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Harnessing the Power of the Social and Human Sciences to Shape Inclusive, Sustainable, and Just Societies in South-East Asia

A Position Paper

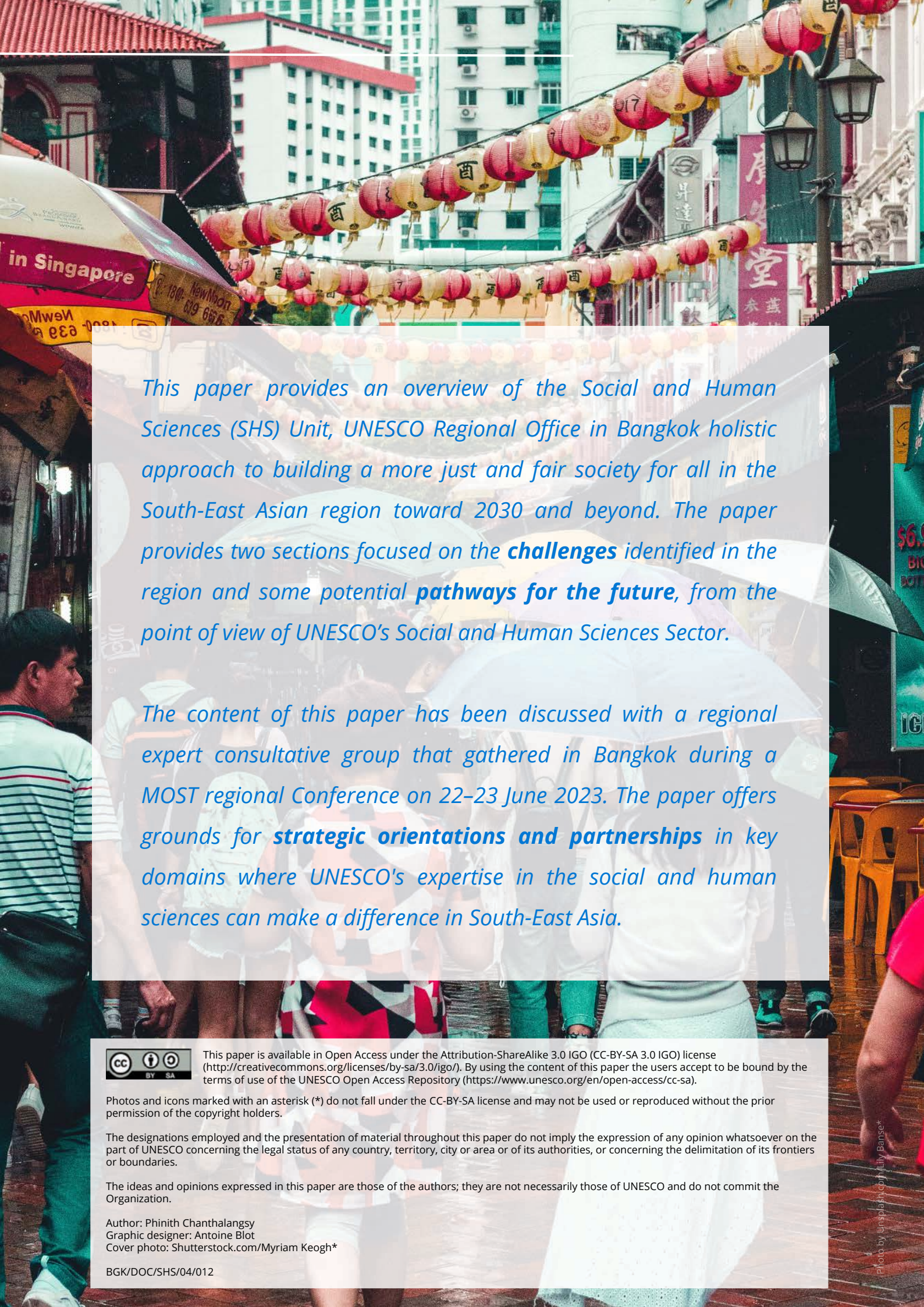


UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok

Social and Human Sciences Unit

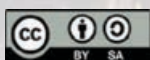
July

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*This paper provides an overview of the Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Unit, UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok holistic approach to building a more just and fair society for all in the South-East Asian region toward 2030 and beyond. The paper provides two sections focused on the **challenges** identified in the region and some potential **pathways for the future**, from the point of view of UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector.*

