



ASEAN
INDONESIA 2023
YOUTH AGENDA



ASEAN
INDONESIA
2023

Background Paper

ASEAN+
YOUTH SUMMIT
2023

Hosted By:



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Foreword

Indonesia who holds the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023 envisioned ASEAN as the epicentrum of growth. This vision could be implemented with an inclusive environment to involve the 213 million youth (age 15–34), ensuring that no youth is left behind. This opportunity shall become a platform for ASEAN Youth to voice their thoughts and commemorate the chairmanship through a designated youth platform, titled the ASEAN Youth Agenda (AYA). This event shall become a place where youths across ASEAN+ convene, exchange knowledge, and produce a tangible output to be given to the leaders. Therefore, the ASEAN+ Youth Summit as the pinnacle event of AYA is here to serve as a platform of advocacy towards the youth.

This background paper was formulated by Indonesian Youth Diplomacy, the official host of the ASEAN Youth Agenda 2023, with the support from the Ministry of Youth and Sporting Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the ASEAN Secretariat. The team behind the ASEAN+ Youth Summit Background Paper comprises Raihan Zahirah (Lead Researcher of Digital Literacy and Inclusion), Rifli Mubarak and Chendy Puspita (Lead Researchers of Future of Education and Work), Muhammad Maulana and Reza Edriawan (Lead Researchers of Green Economy), Aurelia Bianca Hanjaya (Lead Researcher of Health), and Nicole Accalia Angriawan (Lead Researcher of Food Security), and was reviewed by Mathew Marchel Lim (Research Staff), Biondi Sanda Sima and Alvin Adityo (Co-Head of Research and Advocacy Division of IYD).

The objective of this paper is to assist the delegates of the ASEAN+ Youth Summit to have a clear substantive foundation; where the paper explains the general issues, challenges, and recommendations that shall help delegates to formulate their policy recommendations. This paper is also directed to increase awareness among the general public in regard to the discussed 5 main topics: Digital Literacy and Inclusion, Future of Education and Work, Green Economy, Health, and Food Security. Hence, the substance that is depicted in this paper shall bring benefits towards the internal and external stakeholders of the ASEAN+ Youth Summit, as the pinnacle event of the ASEAN Youth Agenda 2023.

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INDONESIAN YOUTH DIPLOMACY

Digital Literacy & Inclusion

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Digital Literacy & Inclusion

Maximising Digital Economy through Digital Talent and Access to Financing for Startups

A. Introduction

A plethora of population in ASEAN in the last five years is such a “blessing in disguise”. ASEAN has approximately around 660 million inhabitants in which 50% of them are under the age of 30, and are tech-savvy youths. Moreover, 9 out of 10 youths in this group are heavy Internet users and have access to the Internet.[1] Along with this growth, it is also estimated that urbanisation in ASEAN countries will most likely spike to 43% by 2030. It can be inferred that the people of ASEAN itself are the vital foundation to support the region as the epicentre of the digital economy. There is a strong need to ensure that the preparedness of these youths are guaranteed through various affirmative actions which should be taken by the stakeholders in the region.[2]



Harnessing youth preparedness to become the essential driver in maximising ASEAN's digital economy is the first priority. Youth capability to become an essential driver for the digital economy is still a gap where digital literacy becomes a privilege. A recent study by UNICEF showed that 6 out of 10 students in ASEAN did not receive digital literacy.[3] Adding insult to injury, a joint survey conducted by ASEAN Foundation, PLAN International, and Google.org stated that 55.4% of youths in ASEAN believe that basic digital skills are the most important skills that should be sharpened.[4] Moreover, about 72% of youths didn't have advanced digital skills.



The ASEAN status quo as a hotspot of the digital economy is also supported by its digitally-connected population. By 2025, it is projected that the majority of ASEAN citizens will be able to utilize advanced technology both in personal and professional realms or are so-called “digital natives”[5]. With digital penetration of about 63%, better execution of regional economic agreements which are reflected through the ASEAN Economic Community and Socio Cultural Community as well as numerous initiatives (framework agreements, guidelines, digital talent developments and stakeholders consultative dialogues), the region is supposedly ready to be at the forefront of the global digital economy[6].

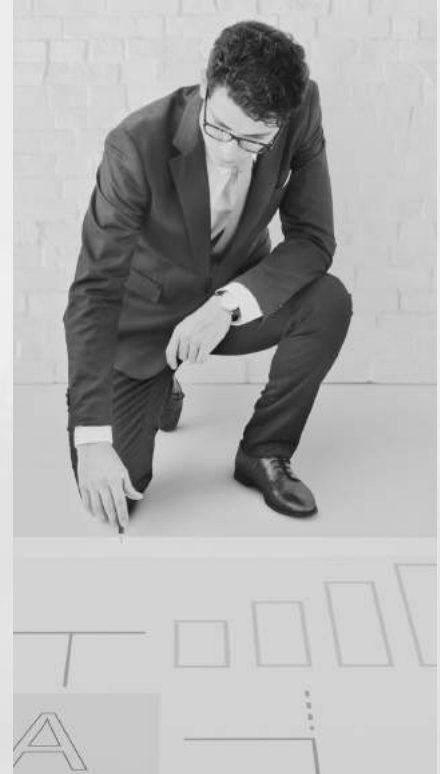
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- [1] Forbes (2018), A Guide To Southeast Asia's Thriving Startup Ecosystem, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jonathanmoed/2018/07/12/a-guide-to-southeast-asias-thriving-startup-ecosystem-heres-what-you-need-to-know/?sh=5d781ef66e18>
- [2] Tobing, Dio H. (2022), Preparing Southeast Asia's Youth to Enter the Digital Economy, <https://blogs.adb.org/blog/preparing-southeast-asia-s-youth-enter-digital-economy>
- [3] UNICEF (2020), Bridging the digital divide for Children and Adolescents in East Asia and Pacific, <https://www.unicef.org/eap/bridging-digital-divide-children-and-adolescents-east-asia-and-pacific>
- [4] ASEAN Foundation, PLAN International, & Google.org (2022, June 17). Mind the Gap: Mapping Youth Skills for the Future in ASEAN. ASEAN Foundation. Retrieved June 30, 2023, from https://www.aseanfoundation.org/mind_the_gap_mapping_youth_skills_for_the_future_in_asean
- [5] Kearney (2020), The ASEAN digital revolution, <https://www.kearney.com/digital/article/-/insights/the-asean-digital-revolution>
- [6] Choi, J., Santhanam P., et al (2020), The Rise of Digital Banking in Southeast Asia, <https://media-publications.bcg.com/The-Rise-of-Digital-Banking-in-Southeast-Asia.pdf>

B. Challenges and Opportunities

I. Challenges

Inadequate investment in talent development touchpoints

Digital infrastructure is an important foundation before taking a step forward into the digital talent issue. Amidst the pandemic and the shifting of human behaviour into a digital realm, facilitating investment in the digital infrastructure is important and thus ASEAN Member States (AMS) with a low level of mobile penetration and population should consider providing incentives for the private sector to further invest heavily in this area.[7] It is recommended that AMS reassess the quality and preparedness of teaching staff before making any major changes in the education system. The third foundation of touchpoints is the availability of education systems and skilling programmes. Revamping the education system through recentering the focus to associated skills such as social, cognitive, numeracy, critical thinking, problem-solving, effective communication, empathy, computational thinking, business, data analysis, product development, and agility.[8]



Regulatory Framework Gap

Public policy, including regulation, is the ‘umbrella’ of law that can justify the urgency of harnessing youth digital talents and preparedness in facing the digitalisation era in ASEAN. Creating and enacting national laws regarding digital talents is not enough to cope with future needs. ASEAN has created the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 which encompasses a wide range of desired outcomes to ensure that the region and ASEAN Member States (AMS) are more than ready to face the future. In addition, AMS should reform its traditional policymaking process as the cross-sectoral process is the best way to devise policies

related to digitalisation, reduce bureaucratic silos, government capacity building for long-term planning creation, and develop policy co-creation workshops.[9] Eventually, there is no “one size fits for all” regulatory framework and each AMS has different capabilities. Therefore, there might need an adjustment on the desired outcome and action items, as envisioned in the Digital Masterplan 2025 to make ASEAN as a leading bloc in digital and economy[10], but making small progress is such a “stitch in time saves nine[11]”, hence the member states will not “miss the boat.”[12]

[7] Ibid

[8] ERIA (2022), The Future of Education and Skills in Asia, <https://www.eria.org/news-and-views/the-future-of-education-and-skills-in-asia/>

[9] Karr, J., Lokshin, B., et al (2020), The Future of Work Across ASEAN, https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Future-of-Work-Across-ASEAN_summary.pdf

[10] ASEAN. (n.d.). ASEAN DIGITAL MASTERPLAN. ASEAN.org. Retrieved June 25, 2023, from <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ASEAN-Digital-Masterplan-2025.pdf>

[11] This sentence refers to the urgency to solve a problem right away, to stop it becoming a much bigger one

[12] Ra, S., Chin, B., & Liu, A (2015), Challenges and Opportunities For Skills Development in Asia, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/176736/challenges-and-opportunities-skills-asia.pdf>

Complex Requirements

Affording financial products in the form of financing through financial institutions is not simply visiting the branch office and submitting application forms. The unavailability of collateral and credit history is the major obstacle that prevents youth from developing and expanding their startups.[13] The perception of financial institutions towards youth also become an additional factor as youths are always perceived as high-risk clients since the majority of them didn't have sufficient credit history, lack access to business network, inadequate business experience, savings, and assets as collateral [14]. This affects the way youth pursue alternative options, especially to the informal lenders such as borrowing money from families, friends, and relatives which eventually resulted in limited financing and the risk of entering exploitative yet speculative lending schemes. Furthermore, interest rates imposed by financial institutions provide adverse effects on the growth of youth startups.

