

# ASEAN Development Outlook

Inclusive and Sustainable Development



one vision  
one identity  
one community

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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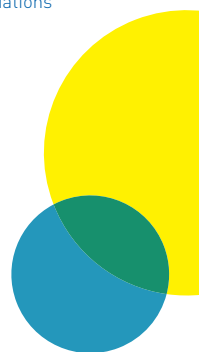
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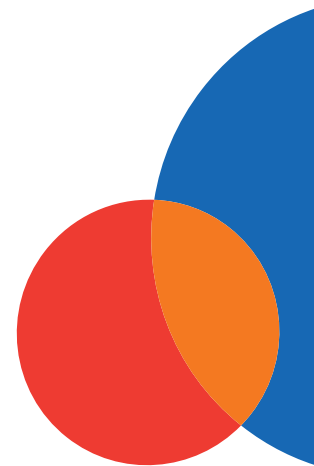
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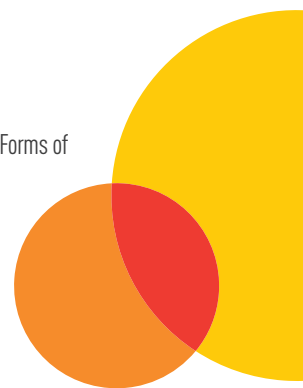
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## ABBREVIATIONS

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution	ADI NeT	ASEAN Disaster Information Network
AADMER	ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response	ADO	ASEAN Development Outlook
AATHP	ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution	AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
ACAI	ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation	AFCC	ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework on Climate Change
ACDM	ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management	AFML	ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour
ACHDA	Digital Cultural Heritage ASEAN Archive	AHA	ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management
ACMP	ASEAN Communication Masterplan II	AHRD	ASEAN Human Rights Declaration
ACMW	ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers	AHP	ASEAN Heritage Parks
ACWC	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children	AICHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
ACYLS	ASEAN-China Young Leaders Scholarship	AIDB	Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind
ADB	Asian Development Bank	ALM	ASEAN Labour Ministers
		ALMM	ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting

AMCA	ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts	CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
AMMDM	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management	CEO	Chief Executive Officer
AMME	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment	CEM	Commission on Ecosystem Management
AMP	ASEAN Master Plans	CF	Carbon Footprint
AMS	ASEAN Member States	CFW	Contributing Family Workers
ANGIN	Angel Investment Network	CGC	Credit Guarantee Corporation
AOSHNET	ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network	CIC	Community Interest Company
APAEC	ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation	CICs	Camp in Charges
APSC	ASEAN Political Security Community	CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
AQAF	ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework	CoastalDEM	Coastal Digital Elevation Model
AR	Assessment Report	CoP	Culture of Prevention
ARES	ASEAN Rabies Elimination Strategy	COP	Conference of Parties
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council	COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community	CP	Cleaner Production
ASCN	ASEAN Smart Cities Network	CRC	Convention on Rights of the Child
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	CRISEA	Competing Regional Integrations in Southeast Asia
ASEAN+3	ASEAN plus China, Japan and South Korea	CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations)
ASEAN-IPR	ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation	CRWP	College-Ready Writers Program
ASETUC	ASEAN Services Trade Union Council	CSA	Civil Society Alliances
ASUS	ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Strategy	CSOs	civil society organisations
ASOEN	ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment	CSR	corporate social responsibility
ASTA	ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award	DDA	Double Duty Actions
ATF	ASEAN Tourism Forum	DepEd	Department of Education
ATSP	ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan	DM	Digital Malaysia
ATUC	ASEAN Trade Union Council	DOLE	Department of Labour and Employment
AUN	ASEAN University Network	DPOs	Disabled People's Organisations
AVEI	Auroville Earth Institute	DSM	Dutch State Mines
AWE	ASEAN Work Plan on Education	DW	Decent Work
AWEN	ASEAN Women's Entrepreneurship Network	EBL	Enterprise Based Learning
AWGCC	ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change	ECE	Early Childhood Education
AWGCV	ASEAN Working Group on Chemicals and Wastes	EECP	Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Production
AWGESC	ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities	EECP	Viet Nam Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Production
AWGNCB	ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity	EF	Ecological Footprint
AWGWRM	ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management	EEF	Education Endowment Foundation
BaU	Business as Usual	EFA	Education for All
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	ELF	Enhancing Livelihoods Fund
BCG	Bacillus Calmette-Guérin	EM-DAT	Emergency Events Database
BIC	Business Information Centre	ENA	Essential Nutrition Actions
BMI	Body Mass Index	ERIA	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
CA	Capability Approach	ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
CBDRM	Community-based Disaster Risk Management	EU	European Union
C-BED	Community-Based Enterprise Development	FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
CBL	Class Based Learning	FIPS	Farm Input Promotions
CBOs	community-based organisations	FISSS	Federation for Industry Sector Skills & Standards
CBT	Community-Based Training	FLW	Food Loss and Waste
CCBP	Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines	GAPKI	Indonesian Association of Palm Oil Producers
CDR	Carbon Dioxide Removal	GCTF	Green Credit Trust Fund



GCPSE	Global Centre for Public Service Excellence	LMIS	Labour Market Information Systems
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
GEM	Global Education Monitoring	MCEB	Ministry of Climate, Energy and Buildings (Denmark)
GHG	Green House Gas	MCW	Magna Carta for Women
GIC	Global Intelligence Corps	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
GIZ	German development agency (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)	MNCs	multi-national companies
GTO	Group Training Organisations	MNP	Multiple Micronutrient Powders
GWP	Great Women's Project	MOE	Ministry of Education
H1N1	influenza A virus subtype H1N1	MONE	Ministry of National Education
H5N1	influenza A virus subtype H5N1	MONRE	Ministries of Natural Resources and Environment
H7N9	Influenza A virus subtype H7N9	MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
HEI	Higher Education Institution	MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	MOWCD	Malaysia Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
IBL	institutions-based learning	MPAC	Master Plan on Connectivity
IBP	Indonesian Broadband Plan	MPAC	Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025
ICF	Integrated Capabilities Framework	MPI	Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index
ICL	International Conference for Labour Statisticians	MPWDS	Master Plan on Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ICN2	The Second International Conference on Nutrition	MRA	Mutual Recognition Arrangements
ICS	Improved Cook Stoves	MSME	Medium, Small and Micro-enterprise
ICT	Information and communications technology	NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
IDP	Internally displaced persons	NCDDP	National Community-Driven Development Project
IE	Inclusive Education	NDC	Nationally Declared Contributions
IEP	Individualised Education Programmes	NDP	National Development Plans
IFC	International Finance Corporation	NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	NGOs	non-governmental organisations
IGES	Institute of Global Environmental Strategies	NIE	National Institute of Education
IHR	International Health Regulations	NNS-NPAN	National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action
ILO	International Labour Organization	NPA	National Protected Area
IL	Independent Living	NPAN	National Plan of Action for Nutrition
ILM	Independent Living Movement	NTFP	non-timber forest product
IMF	International Monetary Fund	NTS	Non-Traditional Security
INDCs	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions	OAP	Old Age Pension Fund
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	OOSC	Out of School Children
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence	OSCC	One-Stop-Crisis Centre (Thailand)
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency	OOSCY	Out of School Children & Youth
IT	Information technology	OSHNET	Occupational Safety and Health Network
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature	OTOP	One Tambon One Product
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management	OVOP	One Village One Product
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding	PAs	Protected Areas
JAIF	Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund	PACE	Personal Advancement & Career Enhancement
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators	PERPADUAN	Rural development and the Department of Integration and Unity
KRAs	Key Result Areas	PEW	PEW (Joseph N Pew) Research Centre
LBC	Left Behind Children	PGST	Psycholinguistic Grain Size theory
LED	Light Emitting Diode	PIK	Postdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
LMCs	Lower Mekong Delta Countries	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
LMICs	Low- and middle-income countries		

PPCs	Provincial People's Committees	TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
PPPs	public-private partnerships	TVET	Technical Vocational Education Training
PROMPT	Public Health Emergency Preparedness Capacity	UCS	Universal coverage system
PT. MMA	PT. Mustika Minanusa Aurora (Indonesia)	UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities	UHC	Universal health coverage
R2P	Responsibility to Protect	UN	United Nations
R4B	Ready for Business	UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
RCT	Randomised Control Trial	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
RCP	Representative Concentration Pathway	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
RECOTVET	Regional Cooperation on TVET	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
RRRC	Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner	UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome	UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network	UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SE	Social Enterprises	UNU	United Nations University
SEA	Southeast Asia	USA	United States of America
SEAMEO	Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organisation	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
SEA-PLM	Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics	VCEP	Viet Nam Clean Energy Program
SECA	Socially Embedded Capability Approach	VE	Vocational Education
SEN	Special Needs	VNEPP	Viet Nam National Energy Efficiency Program
SF	Strengthen and Facilitate	VWEC	Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs Council
SHS	Solar Home Systems	WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business	WBA	Women's Business Association
SLOM-WG	Senior Labour Officials Meeting's Working Group (ASEAN)	WB	World Bank
SMART	specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (goals)	WBL	Work based learning
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises	WEDGE	Women's Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality
SMKs	Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (Vocational High School)	WEF	World Economic Forum
SMU	Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement, South Korea)	WENR	World Education News and Reviews
SOF	Social Outcome Fund	WHA	World Health Assembly
SOMCA	Senior Officials for Culture and Arts (ASEAN)	WHO	World Health Organization
SOMRDPE	Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication	WOPs	Water operators' partnerships
SOMY	Senior Officials Meeting on Youth	WWF	World Wildlife Fund
SRPP	School Readiness Promotion Project	YDI	Youth Development Index
SRTM	Shuttle Radar Topography Mission	YEAC	Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths		
SUMMA	Education Research and Innovation Laboratory for Latin America and the Caribbean		
SUSENAS	National Socio-Economic Household Survey		
SUVI	Sustainable University Village Initiative		
TB	Tuberculosis		
TCF	Teacher Competency Framework		
TCF	The Community Farm		
TEFA	Teaching Factory		
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority		

# FOREWORD

ASEAN is committed to improving the quality of life in the region through activities that are people-oriented and people-centred, with the aim of providing opportunities to collectively deliver and fully realise the capacity for human development. In line with this goal, the publication of the ASEAN Development Outlook (ADO) is a milestone initiative that comes at a crucial moment. This flagship report offers a candid, comprehensive and analytical overview of our progress in achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

The inaugural ADO is structured across four key thematic areas: Identity; Natural and Built Environment; Livelihoods, and; Social Welfare and Health. These themes underscore both the inter-connected nature of ASEAN's development agenda, as well as highlight the need for a holistic approach to ensure tangible impacts for people at all levels, particularly for poor and vulnerable groups. This approach is pivotal in enhancing our understanding of the essence of development, which is our ability to expand people's choices and opportunities to live a decent life with freedom, dignity and access to support.


This report is designed to identify key challenges and lessons learned, as well as offer policy options and innovative solutions to inform future decision making.

Furthermore, the foresight analysis of the ADO is envisioned to guide ASEAN's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, enhance our preparedness for future shocks and crises, as well as build resilience amidst unprecedented changes brought by climate change, demographic shift, migration and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Notably, the new and nuanced perspectives offered in the report is also expected to help us foster greater ASEAN policy ownership.

I congratulate the Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) for their continued leadership in advancing sustainable development agenda in our region. I also express my appreciation to the People's Republic of China, through the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund (ACCF) for their support in this endeavour.

I hope that the recommendations presented in this publication will complement our policies and programmes for effective recovery. I also hope that the ADO will prepare ASEAN to address and overcome emerging and future challenges in order to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of our people, thereby contribute to our efforts to successfully realise a resilient, sustainable, and dynamic community that leaves no one behind.

**DATO LIM JOCK HOI**  
Secretary-General of ASEAN



# FOREWORD

Let me express my warmest congratulations to the release of the ASEAN Development Outlook, the inaugural flagship report for the ASEAN Social-Cultural Community. We are proud to support this project through the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund (ACCF).

As close neighbors and indispensable partners for common prosperity, China and ASEAN have built strong ties of unity, friendship and cooperation. China is the first among ASEAN's dialogue partners to join the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) and support ASEAN's centrality in regional cooperation architecture. It is also the first to establish strategic partnership and the first to launch free trade agreement talks with ASEAN. China-ASEAN relationship has withstood the test of the times and triumphed over numerous challenges, ranging from the Indian Ocean tsunami to Wenchuan earthquake, from the 1997 Asian financial crisis to the global financial crisis of 2008, from the SARS outbreak in 2003 to the COVID-19 pandemic still raging across the world.

Sustainable development sits among the top of our cooperation. Having lifted more than 800 million people out of absolute poverty at home, China is working keenly with ASEAN at both bilateral and multilateral levels in reducing poverty, enhancing people's wellbeing and narrowing regional development gaps through experience sharing, capacity building and technical assistance. Cooperation programs include the China-ASEAN Forum on Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted for 14 consecutive years, the village-based poverty alleviation pioneering projects in Cambodia, Myanmar and the Laos, IAI capacity building projects tailored to the needs of CLMV

countries as well as projects in areas of health, agriculture, environment, disaster management connectivity, digital economy, etc. At the sub-regional level, China is actively engaging ASEAN Member States under frameworks such as the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) and the BIMP-EAGA-China cooperation mechanism. The annual China-ASEAN-UNDP symposium on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development launched in 2016 has set up a useful platform to brainstorm, share experience and discuss ways in realizing the SDG agenda.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe disruptions to the attainment of UN sustainable development goals. The silver lining is that, among others, the economic dynamism of our region is still strong, with a stable political environment and robust multilateral cooperation framework with ASEAN at the center. We welcome the adoption of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework at the 37th ASEAN Summit and will continue to work closely with ASEAN for a comprehensive and sustainable post-pandemic recovery.

Year 2021 marks the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of China-ASEAN dialogue relations, which is also the China-ASEAN Year of Sustainable Development Cooperation. Domestically China will kick off the implementation of the 14th Five-Year Plan and work towards the second Centennial Goal. ASEAN will continue to forge ahead in line with the ASEAN Community Blueprints 2025 and start charting out its post-2025 vision. There are immense prospects for us to take China-ASEAN relations to new heights and build a closer community with a shared future. Let's join hands to bring that vision into reality!

**Deng Xijun**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of  
the People's Republic of China to ASEAN

# PREFACE

The inaugural publication of the ASEAN Development (ADO) Outlook marks a milestone in ASEAN. The report looks back and reflects upon ASEAN's experiences in driving development in the region and at the same time looks towards ASEAN's horizon in realising an inclusive and sustainable ASEAN Community. Its strength lies in providing the readers with critical analysis of ASEAN's strategic role as a regional grouping in advancing inclusive and sustainable development, ASEAN narratives of successes and challenges, and forecasts of the future that lies ahead.

The 2020 edition of the ADO focusses on inclusive and sustainable development in ASEAN across four key thematic areas namely: i) Identity, ii) Natural and Built Environment, iii) Livelihoods, and iv) Social Welfare and Health. These areas are further unpacked by exploring cross-cutting dimensions such as gender equality, poverty and inequality, and social inclusion and intersectionalities ; and four major drivers of change namely demographics, migration, climate change, and the 4th industrial revolution.

The evolving landscape of regional development cooperation has given rise to more constraints as well as opportunities, and global developments continue to inform ASEAN's development

agenda including the massive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ADO is a pivotal leap in enriching the discourse on inclusive and sustainable development as it reaches out to decision-makers in ASEAN Member States and other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies and entities, and other stakeholders in developing strategic policies and programmes.

The ADO has been developed at the most opportune time: with ASEAN being at the half-way mark of implementing the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entering the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs. The report provides the necessary signposts to navigate and steer regional cooperation, and chart a vision of the ASEAN Community in coming years.

The development of the ADO benefited from the robust sharing of information and insights of the ASEAN Member States, ASEAN sectoral bodies, and ASEAN's partners, as jointly led and facilitated by the University of Cambridge and the ASEAN Secretariat under the overall guidance of the ASEAN of Social Cultural Community (ASCC).

The inaugural ADO is made possible with the support from the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund (ACCF).

**Kung Phoak**

Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN  
for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS<sup>1</sup>

The ASEAN Development Outlook was prepared by a research team based at the University of Cambridge, led by Dr. Shailaja Fennell, and drawing together specially commissioned papers by over fifty international scholars.

Valuable contribution and inputs were obtained from ASEAN sectoral bodies under ASCC Pillar who shared views, guidance and information through several group discussions, questionnaire and written inputs.

Valuable inputs were also obtained from relevant UN Agencies through online discussion. Several divisions of the ASEAN Secretariat were actively involved in sharing materials and suggestion for the research team.

This Report was made possible through the support of the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund (ACCF). China has been among the important partners of ASEAN especially on the areas of sustainable development.



Disclaimer: The findings, analysis, and recommendations of this Report do not represent the official position or views of the ASEAN, ASEAN Member States or any other institution.

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<sup>1</sup> The full list of the Cambridge team, and the group of international scholars is provided as an appendix'

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ASEAN Development Outlook (ADO) is the first report of its kind. In the inaugural report, an effort is made to chart progress towards inclusive and sustainable development in the ASEAN region, and to identify key challenges together with examples of best practices and candid analysis on lessons learned for future policy planning and programming.

To this end, the Capability Approach<sup>1</sup> is employed as an analytical framework, complemented by the Foresight Approach<sup>2</sup> to sharpen policy insights. Three broad research objectives guide the report: (1) assess development goals and outcomes of ASEAN against foreseen future challenges in order to identify gaps or shortfalls; (2) evaluate progress and highlight best practices and ways to accelerate such gains across the region; and (3) make policy recommendations to advance progress against existing goals and propose new ones where applicable. Given the broad scope and the complexity of some of the issues discussed, the ADO seeks to highlight a forward-looking approach to interacting challenges, new perspectives and questions, as well as contextually pertinent solutions.

## The ADO is structured across four inter-related themes:

**Theme 1 - Identity:** The ADO places identity at its heart in order to evaluate how social values and cultures may shape and be shaped by development policy choices. Theme 1 examines how socially constructed identities of gender, disability and other forms of identities generate social norms that cause exclusion of groups and the implications for inclusion, connectivity and the realisation of ASEAN identity.

**Theme 2 – Natural and Built Environment:** Theme 2 provides the canvas on which current choices define future development pathways. It highlights the importance of shared responsibility for climate change adaptation, mitigation,

disaster preparedness and management as well as analysis on energy and infrastructure. To address these issues, a forward-thinking, preventative and holistic suite of policy measures, as well as behavioural change are required for the benefits of current and future ASEAN generations.

**Theme 3 – Livelihoods:** Themes 1 and 2 serve as a lens through which social and natural boundaries frame livelihood opportunities which form the central part of Theme 3. In ASEAN, an ageing workforce over the next 20 years will have an impact on dependency ratios, and change gender and generational relations and identities. Ongoing technological changes will require life-long learning for all social cohorts. The ADO, in Theme 3, examines how current ASEAN plans address social and economic barriers to livelihood transitions in view of current and future demographic shifts. It also discusses effective prevention and protection of less able-bodied workers and migrants, or those in informal, unskilled or unpaid activities.

**Theme 4 – Social Welfare and Health:** Theme 4 is a continuation of Theme 3, as the issues of livelihoods and protection at work overlap with social protection, physical and mental health, access to public services and time use. The ADO examines the way people in ASEAN live, and the ramifications on our health, as well as the implications of the social conditions of our lives on the vulnerabilities to diseases. The availability of quality public services is construed as a means to alleviate poverty and enhance inclusion and well-being.

The ADO also identifies four major Drivers of Change which are demographics; migration; climate change; and the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. The four 'drivers' demonstrate potentials for far-reaching effects upon current and future ASEAN. The four Drivers of Change are employed to capture a wide range of scenarios in order to recommend a risk-based approach and robust policy preparation.

<sup>1</sup> Capability approach places people at the centre of development. It focuses on individual and social well-being defined in terms of capabilities and their interaction with the material basis of well-being and social structures and institutions. It follows that development is about the expansion of capabilities rather than the growth of material things. A chief advantage of the capability approach is that it recognises and embraces human heterogeneity and diversity (Clark, 2005, 2017; Sen, 1997; United Nations, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> A Foresight approach is long-range, drawing on expertise, evidence and scenario building, with the intention of planning, and optimising risk and opportunity management. Foresight considers future scenarios to explore possible changes and outcomes – taking account of attractive and unattractive possibilities even-handedly. In each scenario a Foresight study identifies the major challenges and drivers of change that will frame outcomes. 'See for example the description of a Foresight study of sustainable energy: An independent look, evidence based futures, and coevolution across political, economic and technological dimensions are fundamental.' The source for all that can be added. It is in Zotero. Page 9, Foresight Sustainable Energy Management and the Built Environment Project - Government Office for Science 2008.

**The key findings for each theme are set out below:**

## Theme 1: Identity

1. The plurality of identities that exist in the region can serve as the building blocks for a regional vision and leadership that embrace and thrive with the multiple identities of its peoples. A participatory approach is needed to harness the multiplicity of views on an ASEAN identity. This could help drive social change and manage social relations to achieve public policy goals.
2. The use of a Foresight approach, and evidence, is encouraged to obtain a better understanding of individual identities and how they evolve. Using data and evidence to comprehend people's conceptions of themselves and their communities can help policymakers make more inclusive and responsive policies.
3. The social exclusion experienced by individuals on account of being regarded as 'different', or of 'lesser value', as exemplified by the cases of persons with disabilities, women and other groups due to social norms, must be urgently addressed and tackled. Excluding individuals due to personal attributes, or due to ascription to a minority culture, is antithetical to the ASEAN Community Vision.
4. A social-justice based lens must become a central feature of ASEAN identity building, with a focus on dealing with distributional equity so as to overturn the lower access to resources, and poorer education and limited health outcomes, for marginalised individuals and groups.
5. Promoting an ASEAN identity is built on a combination of universal values that are adaptive and flexible. This identity needs to be rooted in the region's rich heritage and culture, where diversity and heterogeneity are regarded as having intrinsic value, instead of being based on homogenising perspective. Cultural heritage must be preserved, through the contribution by all cultural stakeholders through participatory processes, to ensure that it is a testament of a common humanity and a testament of diversity.
6. Focusing solely on technology for data collection leads to an over-representation of people in certain locations (mainly urban) and age cohorts (predominantly young people). There is a need to use a range of methods to ensure a representation of all ages. Harnessing new forms of technological communication platforms to foster communication between people, especially minority groups, is a means of deepening public engagement and forging ASEAN identity. A process

of consultation on the economic, social and cultural needs of communities in rural, urban and peri-urban locations is necessary to obtain more comprehensive, people-centric perspectives on the impact of public communication on ASEAN level policy-making.

## Theme 2: Natural and Built Environment

1. Responses to climate change must be carefully considered, but not delayed. Clear prioritisation of climate issues (both mitigation and adaptation) in economic decisions, and in planning and development across the region is critical. Pursuing these objectives together can add value and benefits for the ASEAN Member States. All aspects of life and stability are affected by the changes: food supply will be less stable; cities will particularly struggle with more floods; and droughts which will severely affect rural livelihoods.
2. The disaster risk profile of ASEAN is changing. Slow onset disasters are imposing the highest developmental costs, while sudden onset disasters are increasing in frequency and magnitude. Disaster costs are growing at a rate faster than disaster management capacities, impeding development outcomes especially among the communities most vulnerable to disaster. Leveraging climate change investments strategically, by using Green Funding to create sustained development strategies for strengthening resilience, can reduce disaster vulnerabilities through increasing adaptive capacities. This will create a holistic sustainable development approach that is aligned with AADMER's current work plan.
3. Developing ASEAN disaster management capacities will improve efficacy of disaster management and sustainability of ASEAN development. Difficult changes in the natural environment such as sea-level rise, increased frequency of extreme weather and sinking of coastal areas are in the pipeline, and will play out over the next fifty years. Any development planning that ignores these threats will yield sub-optimal results.
4. The built environment and climate change interplay and affect the triple bottom line<sup>3</sup>. Planned urban expansion can yield benefits, while unplanned expansion can exacerbate social and environmental ills. Community engagement in planned urban development will provide the best chance of liveable cities for the growing urban population.

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<sup>3</sup> The triple bottom line is a sustainability framework that measures success in three key areas: profit, people, and the planet.

Successful implementation of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) demands a focus on the supply-side and the demand-side of consumption, plus the adoption of both social and technical lenses. An ASEAN-inspired interpretation of SCP and its evolution to a true circular economy can provide a mobilising cause for young and old alike, and can foster the projection of ASEAN as a global leader.

#### Theme 3: Livelihoods

1. In terms of education, learning outcomes depend upon highly trained, motivated and respected teachers and innovative teaching practices. Teachers are an important traction point in education systems and can amplify the investments made in other components of the system.
2. A capability-based approach cognisant of individual contexts is crucial and should be embedded in educational systems to equip children with skillsets that foster equity in educational outcomes. This is because intersecting factors such as gender, location and wealth can result in exclusion of children and their learning. This can recur at various points in the educational journey, and thus addressing one component is insufficient to remove exclusionary barriers in education.
3. In the world of work, the prevalence of informal and vulnerable modes of employment reflects the limited livelihood choices of disadvantaged groups. Multiple ASEAN policy measures have shown awareness of the inequities in social protection and access to training. Yet, more efforts are needed to remedy the root cause of the capability traps that underpin them.
4. Given the complexity of such challenges, addressing the implications for decent work requires measures to deal with its causes, and not simply its effects. This suggests a deeper engagement with the causes of informality and vulnerability. Policies that focus on a particular social group or social marker can lead to a misdiagnosis of the issue, or even prejudice opportunities available to others. For example, a focus on female youth may divert attention from hazardous labour of male youth or retraining for displaced middle-aged workers.

5. Using a Foresight approach, ASEAN could take the opportunity to reshape the foundations of TVET to embrace the needs of traditional sectors such as agriculture, or to catch up with new ones in the service and technology-led economies. TVET can play a significant role in shaping an inclusive development model for ASEAN nations but this requires a fundamental re-evaluation of the notions of learning and work that frames TVET's purpose, design and impact. This re-evaluation requires more than improvements to governance, funding and qualifications frameworks to adopt life-long learning in all its forms.

#### Theme 4: Social Welfare and Health

1. ASEAN governments' spending on social protection is at an average of three percent of GDP. Coverage varies by citizenship status. Adopting a human security lens to protection can help identify and reduce risks, protect rights and promote capabilities across social groups. In this regard, social protection should be expanded to cover mental well-being and violence, and long-term care issue especially for women, youth, older people and migrant communities. This could be done through the establishment of an ASEAN Welfare Fund along with engagement of media, unions and civil society organisations in the framing of social protection reform and resource mobilisation.
2. With regard to health, reducing social inequalities helps vulnerable groups access healthcare and avoid disease. Communicable disease can be managed by addressing social determinants such as malnutrition and poor living conditions. Effort is required to ensure that responses to emerging infectious diseases are equitable and inclusive. While public health care was, to a large extent, viewed as a national concern within ASEAN countries, in the face of new challenges such as COVID-19, there is considerable scope to leverage regional commonalities and expertise.
3. There is a need to increase revenues through taxes on unhealthy consumption and lifestyle elements that will also incentivize healthier behaviour. These taxes are likely to become effective when they are harmonized across the ASEAN countries to avoid parallel imports. Simultaneously, boosting awareness on key health risks among ASEAN citizens while increasing resources for early diagnosis and prevention of major diseases especially diseases that have high disability effects will substantially reduce their total healthcare costs.

The ADO's findings have been structured in terms of four inter-related themes: Identity; Natural and Built Environment; Livelihoods; and Social Welfare and Health. Each is overlain with four Drivers of Change which will create significant opportunities and risks for the current and future ASEAN population.

This report demonstrates that directly engaging with the social and cultural spheres of development programmes and interventions through participatory methods will ensure that the voices of individuals across different cohorts of society are included. Furthermore, the shift to consultation with individuals and communities in ASEAN Member States sets in play the practices that would make for a more organic and holistic process of consensus building, and enhance this principle that is at the heart of ASEAN thinking and *raison d'être*.

Using social and cultural lenses makes explicitly visible the vulnerabilities experienced by individuals and communities, and points the way to design targeted support programmes for individuals and communities to increase their resilience levels. This approach to policy making is at the core of the Capability Approach. While ASEAN has made some progress in a range of development policy areas, the possibility of using a Foresight approach would enable policy makers to evaluate the impact on their proposed list of programmes in relation to future capacities for success. This also entails the introduction of new conceptual and data collection methods in creating an evidence-

based approach that is necessary to permit a substantive re-evaluation of current modes of implementation of development policies. The adoption of iterative methods of analysis, and use of numerous data collection techniques can enhance the credibility of ASEAN policies related to inclusive and sustainable development.

While the ASEAN region has developed external linkages with development partners and cooperation, there is ample scope to deepen internal ones. Rather than looking for global best practices, the ADO advocates for the adoption of an approach which is ASEAN-embedded in its design, implementation, and evaluation. This incorporates unique local perspectives in dealing with cross-cutting challenges and can thereby contribute to the emergence of more sustainable solutions. This will underscore the reality that successful policy making is based on a learning process.

Policy success is the result of policy-making institutions having the possibility of revisiting their objectives in the light of new data on policy outcomes, tailored to local contexts. It is indeed this feature of responsiveness that is at the heart of institutional learning<sup>4</sup>. With regional and national support, the outcome will be a powerful collective good, enriching policy making at all levels of intervention and achieve a deeper sense of inclusive and collective ASEAN policy ownership.

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# 0. INTRODUCTION

ASEAN's modern economic success has been founded on its external relationship with the world, rather than its internal relationship with its own past and future.





# 0. INTRODUCTION

## 0.0 Introduction

Formed by five nations in 1967, the current Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) consists of ten ASEAN Member States; namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Viet Nam.<sup>1</sup>

The ASEAN region comprises a population of 650 million people spread over 4.5 million square kilometres across 20,000 islands and landmasses (Wang, 2017). Populations range from less than 0.5 million in Brunei Darussalam to over 250 million in Indonesia, and span a wide range of peoples, histories, languages, religions and cultures (ASEAN Stats, 2020).

ASEAN's regional identity has been (and continues to be) framed not only by the Middle East, Europe, China, and India, but also by the history and ongoing evolution of its Member States and the social interactions amongst them. These in turn are rooted in a range of agricultural and maritime development pathways that have shaped the movement of people, knowledge and Austronesian (such as Malay) and Austro-Asiatic (such as Mon and Khmer) languages for hundreds of years (Wang, 2017).

Framed by the orthodoxy of globalisation, ASEAN's modern economic success has been founded on its *external* relationship with the world rather than its *internal* relationship with its own past and future. The result is that ASEAN – and indeed Asia – is seen as a homogenous block, defined in terms of economic indicators rather than the rich heterogeneity of its cultures and peoples.

These perceptions of the region are the result of the use of a Western lens that measures cultural, societal and economic values based on metrics and norms external to the region. Such an external standpoint is not conducive to recognising the richness of languages, ecologies, livelihoods and practices as perceived within the region.

In practice, there is considerable diversity between ASEAN Member States in terms of their economic, social and cultural development. Such heterogeneity exists *within* states as well as *between* states, and cuts across regional, urban-rural, gendered, ethnic, and other forms of social divides. The scale and scope of this diversity present challenges for analysing ASEAN as a single homogenous block of countries. Instead, a more nuanced and inclusive approach is required that is capable of embracing diversity and difference.

The *ASEAN Development Outlook* (ADO) is the first report of its kind. In the inaugural report, an effort is made to chart progress towards sustainable human development in the ASEAN region and to identify key challenges along with best practices for the future. To this end, it employs a 'human development'-centred analytical framework (The

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<sup>1</sup> East Timor's application for ASEAN membership is still pending.

Capability Approach) and a policy framework to sharpen practical insights (The Foresight Approach). Three broad research objectives guide the report: (1) to assess the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community's (ASCC) performance and goals against likely future challenges; (2) to evaluate progress and highlight best practices and areas for improvement across the region; and (3) to make policy recommendations to accelerate progress against existing goals and to propose new ones, if appropriate.

Given the broad scope and the complexity of some of the issues discussed, the *ADO* seeks to highlight a forward-looking approach to identifying and interacting with challenges, to designing flexible and contextually pertinent solutions and to rolling out experimental and accountable policy implementation. The *ADO* is a selective overview, not a systematic detailed policy review. It offers new perspectives and questions, rather than new evidence and answers. It sketches frameworks of problem diagnosis, rather than detailed universal blueprints.

## 0.1 A Sustainable Vision of Development

There is a long tradition of viewing development in terms of economic growth, expressed in terms of GDP per capita. In terms of growth, the ASEAN economies – like much of the rest of Asia – have performed well over the last three decades (Figure 0.1). Real GDP per capita, has grown at an average annual rate of between 2.4 and 7.6 percent in ASEAN countries.<sup>2</sup> In most cases, this exceeds the average growth rates found in East Asia and the Pacific, and is broadly equivalent to the high rates of growth seen in South Asia. At the same time, lower income economies such as Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam have grown faster than their more affluent neighbours—implying some degree of economic convergence within ASEAN.



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<sup>2</sup> We have excluded outliers (see Figure 0.1).

Figure 0.1 Average annual growth rate of real GDP per capita in ASEAN Countries, 1990-2018



Source: Authors' calculation based on World Bank (2020e) data

The purpose of economic development is to improve the quality of life and well-being of all people and groups in society. ASEAN's economic progress is neither synonymous with improved social well-being nor an end in itself (ESCAP, 2019d). It has the potential to serve as a strong foundation for social well-being and cultural development but history is replete with examples of economic growth devoid of jobs, empowerment, inclusion, equity, foresight, social purpose or consideration for the natural environment (Haq, 1995; Sen & Drèze, 1999; UNDP, 1996).

In recognition of this, the *ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025* seeks to foster a 'committed, participative and socially-responsible community' that is 'aware and proud of its identity, culture and heritage with the strengthened ability to innovate and proactively contribute to the global community' (ASCC, 2016, p. 3). In short, it seeks a society that can embrace the future without losing touch with its past. There is complementarity between the 2025 Blueprint's 'Key

Results Areas' (divided into 'Engages and benefits the people', 'Inclusive', 'Promotion and protection of human rights', 'Resilient', and 'Dynamic'), the 2015 ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Scorecard (ASEAN, 2016a), and the international development agenda.

This is reflected in ASEAN's efforts to align social and cultural objectives with global development goals over the past two decades. In response to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the international community between 2000 and 2015, ASEAN issued a 'Joint Declaration on the Attainment of the MGDs' on 1 March 2009 (ASEAN, 2012c).<sup>3</sup> A subsequent *Roadmap for the Attainment of the MDGs* followed to guide collective action and to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework (ASEAN, 2012b). The Joint Declaration formalised ASEAN's commitment to end poverty across the region, and promised a more gender responsive approach. It also pledged to strike 'a balance between economic growth and social development and environmental sustainability in order to... [further] the attainment of the MDGs' (ASEAN, 2012c, para. 2).

<sup>3</sup> The goals were to (1) eradicate poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development (White, 2006).

In September 2015, the United Nations set out a far more ambitious and comprehensive development strategy in *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations, 2015d). Instead of the MDG's focus on poverty reduction using

eight basic dimensions, the 2030 Agenda sought to promote sustainable development across economic, social, and environmental fields. A new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provided guidelines through 17 goals, 169 targets, and an expanding set of 232 indicators (Figure 0.2).

Figure 0.2 The Sustainable Development Goals



Source: United Nations (2020)

The SDGs have been ratified by every member state of the United Nations, including all ten ASEAN member states. So far, ASEAN itself has not made any funding available to support a strategic plan at the regional level to further the SDGs. The organisation, however, has begun to chart the scale and complexity of the challenges ahead, and has explored available options for financing the SDGs. Two noteworthy initiatives here include the annual High-Level ASEAN Brainstorming Dialogue on Sustainable Development (from March 2017) and the Special Session of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting focusing on Sustainable Development

(September 2016). A large part of ASEAN's efforts have focused on building a regional policy consensus on sustainable development that can apply to diverse local contexts (UNDP, 2019b). At the same time, ASEAN has collaborated with regional and international partners to explore ways of mobilising and channelling the financial resources required to reach the SDGs. This requires more comprehensive and long-term financial strategies at the country level, as well as diverse and innovative financial instruments, such as blended finance, impact investing, public-private partnerships, and bond issuances (UNDP, 2017).

Moving forward, the key to fostering sustainable development in ASEAN is partnership. A noteworthy example is the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership under which various initiatives have been implemented to foster sustainable and inclusive development. The initiatives cover many areas of development ranging from poverty reduction to climate change, from education to public health, and with a focus on enhancing policy coherence, capacity building and resources. There are notable examples of such initiatives, including the annual ASEAN-China Forum on Social Development and Poverty Reduction from 2007, a series of ASEAN-China-UNDP Symposium on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development starting in 2016, the China-ASEAN Public Health Cooperation Initiative: Program on Public Health Emergency Preparedness Capacity (PROMPT), the ASEAN-China Young Leaders Scholarship (ACYLS) Program, and the China-ASEAN Environmental Outlook: Regional Development of Green Economy. Importantly, ASEAN and China also designate 2021 as the ASEAN-China Year of Sustainable Development Cooperation during which robust joint initiatives will be further advanced. Alongside this partnership, China's Belt and Road initiative has created shared opportunities to invest in sustainable infrastructure projects with common benefits intended to align with the SDGs.

Internally, ASEAN Community Pillars and Sectoral Bodies operate with the SDGs in mind. In many cases ASEAN workplans are explicitly aligned with the SDGs as well as official ASEAN Blueprints (e.g. ASEAN, 2018f). Furthermore, ASEAN workplans and ASEAN Blueprints (e.g. ASEAN, 2018f) are often

explicitly aligned with the SDGs'.<sup>4</sup> Although ASEAN lacks an official declaration endorsing the SDGs, the co-chairs of the ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development have recently issued a joint press statement that reaffirms that the SDGs are a priority for ASEAN (EU & ASEAN, 2020). Alongside this initiative, the continued cooperation with nations in the Asian region such as that with China also assists ASEAN Member States in pursuing the objectives set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## 0.2 Poverty, Inequality and Development

Broadly speaking, poverty and inequality can be characterised in terms of depth, breadth and duration (D. A. Clark et al., 2017, p. 20; D. A. Clark & Hulme, 2010). Poverty and inequality have depth or intensity, insofar as a person or household falls below a minimum threshold or some average measure of achievement. They have breadth in the sense that they are multidimensional and span a variety of capabilities, rights, and needs. Finally, they have duration, in terms of the amount of time that poverty and inequality are experienced.

Over the last two decades, ASEAN has made tremendous progress in terms of tackling poverty in the income space (Table 0.1). At the turn of the century, just over a third (34.3 percent) of the population fell below the international poverty line (\$1.90 per day). By 2018, only 3.3 percent of ASEAN's citizens remained below the poverty line. When looking at the seven ASEAN countries for which data is available, the total number of people below the international poverty line fell from an estimated 172 million in 1999 to about 20 million in 2018.

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<sup>4</sup> The complementarities between the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community Blueprints are explored by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia in their ASEAN Vision 2040 integrative report (ERIA, 2019). The integrative report is not an official ASEAN publication.



Table 0.1 Proportion of people below the \$1.90 poverty line and related statistics

\$1.90 2011 PPP	Ave monthly income		Pov headcount		Population		Total below pov line (mil)	
	1999	2018	1999	2018	1999	2018	1999	2018
Indonesia	78	199	41.7	4.6	208.6	267.7	87.0	12.4
Lao PDR	78	154	45.5	8.6	5.2	7.1	2.4	0.6
Malaysia	464	982	1.2	0.0	22.7	31.5	0.3	0.0
Myanmar	39	187	86.9	1.5	46.2	53.7	40.1	0.8
Philippines	163	209	15.9	4.6	76.3	106.7	12.1	4.9
Thailand	255	469	2.5	0.0	62.3	69.4	1.6	0.0
Viet Nam	92	319	35.7	1.9	79.0	95.5	28.2	1.8
ASEAN 7*	..	..	34.3	3.3	500.4	631.6	171.7	20.6

\* Data not available for Brunei, Cambodia and Singapore.

Source: World Bank (2020c) and authors' calculations  
Last accessed, 2 July 2020

The experience and timing of poverty reduction have varied across the ASEAN region. Some of the wealthier ASEAN countries such as Malaysia and Thailand succeeded in nearly eliminating income poverty at the end of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, most of the progress in

Indonesia and in the Philippines (ASEAN's two most populous countries) has been made after 1999.<sup>6</sup> The most rapid progress can be found in countries with lower average incomes – Lao PDR, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Viet Nam.<sup>7</sup>



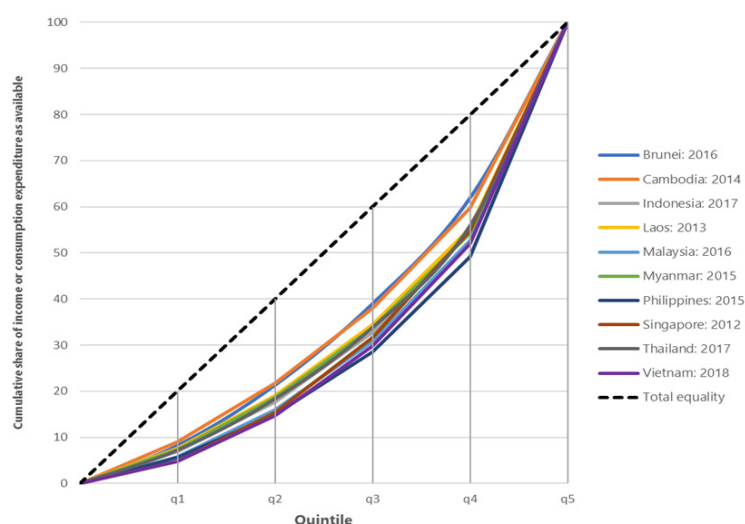
<sup>5</sup> Poverty data is hard to find for Brunei Darussalam and Singapore. Although both countries are classified as high-income economies, local proxy estimates released in 2012 suggest income poverty could be as high as 5 percent in Brunei Darussalam (Chow & Lin, 2015). There is also evidence suggesting that the incomes and living conditions of the poorest in Singapore need to be reassessed and acknowledged (Donaldson et al., 2013).  
<sup>6</sup> In 1991, 26.6 percent were below the \$1.90 poverty line in the Philippines, compared to 15.9 percent in 1999 (World Bank, 2020c).  
<sup>7</sup> In the case of Cambodia, the available evidence (covering the period 2002–2012) points to a sizeable reduction in poverty (from 50.2 percent to 17.7 percent), as measured by the national poverty line (World Bank, 2020e).

ASEAN has also been successful in reducing the depth or severity of poverty. The severity of poverty is captured by the poverty gap ratio, which measures the average shortfall in income of the population below the poverty line.<sup>8</sup> Over the last twenty years, the poverty gap ratio has fallen from just over ten percent to less than one percent. This has been achieved through the elimination of extreme poverty in Malaysia and Thailand, as well as the reduced incidence of poverty in Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Viet Nam.

Tackling inequality, on the other hand, has been more of a challenge for ASEAN. The Gini coefficient captures the dispersion of

income among a given population, and is calculated using a Lorenz curve.<sup>9</sup> Data based on expenditures (or income where available) shows that the Gini coefficient is higher in relatively wealthy ASEAN member states (Figure 0.3), although there are some offsets through the tax system.<sup>10</sup> On average, the share of income (or consumption expenditure) of the top quintile in ASEAN countries is over six times that of the poorest.<sup>11</sup> The lowest quintile accounts for only seven percent of national incomes.<sup>12</sup> Data issues aside, there is a general pattern that suggests the benefits of greater income in the ASEAN region are becoming more skewed towards wealthy cohorts over time (ESCAP, 2019c).

Figure 0.3: Income share by quintile



Source: Authors' based on UNU (2019) data.

<sup>8</sup> Expressed as a percentage of the poverty line.  
<sup>9</sup> A Lorenz curve plots cumulative distributions by decile or quintile. The Gini coefficient uses income or consumption expenditure data to calculate a value ranging from 0 to 1. In terms of the graph, it is the ratio of the area between the line of perfect equality and the observed Lorenz curve to the area between the line of perfect equality and the line of perfect inequality. The higher the coefficient, the more unequal the distribution is. The 45-degree dotted line shows perfect equality, and would equate to a Gini coefficient of zero. Perfect inequality would result in a curve along the horizontal axis, where the index would be 1.  
<sup>10</sup> Income Growth, Distribution, and Mobility Trends in Singapore (Singapore Ministry of Finance, 2015).  
<sup>11</sup> Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam curves are plotted using consumption data. The others use net or gross income (UNU, 2019).  
<sup>12</sup> This skew would be even greater if we used income (rather than consumption) data in Cambodia, Thailand, and Viet Nam (UNU, 2019).

Table 0.2: Proportion of population below rural and urban poverty lines

	Earlier Year			Latest available year		
	Year	Rural	Urban	Year	Rural	Urban
Brunei Darussalam	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cambodia	2003	54.2	28.5	2012	20.8	6.4
Indonesia	2002	21.1	14.5	2016	14.0	7.7
Lao PDR	2002	37.6	19.7	2012	28.6	10.0
Malaysia	2002	13.5	2.3	2014	1.6	0.3
Myanmar	2004/5	35.8	21.5	2015	23.3	9.0
Philippines	2000	47.0	19.9	2018	12.6	5.0
Singapore	..	..	..	..	..	..
Thailand	2002	40.2	17.0	2013	13.9	7.7
Viet Nam	2002	35.6	6.6	2014	18.6	3.8

Sources: UNSTAT (2020) and UN-ESCAP (2020c). Additional statistics from OECD (2019c) for Indonesia (latest year); World Bank (2017) for Myanmar (both years); ADB (2009, p. 122) and Philippines Statistical Authority (2020a) for Philippines; and Thang et al (2006) for Viet Nam (earlier year).

Poverty and inequality within ASEAN countries can be explored using national poverty estimates (Table 0.2). Although progress has been made in reducing rural poverty, there is still some way to go. In recent years, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Thailand have been particularly successful in curbing rural poverty. In most ASEAN countries, however, substantial

levels of rural poverty persist. Urban poverty has been reduced to lower overall rates, although substantial enclaves remain. Inequality across the rural-urban divide continues to pose a challenge, with only Malaysia managing to substantially close the gap, while Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Viet Nam have made some progress in terms of easing the rural-urban divide.

Table 0.3 Selected indicators of poverty and development for ASEAN member states

	Live expectancy birth (years)		Infant Mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)		Adult literacy rate (% 15 y.o and above)		Primary school enrollment (%) *		Secondary school enrollment (%) *		DPT immunization (% aged 12-23 months)		Measles immunization (% aged 12-23 months)	
	(2000)	(2018)	(2000)	(2018)	(2000)	(2018)	(2000)	(2018)	(2000)	(2018)	(2000)	(2018)	(2000)	(2018)
Brunei Darussalam	72.8	75.7	8	10	..	97.2	..	93.1	..	82.6	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.0
Cambodia	58.4	69.6	80	24	..	..	92.4	90.3	15.6	..	59.0	92.0	65.0	84.0
Indonesia	65.8	71.5	41	21	..	95.7	..	93.5	..	78.7	75.0	79.0	76.0	75.0
Lao PDR	58.8	67.6	76	38	69.6	..	75.9	91.5	27.4	60.0	51.0	68.0	42.0	69.0
Malaysia	72.6	76.0	9	7	88.7	94.9	98.4	..	75.3	72.2	98.0	99.0	96.0	96.0
Myanmar	60.1	66.9	65	37	89.9	..	89.7	97.9	33.0	64.1	82.0	91.0	84.0	93.0
Philippines	68.8	71.1	29	23	92.6	..	..	..	..	..	78.0	65.0	78.0	67.0
Singapore	78.0	83.1	3	2	92.5	97.3	..	..	..	..	98.0	96.0	96.0	95.0
Thailand	70.6	76.9	19	8	92.6	93.8	..	..	..	..	97.0	97.0	94.0	96.0
Viet Nam	73.0	75.3	24	17	90.2	95.0	97.9	..	..	..	96.0	75.0	97.0	97.0
East Asia & Pacific	71.2	76.1	31	13	90.3	95.6	94.4	..	63.8	78.9	83.5	91.3	83.7	91.8
South Asia	62.8	69.4	69	35	57.7	72.3	75.4	87.8	39.2	60.5	60.2	86.8	57.8	87.5
Low & middle income	65.4	71.0	58	31	77.3	84.0	81.8	88.6	50.9	63.3	70.6	84.9	70.3	85.2
World	67.5	72.6	53	29	80.8	86.3	83.4	89.4	54.9	66.3	72.8	85.9	72.4	86.0

"Source: World Bank (2020e)."



As mentioned, tackling poverty and promoting development involves more than just economic growth and higher incomes. The distribution of the benefits of growth and income also matters. In other words, it is important to recognise that poverty has *breadth*, which can be assessed in terms of a wide range of social, cultural and environmental indicators. Table 0.3 summarises a selection of these indicators taken from *World Development Indicators*.<sup>13</sup>

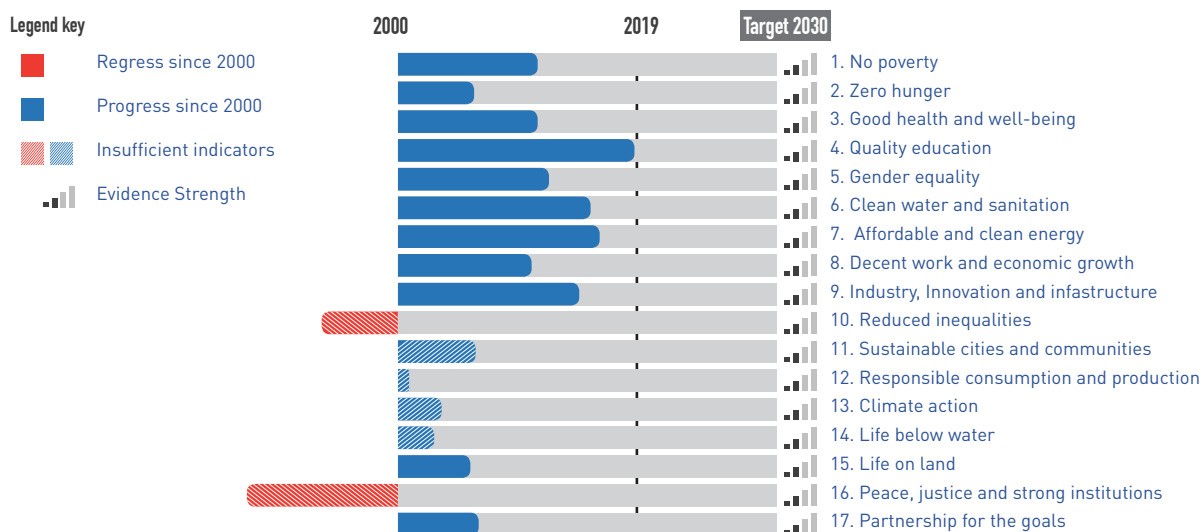
These point to improvements in life expectancy, infant mortality, child immunisation, nutritional status, female representation, adult literacy, primary school enrolment, and access to water, sanitation, and electricity over the past two decades.

This strong performance in development's social dimensions is reflected in ASEAN's progress towards the MDGs between 2000 and 2015. Of the 25 MDG targets with a clear objective, ASEAN countries managed to achieve thirteen targets and came close to meeting three others (ASEAN, 2017b). The gap between ASEAN states also narrowed, with Cambodia, Lao PDR,

Myanmar, and Viet Nam catching up with (and in some areas overtaking) the other six ASEAN countries (ASEAN, 2017b). Even in cases where MDG targets have not been fully achieved there has been progress.

Despite progress in the social dimensions of development, ASEAN – like most of Asia and the Pacific – is unlikely to meet most of the SDGs. This is due to existing targets (except perhaps for SDG4) being too high to reach by 2030, given current rates of economic, social and environmental development (Figure 0.4).<sup>14</sup> Reasonable progress has been attained in eleven out of seventeen goals to date. In four goals progress so far is marginal and difficult to assess (SDG11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG12 on responsible production and consumption, SDG13 on climate action and SDG14 on life below water). In two goals, ASEAN is moving backwards (SDG10 on reduced inequalities, SDG16 on peace, justice and strong institutions). In comparison to other sub-regions in Asia and the Pacific, ASEAN has led the way in quality education (SDG4), affordable and clean energy (SDG7), and industry, innovation, and infrastructure (SDG9) (ESCAP, 2020a; Thomas, 2019b).

Figure 0.4: ASEAN SDG snapshot



The length of each bar shows progress since 2000. If a bar reaches or crosses the 2019 line, the region has made the expected progress to date. However, whether a Goal can be achieved by 2030 depends not only on the distance travelled so far, but also on the pace of progress going forward, as reflected in the Snapshot.

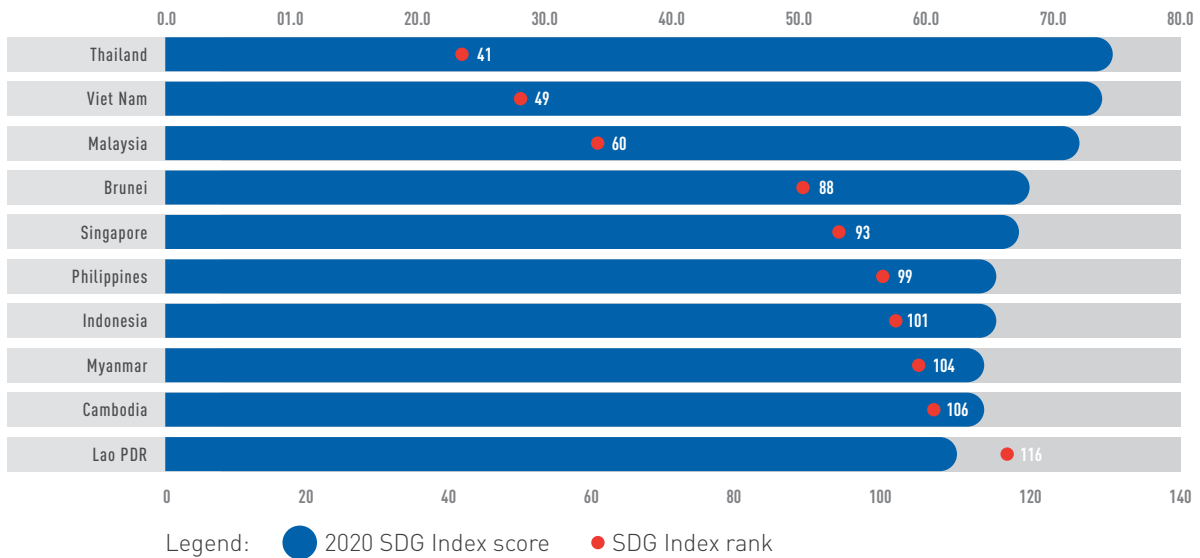
Source: ESCAP (2020d)

<sup>13</sup> Table 0.3 omits available statistics from World Development Indicators covered elsewhere in this report. See also Figure 1.5 (women's representation in parliament), Figure 3.2 (enrolment in education), Figure 4.3 (malnutrition burdens), Table 4.3 (gender-based violence), and Figure 4.8 (safe water and improved sanitation). On environmental indicators, see Figure 2.8 (ecological footprint), Figure 2.9 (carbon emissions), Figure 2.13 (forest coverage), and Figure 2.17 (air pollution) in Theme 2. For gender-related indicators [other than those just mentioned], see Figure 0.7 (HDI vs gender rankings), Table 1.1 (customary law), Table 3.1 (female entrepreneurship), Figure 3.5 (gender differences in out of school children), Figure 3.7 (child marriage), and Table 4.3 (legality of sex-trade).

<sup>14</sup> A slightly less optimistic reading is provided by ESCAP (2020a) and Thomas (2019b).

Using data from the *Sustainable Development Report 2020*, we can rank each ASEAN country’s SDG performance to identify policy gaps and future challenges. As Figure 0.5 shows, ASEAN country rankings in terms of economic, social, and environmental metrics from the SDGs do not necessarily correspond to their level of economic development. For example, Viet Nam has a much lower per-capita income, but ranks much higher than wealthier ASEAN neighbours, including Singapore and Brunei Darussalam.

Figure 0.5: SDG Index score and rank by country



Source: Authors’ based on Sachs et al (2020a) data.

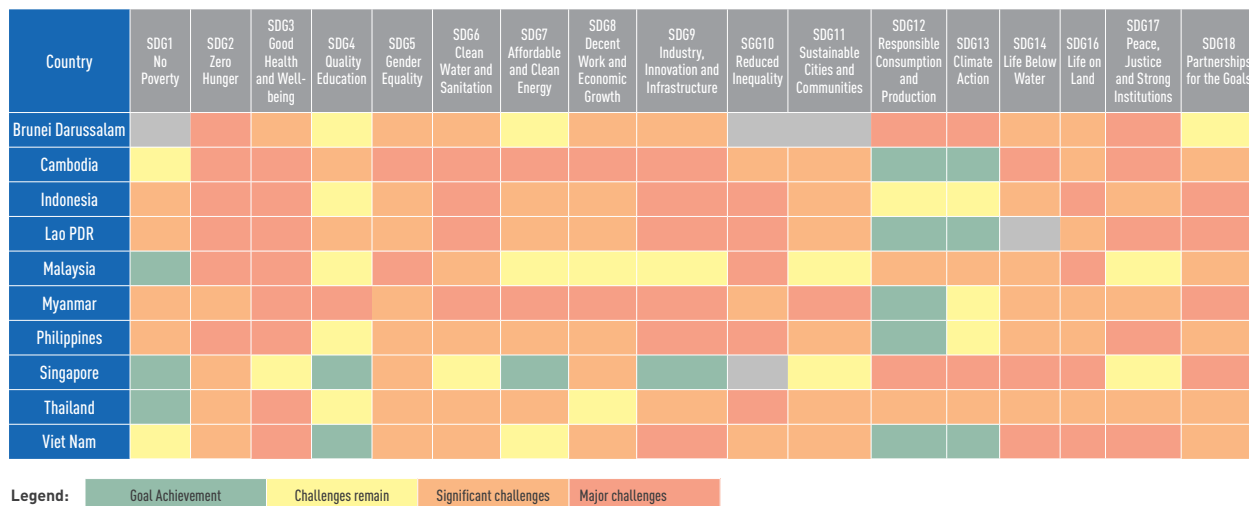
There are two major caveats to this analysis. The first relates to data availability and limitations. ESCAP (2020a) has highlighted data deficiencies for over half of the indicators for monitoring performance towards the SDGs. The index employed here uses a sub-set of 85 indicators, including some statistics not featured in the official SDG dataset (Sachs et al., 2020, p. 66). The second issue relates to the methodology of aggregation of indicators within and across goals, which we recognise is not able to fully address the the balanced and integrated nature of the SDGs (advocated by the

United Nations) as it has not yet been able to measure the tradeoffs and synergies between indicators.<sup>15</sup> As such, we use the available data and indices to prompt questions rather than to look for definite answers.

As seen in Figure 0.6, ASEAN Member States with lower average incomes rank poorly in goals related to economic and human development, but perform better in environmental goals.<sup>16</sup> The opposite is true for ASEAN Member States with higher average incomes, as they struggle to reconcile the economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

<sup>15</sup> An adjusted SDG index that incorporates the SDGs by using a different aggregation method developed by Biggeri et al (2019) produced many cases of differing country rankings from the standard SDG index.  
<sup>16</sup> This seems to have been more in terms of sustainable consumption and production than in renewable energy.

Figure 0.6: Heatmap of Individual SDGs by ASEAN Member States



Data source: Authors' based on Sachs et al (2020) data.

There appear to be several cross-cutting 'major' challenges (in dark orange), including nutritional status, health and well-being, clean water and sanitation, industry and infrastructure, marine life, peace, justice and institutions, inequality, and sustainable partnerships for development.<sup>17</sup> As indicated by the light orange boxes, there are also a number of 'significant' regional challenges, including gender equality (themes 1, 3, and 4), affordable energy (theme 2), decent work (theme 3), sustainable cities (theme 2), and life below water.

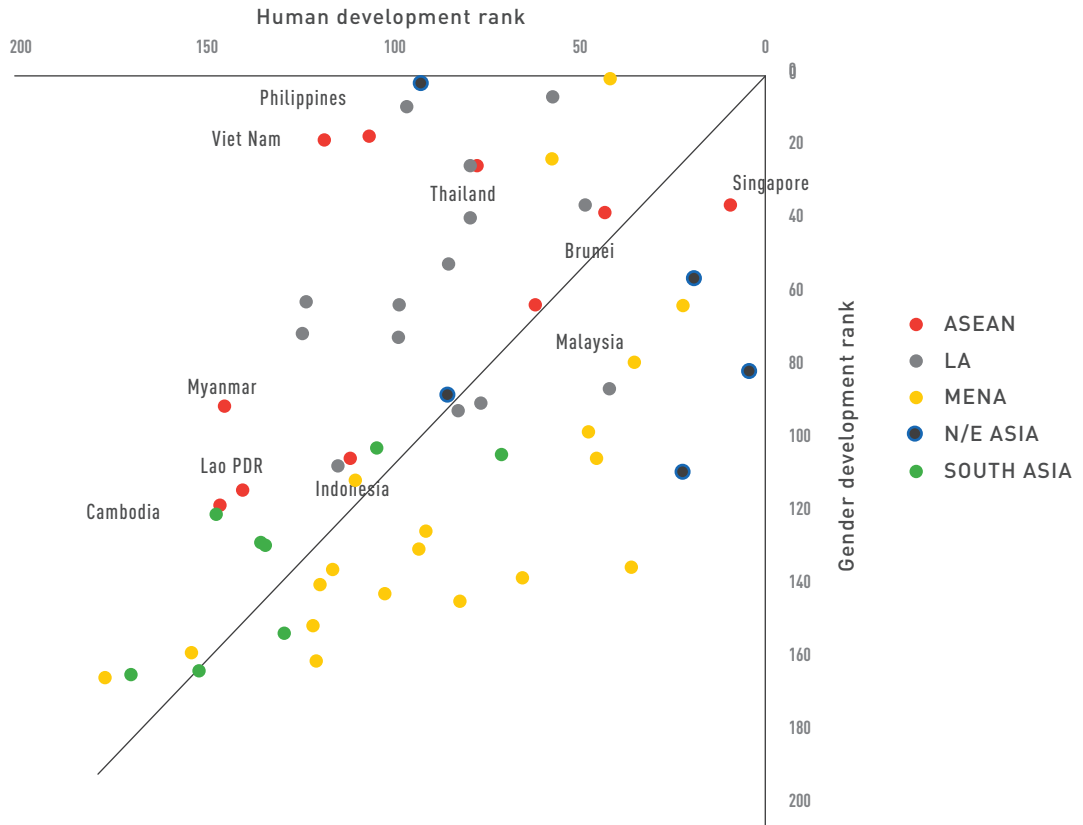
The heterogeneity across the region in some areas is stark. For example, maternal mortality rates in Lao PDR and Myanmar are around ten times higher than in Malaysia, Singapore, or Thailand (ASEAN, 2019c, p. 18). The incidence of child malnutrition and stunting is also a major

challenge in some countries (ESCAP, 2019c).<sup>18</sup> There are also significant discrepancies in secondary school enrolment rates (Table 0.3).

In addition to these disparities *across* countries, there are also significant disparities *within* them. As Figure 0.6 shows, all ASEAN countries face challenges in the pursuit of SDG5 (Gender inequality) and SDG10 (Inequality). In terms of gender, Figure 0.7 shows that some countries (notably Viet Nam and the Philippines) are successfully sharing the benefits of human development more equally.<sup>19</sup> The figure shows the rankings of countries in terms of human and gender development. Countries to the left of the diagonal line have a higher gender development ranking than they do in terms of human development for both men and women.

<sup>17</sup> The first three are discussed in Theme 4. The latter two are core features of this report.  
<sup>18</sup> See Theme 4.  
<sup>19</sup> Income inequality and disparities across the urban-rural divide are considered above.

Figure 0.7: Human and gender development rankings



Source: Authors' based on UNDP (2019a) data.

As well as the persistence of pockets of *observed* inequality, vulnerable groups also remain at *risk* of transitioning in and out of poverty over time. Being in poverty (or at risk of being so) tends to be concentrated amongst marginalised social cohorts, whose capabilities, resilience and access to social support are constrained in multiple ways. This risk is driven by not only income deficiencies, but also a lack of access to education, health and social protection.

The Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) incorporates education and health alongside income to facilitate analysis of these *intersecting* deprivations.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the ASEAN region *multi-dimensional* poverty is falling more slowly than *income* poverty (ESCAP, 2019d). Table 0.4 shows that the numbers *at risk* are far higher than those actually in poverty. Whilst a lack of income is important, in Lao PDR and Viet Nam, vulnerability is driven by a combination of poor access to education and income and in Thailand by poor access to education and health.

<sup>20</sup> Including access to education, health care, clean water, risk of disease, violence and natural hazards (UN, 2019). Multidimensional Poverty Index is the percentage of the population that is multidimensionally poor adjusted by the intensity of the deprivations. See UNDP (2019a) Technical note 5 for details on how the MPI is calculated.

Table 0.4: Drivers of multi-dimensional poverty

Country	Multi-dimensional poverty (%)		Drivers of Multi-dimensional poverty (%)		
	Population in severe multidimensional poverty	Population vulnerable to multidimensional poverty	Health	Education	Standard of living
Cambodia	13.2	21.1	21.8	31.7	46.6
Indonesia	1.2	9.1	23.2	30.0	46.8
Lao PDR	9.6	21.2	21.5	39.7	38.8
Myanmar	13.8	21.9	18.5	32.3	49.2
Philippines	1.3	7.3	20.3	31.0	48.7
Thailand	0.1	7.2	35.0	47.4	17.6
Viet Nam	0.7	5.6	15.2	42.6	42.2

Data source: UNDP (2019a), table 6.

Economic growth is a means to improve human capabilities in all respects. Rather than the human capabilities being an input to economic growth, the two should be seen as mutually constitutive (ESCAP, 2019d). Instead of focusing on inequality of income, there is a need to focus on inequality of opportunity (Roser, 2013). This requires the reduction of systematic risks faced by vulnerable groups that have a daily impact on their well-being. This is *human* development, and not just *economic*.

The omission of appropriate *disaggregated social metrics* that lie behind economic ones and a failure to encompass *risk* (rather than look at actual outcomes), leads to misdiagnoses of problems and policy designs blind to planning and implementation errors. This has a disproportionate effect on marginalised groups, as they are more at risk of impact and less resilient to the consequences. This requires a recalibration of social and economic metrics. The *ADO* suggests that it also requires a revised approach based on the expansion of human capabilities.

## 0.3 ASEAN Policy-Making

ASEAN's longstanding commitment to sustainable forms of human development is demonstrated in the original 1967 'ASEAN Declaration' (or 'Bangkok Declaration'), the 'Joint Declaration on the Attainment of the MDGs' in March 2009 (ASEAN, 2012), and the official declaration endorsing the SDGs by the co-chairs of the ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development (EU & ASEAN, 2020). Since 2007, the ambition 'to leave no-one behind' has been underpinned by the ASEAN Charter, which formalised the current framework of three institutional pillars: the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).

However, this formalisation has not altered the ASEAN ethos of how cooperation and trust are engendered through a philosophy of informal relations, open regionalism, cultural sensitivity, and a careful balance of political, economic, and social priorities (Vejjajiva, 2017). The 'ASEAN way' relies on the power of consensus (UNESCO, 2017b). The ASEAN Secretariat has convening but not legislative power and operates with a minimal budget and resources. The question is whether this current mode of governance can adapt to future policy challenges or whether there should be more local autonomy on particular issues (United Nations, 2017a).

Under the momentum of the world's third largest labour force, the ASEAN region is forecast to become the world's fourth largest regional economy within 30 years (Vinayak et al., 2020). However, there is growing recognition that a significant portion of the ASEAN population has not shared in past economic success and that current modes of growth create excessive environmental, and cultural burdens. Moreover, under the influence of

several 'Drivers of Change', the next 50 years of ASEAN are unlikely to be like the first. Throughout the 21st century, ASEAN countries will experience significant demographic and economic changes, whilst climate change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) will unveil new development barriers and opportunities. How these issues are managed and how future economic success manifests in terms of inclusive, equitable, resilient, and sustainable development will depend upon a symbiotic relationship between the social and economic pillars of the ASEAN community and how well the Secretariat engages with wider society (Sudarno Sumarto & Moselle, 2015).<sup>21</sup>

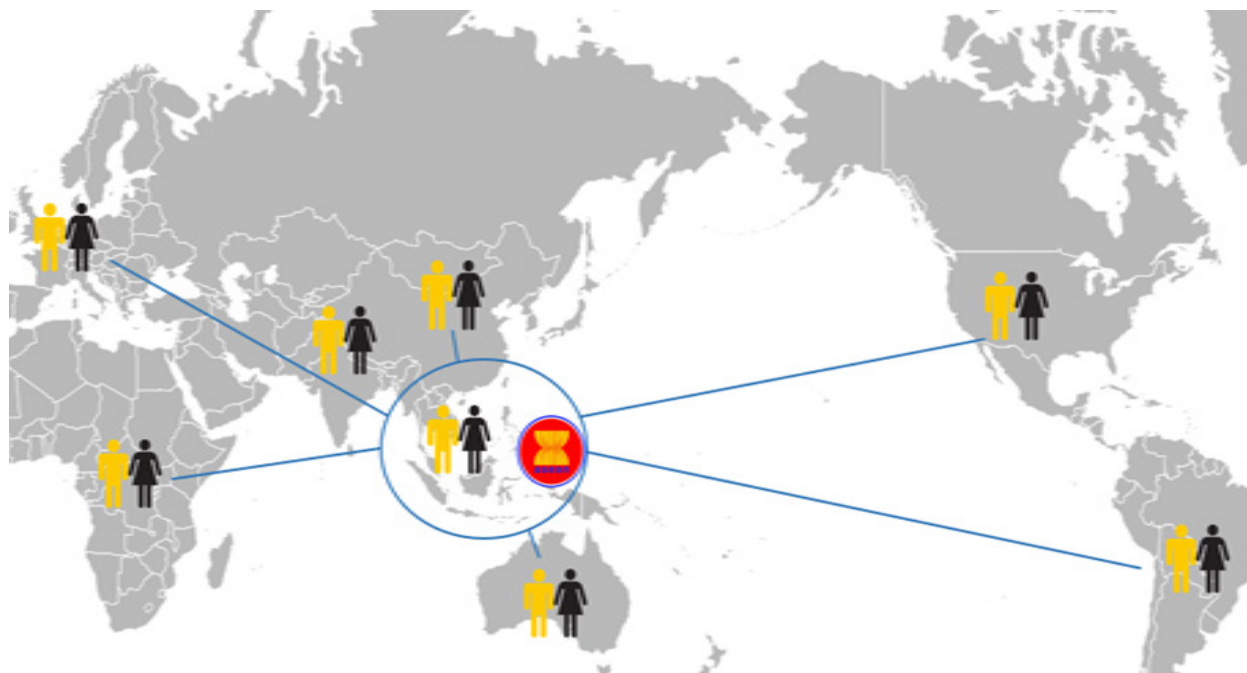
## 0.4 Research Method

This ADO focuses on ways of thinking about social questions, rather than trying to highlight universal 'best practice' solutions. This section outlines our approach to try to identify the right contextual questions by describing the conceptual framework that underpins our research findings and analysis.

Inclusive knowledge collation and dissemination are key aspects of our approach and how we would suggest the findings of the ADO are taken forward. The ADO has used a selection of secondary literature from ASEAN and non-ASEAN resources and commissioned over 70 global and regional experts from over 20 countries across a range of disciplines to conduct research, write new background papers and review ADO drafts. We have also had numerous lengthy and fruitful conversations with ASEAN Divisional staff who have been most welcoming and provided valuable insights.

•••••

<sup>21</sup> Initiatives such as the Enabling Masterplan, preparing for an ageing population, protection of children, and increasing participation of local governments, go beyond economic concerns. They are welcome advancements in expanding the realm of the 'social' in ASEAN policymaking.



Through this engagement, we have sought to lay the foundations for a Global-ASEAN knowledge-network to encourage ongoing dialogue. To foster these relationships, we had originally planned research visits to the region and a conference in Cambridge. Due to the Covid-19 global travel restrictions, this was replaced with long and productive virtual meetings that often brought together representatives from several countries in one virtual room.

The open spirit in which all such conversations were held is a testament to cross-country collaboration and to the people involved. We regard this 'adaptive co-learning process' as both a means and objective of this report.

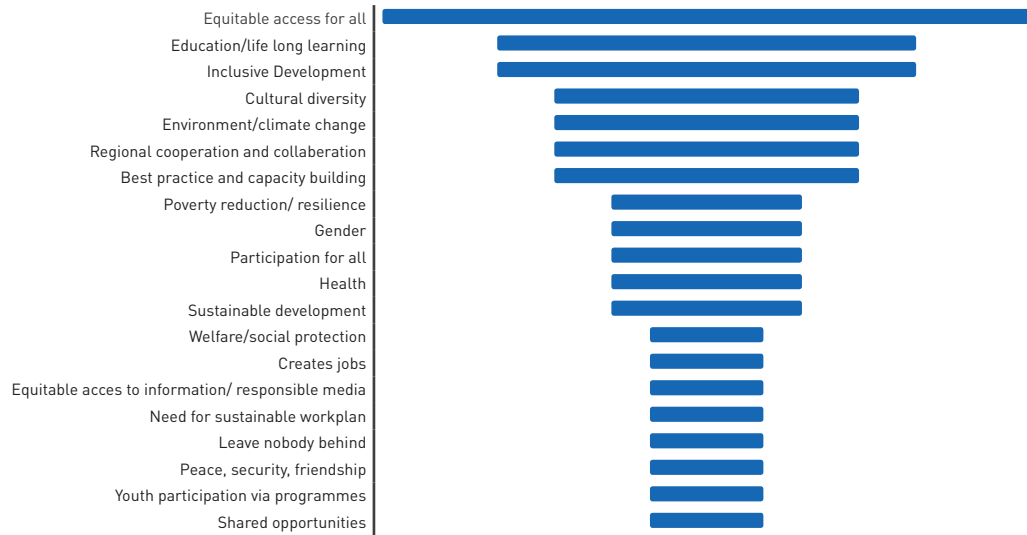
A key part of this engagement was with ASEAN senior officials. National teams across the region participated in a series of online focus

group discussions through June and July 2020 and completed a questionnaire to inform the forthcoming ADO with regard to the key themes, challenges and opportunities facing the region and cases of good practice.

Across the 37 completed questionnaires, there was a clear sense that equitable access, education and learning, and inclusive development were at the top end of priorities, followed by cultural diversity, the environment and climate change, poverty reduction/resilience, best practice and capacity building, and regional cooperation and collaboration (Figure 0.8). The importance of education, inclusive development, cultural diversity, and the environment dovetail neatly with the key themes of the ADO report: Identity, Natural and Built Environment, Livelihoods and Social Welfare.



Figure 0.8: Important themes for the ADO

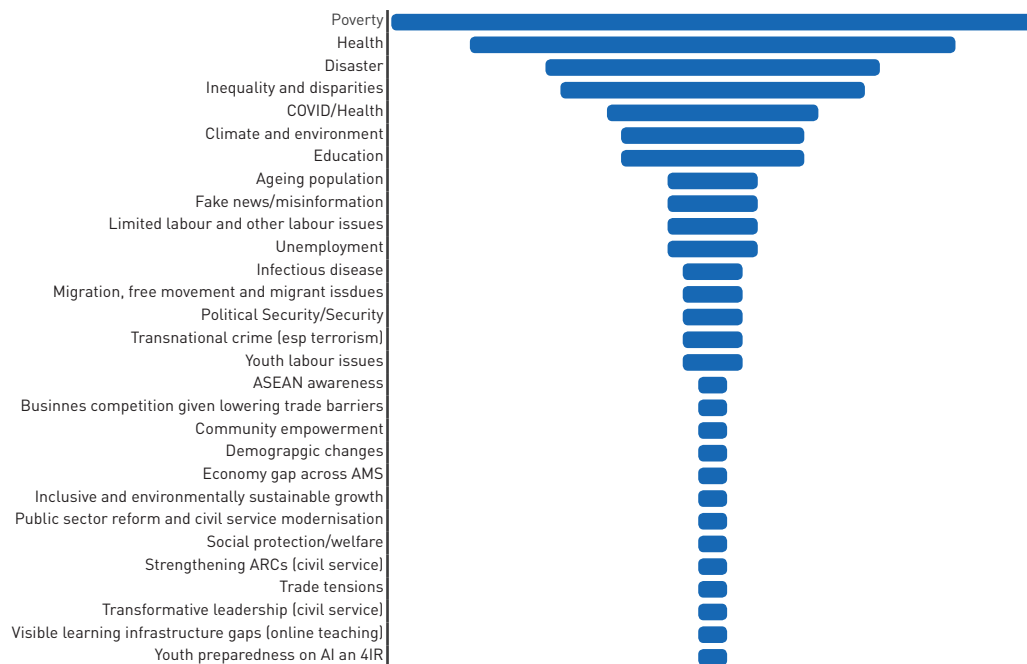


Note: Graph includes top 20 themes by number of mentions

Source: Authors' based on survey of ASCC offices across ASEAN member states conducted for ADO

The respondents regarded the biggest regional challenges as Poverty (21), Health (16), Disaster (11), Inequality (10), COVID/Health (7), Climate and environment (6), and education (6) (Figure 0.9). Each of these topics is discussed at length in this report.

Figure 0.9: Regional challenges



Source: Authors' based on survey of ASCC offices across ASEAN member states conducted for ADO





The responses indicated that there were gaps in current ASEAN policy approaches to these challenges. For example, the achievement of ASEAN identity will require a more socially-grounded “We”-feeling, rather than being the product of high-level policy making discussion. This would require greater attention to barriers of language and perception. This was also felt to be an issue in the dissemination of the ADO itself.

Respondents suggested a more inclusive approach would require the ADO to be translated (perhaps in a shorter format) to reach everyone in ASEAN. This suggestion formed part of wider concerns regarding the need for fully funded and more effective policy communication in local languages to disseminate helpful ASEAN news and dispel rumours and falsehoods.

The ongoing sustainability of this knowledge foundation rests on the capacity and relationships forged by younger generations going forward. We hope an essential legacy of the approach in this ADO will be the mentoring of many early stage researchers – who either live or conduct research on the ASEAN region. They have provided valuable insights for the ADO that reflect unique generational and regional perspectives and have engaged actively in this capacity building process. Hopefully, this process has left the early stage researchers with new insights, equipping them to contribute even more fully to future ASEAN development.

However, this is only a beginning. Academic-policy actor-networks only engage with a sub-set of society and a particular type of knowledge. The future challenge is how to develop a deeper sense of inclusive and collective ASEAN ‘policy ownership’ by extending this knowledge platform to a wider stakeholder base. It is not in our scope (or our capability in the current global circumstances) to investigate means but we would encourage policy makers to make this a top priority.

This emphasis on democratisation resonates strongly with the centrality of justice, a core tenet of the Capability Approach which depends on active participation and public reasoning.<sup>22</sup>

In the face of risk and uncertainty, the enhancement of individual capacity and social resilience to future unknowns are as important as trying to anticipate each and every scenario. The establishment of modes of inclusive knowledge collation and dissemination are a key steppingstone towards that objective. A more inclusive ASEAN knowledge platform can provide explicit ‘feedback loops’ to ensure ordinary people’s voices are heard and to offer the chance for all types of ‘knowledge’ to be disseminated clearly and equitably. This would enhance the richness of intra-regional dialogue, strengthen the legitimacy and ownership of policy initiatives, and significantly raise the global profile of the ‘ASEAN way’ as an example to the world.

## 0.5 Theoretical Frameworks

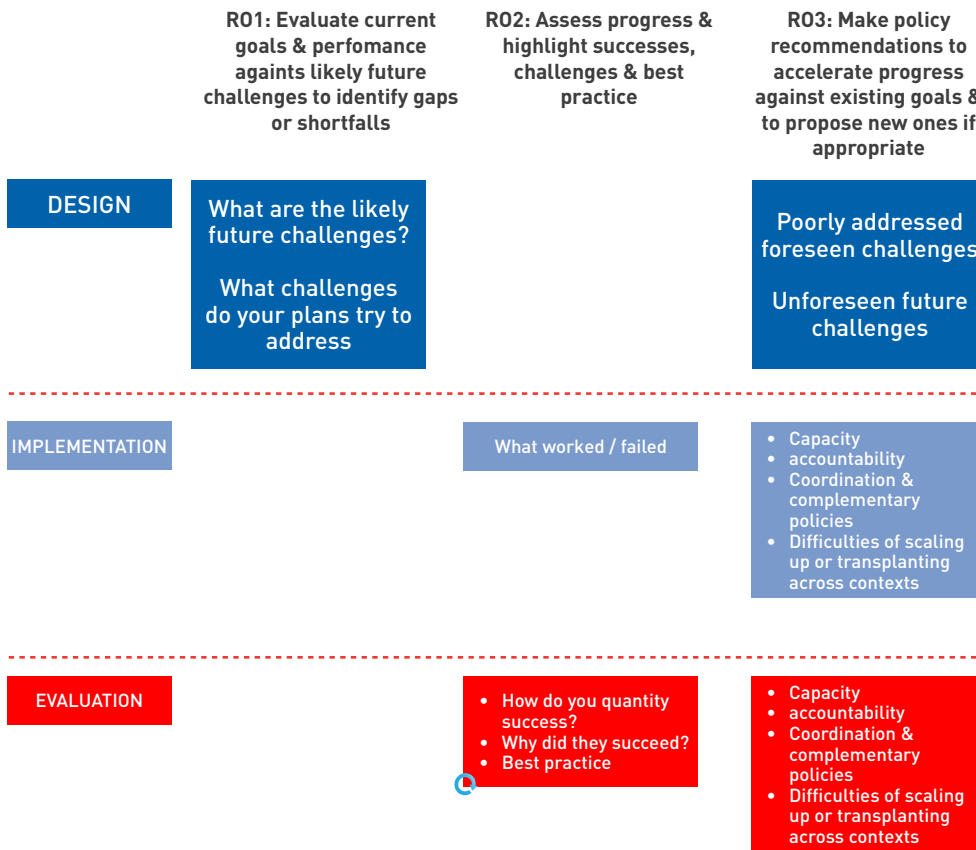
The ADO is guided by a theory of change together with a conceptual framework (the capability approach) and a policy framework (the foresight approach).

### 0.5.0. A Theory of Change

The research objectives described at the beginning of this chapter are addressed by asking questions about three different aspects of policy: design, implementation, and evaluation (Figure 0.10) (Artuc et al., 2020). This allows distinctions to be made between challenges that have been foreseen and addressed; those foreseen but dealt with less effectively; and those that may not have been foreseen at all.

.....  
<sup>22</sup> See Sen (1999, 2009), Drèze and Sen (2002), Clark, Biggeri and Frediani (2019) and Clark (2021).

Figure 0.10 Research objectives



Source: Authors' inspired by Artuc et al. (2020)



The interactive nature of the Themes and Drivers of Change requires an *integrated* policy response. Their social embeddedness also requires an *inclusive* one. This analytical framework is based on a Theory of Change outlined in Figure 0.11.

Reading from the left, the framework shows the four *Drivers* of Change; the impact of which depends on the use of a range of policy *Levers*

in their policy toolkit – including regulation, incentives, and improved information/education.<sup>23</sup> However, the effectiveness of Levers is subject to human *Filters*. People are the *Agents* of change at the heart of effective policy implementation (Artuc et al., 2020), but their behaviour is subject to individual and collective constraints. These are governed by their capabilities as well as the formal (such as legal requirements) and informal ‘rules of the game’ (such as social customs) (North, 1990).

Figure 0.11 Theory of change: Drivers, levers, filters and agents



Source: Authors

This Theory of Change enables the research questions to be framed through a social rather than an economic or political lens. The resulting analysis focuses on agents, their capabilities and inter-relationships (particularly those of vulnerable individuals), and groups or communities.

As shown in Figure 0.12, these groups present key current and future social policy challenges. Some remain trapped in persistent pockets of poverty, while others are becoming more vulnerable under the impacts of drivers of change. Others are only just emerging as future policy challenges (such as working mothers) or are even unseen (such as those with social or learning difficulties).

<sup>23</sup> We adapt this from the United Nations’ Global Sustainable Development Report (ESCAP, 2019d), which highlights four levers of change: Governance; Economy and finance; Individual and collective action; and Science and technology. Rather than viewing individual and collective action as a ‘lever’, we conceptualise it as an ‘agent of change’ to emphasise the human dimension as a key ingredient for the realisation ASEAN aspirations and the SDGs.

Figure 0.12 Social policy challenges

Persistent	Growing	Future	Unforeseen
Ethnic Minorities			
Low income families			
	Migration		
	Education and learning		
	Nutrition and health		
	Informal workers		
	Social protection		
	Gender issues		
	Inequalities		
	Climate change and environmental issues		
	Leisure		
	Displaced		
	People with disabilities		
	Undocumented migrants		
	Unskilled workers		
	Offline families		
	Learning difficulties		
	Elderly		
	Substance abuse		

Source: Authors' impression

### 0.5.1. The Capability Approach to Development

In this ADO, the analysis of these challenges is grounded in Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA), which underpins the Human Development paradigm.<sup>24</sup> The CA places people at the centre of development. In this respect, it argues 'for the necessity of seeing human beings as ends in themselves, rather than only means to other ends' (Sen, 1999, p. 41). This approach focuses on individual and social well-being defined in terms of capabilities (or freedoms) and their interaction with the material basis of well-being, social structures, and institutions. As such, the CA can be used to distinguish between the *means* and *ends* of development (D. A. Clark, 2005, 2017; ESCAP, 2019d; Sen, 1997).

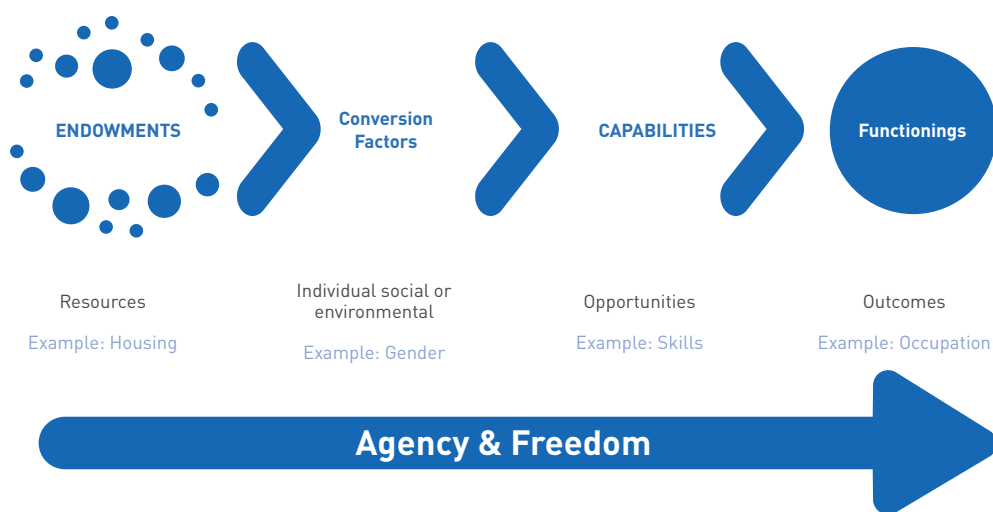
The central idea behind the CA is that well-being should be evaluated in terms of the *functionings* (actual achievements) and *capabilities* (opportunities to function) people have reason to value rather than resources (income, wealth, or assets) or utility (happiness, the satisfaction of desires) (Sen, 1999, 2009). It follows that development is about the expansion of capabilities rather than the growth of material things. While there is likely to be considerable agreement about the value of certain capabilities (and several scholars have proposed universal lists<sup>25</sup>), Sen (2005) has argued that the identification of relevant capabilities should be tailored to specific questions or project objectives through public reasoning and discussion.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For an overview of the capability approach, see Clark (2006).

<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the most notable example is Nussbaum's (2000) list of 'central human capabilities'. For a review of different capability lists, see Clark (2002).

<sup>26</sup> Examples of intrinsically valuable capabilities may well include being able 'to live long, escape avoidable morbidity, be well-nourished, be able to read, write and communicate, take part in literary and scientific pursuits and so forth' (Sen, 1984, p. 497).

Figure 0.13 The Capability Approach



Source: Adapted from Chiappero-Martinetti & Venkatapuram (2014) and Hart (2019)

A chief advantage of the capability approach is that it recognises and embraces human heterogeneity and diversity (D. A. Clark, 2006). For example, it allows for the fact that individuals and groups typically *differ* in their capacity to convert a given bundle of resources into similar functionings and capabilities. As Figure 0.13 shows, this is because of a variety of personal, social, and environmental conversion factors linked to gender, age, health, social conventions, climate, and so on (Sen, 1985). The CA is therefore well-placed to explore inequalities in capabilities among individuals, households, or communities with similar resources.

The CA also emphasises the expansion of *agency* through the promotion of substantive freedoms, the elimination of social exclusion, and the removal of power structures and unjust institutions (e.g. Sen, 1999, 2009). One example is the vast literature within the CA on tackling gender inequality – a theme that also cuts across this report (especially themes 1 and 4). Individual and collective forms of agency can also be used to promote capability expansion and further development objectives.

The CA is flexible and can be adapted and extended in a variety of ways to help address many different issues. This report has reason to draw on several variants of the CA at different points in the analysis – most notably the Socially Embedded Capabilities Approach (Theme 3) and the Integrated Capabilities Framework (Theme 4). The ADO also draws on the Human Security Approach (Theme 4), and resonates with the Sustainable Human Development Approach, which are both *capability* inspired.

By using a Socially Embedded Capabilities Approach (SECA), the ADO applies a *social lens* to the Capability-Agency matrix to examine the extent to which individual livelihood constraints are socially conditioned. The ability to move from the individual scale to the community level makes it possible to examine *conversion factors* in greater detail, unveiling how different facets of personal identity (such as psychology, gender, ethnicity, disability) *intersect* with each other and with location, family, household, community, and wider society (H. Khan, 2020).

Biggeri and Ferrannini's (2014) approach to 'Sustainable Human Development at the local level' also expands on conversion factors. They offer a people-centred and place-based perspective that shows that agency and participation mostly take place at the local level, and that capability expansion is linked to local governance structures. Their Sustainable Territorial Evolution for Human Development Framework explores the connections between individual, collective, and local dynamics with reference to territorial convergence functions (incorporating the resources and facilities of the locality), multilevel actors and institutions (including firms, markets, and political power), and procedural feedback loops (among different elements of the model).<sup>27</sup>

The Integrated Capabilities Framework (ICF) developed by Clark and Hodgett (2019) also aims to capture the interaction between the means and ends of development. It uses participatory methods (including open-ended questionnaires) to investigate capabilities in local contexts by focusing on values, expectations, and actual experiences. Specific research questions are adaptable but typically focus on the identification of capabilities, challenges, and opportunities over short- and medium-term horizons. In terms of guiding policy recommendations, the framework appeals to a 'targeted pragmatism', which means taking care of the priorities (or greatest needs) of specific groups (which typically vary) over universal (but less effective and more expensive) policy responses.

The Human Security Approach to sustainable human development also has connections to the capability approach. As Gasper (2020) shows in his expert paper for this report, human security includes safety from chronic threats associated with basic capability failures, such as being unable to avoid hunger, disease, exploitation, or repression. It also covers rapidly emerging threats, such as unemployment and natural or manmade calamities. Finally, the human security approach aids in identifying new threats to well-being, such as COVID-19.

### 0.5.2. Foresight Approach to Policy

The Foresight Approach draws on expertise, evidence, and scenario building for long-term planning, risk optimisation, and opportunity management. Foresight studies engage with complex issues, and investigate whole systems rather than single strands of cause and effect.

Foresight studies consider future 'scenarios' to explore possible changes and outcomes – taking account of attractive and unattractive possibilities even-handedly. In each scenario, a foresight study identifies the major challenges and drivers of change that will frame outcomes. Typically, challenges and drivers include: climate change; population and demographic shifts; resource constraints; and other report-specific considerations (such as health, mobility, education, spatial planning). A foresight study will typically evaluate four different future scenarios that incorporate diverse challenges and drivers to create complex and layered possible visions for the future.

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<sup>27</sup> This kind of approach can help provide a bridge between the capability approach and the agenda to localise the SDGs in ASEAN countries (UNDP, 2019b).

The methodological approach of a foresight study pulls in expertise from every available relevant source, discipline, or sector. It is important not to constrain the analysis, so as to allow for the widest implications of different scenarios and drivers to emerge. 'Expertise' is a wide concept. Global experts are invaluable, local input is crucial, and knowledge may reside in bureaucracies, academia, communities, community organisations, and NGOs.

Foresight studies are run by a policy team with expertise in this methodology, working with a hundred or more experts in the field. Two years is a typical time frame for the creation of a valuable foresight report – with an outward view for forty to fifty years.<sup>28</sup> A strong foresight study is chaired – and promoted – by a Minister, who is accountable for carrying through the application of the process into its policy implementation (S. D. King, 2020). The report is in plain language, with technical language confined to the Appendices. Appendices are complete technical reports in themselves, validating and substantiating the recommendations of the report and allowing for transparency and scrutiny.<sup>29</sup> Foresight reports should be launched publicly and made available in the public domain for maximum impact.<sup>30</sup>

The 'foresight approach' has diverse interpretations.<sup>31</sup> Some are more relevant to long-term policy processes than others.<sup>32</sup> This report identifies the principles that deliver the strongest returns to policy guidance in complex challenges within a systems analysis.<sup>33</sup> Detail, depth, breadth, and ownership at senior

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governmental levels and purposeful scenario building are the hallmarks of enduring reports. Stronger reports take time and are adequately resourced so that expert evidence and information can be sought as widely as possible. The approach brings technical knowledge (especially scientific understanding) into the policy arena, building from the experience of policy makers whilst benefiting from the very best technical knowledge.<sup>34</sup>

Foresight studies enable policy makers to step out of their habitual views and strategies for risk management. Effective foresight avoids the hazards of 'groupthink' and the dangers of narrow disciplinary discussions. Citizens, alongside policy makers, are engaged in the process of visualising risks and scenarios through the foresight process. A strong foresight study assesses the risks of inaction alongside the risks of different action responses. The challenges of 'locking in' on a particular pathway are embedded in the evaluation from the start. Driven by the search for a policy response, foresight studies allow the risk assessment process to be linked directly to the purpose of making the assessment. Communication and engagement of the foresight process and its outputs are built into the scheme of action from the beginning (Craig, 2018).

All foresight reports take a long view in order to anticipate future needs. However, action in response to a foresight study starts immediately. Health, cities, education systems, and climate impacts all unroll over mid- to long-term timescales. In each case, however, decisions

<sup>28</sup> There is no exact definition of a long-term horizon for a foresight study. It will be decided on a project by project basis – but decades, rather than years, are typical (Government Office for Science, 2017b, p. 3).

<sup>29</sup> Appendices for an example foresight study of obesity covered: a scientific review of strategies for reducing obesity; a review of evidence for lifestyle changes as a way of tackling obesity; environmental factors in reducing obesity; international comparisons for tackling obesity; research challenges in tackling obesity; and trends and drivers of obesity. Each appendix was a strong technical report in its own right, in addition to contributing to the totality of the foresight report.

<sup>30</sup> These kinds of institutional arrangements have been found to be effective in the foresight process (Government Office for Science, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> The Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, with the UNDP, promotes the principles of 'foresight planning' as a tool in sustainable development. (UNDP, 2014b). The UK government has drawn together its experience in foresight and other planning strategies for science in policy to create a 'Futures Toolkit' (Government Office for Science, 2017b). A foresight approach can be discerned in a study of innovative approaches to tackling complex problems in New Zealand highlighting crowdsourcing and the value of indigenous knowledge (Frame, 2018). The methodology for strategic foresight analysis is still in its early development (Iden et al., 2017), so it is important to pick a careful route through the diverse options suggested by a foresight approach.

<sup>32</sup> The term 'foresight' has also been taken up in the private sector as a way of describing market research for investors (Foresight Research, 2020) and as a way of looking at health in the future for Philanthropists (Foresight Initiative, 2020). At Stanford University, 'Foresight at Stanford' is a research initiative in the field of engineering design and technology (Stanford School of Engineering, 2020). In these contexts, the term 'foresight' gains ever wider and more flexible meanings.