*The content of this paper has been discussed with a regional expert consultative group that gathered in Bangkok during a MOST regional Conference on 22–23 June 2023. The paper offers grounds for **strategic orientations and partnerships** in key domains where UNESCO's expertise in the social and human sciences can make a difference in South-East Asia.*



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Author: Phinith Chanthalangsy
Graphic designer: Antoine Blot
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BGK/DOC/SHS/04/012

When looking at South-East Asian and ASEAN countries from a sociocultural perspective...

Photo by unsplash.com/kazuo ota*



Is the **market-driven economy** sufficiently inclusive and sustainable for all, after decades of accelerated growth in the region, and after COVID-19 shocks?



How can the increasing **demand for civic participation and equality** be accommodated in the public space, amidst a top-down political philosophy and tradition?



What new development models can be explored to mitigate the **environmental degradation** induced by rapid **urbanisation** and pollution, excessive land exploitation, and extraction?



What are the possible tradeoffs and compromises between **traditions and modernity** in hyper globalised societies, including on gender equality?
How do communities and institutions deal with **identities, national unity, diversity**, and universalism?



How should the **future of education and training**, and skills development look like in a rapidly changing economy?



How can new **technologies and digital economy** be harnessed from an ethical, social justice and inclusive development perspective?

THE CHALLENGES

A context analysis from the point of view of the Social and Human Sciences

Photo by Pxhere.com/Min An*

From the point of view of UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector, Asia-Pacific in general and South-East Asia in particular present many insightful and intriguing interrogations.

Over the last decades South-East Asia has been characterised by...



Icons: <https://uxwing.com>* and <https://www.canva.com>*

Such profound and rapid transformations open up some key philosophical questions as to how the said societies understand their own identities and trajectories, invent their development models, engage with others in the region and in the world, and project themselves into the future in a context of global uncertainties.

The present analysis focuses on four challenges that have been identified as the most prevailing in the region from a sociocultural point of view. These challenges are also of specific concern to UNESCO vis-à-vis its mandate and fields of expertise in support and in service of the Member States' sustainable development.

INEQUALITIES, VULNERABILITIES, AND EXCLUSION

The ASEAN space is well-known for its rapid economic growth over the last decades, its traction for foreign direct investment, and its business-conducive environment. Despite a short slowdown due to the pandemic since 2020, ASEAN is viewed by the World Economic Forum as the fifth-largest economy in the world, well on track to become the fourth largest by 2030.¹ The poverty rate has fallen from 47% in 1990 to 14% in 2015; undernourishment fell from 30.4% to 8.9% in the same period, while life expectancy improved from 56 years in 1967 to 71 in 2016.

However, the social benefits of the economic growth are far from being equally shared among the populations. Some examples of an entrenched social inequality can be found in the region...

- “ **Indonesia**.....→ *The four richest men in Indonesia have more wealth than the 100 million poorest combined.*
- Thailand**→ *Thailand is the third most unequal country with 58% of the nation's wealth controlled by the richest 1% of the people.*
- Viet Nam**→ *The richest man in Viet Nam earns more in a day than the poorest person earns in a decade.* ”

Source: Inequality a growing challenge for rising ASEAN, Bangkok Post, 30 April 2018.

These indicators describe a heavy trend in the region – **that of social inequality, marginalisation, and exclusion** that is deepening despite longstanding economic growth, and is aggravated by economic, environmental, and public health shocks.

Such socioeconomic gaps have been worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing the middle class to emerge and thrive, and weakening further the most marginalised in the informal economy, notably **women, youth, the elderly, ethnic groups, as well as persons with disabilities**. Applying the **intersectionality approach** to this analysis of social inequalities, one can note that ethnicity, disability, gender, geographic marginalisation, and poverty continue to be the major factors of exclusion of millions of people, especially in States where there is no centralised social protection policy and social welfare system. Such discrimination patterns compound with **isolation from the political space**, making participatory and inclusive approach (LNOB) difficult. Issues of social justice, equal distribution of the economic dividend, access to social services, and effective civic engagement and participation in the political spheres remain some major concerns for a sustainable development and stability in the region.

