



Towards a More Inclusive and Resilient ASEAN

This brief introduces the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agendas in simple, accessible language, highlighting their relevance to ASEAN and how both contribute to a more inclusive and resilient region.

What Is Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agendas?

Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda

The Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda is grounded in three UN Security Council Resolutions: [2250 \(2015\)](#), [2419 \(2018\)](#) and [2535 \(2020\)](#). These

resolutions recognise that young people are essential partners in preventing conflict, building peace and shaping security decisions.

The agenda is built around five pillars:



PARTICIPATION

involving youth in decisions on peace and security



PROTECTION

safeguarding young people from violence, abuse and exploitation



PREVENTION

supporting youth efforts that address the root causes of conflict



PARTNERSHIP

fostering cooperation between youth, governments, civil society and the UN



DISENGAGEMENT AND REINTEGRATION

helping young people associated with armed groups rebuild their lives

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda

WPS is an agenda that recognises the critical role of women in peace and security. It highlights the importance of including women in decision-making, conflict prevention, protection and peacebuilding. It acknowledges that women in their full diversity face specific barriers and forms of violence that must be addressed to achieve sustainable peace.



WPS and YPS together help ensure peace processes include groups who are often left behind—women, young people, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and others facing discrimination.

A common misconception is that WPS is relevant only for countries experiencing armed conflict. In reality, the WPS agenda is equally important for “stable” regions facing emerging security threats such as climate change, cybersecurity risks, pandemics, organised crime, and violent extremism. These challenges cut across borders and affect communities in diverse ways, making the participation, safety, and leadership of women essential for building resilient societies.

What Does YPS Mean for Youth in ASEAN?

[The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation Regional Study on Youth, Peace and Security \(ASEAN-IPR YPS Study\)](#) shows that youth in Southeast Asia understand peace as a set of conditions that allow people to live with dignity, fairness and justice—not merely the absence of war.

Based on the Study, youth connect YPS to:

- gender equality and gender-based violence,
- discrimination and ethnic or religious divides,
- climate change and disaster risks,
- violent extremism,
- migration, displacement and urbanisation,
- access to education, technology and opportunities,
- human rights and democracy.

Youth, Peace and Security in the Southeast Asia

Young people have been shaping peace and social change in Southeast Asia for generations. From historic independence movements to today’s community leadership, digital activism and cross-



Global milestones

2015

UNSCR 2250

First global framework recognising youth as peace actors

2018

UNSCR 2419

Reinforces youth participation in peace negotiations

2020

UNSCR 2535

Strengthens long-term implementation of the YPS agenda

border cooperation, the ASEAN-IPR YPS Study shows that youth are a powerful force for dialogue, justice and resilience across the region. The study describes ASEAN youth as a “peace dividend”—their creativity, solidarity and leadership strengthen the social fabric of their communities and help build a more peaceful and inclusive region.

Across the region, young people contribute to peace in many ways: they organise community initiatives, promote tolerance, raise awareness on human rights, challenge discrimination, engage in dialogue, and mobilise support during periods of political and social change. Even in difficult contexts, youth continue to build bridges, support their peers and work towards fairer, more cohesive societies.

Why Youth Matter to Peace and Security in ASEAN

Young people are central to building a resilient and peaceful ASEAN. They bring fresh ideas, identify early warning signs, mobilise communities, and contribute solutions to emerging challenges such as climate impacts, misinformation, discrimination and rising social tensions.

By recognising youth as active contributors—not just beneficiaries—ASEAN Member States can enhance participation, strengthen social cohesion, and shape a future where peace is inclusive, sustainable and grounded in the lived experience of young people.

Challenges Youth Face in Contributing to Peace

The Study identifies several structural obstacles:

- limited civic and political participation spaces,
- unequal access to education, technology and employment,
- discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, class or disability,
- exposure to online harms, misinformation and violent extremism,
- insufficient mechanisms to meaningfully engage youth in decision-making.

These obstacles limit how effectively youth can contribute to resilience, dialogue and conflict prevention across the region.

How YPS and WPS Are Connected

The Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agendas are deeply intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Both agendas emerged from global advocacy movements calling for more inclusive peace processes. Both respond to the reality that women and young people—



Regional milestones

2018

ASEAN Youth Declaration on Peace and Tolerance

2021

ARF Joint Statement on Promoting the YPS Agenda

Youth interfaith camps, digital peace initiatives, youth conferences

2022

ASEAN-IPR-UN Workshop on Advancing YPS, recommending:

- a regional YPS study,
- an ASEAN YPS framework,
- stronger youth engagement mechanisms

2023

ASEAN-IPR Governing Council approves proposal for the ASEAN-IPR Regional Study on YPS

2025

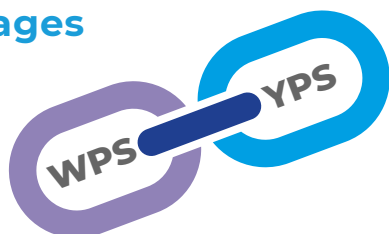
Launch of ASEAN-IPR Regional Study on YPS: This provides the first regional evidence base for future policy and action

together—represent the majority of those affected by conflict, insecurity, exclusion, and discrimination. And both insist that sustainable peace is only possible when those most affected have a voice, leadership and agency in shaping solutions.

Although each agenda has a specific entry point—gender for WPS and age for YPS—both recognise that sustainable peace depends on the participation, protection and leadership of marginalised groups, including women, young people, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and other communities historically excluded from decision-making.

Both agendas share a common purpose: ensuring that peace reflects the voices, needs and rights of people who are often left behind.

Linkages



1. Both promote inclusive, people-centred peace and security.

They aim to make peace processes more representative and responsive to diverse experiences.



2. Both address structural exclusion.

Women, young people, and many other groups face systemic barriers to participation, safety, civic space and voice.

Addressing these barriers strengthens social cohesion and the legitimacy of institutions.



3. Both apply an intersectional lens.

Gender and age overlap with other identities—ethnicity, disability, class, rural/urban background—which shape how people experience conflict and insecurity.



4. Both strengthen protection frameworks.

Women, youth and other marginalised groups face heightened risks in conflict and crisis settings, including discrimination, violence and online harms.







5. Both cultivate diverse leadership.

Youth movements in ASEAN often champion gender equality and inclusion; WPS actors frequently collaborate with youth-led networks to advance shared goals.

When young people and women participate in peace efforts, decisions are fairer, communities feel more represented, and solutions last longer. YPS and WPS are two pieces of the same puzzle—both help make peace more inclusive, more just and more sustainable.

WPS and YPS at a Glance

	Women, Peace & Security (WPS)	Youth, Peace & Security (YPS)
 FOCUSES ON	Women and girls of all identities	Young people (18–29)
 SEEKS	Women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in prevention, protection, and peacebuilding process	Meaningful youth participation in peacebuilding
 RESPONDS TO	Gender-specific discrimination and exclusion	Age-based exclusion and limited civic space
 KEY AREAS	Participation, Protection, Prevention, Relief & Recovery	Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships, Disengagement & Reintegration