

## Civil society makes key policy recommendations on SDG 4.1 and SDG 4.6 in lead-up to Asia Pacific education meeting

CSO preparatory meeting for APMED 5

30 September 2019, Bangkok, Thailand



Civil society organisations, including fourteen national education coalitions from the Asia Pacific, met at a civil society preparatory meeting in Bangkok on 30 September 2019. This meeting, organised by ASPBAE and facilitated by Cecilia (Thea) Soriano and Bernie Lovegrove, was held in the lead-up to the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (AMED 5), for civil society organisations (CSOs) to agree on [key policy recommendations](#) for SDG 4.1 (primary and secondary education) and 4.6 (youth and adult literacy and numeracy).



**Jan Mohammad Ahmadian of ANEC,  
Afghanistan.**

The meeting started off with sharing achievements and follow-up activities from the 2018 APMED 4, which focused on SDG 4.3 (equitable access to TVET and tertiary education) and SDG 4.4 (relevant skills for work).

The reports indicated a very active and vibrant civil society engagement in education policy in general, and in the SDG and SDG4 processes, in particular. A major achievement for ASPBAE and the national education coalitions was the development of CSO Spotlight Reports on SDG4, many of them highlighting issues related to youth, entrepreneurship skills, increased budgets for programmes, inclusion of women and girls and other vulnerable sectors, and more investments for TVET, skills development, and training. These informed ASPBAE's and its members' engagement in the 2019 regional and global High-level Political Forum (HLPF) processes.

At the country level, several reported on efforts to actively influence policies on TVET and non-formal education: NCE Nepal was invited to be part of the Board of a high-level advisory commission on TVET. NEW Indonesia was actively involved in establishing an inter-agency network on TVET in the country.

## Civil society makes key policy recommendations on SDG 4.1 and SDG 4.6 in lead-up to Asia Pacific education meeting

CSO preparatory meeting for APMED 5

30 September 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

Bunyard in Pakistan, played an active role in the development of an explicit policy on non-formal education for out-of-school children, youth, and adolescents in Punjab. The legislation was passed in 2018 after tireless advocacy efforts over a period of 15 years. The government took on board some recommendations from the coalition in Mongolia (AFE Mongolia) directed at making education sector indicators more sensitive to equity considerations, recognising the need for more disaggregated data. KoBLE, the coalition in Vanuatu began to dialogue with their government on the importance of non-formal education for youth and adults. Azad Foundation had been engaging with the Indian government on skills training for marginalised women focused on



**Shaheen Attiq-Ur-Rahman, Bunyard, Pakistan.**



**Shirley Abraham of KoBLE, a national education coalition in Vanuatu.**

livelihood options that break gender stereotypes. In the Philippines, civil society organisations mobilised almost USD 1 million for education for people with disabilities. The funds will be used for learning materials for TVET and skills development of people with disabilities in senior high schools.

This was followed by a session on key recommendations to ensure the learning continuum from SDG 4.1 to 4.6 from an equity and inclusion lens and youth perspective – a core area for discussion in APMED 5. Nguyen Linh, President, Mobilisation Board of the Vietnam Association of the Deaf, and Vichelle Yumuya, of the Student Party for Equality and Advancement of Knowledge (SPEAK), E-Net Philippines, spoke in the session.

Nguyen Linh highlighted issues of exclusion faced by students and learners with disabilities such as no free access to primary education for deaf people, outdated curricula, the absence of support mechanisms for different disabilities, lack of sign language in schools, and limited opportunities for people with disabilities to access an appropriate education in remote areas. He recommended that there be, amongst others, – (1) minimum standards for inclusive education; (2) protection and safeguarding of children, especially those with disabilities (bullying, harassment); (3) inclusive education for all genders, not just boys and girls or women and men; (4) greater awareness of disabilities; (5) employment of teachers with disabilities; (6) dedicated budgets for education for persons with disabilities (PWD); (7) teachers who teach in sign language and teachers qualified to teach PWD; (8) better data on PWD.



**Kilala Devette-Chee of PEAN (PNG), and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific.**



## Civil society makes key policy recommendations on SDG 4.1 and SDG 4.6 in lead-up to Asia Pacific education meeting

CSO preparatory meeting for APMED 5

30 September 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

Representing the youth, Vichelle Yumuya stressed that education should not be market oriented and that there should be a platform for students to exercise their civic engagement, both in formal and alternative learning systems (ALS). She further stated that youth should be encouraged to participate in education policy and implementation and that the government should provide opportunities to equip young people with the competencies and skills to engage meaningfully in policy formulation. Talking about higher education, Vichelle pointed out that only 12% of economically weaker sections of society are able to go to university in the Philippines. Though education is free, access is highly limited with competitive examinations for admission in universities highly skewed in favour of more economically well-off students



**Ehsanur Rahman of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing South and central Asia.**



**Nguyen Thi Kim Anh of the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA), and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing Southeast Asia.**

Mitzi Chan, of E-Net Philippines, presented policy recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) that emerged from the regional ASPBAE-DVV International capacity building workshop on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) advocacy held in June 2019 in Bangkok. These were envisaged to inform the advocacy positions of CSOs on SDG 4.6 on Adult Literacy within the framework of adult and lifelong learning.

Ram Gaire of NCE Nepal led the discussions on policy recommendations regarding financing equity in SDG 4.1 and 4.6. He highlighted the need for a rights-based approach to budgeting (non-discriminatory, accountable, transparent, participatory). Some

recommendations included programme and funding priority for women and the furthest behind (children with disabilities, marginalised youth); scale-up, sustain, and improve programmes that effectively address equity; increase in public investment for education and an increase in domestic revenues through tax reforms and ending harmful tax incentives; non-commercialised education and regulation of the private sector in education. He underscored the need to sustain a vibrant civil society voice on SDG 4 for equity, social justice, and peace.

The meeting concluded with a session on social media for APMED 5. The session, facilitated by ASPBAE's Medha Soni, focused on effective ways of using Facebook and Twitter, especially hashtags and Twitter handles, and briefed on the blogs to go live during APMED.



**Vichelle Yumuya of SPEAK (E-Net Philippines) and a youth representative at APMED 5.**

## Civil society makes key policy recommendations on SDG 4.1 and SDG 4.6 in lead-up to Asia Pacific education meeting

CSO preparatory meeting for APMED 5

*30 September 2019, Bangkok, Thailand*

---

The civil society participants to APMED 5 will work towards ensuring that messages emerging from the key policy recommendations formulated at the preparatory meeting be disseminated and that linkages are forged with government representatives and other key decision makers in education.



**Mitzi Chan of E-Net Philippines presenting policy recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (ALE).**



**Nguyen Linh, President, Mobilisation Board of the Vietnam Association of the Deaf, highlighted issues of exclusion faced by students and learners with disabilities.**



**Shantha Kulathunge of CED Sri Lanka.**



**Archana Dwivedi of Nirantar, India.**



**Abdulla Ubaid of NEW Indonesia.**



**Noopur of NCE India.**