QUALITY OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The combination of **high-carbon growth, fast-tracked industrialisation, and rapid urbanisation** has resulted in the degradation of the quality of the air in many Asian and South-East Asian cities. It is estimated that in Asia-Pacific, about 4 billion people (around 92% of the region's population) are exposed to levels of air pollution that pose a significant risk to their health.² This is a **severe degradation of the quality of life** of the people which is all the more concerning that the public awareness on the matter is still lacking (because immediate impact seems intangible to many), and prioritisation is often made in favor of the continuation of an **exclusive economic development**.

More recently, some positive policies have been taken to control the emissions that lead to the formation of fine particulate matter (PM2.5), as governments start to realise that **high-carbon development and devastating agricultural models are no longer sustainable, nor socially and ethically acceptable, on the long term**.

¹ ASEAN is poised for post-pandemic inclusive growth and prosperity – here's why, WEF, Jan 18, 2022.

² [Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership, UNEP](#)

The environmental and quality of life degradation also relates to the **extractive industry** in many South- East Asian countries, especially those with low-income economy that are under pressure of international mining companies. Such an economy also raises important issues in relation to the people’s right to access land, issues of land eviction, labor exploitation, contamination of the waters, etc. notwithstanding the challenge of corruption and capture of public money. According to UN-ESCAP, the global demand for minerals and the concentration of the latter in South-East Asia will continue to put pressure on governments,³ thus making the **dilemma between exploitation vs sustainability** even more acute and of public concern.

“ Around 92% of the region’s population are exposed to levels of air pollution that pose a significant risk to their health. ”

The **disproportionate impact of climate change on marginalised groups** is also a matter of concern for the next decades. Back in 2009, the IPCC report had already identified the urgent need for measures that improve the adaptive capacity and resilience of vulnerable people as an immediate priority for the region.⁴ But while some South-East Asian countries have started to recognise the greater impact climate change has on these groups,⁵ concrete measures to tackle the problem have remained scarce due to governance and capacity- related issues,⁶ as well as a lack of public understanding of the urgency by the right-holders themselves. The 2022 IPCC report calls once again for adaptive measures to be taken in the region to protect the most vulnerable, especially **the poor, the women, and the children** who are particularly at risk to suffer from the adverse effects of climate change on food security.⁷

The increasing frequency of **extreme weather events** raises the issue of the challenges faced by "climate refugees," groups of people who were forcibly displaced as a result of weather-related events such as floods, storms, and extreme temperatures. Based on a report produced by ActionAid International and the Climate Action Network South Asia,⁸ by 2050, up to 63 million people could be forced from their habitats, making the state of affairs not only a humanitarian problem, but also a social stability concern and a regional security urgency. Finally, in 2022, the ASEAN leadership remains concerned with the transboundary haze pollution, arising from land and forest fires.⁹



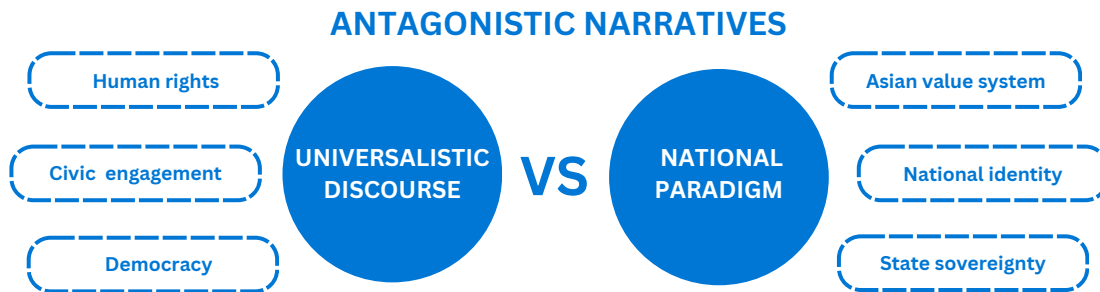
Photos: Pexels.com/Pixabay (left), Unsplash.com/Saikiran Kesari (middle) and Pexels.com/Quang Nguyen Yinh (right)

NATIONALISM, GLOBALISATION, AND DIVERSITY

In many ways, the ASEAN integration model has grown out from the geopolitical context of the Cold War, which narrative still continues to influence aspects of the regional integration dynamics. The construction of this regional political space depicts the complex processes of nation-building, regional integration, engagement with the international laws and standards, globalisation and liberalisation, as well as the search for and the preservation of an ASEAN “common identity”.