<sup>33</sup> The approach aligns most closely with that taken by the Government Office for Science in the UK when advising on obesity, for example (Government Office for Science, 2007).

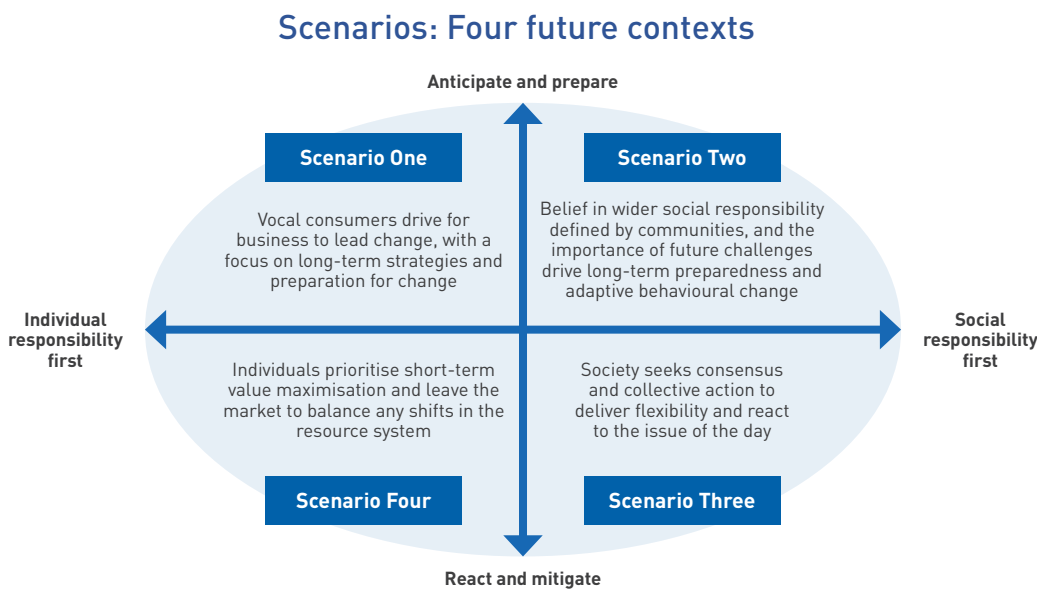
<sup>34</sup> A foresight approach can also be taken to anticipate political or socio-cultural future developments (Burrows & Gnad, 2018). In Chapter 5 ('How to ensure that when a Minister meets a Nobel Laureate they both have a great encounter'), Craig notes that 'Government generally wants to learn from science, even if it doesn't always act on that knowledge.' She also notes that public trust in scientists is consistently found to be higher than trust in politicians (Craig, 2019).

made immediately will either strengthen or weaken future capacities for success.

An additional dimension in foresight planning is found when the study engages with future 'contexts' (as shown in Figure 0.14) and overlays them onto other foresight study outputs. These contexts consider the degree and impact of planning and preparing for change, versus reacting only when change actually occurs (creating two dimensions of difference, captured on the y-axis of Figure 0.14). The contexts in Figure 0.14 also consider the degree to which

responses to change are socially organised or left to individuals to act upon (creating two further dimensions of difference, captured on the x-axis of Figure 0.14). This analysis creates four distinct future contexts, as shown in Figure 0.14. The future reality is likely to be an amalgam of all four contexts. Scenario modelling supports visualising and anticipating the impacts of moving towards one or another kind of future.

Figure 0.14: A Foresight approach to problem analysis



Source: Government Office of Science (2007).

In the sphere of human development interventions, application of a foresight approach enables the development of a problem analysis framework for addressing social exclusion and injustice, enhancing physical and mental well-being, and alleviating poverty. The framework will be resilient and adaptive, relying on active participation and values of mutual respect, empowerment, and inclusion. In this application, a foresight study will provoke innovation and experimentation, going beyond prediction and policy prescription. In the face of risk and uncertainty, foresight in human development allows for a focus on the enhancement of individual capacity and social resilience to future unknowns.





### Box 0.1 – Foresight and flooding in United Kingdom

The UK adopted a Foresight Programme in relation to 'Future Flooding', examining the risks posed from flooding and coastal erosion over the next 100 years. The Future Flooding foresight report is set out in several volumes, including a costed and recommended action plan (E. Evans et al., 2004). The Future Flooding report includes a physical analysis of flood risk across the whole of the UK at a level of detail that enables individual communities to respond. This geophysical analysis is combined with other conclusions on the expected costs and losses by sector of flood damage in different scenarios and the number of people affected. Using the foresight report as a tool, policy makers are able to value proposed interventions by comparing the cost of action with inaction, for example.

The annual probability of local flooding and social vulnerability in the event of floods is examined by local area. Analyses of urban flooding vulnerability required a hydrological study, analysis of stores, and engineering expertise on managing flows and the risk of permanent damage. The issues at stake are complex and inter-connected. No single ministry or department would have been able to create such a report independently, but many departments can make use of it.



### Box 0.2 – Foresight: Flooding in the Taihu basin in China

China's government made a foresight study of the Taihu Basin, located on the southern side of the Yangtze River estuary. Remarkably vulnerable to flooding, major floods in 1991 and 1999 brought water levels that exceeded historical records. Damage was extensive and the events received significant attention from the local and central government. Partners for the Chinese foresight flooding project included the Chinese and UK governments and the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs.

The study examined how the risk of Taihu Basin floods might change over the next 50 years and the best response options for government and other stakeholders. The project's qualitative and quantitative analyses support a comprehensive vision of possible future flood risk, informing immediate and future policy and decision making (Harvey et al., 2009).



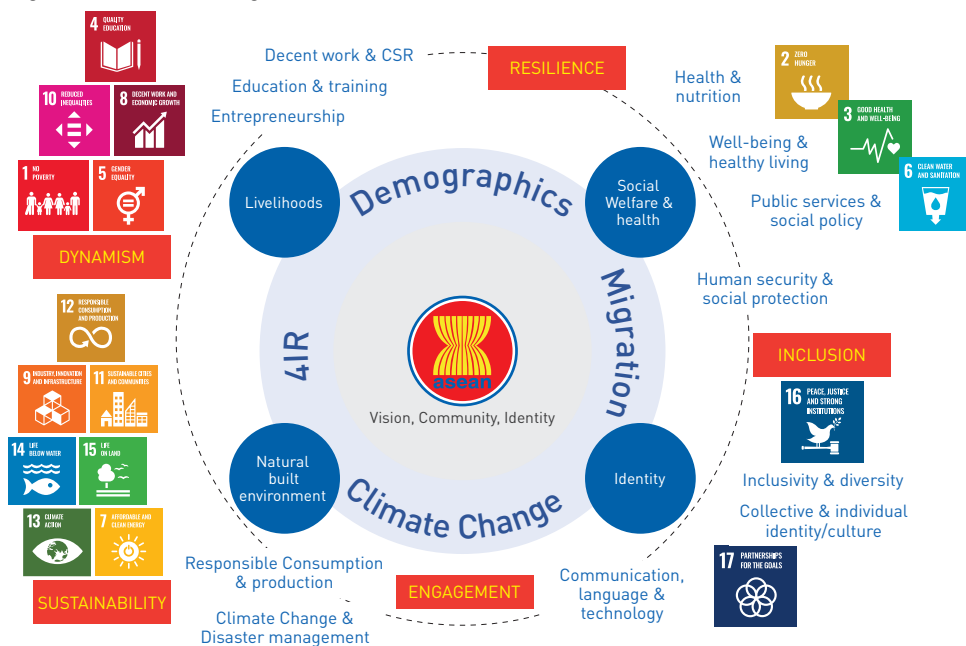
Both the Chinese and United Kingdom governments have used foresight approaches in different contexts. Boxes 0.1 and 0.2 show how each of them has focussed on sea-level rise and flood defences to understand and address one widespread threat with diverse and complex challenges at local levels.

Whatever the specific focus, a foresight study extends beyond the scope of a single Ministerial Group, Pillar, or Division within ASEAN. The complexity and breadth of a foresight report require central coordination, knowledge of the foresight concept, and the ability to draw on regional and global technical expertise across the multiple disciplines involved.

## 0.6 Structure and Content of the ADO

The ADO is structured across the four inter-related themes of Identity, Environment, Livelihoods, and Social Welfare and Health, each of which closely aligns with the ASEAN pillars of Community, Vision, and Identity. These report themes also mirror the policy priorities outlined in the ASCC Blueprint 2025 which consist of engagement, inclusion, sustainability, resilience, and dynamism. Furthermore, these themes also link directly to the social, economic and environmental pillars of the global Sustainable Development Goals (Figure 0.15).

Figure 0.15: Intersecting thematic structure



Source: Authors

Theme 1 places Identity at its heart in order to evaluate how social and cultural values shape and are also shaped by development policy choices. The theme examines the evolution of social, historical and institutional understandings of identity, by exploring how the concepts of gender, community, heritage, and language are understood within the region. To ensure the ASEAN principle of ‘no one gets left behind’ the theme seeks to uncovering people’s conceptions of identity using participatory data collection methods as a productive policy approach. This has the added value of reducing conflict and can also contribute to developing a richer sense of ASEAN identity.

Theme 2 examines the current policy choices made within the spaces of the natural and built environment and considers how these define future development pathways. The theme divides into five parts, focusing on shared drivers of change that demand intersecting strategies and solutions. It reviews the key challenges of climate change, disaster management, the built environment, and the natural environment through an evaluation of current policy implementation in the region. The theme assesses future strategies and solutions to inform thinking for the benefit of current and future ASEAN generations.

Theme 3 focuses on how social and natural boundaries frame livelihood opportunities. An ageing workforce over the next 20 years will have an impact on dependency ratios and is likely to change gender relations as well as inter-generational relations. This theme examines how current ASEAN plans address social and economic barriers to livelihood transitions and tackle the effective protection of less able-bodied workers and migrants, or those in informal, unskilled or unpaid activities.

Theme 4 analyses social welfare and health from a human development and capability perspective. It focuses on malnutrition, disease, social protection and the provision of public services. In doing so, it looks beyond the traditional medical model by emphasising the social determinants of health and well-being. The analysis identifies the nutrition burden, the risk of disease, and mental health as priority areas where the provision of more effective, equitable and accountable public services have the potential to advance human development.

### Cross-cutting themes

The ADO overlays four major drivers of change across the four themes. These drivers are demographics, migration, climate change, and the 4th industrial revolution. We do not suggest that this list is exhaustive but use these four 'drivers' to demonstrate how policy choices made today can have the far-reaching effects on society, both in the present day as well as in the foreseeable future.

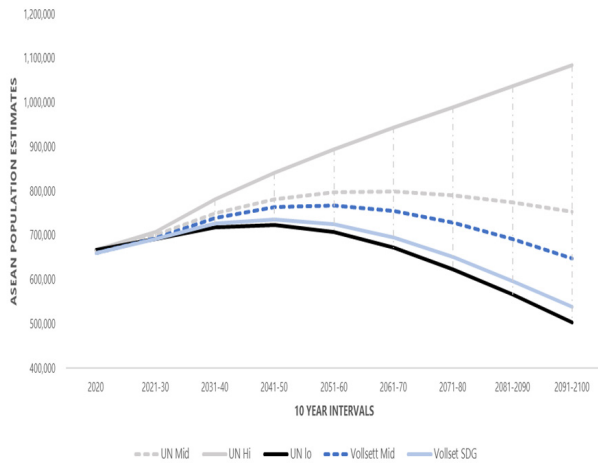
The conjoint impact of changes in climate and demography will have a significant impact on the ability of policy makers to realise the vision of an inclusive, participative and dynamic community. Long-term forecasting over multiple generations will be a valuable tool for policy designers in furthering this objective.

This is particularly significant in the ASEAN region, where a burgeoning young population was a key development driver of the latter half of twentieth century. This trend, however, might dramatically reverse in the second half of the twentyfirst century. Figure 0.16 compares three standard United Nations population forecast scenarios with new research published in the *Lancet* (Vollset et al., 2020). It plots population projections over eight decades from 2020 to 2100 using three UN-DESA scenarios (low, base and high) and contrasts these with a base case and a SDG-adjusted case as calculated by Vollset et al. (2020)

Should the United Nations high growth scenario prove accurate, an ASEAN population in excess of one billion would put unsustainable strain on the region's resources. All other scenarios indicate a growing population for a further generation, after which there will be a discernable shift towards a decline in the population of the region. The United Nation's baseline scenario forecasts that population in the ASEAN region will rise to a peak of 800 million by 2062, after which it will fall to 742 million by 2100 (UN DESA, 2020).

If the ASEAN region achieves the SDG goals, then fertility rates could fall substantially and stay low (see Figure 0.16).<sup>35</sup> By 2100 ASEAN’s population could be just above 500 million. This would represent a twenty-to percent decline from today’s population levels (Vollset et al., 2020).

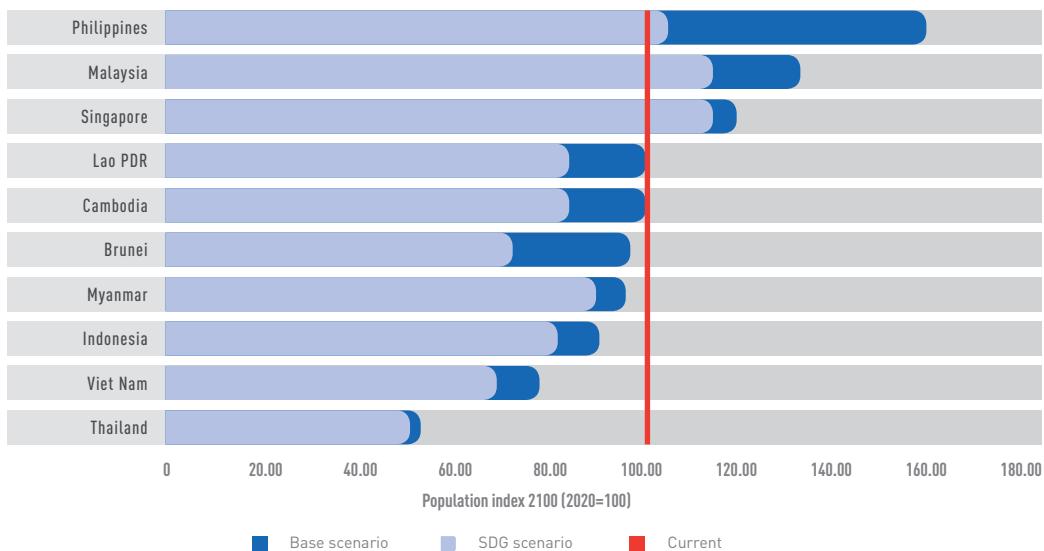
Figure 0.16 ASEAN regional population forecast scenarios



Source: Authors’ based on data from UN DESA (2020) and Vollset et al (2020).

At country level, patterns are even more dramatic (Figure 0.17). The Philippines and Malaysia would join Indonesia as ranking among the top twenty five most populated countries in the world. Furthermore, under this SDG scenario, Viet Nam would experience a thirty percent decline in population from the present day and this would be a fifty percent decline in the case of Thailand (Vollset et al., 2020).

Figure 0.17 ASEAN country population forecast scenarios

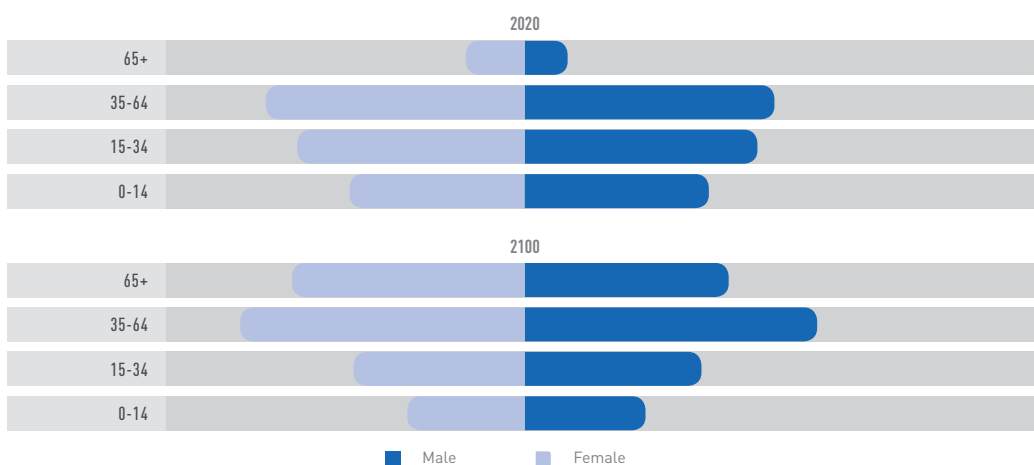


Source: Authors’ based on data from UN DESA (2020) and Vollset et al (2020).

<sup>35</sup> Particularly because of access to contraception, female empowerment and education which tend to lead to delayed marriage, fewer children and higher workforce participation (Vollset et al., 2020).

A major shifts in the age composition of the population is likely to accompany the overall decline in the number of people across the region (Figure 0.18). While currently, the over-64 age group accounts for 7 percent of the ASEAN population, this is projected to rise to 21 percent by 2100. In the case of Singapore and Thailand, the over-64 age group will constitute 30 percent of the population by 2050, of which one-third will be older than 80. The majority of the over 80 population will be women. Similar changes in population structure will also be evident in the case of Brunei, Malaysia and Viet Nam by the 2070s (UN DESA, 2020)

Figure 0.18 ASEAN population pyramids 2020 and 2100

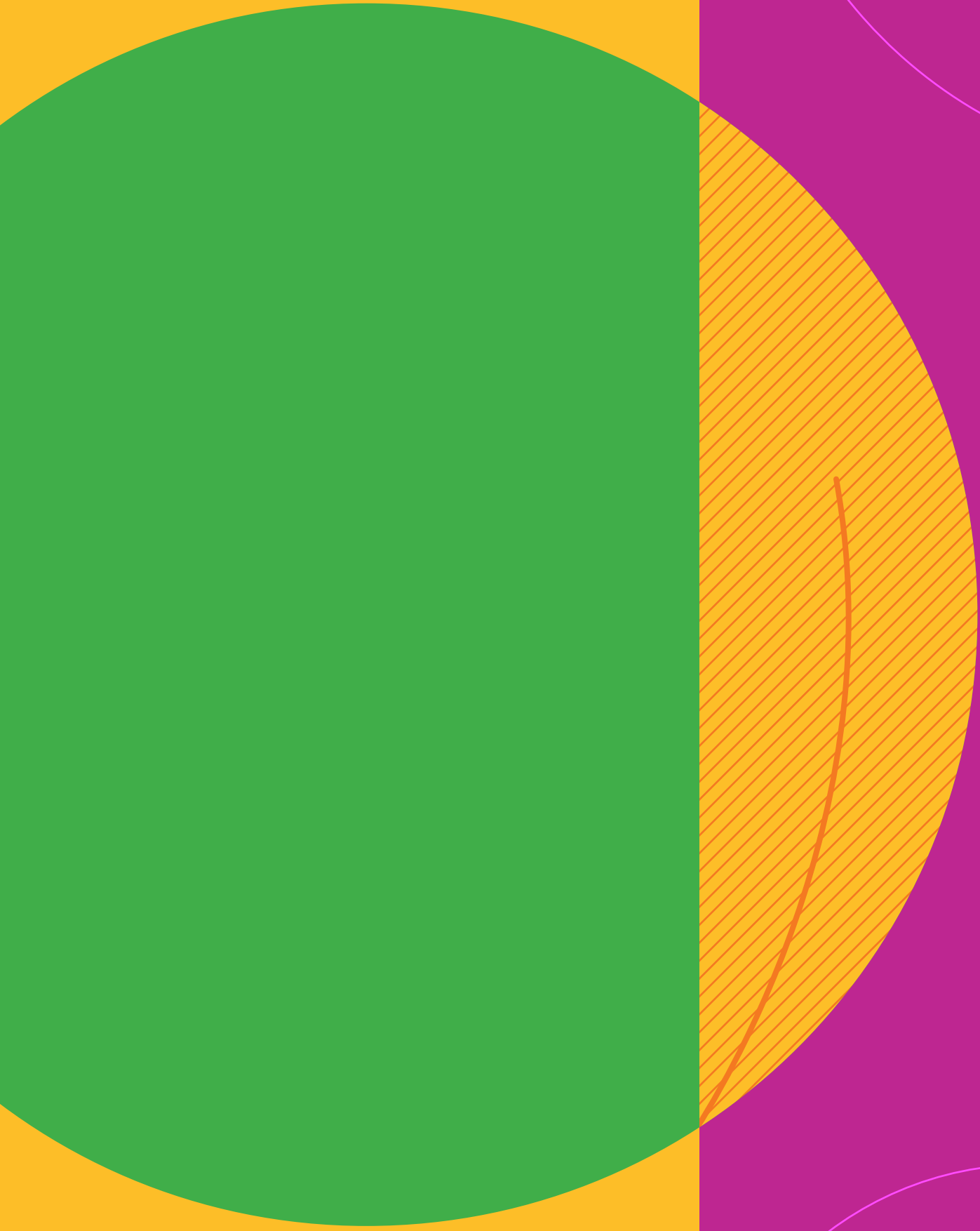


Source: UN DESA (2020)

These population shifts and the associated ‘feminisation of ageing, in particular, will have significant implications for identity, the environment, livelihoods, well-being and health.<sup>36</sup> The significant changes in demographic deciles as well as the gendered difference in each decile present social and fiscal policy challenges. The challenges will need to be addressed by policies in the areas of workforce participation, skills training, social protection for young and old, health and active living, housing and transport and disaster management.<sup>37</sup> All the themes recognise the importance of these drivers, and take explicit account of them in the analysis, as and when they directly impact a particular policy arena under the ASCC.

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<sup>36</sup> Older women in particular face more discrimination, are less financially secure and tend to be less well educated. Many will be widowed and have not had the ability to work or save themselves during their working years (VNCA & UNFPA, 2019).  
<sup>37</sup> Many are less able to work and more dependent upon family members for financial and medical assistance (VNCA & UNFPA, 2019).



# 01. IDENTITY

Identity is central to ASEAN’s strategy—and to who we are as human beings. To identify and realise its objectives, ASCC requires a participatory and inclusive approach and full cognisance of the notion ‘ASEAN identity’





# 1. IDENTITY

## 1.0 Introduction

The nurturing of ‘ASEAN awareness’ and community participation is central to the ethos that underpins ASEAN’s social development strategy. In recognition of this, ‘Identity’ is placed at the start of this Outlook and its inter-relationship with socio-economic development choices and outcomes are examined throughout.

Although identity is central to ASEAN’s strategy (and indeed to who we are as human beings), defining precisely what it entails is not straightforward. To identify its objectives and implementation mechanisms, the ASCC needs a participatory and inclusive approach to develop a fuller understanding of the idea of ‘ASEAN identity’. This presents both a policy objective in and of itself and a means of supporting other policy objectives (Park, 2020).

The purpose of **Theme 1: Identity** is to discuss how ASEAN identity has to embrace inclusivity and diversity. The idea of identity is wide. It takes in the past, as well as the present. It includes the individual, as well as the collective. ‘Identity’ can relate to small groups within a nation, age-related characteristics, transboundary commonalities, shared gender-related factors, ethnicity, or links of faith and or shared cultural experiences. This theme consists of four sections:

**Section 1.1** looks at **Identity Construction and Multiplicity** as interconnected, multiple pathways to assist in achieving cohesive social and cultural objectives.

**Section 1.2** examines how ‘Identity’ links to **Inclusivity and Diversity** by looking at individual identities through the examples of disability and gender.

**Section 1.3 Collective Identity and Culture** adopts a collective point of view to investigate issues of ethnicity and heritage.

**Section 1.4 Communications, Language, and Technology** discusses the importance of how these ideas and notions are communicated across society through different languages and modes of communication.

In addition to setting up a discussion on the meaning of ‘identity’ across the ASEAN member states, Theme 1 draws on various official ASEAN documents addressing a range of associated topics. The aim is to review case studies and identify metrics within ASEAN for monitoring and evaluating its own strategic and work plans. This process of reviewing existing documentation has highlighted particularly innovative plans, offering additional insights into existing streams of work being undertaken by ASCC.

The documents drawn on in Theme 1 include: the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community Blueprint 2025 (ASCC, 2016); the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children ('ACWC') 2016-2025 (ACWC, 2015);<sup>38</sup> the ASEAN Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication 2016-2020 (ASEAN, 2017a);<sup>39</sup> the ASEAN Youth Work Plan 2016-2020 (ASEAN, 2019j);<sup>40</sup> ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ASEAN, 2018d); the Regional Action Plan for ASEAN Heritage Parks 2016-2020 (ASEAN, 2008); the ASEAN Communication Master Plan II 2018-2025 (ASEAN, 2019a); the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (ASEAN, 2016h); the ASEAN Strategic Plan for Information and Media 2016-2025 (ASEAN, 2016f); Report of the Secretary General of ASEAN on the Work of ASEAN 36<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit (ASEAN, 2020d); and the Narrative of ASEAN identity (ASEAN, 2020g). Each document contributes to the understanding of what ASEAN identity might be, and how it might be measured from various perspectives.

The ASEAN 'Youth Development Index' ('YDI') is a new metric that addresses identity for youth within ASEAN more directly. YDI was developed and introduced by the Youth Development Index Task Force under the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) within the ASCC. It is a sectoral initiative designed to improve the quality of data on youth and to evaluate youth programmes by identifying youth outcomes. The YDI specifically recognises 'ASEAN Awareness,

Values and Identity' as one of its five domains (the others being Education, Employment and Opportunity, Health and Well-being, and Participation and Engagement).

An 'inclusive' approach to identity is central for the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its call 'to leave no one behind'. This SDG principle demands institutional processes and practices that secure participation for all citizens. This approach to inclusion involves acknowledging that some individuals have already faced exclusion. As a result of exclusion and discrimination, they may have suffered lost earnings and reduced asset creation options. Discrimination also increases the likelihood of physical and mental ill-health. These costs imposed on individuals are increased and compounded by the real costs imposed on the state. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has demonstrated that gender discrimination, measured by the difference in the percentage of men and women in the labour force, costs countries at the bottom of the gender equality ladder close to 35 percent of their GDP (Ostry et al., 2017). Gender is clearly an 'axis of disadvantage' across many social organisations, from the community to national level and beyond. However, it is only one example of systemic disadvantage in different contexts and locations.

'Axes of disadvantage' identified for consideration in this Outlook are gender, age, location, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, disability, and sexual orientation. These are found to be social markers along which

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<sup>38</sup> The sixteen themes set out in the workplan are: Strengthening institutional capacity of ACWC; Elimination of violence against women and children; The right of children to participate in all affairs that affect them; Trafficking in women and children; Promotion and protection of the rights of women and children with disabilities; Child Protection System: Comprehensive / Integrative Approach for Children in Need for Special Protection (e.g. victims of abuse and neglect, trafficking, child labour, children affected by statelessness, undocumented migrant children, HIV/AIDS, natural disaster, conflicts, and children in juvenile justice system, or children in conflict with the law); The right to early childhood and quality education; Promoting implementation of international, ASEAN and other instruments related to the rights of women and children; Gender equality in education (textbook, curriculum, equal access); Social impact of climate change on women and children; Strengthening economic rights of women with regards to feminisation of poverty, women's rights to land and Property; Adolescent physical and mental health; Gender perspective in policies, strategies and programmes for migrant workers; Gender mainstreaming; Women participation in politics and decision making, governance and democracy; and Early marriage.

<sup>39</sup> The six components of the workplan are: Rural Economic Growth; Social Protection and Safety Nets; Development of Infrastructure and Human Resources in Rural and Peri-Urban Areas; Public-Private-People Partnership (4Ps) for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication; Resilience of the Poor and Vulnerable Groups to Economic and Environmental Risks; Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Development and Poverty Reduction in the Region.

<sup>40</sup> The five sub-goals are: Sustain the focus on youth entrepreneurship through structured capacity building and mentoring programmes; Enhance youth employability through skills training and life-long education; Enhance awareness and appreciation of an ASEAN Community through mutually beneficial people-to-people exchange Programme; Strengthen youth involvement and participation in building an ASEAN Community through volunteerism opportunities and leadership programmes; Increase youth competencies and resilience with advanced technological and managerial skills.

discrimination is experienced and around which groups are 'left behind' in the process of development.

The theme of identity is addressed within this larger context of achieving the global goals of inclusion and sustainability set out by the terms of reference of this Outlook. In particular, we focus on both the specific structures in national and regional institutions that continue to discriminate along the axes identified above and on the outcomes achieved through the operation of these institutions. The objective is to understand how the role of identity construction undertaken by communities can provide a more inclusive and sustainable framework; for example, women coming together to crowdsource funds for entrepreneurial activities (ESCAP, 2018b). In order to trace out multiple pathways, it focuses on using evidence from ASEAN Master Plans (AMPs) of policy-making in the fields of gender and disability at distinct levels: individuals; religion, ethnicity, and heritage at the community level; and communication, media, and language at the national level.

## 1.1 Who are We? Identity Construction and Multiplicity

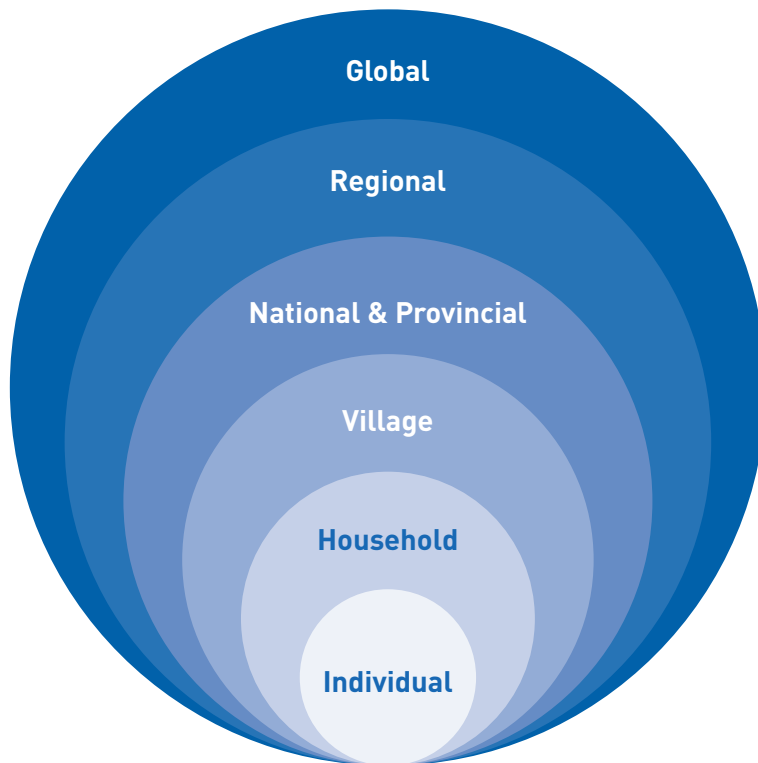
Human beings make decisions based on how their thoughts are shaped by the society in which they live, and it is the role of development policy to find ways to assist individuals and communities in taking advantage of opportunities to improve their lives (World Bank, 2015). People do not make explicit reference to how societal influences - such as having caring responsibilities as an older sibling or being

discriminated against as a minority group - affect their choices. Yet these very identities play a significant role in one's ability to improve one's life choices and future outcomes.

These aspects of people's lives arise from society's modes of thinking about individuals, with regards, for example, to gender, age, ethnicity, language, sexuality, and location. Such societal differentiation of individuals results in individuals being accorded status based on dominant beliefs and values accorded to particular occupations. For example, 'a farmer is less successful than a professional'. These socially held beliefs affect the status that is accorded to an individual. It is important to emphasise that these identities are social constructs that are formed and re-formed through social beliefs and practices. Socially held beliefs are also subject to political manipulation and affected by institutional framing at multiple levels (e.g., local, sub-national, national, regional). These beliefs and identities do not emanate from a set of objective facts. Nor are they the product of natural differences. They are socially constructed. For instance, people may regard others of a different ethnicity as being less intelligent, but this ordering of intelligence between ethnic groups will change based on the ethnicity of a particular observer. It is a relative ordering and not a fixed or singular point (Bates, 2006).

Identities also change as social construction is influenced by continuous processes that shape how an individual, group, or nation see themselves, as well as how others see them (Akerlof & Kranton, 2005; Sen, 1999). They draw on physical and spatial proximities and shared cultural and political experiences on multiple levels (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Multiple scales and identities



Source: Authors

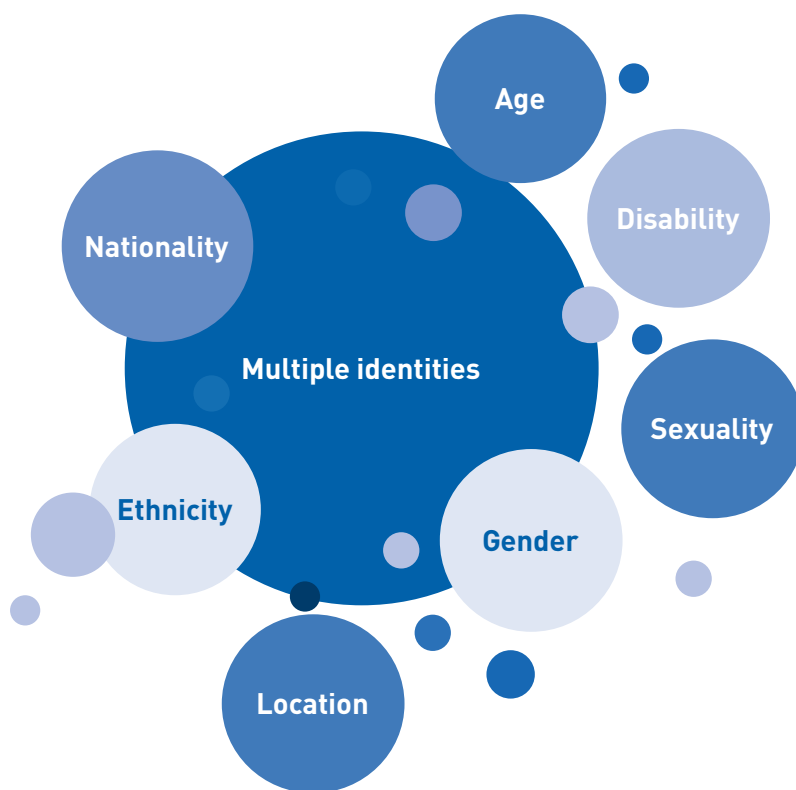
At a national level, the creation of a 'nation' draws on past institutional and colonial legacies to generate ideas of an 'imagined alternative' amongst nationalist groups. This is both inclusionary and exclusionary. Nationalist consciousness becomes a force to overthrow old states and create new ones. Identity formation is thereby a source of conflict, as well as cohesion [Sen, 2007].

At a regional level, the foundation of a common identity amongst the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is based on a process of active institutional construction through political interactions within and between its governments [A. Acharya, 2017]. This notion of 'region' did not emerge from a previously circumscribed geography or single agreed culture, but was the consequence of strategic interaction among the region's elite [A. Acharya, 2012]. The emphasis on 'imagined' does not imply that territories that are contiguous to each other and have commercial

and cultural interactions cannot constitute a region. Emphasising a 'social construct' does not take away the importance of proximity or a common history for a shared identity. The point is that 'ASEAN identity' is not a 'given' fact. It represents the outcome of conscious thinking, strategy and policy.

At an individual level, belonging to groups is the very essence of our social being. Individual and group identities are mutually constitutive. Each influences the other in a chain of interactions. Being marginalised as a group or as an individual from a group can create a sense of being different from the norm [Settles & Buchanan, 2014]. This can lead to real consequences, such as a greater likelihood of mental disorders, stress, and discrimination [Klonoff et al., 2000]. However, these individual and collective identities co-exist in a complex arrangement of social labels, structures, and spheres (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Multiple identities at the individual level



Source: Authors

A person can be a 'male' or 'female', 'Indonesian' or 'Cambodian', and also identify as 'ASEAN' simultaneously. A person's behaviour can reflect any one (or several) of these identities, depending on the time, circumstance, or framing (Bates, 2006). The multiple spheres of an individual's identity frame the channel through which development interventions are accessed.

Successful public policy supports the flourishing of multiple identities at all levels. A failure to deal fairly with this natural variety of identities by favouring one over another is

a direct obstacle to inclusion and diversity. The constriction of individual and community choices through the use of singular identities (for example, gender or migrant status) is a recipe for exclusion and violence, not social cohesion and inclusion (Sen, 2007). The policy implication is that governments and institutions must recognise the potential for explicit and implicit discrimination against less visible minority identities if policies tend to favour more visible groups (World Bank, 2015). This especially applies when political elites seek to consolidate political power (World Bank, 2013).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> The study of the role of the elite attracted economists, sociologists and political scientists in the first half of the twentieth century. See the work of Vilfredo Pareto (1979) for an economist's perspective on why the role of meritocratic elites was commendable for organising and controlling the economy and society. See also the work of Mills (1956) and Mosca (1898).

Individuals can be further restricted if the set of identities that are assigned to them excludes them from accessing resources; for example, a disabled older woman or neurodiverse child. In the former example, this person would not be able to travel independently if they did not have specialised aids to participate. They might also need additional time to participate, taking into account both their disability and age. In the latter example, the person might not be allowed to play with other children in group sport due to social discrimination, which might lead to a psychological downward spiral in their well-being. These multiple restrictions that become a cumulative source of disadvantaged are termed 'intersectional', as each additional restriction multiplies the disadvantage rather than simply adding another restriction. These forms of identity that are located in social norms can distance individuals, who due to no fault of their own are regarded as 'lesser' in their own community and society.

In other situations, it is the policy environment that could be the source of disadvantage. For instance, a highly educated society might place a high value on education. Those who are unable to achieve educational excellence are then easily regarded as an 'outsider' group. 'Outsiders', as groups or individuals, do not generally have the power to influence policy-making in societal or economic spheres, while 'insiders' tend to have that cultural or market power (Maloney et al., 1994, p. 199).<sup>42</sup> This highlights the circular relationship between society and identity: society shapes identity, but identity also shapes society (Park, 2020).

This interactive process between identity and society (leading to exclusion for some and inclusion for others) has a direct impact on social exclusion - broadly defined as 'the lack

or denial of resources, rights, goods, and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural, or political arenas' (Levitas et al., 2007).

The danger for individuals deemed to have 'subordinate identities' in a given context or are stigmatised due to one or more aspects of their identity is that they are more likely to be excluded from the full set of social opportunities. For example, an elderly indigenous woman living in a rural area experiences multiple disadvantages: exclusion due to location, gender, and age all at once. The way in which these specific aspects of her identity interconnect will have various impacts on her ability to achieve the life she wishes to lead. The intersectionality (the way they meet and overlap in one person) of identities can result in her voice being muted and difficult to be heard. In more extreme cases, she will experience intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008).

Analysis of policy design shows that explicit and implicit forms of social exclusion of marginalised peoples can be invisible during the policy making process (Fennell, 2009, p. 2). Sometimes exclusion and discrimination may unintentionally be built into policy in a form of 'adverse incorporation'. This occurs when an individual is included in the aims of policy intervention, but on terms dictated by the prevailing power and social structures. Such 'inclusion' can have effects that are worse for the individual than exclusion, because it secures an unequal power relation between the majority and the minority group (Hickey & du Toit, 2007).

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<sup>42</sup> An 'insider' group is more readily recognised by the state, as their opinions are regarded to be more valuable. The power of the 'insider group' arises from key characteristics of success: organising ability arising from a clearly enunciated set of group demands to achieve goals; cohesiveness which results from a high level of commitment to goals, or strategic positioning that was the result of the resources that the group controlled. An oft-cited example is the National Farmers Union in the UK (Rose, 1985).

In an inclusive and sustainable community, individuals have the right to adopt multiple identities and the freedom to choose a lifestyle and live in an environment that they value. A key indicator of a successful social policy is evidence of human flourishing through their ability to manoeuvre through and mix multiple identities (e.g., those of gender, age, location, sexual orientation). Furthermore, when social policy is oriented towards improving human development, the adoption of inclusion and sustainability as core policy objectives entails facilitating the right of individuals to exercise increased freedom, including through navigation of their multiple identities. Achieving these outcomes requires the active encouragement of communities, households, and individuals (as set out in SECA in the introduction) to make choices that promote resilience and make them less vulnerable to human and natural shocks. For example, a policy decision to champion resilience might promote innovation by promoting more open-minded social attitudes that also enable greater human flourishing; thus creating a 'virtuous circle' of development (Park, 2020).

### 1.1.0. Implications of Constructing Identity for the ASEAN Region

The evolution of an ASEAN regional identity has been underway for the past six decades as a result of 'localisation' through the borrowing of 'foreign' ideas that were the 'best fit' for existing indigenous traditions and practices. Localisation introduces new agreed norms within the regional body, which are subsequently transmitted to new members through a 'socialisation' mechanism using persuasive and non-coercive engagement. This form of transmission has the advantage that it makes the entry of additional members into the regional body easier as they familiarise

themselves with the agreed norms and move towards a more homogenous view (A. Acharya, 2004). The result is a 'pro-norm' attitude emerging among new entrants, which increases the ability to deliver a deliberated mandate and permits adoption through socialisation rather than through rigid institutional rules. This kind of institutional design emphasises flexibility and promotes interactions through informal processes, resulting in a path-dependent approach to regional decision making (A. Acharya, 2011).

The Narrative of ASEAN Identity adopted by the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN summit in November 2020, provides another example of this 'localisation' approach. The exploration of this ASEAN notion of identity was initiated through the presentation of an identity concept that combined inherited and constructed values. The objective of a common identity would be achieved through installing a bridge between constructed values that are the result of explicit intent to develop an allegiance to a mental mode that would direct a society to uphold a shared vision; and ascribed inherited values that are already in circulation in the region and arise from historically transmitted ideas of heritage across many generations (ASEAN, 2020g).

By drawing on identity construction, the Narrative of ASEAN Identity (ASEAN, 2020g) develops a common language and a set of common beliefs or values that will bring different generations within a nation and across the region together. The long-term perspective set out in the Narrative is also conducive to ensuring that the process of selecting shared values will be the result of a participatory and democratic process. Nonetheless, challenges may remain in determining both 'inherited' and 'constructed' sets of values for the purposes of policy making. In the case of inherited values, the challenges are based on a subjective understanding of the past.

Historical understanding is framed by the particular perception adopted. It might be said that 'the past is a foreign country', while 'the future is another country' (Lowenthal, 2015, p. 25). The story of the history of a country is affected by how a particular account is presented, as well as the nature and manner of use of records to construct a narrative. Furthermore, historians discuss and analyse the past using the standpoint of the current day. They are influenced by the needs of the present, including their audiences (Lowenthal, 2015). In the case of 'constructed values', on the other hand, the process of construction of new values for a region needs to be preceded by drawing on a shared common vision. This would be the result of a long-standing participatory design that would operate over a matter of decades to acquire a set of common norms. A successful ASEAN governance mechanism, in line with 'one vision, one community, one identity', will recognise that the timeline is long – several decades, rather than years. Norm localisation and subsequent socialisation is a result of multiple mutual interactions between society and identity that can only occur over many years (A. Acharya, 2017).

The local and cultural identities that operate in a nation or region can be modified through societal processes of 'norm localization' and the subsequent 'socialisation of norms' across countries and within their communities. However, this requires clear recognition that this is a policy-directed 'construction' of regional identity. There is always a political dimension associated with regional governance that can be framed by a distinction between thick versus thin identities.<sup>43</sup>

Thick identity is based on a shared culture and community interactions, and is a long-term objective that evolves over decades. Achieving a thick ASEAN identity requires a substantial political programme. To achieve this, the starting point would be working on abstract concepts such as 'heritage' and 'culture' and on how they are shared across Southeast Asia. A 'bottom-up' and 'participatory' exercise led by civil society organisations and membership bodies would create a set of consultative platforms. Over a number of years and through a set of repeated processes, these consultative platforms would create an inclusive framework with individual agency at its core. In contrast, thin identity takes place at the level of involvement with other individuals, and is built around solving a single problem. A thin ASEAN identity would focus, for example, on universally-agreed-on sectoral programmes such as health and education and would be limited to ensuring all individuals are able to make use of the identified service.

Aspects of the 2025 Blueprint hint that a thicker identity may be feasible if sufficient commonalities across ASEAN's constituent identities can be found. However, this approach carries with it a risk. If political consensus is insufficient, then ASEAN identity and ASEAN development may be seen as being against local and even national, interests (Park, 2020). While the final determination lies with ASEAN policy makers, gathering perspectives on and knowledge of 'ASEAN-ness' across the member states would have long-term and forward-looking value.

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<sup>43</sup> The terms 'thick' and 'thin' have been used in economics and sociology (and there are later variants in other social sciences) to distinguish between stronger and weaker forms of cooperation and other associated relational behaviour. See Axelrod (1984) for the economic model of cooperation; Granovetter (1973) on strong and weak ties; and Terlouw (2012) for a review of the more recent use of the terms in regional studies.



The risk of designing unintentionally poor policies would thus be reduced if there was a long-term approach to exploring the identity of individuals and their communities. This would require a long-term approach that is founded on data and involves going out to community members where they reside, study, and work. An example of political and policy processes that bring identity to the fore is provided by the foresight programme in the United Kingdom. Since the early 2000s, long-

term planning and policy making have been a priority, resulting in the founding of the Horizon scanning programme, established by the Office of the Chief Scientific Advisor. The UK Foresight Report, *Future identities: changing identities in the UK*, shows forward-looking thinking on the impact of identity on national and regional development. Box 1.1 provides a summary of the programme, which seeks to investigate future scenarios to better understand uncertainties and identify key subjects of interest/concern.



**Box 1.1 Bringing identity into the policy making sphere**

The Foresight Future Identities report was commissioned to obtain a better understanding of identities in the UK (Government Office for Science, 2013). Evidence was collected to understand how identities in the UK might change over the next ten years and to identify key challenges for effective policy making and implementation in the UK. This approach of looking forward to understand the relationships between identity and policy making dovetails with the long-term process of 'socialisation' of norms through a process of 'localisation' (A. Acharya, 2017). The foresight thinking exercise provides policy makers the opportunity to examine the roles and relationships that people undertake in society. It is able to display how they 'see' themselves and also how 'others see them'.

It also provides methods for designing and collecting data on how these different forms of 'seeing' affects how people perceive their own lives and how their lives are perceived by society. It also provides insights into how identities provide individuals opportunities to change their living: for example how being a member of a club can increase their networks, or how, and they might be excluded because they are of a minority religion. By approaching the identity of individuals and the communities within which they reside, such an investigative exercise reduces the risk of governments misreading how identities might tie to their objectives, and prevent the designing of an erroneous policy despite the policy intention of improving the lives of individuals.



The objective of the report was to map evidence across multiple spheres on the particular configuration of identities in a nation/region and to move away from the notorious 'template approach' of imposing universal expectations from top-down.<sup>44</sup> The report identified key areas where identities were key drivers of change and

how these drivers could contribute to meeting policy objectives. The report grouped the drivers into five broad categories: social, technological, economic, environmental, and political. The intention was to understand how a common set of beliefs held by a particular populace could be affected by changes in each of these categories.

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<sup>44</sup> Biographical identities are more 'standalone' identities that individuals might use to describe themselves to others or even themselves. These might include national identity, as well as ethnicity and religion – although these also have a strong social role. Identities such as a professional role or financial status might also be considered biographical identities. Biometric identities are those aspects of identity related to the body, including unique characteristics such as DNA, fingerprints, irises and faces, which can be used as a means of authentication to verify that people are who they say they are (Foresight Report, 2012).

The result of this foresight report was that UK government agencies and policy makers had rigorous scientific evidence of how identities can be a powerful resource to engineer social change. The evidence pointed to the need to mediate changing identities through social networks, and that individuals are most affected by events that occur in their local communities (though 'local' might be closely bound to global events, due to the role of transnational communication and digital technologies).

The implication was that there was social value in encouraging a flourishing of multiple identities of an individual (e.g., parent, citizen, and employee). This provided the policy making process a richer and more integrated understanding of how individuals navigate the world. It also made policy makers more acutely aware of policies that did not recognise the value of identities in creating social networks - thus losing an opportunity to increase trust in society and the government (a consequence of the majority of individuals failing to achieve their desired outcomes). A far worse consequence of disregarding identity in policy is that it leaves one unable to predict the negative consequences for a harmonious social fabric, should portions of the population face marginalisation and exclusion.

### 1.1.1. Policy Implications

Promote the plurality of identities that exist in the region. As identities have the potential to be 'drivers for change' they can be valuable assistance in achieving public policy objectives. There is particular value in recognising the importance of multiple identities for achieving a sense of selfhood, and is a feature that is highly significant in in Southeast Asia, where there are

multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies and where multiple identities can weave a richer fabric for social integration. There is a positive outcome at different scales for individuals, communities, nations and the entire region

- Identities have intrinsic value to individuals but they were also of instrumental value to larger units such as businesses and nation states.
- Thick identity is more robust than going for a thin identity that draws on current policy. An ASEAN identity that explicitly uses a norm of localisation to positively engage with and influence national and political conditions in member states.
- Use of a Foresight approach that consults with the populace and sets up an evidence base for identifying challenges and opportunities is valuable.

### 1.1.2. Key Findings

1. The plurality of identities that exist in the ASEAN region can serve as the building blocks for a regional vision that actively embraces and thrives with the multiple identities of its residents.
2. A participatory approach to harnessing the multiplicity of views on an ASEAN identity could, as a process in itself, help drive social change and achieve public policy goals. The cooperation and coordination of all stakeholders in such a participatory process is key to building and managing social relations that lead to change.
3. Using a Foresight approach obtains a better understanding of individuals' identity and how it evolves. Using evidence to understand people's conceptions of themselves and their communities can help policymakers make more responsive policies.

## 1.2 Inclusivity & Diversity and How We See Each Other

Given this understanding of identity as multiple and constructed, the question is how this affects people's lives. Since individuals flourish when they are able to navigate multiple identities successfully, and they suffer when these identities are sources of marginalisation, it is necessary to understand individual life experiences by a simultaneous consideration of all the groups to which an individual belongs. Through the examples of disability and gender, this section highlights how diversity provides a richer inclusive framing than a standard norm-based approach to social development.

### 1.2.0. Disability

Available evidence suggests that persons with disabilities living in ASEAN countries are more multidimensionally deprived than the average person (ESCAP, 2018a). Poverty rates tend to be higher among persons with disabilities. The gap changes from country to country, ranging from 3.9 percent to 20.6 percent across countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Access to education is also an issue. The drop-out rate of students with disabilities between primary and secondary education reaches 50 percent in Southern Asia (ESCAP, 2018a). Overall, a similar picture is found for access to employment and political/social participation. All in all, it is clear that fostering full and effective participation in society for persons with disabilities will accelerate multidimensional poverty reduction across ASEAN.<sup>45</sup>

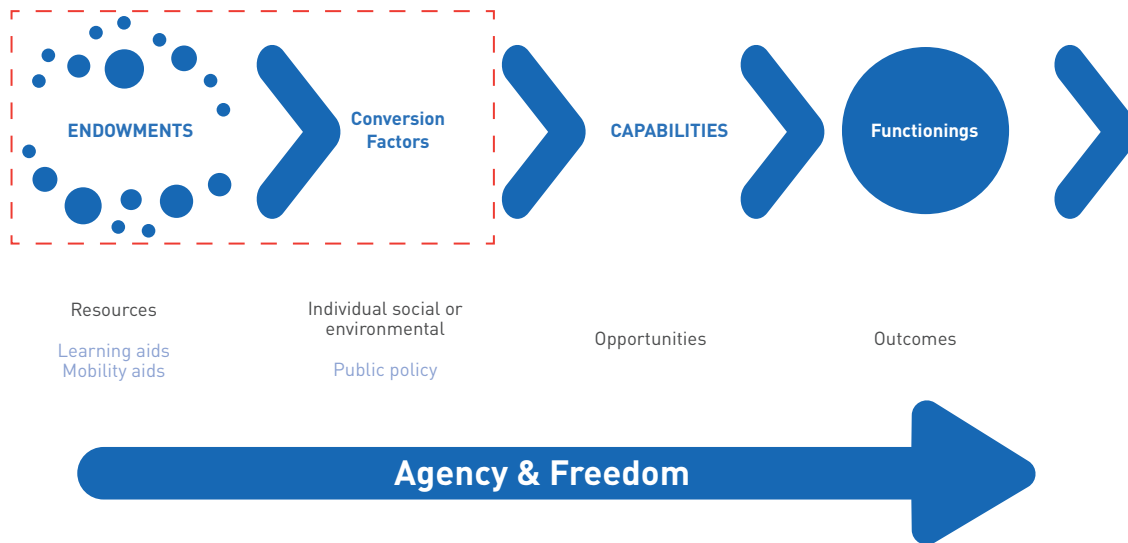
In addition, demographic trends confirm that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is an urgent need for the middle- to long-term sustainability of the development process. ASEAN countries are experiencing demographic transitions as a consequence of their economic development. Increased life expectancy and reduced fertility rates will cause remarkable ageing of the population. In 2019, the share of the population aged 60 or above ranged from under 7 percent in Lao PDR to over 21 percent in Singapore. In 2050, this share is expected to range from about 16 percent to over 40 percent, depending on the country (UN DESA, 2017). It is worth emphasising that disability prevalence is much higher among the elderly. Almost 60 percent of people in Southern Asia aged over 60 have some disability, compared with about 16 percent of people aged 15-59 (WHO & World Bank, 2011).

Treating disability as a key axis of identity helps develop an 'Intersectionality' approach for examining different and multiple axes of identity (e.g., ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc.). 'Intersectionality' recognises that these various axes of identity can include or exclude. Where they exclude, the different axes interact with one another in shaping the condition of marginalisation experienced by particular individuals (such as people of a particular ethnicity, for whom gender and disability may cause particular kinds and depths of exclusion). (Brewer et al., 2002).

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<sup>45</sup> The ASEAN Enabling Masterplan, 2025 provided valuable guidance as it emphasises the rights of persons with disabilities, which advances the previous framing of disability using a needs-based perspective. This innovative approach facilitates the creation of human rights instruments so that PwDs can have the same opportunities and pursue their chosen life outcomes

Figure 1.3 The Capability Approach to well-being



Source: Adapted from Chiappero-Martinetti & Venkatapuram (2014) and Hart (2019)

The capability approach (CA) has been a powerful lens for analysing disability. It emphasises a rights-based approach and focuses on a psycho-socio-biological model of well-being (Figure 1.3). A person with disabilities who has access to the same set of resources as another individual will not be able to achieve the same level of functionings (Trani et al., 2011). The provision of specialist mobility aids or adapted learning aids may assist a person with disabilities. However, individual support and adaptation is only one part of the change required. Public policies have to recognise that the needs of persons with disabilities are different, whether it be on streets, in schools, or in public spaces and buildings. The red box around resources and conversion factors in Figure 1.3 indicates this two-part change must occur to increase the choices available to those with disabilities.

Prior to the introduction of intersectionality as an analytical lens, persons with disabilities were believed to be experiencing the same deprivations. This not only standardised the experience of individuals with disabilities, it also implicitly regarded adult men with disabilities as the 'standard'. By contrast, using the intersectionality lens provides an approach that can identify when an individual faces multiple levels of discrimination (McCall, 2005). The CA permits a direct investigation of the actual range of possibilities that are available to a person with disabilities, rather than looking only at what they have achieved. By moving away from a focus on either a single feature or a collection of additive features, this approach can look at the multiplying effects of different kinds of deprivation. For example, a child who cannot walk to school is a child who misses out on education and who may then be (wrongly) recorded as a child with cognitive disabilities. This analysis shows how different grounds of discrimination can interact with each other (Arciprete et al., 2020).

In practical terms, the degree of exclusion of persons with disabilities varies substantially among the population depending on the intersection between age, class, caste, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. For example, women with disabilities are more at risk of abuse and violence than men with disabilities, as reported in the Progress Report on Women's Rights and Identity (ASEAN, 2019h).

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006, was the result of a long-standing campaign to move away from a medical model of disability in favour of a social (then bio-psycho-social) model, with the result that there was a shift from a 'deficit' or 'needs based' framework to one that explicitly uses a human-rights based framework. The nature of the advocacy required for this successful change was multi-pronged. In addition to making the case for a philosophical change in the conceptualisation of disability, the

campaign directly and repeatedly addressed the urgent need for a radical shift in practices and power-relations through which individuals were perceived. By making the case that it was wrong to use a medical approach that defined disability in terms of some distance from 'normality', the campaign also identified an incorrect 'norm' where disability is seen as an impairment. The campaign went on to push for the 'bio-psycho-social' approach to disability, which regards individual attributes (abilities, disabilities etc) as the result of interactions between an individual and their environment. The use of this CA-sensitive framework has enabled important strides in changing United Nations policies and practices. They now emphasise the need to mitigate the consequences of disability by acting both on challenges faced by the individual (e.g., by providing assistive devices) and by promoting a change in society (e.g., by working on accessibility).



#### Box 1.2 The CRPD and its monitoring system

The CRPD monitoring system is explained in Article 33 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. All state parties should indicate a focal point responsible for monitoring activities. Civil society organisations are invited to participate in the monitoring mechanism.

Source: United Nations (2006).

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is composed of 18 independent experts. All the state parties commit to providing an official report on the implementation of the convention to the Committee.



By 2016, all ASEAN member states had ratified the CRPD, now defined as the current universal standard and main reference in the field of disability and related issues (Box 1.2). This is only the beginning of a process of 'norm' changes. What needs to be done

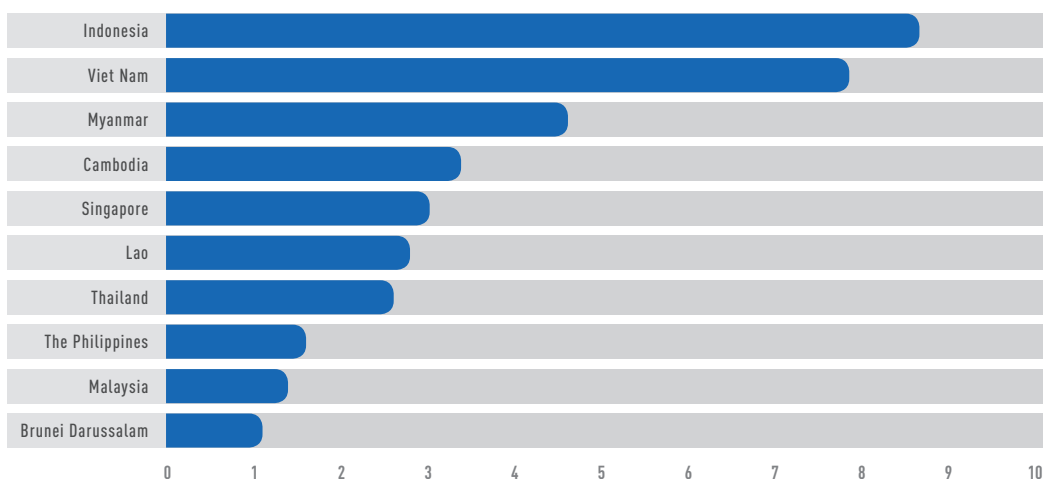
next is to ensure that the universal standard of rights, enunciated in the CRPD, is thoughtfully implemented by setting in place a process of localisation through regional action plans and national-level legal and operational frameworks.



A key feature that must be in place to support a discussion within ASEAN on how to ‘localise’ and ‘socialise’ norms is the availability of data on disability. In the Midpoint Review, every country (except Myanmar) had answered the Survey. However, among the ASEAN member states,

only Thailand was able to supply data for more than 20 indicators. Figure 1.4 presents disability prevalence data for the ASEAN countries, based on estimates gathered by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).<sup>46</sup>

Figure 1.4: Disability prevalence in ASEAN countries (percent)



Source: ESCAP (2019e, p. 10)

The use of data on disability can be important for ensuring full inclusion and participation of persons with disability through improved policies. As the demographic profile of ASEAN moves to a greater preponderance of older age groups, it will be greater needs where the ability of these older individuals does not fit easily with their environments and a consequent drop in the quality of the lives they can choose.

Organizations such as ‘Independent Living Movement’ (ILM) can play a role in reframing the system of services for persons with disabilities and elders with relevant functional limitations, so as to support their chosen lifestyles. The ILM was established at the University of Berkeley in the United States in the early 1960s. Independent Living (IL) was built on the principles of self-determination, emancipation, and self-reliance of persons with disability to ensure full and

effective control of their own lives. IL does not deem institutionalisation and medicalisation of persons with disabilities to be acceptable, and this has become a fundamental component of the main policy platforms concerning the rights of persons with disabilities (including the CRPD). Adopting IL thinking has the first practical implication that older people should be able to achieve independent living, with support provided by a personal assistant. Second, it implies the establishment of institutional structures to provide multidimensional support to persons with disabilities - peer support, technical assistance, legal support (termed the centres for Independent Living). Third, the older population of persons with disabilities exercise freedom of choice on their own account about assistive devices, which should not be imposed based on standardized parameters.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> There are differing legal definitions of disability between countries. This results in variations in the disability data collected by individual countries and makes it difficult to use national data for cross country comparison. For this reason, we decided to use data from the World Disability Report 2011.

<sup>47</sup> For more information about IL see Gerben Dejong (1979), Reed et al. (2014) as well as the European Network for Independent Living website (<https://enil.eu/>).



### 1.2.1. Gender

Gender relations in Southeast Asia vary along family/kinship and property systems. They also vary according to whether groups lived (and in rural areas, continue to live) principally by either cultivating irrigated rice or hoe horticulture, mostly in uplands. The traditional cultivation system was a combination of irrigated rice cultivation in paddies and hill-country non-irrigated horticulture, and both were managed through clear sets of rules for family responsibilities (Geertz, 1963). Irrigated rice systems, producing sufficient rice and fish to sustain a family, were both economically and ecologically sustainable, and have come to symbolize the region as a 'balanced aquarium' (Blumberg, 2020).<sup>48</sup>

Within this local ecological niche, most groups followed a form of bilateral kinship, where both mother's-side and father's-side relatives count equally. If there was a kin preference, it was overwhelmingly in the form of matrilineal kinship. Patrilineal kinship was – and is – very unusual in Southeast Asian groups that had lived in the region for millennia. Blumberg's (1984) General Theory of Gender Stratification, makes the case that paid contributions accruing from economic production activities are a necessary prerequisite for women to have relative equality. Yet, work is not enough. Where women do not have control over the means and/or fruits of production, their overall position is subordinated to varying degrees.

A recent study in the region indicated a range of gender gaps based on land, such as in the incidence of land ownership, share of landholders, distribution of plots, and

distribution of area (Kieran et al., 2015). In addition, the study noted that the inequality of landholding was lower than the inequality of distribution of plots for farming. This indicated that even where women had ownership of land, they tended to have smaller and fewer plots. If development policy aligns with social norms that regard men as the singular head of the household, then this gives men inordinate control over decisions regarding household labour allocation and technology adoption. Women are not in a bargaining position to object to the imposition of long working days on the land. Nor can they take exception to being paid a lower wage than men for the same task (Ha Nguyen et al., 2020). On the other hand, the existence of a social norms that favour women's rights to land gives women greater agency to demand gender equality. The rights to economic resources in Thailand and Laos provide notable patterns of gender equality (Blumberg, 2020). The ability to exercise individual agency that women have acquired, has had benefits beyond the rural family context. Women also negotiate successfully to enforce community norms to ensure that they have the right to sell commodities and undertake a full range of entrepreneurial activities in peri-urban and urban informal contexts (Fennell, 2009).<sup>49</sup>

A key area of work highlighted by the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children indicates agreement that there is an urgent need to improve the access that women have to economic and legal rights. This ties to Thematic Area 11 of its work plan 2012-2020 on 'Strengthening economic rights of women with regards to feminisation of poverty, women's rights to land, and property' (ACWC, 2015).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> This was a system of a case of 'homeostasis', where the stable equilibrium is sustainable over time.

<sup>49</sup> The Fostering Women's Empowerment Report in ASEAN (2018) provides rich detail on many facets (see also Theme 3 on livelihoods).

<sup>50</sup> Women's rights to resources in reducing the inequality in gender relations can also be addressed by reviewing the data to identify relevant information regarding the functionings and capabilities of women and other vulnerable groups. Indicators such as life expectancy, females as a percentage of the total population, and other demographic indicators provide important evidence in this regard (refer to tables in introduction).



### Box 1.3 Gender and Mindanao

In Mindanao, as in most conflict affected areas, it predominantly men who are killed in the fighting, while the majority of the internally displaced people (IDPs) are women and children. These women shoulder a great deal of the economic burdens without necessarily being empowered to do so. As new spaces open up for women to occupy socio-economic roles, these activities come with new risks, insecurities, and hardships amidst the conflict (Cagoco-Guam, 2013).

As the mobility of men has been severely curtailed by the conflict, there is a significant impact on societal interactions as deeply embedded cultural definitions of masculinity are disrupted and challenged. Such restrictions continue due to the persistence of localised conflicts around the practice of rido, where men are especially vulnerable and must limit their social movements. Thus, women must undertake activities traditionally performed by men, while also navigating tensions around religion and identity, physical and/or emotional trauma, and its impact on children, while themselves managing high levels of psychological distress.

Despite these many challenges, women do not see themselves as passive observers in society (Veneracion-Rallonza, 2015). As illustrated by Hilsdon (2009), women are frequently key actors in negotiating and mediating disputes around rido, while remaining behind the scenes. They organise peace-building efforts, manage cooperatives, seek out assistance from outside sources, and manage the distribution of relief goods (Cagoco-Guam, 2013).

Paradoxically, even as women become more engaged in economic activities, they are perceived to simply be 'helping' or 'assisting' despite shouldering the full burden of both economic and caring activities (Bamgbose, 2003). Women's roles are thus undervalued, even where they take on many economic activities while continuing to perform traditional roles. Empowerment requires recognition of the multiple roles that women play, so that their agency can transform into empowerment. The absence of such formal acknowledgement and awarding of full rights for women could push women into further subjugation and poverty (Dwyer & Guam, 2011).



This is particularly important for improving the ability of women to negotiate access to economic, social, and cultural resources (Box 1.3). Countries that simultaneously use modern and customary laws present a particularly challenging case, as customary law and its associated practices tend to be deeply embedded in gendered norms (see Table 1.1).

The co-existence of laws provides an opportunity to establish inter-linkages with Theme 8 of the work-plan. Promoting implementation of international, ASEAN, and other instruments on the rights of women and children ensures that rights accorded by family law, for example, are reflected in the economic rights women actually have in a community. Analyses of how gender





laws operate between the household (private sphere) and the economy (the public sphere) often reveal hidden areas of social exclusion. For example, if women do not have the right to

confer citizenship on a non-national husband, then this will reduce the ability of certain households where men are non-nationals to feel included in society.

Table 1.1: Gender and customary law

Country	Can a married woman choose where to live in the same way as a married man?	Can a married woman be "head of family" in the same way as a married man?	Can a married woman confer citizenship to non-national spouse in the same way as a married man?	Are married women required by law to obey their husband?	Do married couples jointly share legal responsibility maintaining the family's expenses?	Does the law recognize customary courts?	Does the law recognize personal law courts?	Does a woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's?
Brunei Darussalam	No	N/A	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Cambodia	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Indonesia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Lao PDR	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Malaysia	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Myanmar	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Philippines	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Singapore	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Thailand	Yes	N/A	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Viet Nam	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

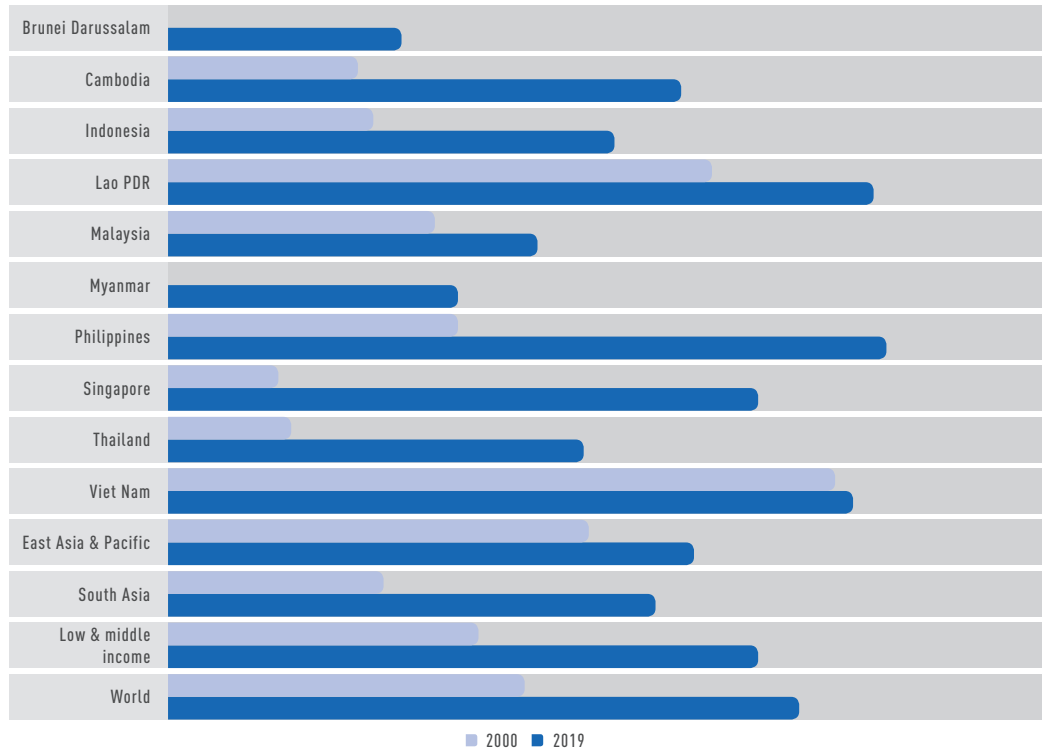
Source: adapted from World Bank (2015) data.

There is also a surprising link between gender, economic rights, and legal testimony. If a woman has less access to economic resources, then she will be more likely to feel intimidated when using legal courts and is more likely to be regarded as a member of a lesser group (Fennell, 2009; Tanwir et al., 2019). The CA also pushes for linking economic resources to individual empowerment. It argues that improving one's capabilities cannot be achieved without linking the economic sphere to the treatment of women in the social and political spheres.<sup>51</sup>

Examining the political indicators of democratic rights and democratic participation is also of great importance. Women's representation in political institutions present an important opportunity to enable women to claim positive political freedoms (see Table 1.1). The data on gendered political representation shows an upward trend. At the top end, women occupy close to a third of the seats in parliament (Figure 1.5). However, much work still remains if equal gender representation is to be achieved in the political sphere.

<sup>51</sup> Chen [1995], Nussbaum [1995], and others have pointed out that discrimination against women does not occur only because they are economically disadvantaged.

Figure 1.5: Seats held by women in national parliaments (percent)



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020e) data.

There is also growing evidence that rights are more accessible through social group demands - what Khan (2020) terms the 'socially enhanced capability approach'. These groups facilitate linkages between the family sphere and the economic sphere. As women begin to speak out for themselves and ask for solutions with assistance from local groups, a new form of inclusion is created where the democratic process can be expanded (Narayan-Parker, 2000, pp. 273-283). This provides an additional area of policy intervention for advancing gender equality.

There have been laudable advances in the sphere of women's empowerment across ASEAN in recent decades. Particularly noteworthy are

successful initiatives for improving health and educational opportunities. There has also been gains in the ratification of efforts to eradicate violence against women but some challenges continue in this arena (ASEAN, 2016i). An early success story was the achievement of the promulgation of The Magna Carta of Women (MCW), which was signed into law on 14 August 2009 in the Philippines and is regarded as a direct translation of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) into the nation's legal system (ASEAN, 2016i). It defines discrimination against women in accordance with Article 1 of the Convention, and cites specific acts of discrimination by law, policy, or practice that can be compounded by intersecting grounds (CEDAW, 2017, para. 12).

A SECA approach would highlight that listening to women's voices through channels created by community-based organisations (CBOs) or NGOs would help policy makers understand how social norms can impair the realisation of gender equality laws. If it is socially acceptable and deemed to be 'masculine' or 'honourable' to inflict violence on women in the community, then change will be difficult to achieve. Pushing for change through collective action, including through local organisations that use the convening power of older generations such as active grandmothers, has the potential to impose the cost of ostracism against such social norms (Fennell, 2021). Encouraging CBOs (an area where The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) has already made considerable progress) has a democratizing aspect, as it expands the sphere of active participation and leadership to include local women (H. Khan, 2020).

Changing social norms that endorse violence against women may enable more effective management of gender-based violence when these acts do not result in legal action. Programmes that support interventions by encouraging reassessment of gender norms is a key area where development policy and practice from the global North can be translated into national and local contexts (K. Wilson, 2015). Projects that promote the 'localisation' of these social norms by linking Theme 11 and Theme 8 can offer a basis for new opportunities to transform gendered relations (A. Acharya, 2017). Furthermore, it may be possible to address the marginalisation of other groups, including gender diverse communities, by addressing legal rights to channel their voices in the political sphere.

## 1.2.2. Rural-Urban Transitions

In ASEAN, between 22 percent and 55 percent of the urban population live in slums. Meanwhile, the rural population - a falling proportion of the national population - live without access to social protection and other services. The phenomenon of rapid industrialisation has the undesirable consequence of a growing informal (slum) sector and a rise in urban poverty, as migrants are forced to take up low-paid employment. Migrant households in these contexts have limited access to education, health, water, and sanitation, and their activities and incomes are not recorded in official statistical databases (UNESCO, 2018).

Regional migration has become significant, with about 6.8 million migrants travelling within the ASEAN region between member states and a total of 21.3 million ASEAN nationals living outside their country (ILO, 2015). Men migrating outside their country has a cumulative negative impact on social support networks, and impose greater work burdens on women who are left behind. Moreover, there is a differential impact on women in urban or rural areas. In urban settings, women have to manage the triple burden of paid work, unpaid care, and domestic work. In rural areas, women suffer from the gendered norms that prevent them from making autonomous decisions about paid work, while still having to manage care-work and agricultural production (UNICEF, 2019).

The distinction between 'urban' and 'rural' is not simply about migration flows between sending and receiving areas, and the implications for rural areas is not just that of a 'remainder'. The rural sector is complex

and distinct from the urban sector, with very specific concerns that need to be addressed. As a characteristic of ASEAN Master Plans (AMPs) rural development should not be thought of as a complementary policy to industrialisation. The practical experiences of several AMSs already show that agricultural development can play an important role in boosting GDP. This can take place by diversifying from agriculture to non-agricultural rural activities. There could also be gains to foreign trade and increased engagement in regional supply chains.<sup>52</sup>

The strongly gendered impact of migration should also be addressed as an explicit feature of social development, while recognising the substantial variation between countries. In some countries, the opposite trend is evident. That is, women leave the household in search of work and produce a feminisation of migration (such as in Indonesia and the Philippines), with the burden of care falling on fathers and/or other women in the family (UNICEF, 2019b).

There is also a need to recognise that the types of migrants in cities are increasing. In addition to economic migrants, there is also a greater incidence of political migrants and internally displaced people among migrant populations (such as the case of displaced people in Bangladesh). These groups face far greater challenges in obtaining employment in the city, and there are particularly acute challenges for women to access jobs and gain recognition of their skill levels. These groups are the most vulnerable to shocks, and face the greatest obstacles to achieving their desired human capabilities (UNESCO, 2016).

### 1.2.3. Policy Implications

A wider definition of the socio-psycho-biological model of disability can be an important way forward for policies to ensure the full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities. As the demographic profile of ASEAN moves to a greater preponderance of older age groups in the population, there will be increasing unmet needs where the abilities of older individuals do not fit easily with their environments. The design and implementation of a more inclusive policy making process for older citizens would do well to consider policies that focus on bringing in the following features:

- Pushing for change through collective action in the household context (e.g., through local organisations that use the convening power of the older generation such as active grandmothers). By drawing on change makers in the household policy can create an 'insider' advocate for change who can manage attempts in the community who are opposed to social change and react by embarking on a strategy of social ostracism
- Encouraging Community Based Organisations (CBOs), which is an area where the ACWC has made considerable progress, has a democratizing process as it expands the sphere of active participation and leadership for local women (H. Khan, 2020)
- The distinction between urban and rural is not simply that between sending and receiving areas. The implications for rural areas and the rural population are not simply that of a 'remainder'. The rural sector is complex, with specific concerns that need to be addressed as distinct from those of the urban sector.

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<sup>52</sup> Theme 3 on Livelihoods provide numerous sections that deal with the importance of entrepreneurship and incomes in rural and urban locations.

### 1.2.4. Key Findings

1. Individuals experience social exclusion on account of being regarded as 'different': e.g., people with disabilities (PwDs) or due to the existence of social norms that according 'lesser' value to some groups, e.g., rural or indigenous people. Excluding individuals due to personal attributes or because they belong to a minority culture is antithetical to an ASEAN vision where no one gets left behind.
2. A social justice-based lens must become a central feature of ASEAN identity building, with a focus on dealing with distributional inequities in access to resources, education, and health outcomes for marginalised individuals and groups.
3. Prioritise the direct participation of PwDs in policy dialogues, with support from DPOs and CSOs, to continue the move away from a medical model and towards a human rights-based perspective of disabilities.

& Johnston, 2007, pp. 268–270). For a highly diverse region, the ASEAN Way represents a pragmatic approach to building regional cooperation and integration, where finding common ground can be challenging. However, this thin approach has a shortcoming in that it cannot automatically trigger the onset of a thicker, more comprehensive approach that would advance a more comprehensive ASEAN identity. If for instance, in keeping with the Narrative of ASEAN Identity objective of a common identity, there is the implementation of an education policy to fashion a single community: this would not directly emerge from the explicit instruction that youth should have the same set of values. Instead, the sharing of ideas generated from a plural set of knowledge sources is what provides young people with the ability to think and analyse. What is needed is a platform where young people have the opportunity to debate different viewpoints and come to a consensus.

This principle of consensus building, which is at the heart of ASEAN thinking, needs to be explicitly incorporated into a new identification exercise of the thin and thick aspects of policy making. This distinction will allow for the drawing of linkages between short-term single objectives (e.g., education) that have the potential to feed into the creation of policies to achieve long-term objectives (e.g., sustainability). It is not possible to build 'a common identity' unless this set of linkages is used to undertake advocacy for new programmes that are built around participatory consultations as they will build an inclusionary principle that will guide discussions within the region. Explicit campaigns across programmes using inclusion can ensure that future informal negotiations can generate new framings that are more conducive to improving human development (as was undertaken at the global level in regard to the new model of disability; see Section 2).

## 1.3 Who are We? Collective Identity and Culture

The adoption of the 'ASEAN Way' is achieved through forms of negotiation that are achieved through informal institutional engagement, such as inter-committee consultation rather than formal committee meetings. The preference for minimal institutional development and formal protocol is very conducive to consensus building (Severino, 2006). This is a 'soft institutionalism' that has used the thin identity approach, adopting discreteness and non-confrontation (Baba, 2016, p. 104). This combination of characteristics has been credited with strengthening cooperation and consolidating a regional identity (A. Acharya

In the absence of such an explicit model, there is a risk that individuals as members of a particular group are labelled as antagonistic by other groups with different markers of membership (e.g., 'able bodied' and 'disabled' people). This can result in a whole group feeling marginalised or threatened by others such as in a situation where those influencing government policy uphold an elite or hierarchical view (Maloney et al., 1994),<sup>53</sup> e.g., those who regard the medical model of disability as preferable to that of a socio-psycho-bio model.

The abilities of a family group or larger social group (e.g., ethnic or language-based) are closely linked to the communal sense of trust that creates a sense of membership within said group. In cases where there is extreme marginalisation (e.g., multiple exclusions due to an overlay of ethnic and religious identities), the ensuing social exclusion and inability to influence policy making (see Box 1.4 on Patani-Malay below) can foster more volatile and violent situations (Fennell, 2009).

While the ASEAN region is rich in group diversity and ensuing perceptions of how the development process should be devised, tensions in the region have not led to major inter-state armed conflicts (despite the numerous and often decades-long conflicts at national and sub-national levels). A major reason for this state of affairs has been the adoption of the principles of sovereignty and non-interference (Barter, 2020). The positive power of collective identity can only be harnessed if the top-most priority is given to building additional layers of collective action. Of particular importance is the ability to instil in communities the rights to channel their own system of cultural and historical ties when forging of a multi-dimensional 'common identity'. The challenge is to adopt an identification exercise, that draws across communities within countries and the region.

Each successful outcome of this consultative process creates an additional layer of collective action (e.g., women in a minority group securing rights to assets to reduce group violence).<sup>54</sup> The harnessing of collective action will simplify the demands of groups. For example, a successful group such as a rural community with land rights does not need to oppose the state, as they have an asset that gives them a stake in the state policy-making process (see Box 2.5). If there is no attempt to reduce the hierarchies of power through such an identification exercise, the outcome is not a foregone conclusion. It could lead to harmony or conflict in a society (A. Acharya, 2017).<sup>55</sup>

### 1.3.0. Ethnicity, Religion and Diversity

The ASEAN region is home to diverse populations in terms of ethnicity, culture, and religion. Neighbouring countries have different historical backgrounds, forms of governance, and economic structures. Figure 1.6, from the Pew Global Religions project, show the wide variation in the composition of societies by religion. The projections undertaken show that there are likely to be few changes in the composition of religious diversity between 2020 and 2050. This could be read by policy makers that the stability would imply there would be no new forms of antagonism in the forthcoming decades. A more inclusive approach could be that directly addressing those long-standing tensions that do currently fester in the region, would put in train a social norm change. Embarking on such social policy making trajectory would mean that policy makers would draw more deeply on the processes of localisation and socialisation set out by Acharya (2011).

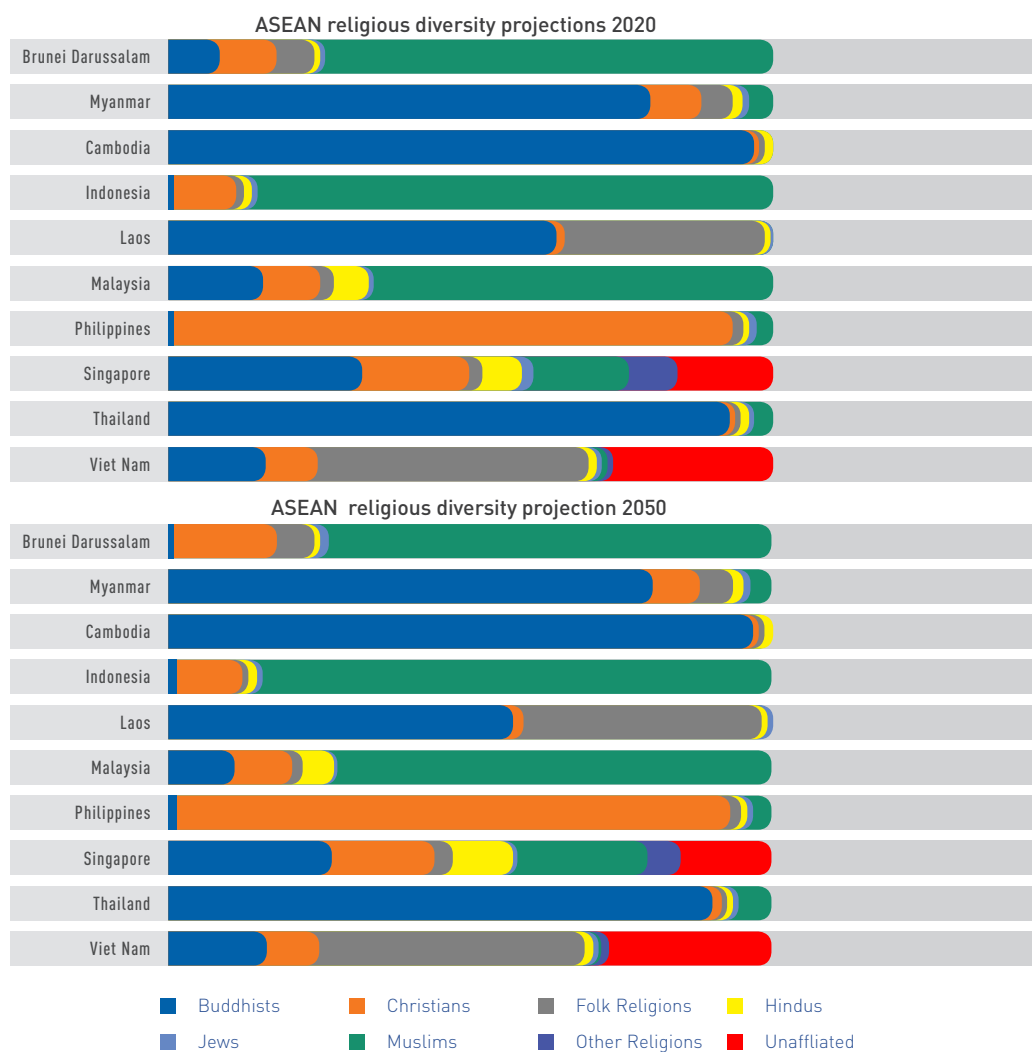
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<sup>53</sup> An ability of a group to be more readily recognised by the state, either due to their numerical strength, their access to resources, the ability to change electoral results by controlling vote banks are all areas of active research in the fields of development studies, sociology, political science (see Bates, Khan, and others in the school of New Institutional Economics).

<sup>54</sup> See Axelrod (1984); see also Olson (2000) on the importance of collective action and the creation of stable groups.

<sup>55</sup> An individual identity can be based on individuals' perception of themselves, or on other's perception of them, so that an individual will prefer to work and reside with those who are within her group, or at least have a set of beliefs and preferences that align with her own (Akerlof & Kranton, 2005). In an analogous manner, a group identity is based on how group perceptions see themselves and other groups. This analytical framework is central to the study of society, across development. Studies, sociology and political science.

Figure 1.6: ASEAN religious diversity projections, 2020 and 2050



Source: Authors' based on Pew (2020) data.

The region continues to be home to several deeply rooted intra-state conflicts along ethno-linguistic and religious lines. These forms of group identity are making demands for political autonomy and self-determination within a nation-state. As group identity has been constricted to operate only along one axis to produce a binary distinction between 'us' and 'them', identity-based antagonisms have been easy to ignite due to its strong exclusionary effects (Smelser, 2007).

There is growing evidence that outbreaks of violence along religious dimensions are an extension of a desire to preserve specific collective identities (Barker, 2001, 2001; Liow, 2005, 2006, 2016; Malešević, 2006, 2011). This research provides an opportunity to revisit the role of religion in Southeast Asian societies and address religions as forms of political, cultural and historical reproduction of a community's identity.<sup>56</sup> The ability to work with more inclusive forms of communal identity and facilitate the channelling of minority forms of

<sup>56</sup> The term social reproduction, as used by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, focuses on the processes and mechanisms through which a society maintains social order. Directives to ensure the observance of social norms and methods of organising groups and individuals around established rules of behaviour are the means to reproduce society. The maintenance of status-quo is part of a process of cultural reproduction - it can be the undertaken by the state or other institutions to endorse dominant culture, and marginalise minority cultures.

religious identity into the public sphere could be an effective approach to broaden national and regional 'imaginings'.<sup>57</sup>

The research programme being undertaken at Competing Regional Integrations in Southeast Asia (CRISEA) has developed an approach for analysing these 'imaginings' by using a generational approach to identity.<sup>58</sup> They show that millennials (those born in the 1980s or 1990s) are likely to have group identities that are built on transboundary and transnational value systems. This world view of the 'younger generation' might not be held by the older

generation, and the younger people might wish to take the region in a direction that is very different from that of current leaders and elites (Grabowsky et al., 2019).

Thailand, a country with a predominant Buddhist population, provides an example of how youth in minority communities see their own identity. In particular, it focuses on how transboundary identities are regarded as a form of 'otherness' in the eyes of the nation-state, and how such a form of distancing by the state may feed into the desire of minority youth groups to support a secessionist movement (Box 1.4)



#### Box 1.4 Religious conflict and collective identity<sup>59</sup>

Collective identities are socially constructed. These forms of identity can become the basis of marginalisation and exclusion if there are political or institutional forms of recognition accorded to some groups and not all. Strong patterns of social separation result in segregated parallel institutional worlds that can give rise to a self-perceived collective victimhood (Bar-Tal et al., 2009).

The case of the Patani Malays is one such case of differential treatment of a group that has resulted in the creation of local organizational structures (e.g., educational system, religious authorities, media, etc.). This has fostered the proliferation of a collective Patani-Malay identity that is strongly rooted in micro-solidarities of family, friends, peers, and location.

'Otherness' takes the form of giving collective-identity terms of address to the other group: Siyae, derived from the former name of Thailand 'Siam', is the external categorization used by Patani Malays when referring to Thai-Buddhists, while Thai Malay-Muslims, refer to themselves colloquially as Naya. A primary survey of 2,781 Patani-Malay youth to investigate how they regard ascriptive markers (e.g., language, history, culture, religion) and emotional markers (e.g., collective memory, victimhood) found that the majority identified as Patani Malay (57.4 percent), followed by Thai (31 percent), and finally those favouring dual identities as Thai-Patani Malay (11.6 percent).

Source: Siriwat (2020).

In follow up interviews, youth indicated that the term 'Thai Muslims,' promoted by the Thai state to categorize all Thais who are Muslims, was strongly rejected by the group. They also pointed out that they preferred the term Malayu to the colloquially used Naya, as they see themselves as primarily 'Muslim', then ethnically and culturally 'Malay', and only 'Thai' because that is written on their identity card.

Respondents had the perception that assimilation was problematic, as the youth recalled Patani-Malay civil servants who 'tried to fit into the Thai mould so much that they've forgotten their roots'. However, they recognised that they were forced to 'dilute their own local identity' when they were around Thai-Buddhists, particularly their Muslim-identity as the 'religious and pious are more likely to be targeted by Thai authorities as supporters of the secessionist movements'.

There is also distinct collective identity in relation to linguistic identity. A majority of the respondents spoke the Patani-Malay dialect within the family (69.6 percent), followed by both Thai and the Patani-Malay dialect (21.2 percent). Those who only spoke Thai at home were a mere 8.5 percent of the sample. Patani-Malay dialect and written script continues to be the language for religious instruction, from weekend elementary schools to tertiary levels of religious studies (Khana, 2006).



<sup>57</sup> See Anderson's (1983) work on 'imagined communities'.

<sup>58</sup> CRISEA is an interdisciplinary research project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme (European Commission, 2020). It studies multiple forces affecting regional integration in Southeast Asia and the challenges they present to the peoples of Southeast Asia and its regional institutional framework, ASEAN. Work has been underway since November 2017, and is due to be completed at the end of 2020.

<sup>59</sup> 'Other' and 'Otherness' are terms used in the humanities and social sciences to indicate how individuals and groups regard those whom they see as dissimilar or separated from themselves. The forms of the 'other' can be physical, cultural, or linguistic, and are the products of a form of social construction. For example, a refugee is regarded as not being able to be able to assimilate into a society because the category of 'refugee' is associated with being without skills and other resources. This, in turn, excludes the group from getting access to employment or being invited to participate in social activities.



The exclusion faced by refugees when they are not provided with a channel of communication (Box 1.5) is also a form of ‘othering’. The refugees’ voices are muted, as they must rely on outsiders to represent them for the resolution of their disputes. This reduces their agency, and increases their sense of isolation.



**Box 1.5: Conflict resolution mechanisms in refugee camps**

The current justice and conflict resolution mechanisms for displaced people in Bangladesh take place through a camp-based structure. These activities, are not always mediated through internally generated channels, but are rather the outcome of interactions between the community organisations (Mosque Committees) and the groups formed by external bodies, such as the Majhi system, working with ‘camp in charges’ (CICs).

Mosque committees were established to maintain the mosques in each block of the camps. The members of the mosque committee include an imam, muajjin (person who delivers the call to prayer), local elites, and influential figures – mostly men. The committee will also convene to make decisions on inter-family conflicts, drawing upon Islamic law.

In the Majhi system, Majhis appointed by the Bangladeshi Army serve as liaisons between humanitarian agencies and displaced people. They are responsible for 50 to 200 households or a ‘block’, with a head Majhi from within the group of block Majhis that reports directly to the CIC. While the system has proved to be an efficient mechanism for information sharing and community engagement, there are serious allegations by refugees of abuses of power on account of an unrepresentative system of order and control.

The Camp in Charges (CICs) are Bangladesh government-appointed representatives, supporting camp coordination, in partnership with formal humanitarian actors. They coordinate services and liaise with governments and UN bodies.

Source: Winters (2020).

Primary research and reports indicate that the process for accessing justice and further escalating claims involves engaging with a series of actors. When a conflict cannot be addressed within the household or between the two households, the block Majhi is contacted. On matters relating to family or marital issues, such as intimate partner violence, the Majhi arranges a gathering of community leaders. On all other issues (such as lack of access to food supplies), the Majhi will refer the matter to the mosque committee to decide.

If a verdict is not acceptable to any of the parties or the group fails to reach a verdict, a larger group meeting is organised. If the verdict is again not acceptable, the dissatisfied party can approach the CIC. If an NGO is present, a lawyer may support in the mediation of the case. If the mediation fails to reach an acceptable verdict, the CIC, as an executive magistrate, will deliver the final verdict that has to be accepted by everyone.

Displaced peoples are often reluctant to raise matters at levels higher than the community, as they fear the possibility of punishment via fines and imprisonment within the camp governance structure. This deters them from accessing formal methods, and they have to fall back on the Majhi system, despite concerns of unequal treatment for women and of some groups in the refugee community having more power to ensure that decisions are made in their favour.



The difficulty that states face in understanding and managing religious and ethnic conflicts across Southeast Asia appears to be a consequence of viewing religion as having no place in the modern region. As opposed to being archaic, religion is very much embedded in modern ideologies, and can be a potent source of legitimacy for nationalist movements (Siriwat, 2020).

The narratives of victimhood and resistance that are evident in areas of incarceration (Box 1.4) and refugee camps (Box 1.5) indicate that in many postcolonial states, the emergence of intra-state nationalist movements may be a call to reframe the national identity into a more accommodating narrative beyond a single, ethnocultural nation (Siriwat, 2020).

ASEAN's ten member states collectively represent a vast diversity across other axes of identity, posing both opportunities and challenges for constructing an ASEAN identity. This is particularly when considering the stated objective of inclusivity. ASEAN's population reached 649.1 million in 2018, with 33.9 percent under the age of 19. Down from 40.8 percent in 2000 (ASEAN, 2019h), this indicates a demographic shift as the population ages – the youth demographic bulge being replaced by a more even spread, as population growth has declined to 1.6 percent per annum. ASEAN's demographic dividend has supported decades of economic growth that has, in turn, contributed towards stability through youth employment during major structural economic shifts (e.g., rural mechanisation and booming manufacturing leading to large-scale urbanisation).

The trend towards urbanisation is set to continue, particularly in the less wealthy ASEAN countries (e.g., Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar), which currently have the highest proportion of rural populations in the region. The greater connectivity of urbanised populations has significant implications for identity construction, while declining rural populations face new challenges as youth increasingly move to cities.

There is also a pronounced and growing rural-urban divide, which poses a major challenge for ASEAN identity and inclusivity. This is exacerbated by widespread issues around rural land tenure in many member states. The expulsion of minority groups from rural areas due to growing land conflicts has particularly adverse implications for the life chances of young refugees.

The continuing conflicts around ethnic and religious lines have created a self-perceived sense of victimhood based on different

loyalties, ethnicity, religion, and culture. The calls for a separate nation, as distinct from the majority ethnic or religious state, indicates that there is an entrenched binary set of identities in play. Militant and separatist nationalism develops using a within-group narrative, embedded in the local institutions of everyday life (Siriwat, 2020).

The emergence of intra-state nationalist movements may be a call to reframe the national identity in a more accommodating narrative, which recognises the value of multiple identities in a diverse nation. A new narrative could promote more flexible and inclusive definitions of peoplehood by recognising multiple and distinct histories, languages, and ways of life associated with multiple religious and ethnic identities. The concept of an ASEAN Identity that builds on a shared set of inherited and constructed values may, in turn, pave the way towards an Imagined ASEAN Community. This would entail a shared mindset that pulls together different origins, rather than pushing for a homogenising singular perspective. The erasure of a people through the silencing of their voices needs to be addressed through reconciliation and the building of more inclusive cultural and political understanding.

