



# Advancing Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN:

## Overall Progress of the *Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Preventing Violence and Promoting Social Cohesion in ASEAN Project* (ASEAN WPS Project)

### Introduction

Since 2021, ASEAN and UN Women have worked together to translate the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda into tangible regional and national change. The five-year project *Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Preventing Violence and Promoting Social Cohesion in ASEAN* – endorsed by ASEAN and generously supported by the Governments of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Korea – has positioned WPS as a shared ASEAN commitment. Guided by the [ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statement on Women, Peace and Security \(2017\)](#) and the [ASEAN Regional Study on Women, Peace and Security \(2021\)](#) the initiative has laid the foundations for a regional WPS architecture that strengthens the capacities of Member States, and fosters women's leadership, in peace and security.

When the collaboration began in 2021, only three ASEAN Member States – Indonesia, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste – had national action plans on WPS. Four years later, ASEAN stands out for having one of the most comprehensive WPS policy architectures and policy frameworks, demonstrating how regional collaboration and investment in gender equality drive institutional transformation, social cohesion and inclusive governance.

### Regional milestones and policy achievements

ASEAN's policy landscape has evolved dramatically, with **three regional frameworks now anchoring coordinated action**: the [ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security \(RPA WPS\)](#) (2022), the [ASEAN Regional Framework on Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Disaster Management](#) (2021–2025), and the [AIPA \(ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly\) Plan of Action on Promoting Women's Political Participation & Leadership \(WPPL\) Implementation Framework 2024–2030](#), which was endorsed by the ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), and embeds women's leadership in governance.

Under ASEAN's leadership, a baseline study, monitoring framework, and preliminary indicators were developed to track progress. In 2023, the ASEAN Advisory Group on WPS, chaired by the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) Cambodia, was established to coordinate implementation across the three ASEAN Community Pillars.

WPS-related commitments are now embedded in ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its Strategic Plans, thereby signifying strengthened system-wide policy direction from commitment to coordinated action.

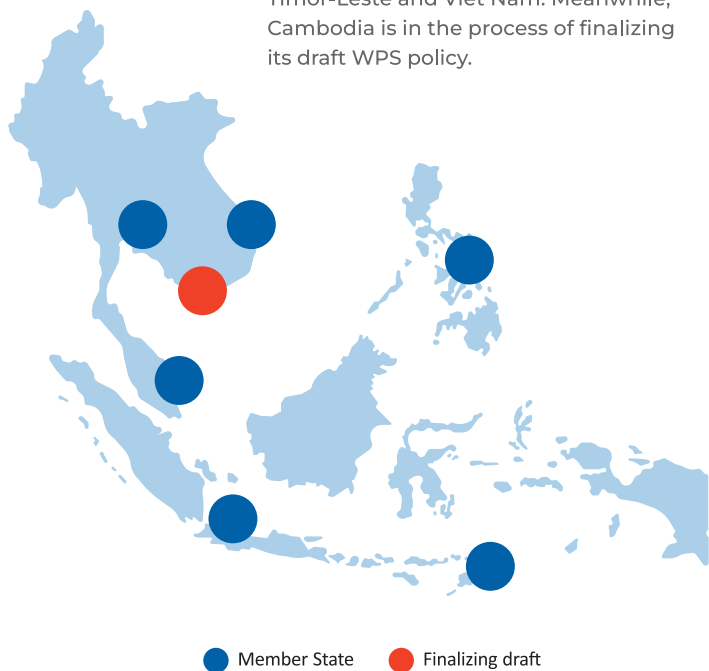
## National progress and capacity-building

The ASEAN RPA WPS has spurred unprecedented momentum at the national level. Since 2022, **six Member States have developed or adopted WPS national policies:** Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, and Timor-Leste, while Cambodia is developing its draft. Most include accountability and monitoring mechanisms aligned with the regional plan.

Between 2021 and 2025, **15,278 individuals** from ASEAN institutions, Member States, and civil society organizations (CSOs) **benefited from capacity-development programmes under the ASEAN WPS Project.** This included 11,887 participants at the national level (7,581 women, 2,736 men, 29 others, 1,541 unidentified) and 3,391 participants at the regional ASEAN level (1,790 women, 872 men, 16 others, 713 unidentified).