³ Implications of the energy transition on the extractive industries in Asia and the Pacific, UN-ESCAP, 2022.
⁴ *The Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia: A Regional Review*, Asian Development Bank, 2009.
⁵ *ASEAN State of Climate Change Report*, ASEAN, 2021.
⁶ *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, IPCC, 2022, p.1506.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ *Costs of climate inactions: displacement and distress mitigation*, ActionAid, 2020, p4.
⁹ Chairman’s Statement of the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 11 November 2022.

While the ASEAN Member States – including the last comers such as Laos and Vietnam – have today adhered to international human right laws, frameworks and mechanisms, there is still a sentiment of **competition between the universalistic discourse, and the more regionalistic or nationalistic narratives** that stress on the “Asian value system”, the South-East Asian ancestral traditions, or the national sovereignty.



In the region’s recent colonial history, the nationalist movements and fight for freedom and independence have been a very important and prevailing political paradigm in many of the ASEAN countries. Today these countries experience a fast-changing lifestyle of the new urbanised and hyperconnected generations, which creates a certain **antagonistic conception of narratives** that expresses itself in many ways and fields in the society, creating still today a need for more open discussions, analysis, and public dialogue between the different segments of the population. This holds true in particular with regard to the **human right paradigm and discourse**, where many State actors often show reservations as to the entirety of their relevance for their nations and cultures, thus also raising the issue of the role that civil society organisations should play in advocating for democratic participation, accountability, civic movements, and fulfilment of the fundamental rights and freedom. Some initiatives have been done in the area of reconciliation with and learning from History and the recent Past (colonisation, antagonism and conflicts between the countries, genocide and political violence, nation-building vs minority groups), by which the younger generations could deepen their understanding and knowledge in order to envision better the future of the region.

The History of South-East Asia is also one of **migration and circulation of the people**, which partly explains the current cultural and ethnic diversity of the region. Today, many countries in the region are receiving, sending, as well as transit countries. Human mobility is at the core of social and economic development, as the remittances generated by workers in foreign lands do ensure the survival and growth of their families. Migration also contributes to culturally, intellectually, and artistically enrich the societies with human diversity and creativity that are expressed in many ways. However, many migrants continue to experience violence, stigma and discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion, and online scam, which in many cases can be characterized as human trafficking. There is a severe lack of understanding of how human beings have always been mobile in all spaces, and that the borders politics cannot be used to perpetuate exclusion and discrimination.

A challenge to diversity

- ▶ **Patriarchal social** norms hinder individuals’ rights and development.
- ▶ Some countries and societies still criminalise and discriminate same-sex relationships or **different gender expressions**.
- ▶ Opposition between the nationals and the foreigners in a **xenophobic discourse**.

A challenge to minorities

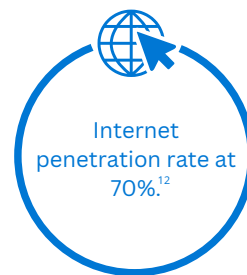
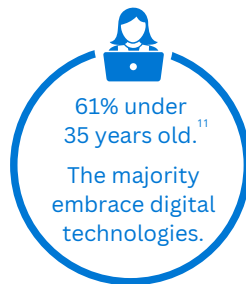
- ▶ Threat to the diversity of **ethnic groups** (national identity construct).
- ▶ Willingness to **foster national consciousness** by reinforcing the supremacy of the major ethnic group.
- ▶ **Existence of an ethno-cultural essentialism** and a narrative of ever-present foreign “threats”.¹⁰

¹⁰ Rethinking Schooling for the 21st century. The State of Education for Peace, Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in Asia, UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, 2019, p. 123.

There is an urgent need, therefore, to define the paradigm shift in the way South-East Asian nations envisage the interactions between the self and the others in a globalised, digitalised and diverse world, in order to achieve, for instance, the important aspirations for the Future of Education and Transforming Education – that are focused on quality, inclusive, plural, and innovation.

TRANSFORMATIONS, TECHNOLOGY, AND CONNECTIVITY

ASEAN in numbers...