### 1.3.1. Heritage, Culture and Identity

Heritage provides a powerful symbol of the culture of a society. The creation of heritage occurs when there is a conscious effort to relate to the past, as having meaning for the future. Viejo-Rose (2015) points to Anderson's (1983) work on 'imagined communities' as a key perspective on the subject, and identifies the three elements of a national collective that can be found in the census, the map, and the museum.

There is a set of individual and collective interactions that give rise to heritage. They are never neutral, and often bring considerable contestation and confrontation in the identification of heritage. There are also conflicts between the global and national and critiques that global concepts reflect a narrow materialist Western view of heritage that is applied in the 'official' heritage discourse (Nagaoka, 2015). Intangible heritage has come to be recognised as a form of culture that should be recognised more readily.

The countries of Southeast Asia are constituted by a wide variety of ecologies. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Brunei are

mainly composed of islands, and constitute the maritime world. Thailand, Myanmar, Viet Nam, the Lao PDR, and Cambodia, on the other hand, are on the mainland. These groups of countries have different forms of accumulation, with the mainland countries being more agriculture based and with movements of peoples from the mainland to the maritime regions (Wang, 2017).

These movements have implications for the distribution of ethnicities, languages, and religions across the region. This has produced competing conceptualisations of the history of settlements and the origin story of different ethnicities (Aboitiz, 2020).



#### Box 1.6 Heritage

The importance of heritage, in both tangible and non-tangible forms, creates important links between these symbols and the communities that have historical and cultural associations with these sites. It continues to be a challenge to ensure an inclusive approach to heritage management.

The restoration of Borobudur began in the 1970s, as a consequence of being given the international status of a World Heritage site. The Indonesian Government led the effort, in conjunction with international bodies, and restoration activities included the resettlement of local people away from the site. This resulted in a loss of their traditional livelihoods in the tourism sector, and also denied them access to their heritage. In more recent years, as a result of advocacy from community groups and academics on the plight of the displaced citizens, the Indonesian Government has changed its policy. It has focussed on the need to address the matter of livelihoods for these groups.

Source: Bloembergen & Eickhoff (2019).

One big shift has been the replacement of the Borobudur National Archaeological Parks with the Borobudur Tourism Park. It also brought the establishment of a state corporation in 2011 (PT Taman Wisata Candi Borobudur and Prambanan) to manage heritage sites.

The Indonesian government's official heritage policy has also created distinct categories of archaeological sites: 'dead sites', which refer to sites that are the location of monuments of the past, and 'living sites', which are sites where active worship is recognised and where visitors can worship. Communities do not always respect that distinction, and worship and other religious activities are evident on both types of sites.



There is often conflict underlying heritage management, particularly where the conservation of monuments has come at the detriment of the livelihoods and rights for local communities (Box 1.6). There are also conflicts between majority and minority ethnic and religious groups, where heritage management becomes part of a political conflict. The erasure

of minority rights to land and associated sites of religious worship creates 'negative heritage'. Here, conflicts associated with the erased object captures the imagination, as in the case of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan (Meskell, 2002). The destruction of the heritage of minority groups can also become a proxy for the erasure of those groups (R. Lee & González Zarandona, 2020).

The conservation and the destruction of heritage are political acts, and both have been used by governments and private actors to influence the course of conflicts and war. This makes it important to think about how to understand 'commonness' in the context of a diverse region and their use of tangible and intangible forms of heritage.

The importance of heritage in ASEAN deliberations can be pinpointed to key initiatives. In 2018, the ASEAN Cultural Heritage Digital Archive (ACHDA) was made possible under the auspices of the ASEAN Senior Officials for Culture and Arts, as supported by the Government of Japan through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund.

At the end of February 2020, the ASEAN Secretariat opened the ACHDA at ASEAN headquarters in Jakarta. The archive preserves the rich and diverse cultural heritage of ASEAN and showcases a veritable treasure trove of exemplary artefacts and history.

By sharing ASEAN's cultural treasures online, ACHDA aims to raise greater awareness of and appreciation for a shared ASEAN cultural heritage. In the first phase, ACHDA introduced more than 160 digitized specimens from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. The archive used 3D models, images, sound recordings, and videos to present the cultural heritage of the three countries mentioned above.

The second phase of the project is intended to digitize collections from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Viet Nam before expanding to the remaining ASEAN countries.

Furthermore, the theme proposed for the second ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Awards ASTA edition 2020-2021 is 'Culture and Heritage Tourism', focusing on the following definition:

Cultural tourism is concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of the people, their art, architecture, religion(s), performing arts, visual arts, festivals, heritage sites, fashion, theatres and other elements that shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals and rituals), and their values and lifestyles.

Heritage tourism, which can be seen as a subset of the larger field of cultural tourism, is a branch of tourism oriented towards understanding and appreciating the heritage of a destination. It involves visiting historical sites that may include old canals, railways, battlegrounds, et cetera. The overall purpose is to gain an appreciation of the past. Heritage tourism can also apply to historical events that are dramatized to make them more entertaining, such as a historical tour of a town or city. Increasingly, heritage tourism is concerned not only with the tangible elements of the past, but also with the intangible dimensions of culture.

If ASEAN’s heritage programme is to uphold its Blueprint objectives, then it must keep in mind that monuments are both a ‘reminder of the past and harbingers of the future’ (Lowenthal, 2015). Consequently, simply elevating a feature of culture by drawing on international brands, such as World Heritage, will continue to be controversial, because groups in a diverse nation and region do not

automatically share an identical view on the value they accord to a landmark or practice (Meskell, 2018). It is also not clear whether the aspiration to have a large number of World Heritage sites as a symbol of the richness and long-standing lineage of a culture offers an inclusive or sustainable path (see Table 1.2 for a list of ASEAN heritage sites<sup>60</sup>).

Table 1.2: List of ASEAN heritage sites

Country	Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage
Brunei Darussalam	None	None
Cambodia	Angkor Temple of Preah Vihear Temple Zone of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site of Ancient Ishanapura	None
Indonesia	Borobudur Temple Compounds Prambanan Temple Compounds Sangiran Early Man Site Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy Ombilin Coal Mining Heritage of Sawahlunto	Komodo National Park Ujung Kulon National Park Lorentz National Park Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra
Lao PDR	Town of Luang Prabang Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape Megalithic Jar Sites in Xiengkhuang – Plain of Jars	None
Malaysia	Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca Archaeological Heritage of the Lenggong Valley	Gunung Mulu National Park Kinabalu Park
Myanmar	Pyu Ancient Cities Bagan	None
Philippines	Baroque Churches of the Philippines Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras Historic City of Vigan	Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Puerto-Princesa Subterranean River National Park Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary
Singapore	Singapore Botanic Gardens	None
Thailand	Historic City of Ayutthaya Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns	Thungyai-Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex
Viet Nam	Ban Chiang Archaeological Site Complex of Huế Monuments Hoi An Ancient Town My Son Sanctuary Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long – Hanoi Citadel of the Ho Dynasty	Ha Long Bay Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park

Source: UNESCO (2020a).

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<sup>60</sup> As defined by UNESCO, cultural heritage includes monuments, such as architectural structures, art, and science pieces, while natural heritage includes formations that are of ‘Outstanding Universal Value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view’—the point of view of conservation, natural beauty, or science (Operational Guidelines 2012).

Acquiring World Heritage status is a process that often reduces access to a monument for those who have a livelihood claim, whereas nations might regard this as a source of prestige. If the ASEAN Blueprint is to be pursued, the discourse on 'heritage' in the region should consider a shift towards notions of living heritage, traditional knowledge, language, cultural diversity, and performing arts to deepen the cultural exchanges undertaken by the ASEAN Senior Officials for Culture and Arts (Daly & Winter, 2012).

There may also be considerable value in addressing recent concerns on the destruction of habitats due to the disregard for the impact of inter-connections between humans, non-humans, and our fast-changing environment (Jalais, 2020).<sup>61</sup>

Thinking through the 'non-human' allowed anthropologists to question social hierarchy, colonialism, social justice, and sustainability in the contexts of the Western world. Today,

with the sustainability of our planet suddenly appearing bleak, the rethinking of the relationship between humans and nonhumans becomes imperative. The reason that ethics and politics are so important is that they allow us, via an exploration of the non-human, to speak of the various groups of people organised into 'societies' or 'cultures' and their distinct interactions with nonhumans

### 1.3.2. Policy Implications

The emergence of intra-state nationalist movements may be a call to reframe the national identity in a more accommodating narrative, which recognises the value of embracing multiple identities in a diverse nation. This new narrative would promote more flexible and inclusive definitions of peoplehood by recognising multiple and distinct histories, languages, and ways of life across religious and ethnic identities.



<sup>61</sup> In light of the current pandemic, the impact of transference of zoonotic diseases between humans and non-human species is a matter of acute concern. Understanding how human cultures regard non-human worlds, and the type of interactions that take place between human and non-human species (e.g., the eating of particular animal species by humans, or the protection of other species by humans) provide new insights into ecological management (Jalais, 2020).

The conservation and destruction of heritage are political acts, and both have been used by governments and private actors to influence the course of conflicts and war. This makes it important to think about how to consider the characteristics of ‘commonness’ in the contexts of a region with a recognised diversity of peoples and their use of tangible and intangible forms of heritage.

With the growing concern about adverse implications for planetary health, it becomes crucial to directly address how to create a sustainable relationship between humans, non-humans and the natural world. The design of cultural policies that focus on how human communities regard communities of non-humans and could be encouraged to manage sustainable habitats, would improve the sustainability prospects for the region.

2. Promote an ASEAN identity that is a combination of universal values that are adaptive and flexible. This identity needs to be rooted in the region’s rich heritage and culture, where diversity and heterogeneity are regarded as having intrinsic value (instead of being based on a narrow homogenising perspective).
3. Highlight the importance of viewing the region’s heritage as a testament to its diversity. Cultural heritage must be preserved, through the contribution of all cultural stakeholders through participatory processes, to ensure that it is a testament to a common humanity.

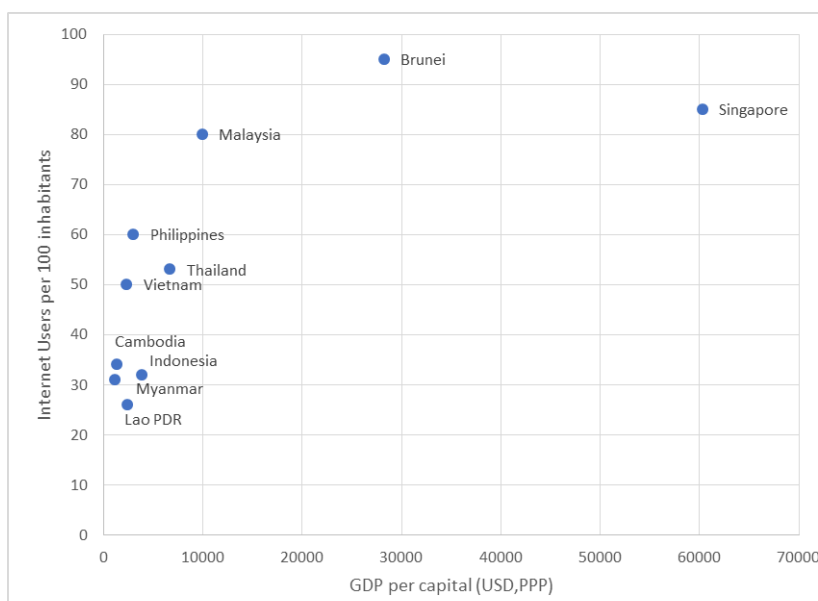
### 1.3.3. Key Findings

1. Acknowledge the diversity of minority identities that exist in the region. It is important to recognise the distinct ethnicity, language, and religion of minority groups and to include these communities in the decision-making process.

## 1.4 Communication, Language & Technology and How We Speak and Listen

The ASEAN region has actively adopted modern communication technology, but there is variation across the region (Figure 1.7). A significant portion of the population jumped straight from landlines to smartphones. Nonetheless, the lower income countries in the region are more likely to access the world of modern communication through 2G or 3G, while 4G may be far more readily available in the high-income countries.

Figure 1.7: Share of the population using the internet vs GDP per capita (2017)



Source: Authors’ based on World Bank (2020e) data.

ASEAN regards communication technologies as a key method for reaching out to new audiences, particularly young people. The Communications Master Plan highlights one of its three key messages as ‘ASEAN has its own identity and we are stronger together’ (ASEAN, 2019a). Social media outreach has been an important channel for providing information about ASEAN, and the presence of online platforms could democratise the process of identity construction (Barter, 2020).

Internet and related technologies certainly enable far greater interaction between vast numbers of people across borders. A CRISEA report indicates that the aspirations of young ASEAN adults differ from the previous generation’s. They also obtain far more of their group norms through digital sources and trans-boundary engagement from social media (Grabowsky et al., 2019). Internet-using youths who seek out opportunities to influence government as a new ‘insider’ group could create an expansion of the political class. However, it is also possible that ASEAN identity might simply continue to be driven by new elites, rather than enjoying wider popular support (A. Acharya, 2017, p. 33).

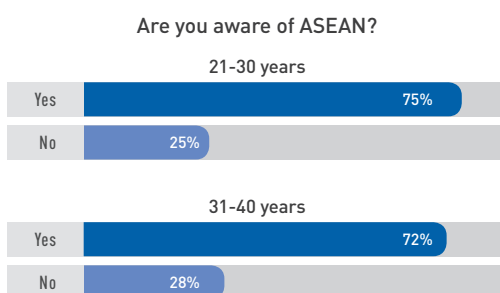
ASEAN created a Youth Development Index (YDI) in 2017 to learn more about the human development levels of their youth. The YDI contained four domains: education, employment and opportunity, health and well-

being, and participation and engagement. Here, two indicators under the Participation and Engagement domain (volunteering and helping a stranger) ranked the lowest level of all domains, except in the Philippines, Myanmar, and Indonesia (where it was higher than other domains in the first two, and aligned with other top domains in Indonesia).

The World Economic Forum’s first youth survey, conducted through online survey tools for 16-35 year olds and published in 2017, showed that just over two-thirds of the youth in ASEAN expect a better life than their parents. While 90 percent were aware of ASEAN and its goals, just under two-thirds were of the view that being part of ASEAN would improve their prospects for employment and career progression (WEF & ADB, 2017).

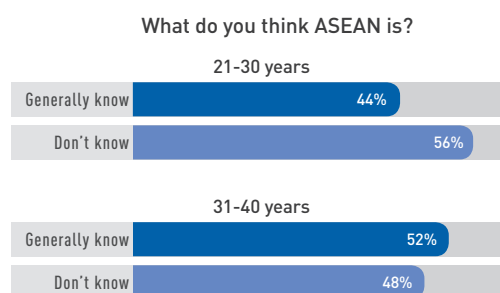
A more recent primary survey of young adults in Malaysia in the summer of 2020 indicated that three-fourths of the sample were aware of the ASEAN (Figure 1.8).<sup>62</sup> Out of those aware, only half went on to affirm some knowledge of ASEAN’s activities (Figure 1.9). Positive answers revolved around security and diplomacy, neighbourliness, and shared growth. A minority view among the respondents centred on ASEAN-organised conferences or the ASEAN name instead of the functioning body, which did not cooperate on contentious issues (displaced peoples, for instance).

Figure 1.8: Malaysian Youth Awareness of ASEAN



Source: Ponniah (2020a).

Figure 1.9: Malaysian Youth Understanding of ASEAN



Source: Ponniah (2020a).

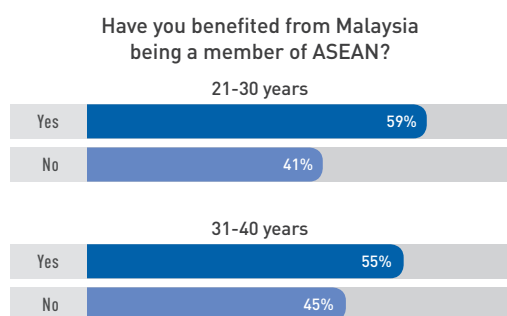
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<sup>62</sup> A stratified random face-to-face survey was conducted amongst 1,068 Malaysian respondents over the age of 21 from 05–12 July 2020.



The primary survey delved deeper to ascertain whether Malaysians felt that the country had benefited from being part of ASEAN. Again, just over half responded positively (Figure 1.10).

Figure 1.10: Direct benefit of ASEAN membership



Source: Ponniah (2020a).

The difference in the results between the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Endeavour Land surveys may be traced to the different mode of data collection. Online surveys target those who have digital access, while face-to-face surveys are more inclusive of voices of those who are digitally excluded. The findings indicate that digital approaches to obtaining data on the perception of ASEAN youth populations do not automatically provide a full representation of voices. The ability to draw on diverse perceptions and understand different groups requires more inclusive forms of engagement.

The importance of bringing diverse groups together through a process of 'socialisation' is at the core of the Narrative of Identity adopted at the recent 37th assembly (A. Acharya, 2011). The Narrative identifies ASEAN Awareness as the first of three primary parameters (the other

two being relevance and pride) for measuring the success of ASEAN identity, with an explicit focus on the level of awareness in two recent studies in 2017 and 2018. The 2017 Voices of ASEAN report finds geographical disparities in the awareness and feelings of citizenship in ASEAN (Intal & Ruddy, 2017).<sup>63</sup> There was 'remarkable unanimity' in that 'corruption' was the most important issue, being seen as a 'critical bottleneck to... development' (Intal & Ruddy, 2017, pp. 5, 20, 22).

The Report suggests that without solving bureaucratic and governmental issues, improved perceptions of and development through ASEAN are unlikely. Furthermore, the severity of this issue is reinforced by the fact that no other problem had 'this level of overlap between... the regional level and... the national level' (Intal & Ruddy, 2017, p. 22). A coordinated response is hence required by the organisation to temper these fears.

Another area of importance where regional-national level significance was evident was that of climate change: the second most important problem facing the 'ASEAN Community'. Yet, it was only the fifth most important problem at the national level, along with infrastructure problems and educational availability (Intal & Ruddy, 2017, pp. 20–21). By situating climate change as a regional problem instead of a national problem, there is arguably more opportunity to 'free-ride' at a national level by pursuing growth policies that may compromise the environment (for example, Indonesia's plans to build 175 new coal powerplants by 2030 to meet increasing energy demands) (Bernarto, 2019). This is an enlightening finding that adds another layer of importance to the framing of issues and accountability.

<sup>63</sup> The Voices report sampled 2,322 people across the 10 ASEAN member states, and was designed to be representative across 'ages, genders, and affiliations' (Intal & Ruddy, 2017, p. 2).

The results of the 2018 ASEAN Awareness Poll show that perceptions on the future success of ASEAN amongst the general public are considerably higher than the perceptions of businesses and CSOs (ASEAN, 2019g).<sup>64</sup> For example, 77 percent of the general public are optimistic 'about the success of ASEAN's future', compared to only 56 percent of businesses and 50 percent of CSOs (ASEAN, 2019g, p. 26).<sup>65</sup> The main reason given by businesses and CSOs for being more sceptical was that they felt that there was a 'relative lack of communication on ASEAN's policy impacts' to their activities and objectives (ASEAN, 2019g, p. 27).<sup>66</sup>

Both reports indicate that ASEAN is perceived to be a mainly economic organisation. This is also corroborated by a CRISEA report, which shows greater familiarity with ASEAN's economic pillar than with pillars on security and culture. They see the way forward as a shift towards a more people-oriented approach to identity, which is led by the social and political dimensions of people's lives (Grabowsky et al., 2019).

The sampling and dissemination methods used in these early surveys utilised the internet in one case and on-the-street sampling in another. A more comprehensive and representative approach to data collection would require census-style random sampling methods. This would ensure that digitally disadvantaged groups are not excluded from future studies and that survey results are indeed representative of the populations surveyed.

Other forms of connectivity are also gaining importance in AMS and contribute to the forging of an ASEAN identity. Intra-state road and rail connectivity is still lagging, but the ASEAN region has witnessed a boom in regional air travel in recent decades. With the advent of low-cost carriers, this increase has been supported by ASEAN policies to reduce visa requirements for AMS citizens travelling within the region. Although it remains economically inaccessible for many people within ASEAN, regional travel has played a critical role in cultural exchange and organic regional identity construction versus formal attempts to cultivate collective identity.

Similarly, increased low-cost regional connectivity has made regional migration and thus cultural exchange easier. As outlined earlier, however, inequality between states and a lack of protections for migrant workers means that this exchange does not necessarily contribute positively to ASEAN identity. Plans for increased freedom of movement and connectivity (such as rail from Laos to Singapore) between AMS will further strengthen informal ties, both in terms of leisure and business. However, for ASEAN to maximise the potential positive impact of these developments on identity construction, commitment to freedom of movement and regional connectivity must be matched with improved rights and protections for migrant workers.

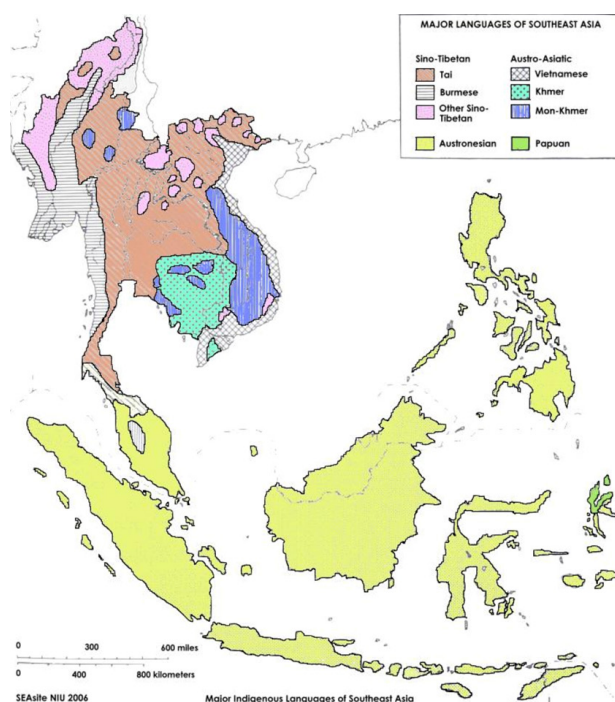
Communication across the region's diverse ecologies and the rich family of languages currently spoken in Southeast Asia (Figure 1.11) seem to cross current-day boundaries rather than be contained within them (Scott, 2009). Language has also been a basis for inclusion and exclusion, often creating mental borders for the latter (Leow, 2018).

<sup>64</sup> The sample was 3,900 individuals from the general public plus 410 business and 184 CSOs respondents.

<sup>65</sup> The ASEAN Secretariat, Poll on ASEAN Awareness 2018, 2019, p.26.

<sup>66</sup> The multisectoral nature of the 2018 Report gave it a greater layer of complexity in disseminating the benefits of the community to different stakeholders than the 2017 study.

Figure 1.11: Major languages of Southeast Asia



Source: Kirkpatrick (2012).

### 1.4.0. Language and Communication

The ASEAN region is linguistically rich and diverse with over 1000 languages identified across AMS. Several hundred of those are identified in relation to minority ethnicities (Kirkpatrick, 2012). It is in the context of this diversity that the ASEAN Charter has made explicit the importance of respecting all the languages of the region, in addition to recognising English as ASEAN's working language.

It has been argued that language selection takes place when newly independent nations are created (e.g., Singapore in 1965 or India in 1947) (Haugen, 1966). It is the will and remit of political leaders to select

a language to represent the nation. Using Europe as the model, a tight coupling was found between language and nation; French for France, German for Germany and so on. Decisions on the choice of language triggers the process of codifying these languages for education, with the publication and use of dictionaries and grammar books that are prescribed in schools. This creates a process of social norm change, analogous to the process of 'localisation' and 'socialisation' underlined by Acharya (2011). Acceptance increases until the language becomes dominant across the nation and is reflected in media and technology. This form of nation building is very different from that of the 'imagined communities' thinking set out by Anderson (1983). Other historians (Gellner, 1992; Hobsbawm, 2000) have also argued that in the case of European countries, this link between language and nation was socially constructed.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Spain would be regarded as more than one nation if it is based on language policy, and has a long-drawn conflict between Catalan and Spanish speakers.

There is an alternative model of nation building to be drawn from the language selection argument. Countries like Singapore and India chose multiple languages to represent the diverse populations that comprised their nations (Vaish, 2020). In the case of Singapore, the languages chosen were English, Malay, Tamil, and Chinese, all of which were already developed to a high degree and did not require codification. Of these, English was perhaps the most alien to the masses, and it was this language that that underwent ‘nativization’ in relation to the established languages of Chinese, Malay, and Tamil. The result was the emergence of a New English popularly called ‘Singlish’. Unlike Malay, Tamil, and Chinese, it is a register that can be said to index a Singaporean identity, spoken by people of all ethnic groups (Vaish, 2020).

Established by elites, English holds a privileged position throughout the ASEAN region, and has become the link language between countries. The first consequence of this is an increasing role in ASEAN for the teaching of English. In turn, the increased teaching and learning of English have implications for the teaching, learning, and maintenance of local languages — many of which are classified as ‘endangered’. This challenge occurs because the regional focus has been to teach English and the respective

national language, at the expense of local languages. There are concerns that the move to introduce English earlier in primary school curricula may also have an adverse impact on the development of English proficiency, itself (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

There is very little information across ASEAN member states on the role of education in local languages. A UNESCO (2017) background paper indicates that the percentage of children who are instructed in their mother tongue (local language) varies across the region. Countries such as Cambodia and Viet Nam were at around 90 percent, with Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Lao PDR at around 50 percent and Singapore, Indonesia, and Brunei around 20 percent to 30 percent. Table 1.3 draws on the classification provided by Kirkpatrick (2012), where the right-hand column (coloured in green) shows the formal position of all countries. Mother tongue is the language of instruction (except Singapore). The remaining part of the table shows the introduction of English by year of schooling. It distinguishes between country cases where English is introduced in the curriculum as the medium of instruction (in peach) and those countries in which English is introduced as a subject but not the medium of instruction.

Table 1.3 English as medium of instruction (MOI) and introduction year in ASEAN

Country	Primary 1	Primary 3	Primary 5	Secondary 1	MOI is Mother Tongue
Brunei Darussalam					
Cambodia					
Indonesia					
Lao PDR					
Malaysia					
Myanmar					
Philippines					
Singapore					
Thailand					
Viet Nam					

English as MOI    English not as MOI    MOI as Mother Tongue

Source: Kirkpatrick (2012)

A study on the impact of English as a Mother Tongue for Singaporeans found that young people identify with English as a Mother Tongue, while older generations do not (Tan, 2014). Another intergenerational difference that emerged was that the language in which young people acquire expertise might not necessarily be the one that they inherit from their parents. It would appear that this expertise could be in a language with which they do not have a familial affiliation, and could be based on associational networks (Vaish, 2020). This is a strong indication that new groups are forming beyond those of family and community.

The resilience and longevity of Singlish is seen as a challenge to an English medium education system, and linguists are divided about its impact. Some have a neutral view of Singlish, and merely enumerate its grammatical attributes (J. Wong, 2005). Others oppose it as a top down approach taken by the government to bind disparate groups in the country (Kramer-Dahl, 2003; L. Wee, 2002). There is currently little research and recognition of the richness of Singlish (for instance, its participle system that allows for subtle pragmatic distinctions and its vibrancy as a unique Singaporean index). There is also little, or no, attempt to look at how these new languages that are a source linguistic richness. This feature of distinctive Southeast Asian identity, has been resolutely overlooked by policy makers (Vaish, 2020).



The dynamic interplay of languages and registers in this naturally occurring speech is an example of translanguaging: a spontaneous retrieval of multiple linguistic resources in bilingual thought to express meaning, emotion, and identity. This is language and identity in Singapore. The value of translanguaging is not yet understood to be an important form, and it is proscribed in language classes. What stands out very strongly, however, is that this is the language that fuels communication and creates a form of public inclusion, whether on the streets or in virtual forums. The vibrant meshing of Chinese, English, and Singlish in is yet another example of the celebration of language and identity in Singapore.

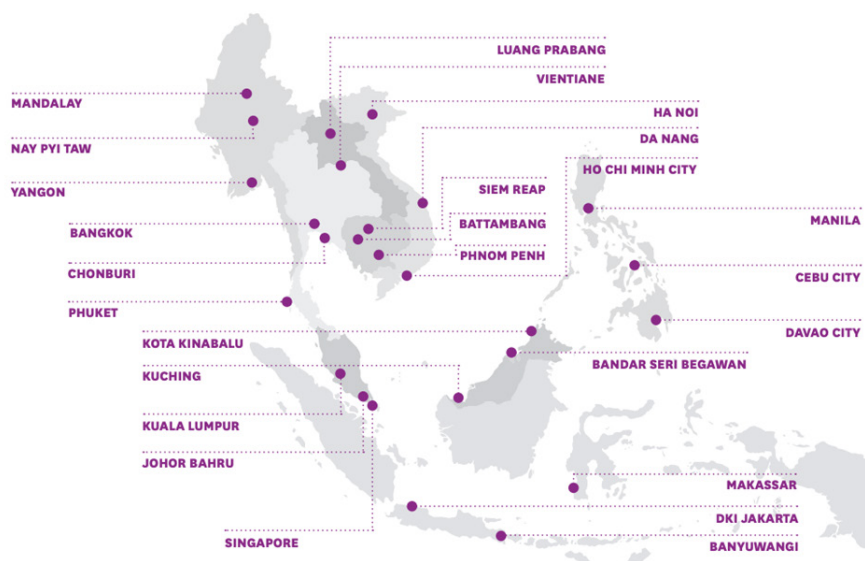
According to Li Wei (2018), celebrating this type of communication creates a 'Translanguaging Space' which has 'transformative power because it is forever evolving as it combines and generates new identities, values and practices' (pg. 23). Additionally, it allows interlocutors to be creative and innovative with spontaneous speech forms (Vaish, 2020).

### 1.4.1. Smart Connectivity and Inclusion

There are also forms of connectivity that are being advanced as opportunities for the inclusion and creation of a smart and technologically innovative society. At the 32nd ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) was established with the aim of creating synergies in development efforts. It provides an opportunity to share best practices and spur growth to promote innovation, capacity-building, and sustainable development. The thinking was that these objectives would promote an inclusive approach by ensuring that it would take into account city-specific needs and recognise local values and cultural uniqueness.

In total, 26 cities across ten member states were listed as ASCN pilot cities: Bandar Seri Begawan, Bangkok, Banyuwangi, Battambang, Cebu City, Chonburi, Da Nang, Davao City, Jakarta, Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, Luang Prabang, Makassar, Mandalay, Manila, Nay Pyi Taw, Phnom Penh, Phuket, Siem Reap, Singapore, Vientiane, and Yangon (Figure 1.12).

Figure 1.12 ASCN pilot cities



Source: Centre for Liveable Cities (2018, p. 3).

The aim of the ASCN to promote sustainable urban development and the design and development of these 26 cities takes place when governments, companies, and people are aware that they need to adapt to 'meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987). The mechanisms for building these Smart Cities use public-private partnership (PPP) consortia as the preferred vehicle for the delivery of infrastructural projects. Here, international firms play a leading role, possibly contradicting the spirit of participation, inclusion, and sustainability.

The ASEAN workplans on connectivity and communication provide further insights. The overall sense is that there does appear to be a harmonising set of principles to bring together Connectivity and Communication. The 'Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025' (MPAC) and 'ASEAN Communication Masterplan II' (ACMP) seem to be attempting to influence two different facets of connectivity, leading to different project objectives and subsequent designs, measurements, and results (ASEAN, 2016h).

The MPAC aim to increase integration and connectivity for ASEAN countries to 'promote competitiveness, inclusiveness, and a greater sense of Community' (ASEAN, 2016h, p. 7). This objective will be achieved through improvements in 'physical', 'institutional', and 'people-to-people' connectivity (ASEAN, 2016h, p. 8). These improvements aim to strengthen member states and 'narrow the development gap' to reinforce the economic, political-security, and socio-cultural pillars of ASEAN (ASEAN, 2016h, p. 8).

On the other hand, the ACMP attempts to promote the benefits of ASEAN integration by spreading public understanding of what the organisation has achieved. This objective is to be realised through relaying the message that ASEAN is beneficial, being 'A Community of Opportunities for All' (ASEAN, 2019a, p. 2). This Master Plan responds to a degree of scepticism surrounding the organisation (ASEAN, 2019a, p.

29). It is hoped that through this communication, the idea of ASEAN as a community and identity will be reinforced.

It would appear that the connectivity that is being followed in the Smart Cities project is going for the 'low-hanging fruit' of thin identity. It applies a template-based model of public-private partnership, where both international and national professionals are not fully involved in participatory infrastructure projects. It is also noteworthy that this contradiction is evident in some ASEAN programmes. The MPAC has opted for a technical and 'top-down' approach, whereas the ACMP has taken a more bottom-up approach (more in line with ASCC objectives on engaging with community and identity).

The five policy areas of focus in achieving integration through MPAC are developing: 'sustainable infrastructure', 'digital innovation', 'seamless logistics', 'regulatory excellence', and 'people mobility' (ASEAN, 2016h, p. 8). The emphasis of MPAC is on the 'additionality, breadth, coordination, depth, and emphasis' that connectivity policy should have. It attempts to enhance coordination between working groups, and closely aligns with the thinking of the ASCN and the six guiding principles to create 'SMART' targets (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timely) (ASEAN, 2016h, p. 10). These are: 'clear and aligned plans', 'strong focus and targets', 'clear governance and ownership', 'robust performance management', 'proactive stakeholder engagement', and 'presence of core skills, incentives, and finance' (ASEAN, 2016h, p. 69). Due to the limited resources of MPAC, the objective is to 'prioritise return and speed of implementation' of policy (ASEAN, 2016h, p. 10). The stress on empirical results (specifically the first 4 listed principles here) is useful in monitoring policies (discussed below). Finally, these policies are implemented in 3 stages: a 'planning phase', 'initial implementation' phase, and 'broadening and deepening' phase (ASEAN, 2016h, p. 75). By breaking these stages down, different problems can be better understood within different stages

In contrast, the way that the ACMP is designed to achieve its objectives centres on the creation of 'message houses'. There is a direct focus on communicating the idea of ASEAN bringing 'opportunities for all', reinforced by 'Community Pillar-specific messages' (ASEAN, 2019a, p. 17). This means that there can be a 'people-focused and...fact-based' approach. By communicating more relevant and specific messages to 'businesses' or 'women and children' among others, what ASEAN is doing for the individual appears more obvious (ASEAN, 2019a, pp. 9–12). This recognition of differences links to a key part of the design of ACMP policy.

On the matter of objectives, it is clear that MPAC has focussed on the hard and technical aspects, while ACMP has gone for the soft skills in messaging and social networking. While it might appear that this two-pronged strategy is logical, it misses the need for norms to drive change. It is a case of needing to understand that society needs to change identity. If the two programmes are to work harmoniously, then it will be helpful to begin with a survey and other modes of data collection to obtain evidence on what different stakeholders in AMS regard as challenges for connectivity and on how this hinders communication. Such an exercise should be aware of the importance of language and of generational differences.



#### Box 1.7 Case study of infrastructure provision to Smart Cities Network

The global private sector is a major player in the provision of infrastructure in the Smart Cities Network through very large Public-Private Partnership (PPPs) contracts.

The sense among critical industry professionals is that the activities of these consultancies are pursuing strategies of messaging and branding, and that sustainability does not take centre stage. Instead it 'contains a fairly uniform and consistent set of ideas for enhancing the sustainability of urban development', and 'repeats a similar menu of options such as bicycle lanes, bus rapid transit, sustainable urban drainage systems, combined heat and power systems, and renewable energy'. Interviews with professionals indicate the following challenges.

Sustainability of a project is undertaken at the 'vision stage', where key principles and objectives of sustainability are addressed (e.g., long-term economic prosperity; inclusive communities; good quality and affordable housing for all; strategic transport links and safe, healthy, low-carbon local movements; high-quality, human-centred place-making; environmental protection and resilience; efficient and sustainable infrastructure). However, the models of governance mechanisms to ensure delivery are surprisingly uniform.

Participation of the local communities is regarded as a cherished principle, but the actual design and implementation of plans for the transformation of entire regions, cities, and neighbourhoods do not involve any public consultation:

Source: Buchon (2020).

An interviewee:

'We [international consultants] are not the ones who do it. Our role is limited to simply providing the communication material and offering best practice advice. We always encourage the client to engage in public participation as it is a key determinant of sustainable urban development. The client will in turn recruit local consultants. Public engagement is still perceived as a box-ticking exercise, performed as a formality, gathering limited inputs as evidence to decisions which may already have been taken.'

Other interviewees local professionals indicated that the process of participatory planning was 'still immature' in Southeast Asia and that only INGOs do it properly. They also noted that since 'Indonesia has a more unequal society than in Europe, the gap between the poor and the rich is huge. The ruling class is very inward looking and controls a lot.' They recognised that there was bottom-up action and 'thought that kampungs do have some power in the decision process', but only 'violent outbursts can make their voices heard. This triggers a wind of solidarity from other citizens and becomes a political issue.'

Making sustainability and participation key principles requires developing a professional practice that actively promotes the principle of co-creation in designing and implementing the project. It also requires that every aspect of a project should ensure feedback from stakeholders and local people, a crucial requirement for ensuring an inclusive and sustainable infrastructure project.





The challenge of not having a clear evidence-base has become evident in early reviews of programme implementation. They indicate that parallel approaches in the case of MPAC and ACMP are challenged by limited institutional arrangements within ASEAN for collaborating across divisions in different pillars. The obstacle to ensuring that the messages regarding SMART complement the Objectives of the ASCC (participation, inclusion, sustainability) is that there does not appear to be an agreed concept of what constitutes the core of SMART and how it should be deployed in the activities of different divisions. Nor is there an in-depth knowledge of the need to tailor content to the needs and abilities of different sectors of the population (Box 1.7). When communicating messages through a template-based approach, it fails to recognise the importance of tailoring messages to member states and local audiences (ASEAN, 2019a, p. 37).

The concept of Smart Cities based on smart grids and devices is proposed as a mechanism to generate economic growth. By creating wealth and sizeable demand for rural and agricultural products, this enables a shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture. However, a sustainable transition requires the provision of public goods based on a detailed understanding of social differences and capabilities to ensure the provision of public goods for all children in urban and rural areas. Existing inequalities require an innovative intervention to improve access and quality of services, so as to reduce the gap

within and between rural and urban areas to sustain growth and equitable living standards for all citizens.

While there are a number of policy interventions that are designed to improve access to public services, these are often top-down processes that do not use participatory methods to incorporate the requirements of all citizens. A core pillar for inclusion would be to bring households and communities in specific localities into the development arena. A sustainability agenda for Smart Cities tends to focus only on the city, as they are now regarded as the future of humankind. However, there is an urgent need to recognize that smart and sustainable solutions are even more important for rural communities. They are often far away from the growth poles of urban-based industrial development, are disadvantaged in their access to education and health, and are often more vulnerable to both human and natural disasters (Fennell et al., 2018).

Communication strategies that harness the mobile phone revolution could provide a powerful lever for catalysing the ability of rural households to increase their social information base. It is possible that new social media groups formed by rural youth will become powerful channels for generating identity and new opportunities for engagement with the local and national public sphere. Furthermore, it could be an enabling environment, in which youth choose to redraw their own lives through engaging with these new sources of information to create bottom-up forms of empowerment.

## 1.4.2. Policy Implications

Implementing representative methods to collect data on identity perceptions is key. While there are a number of policy interventions that are designed to improve access to public services, these are often top-down processes that do not use participatory methods to incorporate the requirements of all citizens. A core pillar for inclusion would be to bring households and communities in specific localities into the development arena.

A process of consultation on the economic, social, and cultural needs of communities in rural, urban, and peri-urban locations is necessary to obtain more comprehensive people-centric perspectives on the impact of public communication on ASEAN policy making.

## 1.4.3. Key Findings

1. Focussing solely on technology for data collection leads to an over-representation of people in certain locations (urban) and age cohorts (young people). There is a need to use a range of methods to ensure a representation of all ages through public consultations.

2. Harness new technological platforms to foster communication between people (especially minority groups) as a means of deepening public engagement beyond elite and urban groups.
3. While a common language is important for regional integration, the importance given to English and national languages in schools has social implications that affect conceptions of identity. There is a need to ensure that local languages will continue to flourish.
4. Top-down efforts to enhance connectivity and improve infrastructure do not promote inclusivity and participation. Rather, that have focussed on the city (i.e., sustainable urban futures that are linked to sustainable rural futures). Moving towards a participatory consultative approach that allows the harnessing local voices across a wide range of stakeholders, (across gender, age, and location), will ensure a more inclusive design of a communication policy across the region.



## 1.5 Communication and Identity: A Foresight Study

Public communication in the sphere of social development is intended to support and promote sustainable lives and human flourishing. This will usually be in the contexts of carefully developed policy interventions. However, there can be a disconnect between these intentions and the way in which that communication is received. There are numerous possible reasons for such a breakdown in communication, but they threaten effective policy implementation at its best and exacerbate social fragmentation and misinformation ('false news') at its worst. Communication is such an important element of policy delivery that a foresight study is proposed as a way of better understanding the risks and opportunities of effective communication strategies, mind-sets, and platforms.

A foresight study will ask simple questions that arise from the complexity of communication, human identity, and rapidly changing technology, amongst many varied factors – or 'drivers of change' – at play. Such questions might include: how are rural and urban populations most easily reached; how do age, education, technological 'literacy', socio-economic status, or familial status affect the way in which messages and communications are received; how do the different genders, sexualities, 'fringe', or 'mainstream' identities interpret or perceive messages aimed at them or the whole of a society of which they are a part; what is the importance of language – and its interaction with different age groups, educational achievement levels or geographical location; and, perhaps even more importantly, how are these different groups, identities and interests able to communicate back to those who drive interventions in

the policy space. From these questions, a foresight analysis will investigate the role of mass media, social media, social networks, and community-based groups. Ethnicity, faith, religious affiliation, and community are all factors in this complex picture.

The possibility of working with fast moving communication technology (sometimes with broad uptake – such as mobile phones and WhatsApp; sometimes narrower in uptake – TikTok and younger people, for example), provide an illustration of the vast array of choices available in the sphere of communication. A foresight study would help highlight the consequences of using these technologies and the implications for the intersections of public and private notions of identity.

A foresight study might pose a fundamental question. For example, what do we want the notion of 'ASEAN identity' to mean in 2050? There is no singular perspective on the multiple identities that enrich and strengthen the ASEAN member nations. Yet, there is a desire to use this collective identity for shared advantage and to strengthen common efforts and shared purpose. The strength of a foresight study lies in its ability to develop scenarios based on different assumptions on how communication drives development interventions and the strengthening of an ASEAN identity. Each scenario can capture different challenges and resource commitments, different time frames and levels of engagement, and different ideas of decentralisation, participative engagement, and community-led change.

There is a wide range of players and expertise to be engaged in a foresight study. Community representation, civil society groups, and religious groups will all have important voices to be heard. Technology companies, education institutions, advertising trade groups, mental

health advocates, urban planners, broadcasting organisations, and a wide range of advocacy groups will all have a contribution to make. The range of participation here extends beyond the scope of one department or pillar of government. This is a typical hallmark of a foresight study.

A well-managed foresight study will focus on detail in order to demonstrate general principles at stake. For example, the detail of a policy for the elderly might be explored in order to see the implications of communication in only one national language or one digital communication platform. Similarly, a study would notice the challenges faced in rural versus urban locations. In rural areas, cookstoves might be a preferred manifestation of renewable energy policies, but smart meters and solar panels might be more

acceptable in urban settings. Furthermore, the policy would be spelt out through a simple and clear communication strategy. The objective of the communications would be to identify preferred outcomes. This would be undertaken by relaying policy intentions, and spelling out how the policy recognises different needs by using simple illustrations of how they will be addressing case- and location-specific needs of individuals.

The complexity and subtlety of some of the drivers of change identified here create a multi-layered picture requiring careful interpretation and application. In any given social group, geographical area, or other identity, different influences may dominate. A foresight study will allow decisions to be well-informed, local in nature, and directed towards specified outcomes.





The final set of considerations for any foresight study might be the degree to which the policy interventions are going to be 'reactive' versus 'proactive'. In reality, the interventions will be somewhere between those two extremes, but a foresight study will be able to focus attention on the advantages of taking a more proactive

stance. Similarly, a foresight approach will examine the implications of focussing on individual responsibility for the issues at stake versus a more organised, societal approach to messaging and communication. These ideas are explained more fully in the Introduction to this report – and are captured in Figure 0.18.



## 02. NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Highlights the importance of shared responsibility for climate change adaptation, mitigation, disaster preparedness, and management as well as analysis on energy and infrastructure.





## 2. NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### 2.0 Introduction

The Natural Environment and the Built Environment are the canvas on which social choices made today define future development pathways and possibilities for decades ahead. Theme 2 will consider the impact on people's lives of environmental factors, both now and in the future. The theme will seek to put environmental impacts into context by exploring a technical understanding of the environment, the changes happening through 'climate change' and the consequences of those changes on people's lives and livelihoods. The theme also considers how enhanced standards of living may themselves become drivers of damage to the environment. To understand these pressures and paradoxes, it is important to consider the meaning of 'sustainable development'.

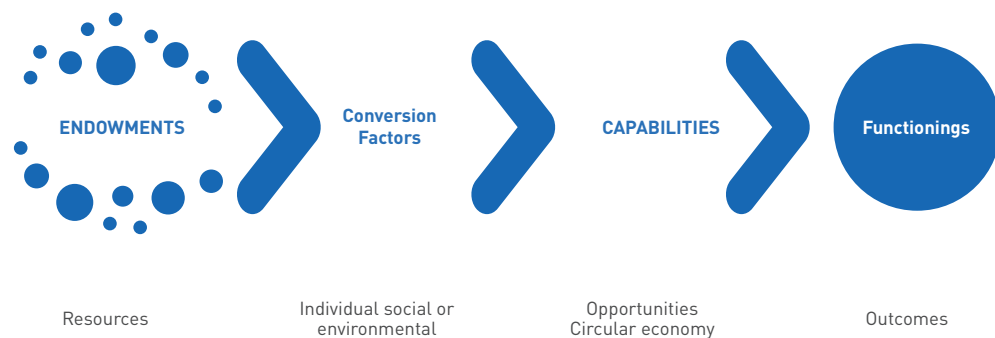
The adoption, by all UN member states, of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signalled a global understanding that development activities are integrated with all others. Action in one area will affect outcomes in other areas. Development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. This 'triple bottom line' was recognised as the key to 'sustainable development' and to the pledge to 'Leave No One Behind' (UNDP, 2015).

Sustainable development thus has, three interdependent pillars: the social, the economic and the environmental. The challenge of sustainable development is to keep the three pillars in balance, so that economic growth comes with social equity and enhanced environmental stability. Unfortunately, this balance does not occur easily. A focus on economic growth can disrupt the environmental balance in the short and the long-term. It can also exacerbate social inequality for the most deprived, vulnerable or marginalised communities and individuals (as discussed in depth across Theme 1, Theme 3 and Theme 4 in this report).

The opportunities and constraints that each of the three ‘sustainability’ pillars places on the others will be evident throughout Theme 2. Successful policy recognises a ‘triple bottom line’, in which each of the three pillars is enhanced – or at least not damaged. Truly sustainable development interventions deliver positive results to all three pillars in a balanced way. Social, environmental and economic gains go hand in hand (Raworth, 2017).

Sustainable development delivers and sustains a safe and just space by, securing planetary well-being (a ‘safe’ space) and human well-being (a ‘just’ space). It sits comfortably with the Capabilities Approach (CA) adopted in this report (Pasgaard & Dawson, 2019). Figure 2.1 shows how the CA can help to organise livelihood components that are tightly linked to environmental features, creating and responding to social and economic change.

Figure 2.1: The Capability Approach to well-being



Source: Adapted from Chiappero-Martinetti & Venkatapuram (2014) and Hart (2019)

In Figure 2.1 ‘Conversion Factors’ can be positive or negative. A strengthened environmental or social context will support positive livelihood options, while negative changes will not.

Degraded environmental circumstances will give feedback through all elements of the CA. ‘Endowments’ may be degraded (e.g., poor air quality, frequent floods or extended travel times that undermine health, security and the value of work or leisure). If conditions worsen, then every household or community faces constrained ‘Opportunities’ and ‘Outcomes’. In the worst case, opportunities and outcomes can become negative (e.g., choosing between forced migration versus other forms of hardship and vulnerability).

Individuals and groups assign different values to natural resources and the ecosystems, based

on their historical experiences and specific worldview. Indigenous groups may regard nature as an integral part of their spiritual world. Places, such as sacred groves, are the locations of their collective spirit. It is important for inclusive livelihoods that these values are recognised, respected and allowed to flourish. It is also necessary to support such communities whose values and responses are being forced to change as the world around them changes irreversibly. Practised responses to pressures (e.g., traditional methods of dealing with annual floods) may be overwhelmed by new environmental conditions, leaving individuals and communities without tried and trusted responses (or ‘conversion factors’) to draw on.

As the ASEAN region moves into its second half-century, new development aspirations are taking shape. Amongst the new priorities, the



environment has taken a leading position.<sup>68</sup> Outcomes do not yet, match all of the stated objectives within the ASEAN region, but there is a solid policy agenda in the making.<sup>69</sup> If actions to date fall short of what is ultimately required, it is important to recognise the steps that have been taken. There are many changes across the ASEAN region in the right direction for a sustainable future. However, it is important to be analytical about what is happening and what may still be required to maximise development and sustainability across the region. This Theme will show how environmental challenges of many kinds, but especially the impacts of climate change, are at enormous risk of undermining gains that have been made for individuals and social well-being in recent decades.

Remarkable economic gains have been made in ASEAN's first 50 years. People are economically better off now than they have ever been in many parts of ASEAN, and the aim is to raise the standard of livelihoods for all citizens. However, a new way forward will be required if sustainable development is to be maintained amidst rapid environmental changes. These include harshening weather systems, extreme flooding and storms, sinking land masses, and rising sea-levels. The drivers of these undesirable changes are both global and local. Global climate change drives much of the weather intensification. Local and regional environmental and demographic shifts (e.g. forest and wetland destruction; smoke pollution; urbanisation; population growth; the rise of the middle class)<sup>70</sup> exacerbate the impacts of global changes. The export-led, energy-intensive and land-intensive economic model of the twentieth

century has fallen short in relation to both the social and environmental pillars. Economic growth across much of the region has clearly been strong, but a significant portion of the ASEAN population has not benefited from those economic gains (and are denied a 'just space'). The natural environment that sustains social survival is also being damaged beyond its ability to support the population safely (denying everybody 'a safe space'). Theme 2 focuses in particular on the technical reasons for the challenge to a 'safe space' for all.

As societies become wealthier, their growing demand for food, housing, transportation, energy, and consumer goods creates increasing stress on regional and world resources. If these demands continue to grow, the 'carrying capacity' of the world will be passed. This means that planet earth will not be able to provide the resources required, or to absorb the impacts of resource use. There are already signs that some planetary limits have been reached, pushing earth beyond its carrying capacity. Climate change, rising sea levels and harmful plastic waste on land and at sea, are examples of the most severe planetary threats already challenging economic stability and human security.<sup>71</sup>

The exponential growth of the middle-class across the ASEAN region<sup>72</sup> is another factor accelerating the ASEAN nations down unsustainable development pathways. Through elements of geographical conditions and human choices, the ASEAN population is highly exposed to an unfolding environmental disaster. Without decisive intervention, countless lives will be harmed and livelihoods damaged (especially amongst the most vulnerable in society).

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<sup>68</sup> The ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Sustainability contains a commitment to achieving a 'clean and green' ASEAN (ASEAN, 2007); the ASCC Blueprint identifies a 'Sustainable' ASEAN as a 'Characteristic and Element' of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community 2025 (ASCC, 2016); 'To enhance efforts to tackle climate change as well as promote sustainable development' is an objective of the Masterplan on ASEAN Connectivity (ASEAN, 2016h) - and so on.

<sup>69</sup> Consider, for example, the commitment to reduce haze pollution across the whole ASEAN region (ASEAN, 2016k), Malaysia's commitment to SCP (Economic Planning Unit, 2016), and the circular economy and plastics gap analysis for ASEAN member states (Akenji et al., 2019).

<sup>70</sup> Each of these is discussed further in this theme.

<sup>71</sup> Numerous articles feature the problem of plastic waste across ASEAN and efforts at the local level to stem the flow and make use of waste plastic as a resource. The challenges are immense. See, for example, The ASEAN Post Team (2020) article on tackling waste in the ASEAN region or UNDP (2019c) writing about plastic pollution in Cambodia. For a wide range of reasons - whether marine debris, visual pollution, land shortage for waste disposal, or other sectoral concerns - dealing with plastic waste has emerged as a high priority for the ASEAN region (Akenji et al., 2019).

<sup>72</sup> In Indonesia alone, 52 million citizens are in the middle class (one in five of the population). Another 115 million people (45% of the population) are out of poverty and in the 'aspiring' middle class. The size of the middle class tripled between 2002 and 2016, and growth continues at the same rate (World Bank, 2019a).

Theme 2 attempts to explain why the breaching of environmental boundaries is a defining concern for the ASEAN region, along with the interconnected challenges of population dynamics and technological change. These drivers of change are not fixed and can be adjusted through social, economic, and environmental choices, to create immediate and long-term opportunities for sustainable development. These environmental drivers cannot be ignored if a sustainable future is desired. Chief amongst the drivers of change is climate change.

Climate Change is an existential risk for the ASEAN region and its greatest impact will be on the most vulnerable in society. Interventions (through a combination of social change and strategic policy efforts) aim to *mitigate* the causes and to *adapt* to the potential consequences. Mitigation means taking steps to reduce the progression of climate change. Adaptation means responding appropriately to the changes that come (in particular those that are already 'in the pipeline' and cannot be avoided).

Some of the consequences of climate change are easy to see (e.g., flooding), while others remain less visible (e.g., reduced soil fertility or low-level, persistent drought patterns). The potential impacts of these consequences depends on policy responses and on the adaptive capacity of each AMS, and, cumulatively, of the ASEAN region as a whole.

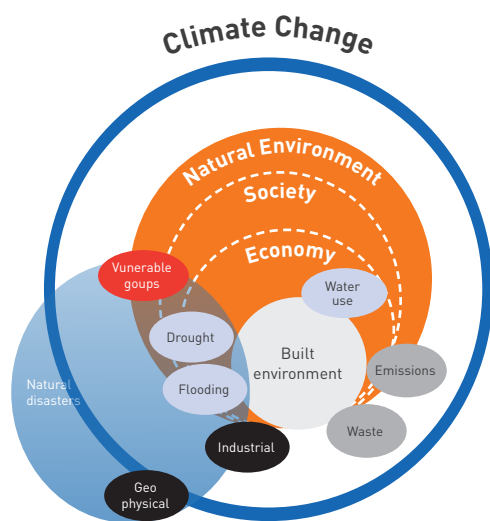
A successful strategy involves *recognising* the growing frequency, magnitude, and impact of high-risk events and climate changes, and *strengthening* response capabilities.

There are simple but important questions that affect the everyday lives of ASEAN people. 'What is the risk of not doing enough?' 'What are natural disasters telling us about present and future risks?' These questions, in turn, lead to a discussion of how best to live in the built environment in terms of one's relationship with the natural environment as consumers and producers.

The topics of Climate Change, the Natural Environment, Disaster Management and the Built Environment are combined under one theme because they connect in fundamental ways. As depicted in Figure 2.2, each challenge has to be examined in relation to other challenges, in order to capture the many overlaps and inter-dependencies. Addressing all the issues collectively requires an integrated and long-term approach over several decades. Measures that are adopted to respond, for example, to short-term pressures will tend to fall short. Climate change is here already with impacts on the built and the natural environment. It also magnifies the frequency and magnitude of natural disasters. These disasters have the greatest impact on the poorest people and communities in the region, where socio-economic capabilities and resilience remain weak.



Figure 2.2: Intersecting worlds: The built and the natural



Source: Adapted from Raworth (2012) and Rockström et al. (2009)

The sections within this theme on Climate Change and the Natural and the Built Environment provide insights into forward-looking development and investment planning, encompassing environmental dynamics, and using an evidence-based approach to policy formulation. The section on Disaster Management considers the steps ASEAN has already taken to respond to natural disasters and highlights how ASEAN and its socio-cultural community could offer global leadership and further support a resilient ASEAN future by showcasing its forward-thinking identity to the world.

Ultimately, the responsibility for action will rest with society and not just with policy leaders. This poses questions for workers, employers, farmers and consumers. This reality is highlighted in the section on responsible production and consumption, which broadens the discussion to a wider social context.

It examines the notion of a circular consumer economy and looks at case studies of changes in production practices. It also discusses ASEAN interventions on a circular economy through the prioritisation of plastic waste to show the current state of thinking. The challenge for policy makers is to embrace and foster this momentum.

Clear and accurate evidence tailored to regional, national, and local needs, will be an essential foundation for responding effectively to environmental challenges. Given its responsibilities under the ASCC Blueprint 2025 the ASCC is uniquely placed to commission, evaluate, and deliver evidence-based thinking to all relevant stakeholders across the ASEAN organisations and member states. The impact of such evidence will be greatly enhanced because it will be able to focus directly on the local needs of the AMS and their populations.<sup>73</sup> The ASCC Blueprint 2025 identifies

<sup>73</sup> See for example the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment of 2011, in which the top priority actions for adaptation, mitigation, finance and investment, and technology transfer are all to 'share best practice', 'enhance networks' and 'promote common understanding' of matters relating to climate change. Since 2009 the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) has been convened as a 'consultative and collaborative platform'. The focus is on information sharing, formulating regional interests, priorities and concerns, and serving as a consultative forum amongst other ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. The ASCC Blueprint suggests more direct engagement – with duties to 'enhance policy and capacity development', for example (Para C.1 v.). The Action Plan on Climate Change (ASEAN, 2019d), developed by the AWGCC, has similar emphasis. The current structure within ASEAN and the division of responsibility between the Economic pillar and the Socio-cultural leave responsibility with the Climate Change and Environmental teams for 'strengthening' and 'facilitating' – for which excellent evidence and data are needed (ASCC, 2016; ASEAN, 2018a; ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment, 2011). These responsibilities are explained and referred to as 'SF' responsibilities in this text.

‘Sustainability’ as a defining characteristic of ASEAN. Achieving a ‘sustainable climate’ is a ‘key results’ area for sustainability. Several other facets within the Blueprint also intersect with climate change and sustainability, such as sustainable cities, inclusivity and equity, conservation, sustainable consumption and production, and others (see ASCC, 2016). Some of these related matters are explored further in Theme 2, but the importance of achieving a sustainable climate will be explored in the next section on Climate Change.

The ASCC is required to take strategic measures that include ‘Strengthen human and institutional capacity in implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation, especially on vulnerable and marginalised communities’ and ‘Facilitate the development of comprehensive and coherent responses to climate change challenges, such as but not limited to multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approaches’.<sup>74</sup>

This duty to ‘strengthen’ and ‘facilitate’ (referred to in this section as the ‘SF’ obligations) implies being an enabler to others with complementary obligations. For successful implementation, SF will always demand excellent knowledge-sharing skills and the ability to provide correct and relevant information. The ASCC has addressed its SF obligations in numerous activities and strategic actions. However, there is much to be gained if those SF deliverables are strengthened so that all areas of policy across ASEAN are made with climate change concerns placed at the forefront of thinking. The reasons

for this urgency and priority are discussed in the next section on Climate Change.

Within the ASEAN architecture, the different areas of responsibility (e.g., Economic Development) are distributed across different ‘Communities’ (e.g., the ASEAN Economic Community for economic development). In this structure, responsibility for direct policy development in areas relevant to climate change (e.g., forestry, agriculture, energy, city planning) lies within parts of the organisation outside of the ASCC. The ASCC has the opportunity, through its SF obligations, of ensuring that there is clear understanding within each relevant Community of the climate challenges faced across the ASEAN region. This includes multiple interactions between climate and other development drivers, the best data available to inform policy development, and the practical steps required of policy makers to create positive outcomes and minimise undesirable consequences.<sup>75</sup> Reviewing the implementation of the SF obligation might reveal opportunities for offering a strengthened impact upon policy responsiveness to climate change.

Strong SF delivery requires solid knowledge generation, sound knowledge management and targeted knowledge dissemination (Pye et al., 2021). By ensuring that timely and ASEAN-specific information is available to each of the relevant policy sectors, the ASCC can continue to strengthen critical policy areas and promote sustainable development interventions.

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<sup>74</sup> See ASCC (2016) Article C3 (i) and C3 (ii) on page 12.

<sup>75</sup> The same principles are elaborated in other parts of ASEAN’s institutional framework. For example, the Terms of Reference of the Senior Officers in the Environment (ASOEN) says that ‘ASOEN shall provide strategic and policy guidance to coordinate, monitor, evaluate and review the implementation of ASPEN (ASEAN Strategic Plan on the Environment 2016 – 2025) towards the realisation of the objectives of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 and ASEAN Community Vision 2025. Specifically, ASOEN shall: (i) identify and implement regional policies, measures and programmes to promote environmental protection and sustainable development in the ASEAN region; (ii) ensure effective implementation of directives, agreements, and decisions deriving from the ASEAN Summits, relevant strategic measures of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint and relevant strategic measures of ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) and ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprints pertinent to environmental protection and sustainable development in ASEAN; (iii) consider recommendations of ASOEN’s subsidiary bodies and provide guidance for the effective implementation of their respective work plans; and (iv) promote coordination, collaboration and/or partnerships with other ASEAN sectoral bodies, ASEAN Dialogue Partners, international organisations, and relevant stakeholders for the environmental protection and sustainable development in the ASEAN region.’

The theme is structured as follows:

Section 1 Climate Change reviews climate risk and response from an ASEAN perspective, detailing the risks presented by rising sea-levels in particular, and its threats to human habitation, livelihoods, and food production.

Section 2 Disaster Management and Section 3 Natural Environment highlight what natural disasters and the natural environment appear to be telling us about the interdependent social *risks*, and discusses examples of ASEAN and national policy responses.

Section 4 Built Environment and Section 5 Sustainable Consumption and Production discuss how we should *respond*, by asking how we should live in our built environments and how we should consume and produce.

## 2.1 Life in a Time of Climate Change: The Impact of Climate Change on Human Development, Livelihoods and Sustainability

This section opens with a technical explanation of the meaning, drivers, and impacts of climate change – and its significance for the ASEAN region. In particular, it takes a close look at the drivers of rising sea-levels, current forecasts until the end of this century, and implications by country for some of the ASEAN member states.

The section reviews the international approach to collaborating on climate change and introduces the 'NDCs' (Nationally Declared Contributions), examining how they cumulatively fall short of what is needed for global climate management. It also discusses the emerging strategy for 'net-zero emissions' as the favoured pathway. The section touches on some challenges faced within the ASEAN region for implementing policies and processes to mitigate climate change and identifies the importance of transitioning from coal-based to renewable energy generation. The clear importance of location-specific climate modelling for policy use is highlighted. The response to dealing with the unavoidable impacts of climate change, called 'adaptation', is also addressed as part of a coordinated approach to climate change. Adaptation will also be addressed in more detail in later sections on disaster management, the built environment, and the natural environment.

The section closes with a review of the policy implications for these factors, emphasising the imperative for the ASEAN nations (both individually, and as a bloc) to engage with a policy for net-zero global emissions by 2050 to achieve levels targeted in the 'Paris Agreement' (United Nations, 2015b) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (United Nations, 1992). This closing section highlights the mechanisms within the Paris Agreement for updating national contributions (NDCs) in order to meet global targets. This is important in the light of the COP 26 meeting in November 2021 where updated proposals from participating nations will be a central feature.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Postponed from November 2020 to November 2021 because of the global COVID 19 pandemic (IISD, 2020)

## 2.1.0. Risk to Livelihoods and Security

'Climate Change' is a long-term shift in weather patterns caused by the gradual heating of the earth. The heating of the planet is a result of human activities, especially from burning fossil fuels and forests.<sup>76</sup> These activities release 'locked-in' carbon from coal, oil or trees, that enters the earth's atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), a greenhouse gas. As CO<sub>2</sub> levels rise in the atmosphere, it captures heat inside the earth's atmosphere and gradually raises the surface temperature, triggering distinct changes in weather patterns and the severity of weather events.<sup>77</sup>

Over many years the causes and effects of climate change have been studied, with the impacts and anticipated future effects published globally.<sup>78</sup> There is a very strong consensus amongst scientists and global climate change experts about what is happening and why.<sup>79</sup> Every ecosystem in the world is affected by climate change, and many are already experiencing negative effects – some of which will be discussed further in this Theme. Predictions of the future effects of climate change are made by considering different 'scenarios'. Each scenario is based on assumptions about different global levels

of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the future, and a modelling of the possible consequences.<sup>80</sup> Predicting future consequences of climate change under different scenarios offers a range of potential outcomes, with greater certainty about impacts in the near future (20 to 30 years) and wider uncertainty about specific impacts in the more distant future (50 to 100 years, and beyond).<sup>81</sup>

Climate change affects the entire globe and is driven by greenhouse gas emissions. Only collective global action can slow down and halt these emissions and the changes they cause. The crucial interventions that will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to the necessary net-zero include a reduction and phasing out of the use of fossil fuels across the globe, if climate change is to be managed.<sup>82</sup> There is an urgent need for a transition to renewable energy sources, and for fossil fuel consumption to cease decades before 2100 (IRENA, 2020). In addition to emissions reduction, there will be a need for CO<sub>2</sub> removal from the atmosphere, for example, through reforestation.

Although impacts are global, climate change operates differently at regional and local levels. In some parts of the world the most immediate effects include drought often interspersed with extreme rainfall causing destructive floods. The USA, Australia, and many parts of Africa have recently experienced some of these extreme weather effects.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>76</sup> 'Science tells us the climate is already changing because of human activity. We are currently on a path risking serious, pervasive, and irreversible impacts' [Hoesung, 2020].

<sup>77</sup> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produces regular 'Assessment Reports' in which observed changes are set out and explained. See for example the synthesis of AR5 (the Fifth Assessment Report), page 4 (IPCC, 2015). These Assessment Reports, intended to provide clear technical support to the United Nations climate deliberation processes, draw on many publications and the work of many research programmes across the world. The most recent regular IPCC Assessment Report was AR5, published in 2014. The next Assessment Report, AR6, is due in 2022. In 2019 the IPCC also produced a Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5° and related global emissions pathways [Allen et al., 2019].

<sup>78</sup> The IPCC Assessment Reports clarify the up to date understanding of the science of climate change, along with its current impacts and predicted future impacts.

<sup>79</sup> In a 2013 analysis, it was found that over 97 percent of scientific papers analysing climate change endorsed the consensus that climate change is being caused by human activity (Cook et al., 2013). The consensus is confirmed in AR5, with explanations on the uncertainty or unpredictability of some of the impacts of climate change observed (IPCC, 2015)

<sup>80</sup> For example, the IPCC Assessment Reports create scenarios based on four different global emissions pathways for the 21st Century. These include a stringent mitigation scenario (RCP2.6), two intermediate scenarios (RCP4.5 and RCP6.0), and one scenario with very high GHG emissions (RCP8.5). Scenarios without additional efforts to constrain emissions ('baseline scenarios') lead to pathways ranging between RCP6.0 and RCP8.5. RCP2.6 is representative of a scenario that aims to keep global warming likely below 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures (IPCC, 2015, p. 8). Scenario building for policy purposes requires particular considerations, as well as the most up to date scientific analysis (Pye et al., 2021).

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, predictions and outcomes relating to sea-ice melting. AR5 noted that sea-ice loss was due to human activity and was occurring at a rate of about 3.5 to 4 percent per decade. In 2012, measurements showed that loss of sea-ice in the Arctic region due to rising temperatures had been underestimated. The measurements suggested that sea ice loss had accelerated to about 10 percent per decade. 'A challenging characteristic of the summer sea ice extent is that its decay has exceeded the predictions of models' (Wadhams, 2012, p. 24). In 2016, the dramatic loss of Arctic sea ice suggested that the higher estimate was closer to correct – with the updated analysis showing ice-losses running at 13 percent per decade [Cullather et al., 2016; Ricker et al., 2017].

<sup>82</sup> 'To prevent the worst effects of climate change, we need to get to zero net greenhouse gas emissions in every sector of the economy within 50 years' [Gates, 2020].

<sup>83</sup> Media coverage highlights many newsworthy events attributed to climate change in different parts of the world. For example: 'There is an "unequivocal and pervasive" role for climate change in driving the scale and impact of wildfires in California' (BBC News, 2020); 'Australia faces more fires, drought as climate continues to heat' (Aljazeera, 2020); in the Sahel region of Africa, 'No other region has documented such a long and spatially extensive drought' (BBC News, 2019).



Within the ASEAN region, the impact most urgently requiring a policy response is arguably rising sea-levels. Rising sea-levels are exacerbated by the increasing frequency of extreme weather (another consequence of climate change), especially the frequency and severity of typhoons across the ASEAN region.<sup>84</sup>

Sea-level rise is driven by global ice melting and by rising sea-water temperatures, both caused by the rise in global temperatures relative to pre-industrial levels (Climate Central, 2019). When ice melts within the oceans (icebergs or sea-ice in the Arctic, for example) sea-levels do not change (in the same way that a glass does not overflow when an ice-cube melts). When ice on land melts and flows into oceans as water, however, sea-levels rise. Key areas in which ice-melt will have a critical impact on the ASEAN region are the Antarctic ice-shelf and Greenland ice melt (with the permanent covering of ice becoming thinner, and threatening to break down completely). The rising sea-levels, over the last 50 years or so, are driven largely by the rise of sea-water temperatures, causing the water to expand. But accelerating ice melt is the greater imminent threat.<sup>85</sup>

These technical facts show how the extent of future sea-level rise will depend on the actions of the entire global community. However, some sea-level rise is already 'in the system' and cannot be avoided in the coming decades (Climate Central, 2019). These changes are discussed in the sea-level rise section, below. In particular, urgent action is needed to protect millions of people across the ASEAN region against changes that are unavoidable.

Future impacts of climate change are re-estimated repeatedly, considering changes as they occur, in order to update models and predictions.<sup>86</sup> Where predicted impacts have proven to be underestimated, such as with sea-ice melting, it tells the world that Climate Change and its impacts can arrive faster and more severely than expected. Climate change is an immediate challenge, and demands an urgent response. The IPCC in AR5 says (IPCC, 2015, p. 8):

'Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems. **Limiting climate change would require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions** which, together with adaptation, can limit climate change risks.' (emphasis added)

When presented in terms of small temperature or CO<sub>2</sub> emission rises, climate change is somewhat difficult to picture. Potential impacts seem distant in terms of time and space. The socialisation and normalisation of responding to climate challenges has been a slow process, seeming to lack urgency. Even when scientists warn clearly of the danger of 'locking in' a global warming pathway with cumulative and accelerating effects, society and policy can seem to remain unresponsive (Woetzel et al., 2020). However, response to climate change is gaining a sense of urgency across the world.

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<sup>84</sup> Typhoons are the most prevalent hazard in the region, causing destruction to human life, buildings, agriculture and infrastructure alike, while causing flooding and landslides/mudslides. The region provides compelling evidence of the destructive power of such disasters' (Gupta, 2010, p. i).

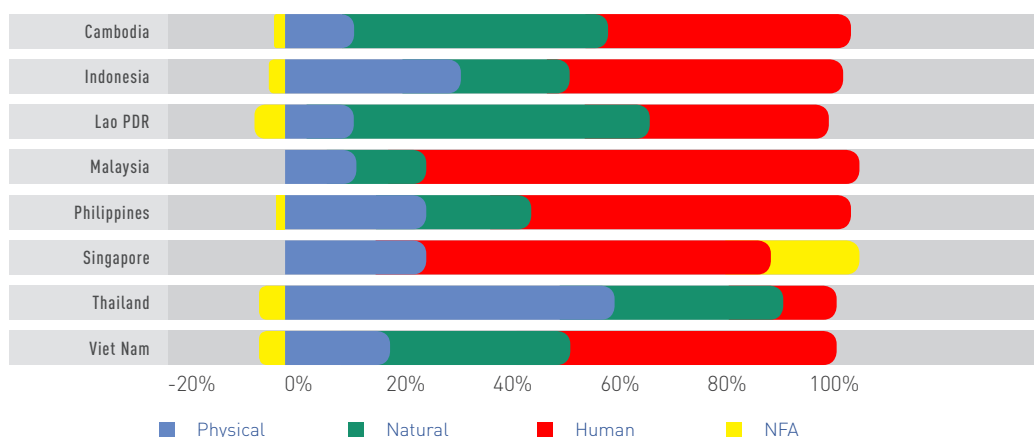
<sup>85</sup> AR5 explains the impacts of climate change on the oceans – noting that much of the energy captured by global climate change is absorbed into the oceans, raising their temperature (IPCC, 2015, p. 4).

<sup>86</sup> See for example (IPCC, 2020) reports AR 4 (2007), AR5 (2014) and AR6 (Due 2022), all of which cover similar assessments, building from each other – and comment on the insights gained from comparing previous predictions from relevant observed changes. The sixth assessment of the IPCC (AR6) is due to be published in 2022. 'The overall risks of climate change impacts can be reduced by limiting the rate and magnitude of climate change. Risks are reduced substantially under the assessed scenario with the lowest temperature projections (RCP2.6 – low emissions) compared to the highest temperature projections (RCP8.5 – high emissions), particularly in the second half of the 21st century (very high confidence). Reducing climate change can also reduce the scale of adaptation that might be required. Under all assessed scenarios for adaptation and mitigation, some risk from adverse impacts remains (very high confidence)' (IPCC, 2015, p. 14).

The ASEAN region is, unfortunately, exposed in unique ways to climate change in the near future. Through geographic circumstance, the region is naturally disposed to variable weather patterns and associated floodings and droughts through El Niño and La Niña events. ASEAN’s tectonic location also exposes it to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Sustained shifts in rainfall patterns generated by climate change have exacerbated these pre-existing risks (Markandya, 2020). Natural risks are further entrenched and exacerbated where

access to physical, natural and human wealth is most limited.<sup>87</sup> Figure 2.3 shows how eight of the ASEAN countries face different risks from climate change, based on their economic composition.<sup>88</sup> Countries with the lowest GDP, Cambodia and Lao PDR, are heavily exposed to damage to the natural environment, whereas Thailand (in the moderate ranking of GDP) is especially vulnerable in terms of its physical infrastructure. By contrast Singapore, with its high GDP per person, shows no exposure to damage to its natural resources.

Figure 2.3: National wealth by category



Source: Authors’ based on World Bank (2018c) data

NOTE: Data selection comes from the link to Excel sheet within the National Wealth website called ‘The Changing Wealth of Nations – Country Tool’ – Myanmar and Brunei are not in the data set.

According to the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analysis (PIK) the potential impacts are especially devastating for low lying areas of the Philippines, Indonesia and Viet Nam (Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analysis, 2013).<sup>89</sup> Flooding and temperature extremes are likely

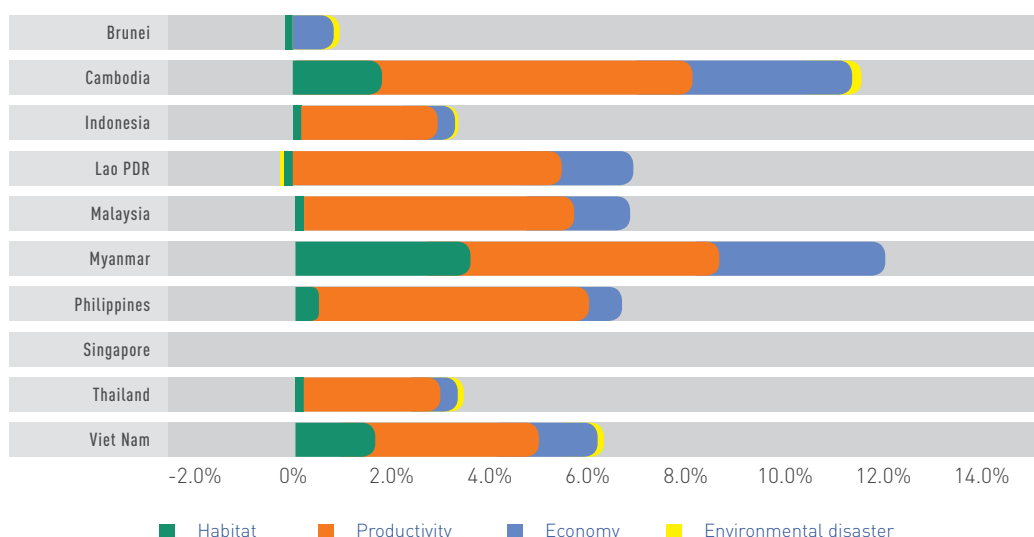
to cause significant reductions in agricultural and fishery production with negative effects for food security, health and livelihoods (Markandya, 2020).<sup>90</sup> These findings may further underestimate the problem. The more evidence that is gathered, the more severe the problems are seen to become.

<sup>87</sup> These are often referred to as economic, environmental, and social wealth – the elements of the ‘triple bottom line’ and the focus of truly sustainable development.  
<sup>88</sup> Data is unavailable in this World Bank data source for Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar.  
<sup>89</sup> It is predicted that the Mekong Delta will see a reduction in food production by more than 10 percent. See Figure 2.7 for further details.  
<sup>90</sup> Climate projections indicate that crop yields could decrease by 20% to 60% by 2049 (D. King et al., 2015).

Given these geographic and economic contexts, it is possible to estimate the cost of damage to a country’s habitat, through economic stress and environmental disasters using the PIK projections. As Figure 2.4 shows, the *damages are expected to exceed 6 percent of GDP in six countries* by 2030. Cambodia and Myanmar (both losing more than 12 percent of GDP by 2030) are the worst affected through lower agricultural productivity. Region-wide, there may also be nearly 30,000 climate-related deaths in

2030, rising from an estimated 20,000 in 2010. Notably, countries with higher GDP are the *least* affected. Brunei Darussalam is expected to lose no more than 0.7 percent of its GDP, with Singapore expecting no losses to GDP. The most vulnerable across the ASEAN region will bear the worst of the climate change impacts (Markandya, 2020).<sup>25</sup> It is again important to bear in mind that these estimates may be lower than the reality that unfolds.

Figure 2.4: Costs and impacts of climate change



Source: Authors’ based on data from Markandya (2020)

Note: Gives estimates of costs in US dollars (2020 prices) for each category (except health), as well as the costs as a percent of GDP in 2010 and 2030.

### 2.1.1. Sea Level Rise

Humans have always created settlements close to coasts and rivers. Of the twenty largest cities within ASEAN (with a combined 121 million residents) fourteen are on the coast or on the banks of a major coastal river (World Population Review, 2020).

Over more than 7,000 years of global human settlement, the place and shape of coastlines have changed remarkably little around the world. This was due to the relative stability of the world’s climate over that period, with sea levels changing relatively slowly. ‘Over the last few thousand years, the rate of sea-level rise remained fairly low, probably not exceeding a few tenths of a millimetre per year’ (Gornitz, 2007). That stability is now ending, and coastal

<sup>25</sup> These and other impacts are well-captured in ‘The ASEAN’ edition on Climate Change of September 2020 (ASEAN, 2020e). The information is well organised and accessible. The challenge is to promote action in response. See particularly ‘Climate Change is Real: The ASEAN region is bearing the brunt’ (Vong et al., 2020).  
<sup>26</sup> Gives estimates of costs in US dollars (in 2020 prices) for each category (except health), as well as the costs as a percent of GDP in 2010 and 2030 (Markandya, 2020).

settlements are no longer safe. Sea levels are already rising as the planet heats up, threatening those who live or depend on low-lying coastal areas in particular.

Livelihoods in the Mekong (Viet Nam), Irrawady (Myanmar) and Chao Phraya (Thailand) deltas are particularly vulnerable to expected flooding and permanent inundation, given the low-lying nature of the land and livelihood dependence on agriculture and tourism, and expected flooding and permanent inundation across parts of the region. In Viet Nam, 15 percent of land is less than five metres above sea level, including most of the Mekong Delta (World Bank, 2020d).<sup>93</sup> The Philippines and Indonesia account for the largest numbers of 'at risk' people (Brecht et al., 2012). By 2100, a one-metre sea-level rise is expected to inundate almost all of North Jakarta and recede the city coast line by up to 10 kilometres (Bappenas, 2010).

Sea-level rise is driven by the expansion of oceans as seawater temperatures rise and water flowing from land masses as ice melts. If *all* land-based ice melts, the sea level will rise by 9 metres and at a rate of 2.5 metres per century, 'drowning huge swathes of what is now dry land' (Voosen, 2018).

The worldwide impact of sea level rise puts coastal cities everywhere under pressure. About 800 million people in 570 coastal cities are vulnerable to a sea-level rise of 0.5 metres by 2050. That number is only expected to grow with demographic shifts in the coming decades (WEF, 2019b). The impacts will vary around the world, but for the ASEAN region the forecast is pessimistic:

'...it is clear that Asia will be the worst-affected region as a result of a combination of hydrology, population density and asset concentration' (WEF & Zurich, 2019, p. 56).

Sea-level rise is the most immediate indication of human-induced change to the natural environment in the ASEAN region. Planned adaptation, executed with rapid commitment, will remain an urgent policy response for decades to come.

Projections vary considerably but most estimates of sea-level rise by 2100 range from 0.5 metre to 2 metres, depending on emissions and the speed of ice-melt. Central estimates broadly predict a 20 to 30 centimetre sea level rise by 2050, only 30 years from now.

'The conservative scientific consensus is that a 1.5°C increase in global temperature will generate a global sea-level rise of between 0.5 and 1 metre by 2100. Even if we collectively manage to keep global temperatures from rising to 2°C, by 2050 at least 570 cities [globally] and some 800 million people will be exposed to rising seas and storm surges' (Muggah, 2019).

The impact of sea-level rise is, of course, an interaction between the actual rise of water levels, coupled with the actual elevation of land upon which human settlements and activity are located. Since 2019 higher estimates of the impacts of sea-level rise have seemed more accurate, taking a new dataset – CoastalDEM – as the source for land elevation measurements<sup>94</sup>. Table 2.1 presents the number of people in seven ASEAN nations exposed to flooding (whether permanent or annual) under different scenarios across time from today to 2100 using the CoastalDEM data, coupled with sea-level rise predictions (Climate Central, 2019; Kulp & Strauss, 2019).

<sup>93</sup> See Figure 2.7 and the discussion below, for the impact of a 1 metre sea-level rise in this area.

<sup>94</sup> Different methods of estimating the impact of sea-level rise have been used. The 'gold-standard' approach is expensive, but reliable, and has been used by US agencies to understand the challenges faced in the USA. The approach uses 'lidar' technology for reliable mapping of heights of coastlines. More frequently estimates of the impact of sea-level rise rely on SRTM (Shuttle Radar Topography Mission) data – freely available, but less accurate. SRTM data tends to overestimate the elevation of land (and therefore underestimate the impact of sea-level rise). The error can be over 2 metres. A new process, less expensive than lidar, but with greater accuracy than SRTM, is called CoastalDEM, developed using machine learning. When CoastalDEM data is compared with lidar data, it is found to approach the same accuracy, but still overestimates elevation, and therefore underestimates sea-level rise impacts (Climate Central, 2019; Kulp & Strauss, 2019).

Table 2.1 gives an insight into how acute the threat to ASEAN coastal settlements is. Nearly 29 million Indonesian residents already live with exposure to flooding, either permanently (often protected by flood defences) or by annual floods. That number will increase to 34 million by 2050 and to between 43 million and 67 million by 2100, depending on emissions levels and the rate at which global ice melt proceeds. The increased exposure to flood risk by the end of the century is likely to overwhelm existing flood

defences, and will expose whole new areas and communities to flood risk. In Viet Nam 47 million people already contend with flood risk, either permanently or annually. An extra 5 million people will be affected by 2050, and as many as 77 million by the end of the century with high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Clearly the numbers in Table 2.1 do not give access to the complexity of the detailed picture on the ground. Only a detailed study would achieve that. However, the broad picture is clear.

Table 2.1: Current and projected permanent inundation and annual flooding

Country	Present day and 2050 population exposure (millions affected)				2100 exposure (millions affected): Range from medium emissions, moderate ice melt to high emissions, high ice melt			
	Permanent inundation		Annual Flooding		Permanent inundation		Annual Flooding	
	Today	2050	Today	2050	Medium	High	Medium	High
Cambodia	0.34	0.46	0.63	0.78	0.63	1.3	1.1	1.7
Indonesia	8.9	11	20	23	14	27	29	40
Malaysia	0.71	0.91	1.8	2.3	1.2	3	2.9	4.9
Myanmar	1.4	1.7	2.6	3.3	2.3	4	4.3	6.8
Philippines	4.3	5.2	5.4	6.8	6.9	11	8.6	13
Thailand	1.6	7.4	8	12	11	13	14	15
Viet Nam	19	21	28	31	24	35	34	42

Source: Kulp & Strauss (2019) including 'Supplementary Data 1' file, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-12808-z#Sec14>

Table 2.2 summarises the difference in projected impact of sea-level rise in 2050, across China plus three of the ASEAN nations, between reliance on SRTM data (as is usual in readily available estimates) and adopting the CoastalDEM data for creating the estimate. The more accurate data shows 118 million **more** people below the elevation of an average annual flood by 2050 than previously estimated, bringing the total in Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam to 66 million, and in China to 93 million.

These figures show how many people will be living below flood levels – and do not take account of existing adaptation measures (flood defences, for example) that already protect people under today's climate and sea-level conditions. Adaptation measures currently enable millions of people to live with flood risk today: cities are defended by major seawalls and fortifications; villages of houses on stilts may be adapted to regular floods. However existing measures are already breached during extreme weather events, and are predicted to be insufficient to provide meaningful protection as sea-level rise unfolds<sup>95</sup>.

<sup>95</sup> The storms of 2020, including Vongfong and Saudel hit the Philippines. Central Viet Nam and Cambodia both experienced multiple storms in October and November, causing deaths and economic damage. Typhoon Saudel, in October 2020, caused flooding in Viet Nam, damage and flooding in the Philippines and also in China. Typhoon Goni was the strongest storm of the season (and the strongest on record) also hitting the Philippines in October 2020.

Table 2.2: Three decades from today: Population at risk from sea-level rise in 2050

Country	2050 – using SRTM	2050 – using CoastalDEM	Change by using updated data
Viet Nam	9 million	31 million	+ 22 million
Indonesia	5 million	23 million	+ 18 million
Thailand	1 million	12 million	+ 11 million
ASEAN total	15 million	66 million	+ 51 million
China	29 million	93 million	+ 67 million
Region Total	44 million	159 million	+118 million

Note: Table showing impact of updated CoastalDEM data  
Source: Climate Central (2019).

‘There are three main strategies for adapting to sea level rise: engineering projects; nature-based defences; and people-based strategies such as moving households and businesses to safer ground or investing in social capital to make flood-risk communities more resilient’ (WEF & Zurich, 2019, p. 7).

Figure 2.5 shows how mangrove restoration can protect communities, reduce storm damage, support biodiversity, increase land based economic activities and tourism, and contribute to reforestation programmes to mitigate climate change. In one project in Thailand, mangrove protected by bamboo fencing is being restored in Samut Sakhon province. This is just one example of using indigenous knowledge and local materials to create a flood barrier. The bamboo reduces wave forces as mangroves becomes established. Mangroves then reduce flooding risk and storm damage in the long term.

Rising sea-levels in ASEAN will invite adaptive support of each category, with related policy support and intervention. Engineering projects already support coastal cities across the ASEAN region. However, nature-based defences also offer successful solutions. Mangrove protection or restoration is a particular case in point.

Figure 2.5 Mangrove replanting behind bamboo fences in Thailand



Source: Seenprachawong (2011), photo credit to Rudklao Ruangkhanab in 2011

Across the ASEAN region, the impact of mangroves on economic, environmental, and social sustainability has been verified. In the Philippines, national wealth accounting includes analysis of mangrove ecosystem services, enabling strategic investments into mangroves. Existing mangroves protect over 600,000 people from the worst flood impacts, and prevent an estimated 1 billion USD in property damage each year (Menendez et Al (2018) 'Valuing the protection services of mangroves at national scale: The Philippines' cited in Huq et al., 2020).

In Viet Nam, over 7 million people across 3,000 square km are protected by mangroves from flood damage. This is the highest number of people in the world being protected in any one country in this way (Huq et al., 2020, p. 9; Menéndez et al., 2020). Work has been done in Viet Nam since 1998 to enable the cost-effective mangrove restoration, with the benefits outweighing the costs by a factor of 5 to 1. Benefits include timber, fish, and honey production and avoided sea-dyke maintenance (Hoang Tri et al., 1998; Huq et al., 2020).

Indonesia has the second-longest coastline of any country in the world. Nearly half of its mangrove coastline has been removed in the last 30 years, often to make way for shrimp farming. Indonesia is now more vulnerable to flooding and has lost biodiversity as a result. The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) has introduced a certification programme for responsible shrimp farming that manages mangroves and wildlife. In 2017, PT MMA in Indonesia became the first shrimp processor to sign up, showing that the natural environment can be protected alongside community and economic concerns to deliver a triple bottom line (ASC, 2020).

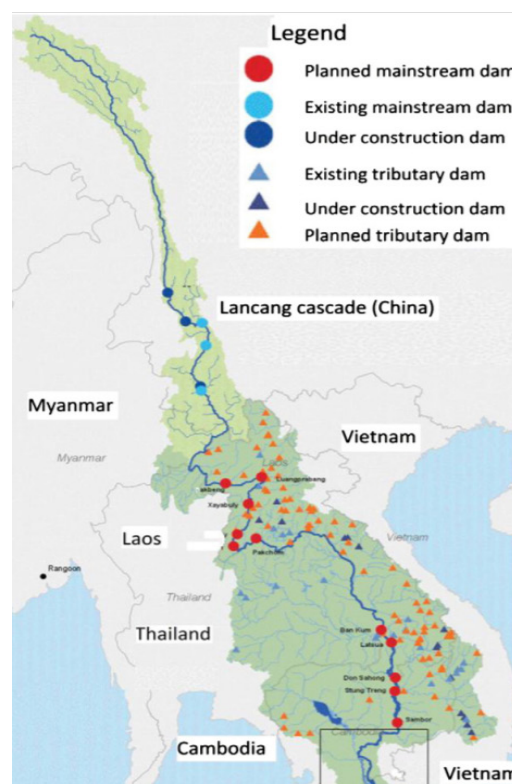
Mangrove forests now cover 1 percent of the world's surface, with 50 percent destroyed in the past 50 years. Mangroves store more carbon per hectare than any other forest type, thereby mitigating against future climate change, protecting coastal areas from storms and floods, and supporting

sustainable livelihoods amongst vulnerable coastal communities. A global effort by WWF is underway to increase mangrove stores by 20 percent by 2030 (WWF, 2018).

### 2.1.2. The Mekong Delta

Concerns about the natural environment and its vulnerability from human impacts, discussed further in the 'Natural Environment' section, are especially acute in coastal areas; the Mekong Delta perhaps being the most vulnerable of all. Box 2.1 shows the interaction between a region that is important for agriculture with climate uncertainty and increased exposure to flooding from rising sea levels. Already higher than it was at the beginning of the century, sea-levels are predicted to rise by 30 to 40 centimetres or more by 2050 continuing to 1 or even 2 metres by 2100 (Huq et al., 2020 citing Kulp & Strauss 2019).

Figure 2.6: Mekong river basin with hydroelectric dams



Source: Manh et al. (2015)

The Mekong delta produces about half of Viet Nam's staple foods, 40 percent of its caught fish, and most of its aquaculture production. As Box 2.1 and Figure 2.6 show, loss of production in the Delta poses real risks to food security across the ASEAN region, and a challenge for economic and human security.

Traditional agricultural practices in the region will be disrupted as sea-level rise and other climate changes take effect. Shifting from traditional rice production to aquaculture (e.g., shrimp-farming or rice-shrimp) is a possibility. However, industrial-scale shrimp farming damages local ecosystems and often benefits only wealthy farmers. The livelihoods of the more vulnerable members of farming communities are at risk of being lost permanently. There are hard choices ahead, with 24,000 people or more already leaving the Mekong Delta area each year due to complex interactions between

climate change effects and poverty. The most vulnerable are already being forced to make undesirable livelihood choices (Chapman & Tri, 2018; Huq et al., 2020). The natural environment in the Mekong is changing under pressure from man-made activities including climate change, and the capacity for lives to be lived sustainably in a 'safe space' is being rapidly eroded.

Currently the problems felt most strongly on the Mekong Delta are those caused by development activities that can alter water flow. However, sea level rises will soon outstrip all other problems, with rises predicted to reach 1 metre before 2100 inundating much of Viet Nam, as shown in Figure 2.7 (Thuc et al., 2016). In this scenario 40 percent of the Delta region is inundated. Bearing in the mind the observations made in relation to the CoastalDEM data set, above, there is a risk that this scenario underestimates potential effects, despite their apparent severity.



**Box 2.1: Impact of development and climate change on the Mekong Delta**

Importance:

- One of the most agriculturally productive areas in the world, with special significance for regional and global food security.
- 50% of Viet Nam's staple foods.
- 75% of fish production.
- 20% of the population.

Vulnerability:

- Sea level rise.
- Increased frequency of extreme climatic events.
- Salinity intrusion.
- Development activities all along the river (including sea-dykes, irrigation, drainage systems, hydropower dams and transportation activities) can alter the river's water flow within the delta, and may shift sediment and nutrient flow. This can also affect fish production and biodiversity.
- In the 2015–2016 dry season El-Niño brought drought and more salt intrusion, causing lost income for two million people, falling farm production, and water shortages.

Climate change impact:

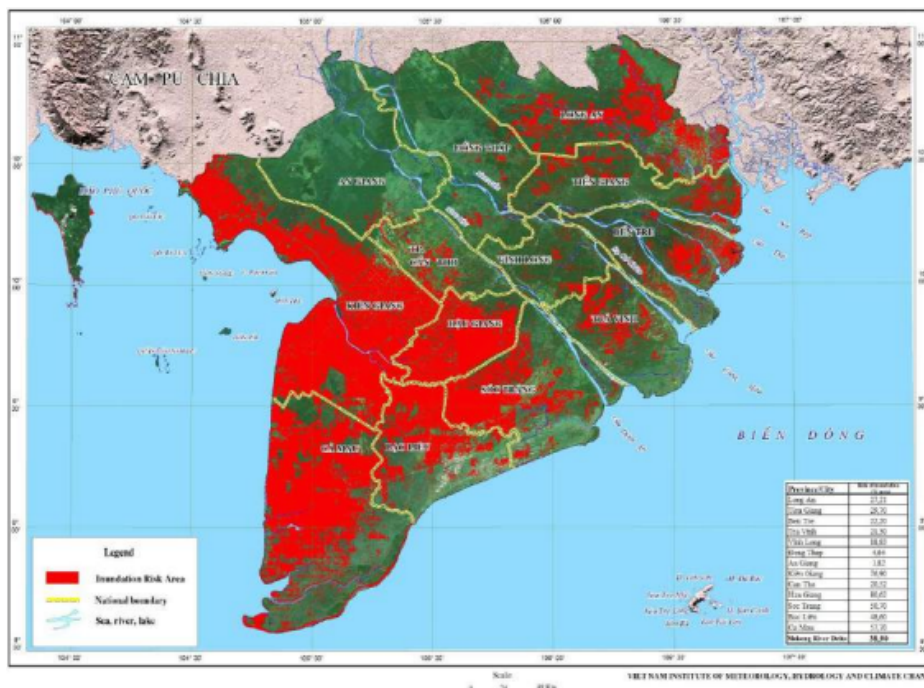
- The region will be warmer with longer, drier summers and wetter rainy seasons.
- 1 metre sea level rise affects almost 40% of the Viet Nameese Mekong.
- 90% of agricultural land will be flooded.
- Land subsidence from human activities makes the impact of sea level rise worse on the Delta.
- Increasing salinity is likely, especially during the dry season (October-May).
- Rainfall changes along the river may affect the delta flood regime, changing water patterns.

Source: Huq et al (2020).





Figure 2.7 Projected inundation risk areas in and around Mekong Delta following a one metre sea level rise



Note: inundation risk areas marked in red.