Affording financial products as a form of startup financing through legitimate financial institutions is not as simple as visiting a bank branch office and submitting an application form. The unavailability of collateral and credit history is a major obstacle that prevents youths from developing and expanding their startups. The cynical perception of financial institutions towards youths—where they are always perceived to be high-risk clients since the majority of them do not have sufficient credit history, access to business networks, adequate business experience, savings and assets as collaterals—also serves as another major hindrance. This affects the way youths pursue alternative financing options, especially via informal lenders such as families, relatives, and friends, which eventually results in inadequate financing and worse falling into the risk of entering exploitative yet speculative lending schemes. Furthermore, interest rates imposed by financial institutions adversely constrain the growth of youth startups.

Inadequate Ecosystem

Limited alternative options to access financing aside from traditional financial institutions such as banks obstruct the ability of youth startups to scale up. The presence of an entrepreneurship ecosystem is necessary to help youth startups in obtaining guaranteed access to financing from other stakeholders, such as through accelerators, venture capital, incubator, and private equity.[15] Furthermore, a strong ecosystem can invite individual angel investors to pledge their pre-seed or seed financing into youth startups, while at the same time becoming a mentor to further grow the business. However, the accessibility of these ecosystems should be taken into consideration as sometimes it is challenging for youth startups to get in without having any business network or referral.

[13] Yoshino, N. and F. Taghizadeh-Hesary. 2018. The Role of SMEs in Asia and Their Difficulties in Accessing Finance. ADBI Working Paper 911. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute. Available: <https://www.adb.org/publications/role-smes-asia-and-their-difficulties-accessing-finance>

[14] Horton, S., Molina, H, et al (2020), Unlocking Finance for Youth Entrepreneurs, https://www.gpfi.org/sites/gpfi/files/sites/default/files/unlocking_finance_youth_entre.pdf

[15] UN DESA (2020), World Youth Report, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/10/WYR2020-Chapter3.pdf>

Lack of Financial Capabilities

Limited financial literacy and awareness, as part of financial capabilities, pose youths to lending programmes that can be unsustainable for their startups.[16] Although they may be capable enough to keep their startups running, financial capabilities are also a determinant in manifesting successful youth startups. Financial capabilities for youth startups are not only to the extent of bookkeeping and differentiating between capital expenditure and operating expenditure. It encompasses the ability to make financial decisions, understand financial products, develop financial goals, manage risk, allocate expenses, etc.[17] In addition, as youth spending power is easily influenced by peers, family members, relatives, and media, it can lead to poor financial decisions and financial habits.[18]

II. Opportunities

Talent Mobilization

As the highly skilled digital talents in the region are mostly concentrated in certain areas, AMS should consider advancing and accelerating intra-ASEAN mobility. This aims to ensure that the highly skilled digital talents can circulate and attract innovators to other areas which are lacking support.[19] In ASEAN, about 46.4% of youths are keen to work overseas in the next three years. Allowing talents and ecosystem players to circulate around the region can address issues such as labour shortages, transfer of knowledge, and improve productivity. [20]

Political Will and Leadership

A strong political will from the government and relevant authorities in creating sound infrastructure and environment for the digital economy should be present in the first place. This should be reflected by the implementation of leaders' vision through a national action plan that they design, adequate regulatory framework, execution of initiatives, effective delivery, effective cross-sectoral relationships, and efficient bureaucracy. Without political will, any programme will lack progress and be poorly executed which makes the situation more complex like spider cobwebs. In regards to the digital economy, a typical 'digital leader' is needed to inspire change and challenge the current traditional way of execution by transforming the mindsets, behaviour, and working culture of public servants so they can be more empowered and motivated.[21]

[16] UN DESA (2020), World Youth Report, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/10/WYR2020-Chapter3.pdf>

[17] UN DESA (2013), Financial Inclusion of Youth, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-financial-inclusion.pdf>

[18] UNCDF (2012), Policy Opportunities and Constraints to Access Youth Financial Services, http://ifconsulting.co/attachments/Policy-Opportunities-and-Constraints-to-Access-YFS_YouthStart.pdf

[19] Marsan, A.G (2022), Addressing the digital divide in ASEAN, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/07/01/addressing-the-digital-divide-in-asean/>

[20] Gentile, E (2019), Skilled Labor Mobility and Migration, <https://www.adb.org/publications/skilled-labor-mobility-migration-asean>

[21] EY (2022), How governments can foster a digital-first culture in their workforce, https://www.ey.com/en_pt/government-digital-innovation/how-governments-can-foster-a-digital-first-culture-in-their-workforce

Public-private Partnership

As the proverb says, “It takes a village to raise a child”. It is impossible for one party to bear a collective responsibility in fostering the best digital talents. Public-private partnership is one of the best solutions to create joint initiatives and narrow the gap between markets and skill-building opportunities. An example of good initiatives is the tripartite partnership between the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME), The Asia Foundation, and Google.org in launching “Go Digital ASEAN” which successfully helped 183,096 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) owners, 42,682 job seekers, 140,276 women, and 145,407 youths (age 18–35), 1,983 trainees with disabilities and 19,064 indigenous trainees.[22] Another prominent example would be the Kampus Merdeka' programme which was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in partnership with numerous companies to share Indonesia's youth future which aligns with their career aspirations and industry needs.[23] This programme is divided into several sub-programmes such as internship, teaching, independent study, student exchange, entrepreneurship, and career preparation programme.



Redefine Financing Pathways

All roads lead to Rome as financing pathways for youth startups. There should be a redefinition of financing pathways so there would be more options than just conventional loans. There are other alternatives for youth startups to access financing such as but not limited to lease financing, factoring, private equity, venture capital, angel financing, specialised exchanges, debt crowdfunding, P2P lending, equity crowdfunding, blockchain-based financing (initial coin offering), and trade financing.[24] For instance, Angel Investment Network Indonesia (ANGIN), which had more than 95 investors, committed to providing angel financing for startups through investment services, equity crowdfunding, and women's funds.[25]



[22] ASEAN Secretariat (2022). Go Digital ASEAN” Impact Summary Report: MSMEs, job seekers benefit from digital skills training, <https://asean.org/go-digital-asean-impact-summary-report-msmes-job-seekers-benefit-from-digital-skills-training/>

[23] Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs Indonesia (2022), programme Kampus Merdeka, <https://kampusmerdeka.kemdikbud.go.id/programme>

[24] OECD (2020), Alternative Financing Instruments for ASEAN SMEs, www.oecd.org/finance/alternativefinancing-instruments-for-ASEAN-SMEs.htm.

[25] ANGIN. (2021). INVESTMENT. Angin.id. Retrieved June 30, 2023, from <https://www.angin.id/investment?lang=id>

[26] OliverWyman & Asian Development Bank (2017). Accelerating Financial Inclusion In South-East Asia, <https://www.oliverwyman.com/our-expertise/insights/2017/jan/accelerating-financial-inclusion-in-south-east-asia.html>

[27] The World Bank Group (2020), Unlocking Finance for Youth Entrepreneurs, https://www.gpfi.org/sites/gpfi/files/sites/default/files/unlocking_finance_youth_entre.pdf

Digital Financial Services and Financial Technology

Bringing youth startup financing into the digital realm is the best thing since sliced bread. Aside from alternative financing pathways, digital financial services (DFS) and financial technology can help youths in accessing financing in a quick process. It can also supplement 20% of unmet credit needs of startups through its fast, low-cost, and convenient verification process.[26] DFS and financial technology can bring more affordable and competitive financing in several ways inter alia improve accessibility, bring friendly options, eliminate operating cost, present accurate financial risk assessment, and complement the absence of traditional financial institutions.[27]



Founded in Singapore, Funding Societies is one of the leading financing platforms for startups in Southeast Asia which provides microloans, short-term loans, and virtual cards. [28] Another example of DFS would be Modal Rakyat from Indonesia which provides financing and lending as well as connecting individual lenders with borrowers.[29] First Circle, which comes from the Philippines successfully lends millions of dollars to underbanked startups and offers growth partnership programme where potential startups can receive free funding as well as more support to achieve exponential business growth.[30]

Strong Ecosystem

Youth startups face risks from internal and external shocks, hence a strong youth startup ecosystem is needed to ensure a support system that further encourages them to scale up their startups. It also provides youths with an interconnected business network with investors, accelerators, incubators, and even venture capital which can give them easier access to financing. The ecosystem should not be limited to financing, but also mentoring and training by local champions or industry experts such as what has been done by the Bank of Philippine Islands through its BPISinag which provides high-quality and cost-saving mentorship for its youth clients with academics, investors, and finance specialists.[31] Another example would be DARE of Brunei Darussalam which is an ecosystem designed for local startups and offers six services such as information, training, financing, space, market access, and promotion. [32]

[28] Funding Societies. (2020). Home. Southeast Asia's Largest SME Digital Financing Platform | Funding Societies SG. Retrieved June 30, 2023, from <https://fundingsocieties.com/>