Icons: <https://uxwing.com>*

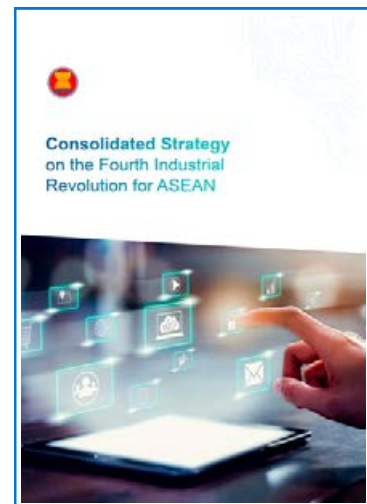
This represents a **huge potential** of transformation of the economy and of the social habits across generations and social milieus.



Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for ASEAN¹³

A people-centred and integrated approach to digitalisation

- ▶ “A digital ASEAN that is open, secure, transparent, and connected while respecting privacy and ethics in line with international best practices.”
- ▶ Emphasis is put on: Technological Governance and Cybersecurity, Digital Economy, and Digital Transformation of Society.
- ▶ **Ethical dimension** and very strong people’s well-being philosophy, whereby the State should pay attention to the equal benefit, access and protection of the marginalised groups.
- ▶ Embraces the concept of **youth’s skills development** in a humanistic and non-purely technical approach and address youth skills gap.¹⁴
- ▶ The ambition is to connect the technological devices and infrastructures, connect and harmonise institutions, but most importantly connect the **peoples among themselves**, in a thorough regional integration scheme and from a sociocultural perspective.



Such an approach echoes the broad notion of “Connectivity” enshrined in the **Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025**¹⁵ and is fully in line with the **UNESCO’s Recommendation of the Ethics of AI**.

¹¹ ASEAN Youth. Technology, Skills and the Future of Work, WEF, 2019.

¹² Internet usage in Southeast Asia - Statistics & Facts, Statista, December 2022.

¹³ Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for ASEAN, 2021.

¹⁴ According to figures by the ASEAN Foundation and Google.org on [Youth Job Market and Skills Demand for the Future](#), 47.8% of youth have either “none” or “low” basic digital skills proficiency – meaning that nearly one out of two youths in ASEAN cannot adequately perform the basic functions of work software. Much worse, the same report provides the alarming statistic that nearly three-quarters of youth (72.7%) have “none” or “low” advanced digital skills.

¹⁵ Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025, 2016.

These frameworks and consciousness should make it easy for the ASEAN nations to reflect and device on the use and application of the emerging and new technologies in the various fields – including in the health sector after the shocks of COVID-19 – where there may be profound **ethical implications** for the population. This includes **issues of bioethics** and **ethics of science and technology, ageing, social eugenism, selection, and surveillance**, etc. The UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector has a longstanding global experience in supporting the Member States address these complex challenges, through social dialogue, public awareness-raising, multidisciplinary capacity-building for professionals and officials, institution buildings, formulating policy and normative frameworks.



Photo by Pexels.com/Yen Nguyen*

THE PATHWAYS

What UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector can do, together with partners

The purpose of the Sector is not to solve the challenges all together in the short or medium terms; but to trigger and support a collective attempt in understanding them from a new angle. UNESCO works to elaborate new ways to reflect and to act on the complex challenges, including in a participatory approach with the populations, and to model and test practices and approaches that are pluri-disciplinary and based on a multi-stakeholder engagement.

The Sector's assumption is that a 21st century society that is sustainable, healthy, and inclusive requires the peoples to actively enquire on, to anticipate, and to take part in defining and implementing what really matters for the improvement of their quality of life.

Four Pathways are proposed to this end, tapping into UNESCO's global expertise:

1
Making the Social and Human Sciences Count in Policy Dialogues on Social Transformation and Inclusive Development

3
Promoting Gender Equality, Disability Rights, and Diversity

2
Advancing a Culture of Enquiry among the Youth and Transform Learning in a Complex World

4
Spearheading Conversations on Ethics of AI and Ethics of Climate Change, for a Sustainable Future

MAKING THE SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES COUNT IN POLICY DIALOGUES ON SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



Bringing intellectuals, thinkers, scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners together



Creating a laboratory of ideas that is oriented towards policy actions using Foresight



Repositioning the Social and Human Sciences as critical disciplines in the higher education system



Promoting Pluri-disciplinary, Multi-stakeholder approach, and Quality policy dialogue

Icons: <https://uxwing.com>* and <https://www.canva.com>*



Under its Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Programme, UNESCO acts as the regional convening power in conducting a Structured Research-Policy Dialogue Programme (SRPD) that will aim at advising governments on embracing development models that are more people-centred, inclusive, participatory, and sustainable.