Source : Thuc et al. (2016)

### 2.1.3. Response

The social and economic impacts of Climate Change are governed by a country’s exposure to its consequences, combined with the ability of communities and nations to stand up against that exposure. A successful response will therefore strengthen resilience and increase tolerance for more frequent or more severe weather impacts. It will put planned emergency measures in place for when increased tolerances are overcome. The planned emergency responses across the ASEAN region are discussed in detail in the ‘Disaster Management’ section of this Theme. The strengthening of resilience and increasing tolerance are ‘adaptation measures’.

The high degree of adaptation required in response to climate change, and, in

particular, rising sea-levels, demands long-term, integrated, multi-sectoral planning. A Foresight approach has the potential to address this level of complexity. Adaptation needs to be planned in order to be ready to respond to predicted changes, and to use limited resources as effectively as possible. In addition to the adaptation measures that will be made, the ASEAN region has a strong rationale for pursuing global mitigation of climate change causes. Lower global emissions now can still affect the extent of sea-level rise and other consequences of climate change by the end of this century and beyond.<sup>96</sup> The ASEAN region, as much as anywhere in the world, needs global temperatures to remain as stable as possible – and at least in line with the 1.5 degree commitment of the Paris Agreement, Article 2.1 (a) (United Nations, 2015b).

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<sup>96</sup> The different scenarios used in the IPCC reports, for example, are based on four different possible levels of greenhouse gas emissions over the course of the 21st Century – with different consequences for each scenario (IPCC, 2015, p. 8).

Adaptation is discussed further in the sections on disaster management, the built environment, and the natural environment. However, a general observation is that the most effective adaptations tend to be more challenging in countries with lower GDP. Adaptation measures require substantial financial, institutional and human capacity. There is a risk within ASEAN that member states with lower capacity in these areas will achieve weaker adaptation measures to climate change, leaving poorer members of society severely exposed. 'Acting as One ASEAN' offers opportunities for sharing experience and moving together as a region towards a climate-secure sustainable future. An integrated regional approach will coordinate adaptation and mitigation across the AMS to make the best use of evidence, resources, and opportunities. Resources may include global 'green funding' intended to provide support from the wealthier economies in the world for the poorer.

#### 2.1.4. Mitigating Climate Change – International Efforts, the Paris Agreement of 2015, NDCs – and 'Acting as One ASEAN'

Potential exposure to the human, environmental, and economic effects of climate change can ultimately be reduced only through world-wide actions to mitigate its causes. ASEAN's hopes for successful mitigation of the causes of climate change, therefore, require a co-ordinated global response in fulfilment of previous pledges.<sup>97</sup> ASEAN is well-placed to make its contribution to the global effort, having strengthened its regional actions and planning on climate change issues. There is an

active ASEAN cooperation on the environment, with seven Working Groups each addressing different environmental issues. ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment are currently consolidating a Strategic Plan on the Environment, with seven priorities – including climate change – to guide ASEAN cooperation under the ASCC Blueprint. They are to serve as a 'consultative body' to ASEAN sectors where climate change is important (e.g., energy, forestry, agriculture, transportation), all located in the AEC Blueprint 2025.<sup>98</sup> This section explores the many challenges and opportunities ahead for ASEAN to use its global influence to ensure a secure future for the region. First, the section outlines the global framework for action on climate change.

Global efforts to identify a way forward for climate change mitigation culminated in the Paris Agreement of 2015.<sup>99</sup> Each country (including those in ASEAN) proposed Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in line with the agreed Paris Agreement process. NDCs are policy steps that a country will take in order to limit its emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> (and to adapt to the effects of climate change).

The mitigation component of the NDCs can be aggregated to assess the cumulative impact of proposed global mitigation efforts on future global temperature rises. The aim is to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to safer levels where the global temperature will level off and climate change will be curbed. The stated aim of the Paris Agreement is to ensure that the global temperature rise is limited to 2° Celsius and 'if at all possible, should not exceed 1.5° Celsius' (United Nations, 2015b, Article 2.1 (a)). The average global temperature has already risen above 1°C from pre-industrial levels.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>97</sup> In 2015 the world reached a temperature baseline 1 degree Celsius higher than pre-industrial levels – based on data from reliable sources including the IPCC and the Hadley Centre in the UK (Climate Analytics, 2020). Global leaders agreed in 2015 that the global temperature increase should be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius if at all possible, and in any event should not exceed 2 degrees – The Paris Agreement (United Nations, 2015b).

<sup>98</sup> Within ASEAN Cooperation on the Environment, the Climate Change Working group aims to enhance regional cooperation and action, to articulate joint concerns at UNFCCC COP sessions, and to serve as a consultative body to those ASEAN sectoral bodies dealing with impacted sectors (ASEAN, 2018a).

<sup>99</sup> The Paris Agreement is a global treaty ratified by 185 nations. The Paris Agreement allows for review and revision of NDC's every 5 years (postponed from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic) in order to secure the desired limits to global temperature increase (United Nations, 2015b).

<sup>100</sup> For discussion about the increase and how it is calculated, see Climate Change: Global Temperature (Lindsey & Dahlman, 2020); World of Change: Global Temperature (NASA: Earth Observatory, 2020); and Global Surface Temperature Change (Hansen et al., 2010).

The NDCs established in 2015 fall short of the levels needed to secure the desired effects. Further efforts from each ratifying nation will be necessary if the intentions of the Paris Agreement are to be achieved.<sup>101</sup> Latest IPCC assessments show that every country must target net-zero emissions by 2050 (Allen et al., 2019), and earlier wherever possible representing a considerable ramping up of effort from the NDCs.<sup>102</sup>

The Paris Agreement allows for NDCs to be updated every five years (starting from the end of 2020) in order to increase their impact on climate change mitigation. The next round of updated NDCs is due to be reported in 2021 (following the COP 26 delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic) (Hackmann, 2020). As recently as December 2020, new commitments have been made from around the world, gradually building a consensus towards the end-target of net-zero emissions by 2050 (Jackson, 2020; World Resources Institute, 2020).

Policy positions are changing rapidly in relation to net-zero targets. The urgency for humanity is translating into more radical policy intentions across the globe. In December 2019, over 100 nations responded to the net-zero objective with 'Enhanced Ambitions of Nationally Determined Contributions', committing to enhancing national plans for emissions reduction.<sup>103</sup> Along with non-state actors, these countries formed a 'Climate Ambition Alliance' that pledged to

'follow the recommendations of science as regards climate change'.<sup>104</sup> Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar were amongst these from the ASEAN member states.

Momentum continued to build through 2020 as climate change policy discussions continued in preparation for COP26. By January 2021, 53 nations (including Singapore among the ASEAN member states), had made commitments to a 'net zero-emissions' policy to be implemented by 2050 in most cases or by the end of the twenty-first century in Singapore's case.<sup>105</sup> As this report is being finalised, the USA has re-joined the Paris Agreement process immediately following the inauguration of its new President, and is one of the countries with a Statement of Intent to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 (Darby & Gerretsen, 2021).<sup>106</sup>

These shifts in policy demonstrate that the decision to 'follow the recommendations of science' triggers accelerated policy changes, recognising that net-zero emissions is a necessary policy outcome.<sup>107</sup> 'Net-zero emissions' recognises that the Paris Agreement targets require more than a switch away from fossil fuels wherever this is possible. Certain human activities will continue to produce carbon emissions, such as agriculture. In addition to emissions reductions in all possible spheres, carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere will be an essential element of strategy.

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<sup>101</sup> The UN report in 2016 on the NDCs showed that global emissions would rise 38 percent above 2000 emissions levels by 2030 under the aggregated national commitments. This represents a global decline in emissions per person, and is a reduction compared with predicted levels without the Agreement. However, the aggregated contributions do not secure the desired climate stability (UNFCCC, 2016, p. 10).

<sup>102</sup> To have a reasonable chance of meeting the 1.5°C stabilization target by the end of this century global emissions should not exceed 25 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030. For a 2°C target, they should not exceed 40 gigatons. One way to share the burden of meeting the emissions target is to calculate a 'per person' global emissions target. Given the projected population of 8.5 billion in 2030, the per person emissions targets become 2.9 and 4.7 tons per person respectively. ASEAN as a region will be well above that if it meets its NDCs, at about 7 tons per person, and needs to reduce its total emissions by about one-third from Business As Usual (BAU)' (Markandya, 2020).

<sup>103</sup> See the list of countries in Annex 1 to the UNFCCC COP25 documentation (COP 25, 2019).

<sup>104</sup> The quote is taken from the text of the Press Release issued on behalf of the Chilean Presidency of COP25 (COP 25, 2019).

<sup>105</sup> 26 nations have individually made the commitment, as well as the 27 member nations of the EU, making a commitment as a bloc. In each case the commitment is supported either by domestic law, domestic draft law, a submission to the UN, or a Statement of Intent (Darby & Gerretsen, 2021).

<sup>106</sup> See for example the New York Times on the day of President Biden's inauguration reporting on the high priority placed by his administration on tackling the climate crisis (Davenport & Friedman, 2021).

<sup>107</sup> If each country were to implement its current NDC's the whole world would lose between 150 trillion and over 700 trillion dollars by 2021. By adopting a 'self-preservation' strategy (to achieve a limit on climate change of 1.5 degrees temperature rise above pre-industrial levels), the losses are transformed into a benefit of between 100 and 600 trillion dollars. The self-preservation strategy is built upon a 'net-zero emissions' outcome by 2050 (Y.-M. Wei et al., 2020).

Carbon dioxide removal (CDR) must sit alongside efforts (such as carbon-pricing) for proliferating low-carbon technologies.<sup>108</sup> CDR offers the ASEAN region important opportunities for contributing to a net-zero global economy. For example, reforestation, afforestation, and a focus on soil management are all important.<sup>109</sup>

Net-zero emissions imply a considerable energy transition process across the world, phasing out reliance on fossil fuels for a rapid uptake of renewable alternatives. Despite the evident scale of the challenge, China, India, the USA, most European countries (including the UK) and many others too have decided to commit. The ASEAN member states will be aware of the transformation that is underway, and will want to participate as fully as possible.

Participation in targeting net-zero emissions will require careful modelling for the ASEAN region and each member nation. Recent work has shown the importance of tailoring energy modelling for specific circumstances. 'Energy modelling can assist national decision makers in determining strategies that achieve net-zero GHG emissions' (Pye et al., 2021, p. 1). The work identifies three pertinent challenge areas: (1) representing new mitigation options not shown in current energy models, especially focussing on end-user options; (2) generating models that recognise system feasibility, actor behaviour and policy effectiveness; and (3) the need to focus on policy needs – including expanding scenario thinking to deal with uncertainties, insights on target setting, integration with other policy objectives, improving engagement and transparency of processes and objectives (Pye et al., 2021).

This section highlights aspects of the ASEAN position and its background. It draws attention to the urgent need for policy aspirations to be articulated clearly to lead policy making

in all relevant spheres, from energy policy to connectivity, biodiversity management, agriculture policy, management of peat and wetlands, and management of forests. In particular, this section shows how important it will be for the ASEAN to be able to draw on the very best evidence collated for policy purposes, so as to chart a course through the challenges ahead. That evidence and analysis is not yet readily available. There is a clear role for the ASEAN organisation to lead evidence gathering, dissemination and interaction with policy across the region. This report has recommended adopting a 'Foresight' approach. This section of the report highlights the need for such an intervention to protect human development across the region in the face of climate change.

The COP 25 'ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change' indicates some frustration that developed nations have not honoured their Paris Agreement commitments to support less wealthy nations in their mitigation and adaptation efforts (ASEAN, 2019n, p. 3). However, whilst these sentiments may be valid, Figures 2.8 and 2.9 show that apportioning responsibility for the current and future challenges faced across the world is far from straight forward. Current and future trends show that ASEAN contributions to global emissions is growing rapidly. Given the regional growth of emissions, it is important that the AMS do not delay action while waiting for other nations to fulfil their commitments.

The ASEAN nations may decide to take immediate steps towards decoupling future economic growth from the current carbon-intensive economic trajectory, especially when the gravity of the latest evaluation on sea-level rise and global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is factored into national policy making. ASEAN countries might at least, for example, target emissions levels closer to those of a global 'fair share' as a stepping stone towards net-zero emissions targets.

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<sup>108</sup> Up to 1,000 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub> would be removed from the atmosphere over the course of the twenty-first century for the Paris Agreement targets to be achieved. Important CDR measures include afforestation (creating new forests), reforestation (restoring forests), land restoration, soil-carbon sequestration (driven by farming methods), and technological approaches that draw carbon dioxide from the air. These technological solutions remain subject to feasibility evaluation, whilst natural environmental measures are well understood.

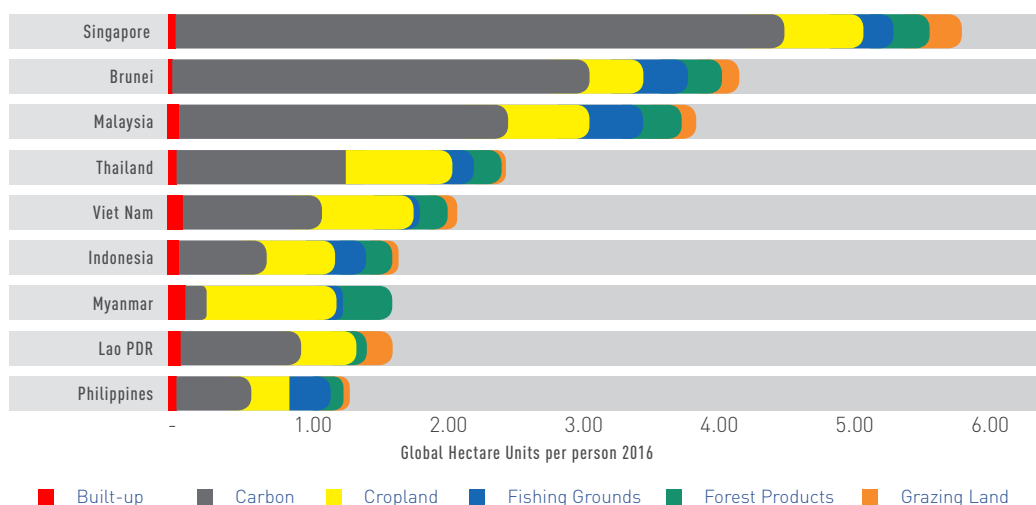
<sup>109</sup> There are clear arguments for rewarding CDR efforts in global policy agreements. Simply penalising carbon emissions is insufficient. See, for example, evidence focussing on carbon pricing and its outcome (Daggash & Mac Dowell, 2019)

Although ASEAN countries currently contribute about 4 per cent of global carbon emissions, their regional emissions doubled between 2000 and 2017 and are on a trajectory to continue to rise steeply (Ritchie & Roser, 2017).<sup>110</sup> Further, on its current NDC plans, the ASEAN region will arrive at about 7 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per person<sup>111</sup> compared with a global ‘fair share’ contribution of just 2.9 tons per person for a global temperature rise limited to 1.5 degrees. Each AMS will have a different capacity to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> (or CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) emissions.

One available framework for evaluating contributions to global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and climate change is the ‘Ecological Footprint’ (EF) devised by the Global Footprint Network. EF measures a country’s resource-use needed to meet demands for food, production, CO<sub>2</sub>

emissions, foreign trade and construction in ‘Global Hectare Units’. Global Hectare Units incorporate an assessment of land area required to ‘sequester’ carbon (e.g., absorbing carbon in forests) so that it does not add to atmospheric carbon emissions levels. Figure 2.8 shows a calculation of the EF per person for each ASEAN country in 2016. There is a clear correlation between economic performance, and drivers of climate risks. The higher the economic output per person, the greater the risk contribution (EF per person). Carbon emissions (shown in grey on Figure 2.8) generate most of the negative environmental impact (Open Data Platform, 2019). Both Figures 2.8 and 2.9 show that relatively high emissions per person occur in the small countries of the ASEAN region with relatively high GDP per person.<sup>112</sup>

Figure 2.8 Ecological footprint per person by country, 2016



Source: Adapted from Open Data Platform (2019)

<sup>110</sup> Most countries have retained their relative contribution to the regional total, with minor adjustments for Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Indonesia’s annual emissions rose by 120 percent to 584 Mt, and Malaysia’s by 95 percent to 246 Mt. Per person emissions rose by 75 percent for Indonesia and fell by 75 percent for Malaysia. The differences in national outcome are accounted for by population numbers.

<sup>111</sup> Calculated from the national NDCs set voluntarily by each ASEAN member nation, the 7 tons of emissions per person is not an official target, but a mathematical outcome of the current commitments made in support of the Paris Agreement mechanisms (Markandya, 2020)

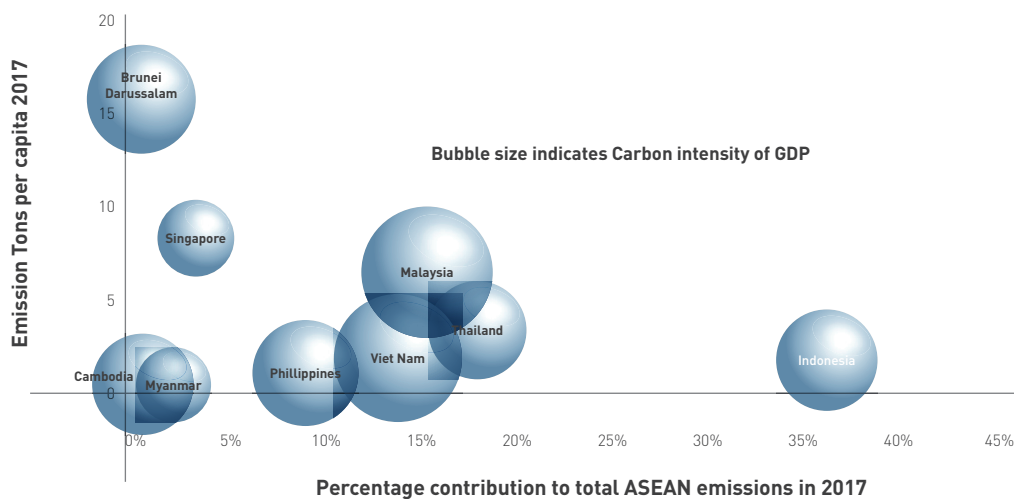
<sup>112</sup> This observation bears out in the reported link within ASEAN between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy and ‘Population, Affluence and Technology’ (Sandu et al., 2019).

If the focus of attention is switched from EF per person to carbon emissions per AMS per year (as shown for 2017 in Figure 2.9), then Indonesia, by virtue of its size, is by far the largest carbon emitter (as shown by its position on the horizontal axis of Figure 2.9). Those emissions are currently set to rise by about 57 percent by 2030. Yet, Indonesia is one of the lowest emitters per person in the region (as shown by its position on the vertical axis of Figure 2.9). Clearly, the higher GDP-per-person countries need to respond to their high EF, in order to bring their emissions towards ‘fair share’ levels. However, the larger countries need to act as well to reduce the impact that their *growing* EF (recognising that their impact on global effects through sheer size is significant). Figure 2.9 also shows the ‘carbon intensity’ of each of the AMS (indicated by the size of their ‘bubble’ in Figure 2.9). Carbon intensity is mentioned in the COP 25 ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change (ASEAN, 2019n). However, carbon intensity is

not a helpful measure of relative contribution to climate change, because a large GDP per person (an aim of the development process) will always tend to create low carbon intensity, but without any overall reduction in emissions.<sup>113</sup>

Carbon emissions are closely linked to energy consumption from non-renewable energy sources. The EFs of Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia (with their economically successful development history) illustrate the problem of continuing along the current development pathway. The more a country economically develops, the more damage it can cause to the global climate. A new pathway must be developed across the ASEAN region to break this link and allow economic development to proceed in a way that builds human and environmental security at the same time. An energy transition towards the use of renewable energy in preference to fossil fuels will break the link, though it may be difficult to implement (M. Acharya, 2020).

Figure 2.9: Carbon emissions by country, 2017



Source: Adapted from IEA (2019)

<sup>113</sup> Carbon intensity is a measure of how much carbon is emitted per unit of GDP, rather than ‘per person’. This is a misleading measure when compared with the ‘fair share’ approach. The very large GDP of Singapore, for example, produces a low carbon-intensity economy (illustrated in Figure 2.9 by the small bubble) showing that CO2 emissions are low per unit of GDP. However, Singapore’s economy is shared by relatively few people, so that the emissions per person are very high – and distant from a ‘fair-share’ per person. Carbon intensity should not be used as a guide to environmental viability. As time goes on carbon intensity will inevitably decrease across the region as economies grow. This will not bring down per person or cumulative emission levels.

Power generation is the single largest source of global carbon emissions across the world, including in the ASEAN member states. The burning of coal is an *unequivocal* driver of climate change. Coal is a fossil fuel that keeps carbon locked in until the coal is burned, at which point it releases CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. (This is equally true of so called 'clean coal' (Burgherr et al., 2012)).<sup>114</sup> The future viability of the ASEAN region, and of the planet, for human activity depends on migrating away from heavy (and increasing) reliance on coal towards the use of renewable sources of energy.<sup>115</sup>

While concerns of job security in incumbent fossil fuel industries are valid, these can be balanced against the green job-creation opportunities offered by renewable energy. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) shows that solar energy is a key driver of employment (employing an estimated 3.4 million people globally in 2018) with biofuels already employing over 1.5 million workers in Indonesia alone (IRENA, 2018).<sup>116</sup>

There are many options for reducing emissions through 'low-carbon' development. These include adopting renewable energy; creating liveable cities; regenerating natural capital; and reducing plastic waste – all of which are policy intentions currently active within and across the ASEAN region.<sup>117</sup> These approaches are all set out in the SDGs as pathways to sustainability: SDG 7 for access to sustainable energy, SDG 11 for sustainable cities and communities,

and SDG 12 for responsible consumption and production. The lifestyles created in clean, well-connected cities will be resilient and safe, allowing citizens to flourish. There will be access to basic services and green spaces for all, without discrimination.<sup>118</sup>

In current circumstances, low-income countries have one distinct advantage over others with more 'developed' economies. Their economic pathways are not yet reliant on high-emission coal-burning and industrialization, making it easier for an energy transition from fossil fuels towards green development solutions (stimulated, for example, by the fourth industrial revolution). The challenge for these countries is to find 'low-carbon' economic growth pathways, that contribute to the triple bottom line. All the ASEAN member states have a role to play in creating an atmosphere conducive to such growth across the region.

By contrast, moving away from a reliance on fossil fuels is technically complex and can seem restricted by previous policy decisions that have 'locked' countries into particular development pathways. This is illustrated in the case of Indonesia, which faces structural challenges in its efforts to transition to renewable energy (see Box 2.2). Concerted policy interventions will be necessary to make significant change in the face of such complexity. Those policy interventions will require the best information and evidence on different forms of renewable energy and their suitability for different locations.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Countries speak of 'clean coal', but this can be misleading. There is no set definition for the term. It can be used to describe some modern coal-burning processes that reduce the particulate pollutants produced, with positive benefits for haze and health. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are NOT reduced. It can imply that CO<sub>2</sub> will be captured and not emitted into the atmosphere. The technology is extremely expensive, and only a handful are operating any capture system in the world – mostly 'pilot projects'. A review of 'clean coal' scientific articles shows the focus is on reducing particulate emissions for cleaner air. Some look for greater efficiency of generation from coal (retaining the same CO<sub>2</sub> emissions). Articles discussing CO<sub>2</sub> capture are all speaking of future possibilities, even as recently as 2017 (ScienceDirect, 2020).

<sup>115</sup> See, for example, the energy production proposals in the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (ASEAN Centre for Energy, 2015). ASEAN's proposed coal use is shown to double or more under different scenarios from 2020 consumption levels to 2035 (ASEAN Centre for Energy, 2015). In 2020 the 800 MegaTonnes of ASEAN's primary energy supply was made of about 400 MegaTonnes sourced from oil and coal. The increased total of between 1400 and 1700 MegaTonnes of primary energy supply projected to be used across ASEAN by 2030 will be met, mainly, by raising the contribution of coal, to give a combined oil and gas contribution of over 800 MegaTonnes.

<sup>116</sup> 88 percent of solar energy jobs are in Asia with Malaysia and the Philippines in the top 8 countries in the world.

<sup>117</sup> UN-Habitat's complimentary New Urban Agenda, adopted as the outcome document from the Habitat III Conference in 2016, seeks to offer national and local guidelines on the growth and development of cities through 2036 (United Nations, 2016).

<sup>118</sup> Liveable cities are discussed further in 'The Built Environment' below.

<sup>119</sup> Viet Nam is one of a number of counties where subsidies for fossil fuels have been lowered in order to help to shift this position. This is discussed more fully in 'Energy Efficiency' below.



**Box 2.2: Indonesia and coal**

Indonesia aims to use renewable sources for roughly one quarter of its electrical energy generation by 2025. This currently looks unlikely to be achieved due to structural supply issues. The current contribution is about 12 percent of Indonesia's energy consumption. Most current renewable capacity is hydro-electric (66 percent) or geothermal (25 percent). Solar and wind power account for less than 1 percent each. There is clear potential to expand the use of renewable sources. A failure to invest in alternative renewables can be attributed to excess capacity and therefore depressed electricity tariffs of the dominant incumbent provider.

Moreover, as coal remains Indonesia's cheapest energy source (and contributes one third of GDP), electricity generators have little incentive to invest in renewables. One potential policy intervention would be to introduce carbon pricing to swing the relative costs back in renewables' favour (Acharya, 2020). This is eminently possible from an institutional and technical viewpoint. However, it remains to be seen whether or not it is politically feasible.



The different emissions levels, histories, and pressures on each of the AMS lend impetus to 'Acting as One ASEAN'. Coordinated efforts offer the most beneficial development pathways. Weighing up the costs and benefits of conventional development approaches against those of green solutions across the region as a whole will best deliver the individual NDCs of the AMS, while also reducing the climate risks faced by each AMS. For the different reasons outlined, every AMS has reason to be concerned about its own emissions levels and future trajectory which tie to the current and future emissions of ASEAN and the world as a whole.

Climate change is a social dilemma that creates a challenging 'collective action' problem.<sup>120</sup> Uncertainty over time and space gives room for policy manoeuvre, while global interplays can lead to policy paralysis. The absence of immediate tangible effects from action or

delay can encourage inertia, while different perceptions of justice cloud the burden of funding and the apportionment of responsibility for the problems that exist already. The ASEAN efforts are, therefore, significant – and the ground is laid for efforts to be stepped up.

ASEAN cooperation on environmental issues will benefit from strengthened coordination across, within and throughout the ASEAN region. There are similarities and synergies amongst the objectives of different AMS in tackling climate change and its consequences. Those are evident in the individual NDCs put forward by the AMS.<sup>121</sup> If climate change is put at the centre of economic thinking, planning, and development policy, then real changes can be made. For example, a regional clean energy program could support the management of regional emissions via carbon pricing arrangements amongst the AMS (M. Acharya, 2020, para. 16).

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<sup>120</sup> 'Simply put, a "collective action" problem is one that cannot be solved by a single individual or member of a group, but requires the cooperation of others who often have disparate interests and incentives, raising the costs of transacting or negotiating a cooperative solution. The most notorious collective action problems arise with respect to the provision of public goods, including clean air and water. The global climate is a global public good' (Cole, 2008, p. 232).

<sup>121</sup> The summary of NDCs and finance obtained for different sectors within the NDCs set out in Table 2.3 gives an indication of each ASEAN member nation's priorities in their strategic plans for tackling Climate Change.



The key problems presented by climate change are understood, and have been taken note of across ASEAN. Many technical solutions are available, and have been explored within ASEAN and its member states. Policy makers have a range of levers at their disposal to promote technical changes and to generate behavioural change, such as education, regulation, and incentives in the form of new jobs, new products, or new markets. If all these efforts are harmonised, then positive outcomes will flow. Successfully dealing with the challenges of climate change is a long-term process, and will require all global participants to exceed the current commitments of the original NDCs under the Paris agreement. The ASEAN countries are no exception. The NDCs represent a good start, but collectively the member states will have to do more for targets on global warming to be met.

The ASEAN countries speak collectively in relation to the Paris Agreement, and have the ability to speak out about the vulnerability of their island regions to rising sea-levels. A clear collective voice, coupled with a rigorous (and visible) commitment to energy transition and other mitigating efforts, will enhance the ASEAN region's leadership role in international discussions and negotiations. Such a voice will be most effective if ASEAN's actions are demonstrably grounded in up-to-date, region specific, locally useful studies and data. Such studies can draw on green funding for support – thereby using the Paris Agreement and its supporting institutions to help to develop the best possible strategies and collective thinking.

## 2.1.5. Policy Implications

1. ASEAN needs to create access to the best evidence, information, scenarios, and modelling on climate change, its consequences, and the need for all AMS to mitigate future climate change. Generated from within the ASEAN organisation using a Foresight study approach, the information must become available to all those involved in policy processes across the ASEAN region. Evidence and information should be sufficiently detailed to provide meaningful and differentiated knowledge to each AMS. Evidence and information must be communicated clearly and actively to all Ministries, especially energy, agriculture and forestry.
2. Sea levels are rising rapidly across the ASEAN region. A specific study of the coastlines and low-lying areas should be carried out to understand the most up-to-date implications of rising sea-levels to the end of the century.
3. The energy transition from reliance on coal towards reliance on renewable energy is an important route for mitigating climate change across the ASEAN region. A specific study of renewable energy options across the region is needed to inform and advance an energy transition without delay.
4. Clear prioritisation of climate issues (both mitigation and adaptation) in economic decisions, and in planning and development across the region is critical. Pursuing these objectives together can add value and benefits for the AMS. Global green funding is a credible source of support for a coordinated approach, and CDR strategies offer pathways to such funding across ASEAN.

## 2.1.6. Key Findings

1. Climate change is unfolding rapidly, with background temperature rise already more than 1°C. NDCs globally fall short of necessary targets if the aims of the Paris Agreement (to limit background temperature rise to 1.5°C) are to be met. A net-zero global emissions policy is required, requiring CDR strategies for removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Responses from within ASEAN to this acute situation must be carefully considered, but not delayed.
2. All aspects of life are affected by climate changes, with rising sea levels posing a particular threat across the ASEAN region. Even if global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions targets are enhanced and CDR is successfully implemented, sea level rise to the end of the twenty-first century and beyond is already locked in. Loss of land to permanent or annual flooding threatens food supply and the sustainability of coastal cities and communities, demanding specifically planned adaptation measures once the detailed predictions are known.
3. Detailed data, models, and scenarios are needed in order to understand the grassroots picture across ASEAN. Local details will vary across cities and coastlines. Detailed forward-looking studies are required. Foresight studies are recommended, focusing on sea-level rise, energy transition pathways, and CDR enhancements. In each case, studies would look in detail across the ASEAN region.

## 2.2 Disaster Management

This section examines the impact of disasters on the population in the ASEAN region and the mechanisms developed within ASEAN and internationally for responding. AADMER (ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management) is at the centre of the ASEAN efforts for regional coordination of disaster management. The implementation of AADMER and its work plans is overseen by ACDM (the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management with representation from each AMS), offering leadership and guidance. The AHA Centre (ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance) acts as the main regional coordinating centre, working with international agencies to support and coordinate responses to disasters. The AMMDM (ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management) provides high level leadership and engagement. All this organisational infrastructure and its achievements have made disaster management and strategic planning a notable strength within the ASEAN organisation.

The scene is set in this section by looking at the disruption caused by natural disasters across the region, and by noting the impacts of climate change on the frequency and severity of these natural disasters. The section looks at how disaster recovery can be treated as part of the 'sustainable development' proposition, inviting further development of the 'building back better' strategy adopted within ASEAN. The AADMER and its Work Programme 2021–2025 (ASEAN, 2020h) is introduced and the AADMER approach is explored in the context of the needs of ASEAN and the pressures on the region arising from frequent natural disasters and vulnerabilities.

The section concludes by noting that AADMER (as set out in the current work plan for 2021–2025) views information gathering, knowledge management and sharing, and proactive planning, as urgent requirements for a response to disasters that is forward-looking, integrated, inclusive and sustainable with a development focus. The use of a ‘Foresight approach’ to gathering and managing the best possible knowledge is considered as a tool for enhancing these dimensions of the AADMER work, and disaster management effort in general.

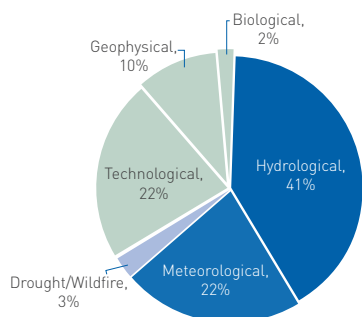
### 2.2.0. What does ‘Disaster’ Mean to the People of ASEAN and for Their Lives?

As a region, ASEAN is prone to natural disasters. Between 2004 and 2014 more than half of the global deaths from natural disasters occurred in the countries of ASEAN – a regional death toll of about 354,000.<sup>122</sup> In addition 191 million people were displaced over the same period, with a further 193 million people affected. This translates into one-in-three people being affected in the region in that decade (M. C. Fernandez, 2020).

Since 2015, a further 349 major disasters have swept through ASEAN, affecting over one tenth of the population and killing more than 13,000 people. Attributed annual losses average 2.8 percent of GDP but are as high as 7 percent in the least wealthy countries, most notably Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (ASEAN, 2016b). Over 90 percent of ASEAN natural disasters occur in five high-risk countries: the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, Viet Nam and Thailand.<sup>123</sup> Of the five ASEAN countries at highest risk of natural disasters, four of them (Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) are ranked in the global top ten of countries most at risk from climate change (Eckstein et al., 2019). In 2018 alone over 27 million people, many from vulnerable groups, were affected by disasters across the region, and in that year the estimated economic damage was 1.2 billion USD (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 16, citing the AHA Centre Annual Report for 2018).

Climate change is altering the natural disaster risk profile across the ASEAN region, with more disasters and more severe events occurring. The exacerbated effects are felt most by those least able to cope. There is a danger that the growing incidence and severity of disasters will outpace ASEAN’s economic and institutional resilience. This is recognised in the latest AADMER Work Plan, and forms the impetus for the work of the ACDM.<sup>124</sup>

Figure 2.10: Proportion of ASEAN disasters, 2015–2020



Source: Adapted from EM-DAT (2020b)

<sup>122</sup> The global death total from natural disasters for the decade from 2004 to 2014 was about 700,000 people. (M. C. Fernandez, 2020)

<sup>123</sup> Based on disaster risk indices factoring risks of exposure, vulnerability, and response/coping capacities (AHA Center, 2019).

<sup>124</sup> This is acknowledged by the Vice-Chair of the 8th AMMDM (ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management) and 9th COP to AADMER in his forward to the latest AADMER Work Plan (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 13).

Figure 2.10 shows the categories of natural disaster that occurred in ASEAN from 2015 to 2020, and the apportionment of those disasters to different types or different causes.<sup>125</sup> Over 60 percent<sup>126</sup> of the natural disasters since 2015 were weather or water-related events (hydro-meteorological: storms, floods and droughts). The last 15 years or so have seen three truly catastrophic hydro-meteorological events: the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004); Cyclone Nargis (2008); and Typhoon Haiyan (2013). Although the duration of each was short, their combined devastation affected nearly 20 million people and resulted in over 300,000 fatalities, 6.5 million displaced people, and US\$26 billion in economic damages (EM-DAT, 2020a).

Ongoing and accelerating climate change will continue to increase the incidence and severity of nature-related risks, bringing continued risks for those least able to cope.

#### *How is the ASEAN disaster risk profile changing?*

The growing incidence and severity of climate-related disasters brings risk to the entire system that makes up the ASEAN way of life, whether the perspective is human, environmental or economic (ESCAP, 2020b). The less visible, growing effects of climate change are pervasive. Between 2001 and 2005, 869 ASEAN natural disasters were recorded by the ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADI NeT) with 80 percent being climate-related (ASEAN, 2016b). The slow onset of regional drought conditions is the largest cause of economic stress to more marginal livelihoods, especially for agricultural areas. In 2018, nearly five million farmers were affected by drought in Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam. In Indonesia, agricultural losses due to drought are currently estimated at over US\$20 billion per year (ESCAP, 2019b).

The combination of increasing magnitude and frequency of short-term environmental shocks, and the deterioration of underlying long-term environmental resilience, is raising the risk profile of the entire ASEAN region. The number of people exposed to disaster is increasing, and economic risks are higher than previously projected, as risk events are becoming more intense. Previously low-probability but extreme weather phenomena are becoming more likely, along with the associated economic and human impacts.

#### *Why are the most vulnerable the worst affected?*

The burden of risk falls most heavily on those least able to bear it. An individual's risk is composed of the frequency of disasters plus national preparedness and their own resilience. As capabilities are unevenly distributed, the impacts will be too. Planning for disaster management must include identification of those most at risk, if it is to deliver support to those who need it the most. The unequal burden of risk is recognised within ASEAN, and in particular is a focus for Prevention and Mitigation and the objective of a 'socially inclusive Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)' strategy (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 37).

Any given storm will affect the poor, the uneducated, the poorly housed, and the vulnerable far more than those with more resilient lives and livelihoods. There is a high concentration of poor people living in fragile environments, prone to multiple hazards and regional wealth disparities. They suffer a disproportionate impact. Repetition of disasters in a given location will undermine the local economy and jeopardise the long-term livelihoods of those with limited geographical mobility. Over 150 million people in the ASEAN region live in environments prone to flooding

<sup>125</sup> In Figure 2.10, disasters are defined in line with EM-DAT criteria. To be entered into the EM-DAT database, at least one of the following criteria must be met: ten or more people reported killed; a hundred or more people reported affected; declaration of a state of emergency; or call for international assistance. The classification of types of disaster is also taken from EM-DAT data. Explanation of the classification of disasters is found at the EM-DAT website (EM-DAT, 2020b).

<sup>126</sup> Technological disasters (including industrial accidents) account for 22% and geophysical (landslides, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions) a further 10 percent.

and two-thirds are prone to drought. These uneven impacts are not special to the ASEAN region. They are captured in reports of the 2004 tsunami, where four times as many women were

killed as men in parts of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India (MacDonald, 2005). The uneven impact of disasters upon livelihoods, wherever they occur, can be understood by considering the CA.

Figure 2.11: The Capability Approach and disaster preparedness, management and response



Source: Adapted from Chiappero-Martinetti & Venkatapuram (2014) and Hart (2019)

Figure 2.11 shows that the direct impact of a disaster is generally upon the resources available to an individual or community (e.g., destruction of homes, crops and community services). As an individual or community responds to this traumatic situation, the 'conversion factors' in Figure 2.11 are shaped by the nature of the disaster. If it is a 'one-off', then a community may be robust in response, quickly sorting out a way forward. This potential robustness is undermined by the repetition of disasters, undermining the conversion factors at play. If a disaster were to affect only one family in a community (a car crash or illness, for example), then the community will have resources to support that family. If a disaster is weather related, then it is likely that all community members are responding to the same disaster at the same time, reducing the collective support available for each community member (known as 'covariant risk'). Covariant

risk increases the impact of a disaster on each and every individual, exposing the most vulnerable to the worst outcomes of all.

The AADMER focus on CBDRM recognises that local impacts and mitigation need to be enabled at the level of these vulnerable communities. In particular, a very local approach allows for nature-based solutions using local materials and skills to be supported wherever helpful. Nature-based solutions were discussed in relation to mangrove forest restoration as a response to sea-level rise earlier in this Theme 2.

Natural disasters have spatial, capability, identity, and poverty dimensions. Effective, socially inclusive disaster management has to recognise the array and spread of short, medium, and long-term social vulnerabilities, as well as of environmental ones. A focus on the human dimension of disaster is a crucial perspective if resilience is to be increased.

Disasters that affect large numbers of people, such as COVID-19, have obvious short-term effects but they also highlight systemic weaknesses that are exposed by disasters (Eckstein et al., 2019). Repeated exposure to multiple shocks weakens long-term resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the need for safeguards that cushion disaster impacts and protect vulnerable households. However, their provision is hampered by the absence of data to identify *who* the vulnerable groups are.

In recognition of these social dimensions, the disaster management concept of '*build back better*' aims to stimulate holistic, resilient growth by using humanitarian responses to *current* shocks to trigger long-term socio-economic changes, and thereby reduce vulnerabilities to *future* shocks.<sup>127</sup> Introduced by the Japanese delegation to the Sendai Framework, the concept is deeply rooted in Asian culture and philosophy. This refocus of humanitarian aid can act as a catalyst for long-term sustainable growth (ESCAP, 2019c).<sup>128</sup> The ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management affirms the importance of disasters being approached holistically from the socio-cultural, economic and political-security perspectives thus recognising the fundamentally cross-sectoral nature of disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts (ASEAN, 2015c, p. 2).<sup>129</sup>

The Philippine government offers an example of national level response to the need for increased community capacity. They are using rural infrastructure spending and improved social protection coverage to improve human security and resilience.<sup>130</sup> The policy recognises that sea level rise and the growing incidence of hydro-meteorological risks in the country will affect the livelihoods of much of the population,

especially those in the agricultural sector. By investing in social protection now, the Philippine government aims to lift over four million people out of extreme poverty (ESCAP, 2020b, p. 17) and thereby improve their resilience to all types of shocks – be they environmental, social or economic – as well as strengthening general well-being.

Across the entire ASEAN region (especially those areas most prone to disasters), efforts are required to improve risk monitoring (through technology and information sharing), risk reduction, and disaster preparation (such as evacuation protocols). These processes allow people to deal with their lives in the knowledge that they will face disasters in a state of preparedness, and in the meantime can focus on the livelihood options available to them. The complex and evolving inter-relationship between climate change and natural disasters presents a significant wide-ranging policy challenge for the ASEAN region, since it creates a dynamic riskscape, demanding accurate, regularly updated, information at all levels, and strengthened responses to immediate and future risks.

The focus of this section is on natural disasters, their changing profile and the responses that will minimise their impacts on livelihoods and capabilities (especially for the most vulnerable individuals and communities). However, natural disasters interact with human-induced disasters to intensify and complicate responses to both. Indeed, the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint categorises natural disasters as a 'non-traditional security (NTS) issue' (ASEAN, 2009a; M. C. Fernandez, 2020). Box 2.3 captures some of the complexities at play in disasters that involve human-induced elements.

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<sup>127</sup> Long-term emission reduction, circular supply chains and climate resilience are factors responsive to 'building back better'.

<sup>128</sup> The 'Build Back Better' approach is reflected in the coordinated ASEAN response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020 adopted the 'ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework', emphasising the need for coordinated action, and for thinking about longer-term socio-economic recovery strategy, as well as dealing with the pandemic's immediate consequences (ASEAN, 2020f).

<sup>129</sup> The ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management emphasises, as well, the need for strengthening capacity at all levels, all the way down to individual communities.

<sup>130</sup> See Theme 4.



**Box 2.3: Complex and human induced disaster: ACEH, Indonesia in 2014 – A role for AADMER and the AHA Centre?**

AADMER arrangements respond to natural disasters. ‘Complex disasters’, combining human and natural causes, can fall outside AADMER’s scope. There is a potential and a need to bring locally sensitive support to all disaster zones.

In Aceh, Indonesia, the devastation of the 2004 tsunami helped to bring a long-standing, complex conflict back to public attention and into a peace process. Reconstruction from both disasters (the ‘natural’ tsunami and the ‘complex’ conflict) was needed. There was pressure from peace-building participants to keep post-tsunami interventions away from conflict reconstruction processes. ‘Tsunami reconstruction’ was better supported than ‘conflict reconstruction’. This separation of efforts posed additional burdens on those who had suffered from both disasters. A similar distinction might be drawn under current AADMER arrangements.

Post-tsunami humanitarian agencies from outside were often unaware of the conflict history, and seemed culturally insensitive. Negative interpretations were put on local efforts to invoke Shariah law in resolving domestic, inheritance or guardianship disputes. Shariah law was interpreted as ‘radicalising’ – a view that undermined community trust in interventions from outside agencies.

NGO’s often engaged in the construction of buildings (‘building back better’) without planning for ongoing use or maintenance. The more complex, non-physical reconstruction of social relationships and norms was neglected.

Some attempts were made to provide psycho-social support, but the WHO observed how these efforts could be at odds with local cultural interpretations that, for example, gave religious meaning to the tsunami disaster. The impact of such culturally insensitive interventions is considered ineffective and ‘unacceptable’.

ASEAN – through AADMER and the AHA Centre – can offer contextual understanding. With trust and time, ASEAN can build bridges rather than imposing interventions and interference. The ASEAN-IPR (ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation) recommends widening the AHA Centre’s scope to include complex and human-induced disasters, along with enhanced community engagement, bi-lateral cooperation within ASEAN, and the allocation of resources to complex problems, AADMER and the AHA Centre thus have scope to mature to become facilitators of trusted and culturally sensitive services for those suffering from disasters of all kinds.

Source: Fernandez (2020).



A comprehensive disaster response incorporates preparedness and response to all categories of disaster, whether within the AADMER-related architecture, or via alternative frameworks at national and regional levels. The complexity of the interconnections between types of disasters, and their causes, and different response arrangements, call for coordinated evidence gathering, monitoring and reporting across the ASEAN region to ensure that the most vulnerable are at the forefront of planning and thinking.

**2.2.1. Response to Disasters: A Resilient Way**

*Responding to need – and getting ahead of challenges*

The impacts of increasing natural disasters and the inter-related ‘slow-burn’ of climate change can be influenced – they are not unchangeable. Disaster management institutions and the ASEAN community have used their experience and skills to create a framework for a resilient pathway forward. This is achieved through vulnerability-focused disaster assessments, national planning, and cross-regional

coordination – the kind of coordinated and forward looking approach envisaged in the recently adopted ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ASEAN, 2020f) and its Implementation Plan (ASEAN, 2020f).<sup>131</sup> In the context of climate change, disaster management and adaptation work hand-in-hand. Enhancing resilience (adaptation) reduces vulnerability to severe events, while a focus on increasing resilience in the aftermath of a disaster (disaster response plus adaptation) reduces the risk of harm from future events. The discussion below seeks to describe this relationship between disaster response and adaptation measures. Disaster response begins before the disaster even occurs, with disaster assessment being the beginning of the process.

Accurate information, based on sound science, and clearly communicated across the region, is required for reliable assessments of disaster risk. AADMER places data gathering, a scientific approach and dissemination of information as very important activities in the overall strategy for reducing harm caused by natural disasters. Climate modelling and forecasting, developing risk scenarios, broadening the use of scientific approaches, and enhancing communication of risk are all elements of AADMER's Priority Programme (1) 'Risk Assessment and Monitoring' in its Work Plan. The significance of the best possible modelling and forecasting for AADMER's approach is shown in Priority Programme (3) 'Preparedness and Response': the changing riskscape is acknowledged, but **with proactive planning '90% of hazards on the ASEAN region can be anticipated'** (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 51).

Vulnerability-focused disaster assessments acknowledge that 'human capabilities' include the assets, skills, and health of individuals and communities. Access to human capabilities enhance resilience – being better adapted to extreme events and disasters. A 'resilient way' forward includes assisting vulnerable families in cultivating and maintaining essential core human capabilities. Effectively targeted plans require a deep understanding of who is affected by disasters, and the changing disaster dynamics at play. Given the shifting risks, and asymmetric burdens borne by the most vulnerable, a deep and accurate diagnosis of the factors affecting vulnerability is essential to developing strong response mechanisms.

The Foresight approach could help here; it offers clarity when assessing disaster vulnerabilities, as it is grounded on anticipated current and future risks and complexities, built from expert scientific analysis, whilst relating the findings to real social contexts and a range of scenarios.<sup>132</sup> A Foresight study seeks to identify hidden social vulnerabilities and to take a human-development perspective as one of its multiple, inter-twined approaches to risk appraisal. By identifying present and future risk scenarios, gaps and solutions, the approach empowers policy makers to plan holistically, whilst supporting community-based and local interventions. For example, a study might be based on detailed climate modelling and flood or drought risk, disaggregated to community level of detail. Interventions will identify relevant skills, service providers, and stakeholders (e.g., humanitarian agencies, development partners, indigenous communities, academia) to engage in disaster response with confidence that they are focussed on reliable possible future scenarios.

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<sup>131</sup> Although the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework was created, together with its Implementation Plan, in response to COVID-19, the Framework recalls the need to deal with immediate and longer term considerations in the recovery and planning process.

<sup>132</sup> The Foresight approach is described and illustrated in the appendix to Theme 2.



National planning, through national development plans, needs to encompass and anticipate the shifts in type, magnitude, and distribution of disaster risk – particularly in the light of climate change. Evidence of current and future trends needs to be precise, local and focused on social and environmental impacts. Once furnished with a Foresight Approach to evidence-based planning, an assessment can follow, that identifies policy response mechanisms that are suited to driving sustainable disaster resilience. Sustainable disaster resilience takes a long-term view of ‘building back better’ by favouring responses that balance the concerns of the social, economic, and natural environments – both now and in the future. Risk assessment is part of ‘Priority Programme (1)’ in the current AADMER Work Plan, and notes the importance of scenario planning and the importance of a scientific approach to data-based risk assessment (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 28). Through this precision and sustainability-based approach to national planning, ASEAN seeks a strong future where all people, even the most vulnerable, will be able to access development benefits.

Cross-regional coordination is also an important element of effective and equitable adaptation in the face of disaster risk, through shared solutions and optimized service provision. Enhancing the operational linkages across the region is an important element of the current AADMER Work Plan, as seen, for example in the case of early warning systems, or mechanisms for identifying priority areas for cross-sectoral collaboration (ASEAN, 2020h, pp. 28 and 48). Within the disaster response ecosystem are a diverse range of stakeholders, from United Nations agencies to government staff and indigenous elders, all of whom bring unique skills, knowledge, and services to improve institutional and individual capabilities and resilience at all levels. Much of the challenge of coordination relates to

harnessing collective abilities to bolster ASEAN strategies with the three aspects of disaster response: technical assistance, finance, and service provision. This is not an exclusively top-down exercise. A strong culture of prevention can be built on participation, dialogue, and capacity building at all levels. Transparency, shared evidence gathering, and (wherever necessary) trans-border cooperation will maximise sustainable disaster resilience. This coordinated approach, with direct links to national development plans, will help address hidden pockets of vulnerability.

Disaster management, with a focus on the most vulnerable as both contributors and beneficiaries, will strengthen rights-based approaches and ensure benefit-sharing of disaster response programs. Vulnerable communities often have a deep understanding of disasters from lived experiences. Lived experiences endow a certain type of expertise that can enrich understandings of the interplay between socio-economic vulnerabilities and the natural environment. Engaging communities through participatory approaches facilitates more nuanced understandings of disasters. The current AADMER Work Plan recognises the importance of public participation in creating and strengthening interventions (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 26). Addressing skewed risk profiles through direct initiatives (e.g., farmer insurance), or improving the conditions of decent work, would improve the daily lives and long-term resilience of such vulnerable groups.<sup>133</sup>

ASEAN has a strong foundation of regional coordination. ASEAN’s history of cooperation in the form of the Sendai Framework and the ASEAN ConCORDS of 1976 and 2003 provided the foundation for AADMER (ASEAN, 2016b). AADMER is considered a landmark or ‘gold standard’ agreement, at least in part because it is legally binding – a significant commitment across the region.<sup>134</sup> The current AADMER Work Plan specifically aligns its interventions

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<sup>133</sup> See Theme 3.

<sup>134</sup> AADMER is also recognised in this way because it was the world’s first legally binding instrument on disaster response and the first multilateral regional agreement to the Hyogo Framework for Action. (M. C. Fernandez, 2020).

with the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (the SDGs), and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The ASEAN disaster management architecture is constructed on two key ASEAN principles:

- First is consideration for the 'ASEAN Way', by which consensus is built on disaster management priorities among AMS. Furthering the ASEAN Way by recognising the evolving disaster risk profile and adapting priorities in response, will counter-balance regional risks profiles with institutional disaster management capacities.
- Second is 'ASEAN Centrality', by which ASEAN's partners engage with ASEAN on the terms and conditions settled by ASEAN (Mahmood & Lacey-Hall, 2020).

ASEAN's compelling track record of disaster management, its legal framework under AADMER, and its respect towards 'the ASEAN Way' and 'ASEAN Centrality' position ASEAN as a leader in guiding and promoting effective response to new disaster risks. Building on ASEAN's successes, and the respect for these two pillars strengthens home-grown strategies for regional resilience.

This approach to disaster response does not compromise 'the ASEAN way' of non-interference. Among AADMER's principles (Article 3) is recognition of the sovereignty of members, particularly the right of any nation *receiving* assistance to exercise control and direction of responses within its borders. This circumscribes the powers of enforcement. Cooperation is consensual, voluntary, and self-driven by member states. AADMER remains a regional framework but is not, for example, uniformly reflected in national disaster legislation (IFRC, 2017).<sup>135</sup>

The key to ASEAN's successful experiences with disaster management lies in the operational arm of ASEAN - the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (the AHA Centre) (Mahmood & Lacey-Hall, 2020). The AHA Centre was established in 2011 as the operational engine for implementing AADMER. The AHA Centre plays a key role in tracking and responding to disasters and coordinating assistance in need. In the four years since its establishment, the AHA Centre has responded to 13 natural disasters, of which 10 are climate related.

However, the AHA Centre currently plays only a nominal role in the greater regional disaster management ecosystem. Despite a regional landscape of 4.5 million square kilometres and over 600 million people increasingly at risk, the AHA Centre is staffed with just 29 employees on a budget of US\$3.5 million. That is less than US\$0.01 per head of population. In 2018, AMS received \$8.5 billion in bilateral assistance, of which 3 percent (\$278 million) was earmarked for humanitarian response. Within this disaster response ecosystem, the AHA Centre budget represents only 0.01 percent of projects.

ASEAN is ambitious in its vision for financial and programmatic self-sufficiency, and has the resources and capacities to achieve such ambition. Achieving its vision will require resources for further strengthening of ASEAN's disaster management arms, particularly the AHA Center, and for building greater influence on the humanitarian agenda through diplomacy, communication and advocacy. There is strong precedence, and further potential, for ASEAN leadership in building regional capacities that respond to evolving disaster risks.

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<sup>135</sup> Oversight of the AADMER and its supporting declarations is provided by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) and the Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM). The annual AMMDM reviews and evaluates the progress of AADMER implementation. The AMMDM is one of the sectorial ministerial bodies under the ASCC of the Secretariat and is responsible for ensuring effective implementation of AADMER in relation to ASEAN Summits and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint. The AMMDM convenes the annual Conference of Parties (COP) to ensure a continuous review and evaluation of progress. The ASEAN Secretariat provides technical and administrative support to AMMDM activities and its subsidiary bodies, and monitors and evaluates progress on AADMER implementation.



**Box 2.4: AADMER and the grand bargain for aid effectiveness**

The Grand Bargain is an agreement between donors and major international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) to improve aid effectiveness through greater local ownership. Launched at the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), it acknowledges the disparity in aid distribution where a mere 2% (\$433 million) of global aid is implemented through local organizations. By 2018, this figure had risen to only 3.1% – well short of the 25% target. In Indonesia, for example, following the Sulawesi Earthquake (2019), most humanitarian funding was channelled through international organizations.

AADMER positions ASEAN at the forefront of humanitarian interventions. Through its 5-year work programmes, AADMER frames the ‘One ASEAN, One Response’ to disaster management. They embody global commitments to the localization agenda, particularly drawing a clear framework for the disaster management ecosystem. Not only does it build consensus at the highest levels of ASEAN government, the AADMER work programmes also establish a clear guide for donors, agencies, and other levels of the aid architecture to design programs in line with a local agenda.



As Box 2.4, indicates, AADMER has the potential to facilitate an effective reorientation of the current regional and global approach supported by the international donor community. As ASEAN’s disaster risk profile evolves, so too must the institutional and policy response, with the AADMER Work Plan 2021–2025 providing the necessary foundations.

Implementation of the AADMER Work Programme will support ASEAN recognition and promotion of a new disaster paradigm in which ‘slow onset’ events (such as climate change) plus ‘sudden onset’ events (specific storms, for example) take place and interact. Regional cooperation has been most focused on unanticipated, sudden onset disasters. This focus risks missing the growing risks that arise from the less visible, slow onset of natural pressures and events that exacerbate existing vulnerabilities. Slow onset disasters require consistent mid-term and long-term planning for their ever-increasing pressure on social, environmental and economic systems: the three pillars of sustainable development.

*Sustainable policy solutions*

ASEAN has demonstrated its ability to mobilise resources to coordinate disaster responses. However, there is a recognised need to shift from *reactive* to *proactive* disaster management through investment in long-term resilience at all levels. In the current AADMER Work Programme taking ‘proactive actions’ is part of the ‘Challenges and Needs’ of Priority Programme (3) ‘Preparedness and Response’ (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 50). Embedding disaster risk reduction strategies into the design of public provision of social protection, healthcare, and education can contribute to resilience and long-term social, environmental, and economic development.

Fundamentally, a more proactive, evidence-based planning and policy approach will recognise the interconnectedness of natural disasters and long-term climate change. It is no longer possible to consider disaster management issues without understanding climate change, the incidence and nature of events, and their impact on at-risk communities.<sup>136</sup> The most effective ASEAN strategies and institutions will promote and

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<sup>136</sup> This interconnection was recognised in the priorities of the second phase of the AADMER Work Plan (ASEAN, 2016b). The work programme identified 21 priority areas for action, with concept notes prepared for each. Concept Note 20 was a project for strengthening institutional and policy frameworks for disaster readiness and climate change adaptation. At its heart was the proposal that each AMS would integrate climate change information into disaster forecasting and planning at the national level (ASEAN, 2017e). The approach is carried forward in the priorities of the AADMER Work Programme 2021–2025, particularly in the second priority programme for Prevention and Mitigation, where Climate Change Adaptation is fully integrated into the analysis, and is a Focus Area (ASEAN, 2020h, pp. 36 and 42).

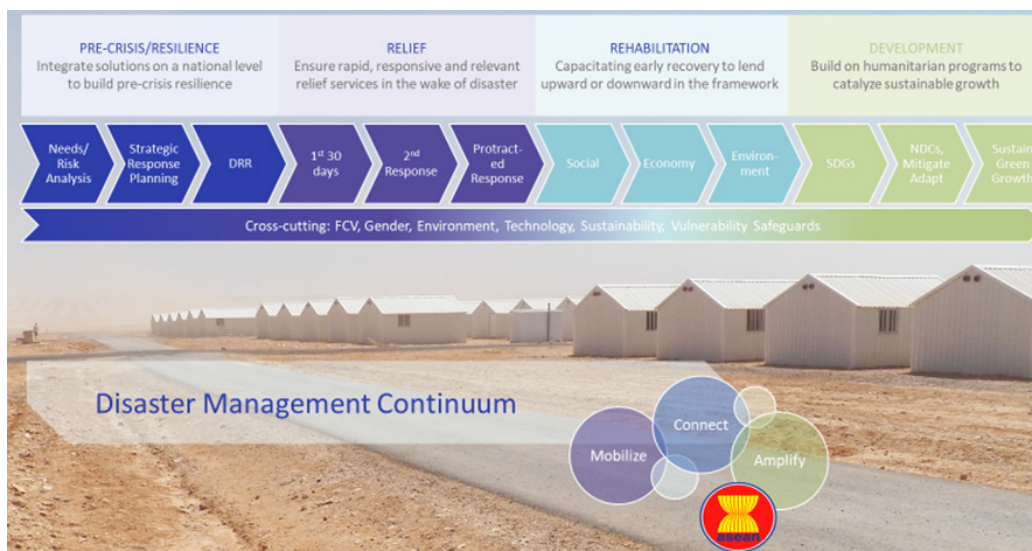
support pragmatic action at all levels, including the most local, so as to respond directly to the varied and specific disaster risks faced by the ASEAN member states.

The NDCs prepared by each ASEAN nation as required for participation in the Paris Agreement offer insights into the priorities of each nation, and can act as a cooperation framework for partnership development and more effective mobilisation of resources and funds in the region. Leveraging climate change investments strategically can reduce disaster vulnerabilities by increasing adaptive capacities. Climate finance is available for building resilience in the face of slow-onset and sudden-onset disasters. At the same time, such financing ensures that a ‘sustainable development’ orientation is at the heart of any ASEAN disaster response. ‘Finance and Resource Mobilisation’ is a guiding principle under the AADMER Work Plan for 2021–2015 (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 15), and making the explicit connection between climate change and

disaster management creates constructive links for seeking global support for strengthening resilience in the face of a changing riskscape.

The disaster management continuum shown in Figure 2.12 is a framework that approaches disasters as a fluid component of sustainable development (with the pressures of climate change acting all along the continuum). This idea transcends traditional, ‘siloes’ disaster strategies by placing ‘disaster management’ within a more joined-up development narrative. The continuum pays attention to core vulnerabilities, building resilience, to reduce the impact of disasters with a positive outlook that extends towards inclusive, sustainable growth. This fluid approach considers vulnerability to disasters of all kind as part of the context in which sustainable development takes place. It shows that responding to disasters and forward planning, with the best possible evidence and foresight, is both a disaster management strategy and a core principle of sustainable development planning.

Figure 2.12 The disaster management continuum



Source: ASEAN (2015c)

Collaboration with the aid ecosystem will be critical to building ASEAN capacities for high-quality, effective disaster management even further. With a strong understanding of the new disaster paradigm and an effective disaster

management position, ASEAN will have adequate resources and technical capacity to deliver the requisite disaster response. It will also be empowered to frame that response as a reflection of regional priorities and development philosophies.

From its rapidly growing body of young graduates to its decades of experience through large scale disasters, the ASEAN community already has significant potential to improve disaster response through shared knowledge and expertise. Building the evidence base for understanding regional disaster risks (including vulnerabilities, capacities and assets) will enable policy makers to make well-informed decisions.

Harnessing big data to map population vulnerabilities among the least developed and hard to reach communities and by incorporating rigorous monitoring and evaluation to underpin disaster management can improve the quality of humanitarian outcomes (particularly, for example, in linking the outcomes of the latest AADMER Work Plan (ASEAN, 2020h) with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community Blueprint 2025). However, the operational and resource capacities to map, predict, prepare and respond to sudden and slow-onset disasters are currently insufficient. Taking the AHA Centre as an example, 91 percent of its operational budget comes from external partners and donors. A high level of dependence upon fragmented external financing is incompatible with regional ambitions for self-reliance, policy ownership, and co-ordinated planning and response.

Both the AHA Centre and the ASEAN Secretariat have the mandate for ensuring concerted mobilisation of resources, now a clear priority in the current AADMER Work Programme Mission (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 23). The Secretariat drives the framework for regional disaster cooperation through AADMER. This existing mandate provides an excellent platform for strengthening ASEAN as a *co-influencer* of disaster management on a global scale – thereby addressing its Priority Programme for Global Leadership.<sup>137</sup> International partnerships within regional disaster management institutions, such as embodied by AADMER and its current priorities and its commitment to partnerships (as a strategic element for implementing the current AADMER work plan), provide a promising approach to developing disaster management capacities and resources that correspond to the evolving riskscape.

The AADMER Work Plan 2021-2025 (ASEAN, 2020h) sets out a framework for implementation of the mandate for inclusive, proactive disaster forecasting, preparation, response, and for adopting a global leadership role through knowledge management and knowledge sharing. All these aspects depend, for their success, on a systematic adequately resourced process within the ASEAN organisation for gathering information, and for strengthening a science-based forecasting capability specific to the ASEAN region. A Foresight approach, explained in further detail in the Appendix to Theme 2, offers the support for these commitments.

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<sup>137</sup> In 2011/2012 the ten AMS Ministers of the Environment adopted a programme of action covering Adaptation, Mitigation and Implementation Mechanisms. The programme outlined a commitment to sharing best practice in all areas as well as exploring a cap and trade system in the region as part of a strategic move towards a 'low carbon society' (ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment, 2011). In the AADMER Work Plan 2021–2025 global leadership is founded upon knowledge management, based on scientific findings and innovative technologies, and knowledge sharing (ASEAN, 2020h, p. 72).

## 2.2.2. Policy Implications

1. As ASEAN's disaster risk profile evolves (especially in the face of climate change), so must the institutional and policy response in order to build resilience to slow onset disasters, rather than being primarily reactive to sudden onset disasters. The changes are largely predictable, and need to be studied with a Foresight approach for accuracy and local relevance.
2. Leveraging climate change investments strategically by using 'Green Funding' to create sustained development strategies for strengthening resilience, can reduce disaster vulnerabilities by increasing adaptive capacities, creating a holistic sustainable development approach that is aligned with AADMER's current work plan.
3. The high level of dependence upon fragmented external financing is incompatible with adequately resourced regional ambitions for self-reliance, policy ownership, and co-ordinated planning and response.

## 2.2.3. Key Findings

1. The disaster risk profile of ASEAN is changing. Slow onset disasters such as drought and regular inundation, driven by climate change, are imposing the highest developmental costs, while 'sudden onset' disasters are increasing in frequency and magnitude, imposing sudden shocks on livelihoods and economies.
2. Disaster costs (environmental, social, and economic) are growing at a rate faster than disaster management capacities, impeding development outcomes especially among the communities most vulnerable to disaster. Resourcing and developing ASEAN disaster management capacities will improve the efficacy of disaster management and the sustainability of ASEAN development.
3. Nature Based Solutions capable of implementation for building resilience in disaster-prone communities will benefit from central evaluation to ensure effectiveness, with implementation to be local. This approach highlights the complex intersections between natural disasters, climate change, and the natural environment.



## 2.3 Natural Environment

The 'natural environment' is the default state of land and ecosystems onto which human lives, including the built environment and human activity, are imposed. The natural environment includes: forest, peatland, desert, meadowland, rivers, or oceans upon which humankind may have made great or little impression; managed land used for farming, grazing livestock, or gathering requirements for living; quarried, mined, exploited, polluted, or abandoned land, reverting to a new 'natural' state; productive or unproductive land, well managed or plundered, capable of supporting bio-diversity or barren (usually as a result of human activity).

In each of these forms, the 'natural environment' exerts a major influence on livelihoods, economic well-being, and community health, safety and resilience. This is a wide area in which potential policy interventions are many – with multiple potential points of focus, including economic growth, market arrangements, infrastructure security, public health, inter- and intra-regional security and more. This section of Theme 2 will review the current status and policy challenges of agriculture, peatlands, and biodiversity in the context of rapid climate change. Tourism is also reviewed in this section due to its reliance on a clean, safe natural environment for high-end economic success, and due to the challenges presented by the presence of tourists and

facilities in the natural environment. Tourism illustrates the tension that can arise between the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainable development, and explores some of the approaches taken across ASEAN to resolving those tensions.

### 2.3.0. Agriculture

Farming exists at the intersection between the natural and the built environment. It requires land to grow crops, but is driven by human settlements. Success depends on seed and fertiliser distribution, roads, transport and storage facilities, access to markets, and distribution systems. It also depends on climate or irrigation and water supplies for viable cropping, and on seasons that are sufficiently predictable for successful, regular crop selection and management. Agriculture is an important source of livelihoods for millions of ASEAN citizens, with smallholder subsistence farming still prevalent especially in the less developed ASEAN member nations.<sup>138</sup> Development policy is often aimed at enhancing the resilience of such smallholder livelihoods, particularly in the context of climate change.<sup>139</sup> At the other end of the scale, palm oil cultivation has spread successfully across many parts of the ASEAN region, bringing rapid economic growth. However, it has also brought environmental concerns, as bio-diverse forests and peatlands give way to large mono-cropped plantations.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> 'Agriculture is a way of life in ASEAN, with 8 out of 10 countries in ASEAN dependent on agriculture and its production. In the least developed countries such as Myanmar and Lao PDR, the sector accounts for more than 40 percent of GDP. The region is a major producer and exporter of palm oil, crude rubber, rice, sugar, seafood and fruits. However, the sustainability of the sector – and the plates of millions of Southeast Asians – is currently at threat from climate change, overfishing, unsustainable farming methods, food wastage, and other problems. Much effort is required to ensure that the region's agricultural sector, as a key source of food and income, continues with the wise stewardship of earth's resources' (Chong, 2020).

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, the objectives of the ASEAN Roadmap for Enhancing the Role of Agricultural Cooperatives in Agricultural Global Value Chains 2018-2025, in which objective 2 includes 'Advance ... market access...'; and 'Assist resource-constrained small producers and SMEs to improve productivity, technology and product quality ...' (ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Agricultural Cooperatives, 2018, p. 4). See also the ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework for Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry: 'Recognizing that Southeast Asia is the one of the most vulnerable regions of the world in terms of adverse climate change impacts that can undermine food and nutrition security and the attainment of SDGs, and capitalizing on its potential to strengthen the resilience of its people and ecosystems towards a more sustainable future, the development of a more comprehensive multi-sectoral strategic framework that builds on the existing ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry Towards Food Security (AFCC) were deemed of central importance.' (ASEAN, 2018e, p. 2).

<sup>140</sup> Palm oil today is the most important source of vegetable oil in the world, having overtaken soybean-oil in 2006. ... The world is reliant on palm oil to satisfy growing global demand for vegetable oil. ... To increase vegetable oil production by the same amount by relying on competing oilseeds instead of oil palm will require 5-8 times larger areas of land. ... Indonesia and Malaysia [have] close to 90% of world output ... [and] will remain the major producers for the foreseeable future. ... The Indonesian Association of Palm Oil Producers (GAPKI) projects a 50% increase in output between 2014 and 2025, ... while the FAO predicts a doubling of vegetable oils consumption between 2010 and 2050. Oil palm ... is harvested year round, thereby smoothing the incomes of farmers over the year. The production of oil palm is split between plantations and small holders: roughly 60% of the palm oil comes from the larger plantation companies (privately owned estates) and 40% from smallholders. ... Oil palm cultivation and harvesting is very labour intensive ... The complexity of the supply chain necessitates close co-operation between smallholders, plantations, mills and intermediaries. ... India is the largest consumer of palm oil almost all of which is imported. ... The bulk of palm oil consumption and consumption growth is likely to occur in the developing world.' (Abstracted from Executive Summary, Barthel et al., 2018, p. 14)

Palm oil will be discussed in detail later in this section in relation to certification schemes for managing environmental impacts.

As world global population density increases, the need to produce more food using less land per person has encouraged more intensive farming practices. In Southeast Asia, the 'green revolution' brought an end to hunger and created food security for many people. In Viet Nam, notable improvements in crop research and plant varieties have continued into the twenty-first century, with similar advances peaking in Indonesia and the Philippines in the mid-1980s (Ut & Kajisa, 2006).

However, the realisation of food security has sometimes come at the expense of human and environmental health. This reflects the reality that food production, itself, is a core driver of a range of environmental impacts. On a global scale, farming accounts for about 26 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, 40 percent of land use change, 30 percent of soil degradation, 60 percent of freshwater use, 78 percent of water pollution and 80 percent of the extinction threats to mammals and birds.<sup>141</sup> Rice offers a specific example of the link between farming and environmental impacts. It is an essential staple crop in the ASEAN region, but accounted for 10 percent of global methane emissions in 2009. Rice is also a very water intensive crop. Almost two-thirds of fresh water for human use in Asia goes to rice cultivation (Richardson, 2009).

The use of pesticides has also raised the risk of environmental contamination through run-off from crops into the water system and direct harm through consumption of pesticide residues remaining on food. Thailand is the fourth highest user of pesticides in the world (FAO, 2020; Pariona, 2017). Harm to human health has been linked to pesticide use<sup>142</sup> as it becomes more relied upon in farming and food production. Potential damage caused by pesticide run-off in water supplies includes, for example, loss of biodiversity and food sources in rivers in Malaysia; harm to health of agricultural workers, especially women, in Viet Nam; and contaminated water in Philippines (PAN Asia Pacific, 2017).

In short, agriculture is an important source of livelihoods across ASEAN, and has helped drive economic growth. However, the unintended consequences of successful growth are complex. A sustained focus on human health, well-being, and on the environmental impacts, is now becoming a priority in order to consolidate past gains and manage current and future risks strategically. As noted in this Theme's introduction, the environmental focus is found in current policy and Blueprints within ASEAN. The challenge is to ensure that policy interventions prioritise those considerations.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> See Trewern (2020), citing: Clark et al. (2019) Tilman and Clark (2014), Foley et al. (2005), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (United Nations, 2017c), Willet et al (2019) and Poore & Nemecek (2018).

<sup>142</sup> See, for example, Kim et al (2017).

<sup>143</sup> See, for example, the discussion in the 'Built Environment' section on the Connectivity Masterplan and the fact that environmental considerations are addressed only when infrastructure matters have already been decided.

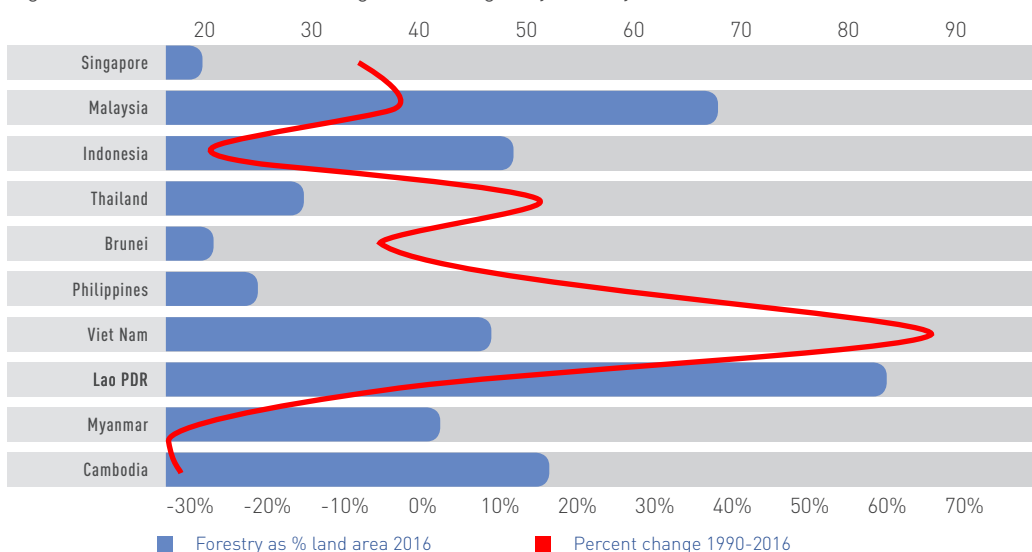


### 2.3.1. Forestry and Peatlands

Soil degradation is a challenge to sustained farming productivity. Across the ASEAN region this is driven by deforestation and agricultural activities, themselves. (Yagi, 2015). 55 percent of the ASEAN countries' surface is designated for forest land, with whilst 47 percent is actually covered by forest.

Figure 2.13 shows the distribution across ASEAN nations and the changes from 1990 to 2016, according to World Bank data. The World Bank data echoes the data presented by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity in its 2017 Outlook, where Forestry is described as an 'overdrawn natural resource' (ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, 2017).

Figure 2.13: Current forest coverage and changes by country, 1990–2016



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020e) data.

About 1.3 million hectares of forest is estimated to be lost each year. Indonesia has lost the most, with losses in Cambodia and Myanmar increasing rapidly. All but three ASEAN nations have reported continuous losses in recent years (RECOFTC & AWF-SF, 2017). Deforestation is ASEAN's single biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Table 2.3 summarises the priority areas for action, identified by each ASEAN member nation, as set out in their own 'Nationally Determined Contributions' (NDCs)<sup>144</sup>. The table shows that five ASEAN countries identified reforestation as a priority activity in their own climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy for their NDCs. A further two countries (making seven ASEAN member states in all) received funding in support of reforestation actions.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> The point has already been made (Climate Change section) that the NDCs fall short of the reductions in emissions required to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. However, the NDCs of the ASEAN nations give direct insights into the priorities identified for actions to respond to Climate Change and its challenges.

<sup>145</sup> Brunei Darussalam launched its National Climate Change policy in July 2020, in which it formally recognised the importance of reforestation as part of its contribution to climate change mitigation (RTB News, 2020). This is a clear example of explicit concerns and action on reforestation expanding in the region since the NDCs were formulated.

Table 2.3: ASEAN 'Green fund' allocation sources

Sector	Agriculture	Energy	LUCF/REDD+	Health	Industry	Transport
Brunei						
Cambodia	76	34	16	NF	2	33
Indonesia	5	533	81	1	5	6
Laos	15	2	41	NF	1	2
Malaysia		9		NF	5	2
Myanmar	7	7	11	NF	7	NF
Philippines	NF	91	1	NF	2	66
Singapore						
Thailand	NF	124	8		13	160
Viet Nam	NF	123	22		-	269

<b>Color Key</b>	Sector prioritized in NDC, receiving funds	Sector not prioritized in NDC, receiving funds	Sector prioritized in NDC, not receiving funds
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Note: Green Financing is fundamentally development oriented, and therefore development is a cross cutting issue.

Source: Author adapted from UNFCCC (2020)

This track record indicates that the importance of forests in sustainable development across ASEAN is well-understood and being addressed at least in part. The table also shows that the international community is willing to help by partnering through programmes to address deforestation. Forests are significant contributors to the triple bottom line. They offer livelihoods for many vulnerable communities and 'lock in' carbon, thereby slowing down climate change. Reforesting can reverse soil degradation and help manage floods and droughts. There are economic, social and environmental gains to be made in increasing forest preservation and restoration.

However, a focus on forests is not enough. Around 10 percent of Indonesia – more than 20 million hectares – is peatland.<sup>146</sup> Peatlands across the world contain twice as much carbon as the world's forests. They are part of the wetlands ecosystems created over millions of years. In their natural state, peatlands are biodiverse homes to many rare species (including Sumatran tigers and orangutan) and provide many eco-services. They absorb heavy rainfall, protecting against floods, and release water slowly, supporting water supply through the year. Economic activities on peatlands support millions of people (e.g., raising cattle, catching fish, farming). The loss of these livelihoods can result in rapidly growing vulnerability – especially in relation to health and nutritional well-being.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Indonesia's land mass (including inland waterways, lakes etc) extends to about 1.9 million square kilometres (See, for example, Worldometer, 2020). Various estimates of the extent of peatlands can be found. The WWF estimates that about half of the world's total of 44 million hectares is located in Indonesia (WWF, 2019). More precise estimates range from 14.9 million hectares (in 2011, according to the Indonesian Centre of Agricultural Land Research and Development and the Indonesian Soil Research Institute) to 20.6 million hectares (in 2005, according to Wetlands International) (Cited in Pantau Gambut, 2020).

<sup>147</sup> The range of peatland ecosystem services is far greater than simply their role in the carbon cycle. Pivotal peatland ecosystem services further include, for example, the provision of high-quality drinking water derived from peatland catchments. Peatlands also play a role in flood-water regulation, especially in lowland or coastal settings. Importantly, peatlands constitute old and rich palaeoecological knowledge archives, as their waterlogged soils preserve both natural (pollen, macrofossils) and anthropogenic (artefacts) organic materials, and the study of peat cores has greatly contributed to our understanding of global climate change. Peatlands are often open and wild landscapes and provide a sense of place and socio-cultural connection for communities as well as important breathing spaces for millions of people to enjoy. Globally, peatlands represent some of the largest unfragmented (semi-) natural habitats, hosting nationally and internationally important biodiversity. Peatlands therefore form a globally and nationally important natural capital.' (Bonn et al., 2016, p. 2)

Once cleared, peatlands become a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>148</sup> When peatland is drained for land clearance, its high levels of carbon (from plant material) are easy to burn. Forest and peatland clearance is often associated with oil palm plantations, as noted in the section on Agriculture. This industry is worth 30 billion dollars per year and employs 6 million people in Southeast Asia. Indonesia and Malaysia account for 85 percent of global production, where palm oil is credited with lifting millions out of poverty (Wallbrook, 2019). This illustrates the potential tension between economic policy, the quest for sustainable livelihood policy and the need to prioritise environmental stability.

Land clearance (destruction of forests and wetlands) is done by seasonal burning, bringing another environmental challenge to the fore. Burning drives hazardous air quality into cities across Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. It is estimated to have caused over 100,000 premature deaths in those three countries in 2015 (Wallbrook, 2019).<sup>149</sup>

‘With every fire season, they are an escalating and intensifying environmental disaster with very profound implications for GHG emissions, air quality, human health, local livelihoods and regional economies.’ (Page & Hooijer, 2016)

The battle against haze across many parts of ASEAN countries illustrates the challenges of integrating desirable environmental outcomes with economic drivers of growth. Within the ASEAN organisation, those with direct responsibility for environmental concerns sit in the ASCC, while many economic development decisions are driven from the AEC. There are mechanisms for working across sectors and coordinating policy development. However, the split between pillars of these responsibilities and drivers may weaken the organisational capacity for integrating conflicting pressures, and there is a risk that the environmental considerations are left behind.

Since 1990, clear and formal efforts have been made to manage trans-boundary pollution within ASEAN.<sup>150</sup> In 2002, the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (‘AATHP’) was signed by environment ministers of ASEAN to tackle the problem (ASEAN, 2002b). They recognised the adverse effects of the pollution caused by haze and the rising levels of harm. The aim of the AATHP was to prevent and monitor haze pollution. The pollution in question is mainly the haze from seasonal fires mentioned above, as is formally acknowledged within the 2016 Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Pollution Control.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> The IUCN CEM ‘Peatland Specialist’ group estimates that peatlands store 30 percent of global carbon, and current rates of draining and damaging of peatlands accounts for 6 percent of global annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Bain & Nuutinen, 2016)

<sup>149</sup> See section 2.4 of this report on the Built Environment.

<sup>150</sup> See, for example, the Kuala Lumpur Accord on Environment and Development (adopted 19 June 1990), which calls for efforts towards the harmonisation of transboundary pollution prevention and abatement practices (Cited in the preamble to AATHP, ASEAN, 2002b).

<sup>151</sup> The Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control was developed by a Task Force consisting of senior officials and experts from AMS who are responsible for the fire management and transboundary haze pollution issues in the respective countries, as well as invited experts and partners.

See, for example, the background narrative to the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation at page 1: ‘The ASEAN region has experienced episodes of transboundary haze pollution arising from land and forest fires over the past two decades’ (ASEAN, 2016k).

The 2016 Roadmap describes the range of damage caused by haze, including ecological damage, damage to health, and social damage. It sets a vision for a haze-free ASEAN by 2020. The mechanism is to 'translate the principles of the AATHP into concrete and collective actions', so as to prevent and control forest and land fires.<sup>86</sup> In spite of this effort, ASEAN is not haze-free as of 2020, and transboundary haze remains a significant challenge. In a 2019 Media release from the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the AATHP, 'the Ministers expressed concern over the severity and geographical spread of the recent smoke haze affecting various ASEAN countries in the northern and southern ASEAN. They also expressed sympathy to the millions of people affected by the haze' (ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment, 2019, para. 10).

Addressing the single issue of haze pollution successfully would offer a clear gain to the 'triple bottom line' of social, economic, and environmental sustainability, as recognised in the 2016 Roadmap. Better quality air would improve the health and productivity of the workforce and reduce premature deaths and illness. The steps needed to improve air quality relate directly to the management of the natural environment. If successfully implemented, these steps would also reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the ASEAN region, thereby mitigating the growth of climate change. The rescued forests and peatlands would operate to contain CO<sub>2</sub> (creating 'carbon sinks'), further strengthening the fight against rising temperatures, and making social and economic stability more achievable.

Given that the problem has been clearly articulated, the action plan is made, and Ministerial participation has been unanimous, the deep challenges of eradicating haze is clear. Things have been made even more difficult since the COVID-19 pandemic, its economic impacts, and the demands the pandemic has made on stretched resources: the smoke has continued to be a problem through 2020, creating a potential 'double health burden' of haze effects alongside COVID-19 impacts (Phoak, 2020). Strengthened commitment (including a significant financial commitment of an estimated 1.5 billion USD over the next ten years), is necessary to move towards a haze-free region (Vong Sok & Hayati, 2021).

The efforts to manage haze pollution highlight the challenges of implementing clearly intended outcomes even when such a high degree and high level of agreement has been expressed across ASEAN for the need for change. Efforts are to be renewed and increased. Policies and practices need to be strengthened at national and local levels, and it is recognised that government alone will not be able to resolve this challenge. Lessons from other sectors show the importance of engaging with the private sector, local communities and the media (Phoak, 2020). A Foresight study focussed on such difficulties would likely be able to analyse what interventions could ease these difficulties – and the outcome of different scenarios based on the degree to which these difficulties are successfully tackled.

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<sup>86</sup> See Clause 6 of the Roadmap (ASEAN, 2016k).

### 2.3.2. Biodiversity

Biodiversity is a concern across the whole region, closely intersecting with concerns about the natural environment. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity is dedicated to the conservation and protection of the region's natural heritage (ACB, 2021).<sup>152</sup> Biodiversity, is also the subject of the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (AWGNCB) under the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment (AMME) (ASEAN, 2019m). Biodiversity, ties to a large number of topics, geographical areas and ecosystems. The aim of this section is to sample some of the approaches already in use around ASEAN and to understand some of the policy implications of these experiences.

Every nation within ASEAN has tackled some aspect of the biodiversity challenge. The range of programmes illustrates an array of concerns and approaches to tackling biodiversity loss (e.g., the importance of relationships with partners, with legal systems, and with local endeavours). The following selection of illustrative examples is drawn from Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Laos PDR, Thailand and the Philippines.

The overview of projects will highlight the need for localised perspectives that balance multiple stakeholders. These examples also show the need to step back and look at biodiversity holistically across large areas. Cambodia has achieved notable success in this regard.

The Cambodian Ministry for the Environment created a Strategy for Protected Areas 2017–2031 (Ministry of Environment, 2017). The strategy recognises the interconnectedness of many elements that have an impact upon biodiversity, including multiple stakeholders; pressures from many directions on biodiversity; the power of protected areas and the need to support them; and the quest for 'green growth' and the balance to be struck between

conservation, economic growth, and social well-being. Under the Strategy, Cambodia enhanced its efforts at biodiversity conservation by putting all management of 'protected' forests under one administrative umbrella. It then selectively added new areas for protection to create vast, connected protected regions (Souter et al., 2016). In only four years, biodiversity loss has already slowed in protected marine areas within Cambodia. Further patrolling and enforcement in other rich but less accessible biodiverse areas may enhance the impact of those efforts (Fauna & Flora International, 2020).

There are important cultural considerations to be woven into biodiversity protection policies. Current efforts to protect biodiversity are often 'western' or secular, taking a 'scientific' approach to conservation. This neglects the link between sacred spaces and cultural (religiously sanctioned) protection. The complementarity between community and government-based projects for conservation was explored in Thailand decades ago, and is known to maximise the value of all approaches (Sponsel et al., 1998). Ecotourism provides a different set of forces to engage with. As ever, each case will have local specificity. The tensions between conservation and tourism explored in Cambodia (with tourists attracted by the biodiversity itself) showed a need for thoughtful planning to balance ecotourism with a range of factors (e.g., local livelihoods, infrastructure, protected areas, and other tourism ventures) (Hvenegaard & Dearden, 1998). Such conceptual frameworks sit well within ASEAN, and the sharing of experience and principles for supporting biodiversity.

When evaluating a programme, it is tempting to focus on the economic value of biodiversity. Eco-tourism is one example where the income stream produced is a clear part of considerations. Pharmaceutical drug discovery is another opportunity in less surveyed ecosystems. Projects for drug exploration are

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<sup>152</sup> The ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, a blueprint for broad recovery strategies from COVID-19, emphasises the importance for cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement in order for biodiversity to be a mainstreamed concern (Lim, 2021).

sometimes justified by the thought that novel drugs will deliver large income streams that can be shared with local communities. However, very few surveys lead to drug discoveries that are commercialised, and the lead time can be several decades long. Yet, explorations, themselves, may still bring value to local communities, as argued in relation to projects in Viet Nam and Lao PDR (Soejarto et al., 2002; Soejarto et al., 2006). The economic benefits of diversity programmes can far exceed the costs of the conservation efforts, so there is often an underlying economic sense in conservation processes (Subade, 2007). This is explored more explicitly in ideas of 'natural capital'; the value of natural resources is recognised, and also the value of losses when natural resources are not properly valued and accounted for. This line of thinking is being adopted at national and regional levels across ASEAN – and the ASEAN Natural Capital Road Map will be an important strategy for managing biodiversity along with other natural resources (ASEAN, 2019o).

Whatever the economic arguments, biodiversity also has to be understood and promoted as an end in itself, if it is to be systematically supported across the ASEAN region. If there is no intrinsic value placed on biodiversity, then policy makers will look for case-by-case arguments on economic or social values. The holistic picture requires environmental concerns to be part of the 'triple bottom line' of the analysis.

Sometimes, the arguments and trade-offs are not difficult. For example, diversified smallholder rubber-plots in Thailand were found to be just as productive as monocropping on large plantations, but with considerable biodiversity benefits on the smallholder farms (Warren-Thomas et al., 2020). Such evidence helps economic, social, and environmental sustainability to be seen as compatible. These insights may help support smaller scale farming efforts to slow down deforestation. An important policy intervention is to ensure that evidence on these balanced outcomes is shared across ASEAN so that all areas can learn and develop programmes with a similar balance.

Where deforestation is set to continue despite such arguments, there is still a need for biodiversity to be at the forefront of policy concerns. On-going deforestation gives rise to a strong argument for a complementary strategic focus on biodiverse 'hotspots'. Hotspots are areas of rich biodiversity – sometimes under-surveyed, but revealing new species when surveys are undertaken, as in Lao PDR (P. Kumar et al., 2016; Prospero et al., 2018). It is important to ensure that hotspots are actively protected, even if they are remote and relatively inaccessible (e.g., with patrols, as seen in Thailand). This is a reminder that there is a wide range of socio-economic factors at play in biodiversity conservation sites and that all need to be included in successful projects and policies (Trisurat et al., 2019).

The concept of diversity focuses on the *range* of species in a habitat rather than the *abundance* of fewer species. The most disturbed habitats may host a great abundance of well-adapted species, while failing to support a wide range of biodiversity, as was noted in a study in Malaysia (Hassall et al., 2006). Where future Biodiversity loss is expected to occur, baseline evidence will be invaluable for monitoring changes and for testing the balance of the triple bottom line. Biodiversity is affected by any element of human presence, so it is important to survey and record species before they are disturbed by human interaction, if at all possible, so that a full picture of biodiversity is achieved (Chouangthavy et al., 2020).

Biodiversity loss is not a stand-alone phenomenon. It reflects environmental conditions and means a deterioration in some aspect of the environment. Negative environmental changes are sometimes surprisingly remote from the site of biodiversity loss. For example, an Eastern Indonesian study showed how land-based pollution damages coral-based ecosystems, reducing biodiversity in the marine ecology.<sup>88</sup> Small technology shifts can also cause biodiversity loss. Shifts in farming techniques (e.g., moving from shady to sunny planting strategies for cacao and coffee

in Indonesia) can both directly and indirectly reduce biodiversity.<sup>153</sup> These examples add weight to the idea that biodiversity needs to be considered, analysed and monitored holistically across nations and regions, even if the impacts are felt more locally.

Marine biodiversity conservation is considered a global priority. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) offer species protection from fishing and habitat destruction. Within ASEAN there are many different MPAs, designated and managed at national levels. Experience shows that the detail of how these are selected affects their impact greatly. A focus on a pre-determined *percentage* of marine area can create small, concentrated zones, covering a few distinct areas, as occurred in the Philippines in the 1990s.<sup>154</sup> A systemic approach maximises impact, as found when changes were made to the approach in the Philippines in 2009. Protecting land and water-based 'Key Biodiversity Areas' produced a holistically coherent 'protected area system' (Ambal et al., 2012).

Once an area for action is selected, the manner of its management will be important. In forests for example, as in other complex habitats, there is a constant process required of balancing competing pressures. Productivity is important for the economic sustainability of local communities, but shifting from forest environmental systems to monoculture farming inevitably reduces biodiversity. Management practices are therefore key for balancing multiple objectives. Ultimately, well-balanced management secures biodiversity and health of farmlands, thereby securing future

economic opportunities (Huong Nguyen et al., 2012). However, the balance is not necessarily easy to find, and monocultural cultivation is often economically attractive due to increases in productivity. Policy support is needed to ensure that the intrinsic value of the less visible economic and social values of conservation are not overlooked.

This interconnectedness between social and economic, land and sea, plantation and forest, and so on, highlights the challenge of looking at individual biodiversity problems in isolation. Coherent, systems-based strategies have the best track record for success in improving biodiversity. These approaches require multiple inputs, resources and partnerships – with strategic control centred within regional, national, or local governments to secure ownership and capacity.<sup>155</sup>

Biodiversity provides many eco-system services. Good air quality, modified weather patterns, and storm protection can all be linked to certain biodiverse habitats. Biodiversity can also provide regular information about the quality of an environment. Bio-indicators of clean water can include the diversity of particular creatures. Monitoring those creatures in a Malaysian project was found to expose the impacts of run-off from human activities on land (Azrina et al., 2006).<sup>156</sup> Numbers of different aquatic insects were also found to give reliable information about water quality in streams in Northern Thailand (Prommi & Payakka, 2015). In fact, biodiversity in different systems, even at the level of the smallest creatures, can provide important feedback on ecological health (Hassall et al., 2006).<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> At depths of 10 metres, diversity loss from land-based pollution entering sea water was found to amount to up to 60 percent loss of marine species diversity amongst coral reefs in Eastern Indonesia (Edinger et al., 1998).

<sup>154</sup> In the Philippines, for example, Marine Protected Areas in the late 1990s were few, with 85 percent of the protected areas split between only two sites and 90 percent of all protected areas falling into an area under 1 square kilometre. (Weeks et al., 2010).

<sup>155</sup> The partnerships themselves can have unintended consequences, requiring thoughtful and careful review. Two NGOs in the Philippines led quite different conservation agendas. However, in spite of the different approaches, both NGOs were characterised as 'persuading indigenous people to internalise state control' rather than representing empowerment at a community level. This observation was not intended to belittle the achievements of NGOs in achieving their intended outcomes, but serves as a reminder that human development is multi-faceted and that focus across all aspects is needed (Bryant, 2002).

<sup>156</sup> The study looked at the diversity of microbenthic taxa along the length of the Langat River in Malaysia. The diversity of species decreased in more urbanised areas, where more resistant species dominated.

<sup>157</sup> This study, in Sabah, East Malaysia, noted the abundance or diversity of terrestrial isopods as a symptom of habitat disturbance.

Biodiversity in one system can provide positive benefits for another. Improved water management in the Viet Nam Wetland National Park is good for water quality, but it also enhances bird biodiversity. A deep understanding of the 'natural' flooding patterns in the wetlands was important before management of fire risk and bird habitat could be balanced adequately (Chu et al., 2019, p. 55).

The Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil demonstrates that 'sustainability' and biodiversity are different ideas, and do not always go hand in hand. There are large, homogeneous (i.e., non-biodiverse) palm oil plantations that have achieved certified 'sustainable' status under the Round Table scheme. All the while, smaller plantations sometimes fail to achieve 'sustainable' certification, despite sometimes being very biodiverse. Biodiversity has to be a mandatory component within such certification schemes if it is to become a part of the 'sustainability' package (Azhar et al., 2015). Policy influence is clearly important to ensure a good alignment between private sector certification programmes and the needs of nations and societies.

Biodiversity is not solely a concern for rural environments. Urban green space also plays an important role in 'liveable' urban areas, and can contribute meaningfully to urban biodiversity. Urban parks are large in Kuala Lumpur, for example, and this variety of urban spaces has helped protect species within the city. Continued protection (in the face of current decline) requires active partnership. Community engagement, input from stakeholders, and policy support are all important (Karuppanan et al., 2013). Since Malaysia has areas of 'mega' biodiversity, holistic approaches are important. To ensure that actions and policy are evidence-based, the approaches are best coupled with responsive database creation (Napis et al., 2001).

Partnerships will be important in any programme for biodiversity preservation. Strengthened links amongst stakeholders (e.g., government, NGOs, community) help to ensure that traditional methods and systems, are recognised in holistic efforts (Halim et al., 2013). Different approaches may have merits in different contexts, including in different forms of institutional partnerships. These ideas were explored in a bird conservation project in Cambodia.

Where institutional partnerships and arrangements were weaker, there was an argument for making direct payments in the Cambodia project to farmers and rural households in exchange for their individual conservation efforts. Direct payment schemes have shown strong conservation benefits. However, if payments are directed instead to community groups, there can be a useful trade-off: weaker protection in the short term, but a strengthening of conservations efforts at the community level over time (Clements et al., 2010). Biodiversity protection is, as ever, a balancing act: 'Protectionism' puts species diversity first, while 'sustainable management' seeks to balance competing economic, social, and environmental pressures by taking community needs and engagement into account. The 'correct' approach will be context specific at a local level, with mixed approaches across ASEAN (Baird & Dearden, 2003).<sup>158</sup> The balanced and local approach is equally relevant on land or in aquatic settings, as explored in Cambodia (Fiorella et al., 2019).

