hospitality.<sup>14</sup>

**THE UN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) ESTIMATES THAT 62% OF PEOPLE LIVING IN SITUATIONS OF MODERN SLAVERY ARE IN THE REGION, WORKING IN SECTORS INCLUDING THE SEX INDUSTRY, AGRICULTURE, CONSTRUCTION, FISHING AND HOSPITALITY.**

As UNESCO observes, migration brings both benefits and risks to children of migrant families. Remittances from family members who migrate may reduce poverty in recipient households. Remittances often exceed what would have been earned if the migrants had stayed in their home country. As a result, remittances allow children to stay in school rather than drop out to support their families. On the other hand, children who accompany a parent or are born in a destination country can find themselves in an irregular status, if not stateless, as migrant workers are not usually permitted to bring dependents with them. This irregular status can prevent children from attending formal education in the host country. Moreover, migrant children are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour.<sup>15</sup>

Migration flows are complex and mixed, including asylum seekers, stateless persons and people displaced by conflict, natural disasters or environmental change. According to the UNHCR, the number of forcibly displaced people in the world stands at 70.8 million which includes a record 25.9 million refugees, 41.3 million



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internally displaced people, and 3.5 million asylum seekers. In 2018, 67% of refugees came from 5 countries, two of which are in Asia: Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia. UNHCR estimates that some 37,000 each day are forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution.<sup>16</sup>



Levels of conflict and bloodshed have escalated in Afghanistan. Bangladesh still hosts close to a million refugees from Myanmar. Border conflict between India and Pakistan flared up in 2019 over the disputed region of Kashmir. The South Pacific has increasingly been used as the theatre of geopolitical manoeuvres between the US and China.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.iom.int/asia-and-pacific>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.iom.int/asia-and-pacific>

<sup>15</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265912>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>

Levels of conflict and bloodshed have escalated in Afghanistan soared over the past two years. Attacks by Taliban insurgents and Islamic State militants have devastated cities and towns across the country, with the impact on the countryside more severe. Washington and Kabul have stepped up air assaults and special-forces raids, with civilians often bearing the brunt of violence.<sup>17</sup> Some 437,000 were displaced in Afghanistan in 2019 due to the ongoing conflict and disasters.<sup>18</sup>

**MIGRATION FLOWS ARE COMPLEX AND MIXED, INCLUDING ASYLUM SEEKERS, STATELESS PERSONS AND PEOPLE DISPLACED BY CONFLICT, NATURAL DISASTERS OR ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE.**

*-UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

# conflict

## geo-political tensions & repression

Bangladesh still hosts close to a million refugees from Myanmar, most of whom fled over the border in 2017-2018 following a brutal military crackdown on the Rohingya in Myanmar's Rakhine State. Attracting less attention in 2019 has been the conflict between the Myanmar government and Arakan Army, a Buddhist insurgent force fighting for an independent Rakhine state. The area in dispute is rich in natural resources and occupies a key geostrategic location, with India and Bangladesh to the north, China to the northwest, and the countries of the Mekong valley to the south. Exact numbers of the latest IDPs in Myanmar from this conflict are hard to gather. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Myanmar has advised they are helping more than 50,000 people displaced by this conflict.<sup>19</sup>

Latent ethnic tensions in southern Thailand over the last decade have led to intermittent conflict between Thai security forces and armed militants from the south's majority-Muslim, ethnic-Malay

population. China's treatment of the majority Muslim Uyghur population in the autonomous north-western Xinjiang province is only more recently coming to light.<sup>20</sup>

Border conflict between India and Pakistan flared up in 2019 over the disputed region of Kashmir. Both countries lay claim to the Himalayan territory, split by an informal boundary, known as the Line of Control, since the first Indian-Pakistani war of 1947-48. Military skirmishes from both sides in the year heightened apprehensions beyond both countries. Tensions spiked again in August when the newly elected Indian government - revoked the state of Jammu and Kashmir's semi-autonomous status, which had served as the foundation for its joining India 72 years ago, and brought it

under New Delhi's direct rule. In the run-up to the announcement, the area was highly militarised, a curfew imposed, communications blackout was put in place, and thousands of Kashmiris, including the entire political class were arrested. Separately, the Indian government's new citizenship law, widely regarded as anti-Muslim, has sparked protests and violent police responses in many parts of the country. Together with the actions in Kashmir, these developments have brought greater insecurity to minorities in the country and stoked tensions across the border in neighbouring Muslim-majority countries.<sup>21</sup>

The thaw in US-North Korea relations in 2018 did not sustain through 2019 with North Korea restarting its missile testing in 2019. The South China Sea disputes continued in the period as well. China, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam have all staked claims to various islands and reefs as well as waterways in the sea, with rich petroleum reserves thought to sit deep beneath the waters. The US naval and air patrols through the disputed areas in the year in "Freedom of Navigation Operations" to assert freedom of access to international waterways, has been met with strong protests from China which claims all of the territory, adding to the US-China tensions over the trade war and relations with Taiwan.

The South Pacific has increasingly been used as the theatre of geopolitical manoeuvres between the US and China. China has re-emerged as a diplomatic force to be reckoned with. With the Solomon Islands and Kiribati switching diplomatic

## **PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES HAVE FOUND NEW SOURCES OF FINANCING FOR MUCH NEEDED INFRASTRUCTURE AND HEALTH SPENDING.**

*-Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada*

support from Taiwan to China in 2019, the US has begun to openly urge Taiwan's remaining allies in the Pacific not to switch sides as the region becomes the latest battleground with China.

These moves have spurred other players to react: Australia and New Zealand are strengthening regional networks of security agreements and infrastructure and military investments; Taiwan has poured money into medical and infrastructure funds for various island states; both France and the UK have increased their diplomatic and multilateral presence. Leveraging the attention, the Pacific Island countries have found new sources of financing for much needed infrastructure and health spending. At the same time, there are strong calls among these island states to pay less attention to the remote security concerns of Washington, Beijing and others, and more on the existential threat these low-lying countries face: that of climate change-driven sea level rise that could wipe out their land base.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/26/10-conflicts-to-watch-2020/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/maps-and-graphics/2020/01/20/Afghanistan-Iran-Pakistan-US-migration-returns>

<sup>19</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/31/rohingya-refugees-myanmar-attacking-buddhists-rakhine/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/chapters/the-global-state-of-democracy-2019-CH4.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.asiapacific.ca/publication/year-review>

**THE OVERALL INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF DISASTERS IN THE REGION IS LARGELY DUE TO THE INCREASE IN CLIMATE-RELATED EVENTS CONNECTED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION.**

*- Asia Pacific Disaster Report 2019*



# climate change & disasters

In 2019, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released new data that confirmed 2019 was the second-warmest year on record and capped off the warmest decade on record, underscoring the scale and gravity of the climate crisis. On the current path of carbon dioxide emissions, the world is heading towards a temperature increase of 3 to 5 degrees celsius by the end of century according to the WMO. Australia had its hottest, driest year on record in 2019, setting the scene for the massive bushfires which were devastating to people and property, wildlife, ecosystems, and the environment. WMO predicts much more extreme weather throughout 2020 and the coming decades, fueled by record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.<sup>23</sup>



More than 10,000 people lost their lives to natural disasters in 2019 with approximately 59% of fatalities occurring in the Asia Pacific region. The total financial impact on these disasters was USD \$232 billion.

The Asia Pacific Disaster Report 2019 says that diagnostic analysis indicates that overall increase in the number of disasters in the region is largely due to the increase in climate-related events connected with environmental degradation. Climate change and the complexity of disasters are also creating deep uncertainty. While enhanced technology and greater data availability allow many disasters to be predicted with greater accuracy, disasters triggered by climate change deviate from the usual tracks. It is therefore increasingly difficult to determine which areas should prepare for what kinds of disaster.<sup>24</sup>

More than 10,000 people lost their lives to natural disasters in 2019 with approximately 59% of fatalities occurring in the Asia Pacific region. The total financial impact on these disasters was USD \$232 billion. Five of the top 10 costliest disasters of 2019 were flood-related, including the summer monsoon floods in China which cost \$15 billion and took the lives of 300 people.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/01/15/unquestionably-alarmed-signs-new-data-confirms-earth-just-had-hottest-decade-record>

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Summary%20of%20the%20Asia-Pacific%20Disaster%20Report%202019\\_English.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Summary%20of%20the%20Asia-Pacific%20Disaster%20Report%202019_English.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.aon.com/global-weather-catastrophe-natural-disasters-costs-climate-change-2019-annual-report/index.html>





Social mobilisations have come to the fore in the face of expanding threats to democracy the world over and in the Asia Pacific.

# social mobilisations & threats to democracy

Millions of people all over the world joined the global mobilisations around the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York, September 2019 and hundreds of thousands marched in Madrid, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25). Young people came out in their numbers to demand urgent climate action with its most visible champion, Swedish teen, Greta Thunberg.

Hers was not the only voice that demanded change with little patience for further wait, inaction or compromise. In Hong Kong, young people led the most recent expression of civic voice and social mobilization in 2019. The largest street protests paralyzing Hong Kong were triggered by a draft extradition bill proposed by the Hong Kong Government, which would have allowed suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial. While the draft bill triggered the protests, the sentiments of protesters had been brewing for a long time, and their demands also included full representation in the legislative body, and

direct election of the chief executive.<sup>26</sup>

Students also took to the streets in several capital cities in India, notably in New Delhi, Lucknow, Kolkata, Mumbai in protest against a Citizenship Amendment Act and the moves towards a nation-wide national registration of citizens, seen as discriminatory against India's 200 million Muslim minority. In both Hong Kong and India, the mobilisations were further fired up by perceived police brutalities on the protesters.

These social mobilisations have come to the fore in the face of expanding threats to democracy the world over and in the Asia Pacific. According to the Global State of Democracy Report 2019, Asia and the Pacific is one of the regions most affected by democratic erosion. There have been attempts throughout the region to undermine civic space, freedom of speech and a free media in recent years.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/chapters/the-global-state-of-democracy-2019-CH4.pdf>

According to this Report, rising nationalism, and in particular ethno-nationalism, has led to the infusion of religion in politics in a number of countries, undermining secularism and pluralism, increasing societal polarization and, in the worst cases, heightening conflict. In the past, India, one of the region's older democracies, served as a model for much of South Asia by establishing a democratic system that prioritized a secular state identity and safeguarded pluralism. This is currently being challenged. In Sri Lanka, the political revival of the party encouraging an ever-present but latent Buddhist nationalism among the majority Sinhalese population constitutes a critical challenge to the country's future democratic trajectory.

Nepal has also expressed doubts about secularization and pro-Hindu nationalism is gaining strength in the country. In Pakistan, the military, through its support for the incumbent Prime Minister, also empowered three political parties with known ties to terrorism and a commitment to radical religious edicts. These include a party 'whose single position is the strict enforcement of the country's controversial blasphemy law'. In Indonesia, while civil society was one of the key political forces in the democratization process, democratic consolidation has also spawned groups that do not share democratic ideals. The emergence of radical Islamic and conservative nationalist groups, outside of the mainstream moderate Islamic movement, has been successfully

exploited by certain political interests in Indonesia. Efforts by certain Muslim groups as well as civil society organizations to reinforce sharia law in Indonesia's legal system could present a potential threat to democracy.<sup>27</sup>

In the Pacific Islands, there have also been attempts to stifle dissent and censor the internet. Most recently, governments in the sub region have made efforts to regulate the internet through legislation relating to the prosecution of cyber-criminals and restrictions on the use of social media platforms such as Facebook. There have been recent attempts in Papua New Guinea and Fiji to temporarily block Facebook and investigate how the social media platform can be regulated. Legislation governing cybercrime is also pending in Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.<sup>28</sup>

The Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Bill, passed by the Singapore Parliament in May 2019, will have a negative effect on freedom of expression. Criminal defamation laws are commonly used to repress activists and opposition members such as in Bangladesh, where scores of critics and journalists were prosecuted under the draconian Digital Security Act, and in Malaysia where criminal defamation laws were used to stamp out online criticism of religion and the monarchy. In the Philippines critics of President Duterte are now at greater risk of facing sedition and other charges.<sup>29</sup>

**THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT ATTEMPTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND FIJI TO TEMPORARILY BLOCK FACEBOOK AND INVESTIGATE HOW THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM CAN BE REGULATED. LEGISLATION GOVERNING CYBERCRIME IS ALSO PENDING IN SAMOA, SOLOMON ISLANDS, AND VANUATU.**

*-Global State of Democracy Report 2019*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>29</sup> <https://monitor.civicus.org/Asia.PeoplePowerUnderAttack2019/>



More restrictions are being imposed on NGOs in the region. In Kazakhstan, some NGOs addressing issues that the authorities deem sensitive have been unable to legally register themselves, such as those working in on human rights, and women's and LGBTQ rights.

More restrictions are also being imposed on NGOs in the region.<sup>30</sup> Participants of the 2019 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) - a large Europe-wide annual human rights and democracy conference - documented the growing restrictions on civil society and NGOs in Central Asia.

In Tajikistan, amendments to the Law on Public Associations that entered into force in 2019 introduced additional reporting obligations. The amendments also included vaguely worded provisions charging the Ministry of Justice, which oversees the work of public associations, with informing the relevant authorities if they suspect that an organization may be used as a cover for the financing of terrorism or extremism activities.<sup>31</sup> In Kyrgyzstan several members of parliament and the deputy head of the national security services have been calling for new restrictions on NGO activities

# restrictions on NGOs

including reviving the controversial draft "foreign agents" law which would require domestic nongovernmental organizations in Kyrgyzstan that receive foreign funding and engage in vaguely worded "political activities" to register as "foreign agents."<sup>32</sup>

In Kazakhstan, while national law requires public organizations to obtain official registration to operate lawfully in the country, some NGOs addressing issues that the authorities deem sensitive have been unable to register such as those working in the field of human rights, women's and LGBTQ rights. Independent trade unions also continue to experience serious obstacles to registration.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.osce.org/odihr/430745?download=true>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid* and <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/05/kyrgyzstan-reject-foreign-agents-law>

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*



# social media platforms freedom of speech & regulation

In recent years, social media and new technologies have contributed to a profound reshaping of the democratic landscape in Asia and the Pacific. They provide for example, a powerful platform for candidates to deliver their messages during election campaigns, a sophisticated means for spreading information, and an instrument for civil society activists to hold politicians and security forces accountable.

Recently, however, social media platforms have also become tools for the dissemination of hate speech towards minority groups and for deliberate disinformation or 'fake news'. The proliferation of online hate has contributed to demands that social media platforms become more proactive in moderating and blocking all forms of hate speech. Politically, governments and increasingly key

**THE PROLIFERATION OF ONLINE HATE HAS CONTRIBUTED TO DEMANDS THAT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BECOME MORE PROACTIVE IN MODERATING AND BLOCKING ALL FORMS OF HATE SPEECH.**

*-Global State of Democracy Report 2019*

platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are coming under pressure to develop a meaningful regulatory framework designed to prevent or at least curtail dissemination of the worst online excesses, including hate speech, disinformation and pornography. However, regulatory attempts face stark criticism from free speech advocates, who argue that any attempt to regulate online speech undermines democratic Principles such as freedom of expression. In parallel, many countries are waking up to the need to educate young people in responsible online user habits, starting in the classroom.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/chapters/the-global-state-of-democracy-2019-CH4.pdf>



# SDG4 & EDUCATION IN 2019

The review of SDG4 during the 2019 High-level Political Forum offered mixed results, although a clear message was given that accelerated action is needed if the international community is to meet the 2030 targets:

*“Despite the considerable progress on education access and participation over the past years, 262 million children and youth aged 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2017, and more than half of children and adolescents are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. Rapid technological changes present opportunities and challenges, but the learning environment, the capacities of teachers and the quality of education have not kept pace. Refocused efforts are needed to improve learning outcomes for the full life cycle, especially for women, girls and marginalized people in vulnerable settings.*

- In 72 countries with recent data, approximately 7 in 10 children aged 3 and 4 were developmentally on track in at least three of the following domains: literacy-numeracy, physical development, social-emotional development and learning.
- In 2015, an estimated 617 million children and adolescents of primary and lower secondary school age worldwide – more than 50 per cent – were not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. Of these, about two thirds were attending school but were not learning in the classroom, or dropped out of school.
- Some 750 million adults – two thirds of them women – remained illiterate in 2016. Half of the global illiterate population lives in South Asia, and a quarter live in sub-Saharan Africa.