POSSIBLE INITIATIVES

- 1 Accompanying the national authorities to undertake a state of the arts of the Social Sciences and Humanities research and teaching under the framework of their Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policies, geared toward sustainable development and regional integration (ASEAN, Indo-Pacific, and Asia-Pacific).
- 2 Engaging with the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and other University networks to connect intellectuals⁶ in building research-policy programmes on topics of major concern to the national, regional, and development partners, with specific targets and commissions/assignments by governments.
- 3 Setting up exchange and mobility programmes and Centres of Excellence for scholars and students working in the same areas of expertise under the framework of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025.
- 4 Deploying a capacity-building programme for decision-makers aimed at devising on policy formulation on cutting-edge issues of development, including by using Foresight and Imagining the Futures.
- 5 Promoting youth's understanding of the region's History and recent Past, for reconciliation, regional integration, and social cohesion, in synergy with the Memory of the World Programme.



UNESCO CONVENING POWER

Education Sector
Communication and Information Sector
Culture Sector

Youth Networks
ASEAN University Networks
Asian Indigenous Peoples
Pact

MOST Programme
Inclusive Policy Lab
Foresight and Future Literacy
Programme

Icons: <https://uxwing.com>* and <https://www.canva.com>*

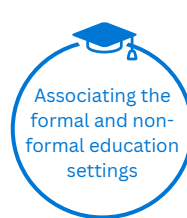
¹⁶ Along the tradition of the "Asian Public Intellectuals" (API) Fellowship Programme that was launched in 2000.

ADVANCING A CULTURE OF ENQUIRY AMONG THE YOUTH AND TRANSFORM LEARNING IN A COMPLEX WORLD

In the Bangkok Statement of 2022 *towards an effective learning recovery for all and transforming education in Asia-Pacific*, the Ministers of Education have recognised that “education and its systems must be transformed to become resilient and prepared for future shocks, address inequalities and the learning crisis, and contribute to peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable futures of humanity and the planet.” To this end, “learning materials and pedagogies should be, learner-centred, inclusive, reflect our multi-cultural, multilingual, and knowledge-based societies and build the capacity of learners to become resilient... [requiring] the use of innovative and flexible learner-centred pedagogies, methods, and tools.”¹⁷

South-East Asian nations have elaborated ancestral traditions of enquiry and learning, using what modern education science calls the “**cognitive, emotional, and social functions of learning**”. Such assets are of great value today in enabling the youth and all individuals to continuously learn to interrogate our greatly complex societies, to anticipate and innovate with new paradigms, and to embrace diversity and differences in building inclusive and peaceful societies. Transforming education indeed requires that our education philosophy fosters a **culture of enquiry** that encourages the youth in “learning to learn”. UNESCO has made efforts worldwide – including in South-East Asia and the Pacific – to develop communities of enquiry and youth engagement models that foster system thinking, a culture of intellectual autonomy, and the ability to solve problems. This shall serve as a useful platforms of practices, networking, and policy dialogue¹⁸ whereby youth development specialists, youth-led organisations, and educators from the region can learn from one another to enhance the formal and non-formal education linkage, impel new ideas, and collaborate in addressing the social challenges at hand.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES



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POSSIBLE INITIATIVES

- 1 Awareness-raising for decision-makers on the transformative methods of education using Philosophy with Children and Youth as a case study in building a culture of enquiry.
- 2 Capacity-building and training of educators on the proven methods, pedagogies, initiatives tested in Asia-Pacific, both in formal and non-formal education settings.
- 3 Piloting and documenting the development of communities of enquiry in in partner schools and learning centres, in the formal or/and non-formal settings at the primary and secondary education levels. Possibility to articulate with the MIL interventions.
- 4 Translating educational materials into the national and/or indigenous languages.
- 5 Putting in place exchange programmes among the practitioners, educators, and researchers in the region to sustain a vibrant community of practices, expert networks, and policy dialogues.