Direct payment schemes can, like other policy interventions, have unintended consequences. If a particular behaviour is targeted and rewarded, then it may crowd out other beneficial behaviours. For example, payments for 'preserving' activities can result in more monetised outlooks, changing the way that local communities relate spiritually and practically to their biodiverse environment, as noted in a study on the Cardamoms Forests of Cambodia (Chervier et al., 2019).

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<sup>158</sup> See for example the case of direct payments for bird egg protection in the Northern Plains of Cambodia. Many thousands of nests were protected, and almost 80 percent of the scheme's finances went directly to local people, supporting livelihoods for the few who were involved. However, households who were not included in the scheme were unhappy, with some even disturbing nests to undermine the scheme. Local and careful design of schemes is important (Clements et al., 2013).



Different approaches will support specific efforts to maintain different populations. Primate programmes, for example, require additional considerations. Primates, like other creatures, depend on habitats, but are also subject to relentless hunting, poaching, and human contact. 'Protection' depends on knowing the target species well – survey, monitoring, and research are important. It also depends on law enforcement and careful land use planning (with zoning and protection from encroachment by different Ministries, for example). Law enforcement demands patrols, knowledge and capacity at the local level, alongside education and interventions to support protective legal arrangements. These various strands were all noted in a strategic effort for primate conservation in Cambodia (Pollard et al., 2007). The interconnectedness of so many facets requires strong evidence on the impact of programmes and clear policy support.

It is possible to restore habitats, as well as to preserve existing ones. The fauna and flora may show differences reflecting an ecosystem's history, but diversity was found to be re-established in many aspects within 12 years in a mangrove in Thailand (Macintosh et al., 2002). In China, efforts at re-greening 1.5 million hectares in the Loess Plateau illustrate the possibilities of large-scale rehabilitation.<sup>159</sup> The impacts are far-reaching. Urban sandstorms are reduced, while soil conservation and carbon sequestration are enhanced (Lü et al., 2012). Projects also demonstrate that land conservation and sustainable farming can be compatible if carefully managed (Shaojun, 2004).

These diverse examples illustrate important principles behind biodiversity and its conservation, whatever the scale of a project. There are likely to be multiple implications for the environment, economic outcomes, and

social consequences. These factors will not necessarily align, and trade-offs, compromises, and balance must be found through holistic approaches. Evidence is essential, and needs to be local, current and updated. Databases have an important role to play. Policy interventions can add value by providing management, knowledge sharing, and mechanisms to protect areas through education, law enforcement, and physical protection.

The individual examples across some of the ASEAN nations give grass-roots details of the kind of work that is happening in the ASEAN region. This aligns with efforts at ASEAN level. The Declaration on Heritage Parks of 2003 (ASEAN, 2003), for example, recognises the need for common cooperation across the region to manage and conserve biodiversity in protected parks; there are 49 ASEAN Heritage Parks as of 2020 (ASEAN, 2020b), and each one strengthens the biodiversity and 'natural capital' within its boundaries.

There are clear links between biodiversity and the idea of natural capital, and this is being developed more fully in order to ensure that the value of natural resources is properly recognised and accounted for in national and regional evaluation and development. The EU-ASEAN Introductory Forum on Natural Capital, held in November 2019, launched the drafting process for an ASEAN Natural Capital Road Map (ASEAN, 2019o). A focus on Natural Capital acknowledges that natural resources, including biodiversity, are the foundation of social and economic development (UNEP, 2021). The use of natural resources in the ASEAN region has accelerated in recent decades, raising living standards and creating new resource demands as people's lives improve. The measurement and valuation of natural resources is gaining traction within the region, and biodiversity and its 'value' are part of a sustainable future for ASEAN.

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<sup>159</sup> A film illustrating the progress of the rehabilitation project is available on line (Liu, 2012).

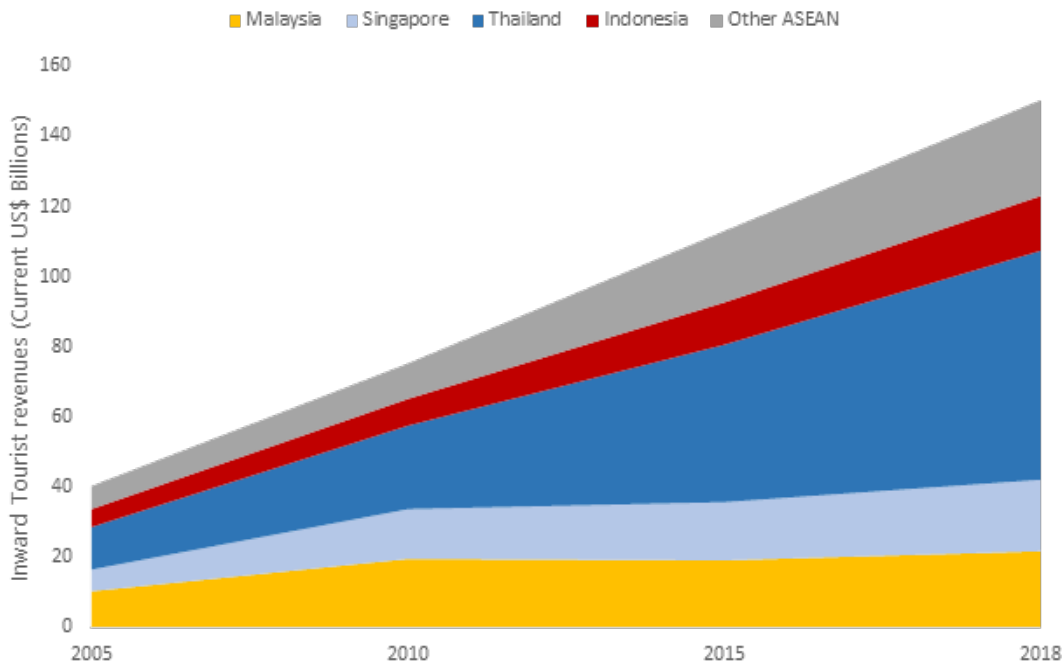
### 2.3.3. Tourism

The natural environment supports economic activity beyond farming and fishing. Tourism is a core activity across the ASEAN region, and depends on clean beaches, beautiful forests, plant and animal diversity and remote trekking to relatively undisturbed areas. Tourism makes significant contributions to GDP in every country, and is a source of livelihood for those

in the tourism service industry. Figure 2.14 shows the estimated contribution of tourism to the GDP of Southeast Asia, growing steadily between 2010 and 2019 (Statista, 2020).

This growing source of economic activity will not survive if the appeal of ASEAN tourist destinations is spoilt. Tourists bring new pressures on the natural environment and important reasons to manage those pressures.

Figure 2.14: Contribution of tourism to GDP across Southeast Asia, 2010–2019



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020e) data

### 2.3.4. An Overview of Implications

Every aspect of human life depends on the natural environment. Forests clean the air that we breathe and convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. Plants and fish clean drinking water, provide daily nutrition, and process human waste. Worms aerate the soil, providing nutrients for crops, while insects pollinate food supplies. Humans are completely dependent on such 'ecosystem services' for well-being and survival. This creates challenges for policy and administration. Table 2.4 shows the location of responsibility for a small number of ASEAN policies, whose impact on environmental outcomes is significant. They are spread across ASEAN, and not within the ASCC.

Maintaining clear communication channels is especially important for the ASCC because of its particular role in strengthening and facilitating responses across ASEAN (the SF obligations in the Theme 2 introduction above). The need for vigorous communication is illustrated, for example, by the objectives within the ASCC of the ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable

Cities (AWGESC). These include obligations to review clean air indicators, and undertake pilot studies and baseline studies on sustainable cities. In parallel with these obligations, the 'ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Strategy (ASUS) 2018' (ASEAN, 2018g), sets out an initiative for sustainable cities across the ASEAN region, driven from outside the ASCC under the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (ASEAN, 2016h). In that Strategy, AWGESC is noted as a source of information - but without

itemised responsibilities. AWGESC will need to use its over-arching obligations for review and research as the means of ensuring that relevant aspects of the ASUS study are built on well-informed information (see Table 2.4).<sup>160</sup>

Closer linkages will capitalise on common synergies between these high-priority strategic interventions, with strategic focus from the ASCC on the SF obligations ensuring effective environmental responses across ASEAN.

Table 2.4: Selection of ASEAN work plans relating to environmental initiatives

Initiative	Parent ASEAN entity	Perspective on Environment
ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Sustainability (ASEAN, 2007)	Heads of State	On climate change, avoiding barriers to trade in the course of tackling climate change is important (Para 15.); low emissions use of fossil fuel is the focus of research (Para 16.)
ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2016 – 2020 (ASEAN Centre for Energy, 2015)	ASEAN Centre for Energy, AEC	Environment concerns mentioned frequently, but continued intention to expand energy from coal shows soft commitment on CO2 emissions.
ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework for Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food and Nutrition Security and Achievement of SDGs (ASEAN, 2018e)	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF), AEC	ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) is to be engaged by the AMAF team in preparing a multi-sectoral framework.
ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AWGESC) (ASEAN, 2019p)	ASCC Environment Division	There is an 'ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Strategy (ASUS) 2018' - an initiative under the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025.  The two strands of work on sustainable cities highlight similar issues, but are not clearly integrated with one another.  AWGESC has responsibility for reviewing indicators on air quality, water and land; sharing best practice across ASEAN by highlighting success; and selecting cities for awards as recognition.  In response to climate change AWGESC has responsibility for developing base line studies and pilot studies. The brief is to inform, raise awareness and develop local knowledge and education on sustainable cities.

Source: Authors adapted from ASEAN (2007), ASEAN (2018e) and ASEAN (2019p)

The impacts of changes to the natural environment are far-reaching in the short and medium term. The precise impacts are location specific, whether at the regional, national or sub-national level. Every area of governance and policy-making expertise must be brought together. Silos for different policy areas result in lost opportunities, ultimately damaging economic growth and well-being. The SF obligations recognise the need to strengthen cross-linkages within ASEAN institutions and amongst the AMS. All policy makers need strong evidence and advice to support their activities. While the natural environment is recognised within ASEAN organisations as a socio-cultural concern,

<sup>160</sup> In that strategy, there is a table of 'Importance of different aspects of sustainability outcomes in cities in ASEAN'. 'Energy' is considered, but no mention of climate change is made in relation to energy sources. The high importance of connectivity for all is noted along with pollution levels to be managed. But CO2 emissions are not flagged as a source of concern. Climate change is recognised as a concern for urban resilience, but likely factors in mitigating climate change as part of a sustainable urbanisation policy is absent.

the reality is that it has far-reaching economic implications. Looking after the environment will pay for itself in the short to medium term. At a national and regional level, the productive capacity of the work force – driven by health, nutritional status, and access to reliable sources of clean air and water – is an economic as well as a well-being consideration.<sup>161</sup>

The burden of recovering from natural disasters is an economic cost, and management of the natural environment is a first step towards mitigating those disasters and their effects.<sup>162</sup> A well-managed natural environment is complementary to the built environment, supporting and sustaining life-giving systems. If allowed to deteriorate, then GDP will ultimately be affected, and development trends will stall or go into reverse.

This section has sought to illustrate ways in which the natural environment and its interactions with human settlements and climate change present an area where cooperation at many levels will yield results: full participation on the global stage, offering vision and leadership; regional cooperation to secure transboundary improvements based on sound evidence and policy engagement; and national regulation and facilitation to support the natural environment. ASEAN is well-placed to participate at each of these levels, enabling its member states to play their part as leaders and enablers.

### 2.3.5. Policy Implications

Economic evaluation of development projects or industrial strategy is not possible without a clear review of environmental considerations. This includes those environmental changes

that are in the pipeline over the next thirty to fifty years, such as sea-level rise and increased severity and frequency of extreme weather events – with grave implications for social sustainability.

Concern for the natural environment is not the enemy of development and growth. Indeed, it is an essential component of sustainable and inclusive growth.

A focus on creating and supporting a resilient natural environment will pay for itself many times. Floods will cause less damage, air quality will recover more quickly, and food production will be more secure. The natural environment poses regular challenges to the ASEAN region, and demands constant attention to planning and management.

### 2.3.6. Key Findings

1. Difficult changes in the natural environment are in the pipeline and will play out over the next fifty years or more. Rising sea-levels, sinking coastal areas, and increased severity and frequency of extreme weather events pose immediate and serious existential threats to food, health, livelihoods and economic sustainability.
2. Any development planning (or failure to plan) that ignores these threats is wasting effort: the costs of future recovery increase; stranded assets are created; people suffer; 'triple bottom line' wins are missed.
3. Research, evidence and planning matter. The SF obligations are central to ensuring that ASEAN communities are well-advised. Evidence on the challenges ahead must be tracked at a regional level using local research capacity to maximum effect.

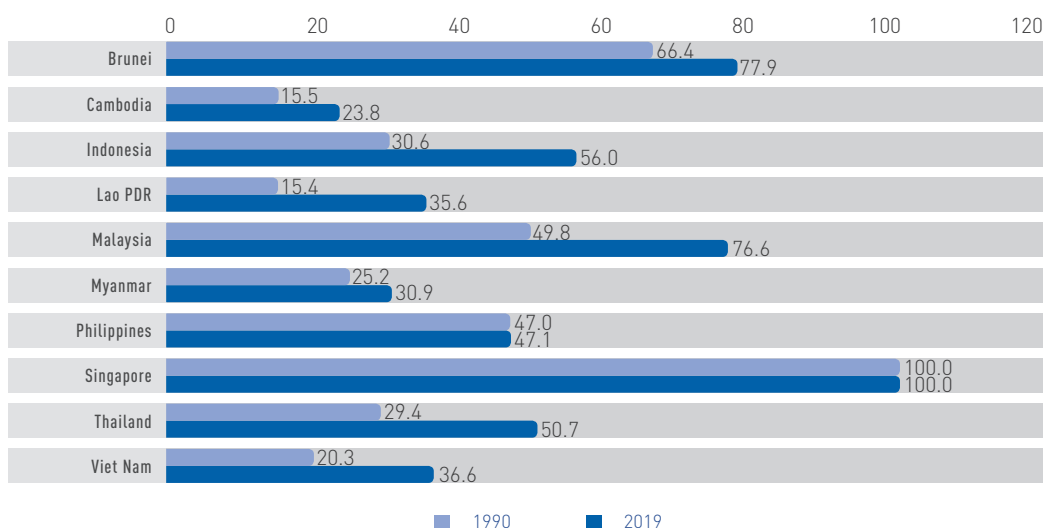
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<sup>161</sup> In recent decades, the incidence of allergic respiratory diseases has escalated in Southeast Asia so that they match levels in Western countries. Experimental and epidemiological studies suggest that air pollutants are a driver of this health burden. Globally at least six million people each year die, in part, from air pollution [Sompornrattanaphan et al., 2020].  
<sup>162</sup> This cost-effectiveness is true globally as well as regionally and across nations – amounting to a 'self-preservation' issue [Y.-M. Wei et al., 2020].

## 2.4 Built Environment – Living in a World Devised by Humans

Almost all homes and livelihoods across the ASEAN region intersect to some degree with the ‘built environment’.<sup>163</sup> At the large urban level, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, and Jakarta expanded by over 70 percent between 2000 and 2014 (Bardhan, 2020). Subsidiary cities, infrastructure, and services delivered and managed on behalf of communities have also grown alongside, but not necessarily in an even and inclusive manner.

This section will focus on the impact of being excluded from the ‘upside’ of human changes to the built environment – especially concerning slum living. It will also consider the increased strain that human changes – and the sheer weight of human numbers – impose on the natural environment. It will consider, briefly, what innovations or interventions are important for maximum impact to the triple bottom line in ASEAN, using examples from across the region. The range of potential interventions is vast and include remedial work to improve air quality, high-tech interventions to improve connectivity, enhancements to the ‘liveability’ of urban spaces to capture the best of the upside of human changes for everyone, and to minimise the downside of life in crowded spaces. All are concerns within ASEAN.

Figure 2.15: Percentage of population living in urban areas, 1990 and 2017



Source: Authors’ based on World Bank (2020e) data

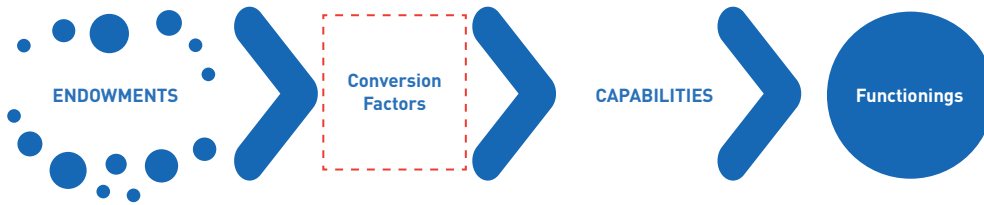
As Figure 2.15 shows, several ASEAN countries remain predominantly rural, but the picture is rapidly changing. By 2050, over 60 percent of people in seven ASEAN countries will be living in large cities (ASEAN, 2017c). Such shifts are not necessarily an indication of poverty reduction and improved lives. One in four urban residents lives in slums in Viet Nam and Thailand, and one in two in Cambodia (World Bank, 2020b).<sup>164</sup> These living conditions have a dramatic effect on health and well-being. Poor housing, lack of sanitation, and personal insecurity all detract from the *conversion factors* needed to enhance *capabilities* and achieve better *functionings* in the CA (Figure 2.16).<sup>165</sup>

<sup>163</sup> The built environment encompasses all man-made features of the world, including (but not limited to) the urban environment. Examples include: drainage, clean water supply, human settlements (whether planned or unplanned, formal or informal), transportation systems, supply depots, markets and public parks.

<sup>164</sup> Defined as lacking one or more of the following conditions: access to improved water, access to improved sanitation, sufficient living area, or durability of housing (World Bank, 2020b).

<sup>165</sup> See Introduction for the Capability Approach (CA).

Figure 2.16: Living conditions and conversion factors



Source: Adapted from Chiappero-Martinetti & Venkatapuram (2014) and Hart (2019)

For a growing number, however, urbanisation is allowing people to prosper and realise their aspirations as members (or aspiring members) of the middle class. The middle class, spending between \$10 and \$100 per day, will expand from about 2 billion in 2010 to 5 billion globally by 2030. This is the essence of development success in a human sense: bringing people out of poverty and into lives that they have reason to value.<sup>166</sup>

The growth of urban areas in the ASEAN region (including the increasing number of mega-cities with more than 10 million inhabitants and their secondary cities) is taking place on an unprecedented scale. It is part of a series of demographic shifts that will see changes in age structure, family size, and population numbers (some increasing, some decreasing) within each AMS.<sup>167</sup> As the middle class increases by 10 percent per year (tripling in Indonesia between 2003 and 2017), (World Bank, 2019a) the spending power of urban dwellers changes, too. Urbanisation is linked with increased energy use, particularly in housing and transport.<sup>168</sup>

These undulating demographic patterns over the next fifty years present clear challenges for planning future urban expansion and dealing with present pressures. A careful approach is important for the delivery of inclusive cities, where all citizens have access to open space,

services, decent work, and livelihoods. This approach requires evidence-based thinking and engagement with the members of all population cohorts. Each dynamic shift and trend must be fully understood, if well-managed and ‘liveable’ cities are to be maintained.<sup>169</sup> The role of society, the private sector, and the government in producing improving living conditions is often complex, interconnected, and sometimes confrontational.

Urban environments **can** be liveable. Singapore offers high density housing to all its citizens, connected by efficient and affordable public transportation, with plenty of urban green space. It maintains ‘moderate to low’ polluting levels, in spite of the high density of habitation. Jakarta and Bangkok, in contrast, have the lowest green space provision in the region and poor arrangements for public transportation. Currently, poor air quality and lengthy travel times are daily burdens for their residents, across all demographic groups.

As Figure 2.17 shows, poor ambient air quality is already having a health impact – especially in Myanmar. These risks can be reduced through environmentally conscious urban planning. The economic slowdown induced by the Covid-19 pandemic offers a rare example of a sudden reduction in urban pollution with a commensurate reduction in respiratory illnesses in many countries.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> See, for example, Sen (1999).

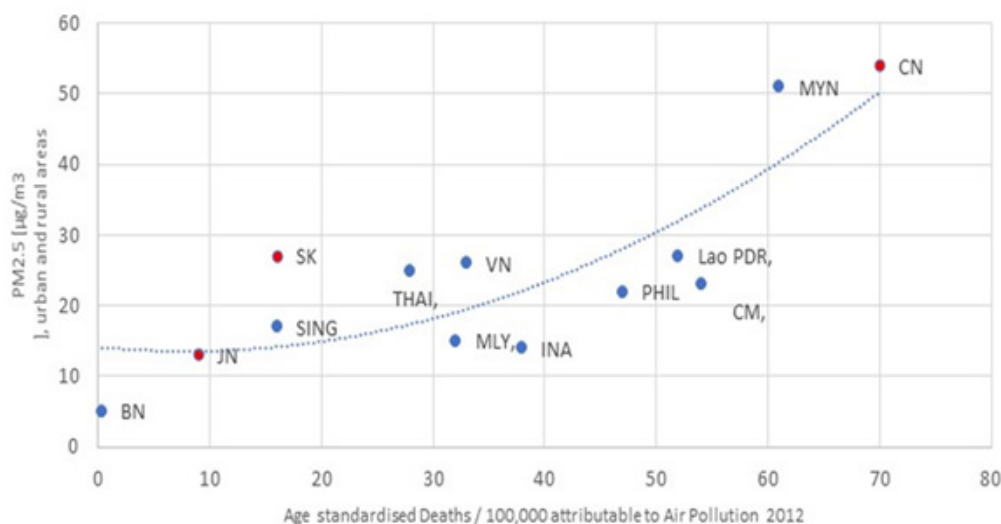
<sup>167</sup> See ADO Introduction for a discussion of demographic change.

<sup>168</sup> The relationship between urbanisation and energy consumption seems also to depend on GDP per person – borne out by carbon footprint data in this report. On the ground the picture is more complex and locally variable (Minh Khuong et al., 2019). The general relationship between urbanisation and increased use of energy is evident across ASEAN, with higher GDP per person also pushing up energy consumption (Chontanawat, 2020).

<sup>169</sup> A ‘liveable city’ is one that supports good health, offers inclusive economic opportunities and minimises its own detrimental impact on the natural environment to put as little pressure as possible on planetary boundaries. For further explanation of ‘planetary boundaries’, see Raworth (2012).

<sup>170</sup> Some anecdotal consideration is being given to this impact in the UK (News Medical, 2020).

Figure 2.17: Air pollution versus standardised deaths in ASEAN+3 countries



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020e) data

However, it is evident that 'development' need not inevitably lead to polluted living conditions. Well-managed development is not the enemy of growth and decent living conditions. Green spaces, public transportation, low particle-emissions strategies – all improve health outcomes (Ristovski et al., 2012).<sup>171</sup>

Economically and environmentally sustainable cities and decent living conditions do not emerge by chance. Conscious planning and investment in environmental outcomes and liveability are important from the outset. The ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy notes:

'... challenges can be amplified by rapid and haphazard urbanisation, which has occurred in many ASEAN countries. These challenges must be addressed in order to achieve sustainable urbanisation. Cities need to develop strategies to sustain the momentum of economic activities, provision of housing, healthcare, education, energy services, and mitigate the impacts of climate change, as well as manage various other priorities' (ASEAN, 2018g, p. v).

As well as the importance of building regulations, connecting urban features are important for how urban areas support lives. Streets, paths, and public spaces are amongst the factors that affect life for urban inhabitants. Measuring those benefits is a concern for planners (Southworth, 2003). The role of 'walkability' as a measure of 'liveability' is important, as was identified in a study of Kuala Lumpur (Shamsuddin et al., 2012). Thinking about mobility and its relationship to public space seems to be central to the idea of a liveable city (Ravazzoli & Torricelli, 2017).

The ambition of a liveable city matches economic and socio-cultural objectives for inclusive development and decent livelihoods. A holistic and inclusive agenda is important to success, with a focus on 'efficient, multi-modal public transport', land use arrangements that 'promote environmental sustainability and resilience', and 'affordable housing' with access to social services and physical infrastructure (ADB, 2019b).

<sup>171</sup> Plus many other urban arrangements beyond the scope of this report.

Any planning process needs to actively seek out residents' views on how public, and private spaces should be designed to suit their lifestyles or health and security concerns. The failure to incorporate 'bottom up' information into policy design and architecture can result in unintended consequences that downgrade the quality of lives. Attempts to offer affordable housing in one case in India, for example, provides a warning. The programme risked transforming 'horizontal' informal slums into 'vertical' high rise slums and caused new stresses and disappointments for occupants, as captured in Box 2.5 (Debnath et al., 2019).



### Box 2.5: Living conditions and well-being

One survey of slum dwellers in India found that loneliness and personal insecurity were key sources of anxiety amongst women. Their sense of isolation was exacerbated by a lack of communal outside spaces for cooking and social inter-action. This was combined with a sense of claustrophobia on account of buildings being too close together and rooms lacking any natural ambient light or ventilation. These design features encouraged the use of fans and lights, but budget concerns meant that women often bore the discomfort of the heat and darkness instead. Nonetheless, all households were stressed by the need for energy costs that had not been required before.

Source: Debnath et al. (2019).

In short, the architects had failed to co-develop housing schemes with end users, and thereby neglected the importance of community and safe pleasant spaces. In response to the survey, residents were able to propose collaborative interventions to improve their quality of life, even within the limited scope of the housing project – based around community cooperatives for cleaning and creating usable communal space. No one had asked for their input before.



All planning processes need to have social and environmental considerations (including climate change preparedness and resilience) at the forefront. These considerations will 'pay for themselves'.<sup>172</sup> For example, effective public transport and preservation of green spaces not only enhance health and well-being, but also offer resilience against flooding and storm damage from changing weather patterns. A planned approach can also help mitigate climate change by reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy generation and construction (M. Acharya, 2020; Huq et al., 2020). Within new urban areas, there are perfect opportunities for learning from the efforts of others to create socially cohesive communities that are carbon neutral and truly inclusive.<sup>173</sup> The approach can encompass social engagement processes; the organisation of space that allows and encourages zero-carbon lifestyles in socially cohesive and resilient contexts; energy generation that is

affordable and carbon neutral; or construction materials that focus on indigenous renewable materials, locally created skills and labour and low (or zero) carbon impacts.

There are economic, social and environmental advantages of getting these things right from the start, rather than trying to 'retrofit' necessary infrastructure and thinking (the challenge currently faced by the 'developed North').

These examples show how decisions must be consciously made about the kind of urban environment, and the kind of society that will best suit a population to create healthy and sustainable lives. The failure to make decisions today is, itself, an active policy choice. It is a costly one for the future if it entrenches social exclusion, poor spatial planning, inadequate standards and resilience, environmental degradation, eroded health, and poorer well-being.

<sup>172</sup> Numerous models have been tried in India to ensure that urban infrastructure is funded, at least in part, by the windfall increase in the value of land when new transport hubs are created. Commercial developers bid for land that has become commercially valuable, providing funding to create public goods, including a liveable environment (Adusumilli, 1999; Payne, 2020).  
<sup>173</sup> Zero carbon homes, for example, invite discussion about regulation (Heffernan et al., 2015), a shift from zero carbon operating mode to a zero carbon lifetime model (Pan, 2014), and supply chains (Karlsson et al., 2020).



The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 shows the potential of a holistic vision of development (ASEAN, 2016h). 'Connectivity' in this vision encompasses concerns that might traditionally fall across the responsibilities of many ministries (e.g., infrastructure, digital innovation, logistics, regulatory frameworks, mobility). This 'joined up' thinking creates a coherent approach both within and across each member state of ASEAN, as they share, discuss, and build on experiences.

'Sustainability' is a central concern of the Connectivity vision – although the concept is not defined. Considerations in the vision focus on efficiency and productivity. There is an emphasis on 'smart' developments, but no reference to poverty or slums. There is, however, a clear commitment to develop sustainable urbanisation strategies in ASEAN (ASEAN, 2011, p. 48).

The Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity 2025 highlights problems in any planning vision or process that does not put livelihoods at the fore. For example, the meaning of a 'sustainable city', is not defined, and yet many of the Master Plan's 'connectivity' projects are complete already.<sup>174</sup> Whatever form the sustainable urbanisation strategies may take, there will be no going back from the infrastructure projects that have already been completed – however well or poorly they fit into sustainable strategies.

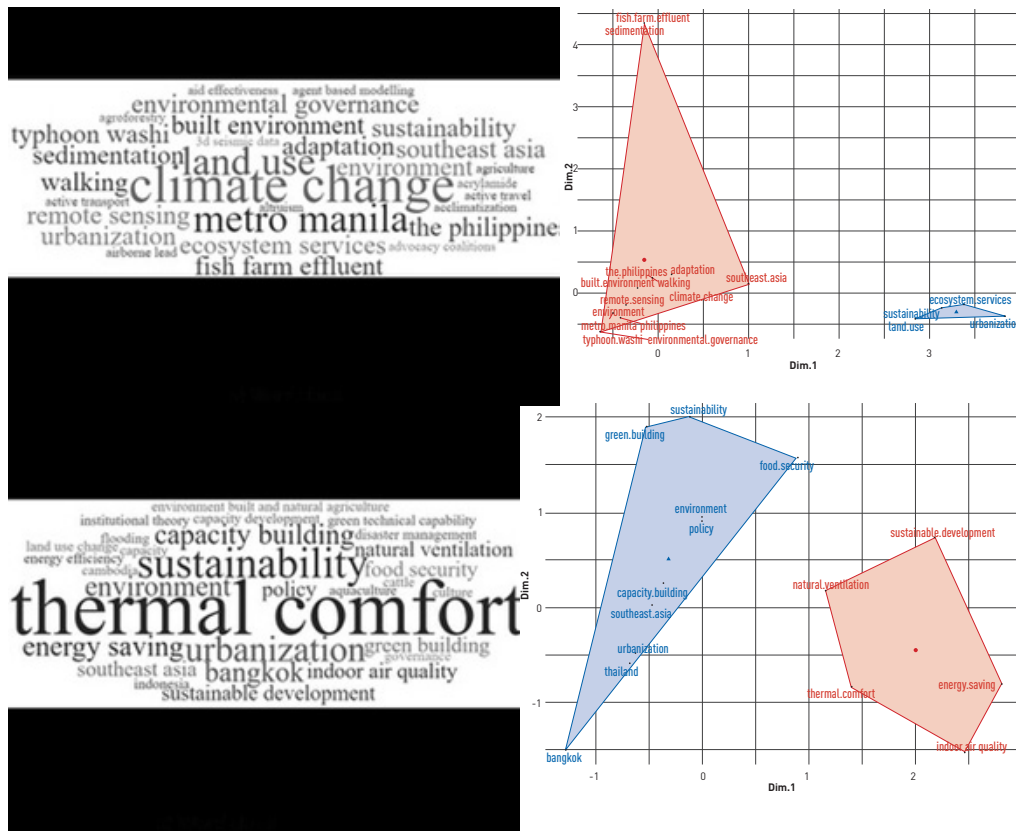
Environmental sustainability is not stated to be a central concern in the Connectivity Master Plan. It is unlikely that projects created in these circumstances will maximise opportunities for delivering to the triple bottom line to support livelihoods sustainably and inclusively.

The ASEAN nations are, of course, aware of these difficult issues, as evidenced in a survey of the academic literature. The word clouds in Figure 2.18 are generated from a mapping technique to show the relative prominence of different issues in ASEAN-related articles from 2000-2020 (Bardhan, 2020). The emphasis and focus of these articles is found to vary across ASEAN countries, but a common thread on managing the environmental pressures of urban living is shared throughout. Figure 2.18 shows only two of the word clouds created in relation to the ASEAN countries. In the Philippines (and Indonesia is similar), the greatest attention is paid to the 'Environment' and 'Climate Change' – suggesting immediate concerns about existential threats to the welfare of the nation. In contrast, the focus in Thailand (and also in Malaysia and Singapore) was found to be more on issues of 'thermal comfort' and the 'built environment' – showing a focus on concerns about how to make city housing arrangements more liveable, perhaps for the rapidly growing middle class.

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<sup>174</sup> 39 of the initiatives proposed within the 2010 Master Plan have been achieved, with 56 remaining (ASEAN, 2016h).

Figure 2.18: Word cloud images for Philippines and Thailand



Source: Bardhan (2020)

Each of the ASEAN member states is already able to demonstrate some clear interventions in shaping more liveable urban landscapes and inclusive livelihoods with regards to social and environmental sustainability. Several examples have been itemised by Bardhan (2020) as follows:

- *Shortage of affordable housing:* Singapore has a socially inclusive housing policy that has shown ingenuity and success over many years.<sup>175</sup> Indonesia and the Philippines have shown how resilience can emerge from self-housing strategies, and Cambodia’s heritage-conscious planning offers both tangible (e.g., local materials, resilient design) and intangible values (e.g., pride in local culture, a sense of identity).

- *Understanding the links between the built environment and health burdens on communities:* A range of urban development initiatives has shown strategic potential for reducing health burdens across the ASEAN region, including urban greening, inclusive and liveable housing, building for climate resilience, adopting low-income community design (for example, in the Philippines), and ICT and smart technology (seen in Singapore and Malaysia). Such initiatives also have the potential to boost well-being, productivity and economic growth.
- *Security of tenure* (e.g., access to inclusive housing): Cambodia is commended for its work in cultural sustainability within urban development, leading to the preservation of the traditional shop house, for example.

<sup>175</sup> Started in the 1960’s, it has developed to provide housing for over 75 percent of Singapore’s inhabitants. The desire for private housing has been accommodated, broadly, into the programme (T.-C. Wong & Yap, 2003).

- *Creating and maintaining a good quality environment:* Brunei Darussalam has demonstrated that traditional knowledge can be preserved in planning processes as a catalyst for sustainability.
- *Managing infrastructure standards and regulation to produce cities that its occupants need and want:* Malaysia and Singapore both use energy efficiency and conservation programs to good effect.
- *Harnessing of innovation:* Industry engagement and sustainable development practices can produce sustainable, resilient cities capable of meeting present needs, and the needs of citizens to the end of the Century and beyond. Again, Singapore, has demonstrated opportunities for technological innovation as a means of promoting liveable city life.

In contrast to this range of innovative and diverse interventions, there is a noticeable absence of strict environmental and waste management laws, posing urgent challenges across all of the ASEAN member states (Akenji et al., 2019).

This section has touched on concerns regarding urban development and has demonstrated some of the ways in which the social, economic, and environmental pillars of human lives are inextricably connected. People's feelings of well-being are driven as much by comfort in their environment and by their sense of control and opportunity in their lives (i.e., agency) as they are by simple economic gains. These inter-relationships frame a person's identity and the identity of communities and society as a whole.

The 'built environment' is a somewhat paradoxical term. Towns and cities are actually built into or onto the natural environment, and all the pressures outlined in the Natural Environment section are applicable in the urban context as well. No matter how much concrete is poured, towns and cities are forever embedded in 'nature'. They are often close to the sea, always dependent on weather and climate, and demand increasing quantities of food and fresh water from the natural environment for

their growing populations before expelling ever more waste back into it. The example of Jakarta is stark, as it sinks at a rate of 25 cm each year, with some parts of the city now 3 metres below sea level (Payne, 2020). This is a potent illustration of the limits in how far the relationship between the built and the natural environments can be pushed.

## 2.4.0. Policy Implications

1. No aspect of the environment devised by human intervention can be developed sustainability if it fails to engage with environmental, social and economic concerns.
2. An evidence-based approach to planning human intervention in the environment – especially in the built environment – is vital if urban areas are to be liveable for the next fifty or more years. The ASCC has the reach to marshal the diverse human, environmental, and demographic concerns in order to establish a sound knowledge base. The complexity of demographic changes invites a Foresight approach to urban planning in order to deliver conditions for decent lives now and into the future.
3. A central approach to gathering evidence is cost-effective but detailed policy and implementation should be executed at levels where specific context can be addressed with communities involved in the planning and deliberation process.

### 2.4.1. Key Findings

The built environment and climate change interact with one another to amplify good or bad outcomes. If considered holistically in development policy interventions, they can deliver to the triple bottom line.

To deliver positive outcomes, research, evidence and planning matter. Planned urban expansion can yield benefits, but unplanned expansion can exacerbate social and environmental ills.

Community engagement in planned urban development will usually provide the best chance of liveable cities for the growing urban population.

## 2.5 Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

### 2.5.0. Introduction

This section evaluates the *response* of governments, producers (e.g., farmers, manufacturers), and consumers by assessing the question of how to ‘produce’ and ‘consume’ within more sustainable and inclusive development objectives. It highlights the importance of behavioural barriers to change, whether rooted in socially accepted norms of consumption – or in skewed priorities of corporate governance.

‘Sustainable consumption’ and ‘responsible consumption’ can be used interchangeably. Either expression refers to a collective responsibility for all members of society. Sustainable Production and Consumption (SCP) is specifically listed as SDG 12, but has inter-linkages with almost all the other SDGs (Le Blanc, 2015). SCP can be best considered through this wider perspective, i.e., thinking about how a strategy for SCP will help to deliver other environmental goals within the SDG’s and visible benefits in the real world. This approach highlights, again, that environmental challenges are *social* challenges and not just technical ones.

Reducing the resource burden on the natural environment requires both producers and consumers to consume fewer resources or to consume them more efficiently. SCP offers direct gains in relation to SDG 11 Sustainable Cities, SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 14 Life Below Water, and SDG 15 Life on Land. SCP will also have an impact on SDG 1 No Poverty, SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being, SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, and SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth. SCP

is strongly interconnected with SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, and SDG 17 Partnerships, with each of these goals providing support to the aims of SCP, and gaining from the objectives of SCP action (United Nations, 2015c).

The role of SCP is pivotal, and it can be understood as ‘a “nexus” for the network of SDGs and their respective targets, along with the topic of inequality’ (Castro-Hallgren, 2017b, p. 53). There are clear links between SCP and Theme 3 (especially Decent Work and Green Jobs) and Theme 4 (especially Health) in this report.

Tackling SCP is a significant development challenge, as evidenced by the failure of even ASEAN countries with higher GDP per person to address SCP successfully – or anywhere in the ‘Developed North’ or across the emerging economies, for that matter. The very nature of current production and consumption patterns in wealthier parts of the region and across the world, is the root cause of this development challenge. Within the ASEAN region, the middle-class demographic will rapidly grow over the next 30 years. This clear development ‘success’ brings new aspirational levels of consumption and new (often unhealthy) dietary patterns. Following the patterns of middle-class behaviour around the world, it is easy to foresee a rapid growth in individual and cumulative environmental footprints, coupled with largely negative health consequences.

It is tempting, in managing SCP, to focus mainly on resource efficiency to reduce waste, and environmental footprints. Unfortunately, that approach falls short of the fundamental changes needed. Indeed, ‘efficiency’ can lead to an unexpected problem, known as ‘Jevons paradox’ (Alcott, 2005). Here, efficiency efforts bring cost reductions and have a strong tendency to generate even more demand (Castro-Hallgren, 2017a). A wider approach is required to moderate consumption patterns of the relatively well-off, with separate strategies needed to support those populations whose consumption is constrained by poverty so that they are not ‘left behind’.

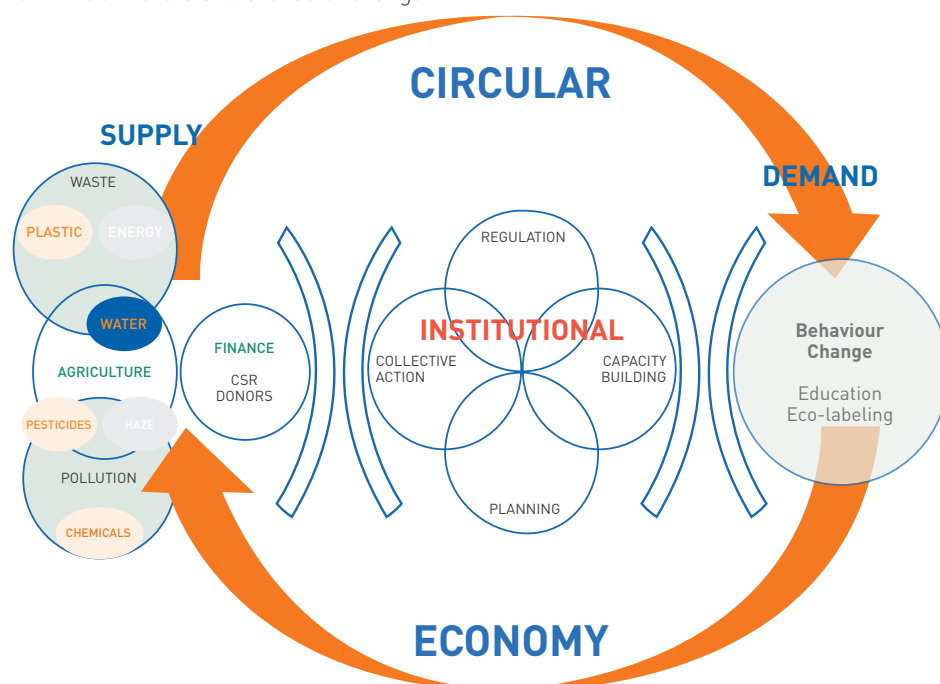
Policy makers face a multi-dimensional problem that is shifting over time. Developmental progress and demographic shifts generate a large new middle class. In this situation, ‘...the objective of SCP policymaking is to create resource-efficient production systems for sustainable goods and services (supply), coupled with *shifts in consumption patterns and consumer behaviour* (demand) for Sustainable Development, economic growth, and societal well-being’ (Castro-Hallgren, 2017b, p. 46 our italics).

Demand and supply side behaviour can be influenced through consumer awareness campaigns, compulsion (e.g., using pollution limits and removing unsustainable choices), and incentives (e.g., renewable energy subsidies). The aim is to encourage a more ‘circular’ economy (not just more recycling)<sup>176</sup> Many *Agents of Change* will be drawn into the process (e.g., private companies, NGOs, consumers, local leaders, farmers and workers), along with national and regional governance mechanisms.

Behavioural change relies on the careful use of *Levers of Change*, including technology, education, finance, incentives, and regulation. Figure 2.19 separates these levers of change into three *Arenas of Change*. At the centre ‘institutional factors’ include policy planning and regulation, but also capacity building and ‘collective action’ (organised with or without policy makers’ assistance).

The left-hand side of Figure 2.19 shows supply-side challenges and initiatives. These include waste (water, food, plastics and energy); pollution (haze, pesticides, chemicals); agriculture (again, linked to water, pesticides and haze); and finance (CSR and Donors as key sources of funding). On the demand side, the focus is on consumer awareness and behavioural change through education and eco-labelling. The separation of these arenas aids analysis. In reality, the relationship between supply and demand is deeply intertwined and complex.

Figure 2.19 SCP levers and arenas of change



Source: Authors adapted from Castro-Hallgren (2017b) and ESCAP (2019d)

<sup>176</sup> A circular economy refers to the recycling and reduction of waste, rather than single use and disposal.

This framework has been adapted from the United Nations (2019d) and Castro-Hallgren (2017b). The United Nations report, for example, discusses institutional levers (e.g., regulatory changes), technological levers (e.g., eco-labelling), and cultural levers (e.g., changes in social norms governing consumption habits). This approach to modelling emphasises that governance frameworks form a critical part of the SCP picture, but other elements are also important. Similarly, the framework acknowledges a range of policy instruments in the toolkit of policy makers. It is not limited to regulation, though that remains an important option. Engagement across multiple actors to systematically deploy multiple 'levers', will maximise desired changes. Leadership in this process will be important. Evidence-based planning and implementation will be crucial, too.

ASEAN policy makers are well-placed to coordinate a strategy for change towards SCP. To fill out the picture, this chapter focuses on specific regional case studies across a range of stakeholders, taking a look at the impacts and drivers of change. The intention is to focus on the centre of Figure 2.19 – the institutional planning and co-ordination of SCP.

### 2.5.1. Institutional Pillar

SCP is explicitly mentioned in the ASEAN Vision 2025, and its importance was confirmed in a joint statement on the implementation of SCP in 2013. However, research and development on, for example, relevant SCP technologies has not featured as a priority (Open Development Mekong, 2018). The ASEAN region shares a number of challenges with its neighbours in its pursuit of SCP, including monitoring and evaluation,

knowledge gaps on sustainable consumption, supply-side financing, and incentives for change (especially for small enterprises).

Regional dialogue resulted in the ASEAN+3 Green Public Procurement and Ecolabelling network in 2013 and the establishment of the ASEAN Forum on SCP in 2014. These initiatives have made some progress in establishing frameworks on eco-labelling, energy efficiency, and green procurement (Castro-Hallgren, 2017a).<sup>177</sup>

The ASCC Blueprint makes reference to SCP in outline only through public-private partnerships (PPPs) to promote technological solutions, education on green lifestyles, waste management, and the incorporation of SCP into National Development Planning.<sup>178</sup> The incorporation of SCP into National Development Planning is clarified to mean, either, national and regional policies '...or as part of CSR activities' (ASCC, 2016, p. 13), suggesting the actions of the private sector are viewed as a possible substitute for government action, rather than an additional point of essential focus.

At the level of ASEAN workplans, detailed initiatives and explicit cross-referencing to SCP remain few – especially on the demand side. The Rural Development plan highlights the importance of capacity building to improve environmental resilience using climate smart agriculture, crop diversification and crop insurance. The ASEAN Working Group on Environmental Education and Sustainable Consumption Action Plan places emphasis on raising awareness and influencing private sector action – emphasising the perception that change will be driven via the private sector (especially through CSR programmes) (ASEAN, 2019e).

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<sup>177</sup> For example, agreement on standards for light emitting diode (LED) technology.

<sup>178</sup> Outlined in KRA C4 Sustainable Consumption and Production: Strategic Measures. It states Strengthen public-private partnerships to promote the adoption of environmentally-sound technologies for maximising resource efficiency; Promote environmental education (including eco-school practice), awareness, and capacity to adopt sustainable consumption and green lifestyle at all levels; Enhance capacity of relevant stakeholders to implement sound waste management and energy efficiency; and Promote the integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production strategy & best practices into national & regional policies or as part of CSR activities.

The vulnerability of the lower Mekong delta countries (Viet Nam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Lao PDR) to rising sea-levels<sup>179</sup> may be a particular driver for a range of supply side and demand side policies to accelerate responses towards SCP. These include, for example, eco-labelling and tourism, waste reduction, and plastics recycling. Cambodia and Thailand, for example, have each established a government body specifically for SCP (Open Development Mekong, 2018).

Attention is shifting towards SCP within the rest of ASEAN. For example, Malaysia has published a 'National Sustainable Consumption and Production Blueprint 2016-2030', which places SCP at the heart of its national planning process (Economic Planning Unit, 2016). The plan has targets for 'green' government procurement and has also introduced 'Education for Sustainable Development' into school curricula to foster behavioural change in younger generations. Meanwhile, Indonesia incorporated SCP into its 'Medium-Term Development Plan 2015-2019', stating that the green economy is to be the foundation of Indonesia's development programme (Setiawan, 2015). In line with its focus on collaboration, knowledge sharing and support for SMEs, Indonesia is, for example, promoting eco-friendly rattan production and products (Switch-Asia, 2017).<sup>180</sup>

## 2.5.2. Supply Side: What is on Offer to Consumers?

This section gives a brief overview of three 'supply-side' areas affecting the availability of consumable goods and services: resource efficiency, agriculture, and tourism. The intention is to use these examples to prompt wider debates, especially on the type of unforeseen social dilemmas that SCP may present.

## 2.5.2.0 Resource Efficiency and Waste

Addressing the generation and management of waste is a key aspect of ASEAN's Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint.<sup>181</sup> The three examples (resource efficiency, agriculture and tourism) each shed light on related problems of waste: energy efficiency, water management, and food waste.

*Energy Efficiency.* Different AMS respond to energy efficiency and access challenges according to their particular priorities and possibilities. Viet Nam and Lao PDR have contrasting solutions to making sure that their energy use is targeted and efficient.

An anomaly in the ASEAN climate change mitigation policy is the persistence of fossil fuel (mainly coal) subsidies in many parts of the ASEAN region. The 80 percent increase in ASEAN's energy demands since 2000 has largely been met by doubling coal consumption (IEA, 2019), rather than by capturing the region's hydroelectric, wind, geothermic and solar potential (IRENA, 2017).<sup>182</sup>

Subsidies have been lowered in a number of countries, including Viet Nam, recognising the tendency of fossil fuel subsidies to skew consumption incentives for businesses and wealthy cohorts. Subsidies are particularly ineffective for alleviating poverty for people who lack access to electricity or vehicular transport (Open Development Mekong, 2018). This is the context in which Viet Nam and Lao PDR have each formulated their policies.

Viet Nam has adopted a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model as part of its Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Production (EECP) Financing Program to reduce its reliance on coal.<sup>183</sup> The aim is to increase electricity produced from renewable sources (rising from

<sup>179</sup> See Section 2.1 on Climate Change for detail.

<sup>180</sup> See Section 2.5.2.2 Sustainable Agriculture below for further details and impacts of this intervention.

<sup>181</sup> Identified as 'Key Result Area C4'.

<sup>182</sup> Indonesia uses a small percentage of its geothermal potential [1.4 GW deployed in 2014 out of a 7 or 8 GW potential] (IRENA, 2016, p. 88, 2017). Only the Philippines has invested significantly in wind. Across the ASEAN region, only 0.5 GW of total wind power capacity existed in 2014. Of that, 0.3 GW was based in the Philippines (IRENA, 2016).

<sup>183</sup> A third of Viet Name national power production comes from hydroelectric power, another third from coal, and the remaining third from a combination of gas, oil, diesel, and renewables.

58 billion kWh in 2015 to 186 billion kWh by 2030). PPP models are used as both a source of international donor funding and of technical know-how (Thong et al., 2017).<sup>184</sup>

Viet Nam's EECF financing programme includes the revision of building codes and energy efficiency in smaller enterprises in the construction sector through initiatives with the Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Buildings (MCEB) and funding from the EU and USA (Duc Luong, 2015). The concept of sustainable corporate practices is not easily compatible with an economy dominated by small enterprises. They may be unaware of cleaner and more efficient energy sources, or may have no capacity or funds to adopt them (Thong et al., 2017). The limitations, once again, are more human than technical or financial.

In order to guide energy efficiency changes in the right direction, interventions that recognise current human limitations may be most successful. 'Best fit' rather than 'best practice' can offer optimal step-by-step solutions.

In Lao PDR, a different approach has been taken. The Renewable Energy Development Strategy of the Ministry of Energy and Mines has focused on reducing household reliance on charcoal and biomass as a cooking fuel through the introduction of improved cook stoves in an initiative sponsored by the World Bank (Phonsavath, 2017; World Bank, 2019b). The policy recognises that *access* to electricity is not the same as *affordability*, limiting take-up by the poorest and most vulnerable households. In any case, 20 percent of rural residents have no access to electricity, and less than six percent of all households have access to clean cooking fuel. Use of biomass, and the existence of energy poverty, have a detrimental effect on the health, well-being and livelihoods of the poorest - particularly amongst women (Oum, 2019). Adoption

of improved cook stoves is an immediate step towards improving energy and health outcomes in the most vulnerable households.

The Lao PDR policy for clean cook stoves is in place even though a significant portion of electricity generated there (and theoretically available for the local population) is exported to Viet Nam and Thailand. The Renewable Energy Development Strategy also emphasises the importance of solar energy, solar home systems (SHS), and micro-grids using bioenergy and ethanol to improve energy availability for households, rather than a total reliance on extending access to the electricity grid (ADB, 2019a).

The very different supply-side interventions in these two countries - Viet Nam and Lao PDR - reflect different development contexts and different results. Recent studies suggest that Viet Nam has been successful in scaling up its energy efficiency programme, but there are challenges with including some local communities due to cost or loss of land (Urban et al., 2018). The gender sensitive bottom-up approach in Lao PDR has directly empowered rural women both in terms of health and reduced cooking times.

*Water Management.* Managing water can focus on pollution to ensure that only clean water is used when it is required and that toxic waste is strictly managed in and around water. Management can also focus on wastefulness, recognising that water is often in short supply and is needed for all aspects of life and economic activity. Effective approaches to these two limbs of water management will be separate but coordinated.

There is an increasing incidence of water system pollution across ASEAN countries due to a combination of factors. Untreated human effluent is often poorly managed, alongside 'inappropriate environmental management

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<sup>184</sup> Donor sources include: the Green Credit Trust Fund (GCTF), the Viet Nam National Energy Efficiency Program (VNEEP), the Viet Nam Energy Efficiency and leaner Production (EECP) Financing Program, and the Viet Nam Clean Energy Program (VCEP). GCTF focuses on SMEs and cleaner production (CP) technology. VNEEP focuses on energy efficiency, and is led by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. EECF promotes energy efficiency, renewable energy, and CP methods. VCEP 2012-17 looks at renewable energy technologies and energy efficient practice in the building sector, and is funded by USAID. The SWITCH-Asia Programme looks at sustainable use of forest resources, corporate social responsibility (CSR), energy efficiency, and awareness for sustainable lifestyles (Thong et al., 2017).



and the development of the region's chemical industry' (Ding, 2019, p. 1096). Efforts are required to manage water pollution to ensure that households and communities have access to safe water for day-to-day use.

ASEAN created an ASEAN Working Group on Chemicals and Wastes (AWGCW) in 2015 (ASEAN, 2019k, p. 5). The AWGCW aims to address chemical and waste-related issues by strengthening regional coordination and cooperation, including those under relevant multilateral environmental agreements. Viet Nam and Thailand have created national chemical inventories to improve chemical regulation, while Viet Nam and Lao PDR have banned and are phasing out highly hazardous pesticides. However, stronger regional cooperation is necessary for the most effective chemical management. For example a regional effort will prevent multinational corporations from using chemicals in one country that might be prohibited in another (Open Development Mekong, 2018).

Water reuse is an important process for reducing waste water, shifting the water management system towards a 'circular' approach. Singapore is the only AMS to treat all of its wastewater, with all others treating less than 5 percent (Sachs et al., 2020). Singapore's recycled water is reused by water-intensive industries (such as wafer fabrication parts and industrial estates) as well as for indirect potable (human consumption) and direct non-potable use (Li & Rawat, 2020). Successful replication of Singapore's 'circular water system' requires not just technical know-how and financing, but also planning through a social lens (Jensen & Nair, 2019).

First, there is a human capability dimension. Wastewater treatment is a relatively new skill in many countries. The Viet Nameese government had to establish a specific vocational training programme in 2016 to move towards its goal of treating 60 percent of its wastewater and

connecting 80 percent of urban households to a sewerage system by 2020 (GIZ, 2013, p. 45; Lames, 2020).<sup>185</sup>

Second, there are concerns from consumers. Singapore's successful shift to a sustainable, more circular water consumption model required sustained engagement through public messaging to show how the potability of reused water had been readily accepted in other parts of the world. These psycho-social considerations were given top priority to keep any negative connotations of association with the term sewage at bay (Li & Rawat, 2020).

The crucial importance of the capability/capacity and the psycho-social aspects of consumption were successfully addressed in the Singapore case, illustrating the importance of a holistic approach.

*Food waste.* Food Loss and Waste (FLW) are growing global challenges, with one-third (almost 1.3 billion tonnes) of the edible foods discarded as FLW annually (Gustavsson et al., 2011). Industrialized Asia and South & Southeast Asia contribute the most to global FLW (just over 20 percent). In low-income countries in Southeast Asia where rice is the dominant crop, agricultural production and post-harvest handling and storage result in high crop losses. Furthermore, up to half of all fruits and vegetables and up to 30 percent of grains, are lost between the producer and the consumer.

In line with SDG 12.3, Lao PDR has pledged to halve food waste per person by 2030. A recent review by the Asia-Europe Forum (2019) delivered a favourable verdict on the country's proposed monitoring framework. It particularly commended the links between agricultural strategy and SCP principles embodied in the Agriculture Development Strategy to 2025 and Vision to the Year 2030, which emphasise the implementation of a Clean Agriculture Development Plan, with production standards for various crops.

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<sup>185</sup> Assisted by the German Development Agency: The Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

There have also been food waste initiatives established within the private sector. In Malaysia, Tesco has become the first retailer to publish independently assured food waste data for their own operations. Over the year 2019-2020, all 60 of their stores across Malaysia offered surplus food to local charitable organisations, thereby achieving a 30 percent reduction in food disposal (Tesco, 2019).

The role of Tesco highlights a key point. The growth of the ASEAN middle class may accelerate a shift in shopping habits away from local stores and towards larger supermarket chains. These may offer less healthy processed foods, such that affluence is not synonymous with improved health. Consumption of protein may increase, but so might consumption of sugary goods or salty, high-fat snacks.<sup>186</sup> There is therefore a health and nutrition aspect to 'sustainable consumption'. As ever, sustainable development emphasises the 'triple bottom line', where social, environmental, and economic dimensions always interact with each other.

### 2.5.2.1 Sustainable Agriculture

The agricultural sector is a key contributor to climate change, through chemical use and land clearance but remains a major employer in many parts of the ASEAN region. Even as the ASEAN middle-class grows, there will still be pockets of marginalised groups to whom the consumer world is alien. It is in the meeting of these worlds that we see contrasting visions of what sustainability means and to whom. If SCP is to be a socially legitimate and inclusive concept, it needs to involve those still employed in the agricultural sector - taking more effective notice of traditional knowledge and values.

In the context of traditional farming and forest-based livelihoods, 'nature' needs to be understood for its intrinsic and cultural values, not just its economic ones. The erasure of traditional systems of food production and

consumption through climate change and economic transition has detrimental impacts on the livelihoods and health of upland communities. It may also reduce their access to traditional local practices of collecting food and medicine, while favouring the knowledge and values of global systems (Jasanoff, 2004).

One particular form of local production is that of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as mushrooms, nuts and berries. Historically, these have provided important sources of income and nutrition to mountain communities (van Gevelt, 2013). In recent decades, this has become a source of commercial activity (Shackleton et al., 2011), as well as a source of food, medicine, building material and fuel (Ahenkan & Boon, 2011).

While the incorporation of NTFPs into the commercial sphere may be seen as a contribution to sustainable livelihoods, Broegaard et al. (2017) find that as shifting cultivation declines in upland Northern Laos there has been a reduction in the collection of wild foods. This is because the move to permanent maize cultivation is more labour intensive and reduces the time available for the collection of NTFPs. As a consequence, farming communities have lost a rich protein and micronutrient source from their diet. Moreover, there is no evidence that higher incomes are being used to purchase vegetables or other plants as a replacement for the loss of nutrients from NTFPs. The result is a lower quality diet and reduced resilience.

In forest communities in Borneo, the harvesting of forestry products is governed by local understandings of 'sustainability'. Certain areas are reserved for fruit trees that provide valuable nutrition, but others are allocated as sacred burial grounds (Wadley & Colfer, 2004). Within this cultural and ecological niche, there is a clearly established procedure for the authorisation of the felling of trees in order to harvest rattan vines.

<sup>186</sup> Trewern (2020) discusses evidence showing how the layout of supermarkets and the presentation of products can influence the buying decisions of consumers, with the consequential health impacts. The human dimension is, once again, important to considerations how to create positive sustainable development – even for those who are progressing socio-economically.

Indonesia is the largest producer of rattan in the world but, in contrast with the Borneo ‘niche’ example, current harvesting methods can destroy forest ecologies (Switch-Asia, 2017). Poor regulation and limited public awareness contribute to overexploitation. The need to move to a sustainable production system was the catalyst for creating the Switch-Asia project, *Promoting Eco-Friendly Indonesia Rattan Products (PROSPECT Indonesia)*, in 2016.

The *Promoting Eco-Friendly Indonesia Rattan Products* project brought together 400,000 rattan collectors and 200,000 rattan workers. It has focused on encouraging collective action between the small and often unregistered companies in the rattan sector, offering sustainable training programmes for 40,000 farmers in Aceh, Central Kalimantan, and Central Sulawesi. This has resulted in fewer trees being felled and the establishment of a rattan eco-label certification scheme.

Once again, the social, environmental, and economic considerations are all addressed in these ‘sustainable’ programmes and projects.

### 2.5.2.2 Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism offers an example of potential interlinkages between SDG 1 (Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent work), SDG 12 (SCP), and SDG 14 (Life below water) – together addressing concerns of jobs and growth, whilst simultaneously preserving natural and cultural heritage (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). Resolving the potential conflicts between these multiple priorities can be problematic.

Southeast Asia’s natural environment (including its forests) provides a backdrop to attracting 129 million tourists per year. As ASEAN’s middle class and their spending on leisure activities grow, tourist revenues are expected to contribute over 5 percent of regional GDP (The ASEAN Post Team, 2018). However, this growth can undermine the conservation of cultural

and natural heritage in local environments and communities (Cambridge Heritage Network, 2019). The degradation of ecosystems as a result of ‘over-tourism’ (Koh & Fakfare, 2019) has prompted efforts to expand the number of popular tourist destinations and to ease their impact on each one (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020).

The ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016–2025 sets out two strategic directions (ASEAN, 2016g). The first is to enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN as a single tourism destination through events such as the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF). The second is to ensure that ASEAN tourism is sustainable and inclusive (ASEAN Tourism Forum, 2020; Thomas, 2019a). The ATSP offers no explicit definition of ‘sustainable tourism’, but the mandate of the ASEAN Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Development Committee indicates that ‘sustainable’ includes the protection of the climate and heritage sites and the participation of local communities in the tourism value chain (ASEAN, 2016g).

The terms of local community participation are somewhat narrowly framed to mean ‘economics and jobs’, without a focus on job quality or livelihood impact (Thomas, 2019a). Tourism has the potential to reduce poverty, but rising tourist volumes in areas of the Philippines, for example, have not shown local benefit (Ocampo, 2019).

There is potential for ASEAN’s historic culture and traditional festivals to become tourist attractions (Thomas, 2019a), but there is also a danger in their commercialisation (Shamasundari, 2017). Tourism can be a ‘double-edged sword’ (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020). Increased income may result in a form of ‘touristification’, where local culture is reduced to a saleable commodity in the form of a tourist souvenir. Equitable inclusion can be made particularly difficult by the dominance of English as the language of tourism.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Most tourists go either to Thailand or Malaysia. Within countries, they concentrate on particular sites such as Angkor Wat in Cambodia (Trupp & Dolezal, 2020).

The risk of dilution of local and historic identity has prompted the ASEAN region to develop its own approach to understanding the relationship between natural heritage and tourism. The Declaration on Heritage Parks and Reserves recognises 'the uniqueness, diversity and outstanding values of selected protected areas (PAs) of ASEAN Member States that deserve the highest recognition so that their importance as conservation areas could be appreciated regionally and internationally' (ASEAN, 2003). These selected ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) are protected areas for the continuance of ecological processes and life support systems; the preservation of genetic diversity; and the monitoring and sustainable use of species and ecosystems to maximise their scenic, cultural, educational, research, recreational and tourism values.

For example, Nam Ha National Protected Area (NPA) is Lao PDR's sole ASEAN Heritage Park. Located in the northern province of Luang Namtha province, Nam Ha NPA has abundant bamboo forests, and thousands of plant species used by local communities for medicine and other purposes. While Lao PDR has signalled that it is keen to make eco-tourism a top priority, progress has been slow on its policy objective of "one village, one product", intended to make sure that each rural community specialises in a particular good to maximise branding to attract tourism. Like many of its neighbours, Lao PDR targeted the high value tourist sector. Most inflows in reality are budget travellers.

The balance between inclusion, income, jobs, culture, and the environment is not easy to find. If sustainable tourism remains a niche concept – the privilege of international 'eco-tourists' who can afford to stay in high-end resorts – then this may exclude the aspiring ASEAN middle class from experiencing their own natural environment. It is only by mainstreaming the notion of sustainable tourism that a balance can be struck.

### 2.5.3. Demand Side: What do Consumers Want to Buy?

Several ASEAN policy documents make reference to eco-labelling or corporate social responsibility initiatives from multi-national companies as key pillars of their SCP strategies. National plans highlight the importance of changing consumer behaviour. For example, Viet Nam's Sustainable Development Strategy (2011-20) and the National Strategy on Green Growth (2014-20) target development of an 'environmentally-friendly consumption culture' (Castro-Hallgren, 2017b, p. 67). Achievement of these regional and national aspirations will require active engagement with the private sector and a comprehensive transformation of consumer mindsets.

Some MNCs have realised the importance of sustainable consumption (Landberg et al., 2019). The motivation for the move towards sustainable commitments amongst MNCs may be varied. In many cases, sustainability initiatives are led, in the first place, by market leaders. Their pioneering efforts can encourage others to follow if 'sustainable' approaches are shown to win further market share (Sidebottom, 2017).

One global example of such an 'agent of change' is Apple, the IT giant whose high-premium brand is founded on user experience and aspirational status. Apple has used its market power to re-orientate procurement criteria for its entire global value chain. To maintain market share, competitors are likely to have to adopt similar practices (Apple, 2020).

A regional example is DSM, a global enterprise that has progressed from being a mining company (in the Netherlands in the twentieth century) to become a global 'Nutrition, Health, and Sustainable Living' company (DSM, 2020). With 'business-to-business' operations throughout ASEAN, DSM has a strong internal commitment to sustainability from its management team, who are convinced that profitability and social

and environmental responsibility go hand in hand. For DSM, commercial targets are explicitly aligned with SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being, SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 12 Responsible Production and Consumption, and SDG 1 No Poverty.<sup>188</sup> DSM influences all the commercial players in its value chain to align their processes and methods in the same way, bringing about change towards SCP through the private sector.

'Eco-labelling' is frequently mentioned as a potential policy lever in the context of changing consumer behaviour. There is a question on whether eco-labelling is actually appropriate for this intended policy purpose. Labelling as a government-standardised exercise has different implications from an initiative led by the private sector. This is not to say that one approach is necessarily worse, but it is worth noting that the policy implications of private labelling and government-driven labelling are different.

Private labelling is not used just to advertise the sustainable or health characteristics of a product or the process by which it was made. Labelling is often (but not always) intended to enhance brand reputation, maintain quality,

and reduce costs. Labelling forms part of a company's sustainability toolkit. The existence of eco-labels tends to reflect supply-side initiatives from companies rather than any demand-side pressure from consumers (Yeung & Coe, 2015). There is a wide variety of eco-labels in the market, with varying degrees of 'sustainability' and enforcement mechanisms. Some involve a single company. Others engage a wider sector-representation. There are third party schemes (for example, Fair Trade) which invite participation across several sectors. The details, influence, and nuances of each scheme reflect the relative market power of the players involved (Sidebottom, 2017).

The wide range of approaches to eco-labelling is one of the key criticisms of 'roundtable' schemes, such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) initiated by the WWF and Unilever (Bitzer et al., 2008; Schouten & Glasbergen, 2011). In such an uneven playing field, it is hard to know which schemes ASEAN should 'promote'. The key questions to ask are: 'Who sets the standards?' 'How are they monitored?' and 'How are they marketed?'<sup>189</sup> Box 2.6 lays out some of the inter-twined issues that make answering these questions complicated.



#### Box 2.6: Palm oil

The case of palm oil is contested but illustrative. The crop is by far the most productive source of vegetable oil, so banning it may increase land use rather than reduce it (Slade et al., 2018). There is some evidence that deforestation rates are declining, but it has not yet been stopped (Erikson-Davis, 2019; Jong, 2019). While the crop provides livelihoods for smallholders (Barthel et al., 2018), there are a number of 'decent work' concerns at larger plantations (Wahab, 2019).

Regulation of land clearance and employer malpractice is fraught with difficulties in a fragmented industry.

As part of its BUMDes programme, the Indonesian government is trying to redistribute ownership and governance of forestry land to local communities, but the impacts are as of yet unclear (Jong, 2018; Srijekki, 2018).

In the meantime, on the demand side, growth continues. Palm oil is already ubiquitous in Western supermarkets (WWF, 2020), but demand is increasingly driven by Asian consumer preferences (Pretorius & Barron, 2020).



<sup>188</sup> This approach dovetails with the discussion in Theme 3 on the nature of social enterprise.

<sup>189</sup> Nelson and Tallontire (2014, p. 486) categorise these three questions as 'Legislative' (Who sets the standards?); 'Judicial' (How are they monitored?); and 'Executive' (How are they marketed?).

There is also a question about whether eco-labelling changes the demands and behaviour of consumers or whether other 'nudges' are needed. Research on clothing purchases, for example, shows that consumers pay little attention to labelling. They have different understanding of what a 'sustainable' label actually means, and are usually unwilling to pay a premium even if they do understand. Clothing forms part of an identity statement, not just the fulfilment of needs. Clothes shopping is 'a social activity, where the experience is often as important as the product' (Sumner, 2015, p. 212). Buying a 'green' product is a reflection of a consumer's perception of 'self' and the image they wish others to see, rather than intrinsically derived from the good itself (Thaler, 1985). It is not enough to advertise sustainable metrics. Customers need to be able to identify precisely what impact their purchasing decision will have on the manufacturer or on themselves (Sidebottom, 2016).

The power of social norms and health concerns to change consumer behaviour was confirmed in the 'Get Green Viet Nam' project.<sup>190</sup> The 3-year initiative tried to identify 'agents of change' amongst consumers, who would then encourage more sustainable habits throughout their social networks. The project concluded that 'social nudging' could be a potent means of inducing behavioural change, especially when 'sustainability' was associated with lower costs (e.g., lower electricity bills) or higher quality (e.g., food safety) (Thong et al., 2017). These social and health dimensions illustrate that eco-labelling is not a simple technical or regulatory exercise.

## 2.5.4. Policy Implications

The deep underlying concern with the examples of SCP discussed in this report is whether they go far enough or fast enough. The first issue is consumer inertia. The second is the limitations of waste recycling.

1. Efforts must be made to shift the demand and supply narratives simultaneously. Consumer education may not be sufficient, and markets have a role to play in limiting supply to reflect sustainable products.
2. Commitment to waste recycling is critical. A circular economy that prolongs the life-cycle of products and encompasses design, manufacture, markets, and social dimensions can improve sustainable behaviours and production.

In response to the first issue of consumer inertia, the difficulties in shifting demand patterns through 'consumer education' have encouraged the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to argue for the mobilisation of core market players to drive change (WWF, 2015). This is a view in which the role of 'the market' is not to provide customers with the choice of more sustainable alternatives, but to *limit* customer choice *only* to sustainable products.<sup>191</sup>

This approach does not try to alter consumer preferences or behaviour through moral arguments (Ponte & Gibbon, 2005). It is a business argument, through engagement with a core group of controllers of the mass market. The aim is to *restrict* consumer choice through the removal of unsustainable supply. This can be seen as 'choice editing' or 'shifting the field of choice for mainstream consumers' in a manner similar to that adopted for removing incandescent bulbs or net-caught tuna from supermarkets (Worldwatch Institute, 2010, p. 119).

<sup>190</sup> Implemented by the Delft University of Technology, the Viet Nam Cleaner Production Centre, and the Asian Institute of Technology in Viet Nam (Thong et al., 2017).

<sup>191</sup> This is a sentiment echoed in an interview conducted for this ADO report with the regional President of DSM. He shared the view that demand-side inertia was the key obstacle to meaningful change in consumption patterns, not supply side. '80% of people think that climate change is an issue. But [consumers] will not change behaviours unless there is a crisis that personally affects them'. He therefore declared that 'the only ones who can credibly lead is industry.' (Interview, President, DSM Asia Pacific, 2020).

In response to the second concern of commitment to waste recycling, there is an additional concern about whether recycling waste is enough if the volume of resources being used continues to increase. This issue is examined through the example of plastics, a major concern within ASEAN.

A very high level of commitment to reduce plastic waste was demonstrated in 2017 at the ASEAN Conference on Reducing Marine Debris in the ASEAN Region, reaffirmed in the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region (ASEAN, 2019I), and set out in the subsequent adoption of the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris (ASEAN, 2020a). The obstacles and recommendations to achieving circularity in the ASEAN plastics sector are outlined in the ASEAN report, 'Circular Economy and Plastics: A Gap-Analysis in ASEAN Member States' (Akenji et al., 2019).<sup>192</sup>

The Gap-Analysis describes how marine plastic waste is an endemic problem across the Asia-Pacific region. A significant portion of the accumulation of plastic waste occurs in just a few countries, including the ASEAN member nations of Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. High local production, poor waste collection facilities, and weak regulation have all contributed to the problem along with the many countries of the world that are exporting their waste to the region. The report highlights how plastic recycling is expensive and energy intensive. Recycled plastic, as a resource, tends to produce inferior products, and recycling does not reduce demand sufficiently.

A circular, rather than linear, economy approach is promoted in the report. A circular economy seeks to reduce waste altogether, not simply to try and recycle it. This is achieved by prolonging the lifecycle of products through forward-thinking design that plans for component parts to be re-used at the end of a product's useful

life (Akenji et al., 2019, p. 3). In this framework, single-use plastics disappear and all previously used plastic is framed as a resource, not a waste product.

At the national level, several AMS have taken steps to address plastic waste. In some countries, such as Cambodia, progress is hindered by shortages of human capacity or fragmented modes of waste collection. Malaysia, by contrast, is a major plastics manufacturer and importer of plastic waste. The country has centralised the governance of plastic waste management and is beginning to develop a Circular Economy Roadmap for plastics.

However, as plastic waste is a region-wide issue, there is a continuing role for ASEAN bodies to take a strong lead in line with the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris. The 2019 report highlights the importance of the following: regional technical guidelines on circularity in plastics, a region-wide research network, and a holistic approach that reaches beyond the technical to address institutional, market, and social barriers to change. An ASEAN circular economy initiative would be able to commission Foresight research to identify and promote an optimal combination of regulation, financial incentives and education for the desired changes.

### 2.5.5. Key Findings

1. Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) can provide foundational support towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) if it is broadly interpreted, centrally resourced, and mainstreamed as part of a national development policy.
2. Successful implementation of SCP demands a focus on the supply-side and the demand-side of consumption, plus the adoption of both a social and a technical lens.

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<sup>192</sup> The report is a joint effort by ASEAN Working Groups (Coastal & Marine Environment, Environmentally Sustainable Cities, Chemicals & Waste), along with the EU, the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), and the European Commission.

3. An ASEAN-inspired interpretation of SCP and its evolution to a true circular economy can provide a mobilising cause for young and old alike, and can foster the projection of ASEAN as a global leader.

### Appendix 2.A: Using Foresight in support of policy: The Built and Natural Environment

The potential for policy support using Foresight studies has been mentioned in several places in Theme 2 and throughout this report. This appendix aims to give more detailed insight into the strength of such a study. By way of example, sea-level rise and its impacts are considered. This is followed by a brief account of the interdisciplinary nature of a Foresight review of urban planning concerns.

Flooding, coastal erosion, and rising sea levels present a clear opportunity to engage with the foresight research approach. Examples of such research have considered a 100-year view at a level of detail offering specific scenarios and risk analysis for local communities. The thinking behind the Foresight approach is discussed in the Introduction to this report.<sup>193</sup>

The ensuing level of detail resolves two inherent problems in the management of long-term changes in flooding risks induced by climate change and changing patterns of coastal human activity:

1. The problem of infrastructure and its inflexibility once installed is countered by Foresight analysis' long-term view. This allows for incremental planning to get from 'where we are now' to 'where we need to be'.
2. The problem of the context-specific details required to plan for each locality is countered by the level of disaggregation that is possible when time, resources, and expertise are applied to the Foresight approach.

The methodology for a flood and coastal defences Foresight study would examine the physical environment, detailed meteorological data (past and future), social systems and economic contexts. It enables 'sustainable' planning. A study encompasses the physical attributes of the earth and its multiple water cycles including rain, rivers and tides. It takes into account man-made systems for drainage, water storage, and existing flood defences – and their interaction with the natural cycles; it engages with social and economic arrangements affected by flood areas and events – and the impact those arrangements have on flooding risk; it takes account of statutory bodies, their powers and capacities; and it recognises the role of insurers, their likely future stance in the face of increased or managed flooding risk, and the sustainable options for development or managed retreat.

Different flood modelling systems are integrated to show the pressures that drive flood risk, and the ensuing risks arising from flooding. A Foresight approach identifies and analyses the drivers of flood risk, ranging from those that cannot be controlled (but can be well understood) to those that can be closely managed.

The many layers of the study create completely new opportunities for flourishing while accommodating the changes that occur. Decisions tying future generations to profound consequences should be made with the greatest possible access to evidence. A Foresight study offers analysis that is weighty, usable, accessible, and able to inform planning and policy decisions for decades.

There are many other Foresight possibilities within the scope of the built and natural Environment. For example, urban development analysis demonstrates the multi-disciplinary nature of complex systems, when approached in the Foresight way.

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<sup>193</sup> See also Box 0.1 on Foresight and flooding in the United Kingdom and Box 0.2 on Foresight and flooding in the Taihu Basin, China.



The Drivers of Change within urban planning include, of course, population and demographic shifts – in all their complexity across ASEAN over the next fifty years. They must also take account of flood risks and other natural challenges to urban sustainability. Services, transportation (Jimenez-Vaca et al., 2020), and food production in a low-emissions and increasingly middle-class economy will be important. In addition, inputs relating to local and national identity, inclusion (Galvis, 2017) and relationships between urban and natural environmental features are crucial to sustainable urban settings – calling for a broad interdisciplinary study (Freudenberg et al., 2009; Iossifova et al., 2017). A sustainable

urban future demands inputs from physical and mental health experts (Freudenberg et al., 2009). Obesity and respiratory illness respond to factors such as travel time, walkability (provision of sidewalks, for example), safety in the streets, sustainable transport systems (favouring cycling, mass transportation, and low pollution). Mental health responds to the provision of green spaces, safety in public areas, and the provision and care of communal spaces within dense areas of housing. A Foresight approach will look at each urban area holistically, examining their ‘liveability’ (Kashef, 2016) and the networked interconnectedness within and between different urban and rural areas (Cooper et al., 2005).



## 03. LIVELIHOODS

Examines how current ASEAN plans address social and economic barriers to livelihood transitions in view of current and future demographic shifts.



## 3. LIVELIHOODS

### 3.0 Introduction

This theme analyses livelihoods as a series of transitions that begin in early childhood. The first of which is from basic education to secondary education, then from school to work; and finally moving between different types of work. The foundations for these transitions are formed in early years and continue to be framed by demographics, migration, technology and climate change as the twenty-first century unfolds.

The purpose of the theme is to highlight current and future policy challenges arising at key dis-junctures in these transitions. It is based on a wide selection of secondary academic literature and ASEAN Policy Declarations, Workplans and Reports<sup>194</sup> extending beyond the ASCC, and highlighting the need for an integrated perspective. Most available regional documents outline *intentions* rather than detailed *impact* evaluations, so the focus is on problem framing at the regional level using cases of implementation at the national level.<sup>195</sup> Due to considerations of space and the need to select from a large range of material, this overview is selective, not systematic.

The theme consists of two parts:

**3.1 The World of Learning** highlights a number of challenges for the inclusion of vulnerable groups in pre-primary, primary and secondary education.<sup>196</sup>

**3.2 The World of Work** discusses lifelong capacity building to facilitate livelihood transitions from school to work, and between different types of work. These highlight ASCC policy challenges in skills development, empowerment, leadership, entrepreneurship, and productive and decent employment to enable the living of decent lives (especially for disadvantaged groups, including women and persons with disabilities).

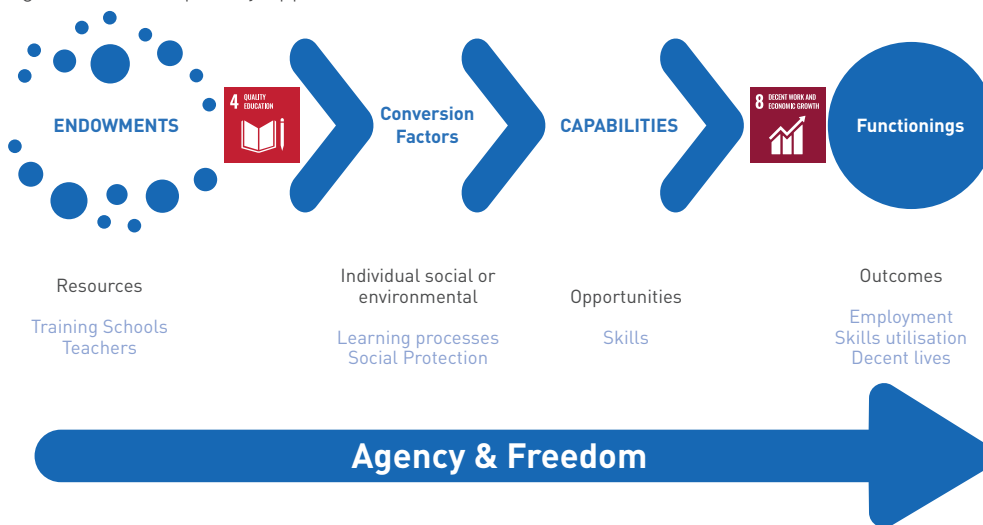
<sup>194</sup> These include the ASCC Blueprint [ASCC, 2016]; the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020 [AWE] [ASEAN, 2016m]; the ASEAN Integration Plan; the Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication [ASEAN, 2017]; ASEAN Work plan on Youth 2016-2020 [ASEAN, 2015a]; the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Work Plan 2016-2020 [ASEAN, 2016c]; SLOM Working Group on Progressive Labour practices to Enhance the Competitiveness of ASEAN [SLOM-WG] Work Plan 2016-2020 [ASEAN, 2016c, p. 15ff]; the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers [ACMW] Work Plan 2016-2020 [ASEAN, 2016c, p. 29ff]; the ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network [ASEAN-OSHNET] Work Plan 2016-2020 [ASEAN, 2016c, p. 39ff]; the Regional Action Plan of Vientiane Declaration on Transition from Informal employment to Formal employment towards Decent Work Promotion in ASEAN [ASEAN, 2016l]; the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 [MPAC] [ASEAN, 2016h]; the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children [ACWC] Work Plan 2016-2020 [ASEAN, 2019f]; the Master Plan on mainstreaming the rights of Persons with Disabilities [MPWDS]; the Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2016-25 [ASEAN, 2015a]; the ASEAN SME Policy Index ASEAN 2018, Boosting Competitiveness and Inclusive growth [OECD & ERIA, 2018] and Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship in ASEAN [ERIA, 2019].

<sup>195</sup> One of the most valuable aspects of the ASEAN SME Masterplan [ASEAN, 2015a] is a high-level monitoring and evaluation mechanism – the SME Policy index [ASEAN, 2018]. We also use an output from the SME Plan – the Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship in ASEAN, "Towards increasing women's participation in economic activity", 2017 [OECD, 2017b].

<sup>196</sup> We focus on the ASEAN Education plan [ASEAN, 2015a] which outlines 67 projects designed to achieve 8 sub-goals, ranging from ASEAN awareness to teacher quality. Each is tied implicitly to KRAs within the ASCC Blueprint [ASCC, 2016] (in particular B2 Equitable access for all and E2 Towards a Creative, Innovative and Responsive ASEAN) but it is not always clear how they are prioritised, integrated or implemented

Analysis of these transitions is grounded in the Capability Approach (CA) used throughout this Outlook.<sup>197</sup> In Figure 3.1, we envisage Quality Education (SDG 4) and Training as key endowments for the enhancement of capabilities. Whether these endowments generate new capabilities (or opportunities) depends on an individual's experience in the Worlds of Learning and Work, as governed through a suite of conversion factors. These include personal characteristics, social markets, and access to social protection. An individual's agency to realise these opportunities is contingent upon knowledge and skills being used and rewarded in line with the principles of decent work (SDG 8).

Figure 3.1 The Capability Approach



Source: Adapted from Chiappero-Martinetti & Venkatapuram (2014) and Hart (2019)

### 3.1 The World of Learning

The global education deficit, framed in economic or digital terms, sees a workforce unprepared for changes in the labour market (OECD, 2019a; WEF, 2017). This framing gives preference to the use of metrics that ignore pervasive social dimensions of constrained choices and unseen challenges for marginalised groups (ESCAP, 2019a). A discourse that views children as 'human resources' and education as a 'production function' leads to ineffective, technical fixes that ignore the people at the heart of the system. 'Learning deficits' need

to be understood not just in terms of so-called twenty-first century skills, but also in terms of what types of children society is raising.

In spite of diverse economies, socio-cultural backgrounds, religions, political systems and histories, ASEAN has succeeded in raising school enrolment; but the scorecard is less impressive in terms of equitable secondary transition and learning outcomes (World Bank, 2020b). The persistence of pockets of inter-generational poverty and "low learning traps" (World Bank, 2018, p.15) mean that schooling cannot be considered to be the same thing as learning. Policy design requires a holistic diagnosis of why certain children are being left behind.

<sup>197</sup> See the Introduction of this ADO.

Evaluation through a social lens implies recognition that the *purposes* of learning reach beyond economic empowerment towards freedoms and basic human rights that underpin our well-being (Unterhalter, 2015). An inclusive education system should offer a safe educational experience and ‘equip students with the skills they need to lead healthy, productive meaningful lives’ (World Bank, 2018b). Education can foster inclusion only if it empowers people with effective options that they are free to use in choosing how they live their lives (ESCAP, 2019a; Kabeer, 2012). In short, educational inclusion requires equitable access, and also meaningful and equitable experiences and outcomes. It is important, therefore, to understand both the *means of exclusion* and also the *terms of inclusion* (Hickey & du Toit, 2007).

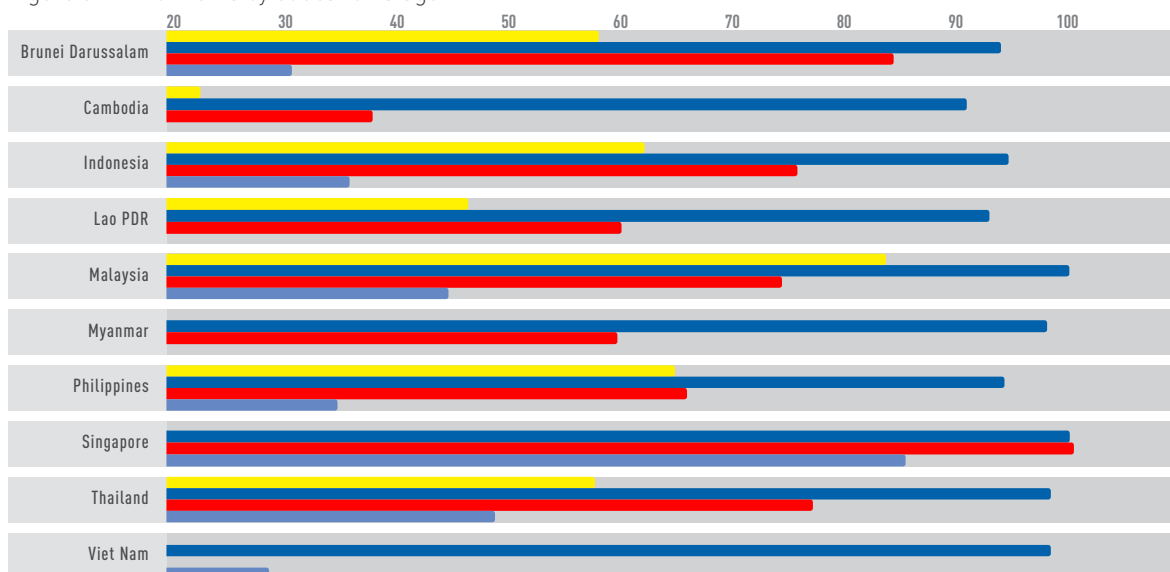
This chapter addresses these issues through four inter-linked questions: *Who do we teach? How do we learn? How do we teach? and What do we learn?* These questions bring into focus a number of current and future challenges across the ASEAN region and highlight examples of initiatives<sup>198</sup> that address them.

### 3.1.1. Who do We Teach?

Barriers of exclusion are multiple and intersecting. They reflect all aspects of a person’s identity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, location, disability, wealth). In the last 30 years, there has been a major improvement in educational enrolment across ASEAN, particularly at the primary school level. Even at the tertiary level (e.g., university, TVETs), enrolment has risen to 20 million students across ASEAN, split evenly across the sexes. This represents a median enrolment rate of 33 percent and a quadrupling of higher education student numbers over a 30-year period. (Figure 3.2) (EdStat, 2020).

There are, however, indications that the growth of primary participation has stalled (for example, in Cambodia and the Philippines). There also remains room for improvement at pre-primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. A simple focus on analysing enrolment figures can also mask a number of other problems, including quality concerns, non-attendance and drop-outs, and those who have never been to school at all.

Figure 3.2 Enrolments by education stage



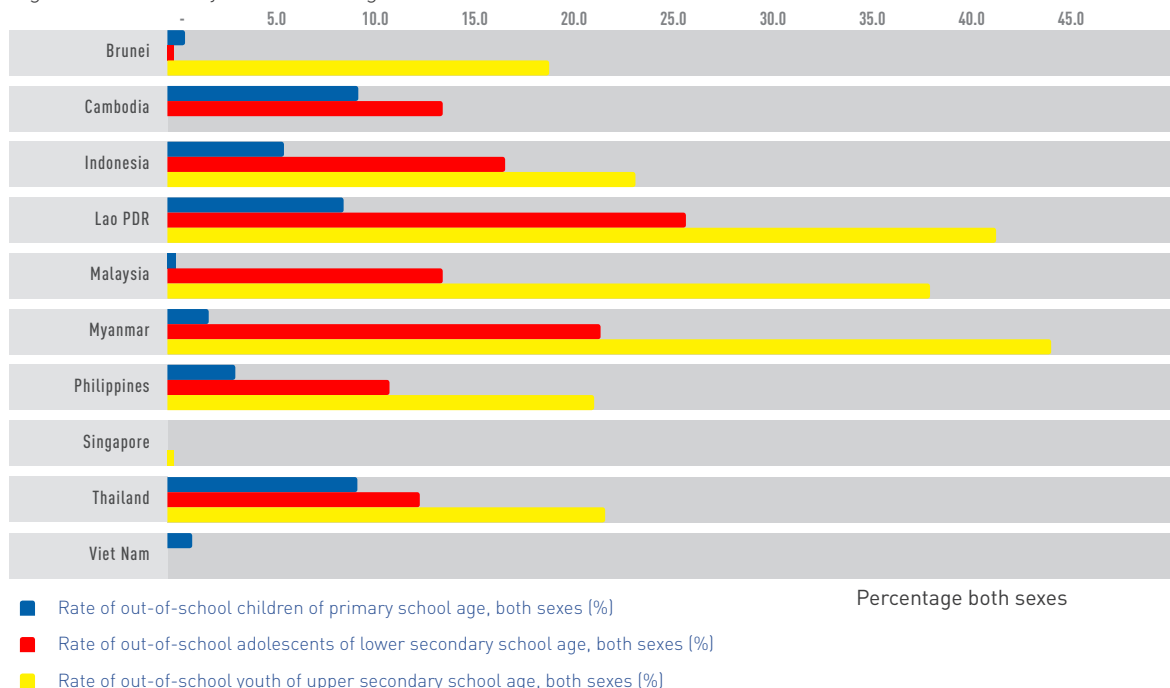
Source: Authors’ based on data from EdStats (2020).

- Net enrolment rate, pre-primary, both sexes (%)
- Net enrolment rate, secondary, both sexes (%)
- Net enrolment rate, primary, both sexes (%)
- Gross Tertiary enrolment rate, both sexes (%)

<sup>198</sup> Including the ASEAN Work Plan on Education (AWE); the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion & Protection of the Rights of Women & Children (ACWC) Work Plan 2016-2020; the Action Plan on Rural Development & Poverty Eradication; the Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2016-2025; and the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2016-2020.

In Cambodia and Myanmar 10 percent of children have never been to school; estimates for Lao PDR are as high as 18 percent (UNESCO, 2020b). In Indonesia, there are over 1.5 million primary school children out of school (mainly girls) and 2.3 million lower secondary children out of school (mainly boys) (UNESCO, 2020b).<sup>199</sup>

Figure 3.3 OOSCs by education stage



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020a) data

Indonesia has the greatest proportion of ASEAN's out of school children at the primary level. However, this is due to the total population size of Indonesia, as the actual *rate* of exclusion is 5.6 percent. This is lower than Cambodia at 9.3 percent, Lao PDR at 8.5 percent and Thailand at 9.2 percent (Figure 3.3). In Lao PDR and Thailand, this rate of exclusion has been increasing rapidly since 2015 (Figure 2) (World Bank, 2020a).<sup>200</sup> The problem of children being out of school is worse at the secondary level, especially for less wealthy<sup>201</sup> rural children. More than 20 percent of upper secondary children are out of school in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. In Lao PDR and Myanmar more than 40 percent of upper secondary age children are out of school (UNESCO, 2020b).

These challenges are widely known to governments across ASEAN who have a shared understanding of out of school children.<sup>202</sup> Tackling these problems will also require a systemic understanding of the intersecting web of factors and pressures that occur repeatedly throughout a child's school career, rather than treating each factor separately.<sup>203</sup> Non-attendance at school is rarely the result of a single factor.

The existence of a 'multiplier effect' (Figure 3.4) makes 'one-factor' remedies for school absence ineffective, because the underlying drivers are not always clear. Successful policy design looks beyond data headings to examine *why* certain patterns of exclusion persist in particular contexts (UNESCO, 2020b). For example, gender-based patterns of exclusion vary by country, wealth and education level.

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<sup>199</sup> Indonesia also estimates a further 3 million youth not in school if we include the 15-18yr age range (UNESCO, 2020a).

<sup>200</sup> Only 2015 data is available for Thailand. In Cambodia and Lao PDR, this appears to be evenly spread across sexes. Gender data for Thailand was not available (World Bank, 2020a).

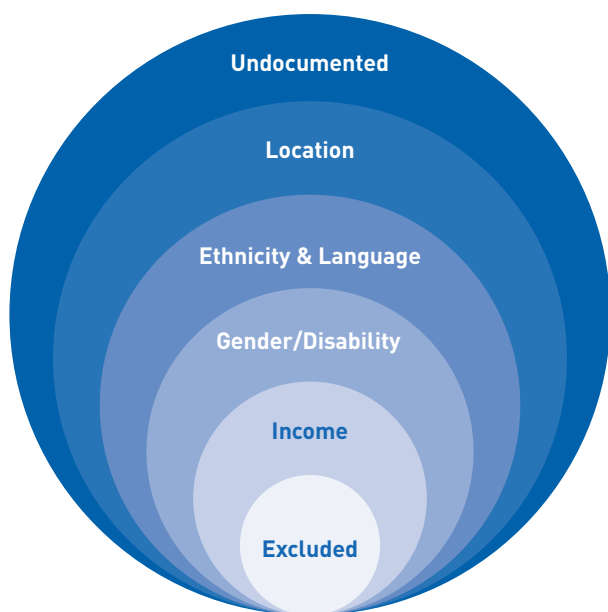
<sup>201</sup> For example, in Cambodia the likelihood of a youth from the poorest quintile being out of school at the upper secondary level is twice that of a youth from the richest (UNESCO, 2020b).

<sup>202</sup> In most countries OOSC means children of primary and lower secondary school age (usually 15, though the upper limit in Indonesia is 18) without access to the formal education system (the Philippines includes non-formal education). Country specific nuances can have a particular impact. For example, Malaysia includes any child being home-schooled or attending a school that does not adopt the national curriculum. This can affect migrant children in unregistered alternative education centres. This has a significant impact on migrants.

<sup>203</sup> See Theme 1.