- Many developing countries still lack basic infrastructure and facilities to provide effective learning environments. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the biggest challenges: at the primary and lower secondary levels, less than half of schools have access to electricity, the Internet, computers and basic drinking water.
- ODA for scholarships amounted to \$1.3 billion in 2017. Australia, France, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and institutions of the European Union accounted for nearly two thirds of this total.
- Globally, there has been little progress in the percentage of primary school teachers who are trained: it has been stagnating at about 85 per cent since 2015. The proportion is lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (64 per cent).<sup>35</sup>



Many developing countries still lack basic infrastructure and facilities to provide effective learning environments.

**AS MANY AS 18.7 MILLION CHILDREN ARE OUT OF SCHOOL IN THE ASIA PACIFIC. 446 MILLION PEOPLE, AGED 15 YEARS AND ABOVE, ARE ILLITERATE ADULTS.**

-UNESCO Bangkok



The Asia Pacific region is home to 52% of tertiary students worldwide. East Asia made the greatest progress - 39 million more students have enrolled in tertiary education since 2000.

*“Paving the Road to Education: A Target by Target Analysis of SDG4 for the Asia Pacific”* was released by UNESCO Bangkok in preparation for the HLPF 2019 processes in the region. According to this report, as many as 18.7 million children are out of school in the Asia Pacific. 446 million people, aged 15 years and above, are illiterate adults. Most (369 million) live in South and West Asia alone which accounts for roughly half of the global population of illiterate adults. With 58% of the world’s youth between the ages of 15 and 24 residing in the Asia-Pacific, about 21% are not employed or enrolled in education or any other form of training.

Currently available data does not paint a comprehensive picture of enrolment in either early childhood education and/or pre-primary education. Available country data however, illustrates the uneven enrolment of children in ECE programmes in the region. Fifteen out of 38 countries, most of which are middle or low-income countries, enrol less than 50% of

<sup>35</sup> <https://undocs.org/E/2019/68> (Paragraph 25)

**GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION ARE TURNING TO TVET TO BOOST ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY AND NURTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECENT WORK FOR ALL. -UNESCO Bangkok**



Across the Asia-Pacific, men use the internet more frequently than women, except in Australia and New Zealand. The gender gap is likely to widen as a result of women not benefiting from equal access to the internet, or acquiring much-needed ICT skills.

children in ECE programmes while many countries from East Asia and the Pacific enrol more than 70% of young children in early childhood education programmes.

Against the backdrop of changing economies, governments in the region are turning to TVET to boost economic productivity and nurture opportunities for decent work for all. TVET

programmes take place in formal education systems at the secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary and tertiary levels, as well as in non-formal settings and workplaces. Available data on TVET currently however can mainly capture participation in TVET in formal programmes at the secondary education level. In the Asia-Pacific region, the number of students enrolled in TVET programmes in formal secondary education increased in recent years from 20 million in 2000 to 31 million in 2016. The region accounts for more than half of secondary-level TVET students in the world today. Four out of five of those enrolled live in East Asia and South East Asia, with China (17 million) and Indonesia (4 million) registering huge numbers. Across the region, secondary education TVET programmes tend to attract more male students than female students.

In terms of tertiary education, the numbers have also grown: doubling between 2000 and 2016, from 46 million to 112 million. The Asia Pacific region is now home to 52% of tertiary students, worldwide. East Asia made the greatest progress: 39 million more students have enrolled in tertiary education since 2000. Data however shows that certain population groups are more likely to access TVET and tertiary education. TVET programmes are largely dominated by male students. In tertiary



Equity and inclusion are at the heart of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda. Access and participation in education have expanded in the past decade, especially for girls.



Studies have shown that countries have increased efforts to mainstream Target 4.7 at the policy level, but the quality of teaching materials and the knowledge level of teachers remain low.

education, there is a large completion gap between the most privileged (typically, males in urban areas from the richest households) and disadvantaged groups (typically, females in rural areas from the poorest households). From an equity perspective, much more needs to be done to understand the barriers certain populations face in accessing and completing TVET and tertiary education.

Target 4.4 emphasizes the importance of equipping youth and adults with essential skills for employment, entrepreneurship and decent jobs, by building on literacy and numeracy skills acquired in school. Work-specific skills vary considerably, although the skilful use of information and communication technology has become a universal requirement for youth and adults in today's ICT-driven world. Currently, country-level and regional data that provide measures of ICT skills and digital literacy skills are limited. However, data suggest that in both developing and developed countries, a significant share of the populations have low ICT proficiencies. A gender gap also exists with regards to access to ICT skills. 48% of men in the Asia-Pacific region had access to the Internet in 2017, compared to 40% of women. Across the Asia-Pacific, men use the internet more frequently than women, except in Australia and New Zealand. The gender gap is likely to widen as a result of women not benefitting from equal access to the internet, or acquiring much-needed ICT skills. Women may also face

### **CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ARE LESS LIKELY TO ENTER AND COMPLETE BASIC EDUCATION, COMPARED TO THEIR PEERS WITHOUT DISABILITIES.**

*-UNESCO Bangkok*

discrimination when they wish to acquire ICT skills. Technology is often perceived as a 'male domain'. As a consequence, girls and women are discouraged from embracing ICT training or employment. Moreover, women face obstacles that arise from household obligations, poverty, mobility constraints and limited family support.

Equity and inclusion are at the heart of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda. Access and participation in education have expanded in the past decade, especially for girls, and more work has been done to understand the characteristics of excluded children. Attendance in primary education has reached gender parity in almost all countries with available data, with a few exceptions. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, boys, children in urban areas and those from the richest families are more likely to attend school than girls in rural areas from the 20% poorest families. The inequalities become more pronounced in upper secondary education. For instance, Thailand maintains parity for gender, location and wealth in primary and lower secondary education, but inequalities emerge in upper secondary education.



While parity indices offer important information about exclusion based on gender, wealth and location, Target 4.5 calls for countries to address all forms of exclusion and marginalization in education and learning for children and adults. Some countries in the region collect data that can shed light on harder-to-measure characteristics, such as disability. Children with disabilities are less likely to enter and complete basic education, compared to their peers without disabilities. In Cambodia, 44% of children with disabilities, aged 14 to 16 years of age, completed primary education, compared to 72% for non-disabled children. This tendency grows at higher levels of education where only 4% of disabled young people, aged 17 and 19 years, completed lower secondary education, contrary to 41% for their non-disabled counterparts.

**WITHOUT GREATER COMMITMENT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM RESOURCES AND TEACHER TRAINING TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION, STUDENTS WILL FAIL TO MEET THE LEARNING OUTCOMES EXPECTED OF TARGET 4.7.**

*-UNESCO Bangkok*



Approximately 32 million teaching posts will need to be filled to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030 in the Asia Pacific.



In order to achieve the SDG4 Education 2030 Agenda, countries need to increase investment in education.

Target 4.7 presents a vision of education as a force for societal transformation in support of the broader Sustainable Development Agenda. The target goes beyond subject matter knowledge highlighted in the learning agenda by calling for all learners, regardless of sex or age, to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary to contribute to peaceful and sustainable societies. The target encompasses Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as well as Global Citizenship Education (GCED). Themes such as education for peace and non-violence, human rights, gender equality, health and sexuality, sustainable lifestyles and cultural diversity are to be integrated into curricula, teaching, assessments and education policies by 2030. With some exceptions, the concepts of gender equality, peace and global citizenship were however found to be mostly absent from national education policies and curricula in the Asia-Pacific region.

Studies have shown that countries have increased efforts to mainstream Target 4.7 at the policy level, but the quality of teaching materials and the knowledge level of teachers remain low. Inadequate resources and capacities were shown to hamper the implementation of curricula.



UNESCO has asserted that even with an increase in domestic resources, there is still an annual financing gap of close to US\$39 billion between 2015 to 2030 to finance the target of universal access to 12 years of free primary and secondary education.

Quality learning depends on the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter. Whether it be citizenship, human rights, sustainability or sexuality, the teacher must feel confident delivering the subject and using available teaching materials in order to teach the subject effectively. Without greater commitment to the development of curriculum resources, and teacher training to support sustainable development and global citizenship education, students will fail to meet the learning outcomes expected of Target 4.7.

The quality of learning environments impact access and quality of education. Children and young people around the world face numerous factors that lead to exclusion and bullying, such as poverty, social status, gender, ethnicity, language, migration, refugee status, appearance and disability. When physical, verbal, or psychosocial bullying or other forms of violence are added into the mix, learners are at an even greater risk of leaving school early. Based on available country data, boys appear more likely to be the victims of bullying than girls. In the Asia-Pacific region, the highest percentage of boys and girls experiencing some form of bullying at school was reported in the Pacific. Solomon Islands (67%), Vanuatu (67%) and Samoa (74%) had the highest rates.

**APPROXIMATELY 32 MILLION TEACHING POSTS WILL NEED TO BE FILLED TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION BY 2030 IN THE ASIA PACIFIC.**

*-UNESCO Bangkok*

The lowest incidence of bullying was in Tajikistan (7%) and Lao PDR (12%). However nearly one-fifth of students felt bullied in Malaysia (18%), Myanmar (19%) and Indonesia (21%). Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons suffer higher rates of victimization than their non-LGBT peers.

Advances in assistive technologies are helping some children with disabilities to become more mobile, to communicate, see and hear better, and generally participate more in learning activities. But many barriers still exist ranging from a lack of roads, long distances to adapted schools and inadequate infrastructure (stairs and doorways unsuitable for wheelchair use), to a lack of classroom equipment and inaccessible sanitation facilities. School pedagogy also often focuses on performance rather than individual progress, which makes education restrictive for children with disabilities and other special needs.

In 2016, the Asia-Pacific region had 38 million teachers, from pre-primary to upper secondary education, accounting for 50% of the global teacher supply. The largest share of teachers, 44% (17 million), were employed in primary education. Since 2000, the number and share of female teachers has increased at all levels of education; however, they tend to be over-represented in pre-primary education and under-represented in secondary education. Women tend to be under-represented in

leadership roles, too. With few exceptions, men dominate the upper levels of education management and administration, globally.

Approximately 32 million teaching posts will need to be filled to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030 in the Asia Pacific. Increasing school-age populations will continue to drive the demand for teachers as education systems try to absorb more students at all levels. A growing teacher workforce then will require governments to increase spending on education in order to cover teachers' salaries, which are the largest share of public education expenditure. At the same time, more students are making the transition to secondary education where teachers are paid more. Countries will also need to pay attention to the distribution of teachers to avoid ballooning class sizes. Although some countries have a desirable parent teacher ratio (PTR) at the national level, this can mask variations across the country. Teachers tend to be concentrated in areas where they have better working conditions, such as urban areas. As a result, children in disadvantaged locations, such as rural and remote areas, may face overcrowded classrooms led by underqualified teachers.

In order to achieve the SDG4 Education 2030 Agenda, countries need to increase investment in education.

The Financing for Social Development Report 2019 underscores that domestic public finance is by far the most important source of funding, accounting for 79 per cent of education spending globally. Poorer countries prioritize education more in their public expenditure, but this still translates into vastly smaller expenditure by student—less than \$200 annually per primary school student in low-income countries, compared to around \$8,000 in high-income countries. In response, households have to contribute a much larger share of education financing directly. In some developing countries, households account for more than half of all expenditure, compared to less than 15 per cent in most developed countries. Over-reliance on households raises equity concerns.<sup>36</sup>

**IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE SDG4  
EDUCATION 2030 AGENDA,  
COUNTRIES NEED TO INCREASE  
INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION.**

-UNESCO



Education has become less of a priority for development partners, with the share of education falling from a peak of 10.7% of total aid in 2007 to just 7.1% in 2017.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid



The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) has continued to assert that tax justice measures that end harmful tax incentives for the rich and stop aggressive tax avoidance by elites and multinational corporations offer a sustainable and lasting solution to the financing gaps in education and development.

The same report also observes that high debt burdens may threaten countries' abilities to raise sufficient financing. It states that public debt levels have continued to rise, with some middle-income countries experiencing debt levels last seen during the debt crises of the 1980s. Debt vulnerabilities in developing countries exist due not only to higher levels of debt, but also because of increased risks from a shift in debt composition. A rise in external debt that carries variable interest rates and greater reliance on commercial debt have increased refinancing risks. A more prominent role of non-traditional creditors and market-based financing also presents new challenges for debt crisis resolution. The rise in public debt has been accompanied by an increase in corporate debt, particularly

**PUBLIC SUPPORT TO LOW-FEE PRIVATE CHAIN COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS, OR PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, THROUGH, FOR EXAMPLE, VOUCHER SYSTEMS, HAVE SHOWN LIMITED IMPACT ON INCREASED ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION.**

in middle-income countries, as many large companies took advantage of the long period of unusually low international interest rates. Further increases in global interest rates could create concerns for financial stability, and in many cases, for public debt sustainability as private liabilities often become public during crises.<sup>37</sup>

UNESCO has asserted that even with an increase in domestic resources, there is still an annual financing gap of close to US\$39 billion between 2015 to 2030 to finance the target of universal access to 12 years of free primary and secondary education. Donors have however not kept their promises to keep to the UN target of 0.7% of gross national income to foreign aid. Doing just that and allocating 10% of that aid to primary and secondary education, would have been enough to fill the US\$39 billion dollars annual financing gap. Yet, education has become less of a priority for development partners, with the share of education falling from a peak of 10.7% of total aid in 2007 to just 7.1% in 2017.<sup>38</sup>

Civil society organisations, such as the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), have challenged the push to find solutions in greater private sector participation in education as a means to close the financing gaps. Public support to low-fee private chain commercial schools or public-private partnerships through for example voucher systems have shown limited impact in increased access to quality education, and have been seen to cause segregation and competition at the expense of learners from poorer, more marginalised communities, undermining the right to education. GCE has continued to assert that tax justice measures that end harmful tax incentives for the rich and stop aggressive tax avoidance by elites and multinational corporations offer a sustainable and lasting solution to the financing gaps in education and development. According to Oxfam, if governments were to increase taxation on the wealthiest 1% for the next 10 years for example, that alone would be the equivalent to creating 117 million care jobs in education, health and elderly care.

<sup>37</sup> <https://developmentfinance.un.org/sites/developmentfinance.un.org/files/FSDR2019.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/news/aid-education-falls-slightly-2017-shifts-away-primary-education>



# ASPBAE IN 2019

# POLICY ADVOCACY

1

*Asserting a stronger CSO voice for SDG4 within the SDG4 processes and the wider SDG debates at national, regional, and global levels.*

The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) of 2019 was the year's major platform to assert the importance of SDG4 and its strategic role in the achievement of all other SDGs. The HLPF 2019 convened under the auspices of the UN ECOSOC July 9-18 in New York, themed on "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" was to focus its review in-depth on SDG4 along with SDG8 (decent work), SDG10 (equity), SDG13 (climate action), SDG16 (peace), and SDG17 (partnerships for the Goals).

A major part of the engagement of ASPBAE in the process was the development of CSO Spotlight Reports on SDG4: an attempt to offer a distinct civil society appraisal of progress on the implementation of the SDG4 targets. A total of **16 CSO Spotlight Reports** were developed in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Japan, Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Timor Leste, Australia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu – surpassing the 13-country target coverage. In addition, the education coalition in Korea, CIATE prepared a report that focused on SDG4.7. A Regional Report summarising the findings of the Country Spotlight Reports was developed as well.