[29] Modal Rakyat. (n.d.). Funding. Modal Rakyat. Retrieved June 30, 2023, from <https://www.modalrakyat.id/funding>

[30] First Circle. (n.d.). Home. First Circle Philippines Business Loans | Up to P20M. Retrieved June 30, 2023, from <https://www.firstcircle.ph/>

[31] The World Bank Group (2020), Unlocking Finance for Youth Entrepreneurs, https://www.gpfi.org/sites/gpfi/files/sites/default/files/unlocking_finance_youth_entre.pdf

[32] Darussalam Enterprise. (2020). Home. DARE (Darussalam Enterprise). Retrieved June 30, 2023, from <https://www.dare.gov.bn/>

C. WAY FORWARD

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Maximising the digital economy through literacy and access to financing for startups in ASEAN is a cross-sectoral issue where various stakeholders, elements, and problems are interconnected which makes the effort to tackle this issue a responsibility of all. Although the guideline is already on the table, AMS should revisit its existing regulations, make adjustments/modifications based on the guidelines (if needed), and evaluate whether the current regulation or policy has satisfied some points which are also stated in AMD such as access to digital infrastructure and inclusive yet accessible education.[33] The right policy approach for this region and each AMS still needs to be explored but there are few interesting inspirations that can be referred such as human-centred, cross-sectoral, distributive, regulatory, restrictive, facilitative, and one package policy which encompasses macro objectives, social objectives, static efficiency objectives, dynamic efficiency objectives, and human capital objectives.[34] It is also worth considering the existence of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Council (AYEC) and ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Association (AYEA) as one the key mediums for future actions.[35] The policymaking process and stakeholders should take into account disadvantaged groups, marginalised groups, and vulnerable groups so as to ensure that inclusivity is present in the first place.

[33] McKinsey & Company (2021), Tackling Asia's talent challenge: How to adapt to a digital future, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/asia-pacific/tackling-asias-talent-challenge-how-to-adapt-to-a-digital-future>

[34] OECD/ERIA (2018), SME Policy Index: ASEAN 2018: Boosting Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth, OECD Publishing, Paris/Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, Jakarta. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264305328-en>

[35] AYEC. (n.d.). About AYEC. ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Council. Retrieved June 30, 2023, from <https://ayec.org/ayec-asean-young-entrepreneurs-council>



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Future of Education and Work

Harnessing Youths' Talents for A Better Future

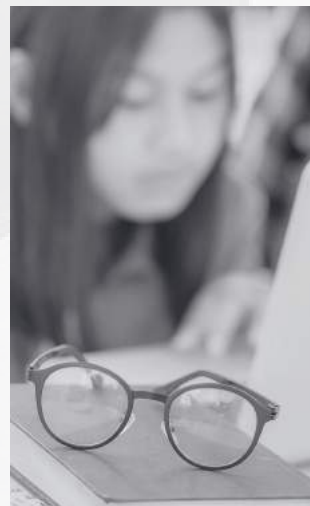
A. Introduction

Education and jobs are the crucial aspects for creating a rational, empowered, and independent human being amidst the competitiveness and technological advancement. ”

Universally, youth has emerged as an essential component of global policymaking, where they correspondingly need the skills involved as the supporting elements, such as the 21st-century skills, to be the foundation for ASEAN youths to enter the workforce and contribute to building a more sustainable and secure economy post-pandemic. Hence, ASEAN youths' employment landscape, particularly in terms of skill training and learning behaviour is something that should be honed earlier for preparing the bright future of our aspiring leaders.

Increasing youths' preparedness for the work environment involves the role of schools in incorporating analytical thinking and digital skills within the curriculum system. ”

The question is, are we ready for it? Based on the report of UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, in terms of how digital literacy is taught in schools, ASEAN nations differ greatly. In Myanmar and Lao PDR, digital education is only available to a small percentage of students. This percentage is much higher in other nations, but even in non-Least Developed Countries (LDCs), a significant number of young people do not receive digital education at school.[36] Young people believe that the lack of digital training at school and a lack of technical resources and infrastructure are major obstacles to their development of digital skills. They want more time to practice their digital skills in all grades, better access to technological devices and ICT infrastructures, more qualified teachers, and increased awareness of this issue among parents, teachers, and students in order to improve their digital literacy at school.[37]



[36] UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office. (2021, February). Digital Literacy on Education Systems across ASEAN. UNICEF. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/7766/file/Digital%20Literacy%20in%20Education%20Systems%20Across%20ASEAN%20Cover.pdf>

[37] Ibid.

Educational issues are a multilayered problem that impacts intergenerational poverty and arises from the failure to use education as a stepping stone towards social mobility.[38] ”

It could hinder the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) #1 (Ending Poverty) and #10 (Reducing Inequality). In responding to the equitable opportunities for education as a fundamental human right based on the Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ASEAN has committed to improving the education opportunities for ASEAN youths and overcoming obstacles.

In the job sector, ASEAN leaders also have been doing a progress in implementing the SDG #8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). ”

It could be reflected in the ASEAN Declaration of Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work. ASEAN undertakes the following actions in enhancing the responsiveness and cohesiveness of labour, educational, economic policies and institutional frameworks in promoting the following aspects towards better employment opportunities, employability, higher income, job security, quality of jobs, and enterprise competitiveness, where relevant and within the framework of each member states:

- (a) Innovations and the use of technology in teaching and learning approaches,
- (b) Educational systems that promote competencies that prepare all for lifelong learning and that promote 21st-century skills,
- (c) Competencies, productivity, job flexibility (including mobility) of workers,
- (d) Business models that incorporate re-skilling, up-skilling and new skills acquisition of workers, and
- (e) Mutual recognition of skills to support mobility of skilled labour.[39]

However, in several nations, income inequality remains relatively high despite some progress in ASEAN. ”

When compared to advanced Asia, these obstacles impede ASEAN welfare convergence. Policies aimed at closing these gaps in sustainable development have the potential to result in significant gains. In particular, more determined policy efforts are required to improve outcomes in education and skills training as well as infrastructure in the lower-middle-income ASEAN nations. In order to address the remaining challenges to sustainable development, country-specific SDG strategies must be developed within the framework of national development plans and closely monitored through the voluntary review process.[40]

[38] Ibid.

[39] ASEAN. (n.d.). ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work and Its Roadmap. ASEAN.org. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Declaration-on-Human-Resources-Development-for-the-Changing-World-of-Work-and-Its.pdf>

[40] International Monetary Fund. (2018, November 8). ASEAN Progress Towards Sustainable Development Goals and The Role of the IMF. International Monetary Fund. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/11/07/pp101118asean-progress-towards-sdgs>

B. Challenges and Opportunities

I. Challenges

Skills gap due to the inequality in education

Skills gap is worsened by the geographical disparities that make the ASEAN youths unable to be in the same education standard.

According to the United Nations Human Development Report, in Cambodia and Laos, the expected number of years spent in school is only 11.3 and 11.1 years and education disparities range from 20% to 30%.[41] This indicates that there are still a significant number of adults and children who do not have equal access to education. According to the same report, the rest of Southeast Asia has a similar rate of education inequality. This issue has persisted over the past ten years and makes it difficult for governments to improve education standards. The majority of ASEAN youth's skill development has occurred through formal education; however, the lack of information and resources restricts non-formal opportunities for reskilling and upskilling. The majority of ASEAN youths acquire their skills through formal education, with less than half having attended informal training.[42] These types of training programmes are typically provided by private institutions in 70% of the cases.[43] Access to training opportunities for ASEAN youths is hampered by a lack of information, a limited budget, time constraints, and distance. As an empirical example, the lack of information particularly affects young people in Myanmar, where half of the respondents were unaware of training opportunities.



[41] United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). Data Center | Human Development Reports. Human Development Reports. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center>

[42] UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office. (2021, February). DIGITAL LITERACY IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS ACROSS ASEAN. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/7706/file/Digital%20Literacy%20in%20Education%20Systems%20Across%20ASEAN%20Cover.pdf>

[43] Ibid.

Disruptive job market

The World Economic Forum's survey of 56,000 ASEAN youths between the age of 15 and 35 showed that 52% of respondents believe that they must constantly update their skills, while 9% believe that their current skills are already out of date.[44] These findings highlight their concern about the need to continuously update their skills amidst changes.[45] Consequently, 5.7% of respondents say that they have lost their job because technology has displaced their skills.[46] ASEAN youths need to reinvent themselves in light of rapidly advancing technologies like AI, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT). The survey's findings that STEM skills (software design and programming, data analytics, and math and science) represent three of the four weakest skills in the region as further evidence that the ASEAN region's current education system does not give students the tools they need to succeed in the workplaces.[47]

Digital divide

According to the Brookings Institution, while the majority of developed countries use primarily online platforms for remote learning, developing countries merely use radio and television to help people who don't have internet access.[48] The nationwide lack of internet access is the primary obstacle to remote learning. The issue known as the "digital divide" is used to describe gaps in internet device usage and its accessibility. With high rates of internet penetration, Singapore, Brunei, and Malaysia have the most internet access, while the other Southeast Asian nations are still having trouble providing internet access to the entire population.[49] Because the majority of students in remote areas do not have access to the internet, their previous pandemic-era distance learning cannot be processed, resulting in a waste of the school year, particularly for children in middle and primary education. ASEAN youths lacked significant digital skills, digital infrastructure, and funding due to the difficulties they faced during social distancing. Thus, multistakeholder endeavours to address these holes are required more than ever before. In addition, workers under the age of 25 who live outside of the capital, find it difficult to work remotely, especially for those of them who live outside the capital city and work in the education and agriculture sectors deemed as temporary jobs.[50] The COVID-19 crisis has reminded us of the essence of digital transformation in the education sector and job employment, including those in Southeast Asia, thus the inclusivity of the education system that applies the technological approach is significant to be taken into account.