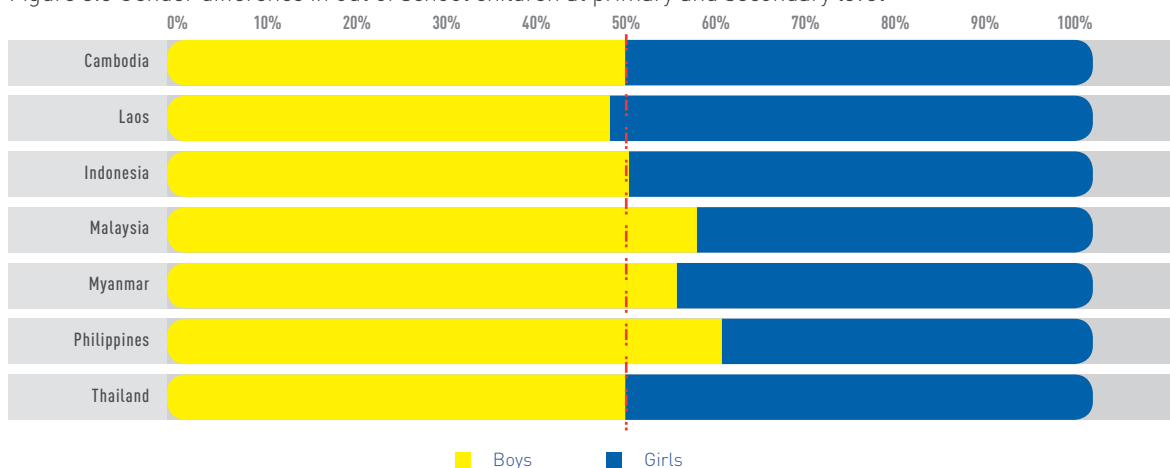
Figure 3.4 'Multiplier effect' driving OOSC



Source: Authors

Figure 3.5 suggests that there is not a systematic gender bias against female children throughout the region. In fact, in Myanmar, Malaysia and the Philippines, it is boys who are excluded (especially at secondary levels). However, apparent gender parity in Indonesia disguises disparities **against** girls at the primary level and the opposite disparities at the secondary level. The complete reverse is observed in Cambodia (EdStat, 2020; UNESCO, 2017a; World Bank, 2020b)<sup>204</sup>. The trends and pictures are complex, varied and may be location specific.

Figure 3.5 Gender difference in out of school children at primary and secondary level



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020a) data

<sup>204</sup> The graph uses the most recent data from UIS [Malaysian data is calculated for 2014 primary school and 2017 lower and upper secondary school]. Only Laos and Indonesia have consistent data for all levels of education (2018).

The underlying driver is poverty but the link is non-linear. Poorer children are **less** likely to start school and **more** likely to drop out as they get older. Children of both sexes from the lowest income quintile are five times less likely to attend school in Indonesia and nine times less likely in Lao PDR (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2017). As well as direct and indirect costs (e.g., tuition fees, transport, learning materials), non-attendance is driven by opportunity costs (labour time foregone). Poorer children also face non-monetary barriers (e.g., poor nutrition), which affect their ability to attend and learn at school (Peel, 2018; Reyes et al., 2014; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2017). The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted further inequalities in access to virtual learning in some AMS. For example, 60 percent of Indonesian pupils do not have access to the internet.

A holistic set of policy measures is required to address these multiple barriers, with different points of focus being consistently applied across relevant work plans. A full set of policies would include childcare services, outreach programmes, parental counselling and healthcare. The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion & Protection of the Rights of Women & Children (ACWC) Work Plan 2016-2020 notes the importance of childcare for fostering learning, and for women's empowerment (ASEAN, 2018b). However, the importance of childcare provision is not captured in the Education workplan and its discussion of pre-primary provision.

There have been a number of national level initiatives to address some of these issues. Malaysia has increased pre-school participation from low income families through the provision of workplace and community childcare services, outreach programmes, parental counselling and healthcare (School Malaysia, 2020).

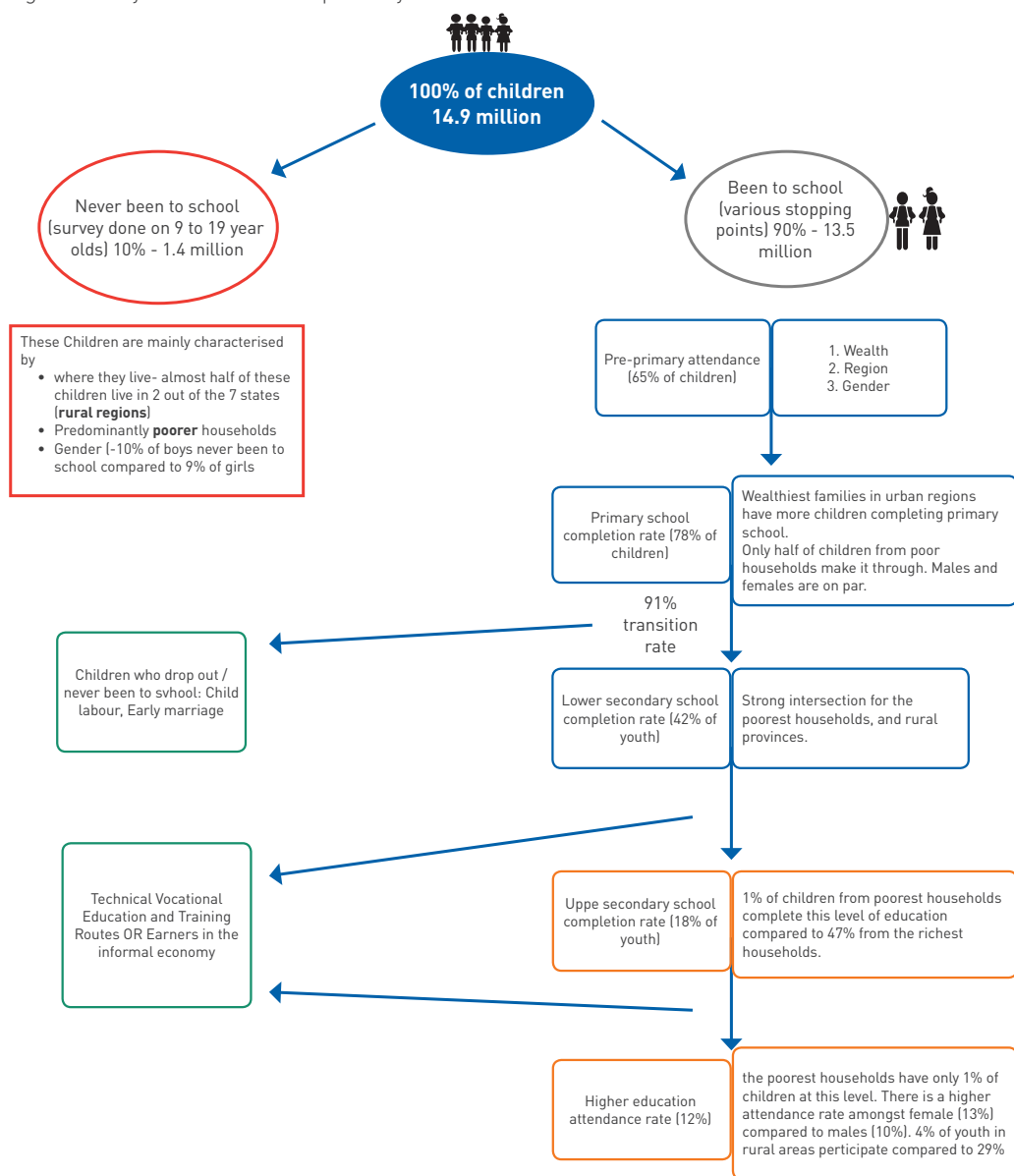
Viet Nam's School Readiness Promotion Project (SRPP) has addressed financial barriers through improved maternity leave and social protection and perceived pre-school quality concerns through teacher training (UNICEF, 2019a).

Cambodia has had to address similar quality issues, as well as improvements to home-based pre-primary education services to promote school readiness (Kim, 2020; Nurturing Care, 2019; World Bank, 2018b). From 2010 to 2018, Cambodian pre-school enrolment doubled, but three-quarters of pre-schoolers remained outside the formal system (EdStat, 2020). Reluctance to educate toddlers may reflect concerns about personal security (e.g., in Cambodia) or religious or social norms (e.g., in the Philippines) (Kim, 2020).

The nature and impact of combined monetary and non-monetary barriers to access to education changes throughout a child's school progression. For example, in Indonesia, only 60 percent of girls who enrol from the poorest quintile complete Grade 9, compared to 95 percent in the richest quintile (World Bank, 2018b).

Myanmar has the highest rate of out of school children (10 percent) in the ASEAN region. These are mostly poor rural boys (EdStat, 2020). If we trace a child's education over time in Myanmar (Figure 3.6), we see that this 10 percent figure disguises different problems at each education level. Only 8 percent of children are enrolled in pre-school, but net enrolment at primary school is 98 percent. This figure falls to 64 percent of children attending secondary school, reflecting the rise of direct and indirect costs of schooling (EdStat, 2020). The situation in Myanmar is complicated further in places of ongoing social conflict or displacement, and in communities where drug abuse is an endemic problem. Thousands of 'invisible' children can be marooned in this way, outside the formal education network (UNOCHA, 2013).

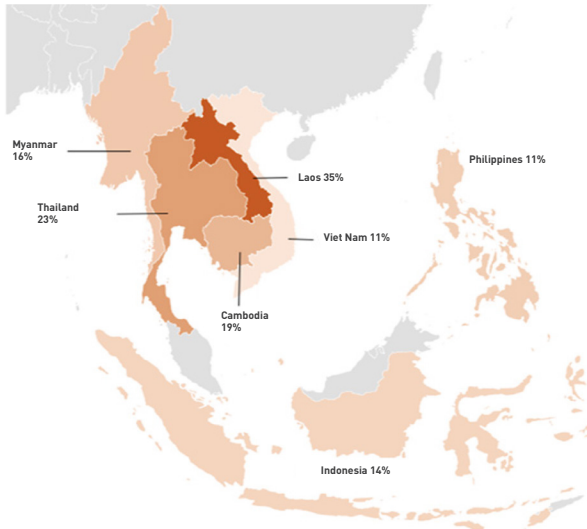
Figure 3.6 Myanmar education pathways



Source: Authors' impression based on UNESCO (2020b)

Throughout the ASEAN region, non-enrolment, non-attendance or non-completion at secondary school is often attributed to early marriage for girls, and to child labour for boys. The potency of these explanations reflects deeply embedded social norms, not just economics. Parental decisions on child marriage and labour reflect “choices without options” (Kabeer, 2012, p. 18).

Figure 3.7 Percentage of under 19-year-old married females

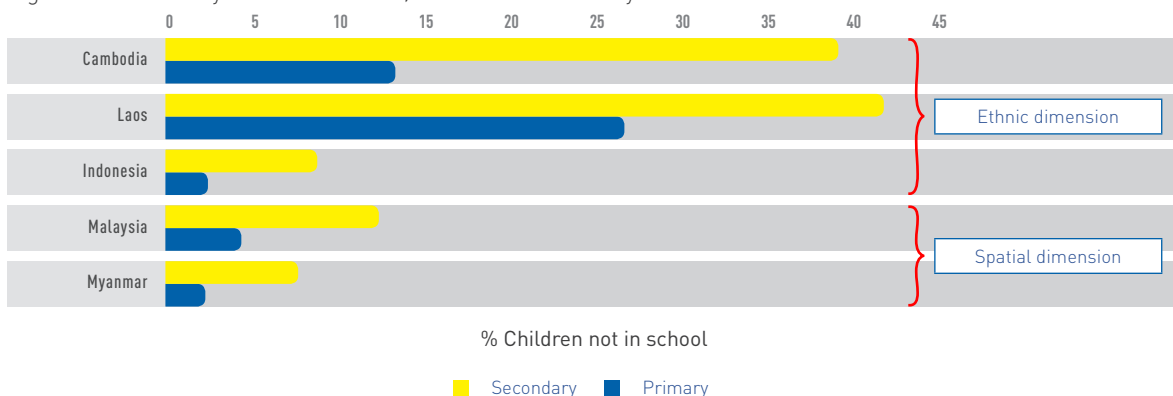


Data source: Authors' based on Girls Not Brides (2020) data

Figure 3.7 shows that in 7 ASEAN countries, the incidence of female teenage marriage ranges from one in nine to one in three. It is particularly high for females in poor rural communities (Rigby, 2013). In Lao PDR, poor, less-educated women are more than twice as likely to marry before 19 years old. This effective female *disempowerment* is driven by social custom, educational background and economic circumstances (Kabeer, 2012). Children (especially girls) may be viewed as a financial burden, with their marriage used to cement alliances, settle familial disputes, or avoid social shame. In Thailand, high teenage pregnancy rates often result in early marriage, especially in indigenous communities. Elsewhere, female roles are constrained through religious law (e.g., Malaysia) or by social code (e.g., Cambodia). In some areas, they may even be subject to kidnapping and violence (for example, in parts of Myanmar and Viet Nam).

These gender, poverty, and health drivers intersect most vividly in rural areas, where the rates of children out of school are double (e.g., Cambodia, Viet Nam) or even triple (e.g., Indonesia) those of urban areas – especially at secondary school (EdStat, 2020). Some minority groups have always been concentrated in more remote regions, and often cannot speak the instructional tongue. This adds a distinct linguistic *and* ethnic dimension to barriers to educational opportunity (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8 OOSC's by educational level, location and ethnicity in Viet Nam



Source: UNESCO (2017a).

In line with the CA, ethnicity and location can be understood as ‘conversion factors’ that may inhibit the development of a child’s capabilities. For example, in Viet Nam, the Mong community (who make up 1 percent of the population) account for 16 percent of out of school children, with girls especially affected. Over half of lower secondary school girls in the Mong community had never attended school in the early twenty-first century (McDougall, 2011).

ASEAN’s commitment to addressing child marriage is demonstrated in its adherence to a wide range of initiatives: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1981); The Rights of the Child (1991); The ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Violence against Children (2013); and Thematic Area 16 of the ACWC plan (ACWC, 2015). To strengthen the impact of this commitment, it will be important to ensure there are explicit links to the education plan in order to address intersectional concerns. At the national level, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Lao PDR have adopted a combination of legislation and public awareness campaigns to address the persistence of informal social and religious norms that keep children from school.<sup>205</sup>

Child labour is an additional contributor to non-school attendance for children aged 15 to 17. Child labourers are five times less likely to enrol in school in Cambodia and the Philippines, and eight times less likely in Myanmar and Lao PDR (United Nations, 2017b). This is especially true when the household head has not attained primary or secondary education. These ties between poverty, child labour, prior education levels, and the experience of their children illustrate some of the challenges of a *self-perpetuating inter-generational poverty* cycle.

Both girls and boys face barriers to school attendance but the causes and effects are not always the same. Girls are more likely than boys to be working (in Cambodia and Laos, in particular, and in rural areas elsewhere). Boys are more exposed to hazardous activities, but girls’ domestic work is often concealed in a web of social obligation, economic exploitation, and even abuse. While educational non-participation is the visible effect, there may be even more (but unseen) damaging long-term effects on a child’s well-being (UNICEF, 1999, 2017).

Data from the Philippines suggests that marriage and household responsibilities account for *half* of all out of school girls, suggesting the persistence of social stereotyping. With regards to out of school boys, direct expenses and opportunity costs account for nearly 30 percent of non-attendance reasons (according to national survey responses), with a significant number of cases also attributed to lack of interest (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2013). In Thailand, a similar pattern is further fuelled by parental and student dissatisfaction with school (Phuaphansawat, 2020). The rising incidence of male school drop-outs may suggest failings in schools or disguise deeper underlying social or adolescent mental health problems (UNESCO, 2017b). However, social stigmas may prevent teenagers from revealing their worries to teachers or parents, so the true scale of that problem is unknown (WHO, 2017b).

Dropping out of school or resorting to drug abuse may be symptoms of deep psychological or social problems, not simply economic hardship. Diagnosing these invisible or less visible causes of failure to attend school is a key challenge for ASEAN policy makers. This ‘invisibility’ is seen in two particular disadvantaged groups of children: those without legal documentation and those with disabilities. These two groups also demonstrate the intersectionality of ‘conversion factors’, which interact together and compound exclusion from the educational experience.

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<sup>205</sup> Cambodia has tried to improve female access to social services and protection through the Neary Rattanak IV strategy and action plan. The Noi 2030 Framework for Laos 2030 generation of children monitors adolescent girls’ experiences and the Ministry of Health has launched a ‘Me, My Body, My Planet, My Future’ campaign to encourage gender equality. The country has also conducted a National Violence against Children survey in 2019; the National Action Plan for Mothers and Children (2019) and the National Social Economic Development Plan (2016-2020).

Being without legal documentation (including due to the case of unregistered births) increases the chance of child marriage and also, more widely, of dropping out of school. In Malaysia, unregistered births are common amongst various specific groups: those of Pala'so ethnicity; migrants and refugees; and 'high-risk' parents (especially drug addicts and sex workers). In Indonesia, estimates of unregistered births amongst its youth are as high as 50 million (Susenus, 2012). Children in these groups are largely restricted to informal charitable education providers, and in official terms, they are *excluded* from the system (Letchamanan, 2013).

Immigration from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar to Thailand has doubled to nearly 4 million since 2010. Low income migrants now constitute over 10 percent of the labour force (Harkins, 2019). An estimated two-thirds of migrant children are excluded from mainstream education due to a lack of documentation, language barriers and costs (Save the Children, 2016). The government has relaxed documentation requirements and established learning centres in migrant hubs, but many learning centres are unaccredited and the teaching quality can be low (Draper & Kamnuansilpa, 2015; Thailand Office of the Education Council, 2019). Despite legal reform, institutional reluctance to educate migrant children continues as schools fear migrant children will have a detrimental effect upon test scores and funding or will become a financial burden on the school<sup>206</sup>.

A number of best practice remedies have been established to improve educational prospects for out of school children. These include school enrolment incentives, the use of distance learning television to mitigate teacher shortages, easier transitions from learning centres to public schools, and the development

of life skills and vocational skills for older children (UNICEF, 2019a). So far, the impact on migrant student drop-outs has been limited, highlighting the challenges of dealing with complex reasons for leaving formal education in childhood.

Similarly, high degrees of invisibility and social stigma exist for children with disabling conditions. There is insufficient data, and also inconsistent definitions of relevant terms, to allow a detailed analysis of the reasons and likelihood of children with disability gaining access to school. Most individual ASEAN member states estimate the amount of disability amongst their population to be *significantly* lower than the WHO global average of 15 percent (Baskaran, 2020).<sup>207</sup> This may be due to failure by member states to include all types of impairment in data estimates (which should include sight, hearing, cognitive, developmental, and social impairments).<sup>208</sup> Persons with disabilities face physical barriers and social prejudice from pupils, administrators, and teachers (UNESCO, 2015; United Nations, 2017b). The lack of social awareness means that young people with disabilities such as autism are unlikely to be diagnosed, and are more likely to face physical dangers or social discrimination. Children with autism are more likely to have poor educational outcomes or have a negative educational experience (APDC, 2019).

Even where disabilities are identified, provision for their inclusion is inadequate. In Myanmar only 40 percent of disabled children attend school. In Cambodia, disabled children are 10 times more likely to be out of school and half as likely to complete primary school. In Viet Nam and Indonesia, youths with disabilities are twice as likely to have never attended school and have vastly inferior literacy rates (Baskaran, 2020; UIS, 2018).

<sup>206</sup> This inertia is reinforced by cultural barriers within school communities that create social stratification within the education system, despite the employment of translators.

<sup>207</sup> Estimates range from 1 percent in Lao PDR to above 8 percent in Indonesia (Baskaran, 2020).

<sup>208</sup> For example, estimates in Lao PDR vary from 5 to 20 percent depending on statistical classifications (Grimes et al., 2011).

ASEAN member states have said that they intend<sup>209</sup> to increase support for the inclusion of persons with disabilities (ASEAN Masterplan). A practical demonstration of this is the ASEAN Autism Mapping Project, launched in 2018. Based on an autism mapping exercise which addresses issues like data availability on autism prevalence in the region, the project was aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of people with autism in the region (S. T. Wee et al., 2019).

In Thailand, 84 percent of the registered disabled population are found to have access to an inclusive education, through the introduction of “integration” schools (Thai Ministry of Education, 2015). Managed by the Special Education Bureau, the integration schools programme provides special classrooms and trained teachers at education centres, as well as in homes and hospitals (Vorapanya, 2012). This holistic approach involves close communication with classmates, so that they are familiar with children who have special needs; and also with primary caregivers and educators to continuously assess a child’s well-being through an Individualised Education Plan (IEP). However, teachers remain under-trained and an independent, robust, impact study would help understand the programme’s strengths and challenges in more detail.

In Lao PDR, the Inclusive Education (IE) Project also set out to integrate children with disabilities into mainstream schools. The programme improved enrolment across 500 schools and reached 3,000 children with disabilities (Grimes et al., 2011). This was a small proportion of the scale required to meet the needs of all children with disabilities in Laos, and the original programme funding (by Save the Children, Norway) has been discontinued for some years, since 2008 (UNGEI, 2014).

### 3.1.1. How do We Learn?

Many school children are invisible or socially segregated by divisions in ability and wealth. Tackling questions about who gets taught (and who is excluded) is only one part of a complicated problem. If learning quality is low in some schools or for certain pupils, then the number of children enrolled is a misleading indicator of success in inclusive education (World Bank, 2018a). It is thus important to look at the terms on which a child is included, and not just the ways in which they might be excluded. This section examines the meaning and impact of inclusion by asking: **How do we learn?**

Questions about ‘learning’ are truly interdisciplinary, with links to the full range of social sciences and natural sciences, whether orthodox or heterodox. Policy makers can encourage a vibrant cross-disciplinary debate to challenge current thinking, rather than simply accepting well-worn ideas.

Learning is ‘path dependent’ (children can only begin from their current state of knowledge and experience) and cumulative (each learning experience is added to what has gone before to create a body of learning). As a result, ‘early learning deficits are magnified over time’, and continue to be affected by environmental influences throughout life (World Bank, 2018b, p.6). Social science research has highlighted how the development of ‘soft skills’ (such as emotional maturity) is rooted in Early Childhood Education (ECE) experiences of play, health, and nutrition (Kim, 2020). Effective policy intervention will encompass a child’s *preparedness* for learning within the family unit, as well as in the school environment (Asim et al., 2015; World Bank, 2018b).

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<sup>209</sup> ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) (2012) & the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD, the universal ASEAN ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2016), Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role & Participation of Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN Community (2011) & Mobilisation Framework of the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2011-2020)

Advances in neurology show how synaptic growth and brain plasticity peaks in early childhood.<sup>210</sup> The development of simple skills at this stage forms the foundation for future neural circuits and more complex functionings (Goswami, 2000). Young brains learn as a result of their neuroplasticity – the *interaction* of genetics and school and home surroundings. The presence of books, positive social interactions, and responsive caregiving during early childhood may each have long-lasting effects in the future learning outcomes for that child.

Viewing education through a Socially-Embedded Capability lens (Khan, 2020; Sen, 1999) allows an understanding of individual and social constraints to learning. The mere presence of books (or other resources) may have no effect in isolation. Positive nurturing through play at home and school can foster brain development, but adverse events (e.g., mental stress, abuse, poverty) can inhibit it. Poverty affects parents' ability to provide nutritious food or to finance education, as well as affect the long-term mental well-being of the *entire* household (World Bank, 2018b; Ziegler & Goswami, 2005). These are the *social conversion factors* through which resources may develop into *capabilities* and *functionings*. Poor, stressed families may struggle to provide an environment in which a child plays and learns freely. Many disadvantaged young children will find that their individual learning needs are invisible, or they may find themselves segregated from others by means of ability or family wealth.

Some children are included in the school *system* but do not share the same school *experience*. Learning difficulties are estimated to affect approximately 10 percent of children. This has a major impact on their learning, but it also affects their entire educational experience, social wellbeing, and self-esteem. These learning difficulties can be developmental or cognitive (Goswami, 2000).

Examples of cognitive difficulties include dyslexia and dyscalculia (which are more prevalent in boys than girls). These can affect functional literacy, numeracy skills, and 'executive function' skills (such as working memory, emotional skills, motivation, and problem solving). Brains of children with dyslexia fail to process auditory information in a typical way, so that they have difficulty hearing rhythm or distinguishing strong or weak syllables. This causes particular problems in reading and writing in languages with irregular spelling systems, including English (Goswami, 2000).

Neuro-developmental disorders include autism. Children with autism face difficulties in social communication and interaction. These children experience many challenges in the learning environment, made worse by a lack of awareness among teachers, pupils, and parents. Boys are more likely than girls to be diagnosed with autism (APDC, 2019).

The problem of 'invisibility' arises for children with both kinds of learning difficulties. Most children who experience difficulties are at the less severe end of a continuum of challenges, and are not visibly handicapped (especially to teachers and parents with little prior knowledge).<sup>211</sup> The disparate needs of many children are often neglected because they remain *undetected*, sometimes until as late as 9 years old, if at all. This is especially true for conditions such as autism. Diagnosis and remedy require changes in pedagogy (teaching styles and methods) to enable teachers to offer tailored support.<sup>212</sup> Allowing for different speeds of learning amongst children of varying difficulties and abilities does not mean that the children have to be tutored separately. The *entire* class may well benefit from the use of music, poetry, and rhyme/sound games - all of which are examples of wider teaching methods (Goswami & Ziegler, 2005). Keeping children in class together avoids the stigmatisation and

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<sup>210</sup> Synaptic growth is part of structural brain development through learning and life experiences.

<sup>211</sup> The development of Psycholinguistic Grain Size theory (PGST) has revolutionised understandings of how reading skills develop through syllables and rhymes (World Bank, 2017). Even very young readers use "analogies" (shared spelling sequences in words) to decode new words but children do so at different rates due to differences in "phonological awareness". The development of letter-sound relations through active coaching both at school and at home is a critical early intervention tool especially for children being taught in a foreign tongue.

<sup>212</sup> Current tests generate a number of false positives (Goswami & Ziegler, 2005).



exclusion of those with known difficulties, but this requires greater public awareness and a more prominent profile for Special Education Needs (SEN) teachers. In Finland, 20 percent of children see a highly qualified SEN teacher at some stage in their school career, whether in special or mainstream schools. It is regarded as the norm, rather than the exception. Moreover, it is funded separately and not from a school's main budget (Goswami & Ziegler, 2005).<sup>213</sup>

This knowledge and understanding of different learning approaches, especially in dyslexia and related difficulties, has been used to develop customised software (*'GraphoLearn'*) to diagnose problems and to help children with literacy problems through play. An Indonesian case study found a correlation between reading ability and game-play for more able readers, but prolonged exposure to game-play was needed for benefits for the less able (Borleffs et al., 2020).<sup>214</sup> This suggests that schools could develop customised learning processes, such as through the recruitment of volunteer readers, to assist with literacy skills as seen in the Philippines (Asim et al., 2015).

The importance of integrated learning approaches also suggests the need to look at the mix of learning abilities *within* schools (Dang et al., 2020; World Bank, 2018b). One clue to this might be a function of *place*. Disadvantaged groups attend school based on residence, not choice (Phuaphansawat, 2020). Less advantaged children are therefore affected not only by the variations in learning outcomes *within* schools, but also *between* them. As schools are not identical, there is evidence at the secondary level of a link between residence, educational status of parents, socio-economic group, enrolment choices, and learning outcomes.<sup>215</sup> This is reflected in the low diversity of social

backgrounds and capabilities *within* schools – for example, in Indonesia (OECD, 2019a).

In terms of reading ability, disadvantaged students are more likely to be isolated from advantaged students in the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. In some countries (Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines), this is driven by the separation of private and publicly funded schools.<sup>216</sup> In others (Malaysia, Viet Nam, and Thailand) it is driven by differences between *public* schools (OECD, 2019a).

Improved ASEAN enrolment rates have been built on diversification of education providers, with the private sector accounting for more than 75 percent of pre-primary pupils in Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia and over half of tertiary students in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Indonesia (EdStat, 2020). Although the academic impacts of this are uncertain, private-sector provision may perpetuate social segregation (Bourdieu, 1977), (OECD, 2019b),<sup>217</sup> Social identities form as early as pre-school and continue through school, maturing in universities where future work relationships are formed (Borleffs et al., 2020).

Concerns regarding a child's 'social experience' at school are true for all children, irrespective of ability or background. Parental pressure to perform well at school, almost at the expense of enjoying childhood and friendships, is a key cause of a growing adolescent mental health problem across the ASEAN region and the rest of the world.<sup>218</sup> 'Schools in most of the Member States place great emphasis on academic achievement, perhaps at the expense of the social climate of the school' (WHO, 2017a). With systematic under-reporting of teenage bullying, stress, and suicides, this poses an unseen policy challenge.

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<sup>213</sup> Further examples include the No to Failure Project (The Dyslexia-SpLD trust, 2009) and the Individualised Student Instruction Project in the USA (Connor & Morrison, 2016).

<sup>214</sup> This test used Standard Indonesian (SI) spoken by over 160 million as a first or second language. Many common SI words have multiple syllables, so mastering them early is vital. This may be facilitated by the fact that SI has clear syllable structures. Whether the results would apply in a similar language (such as Malay) is unclear.

<sup>215</sup> Inter-school differences are small in Denmark and Finland, for example, but high in Germany (Borleffs et al., 2020).

<sup>216</sup> There are also major social and performance differences within the private school sector. Other global examples include Chile, the UK, and Hong Kong (OECD, 2019b).

<sup>217</sup> Schools in the Philippines have more social diversity than in Indonesia but lower reading scores (OECD, 2019b).

<sup>218</sup> Mental health status of adolescents in South-East Asia: Evidence for action. New Delhi: World Health Organization, Regional Office for South-East Asia; 2017. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Scholarship programmes through the ASEAN University Network (AUN), can play an important role in addressing social segregation, but only if disadvantaged children can make it that far through the system (Prateepornnarong, 2020). So far, scholarships are limited in number (AUN, 2020). Some public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (such as the University of Philippines) also provide means-tested financial assistance, but these are less available from private HEIs (Symaco & Tee, 2019). Given the importance of the private sector in Filipino tertiary education, there is a high risk of poorer children being excluded.

The complementary strategy is to lift the quality of all teaching institutions through improved quality assurance. Designed as a common regional reference point rather than a prescriptive tool, the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) was piloted in 2017-18 and is due to be rolled out throughout the region (Rosser & Fahmi, 2016; ASEAN, 2019). Malaysia and Singapore are at the forefront of this effort, but countries like Lao PDR are less visible (Feuer & Hornidge, 2015). The AQAF is designed to be flexible, not prescriptive, but there is some reluctance amongst regional standard-setting agencies to allow diversity (Feuer & Hornidge, 2015). The effects as yet remain unclear.

### 3.1.2. How do We Teach?

Learning outcomes depend upon highly trained, motivated, and respected teachers and innovative teaching practices. A key finding in this Outlook is the importance of *people* (teacher recruitment, remuneration, and training); and *process* (teaching styles and methods, including the use of information and communication technologies).

Entry thresholds to the ASEAN teaching profession are comparatively low – particularly in basic education (González & Molina, 2020). According to UN data, a primary teacher in Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, and Myanmar requires only a year 10 or year 11 qualification. Initial teacher training lasts a year in Cambodia and Lao PDR, two in Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand and three in Malaysia and the Philippines (No & Heng, 2017).<sup>219</sup> Most ASEAN countries require secondary teachers to have completed grade 12 plus two years of training, while tertiary teachers train for four years (UNESCO, 2014). A number of ASEAN countries are increasingly requiring a degree qualification, especially beyond lower secondary (TIMSS, 2015; Montrose International Consultants, 2016).<sup>220</sup>

Encouraging the most talented students to become teachers requires higher salaries and recognition or social status attached to the profession (World Bank, 2018b). Somewhat surprisingly, global evidence suggests that entry to the teaching profession should therefore be made harder, not easier. Singapore selects only the brightest of graduate applicants through an entrance exam to be trained at the government-run National Institute of Education (NIE). This is supplemented by a series of attitudinal and skill-based practical tests. By adopting very selective standards of entry to accredited teacher-training institutions and providing bursaries, not only are the better candidates attracted, but their social prestige is raised (González & Molina, 2020).

The quality of initial training is paramount, as it provides a foundation for ongoing learning for children of all abilities (World Bank, 2018b). Thailand and Singapore use external agencies to enforce accreditation standards, but Malaysia and the Philippines do not.

<sup>219</sup> According to TIMSS (2015), all Indonesian teachers (primary to secondary level) must complete a four-year university degree, a teacher certification, and a government competency test.

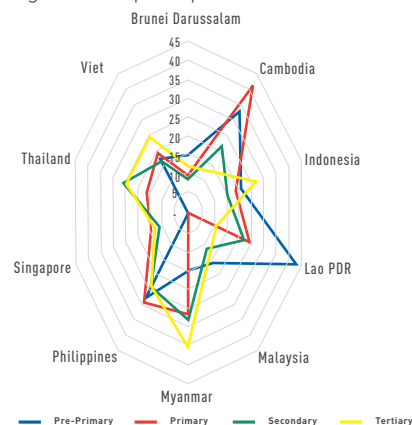
<sup>220</sup> Including Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Viet Nam, and Indonesia

The Southeast Asia Teachers Competency Framework (TCF) outlines the skills expected of teachers in the ASEAN region, but it is not clear yet how this will be accepted by teachers (González & Molina, 2020).<sup>221</sup> Moreover, as most ASEAN teachers are women, such a strategy needs to allow for time and social constraints (Sidebottom et al., 2019).

Most OECD countries require a one to two-year post-training probationary period with the most effective systems providing ongoing mentoring as teachers learn in a workplace environment.<sup>222</sup> Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand impose a mandatory probation period for newly trained teachers, while the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand also use a licensing system (González & Molina, 2020).

As well as being rigorous and legitimate, teaching standards need to be dynamic, especially when class sizes are large.

Figure 3.9 Pupil to qualified teacher ratios, 2016–2018



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020a) data

As Figure 3.9 shows, class sizes are particularly high in basic education in Cambodia and Lao PDR, as well as in tertiary level in Myanmar.

In general, pupil-to-qualified-teacher ratios in the Philippines and Thailand are high compared to Viet Nam and Indonesia (World Bank, 2020e). This suggests a need to distinguish between *qualified* and *trained* teachers (Artuc et al., 2020).<sup>223</sup> Available data shows that pre-school teachers in Brunei Darussalam are qualified, but only 62 percent receive minimum ongoing training. Conversely, pre-school and secondary teachers in Lao PDR are more likely to be trained than qualified. However, the data does not reveal the quality or content of the different approaches (World Bank, 2020e).

Although higher teacher salaries do not solve all problems, they are important, particularly when it comes to comparisons (both absolute and relative) and career pathways. Teachers are poorly paid in Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia, but relatively well paid in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Remuneration in Thailand depends on seniority. Teacher salaries need to be supplemented by well-enforced performance incentives, training and mentoring (Asim et al., 2015; González & Molina, 2020).

Recruitment processes can also present problems in teaching. In Indonesia, for example, higher teacher salaries have failed to overcome absenteeism, limited pedagogical strategies, and poor content knowledge (Huang et al., 2020; Sumarto, 2018). Formal 'tenured' civil servant teaching positions give preference and status to seniority rather than ability. This is not seen as controversial by teachers themselves, since it is an accepted practice and forms part of their group identity. With teacher recruitment centralised at the national level (but split across three ministries), local authorities often rely on contract teachers to fill staff gaps.<sup>224</sup> In some cases, this can be through patronage rather than on the merit of the teacher (Huang et al., 2020).

<sup>221</sup> The ASEAN Education Plan notes the importance of 'Enhancing teachers' competencies [Sub-goal 8] but this ADO was unable to confirm if planned initiatives (exchange week-long programmes; professional development courses; and a network of experts) had been implemented or if their impact had been assessed.

<sup>222</sup> One example is the College-Ready Writers Program (CRWP) in the USA (González & Molina, 2020).

<sup>223</sup> Where 'trained' is the percentage of teachers who received the minimum organized teacher training (pre-service or in-service), 'qualified' is defined as the minimum academic qualifications necessary to teach at a specific level of education in a given country (World Bank, 2020b, p. 2).

<sup>224</sup> Education is governed by 3 ministries (Education; Research Technology and Higher Education; and Religious Affairs) (Dilas et al., 2019), while teachers (as they are considered as civil servants) are also the responsibility of a further two (Finance and Administration) (Huang et al., 2020).

Greater use of digital education tools designed to improve teaching experiences and extend the reach of education is frequently mentioned in ASEAN workplans. The necessity of home learning induced by the Covid-19 pandemic may accelerate the growth of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) already underway in the region. Available evidence seems to focus primarily on tertiary education. For example, the Universitas Terbuka (Indonesia Online University) has more than 500,000 students enrolled (Dilas et al., 2019). Ramkhamhaeng University in Thailand operates at a similar scale, though its reach is global (Michael & Trines, 2018). The popularity of Malaysia's official MOOC (OpenLearning.com) has been enhanced through improvements in the transferability of credits between local and international undergraduate programmes (Kumar & Al-Samarraie, 2018).

Viet Nam encourages teaching institutions to share digitised courses whilst the Thai government's Cyber and UniNet projects enables all HEIs to be linked for research and education (Tatiyakavee, 2020). The extension of access to all levels of education is likely to be particularly important for remote communities, but depends upon internet access (Rizvi, 2018).

The region's technical challenges are discussed at length in the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity (MPAC), but it is unclear how this has been taken into account in the framing of educational strategies in the Education Workplan, or how information and communication technologies (ICTs) will be integrated into pedagogical practices. Use of ICT is a means, not an end itself in education. The successful integration of ICT into education depends on administrative and teaching capabilities of people. The use of technology requires careful pedagogical revisions. It is not a substitute for good teaching practices, and it is not a compensation for bad ones. The failure to integrate ICT carefully into education, as a *part* of every-day learning, has often rendered laptops an ineffective (and expensive) technical fix (Asim et al., 2015).

Technology forms part of a range of reforms in Viet Nam, including: higher teacher qualification thresholds, improved quality assurance mechanisms, a national qualifications framework, and ongoing efforts to improve foreign language and vocational skills (WENR, 2017). However, secondary school drop-out rates remain high and fierce competition for public places results in a number of children being forced to choose private or vocational options (WENR, 2017). The overall outcome of the reforms is favourable, but the benefits from the reforms for the less advantaged is the least obvious. This is particularly important in Viet Nam, because higher learning outcomes have enabled particular pupils, households, and schools to jointly generate improved outcomes (WENR, 2017).

There are no technical or monetary silver bullets in improving education outcomes. In reality, the challenges and gains are all about people (e.g., administrators, parents, teachers, children) and their capabilities, motivations, and aspirations in a form of collective action to improve learning outcomes. This interconnected, people-centred evaluation calls for a socially-embedded capabilities approach to policy – one that recognises that a given set of inputs can have a wide range of outcomes.

### 3.1.3. What do We Learn?

Meaningful metrics matter but for whom must they be meaningful? This section examines **what we learn** through a focus on appropriate content and metrics, analysing **who** this content and metrics are appropriate for.

Education is understood as a multidimensional process of human development – both as an individual and as a member of society. According to UNESCO, these multiple dimensions include learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. A school's curriculum thus needs to develop a common skill-set to promote a sense of social participation and inclusion, while facilitating the learning process at an

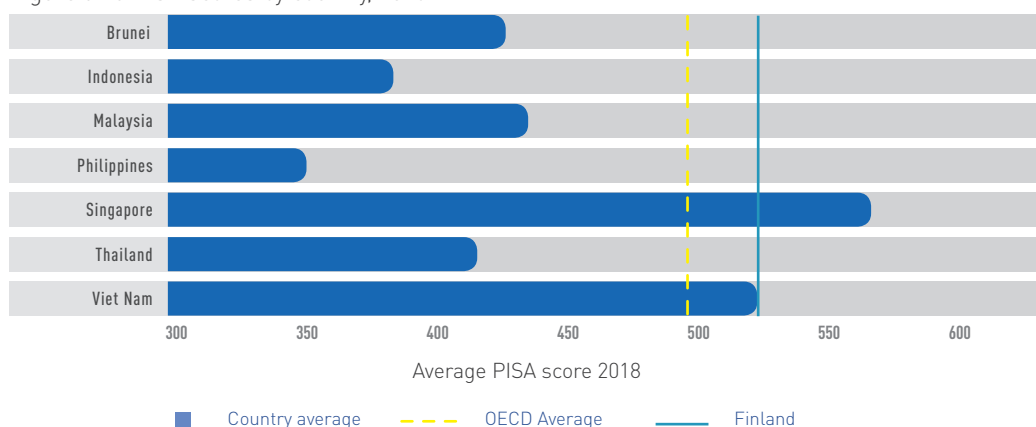
individual student level (González & Carrasco, 2020). Furthermore, school curricula need to be appropriately designed for persons with disabilities, as well as for the 'typical' learner. These individualised education programmes (IEPs) can play an important role in helping develop and foster an inclusive educational system. A non-traditional curriculum that includes greater vocational and experiential education can be more suited to children with disabilities to enhance their skillset and prepare them for the job market (APDC, 2019).

However, educational curricula tend to be uniform social constructions, often reflecting a Euro-centric perspective more than a country's unique cultural history, ethnic diversity, and individual preferences. So-called twenty-first-century skills (cognitive, intra-personal, and inter-personal skills) have long been taught in elite schools, but have only recently extended to the wider populace in the face of labour market demand shifts. While this is to be welcomed, it does not solve all problems. A well-rounded

curriculum will also foster equitable civic values that encompass social justice, equality, and equity. This requires an understanding of the relationship between formal school-based learning and subsequent modes of lifelong learning in formal and informal spaces. There is also a need for contextually relevant measures to assess an ability to use knowledge, not just an ability to acquire it; in short, a socially-embedded capability approach.

Singapore has made progress in reforming its educational outcomes, which now seek to develop a student's self-awareness and confidence, social morals, resilience, and technical skills for the future. This has required the retraining of teachers and the rearrangement of the school day to allow adequate time for group discussions, for example, to develop critical thinking and collaborative skills (González & Carrasco, 2020). Figure 3.10 shows the ASEAN dispersion of learning outcomes as measured by PISA. While ASEAN average performance compared to OECD averages is generally good, the detailed picture is complex.

Figure 3.10 PISA scores by country, 2018



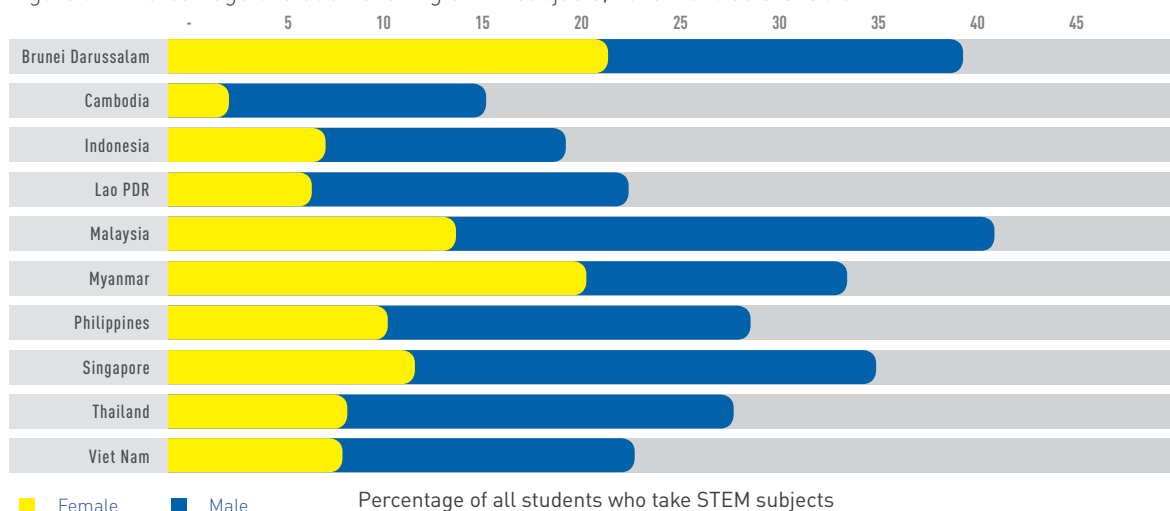
Note: Viet Nam is not yet a full participant.

Source: Authors' based on OECD (2019b) data

When compensating for higher GDP per capita, Malaysian, Thai and Indonesian learning outcomes have been static since about 1970. Fewer than 10 percent of Thai and Indonesian pupils achieve high learning outcomes (Altinok et al., 2018). PISA-D data in Cambodia<sup>225</sup> shows that only 28 percent of 15 year-olds are at school and only 10 percent of those attain a Level 2 in Maths. Even if enrolment was 100 percent, learning outcomes would *still* be poor (Kaffenberger & Pritchett, 2020).

Metrics thus need to be relevant to their context and need to set clear expectations (Unterhalter, 2015). There also has to be agreement on precisely what it is that children are going to learn and on whose voice is heard (McGrath, 2012). In terms of *learning content*, a market-driven approach focuses on economic challenges - most obviously the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). This way of thinking emphasises Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects (Chao & Chao, 2018). Efforts are needed to raise standards in these areas across ASEAN and to build a more inclusive approach, as the following discussion highlights.

Figure 3.11 Percentage of students taking STEM subjects, 2015–2018 as available



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020a) data

As Figure 3.11 shows, on average of 29 percent of ASEAN university graduates took a STEM subject, compared to less than 20 percent of graduates in Cambodia and Indonesia. In Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar, the majority of STEM students were female, but not in other ASEAN member nations. ICTs were chosen by less than 10 percent of students across ASEAN, except in Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines. To boost STEM education Malaysia and Thailand have

granted 'research university' status to several universities to improve their access to funding (bin Abdullah, 2017; Clark, 2014; Michael & Trines, 2018).

Concerns of economic employability have also driven efforts to improve vocational learning in schools. In Indonesia, enrolment into vocational courses is high but quality still needs to be raised to meet the intended aspirations (Box 3.1).

<sup>225</sup> For a small subset of countries who do not take part in the main PISA evaluation process.



### Box 3.1 Vocational education in Indonesia

In Indonesia, nearly 20 percent of secondary school pupils chose Vocational Education (VE) compared with only 6 percent in the Philippines (EdStat, 2020). VE is taught at the upper-secondary level in one of over 14,000 Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMKs). Three-quarters of these are privately owned foundations, but the better resourced state-owned SMKs are perceived to be of higher quality. However, the employability of their graduates is lower than in more general education streams. To address this,

the Teaching Factory (TEFA) education concept is a demand-oriented collaboration between government, schools, and industry. Students gain practical experience as well as seven hours of entrepreneurial classes per week. Although a number of partnerships have been established, state schools cannot retain profits from successful ventures (unlike private schools) and remain plagued by shortages of modern equipment and appropriate teachers. While the government has tried to address the recruitment of industry sector teachers, commercialisation opportunities remain thwarted by contradictory legislation (Amaripuja et al., 2020).



Under the Philippines' k-12 system, students from Grade 10 follow an academic, vocational, sports or arts track but each is expected to learn communication, scientific literacy and critical thinking, mathematical and problem-solving skills, life and career skills, and self and social awareness (DepEd, 2020). One equity concern of this system is the potential to reinforce social divisions by the clustering of lower performing students into lower paying professions (Ozer & Perc, 2020).

On average, women from the ASEAN region are twice as likely to study education, business, or health as they are to study a STEM subject; especially, for example, in Cambodia (World Bank, 2020a). One question is whether these choices reflect barriers on the *supply* side (colleges and universities) or on the *demand* side (the preferences of students or prospective employers). It is useful to reflect on whether 'demand', is driven by students or by prospective employers. While they recognise the importance of technical skills, young people have their own wider learning aspirations. Young people across ASEAN have said that the education system was failing them in terms of creative skills and language skills (WEF, 2019a). A well-considered policy will reflect these different concerns when deciding what will be taught and how learning will be measured. Metrics for measuring the implementation and impacts of an education policy require simplicity, credibility, and flexibility. However, they also need to be relevant for *all* those

involved, including pupils and parents (Unterhalter, 2015). A range of cognitive and non-cognitive skills will be included, as well as some assessment of how these skills are used (Torres, 1999 cited in Unterhalter, 2015).

Metrics like PISA focus only on the academic skills of 15 year olds actually in school and disguise diverse learning outcomes within school (Torres, 1999 cited in Unterhalter, 2015). In 2019 ASEAN began trialling its own programme - the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) - targeted at Grade 5 children (UNICEF, 2019a). Jointly funded by ASEAN, AMS countries, donors and private companies, the collaborative nature of this 7-year process demonstrates ASEAN's convening power and institutional capacity. Key to this has been shared ownership and governance embedded within existing national and regional ASEAN bodies with ongoing technical support from UNICEF. This has also strengthened the accountability and institutional capacity of national assessment systems through training, clear timelines and lines of responsibility.

This collaborative process is the foundation of SEA-PLM's legitimacy. It has facilitated a careful balance of national, regional, and international understandings that seek to assess students' *skills application* and not just *skills acquisition*. SEA-PLM uses broader metrics to try to assess 'global citizenship' - including social values, appreciation of differences and the ability

to collaborate. It also allows assessment in some (but not all) regional languages, not just English. It is too early to evaluate impacts, but SEA-PLM is powerful evidence of ASEAN's ability to develop meaningful metrics and tools on its own terms.

### 3.1.4. Policy Implications

The ASEAN Education Plan is ambitious in scope, but its layout and content do not readily reveal a clear theory of change that underpins it. It is not clear which goals are the priority or how they are interconnected. Some Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are vague, and others conflate inputs with outputs or activities. It is also sometimes unclear how plans across divisions or Pillars are co-ordinated.

To try to unpick these inter-linkages, this chapter has discussed access to and quality of education by asking four inter-related questions: Who do we teach? How do we learn? How do we teach? and What do we learn?

These have been used to highlight a number of ASEAN current and future challenges and to highlight examples of initiatives designed to address them (see Key Findings below). A key policy implication of the multi-dimensional nature of the education problem is the need for more integrated policy designs to focus on the entire school experience for *all* children. Reducing demand-side barriers to school attendance may be deemed a policy success in terms of enrolment, but there is little evidence that these translate into improved learning outcomes or happier school experiences. For both the able child and the less able one, there is increasing evidence that school can have significant detrimental effects on mental well-being that continue into adult life.

Improving the school experience requires more than just more inputs (e.g., books, funding, school buildings). What seems to be

far more important, is the effectiveness with which schools tailor said inputs to pupils' needs through inclusive collaboration between principals, teachers, parents, pupils, the private sector, and local and national government officials. This requires attention to pupils' entire preparedness to learn, including their family environment, as well as ensuring that groups of different backgrounds or abilities are not segregated (Asim et al., 2015; World Bank, 2018b). In essence, this is the adoption of a social lens that appreciates capabilities, motivations, and hopes for all individuals and groups (World Bank, 2018b).

The development of the SEA-PLM framework demonstrates ASEAN's capability to develop meaningful metrics that reflect regional priorities, but this took a considerable amount of time to implement. There is scope to adopt much smaller iterative changes through an experimental approach that relies on effective monitoring and evaluation processes fuelled by up-to-date disaggregated data. There is a wide body of global evidence that suggests that change is most effective when it is gradual and collaborative (Asim et al., 2015).

Such an approach could be assisted through the extension of ASEAN's relationships with international education research. This could encourage a discussion of ideas that work in ASEAN contexts, rather than in Western ones. There is readily available information for policy makers to leverage the experience of others in similar situations. For example, the Teaching and Learning Toolkit developed by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) in the UK and SUMMA in Chile identifies feedback, meta-cognition and self-regulation, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and mastering learning as key characteristics. Each initiative in the EEF/SUMMA toolkit are relatively low-cost, and represent iterative changes to widely accepted teaching practices (González & Molina, 2020). As such, they are more likely to be adopted successfully.



### 3.1.5. Key Findings

1. Who do we teach? A complex web of factors intersect to result in the exclusion of children (e.g., their identity, gender, ethnicity, location, disability, and wealth). The compounding effect of such multiplicities means that they can recur at various points in the educational journey. Thus, simply addressing one component is unlikely to be sufficient in removing exclusionary barriers.
2. How do we learn? Preparedness for learning and the value of the learning experience itself is often overlooked. These outcomes are divided along lines of ability and family wealth.
3. How do we teach? Learning outcomes depend upon highly trained, motivated and respected teachers and innovative teaching practices. Teachers are an important traction point in education systems and can amplify the investments made in other components of the system.
4. What do we learn? Meaningful metrics matter, but 'meaningful' for whom? A capability-based approach cognisant of individual contexts is a crucial consideration, and should be embedded in educational systems to equip children with skill sets that foster equity in educational outcomes.

protection, and social dialogue (Andrieu et al., 2008; Blustein et al., 2016).

Here the focus is on the facilitation of job creation through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for employment and self-employment and on the provision of improved livelihood risk management through social protections.

TVET is seen as the foundation for improved entrepreneurial profitability, labour force productivity, and the reduction of skills bottlenecks accelerated by Climate Change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) (ILO, 2018, Pavalova, 2019). This perspective has encouraged a range of reforms in an effort to replicate global best practices (GIZ, 2019b; The Asia Foundation, 2020). Germany claims that its economic success arises from its VET programmes, but this simplifies a complex picture in which outcomes depend upon the successful integration of education and training in locally specific social contracts (Ansu & Tan, 2012). Medium, Small and Micro-enterprise (MSME) policy relies on a 'conducive business environment' and entrepreneurial capacity building through training and financial inclusion. These presume a 'level playing field' for trainees, and pay little attention to implicit and explicit social constraints upon human livelihoods.

## 3.2 The World of Work

The availability of equitable and secure employment is intrinsically interlinked with well-being, identity, and social cohesion.<sup>226</sup> The ASCC Blueprint's (2016) recognition of the importance of the quality of jobs dovetails with a global agenda most evident in the formulation of Sustainable Development Goal 8 (decent work for all), which includes employment creation, rights at work, social

ASEAN's current demographic profile offers an opportunity to extend its economic success. At the same time, it presents many future employment policy challenges (ASEAN, 2019f). It is not clear, for example, if the current economic model can deliver benefits shared equitably across all social cohorts (ILO, 2018; Frey, 2017; Moktan, 2019). Whether integrated into global value chains or not, ASEAN workers face a 'decent work deficit' – especially those working with limited skills in the 'informal' economy (Blustein et al., 2016).

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<sup>226</sup> See Themes 1 and 4 for further discussion.

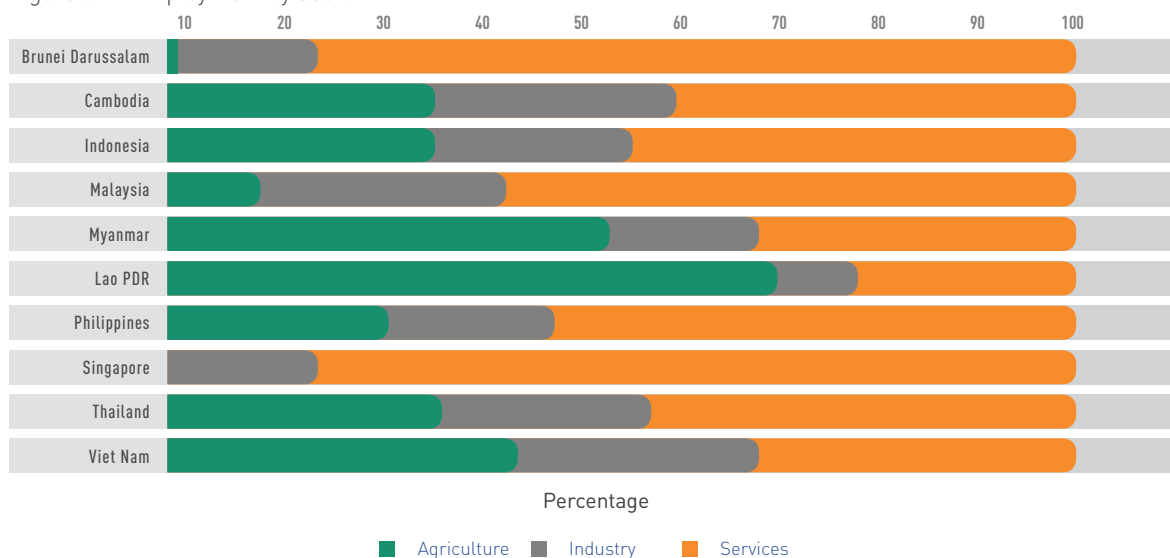
### 3.2.0. Who do We Exclude?

Barriers of exclusion from social protection and training are multiple and intersecting. They reflect all aspects of a person’s identity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, location, disability and wealth. In order to investigate these issues, this chapter asks three inter-related questions: Who we do exclude? How do we include? What skills do we need?

ASEAN labour markets are fractured along numerous fault lines, including informality,

sector, region, skill, gender, migrant status, ethnicity, occupation, age and education. These exclude less advantaged groups from the labour force, and also frame the terms on which people are included (Sidebottom et al., 2019). While ASEAN’s economic transition from agriculture is underway; the benefits are not being shared equitably across or within countries. Agriculture remains a significant employer in many ASEAN member states (AMS) (Figure 3.12) and several marginalised groups remain trapped in informal vulnerable livelihoods (ILOStat, 2020).

Figure 3.12 Employment by sector



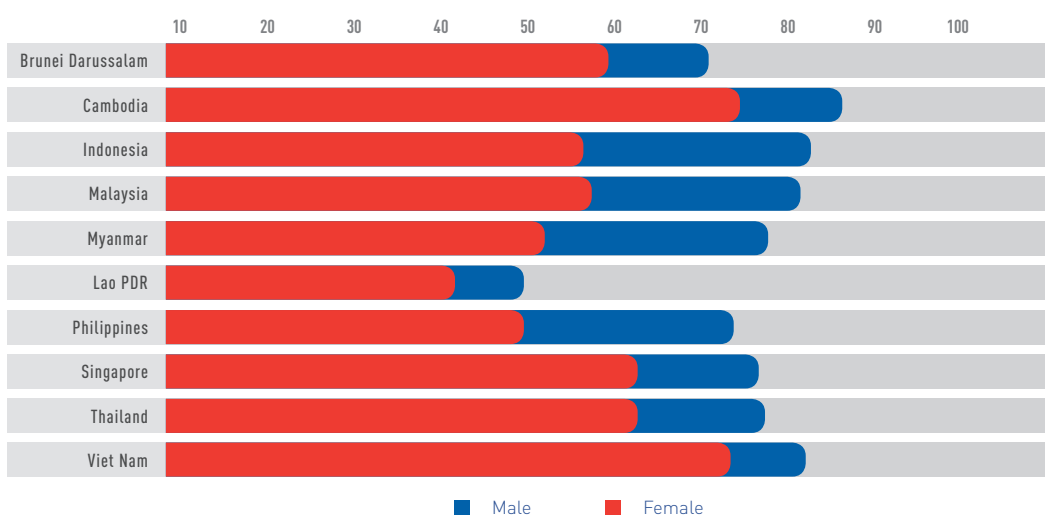
Source: Authors’ based on ILOStat (2020)

Employment and entrepreneurial opportunities are often segregated horizontally (by sector) or vertically (by activity), and not just by skill but by individual aspirations or social status (Sidebottom et al., 2019).<sup>227</sup> On average, informality accounts for 79 percent of ASEAN workers (Nguyen & Cunha, 2019) but ranges from 37 percent in Thailand to over 90 percent in Cambodia (ASEAN, 2019i). Formal and informal relations can coexist in old sectors like textiles or new ones, like the ‘gig’ or ‘platform economy’ (Plank et al., 2014). As ‘gig’ work is unregulated, workers often have no secure contract or social protection (Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2016; Nguyen & Cunha, 2019).

<sup>227</sup> This links directly to Theme 1: Identity. People’s occupational choice and their identity are mutually constitutive.

Because of practical and conceptual difficulties, statistics on informal employment do not always include agriculture or domestic work (ASEAN, 2019i).<sup>228</sup> The exclusion of agriculture from these statistics is a problem that has been recognised (Frosch & Schimanski, 2019). However, there is no resolution to the problem of including household work, which has implications for recognising the burden of domestic work carried out by women.

Figure 3.13 Labour force participation, male and female



Source: Authors' based on World Bank (2020b) data

Although female participation in the ASEAN region is higher than in South Asia or the Middle East, it remains far below that of men (Figure 3.13) (Sidebottom et al., 2019).<sup>229</sup> Women are concentrated in primary sectors, low-skilled activities and various forms of informal or self-employment. They work in vulnerable conditions as homeworkers, domestic workers, casual workers or contributing family workers (Nguyen & Landini, 2020). Their choice sets are constrained by low capital and geographic mobility; a lack of time, skills or work experience; social and workplace prejudice; poor access to social services; and weak social representation (Kabeer, 2012).

In Viet Nam, for example, females account for 80 percent of garment sector jobs, two-thirds of informal jobs, and are concentrated also in food processing, services, and agriculture (especially

if they are uneducated or are migrants) (An & Kazuyo, 2018). Persons with disabilities are far less likely to have a job at all (Baskaran, 2020).

When viewed through an *economic* lens, high labour force participation, a large MSME sector, and low unemployment suggest labour market efficiency and a good supply of choices. When viewed through a *social* lens, the same factors suggest a *lack* of choice driven by time poverty and the absence of social safety nets. Workers survive through a portfolio of jobs, including hired work, unpaid family labour, and various forms of self-employment (Singh, 2000). Informality is therefore the norm, not a transient 'residual' (McGrath et al., 1995). Attempts to 'formalise the informal' fail to acknowledge the durability, nature, or origins of informal work. Informality presents lower barriers to entry in terms of skills, technology,

<sup>228</sup> There is no generally accepted definition of agricultural informal employment, especially for own-account workers, employers, and members of producers' cooperatives. The International Conference for Labour Statisticians (ICLS) leaves it to individual countries to decide how to treat workers in agriculture (ASEAN, 2019i).  
<sup>229</sup> Labour force participation is defined as the proportion of the population ages 15 and older considered to be economically active (World Bank, 2020b). Therefore, a significant amount of 'work effort' (including subsistence labour and household chores) are omitted. In South Asia and the Middle East, female participation is below 30%.

capital, and social protection (Nguyen & Cunha, 2019).<sup>230</sup> A social understanding is based on analysis of the constrained choices of disadvantaged social groups.

The choices available to disadvantaged workers form an interactive web of conversion factors that constrain the ability of those informal workers to enhance their capabilities and realise desirable outcomes.<sup>231</sup> This web traps vulnerable groups with limited capacity to manage livelihood risks either through skill upgrading or migration. Most intra-ASEAN migrants are poorly educated and restricted to unskilled informal jobs with limited opportunity for training (Testaverde et al., 2017; UN Women & ASEAN Secretariat, 2017; Oliver, 2018). For example, internal migrants in Lao PDR from the northern upland provinces tend to work informally in construction (men) or domestic, hospitality or sex work (women) – rendering them vulnerable to exploitation (Hickey & du Toit, 2007; Singh, 2011). Yet, those unable to migrate are often the very poorest.

Due to age or disability, rural workers may be unable to undertake labour-intensive agricultural work, so they rely on remittances from family members (UNESCO et al., 2017). Restricted mobility makes rural workers twice as likely to be trapped in informal employment with no social protection (Bonnet et al., 2019; Nguyen & Cunha, 2019). Rural women, in particular, face heightened risks of income losses due to shocks from outside, like the Covid-19 pandemic (FAO, 2020). Their mobility is also restricted by a number of social and familial constraints. Female choices are often circumscribed by formal laws and informal social customs (North, 1990). These generate

implicit or explicit gender bias in terms of inheritance rights, 'socially acceptable' jobs, and lack of family support (Tanwir & Sidebottom, 2019; Teoh, 2014).<sup>232</sup>

These restrictions on women, and the continued burden of household work, mean that self-employment is the only economic option available to women. ASEAN female self-employment<sup>233</sup> ranges from 9 percent in Brunei Darussalam to 86 percent in Lao PDR (ILOStat, 2020). However, this current predominance of informal, vulnerable, self-employment without social protection, cannot be regarded as 'inclusive'; nor is it truly representative of 'entrepreneurship' or 'empowerment' for women.

Estimates of female business ownership range from below 30 percent in Malaysia, Viet Nam and Indonesia to above 50 percent in Lao PDR, Cambodia and the Philippines (OECD, 2017b). In most AMS (especially Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR), women are more likely to be contributing family workers (CFWs) than employers. They are potentially subject to poor work conditions with no access to training or social protection (ILOStat, 2020) (Figure 3.14). These female, informal, and sole proprietorship businesses focus on survival in low growth sectors, rather than innovation and growth (Langevang & Gough, 2012).

Prior to the crisis, young people globally were already three times more likely to be unemployed compared to adults. Additionally, according to the ILO (2020, p. 8), during the pandemic crisis, youth experience the loss of working hours in a different way than adults: youth are more likely to experience outright job loss than temporary job suspension.<sup>234</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Employees with no employer contribution to social protection schemes are classified as informal. Other aspects (including skills provision) are discussed in Themes 3 and 4.

<sup>231</sup> See Capability Approach in Introduction.

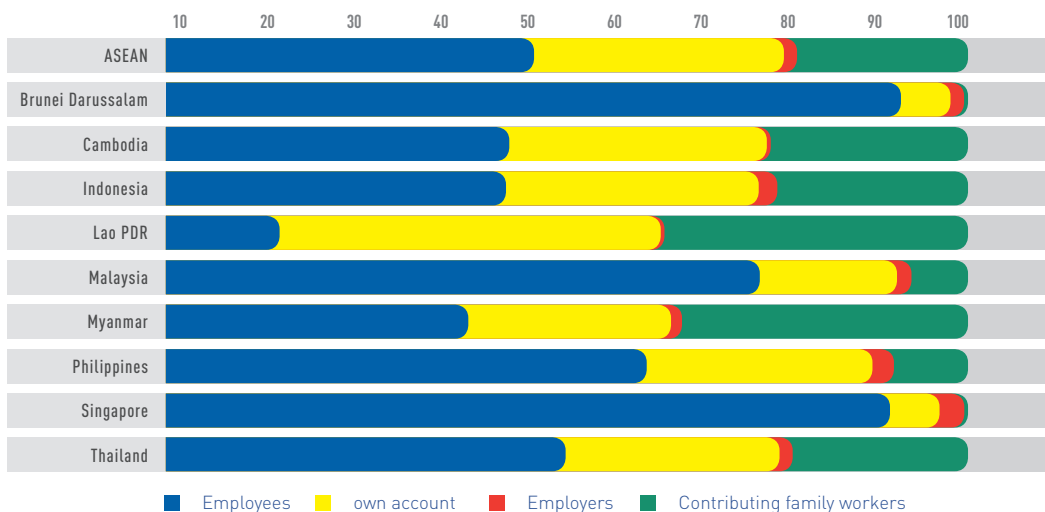
<sup>232</sup> In some cases, religious codes override legal guarantees of female inheritance rights (ERIA, 2019).

<sup>233</sup> Self-employment is defined by the ILO as contributing family workers (CFW); own account workers (OAW) [sole proprietors with no employees]; and employers.

<sup>234</sup> Self-employment is defined by the ILO as contributing family workers (CFW); own account workers (OAW) [sole proprietors with no employees]; and employers.

The promotion of the ‘spirit of entrepreneurship’ (especially for females and youth) through several ASEAN policy declarations has to be viewed in this context.

Figure 3.14 Female participation by type



Source: Authors’ based on ILOStat (2020) data

Ongoing economic development and the forthcoming 4IR will create and destroy some jobs and change the skill requirements of others (ADB, 2007). Most job losses in Viet Nam, for example, are forecast to be in agriculture. This will have a disproportionate effect on older, less educated, and unskilled or semi-skilled workers in informal rural economies. Although displacement effects (as a percentage of the workforce) will be larger in Singapore, Viet Nam has a far lower *adaptive capacity* (CISCO, 2018).

ASEAN policy declarations suggest there is some awareness of these distributive effects (Paryono, 2020; Scholz & Cunha, 2020). Ensuring equitable access to social protection and skills training will require a deeper understanding of the *multiple* monetary and non-monetary constraints faced by disadvantaged households, including location, gender, migrant status, age, and disability (McKenzie & Woodruff, 2014). These constraints (in isolation or combination) may form a barrier to inclusion. A policy focus on one social group or one social marker may misdiagnose the underlying problem or prejudice the opportunities of others.

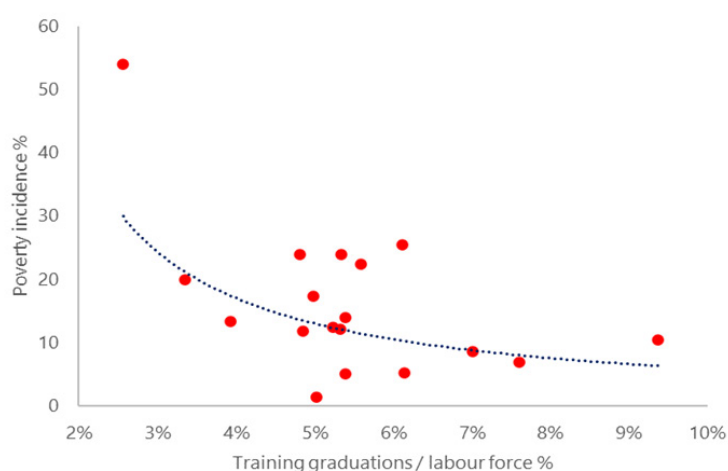
**Location:** There are few well-paid jobs in rural areas, so there is little incentive for training due to the high ‘wage penalty’ for overqualification (Sakamoto & Sung, 2018, p. 405). This imposes a ceiling on demand for training in rural areas. There is more poverty in rural areas than in urban areas in the ASEAN region, ranging from 1.8 times more in Indonesia and Thailand to over 5 times more in Malaysia (Economic Planning Unit, 2016). Rural exclusion from skills development appears to be recognised in the SLOM-WG plan but is less evident in others.

However, basing policy design on high level rural-urban disparities is too simplistic. Within rural areas there are wide variations in livelihood strategies and access to training between farmers, as well as between farm and non-farm employment (De Mel et al., 2014; Vorley et al., 2015). Food processing in Thailand and Indonesia and textile manufacturing in Cambodia and Viet Nam account for a significant share of low skilled rural employment but offer few opportunities for training (Huynh, 2018). Indonesia’s Vocational Village Programme offers community-centred vocational and entrepreneurial training (Hanemann & McKay,

2015; Mulyana et al., 2016) but village provision does not guarantee inclusion for every resident. In Lao PDR, Chea & Huijsmans (2018) find that training programmes are accessible only to the rural elite.

TESDA’s Community-Based Training (CBT) programme enrolls more than 1,000,000 trainees per year (TESDA, 2020b) but may exclude those without a secondary school certificate or unable to afford the costs of training (Punongbayan, 2018).

Figure 3.15 Training graduations as a percentage of the labour force compared with regional poverty incidence, 2017



Source: Authors’ based on data from Philippine Statistical Authority (2020) and TESDA (2020b)

As Figure 3.15 shows, training graduations appear to be lower just where they are needed most – in the poorest areas (TESDA, 2020b). With jobs abroad or with foreign companies in the Philippines requiring secondary or vocational qualifications, employment options of the poorest are often limited (Punongbayan, 2018).

Rural-urban disparities in terms of income, education, health care and social services have worsened over time (Huynh, 2018). Skill levels tend to be lower in rural areas and there is a lack of infrastructure (GIZ, 2019a). While informality exists in both urban and rural areas, the choices available to those based in rural areas are likely to be more limited. In the absence of formal TVET, rural trainees are reliant upon informal provision which tends to follow Arrow’s (1962)

mode of ‘learning by doing’, instead of a structured curriculum. Training may take the form of an informal apprenticeship, where access often depends upon *social networks* and completion relies on the subjective assessment evidenced by the trainer’s *social reputation*, not certification (Singh, 2000)

**Gender:** Reliance on social networks creates an implicit gender bias, as women often lack the particular social ties required, or have the freedom to use them. Explicit or implicit gender bias limits female agency either by restricting individual choices or by others making those choices on her behalf (Kabeer, 2005). Gender bias manifests itself through visible and invisible presumptions on what types of work are suitable and what women should be paid (if anything).

Gender Inequality rankings do not match Human Development rankings (UNDP, 2019a). The Philippines and Lao PDR score well on gender economic equality but Singapore scores relatively poorly (WEF, 2020). Addressing these biases requires behavioural change underpinned by effectively enforced statutes. Choices reflect political priority, not economic circumstance. In several AMS, gender-sensitive national development plans (NDP), MSME development plans and legislation either do not exist or cross-reference to each-other (OECD & ERIA, 2018). Cambodia's NDP outlines specific measures to improve female economic empowerment but does not have an SME law. Lao PDR targets gender equality in labour markets, but only Viet Nam and the Philippines explicitly mention women in their SME strategies. Only four have gender equality laws and only four practice active female targeting (OECD, 2017b).<sup>235</sup>

There are numerous ASEAN institutions offering support for female entrepreneurs<sup>236</sup> (OECD, 2017b) but there is little systematic evidence of their inter-relationships or impact. There is potentially a critical role to be played here by women's business associations (WBAs) (such as the Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC)) to co-ordinate information and

training services provided through dedicated 'Women Entrepreneurship Centres'. Although their impact is undocumented, examples of these include US AID's 'WECREATE' Women Entrepreneurs Centres and Cambodia's Women's Development Centres (OECD, 2017b). To widen female networks to a regional level, the ASEAN Women's Entrepreneurship Network (AWEN) was launched in 2014. However, it is unclear to what degree this has successfully engaged with the informal sector or with government (OECD, 2017b).

Improving female access to training requires government co-ordination. Addressing female time-poverty may require simple gender specific measures in the Education or Health, not Labour department. Improved access to childcare, for example, benefits both parent (in terms of employment) and the child (in terms of education) (Sidebottom et al., 2019). In recognition of this, Indonesia's Ministry of National Education (MONE) subsidises pre-school providers (ERIA, 2012). However, piecemeal approaches may address symptoms, not causes (Tanwir & Sidebottom, 2019).

The Philippines' gender mainstreaming approach (Box 3.2) provides for distinct budget line items for female SMEs (OECD, 2017b).



### Box 3.2 Gender mainstreaming in the Philippines

The gender mainstreaming approach in the Philippines is founded on cross-government co-ordination rooted in the 2009 Magna Carta of Women and the 2013 'Go Negosyo Act'. These mandate private and public institutions to improve female access to training, finance, and state procurement contracts. Additionally, the Women's Empowerment, Development, and Gender Equality (WEDGE) and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED) plans address female informal SMEs. The GREAT Women Project also spearheads the mainstreaming of gender across departments. The initiative provides for effective monitoring and evaluation of programmes through the collection of gender disaggregated data, thereby facilitating effective, participatory, and gender sensitive policy design (ERIA, 2019).

TESDA governs a network of over 4,000 (mainly private) training providers who offer Institutions Based Learning (IBL), Enterprise Based Learning (EBL), and Community Based Learning (CBT) from NGOs and local governments (ILO, 2019a). Attempts to replicate the German dual system have largely failed, with EBL accounting for only 3 percent of enrolments. By contrast IBL is 46 percent and CBT is 51 percent (TESDA, 2020b). While the 54 percent female share of enrolment suggests the fulfilment of the gender mainstreaming principles of the Magna Carta for Women (MCW), courses are only open to secondary school graduates. Females also tend to engage more in less regulated CBT than IBL, and favour traditional 'feminised' occupations such as garments, social services, tourism, and food processing (ILO, 2019a).



<sup>235</sup> Lao PDR, Viet Nam, the Philippines, and Thailand (ERIA, 2019).

<sup>236</sup> Malaysian Women Innovation Academy; the Philippines Franchising Regional Enterprises for Women project; and the Mekong Women's Entrepreneurship Challenge (ERIA, n.d.).

This has helped facilitate a reduction in *explicit* gender bias in enrolments, but post-training employment data indicates continued *implicit* bias in terms of occupational choices. This may reflect prevailing social norms which require behavioural, not legal change. As witnessed in India, Korea and Germany, certain sectors become informally associated with low skilled female labour (Sidebottom & Fennell, 2019). As Dahlquist (2018, p.316), writes “While potentially transformative, skills training reinforces occupational segregation”.

**Migrants:** Gender is one of many social identity markers that intersect in tandem, rather than in isolation.<sup>237</sup> For example, female migrants from Myanmar were systematically underpaid in the Thai seafood processing industry but Thai women were not (Dahlquist, 2018). AMS have shown commitment to migrant workers’ rights under the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers but their mobility is subject to their ability to fulfil requirements of Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) in accordance with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) (UN Women, 2015). Regional co-ordination may facilitate movement of *skilled* labour but does little for the *unskilled* (Rother, 2020)<sup>238</sup>.

One survey showed that low skilled migrants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam were more likely to receive basic on-the-job training in *host* countries but most Cambodians received no training at all (Harkins et al., 2017). Only the Philippines seems to offer training to its own migrants. Emigrants receive training before departure but this is largely information on their work rights, not skills training. TESDA also provide Balik Pinay! Balik Hanapbuhay training for returning migrants.

The point to stress here is that measures to address barriers to training or employment cannot always be attributed to a specific focus

(such as gender) but rather an appreciation of generic structural barriers to learning and work most pertinent to the disadvantaged (e.g., conditions of work, modes of learning, personal security, flexible hours and child care (Sidebottom & Fennell, 2019).

**Age:** For example, ASEAN TVET initiatives overwhelmingly focus on youth, rather than older generations. Moreover, the ‘youth’ label homogenises people of different ages, marital states and places to make presumptions about motivations and ambitions that dovetail with economic orthodoxy (Sumberg et al., 2012). Although the common perception is that youths are more ‘tech-savvy’ due to their familiarity and emancipation derived from social media, male youths are at the centre of the social changes driving migration. Yet, their individual narratives remain silent (Holmarsdottir & Dupuy, 2017). This reinforces the unseen challenge discussed in the World of Learning – adolescent males are being forgotten.

The World Economic Forum’s 2019 online survey of 56,000 youths in six ASEAN countries<sup>239</sup> voiced a number of the psychological motivations behind youth employment choices that challenge conventional wisdom. Survey respondents showed awareness that practical work-based training was imperative in the digital age, and that expanding individual capabilities and personal well-being were key drivers of occupational choice. They favoured formal employment in multinationals (where training is available) and start-up enterprises in the hi-tech arena (which offered a sense of status and identity), but not MSMEs in traditional sectors (as these offered neither) (WEF, 2019a).

In ASEAN there are many public and private initiatives to promote youthful enterprise. Evidence of the incorporation of youthful ambitions, assistance to non-tech sectors and robust over-arching holistic strategies are harder to find. One exception is the Business

<sup>237</sup> See Theme 1: Multiple Identities.

<sup>238</sup> There is growing evidence that this constitutes the bulk of intra-ASEAN migration (UN Women & ASEAN Secretariat, 2017).

<sup>239</sup> Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam (WEF, 2019a)



Information Centre (BIC) in Cambodia<sup>240</sup>. BIC is an online information platform shared by female and youth entrepreneurs who face similar issues, so the consolidation of resources was rational (OECD & ERIA, 2018). Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia appear to have some form of dedicated youth entrepreneurship strategy although Singapore does not<sup>241</sup>. As the co-existence of lists of projects and strategies is not always readily apparent elsewhere, there is a high degree of duplication and a low degree of systematic monitoring and evaluation across ministries (OECD & ERIA, 2018).

ASEAN's maturing demographic profile, suggests that policy emphasis on young entrepreneurs, should not come at the expense of older generations (ASEAN, 2019). Technological change will impact workers in mid-career, not just those transitioning from school to work. This is particularly important in Singapore, Viet Nam and Thailand whose populations are rapidly ageing or in countries where social protection is weak. In Malaysia, for example, there are few opportunities for adult retraining (Song et al., 2016). Older women in Singapore and the Philippines are increasingly vulnerable to poverty as they have insufficient personal savings or state social protection (Ko, 2018; Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020b). In the Philippines and Thailand 40 percent of people aged between 60 and 64 continue to work. In Viet Nam it is as high as 70 percent (Knodel et al., 2015) but they are concentrated in informal or unpaid occupations where they remain largely invisible to the TVET and social protection system.

Governments are slowly realising the need for a life-long learning that incorporates older workers, not just school leavers.<sup>242</sup> This will require coordination across multiple

stakeholders and poses significant challenges (The Asia Foundation, 2020). Efforts to address these challenges may include the use of online MOOCs and community learning centres (The Asia Foundation, 2020).<sup>243</sup> One Singaporean scheme (SkillsFutre) succeeded in training a large number of over 50 year olds in 2016, but beyond this scheme older people are under-represented in training (Barthel et al., 2018).

This may be a result of self-deselection. That is, those who have had a poor previous educational or training experience are less likely to retrain later in life. Early life exclusion is self-reinforcing over time (Government Office for Science, 2017a). This reluctance can also be influenced by experiences at work. In Singapore, there are still instances of recruitment discrimination and a failure to adjust work practices to suit the capabilities of older people and time schedules. Behavioural change from employers and fellow employees will also be required (Ko, 2018).

**Disability:** The pertinence of ageing comes even more starkly into focus when another layer of disadvantage is added – that of disability. Persons living with disability of any age are far more likely to be unemployed than their able-bodied peers (especially if they are women). Perceived barriers to their inclusion are noted in a number of ASEAN documents, including the ASSC Blueprint (ASSC, 2016) and the Master Plan on Persons with Disabilities (ASEAN, 2016h).

Being disabled affects an individual's capabilities and social perceptions of them. Persons with disabilities tend to have poorer health, lower educational access and attainment; and lower levels of economic participation. For example, a recent study shows that there are limited employment opportunities in the ASEAN region for autistic people (APDC, 2019). These are the

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<sup>240</sup> Established by the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia (YEAC), in partnership with the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association, Cambodia Chamber of Commerce and Mekong Business Initiative.

<sup>241</sup> Neither does Singapore have an SME strategy for women (ERIA, 2019).

<sup>242</sup> Lifelong learning refers to the idea that the portfolio of personal skills changes over time and there is a need for a learning ecosystem that supports learning opportunities for individuals of all (ILO, 2019c).

<sup>243</sup> A national online course platform called Thai MOOC was developed in 2017 through a partnership between the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education.

conversion factors that inhibit their potential capabilities.<sup>244</sup> However, like youth and gender, 'persons with disabilities' is a misleading homogenising label. Not all disabilities are visible or physical. Intellectual, developmental, and psychosocial disabilities are also relevant. Depending upon the age of a person, or the degree of social support available to them, a given disability can be more or less disabling. 'Disability' is therefore a time-bound 'social label' that needs to be understood more as a relative continuum, rather than as one that is absolute or distinctly delineated (Baskaran, 2020).

Depending upon which methodology is adopted, the number of persons with disabilities in the ASEAN region could already exceed 100 million. Current official national estimates range from just 1 percent in Brunei Darussalam to 8.6 percent in Indonesia<sup>245</sup>. As the ASEAN population ages, this incidence of disability will increase<sup>246</sup>.

Combined, ageing and disability represent a substantial unseen challenge in terms of employment, training and social protection. Nearly half of all disabled people in Thailand and Indonesia are elderly (Baskaran, 2020). As women tend to live longer, this also exhibits a gender dimension.<sup>247</sup> Due to interrupted or informal careers, poor access to social support, and inhibited property rights, older women are more likely to live in poverty. They therefore face multiple layers of disadvantage – gender, disability, poverty, age, and perhaps even location. To address each independently misdiagnoses the problem.

Holistic ASEAN efforts that focus on the needs and capabilities of individuals are only at a nascent stage. There have been calls to develop training courses and vocational education programmes aimed at providing training to persons with disabilities, especially those with autism. However, progress on the ground is far more limited (APDC, 2019). Cambodia offers tax incentives to employ persons with disabilities. Thailand has a job matching hotline, and Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia are taking measures to address the access of persons with disabilities to finance and training. The lack of progress on inclusive social entrepreneurship is particularly apparent for persons with disabilities (OECD & ERIA, 2018). The government has taken multiple policy measures in Singapore to improve the employability and opportunities available to persons with disabilities such as the establishment of SG Enable in 2013. It works with other agencies to provide an assessment of needs and readiness of persons with disabilities for employment (APDC, 2019). The focus of policies towards including persons with disabilities tends to be on businesses that may *employ*, instead of businesses *owned* by them.

The ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (MPWDS) recognises the need for a comprehensive policy approach but fails to address this potential significant under-reporting, or to pinpoint specific reasons for the lack of policy progress (Baskaran, 2020). Only four ASEAN countries (Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand) have developed a strategic approach but even here budget allocations are low and training provision and evaluation are weak (OECD & ERIA, 2018; Baskaran, 2020).

<sup>244</sup> See Introduction Capability Approach.

<sup>245</sup> According to the WHO, the UN ESCAP, national estimates as a percentage of the population of disability are: Brunei Darussalam (1.1); Lao PDR (1.0); the Philippines (1.5); Cambodia (2.1); Malaysia (1.3); Singapore (3.0); Viet Nam (7.8); Indonesia (8.6); Myanmar (2.3); and Thailand (2.2). (Baskaran, 2020)

<sup>246</sup> Age-related disabilities include sight and hearing impairments; musculoskeletal diseases; and mental disorders, such as Alzheimer's (Baskaran, 2020).

<sup>247</sup> In Brunei Darussalam and Viet Nam, women account for nearly 70 percent of the population aged 80+ (Baskaran, 2020).

### 3.2.1. How do We Include?

**Terms of inclusion:** The impact of training programmes is mediated by multiple factors. In the absence of decent work opportunities, upskilling does not translate to access to social protection. Decent Work requires people to be given the opportunity to improve their capabilities and to mitigate livelihood risks through skills training and social protection. This section firstly focuses on ASEAN approaches to the skills challenge, before examining the broader relationship between work and society through a discussion of Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR), social enterprise, and social protection.

**Skills challenge:** Post-school training models can be broadly categorised into class based learning (CBL), work based learning (WBL), and community based training (CBT) (Sidebottom & Fennell, 2019).<sup>248</sup> While WBL and CBT tend to give more favourable results, global evidence of the inclusive impact of TVET models as a whole is very varied (McKenzie, 2017). Contextual contingencies include prior skill levels, location and duration, training content and language, labour market conditions, and personal safety and childcare (Escudero et al., 2019). Many address *barriers to participation* but not necessarily *barriers to impact* (Chinen et al., 2018; Cho & Honorati, 2014).

**CBL:** Some CBL programmes appear to show favourable outcomes in terms of self-confidence or employability for marginalised groups (La Porta & Shleifer, 2014). However, these tend to address the failings of a country's poverty alleviation mechanisms or education system more than realising skills 'excellence' (ILO, 2016b). Other cases suggest that a post-training job placement provides non-cognitive skills and a chance for employers to see potential recruits on site.<sup>249</sup> Here, the emphasis is on employability rather than skilling, *per se*.

In general, class-based enterprise training programmes tend to be shorter than those focused on employment. They also do not offer the same degree of post-training support and differ widely in quality and content (ILO, 2018a).

The Philippines offers a wide range of entrepreneurship tertiary qualifications co-ordinated under 'Tara Na, Negosyo Na', while Indonesia provides internships as part of its vocational training programme. Thailand and Singapore also appear to have made progress in entrepreneurial education, but it is neither fully integrated nor mandatory. The rationale and impact of these different strategies are unclear. Only five AMS use background studies to inform programme design and robust monitoring, and evaluation procedures remain under-developed (OECD & ERIA, 2018).<sup>250</sup>

There is little robust global evidence that enterprise training facilitates growth of existing businesses, and only weak evidence that it facilitates the establishment of new ones (McKenzie & Woodruff, 2014). For example, the International Labour Organisation's widely adopted Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme offers short-term business training. However, one randomised control trial (RCT) found only short-term changes in entrepreneurial behaviour (De Mel et al., 2014). This echoes the findings of several studies which conclude that enterprise training may increase the likelihood of *starting* a new business with little effect on its likely *survival* (Valdivia, 2015). It also suggests that the impact of introducing entrepreneurial education may have limited impact in isolation. Evidence from Tunisia shows that entrepreneurship is not deemed a 'socially acceptable' female career especially in rural areas, thereby rendering its introduction to university curricula effectively impotent (Mansuy & Werquin, 2015; Mouelhi & Goaid, 2017).

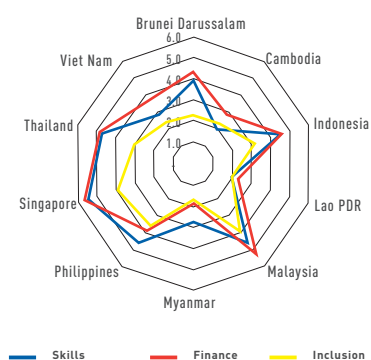
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<sup>248</sup> Lecture based learning usually includes theoretical rather than practical elements of skilling. Remote learning using ICT might be included here, and may include post-training job placement.

<sup>249</sup> For example, the Peruvian Pro-Joven co-ordinated and funded by an autonomous unit within the Ministry of Labour and Social Promotion but outsources training to a network of training institutions (Entidad de Capacitaciones [ECAPs]) (Chinen et al., 2018; Rosas-Shady, 2006).

<sup>250</sup> Only Malaysia has an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process (OECD & ERIA, 2018).

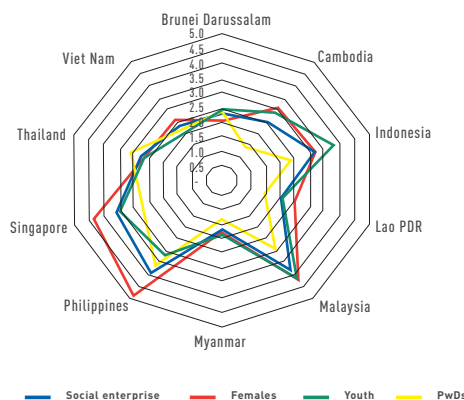
The SME Action Plan 2016-25 produces a useful SME Policy Index which evaluates AMS enterprise policy using 8 dimensions (OECD & ERIA, 2018).<sup>251</sup> The three dimensions that have been focussed on in this analysis are: Finance; Skills; and Inclusion.<sup>252</sup> The report highlights a degree of dispersion between countries and dimensions (Figures 3.16 and 3.17).

Figure 3.16 Three dimensions of enterprise



Source: Authors' based on OECD & ERIA (2018)

Figure 3.17 Four dimensions of inclusion



Source: Authors' based on OECD & ERIA (2018)

Even countries that have made progress in finance and skills (Singapore and Thailand), remain at the early stages with inclusion. Only Malaysia appears to have made progress across all three indicators. With the exception of Cambodia and Philippines, the Inclusion score is the lowest performing category in 8 out of 10 AMS (OECD & ERIA, 2018).

The OECD SME policy index (OECD & ERIA, 2018) shows that the impact on particular social groups varies by country. The Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia have made the most progress overall but most countries score poorly on inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Philippines appears to have made the most progress on social enterprise, persons with disabilities, and on female inclusion but less so on youth. Of the richer countries, Brunei Darussalam and Thailand score poorly on most metrics. All countries seem more able to design programmes than they can implement and evaluate them (OECD & ERIA, 2018). There is no analysis of inclusion of migrants or older social groups.

A second useful output of the SME Action plan is the OECD's "Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship in ASEAN, "Towards increasing women's participation in economic activity" (OECD, 2017a). This report was used for this Outlook to generate a policy 'heatmap' identifying gender specific areas of entrepreneurial inclusion (Table 3.1).<sup>253</sup> This is a simple policy tool to help prioritise across countries, initiatives and departments.

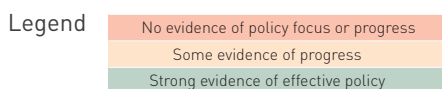
<sup>251</sup> The eight dimensions examined in the OECD study were (i) Productivity, technology and innovation; (ii) Greening SMEs; (iii) Access to finance; (iv) Access to markets and internationalisation; (v) Institutional framework; (vi) Legislation, regulations and tax; (vii) Entrepreneurial education and skills; (viii) Social Enterprises and Inclusive Entrepreneurship, to analyse inclusive practices.

<sup>252</sup> The other 5 are Innovation; Greening; Market access; Institutional framework; and legislation. All 8 dovetail with 5 target areas in the AEC's SME Action Plan 2016-25. Each is given a score 0-6 based on a periodic survey, refined to reflect the degree of activity in each and weighted in accordance with a multi-stakeholder working group review (ERIA, 2019).

<sup>253</sup> Red - little progress; orange - some progress; and green means adequate measures in place.

Table 3.1: Female entrepreneurial heatmap

Target area		Initiative	Brunei	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam
1	Policy making	Gender mainstreaming	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Green
		SME plan gender targeting	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
2	Formal networks & dialogue	Government focal point for WED	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
		Public-private dialogue	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
		Female business associations	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange
3	Access to finance	Microfinance programmes	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green
		Commercial Bank lending	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
		Government loans	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
4	Capacity building	Business Development centres	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
		Business Incubators	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange
		Entrepreneurship training	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green
		Counselling and mentoring	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
5	Market access	Digital training	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange
		Export promotion	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green
		Public procurement	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
		Supply chain development	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	



Source: Authors' interpretation of OECD (2017)

WBL models provide class and work-based employment training as part of a permanent job, rather than as a precursor to it (OECD & ERIA, 2018). While the German dual apprenticeship system is often praised in this regard, it does very little to address barriers to female occupational mobility (Haasler & Gottschall, 2015). Likewise, the Japanese and Korean systems score poorly in terms of inclusion as they exclude part-time workers (mainly women and the less educated) (So, 2018). Singapore's co-ordinated matrix of sectoral training clusters excludes occupations (such as household work and construction) usually reserved for unskilled migrants (Leggett et al., 2013).

The English apprenticeship system may appear more equitable in terms of gender access, but skill levels are low and women remain marooned in feminised sectors, such as healthcare (FISSS, 2013). Australia has created Group Training Organisations (GTOs) which employ trainees and hire them out to SMEs unwilling or unable to take on training (Smith & Kemmis, 2013). This may be a model for ASEAN to consider.

Philippine's Enterprise-Based Training (EBT) operated by TESDA includes a four to six month Apprenticeship Program, a three month Learnership Program, and an 18 month Dual Training System that combines CBL and WBL modelled on Germany's approach (TESDA, 2020b).<sup>254</sup> However, despite tax incentives, less than 75,000 trainees enrolled in EBTS in 2017 – only 3 percent of TESDA's enrolments (TESDA, 2018).

Apprenticeship based training models are also pervasive in the informal sector across the ASEAN region. In developing countries, the number of workers trained through such informal apprenticeship schemes are likely to be much greater than those trained by the formal education system and government run job-training schemes (Ciccione et al., 2019; Walther, 2011). Informal apprenticeships are culturally embedded and socially accepted (ILO, 2011). Apprentices get the opportunity to learn tools of the trade from master craftsmen (Jacobs, 2020). In some ways, while operating in the informal sector, these apprenticeships are quite formalised (McGrath et al., 1995).

<sup>254</sup> A lower level apprenticeship model. Also operates in South Africa and Australia (Sidebottom et al., 2019).

Despite their importance and low barriers to entry, informal apprenticeships are usually confined to areas with limited avenues for technological innovation and growth. Transferability of skills acquired in informal apprenticeships is limited. On one hand there is a lack of training certification and on the other workers lack general skills due to a lack of formal TVET education. Even if a certificate is issued, it is not widely accepted beyond a particular geographic area or community (Biavaschi et al., 2012). The lack of legal frameworks to enforce training standards also contributes to exploitative and sometimes dangerous working conditions. Apprentices often receive very low or no allowances or wages at all (ILO, 2011), and trainees often use poor equipment. There are also negligible opportunities for further training (GIZ, 2019a).

To deal with some of these shortcomings of informal apprenticeship programmes, there is a need to understand the incentive systems that drive informal apprenticeship programmes both from a demand (apprentice) and supply (master craftsperson) perspective. Another way to strengthen the informal apprenticeship system is by training master craftspersons in new skills to ensure that they transfer up-to-date skills to their trainees (ILO, 2011)

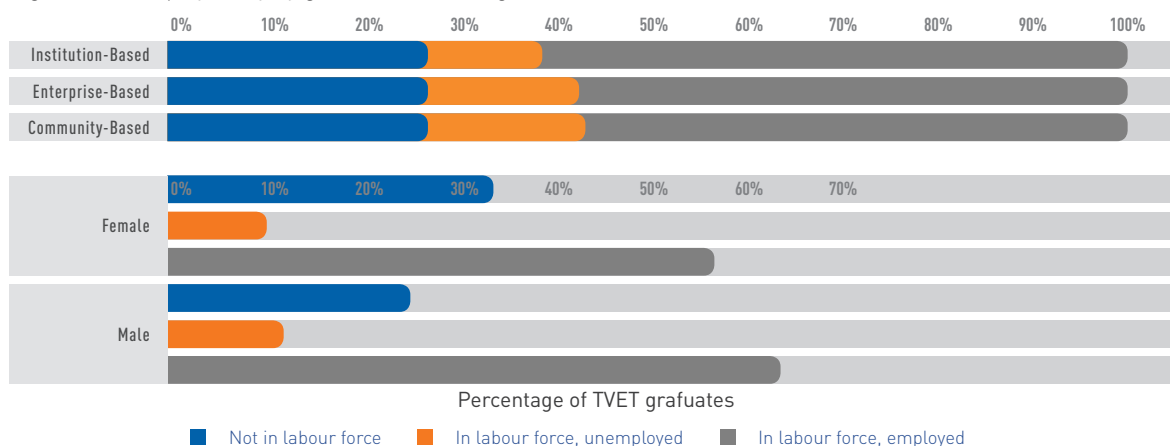
The underlying free-rider problem means that firms risk fully-trained apprentices being poached unless a tacit agreement exists across the sector. Co-ordination across firms, is highly unlikely in fragmented or informal industrial sectors (Chankseliani et al., 2017). However, there is scope for co-ordination at a community level.