The CSO Spotlight Reports informed the engagement of national education coalitions in the countries which have volunteered in 2019 to offer their Volunteer National Reviews (VNRs) for

**A TOTAL OF 16 CSO SPOTLIGHT REPORTS WERE DEVELOPED IN INDIA, NEPAL, BANGLADESH, PAKISTAN, SRI LANKA, KYRGYZSTAN, MONGOLIA, JAPAN, CAMBODIA, THE PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA, VIETNAM, TIMOR-LESTE, AUSTRALIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AND VANUATU.**



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the HLPF 2019, notably, Cambodia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Indonesia and the Philippines. For the rest, the CSO Spotlight Reports represented independent CSO assessments of progress on SDG4 implementation intended to assist in facilitating a wider public debate especially at the country level, on the right to education and SDG4.

The Reports outlined observations of civil society on the SDG-SDG4 implementation, highlighting especially, the concerns and aspirations of the most marginalised and excluded groups. They also described the nature of civil society engagement in the official SDG-SDG4 processes at the country level, so far.

The Summary Report noted that all countries reviewed have rolled out the SDGs and SDG4 locally; SDG committees/working groups/task forces have been set up in all countries and in five (5) of 16 countries reviewed, SDG-related committees have been set up at the highest level, directly under the Office of the Prime Minister or President. Twelve (12) of 16 countries reviewed have adopted a national SDG policy framework, four (4) with a clear and comprehensive implementation strategy and action plan.

Governments in the region have convened SDG-related consultations with stakeholders, including civil society. Broad national civil society platforms on the SDGs have been set up in several countries across the region where different groups come together for SDG planning, monitoring, and engagement with the government, development partners, and UN agencies. These networks include ASPBAE members and national education coalitions.

Some notable examples of CSO engagement outlined in the Summary Report are as follows:

- The Government of Timor-Leste has created an open space for CSOs to monitor the implementation of programmes, particularly on the SDGs, through a Social Audit Partnership between the government and CSOs represented by the Forum NGO Timor Leste (FONGTIL) that was formalised in a signed Memorandum of Understanding. CSOs have actively

**THE CSO SPOTLIGHT REPORTS REPRESENTED INDEPENDENT CSO ASSESSMENTS OF PROGRESS ON SDG4 IMPLEMENTATION INTENDED TO ASSIST IN FACILITATING A WIDER PUBLIC DEBATE, ESPECIALLY AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL, ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND SDG4.**



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engaged in the government's VNR processes with the latter committing to include CSO representatives in its delegation to present the country's VNR during the 2019 HLPF.

- In the Philippines, the Department of Education initiated the formation of the Multi-Sectoral Committee on SDG4 to coordinate the implementation and monitoring of SDGs. The committee is currently being formalised with defined terms of reference and includes as members other government agencies and education-focused CSOs, child rights networks and youth groups, among others.
- In Bangladesh, the government has provided ample space for the meaningful participation of civil society in SDG processes. It organised several consultations with CSOs and extended recognition to the Citizen's Platform for SDGs as a partner in the SDG rollout and localisation in the country.
- Since 2017, the Government of Mongolia, through the Ministry of Education, has convened annual national conferences on SDG4 in cooperation with UNESCO Beijing Office, the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO and UNICEF Mongolia. Different units of the government and several

CSOs participated in these consultations where discussions revolved around SDG4 implementation progress and challenges, and the ways forward.

- In Nepal, the government recognises and appreciates the role played by CSOs in localising the SDGs through community consultations, training, workshop, information dissemination, and monitoring. Working as a watchdog of the SDG implementation, CSOs come out regularly with the Civil Society Education Report (CSER) that tracks the progress towards the SDGs.

**IN TERMS OF SDG4 IMPLEMENTATION, THE SPOTLIGHT REPORTS HIGHLIGHTED CONCERNS RELATED TO LOW FINANCING AND GROWING PRIVATIZATION; EQUITY CONCERNS INCLUDING WIDENING DISPARITIES, DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION.**



Serious challenges were however also noted: while most countries have developed a national SDG indicator framework, there is a huge challenge in the availability of data and the omission of some important indicators in the monitoring system. Few countries have established a baseline with clear numerical targets for the SDG indicators. Financing the SDGs, including SDG4, emerged as one of the most critical issues: most countries have no clear financing strategy and no estimate of the financial requirements needed to achieve the SDG4 targets. In most countries, there are no institutionalised partnership and coordination mechanisms between the government and civil society on the SDGs. Except for a few countries, consultations on the VNRs were tokenistic without opportunities for substantive inputs and debates. Only five (5) of 16 countries have institutionalised Government-CSO coordination mechanisms on the SDGs/SDG4.



While most countries have developed a national SDG indicator framework, there is a huge challenge in the availability of data and the omission of some important indicators in the monitoring system.

**MOST COUNTRIES HAVE NO CLEAR FINANCING STRATEGY AND NO ESTIMATE OF THE FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE SDG4 TARGETS.**

In terms of SDG4 implementation, the reports highlighted concerns related to low financing and growing privatization; equity concerns including widening disparities, discrimination and segregation; challenges in quality including teacher shortages, poor, unsafe learning environments; low priority to the SDG4 targets related to adult learning and education; and ongoing issues of lack of transparency, accountability and poor management in education governance.

These findings informed the main advocacies on ASPBAE and its members in the different SDG-SDG4 related processes at the national, regional and global levels. Apart from the launch of the Spotlight Reports during the HLPF side event on 10 July in New York, the reports were likewise presented in seven other regional and international events. In the latter part of the year and early in 2020, national coalitions organised national and local consultations to disseminate the main messages of their respective spotlight reports.

## SDG-wide Processes

ASPBAE and its members participated in the **6<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)** organised by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) on March 27-29 in Bangkok, Thailand. The ASPBAE delegation which was led by ASPBAE Executive Council member from the South Pacific and youth leader, Peter Clinton Foaese, included ASPBAE staff, and ASPBAE national education coalition members from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea.

ASPBAE was selected as the CSO representative in the Roundtable session focused on SDG4 in the APFSD. The roundtables were designed to jointly agree on the analysis regarding progress on meeting the given SDG and its targets and to jointly develop policy recommendations, forming the official submission of the Asia Pacific to the 2019 HLPF. Most of the interventions from the ASPBAE delegation and CSOs were taken on board and integrated in the final recommendations reported in the full plenary.

**DURING THE APFSD, ASPBAE, UNESCO BANGKOK, AND THE THEMATIC WORKING GROUP (TWG) ON EDUCATION 2030 CO-ORGANISED A SIDE EVENT ON 'MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS FOR SDG4', WITHIN WHICH THE GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2019 YOUTH REPORT WAS LAUNCHED IN THE REGION.**



National coalitions organised national and local consultations to disseminate the main messages of their respective country spotlight reports.

During the APFSD, ASPBAE, UNESCO Bangkok, and the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Education 2030 co-organised a side event on **'Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for SDG4'**, within which the GEMR 2019 Youth Report was launched in the region. Fidelis Leite Magalhaes, Minister of Legislative and Parliamentarian Reform of Timor-Leste, who was elected Chair of the 6th APFSD, gave the keynote address, stressing the critical role of education in human development and in meeting all the SDGs. Ahmed Shamim Al Razi, Joint Secretary for Secondary and Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh, presented the progress and challenges in implementing SDG4, citing the important role of civil society organisations (CSO) in SDG processes. ASPBAE presented the highlights of the CSO country and regional Spotlight Reports in this event. Two youth representatives, one being from ASPBAE, also spoke during the launch of the GEMR 2019 Youth Report.

In advance of the APFSD, a CSO preparatory event, called the **Asia Pacific Peoples Forum (APPF)**, was organised by UN ESCAP with the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM). This was convened on March 24-26 in Bangkok, Thailand. The ASPBAE delegation to the APFSD participated in this CSO preparatory event as well. ASPBAE organised two side events in the APPF: 1) one on 'Transformative education for people's empowerment and social justice: unpacking SDG4'; and 2) a second on 'Accountability on SDG4-CSO space and engagement'.

The People's Forum provided a meaningful venue for civil society coming from different sectors and countries to explore common ground, develop common messages, and coordinate strategies for effective participation in regional and global SDG processes. For the ASPBAE delegation, the People's Forum was an occasion to meet CSOs from other sectors and movements, appreciate their issues and advocacies, understand different perspectives in education, and deepen the analysis on the systemic barriers that impact education. ASPBAE also pushed for the formation of an education constituency group within APRCEM: the subject of ongoing negotiations with the Regional Coordinating Committee of this CSO mechanism.



ASPBAE and its members participated in the 6th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). The ASPBAE delegation consisted of national education coalition members from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea.

**ASPBAE WAS CONCERNED THAT THE 2019 HLPF DID NOT HAVE A NEGOTIATED OUTCOME WHICH FOCUSED IN-DEPTH ON THE SPECIFIC SDGS UNDER REVIEW: SDGS 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, AND 17.**

With respect to the global HLPF processes, ASPBAE co-organised **two side events during the HLPF 2019 processes** in New York, July 9-18, 'The Invisible Friend-Adult Education and Sustainable Development Goals' with DVV International, ICAE and UIL on July 9, and 'Education to End Inequality and Promote Peace' with GCAP, CONGO and the Episcopal Church Centre, among others on 10 July. ASPBAE also participated in the Azad Foundation and American Jewish World Service side event on 'Tapping the Potential of Non-Traditional Livelihoods to Empower Women and Girls' on July 15 and the different activities and side events of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) on July 12-13.

ASPBAE organised two side events at the Asia Pacific People's Forum (APPF) – 'Transformative education for people's empowerment and social justice: Unpacking SDG 4'; and 'Accountability on SDG4 - CSO space and engagement'.

At the end of the HLPF 2019, like many of the NGOs that participated, ASPBAE was concerned that the 2019 HLPF did not have a negotiated outcome which focused in-depth on the specific SDGs under review: SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, and 17. It was agreed that only one Political Declaration come out of this two-level HLPF<sup>39</sup> and this Political Declaration focused on the next 10 years of SDG implementation was instead adopted in the SDG Summit, September 24-25, alongside the UN General Assembly in New York. This took away from the more exhaustive consideration given to specific SDGs that was possible in earlier HLPFs and thus blunted attention to SDG4 and the other SDGs of the HLPF 2019 review process for example on decent work, inequality, climate action, and peace.

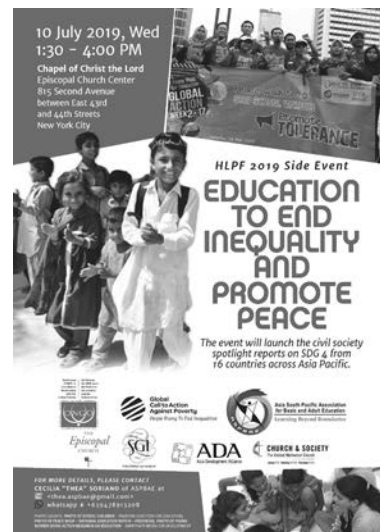
After much lobbying by the education sector, the Political Declaration (finally) made reference to SDG4: Paragraph 8 which reaffirmed “access to inclusive and equitable quality education” and Paragraph 27 (h) “promote and support quality education and lifelong learning to ensure that all children, youth and adults are empowered with the relevant knowledge and skills to shape more resilient, inclusive and sustainable societies that are able to adapt to rapid technological change.”



The HLPF 2019 Political Declaration made reference to SDG4 by reaffirming access to inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting and supporting quality education and lifelong learning.



ASPBAE, UNESCO Bangkok, and the TWG on Education 2030 co-organised a side event during the APFSD on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for SDG4. The GEMR 2019 Youth Report was also launched.



ASPBAE co-organised two side events during the HLPF 2019 processes in New York - ‘The Invisible Friend- Adult Education and Sustainable Development Goals’; and ‘Education to End Inequality and Promote Peace’.

<sup>39</sup> The 2019 HLPF was convened in two parts, the first under the auspices of the UN ECOSOC (July 9-18, in New York) themed on “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” and which reviewed, in-depth, SDG4, SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 10 (equity), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 16 (peace); and the second under the auspices of the UN General Assembly (September 24-25, in New York), which was themed on “Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and was the first UN summit on the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015.

## SDG4 Processes



ASPBAE maintained a strong presence during APMED which focussed on SDG 4.1 (primary and secondary education) and 4.6 (youth and adult literacy and numeracy).

ASPBAE also sustained its engagement with the SDG4 follow up processes in the region and globally.

It maintained a strong presence during the 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED 5) which was themed on 'Delivering Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education in the Era of Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Development'. APMED 5 focused on a review of the experience and progress on SDG4.1 (primary and secondary education) and SDG4.6 (youth and adult literacy and numeracy).

ASPBAE led a delegation of 18 national education coalitions, 3 national adult education organisations, and organisations of youth and persons with disabilities. ASPBAE Executive Council members participated actively in the event and following ASPBAE's negotiations with the organisers, were accorded prominent speaking roles in plenary sessions and in the open discussions: Ehsanur Rahman (EC member for South and Central Asia and Dhaka Ahsania Mission or DAM, Bangladesh), Nguyen Kim Anh (EC member for South East Asia and Vietnam Association

### ASPBAE CONTINUED TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE THEMATIC WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION 2030+ (TWG), CO-CONVENED BY UNESCO AND UNICEF.

for Education for All or VAEFA, Vietnam) and Kilala Devette-Chee (EC member for the South Pacific and PNG Education Advocacy Network or PEAN, PNG). ASPBAE was once again represented in the Drafting Committee and in the SDG4 National Coordinators Meeting by ASPBAE staff, Thea Soriano. This facilitated greater access by ASPBAE to the processes deciding on the policy messages coming out of APMED 5, notably the Outcomes Document and plans of the National Coordinators.

ASPBAE continued to be an active member of the Thematic Working Group on Education 2030+ (TWG) co-convened by UNESCO and UNICEF, which steers attention to SDG4 within the regional UN ESCAP system. ASPBAE was part of the UN ESCAP-UNESCO SDG4 Reference Group for APFSD which met on January 18, to prepare for the SDG4 related submissions for the 6th APFSD. ASPBAE participated in the Regional Experts



In APMED, ASPBAE led a delegation of 18 national education coalitions, 3 national adult education organisations, and organisations of youth and persons with disabilities. ASPBAE was also represented in the Drafting Committee.

Group Meeting on the 5-Year Progress Review of SDG4 in November 14-15, which was tasked with deliberating on how to develop the 5-year SDG4 Review Report. ASPBAE has become part of the Drafting Committee for this report which will be presented during the 2020 Asia Pacific Regional Education Ministers Conference (APREMC), a Ministerial-level policy meeting on to review SDG4 progress, August 19-21, 2020 in Bangkok. ASPBAE will also co-steer on the section of the Report related to SDG4.6 and will contribute to the section on CSO participation.

At the global level, ASPBAE participated in the 6th SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) meeting on March 11-12, Paris, as one of the civil society representatives. ASPBAE continued to serve as an alternate to the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) in the Steering Committee. The meeting focused on the preparations for the Steering Committee engagement in the 2019 High-level Political Forum. In defining its main messages, it drew from the outcomes of the 2018 Global Education Meeting codified in the 'Brussels Declaration'. The SC agreed to highlight 6 areas to accelerate action on meeting the SDG4 targets:

- Beyond Averages: focus on equity and inclusion
- Beyond Access: attention to quality and learning
- Beyond Basics: content fit for sustainable development
- Beyond Schooling: adopt a lifelong learning framework
- Beyond Education: work for cross-sectoral approaches
- Beyond Countries: foster regional and global cooperation

ASPBAE attended the **Meeting of the 6th Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) on SDG4 Indicators** convened by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) in Yerevan, Armenia on August 27-30. ASPBAE filled in for the Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education (CLADE) in the meeting. The TCG was formed in early 2016 to lead the development and implementation of the global and thematic indicator frameworks to monitor the education targets in SDG4. It is currently composed of 27 Member States and 8 organisations including representatives of all regions as well as from civil society and international organisations. In the meeting ASPBAE raised the absence of a specific indicator to measure a critical target under SDG Target 4.1 on free and compulsory basic education, noting that poverty, exclusion and the rising cost of education are the main reasons for dropping out or being pushed out of school. This was

**ASPBAE MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN THE APFSD HONED CAPACITIES TO LOBBY AND ADVOCATE FOR EDUCATION WITH OTHER CSO NETWORKS.**

acknowledged, although it was mentioned that coming up with an additional indicator for SDG4.1 would be difficult at this stage.