UNESCO CONVENING POWER

Education Sector
Communication and Information Sector

Philosophy with Children and Youth
Network for Asia-Pacific

MOST Philosophy
Programme

Icons: <https://uxwing.com>* and <https://www.canva.com>*

¹⁷ Bangkok Statement of 2022. *Towards an effective learning recovery for all and transforming education in Asia-Pacific*, UNESCO, 2022.

¹⁸ *Philosophy, a School of Freedom. Teaching Philosophy and Learning to Philosophize. Status and Prospects*, UNESCO, 2007; *Teaching philosophy in Asia and the Pacific*, UNESCO, 2009.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY RIGHTS, AND DIVERSITY

The Non-discrimination and Equality agenda remains very high in UNESCO's work as well as in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. More specifically, attention will be paid to the **intersectionality approach to vulnerability, combining gender, disability, poverty, ethnicity, and marginalisation**. Three particular groups will be targeted in this Programme that will seek to give voice to the invisible, to advise policies, and to accompany social movements for change.

WOMEN & GIRLS

- ▶ Address patriarchal norms and practices in Asia-Pacific.
- ▶ Work in close partnership with youth and students organisations to unpack the gender norms and roles, understand how they pervade in all walks of life.
- ▶ Promote gender equality as a factor of betterment of livelihood and of quality of life for all.
- ▶ Organise Intergenerational dialogues.
- ▶ Associate advocacy organisations with development organisations at all levels.
- ▶ Collaborate with universities and UN agencies, to offer the best comparative advantage of SHS.
- ▶ Promote the Gender Studies.

PERSON WITH DISABILITIES

- ▶ Strengthen the OPDs movements at the national and regional levels.
- ▶ Learn from other more experienced social movements (e.g. the women's movements).
- ▶ Apply intersectionality lens and use already existing tools and methods to address stigma and discrimination.
- ▶ Collaborate with the Education Sector in the area of teachers' education and TVET.
- ▶ Collaborate with Culture and Communication and Information Sectors on inclusive cultural and creative industries.
- ▶ Collaborate with ASEAN at the regional level on developing a post-2025 strategy to the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025.¹⁹
- ▶ Engage in UN Joint programming on disability inclusion at national and multi-country level, targeting the support of UNPRPD.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- ▶ Promote indigenous people civic participation and the public awareness.
- ▶ Valorise their traditions, knowledge systems, and cultures.
- ▶ Give more exposure to the indigenous groups through capacity-building, movement-building, and knowledge dissemination.
- ▶ Reflect on the notions of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and civic engagement with the youth mainstream movement, under the framework of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032).
- ▶ Address the question of migration, exile, and displacement, and their impact on indigenous youth.

POSSIBLE INITIATIVES

- 1 Promoting a culture of Gender Equality by engaging youth leaders and student communities in championing intergenerational dialogues on gender norms and sustainable development, in order to understand the social constructs of patriarchal norms, and envision the possible ways to change mindsets towards equality and mutual contribution to the people's quality of life and inclusive development.
- 2 Accompanying ASEAN in championing Disability Inclusion at the policy and normative level, in social dialogue with OPDs, and in designing ambitious and impactful programmes to fight stigma and discrimination.
- 3 Supporting youth organisations to document and promote indigenous knowledge systems and practices, as a key driver for diversity, social cohesion, peace, and regional integration.
- 4 Understanding the sociocultural impacts of migration, exile, and displacements on communities in terms of civic participation and social integration, intercultural dialogue, disruption of knowledge systems and livelihood, remittances flow and use for community development and public good, etc.



UNESCO CONVENING POWER

Education Sector
Communication and Information Sector
Culture Sector

ASEAN Disability Forum
Asian Indigenous Youth Platform
UNPRPD

Hooked on Peace Project
Global Youth Community
Youth Grant Schemes for Social Innovation

Icons: <https://uxwing.com>* and <https://www.canva.com>*

¹⁹ ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025 Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2019.