**CBT:** The lack of training facilities in rural areas has encouraged many countries to adopt CBT models.<sup>255</sup> Whilst their forms vary, the common theme is training *in* the community and *by* the community (Sidebottom et al., 2019). Knowledge is embedded collectively rather than individually, and is thus not only sustainable, but also a means to nurture a communal identity.

Particularly in informal, rural settings, where literacy levels may be low, learning needs to be understood as a social, and not just an individual process (Conley & Udry, 2010). This may be as simple as attending with a friend (Field et al., 2010); using group discussions to diagnose local problems (Powers & Associates, 2019); or family members being involved in learning how to send remittances (Doi et al., 2012).

In the Philippines, CBT is one of three models used by TESDA to provide a basic level of training to marginalised groups in rural *barangays*. This is a collaborative effort between national and local government, NGOs and religious groups (TESDA, 2020b).

Figure 3.18 Employability by gender and training

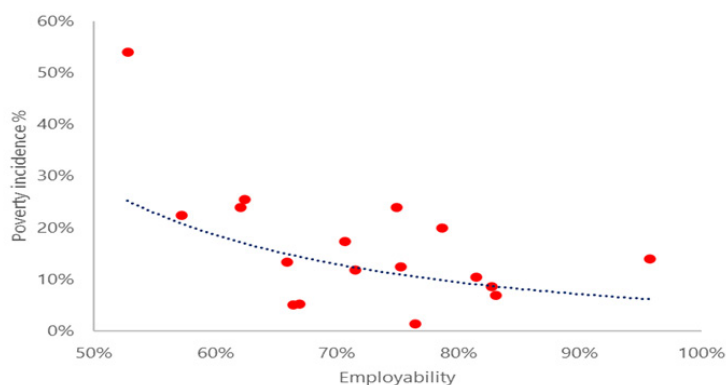


Source: Authors' based on Philippine Statistical Authority (2020) and TESDA (2019, 2020a) data

<sup>255</sup> Examples: the Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI); the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union (AMUL) & the Special Programme for Millets in Tribal Areas of Odisha in India; and Farm Input Promotions Africa (FIPS-Africa) in Kenya.

Training outcomes result from complex inter-relationships between location, age, sector, pre-training status<sup>256</sup>, gender and training model. Communal training schemes are more commonly used by women<sup>257</sup>, own-account or self-employed workers and by those who do not participate in the labour force at all. Although this delivery mode does not appear to influence published employability rates<sup>258</sup>, these do not account for the 34 percent of women who continue to stay outside the labour force due to geographical immobility<sup>259</sup> or the burden of household chores (Figure 3.18)<sup>260</sup> (TESDA, 2019, 2020a). This pattern is particularly evident in Tourism<sup>261</sup>, Wholesale and retail and agriculture. However, as Figure 3.19 shows, employability is lowest and least secure, where poverty is highest (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020a). Nearly 40% of TVET graduate jobs in 2018 were seasonal or unpaid. These patterns may reflect the absence of jobs, not necessarily a lack of training. This reinforces the very obvious message that TVET's impact depends upon the prioritisation of rural development and the integration of education and training platforms as drivers of inclusive growth (Diao et al., 2010).

Figure 3.19 Employability by region



Sources: Authors' based on data from Philippine Statistical Authority (2020) and TESDA (2020b)

There are a number of other CBT empowerment models, including Thailand's One Tambon One Product model (Box 3.3) and Indonesia's BUMDes model (Box 3.4). The impacts of each appear to depend upon on several factors. It is unclear from the reports available whether these contingencies and possible social consequences have been factored into ASEAN's inclusion of OTOPs in its workplans.

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<sup>256</sup> Meaning whether trainees are participating in the labour force as waged workers, own account workers, unpaid family labour or not in the labour force at all.

<sup>257</sup> Especially in Regions III, IVb, VI, X, Caraga and NCR.

<sup>258</sup> 84% for all delivery modes in 2018.

<sup>259</sup> 94% of female TVET graduate jobs were in the same region as the training took place.

<sup>260</sup> Note that the data is disaggregated by delivery mode and employability and delivery mode and gender but not both.

<sup>261</sup> Which accounts for one third of training programmes



### Box 3.3 One Tambon one product

The ASEAN Rural Development Plan suggests replicating of Thailand's 'One Tambon One Product' (OTOP) model which aims to promote local products (Mukai & Fujikura, 2015). Unlike their Japanese equivalent (One Village One Product, OVOP), OTOPs in Thailand were introduced by the central government, rather than as a bottom-up initiative (Kurokawa et

al., 2010). Economic success appears to depend upon suitable rural infrastructure, local government support, and business know-how (Sitabutr & Pimdee, 2017). There is some evidence that OTOPs reinforce culturally rooted rural social divisions between owners and workers, rather than serve as a vehicle for social mobility (Diefenbach, 2016). They may also lead to unsustainable use of local natural resources (Mukai & Fujikura, 2015)



### Box 3.4 BUMDes in Indonesia

BUMDes or 'village owned enterprises' are designed to empower communities to develop a range of local projects, including waste management, tourism and retail outlets (Marini & Omar, 2016). Funded by the central government and private sources, there are 4,000 such ventures across Indonesia (Srirejeki, 2018).

As yet, there is insufficient evidence to provide an objective view of their socio-economic impact. There is anecdotal evidence of poor co-ordination between villages and of village leaders taking control of the allocation of funds (Omar, 2019; Sofyani et al., 2019). Whether this is villager empowerment in the sense of agency or capacity building is as yet unproven.



The ILO's Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) model (Box 3.5) also incorporates local expertise, language and priorities. Its potency rests on simplicity and social embeddedness. It builds upon pre-existing institutional structures and social networks to facilitate collective learning, belonging and ownership (Powers & Associates, 2019). This recognises learning as a social activity, not just a technical exercise. The means are as important as the ends (Santoro & Rosser, 2016)

However, this may also limit the benefits in two ways. First, knowledge exchange is obviously limited by the breadth of 'local expertise'. Second, 'social activity' is not necessarily equally beneficial to all participants. In Cambodia, post-training surveys suggest that positive impacts were skewed in favour of older trainees, who may have been more effective in generating entrepreneurial opportunity from their social connections (Powers & Associates, 2019; Santoro & Rosser, 2016).



### Box 3.5 Cambodia and Thailand

The ILO's Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) training model uses local community knowledge of the community for

capacity building led by external parties. It therefore has the potential to reach entrepreneurs in remote areas (including refugees in Thailand, for example), and has been adopted by 60 institutions in 14 countries (C-BED, 2015).





Jung's (2020) comparison of two communal development approaches in Myanmar, the Korean Saemaul Undong (SMU, New Village Movement) and the World Bank National Community-Driven Development Project (NCDDP) reveals distinct differences in communal objectives and the role of social capital in achieving them.

SMU utilises relationships between Ministry of Agriculture extension workers and village leaders to focus on economic outcomes through the creation of model villages. However, it is unclear how easily these are replicated in regions where committed local leadership is less apparent. There is also some evidence of elite capture in projects that reflect civil servant priorities more than the local populace. The World Bank's more decentralised approach relies more on foreign private firms and NGOs to improve social development in villages where poverty is highest. The focus here is on the engendering social capital through equity and inclusion, rather than on economic targets, *per se*.

Rather than catalysing the development of social capital, positive communal outcomes may depend upon its pre-existence. Inclusive collective action is a necessary input to the process, rather than a guaranteed output.

**CSR, social enterprise and social protection:** Several ASEAN documents also make reference to social entrepreneurship or social enterprises (SEs) as a means of social inclusion. SEs in Europe are generally understood as 'hybrid modes' in terms of ownership and purpose (British Council et al., 2019). They cover a wide range of forms, from traditional co-operatives and microfinance institutions to firms trying to reconcile profitability with employees' well-being, social outcomes, and/or the environment in line with SDG 12 (Hunter, 2020).

What SEs mean in Southeast Asia is not entirely clear (OECD & ERIA, 2018). The Philippines has two laws supporting MSMEs but not SEs explicitly (Ballesteros & Gilberto, 2017).<sup>70</sup> Malaysia has a Social Entrepreneurship Unit and a Social Outcome Fund (SOF) under the purview of the Ministry of Finance, rather than departments dealing with social inclusion (Pillsbury, 2017). Viet Nam offers SE credit and training assistance under specific SE legislation but growth in the sector has stagnated (British Council et al., 2019).

Many social ventures originate in local (rather than national top-down) initiatives, but do not necessarily comply with a 'social enterprise' label. Two-thirds of Viet Namese SEs are over 10 years old and have evolved from Viet Nam's long history of collective and co-operative roots (British Council et al., 2019). More recent SEs tend to be owned by partners in their 30s or 40s with a tertiary education, and operating on behalf of *other* communities (British Council et al., 2019). This mirrors the operations of some SEs in Bristol, UK – a city with a rich demographic mix of religions, languages, wealth, and education levels. Here too, one community is seen as acting collectively on behalf of another. For example, the Community Farm (TCF) was set up as a SE funded by 500 local individuals to establish an organic food business. Profits are recycled into drug rehabilitation, health, and adult education for disadvantaged communities (Hunter, 2020).

This is a particularly nuanced form of 'inclusion' where one social cohort acts as the agent of change for another. This is not necessarily 'exclusive' but does have implications for policy targeting and design. Governments can play a major role in promoting SE, not just in terms of legislation but also through convening and procurement power. Alternatively, governments can be more ambitious and do away with the label altogether by remoulding consideration of wider interests as the new corporate norm, not the exception (Hunter, 2020).

As a key player in global value chains, ASEAN can boldly reframe the decent work (SDG 8) and CSR agendas to mainstream social priorities in order to ensure that no-one is left behind. Under the ASEAN Labour Ministers Work Plan (ASEAN, 2016c), the AMS approved the ASEAN CSR Guidelines on Labour in 2017 (ASEAN, 2017a) and submitted national implementation initiatives.<sup>262</sup>

The ASEAN Services Trade Union Council (ASETUC) has been critical of enforcement mechanisms, and the ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC) has called for more participation of workers in the design and implementation of CSR projects (ATUC, 2019). Industry and governments alike tend to resist the empowerment of workers (Bair et al., 2020). Yet, inclusion is a key component of successful policies and of decent work (Andrews et al., 2013; Artuc et al., 2020).

Instead, private sector engagement in decent work is often spearheaded through multinational CSR initiatives. The Better Work partnership between the ILO and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), for example, has improved contract security and training in foreign textile firms in Viet Nam (UN Women, 2015). However, coverage is weak in locally owned private enterprises - which account for three-quarters of jobs (ILO, 2017). Firms are more likely to offer skills training where they can see a direct or indirect benefit in terms of productivity, and where they can ensure employee retention.<sup>263</sup>

The combination of CSR and profitability is also evident in the recruitment of women entrepreneurs as distribution agents by Unilever

in India<sup>264</sup> and the Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines (CCBP) and the TESDA 'Sari-Sari Store Training and Access to Resources' (S3TAR) Program in the Philippines (Limpag, 2017). One advantage of such value chain engagement is the ongoing relationship with a 'mentor'.<sup>265</sup>

The provision of social protection, however, offers less tangible firm-specific benefits. Here the onus tends to rely on the state, particularly where firms are small and sectors are fragmented. Weak social protection coverage is a global issue, not just an ASEAN one. Less than half of the global population has even one form of social protection, and less than a third have comprehensive cover (Ong & Peyron Bista, 2015).

By 2050, the number of people over-65 in Southeast Asia will reach 133 million and outnumber those under 25 years old (ILO, 2019b; UN DESA, 2020). ASEAN's demographic transition increases the urgency to address the lack of social protection, especially for the elderly.<sup>266</sup> Even in countries where a high portion of the elderly receive pensions (e.g., Thailand), the country's age profile will impose a significantly larger burden on resources by 2050.

Elsewhere in the Philippines, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Cambodia, pension provisions are far weaker, especially for women (Kidd et al., 2016). A lack of social protection will force older people to continue working, usually in some form of informal or agricultural occupation (Bonnet et al., 2019). Those who are disabled or otherwise excluded from labour markets will have to rely on family networks. This is a significant future policy challenge.

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<sup>262</sup> The legislation consists of Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (Republic Act 6977), and Barangay Micro Business Enterprise Act, 2002.

<sup>263</sup> The guidelines focus on the following priority areas: Forced labour and child labour; employees and employment relationship; human resource development and training; conditions of work and life; industrial relations; migrant workers and sustainable development (ASEAN, 2017a).

<sup>264</sup> In India, the Gap's Personal Advancement & Career Enhancement (P.A.C.E.) programme offers garment workers training in stress management and health. Legal and financial literacy appears to improve their self-esteem and communications skills.

<sup>265</sup> Unilever's Opportunities for Women; Enhancing Livelihoods Fund (ELF); & Project Shakti

<sup>266</sup> In this case it is the lead buyer but mentoring is also offered by Enterprise incubators. Their development in ASEAN appears to be relatively nascent. Examples targeted at women include the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women 'Mentoring Women in Business Programme' in Indonesia and Malaysia; the SHE Incubator programme in Cambodia, the US AID funded WECREATE projects in Cambodia and Viet Nam; and Project-W in Myanmar led by the private sector (OECD, 2017b) Further research is required to confirm their long-term impact.

<sup>267</sup> See ADO Introduction and Theme 4.

A commitment to expanding social protection is enshrined in the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection (2013), and is a key objective in many workplans (Ong & Peyron Bista, 2015).<sup>268</sup> As Table 3.2 shows, a number of countries have made progress in expanding the provision of social protection (Nguyen & Cunha, 2019; Zen, 2017). In some cases, provision is either limited (e.g., maternity) or totally absent. Gaps include family benefits in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and the Philippines and unemployment in Brunei Darussalam.

Table 3.2 Social protection heatmap: coverage by country

Initiative	Area covered	Health care	Sickness	Maternity	Old age	Work injury	Disability & Invalidity	Survivors	children & Family	Unemployment
Thailand	9									
Viet Nam	9									
Philippines	8									
Singapore	8									
Lao PDR	8									
Malaysia	7								b	
Brunei Darussalam	6			a						
Indonesia	6									
Cambodia	4									
Myanmar	5								c	

- a In Brunei Darussalam, cash maternity benefits are an employer liability
- b Malaysia has both conditional and unconditional cash transfer programmes.
- c The 2012 social insurance law is gradually being implemented. Family benefits have been implemented.

At-least one programme in national legislation
Limited provisions via employer's liability under national labour code (includes company sick leave and severance pay provisions)
Programme has not been implemented yet
None

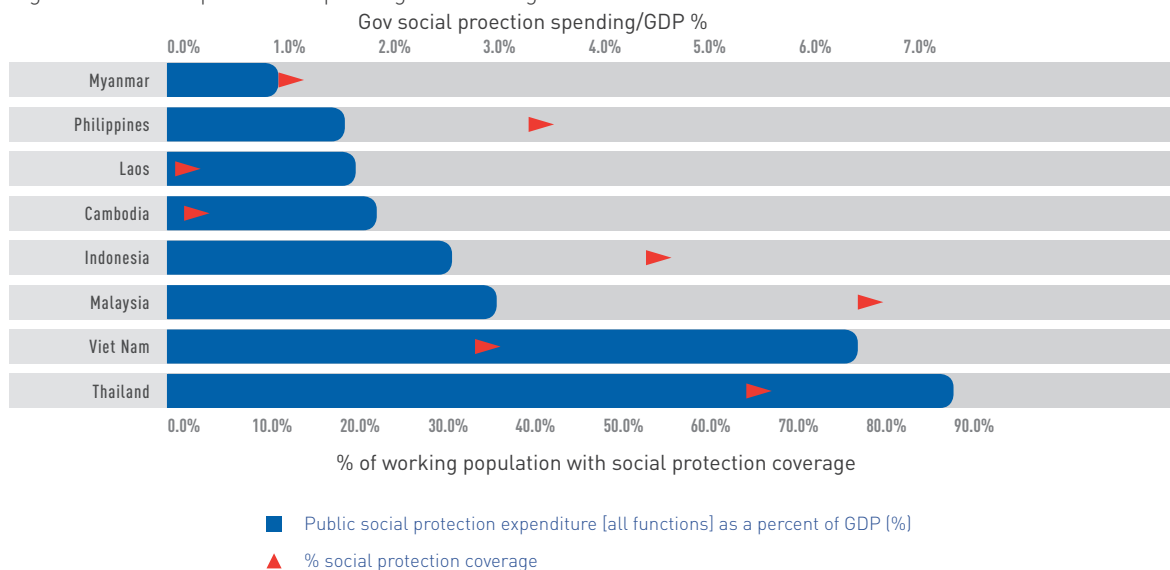
Source: Authors' based on EdStat (2020)

To some extent these gaps can be attributed to funding. Southeast Asian governments' spending amounts to less per head on social protection than other Asian countries. This spending is skewed against women and the poor (ADB, 2019a). This often leaves ASEAN projects dependent upon external financing and thereby beholden to someone else's agenda. An increased level of funding at the national or regional level would not only accelerate progress but also strengthen policy ownership.

Countries with rapidly maturing populations (e.g., Thailand and Viet Nam) are spending more on social protection (Figure 3.20). Fiscal constraints have limited government expenditure on social protection in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, and programmes in Cambodia and Myanmar to address old age, disability, and survivors of conflict have not yet been implemented (Nguyen & Cunha, 2019).

<sup>268</sup> ASEAN Labour Ministers' Work Plan 2016 – 2020, governed through the biennial ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM) Meeting; Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) & 3 subsidiary SLOM bodies: Senior Labour Officials Meeting Working Group on Progressive Labour Practices to Enhance the Competitiveness of ASEAN (SLOM-WG); ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection & Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW); & ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network (ASEAN-OSHNET).

Figure 3.20 Social protection spending and coverage



Note: Data relates to latest years available. No data available for Brunei and Singapore.  
Sources: Authors' based on ILOStat (2020) and World Bank (2020e) data

There also seems to be a varying degree of *omission*, *commission*, and *coordination* issues across ASEAN workplans, with regards to decent work (Khan, 1995). One manifest *omission* appears to be the absence of any reference to Decent Work in the Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty alleviation (2016 – 2020). This risks Decent Work following an urban-centric agenda and neglecting non-farm and farm workers in rural areas.

With regard to migrants, there appears to be an issue of *commission*. While policy documents recognise that unskilled migrants make up a significant share of vulnerable informal workers, efforts to harmonise intra-ASEAN migration are skewed against them, as they focus entirely on the migration of *skilled* labour (Oliver, 2018).

Where an issue *is* included in multiple plans, it is not clear which one takes the lead – thereby creating issues of *co-ordination* and delay. The first example is the apparent overlapping Labour

Market Information Systems (LMIS) initiatives between the Regional Action Plan of the Vientiane Declaration Action Plan (2018 – 2025) and SLOM-WG. The second example is SLOM-WG's study on old-age income security (Scholz & Cunha, 2020). This was started in 2017 but was only approved by AMS in 2020. As yet, there does not appear to be an implementation roadmap.

Even where labour and social protection laws have been implemented, their effective enforcement is often weak (Nguyen & Cunha, 2019). Despite the centrality of labour inspections to the ASEAN agenda and regular ASEAN Labour Inspection conferences, the quality of inspections has room for improvement.

### 3.2.2. What Skills do We Need?

Skills should reflect the aspirations and capabilities of all trainees throughout their lifetime, not just the technological demands of the labour market.

In countries like Lao PDR, there are no mechanisms to ensure compliance through regular inspections. In Indonesia and Viet Nam, there is poor coordination between agencies and a lack of human, financial and administrative resources (Scholz & Cunha, 2020).

**Box 3.6 Good practice: Migration policy accountability**

The ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW) convenes an annual meeting of key stakeholders – the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML). The

AFML conducts a biannual audit of progress on recommendations agreed to in previous years. There are currently forty recommendations designed to ensure that vulnerable migrant workers are included in the decent work agenda. While the monitoring mechanism is still dependent on labour ministries and other external agencies to provide data, the institutionalisation of the M&E system can provide a template for other sectoral bodies.

Each of these examples appear (based on evidence made available to this report) to demonstrate scope for greater co-ordination and tighter evaluation procedures. Box 3.6 highlights elements of good practice already adopted by the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW).

This section focuses on financial, technical and life skills that apply equally in an employment or self-employment setting.

**Finance:** Formal financial inclusion is conventionally deemed essential for inclusive enterprise and for an inclusive society (OECD & ERIA, 2018). Adults are less likely to have a formal bank account in Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Viet Nam, especially if they have a low income or education and live in a rural area (Table 3.3) (World Bank, 2020b). Insufficient funds are a key obstacle across all AMS but, according to this data, gender does not appear to be. Physical proximity is particularly problematic in Lao PDR and Thailand, whereas education, costs and income factors appear to be more significant in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines (Lubis, 2020).

Table 3.3 Formal bank accounts in ASEAN countries

Initiative	Account (% age 15+)	Account, female (% age 15+)	Account, primary education or less (% age 15+)	Account, income, poorest 40% (% age 15+)	Account, rural (% age 15+)
Cambodia	22%	22%	19%	14%	19%
Myanmar	26%	26%	24%	23%	25%
Lao PDR	29%	32%	22%	17%	22%
Viet Nam	31%	30%	13%	20%	25%
Philippines	34%	39%	18%	18%	27%
Indonesia	49%	51%	34%	37%	47%
Thailand	82%	80%	77%	78%	81%
Malaysia	85%	82%	70%	81%	81%
Singapore	98%	96%	93%	96%	100%

Source: World Bank (2020b)

While this appears to indicate evidence of an apparent financing gap, financial inclusion should be viewed as a means, not an end (OECD, 2017b). It is important to understand how the 'unbanked' currently manage their finances through informal clubs and social relationships (Armendáriz de Aghion & Morduch, 2000). Moreover, having a formal bank account does not necessarily mean people become entrepreneurs. In most AMS, people are more likely to save for old age, than a new business (World Bank, 2020b). This suggests a gap in social protection.

Technical, donor funded measures to improve formal financial inclusion include plugging gaps in legal frameworks in Lao PDR and Myanmar and addressing a lack of credit information in Cambodia and the Philippines (OECD & ERIA, 2018). This has been supplemented by national strategies for MSMEs, female targeted funding, and loan guarantee schemes (OECD, 2017b).<sup>269</sup>

Examples include the Malaysian Credit Guarantee Corporation (CGC) which facilitates lending to SMEs with no credit history or collateral. Backed by Malaysia's Central Bank, CGC has over US\$ 1 billion in assets and has assisted over 14,000 entrepreneurs (CGC, 2020). Community-based models include the Village and Urban Revolving fund in Thailand and the 'Village banks' in Lao PDR (OECD & ERIA, 2018). Evidence for some of these models is mixed.<sup>270</sup>

Microfinance, for example, can be effective in managing liquidity in some circumstances but there are doubts regarding its long-term impact on entrepreneurial success. Community schemes suffer from covariance risk but are relatively less well-documented than 'imported' models (Bateman & Chang, 2009; van Rooyen et al., 2012).

ASEAN strategy documents refer to 'alternative' financing models (including venture capital, junior stock markets and 'Angel financing' (ASEAN, 2015b; OECD & ERIA, 2018). However, their relevance is somewhat questionable as a means to include those left behind. The Indonesian Angel Investment Network (ANGIN) Women Fund, for example, has a minimum investment of US\$25,000 (OECD, 2017b). It is unlikely that export or public equity financing will be relevant for most micro-enterprises, though various forms of factoring or franchising may well be (OECD & ERIA, 2018).

ICT and so-called FinTech (financial technology) initiatives have the potential to have a more immediate and inclusive impact on *access*, but not necessarily on *use*.<sup>271</sup> Global evidence suggests that payment behaviour changes more quickly than borrowing (Fernandez & Rakotomalala, 2020). This highlights the importance of human, rather than technical barriers to adoption – including a borrower's understanding of financial products, risk appetite and trust of banks (Lubis, 2020).

Many Indonesians use the internet and Filipinos are very familiar with mobile money, but most payments are still made in cash. Singaporean customers familiar with FinTech still use automatic teller machines (ATMs) for transfers that can be done online (Fernandez & Rakotomalala, 2020).

Changing this technology-stacking of the old and the new can sometimes require a market or policy 'nudge' (for example, the closure of nearby ATMs). Conversely, innovations can be adapted to *existing* behaviour. FinTech start-ups are learning from informal modes of financial inclusion. One example is the Indonesian social enterprise Mapan, which builds on

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<sup>269</sup> Notably in Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Singapore, and Viet Nam (ERIA, 2019). See also OECD/ERIA (2017)

<sup>270</sup> India's Rural Development banking is regularly cited as an inclusive model but female labour participation and empowerment remains amongst the lowest in the world (Sidebottom et al., 2019).

<sup>271</sup> For example, MPAC's Initiative 5: Develop the ASEAN Digital Financial Inclusion Framework (ASEAN, 2016h).

social bonds developed in *arisans* to reach poorer communities.<sup>272</sup> Other firms (such as GoJek) have developed so-called ‘Super-Apps’ which offer multiple services (not just finance) (Fernandez & Rakotomalala, 2020).

While some governments have tried to play a facilitating role through deregulation, FinTech raises concerns of data privacy and exploitation (ASEAN, 2016h). To mitigate this several government bodies fund financial literacy training programmes, (including the Great Women’s Project (GWP)) in the Philippines; the Ministry of Women’s Affairs in Cambodia, and the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection in Indonesia fund financial literacy training programmes (OECD, 2017b). However, such courses sometimes rely on ‘imported’ concepts.

Perhaps more relevant is a more holistic notion of ‘financial capability’ which not only reflects the absorption of contextually relevant financial knowledge but also the empowerment to use it. This is not simply a function of individual knowledge. It reflects interlinked limitations of behaviour set by confidence, trust, risk appetite and social norms (Lubis, 2020). GIZ funded research on the Laos Village Banking network owned and governed by villagers provides some interesting insights on the cognitive and psychological constraints on financial behaviour (GIZ, 2020).

As shown in Box 3.7, females’ willingness to open an account was a function of confidence and independence more than entrepreneurial ambition.



#### Box 3.7 Lao PDR

A GIZ survey of a mixed ethnic village group of women in Lao PDR (GIZ, 2015) noted numeracy, linguistic and literacy capabilities as the key constraint on villagers’ willingness to adopt financial services, even if they were available. Some also cited

the dominance of village bank committees by males. Financial decisions tend to be taken jointly at the household level but women who did have accounts were more likely to be motivated by personal independence than the opportunity to invest in a business (GIZ, 2012). This presents a complex picture of capacity and confidence – implicit, rather than explicit gender barriers.



Financial access and literacy are not a complete solution for more productive employees or entrepreneurs. Neither finance nor training appear to be sufficient *in isolation*<sup>273</sup> (Blattman & Ralston, 2015; Cho & Honorati, 2014).

For example, ‘finance is often the most *visible* constraint but it is not necessarily the *primary* inhibitor’ (Kew, (2015), italics added). In fact, credit shortages are sometimes a *signal* of poor access to advice, mentoring, business networks, and training (Agriculture for Impact, 2014; Bhorat et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2020b). Answering what financial skills may be required is far from straight forward.

<sup>272</sup> Mapan has over 3 million members. Bought by GoJek in 2017 (D. Fernandez & Rakotomalala, 2020). An arisan is a social club that affords members access to finance for personal or business purposes (Fernandez & Rakotomalala, 2020).

<sup>273</sup> This is recognised by the SME Bank in Malaysia whose loans are conditional upon the enrolment on a training programme (Citation).

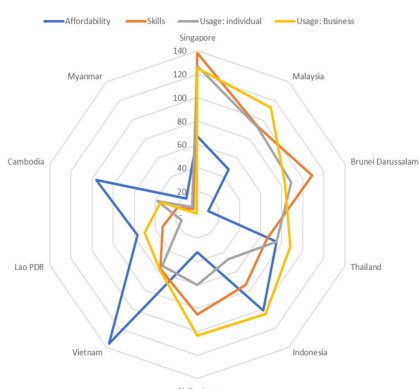
**Skills Training:** Due to its breadth of impact (Sakamoto & Sung, 2018), the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)<sup>274</sup> dominates the TVET discourse. AMS are making progress in their preparations (Figure 3.21) but none has addressed all dimensions of the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) readiness index: affordability; skills; individual and business use. Brunei Darussalam and Singapore have strong skills capabilities, but access may be limited by cost. Whilst ICT is affordable in Cambodia and Viet Nam, skills are deficient. In Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos internet and 4G mobile use remain very low (Vu, 2017).<sup>275</sup>

access and training quality, harmonise regional standards, and more effectively engage with the private sector.<sup>276</sup>

Some progress is evident on quality assurance mechanisms, including the Agreement on Regional Standards for TVET Personnel (a new SEA-TVET Consortium to improve opportunities for cross border internships, apprenticeships and academic exchanges) and an ASEAN TVET Council to improve regional policy coordination. Work is also underway on Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) and on the harmonisation of Qualification Reference Frameworks to improve the mobility of skilled workers (Song et al., 2016; Hoppe et al., 2018; GIZ, 2019b; Paryono, 2020) although it is unclear how this helps unskilled migrants. A Quality Toolbox website of best practices (SEA-VAT, 2020) has been set-up though inclusion does not seem to feature prominently in terms of assessment criteria.

Each AMS has an ICT plan but only Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam appear to have made explicit provision for 4IR.<sup>277</sup> These plans have resulted in efforts to align training curricula with market demands, more learning flexibility and improved governance and teacher training (González & Molina, 2020). Public sector capacity and financial constraints have encouraged the use of tax incentives and industry levies to induce private sector training provision. The success of these schemes depends on the private sector’s capacity and willingness to participate and risks further skewing attention towards an economic urban-centric agenda.

Figure 3.21 ICT Readiness score



Note: Readiness rankings inverted, so Singapore’s no 1 / 139 ranking for skills gives a score of 139.

Source: Authors’ based on WEF (2016) data

Hoppe et al. (2018) and Song et al. (2016) emphasise the necessity of reorienting, and numerous policy declarations and documents have highlighted the need for research and reforms to identify skills mismatches, improve

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<sup>274</sup> IR4.0 refers to new technologies, especially in the industrial sector. IR4.0 is a recent terminology which highlights the idea that emerging technologies are blurring the lines between physical, digital, and biological spheres to a degree that will have an impact on the future of humanity.

<sup>275</sup> Vu (2017) highlights the importance of looking at the generation of mobile technology used, not simply number of subscribers. For example, whilst several AMS appear to be progressing on 3G, seven are doing less well on 4G (Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Laos, Viet Nam, and Myanmar)

<sup>276</sup> ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development on 26th June 2020. Supported by Germany’s Regional Cooperation Programme for TVET (RECOTVET), a regional working group launched in June 2018 recommended the formation of an ASEAN Future Workforce Council led by business; creation of public-private National TVET Councils to formulate training content; and increased investment in information on skills deficits. These conclusions were endorsed by the Senior Officials Meeting on Education during their 13th session in November 2018 (GIZ, 2019b).

<sup>277</sup> Brunei Darussalam National ICT White Paper 2016–2020; Cambodia ICT Masterplan 2020; Indonesia National Midterm Development Plan (2015–2019); The Indonesian Broadband Plan (IBP, 2014–2019); Laos National ICT policy; Digital Malaysia (DM) Masterplan (2012); Myanmar The 2011–2015 ICT Master Plan (Follow Up Plan); Philippines Philippine Digital Strategy (PDS, 2011–2016); Singapore Intelligent Nation (iN2015) Masterplan (2006–2015); Thailand ICT Policy Framework 2020 (2011–2020); Viet Nam Master Plan on Information and Technology (2011–2020) (Vu, 2017). For example, Thailand targets 500,000 skilling upgrades in 5 years (ILO, 2019c).



Progress has also stalled due to practical difficulties in assessing skills shortages. First, collection of current skills data often relies on poor Labour Market Information systems (LMIS), externally funded surveys or proxy data (Box 3.8). While Singapore has the capability to forecast skilling requirements on a sectoral basis through the Future Economy Council, very few others can replicate this (Sakamoto, 2019).



#### Box 3.8 Skills shortages

“Skill shortages” (the inability of firms to fill vacancies) [McGuinness et al., 2017, p. 2017] and a “skills gap” (mismatch between skills acquired and required) [McCornac, 2014] are distinct and their collation complex. Mismatches are vertical (the wrong level of skill) or horizontal (the wrong skill area), but are not easily captured. Household, labour

market or business surveys fail to obtain objective data from an employer’s and employee’s viewpoint.

Using education as a proxy for skills (Matsumoto & Bhula-or, 2018), over-skilling is found in low skilled sectors in Philippines, Malaysia and Viet Nam with under-skilling in semi-skilled jobs is found in Indonesia, Viet Nam and Thailand (Hital, 2018; Sakamoto, 2019).



A second issue is what to do with data that *can* be found. The implicit assumption that underpins the ‘market failure’ TVET discourse is that low productivity and labour market inequities derive from a shortage of skills not of jobs (McGrath, 2012). Productivity gaps may be attributed to a weak TVET system or because a country is stuck in a low skills equilibrium in unproductive activities. An absence of skill shortages is therefore not synonymous with an efficient TVET system or a ‘high skilled’ economy. It could simply reflect low employer *demand* for skills.

The labour market in many ASEAN countries continues to suffer from twin issues of a lack of quality formal jobs and a shortage of skilled labour (Sidebottom & Fennell, 2019). In these cases, there is likely to be a mismatch between the type of skills required by formal enterprises and the supply of these skills (Pouliakas & McGuinness, 2019). Those with higher levels of skills face a wage penalty as they make less money than those with equivalent employment who are working in areas that are commensurate with their skill set. The lack of jobs is also a function of excess supply of trained human capital with limited demand for those skills (UNESCO, 2013).

Underlying these practical issues is a conceptual one – uncertainty regarding the precise definition of what skills are required (Palmer, 2014). Technological shifts create specific and broad skills challenges but these vary by sector and location. A degree of familiarity with technology is increasingly becoming a pre-requisite but the reorientation towards the service sector will also require ‘softer skills’ (e.g., literacy, analytical, interpersonal and negotiating), as well as greater agency, resilience and adaptability.

To narrow the focus of TVET to technical skills is to miss the multi-faceted nature of the future skills challenge (CISCO, 2018). Standard policy responses make reference to so-called ‘twenty-first-century skills’: foundational literacy, competencies, and character (Buchanan et al., 2019). Whether these are in fact twenty-first century at all is debateable. What is perhaps more important is that they are not universally agreed upon or applied at all educational scales (Palmer, 2014).<sup>278</sup> These conceptual and practical considerations are illustrated in the ASEAN Youth Development Index. Whilst the attempt to incorporate social awareness is good, it is debatable whether surveys on volunteering and helping strangers are suitable proxies (ASEAN, 2017a).

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<sup>278</sup> Foundational literacy (numeracy, ITC skills, and financial literacy); Competencies (critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity); and Character (including initiative and social awareness) [Buchanan et al., 2019].

Even if generic non-cognitive or 'life' skills could be measured, there is still an issue of how they might be *taught*. Teaching them in isolation may be ineffective, as many skills are contextual (Chinen et al., 2018; Langer et al., 2018). A more flexible "capabilities-based approach" (Buchanan et al., 2019, p.125), would focus on a portfolio of *types* of skills acquired through lifelong formal and informal learning across job clusters, rather than specific job competencies (Sakamoto, 2019).

It would also require resolution of an additional 'demand' element; that of trainees. Vocational learning is often seen as inferior to academic learning (OECD, 2019a; Stevenson, 2005). In Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia and Viet Nam, children and parents value a university education as a safer and more prestigious option (Cheong et al., 2018; Sidebottom & Fennell, 2019). In Thailand, vocational careers are seen as a choice of last resort (Heng, 2019).

In Viet Nam, attempts to upgrade the 'status' of vocational training (for employment or self-employment) have failed to attract richer cohorts (who prefer academic routes) or poorer ones (who feel risks are too high) (McCornac, 2014). If low-income families opt for vocational training, this is restricted to males (Freire & Giang, 2012).

There is a fundamental social dimension to this problem. Activities associated with particular occupations generate economic rewards, but also social rewards that frame a person's individual and collective identity (ILO, 2019c). Because academic requirements for admission into TVET programmes are lower, they are perceived to be necessarily inferior. This 'signal' is magnified by the absence of a clear pathway for future educational and professional development among TVET graduates (ILO, 2016).

Weakness on the demand side also highlights poor quality supply as there is little public pressure to address quality issues, creating a self-perpetuating cycle. Insufficient funding limits the ability to attract experienced teachers to a profession deemed to have a low social standing (UIS, 2018). This renders the system reliant upon young graduates, and leaves a critical lack of linkages between the TVET system and the labour market (Paryono, 2020; Euler, 2018). This can be addressed by encouraging experienced practitioners to teach part-time or by offering fresh graduates more industry experience. In the Philippines, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) has tried to address this stigma through social media but the ASEAN Work Plans do not seem fully cognisant of the demand side bias (GIZ, 2019b). As Box 3.9 suggests, this bias has deep cultural and philosophical roots.

### Box 3.9 Social perceptions of work

The adoption of universal global norms reflects a discourse that defines ASEAN perceptions of work in terms of how they are different, rather than what they actually are. The promotion of vocational training as a desirable career pathway ignores the prevalence of social-embedded hierarchies of 'valuable' or 'decent' work (Burdge, 2020). Work is commonly portrayed as a universal good, in that it helps frame identity and a sense of well-being. However, this ignores the legacy

of a plurality of views stemming from Buddhist, Islamic and Greek philosophical traditions, that do not see all types of work as equally worthy (Thiam, 2004). This is currently manifest in social attitudes to manual labour and vocational training as being suitable only for the 'other'. Career aspirations and perceptions of work are polymorphic rather than uniform. They reflect how we see ourselves and how others see us. In short, perceptions of work are embedded.

There is a great deal of focus on the demand side from an *employer's* perspective but very little mention of the views of *employees*. The current emphasis is on training to homogenise students to fit jobs, rather than the other way around. The World Economic Forum's ASEAN Youth survey suggests that young people want the capacity to grow as people, not just fit into a job slot (WEF, 2019a).

Whilst numerous ASEAN documents focus on STEM subjects and technical skills; the survey also showed that ASEAN youth were more inclined to value *soft* skills (creativity, language, resilience and adaptability). These skills can enable them to think laterally, not just literally (WEF, 2019a). These findings echo evaluation studies of programmes that focus on the skills of every-day life, not simply those focused on work (Holmarsdottir & Dupuy, 2017). As Buchanan et al. (2019, p. 150) write, "We need arrangements that deepen people's capacity to live a life they value and have reason to value – not just as individuals but also as communities and societies".

Resolution may lie beyond the realm of TVET and more in that of decent work. Quality training, quality jobs and decent work are all inextricably inter-twined (Sakamoto & Sung, 2018). Even if skills were supplied, they may remain unrecognised or under-utilised due to a mismatch between skills and job requirement or exploitation by employers. The failure of some employers to adequately remunerate skills could partly explain low employee demand for acquiring them.

Skilling improvements lead to increases in value *added* per worker but not necessarily value *captured* per worker. Sectoral variations of conditions of work dictate how a skill is acquired, recognised, utilised and compensated. This suggests that the nature of ASEAN engagement with the private sector needs to extend beyond the identification of skill requirements and the provision of training to include skill recognition and remuneration.

### 3.2.3. Policy Implications

The prevalence of informal and vulnerable modes of employment reflects the limited livelihood choices of disadvantaged groups. This chapter on the World of Work has highlighted some central issues in diagnosing the social foundations that underpin these vulnerabilities by asking three simple inter-related questions: Who we do exclude, how do we include, and what skills do we need?

These have been used to highlight a number of ASEAN current and future challenges and to highlight examples of initiatives designed to address them (see Key Findings below).

The sections have shown that there are interconnected conversion factors that constrain the ability of those based in informal employment to improve their own capabilities and achieve desirable development outcomes on their own terms. In most cases, these constraints mirror those which dictate the means of exclusion and terms of inclusion throughout an individual's experiences in the World of Learning. For example, someone who has learning difficulties as a child will experience problems accessing training, employment and social protection as an adult.

It is encouraging that multiple ASEAN policy declarations have shown awareness of inequities in social protection and in access to training. However, attempts to address the symptoms have had limited success, because they have failed to address the root cause of the capability traps that underpin them.

While the policy focus is welcome, this chapter has shown that, given the complexity of the challenges, addressing the implications for decent work requires measures to deal with its causes, not just its effects. This suggests a deeper engagement with the causes of informality and vulnerability. Policies that focus on a particular social group or social marker can lead to a misdiagnosis of the issue, and

may even prejudice opportunities available to others. For example, a focus on female youth may divert attention from hazardous labour for male adolescents or the need for social protection or re-retraining for displaced middle-aged workers.

An emphasis on training and upskilling, given the changing nature of work, is important to enhance access to decent work. However, it can only hope to be effective if decent jobs are available and if skills acquired are effectively utilised and equitably remunerated. Training programme design needs to be based on rigorous and contextual impact reviews and an evidence-base filtered through a social lens. This means that given inputs will achieve different outcomes depending upon an individual's circumstances. The effects of training programmes are themselves mediated by a number of factors, including prior education and skill level, age, migrant status, location and duration of training, labour market conditions, and childcare.

Self-employment, for example, is often a reflection of limited livelihood choices. ASEAN policy statements highlight the importance of promoting entrepreneurship, but there is little evidence that such training enhances the chances of business survival for entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds. This remains dependent on multiple other factors that training does not address.

Using a foresight approach, ASEAN could take the opportunity to reshape the entire foundations of TVET. Shaped in a previous industrial era, orthodox TVET thinking has failed to embrace the needs of traditional sectors such as agriculture and catch up with new ones in the service and technology-led economies. TVET can play a significant role in shaping an inclusive development model for ASEAN nations, but this requires a fundamental re-evaluation of the notions of learning and work that frame TVET's purpose, design, and impact (McGrath, 2012; Sakamoto, 2019). This re-evaluation requires more than improvements to governance, funding, and

qualifications frameworks. Rather it should encompass life-long learning in all its forms (including community-based and informal) that cater to the needs of gender, age, and disability and addresses issues pertinent today (e.g., green jobs, technology).

TVET needs to be driven through a social, rather than an economic lens. A lifelong learning system needs to reflect the desires of trainees as individuals and communities, and not just those of their employers (Buchanan et al., 2019). This is part of assuring accessibility to lifelong learning for all and its inclusion in the human development, multi-dimensional poverty, and gender equality indices. It involves a reorientation of the purpose of lifelong learning as the extension of an individual's capabilities, aspirations, well-being, and agency, rather than their mere 'suitability' for jobs (McGrath, 2012).

A foresight study of TVET and its future possibilities would bring these threads together under one systematic analysis. A study would ask headline questions such as: Where would ASEAN like its TVET provision to be in 30 – 40 years' time? How does TVET sit within, complement, enrich – and differentiate itself from – the education system as a whole? How will TVET be funded and resourced? What is the relationship between TVET programmes and decent work and livelihoods? What are the behavioural implications of promoting lifelong learning?

At the next level of investigation, diverse questions and lines of enquiry will emerge. A TVET foresight project might consider: What skills are valued in the workforce of the future? What skills currently prevail across all sectors of the adult population? What status would a TVET qualification hold – socially and economically? What 'access' would secure participation of those currently excluded from TVET or other formal education options? What is the place of TVET in a 'lifelong learning' offering to ASEAN communities and populations? What is the role of the private sector in shaping TVET objectives? What is the role of policy makers in shaping TVET? What are the mental health implications of failing to achieve organised TVET opportunities that are inclusive? What are the

challenges of predicted demographic shifts to TVET participation and development? Which sectors need to be served and supported by TVET-driven skills creation? What has TVET to offer rural economic development as well as urban?

Any foresight study would look at a range of future scenarios (including those less desirable) in order to understand the impact of different drivers. A TVET foresight study should beware of adopting a too-narrow perspective. The benefit will come from a wide-ranging, multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary exploration – but always with a central focus on implications and outcomes for the TVET sector of the future.<sup>279</sup>

### 3.2.4. Key Findings

1. Who do we exclude? Barriers of exclusion from social protection and training are multiple and inter-secting. They reflect all aspects of a person's identity, gender, ethnicity, location, disability and wealth.
2. How do we include? Terms of inclusion: impact of training programmes is mediated by multiple factors. In the absence of decent work opportunities, upskilling does not translate to access to social protection.
3. What skills do we need? Skills should reflect the aspirations and capabilities of all trainees throughout their lifetime, not just the technological demands of the labour market.

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<sup>279</sup> See 'The Foresight Approach to Policy' in the Introduction for a deeper understanding of how these sample questions might emerge in relation to a foresight study of TVET.

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## 04. SOCIAL WELFARE AND HEALTH

Examines the way people in ASEAN live, and the ramifications on our health, as well as the implications of the social conditions of our lives on the vulnerabilities to diseases.





## 4. SOCIAL WELFARE AND HEALTH

### 4.0 Introduction

'Human development' encompasses the dimensions of health and social welfare, and emphasises the social development aspects of human life.<sup>280</sup> It is an advance over the more traditional understanding of 'human capital' theory that health is a form of private investment. The current thinking in human development recognises that 'being healthy' is a human condition that is not equally accessible to all individuals. Improvements in life expectancy and the ability to remain in good health varies across the world. The UN's Human Development Index includes life expectancy and other health metrics.

A society's ability to ensure a socially-just health system is indicated by the distribution of health provision across all sectors of society (e.g., rural or urban, wealthy or underprivileged) and on the availability of social protection measures for those who are in conditions of ill health. There are also culturally contingent aspects, such as the marginalisation of indigenous groups who may live in distant rural or forest locations, making it difficult to access health provision (CSDH, 2008).

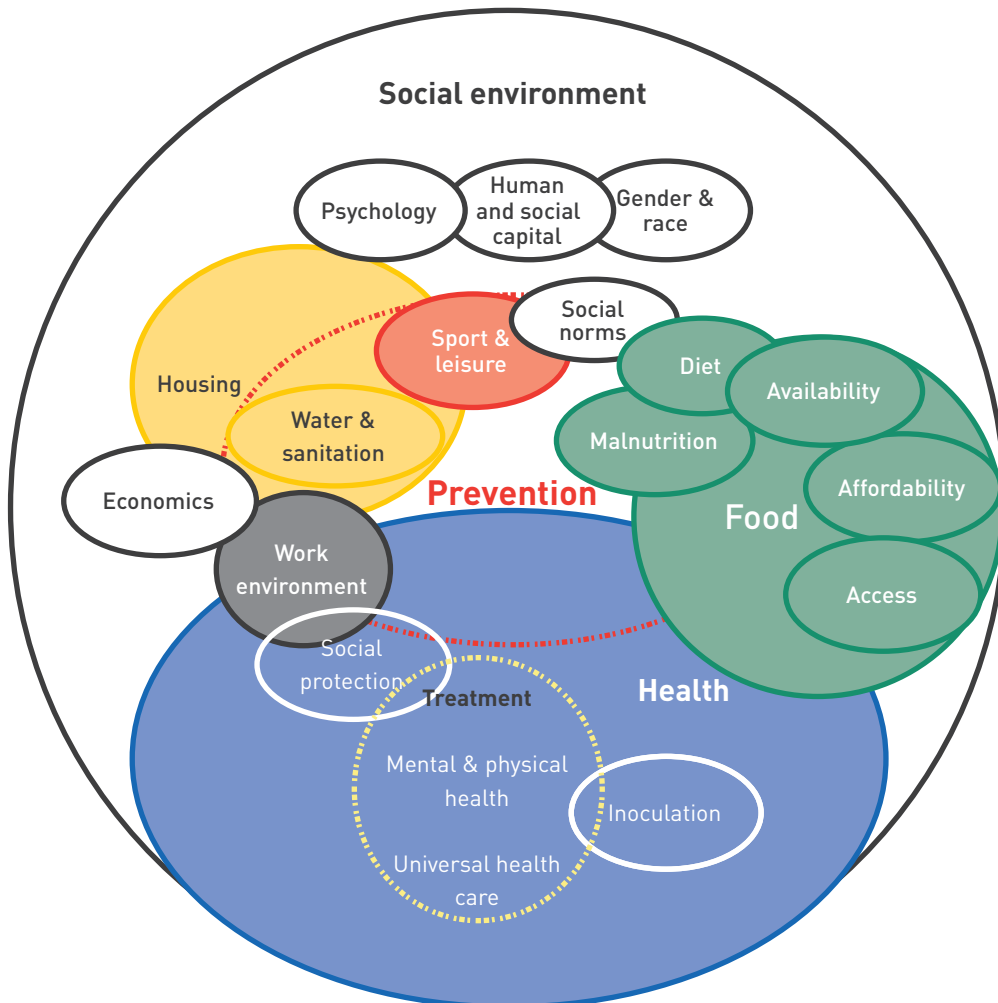
Social determinants result in inequalities that can impact on mental health as well as physical health. Previous experiences of injustice can cause greater vulnerability to health shocks, magnifying their impacts and making recovery more difficult (Commission for Equality in Mental Health, 2020). Poor health, in turn, can affect a

person's state of mind, as well as their ability to achieve the capabilities that they may have reason to value doing and being.

This analysis is based on a 'socially embedded' diagnosis of health and welfare. It reaches beyond a traditional medical model, which defines health as the absence of illness or disease, and emphasises the role of clinical diagnosis and intervention. The more holistic, socially embedded, approach is founded on the WHO's definition of health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1948). This emphasises the biopsychosocial model of health, thus including physiological, psychological and social factors, as well as interactions between them (Bickenbach, 2015).

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<sup>280</sup> The Human Development Index includes three dimensions: income, education and health.

Figure 4.1: Social determinants of social welfare and health



Source: Authors' drawing on WHO (2020d), and Government of Canada (2019).

As represented in Figure 4.1, these health factors are affected by an individual's housing (living environment), what they eat (food environment), where they work (working environment), social and human constraints on livelihoods including eating and leisure habits (social environment), and access to the health system itself (health environment). Collectively these can be termed the Social Determinants of Health (Government of Canada, 2019; WHO, 2020d) and can be directly linked to someone's capabilities and well-being. This recentring of focus onto the community and society implies that health interventions should reach beyond the medical sphere (Danaher, 2011).

This theme uses the Social Determinants of Health model to highlight social contexts that make particular social cohorts more vulnerable to economic and natural shocks, making them more likely to suffer from ill-health and to succumb to disease. *Section 4.1 Food and Nutrition* begins the discussion with an examination of the relationship between nutrition and non-communicable disease. *Section 4.2 Well-Being and Healthy Living* then examines the relationship between the incidence of communicable diseases and the provision of immunisation services, as well as limited health provisions in relation to vulnerability and mental health conditions. *Section 4.3 Human Security and Social Protection* considers whether the adoption of a Human

Security approach can provide additional forms of social provision to reduce the vulnerability of particular groups (persons with disabilities and women, in particular) to social exclusion and marginalisation. Finally, *Section 4.4 Public Services and Social Policy* discusses the implications for public services and social policy through one aspect of treatment (the provision of Universal health coverage) and two aspects of disease prevention (water and sanitation, followed by sport and leisure).

## 4.1 Food and Nutrition

This section examines the links between health in terms of non-communicable disease and nutrition by asking four questions:

1. What is the impact of malnutrition on social development?
2. Why should food and nutrition be a social policy priority?
3. What is ASEAN's nutrition problem?
4. What are the policy implications?

### 4.1.0. What is the Impact of Malnutrition on Social Development?

SDG 2 strives toward eliminating hunger and rates of malnutrition, but these challenges are not always the result of insufficient consumption of food. The definition of malnutrition extends to 'deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in an individual's intake of energy and/or nutrients' (WHO, 2016). There are therefore three dimensions (Trigueiro et al., 2020):

- *Undernutrition* can result in child stunting and/or wasting, and is attributed to a mother's diet during pregnancy and an infant's diet after birth.<sup>281</sup>
- *Overnutrition* is caused by excessive intake of energy and nutrients (especially through highly processed foods), leading to an accumulation of fat and associated health issues, such as type 2 diabetes.<sup>282</sup>
- *Micronutrient deficiency* can increase the risk of conditions, such as anaemia.

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<sup>281</sup> Stunting is the failure to achieve the height expected among healthy children. Low body mass due to significant weight loss is usually attributed to acute starvation or disease.

<sup>282</sup> It is often measured using the Body Mass Index (BMI), which is calculated by dividing body mass in kilograms by height in metres squared. A reading equal to or greater the 25Kg/m<sup>2</sup> is regarded as high while a reading equal to or greater than 30 Kg/m<sup>2</sup> qualifies as obese.

<sup>283</sup> The WHO classification of Southeast Asia includes 11 states, and only three of these are ASEAN states: Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand

Economic development is generally accompanied by shifts in nutritional burdens between these three dimensions. Changes in incomes and dietary patterns reduce the predominance of undernutrition, but increase the incidence of obesity. Globally, one in nine people are still undernourished but one in three are obese (GNR, 2020, p. 15).

Each dimension of malnutrition can be present independently, or the dimensions. They can co-exist in any combination, thereby giving rise to a double or triple burden of malnutrition – even in less developed countries and less wealthy social cohorts (Popkin et al., 2020).

### 4.1.1. Why Should Food and Nutrition be a Policy Priority?

While global food stocks can feed all the world's people, this does not translate into the availability of food for all groups and across all locations. In particular, the impacts of climate change are resulting in greater variability in crop output across the tropical regions of the world. The impact of rising temperatures is adversely affecting food production, and in the case of Southeast Asia, there has been an increased incidence of drought, due to lower absolute rainfall levels from a decreasing intensity of rainfall and fewer rainy days (FAO et al., 2018).

The emphasis on nutritional well-being of all people as both a precondition and a key objective of human development was first set out in 1992, with the launch of the *World Declaration and Plan of Action for Nutrition*. The continued presence of malnutrition in a population has an enormous human cost. While Southeast Asian countries<sup>283</sup> are making progress on reducing malnutrition they are not expected to meet SDG 2.1 by 2030 (FAO et al., 2020).

Unhealthy diets and poor nutrition are among the top risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including certain cancers, and diabetes.<sup>284</sup> The impact of unhealthy diets is particularly acute in Southeast Asia, where it has been estimated that if a more healthy diet were introduced to replace the current diet, this would reduce deaths on account of poor diet for 22-23 percent of the population (FAO et al., 2020). Myanmar has the ASEAN region’s highest rate of deaths from NCDs. Rates are also high in Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines and Cambodia. By contrast, Singapore has the second lowest NCD mortality rate in the world.

There are also large fiscal burdens of treating the NDCs, such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes, all associated with over-nutrition (Figure 4.2 summarises national capacities for addressing NCDs in ASEAN). The annual cost has been estimated to be US\$12 million in Thailand, US\$20 million in Viet Nam and US\$ 60 million in the Philippines. The cost of under-nutrition in Cambodia and Lao PDR is estimated at over 2 percent of GDP. By 2030, the cost of treating nutrition related NCDs could be nearly US\$ 4.5 trillion in Indonesia (FAO et al., 2018).

Figure 4.2. National capacities for control of NCDs in ASEAN

	Earlier Year				Existing population-based data for NCDs in the national health reporting system		Population covered by insurance for NCD-related services
	Existing NCD strategy	Unhealthy diet	Physical inactivity	Tobacco	Cause-specific mortality related to NCDs	NCD risk factors	
Brunei Darussalam	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Cambodia	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Indonesia	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Lao PDR	Green	Green	NA	Green	Green	Green	Green
Malaysia	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Myanmar	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Philippines	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Singapore	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Thailand	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Viet Nam	Green	NA	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

The cover rate for Malaysia and Thailand are 100%; Philippines, Indonesia and Viet Nam are 50%.

Source: Authors based on data from Dans et al. (2011, p. 684).

Nutrition affects economic development through *direct* losses in productivity, *indirect* losses from poor cognitive function, and *impairment* of personal functioning through ill health (Ehrlich & Harte, 2015; Sen, 1999). Most importantly, the health effects of malnutrition are an impairment to an individual’s ability to live a life they deem fulfilling. This is particularly insidious where social discrimination or political exclusion could result in a greater vulnerability to ill-health. Forms of reduced access to healthier options can also be seen in food markets in concerning evidence that nutritious foods are more expensive than high energy-density foods, which have minimal nutritional value. This cost and nutritional value disparity has grown over the first decade of the twenty-first century in Southeast Asia (FAO et al., 2020). Disaggregated data on these disparities by location, disability, wealth, ethnicity and gender is currently lacking. It will be important to gather that this information in order to design remedies to these inequities (GNR, 2020).

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<sup>284</sup> Including cardiovascular diseases (such as heart attacks and stroke and often linked with high blood pressure).

Malnutrition has multiple causes and consequences. It can affect a single individual repeatedly and in interconnected ways over the course of their life. Indeed, a person who experiences ailments or undernourishment early in life often has an increased risk of becoming overweight later in life. Policy interventions must also consider links between micronutrient deficiency and consumption excesses. For example, an individual can be overweight and anaemic at the same time (Trigueiro et al., 2020). An imbalance in micronutrient consumption is not just a consequence of inadequate income, but also a result of poor information and education on healthy eating due to social exclusion. Addressing nutrition must thus also explicitly address social justice objectives.

### 4.1.2. What is ASEAN’s Nutrition Problem?

Across ASEAN Member states there is a variation in the characteristics of malnutrition, though there is a common feature that the poorest countries and households are more vulnerable to undernutrition (Mbuya et al., 2019). Figure 4.3 shows that the nature of nutrition problems varies across the ASEAN region. Three countries face one main nutritional burden, but not the same one in each case: they are Brunei (overweight) (Box 4.1); the Philippines (stunting); and Singapore (anaemia).

Figure 4.3 Malnutrition burdens in ASEAN

	No. of burden	Features of Malnutrition				
		Low birth weight	Stunting	Overweight	Diabetes	Anaemia
Brunei	1	●		●	●	●
Indonesia	2	●	●	●	●	●
Cambodia	2	●	●	●	●	●
Lao PDR	2	●	●			●
Myanmar	2	●	●		●	●
Malaysia	2	●	●	●	●	●
Philippines	1	●	●	●	●	●
Singapore	1	●		●	●	●
Thailand	2	●	●	●	●	●
Viet Nam	3	●	●	●	●	●

Source: Authors based on data from GNR (2020).



#### Box 4.1 Brunei Darussalam

Brunei's progress on malnutrition is mixed. It is on course to meet global targets for child undernourishment and diabetes amongst women, but not for diabetes amongst men, female anaemia, adult obesity (especially females), and child obesity (especially boys) (GNR, 2020).

This in part can be attributed to a diet low in essential nutrients, such as calcium – which contributes to musculoskeletal health (J. Leong et al., 2016; Prentice, 2004; Ward, 2012). National dietary data indicates that unhealthy diets are particular evident in male children, especially in high consumption of sugar sweetened beverages (NHANSS, 2011). Starch-rich rice tends to be a family's main energy source, and is typically consumed with meat, fish or chicken and spicy sauces. Intake of vegetables and dairy products is low, while salt, sugar-sweetened beverages and processed meat consumption is high.

Brunei already has six of the nine national policies recommended by the Global Nutrition Report 2020 in place, indicating significant political commitment and action. These include the "Brunei Darussalam Multisectoral Action Plan on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, 2013–2018"; national guidelines on nutrition and physical activity in education; the Multisectoral Taskforce for Health ; and increased maternity leave.

A significant obstacle in addressing these issues is a lack of data. Of the six indicators that can be measured, only one (adult female diabetes) is classified as 'on course'. Beyond this, the evidence of greater overweight and obesity rates in male children is not well understood. There is scope to improve the design of national surveys (NHANSS and WHO STEPS Risk Factors), which have lost data and obscured important messages regarding the health and nutritional status of rural populations, indigenous people, and long-term temporary workers who account for around one-fifth of the population (Dalzell, 2020).



Six other other countries face a double burden. In five of these, the double burden is a combination of anaemia and stunting, but in Thailand, the double burden is anaemia and obesity. Malaysia is one of the wealthiest countries among the 41 countries worldwide who suffer from all three types of malnutrition (GNR, 2020).

Anaemia appears to be a growing problem throughout the ASEAN region. Only Brunei and Singapore have made some progress against diabetes in their populations. Women are more likely to be overweight in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, but men are more likely to be obese in Singapore. There is also a growing problem of childhood obesity.

The incidence of overweight children aged five to nine years is greater than one in four in Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore (GNR, 2020). Stunting prevalence is above 30 percent in five ASEAN countries<sup>285</sup> and wasting is prevalent in Indonesia and Cambodia. ASEAN maternal mortality rates are below world averages but the risk in Lao PDR is 20 times that in Singapore. A recent ASEAN report indicates that AMS have recognised the importance of addressing the challenge of malnutrition by improving multisectoral coordination mechanisms (ASEAN, 2016j). The *Global Nutrition Report 2020* shows that no ASEAN Member State is on course to meet more than two of the ten global nutrition goals.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Lao PDR (36 percent); Indonesia (36 percent), Myanmar (35 percent), Cambodia (32 percent) and the Philippines (30 percent).

<sup>286</sup> The GNR sets out ten goals: six of these goals are Maternal, Infant and Young Child indicators: low birth weight, stunting in children under 5 years of age, wasting in children under 5 years of age, overweight in children under 5 years of age, anaemia in women of reproductive age and exclusive breastfeeding. There are also four diet-related NCD indicators in adults: salt intake, raised blood pressure, diabetes and obesity.

### 4.1.3. What are the Policy Implications?

The identification of suitable intervention pathways requires an appreciation of how and why food is consumed and the design of initiatives that are nutrition-sensitive or nutrition-specific. These initiatives involve multiple actors throughout the entire food environment. This 'food environment' refers to the physical, economic, political, and socio-cultural context in which consumers engage with the food system to make decisions on acquiring, preparing, and consuming food.

On the supply side, initiatives might undertake innovations to increase the nutritional value of food. This can be done, for instance, through: securing shorter value chains, adopting fortification (addition of valuable micro-nutrients to foodstuffs); improving storage of perishables; and reducing the use of food additives and hydrogenated fats (ASEAN, 2016j, p. 201; HLPE, 2017).

On the demand side, choices about food consumption and dietary patterns reflect food availability, aspiration, affordability, and acceptability. This decision matrix thus depends on incomes, information, time constraints, social and religion customs, and is also influenced by whether consumers have the opportunity to grow their own food. Lack of access to food – in the dual sense of physical and economic access – increases the risk of undernourishment, as well as of obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases (Walker et al., 2010). Longer work hours, urbanisation, and the availability of processed and fast food each contribute to poor nutritional and environmental outcomes (HLPE, 2017; Popkin et al., 2020).

Consumer behaviour may be influenced through interventions known as 'choice architecture' (Hollands et al., 2013). Through the use of regulatory schemes such food-based dietary guidelines, or advertising restrictions of

poor-quality foods. Another policy route is the rolling out of economic incentives/sanctions (e.g., 'sugar taxes', education programmes, food labelling) or food-based dietary guidelines (HLPE, 2017).

Food-based dietary guidelines have been shown to reduce social inequalities in diets in developing countries when targeted towards disadvantaged groups (Mayén et al., 2016). However, their potency may be limited if 'healthier' food is less energy intensive, less tasty or more expensive. Some fruit and vegetables, for example, can be cheap but are low in calories. Others can be rich in vitamins but too expensive.

"The high cost of many nutrient-dense foods in populations most at risk of undernutrition is a major barrier to resolving undernutrition and warrants urgent policy attention". (Global Nutrition Report, GNR, 2020, p. 85)

Southeast Asia has seen the sharpest increase in overweight populations with a 128 percent increase since 2000 (FAO, 2018). These regional and national challenges to meeting SDG 2 indicate the need for a comprehensive food and nutrition policy, using a food systems framework, which has the scope to increase spending and integrate nutrition into healthcare provision.

ASEAN's policy response has broadened from the 2014 Action Plan to Reduce the *Double Burden of Malnutrition* (2015–2020) to the 2017 ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Ending *All Forms of Malnutrition* (*italics added*). The 2014 plan initiated the elevation of nutrition to the development agenda. Examples include the promotion of breastfeeding; the strengthening of legal frameworks supporting healthy diets; the improvement of nutrition services across public health programmes; and the provision of financial incentives to adopt healthy diets. The case of breastfeeding is a case in point, with only 30 percent of children being exclusively breastfed at six months. It is estimated that 12,400 child and maternal deaths annually

could be attributed to inadequate breastfeeding. There is an urgent need to enact effective breastfeeding strategies across the region to be able to harness the health benefits for infants and young children (FAO, 2018).

While the 2017 Declaration reaffirms a high level of political commitment toward a multi-sectoral collaborative approach (across agriculture, public health and nutrition, and social welfare), there needs to be explicit and detailed linkages made between types of food and the impact on nutrition for different demographic groupings (infants and mothers in the case of breastfeeding). In March 2018, the Philippines led the creation of a framework to implement the Declaration. This is a valuable opportunity to have a more integrated food

and nutrition approach to health. It builds on prior collaboration with UNICEF, where ASEAN collated examples of healthy diet promotion in the Regional Report on Nutritional Security in ASEAN (ASEAN, 2016j). These include *nutrition-sensitive* interventions to increase the production and sale of nutrient-rich foods and *nutrition-specific* interventions to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables, reduce consumption of free sugars, salt, and fats, and encourage dietary diversification (ASEAN, 2016j). These examples serve as indicators of the types of the interventions that work, but should not be interpreted as blueprints. They can be used as ingredients of success, but their precise make-up should be subject to collective and contextual design (see Boxes 4.2 and 4.3).



#### Box 4.2: Lao PDR and breastfeeding

Early cessation of breastfeeding, inadequate complementary feeding practices, and poor and infrequent feeding habits are major causes of malnutrition in young children. Diets that lack animal protein, vegetables, and fruits are also a major cause of anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies among 6-15 month old infants.

In Lao PDR, The National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action (NNS-NPAN, 2010–2015) addressed anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies through home fortification of children's diets with Multiple Micronutrient Powders (MNPs). Developing and testing the delivery of MNPs was put in place with support from UNICEF, the European Union, and the Mines and Minerals Group in 2012. It also provided complementary feeding promotion and counselling focused on dietary diversity in three southern provinces (Saravane, Savannakhet, and Attapeu) of Lao PDR.

Two models were rolled out. The first freely distributed MNPs through the health sector, providing universal coverage with a particular focus on reaching the poorest and most remote populations for 6 to 23 month old infants. This

was integrated into a package that included IYCF and WASH interventions. The second model used market-based distribution of MNPs for 6 to 59 month old children through private sector outlets (e.g., pharmacies, shops) at an affordable price. A behaviour change communication strategy was also developed to promote appropriate complementary feeding and hygiene practices.

An external review showed that public sector distribution achieved between 70 and 99 percent coverage of the target population for subsequent rounds, while private sector distribution remained very low (less than 5 percent). The involvement of the Lao Women's Union at the community level was an important reason for the success of the public sector scheme, contributing to enhanced acceptability, better knowledge from caregivers, and adherence to MNPs. The private sector could supplement public distribution (especially in urban areas with higher incomes), but needs to be regulated in programme areas that provide blanket fortified food supplementation to prevent overconsumption of micronutrients.

Sources: ASEAN (2016b) and Fellmeth & McGready (2020, p. 11).







#### Box 4.3: Scaling up nutrition (SUN)

To accelerate progress towards reducing undernutrition, the six ASEAN members states faced with this challenge (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Viet Nam) have committed to the international movement for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN). This programme focuses on a critical 'window of opportunity' to eradicate the underlying causes of undernutrition: the first 1000 days after conception. It also provides a diagnostic and monitoring framework for each country. In Indonesia, the SUN movement has generated awareness of malnutrition prevention through the integration of two key social protection programmes: a national movement on the 'First 1000 Days of Life' (locally referred to as '1000 HPK') and a community empowerment programme that targets vulnerable groups. They utilise cash transfers to provide health and nutrition services, with parallel programmes to improve the knowledge and attitudes of mothers and families on maternal and child health (ASEAN, 2016j). A major outcome as a result of these efforts has been the increased coverage of cost-effective and nutrition-specific interventions.

Nutrition programmes in Cambodia and Lao PDR have organised around SUN Civil Society Alliances (CSA). In Cambodia, this networking highlights the 'importance of a unified voice' to strengthen coordination, pool funding, and improve advocacy. In Laos, the CSA is undertaking comprehensive nutritional mapping exercises to inform national nutrition planning. This has encouraged the government to increase spending on nutrition interventions (ASEAN, 2016j). Viet Nam is working towards aligning actions to national priorities, as laid out in the 2017-2025 National Plan of Action for Nutrition (UNICEF, 2019c). This explicitly identifies multi-sectoral coordination and multi stakeholder platforms as a key mechanism in facilitating behaviour change (UNICEF, 2019c). Similar collective action through multi-stakeholder platforms in the Philippines has led to the prioritisation of nutrition in national and local budgets, as well as taxation on sugary drinks. In Myanmar, initiatives include a fortification of the main cereal staple (rice) and maternity conditional transfers to encourage breastfeeding (PATH, 2018; UNICEF, 2019c).



The 'pillars of success' in these models appear to be collective action, plus a portfolio of measures to make behavioural change easier. Measures include fortification of staple food and monetary or non-monetary incentives to change (e.g., conditional transfers). A recent analysis found that there are also shortcomings in food supply chains, and food waste in perishable products such as fruits and vegetables is higher than for cereals and pulses in Southeast Asia (FAO et al., 2020). Farmer production organisations or other types of collective action to overcome an individual inability to improve the logistics of food supply are crucial to improving food affordability and use.

The absence of universal blueprints for improving nutrition does not stop lessons from being learned from global and regional examples – even if they are failures. The essential point is to identify how and why success or failure came about. One approach, double-duty actions (DDA), tries to identify common drivers,

such as: early life nutrition, diet diversity, food environments, and socioeconomic influences (GNR, 2020). These drivers can be used to develop a simple framework of factors to be considered when addressing multiple forms of malnutrition. They also help identify the feasibility and risks of adapting measures focused on undernutrition to address over-nutrition (Hawkes et al., 2020).

The logic of such an evidence-based approach highlights the existence of major data gaps on nutrition indicators (particularly the degree of disaggregation by location and social cohort). It also suggests a re-evaluation of modes of implementation. Rather than focusing solely on the short-term behaviour of an individual, policy design should look across the life-long behaviour of groups. Policy must pay attention to the inter-generational aspects of health systems in a capability model that encompasses the motivations and constraints under which nutritional decisions are made (WHO, 2019a).<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> See the Introduction to this report.

Evidence suggests a need for an integrated and multi-pronged policy strategy to address short- and long-term drivers of malnutrition for maternal, infant, and child health. The WHO formalised concerns about the vulnerability of groups through the establishment of the World Health Assembly (WHA) implementation plan in 2012. The case of wasting among children is a case in point, where the WHA goal is to reduce wasting to less than 5 percent in childhood. The ASEAN region, where this figure is around 10 percent, would need to reduce the prevalence of wasting by half to meet this goal (FAO, 2018). The targeting of health services (such as antenatal care, feeding practices, and early childhood growth monitoring programmes) and explicit linkages with food and nutrition programmes brings together health systems and food systems. This approach could also assist in more innovative thinking regarding, for example, social safety nets; the redesign of school feeding programmes; and the scaling up of nutrition-sensitive agriculture programmes.<sup>288</sup>

Efforts to improve food consumption and nutrition are likely to benefit from a foresight study to assist in policy making. This approach carefully weighs a range of expertise (e.g., from agriculture, environmental science, public health, behavioural economics and social welfare) to produce comprehensive strategies to improve population nutrition and health. It also embraces participatory forms of development to ensure that the attitudes and insights of consumers, small scale-farmers, and other stakeholders are included.

A foresight approach to evaluating nutrition will first identify key drivers that govern nutrition outcomes. These are likely to include some or all of the following: (i) wealth disparity and demographic transitions; (ii) insecure livelihoods and stunting linked to malnutrition; (iii) calorie sufficiency with nutrient insufficiency, which would focus on the relationships between human health across work and age profiles. It might also be valuable to engage with (i) cultural aspirations; (ii) nutrition education;

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<sup>288</sup> Cash and food transfers, subsidies, and vouchers.

(iii) regulation to shape food standards and dietary composition; and (iv) health and safety standards on food preparation, packaging, and sales, which would focus on global supply chains and the role of supermarkets and big business their soft power in influencing food choices; the role of advertising and lobbying in creating poor dietary outcomes; the impact of urban design in promoting lifestyles for healthy outcomes (cycling, walking, parks, playgrounds, street-lighting, street safety, social norms about who can walk safely during cooler times of the day). From these complex drivers and their connections and interactions a set of scenarios can be developed for deeper exploration from these complex drivers and their connections and interactions. Malnutrition and obesity both exist in different parts of the ASEAN region. Malnutrition has been a global concern for decades, and yet it persists. Obesity is also proving to be one of the most challenging dangers to human health, as wealth and urbanisation increase (generating the term 'obesogenic society'). Its causes are complex, and tackling obesity is recognised as a multi-faceted process (Government Office for Science, 2007).

Finally, all scenarios developed in a foresight approach can be categorised as 'pro-active' versus 'reactive' interventions and 'collective' versus 'individual' responsibilities (see Figure 0.14 in the Introduction). A complex, layered study can thus produce recommendations for policy information that address many different circumstances and locations, while creating a cohesive and coherent regional strategy for the next fifty years or so.

A foresight study can set the framework for charting the evolution of consumer behaviour over the life-course or across generations. It can also model supply-side factors (e.g., climate change, land use, water management) that affect the quality and quantity of food production. Foresight can help weigh the feasibility and risk associated with specific policy options and interventions.

The combination of measures to address the immediate causes through nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions (e.g., the World Health Organization's Essential Nutrition Actions) can create a virtuous cycle of resilient and sustainable health outcomes (GNR, 2020; WHO, 2019a). Due to considerations of scope, we consider only two key aspects of this in section 4.4: access to health coverage and access to water and sanitation.

#### 4.1.4. Key Findings

1. ASEAN countries are burdened with a triple burden of malnutrition coupled with rapidly rising prevalence of obesity and NCDs.
2. To effectively address the key drivers of malnutrition, it is essential to acknowledge and engage with the multitude of systems and sectors that influence what, when and how people eat. Intersectoral action and accountability are paramount to help families overcome the economic, social and political barriers they face to accessing enough nutritious food.
3. There is a need to introduce effective breastfeeding programmes, including the implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, and to address workplace maternity protection to support breastfeeding.
4. Policymakers should engage with all stakeholders in the food supply chain to increase the availability, affordability and consumption of healthy foods, including legislation to improve food quality and regulate and improve the information available to consumers so they can make informed decisions. This is necessary to help achieve national and global targets around healthy diets and reduction of overweight, obesity and NCDs.

## 4.2 Well-Being and Healthy Living

This section highlights how social inequalities faced by particular social cohorts make the objective of healthy living harder to achieve. The focus applied here diverges from a conventional epidemiological model that regards the incidence of disease as a matter of individual risk. It recognises that social inequalities make particular groups more vulnerable to disease, and moves away from the 'pathologies of power' (Farmer, 2004) that characterise the poor as being the cause of their own ill-health. The social determinants of health show that disadvantaged groups find it harder to access health services, which makes them more vulnerable to infectious diseases. There are also gendered differences in access where households may, for example, give preference to boys being immunised over girls (GPEI, 2018).

Shifting from an examination of non-communicable diseases to communicable diseases and the social determinants of ill-health, the focus is on those who do not have endowments and capabilities to maintain their health and live a life that they desire. The WHO's definition of health explicitly regards well-being as a component of health: '*Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*'. Yet, it remains difficult to identify the precise ways in which this should be conceptualized and measured.

One of the earliest composite health measures was the Physical Quality of Life Index in the 1970s, with dimensions on health and education. This was followed by the 1990 Human Development Index, which introduced income as an additional dimension (Hirai, 2020).

Both health and well-being have been assessed using objective and subjective criteria (D. A. Clark, 2014; Griffin, 1986; Parfit, 1984).<sup>289</sup> Objective assessments (such as the Human Development Index) draw on a list of attributes defined by experts. Subjective assessments (such as the World Happiness Report) rely on the accounts of individuals who inform experts of what **they** regard as the good life (Diener et al., 1998; Hirai, 2020).

Although difficult to quantify, subjective assessments encompass individual voices, and they shift the emphasis to understanding the lives of ordinary people (Gasper, 2004). In so doing, a clearer picture begins to emerge on the *interactions between physical and mental health risks*; positive correlations between heart disease and irascibility (Kawachi et al., 1996) and *between mental illness and social inequality* (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2019). An inverse relationship is seen between early positive emotional experiences and mortality risk in later life (Danner et al., 2001).

Inequalities in health are driven by a number of variables such as location, migrant status, income, disability and gender (Mohammed & Ghebreyesus, 2018). Regional inequalities in health can have significant adverse impacts on the health of individuals in all AMS countries. The distribution of the social costs from climate-change related outcomes indicate that Southeast Asia (and the Western Pacific region)<sup>290</sup> will incur the highest social costs from global warming by 2030, amounting to around US\$339 billion (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2018). Rising sea levels are another imminent climate-change threat, which will increase vulnerability to flooding along all coastal and low-lying areas (including many highly populated coastal cities). As underlying global temperatures rise by 1.5°C or 2°C (or even more), Manila is a city among the most likely to face the threat of submergence (Climate Analytics, 2019).

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<sup>289</sup> "What is good for someone is neither just what Hedonists claim, nor just what is claimed by Objective Theorists. We might believe that if we had either of these, without the other, what we had would have little or no value" (Parfit, 1984, p. 502 original emphasis); "if the question 'Subjective or objective?' is pressed, then the answer has to be 'Both'" (Griffin, 1986, p. 33).

<sup>290</sup> Again, note that the WHO classification of Southeast Asia, only includes three Southeast Asian countries, namely Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand.

<sup>291</sup> Examples of diseases for which vaccines are available include cholera, hepatitis B, typhoid, and measles.

The impacts of climate change are unequally distributed across the population, with those social groups who are living in low lying areas being more prone to increased flooding and an ensuing loss of livelihoods and well-being. Richer communities are more likely to gain access to national, regional, and global support when faced with climate-change related disasters or health emergencies.

A proposed health intervention cannot remain neutral to distributional implications, and must explicitly recognise the varying ability of social groups to draw more or less on health-capacity enhancing interventions. For example, improvements in ASEAN life expectancy appear to be have been driven by nationwide improvements in healthcare systems (Moore, 2020). However, reductions in infant mortality depend more upon the capacity of local clinics (Acuin et al., 2011). Where critical care is deficient, fatality can rise significantly, especially in low capacity areas, as seen in the case of recent epidemics like SARS (Christian et al., 2008).

## 4.2.0 Risk of Communicable Disease

The risks a particular disease places on an individual's health and livelihood depends on a combination of factors. These include health system capacity, incidence rates (number of cases, infectiousness), and the underlying resilience (health and well-being) of the individual. While more attention has shifted to non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases still account for 30 percent of annual global deaths. The incidence of communicable diseases has fallen as immunisation and sanitation campaigns have expanded, but coverage is not universal across disease types and populations.<sup>291</sup> The importance of communicable diseases in policy and public health management has become very clear

with the COVID-19 global pandemic, as seen in the different national approaches to its management. This Outlook report does not review the pandemic, which is still on-going. But much of the content in this section has additional resonance because of COVID-19.

Even with diseases for which a vaccine exists, repeat dosages can be needed to ensure continued immunity (e. g., MMR vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella), and disease may move from one organ of the human body to another (e.g., the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine for tuberculosis is 70 to 80 percent effective against TB meningitis, but the evidence is less robust regarding pulmonary TB (Abubakar et al., 2013). In the Philippines, where immunisation rates are low for measles and diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus (DPT), there are regular outbreaks of measles (Raguindin et al., 2021) as well pneumonia and diarrhoea (Purnomo et al., 2020). However, Indonesia also experiences spikes in the incidence of diarrhoea due to dense informal living conditions. Where vaccines are not entirely effective or do not exist, the capacity of the health system is crucial for epidemiological surveillance and rapid response. For example, Tuberculosis (TB) remains the single biggest cause of communicable disease related deaths worldwide. The lack of a comprehensive vaccine, that covers all incidence of TB requires risk management efforts to focus on its proven *social* determinants (e.g., poor living conditions and malnutrition). These are most potent where there is a high prevalence of diabetes and an ageing population. There are also differences in the incidence of disease between urban-rural environments for both communicable and non-communicable diseases (Htet et al., 2016). Disparities in the incidence of communicable diseases is a particular challenge as growing urbanisation results in a large informal sector population, living in poor quality housing without assured water and sanitation. These people are

often in low lying areas where stagnant water breeds malaria and enables rapid transmission of water borne diseases (Coker et al., 2011).

These gaps in health vulnerability and health provision are present in a social policy environment that is also dealing with the containment and growing occurrence of newly discovered diseases that require greater policy focus on containment across a wider social landscape.<sup>292</sup> The ASEAN region has been exposed to the threat of 13 out of 17 major neglected tropical diseases including protozoan, bacterial and viral infections (Hotez et al., 2015). The 2014 H5N1 virus outbreak in Cambodia and Viet Nam, and the 2013 Dengue epidemic in Lao PDR, have tested and provided opportunities for improved policy co-ordination. There has also been an increase in preparedness for public health emergencies of international concerns such as Ebola, MERS Cov and Zika outbreaks (Kumaresan & Huikuri, 2015).

ASEAN has established a system of regional cooperation in reporting disease in compliance with WHO International Health Regulations (IHR), even in states with low response capacity.<sup>293</sup> This has had a positive result in improving reporting procedures for key diseases, such as dengue, and is a testament to the importance of linking IHR core-capacity improvements to existing health burdens in the member states and across the ASEAN region.

The ASEAN region has also recognised the interaction between people and the wider environment through the ASEAN Rabies Elimination Strategy (ARES). This involves a range of stakeholders to identify socio-cultural, technical, organisational, and political challenges in the prevention and control of rabies. The emphasis on behavioural change included the integration of rabies programmes into the school curriculum and the development of appropriate communication tools to address common perceptions on the role of dogs. This

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<sup>292</sup> The emergence of a range of communicable diseases in the early 2000s with pandemic potential, including but not limited to SARS (2003), H5N1 (2005–2006), H1N1 (2009) and H7N9 (2013) was a major reason for the adoption of the IHR (Caballero-Anthony, 2018).

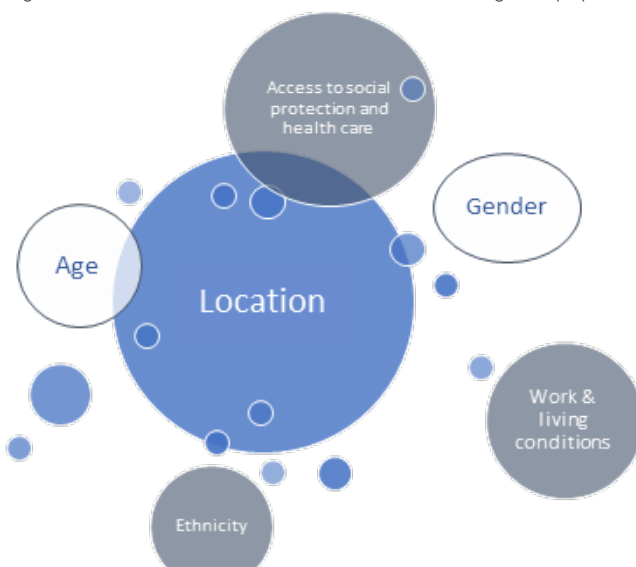
<sup>293</sup> Cambodia and Lao PDR.

inclusivity raised social awareness on rabies' causes, available emergency assistance, and the importance of responsible pet ownership.

Managing communicable diseases is far more challenging for the group of diseases that do not have a vaccine, as has been highlighted during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. As cases began to rise from January 2020, a regional response was initiated by the ASEAN Health Sector bodies (ABVC, 2021). In ASEAN (as throughout the globe), some policy responses have raised equity concerns. For example, widely praised control in Viet Nam and Singapore involved treating migrant workers differently from wider society (CNN, 2020). There have been variations in the way each nation calibrated its policy responses, and the stringency of policy measures such as lockdowns and restrictions (Anand, 2020). Most importantly, the disease has reiterated the need to recognise the distributional dimension of ill-health, as economically vulnerable groups found it challenging to adhere to lockdown rules (which resulted in a loss of work and an associated reduction in income to support themselves and their families).

With the growing incidence of new diseases across the globe and uncertainties regarding the capacity of regional health systems, the ability to manage health shocks can become more dependent on the resilience of individuals. While health systems in the ASEAN region have increased their capacity to provide health services in the aftermath of outbreaks in recent decades, the less successful experience of managing rabies, and the earlier experiences of containing influenzas, suggests there is a greater need to work with communities to understand how their livelihoods and lives expose them to natural and human hazards, so that proposed health measures do not push them into greater economic and social distress. Using health protocols that shore up the ability of the community to manage and cope with health directives, turns communities into 'drivers of change', rather than the passive recipients of policy, improving the likelihood of successful health interventions (Kar & Chambers, 2008).

Figure 4.4: Social determinants of health for migrant populations



Source: Authors

This analysis reinforces the rationale for a socio-cultural framework on health management. The primary challenge is how to identify those most at risk. To illustrate the types of questions required to address this challenge, Figure 4.4 shows a slimmed-down version of Figure 4.1 to highlight the individual characteristics of a migrant's life that may influence his or her health and well-being. Cross country collaborations are essential when addressing the health coverage of cross-border migrant workers (Guinto et al., 2015; Van Minh et al., 2014).

There is a growing evidence-base on migrant adults but far less on their families (Rosa Dias, 2009; Trannoy et al., 2009). Migrant children are more likely to be invisible to local health systems and therefore to have missed immunisations or be vulnerable to misdiagnosis (Shen et al., 2015; Vearey et al., 2020). Whilst measures may have been taken to address undernutrition, stunting and education gaps, there is almost no evidence on the psychological burdens migrant children face (Graham & Yeoh, 2013). This includes Left Behind Children (LBC), not just those in a new place. Left behind children suffer separation anxiety and depression that could adversely affect their well-being (Chindarkar, 2020).

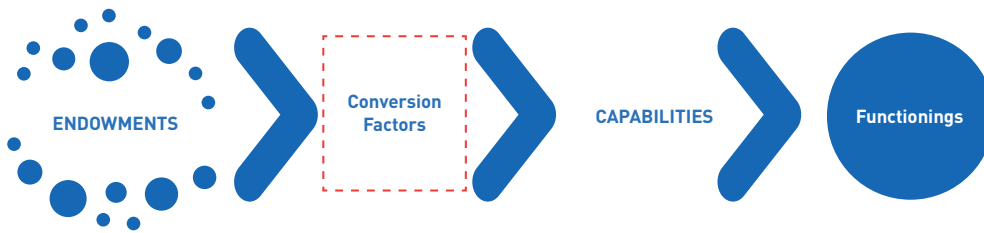
### 4.2.1. Bringing Mental Health into Healthy Living and Well-Being

Mental health was brought into global health goals with the advent of the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Feeling actively mentally engaged and being able to interact with others are at the core of the WHO's focus on social inclusion and equity, universal health coverage, human rights, and sustainable development (WHO, 2004).

This recognition of the burden of mental illness is part of a shift to a socio-psycho model that sees physical and mental health as inextricably inter-related (Patel, 2017). In this sense, mental health is understood as 'a state whereby an individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community' (WHO, 2004, p. 12).

This is also in keeping with the understanding of the CA, wherein well-being is made up of both physical and mental health (D. A. Clark, 2005; Sen, 1985). Where an individual is excluded, they are far more likely to suffer a weak or thin set of *conversion factors* to assist them in achieving better *functionings* (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Mental well-being and sparse conversion factors



Source: Adapted from Chiappero-Martinetti & Venkatapuram (2014) and Hart (2019)

There is a variety of triggers for mental ill-health across different age groups, with adolescent data showing a significant relationship between bullying at school and anxiety and substance use (WHO, 2017a). A recent study shows that there are currently two legislative approaches taken to ensure the provision of mental health counselling for youth: the first is to introduce mental health services through legislation on the provision of mainstream education (e.g., Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore), the second approach is to introduce mental health services through legislation on child protection and/or legislation for inclusive education (e.g., Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, and Viet Nam) (Nishio et al., 2020).

The impact of mental illness among youth imposes a burden on their families and it can also trigger disabilities later in adult life (Vigo, Thornicroft, & Atun, 2016). Mental disorders also have a direct impact upon an individual's capacity to work, as well as on individual and family well-being (Fellmeth & McGready, 2020). The long-term impact of mental illness among young people affects their well-being and their ability to enjoy autonomous living (Fisher & Cabral de Mello, 2011).

The WHO estimates that mental illness in its various forms accounts for 30 percent of non-communicable diseases and 10 percent

of all diseases worldwide, and also that it triggers other forms of health disorders, such as substance use (WHO, 2018b). While these triggers are now established in the global literature, and the SDGs explicitly identify the link between mental health and substance abuse, there are currently no established indicators for identifying the impact of mental ill-being on achieving the SDGs.

Hirai (2020) proposes two additional proxies for mental health ('death rate due to substance use disorder' and 'alcohol consumption (heavy episodic drinking)') to supplement the original 12 health indicators set out by the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) (Sachs et al., 2019).<sup>294</sup> Hirai also replaces 'life expectancy at birth', with 'healthy life expectancy at birth', as this reflects the reality of "well-being" more accurately.<sup>295</sup>

The dashboard in Table 4.1 illustrates each country's performance on each indicator against globally-set target values. A green rating denotes SDG achievement, Yellow, orange and red indicate increasing distances away from SDG targets (Sachs et al., 2017). While ASEAN countries have performed well in terms of reproductive health, there is a distinct variance in HIV and TB. In general, infant immunization is also more widespread than Universal Health Coverage.

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<sup>294</sup> The SDG Index was created in 2016 to rank countries globally; it is updated annually. For the data source and reference year of each indicator, please refer to page 50 of the report (Sachs et al., 2019). The indicators used by Hirai are the following : Reproductive health where there was a selection of 5 out of 6 indicators; Communicable disease, where there was a selection of 2 out of 5 indicators; NCD, where there was a selection of 3 out of 7 indicators; Health service, where there was a selection of 2 out of 7 indicators . Additionally there was the inclusion of two summary indicators for overall health: 'life expectancy at birth' (for objective well-being) and 'life evaluation' (for subjective well-being) plus 2 additional proxies for mental health.

<sup>295</sup> Hirai's data is taken from WHO (2018a) and relates to the year 2016.



Table 4.1: SDG Goal 3 dashboard in ASEAN countries

		Target				Top 5					Bottom 5					ASEAN
						Singapore	Brunei	Malaysia	Thailand	Viet Nam	Indonesia	Cambodia	Philippines	Myanmar	Laos	
Reproductive health	Maternal mortality	>70	70<x<105	105<x<140	>140	10	23	40	20	54	126	161	114	178	197	92
	Birth with health personnel	>98	98>x>94	94>x>90	>90	99.6	100.0	99.4	99.1	93.8	92.6	89.0	72.8	60.2	40.1	84.7
	Under 5 mortality	>25	25<x<37.5	37.5<x<50	>50	2.8	10.5	7.9	9.5	20.9	25.4	29.2	28.1	48.6	63.4	24.6
	Neonatal mortality	>12	12<x<15	15<x<18	>18	1.1	4.7	4.3	5.3	10.6	12.4	14.9	13.6	24.1	28.2	11.9
	Adolescent fertility	>25	25<x<37.5	37.5<x<50	>50	3.7	10.9	13.4	51.8	29.0	48.0	49.9	59.9	29.0	63.3	35.9
Communicable diseases	HIV	>0.2	0.2<x<0.6	0.6<x<1	>1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
	TB	>10	10<x<42.5	42.5<x<75	>75	47.0	64.0	93.0	156.0	129.0	319.0	326.0	554.0	358.0	168.0	221.4
NCD	Death by NCDs	>15	15<x<20	20<x<25	>25	9.3	16.6	17.2	14.5	17.1	26.4	21.1	26.8	24.2	27.0	20.0
	Traffic Death	>8.4	8.4<x<12.6	12.6<x<16.8	>16.8	3.7	8.0	22.3	31.7	24.0	15.5	19.0	10.7	19.5	15.0	16.9
	Death by air pollution	>18	18<x<84	84<x<150	>150	2.6	13	47	61	64	112	150	185	156	188	100
Mental health	Death by drug use	>2.0	2.0<x<3.0	3.0<x<4.0	>4.0	0.42	1.15	3.07	3.45	2.17	0.64	1.81	2.31	2.16	2.25	1.94
	Alcohol consumption	>9.0	9.0<x<16.0	16.0<x<23.0	>23.0	32.2	9.8	9.1	16.8	14.4	6.4	10.9	12.1	8.9	16.6	13.7
Health service	Universal health coverage	>80	80>x>70	70>x>60	>60	92.4	76.5	72.9	76.4	71.1	61.8	61.9	57.9	58.4	53.0	68.2
	Infant with vaccines	>90	90>x>85	85>x>80	>80	95	97	93	99	94	75	84	88	83	82	89

Note: Target values for the additional indicators 'death by drug use', 'alcohol consumption' and 'healthy life expectancy' were set by following the methods in Lafortune et al. (2018). For example, the green thresholds for 'death by drug use' and 'alcohol consumption' were set at around the top 25% of the distribution and the red thresholds were set at around the bottom 35% with reference to 'TB'; the green threshold for 'healthy life expectancy' was set at around the top 15% and the red threshold was set at around the bottom 35% with reference to 'life expectancy'.

Source: Sachs et al (2019), IHME (2018) and WHO (2020a)

Interestingly, *all* countries perform badly with regard to objective and subjective measures of well-being and mental health. Policy measures globally have tended to focus on high-risk individuals (Fuhrer & Keyes, 2019; Jacka et al., 2012), rather than on understanding mental well-being as a continuum affecting the *entire* population.<sup>296</sup> As a result, many disorders go undetected and up to 70 percent of disorders are untreated (Vigo et al., 2019; Wainberg et al., 2017). In ASEAN, this 'treatment gap' is estimated to be as high as 90 percent, even where treatments are available (Sharan, 2017). Low take-up may reflect social stigmas or a fragmented health system (Wainberg et al., 2017). There is also evidence that the level of stigma varies by spatial location. For example mental illness has been associated with lower negative perception in rural areas of Viet Nam than in urban Hanoi (Ta et al., 2016).

While mental illness has been recognised as a major challenge in the ASEAN region, the ability to secure widespread access to mental health facilities is a challenge that exists both at the global and the ASEAN level. The difficulty is most severe when providing support to vulnerable social cohorts. While a global meta-review indicates that women have higher rates of mood and anxiety disorders, women can find it harder than men to access mental health facilities (Steel et al., 2014). In gendered contexts where women are more likely to be the subject of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), they have a greater propensity for suffering from mental ill-health.<sup>297</sup> A study of women in rural Viet Nam indicates that both emotional and physical IPV can trigger suicidal thoughts and self-harming behaviour (Fisher et al., 2013). Two sub-groups of women - elderly women and pregnant women - are more vulnerable

<sup>296</sup> Similar to learning disorders discussed in Theme 3.  
<sup>297</sup> IPV is discussed at length in section 4.3.1.0. The social determinants of health indicate that those who are lower down the social gradient are more adversely affected by health shocks. In the case of mental health, the social gradient works against those who are most vulnerable to economic shocks such as unemployment and social shocks such as discrimination (Alegria, et. al. 2019).

than others to suffering from mental illness due to the caring responsibilities and physical demands placed upon them. In both Cambodia and Viet Nam, older women are less willing to come forward to access health facilities, despite recording high levels of despair and loneliness (Knodel & Chayovan, 2008; Knodel et al., 2009).