ASPBAE's mobilising capacity, the spread of its membership across the region, and the depth of its network was demonstrated prominently during the 2019 SDG-SD4 follow up processes.

#### ***Gains in these processes:***

- The work of Keck and Sikkink on transnational advocacy, identifies a set of tools that transnational advocacy networks employ to exert influence given their distinct type of politics and nature. 'Information politics' is one such tool, or "the ability to move politically usable information quickly and credibly to where it would have the best impact". This is what the CSO Spotlight Report initiative represented. ASPBAE, and its members effectively harnessed information and data that is most accessible to them i.e. a CSO view of processes in the implementing the SDG-SDG4 promises, the outstanding issues especially on equity drawn from the perspective of more vulnerable groups and distinct stakeholder groups like youth, especially marginalised youth – and deployed these in arenas of policy influence within the HLPF processes.

ASPBAE members appreciated the tools of analysis and methodology jointly developed by ASPBAE and participating members. This facilitated their ability to develop timely lobby and advocacy material which sharply brought their analysis and assertions to the fore with relevant policy makers. The strategic information infrastructure that was developed (database, methodology, toolkits, popular communication tools) has continuing utility to the coalitions and other education campaigners and can be shared and echoed to other members of coalition and to wider networks facilitating greater reach and potential impact.

- ASPBAE's mobilising capacity, the spread of its membership across the region and the depth of its network down to sub-national levels, well-equipped to engage in education policy concerns was demonstrated prominently during the 2019 SDG-SD4 follow up processes. Within the APFSD, it was from the ASPBAE membership that CSO representation was possible from the smaller, more remote countries in the region. Even as there were setbacks with the continued resistance of the APRCEM to create a distinct constituency for education, ASPBAE was the undisputed voice and deserving representative for CSOs during the official Roundtable on SDG4 in the APFSD. ASPBAE secured this competitive slot with full support from CSOs and UNESCO.

The protocol negotiated by ASPBAE and agreed by UNESCO and UNICEF for CSO participation in the annual APMEDs, institutionalised CSO participation in this important regional policy space for education. The active and meaningful engagement of CSOs in these meetings year after year, enhanced the credibility of civil society actions and contributions. Where it was difficult to negotiate roles and speaking slots for CSOs in earlier APMEDs, these were readily available

in APMED 5. Given this position, ASPBAE was also able to negotiate for representation of otherwise excluded groups such as people with disabilities or marginalised youth.

- ASPBAE members participating in the APFSD honed capacities to lobby and advocate for education with other CSO networks and to more powerfully make the case for the value of education in meeting the other SDGs. They also witnessed, first hand, the realpolitik of engaging with other social movements and CSO networks operating in the SDG platforms. This prepares them well for ongoing involvement in these spaces at country, regional and global levels.
- Several of the advocacies of ASPBAE and CSOs made it to the APFSD and the APMED 5 official recommendations. Within the APFSD, the Rapporteur’s report on SDG4 included the CSO advocacies on: (1) accelerated efforts to remove systemic and non-systemic barriers that hinder equity, inclusion and quality; (2) Increased numbers in motivated, qualified, adequately resourced, and empowered teachers supported by an enabling environment; (3) the global



Some of the gains of ASPBAE’s participation in regional and global events were that ASPBAE members honed capacities to lobby and advocate for education with other CSOs, and several ASPBAE and CSO advocacies made it to official recommendations of events.

commitment to allocate at least 4-6% of the GDP and/or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure to education, and ensure an efficient, transparent, and equitable resource allocation and accountability in expenditures (4) enhanced investments in generating more robust data and processes to track inequalities in education; (5) expanded programs targeting and benefitting the marginalised sectors; (6) setting in place, diverse learning pathways in public education systems; (7) ensuring stakeholder participation in all phases of SDG4 implementation.

These also informed the final Outcomes document of APMED 5, with the addition of the CSO push for: 1) enhanced quality of teaching and learning with attention to achieving learning outcomes beyond simple, narrow competencies of literacy and numeracy, and embracing the multi-dimensional and holistic aspects of learning and literacy outcomes for lifelong learning; and 2) increased education financing to realise 12 years of free quality education and for adult literacy.



ASPBAE attended the Meeting of the 6th Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) on SDG4 Indicators in Yerevan, Armenia.



# 2

## *Expanded efforts on domestic resource mobilisation to strengthen public education systems and wider engagement with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and efforts challenging education privatisation*

As planned, ASPBAE initiated work focused on domestic resource mobilisation involving **budget analysis and tracking; and reviews of select domestic resource mobilisation initiatives including ‘innovative financing’ efforts** undertaken by governments in the Asia Pacific region.

Working with 6 coalitions in Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and the Philippines, ASPBAE began a set of trainings in 2019 to start-up coalition efforts in budget advocacy to ensure equitable and gender-responsive financing that prioritise those who are furthest behind. The trainings were directed at equipping coalitions with the tools to undertake analysis of education budgets and financing gaps, map strategies, and advocate for equitable and gender-sensitive financing by proposing concrete budgetary

**ASPBAE INITIATED WORK FOCUSED ON DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILISATION INVOLVING BUDGET ANALYSIS AND TRACKING; AND REVIEWS OF SELECT DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILISATION INITIATIVES INCLUDING ‘INNOVATIVE FINANCING’ EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN BY GOVERNMENTS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION.**



Working with 6 coalitions in Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and the Philippines, ASPBAE began a set of trainings in 2019 to start-up coalition efforts in budget advocacy.

measures to address the gaps, improve access and quality, and prioritise the marginalised sections of the population. This initiative is expected to run through to 2020 with the inclusion of Cambodia.

ASPBAE started negotiations and planning with NCE Nepal, E-Net Philippines and NCE India on an analysis of domestic resource mobilisation efforts for education undertaken in their countries. In Nepal for example, the coalition is poised to review government policies and the experience in tracking tax avoidance and exemptions of big corporations. In India, the coalition will review the experience on the



ASPBAE started negotiations and planning with NCE Nepal, E-Net Philippines, and NCE India on an analysis of domestic resource mobilisation efforts for education undertaken in their countries.

**ASPBAE’S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION (GPE) INTENSIFIED IN THE YEAR WITH THE ELECTION OF ASPBAE’S SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE GPE BOARD AS ONE OF THE CSO REPRESENTATIVES (ALTERNATE).**

education cess, an additional levy introduced by the Central Government in India to raise resources specifically to finance its education targets and programmes. In the Philippines, the coalitions will review the experience of the Special Education Fund (SEF), an additional tax on real estate levied by local governments which accrue to a special education fund. The analysis in all cases are expected to offer policy options and recommendations to effectively generate additional resources for education, and inform the coalitions’ advocacy efforts on education financing. The studies are expected to commence in 2020 with the possible additional participation of NEW Indonesia which is considering to undertake a similar research focusing on harmful tax incentives

extended to big multinational corporations. At the regional level, ASPBAE has completed a preliminary scoping research on tax havens and financial secrecy practices in the Asia Pacific Region.

ASPBAE’s **engagement with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** intensified in the year with the election of ASPBAE’s Secretary General to the GPE Board as one of the CSO representatives (Alternate) from the CSO 2 or developing country CSO constituency. ASPBAE participated in the GPE Board Meetings on June 11-13, Stockholm and on December 10-12, Nairobi and in all the various Board Committee processes especially through (but not limited to) their respective CSO 2 representatives.<sup>40</sup> ASPBAE’s Deputy CSEF Regional Coordinator, Helen Dabu replaced the CSO2 representative in the Grants and Performance Committee in the final meeting of his term, January 29-31, London, and has been active in the deliberations related to reforming the country level processes of GPE for better accountability, around the Effective Partnership Review and roll out processes. ASPBAE continued efforts in pro-actively mobilising feedback and comments from coalitions, as their grants were coming for review, such as in the case of the grants to Myanmar, Timor Leste and Tajikistan.

By far, the most contentious issue debated by the GPE Board in the year related to its Private Sector Engagement Strategy (PSES). CSOs were very concerned with the push for public money and GPE resources to financially support for profit, private sector engagement in education.

<sup>40</sup> Two (2) CSO representatives in GPE Board Committees are from the Asia Pacific: Zehra Arshad of PCE Pakistan is a member of the Finance and Risk Committee and Rasheda Choudhury of CAMPE Bangladesh is an alternate member of the Governance and Ethics Committee.



The most contentious issue debated by the GPE Board related to its Private Sector Engagement Strategy (PSES). CSOs were very concerned with the push for public money and GPE resources to financially support for profit, private sector engagement in education.

What was earlier conceived as a strategy to engage the private sector in contributing more to the GPE and to education, became increasingly framed on the possibilities for financial access of the private sector to GPE funding. Launching broad-based consultations among CSOs, and reaching out to eminent education researchers and specialists on education financing, including past and incumbent UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Education, the coordinated efforts of CSO representatives in the GPE Board pushed back on the most regressive features of the PSES and successfully enabled the GPE decision to prohibit its funds from being used to support for-profit provision of core education services unless under “exceptional circumstances”. The final decision language of the Board, (1) reaffirms that education is a public good and

**ASPBAE SUSTAINED ITS WORK CHALLENGING THE COMMERCIALISATION AND PRIVATISATION OF EDUCATION, UNDERMINING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS IN DIFFERENT PLATFORMS.**

fundamental human right; (2) affirms GPE’s commitment to strengthening public education systems and that its engagement with the private sector is framed within this; (3) reaffirms its recognition of the government’s role in supporting 12 years of free, publicly-funded equitable, quality education. CSOs also managed to alter text in the draft PSES that allowed for GPE funds to finance commercial banks and private investors, among other actors involved in education ancillary services. Reference to being able to finance ancillary service actors was taken away and replaced with “GPE will engage” with ancillary service actors, which is considered a major win.

In the run-up to the December 2019 Board meeting, CSOs also managed to strongly influence the Guidelines for the ‘exemptions’ to the PSES norm prohibiting GPE funds from being used to support for-profit provision of core education services to account for ‘exceptional circumstances’. CSOs would have preferred to have no exemptions but agreed that the current safeguards and complex processes involved for countries applying to an exemption offer strong deterrents for abuse – and some have observed, will actually make it nearly impossible for applications to be successful. CSOs successfully lobbied for ‘exemptions’ only in cases where there is no public provision and no not for profit private provision, and under no circumstances shall these include internationally owned network (chain) schools, or part-internationally owned (majority or minority investment). Other important wins for CSOs include conditions that the provision of core education services through for-profit providers will not result in an additional financial burden for poor families; governments applying for exemptions should ensure that they have a clearly determined plan and timeframe for transitioning from for-profit provision to public-provision of core education services; and that any exceptional circumstances exemptions should be preceded by, and at

a minimum must be accompanied by, the establishment of a robust regulatory framework for private provision of core education services. An exemption request for a DCP Government can only be made for one grant cycle and any GPE Board approval may not be carried from one grant to another. A DCP government is however free to apply for an additional exemption in a subsequent grant, subject to adequate justification.

ASPBAE and other CSOs within the GPE CSO constituencies have been engaged in shaping the new Strategic Plan of GPE around which the 2021 Replenishment Conference will be organised. ASPBAE led on consultations in the Asia Pacific region, in tandem with similar CSO processes undertaken in all other regions to agree the advocacies of CSOs. A core advocacy of CSO2 has been to push for greater alignment



ASPBAE, and other CSOs within the GPE CSO constituencies, have been engaged in shaping the new Strategic Plan of GPE. ASPBAE led on consultations in the Asia Pacific region.

of the GPE priorities with SDG4, with a focus on equity and for GPE's priorities to be driven by the need to respond to identified education needs of developing countries, with developing country governments in the driving seat of defining these through broad-based, multi-stakeholder country processes. Engagement in the strategic planning process of GPE has galvanized CSOs and governments from the developing countries including UNESCO, to argue for an expansion in the funding priorities of GPE beyond support for primary education. Developing country governments have been arguing for attention as well to skills for work and TVET especially for young adults in their countries. While stiff opposition from donors prevented consensus on financing support for the wider SDG4 and lifelong learning agenda, GPE financing is open now to training (not just schooling) within basic education, and has expanded to consideration of ECCE and secondary education. There is also a more serious discussion on how GPE can leverage its funding to mobilise support from other donors to fund other aspects of the SDG4 agenda GPE does not fund such as adult literacy, SDG4.7, TVET, as identified in the country's education sector plans. GPE has affirmed as well that it can fund processes for developing strong education sector plans aligned to the full SDG4 agenda.

Through the different GPE processes, CSOs continued to be vigilant about changes being introduced in the functioning of GPE that could erode the nature of the partnership (for example, give inordinate powers to the Secretariat or select constituencies in the Board), moderate accountability measures and protocols that could undermine the correct and strategic application of GPE grants (for example, reducing the space for CSO participation especially at the country-level on education sector planning, implementation and monitoring of the GPE grants).

ASPBAE's term in the GPE Board continues till the end of 2020.



ASPBAE participated in the Civil Society Summit (C20) in Japan and in the launching conference of the Abidjan Principles in Côte D'Ivoire.

In the year, ASPBAE sustained its work challenging the commercialisation and privatisation of education, undermining the right to education of children, youth and adults in different platforms. This was the focus of its interventions and advocacies when it participated in the **Civil Society Summit (C20)** on April 21-23, the CSO event preparatory to the 2019 G20 Summit hosted by the government of Japan on June 28-29 in Osaka. Likewise, ASPBAE participated in the Launching Conference (of the Guiding Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education, later known as the **'Abidjan Principles'** February 12-14 in Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire. This culminated three years of wide consultations among education and human rights experts and stakeholders. The Abidjan Principles unpacks the existing obligations of states under international human rights law to provide quality public education and to regulate private actors in education in the context of the rapid privatisation and commercialisation of education globally.

On October 4-5, ASPBAE, in cooperation with the Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consortium (PEHRC), organised a **Regional Consultation on the Right to Education and the Abidjan Principles** in Bangkok. The Consultation

aimed to deepen understanding on the Abidjan Principles, its salient contents and contentious provisions, the references to international law and agreements, the adoption process, and recognition extended by institutions and human rights bodies; and plan possible uses of the Abidjan Principles in the upcoming advocacies of ASPBAE and coalitions for stronger public education systems, for increased financing for education, and for stronger regulation of private sector involvement in education. Several participants committed to using the Abidjan Principles as a reference in their lobbying for increased public budgets for education, stricter enforcement of regulations of private educational institutions and the rising privatisation of education. A number of coalitions however noted that their existing laws and Constitutions offer no room for the use of public funds to support private schools. In such instances, drawing attention to the Abidjan Principles may not be so helpful in bolstering their case for strengthened public education systems to ensure the right to education of all.



ASPBAE co-organised a Regional Consultation on the Right to Education and the Abidjan Principles to deepen understanding on the Abidjan Principles and plan possible uses of the Principles in ASPBAE and coalition advocacies.

## 3

## Expanded capacities and wider advocacy efforts on Adult Learning and Education (ALE)

ASPBAE's partnership with DVV International in 2019 was strongly focused on enhancing capacities for advocacy on ALE and scaling up ALE advocacy at national, regional and global levels.