[44] World Economic Forum. (n.d.). ASEAN Youth Technology, Skills and the Future of Work. Weforum. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_ASEAN_Youth_Survey_2019_Report.pdf

[45] Thomas, J. (2019, August 17). ASEAN youth face a disruptive job market. The ASEAN Post. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://theaseanpost.com/article/asean-youth-face-disruptive-job-market>

[46] Ibid.

[47] ASEAN Post. (2019, August 7). Education in ASEAN needs a revamp now. The ASEAN Post. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://theaseanpost.com/article/education-asean-needs-revamp-now>

[48] Emiliana Vegas. (2020, April 14). School Closures, Government Responses, and Learning Inequality around the World during COVID-19. The Brookings Institution. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/school-closures-government-responses-and-learning-inequality-around-the-world-during-covid-19/>

[49] UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office. (2021, February). DIGITAL LITERACY IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS ACROSS ASEAN. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/7766/file/Digital%20Literacy%20in%20Education%20Systems%20Across%20ASEAN%20Cover.pdf>

[50] BIMP-EAGA. (2020, August 20). Youth Survey Shows Why ASEAN Needs to Become Digital-ready. BIMP-EAGA. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://bimp-eaga.asia/article/youth-survey-shows-why-asean-needs-become-digital-ready>

Discrimination toward people with disabilities

Discrimination against People with Disabilities (PWDs) persists in the workplace. Nearly all ASEAN nations have a tendency to view disability as a performance barrier by employers. Additionally, the stigma surrounding certain kinds of disabilities persists in the workplace. Countries like Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore have enacted legal provisions like quotas and incentives to better match the skills of job seekers with suitable jobs to address this issue.[51] This makes it possible for young people with disabilities to find work. Limited information, lack of devices, parental consent, and disability-friendly access are the primary barriers to PWDs training. Countries like Cambodia are notable for some of these difficulties where more than 45% of respondents lacked access to appropriate devices and more than 70% lacked training-related information.[52]

II. Opportunities

Contextualising, implementing, and mainstreaming the Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) for ASEAN at the national and local levels. In order to withstand the unprecedented, rapid, transformative, and irreversible changes that the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has brought, ASEAN has recognised the need to develop a coherent strategy that will support more effective implementation. The Consolidated Strategy is established to set out the context of 4IR in the region and globally, provide a strategic framework for ASEAN work and current initiatives of the 4IR, and provide strategic directions for ASEAN's 4IR work going forward to focus on areas where a regional approach would generate the greatest value added.[53]

The main objective of The Consolidated Strategy on the 4IR for ASEAN is to provide policy guidance in building the ASEAN Digital Community. This acknowledgement of ASEAN's efforts in 4IR is important to set the foundation of education and work amidst exponential and dynamic technological advances. As the strategy was only completed in 2021 and socialised with a virtual webinar in early 2022.[54] Which the strategy still requires various systematic socialisation among ASEAN Member States (AMS) to ensure integrated adaptation of 4IR.



[51] ASEAN Foundation. (2022, July 25). Mind The Gap: Mapping Youth Skills for the Future in ASEAN. ASEAN Foundation. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from https://www.aseanfoundation.org/mind_the_gap_mapping_youth_skills_for_the_future_in_asean

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] ASEAN. (2021). Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for ASEAN. ASEAN.org. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/6.-Consolidated-Strategy-on-the-4IR-for-ASEAN.pdf>

[54] ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program. (n.d.). Development of Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).



The 4IR presses urgent measures to reshape the education system to prepare for the adaptation of the workforce because 85 percent of jobs that will exist in 2030 have not been invented yet[55]. To combat this, countries can solidify the political commitment to invest in the five pillars of education reformation. First, the support and motivation of students to learn by emphasising whole-child development and support to learning continuity beyond school. Second, the teachers who are socially valued and have the tools, support, and expectations they need to be effective. Third, the accessible, diverse, and high-quality learning resources support good pedagogical practices and personalised learning. Fourth, the safe and inclusive learning environments. And fifth, educational institutions with effective leadership and management structures[56].

Although the future of education does not synchronise on a single model or path for all countries, high-performing systems share five common features in reforming education. The five tenets are (1) systemic reform supported by political commitment, (2) focus on equity and inclusion, (3) evidence-based policies, (4) financial commitment corresponding to needs, and (5) investment in technology. These core principles are important to ensure the policies within each pillar are scalable and sustainable and have the greatest monetary value[57].



The transformation for education in 4IR also calls for shifts in learning content and learning experiences. In learning content, technical and human-centric skills are required to build growing and inclusive economies and societies, such as global citizenship skills (awareness of the wider world and sustainability), innovation and creativity skills (problem-solving and analytical thinking), technology skills (data science and programming), and interpersonal skills (emotional intelligence and cooperation). To support these skills, education also needs learning mechanisms that more closely reflect the future of work. The following mechanisms are personalised and self-paced learning, accessible and inclusive learning, problem-based and collaborative learning, and lifelong and student-driven learning[58]. Overall, these suggestions

[51] ASEAN Foundation. (2022, July 25). Mind The Gap: Mapping Youth Skills for the Future in ASEAN. ASEAN Foundation. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from https://www.aseanfoundation.org/mind_the_gap_mapping_youth_skills_for_the_future_in_asean

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] ASEAN. (2021). Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for ASEAN. ASEAN.org. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/6.-Consolidated-Strategy-on-the-4IR-for-ASEAN.pdf>

[54] ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program. (n.d.). Development of Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

for alterations in the education system can help to set the base of a highly-skilled and versatile workforce.

The rapid development of technology has changed workforce trends across age ranges. Several ASEAN Member States itself have an abundant youthful workforce, but the emergence of the “gig economy” among many job opportunities in 4IR is resulting in larger concerns over job security and stability. Thus, ASEAN Member States should aim to review their education curricula and skills regularly. On the other hand, ASEAN Member States with an aging workforce can advocate maximising the human resources of firms by hiring women, older workers, and persons with disabilities, while ensuring adequate opportunities for existing workers to upskill to fulfil new employment demands of the digital economy [59].

The policymakers in ASEAN can utilise technology and data from previously untapped resources and partnerships. Through coordination at the national and regional level, policymakers can work with the private sector in order to unlock useful market data that already exists. Innovative new public-private partnerships can help policymakers establish new data-sharing initiatives that give leaders better tools to predict skills shortages and gaps in a training capacity. Technology can also play a role, as connected databases and artificial intelligence systems make it possible to track real-time trends at a massive scale[60].



These data-sharing environments of adaptation in 4IR can push for a greater social dialogue in a tripartite setting. The close partnership has helped various ASEAN Member States introduce quick, decisive measures to cope with the pandemic. Now as the ASEAN Member States and other economies reopen, enabling businesses to resume and help workers get back to work, tripartism will play a key role in this recovery. Tripartite partnerships will support workers to be retrained to work in new areas where demand is stronger. It will facilitate safe management measures to be implemented at worksites so that workplaces remain COVID-safe for all workers[61].

[51] ASEAN Foundation. (2022, July 25). Mind The Gap: Mapping Youth Skills for the Future in ASEAN. ASEAN Foundation. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from https://www.aseanfoundation.org/mind_the_gap_mapping_youth_skills_for_the_future_in_asean

[52] *Ibid*.

[53] ASEAN. (2021). Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for ASEAN. ASEAN.org. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/6.-Consolidated-Strategy-on-the-4IR-for-ASEAN.pdf>

[54] ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program. (n.d.). Development of Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

C. WAY FORWARD

The study highlights our need to mainstream our current tools of The Consolidated Strategy in 4IR for ASEAN. In order to prepare our workforce, ASEAN can look into several strategies regarding education reform, such as investing in the five pillars and shifting the learning content and experiences, which can be customised based on the priorities and available resources of each ASEAN Member State. The policies for adapting the 4IR can also be based on the age structure of the workforce. These policies can be continuously harmonised and improved by the use of data-sharing and technology transfer across the ASEAN Member States in public and private sectors. Another strategy that encourages partnership in ASEAN can be seen in Singapore's regional initiatives on tripartite partnership which pushes the coordination among unions, employers, and the government.



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Green Economy

Paving the Way for Green Growth and Sustainable Future

A. Introduction

The Southeast Asian region has emerged as one of the fastest-growing regions globally over the past three decades

This growth, however, has been predicated on a linear economic model that has been largely driven by extractive industries that exhaust the region's natural capital and by emission-intensive practices that accelerate climate change. Roughly 30% of the wealth of Asia Pacific is derived from its natural capital[62]. In some countries in the region, the dependence on natural capital is even greater, with an average of roughly 50% of their national wealth being attributed to these resources[63]. Moreover, ASEAN's heavy reliance on fossil fuel as its energy supply means that the region's massive economic growth that is fueled by its rising energy consumption has a direct link to its increase in emissions.

The economic implications of maintaining business-as-usual, therefore, are potentially catastrophic.