*Elderly women:* By 2050 the number of elderly women across the ASEAN nations will increase, especially in Viet Nam, Singapore and Thailand.<sup>298</sup> Within the elderly cohort, the proportion of the very old (80+) will rise. As life expectancy rises, there is a greater incidence of mental illness (such as dementia); depression (due to loneliness), and non-communicable diseases (such as diabetes, pulmonary diseases and cancers).<sup>299</sup> This presents many social and fiscal policy issues for social protection, retirement planning, workforce participation, skills training, disability housing, abuse, disaster management, and intergenerational relations (VNCA & UNFPA, 2019).

The provision of mental health services across ASEAN is currently very limited but most countries have some form of plan for elderly men and women.<sup>300</sup> Families are often subject to social stigma or reliant upon traditional healers (ASEAN, 2016j). Ageing requires more hospitals that can cater for geriatric patients and are easily accessible. Individuals requiring domestic assistance, continuing to live with their families, or living in full time care homes, will also all increase.

This picture demonstrates a need to know much more about ongoing inter-generational relationships within families, as sons and daughters migrate to cities or raise their own families. Respect for the elderly is traditionally high in the ASEAN nations, but living under stress in close quarters may explain the modest increase of violence against older people in some countries. ASEAN countries could learn from China's encouragement of care in the community. Addressing intergenerational issues effectively will require a more integrated and foresighted approach that plans well into the future and recognises the wider issue of the demographic ageing of the entire population.

*Pregnant women:* Lower levels of agency and empowerment contribute to a high incidence of stress and mental problems for women in general (Seedat et al., 2009). They can be particularly at risk during childbearing years, due to the associated social pressures of having a family. The transition to motherhood represents an important phase of physical, physiological, psychological and societal change for women. The danger is highest during pregnancy<sup>301</sup> and the 'perinatal period', after giving birth (Gelaye et al., 2016; Howard et al., 2014). In their most extreme forms, mental disorders such as postpartum psychosis and severe perinatal depression can lead to suicide (H. E. Knight et al., 2017; Vijayakumar, 2016).

<sup>298</sup> The average life expectancy of men is 69 years and of women is 75 years in Southeast Asia, and this would indicate that elderly women are more vulnerable to repeated shocks during their lives as they live longer. This would imply that there is a particular need to support elderly women, particularly as they do not often have equal access to economic resources due to social norms biased against women.

<sup>299</sup> Due to increased incidence of diseases such as dementia and Alzheimer's.

<sup>300</sup> Cambodia: National Plan for the Elderly 2003; National Ageing Policy 2017-2035 (2017); Indonesia: National plan of Action for Older Person Welfare Guidelines 2003; National plan of Action for Older Persons 2009-14; National Action Plan for Elderly 2016-19; Lao PDR: National Policy for the Elderly 2004; Malaysia: National Policy for the Elderly 1995-2005; 2010-2015; Myanmar: National Plan of Action on Ageing 2014; Philippines: Philippines Plan of Action for Older Persons 1999-2004; National Plan on Senior Citizens 2006-10; Philippines Plan of Action for Senior Citizens, 2011-16; Thailand: First National Plan for Older Persons 1982-2011; Second National Long-term plan for Older persons 2002-21; Viet Nam: National Action Plan on Elderly People, 2012-20.

<sup>301</sup> In low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), the prevalence of depression in pregnancy as determined through meta-analyses is estimated at 19%, compared with estimates of 9% across high-income countries (Woody 2017).



#### Box 4.4: Female mental health on the Thai-Myanmar border

The Thai-Myanmar border is home to between 500,000 and 1 million migrants and an additional 93,000 refugees (UNHCR, 2020) In Tak Province, Thailand, displaced groups include Sgaw Karen, Poe Karen, Burman and Burman Muslim populations.

Refugees live in camps on the Thai side, where non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provide for their basic needs. However, their movement into and out of the camps is restricted and employment opportunities are limited. By contrast, migrants living and working in towns on both sides of the border, work in a range of jobs but endure low and precarious incomes (Meyer et al., 2016). Lack of documentation renders them vulnerable to arrest and deportation, in addition to limiting access to healthcare and education.

Interviews with young women from both groups reveal the impact on their mental health. Their personal stories highlight a lack of empathy – and endemic interpersonal violence

“There isn’t anyone who will come to me and ask what I am going through”

“I forgot to cook and he got angry and kicked me which left me unconscious.”

Everyday life is difficult, with women often struggling alone to meet the needs of an entire extended family. Scared about facing an uncertain future, their voices are a testament to their suffering:

“I have no direction I can go, nowhere to run away or escape this trouble. Sometimes I think I want to choose the path of suicide.”

“I have so much burden in this life... I have never been lucky. I am carrying this very heavy burden. Sometimes it feels like I cannot take it anymore.”

But amongst this stark reality, there are pockets of communal support from friends, neighbours, religious leaders and traditional healers. These social mechanisms cannot resolve underlying circumstances but can offer a sense of belonging, identity and hope;

“I realise that I am not alone going through the burden of these difficulties but that there are more people like me” (Fellmeth & McGready, 2020, p. 1).



The burden of perinatal mental disorders is inequitably distributed. They fall disproportionately on those living in poverty or in stressful environments, such as living conditions endured by migrants and refugees (Box 4.4). Female migrants are already vulnerable to the psychological effects of higher levels of violence and trauma (Connelly et al., 2013). The additional demands of motherhood without a social network (on account of forced displacement) can lead to extreme pressure, and even planned migration can lead to these disorders (IOM, 2015; Shishegar et al., 2017).

### 4.2.2. Policy Implications

In the face of new health challenges, both in relation to communicable and non-communicable diseases there may be a greater need for regional co-operation. There is considerable scope to leverage regional commonalities and expertise through more integrated regional cooperation in health policy.

While mental illness has been recognised as a major challenge in the ASEAN region, increasing the availability of mental health services should be prioritised. These services need to be accessible to socially and culturally vulnerable groups, such as women, poor adolescent youth, or older populations.

### 4.2.3. Key Findings

1. Reducing social inequalities helps vulnerable groups access healthcare and avoid disease.
2. Communicable disease can be managed by addressing social determinants such as malnutrition and poor living conditions.
3. Effort is required to ensure that responses to emerging infectious diseases such as COVID19 are equitable and inclusive.
4. Mental well-being requires more policy attention – especially for women, the youth, older people and migrant communities.

## 4.3 Human Security and Social Protection

The idea of people-centred security is reflected in the three pillars of the ASEAN Community: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). ASEAN has also promoted the idea of a 'culture of prevention' as part of its understanding of human security in the health sector, with the ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention (CoP) for Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society adopted by the member states during the 31<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit held in Manila on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (ASEAN, 2017f).

The broader concept of human security is a foundational concept for the United Nations, that links peace, dignity (expressed in human rights and responsibilities) and development (United Nations, 2012a). Human security can be adopted at a global, regional or social level. Within a regional studies perspective, the security of one nation or region can undermine the sovereignty of another (A. Acharya, 2001; Fennell, 2009). A social perspective asks a simple fundamental question 'Whose security is the concern about?'

This question, in the ASEAN context, was first brought into the remit of the health sector, to help address the threats to national and regional health in the wake of the pandemics of the early 2000s. The process led to the adoption of regional surveillance systems (Caballero-Anthony, 2018). The creation of a regional network has also brought greater readiness to adopt the IHR guidelines of the WHO to protect national populations, and the creation of a regional network (Lo & Thomas, 2010).

### 4.3.0. Human Security Thinking

This idea of 'human security' is a form of non-traditional security coordination that strengthens the monitoring of the outbreak of infectious diseases; it was a major reason for the expansion of immunisation drives and information sharing between nations in the region and further beyond (Wibisono, 2017). The concept reaches beyond geo-political thinking to support people-centred, context-specific and prevention-oriented policy to protect and empower (A. Acharya, 2001; Gasper, 2020). There are also close overlaps with ideas in the field of humanitarian practice, where human security is used as a lens to focus on the provision of equitable welfare and justice – especially for marginalized minority groups or victims of human trafficking (Gasper, 2020).

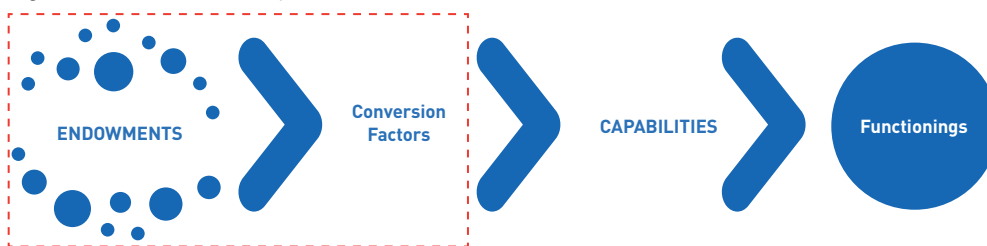
The concepts of human, and regional security are complementary, rather than conflicting, and address the need to protect society at *different* levels (Pitsuwan & Caballero-Anthony, 2014; United Nations, 2012a).<sup>302</sup> They also share an understanding that security is not generally about averting a direct conflict but is usually about ensuring a reduction in the *risk* thereof. 'Security' is the degree to which individuals, families and communities are able to face a range of potential intersecting exposures to human and natural hazards or social exclusion and discrimination.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> The UN Secretary-General's report that laid the basis for Resolution 66/290 was explicit: human security analysis is a "tool for assisting Governments in identifying widespread and cross-cutting threats to the prosperity of their people and the stability of their sovereignty" (United Nations, 2012b, para. 2).

<sup>303</sup> For example, "[tribal] groups who [simultaneously] face discrimination, economic vulnerability, and the lack of access to social and economic goods and services" (Banpasirichote et al., 2012, p. 5).

Figure 4.6: Human security, endowments and conversion factors



Source: Adapted from Chiappero-Martinetti & Venkatapuram (2014) and Hart (2019)

This view of human security ties in with Sen’s ‘Development as Freedom’ and ‘rights-based approaches’ in addressing ‘negative freedoms’ (such as fear or risk of violence) (A. Acharya, 2001). In terms of the CA (Figure 4.6), this indicates that the adoption of a human security approach provides a greater sector of endowments (more resources), as well as conversion factors for those who are marginalized (e.g., the right to additional support and guidance) to achieve their desired functions.

A human security approach has the ability to empower people as a means to improving their capabilities, sense of dignity and livelihoods (Pitsuwan & Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 203). It is therefore a framework for facilitating the implementation of ASEAN’s people-centred approach to ensure that no-one gets ‘left behind’ (Howe & Park, 2017).<sup>304</sup> By identifying the causes for a lack of *agency* and the inability to achieve particular *freedoms*, the use of a CA in the human security sphere can work to reduce these risks faced by disadvantaged minorities (Gasper, 2020).



<sup>304</sup> Similarly, in China human security is regarded as complementarity to national/state security (Ren, 2019), and the concepts of security are linked to the importance of institutional security (NHDR, 2019, p. 92).

The use of the CA also allows human security to be drawn on to address inequalities; especially the removal of violent threats to personal bodily security. A particular group that is affected by violence<sup>305</sup> is migrants. A conventional state-security approach would be to regard migration as a matter of national security or the 'securitisation of migration' as a way to reduce a national threat (Truong & Gasper, 2011). Another form of securitisation is that of the 'securitisation of development', where development is part of a larger exercise in international relations to move away from conflict to a shared future (Fukuda-Parr & Messineo, 2012).<sup>306</sup> Improvements to the risk

profile of particular groups through better welfare provision, violence prevention, and human trafficking reduction, can also enhance the region's sense of 'common security' (Gasper, 2020).<sup>307</sup>

A focus on collective or common security also implies a need to listen to the voices of disadvantaged communities,<sup>308</sup> not just individuals. It provides further recognition of the importance of participatory methods to collect voices and to build social protection measures that are better tailored to meet the needs of individuals and groups that face intersecting exclusions (Box 4.5).



**Box 4.5: Listening to communal voices on insecurity**

The adoption of listening as a form of people centred consultation has been adopted in Cambodia: '[The] added value of [the concept of] human security is in enabling communication around needs and people's conflicting aspirations' (Mine et al., 2019, p. 287). It is an effective method to initiate conversations about insecurities that people experience and about their hopes for the future (Sovachana & Beban, 2019, p. 40). It is also possible to use methods to draw out perceptions at the community level, using policy tools, such as surveys.

Chng and Jamil's (2019) study draws on an extensive 2012 survey ('the Singapore Conversation') which revealed perceived problems in community, health,

and economic insecurity. 'Growth-first' strategies were felt to have brought rising inequality, rising costs of housing and healthcare, and increasing pressures on an ageing population to work longer. In Thailand, the One-Stop-Crisis Centre (OSCC) was introduced in 2013 to receive 'all reports and leads on violence against children, women [and other groups], child labour, human trafficking, ...and under-age pregnancy. In addition to a hotline and website, the OSCC has a countrywide network of centres easily accessible by the public. This is an attempt to integrate various kinds of services provided by several government agencies, the private sector, and NGOs at the frontline as well as serve as a gateway...' (UNDP, 2014c, p. 33).



<sup>305</sup> See Section 4.2

<sup>306</sup> See Fennell (2009) for a critique of this approach with regard to food security.

<sup>307</sup> The term 'common security' emergence in Europe as a concept to avert the catastrophe of nuclear war. It shares with 'comprehensive security' the idea of protection against military and non-military threats. It is, however, a concept of 'security with' rather than 'security against' in keeping with the primary objective of deterrence.

<sup>308</sup> There is another aspect of human security, in particular, the security of the migrants, including "climate refugees". It places emphasis on the need for domestic and international policies to help those who must move, for instance, by protecting their rights in national laws and international agreements (Chantavanich et al., 2013).

### 4.3.1. Priority Areas for Furthering Human Security in ASEAN Countries

A wide range of issues has been identified as human security concerns for ASEAN countries (Gasper, 2020; Gómez, 2019; UNDP, 2009, 2014a). These include domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, corruption, drug problems, arms trading, transnational crimes, migration, inequality and social instability. They touch on several topics also addressed elsewhere in this report, such as the destruction of the environment and loss of livelihoods (atmospheric haze, pollution, climate change), natural disasters (water shortages, tsunami, cyclones, earthquakes) and health insecurities (contagious disease, loss of public sector health staff, growth of medical tourism).

It is worth remembering that many of these insecurities are the result of ongoing development (Gómez, 2019). They disproportionately affect vulnerable groups such as women, those with disabilities, the elderly and migrant workers. In this section, the discussion is confined to three priority areas not yet discussed at length elsewhere in this report, involving distinct groups of vulnerable people.

#### 4.3.1.0. Domestic and Sexual Violence

Domestic violence or intimate partner violence and other forms of sexual violence are serious problems in many ASEAN countries, as in many other parts of the world. It is difficult to obtain statistics on the prevalence of violence against women from official sources. Most of the available data is from sample surveys conducted in ASEAN countries by agencies such as the WHO (Table 4.2). Although available data provides a useful indication of the scope and nature of different forms of violence against women, many incidents of violence likely remain hidden.<sup>309</sup>

The proportion of women citing incidents of physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner ranges from 15 percent in the Philippines and Lao PDR to 44 percent in Thailand. In ASEAN countries, the proportion of women reporting incidents of physical and/or sexual violence in the last twelve months ranges from five percent in Indonesia to 22 percent in Thailand. Psychological and emotional forms of abuse (not including controlling behaviour) are especially high in Cambodia and Viet Nam compared to physical and sexual violence. No data is available for Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Singapore.

Table 4.2: Proportion of women disclosing the incident of different types of gender-based violence in ASEAN countries

	Year of survey	Intimate partner violence								Non-partner violence				
		Psychological violence		Physical violence		Sexual violence		Physical/sexual violence		Physical violence		Sexual violence		
		Life time	Last year	Life time	Last year	Life time	Last year	Life time	Last year	Life time	Last year	Life time	Last year	
Brunei	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cambodia	2015	32.0	14.7	15.0	4.7	10.2	4.1	20.9	7.7	13.6	2.6	3.8	0	
Indonesia	2016	20.5	7.5	12.3	1.8	10.6	3.8	18.3	4.9	9.3	1.5	18.5	4.7	
Lao PDR	2014	26.2	10.5	11.6	4.0	7.2	3.1	15.3	6.0	5.1	0.9	5.3	0	
Malaysia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Myanmar	2015	13.5	10.2	16.3	10.2	3.5	2.2	17.3	11.0	--	--	--	--	
Philippines	2017	21.6	12.9	13.5	4.4	5.2	2.2	14.8	5.5	--	--	--	--	
Singapore	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Thailand	2000	38.0	20.0	28.4	10.7	29.4	16.4	44.0	22.0	8.6	--	4.4	--	
Viet Nam	2019	47.0	19.3	26.1	4.6	13.3	5.7	32.0	8.9	11.4	1.4	9	1.2	

Source: kNOwVAWdata (2020).

<sup>309</sup> Domestic violence or intimate partner violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviours including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion used by adults or adolescents against their current or former intimate partners ( <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>)

The kNowVAW data shows that in most cases women are far more likely to report physical and sexual violence from an intimate partner than a non-partner. The proportion of women reporting acts of physical violence in their lifetime from a non-partner is significant in the ASEAN countries for which data is available – most notably, in Cambodia and Viet Nam. The prevalence of sexual violence from a non-partner is especially high in Indonesia.

ASEAN member states are committed individually and collectively to the elimination of all forms of violence against women. The 2013 “Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Elimination of Violence Against Children” explicitly includes a commitment to social and legal protection for victims of violence. For example, the Declaration refers to policies and measures to provide “justice, legal assistance, protection, social welfare services, education, and health services, including counselling and peer-to-peer support mechanisms, rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration into the community, and consider provision of programme for families to properly give support to victims/ survivors” (ASEAN, 2016e, pp. iv–v). Elsewhere it also refers to family support services, parenting education and public awareness raising to promote rights and create an enabling environment for victims and the public to participate in the elimination of violence.

The Asian Forum for Development and Human Rights has recently criticized the lack of progress in monitoring the tackling of violence against women within ASEAN nations. At a recent public dialogue in Jakarta entitled “Women and Children at Risk: Struggle of Combating Violence and Discrimination in ASEAN” (6 March 2020), the Asian Forum has raised concerns about women – especially those belonging to intersecting marginal groups (such as the LBGTQ community, labourers, peacebuilders, ethnic minorities) – remaining desperately insecure when it comes to gender based violence (The Online Citizen, 2020). This especially applies to those

belonging to intersecting marginal groups (such as the LBGTQ+ community, labourers, peacebuilders, ethnic minorities). Following the creation of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), it is suggested that ASEAN “has not been successful in holding Member States to account [for their] inability or unwillingness to provide effective protection and remedies for those in need” (The Online Citizen, 2020). Further work is required to ensure the collating of an evidence base on how current programmes to promote legal and social protection for violence victims proposed by ACWC are ensuring effective change.

Moving forward, the policy framework for tackling gender-based violence and abuse would benefit from a foresight analysis. A wide range of policies is required to tackle the causes and consequence of gender violence. The 2013 Declaration (with its commitment from ASEAN member states to legal reform and assistance, social welfare support, and education and health services including counselling, re-education and rehabilitation) offers a clear contribution, background and impetus for such a study.

A Foresight study would be able to combine insights from the huge array of influences that entrench or support domestic and gender-based violence as a day-to-day reality for so many. The first step would be to identify key drivers of change, and these might include any, or all of: expectations and norms of ‘masculinity’ (aggression, physical power, apathy), patriarchal privilege (male dominance), cultural and family influences (attitudes and socialisation processes), low self-esteem and economic hardship (Gibbs et al., 2020; Peprah & Koomson, 2014; Sikweyiya et al., 2020); wealth disparity and socio-economic differences in attitudes; insecure livelihoods, and challenges to safe economic independence for women; notions of privacy and public intervention in private spheres; the role of alcohol or drugs in violence; the role of education in challenging norms – and in identifying and supporting victims of violence; sanitary arrangements at school – and their importance in extending girls’



education beyond puberty (thereby delaying marriage and child-bearing, and increasing education levels amongst girls); secure travel arrangements to and from school, places of work, access to healthcare; street-lighting for safety in cities; workplace ‘ceilings’ that hinder women reaching positions of power and visibility, as role models for other women and girls; maternity arrangements that allow women to pursue work outside the home; public education about the unacceptability of domestic violence or stranger violence on women in all contexts; legal systems that acknowledge women’s rights to safety; identifying the transmitters and amplifiers of cultural values – education, public discourse, religion and religious entities, might all be amongst them; dress and modesty codes, and how they are policed, enforced or adapted; notions of ‘head of household’ and other designations of status within households (often adopted by external organisations, for example).

The complexity and subtlety of some of these drivers of change create a multi-layered picture to guide short and longer-term policy interventions and legal arrangements.<sup>310</sup>

Different influences may dominate in each part of ASEAN, but a foresight study will allow decisions to be well-informed, local in nature, and directed towards specified outcomes.

Since attitudes towards women in ASEAN countries, as elsewhere in the world, are firmly embedded in local attitudes and norms which are unlikely to change rapidly, the long-view and incremental nature of suggestions for intervention arising from a foresight study are likely to be particularly valuable. Political and structural resistance to effective change may also slow progress. A *long-term* approach that addresses these *risk* factors with foresight and provides a reference point for action, monitoring, and modelling over several decades is important and helpful. Foresight specifically allows scenario building to visualise future possibilities that may be unattractive as well

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<sup>310</sup> An example is found in Bogota in South America, where a succession of policies between the 1990s and 2015, including specific crime prevention programmes, (subsequently enhanced by ‘an impressive public space recovery programme’) reduced violent crime in the city to a significant degree (Soares & Naritome, 2010, p. 51). The simple process of making streets and public spaces more accessible to pedestrians and communities (for example by excluding vehicles, or by preventing parking in pedestrian-spaces) contributed to homicide reduction in the city.

<sup>311</sup> This section draws on Gasper (2020).

as those that are more desirable outcomes. A foresight study will enable the diverse ASEAN countries and cultures to identify pathways to the more desirable outcomes that are most suited to their circumstances and provide clear insights into how to avoid the less desirable outcomes portrayed in some scenario models.

A foresight approach can help evaluate policy options for countries with reference to different degrees of commitment, preparation, and organisation for transforming gender relations (see Figure 0.14). Relatively conservative societies are more likely to be inclined to react to gender violence with minimal efforts that mitigate only the worst outcomes. In many such cases, the main recourse for victims will be self-help perhaps bolstered by informal support from women’s groups. The social and economic costs of that approach will be clearly shown in a foresight study. More progressive societies that are more inclined to be proactive in planning and delivering effective change will be able to evaluate and affirm the benefits of interventions of different kinds.

A foresight study chaired by a senior official or government minister with clear lines of accountability and responsibility for transforming sound analysis and concrete proposals into the implementation of policy could be pivotal in galvanising political support and motivating policy responses for tackling gender violence within countries. At the regional level, this could be coordinated by a high-level advocate for violence against women and girls located within the ACWC.

#### 4.3.1.1. International Migration<sup>311</sup>

There is a growing number of migrant workers in ASEAN countries. The estimated number of migrants in Thailand has grown from 1.2 million in 2000 to 3.7 million in 2014 before reaching 4.9 million in 2018. Migrants now account for more than 10 percent of the labour force

(Harkins, 2019, pp. xi, 15). Although Thailand is the largest destination for migrant workers, Malaysia and Singapore have greater numbers of migrant workers per head.

While immigrant labour has enabled local people to move into more productive and lucrative work, most ASEAN countries have not viewed migration as a long-term experience and have failed to plan accordingly. Put another way, migration has typically been viewed as a short-term source of labour. Relatively little effort has gone into providing education and training or making local people aware of the benefits or needs of immigrants in an effort to facilitate social integration (Gasper, 2020).

The lack of planning and support services renders migrant populations across ASEAN countries especially vulnerable. The empowerment and social protection of low-skilled migrants are impeded by their cognitive invisibility, non-recognition and lack of voice which in turn redirects policy attention (Gasper, 2020). In contrast to their counterparts bound for European and North American destinations, ASEAN immigrants currently have no real pathways to residency or citizenship and are likely to remain second class citizens indefinitely (UN Women, 2013, p. 7).

Given the scale of demand for migrant labour, the lack of orderly planned entry, and the difficult of legally changing jobs, many migrant labourers have entered or overstayed irregularly. This has in turn, created opportunities for large scale exploitation and criminal activity. Lack of access to basic services and social protection has produced multiple forms of insecurity for migrants that often intersect. For example, long-term migration raises the danger of producing a new generation of uneducated, stateless

children who will grow up bereft of citizenship (e.g. Gasper, 2020). A more immediate difficulty for many migrants involves access to health services in the destination country. Notable barriers to healthcare include language issues, absence of health insurance and insufficient money to pay for treatment in public hospitals and clinics. In 2019 only two-fifths of Thailand's three million irregular migrants were enrolled in public health insurance schemes, and over half of school age migrant children were out of school (Harkins, 2019, p. xiii).

Low-skilled migrant workers, especially, have not done well in ASEAN nations. In 2017, there were an estimated 20 million (mainly female) domestic workers across the ASEAN region – 20 percent of the region's entire migrant workforce (UN Women & ASEAN Secretariat, 2017). Thailand and the Philippines heavily depend on these domestic workers. The remittances sent home by these women are an important source of economic support for their families and communities (Koehler, 2020). These domestic workers are particularly insecure because labour laws have been slow to reach the domestic sector (Fennell, 2021). In Singapore, for example, domestic workers only won the legal right to one free day per week in 2013 (Chng & Jamil, 2019). Part of the problem is that domestic work is typically not regarded as real work and is therefore excluded from policy discussions (Gasper, 2020).

Women also face challenges because of their lack of educational, linguistic capital and social capital (Koehler, 2020). In Thailand, "persistent labour abuses against women and men migrant workers continue" – especially amongst "seasonal agricultural workers [who] do not receive even the most basic protections" (Harkins, 2019, p. xii).

Table 4.3: Legality of sex-trade in ASEAN countries

	Prostitution	Buying sex	Brothels	Procuring	Solicitation
Brunei Darussalam	Illegal			no source data	
Cambodia	Illegal			no source data	
Indonesia	No prostitution laws				
Lao PDR	Illegal			no source data	
Malaysia	Legal			Illegal	
Myanmar	Illegal			no source data	
Philippines	Illegal	Legal		no source data	
Singapore	Legal			Illegal	
Thailand	Legal			Illegal	
Viet Nam	Illegal			no source data	

Source: Authors' based on Wikipedia [2020].

The sexual exploitation of women remains a significant problem despite being illegal to a greater or lesser extent across most ASEAN countries (Table 4.3). In many cases, migrant women enter the sex trade after obtaining legal status because they lose or fail to find a job and have taken on debt or require money (e.g. Kojima, 2011; Truong & Gasper, 2011). In policy circles sex work is “often conflated with trafficking... [even though] studies have found that the vast majority of people working in [for example] the Thai sex industry are employed there by choice” (Harkins, 2019, p. xiii).

To tackle vulnerability among migrant workers and their families, the 2014 Thailand *Human Development Report* has argued for the creation of an ASEAN Healthcare and Welfare Fund (UNDP, 2014a, p. 39). Such a fund, if properly resourced and administered across member states, has the potential to dramatically improve the well-being and human security of immigrant populations within the ASEAN member nations. Steps could also be taken to make social protection schemes ‘portable’ (i.e., able to be transferred from one location to another). Where migrants are mobile (especially temporary, circular and transient migrants), social rights and welfare benefits such as pensions and workplace insurance should be mobile too.

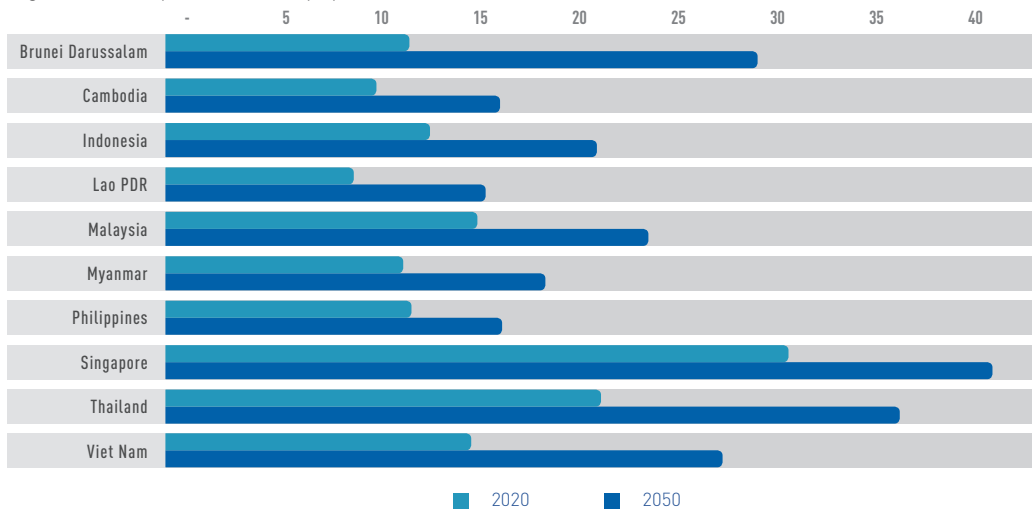
#### 4.3.1.2. Active Ageing

Many parts of the world, including ASEAN member states, are experiencing demographic ageing of the population. This means that a higher proportion of the population is older, and that individually people, on average are living longer. The concept of ‘active ageing’ has been developed to capture the desire for longer active lives, and the need to adapt to the ageing process over the life course. In practical terms, it embraces issues such as the reorganisation of working practices, higher retirement ages, and the reform of pensions. It also has consequences for social protection including healthcare and the provision of long-term care for the elderly.

The CA naturally lends itself to the analysis of active ageing from a social policy perspective (Arciprete et al., 2020; Lloyd-Sherlock, 2002). Ageing involves a set of deep complex changes that are reflected in the theoretical apparatus of the CA through conversion factors, resource allocations and value formation. For example, personal conversion factors change over the life-course (and in old age) as people require different bundles and levels of resources to function. Environmental conversion factors also evolve (for example, as a person makes the transition from care giver to care receiver).

The capabilities people have reason to value also vary with age. Finally, capability analysis recognises that functionings in later life depend crucially on the capabilities achieved in earlier life, as well as on past constraints and opportunities.

Figure 4.7: Proportion of the population over 60 in ASEAN countries, 2020 and 2050



Source: Authors' calculation based on UN DESA (2020) data

The available statistics show that all ASEAN countries are ageing (Figure 4.7). At present, older people in ASEAN spend up to ten years with impairments (Henning, 2019). These trends are likely to create significant challenges for pension schemes and the current level of social services. The present servicing of the needs of older family members places very large demands on the daily labour activities of women and children in their families (Yueng and Thang, 2018). These challenges need to be tackled through well-targeted long-term care policies. Consequently, 'active ageing' is important for avoiding the social and economic exclusion of elderly people. Active ageing is simultaneously an ethical and human right, as well as an issue relevant to economic sustainability.

**Box 4.6: Social protection and pensions policy**

The ageing of the population has been a major reason for addressing the need for pensions reform in Asia. There is also a concern that family structures are changing and that the traditional practice of children supporting their elderly parents is breaking down in a globalising world. As the extended family is replaced by a nuclear family set up, the need to look for new solutions is becoming more pressing.

The coverage of pensions policies is rather limited in the ASEAN region. In the case of Indonesia, the current system covers civil servants, with a similar provision for the armed forces. There are private employer funds for the banking and insurance sector, and all formal workers can also access this scheme. 100 percent of government employees take up the programme, but only 14 percent of private sector workers are covered. In the case of Thailand, there is a provident fund scheme for civil servants, which is far more generous (70 percent replacement rates) than the provision for the private sector (30 percent replacement rates). An Old Age Pension Fund (OAP) for the private sector was introduced in 1999, but this has not extended to the informal sector.

Different financing instruments may have different suitability in different countries. For example, individual retirement accounts have been relatively easy to develop in Singapore and Malaysia, but these have not gained traction in Thailand and Viet Nam. This is attributed to Thailand and Viet Nam having high levels of informal labour markets.

It is calculated that a universal social pension for all above the retirement age and indexed to per capita income (e.g., a benefit level of 15 percent of per capita income) would cost between 0.6 percent (the Philippines) and 1.33 percent (Thailand) of GDP in 2010. This would rapidly grow to between 1.4 percent (Indonesia) and 2.9 percent (Thailand) of GDP by 2030. While the cost of a universal social pension might be regarded as prohibitive, some form of a social pension is necessary to mitigate old-age income poverty. Social pensions could be considered as the necessary minimal cushion of retirement security for those who have been able to participate in formal contributions-based social security programs.

Source: Pasadilla (2011) and Asher & Bali (2015)

The ability to access entitlements in old age is influenced by past opportunities and choices. A key 'choice' is the ability to be the beneficiary of a pensions policy by saving for the future (Box 4.6), against spending money in earlier decades in the pursuit of developing one's cultural interests. Social protection policies are more beneficial for older individuals if they are able to respond to the heterogeneity of human living. This entails being able to respond positively and actively to a temporary loss of employment, including the need to acquire new skills (human capital) through training in the third or fourth decades of their life. While the context is different, there may be some general principles to learn from European and Japanese experiences (Box 4.7).

**Box 4.7: Ageing in Japan and Europe**

The AGE Platform (<https://www.age-platform.eu/about-age>) is a European network of non-profit organizations of, and for, older people. It promotes the full participation of older citizens in social and economic life, and collects good practices concerning active ageing. These include intergenerational solidarity, employment, accessibility, health, dignified ageing, social protection and inclusion, and social innovation.

The ASEAN-Japan Active Aging Conference is a valuable example of the kind of dialogue where ASEAN countries can acquire further capacity to find mechanisms to improve human security. The website (<http://aging-asia.info/active-ageing>) of the 3rd Conference provides valuable analysis. The ASEAN+3 (China, Japan, South Korea) Statement on Active Ageing is a relevant official result of the cooperation in this domain (Arciprete et al., 2020).

The 2016 “ASEAN Plus Three Statement of Active Ageing” commits the ASEAN Nations plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to the promotion of “greater inclusion for active aging in national policy making and action plans, including active employment policies, social protection, welfare and healthcare services...” (ASEAN, 2016d). In order to monitor progress toward active ageing, the ASEAN countries designed an ACTIVE Ageing Index (Zaidi & Um, 2019).<sup>312</sup> The index shows several interesting issues, such as the prevalence of gender-based differences in active ageing, widespread age-based discriminations, as well as problems linked to the accessibility of transport, services and infrastructures (Arciprete et al., 2020).

### 4.3.2. Social Protection in ASEAN

ASEAN members’ commitments to addressing Human Security concerns through the provision of social protection are evident in numerous declarations and regional and national initiatives. These include the 2007 Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers and the endorsement of the 2018 Global Compact on Migration (United Nations, 2018). The ASEAN *Cha-am Hua Hin Declaration on the Roadmap for the ASEAN Community* (2009-2015) make explicit reference to the importance of social protection (ASEAN, 2009b). This then fed into the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection (ASEAN, 2018c). The commitment reads:

Everyone, especially those who are poor, at risk, persons with disabilities, older people, out-of-school youth, children, migrant workers, and other vulnerable groups, are entitled to have equitable access to social protection that is a basic human right and based on a rights-based/needs-based, life-cycle approach and

covering essential services as needed (ASEAN, 2018c, p. 3).

Such sentiments resonate strongly with the capability approach to development (CA) and its commitment to promoting social justice and tackling social exclusion. In this respect, it is worth noting that the CA can be applied pragmatically to social welfare and protection issues (see Introduction). Instead of striving for a utopian social policy that seeks to raise capabilities across the board, it may be better to use the CA approach to ask how specific people and groups are managing, before striving to improve capabilities one at a time (depending on social priorities).<sup>313</sup> This kind of *targeted pragmatism* may be more effective than narrow approaches to policy that focus on single objectives for every person or group. It may also be more efficient and less costly to implement than more ambitious blanket-type approaches to social welfare that aim to promote the full range of capabilities and freedoms (D. A. Clark & Hodgett, 2019, pp. 243–244).

At the global level, the human security gateway provides a policy intervention on the ‘protection of people on the move’ in relation to political conflict and environmental stress. It emphasises the code of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) to individuals who have had to leave due to human and natural upheavals. As member states within the United Nations, the ASEAN countries already support the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Agenda 2030. All have acceded to the CEDAW and CRC, and seven have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, no country amongst the ASEAN member states has yet ratified any of the ILO Conventions on social protection, most centrally C102 on social security. Other Covenants and Compacts also require

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<sup>312</sup> In 2020, the ASEAN agreed to establish the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) (ASEAN, 2020c).

<sup>313</sup> This idea is behind Sen’s (2009) critique of transcendental/institutional justice.

immediate attention.<sup>314</sup> The ratification process is an effective way to sensitise all ministries, the cabinet, parliament itself, and the media, to the rights contained in the respective conventions. Moreover, once ratified, civil society has a legal anchor from which to claim these rights.

Currently ASEAN government spending on social protection averages three percent of GDP (ADB, 2019a).<sup>315</sup> However, there is a wide range across countries, from 0.1 percent in Myanmar to four percent in Singapore and Malaysia and 5.5 percent in Viet Nam (ADB, 2019a). In Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam, only a third of intended beneficiaries are covered (ADB, 2019a). Coverage varies by citizenship status, and by the nature of the labour market. The majority of citizens (as opposed to residents) in Singapore and Brunei are employed in the formal economy and have social insurance coverage. In Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar, only those employed in the formal economy enjoy social security. For the large migrant populations in Thailand, Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia (and for stateless or unregistered groups), there is inadequate social protection, if any (Koehler, 2020).

Some countries have eased restrictions on transferring payments into pension schemes (including Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) while other countries place minimum contribution restrictions on withdrawals (Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam). In the case of foreign workers, both Indonesia and Malaysia allow voluntary contributions of foreign workers to the provident fund scheme, but Brunei Darussalam and Singapore only allow access to nationals and permanent residents (Pasadilla & Abella, 2012). Thailand has added health security, with all Thai nationals having access to universal health care, and all registered migrants can, in theory, join the health insurance scheme for a registration fee (Harkins, 2015; Tangcharoensathien et

al., 2017). These ‘commitment gaps’ suggest unmet *current* challenges and concern for *future* ones. As ASEAN countries experience a ‘greying’ of their populations there will be a growing need to provide social protection.

### 4.3.3. Policy Implications

The fuller adoption of a human security approach would ensure that countries in the region can reduce the risk that is experienced by vulnerable individuals and groups. It ensures that individuals, families and communities are able to face a range of potential intersecting exposures to human and natural hazards. There should be specific policies designed to tackle the causes and consequence of gender violence, face by a large proportion of women across the region.

Social protection measures should be extended to cover currently excluded groups such as low-skilled migrants and older individuals. Creating a cushion for these groups, who are more likely to face shocks that they cannot bounce back from, will allow them to access funds that are essential to assist them to achieve human flourishing.

### 4.3.4. Key Findings

1. Human security thinking for social protection can help identify and reduce risks, protect rights, and promote capabilities.
2. Priority areas include – but are not limited to – domestic and sexual violence, international migration, and active ageing.
  - a. Effective social protection should prioritise capabilities across groups.
  - b. Stronger leadership and greater commitment are required to deal with gender violence and active ageing.

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<sup>314</sup> Examples include the ILO Convention on Domestic Work (C189) and on Homework (C177) which would introduce social protection for domestic workers and for workers in global production chains; as well as the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families, the UN Compact on Migration and the UN Compact on Refugees which each include provisions for social protection.

<sup>315</sup> Excluding Brunei, for which data is not available. As a comparator: the overall spending at country level ranges from 21.1% of aggregate GDP in Japan to 0.1% in Myanmar (ADB, 2019a, p. 6).

3. An ASEAN welfare fund, portable pension rights, and practical routes to citizenship could improve the position of overseas migrant workers.
4. Regional and national ASEAN commitments could be enhanced through the ratification of international protocols.
5. The media, unions, and civil society should be encouraged to participate in the framing of ambitious social protection reforms.

## 4.4 Public Services and Social Policy

The underlying message of this theme (and indeed across all themes) is the need to make social policies more effective, equitable and accountable. ASEAN policy makers have demonstrated their commitment to these goals through several key declarations but there appear to be some gaps.

In 2015, the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters adopted the Putrajaya Joint Declaration on ASEAN Post-2015 Priorities towards an ASEAN Citizen-Centric Civil Service.<sup>316</sup> The focus on a citizen-centric approach adopts the needs of the population as the starting point and is driven by the choices and concerns of the community. The ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection produced a revised Regional Framework and Action Plan in 2018 (ASEAN, 2018c). Its objectives are to reduce poverty and inequality; increase the capabilities of the vulnerable; and directly address the needs of persons with disabilities, the elderly, and young children by ensuring sustainable and equitable access to public services.

As early as 2002, ASEAN put together a “Healthy ASEAN 2020” vision (ASEAN, 2012d) and established a Regional Action Plan on Healthy Lifestyles 2020, promoting the improvement of social determinants of health (ASEAN, 2002a). The ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development

Agenda (APHDA) has work plans arranged into four clusters: promoting healthy lifestyles; responding to all hazards and emerging threats; strengthening healthy systems and access to care; and ensuring food safety (ASEAN, 2018f). The first cluster incorporates universal health coverage (discussed below) and addresses non-communicable diseases and mental health (discussed prior). The second focuses on reducing the incidence and burden of Rabies (Viet Nam, discussed prior), Dengue (ASEAN Dengue Day), and Malaria (Myanmar).

To examine the effectiveness of these commitments, health *treatment* and *control* through universal health coverage and health *prevention* through water and sanitation are examined, as well as sport and leisure. Sport and leisure are underappreciated dimensions that can have significant impacts on inclusion and identity, and not just on well-being.

### 4.4.0. Treatment: Universal Health Coverage

Health is a basic human need and a fundamental right (WHO, 1948). To fulfil this need, universal health coverage (UHC) is at the forefront of global, national and local efforts as part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015d). Moving towards UHC directly engages with SDG3 (Good health and well-being) and components of SDG2 (Zero hunger), SDG5 (gender equality), and SDG6 (clean water and sanitation) (WHO, 2019b). UHC is also at the heart of the ASEAN Post-2015 Health and Development Agenda (ASEAN, 2018f) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint (ASCC, 2016).

The aim is to ensure that everyone has access to the full range of essential, quality health services associated with promotion, maintenance and restoration of health. The focus is on ‘leaving no one behind’ and providing social protection coverage for those who are unable to cover the

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<sup>316</sup> It has the following missions: (i) enhancing existing measures for networking, mutual learning and sharing experiences among members; (ii) promoting and facilitating the exchange of best practices and public management innovations by enhancing the ASEAN Resource Centres’ role as experts in their respective competency areas; (iii) establish supporting initiatives to help ASEAN civil services develop and adopt cutting-edge practices; and (iv) implementing various programmes on civil services matters with the support and assistance of ASEAN dialogue partners and regional/international agendas.



cost, whether services are provided publicly, privately or through public-private partnerships.<sup>317</sup> UHC is one aspect of social protection that *disproportionately benefits the poorest people in society and thus makes an important contribution toward leaving no one behind.*

Primary health care is the foundation of UHC. It involves a whole-of-society approach to health and well-being, centred on the needs and preferences of individuals, families and communities. It addresses broader determinants of health to focus on interrelated aspects of physical and mental health and well-being (WHO, 2019b). Although every country has a different health system, it is important to consider six essential pillars: health services delivery, health workforce, financing, information systems, access to medicine and governance (WHO, 2007, 2020b).

Four member states within ASEAN have already established UHC, either through systems that are primarily tax-funded (Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Thailand) or through a subsidised contribution-based system (Singapore). Others have committed to the agenda. Indonesia, for example, launched a UHC programme in 2014 with the objective of covering the entire population by 2019 but needs further investment to be able to achieve the health SDGs by 2030 (Augustina, 2019). Myanmar has also recently introduced a new National Health Plan that promotes universal healthcare.

In 2017, 79 percent of citizens in Southeast Asian countries reported being satisfied with the availability of quality health care. This is slightly higher than a decade earlier (76 percent) and also higher than the 2017 OECD average (71 percent). Citizen satisfaction is

the highest in Singapore (93 percent) and the lowest in Viet Nam (62 percent). Over the last 10 years, citizen satisfaction with the healthcare system increased the most in Cambodia (by 16 percent), thanks to a series of health-finance policies aimed at improved access, particularly for vulnerable groups (Ensor et al., 2017). On the other hand, satisfaction has decreased the most in Thailand (by 5 percent). Although Thailand introduced a Universal Coverage Scheme in 2001, some research finds that a significant proportion of beneficiaries still use out-of-network services, suggesting either there is a lack of universal access, or that there is better service provided by private providers (Paek et al., 2016).

Public finance is a key driver of increased access to health care for the poorest and most vulnerable people, as well as for the emerging middle class that still struggles to afford private healthcare. Public finance allows risk to be pooled across an entire population, as opposed to the proportion that contributes to a health scheme. It can provide the funds to increase coverage of those outside contributory systems (as is the case in Singapore). This is vital for reaching people who work in the informal economy.

Evidence shows that systems driven by private sources of financing are often characterized by households going without care, or facing the risks of catastrophic health expenditures. Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam have social health insurance systems that are based either on contributions alone, or on mixed systems of contributions that combine full or partial subsidies for vulnerable groups. Coverage ranges from around 60 percent in Indonesia and Viet Nam to just over 80 percent in the Philippines (Koehler, 2020).

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<sup>317</sup> The Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing Development emphasises that public services must be extended to ensure that for those who are economically and socially marginalised there must be methods in place to prevent them from being pushed into poverty on account of health shocks and become even more vulnerable to ill-health and inter-generational poverty (United Nations, 2015a).



#### Box 4.8: Thailand's universal coverage scheme

Thailand introduced universal health coverage (UHC) in 2001. Funded primarily by taxes, this replaced a subsidised voluntary contribution system that was exacerbating social inequalities. Its stated objective is 'to equally entitle all Thai citizens to quality health care according to their needs, regardless of their socioeconomic status' (HISRO, 2012). The system is truly universal in that it covers all people regardless of citizenship and ethnicity (Purnomo et al., 2020).

The system is pro-poor in terms of extending health coverage to informal sector workers who previously lacked health protection and account for around 30 percent of the population (ILO, 2016). This inclusion resulted from collective action. Fuelled by evidence compiled by the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and the Health Systems Research Institute, Thai civil society formed a united front that made

UHC an election issue in 2001. This generated a political window of opportunity that encouraged bold financing reforms (ILO, 2016).

Rising labour and material costs have increased the state budget burden but alongside this, benefits include significantly more medical personnel, better quality of service, wide population coverage, and reduced out-of-pocket healthcare payments, especially for the poor (ILO, 2016; Purnomo et al., 2020).

Disparities between urban and rural hospitals remain which are exacerbated by budget allocations, private donations and recruitment issues. Rural residents prefer treatment at the better staffed and equipped urban hospitals leading to pockets of excess demand (Purnomo et al., 2020).



As Boxes 4.8 and 4.9 highlight, the introduction of UHC is a complex technical, social, and political undertaking. UHC is not simply the product of rational planning, careful technical design, or sound management. Rather, it depends on political and institutional factors that are, in turn, shaped by history, culture, and society.



#### Box 4.9: Indonesia's move towards universal health coverage

The introduction of universal health coverage (UHC) in Indonesia was designed to address concerns of social instability after the 1997 Asian financial crisis. As this coincided with attempts to decentralise power to local governments, a range of different health provision models evolved. Successful local models relied on policy experimentation and of a close understanding of specific local issues. UHC has become a contested political issue, with national policymakers appropriating local success or attempting to replicate local models irrespective of context (Pisani et al., 2016).

Within four years of its launch in 2014, Indonesia's National Insurance Programme (or JPK) covered three quarters of the population (Agustina et al., 2019). Its founding principles were equitable access, service quality, and strong primary and preventative healthcare. The maintenance cost in terms of

government expenditure is around 3.2 percent of GDP (Ministry of Health, 2019). This has enabled healthcare resources to match the demands of a growing population, improving coverage and reducing service fees (Agustina et al., 2019; Purnomo et al., 2020).

However, there is a wide inter-district dispersion of puskesmas (primary healthcare centres) in terms of numbers and quality (Ministry of Health, 2019; Purnomo et al., 2020). There have also been a number of administrative challenges in terms of localised capacity issues and payment delays for service providers (Pisani et al., 2016; WHO, 2020e).

Future challenges include the development of affordable benefits packages, improvement of service provision for isolated areas, the reduction of out-of-pocket expenses and rising costs, and addressing unhealthy lifestyles (Purnomo et al., 2020).



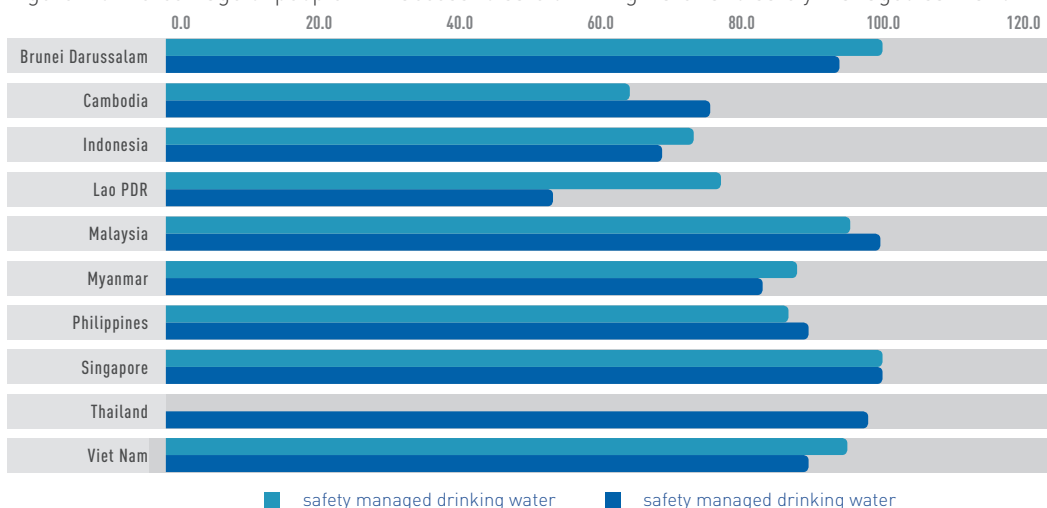
## 4.4.1. Preventing Ill Health

### 4.4.1.0. Water and Sanitation

Access to safe water and sanitation is not only an intrinsic human right, but also instrumental for reducing the incidence and spread of many infectious diseases (United Nations, 2010).<sup>318</sup>

Safe drinking water is available to at least 90 percent of the population in most ASEAN member states, except for Cambodia (64.8 percent) and Indonesia (73.7 percent) (Figure 4.8).<sup>319</sup> Unsafe drinking water causes 1.2 million deaths worldwide per year through links with cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis, typhoid and polio (Ritchie & Roser, 2019). Only three ASEAN nations have above 90 percent coverage for improved sanitation. In the Philippines and Viet Nam sanitation coverage is significantly below that of safe drinking water (ASEAN, 2019b).

Figure 4.8: Percentage of people with access to safe drinking water and safely managed sanitation



Note: Data relates to 2018 or nearest available year

Source: ASEAN Stats (2020)

At first glance, average coverage of 88 percent for safe water and 84 percent for improved sanitation seems a good record. However, if this coverage is weighted by population, it shows that over 100 million people are without safe water and over 150 million people live without improved sanitation. This is a significant policy challenge especially in the Philippines, Viet Nam and Indonesia.

ASEAN initiatives on safe water are based on the 2012 ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHDR) (ASEAN, 2012e) and the work of a number of regional bodies since the endorsement by the Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM) of the Chiang Mai Ministerial Declaration on Managing Water Resources in Southeast Asia in 2003 (ASEAN, 2003).<sup>320</sup> The declaration was mapped out in the 2005 *ASEAN Strategic Plan*

<sup>318</sup> 'Safe water' defined as water from an improved source that is accessible on premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination. Improved water sources include piped water, boreholes or tube-wells, protected dug wells, protected springs, and packaged or delivered water (World Bank, 2020d). 'Sanitation' defined as improved sanitation facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite. Improved sanitation facilities include flush/pour flush to piped sewer systems, septic tanks or pit latrines; ventilated improved pit latrines, composting toilets or pit latrines with slabs (World Bank, 2020).

<sup>319</sup> These figures are taken from (ASEAN, 2019b). The World Bank (2020) has significantly different data for the Philippines and Cambodia.

<sup>320</sup> Including the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR, n.d.); ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN); ASEAN Cooperation on Environment; ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM); and the Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE).

of Action on Water Resources Management under the oversight of AWGWRM and the ASEAN Secretariat's Environment Unit (ASEAN, 2005). AWGWRM initiated the development of the ASEAN Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)<sup>321</sup> Country Strategy Guidelines in 2005 (ASEAN IWRM, 2020) but even at inception ASEAN water systems were already overstretched due to growing populations, natural disasters, climate change and pollution (Hutton & Chase, 2016; Levy et al., 2016).

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR, n.d.), organized a Regional Consultation on the Right to Safe Drinking Water & Sanitation (with emphasis on rural communities) in 2017 (ASEAN, 2017d). In 2018 AICHR held the first Coordination Meeting of the Thematic Study on the Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation in ASEAN (AICHR, 2019). This is a joint effort of AICHR and AWGWRM to strengthen the integration and development of the ASEAN community towards promoting the right to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in the region.

At the national level, strategy direction and progress has been varied. Singapore has abundant rainfall but few natural water sources. With a growing population, Singapore has had to focus on source diversification, re-use, conservation, regulation, taxation and pricing. Singapore has succeeded in using recycled waste water through investment in technology, and the careful public education and marketing surrounding its NEWater brand of high-grade treated wastewater (H. Lee & Tan, 2016; C. Leong & Lebel, 2020). Conservation measures have helped to reduce per capita water consumption by 10 percent since 2003 (PUB, 2018). However, the total water consumed continues to rise.

Viet Nam has adopted a decentralised water resources management system with responsibility split between the Ministries of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE), and the Ministry of Construction, Agriculture and Rural Development (Sagris et al., 2017). At the local level, water provision is managed by Provincial People's Committees (PPCs) that have considerable financial and administrative autonomy. Urban water, however, is typically provided by state-owned enterprises (World Bank & WSP, 2014).

Despite having a widespread river network, Viet Nam suffers periods of water stress and drought. Water consumption is managed by relatively higher tariffs and measures to reduce waste (McIntosh, 2014). The move to market principles has also led to the establishment of a design-build-operate approach, and to experimentation with Public Private Partnerships, where water utilities have become autonomous state-owned enterprises (Li & Rawat, 2020).

As connection fees can inhibit access of the poorest, Viet Nam has focused instead on recovering costs through tariffs over many years. There has also been a move towards international collaboration, with the Da Nang Water Supply Joint Stock Company (Dawaco), setting up water operators' partnerships (WOPs)<sup>322</sup> with the Dutch water operators' organization, VEI (formerly Vitens Evides International) in 2007, and in 2008 the Prime Minister followed the example of Singapore in decreeing that industrial parks and urban residential areas were required to separate storm water and wastewater (McIntosh, 2014). Viet Nam now has almost universal access to safe drinking water (ASEAN Stats, 2020).

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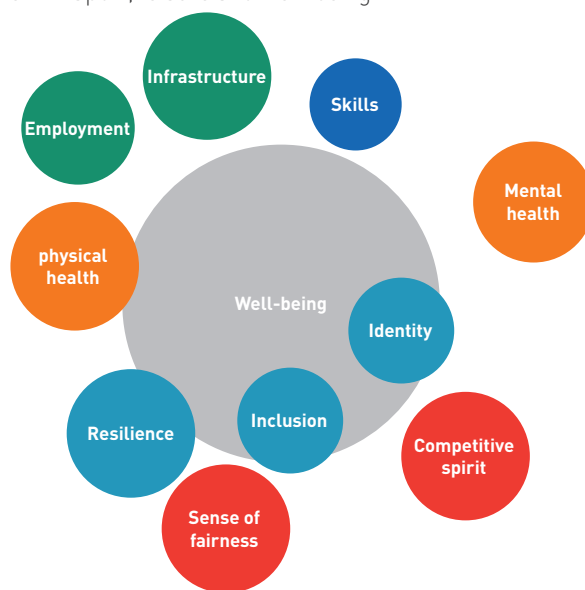
<sup>321</sup> ASEAN's IWRM focus on six water management issues, including i) water supply management; ii) irrigation management; iii) stormwater management; iv) flood management; v) water pollution management; and vi) sanitation management, which is at variance with the measure adopted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) that measures the degree of implementation of IWRM across four elements. While three of these are the same as that of ASEAN (i.e. environment, institutions and management tools), the fourth element is that of financing for water infrastructure and ongoing costs of water resources management (UNEP, 2018).

<sup>322</sup> WOPs are defined as 'cooperation between water operators ... for providing support for capacity building of public water operators', with the goal of strengthening local water services 'while ensuring that WOPs are recognized as important means of achieving internationally agreed targets' (UNSGAB, 2006, p. 3).

### 4.4.1.1. Sport and Leisure

The second area of ill-health prevention is sport and leisure. Each can make a huge contribution to the quality of ordinary people’s lives – especially in contexts where life is harsh or there is otherwise genuinely little to do (D. A. Clark, 2002). Such activities can be vital for facilitating rest and relaxation, alleviating stress, and promoting happiness and joy (among other important capabilities).

Figure 4.9: Sport, leisure and well-being



Source: Authors

Leisure is typically neglected as a component of human well-being and development. However, leisure and sport are tightly linked with social and cultural aspects of development in a variety of ways (Figure 4.9). Insight can be gained from reflecting on the capabilities – or human function(ing)s – that leisure helps to improve (D. A. Clark, 2002, 2005). The latest round of the World Values Survey (2010–2014) suggests that leisure time is highly valued. Of nearly 6,000 survey responses in Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand: 78 percent indicated that leisure time plays either a “very important” or “somewhat important” role in their lives (WVS, 2020). Primary data collected for this Outlook report from a survey of 1,068

people in Malaysia found that 54 percent of people in Malaysia (between 21 and 60 years of age) actively participate in sports at least once a week (Ponniah, 2020b).

The World Health Organization’s identification of a ‘global epidemic’ of childhood inactivity highlights the fact that global society is not paying sufficient attention to mental and physical health, especially in the case of teenage girls (WHO, 2020c).<sup>323</sup> Although this can sometimes be attributed to social norms or lack of opportunity, it does suggest significant scope and urgency for policy makers to facilitate greater adolescent physical and sporting participation.

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<sup>323</sup> See also Gallagher (2019).

Sport in particular is not just instrumental in ill-health prevention (Darnell et al., 2016). It can play an important role in the entire development process. In addition to physical and mental well-being, sport can reduce youth participation in anti-social activities, increase new livelihood opportunities and foster a sense of group or national sense of belonging (UNOSDP, 2016). All these aspects are touched on here, as each can have a direct or indirect impact on well-being.

As Nelson Mandela noted, the potential of sport to act as a catalyst for social change and inclusion is multi-dimensional: 'Sport has the power to change the world... it has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair' (quoted in SDGF, 2018, p. 7).

Sport encourages social cohesion and inclusion, as well as helping to refine core values of fairness, equality, and respect for rules and others, as well as equality (level-playing field) (UN Sustainable Development Goals Fund, 2020; UN Sustainable Development Goals Fund, 2018). Sport can, in these ways, enhance the well-being of individuals, communities and entire societies (Beutler, 2008; Darnell et al., 2016). Sport can also offer ways of reaching marginalised members of society (Levermore, 2008).

Sport has been cited as a means to both 'normalise' and more importantly to 'liberate' people with disabilities, by empowering them to choose their own independent pathways (D. M. Anderson et al., 2008, p. 186). This is particularly true when an activity is part of a sport, because it can be seen as part of a 'socialisation process' (D. M. Anderson et al., 2008, p. 187). Sport's potency as a unifying common language has been recognised across numerous fields, including conflict resolution and refugee assimilation.<sup>324</sup> Team sports, in particular, generate feelings of camaraderie

and a sense of belonging through on- and off-field activities (McDonald et al., 2019).

It is important to recognise that social exclusion occurs at multiple levels (macro, meso, and micro) and across interconnected dimensions (geographic, relational, functional, and power) (McDonald et al., 2019). Research in the USA and Australia concludes that the potency of sport as a medium for inclusion is "conditional and context dependent" (St John 2007; McDonald et al., 2019, p. 936). There remain a number of legal, structural, and attitudinal barriers to more inclusive participation (Wilson and Koo, 2013) at grass roots level. This especially applies to girls and women, who are disenfranchised on account of age and gender, and to children anxious to fit into new social environments (Doherty & Taylor, 2007).

For persons with disabilities physical activity is often presumed to be irrelevant, but evidence from Malaysia, suggests that sporting aspirations and fun-seeking are not only appreciated by more able-bodied people (D. M. Anderson et al., 2008; E. K. Wilson et al., 2013; N. C. Wilson & Khoo, 2013). Although a number of ASEAN countries have participated in regional and global Paralympic Games since the 1970s, participation on the global stage is still dominated by developed nations; domestic participation (especially for girls and women) is held back by the lack of suitable infrastructure and by negative attitudes from the media, corporate sponsors and society in general (even including family and friends) (N. C. Wilson & Khoo, 2013).

From a policy standpoint, researchers conclude that better training of female teachers is needed, since school is the source of inspiration for a significant percentage of disabled athletes. Sporting institutions also need to combine so-called 'able' and 'disabled' sporting events, rather than treating 'disabled' events as an 'other'. Attention also needs to focus on the emotional needs of persons with disabilities

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<sup>324</sup> See for example Chee (2020).

who are engaging in sporting activities, and the availability of appropriate role models who can alleviate their sense of social isolation (D. M. Anderson et al., 2008).

Even if sympathetic coaching is provided at the community level, active participation by girls from marginalised groups (whether able-bodied or not) is not a certainty. Participation may depend on whether a change of clothes is required, or if physical activity is being promoted in single or mixed groups (Doherty & Taylor, 2010). Even, where interventions are carefully designed, they can still *reinforce* social stereotypes and exclusions, rather than alleviate them (Doherty & Taylor, 2010).

Attempts to integrate migrant youths in Swedish cities, for example, have highlighted the social norms that inhibit sporting participation by girls from particular ethnic groups (Ekholm et al., 2019). Their absence, or their inability to communicate or to perform well at a sport that they do not know, can reinforce their sense of being 'different', rather than serving as a way of increasing 'belonging'. Research indicates this is particularly problematic for young girls (Doherty & Taylor, 2010). Any targeted programme with this group needs to take into explicit account the multiple exclusions that have to be overcome. Increasing access may not be enough to increase the uptake of sport by young women.

Sport has been used as a means of nation building for otherwise disparate groups. Sport can be viewed as a cultural practice with the evident capacity to generate events and experiences through which 'imagined communities' are made real (Porter, 2017).<sup>325</sup> Hosting multilateral sporting events can

contribute to reinvigorating local infrastructure and labour market opportunities, as well as by improving dialogue, understanding and tolerance among countries (The Business Year, 2014). For example, the biennial Southeast Asian Games are a vehicle for promoting nationalism, while also highlighting the fact that the athletes belong to a wider ASEAN community.

Sports can also play an important role in raising social awareness. Research undertaken in Tanzania, found that children who participated in HIV/AIDS education programming through sport-focused peer coaching showed better knowledge of, and intentions towards, safe behaviour versus children who had taken part only in the school-based national curriculum. Researchers concluded that "the sport-based approach is an effective means of communicating desirable information about safe sex behaviours to a population of at-risk adolescents." (Darnell et al., 2016).

The importance of sport and leisure to well-being and cultural development has been recognised by UNICEF, the WHO and ASEAN. Many of the cultural exchange programmes highlighted in the *ASEAN Workplan on Youth 2016-2020* involve a variety of leisure activities. Prioritising sport for peace, inclusion, and social development is reflected in *ASEAN's Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint*, as well as in workplans focused on cultural communication and awareness, peaceful co-existence, healthy lifestyles and sporting skills. *The ASEAN Work Plan on Sports 2016-2020* notes how sport can bring people together; foster a sense of ASEAN community; strengthen resilience through healthy lifestyles; and build capacity and skills (ASEAN-SOMS, 2019).

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<sup>325</sup> See Theme 1 Identity.

ASEAN has followed efforts by the United Nations to mainstream sport into social policies but has focused on cultural objectives. For example, the ASEAN School Sports Council aims to promote youth solidarity, inspire sporting talent and encourage cultural exchange among ASEAN member states (Ministry of Education, 2011).

A newer initiative with a more substantial social component is the Government of Thailand and United Nations exchange of best practices on 'Integrating sport into youth crime prevention and criminal justice strategies...' convened in Bangkok in January 2020. Delegates reflected on using sport to "provide a sense of belonging and an outlet for emotions" and to empower girls through life skills (UNODC, 2020).

In Malaysia the crowdfunding organisation Crowdsukan uses the development of sport facilities to promote peaceful coexistence and inclusive development. It focuses on conflict zones and disadvantaged groups with programmes such as a Street Child World Cup in Indonesia, and uses sport to promote community resilience amongst domestic workers in Singapore (United Nations, 2017b).

Addressing the need for more sport and leisure (for all the reasons outlined above) requires a complete reappraisal of ideas of decent work and a 'work-life balance', more than just the provision of more cinemas or running tracks. The ability to rebalance social gradients, and to ensure that even people who are disadvantaged (e.g., by low income, ethnicity, or sexual orientation) can access sport and leisure to improve their well-being is a powerful lever for human development.

With an ageing population in many countries, there is also an urgent need to look beyond the current youth-centric approaches to sport by recognising that sport and leisure, in one form or another, is relevant for *all* people and *all* age groups. There is plenty of research showing that leisure and play are important for younger children's development, health and well-being (Coyl-Shepherd & Hanlon, 2013; Goldstein, 2012; Kleiber & Barnett, 1980).<sup>326</sup> Studies also illustrate how leisure activities and sport contribute to the mental and physical health of older adults (Heo et al., 2013; Stenner et al., 2020), helping to preserve cognitive function and physical function among the elderly (Sala et al., 2019).



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<sup>326</sup> See also the advice for parents on the UK Government's NIDirect website that includes "How play helps children's development" (nidirect, 2020)





**Box 4.10: ASEAN 2034 world cup bid**

- June 2019: Thai PM announces ASEAN's joint bid for the 2034 World Cup (the idea was also mooted in 1996, 2011 and 2017).
- October 2019: Under the banner of 'One Vision, One Goal, One Community: Strengthening Unity Through Sports', ASEAN Sports Ministers agreed to establish a dedicated Technical Working Group led by Thailand in the lead up to ASEAN's bid to host the World Cup in 2034.
- November 2019: At a signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between FIFA and ASEAN relating to investment, capacity building, and education for football in the ASEAN region, the FIFA President welcomed ASEAN's plan to bid for 2034 World Cup.

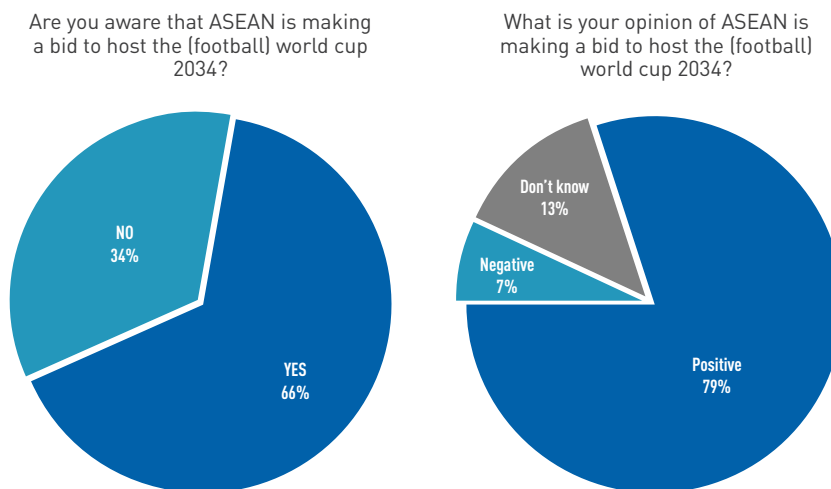
Source: Ponniah (2020b) based on ASEAN-SOMS (2019), Azharie (2019) and Low (2019).



In the light of all of these arguments about the universal need for sport and leisure opportunities across the whole population of the ASEAN nations, the bid by ASEAN to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup is a very positive development (Box 4.10). World Cup bids and competitions involve considerable national and regional commitment, and require large financial outlays. The 2018 World Cup in Russia is estimated to have cost US\$12 billion (Sheetz, 2018). These costs, and any potential impacts they may have on people, need to be weighed against the potential of sport to contribute to socio-economic and human development.

To investigate further for this Outlook report, Endeavour Land has administered a survey covering 1,068 Malaysians to find out how ordinary people view ASEAN's World Cup bid (Figure 4.10). The results show "widespread awareness and... support for ASEAN's bid to host the 2034 World Cup amongst the Malaysian... public" (Ponniah, 2020b). Building on this support base, it should be possible to use this public appreciation and cooperation for promoting many of the goals and objectives set out in ASEAN's 2025 Community Vision (Ponniah, 2020b).

Figure 4.10: Perceptions of the ASEAN 2034 World Cup bid



Source: Ponniah (2020b).

## 4.4.2. Policy Implications

As discussed in this theme, ASEAN member states face new health challenges due to the epidemiological transitions, different forms of malnutrition and various kinds of infectious and non-communicable disease, as well threats of natural disasters. To a large extent, public health care is currently viewed as a national concern within ASEAN countries.

One example is preventative health approaches to address unhealthy dietary habits. Adequate, timely and predictable funding is key to ensure the effective delivery of health and nutrition interventions. Advocacy efforts should be carried out to encourage traditional donors to increase their spending on this area and encourage private sector participation. Current funding for such programmes comes from disparate sources and is spread across numerous government departments (Di Ciommo, 2013)<sup>327</sup>.

A greater emphasis on sustainability in the water sector among the member nations is required, as all ASEAN countries are vulnerable to climate risks, though the degree of risk varies. By focussing on treating wastewater before it is released into water bodies or re-used would allow countries to rationalize their water tariffs as part of a water conservation strategy.

Countries can also reduce their Non Revenue Water (NRW) share by improving the distribution and transmission of infrastructure. Furthermore, there should be concerted efforts towards improving their data systems, and collecting and analysing data around water delivery, water quality and water levels of the source body.

By adopting a more inclusive build-up to sporting events and platforms for all ages and groups wider participation in sport can be achieved. Sports programmes should be designed to include all members of the community. They should be able to encourage young girls and older women who are often not welcomed into these spaces. Provisions should also be made to ensure that there are opportunities for PwD and for the older generation to enjoy 'active living' sporting programmes.

## 4.4.3. Key Findings

1. To a large extent, public health care is currently viewed as a national concern within ASEAN countries. In the face of new challenges, there is considerable scope to leverage regional commonalities and expertise.
2. Increasing revenues through taxes on unhealthy consumption and lifestyle elements will incentivize healthier behaviour. These taxes are likely to become effective when they are harmonized across the ASEAN nations to avoid parallel imports and other issues.

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<sup>327</sup> In Thailand, for example, the ministries of public health, agriculture, commerce, and education all allocate funds for programs whose components target malnutrition, as do the Thai Health Promotion Foundation and the National Health Commission (Tontisirin et al., 2013).

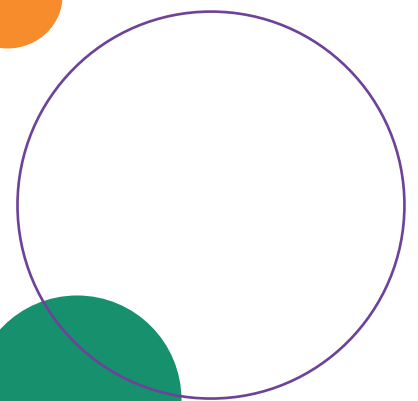
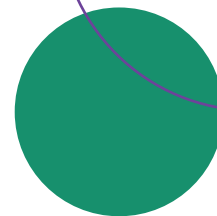


3. Streamlining redundant processes and functions within and between healthcare systems of the respective countries, while effectively maximising the patient-facing share of public health personnel and attempting to improve overall resource allocation.
  4. Boosting awareness on key health risks among citizens and substantially increasing resources for early diagnosis and prevention of major diseases to improve chances for a healthy life and reduce total healthcare costs.
- Focusing on diseases that have high disability effects. Enabling treatments that initially require higher budgets but reduce long-term burdens on patients and the healthcare system.



# 05. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

An overview of policy approaches to discuss ASCC's policy response to foreseen challenges and to highlight potential future ones.



# 5. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.0 Summary Findings

The purpose of this ADO has been to discuss ASCC's policy response to foreseen challenges and to highlight potential future ones. Given the documentation available, this has generally been limited to an overview of policy approaches, rather than on policy implementation or impact.

The ASEAN bloc has evolved into one of the most dynamic economic regional groupings in the world, but member states continue to face a number of socio-economic challenges. Notably, these include decent work deficits, low provision of social protection, and pockets of persistent inequality of access to good quality education and healthcare. There also appear to be a number of less visible challenges, such as empowering the aspirations of youth; social protection and skills' provision for an ageing population; obesity and mental health; and the silent voices of disadvantaged groups.

Whilst the ASEAN region is well placed to build the economic pillar of sustainable development, addressing the social and environment ones is proving much more problematic. Economic development is inherently an unequal and contested process (Booth, 2012; J. Knight, 1992). It benefits some but leaves others stranded in structural "capability traps" whereby efforts do not lead to any improvement in livelihoods (Andrews et al., 2013, p.235).

Inclusive sustainable development requires a collective forward-looking approach that recognises the importance of human and institutional adaptability (North, 1994). It must also consider the freedoms of all individuals to escape these traps in order to live their lives in ways they deem valuable (Sen, 1999).

Using a Socially Embedded Capability Approach (SECA), the ADO highlights the importance of the intersecting nature of barriers to developing human capability at the individual and community level – particularly amongst vulnerable groups. The ADO's findings have been structured in terms of four inter-related themes that reflect the divisional priorities of the ASCC: identity, environment, livelihoods, and social welfare. Each is overlaid with four drivers of change: demographics, migration, climate change, and the fourth industrial revolution. Each brings significant opportunities and risks for the current and future ASEAN population.



While each Theme has specific Key Findings, this cross-thematic approach reveals a number of commonalities. The first echoes the ASCC's focus on Inclusivity as both a means and an end of human development. A more inclusive ASEAN will be better equipped to deal with current and emerging challenges. Inclusion must be main-streamed. It cannot be an afterthought.<sup>328</sup> Inclusivity means much more than labour force participation or school enrolment. Developing a stronger sense of community identity (including at the regional level) can be instrumental to this, but a sense of belonging comes from participation more than instruction. An inclusive community embraces and accepts an individual's right to adopt multiple identities, and ensures that they have the freedom to choose a life that maximises their capabilities in ways they deem appropriate.

The improvement of climate change resilience must be founded on equitable dialogue with vulnerable communities and on investment in capacity building at multiple levels. A truly inclusive education system equips all children with the skills to expand their ability to lead healthy, productive, and meaningful lives. However, children of different backgrounds and abilities are often segregated, and the

hidden learning and social difficulties of some remain invisible. Similarly, vulnerable groups may be included in the workforce, but on unfavourable terms that leave them bereft of skills or social protection. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided ample evidence of the social and health consequences of inequitable terms of inclusion.

In order to foster meaningful inclusion, we need to understand the multiple barriers to exclusion and how these frame the restrictive terms of inclusion. Each ADO theme highlights the multiple levels of exclusion: age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, location (rural versus urban), employment relations (formal versus informal), and migrant status. This applies as equally to exposure to the impacts of climate change as it does to access to quality education, health, and social protection.

Inclusivity can be fostered through a people-centric focus to enhance local capabilities to design and implement solutions that reflect best-fit, rather than best practice. While the ASEAN region has developed external linkages, there is scope to deepen internal ones. Rather than look for global best practices, the ADO advocates the adoption of a research approach that is socially embedded in its

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<sup>328</sup> For example, AEC's Action Plan on SMEs 2015-25 prioritises innovation projects from 2015-20 but many of those on inclusion do not start until 2020. Moreover, it is unclear if ASEAN's social pillar has a major role in its implementation.



design, implementation, and evaluation. This incorporates local perspectives in dealing with cross-cutting challenges and can thereby contribute to the emergence of more sustainable solutions.

This approach is founded on frequent local collection of disaggregated contextual data and capabilities at the local government and village level to understand, implement, and evaluate solutions. It will also require active engagement from the region's research community across multiple disciplines.

While ASEAN appears to have made progress, there are areas where changes to policy may facilitate greater effectiveness, transparency, and ownership. Several work plans make reference to exchange programmes and workshops, for example, but it is unclear if these are reserved for academic students, skilled migrants, village leaders, and pre-selected NGOs, rather than a true representation of society.

Moreover, there seems to be a rudimentary system of evaluating whether activities have achieved their objective and a conflation of inputs, activities, and outputs with outcomes. For some workshops, for example, many KPIs simply observe that 'objectives of the workshop have been met'.

The ASEAN TVET Council established in June 2020 promises to more effectively integrate across divisions within ASCC and between ASCC and AEC. However, its potency heavily relies on a similar ethos being adopted at the national level.

The Master Plan on Connectivity provides a useful overview of inter-connected priorities, but its lens is unequivocally economic and technical, rather than social.

The implementation of inclusive evidence-based policy making is underpinned by a strong central vision that co-ordinates and empowers. This dovetails with the ASEAN model of mediating relations between member states. The ASEAN Secretariat can orchestrate an evidence-based approach to participatory development by taking a more active role in mainstreaming the social dimension and integrating development efforts across its own divisions to set an example for member governments.

## 5.1 Policy Toolkit Suggestions

This section suggests some components of a holistic policy toolkit to support the movement towards the ASEAN socio-cultural vision. It includes a foresight approach to tackle large complex challenges that affect the whole ASEAN system and inclusive approaches to knowledge-gathering and knowledge-sharing to foster local ownership and facilitate effective implementation.

They are not policy solutions. They are rather suggestions on how policy problems might be framed and policies designed, implemented, and evaluated.

### 5.1.0. Good Practices and Experimentation

The inclusive, evidence-based policy approach outlined above echoes the concept of a developmental state discussed in much of the Asian economic development literature (P. B. Evans, 1989). While this can manifest in many forms, the central pillars are state capacity to engage with society (*societal embeddedness*), combined with the ability of individual government departments, local governments, or villages to make independent decisions subject to prior capacity-building (*autonomy*) (Amsden, 1989).

Investigating why some economies are more inclusive than others is also encompassed in the notion of 'social capital'. This alludes to 'features of social organisation, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions' (Putnam, 1993, p.67). In Theme 3, for example, we saw the role of social capital as both an input and an output of community-based training schemes. Such concepts that recognise the importance of social networks in society and in formal governance structures provide insights into why some national development strategies result in improvements in *human* development, while others do not.

The 'intersectionality' and socially-embedded nature of the barriers faced by those 'left behind' in ASEAN's economic success requires changes in institutional function, not just form (Chang, 2011). Rather than top-down transplantation of globally accepted norms, ASEAN policy makers are well-placed to embark on a bold, forward-looking pathway that is accountable to the people of ASEAN nations, not to outside opinion. The region will gain enhanced policy ownership

while creating fair social and environmental outcomes that meet the priorities of its own people and places.

One potential way forward is known as 'Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation' (PDIA). This means that problem solving starts from the bottom up, and adapts quickly to feedback and experience. It relies on rapid feedback loops driven by frequent collection and analysis of local data to enable all stakeholders to learn from implementation mistakes and re-evaluate priorities (Andrews et al., 2013). The aim is to focus on 'best-fit' projects from available practical options, rather than on (often unobtainable) ideas of 'best-practice'.

Andrews (2013) reviews 44 health sector projects pursued by the World Bank and Global Fund in the late 1990s and early 2000s to examine the effectiveness of state capability building. The evaluation revealed that the successful health interventions had elected to focus on the problem and to learn what they could from local conditions, rather than focusing on rolling out globally prescribed solutions. The importance of seeking out local definitions of a particular problem and the development of baseline indicators that can be effectively collected and analysed are core characteristics associated with successful projects. On a broader level, it emphasises the importance of a problem-driven rather than a solution-driven approach to development interventions.

Policy design, implementation, and evaluation require more than just technical competence. They need to be based on an understanding of their local contexts and on a full sense of the capabilities of the institutions involved (Loayza and Woolcock in Artuc et al., 2020).

**Design:** A problem, not solution, orientated approach. Resolution of specific local problems requires local framing of problems and priorities, rather than applying ready-made blueprints (Stone, 2011). It follows the approach used throughout this report of asking very simple questions – such as who, how and what – and listening to the voices of those who they primarily effect, rather than speaking on their behalf.

Inclusion means nothing without empowerment, which can be understood as ‘the ability to make strategic choices about one’s life and future’ (ESCAP, 2019, p.2). The empowerment of ordinary people enables the issues they feel are important to become politically salient (Andrews et al., 2013; Kingdon, 1995). It thereby legitimises policy decisions and helps policy designers understand *why* things happen and what that *means* on the ground (Sumberg et al., 2012). A top-down policy designed through an economic lens can be blind to the social impact on particular groups (Tanwir & Sidebottom, 2019). Rather than focusing on what *isn’t*, this process helps to focus on what *is*.

In keeping with an inclusive approach and iterative learning process for policy making, there is value in moving to bring in a range of stakeholders. The adoption of participatory methods should ensure that all cohorts of society (not just donors or the private sector) are included. The use of qualitative methods can also be complemented by community-based processes to identify change agents, role models, and unforeseen challenges.

Effective inclusive participation facilitates ‘ownership’ and avoids the tendency to import ‘best practice’ models from elsewhere that may not prove to be a ‘best fit’ in local contexts (World

Bank, 2018b). Policy design should therefore develop general principles, not prescriptive lists. Policy ownership and coordination are key ingredients for ASEAN to drive the agenda on its own terms. A people-centric approach requires recognition that inclusion and innovation are intertwined. Their pathways are simultaneous, not sequential. To prioritise one over the other is to miss this salient truth.<sup>329</sup>

**Implementation and evaluation:** Change is sticky. This reflects the inertia of incumbents and path dependencies (North, 1990). Incremental and inclusive interventions allow new ideas to be tested as they go along. Successes and challenges can be picked up rapidly if channels for feedback and evaluation are built into the process. This feedback makes ‘active learning’ available to all policy stakeholders (Andrews et al., 2013, p.239).

For example, deciding whether or not to introduce conditions on cash transfers may depend on intended outcomes. A universal safety net to satisfy basic needs may be a more urgent concern than worrying about whether or not it encourages better eating habits or school attendance.

Each policy option should not be regarded as a ‘stand-alone’ or as a substitute for another. Interventions often produce the best outcomes when they overlap and complement each other. Health and education, in particular, can benefit from a multi-faceted approach. For example, providing children with school meals to improve learning outcomes requires the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education to engage on an ongoing basis. Likewise, encouraging farming innovations requires co-ordination across Ministries of Finance, Agriculture, and Industry (Artuc et al., 2020).

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<sup>329</sup> It is therefore perhaps quite illustrative that the structure of two ASEAN documents (SME Action Plan and the SME Policy Index: ASEAN 2018: Boosting Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth (OECD & ERIA, 2018) put inclusion and gender at the end, not the beginning.

Each change should be iterative and part of a holistic approach. This is particularly important in the light of strong evidence of the inability to scale up successful pilot projects due to a lack of robust impact evaluation data and weak institutional and stakeholder alliances (World Bank, 2018b).<sup>330</sup> The policy literature indicates that scaling up requires a multidimensional process of change and adaptation (Uvin 1995). Responsive institutions are able to operate in three directions: (i) hierarchical or top-down; (ii) individualised or bottom-up; and (iii) relational, which is based on active participation of target beneficiaries (Hartmann & Linn, 2008).

The collection of local disaggregated data in combination with bottom-up evaluation and experimentation are key facets in developing these flexible frameworks of iterative change. Data facilitates feedback loops that engage change agents and empower inclusive participation. Data metrics should be locally relevant and fit for purpose, not just what is available or transposed from global norms.

The availability of data allows us to address the question of 'how do we know'? Household surveys are taken too infrequently, and the data collected often lacks granularity and local relevance. Innovative uses of mobile phones or the engagement of local youth may be a means to address these issues (Artuc et al., 2020). The effective use of participatory methods is regarded as an appropriate method to produce a set of richer poverty estimates (Thorbecke, 2005). This also does away with the methodological straitjacket of existing top-down models, which are based on an external model of development rather than the actual

experiences of the affected poor. It has also been found that shifting away from a sole focus on large scale surveys towards adding iterative interviewing techniques can be very helpful in learning more about the lives of individuals and communities (Shaffer, 2021).<sup>331</sup>

Policy is a learning process, and is successful when policy making institutions have iterative processes that allow them to return to their objectives in light of new data on policy outcomes. It is this feature of responsiveness that is at the heart of institutional learning. This process of iteration is not easy to achieve if policy making is undertaken by setting out long lists of un-prioritised activities without an associated impact evaluation procedure. This would appear to be a feature of many ASEAN workplans.

An iterative framework has the power of allowing a policy making body to use obtained data to understand past and present failures. Unpicking failures is incredibly valuable, as this can highlight binding constraints and decision points, such as understanding that the socio-psycho-biological model of disability requires recognition of how PwDs regard their own agency. This is not possible with a medical model based on a single norm of 'what is normal'.

This learning process is easier in institutions that requires clear distinctions between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. Each of these can then be more effectively integrated into the evidence base. Evidence-based policy in its current form is reliant on data obtained from experimental methods. This includes randomised control

<sup>330</sup> The examination of the scaling up process, began with an evaluation of poverty reduction programmes in the 1990s, and was given a boost by the World Bank's 'Scaling Up Poverty Reduction' conference in May 2004.

<sup>331</sup> In regard, the CA is valuable as it is driven by a focus of measuring those things that an individual chooses to value. For example, informal sector citizens can be encouraged to provide an account of their habitation—a social construct emerging from their experience of living in a dwelling—rather than be restricted to responding to a formal and strait-jacket form of a questionnaire. On the synergies between the CA and participation, see Clark, Biggeri and Frediani (2019).



trials (RCTs), quasi-experiments, and natural experiments. Other methods are equally valid, although largely marginalised, including: statistical, case-study based, participatory, and meta-analysis.

The ability to collect a robust evidence base for policy making, requires that programme activities should have explicit monitoring and evaluation methods. This cannot be undertaken if there is a mere statement of activities and the presumption that these automatically ensure the successful achievement of the associated objective. There is a need to move away from a conflation of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, and an eschewing of the practice that KPIs simply record that objectives of the workshop have been met.

The adoption of these iterative methods of analysis and the use of numerous data collection techniques can enhance the credibility of ASEAN declarations (Fennell et al., 2013). This will also help find methods to reduce performance gaps, but this would require a degree of institutional capacity building in some member states – an exercise that could be spearheaded by the ASEAN Secretariat.

Looking for local abilities and learning from individuals who are able to overcome health challenges has revealed agency among families that could provide a kernel for new policies. In the case of Viet Nam, such an approach revealed that there were families that were not under-nourished (despite suffering economic hardship), because the parents in these

households were *disregarding* social norms regarding 'correct' methods of feeding and raising their children (Andrews et al., 2013).

### 5.1.1 Foresight Approach

The adoption of a foresight approach can highlight a shared vulnerability to uncertain socio-economic and environmental drivers of change. The horizontal axis in Figure 0.14 shows a range of social responses to a problem, depending on whether it is driven by an individual's compulsion to act for themselves or by a wider, more organised response (ASEAN, 2010; Suhaili et al., 2018). Along the vertical axis, we see a range from wholly reactive to more proactive responses. The socially organised proactive response (the most 'collective' approach) is most difficult to achieve, but might have sizeable economic and social benefits.

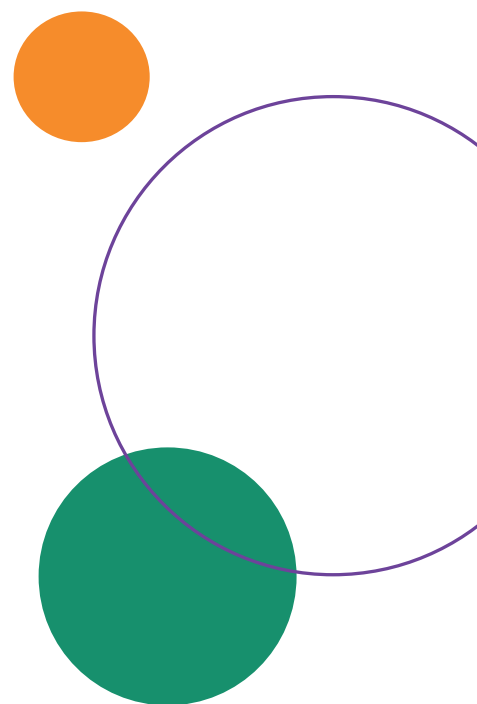
The collective approach mirrors thinking in ASEAN's 'Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society' (ASEAN, 2017f). For example, the Declaration seeks to 'embed a culture of prevention' (Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee, 2018). This implies a policy preference for positioning in the upper quadrants of Figure 0.14, while trying to anticipate and address the pressures that lower quadrant responses bring.

From a policy perspective, this prompts a range of initiatives and principles: effective gathering and use of disaggregated data; effective forecasting and monitoring of change; and improvement of the delivery and equity of social services and collective goods. With regional and national support, the outcome will be a powerful collective good, enriching policy making at all levels of intervention.



Application of a foresight approach (UNDP, 2014b) encourages the development of a problem analysis *framework* for addressing social exclusion and injustice, enhancing physical and mental well-being, and alleviating poverty.<sup>332</sup> The framework would have to be resilient and adaptive, and would rely on active participation founded on mutual respect, empowerment, and inclusion across the *entire* social spectrum. Its success will rest on its power to provoke *innovation* and *experimentation*, not just upon its support for predicting and prescribing. In the face of risk and uncertainty, the enhancement of individual capacity and social resilience to future unknowns are equally as important as trying to anticipate each and every scenario.

A foresight report of this kind takes several years to complete, and requires considerable funding. Both the Chinese and United Kingdom governments have used this approach (see Box 0.1 and 0.2) across a range of policy areas, over the past decades. The foresight exercise and has provided information for scenario building that has proven to be robust for many policy and practical purposes.



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<sup>332</sup> The foresight method has been advocated by the UNDP for the study of sustainability and resilience.

# APPENDIX 5.1: PARTICIPATORY DATA COLLECTION

Sustainable University Village Initiative (SUVI): An inclusive, cost effective, equitable approach to field-based research

The Sustainable University Village Initiative (SUVI) is a participatory research method built around developing capacity and increasing participation of young unemployed graduates to become competent data collectors in the field. SUVIs are particularly successful for wide-coverage survey administration, and has been successfully explored in the field in rural locations in Rwanda, Africa, with funds from international donors.

The young graduates, termed Village Champions, undergo a rigorous ten-day training programme on survey and other data collection methods using mini-tablet computers. They undertake their data collection tasks in paired groups, and data collection includes mapping and photographing a village for context setting. Data collected is entered into the programme and loaded on the tablets, keeping data secure and protected. The data can be uploaded regularly, and data analysis can be rapidly undertaken.

The data collection procedure is first undertaken by Village Champions in their own village (moving on to other villages later in the project) and the data-collection process benefits from mutual recognition

between data collector and community member, in providing assurances of how the data will be utilised. The Village Champions maintain field diaries, and they share their experiences within the group and also provide feedback on the data analysis to the community in which they are working.

A SUVI project has three benefits:

- It allows universities to offer support to their graduates who may be unemployed and living back in rural home-villages.
- It allows villages to take part in data collection – and to know that their contribution will reach different levels of policy influence, from village leaders to local leaders and centralised policy makers.
- It allows universities to take charge of the research story of their own communities and to interrupt the tendency for social research to be an 'extractive' industry for the benefit of academic institutions in the developed North.

The conditions that are necessary for a SUVI are funding, a university lead, and a cluster of villages willing to participate. With these features in place, the SUVI becomes a cost-effective research method that offers sustainable and equitable outcomes, while supplying information at speed across distant geographic locations. For further information about the SUVI programme or its approach, on-line training is available.



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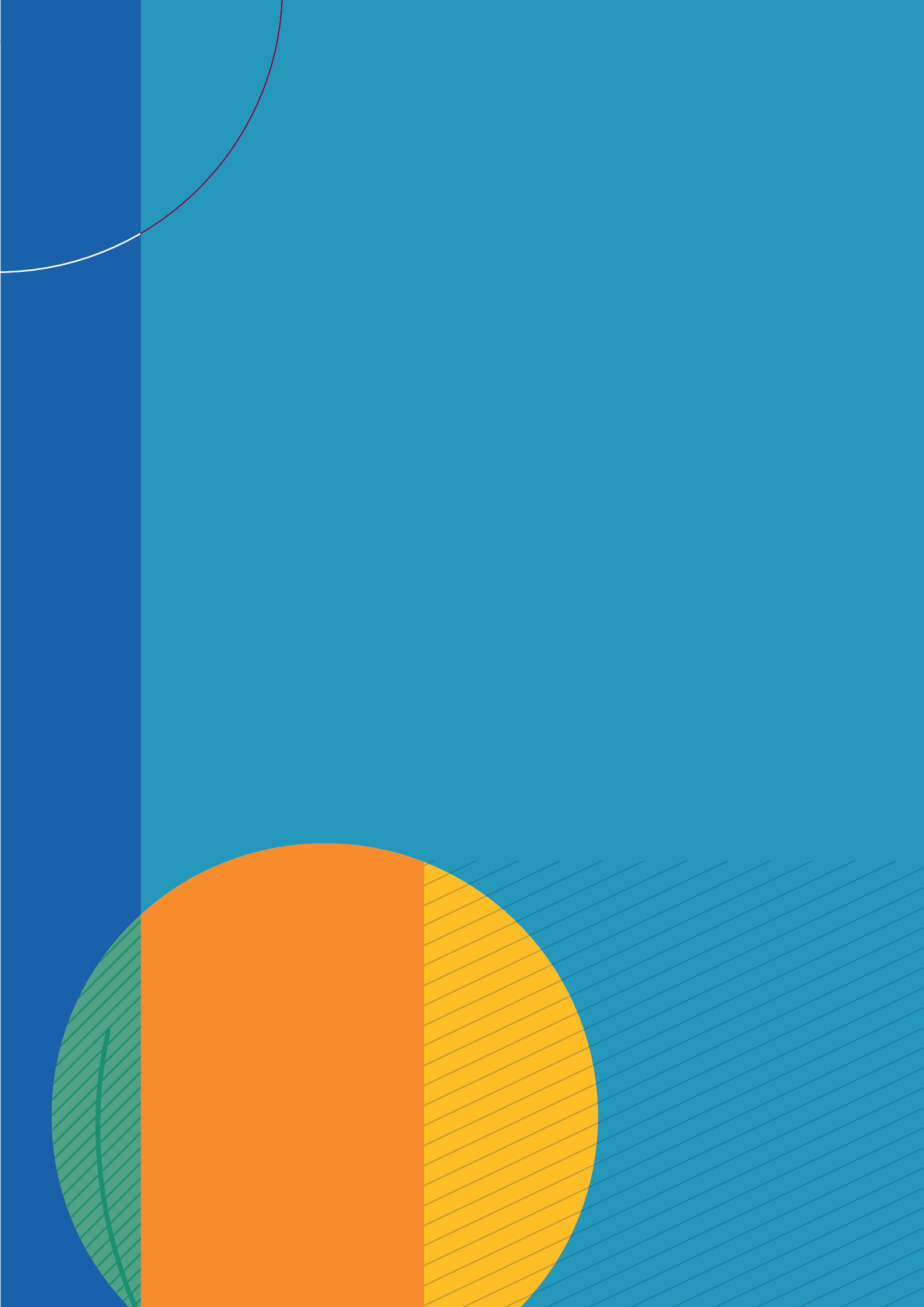
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