The lynchpin of the ALE advocacy efforts in 2019 was the **Regional Capacity building Workshop on ALE Advocacy themed on 'Rethinking Adult Education in the Asia Pacific'**, organised by ASPBAE and DVVI in September 4-6, in Bangkok. This workshop built on the discussions of a Policy Forum on a similar theme organised by the Regional Office of DVVI for South East Asia in June 5-6 in Vientiane. The ALE workshop gathered representatives from ASPBAE members and DVVI partners in 7 countries in the Asia Pacific region, who are targeted to be the focal points for ongoing country-level ALE advocacy in the coming period, especially in preparation for CONFINTEA 7 in 2022. Participants came from coalitions and NGOs working on ALE in India, Nepal, Cambodia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. ASPBAE members from Afghanistan were unable to participate on account of visa restrictions but a separate ALE workshop was organised with them within September 22-25 in New Delhi. The workshop aimed to strengthen knowledge and skills of civil society education coalitions and adult education providers to enable the scaling-up of ALE advocacy in their

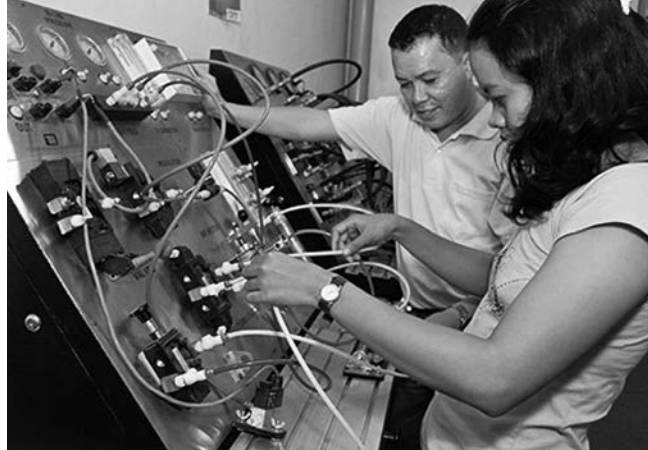
**A REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND THE ABIDJAN PRINCIPLES AIMED TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING ON THE ABIDJAN PRINCIPLES.**



ASPBAE's partnership with DV International in 2019 focused on enhancing capacities for advocacy on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) and scaling up ALE advocacy at national, regional, and global levels.

countries and other transnational policy spaces. It also focussed on providing a space for exchange, for building a shared understanding of ALE concepts and the critical regional and global policy debates around ALE. The workshop was also organised as a **strategizing meeting for the 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED 5)** which was to focus on SDG4.6 on adult literacy along with SDG4.1 (on primary and secondary education). At the end of the workshop, participants agreed on Key Messages of Civil Society on Adult Learning and Education to inform lobbying during APMED 5 specifically on SDG4.6; and also agreed national advocacy actions focused on: 1) key education policy spaces including; 2) engagement with the SDGs-SDG4 processes notably the development of VNRs; and 3) the launch of the next Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) on Participation and the national processes preparing for CONFINTEA 7.

## PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS IN INDIA, VIETNAM, THE PHILIPPINES, AND NEPAL DEVELOPED REVIEWS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRY'S VOLUNTEER NATIONAL REVIEWS (VNR'S) FROM AN ADULT EDUCATION LENS.



*The Key Messages are summarised around the following:*

- Assert ALE as an integral part of the right to education and a key component of lifelong learning with the power to radically transform lives for the better and play a pivotal role in the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Governments and other policy makers must develop and put in place constitutional and legislative frameworks where needed, along with comprehensive, robust, and explicit policies promoting adult learning and education within a lifelong learning framework.
- The effective delivery of quality ALE will require scaling up the convergence of efforts across different agencies and governmental bodies and among all ALE stakeholders.

Coalitions in India, Vietnam, Philippines, and Nepal developed reviews of their country VNRs with an adult education lens.

- Increase public provisioning for ALE through higher government budgetary allocations, supported by expanded development cooperation for ALE and tax justice reforms to widen the domestic resource base for state budgets to draw on. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in its next Strategic Plan should align its funding priorities more fully to SDG4 and accord include youth and adult learning and education in its financing framework.
- Ensure the provision of inclusive and equitable quality adult education that is learner-centred, context-based, culturally and linguistically appropriate, with clear quality assurance systems and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place.
- Enable the full and meaningful participation and inclusion of all adults, especially the underprivileged, women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, minorities, learners from rural and remote areas, and other disadvantaged groups, in quality and accessible adult learning and education. Public policies and programmes should recognise that learners from marginalised and vulnerable groups face far more barriers in participating in ALE activities. Women, in particular, face gender-based impediments to participation.



The lynchpin of ALE advocacy efforts was the Regional Capacity building Workshop on ALE Advocacy - 'Rethinking Adult Education in the Asia Pacific' - organised by ASPBAE and DWI.

Intersecting with other economic, social, cultural barriers, these add further to their marginalisation. These should be considered in ALE monitoring, participation and financing frameworks and strategies of government.

Following the workshop, participating organisations in India, Vietnam, the Philippines and Nepal developed reviews of their respective country's **Volunteer National Reviews (VNRs) from an adult education lens**. This was part of a regional effort by ASPBAE to analyse VNRs completed in the Asia Pacific to assess their attention to ALE. ASPBAE commissioned Anita Dighe, an eminent researcher on ALE from India to do the review for VNRs in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Mongolia, Laos, Timor Leste and Vanuatu. With the 12 country reviews completed in 2019, the Synthesis is currently being finalised. These reviews are envisaged to assist coalitions in their ALE advocacy efforts within the SDG processes in their countries especially in the development of future VNRs. In 2020, Nepal and India will submit their VNRs once again. Some coalitions such as E-Net Philippines have stated their engagement with the Literacy Council bodies in their countries within 2019 as part of this coordinated effort. ANAFEA and ANECO in Afghanistan have been also been engaging with the Ministry of Education and officials of the Literacy Department on the need to develop a strong Literacy Policy for the country and CSO contributions to making this possible.

ASPBAE also expanded its **Study on Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women to Bangladesh**, partnering with Dhaka Ahsania Mission and in Vietnam, in partnership with the national coalition, VAEFA. The studies will be fully completed in 2020. Meanwhile, the outcomes of the earlier study were disseminated further in the HLPF processes, as described in the earlier session and during the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, March 11-22, in New York.

## THE VNR REVIEWS ARE ENVISAGED TO ASSIST COALITIONS IN THEIR ALE ADVOCACY EFFORTS WITHIN THE SDG PROCESSES IN THEIR COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE VNR'S.



ASPBAE expanded its Study on Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women to Bangladesh, partnering with the Dhaka Ahsania Mission, and with VAEFA in Vietnam.

ASPBAE participated through its Executive Council Members, ASPBAE President Nani Zulminarni (PEKKA, Indonesia) and South and Central Asia Representative, Meenu Vadera (Azad Foundation, India). The analysis and recommendations coming out of the India and Indonesia studies have been summarised and presented in a more reader-friendly **Explainer** on Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women, a tool for advocacy and lobbying. This document highlighted the key recommendations to governments which argue the following:

- A clear gendered analysis must be incorporated within policy frameworks on skills for work. Policy frameworks need to promote non-traditional livelihoods



(NTL), which are clearly more remunerative and have a greater potential for initiating transformative changes in women's lives.

- All economic empowerment and skills training programmes for women must include social empowerment and women's leadership development, including efforts to boost self-confidence, enhance negotiation skills, and trainings on rights and structural barriers, among others.
- Funds allocated should allow for more comprehensive training programmes that extend over flexible periods of time.
- Social protection policies and conducive social infrastructure should be put in place that can ensure women and gender minority workers in the informal sector and the formal sector are able to live a life of dignity. This includes crèches, safe workspaces, hygienic toilets, etc.
- Institutionalise a gender disaggregated data system that monitors access, quality and outcomes of skills trainings. It must be collated, made available to all stakeholders and inform policy formulation and programme development by the Government.
- Implement education and skills development on NTL that help women and



ASPBAE attended the DWI International Adult Education and Development (AED) Conference commemorating its 50th anniversary, in Weimar, Germany.



### Policy and financing options for skills for work of marginalised women

**Background:** The rapid changes across the world have had a huge impact on the future of work and of learning. In the current scenario where there is a wide gap between people to be skilled and the opportunities available, it is vital to ask which people have access to skill building initiatives and who are left behind. Within the education and lifelong learning agenda however, the issue of skills for work for marginalised women in the informal sector has been neglected. Since 2015, the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), through its member organisations, has carried out two scoping papers, two country research studies on skills development for marginalised women (with Azad Foundation in India and PEKKA in Indonesia), and an overarching synthesis report.

These explored the following question:

*What are the policy, governance and financing options required to include and/or provide skill development and adult education for decent work and economic and social well being to the marginalised women in the Asia Pacific women – given the perspectives of 'no one left behind' and social justice?*

This explainer compiles information from these sources to provide insights into the interlinked issues, which are important to understand the world of women and work from an empowerment framework.

This is also prepared on the occasion of the High Level Political Forum 2019 which under the theme, "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" will specifically review SDG 4 (education) and SDG 8 (decent work) – the core areas of ASPBAE's study, along with gender and women's empowerment, the focus of SDG 5 (gender equality). It hopes to contribute to civil society organisations' efforts to hold governments and other decision-makers to account, in making equity and education for all, a reality in the important space of the SDG follow up.

The analysis and recommendations of the India and Indonesia studies on skills for marginalised women were presented in an Explainer on Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women, a tool for advocacy and lobbying.

## ASPBAE CONTINUED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DVVI-LED EFFORT ON BRANDING ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE). THIS AROSE FROM THE RECOGNITION THAT ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE NEGLECT OF ALE IS THE ABSENCE OF A COMMON NARRATIVE ABOUT THE SECTOR.

adolescent girls break stereotypes related to gender, caste, class, religion, sexual orientation, disability and other forms of marginalization and oppression.

- Institutionalised mechanisms for women's participation in education governance, policy discussions that relate to women's issues and decision-making processes in the world of work and community.

The outcomes were also deliberated on and shared during the **International Conference on Making Non-Traditional Livelihoods (NTL) work for the Marginalised** organised by Azad Foundation in New Delhi on January 16-18, as reported earlier.

Scaled up advocacy actions on ALE promoted by ASPBAE and DVVI coincided with the 50th anniversary celebrations of DVV International and the centenary celebrations of the German Adult Education Association (DVV) in 2019. ASPBAE attended the **DVVI International Adult Education and Development (AED) Conference** commemorating its 50th anniversary, in Weimar, Germany on May 6-11. The AED Conference focused discussions on the contributions of ALE to SDG4 and to other SDGs, and developed the main ALE-related messages and advocacies of DVVI and its partners including ASPBAE and ICAE during the 2019 HLPF.

ASPBAE also continued to participate in the DVVI-led effort on **branding Adult Learning and Education (ALE)**. This arose from the recognition that one of the reasons for the neglect of ALE is the absence of a common narrative about the sector. Multiple terms and definitions abound on the same concept. Decision makers therefore do not have a clear understanding of ALE and its full value. DVVI has been instrumental in building consensus on an 'ALE brand'. A meeting convened on October 14-16, in Bangkok set out to plan more concretely, the ways to promote the brand in 2020, with the intention of using the brand in CONFINTEA 7 (2022) and the mid-term SDG4 review. ASPBAE participated in this meeting.

## SCALED UP ADVOCACY ACTIONS ON ALE, PROMOTED BY ASPBAE AND DVVI, COINCIDED WITH THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF DVV INTERNATIONAL AND THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE GERMAN ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (DVV) IN 2019.



ASPBAE continued its engagement with UNESCO and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) on ALE-related policy processes and platforms.

ASPBAE continued its engagement with UNESCO and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) on ALE related policy processes and platforms. ASPBAE participated in the UIL organised "Asia-Africa Inter-Regional Seminar on SDG4 (Education 2030)" with the theme "Youth and Adult Literacy in the Framework of Lifelong Learning for All" on September 11-13, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ASPBAE was also represented in the UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Policy Seminar, "Leaving No One Behind: Education of migrants and refugees", convened on June 17-18, in Bangkok. UIL was a resource person during the ASPBAE Regional Capacity-building Workshop on ALE Advocacy September 4-6, Bangkok.

# LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY BUILDING

## 4

### *Sustained efforts for capacity-building for advocacy: successful bridging of the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) to Education Out Loud (EOL)*

The main platform for ASPBAE's capacity support for education advocacy is the **Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF)** initiative, coordinated at the global level by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), and where ASPBAE serves as the Asia Pacific CSEF Regional Secretariat. Started in 2009, CSEF was on its 3rd and final phase in 2016-2018 when a costed extension was approved by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to run from 2019 to Quarter 1 of 2020.

Under the CSEF initiative in 2019, ASPBAE was able to sustain support to 19 education campaign coalitions and nascent CSO education networks for institutional strengthening, in education policy dialogue, in active public outreach, in undertaking research and building evidence to promote quality, equity, financing and education system reform, and to participate effectively in global and regional education policy processes. Customised, demand-driven capacity-support continued to be offered through various modalities e.g. in technical support during coalition strategising

workshops, country-level trainings on identified areas especially related to engagement in the SDG-SDG4 processes, in education financing advocacies and on deepening their understanding of lifelong learning. ASPBAE accompanied coalitions in their policy events, in dialogues, engagements with local education groups (LEGs), and public-facing initiatives including press meetings, briefings and mobilisations.



**ASPBAE ORGANISED THE 2019 ASIA PACIFIC  
REGIONAL CONSULTATION OF EDUCATION  
ADVOCATES IN DA NANG, VIETNAM.**

ASPBAE supported 19 education campaign coalitions and education networks for institutional strengthening. Customised, demand-driven, capacity-support was offered through various modalities.



CSO meetings were organised by ASPBAE at the front end of regional policy meetings and events.

Aside from capacity support at the country-level, ASPBAE facilitated several regional and other cross-country capacity-building workshops and events to offer spaces for cross-country learning and exchange and for planning coordinated advocacy actions.

**CSO meetings were organised by ASPBAE at the front end of regional policy meetings and events**, where participating CSO representatives strategized engagement in these policy spaces: agreeing main messages and lobbying priorities, and defining modes of coordination and actions. A CSO pre-meeting was organised at the front end of the Asia Pacific Meeting on Sustainable Development March 23, in Bangkok and during the 5th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030, September 30, in Bangkok. A South Pacific consultation originally planned to coincide with the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society Conference (OCIES), November 25-28, had to be scaled down when the OCIES was cancelled and rescheduled for 2020 at the last minute on account of a State of Emergency declared on account of a measles outbreak in the host country, Samoa. The ASPBAE Pacific meeting

### **ASPBAE'S REGIONAL CONSULTATION PROVIDED ASPBAE MEMBERS AND EDUCATION COALITIONS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN DIVERSE AND DISTINCT CONVERSATIONS AROUND EDUCATION.**

was organised nevertheless on November 24-29, and focused on preparations for the EOL proposals of the coalitions, and updating on SDG-SDG4 processes in the year.

On August 20-23, ASPBAE organised the **2019 Asia Pacific Regional Consultation of Education Advocates** in Da Nang, Vietnam, hosted and co-organised by the Vietnam education coalition, the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA). The four-day consultation provided ASPBAE members and education coalitions an opportunity to engage in diverse and distinct conversations around education. The Regional Consultation was attended by 18 national education coalitions and representatives from regional and global partner organisations, such as the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), Arab Campaign for Education (ACEA), Inter-Agency

Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). Representatives from CLADE, ActionAid International, and Oxfam Ibis also participated virtually, giving their inputs via Skype.