Despite its contribution that brings the region to where it is today, ASEAN's extractive and emission-intensive economic model generates large social costs, posing a considerable challenge to sustainable development and potentially reversing decades of accomplished growth. Without significant action, it is estimated that Southeast Asia's economy could lose as much as USD \$28 trillion over the next 50 years[64]. All of ASEAN's major trading partners have committed to a decarbonized economy by 2050. In addition, a growing number of states have started to experiment with introducing trade limitations to ban imports of products that bear large environmental footprints[65]. Furthermore, there is a growing shift in global investment flow towards sustainable investment amid the push for a green recovery.[66] Following this direction of development, it is essential for Southeast Asia to embrace the transition towards green economy to minimise carbon emissions.

[62] Halimanjaya, A., Pasaribu, K., & Steele, O. (2021, September). Investing in Sustainable Natural Capital in ASEAN: STATUS REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2021. Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI). Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Investing-in-Sustainable-Natural-Capital-in-ASEAN-FINAL.pdf>

[63] Deloitte Economics Institute. (2021, August). Asia Pacific's Turning Point: How Climate Action Can Drive Our Economic Future. Deloitte.

[64] Deloitte Economics Institute. (2021, August). Asia Pacific's Turning Point: How Climate Action Can Drive Our Economic Future. Deloitte.

[65] Ahmad, E. & Ooi, E. (2021, November 12). A Pathway Towards Green Recovery for ASEAN: Recommendation From ASEAN Business Advisory Council, Joint Business Councils & Sector Champions in Greening ASEAN. CARI ASEAN Research and Advocacy. Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://cariasean.org/pdf/A%20Pathway%20Towards%20Green%20Recovery%20for%20ASEAN.pdf>

[66] QIANG, C. Z., SAURAV, A., & VINEY, B. (2021, June 15). Global investors shift focus to sustainability amid push for a green recovery. World Bank Blogs. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://blogs.worldbank.org/psd/global-investors-shift-focus-sustainability-amid-push-green-recovery>

The region's youth represents a vital force in driving this change toward a sustainable economic model.”

With a young population, Southeast Asia has a significant opportunity to leverage the enthusiasm, creativity, and manpower of its youths to lead the way in pushing economic model transformation. Young people can drive policy and practice changes that can lead to more sustainable growth for the region by fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, combined with the support from governments, civil society, and businesses

B. Challenges and Opportunities

I. Challenges

ASEAN's Critical Reliance on Fossil Fuels

At the heart of ASEAN's shortcoming in shifting towards a greener economy, lies the region's critical reliance on fossil fuels as the main barrier”

The region's economic growth and population boom have led to an increase in energy consumption[67]. In 2020, the greatest energy-consuming sector was the industrial and transportation sector, accounting for around 74% of the Total Final Energy Consumption (TEFC); while in the same year, coal, oil, and natural gas claimed over 80% of ASEAN's Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES)[68].

There is an undeniable link between ASEAN's historic economic growth with the fact that its TPES is dominated by fossil fuels. This is the first great barrier that the region should overcome. ASEAN's economy will continue to demand energy for it to operate at the same level, and by 2050, this demand is predicted to have tripled from what it is today[69]. The challenge, therefore, lies in how ASEAN could transition towards a greener economy in a way that could maintain the economic growth and quality of life of its people that it had achieved

The Priority of Extractive Economy in ASEAN

ASEAN's economic growth also owes its existence to the extraction of AMS's natural resources, which represent a key instrument to most of AMS's strategies of development. This industry, however, poses a massive social cost. It leads to deforestation, water pollution, and soil degradation, which can harm wildlife habitats and affect the livelihoods of indigenous people. ASEAN's natural capital is currently facing a critical depletion. Forests in Southeast Asia are shrinking faster than anywhere else in the world, where between 1990-2020, the region lost nearly one-sixth of its forest[70]. There is a growing need for ASEAN to diversify its economy towards greener and more sustainable sectors.



[67] ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE). (2022). The 7th ASEAN Energy Outlook (AEO7). ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE). Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://aseanenergy.org/>.

[68] ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE). (2022). The 7th ASEAN Energy Outlook (AEO7). ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE). Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://aseanenergy.org/>.

[69] ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE). (2022). The 7th ASEAN Energy Outlook (AEO7). ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE). Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://aseanenergy.org/>.

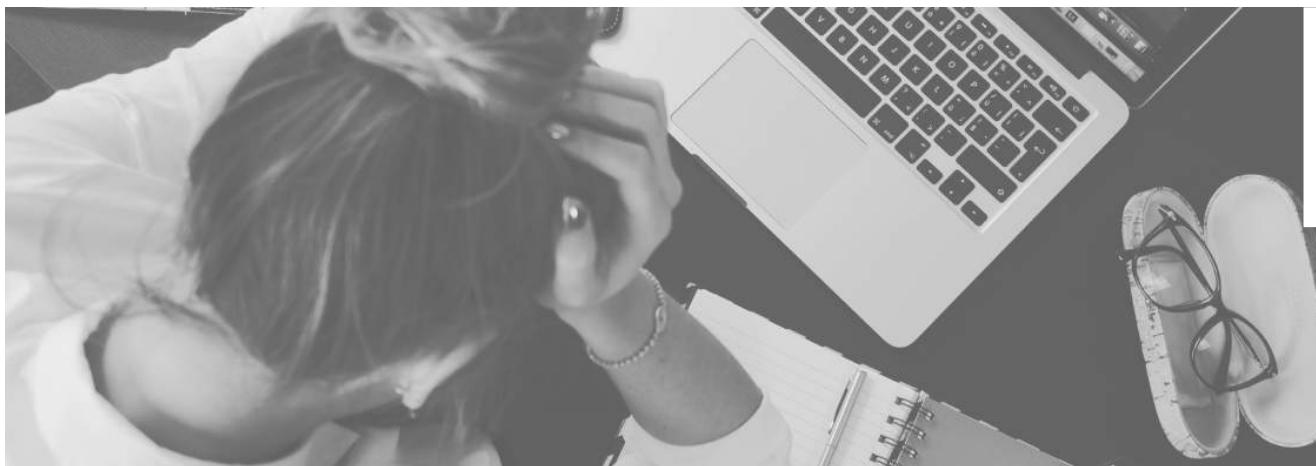
[70] Russel, M. (2020, September). Forests in south-east Asia: Can they be saved?. European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Retrieved March 6, 2023, from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652068/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)652068_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652068/EPRS_BRI(2020)652068_EN.pdf)

Barriers hinder youths' participation

Youth has been at the forefront of innovation to create solutions to issues around them through social enterprises, effectively contributing towards ASEAN efforts towards a circular and green economy, but they are faced with a myriad of challenges related to access. Though many youths are entrepreneurial, most of them still lack the necessary qualifications and often do not have financial access and networks that can support them in building a sustainable enterprise. There is also an interregional discrepancy in the social entrepreneurship prevalence rate that indicates that this economic model is not yet equal and severely underutilised in ASEAN countries[71].

The lack of regulatory support may inhibit the growth of social enterprises that could drive ASEAN's green economy. In many countries with underdeveloped policy support, social enterprises often operate as non-profit organizations (NGOs) or small or medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) due to the lack of legal frameworks. This effectively removes significant incentives for young entrepreneurs, such as government grants, tax breaks, and the ability to receive donations, that are currently present in countries with specific legal frameworks for social enterprise[72].

Though these challenges may be universal for social entrepreneurs, there are substantial barriers that are affecting youth disproportionately. Most young entrepreneurs have to compete for a very competitive financial resources. Though there are a lot of charitable grants, they are often insufficient to meet the needs of all youth-led businesses. Young people are less likely to qualify for a business loan due lack of collateral assets, and investors tend to support well-established businesses as youth enterprise is seen to be a more risky investment. Development strategies such as ASEAN Economic Community's (AEC) Framework for Circular Economy have yet to address the challenges that are specific to youths. Factors related to access that overwhelmingly affects youth entrepreneurs need to be further examined if ASEAN is to harness the underutilised potential of youth social enterprise to transform the region's economic model.



[71] United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2020). The World Youth Report: Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda. United Nations. Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2020.html>

[72] Agapitova, N., Sanchez, B., & Tinley, E. (2017). Government Support to the Social Enterprise Sector: Comparative Review of Policy Framework and Tool. Retrieved March 6, 2023, from https://www.innovationpolicyplatform.org/www.innovationpolicyplatform.org/system/files/SE%20Policy%20Note_Jun20/index.pdf

II. Opportunities

Potential Areas of Green Economy Transition

Transition to the green economy will not only give AMS the opportunity to avoid economic losses but also an opportunity to embrace the potential gain in the future. ASEAN can see a green growth of around USD \$170 billion by 2030 alone[73]. Furthermore, ADB[74] projected that this transition will also add 30.1 million new green jobs in the ASEAN economy by 2030. In this sense, youths in ASEAN will play a critical role in both realising and acquiring these opportunities.

Youths As The Main Actor

Youths already aspire to be the main driver of the future green economy. A survey by Accenture[75] showed that 77% of young people in Asia Pacific aspire to secure a green job within the next ten years. Furthermore, research by McCann WorldGroup found that 89% of youths in Asia Pacific believe that they have the power in forcing brands to change for the better[76]. Hence, it is evident that youths will be one of the key players in the economic transition towards more sustainable growth in the region.