Across the region, 220 training sessions and workshops and 48 cross-sectoral dialogues strengthened institutional and individual capacities to advance the WPS agenda. Post-event evaluations show consistent learning gains: **84 per cent of 4,624 respondents reported confidence in applying newly acquired WPS-related knowledge and skills within their institutions and communities.** These cumulative efforts have enabled ASEAN sectoral bodies and Member States to develop national WPS policies and mainstream gender perspectives into conflict prevention, crisis response, and peacebuilding policies, and provided women and CSOs the skills to strengthen coordination, reporting and advocacy for inclusive peace.

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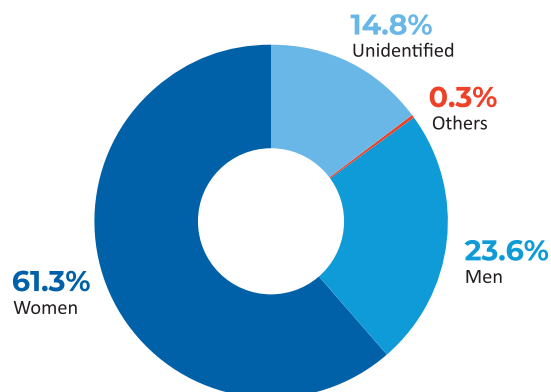
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Total participants in ASEAN WPS capacity-development programmes (2021-2025)





Peacebuilders put their hands together to symbolize solidarity and diversity. Photo: UN Women/Satu Bumi Jaya

## Expanding the space for ASEAN and civil society dialogue on WPS

To sustain engagement beyond the project's lifespan, the **ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) is on track in establishing the upcoming Community of Practice (COP) on WPS**, developed through consultations with more than 300 participants. The COP is intended to serve as multi-stakeholder platform for peer learning and knowledge exchange among ASEAN institutions, governments and civil society.

At national level, **WPS Academies and gender-responsive budgeting pilots** in Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste **helped institutionalize and finance WPS implementation**.

## Evidence and knowledge for action

Knowledge generation has been central to progress – driving capacity building and evidence-based policymaking. Since 2021, ASEAN and UN Women have produced over 30

regional knowledge products, including toolkits, and research. The ASEAN WPS Knowledge Hub ([Knowledge Hub](#)) now hosts over 120 resources, accessed by 28,000 users and downloaded 3,500 times, enabling data-driven design and monitoring of WPS policies, including the following:

- [Localisation Toolkit and Guidelines for the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security \(2023\)](#), used to train ASEAN Member States on how to develop their national action plans on WPS.
- [Gender Analysis of Violent Extremism and the Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security in ASEAN: Evidence-based Research for Policy](#)
- [Advancing Gender-Responsive Conflict and Crisis Prevention in ASEAN \(2025\)](#), developed with ASEAN-IPR.
- [Regional Study on Youth, Peace and Security \(2025\)](#), developed with ASEAN-IPR and Griffith Asia Institute, launched in Jakarta with youth networks from across Southeast Asia.
- [Voices of Peace: Catalogue of Good Practices by Civil Society Organizations on Women, Peace and Security in Southeast Asia \(2025\)](#), showcasing good CSO practices from across the region in implementing the WPS agenda at the grassroots.



***“Such a coordinated, resourced, and dedicated programme on WPS has never been designed and implemented with ASEAN and for ASEAN before.”***

— Rodora Babaran, Director, Human Development Directorate, ASEAN Secretariat

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## Impact and partnership highlights

Evaluation findings confirm the **project’s high relevance, coherence, and effectiveness in building ASEAN’s institutional ownership of WPS**. ASEAN is now recognized for having one of the most advanced regional frameworks for WPS.

**Institutional transformation:** The following five ASEAN sectoral bodies now possess the knowledge and tools to integrate WPS into their mandates: the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW); the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC); the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC); the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR); and the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials’ Meeting (ADSOM).

**Visibility and advocacy:** Two ASEAN WPS Summits (2023 and 2025) and annual Advisory Group meetings have sustained high-level political dialogue and momentum. Combined with dynamic communications – including over 200 advocacy products, stories, videos and social media posts – these platforms have elevated women’s leadership and regional ownership of WPS.

**Catalytic role of UN Women:** The evaluation credits UN Women’s normative mandate and technical depth for bridging governments and civil society, promoting inclusive dialogue, and strengthening ASEAN’s capacity to translate norms into policy and practice. **ASEAN’s convening power, combined with UN Women’s gender expertise, has multiplied impact and sustainability.**

## For more information, contact:

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