Following the strong advice of the Executive Council in the last meeting, the consultation was offered dedicated attention to issues around education in emergencies and crisis and in capacity-building on gender and education. A representative from INEE participated in the event as a resource person, offering inputs on analysis and advocacies around education in emergencies, and offering examples of CSO engagement at country and global levels, including with Education Cannot Wait. Other examples of country level work in this field were shared notably by PEKKA in Indonesia, the Afghanistan National Education Coalition Organisation (ANECO), and by the Arab Network on Education or All (ALL).



ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, Meenu Vadera, led a capacity building session on ways of “engendering” their work.

ASPBAE’s President, Nani Zulminarni, and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and Central Asia, Meenu Vadera, led a capacity building session to orient the participants on ways of “engendering” their work. The session was designed to use the experience of coalitions on specific advocacy initiatives they have undertaken, to better situate how gender can be better mainstreamed in their organisation’s work. The experience around developing the CSO Spotlight Reports and the efforts in developing their Theory of Change as part of their strategic planning efforts for instance, were analysed from a gender perspective. Participants appreciated the practical advice and conceptual inputs offered to aid organisations in gender mainstreaming for education advocacy.

The Regional Consultation also offered a space for the civil society representatives (CSO2) in the GPE Board to report back to the CSO2 constituency in the Asia-Pacific. Camilla Croso (who joined by Skype) and Maria Khan led the discussion sharing updates especially on the Private Sector Engagement Strategy (PSES) of GPE, the processes related to the Effective Partnership Roll Out (EPR) and the GPE Strategic Planning process which was just initiated. The participants agreed the main messages from the Asia Pacific CSO2 constituency to the GPE consultation on its strategic directions: a strong push being to call on GPE to align its priorities more strongly to the SDGs and SDG4.

Offering further updates and analysis on education financing issues globally, David Archer led the discussions around tax justice and the dangers to an emerging push for debt as a means to fill the financing gap in education, as promoted by the International Financing Facility for Education (IFFED) and as seen in the practice of the GPE Multiplier Fund. The Global

Campaign for Education, in its critique of IFFED has raised serious concern about the “rising debt crisis which represents one of the major threats to domestic financing for education” and how it can bring countries down the path of debt distress. Ashina Mtsumi, Policy and Legal Officer at the Global Initiative on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR), gave an overview of the Abidjan Principles in the meeting.

The Regional Consultation also offered the opportunity to discuss the end of project wrap up activities for CSEF and for GPE and Oxfam, Ibis, the new Grant Agent of the successor programme to CSEF, Education Out Loud (EOL) to present to the national coalitions, the guidelines for developing their EOL proposals (OC1).

ASPBAE supported the coalitions in eligible countries<sup>41</sup> in developing their EOL proposals by the deadline of October 14. It supported the GCE-led efforts to liaise with both the GPE Secretariat and Oxfam Ibis to ensure



A highlight of the work of the Training for Transformation (TfT) programme for 2019 was the launch of its capacity-building effort on SDG 4.7 advocacy building on the rich practice on ALE in the region.



ASPBAE organised the 2019 Asia Pacific Regional Consultation of Education Advocates in Da Nang, Vietnam, hosted and co-organised by the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA). 18 national education coalitions and representatives from regional and global partner organisations participated.

a smooth transition of funding for coalitions from CSEF to EOL. ASPBAE also reached out to the regional office of the Grant Agent for EOL or the Asia Pacific Regional Management Unit (RMU), to begin to define the modes of coordination and mutual-support both entities can offer to assist national coalitions and the overall EOL effort in the region. In early 2020, proposals of all coalitions from 14 countries were approved with one offered an extended period to develop their proposal further (or year Zero as it is called).

The CSEF documentation project, Persuading Powers part 2 is underway and will be released in early 2020.

<sup>41</sup> These are coalitions in GPE partner countries. India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka are not GPE partner countries.

# 5

## *Bringing education advocates and ALE practitioners together to enhance the practice of transformative ALE, and to foster a policy environment in basic education and ALE that can sustain this*



The ASPBAE Regional Workshop on Capacity Building for SDG 4.7 was designed to strengthen the advocacy efforts of member organisations especially around Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Global Citizenship Education (GCED).

A highlight of the work of the Training for Transformation (TfT) programme for 2019 was the launch of its capacity-building effort on SDG4.7 advocacy building on the rich practice on ALE in the region.

Member organisations especially national education coalitions have expressed the need for greater capacity support in understanding SDG4.7 to equip them with the means to advance this SDG target in their respective countries. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED 3) which focused on SDG4.7, also observed that this is an area governments consider most difficult to concretise and where the most severe data gaps exist. Alongside this, many national education coalitions have also been keen to shore up their capacities in the area of education in emergencies. Asia Pacific is after all a huge arena for contestation in war

and in protracted crisis and conflict, and is the region most devastated by natural disasters. What are appropriate education responses to mitigate the impact of emergencies? How to ensure that education is a core part of emergency responses?

Meanwhile, there has been a wealth of transformative frameworks and practices in the Asia Pacific on community-based Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Global Citizenship Education (GCED), and education responses in emergencies: in relief and rehabilitation work, and in education for resilience and disaster-preparedness. Many are from the ASPBAE membership and within the network of UNESCO Bangkok that ASPBAE has been engaged with, especially in its efforts to develop community-based training modules for ESD in Community Learning Centres.

**ASPBAE'S BASIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE (BLDC) PROVIDED A SPACE FOR EMERGING LEADERS WITHIN ASPBAE'S MEMBERSHIP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE) WITHIN A LIFELONG LEARNING FRAMEWORK.**



The 2019 Basic Leadership and Development Course (BLDC) was organised in Bogor, Indonesia, with PEKKA hosting. ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, and EC representatives from South East Asia, Nguyen Kim Anh, and from the South Pacific, Peter Clinton Foase, were joint Course Directors.

Drawing on this pool of practitioners and resource persons, the ASPBAE Regional Workshop on Capacity Building for SDG4.7 was designed to strengthen the advocacy efforts of member organisations on SDG4.7, especially around Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Global Citizenship Education (GCED) with a clear focus on developing a policy reform agenda which effectively mainstreams SDG4.7 in public education and lifelong learning systems of government – in basic, adult, formal and non-formal education delivery systems;

focusing on how SDG4.7 policy and program development at both community and school levels and will link communities and schools, individuals to communities and children, youth and adults. The workshop also addressed attention to education in emergencies (EiE), drawing the linkages between EiE and SDG4.7 i.e. how SDG4.7 offers the strategic responses to addressing the root causes of emergencies i.e. mainstreaming SDG4.7 to embed peace building, climate change education and sustainability in the education systems. Case studies on various creative attempts by different CSOs in the region, e.g. in India, Japan and Korea to mainstream SDG4.7 in schools and in community learning centres, offered very concrete, practical and effective tools and approaches that education advocates can build on in defining their policy reform agenda attentive to concretising and meeting the SDG4.7 targets in public education systems.

Action plans for SDG4.7 advocacy were defined at the end of the workshop to start-up efforts in Afghanistan, Nepal, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Indonesia. It is envisaged that a pool of ASPBAE resource persons, trainer/facilitators will be called on to assist/mentor the organization/national education coalitions in these advocacy and capacity building efforts in 2020. ASPBAE also intends to put together a compendium of frameworks, tools, good practices and other resources on SDG4.7 to support this initiative.

The 2019 Basic Leadership and Development Course (BLDC) was successfully organised on November 12-17 in Bogor, Indonesia with PEKKA as host organisation. As again, the BLDC provided a space for emerging leaders within ASPBAE's membership to learn more about adult learning and education (ALE)



within a lifelong learning framework – drawn from the very rich experience of ASPBAE and its members and partners in this field. Specific focus was made on understanding integrating frameworks for ALE, notably, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Gender Equality – the core themes within SDG4.7. Skills-oriented sessions focused on facilitation/training approaches and on education advocacy. With a large number of youth participants in the 2019 BLDC (61% of total participants), the Course devoted time to also discuss youth and education – the experience of ASPBAE and members in youth organising and leadership building with the education-related strategies in this respect; and the education issues youth in the Asia Pacific region confront. Action Plans were developed by the participants: identifying an action or activity based on key learning/s from the BLDC that they will undertake to apply in the on-going work of their organizations within the next 6 months following the BLDC.



ASPBAE continued its involvement with the UNESCO Bangkok initiative on 'Promoting Community-based Education for Sustainable Development' which involves the development and piloting of modules for ESD to be used in Community Learning Centres.

ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni, and EC representatives from South East Asia, Nguyen Kim Anh and from the South Pacific, Peter Foese were the joint Course Directors of the 2019 BLDC. Johann Heilmann, the new Director of DWV International's Regional office for South East Asia participated in part of the Course as a resource person.

The BLDC 2019 faculty were each assigned to mentor/assist a cluster of BLDC 2019 participants in their action plans. The documentation of these actions forms part of the BLDC Tracer Study. At the end of 2020 at least 25 participants have completed their action plans. The action plans involved articulating their on-going work within the SDG framework, building awareness programs on SDG4 and its links with other SDGs using creative approaches like a Film Festival on SDGs, using the framework on gender and education to analyse and mainstream gender into their education work, planning campaigns for education advocacy and ESD at the local level, enhancing their ALE practice using participatory approaches, initiating youth-led action research to engage community youth among others. The BLDC Tracer Study document capturing the outcomes and good practices for ALE from the Action Plans of the BLDC participants will be shared through the ASPBAE website to strengthen the Community of Practice on ALE, in the Asia Pacific region.

Through the year, ASPBAE supported different initiatives which sought to promote and enhance transformative ALE practice, and the processes that better embed these in public provisioning for basic and adult education. ASPBAE continued its involvement with the UNESCO Bangkok initiative on “Promoting Community-based Education for Sustainable Development” which involves the development and piloting of modules for ESD to be used in Community Learning Centres. ASPBAE

has been part of the core group that developed the modules which were piloted in India (Centre for Environmental Education or CEE), Japan (ACCU Japan) and the Philippines (Cebu Technological University) in 2019. ASPBAE participated in the project meeting to plan out the piloting process, in April 1-3 in Bangkok and in its second meeting for the year on November 18-20 in Bangkok. Partners in this initiative, notably, UNESCO Bangkok, CEE India and ACCU Japan offered resource person support to ASPBAE’s Regional Workshop on SDG4.7 in December 16-18, Colombo.

ASPBAE continued to partner with DWV International’s Regional Office for South East Asia on its Training of Trainers (ToT) initiative, this time in Cambodia. The ToT run by DWV International is directed at Community Learning Centre (CLC) Managers in the country. With the passing of a new national policy on Lifelong Learning by the Government of Cambodia in 2019, the expectation is that CLCs will need to be better equipped to deliver on this new thrust in non-formal education for youth and adults focused on “Literacy Linked with Life skills”. ASPBAE supported DVVI in customizing the ToT module from the Curriculum GlobALE and being a mentor/facilitator for the first module of the ToT on Basic Knowledge and Skills covering: an introduction to CLC, Lifelong learning, ALE, NFE facilitation, communication, presentation skills and teamwork. This training was organised in August 4-9, in Takeo, Cambodia.



ASPBAE continued to partner with DW International’s Regional Office for South East Asia on its Training of Trainers (TOT) initiative, this time in Cambodia.

**ASPBAE SUPPORTED DIFFERENT INITIATIVES WHICH SOUGHT TO PROMOTE AND ENHANCE TRANSFORMATIVE ALE PRACTICE, AND THE PROCESSES THAT BETTER EMBED THESE IN PUBLIC PROVISIONING FOR BASIC AND ADULT EDUCATION.**

# 6

## *Growing the youth constituency of ASPBAE towards expanded participation and leadership of youth in ASPBAE*

In the year, ASPBAE continued to expand its efforts in strengthening its youth constituency in the region, setting in place opportunities that enable a stronger voice and agency of young people and youth-led organisations in ASPBAE's work and advocacies as key stakeholders in education and lifelong learning. As planned, ASPBAE also continued its focus especially on advancing the interests of youth from marginalized communities.

ASPBAE mobilised young people in the development of the CSO Spotlight Reports for the HLPF 2019. Recommendations from youth formed part of the CSO Spotlight Reports of the Philippines, Nepal, Sri Lanka, East Timor and Indonesia. These were shaped during **youth consultations on the Spotlight Reports** convened by the national education coalitions through the end of 2018 and early 2019. Young people who are part of the coalition network, coming from economically and socially marginalised communities, those with disabilities and special needs, LGBTQ youth and those from more remote, rural areas, were involved in the consultations.



ASPBAE continued to expand its efforts in strengthening its youth constituency in the region, setting in place opportunities that enable a stronger voice and agency of young people.

### **ASPBAE MOBILISED YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CSO SPOTLIGHT REPORTS FOR THE HLPF 2019. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUTH FORMED PART OF THE CSO SPOTLIGHT REPORTS OF THE PHILIPPINES, NEPAL, SRI LANKA, EAST TIMOR, AND INDONESIA.**

Across the different countries, young people were common in their desire for their governments to:

- Increase funding for education that allows all youth – including marginalised youth – access expanded access to high quality foundational, technical, tertiary education, removing all barriers that discriminate and exclude participation.
- Ensure a holistic and humanistic vision of education, integrating multiple dimensions of human existence aiming to develop the full potential of the youth.
- Provide effective and age-appropriate continuing education on sexuality and reproductive health within schools and through non-formal education.
- Expand avenues for youth counselling and career development guidance for young people within formal and non-formal channels of education.
- Put in place institutionalised mechanisms to ensure the active and meaningful participation of the youth in education governance at national and local levels.

These recommendations were incorporated as well in ASPBAE's key messages during the HLPF 2019 processes which guided its lobbying and social media campaign work.

Youth delegates from 9 national education coalitions were convened by ASPBAE in a **Pre-APFSD Youth Meeting** on March 22, Bangkok to prepare for their participation in the Asia Pacific Peoples Forum on Sustainable Development and the 6th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. The meeting offered a dedicated space for young people to be oriented in the APPFSD and the APFSD processes, to discuss and agree on their main advocacies especially their engagement within the Youth Caucus of the APPFSD, ensuring that education and SDG4 are prominent in their discussions. On the second day of this pre-meeting, other (non-youth) participants coming from the ASPBAE membership attended and were part of the discussions planning the advocacy and lobbying strategies for SDG4 in the APFSD spaces.

Carrying the youth messages and advocacies, ASPBAE Executive Council Member from the South Pacific, Peter Clinton Foese was one of the respondents during the SDG4 Round table of the APFSD and during the ASPBAE and UNESCO Bangkok organised side event on 'Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for SDG4', within which the GEMR 2019 Youth Report was launched.

In 2019, ASPBAE **expanded its work on the Youth-led Action Research (YAR) to four (4) more countries:** in Mongolia, working with All for Education (AFE) Mongolia; in Nepal, working with NCE Nepal; in East Timor, with the Civil Society Education Partnership (CSEP); in Vanuatu, with Kolisen Blong Leftemap Edukesen (KOBLE). ASPBAE staff run the YAR trainings preparing the partner organisations and youth researchers to undertake the action research in their respective countries.

The focus of the YAR work in these new countries dovetailed their youth constituency building and advocacy priorities. In Mongolia, the focus was on youth participation in school governance, hence it was directed at determining whether children

**IN 2019, ASPBAE EXPANDED ITS WORK ON THE YOUTH-LED ACTION RESEARCH (YAR) TO FOUR MORE COUNTRIES: IN MONGOLIA, WORKING WITH ALL FOR EDUCATION (AFE) MONGOLIA; IN NEPAL, WORKING WITH NCE NEPAL; IN EAST TIMOR, WITH THE CIVIL SOCIETY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP (CSEP); IN VANUATU, WITH KOLISEN BLONG LEFTEMAP EDUKESEN (KOBLE).**

and youth were involved in school decision-making, and to draw up recommendations to facilitate their meaningful participation in school governance. In Vanuatu and East Timor, the focus was on enabling community youth to analyse the factors preventing their greater access to and participation in literacy, basic and higher education, basic skills programmes and other services in their communities given high drop-out rates of young people in Vanuatu and the high numbers of youth out of school and not in trainings in East Timor. The Nepal study sought to mobilise marginalised youth to better understand the barriers to their access to foundational and lifelong learning opportunities, but focused on the experience of the most marginalised tribal group in the country. Through the action research, they



The focus of the YAR work in Mongolia, Nepal, East Timor, and Vanuatu dovetailed their youth constituency building and advocacy priorities.