Existing Past Initiatives

ASEAN is in a good position to achieve the green economy transition, but more action is needed. The latest Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community has provided AMS with a common and coherent framework in this transition. Furthermore, it is reported in the Green Jobs Readiness matrix that all AMS have had their green agenda and industrial green policy in place[77]. However, significant policies are still limited and missing in several policy areas, such as social protections, active labour for greening, and enterprise policies and initiatives, among other areas. In this sense, ASEAN youths will play a major role in pushing for more policies and actions related to the green economy transition by the government and businesses in the region.

Additionally, addressing climate change through green economy development can reinforce progress towards Sustainable Development Growth. It has been determined that climate action – one of which through the transition towards the green economy – can reinforce progress towards all 17 SDGs[78]. Furthermore, the most notable synergies between climate resilience and SDG can be observed for SDG #7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG #11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), #12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), #13 (Climate Action), SDG #14 (Life below Water), and SDG#15 (Life on Land). Hence, accelerating the transition towards more sustainable growth will ripple through efforts and achievements in a greater developmental context in ASEAN.

[73] Bain & Temasek. (2022). Southeast Asia's Green Economy 2022 Report: Investing behind new realities. Retrieved March 6, 2023, from: <https://www.bain.com/globalassets/noindex/2022/bain-temasek-sea-green-economy-2022-report-investing-behind-the-new-realities.pdf>

[74] Asian Development Bank (ADB). (2021, March). Implementing a Green Recovery in Southeast Asia. ADB Briefs, 173, pp 1-7.

[75] Accenture. (2021). Youthquake meets green economy. Accenture. Retrieved March 6, 2023, from: <https://www.accenture.com/content/dam/accenture/final/a-com-migration/r3-3/pdf/pdf-167/accenture-youthquake-meets-green-economy.pdf#zoom=40>

[76] Widiastuti, Dini. (2021). Prioritise The Youth For A Greener Economy In ASEAN. Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://theaseanpost.com/article/prioritise-youth-greener-economy-asean>

[77] ASEAN & ILO. (2021). Regional Study on Green Jobs Policy Readiness in ASEAN, Final Report June 2021. Thailand: ASEAN and ILO.

[78] Nerini, F. F., Sovacool, B., Hughes, N., Cozzi, L., Cosgrave, E., Howells, M., Tavoni, M., Tomei, J., Zerriffi, H., & Milligan, B. (2019). Connecting climate action with other Sustainable Development Goals. *Nature Sustainability*, 2, 674–680.

C. WAY FORWARD

As the impact of climate change and demand for a green economy and sustainable growth increases, coordinated and coherent action in economic transition is needed in ASEAN. It requires more than just visions and frameworks, but also coordinated actions for sustainable economic growth. All available policy tools and technologies must be put in place to assess the sustainability of our economic activities. ASEAN youths that account for more than 654 million productive workers can be the key to achieving this common vision of the future.

Increasing youth employment through green jobs will be the key to promoting ASEAN's sustainable growth. ASEAN youths have the potential to not only fill the future 30.1 million of green jobs by 2030 but also create innovative systems that catalyse the economic transition to a green economy. Furthermore, research by Nga & Fung[79] has found that an increase of 1% in youth employment equals 0.24% of economic decline in ASEAN. Hence, the inclusion of youths in the economic transition towards more sustainable growth will need to play a central role among other aspects.

A coherent set of the skill development programme for youths to be able to create and fulfil the demand of green jobs in the future has become more critical than ever. This type of programme will help alleviate youth unemployment through the green economy. This includes more than just ensuring that ASEAN's labour supply is suited to future economic growth, but also reskilling the workforce who are currently in unsustainable sectors and functions.

[79] Nga, Janice L. H. & Fung, Yen Yun. (2021). An Investigation of Economic Growth, Youth Unemployment and Inflation in ASEAN Countries. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(1), 1731-1755.



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INDONESIAN YOUTH DIPLOMACY



Ensuring Equal Health Access and Leaving No One Behind

A. Introduction

ASEAN has a vast array of diverse natures of healthcare industries, also widespread public health problems

Based on SDG #3, one of the most defining universal health coverage is how infrastructures for both physical and mental well-being are placed equally for all ages of the population. SDG #10 on reducing equality also aligns with health as a multidimensional issue. Faced with these conditions, Southeast Asian countries are seeking and strengthening a common One Health[80] approach within their regional identities to provide effective solutions to common health challenges.



Defined as the complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not simply the absence of disease or infirmity[81], health is one of the world's most discussed topics. On the other hand, its solutions are heavily affected by socio-economic status, leading to a wide gap between economic powerhouses, such as Singapore, and less developed countries including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Timor Leste.

Analysing the major demographic and regional shifts of global health challenges has shown measurable progress over the years as seen in the table below. This approach mainly deals with long-term epidemics resulting from withstanding AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other tropical diseases in particular. While the system is still highly benefiting the wealthy, ASEAN society shall attain the highest standards of health, especially for our young people.

[80] a cost-effective, sustainable, and practical approach to find solutions to problems that require a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, especially in resource-constrained countries (Gongal, n.d.).

[81] David, T. (n.d.). Constitution of the World Health Organization. World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>

Life expectancy and HALE[82] data by the World Health Organization

WHO region	Year	Life expectancy at birth (years) ⁱ			Life expectancy at age 60 (years) ⁱ			Healthy life expectancy (HALE) at birth (years) ⁱ			Healthy life expectancy (HALE) at age 60 (years) ⁱ		
		Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
South-East Asia	2019	71.4	69.9	73.1	19.1	18.2	20.0	61.5	61.1	61.9	13.7	13.3	14.1
	2015	70.2	68.7	71.8	18.8	17.9	19.7	60.5	60.1	60.8	13.6	13.2	13.9
	2010	68.1	66.4	70.0	18.2	17.1	19.3	58.7	58.1	59.3	13.1	12.5	13.6
	2000	63.4	62.2	64.6	16.6	15.8	17.4	54.5	54.4	54.7	12.0	11.6	12.3

[83]

In recent years, there have been conferences and international discussions in Asia, Asia-Pacific, and at the global scale on SDG #3. Most are focused on health literacy, enhancing the role of medical students, and improving clinical education. There are overlooked topics that have been discussed in those international conferences, which to embrace the ASEAN community in achieving health equity. The youth population of the region represents the largest cohort, about one-third of the total population of ASEAN.[84] The time when children grow to be adolescents and later into young adults put them in a unique stage of laying stable health foundations, not to mention the number of youths who will later pursue the career of helping others by being medical practitioners. Therefore, youth development should be the main objective in highlighting effective efforts to maximise the health and welfare of ASEAN countries.

[82] The average number of years that a person could expect to live, if subjected to the sex- and age-specific mortality rates prevailing at the time of birth in a given year, in a given country, territory, or geographic area (Identifying Opportunities Within Asean's Universal Healthcare programme, n.d.)

[83] GHO | By category | Life expectancy and Healthy life expectancy - Data by WHO region. (n.d.). World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved January 24, 2023, from <https://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main.SDG2016LEXREGV?lang=en>

[84] ASEAN. (n.d.). Youth. ASEAN.org. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-socio-cultural-community/education-youth/>

B. Challenges and Opportunities

I. Challenges

Regional environment contributes a great deal to disease risks and mortality.

Natural disasters, often affected by climate change, account for up to a quarter of all deaths in health disruption.

Southeast Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. As Indonesia and the Philippines in the Pacific Ring of Fire, the region is said to be the world's most seismic and volcano-prone area. Emerging infectious diseases are also causing notable epidemics, among other tropical diseases, which would later endanger the ASEAN population regarding logistical errands, having to deal with post-traumatic care, and economic loss which is proven to be life-changing for middle-to-low society. For example, death from dengue was recognised in the Philippines and Thailand in the 1950s, but today access to adequate medical care reduces the mortality rate to below 1%^[85]. Another example worthy of mentioning is when Indonesia's forest fires from 1997 to 1998 boast an air pollution index of 800 in Malaysia and Singapore.^[86]

This situation endangers not only the locals but also neighbouring countries. In the 1998 forest fire, not only were more than 200,000 people hospitalised, but life-threatening disasters like this one also caused long-term health effects to more than 70 million of the population across six countries. As the state of nature becomes a significant disruption in trade, the transport of goods, and the mobility of people, not to mention the long-term effect that youths will have to endure for the rest of their lives.

Excessive tobacco use on underaged consumers.



Southeast Asia is home to more than a third of the world's children who use tobacco. Children aged 13 to 15 years

(about 14.8 million in total) use various forms of tobacco^[87], leaving the region with an alarmingly high but severely neglected tobacco dependence. Not to mention the clear health threats, this also puts an additional strain on national economies. Tobacco is recognised as a major cause of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancers, cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease, and diabetes mellitus. This long-standing threat in the region has been compounded by the imminent popularity of electronic cigarettes/ENDS^[88].

[85] Dengue and severe dengue. (2022, January 10). World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved January 24, 2023, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dengue-and-severe-dengue>

[86] Butler, R. A. (n.d.). The Asian Forest Fires of 1997-1998. MONGABAY. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from https://rainforests.mongabay.com/08indo_fires.htm

[87] World Health Organization (WHO). (n.d.). Tobacco Control in the South-East Asia Region. World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/health-topics/tobacco/tobacco-control-in-the-south-east-asia-region>

[88] Vapes, vaporizers, vape pens, hookah pens, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes or e-cigs), e-cigars, and e-pipes are just a few of the many tobacco product terms used to describe electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). These products use an "e-liquid" which typically contains nicotine derived from tobacco along with flavorings, propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, and other ingredients. The liquid is heated to form an aerosol that the user inhales (Tobacco: E-Cigarettes, n.d.).