ADVANCING CONVERSATIONS ON ETHICS OF AI AND ETHICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Building on UNESCO's two normative frameworks – the **2017 Universal Declaration on the Ethical Principles in relation to the Climate Change**, and the **2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence** – UNESCO will support governments and the national stakeholders in addressing these two major challenges from the ethical point of view. A particular attention will also be paid to the ethics of science and technology.



ETHICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Under the framework of the 2017 Declaration on the Ethics of Climate Change:

- ▶ Engage governments and civil society in paying attention to the specific vulnerabilities of the most affected by the effects of climate change, from the point of view of climate justice and solidarity.
- ▶ Collaborate with the Natural Sciences and the Education Sectors to draw more attention of the scientific community, the educators, and policy-makers on the specific angle of ethics in calling for action vis-à-vis climate change.
- ▶ Reflect on the best way to translate the ethical principles into indicators and guidelines for policy making and into community-based initiatives that improve people's quality of life.



ETHICS OF AI

Under the framework of the Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for ASEAN:

- ▶ Work with governments as well as ASEAN to implement the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI.
- ▶ Collaborate with the UNESCO Jakarta Office in advising the ASEAN Secretariat on the best way to set up a regional regulatory body to oversee the implementation of the UNESCO Readiness and Impact Assessment on Ethics of AI on the ground.
- ▶ Focus on "Promoting technological governance taking into account global best practices" and "Observing data governance that respects privacy and security".
- ▶ Promote regional exchanges of expertise and experience as well as awareness raising and capacity-building for ethical monitoring.

Icons: <https://uxwing.com>*

BIOETHICS AND ETHICS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

UNESCO will support the concerned Member States to understand and address issues of bioethics and ethics of science and technology using the UNESCO's protocols and tools for a multidisciplinary ethical approach.

POSSIBLE INITIATIVES

- 1 Elaborating a UNESCO-ASEAN set of indicators to implement the 2017 Declaration in Asia-Pacific, offering to Member States standards instruments to assess and measure their concrete commitment towards implementing the Ethical principles in relation to Climate Change.
- 2 Engaging schools, civil society and youth organisations, and communities to champion the ethical approach in conducting projects related to people-centred sustainable development work, sufficiency economy philosophy and circular economy initiatives, participatory projects on greening, sustaining, and humanising the community development.
- 3 Accompanying ASEAN in implementing the 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, in the areas of regulatory mechanisms, Readiness and Impact Assessment, and understanding the gaps in terms of gender bias, human rights infringements, and environmental impacts.
- 4 Assisting Member States in understanding the social and political importance of bioethics and ethics of science and technology, by conducting policy dialogue on key burning issues (social eugenism, application of augmentative medical technologies, sexual and reproductive health and rights and abortion, aging and end of life issues, hygienism and social surveillance, etc.) Setting up national ethics advisor mechanisms, and building the capacities and understanding of professionals in the domains concerned.



UNESCO CONVENING POWER

Education Sector
Communication and Information Sector
Natural Sciences Sector

ASEAN 4IR Task Force Group
(A4IR-TFG)

Ethics of AI,
Bioethics and Ethics of Science
and Technology Programmes

Icons: <https://uxwing.com>* and <https://www.canva.com>*



How will we exist?

Will we exist?

What needs to change?

Through the four pathways proposed in this paper, UNESCO aims at mobilising the knowledge of the Social and Human Sciences disciplines and communities of practice in South-East Asia to:

Deconstruct, Enquire, Investigate

In the face of the global and complex challenges of the 21st century, equipping individuals with critical thinking is essential. UNESCO supports its member States in South-East Asia to understand what matters the most for a *truly* sustainable development, by building a culture of enquiry among the youth, as well as comprehensive science policies, and interdisciplinary research-policy linkage.

Reconnect, Reimagine, Repair


Meaning is the real wealth in a changing world. In its quest, the mobility of the peoples and ideas is key to overcome divides and prejudices, and to build communities of minds and practices for a human-centered regional integration. Reimagining the possible futures and new avenues of development should shape a policymaking model that gears to repair injustice, inequality, exclusion, and the environmental degradation societies face today in South-East Asia.



UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok
Social and Human Sciences Unit

Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building
920 Sukhumvit Road, Phrakhanong, Khlongtoei,
Bangkok 10110 Thailand

 bangkok@unesco.org

 +66-2-3910577

 <https://unesco.org/bangkok>

   @unescobangkok