The emerging findings of the YAR Phase 2 initiatives were shared at the 'Regional Youth-led Action Research Learning Exchange' in Bangkok.

also sought to engage the members of the tribal community in challenging social norms and practices that encouraged early marriage of girls and alcohol substance abuse – both having adverse impact on girls' access to education.

The emerging findings of these YAR Phase 2 initiatives were shared during the '**Regional Youth-led Action Research Learning Exchange**', October 21-22 in Bangkok. This regional workshop was organised to: 1) update on the follow through actions/plans of the YAR initiative in Indonesia, India, and the Philippines; 2) discuss the preliminary findings and recommendations from the YAR from Nepal, Mongolia, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu; 3) share the reflections of the young community researchers on the success and challenges in implementing a YAR in their respective communities; and 4) exchange ideas and lessons learnt on YAR as a process for engaging marginalised young people in education policy and program development at the community, sub-national and national levels. A total of 34 participants attended the workshop mainly involving representatives from YAR partner organisations and youth researchers from India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Nepal, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Vanuatu.

The participants from the first YAR effort shared their updates on YAR work they continue to pursue. Abhivyakti in India has expanded the YAR

effort called 'Shodhini' or 'seeker' to 10 more villages in Nashik, India. They have sustained the community Shodhini Library for Girls, which provide access to reading materials, encourage good reading habits, and offer a safe space for young women to converge. Engagements of the Shodhinis with the local village councils on issues related to education access, safety of women and other development concerns have been sustained. The experience boosted the confidence of many of the researchers and sparked greater aspirations and ambitions they had earlier repressed: several have returned to formal schooling, after actively finding financial support; some have started livelihood initiatives they had not earlier aspired to pursue; and several have become trainer/organisers of the new batch of Shodhinis, as the initiative expanded.

There were similar stories of empowerment shared by ASSPUK in Indonesia. Several young women mobilised through the YAR effort in West Sumatra, Indonesia have sought greater financial independence and autonomy through livelihood ventures, assisted by ASSPUK. One ventured into preserving the art of traditional weaving and has become a prominent authority in the field. She has since been designated YAR ambassador of ASSPUK and in that capacity, has been actively engaging with policy makers and government to allocate more funds for youth development programmes in marginalised communities. ASSPUK has also expanded its YAR effort to West Kalimantan.

The youth organisation members of E-Net Philippines who were involved in the YAR efforts have sustained some of the YAR activities, promoting alternative education through Theatre Workshops for the community youth and in sustaining the dialogue with young people to inform the advocacy actions of E-Net Philippines, the national education coalition. The Solo (single) Parent Organising initiative which emerged from the YAR process

– recognising that many of the school leavers have been pushed out on account of unwanted adolescent pregnancies and early marriage – have mobilised their members to better access benefits they are due as guaranteed by the Philippines Solo Parent Act of 2000.

The Workshop concluded with the participants deliberating on the main issues on youth and education which should inform ASPBAE’s advocacy agenda and the lessons on YAR that can guide ASPBAE’s ongoing efforts on youth constituency building.

To provide a space to consolidate and learn from this rich experience and ongoing effort on youth constituency building, **ASPBAE organised the ASPBAE Regional Youth Consultation** on October 23-24 in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop was organised along the following objectives: 1) Reflect on the nature and diversity of the youth in Asia Pacific, analyse the structural barriers and emerging issues that impact on the education and development of the youth; 2) Share experiences in youth work and discuss effective strategies towards youth constituency building for education at the Asia Pacific; 3) Build the connections amongst youth leaders and ASPBAE members that will work towards building capacities of marginalized youth and strengthening existing youth leadership in education within ASPBAE; 4) Draft a plan of action to build the momentum around youth-led advocacy in education/SDG4 and work towards institutionalization of youth participation in education governance in countries. Over 40 participants attended the workshop representing youth organisations, national education coalitions and ASPBAE members engaged in youth organising work from 16 countries: India, Nepal, Sri Lanka,

### **ASPBAE ORGANISED THE REGIONAL YOUTH CONSULTATION TO PROVIDE A SPACE TO CONSOLIDATE AND LEARN FROM THE RICH EXPERIENCE AND ONGOING EFFORTS ON YOUTH CONSTITUENCY BUILDING.**



ASPBAE organised a Regional Youth Consultation in Bangkok to provide a space to consolidate and learn from the rich experience and ongoing efforts on youth constituency building.

Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, China, East Timor, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Korea, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Vanuatu. Resource persons from UNESCO Bangkok involved in youth engagement work participated in given sessions. A representative from the Global Secretariat of GCE was invited by ASPBAE to participate, to facilitate complementation in youth engagement efforts in the Asia Pacific between these two bodies. ASPBAE Secretary General, Maria Khan and EC Member, Peter Foese participated in this workshop and the earlier YAR Learning Exchange.

The discussions during the workshop revealed a wide range of experiences in creative and empowering youth engagement work among ASPBAE members in the region in confronting issues on peace and conflict, gender-based discrimination and violence, migration, shrinking democratic space, various forms of fundamentalism, the changing world of work, fake news, to name some. At the end of the workshop, the participants agreed action plans on youth constituency building that will be pursued in 2020. Reflecting on the outcomes of the Regional Consultation, ASPBAE is keen to set in motion a greater participation and steer of youth in the unfolding youth engagement strategies of ASPBAE. This will inform how it intends to organise the next youth consultation in 2020 and the deliberations with youth that will inform its 8th General Assembly and its next strategic plan (2021-2024).

# BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

## 7 | *Nurturing partnerships for advocacy, capacity development and movement building*

ASPBAE sustained its strong engagement and leadership within three major global civil society networks on education: the **UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CC NGO Ed 2030)**, the **Global Campaign for Education (GCE)** and the **International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)**.

As a member of the **Coordination Group of the CC NGO Ed 2030** representing the Asia Pacific, ASPBAE was closely involved in the activities of this body especially around its engagement with the Education 2030 Steering Committee processes, the HLPF 2019



ASPBAE sustained strong engagement and leadership within the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO Ed 2030), the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE).

**REFLECTING ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION, ASPBAE IS KEEN TO SET IN MOTION A GREATER PARTICIPATION AND STEER OF YOUTH IN THE UNFOLDING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF ASPBAE.**

and in organising the 9th Global Meeting of the CC NGO Ed 2030 in Hammamet, Tunisia on December 2-5. The Coordination Group met on March 7-8 at UNESCO Paris. The meeting reviewed the outcomes and follow up actions of the 2018 Global Education Meeting (GEM) and the preparations of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee for the HLPF 2019, notably its submission on the SDG4 status. The Coordination Group also strategised on how to ensure civil society participation in the wider UN processes to advance the SDG-Education 2030 Agenda. Members of the Coordination Group also shared their initiatives to follow up on SDG4 and engage with the wider SDG processes. It was agreed that a CC NGO ED 2030 Survey on CSO Participation in the SDG4 processes be undertaken in 2019 to better understand and profile the extensive engagements in this regard, and assist in making a powerful case for more institutionalised CSO participation in the SDG processes.



ASPBAE was re-elected as a regional focal point for the Asia Pacific in the CC NGO Ed 2030. It also continued to be represented in the GCE Board as one of the two regional representatives for the Asia Pacific.

The Survey on CSO participation in the SDG4 processes was undertaken by the CC NGO ED 2030 as a preparatory activity for the 9th Global Meeting of the CC NGO Ed 2030 in Hammamet which was organised around the theme of ‘Educating for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future’. Deliberating on this theme, the Assembly’s Outcomes document highlighted ways by which inclusion can be better ensured in education systems. These included the following:

- Ensure legal, policy and planning frameworks that adopt an inclusive rights-based approach.
- Develop curricula and pedagogical practices that respect intercultural and linguistic diversity, promote human rights, global citizenship and gender equality.
- Ensure that teaching is a valued profession with decent working conditions.

## ASPBAE CONTINUED TO BE REPRESENTED IN THE BOARD OF THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION AS ONE OF THE TWO REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE ASIA PACIFIC.

- Improve the collection and availability of disaggregated and reliable data to inform action, monitoring and the assurance of accountability. Credible data from multiple actors including government, multilateral organizations, development partners, academia and civil society should be taken into account.
- Build safe, inclusive learning environments free of harassment, violence and discrimination, and support mechanisms that offer access to services and information for those affected, including refugees and displaced people.
- Recognize democratic student governments as politically legitimate institutions within education systems and support the inclusion of student representation within education decision-making structures.
- Engage in wider inter-ministerial and parliamentary dialogue and policy making in order to address the full SDG4 agenda and linkages with other SDGs.
- Meet the agreed education financing benchmarks for education.

The participants also called on UNESCO “to ensure that CCNGO is strengthened, including through core funding, to enable it to play a central role in UNESCO’s leadership and coordination of SDG4. This must include continuing to recognize civil society as a fully-fledged partner in debates and decisions in the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030.”



ASPBAE was re-elected as a regional focal point for the Asia Pacific in this Assembly. ASPBAE President, Nani Zulminarni led the ASPBAE delegation in the event.

ASPBAE continued to be represented in the Board of the **Global Campaign for Education** as one of the two (2) regional representatives for the Asia Pacific. Jose Roberto Guevara, former President of ASPBAE represents ASPBAE in the GCE Board. Ram Gaire of NCE Nepal is the other representative from the Asia Pacific region. Both participated in the GCE Board Meetings in 2019: March 16-21 in Johannesburg and December 6-8 in Hammamet. A big part of the GCE Board in the period related to setting in place the programmes and strategies of the Campaign, following the decisions of the 2018 World Assembly and the agreed strategic directions for GCE.

ASPBAE continued to work closely with GCE through the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) and through various campaigns and advocacy actions notably around the SDG-SDG4 follow up.

ASPBAE participated in the GCE-convened Inter-Regional Meeting for the CSEF Programme on September 16-18 in Johannesburg which was organised to coordinate activities related to the closure of CSEF III and to transition to the Advocacy for Social Accountability (ASA) programme, since renamed "Education Out Loud" (EOL). It also offered a space to discuss GCEs

new strategic plan and to discuss the communications strategy to support GCE's strategic plan. The regional CSEF Secretariats and Fund Managers from the different regions participated in the meeting.

GCE and ICAE are two of the Organising Partners of the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG) of the Major Groups and Stakeholders – the main mechanism for CSO engagement with the SDG processes in the UN system in New York. ASPBAE was an active player in the EASG, participating in the strategizing meetings and side events they convened in New York during the HLPF 2019. ASPBAE representatives spoke during the GCE side event, 'Unifying the Playing Field: Local and Global Movements to Advance the Right to Education', co-organised with Light for the World, Global Campaign for Education-United States, and Results International on July 12, in the session focussed on civil society

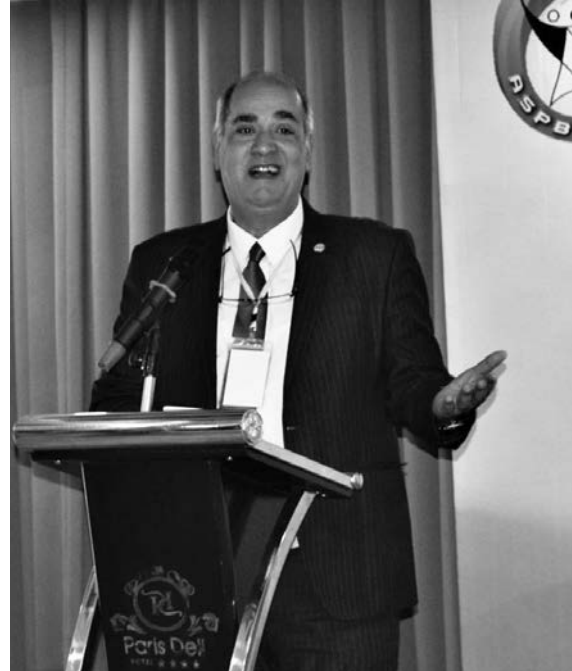
### ASPBAE COLLABORATED CLOSELY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION (ICAE) IN THE HLPF 2019 PROCESSES.



ASPBAE and its members participated in the 2019 Global Week of Action (GAW), 24-30 April, themed on 'Making the Right to an Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Free Public Education a Reality'.

alternative reports on the right to education in countries undertaking the VNR process. ASPBAE and its members were also mobilised to participate in the 2019 Global Week of Action on April 24-30 themed on 'Making the Right to an Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Free Public Education a Reality'.

ASPBAE collaborated closely with the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in the HLPF 2019 processes and in global ALE advocacy activities as earlier described. ASPBAE continued to be represented in the Executive Committee of ICAE as Vice President for the Asia Pacific through Jose Roberto Guevara. Through this role and through the ASPBAE Secretariat, ICAE received support in its efforts to start up its operations in Manila, having moved its registration to the Philippines from Uruguay. ASPBAE participated in the ICAE Virtual Assembly of 2019 to amend its Constitution. In this platform, ASPBAE continued its linkages



ASPBAE continued its linkages with other regional ALE networks - European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education (CLADE), and the Latin American Council for Popular Education (CEAAL).

with other regional ALE networks notably the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), the Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education (CLADE) and the Latin American Council for Popular Education (CEAAL).

ASPBAE sustained its decades-long partnership with **DVV International** in the year and welcomed the new Director of the DWI Regional Office for South East Asia to the region and to ASPBAE work. Johann Heilmann replaced Uwe Gartlenschlaeger in this role. Aside from side meetings organised alongside events, two (2) dedicated meetings between ASPBAE and DWI were organised in the year: on April 9-10 in Bangkok – to discuss ASPBAE collaboration with the DWI Regional office in Central Asia especially with respect to ASPBAE’s membership building and education advocacy efforts in the sub-region; and on October 12-13 also in Bangkok – to discuss and plan for the next phase of the ASPBAE-DWI partnership (2021-2023).



2019 was the second year of ASPBAE’s strategic partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It continued its dialogue with the Open Society Foundation (OSF) and with Oxfam Ibis.

ASPBAE remained part of the Editorial Board of the Journal for Adult Education and Development (AED) through ASPBAE EC member, Meenu Vadera who attended its meeting on January 21-23 in Stuttgart, Germany. Anita Borkar, ASPBAE's Regional Coordinator, Training for Transformation Programme, contributed an article on the final issue of AED, 'What is a Good Adult Educator?' released in 2019. ASPBAE also facilitated the engagement of ASPBAE member, Nirantar from India in an initiative of the DWI regional office in the Middle East on 'Reaching the marginalized through adult learning and education'. ASPBAE EC Member for East Asia, Batjargal Batkhuyag was a resource person in the DWI Central Asia Forum on Global Citizenship Education, June 23-27 in Lake Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan.

2019 was the second year of ASPBAE's strategic partnership with the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)**. Ties with SDC were facilitated by the appointment of a new Programme Officer in SDC charged with liaising with ASPBAE, Guigone Devevey. ASPBAE met with SDC on the side of the GPE Board meeting in December in Nairobi to update on each other's work. SDC is also represented in the GPE Board as one of the donor representatives. The GPE Board Meeting and processes have offered opportunities in the year for ASPBAE and SDC to cooperate and link up.