Policies and control measures are constantly being developed to deal with this particular genocide that is slowly brewing. To name a few, the WHO FCTC, WHO MPOWER Package, WHO GPW13, NCD Action Plan, and the SDGs are at hand. Smokers are caught in an addiction, which by its medical term makes them unable to withdraw from using because nicotine has changed how the brain works. This inability to stop will cause a severe likelihood to further develop into cancers, chronic lung disease, and cardiovascular disease, and therefore has become a major public health challenge and arguably one of the most compelling factors determining the future of our generation. Looking at how the industry has become one of the most influential income for countries like Indonesia and Myanmar, agreements on the healthcare insurance system will also have to be mutually beneficial to these countries' fiscal structures, as it amounts to 1% of these countries' economic income. But at all odds, the two factors are fighting against each other as it will force authorities to choose to save the well-being of the society or to rocket the countries' GDP.



Socio-economic differences lead to significant gaps in health services

Modern medical technology is available, but its costs are more than what the majority of the population can afford.

The demand for a better healthcare system increases with the uphill state of education levels, ageing populations, and awareness of human rights. But of course, this does not eliminate some of the concurrent practices of traditional cultural health practices where they often gamble with the safety of the procedures. The long history of culture and facility availability often makes these alternative procedures and medicine the only choice of help in remote areas.

A shortage and uneven distribution of healthcare professionals, a low per capita ratio of hospital beds, and relatively high healthcare costs are key challenges for individuals[89]

Maldistribution of health professionals seems to be under the radar, but when analysed deeply, around 5 countries have this condition, especially for the rural areas where it's seriously understaffed[90]. The qualification of healthcare professionals also varies by country, suggesting a specialised regional measurement standard for medical education curricula. This difference shall be seen to enable a cogent collaboration between member states to have standardised qualities for healthcare professionals.

[89] Cui, X., Cassidy, D., & Hendrajaya, S. (2017, July 7). Identifying Opportunities Within Asean's Universal Healthcare Programmes. Ipsos. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.ipsos.com/en-id/identifying-opportunities-within-aseans-universal-healthcare-programmes>

[90] Kanchanachitra, C., Lindelow, M., Johnston, T., Hanvoravongchai, P., Lorenzo, F. M., Huong, N. L., Wilopo, S. A., & dela Rosa, J. F. (2011). Human resources for health in southeast Asia: shortages, distributional challenges, and international trade in health services. *Lancet* (London, England), 377(9767), 769–781. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(10\)62035-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(10)62035-1)

II. Opportunities

Beneficial medical tourism collaborations

The COVID-19 pandemic set the industry back two years, however, measures to revive the industries have been done. In many hospitals in ASEAN countries, the cost of care is up to 70% cheaper than in the US. These industries could further profit from ASEAN countries' tourism in the healthcare sector by maximising partnerships with others within member states. For example, Singapore has improved its market by rebranding its industry for clients seeking affordable complex medical treatments. Thailand, home of Bumrungrad International Hospital, maintains its leading position by serving more than 50% of international patients from more than 190 countries[91]. Best practices could be implied in all eleven countries for the benefit of the region, where this exchange can also be supported by the Digital Infrastructure for Universal Healthcare in the ASEAN Framework that is consolidated in 2022[92].

Consolidating efforts on safeguarding equity of health infrastructure in the rural area

Rural areas in ASEAN hold a high percentage where there are 47,28% reside in the territories[93]. It is clear that to realise the common purpose as stated in the ASEAN Declaration, member states should provide assistance to each other in the form of training to reach an equity point in healthcare systems[94]. With most health workers living in cities, proportional relocating and standardised training can build initial comprehensive strategies. Agreeing with the tropical climate of Southeast Asian countries, these rural areas ignite agriculture-related vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, yellow fever, filariasis, etc[95]. Looking at the diversity of tax-based financing, health insurance, and other payments, each government body needs to ensure that health services, manpower, and equipment are accessible.

Mainstreaming mental health in the health infrastructure

With the alarming rates of young people suffering from mental illness, proper professional help is needed now more than ever. Unfortunately, most people of the older generation in native ASEAN culture still regard mental illness as some product of make-believe rather than a serious health problem. The development of mental health in primary care needs to be normalised in society as 10-20% of children and adolescents worldwide face mental illnesses[96]. These conditions will result in serious health problems, associated not only with suicide rates, levels of depression, and anxiety, but also with behavioural problems such as tobacco, alcohol, and drug use. It wouldn't come as a surprise that some ASEAN member states already implied some of these precautions in their daily practice, for example, the online surveys brought up by the Mental Medicine Association in Indonesia, along with digital apps in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand[97]. Measured infrastructure, such as an empowering community, workforce, access to services, and concrete regulation plays an important role in saving lives, one at a time, every day.

[91] Medical Tourism Magazine. (n.d.). Southeast Asia - Rebuilding Medical Tourism amid the Pandemic. Medical Tourism Magazine. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.magazine.medicaltourism.com/article/southeast-asia-rebuilding-medical-tourism-amid-the-pandemic>

[92] Marcelo, MD. A. B. (2022, December 7). Digital Infrastructure for Universal Health Care in ASEAN | The ASEAN. The ASEAN. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://theaseanmagazine.asean.org/article/digital-infrastructure-for-universal-health-care-in-asean/>

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[97] Oi, R. (2021, October 25). ASEAN healthtechs making a difference in mental health. Tech Wire Asia. Retrieved April 21, 2023, from <https://techwireasia.com/2021/10/mental-health-in-asean-healthtechs-making-a-difference/>

C. WAY FORWARD

Addressing socio-economic impacts on health infrastructure

The current system has various loopholes that widen the gap of inequalities, especially directed at the youths.

Previous international forums have covered merely the issues' first page, leaving a significant amount of work yet to be done in order to ensure a better future for youths in the Southeast Asia region. The technicalities of these implementations, along with unanimous agreement on detailed regulations across the eleven ASEAN countries need to be addressed accordingly.

Designing how natural resources could benefit the health of the people

The natural environment has already provided a significant challenge for our population, with vulnerability to natural disasters and access inequality.

The solution shall thus provide strong-willed commitments from every member state to involve the youths in designing a specific framework to tackle these challenges. Nature-based solutions in the health sector shall be looked at by collaborating with the local community to ensure access to traditional medicine that might be helpful for those who are in need. Furthermore, the incorporation of contemporary healthcare in traditional practices is an interesting area to be looked at.

Reinforcing the One Health Framework for a Sustainable ASEAN Collaboration

The dreamed partnership definitely is not a one-size-fits-all solution,

but as adaptability and compromises need to be made for the collectivistic benefit of the Southeast Asian nations, this proves that our diversity is not a barrier, but indeed our strongest apparatus.



ASEAN
INDONESIA 2023
YOUTH AGENDA

Food Security

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Food Security

Enhancing Food Accessibility for Adequate Life

A. Introduction

Everyone has the right to adequate food and well-nourished people equals more productivity[98]”

ASEAN has the 5th largest global economy and its 11 member states hold the third-largest population in the world[99], making this number both an opportunity and a vulnerability in the context of food security. Food security is a vital issue for humanity where food has become a daily necessity. The 1996 World Food Summit emphasises the issue as a situation where all people at all times have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life[100]. Access becomes an essential variable in this topic where people all across the globe acknowledge food as their primary need. ASEAN becomes relevant in this issue as this region is prone to food insecurity due to the socio-economic condition, which history has shown in the 2008 economic crisis that causes increasing food prices. Moving forward this issue becomes more relevant with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and current diplomatic tension between Ukraine and Russia that disrupts the supply chain and hinders economic activities, pushing 18.8% population into severe food insecurity[101].

Existing measures have been done where ASEAN provides agreements and a framework to mitigate factors that could lead to food insecurity”

ASEAN Integrated Food Security Network (AIFS) has become the foundation of member states where the 5 main principles of (1) Result-oriented programme actualization, (2) Strategic multilevel coordination, (3) Root problem eradication, (4) Multilateral stakeholder improvement, and (5) Commitment to allocate resources are held high and firm to ensure the sustainability of livelihood and stability in the region. ASEAN has become an active party to engage with various multilateral institutions and enact high-level meetings so as to ensure the efficiency of the ongoing programme towards the livelihood of the community. The national approach amongst member states has also been done where various capacity-building and financial approaches are enacted to ensure food security in various aspects.



