



ASPBAE STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH ITS MEMBERS, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) stands in solidarity with its members, development partners and the people of Afghanistan as the country grapples with another Taliban take-over that will threaten hard-fought progress made on education, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Even prior to and immediately after the signing of the 'peace agreement' between the US and Taliban in Doha, Qatar last year, the deal has been viewed with deep concern especially by those closer to the ground and who have historically suffered from a brutal and fundamentalist Taliban rule 20 years ago.

Their fears were not unfounded. The speed of the Taliban take-over spawned chaos and a climate of dread that descended all over the country in just a few days. Many sought desperately to flee the country in the hope of escaping another period of untold hardships on top of enduring the effects of the other multiple challenges that the country has been suffering on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, weak governance and decades of protracted crises.

Women and girls, persecuted ethnic groups, religious minorities, people advancing human rights and freedoms and those working for a truly inclusive peace and development all over Afghanistan are ever more under threat and fearful for their lives and liberties.

Even as foreign governments continue to evacuate their staff, citizens and allies out of the country, a clear and unequivocal message must be offered the Afghan people that the international community is still standing by them, that safe refuge is on offer to those whose lives and liberties are at great risk, and that development and humanitarian support will continue to reach those in need in the country.

As a regional network of more than 200 civil society organisations and individuals operating in around 30 countries of the Asia-Pacific including Afghanistan, ASPBAE remains steadfast in its mission to advance the right to education for all - and in all situations - founded on core principles of upholding human dignity, participation in society and the promotion of tolerance and peace.

ASPBAE joins its members, development partners and the people of Afghanistan in calling for:

1. Protection and the upholding of human rights and freedoms of all people in the country, regardless of gender, ethnicity, location and beliefs; holding these above geopolitical dynamics and interests in the region.



2. Immediate cessation of violence, and ensure swift, unimpeded humanitarian support to all in need and to those who have been displaced by this conflict from all parts of Afghanistan.
3. Countries to offer safe refuge to the Afghan people and development workers needing to be relocated from their places of operations.
4. Rejection of all forms of discrimination, exclusions and violence against women and girls, people with disabilities, ethnic groups, religious minorities and human rights and development workers.
5. Quality education truly for all and the protection of schools and places of learning from any violence or conflict.
6. A path for broad-based and inclusive dialogue to uphold the rule of law, restore a democratic order and define a framework for genuine peace and stability where the people's human rights and freedoms are protected, offering the basis for ongoing development cooperation and support.

ASPBAE has been in touch with its members and partners on the ground in Afghanistan since this crisis unfolded and it will continue to find ways to offer support and solidarity. May the international community never abandon and fail the people of Afghanistan.