ASPBAE continued its dialogue with the **Open Society Foundation (OSF)** on the possibilities of its future strategic partnership. ASPBAE offered the Keynote Address in the OSF South East Asia Education Conference, October 26-27 in Bangkok, and co-organised two other panels during the conference on CSO engagements in education sector planning and in education financing. OSF financially supported the ASPBAE Regional Consultation on the Right to Education and the

## ASPBAE COLLABORATED CLOSELY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION (ICAE) IN THE HLPF 2019 PROCESSES AND IN GLOBAL ALE ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES.

Abidjan Principles, October 4-5, Bangkok. OSF and ASPBAE are active participants in the **Privatisation in Education and Human Rights Consortium (PEHRC)**, which campaigns around issues of education financing and privatisation globally. ASPBAE also works closely with OSF in lobbying within the GPE Board. OSF is represented in the GPE Board as part of the Private Foundations constituency.

ASPBAE continued its introduction (started in 2018) to **Oxfam Ibis**, the new Grant Agent of Education Out Loud (EOL), the successor programme to CSEF. ASPBAE participated



ASPBAE sustained its decades-long partnership with DWI International and welcomed the new Director of the DWI Regional Office for South East Asia to the region and to ASPBAE work, Johann Heilmann.

in a meeting to discuss the roll out of the Operational Component 1 (OC1) of the EOL, which will offer continued support to national education coalition partners of CSEF in GPE partner countries. The meeting was held on August 29-30 in Copenhagen. ASPBAE also met with the staff of the newly set up Asia Pacific Regional Management Unit (RMU) of the Grant Agent based in Kathmandu on November 2-3 to introduce each other and preliminarily discuss modes of coordination and complementation of roles within EOL, in support of national education coalitions. They also discussed the next steps on the processing of the EOL funding proposals of the coalitions.

**ASPBAE CONTINUED TO LIAISE STRONGLY WITH VARIOUS UNESCO OFFICES THROUGH THE YEAR, NOTABLY, UNESCO BANGKOK, UNESCO PARIS, AND THE UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING (UIL).**



ASPBAE continued to liaise with UNESCO offices - UNESCO Bangkok, UNESCO Paris, and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), along with APRCEM, GCAP, ADA, Bridge 47, CoNGO, and RCAP.

ASPBAE continued to liaise strongly with various UNESCO offices through the year, notably, UNESCO Bangkok, UNESCO Paris and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL).

It continued its association with the different networks and formations active in the wider SDG-SDG4 follow up processes including the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCEM), the Global Call to Action against Poverty (G-CAP), the Asia Development Alliance (ADA), Bridge 47 and the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO). ASPBAE continues to be represented in the CoNGO Regional Committee in Asia-Pacific (RCAP) and attended its meeting in Bangkok on May 29-30. ASPBAE also attended the Bridge 47 Conference on GCED, “Global Citizenship Education: Recalibrating Civic Action for Systemic Change”, April 9-10 in Belgrade.

# INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

## 8 | *Managing changes and transitions creatively and boldly*

**ASPBAE's Executive Council (EC)** convened on February 28 to March 4 in Gotemba, Japan. The meeting was hosted by ASPBAE members, Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) and the Development Education Association and Resource Centre (DEAR) with the support of the Japan NGO Network for Education (JNNE). Organising a meeting in Japan offered the opportunity for the ASPBAE EC and staff to interact with members in the country. A half day seminar was thus organised on February 27 in Tokyo to: 1) offer a space for the ASPBAE EC members and staff to better understand the education context in Japan, through the prism of equity, a core principle advanced by ASPBAE; 2) learn from the rich

**BY THE END OF 2019, ASPBAE'S MEMBERSHIP STOOD AT 147 MEMBER ORGANISATIONS AND 97 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.**

experience of Japanese members and ASPBAE in advancing the SDGs and SDG4, in particular; 3) discuss ways and avenues for coordination action and strengthened engagement of Japan members in ASPBAE initiatives and 4) discuss ways of collaboration with JNNE on its advocacy initiatives. ASPBAE updated the members on its work and upcoming campaigns especially related to the SDGs. JNNE encouraged ASPBAE's involvement in the Civil Society 20 (C20) Education Working Group, one of the seven Engagement Groups organised by civil society to advocate within the G20 Summit which was to be hosted by Japan in 2019. ASPBAE member, DEAR briefed the participants on their work on global citizenship education and their advocacy efforts with governments to mainstream SDG4.7 in Japan's education systems.



ASPBAE's Executive Council (EC) met from 28 February-4 March 2019 in Gotemba, Japan. The meeting was hosted by ASPBAE members in Japan SVA, DEAR, and JNNE.



Participants of ASPBAE's Regional Consultation held in Da Nang, Vietnam.

This meeting of the Executive was important as it began the planning for the 8th General Assembly of ASPBAE in 2020 and discussed, in depth, the leadership transition processes in the organisation including the selection process for the next Secretary General of ASPBAE. The EC likewise appraised ASPBAE's work in 2018 set within an analysis of the development and policy context of the region, deliberated on and approved plans and budgets for 2019.

On December 2, **the Notice of the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (GA) of ASPBAE** was released, outlining the Guidelines for Accreditation and the Timelines of the Assembly. A core part of the General Assembly will be the election of a new Executive Council (2021-2024) by electronic ballot. Alongside the GA notice, the Executive sought recommendations on **Constitutional amendments** from the membership, to be considered in the GA.

By the end of 2019, ASPBAE **membership** stood at 147 member organisations and 97 individual members.

Membership expansion efforts scaled up in Central Asia, buoyed by the possibility of the Central Asia becoming a full-fledged, stand-alone sub-region in ASPBAE's governance structure if the critical mass of members in the

## ASPBAE'S INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS WORK CONTINUED TO OFFER STRATEGIC SUPPORT TO ITS ADVOCACY, CAPACITY BUILDING, MEMBERSHIP CONSOLIDATION, AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING EFFORTS.

area was reached. This coincided with the advance in education advocacy work in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through the CSEF efforts; and with the dedicated support of the DVVI Central Asia regional office to link up its partners doing youth and ALE work with ASPBAE's efforts. Expansion and consolidation efforts in East Asia, notably in China and Korea progressed in the year as well. New members from China were mobilised in the year through ASPBAE's youth engagement work; and members in Korea were involved in ASPBAE's



Membership expansion efforts scaled up in Central Asia, buoyed by the possibility of the Central Asia becoming a full-fledged, stand-alone sub-region.

work on youth and SDG4.7. In the South Pacific, discussions had started with Adult and Community Education (ACE) Aotearoa on their generous offer of partnership to expand capacity-building work in the South Pacific on community education. The planned workshop to consult on and develop ASPBAE's vision and strategy for work in the South Pacific was rescheduled to 2020 – and will now be pursued in the context as well of the 8th General Assembly of ASPBAE and its strategic planning exercise.

ASPBAE's **Information and Communications** work continued to offer strategic support to its advocacy, capacity-building, membership consolidation and partnership building efforts. It sustained the release of the monthly Bulletin and the tri-annual ASPBAE Ed-lines which focused in 2019 on Mainstreaming SDG4.7, on the HLPF 2019 and APMED 5. ASPBAE continued its presence in social media especially through Facebook and Twitter. The ASPBAE Activity Report 2018 and ASPBAE Plans 2019 were circulated to members and friends to report on ASPBAE's past work and invite engagement on future activities. The website was updated with two sub-sites dedicated to Policy Advocacy and on the Training for Transformation Programme. Following changes asked for by the Executive Council on the penultimate version of the ASPBAE logo, a revised design was developed; aiming for adoption in 2020.

Following the guidance of the **Gender Mainstreaming** Committee, ASPBAE undertook various capacity-building initiatives to embed gender in the work of ASPBAE especially in advocacy. As earlier reported, a capacity-building session on gender mainstreaming formed a significant part of the Regional Consultation of Education Advocates (August 20-23, Da Nang). The development of the CSO Spotlight Reports benefitted from two processes, one oriented to getting youth perspectives to inform the reports; and another, a gender review. The review of the



ASPBAE's Information and Communications work continued to offer strategic support to its advocacy, capacity building, membership consolidation, and partnership building efforts.

Spotlight Reports from a gender perspective was undertaken in India, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Timor-Leste, Mongolia, Cambodia and Vanuatu. The review appraised the attention given to gender in the Spotlight Report, set in place a process where advice could be offered to coalitions on missing gender-related aspects, and where tools of analysis were shared to assist them in planning advocacy with a stronger gender lens. ASPBAE mobilised from within its membership feminist activists with extensive work in education, women's empowerment, and policy advocacy to assist in this review process. The review brought to the fore the ongoing challenge in the lack of disaggregated data on gender and

**GENDER ANALYSIS ON THE STUDY ON SKILLS FOR MARGINALISED WOMEN IN BANGLADESH AND VIETNAM, AND ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING, WILL CONTRIBUTE TO DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING ON GENDER AND EDUCATION WITHIN ASPBAE'S MEMBERSHIP.**

other dimensions of marginalisation in the information and data systems of government. Marginalisation could therefore not be characterised or understood in depth – and the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of vulnerability left unexplored. The detailed inputs and comments were shared with the coalitions to inform the finalisation of their Spotlight Reports and equally important, to offer critical touchstones for further internal reflection and guides for capacity building.

Gender analysis around the ongoing Study on the Policy and Financing Options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women in Bangladesh and Vietnam, and on policy work on gender responsive budgeting will contribute to deepening understanding on gender and education within ASPBAE’s membership.

ASPBAE continued its efforts in **mobilising the resources** needed for the sustainability of its work and functioning. As planned, its



ASPBAE undertook various capacity-building initiatives to embed gender in the work of ASPBAE especially in advocacy.



ASPBAE prioritised facilitating a smooth transition from CSEF 3 to Education out Loud (EOL) to ensure uninterrupted funding for national education coalitions and of ASPBAE in education advocacy.

### ASPBAE FOSTERED ITS PARTNERSHIPS WITH DVV INTERNATIONAL AND WITH SDC – STARTING DISCUSSIONS AS WELL ON THE PREPARATIONS NEEDED FOR THE NEXT CYCLE OF SUPPORT TO BEGIN IN 2021.

efforts in the year prioritised facilitating a smooth transition from CSEF 3 to its successor programme, Education Out Loud (EOL), to ensure uninterrupted funding for the work of national education coalitions and of ASPBAE in education advocacy. Similarly, it fostered its partnerships with DVV International and with SDC – starting discussions as well on the preparations needed for the next cycle of support to begin in 2021. While it did receive some project funds in 2019 from OSF, discussions are ongoing for a strategic partnership arrangement. Some small research grants were secured from a partnership with the University of Edinburgh on expanding access to secondary education.

Efforts to maintain the effective and cohesive function of ASPBAE staff continued through the period. Processes and mechanism were set in place to ensure close coordination especially in the light of several programmes being expanded (e.g. youth engagement, ALE advocacy) and initiated (e.g. work on SDG4.7, domestic resource mobilisation) in the year, alongside the transition from CSEF to EOL. Several all-in staff meetings



were organised in 2019: one at the start of the year for annual planning January 21-24 Manila, and 2 others alongside other events, on March 5, at the back end of the Executive Council Meeting, Tokyo and on August 24, following the Regional Consultation of Education Advocates, Da Nang.

Recruitment for new ASPBAE staff was pursued in the year. Subrat Nayak joined the ASPBAE team as Programme Specialist for the Training for Transformation programme in October 2019. The hiring process for a Coordinator of the Programme on Youth Constituency Building (Youth Coordinator) and for a new Senior Finance Officer commenced in 2019 and was completed in February 2020.

The search for the new Secretary General of ASPBAE formally started in end-2019 through an open recruitment process. It is envisaged that the new Secretary General will assume the post in the second half of 2020, following an interim change-over and mentoring process with the outgoing Secretary General. This will cap 25 years of service of the incumbent Secretary General of ASPBAE. The turn-over will coincide with the election of ASPBAE's new Executive Council, and membership agreement



The search for the new ASPBAE Secretary-General formally started in end 2019 through an open recruitment process.

on its new strategic directions. It can only convey the resilience of this more than 50-year old organisation – a legacy of inventiveness, relevance and regeneration.



Processes were set in place to ensure close coordination amongst staff, especially in the light of several programmes being expanded.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

ASIA SOUTH PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR BASIC AND ADULT EDUCATION

## PROVISIONAL BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31.12.2019

	<i>Amount in US \$</i>	
	<b>PROVISIONAL <sup>1</sup> 31.12.2019</b>	<b>AUDITED <sup>2</sup> 31.12.2018</b>
<b>Sources of Funds</b>		
Capital Fund	581,136.11	598,621.64
Add: Surplus carried from Income & Expenditure A/c	(21,289.54)	(17,485.53)
Total	<b>559,846.57</b>	<b>581,136.11</b>
<b>Application of Funds</b>		
Fixed Assets	154.70	179.29
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash & Bank Balances	916,070.07	990,294.83
Loans & Advances	135,485.73	41,196.48
	1,051,555.80	1,031,491.31
<b>Less: Current Liabilities</b>		
Sundry Creditors	116,858.86	99,241.93
Expenses Payable	22,408.00	20,001.00
Balance Grants	352,597.07	331,291.56
	491,863.93	450,534.49
Net Current Assets	559,691.87	580,956.82
Total	<b>559,846.57</b>	<b>581,136.11</b>

### Notes

1. Provisional Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Statements for 2019 were prepared on the basis of financial statements submitted as on 15th Feb., 2020 by the staff, partners and coalitions pertaining to the year 2019 and advances on the basis of funds transfers to the concern party and liabilities on the basis of statements provided by the participants of the workshop and/or Individual staff / members to the Secretary General

2. 2018 Accounts were audited by M/s. Romano Mendez & Co., Manila, Philippines  
The Audited Report was dated 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2019

ASIA SOUTH PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR BASIC AND ADULT EDUCATION

**PROVISIONAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.12.2019**

	<i>Amount in US \$</i>	
	<b>PROVISIONAL 31.12.2019</b>	<b>AUDITED 31.12.2019</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grants Received	<b>1,192,214.30</b>	<b>1,398,840.04</b>
<b>Other Incomes</b>		
Bank Interest	3,035.41	3,616.81
Exchange Rate Gain / (Loss)	(7,367.32)	(11,459.40)
Registration Fees Received	3,000.00	1,500.00
Membership Fees	6,954.02	1,479.71
	<b>1,197,836.41</b>	<b>1,393,977.16</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Education/Training, Research, Advocacy & Evaluation	1,073,660.14	1,068,006.05
Partners Infrastructure, Administration & Running costs	72,500.24	72,271.48
Production of Publication and Media	5,330.12	25,550.25
Partners Personnel/Salaries	41,100.00	24,033.49
Audit Fees & Expenses	5,340.00	5,661.00
	1,197,930.50	1,195,522.27
Surplus carried forward to Balance Sheet	<b>(21,289.54)</b>	<b>(17,485.53)</b>
Surplus/(Deficit) C/F to Balance Grants account for 2019	21,195.45	215,940.42

# ASPBAE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS 2017-2020

## PRESIDENT

**Zulminarni Hidjazi Arsyad 'Nani'**

**POSITION**

Director

**ORGANISATION**

PEKKA (Perempuan Kepala Keluarga) or "Women Headed Family Empowerment"

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## SECRETARY-GENERAL

**Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan**

**ORGANISATION**

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Village East, Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines

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## ASPBAE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTING SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA (SR-1)

**Meenu Vadera**

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Executive Director

**ORGANISATION**

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**Ehsanur Rahman****POSITION**

Executive Director

**ORGANISATION**

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**ASPBAE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTING EAST ASIA (SR-2)****Eri Yamamoto****POSITION**

Secretary General

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**Batjargal Batkhuyag****POSITION**

Executive Director

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**ASPBAE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTING SOUTH EAST ASIA (SR-3)****Nguyen Thi Kim Anh****POSITION**

National Coordinator

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**Thein Lwin****POSITION**

Foundation Chairperson

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Asia South Pacific Association  
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Learning Beyond Boundaries

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