[98] D'Aloisio, J., & Park, C. (2022, April). ASEAN Food and Nutrition Security Report 2021 Volume 1. ASEAN. Retrieved January 27, 2023, from https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Digital_ASEAN_FNSR_Volume-1_21-4-2022_FINAL.pdf

[99] ASEAN Secretariat. (2021, December). ASEAN Key Figures 2021. 3. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ASEAN-KEY-FIGURES-2021-FINAL-1.pdf

[100] ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security (SPA-FS) 2021-2025. (2020, November 17). ASEAN. Retrieved January 27, 2023, from <https://asean.org/asean-integrated-food-security-aifs-framework-and-strategic-plan-of-action-on-food-security-spa-fs-2021-2025-2/>

[101] Chiengkul, P. (2022, August 11). Hunger, Malnutrition and Climate Change: Challenges Facing Southeast Asia | FULCRUM. Fulcrum.sg. Retrieved February 7, 2023, from <https://fulcrum.sg/hunger-malnutrition-and-climate-change-challenges-facing-southeast-asia/>

In addition to access, nutrition is also an integral aspect of food security where the 2017 ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Food Security and Nutrition”

(FSN) policy endorses the importance of sufficient consumption and nutrition as well as an instrument to face malnutrition[102]. There are 122.6 million people without consistent access to food, which in turn creates another problem where 52 million people acquired a disease due to the unsafe and unhealthy food consumption in ASEAN. Also, in addition to that the member states within the Asia region have also contributed to the 52% world hunger population. Those numbers could be a wake-up call where despite the economic growth, there is 18.6% population that is left out[103].

Food security is a multidimensional issue with layered problems.”

Social and economic factors are key factors among many to ensure accessibility and affordability of safe and healthy food so as to achieve food security. There is a high alerting gap of people in ASEAN who could not afford adequate safe and healthy food. This condition will hinder the ASEAN community to achieve SDG #1 (No Poverty), SDG #2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG #3 (Good Health and Well-Being). Firstly, lies the inequality between the rich and the poor where infants and children consume unsafe food and causing stunting problems. Second, high urbanisation causes disruption for rural area development as the productive-aged groups prefer to work in the urban areas for better living conditions, leaving the community behind. Also, the current political and climate crisis affects livelihood where economic shocks widen the gap to achieve food security.



B. Challenges and Opportunities

I. Challenges

Affordability over Quality

Price tags have influenced consumers on their choices when doing purchases. This has created a tendency for consumers to choose unhealthy food options due to their lower prices over healthy and organic foods that cost more. This consumption behaviour has impacted the household's diet where processed food becomes the main option despite its related health implications. There was a study that highlighted unhealthy diet as the main variable causing the worldwide health problem where this cost 11 million deaths and vulnerability for 39% of the world's adult population[104]. However, this behaviour does not merely happen due to preference however due to the socio-economy and demographic factors that sway household preference towards cheaper foods. Hence, this challenge reflects the condition where disadvantaged social groups, such as low-income families do not have any option to choose healthy food. The policy is also becoming a crucial factor that influences food affordability in a region. The COVID-19 quarantine policies that limit global trade, on export-import activity, further disrupt the logistics and cause a higher price on port transport that eventually increase food prices in the market.

[102] ASEAN Secretariat. (2017, October). ASEAN REGIONAL GUIDELINES ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICY. 4-8.

efaidnbmnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ASEAN-Regional-Guidelines-on-Food-Security-and-Nutrition-Policy.pdf

[103] D'Aloisio, J., & Park, C. (2022, April). ASEAN Food and Nutrition Security Report 2021 Volume 1. ASEAN. Retrieved January 27, 2023, from https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Digital_ASEAN_FNSR_Volume-1_21-4-2022_FINAL.pdf

[104] Placzek, O. (2021, October 2). Socio-economic and demographic aspects of food security and nutrition. OECD Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Papers, (150).

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Political Instability Accelerates Food Insecurity

Conflict, bad governance, and corruption cause a negative impact on the Dietary Energy Supply (DES) where the global supply chain is disrupted and limits food accessibility and availability.[105] Indeed this challenge is not an independent variable where famine or food unavailability could be caused due to climate change. However international policies, such as embargoes and sanctions as well as instability could also lead to food shortages. Examples such as North Korea's "great famine" due to their ideology, as well as Indonesia's food shortage in 1998 where 1.5 million people suffered from acute malnutrition[106]. Furthermore, the ongoing crisis between Russia and Ukraine has brought the interlinking connection between the regional instability that disrupted the global food supply chain, risking 75% of the ASEAN food trade activity and causing food unavailability, such as shortage of food staples in the ASEAN region[107].



Climate Change Increases Vulnerability

The Southeast Asia region with a current population of 675 million people has a high index of climate change vulnerability due to the existing loss from climate-related disasters, extreme poverty, and high density of migration as well as deforestation[108]. Impacts of climate change cause the disruption of crop production and distribution, where seawater intrusion in the Mekong Delta destroyed 100 kilometres of paddy fields[109], extreme drought has caused disruption of the flow of the Mekong River hence threatening 10 million people and decreasing fish population[110]. This preexisting condition created loss and damage to the agriculture and fishery sector as well as the infrastructure and livelihood. Availability of arable land and farmer productivity are also influenced due to climate change, causing crop losses and furthermore hindering the availability of food staples[111].



Urbanisation Widen Inequality

Poverty in rural areas has caused economic distress for young people. Youth's mobility to urban areas for job-seeking and well-being purposes has become a trend, and thus with the ongoing urbanisation, rural areas lose the productive workforce needed to accelerate their economy[112]. This has caused a dilemma where agriculture and rural development demand a productive workforce however it is the urban area that has provided a faster track in providing economic opportunity and stability. Food security consists of various factors and human resources in agriculture sectors to support the market needs are vital.

Youth's mobility to urban areas for job-seeking and well-being purposes has become a trend. Thus with the ongoing urbanisation, a productive workforce is continuously drained out of rural areas[113]. This has caused an ironic dilemma where agriculture and rural development requires a productive and competent workforce however it is the urban area that has successfully provided a faster track in providing economic opportunity and stability.

Food security consists of various factors and human resources in the agriculture sector are vital in order to support the market needs.

The current economic trend in ASEAN from agricultural-based towards industry-based is increasing the inequality between rural and urban areas[114] as well as causing socio-economic issues which lead to high unemployment, such as 72.5% in Indonesia (2009), 70.1% in the Philippines (2008), and 62.8% in Vietnam (2009).

II. Opportunities

Government action to enhance nations' resiliency in achieving food security. Previous initiatives that have been taken show ASEAN's commitment to mitigate risks, such as climate change impact and poverty through the 2017 ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Food Security and Nutrition Policy where policy coherency in ensuring the national capability to achieve food security is affirmed. This initiative is done by engaging with various education institutions through school lunch projects in expanding the raising awareness campaigns of nutrition security, facilitating crop diversification in agriculture sectors, improving facilities in food storage and distribution, also empowering the vulnerable community to increase their well-being in society and economic aspect[115]. The multilateral forum World Food Security's Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems has also shown support by enabling community and enhancing transparency for the improvement of the agricultural sector.

Partnership and collaboration amongst nations and international institutions to strengthen resiliency and food sufficiency amidst unprecedented situations. COVID-19 has become an awakening moment for the international community to act together and leave no one behind. ASEAN has been an active party to boost regional connectivity in the supply chain as a mitigative approach towards the economic risk of the pandemic. The 26th ASEAN Economy Minister Meeting mentioned the agenda of economic resilience, followed by a collaboration with the European Union in facilitating trade activity amidst disruptions and the USA on public health cooperation in providing vaccines, medicines, and medical facilities[116].

Small and local farmers are the key stakeholders in accelerating ASEAN's journey to achieve food security. UNDP has recognised grassroots practices and family-based farming in ensuring small-scale food sufficiency amidst the Russia-Ukraine conflict[117]. ASEAN is rich in natural resources with a productive agriculture sector with 129 million tons of rice, 40 million tons of corn, and 171 million tons of sugarcane, and a growing economy with the export of some 18 million tons of food. ASEAN has provided Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry as an initiative from the governments to ensure the sustainability of farmers' well-being. The ASEAN has extended its hand to help farmers through various working groups on crops (AWGS) that ensure land and crop productivity and also working groups on livestock (AWGL) to promote good practices in nurturing the livestock and maintaining good quality poultry and meat.[118]

[105] Ukwuru, M., & Hsiung, M. -. (2020, October 16). The Impact of Political Risk and Institutions on Food Security. *Current Research in Nutrition and Food Science Journal*. Retrieved January 29, 2023, from <http://www.foodandnutritionjournal.org/volume8number3/the-impact-of-political-risk-and-institutions-on-food-security/>

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C. WAY FORWARD

Sustainable and Healthy Consumption for Everyone

Coherency between bottom-up and top-down approaches is essential to accelerate the behavioural transition

Economic policies, such as taxation on processed food and incentives for healthy products might help in accelerating the change. Various steps to enact social safeguards for those in rural, inaccessible areas, as well as those that are prone to hunger, must be assisted through capacity building, socialization, and infrastructure development.

Incorporation of Technology in the Agricultural Sector to Boost Farmers' Productivity

Climatic and social factors that lead to damaged land is a pertinent issue that limits food production, therefore, modern solution to integrate technology in agriculture practice is mandatory

Improving facilities through (1) a digital marketplace for local farmers to connect them directly with the customer could increase efficiency in logistics and provide fresh food for consumption, (2) transition to modern farming, (3) climate change adaptation advocacy on farming where farmers must be prepared to face drought, high precipitation, and other climate-related risks to prevent failure on the crop production and profit loss.

Enabling Youth as the Vital Stakeholder of Food Security

Youth holds a big number as there are now 213 million youths (age 15–34 years) population in ASEAN, making them to be the future majority[119].

It is imperative to involve youths in national projects in achieving food security. Rural development through increasing connectivity in the area must be enhanced in order to boost economic growth and to expand education for youth capabilities in empowering their community. Government must also provide grants and financial incentives for youths to participate in the agricultural sector at local and national levels.

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